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BRYN MAWR 1872-1986



STORY BY HAROLD "JIGGS" HOYT

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THE STORY OF
BRYN MAWR

1872-1986

by

HAROLD "JIGGS" HOYT

edited by

Betty Herr Moore

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INTRODUCTION

This tale of Bryn Mawr started as a short report of the History of King County Fire District 20. The search led to the Bryn Mawr Volunteer Fire Department, to King County Water District 14, and in turn, to the Bryn Mawr Water Company. Additional stories about the Mental Science College and Grocery, Bryn Mawr Post Office, clubs and businesses, and numerous unique pioneers and other individuals, were too interesting to ignore, so the lore and history of the whole community and adjoining areas had to be told.

Bryn Mawr, Washington is related to Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania through a common name. So far as is known these are the only two villages in the United States with this unique name.

Washington State's Bryn Mawr located in south King County (Western Washington), first received recognition when platted in 1890 by William Parker and his wife, Lillian. The Parkers believed this wilderness area had great potential, and platted 316 acres, which they named "Bryn Mawr," perhaps after their home town in Pennsylvania. The local community has grown, prospered, and is populated by many third and fourth generation descendants of those first pioneers. Former residents return to stay, or to visit friends and relatives who live in the area.

This story will reveal Bryn Mawr was and is a unique community. For an area that has never borne an official title such as "city, town, or village," Bryn Mawr has more untold history than most incorporated areas. After 96 years of existence, there are many intriguing stories and events, factual and hearsay, that will be new to many of today's residents and may bring back memories to the oldtimers.

If this history brings as much good feeling and rekindles as many memories of long past events to the reader as it has to me, its author, then I will feel very much rewarded and enlightened with my new found knowledge of one of the most intriguing communities in the south King County area.

HAROLD "JIGGS" HOYT

May 26, 1986

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While searching for information on Bryn Mawr, Lake Ridge, and Buffalo Station, pioneers and some new-found friends have willingly come forward with facts, history and stories of this area to make this journal possible. The willing cooperation of many people makes the recognition of all local and other individuals an insurmountable task, but we must begin somewhere.

Fire District 20 was formed in 1944, some of the "kids" who were part of that history and who helped in the research for that chapter were: Don Crenna, Chuck Curtis, Bill Tomlin, Scotty Walls, and others.

As people heard of the Bryn Mawr History project, more and more came forth with stories for this journal. A trip to Wesley Gardens Retirement Home and a meeting with long-time Bryn Mawr residents, Hattie (Hebner) Hisey and Lottie East, both fountainheads of information, produced many stories about the pioneers and old-timers. Reminiscing with these ladies about the early days, especially the 1905-1910 period, brought to light many other persons or their offspring who also had memories to relate.

Some others who were excellent sources of information are: Vivian (Hall) Hughes, Fred Hebner, Harold and Sylvia (Scholz) Cummings, Alex Edmund, Dick Doran, Frank Conklin, Josephine Nairn, and Vince Dougherty. As time passed the list grew out of bounds.

A number of pictures and prints were obtained from Hattie Hisey, Vivian (Hall) Hughes, Don and Jan (Baumgardner) Ballard, The Renton and Des Moines Historical Societies. The Mental Science booklets, "True Word," came from Vi and Lou Nelson. Leslie Blanchard, Seattle Railway Historian, gave permission to use text from his book. Information about the post office was provided by Helen Muri. Notes on the building of Rainier Avenue came from Steve Morris of the Washington State Department of Highways. Charles Payton with King County Community Museum Department was also of assistance, as were many other sources.

Photographs of present local scenes were taken by Don Henry, Don Sorenson and Riley Adams, who aided in making the pictures press-ready.

A great debt is owed to Betty (Herr) Moore for editing and typing the script into good copy.

A special debt of thanks goes to Seth "Herb" Seablom, a Bryn Mawr School graduate, who used photos of the old two-story wooden school house to create the attractive, composite sketch on the cover. The school has been a central point in the community over the years, since Hattie Hisey, Lottie East and others helped open the first building in 1908.

All information in this history may not be accurate, undoubtedly there are incidents omitted or misquoted, and some incorrect dates or misspelled names might have slipped into the text, but every effort was made to make the story as factual as possible. Remember, time dims the memories of long-past events and forgotten stories related by persons of all ages, but essentially the reminiscences are as they were reported.

HAROLD "JIGGS" HOYT

RENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bryn Mawr-Welsh-big brow

In this case big bargains.

By far the prettiest—admittedly the choicest and best piece of property from a speculative standpoint. Held back for years, the property has now been platted, and over 200 lots have been sold in the last month.

Whenever there is a sale of real choice property where it is necessary for the owners to use discrimination in the selling of it there is no occasion for any "hurrah" in the marketing of it. There will be nothing of that kind in this instance. The property is too well known as being particularly desirable; it has been "wanted" too long for anything of that sort; but for the benefit of those who are strangers here, and do not know about it, hence this information:

It is eight miles from the Totem Pole (and in this connection we state a fact when we say that in the larger cities the very choice suburban properties are from 7 to 16 miles from the business centers). It is on the shore of Lake Washington, one of the prettiest bodies of water in the country; it is on the Renton car line, with an hourly and 1/2 hour service (40 minute run), and it is no question about it at all—the choicest, prettiest, the most clean cut, and most desirable from every standpoint, piece of property that ever has or ever will be offered for public sale in this city. It is the only piece of lake shore property where the beach is perfect and the slope gentle, and where there are no steep bluffs. It is the only piece of suburban property where a large, magnificent and thickly wooded natural park is to be found; and there is no lake or sound property so ideal for the building of a summer home, for camping and boating purposes, or for rowing or fishing.



The Very fact that for years past it has been the first choice of thousands of picnickers, and the fact that camping privileges are always in demand in season is surely indicative of the beauties of the property.

But we realize that words are cheap, and that expert advertisement writers are to be had for the paying; and that the public has been too often misled; so, in order that those who may be interested can see for themselves we specially invite you to go and see this property.

The prices for lots on this splendid property, right along the lake shore, are \$150.00, with very choice spots at \$250.00, and a few "beauties" at \$300.00. Back a little they are as low as \$80.00. And this includes as fair or better terms than you were ever offered by responsible owners.

And you will not be met with excuses and explanations—no stories that the inexpensive ones have "just been sold." These are the prices, and you can buy at them.

The situation is just this: If you are a believer in the future of Seattle; if you think that this city, like all larger ones in the West, will be the center of its select suburbs—be you investor, speculator, or just the wantor of a choice, beautiful, piece of summer property, or a nice piece of camping ground that is ideal and your own, accept our invitation and take a look at this beauty spot. No harm done if you do not decide to buy, but we sincerely believe that you will find more than we claim for it when you see it. We have sold a beautiful residence site to Arden L. Smith, who will put up a \$10,000 house on it next year. We have also sold to a number of people lots who are now making first-class and lasting improvements. We have every assurance that a college will be erected on the grounds next year by Mental Scientists.

Bryn Mawr Land Company

306 MARION BLDG.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

COPY OF BRYN MAWR LAND COMPANY
BROCHURE; SEE PAGE 6 ALSO.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROADS TO BRYN MAWR

Until 1872, when Chester A. Arthur was President of the United States, the wilderness area known as "Bryn Mawr" belonged to the U. S. Government. This chapter will reveal the early days of the area, how it was named and its progress to the present day.

One bright sunny day, Tuesday, October 10, 1872, Joseph J. Botts received a U. S. Government Land Patent for the following property: Lots 9 and 10, and the S.W. 1/4 of the N.W. 1/4, Section 7, Range 5 East W.M. or, the area between South 120th and South 124th Streets, and between 84th and 87th Avenues South, an area of 158 acres.

A year later, October 1, 1873, John McIsaac received a land patent signed by President Ulysses S. Grant for the area bounded by 84th Avenue South to the shore of Lake Washington, between South 112th and South 124th Streets, an area of 158 acres, legally described as the N.E. 1/4 of the N.W. 1/4, and Lot 3 of Section 18, and Lots 5, 6, and 7 in Township 23 North, Range 5 East W.M.

The aforementioned gentlemen, McIsaac and Botts, held the property for a short while until they sold to Joseph Pinell for \$1,000.00 and \$1,500.00, respectively. Mr. Pinell sold most of the property in March of 1874 to Dexter Horton, and the Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad, for a modest sum.

The above 316 acres are the whole of Bryn Mawr, excluding the area to the West which is officially called the Kelsey-Craig Five Acre Tracts Addition. The top of this unnamed hill was choice property and on Friday, July 19, 1889, President Benjamin Harrison signed a homestead agreement for a small amount of cash in favor of Edward Bellows for the East 1/2 of the N.E. 1/4 of Section 12, Township 23 North, Range 4 East W.M. or in every day language, the acreage between 80th and 84th Avenues South, and between South 112th and 120th Streets, an area of 80 acres.

Although the property was acquired by Mr. Bellows in 1889, the side hill above 84th still had no name. Mr. Bellows sold to Michael Burns, a strip of land 290 feet wide along the east side of what is now 80th Avenue South, from 112th to 116th Streets, for an undisclosed amount.

This was the only property sale Mr. Bellows made, since he died on February 14, 1897, a bachelor. He was a prudent man and prepared a will May 5, 1892 because one sister and three of his four brothers were still in Ireland. The administrators of the will were Terrance O'Brien and Monsignor F. X. Prefontaine of Our Lady of Good Help Church on Fifth Avenue and Jefferson Street in Seattle. (The church foundation is still on the Southeast corner; probably to be replaced by a large building.)

The two Irish administrators sold Mr. Bellows property to Robert Craig on October 25, 1900 for an undisclosed sum. Mr. Craig and a Mr.