

LACEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PO Box 3324 Lacey, WA 98509-3324

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

2024 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICERS

Jon Halvorson
President

Cynthia Pratt
Vice President

Kendra Hensley
Treasurer

Denise Keegan
Tim McGuire
Co-Secretaries

TRUSTEES

John Dziedzic

Larry Ganders

Cheryl Malkmus

Peggy McHugo

Monte Pascual

John Turner

Margie Wyllie
Newsletter Editor

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Lanny Weaver

TIME TO BECOME A MEMBER FOR 2025!

Over the past year, your Board of Trustees has worked hard to re-invigorate the society, including the following accomplishments, which we hope will help persuade you to renew your membership for 2025:

The newsletter now includes much more content than in prior years and, for the first time in over 25 years, we published three editions during a single calendar year.

We have begun planning to commission a permanent tribute to honor Lacey's first physician, DR. WILLIAM A. EHLERS (see page 11).

LHS successfully sponsored PAUL WEBB as Lacey's Historian of the Year. And we have received the support of the Historical Commission to recognize SELMA & BUD POPKES, developers of some of Lacey's earliest residential neighborhoods.

The society has expanded our outreach to younger, more social media-savvy users by reviving our Facebook presence.

Through a weekly Facebook posting we're calling "Memorial Monday," we are recalling the stories of over a hundred local residents who have made significant contributions to Lacey's progress. We have also committed to resurrect "THE REMEMBRANCE PLACE," the garden of dedicated plantings honoring these historic figures.

Our website (LaceyHistoricalSociety.com) contains copies of all our past newsletters along with board meeting minutes and other organizational information.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING SUMMARY

The Society held its annual membership meeting at the Lacey Community Center on September 5, 2024, electing its officers for 2025: JON HALVORSON, President; CYNTHIA PRATT, Vice-President; KENDRA HENSLEY, Treasurer, and JOHN DZIEDZIC, Secretary. In addition, Halvorson, Pratt, LARRY GANDERS, JOHN TURNER, and MARGIE WYLLIE were re-elected to two-year terms on the Board of Trustees, while Dziejdzic and PAUL WEBB were elected to fill unexpired one-year positions.

The theme of the meeting was “The Past and Future of the South Sound Center,” and featured JOHN DONALDSON, the Center’s original Marketing Director, and RICK WALK, Lacey’s current City Manager.



Groundbreaking for the Sears store at South Sound Center. Bob Blume is second from the right.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

ALLYDENA “AL” BAKER

**By Margie (Worden) Wyllie,
with help from Al’s autobiography: “Reminiscing”**

Allydena Baker didn’t hold public office or invent some useful object. On paper, she may just seem ordinary, so in this article, we’ll call her “Al” like everyone did. But ordinary she was not. Al was very extraordinary to everyone who knew her. I am one of those lucky ones that knew her for nearly 70 years, and admired her until the day she passed.

Al’s family was unique, as they were not transplanted from somewhere else. Six generations of her family were born in Thurston County: her grandmother was born at Grand Mound and her mother was born at Delphi. Al’s three children (Joan Carol Baker Loder, Janice Lynne Baker Hennell, and Keith William Baker) were born in Olympia, as were four grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren.

Allydena McCash Baker was delivered on November 13, 1919 by her grandmother at the family home near Rochester (Michigan Hill). She had four older sisters (Ada, Alma, Arletta, and Edna) and a younger brother, Charles. Her dad had always wanted a son, and until his arrival, he had done his best to make little Allydena into that son by teaching her to fish, build a raft, shoot a rifle, and do the “men’s work” of outside chores with the animals - - no doubt that is when she went from Allydena to Al.

Al’s life growing up was simple, but hard. Unfortunately, the Baker family lost Arletta and Alma, because at the time, there was little medical care available, and no one had yet heard of “pre-natal-care.” It is a wonder that Al, and others, grew up in large families back then.

Al’s early life was during the days of outhouses and the horse and buggy. I cannot imagine her excitement as she witnessed monumental events like the first space shuttle or amazing medical advances like heart transplants. She lived long enough, like most of us, to take for granted microwaves, cell phones, and computers (although I’m not sure any of us will ever get used to the idea of an electric car driving itself).

Part of the farm was in stumps, but her dad carefully blasted them out with dynamite. You have probably heard of “Sewing Bees” and “Quilting Bees,” but have you heard of a “Logging Bee?” The neighbors would come together with their horses, axes, shovels, and other implements to help get the wood into piles to burn. After the cleanup, the land was ready for planting fruit and vegetable crops. And there was always pasture land for the farm animals. They, like most families during that time, raised everything they needed, and then some. Her dad was very resourceful and kept up with the doings at the Agricultural College in Pullman. Oh, and Al did not escape the “girl” chores inside.

Life for little Al was good, being born the year after World War I ended, although as mentioned earlier, life was not easy. Al knew much more than arduous work, and had a life full of love, family, friends, music, dancing, and even a few dollars in the bank. Then the crash of '29 hit, and the Great Depression reared its ugly head. Her mother and father had good foresight and pulled all their hard-earned money out of the bank just before it closed. Her dad had a \$1000 life insurance policy he refused to cash in, and because of that, he was not eligible to be employed to build public roads and buildings by the Works Progress Administration, as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal in 1941. Instead, Al's dad supported his family with their land.

When her dad became extremely ill, and spent weeks in a Centralia hospital, her mother moved to Centralia with the five girls to live with Al's Uncle Claud. Ironically that was when her dad finally got the son that he so wanted

After graduating from high school, Al earned money picking berries and working in the “Lynes” nursing home, next to Priest Point Park, which was variously described as a religious retreat or house of ill repute, and where bootlegged whiskey got unloaded during Prohibition. Later, she worked in several restaurants, including the old Triple XXX (now the Martin Way Diner).

Her life was not all work. She loved to dance and did so whenever she could. If there was no place in Olympia to dance, you could find her at a speak-easy in Tacoma or a Grange hall. In the fall of 1940, she met Bill, a friend of one of her friends at one such dance. She danced every dance with Bill and thereafter never dated anyone else.



Al & Bill were married on July 26, 1941 at “Doc” & Gladys Stanfield’s Hicks Lake home.

Bill didn't want his wife to work outside the home, and in time she became very busy with their three children: Joan, Janice, and Keith, becoming involved with Girl Scouts, Children's Orthopedic Guild, the [Lacey] Women's Club, the Lacey Historical Society, and various school functions, including the role of "room mother" in her children's classes at Lacey Grade School, just across the street where the Safeway on Carpenter Road is now. She also actively supported her son, Keith, a state championship wrestler.

In 1948, Bill and several other men in the area formed the "Elephant Club" and helped establish a local volunteer fire department. The men and women conducted a variety of fundraisers (dinners, raffles, Bingo parties, bake sales, etc.) until, at last, they had enough to buy "Old Betsy," a tanker truck that still participates in local parades. Then, seeing the need to buy a resuscitator, even though Bill voted against it, the group raised enough to buy that, too.

Ironically, Bill, at only 40 years of age, was the first person to need that new resuscitator. The night of Bill's heart attack, Al called for help and it came immediately, in the form of Tommy Finnegan, Dick Webb, Dick Fuller, and the Turner twins. Bill was rushed by ambulance to St. Peter's Hospital. He had had a bad heart for years, which was the reason he was never allowed to enlist in the military, although he was an electrician at Fort Lewis his entire career. Eventually, on the advice of his doctor, Al Homann's brother, Bill underwent successful heart surgery in Portland, and later had a valve replacement procedure, but ultimately, in time, passed April 11, 1981.

It was very hard on Al to lose the love of her life, but she knew she had had a lot to be grateful for and lived the remainder of her life with purpose. She continued to be an active, positive role model and was always one to have a lot of fun. Al passed on November 1, 2017.

GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN will appear as a regular column in future editions of this newsletter, and will include these former Lacey Historical Society Trustees who have passed away in the last 2 years: KEN BALSLEY (February 2023); ROBERT KRIER (April 2023); WILLIAM "BILL" BUSH (December 2023); and ROBERT SOUTHWICK (July 2024).

ENGLEHART TURKEY FARM

By Margie (Worden) Wyllie

Since we are in the festive holiday season, which is typically associated with turkey dinners, I thought it was time to familiarize you with the Englehart turkey farm. Back in the 1930s, people would come from all over the area to get their turkeys, in part because the Englehart turkey farm offered more choices than Safeway or QFC. You had your choice of turkeys that were alive, dressed, oven-ready (which is a variety that is what people are most familiar today) or “New York style” (which was a processed turkey, but with the feathers, head, feet, and innards included).

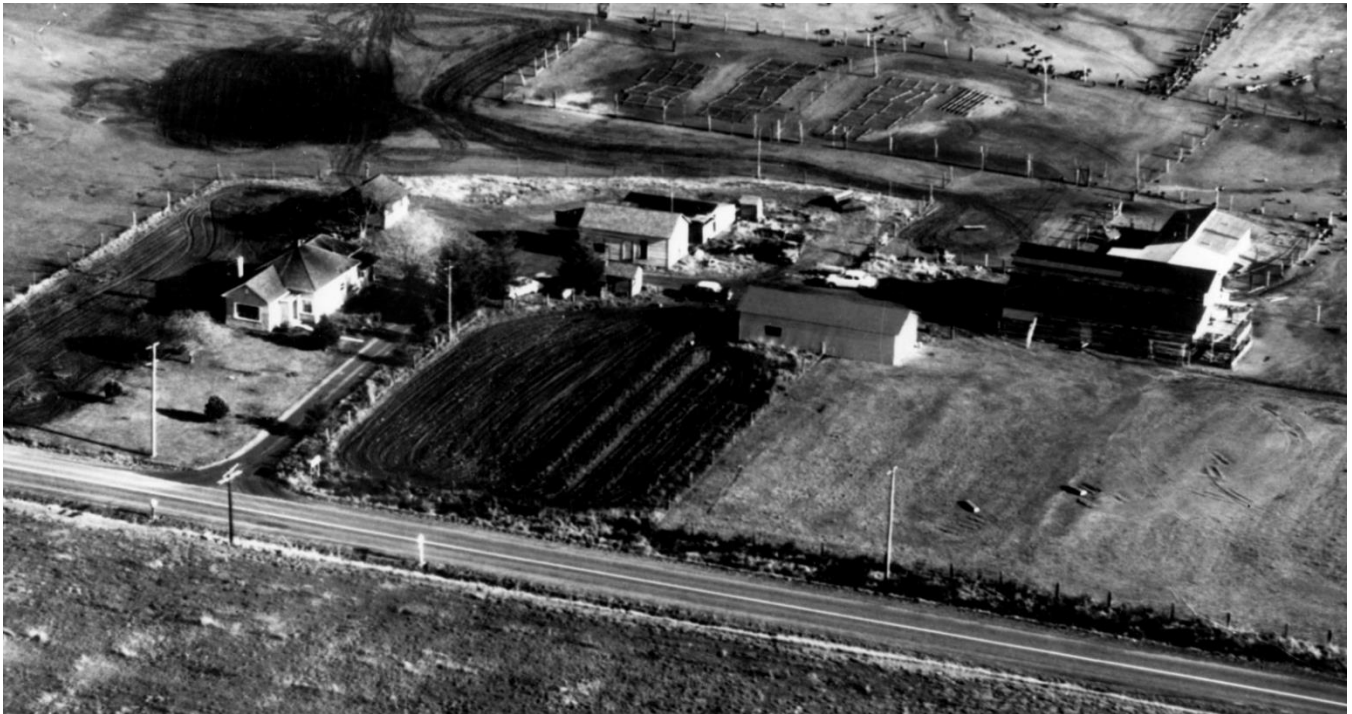


The farm was owned by Archie and Violet Englehart. They had two daughters: Dorothy and Shirley.

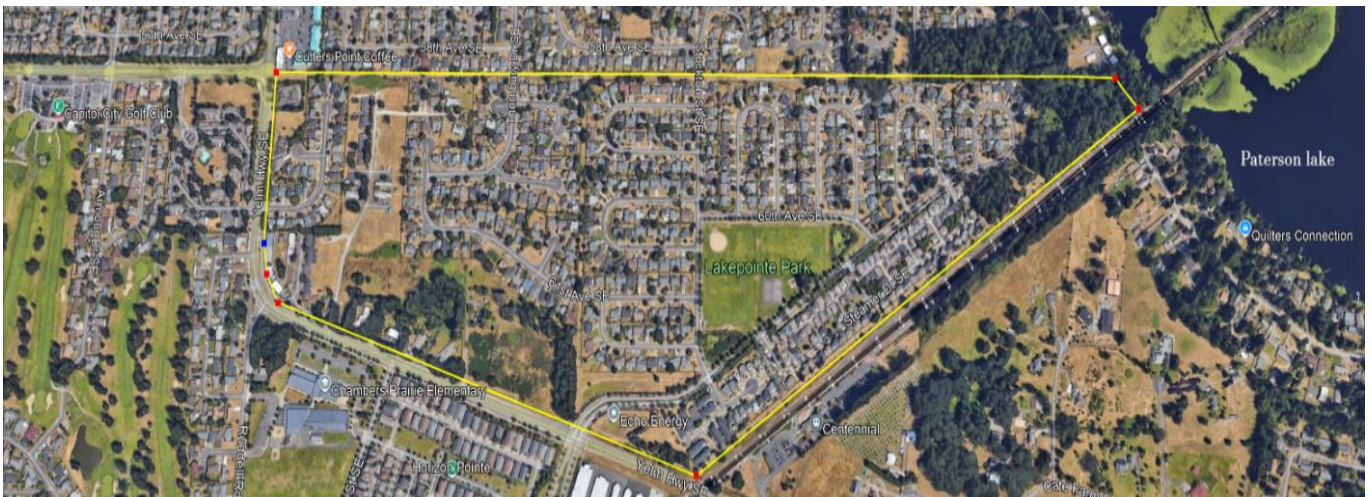
In the picture on the right, Violet is on the far left, holding the hands of her grandson, Steve. Dorothy (Mitchell) is in the middle, with her daughter Karen (Mitchell). On the far right is Shirley (Ackleson / Cronk), Steve’s mother, and she is holding her younger son, Dave (Ackleson) . Shirley still lives in Lacey, and her son, Dave is a friend of mine.

As both Shirley and Dave lived on the farm, it is their memories of what it was like to own and operate a turkey farm that supplied the basis for this story.





The turkey farm was located seven miles southwest of Olympia on the north side of the Yelm Highway, between Ruddell Road and the Amtrak railroad tracks.



At one time, the Engleharts raised not only turkeys, but also cows and other animals on their 160-acre farm.



Archie and Violet Englehart



Dave Ackleson among the turkeys

Archie and Violet raised their turkeys from chicks. The chicks were hatched under brooder hoods with lights surrounded by a cardboard fence to keep them contained. Archie would tie the brooder hoods to the ceiling with ropes on pulleys, which could be raised and lowered so he could check for any sick or injured birds. After they grew he would take them out of the brooder and put them in a larger indoor pen until they were old enough to be outside. Then Archie would transfer them to the larger fields.

Every evening, the birds would be herded into a roosting shed with racks of wooden poles so the birds could be protected for the night. The racks were lit from overhead, and the shed faced Archie and Violet's bedroom, one hundred yards away. Archie always kept a gun hand in case a coyote or fox tried to get to the birds.

Every Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Engleharts would hire local men and women to help harvest the birds. He had a designated "killing area" with an electric knife, and a tumbler to defeather the birds. The gizzards were stored in old washing machine tubs with very cold water. The water helped separate the gizzards from the skin, which was otherwise a very hard job. The system also included a vacuum station to remove excess air from the bags of processed turkeys. The bagged turkeys were then put in a refrigerator located in another small building, where people would come to select their fresh turkey. Mrs. Englehart managed the sales end of the process, which was very busy during the holiday season.

Archie passed away in 1963, while feeding his animals. Violet then went to live with her daughter, Shirley, and her grandsons, until she passed away in 1972.

HE MADE HOUSE CALLS

The Lacey Historical Society Board of Trustees has appointed a special sub-committee to develop a plan to honor Lacey's first doctor, WILLIAM A. EHLERS.

The committee is composed of JOHN DZIEDZIC, NANCY (Cunningham) MILLER, JOHN TURNER, PAUL WEBB, and MARGIE (Worden) WYLLIE.

Dr. Ehlers served the residents of the Lacey area for 45 years, from 1953 through 1998. He was also the President of the medical staff of Providence St. Peter's Hospital. He epitomized the classic country doctor and would routinely take the time to check on his patients at their homes.

Dr. Ehlers passed away in 2012 and is buried with his wife, Gail, at Woodlawn Cemetery.



Preliminary sketch of statue honoring Dr. Ehlers

THANK YOU, PEGGY McHUGO

The Board of Trustees wishes to acknowledge the many contributions of PEGGY (Witte) McHUGO, who, earlier this year, announced her intention to step down from the Board at the end of 2024. When she volunteered to step forward and serve as a Trustee last year, she said she was doing so in honor of her late husband, Dennis, who was also an LHS Trustee. PAUL WEBB has been elected to fill the remaining year of Peggy's term. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

Lacey Historical Society
PO Box 3324
Lacey, WA 98509-3324

Use this form to become a member of the Lacey Historical Society for 2025

E-mail: Lacey.Hist.Society@gmail.com

The Lacey Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Dues & donations are both tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Please attach your check for your 2025 DUES: \$ 10.00

You can now also join or
renew your membership at: **(Optional Donation: \$_____)**
LaceyHistoricalSociety.com

Total \$_____

Check here [], if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by e-mail.