

The Old Line Trolley

by Jerry Bates



To catch the Trolley to Tacoma from Puyallup 100 + years ago, you had to climb the Hill first. *Image courtesy of Wes Perkinson*

THE Old Line trolley, TR&P Line (Tacoma Railway & Power Company), Puyallup's first, operated from approximately 1889 to 1919. The trolley line started in Puyallup, then wound its way up the hill through Maplewood Springs (south of the Washington State Department of Game, Puyallup Fish Hatchery, see map) to 104 TH ST E and Woodland AV. This was the location of the trolley's Woodland Station for South Hill passengers. From there it went west through Summit and Midland to Fern Hill and connected with the Tacoma/Spanaway trolley.

For residents of Puyallup and the Hill, it was, for

a time, the only means of public transportation to Tacoma—a very roundabout route for those living in Puyallup.

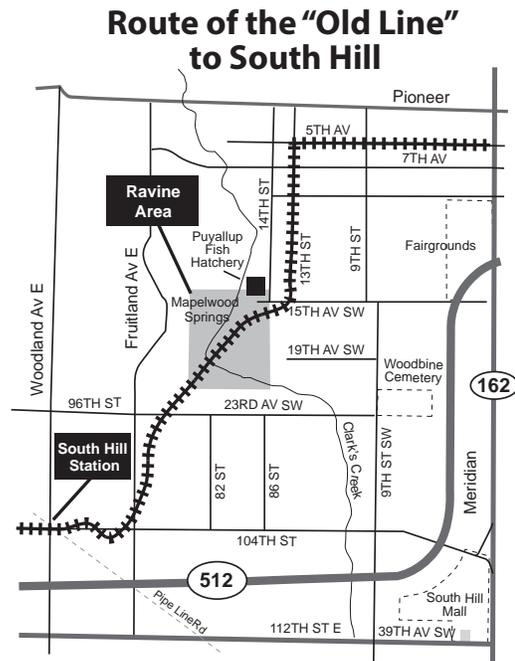
The part of the Old Line between Maplewood Springs and Woodland Station followed a path of least resistance to get from the valley floor to the top of the Hill. This path was the ravine that follows Clark's Creek. The trolley was notorious for its unsound accident-prone trestle that skirted along the treacherously steep ridge that climbs above the creek and the springs.

The Old Line was eventually replaced by the

“Short Line,” the PSE (Puget Sound Electric Railway) which was a much more direct route to Tacoma for people in Puyallup. The Short Line electric trolley left Puyallup and crossed the Puyallup River, then went west through Firwood and on to a point west of Fife called Willow Junction. From there it followed what in later years would be Pacific Highway, US 99, which runs into Tacoma’s Puyallup Ave., then on to downtown Tacoma.

The era of electric trolleys came to an end in the late 1930s. Buses that were more versatile and less expensive to operate rapidly replaced trolleys, not to mention the ever-growing use of private automobiles over roads that were continually being improved.

Wes Perkinson, our archivist, discovered the old trolley photograph at a Bellevue paper show.



Member Pat Drake reminisces her Meeker family connections.

Retired Marine Col. Chuck Meeker often came to visit my folks in Puyallup during Ezra Meeker Days. He and his wife Marge were longtime friends of my parents dating back to 1947 in Hawaii.

The Meekers lived in the Quonset hut next to ours in Barber’s Point Air Station. He was in the Marines and Dad was in the Navy. They were just the nicest neighbors and Chuck took great care making sure his dress whites had no wrinkles for inspection. He walked to work.

He, like my father, served in World War II and the Korean War. Both went through some very tough war times. My sister said Meeker was a survivor of the Bataan Death March during World War II. During the Korean War, Chuck was on the front lines when the Chinese came storming over the border. Their numbers inundated American forces. He said by the grace of God he survived both horrendous experiences. Dad had his own stories of surviving his ship sinking in the North African invasion that made the front page of the *Puyallup Herald*. He was also on the Yorktown in the Pacific battles and participated in the Korean War.

But back to Meeker and Meeker Days. Chuck and his wife drove from their Wyoming ranch to Puyallup to visit my folks and to honor Uncle Ezra. There were many Meeker Day visits.

I met two more Meekers on the wagon train that retraced the 1853 Longmire/Biles route over the Cascade Mountains. One Meeker was in her seventies and returned from Africa (I think) where she was serving in the Peace Corps to participate in the trip. Another Meeker on the trip was injured when one of the wagons overturned. She was back the next day with her leg in a cast—determined to finish the trip that was timed to arrive in Puyallup during Meeker Days. What a family!!

Three generations of my family met Meekers beginning with my grandfather who pulled his racecar up to Ezra’s wagon and advised him to take a car next time back to see the President. This was in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Meeker Days is a special time to honor a special man and his incredible family and, of course, to have fun.

Help Wanted!

Our Society has maintained its vibrancy over the years by attracting members and guests to our monthly general meetings. We have traditionally done this by offering interesting monthly speakers. This has been one of the most important duties of the Vice President. However, our Society currently has a vice president vacancy. Without speakers lined up, general meetings have suffered a very small turnout.

Inviting speaker candidates doesn't have to be solely dependent on a vice president. Any member with an interesting story to share can give a short presentation or offer to be interviewed before the attending membership. We will support any such effort with slides or any other technical help we can offer.

If you would like to speak, have a candidate, or know of an organization or individual that can speak on any subject with an historical or South Hill orientation, please let us know—go to our website southhillhistory.com or email mail@southhillhistory.com.

Are you interested in filling the vice president vacancy? This is your chance to join our board and, with other society officers, determine the direction of our Society. As mentioned above, the main responsibility of the vice president is to make arrangements for quarterly general meeting speakers plus attend monthly board meetings.

It's critical for our Society's continuation that we fill leadership positions. If you have been a member for years—reading the newsletters and attending meetings—now is a good time to get more involved. And, any member can attend a board meeting on the first Tuesday every month. We would love to see you!

**Join us for the
September
General Meeting!**

**Scheduled Speaker
Lyle Schaefer**

September 17, 2019 11:00 A.M.

From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppaben2002@yahoo.com, South Hill Historical Society, Box 73582, 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 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.**

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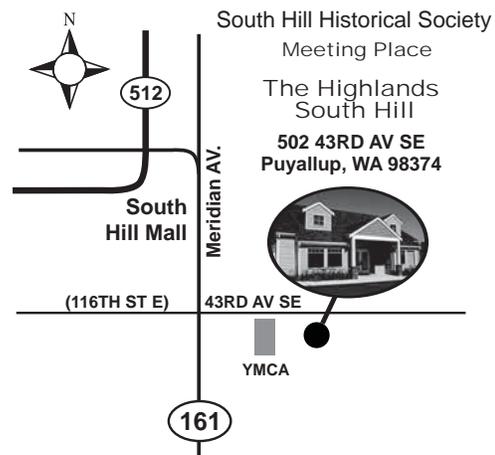
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