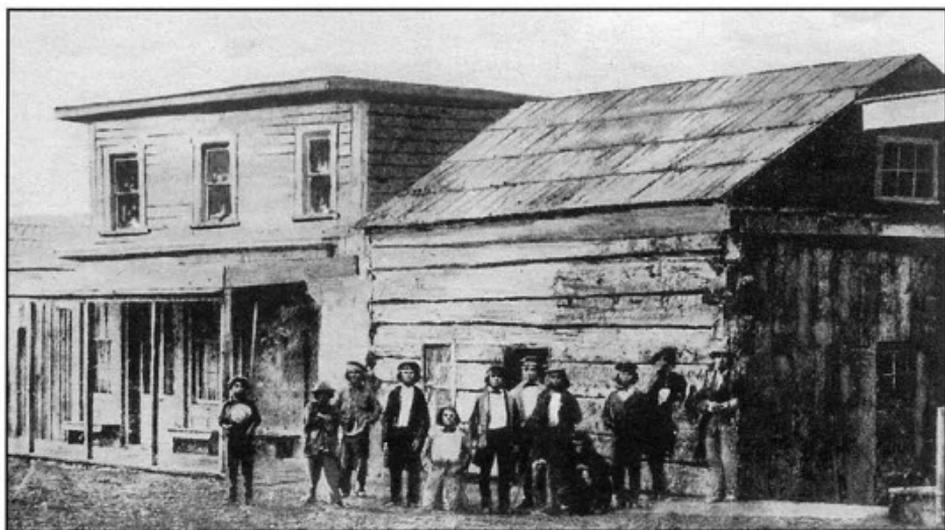


BY PAUL DORPAT

Civics Served Here

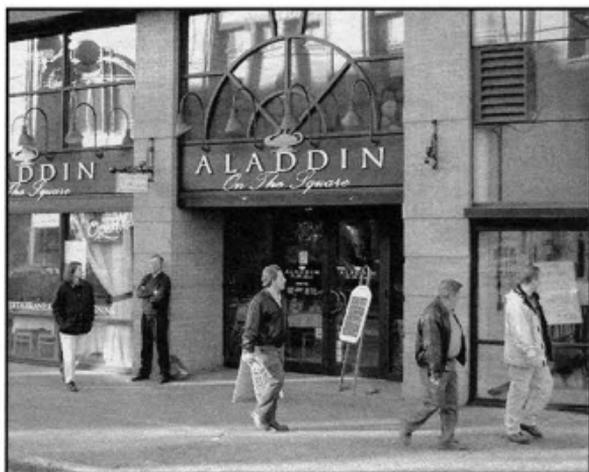


Next to Henry Yesler's sawmill, his cookhouse was the most legendary of pioneer Seattle structures. Built during the inordinately cold winter of 1852-53, it was razed in mid-July 1866. A Mediterranean restaurant occupies the spot where the cookhouse once stood.

BEFORE OPERATING his steam sawmill early in 1853 — the first on Puget Sound — Henry Yesler quickly constructed his cookhouse. While for years the mill supplied Seattle with its principal payroll, the rough-hewn cookhouse gave it much more than hot meals served beside a broad fire-place. This was a stage for sermons, political caucuses, parties, hotel accommodations, military headquarters (during the 1856 Indian War), elections, the county auditor's office and civic meetings of all sorts. And until his wife Sara joined him here in 1858, it was also Henry's bunkhouse.

In researching the cookhouse, Seattle historian Greg Lange discovered that it first sat on Commercial Street (before the street was there) and was later moved to where we see it here, retouched but still smoke-stained, on Commercial (First Avenue South), just off Yesler Way. It faces the street beside the home of Seattle's first photographer, E.A. Clark, and it is a good guess that Clark took the picture sometime in early 1860.

This, the only photograph of the cookhouse, appears in "More Voices, New Stories," where



it is used as an illustration for Coll-Peter Thrush's essay "Creation Stories: Rethinking the Founding of Seattle." The attentive eye will notice that most of the group posing here are Native Americans. The new book's 12 essays under the heading "King County: Washington's First 150 Years" were written by members of the Pacific Northwest Historians Guild and published by the King County Landmarks & Heritage Commission. Call Guild president Chuck Richards at 206-783-9245 for details. **P**

Paul Dorpat's two-hour videotape on Seattle's early history, "Seattle Chronicle," is \$29.95 from Tartu Publications, P.O. Box 85208, Seattle, WA 98145.