

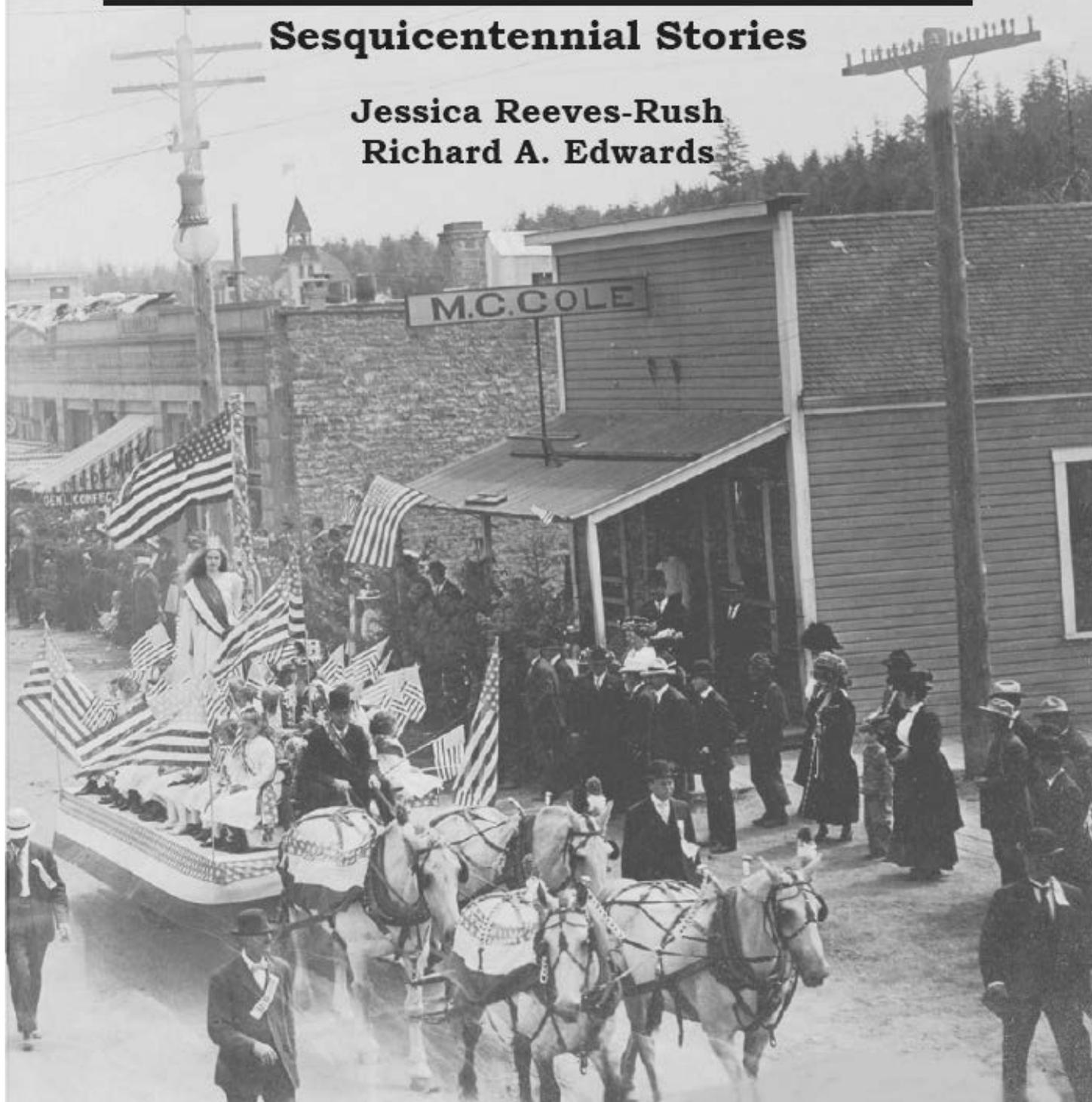
# Tenino

## 150 Years

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**Sesquicentennial Stories**

**Jessica Reeves-Rush  
Richard A. Edwards**



# TENINO

## 150 Years



## Sesquicentennial Stories

By Jessica Reeves-Rush and Richard A. Edwards

South Thurston County Historical Society, Tenino, WA

Cover illustration: downtown Tenino, Sussex Avenue looking eastward from Howard Street, circa 1910.

Title page illustration: downtown Tenino, Sussex Avenue looking westward from Olympia Street, circa 1910.

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Printed and bound in the United States of America  
Second printing, July 2023

# Dedication

My dedication goes out to my parents Roger and Marsha Reeves. My Dad, especially, whose stories sparked a love of Tenino history through his reminiscences of growing up here. To my friends at the South Thurston County Historical Society and Forest Grove Cemetery who have supported my efforts. And lastly, to the folks at ThurstonTalk.com, who first encouraged and published my history writing.

Jessica Reeves-Rush

I would like to dedicate this book to Mayor Wayne Fournier, who created the position of Tenino City Historian and worked so diligently to make sure that Tenino's history was supported locally and also told internationally.

Richard A. Edwards

# Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank all those whose efforts made this book possible.

All the citizens of Tenino who so loved their city that they saved and then donated material to create the Tenino Depot Museum, including the depot building itself. It is important to continue to preserve our recent history for the next generation.

All the historians who so loved Tenino's history that they collected and published stories and photos. C. Lee Miller, Art Dwelley, and Scott McArthur, especially.

All the librarians, archivists, and researchers who have helped us along the way. Many thanks to the staff at the Washington State Library and the Washington State Archives.

All of our valiant readers, who read the draft and provided comments and proofreading: Carolee Edwards, Kathy Allen, Dusty Quinn-Campbell, Judy Cryderman, and Kathy Bishop (who also helped with cover graphics).

All the members of the South Thurston County Historical Society, who have worked for almost 50 years to collect, preserve, and present Tenino and South Thurston County history at the Tenino Depot Museum.

Without you all, this book could not be.

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*Ruby Circle in Tenino's 4th of July Parade.*

**BY THE CITY OF TENINO  
- A PROCLAMATION -**

**Sesquicentennial Year 2023**

Whereas, we remember that in 1872, the Northern Pacific Railway's track arrived in the region of Thurston County, Washington Territory, known as Coal Bank, and there stopped just south of Stephen Hodgden's farm and stage station; and

Whereas, the Northern Pacific Rail Road Company built a depot at this location and named it "Tenino"; and

Whereas, on May 22, 1873, Stephen and Deborah Hodgden had filed a plat for Hodgden's Addition to Tenino with the Recorder of Thurston County, Washington Territory; and

Whereas, on July 5, 1873, the Plan of Tenino, was filed by the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Company with the Recorder of Thurston County, Washington Territory; and

Whereas, these two filings together created the town of Tenino, Thurston County, Washington Territory.

Now, Therefore, we, the Council of the City of Tenino, Washington, do hereby Proclaim 2023 to be our Sesquicentennial Year. And that our community, past, present, and future shall be celebrated this year on Saturday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, with a 150th Jubilee celebrated by our citizens, businesses, and civic organizations, showing the world our Tenino Spirit.

Signed in the City of Tenino, Washington, this 24th day of January, 2023.

Wayne Fournier, Mayor  
Linda K. Gotovac, Council Member  
Elaine Klamn, Council Member  
John O'Callahan, Council Member  
Jason Lawton, Council Member  
Rachel Davidson, Council Member

# Foreword

By Wayne Fournier, Mayor of Tenino

I consider it a great honor to be asked to write a foreword to any book, and I'm especially honored to have the opportunity to do so for a book written on such a personally valued subject as Tenino's history on the eve of our community's 150th anniversary.

Historic preservation and record keeping are two of the most important responsibilities a civilization has. The attorney, philosopher, and author John Jay Chapman wrote, "One of the deepest impulses in man is the impulse to record, to scratch a drawing on a tusk, or to keep a diary... The enduring value of the past is, one might say, the very basis of civilization." Maintaining a shared story bonds us at every level of community; it unites us and defines our character and values. The stories we choose to record and continue to breathe life into reflect who we are today and what we still wish to hold on to.

When I first took public office, I knew what I wanted to do: improve the lives of my friends and neighbors. To me, that meant ensuring economic opportunities existed, protecting the most basic of investments (home values), providing adequate public safety, and developing a shared vision for the city's future, but I didn't know what that meant or how to do it. So for me, developing a way forward started with trying to better understand where this city and community came from, and that meant better understanding our history.

We are very blessed to live in the age of information, but even in the age of the internet, the Pacific Northwest is an area with a written history that only reaches back to the very late 19th century. We are historically distant from the centers of population and culture, but in the brief window of Tenino's 150 years of existence, we have many times reached outside of our little corner of the world and made big waves that have had greater influence than one would expect. As I read the available sources and started to better understand our place in history, I also developed a greater understanding and appreciation of the value of the historian.

Tenino has had many notable informal historians over the decades; it seemed like each generation had their own, and it was simply by luck that someone took up that mantle. We are very fortunate for that because there are some excellent books and resources that our Depot Museum has collected and preserved. As my efforts to understand continued, and during my enjoyment of learning and discovering new old stories and pictures, I would share them on social media, sparking conversations with, of course, very talented and passionate people.

I, as Mayor, had the extremely good fortune of being able to discover and share a passion for historic preservation with the two very smart and talented individuals who are the co-authors of this book. Jessica Reeves-Rush and Rich Edwards are both accomplished lifelong community members in their own right.

Jessica is a Life Member of the South Thurston County Historical Society, the Clerk of the Forest Grove Cemetery, and currently serves as the Tenino Depot Museum Director. She works full time for the City of Tenino as the Parks, Arts, Recreation, Culture Coordinator and has also written several well researched historical essays for both the City of Tenino and [www.thurstontalk.com](http://www.thurstontalk.com). Her writing style is eloquent and thoughtful. She has led efforts to perform historical re-enactments of prominent pioneers at graveside tours of the Forest Grove Cemetery and recently wrote a rather clever musical narration of Tenino's history for our first Tenino Railroad Festival (which she also dreamed up and championed).

Rich Edwards is by a formal City Proclamation the Official City Historian of record. He took on this role after a career as an academic and special Librarian and has published several essays and books on various subjects. Rich had the name of Chain Hill north of Tenino officially changed to the more historically accurate Chaenn Hill. He literally wrote the book on Tenino's name origins. He also organized an archaeological survey of Fort Henness. On one notable occasion, he joined me in covertly venturing into a near abandoned historic structure in an attempt to conduct a dendrochronological assessment to determine the structures age. I was very impressed when he took a sample of the newsprint used in the lowest layer of the structure as insulation, and within 24 hours had been able to provide dateable information by identifying the newspapers' age. He stopped just short of identifying the glue and what the person who put the wall paper up had for breakfast.

I could not think of two better people to collaborate on such a project as this book.

I am thankful that through excellent public policy the elected officials of the City of Tenino through formal doctrines established these authors as our historians. This designation has given weight to their efforts and opened doors that allowed them to dive deeper into official documents and records. I am proud of the fact that Tenino has formalized its historic preservation efforts, and I hope that this becomes a tradition that continues.

I would like to express my deep appreciation and thanks to our current Historians Jessica and Rich, who help us better understand our place and guide our future. I would like to pay homage to Tenino's past historians, people without whom we would have nothing. And I would like to encourage future generations to not lose sight of the importance of preserving our history because it becomes lost quickly. As you'll read in this text it's all significant. Even the mundane acts in our daily lives will eventually be a window into the past.

I leave with advice to our future historians in the form of a quote from the Greek writer Lucian of Somosata, "The good historian... must be fearless, uncorrupted, free, the friend of truth and of liberty. One who calls a fig a fig, and a skiff a skiff, neither giving nor withholding from any, from favor or from enmity, not influenced by pity, by shame, or by remorse. A just judge... a stranger to all, of no country, bound only by his own laws, acknowledging no sovereign, never considering what this or that man may say of him, but relating faithfully everything as it happened."

# Introduction

When we realized that Tenino's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday was approaching, we debated as to which date was best to celebrate. Was it when the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) first reached the Coal Bank area in 1872? Or when they named the depot just south of Hodgden's Station, "Tenino," on October 12, 1872?

We settled on the following summer when Stephen and Deborah Hodgden, along with the NPRR's land sales division, the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Company (LSPS), platted portions of their land to create the Plan of Tenino and thus established the town. These plats were recorded by Thurston County's Recorder on May 22, 1873, and July 5, 1873.

Due to Hodgden's "Addition to Tenino" plat being filed locally earlier in May, the earlier date for the "Addition" predated the LSPS's filing of the full "Plan of Tenino", which went through their offices in New York City, and wasn't recorded until July 5, 1873.

So July 5, 1873, became the official date when the town of Tenino was established, though it would not be until 1906 that the town would be incorporated as a municipality and grow into the City of Tenino.

To celebrate this 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the City of Tenino, on January 24, 2023, proclaimed this year as Tenino's Sesquicentennial Year and declared a day of Jubilee for July 8, 2023.

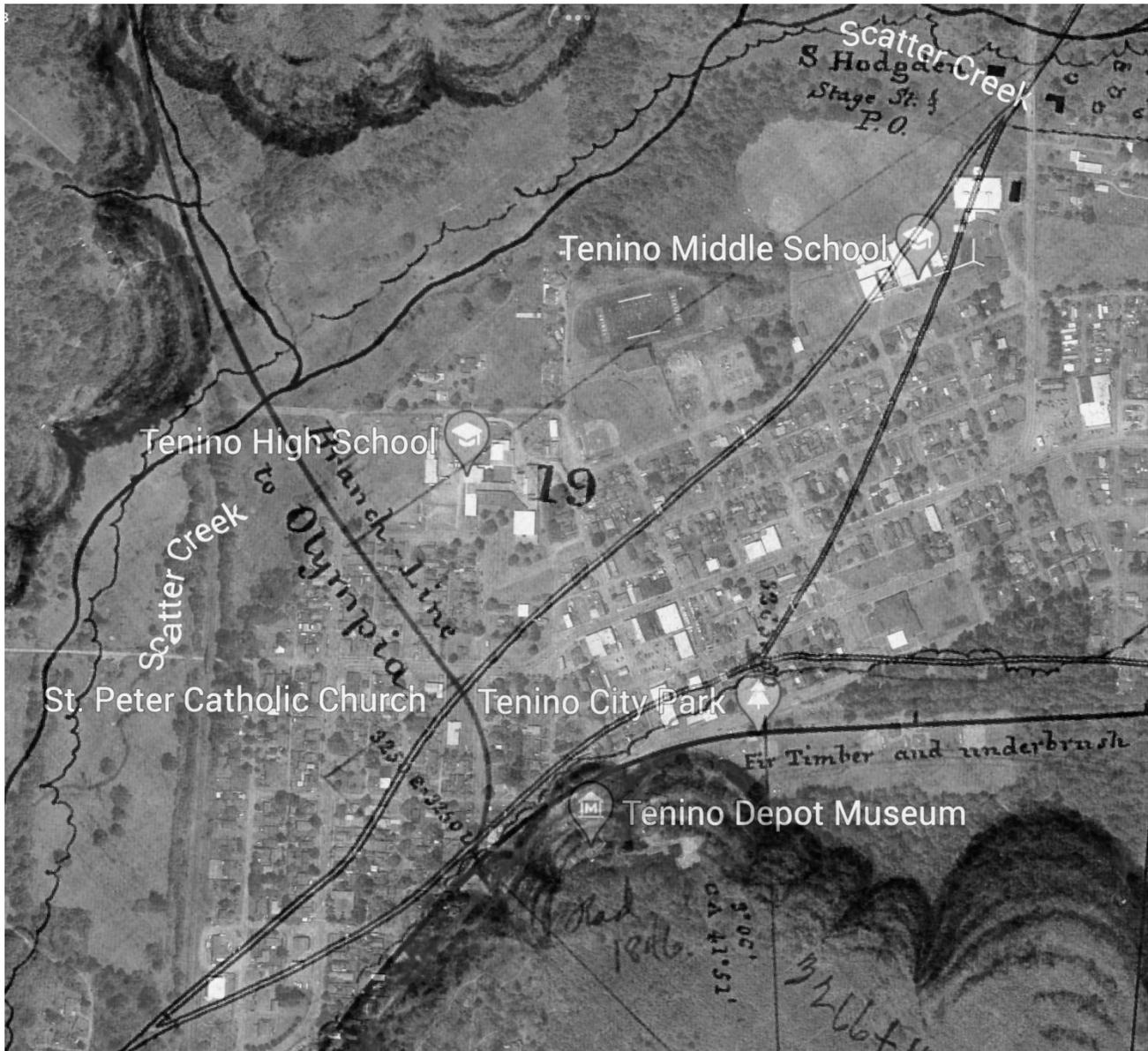
This book is our contribution to this celebration.

Rather than contribute a book on a single topic or an academic tome or chronological history, we gathered together some of our favorite stories about people, places, and events throughout Tenino's history. We offer this volume of sesquicentennial stories to celebrate our 150-year history.



*Downtown Tenino circa 1905. Sussex Avenue at Olympia Street looking west.*

NOTE: Some parts of some articles in this book have previously been seen online on Tenino History's Facebook page, the Tenino City Historian's web page, LewisTalk.com or ThurstonTalk.com.



1872 and 2023

This image uses a 21<sup>st</sup> century satellite image of Tenino overlaid with the Northern Pacific Railroad survey map from 1872 showing the location of the original roads and trails and the location of "Hodgden's Stage St." just before the coming of the railroad, the building of the depot, and the creation of the town of Tenino. The NPRR track was built along the dark line just above "Fir Timber and underbrush." The "Branch Line to Olympia" was not built.

The depot and town would start just below where the word "Park" appears on the modern map at the intersection of Olympia and Park streets.

# Before Tenino

## European and American Settlement

In the area of what would become Washington Territory, Great Britain's London based Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Vancouver near the Columbia River in 1825 and Nisqually House (then Fort Nisqually) near Puget Sound in 1832.

Travel between these two locations was done via a system of native trails and river travel on the Cowlitz and Columbia Rivers. Hudson's Bay established the Puget Sound Agricultural Company to manage their livestock near Fort Nisqually and farming at Cowlitz Farms, near the Cowlitz River landing.

The native trail that was used by the Hudson's Bay Company to travel between their locations wound through the small valley of what would become known as Scatter Creek and was the future site of Tenino.

In 1845, while negotiations between the United States and Great Britain were ongoing, the Simmons-Bush party, having traveled the Oregon Trail from Missouri to the Oregon area, discovered that one of their members, George Bush, was not welcome to settle because of his race. The Simmons-Bush party then moved north from Oregon, up the Cowlitz trail. When the party reached the Scatter Creek valley, they veered north instead of traveling on to Fort Nisqually and the areas of British settlement. They established themselves near the falls of the Deschutes River to create New Market, which became Tumwater. This fork in the trail, connecting Olympia and Puget Sound with points south on the Cowlitz trail, would make the Scatter Creek valley a critical transportation hub for decades to come.

The Oregon Treaty of 1846, set the border between the United States and British Columbia at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel and led to the creation of Oregon Territory, which included the area that would separately become Washington Territory in 1853.

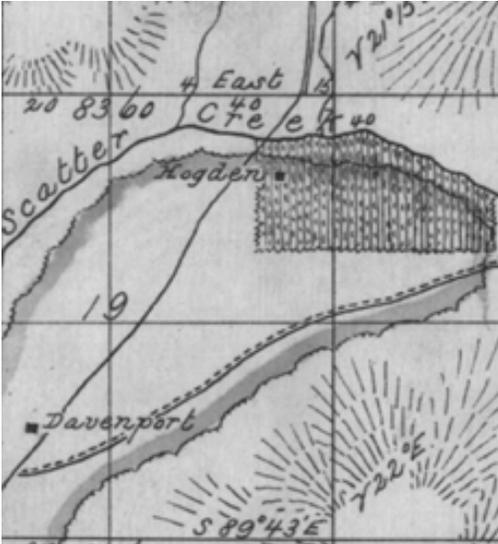
The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, granted 320 acres free of charge to every unmarried white male citizen eighteen or older and 640 acres to every married couple arriving before December 1, 1850. In the case of a married couple, the husband and wife each owned half of the total grant under their own names. A provision gave half this amount to those who arrived after the deadline, but before 1854.

During these early years of the 1850s, most of the pioneer families of Thurston County would arrive and stake their claims to native lands. These included Hennes, Colvin, Martin, Crowder, Gibson, Northcraft, Yantis, and the two settlers whose claims would include most of the land that became Tenino, Stephen Hodgden and Samuel Davenport.

# Stephen Hodgden

Stephen Hodgden, the first settler in what would become Tenino, was born in Maine about 1807.

In 1839 he married Deborah Bosworth. The couple had four children, only one of which, a daughter, Deborah, lived beyond childhood. He became a '49er and traveled to the California gold fields with his brother-in-law Noah Bosworth. With the availability of Oregon Territory land from the Donation Land Claim Act of 1850, he headed north and ended up in the valley of Scatter Creek by 1851, with Samuel Davenport and Noah Bosworth.



Homestead survey map, 1856.

As reported in the *Chehalis Nugget*, July 1897:

“Mr. Hodgdon left there [California] for Oregon in 1851 where he took a claim on the Columbia slough. Not satisfied there he concluded to return to Boston. He purchased a ticket to sail on the *General Warren*, but before sailing, he heard something of the Puget Sound country. He disposed of his ticket and in company with Samuel Davenport prospected the country along the route from the Columbia to the sound. He took a donation claim, but on account of the hostile Indians, he could not send for the family until after the war 1855-56.”

During the early 1850s, Stephen participated in various official duties for Thurston County, including as a Bridge Commissioner. During the Indian War of 1855-56, he served as

Third Corporal in Captain Hays' Rangers of the Washington Territorial Volunteers. In the 1860s, he served the county as a Road Supervisor.

The *Nugget's* story continues: “After the war he sent for his wife and daughter, the latter being the late wife of J.H. Long. They came by steamer via the isthmus, and were accompanied by Mr. [Noah] Bosworth. They landed at Rainier, Oregon, opposite the mouth of the Cowlitz River from where they were taken by Indians in canoes across the Columbia and up to the Cowlitz Landing where Mr. Hodgden met them. From there, they were taken by Charles Bishop to Sander's Landing, the present site of the Woodlawn flouring mill at Centralia. They arrive at their new home, the present site of Tenino, in May 1857.”

The Hodgdens settled down on their farm and Stephen became Postmaster for Coal Bank (the region including the valleys of Scatter Creek and Skookumchuck River to the south), in 1860. His gold fever days were not over though, and the *Nugget's* story continues: “In 1862, the Idaho gold fever caught them, the farm was rented, and they left for the Boise mines, wintering in Walla Walla in 1862, traveling that spring with the government troops ordered to Boise valley to build Fort Boise, in the building of which all took part for a time. Instead of mining, they secured land and began farming.

Stephen Hodgdon, Noah Bosworth, and Robert McComb formed a partnership for that purpose. The latter two purchased Mr. Hodgdon's interest in 1865 and he returned [home]." It is interesting to note that the main steamship transporting men and equipment to the Idaho mines in the 1860s was the Oregon Steam Navigation Company's steamboat *Tenino*.

Hodgden's farm was also used in the 1860s and 1870s as a stage coach station, where the stages between Olympia and Cowlitz Landing would stop. Returning to Olympia would require going over Chaenn Hill, which was considered very difficult and Hodgden's Station allowed a rest just south of the hill.

This map is from an 1872 survey done by the Northern Pacific Railroad just before they built the tracks into the Scatter Creek valley. They stopped just south of Hodgden's Station and built a depot that they named Tenino.



NPRR survey map, 1872.  
Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

In 1873, the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Hodgdens jointly file plats to create the town of Tenino.

Deborah (Bosworth) Hodgden died in 1876. The Hodgden residence was destroyed by fire in 1877.

In 1878, Stephen married Sarah (Myers) Tilley, widow of Abram Tilley, who was 65. Mrs. Tilley had moved into the new town of Tenino, a few years earlier.

Stephen Hodgden died on September 26, 1882 after a short illness. He was buried alongside his first wife, Deborah, at the Claquato Cemetery in Lewis County, where his daughter, Deborah (Hodgden) Long, was living.

The Hodgden name is spelled several ways, but the most common disagreement is whether it ends "en" or "on". In most newspapers and documents, it was recorded as "Hodgden", however the family had it engraved on his headstone as "Hodgdon". His only known signature, which appears on an affidavit affirming his appointment as Thurston County Road Supervisor, spells it "Hodgdon." Hodgden Street in Tenino is named after him.



Gravestone.

# Making the Cowlitz Landing

*Originally published on Lewistalk.com*

In the mountainous regions of the west, in the times of western movement and long before it, the riverways served as highways for the people. As the most efficient mode of travel, Native Americans mastered northwest rivers with canoes. With the arrival of the “Boston Man,” as settlers were called, the Columbia and Cowlitz Rivers became their entry point to what would one day be Washington State.



*A canoe on the Cowlitz in 1935.  
Courtesy of the Lewis County Historical Museum*

In 1825-1830, the British Hudson’s Bay Company began a farm on the Cowlitz Prairie one mile downstream of modern-day Toledo. Cowlitz Farm covered four square miles and produced staples like wheat and oats as well as cattle and other livestock. Cowlitz Landing, the northernmost river navigation point for those entering the territory from the south, served the Hudson’s Bay Company. Between 1825 and 1845 the Cowlitz route was the only way into Puget Sound country.

In 1846, with the Oregon Treaty, Great Britain and the United States came to a boundary settlement. They established the border between Canada and the United States at the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Consequently, the Hudson’s Bay Company relinquished control of Cowlitz Landing and the American northward settlement began in earnest. In 1850, the Donation Land Claim Act gave hope to those who wanted to carve out a new life on the land.

Some, however, laid claim earlier. John R. Jackson, who was born in England and possessed a British accent, managed to make a tentative claim in 1845. Legend has it that he, despite considering himself an American, convinced the Hudson’s Bay men that he was an English national, and consequently they let him explore northward.

Many a weary traveler stepped foot for the very first time in the new territory at Cowlitz Landing. The beautiful prairie region became home to several early pioneers. Lewis County, which was once the single county for Oregon Territory north of the Columbia River, is called “The Mother of All Counties”, having birthed many others. In addition to Jackson, Michael T. Simmons, founder of New Market (Tumwater), came through the landing. Pioneer men such as Joseph Borst, who traveled with Sidney Ford, passed through Cowlitz Landing, as did Lewis Hawkins Davis, founder of Claquato. Eliza Jane (Sumner) Meeker, Ezra Meeker’s wife, arrived by way of the Cowlitz as well.

Several accounts of the journey up the Cowlitz to the landing exist and give the modern reader a glimpse as to what it was like.



“... we began the ascent of the Cowlitz river in an Indian canoe, propelled by Indian muscle, making about the same speed against the strong current as did our oxen when pulling up a steep mountain. There were many portages, where jams of logs obstructed the river. Frequently the water was so shallow that the Indian pushed the canoe along more rapidly than they paddled through the deep water. For a time, the novelty of it was quite interesting, but, as there was a lack of variation, it soon became monotonous--only varied by the mild excitement of the occasional salmon leaping from the water.”

Judson amused herself by learning the Chinook Jargon, a conglomeration of French, Indian, and Hudson’s Bay Company words that the Native Americans used to speak to the “Bostons.”

Judson continued, “Sitting in one position all day, in the bottom of a canoe, we found very wearisome; and we were only too glad when we landed at a stopping place with no name, only one building- a rude hotel kept by a ‘bach’ [bachelor] who was known by the pioneers from one end of the Sound country to the other by the name of ‘old hard bread,’ because of the hard bread (hard tack) he invariably served to his customers. We, however fared sumptuously on salmon and potatoes.

“At noon the next day we reached Cowlitz Landing, where, on the prairie, the Hudson’s Bay Company had a trading post, and here put up at a hotel kept by another ‘bach,’ but, from all appearances, it was run by the Indians.”

The Territory’s first Governor, Isaac I. Stevens, traveled this route with his family in 1854. Mrs. Margaret Stevens wrote an account which agrees on many points with Judson’s.

“We were placed in the canoe with great care, so as to balance it evenly, as it was frail and upset easily. At first the novelty, motion and watching our Indians paddle so deftly, they seize their poles and push along over shallow places, keeping up a low, sweet singing, as they glided along, was amusing. As we were sitting flat on the bottom of the canoe, the position became irksome and painful. We were all day long on this Cowlitz river. At night I could not stand on my feet for some time after landing. We walked ankle deep in mud to a small log house, where we had a good meal. Here we found a number of rough, dirty looking men, with pantaloons tucked inside their boots, and so much hair upon their heads and faces they all looked alike...”

By 1850, Cowlitz Landing contained two hotels, two general stores, a saw and grist mill, the 1849 blockhouse, several dwellings and the landing wharf. Advertisements for Carter & Padgett dealers in produce, merchandise, groceries and provisions as well as owners of the Cowlitz Hotel “where travelers can find good fare and accommodations” appear in the 1854 issues of the Olympia newspaper, *Pioneer and Democrat*. A plant nursery, specializing in fruit trees, is also advertised at the Landing. Canoe passage services on the Cowlitz and horse services from Tumwater to Cowlitz Landing appeared regularly at the time.

By the 1860s, the first steamships arrived and replaced the canoe. Roads were constructed and travel became easier. Cowlitz Landing was flooded in October 1867, and any original remnant of this historic place was washed away by the river for which it was named.

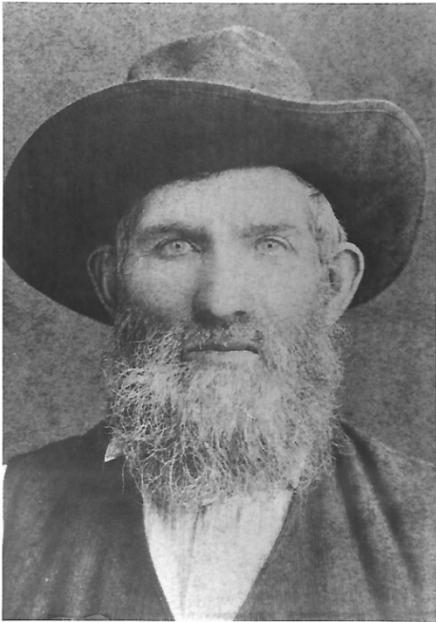
By 1873, though the steamboats would continue for some decades along the Cowlitz River, the Northern Pacific Railroad had replaced much of the traffic from Kalama on the Columbia up past the Cowlitz River landing and continued all the way to Tacoma on Puget Sound.



*Historical marker in the vicinity of Cowlitz Landing.*

# Ignatius Colvin

Originally published on [Thurstontalk.com](http://Thurstontalk.com)



In 1849, as far as Easterners were concerned, the far western territories were a wilderness, and a foreign land beyond the United States of America. More than one mother and father said goodbye to a grown child who desired to go west knowing they may never see or hear from them again. Ignatius Colvin was one such youth. Since he was illiterate, no journals or letters exist of Colvin's that would give us a window into his personality. But some reports, like Rev. H. K. Hines' 1893 sketch in *An Illustrated History of the State of Washington* called him a "liberal-minded and public-spirited citizen." He was also labeled a "Gruff old Codger" in Susan Erb's essay titled, "Emma Ester Peck Rector Colvin." His decedents think of him as a shrewd businessman.

The west called to young Ignatius Colvin in 1849, out of Boone County, Missouri. Like many 20-year-old men, he was up for an adventure and to find his fortune. He took a job driving a military commissary wagon carrying food, munitions, and supplies from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Vancouver. This was probably an early expedition to the Fort, which had belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company and had only begun transfer to the United States Army in May of that year. Colvin's tenure with the army was short. By 1850, he continued his journey up to Cowlitz Landing where he hired a horse and guide and made his way to New Market, now known as Tumwater. There he worked hand hewing piles (used for pilings) for Col. Simmons.

In 1851, lured by tales of gold, a company of 22 men plus crew set out on the ship *Georgianna* for Queen Charlotte Island. The ship arrived on the wrong side of the island. On November 18, it was caught in a storm that wrecked it. As the men struggled to shore, they were captured by Haida Native Americans. The Haida burned the ship, took most of the men's clothes, and threatened to kill them. Fellow castaway Sydney Ford, Jr. was able to convince the Haida they were worth more alive than dead, but the men still lived in a constant state of fear. Since they had no blankets, the men slept in a pile for warmth. Lice were a problem.

After the men had spent 54 wintery days in captivity, a ransom and rescue were arranged by the United States Government. Colvin later made a second prospecting expedition to the island, which was also unsuccessful, but less disastrously so.

According to marriage records, in 1854 Ignatius married Ketty Socum, also known as Kirby Ann Socum. She was a Native American with whom Ignatius had one child in 1855 named Jeremiah Colvin. During this time period, Colvin applied for a donation land claim of 320 acres, which is the

amount of land granted to an unmarried man. As a Native American, Ketty would not have qualified for the full 640 acres allotted to a married couple.

The Pacific Northwest Indian Wars broke out in 1855. Colvin joined the volunteer army under Captain C. Eaton. He is reported to be one of the men who brought back the dead from White River to Steilacoom, including the body of James McCallister. Some have wondered why Colvin enlisted when he was married to a Native American. One answer is that every able-bodied settler was expected to enlist. The other is that Colvin later received a Soldier Bounty of 160 acres from the United States. It is unclear if he was aware of the bounty, but if he were, it would have been a huge motivator for Colvin, who was to become a collector of properties.



*Homestead survey map, 1856.*

Ketty Socum disappeared from the family history and by 1860 the census shows only Colvin and five-year-old Jeremiah.

Colvin turned to the land for his fortune, and went about amassing a 3,000-acre farm. Many of the deeds he collected from buying up his neighbors' property are still in possession of the Colvin family. Colvin didn't just amass land for his farm, but he also bought and sold for a profit, gaining his reputation as a businessman. Colvin employed Native Americans to help him build his ranch. In 1866 Colvin married Emma Peck Rector. A divorcee, she had been married to George Rector, and brought to the Colvin household her three sons, Jesse, Washington Irving and Franklin. The couple had four more children, Benjamin, Nellie, Sarah (Sadie) and Fred Ambrose.

Under the directorship of Colvin, the local Coal Bank School later became known as Colvin School. It was said that Colvin, who signed his name with an X, made it a priority that his children learn. All the children, including the children of any Native Americans who worked for him, attended. The Colvin School existed for 80 years.

Family stories, told by Eldon Morrill, report that Ignatius used to disappear for months, sometimes years at a time leaving Emma to run the ranch. Wherever these expeditions were to, or for what purpose is unknown, but the stories are he came home with money.

Fred Ambrose Colvin, who was born in the farmhouse, went on to run Colvin Ranch. He then passed it on to his son, also a Fred A. In the twenty-first century, the third Fred A. Colvin runs the ranch.



*Emma Peck Rector Colvin.  
Courtesy of Margaret Colvin*

The three Rector boys worked for other people and eventually settled in Hanaford Valley. This was probably because the boys found Colvin difficult. When Washington Irving Rector and his wife Flora

had their third child in 1894, they put their baby to bed in a box. When Colvin heard about this he went to Tenino and purchased a cradle, took it to the Hanaford Valley and, according to family stories, said: "There, that'll get that kid out of the box."

There was an attempt at a divorce between Emma and Ignatius. According to the family, the Supreme Court in Washington heard the case and rejected the divorce noting that Emma had enabled Colvin to amass his ranch and she should therefore benefit from her hard work. Ben Colvin testified on Emma's behalf. Another report is that Emma, in 1895, purchased the Lewis County property from Ignatius for a dollar which she transferred to her three sons as well as Ben Colvin.

Eventually Colvin, who smoked a pipe, developed mouth cancer. He and Emma went to San Francisco to seek treatment where he succumbed to his illness in February of 1898. He is buried in Forest Grove Cemetery in Tenino.

In his will, his cantankerous nature comes through. He left his wife one dollar, a sum he also left to his son Ben. His daughters received a lifetime residency on the ranch. His youngest, Fred, would inherit everything for himself and his decedents. It was stipulated that if any of the children gave any property to Emma or Ben, they would forfeit their inheritance. Perhaps Ignatius felt that Emma and Ben had already received their due in the land that had cost Emma a dollar.



*Colvin Ranch from a drawing by Ken Brown from A Tour of Centennial Farms.*

# The Coming of the Railroad

Wanting to connect the Pacific Northwest and especially the Puget Sound country with the rest of the country, the United States Congress in 1864 chartered the Northern Pacific Railroad Company (NPRR) to build a transcontinental railroad from the Great Lakes to Puget Sound within ten years. In the Pacific Northwest, work began in 1871 when they established a depot and shops at Kalama on the Columbia River and began building a railroad hub and port while laying track northward toward Puget Sound.

With the goal of quickly advancing their transportation line, while building track and bridges, in April 1872, they also acquired majority stock in the Oregon Steam Navigation Company (OSN), which operated a monopoly of steam riverboats along the Columbia and Snake Rivers from Oregon and Washington to Idaho. Using a mix of steam boats and steam trains would give the NPRR a vast transportation network very quickly.

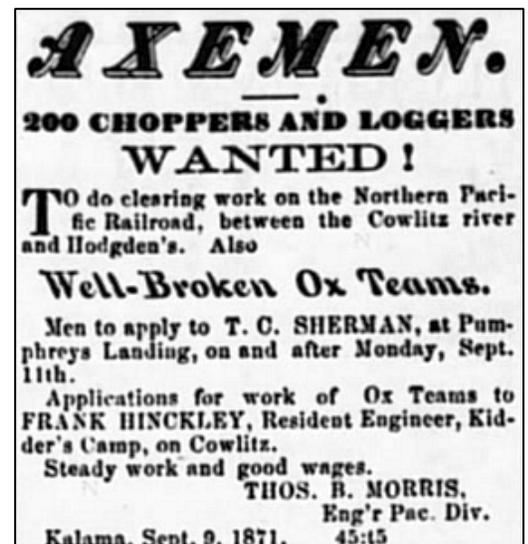
Track laying in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was very labor intensive. To meet this demand for labor, hundreds of people were hired to do the clearing, leveling, and track laying. Many hundreds of those who built the NPRR line from Kalama to Puget Sound were Chinese laborers, hired through contractors in San Francisco.

While NPRR surveyors determined the route and made the maps, and NPRR officers and staff oversaw the building, the responsibility for much of the work was contracted out. The contract for the first 40 miles from Kalama northward was given to J. B. Montgomery and the next 60 miles, as far as Hodgden's Station, was contracted to J. L. Hallet.

By the spring of 1872, Hallet's crew had started clearing and grubbing from near Hodgden's Station heading southward. The April 13, 1872, *Washington Standard* reported they had completed three miles of grading and had "52 horse-scrapers at work with an entire force of 175 hands-100 whites and 75 Chinese-but more were constantly joining him."

Track laying began in Kalama and moved slowly northward, with delays due to bridging the Cowlitz River and various streams. The locomotive used on the track was the Minnetonka.

By October 1872, track laying reached the valley of Scatter Creek, just south of Hodgden's Station, where the trail junction had become a stage coach stop. Running short of funds and still not sure where on Puget Sound they wanted their final terminus, the NPRR decided to stop for the winter. The NPRR Board ordered their Chief Engineer, W. M. Roberts, to build a temporary office/depot and a turntable, suitable for acting as the end of the line for a year.



**AXEMEN.**  
**200 CHOPPERS AND LOGGERS**  
**WANTED !**  
TO do clearing work on the Northern Pacific Railroad, between the Cowlitz river and Hodgden's. Also  
**Well-Broken Ox Teams.**  
Men to apply to T. C. SHERMAN, at Pumphreys Landing, on and after Monday, Sept. 11th.  
Applications for work of Ox Teams to FRANK HINCKLEY, Resident Engineer, Kidder's Camp, on Cowlitz.  
Steady work and good wages.  
THOS. B. MORRIS,  
Eng'r Pac. Div.  
Kalama, Sept. 9, 1871. 45:t5

*Washington Standard, September 9, 1871*

By November, the fledgling train line was running freight and passengers on a daily schedule from Kalama to the northern end of the line, Tenino, and back.

Since Kalama was also a port for the steamboats of the Oregon Steam Navigation Company, which was controlled by the NPRR, The *Washington Standard* could report in December 1872: "From Kalama to the mouth of the Snake River, about three hundred miles, there is good river navigation including two railroad portages, and also Pend Oreille Lake and tributary river there is good navigation for one hundred and twenty miles-so that at the end of 1873, the company will have six hundred miles of steam communication at each end of the line, with a gap of seven hundred miles to be completed."



*The Minnetonka, first locomotive to reach Tenino.*

# The Naming of Tenino

## Tenino Native Americans

**1855.** Treaty with the “the Tenino band of Walla-Wallas.” The Tenino were a group of Sahaptin speaking people living near the Columbia River close to The Dalles, Oregon.

**1857.** The Tenino people were removed to the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon.

## Tenino Steamboat

**1861.** The Oregon Steam Navigation Company (OSN) built the *Tenino* steamboat, just upriver from the Celilo Falls near where the Tenino people had lived.



*OSN steamboat TENINO on the Upper Columbia.  
Photo courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society.*

## Tenino Depot

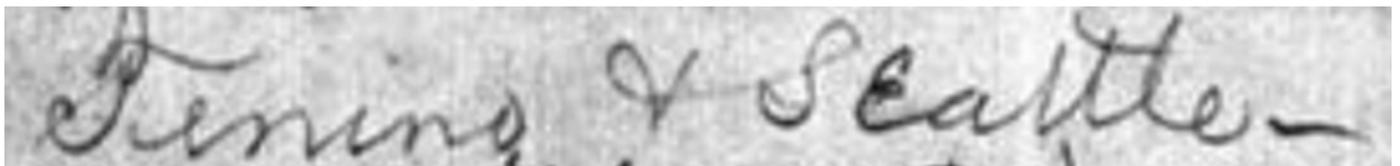
**1871.** The Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) began building its track from Kalama, Washington Territory, to Puget Sound.

**1872.** The NPRR bought control of the OSN and its steamboats, including the *Tenino*.

**October 1-12, 1872.** A NPRR committee toured the track under construction, possible Puget Sound terminal ports, and their OSN steamboats on the Columbia River, including the *Tenino*.

**October, 1872.** Track building stopped in the valley of Scatter Creek near the farm of Stephen Hodgden. The area was simply called “the present Northern terminus of the Road,” and “a cheap temporary building for the shelter of passengers and such small quantity of freight as may be offered for transportation, and of a small shed for the shelter of one locomotive” was authorized.

**October 12, 1872.** At a meeting in Portland, Oregon, NPRR President Cass used the name **Tenino for the location for the first time.**



*First known use of "Tenino" for NPRR Depot. Handwritten by Samuel Wilkeson, Secretary,  
from committee meeting minutes, October 12, 1872.  
Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

## Tenino: Town and City

**November 16, 1872.** Olympia's *Washington Standard* newspaper: "The extension of the North Pacific Railroad, from the old Tenino to the new town of that name, was completed last Tuesday."

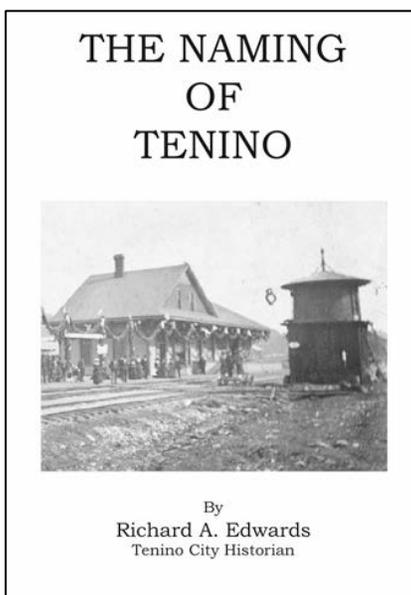


*Earliest known photo of the Tenino depot. Circa 1876-1878.*

**1873.** The town of Tenino is officially created by the NPRR and Hodgden filing plats.

**1906.** Tenino is incorporated as a municipality of the fourth class.

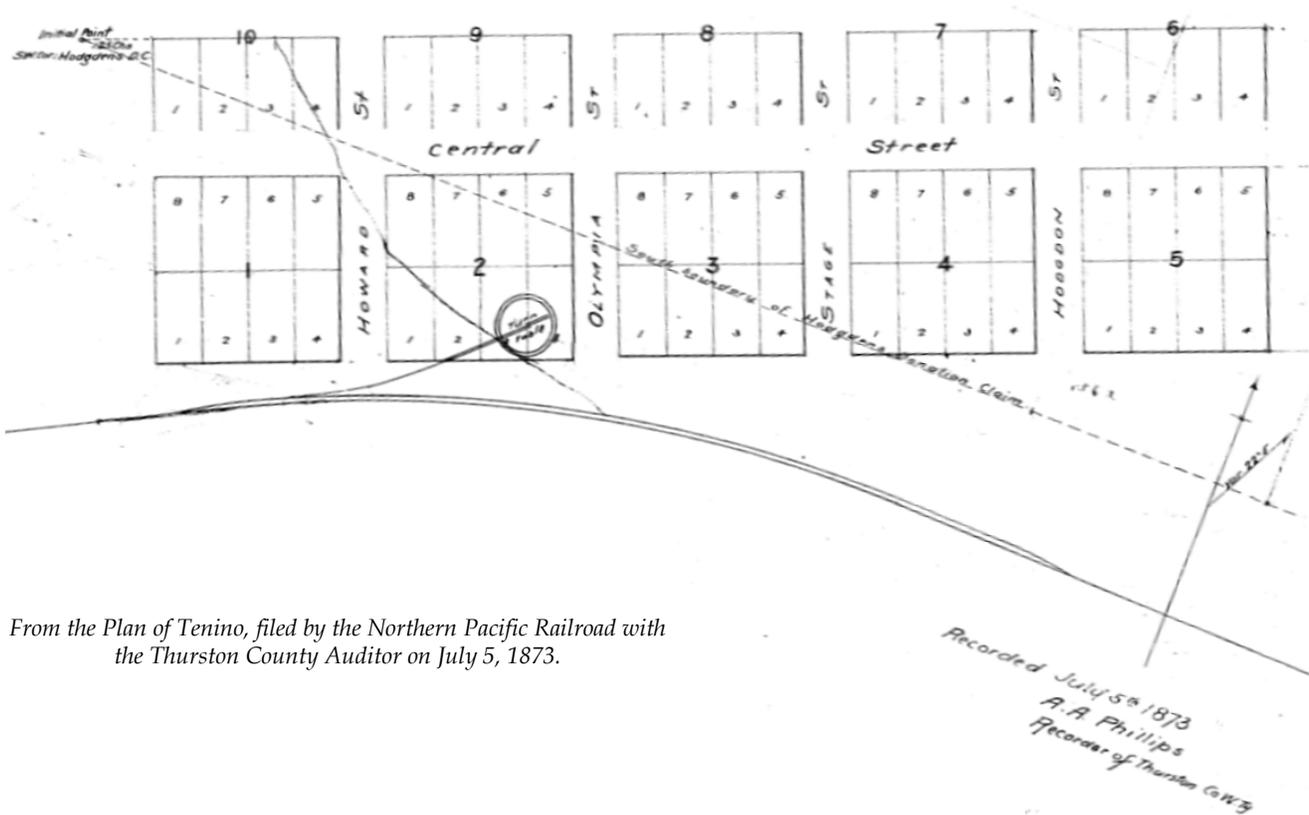
**2023.** Tenino celebrates its sesquicentennial.



*For further information and evidence about the naming of Tenino, see the book **The Naming of Tenino** by Tenino City Historian, Richard A Edwards.*

# The Creation of Tenino.

In 1873, Stephen and Deborah Hodgden and the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Company (the land agency for the NPRR), platted the town of Tenino and began selling lots.



Later in 1873, the railroad moved on to its destination on Puget Sound, Tacoma. Tenino remained a junction town, with a train depot and a stage stop connecting the territorial capital of Olympia with the railroad.

When the railway construction workers moved on, two noted businesses remained behind. John McGrath and Billy Huston built a hotel just west of the depot. McGrath would go to Tacoma with the railroad, but Billy Huston continued to run the Huston Hotel into the 1890s. Fred Brown and a man named Wakefield built a general store just east of the depot. Wakefield also left with the railroad, but Fred Brown would be the local shopkeeper until selling to the Blumauers in 1882.

These buildings plus a few other small shops, including a blacksmith, and a few homes to support them, would be the entirety of Tenino for more than a decade. Sales of new lots was slow.

Tenino remained a very small town throughout the 1870s and 1880s, huddled around the depot. The R. L. Polk & Company's 1887 *Puget Sound Directory* gives the population of the "village" of Tenino as 75.

# Chinese in Tenino

The earliest known photo of Tenino shows four Chinese railroad workers, a part of the “section gang” that worked in the 1870s for the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR). They most likely came to the valley of Scatter Creek when the track was laid before there was a Tenino and became some of our earliest settlers.

In 1871, the Northern Pacific Railroad began laying its track from the Columbia River to Puget Sound. That February, the first construction workers arrived, 20 white men and 67 Chinese on the steamer *Idaho*. The *Washington Standard* reported that a total of 2,000 Chinese were to be brought in from San Francisco for the railroad. That same year, the *Washington Standard* reported the Chinese population of San Francisco to be 14,000.

When the railroad arrived in October 1872, the NPRR established the Tenino Depot. It became the northern terminus of the line for more than a year. All railroad traffic heading north from Kalama on the Columbia River ended at Tenino.

During the winter of 1872-73, many of the workers stayed in Tenino valley. Roskelyn (Wardle) Whalin (1859-1951) recalled in a 1935 newspaper interview for the *Thurston County Independent*, that “Many of the tents of Chinamen dotted the prairie, the Orientals having been employed in building the railroad. Many of them stayed to work on the farms and find odd jobs.”

Local oral tradition as noted by historian and publisher Art Dwelley, says that Chinese panned for gold on a small creek that ran into Scatter Creek on the north side of the valley and that afterwards it was referred to as China Creek. He also recorded that some of the Chinese workers labored in the nearby coal mines for a time.

In the spring of 1873, the railroad began construction again, driving northeast toward the final terminus at Tacoma. Most of the Chinese labor force moved on with the railroad construction, but some stayed.



*William Ragless with 4 of his Chinese crew and hotelier Billy Huston.*

When William Ragless was the Section Supervisor for the area that included Tenino in the 1870s, his section crew included at least 7 Chinese employees. The 1880 U.S. Census records them as Quong Tg (age 24 and listed as head of the household), Hovey, Lung, Hee, Lewis, Bu Pu, and Kizig Wu. They were all living together in one home nearby.

In addition, the famous Huston Hotel employed Ah Sung, a Chinese cook, aged 31.

In 1882, the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, restricting Chinese immigration.

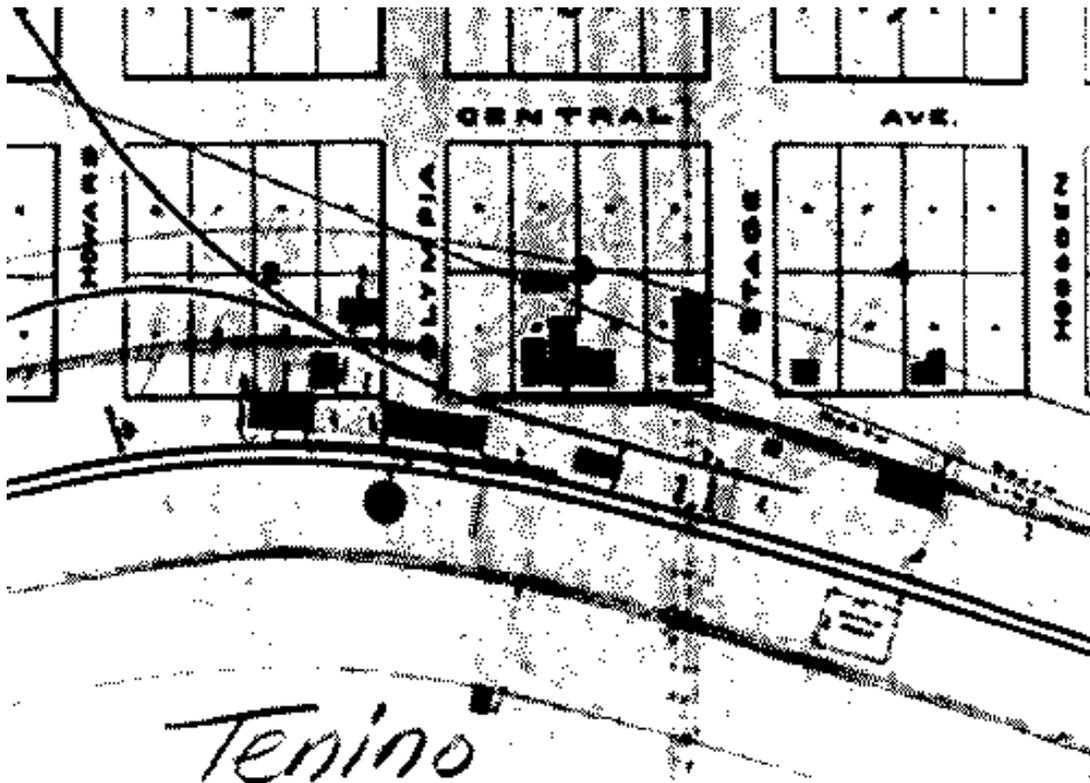
By 1885, the Chinese residents of Tacoma were expelled by force on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. They were rounded up and marched to the Northern Pacific railroad station that many of them may have helped build, forced onto a train, and sent to Portland, Oregon.

Shortly thereafter, violence was used to force the Chinese residents of Tenino to leave as well, by burning down their home of many years.

“Mr. Huston informs us that the log shanty near his hotel, at Tenino, occupied by Chinese section hands, was burned Christmas eve, about 11 o’clock. As the same fate happened to another Chinese cabin at Deschutes, about six miles north of Tenino, the same night, it is quite evident that an incendiaries’ hand fired the buildings. At the latter place the inmates succeeded in saving their blankets, but at Tenino everything was destroyed, and the hapless victims at once departed for a more hospitable neighborhood.” *The Washington Standard*, January 1, 1886.

According to Art Dwelley’s notes, the Olympia & Tenino Railroad followed shortly after by terminating all of their Chinese employees as well. By the fall of 1886, the Huston Hotel also had a new cook, a non-Chinese Mrs. Cornelius.

There are no further mentions of any Chinese residents in Tenino during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Tenino's buildings and railroads circa 1885.  
Northern Pacific Railroad map of Tenino.  
Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

# The Olympia and Tenino Railroad

Being left without rail service made the residents of Olympia, the territorial capital, upset. In a time when railroads meant growth and prosperity to communities, being passed by could be devastating.

While several sites, including Olympia, Port Gamble, Port Townsend, Bellingham, Mukilteo, and Seattle, were considered by the Northern Pacific Railroad during construction in 1872, by July 1873, the Northern Pacific Railroad Board announced their terminus would be at Tacoma. Having purchased inexpensive land near the south side of Commencement Bay, west of the existing Tacoma, they were able to create their own new city, briefly named New Tacoma, centered on their railroad and port. Eventually the two town sites would merge and become simply, Tacoma.

When word was announced that the railroad was going to Tacoma instead, Olympia's response was immediate. Rather than be left without a rail connection to the territorial capital, by late 1873 Olympians banded together with a dream of creating their own 15-mile railroad to Tenino, the closest point with a depot on the Northern Pacific line.

There were several starts and stops to this process, and it wouldn't be until 1878 that Olympia finally began rail service to Tenino using a less expensive narrow-gauge line. The Olympia and Tenino Railroad would connect on the north side of the depot while the Northern Pacific mainline track ran along the south.



*From Map of Puget Sound and Surroundings,  
by John Hanson, 1877.*

As this map from 1877 shows, Tenino was a major transportation junction, with the road from Grand Mound to the west, the road from Seatco (Bucoda) from the south, the Northern Pacific Railroad line from the south which went northeast to Tacoma, the old Military Road which went east to Yelm, the road across Scatter Creek going north to Tumwater and Olympia, and the new Olympia & Tenino Railroad track coming from the north to arrive at the Tenino depot next to the NPRR main line.

In 1881, the railroad's name was changed to Olympia & Chehalis Valley Railroad. In 1890, it became part of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad. The Northern Pacific Railroad moved its depot about a mile south and the old narrow-gauge line to Olympia was upgraded to standard gauge and relocated to the new Tenino Junction south of town. In 1914, the line was sold to the Northern Pacific Railroad, which opened their new Point Defiance Line from Tenino to Tacoma that year. Olympia's train service was then shifted to join the new line at East Olympia and the old track from Tumwater south was removed by 1916.

# The Blumauers

Blumauer Hill, south of Tenino, was named after members of the Blumauer family, who as J. Blumauer & Sons, and then as the Blumauer Brothers, owned several businesses in the area from the 1880s into the 1920s.

Born in Sulzberg, Germany (1827), Joseph Blumauer and his three brothers came to America, where his children were born in New York. Joseph went to California for the Gold Rush and eventually ended up in Portland, Oregon, engaged in the mercantile business, erecting the first brick building in that city.

In 1882, Joseph Blumauer purchased Fred Brown's general merchandise store in Tenino, and moved his family of three sons and three daughters into the Brown house in the small community of about 75 people. As Blumauer & Sons, he established several business ventures in Thurston County, including logging and real estate. Their Bucoda store was one of the largest north of Portland. During the 1890s, Joseph moved back to Portland with his daughters, leaving his sons to continue the family businesses in the area as the Blumauer Brothers.



Sol Blumauer became Tenino Postmaster in 1882 and his brother Isaac "Ike" Blumauer took over in 1884, while brother Sol began expanding the family businesses in nearby Seatco (Bucoda), becoming Postmaster there in 1888, with brother Ike following as Postmaster in 1897-1912.



By the early 1900s, they also had a large lumber mill on the western side of Blumauer Hill, as well as the Blumauer Hotel on Crowder Road. In 1913, the hill was subdivided into lots for sale as the "Blumauer Acre Tracts."

Ike Blumauer was President of the State Bank of Tenino when it folded in 1914. He was accused of larceny but was acquitted. The bank's failure was his last business in Tenino. Isaac and Sol would eventually return to Portland. The family is buried at the Beth Israel Cemetery in Portland.



*Blumauer Lumber Company  
at the western foot of Blumauer Hill.*

# Huston Hotel

*Portions originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

In 1872, when the Northern Pacific Railroad built their track to the Scatter Creek valley and stopped for the winter, they also built a temporary office/depot, water tank, and a turntable. Several men had been traveling along with the railroad crew, providing support, food, goods, and drink. These included Fred Brown and his partner Wakefield, and William "Billy" Huston and partner John McGrath.

After wintering in Tenino, in 1873, the railroad crew moved on to their final destination in Tacoma. By the time they left, Huston and McGrath had built a hotel adjacent to the Tenino depot, which served as a restaurant, saloon, and hotel for railroad travelers. McGrath moved on with the railroad to Tacoma where he built another hotel. Billy Huston stayed in Tenino and ran his "Huston Hotel" until the 1890s.



*Tenino in 1883 showing the Huston Hotel (left), the Depot, and the water tower.*

Tenino was the hub of transportation from the Columbia River at Kalama to Puget Sound at Tacoma, as well as providing road connection to Olympia, the territorial capital. Though its population was only about 75, it was also the junction of roads from south, west, north, and east. In 1878, the narrow gauge Olympia and Tenino Railroad finally linked the capital city to the Northern Pacific Railroad at Tenino.

The Huston Hotel was the social center of town in the 1870s and 1880s. Local historian Art Dwelley once wrote: "Billy Huston became noted for providing excellent hospitality, good food, an occasional all-night poker game, and 15 cent and 25 cent whiskey from the same barrel on the back porch."

The location of the first depot, a general store, and the Huston Hotel was near the intersection of what is now Park Avenue and Olympia Street in Tenino.



*1880s NPRR map overlaid on 21st century street map.*

About 1890, the town of Tenino was changing drastically. With the opening of the first sandstone quarry in 1889, the population exploded and things were moving. See “The 1890 Real Estate War” elsewhere in this book for more details.

What we do know is that the Huston Hotel was put on rollers, along with the depot and other buildings, and moved about a mile south to an area that would become known as Tenino Junction. About this time, Billy Huston appears to have sold his hotel and moved on himself.

Shortly thereafter, the old hotel, the oldest building in town after Fred Brown’s store and the original depot, was put back on rollers and moved to the new town center on Sussex Avenue. Tenino Junction lost its bid to become the new city center.

On Sussex Avenue, the building continued to serve as a hotel and boarding house for decades.

During the 1930s it was known locally as the Laningham Board House, after its owner, A. W. Laningham, but officially it was named the Hotel New Home.

In a 1935 edition of the Tenino Independent, it was said that pioneer resident Mr. Clowers could give you a tour in Laningham's hotel and "point out the old liquor room where all kinds of drinks were

served from the same barrel; in fact, he even indicated that he could find heel marks on the wall of the notorious little room."

Newspaper man and Tenino historian Art Dwelley in his book *Prairies and Quarries* wrote in 1989 that "Billy Huston's Hotel was one that returned uptown and was placed on Sussex Street where it is now part of Tenino True Value Hardware, and the oldest building in town."

To look for further evidence that the old run-down building on Sussex Avenue is

indeed the same structure as Billy Huston built in 1873, Mayor Wayne Fournier and City Historian Rich Edwards visited the site in 2019.

A sampling of old newspapers used as insulation on the second floor revealed that they were from 1881, which predates any building on Sussex Avenue, except the no longer extant Tilley house. This building must have been moved here. And, given the 1881 date, it was built before the sandstone quarries opened and other hotels sprung up. The most likely explanation is that the building, as remodeled as it is, is indeed the old Huston Hotel and thus the oldest building in Tenino.



*Hotel New Home on Sussex Avenue circa 1935.*



*The original Huston Hotel photo from 1883 overlaid on 2018 photo of the current hardware store building.*

# The Coming of the Quarry

When he was 18, Scottish-born Samuel Wesley Fenton (called Wes) became an apprentice in Ontario, Canada, working for Thomas Russell in 1879 as a brick and stone mason. During the course of his work for Russell, he was sent to Wisconsin to manage a contract at a limestone quarry near West Superior for the purpose of supplying arches being built over streets in St. Paul, Minnesota. There he met fellow quarryman, George N. VanTine.

Mr. VanTine heard that the Portland (Oregon) Hotel was going to be built in 1888, so he and Wes Fenton applied themselves to learning more about stone building in the Pacific Northwest. While the pair did not get the contract for the Portland Hotel, they did notice the scarcity of building stone in the Pacific Northwest. While traveling in the area, they stopped in Olympia, where they noticed the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) Hall was being trimmed with local sandstone. The partners then decided to find out where the local sandstone was being quarried. While in Olympia, they also interested W.D. Derrickson in helping to finance their quarry business.

From Olympia they rode south on the narrow-gauge Olympia & Tenino Railroad to the source of the sandstone at a small quarry near Plumb Station. After viewing the Manville Quarry, the source of sandstone for the I.O.O.F. Hall in Olympia, Fenton & VanTine determined that the site had little future possibility. They had stayed so long at the site that they missed the return train that day and stayed the night at the nearby home of Sam Spurlock where they noticed his fine sandstone fireplace. Sandstone that they were told came from south near the village of Tenino.

The next day, the two entrepreneurs boarded the train south toward Tenino instead of north toward Olympia. During their ride, conductor Fred Brown (who had also been the first merchant in Tenino in 1872, but had since sold his store to Joseph Blumauer in 1882) told them about local farmers hewing sandstone with axes from boulders just south of the town.

Wes and George examined several sites near Tenino and settled on a hillside just south of the railroad track and close to the train depot due to its good stone and proximity to railroad transportation. They leased the land from owner Charles Billings.

With a horse-powered derrick, they started the first quarry in Tenino in the fall of 1888. By the spring of 1889, the quarry was ready to ship the first sandstone from the VanTine Stone Company. The California Building of Tacoma and the Bailey Building of Seattle were among the first buildings built with the VanTine quarry stone.

By April 1889, VanTine was in Tacoma buying blocks and fixtures for two large derricks. He announced he would be doubling his work force due to the high demand for sandstone.

With orders rolling in, the quarry soon employed 30 men cutting rock and loading railroad cars.



*VanTine and Fenton Quarry circa 1890.*

Also in April 1889, their first competition opened the Eureka Quarry east of Tenino along the Old Military Road. Land was purchased from John Wherret by Mr. Pollock and Mr. Bruce. Under the direction of J. W. Derrickson, they hired a crew of 11 and a rail spur was constructed to benefit projects for the Northern Pacific Railroad, which had helped finance the venture.

The town's growth was such that an Olympia newspaper in June 1889, commented that "Tenino is putting on city airs – it now has a barber shop." It would also have its first Justice of the Peace appointed in December of that year.

In 1890, hoists were installed at the newly renamed VanTine and Fenton Quarry and the next year steam power replaced horse power.

Tenino had become a boom town.

# The 1890 Real Estate War

By the time the VanTine and Fenton Stone Company started shipping sandstone in early 1889, many more workers and their families were moving into the Tenino area. Housing was scarce in the suddenly booming town. Within a decade, the population would grow from barely 75 to more than 300.

Sometime after Stephen Hodgden's death in 1882, William Ragless purchased much of Hodgden's Donation Land Claim, and divided it into lots as an addition to Tenino. Ragless Street marks the boundary between the original 1873 Hodgden's Addition and Ragless's Addition plats.

In June 1889, The Washington Standard commented "Real estate prospects are constantly improving. The Ragless's addition has engaged the attention of several prospective buyers the past few days, and if the project they have in view is started, a veritable boom will speedily ensue."

Seeing the land rush, Tacoma businessmen, John Snyder and John Stevens, purchased the Donation Land Claim of pioneer Samuel Davenport. Davenport's claim was adjacent to Tenino, just west and southwest of Hodgden's original claim. They platted this land into lots for sale in August 1890.

The Tacoma businessmen, looking to cash in on the boom, were rumored to be working with their friends and business associates with the Northern Pacific Railroad (whose terminal and main depot was also in Tacoma). The fruit of this association was that the Tenino Depot, which had been in the same location (near the intersection of Olympia and Park) for almost two decades, was moved about a mile southwest so that it would be within the Davenport (now Snyder & Stevens Addition) land. Along with the relocation of the depot, several important businesses (including the Huston Hotel) were also rolled along to the new "West Tenino" or "Tenino Junction" as it would sometimes be called.

The next phase of the land rush battle is perhaps best told by T.F. Mentzer in the pages of the *Thurston County Independent* in 1935:

"In the 1890s the town was torn between two locations. Business buildings started springing up from the original junction center. Things were going well for the new town.

"Now the plot thickens. Joe SNYDER and J. B. STEVENS purchased the old Sam DAVENPORT donation claim and proceeded to start a town that would put the original place off the map. The spur to Olympia had been purchased by officials of the N. P. railway and they were interested in the real estate scheme. The name was changed to Port Townsend and Southern and the Tenino terminal was changed. The old right-of-way was abandoned, and the track laid along much the same line as the present double track. The SNYDER and STEVENS plat was laid out in opposition to the old Hodgden's Addition, the streets not being connected directly. (That accounts for the jog in the Highway at the west end of the business section).

“Part of the population of about five hundred souls decided to go to the new location and part preferred to stick. A hotel building was moved from the old to the new town, and several buildings constructed. The hotel was later moved back and is at present the one operated by A. W. LANINGHAM on Sussex Street. William RAGLESS, L. J. JOHNSON, George SUMPTION with T. F. MENTZER and others decided to hold the fort and girded themselves for battle.

“Mr. RAGLESS donated land for a school and park, and the first part of the wooden building torn down a few years ago was constructed. Stores and a bank came later and the abortive attempt to rend the town from its moorings went for naught.”

The layout of the Snyder and Steven’s plat is at a different angle than the original Tenino plat filed by Hodgden and the railroad, which is why there is an odd jog on Sussex Avenue at Ritter Street where the two plats collide.

The wandering old Huston Hotel would be moved back into the original plat, but its final home would be on Sussex Avenue where it stands today as the oldest building in Tenino, though much changed through extreme remodeling.

The attempt to create a town center southwest of the original Tenino center failed. The businesses along the Olympia and Central corridor expanded northward onto the new street named by William Ragless after his home county in England, Sussex. Sussex Avenue would become the new downtown for Tenino, and has remained so. It would become part of the Pacific Coast Highway from the 1910s to the 1950s, when the development along Sussex Avenue and Third Street, across both plats, would knit the city of Tenino together.



From the plat of Ragless's First Addition to Tenino, filed Thurston County Auditor on May 10, 1890.

# The Tenino Sandstone Quarries

After the founding of the VanTine Stone Company in 1888, the first sandstone was shipped out in early 1889. Following on VanTine and Fenton's success, that same year the Eureka Quarry opened just northeast of Tenino. Both quarries started hiring and Tenino experienced a major boom in population, rising from about 75 people to more than 300 within two years. It would continue to rise until Tenino became a city in 1906 with about 1,000 residents.

*The Washington Standard* in 1891, described the change from railroad junction to boom town this way: "One of the most progressive towns on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad between Portland and Olympia is the junction city of Tenino. It has taken a start within the past few months that is amazing to those who remember it as a mere way station, which had become moss covered from the somnolent nature of the few inhabitants who picked up an easy living from the business created by the transfer of passengers and freight at that point. A change was observed, however, when the capability of its magnificent quarry of building stone became developed. Soon as it was demonstrated that it was equal to any stone on the coast, without fissure or seam, and that it could be placed on railroad cars at minimum of expense, the prospect of Tenino brightened; but it was only when this impression was verified by the severest tests, actual production and use extending over sufficient time to give average results, that its future became a certainty and Tenino was assured to rank as one of the growing rival cities of the great artery of business connecting river and Sound."

Tenino sandstone, available in both a buff color and blue tone, was used for building construction up and down the west coast as well as in towns and cities in several western states. In addition to stone blocks and expert builders for construction, the quarries employed a number of skilled stone carvers to do ornamental work, including fireplaces and funerary monuments.

In 1902, Spokane's H.P. "Horse Power" Scheel, along with Ritzville banker Claus Clodius and Tenino quarryman William McArthur founded the Tenino Sandstone and Townsite Company. They purchased much of the Snyder and Steven's Addition to Tenino (originally Samuel Davenport's Donation Land Claim) with the idea of opening a new quarry on the west side of town and then selling lots to their employees as that side of town grew.

In 1903, they began quarrying sandstone. In 1907 they changed the company name to the Hercules Sandstone Company and the quarry became Hercules No. 1.

After more than two decades as a major sandstone producer, quarrying hundreds of thousands of tons of sandstone annually, at the beginning of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tenino saw a rapid decline in orders as cement and steel took over the construction industry.



*Gray's Harbor County Court House. Montesano, WA built 1911.*



*Tenino Stone Company facilities at their peak, circa 1910. Site now listed in the National Register of Historic Places.*

One of the Hercules Sandstone Company's attempts to find new uses for their product included the 1912 excavation of rubble stone for the Grays Harbor jetties which became known as The Big Blast. Having purchased the old Eureka quarry, they decided to use 43,000 pounds of blasting powder and 1,200 pounds of dynamite to break up a huge portion of the quarry to create large rubble stone that could be used to fulfill a government contract.

The resulting explosion was so large that it damaged the quarry buildings and railroad spur! But it did generate rubble which was then shipped to the jetties.

Operations at the Tenino Stone Company were suspended in 1913, though occasional work, such as producing holystones (for polishing wooden ship decks) continued as late as 1926.

The Hercules Sandstone Company took another gamble on jetty stone in 1915, when they purchased land and built a railroad track up the Skookumchuck River to a granite quarry (Hercules No. 6). Unfortunately, the United States entry into World War I ended up canceling the contract they had with the government, leaving the sandstone company with the huge debt of opening the new quarry. This resulted in the closing of the Hercules quarries.

In 1923, Andrew Wilson, one of the town's master masons, purchased Hercules Quarry No. 1 and renamed it Western Quarry. He operated it for occasional projects into the 1930s. In 1927, he provided stone for Camp Lewis buildings.

By 1935, the Tenino Stone Company's quarry, originally opened by Fenton and VanTine, had filled with water and despite the dangers of cables, timbers, and fallen derricks, it was being used by local kids as a swimming hole. In 1946, the city of Tenino purchased the old Tenino Stone Company quarry, and over the course of four years, turned it into a public swimming pool. It was dedicated in 1950, as the Tenino Memorial Pool, and is still a public swimming pool. The company's old office building serves the public too, as the Quarry House community center.

# The Big Blast of 1912

*Portions originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

Early one chilly morning on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1912, the men of the Hercules Sandstone Company and Dupont Powder Company went about checking and rechecking their work, poking their heads into the explosive-filled coyote holes dug deep into the hillside at Hercules Quarry #2 in Tenino. Though their breath hung in the air, the nervous sweat and tension hung heavier. These men were professionals, but few had ever attempted a blast of this magnitude, or with so many eyes watching. Meanwhile in Seattle, spectators and officials from the Army Corps of Engineers boarded a southbound train to Tenino. For them the day promised a bit of excitement, a front row seat, and the prospect of a celebratory meal afterward.

The actual feelings of the company men on that day are only imagined and lost to history, but it is not hard to presume what was at stake. The Hercules Sandstone Company was reaching a crossroad. In business it's all about supply and demand. If the world should no longer want what you offer, then it's time to innovate and try something new, radical even.



*Hercules Quarry Office.*

The bread and butter of Tenino-produced sandstone was its precision cut stone used in construction. But by 1910 steel girder construction, rising higher and higher into the skyline, relied on revolutionary on-site mixed concrete. Why pay to have stone cut and shipped when it was more economical to bring in a rotary mixer and cheaper concrete? Hercules Sandstone needed to find a new market and possibly a new product.

The Army Corps of Engineers announced its need for large sandstone boulders to be used on a jetty at Grays Harbor. Hercules Sandstone Company put in a successful bid and consequently purchased a quarry off of Old Military Road, formerly owned by the Eureka Stone Company. The newly-purchased quarry was dubbed Hercules Quarry #2. The plan was to produce 375,000 tons of large, rough boulders to be delivered to Grays Harbor. Blasting was thought to be the most efficient way to get the job done.

As Scott McArthur, grandson of Hercules Superintendent William McArthur, wrote in his book *Tenino Washington: The Decades of Boom and Bust*, "This was the first rubble stone contract entered into by the Hercules Sandstone Company and marked the beginning of the end for the company."

At Hercules Quarry #2 they dug 1,400 linear feet of 3-foot-wide tunnels known as coyote holes. Blasting experts from Dupont, Washington's Dupont Powder Company wired and packed the tunnels with 43,100 pounds of black powder and 1,200 pounds of 60-percent dynamite.

The *Centralia Weekly Chronicle* wrote, "The blast will be the biggest event in the history of Tenino and the city is preparing to entertain several thousand visitors on that day."

When the train from Seattle arrived loaded with spectators, there were also, among the lookers-on, reporters and a camera crew from the Motion Picture Advertograph Company of Tacoma. Scott McArthur wrote, "Folks in Tenino were warned to take all their fragile possessions down off the shelf. At 2:25 o'clock that afternoon, Major J.B. Cavanaugh of the Army Corps of Engineers.... pressed the electric button. The charge was fired."



*Hercules Quarry No. 2 (Formerly Eureka Quarry).*

Some accounts say it was the largest single explosion in Washington State history. *The Seattle Daily Times* wrote "What probably was the biggest single blast ever discharged in the United States took place at the Hercules quarry at Tenino this afternoon, when more than 500,000 tons of sandstone were broken up by a single charge of 50,000 black powder and dynamite."

It may be that some newspapers of the time were prone to exaggeration, for *The Morning Olympian* wrote, "its most unique feature was the almost absolute absence of any noise or concussion. The load was so arranged by expert engineers that the noise and danger was minimized, scientific care being exercised by everyone employed."

The town shook and a huge cloud of smoke and dust arose in the air. The railroad spur leading to the quarry was buried under rubble and holes up to 10 feet in diameter were punched in the quarry's buildings.

While the blast was exciting the ensuing official celebration attended by 102 persons is also notable. McArthur wrote: "25 men--only one from Tenino--were listed as giving speeches. The dinner menu was a monument to boosterism. It featured: Olympia Oysters (Cocktailed with Tenino Booster Spirit), Consommé A La Sandstone, Chicken (with Hercules Sandstone Noodles), Cold Roast (with Sea Board Oil), Browned Potatoes (with crushed Steel), Celery and Lettuce (Grown on Mount Mullaney), Lemon Pie (Keithahn Cream with DuPont Powder Cakes), Tea, Coffee, Wine and Homespun Cigars (Of Hercules Strength)."

While everyone was impressed with the events of the day, 40 percent of the blasted stone was crushed beyond usefulness for the jetty project and the expense of cleanup didn't help matters. Despite everything, the Hercules Sandstone Company still managed to deliver 387,000 tons of stone from 1912 to 1913. Still, when the time came, the contract for the Grays Harbor jetty was not renewed.

Subsequent government projects of this nature were not enough in the long run to sustain Hercules. Hercules Sandstone would try to replicate this sort of project again in 1915, by building a railroad spur and opening Hercules Quarry #6 on a granite deposit up the Skookumchuck River valley. In January of 1916, with World War I underway, government funds were frozen and such projects were suspended. The high investment costs and the suspension of the government project put an end to the Hercules Sandstone Company.



*Aftermath.*

# Washington Monument Stone

In the winter of 1910, William Douglas Johns of Seattle, a member of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), toured the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. He was intent on viewing the Stones of the States, especially the stone of his home state, Washington.

The Washington Monument, along its stairs, has commemorative stones placed by all the states as well as various organizations. But Mr. Johns found no stone for Washington State! He then visited with Senator Poindexter, who was also a Son of the American Revolution, to discuss the matter.

Senator Poindexter contacted the Secretary of War, under whose jurisdiction the monument fell. His inquiry was answered by the Washington National Monument Association, who sent along a copy of the correspondence they had written to Governor Hay of Washington State, asking for such a stone, along with his reply.

The Governor's reply was that the issue must wait until 1913, since the state legislature had adjourned and would not be back in session until then and they would be needed to appropriate the funds for such a stone.

Apparently, a number of western states had not yet sent stones and the Association decided to send letters to the states of Colorado, Idaho, Oklahoma, and Texas, as well as Washington.

The request from the Association listed the requirements that the stone must be funded and approved by the state government in order to be official. And that it "should be a stone native of Washington, of the most durable character, and should be of the following dimensions - four feet long, two feet wide, and six inches in thickness." They noted "the tablet may be engraved with the State name, its coat of arms, and such emblem, motto, or patriotic inscription, as may be selected to give it character."

In 1913, the SAR's Washington State society appointed Mr. Johns as chairman of their committee to visit the legislature and lobby for the appropriation for the stone. In March 1913, the legislature passed the appropriation bill for \$500 for "the purpose of placing a memorial stone in the Washington National Monument."

Governor Lister then signed the bill and the project advanced.



In April 1914, the stone was cut and carved in Tenino from local Tenino sandstone. News reports in March said "the quarries of the Tenino district having joined together to supply and engrave the slab." There is no known record of which quarry or stone carver supplied the stone or carving. The quarries in the district would have been the Tenino Stone Company and the Hercules Sandstone Company. Several newspaper accounts refer to it as the "Tenino gift."

The finished stone, weighing 600 pounds, was shipped to Washington D.C. in June 1914.

The date of October 1, 1914, was chosen for its installation ceremony to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Washington State's adoption of its constitution. On this date, more than 200 Washingtonians gathered to see the unveiling.

The event was presided over by Miles Poindexter, Washington State's junior senator and Franklin K. Lane, formerly of Tacoma, Secretary of the Interior, representing Governor Lister. President Woodrow Wilson released all federal department employees from Washington State to attend. The Chaplain to the U.S. Senate, Reverend F. J. Prettyman gave the invocation.

The decorations included fir and rhododendrons sent from Washington State. The engineers' band played. The stone removed from the monument to make place for the new sandstone piece had been broken into bits which were distributed as souvenirs. Tenino's own master mason, Andrew Wilson, installed the stone.

Remarks from Governor Lister were read:

"That the state of Washington has not heretofore been represented in the monument is explained by the fact that in a vast new Western state, such as is ours, men have been rather too busily engaged in the task of practical building to give much thought or attention to the sentimental things. The placing of the stone that is today unveiled is, first of all, an act of sentiment. The stone itself means no more than does any other stone. But the spirit that inspired the building of the great shaft of which it now forms a part - the spirit that has already led most of the states of the Union to place slabs of their native rock within the monument - has real significance.

"The stone unveiled today, which with the stones to which it now becomes companion, represents the sterling manhood and womanhood that have made the state of Washington great and will make it still greater, and that has placed the United States in the position of leadership among nations.

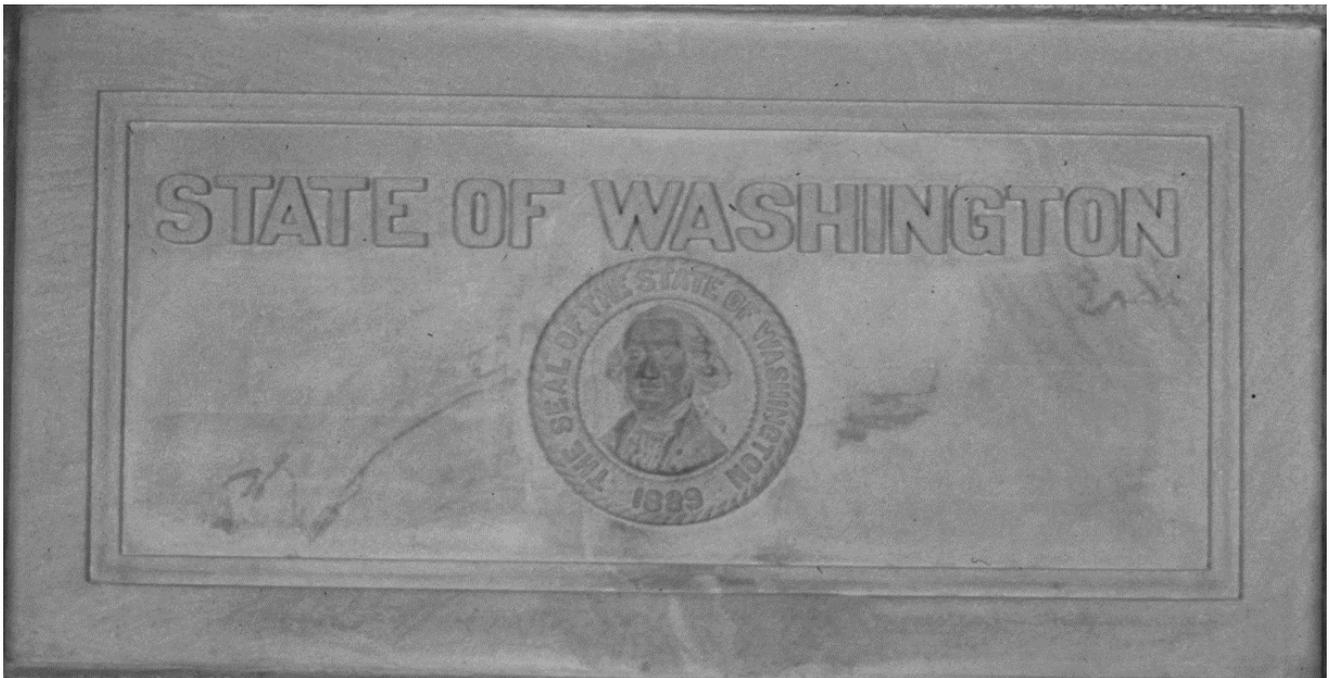
"I am pleased, indeed, and I am sure every citizen of the great state of Washington will be gratified in knowing that our state today takes its proper representation in connection with an institution which typifies Americanism as does the Washington monument."

Also speaking were Senator Jones and General John M. Wilson, "the oldest living West Pointer from Washington State, who was present when the cornerstone of the Washington monument was laid." Others speaking included Representatives Johnson, Humphrey, La Follette, Falconer, and Bryan.

The stone itself was unveiled by Miss Hazel Jones, the 16-year-old daughter of Senator Wesley L. Jones. The stone was then accepted by Colonel W. W. Hart on behalf of the Washington Monument Association.

After the event, it was reported by Olympia's *The Washington Standard* that "Each elective state official now has on his desk a small piece of the stone from which the Washington state monument recently erected at the national capital, was cut, these officers having paid the freight charges on the stone to Washington, D. C., while it was donated by the Tenino stone interests."

The Tenino sandstone representing Washington State can be visited at the 310 foot level of the Washington Monument.



*The Washington State Stone. Courtesy of the National Park Service.*

# Chaenn Hill

*Portions originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

Early travel into Washington Territory was on the Cowlitz Trail. To avoid mountain passes, hopeful pioneers moved west along the Columbia River, then loaded onto canoes and barges to go up the Cowlitz river to Cowlitz Landing (near present day Toledo). From there they used the old Hudson's Bay trail, which used an earlier Native American trail, to go overland north across the Cowlitz Prairie to the area that is now Centralia, then along Ground Mound Prairie to Tenino. Then at the trail junction used by the Simmons-Bush party in 1845, many traveled on north to Olympia and Tumwater. This route would be considered by many to be an extension of the Oregon Trail.

On the last stretch of the Cowlitz Trail from Tenino to Olympia, just north of where Old Highway 99 bridges Scatter Creek, is a particularly notorious hill called Chaenn Hill.

## How's that spelled?

Chain Hill (Section 7, Township 16N, Range 1W), as it's often referred to, has been spelled numerous ways. As is often the case with Tenino place names, there were several stories as to why it was named Chain Hill. One tale told was that in olden days they needed to use extra chains to pull the ox carts up and over the hill.

Alternative spellings of Chane, Chein, or Chaen suggested some other origin for the name, though. As it turns out with many place names, the hill was named after an early settler. In this case, Charles Chaenn.

## Biography of Charles Chaenn

Charles Chaenn was born as Jean Charles Thiabaud Tschaenn in France on January 24, 1839. He was born in the region known as Haut Rhin (Upper Rhine), which in 1871, was annexed by Germany during the Franco-Prussian War. French citizens in that region were given the choice to become German citizens or leave. Those that left were known as the *Orphans* (Orphans). Tschaenn was one of these. He left the region, and France, and arrived in Texas where a few years later he met Marie Zoe Bertrand, another French émigré, and they married in 1876.

By 1878, the couple had relocated to Washington Territory and resided in the capitol of Olympia, where Charles Tschaenn declared his intent to become an American citizen. After he became a citizen in Thurston County court in 1883, he spelled his name Chaenn.

On July 9, 1884, Charles Chaenn and his wife Zoe purchased 80 acres from Avery Gilmore for \$600. These 80 acres were a large portion of a hill just north of Tenino which had been the cause of travelers' woes for decades.

### Name Variants

Due to the odd spelling of Chaenn, the hill's name has been written many ways over the years, including: Chain, Chane, Chein, Chaen. Charles usually spelled his name Chaenn.



*His signature from a receipt dated  
Sept 12, 1887.*

Charles and Zoe also bought a building on the outskirts of Olympia in 1885, and opened a saloon known as the "First and Last Chance Saloon" and "Halfway House." Zoe would often run afoul of the law for selling liquor illegally. Charles and Zoe went their separate ways and eventually had a very messy divorce in territorial court. Charles retained his farm, though the saloon property was repossessed.

The last known mention of Zoe was in 1890, when she was running another saloon in Olympia. By the late 1890s, Charles had moved to Seattle where he was working as a gardener for the Wittlers. There he met another servant, Lisette Schmidt, and they were married in 1900, after which the newlyweds moved down to the Chaenn farm near Tenino.



*Chaenn Hill Farm.*

Sadly, for Charles, Lisette was not happy with him and farm life in Thurston County. After a short time, she left the farm and Charles. About that marriage, during the divorce proceedings Charles said: "We were married nine months before she went away. During the time we lived together we occupied the same bedroom and bed until her son told me that she was married five times before and wouldn't behave herself; and she complained that I married her to

sleep with her and I said then 'I will make my own bed.' That was about three or four weeks after I was married. From that on I made my own bed and slept in it."

Lizette filed for divorce in King County in 1902, asking for alimony since Charles had money and land. Charles responded by accusing Lizette of drinking, spending money on drink not food, not being a good wife, arguing all the time, breaking his things, and finally leaving him, selling her dog, getting drunk in Tenino with a drunken man, and then deserting him. He said he does not believe in divorce and she could come home any time but that he had no money and could not pay her.

By 1904, Charles was elderly and unhealthy. "I was poisoned in a Japanese Restaurant in Seattle on the 3rd of July 1904, and came very near dying, Dr. Kincaid attending me and saving my life. That I was compelled by reason of such poisoning to remain in the hospital until my funds were all exhausted, and I have been sick ever since. That I am afraid I will have to seek charity before the winter is past."

His woes continued in 1905. Thurston County Superior Court issued an order for temporary alimony to Lizette, which Charles failed to pay. He was then arrested and brought before the court where he stated "I am an old man 66 years and past and am in very poor health. Since last July I have not been able even to take care of myself let alone my little ranch. I cannot do any work on the ranch of any kind and am entirely dependent upon the ranch for my living."

About 1907, in failing health, he befriended the Blue family. Wilbur and Margaret Blue and family had moved to Tenino about 1904, when Wilbur left Seattle City Light to work as an electrician in the Tenino Stone Company's quarry. In 1909, Charles signed over his 80-acre farm to Wilbur Blue for \$1 with the understanding that the Blues would care for him until his death. Charles Chaenn died on March 4, 1910 and was buried in a pauper's grave with no headstone at county expense in Olympia's Forest Cemetery.

### **Wagons, Trains, and Automobiles**

The grade of Chaenn Hill has been altered over the years. At one time the old road was both narrow and steep and well known for accidents. The new road, constructed about 1920, was called the Pacific Coast Highway and is now known as Old Highway 99. Its construction rerouted the ascent so the hill was less treacherous to travelers.

Art Dwelley in his book *Prairies and Quarries* has this to say about the hill:

"It was a hard, lonely, and secluded life in the first years of settlement. Roads were poor and going to "town", the nearest being Tumwater, was a major project. One of the most dangerous and difficult stretches of the road was Chaen Hill. Described as a 'terror', by one pioneer woman, the old road was steep and often required an extra team of oxen to negotiate. (The old wagon road was located to the east of the present highway....)."



*A team of oxen logging on Chaenn Hill.*

In the 1850s, Stephen Hodgden established a stage coach or horse station at his farm which became referred to on the route from Olympia to the Cowlitz as Hodgden's Station. The quickest route from Hodgden Farm to Olympia was over Chaenn Hill.

When the Olympia and Tenino Railroad was built in 1878, it bypassed Chaenn Hill altogether, possibly because of the grade. Heading south, the train deviated away from Old Highway 99 by Offut Lake Road, heading toward McDuff Road, where it takes up the route of the modern BNSF railroad to Tenino. Even with this route change, the Olympia to Tenino train journey was a notoriously bumpy ride.

This isn't to say that there was never a train on Chaenn Hill. More than one small spur was constructed on the top of Chaenn Hill to aid the logging companies, specifically, the Olympia Logging Company and Hartson-Otis Lumber Company.

Long before the Pacific Highway or Old 99 was completed, cars took to the road in rural Thurston County. In 1914, Tenino's streets were paved, but the paved highway didn't arrive until around 1920,

which made travel over Chaenn Hill treacherous for the automobile commuter. Prominent Tenino citizen William McArthur got his first automobile in 1913, a 30-horsepower 1912 EMF touring car. His grandson, Scott McArthur, humorously recounts the journey over Chaenn Hill in his book, *Tenino, Washington: The Decades of Boom and Bust*.



*Newly paved Highway 99 going over Chaenn Hill,  
part of the Pacific Coast Highway.*

“The worst part of the road between Olympia and Tenino was Chaen Hill. This section of road has been realigned since then. It was a steep hill. Before the railroad came, teams hauling timber and farm goods to Olympia would double-team going up the grade. It was the scene of a number of accidents. Chaen Hill was quite a pull for the automobiles of the day. Some cars didn’t have fuel pumps. Gas flowed by gravity from the gas tank, which generally was under the front seat, to the carburetor. If the car was heading up a really steep hill, gas wouldn’t flow to the engine and the engine could stall. In that case, those

people backed up the hill in reverse gear. Other cars had trouble making it with a full load. William McArthur would make the kids get out and walk up the hill while he drove. But going the other way he was afraid the mechanical brakes might fail so he would make the kids get (out) of the car and walk to the bottom of the hill where he would pick them up again.”

The newly paved road in the 1920s became part of the Pacific Coast Highway and with the new boom in automobile travel, Tenino became a highway center with hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and booming business. With the closing of the quarries by the 1920s, the highway would become Tenino’s main business focus for decades, until the building of Interstate 5, which routed traffic several miles west of Tenino causing a decline in almost all businesses in town.

### **Restoring the Chaenn Name**

In 2022, after an application from the Tenino City Historian, supported by the Tenino City Council and local citizens, the misspelling of Chain Hill, which had been spelled many ways over the decades, was corrected. The spelling “Chaenn Hill” was approved by the Washington State Committee on Geographic Names, the Washington State Board of Natural Resources, and finally by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.

# The Tenino Massacre

## March 10, 1908

In Forest Grove Cemetery, just off the Gate 3 Road in Annex 1, lies a monument to the McKay family. Cemetery records list that the whole family died in March of 1908, in a fire. But the monument that was placed many years later tells a different story.



*William Warren McKay*

Warren McKay's cold body was found by two men on their way to work on a trail into Tenino. He was wearing only his underclothes and no sign of injury could be seen on his body. The men notified the Marshal who went to tell Mrs. Ann Currie McKay the sad news that her husband was dead. When he arrived, a gruesome scene unfolded. The Marshal found Ann McKay and two of her children, 7-year-old Gladys and 4-year-old Wallace, with their throats cut by a razor. A third child, 6-year-old Dorothy McKay had her head smashed by a hammer. It was quickly surmised that the family had been attacked by Warren in a murder-suicide.

William Warren McKay was born in Ontario, Canada on March 13, 1870. He and Annie Currie were married in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1899, and moved to Tenino.

Warren's older sister, Lexie Jane McKay, had married Annie's uncle, Peter Currie, in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan in 1887. Sometime after their marriage, Peter and Lexie moved to Washington State where Peter was listed as a logger in 1892.

Peter later became a rancher. He and his brother-in-law, Albert Wilson, were convicted of cattle rustling, bribery and attempting to bribe members of their jury in 1905. J.F. McCorkle discovered one of his missing cattle on the old Ragless farm in Tenino, which was leased to Peter and Albert. He suspected that more of his missing cattle were there also. The men were sentenced to three years, but were awaiting retrial, out on bond in the amount of \$3,000 each, paid by William McArthur. It was noted in the *Morning Olympian* that his wife Lexie was distraught by the verdict.

On June 6, 1905, Peter Currie was staying at the home of Harry Griffith on the Chehalis River. Peter had been drinking heavily, ever since his conviction. He was put to bed and in good spirits. In the morning at about 5:30, Peter got up, said some pleasant things to Griffith's wife, and had a glass of water. He then took the



*Peter and Lexie Currie*

son's rifle, stepped back into the bedroom, put the rifle under his chin and pulled the trigger. He died instantly leaving his wife Lexie and two of his children in Tenino. Everyone was so surprised by this event that there was a theory that Peter had been drinking and playing with a gun and unintentionally pressed the trigger. When William McArthur heard the news, he withdrew his bonds. Lexie was so distraught during the funeral that she fainted several times. Peter Currie is buried in Tenino.

The McKays had lived in Tenino on and off since their marriage. In 1905, Warren sold his Tenino home and moved back to Sault Sainte Marie, presumably with his family (around the time of Peter's death) and moved back to Tenino in 1907. Annie, it was said, wanted to go back to Michigan where her parents still lived.



*Ann Currie McKay*

Reportedly, Warren McKay had been suffering with cancer of the face which had begun to eat away at his brain. It is entirely possible that the reality of his imminent death and that his family would not be provided for preyed upon his mind. This, coupled with the cancer affecting his sanity, plausibly led him to the acts of violence upon his family.

Warren was only a quarter of a mile from his home when he collapsed and died. It was assumed that he had poisoned himself.

Dorothy McKay, whose head had been crushed by a hammer, sat in bed, still alive, next to her dead sister. She not only survived but went to live with her Aunt Lexie Jane McKay. An article that came out at the time of the funeral stated that Dorothy who "narrowly escaped death from the blows on the head is doing very well and it is now thought she will fully recover. Her mind does not appear to be at all affected by the wounds or the trying experience." However, a later family story states that Dorothy used to have nightmares about a hooded stranger.

At first, Annie McKay's family wanted to have the remains of the family shipped back to Sault Sainte Marie, but then it was decided to have them buried at Forest Grove where Annie's Uncle Peter Currie was also buried.

The March 13, 1908, *Olympia Record* described the burial: "The bodies of the mother and daughter are in one casket, the child in her mother's arms, and the father and son in the second casket, occupying similar positions. The bodies show little sign of the terrible death they met and the burial scene looks peaceful and almost beautiful."

Dorothy died in 1980, and was interred with her family at Forest Grove Cemetery and the monument (shown below) was installed.



*Ann Currie McKay with her children Dorothy, Wallace, and Gladys.  
Photo courtesy of Mary Kowatch.*



*Monument at the Forest Grove Cemetery, Tenino.*

# Incorporation

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Tenino was continuing to experience the growth that had occurred throughout the 1890s. Added to the population increase, new businesses and new technologies were expanding quickly. In response to these changes, many of the citizens of the growing town wanted to improve services for the residents and local businesses. Fire, and the lack of a fire department, was a major concern.

Tenino's first attempt to incorporate occurred in December 1903, when a number of prominent local citizens petitioned the Board of Thurston County Commissioners to become a "municipal corporation of the fourth class." The petition claimed the area to be contained within the city limits had a population of 370 inhabitants. The first name on the list was S. W. Fenton, owner of the Tenino Stone Company and included many of the town's luminaries: T. J. McClellan, George Sumption, John Tweed, Aaron Webster, George VanTine, H. H. Gilmore, Robert McArthur, J. D. Jonis, and H. J. Keithahn.

However, there were opponents to incorporation who felt it would just create another layer of taxing government. This opposition was led by T. F. Mentzer, an attorney who owned a large mill just east of the town. A "remonstrance signed by those opposed" was also provided to the Board.

In February 1904, the Board considering the petition, which had been signed by 63 citizens, was made aware by the opposition that at least 5 of the signers of the petition actually did not live within the proposed boundaries and that some signers had also signed the opposition's remonstration document. After a hearing and further discussion, the Board declared that the petition did not contain the requisite number of names and therefore rejected the petition.

The next few years brought a lot of change to the residents of the area. Electric power production was started. A water supply system was planned. A telephone exchange was created. There was talk of paving the streets for the fast-growing number of automobiles, and of creating better sidewalks for pedestrians. The desire for local fire and police protection was also a local issue.

By December 1905, the *Washington Standard* reported that the growing area of Tenino had a population of 800! By January 1906, the *Washington Standard* was reporting that Tenino was again making an effort to incorporate.

In May 1906, the *Tenino News* published a legal notice of the preliminary steps to, once again, try to incorporate.

Once again, there were supporters and opponents. The *Washington Standard* reported "a large delegation of citizens of that little burg were present and insistent" upon a vote being held. Opposition, this time led by John McDonald, filed a remonstrance signed by about 40 protestants. This time the petition to incorporate included 93 names, including 40 property owners.

The newspapers reported "lively arguments between opposing factions" that "waxed exceedingly warm" before the county commissioners. It was voiced that without incorporation there would be no public water supply, no fire hydrants, and no fire department, without which most insurance companies would not issue fire insurance. Arson had occurred twice in June and was thought to be linked to opponents of incorporation. The county sheriff appointed John Van Norman as a deputy to keep watch on Tenino. The opposition was cast as being overly concerned with "visionary theories and petty jealousies."

This time the Board of Thurston County Commissioners decided to authorize a vote, appointing William McArthur and Angus Campbell as Judges and T. F. Mentzer as Inspector, for the election to be held on July 19, 1906. The voting would also include an election of the town's first officers, should the proposition carry.

During July, public meetings were held in which many "attended in a body to fight it." *The Tenino News* reported, "The caucus Saturday night at times waxed strenuous." They went on to say, "In fact, the spirit for incorporation is probably stronger today than ever before in the history of the town, and the opposition seems to be weakening very materially as it develops that there are no personal interests that will be benefitted other than the public good, and in fact it would seem the height of folly to reject it when we would receive thereby about \$2,700 from saloon licenses, and about \$800 from poll and road tax money that we do not now get...and a very snug sum for other licenses, and all this without one cent of additional taxes." To placate large business owners who were concerned, the local mills and quarries would be excluded from the city limits, excepting their yards.

Incorporation passed by 76 to 36 votes at the election held on July 19<sup>th</sup>. As to new officers, there was only one party on the ballot, the "People's Ticket" which listed H. J. Keithahn for Mayor, L. J. Miller for Treasurer, and Fred Spencer, George Sumption, Harry Richards, W. H. Waddell, and Hardy Ogle for the first city councilmen.

On July 24, 1906, the Thurston County Commissioners approved the election and incorporation. Another election was scheduled for December 1906, to begin a cycle of regularly elected officials, which continues to this day.



*Tenino's first Mayor and  
City Council, 1906*

*Left to Right:*

Back Row:

Henry Keithahn, Mayor

T. F. Mentzer

Claude LaClide

Seated:

Harry Richards

Arthur Waddell

Hardy Ogle

George Sumption

Fred Spencer

# A Retrospective on Tenino Schools 1862-1922

*Reprinted from the 1922 Tenino High School Tehisco annual.*

## COAL BANK PRECINCT



*Coal Bank School, later the Colvin School.*

Coal was first discovered in Washington here in this vicinity in 1853, so to any one who is an "old settler" here the word "Coal Bank" brings a flood of recollections and a flow of reminiscences. For away back in the days of Indian wars and early explorers, this part of the territory was known as "Coal Bank Precinct," and to this locality the settlers came from many miles distant to vote and transact public business.

Public records show us that very soon after

Washington was organized as a territory a school was established here; and two days after Christmas in 1862 the settlers met at the home of E. K. Sears, selected a site for a school on the Sears' claim, and began the building of the first school house in this part of the county, then known as "Coal Bank" or District No. 18. There was still only a house or two within the present limits of Tenino and the children all went to Coal Bank.

A. S. Yantis, E. K. Sears, H. Mize, A. Webster, Wm. Martin, J. Gibson, and I. Colvin are among the names of those who appear on the record as active in making these early educational beginnings; and to these and others with them should be given a meed of praise for their splendid work. For from that day till this the children have never been allowed to be entirely without school advantages. Sometimes equipment was meagre, or the term short, or the teacher a poor one, but a school of some sort was always sustained.

They only had seventy-eight dollars with which to run the school the first year; and for many years only three months of instruction were provided. Teachers those days got but \$25 per month and "boarded around," for each child drew only 20c to 40c of public money annually in the '70's [1870s], whereas today [1922] they draw \$30 each and there are so many more of them now. Indians as well as white children attended and sat at the long, home-made, box-like school desks.

## EARLY TENINO DAYS

As time went on, new settlers appeared one by one where Tenino now stands. F. R. Brown started the first little store here and gradually a tiny village appeared. Then came the Railroad, which reached as far north as Tenino in 1873. At that time, Jay Cooke, the great Philadelphia banker who was building

the road, failed, bringing on the panic of that year. Construction on the road stopped for some time, leaving Tenino the northern terminal with a depot and roundhouse. The town took on some life and its permanency became thoroughly established.

The main street at that time extended east and west and was two blocks south of the present business section. The depot was south of the Citizens Bank corner. Here too, was the hotel (now the Laningham house), a rendezvous for all the jolly spirits, and conducted by Mr. Huston, the jolliest of them all. The Tenino hotel now stands near what was then the center of town, and close by are two or three little "shacks", then used as barber shop, shoe shop, saloon, etc. The depot, railroad Y, and round-house were all near at hand and the Tilly home two blocks north still stands an example of one of the better houses of the time.

It was about the year 1878 that the old "coal bank" district was divided, making a separate district for the northern portion, with a new school house at Tenino Proper.



TENINO'S FIRST SCHOOL—1890

That was the first school house within the present district boundaries, a picture of which is shown at the beginning of this article. It stood near the old oak tree in the present city park. Many of our present citizens recall it and some of them attended there.

Then came the construction of the narrow-gauge road to Olympia, financed by Olympia capital. For when the Northern Pacific was

finally extended it did not go to the Capitol City. They were hence bitterly disappointed and determined not to be ignored. They put up a plucky fight at that time for "a place in the sun" and they won. Following this in the later '80's came the opening of the quarries which put Tenino "on the map" as a lively junction town backed by a splendid industry. Here all passengers changed from the main line to the Port Townsend Southern. And here both Pres. Hayes and Pres. Harrison spoke to the assembled citizens at the depot. At this time the town had become a regularly plotted municipality of about 1,000 population.

By the year 1890 the school population had increased so much that a new building was necessary, so the older west half of the present building was constructed and first occupied in 1891-92. The stairways were then in the west end under the bell, with the second-floor landing in the present laboratory. At first only the two lower rooms were used and Mrs. Peterson and Mr. Olivie were the mentors.



*Tenino school, circa 1910.*

This building answered every purpose till fourteen years ago when the east half of the building was added, and high school work was done for the first time. During that year (1908-9) there were fourteen high school students enrolled, nine of whom went through the year. There were only four subjects taught and only the ninth grade attempted.

Those were in the days of C. L. Martin, who was for ten years Principal of our School system. He was followed in 1917 by Mr. Barber, who remained two years, and following Prof. Barber was Supt. Gwin, who remained for a like period. All of these gentlemen are still doing valiant services in the schools of the state.

Again in 1917 the congested condition of the schools made it imperative that more room be provided, so the present primary building and the gymnasium were added to the school plant. And now, with 106 enrolled in the high school and 242 in the grades, we find the buildings are equipped again wholly inadequate.

The first class to graduate from high school was in 1913, and each year since then a class has been ready to receive their diplomas and step forth to higher institutions of learning or to face the world and its problems.

# Ticknor School

*Listed on the National Historic Register*

*Originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

Nestled below the forest of the Tenino City Park and next to the Tenino Depot Museum is a one room schoolhouse called Ticknor School. It's worth a visit to Tenino to experience the best interactive one-room schoolhouse in Thurston County, complete with desks and a pot belly stove. The school began its life serving a remote pioneer farming community out on the Skookumchuck Valley Road.

## Settling the Valley

The Skookumchuck Valley with its fertile river land was attractive to early settlers who were looking to take advantage of the Donation Land Claim Act. Land that was easy to farm not only made subsistence survival easier, but also contributed to the fulfillment of the Donation Land Claim Act's requirements which was to cultivate and live on the land for four years to own it outright.

Some of the early settlers of Skookumchuck Valley were the Frost, Davis, Prince, Yantis, Northcraft and Ticknor families. Many of these families had children who attended Ticknor School and many of their descendants still live in the valley.

Ticknor School is named for Joel and Elizabeth (Ford) Ticknor. Lizzie Ford came out west with her parents, Sidney and Nancy Ford in 1845, as a tiny four-year old and settled on Ford's Prairie near Centralia. She spent her childhood in the wild Pacific Northwest learning to ride ponies bareback, playing with the Native American children and learning their language. She married Joel Ticknor when she was 15 years old and moved to their homestead Donation Land Claim of 320 acres out the Skookumchuck Valley. Joel, though a farmer, served during the Indian Wars of 1855-1856. Joel and Elizabeth had 10 children.

Life out the Skookumchuck Valley could be lonely and remote, as it's a road to nowhere. Because of this, folks out the valley kept the one-room schoolhouse system going when its era was elsewhere past.

## Life of a One-Room Schoolhouse

Accounts within the museum do not agree regarding the historical timeline of the Ticknor School. What is fact is that the current Ticknor School was constructed next to the present Skookumchuck Fire Station around 1932.



*Display in the Ticknor Schoolhouse.*

Before the construction of the Ticknor School, there are tales of classes in various homes: in Flora Turvey's kitchen on Coal Road, in the attic of Jonathan Prince, and at the Davis home on Skookumchuck Road. The first Ticknor School was built in 1883 across the street from the grange hall. One story is that the original school was burned and rebuilt in 1912, and then the second school burned, leading to the construction of the third. Another story is that the original school was actually moved in 1896 to the location next to the fire hall. In photographs, the two buildings do look remarkably similar with the later addition of windows. After the fire in 1932 the Ticknor School was rebuilt. It was closed in 1936, when consolidated into Stony Point.



*Second Ticknor School.*



*Abandoned Ticknor School in the 1990s.*

The one-room schoolhouse was a way of life for many pioneer children. The school terms were shorter than they are today and ranged in length from three to five months of the year.

What was expected of a teacher in a one-room schoolhouse went well beyond modern job descriptions. Teachers were expected to haul firewood for the little pot belly stove and act as janitor. Some made soup for the children on the wood stove. Students ranged in age from six to twelve or fifteen years old with subjects covering first through eighth grade levels. A teacher needed to be dynamic enough to accommodate them all.

Teachers were also generally unmarried and boarded with a neighboring family. The quality of the boarding situation was possibly more important than the salary. Poor boarding was most likely the cause of more than one school's inability to retain teachers. Regardless of the situation, it was uncommon for a teacher to remain at a school for more than a couple of years. If they didn't marry, they moved around from school to school, sometimes just down the road.

Schools were only four or five miles apart since, before the advent of school buses, many of the students had to walk to school. Without plumbing or electricity, amenities in most schools often included a pot belly stove for heat and an outhouse.

With original schoolhouse features still intact, the South Thurston County Historical Society worked tirelessly to preserve and move the Ticknor School to the Tenino Depot Museum grounds. Extensive fundraising and donations of time and equipment enabled the school to begin its journey. In addition to the move, the school required a new roof.

On Sunday, August 18, 2002, the Ticknor School was moved over the span of six hours from 5405 Skookumchuck Valley Road to the site of the Tenino Depot Museum.

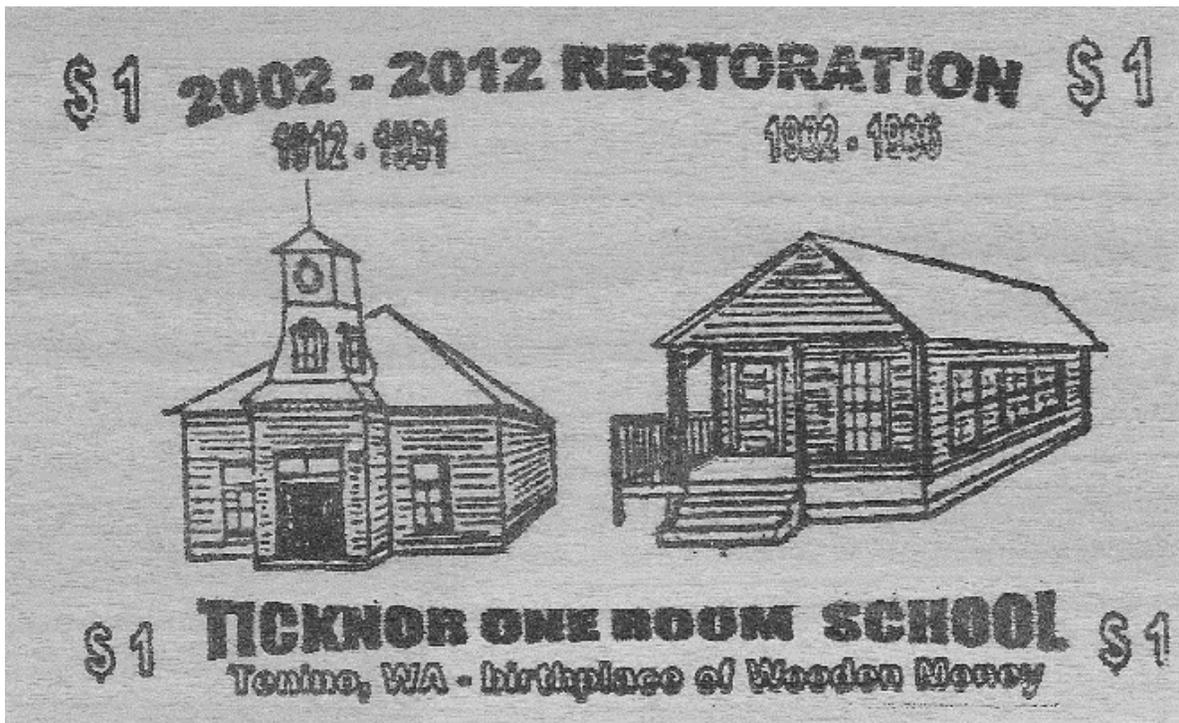
Without the move, the Ticknor School would have been destroyed by a planned burn, since it sat virtually unused, except for fire department storage, for decades.

The recent addition of the Mendota school bell and a tower completes the scene of the long ago one-room schoolhouse, with perhaps the omission of the outhouse.

All that's missing is for old-time teachers Miss Case or Miss Campbell to ring the bell and declare school in session.



*Mendota school bell in tower and Ticknor school at Tenino Depot Museum complex.*



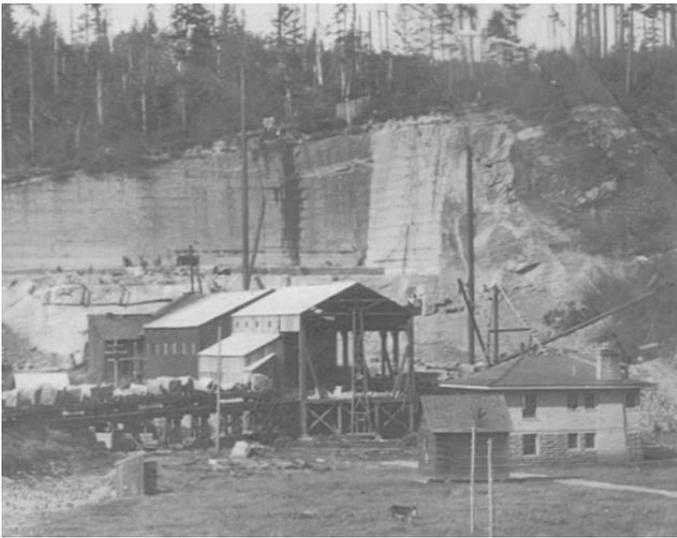
*Wooden Money Commemorative.*

# From Quarry Office to Tenino City Hall

*A Site in Tenino's National Historic District*

*Portions originally published on [Thurstontalk.com](http://Thurstontalk.com)*

The sounds surrounding Tenino City Hall were quite different once upon a time when, in a previous incarnation, it served as the Hercules Sandstone Company Office. More than one hundred years ago, the building was situated near the imposing cliffs of the Hercules Sandstone Quarry #1 at Lemon Hill on the southwest end of Tenino. The din of steam channelers and gang saws harvesting top grade sandstone from the earth rang out against its four walls all workday long. Near the quarry, everything was bathed in gray dust, and the office stood solidly as an example of what could be created with Tenino Sandstone.

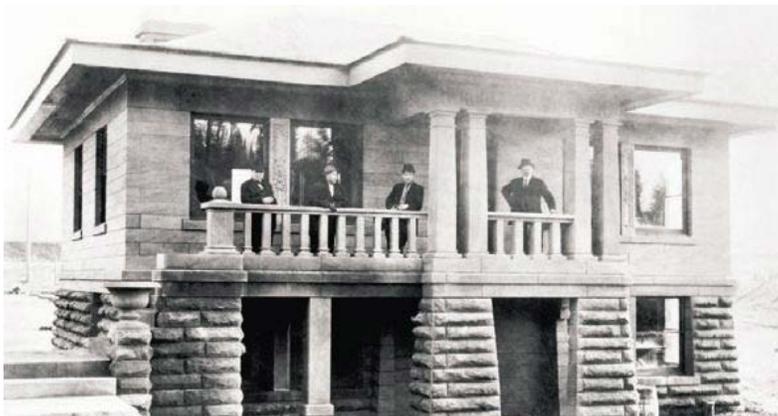


*Hercules Quarry Office at its original site  
Hercules Quarry No. 1.*

The Hercules Sandstone Company Office was originally designed by Walter Scheel, son of H. P. "Horse Power" Scheel, who was the mastermind behind Hercules Quarries. Hans, who was a stonecutter by trade, was also a gifted salesman and investor. The Scheel family reached such a height of prosperity that at one time they lived in a mansion on Prospect Hill in Tacoma, which had room for four servants and a steam-heated greenhouse.

A number of calamities, including Tenino's Big Blast, led up to the demise of the Hercules Sandstone Company, but the final blow involves an

amusing story about young Walter Scheel, which is detailed in Scott McArthur's book *The Decades of Boom and Bust*. On a hunting expedition outside of Tenino, Walter aged 23, came across a deposit of granite. There was a demand by the Army Corps of Engineers for more durable stone than sandstone, and Walter felt he hit pay dirt with the granite discovery.



*Quarry Office in its original configuration.*

McArthur explains, "Just getting to the site of the proposed new quarry was a challenge. The rough trail from the end of the county road crossed the river several times. Walter Scheel, a bear of a man, picked up the experts and government engineers who went on an inspection tour and carried them one by one piggyback across the river."

This site became Hercules Quarry #6. It seemed promising, with a government contract in hand at the time of its inception. However, the expenses kept mounting since rail lines had to be expanded and temperamental rivers bridged. When World War I was declared and government spending was frozen, the Hans P. Scheel family, who had personally guaranteed the company notes, lost everything. With their businesses and the mansion in Tacoma in possession of the bank, the family moved to their farm near Tenino which was owned by Hans' wife Frances. Frances didn't seem to mind the change in circumstances and cheerfully went about raising their eight children in a barn.

When the Hercules Stone Company went bust the office building was purchased by the City of Tenino for use as its City Hall. Then in 1921, the monumental task of moving it from the edge of town to the town center began.



*Tenino City Hall circa 1925.*

Walter Scheel, who had worked on the original construction of the Hercules office, helped to dismantle it stone by stone and moved the building to its new home on Sussex. Each stone was numbered, and the numbers can still be seen carved into the blocks inside the Records Room on the first floor. According to Keith Phillips, Tenino stonecutter and historian, Walter said it was the only building he ever had to build twice. One has to wonder how he felt about dismantling his father's old office.

Some alterations were made to the exterior.

Originally there were two staircases that led to the front door of the office, while as city hall, there is a single staircase. There is also the addition of the words "City Hall" carved over the front door, as well as the cornerstone which states the year of construction as 1922, and lists the mayor and city council members.

In January of 1923, a time capsule was placed in the cornerstone. It was reported to contain business cards and a Citizens Club brochure. In July of 2023, during the Sesquicentennial, the City will endeavor to open the cornerstone and reveal its contents.

Since its move to Sussex Avenue, the building has served many purposes. It first served as city offices to which a library was added in 1925, organized by the ladies of the Tenino Home Study Club. Grace Engle was appointed librarian and served in this post until 1960. While the top floor was a library, the basement was the police station, which included a holding cell.



*Tenino Library on the top floor of the City Hall, circa 1950s.*

The building was restored in 2022, the exterior stone repointed, the council chambers brought back to their Hercules Stone Company glory, and the offices downstairs even received a facelift. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the City Hall is now abuzz with city employees dealing with the day in and day out running of a municipality. Where once the Tenino Public Library operated, City Council Meetings are now held and open to the public, who may view the restoration of their beautiful city hall.

Tenino City Hall is on the main street running through Tenino at the corner of Sussex Avenue and Hodgden Street. It's hard to miss with the iconic "Tenino" sign, constructed of sandstone blocks sitting right out front.



*Tenino City Hall in the 21st Century.*

# The Columbia Building

*A Site in Tenino's National Historic Downtown District*

It all began in the small hours of June 23-24, 1908 when a fire destroyed the west end of Sussex Avenue in Tenino. Ten buildings were destroyed in the fire. It's hard to say which business was located on the southwest corner of Sussex and Howard, but the land was reported to be owned by John Hartl, who was most likely a landlord, as he is not listed among business proprietors.

According to the *Morning Olympian* for June 24, 1908, the fire started in the Eagle Saloon building that was located on the other corner of the block. This was across the street where the Jiffy Lunch would be located (now Los Compadres). This was one of only two multi-story buildings to be destroyed in the fire, and was thought of as an unofficial town hall.

This was the second major fire to strike Sussex in three years, and consequently spurred a second construction boom in the downtown area. Plans to build in sandstone started almost immediately. An August 7, 1908 article in the *Morning Olympian* mentions the City Council's decision that new construction on Sussex must be built of stone, brick or cement after the recent fire. The Wolf Building and the Columbia Building are both products of this decree.

Construction of the Columbia Building began in September of 1908 and was probably completed in 1909 by the Columbia Brewing Company of Tacoma, Washington. The *Morning Olympian* reported in Tenino news on September 6, 1908, that "Emil Kleise, of Tacoma, representing the Columbia Brewing company, was in town for the construction of a stone building 60 by 60 feet on the corner of Sussex and Howard streets." In all likelihood, this new building, which would house a saloon, was to serve Columbia Beer. It was common for brewing companies to sponsor the construction of buildings that housed saloons. The Wolf building, for example, built at the same time, was sponsored by the Olympia Brewing Company.



*An Advertisement for Columbia Beer from The Tenino News.*

## Lee's Place

The first known tenant of the saloon portion of the Columbia Building was Lee Waddell, proprietor of Lee's Place.

Lee Waddell was born circa 1866, in Thurston County, Washington Territory. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, he was a farmer and married Maggie in 1899. They lived in Rainier. By 1909, Lee and Maggie were living in Tenino and had a son, Roy Robert Waddell (1903-1982). At that time Lee's profession was listed as 'Logger' in the Polk directory while Maggie Waddell was listed as the proprietor of the Tenino Hotel.



*Lee's Place.*

*The telephone pole on the corner bears a "Columbia Beer" sign.*

In the 1910 U.S. Census, Lee is listed as a Bartender – Saloon Owner and he lives on 'D' Street (now Wichman Street). In the 1911-1912 directory, Lee's business is listed as 'Saloon'.

Lee died in 1915 of pneumonia. He is buried at Forest Grove Cemetery near Tenino.

While Tenino residents often talk about older businesses that remained in civic memory for decades, there were also much shorter-lived businesses that came and went and disappeared from our history.

In the photograph of Lee's Place, most likely taken between 1909-1911, the neighboring storefront at 325 West Sussex Avenue shows Castle Brother's Hardware and Furniture.



*Coast Magazine, 1909*

The Tenino Racket Store, owned by the Castle Brothers Herbert and Lewis, could be the first store located at 325 West Sussex Avenue. Their advertisement from 1909, shows the store carried furniture, hardware, and home furnishings.

Photographs circa 1910 show a business called "The Leader" at 325 West Sussex Avenue. Neither the Castle Brothers nor The Leader appear to have lasted very long. The Leader's proprietor, J. S. Mattar, advertised a sale in the 1911 *Tenino News* offering hats, kimonos, shirts, aprons, dresses, and underwear.



*Sussex Avenue circa 1910 looking east from Ritter Street.*

## The Quarry Bar

The Quarry Bar's proprietors, Oscar F Neuerburg and Cortney W. VonStein, were "dealers in choice wines, liquors and cigars," according to an advertisement in a 1912 *Tenino News*. They also appeared in the Polk city directory for 1913, still running a "saloon" business. They would be replaced by one of the best known and longest running named businesses in Tenino, Anderson's.

## The Gorline Company

Charles and Jessie Gorline came to the Pacific Northwest with their children, Harry, Louise, and John, settling initially in Little Rock where Charles opened a store. The 1910 U.S. Census shows the family lived in Little Rock and that they owned a Variety Store. By all reports shortly thereafter Mr. Gorline died. Jessie moved to Tenino and opened her store in January of 1912.

An article in the August 1912, *Olympian*, written by Miss Blendine Hays, has this to say, "The Gorline Company. One of the largest, best equipped, most pleasant to visit of Tenino's stores is the variety business conducted by the Gorline Company. They keep in stock about everything which you are likely to need and they make a list of prices which cause the housekeeper to forget the high cost of living when trading with them. More than this, they extend to all their customers that unflinching courtesy that makes trading with them a real pleasure instead of the tiresome burden of an ordinary day's shopping.

"A convenient rest room has been arranged in the front of the store, there all classes of refreshing beverages are served from a modern soda fountain, as well as ice-cream and other dainties in season. Publications for the women. A good variety of drugs is available together with office supplies, toys, light hardware and all of the latest novelties useful to the housekeeper or the farmer. You will be surprised at the excellent showing in such departments as millinery, china, glassware, and crockery, jewelry and musical instruments. Shoes might also be enumerated among the staples, and the various kinds of sporting goods should not be overlooked. The firm consists of Mr. Harry B Gorline, manager, C.S. Gorline, president, and J.A. Gorline, treasurer. They are all well known in the county having been in business some two or three years, though located at the present place only since last January. Their first half year's business just drawing to a close has been particularly satisfactory and it is fair to predict that the total volume for the year will exceed \$12,000."



*The Quarry Bar and Gorline store, circa 1913.*

When son Harry left to serve in World War I, Jessie ran the business alone. At one point, probably before 1924, the Gorline store moved eastward, staying on Sussex a few blocks away. Jessie continued to run the business until, one account in the museum states, 1933, when she sold the business. Her obituary says she remained in business until 1940 when she retired. She died in December 1955 at the age of 95 and is buried in the Forest Grove Cemetery.

### **Anderson Brothers and Anderson's Tavern**

Sergeant Ben (Bennett), born in 1895, and his elder brother, Private "Harry" (Henning), born in 1893, both returned from France after World War I and were discharged from the U.S. Army in 1919.



Ben had worked in a Tenino grocery before the war, but when he and his brother came home after the war, they opened their own ice cream parlor. Most likely the previous tenant of the building, the Quarry Bar, sold out due to Prohibition, which went into law in January 1920.

By June 1920 when Ben married Stella Davis in Tenino, his occupation was listed in the city directory as "confectionary." Henry in the 1920 U.S. Census was listed as "Manager

Confectionary Store."

By 1922, the Anderson Brothers was listed in the Polk city directory as a "billiards" establishment. They also sold cigars, tobacco, and candy.

By 1923, the Anderson Brothers operation was listed as "soft drinks" in the city directory. They were running a soda shop during prohibition, as well as being the local pool hall.

Some reports say it was a soda fountain up front with a pool hall and card room in the back during prohibition. By 1935, their business was listed as "beer parlor" and Anderson's Tavern it would remain for decades.

Harry Anderson moved to Tumwater and went to work for the Olympia Brewing Company in the late 1930s. Ben Anderson died in 1945, according to a relative, his life cut short by the long-term effects of mustard gas during World War I.

They had created a well-known tavern. By 1953, the tavern was being managed by L. B. McGill, but continued under the name Anderson's. At some point it was taken over by Bert and Jeanette Diesburg, but the name remained Anderson's for many more years. The site is still a tavern, but since the mid-1990s has become known as the Landmark Tavern.

The west side of the Columbia Building, which had been the Castle Brother's Hardware store and then Gorline's variety store, by the 1930s had become Pickett's Ten Cent Store.



The location would continue to operate as a variety store well into the 1970s. By the 1970s, it was called the Miscellany Store. The business changed hands at least three times in the 1970s, each time it was sold as a Variety Store.

By the 1980s, the location had become Tenino Hobbies and Toys, which was gone by the 1990s.

An article by Joy Orth in the *Thurston County Independent* March 8, 1996 states: "The western part of the building has been occupied over the years by a variety of businesses: a café, a variety store, a ten-cent store and others. The owner of the western portion of the building since October '95 is Scott Lake resident Robert Peterson...he values the historical quality of the building and is currently restoring it to at least some of its former glory. After restoration, the building will be opened as a second-hand store, expanding eventually into antiques."



The western side of the location has since become The Shiplap Quilt Shop and Coffee House, while the Landmark Tavern continues in the location that was once the Quarry Bar, Lee's Place, and Anderson's Tavern on the eastern end.



*Anderson's Tavern and the Miscellany Shop, circa 1970s.*

# Thomas J. McClellan

## Tenino entrepreneur



*Thomas J McClellan  
(1840-1926)*

Born in Athens, Ohio on February 6, 1840, Tom served in the 75th Ohio Infantry during the Civil War, where he participated in many armed encounters, including fighting in the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic after the war.

As a young man he moved to Kansas, and married Mary M. Fay at Wakeeny on April 21, 1870. They had ten children.

In the early 1890s, McClellan arrived in Tenino, Washington. His first work was in a general merchandise store, but before long he opened the first drug store in Tenino.

Among other firsts, he created Tenino's first telephone company (1905), first electrical power company (1906), and first moving picture theater.



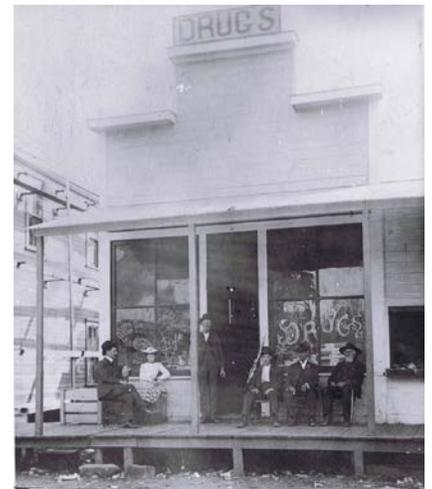
*Tenino's first phone company building about 1909.  
It was located on Sussex, east of the Miller Building.*

He also served as a local Postmaster (1894-98), a Justice of the Peace, and he was a charter member of Tenino's Masonic Lodge (1892).

Other McClellan businesses included a creamery, a lumber mill, and a shingle mill.

He died in 1926, at the age of 86. His obituary in the *Tenino Independent* praised his contributions to Tenino by stating:

*"A history of his many activities and business activities here would almost suffice as a history of Tenino itself."*



*Tenino's first drug store.*

# The Tenino Independent Building

*A Site in Tenino's National Historic Downtown District*

## Site before Construction

The Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Tenino for 1910 shows Miner Clifton Cole's (1864-1914) saloon on the Corner of Sussex and Howard. The saloon's exact dates of operation are unknown. Cole was married in Pierce County in July 1895, to Amanda. He is listed as a saloon proprietor in Tenino in a 1902 city directory. His saloon appears in photos after 1906, and the building was being operated as a saloon and billiard parlor in 1910. Cole died in a murder-suicide in 1914.

Dr. Robson was murdered by M.C. Cole on January 13, 1914, at the age of 37. Dr. Charles E. Robson (1878-1914) arrived in Tenino in 1905 and is listed in the Polk Directory of that year as a physician. He was survived by his wife, Clara Sylvester Robson, and daughter, Constance. Previous to the murder-suicide, Robson had been treating Cole, and then a second doctor, from Olympia, took over Cole's care. Dr. Robson was murdered by M.C. Cole in 1914. Cole then committed suicide. Both were popular citizens of Tenino.

According to the *Washington Standard*, 16 January 1914, Cole had "...acquired several delusions, one of extreme jealousy for Dr. Robson relative to domestic matters, which is said to have been unfounded. The first intimation of this, according to Mrs. Cole, was about two weeks ago when Cole came home in an enfeebled condition due to drinking considerable alcohol and when she offered to call Dr. Robson, said, 'if you do, I'll kill him.'"

"M.C. Cole, a former saloon keeper of that city, apparently beside himself from unfounded jealousy shot and killed an old friend Dr. C. E. Robson, and then walked over to his own home, gave his wife \$1,000, bade her goodbye and shot himself.... The tragedy occurred on Main Street Tenino, almost directly in front of Dr. Robson's office, which is across the street from the Cole home."

Cole's and Robson's homes are listed as both being on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in the 1910 census. Sussex Avenue turned into 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at the jog in the road in 1910.

## Construction

The *Washington Standard* for April 17, 1914 announced "The Pacific Coast Investment company of Olympia is erecting a 60 x 90 one-story business block at Sussex and Howard streets, to be occupied by the Tenino Bar, a poolroom and a moving picture theater operated by T. J. McClellan. Contractor J. Hansen of Tacoma expects to complete the building in 90 days. The walls will be of stone and tile." If the construction stayed on track, the building would have been completed in July of 1914.

We do not know if the building was given a name. Judging by how other buildings on Sussex in Tenino were named, it could be called the "Pacific Coast Block" or "McClellan Block," though apparently neither name was ever used.

The building itself was divided into thirds. The eastern third started as a theater and remained so for many years. At some point, the middle section became a barber shop and appeared to remain so into the 1930s. The poolroom portion of the Tenino Bar presumably took up the western third of the building initially. It is not known if the "Bar" ever opened since prohibitions started in Tenino on January 1, 1916.

In 1915-16, T.J. McClellan is listed as the proprietor of the Circuit Theater in the Olympia city directory, perhaps the original name. According to his daughter, he sold the theater after a few years to Wren Scott. It was called the Lotus Theatre as early as 1919 when the name A.W. Laningham was attached the business and Lee Lewis was the moving picture operator.

The 1920 U.S. Census for Tenino shows only one person listed working at a moving picture theater-- Roy S. Bowen. The 1921 Olympia city directory shows an R. S. Bowen (Lotus Theatre) in Tenino which was renamed the Tenino Liberty Theatre when "Talkies" began in December 1930.



*"When London Sleeps" featuring Charles Darrells, which was released in 1932.  
Notice that next door is a barber shop.*

Those in living memory remember the theater as the "Tenino Theater" and it was run by the Schaefer family in the same location from about 1934-1953. It was closed when movies became wide screen and the narrow sandstone building couldn't accommodate them.

Sim Lewis owned the barber shop next to the theater, and according to Scott McArthur's *Decades of Boom and Bust*, Sim cut hair in the front while there was a pool hall, perhaps the heritage of the Tenino Bar's poolroom, in the back.

Apparently at some point after Prohibition, the western portion of the building did become a bar, the Log Tavern. The Log Tavern would eventually move across the street where it would become a fixture for many years.



*The building circa 1940s. The sign out front says: "Cold Drinks. Log Tavern. Lunch. Sandwiches. Eat."*

After 297 West Sussex's life as the Log Tavern, it became a "Dry Goods Store," which essentially meant clothing. At one point (circa 1940s) it housed a clothing store owned by A.D. Campbell, of Campbell & Campbell's. A gentleman named Ralph Mickleson ran it. After World War II, it was run by Josephine Baccus and continued as a clothing store into the late 1950s.

After the theater went out of business in 1953 it changed hands a couple of times. At one point, a gentleman named Earl Anderson owned the building and gutted it and leveled the floor. In 1973, it became the Veterans of Foreign Wars with a barber shop in the front section.

While the store was dry goods, the back corner of the building was used by the Tenino Telephone Company, according to the assessor in 1962. This would make sense as the building was owned by Ewart and Esther Furness Peterson, who ran the Tenino Telephone Company.

Esther sold it to Art Dwelley in 1972-73. Around that time, the *Tenino Independent* moved into the most western portion of the premises. The local newspaper's long tenure in the building led to it being given the name the "Independent Building."

# Mayors of Tenino

In 1906, Tenino was incorporated as the City of Tenino and elected its first Mayor and City Council. In the 117 years since Tenino became a city, 23 people have served as Tenino's Mayor.

In chronological order, they are:

1. Henry J. Keithahn	1906-1907
2. T. F. Mentzer	1908
3. L. J. Miller	1909-1911
4. Marshall B. Peterson	1911-1913
5. Howard S. Barclay	1913-1914
6. Stace M. Peterson	1915-1916
7. Howard S. Barclay	1917
8. Del D. Axtelle	1918
9. Samuel Wes Fenton	1919-1922
10. Charles W. Cook	1923-1924
11. Henry J. Keithahn	1925-1926
12. Tom H. Richards	1927-1958
13. Ewart A. Peterson	1959-1967
14. Kenneth Hedden	1968-1977
15. Robert "Bob" J. Pettit	1977-1979
16. Maurice Knight	1980-1984
17. Keith Hixson	1984-1987
18. Susan Cundy-Harris	1988-1991
19. Mike Brown	1991-1995
20. Steve Lycan	1996-1998
21. D. Jean Pettit	1998-2003
22. Kenneth A. Jones	2004-2011
23. Eric G. Strawn	2012-2013
24. Bret D. Brodersen	2013-2015
25. Wayne Fournier	2015-



*Tom Richards  
Tenino's longest serving mayor.  
1927-1958  
31 years!*

## Interesting facts about Tenino's Mayors...

- Henry Keithahn, born in Germany, was a dairyman and owned The Creamery. He was a member of the I.O.O.F., Ancient Order of United Workmen, and a Mason.
- T. F. (Theodore) Mentzer was a lawyer and mill owner. He served in the Union Army during the Civil War. He was also elected to the Washington State Legislature.
- Howard Barclay resigned as Mayor in 1917 to join the American military during World War I.
- Tom Richards holds the record as Tenino's longest serving Mayor with 31 years. He was a veteran of World War I. He also served as a Thurston County Commissioner. He was a Mason, a Shriner, and a member of the American Legion.

- Family Dynasties: Stace Peterson and his son, Ewart (they are of Swedish descent and do not seem to be related to Marshall Peterson, who was born in Canada); and Bob Pettit and his wife, D. Jean (Martin) Pettit, who are the only husband and wife to have both served as Mayor.
- Steve Lycan died in office after a car accident. He was 38 years old.
- Wayne Fournier, a qualified scuba diver, led a diving exploration of the Tenino Memorial Pool (old Tenino Stone Company Quarry) in 2017.



## Tenino City Marshal

This Tenino City Marshal Badge on display at the Tenino Depot Museum once belonged to James B. Case (1877-1939), who served as Tenino City Marshal in 1911. It was donated to the Tenino Depot Museum by his grandson, Rodney G. Case, in 2013.

From the *Tenino News* 23 March 1911:

"City Marshal Case finds the collection of dog licenses about the orneriest duty he has to perform. While the ordinance requires that all licensed dogs shall wear the tags conspicuously displayed on their collars, Tenino dogs have no collars, and the owners wear the tags in their pockets. Jim is making the personal acquaintance of every dog in town so he can find to whom the canine belongs."

From the *Tenino News* 6 April 1911:

"In the matter of the new sidewalk on Olympia street in front of Campbell & Campbell's new warehouse, Marshal Case reported that he had notified Campbell & Campbell to lower the same to grade, and had served written notice, a copy of which was placed on file with the clerk March 29, 1911."

From the *Tenino News* 6 April 1911:

"A hobo with a cane and a hard luck story about being totally wrecked in a coal mine, raised considerable money from sympathizing citizens Friday, and proceeded to convert the proceeds of his efforts into a hide full of booze. He was gathered in by Marshal Case and given \$10 or five days by Judge Mawson. He took the five days, and Jim says he is a good worker for a man who got totally disabled by an accident."

Though he did not serve long as City Marshal, Jim and his family lived in Tenino until his death in 1939. He is buried in the Case family plot, along with his parents, in Roy, WA.

# Tenino Bands

It was about 1890, that an intrepid group of musicians attempted to form into a band by sneaking into the cupola of the old school to practice. Unfortunately, one blare of the trumpet and the whole of Tenino knew what they were up to. They only learned one song, a polka. And since they only knew one song, they had to constantly find new audiences. In an early performance, they played a serenade for T.F. Mentzer and his new bride.

There is not a complete roster of the first band, but some founding members were: their leader Prof. Mills, Andrew (Tim) McArthur, Wes Fenton, Joe Dere, Jim Allison, Bun Ollinger, George Bower, Jim Stevenson, and George Liscom. Jim Stevenson was from Scotland where he was once a musical instructor, and he provided inspiration for the project.

Once everyone was tired of the band's polka, the Tenino Drum Corps was formed in 1891. This group would persist for at least the next 45 years. The drum corps had a very Scottish bent. It wasn't hard to do with a dominantly Scottish membership. Bob McArthur played the accordion, Jim Stevenson the fife, Tim McArthur was on snare, Wes Fenton on bass drum, and Jake Hartle was drum major. Jake dressed up as George Washington in 1893 and rode a white horse in the Battle of Pea Soup.



*Tenino Band.*

In 1902, younger members of the community formed the Tenino Cornet Band, but during a lull in bands from 1910-1912, the ladies had their chance to shine under the direction of Robert McArthur. The all-female band was short-lived when the Tenino Cornet Band returned.



*Tenino Girls Band.*

*Gertrude Hall, Iva Hall, Luella Campbell, Velna Covert, Pat Hartson, Emma Jarvis, Carrie McArthur, Louise Hartson, Eva Hartson, Minnie McArthur, Bandmaster Robert McArthur.*

In 1917, the Tenino Cornet Band became the Tenino Eagles Band and by 1920, they had spiffy uniforms. The Tenino Eagles Band became famous on the parade circuit up and down the west coast. Robert McArthur was a band leader from 1908 until his untimely death in a car accident in 1923.

In 1924, the Tenino Aerie of Eagles ceased to have a monopoly on Tenino bands, when the first Tenino High School Orchestra was organized by Mr. Moser. Both boys and girls were welcome to perform together. Tenino Schools have provided the town with live music ever since.

## Doc Howe

In 1922, the Tenino Drum Corps, which had been going strong for many years, became the "Harmony Hounds," otherwise known as Doc Howe's Jazz Band. The style of music, however, continued to be Scottish pipes and drums.

Howe, interestingly, was neither a doctor nor a musician. Wilson Howe was born in Canada in 1863, but grew up in Michigan. He made his way to Tenino in 1889, where he met his wife, Elizabeth. They were married that same year. He came first to work at the Eureka Quarry, and then the Tenino Stone Company quarry.

It was while working as a quarryman that he first tried his hand at dentistry. Howe's friend Charly Robinson was suffering an ache in his eye tooth. Howe had the strength to relieve the poor man of his aching cuspid, but unfortunately it broke a quarter of the way. A dentist must have the proper tools of the trade. A bum had given Peter Stewart a pair of forceps in exchange for a meal, which he passed along to Howe. Thus equipped, with assistance from Tim McArthur holding the patient's head, Howe went on to pull hundreds of teeth. He accepted teeth, and some swearing, as payment for his work and earned the title "Doc".

Howe was a charter member of the Tenino Aerie of Eagles in 1903, and a lifelong member serving in several capacities, including a quarter of a century as secretary. Howe personally had few musical skills, but he could play a steady beat on the bass drum. And he certainly loved to perform. He also lent his drum to the Tenino Eagles Cornet Band.

Howe was Assistant Postmaster under Jefferson Canon, who fought in the Civil War on the side of the Union. When Canon died in 1915, Howe left the quarry and became Postmaster. He served for 20 years and held the distinction of having been commissioned by five presidents. He was in good spirits, going about his postal duties and visiting with friends, just moments before he died.



"Doc" Howe, Bill Mullaney, E. Betts, Wes Fenton, A. McArthur.  
Fred Colvin on the right.

# Tenino Eagles

## An Early Aerie History

The Tenino Eagles Lodge #564 was started in 1903, and received their Charter in February 1904.

The Eagles, at that time and until the 2000s, was a men's only club. They did, however, have a strong social scene. They frequently had events such as picnics at Offut Lake Resort where the whole family was invited.



*Eagles Picnic at Offut Lake August 4, 1905.*

It really added to local entertainment that many of the members were also in the Tenino Cornet Band. The Tenino Band would eventually become the Tenino Eagles Band. A summer picnic seems to have been an annual event. A program from 1929 reveals that the festivities continued to be held at Offut lake. The Eagles also hosted frequent dances in their hall. It was common for neighboring Eagles chapters to get together for baseball games.

The Eagles also looked out for their own members. During World War I the Tenino Eagles started a Patriotic Fund.

*Washington Standard*, October 12, 1917: "The Tenino aerie of Eagles at a meeting last week adopted a resolution instructing the secretary to collect 10 cents a month from the members of the aerie. This will be turned into the grand aerie for the payment of \$1,000 to the relatives of any Eagle losing his life while in Uncle Sam's service. "

*Washington Standard*, August 17, 1917: "Tenino Eagles Honor Soldiers. The Tenino aerie of Eagles held a complimentary meeting last week in honor of members of the lodge who have enlisted in the various branches of the service. Music was furnished by the Tenino band. Nine members of the aerie are in service as follows: Water Phillips, infantry; Asa Phillips, navy; Dr. Wichman, medical corps; J.D. McArthur, field hospital; Sylvan Lycan and Ed Mayes, quartermaster's department, and Clyde Wallace, Ben Myers and John Gallagher, naval militia."

Tenino Eagles also helped with funeral expenses and arrangements.

*Aberdeen Herald*, April 4, 1910: "Killed in Logging Camp. Montesano, April 3. Emil E. Ingram, a rigging slinger working in the Clemons camp, was instantly killed yesterday morning. Ingram and others were engaged in moving a log, when it struck a stump and swerved around, striking Ingram

and breaking his back. He was a single man, 30 years of age, and his parents reside in Grand Mound, Lewis County, where his body will be shipped for burial. He was a member of the Eagles at Tenino, and the local Aerie has taken charge of the remains.”

A disastrous fire struck Tenino in 1908. According to the *Morning Olympian* for June 24, 1908, the fire started in the Eagles Saloon building that was located on the northeast corner of Howard Street.

Later photographs show that the Eagles continued to occupy that corner of Sussex and Howard. The building was oddly wooden, somehow defying the city’s mandate for stone buildings. Upstairs was the Fraternal Order of Eagles and next door was the Eagle Café. The building in later years became McArthur’s Grocery Store.



FOE building and the Eagles Cafe before McArthur’s Grocery moved in.  
Date unknown, but probably 1930s.

In 1947, the Eagles purchased the Mandery-Martin Building at 349 Sussex Avenue, which was built in 1925. At that time the building housed the *Thurston County Independent*, the City Bakery, and a space used for storage by Campbell and Campbell. The building had three storefronts and the Eagles moved into the middle section which became the Lodge room. The Eagles up to that point had rented property for 44 years. This would be their first time owning property.

By the 1970s, the *Tenino Independent* (also known as the *Thurston County Independent*) had moved into the Pacific Coast Building, which then became known as the Tenino Independent Building, and the Eagles took over the rest of the Mandery-Martin Building property.



Tenino Eagles in Mandery-Martin Building, 1970s-80s.

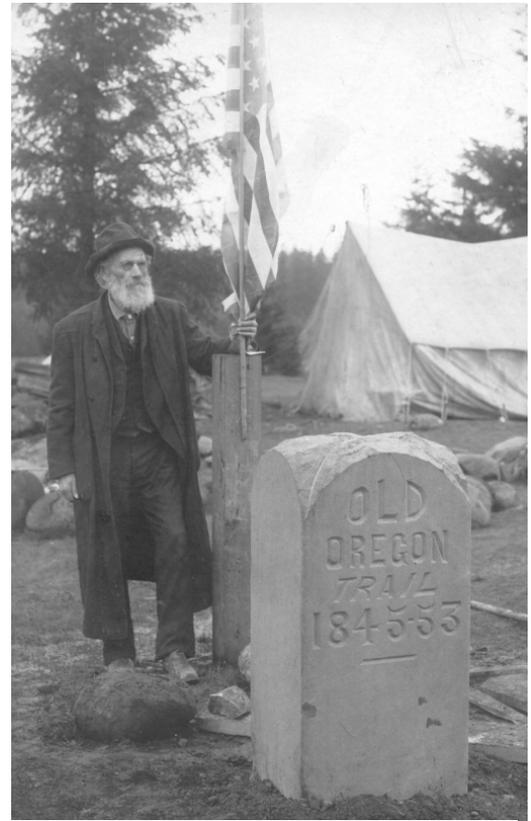
# Oregon Trail Markers

Tenino has two Oregon Trail markers. The earliest and best known is a marker made of Tenino Sandstone on the northwest corner of Sussex and Sheridan, placed in 1906 by Ezra Meeker. The second was placed in 1916 by the Daughters of the American Revolution, on the east side of Old Highway 99 about a block before the highway crosses the bridge on Scatter Creek.

The marker on Sussex was placed during Ezra Meeker's "expedition to perpetuate the memory of the old Oregon Trail." Ezra (1830-1927), was a Puyallup pioneer. He decided to retrace the Oregon Trail backwards, from west to east with an ox-team (Dave and Twist) and covered wagon. His hope was to gain national attention for preservation efforts for the route's history.

In his journal for February 21, 1906, he wrote "A red-letter day; drove over to the stone quarry and hauled monument over to site, where workman followed and put same in place. This monument was donated by the Tenino Quarry Company and is inscribed, 'Old Oregon Trail, 1845-53.' At 2 o'clock the stores were closed, the school children in a body came over and nearly the whole population turned out to the dedication of the **first** monument on the Trail. Lectured in the evening to a good house - had splendid vocal music. Receipts \$16.00."

On November 29, 1907, twenty-two months after leaving his home in Puyallup, Ezra arrived at the White House in Washington, DC and was received by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1908, Congress considered House Bill 11722 (the Humphrey Bill) which would appropriate \$50,000 for the cause but it was not passed.



*Ezra Meeker in Tenino, 1906.*

Ezra finally completed the return trip (via various methods of transportation) and returned home on June 6, 1908.

The DAR marker was placed on September 6, 1916, as part of a larger placement of markers across the region. That same day another marker was also placed on Bush Prairie in Tumwater. They also wanted to document and preserve the Oregon Trail. They attempted, unsuccessfully, to rename the "Pacific Coast Highway" to "Pioneer Way".



Governor Lister and a crowd of about 500 attend the monument placing on land that was once part of the original Stephen Hodgden Donation Land Claim.

The DAR marker, a bronze plaque attached to a concrete pillar, reads in part "Oregon Trail 1844." The bronze was cleaned and repaired in a restoration project in 2017.

Tenino's fascination with being part of the Oregon Trail resulted in the creation of Oregon Trail Days in 1968, a community parade and celebration continuing to be held in Tenino every summer.

## We invite you to come join the fun at Tenino OREGON TRAIL DAYS

### Friday, July 22

Food Booths and Pony Rides Open

12:00 P.M. - Little M. and Miss Tenino Contest (Ages 5-12) Held at NE corner of Howard & Bureau Avenue

7:00 P.M. - Howl in at Wolf Haven, Old Lake Road

### Saturday, July 23

(All events with exception of parades at Tenino City Park)

6:30 to 10:30 A.M. - Tenino All Sports Booster Club Breakfast Quarry House

8 A.M. - Black Powder shoot range opens

9 A.M. - Black Powder Match

10 A.M. - Friends of the Library Book Sale starts at New Library

10:30 A.M. - Kids Parade - Sussex Avenue

11 A.M. - Grand Parade - Sussex Avenue

11:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. - Tenino Quarry Pool Open (Must know how to swim and pass Lifeguard test)

(Most Saturday afternoon events will be on the Quarry House Stage)

12 to 4 P.M. - Kids Games at City Park, Face painting, water balloon toss, bubble gum contests, three-legged races, etc. Sponsored by Thurston County Parks & Recreation Dept.

Olympia highlanders - At large in park - Sponsored by Tenino Eagles

Carroll Charisma - Vaudeville Clown at large in park

12:00 - Tenino Motorcycle Drill Team - 5th Annual Motor Cycle Rodeo (at field across from Tenino Grade School)

12:00 to 4:00 P.M. - Tenino Depot Museum Open

Sandstone Quarry Demonstration by Keith Phillips

7:00 P.M. - Howl in at Wolf Haven, Old Lake Road

7 to 9 P.M. - STEAMER CLAM AND CORN FEED AT BUCCOON VOLUNTEER PARK \$6 per plate for adults, \$3 for children under 12 \$2 for BBQ HOT DOGS AND CORN

### Sunday, July 24

6:30 to 10:30 A.M. - Tenino All Sports Booster Club Breakfast Quarry House

9 A.M. - Black Powder Range Opens

10:00 A.M. Arts & Crafts and Traders Row Booths Open

Pony Rides and Kids Games

10:00 A.M. to 4 P.M. - Tenino Depot Museum Open

Sandstone Quarry Demonstration by Keith Phillips

11:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. - Tenino Quarry Pool Open (Must know how to swim and pass Lifeguard test)

2:00 P.M. - Historical Program of Quarry Stage

1800's Folk Music by "E & The Boys" Historical Talk

Fashion Show - Sponsored by South Thurston County Historical Society

3:00 P.M. - Prize Drawing for Oregon Trail Days Pin Sales at Quarry Stage



### Quarry House Stage Program

Saturday - - George Barner, Master of Ceremonies

12:30 - Olympia Highlanders

1:00 - Nagle Family

1:30 - Trophies Awarded

2:00 - Kitchen Band

3:00 - Dick Fall & Yvonne Ruege

3:45 - Carroll Charisma - Clown

### Sunday 2:00 Historical Program

Les Ekridge - Speaker

1800's Folk Music by "E & The Boys"

Fashion Show - South Thurston County Historical Society

3:00 - Prize Drawing for Oregon Trail Days Pins

Oregon Trail Days advertisement from 1988.

# The Old Tenino Bank and Famous Wooden Money

*A Site in Tenino's National Historic Downtown District*

*Portions originally published on [Thurstontalk.com](http://Thurstontalk.com)*

The interior of what is lovingly called the Old Bank in Tenino is deceptively small. The building occupies the southwest corner of Sussex and Olympia Streets in Tenino and is surrounded by the larger L-shaped Campbell and Campbell building, which was home to a prosperous pioneer mercantile. The two buildings share architectural features, like the continuous cornice panel, but are separate structures. The bank, however, stands out with its iconic Corinthian column as a Tenino



*The State Bank of Tenino was built with Tenino sandstone in the years 1906-1907.*

landmark. Within the bank, a vault was constructed of solid masonry to protect the bank's deposits. The cost of construction was estimated at \$6,000.

In 1906, fire tore through the Tenino Business District, decimating the wooden structures with which the booming pioneer town was built. With its homegrown sandstone industry, the town vowed to rebuild in stone.

And so, in 1906, construction began in earnest, shaping Tenino's downtown as it is still. That same year, Tenino was incorporated, and

Henry Keithahn, operator of the local creamery, was elected the town's first mayor. Banker W. Dean Hayes was brought in to organize Tenino's first bank.

## The State Bank of Tenino

The State Bank of Tenino opened its doors on May 7, 1907, starting with \$10,000 in capital, in the Miller Building during the construction of the new bank building on Olympia Street. The State Bank of Tenino took up its permanent residence in its own bank building on May 9, 1908. The bank quickly gained the confidence of a town unaccustomed to formal banking.

According to an article in *The Tenino News*, August 14, 1908, deposits by patrons of the institution amounted to nearly \$67,000.

The State Bank of Tenino placed convincing advertisements in *The Tenino News* like this one from September 18, 1913: "Beware of Smooth Strangers. If all the money taken out of this



*From The Coast magazine in 1909, this is the only known image of the original interior of the State Bank of Tenino.*

*Interior bank images were rare due to the risk of informing would-be thieves about the institution's layout.*

community by smooth strangers and 'get - rich - quick' schemes had remained at home, it would be sufficient to pave every street in town. Why do you not put your money safely in your home bank where it will help you and everybody else in your community, and where you can get it when you want it! We pay 4% interest on savings accounts."

Or this ad from March 23, 1911: "Everybody should have a bank account no matter what his or her occupation, salary or income. It is the START. This is what counts most in the accumulation of money. An account once opened draws dollars to itself just as surely as a magnet draws steel. Your business and account is not too small to receive care and attention at this bank."

According to Scott McArthur's book, *Tenino: The Decades of Boom and Bust*, "The local bank was alert to the possibility of robbery. As a part of its own crime-prevention program, the bank passed out rifles to the business establishments at each end of town. They had one at the Titus Garage. The rifle was kept loaded. If there was a bank robbery in town, the citizens were supposed to shoot the robbers as they fled the town. It must have worked. There was never a bank robbery."



*In May 1914, Ezra Meeker, Oregon Trail pioneer with his oxen team, met "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Cody was in Tenino switching trains between performances with the Sells-Floto Circus in Centralia and Aberdeen. They posed in front of the Bank building while crowds of onlookers and schoolchildren gathered.*

In September 1914, the State Bank of Tenino failed in a scandalous fashion. When the United States National Bank of Centralia failed due to "high finance," including investing in bad loans, two additional banks also failed. W. Dean Hayes, the cashier for the State Bank of Tenino, who had also just the month previously opened the Olympia Bank & Trust Company, had invested their finances with the Centralia bank.

The Centralia institution was managed by Charles Gilchrist, who, as it turned out, was stealing from his own bank. A number of charges were filed against Hayes and Isaac Blumauer, the President of the Tenino Bank, but both were acquitted. However, Hayes, Blumauer and other shareholders were ordered to pay considerable sums to their depositors, who eventually recovered 50 cents on the dollar. The bank quickly changed hands, and by late December 1914, the new Citizen's Bank of Tenino opened its doors.

### **The Citizen's Bank of Tenino**

The Citizen's Bank of Tenino had a strong run and plenty of money on deposit, until the bank's investments failed during the Great Depression. Citing the "Uncertainty of business conditions throughout the country," President Kerbaugh decided by closing, "this way all depositors and customers will be on an equal basis" rather than allowing a run on the bank to result in some customers getting funds while leaving others holding the bag.

Unfortunately, local citizens did not have access to the money in their accounts while the bank went through receivership, which might take a year! And without local customers with cash, Tenino businesses were likely to suffer as well.

Interestingly, a month earlier, Don Major advocated in *The Tenino Independent* the possibility of a town running its own scrip. With Tenino officially short of cash, the Chamber of Commerce held an emergency meeting where they agreed to produce and accept local scrip. Depositors would be able to sign over 25% of the value of their Tenino Citizens Bank account to the Chamber and receive the new town currency.

The first run of paper scrip was printed in the newspaper office and signed by newspaper publisher Don Major, Dr. F.W. Wichman, and City Councilman A. H. Meyers. \$3,255 worth of scrip was printed, \$1,279 circulated, of which \$1,079.75 was later redeemed.



*Meyers, Wichman, and Major signing Tenino Wooden Money next to the original press.*

Because of the ease of counterfeiting paper scrip, a change came when samples for a new kind of wooden Christmas card came to town. After some experimentation, Tenino wooden money was born.

After the printing of the town scrip on wood, the *Seattle Star* ran the story of Tenino's wooden money in February 1932. The story was quickly repeated by other notable publications, including newsreels, and the demand for wooden money outside of Tenino skyrocketed as collectors wanted these novel and unique bills. A total value of \$10,308 of wooden money was printed. Only \$40 was ever used and redeemed by the Chamber of Commerce.

The original press which printed Tenino's scrip is housed at the Tenino Depot Museum. The story of wooden money holds a special place in the hearts of historians and collectors alike and was featured on Season 20 Episode 5 of "Mysteries at the Museum." Wooden money souvenirs can still be purchased at the Tenino Museum, where they are printed on the original press.

### **The Old Bank's New Life**

The bank building was purchased by the Tenino Chamber of Commerce for \$2,400 with proceeds from the sale of Tenino wooden money and later sold to the city, which used it as offices for a time. Several businesses have used the building over the years, including another bank, realty offices, a gift shop, and flower shop. It sat vacant for a number of years, during which time there was considerable water damage.

An article from the 1970s by an unknown author has this interesting bit of information: "The bank's vault was permanently sealed some time ago, said town administrator Bob Mosher. The vault lock was broken and the unlock mechanism reportedly contained poisonous gas for foiling would-be safe crackers. Whether it really does contain such gas is open to question, but whoever tries to pry open the vault in the future ought to wear a gas mask for safe measure."

Incidentally, though it's unknown who opened it, the vault was eventually opened with no ill effect.

Thankfully, the Old Tenino Bank was lovingly restored by owners Sharon and Steve Thornily, for which they received the Valerie Sivinski Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation Rehabilitation Projects in 2015. The building, in 2023, is the office of Edward Jones financial advisor Chris Hallett.

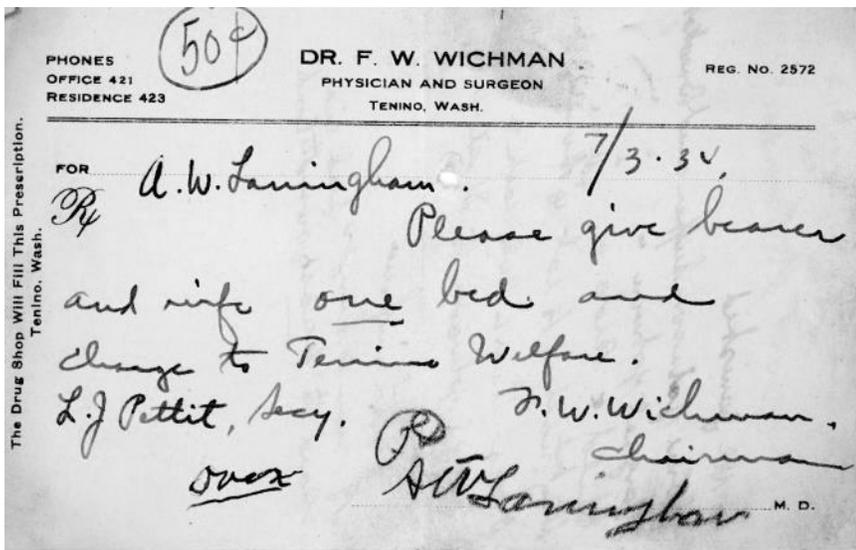


*Wooden Money Commemorative.*

# The Tenino Welfare Fund

Tenino is well known for its Depression era wooden money that saved the day when the Citizen's Bank of Tenino closed its door. But there was another lesser-known program that was meant to show compassion to the tide of humanity that was displaced by the Great Depression. Many who lost their farms came out west looking for work, and undoubtedly some made it to Tenino.

The Tenino Welfare Fund was meant to help locals and transients alike. Vouchers were given to those in need, primarily by Dr. Wichman from 1931-1938. Dr. Wichman, as the town doctor and philanthropist, assessed the needs of each individual and if he did not have what they needed, he sent them on to the local businesses with a "prescription" voucher.



The Tenino Depot Museum has a large collection of vouchers. Looking at the stack, 1932 was the busiest year for the program, but 1938 still saw a huge need for the program. Vouchers were often written on whatever was handy.

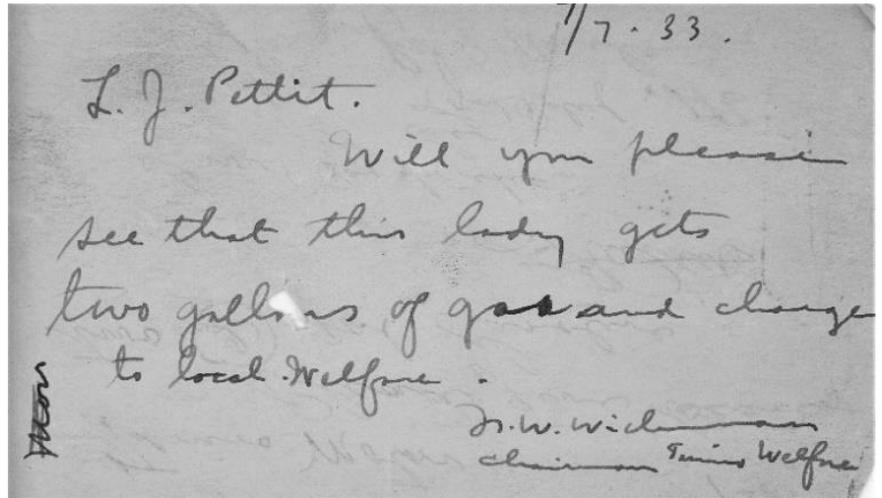
Stores would then keep an accounting for Community Welfare and turn it in for reimbursement.

The *Thurston County Independent* October 30, 1931: "One hundred and

twenty-eight parcels were contributed to the Community Welfare at the program staged by the Tenino Chamber of Commerce at the Liberty Theater Monday evening. The packages contained a number of articles of serviceable clothing, shoes, rubber, canned goods and other food stuffs, and have been placed with the other material already collected in the basement of the Russell Hotel. After a preliminary reel, Burrill Johnson, acting as master of ceremonies, introduced Howard Moses and Donald Olsen, who pleased with a saxophone duet."

The *Thurston County Independent* January 8, 1932: "Preparations for the production of 'Corporal Eagan' for the Community Welfare Fund took definite form Thursday when Evelyn Christensen arrived to direct the play for the Universal Production Company. The musical comedy will be staged at the High School Auditorium."

The *Thurston County Independent*, December 11, 1936: "The treasury of the Tenino Welfare, maintained for Transients, has now dropped to one cent, according to the treasurer, L.J. Pettit, and it will be necessary to replenish the fund. Contributions should be made to Dr. Wichman or the treasurer. The local Charity system has been in operation for about five years, and has been found very satisfactory in taking care of the



tramps and others who beg from door to door, or persons stranded in town. Local people are in the habit of referring those seeking alms and food to Dr. Wichman. He gives the mendicant an order for food to the restaurant or bakery, which supplies a simple meal at cost."

### Here are some more sample vouchers

*"George Keithahn, Will you please see that these 2 lads are provided with a pair each of shoes + overalls so they may attend school. F.W. Wichman Chairman Welfare 9/10/32"*

*"Lins Shoe Shop: Please repair this boy's shoes for 25 cents and charge to Tenino, Welfare. L.J. Pettit of Light Office, will pay. F.W. Wichman. 1/25/34"*

*"Give bearer 1/2 dozen eggs & charge to Tenino Welfare. F.W. Wichman, Chairman. 4/3/34"*

A very common request which went to the Café read: *"Give bearer one sandwich + coffee (10cents)"*

A common request to the Bakery, which was located where the Eagles is today, read: *"Give bearer one loaf bread."*

Or to McLain's Grocery Store, *"Give bearer 10 cents worth groceries."*

Sometimes a request came from other members of the Welfare team: *"Fix these two fellows up with a cup of coffee and a sandwich each or the equivalent of that. Community Relief. George Keithahn. 9/29/1932"*

# Homefront Tenino during World War II

Portions originally published on *Thurstontalk.com*

The Tenino Depot Museum often has World War II displays telling the story of one small town on the Homefront. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, every American was asked to do their part and it was no different in Tenino.

It was not uncommon to see the war effort up close as troops marched through town along Highway 507. A recently recovered film, housed at the museum, shows formations of soldiers in training marching through Tenino during World War II. Local resident Roger Reeves also has memories of tanks sitting on flatbed railcars, most likely destined for the war effort.

## V-Home in the News



An April 23, 1943 edition of the *Thurston County Independent* has a snapshot of hometown life nearly a year and a half into the war effort. Headlines include, "Is Yours a V-Home? Do IT NOW!" and "Dim-Out Time: Sunrise at 6:04; Sunset at 8:10."

So, what is a V-Home? According to an ad by Puget Sound Power and Light Company, "Washington's Victory Home mobilization is underway. A V-Home is a fighting home, backing up the boys in service 100%. A V-Home is prepared, conserves household goods, guards the family health, carefully observes government regulations, buys war bonds, and participates in essential war efforts such as Victory Gardens, fat salvage, tin and scrap salvage."

In Tenino, local Air Raid Wardens, under the leadership of citizens James Corcoran, Frank Newell, and Frank Knitch, would conduct home visits to assist homeowners in preparing their V-Home.

The newspaper assured homeowners "No attempt will be made to 'snoop', according to Robert Austin, coordinator, but to aid in presenting an aggressive home front."

"On the first visit, the warden will present a leaflet entitled 'Be Prepared, Make Yours a V-Home.' A sincere effort to comply with the nine-point pledge contained on the back of the leaflet will entitle the resident to display the V-Home emblem."

## Threats from Above

The major threat to towns up and down the west coast was a repeat of Pearl Harbor, and to avoid providing a target to enemy bombers at night, homes had to black out their windows. Consequently, a black-out bulb from Dr. Wichman's house is part of Tenino's exhibit.

Marilyn Ritter, who was born in 1927, remembers the precautions against enemy bombers, which included citizens called "Aircraft Warning Observers" who were trained to identify enemy planes. The Westminster House, once a community house owned by the First Presbyterian Church of Tenino, served as a watch station in Tenino. Before its demolition, the Westminster House tower contained many signatures of bored observers who put in their time watching the skies.



Westminster House Tower.

"During the war the Westminster House had to be manned 24/7," says Marilyn Ritter. "You had so many hours. Yes, we had air raid drills and we had to cover our windows with something black so no light could be seen. Most people used tar paper on the outside."

### Food and Rationing

In addition to observing the black-out, a V-Home grew a Victory Garden. Another ad in the Independent says, "The 1943 Victory Home conserves food by producing its own supply of vegetables." This was taken so seriously that the Tenino City Council considered a leash law to stop the canine threat to gardens.

Ask anyone their memories of the Homefront in Tenino and they will mention "rationing." Ration books were issued to every American citizen. At first it was used to ration sugar, a commodity that was limited because of restrictions on importing. Soon it was expanded to meat, cooking oil, and canned goods. With canned and processed food shipped overseas to the allies and limitations on fresh food due to



gasoline and tire rationing there is little wonder why the Victory Garden became so important. When a household ran out of a particular ration stamp, the family couldn't buy anymore.

Ration Booklets, issued by the United States of America, Office of Price Administration, came with a stern warning. Booklets could not be transferred or used by someone else. Anyone who didn't follow this rule could face "Punishments ranging as high as Ten Years' Imprisonment or \$10,000 Fine, or both." Price gouging was also strictly forbidden.

"It was really hard to get sugar and butter," remembers Marilyn Ritter "we had to have coupons for that. And shoes! There wasn't any leather, and the ones you'd get, when they got wet, they just fell apart. All the leather went for things for the war effort so, we couldn't get leather shoes. Life was

certainly different. And you had to get ration stamps for gas. Because my Dad had the theater in Pe Ell they gave him enough stamps. So, we had plenty of gas.”

Marilyn Ritter was old enough at the time to stand in line, “I remember when Campbell and Campbell had a sale on silk hosiery. We were lined up around the block to get some silk stockings. The ones we had would stretch and bag at the knees, so we painted our legs in those years. We had this paint that we smeared on your legs and it dyed your hands too but that’s what we did, we went bare legged.



WWII Ration Book from Tenino Depot Museum collection.



Tenino made international news in 2020 during the Covid pandemic when the city issued “wooden money” vouchers for federal relief grant funds.





*Honor Roll Plaque at Plaza Park late 1940s.*

After World War II, Tenino purchased the old Tenino Stone Company quarry and began work to turn it into a public swimming pool. The old fairgrounds north of town were cleaned and remodeled and Labor Day celebrations were planned.

By 1949, the Chamber of Commerce, discussing city clean up and all these projects said of the “Plaza Park” that it had “become more of an eyesore than a place of beauty.” It was suggested the benches be removed and the Honor Roll be removed and a new placard placed at City Hall. About the old sign it was said, “It is almost impossible to keep the names on the board readable when they are beaten by the weather day in and day out.”

The members of the Service Club objected to the removal. They had disbanded and joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, but still met with the city council to protest the removal of the Honor Roll. The VFW Auxiliary agreed to repaint the names, repair the fountain, and frame the service flag.

In 1949, under the new name “Memorial Plaza,” plans were made and bids taken. The plan was to rededicate the Honor Roll on Memorial Day, May 30, 1949, but due to “unavoidable delays,” the dedication was postponed until V-J Day, August 15, 1949.

The city and other service clubs were very busy preparing to open the new Memorial Swimming Pool at the quarry, as well as the remodeled Civic Center at the restored fairgrounds, which in the summer of 1949, had new 2,000 seat bleachers constructed. The Thurston County Fair was held at the revitalized fairgrounds in Tenino from August 19-21, 1949.

By October 1949, the Thurston County Independent could only print that “the work now being done on the Honor Roll Plaque, which is coming along satisfactorily...will be dedicated soon on an appropriate date.”

By the spring of 1950, the VFW Auxiliary announced they would hold a “Penny Social Benefit” to raise funds for the Honor Roll sign which “has been recently repainted and will be up by Memorial Day.” The event was considered a success and it was announced the funds raised would be “used toward the cost of repairing the Honor Roll Plaque at the Plaza, which is now being completed.”

On Memorial Day 1950, the Honor Roll was put back on display “now all bright and shiny with its new paint job.” The water fountain had been broken and was to be replaced by a new metal fountain. The city was moving the rock letters “TENINO” and planned on repainting the benches. In June 1951, it was announced that the Honor Roll sign had been “completely repainted.”



*Honor Roll in background of late 1940s Labor Day Parade.*

It is unknown exactly what happened to the Honor Roll sign or when the Memorial Plaza Park was removed. It appears to have happened at some point in the early 1950s. The last rumor was that the sign had been removed in order to be repainted and restored again.

### **A Letter to the Governor During Prohibition**

Governor Lister  
Olympia, WA

Tenino, WASH Oct 17, 1917

Dear sir:

This little town of Tenino is a disgrace to a dry state with its bootleggers. The officers won't arrest anyone for selling liquor and I guess part of them are selling as much as anyone else. I sent for a W.S. Marshal and he said the druggist could sell it by the glass over the bar if they wanted to so far as that goes. I was concerned but that the state should stop them. We have one drug store that is a saloon just the same as it was before the state went dry. Now if you care about stopping the sale of booze, please do something here. I am told that you are framed the same as the officers of this town are. If you are not, please prove it.

Mrs. J. M. Lackey  
C/O Francis Hotel

# Punch McArthur

## Tenino's 1940s Day Marshal

Originally published on [Thurstontalk.com](http://Thurstontalk.com)



*Punch's parents Andrew McArthur Sr. and Jessie McArthur who came to Tenino from Scotland in the early 1890s.*

His name wasn't really Punch; it was Andrew. And before you get the idea that he got that nickname in a fight, let's go way back and talk about the McArthur family.

On the 4th of July, 1893, when the rest of the nation was celebrating Independence Day, Tenino was celebrating a different occasion. Almost everyone in town turned out at the old depot to welcome Jessie McArthur and her two little black-eyed sons, Bob and Andrew Junior to Tenino.

They had undergone a long sea voyage from Andrew Junior's birthplace in Bannockburn, Scotland to Quebec, Canada. From there, they traveled overland to Tenino so that Jessie could be reunited with her husband, Andrew McArthur, after a 3-year separation.

There was a joke in the family that Andrew took one look at his newborn namesake and scampered off to America. But, little Andrew was two years old when her husband set off.

In reality, Andrew Senior had waited long for a ship to begin the journey to Tenino where his brother William had already established himself as a quarryman. The McArthur brothers, who apprenticed as quarry workers in Scotland, would go on to play an active role in the quarries of Tenino, which were the life blood of the town.

There is a tradition in the McArthur Family of naming sons William, Andrew, and Robert, which makes for very confusing history. At one point in time, there were three Williams, three Roberts and two Andrews in Tenino. It was no wonder that Andrew Junior would one day find himself with a nickname.



*Young Punch.*

When the family arrived, Tenino was a rough and rowdy crossroads. Jessie set up housekeeping in the old hotel by the depot, until they found a home. Jessie sent Punch and Bob to Bucoda (which was the bigger community at the time) to do the shopping.

Evelyn Hoffman's *Tenino Scrapbook* has an account by Gene McArthur about how Punch got his nickname.

"My grandfather (Andrew McArthur Senior) had established a residence for his family in Tenino near the railway. After a few years, the family acquired two cows, which were named Punch and Judy. Andrew Junior was given the job of bringing in the cows

each evening and one day he was not able to locate one of them so he was calling 'Here Punch, here Punch, here Punch.' The engineer was sitting in the cab and called to Uncle Punch 'Hey, Punch, I saw your cow back along the track as we came in.' He has been called 'Punch' ever since! After he told us this story, his wife, Lelia, who had been listening along with us, said with sort of a surprised wonder in her voice, 'My gosh! We've been married fifty years and this is the first time I ever heard that story!'"

Like his father, Punch became a quarryman for the Hercules Stone Company. The quarry company did not survive World War I and Punch had to try his hand at other work. He made the leap to lumberman and worked for the Mutual and Weyerhaeuser Lumber Companies. After World War II, he joined the Tenino Police as a Day Marshal and then was employed by the State Highway Department, from which he retired.

If you talk to folks who grew up in Tenino in the 1940s, Punch had a long and storied career as a policeman. In reality, his tenure was short, but the impression he made on the youth of Tenino carried its own sort of weight. Colleen Kirchmeier, who lived across the street from the McArthurs on McArthur Street, had this to say:

"Punch would light our fireworks so we dumb kids didn't blow ourselves up!" recalls Colleen. "He also bought us cherry bombs that you could just throw down and they would explode when they hit the ground. He would stay in the street with us half the night. We all loved him! I remember he wore a uniform. He was a really nice guy. In those days we had no worries about being outside, playing in the street after dark in the summer because Punch would watch out for us."



*Lelia and Punch McArthur*

Another Tenino citizen, who wishes to remain anonymous over this youthful indiscretion, remembers getting caught shoplifting penny candy. Punch, much to the child's embarrassment, took the youth around to the various shops to apologize.

It was during Punch's tenure that Tenino got a police car. The car would do double duty as a driver's education vehicle at the Tenino High School.

If Punch made the paper, it was generally for issuing a driving citation, like the time an Oregon woman took the sharp corner in Tenino (then called Penny's Corner) too fast and lost control. While trying to get the car back on the road she ended up in a partially dug cesspool. She was charged with negligent driving.

Punch spent a lot of his time on traffic control. In the years before Interstate 5, the Pacific Highway (now Old Highway 99) was the main thoroughfare from Portland to Seattle. It was the "Route 66" of

the Pacific Northwest and passed through Tenino. Tenino, meanwhile, became famous for being a speed trap.

According to *Tenino: Decades of Boom and Bust* by Scott McArthur, "One of the recipients of a speeding ticket in 1947 was the driver for U.S. Senator and presidential candidate Robert Taft."



*Punch in Uniform.*

Though Punch resigned as Marshal at the end of 1947, his legacy lived on. In 1953, there were \$6,885 in traffic fines, and in 1955, after I-5 opened, fines only amounted to \$987. The reputation went on for years. Roger Reeves recalls hitchhiking in California in the late 50s and when he mentioned he was from Tenino the driver commented, "Oh, that speed trap."

After Roger left the Navy, he came back to Tenino for eight months in 1960 before moving to California to find work. There was a recession on, and work was scarce. During that time, he started fishing regularly with Punch, who was retired. While Roger was newly 21, Punch had just turned 70 and consequently qualified for a free fishing license, of which he was very proud. Roger doesn't remember what they used to talk about, but he does recall passing pleasant hours on Offut Lake shooting the breeze. Just a couple of guys who had nothing but time.

Punch was a long-time member of the Tenino Eagles Aerie, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, and the First Presbyterian Church of Tenino. He died in 1971 at the age of 81.

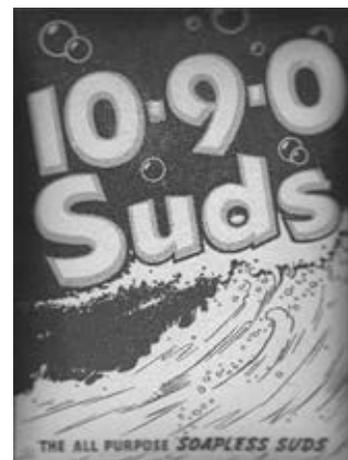


*Sussex Avenue looking west, circa 1950s.*

# Pacific Powder

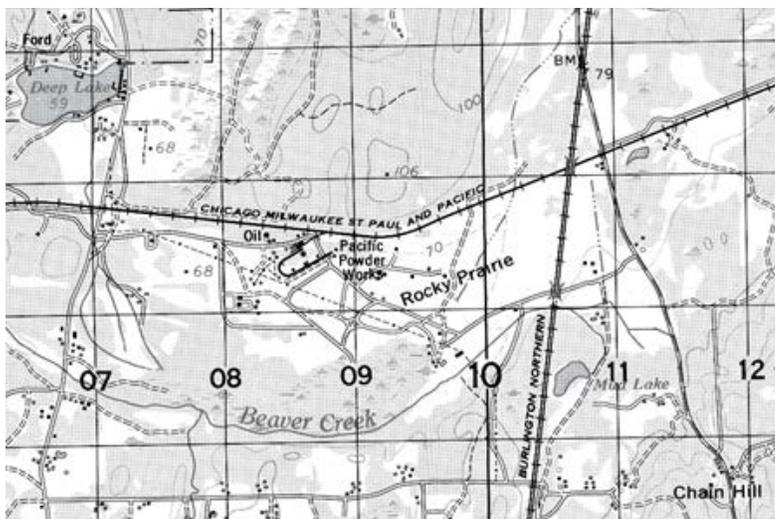
The Universal Powder Company built a plant in 1940 in a remote area near Tenino to produce explosives. It was taken over by Pacific Powder in 1943.

The Pacific Powder Company set up a small factory in the City of Tenino in 1946, to produce a detergent marketed as “soapless suds” called 10-9-0 Suds. A powerful disinfectant was another offering. The formula came out after World War II when the United States Government released the information about recently discovered chemicals. The detergents required no fats (and so are not technically soap), but cleaned regardless and were “wetter than water” and could be used for “Dishes & Glass, Woodwork, Bathroom, Linoleum, and Laundry.” 10-9-0 Suds were produced in the Russell Building on Sussex Avenue, but were unable to compete with larger competition. Pacific Powder Company continued to have their offices at the Russell Building long after their detergent production closed.



*Laundry Soap Box.*

The Pacific Powder Company was perhaps more famous for its production of nitroglycerin explosives such as dynamite. The plant was located on what is mapped as Powder Plant Road, which connects with Tilley in the Rocky Prairie area. The Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific Railroad passed through this area and most likely served Pacific Powder.



*Pacific Powder on Rocky Prairie. Aerial photo from 1957.*

In 1954, a nitro house exploded at Pacific Powder and killed one Tenino man, Amos George Owens. He was survived by his wife, parents, and his three children. The blast could be heard all around the area, according to witnesses.

Infamously on Jan. 18, 1957, six people died in an explosion at the remotely located 58-acre Pacific Powder Company. The blast was described as "tremendous, earth-shaking blast" and created a

mushroom cloud. The blast could be felt clearly in Tenino and was thought to be an earthquake in Olympia.

The blast obliterated a gelatin-stuffing building and the six workers inside. Four people working in nearby buildings on the 58-acre factory property were also injured. There were at least 3,000 pounds of explosives in the building when the blast went off and was probably triggered by static electricity or a spark from a zipper.

"The area was blown as clear of debris as though a blockbuster bomb had been dropped on it," *The Daily Chronicle* reported. "Parts of shattered metal, splinters of wood and bits of human flesh were found as far away as 400 yards from the explosion site."

Another notorious incident happened in 1959 when a Pacific Powder truck carrying dynamite and ammonium nitrate exploded in downtown Roseburg, Oregon. The driver, George Rutherford of Chehalis, had parked his truck, loaded with more than six tons of explosives, on the street while he went to a hotel to have a rest and bite to eat.

Disastrously, a fire broke out in the building next to where his truck was parked. Upon hearing the sirens of firetrucks, Rutherford rushed to move his truck, since dynamite and fire don't mix. As he approached the vehicle from a block away, he was swept off his feet by the blast. The force of the blast was so great it bowled over people blocks away. Fourteen people died and the local hospital reported 52 patients. Among the deceased were first responders dealing with the fire. The truck left a crater 50 feet wide and 20 feet deep.

"Let me go! Let me go!" cried a distraught Rutherford according to the *Daily Olympian* August 7, 1959, "I've got to go down there and see how many people I've killed."

A conversation with Bill Garson tells the rest of the Pacific Powder story. In 1963, Pacific Powder was bought by Hercules Inc., another powder company but no relation to the Hercules Stone Company. Bill Garson worked for Hercules and transferred to the Tenino operation in 1965. Hercules continued production until 1968, then moved to strictly distribution in 1970. Bill was part of the resurrection of Pacific Powder Pipe and Supply, which bought out Hercules in 1970, and continued operation as a distributor and manufacturer. In 1988, the business was sold to a Norwegian company, which continued to operate until 1994, at which point it was dismantled.



*Empty wooden crate on display in Tenino Depot Museum.*

# Tenino 1930s, 1940s & 1950s

*This article is based on an interview project of Tenino Citizens who remember Tenino in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. This is only part of their reminiscences. This project was made possible by the Thurston County Heritage Grant.*

## *Interviewees:*

- (Sis) Lola Arlene Yantis Barclay (b. 1929) with input from her sister Judy Yantis Logan. They grew up out the Skookumchuck Valley.
- Roger Reeves (b. 1939) grew up on Blumauer Hill. Moved to his mother's Stella's Beauty Parlor in the 1950s on Sussex Avenue.
- Thelma Arnott McNair (b. 1933) grew up on Hyatt Road on Chaenn Hill.
- Marilyn Schaefer Ritter (b. 1927) grew up on Offut Lake. Her parents owned the Movie Theater in Tenino.
- Dorothy Jean Martin Pettit (b. 1939) grew up in Tenino. She was Mayor 1998-2003.
- Marjory Ann Tibbets Lycan (b. 1933) grew up near Old Highway 99 south of Tenino. Her parents owned Tibbets'.
- Colleen Kay Keithahn Kirchmeier (b. 1939) grew up in Tenino. She was best friends with Jean and they mention each other in interviews. They were also in the same grade as Roger.

## **What appliances and modern conveniences did you have?**

**Jean:** Mom had a refrigerator. It was one of the old ones with a motor up on top of it. She had an electric stove and we had a trash burner in the kitchen and sometimes she would cook extra on that. An iron griddle would fit the length of it. We called it a trash burner, but it had two openings and you could put wood in it. There was a coal furnace to heat the house. There was a door with a cement chute and the coal went down to the basement. There was an oil stove in the front room too. The laundry was always downstairs. A washing machine with a ringer on it, wash tubs, and what you would call a mangle. A great big thing for ironing. It lifted up and you put clothes in there. Mom used it along with an ironing board and iron. There were clotheslines outside and down in the basement. And of course, I was the one who got her arm caught in the wringer. I'm the accident prone one. The laundry didn't get moved up until the 80s. Mom went up and down those stairs for years and years.

**Sis:** We had a washing machine and an iron. I think we had a hot plate. Because we used wood stoves and when it was really hot in the summer, I think that mom used a hot plate. The first year we were there we didn't have electricity; mom went to work in the cannery to get money to run the line in. And that was during the Depression and those were hard times.

Primary cooking was a wood-fired cook stove. And we had a heater stove. I remember Mom got tired of stoking the heater stove and so they put in an



LOLA (Sis) YANTIS—annual editor 4; Beaver Tales staff 3, 4; yell leader 1, 2, 4; operetta 3; sec. of student body 3. Hobby—4-H work. Future—college.

oil stove. I don't know why but after a year, the thing exploded. She got rid of that thing and never wanted to see it again. She had that oil everywhere, the soot, you know.

We didn't have indoor plumbing until 1946. We had a well and an electric pump and a hot water heater stand. On the back porch were laundry tubs with running water. And we lacked a shower, we used a round tub behind the stove when it was cold. Then we added a shower only, because the room was little.

We had an ice box. I think when Gerry was married, we got a refrigerator. I just remember an ice box. There was an ice person who went around and delivered ice. We had a cellar out back. Above ground and that's where the ice box was and canned goods.



**Thelma:** We had a power plant that was battery operated for light, when it went haywire, we had one that was gas run. The hot water was heated by the stove. We had a kitchen stove and wood burning heater. We cut all the wood for them. We had a boiler standing in front of the stove. It would be on the right end that would heat water for laundry or a bath. We had running water but we had a water tank on a tower. Gravity fed water down through the pipe. We got there in 1946, and folks moved off it in 1956. We lived rougher than sandpaper.

**Marge:** We had a washer and dryer and refrigerator and an electric range. We were up to date on things like that.

**Roger:** Primarily we used the kitchen wood stove for the heat. We didn't try to heat the rest of the house. It had a fire box and an oven. We didn't have a refrigerator.

We had a radio. My mother won it on a contest. I liked the Jack Benny show. Dennis Day was a singer on it. I liked him; he was a tenor. We didn't have much for music. Then there was a couple of programs like the Shadow. I don't remember if I actually listened to them or not, but I remember them being on. My mother liked soap operas, but I don't remember if she listened to them on the radio. She watched them on TV when we moved into town and had a TV.

**Colleen:** We had a wood stove that mother cooked on in the kitchen, we cut wood out back. My sisters, that was their job. They had a load dumped and my sisters would cut it up and we stacked it in the back. Every morning mother would lay a fire, when we would have to get up for school in the winter, and our couch was in front of the fireplace and she would lay our clothes on the couch and we had to go from that cold bedroom that was in the back and run to the fireplace to get our clothes on. My mother was really exceptional.

We did have a little refrigerator. It had a big box that sat on top and ran it. But it wasn't really dependable. You put things in there that you couldn't get in cold storage.

We had a wringer washer machine on the back porch. You had to fill it with water and then you turned it on and then you had a rinse. We had two big rinse tubs. One had bluing in it for the whites. Then they would go through the ringer into a basket on the floor and then we would take them outside. Mother only did laundry once a week. Usually, people in those days did laundry on Monday and ironed on Tuesday and that sort of thing, but mother usually did it on her day off on Sunday. Everything was line dried. It was labor intensive.

### Did you have a Telephone?

**Jean:** We had a telephone, party line. The telephone was on the wall of a corner of the kitchen. There was a door going into the living room and a door going into the little bedroom and Tinker and Patsy would be on that phone all the time and they would run their finger up and down with their fingernail so there were grooves in the doorframe. Cause you stood over there and talked, there was no chair so they made grooves in the doorframe.

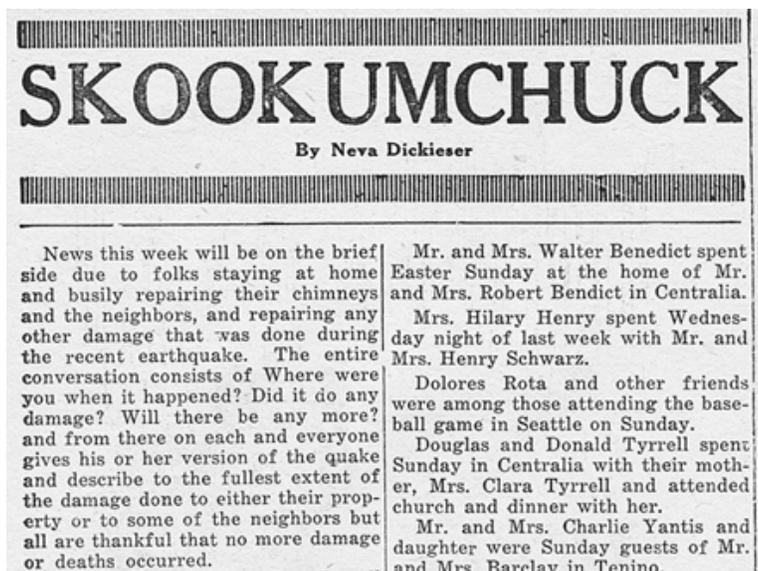
**Sis and Judy:** We did have a phone, but before we did if I wanted to get a hold of somebody I walked over across the bridge to Case's and I used the phone. Uncle John Case, I could come every day; he didn't care and when I got to be a teenager, I sort of did. Then we got one. I was in high school, I think. It was a crank on the wall. The crank called the operator in town.

**Judy:** If you rang Neva, it would be like a long and a short.

**Sis:** And that was your ring. Ours was two and something. There were about ten people on a party line and everyone had a different ring. If you wanted to get on a different line you had to call the operator. It rang in everyone's house but you only answered if it was your signal. But you knew everyone was listening anyway.

**Judy:** Neva was famous for this, I remember mom would say, "OK Neva" and she would hear a click.

**Sis:** Neva used to write for the paper. So, she would call Monday morning and ask mom what had gone on that weekend so she could put it in the paper but mom didn't want to tell her. So, she had a terrible time keeping things from Neva so they wouldn't make the paper. But that was the only time I bought that paper after I was grown was when Neva and Bernice were putting all their gossip in there. Otherwise, it was boring, but I liked to read that kind of stuff...



**Thelma:** No telephone. If we had to make a phone call, which we rarely tried. There was a service station there at the end of Hyatt Road off the highway.

**Marge:** Our phone hung on the wall. There was an operator and you had to ring twice to get the operator and you gave her the number of the person you were calling. And it was also a party line. So, you had to pick up the receiver and if someone else was on it then you hung up and you waited a while until they were finished, hopefully, then you could ring twice for the operator. If you had an emergency, you would tell whoever was on the line that you have an emergency. Then they would get off the line. In a few years we got a cradle phone.

### **Did you do odd jobs in your youth?**

**Thelma:** I worked at the service station on Hyatt. Not a service station so much but gas pumps. When I was 13, I was working for them and you had to put the handle over and pump to fill the glass globe. I think it was 10 gallons or up to 20. I was short enough that I had to make a little jump to do the handle over. Logging trucks would come in and want filled up and it was like 40 gallons. It was a lot of work. It kept me in shape. So, you would fill up the globe and that would measure it out, and you would do that over and over again. It was quite busy. You always washed the windshield at that time. I had a 3-foot ladder that I had to get out.

**Jean:** As a kid I sold the neighbors' milk. That's when Lincolns lived next door, and the barber shop. The only odd jobs would have been picking berries, babysitting. There was a bus that came along and took us to the berry fields, but we must have been teenagers by that point. At one point Dean Barney had a big field of green beans down below Scheels and we would pick green beans for him.

**Sis:** I cut wood for the fire. I fed chickens and you learned to milk in case you were needed. I had to hoe in the garden and can food.

The first paid job was across at Glenda and Norman's, I got a quarter an hour for cleaning flower beds.

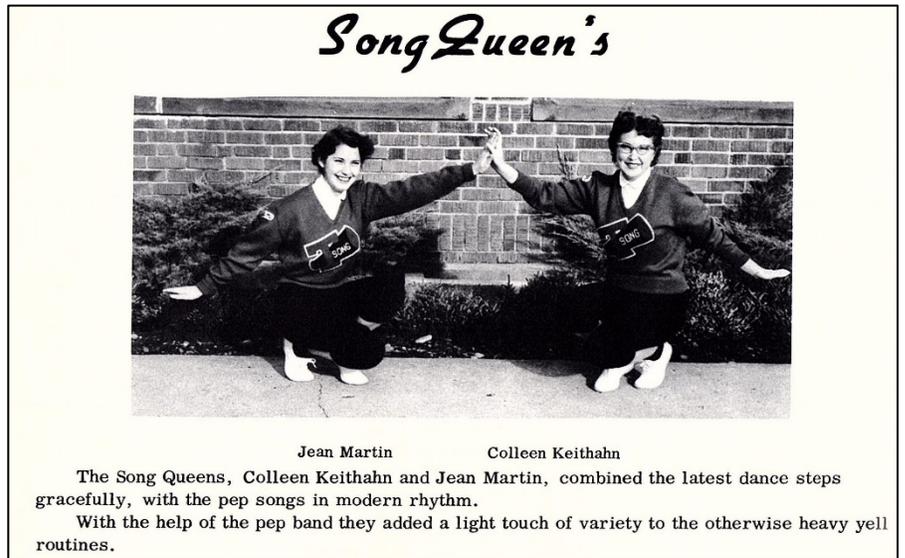
We had a strawberry patch and Gerry and I could sell the strawberries out of that. We worked the bean fields in Yelm staying at my aunt and uncle's. That's how we earned school money for clothes. And when I was in high school, I worked at my grandad's and my uncle paid me all summer for cooking for the crews.

**Roger:** The hotel was a going concern. After the freeway went by, that probably hurt its business. But there were apartments in it around the bottom. There were some little old ladies who lived there. I remember I would fill their wood box for them and get a buck here and there. Filling the wood box, splitting the wood.

**Colleen:** I babysat. I didn't need to earn money since my parents were divorced, Daddy sent me money every month. I babysat a lot. And every cent I made I spent on clothes.

## School Activities and Memories?

**Jean:** Baseball and basketball. We had a flag twirling group. We did PE, tumbling, flags, we played basketball but there were weird rules for girls' basketball at that time. We played tennis. We had a tennis team when Mr. Mackleberg was the superintendent here. We traveled to other schools. Then Colleen, Beverly and I were song queens in school. We had cheerleaders and song queens.



**Colleen:** Degree of honor. I was in sports. I was in everything they did at school. I was in tumbling team. I was in everything the girls could do.

For school dances, there was the Junior Prom, and the Senior Ball. Sadie Hawkins Day Dance and those sorts of things. I never missed a one. Taking portraits at the dances is a new thing. We had senior pictures. Jeanie and I were song queens in school, so they took pictures of us for the annual. Song Queens are part of the yell staff. There were cheerleaders and the ones who did all this during the songs. Jeanie and I were that part. They divided it in the annual.

I remember when Roger left. I remember when he quit and went in the service. I remember when he came home. I've known him forever. There were several that quit and went in the service at the time so I didn't think much about how he didn't graduate with us when he started with us.



*Roger Reeves, 1957*

**Sis:** We had 4H in the Ticknor Building. Since there wasn't school in there anymore, it was the 4H building. When I was little, the teacher lived in that. There were two classes in Stoney Point: 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and then 4th, 5th and 6th. Edna McArthur had the first one. And the second one was Mrs. Johnson and then they combined them for, I guess, lack of kids and so Edna had everybody. But she did good.

She taught Judy 1st Grade in Tenino. All these small schools were closed in about 1940 and combined them into Tenino. (Tenino Union School was 7th grade and above). In 7th grade, I started in Tenino and was bussed in.

**Marge:** When I was a junior or senior in May or the early part of June, Mrs. Welsh was our PE teacher, and we had to go to the quarry and swim. That time of year it was cold, it is cold anyway, but to get in a bathing suit in May. Let me tell you we swam quick, we just had to swim across and oh, we did that in a hurry! And she stood there with her whistle in her mouth.

I belonged to the Degree of Honor. The Masons for kids. I was never good at sports. I tried Tennis; I wasn't good at that. I tried softball; I wasn't good at that.

Ed (Marge's husband, Ed Lycan) went to Tenino schools his whole life. He started in kindergarten and went all the way through. We knew each other in school. I asked him to Tolo. Other dances were the Junior Prom in the fall, Senior Ball was in the spring. And Tolo, too, when the girls asked the boys. Dance styles during that time were mostly the jitterbug and waltzing.

**Roger:** School was by Parkside in grade school. Out in the middle of the play yard was a building that had the heating system (the boiler room). We played "ante, ante over". There was a lunchroom with classrooms upstairs. The school had two wings. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades were on one side. They tore down one wing and kept the other. On the left which is now Parkside, was 4th, 5th, and 6th grades.

After 6th grade you went to the high school. Which was junior high and high school and was located at same location as now. They are different schools since the high school burnt down.

### **What's to Eat?**

**Jean:** Mom cooked all the time. Three meals a day. We walked home from school for lunch. The church parking lot was not there. It was a wooded lot, so we walked from the house to the school. That's when the back building had a cafeteria and classrooms.

You had to walk upstairs to get to the classrooms. I remember going down those stairs during the earthquake. I guess for lunch. Trying to carry a bowl of soup and soup was slopping out of the bowl because everything was shaking so.

We used to make taffy and pull taffy. At Christmastime we made divinity and fudge. There wasn't much of a grocery store in Tenino. I can't ever remember having asparagus. If we had broccoli, it came out of the garden. Mom canned and she made butter. And she did a lot of baking of bread. We had our own chickens and beef and pigs. We had the grocery stores but there wasn't the variety of things that you bought at the grocery stores when I was growing up.

**Marilyn:** My favorites were fried chicken and french fries, hamburgers. My mother was a good cook. She was German and cooked a lot of good German food. Her mother died when she was 40 of a heart condition. Nowadays, they could have fixed it but in those days, they had no idea how to fix it.

At Offut they had McArthur's resort there and they had a little store there and he would freeze all kinds of candy bars which were about three times the size they are now. They had Snickers, and the Three Musketeers which were three different candy bars. One was chocolate, one was strawberry, and one was vanilla and that's where the Three Musketeers came from. But eventually, they came down to just the chocolate. It was owned by Punch McArthur.

**Sis:** I know it was really rough times, but we were lucky that we lived where we grew everything and my mom sewed, so I didn't know we were poor, because everyone else was poor too. And we always had meat and mom baked so I don't remember any problem with food. Ever.

Cookies were a treat. And cinnamon rolls, mom made really good cinnamon rolls.

**Thelma:** Just whatever we got stirred up. We did eat a lot of deer meat. Venison. The game warden at that time was Art Erickson. He come up one day and said to dad, "I know you got a big family, and I know you get meat out of the season, sometimes. The only thing, if you ever waste any or sell any, there is a room waiting for you."

We had no refrigerator. We canned it. Feeding 10 every meal it never went to waste.

**Marge:** Where the Landmark is, that used to be called Anderson's Tavern and my friend who I used to pal around with in school, Beverly McGill, her parents owned it. Sometimes we would go there after school and in one part they had a bar that faced the street and kids could sit there. We would have a milkshake or a sundae and share it. Whatever we did, we would share because we didn't have much money. That was fun, that kids could go in a certain part, which was kind of neat for us.



**Roger:** We ate Spam. I ate a lot of canned foods because we didn't have a refrigerator. Fresh fruit and stuff like that didn't keep. In my lunch I always had a Hostess cupcake. I always had a sandwich but I don't remember what kind. I had a lot of peanut butter and jelly. We had bologna and stuff like that for sandwiches but nothing that couldn't keep for a couple days. I had an egg and toast and tea for breakfast most days. Chocolate milk was a treat. It didn't keep very well and mice would get into it.

**Colleen:** My mother canned, back in those days people put up food. We had the cold storage, up from where Jeanie lived, we had a big box in there and I loved going in there with mother because you had to go in the big locker part of it and it was just white ice, and of course people had their own compartments and I loved going in there.

We had chickens, and mother killed chickens. I remember her sticking them in the fireplace to singe the feather off and then she would cut them up and take them to the freezer at the cold storage. It was a lot of work and I don't know how she did it. But we had a chicken dinner or a special dinner every Sunday.

She had a full-time job at the Jiffy Lunch. When we were really little, she worked at Fort Lewis in the hospital cafeteria. But she canned and put up food and she did this until the day she died. We could have fed the whole town out of her pantry. And she would buy 50 pounds of sugar. Nobody was buying 50 pounds of sugar except my mom who canned everything. So, we didn't spend a lot outside.

Mother made our bread. I remember there being a strike at that time and you couldn't buy bread. But mother was making it all along. I think a loaf of bread was 9 cents. So, I remember mother making jam and taking the skimming off the jam, with homemade bread. You can't even get that flavor anymore. Gone forever when mother died, for us anyway.

Most of the time when we had sandwiches, they were egg salad or chicken salad or peanut butter and jelly. We didn't have a lot of money, but we didn't know that. As long as I didn't miss any meals, I didn't realize that we were sort of poor. But everyone was in the same boat. It wasn't such a caste system at that time. Especially not in Tenino.

## **Fun**

**Jean:** We were outside all the time. The corner where we lived was the gathering place for most of the kids. So, we played kick the can, hide and seek, baseball in the streets. Most of us had roller skates for outside. We came in at dinnertime. When Mary and I were little, it had to be past five years old, we had miniature electric ovens. We had miniature Pyrex cookware, bread pans and pie plates and dishes and the ovens actually plugged in. We baked in them, believe it or not. We had ironing boards and electric ovens that plugged in that were toys. One of our great pastimes was to take a leaf out of the kitchen table and set it up on chairs. We had a cash register and we would empty the pantry and do a grocery store business. Mom let us roller skate in the kitchen because we had skates with rubber wheels.

We rode bikes, no helmets, no safety gear.

**Marilyn:** We rode bikes or roller skated because all the roads were new cement. And a few years after we moved here, they started building Highway 507. Before that there was no 507 just the old Military Road that runs back behind through town. They started building that road and I would watch them. And then I realized someday I would buy the property that it runs through.

We swam at the quarry. My mother would sit there and watch us while we learned to swim. Well, we learned to swim at Millersylvania through the Red Cross program. You could go up there and swim. You were on your own, there was no life guard or anything.

**Sis:** We played with the neighbors up the road. We swam all summer in the Skookumchuck River and it was warmer than it is now because the dam made it colder. We rode horses. I didn't ride a bike because it was a gravel road, but my neighbor up Coal Road, Jenny, she did. And I learned to ride her bike up there.

Yes, we were lucky to have the river. In the summer we just washed our head, because we could go in twice a day if we wanted to. But we did go to Millersylvania, Deep Lake. If it was really hot, mom would fix dinner and we would go out there for supper. Deep Lake Resort was there but you didn't go there because it was private. You went to Millersylvania because it was a State Park and there were swimming docks.

We went dancing at the Skookumchuck Grange. Dances were big for us. Alcohol was only outside. Our Dad liked to have a nip and he would go outside, him and Tommy Dickieser and whoever, and he was really a good dancer. And as the evening progressed, he would dance a little faster. He was really good. The music was live. It was western because we had square dances, polkas and waltzes. It was every other weekend.

We went to the movies in Centralia or Olympia. Centralia was the town to go to. They had two dime stores there.

**Thelma:** If we got our chores done, we would go to the movie theater in Tenino.

At home we would play ball games or play with the littler kids, ring around the rosie... stuff like that. That's if we had time to play. We had the chickens and cows and wood to cut and the garden. We kids did most of the garden. Dad was away working, and mom was in the house working. I can remember plowing the field with the horse. I processed a number of those chickens.

**Roger:** I played in the woods and chopped down trees. I don't really want to talk about my BB gun. ... I did a lot of hunting with my BB gun. That was my favorite sport. Unfortunately, a lot of birds died because of me.

I didn't invite friends to my house. I had one friend who came up. He was in the same boat as I was in financially. I don't remember any other friends ever coming to my house.

Back in those days, Skookumchuck kids tended to stick together, Offut Lake kids got to know each other, Maytown kids, Deep Lake area, Violet Prairie kids. In town friends were Charlie Gibson, Leslie Wayte, Les Stanton all lived right by each other. They played close to each other, so those became little social groups. Now we have Facebook.

Kids used to go up to the Beacon on top of Blumauer Hill. They walked right through my yard to get there. You could also get there from the dump road. It was a beacon for airplanes, so they could see there was a hill there.

The quarry wasn't a swimming hole, yet. Folks were still swimming in it though. The rocks were still out scattered around the property. I remember going swimming with my sisters when they were still around. There were enough rocks out in the water at the deep part and I remember they put me out on those rocks. The pool wasn't developed until the late 40s.



The other swimming hole was underneath the railroad tracks on Scatter Creek. There was a trail and a tunnel under the railroad tracks and little kids swam on this side, but it was deeper on the other side. I was little so I never went to the other side.

We moved in 1952 or 53 into Tenino. I was basically a town kid before we moved out of the woods. I was always in town and my mother never knew where I was. She had no way to communicate with me.

When we lived on the hill, I usually tried to get home before dark because I hated coming up through the woods by myself in the dark. I wasn't very brave.

Fred McNair was probably who I hung out with the most. Sometimes depending on ages, and how things changed. Jack Tanner was a pretty good friend. I associated with a lot of people.



**Colleen:** For fun, we mostly packed lunches. I had older siblings so I didn't have a sitter, but it didn't matter anyway because all the neighborhood, Mabel Eaton was older than the rest of us and she was always the instigator to go on these field trips up into the hills around there. As you go out of town around the corner toward Millersylvania, there was a big clay hill. At the top we could jump off and ride the clay down because it was loose. I lost a shoe in there one time and got in trouble so I remember that well.

But we would play outside and make forts down by the school. There was a big pile of cement blocks that were dumped over there and we made little roads in there with our cars. And we played outside. Jeanie and I would go to the creek and catch pollywogs in the spring. We stayed away from the boys

because they bugged us. Mostly we were on our bikes. She had a dog and I had a dog and they were with us every day with our bikes.

The beacon was up behind Roger's house. We used to go up there, and I don't know why somebody didn't get killed. Because we were kids then. 8, 9, 10, 11 years old and we would climb straight up and you know how tall that beacon was. I couldn't do that on a bet now. But of course, the beacon isn't there anymore. It used to go around and around.

There was a siren that went off every night at nine o' clock and you had to be home. Sounded like an air raid siren. We called it curfew. It was the only thing that took us in at night because we played in the street, we played a lot of kick the can in the street. The street lights then were dim. They weren't worth much. I didn't know about responsibilities, I had to keep my room clean and that was it. I didn't do much, I was the baby.

## Teen Years

**Colleen:** As a teen, in those days I didn't date. I was 16 before I could really go out with a boy. We went to the Dreamland Ballroom on Saturday nights. There were a lot of soldiers that would come down. But I had my older sisters who protected me. They wouldn't let me get away with anything... they would tell mother.

Dreamland was a huge open hall with a bandstand. On the right when you went in you would put your coats and everything. Bathrooms were on the left. It looked very much like the grange out at Skookumchuck if you had the bandstand at the end instead of the middle. Just a huge dance hall. It attracted lots; it was really fun.

I remember going to other dance halls, too. Skookumchuck Grange, Claquato and the Evergreen Ballroom. That's where I met Myron when I was 21. We went there every Saturday night. So, in my younger days I went to Dreamland.

Cruising was the most fun, because we could load up the kids and put in a dollars' worth of gas and we could be gone for a day and a half, practically. But we would go to Olympia and go up around Triple X and downtown and up to the OK Drive-in. We could do that all night with a car load of girls because there were car loads of boys. That's where the kids were.

We didn't get away with much then. Parents knew each other and we knew somebody would see us in Tenino and somebody would tell somebody.

**Marge:** We would go to football games and basketball games and they would have sock hops. Usually after the games. You took off your shoes and danced in your socks so you didn't mar up the gym floor.



**Roger:** Dreamland. That's where we went. The dances were with live music, and they were sometimes locals. There was a kid named Watson who thought he was Elvis. Can't remember his first name, but I think he lived in Bucoda. They had a little band and he could sing. But mostly there was country music in those little dance halls. Because that's what people liked to dance to.

The Grange (Skookumchuck) was the place to go, but it was a drinking place (outside). I went there when my dad was still living with us. So, I wasn't very big. Maybe 4 years old. And I remember because those same benches are still there and I was told to stay on the bench. But I couldn't hold still. And the dance floor was full of people and I started running around and guess who ran into me. My mom and dad. I remember that! I never went there as a teenager. I think Dreamland pretty much put them out of business.

## Do you remember the Blizzard of 1950?

### Friday the 13th Blizzard Worst In Many Years

Last Friday the 13th the residents of Tenino experienced the worst blizzard ever to hit this vicinity. The wind and snow blew to pile up about seventeen inches of this blanket of white.

Stace Peterson, who has lived in Tenino over 40 years, says that the Friday storm was the worst he had ever experienced.

The Puget Sound Power and Light crew reports that they worked night and day from Friday the 13th early morn till Sunday night, in blizzard conditions to restore service to the affected area. Of the district the Tenino crew serves, from Yelm to Oakville, the Oakville and Rochester section was the worst hit. Trees fell across the lines and caused Oakville

**Jean:** I was about 10 years old. I do remember that the snow was about as high as I was tall that time. So, we were just stuck in the house.

**Roger:** Mom came off the hill looking for me. We might have stayed the night at the hotel. I couldn't stand the bed because I was used to having this many blankets on me to keep warm. And it only had one blanket, I couldn't stand it. I needed weight. I think our neighbor, Gary Bogs, brought mom down the hill on the horse sled and we may have stayed the night at the hotel. The only reason we would have stayed at the hotel was if something had gone wrong at the house.

In the wintertime, we were more likely to have water from the spring than in the summer time unless the pipe froze. Mom left the water running just a little so the pipes wouldn't freeze and when we got home the water in the sink was frozen with ice all the way up to the faucet. It was so cold. There was no insulation in the house whatsoever. And once the pipes broke, we had no way of fixing it. We didn't get water again until this guy she was dating ran a plastic water pipe from the well to the house.

**Colleen:** It was the first time I remember before or after, there being drifting snow. It drifted up against the windows and we couldn't see out. Blowing snow, you know, because normally we get those wet snows. And the streets, they tried to keep them clean and it was stacked up against the streets on both sides. I've never seen snow like that. Mostly people were walking on top of the piles because it froze.

**Marilyn:** We had 4 feet of snow in our yard out here. We had a dog who had puppies out in the barn, and I had to dig a trail for her to get out to the barn for her puppies. And that snow wasn't coming down, it blew in sideways. It was terrible, trees down every place. I mean it was a real mess. I remember that very vividly. We were without lights for 8 days.

This was in the house I live in now, Rambo's old house. The house was built the same year I was born. Where I live now, Rambo's was a dairy.

## What did you do for fun in the Winter?

**Marilyn:** We lived on this cove at Offut Lake and it would freeze every winter and we used to ice skate. But if it snowed, we had to sweep all the snow off because you couldn't skate in the snow. That kept us busy trying to keep that cove clear. We lived on the north side of the lake.

**Jean:** When we were teenagers, Pappy (Roy) Etter's hill was the sledding hill. Straight past Penny's corner (Napa) under the tracks. You went across a bridge because of the creek. He had a house there and a big barn, then the hill. He built us a toboggan and we did stupid things. All the town kids did. We would build a fire at the top of the hill and go down and get cold and wet and go home and get

hot cocoa. Getting your wet clothes off at the back door. I know we almost ended up in the creek a few times taking the toboggan down.

**Roger:** Roy Etter owned that whole hill. We used to go sledding there. That was a ritual. Roy Etter used to take his horses and pull a sled down and pack it down. You could see it from town. Roy had a big toboggan and it scared me to death. You could imagine getting your leg ripped off because it really got going. All the town kids went up there. Francis White would go up and build a fire and when everyone saw the fire, they would head up the hill.

**Colleen:** We would go sledding on Etter's Hill. Roy Etter, you know, he cleared everything. He had a couple of toboggans that he made us kids. Etter would light fires for us. We called him Pappy Etter. Jeanie would remember him well because we rode his horses. He would saddle up his horses for us and we'd go back up in the woods, back up where the reservoir was.

### Do you remember the 1949 Earthquake?

**Thelma:** I was behind the school during PE playing baseball. And a classmate hit a fly ball. I was going backward trying to catch it. I kept going backward and when I looked back the ground was rolling. Like waves. I don't know where the ball ever went. Anyhow, then the bell rang and they told us to just go, my brother that was just younger than me, I told him I was going to go home and see what had happened with mom. I'm thinking, what if the water tower fell on her, or something like that. So, I took off running and I got up there and she was asleep. She had no idea. There was a glass of milk that had spilled on the table. And that was it. She had no idea. She was just fine.

**Marge:** I was in PE class and it was a two-story building that isn't there anymore. I don't remember if it was torn down or burnt down. But downstairs was the agriculture class and upstairs the gymnasium. And we were having gym class up there. The earthquake started and we were told to leave and it was so hard going down those steps. Then we were told there was no school so we walked up town and where the Mexican restaurant is on the corner now, that was the Jiffy Lunch Café. And next to that was the pharmacy, the Davenports owned it. Anyway, they had their door open and you could smell the liquor and the perfume that had dumped on the floor and mixed together. Oh! it was a terrible odor going by there! I can still remember the smell!

### Quake Hits

ed about to topple but stuck in place, and that area is now roped off for fear that the great stones may yet fall.

The walls in the Log Tavern were cracked. The well at the Hillcrest Service Station caved in. Fred Martin had hardly a glass or dish in one piece.

Campbell and Campbell's store suffered heavy loss, both to stock and building. The plaster was completely ruined and walls were cracked. The chimney fell into the alley. The loss here will probably reach \$5,000.

Gus Stiner, at Tenino Feed, reports that he lost a valuable \$150 scale, by having it shaken from the counter onto the floor.

McLain's grocery, in addition to having a plate glass window broken out, was badly mussed up, with stock scattered over the floor.

The City Hall, and in fact every business house and dwelling in Tenino suffered some damage.

H. R. Williamson and his wife are working all night tonight (Wednesday) to get the Tenino Drug in shape for business Thursday by noon if possible.

Heavy damage was done to the Tenino Grade school, particularly in the boiler room, one wall of the building is about ready to collapse. It will take several thousand dollars to repair the damage here.

Due to the wide extent of the damage from the quake, the Independent will make no attempt to report in detail the damage other than in this county.

Two people were reported killed by falling brick in Centralia, and

**Roger:** I was in 3rd grade in 1949, the year of the earthquake. I was in school in the classroom and I had a teacher named Mrs. Blue. She told us all to stay in our seats and she headed for the door. We thought she was leaving us! We all started skittering after her.

We had to go out to a fairly wide hallway to the front double wide doors. Some plaster came off the ceiling and hit Dick Crane on the head. The brick veneer it looked like it had a big air bubble in it. It bowed out.

**Colleen:** There was an earthquake in 1949. Mother was working at the Jiffy Lunch and I was in either the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade and it was in a separate building. It was supposed to be the lunchroom but there were two classrooms upstairs. Mrs. Blue was my teacher. I shouldn't say this, but she left before all the kids got out. We were on our own! Honest to God! Everyone said, "I'm so glad you stayed with Joanie" but I didn't mean to stay with Joanie! Joanie was my girlfriend and she had polio and she just couldn't get out as fast and my desk was next to her. Well, we just huddled there together because I was scared and I didn't know what to do. Mrs. Blue was gone. So, they thought I had stayed with Joanie because we were one of the few left in the building... but I was just petrified. I didn't make it out until after the earthquake. Parents started showing up for their kids and mother came down and got me. I don't remember where anybody else went but I assume with their parents. Mother was working and she just locked it up. That was a big one, bricks came off the boiler room and I remember a big puff of steam. It was really scary.

#### **What was it like when the freeway came?**

**Marilyn:** It was a big deal. Before we had the freeway, you could hardly get across the street. We had no stop lights. It was really hard to cross the street. So much traffic and when they opened up the freeway, there was hardly any. I know the merchants certainly did fight against it because they didn't like the idea of being bypassed. That was pretty tough. Tough on the merchants. The impact was right away. Because the population was smaller than it is now, though at the turn of the century the population was bigger on account of the quarries.

As soon as they put in the section at exit 88 to Tumwater, we were bypassed.

Before there were more gas stations. There was Lycan's, Mac McDonald's, who was married to one of the Furness girls. Then the one at the end of town. Where Jackpot is there was a right angle and they smoothed out the corner.

#### **Who were the notable Citizens and Businesses?**

**Thelma:** Oh, Tom Richards. Campbells had the grocery store. And Jim and Edna McArthur had a grocery store. Then there was McLain's. I worked in the Recreation Parlor. You could go in there and get your hunting license or your fishing license in the back part. They had a pool table there and they had some stools and booths in the front. Ray Bush was in there all the time playing pool. It was next to the Log Tavern.

**Marge:** I think of Uncle Tom. Tom Richards. He was the mayor forever, it seemed like. He must have been mayor for like 15 to 20 years. He was Ed's uncle. Ed's mother and he, were brother and sister.

And Dora Major, she and her husband had the newspaper office. They lived in that house on the corner. They were nice people.

There was the Log Tavern. You could sit in a booth there and we would order a milkshake with two straws. Then there was the Jiffy Lunch where you could watch the cook. You could sit at the counter on stools and Peaches Corbin ran it and you could see the grill on the wall. So, you could watch everything cook. There wasn't much room. It was a tiny place. I imagine it was a great place for people to stop through and get a bite.

**Jean:** We would go up to the cold storage. And get hand packed ice cream cones for a nickel. As a teenager there was the Rec and the Jiffy Lunch. The Recreation Parlor was an afterschool hang out at times, and they always had curly fries, and they were the best curly fries you ever had. The health department wouldn't let you get away with that anymore. Because they kept peeled potatoes in a bucket of water, and they had this spike and they would just take a peeled potato and put it on the spike... cut it and deep fry it. McArthur's grocery store was right next to it and both of those buildings burned down.

On the south side there was a soda fountain place. Mike Shogren was in my class and his family owned that for a while and we hung out there. Nadine Hicks lent the table and chairs. It was a café for a while and then Mike's parents ran it for a while when we were in high school and we would stop by there. Then we had the movie theater to go to.

The Feed Store and Puget Power had an office and the hardware store had a furniture store across the street there at one time. The powder company was where the beauty shop was. Stella's Beauty shop was Doc Wichman's old office. I remember getting my head stitched. It was, "look at the goldfish". My brother dropped a rock on my head. Yes, he was always doing something to me. So, I had stitches in my head.

**Roger:** I went to Dr. Wichman once. I don't know who paid the bill. Fred McNair hit me in the head with an ax when we were cutting brush. Dick carried me over to Doc Wichman. I don't know if he put a Band-Aid on me or sewed me up. I can't even remember.

There was a Dr. Yu down where the bookkeeper was by Eagan's. It was built as a doctor's office.

McArthur's: Jim and Edna McArthur owned the grocery store. Edna McArthur was a first-grade teacher. She was really nice. Everyone wanted to have Mrs. McArthur. Vince Barney had Barney's Automotive. There was A.D. Campbell.

There was a cold storage, it's been torn down. I can't remember what his name was but he lived in the house where the daycare center is now. Nobody had freezers. So, if you needed something

frozen or you didn't have enough room in your refrigerator, you took it to cold storage. I remember we did it when I got a deer. I wasn't very old. I also had a .22 in addition to a BB gun.

Lycan's fuel service, everybody liked him. Right behind the Lycan house they had a service station. Sylvan Lycan, and Ed came home to take over when he retired. Jack Tanner worked there. We also had the Mobile station, later on, Fran and Corky Wells bought it and ran it for years.

There was Ewart Peterson from the telephone company.

Matt and Ada had the Rec (Recreation Parlor). That was a big deal because it had a restaurant and it was a place that we hung out quite a bit. It had a couple pool tables.

There was a place called Johnson's Garage. Johnsons ran it. It was right about where Obee is now. I remember their restroom was an outhouse. They just hadn't caught up to the times yet. They did a lot of welding. I don't know if they did car work or if they just did welding. I remember how they dressed; they wore these little welding hats.

There was Shaefer, who had the theater. Don Major who was with the newspaper and was a signer of wooden money with Dr. Wichman, of course.

Peaches Corbin and Chris were partners in the Jiffy Lunch and before that, they were partners in the bakery. The bakery was right across the street. It would be part of the Eagles. The newspaper office was on the end, then the bakery.

At one time there were two buildings right next door to us (Stella's Beauty Shop also known as Dr. Wichman's Office). But only one when we lived there. That was owned by a guy we called Hairspring. He had a shop where he fixed watches and such. All those old buildings are gone.

Right where the bank is too, there were three little buildings. One on the corner. Then a little shack like Stella's building, then Johnson's Garage, then city hall.

Across the street from city hall there used to be a building. Even back then there were buildings that weren't used much. So, across the street where the post office parking lot is, right on the corner was a building. Sometimes a church rented it for a while, and ran church out of it.

Then, the next building towards Hedden's was an office. I never saw anybody in it, it was deserted, the guy was named Kibbe, he was an attorney. There were a lot of books and stuff in there, the kind of things you would want to go in and look through, but whatever happened to it, I don't know.

Norm Clowers was a barber on the corner (where Hedden's is today). We had three barbers in town. Clowers, and then there was John Bunker's barber shop. It was a two-seater and they usually had two guys in there.

Don Roy decided to become a shoe guy. I don't know where he got training but maybe he went and got training down in Centralia or someplace and came back to Tenino and opened a shop. But he

wasn't very ambitious. He just liked to sit out in front of his shop and watch the traffic go by and smile and wave at everybody. I don't think he made much of living there. By then I don't think people were taking care of their shoes like they were back in the 40s. Back then you resoled them or if you couldn't, you put cardboard in the bottom to keep your foot from touching the cement.

The mayor was Tom Richards, he was an institution. Herb Ash was the city everything. Punch McArthur was the local cop. They were the 40s. Punch had a reputation for pulling people over. Ten, fifteen years later you could be hitchhiking down in California, "where are you going?" "Going to Tenino." "Oh! that speed trap." We had a reputation.



*Downtown Tenino, Sussex Avenue looking east, circa 1940s.*

# Forest Grove Cemetery



The earliest graves in the cemetery are as old as when the area started seeing settlement. Mostly folks from Bucoda, Tenino, and the Skookumchuck Valley are buried in Forest Grove.

The cemetery was started on the corner of Reuben Crowder's homestead and then expanded onto the corner of his neighbor Phillip Northcraft's property. Crowder Road and Northcraft Road are named for these families. Both gentlemen are buried in the cemetery.

There are 13 Civil War Union Soldiers buried in Forest Grove.

Here are just a few of the well-known graves in the cemetery:

- 1) The Swift Family graves have been of great interest to those who care for the cemetery. Five children died within a few short years. Three boys died in 1889. Death records were not recorded by the county until 1890, so cause of the deaths is unknown. The Swifts were from Bucoda. Anna Swift, the mother of the children, was a dressmaker. She was also tongue-tied, though she managed to make herself understood. There were no reports of house fires with casualties in the Bucoda papers; however, there was a typhoid fever epidemic. Typhoid is spread through contaminated water or food, and may have taken some of the children.
- 2) Edward Morsbaugh (1870-1874) was the very first person to be interred in Forest Grove Cemetery. The land for this section was donated by Reuben Crowder when four-year-old Edward died. Reuben would also end up buried in the cemetery he helped create, a quarter century later.
- 3) Aaron Webster (1828-1911) arrived in 1854, in the area that would become Bucoda. At that time, there was nothing there but a peaceful valley meadow, with grazing deer along the Skookumchuck River. After fighting in the Pacific Northwest Indian Wars, Aaron took up his claim and built a cabin with the help of Rueben Crowder. As he was a millwright, he constructed a mill over the river; it was the second mill in Thurston County, after the one in Tumwater. Aaron married the younger Sarah Yantis and they had three daughters. Sarah passed away in 1874, a year after the youngest was born, leaving Aaron to raise his girls on his own until he remarried 5 years later. Sarah was only 29. Aaron is remembered as the founder of Bucoda.



*Sarah (Yantis) Webster holding Sarah May, and Aaron Webster holding Anna Cora.*

4) Herb (1889-1933) and Cliff (1888-1930) Turvey owned Turvey's Skookumchuck Logging Camp. Logging was hard work, but every July the camp shut down for a couple weeks and there was time for picnics, fishing, ballgames, and dances in the Skookumchuck Valley community. Tragically in 1930, Cliff and his wife, Maude, were on their way out the door to their son's high school graduation when they were murdered by a former employee. The graduation ceremony was cancelled. 800 people attended their funeral. Herb died of a heart attack three years, three months, and three days after his brother.

5) Oscar Olson (1855-1895) was a quarryman. He has a unique and beautiful monument. He was only 40 when he died and beloved by his coworkers, as is evidenced in the artful carving that they made for him. The tree, with its limbs cut off, is symbolic of a life cut short. The forest themed monument includes a squirrel and a rabbit.



*Oscar Olson's marker.*

6) Elizabeth (Ford) Ticknor (1840-1917), with her family from Missouri, made the journey west in 1845, all the way to the Oregon Territory. Her headstone says, "Her little feet, A pathway beat, Across the wilderness." One story states that her shoes burned by a campfire and she came west barefoot. In 1845, the family joined a wagon train of 300 immigrants and headed west. The trip was arduous, and at one point they were lost in the mountains. They dealt with horse thieves, and a little baby died on the trail. They came to stay in Oregon City, but the following year Lizzie's parents, Sidney and Nancy Ford, along with Joseph Borst, set their eyes to the unsettled north. The men on a scouting expedition found a beautiful place the tribes called "Tahsunshun" or "Resting Place" located on the Upper Chehalis River, on Ford's Prairie near Centralia. They had to cross the Columbia River with all of their belongings on canoes. Lizzie was so excited that she jumped into the first canoe with the luggage and the Indian boatman. Her family had no idea where she went! But when they arrived at the landing, there she was on the beach, calmly waiting. Growing up, her father was very friendly to the local Native Americans. Her playmates were Indian boys and girls. She learned to speak Quiyaish and other local dialects, too, and to use lariats to catch the Indian ponies, mount them, and race bareback across the prairie. Lizzie married Joel Ticknor and they settled out the Skookumchuck Valley. The Ticknor Schoolhouse was named for their family.

7) Rebecca (Davis) Tyrrell (1812-1900) was remarkable for having been a female wagon master who drove her own team across the Oregon Trail in 1841. She was a widow at the time and brought with her, her six children. She was accompanied by her brother, Johnathan Davis, who drove his own wagon. She later married Captain Tyrrell, with whom she had more children.

8) Philip Northcraft (1825-1893). Philip and his brother William both served in the Pacific Northwest Indian War. William Northcraft was the only South Thurston County casualty of the war. He was attacked and killed while transporting supplies for the military to Yelm. Philip was part of the Cemetery Board when it was incorporated. He died shortly after. His descendent still lives on the family farm, and his name is also Philip Northcraft.



9) John Hayton (1814-1912) was a Native American whose name has also been pronounced Hi-a-ton. His headstone, which is huge, was stolen in the 1980s. A public plea went out in the newspapers for its return. Just as quietly as it disappeared it reappeared in the night. There is a story that Hi-a-ton did a Paul Revere style midnight ride to warn local settlers about the impending Pacific Northwest Indian Wars. As a result, many local families retreated to Fort Henness. He was a signer of the Medicine Creek Treaty. Representatives from all the local tribes attended his funeral.

10) Francis Scheel (1870-1956) was born Martha Louisa Christina Franziska Stein in Germany. In 1886, at 16 years old she left Germany, crossed the stormy Atlantic with her feather bed and German bible and hundreds of German recipes in her head. When she arrived at Ellis Island, she spoke no English at all and answered all their questions by shaking her head, yes or no. She came by train to Portland, Oregon, where her three brothers were there to greet her. There was a large German community in Portland. At a dance, while dressed as a mermaid, she met Hans Peter Scheel. Hans, who was a stonecutter, was very good at English. He studied American History and English to become a citizen. Francis became a citizen when she married him. Hans was more than a stonecutter; he was a businessman and co-owned the Hercules Sandstone Company in Tenino. He was so prosperous that he built a great house on Prospect Hill in Tacoma for his wife and eight children. Francis had a maid, cook, a gardener, and an Irish washerwoman. They had a steam heated greenhouse for flowers and vegetables, and owned the first Cadillac on the hill. Hans was also a snappy dresser. He wore a Stone the Tailor suit with a celluloid collar, and a Cecile Brunner rose on his lapel, and he smoked cigars.



*Scheel family.*

World War I changed everything. Hans had borrowed to open a quarry to fulfill a long-term government jetty project, but when America entered the war, all funds were frozen, the contract was cancelled and the Hercules Sandstone Company went bankrupt. Everything that Hans owned was claimed by the bank, except one piece of land in Tenino that was in Francis's name.

There was nothing there when they moved to "the farm." The children and Francis cleared stumps, and planted gardens and orchards. Hans built a large barn and everyone moved in. Half the loft was stuffed with hay, and in the other half Francis had her cast iron cookstove and sleeping bunks. The cows, pigs, chickens, and Maude, the horse, lived downstairs. But Francis was not troubled with hard work. One of her sayings was "Morgan morgan, nur nicht heute, sagen alle faulen Leute." Or, "Tomorrow, tomorrow, just not today, say all the lazy people."

But one of the hardest parts of the war was the way America turned on American Germans, calling them Huns or Krauts. Francis tried harder to learn English and lose her accent. And though times were hard, she always tried to remember when she put a meal on the table each night that "Ich bin nicht undankbar." ... I am not ungrateful.



*Scheels and McArthurs at clam bake in Tenino City Park, 1907.*

# Nelson Ranch

*Portions originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

As Thurston County continues to grow in population, wide open places like Nelson Ranch in South Thurston County are becoming a rarity. It isn't easy keeping a 500-acre working ranch intact and adapted to the times for 155 years. Yet, the Nelsons have managed to do it for five generations since the arrival of their forefather, James D. Spirlock.

The adventurous Spirlock, who was of French descent, was born in the Carolinas, made his way to Texas, then came to Thurston County by way of the California gold fields. It is unclear how old Spirlock was at the time of his arrival, since somewhere along his journeys, for reasons unknown, both the spelling of his name and his birth date were changed. In 1861, Spirlock paid \$211.47 for his first 40 acres of land, which he cleared and farmed.

Spirlock was not just a farmer, but also a livestock trader. His business model was to travel to Oregon with his horse and dogs and purchase a herd of livestock, which were most often sheep. He then hired men to help him herd his sheep north for a distance. Once the sheep were accustomed to Spirlock and his dogs, he let the hired men go, driving the sheep by himself the rest of the way to Olympia, where he sold them for a profit. There the livestock were loaded on barges bound for Canada.

In 1867, James D. Spirlock married Cordelia Ricker Plumb, who was many years his junior. The Plumbs were another homesteading family in the area, for whom a train station was named. There was also a Plumb Station schoolhouse in the neighborhood. It was probably through this marriage and other purchases that Spirlock expanded his land holdings into the ranch still run by his descendants.

Spirlock was most certainly a self-sufficient man, and was not one to be messed with. Another family story concerns the time some young men from Olympia came down to Offut Lake for a swim. On their way home they stopped to rest on Spirlock's rail fence. Spirlock spotted them there and shot the fence right out from under them.

Two of Spirlock's daughters married neighboring Swedish brothers, Andrew and Gust Nelson, who worked on Spirlock's farm. The family line of today descends from the marriage of Pearl Spirlock and Gust Nelson, who were married in 1909, and had two children, Jim and Bob. By this time, the main function of the ranch was as a dairy, but by 1940, it was a beef ranch with a small flock of sheep. They added a mill to the ranch and milled lumber from around the farm which was sold to Olympia Harbor Lumber. By the 1950s, the farm had its first tractor, but the use of draft horses for haying and harvesting oats went on into the 1970s.

The dump rake consisted of a series of teeth that combed the ground, and when full it was tripped to lift the teeth and dump the hay, which was compressed into manageable piles called shocks. The hay was then pitched onto a wagon by one or two men.



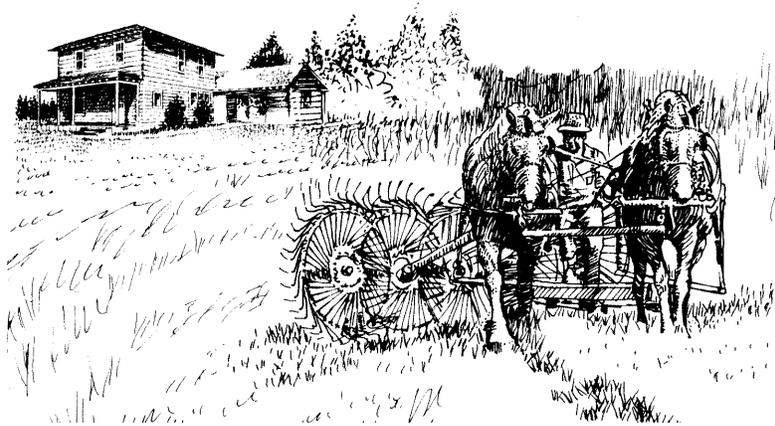
*Bob Nelson in 1923. Photo courtesy: Nelson Family*

According to the Nelson Ranch brochure, “Jim and his wife Elna ran the farm with his brother Bob and wife Katherine. Jim and Elna had four children –Maria, Ginny, Ron and Rick.” In 2023, the farm is run by Ron and his wife Kay, joined by their children Scott and Jill.

Jill said that the house used to be Bob and Katherine’s and that folks could drive right up to their front porch and purchase milk from her great aunt Katherine.

As an operating farm, the cattle are rotated onto different pastures to prevent overgrazing, which allow the cows to have free range, nutrient rich grass while it’s in season. The hay fields supply food for the winter months. The modern Nelsons have invested in barrier fences around the Deschutes River and solar powered troughs to water the cows. They also have a manure barn, which is a holding and composting facility.

Being a historic farm, the Nelsons have restored their granary which, as a museum of sorts, houses many tools of yesteryear. Their farm is listed as a Centennial Farm by Washington State Department of Agriculture alongside Thurston County’s Colvin Farm (est. 1854), Rutledge Farm (est. 1856), and Hilpert Farm (est. 1858).



*Nelson Ranch from a drawing by Ken Brown from A Tour of Centennial Farms.*

# Tenino Fairgrounds

The public land along the west side of Old Highway 99 just south of where it crosses Scatter Creek, now home to Tenino Elementary School and Tenino Middle School, was once known as the Fairgrounds.

This 24.8 acre piece of land has long been part of Tenino history, and was once the site of pioneer Stephen Hodgden's farm and stagecoach station. The land was also once owned by "Pioneer Merchant" A.D. Campbell.



*Tenino Community Fair 1923.*

In the early 1920s, this large plot of open land became the home of the Tenino Community Fair, which was held from 1922 to 1925.

It was such a great site for a fairgrounds that in 1926, it was purchased by the Thurston County Fair Association and in 1926, hosted the very first Thurston County Fair. The Thurston County Fair continued to be held at this Tenino site from 1926 to 1929.

The Thurston County Fair Association developed the site, adding a dance hall and a grandstand in 1926. In 1929, in hopes of accommodating the growing airplane exhibitions, a 1200 feet long by 200 feet wide airstrip was built at the southwest corner of the fairgrounds.

By 1930, the economic depression had taken hold and there would be no more fairs until after World War II. In fact, in 1939, with the buildings falling into disrepair with little use, Thurston County decided to sell the property. Mayor Tom Richards purchased the land from the county for the city of Tenino.

In 1940, the national Works Progress Administration (WPA) approved more than \$25,000 to improve the grounds, and reconstruct the "civic auditorium" and the grandstand. An athletic field for baseball and football, as well as a single green golf driving range were planned.

After World War II, in 1945, a fair returned to Tenino, one of several around the county. In 1947, an electrical line was run to the Fairgrounds and lighting installed. The ballfield was also graded and the race track improved as the Fairgrounds were restructured as a Civic Center for Tenino.

In 1948, an "Old Timers" baseball game was held as part of the Labor Day festivities. Bleachers were added in 1949, giving the Fairgrounds grandstand and bleachers a capacity of about 2,000 spectators.

These improvements led the Thurston County Fair Association to return to the Tenino Fairgrounds and in 1949, the first of three more Thurston County Fairs were held there.

It was during these years, 1949-1951, that the *Thurston County Independent* said “Our Civic Center is located about two blocks North and one block east of town. It is composed of a baseball diamond, football field, race track, where horse races and motorcycle races are held, a gymkhana, wherein all kinds of stunts are done on horseback. It has a grandstand and bleachers, community house, kitchen, dance floor, barbeque pit. This is where our Thurston County Fair is held.”



*Tenino Fairgrounds, circa 1950s.*

Even though the Thurston County Fair left after 1951, the Tenino fairgrounds continued to be the site of races, dances, and many events, including major activities every Labor Day Weekend, throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s.

The dance hall became known as Dreamland, with live music and dances almost every weekend. During the 1960s, the track was adjusted for car racing.

Toward the end of its 50 years of use as a community fairgrounds, in 1971, the city held events there as part of Tenino’s “Centennial Celebration.”

The city would soon sell the property to the Tenino School District and by 1977, the Tenino Elementary School and Tenino Middle School were open for business and the Tenino Fairgrounds relegated to the fond memories of local history.



*1967 ad for racing at the fairgrounds.*

# Tenino Parades and Celebrations

*Originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

## Fourth of July Parades

The earliest recorded mention of a Fourth of July Celebration in Tenino comes from articles in the *Tacoma Daily Ledger* from June and July 1884. The "Committee of Arrangements" included Aaron Webster, William Rowley, William Ragless, Miss Clara Blumauer, Miss Clara Wolf, and Miss B. A. Smith. The Marshal was S. M. Yantis and R. M. Gibson served as Chaplain.

At sunrise the town was awakened to the firing of a 21-gun salute. By 10:00 am, the liberty wagon drove down Sussex Avenue, filled with "several young ladies representing the states of the Union and Miss May Blumauer as the Goddess of Liberty." When the excursion train arrived from Olympia, it bore Governor William A. Newell, who delivered the main speech. The procession, led by the liberty wagon and followed by the Governor and William Ragless and "several hundred citizens in carriages, on horseback, and on foot," marched along the principal streets and then to the "grove, where every preparation had been made for comfort and pleasure."

After Mrs. T. Rutledge read the Declaration of Independence, the Governor orated and was followed by music and singing. The orations were followed by a "procession of plug-uglies" also known as the "Ancient Horribles" which "gave a great deal of fun to the young folks." Events included foot, wheelbarrow, and sack races as well as the "climbing of a greased pole." A clam bake was held, though the fireworks did not arrive in time for the display. A "grand ball and oyster supper" closed the event.



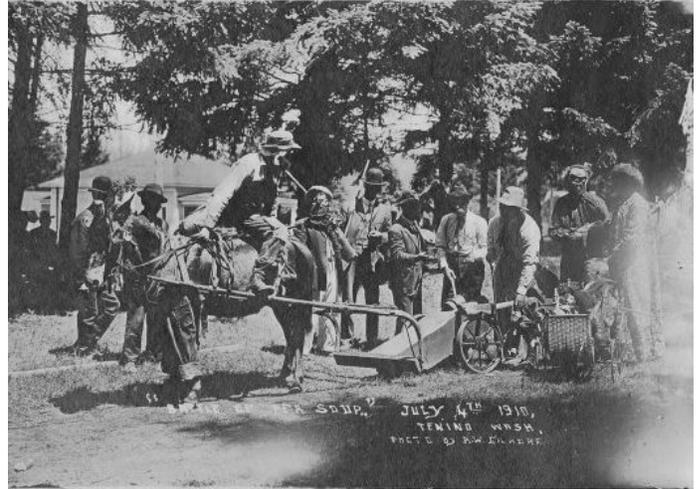
*This float from 1910 includes a beautiful team of horses conveying Lady Liberty (Ivy Gilmore) in Tenino's Fourth of July Parade.*

Fourth of July parades and celebrations would continue for several decades and many notable examples are recorded in Tenino history.

In 1906, birds began to sing at the top of Lemon Hill in Tenino, heralding the rising sun. While still cloaked in darkness, the men had hauled the cannon to the top, and as sun broke the horizon, the Fourth of July cannon was fired, opening the day of festivities which included a parade and a picnic in the park. In the early 1900s, this was the Tenino tradition.

Many Fourth of July Celebrations are chronicled by Scott McArthur whose father used to tell him stories. The parade was the main feature of the day and included floats from prominent businesses, the Tenino Cornet Band, and the Battle of Pea Soup. The Battle featured members of the Tenino Home Guard, which was a comically disorganized group of fellows.

According to McArthur in his book, *Tenino Washington: Decades of Boom and Bust*, "Dad said short men carried long rifles and tall men carried short rifles. Some were clad in remnants of cast-off military uniforms. One photo taken after the parade about 1906 showed one participant clad in the skirted coat and cocked hat of a naval officer of the Mexican-American War."



*4th of July parade featuring the troops from the Battle of Pea Soup and a homemade cannon, 1910.  
The cannon is on display at the Tenino Depot Museum.*

The battle waged throughout the parade route with the cannon firing blanks and lots of smoke. A soldier would drop dead with each blast then be removed to the mobile hospital tent that followed the battle. Doc Wichman then performed a "field amputation" and a fake appendage would fly out the back of the tent. After a pull on the communal whiskey bottle, the wounded soldier would then sneak back out to rejoin his regiment.

It is hard to say what years the Fourth of July Parade began or ended, but the best guess is 1884-1913. In the June 19, 1913 issue of the *Tenino News* it was announced that, "July Fourth Tenino will entertain its friends from everywhere at an old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration and FREE CLAM BAKE. The following program of events indicated that there will be something doing all the time... EVERYONE IS CORDIALLY INVITED."

In 1914, the available newspapers became overwhelmingly concerned with World War I in Europe until the Welcome Home Celebration in June of 1919, that signaled the return of "Our Boys." There was a Salute at Sunrise, a Grand Parade, and barbeque which included races like the potato sack races, bicycle races, fat men and fat women races, men's 3-legged, and free-for-alls. This was followed by a Banquet to the Boys in Uniform, and a 21-piece band concert.

### **The Labor Day Parades**

In August of 1923, the *Tenino Independent* announced that "Tenino is going to experience the greatest celebration in its history on Labor Day." The event was sponsored by the Tenino Eagles, and a contest to become Labor Day Queen was initiated to generate funds for the Labor Day festivities in which the girl who sold the most tickets became Labor Day Queen. The program for the First Annual Eagles Labor Day Celebration, September 3, 1923, included a parade, speeches in the park, sports, a



baseball game of Kent vs. Bucoda, a concert by the 36-piece military band of Camp Lewis, an open-air smoker (which was boxing outdoors), and a street dance.

Roger Reeves grew up in Tenino and remembers the Labor Day Parades of the 1940s and 50s. “It was a reunion weekend,” he explained. People didn’t have school reunions in those days but everyone came to town on Labor Day weekend.

Floats came from all the surrounding festivals and a number of professional bands marched, including the bag pipers of Clan Gordon. The Labor Day Parade ran from west to east, which is the opposite of the Oregon Trail Days Parade, because it ended at the Tenino Fairgrounds, former site of the Thurston County Fair, located where the Tenino Elementary and Middle schools have been built.

What folks remember about the weekend’s events depends largely on their interests. Roger Reeves has strong memories of the carnival and the clam bake that took place at the Fairgrounds. The late Don Montgomery remembered the baseball games and the shows, like the daredevil motorcyclists and the logger’s contests.

The 1965 program included Friday’s coronation, a horse show, and a teenage dance, while Saturday’s program was the kids’ parade, main parade, sky divers, logging show, motorcycle races, the dance at Dreamland, and the queen ticket drawing, which included big prizes. Don Montgomery remembered his brother winning a freezer one year in the drawing, which was a big deal in those days.

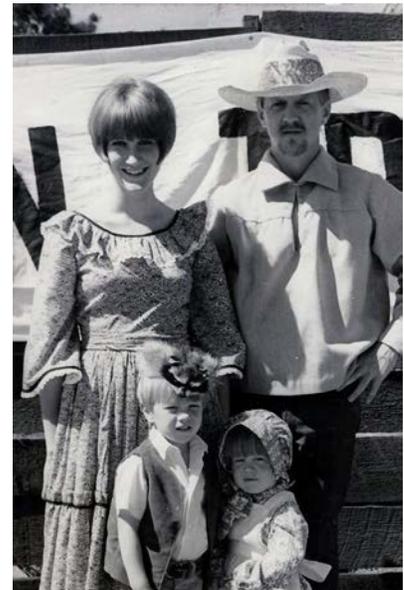
In 1967, the Eagles decided they didn’t want to host the Labor Day festivities anymore. The Lions Club picked up the reins that year, but the efforts were last minute and there was no parade.

## Oregon Trail Days

In 1968 this proclamation was published in the *Tenino Independent*:

*“I, Kenneth E. Hedden, Mayor of Tenino, do hereby proclaim the period of August 3<sup>rd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup> as a time to honor our pioneer past in both word and deed;*

*THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that all male residents over the age of 18 must refrain from shaving during said period. Failure to abide by the above order will result in appropriate action by the local “Vigilante” committee and my well cause the offender to be incarcerated in the “hoosegow.”*



*Roger Reeves, 1969. Chairman of Oregon Trail Days with his family: Marsha Reeves, David & Jennifer Reeves.*

*HOWEVER, recognizing the need to promote domestic tranquility, all those male citizens with ticklish spouses may purchase a "Beardless Permit" from Oregon Trail Days representatives for \$2 which will release them from the terms of this order.*

*IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that "old-time" dress will be considered the only appropriate attire for said period for local business proprietors and their employees. Failure to comply will also result in "Vigilante" action.*

*THEREFORE, let all good citizens of Tenino take heed of this proclamation and abide by its provisions in the interest of showing the world that we truly have "the pioneer spirit."*

This proclamation set the mood for the first Oregon Trail Days, where apparently everyone dressed up. Events and attractions the first year included a kid and main parade, midway booths, muzzle-loading rifle shoot, slo-pitch baseball, Indian dances, square dancing, a teen dance, and an old-time fiddlers' contest. Store owners dressed up and historic window displays were placed in all the shops on Sussex Avenue.

Oregon Trail Days has continued for more than fifty years and is held annually on the fourth weekend in July. For the past decade, Bob Hill and the South Thurston County Historical Society have added a Pioneer Village to the celebrations, with hands-on activities showcasing early pioneer skills.



*Tenino Depot Museum float in the 2021 Oregon Trail Days parade. Authors Jessica Reeves-Rush, walking with basket in foreground, and Richard A. Edwards, on float dressed as train conductor with bell.*

# Far-out Sky River Rock Festival

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Sky River Rock Festival and Lighter Than Air Fair took place just north of Tenino on a cattle ranch off Old Highway 99 in 1969. The festival was the Pacific Northwest's "Woodstock."

There was much consternation among Tenino residents (population: 875) and neighbors when word got out that a rock festival of this magnitude was coming to the area, because of the fear of havoc and depravity at their doorstep. Would Tenino's part time constabulary be able to handle the number of people an event like this would bring? Everyone had heard about Woodstock and festivals of its kind. They worried about everything from lawlessness to traffic snarls. Many letters were written, and a battle went all the way to the Washington State Supreme Court, which eventually gave their blessing to the event.

The festival started at noon on the Friday before Labor Day and continued through the following Tuesday. Music played 18 hours a day. Musical acts included Country Joe and the Fish, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Buddy Guy, Steve Miller Band, the New Lost City Ramblers, and the James Cotton Blues Band. Thirty-nine bands in all. An estimated 25,000-40,000 people attended.



The event was marked by dope dealers peddling mescaline, acid, and weed among a great dusty encampment of ragtag festival goers, who had traveled from places like San Francisco, Berkley, Seattle, and Vancouver to "practice life, liberty, and a far-out dream."

Artist Shawn Hickox, who now makes Tenino home, says one of his earliest experiences of the town was in 1969 when at the tender age of 16 he went alone to the infamous festival. The experience was eye-opening.

"There were nudes everywhere and drugs," laughs Shawn. "It was incredible. I enjoyed the music. That was quite interesting. All these people were selling drugs and I was like 'no thanks, no thanks.' I wasn't into drugs. I had never seen live music before. I didn't stay the whole day...I was a little intimidated. I was definitely one of the younger kids there. Just on the verge of being able to cope with it."

For the festival organizers, New American Community, their goal was to provide an atmosphere of improvisation and freedom without allowing things to fall apart; so drugs and nudity were fine, but violence and gate crashing were not.

At the end of the day, Tenino did quite well off the sale of gasoline and groceries to festival goers who seemed to have kept their nefarious activities sequestered to the ranch. "Every one of them was



# Tenino Quarry Memorial Pool

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, concrete and steel supplanted stone as the main building material. The resulting loss of business caused the local quarries to close. Without constant pumping, the old Tenino Stone Company quarry filled with groundwater.

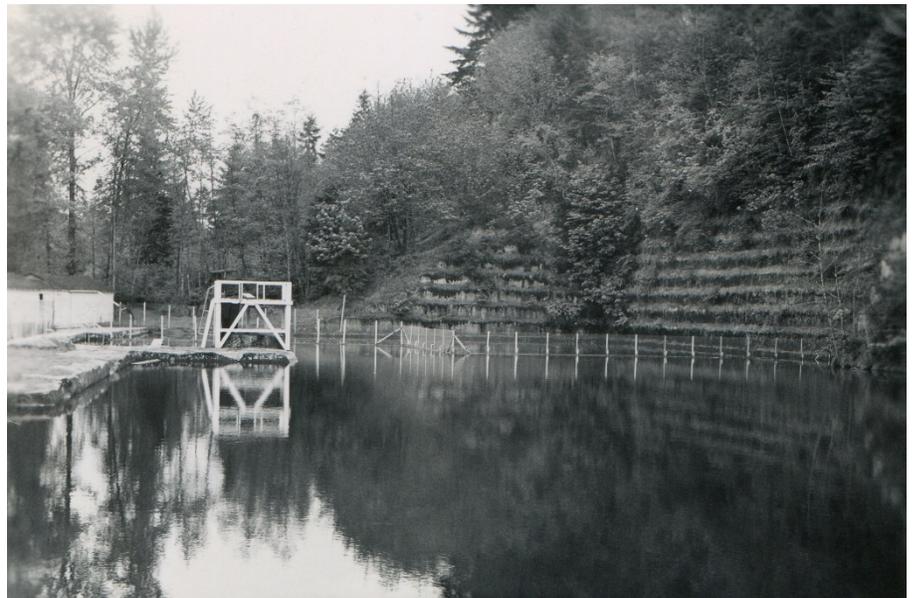
By 1918, “The entrance gate was padlocked with a ‘No Trespassing’ sign posted in clear view. It wasn’t long before the quarry became the favorite swimming hole for high school boys skinny dipping.” “By the early 1930s (perhaps earlier), most of the young people of the town spent their summer hours swimming in the icy waters of the quarry.” – Evelyn Hoffman in *Tenino Scrapbook*.



Over time, all the buildings, except for the Tenino Stone Company office which still exists as the Quarry House community center, were dismantled. In 1946, the City of Tenino purchased the old quarry from Mr. and Mrs. Myrhl Fenton for \$1,500 to create a public swimming pool and memorial to those who served in World War II.

Work continued through the late 1940s, removing stone, building fences, paving the children’s pool area, and building a bath house. Most of the work was done by volunteers from the Lion’s Club. The pool was formally dedicated on June 18, 1950.

The Tenino Quarry Pool continues to serve the community as a public pool and historic location, with the Tenino Depot Museum complex and city park facilities located nearby.



# The Tenino Quarry Dive Expedition

## Legends and Truth

*Originally published on Thurstontalk.com*

There was a sense of nervous anticipation in the air at the Tenino Quarry Pool on Thursday, August 17, 2017, as spectators gathered for the big dive. The King 5 Evening Magazine film crew was present and ready to document the results of the dive to be aired on August 25th. This event would go down as the first official expedition to explore the bottom of the Quarry Pool with the hope that Tenino could finally answer the question, "What is down there?"

It had been almost a hundred years since the quarry, previously owned by Tenino Stone Company, had filled with water, and in that time many rumors had circulated about the pool. Ask anyone who has lived in Tenino for a length of time and they will tell you stories. The pool is rumored to be over 100 feet deep. Word has it there is equipment at the bottom that was abandoned when the quarry flooded. When local kids started using it as a swimming hole, spectators were said to have tossed coins in for them to chase.



After decades, the bottom could be littered with any number of lost things from garbage to jewelry. Some locals suspect it's a great place to toss things that you never want found again like a weapon with a past, or maybe even a body. When a local woman went missing years ago, a search dive took place at the quarry pool on an anonymous tip, but nothing came of it.

Tales of past expeditions into the pool abound as well, but those would have been unauthorized and most likely undocumented dives. One such dive took place in the 1960s by a lone diver who did it on a lark. The city had a diver in the early 1980s help remove a large stone. The danger for a lone diver submerged in the murky depths of the quarry pool was very real. The turbid water and an extreme depth with possible ropes, cables, and debris, along with terrible visibility, would be a very hazardous environment.

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, a dive team waited half suited up and ready to go. The weather was warm, and their dive suits couldn't be zipped up comfortably until it was time to dive. A small boat moved with purpose about the quarry pool using sonar to look for promising dive locations. Once the Evening Magazine crew was ready and a dive location selected, it was go-time.

Four divers, two men and two women, including Tenino's own Mayor Wayne Fournier, led by Clay Farre and sponsored by the Underwater Sports shop of Olympia, jumped into the pool. The plan was to stagger their depths for safety with a floatation device on the surface.

When they returned to the surface from their first dive, Wayne reported that there were "trees down there." Apparently sunken limbs and trees made the journey to the bottom treacherous and visibility, as expected, was very poor. Ordinarily the water in the Quarry Pool is quite pleasant but a swampy smell rose to the surface with the divers as they stirred the sludge that rested in the depths.

Despite these less-than-ideal reports, the divers went down a few more times. At one point Wayne surfaced with a huge smile on his face. He had found something large that he had explored with his hands. He happily handed the GoPro camera off to the Evening Magazine crew for their feature on August 25th.



Rich Edwards, the South Thurston County Historical Society Historian, who attended the dive, circulated a photo of an old steam channeler, and hopes ran high that maybe this was the large metal object the divers discovered lying dormant for so long at the bottom.

Wayne remained enthusiastic after the dive event was over: "I loved it!" said Wayne, "the community support and interest were amazing. It's so cool to see everyone connect to the history of our city and to be able to help make that connection."

Concerning future plans Wayne had this to say, "I want to work on some pool improvements structurally and some water quality improvements. I know it has great potential to be used as a dive park and I can say with confidence that there's a lot of history hidden in the water."

Spectator Marissa Dallaire felt that the dive expedition marked a very important day in Tenino's history. "The quarry legends are what make our town unique. This was a way for the public to love the mystery even more. I also thought it was incredible because I'm double majoring in anthropology and my interest is in underwater archaeology."

Speaking to two of the divers they agreed that something would have to be done about visibility to make dives a pleasant experience in the Quarry Pool.

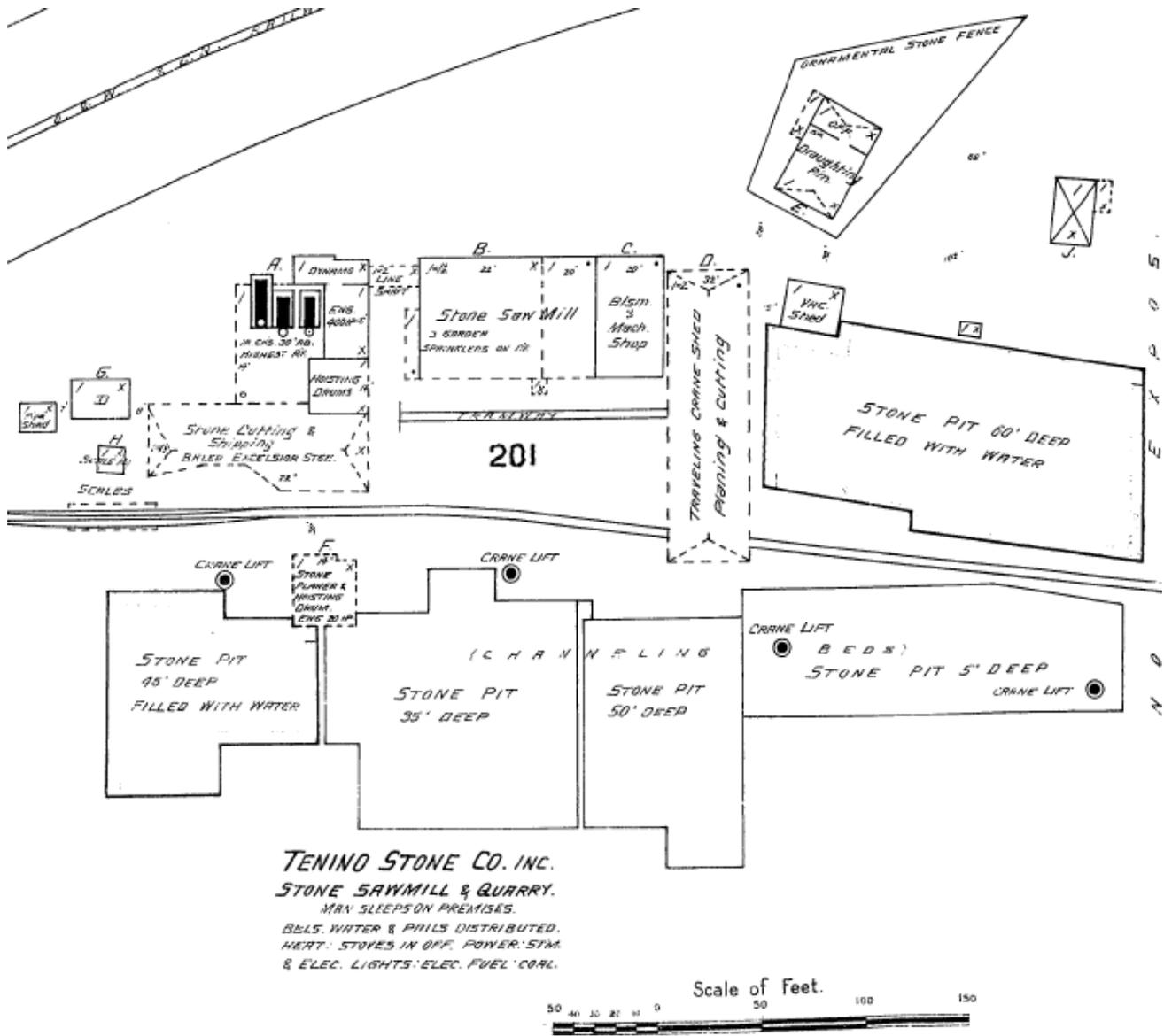
"It was nice around the edges, though," said one diver.

"And there are huge crayfish down there. Just huge," said the other.

All the divers agreed that the pool was not as deep as previously believed in the areas they explored. In the past more primitive attempts to gauge its depth involved dropping weighted ropes to the

bottom. But this expedition involved sonar and digital depth gauges. Wayne's gauge registered that he had gone down 65 feet to the bottom though the depth may vary in different areas of the pool.

According to the 1910 Sanborn Map there are five sections of the quarry. Three of those sections make up the deeper Quarry Pool and the depths as of 1910 from east to west were 50 feet, 35 feet and 45 feet in depth respectively. The sonar's deepest depth recorded was 70 feet.



1910 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map section showing the Tenino Stone Company quarry and facilities.

## Museum on the Move

It came to the attention of the City of Tenino in 1973, that Burlington Northern, who then had ownership of Tenino's aging 1914 Northern Pacific Depot, was planning on removing said depot. The railroad started advertising to sell the building, provided it was torn down or moved from their right of way.



The Daily Olympian July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1973

The depot, which was made of Tenino Sandstone, was Tenino's third depot building and was built to coincide with the construction of the Point Defiance cutoff. The new main line would divert much of Tenino's rail traffic away from the historic Prairie Line that originally brought the railroad to Tenino.

With the decline in train travel, the Tenino Depot was closed around 1961 and spent many years sitting boarded up just collecting graffiti.

The Tenino City Council asked Burlington Northern for the old depot and they agreed to sell it to the city for \$1 with the condition that it be moved within six months of a formal transfer. From that point on, the clock was ticking.

Local history supporters decided that the depot would make an ideal museum. There was a resurgence of interest in Tenino's unique history, and Mayor Ken Hedden decided to mine for more. He paid a visit to the State Capital Museum to see Director Ken Hopkins and Dave McKendry who jumped into action to help find as many historical artifacts and as much data as possible about Tenino. Interns were tasked with taping interviews with pioneer residents. Historic photos and documents were located to become part of the proposed new museum's collection. The Jay Evans film, *Tenino: Boomtown of the Old Northwest*, was a result of this project. Howard Spear of Olympia, who used to be a Tenino railway agent offered to donate antique railway equipment.

It was the city council that appointed a museum board, headed by George Keithahn, a world traveler who once worked for the secret service and had a museum of his own. Other board members were Art Dwelley, publisher of the *Thurston County Independent*, Lloyd Axtelle, Dora Major, and Edna McArthur.

The new museum board had two major issues to decide: where the museum should go, and how to find funding to move the depot. There were arguments against moving it to the park. Some felt that the location wasn't open and bright enough to avoid burglary.

Burlington Northern wanted the museum moved by November 1973. Much debate went into considering the best way to move it. Walt Scheel who helped construct the depot in 1914, was on hand to help. Efforts to move the depot by Burlington Northern's deadline never reached fruition, for lack of funding.

According to the minutes of the first Tenino Museum Board meeting, it was intended that a historical society would grow out of the Board. The Articles of Incorporation for the South Thurston County Historical Society (STCHS) were witnessed on October 30, 1973 and filed by Edna McArthur.

In 1974 fundraising efforts to move the depot and set it up as a museum really took off fully supported by the community. In April, two museum benefits took place, a "Candyland Dog & Pony Circus" performance sponsored by the Tenino Junior High School, and a square dance benefit at Dreamland sponsored by local square dance groups.

In 1974, the South Thurston County Historical Society elected as their first president Dave Nicandri along with Edna McArthur, secretary, and Dora Major, treasurer. Lloyd Axtelle was named board member at-large. One of the first acts of STCHS was to donate \$800 to the museum fund. Another unique fundraiser was to sell blocks from the museum building itself. This included 13 keystone blocks at \$50 each, 50 ring-stones at \$25, and about a thousand miscellaneous stones at \$5 each. Owners received a certificate for their support and mythical ownership of said stones.

With America's bicentennial approaching in 1976, there was a renewed interest and support for local history. One of the biggest events before the museum's move was Tenino becoming a Bicentennial Community, the fourth in the state of Washington.

A ceremony took place in June of 1974, which included selling the museum blocks, a showing of Jay Evans' Tenino film, introduction of the song "Tenino" by Andrew Jackson, as well as prayers, speeches, flag raisings, displays, and ball games. The moving of the depot and creating the museum had become an official Bicentennial project.

Another interesting organization with historical interests existed in Tenino in the 1970s, called the Tenino Wooden Money Society. In 1974, Ken Hedden was the president. Their society did a new commemorative issue of wooden money that year to benefit the Tenino Museum Fund.

In early 1975, the depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

With the Burlington Northern deadline come and gone, more funding sources had to be found. A \$5,000 grant from the Washington State American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, a \$35,000 grant from the National Park Service, and more than \$20,000 in private contributions (mostly by way of community fundraising efforts) finally raised enough money to move the depot.

After receiving many bids to move the museum, the Tenino City Council settled on Shaughnessy and Company. The plan to move the 322-ton structure with 18" thick walls, all in one piece, was to roll it on dollies pulled by a truck built specially to move large structures. The dollies, requiring 150 pounds

of air pressure and equipped with brakes and hydraulic jacks, cost in the neighborhood of \$12,000 each. The move happened on Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup> as part of Tenino's 1975 Labor Day Festivities, renamed Depot Days in honor of the big move.



The Minnetonka, the first locomotive steam engine to roar into Tenino in 1872, was on display for the weekend.

While Walt Scheel didn't ultimately have a hand in the moving of the museum, he was present on the day to watch it happen, along with half the town. He had a few reservations about whether the Depot could be moved without some cracks to the masonry.

Moving the depot was only half the battle. The next would be to set it up as a museum. The historical society was formed for this purpose. While the city of Tenino owns the museum, the management would be run by the newly formed South Thurston County Historical Society.

STCHS met as a board twice a month at City Hall to conduct business, and a general meeting, with a program and refreshments, was scheduled once a month at the Quarry House.

It was the responsibility of the STCHS to get the depot "museum ready." That included a new roof and restoring the walls and ceilings. A basic layout was decided upon for exhibits, which did not in those days include the quarries, but rather focused on wooden money, geology, logging, homesteading and Native Americans.

In 1977, collecting artifacts was underway and the historical society had to learn how to catalog items. By 1978, the museum held its first open house event and quietly opened in 1979 while still holding work parties to put the museum in order, arrange artifacts, and organize storage. The Tenino Depot Museum was formally dedicated in July 1980, during Oregon Trail Days.

In 1984, the Wooden Money Society was rolled into the Historical Society.

The South Thurston County Historical Society has faithfully operated Tenino Depot Museum for the last 45 years and plans on continuing to do so into the future.



*Tenino Depot Museum and Great Northern caboose in December of 2021.*

# The Fire of 1983

Fire has shaped the Tenino business district several times. At one time, the downtown looked like any old western town, with wooden storefronts and board sidewalks, but a series of fires in 1906, 1908, and 1917 changed that. After the fires struck, Tenino was rebuilt in either sandstone or brick.



The Tenino business district saw another devastating fire on December 13, 1983. Three historic buildings were affected: The Old Tenino Bank (mostly due to water damage), the Campbell and Campbell Building, and the Mentzer and Copping Block.

The businesses occupying those buildings included Roger's Home Furnishings, the Wooden Nickel Restaurant, the Kid's Closet clothing shop, and an antique store housed in the bank building. The Wooden Nickel never recovered and the building that once housed it became a pocket garden. The rest of the damaged buildings were restored.

Many artifacts and photographs of Campbell and Campbell's history were lost in the fire. Some architectural details, like the attic that used to be in Campbell's, were also destroyed. There was also an interesting loft full of cubby holes on the Olympia Street entrance of Campbell's that had been, for a brief time, the post office.

The only bright side to the event was that the lathe and plaster walls burned away in the furniture store, revealing the beautiful rubble sandstone walls of the Campbell building. The resolution to build Tenino in stone saved the historic look of Tenino in 1983. Though the interiors were forever altered, the stone remains.



# Tenino Caboose

## Highlights Railroad Roots

*Portions originally published on [Thurstontalk.com](http://Thurstontalk.com)*



In 2020, as part of its desire to showcase more of its railroad history, the city of Tenino purchased a caboose at auction from its previous home at the Country Village Shopping Center in Bothell. The caboose began its service in St. Cloud, Minnesota, in November 1923. Built by the Great Northern Railway in their own shops, it was one of 47 built in that year. After 44 years of service, it was retired in 1967. Numbered X549, the 25-foot-long caboose, has been painted red with black trim and features the Great Northern logo.

Tenino Mayor Wayne Fournier explained his vision for the project: “We hope to begin reconstruction this spring and it will likely go on through the summer using primarily volunteer labor. The hope is to have a caboose on display near the Depot Museum to share in some of Tenino’s history as a railroad destination. The fact that Tenino’s founding is indelibly linked to the railway is something we would like to highlight.”

Since the interior had been modified to become an office, the goal became to restore it to its original condition as a typical 25-foot working caboose, with two upper and lower bunks, a coal pot-bellied stove for cooking and warmth, a refrigerator, closets for tools, oil, and supplies, and a toilet and sink.

Railroad enthusiasts Donald Bowman, who headed the project, and Jan Wigley, volunteered their services to work on the caboose.

Don explained the caboose’s original function: “The caboose afforded a train’s conductor an office for maintaining paperwork, waybills, and a position to keep watch as it proceeded down the line,” explained Bowman. “The conductor made sure to spot abnormalities such as smoke from overheated wheel bearings, safety of brakemen running atop the train cars, or shifting cargo loads. After Westinghouse invented the airbrake in 1869, the caboose became an air pressure monitoring station for the end of the train.”

A railroad essentially made and named Tenino. Prior to the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad (NPRR) in 1872 the area was referred to as Hodgden Station after local homesteader Stephen Hodgden, and the larger region made up of a smattering of homesteads was called “Coal Bank,” named for local coal laden hills mined nearby.

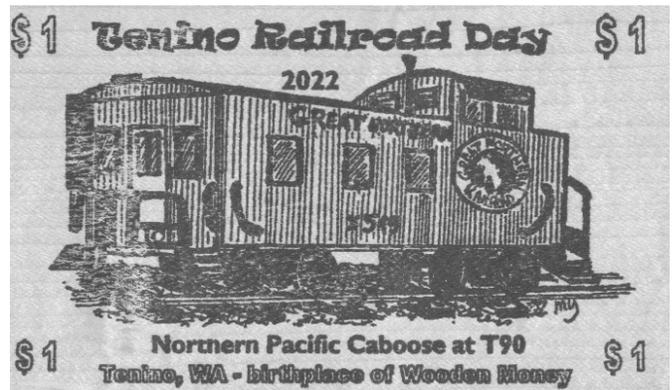
The Northern Pacific Railroad commenced construction on a rail line from the Columbia River to the Puget Sound in 1871. They planned the track as far north as Hodgden Station, and for the winter of 1872, the track ended there while the Northern Pacific decided whether to continue their line to Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle, or some other point on the Puget Sound. Shortly after the railroad arrived, they named their new depot Tenino, and in the summer of 1873, while the track laying continued on to Tacoma, the railroad and the Hodgdens filed joint plats creating the town of Tenino.

Once the station was established, Tenino quickly gained its first store and hotel. A town was forming, all thanks to the railroad. Travel to the territorial capital in Olympia required taking a stage to or from Tenino, the closest depot. Olympia, desiring quicker and easier connection, built their own Olympia and Tenino Railroad in 1878. Tenino became a railroad hub.

It would be many years before Tenino really hit its stride with the development of sandstone quarries in 1889. Even in the boomtown years, Tenino continued to have a strong link with the railroad. Industries such as logging and quarrying relied on the railroad to ship products to the world.

In 1914, the Northern Pacific Railway built a Union Depot out of Tenino Sandstone on their new main line, which used the route first created by the Olympia and Tenino Railroad. This depot was used by several railways, including Great Northern, until it was finally closed in the 1960s. It is this depot building that became the Tenino Depot Museum.

A long portion of the original Northern Pacific track, once known as the Prairie Line, has been repurposed as a paved walking and biking trail known as the Yelm-Rainier-Tenino Trail. To honor this original railroad track, the reconstructed caboose rests on a section of this very line where the original NPRR track was laid in 1872, and is only two blocks from the end of the line where the first Tenino Depot was built.



*Wooden Money Commemorative from Tenino Depot Museum.*

Though trains no longer stop in Tenino, the Tenino Depot Museum works hard to keep railroad history available to the public. On September 17, 2022, the beautifully reconstructed caboose was officially dedicated at the first annual Railroad Day event, with a ribbon cutting ceremony complete with a brass band.

Hearing the sound of the locomotive whistle passing through Tenino on the nearby tracks, while viewing the often mist-shrouded caboose, can be a very moving experience.

# Tenino Stone Carving Continues

In a very unassuming metal shed on Olympia Street in Tenino, you can often hear the sound of hammer on chisel, slowly removing and shaping sandstone. Sandstone carving, once a major industry in Tenino, continues into the 21<sup>st</sup> century thanks to Keith Phillips and his crew at The Shed.

Several decades ago, after Keith graduated from college, he wasn't sure what he wanted to do and considered a career as a farmer. While studying agriculture, he picked up a book about farming in Great Britain containing a picture of a merestone. This is a block erected to mark the corner of someone's property. Keith decided to make one for his dad's birthday. He consulted Tenino locals Walt and Larry Scheel, and after a few pointers he went back to Ellensburg and got to work. Keith went on to make several of these.



"I thought, 'I can do this. I can carve stone,'" said Keith. "This was about 1988, and Tenino was experiencing its stone renaissance. I came to Tenino and walked into a situation made in heaven."

"When I first started, I wanted to be a stone carver. I wanted to carve leaves and birds and lettering, and that's all I wanted to do. But before too long I realized I had to carve this stone to fit into the wall at Tenino Parkside Elementary School. I had to cut it to dimension, look at blue prints and fit it into the wall. And after that, there was just a series of jobs that required I know about geometry, triangles, hexagons and pentagons."

Keith's work through the decades can be seen across Tenino, in the park, at the public library, and in front of many downtown businesses.

In 2017, he opened a new location for his carving, and for teaching stone carving, which he boldly named, "The Shed" located at 147 Olympia Street in Tenino.

The corrugated steel building, built in 1911 during the heyday of Tenino quarries, houses Keith and his crew and is open to the public for viewing, and purchasing, their work.



## Further Reading

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# Tenino Sesquicentennial Stories

Foreword by Wayne Fournier, Mayor of Tenino

This book contains a number of stories and articles about Tenino throughout its history, small vignettes of Tenino's proud 150 years in Thurston County, Washington.

## Including...

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The Tenino Welfare Fund  
Homefront Tenino during WWII  
Tenino Fairgrounds  
Tenino Parades and Celebrations  
Far-out Sky River Rock Festival  
Tenino Quarry Memorial Pool  
Museum on the Move  
Tenino Caboose  
And more...

## About the Authors

**Jessica Reeves-Rush** has been the Director of the Tenino Depot Museum since 2020 and is the P.A.R.C. (Parks, Art, Recreation, & Culture) Specialist for the City of Tenino. She has also been a contributor to Thurston Talk and Lewis Talk. Jessica is a lifetime member of the South Thurston County Historical Society. She holds a Bachelor's in English Literature from the University of Washington.

**Richard A. Edwards** has been Tenino City Historian since 2018. He is the author of *The Naming of Tenino*, a lifetime member of the South Thurston County Historical Society, and a member of the Washington State Historical Society and the American Historical Society. He holds a Bachelor's degree in History from Washington State University and a Master of Librarianship degree from the University of Washington.