



LACEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (LHS)

Newsletter—1st Edition, 2023

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'

The Importance of Memories: By Lanny Weaver

One of the greatest gifts the Lacey Historical Society can give to the City of Lacey are the memories of the "old" days contributed by our membership. I arrived in Lacey in 1986, which to me is not that long ago, and yet I carry the memories of what the area was like then, a time before any of the current members of the Lacey Historical Commission had arrived.

I'd like to share some of the information contained in the oral history conducted by Andrea Goff and me in 1995. We talked with Albert Jensen who lived on the north side of Lacey Street.

In response to a question about his grandfather's memories, Albert said, "He said there was a lot of logging going on around this area. The race track was going pretty good when he first came out here. It was for trotters...it was going strong, but not as good as strong as it did earlier in the century. We used to haul fertilizer from there to people around town just to make a few dollars.

They lived on Ulery Street; we always had one cow and one horse. The horse was used to plow gardens and to clean everybody's driveways. They also had one and two pigs at a time. We butchered the meat because we didn't have refrigeration. They also had chickens. We had a farm. Actually we always had a big garden and always had fruit trees and planted a lot of potatoes and vegetables. We never had to go to the store for hardly anything."



2023 Officers & Trustees **Board of Directors**

Lanny Weaver,
President

Amber Raney,
Acting Vice-
President

Tracy Rebstock,
Acting
Treasurer

Susan Hartman,
Secretary

Mike Smith,
Trustee

Please consider sending in your memories to share with everyone interested in this historical region. You can mail them to PO Box 3324, Lacey, Wa. 98509-3324, or email them to lacey.hist@gmail.com

Memories of South Sound Mall in Lacey

By Susan E. Hartman

In the 1960's and 1970's, South Sound Mall was a great place to visit. It was not only the local shopping mall but several special events were held there each year. During the fall and winter months, my mom, Mavis Hartman and I would take the city bus from Olympia out to visit the antique and collectible shows which were held up and down the inside of the mall. We could spend hours just wandering around deciding what we wanted to buy. At the end of these 'exciting searches' we'd head over to the old Woolworth's Dept. Store where mom would treat me to one of there *real ice cream* chocolate milk shakes.

In the spring when all the schools in Tumwater, Olympia and Lacey let out for spring break, the mall would hold what all the local kids excitedly looked forward to each year, the spring break carnival which was held out in the front parking lot of the mall. We'd all meet there to ride the huge ferris wheel, and visit the haunted house, as well as play the mechanical horse races, ride the merry-go-round, and win stuffed animals at the ring toss. We'd also eat lots of corn-on-the-cob, cotton candy, and juicy corn dogs, and wait for dusk when all the bright, sparkly carnival lights would explode across the fairgrounds.

Each year, my brothers, Stewart and Wayne Hartman were especially excited when we all headed out to the mall to see the local fire engines on display. They'd spend hours running up and down the parking lot with my dad Ken 'Curly' Hartman who always asked the firemen who were manning the trucks if the boys could climb up on the ladders that ran down the back ends of the fire engines. During those same shows, local antique car owners would set up displays to share with all the local car enthusiasts.



The big finale of the year was when Christmas Island, which originated at Capitol Lake in downtown Olympia, was set up in the malls back parking lot behind the Sears department store. Year after year, my dad would drive us out during the Christmas holiday where we'd slowly circle around all the displays in our car excitedly pointing out Santa's castle and his elves, his reindeer waiting to pull his sled on Christmas eve, and huge snow scenes covered with hundreds of twinkly Christmas lights. To this day, it's still one of my all-time favorite memories.

Shirley Dziedzic's Legacy to Lacey

Lacey School Triptych at Safeway

A major Lacey Historical Society project was the preservation of the legacy of the Lacey Grade School after Safeway purchased the property. Under Shirley's leadership the Society was able to preserve the icons from the school in three ways.

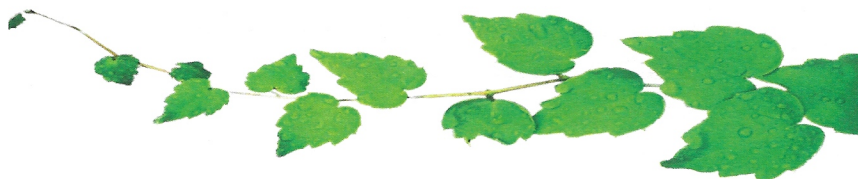
(1) Bricks from the building were used to construct the monuments at the head of Lacey & Ulery Streets proclaiming the Lacey Historic Neighborhood. (2) The emblem at the center court from the grade school gym is preserved at the North Thurston School District Maintenance Facility (305 College St. NE) and, (3) The school bell is on display at the Lacey Museum. Safeway also cooperated by recording the sound of the bell and playing it every noon over the Safeway parking lot.

The most public tribute to the grade school is on the façade of the store facing Carpenter Road where there are three arches that commemorate its origins as a one-room school house in 1892, and its expansion to accommodate the growth in the community until a new grade school was required in 1967.

Memorial Garden 829 Lacey Street

A major project that Shirley spearheaded as President was the development of a memorial garden of trees and shrubs on the city grounds belonging to the Lacey Museum and the Lacey Women's Club. The Society orchestrated the overall project, and the city took responsibility for the landscaping of the plants on their property. The concept was to represent the entire community of Lacey not just the pioneers, although many of them are included, along with other interested community members and organizations (e.g., the Boys Scouts and Fire Dept). Shirley organized many meetings at the Lacey Museum to implement the concept, including advertising the idea, identifying who would be recognized by each plant or tree, and recruiting Eagle Scouts and teachers and their students to do the planting. There is a directory of who is memorialized on the Museum grounds, the city has a spreadsheet, and the Society has two albums with photos of each of the 125 people recognized, their role in the community, and the location of the tree planted in their honor

Park bench at Lake Lois dedicated to Gene and Shirley 6020 7th Ave SE, Lacey





In Memory:
Death of Larry Lee

Maureen Lee notified the Society that her husband Larry died February 28, 2022 after a short battle with cancer.

Larry was born May 19, 1941 in Lacey and raised on the Durham Road. At one point the family had to move their house to make way for a portion of I-5.

Larry attended St. Martin's College for one year then joined the United State Air Force, serving for twenty-two years. While stationed in England, he met and married Maureen. They were married for fifty-four years. After leaving the Air Force, he returned to Washington State and spent 20 years working for Labor and Industries.



Article Found by Society member, Marilyn Morrone About Union Mills, where she grew up.

Defense Program Has Increased Population of Old Logging City

A gaunt, weather-beaten building of massive proportions, almost every window broken, gaping holes showing between its shingles, its steps crumbling and decayed stands beside a country road several miles east of Olympia.

That building is the old Union Mills Hotel, an 80-room hostelry which once served as home for part of the hundreds of men who worked in the big lumber and shingle mill of the Union Lumber Company, later the Union Lumber and Shingle Company.

Within its walls are stored many of the paraphernalia of the hotel and the mill office. Rusty bedsteads are visible through the windows. In the office section old ledgers, rubber stamps, an adding machine which still runs, a well of dried ink and innumerable other articles give mute evidence of the activity which once was there, but is no more.

Was Once Busy Building

Once the big building contained a store, a billiard room and a kitchen and dining room, and all did a rushing business.

The mill was built in 1910 and operated until September, 1925. The planers ran until May, 1926, and then their work, too, was done. A few years later the plant was dismantled. In the time of its operation its owners logged the area surrounding St. Martin's College, vast tracts in the Yelm district, the Hogum Bay section, and part of Hannaford Valley in Lewis County.

New Life In Old town

Two rows of houses adjoining the hotel quartered family men among the mill workers. Many of these stood vacant for years after the operation ceased. But that's all changed today. Everyone of the 17 houses is occupied and Mr. & Mrs. John Mesplay, who look after the property for the owners, have a waiting list of applicants for tenancy.

The national defense program is the reason. Thurston County's swiftly expanding population has to be housed somewhere and the little Union Mills colony houses 17 families, in addition to the Mesplays.

Demand Has Increased

Mrs. Mesplay said all of the houses have been occupied at various times since the mill shut down, but never before has there been such demand for them as now.

It's not a bad set-up for the tenants. The owner, Mrs. Susie Chatten of Kansas City, Missouri, exacts a rental of only \$5 a house with water and electricity thrown in, one of the renters revealed. In these days of high rents, such terms are Godsend to some families.

Mr. Mesplay was chief engineer of the mill when it was closed, and since that time has been the owners representative for all of here (sic) property here, which includes several timber tracts. Mesplay currently is engaged in supervising dismantling of the old Springer Mill in Olympia for the Olympia Supply Company.

There are some who say ghosts steal softly of nights through the cobwebby doorways of the old hotel, snatch spooky naps on the creaky beds and cots, & munch phantom meals off the rough boards of the dining room. But what's a spirit or two against 5 dollar rent?

In Memory of my Mother, Elizabeth Lee Miller
By Bessie Yates

This letter was originally sent to Shirley Dziedzic in 2000. We'd like to share it with you now.

Dear Shirley:

Thank you for sending the information concerning the Storman's Community Rebate Program.

As you know, my mother passed away on June 2, 2000. So many times through the years, she shared with me her many memories of growing up in the Lacey area and the wonderful people that were part of that growing-up process! I think the most vivid memory she shared was riding her horse from the ranch (the Yates' chicken ranch which was, generally, in the area of the present-day Nisqually middle school) to the bay (generally, the route of Marvin Rd. and Hogum Bay Rd.) and not seeing another soul along the way! It's hard to imagine such a memory, now that we watch the present-day growth of the Hawk's Prairie area of Lacey!

In your latest LHS note to me, you spoke of planting and dedicating ornamental shrubs to honor former Lacey residents. My mother always loved her rhododendron bushes which surround our home here at Black Lake. I would enjoy contributing the cost of a plant to honor HER memory. Please let me know what I have to do to make that happen.

In the meantime, I'll be sending you a check to pay for the dues to LHS in order that I can keep a connection with the Society.

Thanks again for your note.

Sincerely,

Eric Lee
4045-80 49th Ave. SW
Olympia, WA 98512-6642



A Look Back at the 1984 Olympic Marathon Trials

It's been a while, so it wouldn't be a surprise that most people don't remember that the 1984 Olympic Marathon Trials were in the Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater area, one-third of which occurred within the city limits of Lacey. Over 4000 local residents volunteered as ABC Sports covered the event for an international audience. The Olympic Trials Legacy Committee made up of local people noted that Joan Benoit, winner of the first Women's Olympic Marathon, had a heart warning and memorable time here. She won the first ever US Women's Olympic Trial and then went onto win the Gold Medal in the 1984 Olympics held in Los Angeles.



The Legacy Committee invited the Lacey Historical Society to become a co-sponsor in hosting the return of Joan Benoit-Samuels to our area in 1996. In a letter to Shirley Dziedzic, the Committee noted that "The women who ran in this first women's marathon trials were housed at St. Martin's College and they spent a lot of time enjoying the beauty and friendliness of our area. We are a community who works hard to make special things happen - it is only right that Joan should receive her welcome back to the community at a special dinner in our own Lacey!! The events scheduled for May 5 - 6 included a Family Fun, a Carbo dinner with Joan Benoit and an Olympic Torch lighting on the Washington State Capitol Campus.