



TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CITY OF DESTINY NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Number 3

Winter 2003

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*Historic Homes of Tacoma
Tour 2003*

North End Homes

May 3rd & 4th

Saturday 10 am to 5 pm

Sunday 1 pm to 5 pm

Tickets \$12.00

Tickets go on sale April 1 at the Northwest Shop, Stadium Thriftway, and the Allenmore, Fircrest, and Westgate branches of Columbia Bank.

Tell your friends.

If you haven't already signed up to docent, call us at (253) 472-3738.

The 'gunnysack kids' knew where to go for goods and goodies



Richards Studio Collection, 1938
Photo courtesy Tacoma Public Library

The Heidelberg Brewery (Columbia Brewing Co.) at 2120 S. C St. was an occasional stop for the “gunnysack kids” – especially if the weather was hot and the foreman wasn't around.

By Bob Tschida

In the late 1930s when I and my friends from our neighborhood would venture toward town, we would always have a gunnysack tucked over our belts. That way we would not lose it or have to carry it in our hands.

The purpose of the gunnysack was to make our forays pay off in more than one way. We had to be self-sufficient and self-reliant

in those days. There was no such thing as asking your folks for small change. They didn't have any spare nickels or dimes. And carrying a lunch was out of the question. We were on our own and we accepted that fact.

We always took different routes to town or to the waterfront or to the Puyallup Avenue area. We never made any special plans to go here

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Inside:

- **The Tacoma Historical Society's new website goes online 2**
- **A bishop and a benefactor bring about a girls' school for Tacoma 6**
- **Much more.**

City of Destiny and South Sound available once again

A new shipment of the well-received Tacoma history, *The City of Destiny and the South Sound*, has arrived, and Ron Karabaich has them on sale at his Old Town Photo & Framing, 2212 N. 30th St., while they last.

Published in 2001 in cooperation with the Tacoma Historical Society, the book was authored by Caroline Denyer Gallacci, and Ron Karabaich was photo editor. The cost per copy is \$49.95 plus tax.

Panelists recall the unknown war in the Pacific for THS audience

Members of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation" presented absorbing and moving accounts of their World War II experiences at the Tacoma Historical Society's December 9 meeting. Taking part were Tom Nelson, a Pearl Harbor survivor; Glenn Oliver and Chuck Towne, both of whom served in the Philippines and were Bataan defenders; and Len Medlock. All are members of the Tacoma Chapter of American POWs.

Also participating were Jim Fredrickson, Bob Tschida, and Ron Magden. The panel was organized by Polly Medlock.

Copies of *The Tacoma News Tribune's* Dec. 8, 1941, "extra" edition about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor were on display.

Three books were recommended as additional reading:

- *Ghost Soldiers; The Epic Account of World War II's Greatest Rescue Mission*, by Hampton Sides.
- *Unjust Enrichment; How Japan's Companies Built Postwar Fortunes Using American POWs*, by Linda Goetz Holmes.
- *Belly of the Beast; A POW's Inspiring True Story of Faith, Courage, and Survival Aboard the Infamous WWII Japanese Hellship, the Oryoku Maru*, by Judith Pearson.

The THS board has regretfully accepted the resignation of Lt. Col. William A. Daugherty (ret.) from the board for health reasons. The board expressed its thanks to Bill for his service.

The Board of Directors of the Tacoma Historical Society meets at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the society's office, 3712 S. Cedar St. Members and friends of Tacoma history are invited to attend and share their ideas and comments.

THE TACOMA HISTORICAL WRITERS
INVITE YOUR PARTICIPATION
2ND & 4TH TUESDAYS 1:30 TO 3:00
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. LIBRARY • 19TH & S. PINE
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READ, WRITE, & ENJOY REFRESHMENTS

Fircrest history on sale

A new book that reprises the last quarter century of Fircrest history has been published.

Titled *Fircrest: The Ideal Home Place*, the book was written by Alison Sonntag. Dale and Marlene Wirsing edited the manuscript.

Copies are available for a \$10 donation at the Fircrest City Hall, 115 Ramsdell St.

If your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall

Your dues keep the Tacoma Historical Society running. They pay for meetings, mailings, projects, the society's office and storage space, and other organizational expenses. Please check the mailing label on your newsletter. If you're not current, please send your check today.

The Tacoma Historical Writers has available the very popular *Tacoma, Voices of the Past* Volume I (reprint) and Volume II — \$20.00 each, \$3.00 shipping and handling.

For copies: call (253) 752-7722 or write 1814 Skyline Drive, Tacoma, WA 98406

Tacomahistory.org is now online

The Tacoma Historical Society's website is online at last.

You can find it at www.tacomahistory.org. We think you'll want to bookmark our site.

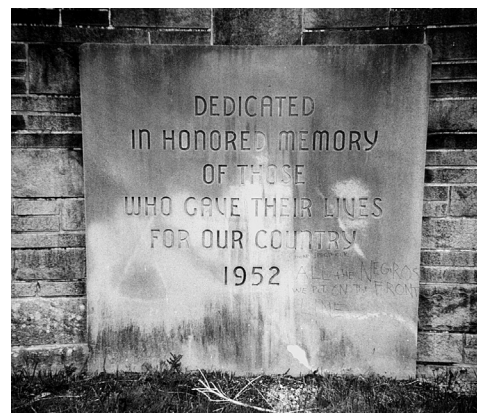
You can use it to check our schedule of meetings and events, download a membership application, check on volunteer opportunities, contact the society by e-mail, read selected articles from the *City of Destiny Newsletter*, or find links to other historical organizations.

In the future we hope to add such features as a photo gallery. Please check it out and let us know if you have suggestions.



Remembering Our Heritage

A sculpture that commemorates turn-of-the-century Slavic immigrants now stands in Old Town. Called “Ribarski Pripovijest” (Fish Story), the statue is the work of local sculptor Larry Anderson. It was erected in front of the Slavonian Hall at 2306 N. 30th St. in November. It was commissioned by the Slavonian American Benevolent Society to honor the lives of Croatian immigrants in Tacoma.



Gone – Let’s Not Let it Be Forgotten

Monuments in Tacoma’s half-century-old War Memorial Park were removed at the end of January to make way for the second Narrows Bridge. The weathered marker reads “Dedicated in Honored Memory of Those Who Gave Their Lives for Our Country, 1952.” The state plans a replacement park farther east on Highway 16, at a 3.7-acre site on the former roadbed of Sixth Avenue and bordered by Jackson Avenue.

'Gunnysack Kids'

Continued from page 1

or there; we just went. Sure, we all had more chores to do at home, but during summers we had more free time to roam. We pretty much knew when drivers of small trucks would return to their companies, so we would go there and ask if they had any old cookies or damaged ice cream bars.

When we were on our way in the mornings we always felt it was our job to watch any major activity — a street being paved with concrete, maybe a city line crew putting up a pole, or a steam shovel scooping up dirt to be loaded into a dump truck, or anything else that caught our attention.

At times we would stop in at a cannery on Puyallup Avenue to watch the women on the assembly lines put up peaches, pears, apples or whatever was being canned that day. The cannery was always good for some peeled apples or tomatoes; these snacks took care of our immediate hunger pangs. This plant was located on Puyallup Avenue and East "F" Street.

We would head over to Tacoma Box Company to watch operations there, and maybe we would venture out to the Puyallup River and see what was going on. Of course, we always had to wander in and around Hollywood on the Tideflats. All manner of shacks and lean-tos were built there. Some were well-built and had little gardens and plants growing out of tubs and planters. This was a way of life for so many unemployed during the Depression days. Truly this was quite an eye-opener for us kids. People living like that made a deep impression on us.

As the day wore on it might be time to head back home, but first we stopped at Medosweet Dairy on South 25th and Pacific Avenue. We would watch the delivery driver unloading empty bottles and cans, and when he was almost through we would ask if there were any old crushed Almond-Roca ice cream bars. If we were lucky the driver would have a carton or two of damaged bars that were unsalable.

Maybe we would end up with two or three ice cream bars apiece, and we would appease our hunger pangs once again. With new vigor and energy we would go up the 25th Street hill, turn left onto the railroad tracks and walk up to Tacoma Ice & Storage Co. This plant was located at South 27th and Holgate Street. There the workers would be directing the large cakes of ice down the opening at either end of a refrigerated boxcar.

Naturally we had our gunnysacks in our hands,

and the icehouse workers knew what we were there for. Sooner or later they would chip out large pieces of ice that somehow or other would fall off the top of the boxcar. So we just naturally placed the chunks of ice in our gunnysacks and slung them over our shoulders. We would wave to the icehouse guys and they would wave back. We lived only two or three blocks from the icehouse. So we supplied our families with ice for their iceboxes.

We earned the name of "the gunnysack kids" at various places where we would stop to see if there was any loot we could haul off for free. Usually as

'At the National Biscuit Company loading docks... we sometimes hit the jackpot.'

we approached places we could hear the workers say: "Here come those gunnysack kids." Some of the workers we knew by name. We would avoid going to certain places every now and then to keep from pestering them with too many visits.

One of our favorite stops was the small meat-packing plant on Commerce Street between South 13th and 15th streets on the west side of Commerce. Another packing plant was Swift's, located in the small triangular piece of property bordering the main prairie line of the Northern Pacific Railroad and bordering South 19th Street and Commerce Street. There were spur tracks on Commerce Street where refrigerated boxcars brought in halves of beef and hogs to be unloaded and cut up for local markets. These small packing houses always had their own smoke rooms where hams, bacon, and sausages were cured. Boy oh boy, how we enjoyed wieners, pieces of sausage, and at times, pieces of ham that some of the workers would slip us. And wow, pickled pigs feet were a treat. Of course, we had to wrap them in newspaper as they were juicy.

At the National Biscuit Company loading docks on Commerce between South 17th and 19th, we sometimes hit the jackpot. We learned that cookies and crackers can't take too much knocking around and some cartons get damaged. So they were unsalable, and we would get the spoils of dozens and dozens of cookies. Our gunnysacks were full and our stomachs as well. When we hit the bonanza they called us over as they had to get rid of broken boxes of the goodies. We didn't even have to ask. This made it extra easy on us. Our neighborhood families shared in the booty. I could not eat fig bars but enjoyed all

Richards Studio Collection, circa 1937
 Photo courtesy Tacoma Public Library

At Griffin Fuel Co., 1910-30 Commerce St., the ‘gunnysack kids’ were able to gather coal briquettes to take home to their families. In the background is the Snoqualmie Falls Power Co. building that now houses the University of Washington Tacoma library.



the other various cookies. We were well received in our neighborhood because in those days everyone shared what they had. We didn't have much but we had each other.

Another small packing plant was Hormel's, located on the northeast corner of South 16th and "D" Street in a three-story brick building. Oh yes, we gunnysack kids knew each and every place where food was the main business.

Usually when it was time to head back home we would walk up the railroad tracks, and if it was a hot day we made a beeline to the Heidelberg Brewery located on "C" Street between South 21st and 23rd streets. The tracks were actually the back of the brewery, where some doors were open, and we would see Alex, one of the brewery workers. He was always good for a large quaff of beer or a mug. We took turns slaking our thirst, and he always said, "That's enough, boys, and be on your way before the foreman comes by."

Farther south by the tracks on the south side of the old Snoqualmie powerhouse was Griffin Fuel Company, the narrow complex of buildings and bunkers extending to South 21st Street. Any coal briquettes that fell down from the bunker were considered free for the collecting. So we loaded up what we could carry in our gunnysacks, and on we went up the tracks to our homes. Once more we made a contribution to our family stoves for the winter months.

During the years of 1937, '38 and '39 we "gunnysack kids" made many jaunts around the industrial areas of Tacoma and downtown, usually south of 13th Street. We knew every building, every street, all the shortcuts, all the alleys. One might say we knew the whole hillside from "K" street all the way down to East "D" Street.

We knew every nook and cranny. How many can say they have seen the deep ravine in Galliher's Gulch extending from "C" Street to the Tacoma Avenue Bridge and also adjoining Wakefield Drive? During the Depression it was home to dozens of down-and-outers who built little shacks to live in. Years later the deep hole was filled in. (A year ago the Tacoma Rescue Mission had a new complex built atop the filled-in hole.)

Obtaining gunnysacks was no problem. Stores practically gave them away to keep them from piling up and taking up needed space. Potatoes, onions, carrots, corn, and other products were shipped in gunnysacks. When we were "junking" — the term we used when we gathered up old rags, copper wiring, bottles, etc., anything that was salable — we placed them in our gunnysacks.

If in our wanderings we saw a City Light crew working on poles, we would check the jobs out. Usually we would ask the "puncher," or foreman, when they would be done. Most likely they would say today or maybe in two days. So at the appointed

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A Bishop, a Benefactor, and a School

By Diane Wells

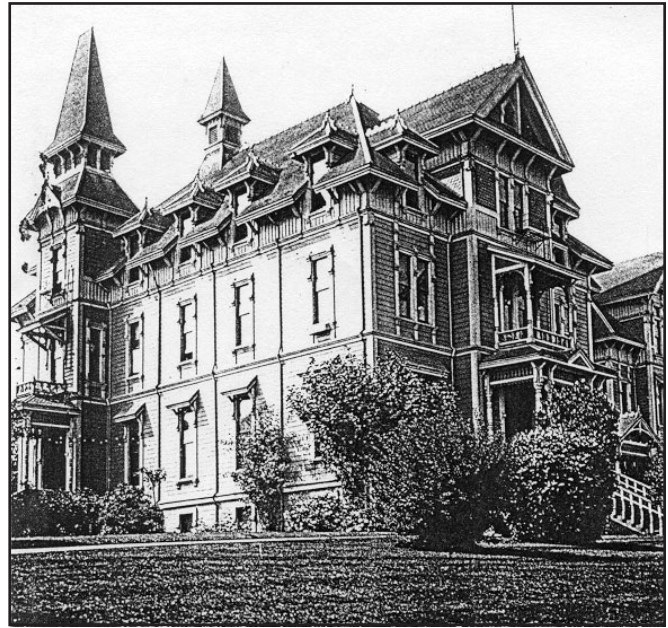
Archivist and records manager,
Episcopal Diocese of Olympia

A bishop to lead and a school to educate were the main priorities when the Episcopal Convocation met in 1853. Held in Oregon City, this was the first official meeting in the Oregon Territory of Episcopalians, and they were determined to build church leadership and minister to the educational, as well as the spiritual needs, of the territory. The first of these two goals was achieved when Bishop Scott arrived a year later, but the planned young men's school including a seminary was not. However, the priority of education and the church's role in establishing schools has not been ignored in the past 150 years.

Often in a pioneer setting, churches were the only institutions capable of educating the community, and the educated missionaries and clergy keenly felt these responsibilities. More than a quarter century after the 1853 Convocation, only eight organized Episcopal congregations existed and four resident clergymen lived in western Washington. Lack of resources made establishing schools a slow and difficult process. The first schools to appear were Sunday schools, established by the three earliest congregations: St. Luke, Vancouver; St. John, Olympia; and St. Paul, Port Townsend. Two parochial schools then opened; the first in 1868 at St. Luke, Vancouver, and the second in 1871 at Trinity Parish, Seattle.

St. Luke's Parish School maintained an average attendance of 40 pupils and offered an impressive curriculum including Latin, French, History, Science, Arithmetic and Music. In 1878, tuition was \$6 for the Primary Department, \$3 for French instruction, \$14 for Instrumental Music, and \$2 just for the use of the piano — not insignificant sums in those days! At Trinity, the rector's wife, Mrs. Lucia Summers, began a school but it apparently closed when the Summers family departed Seattle in 1873. From 1873-1878, Hiram Burnett, a layman at Trinity, Seattle, conducted lay services and a Sunday School for Native Americans at Port Ludlow on the Olympic Peninsula.

Eight congregations, a few Sunday schools and one established parish school were not much to show for years of hard work. However, all that was about to change. In the 1880s, Washington became a separate



Diocese of Olympia Archives

The Annie Wright Seminary, circa 1884. The original gothic-style building was located at Division and Tacoma Avenue North, the site of Stadium Thriftway today. In 1924 the school relocated to the ivy-covered brick buildings on Tacoma Avenue North so familiar to Tacomans. The name was changed to Annie Wright School in 1970.

missionary district and the Rev. John Adams Paddock from Brooklyn, N.Y., was chosen first bishop of the Washington Territory. The Northern Pacific Railroad had first reached Tacoma in 1883. The entry of the railroad had a profound effect on the fortunes of the Episcopal Church, not only because of the increase in population and the improvement in transportation, but because it introduced Mr. Charles B. Wright to the scene.

An Episcopalian from Philadelphia, Wright had interests in the Northern Pacific and was President of the Tacoma Land Company. Over the next few years, he provided Bishop Paddock with much-needed financial support. He helped establish two schools in Tacoma, donating \$50,000 for a School for Girls, named after his daughter, Annie, and another \$50,000 for the Washington College for Boys. The Annie Wright Seminary opened in 1884 with 94 girls enrolled. Each student, according to the first catalogue, paid \$350 per year for board, furnished room, tuition and laundry service. With its imposing turrets and impressive portals, the building struck quite a contrast to the rough-hewn streets of Tacoma.

While the gothic-style structure of 1884 even-

A Bishop and a School

Continued from page 6

tually gave way to a building of ivy-covered brick, Annie Wright succeeded and today continues its long tradition of quality education for girls.

The Washington College for Boys, however, closed after only six years, lasting from 1886 to 1892. Several other schools were established during the next 20 years. With the exception of Annie Wright, all eventually bowed out to the growing public school system and closed by the end of the century. The Episcopal Church helped fill the educational void during the formative years of western Washington's growth and brought scholarship and culture to its pioneer communities.

In the 1950s, 100 years after that first Convocation meeting, the men and women of the Episcopal Church again provided quality education based on Christian



Diocese of Olympia Archives

The Rev. John Adams Paddock came to Tacoma in 1880 to become the first Episcopal bishop for Western Washington and served until 1894. Bishop Paddock was instrumental in the founding of Annie Wright Seminary. In 1884 he successfully answered Charles B. Wright's challenge to raise \$25,000 for a school for girls. In 1882 his wife, Fannie, founded the hospital that grew into Tacoma General.

principles through the founding of several parochial schools and the opening of the Charles Wright Academy (1957). As the Diocese of Olympia prepares to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Episcopal Church in western Washington, we can be proud that the ideals of

higher learning and moral training proclaimed from the start by our missionary founders still exist and flourish in our diocese today.

Excerpted by permission from the *Episcopal Voice*, May 2002

Tacoma circa 1910 was more of a city than they expected

"The City of Tacoma was not at all what the Jordans had expected it was going to be when they first saw it. They had come out from Minneapolis thinking Tacoma was nothing but a mill town, wild and untamed. What they found was a dynamic little city of 60,000 people with modern cobblestone streets, tall brick buildings, with new structures under con-

struction. The population was a mixture of Swedes, Norwegians and Germans, a few Irish and Italians, all traditionally hard workers and thrifty. They were honest, industrious people, with an avid desire to own their homes.

From *Not by Bread Alone; Conversations with Art Jordan*, by John D. McCallum, pp. 45-46.

'Gunnysack Kids'

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time we would come back and wait for the line crew to depart. Like vultures we would look around the ground for pieces of copper wiring, and into the gunnysacks they would go.

When we got home we would build a bonfire in a vacant lot and dump all the wiring into the fire. In time all the insulation would burn off, and we would crunch the copper into piles to sell. At times I wondered if the line crews knew we were trying to make a few dollars and intentionally left extra pieces of wire around for us.

We always gave what money we made to our

families. There was no question about it – you just did your part in helping out your family. There wasn't any thought that this was *my* money. In the Depression years kids brought anything they earned to the family. That's the way it was for the unemployed families. You shared what you had.

Born in Tacoma on June 12, 1924, Bob Tschida is known among local history buffs as "Mr. Tacoma." He is an active volunteer with the Working Waterfront Museum and the veterans hospital at American Lake. He was active in the Holy Rosary alumni group and is a member of the Tacoma Historical Writers Group. He is a charter member of the Tacoma Historical Society, which presented him its Murray Morgan Award in 1999.

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TACOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Regular meetings

April 14, 2003 – Monday, 6:30 pm

Annual meeting of the Tacoma Historical Society – Speaker:

C.R. Roberts of The News Tribune on

“Quintessential Tacoma”

Presentation of the society’s Murray Morgan Award

Election of officers and board members

May 3–4 Annual Tour of Tacoma Historic Homes

June 9, 2003 – Monday, 7 pm

Stan Flewelling discusses his recent book:

Shirakawa: A History of the White River Valley Japanese

Mr. Flewelling is a free-lance writer of folk history and the author of *Farmlands: The Story of Thomas, Washington*. He was raised in Japan, is an active worker in local cultural history, and is a long-time associate of the White River Valley Museum in Auburn.

July 14, 2003 – Monday, 7 pm

A walking tour of Tacoma historic sites

CITY OF DESTINY NEWS

The Tacoma Historical Society

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