



# MHS News

Spring 2021



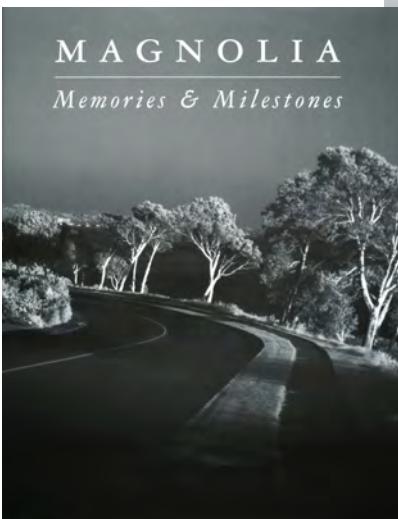
*As You Spring Forward with the Season,  
Why Not Take a Look Back  
at Magnolia History?*

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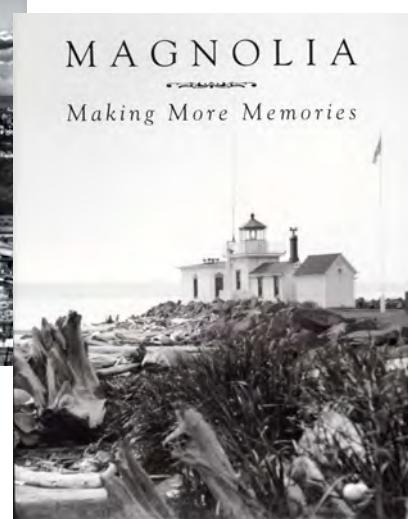


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## Blaine's History: An Unexpected & Interesting Journey

by Whitney Mason - Writer of "A New Idea: Blaine School and Community Center"

When long-time Magnolia resident and colleague Carol Batchelder said "I remember when Lone Pedersen's house was moved" as I shared with her my new research and writing project over lunch, I knew it was going to be an interesting journey!

I knew the third book in the Magnolia history series was in the works, so when Monica Wooton, Magnolia Historical Essay Project III project manager, shared that she was looking for some additional writers and the chapter on Catharine Blaine Junior High School was not yet assigned, I volunteered. Having served as the content editor for the first book, and a peer editor for the second book, I knew I wanted to just write for book No. 3.

I had attended Blaine when it was still a junior high in the mid-1970s, my Dad was an architect and it just seemed like a good fit. I figured I'd look into who Catharine Blaine was, how the design came to be and dig into the unique aspect of it being a joint school and community center – something I had taken for granted as a kid.

As I began my initial research that summer of 2018, I quickly learned there was much more to the story!

While my initial research involved delving into the historic context i.e., Northgate, Sea-Tac Airport, the Viaduct, Dick's Drive-In, I-5, the Seattle Center for the World's Fair, post-World War II architecture trends and learning more about the pioneer life of Catharine Blaine and the career of Architect J. Lister Holmes, my conversation with Carol changed my focus. Houses were moved! And not everyone was pleased with the evolving plan to combine the new school with a much-awaited recreational center.

What I learned as I went back to the 1920s was local desire for park and playground space had grown over the years, that post-WW II, the Baby Boom had hit Seattle so Magnolia was getting new school buildings – and these two tracks were destined to collide – hence the Cs: Controversy, Condemnation, Collaboration and Community Vision.

With assistance from other volunteers, I pored through Seattle Schools Archives & School Board meeting minutes, Magnolia Community Club Board meeting minutes, Seattle Park Board meeting minutes, the Municipal Archives, old copies of the *Seattle Times*, *Seattle P-I*, *Magnolia News* (The media didn't always get it right!) and other ephemera at the UW archives.

It was truly stepping back in time – and I started to see Magnolia through the eyes of what I perceived to be those in 1949 when the neighborhood activated and took sides on how it would grow into the second half of the 20th century.

"Magnolians Disagree on Four Important Point of School-Fieldhouse Consolidation Program" (*The Seattle Times* Dec 11, 1949) was the finale of a year's worth of the four Cs. I could imagine the meetings and presentations at the Magnolia Elementary School cafeteria, the soliciting of signatures at Magnolia Bowl, and some of the key Magnolians involved heading home after a day and evening of laboring for their contingent's beliefs.



The Barter house in the condemned corridor, one that was moved to build the school and community center.  
Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives, #2602-02 31/7. Circa 1950.



House-moving on Magnolia was still going on in the 1960s.  
University of Washington Archives, Special Collections, #UW40088.  
Photo by Ken Baxter. 1963.

A serendipitous and significant milestone was when I discovered that friends lived in one of the houses that had been condemned and moved to make way for the joint school-community center building. And the box of paperwork that had been retrieved from the recycle bin (after my Mom had assisted in the home purchase from the original owners involved in the house relocation – it's a small world!) was a treasure trove of interesting notes, receipts and official paperwork – all helped piece together what it must have been like to accept that one's immediate neighborhood would be removed and that it could lead to a nicer house on a larger lot with a lot of planning and coordination to make it happen.

(continued on Page 3)

## Blaine's History - continued

It was a true "Eureka!" when Monica called to say she had found a photo of a house being moved in Magnolia – it wasn't from the houses on 33rd Avenue West making way for Blaine, but it was a clear depiction of Carol's "I remember when lone Pedersen's house was moved" and we were ecstatic.

Other tidbits that I found especially interesting were the converging interests of the different City departments, the power of the Magnolia Community Club and personalities of those in charge, houses actually being moved instead of demolished and how different it would have been had the school and community center not been combined and where they might have thus been located. Imagine the school at the northern end of the ball fields across West Barrett Street from Fatima or where the Albertsons currently is – that would have completely changed the Magnolia we know today!



Students dismissed from their new school. 1952.

*Courtesy of MOHAI, #2000.107.186.07.3.*

The editing process was the reality check every writer experiences – and so there was a lot of juggling, cutting and negotiation that resulted in what I am proud to have been a part of – and thus my own early teen memories of junior high school were enhanced with the decades of history that came before, and the Seattleites whose legacy we appreciate, amend and enjoy today.



## MHS Book III Award Nominations

**Association of  
King County Historical Organizations  
(AKCHO)**

**Virginia Marie Folkins Award**  
Presented to an organization historical publication that shows outstanding original research

**Association for Women in Communications  
(AWC)**  
**Clarion Award**  
Named for the medieval trumpet known for its clarity, Symbolizes excellence in clear, concise communications

**"History is who we are and why we are the way we are!" ...David McCullough**

**Readers are enjoying our book!**  
**WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT**  
***Magnolia: Midcentury Memories***

"Just finished reading *Magnolia: Midcentury Memories* cover to cover and thoroughly enjoyed it. My family moved there in 1957 when I was 2 years old. So many of the early stories I didn't relate to but so many really resonated with me - Picking blackberries, roaming freely, growing up Catholic, hearing taps from Fort Lawton, Camp Fire. My oldest son recently purchased the house I grew up in. Although he is not living there at this time while stationed elsewhere, hopefully he will make memories there with his family in the future. Thanks for a great book!" .... Shaun McGillicuddy Wesen

"Thank you so much for all the work you and your contributors did in writing and producing *Magnolia: Midcentury Memories*. You've done a wonderful job on it.

I lived in Magnolia from 1959 through the summer of 1965, third grade through eighth grade. I went to Magnolia Elementary and Blaine Junior High. So, of course, I'm reliving a wonderful part of my youth as I read the book. (I also bought a copy for my sister, who was a couple years ahead of me.)

Jim Eicher, one of your writers, was a good friend of mine, and we've remained in touch over the years. We played Little League and Park Department basketball together (I'm the tall kid in the back on the right, next to our volunteer coach Greg Andrews in the photo on page 197. Don McNeil, who people wrote about so movingly, also was a volunteer coach.)

I haven't read everything in the book just yet. I've enjoyed dipping in here and there in the evenings since I received the book. But I especially want to commend Greg Shaw for those two finely detailed pieces he contributed. Hard to believe he isn't a professional writer. Also, I enjoyed a couple of the "growing up" pieces about some places in Magnolia I was not too familiar with -- Perkins Lane and the Catholic Church.



I'm a semi-retired journalist living in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, these days. But I do get back to Seattle at least every other year or so. Typically for a Mariners game. Also on the agenda is a drive through Magnolia and a walk along the bluffs in Discovery Park.

Again, thanks for all your efforts on a great piece of local history."  
 ...Tom Green, [tfgreen29@gmail.com](mailto:tfgreen29@gmail.com)

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