



MHS News Quarterly

Spring 2013 Volume 13, Issue 2



Meaghan Perry & Dee St. George get the wagon ready for the book sale.

MHS HAPPENINGS

- **Farmers Market Book Sale**
- **Free Writing Workshop**
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\$50 for the set
Order Now
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Book Sale on a “donate what you can” basis at Magnolia Farmers Market

Saturday, June 1st
10:00am-2:00pm

MHS will be selling the two award-winning books
on Magnolia’s history:

Magnolia: Memories and Milestones (Book I)
Magnolia: Making More Memories (Book II)

Board Members will be selling the books from their
historic Radio Flyer Red Wagon
as they roam the Market and talk history with shoppers.



The Magnolia Historical Society is offering a free memoir writing workshop

Magnolia Branch Public Library

Saturday, June 8th
1:00-4:00pm

Beginners to polished writers:

This is a class for those wanting to get
the “good old days” down in writing

We provide:

- ♦ writing prompts
- ♦ booklet to write in
- ♦ published writers to guide you

If you prefer, bring an old photo that brings
back memories to prompt your writing.

Join us!

Call (206) 284-2430 to RSVP — Space is limited

Snapshot in Time Magnolia's Ball Fields: A Dairyland of Sorts Back Then

by Monica Wooton

When you ask old time, native Magnolians, a rare breed now in their late 80 and 90's, about dairies and farms on Magnolia "back in the day", they have fond memories of a rural utopia. Research has shown that the reality was mainly 3 smallish farms, mostly in Pleasant Valley, 32nd Avenue West to 34th Avenue West running north and south.

It was a common thing to come to Seattle and stake a claim, become a subsistence farmer and soon realize that exporting natural resources proved a better way to riches: Lumber, fish and other commodities were the real money makers. "Dr. Henry A. Smith (Magnolia's first Euro pioneer) spent some of this time on his Magnolia claim as a practicing doctor, and a serious hobby gardener. He planted an orchard of specially grafted apple trees—the first of the kind in King County and reaped his first crop three years later. He was an avid experimental gardener who produced many varieties of fruits and vegetables to support the diets of his family of ten. While living at the Tulalip Reservation with his family in tow, and treating the Indians as their doctor, he experimented with the use of tidelands as growing fields. He had some success: onions, rhubarb, apples, and potatoes to name a few."



The Aucklund truck farm, Magnolia's very own local produce, was famous for its huge and beautiful produce. In this picture, the young one of the family is even a bit fearful of such beets and cabbages!
Photo Courtesy Betty Samuelson. Circa 1925.

The main secret to growing productive crops on Magnolia lay in the peat bog sometimes referred to as "black gold" and a great feature of Pleasant Valley. But, when it burned, "it burned and burned and was a never ending headache." "Here and there, this fertile soil produced amazing amounts of flowers and foods (and fires) always having to be tended with hard work by the owner."

One or two cows (or goats), homegrown vegetables—enough for family tables, a fruit tree or two, a patch of cutting flowers, and sometimes some poultry for eggs were common for a Magnolia family to own. Having more than one cow provided some with enough milk to share or to sell. Magnolia resident, Shirley Allen Young, said that her brother had a small dairy route on 44th Avenue West for the neighborhood." As did, Monty Holmes and his sister along Commodore Way deliver milk to the Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers doing repairs along that street.

"As to agriculture becoming a vocation on Magnolia, interestingly, some of its property was already being platted out as traditional residential neighborhood lots before it was ever settled or barely even seen. Magnolia was already being envisioned as part of a city planning process similar to that of a suburban neighborhood in the 1990s. Some sections were platted as early as 1888 by out-of-state owners, most probably speculators, from as far as New York." "East Coasters" found the West Coast a good investment. The Emersons were one such couple. And, a Magnolia street is named for them. A very detailed plat of what appears to be similar to a quite modern suburb was completed for them by a Mr. Barrett. The purpose of the platting was to eventually divide Northwest land into many lots for re-sale with single-family houses... - a replication of the development of eastern city developments."

As most early Magnolians literally scratched out a simple living with small crops and chickens, back east there were investors buying land and platting for big city development and residential housing here: "On Magnolia, the landowners who had struggled mightily to farm and prove their claims, seldom profited much as farmers. Seattle's weather and geography made it very hard. Many were anxious to get rid of their land and move, as Seattle wasn't what they had expected."

(continued on Page 5)



Who Is Working for MHS

2013 - 2014 MHS Board

Jeffrey Cunningham, Co-President, was born and raised in Magnolia. He attended Western Washington University in Bellingham, attaining his Masters in History. Jeffrey's passion for history and love of his native Magnolia encouraged him to join the History Society. He will serve on the Board for his third year, in addition to taking on Co-President responsibilities this next year and keeping our Facebook page current and interesting.

"I have loved the important work that MHS does for the Magnolia Community for over 12 years: writing and publishing academically researched history and personal memoirs, a monthly historical article in the Magnolia News, the Local History in the Schools programs, teaching memoir writing in free workshops, the installation of the sculpture in the Village, and fun events and projects relating to history of the Bluff. Because of our activities, events, projects and newsletter, we have given Magnolians a better "sense of place", a deeper understanding of our beginnings as a neighborhood and a good foundation for our future." - **Monica Wooton, Co-President, Project Manager for both Magnolia history books**

Dee St. George, Treasurer, joined the Society as Grant Bookkeeper for *Magnolia: Making More Memories* and enjoys sharing Magnolia history. She helps at all events with set-up and publicity. She is in charge of putting together the Newsletter.

"I was raised on Magnolia over by Fort Lawton on 36th West when there were open fields and a gully. I spent many hours outside with several of the neighbor kids playing all sorts of games and using our imaginations. We also spent many hours down at the train bridge and at the government locks. I moved away for a while and twenty years ago I moved back home to the south end of Magnolia which overlooks the sound and ferries. This was always home and to me there is no place like home..." **Jan Parent, Secretary**

"As a native Magnolian, living on Magnolia eight decades, I have witnessed many changes. I know the history of an older Magnolia so I serve as a reference for the Society. I have written historical articles for The Magnolia News and a chapter for the *Magnolia: Making More Memories*: "The West Point Dig: A Legacy" about the Ancestral Duwamish that hunted and gathered on Magnolia's West Point Beach 4,000 ago." - **Dale Forbus Hogle**

Meaghan Perry moved to Magnolia with her husband, Matthew in 2012. She brings hospitality industry experience and she is very passionate about the rich history of Seattle and specifically the history of Magnolia! Meaghan is eager to learn more about the historic homes of Magnolia and will be overseeing book sales efforts for MHS.

Keith Drechsel has lived in Magnolia for over 2 1/2 years. An extensive remodel of his 1930's Tudor home brought Keith to the Historical Society; and, a love for history and a desire to preserve and better his community has kept him involved.

Jennifer Ryan has helped the Society as the grant writer. She appreciates local history and is helpful in generating ideas for history making in Magnolia. This is her 5th year on the Board. She says: "Working in the rail transit industry, it's clear that our legacy defines us. Serving on the Magnolia Historical Society Board is one way I contribute to my community's awareness of what our forefathers have done for us."

Joely Johnson Mork has lived in Magnolia for the past year and knows that learning the history of a place can be crucial to settling in and feeling connected to a new home. As a writer, she's eager to take part in special MHS events such as the free memoir-writing classes offered Fall and Spring at the Magnolia Public Library and helping to share the love of documenting personal history with young writers. She will also do some historical column writing for the local news.

"As an historian, I believe everyone should understand their place--how it came to be and how the past has formed it and its people. And, MHS helps people do that." **Mimi Sheridan** was a peer editor for *Magnolia: Memories and Milestones* and as an active Board member is a great historical resource for the Society and its work.

Alberta Bleck a Magnolia resident and student at Reed College, Portland, Oregon, works as our intern this summer doing important work on the archives of MHS at the UW. Upon her graduation in December, she will join the Board.

Welcome Our Intern, Alberta Bleck!



Welcome to Alberta Bleck, our Summer Intern. She is a senior at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and came to us looking: “to gain experience in archival work, which would contribute to my post-graduate studies, and possibly career, in history and history writing.” And, so she will!

Alberta has been accepted to work for the UW Special Collections Archive both photo and documents and will get our MHS Photo collection on-line, add to our MHS papers and work on Magnolian history maker Bob Kildall’s materials relating to his work with Magnolia Community Club, creation of Discovery Park, Founder of Friends of Discovery Park, and creation of Commodore Park on the Magnolia side of the Ballard Locks.

She is currently writing her undergraduate thesis on the creation of Discovery Park and Daybreak Star Cultural Center, focusing on the years between 1968 and 1977. She is particularly interested in the urban political history of the park, researching key contributors such as Henry M. Jackson and Bernie Whitebear, and exploring the institutional mechanisms through which Native American organizations reclaimed land in the American Indian political resurgence of the 1970s. We are sure glad to have her!

THE MAGNOLIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOU!

- ◆ Help us sell books
- ◆ Write down memoirs
- ◆ Come to events:
 - Memoir Writing Workshop**
 - Annual Meeting**
- ◆ Volunteer:
 - Plan and help at events, meetings**
 - Teach in the schools**
- ◆ Serve on the Board
- ◆ Donate (it is tax deductible!) to help us continue our work in Making Magnolia History!

**CONTACT: President Monica Wooton (206)284-2430 or
Treasurer Dee St. George (206) 284-5480**

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

Watch for the announcement of our Annual Meeting, now to be held in the fall to kick off our year of historical events and work.

The topic is an interesting one:

“The Revelations of Magnolia Boulevard: Early City Bike Path, Houses of History, and The Long and Winding Road.”

Claudia Isquith, writer of “Magnolia Boulevard West”, a chapter on the history of the Boulevard in *Magnolia: Making More Memories*; Mimi Sheridan, local historian preservationist and Board Member; and, Monica Wooton, Co-president and historical writer will join forces on a lively presentation and book reading.

If you have pictures or history relating to the Boulevard, call 206-284-2430. We would love to include it.

(continued from Page 2) Magnolia's Ball Fields: A Dairyland of Sorts Back Then

With the establishment of Fort Lawton, the Locks, Fishermen's Terminal, the development of the railroad and shipping piers, industrialization was truly born on the Bluff. The population grew and the land was now worth more, but not for farming.



Pleasant Valley Dairy was located where Albertson's is today. Another successful Magnolia farm serving the dairy needs of Magnolia and Queen Anne customers.

Photo Courtesy of Neil Smith.

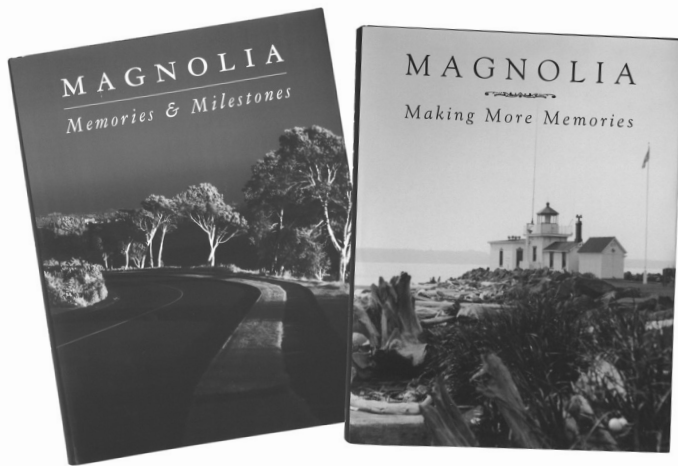
There were the farmers/dairymen who were the exception: "Johan (John) August Hanson arrived in the United States in 1905, set about to make money in logging and then purchased his Magnolia Merrymount Farm. Four brothers and sisters from Sweden arrived to work with him shortly afterwards. Pictures...showed a huge, meticulously painted barn, and a well-kept farm. John's workers and siblings herded the cows on foot. The Pleasant Valley land provided a good water supply from Wolfe Creek and pasture enough for the milk herd and two oxen to survive." "Knut Knutson took over the land and renamed it West Point Dairy and became a beloved milkman on Magnolia. Even when he was forced off his land and moved to the suburbs to re-establish his dairy, he continued delivering milk to his Magnolia customers until the 1960's." Between 1900 and 1936 there were 13 farms listed in the Seattle Polk Directory-most very small in scale and not long lasting.

Now...

The most fertile land once farmed on Magnolia is now where Our Lady of Fatima Parrish sits and where the ball-fields are. But, a little bit of the "olden days" can be experienced June 1 through September 28th when The Magnolia Farmer's Market returns to The Village for its 10th anniversary with over 15 farms represented.. Fresh cut flowers, local organic produce, artisan baked goods and cheeses will be for sale again this year. The first Saturday of the Market, June 1st, The Magnolia Historical Society will be selling copies of the two award winning Magnolia History Books. It will be a "donate what you can" sale (regularly \$50 a set) proceeds to help The Magnolia Community Club and The Historical Society do their non-profit work in the community. Look for the roving red wagon and buy your piece of Magnolia history. And, check out the chapter: *Rural Magnolia: A Pastoral Place*.

Sources: Magnolia: Memories & Milestones, 2001, Making History? Magnolia's First Pioneer, pp. 28-41; and, Rural: Magnolia: A Pastoral Place by Monica Wooton, pp. 58-74.





**FREE DELIVERY OF BOOKS
IN MAGNOLIA AND QUEEN ANNE**

ON SALE NOW

Magnolia: Memories & Milestones
&
Magnolia: Making More Memories

**\$50
per set
and sold separately**



To order:

- ◆ Visit our website at www.magnoliahistoricalsociety.org
- ◆ Call Dee St. George: (206)284-5480



MAGNOLIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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ATTEND WRITING WORKSHOP
Saturday, June 8th, 1:00-4:00PM

See Front Page for details