



History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society
South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

Volume 12 Issue 2 Spring 2014

HERITAGE CORRIDOR

Chuck Larsen

A Métis and a U.S. citizen! by Jerry Bates



Chuck Larsen considers himself a mixed-blood native Canadian (Métis, pronounced Me tee') and a U. S. citizen. In 1968, his family settled here in Washington State by way of Michigan and California. He became a citizen when he was eighteen.

Chuck described his heritage from the European exploration of Canada and the early fur trading industry. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the Northwest Fur Company of Montreal employed his ancestors. Several generations of male heirs worked for the companies and intermarried with the Native population and daughters of mixed families. Métis, by definition, are indigenous Canadians of mixed race, just 1.25% of Canada's population.

Chuck can trace one of his European ancestors,

Chuck Larsen showed his students' map to April's General Meeting attendees. The highly detailed map is the result of a project for his high school geography students. "I'm a weird old guy," said Chuck, "I don't follow the textbook; if you want to understand how to read a map, you have to make one." This map combined the earliest maps of the Puyallup and Nisqually watersheds in existence. The class started with the first military survey of Puget Sound including this area in 1840 and the first surveys of Mt. Rainier in the 1870s—"Today versus 150 years ago," said Chuck. The map also includes Indian villages. According to Chuck, "This is as close to a map of this region when it was Indian country as exists."

The map has been digitized and is part of an exhibit celebrating William Fraser Tolmie, through July 20, at Ft. Nisqually Living History Museum located in Point Defiance Park, Tacoma.

Archibald McDonald to the building of Fort Vancouver. He was a senior officer of the Hudson's Bay Company helping establish Nisqually House at Sequelitchew Creek (site of the original Fort Nisqually), among other trading posts in the British Northwest. Before the first transcontinental railroad was built, "he had the distinction of being the man who had crossed the North American continent from both oceans more than any other living person... a real frontiersman" said Chuck.

Chuck, an ethnographer, holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology. He taught 40 years in Tacoma and Puyallup schools including tribal schools, Tacoma Community College, the University of Puget Sound, and Pierce College.

Chuck explained "Anthropologists don't have a sterling reputation with native people." He thanked his mom for a "foot in the door... but I had to earn my way" to gain their trust. "One of the joys of my life is sitting down with old people, listening to their stories and documenting them, preserving their memories for universities, their families, and tribes."

With this knowledge of local Indian history and culture, Chuck tailored his talk to the Indian trail system of South Puget Sound. South Hill was part of this very well established trail system. When not using the rivers, which were often the long way around, the Indians went overland. No villages were established on South Hill, but Indians crossed it for thousands of years to get to other destinations, the upper Puyallup River and points east over the mountains to tribes in Eastern Washington.

Chuck described the flood plain area of the valley below South Hill around Orting as well as the vast prairie that was south of Tacoma. After 1700, local tribes, acquired horses from tribes of Eastern Washington. Horses were mainly confined to the prairie where they were used to cross the open land to where the tall forests started. At this point the horses were let loose and the Indians continued their journeys on foot through the dense old-growth forest while the horses were left free to roam the prairie for use by other locals. Horses were never corralled or confined. "The prairie was their corral," explained Chuck. "They were used as community property."

The great treasure of the southern Puget Sound

was the camas bulb, a flowering plant that covered the South Sound prairie in those days. It was the staple of the Native diet. Part of the lily family, it looks like an onion, but when dry and hard it can be stored and made into flour. It's lightly sweet with a nutty flavor. Every spring thousands of native peoples, including those from the Northern Sound, would descend on the prairie to dig up the root. With conservation in mind, they removed only every other plant.

Chuck explained that Northwest tribes were exogamous. Marriage within the tribe was discouraged. He described the "love" gathering in August high in the mountain meadows where area tribes—Puyallups, Nisqually, Duwamish, Klickitat, Yakama, etc. —gathered to pick huckleberries. Young males were given time off for a few years to mingle among different tribes during the berry picking time, "where the girls were," said Chuck.

Indians moved seasonally in search of food following the well-established trail system. The most important geography, however, was the river where your tribe had fishing rights. Grandparents would make these determinations for their future grandchildren when young people married.

Space limits covering all the fascinating history we heard from Chuck Larsen. He covered in detail the established trails east and west, all intersected by the main corridor north and south — the Cowlitz Trail. The Cowlitz Trail follows today's State Route 7/Mountain Highway/Pacific Avenue. This route started at today's Foss Waterway, angling south all the way to Eatonville and the Nisqually Gorge, where Alder Dam is now.

Among the many subjects covered was the difficulty of the native language conforming to sounds that could be written down. This made the Chinook language popular, because it could be written and was generally understood by different tribes.

Chuck ended his presentation speaking of William Fraser Tolmie, Chief Trader and Chief Factor at Fort Nisqually for 16 years. On first arriving to the area as a young surgeon and botanist from Glasgow University, he was assigned to Fort Vancouver. Tolmie, fascinated with Mount Rainier, decided to climb it with two Indian guides — a difficult, wet journey. With this story, and

thanks to Tolmie's detailed notes, Chuck added an item to our history on the Hill—in 1833, the first exploration of Mount Rainier by a European—Tolmie—was accomplished by crossing South Hill!

You can learn more about Dr. Tolmie and see Chuck Larsen's student's map (as shown on page one) during a special exhibit "Dr. Tolmie, The Naturalist" currently showing at Fort Nisqually

through July 20.

My report of this meeting covered only some highlights of Chuck's talk. If you don't regularly attend our meetings or want a 'refresher course,' please contact Bob Ballou (253) 845-6071 or e-mail stonebluebob@comcast.net to borrow a DVD of the April meeting. All general meetings are recorded to DVD.

Don Johnstone, *student of history*

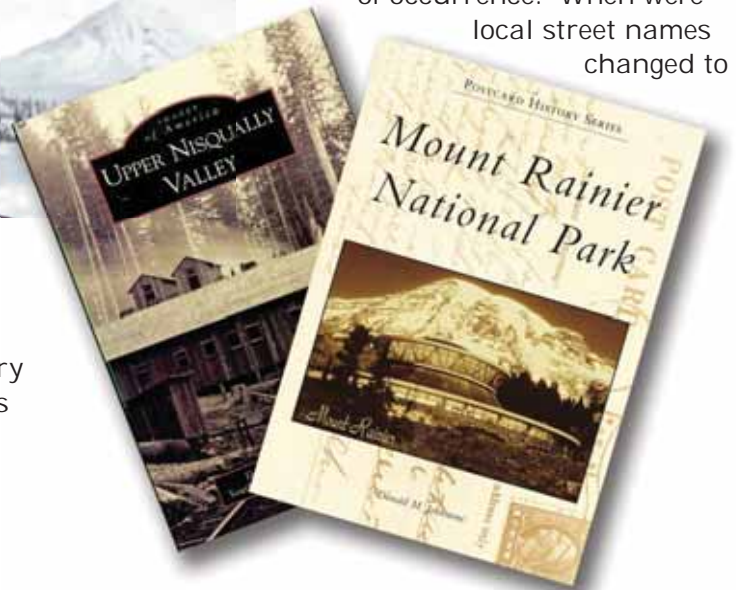
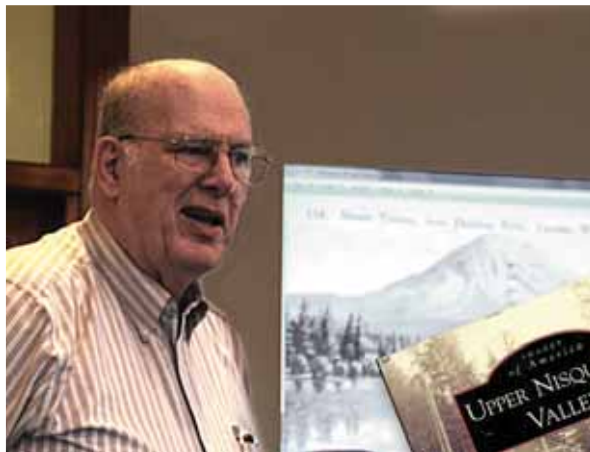
by Jerry Bates

Author Don Johnstone addressed our February General Meeting. Society Vice-President, Terry Maves, introduced Don as "a student of history" and warned there would be a test!

Don was surprised to learn that the South Hill Library "had nothing on South Hill history," not that our Society hasn't tried to change that!

With his audiences' living history in mind, Don passed out maps with a list of questions: Where was Puyallup Heights School? Locate Maplewood Springs; Harding; and seven other locations. A second handout was a list of fourteen events to place in chronological order with date of occurrence: When were local street names changed to

**Don Johnstone
February
General Meeting
Speaker. Don
has authored two
books published
by Arcadia Press,
*Upper Nisqually
Valley & Mount
Rainier National
Park.***



Don and his wife moved to Mineral, Washington, in Lewis County in 1988. Don described himself as a photo historian. "I try to tell a story with pictures. I have thousands of photographs of Pierce County and Lewis County relating to history."

Don began his talk by emphasizing the "living history" that exists among us—his audience. Having worked with many Native American tribes, Don said, "They think of their elders as living history." He told us that "we have a collective memory that is not collected. You have lived through things but that information is not available to researchers. You really do have a history—take time to write it down ... tell your grandkids a story."

numbers? When did phones no longer require an operator? When did balloons come from somewhere other than the fair? Although we didn't answer all of the questions, they generated a lively discussion among our members!

Don covered a wide variety of subjects relating to

the handouts and area history including the Tacoma Eastern Railroad; James Longmire; railroad ties for World War I; the Electron Power Station; Alder Dam; McMillin Reservoir; the 1854 Indian Wars; and the Hudson's Bay plantation at Fort Nisqually. Other more current topics emerged during the meeting such as the location of the original Ivar's Seafood Restaurant on South Hill.

Don concluded his presentation with slides of some of his historic photo collection. He emphasized how difficult was travel and road building. We saw early roads to Mt. Rainier and the opening celebration of Paradise Park in 1914. He showed slides of the Elbe Schoolhouse, explaining its architecture. To receive state funding, schools had to conform to a Washington State school construction standard plan. He added that the old Elbe school building "evolved" over the years. Member Lorraine Larson in the audience enhanced Don's Elbe school story. She attended the school starting in 1931, recalling in amazing detail each room, its contents, function, and location in the building—our own "living history!"

When? Where? A Quiz...

During Don Johnstone's presentation last February, he passed out a series of questions regarding South Hill history. As Society members, we should be able to answer some of these. Wouldn't it be nice to know the answers to all of them? And, impress your neighbors and friends with your knowledge of South Hill history? One of these questions is answered by reading this newsletter. If you have a sharp memory, Don answered most of them during his talk. In following newsletters, I will attempt to answer each of them. Help your Editor out — if you know the answer to any of these questions, e-mail me at jerrybates@mac.com or call me at 253-446-6043.

1. When did street names become numbers?
2. Do you know when the militia retreated?
3. When was the area a plantation?
4. Where/when was the first train whistle heard?
5. When/where was 'light-rail' first introduced?
6. When did balloons come from somewhere other than the Fair?
7. When, in order to vote, did able-bodied men need to give two days of labor on the road crew?

8. When and where was the first traffic light on South Hill?
9. When did phones no longer require an operator to initiate calls?
10. When/where was Lake Meridian (South) resolved? Where did Lake Meridian (South) resolve?
11. When did your life change due to electricity? Electronics?
12. When did Europeans first visit the Mountain?
13. Where/when was the first paved road?
14. Where/when was the first school established?

Allen Zulauf by Jerry Bates

Allen Zulauf returned as a General Meeting speaker in December 2013. Long-time friend and charter Society member, Paul Hackett, introduced Allen.

Zulauf, a graduate of Oregon State University, has lived in Washington since 1953. As a soil scientist, he is interested in and concerned about regional environmental issues. Allen, now 83 years old, has a long history of community involvement and activism in the South Hill area dating from the late 1960s. His work continues.

The formative years of South Hill, as we know today, were the 1970s that created "a frenzy among property owners who had large lots and developers who were willing to pay handsomely to property owners along Meridian," stated Allen. He witnessed things evolve on the Hill—remembering the many open spaces among the Douglas Fir trees and two-lane Meridian—before the opening of Highway 512.



Allen Zulauf

During the 1970s, he and a few other like-minded residents felt some control and input from the

community was essential to deal with the expansion and development on South Hill. About this time, he met Paul.

"I met Paul Hackett, not sure where, but it seemed like wherever he was, I was, so we got together. He had a great idea for getting a community organization to address some of the development problems." As a result, they formed the Township 19 Association, "but over time, it just didn't work out." Along with five or ten others, they worked a year on the South Hill Survey, interviewing over one thousand households.

Allen related, "During those days many community councils were being formed in the Seattle area where politicians were catering to them because they represented a lot of people. These groups had goals and objectives and wanted to improve their communities. Paul Hackett encouraged this idea for South Hill in the form of a community development organization." They solicited help from the University of Washington and the Pierce County Planning Department. Eventually, the South Hill Community Council was formed which Allen led for many years.

Along with a few personal stories, Allen discussed the many problems of those early years — some still an issue. Change was difficult during the time of county commissioners, before the Pierce County Council form of county government. He described the problems on the Hill in the 70s and 80s--fumes from the rotting waste at the landfill, lack of sidewalks, the traffic on Meridian, signs around intersections, accessing strip malls, etc.

One of their successes was the creation of Half Dollar Park off 94th Avenue East. Allen stressed the importance of parks and meeting your neighbors stating "that's how a sense community is formed."

Zulauf concluded his talk by responding to a question regarding the Van Lierop property debate in Puyallup. The soil scientist warned us of the possible eventuality of covering the richest farmland in the valley with fill dirt to build warehouses.

Learn more about Allen Zulauf's accomplishments and personal story in the Spring 2013 issue of *History on the Hill*, available on our Website southhillhistory.com—click on Newsletters.

Highlands Donation

by Paul Hackett

For some years we have done good things for the Highlands retirement community.

In order to express our thanks to the Highland's management for the monthly use of the their community center, we recently, with the approval of the South Hill Historical Society Board, donated \$100 to the Highlands Crafter's Social Club. The grateful members signed a thank you card in appreciation.

More About the Historical Marker Database

by Debbie Burtnett

In the Fall 2013 issue of this newsletter Editor-at-Large Debbie Burtnett wrote a review of Andrew Carroll's book "Here Is Where." In that article she mentioned the trail marker database hmdb.org; A follow-up article describing the database was promised, below Debbie gives more detail.

The Historical Marker Database is kept up-to-date. When you access the site, you can immediately find markers within your area. All of those on the site will pop up on a map, usually within miles of your location. Another column gives you "Markers Recently Added" which include those added yesterday, today, in the last week, and in the last 30 days. If you click on "Most Viewed This Year," you can access the top ten for the current year, including "Lost at Sea" located in Howth, Leinster, Ireland, and the "Atomic Bomb Accident @ Mars Bluff, March 11, 1958," in Florence, South Carolina (recently in the news). A Mobile app for your phone is also available, free.

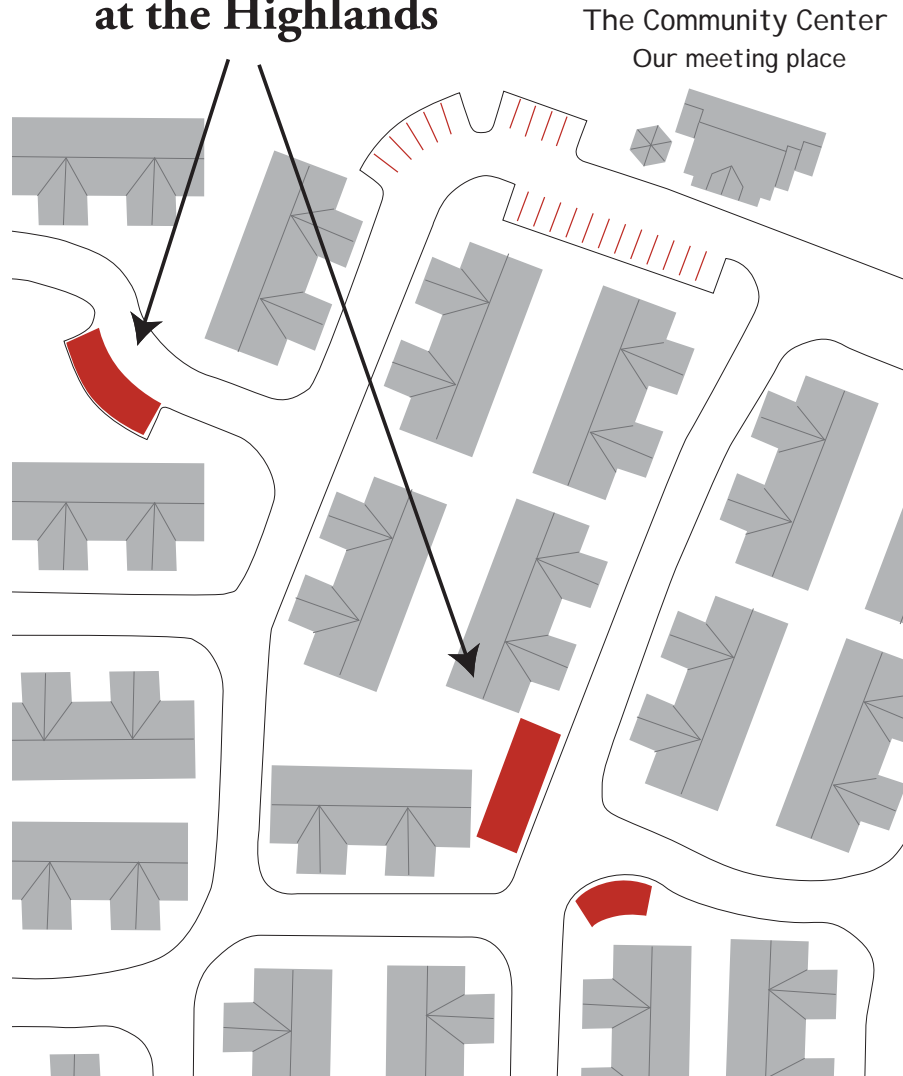
In a far right-hand column, you can click on your state and find out how many markers are in the database for your state, which are also alphabetized in order by county. Markers may represent homes and cottages; churches; bridges; geological sites; forts; airplanes; ships; highways; museums; and a variety of other things. Washington State has 167 markers in the database, of which 28 are located in Pierce County. Eighteen of these are

at McChord Air Force Base ranging from a ten-inch shell from the USS Maine to a memorial for POWs/MIAs servicemen. Puyallup has one—the Old Oregon Trail, and South Hill doesn't have any; thus, the Society's interest in getting the North Fork of the Oregon Trail into the database. Mt. Rainier has one marker at Paradise. By comparison, Indiana has 1,278 markers registered; Hawaii only 76; California 4,348; tiny Rhode Island, 197; and British Columbia, Canada, has 140 in the database.

For those of you who wish to become historical marker 'collectors,' the Website tells you how to

become a Contributing Correspondent and the group of self-directed volunteers that founded the site will send 3 ½" x 2" cards for the correspondent to use if questioned by curious onlookers or authorities who might ask why you are photographing certain sites. The card identifies you as a Contributing Correspondent to the database—just send your name and address to the Editor and number of cards requested and you will receive them by return mail. For more information on the database, see *Preservation Magazine's* August 2010 article entitled "Leaving Their Mark," by Gwendolyn Purdom.

Additional Parking at the Highlands



From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com, 14602 106th Avenue Court E., South Hill, WA 98374.

Also, don't forget that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues, donations, etc., are fully deductible from your income taxes if you are able to do so. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, contact Ben.

Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note, with a renewal form, to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date. **No need to fill out the membership form unless there is a change of some kind.**

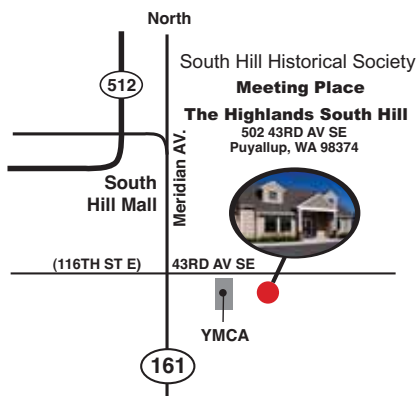
Updated Roster Available

A printed roster including members' home and e-mail addresses, plus phone numbers is available upon request (restricted to members only). Call me—Ben Peters—at 253-845-7028.

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 11:00 AM, (no meetings July and August) at The Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd Ave. SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

We welcome you to our monthly meetings. For more information, contact Paul Hackett at **(253) 845-7691**.

Where to Find Us



Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Kaye Murrell
Andy & Ruth Anderson	Carolyn Nelson
Elizabeth Anema	Dorothy Nelson
Marion Armstrong	Juanita Nordin
Bob Ballou	Mark & Dorothy Norris
Teresa Best	Gloria O'Kelly
Jerry Bates	Ron & Lois Pearson
Katherine Bennett	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Marilyn Burnett	Ben Peters
Debbie Burtnett	Bill Riley
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Dave & Patti Curtiss	Roy and Sheila Rinker
Karen Day	Vern Rockstad
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Pat Drake	Earl Root
Joan Ellis	Stan & Margery Salmon
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Bonnie Starkel
Ira Gabrielson	Lori Stock
Don & Mary Glaser	Bill Stover
Paul Hackett	Marge (Crosson) Swain
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Cecil & Doris Herbert	Margo L. & Joe Tucci
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Lee Van Pevenage
Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw	Carl Vest
Alan & Linda Hoenhous	Neil & Celia Vincent
Joe & Rhoda Hoenhous	Joan Vosler
Maybelle Hoenhous	W. Louise Walsworth
Matt Holm	W. Lynn Williams
Leslie Huff	Lenore Nicolet Winton
John Knierim	Ed Zeiger
Mike Kupfer	Hans Zeiger
Art & Lorraine Larson	Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Terry Maves	Beverly Zook
Olive McDonough	
Laurienne Stewart Minnich	

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South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____

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E-mail Address _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Renewal, check here

Annual Dues: Society membership \$25.00

Note: Please do not send cash.

Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:

**SHHS Membership, 14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905**



14602 106th Avenue Court E.
South Hill, WA 98374-4905

To: