

HISTORY OF BURLINGTON

April 1937

HISTORY OF BURLINGTON

The material for this history was collected and assembled by members of the United States history classes and sociology class.

Students in the English department checked the work for errors in grammar, spelling, punctuations, and construction.

Several copies of the history were typed by typing classes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	Early Landmarks..... Beulah Terwilliger	1
II	Burlington Early History and Pioneers..... Neil Munro	5
III	The History of our Schools..... Jacqueline Griffith	19
IV	History of the Churches..... Lenore Rasmussen	22
V	City Government..... Don Daniels	25
VI	Clubs and Lodges..... Fanny Ormiston	28
VII	Transportation..... Allan Galbraith	37
VIII	Farming..... Lucille Hansen	43
IX	Economic Progress..... Edna Pulver	48
X	Business Survey..... Sociology Class	54

pp 43-47
missing

EARLY LAND MARKS

The first dwelling house was located where W. H. North now lives. It was designed and constructed by one of the earliest pioneers, Abraham Carl. David Kock was architect and builder.

The first shingle mill was located where the cannery now stands.

The town hall was located where William Feathers now lives on Orange Street.

The first school was held in the fall of 1891 in the old town hall. This hall now stands on the northwestern corner of Anacortes and Fairhaven avenues. The teacher was Miss Clara Carl, now Mrs. Clara Morrison of Seattle.

The Methodist church was built in 1891.

The first streets were Orange and Anacortes. At the time the streets were opened, Anacortes and Orange streets were planked. They were the main business streets.

The first school building was located in back of the Roosevelt Grade school. It was built by an old pioneer, David Kock.

A shingle mill stood where the Massar lumber yard stands on Fairhaven Avenue. The first power that generated the lighting system of this town was furnished from this mill.

The first store stood on the Northeastern side of Anacortes and Washington, now vacated. The building was built by Walter Burton, later bought by T. G. Wilson, who, together with the Cressey brothers, had the contract of clearing the townsight. In this building all the business of the town was conducted. The first post office was in this store, with T. G. Wilson postmaster and George G. Cressey Deputy. The first railroad ticket office was also in there. All city court proceedings were held in this building.

The first saloon stood about thirty feet north of the store and post office.

The first Great Northern depot was just a small building of rough boards standing directly just west of where our present structure now stands. Before the construction of our new and commodious depot, one of lesser proportions was located at the intersection of the main line of the Great Northern and the Anacortes-Hamilton branch. This depot was consumed by fire in the early part of the present century.

The first drugstore was on the corner of Anacortes and Orange street, also, the first meat market.

Emerson Hammer's store was the second to locate in Burlington. It stood on the southern corner of Anacortes and Orange streets, where now stands the residence of Dr. Jackson.

Directly west of the drugstore, F. W. Weiderman established a general merchandise store. This completed all the houses on Anacortes and Orange streets, which at that time were intended to be the main business center of the town until Tom Wilson and his associates conceived the idea of the town to Fairhaven Avenue.

At about that time the Great Northern built its new depot at the intersection of the two railroads.

Just east of the depot at the new intersection, Wilson and Shaughnessy erected a hotel and saloon, fronting on the depot platform. This platform extended about four hundred feet east and west along the Anacortes-Hamilton branch of the railroad; and another platform of equal length extended along the main line of Seattle to Vancouver.

Here changes the topography of Burlington. The business section of the town commenced to move from the old quarters to the northwestern part of Fairhaven.

First came a confectionery; then followed the post office adjoining the confectionery, also fronting on the platform.

Across the street from the Wilson-Shaughnessy hotel, north where now stands the Knutzen brothers store, was built a hotel known as the William's House.

The first drugstore was moved from the corner of Anacortes and Orange streets to just west of the Knutzen Mercantile store. It was first used as a saloon by Peter Bergman. This property was then purchased by William Ebeling, who built the Sweetshop, now in charge of Duane Small.

*Marie Brighton
Postmaster*

The little mountain standing north of the Burlington Business Center, prior to 1910 was covered with a beautiful stand of virgin timber. About that time it was destroyed by the ruthless logger under the name of Harpst, who built and operated the mill at the foot of the hill known to the Burlington citizens as Burlington Heights.

SOME EARLY HISTORY AND PIONEERS OF BURLINGTON

In the fall of 1882, John P. Millett and William McKay entered the dense forest of spruce, cedar, fir, and other timber, erected a shack and made ready for the establishment of a logging camp on the ground upon which now stands the city of Burlington.

From a viewpoint, midway between the town of today and the little shack of J. P. Millett in 1882, one gains an interesting glimpse of the beginnings of Burlington as it started toward its seat in the sisterhood of Skagit county communities. Such a viewpoint was enjoyed by the editor of the Skagit News, when in the issue of his papers of July 27, 1891, he recorded his visit to Burlington in the following language:

"After walking over town you find a number of fine new buildings, some completed, and others under construction. One of the most notable buildings, and one which is nearing completion, is a large two story structure; the lower room is to be used as a school room, and the upper story for a hall. The building is being put up by the town, and is to be used for Public schools until a District school could be built.

Arrangements are being made to vote bonds at an early date.

The enrollment of school children in the district is seventy five.

The Methodist church has the foundation laid for quite a large building, which will be a beautiful structure when finished.

A couple of foundations have already been laid near the railroad crossing for warehouses in which grain and farm products will be stored for shipment.

The Sedro Mercantile Co. moved into their two-story building about four weeks ago with a \$10,000 stock of merchandise. The proprietors, Paulson Bros., seem to be doing a very good business.

On Fairhaven Avenue, the Rowley House is located, with A. Rowley as proprietor. It is a fine two-story building which will be fitted up for a billiard hall.

The Burlington House, on Anacortes Avenue is also a two-story building and is run under the management of W. A. Gould. The house seemed to be well patronized. Opposite the Burlington House is located Shaughnessy's Restaurant, with Thomas Shaughnessy as boss of the house.

Next you come to the Pioneer store of T. G. Wilson, the future postmaster of Burlington. Mr. Wilson carries a large stock of general merchandise and is making a specialty of handling Giant and Judson powders. He is doing a very good business. Information has been received from Washington City that the Post Office will be established in a few Days"

Before turning back to the consideration of the first period in the development of Burlington, from a logging camp to it's position at the time the editor made the statement quoted above, it may be well to record a few annotations which will fix in the minds of the reader (as well as acquaint him with the present day Burlington) the buildings and men referred to by the editor. The town company building referred to is now (1891) the Maccabee's Hall, and it stood first on Orange Street.

The Sedro Mercantile Co. store building was erected in 1890 by Joseph Woods & Co. Mr. Shaughnessy was proprietor of a Butcher Shop and Meat Market for several months, and in 1893 he built the World's Fair Saloon and Hotel, now the Great Northern. Mr. Wilson bought out Mr. Burton who established the business just the spring previous to the editor's visit, and Mr. Burton had embarked in the general store business only the year before.

The shack built by John P. Millett, after the establishment of the Millett and McKay Logging camp late in the

fall of 1882, was the first human habitation on the ground where the people of Burlington live. It was located a little south west of the junction points of the railroads of today and in it Mr. Millett and his family lived until late in the eighties. The first timber claims on the site of the present town of Burlington were taken in the year 1883. William McKay held the land which included the Burlington Hill, then called Little Mountain, while across the line where Fairhaven Avenue has since been made was the claim of Larry Gilfoy, in which Mr. Millett's cabin was built and on which the railroad station of today has since grown up.

Looking from Anacortes Avenue across the Gilfoy claims, one could see the land of "Smokey Smith", while in the same direction, with Little Mountain as a viewpoint, one could see the land which formed the Millett timber claim.

There was little done in the way of settlement of the land during the period when timber and logging were the main industries. Isolated facts concerning this period of development have been obtained from an article from Frank Umbarger which appeared in the school bulletin in the issue of March 1903. Mrs. John P. Millett was the first woman to reside in the locality of Burlington. The best of the timber was logged off the town site by Mr. McKay in 1883, but it was not until the closing days of 1890 that he planted the town site, recording his first plat on

the New Year's Day of 1891.

It was in the summer of 1890 that the first railroad train passed through Burlington over the Seattle and Northern Railroad. Though the Great Northern was not surveyed until that year, its through trains were running early in 1891. The first saw mill was erected by T. L. Fox in the winter of 1890 and 1891, and in 1891 Dale and Co. manufactured the first shingles, using a threshing machine engine for power.

It was about this time that the first saloon was opened in the town, Burton & Son established it on Anacortes Avenue in buildings which were in 1896 burned down by fire on Christmas night. The first Post Office at Burlington was established early in the year 1891, with T. G. Wilson as the first Postmaster.

The school district was established May 1, 1891. Miss. Clara Carl was the first teacher.

The advent of the railroad gave a great drive to the settlement of the town of Burlington and vicinity, for it offered transportation for men and merchandise.

Soon after Mr. McKay had platted his logged-off land, George D. McLean, then a resident of Mount Vernon and the Western agent of Roswell Skeel of New York City, purchased fourteen hundred acres of Mr. McKay's property and commenced the foundation of the town site company. J. W. Souls of Mount Vernon secured the interest in the company and Mr. McKay, by the terms of the purchase of his land, retained an interest, but in the course of a short time, all interest was absorbed by Mr. Skeel.

As early as 1893, the inhabitants of Burlington proposed incorporation as a municipality, the movement failed because the community could not muster the required population. The subject of the corporation lay dormant for a number of years and no organized movement was made until June 16, 1902, when Burlington became a fourth class city. The first mayor of the city was F. W. Weideman, and the first city council was composed of Zachariah Warfield, Orson Pease, Bill Hurley, Michael Hougan, and David Koch.

At the time of the incorporation the census showed that ²⁰⁰ 260 persons made up the population. Burlington, today, has about 1650. No municipal works have as yet been undertaken by the town, yet much progress in the way of street grading and other improvements have been made. A stone crusher has been purchased at the cost of \$500 and is in operation every day preparing rock for Maccadamizing the principal streets of the town.

The officers of the town in ^{after 1904} 1890 were: Mayor L. J. Howe; Treasurer; A. E. Henry; Clerk, D. Bennett; Attorney, George D. Greene; Councilmen, J. B. Koch, G. E. Heathman Sr., W. H. Whitney (Mr. Whitney has the office of city Clerk now), F. Fritch, and John Forst. Police Judge, O. A. Pease; Marshall, V. Tourtillette.

The first depot of the Seattle and Northern, was erected in 1890 and stood at the crossing of Anacortes Avenue. The first building of the Great Northern was built the following

year, and was a mere shack at the Orange Avenue crossing.

One Sunday morning a few years later the people of Burlington awoke to find that they had a new railway station.

The fine structure which had stood at Bellville, two miles north of Burlington and on the line of the Great Northern, track to the Junction of the two railroads of Burlington. The removal of this depot had not been heard about, and the citizens of Burlington were as much surprised as was Samuel Beel, whose land it had been built as a part of right-of-way consideration. This building did duty as a station until it was burned; then the one of today was built.

To turn again to the development of the commercial activity in Burlington, the first business building in the town was a twin structure, already referred to at the southeast corner of Anacortes and Fairhaven avenues. The building was erected in the spring of 1891 and was destroyed by fire in 1892. The Sedro Mercantile Co. established itself in the Joe Woods & Co. building which was later occupied by Emerson Hammer and is now the home of Thomas Collin's saloon. In the same summer, F. W. Weideman opened a hardware store on Orange Street, just west of Anacortes Ave. (You can easily see that the early business section of Burlington was located on Anacortes and Orange Avenues. Since, the town has moved towards the highway).

In 1891, the first meat market in town was opened by John Denke & Bros.

At one time, Orange Str. seemed destined to be the leading business street of Burlington, but it had to give way to Ans-cortes Avenue, which in turn has seen the greatest business activity transferred to Fairhaven Avenue.

The Years of these early business ventures were those of financial activity regarding the destiny of the town on the part of the pioneer merchants. At the close of the year 1891. there were probably not over 300 people in Burlington, but with the coming of the following years, more settlers arrived in the surrounding country, transportation facilities opened up, and business men and farmers alike knew that Burlington had come to stay.

The first important event in 1903, was a serious railroad accident on the railroad bridge across the Skagit river south of Burlington. On January 17, a freight train loaded with shingles from Burlington and surrounding mills was crossing the bridge when the bridge collapsed. The engineer and fireman were killed, but the brakemen Mr. Swank, (Mr. Swank resides on a farm just outside the city limits, east of Burlington today) escaped with but a few broken ribs.

SOME OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

ORSON PEASE: Hotel proprietor, is one of the old settlers of Burlington. He was born in New York in 1810, and he lived at home until he was 26, then he married and moved to Iowa. In 1890 he came to Washington and Burlington. He erected the first dwelling in the town. Burlington was just a logging camp then, and the only building in town was occupied by a saloon. The Great Northern was just clearing its right of way. Mr. Pease was very popular among the citizens of the town, and took part in many of the beginning activities of the city.

ALBERT LUNDIN: One of the successful hotel men of Burlington was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1849. He came to the United States about 1880 and to Skagit County in 1883. In 1889 and several years later, he prospected and mined in Nome and Dawson, Alaska, but soon returned to Burlington. He was a member of the school board of Burlington for a good many years. Mr. Lundin owned half a block of Buildings in town in which his well known Lundin Hotel was located.

OLE JOHNSON: Was born in Norway on April 15, 1858 and he came to the United States in about 1870, later, he came to Washington and made his home in Skagit County, just a little north of Burlington. He married and Mr. and Mrs. Johnson had six children; Minnie, Elmer, Hulda, Orga, Eveline and Axel. Axel Johnson is a very well known man living in Burlington, and at the present is working in the First National Bank of Burlington.

W. O. GREGORY: Was born December 24, 1844, in Portage County, Ohio. He later went to Michigan where he lived until 1883, when he came to Burlington which then consisted of only a few rude shacks, a hotel, a store, and a shed used for a depot. He found work in a saw mill as an engineer, later served as a mail carrier in town, and for four years he carried the mail, at that time was appointed postmaster of Burlington.

WALTER S. BURTON: One of the active business men of Burlington was born in Lapeer County, Michigan, in Oct. 16, 1870. He came to Skagit County in 1883 and first made his home in Mt. Vernon but later came to Burlington. He worked as a logger in the Burlington shingle mill. Mr. Burton erected the first store building in the town of Burlington, in which he operated a general mercantile business and later sold out to Thomas Wilson. Mr. and Mrs. Burton still live in Burlington.

SANDS C. PETTIT: Is one of the successful contractors and builders of Burlington. He was born in Orleans County, New York, on September 21, 1855. At the age of sixteen, young Pettit began to learn the trade of carpentering, working in the summer and going to school in the winter. After graduating from the state Normal School at Lake City, Minnesota, he went to Australia, where he stayed for about a year; he

then came back to San Francisco and about a year and half later he came to Seattle where he lived for a short time. From there he went to La Conner and then to Burlington.

He helped in the Building of many of the dwellings and business houses in Burlington. Pettit still lives in Burlington.

DAVID KOCH: Millwright and carpenter as well as a successful farmer, is one of the pioneers of Burlington. He was born in Stark County, Ohio, March 22, 1835. When he was 21, he selected the trade of millwright and apprenticed himself. When the Civil War broke out he enlisted in Company D of the Twenty-Third Missouri Infantry under Captain Robertson. His first taste of battle was at Shiloh, where he was captured by the Confederates; he was released on parole and exchanged after six months. Young Koch fought bravely at Iron Mountain and at Rawley, his regiment later joined General Sherman's Corps which was participating in the operations around Atlanta and in the famous march to the sea. He returned to Missouri after the war and resumed his trade for 12 years. Then he went to Nebraska where he lived for three years and then came to Washington. When he came to Burlington it was merely a hole in the woods. He bought a few acres near town and built his home, and there he farmed for many years.

THOMAS SHAUGHNESSY: Was born in Tipperary, Ireland, on November 11, 1845. He left home at the age of ten to

find work and support himself. For five years he made his living by doing odd jobs in different parts of his native land. He came to America in 1862 and he lived in many different parts of the United States until 1880. When he came west, he made his headquarters at Seattle. It was about this time that a big "boom" was on at Anacortes and Mr. Shaughnessy went there and lived until 1891 when he took a contract for clearing the timber from the town site of Burlington. There were only three houses in town when he commenced his work. When his work was finished, he decided to quit roaming around and settle down in Burlington. He opened up a meat market which he ran for many years.

JAMES M. NORRIS: Was born in Bellville, Hastings, County, Ontario, Canada, September 29, 1864. Mr. Norris left home at the age of twenty-two and engaged in the work of constructing snowsheds for the Canadian Pacific Railway. This work later brought him to Donald, British Columbia, where he built warehouses and helped put up snowsheds in the Selkirk Mountains. In the fall of 1886 he went to Ashland, Wisconsin, where he went to work for the Lake Shore Railroad. He continued with the San Francisco Bridge Co. He soon came to Skagit County and bought a few acres of land in Burlington, which today makes up part of the Norris farm. Mr. Norris married in 1884, and Mr. and Mrs. Norris had six children; Murny, Grace, Stewart, Guy, and Ross.

Murny still lives in Burlington and is following the life of a successful contractor. His brothers Stewart and Guy are also successful contractors. Ross is a well-known strawberry grower living in Burlington. Grace is living with her mother, Mrs. Norris, in Burlington, and Pear died while she was very young.

Mr. Norris was killed in Skagit County in 1921 when some of his machinery fell on him, killing him instantly.

WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON CRESSEY: Was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April 30, 1839. In 1860, Mr. Cressey entered the Civil War in the Twentieth Pennsylvania Infantry, sometimes called the Scott Legion.

He came west in 1890 and settled in Skagit County. He bought land a mile southeast of the city of Burlington and made his home there. In 1865 Mr. Cressey married and had nine children, among them were; George, William, Victor Hugo, all of which still reside in Burlington, the others have left the city. The Cresseys are very well-known to practically everyone in Burlington.

ALEXANDER D. FRASER: Among those who witnessed the wonderful transformations made in Skagit County and Burlington in the past 40 years or more, is Mr. Fraser.

He was born in Nova Scotia, May 2, 1851. Mr. Fraser worked in a saw mill about three years, then a couple years on the Railroad. He then returned to his home and took up the trade of blacksmith.

In 1880, he came to Seattle where he stayed for one summer; then he went to San Francisco for eighteen months and returned to Skagit County and worked on a ranch near La Conner for five years. About 1890 he came to Burlington where he bought the five lots in town on which he has lived ever since.

RUDOLPH PULVER: One of the foremost among the popular and successful farmers of Burlington, is a native of Switzerland. He was born in Berne Canton, June 25, 1853. When he was twenty-four, he was married in Switzerland. Then he and his wife came to America the following spring. He came to Mt. Vernon in 1884 and worked for Peter Lee in Skagit County for two months. He later bought a farm near Burlington. Mr. and Mrs. Pulver had eight children: Anne, Rudolph, Fred, Peter, Mary, Edward, Lena, and Frank.

Rudolph is a well-known farmer and lives just a little north of Burlington. Fred lives in Burlington and works for the Puget Sound Power and Light Co. Lena, Mrs. Drown, is working as nurse in the office of Dr. Johnson. Ed resides in Burlington, also. The rest have moved away.

T. NELSON OVENELL: The well-known and prosperous farmer of Burlington, was born on Whidby Island, August 25, 1861. On June 2, 1890, Mr. Ovenell was married. Their children were: Bertha, James, Albert, and George and Fred. Mr. Ovenell later came to Burlington and bought a farm where he lives yet.

George, one of his sons, is the proprietor of Ovenells Cash Grocery store on the highway.