



LACEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (LHS)

2021 Summer Newsletter

PO Box 3324 Lacey, Wash. 98509-3324
Lacey.hist@gmail.com

'To be a voice for the early citizens of Lacey, and to be their stewards protecting the historical heritage they have given us'

Lacey Historical Society **2021 Annual Meeting**

The 2021 Annual Meeting has been tentatively scheduled for September 30, 2021, at the Lacey Community Center.

Since the covid virus is still with us, it's hard to predict if we will be able to meet in person. But things have been looking up recently, so there's a good chance.

We have yet to choose a theme. Details will be in our next newsletter.

In the meantime, please consider sending in your memories of Lacey's past to share with other LHS members, and the community at large who read our newsletters.

Best to all of you from your LHS board of directors.

2021 Officers & Trustees

Board of Directors

Lanny Weaver,
President

Robert Krier, Vice-
President

Sue Goff,
Treasurer

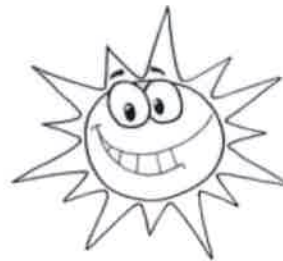
Susan Hartman,
Secretary

Trustees

Shirley Dzedzic

Amber Raney

Mike Smith



shutterstock - 60802480

The Lavender Farm: Memories of Shirley Cronk

“Mr. Wycoff was a well-educated Agronomist, always cross-breeding his agricultural finds. If the Yelm Highway did not exist, my parents 200 acres would be touching his acreage. From Ruddell Road, travel south on Yelm Highway (a graveled road in my time), then turn left toward the bridge. Our property was on the left, his to the right. His house and processing plant was at the far end of the lane, now bordering the golf course. To the right was an old abandoned schoolhouse that eventually became a rental, or more likely a haven for a family, living through this debilitating time called the Great Depression of 1929. To the west of the school was Mrs. Maggie Calhoun Chambers, one of the 4 Chambers girls whose father was Andrew Jackson Chambers, long deceased by this time. When I was in my very early teens, she decided to spend more time in Olympia than in Seattle where her son was a doctor. During the months when Maggie stayed in her house, I occupied one of her bedrooms because she was uneasy about the tramps that came by frequently. She told me so much history about the Indians using the back of our farm to attack the nearby fort. When I rode my horse through fields, there were arrow heads visible, but many more when Dad plowed. As a kid, I just didn't pay a moment's notice and tossed the arrowheads!

The Wycoffs were occupying their same property previously described when we arrived in December of 1931. Instead of taking a hand-out from the government, my father picked weeds from Mr. Wycoff's lavender field for 50 cents a day, on his hands and knees. That's what our family lived on that first year!

I always felt that he was quite a wealthy person. He built all his equipment, including a cutter he pulled behind his tractor. I don't recall much movement at their farm after the cutting, so it is entirely possible that his cutter also included pick-up of the lavender, like a combine. What I do remember is the strong, almost putrid smell that came over the countryside!!!

Behind his house, but still attached, was a large room with vats where he processed the lavender heads into very valuable oil. We would seem standing at the corner of Yelm Highway, waiting for the U.S. Postal carrier, package of bottled oil in hand. Then later we would see him again, on the corner, waiting for the postal carrier to bring him his annual wages. I believe he sold his oils to England, as I'm pretty sure he was of English descent. He was still there when my dad passed in 1963. It is more likely that his older age prevented him from growing lavender any longer, so he just left the field to fade away. Mr. Wycoff was always busy with his lavender business throughout the depression.



Editor's Note: An article on the Lavender Farm will also appear in the next issue of the Thurston County Historical Journal. All Society members are eligible to receive copies of the journal, which is available at the LHS annual meeting.

Memory: Jack Homann—The Old Lacey Grand Stand

I was in the sixth grade at the old Lacey School. I was standing about 200 yards from the old grandstand. It looked like it was on fire! There was smoke coming from under it. Who walks up to me but Mr. Ted McArthur (the principal) from under it. "Jack, you run down there and come back and tell me who is under the grandstand." "Oh boy."

I go down there.....open the door and there stands six or eight eighth gradersin there with jeans and logger boots. They all told me they would the s....out of me if I told McArthur. I went back to Ted. He said, "Don't worry!.....I will take care of it."

I was thinking the next morning would be my last day on earth! But to my surprise when I walked down the hall, they parted like the Red Sea! I don't know what he told them, but it worked. I think he told them he would light up their butts! I did not have a problem the rest of the year.



*When peace is needed, I go in memory to this time when child and natural world were one.
Where are these places of peace for children today?*

Long Lake -Thurston County, Washington (1942) by Eugenia Lee Puckett

I am rowing close to the shore as dimpled rings of water swirl away beside the wake of the little boat. Oarlocks creak. Water cascades from the oars. Wet, weedy odors rise around me.

The sun is high in a blue sky dotted with tiny white clouds. Mt. Rainier stands snowy and cloud-capped in the east. Evergreen forest encircles the lake and edges down to join alders and reeds at the gravelly shore. All are reflected in the clear green water. Long Lake is quiet this Sunday noon *in the gravelly shore*. All are reflected in the clear green water. Long Lake is quiet this Sunday noon *in July*. No sounds yet from the resorts. Docks and boat houses lie waiting. A car rattles across the wooden bridge to Holmes Island and disappears dustily up the small hill. From one of the summer cabins the aroma of a pot roast wafts. I hear a banjo and a guitar.

I am in good company. A bullfrog groans. A fish jumps. Blue dragonflies shimmer over lily pads while water striders dent and skim the water's surface. A green heron, motionless on an overhanging snag, waits for the minnow swimming below. Hawks rise on thermals. Swallows swoop and dart.

On the shore among cattails where singing redwings perch and sway, a man in a Panama hat fishes for bass, his bamboo pole bending under the weight of his catch. I row along beside him. He pinches the hand-rolled cigarette from his lips and smiles. "Hello, Sister." I smile back and wave. "Hello Daddy."

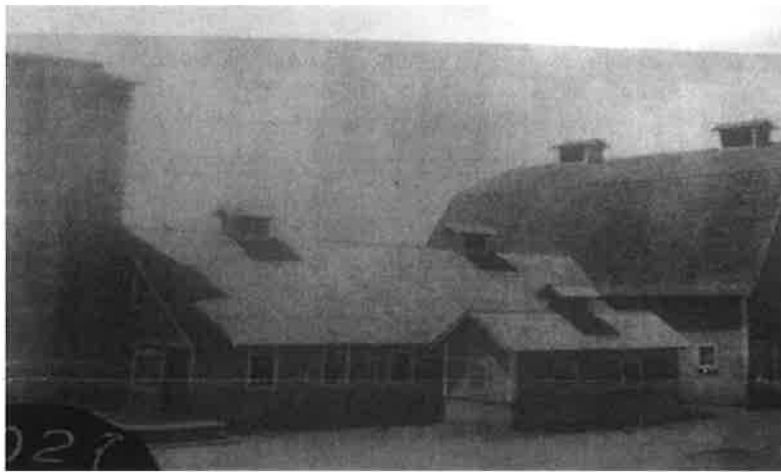
A quick breeze wrinkles the lake, rocking the boat, erasing the clear reflections. Then all is calm again. Whistling peacefully, I row toward home."

Memory: Cecil O'Neill

By Amy Turner

I remember Cecil O'Neill, wife Myrtle and daughter, Beverly. Strangely I remember their telephone number from the early 40s and maybe late 30s (35sF12). Myrtle took care of me while my mother had surgery and was very ill. I remember the huge noon meals that Myrtle would prepare for the help coming to cut and bale hay for their cows. The fields were rolling hills.

The O'Neills were active in Grange and other organizations and as I grew older can remember doing my homework in the basement of the old Chambers Prairie Grand around the pot-bellied wood stove in the basement while they (my parents belonged) had their meeting upstairs.



Editor's Note: Thurston County Assessor photograph

Beverly and my sister Elaine and I were riding in a horse drawn wagon and we decorated it with scotch broom and a photographer came by from the PI or the Seattle Times and took our picture!

I do recall going to the barns, the milk house when the milk would be run through a machine before the milk truck came to pick up the separated cream, milk for market. I was told to never go close to the bull pen and did not! The barn was huge and kept clean with troughs washed down with hoses. The manure smell of course.

The Smiths lived close enough to the sourest of the O'Neills, up the hill with the winding driveway coming from now Marvin Road (a dirt road then).

The O'Neills farm was along Marvin Road at Pacific Avenue. On the property now are the Mountain-Aire Park and Three Oaks subdivisions.

Sad News

The Lacey Historical Society has lost two valued members in the last year.

Norma Husk died August 30, 2020. Norma became involved in the Society with her husband, Dick, who served on the Board of Trustees as chairman of the Gallagher House and Financial Committees. Norma spent many hours working with the Garden Committee. Her devotion to Lacey history included donating several items to the Lacey Museum. Her obituary appeared in the September 13, 2020, issue of *The Olympian*. She asked that any memorial donations be made to the Lacey Historical Society.

Mervin Smith died March 13, 2021. Merv's ancestors, Frank Albert and Louise McIntyre Smith, came to Washington from England in the 1880s. They settled in the Marvin Road area of Lacey in 1901. Mike Smith, Mervin's son still lives on the property. Nora Brown, Merv's sister was a fixture on the Lacey Historical Society board for a long time. Her daughter, Diane Porter served on the board until recently and her cousin, Mike Smith, is now a member of the board as well.

But at the Society's annual meetings it was Merv who took center stage at the Smith table. His huge smile and obvious delight to be seated with his family brightened the room. His obituary appeared in the March 21, 2021 issue of *The Olympian*.

