



TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CITY OF DESTINY NEWSLETTER

www.tacomahistory.org

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Ready for a Second Century



Tacoma Historical Society collection

A recently discovered photo by A.A. Tayler shows Tacoma's Stadium High School in 1912. Intended as a grand tourist hotel, the building dates to 1891. Work stopped after the Panic of 1893, and the building was gutted by a fire in 1899. Facing demolition in 1903, the building was rescued when the Tacoma School District bought it – for \$34,500. A controversial \$200,000 bond issue in 1904 financed the remodeling, and Tacoma High School moved to the site in 1906. It was renamed Stadium High School in 1913. The school reopened in September 2006 after a two-year, \$108 million remodeling to make it fit for another century of service.

Marie Hayden receives Murray Morgan Award

A city that records and remembers its past is a richer, more livable place, and the 2006 winner of the Tacoma Historical Society's Murray Morgan Award has devoted tireless efforts and countless hours to that end.

Marie Hayden was presented the award April 10 at the society's annual meeting, attended by nearly 100 people at First United Methodist Church.

Her most recent contribution in this area was the republishing of Herbert Hunt's classic three-volume *Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders* and creation of an expanded and improved index to the Hunt volumes.

Marie's accomplishments include a major role in the Heritage League's publication in 1990 of *A History of Pierce County* and in the Tacoma-Pierce County Genealogical Society's compiling and publishing *Washington Pioneers*, Volumes I, II and III in 1991.

A charter member of the Tacoma Historical Society, Marie

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This and That...

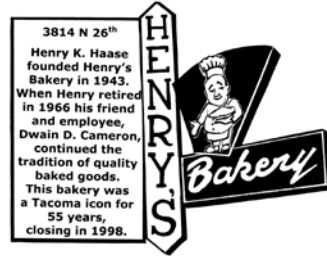
Worth noting

We're please to note the organization of **Historic Tacoma**, a group devoted to speaking up for Tacoma's architectural heritage. The web site is www.historictacoma.net.

The Tacoma Historical Society board has ended Sunday hours at the Exhibit Center because of low attendance. The center is now open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Two THS board members have been honored in recent months for their efforts in behalf of local history. The Elizabeth Forey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution presented **Charlotte Medlock** with its Community Service Award. In recognition of dedicated advocacy in Washington State history, **Dr. Jerry V. Ramsey** received the Gladys Ellis Miller Historian's History Award from the Washington State Society of Mayflower Descendants.

The Tacoma Historical Society was recently honored by the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber for contributing to downtown renewal.



Remembering bakeries

This plaque was installed Aug. 8 to commemorate the site of Henry's Bakery at 3814 N 26th St. in Tacoma's Proctor District. It was commissioned by Kurt Haase, Henry's son. Artist Paul R. Michaels noted, "the plaque features a version of the sign that once hung on the building but instead of the 'baker man' drawing, we included a caricature of Henry."

In our next issue we'll take a closer look at Henry's Bakery and lament Tacoma's lost bakeries in an article by Robert Tschida.

Plans move ahead for World War II Monument

Plans are under way for the creation of a memorial monument bearing the names of Pierce County residents who lost their lives as a result of World War II service. The monument with its some 700 names will become a part of Tacoma's new War Memorial Park located at the intersection of Jackson Avenue and Highway 16.

If you know of anyone whose name we might not have, please let us know.

It is our hope that you will desire to honor those who gave their lives for our freedom with your help.

Contact: THS 1814 Skyline Drive, Tacoma, WA 98406

Memorial Monument Committee:

Dr. Ronald E. Magden

Charlotte A. (Polly) Medlock

Capt. R. Leonard Medlock

Col. Robert B. Campbell

Col. A. W. Knight

Supported by the Tacoma Historical Society and American Legion Post 2.

Author issues a call for historic South Tacoma photos

I am authoring a book about the history of South Tacoma.

The book will tell the story of South Tacoma, an area rich in historical culture, using images and captions. As the saying goes: "A picture is worth a thousand words," which is why I'm contacting you and others who know about South Tacoma's past. Depending on what I receive from you and others, I may begin the story in the late 1800s and go to present.

I am seeking images from your personal collections, (vintage photographs, postcards, etc.) about South Tacoma to be a part of the book. Please also include a brief summary of what the picture represents. I will professionally scan the images and return each item to you intact and will give you credit for the image.

I need images and the stories of South Tacoma's claims-to-fame, as well of people, places, businesses, railroad, churches, cemeteries, events, buildings, schools, community clubs, parks and anything you believe has historical significance for South Tacoma. Search your photo albums, slides, memories and please share with me and others the historical past of South Tacoma.

Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated. I can be reached at darlyne@senimor.com or 253 221-5599. I am happy to meet with you at your convenience.

If you are affiliated with any clubs or associations where I may present my plea, please let me know. Also, if you know anyone who may be able to help me with this project, I appreciate you sharing the contact information with me.

Thank you.

Darlyne Reiter

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONTAINERIZATION**Industry Roots Stretch Back to 1949 Tacoma Waterfront**

By Ron Magden

This spring, the maritime and shipping industries celebrated a milestone in the globalization of shipping. It was on April 26, 1956, that North Carolina trucker Malcom P. McLean literally revolutionized an industry with a simple idea: Load truck trailers for inland transport directly onto ocean-going ships. The idea would evolve into today's standard 40-foot corrugated metal box with doors.

While nobody can dispute the revolution that took place when McLean's boxes were loaded aboard the *SS Ideal X* in Newark, New Jersey, the beginnings of containerization go back a little further into history ... and on the other side of the continent.

Longtime Tacoma longshoreman Harry "The Horse" Hilliard, now 86, remembers the day well.

On October 16, 1949, Hilliard was a member of a longshore gang that loaded the first container to leave Puget Sound. It was a cold, drizzly day on the Tacoma waterfront, and while Alaska Freight Lines was about to make shipping history, there were no brass bands, no VIPs and no fancy ribbons to cut.

In fact, Hilliard describes it as a "matter of fact" maritime revolution. In addition to the usual cargo of cartons on liftboards that cost \$5.86 a ton, there were truck semi-trailers that would cost only 16 cents a ton to load.

"Dockside cargo workers rigged the 40-ton semi-trailers that lay beside the *Asa Lothrop*," Hilliard recalled. "The ship's crane lifted the boxes without a hitch. In the hold using wires and turnbuckles other longshoremen tied down the



Harry "The Horse" Hilliard

trailers. As one of ten seagoing longshoremen, I sailed with the cargo to Valdez, Alaska where we rigged the trailers for discharge. When the boxes reached the dock, truck drivers hooked onto the 'cans' and drove them over the passes to Anchorage or Fairbanks. No one thought it was a big deal at the time."

Over the following years, Alaska Freight Lines continued to move and perfect its early version of container shipping— an operation that McLean studied before selling his trucking company to buy Pan-Atlantic Steamship Company. His innovation? McLean decided not to use semi-trailers, and he refitted the *SS Ideal-X* to hold 58 35-foot-long boxes. The ship sailed into history, but McLean recalled, "There was nothing glamorous about the event. The freight moved."

McLean changed the name of Pan-Atlantic to SeaLand in 1960 and purchased Alaska Freight Lines in 1963. SeaLand then pioneered year-round container service direct to Anchorage.

Meanwhile in San Francisco, Harry Bridges representing West Coast

If you worked on the docks, you probably had a nickname

By Ron Magden and Jeffrey Berger

There was joy among Tacoma longshore workers on July 21, 1897. James McMahon, home after a year prospecting in the Klondike, had struck it rich—\$60,000 in gold dust. A brigade of fellow workers showed up to help the rich man spend his poke. McMahon reserved only enough to buy a new two-wheel handtruck—which he promptly lost overboard. He dove after it but could not rescue his precious tool. From that moment he was known as "Jimmy the Diver."

Thus was bestowed the first of a colorful succession of nicknames borne—proudly and otherwise—by waterfront union members. Soon after "Jimmy the Diver" earned his moniker, longshore union treasurer Peter Wessel was given the name "Total" because he always started his financial report, "The total in the bank is..."

James "The Admiral" Stewart was known for his tall tales. One story Stewart related was about the time he used too much water pressure on the fire hose and ended up lofting a fellow worker 60 feet into the air. Stewart called the engine room and had them lower the pressure gradually until the seaman was safely back on the deck.

Elsworth "Pork Chops" Findley had raised hogs in Missouri. Robert "Boar Bristles" Braden only shaved every fourth day. "Tiny" Thronson was over 6 feet tall and weighed 200 pounds. "Weeping Willie" Wilkerson complained about everything, even if it was brand-new.

Industry roots – continued on Page 7

Nicknames – continued on Page 5

The City of Destiny's Debt to Allen C. Mason

"Allen Chase Mason was a major dude," *News Tribune* reporter Bart Ripp began in a 1995 tribute to Mason. Much has been written about Mason, a much-loved and admired Northwest figure, but the quote describes Mason quite succinctly. The names Mason Middle School, Mason Methodist Church, and Mason Avenue only hint at Mason's numerous contributions to Tacoma. Real estate developer, city builder, railroad builder, teacher, lawyer, investor, newspaperman, and world traveler, Allen Chase Mason was a Tacoma visionary.

A tough and incisive businessman, known for his "square-toed manliness," Mason was also known for his "genial and lovable nature." His fellow Mountaineers knew him as "Uncle Allie." Allen C. Mason's generosity was far-reaching, but perhaps his legacy to the city is greatest in the following four areas:

TACOMA'S GREATEST SALESMAN AND BOOSTER

Allen C. Mason put Tacoma on the map. After his arrival in Tacoma in 1883, Mason flooded the country with promotional materials about Tacoma. He took out full-page ads in the major papers of New York, Boston and Philadelphia. His articles and advertisements appeared in over 500 newspapers and periodicals. A believer in the power of advertising, Mason himself was first drawn to Tacoma by an ad in a Chicago newspaper. His advertising budget was over \$5,000 a month. Mason's "Star of Destiny" was just one of his innovative advertisements. Mason and his wife, Libby (Lawrence), built their North End mansion of all Washington State materials. Tacoma, Washington state and the entire Northwest owe a great debt to Allen Chase Mason's promotional efforts.

GENEROUS BENEFACTOR

Mason was well known for assisting those newcomers who heard his call and arrived in Tacoma. Not only did he help an individual in time of need, but he also contributed greatly to the community at large. Churches, libraries and schools received numerous donations. He built bridges, such as the Proctor bridge, and donated them to the city. The North End water works he created to serve his developments was also given to the city. Mason built some of the first streetcar lines in the city. He helped finance the Tacoma Hotel and the Tacoma Theater. Mason's lobbying was instrumental in obtaining permanent ownership of Point Defiance for the City of Tacoma. Newspaper articles of the time were often titled "Mason's Munificence."

"HIGHER THOUGHTS AND NOBLER DEEDS"

Allen C. Mason did things right. More important than his material generosity, Mason set a standard for

excellence and progressive thinking. Mason believed in provident planning, reaching for the long-term good, never the quick buck. A former teacher and principal, Mason was a strong supporter of education. His employment of John Conna, of Tacoma's first African American family, is more evidence of his forward thinking. Allen C. Mason had class.



Perhaps the best example of his attitude was the donation of the Mason Library to the city. This amazing library he began included 6,000 volumes in all fields. The library subscribed to every newspaper and periodical in Washington State and all of the country's other major publications. The North End library held the third-largest periodical collection in the country, behind only Boston and Washington, D.C. The building included a public meeting and an observatory. The library was later donated to Whitworth College.

At the library's dedication in 1893, Mason stated: "It is my ambition that the Mason Library and reading room may be a silent but potent educator. It is my hope that it may be to Tacoma what pure water is to the home, to-wit, an antidote for impurity and uncleanness and an absolute necessity for life. I hope it may be as the spring is to the hot dusty, and tired traveler – intellectually refreshing, cleansing and nourishing. May it be an inspiration to higher thoughts and nobler deeds."

A MORE LIVABLE CITY

Mason's real estate developments are today some of the most livable and beautiful neighborhoods in the world. He had a favorite slogan for developers — "Keep in view of the water." His 13 North End developments all have scenic views of Commencement Bay. The gorgeous neighborhoods, often the site of historic home tours today, are another example of Mason doing it right. Tacoma owes much of its reputation as the "City of Fine Homes" to Allen Chase Mason.

May the new Allen Chase Mason Exhibit Center inspire in all of us higher thoughts and nobler deeds.

Remarks delivered by Brian G. Kamens at the dedication of Tacoma Historical Society's Allen C. Mason Exhibit Area, May 13, 2006.

Hayden wins Morgan Award – continued from Page 1

has been an executive committee member and treasurer since 1995. She has been on the steering committee for the society's Annual Tour of Homes, which she currently chairs. She has served as a board member and treasurer of the Pierce County Heritage League. Additionally, she edits a newsletter for Daughters of Norway, Embla Lodge.

A native Tacoman, Marie graduated from Lincoln High School and then worked for four years for Whitacre Engineering. She then attended Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and received a degree in Christian Education/Bible.

After graduation she and Chuck Hayden married in their church, First Presbyterian, and they have four

grown children. Chuck retired in 2000 after 40 years teaching in the Federal Way School District. Chuck and Marie directed the church's camp program for 38 years before retiring in 2002. They sing in the choir. Marie is the church historian and archivist, with hundreds of articles, artifacts and photos from the church's inception in 1873 to today.

The society's Murray Morgan Award honors the late Tacoma historian, teacher and author. Previous recipients have included Brian G. Kamens, Winnifred Olsen, Caroline Kellogg, Otilie Markholt, Gary Fuller Reese, Ronald Magden, Cecelia Svinth Carpenter, Robert Tschida, Charlotte Medlock, Jim



*Photo by Bob Tschida
Marie Hayden receives the Murray Morgan Award from THS President Dale Wirsing, right, in April. At left is Dr. Ronald Magden.*

Fredrickson, Dode Trip, and the Tacoma-Pierce County Genealogical Society.

Dr. Magden's long service to the society was recognized with the award of a lifetime membership.

Nicknames – continued from Page 3

Harry "the Horse" Hilliard had worked on a ship carrying horses to Poland. "Hammerhead" Meyer was noted for his stubbornness. "Strawberry" Carlson hosted annual berry feeds at the hiring hall for everyone. "Handy Jim" Berrons was the most accident-prone man who ever worked in the hold of a ship. "Donut Bill" always arrived at work with a sack full of donuts for the gang while "Candyman" Lesser brought jawbreakers.

Physical characteristics also played an important part in nicknaming: "Fats" Ray, "Red" Lyons, "Dog Face" Smith, "Bowlegs" Schock, "Chubby" Hall, and "Halibut Head" Bowman. To distinguish one Johnson from another they were called "Kidney Foot," "Big Foot," "Flat Foot," and "Slue Foot." The same went for the Larsons. Albert was dubbed "Bubble Nose," August "Clam Rancher" and Kenneth answered to "Wolf." "Rope Yarn" Thorsen was so frightened of rats that he tied his pant legs with ropes. *Nicknames – continued on Page 7*

Visit the THS Exhibit Center & Store



Where Tacoma's History Is Celebrated

"Building Tacoma" Exhibit Explores City's Early Growth

"Building Tacoma" traces Tacoma's history from the first Euro-American settlement activity in 1852 through its emergence as a city of some world importance by 1915. The exhibition highlights important events during these years, features images of the town's early architecture, and profiles some of the people who shaped the community.

Scheduled to run through October.

The THS store offers:

- The classic Hunt's *History of Tacoma* - republished in 2005 with an improved, expanded index.
- Vintage photos of historic Tacoma

- Coffee mugs with the THS logo.
- Caroline Gallacci's Old Tacoma.
- Roger Cushman Edwards' Tacoma's Salmon Beach
- Prints and coffee mugs by Tacoma artist Anne deMille Flood
- Prints and posters by Tacoma artist Marshall Johnson
- And more ...

Remember: THS members receive a 10 percent discount by showing their cards.

Master Card and Visa accepted.

747 Broadway – in Tacoma's
Old City Hall Historic District
11 am–4 pm
Wednesday through Saturday
253-472-3738

Annual Fund donors 2006

Discoverer (\$1,000 and up)

James & Jean Hoard
Dr. Jerry V. and Elaine Ramsey

Gary Fuller Reese

Explorer (\$750 and up)

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Gerald Eysaman
Chuck & Marie Hayden
Charlotte Medlock

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Janet L. Stirling
Robert & Betty Tschida
Elodie Vandevent
Shirley Winsley

Response to the 2006 Annual Fund has been gratifying. If you haven't gotten around to signing your check and mailing it in, it's not too late to do so. THS Annual Fund, PO Box 1865, Tacoma, WA 98401.

Statue will keep alive memory of storied restaurant

Do you remember the Top of the Ocean? If you do, you doubtless have treasured memories. Now, sculptor Paul R. Michaels plans to create a monument of the Top of the Ocean at the site where the legendary restaurant once stood.

The Top of the Ocean was built in 1946 to look like a ship moored along Ruston Way and was for years the region's premier dining and dancing establishment. The Top was the first restaurant along Ruston Way to be built over the water. Its distinctive design made it a Tacoma icon. Until an arsonist torched it in 1977, it was the scene of important and memorable Tacoma events.

Michaels plans a scale bronze replica of the restaurant mounted on a pedestal. The sculpture will be about 30 inches long and will accurately portray the unique features of the original. The view from the shore side will convey its shiplike appearance, with a row of scale vintage cars parked alongside. As the viewer moves around the sculpture, it will become obvious that the 'Top' was not a ship. On the water side it will feature large view windows and rows of supporting pilings. A plaque will tell the story and acknowledge all sponsors and donors.

The monument will be installed on the wooden walkway MetroParks has built on the pilings that once supported the Top of the Ocean. The statue and its pedestal



will be one piece of silicon bronze, a material as strong as steel. It will be sculpted in fine detail but without any delicate protruding parts, making it practically vandal-proof. It will be mounted securely on the walkway in such a way that the bolts are inaccessible.

Michaels enjoys a growing reputation for his bronze sidewalk markers and statues re-creating and relating our area's history. His contributions to Tacoma's store of public art are on view at his website, www.michaelsbronze.com.

The Tacoma Historical Society board has endorsed the project and contributed \$500. Mrs. Babe Lehrer is leading the campaign to raise the total cost of \$21,000, including research, sculpting, casting and installation. Donors of \$100 or more will be listed on the monument's dedication plaque. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to THS, PO Box 1865, Tacoma WA 98401, marked for Top of the Ocean project.

Nicknames – continued from Page 6

The paymistress could not pronounce the names of two Hawaiians. Consequently, they were called simply "Joe Oregon" and "San Diego Sam." She called the Japanese by number—Japan One, Japan Two, Japan Three ... By 1950 practically everyone on the waterfront had a nickname.

But by the 1970s "Nicknames had become a lost art," lamented ILWU Local 23 Education Committee

Chair Donnie Gill. "The people who passed them out are no longer with us." And instead of working, eating, and partying with the same gang for their entire working life, waterfront workers are going to jobs with a different bunch of people every day. The era had ended when camaraderie was so close-knit that a birth certificate could be disregarded.

Industry roots – continued from Page 3

longshore workers and J. Paul St. Sure of the employers' Pacific Maritime Association signed the Mechanization and Modernization Agreement in June 1961. Employers achieved what they wanted – the right to introduce even more labor-saving devices on the waterfront beside the container. In exchange, the longshore union received a guaranteed 35 hours of work a week or the equivalent of that pay if a machine replaced them.

Coming full circle, in May 1985, the first SeaLand ship called at the company's new container terminal in Tacoma. SeaLand later merged with another Port of Tacoma customer, Maersk Line. The domestic portion of SeaLand calls at Tacoma under the name Horizon Lines.

Hilliard says he never met Malcom McLean, but both were winners in the containerization of the shipping world. In 2005, over 67 million containers were shipped worldwide.

About the Author: Dr. Ronald Magden is a retired Tacoma Community College history instructor. He has written three books on maritime history: *A History of Seattle Waterfront Workers*, *The Working Longshoreman*, and *The Working Waterfront: The History of Tacoma's Ships and Men*.

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THE TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Regular meetings at Tacoma Public Library

October 9, 2006 - Monday, 7 pm

***“Weyerhaeuser Reminiscences — Howie & Rip’s
Observations of Seattle/Tacoma History”***

W. Howarth Meadowcroft and Rip Collins.

Moderated by Gary Fuller Reese.

• Election of board members

November 13, 2006 - Monday, 7 pm

“The Willits Brothers and Their Canoes”

**Patrick F. Chapman talks about his new
book. Book signing.**

December 11, 2006 - Monday, 7 pm

“Tacoma’s Sixth Avenue District”

**Brian Kamens, local historian and staff member,
Tacoma Public Library’s Northwest Room**

www.tacomahistory.org — 253-472-3738

CITY OF DESTINY NEWSLETTER

published by
The Tacoma Historical Society

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Vice President: Dr. James Hoard
Secretary: Patricia Mannie
Treasurer: Marie Hayden

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Jeff Cunningham	Charlotte Medlock
Gerald Eysaman	Wilma Peterson
Ron Karabaich	Dr. Jerry V. Ramsey
	James Sutter

Join THS Today

Membership in THS is open to all and
is tax deductible.

Student	\$15
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Please make checks payable to:

The Tacoma Historical Society

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