



HERITAGE CORRIDOR

# History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society

South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

Volume 2 Issue 4 December 2004

## More than just a direction

by Jerry Bates, South Hill Historical Society

**W**hen I attended Puyallup High School in the 1960s, I remember we called 112th Street "Airport," 128th Street was Collins Road. Many old timers living on the hill today, before my time, remember road names like Patzner, Cherry, Lundblad, Pear, Odens, among many others.

Today, few if any of those names remain; they've all been changed to numbers. Thanks to the efforts of our own Carl Vest, some of the historical street names have been resurrected and are now present on signs adjacent to the numbered sign on street corners all over the South Hill. But don't expect to find these original street names published in street maps or listed in telephone books or used as mailing addresses.

However, a few street names have over the generations somehow survived, Military Road, Meridian and the subject of our story—Shaw Road.

A road's name becomes part of our life and the geography of our everyday routine. We often never give a thought to a street's name beyond a direction or way to tell someone how to get from here to there.

But a street or road named after a local individual can have a rich history behind it. It can represent a life lived in a bygone era. In the case of Shaw Road, the name represents a very interesting family.

Let's go back a hundred years or so, when travel in Puyallup meant riding or being pulled by a horse. If you were lucky, perhaps a train or trolley would get you where you were going. The only commercial transit between Seattle and Tacoma was by the water of Puget Sound.

The year is 1901 and a 45 year-old carpenter, Chris Shaw, his wife Mary and six children were settling in the Puyallup Valley. They had made a long hard journey from Colorado through Wyoming, Idaho and Oregon. Shaw a clever carpenter modified his large wagon to resemble a modern day camper and built a small wagon/buggy Mary could handle while caring for her baby.

Chris Shaw was a Danish immigrant with talent and ingenuity that would benefit any community

he was part of. Among his many talents, he was known for his mechanical skills.

Before coming to the Puyallup Valley, he attended college to become a minister. His life here was spent as a farmer, preacher and carpenter. He became one of the most respected men in Puyallup.

The spot where he built his home, across from where today's 25th St SE and Pioneer Avenue meet, had to be cleared by him and his two elder sons, Emery and Frank. Remember, the entire valley was originally heavily wooded. After four years of clearing his 15-acre property and building

a house and barn, he had what was called then a "model home and farm." It was featured in the January 7, 1911 Puyallup Valley Tribune.

The article states: "The fruit on this place consists of one and one-half acres of Evergreen blackberries, three-fourths of an acre of red raspberries and two acres of orchard, principally apples, pears and cherries.... ten acres of the farm are in pasture and the remainder is devoted to kale, beets and other forage root crops." His crops held production records for kale and beets.

Shaw's seventh child was born in 1904, giving him and his wife three sons and four daughters. Lightning killed the oldest son Emery when he was 25 in 1912.

Their farm was considered the "oasis." The Shaws would take in homeless people. After a good meal Chris Shaw the preacher would try to convert them, telling them of the gospel.

### Shaw's Road

In 1916 what is now Shaw Road was a mere trail along which some families with small children lived. Wild animals often stalked those that traveled this path.

Since Chris Shaw's son Frank Shaw and Guy Clifford now owned property along the route they felt compelled to convert the existing path into a road. Building the road became a Shaw family project. Frank Shaw was a born engineer; he and Guy Clifford combined their efforts (Guy Clifford would marry Frank Shaw's sister Laura).

The road was completed in 1920. The state road

commissioner at the time was highly impressed, calling it remarkable. The commissioner insisted that it be named Shaw Road, for it was the Shaw family and spouses that donated the equipment, time and money to make it possible.

#### **Editor Note:**

For a more detailed account of the Shaw family ask Paul Hackett for a copy of the family history written by Laura Shaw Clifford.

## **Words from the President:**

Digging up the past about South Hill is very exciting, and has been for the four years this Society has been working. You are being very generous with your remembrances, old photographs, your willingness to be interviewed, and artifacts you have donated to the Society.

We are still in the first phase of our work. That phase is digging deeper into the history of the area from Canyon Rd. to the Ridge (over Orting), from the Fairgrounds south to 204th. We have some large gaps in our knowledge.

#### **We ask you to help us.**

First, we have important, but only limited knowledge of early pioneers who lived from 78th Avenue to Canyon Rd. (We are excited about the restored 1905 home owned by Ralph and Yvonne Thorp, at 12702 66th Av Ct E. Please let us know of others).

Second, we are looking for descendants of the people for whom roads on the Hill were originally named. Meridian Avenue was first called Ball-Wood Road so we are searching for information on the Ball and the Wood families. 160th St E was originally Muehler-Berger Rd. Is there information on Charles Berger? 152nd St was first named Mitchell-Gould Rd. Who were those families? 128th St E was originally Collins Rd. after James B. Collins. 94th Ave E was named Odens Rd. Is there some information about George Odens?

Also we are searching for knowledge about settlers along the Naches Trail in the area near the present-day McMillan reservoir, and east of the Pierce County Airport. These are names from the 1800's: J. C. Leonard (1877); F.O. Hunger (1883); James C. Hall (1876); James Geiger (1872); A.C. McNeeks (1887); C.A.B. Berger (1888); Peter Klee (1888); John Lackey (1884); Antone Ranch (1886). Further to the west in the area of present-day 86th Ave E, west of Meridian Ave, these names appear in records: Frank J. Hartman (1888); G. Gabrielson; W.A. Pettys; Jacob S. Lord (1888) and Addison Pease (1885).

Did these early landowners quickly sell out to timber companies? Did they give up trying to cut down trees to farm and go back East? Did they move into thriving Tacoma?

We would like to hear from you.

Paul Hackett

## **More About Aviation on South Hill**

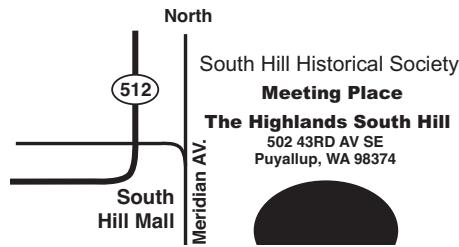
by Carl Vest,  
South Hill  
Historical Society

In a previous edition of our newsletter a request was made for information about an early airstrip on South Hill. A facility developed and operated by a Mr. Sagmiller. I am pleased to report that several people have responded to that request. Thanks to all of you. Due to the number of responses it will take a bit of time to get around to everybody. But please rest assured, we will be in touch if you have left a phone number or address with a Society member.

I would like to thank Bruce Thun for directing our attention to a sketch of the airstrip, which appeared in the 1963 edition of a Washington State pilot's guide. This sketch shows the airstrip, known as the S&S Airport (or S&S Airstrip, it's listed both ways), just to the west of Meridian and located directly across the road from Thun Field. It was a gravel-surfaced airstrip, some 2000 feet long and 60 feet wide. There were trees at both ends of the runway and pilots were warned to "WATCH for Helicopter traffic." It was noted that this was a private airport.

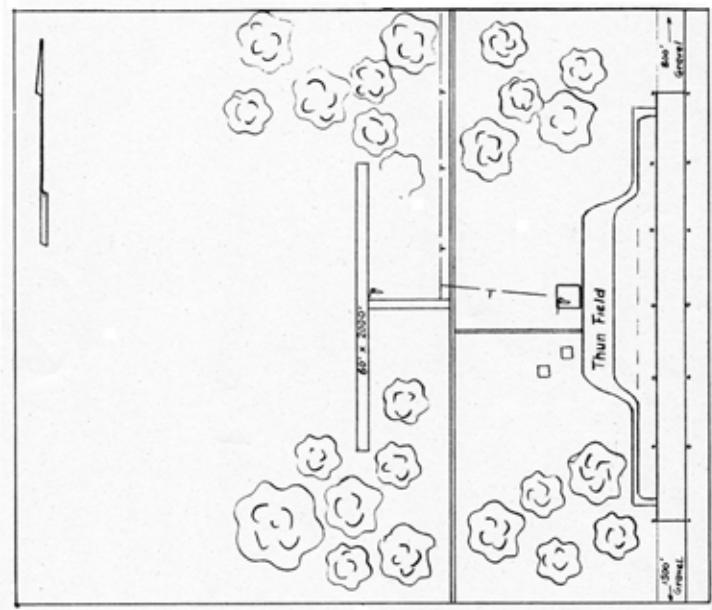
The listing for this airport does not, of course, give any background or history of the facility. And that is what the Society is trying to develop. So we will be contacting everyone who has responded to our requests for information. It's just that it will take a bit of time.

#### **Location of the S&S Airport on South Hill**



A sketch of the relative location of the S&S Airport to Graham, Puyallup and Tacoma, as it appeared in a 1963 Pilot's Guide, published by the State of Washington.

#### **Relative Position of S&S Airport to Thun Field**



A more detailed sketch of the S&S Airport relative to Thun Field. The focus of this sketch is the S&S Airport. A more accurate view of Thun field, relative to its alignment to Meridian, is on another page of the 1963 Pilot's Guide.

# Missed Opportunity!

A note from member Vern Rockstad

"Early December in 1943 and 1944 John Thun and my dad, Pete Rockstad, and me, Vern Rockstad, got permission to cut Christmas trees on about 80 acres of Pope and Talbott Timber Company property.

John Thun and his wife, Babe, lived on a poultry farm, two farms south of ours on the corner of 144th St E and 126th Av E, with their small children that I occasionally baby-sat (one child, now a father/truck driver Tad Thun). John Thun liked that tree property so much that he suggested to Pete, my dad, that the two of them buy this property, then \$30 an acre, but dad thought it was just too much money; so the Thuns bought the property, and the rest is history!"

**Editor's note:**

The land became Thun Field now known as Pierce County Airport.

Vern Rockstad, 2001

(Vern has given the South Hill Historical Society a history of 4-H Club work on South Hill)

**Response from Don Otto, early pioneer**

"Before the Rockstads got that permission to cut trees, I leased that land (which now includes the Lipoma Estates) from Pope and Talbott and grew Christmas trees on the property. I sold them to a man who shipped them to the San Francisco market. The price I got was small compared to the price the shippers got from consumers in California."



*Happy Holidays from the Officers  
of the South Hill Historical Society*

## The November Meeting

"Senior Story-Telling Time" at the November meeting featured three people from the South Hill area. Just a highlight from each story is mentioned here.

Eunice Barth Gilliam recalled the one-room Puyallup Heights School in the 1930's. Chris O'Kelley described the heavy traffic on weekends when there was a drag strip next to Meridian in the old days. Diny Thun Robinson shared from a manuscript "Shaw Family History" written by her great aunt, Laura Shaw Clifford. This was a source for the front-page article in this newsletter. It also related frightening encounters with wild animals, which we will save for another day. "We look forward to hearing stories from other folks at future meetings."

Carolyn Nelson, SHHS Secretary

## We host a visitor from the past for our January 2005 Meeting

On Tuesday, January 18, Arlen Davison, former Administrator of the Washington Research Center will impersonate "John Coulter" who took part in the Lewis and Clark expedition.

All the clothes he wears he has made himself.

This presentation has been given to hundreds at Northwest Trek where he volunteers. Also, he has given this demonstration/talk at several dozen groups in Puyallup.

### South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal, check here

Annual Dues: Society membership \$25.00

Note Please do not send cash.

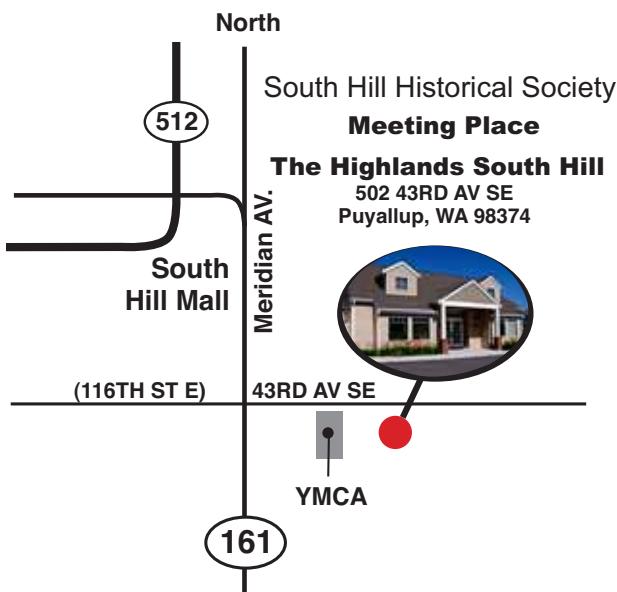
Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:

SHHS Membership, 11711 92nd AV E, Puyallup, WA 98373

## Where To Find Us

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the THIRD TUESDAY of the month 11:15 AM at the Highlands in the Community Center (**no meetings July and August**). This complex is located at 502 43rd AVE SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

We welcome you to our monthly meetings. For more information contact our president, Paul Hackett, at **(253) 845-7691**.



### South Hill Historical Society Officers

President, Paul Hackett  
Vice-President, Carl Vest  
Secretary, Carolyn Nelson  
Treasurer, Ben Peters  
Newsletter Editor, Jerry Bates



11711 92nd AV E  
Puyallup WA 98373

## From The Treasurer

by Ben Peters

### A warm welcome to our newest members:

Ron & Lois Pearson  
W. Lynn Williams  
William & Dori Scott  
Dianna & Fred Fritz  
Stanley & Ila Soter

### Members due for RENEWAL:

Betsy/Bill Stubbs - September  
Allen Zulauf - October  
James Dixon - December  
Lloyd Freudenstein - January  
Christine Wilson - January  
James Hawley - January  
Rob Ballou - February  
Art Larson - February

## Our Current Members

Andy Anderson	Christopher O'Kelly
John and Ruth Anderson	Don and Helen Otto
Jim and Elizabeth Anema	Ron & Lois Pearson
Bob Ballou	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Jerry Bates	Ben Peters
Ward F. Bradley	Ella M. Reese
James H. Dixon	Bill Riley
Mildred A. Dobbs	Bernice Fisher Rinehart
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Roy and Sheila Rinker
Lloyd Freudenstein	Vern Rockstad
Dianna & Fred Fritz	Helen Rohlman
Don and Mary Glaser	Frank Ryser
William (Bill) Goelzer	William & Dori Scott
Hazel Whitford Miller Goheen	Stanley & Ila Soter
Calvin and Amy Goings	Bonnie Starkel
Dorothy Gould	Lori Stock
Paul Hackett	Bill Stover
James Hawley	Betsy and Bill Stubbs
Cecil and Doris Herbert	Margo L & Joe Tucci
Charles and Maybelle Hoenhaus	Carl Vest
Ernest & Irene Hopp	Neil and Celia Vincent
Art Larson	Richard and Joan Vosler
Art S. and Marvella Massie	Vivian Wepfer
Olive McDonough	Pam and Don Williams
Laurienne Stewart Minnich	Wlyn Williams
John A. Mosolf	Christine Wilson
Carolyn Nelson	Kevin Wimsett
Dorothy Nelson	Marilyn Larson Winterton
Juanita Nordin	Allen and Ellen Zulauf
Mark and Dorothy Norris	

To: