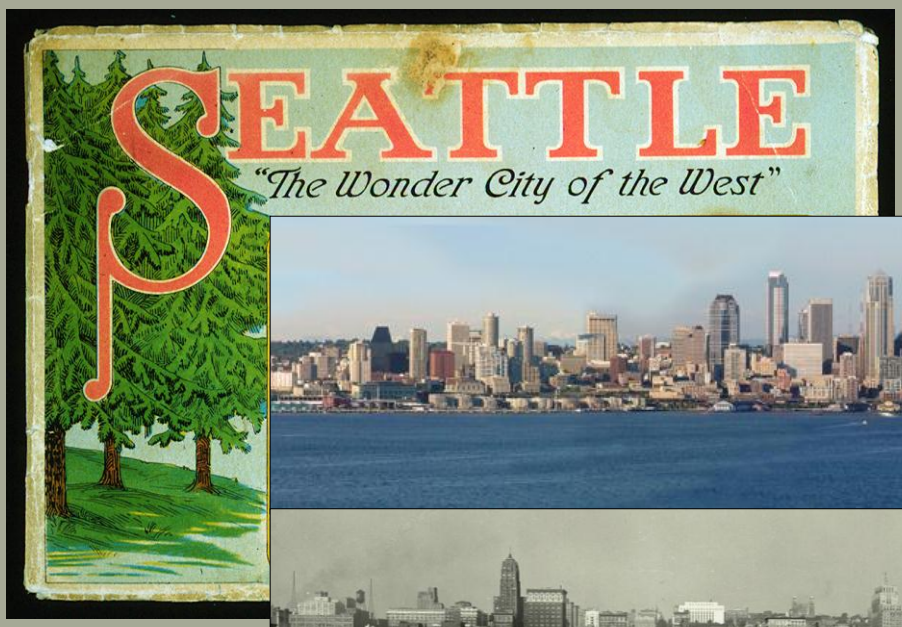

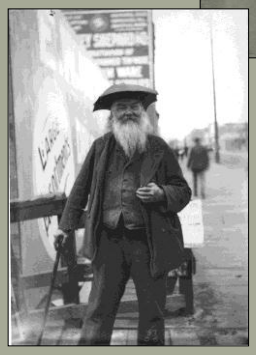

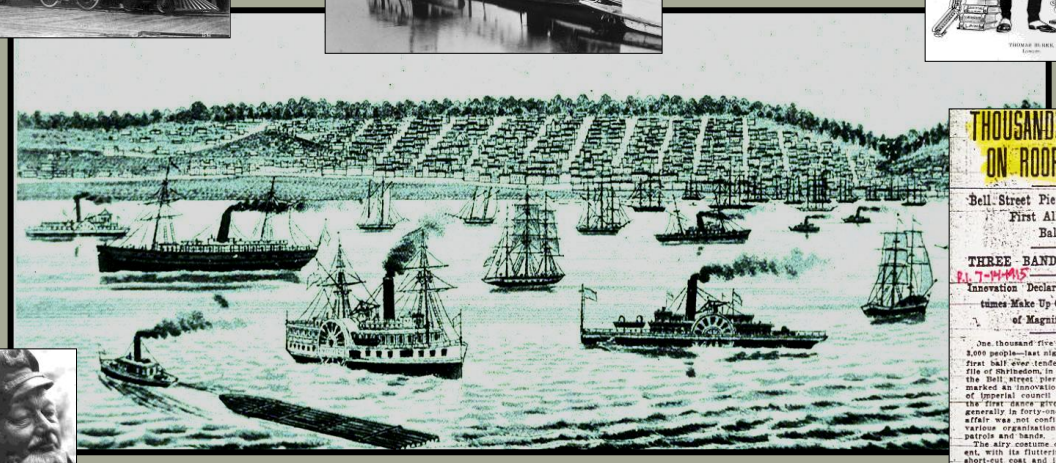

THOUSANDS DANCE ON ROOF GARDEN

Bell Street Pier Is Scene of First All-Noble Ball.

THREE BANDS PLAYING.

P.I. 7-14-1915

Innovation Declared Success—Costumes Make Up Colorful Event of Magnificence.

One thousand five hundred couples—3,000 people—last night gathered at the first half ever tendered the rank and file of Shrinedom, in the roof garden of the Bell street pier. The occasion marked an innovation in social affairs of imperial council sessions, it being the first dance given visiting nobles generally in forty-one conventions. The affair was not confined to officers of various organizations or members of patrols and bands.

The airy costume of the Indian Orient, with its fluttering pantaloons, its short-cut coat and its tinseled multi-colored adornments, swayed over the floor of Seattle's municipal roof garden, entwined with the summery flounces

SEATTLE WATERFRONT – An ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

By Paul Dorpat - June, 2005

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SEATTLE WATERFRONT – An ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

By Paul Dorpat - June, 2005

INTRODUCTION

Pier Name Changes: World War 2

In the spring of 1944 the military changed the name (or letter or number, for all were variously used) of every pier on Elliott Bay. Although a new system was first studied by a committee of all concerned -- the shippers, the Port of Seattle, and the military -- it was the warriors who at last took charge and decided that from then on it would be numbers only. This "act of war" was disappointing to the mix of wharfingers and traditionalists who championed what they considered a sensible extension of the old system that lettered the piers south of Yesler Way and numbered those north of it. This scheme was also based on a pioneer appreciation for how the Seattle waterfront historically pivoted at the point where Henry Yesler first built his steam sawmill in 1853 and the town's first wharf a year later. The old way of naming had been in use since practically the entire waterfront was rebuilt following its destruction during the city's "Great Fire" of June 6, 1889. First south of Yesler, the Pacific Coast Company rebuilt its piers and continued to letter them A, B, C, and D. Next to the north of Yesler during the gold rush years of the late 1890s the irregular scatter of generally short piers were soon either numbered or named or both under the urging of Reginald Thomson, the City Engineer. With the completion of the Grand Trunk Pacific dock at the foot of Madison Street in 1910 and the Port of Seattle headquarters at the foot of Bell Street in 1915, Seattle would be set – with once sizeable exception, a change of wharves at Lenora Street -- with the waterfront it would hold through the first half of the 20th Century. The Port's pier would be both named for Bell Street and numbered first 11 and after the army's revision Pier 66. When it opened, the Grand Trunk Pier at 640 feet was the largest timber pier in the country. With its 108-foot tower it loomed – to the north was Fire Station No. 5 and Pier 3 and to the south, Colman Dock and the Alaskan Piers 1 and 2. The Grand Trunk would be distinguished only by its name until the army insisted in 1944 that it had to have a number too - Pier 53.

Appreciably the principal resistance to the military's new unified scheme came from the Alaska Steamship Company at Piers 1 and 2 (in the old system). **[1]** The distinguished shipper explained that it had been advertising its cherished numbers "all over the country for many years," and that losing them would be a hardship. While the generals were not impressed and cited many examples of how the old system was both confounding and potentially dangerous, the greatest confusion had been of the army's own making. When it first took charge of the Port of Seattle's tideland docks south of Dearborn Street for its Port of Embarkation the army lettered the piers there A, B, and C. As just noted, these were the same letters then already used for 40 years at the Pacific Coast Co. piers directly south of Yesler Way. In one week during the war someone in security counted 24 trucks and 27 individuals calling at a private dock when they intended to visit a military one of the same letter. They might have known better, for the truth was, as the generals explained, that during the war practically all of the activity on the waterfront was military. There was, it seemed, "no private shipping." It may well

have been this "A, B, and C" confusion that inspired the military to rationalize the entire "pierage" on Elliott Bay.

It was probably the military's Seattle Port Security Force that turned the truckers from their blunders. After a three-week course at the University of Washington the volunteers served 12 hours weekly - without pay. Their duty? "To patrol the waterfront, board vessels, check for subversive activities, watch for fires and aid in keeping the waterfront safe, clean and presentable." At the time this meant "clean of fascists." In 1950 it would mean "clean of communists" as the Coast Guard reinstituted the requirement for security passes. Rear Admiral R. T McElligott was resolute. To the fifteen Pacific Northwest unions who objected to the new security regime he explained that anyone without a card would be kept off the waterfront, and that identification cards issued during the Second World War were no longer valid. Most importantly, perhaps, this cold war cardboard was devised as a badge of loyalty.

Post WW2: Anxious Proposals

During both the hot and cold wars there was plenty to be anxious about anywhere including the waterfront. But immediately following World War Two, there was little concern for security and loyalty but plenty of puzzlement over what to do. While the Port of Seattle maneuvered to get its piers back from the military it also lobbied for certification of a World Trade Center on the East Waterway. And it wanted big changes on the central waterfront. The Port publicly pictured for maritime reporters (when there was still a regular waterfront beat in the local dailies) a waterfront whose protruding finger wharves were traded for a long quay that paralleled Alaskan Way. The new ships were expected to be much too long for the old piers that could not at any rate be extended far enough off shore to service them because the water was too deep there to sink piles.

Still, much of the traditional break-bulk cargo that came across the public and private wharves on Seattle's waterfront after the war was delivered in the smaller Liberty Ships built during the war – some of them in Seattle and Tacoma. While the Liberties were not the shipping behemoths the Port was pondering, they were efficiently built like floating bathtubs. From Puget Sound they would typically be sent out crammed piece by piece with lumber and ponderously return with steel, cotton and liquor. This was then moved the old way - piece by piece across the piers, except, of course, for the pieces that were pilfered -- especially the liquor. Ralph Staehli, a retired employee for a shipper at Pier 48 recalled, "We used to bring in an awful lot of liquor – cases of it. We hired Pinkerton guards. But the longshoremen soon learned the trick of cutting the corner of a case on one side and taking a bottle while the guard was on the other side. We hired more guards but soon fired them. When Pope and Talbot (another post-war tenant at Pier 48) discovered that the company's attempts to police this activity cost considerably more than the insurance to cover losses due to theft they got rid of the extraordinary security and simply paid the premiums."

Little Work Some Play

As late as 1949 the military's Seattle Port of Embarkation that the Port and the Army partnered to build during the war was still the largest ship operator on the waterfront. Otherwise the old waterfront was rusting and

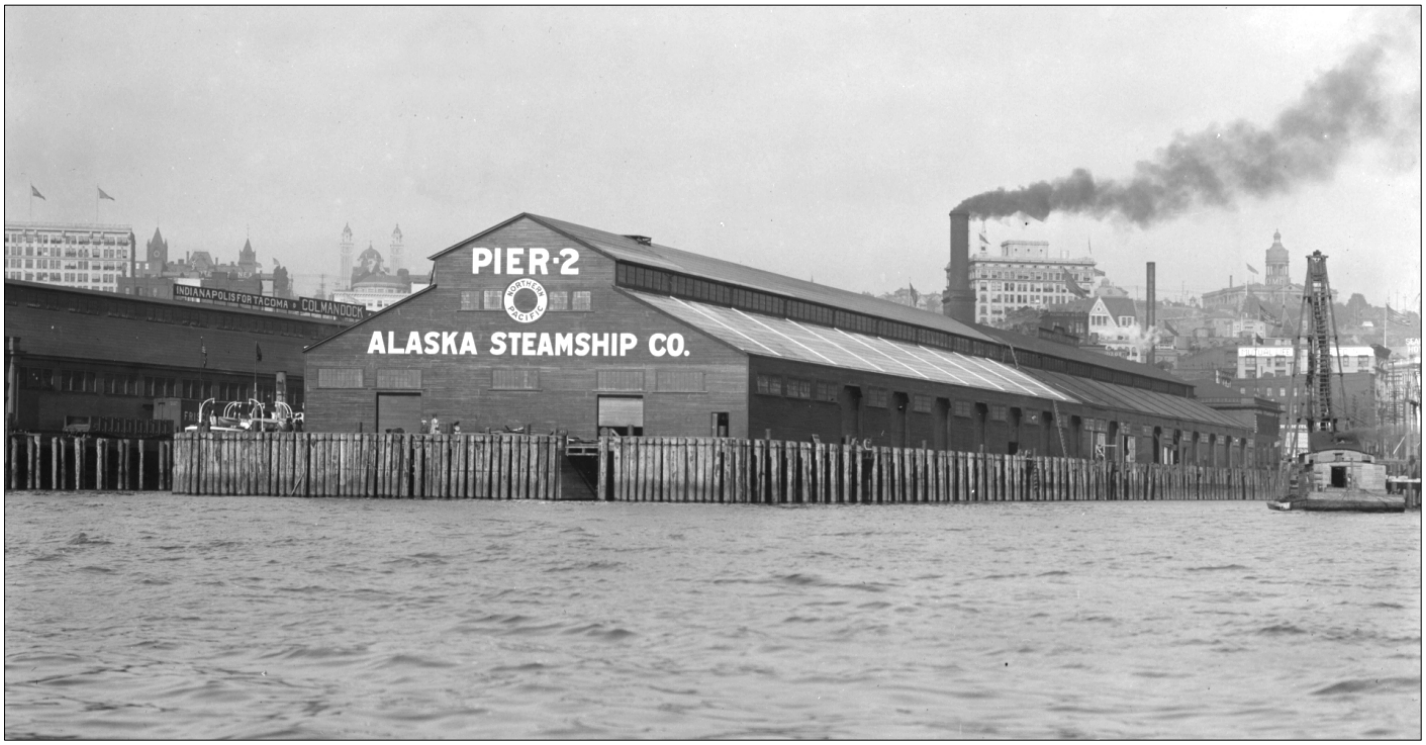
splintering, although the tax-supported Port of Seattle watched and waited to purchase large pieces of it at good prices. It was also in these post-war years that the vanguards of the central waterfront's future in play and recreation – notably Ivar Haglund – first enlivened it with antics like clam eating contests. **[2]** In 1950 they also illuminated it. On the sixteenth of March, 1950 at 6:15 P.M. between Bay Street and Yesler Way the new mercury vapor lights were turned on, giving the waterfront what Ivar described as a properly "romantic green tinge" for St. Partick's Day.

The Early Viaduct

Here we may briefly stand below the Alaskan Way Viaduct and note that its construction was made easier by the relative torpor and uncertainties (if not the petty theft) on the waterfront during the post-war period. **[3]** Since the mid-1920s when local motor traffic first started to periodically lock up Seattle streets – or rather its avenues, for the problem then as now was primarily one of moving north and south through the wasp-waist city – the waterfront was coveted as potentially the great detour – the best way to go around the business district. (As first built the Alaska Way Viaduct completely avoided downtown. The access ramps at Seneca and Columbia to and from the business district were not added until the early 1960s.) A double-decked elevated roadway was imagined from the beginning. During the Second World War buildings along the way were condemned and purchased and, with the general maritime depression that followed the war, the waterfront had really no one to defend it against this vision of it as a convenient detour. While the elevated had nothing to do with water and so with the waterfront, it was by then soaring with advocates.

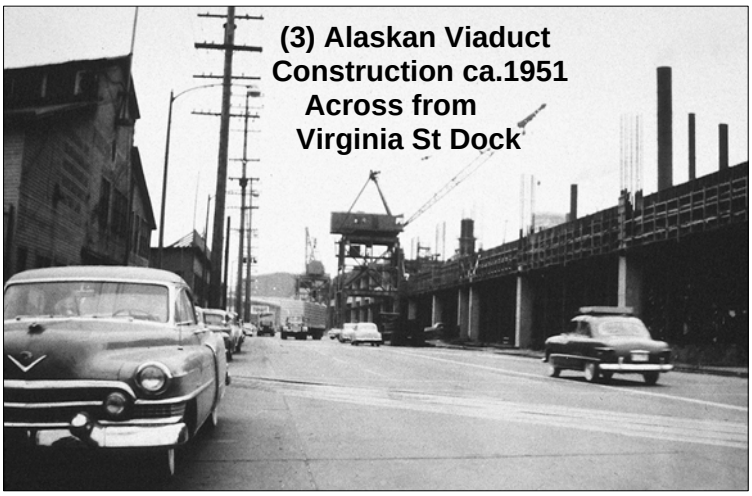
While it was being lifted above the relatively new and loose land that had been packed between the seawall and the "native land" (South of University Street the old waterfront meander line generally runs a few yards west of First Avenue, between it and Post Alley), the monumental Viaduct seemed to many an encouraging sign for the neighborhood of wharves and commission houses. Something was being done. Consequently, although Pier owners and patrons were inconvenienced, they generally put their own best construction on the building of the "great gray way" and smelled in the curing concrete a sweet new waterfront bouquet.

Before the viaduct was opened to traffic three days following April Fools Day, 1953, a few pedestrians with connections and cameras were allowed to use it as a prospect for studying the city. **[4]** They came 101 years after Arthur Denny and William Bell first tested it from off shore as a proper site for building a port community. Unlike the Port of Seattle planners who were proposing parallel piers in 1946, the founders were encouraged by the deep water and marked their upland claims beside it. But the viaduct explorers of 1953 would have been burdened with more than their cameras to find any evidence of the native waterfront from the viaduct without getting off of it and digging or drilling for it through the strata of a century of city building. Like the motorists that soon followed them onto the viaduct, the camera bugs favored facing the city. The few surviving photographs that turn from the tall buildings to look down on the piers are Kodachrome confessions of the waterfront as worn and worried, its common condition in 1953. Still, there were prophetic exceptions, most notably at Pier 54 where Ivar's Acres of Clams was already a popular destination.

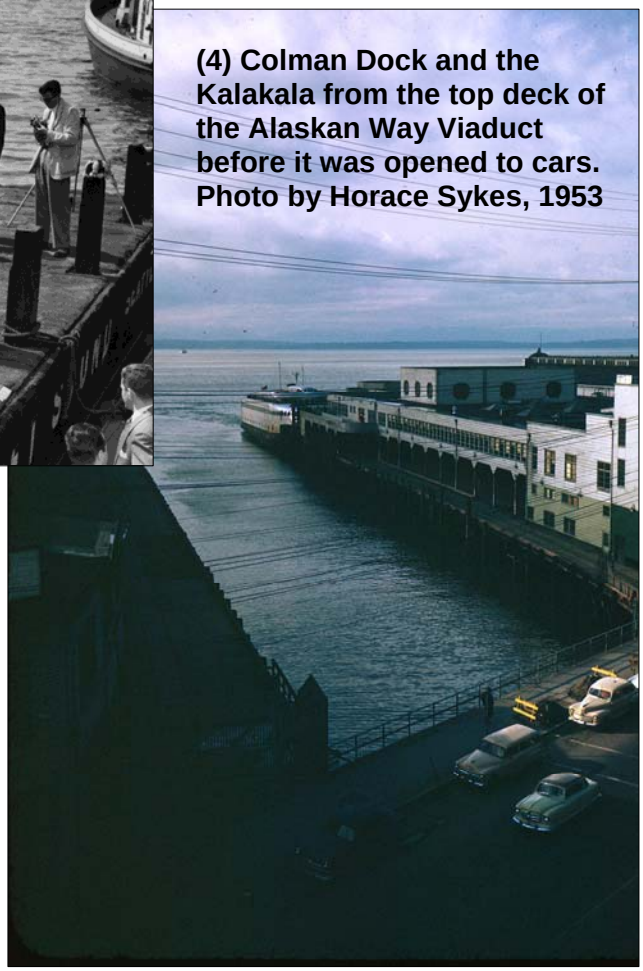


(1) Alaska Steamship Co. Pier 2, Ca. 1910 with extension. Renumber #2 in 1944.

(2) Clam Eating Contest, 1952 On barge between Pier 54 & Fire Station #5



(3) Alaskan Viaduct Construction ca.1951 Across from Virginia St Dock



(4) Colman Dock and the Kalakala from the top deck of the Alaskan Way Viaduct before it was opened to cars. Photo by Horace Sykes, 1953

Covered Parking

In the beginning Ivar advertised the viaduct as "blocks and blocks of covered parking." Later he would revise this and confess to what he considered an early naiveté. "People – some people - weren't finding us. It was like we were locked away. How many tourists wanted to get to Alaskan Way and instead climbed onto the Alaskan Way Viaduct and wound up on the waterfront in Everett? And many of the locals stopped seeing us too. There was this thing in the way. Now I appreciate that the thing gives one a hell of a view from the top in every direction, but at what cost? How long does it take to get between Dearborn and Battery up there? Well, I don't know, but I do know that the thrills received from that free concession come with a heavy price. The more one carries on about the view from the attic, the less one cares for the living room. When you spend a lot of time below – on the sidewalk - you learn what this thing is – a kind of factory of noise and odors and also an exceedingly ugly fence. It's funny what boosters we were for the viaduct when it was built. Some day it will come down, but I hope not on its own. When it does, the waterfront will awaken like Sleeping Beauty to the kiss of its prince, the city. But I doubt that I'll ever see it." In spite of his "on its own" remark, like most of us before the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake came a few seconds from turning the viaduct into a concrete smoothie, Ivar had little appreciation for how flimsy it was. (During the planning the decision to build the viaduct from reinforced concrete rather than steel was a fateful one.) Perhaps Ivar's change of heart was also insightful. The great thing that had first excited him had become a barometer for how far some locals had distanced themselves from their waterfront while happily flying by above it.

Columbia Street Distinction

The smell that Ivar detected flying from the viaduct keeps on giving but it is a different odor from the one familiar to the pioneers. Actually, they were familiar with two odors. If we first imagine John Colman (of the dock) looking at Elliott Bay at low tide from the foot of Columbia Street, and then ask him to turn south towards Yesler's wharf, he would look across an expanse of slimy mud that he would have also smelled. The odor was sulfuric – a perfume made from parts thrown from Yesler's wharf and other parts blown there from the brackish tideflats south of the King Street. One pioneer account describes pigs rooting in this mud while opportunistic crows stood on their backs waiting to see what their snouts might bring up. The acidic power of this section was such that structures built beside the beach south of Columbia were discolored by it.

On the other hand if James Colman looked north, he would have admired a beach of fine hard sand. In the summer of 1878 he could have also counted the bathhouses constructed there by Captain William Jensen. But he'll need more than the fingers on his hand. There were a dozen of them. The captain gave up captaining to become the proprietor of Seattle's first improved bathing beach. It was located between Union and Pike Streets. A representative collection of his changing huts appears in the 1878 birdseye drawing of Seattle. Jensen supplied his recreational beach not only with the bathhouses but also with suits and towels for rent. The smell at this end of the central waterfront was sweet, at least by association. It is a coincidence, and a curious one, that after the Second World War the playful side of the central waterfront developed more to

the north of Columbia Street while the piers south of Colman Dock still preferred to work at water-related chores like shipping and fish.

Samples: Domestic & Exotic

Staying with waterfront odors and their contributors for the moment we will trumpet in the interests of local heritage that the Seattle waterfront is an elaborate midden or buried trove. If we were to act like boring Teredos and gather a spread of core samples we would find all manner of historic and pre-historic stuff and could no doubt identify many of the contributions and sometimes the contributors. The greatest strata came from the burned city – about 32 blocks of it – much of which was pushed onto the beach, especially at street ends, following the city's "Great Fire" of 1889. By then Jensen's resort was already cluttered with the junk dropped onto it from Schwabacher's wharf after that historic grocery and hardware firm built their first dock at the foot of Union Street in the 1880s. After the '89 fire the dumping of all sorts of stuff – both by permit and by night – continued. Much of it was dropped through the many open gaps along Railroad Avenue – a spreading timber quay built over the tides – or simply dumped off the docks. Dropped dirt was especially appreciated because a piling smothered in fill lasted longer than an exposed pile unprotected from the ravages of the wood boring worms called Teredos. (To strengthen and lengthen this point we attach the last verse of Ivar's ditty that he sang to customers – or anyone on the sidewalk - at the entrance to his aquarium. It is titled "The Teredo.") **[5]**

If some unborn genius, a king of the seas,
Teaches Teredos to bore holes in cheese,
Then all the dock owners will always be smiling –
No more need to worry 'bout holes in their piling.

The practice of opportunity dumping along the waterfront continued well into the 20th Century and was especially in renaissance following the construction of the seawall north of Madison Street in the mid-1930s. Those were also the years when Ivar began his "opportunity singing" on and about the waterfront.

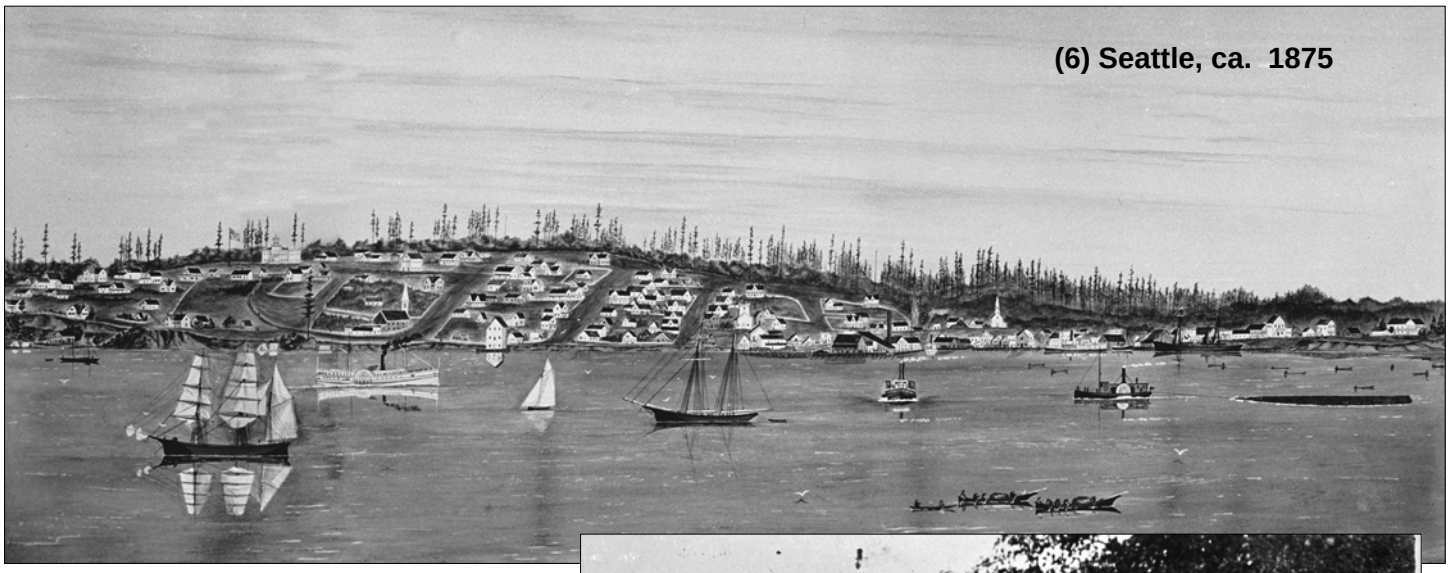
1876: Sewerage & the Sick

The seawall south of Madison was first and dates from the early teens. This, of course, is the oldest part of town, the noisome neighborhood around Yesler Wharf and south of it. Any core drilling there below the Viaduct or in the old tideflats just south of King Street on First Avenue South or south of Jackson on Second Avenue South -- would bring up a most cosmopolitan mix of urban waste and at the foot of Washington Street foreign soil as well. As we will note in greater detail below, this exotic part would be found in Ballast Island (between Main and Washington Streets below the viaduct) and the domestic part could come from almost anywhere. In the 1870s, Seattle began to grow at a pace faster than its capacity to clean itself. It was fortunately a city on a hill built beside a great circulating waterway. Consequently most of the city's early waste wound up on the beach or in the bay, although it could take a sickening route getting there. The city's diphtheria epidemic of 1876 took entire families and the children who caught it rarely got better. A few foul examples from issues of the *Daily Intelligencer* in the month of June 1876 make the point.

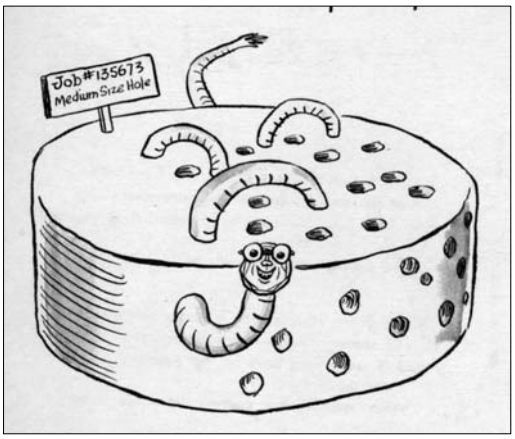
> "We have heard the assertion made in view of the great number of deaths, especially of children, that have occurred in our city the past year, that Seattle, in proportion to its size was the most unhealthy town on the coast. This we believe is an exaggeration. Still, it is true that there has been a much greater mortality of late than can be explained consistently with the well-known salubrity of our climate. On the above hypothesis, at least, a part explanation of this circumstance will be apparent to a casual observer who strolled along almost any of our thoroughfares, in the stagnant oozes that flank the sidewalks. The sewerage from kitchens and stables collects in the obstructed gutters and there forms cesspools that reek in the sun and exhale poison into the air …Considering the sandy and porous nature of the soil under our town site, and the declining grades, the drainage of the city is not a problem of insuperable difficulty. The matter should receive attention if possible before the hottest weather comes on to aggravate the evil. As a measure of public importance, the cleaning out of the street-gutters is not secondary at present even to a new water system or improved street grades."
> "The fish dealers on Commercial Street [First Ave. S.] have been making the beach in the rear of Mr. Davis store a depository of decayed fish to the intense discomfort of those who do business in that part of our main thoroughfare, and of all passers by. The nuisance should be abated at once."
> "We would call attention to those whom it concerns to the fact that the large sewers that empty below Commercial street in the rear of Davis and Schwabacher's stores instead of being continued down to low water, deposit their garbage on the beach which causes much complaint on the part of denizens in that quarter."

The "large sewers" noted might have been private local improvements. The city's first wooden box sewer was buried in 1882 beneath Mill Street (Yesler Way) and ran west from Third Avenue to the bay. Three years later Mayor Henry Yesler signed an ordinance requiring that inhabited property be hooked to existing sewers, but there were still very few of these. And regardless everything still wound up either in cesspools or in the greater pool of Elliott Bay. **[6], [7], [8]**

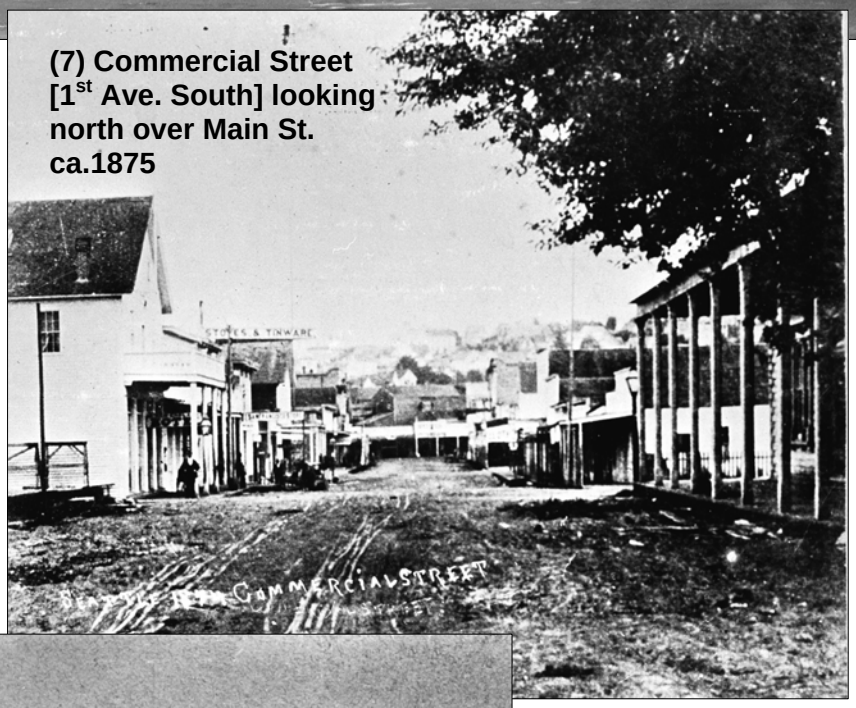
The east shore of the Elliott Bay was settled first in 1852. The citizen's hostilities with some of the Indians in the mid 1850s, followed by the Civil War in the early 1860s, encouraged neither settlement nor growth. Seattle didn't really "boom" until 1869 when the Northern Pacific Railroad was surveying Snoqualmie Pass and property prices spiked. The completion that year of the first transcontinental railroad to California also stimulated a boomer's euphoria along the entire West Coast. The Central Pacific Railroad's appetite for coal would also quicken the exploitation of the rich reserves on the east shore of Lake Washington. And as we will show below, 1869 was also the first year from which any detailed photographic evidence of the Seattle waterfront survives.



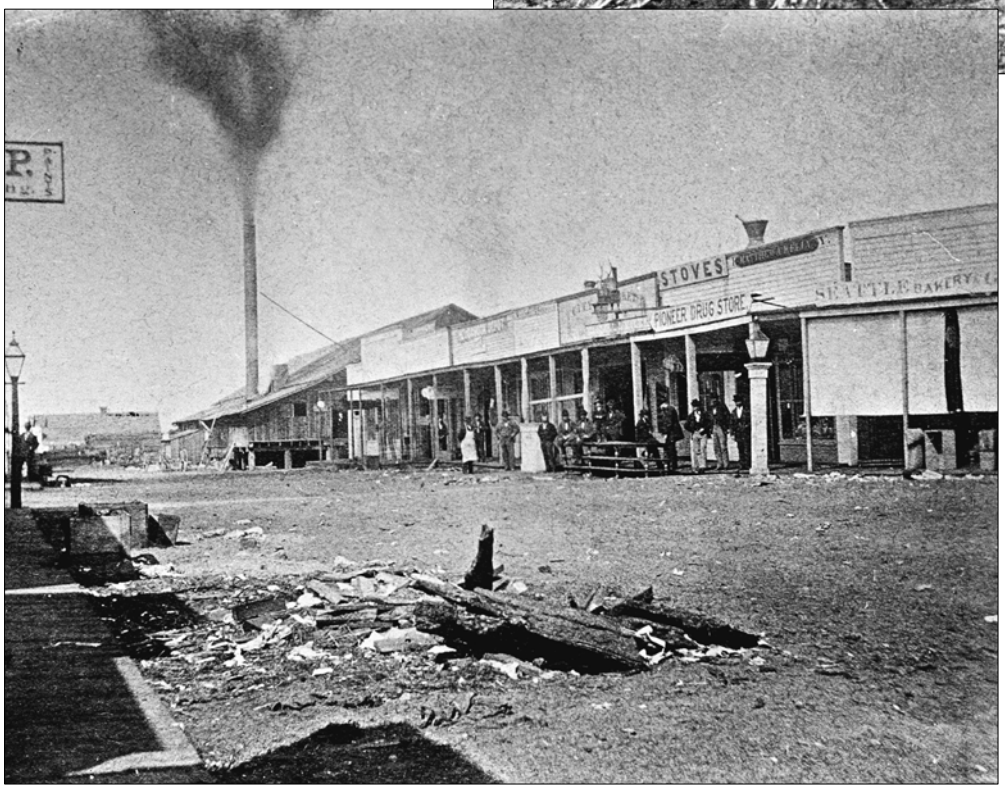
(6) Seattle, ca. 1875



(5) Teredos Service Cheese:
From Ivar's Songbook, 1953



(7) Commercial Street [1st Ave. South] looking north over Main St. ca.1875



(8) Yesler's Wharf looking west from Occidental Ave., ca.1872
Photo by Moore

PART ONE – THE PRE-1889 FIRE WATERFRONT

First Photographs

The community's oldest extant photo – a daguerreotype of the Yesler Home struck ten years earlier in 1859 – does "imply" the waterfront. In it we can find the flume that carried spring water from First Hill to Yesler's wharf running down and above the center of James Street. **[9]** It was also a fateful year for Seattle's future as a port city. The sidewheeler *Eliza Anderson* was sent north from the Columbia River to Puget Sound and thereby, to quote an old but now long gone friend Jim Faber from his book *Steamers Wake*, "in 1859 did the Age of Steam solidify on Puget Sound." (In a second Pioneer Square photograph taken a year later in 1860 from roughly the same position, the flume is gone and water to the mill and a few homes near it is carried through bored logs buried beneath the street.) **[10]**

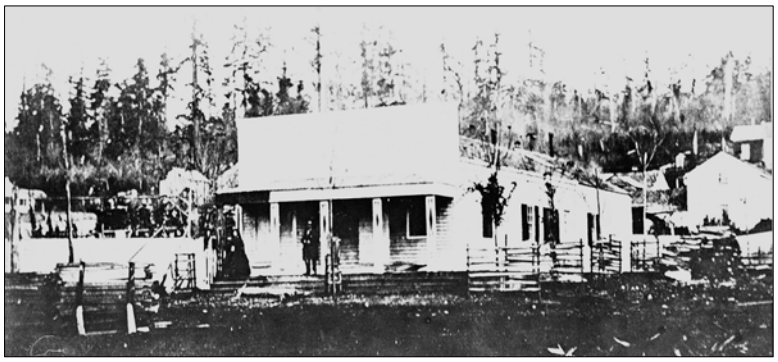
Five years later E. M. Sammis, the town's first but brief resident photographer, returned from a stint in Olympia to resume making portraits of locals and sometimes when they lacked cash trading his art for vegetables. Thankfully Sammis also photographed Chief Seattle – for this privilege he may have paid the chief – and the young town's first panorama. **[11]** **[12]** The 1865 view from Snoqualmie Hall at the southwest corner of Commercial (First Ave. S.) and Main Street is not very revealing of the waterfront, showing only a small section of it on the far left. However (as we will show later), four years later, this same prospect would be used by the visiting Victoria-based photographer G. Robinson and, as already noted above, his wider and sharper panorama is very revealing.

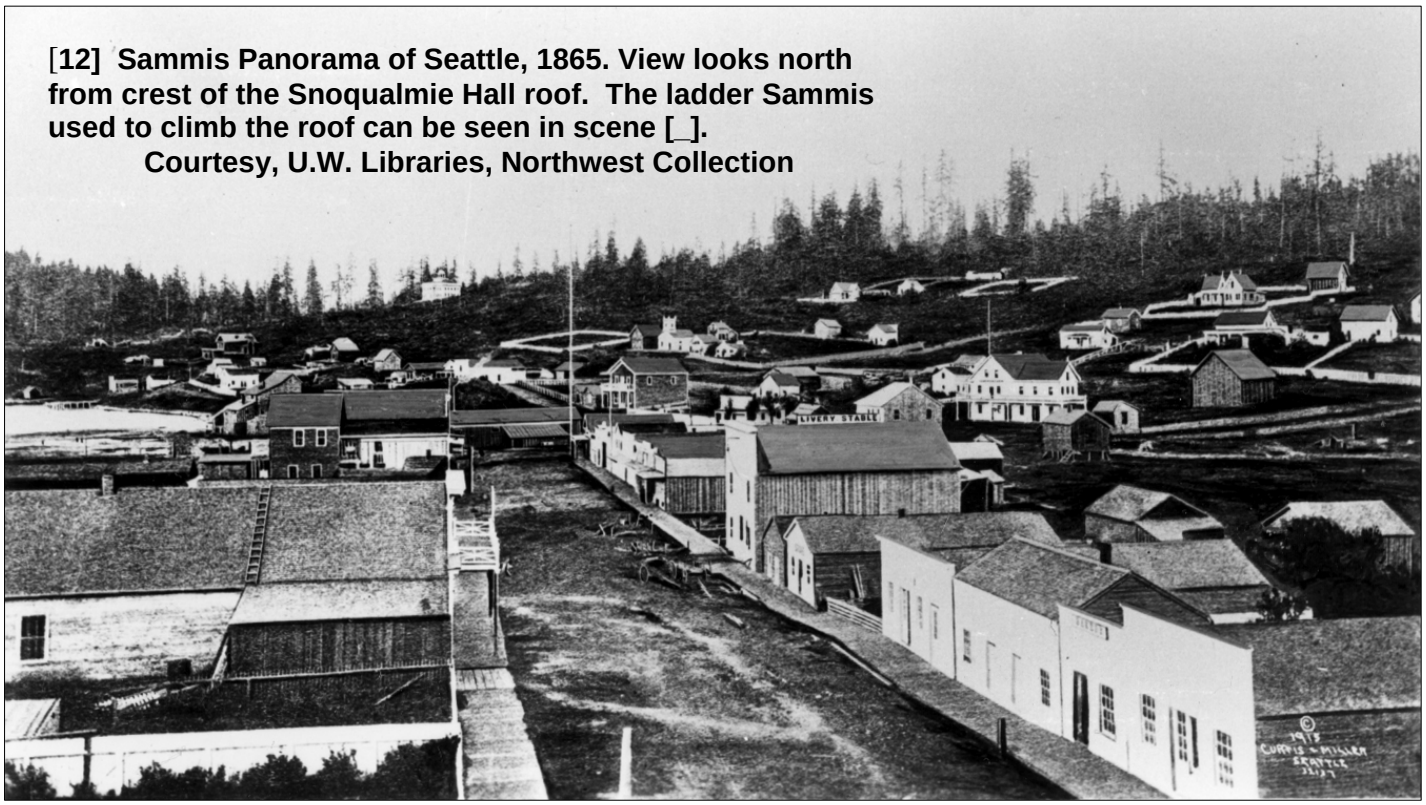
"Center of the Sound"

In between the Sammis and Robinson visits, another photographer called on Seattle and recorded a third surviving view across Pioneer Place towards the Yesler home. The centerpiece of this photograph is the ceremonial arch built by locals to welcome about 200 out-of-town guests to the town's 1868 Independence Day celebration. **[13]** The largest entourage came with the territorial governor from Olympia, and later the capitol's newspaper, the *Washington Standard*, described the temporary gateway as a "tasteful arch of evergreens." The *Seattle Weekly Intelligencer* also described the scene. "Seattle presented a very gay appearance . . . Flags were suspended across the streets, arches erected, and a number of our buildings adorned with evergreen, flowers etc. Shortly after 11, the report of a canon was heard out across the bay, and soon after the *Eliza Anderson* hove in sight . . .From many other places along the Sound, in fact from Bellingham Bay to Olympia visitors continued to arrive by small steamers and sailing craft. James McNaught, Orator of the Day, addressed the assemblage in a manner that reflected the highest credits on the speaker." The visitors from Olympia brought their new pumper with them, covering the fire-fighting apparatus in flowers. Stepping ashore from Yesler's wharf the Olympians and their pumper were led through the arch by Seattle's brass band, and that evening the celebration mustered its first fortuitous fluke when a fire was set in the local jail by a drunk locked up earlier "as a precaution." After the Olympian pumper helped extinguish the flames the Sheriff released the lonely detainee, who was anxious to join the festivities

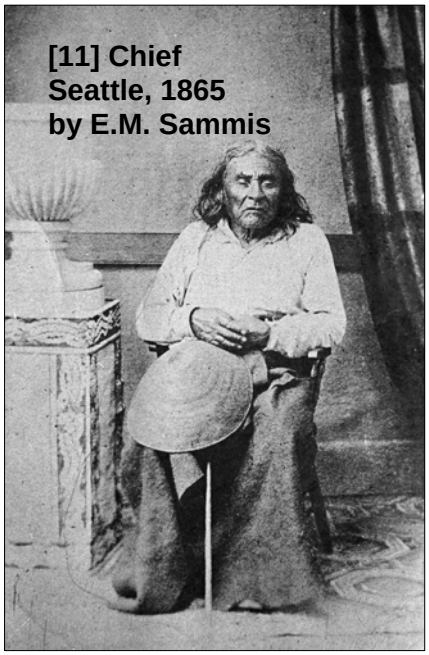
[9] Yesler Home, ne corner 1st & James
Oldest surviving photo of Seattle
1859

[10] Yesler Home – About one year later, 1860.





[12] Sammis Panorama of Seattle, 1865. View looks north from crest of the Snoqualmie Hall roof. The ladder Sammis used to climb the roof can be seen in scene [_].
Courtesy, U.W. Libraries, Northwest Collection



[11] Chief
Seattle, 1865
by E.M. Sammis

[13] Independence Day celebration, 1868. Arch near center of Pioneer Place (Square).
Yesler home on the left and Occidental Hotel on the right.

and promised to behave. The flowered pumper appeared, of course, in the Independence Day parade, but the highlight of that review was another "floral car" that the *Intelligencer* described as "a chariot decorated with evergreens, containing 38 pretty little girls all dressed in white and representing the states of the Union." Each girl held a flag and later when the day's program continued with songs and speeches at Yesler's Pavilion the flags were miraculously stirred by a stiff breeze which came suddenly through the hall's open windows at the moment the children reached the old patriotic anthem's line "oh, long may it wave." "The effect" the *Standard* noted "was electrical." And following the fire in the poky it was this Independence Day's second divine juggle.

We may see in the photograph of the "tasteful arch" a sign of Seattle as the important port town it already was. At that time aside from Olympia it is hard to imagine any other community north of Portland managing to decorate a float with 38 pretty girls. Its other distinction was the territorial university, but in 1868 the school still amounted to very little. Some coal and lumber was sold off the Seattle waterfront but Yesler's mill was small by comparison to those in mill towns like Port Gamble and Port Blakely. Yesler's wharf was probably more important to the local economy than his mill. Most importantly Seattle was the home of the inland waterway's "mosquito fleet" of small steamers – most of them still side or sternwheelers – that paddled from port to port nudging up to docks almost always shorter than Yesler's. As locals liked to repeat, Seattle was "at the center of the Sound." As noted above, the *Eliza Anderson*, the sidewheeler that delivered the Olympians in July, was the most distinguished of these vessels. She repeatedly managed to beat back competitors during the "rate wars" that reduced steamer fares to prices that made it more expensive to stay home. It was said of her that "No steamer went so slow or made money faster." In the two mid-1880s views of her included here the *Eliza Anderson* has reached her third decade on Puget Sound. In one she is approaching Yesler Wharf and in the other tied to it. **[14]** **[15]**

"Where Rails Meet Sails" – Seattle's Early Railroad History

When Doc Maynard opened the Seattle Exchange in the spring of 1852 there was no steamer on Puget Sound, other than the Hudson Bay Company's sidewheeler the *Beaver*. **[16]** (While its status depends upon what is counted as a store, Maynard's was probably the first in the community.) An advertisement for the Exchange printed that fall in the *Olympia Columbian* reads, "Now receiving direct from London and New York, via San Francisco, a general assortment of dry goods, groceries, hardware crockery, etc. Suitable for the wants of migrants just arrived. Remember, first come, first served. D.S. Maynard, Seattle, Oct. 25, 1852." Maynard might have also added "via dugout" to his advertisement for in 1852 he like everyone else was still dependent on native-motivated shipping to fetch his goods from whatever sailing vessel carried a wholesale stock for him to pick from. The first regular steamboat service began a year later with the little San Francisco-built steamer *Fairy*. But it soon failed as did others that followed until, as already noted, the *Eliza Anderson* came and survived on a policy of gouging travelers when it owned the Sound and charging pennies when it needed to beat back competitors.

All the fledgling communities on Puget Sound were preoccupied with getting hooked up with railroads and competed to get them. The coupling of land and sea was expressed in the couplet "Where rails / meet sails." (The revolution from tall ships to steamships changed this to "Where rails meet steam" but without the rhyme the new catchphrase was not embraced. Anyway trains already had steam.) A community's rail connections to its own hinterlands – like Seattle's to the coalfields east of Lake Washington – were considered as mere prelude to transcontinental ties. This meant – and it was obvious only after the fact – that eastern shore communities like Tacoma, Seattle, and Bellingham had considerable advantage over Port Townsend and Port Angeles in the competition for being any railroad's designated terminus. This story of where rail meets sail (and steam) is so important to understanding the changes on Seattle's waterfront – both the tideflats and Railroad Avenue – that I will attempt next a summary of railroad history. It may sometimes be glazed with that melodramatic tone once so popular in every community with boomers. In this one it was especially so, promoting the "Seattle Spirit" against the rejections and concealments respectively spewing from and cowering in Tacoma, that "cowardly company town."

The story of Where Rails Really Should Meet Sails is a domestic comedy because it ends happily with a Great Northern locomotive coupling with the Queen City, the community with the hourglass figure, in a marriage on the tideflats south of King Street after a long courtship on Railroad Avenue, later renamed Alaskan Way.

Early Railroad Hopes

It began in 1853 when Washington Territory's first Governor, Isaac Stevens, was given the federal assignment of conducting a railroad survey as he journeyed west to Olympia. When the new governor reached his subjects he announced that the railroad was only a few years away. Naturally, Seattle was mildly confident that its central position on Puget Sound beside its own low Snoqualmie Pass favored it for the prized terminus. But then there was no Tacoma. Unfortunately for Isaac Stevens and his envisioned transcontinental, both were shot down by the Civil War – the former as a brigadier general leading a charge at the Battle of Chantilly in Virginia.

After the war when surveyors reached Snoqualmie Pass in the summer of 1869 the community was confident that their employers, the *Northern Pacific Railroad,* would lay tracks through the pass and around the south shore of Lake Washington. For its dowry Seattle citizens promised the railroad hundreds of town lots, one thousand acres, cash, bonds, a depot location and use of the tidelands. The reader, then, may imagine the felt sense of betrayal when on July 14, 1873, Bastille Day, the city's founder Arthur Denny stood with his back to Yesler's Mill and read aloud to a nervous gathering of most of Seattle's citizens the terse telegram he had just received from the Northern Pacific commissioners. "A. A. Denny, Seattle; We have located the terminus on Commencement Bay, R. D. Rica, J.C. Ainsworth, Commissioners." Rica and Ainsworth named Commencement Bay and not Tacoma the small community beside it because they intended to speculate on their own company town, and so created New Tacoma nearer the mouth of the Puyallup River. (Eleven years later the *N.P.* would repeat this kidnapping

in Yakima with the creation of North Yakima as it was building its "Cascade Division" through Stampede Pass.)

The "Seattle Spirit"

The "World Port City That Had to Be" responded to the railroad's spurning with the "Seattle Spirit." On May Day 1874 the citizens gathered for a picnic near the mouth of their river, the Duwamish. At least during lunch the scene was pastoral but after the refreshments the picnic turned into a work party and with their shovels and rakes the earnest and muscular citizens began preparing a bed for their own railroad. They called it the *Seattle and Walla Walla* indicating, at least, trans-state ambitions. More sensibly, however, the *SWW* only reached the coalfields of Renton and Newcastle, the last in 1877. In this the community's new railroad made a direct connection with the mines that since 1871 had been sending coal to the Seattle waterfront by way of a lumpish route across Lake Washington, over the Montlake isthmus (then called Union City), then down Lake Union on scows to a narrow gauged railroad that carried the "black gold" through its last dog leg up the future route of Westlake Avenue before turning at Pike Street to reach the impressively large coal wharf and bunkers built at the waterfront foot of Pike. **[17]**

Next comes the tangled part of the eventually happy story, which we will consequently simplify by abbreviation.

"Coals from Newcastle" & Henry Villard

In the spring of 1877 the *SWW* made its inaugural roundtrip run to Renton and early the following year began delivering coals from Newcastle to the new giant on the waterfront – the King Street Coal Wharf. (As we will see below the Pike Street Coal Pier was then salvaged to within a few feet of the tide line and the remnants left for the worms.) Within two years more the entire SWW operation – wharf, railroads and mines -- wound up in the hands of the transportation magnate Henry Villard, who was at the time also in control of the *Northern Pacific*, the land-grant monopoly that the locals had first battled by building their own railroad.

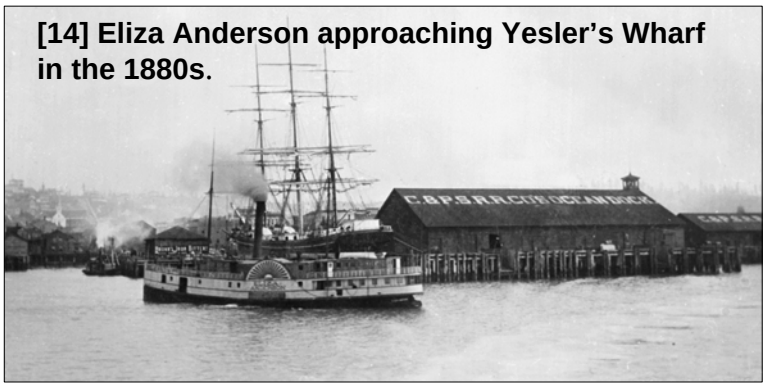
In November 1880 Arthur Denny, James Colman and other SWW trustees took a steamer to Olympia to "convey" their railroad, mines and coalfields to Villard's Oregon Improvement Company. The pioneer and cash-poor community did the sale on the grounds of a promise – and Villard was very persuasive. Once a noted Civil War journalist who got his best scoops directly on the battlefields, Villard used his eloquence to great effect in convincing everyone that they needed the assistance of his "benevolent monopoly." For Seattle this meant that Villard would deliver a standard gauge rail line from Tacoma and ultimately transcontinental rail connection. Villard promised Tacoma that although it would not be technically at the end of the line, the company town would still be the official terminus. In Portland, Villard's Puget Sound moves were looked upon with suspicion and the name Oregon Improvement was ridiculed for a company whose primary business seemed to be the enrichment of Washington. Among the world's big brokers who cared (the ones from whom Villard drew most of his investors) the ports of Puget Sound were expected to become the greatest generators of Pacific Northwest wealth, not the ports on the Columbia River.

Railroad Avenue: First Intimation in 1882

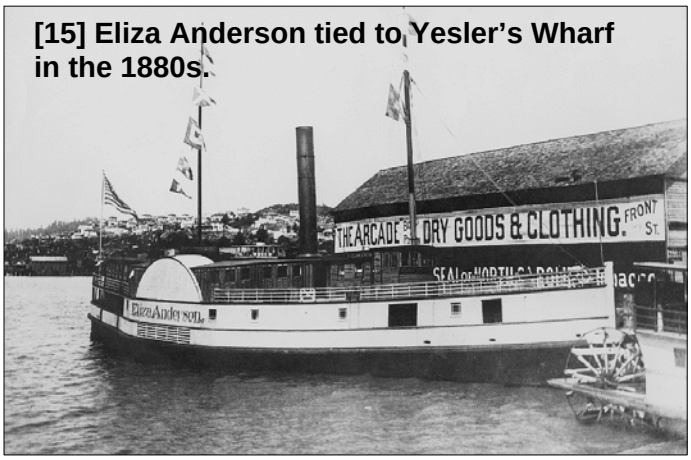
In late 1881 Villard promised Seattle their extension from Tacoma within a year. The following March, in appreciation, the city council with Ordinance 259 gave Villard the right to improve a mile-long and thirty-foot-wide right of way from the King Street wharf north along the central waterfront. The council prudently added that the strip would be held in trust for the use of any second or third railroad that might want to use it, and that Seattle had to be hooked to the transcontinental within two years of the agreement or the waterfront right of way would be voided. When it was at last constructed, this modest and twisting mile or so of track was, in effect, the narrow beginning of Railroad Avenue. Villard let it be known that he expected to build a grain terminal on some of the property north of Pike Street that the OIC had received in their 1881 acquisition of the SWW. (Much of the citizen railroad's original wealth came county-wide as land donated by citizens who expected to benefit from the building of a railroad to Walla Walla with whatever gauge.). On April 20, 1883, Henry Villard visited Seattle and spoke before a packed Odd Fellows Hall. The completion of the Northern Pacific's transcontinental was then a half a year away and Villard closed his remarks noting, "I think I will contrive to ride into Seattle in the first week of September in my private car, directly from New York." A reporter from the *Tacoma Ledger* who either attended the Seattle meeting or read the next day's *Intelligencer* put these promises in his own company town perspective. "Seattle, it appears, is to have a broad-gauge railroad branch, and great excitement in consequence of the expectation is reported from that town including unusual activity of spirits and prosperity to the gin mills … It is not a little astounding that the denizens of Yeslerville should, instead of promptly seizing their grip-sacks and hitting with speed to the site of the future great city, continue in fancied security and idleness to nurse the fond hope for the supremacy of Yeslerville." By "future great city" the writer meant, of course, Tacoma.

1883: Arrival of the N.P. Transcontinental & Villard's Entourage

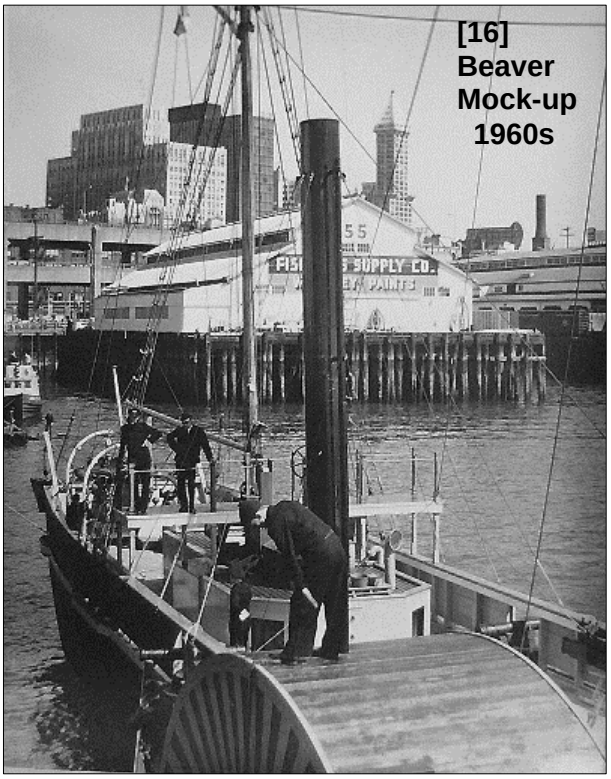
When it came time for Villard to lead his celebrating entourage into Seattle following the completion of the transcontinental, they boarded the steamer *Queen of the Pacific* at Tacoma, for the rails had not yet been laid up the White (Green) River Valley. On the day of his arrival, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, not a little anxious about the distinguished and discerning entourage that accompanied Villard, schooled its readers in a host's decorum that was the opposite of the boomer's bluster that was then the normal stuff of the provincial press. "Don't brag. Don't attempt to hide such disadvantages as may and do exist in any growing city. Don't overstate products, resources, or climatic advantages, nor indulge in undue boasting. Above all, do not attempt to exalt our city by disparaging comparison with others." The Villard party arrived on the afternoon of the 14th of September. **[18]** **[19]** From the university podium erected for the grand ceremonies of the day, the commanding but also charming Villard alluded to his failure to arrive via rail by poking fun at his civil engineer. It was Hans Thielsen's who attempted to push the *Puget Sound Shore Railroad* (the name given for this 20-plus mile leg up the valley but not at the shore) north to Seattle but the spring floods that were an annual event along the White River made the going slow. Turning to



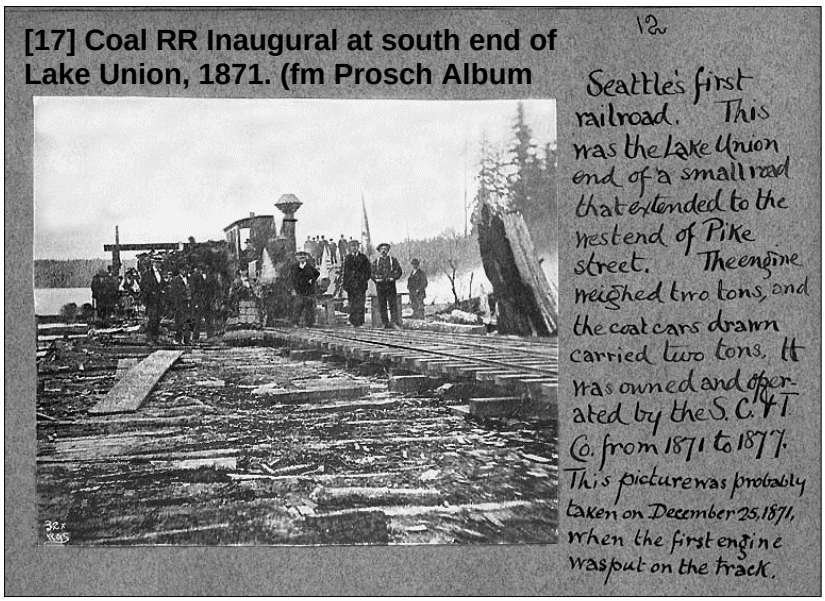
[14] Eliza Anderson approaching Yesler's Wharf in the 1880s.



[15] Eliza Anderson tied to Yesler's Wharf in the 1880s.

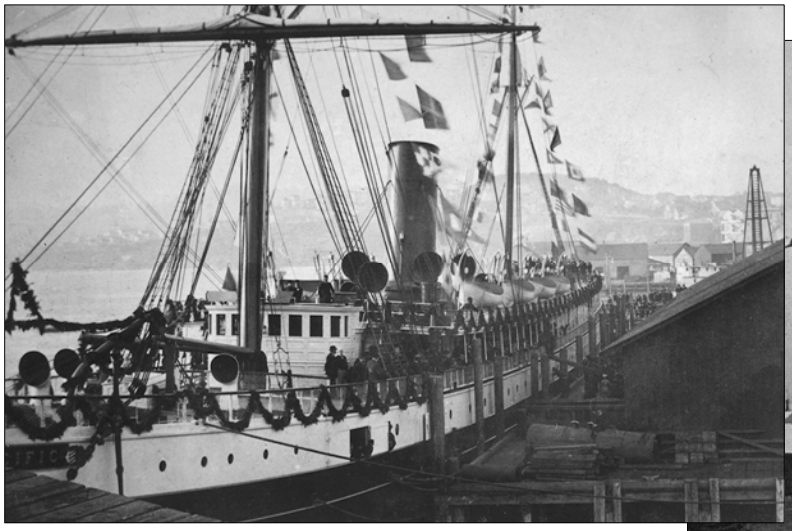


[16] Beaver Mock-up 1960s



[17] Coal RR Inaugural at south end of Lake Union, 1871. (fm Prosch Album

[19] Below: Territorial University draped in bunting welcoming "Villard Party" with completion of the Transcontinental *Northern Pacific.*



[18] Queen of the Pacific docked at Yesler's Wharf for delivery of the "Villard Party" on Sept. 14, 1883.

Thielsen Villard intoned, "I have brought the culprit with me, and you may try him by a jury of twelve good, honest and wise men, and punish him as you like."

"Ram's Horn" & the "Orphan Road" introduced

After his grand entrance at the end of Yesler's Wharf, Villard did not make it to Seattle in his own car any time soon. The national economic crash of late 1883 – stimulated in part by Villard's own watered speculations – disassembled both his charm and grip and he lost his railroads – momentarily. Although the standard-gauged *Puget Sound Shore Line* was completed in 1884 to King Street across its own wide trestle on "Gas Cove" (named for the Gas Company that was earlier built at 5th and Jackson) the railroad was allowed to go to rust and its sides to seed when the old guard of the *Northern Pacific* – the investors in Tacoma – picked up the pieces that were scattered from Villard's pockets. While most of the little line along the waterfront was also completed, the revived old brass of the *Northern Pacific* did not service it. Soon those two Villard promises to Seattle earned their own satiric names. The short line along the waterfront was called the "Rams Horn" because of the way it curved between the properties it rarely served. Some of the locals with waterfront property who made room for the little railroad wanted it on the bay side of their structures and others wanted the rails to pass between them and the shore – hence the horn. The longer line through the valley was called the "Orphan Road" because of its abandonment. The farmers along the way protested against the iron foundling sleeping in their pastures and threatened to tear up the orphaned track for scrap. Earlier many of them had gladly surrendered easements to the railroad and some had also benefited from the system of drainage ditches that the *Puget Sound Shore Line* carved across the valley floor to protect its tracks from the valley's seasonal floods. There was another razz attached to this Orphan Road – an appropriate pun. The railroad originated about two miles south of what is now Auburn at a junction with a line from Tacoma that was sited beside the Stuck River, a short tributary of the Puyallup. The name Stuck Junction for the terminus of this railroad to Seattle was enjoyed by citizens of Tacoma and Seattle alike but, of course, the connotations of the pun did not resonate the same for both.

Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Introduced

With the Villard promises built but then broken, the citizens of Seattle again mobilized. This time they were led by Thomas Burke and Daniel Gilman, names that will come forward frequently in all but the last parts of this narrative, but names that are now best known as a recreational trail. Like their elders in 1873 the new and slightly younger boosters proposed a railroad with a name that like the earlier road to Walla Walla expressed its transcontinental ambitions. In 1887 the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* began building north along over a trestle along the central waterfront to the waterside of the Rams Horn, effectively separating the older road from the docks.

The *SLSER* originated from a comely station at the foot of Columbia Street. By fall the new line reached Bothell by way of Interbay and the north shore of Lake Union (Now, as just noted, the right-of-way for the recreational Burke-Gilman trail). Tracks were laid as far as Snoqualmie Falls but did not continue on as planned over Snoqualmie Pass to Spokane for the same reason that the *Seattle and Walla Walla* did not make it over the

mountains: lack of cash and ultimately lack of compelling need. Instead the *SLSER* turned north for an easier transcontinental connection with the *Canadian Pacific* at Sumas. It is a splendid irony that before the *SLSER* reached the border in 1891 it had fallen (or moved) into the control of the community's old bugaboo, but by then an almost contrite votary, the *Northern Pacific Railroad*. That is, it did not matter. By then the Tacoma railroad was giving equal service to Seattle – it had to. The boom of Seattle's economy and population following its "Great Fire" of June 6, 1889 established an economic dominance on Puget Sound. The flexibility of its older and more diverse wealth meant that it was also better able to survive the hardships that came with the great economic panic of 1893, an event that was especially hard on a one-horse company town like Tacoma. And – to at last reach the climax of this railroad romance – it was in 1893 that the *Great Northern Railroad* reached the Queen City, its Puget Sound terminus. Here, at least, we treat the Yukon and Alaska Gold Rush beginning in 1897 as denouement, and drop the curtain in 1911 with the *Union Pacific* and *Chicago St. Paul and Milwaukee* roads landing passengers at their own Union Depot directly on the site of the old gas manufacturing company facing Jackson Street.

Port of Entry

Another event, although scarcely remembered, is an important marker to this "Seattle Comedy"-- when we end the happy story in 1911. It has more to do with steam than with sail. That year the Federal Treasury Department transferred the Puget Sound Port of Entry to Seattle, leaving Port Townsend a sub-port. As recently as 1889 a New York newspaper described Port Townsend as ranking "only second to New York in the number of marine craft reported and cleared, in the whole U.S." The same Panic of 1893 that exposed Tacoma deflated Port Townsend. Its boom time population of 7,000 crashed to 2,000 and its harbor filled with idle ships. More importantly the maritime winds were changing because wind – except the ferocious kind – was becoming irrelevant. By 1911 Port Townsend's positioning as the "Key City" to Puget Sound was no longer of any advantage. Steamships had practically replaced the brigs and barkentines. In 1854, when Isaac Ebey first moved the Territory's federal customs collection from Olympia to Port Townsend, he was deaf to the complains of the territorial capitol's residents because he knew that sailing ships had a good chance of making it on their own down the Straits of Juan De Fuca as far as Port Townsend. After that they often needed either patience or the help of a tug. Steel-hulled ocean-going steamships did not need the breeze and preferred joining their customs work while unloading and/or loading their cargos and that was most likely to happen in Seattle. And here we have the moral of this comedy. All along – even during the setbacks of its struggles with Tacoma and the *Northern Pacific Railroad* – Seattle's early development as Puget Sound's primary port and thereby much more than a company town made it ultimately and inevitably the metropolis. With this cosmopolitan knack Seattle – and as we will see below for a time also its City Council – married the *Great Northern*.

1841
Lieu. Wilkes & Piners Point

There is no record of what the U.S. Navy Lieu. Charles Wilkes thought of the metropolitan potential of Elliot bay when in the course of exploring Puget Sound and naming many of its features he – or his cartographer – made the first map of the shoreline between Alki Point and West Point. **[20]** (West Point is Wilkes' name but his Pt. Roberts was ten years later

revised by locals to Alki.) The map features a beach stylized as a series of protruding bluffs but the main features of the central waterfront can be deciphered like the turn at Union Street and the bump at Broad. Most obviously there is the small peninsula that Wilkes named Piners Point after Thomas Piner a quartermaster on the expedition. This rendering of Piners Point is the first map-name given to the center of the Seattle.

Piners Point extended from a low point somewhere between Yesler and Washington Streets (descriptions vary) almost as far as King Street. The native name for it was Djidjila'letch, which translates "little crossing over place." This may refer to the isthmus – the "low point" just noted – that connected to the relatively flat peninsula from the hill side north of Yesler Way that later became Seattle's Central Business District. On the occasion of high tides or storms this low connector would flood and turn Piners Point into an Island. One short-lived pioneer name for this neighborhood south of Yesler Way was Denny's Island but it was really Doc Maynard who is most associated with it. The point was part of his claim and he sold lots at prices that were meant to encourage development. The name Djidjila'leetch may, however, refer to the fact that the village was at the Elliott Bay trailhead for "crossing over" to Lake Washington. The trail took very much the same route graded later as Yesler Way and beginning in 1888 rumbled over by its cable cars. The expedition sketch of Piners point is perhaps too small to include what was very probably native structures that stood above the low bluff on its west side. To the east the point sloped into a salt marsh that also shows in the 1841 sketch. Crowding against the low bluff on the beach and closer to Washington Street than to King temporary sweat lodges were probably built.

1854 Coast Survey

The Coast Survey made the next map of Elliott Bay – its shoreline and hydrography – in 1854. **[21]** Seattle was then two years old and appropriately Wilkes quartermaster Piner has been dropped for the Chief. Mostly likely after Wilkes sailed away no one ever referred to the point again as Piners except perhaps Piner himself. (Although Piner will still be remembered by Point Piner on Vashon Island, also named for him.) It is unlikely that the first settlers who came over from Alki Point in 1852 knew they were landing at Piners Point. They first proposed to call their fledgling community Duwamps (which was something like the pronunciation of the name for the local indigenes) until one among them, Doc. Maynard, persuaded the others, the Denny, Boren and Bell families, to trade the name of the tribe for that of its headman. Since it was never easy for Euro-Americans to wrap their embouchure around Lushootseed pronunciations (similar in difficulty to learning French as an adult) early on Seattle received a variety of spellings and pronunciations, and there is still an earnest but perhaps too sincere minority that thinks the city's name should be changed to Sealth.

In the 1854 map, a sandbar that extends roughly in line with Main Street convincingly traps the salt marsh behind the peninsula. The opening was near where the Second Avenue Extension now crosses Main Street – perhaps a few yards south of Main. As noted above, in 1873 the city's first gas works were built both on land at Jackson Street between 4th and 5th Avenues (Then 5th and 6th respectively) and over the salt water "Gas Cove" on a short pier that extended south from the shoreline. By its real estate

designation the gas plant cut through the north end of the Maynard Addition's block 27. Probably assuming too much about the U.S. Land Office's interest in the shallow tidelands much of Maynard's town plat was drawn across the tideflats south of King Street. **[22]** (A dappling of structures is also featured on the Coast Survey map although the cartographers have restrained themselves from marking the streets and it is difficult to know how accurate a representation this is of the structures that made up the young village although there does seem to be some correlation of the Phelps map made four years later.) For comparison a detail of the ca. 1875 topographical map is included. **[23]**

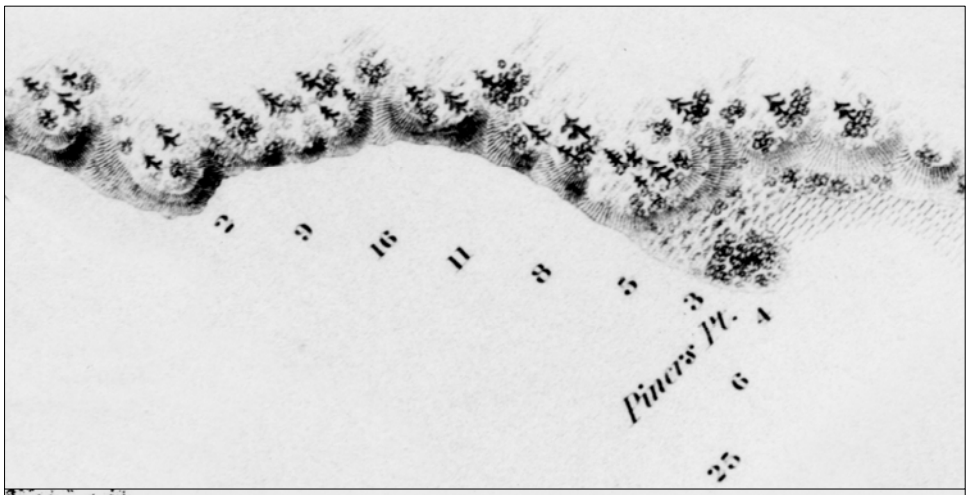
A comparison of the soundings in the 1841 and 1854 maps shows similar depths and we may imagine that Bell and Denny would have liked to have had Wilkes' map in hand when they explored this shore in the winter of 1852, taking their own readings with a weighted clothesline. They found, we know, relatively deep water close to shore that at high tide would allow boats with even the lesser ocean-going draughts to bump up close to a short dock or a removable off-shore gangplank or float and do their business without having to first transfer every item to a smaller vessel. The deepest soundings were between the future Union and Lenora Streets – as we might expect below Denny Hill. As noted above this is part of the waterfront along which the Port of Seattle, following the Second World War, proposed to build long parallel docks to handle the bigger ships because the water was too deep near to shore to construct long finger piers. The position of Yesler's wharf was a compromise between the deep and the shallow. With his mill operation, Yesler was also able to extend and protect his wharf with his own manufactured waste.

1874-75 Federal Survey Introduced

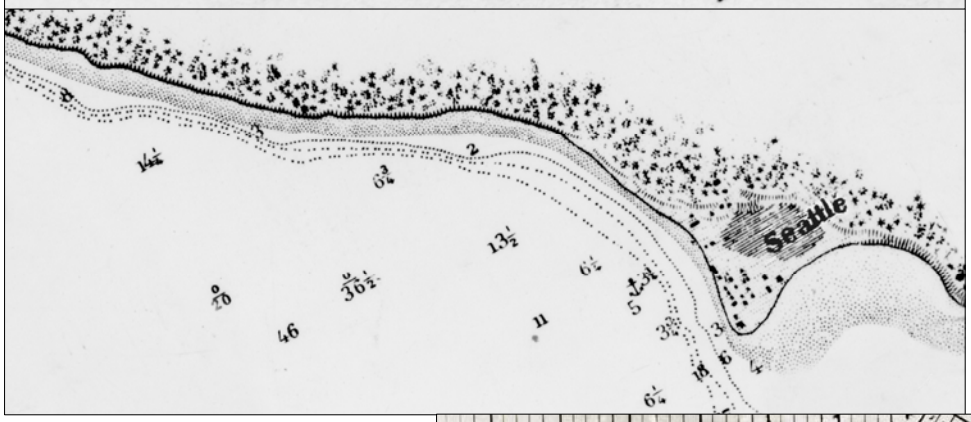
When the federal surveyors returned again in the mid 1870s they were considerably more ambitious. With their hydrographic soundings they continued on shore to survey elevations and charted topographic lines that reached a few blocks into the city. They also included in their map the grid of Seattle streets although they chose to hesitantly delineate only with dashes the streets that ran through the tide marsh. And the map also details the city's few docks, most notably Yesler's and the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company coal wharf off of Pike Street. The full map reveals much more, including the route of the narrow gauged coal railway as it moves east on Pike Street to take a turn towards the south end of Lake Union along what must be either directly on the future line (after 1906) of Westlake Avenue or within a few feet of it. The nearly new Gas Works (a direct predecessor to the one on Lake Union) is also shown in the map. **[24]**

1856 Phelps Map & Sketch

A fourth map of pioneer Seattle – with its accompanying sketch – is the best known of all and the first to locate streets, mark structures and number named landmarks. **[25]** **[26]** Its creator Navy Lieutenant T.S. Phelps was part of the crew aboard the war sloop *Decatur* that defended the raw community during the Battle of Seattle on January 26, 1856. Fortunately, Phelps could also draw, although in one important point his map is far off. The location Phelps gives for the blockhouse or fort from which the locals fired upon the natives, who were generally safe hiding behind trees, is about two blocks too far north. Phelps puts it close to Marion Street when the actual location was on the knoll at the foot of Cherry Street, overlooking

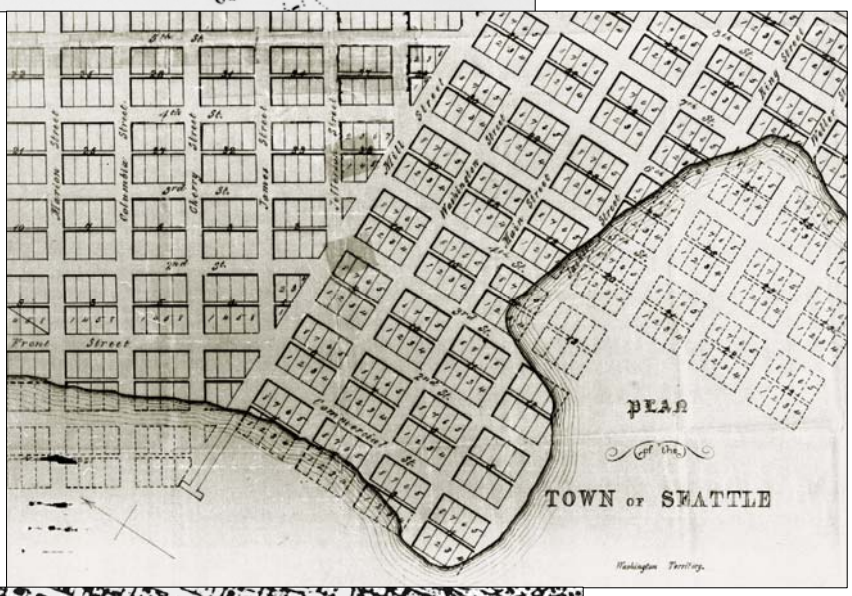


[20] 1841 Navy Expedition Map of Piners Point, future site of Seattle. Expedition led by Lieu. Wilkes



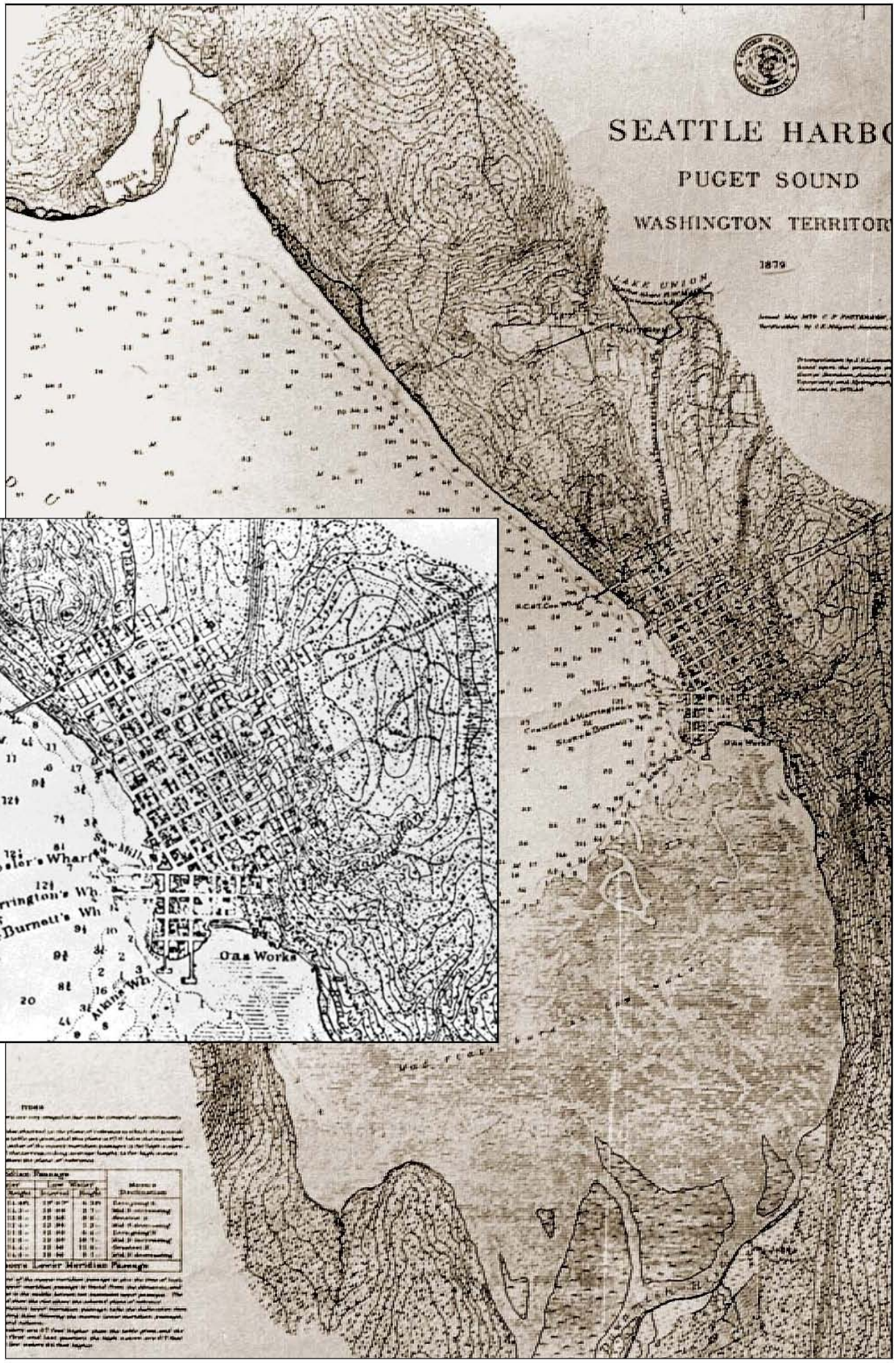
[21} 1854 Coast Survey Map of Seattle, a then two-year-old settlement on Piners Point.

[22] 1853 Town Survey Map for Seattle



[23] Detail from ca. 1875 Topographical Map of Seattle by Coast Survey

[24] We date this topo map for ca.1875 because it lacks features from 1876. The map's own date indicates when it was published.



Yesler's mill and wharf. But the Lieutenant (a commodore by the time he polished his notes) also drew the oldest surviving sketch of Seattle and it is meant to give the third dimension to his map. Curiously Phelps gets the correct position of the blockhouse in his sketch. (This presents a puzzle. Does the discrepancy in the blockhouse location suggest that he drew the sketch first and only later poorly interpreted – or neglected – it while refining his map?)

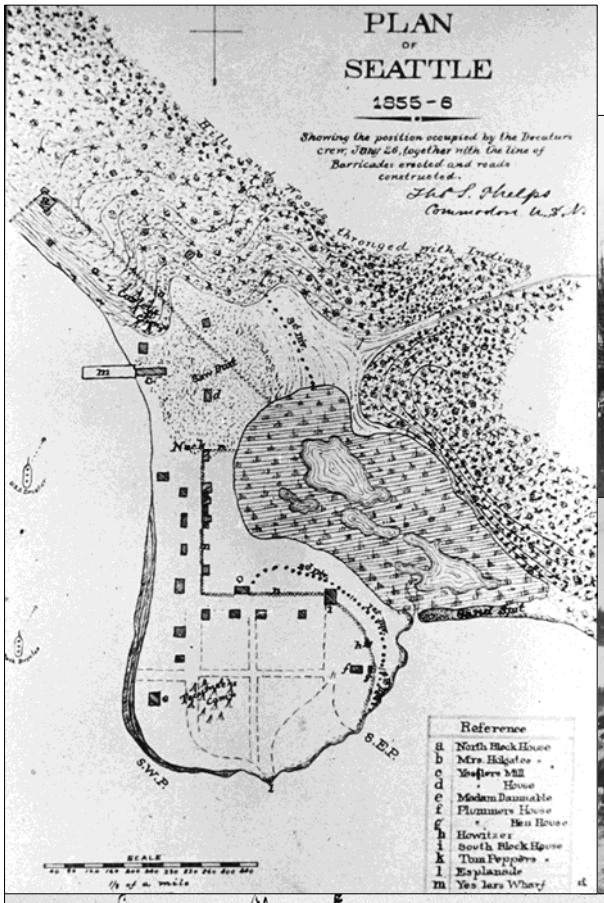
The sand spit that appears in the 1854 map is still in place two years later, and the salt marsh too, for Yesler's waste has not yet reclaimed it. Given Phelps' greater detail most likely the shape of Piners Point (if not the location of the blockhouse) has been refined by him. The 1856 map has regularized beside streets the informal dapple of buildings that the Coast Survey of 1854 roughly features as the fledgling village. In the accompanying printing of the map, the dotted lines of the eventual Seattle grid have been superimposed over it. The streets as drawn are at least close to being properly set. Lines have also been introduced that show the limits of the original pioneer claims. The claims are named (except for Maynard's on the south) and are also distinguished by shadings of different contrast. The offshore yellow marks the new section of waterfront that was reclaimed behind seawalls in the 20th Century.

The Felker House

The First Methodist Church at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Columbia Street appears on the far left of the sketch although it is not lettered in the map. One ready cross-reference between the map and the sketch is the Felker House, although Phelps has given it the knick name of its proprietress Madame Damnable. In the map it is lettered "I" and appears at the far southwest corner (lower left) of the peninsula facing Jackson Street midway between Commercial Street (First Avenue S.) and the low bluff that falls to the waterfront. In the sketch Madame Damnable's hotel – probably the first structure in town that was built of finished lumber – is far right with its back to the end of the point at King Street. The Felker house was destroyed in the 1889 fire, and consequently can be located in many of the views of the city recorded from the King Street Coal Wharf after its construction in the late 1870s. One of the community's earliest (and yet undated) extant photographs looks directly across Jackson Street at the hotel. **[27]** One may imagine a man remembered only by the name of Wilson watching the Battle of Seattle from the hotel's verandah long enough to be hit and killed by a bullet fired from the forest. Wilson was one of the only two mortal casualties inflicted on the settlers during the battle. The other was also an imprudent spectator who looked out from the temporarily opened door of the blockhouse.

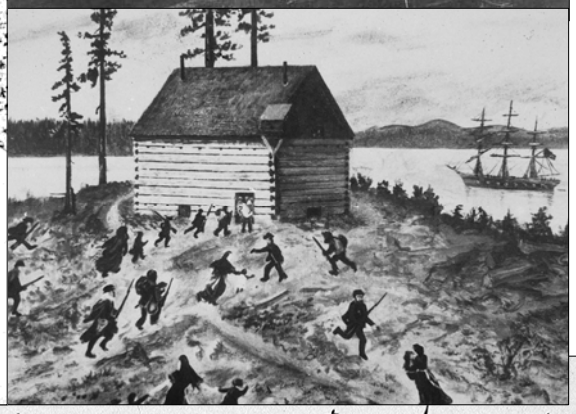
The peninsular shape of Seattle is depicted in an Indian-eye's view of the battle that was imagined in the late 19th century. **[28]** A detail of the sketch shows the cannons booming from the sloop Decatur and from the blockhouse as well. Another painting of the blockhouse shows the locals running for it and was painted by Eliza Denny, who as a child fled with her parents David and Eliza to the blockhouse where her younger sister Decatur was both born and in appreciation named for both the ship and the fort. **[29]**

(A map superimposing donation claims, Phelps map & streets is attached. **[30]**)

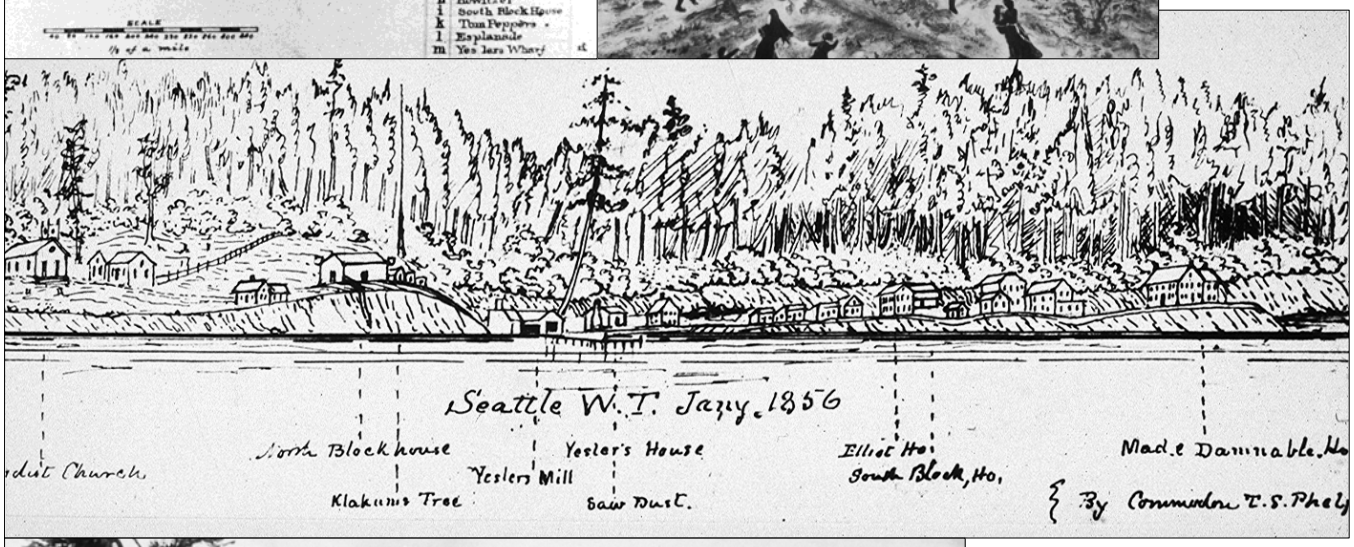


[25] Lieu. Phelps Map of Seattle, 1856

[27] Felker House, on the south side of Jackson between First Ave. S. and the waterfront.

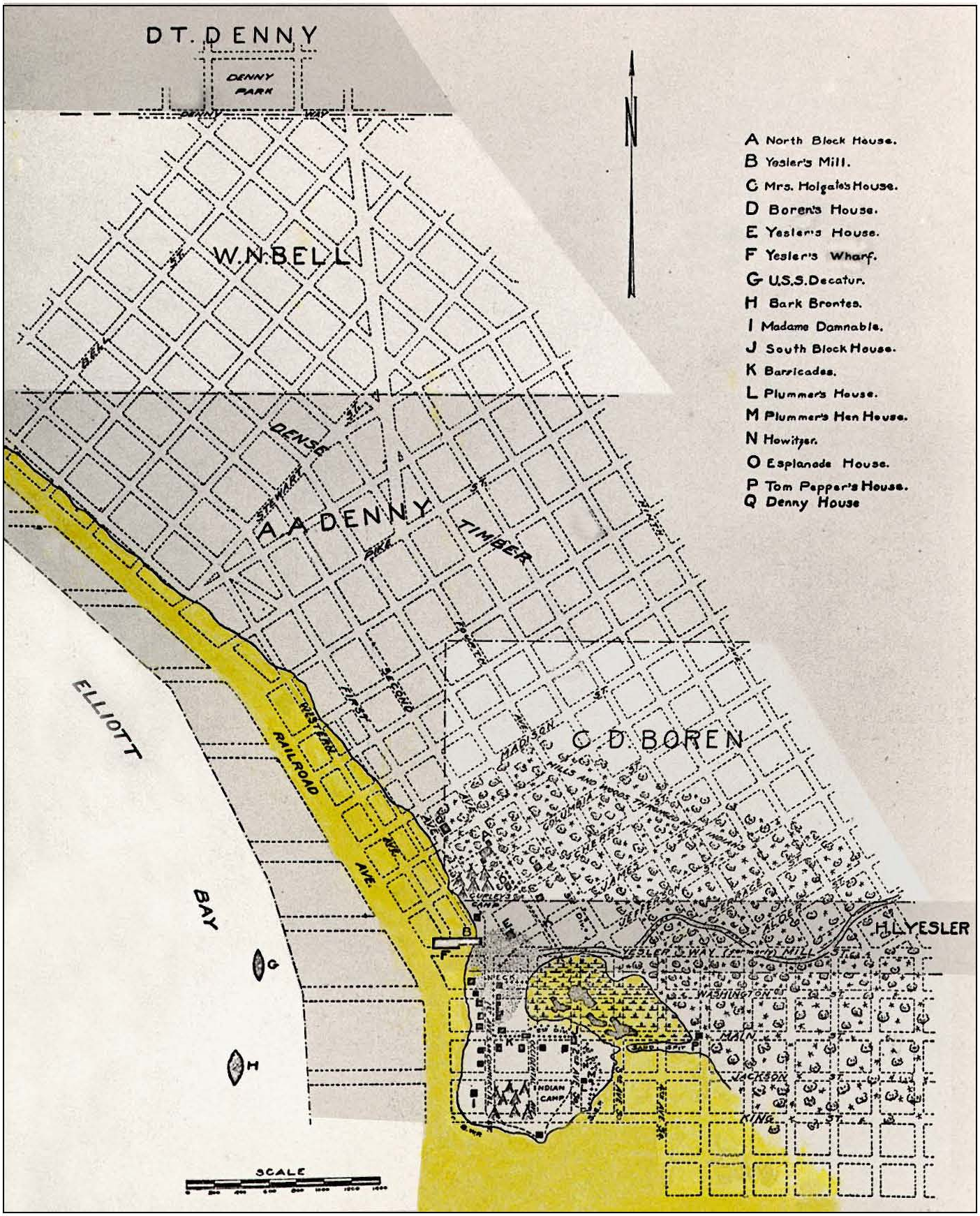


[29] Indian War, Flight to the Blockhouse. Sketch by E.I Denny



[26] Lieu. Phelps sketch of Seattle drawn from the Navy warship Decatur. 1856

[28] "Indian's-Eye View" from First Hill of the "Battle of Seattle." Jan. 25, 1856



[30] Pioneer claims and street map superimposed on an extended version of Phelps Map from 1855-56. All the original claims are named here excepting Doc. David Maynard's. It was the most southerly of the six and included both Piners Point and tidelands. Not shown here is the larger eastern part of Yesler's claim on and to the east of First Hill.

Djidjila'letch

In the map by Phelps the phrase "Hills and Woods Thronged With Indians" is written a little ways below the name D.C. Boren. The map also shows an "Indian Camp" at the southern end of Piners Point and directly east of Damnable's. This including the Felker House footprint is a traditional native site, although Phelps' "tee-pees" were not the style of construction used by Indians on the Northwest Coast. As noted earlier, located both near the trail to Lake Washington and the Duwamish estuary the native "winter camp" on Piners Point was one of the largest villages of the Duwamish. Tribal informants indicated that at one time Djidjila'letch (or Jijilalec) included eight large longhouses and at about the time that the English Captain George Vancouver sailed into Puget Sound in 1792 may have been home for as many as two hundred members of the tribe. When Denny, Bell and Boren explored the site early in 1852 its was deserted and they stumbled upon the remains of only one longhouse. This is puzzling because only two years previous the pioneer Isaac Ebey visited the future Seattle site and was given a rare invitation into a longhouse there by Chief Seattle. Ebey witnessed the Indians' celebration welcoming the Salmon's return to the mouth of the river, where in appreciation the natives waited to snag them with tripod weirs built across the river.

Native Land

Robert Monroe, for many years the director of the University of Washington Northwest Collection, at least once received a request for photographs of the 1851 Denny Party landing at Alki Point. It is not so absurd to think that there might have been such, for photographic apparatus could have been packed by any of the setters. Seattle is younger than photography. When a few Midwestern farmers first picked this place to settle down and farm and/or build a city, photography through the Daguerreotype process had already been with great speed circulating worldwide for a dozen years. The earliest surviving photograph of San Francisco dates from 1850 and for Portland from 1853. Both are Daguerreotypes. Portland, of course, was base camp for all the first Seattle settlers in their exploration of Puget Sound. As already noted the earliest revealing photographs of the central waterfront in Seattle date from 1869 -- two images that we will explore soon below. From these, other early photographs and recollections we can build a convincing description of the native land that David Denny, Lee Terry and John Low first looked across to from Duwamish head in September 1851.

The Railroad tunnel beneath the city was completed one hundred years ago this year [2005]. During excavation a prehistoric Seattle was uncovered that included an ancient streambed with water-worn pebbles, and cobblestones between Cherry and Marion Streets. Beside this stream, directly below the Rainier Club at 4th and Marion, the remains of a forest were uncovered. Distributed above this really underground Seattle is the blue clay, gravel and hardpan of the last Ice Age. These not so scintillating contributions have been exposed time and again with the cuts made during Seattle's many regrades of the early 20th Century and later with its skyscraper pits. It is, of course, the forests on top of the ice age droppings more than the forest discovered beneath them that excite – the green cover nurtured through the millennia following the big thaw.

Now when one repeats the settler's naive approach to the eastern shore of Elliott Bay – most likely aboard a Washington State Ferry – the somewhat generic modern skyline of

Seattle effectively screens the land that Bell and Denny saw. But in their prepossessions the pioneers could see only wild land in the native land. And yet, for thousands of years before it was first admired by visiting Europeans like Vancouver and then annexed by courageous and cussed pioneers like Denny and Bell, these green mounds left by the ice age were marked. They had culture – the hills and the streams that ran from their sides were used. The native land was managed. Now, in this "city of hills," the tallest artifact reaches an elevation nearly twice that of the highest hill. (But really, we are more a city of ridges. Three hills – Capitol, First and Beacon – were originally part of one long ridge that extended with only a few minor dips and bumps from Portage Bay to Renton. Between 1907 and 1912 the Jackson and Dearborn Street regrades severed the ridge.)

Denny Hill & the Waterfront

More to the point of this waterfront history, of all Seattle hills it is the missing one, Denny Hill, that most shaped the waterfront because through much of its length – roughly from Wall to Union Streets -- the hill fell directly to the waterfront. The lowest of Seattle's central hills, Denny Hill crested like a ripple cast south from the much higher Queen Anne Hill and David and Louisa Denny's claim – Seattle Center – was in the trough between them. As expected, below Denny Hill the waterfront is the deepest, and there also the width of the made (or reclaimed) land is narrower than that section of the waterfront that is south of Union Street. (Some of Denny Hill wound up on the waterfront but not nearly as much as some wanted. Most of the hill was dumped just off of the waterfront creating a reconstituted Denny Hill in Elliott Bay that for the safety of shipping required dredging.) Although the two summits of Denny Hill were razed between 1906 and 1911, the hill's skirt, its lowest parts, the bluff and/or bank, is still hinted behind our applications and in a few places even exposed. It is worth review – these native titillations – even in a thumbnail history of the waterfront like this one. **[31]**

The Bank & Bluff

We will for the moment neglect the old harbor south and east of King Street, the part that once rinsed the salt marsh behind Gas Cove and splashed against the sometimes steep sides of Beacon Hill, and concentrate on the central waterfront north of King Street as far as Broad Street (where a slight prominence distinguished it in both the 1841 and 1854 maps.) The native embankment along this line varied in both height – from a couple of feet to about one hundred – and pitch – from precipitous to something one could easily scramble. As we will see below the little bluff at King Street seems even lower in the photographs than its depiction in Phelps drawing. Just north of Washington Street, where at high tide the bay could intrude east to the salt marsh, the native ridge was so low that it might have been used as a bench for sitting. Just north of Yesler's wharf a knoll rose at the foot of Cherry Street, an obvious close-by prominence upon which to build the blockhouse. This Cherry hump was later lowered with the 1876 regrade of Front Street (First Avenue) between Mill Street (Yesler May) and Pike. North of the knoll the waterfront bank stayed low – something the athletic could easily jump from – until near Madison. North from there it climbed as part of what was really the southern slope of Denny Hill. This growing bluff was broken with a gulch at Seneca Street (the contents of which we will describe below). Its elevation at University Street was such that steps were built there between Front Street and the waterfront even before the 1889 fire. Following the fire the steps were quickly

replaced but then soon usurped by a timber bridge that let wagons move directly from Railroad Avenue to Front Street without having to first travel south along the frequently congested waterfront to Madison Street. Although Front Street was still higher above the waterfront at Union Street than at University, it was also further from the waterfront because it is between University and Union that the shoreline turns to the northwest. A rather steep wagon road was in use here for a few years from the 1880s into the 20th Century. Now, while standing at the waterfront foot of Union it is rather hard to imagine it. **[32]** **[33]**

The Bluff North of Union Street

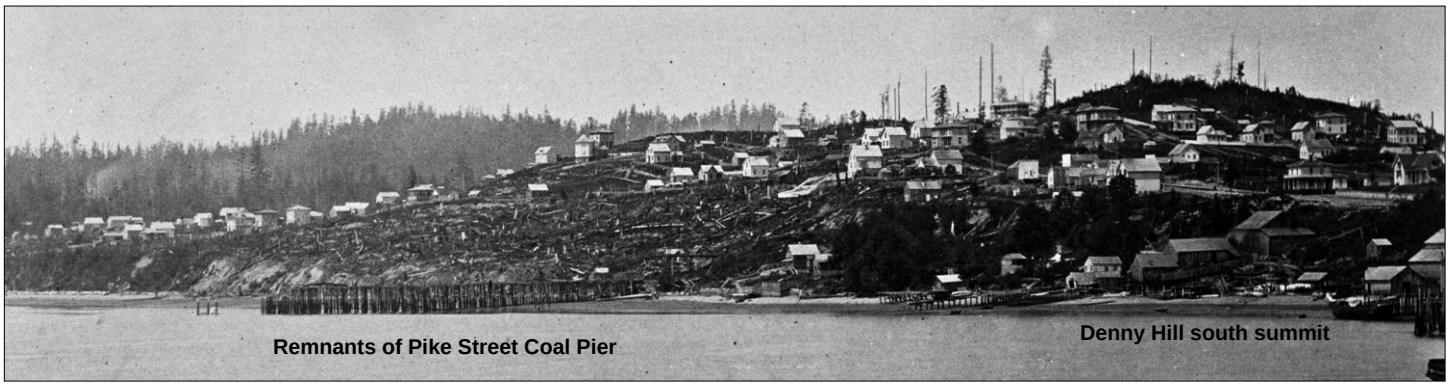
North of Union the bank became briefly a cliff. (In the panoramic photograph ca. 1881 **[31]** this section is darkened by its greenbelt. Although steep it can still support trees. In a detail from 1887 the cliff north of Union is exposed. **[34]**) A short distance north at Pike, the incline was again not so steep, and beginning with the Coal Railroad's incline in 1871 there have been a number of different hill climbs built at Pike. North of Pike near Virginia Street the bluff began to again define itself, and north from there it grew and reached a somewhat dangerous height approaching seventy feet at Lenora Street. **[35]** This was both railroad land and a squatter's milieu – as we will again note in detail below. Two or three steep stairways that resembled ladders climbed the bank in this section, making it possible for the agile to pass between the beachcomber's community on the shore and the shantytown on the ledge above them. North from between Lenora and Blanchard the elevation of the bank descended and again petered out before it reached Broad Street. Just north of Broad there was a small cove (the site of the Olympic Sculpture Garden), and it too was bordered by a new but modest bluff that continued with a few small dips north to Queen Anne Hill. There the terrain suddenly ascended to the forest that was dedicated in 1887 as Seattle's second public park, Kinnear Park.

Seneca St. Ravine

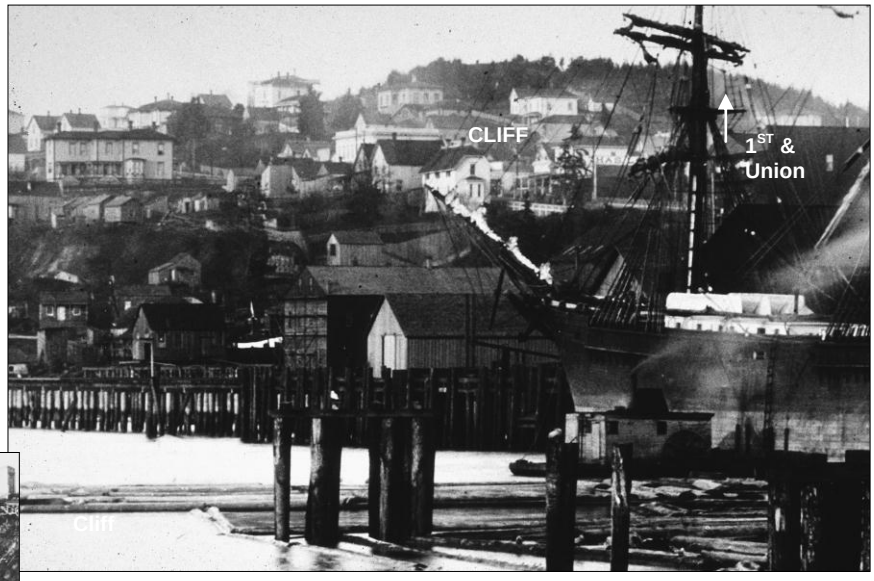
As already hinted two ravines – one small and one big – cut through this central waterfront bank, and both played special parts in Indian life both before and after the settlers arrived to both name and claim them. These ravines are now lost – filled-in and covered. The smaller one was at Seneca Street. In *This City of Ours,* a book of historical Seattle trivia written in the 1930s for the Seattle School District, J. Willis Sayers, the author, advised students that while out on a walking tour of First Avenue they should "stop a moment at Seneca Street. This crossing, in early days, was a bridge; under it was a ravine through which passed all the travel from this section of the beach to Second Avenue." It is curious that the aging Sayers, who was himself nearly a pioneer, did not note that just above the waterfront at Seneca there was also an Indian burial ground.

Indian Cemetery

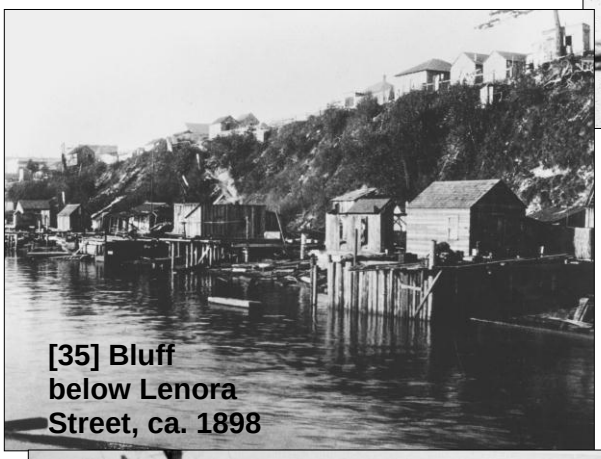
Years earlier another pioneer, A. Denny-Lindsley, included Seneca in her observations regarding early Seattle waterfront life for the June 22, 1906 issue of the *Post-Intelligencer*. "The Indian cemetery that was on a bluff at what is now the foot of Seneca Street was a spot of great interest to us children. The graves all had more or less of the personal belongings of the deceased on them. The graves were shallow and we saw many 'good Indians' who were mummified. A number of graves had roofs built over them of cedar slabs with posts driven at the four corners.



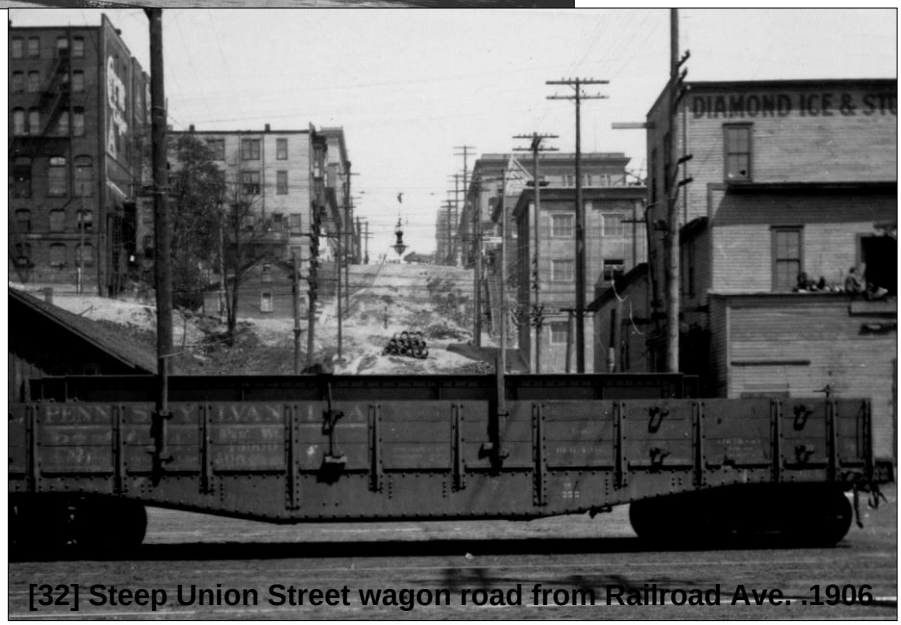
[31] Above: This ca 1881 pan of Denny Hill extends from the waterfront foot of University Street on the right to near Blanchard on the left. The two summits of Denny Hill are evident – "split" by Virginia Street. The ruins of the Pike Street pier enter the bay and above their outer end the bluff forms beneath Lenora Street. (The same bluff appears below with squatters shacks.) The greenbelt on the right hides the bluff north of Union Street.



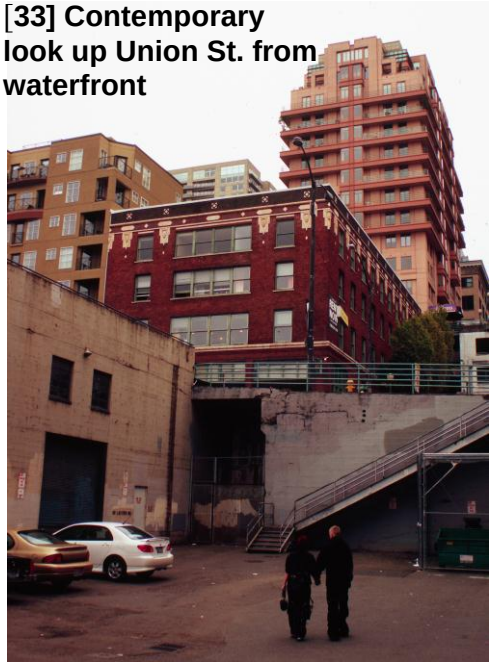
[34] Denny Hill (south summit) from Yesler Wharf 1887. The cliff north of Union Street is marked on the far left. Front St. (First Avenue) at Union is marked by the white line to the left of the tall ship's mast.



[35] Bluff below Lenora Street, ca. 1898



[32] Steep Union Street wagon road from Railroad Ave. .1906



[33] Contemporary look up Union St. from waterfront

These were hung with clothing, tinware, beads etc. Some of the bodies had been laid to rest wrapped in rush mats and canoes turned over them. Others were in the hollow trunks of large cedar trees. Infants were almost invariably entombed in this manner. When the banks would cave away during a thaw after a hard freeze it would expose bones and many stone implements and quantities of blue Hudson Bay beads. Some of these beads were the size of a robin's egg. They are very rare at the present day." The Denny daughter's description of the mortified Seneca is something of a rhetorical jumble as she concludes her description of the burial ground with a digression into pungency. "The Indian camps were not as sweet as clover beds, for the hundreds of drying salmon that were hung on poles over small fires and inside the mathouses, also the strings of clams, were very loud in odor."

It should be noted that while A. Denny-Lindsley does not mention the ravine, she does put a rather elaborate burial grounds both at the "foot of Seneca" and "on the bluff", not that there is a contradiction in her description, only some confusion. It is easiest to think of her graveyard as "on the bluff" and so really above the waterfront foot of Seneca. And yet the ravine would have considerably increased the footage available for anything including graves. And she does also make note that "the banks would cave away" from the gravesite. But when this sizeable funerary ground is mixed with Sayer's pioneer throughway, a bridge, and the spring that another source describes as sometimes irrigating the ravine (and surely through time forming it) it is difficult to know where to put it all. Certainly a mix of exposed graves, overturned canoes, spring freshets and tramping pedestrians would be messy in the extreme. When the "hollow trunks of large cedar trees" is figured in it seems likely that the daughter of David and Louisa Denny is making something of an inventory of gravesites scattered along the ridge. There certainly were other graves on the ridge besides those beside the Seneca ravine. For instance, during an early grading of First Avenue in 1876 a little ways north of Marion Street, according to David Buerge, an expert on the region's native culture, "a half-mummified body in a stone cyst tomb beneath a five-foot high grave mound" was uncovered. Native American bones were also uncovered during the Port of Seattle work on the Bell Street Harbor in the late 1990s although, as we will explain below, it is most likely that they were not buried there but rather carried there during an earlier development.

Front & Seneca

In 1876, when Seattle first got resolute about grading streets, it turned the natural ups and downs of Front Street (First Avenue north of Yesler) into one smooth and wide avenue between Yesler Way and Pike Street. For this the Seneca Avenue Ravine was partially filled and capped with the timber cribbing that was a feature of most of the new street work on First. (If there is a record of what became of the graveyard at Seneca during this work I have neither found it nor stumbled upon it.) Thirteen years later the city's "Great Fire" of 1889 burned through both the timber retaining wall and planking at Seneca Street exposing the ravine, or what remained of it, for as just noted most but not all of it had been filled for the 1876 regrade. (This scene will be visited and illustrated below with the exposition on the '89 fire.) Because the Front Street Cable Railway used its namesake avenue it received speedy attention after the June 6 fire. The *Times* for June 10 reported, "A large force of men are at work on the Front St. cable, near the crossing of Seneca. It was at this point that the

fire crossed over from the electric light building and burned the beer saloon on the northeast corner of Front and Seneca. The burned space in the road is about 50 feet." Also on the 10th the *Seattle Daily Press* noted, "Repairs on the Front St. cable road commenced yesterday. The bridge destroyed by the fire at Seneca Street was rebuilt, and in a few days new rails will arrive to replace those destroyed. It is thought in the course of a week the Front Street Cable cars will be running." In 1922, part of the bulkhead at Seneca Street was replaced. Much later, during work on the foundation for the Harbor Steps development between Seneca and University Street, parts of both the original 1876 bulkhead and its repairs following the '89 fire were once more exposed, to the considerable surprise and delight of the engineers involved. The general pioneer sweetness of this part of the waterfront – north of Columbia Street – was radically corrupted after the 1889 fire and became a cause of the Council. David Kellogg moved his tanning and hide depot onto the ruins and built a new waterfront warehouse between Seneca and University streets. On June 6, 1891, or two years to the day following the fire, the Post-Intelligencer reported Kellogg's depot had "caused many hot debates in the city council by its offensive odors." (Considering the graveyard at the ravine, followed by Kellogg and his rendering, any future archeological probing near the foot of Seneca may test the popular sense that the smell of a place is often the last thing to abandon it and be prepared for both the macabre and the noisome.)

Belltown Ravine

The second ravine that once interrupted the bank on the central waterfront was much the larger. Since it survived into the early 20th Century there are a number of photographs that hint of it, although none so far uncovered look directly into it from its mouth. The Belltown Ravine (the name I used while studying it for evidences of the source for the human bones uncovered during the construction of the Port of Seattle's Belltown Harbor in the late 1990s) was between Blanchard and Bell streets, somewhat closer to Bell. Topographic maps show the ravine extending as far east as First Avenue, a considerable distance from the Bay. **[36]** A photograph from the mid-1880s looks down from First Avenue over the inland end of the ravine into some fill dirt, which has been dumped perhaps from the 1882-83 regrading of First Avenue north of Pike Street. **[37]** An early description that appeared in the Post-Intelligencer for June 26, 1891 gives some indication of the depth of the ravine, or gulch as the reporter calls it, near Western Avenue, a block or more east of its opening. Under the title "A Boy's Great Fall", the report continues, "Yesterday afternoon about 3 o'clock the little 8-year-old son of Andre Mikulicich, fishmonger at 115 Bell Street, fell from the encased sewer pipe which extends across the gulch between Bell and Blanchard and Front and West Streets. The distance of the fall was nearly twenty-five feet. The casing is only eight inches wide, and the temptation to small boys to try to cross over the gulch on it is almost irresistible. It is about seventy-five feet long. It was thought for a time that the little fellow was killed, but he eventually regained consciousness and gives promise of living to a ripe old age yet."

Belltown Beach Squatters

Two partial views of the entrance to the Belltown Ravine were recorded from the offshore railroad trestle. Both show the community of squatters shacks nestled between a jerry-rigged seawall and the opening. (We will show the earlier view here and attach the later view, no. 212, in the "image stream" below.) **[38]** The earliest view dates from the late 1890s

and includes part of the bank that runs south from the ravine. The beginning of the south side of the ravine – the corner where the bank turns east into the ravine – shows on the far left of the photograph by the Norwegian photographer Andres Wilse. The second intimate view dates from about 1902 or 3 and looks over the same community of shacks, but in the opposite direction. Other photographs from the water and also from West Seattle are obscured at the ravine's lowest elevation where it meets the bay behind the railroad trestle. The ingenious cluster of squatters' shacks at the entrance was moved in 1903 with the beginning construction on the north portal to the railroad tunnel. At first, this did not change life deeper within the ravine. But soon during the various stages of the Denny Regrade the ravine was filled until it was closed off at its entrance with the 1912-14 extension of Elliott Avenue between Bell and Lenora Streets. The human remains that were found during excavations for the Port of Seattle's Bell Street project in 1998 were probably carried there in the fill that was used to extend Elliott Avenue across the opening of the ravine.

Native Bones

The bones were discovered near the south entrance to the ravine. Although there is considerable correspondence between the city and F. McLellan, the contractor who placed the 1912 fill, there is no record of where he got it. McLellan was required to find his own dirt and carry it to the site. Obviously, the shorter the distance he would have had to move it the less the expense. By 1912 the Denny Regrade had reach 5th Avenue and stopped. With the cutting, a temporary bluff was left along the east side of Second Avenue. The freshly graded land between First and Fifth Avenues was in many sections still in rough state. It is possible that McLellan may still have gotten much of his fill from the "rough edges" of the momentarily stalled Denny Hill regrade. The use of fill dirt from the Denny School site at Fifth and Battery for the 1914 construction of the Port of Seattle's off-shore headquarters at the foot of Bell Street indicated that it was still possible to take fill material from the regrade. A 1912 correspondence, between city engineer Dimock and a neighborhood property owner named Oldfield, is also suggestive. It regards the latter's willingness to sell cheap to the city fill which was conveniently near at hand for the Elliott Ave. project – some six or seven hundred yards of it. Oldfield writes, "If this should interest the contractor because of its nearness to where the arterial is required he can have the same at a very low figure." Dimock's answer is evidence of how little the city knew or recorded from where the fill in their improvement might come. "McLellan is required to supply all earth needed for fills on the same and it will be necessary for you to arrange with him. I will, however, transmit your letter to him for such action as he may think necessary."

BAHK-bah-kwhb - Muck-muck-wum

Soon after the bones were found and identified as most likely native remains it was speculated that they may be connected with Baq'baqwab (BAHK-bah-kwahb), the other Native American community on the central waterfront that was long in use before the mid-western farmers arrived. (We will refer to this as the "North Camp" to distinguish it from the larger south camp on Piners point already described.) The Lushootseed place name Baq'baqwab is the plural form of ba'qwab, 'meadow' and was associated with the meadows between Queen Anne Hill and the now-vanished Denny Hill that stretched from the bay to the southern end of Lake Union." As local historian

David Buerge notes, "The site was probably chosen because of its proximity to potable, fresh-water springs, draining from a nearby area know as boloc (bo-LOTS). That part of these meadows nearest Baq'baqwab was distinguished for its salal berries. This suggests that the beach site camp named for the meadows was not necessarily identified with the meadows broadly conceived (including the present site of Seattle Center) but rather an entree to them with the advantages of being near both the bay and springs. With this interpretation the beachside borders of Baq'baqwab were flexible, inflating and shrinking with whatever operations or rituals were current, like the acts of medicine men and bird-netters. (The first settlers on Puget Sound – by a few millenniums - had no tradition or use for arbitrary borders – legal and proprietary – that would so interest the latecomers from Illinois and New York. In that sense Baq'baqwab had no borders.)

Two daughters of the pioneers recalled the site. In *Pigtail Days in Old Seattle*, one of the little classics of pioneer reminiscences written by members of the Denny family, the author, Arthur and Mary Denny's granddaughter Sophie Frye Bass, recalls, "Bell Street ran from Depot Street, now known as Denny Way, to salt chuck (water) where the beach was fine and sandy, and there were springs of good water. It was one of the camping grounds of the Indians while they hunted and fished. They called it Muck-muck-wum but we call it Bell Street Dock." By Abbie Denny-Lindsey's recollections, "In Muck-muckum (Belltown) there was a permanent camp where the medicine man lived." Buerge advises that Bass and Lindsey-Denny's names -- Muck-muck-wum and Muck-muckum, respectively – were tongue-tortured variations on Baq-baqwab created by occidentals "struggling with the native language."

The structures that the Denny descendents remembered were not the long houses that were most likely built above the beach somewhere near the lip of the low bank but later beach structures. Native accounts put two medium-sized (50 to 100 feet) longhouses at this the northern of two native camps on the central waterfront. David Buerge continues, "While visitors increased the population at the site periodically, the longhouse inhabitants were permanent residents who, at death, were interred in an extensive local cemetery." However, Buerge also admonishes, "we know little about the actual history or size of Baq'baqwab even during the early years of pioneer settlement. The native census made in 1856 by Indian Agent George Paige identifies Cultus Curley's band encamped about one mile north of Seattle numbering 30." Buerge figures that "thirty inhabitants would have fit comfortably in the two longhouses described. However, these numbers probably swelled after the citizens of Seattle first incorporated themselves in 1865 and wrote laws that prevented the camping of Indians on any 'street, highway, lane or alley or any vacant lot in the town of Seattle.' With this exclusion by statute some of Duwamish Indians still living at Jijilalec, the southern camp, would have moved north to Baq'baqwab. It is believe that among the exiles was Chief Seattle who apparently had houses erected there to stay with his retinue when he was not at Fort Kitsap. However, since the Chief died in 1866 in the old man house at Suquamish it would not have been a long stay beside Bell Street. Eventually, his daughter lived in a shack near the waterfront foot of Pike Street."

Princess Angeline Shack

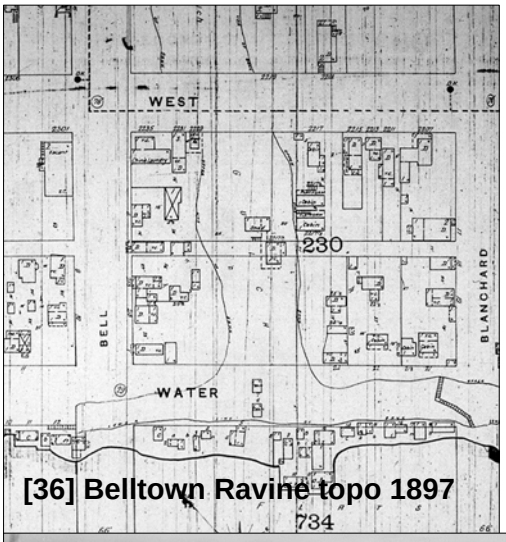
Some historical references to Angeline's beach shack put it near Pine Street but most describe it as closer to Pike than Pine. Most likely it was between them but closer to Pike or some little ways north of the lowest steps in the stairway that now reaches the market. As noted earlier, this slope was a little ways south of the point where the bluff near Virginia Street began to form extending north as far as Vine Street (with the Belltown Ravine interruption.) And as also treated above – and will be noted again below – this natural separation also began the division of the beachcombers below from the higher – in elevation and income – residents of Shantytown above. But without a bluff Shantytown extended to the beach on Pike Street. In 1890 the *Northern Pacific* photographer F. J. Haynes visited Angeline and her hut and its proximity to the beach (far left) is revealed in the photograph he recorded of the scene. **[39]** In 1891, her prosperous neighbor on First Avenue, the lumberman Amos Brown, built her a better hut that was likely very near the spot of the old one. **[40]** (Determining the precise location for the Angeline home is as yet an unsolved puzzle. And was the second home built on the site of the first? Before his sudden death in 2001Seattle historian Michael Cirelli was on the trail of Angeline's home. He was not able to show me a photograph he'd found of her second residence that he claimed included the stump that appears on the right of the Haynes view. Up close a stump could be as convincing as a finger print, but this was a neighborhood of shacks and stumps. A recent discovery may have located Angeline's last home but cannot be shared with Cirelli. Angeline's "Brown home" may appear in a view recorded from the Schwabacher's Dock at the foot of Union Street after her death. The two finished sheds look alike and the place is within feet of the conventional descriptions just noted. **[41]** This image was struck during the historic docking of the "gold ship" Portland in 1897. Although Angeline died the previous year someone else, perhaps her grandson Joe Foster who had lived with her may have still resided there. That may be Foster on the far right of the Haynes view.)

Migrant Fill & Bones-2

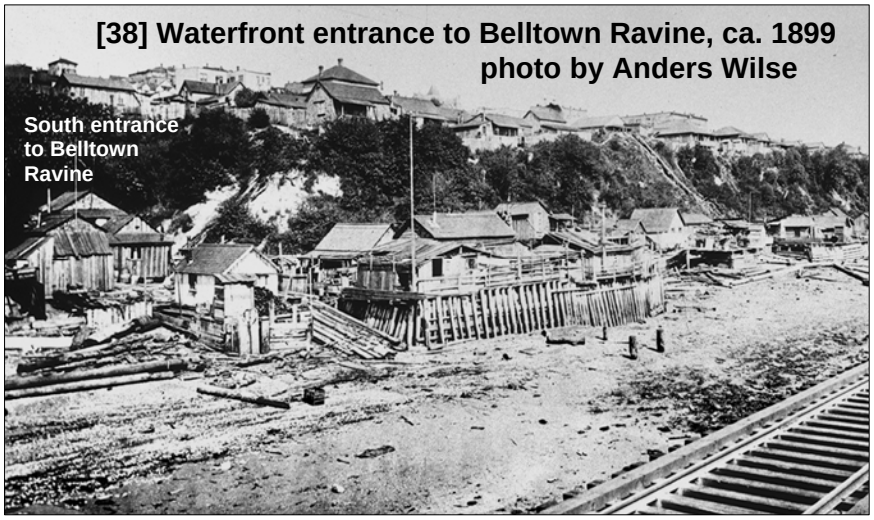
Picking up the bones again, David Buerge suggests that with the 1865 expulsion and restricted access to their traditional cemetery at Seneca Street, the native people "are likely to have attempted to establish another cemetery further north. Traditionally, native funeral grounds were situated north or west of house sites." Since Elliott Bay is west of Baq'baqwab, Buerge's burial ground may have been somewhere north of Bell Street. As noted earlier, in public works like the walling off of the Belltown Ravine for the Elliott Avenue extension in 1912-14 the fill that comes from nearby is obviously favored over dirt got from more remote locations. Consequently the bones found in the 1912-14 fill may have come from a native gravesite associated with the Baq'baqwab camp but not directly at it. This explanation would make the earlier placing of the bones with the fill an ironic instance of the "return of the native" – this native – to his or her home. By about the late 1880s Buerge notes "burials would have been carried out in reservation cemeteries or in more isolate, outlying spots."

Trail to Lake Union

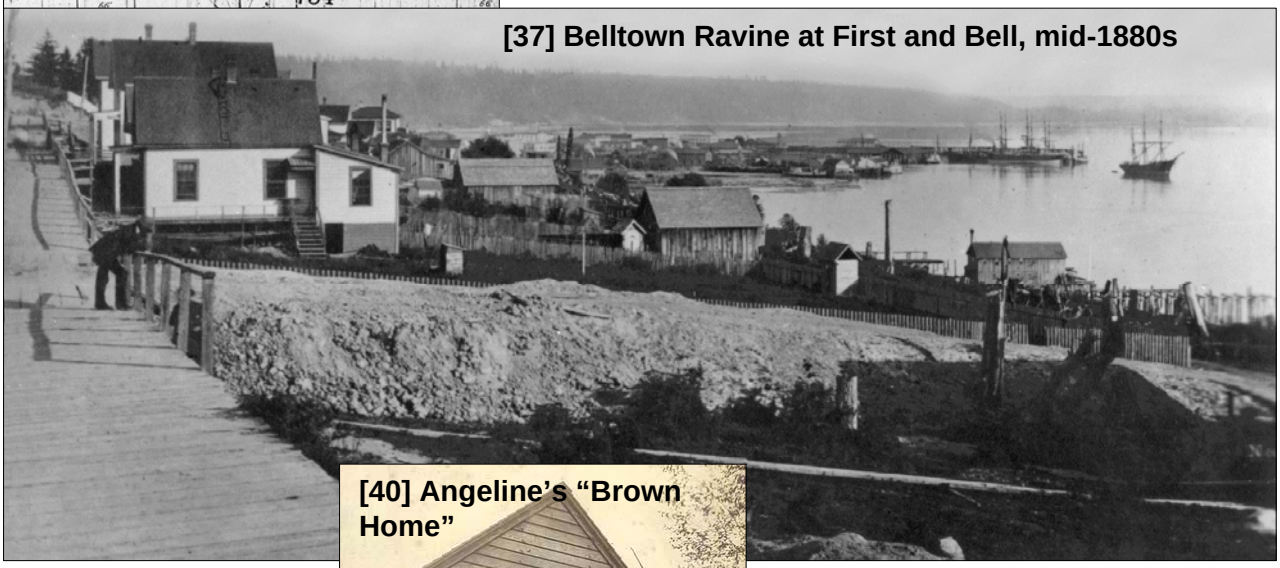
The Belltown Ravine was apparently spring fed in season and allowed an easier access to the hill above the waterfront. (Or did it? The bluff was not so high at the south entrance to the Ravine, and a path can be seen, right of center, ascending the bank at that point in the ca.1902 photograph from the



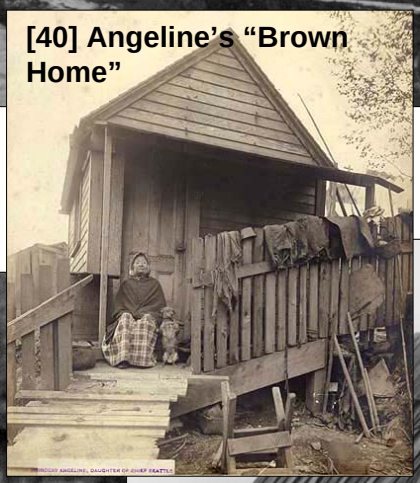
[36] Belltown Ravine topo 1897



[38] Waterfront entrance to Belltown Ravine, ca. 1899
photo by Anders Wilse

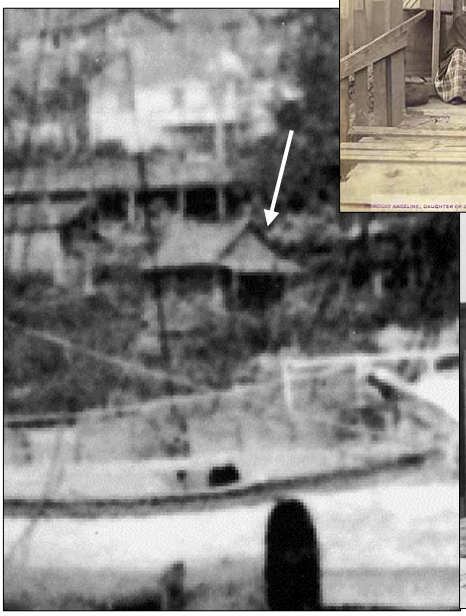


[37] Belltown Ravine at First and Bell, mid-1880s



[40] Angeline's "Brown Home"

[41] Perhaps Angeline's "Brown Home" 1897



[39] Princess Angeline home 1891, by F. J. Haynes

railroad trestle shown earlier. Still, trails that follow the easier grade along a verdant ravine obviously have their appeal and are commonplace even when not especially needed.) Buerge notes that a feature of the north camp was "a trail that left the beach and connected with the southwestern end of Lake Union." Such a trail has been marked on the federal topographical map surveyed in the mid-1870s – the map described above. Perhaps even more than the spring of fresh water the path would seem to center the Baq'baqwab site. Buerge points out that "informants in this century remembered when parties left their canoes on Lake Union's shore and walked the trail over to the bay." In this line (or path) the pioneer William N. Bell, Belltown namesake, concluded his 1878 interview with a H.H. Bancroft researcher from California with a suggestive recollection about the trail to Lake Union. "Boren and I, I suppose, were the two first white men that were ever at Lake Union. Shortly after we had agreed to take our claims here (early in 1852) Boren and I came here and happened to land at the end of the trail that went to the lake, and we just went over. The Indians told us there was a little lake there, and also a big lake."

1880s Belltown Beach Community

After the Battle of Seattle in 1856 the Bell family fled to California and left their land in the stewardship of those who stayed in spite of the uncertainties and regional chill that followed. When William Bell returned for good to his claim in the mid-1870s, he was soon acting the landlord as he promoted his "North Seattle" or "Belltown." The proprietor back on his hill may have hastened another native diaspora, this one at the north camp, Baq'baqwab. Buerge again: "One group appears to have resettled at the south eastern shore of Lake Union until burned out in 1875, while another moved north to the lighthouse at West Point. The houses of Baq'baqwab appear to have been moved off the bluff and down onto the beach." For that period of the late 1870s and early 1880s there is little photographic evidence of Baq'baqwab beach, aside from panoramas recorded from the King Street Coal Wharf. One from the early 1880s shows two beach huts to the north of the entrance to the Belltown Ravine. **[42-43]** Another detail from the late 1880s includes the "cubist" or architectural shapes of beach shacks (mostly their roofs) above the interrupting Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Trestle that in 1887 was built just off shore along the waterfront. **[44]** Consequently, as already observed, the trestle generally obscures the beach. A few photographs of a beach community there survive from the late 1880s and after. They show mostly tents and draped lean-tos. **[45]**

By the time that seasonal migrations of native workers to the hop fields of the White River (Green River) Valley began in the 1880s, as Buerge notes, the beachside "remnant of Baq'baqwab became the focus of large seasonal encampments when native agricultural workers congregated there and to the south at Ballast Island." (As will be described and illustrated below this was the island made from ships ballast, which during its few years of supplying a campground for the migrant Indians was also a parody of their former winter camp on what Wilkes named Piners Point. In the late 1880s, when Ballast Island was formed and first used by the itinerates, their former winter camp of Jijila'lec with its long houses and ceremonies would have still been easily remembered and vividly recalled for those too young or too new to remember it.) With the failure of hop agriculture in the White and Snoqualmie River valleys in the early 1890s, the native

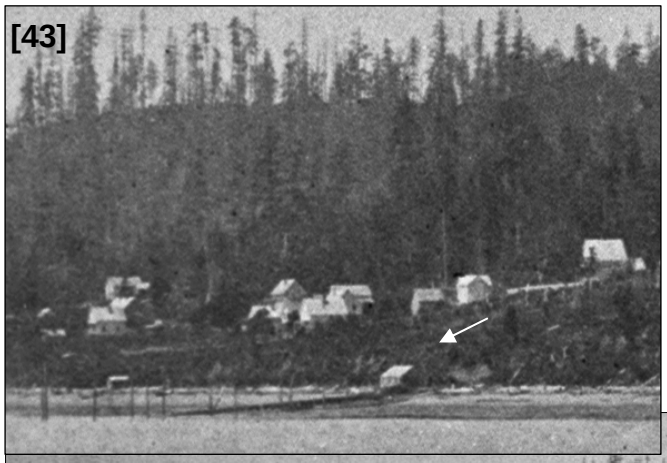
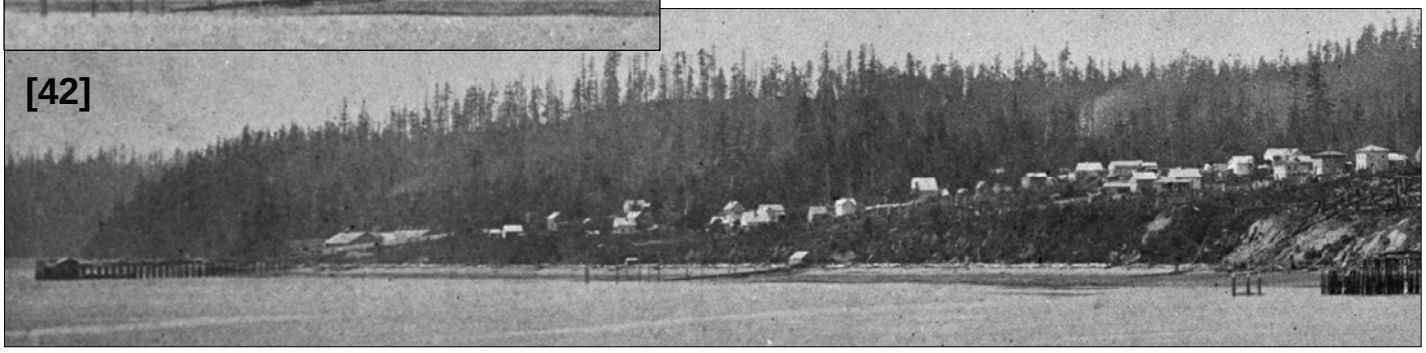
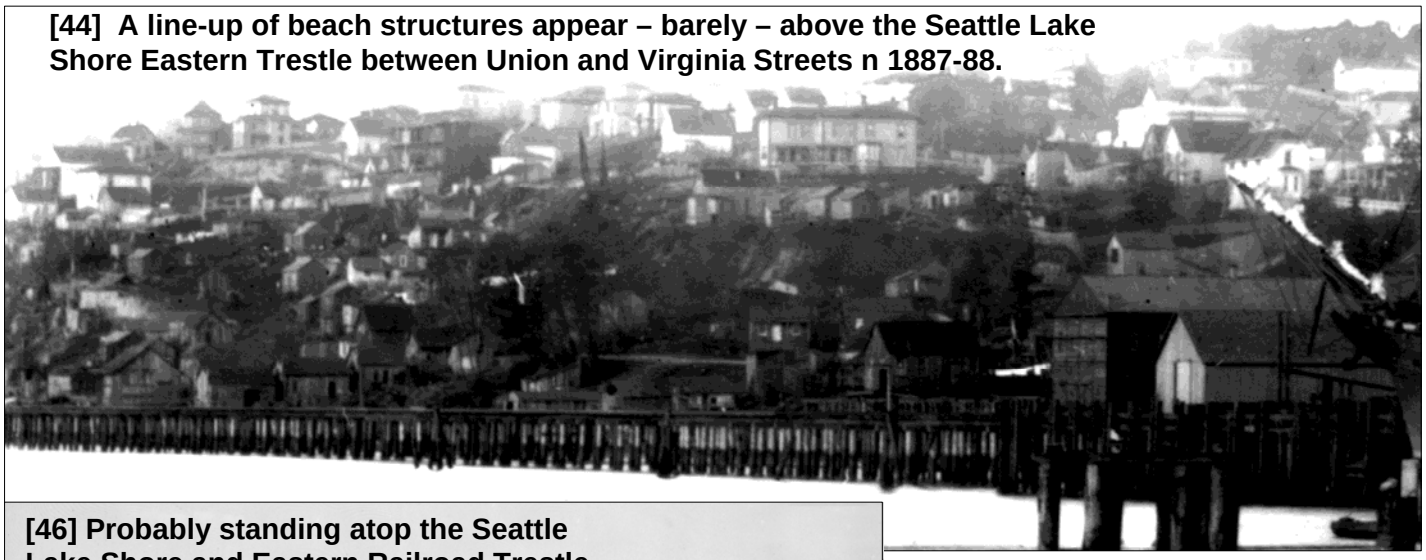


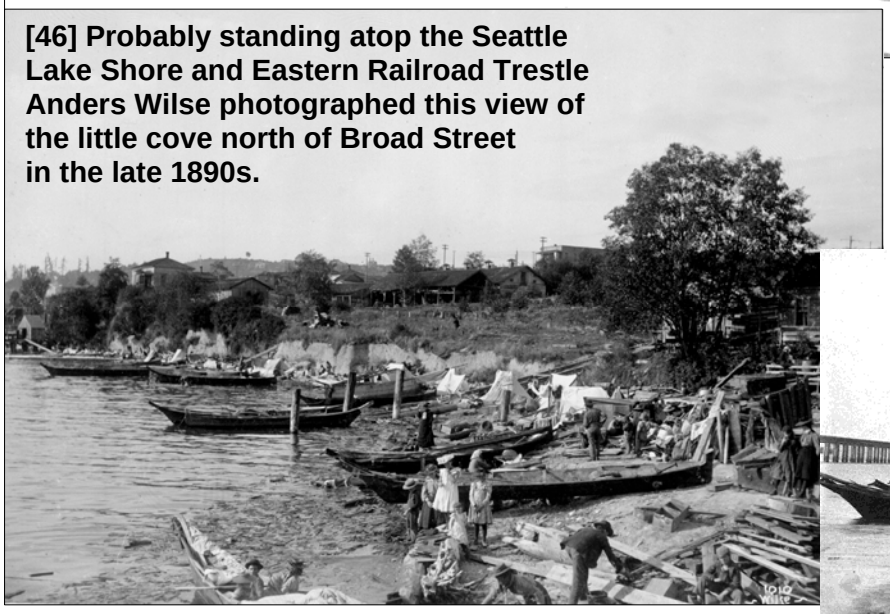
Illustration #43 is, of course, a detail of #42, and both are taken from a five-part panorama photographed from the King Street Coal Pier most likely in 1881. The outer end of the Pike Street Pier ruins appear on the far right of #42 and so is a continuation of view #31 printed above. The larger of the only two beach structures shown here on the north beach appears outfitted with a dock resting on the sands at low tide. The pier on the far left serviced a barrel factory located on Broad Street.



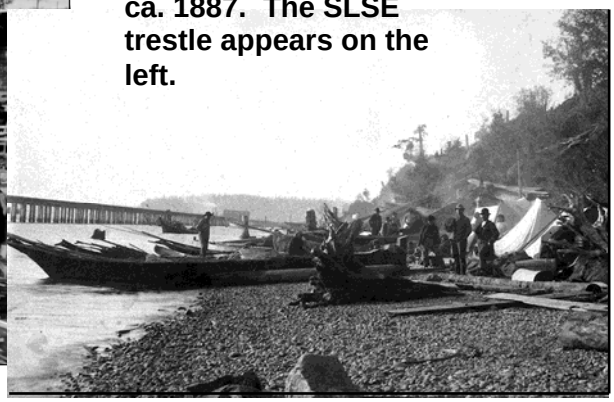
[44] A line-up of beach structures appear – barely – above the Seattle Lake Shore Eastern Trestle between Union and Virginia Streets n 1887-88.



[46] Probably standing atop the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad Trestle Anders Wilse photographed this view of the little cove north of Broad Street in the late 1890s.



[45] The beach community below the Denny Hill most likely north of Battery Street, ca. 1887. The SLSE trestle appears on the left.



encampments at and near Baq'baqwab also dispersed. In their place, especially after the economic panic of 1893 extended into a depression, the new community of squatter's shacks described earlier was built along the beach below Denny Hill. This community was a polyglot of natives and down-and-out immigrants – mostly the latter.

Baqbaqwab Suburbs & the Seattle Center Swale

We may note that the Baq'baqwab community, the north camp, had what may be considered its own northern suburbs. The 1899 view recorded by Anders Wilse looks at a summer camp in the small bay north of Broad Street. **[46]** But the north camp once extended at least as far as Harrison Street, where nets were set up to catch fowl that flying between the Bay and Lake Union, passed low over the swale that once dipped between Queen Anne and Denny Hills. (This future site of Seattle Center is also described in tribal memory as a potlatch grounds.) As late as 1961, on the eve of the 1962 Century 21 Worlds Fair, Seattle Times reporter Charlotte Widrig interviewed William Criddle, a relatively late settler, about life on the beach below Seattle Center. "William was two in 1889 when his father Frederick J. Criddle, a shipwright, brought his wife and six children here from Cornwall, England and settled on the bay at the foot of Mercer Street (below Kinnear Park) . . . One of the early day sights Criddle recalled was a row of Indian tents stretched for a mile along the beach near his home, where Indians from Bellingham and other northerly regions camped while en route to harvest the hop crops in the White River Valley. 'My brother and I liked to visit the camp and sometimes did a little trading. One of the items we acquired was a dugout canoe. Elliott Bay was alive with salmon in the fall. When I was about 9 years old, my brother frequently took me fishing in the dugout.' "

1869: The Robinson Panorama

The earliest photographic record of the beach and bluff of the Baq'baqwab site is included in the 1869 panorama (often alluded to above and now considered in some detail) of the community and its central waterfront. The beach below Bell Street is some distance from Robinson's prospect and so not the sharpest of subjects in the panorama. We will return to a consideration of this part after first examining the photograph for other revelations – especially those involving the waterfront.

The photographer George Robinson, a 44 year-old "Victorian" from British Columbia, was a multi-talented (photography, dentistry, and the managing of mines) enthusiast who purchased his photographic equipment in an auction five years before his Seattle visit (it turned out that his gear had previously been stolen by the consignor) and opened a photographic gallery in Victoria. In the spring of 1869 Robinson announced that he was leaving his gallery to concentrate on dentistry (the man knew how to use his hands) but several photographs of his date from 1869 or later, including his four Seattle views that when knit together become the single the most revealing photograph of pioneer Seattle extant. **[47]**

William H. Seward's visit on the *Wilson G. Hunt*, July 21, 1869.

Robinson dated his Seattle panorama 1869. We may want to narrow it to July 21st or 22nd. "Big Night on the Waterfront" is how the local *Gazette* described the visit of U.S. Secretary

of the Interior William H. Seward to Seattle on July 21, 1869. It was the Seward whose grandest "folly", some of his contemporaries claimed, was to purchase Alaska from the Russians. While en route to inspect this chilled and sprawling purchase Seward stopped off at Seattle and made a speech for the citizenry that assembled at Yesler's Wharf to get a good look at Lincoln's appointee and savor his compliments. And Seward did boom for and about them, advising the community that Washington Territory's was a "glorious future." Seward came and went on the sturdy steamer *Wilson G. Hunt*. It had been freshly delivered to Victoria from the Columbia River in part as an attempt to break the monopoly of the *Eliza Anderson*, and its runners were probably pleased to get the Seward assignment because their *Hunt* was not doing so well against the *Anderson*. Almost certainly that is also the *Hunt* pulling away from Yesler Dock. Although her name cannot be read, that is the shape of her. Clearly if Robinson arrived in Seattle from Victoria with Seward he did not leave with him. Robinson took his photograph from a second floor window of the Snoqualmie Hall (AKA Plummer's Hall) at the southwest corner of Commercial (First Avenue S.) and Main streets. Most likely he timed his panorama to include the hometown steamer leaving Seattle without him. (Robinson would have timed the opening of his shutter with the departure. Consequently, of the four negatives the one on the far left with the ship may well have been struck first.) Two additional Seattle subjects survive from Robinson's visit. One is of Commercial Street from the street and the other a view to the central waterfront from the end of Yesler's dock. We will consider both below.

Yesler's Wharf

Because of Robinson's timing we know that this is what Seward saw on his Seattle whistle stop. Excepting the wharf on which he delivered his pep talk, the structures in the village and the few cleared acres that were still crowded by the virgin forest, most of what he examined -- the waterfront especially – had not been tampered with much since the visits of Wilkes in 1841, the settlers in 1852 the Coast Surveyors in 1854 and in 1856 that self-style heroic defender of Seattle, Lieu. Phelps, U.S. Navy. However, Seattle would change considerably in 1869, after Seward was gone. The biggest changes were Yesler's. He replaced his old steam sawmill of '53 with a new and improved one, and this time much of it was built on the wharf. This second of Yesler's mills burned down in 1879 but was replaced with a mill that lasted until another fire took it in 1887. Although Yesler's was the first steam sawmill on Puget Sound in 1853, by 1855 there were twenty of them operating on the "Mediterranean of the Pacific", and some were many times bigger than Yesler's. Also as noted above, especially after he extended its length in 1859 to 200 feet, Yesler's wharf became the hub of much Puget Sound commerce. A year later he opened a gristmill to produce floue and by 1867 was getting 24 barrels of flour a day. Yesler's wharf helped Seattle get its jump on the "old wealth" that would sustain the city during the economic crashes that were arranged down the years with depressing rhythm in 1873, 1883, and 1893 – especially 1893. Then, as noted earlier, the singular and so more vulnerable wealth of the company town Tacoma was not so resilient. (That the next big recession came in 1907 – not 1903 – added some syncopation to this blues calendar.) According to Seattle's principal pioneer historian Clarence Bagley, for many of the earliest years of settlement "Yesler's wharf was all that was needed. Plummer's at Main fell into disuse and decay." As is revealed in the surviving photograph of Plummer's Snoqualmie Hall (on the left) the

flume, like the one showing in the 1859 photograph of the Yesler Home noted above, carried water to supply ships at a wharf that resembles more a dock than a pier. **[48]**

Sammis Panorama Ca.1865

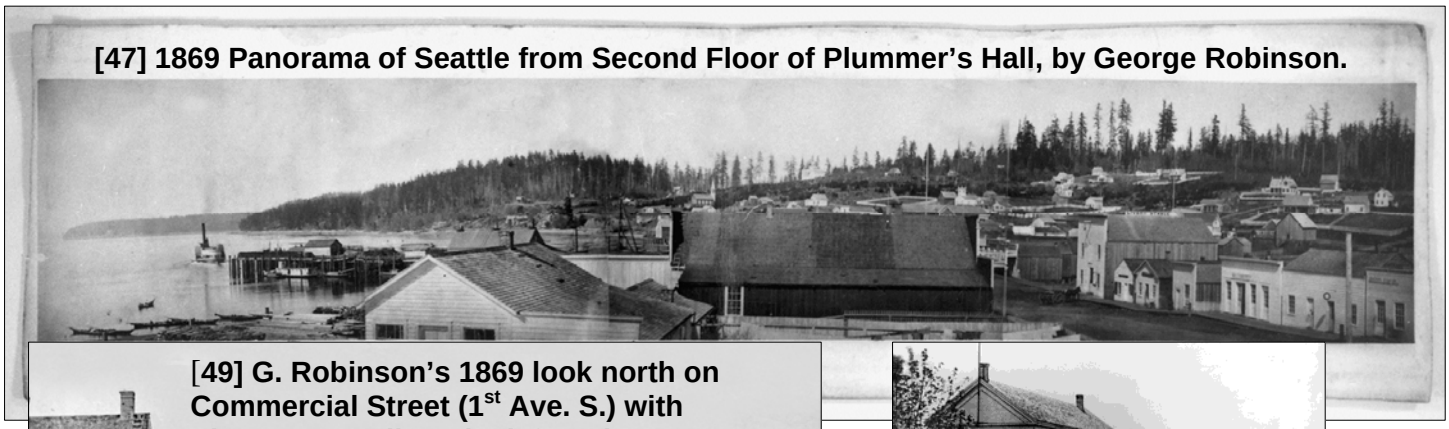
Besides its extraordinary sharpness – one can count the trees on Denny Hill – as noted Robinson's is the first photographic record of Yesler's wharf. His panorama also includes the first picture of any vessel on Elliott Bay (again, the *Hunt*), and most of the central waterfront as far north as Broad Street. The closest features on the waterfront are the Indian dugouts at the foot of Washington, far left, beside the then still future site of Ballast Island. The businesses, far right, on Commercial Street appear in the other and earlier panorama of pioneer Seattle by E. M. Sammis (note above) that is conventionally dated 1865 but may be from 1864. **[12]** Sammis also exposed his smaller view from Snoqualmie Hall, although he climbed the ladder on its south roof to the crest of the building. (During Robinsons 1869 visit he also made a street level record of Commercial Street that was photographed looking north with his back to Jackson Street. **[49]** It shows the ladder that Sammis climbed up the south side of the roof of Plummer's Hall.) When Commercial Street is compared between the two panoramic views – Sammis most likely from 1865 and Robinson from 1869 -- it is clear that little has changed in the generally dull first years following the Civil War. But, as noted, the last months of 1869 made it Seattle's first boom year.

1869: First Boom Year

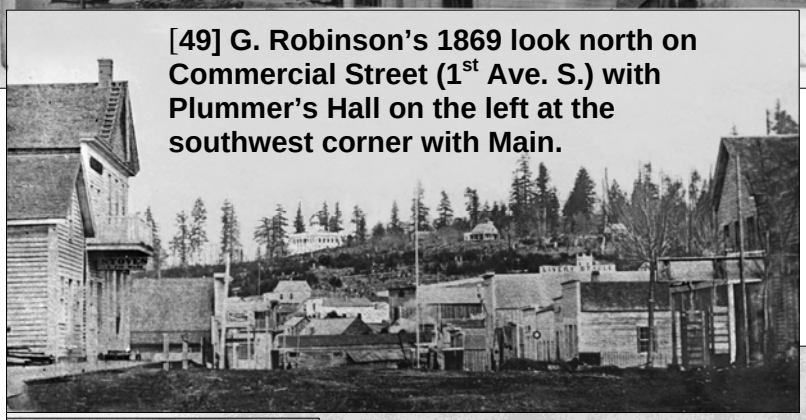
A review of the "local joy" of 1869 includes Seattle's second but first successful incorporation and the considerable rise in real estate values attendant with the Northern Pacific's survey of Snoqualmie Pass. At the time this work strongly hinted that at last Isaac Stevens 1855 recommendation would be heeded -- that Seattle be selected for the western terminus of any transcontinental railroad that took the northern route. (Of course that railroad would also get much of the territory along the way with huge land grants on the promise to reach the shores of Puget Sound.) Stevens called Elliott Bay Puget Sound's "unequalled harbor." (Now Tacoma might make a good defense of Commencement Bay as "more unequalled.") The most immediately influential change region-wide in 1869 was the completion of the *Union* & *Central Pacific* railroads to California. The rush of immigrants – including many traumatized Civil War vets carrying land privileges with them – inevitably pushed in all directions, including north, along the coast. Also, we know, the California railroad soon became a great consumer of Seattle coal.

Denny Home at First & Union & Beach Below

Robinson's view also includes one landmark in the middle distance – Arthur and Mary Denny's Carpenter Gothic home. Knowing that it sat at the southeast corner of First and Union it can also be used as a which was then very much at the border. Knowing the corner is a handy reference to the waterfront. **[50]** Below the Denny home, the 1869 panorama shows a rare structure on the beach at the approximate waterfront foot of Union Street. Looking further up the waterfront in Robinson's 1869 panorama, the beach does not seem to be sited with the structures of any settlement or shore. Still, small tents and lean-tos on that distant beach may be too small to record with definition. What

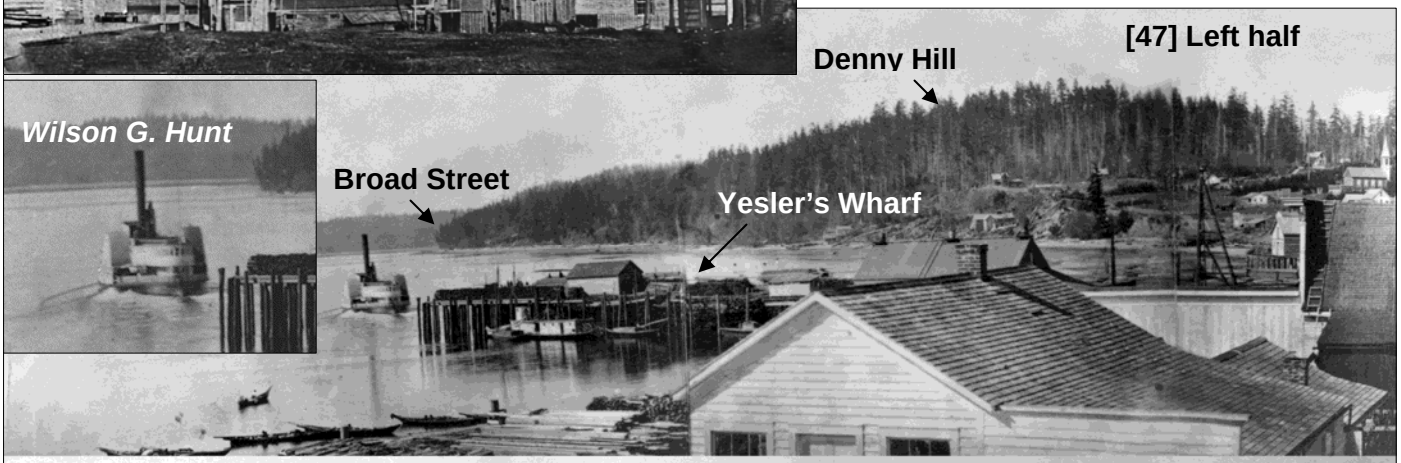


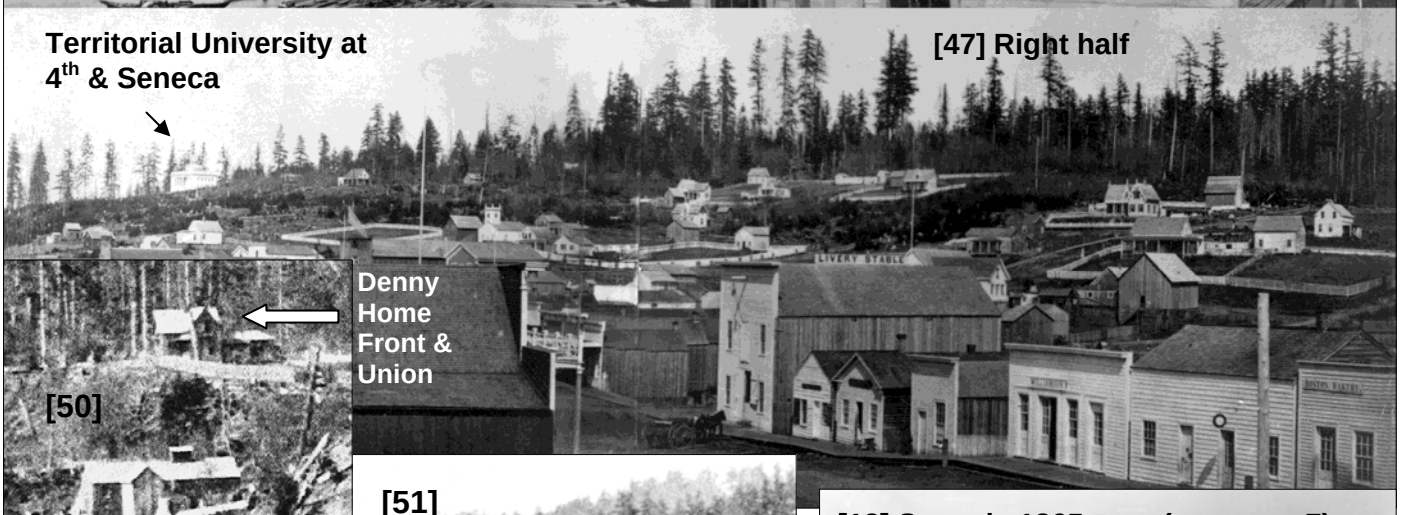
[47] 1869 Panorama of Seattle from Second Floor of Plummer's Hall, by George Robinson.

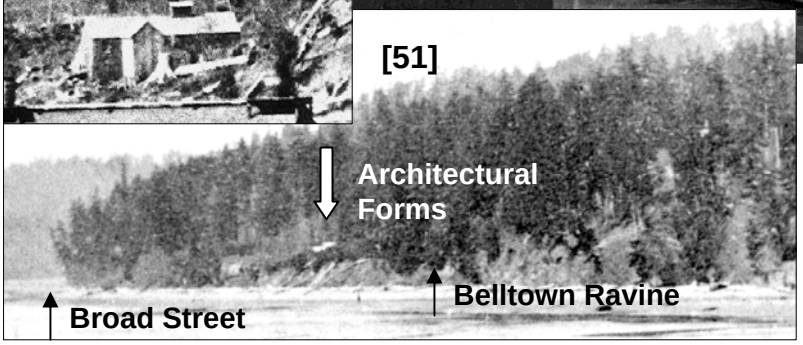


[49] G. Robinson's 1869 look north on Commercial Street (1st Ave. S.) with Plummer's Hall on the left at the southwest corner with Main.

[48] Plummer's Hall, Commercial St. & Main St. (AKA Snoqualmie Hall)







[12] Sammis 1865 pan: (see page 7)

appears to be driftwood may in some instances be shelters. Although relatively detailed for its size and age, the panorama is still constructed from small negatives.

North End Mystery

The Robinson pan includes a north end mystery: two light-colored architectural forms on the bank above the beach. **[51]** If I have figured it correctly they are near Battery Street and so also very near the site of the Bell family's first cabin. (The Bell cabin was destroyed by Indians in the 1856 "Battle of Seattle." During the fighting it was visible from the Decatur and the sailors regretfully watched its destruction. When they were ready to shell the house the captain of the ship gave an order to stop all firing. As Bell later recalled, "The men were awfully displeased about the order, because they would have bursted (sic) some of them if they had put a shell in.") While the forms are too simple and distant to identify they look more artificial than natural. Whatever the are, they are unique – the only light and horizontal forms north of the beach structures just noted near the foot of Union Street. (If the reader has trouble detecting them, the forms begin in the foreground with the little steamer that is moored to the south side of Yesler Wharf. From its wheelhouse, lift the eye directly up to the distant beach. There the forms are set in darker vegetation just above the exposed bank that rises from the beach. A little ways to the right of the mysterious forms the darkened landscape dips to the beach. If I have done my figuring correctly, this is the entrance to the Belltown Ravine.)

The mid-1870s topographical map (noted above) also shows what appear to be two structures on the lip of the bluff near the future foot of Battery Street – although about one city block separates the rectangular marks in the map, which is more than the photograph suggests. Again David Buerge offers an interpretation for the photograph and perhaps for the map as well. "I would suggest that the double structure in the Robinson panorama may be the two standing long walls of a longhouse, minus its roof planks and side walls, part of whose length may be hidden by vegetation. The evidence is that the picture was taken during the summer, which was when the people were off at various camps. It was not uncommon for them to remove planks from their house to use in constructing a deck joining two canoes to help haul gear and for temporary lodging at these camps." So by Buerge's figuring it is then at least a possibility that these gray-white forms that contrast so strikingly with their dark setting, are the reflective sides of aging and silvered cedar slabs and/or posts associated with the construction of long houses. (Another less distinguished form in this neighborhood at least hints at the angles of construction. It appears north of the stepping forms and is also a lighter color than the surrounding bank, although not lighter than the beach.)

Turn at Broad Street

Farther north the greenbelt seems to conclude with a profile made from trees leaning towards Elliott Bay. **[see 51]** This is where the shoreline turns to the east (or north) just far enough to give this modest point near the future foot of Broad Street more prominence than it actually owns. (If Robinson had taken this photo from the deck of the *Hunt,* the point would probably be missed because the shoreline beyond the point could be seen from the where the steamer is found in the photograph. From the *Hunt* the greenbelt would seem continuous although of a lower altitude below the swale that lay between Queen Anne and Denny Hills. The reader

using a straight edge and a map of Seattle can easily verify this point about the deceptive point at Broad Street. Near one end place the straight edge half way between First Ave. S. and Alaskan Way on Main Street – Robinson's prospect. Keeping this point fixed or stationary pivot the same side of the straight edge or ruler so that it touches the intersection of Alaskan Way and Broad Street. You will note that the waterfront north of Broad Street runs generally parallel with the straight edge. Consequently from Robinson's second floor prospect it is just barely lost to view.)

The first U.S. topographical map of Seattle from the mid 1870s (already noted several times) shows this slight turn in the waterfront to be near Eagle and Bay Streets or just north of the foot of Broad Street. In the photograph where the waterfront reaches Broad Street, the bank or bluff has petered out and the darker vegetation that reaches the beach is – to reiterate – marked by the leaning tree at Broad Street or very near it. This leaning tree has a curious correspondence with the topographical map of a few years later. By the mid-1870s the lean in the tree at Broad may have managed to bend so close to the water that it was chosen as a defining landmark by the cartographer. It is marked on another printing of the map.

1870: Census

Before we follow Robinson to the northern edge of Yesler's wharf to study his other view of the Seattle waterfront, we may speculate on how many locals made it to the wharf on the 21st of July to survey Seward. Most likely a telegram prepped them that he was on his way. The 1870 census for King County counted 2164 persons of who 243 were Indians. (Some of them may have been living on or above the beach on Bell's then inactive claim.) In Seattle there were 1142 inhabitants including whites, blacks, Chinese and Indians. Walla Walla with 1394 inhabitants was the largest town in the Territory and its namesake county was the most populated as well. (Walla Walla kept this distinction throughout the 1870s and was again slightly more populated in 1880 than Seattle figured by the Federal census that year. However, it was a distinction lost to Seattle – by estimates – the following year.) In 1870 Washington territory in all had 23,955 residents. It is left to the reader to approximate how many of Seattle's 1100-plus citizens made it down to the dock for Seward, but almost certainly a few hundred pulled themselves away from their home entertainment centers to attend.

1869: Robinson's View from Yesler's Wharf

George Robinson's second view of Seattle was photographed from near the end of Yesler's Wharf and on its north side. **[52]** It looks across Yesler's millpond to Front Street (First Avenue) between Columbia Street on the far right and Madison Street on the far left. Although Front still generally follows the contours of the native land, it has been graded for wagons, and the scrapings from the street can be clearly seen between it and the waterfront. What is perhaps most startling about this earliest view of the central waterfront is how the bay nearly reaches Front Street. At a not very high tide it would have flooded the narrow Post Alley that was developed a half block west of Front Street on fill and pilings following the city's 1889 fire.

The white classical symmetry of the Territorial University sits left of center on the horizon. To the left and below it is Rev. Daniel Bagley's "Brown Church" at the northwest corner of Second Avenue and Madison Street. The stain on the lower rear wall of the church is darker than it appears in Robinson's panorama where it is two toned. So surprisingly the photographer recorded this scene and the merged panorama on different visits. A study of the trees on the horizon (their branches perform like fingerprints) shows that the panorama is the later view. One sizeable tree that appears in the view from the wharf is missing in the panorama from Plummer's Hall. A residence also appears in the panorama that is not included in the view from Yesler's Wharf. Historian David Buerge's stone-covered tomb that was uncovered beneath a burial mound near Front Street and a little ways north of Marion Street is still covered and undetected in Robinson's photograph. From Buerge's description, in this 1869 view the mound is most likely somewhere near the shed on the left that is built in part over the beach. Marion Street ends at Front Street on the rise just left of center. In 1872 the town's first "pleasure garden", a landscaped bower with hanging lanterns and beer, was developed on the hillside a little ways west of Madison Street and east of 2nd, or directly to the far side of the church seen here. Sited between the Methodists and the University, the garden completed in one line the trinity of basic human needs – mind, soul, and refreshments.

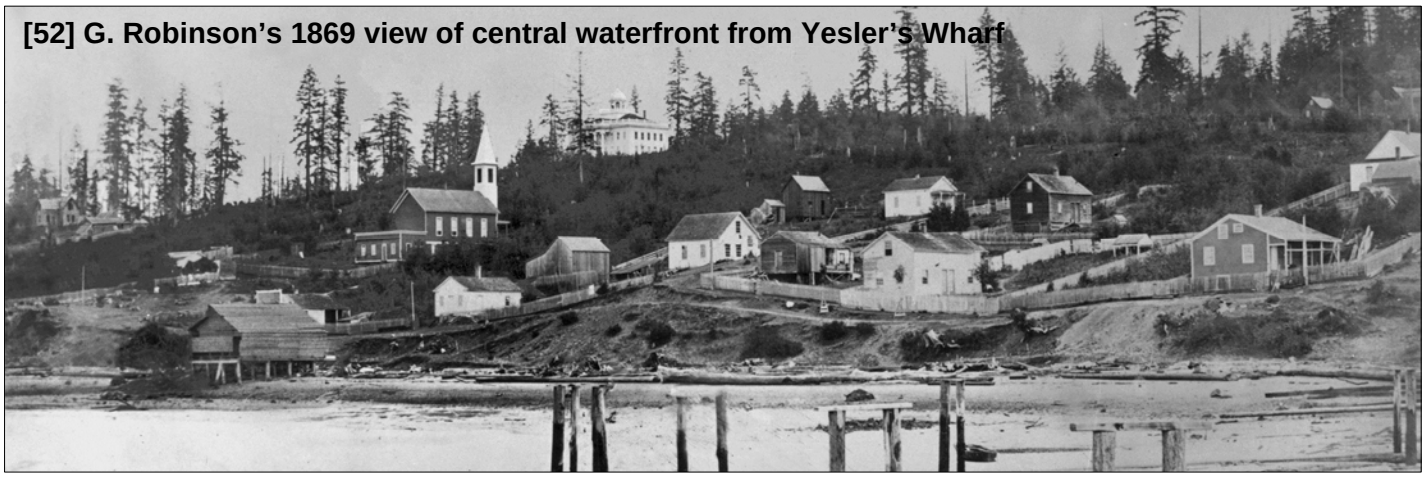
If taxing and fees are reliable signs of a community's priorities, in 1869, the first year of its new status as a chartered municipality, Seattle considered the requirements of its streets more fundable than its dogs, and they dearer than its deaths. General taxes collected amounted to $494.23. However more than three times that amount was got from a designated "road tax": $1601. Dog licenses yielded $119.50, an impressive sum when it is considered that only $47 was gained from cemetery lots. The figure contributed from theatricals, only $20, is a dour sign of the part played by the professional performing arts in the still teenage community.

1878: Peterson Bros. View from Yesler's Wharf

In 1878 the north end of Yesler's Wharf was chosen again as a prospect from which to look back at the central waterfront. This time it yielded the next grand panorama of Seattle. **[53]** Much has changed including the end of Yesler's Wharf, lengthened with a dogleg to the north. From this extended platform the Territorial University is left of the Brown Church, not to the right as in Robinson's view. The Methodists have also added a second floor to their sanctuary for a Knights of Pythius meeting hall whose rituals had a southern exposure through the Mansard windows in the new roof. The photographer for this and many of the best surviving early photographs of Seattle was the Peterson Bros studio. (Detail between Columbia & Madison - **[54]**)

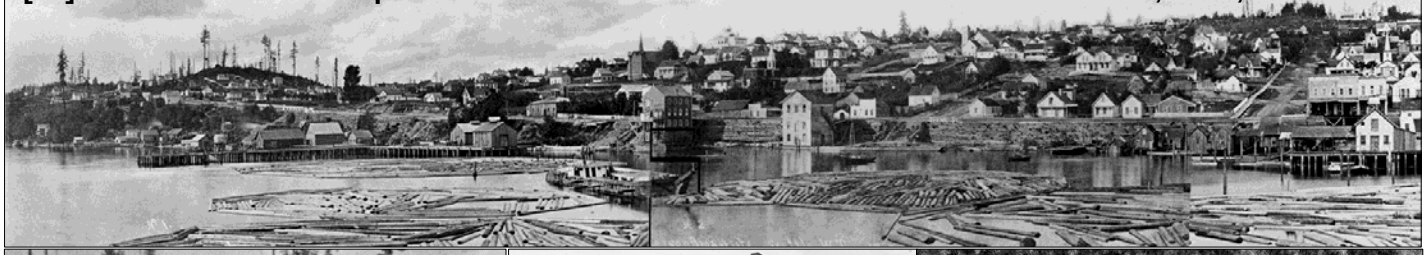
(We confess that the Peterson Bros panorama was stitched from three negatives. The seams between them have been partially exposed along the bottom of the photograph by the irregularity of the logs in Denny's millpond. Although clearly photographed from the same location – within inches – they may not have been recorded even on the same day. The middle of the three images fills most of the right half of the photograph, and the tide appears in this section to be about a foot higher than in the image on the left and perhaps two feet higher than in the smallest part on the far right.)

[52] G. Robinson's 1869 view of central waterfront from Yesler's Wharf



[54] Detail of Peterson 1878 pan showing portion of 1876 Front Street (First Ave.) Regrade between Columbia Street on the right and Madison Street on the left. (Courtesy U.W. Library)

[53] Peterson Bros. 1878 panorama of Seattle between Columbia and Pike streets, 1878,



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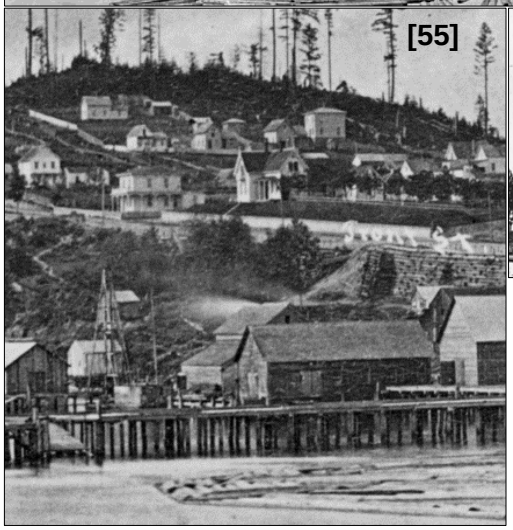

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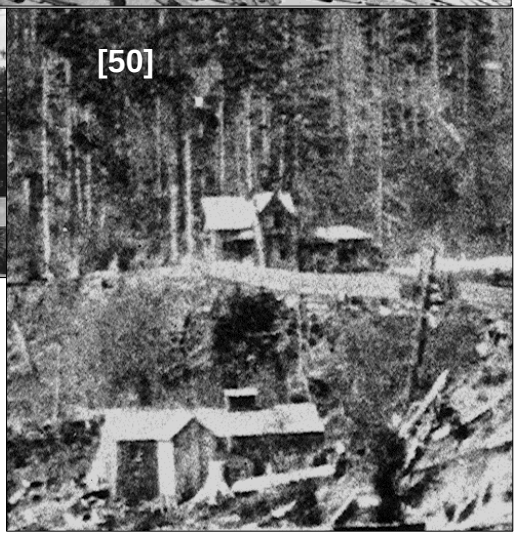


Arthur & Mary Denny Home at southeast corner of First and Union.
55. 1878
56. Late 1890s
50. 1869

While the 1870s were years of growth (most of it fed by the new transcontinental to California), Seattle's extended boom years would really accelerate with the completion of the Northern Pacific in 1883. The city's growth would continue to quicken until the First World War. At a little more than 3000, Seattle's population in 1880 was deceptively small because the city was also a cultural, transportation, and financial center for what went on all around the Sound and in the woods.

The 1878 Peterson view can be compared with Robinson's 1869 record in every part, for instance, the homes that have survived the decade. Mary and Arthur Denny's distinguished home at the southeast corner of Front and Union is there, although it may be hard to decipher without an enlargement of its detail. **[55]** (It is about 1/5 of the way into the panorama from left and near the clump of fir trees to the right of the summit of Denny Hill on the horizon. An 1890s close-up of the Denny home is also attached. **[56]**) Closer by, a study of the intersection of Front Street and Marion Street – near the center of the Robinson view from Yesler's wharf and to the right of the church in both views – shows structures that are still in place in 1878, although with changes. **[57]** **[58]** Some of the homes have been improved and at least the small residence at the southeast corner of Marion and Front has also been lowered to fit the new grade on Front Street.

1876: Front Street Regrade

The Peterson photographs are the best evidence of what a marked effect the 1876 regrade of Front Street (between Yesler and Pike) had on the waterfront. The smoothing of the street behind the timber bulkhead meant that one could no longer scramble onto the waterfront from Front Street. The few exceptions were at street ends. One of these "holes" was at the foot of Marion. **[57 again]** As the detail reveals, the cribbing of the timber retaining wall has there been turned out like a gate. Perhaps this exception is meant to allow the dumping of fill for an eventual extension of the street into the bay. Whether intended or not this, in effect, is what occurred here, and also one block north at Madison Street where a similar break is evident to the left of the four story structure on the water side of Front Street and at its southwest corner with Madison. (It was there that the city's Great Fire of 1889 was ignited.) It also appears that the bulkhead is open at the foot of Columbia Street, far right, although the roofs of the sheds that have been built on the beach block an inspection of most of the street end. (It may be remembered by the reader that it was at Columbia that pioneers described the smell of the waterfront as turning sulfuric to the south. If the Petersons had continued there panorama with another frame to the right in the direction of the wharf on which they standing, we might have seen the discoloration that was also described of beachside constructions south of Columbia.)

Seneca to Union Street Revisited

The Peterson pan includes a hint of another of the waterfront's natural remnants, one noted earlier: the ravine at Seneca street, or more correctly here the bridge over it and the bulkhead hiding it. The large deciduous tree that breaks the horizon about one fourth of the way from the left border of the pan is its marker – nearly. Below the tree and a short distance to the right the bulkhead reveals a darken section. **[59]** This is Seneca Street or today where the Central Business District off ramp from the viaduct meets First Avenue. In this view the

bulkhead is two years old, time enough apparently for the springs that irrigated the ravine and continue to seep through the fill to nourish whatever growth has attached itself to the bulkhead between the street and the waterfront. There is a possibility that the wall itself is constructed differently here. Seen in detail it seems to take a corner and turn towards the ravine (to the east) on the left side of the darkened section. A railing for the bridge is evident a short ways to the right of the darkened area on the bulkhead. This railing is on the east side of Front and is easily detected because it contrasts with the dark north bank of the ravine that appears behind it. A railing on the west or bay side of Front is more difficult to decipher, and yet when seen in detail is at least suggested by other but softer lines.

Both University and Union Streets are also distinguished in the Peterson pan in ways noted earlier. One short block north of Seneca the bulkhead is broken by what appears to be a negotiable incline of dumped earth. **[60]** It may also be, in part, the natural contour of the native bluff. The trees directly to the north of this break are much older than the bulkhead and spring from ground that is not very far below the surface of Front Street. This is also where the shoreline begins its turn to the northwest. Consequently, University Street between Front Street and the waterfront has at least since the 1880s been outfitted either with steps (as now) or ramps to the waterfront. As noted above and we repeat here, soon after the city's "Great Fire" of 1889 the stairway that had been built there earlier was replaced by a bridge for wagons that passed over both Post Alley and Western Avenue and reached Railroad Avenue directly. This bridge allowed the movement of freight between this north section of the waterfront and the growing north section of the Central Business District.

One long block further north on Front (and between University and Union the blocks get longer), Union Street continues only a little ways west of Front Street before it runs out of the picture. In a panorama of the waterfront taken from the King Street Coal wharf about nine years later, Union Street seems to continue to the beach. **[61]** After the fire of 1889, the newspapers made considerable note of the Union Street Wagon road and what a hard but necessary haul it was for moving building materials up from Schwabacher's Dock at the foot of Union Street (the only surviving wharf of size on the central waterfront) to the many building sites in the city. As we shall repeat below this was a temporary hardship for, following the fire, Western Avenue between Union and Belltown was soon improved, and the waterfront itself was speedily rebuilt into a wider Railroad Avenue with several accesses to the business district on Madison, Marion, Columbia and Yesler.

1878: Native Beach Scene

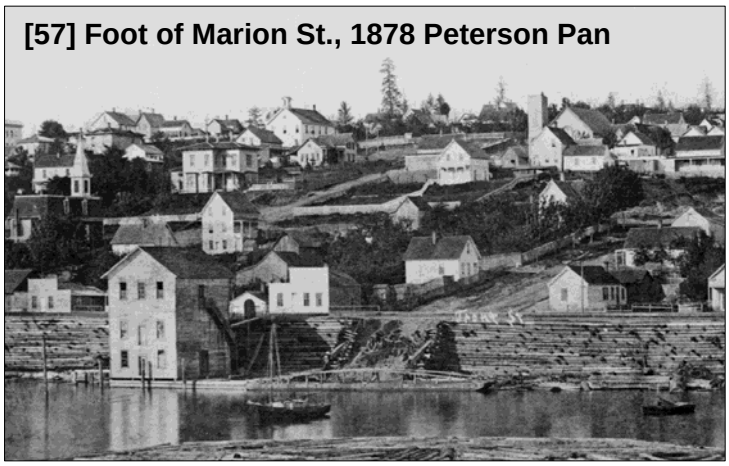
In 1948 a then 86-year-old C.T. Conover, the pioneer publicist and real estate salesman who coined the name "Evergreen State", included in his weekly *Seattle Times* column the recollections of Charles Kinnear who arrived in Seattle with his parents and siblings in 1878, the year of the Peterson pan. Kinnear describes a native scene on the beach near Marion Street that seems to be at least made questionable by the evidence of the photograph. Given how close the waters of the bay come to splashing on the bulkhead, is there room enough left for the exotic work and games seen by Charles Kinnear to have continued for longer than the

few hours in which the beach is exposed between tides? "My brother George and I ran down to the waterfront and looked over the cliff. The beach from Columbia to Marion Streets was lined with wigwams about ten feet apart. In front of them all were fires over which on racks of slate were layers of salt-cured salmon eggs being smoked for winter use. There seemed to be a constant stream of canoes coming in bringing more salmon. Just below us we counted 68 long-haired Indians completely nude, sitting in two lines facing each other, beating boards on their laps and singing a wild chant." The narrative continues with a description of the naked Indians gambling for each other's clothes and salmon. Again, the reader may decide after studying the shoreline that Charles Kinnear described if it would have been possible to line the shore there with wigwams and set up slate racks for smoking.

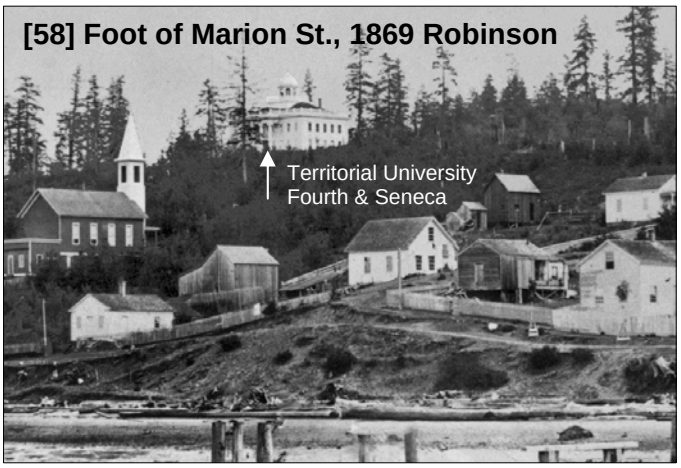
1878 Birdseye View

Clearly, already in 1878 the waterfront both on the beach and off shore was beginning to develop with structures that would thereafter increasingly obscure the native shore. Besides the sizeable structures attached to the bulkhead between Marion and Madison streets an assortment of sheds and docks cluttered the harbor north of Yesler's wharf. Still, this part of the waterfront was much the less active well into the 1880s and years away from being transformed into Railroad Avenue. The wharf reaching into the bay on the left of the Peterson Bros panorama extends from the bulkhead midway between Madison and Spring Streets. This extensive dock is drawn into the city's first birdseye panorama that was sketched also in 1878. **[62]** Near the sources of this dock we can see that the birdseye includes features that do not appear in the Peterson pan -- although such town-promoting sketches are often anachronistic and include structures that at the time of drawing are only planned. A steep stairway is now descending from Front to the waterfront at the south corner of Spring Street. Directly at the end of Spring, an earthen platform extends like a bay window west from the bulkhead. Further north but still closer to Spring than to Seneca a passageway from Front to a short dock has either been made from fill or is bridged. These are two more attempts to push the city further over the bay. The '78 birdseye also shows the doglegs in both Yesler's wharf (the prospect from which Peterson's recorded his panorama) and in the Pike Place Coal Pier as well. As will be explained soon below the Pike pier was, aside from Yesler's wharf, the largest structure on the waterfront during the 1870s. (It is puzzling that Peterson did not include it by extending his panorama with one more exposure to the left or north. But then, if the speculations above are correct, the parts of his panorama were shot at different hours at least and so the intent was not to make a panorama. Since the photograph was made in 1878 salvage work on the Pike Pier may have already begun and so the pier may not have been so appropriate a subject for a progressive and picturesque scene such as this.)

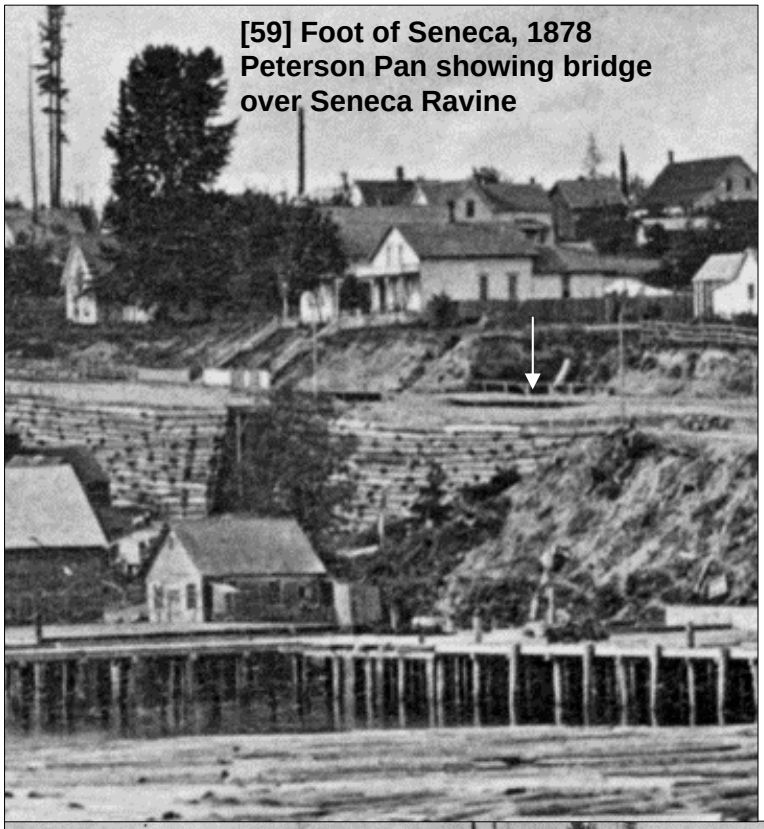
It may be remembered (from above) that 1878 is also the year that Jensen opened his swimming resort on the "sweeter" beach below Union Street. These shores appear on the far left of the Peterson pan. It is, however, clearer in the birdseye that the beach area at the foot of Union Street is greater than that, for instance, below the bulkhead at the foot of Marion where especially at high tide there was a considerable squeeze. The sketch also includes a number of small structures on the beach below Union Street that may be a representative sample of Jensen's dozen bathhouses.



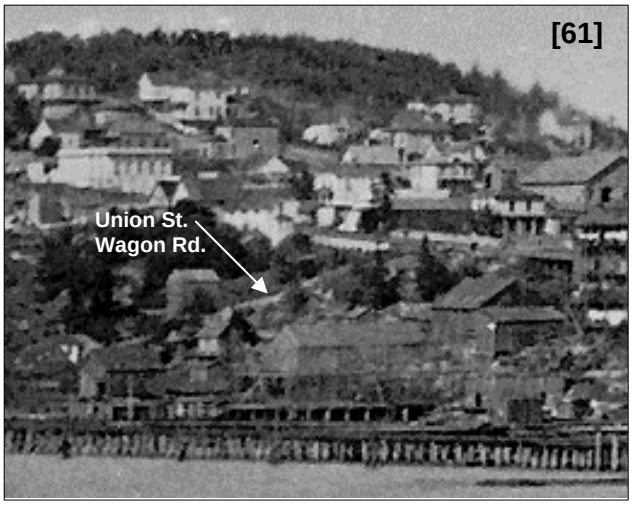
[57] Foot of Marion St., 1878 Peterson Pan



[58] Foot of Marion St., 1869 Robinson

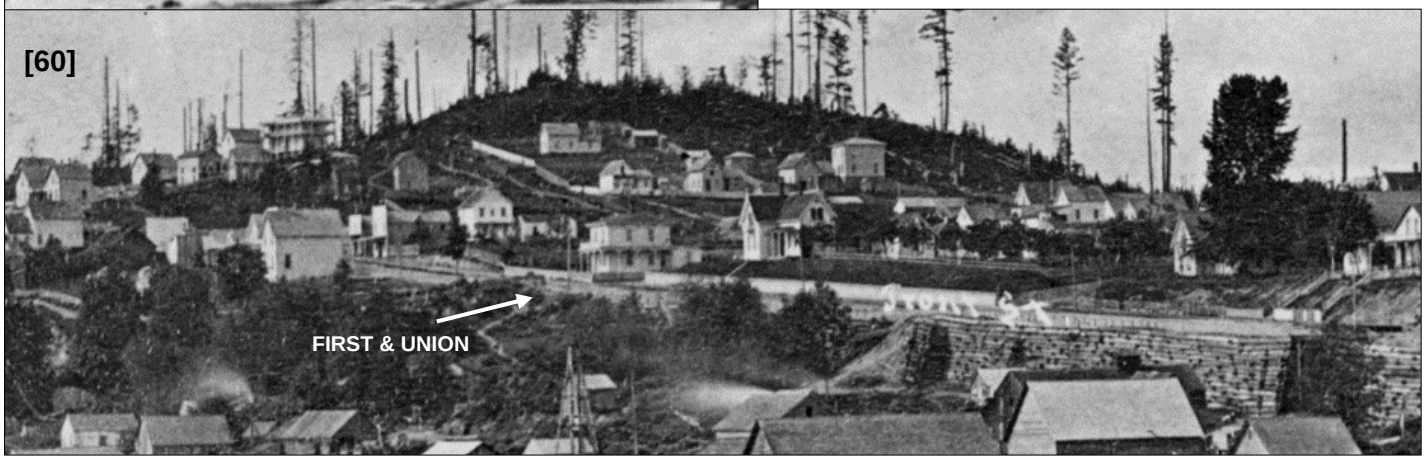


[59] Foot of Seneca, 1878 Peterson Pan showing bridge over Seneca Ravine



[61]

61. Detail of ca. 1888 panorama from King Street Coal Pier showing the thin line of the Union Street wagon road descending from Front Street (First Ave.) to the waterfront. Denny Hill is on top, SLSER trestle is at bottom. Clump of trees is just above the wagon road.



[60]

60. Detail of Peterson 1878 pan, extends from Seneca on the right to Pike on the left. Denny Hill is on the horizon.

1878: Front St. South from Madison . . .

The Peterson look to the city from Yesler's wharf may be compared with another photograph taken by the studio from the second floor of the Maddock Drug Store at the northeast corner of Madison and Front. **[63]** It looks south on Front towards Pioneer Square and is also dated 1878. Both Yesler's wharf and millpond appear in the photograph between the Woodward Grain House, the boxish structure that dominates the center of the scene, and the Pontius Building. The Pontius balcony (only) shows on the far right. As noted above it was in the Pontius that the Great Fire of 1889 was ignited in a cabinet shop with an overturned pot of boiling glue. Attempting to extinguish the blaze, the carpenter only spread the flames by throwing water at them. The Woodward Grain House was also home for Peter's Furs, Cigars and Liquors, a business that had little trouble finding clients. The rare 1878 city directory (previous to 1888, publication of city directories was extremely sporadic) notes "five out of every six men in the territory use tobacco, and nine out of every ten men use intoxicating drinks." (Given the proliferation of popular churches in these years, some of the parishioners were probably praying while plastered.) Also the merchant Peter was probably not surprised to read in the directory "there were three bachelors for every bachelorette in the territory."

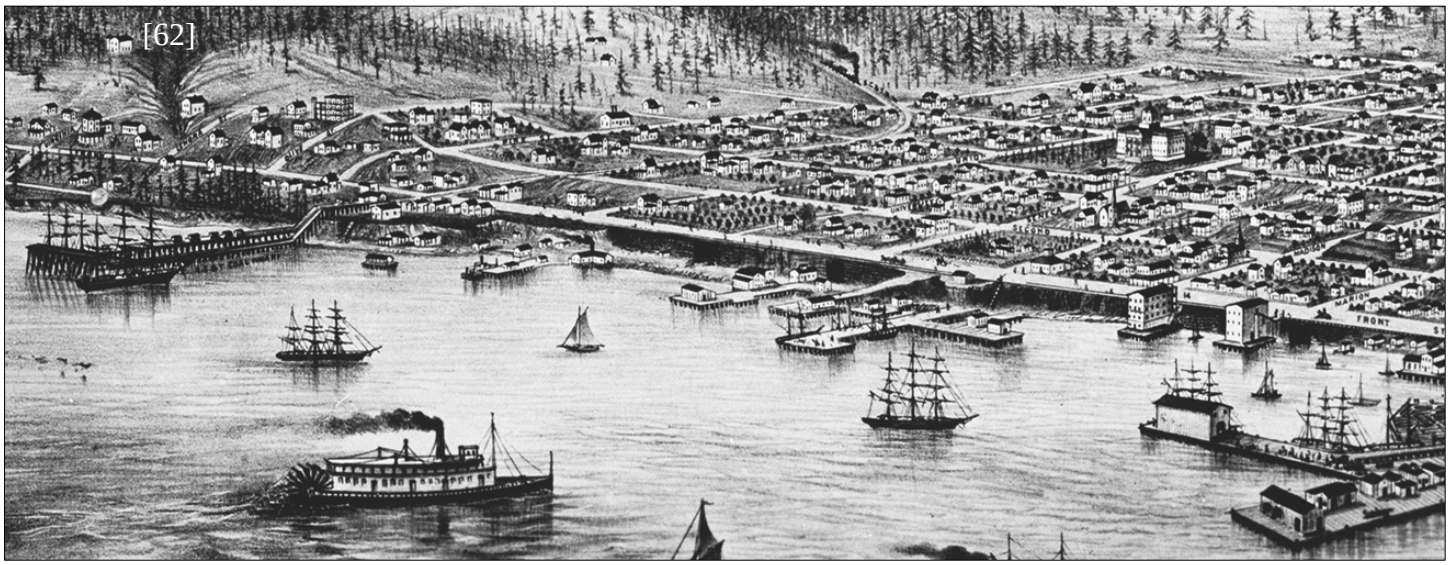
The wide planked sidewalk on Front Street has been sensibly built along its eastern side, for south of Madison there are still many more structures there than on the still exposed western side of the street. In the attached photograph A.W. Piper, his son Wallis and their dog Jack pose on the sidewalk. As the local candy manufacturer, Piper was very popular. He was also a cartoonist, practical joker (a gentle one) and to test his wit the first socialist on the city council. Pioneer historian Thomas Prosch was certain that "Everybody regarded him as a friend." When the religious Unitarian died in 1907 he left his wife, nine children, and the recipe to his long popular "Piper's Cream Cakes."

Front Street: North from Cherry

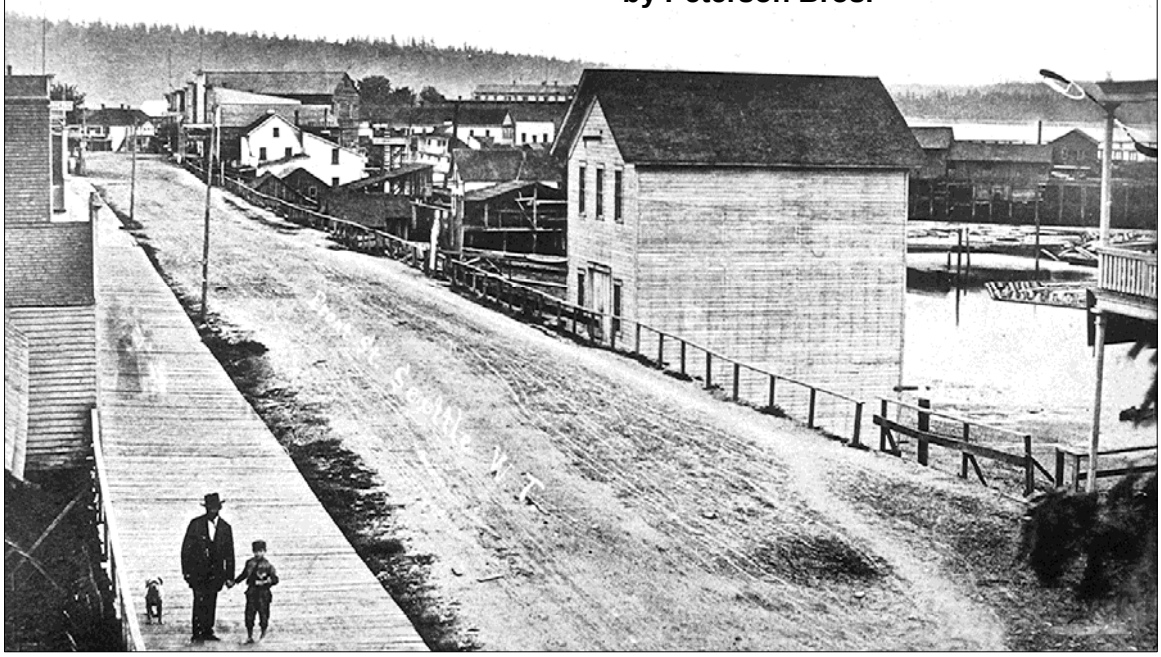
The Peterson Bros' view south on Front from Madison Street is reciprocated by another that looks north on Front from their studio at the foot of Cherry Street. **[64]** It reveals the second floor portico of Maddock's Drug Store from which the Piper and his boy were recorded. The Elephant Store, on the right, looked directly onto the bay from its place at the southeast corner of Front and Columbia. (As may be reviewed above, it also appears in the Petersons' 1878 panorama recorded from Yesler's wharf.) On the horizon is Denny Hill three years after the big blow of 1875 knocked over much of what remained of the old growth still on its crown.

Ca. 1886 View from Yesler's Wharf

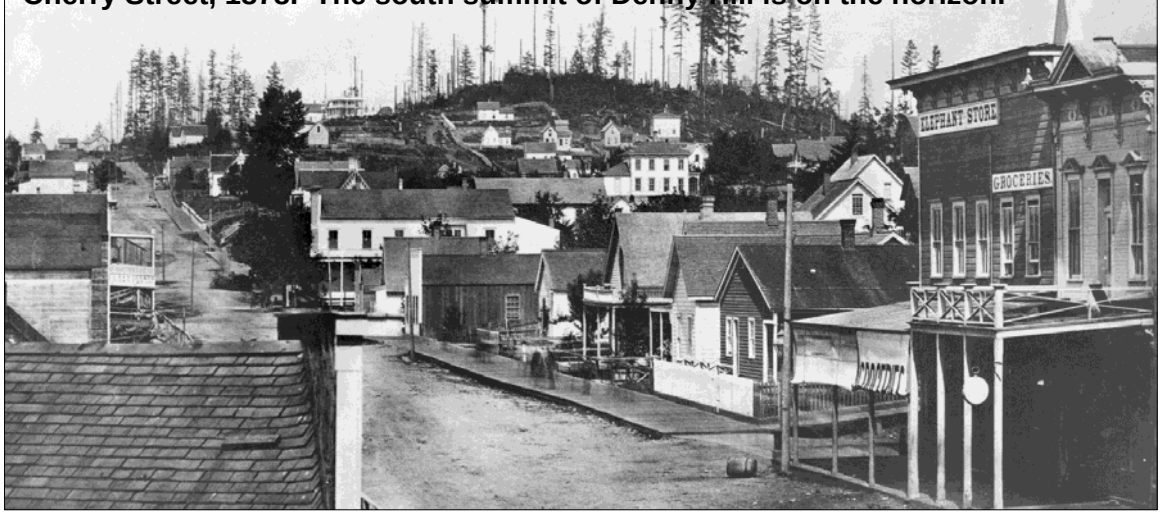
Seven or eight years after one or another Peterson visited the dogleg in Yesler's Wharf, another photographer visited the wharf but not the dogleg. The view this visitor recorded looks from the north side of the main wharf a shorter distance to where the central waterfront is centered on Marion Street. **[65]** The date is not earlier than 1885, the year the Frye Opera House, the dominant landmark in the scene, was completed at the northeast corner of Marion and Front and no later than 1886, the year the YMCA (note the banner sign at the center of the scene) moved from its quarters here kitty-corner from the Opera House.



[63] Look south on Front (First Ave.) from Madison St. 1878, by Peterson Bros.



[64] Look north on Front St from Peterson Bros studio at the foot of Cherry Street, 1878. The south summit of Denny Hill is on the horizon.



[62]
Detail from the 1878 Birdseye View of Seattle. Part of Yesler's Wharf shows on the far right. The Pike Street Coal Wharf is on the far left. Near the top center a coal train returning from the south shore of Lake Union ascends the future route of Westlake as far as Pike St. where it turns for the Pike Pier. The ravine showing upper-left marks the gap between the north and south summits of Denny Hill. The Territorial University campus at 4th and Seneca appears right of center.

Now the native shoreline is completely hidden – in this stretch at least – although Woodward Hall can still be detected behind the Stars and Stripes that wave from the top of Budlong's Boat House. (A contemporary pan from the Colman Dock is a rough repeat.) **[66]**

Budlong Boats & Recreational Boating

The Budlong Boat house – the name is written on the roof – presents an opportunity for an interlude on recreational boating on and off Seattle's waterfront. Besides the many proposals (with few results) for public piers and harbors to tend to small boats, there have been several private enterprises. The Puget Sound Yacht Club got its start at Budlong's in 1886 with its first cup race that August. Eleven years earlier in 1875, the first organized regatta was held on Elliott Bay and six sailboats joined the competition. The then three-year-old Seattle Boat Club, the community's first, sponsored it. Of course, before that there were the odd races held in front of the city, for instance during the Independence Day celebration of 1868 noted above with its Pioneer Square arch. Another popular waterfront boathouse was Brighton's that opened at the foot of Battery in 1894. The Clark and Bartette boathouse near the foot of University Street opened soon after the fire of 1889, but was crowded out with the new pier constructions in the early 1900s. It is especially evident in the photograph of the *Miike Maru* docked at Schwabacher's Wharf at the foot of Union Street in 1896. (Below we will point to it in two or three more photographs.) Finally the Seattle Yacht club got its start on Harbor Avenue in West Seattle in 1892 and later welcomed the Elliott Bay Yacht club to its clubhouse south of the West Seattle Ferry dock. With the formal opening of Lake Washington Ship Canal in 1917, the Seattle Yacht Club moved to the protected Portage Bay site on Lake Union where it has since developed into the region's (south of the border) most distinguished boating club.

Landmarks of 1886

Returning to the ca.1886 view from the north side of Yesler's Wharf, although the "ram's horn" trestle does curve its way through this offshore confusion, this is not yet a functioning Railroad Avenue until the following year with construction of the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad trestle north from its depot at Columbia Street. Everything in the foreground of this scene and much in the middle ground also – including the third version of the Methodist church at 2nd and Madison on the far left – was destroyed by the 1889 fire. Everything on the far side of Second Avenue, however, survived, including all the ornate structures with towers (mansions, churches, schools and one hospital) that seem clustered behind the Opera House but actually extend from the east side of Second Avenue as far east as Fifth Avenue. Central School on the far right horizon was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1888. It faced Madison from its south side between Sixth and Seventh Avenues – now part of the I-5 ditch. The by now familiar Territorial University building, near the northeast corner of 4th and Seneca (now the Olympic Hotel – or the same hotel by some other name) appears again on the left horizon.

1889: Ruins from Yesler's Wharf

Except for the Opera House at Marion Street, in 1886 the city's commercial show-strip lined Front Street south of Columbia to Mill Street, and so is out of the narrow range of the scene

recorded from the wharf. **[67]** In the accompanying photo the backs of these grander masonry structures are shown in ruins from the far end of Yesler's wharf but not from its dogleg. (The wharf's dogleg from which Peterson made his pan was probably not extended over fill, or as much fill as was used in the construction through the years of the main stem of the wharf. Since the bay gets deeper south of Yesler the dogleg was also probably built on longer pilings. If these points – admittedly speculative – are correct then that part of the pier would have burned to the water and not to Yesler's fill and so made it exceedingly difficult to use for a post-fire photographic prospect.) While the fire of 1889 destroyed this wharf like the rest of the waterfront south of University Street, in its rare case most of the Yesler Wharf pilings did not burn to the water but to the years of accumulated rubble that the mill owner placed below his wharf to protect its supports from the boring ravages of those misunderstood worms for whom Ivar sang so sympathetically above. Any core samples taken under the viaduct directly on Yesler Way would call up a great pioneer confession. Core samples taken further into the bay would probably yield less. There the *Northern Pacific* dredged the wharf site during the creation of its two long finger piers early in the 20th Century. In the attached record of the ruins, Mill Street (Yesler Way) is on the right and Columbia on the far left.

A faithful contemporary repeat of the ca.1886 view would be photographed from on or near Alaskan Way and just east of the vehicle staging area to the south of Colman Dock. The 2004 repeat printed here is an extreme compromise of all the historical photographs printed above that were recorded from Yesler Wharf. This "now" was photographed instead from the northwest corner of Colman Dock where the passengers exit the wire gate that leads from the ramps to the wharf. **[66]**

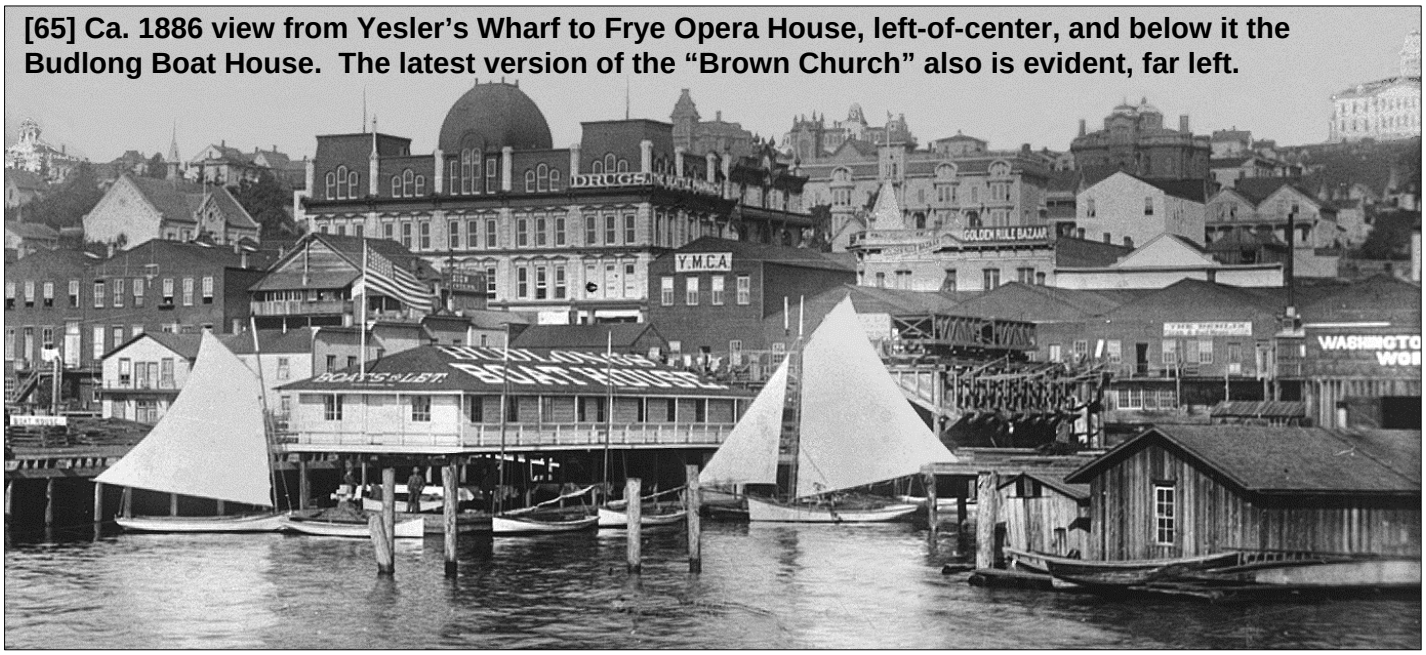
Pike Street Coal Wharf by Peterson Bros.

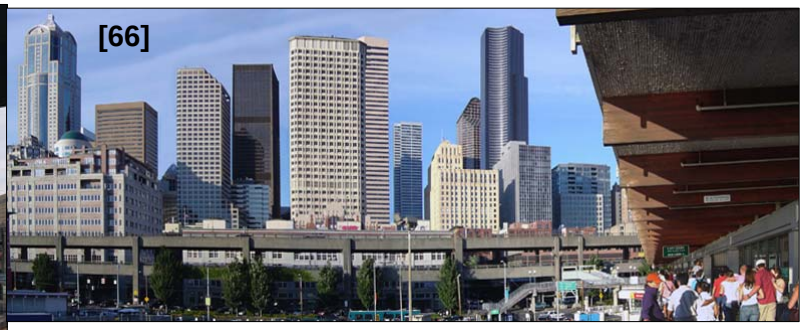
Although Henry and Louis Peterson opened their studio in June 1876 their small collection of Seattle classics only extends into the mid 1880s. It was not cityscapes but portraits and other "vanity assignments" that were their bread and goose pate. (This was true of the great majority of pioneer photographers and most modern ones as well, although many of the professionals that once worked in this wide genre of commercial photography have had to cap their lenses and drain their dark rooms because of the digital revolution and its conveniences.) Still the Petersons' few cityscapes that survive are easily among the most valuable and revealing of all the records of local history. The photographs they produced are most often distinguished by their clarity. Their profile of the Pike Street Coal Pier is a good example. **[68]** As important as the pier was to Seattle economy there is (or seems to be) only one surviving photograph of it (aside from its ruins), and this is it. Taken from the back porch or window of the Peterson Bros. Studio near the foot of Cherry Street it includes much else besides the coal facility – and all is recorded clearly. Beyond the pier is the same bank below Denny Hill that Robinson photographed with his panorama in 1869. What can be seen of it here seems as undeveloped and forested as then. (We know from other sources, like the 1875 survey map, that considerable development was going forward within that forest.)

The *Winward*

Searching the Peterson's view from the rear of their studio, there are a few things more that can be detected – like the wreck of the *Winward*. The

[65] Ca. 1886 view from Yesler's Wharf to Frye Opera House, left-of-center, and below it the Budlong Boat House. The latest version of the "Brown Church" also is evident, far left.





[66] Contemporary views from Colman Dock. Left, 1996 Right, 2004

[67] 1889 "Great Fire" ruins on Yesler Wharf, bottom, and rear of brick structures facing First Avenue, top. Yesler Way is far right. Photograph was taken within first week of the June 6 fire.

Winward can also be found in the '78 pan from Yesler's Wharf but it is not so obvious there as it is here in profile against Elliot Bay. **[69]** (The *Winward* had run aground in Useless Bay off Whidbey Island in 1875 and was towed by James Colman to the central waterfront.) In this view it rests much higher in the water than in the 1878 panorama. After Colman stripped the *Winward* of what could be salvaged he let it rest on the bottom – and there it still slumbers beneath Western Avenue. (If we may be allowed a London allusion, almost certainly the *Winward* rests in better shape than the still recognizable 3rd Century Roman merchant vessel that was uncovered in 1910 near Westminster Bridge during the excavation for the County Hall.) With the creation of Railroad Avenue in 1887, piles for the Seattle Lakeshore and Eastern Railroad were, by other reports, driven directly through the *Winward*. After the fire of 1889 destroyed most of the waterfront and it was quickly rebuilt three or four times as large with timber quays topped by acres of planks, the old wreck was lost and forgotten beneath it all and later also buried beneath the fill that fitfully covered the waterfront, first under the planks and later behind the seawall. But where exactly is it? In the attached newspaper clip from 1949, Pioneer historian C.T. Conover puts it in two places. **[70]** By the first account the stern is under Western Avenue and the bow under the building west of Western and south of Columbia. By the second description it is under the old stone Society Candy building that was once directly behind the Colman Building, but is now a parking lot, and so also between Columbia and Marion Streets. If the report of the SLSER pilings being punched through the *Winward* is true then the former choice – the SLSER trestle was mostly west of Western Avenue – is the better of the two. However the SLSER station was also at Columbia and north of it and the timber quay on which it was built was probably considerably wider and closer to shore at the railroad's southern terminus. In brief finding the slumber bed of the *Windward* will require a little more planning and rigor than was given this analysis. It does seem likely, however, given the handful of photographs in which is appears, that it could be uncovered.

At the bottom left of the same subject the Peterson Bros have signed their work on the ways of the shipyard for which William Hammond and J.F.T. Mitchell are both listed as owners, although never together. (As we will note below they did, however, work together.) The shipyard was on the waterfront between Cherry and Columbia Streets. The tide is evidently low and reveals a portion of the native beach that was a little distance south of Columbia Street and so, for the pioneers, at the smellier end of the central waterfront. Magnolia Bluff reaches the middle near the top, and above it the obligatory Olympics have been retouched on the original glass negative.

1871-1878: Coal Railroad to Lake Union

This same view was taken sometime before June 11, 1877, when at about eight in the morning the coal bunkers of the Seattle Coal and Transportation Co. at the end of their Pike Pier collapsed carrying 3,000 tons of coal with it into the bay. Depending upon the rate of solution for such a pile of coal some of it may still be on the bottom beneath the Pike Street Wharf, for the first Pike pier extended more than 200 feet into the bay and stood 70 feet high. **[71]** (Again, the bunkers were victim to those "Terrible Teredo" shipworms – actually worm-like mollusks who eat at pilings like alien tunnelers. When working in gangs they can "kill" a piling in half a year. A pressure-treated creosote piling can last 15

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27, 1949.

Just Cogitating:

How a Ship Came to Be Buried Beneath a Seattle Street

By C. T. CONOVER

YOU no longer can see it, but under the busy wholesale section throbbing with modern traffic, its bow pointed to the sea, lies a sailing vessel, the clipper ship Windward, that went aground off of Cultus Bay, was towed to Seattle and buried upright, masts and all. The incident is summarized briefly in J. Willis Sayre's "This City of Ours:"

C. T. CONOVER

"In the '70s, J. M. Colman, one of the city's most useful pioneers, bought a famous old sailing vessel, the bark Windward, towed it to Seattle and beached it back of where the Colman Building now stands, so that he could salvage the metal in it. (The tide then came nearly up to First Avenue and all the area between that and the present shoreline is made ground.) When the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad was built in the '80s, instead of moving the vessel, it drove piles right through the hull, and so the old ship today lies diagonally across Western Avenue, with its stern under the paving and its bow under the building north of Columbia Street, its head out toward the harbor as if eager to be once again at the scenes of its former glory."

* * *

I ASKED Charles A. Kinnear what he remembered about it. He said:

"I remember, when a boy in father's office, John Leary came in one day with his high silk hat, Prince Albert coat, well-curried whiskers, boutonniere and cane, and told father that he, John Collins and J. M. Colman largely made up the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad Company (undertaken in Seattle's long fight for railroad connection). The company owed Colman $800 and could not pay it, so they had asked him to take the bark Windward, sunk at Useless Bay, tow her to Seattle and salvage her. The vessel was raised, brought to Seattle and beached between Columbia and Marion Streets. Fortunately she had not sprung a leak. At low tide, we boys tore copper from her bottom and dived from her deck. Mr. Leary told father that the Windward thus became a fixture to the land and the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad Company claimed ownership of the land, with the prior right to purchase the riparian rights. These rights the company transferred to Colman, who, against his will, thus came into possession of the great property which today embraces the Colman Building, the Colman Dock and all between except the railroad tracks.

"Years later Mr. Colman built a two-story frame building which was a good rent payer, but it was wiped out in the great fire of 1889. He then made plans for a six-story building, but only could get a loan sufficient for two stories. Later he bought for half-price the stone quarried for the State Capitol and not used, and built the building now over the Windward and facing Western Avenue. The Windward's masts had disappeared long before and provided many souvenir canes, one, I remember, for Charles J. McKnight, of Schwabacher's. All of which inspired Mr. Leary to quote Shakespeare:

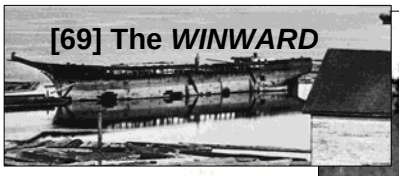
"'Some men are born great, some men achieve greatness, and some men have greatness thrust upon them.'"

But if you had to take a derelict hull and tidewater for a debt payable in coin of the realm, maybe you wouldn't have been entirely happy about it, either.

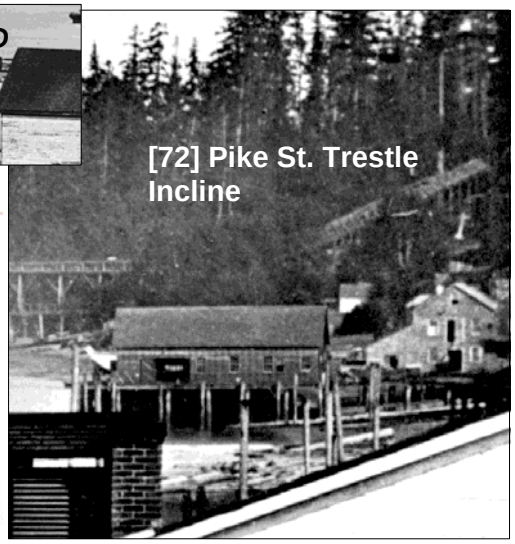
Incidentally, that is a good pen picture of Mr. Leary's sartorial appearance. If you imagine we were uncouth in our attire you are mistaken. Dress was much more formal and punctilious than now. Frock coats, silk hats and spats were commonplace. We had our clothes made in San Francisco by Bullock & Jones, Mills & Hagborn and "Old Man" Steele.

* * *

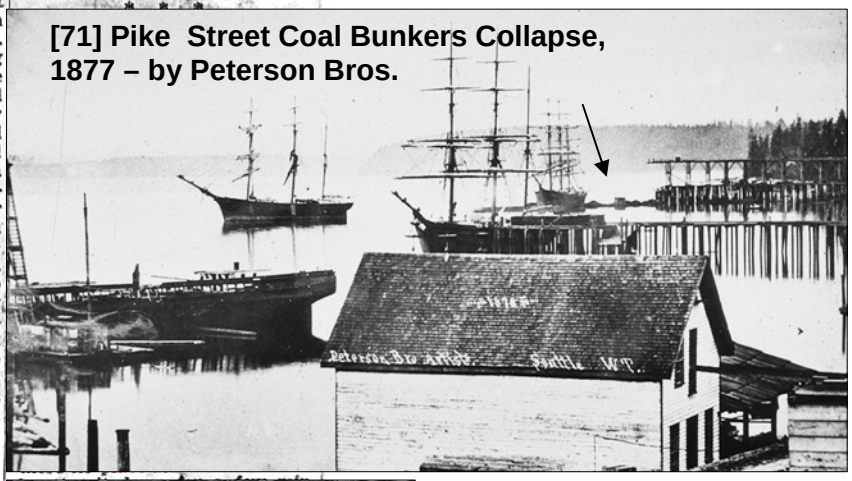
[70] Clipping of C.T. Conover's description of the *Winward*



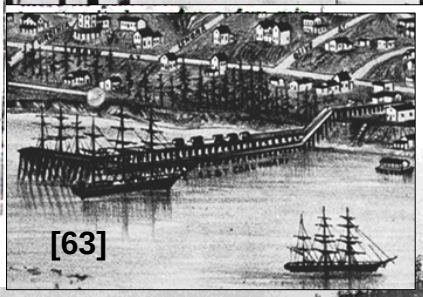
[69] The *WINWARD*



[72] Pike St. Trestle Incline



[71] Pike Street Coal Bunkers Collapse, 1877 – by Peterson Bros.



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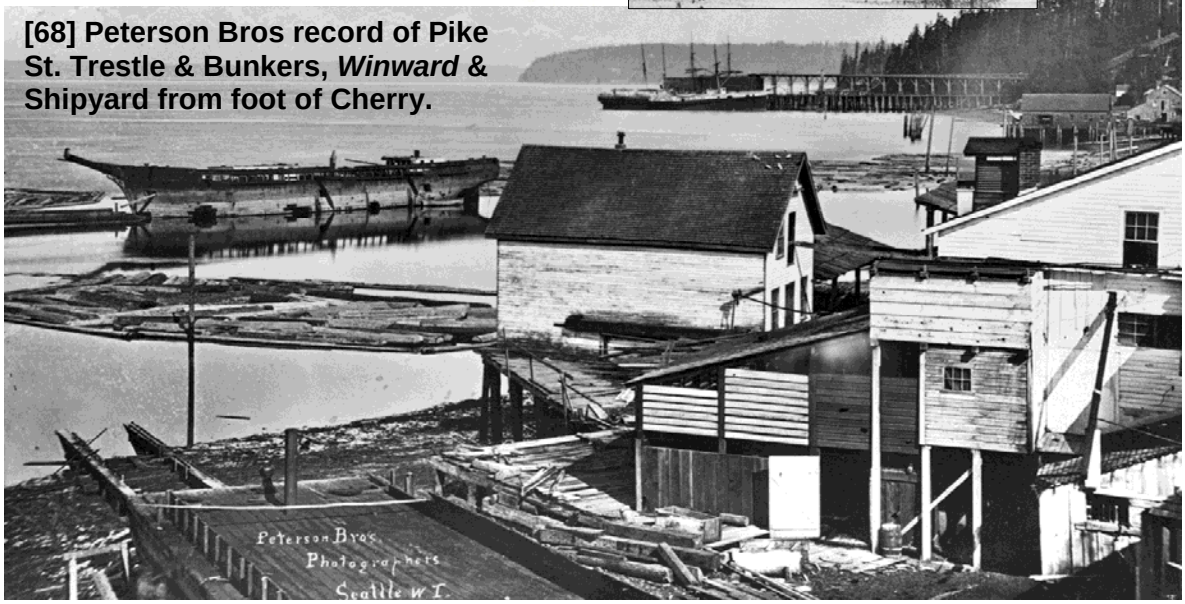


[68] Peterson Bros record of Pike St. Trestle & Bunkers, *Winward* & Shipyard from foot of Cherry.

PIKE STREET COAL WHARF

Between its construction in 1871 and its abandonment in 1878 the Pike Street Pier and Coal Bunkers were the principal supplier of Newcastle and Coal Creek coal for California markets, most notably the Union Pacific Railroad.

years. Since the construction of the American Can pier 69 – now the Port of Seattle headquarters – in the 1930s, most of the pilings on the waterfront have been constructed of steel reinforced concrete.)

As noted above, the Pike Street bunkers were the primary chest of Seattle's wealth during the 1870s and the destination of a long and difficult trip, which began at Coal Creek on the eastern side of Lake Washington and continued by steamer up the lake to Montlake, across that isthmus to Lake Union, down the lake on scows to a narrow-gauge railroad that ran up (or beside) the present line of Westlake Ave to Pike street to turn for the final leg of its seventeen-mile clumsy and expensive – although rewarding – trip to the bunkers. The Seattle Coal and Transportation Co., incorporated in 1871, was the first sizeable infusion of outside capital into the labor-and-land rich but cash-poor local economy. Local business that first got going in the early 1850s supplying pilings to schooners from California twenty years later was often crowded with colliers.

"Local Coal Fleet"

The "Local News" section from the June 6, 1877 copy of the *Daily Pacific Tribune* includes good evidence of this enterprise. "The local coal fleet – On Monday morning last, the bark *Montana* loaded with Seattle coal sailed for San Francisco, and the *W. Libby* has since taken her place under the chutes. Bark *Gem of the Ocean* is about loaded with the same description of cargo, and will go to sea today or tomorrow. Ship *Western Shore* arrived from San Francisco last evening, and will load Seattle coal after the *Gem*. The *Coloma* is taking in Talbot coal, as also the *North Star*, *Ship Belvedere*, bark *California* and bark *Enoch Talbot* . . .. During the past week a dozen Seattle coal vessels or more have arrived at or sailed from San Francisco, and about the same number are now on the way to this port. The Seattle Company alone are mining 400 tons a day and to transport that quantity to market requires the continual services of about fifteen large carriers." Ten days later most of this activity would be shut down by the collapse of the bunkers. (Another Peterson View attached here, also from the back of their studio, shows the pile of rubble including, perhaps, some of the lost coal left the by fallen bunkers. In this scene the date 1876 written on the roof of the structure in the foreground presents a puzzle for it contradicts the timing for the destruction that occurred the following year. Unless, of course, the bunkers collapsed twice, although I have never come across any material that described an earlier fall.)

More concluding observations about the earlier record of the Pike Pier Coal Bunkers when they were still whole: the dock that extended into the bay from near the foot of Spring Street in the Peterson's 1878 panorama (discussed above) is not yet constructed, although the beach structures on the far right of this view can also be found in the '78 subject. And revealed above them in the forest is a portion of the first Pike Street Hill Climb, the steep tramway along which the coal cars were moved between the Pike Pier and the railway on Pike Street. **[72]** It was a second but apparently coincidental accident of June 11, 1877 that only ten minutes before the bunkers collapsed, a coal car derailed on the steep incline. The accident of course drew the workers from the bunkers to help with righting the spilled gondola. Most likely this diversion saved the lives of several men who otherwise would have gone down with the bunkers. (Or we cannot help but wonder, was it coincidence? Perhaps the upset tram caused a chain of events the led to

the collapse of the bunkers. For instance in their rush to get to the tram at the east end of the pier, could human error with the bunkers at its west end led have to their collapse?) Other changes came quickly. The next day, June 12, the coal company signed a contract with the *Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad* (described above as the citizen railway built in defiance of the *Northern Pacific*), which had just completed its narrow-gauge line to Renton, to extend that road another 6 & 1/2 miles to Newcastle. On January 29, 1878, the last coal car unloaded at Pike Street into the only partly patched bunkers. One week later on Feb. 5, the first coal-car left Newcastle for Seattle by way of Renton and to the new coal wharf and bunkers at the foot of King Street – not Pike.

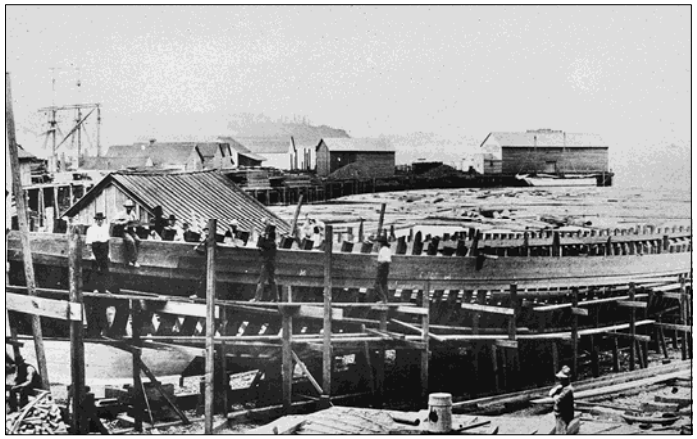
1878: Peterson Bros. Pan of Seattle from Denny Hill

The new King Street Coal Wharf and the curving trestle of the Seattle and Walla Walla where it approaches King Street across the tideflats are clearly shown in the Peterson Brothers two-part panorama of Seattle that looks south from Denny Hill. **[73]** Like their pan from Yesler's Wharf, this local classic was also recorded in 1878 and many features of the waterfront can be compared between them. At its outer end a four-mast collier visits the King Street wharf, and to this side of it sprawls the jumble of Yesler's Wharf. The mill itself is closer to the shoreline, or to use the now familiar landmark of James Colman's grounded vessel, the mill is to the left of the *Winward* that sits in the bay to this side of it. One year later the mill and much of the wharf would burn down and be rebuilt only to burn down again in 1887 and be rebuilt again – sans lumber mill – for its destruction in the "great fire" of 1889. The Peterson pan from Denny Hill also features an abandoned remnant of Pike Street's coal service of the 1870s. A section of the narrow gauged rails and the pattern of their ties can be seen faintly at the intersection of Pike with Second Avenue, just left of the steep-roofed barn in the orchard at the northwest corner of Pike and Second or about one-fourth of the way through the panorama from its lower left corner.

George E. Starr

The third look towards Yesler's wharf dates from 1879, the year a fire scorched the wharf, although this scene was recorded before the fire. **[74]** This too may be a Peterson view although the quality of the surviving image is poorer than that of what is expected from that studio. This second scene is also photographed from near the foot of Columbia, and the subject is the construction of the sidewheeler steamer *George E. Starr* at the same Hammond shipyard that appears sans ships in the Peterson's 1877 view of the Pike Street Pier. Capt. William Hammond was the superintendent of construction on the Starr for J.F.T. Mitchell, another ship builder at the time. When the *Starr* was backed out onto Elliott Bay on August 12, 1879, at 154-ft. length and 28-ft. beam, it was then the largest vessel built on Puget Sound. The brass band accompaniment to the launching was suddenly interrupted when the Starr got stuck in Hammond's ways. After the ship was rocked free by those on board running back and forth from one side of the vessel to the other the music resumed. (It was believed that during this rocking one of the passengers got seasick and another fell overboard.) Except for brief stints on the Columbia River and to Alaska during the Klondike gold rush, the *Starr* stayed on Puget Sound. Consequently, there are a number of photographs of the *Starr* on Elliott Bay at different points in her career. In another glimpse of her included here, she is backing out from Pacific Coast Pier B at the foot of

[73] Peterson Bros. 1878 Panorama of Seattle recorded from Denny Hill between First and Second, Pike & Stewart.



[74] Laying keel of *George E. Starr* near foot of Cherry Street.

[75] *George E. Starr* pulling away from Pacific Coast Pier B at foot of Main Street, ca. 1902

Main Street in about 1902. **[75]** This photograph was recorded from the King Street Coal Wharf like so many before it – a short time before the bunkers were moved south to Dearborn Street in 1903. Just above the sidewheeler's stack is Pier 54 – or Pier 3 as it was numbered when it was constructed for the Northern Pacific Railroad in the 1900-01. When the *George E. Starr* retired in 1911 it was the last sidewheeler on Puget Sound. For her last service she was tied to a buoy in the harbor and used as a temporary storehouse for blasting powders that could not be brought onto the waterfront after dark.

Building Ships – a Thumbnail History

The building of ships on Seattle shores did not, of course, begin with the sizeable *George E. Starr* in 1879. Fifteen years earlier the construction of the flat-bottomed stern-wheel steamer *Black Diamond* is often credited with the start. Her length is uncertain -- "about seventy feet" estimates Dryden's marine history. Although slow, she still did well enough on the White (Green) River with her flat bottom and worked it for a long time. Capt. J. F. T. Mitchell, who built the *George E. Starr* with W. Hammond's help, constructed the long-lived sternwheeler *Zephyr* in Seattle in 1871, first for the Seattle and Olympia route. Later she became a tug working on Commencement Bay. In his time Mitchell is credited with constructing more than sixty vessels on Puget Sound, and so contributed mightily to the elegant simplification, "San Francisco supplied pioneer Seattle and Seattle supplied the Sound." In 1880 Mitchell moved his yard directly south of Yesler's wharf and in the backyard of what was originally the location of Yesler's famous mill cookhouse. The first ship he built there was the *Seattle*, a 33 feet and 7 inch pleasure yacht – then the largest "sail yacht" on Puget Sound. It was completed in time for the 1880 Independence Day Regatta. (Or perhaps it was the second largest. In 1877 Dr. F.W. Sparling built the *Sappho* in Seattle which pioneer historian Thomas Prosch claimed was not only the first yacht built in Seattle but also at 35 feet a few inches longer than the *Seattle*.) In 1883, Mitchell was "victim" to the railroad when he was forced to move his ways because they were in the way of the "ram's horn" railroad (noted above) that was then being pushed along the central waterfront.

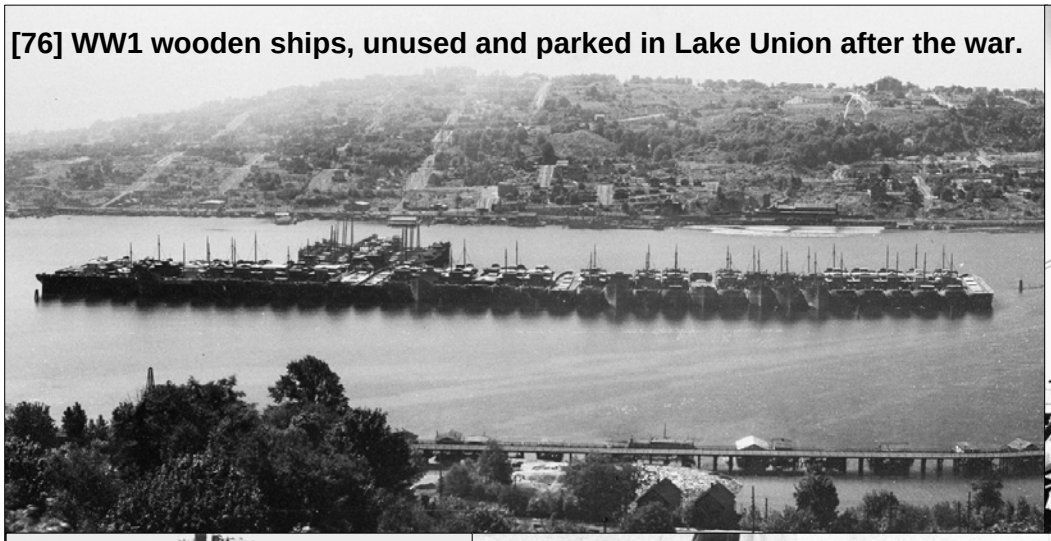
In 1895 it was calculated by a local publication that 76 steamers, 17 schooners, 1 barkentine, and 9 tugs had been built that year at Elliott Bay shipyards. With the Klondike Gold Rush intervening, Elliott Bay shipyards launched 74 ships in the first six months of 1898. Ex-mayor and master caster Robert Moran's greatest contribution to that year's total was the 12 flatboats he built on the Seattle tideflats for delivery to the Yukon River. Moran's maritime success began in 1882 when he opened a small marine repair shop on Yesler's rebuilt wharf. Moran was most touted for building the battleship *Nebraska* from his shipyard near the foot of Charles Street. In order for him to win the military bid this Seattle booster solicited thousands in "subscriptions" from local supporters. The keel was laid on July 4, 1902, and Moran could claim that the citizens built the battleship that soon became respected by those who appreciated the quality of the work that it displayed. (More about Moran and his ships below.)

Twenty percent of all the ship tonnage built in the U.S. during the First World War was built in Seattle. This revival began in 1915 long before the U.S. joined the war, and by 1916 about 6,000 people were employed in local shipyards including Skinner and Eddy

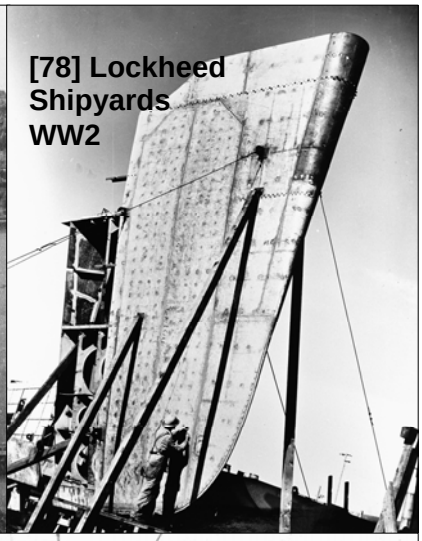
(at the site of Moran's old yard), J. F. Duties Corp and Ames Shipbuilding and Dry Dock. The pay was so good that many professionals dropped their white collars for blue and many lawyers left the docket for the dock. There were 20 shipyards operating in Seattle during 1918 – and seven of them were working exclusively with steel. Armistice is troubling for any munitions manufacturer and following it the Seattle shipyards quickly declined although the expectations and demands of the shipyard workers did not, and the strike that began with them soon developed into Seattle's general strike of 1919 with depressing effects for the workers and wages. During the 1920s the center of Lake Union filled with "Wilson's Wood Row:" the line of surplus vessels built during and for the war and named for the president who made it possible. **[76]** In the 1930s the old Moran-cum-Skinner and Eddy shipyard filled with shacks built mostly by out-of-work single men. This, the largest of local "Hoovervilles", named for the president under whose watch came the Great Depression, was torched in 1940 for another round of local mobilizing. Twenty-nine shipyards operated in or very near Seattle during the Second World War, but none of them were on the central waterfront. The Hooverville site, as noted above, purchased earlier by the Port of Seattle was developed as the military's Port of Embarkment. The local tonnage produced during WW2 was considerably greater than during WW1. Todd purchased the old Seattle Construction and Dry Dock site on Harbor Island and built 45 destroyers and three tenders for the Navy between Dec. 7, 1941 and Aug. 31, 1945 – on the average of one a month. Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging constructed 41 minesweepers, four seaplane tenders and several support vessels during the war. Similar to the First World War there was a decline in shipbuilding following the Second World War, but it would rise again. The 1970s were particularly prosperous. Both Todd Shipyard (a descendant of Moran) and Lockheed (a descendant of Puget Sound Bridge) garnered both naval and state contracts, the latter for the construction of ferries**. [77] [78]**

"Mediterranean of the Pacific"

Pioneer promoters liked to advertise Puget Sound as "The Mediterranean of the Pacific," and sometimes of the West. While the boomers were generally of northern European descent – WASPS – and so looked with some suspicion on Sicilians, Greeks and Egyptians they did prefer, at least for the sake of analogy, the Mediterranean over the Baltic or the North Sea. However, the comparison was wrong on several counts. The Sound was both far too small for any Odysseus and too cold for water sports that did not include protective gear or depend on those rare hours of comfortable swimming when on only the hottest days of summer the tides are lightly cooked above the heated sands of the Puget Sound tidelands that were exposed for a few hours – like those where Sammish Bay reaches the Skagit flats near the south end of Chuckanut Drive. (Popularly, that is part of Puget Sound but not, of course, technically.) Also Puget Sound is cleaner than the Mediterranean, or at least was in the early years of settlement. But as proven subsequently the Sound had potential for pollution because it was constructed like a bathtub with its deepest parts far below (or above in maritime parlance) its source, the Straits of Juan de Fuca. And Puget Sound was certainly more peaceful than the Mediterranean – especially after the arrival of the settlers and of course also following the few years of skirmishes with the indigene. The ancient raids by tribes from the north on the tribes of Puget Sound was stopped by a Pax Americana, and the only vessel to shoot

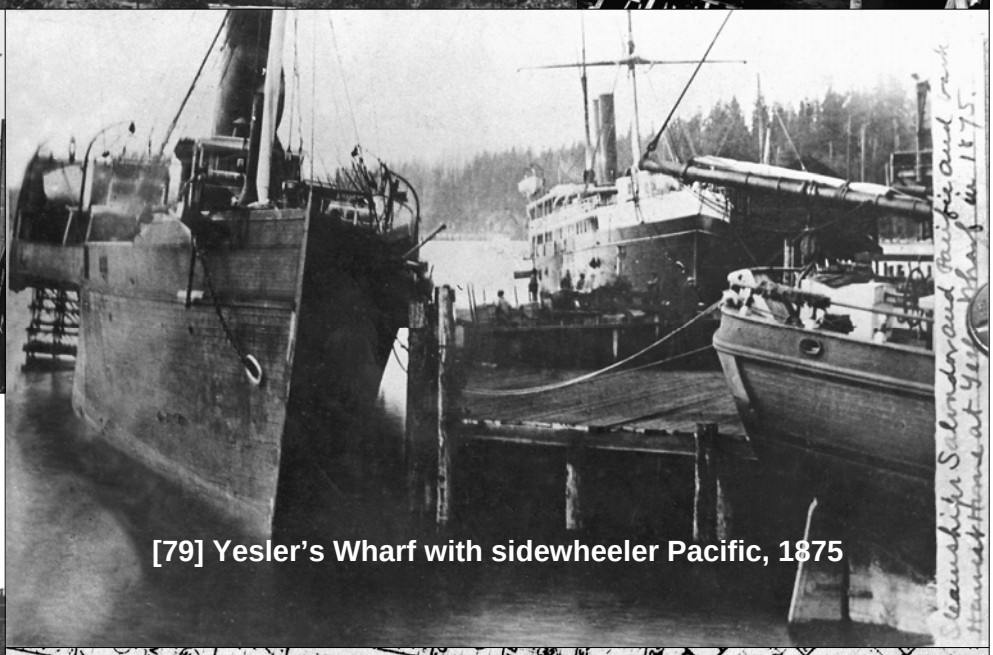


[76] WW1 wooden ships, unused and parked in Lake Union after the war.



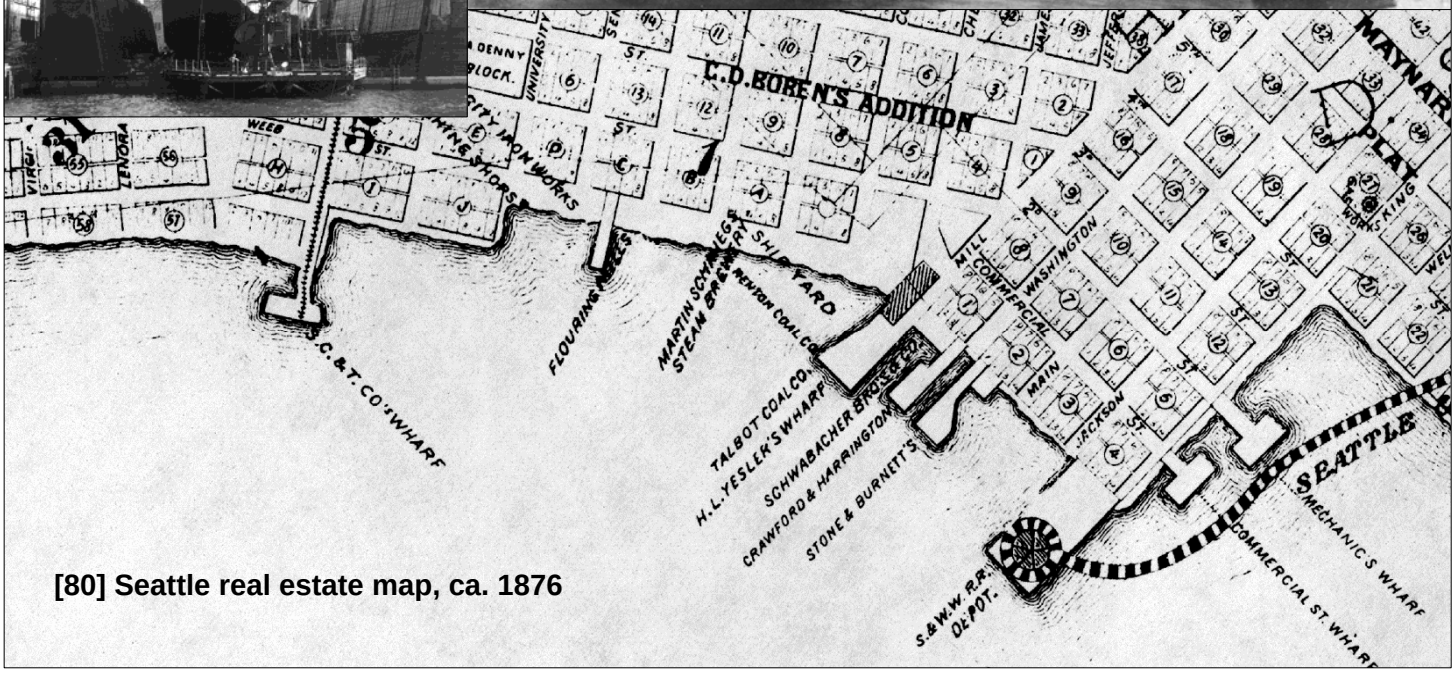
[78] Lockheed Shipyards WW2

[78]



[79] Yesler's Wharf with sidewheeler Pacific, 1875

[77] Todd Shipyards, 1968



[80] Seattle real estate map, ca. 1876

at Seattle was (as noted above) the *Decatur*, the federal warship that probably saved it during the few hours of the "Battle of Seattle" on January 26, 1856.

Abandoning the Mediterranean, the best qualities of Puget Sound – for all times – is that it is both protected and deep with few lurking surprises. (Its other great quality for the settlers was that it was both the best and often only way to get around.) The shores of Puget Sound also feature many harbors that are even more protected and yet still deep. In Commencement Bay and Elliott Bay these favors were added to by the presence of extensive tideflats that could be readily reclaimed for whatever purpose (although then also lost to summer swimming.) Consequently, maritime tragedies on Puget Sound were rarely the fault of the waterway. Instead they were the result of bad equipment – early steamers regularly blew up – and/or human error. For the latter the steamer *Dix* is still the best example on or near Elliott Bay. The *Dix* rapidly sank off Alki while on its way to Port Blakeley on the Sunday evening of November 18, 1906. While the captain went to his quarters to count the fares an inexperienced mate – not a licensed pilot – was left, for some reason that was never understood, to sound two blasts on the whistle and then turn the *Dix* directly across the bow of the steam schooner *Jeanie,* which then pushed the top-heavy *Dix* over. She rapidly filled and sank. An estimated 45 of the approximately 77 passengers were drowned. The *Dix* still lies at 103 fathoms. It remains the gravest maritime disaster in Elliott Bay history.

"The Disastrous Year of 1875"

Of course the greater disasters occurred beyond the safety of Puget Sound. Unlike crossing the bar at the mouth of the Columbia River, there is no sizeable graveyard of ships at the unprotected but well lighted entrance to the Straights of Juan de Fuca, but ships, of course, have met with bad ends there battling both heavy seas and human error. One of the earliest surviving photographs of Yesler Wharf looks north to three ships moored to its outer end. **[79]** The then 24-year-old sidewheeler on the far left, the *Pacific*, figures in one of these great disasters on the open seas. And the tragedy occurred not far from the Cape Flattery Lighthouse on Tatoosh Island. *Lewis and Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* introduces its eleventh chapter with a subject list that begins gravely, "Loss of steamship *Pacific* – The Disastrous Year 1875." Published in 1895, the Dryden history devotes nearly five pages to its description of a strange collision that "even at this time, after a lapse of twenty years, the bare mention of her name brings 'a pallor into the cheek and a mist before the eye' of those whose loved ones went forth on the ship fated never to reach her destination." The most pathetic part of the story describes how the body of one of the victims, a young woman, was returned by the tides and currents to the beach a short distance from the home of her parents in Victoria. The *Pacific* was then involved in a rate war, and the passengers who boarded her in Victoria considered themselves extremely lucky to be paying five dollars for the fair to San Francisco rather than the usual thirty. After steaming from Victoria at 9:30 AM November 4th, and rounding Tatoosh Island at about 4:00 PM, the *Pacific* then met stiff winds and hard going but would have easily survived the weather except that she collided around 10:00 P.M. with the collier *Orpheus* that was headed north to Nanaimo for coal. The disaster was most unlikely, for it happened in open seas about fifteen miles from shore. Of the about 240 passengers on the *Pacific* only one survived by clinging to some wreckage and

was rescued on the morning of the eighth. After checking its own injuries, the *Orpheus* limped on unaware of how she had so neatly opened the side of the *Pacific* that the old sidewheeler quickly filled and sank. For two days the *Orpheus* limped towards Nanaimo but two days after bumping the *Pacific* ran aground on an island in Barclay Sound and was wrecked. The *Pacific-Orpheus* collision resulted in what is still the largest loss of life connected with any vessel in waters relatively near to the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the relative safety of Puget Sound. The photograph of the *Pacific* nudged against the end of Yesler Wharf is dated from that "disastrous year 1875" and the vessel may well be preparing for her final voyage.

On Nov. 16 - only a few days after news of the *Pacific's* loss reached Seattle -- what was then the greatest gales in its history hit the town around dinner time and kept blowing until after 10 pm. The winds dislodged two of the four columns on the Territorial University building, lifted roofs from homes, collapsed a new warehouse on Yesler's extended wharf and pruned Denny Hill of most of its remaining old growth. A comparison again of the panoramas by Robinson and Peterson respectively shows a very depleted landscape on Denny Hill in 1878 compared to that in 1869. According to historian F. J. Sayer the gale of 1875 was responsible for much of the felling. Finally, the year that brought a big wind near its conclusion began with a cold snap in January that not only froze Lake Union over for several weeks – and suspended the cartage of coal along its length – but also froze the Duwamish River. When the ice broke up it was pushed by a southwesterly wind in sheets of from three to six inches thick to the waterfront piling it against the wharves and for several hours stopped all movement of vessels.

1876: Real Estate Map

Real estate maps typically depict the expectations – and hopes – of developers. Such a promotional map was drawn for Seattle in 1876, and it reveals a grotesque waterfront in which the gently curving waterfront meander line has been hammered (or rationalized) into the right angle turns that frame blocks with lots to sell. **[80]** The map also depicts a Seattle and Walla Walla Depot on a wharf that fills at least two off-shore blocks between King and Jackson Street. Of course at the time of the drawing neither the depot nor the wharf were yet in place although it was in 1876 that the city's pile drivers were at work off the end of Piners Point (or Denny's Island), and also in Gas Cove between Piners Point and Beacon Hill. (Most famous of the pile drivers was "Uncle Joe" Surber, the pioneer sheriff and game hunter. Surber has a street named for him on the Laurelhurst Peninsula because he chose part of that remote ridge as a claim more for his dogs and he to go hunting than as an investment.)

Driving Piles on the Tideflats

During June of 1876, news of filling the tidelands and building trestles and docks over them was followed in *The Daily Intelligencer*. The June 8th issue reported, "The contract has been let for building 15 miles of the *Seattle and Walla Walla RR,* which takes the road up to the Renton and Talbot coal mines where it will obtain a daily freightage of 1,500 tons of coal to carry to tide water, besides miscellaneous merchandise." The coal from the Renton and Talbot mines was at that time still being brought to Seattle on barges down

the Black River, then still the outlet at the southern end of Lake Washington. The Black joined the White River (Green River) to form the Duwamish. Although the Black River dried up with the 1916 lowering of Lake Washington for the ship canal, where the two rivers joined is still called the Black River Junction. Part of Yesler's 1875 extension of his wharf with the dogleg pointing north was to provide bunkers for both the Renton and Talbot deposits. In the later edition of the 1875 survey the names of the mines are indicated on the map next to their respective coal bins on the Yesler Wharf. Yesler's service it seems either took the place of or was added to the Talbot mine's interest in a smaller storage shed built at the far end of the Crawford and Harrington Wharf off of Washington Street. With the 1877 completion of the much larger and more convenient King Street Wharf, the Yesler Wharf coal services were no longer needed.

The June 12th issue of *The Daily Intelligencer* reports, "The work of driving piles on the Western end of the *Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad* to deep water [for the building of the King Street Wharf] which was delayed for a few days while awaiting a fresh supply of piles of the requisite length is to be resumed this morning. The work towards the mainland [and so just past the Gas Works at Jackson Street & 5th Avenue.] however where ordinary piles are sufficient, has been prosecuted with vigor and already makes a good showing." The June 12, 1876 issue also reports, "Street work – Mr. Edwards has nearly finished the opening of Jackson Street between Fifth (Fourth) and Eighth Street and the surplus filling dumped into the low ground near the gas works." The paper's June 18 issue notes, "There is at present considerable activity in logging about the head of the bay. Two camps are in operation on the east side just above the mouth of the river employing together about nine teams . . . The camp of Mr. Liddel . . . has delivered 125,000 feet of logs, and is now engaged on a contract to supply a large number of piles long and short for the *Seattle and Walla Walla RR*."

New Wharves

The June 18th issue of *The Daily Intelligencer* also describes the many activities on the Atkins wharf that took Commercial Street (First Ave. S.) over the tideflats a short ways south of King Street. The wharf appears with the Atkins name in the Federal topographic map of 1875, but one year later the real estate map has changed it to the Commercial Street Wharf. "In addition to Carkeek's stone cutting establishment, the boat-yard and Mr. Campbell's new blacksmith shop which have lately been started on the Atkins and Mechanics wharves, Surber was busy last week driving piles at the lower end of the Atkins wharf for a new manufacturing establishment to be erected there by Messrs Hall and Paulson. Nearby, on the west side of the wharf, Messrs Stetson and Post also are preparing to erect a new structure for their manufacturing business. These new industries together with the construction of the *Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad*, now progressing as fast as piles can be prepared, will soon give a new aspect to the upper part of the bay." That this competition for piles and pile drivers was frustrating the railroad is suggested in this *Daily Intelligencer* report from June 28. "The work of piling across the cove on the *Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad,* interrupted by the driving of the foundations for the new factories of Messrs Hall and Paulson, and Stetson and Post, was resumed yesterday." The Mechanics wharf appears on both maps but is named only on the later. The building and/or extending of new wharves presented a unique opportunity to some of the sons of Seattle's pioneers.

An *Intelligence* Thanksgiving Day editorial condemns "a gang of big tough boys who were going around and pushing persons off wharves just for the fun."

The two maps from 1875 and 1876 may be compared in every detail and also with the several Peterson Bros photographs just discussed (and others.) We will be restrained and note only a point or two. First in the federal map, the new wharf near the foot of Spring Street is shorter than in the real estate map, and only in the latter is it named the "Flouring Mills." Given the stubby size of it in the 1877 Peterson view taken from their back window, the real estate map from '76 has – typically – exaggerated its length. Of course, in the 1878 Peterson photograph from the end of Yesler's Wharf this dock has reached a good ways into the bay and spread branches as well. The Mitchell Shipyard near the foot of Columbia (where the George E. Starr was built in 1879) is also noted in the 1876 map, and it is very near Martin Schwieg's Steam Brewery. Any reader who has got this far and studied the accompanying photos has also seen Schwieg's brewery. It appears extreme right in both the 1877 Peterson view from the back window of their studio and from the 1878 panorama from Yesler's Warf. However, its best side is seen in the 1878 look down Front Street from Madison – the photograph with Piper the socialist loved for his cream cakes. The reader is abandoned to figure out its location but should have little difficulty given these several leads. (When examining the 1875 and '76 maps, the reader is also encouraged to recall the descriptions above of the sewerage problems in the city and behind Commercial Street in 1875.)

Uncle Joe's Discovery

We return now to Gas Cove and the tidelands that extend from it south to the mouth of the Duwamish. "Uncle Joe" Surber's work of extending the *Seattle and Walla Walla* trestle south over the tideflats below Beacon Hill led to some discoveries. The May 30, 1877 issue of the *Daily Pacific Tribute* reflected, "In driving the piles for the railroad, Mr. Surber discovered that the mud at the curve off the gasworks was thirty-five feet deep. Piles sixty-five feet long were required, and two jounces of the hammer upon them would take them down to hardpan thirty or forty feet below. All this mud has come from the rivers, and has been left there during the passing years at the rate probably of a half-foot annually. At low tide these piles are entirely bare, from the surface of the mud up. How few years ago it was that this whole upper bay was covered with water at low tide may be easily calculated, and can be told with tolerable accuracy by pile driver and steamboat men who have been working upon it the past fifteen or twenty years. And how many more years will it be before these flats, now covered at high tide with water, will be so raised as to be ready for cultivation?" Reflecting on these reflections, we may note that Uncle Joe came to Seattle early enough – in 1859 – to know that attempts to raise Oysters on a large scale in Elliott Bay failed because of the silting from the Duwamish. He was also around during the late 1880s when tide flat jumpers revived the oyster as a ruse to establish position on the tidelands south of King Street. They appealed to an 1877 territorial law that favored oyster cultivation. The law reads in part that the tidelands so claimed cannot exceed ten acres, not get in the way of logging and that they should be "marked with stakes at the corners." In the years before statehood and that fateful determination of what would become of the tidelands, more than 400 acres were so marked on the flats, igniting one local wag to reflect, "There is one curious thing about oyster claims, and this is that they

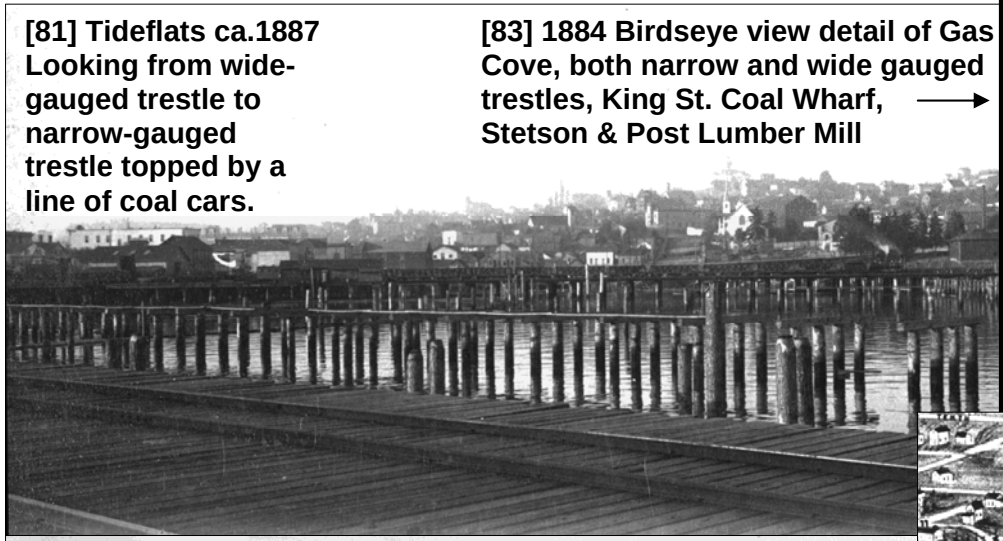
are located as near the city of Seattle as is possible. On the other hand the men who have taken up the tideland for the purpose of improving or speculating have enclosed their holdings with piles. The planked piles and wharfs under construction by one syndicate is attacked in the night by gun-toting oystermen who tear up their construction." (In 1888-89 this tideland behavior was repeated on the waterfronts of many Puget Sound communities.) **[81]**

The *Pacific Tribute's* 1877 musings on the future of river silting continued to the central waterfront with this worrying speculation. "And pursuing the inquiry still further, how many years will it be after that before the lower bay will also have thirty-five feet depth of mud off the town to the lasting destruction of the greater part of the harbor?" As we shall note below such a process might have been just the thing to help City Engineer R.H. Thomson's 1909 proposal to extend the waterfront three blocks further into Elliott Bay with fill – if he could have controlled it. However, the *Tribute's* worries were unfounded and so the river could not help Thomson. The deep central waterfront was treated differently by the Duwamish than the tideflats, a fact that the newspaper's editor might have smelled if he had gone to the foot of Columbia Street and turned his nose alternately north and south. Or he might have compared the hydrographic soundings recorded by Wilkes in 1841 with those of the Federal Surveys of 1854 and 1875 to appreciate that the depths off Seattle's central waterfront were pretty steady. The greatest changes in the soundings were the contribution of the Denny Regrade when most of that hill was poured from trestles and dumped from barges into Elliott Bay and close enough to shore to require some dredging of the "summit" of the reconstituted underwater hill for the safety of shipping.

1878 Birdseye Revisited

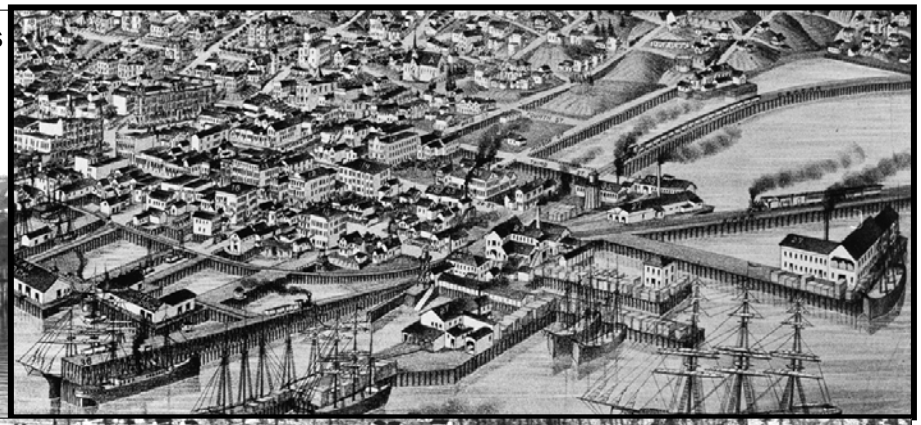
The idealized depiction of the 1878 Birdseye flattens the city so that any visitor who had first consulted it would be surprised to discover that Seattle was built on hills and not merely surrounded by them. **[82]** Still, Seattle's first sketch from the sky does reveal waterfront features that by now should be familiar from the photographs and maps consulted above. And the waterfront facilities have grown – or at least their proprietors have convinced the artist of their intentions to grow. For instance, Yesler's Wharf (just above the smoking steamer) has added a heel to its sole and so resembles Italy even more now than in the mid-1870s maps. The Atkins/Commercial Street wharf off the end of Piners Point has also spread and both it and the Mechanics' wharf are intersected by the slanting *Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad* trestle which begins its climb to the new coal bunkers just west of Commercial Street. While the pier and bunkers are named for King Street, it was only later that the railroad trestle was rebuilt to line up with the street. Surber's original piles were rapidly consumed by Teredos. James Colman, who was effectively the builder and manager of the *S&WW*, completed the new line in December 1879. This new trestle curved closer to shore and then stayed there after heading directly east on King Street nearly as far as 4th Avenue.

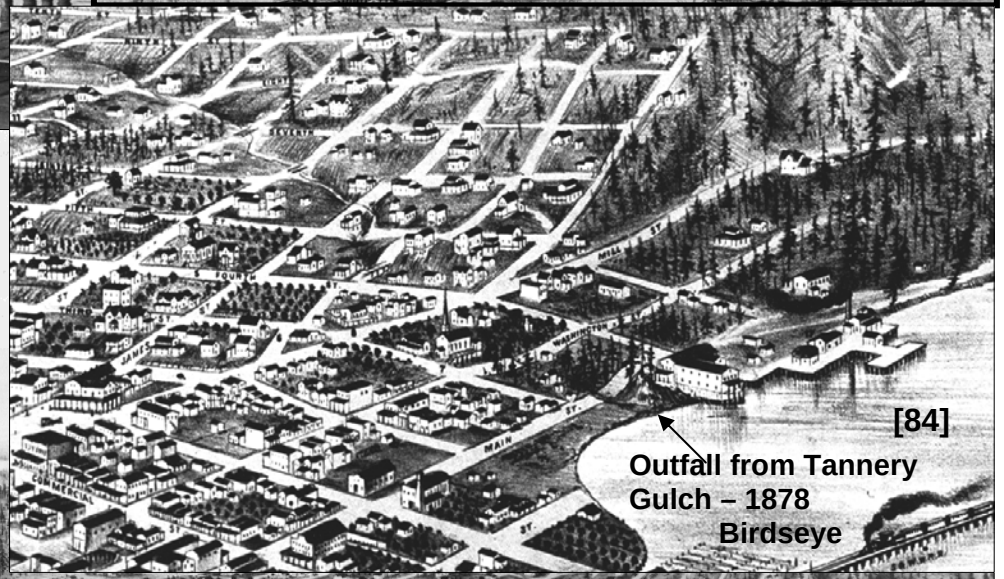
The 1878 sketch also reveals a keen anachronism. On the left of the full birdseye, a coal train can be seen heading up Westlake towards its curve at Pike where it would



[81] Tideflats ca.1887 Looking from wide-gauged trestle to narrow-gauged trestle topped by a line of coal cars.

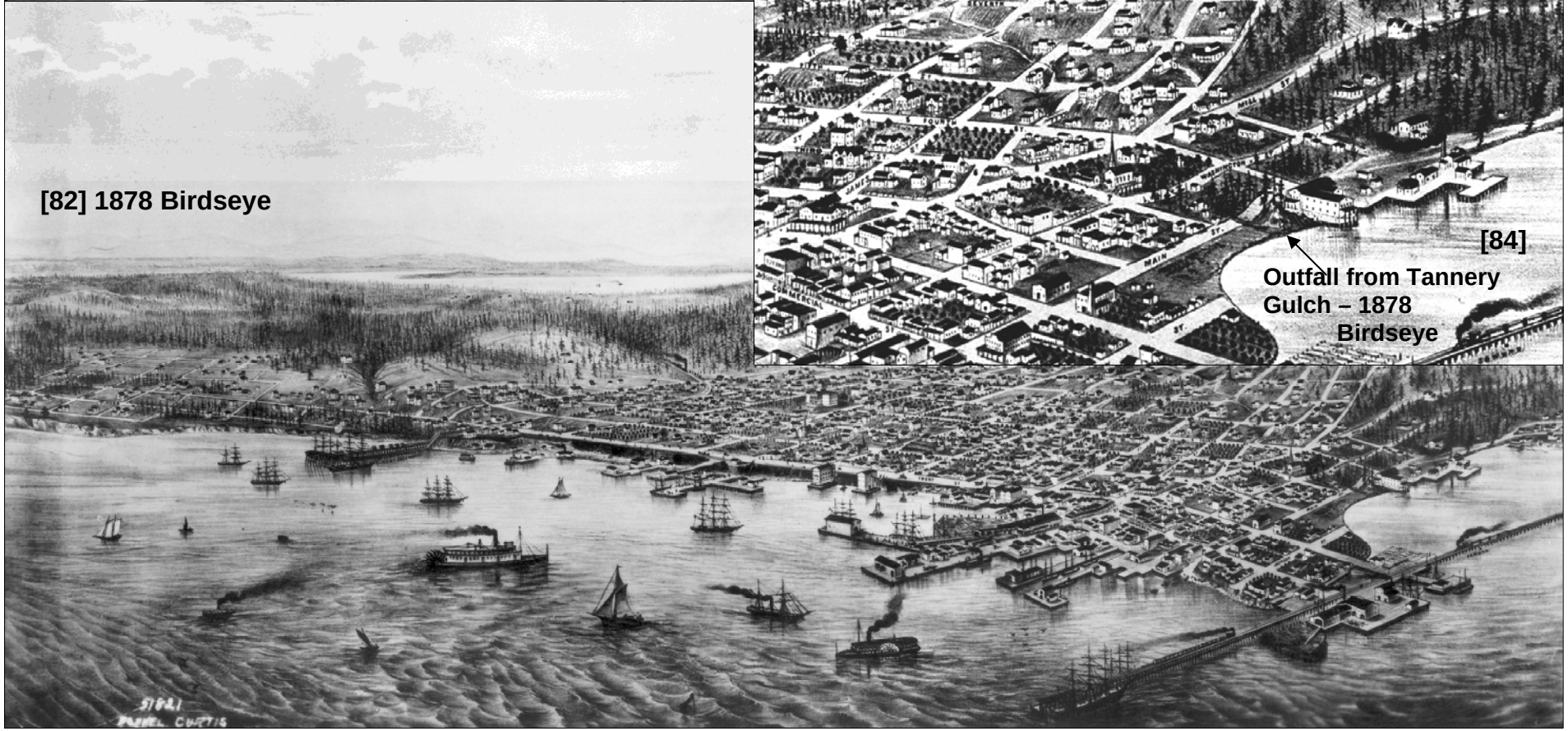
[83] 1884 Birdseye view detail of Gas Cove, both narrow and wide gauged trestles, King St. Coal Wharf, Stetson & Post Lumber Mill →





[84]

Outfall from Tannery Gulch – 1878 Birdseye



[82] 1878 Birdseye

continue west to the Pike Street Pier. Lower right, another coal train is heading empty east from the end of the new King Street bunkers for the coal mines. As already noted the operations of the two lines did not overlap. However, the artist's "time-binding" can only be faulted for one week. Repeating lines from above, "On January 29, 1878 the last coal car unloaded at Pike Street into the only partly patched bunkers. One week later on Feb. 5, the first coal-car left Newcastle for Seattle by way of Renton and to a the new coal wharf and bunkers at the foot of King Street not Pike."

1878 Reflections on Plummer's Cove

The *Daily Intelligencer* for June 22, 1878 lends another indirect interpretation of this birdseye with an article headlined "Fighting the Surf." It should be noted that Jackson Street does not yet extend to the east across Gas Cove. But they were trying. "Time was when the tide flowed all the way across our town site from Plummer's Cove [the Salt Marsh in Phelps 1856 map] by the Occidental Hotel [facing Pioneer Square between Yesler Way and James Street] and re-entering by Yesler's Mill [The low tidal passage between Washington Street and Yesler Way]. The steady depositions of sawdust through a long series of years have gradually shut off the tide and made block after block of real estate out of what used to be salt marsh, until now Colman's [James Colman was then managing Yesler's Mill.] sawdust carts are bluffing the tide at the north line of Jackson Street. The fight has been going on for a year past, but the water being deep and the current unrestrained, with the advantage rather on the side of the tide. The beach for many yards is becoming littered with the floating debris, but time and perseverance will gradually tell, and Jackson Street be added to our thoroughfares, the same as Washington, Mill [Yesler Way] and Main." In the 1884 birdseye Jackson still crosses the cove on a trestle although the fill has been drawn up to its north side. **[83]**

Early Seattle Underground & Commercial Angst

Here we may dip into an *Intelligencer* from 1880 for a description of Mill Street (Yesler Way) that is a good indication of how the neighborhood east of Commercial Street (First Avenue South) was once at a much lower grade than now. This is years before the streets were raised a few feet following the fire of 1889 -- and longer still before Bill Speidel organized his "Seattle Underground Tours" through the basements of some Pioneer Square blocks in the 1960s. "The filling in of Mill Street will necessitate the raising of a number of buildings east of Commercial Street, which are now from 12 to 24 inches below the level of the road. That part of town built over the old swamp [the Plummer's Cove noted above] has been, after successive fillings, raised and raised and raised over again until it is from 12 to 18 feet higher than it originally was, and it isn't high enough yet by from 3 to 6 feet." Two years later the *Post-Intelligencer* (in the meantime the *Intelligencer* had joined with the *Post*) of July 26, 1882 worried over the prejudice that merchants in a community growing in both population and reclaimed land still held towards any street that was not one of the community's established commercial strips. "The necessity of extending the business limits of the city was never more plainly seen than in the present exigency, and yet where and how to do it cannot be satisfactorily told. All hold on to locations as near the Mill [Yesler Way], James, Front [First Ave.] and Commercial Street [First Ave. S.] intersections with most tenacious grip. No dealer is willing to go beyond the Arlington [a hotel] on Commercial street, beyond the

Occidental [another hotel] on Mill or James, and beyond Madison Street, on Front, even if they could get locations there, which they cannot, while as for going out on Washington street, or on Second [Occidental] or Third [Second], nothing with them could be more repugnant. A good many of them will have to go, though, within a year, we are confident." It was a confidence with the considerable backing of the transcontinental *Northern Pacific* that arrived on Puget Sound in 1883, requiring many old and new merchants to open shops on side streets and often also on fill. Part of this prejudice against Second and Third Avenue (now Occidental and Second) and Main and Washington Streets east of Commercial Street (First Avenue South) was also a racial prejudice, for the city's growing Chinese community, encouraged by the need for their labor in building the railroads and canals and handling the domestic chores that were ordinarily avoided by Euro-Americans, often lived and did much of their business along these "side streets."

Tannery Ravine

The 1878 birdseye also includes more than a hint of another feature of the native land – Seattle's third ravine (added to the Seneca and Belltown ravines) or gulch, one that was that was carved over time by water contributed by the many springs on First Hill. In the birdseye the ravine follows a darkened diagonal course and can be traced descending First Hill. **[84]** Eventually, a short distance south of the old tannery site near Yesler Way and 3rd Avenue, it passes behind the Our Lady of Good Help Catholic church (distinguished by the steeple) and reaches Gas Works Cove between Main and Jackson Streets and Third and Fourth Avenues although closer to Third. The ravine was identified with Woodin's (later of Woodinville) Tannery, Seattle's second manufacturing establishment following Yesler's mill. M.D. Woodin and his son Ira used it both for power and for disposing of the often nasty materials that were involved in the making of leather goods. Yesler also collected the water from these springs for the hydraulics of his first flume and later bored logs [see "First Photographs" above], but of course he captured the water fresh upstream. The tannery was nestled in the gulch where it could also draw on the stream for water power. By pioneer historian Clarence Bagley's recollections of it, a bridge crossed the ravine on Mill Street (Yesler way). In 1908 during excavations for the Ulrich building at Prefontaine place and Yesler Way, workman found thirty-five feet below the level of the street the timbers of the tannery. When Bagley was consulted, he advised that if they kept digging another ten or fifteen feet they would uncover the tanning vats. The story of this excavation appears in the *Post-Intelligencer* for Nov. 26, 1908 and does not indicate if the excavation continued. Another part of the ravine was penetrated in 1904 when work on the railroad tunnel near its south portal cut through the gulch where it had been covered with thirty feet of fill. Entombed within these latter-day contributions were grass seeds that, as the *Post-Intelligencer* reported, "sprang to life once exposed to sunlight."

King Street Coal Wharf

The oldest view of the King Street Coal Wharf (not counting the Petersons' record of it from Denny Hill described above) may be a detail that was photographed either from a vessel tied to its north side or from bunkers that extended a ways north from the trestle. **[85]** (The original is a stereo.) The size of the wharf can be appreciated in a later view photographed from its upper deck ca 1882. Two Lilliputian-sized men on the lower deck gaze up at the

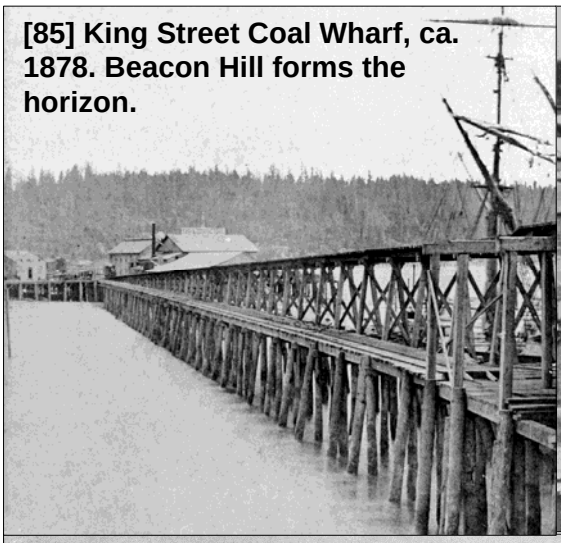
photographer. **[86]** On the far right, the Stetson and Post Lumber Mill and its millpond are attached to the Commercial Street Wharf, and above the Mill's water tower a good swath of Beacon Hill has been cleared for development. The waterfront foot of Jackson Street is on the far left, and facing it on its south side and from the grove of its own landscape is the venerable Felker House that was described earlier in connection with the "Battle of Seattle" and the 1856 Phelps map and sketch. For those inclined to explore the native land, the most revealing part of this view is the bluff at the southwest corner of Piners Point and the beach below it. This is either the native bluff on which the native longhouses were perched or close to it. While I have no explanation for the litter on the beach – including the long and nearly parallel poles – the beach itself looks native enough and undeveloped. The same beach and bank are featured in the 1878 birdseye where a clutter of dugout canoes is also arranged on the waterfront between Jackson and Main Streets. The last word on this view from high above even the upper level of the King Street Coal Wharf is lifted from pioneer journalist Frank A. Atkins who recalled the efforts required by the coal trains to make it up onto the trestle. "Many of the old residents here now can in fancy hear the hurried staccato exhausts of the little locomotive *Hyak* as she would start on the long level stretch of track, before reaching the elevated section which led to the top of the bunkers. With three or four cars loaded with coal, she literally took it 'on the run'." After the city's "Great Fire" of 1889 destroyed the wharf and the trestle on King Street that led to it, the incline was extended to between Fourth and Fifth Avenues where it reached grade and curved to the south as before. The total distance from that point to the end of the bunkers was then 4,000 feet and the incline had also been widened for a double track. (For comparison a ca.1885 view from the trestle has been attached. **[87]**)

King St. Trestle

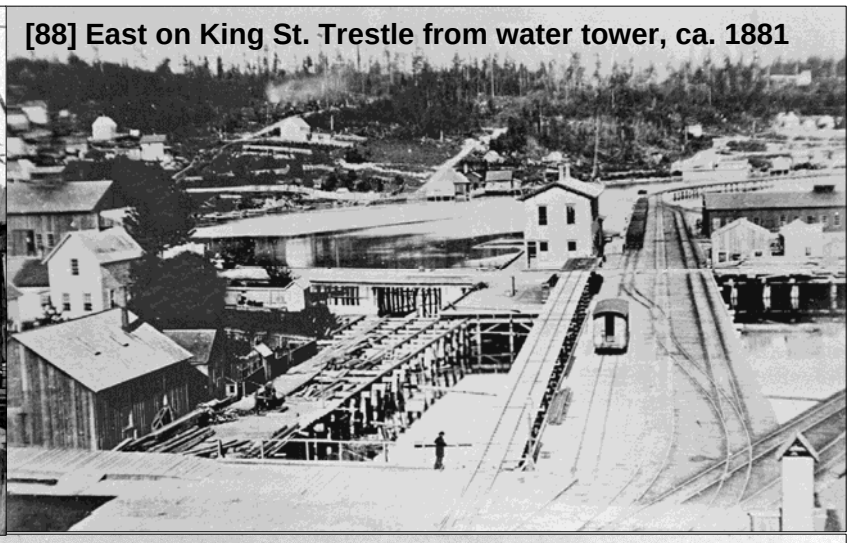
As noted above, it was only ten years earlier in December 1879 that the old *S&WW* approach to the King Street Coal Wharf was re-configured to approach the wharf directly in line with King Street. This new trestle is shown off very well in a view taken from the Stetson and Post mill water tower not long after the change was made. **[88]** The narrow-gauged railroad's station appears just right of center. Behind it hugging Gas Cove on the far shore is the Gas Works, and the narrow road climbing the ridge behind it is Jackson Street running east from the waterfront between Fifth and Eighth Avenues. This is the stretch that was described above in *The Daily Intelligencer* as improved in the late spring of 1876 by one Mr. Edwards who dumped his "surplus filling into the low ground near the gas works." Between Edwards dumping and the completion of the Jackson Street Regrade in 1909, the intersection of 5th and Jackson would reach a considerably higher elevation than the one it holds here behind the gas works. By a variety of trestles, fills, and trestles built above fills, it did a "stepping process" that began – if we consider Edwards's contribution as only on the fringes – in the early 1880s.

Boom Town Counting

Two Peterson Brothers photographs of the Big Snow of 1880 can be compared with photographs taken roughly 33 years later to demonstrate the changes in Seattle during its boom years. To review, in the 1880 federal census Seattle still held second place after Walla Walla among communities in Washington Territory. Seattle counted 3,553 citizens and Walla Walla 35 more. Thirty



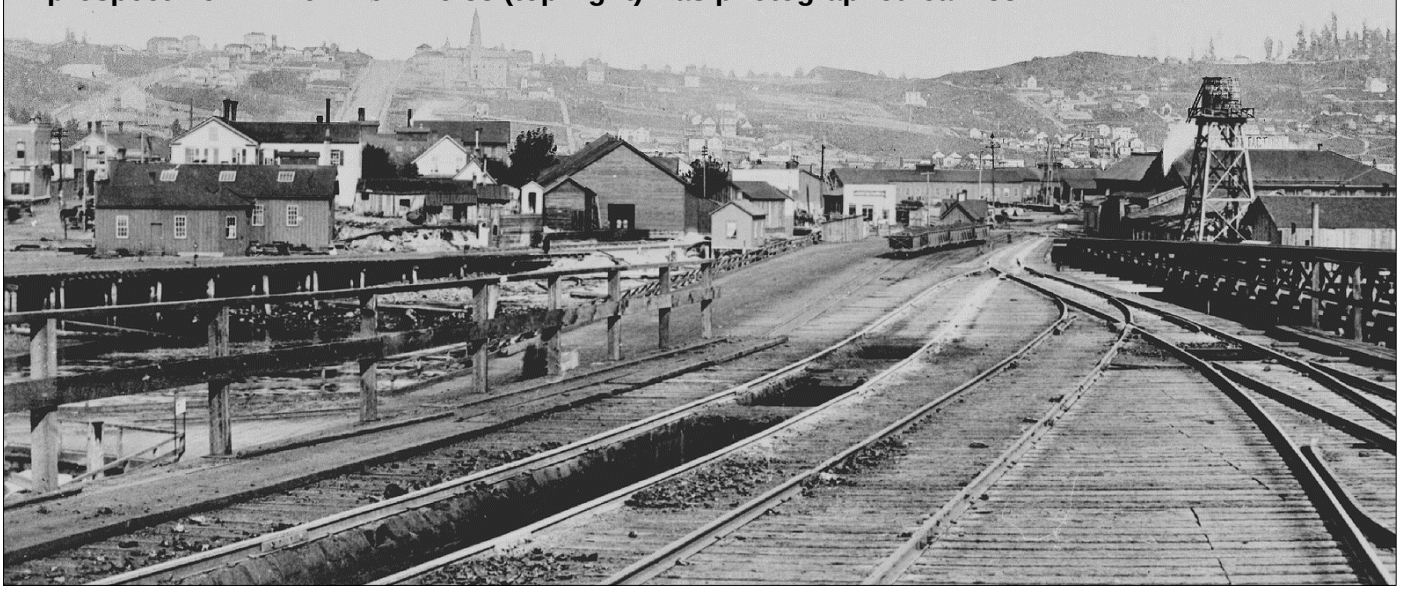
[85] King Street Coal Wharf, ca. 1878. Beacon Hill forms the horizon.



[88] East on King St. Trestle from water tower, ca. 1881

[86] View looking east from King Street Coal Wharf, circa 1882. Felker House faces Jackson Street on the left. Stetson and Post Lumber Mill right-of-center. Beacon Hill horizon can be compared to bottom view photographed about three years later.

[87] Another and later – ca. 1885 – view looking east from King Street Coal Wharf. Note Felker house on left, sans trees. Beacon Hill is also clear-cut. Water tower on the right is prospect from which view No.88 (top-right) was photographed ca. 1881.



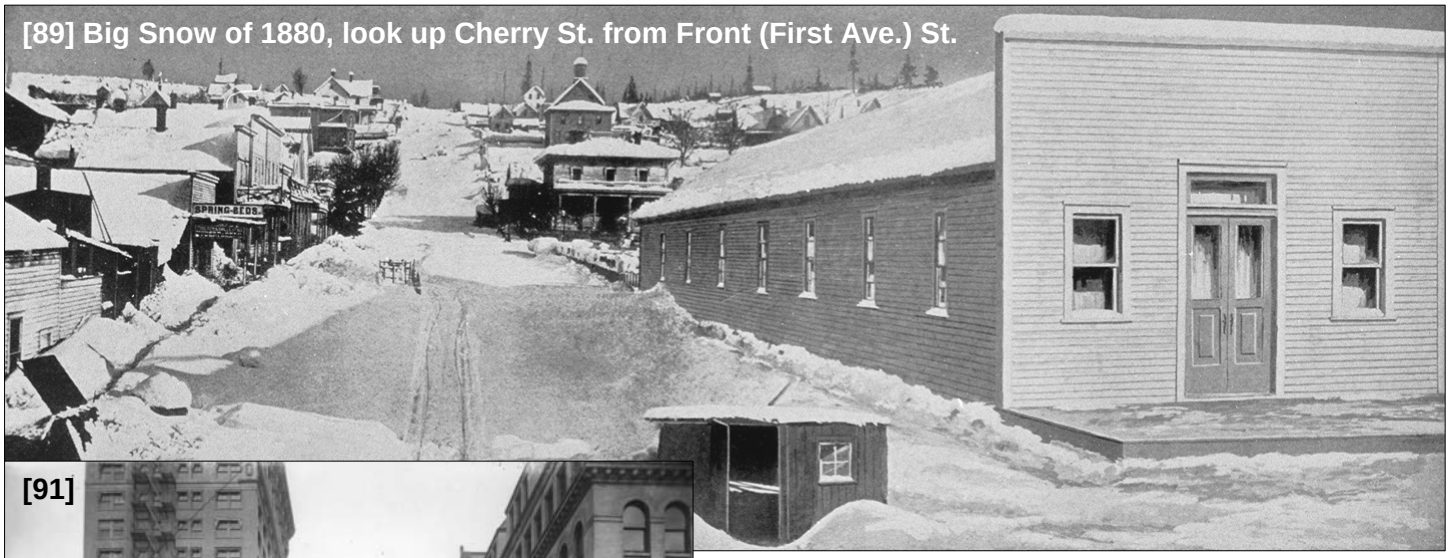
years later Seattle's count demonstrated what it means to be a booming city in the modern American West. The Seattle census that year counted 237,194. In Walla Walla 19,364 citizens were included in the federal register. (Tacoma, Seattle's frequent rival to the south, enumerated 1098 in 1880 and 83,743 in 1910.) The Petersons' two photographs of the record snowfall were recorded from the two ends of their studio. One looks across Front Street (First Ave.) and up Cherry Street, and the other out the back towards Yesler's Wharf. **[89]** **[90]** The two repeats – both from roughly 1913 – are not equally refined in returning to the historical photographer's prospect. **[91]** **[92]** While the later look up Cherry Street – which in the intervening 30-plus years has turned into an "urban canyon" – is very close to returning to the Peterson point-of-view (although it was not intended), the look towards the waterfront is only approximate. That is, both views look west and a little south towards two versions of Yesler's Wharf. Since it is these waterfront scenes that are the more apt for this study a brief description of the February 1880s scene on Yesler Wharf **[90]** and its "repeat" about 33 years later follows. **[92]**

Yesler's Wharf Under the "Big Snow" of 1880

With drifts of six feet, the "Big Snow" of 1880 is still the deepest in Seattle History. The gap between Yesler's snow-engulfed wharf and the King Street Pier beyond is crowded with tall ships, all of them potential sources for the ballast that was left there through the late 1870s and early 1880s to create Ballast Island on the waterfront between Washington and Main Streets. The following year, 1881, a fleet of steam colliers routinely replaced these windjammers. The steamers were often given regional names like *Willamette, Walla Walla* and *Umatilla*. One of these with the "foreign" name *Mississippi* caught fire in 1883 while tied to the King Street bunkers. It had been filled with 1000 tons of coal, and was certainly combustible. The fire spread rapidly and scorched the wharf, killed the chief engineer and destroyed the vessel. The hull was then towed north a few blocks to near the foot of Stewart Street (that would then be just beyond the remnants of the old Pike Pier) and by one report was left there for several years, a summer playground for boys. (The hull, however, does not show up in any post-1883 photograph of the site and there are no gaps of "several years" between them.) Just above the crest of the snow-covered structure in the immediate foreground the front façade of a warehouse on Yesler Wharf is held up with temporary poles. Behind it, the roof of the building has crashed under the weight of the snow. This is added injury to the greater one of the year previous when the mill was swept by fire. The mill has not yet been rebuilt and in this scene the former site of the mill is covered only by snow. The later view that approximately "repeats" the snow scene is a record of early work on the seawall – ca. 1912 – here in the section between the long Piers 1 and 2. As noted above, the piers were built in the place of Yesler Wharf with the waterfront's extensive realignment in the first five years of the 20th Century.

Gas Cove from Beacon Hill

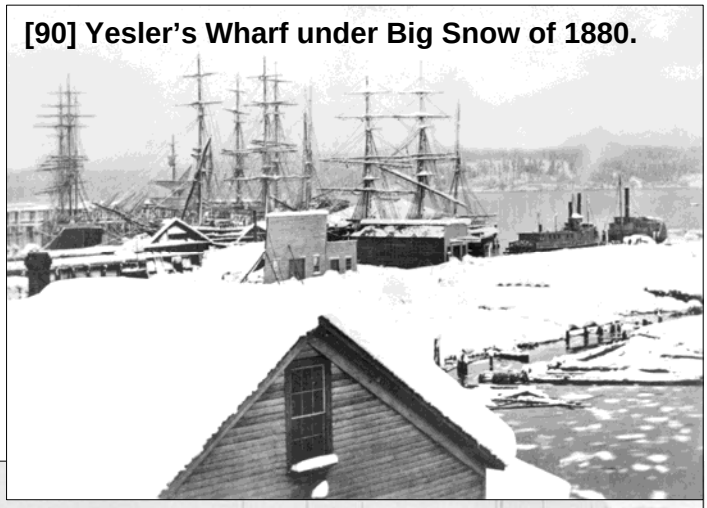
Beacon Hill was another gallery from which to shoot Seattle through the 1880s, its first boom decade. The earliest surviving photograph of the city from the hill dates from 1882 and it is in such good focus that the Petersons may be responsible. **[93]** Here, beyond the city and past the still wild and forested Magnolia peninsula, are the Olympic Mountains. The gentle curve of the *Puget Sound and Columbia Railroad* trestle crosses the tideflats south of Seattle's



[89] Big Snow of 1880, look up Cherry St. from Front (First Ave.) St.

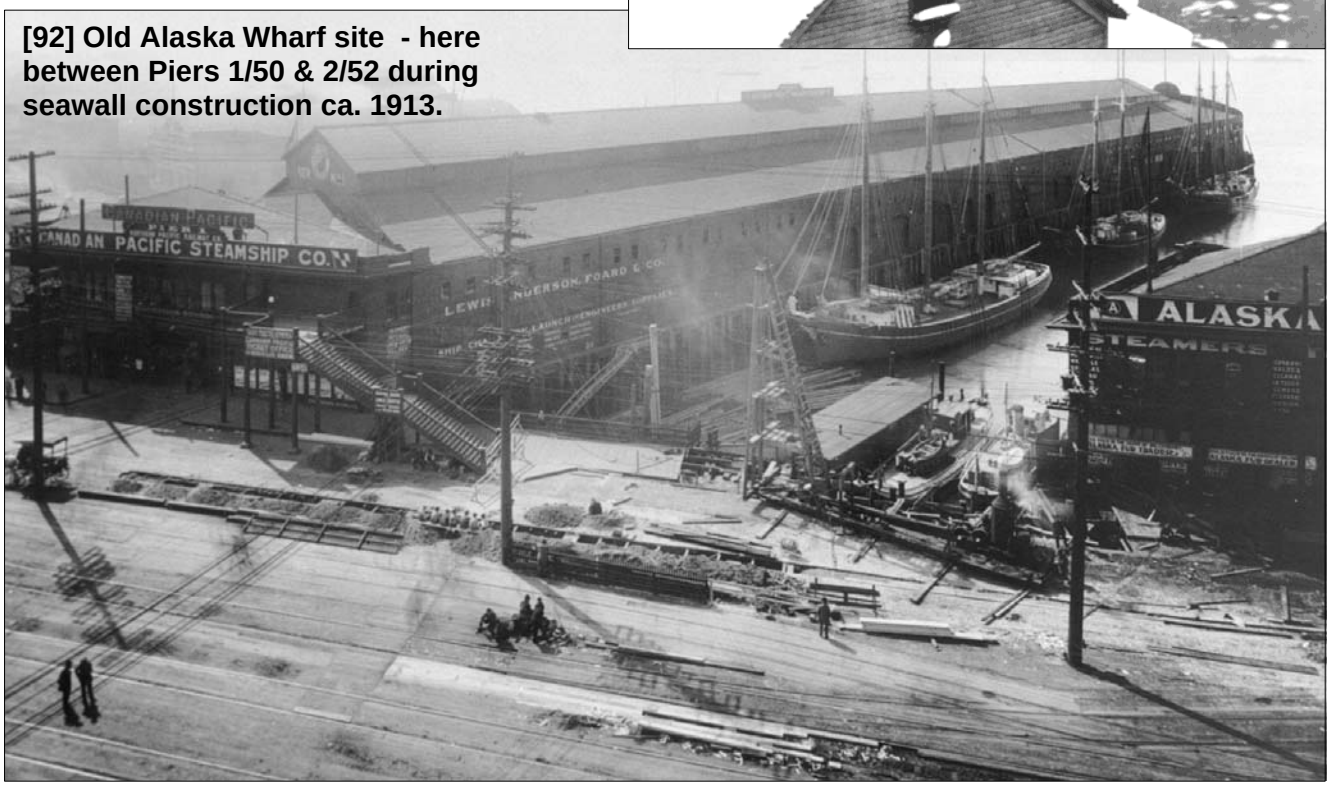
[91]

[89 – 91] "Then & now" comparison of view up Cherry Street from First Avenue in 1880 and about 1913.



[90] Yesler's Wharf under Big Snow of 1880.

[90 – 92] "Then & now" comparison of Yesler Wharf under 1880 snow and during seawall construction ca. 1913.



[92] Old Alaska Wharf site - here between Piers 1/50 & 2/52 during seawall construction ca. 1913.

commercial district and terminates at the King Street Coal Wharf. The stubble of pilings further off shore marks the original line of the *Seattle and Walla Walla* narrow gauged railroad as laid by Joe Surber in 1876. In 1882, 1,274 votes were cast in the November Election (60 more than in Walla Walla.) Remembering that women did not have the vote until 1884 – and then only temporarily – the population of Seattle was perhaps 6,000, and most of them lived and worked within the boarders of this panorama. The completion of the transcontinental *Northern Pacific* the following year in 1883 opened the Northwest to an immigrant flood. Seattle's population soared through the 1880s and reached beyond 40,000 in the 1890 census.

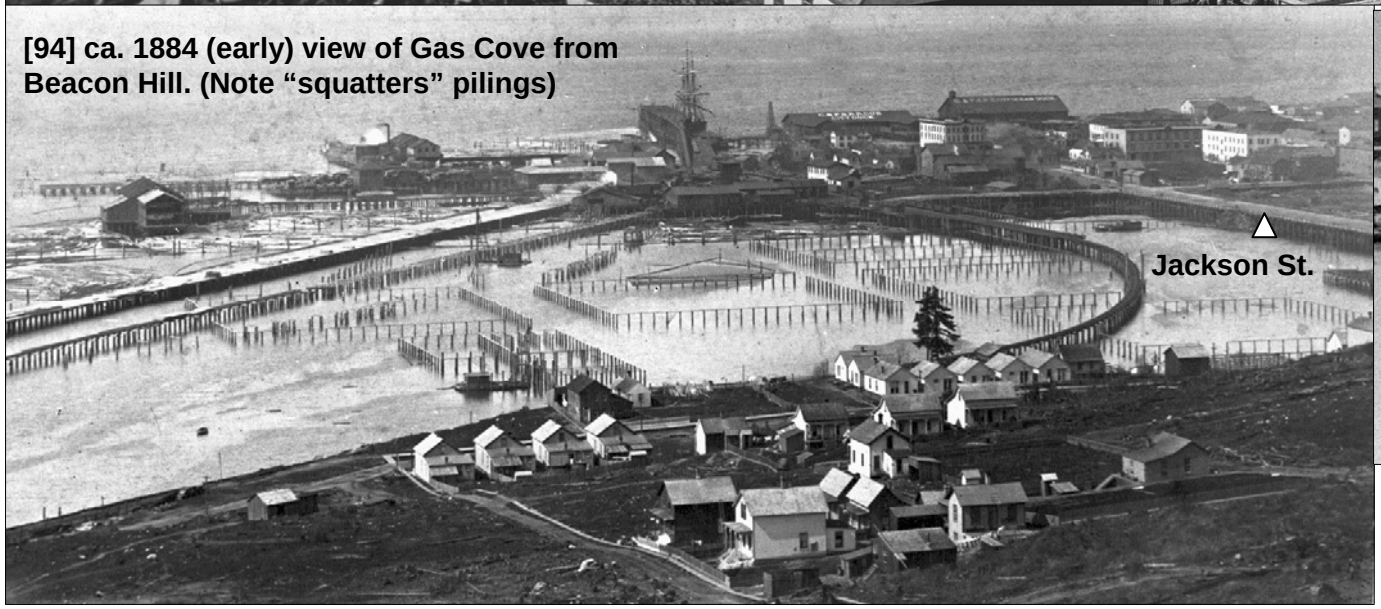
Recalling that after it completes its curve from the shores of Beacon Hill, the trestle here runs in line with King Street, it is readily determined that in 1882 the Gas Cove still reached north nearly as far as Main Street near Second Avenue. (Gas Cove is descriptive of the small bay that was on the south side of the sand spit that separated it from the salt marsh. It will be remembered – or consulted – that both the spit and the march are indicated on the earliest maps from 1841, 1854 and 1856. Plummer's Bay was another name for the entire waterway: salt marsh and Gas Cove. The Plummer home was built at the southeast corner of Piners Point near the present intersection of Jackson and Occidental, and from there overlooked the cove that was sometimes named for them.) In the attached 1882 panorama from Beacon Hill, the largest boxish building just above the cove is Squires Opera House at the northeast corner of Commercial (First Ave. S.) and Main Street. Two years earlier, Rutherford B. Hayes, the first U.S. president to visit Puget Sound, held a reception there and, according to the *Intelligencer*, shook two thousand hands.

"Orphan Road" 1883-85

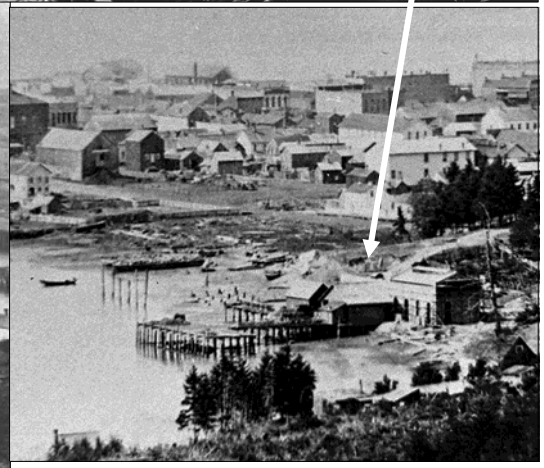
The next featured photograph of Gas Cove taken from Beacon Hill most likely dates from late 1883 or perhaps early 1884. A second trestle across the tides has been added on the left. **[94]** In the book *Orphan Road*, Kurt Armbruster's helpful history of the region's railroads, this "broad gauge strip" as it was known for the regular sized railway that would be laid on it is the most northern part of the book's namesake: the Puget Sound Shore Railway known informally in the mid 1880s as the "Orphan Road." The trestle was completed in Sept. 1883, the month that the N.P.'s transcontinental was also completed, and the Villard party visited nearly every town along the way and even one that was just beyond it: Seattle. But as noted above, they did not make it to Seattle aboard a railroad car of any width, but by water from Tacoma. In spite of its failure to make rail connection to Tacoma and the transcontinental, Seattle was still marvelously swarmed by the new wave of railroad immigrants. *The Seattle Daily Chronicle* of Nov. 23, 1883 notes, "So great has been the increase of population within the last six months that it is now almost impossible to find hotel accommodations, so that many are forced to camp on the hillside."

As noted in the thumbnail railroad history included above, soon after his triumph Villard lost control of the Northern Pacific. The new and resentful parents of the incomplete *Puget Sound Shore Line*, Villard's promise to Seattle, treated it like an orphan; that is, it was abandoned – fitfully. At 2:45 in the afternoon of June 17, 1884 the first standard gauged passenger train headed across Gas Cove on the completed "broad gauge strip"

[93] Panoramic view of Seattle from Beacon Hill in 1882, photographed from near Dearborn and 12th Avenue. New King Street trestle curves to the shore. Abandoned 1876 trestle to the left. Detail of Gas Cove directly below.



[94] ca. 1884 (early) view of Gas Cove from Beacon Hill. (Note “squatters” pilings)



trestle and was met with a twenty-one reports from a small cannon left over from the 1856 Indian War. The celebration was premature for the *Puget Sound Shore Line* was soon dismissed again while all concerned – railroads and citizens – fidgeted over who would operate it after someone or thing finished paying for it. Meanwhile the rancorous cloud arching between Tacoma and Seattle gushed both ways with threats of forfeiture of the *Northern Pacific's* great land grant in Washington Territory (the N.P. was not living up to its contract to build a railroad directly through the Cascades to Puget Sound) and the absurdity of a Seattle branch that had no turn-around but required cars to return to Tacoma backwards. A resolution of sorts followed in the early fall of 1885 when a turntable was installed at the north end of the still relatively new and not used trestle and *Puget Sound Shore* started serving Seattle twice daily. Still with delays and wobbles the locals – especially the *Post-Intelligencer* – continued to complain to the sustained amusement of Tacomans. Armbruster quotes the *Tacoma Ledger* for Oct. 28, 1885. "The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* must have a sour stomach . . . after clamoring for many weary months for the operation of the 'Orphan' road, the *P.I.* began to grumble within two days after the trains commenced to run. Nothing will please our dyspeptic contemporary except the operation of the entire *Northern Pacific* railroad system in the interest of Seattle." Four years later when most of this waterfront was incinerated (including parts of both trestles closest to Piners Point) the *Northern Pacific* and Seattle were often in bed together and ultimately Tacoma would fluff the pillows.

By the implication of Kurt Armbruster's chronology (and it is well ordered), this second view from Beacon Hill should date, as indicated, from late 1883 or early 1884, some little time before the trestle on the left – the "broad gauge strip" – was completed. The dating is pushed toward 1884 by the two large pier sheds that stand above the crowded Piners Point, to the right of the King Street Coal bunkers where a tall ship is moored also to the bunker's right (north) side. These two warehouses or pier sheds are, left to right, the City and Ocean docks. The *Columbia and Puget Sound* Company's two big additions to the waterfront were completed in 1884. In an 1883 photograph taken from close to the same spot chosen by this photographer and showing most of the same homes in the foreground, but not yet featuring the new broad gauge trestle, the roofline of the Ocean Dock is already up although without its little bell tower at the south end. (We will return to both the Ocean and City Docks.)

1883: "Seaport of Success"

Beside all this fuss about the Orphan Road to Tacoma the narrow-gauged *Columbia and Puget Sound* coal road (the old *S&WW*) to Renton and Newcastle continued to enrich Seattle with the "black gold" it carried along the smaller trestle to King Street. The introduction to the City Directory of 1884-85 reviews the prosperity of Seattle's harbor in 1883. "There are engaged in the inland traffic of Puget Sound, seventy-four steamers, with a registered capacity of 7,735 tons, three-fourths of which make Seattle their headquarters . . . Including foreign and domestic trade, it is estimated that 2000 vessels passed through Admiralty Inlet. Coastwise shipments are estimated at $8,500,000 … of these lumber and coal were the leading articles. The large coalfields are one of the greatest elements contributing to the future greatness of the city. These mines consist chiefly of the Renton and Newcastle, which are reached by rail from Seattle, the Black Diamond Mine and

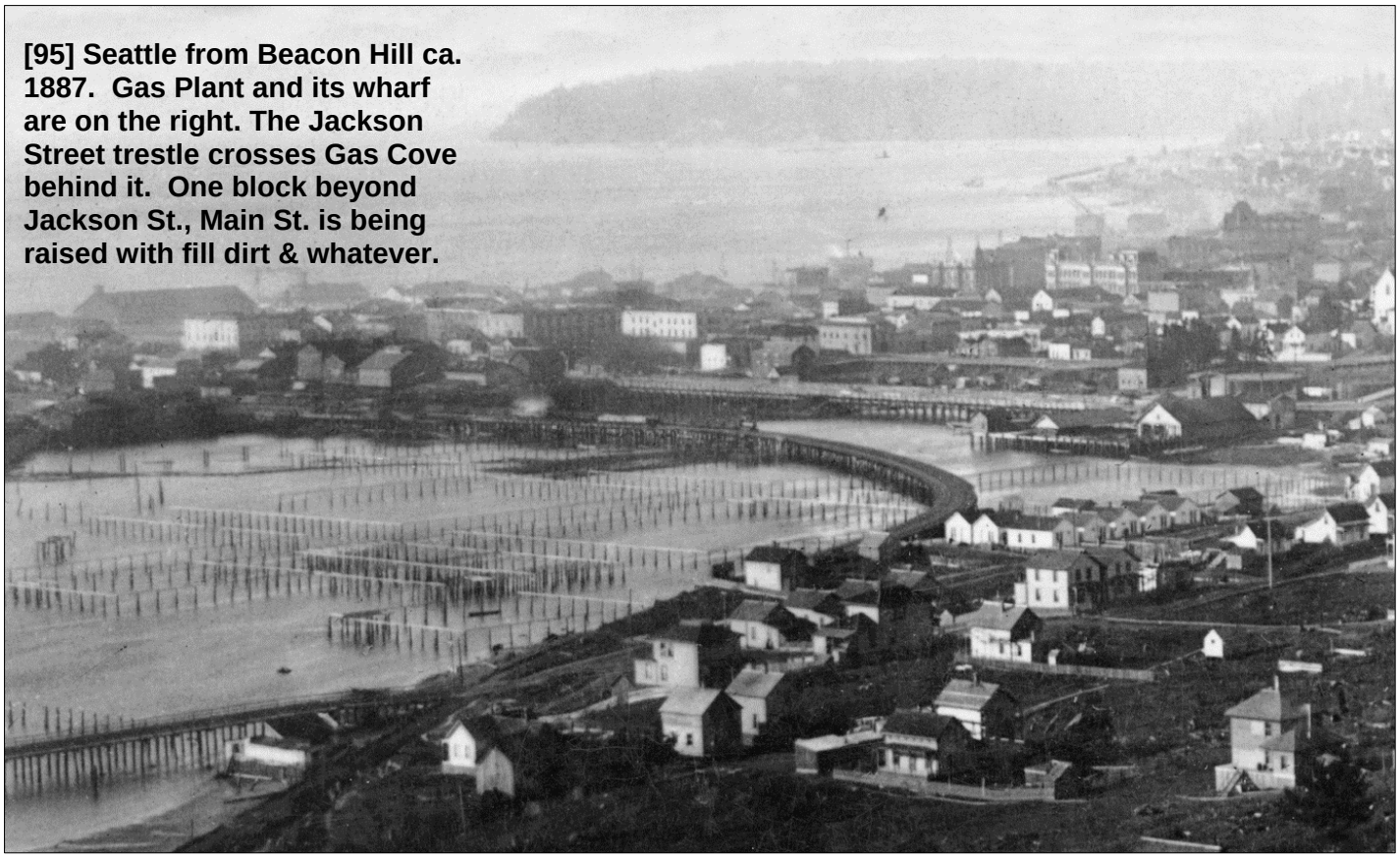
those of the Oregon Improvement Company. In 1883 the Renton Company produced 255,980 tons: the Seattle Company at Newcastle, 189,901 tons . . ." We may add to these grand statistics of a maritime boom town the tender advice of the young lawyer and future judge Everett Smith. In his 1886 letter home to his fiancé Mary in response to her anxieties about what she thought was Seattle's want of diversity and cosmopolitan qualities Smith assured her, "Cosmopolitan? I should say so. Walk down Front Street any day and you meet Chinese, Indians, Irish, Negroes, Italians, Germans, Jews, French, English and Americans from every state. I never saw such a great small metropolis." However, in an earlier letter to his brother he described the anti-Chinese riots of 1886 and requested, "Don't show this letter out of the family. The city is disgraced enough as it is."

"Cawing Crows"

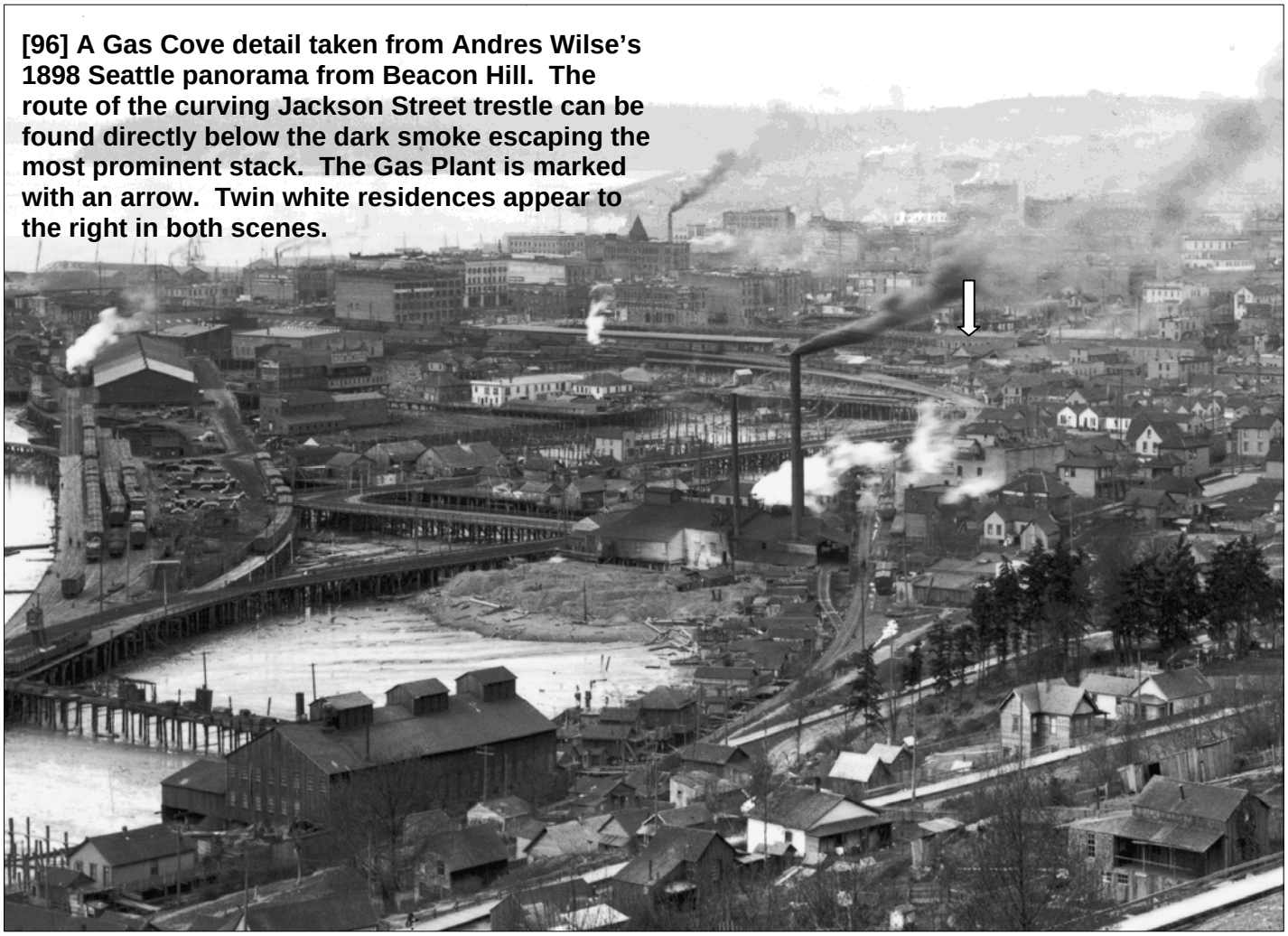
Polishing our historical understanding of this section of the waterfront we will compare a few details from this scene with two more views from Beacon Hill. As prelude, in the 1883-84 exposure, Jackson Street continues across Gas Cove on a wide trestle. **[94]** And the cove is not only crossed by the street and the railroad trestles but also sectioned by land speculators who, we know, purely for the purpose of establishing precedent have "boxed" portions of the tideflats with pilings. Four years later these and more pilings are still in place in another view from the hill. It dates from at least 1887, for in the distance the line of the Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Railway trestle can be seen heading north from the central waterfront. (The SLSER was constructed that year.) **[95]** In 1888, Thomas Burke (of the museum and the trail and the subject of the biography *He Built Seattle* by Robert Nesbitt) described these tideland piles to a distant associate in a letter already referred to above. "Here in Seattle the craze for salt water has broken out again with greater virulence than ever before. A swarm of salt water lunatics, of high and low degree, have alighted, like so many cawing crows, on the mud flats in the southern part of town, and have made the place a veritable sight with piles stuck all over it. And herein is where there is a great abuse of charity by the sea – it should have drowned the whole of them, but so far, I am sorry to say, not a single man of them has even gotten wet." In this ca.1887 vista the trestle on Jackson Street is being filled in (at the exact center of the scene), and behind it Main Street has been raised on fill to an elevation that leaves some of the homes on its north (far) side below grade. The gas plant for which Gas Cove is named can be easily detected at the east end (to the right) of the Jackson Street trestle. The size of the plant and the spread of its own wharf have grown considerably when compared to the detail from the 1882 view printed just above. The plants' tanks on the north side of Jackson between 4th and 5th Avenues appear in both the 1882 and ca.1887 views below the copse or clump of fir trees that stand near the corner of 4th and Main.

"Find the Gas Plant"

Next, for startling effect a detail from Anders Wilse's 1898 view from Beacon Hill is included. **[96]** [For a game of "Find the Gas Plant" look right of center between the white cloud of steam and long curl of smoke escaping from the factory. The by then sprawling gas plant nearly reaches the by now familiar curving line of the Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad's approach to King Street – the line established by James Colman twenty years earlier. The plant's tank is still across Jackson Street and appears in the 1898 view below a point where the smoke



[95] Seattle from Beacon Hill ca. 1887. Gas Plant and its wharf are on the right. The Jackson Street trestle crosses Gas Cove behind it. One block beyond Jackson St., Main St. is being raised with fill dirt & whatever.



[96] A Gas Cove detail taken from Andres Wilse's 1898 Seattle panorama from Beacon Hill. The route of the curving Jackson Street trestle can be found directly below the dark smoke escaping the most prominent stack. The Gas Plant is marked with an arrow. Twin white residences appear to the right in both scenes.

from the tall stack has scattered. Jackson Street is still on a trestle, although a higher one since it was rebuilt following the 1889 fire. The pilings supporting the curving railroad trestle heading for King Street are bedded in at least some fill. It is difficult to tell if the tides can still reach north of the trestle. In the 1898 record, much of Gas Cove has been reclaimed since the gas company arrived at 4th and Jackson in the early 1870s and the railroad trestle to King Street in 1876. But these changes are meager when compared to the tideland changes that will accompany the contributions of several regrades. And as we will note below, added to the dirt dumped from the hills was the mud dredged from the channel.

Ranting Railroads

Wilse's position in 1898 looks in line (on the far left of the detail) with a "broad gauge strip" that has widened to such degree that it may seem to rival Railroad Avenue on the central waterfront. It could be ten tracks wide, except for the warehouse. And the warehouse introduces another story. While the wide-gauged *Puget Sound Shore Line* and the narrow-gauged *Columbia and Puget Sound* originated from the same source – the Villard empire of the early 1880s – soon after Henry Villard's fall they began squabbling with one another and the *Northern Pacific,* first over who would pay for the completion of the regular gauge Seattle-Tacoma connector, and later over who had rights to the tidelands of Gas Gove and beyond. In 1888 when the *Puget Sound Shore Line* began to enlarge its warehouses, the *Columbia and Puget Sound* rolled forward insisting that the land on which the "broad gauge strip" was laid – holding both the tracks and warehouse – belonged to the older railroad, the *Columbia and Puget Sound*. The *C&PS* reasoned that the tideland over which the Seattle Transfer Company – an arm of the *PSSL* – was building its sheds belonged to the *C&PS* by dint of deeds given it in the mid-1870s when the citizens were first roused into making generous donations of labor and land for the building of the *Seattle and Walla Walla*. But really, the tidelands belonged to no one but the federal government until they were given to the state with statehood in 1889. The precedent of Washington Territory giving "gifts" of tidelands to the *Seattle and Walla Walla* had about as much legitimacy as the squares of tidewater marked by lines of opportunistic pilings. The territory did not own it, but when the state got it just about any fundable politician could be expected to listen respectably to precedent, even territorial precedent. Consequently, although neither the tideland "jumpers" (who built trestles and planted piles) nor the "squatters" (who built docks over them from their on-shore property) owned any part of the tidelands, once Washington State's Harbor Commission was rescued from its original populist members and put safely in the hands of legislators who were sophisticated regarding the needs and favors of the railroads, the Harbor Commission's mid-1890s decisions were nearly always to the favor of the railroads. As Bob Nesbit put it in his biography of Thomas Burke, the *Great Northern's* lead man in Seattle, although the railroads lost every battle with the original harbor commission, they eventually won the war. It was, of course, a different thing when railroads battled one another, and this too – as we already noted and will again – was commonplace both on the tidelands and on a central waterfront that following the "great fire of 1889" was quickly built far from where the bay once splashed below Front Street.

1881: Look up the Central Waterfront

Now we rejoin the Peterson Bros, this time on the Stetson and Post water tower for another panorama looking north into both Elliott Bay and what this year became the largest city in Washington Territory. **[97]** (A contemporary repeat of this would require reaching an elevation close to that of the lower southbound lane of the viaduct. It would, however, not be recorded directly from the viaduct but rather from a few yards east of it near the south margin of King Street. The panorama joins two exposures, and they are of unequal quality. The left or water side half was copied from an original Peterson Print while the right half was copied from a print that was some generations distant from an original that may be lost to eternity.) The panorama dates from the summer of 1881 or perhaps the spring of 1882. For the moment I prefer the former. Five years earlier when the Petersons first arrived in Seattle, the hotel on the far right opened as the United States House. It was distinguished then as the largest building in Washington Territory. In 1882 a second floor balcony was added above the sidewalk – it is not yet attached in this view – and the hotel was then also renamed The Arlington. A block distant from the water tower is the rear wing of Seattle's first hotel: the familiar Felker House. The large leafy tree stands between it and the shore, and the high tide covers the beach. The long building extending into the bay is the Union Livery Stable, which sat on the second lot south of Main Street. (This view may be compared with the ca. 1882 view discussed above. Taken from the end of the coal wharf it also shows the low bluff at the southwest corner of Piners Point.)

This Peterson panorama also shows several other landmarks included in other photographs from that studio, most obviously the Territorial University on the center horizon (at the northeast corner of 4th and Seneca). At Second and Madison the "Brown Church" with the Mansard roof and the Knights of Pythius upstairs can also be found. Its white tower is just below the deciduous tree that breaks the horizon a short ways left of the University. In the spring of 1882 this second version of the Brown Church was torn down and replaced with a sanctuary with a veneer of brick. Faithful to tradition, it was brown brick. On the left horizon a by now practically denuded Denny Hill is enriching both Arthur Denny and William Bell as their lots are selling and homes are beginning to dapple the sides. But further on, Queen Anne Hill is still crested by the rough edge of its old grown forest. Some of the trees would survive into the late 1880s, although the opening of David Denny's Western Mill at the south end of Lake Union in 1882 meant that in the following decade practically every hill that surrounded the lake would be transformed into a stump field from which would later spring homes and a new and more exotic landscape.

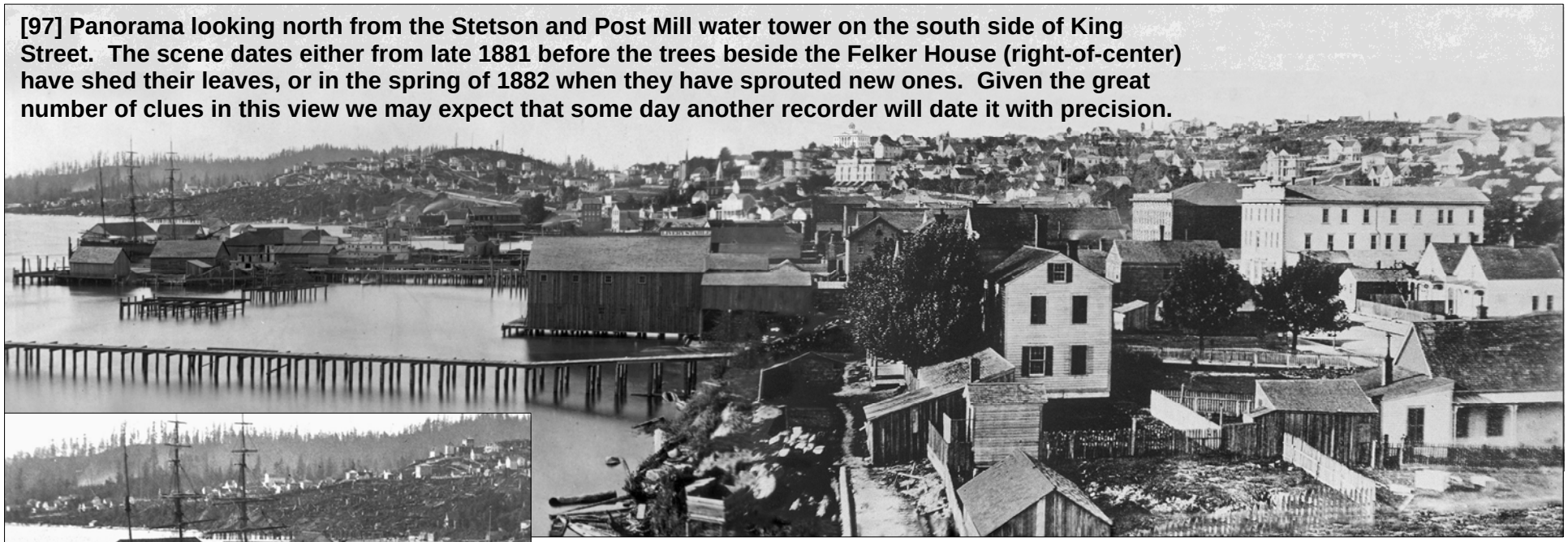
Ballast Island Origins - 1881

The reader may consult again the several maps from the mid 1870s as well as the birdseye from 1878 and note that by 1881 the few small changes along the west shore of Piners Point. The cluster of wharves and warehouses off shore in the middle distance are the two narrow docks that extend from Washington Street, and beyond them the wide and sabot-shaped swath of Yesler's Wharf. But there are two – or really three – additions. First, the narrow dock protruding from Jackson Street, and above it two collections of pilings off of Main Street that are most likely not early instances of jumpers marking tidelands

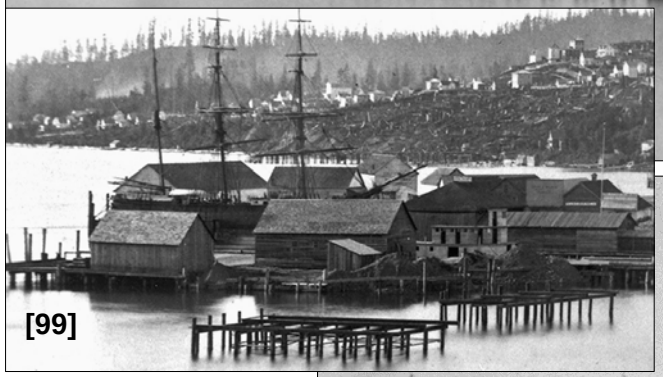
precedent but rather the first wharf work – aside from the King Street coal facility – on the central waterfront undertaken by the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railway*. As we will soon see – and follow – in three years this stretch of the waterfront between King and Mill (Yesler) will be filled by the railroad's two large docks with sheds: the City Dock between Washington and Main, and the Ocean Dock between Main and Jackson. And much of it will also be filled with the mildly puzzling Ballast Island. The detail from the Peterson pan shows a pile of gravel draped across the south side of the Stone and Burnett Wharf and just above the two eccentric islands of pilings. This is the beginning of what the locals called "Ballast Island" after the ships ballast that was regularly dumped there. It may be that Stone and Burnett seized the opportunity of free ballast to build their wharf – and surely to extend it. While this is an early record of the island it is not the earliest.

A five-part panorama of the Seattle waterfront was photographed from the King Street Coal Wharf probably in 1880 or perhaps in the spring of 1881. The middle part of the quintet is attached here. **[98]** It extends on the waterfront from Washington Street on the right to Columbia (behind the wharfs) on the left. Jefferson Street climbs First Hill on the far right. To the left of Jefferson is Henry and Sarah Yesler's orchard in the block bordered by Jefferson, James, Third and Fourth and since 1914 the site of the County's courthouse, known eventually as the City-County Building. Pioneer Square, in the scene's center, is as yet undistinguished by the three-story brick and caste-iron landmarks which in 1883 began to line it and the west side of Front Street (First Avenue) as far north as Columbia. Only four of the five parts survive in the University of Washington's Northwest Collection and although all the prints are stamped with the name of Wilhelm Hester they were certainly not taken by him, for in 1880 Hester was eight years old and still living in Germany. (After immigrating to Puget Sound in 1893 Hester began his celebrated career of photographing tall ships and their crews. It was not unusual for photographers to acquire the work of earlier photographers and stamp or sign the results as their own. Many of Seattle's classics are known through copies made by Asahel Curtis and the Webster and Stevens Studio, and like Hester both were not active until the 1890s or later.) The Peterson Bros. Studio may be regarded as one of the likely suspects for the quintet and, should the missing link surface, the result will be a continuous panorama of Seattle in 1880 (or early 1881) that will match in importance the work of Robinson in 1869. The pile of rubble or gravel in this slightly earlier view seems to have done some injury to the wharf, and it is also a higher mound than in the Peterson exposure where the wharf has been extended. **[99]** The greater mystery is how this imported pile of rubble managed to grow so formidable – as we shall soon reveal below – when two years after the Petersons made their two-part pan from the water tower this stretch of the waterfront – including Ballast Island – was enclosed behind the Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad docks: the City and Ocean Docks.

Ballast Island was an exotic hash of California, Hawaii, South America, and Australia. One source credits Messrs John Webster and Robert Knipe for having started it and persuading the city council to prescribe this collection site in place of the promiscuous disposal that was the practice. The little warehouse that seems nearly crushed by rubble in the 1880s scene is probably theirs, for it was they who plotted to shore up and protect (from Teredos) the pilings beneath their facility by persuading visiting captains to target



[97] Panorama looking north from the Stetson and Post Mill water tower on the south side of King Street. The scene dates either from late 1881 before the trees beside the Felker House (right-of-center) have shed their leaves, or in the spring of 1882 when they have sprouted new ones. Given the great number of clues in this view we may expect that some day another recorder will date it with precision.



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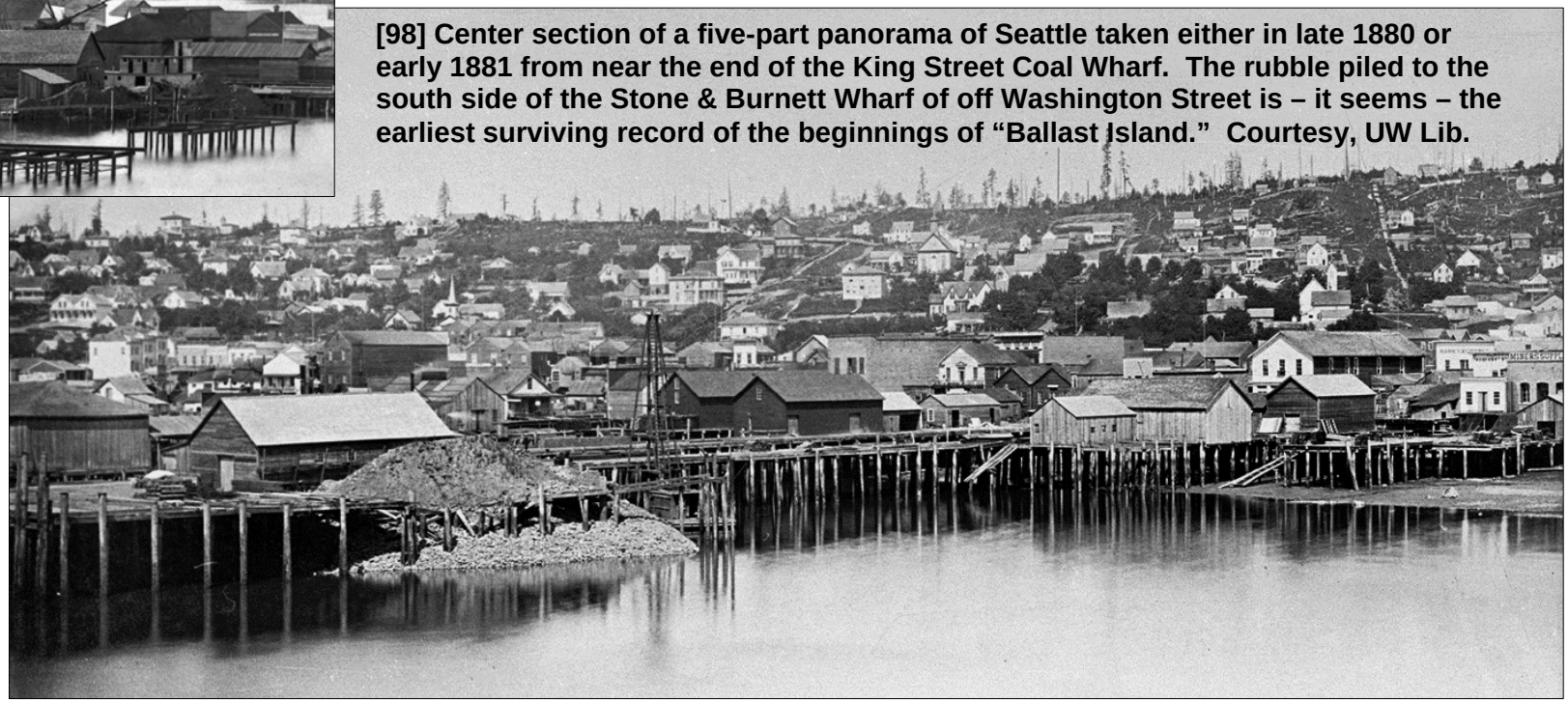


[98] Center section of a five-part panorama of Seattle taken either in late 1880 or early 1881 from near the end of the King Street Coal Wharf. The rubble piled to the south side of the Stone & Burnett Wharf of off Washington Street is – it seems – the earliest surviving record of the beginnings of "Ballast Island." Courtesy, UW Lib.

Both views, the Peterson detail above and the earlier scene to the right, show piles of ballast. In the later view – the top one – the pier has been extended, probably on ballast, and supports another small warehouse.

the dock with their ballast. According to Carol Tobin, in her helpful book *Seattle's Waterfront, A Walker's Guide to Elliott Bay* published in 1981 for Waterfront Awareness (the non-profit organization that aimed to do what its name promoted), "Forty thousand tons of San Francisco's Telegraph Hill lies buried under Washington Street." Most of the Telegraph Hill contributions were surely carried here by the Oregon Improvement Company's own fleet of new steam colliers that began arriving in 1881 to take on coal from the King Street wharf – much of it for the Union Pacific Railroad in California. Tobin's list of other contributors is down right romantic. "Liverpool, Boston, New York, Valparaiso, Mazatlan, Honolulu, Hong Kong, Sydney and Melbourne."

As is evidenced in both the photograph already consulted and in the post-1889-fire 1893 Sanborn Real Estate Map, Ballast Island was formed on the south side of the narrow pier that was constructed along the south border of Washington Street and not in the street. **[100]** By the reliable footage indicated in the map, Ballast Island extended at least 400 feet off shore. When this distance is measured west from the west end of Washington Street, where since 1953 it has been crowded by the Alaskan Way Viaduct, one winds up very close to the east façade of Pier 48. We cannot tell by the 1893 map how far beyond this point Ballast Island extended into the bay, because the east end of the island is hidden under the timber quay constructed after the 1889 fire.

Foreign Native

The native use of this imported island made of "foreign soil" is painfully ironic. If we stand again with one of the Petersons on the water tower in 1881 and look down at the native bank and the scattering of trees, bushes and shacks around the Felker House, we may recall (again, from above) that it was there that only 31 years earlier Isaac Ebey was invited by Chief Seattle into a longhouse to witness the celebrations of the return of the Salmon. We may also conclude that any sweat lodges that were built on the beach here was surely temporary for the high tide in the Peterson view splashes directly against the low bluff. Both the Phelps sketch of 1856 and the 1878 birdseye reveal how the bluff got lower north of Jackson, and the birdseye also suggests that the beach was wider near the foot of Washington Street than south of Jackson Street and so may have offered room enough for sweat lodges or even those wigwams (recalled from above) at any tide.

Potatoes & Hot Hops - 1882

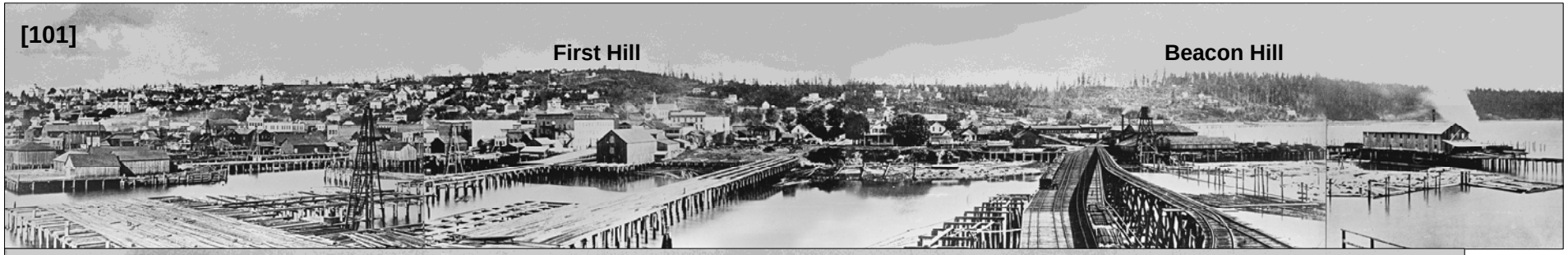
In 1882 King County had a 300,000-pound hop harvest – a boom year – and it was Indians for the most part who harvested them. According to pioneer historian Clarence Bagley, before hops "about the only thing that could be raised [in the valley] to sell was potatoes . . . and they would be taken to Seattle by a couple of hired Indians in a canoe." The profit on the 1882 hop harvest, after expenses, was $150,000. In 1916 Bagley noted, "Never before or since were prices so high. A tremendous stimulation was given hop culture, the acreage being greatly increased from year to year until 1890." As was noted early by historian David Buerge, the Indians who first convened in Seattle before making their way to the White River and the late summer hop harvest may have camped out on the north beach near the Belltown Ravine. It is less likely that they would have used the crowded and, as can be seen from the Peterson record, frequently soaked beach south of Yesler Way. However after Ballast Island was rapidly assembled by the contributing parade of coal

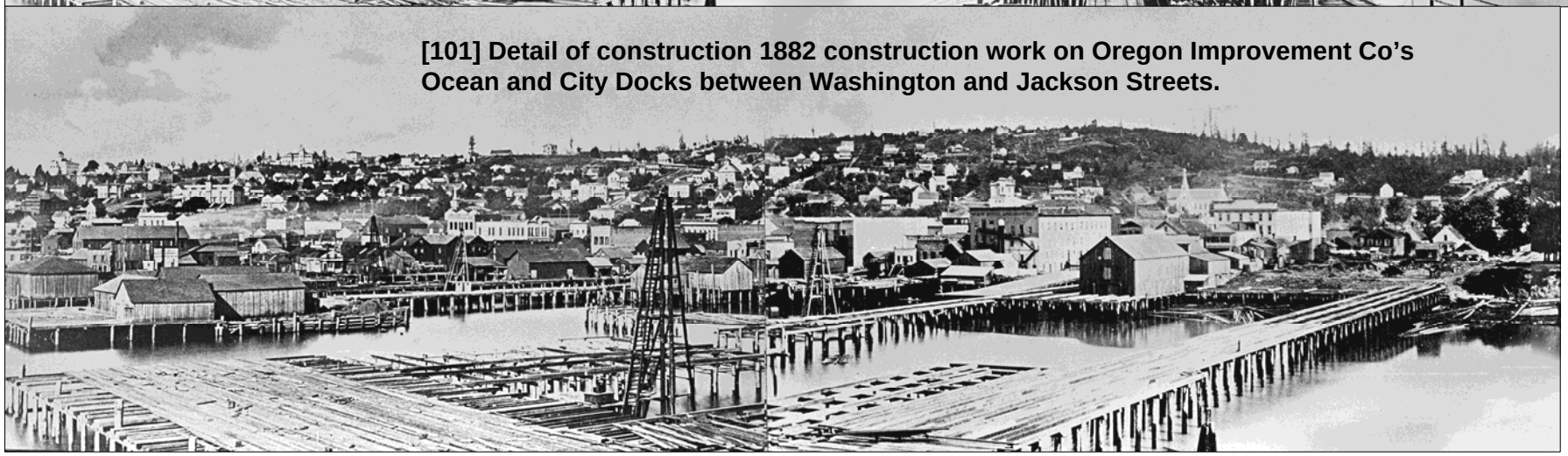
colliers visiting the King Street wharf, this new land became the camp of choice for the itinerate laborers.

Ocean Dock & City Dock - 1883

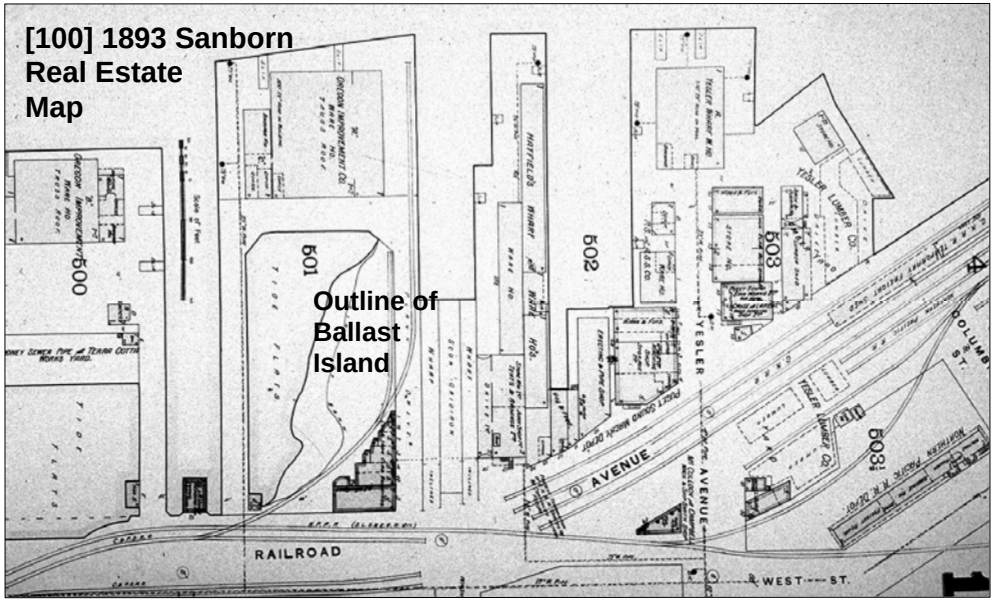
By 1883 construction of the two new railroad docks north of King Street was underway. Although the transcontinental link to Puget Sound would not be completed until late in the summer it was anticipated and communities on Puget Sound were flourishing. All the lumber cut by Seattle mills in the spring of 1883 was used up locally in the construction of residences, flats, businesses and the two big wharves. The pier warehouses on both the Ocean Dock (between Washington and Main Street) and the City Dock (between Main and Jackson) were constructed well off shore over the tides. The Ocean Dock was the furthest out because the considerable extension of Ballast Island allowed (and also required) that the dock sink piles into it. Consequently, as their names indicate, the deeper ocean-going coastwise vessels ordinarily called at the end of the Ocean Dock while the smaller Puget Sound "Mosquito Fleet" generally moored at the outer end of the City Dock. A north quay or timber trestle extended from shore to the main section of the Ocean Dock and its warehouse. This north "bridge" to the dock was really a reworking of the Stone and Burnett Wharf. (As already noted – and seen – the island was built along the south side of this northern trestle.) Once the u-shaped embrace of the Ocean Dock surrounded Ballast Island, this new land became the invitingly protected destination for the Indians who could easily slip between the pilings with their canoes and into this sanctuary of foreign soil. On Dec. 9, 1883, the *Post-Intelligencer* noted that the larger dock had recently got its crowning touch. "Some improvements have also been made along the docks within the past few days that are not unworthy of mention. Not the least of these is the placing of the fog bell above the Ocean Dock warehouse. The neat little cupola erected for this bell enhances the fine appearance of the building considerably."

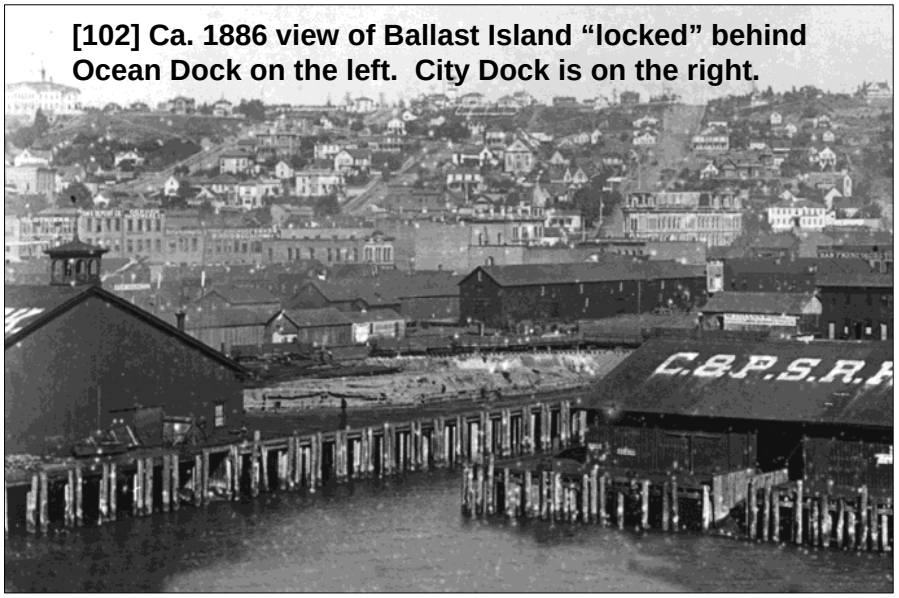
While there are many records of the completed railroad piers, there are only a few hints at their construction. The most revealing is the northerly exposure of a panorama made from four unequal parts. **[101]** The full panorama extends from the Stone and Burnett Wharf south to the Stetson and Post Mill sitting on piles beyond the end of the city. (The third part of this panorama was used above and looks in line with the King Street Wharf.) This most northerly detail of the pan shows some of the flooring for the City Dock – again photographed from the King Street pier. We can count four pile drivers at work. Beyond the fledgling City Dock, Ballast Island is temporarily corralled behind log walls on the south and – we assume – east sides of the Stone and Burnett Wharf. One of the remaining puzzles here is how the volume of rubble showing here in 1882 can become the completed or nearly complete Ballast Island that will be surrounded by – captured behind – the Ocean Dock in about one year. Of course there is more rubble here than meets the eye. The Stone and Burnett warehouses are built on a wharf end that extends a good way south of the trestle that links it to the shore. If we imagine that most of this wide apron at the end of the wharf is built on rubble we also make a sizeable contribution to the island. And with the construction of the Ocean Dock, much of the island that in this view may be hidden beneath the Stone and Burnett wharf will be exposed in the harbor behind and to the east of the new dock. **[102]**





[101] Detail of construction 1882 construction work on Oregon Improvement Co's Ocean and City Docks between Washington and Jackson Streets.





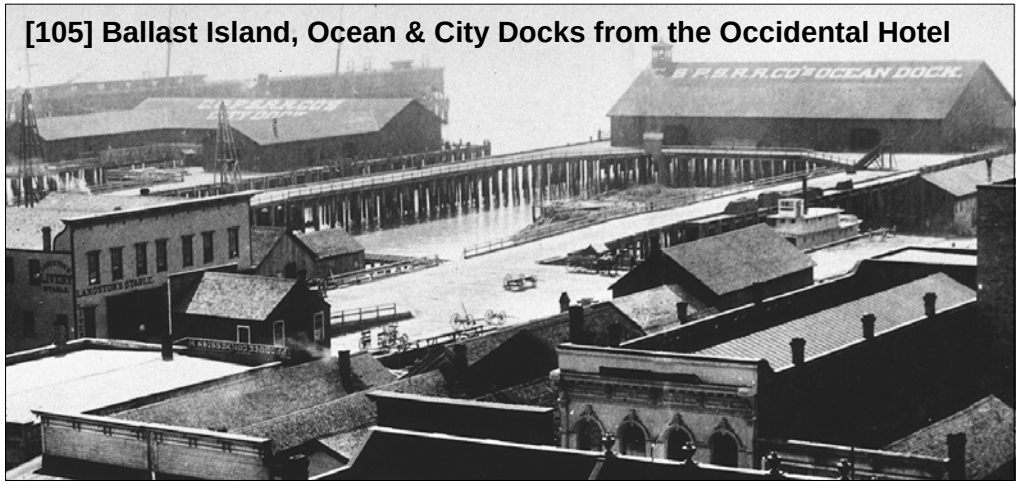
1884 Birdseye View

The nearly new Ocean and City docks show up nicely in the 1884 birdseye of Seattle, as does Ballast Island nestled behind the Ocean Dock. **[103 & 104]** The familiar King Street Coal Wharf extends far into the bay where we have learned to expect it – to the south (right) of City Dock. Directly to the north of the Ocean Dock and effectively on the north side of Washington Street is the surviving Harrington Wharf (introduced above with the 1875 topographic map) and barely visible between it and the trestle to the new dock an incline descends from the foot of Washington Street into the bay. This little gap with public access is retained following the 1889 fire and includes a gridiron (as we will see below) onto which scows may be parked at high tide and unloaded at lower tides. Both the public access and Ballast Island were covered with the sturdy planks of Railroad Avenue in the late 1890s. The more open maritime tradition at the foot of Washington was already witnessed to with Robinson's 1869 panorama of the flotilla of dugouts resting there. It would be introduced again following the First World War with the Pergola and boat launch that have survived although more often gone to seed than in bloom.

Birdseye views of Seattle were drawn in 1878 (as we have seen), 1884, 1887, 1889, 1891, and 1904. In 1884 the population of Seattle was at most ten thousand, and it is very likely that many of them both saw and searched the birdseye for the structures that were important to them. And the 1884 birdseye is perhaps the last one in which any residents could be fairly confident that their home would be featured. In a painterly sense it is the last example of Seattle seeing the whole of itself, at least from the sky. Every structure is treated as important and in the convention of birdseyes the sizes of some landmarks and business structures were ambitiously inflated. And the harbor is crowded with an armada with vessels many of the locals could no doubt identify. Seattle was neither the capitol nor, as yet, even a railroad terminus but still it was the largest town in the territory and the center of water transportation, manufacturing, financing and servicing. Aside from one's home and/or business the most apparent feature for the '84 consumer of this rendering would have been the waterfront – the edge of that romantic meeting where sail meets rail. (In another twelve years it would also be the regularly scheduled "gateway to the orient.") In '84 the waterfront, at high tide, still reached the native land below the Felker House on Jackson Street and, north of Yesler's wharf, continued to splash against Front Street and Denny Hill. But while the future First Avenue was still the front door to the city, it was growing a big front porch out of an unplanned mess of timber quays that supported a litter of small sheds (many about the size of the hotels on Monopoly's Boardwalk) in a physical tangle that had political, commercial and, I suppose, sometimes even moral consequences. And, as we have introduced above and shall soon describe below, curving through this was the "ram's horn" railroad that was – except for the uses of resentment – practically useless.

Suddenly, almost, beginning in 1883 the grandest structures were no longer on Commercial Street south of Mill but in Pioneer Square itself and north of it on Front Street. At the northern anchor for this growing show strip was the largest theatre north of San Francisco at Madison Street. Five years later it and practically all else would make splendid fuel for the "Great Fire" (which we already with rare exceptions refer to simply

[103]
1884 Birdseye View of Seattle



[105] Ballast Island, Ocean & City Docks from the Occidental Hotel

[104] Detail from 1884 Birdseye

as “the fire” or “the ’89 fire.”). On the waterfront north of Mill Street (Yesler Way) there was still a miscellany of generally smaller construction, but as we know beginning in 1883 the waterfront north of Yesler Way was in its seaboard way as grand as the new stone structures being raised on Front Street between Columbia and Yesler. And in the midst of this was that grand and irregular absurdity – Ballast Island.

A Warning from the Harbor Master - 1884-85

The 1884-85 city directory names D.H. Webster as the Harbor Master. The directory also warns that while there are no specified rates regulated by law for pilotage and tow to Port Townsend and the Straits, and that the tugs make their own prices, still those intending to move stuff across the waterfront should “Beware. Rates *are* charged for landing freight on city wharves and slips. E.g. On merchandise and produce, 50 cents per ton; on brick, 25 cents per thousand; on stone 20 cents per ton, on lumber 50 cents per thousand feet; on horses, mules and horned cattle, 25 cents each; on sheep, hogs and other live stock 5 cents each. Cases not provided for above are charged rates that the harbormaster shall deem reasonable. It is unlawful to land freight on city wharves, inclines, etc. without first procuring permission from the harbormaster.”

View from the Occidental Hotel

Another of the few pre-1889 fire photographic records of Ballast Island was recorded from the roof of the Occidental Hotel. **[105]** This Seattle showpiece was one of the brick and cast iron landmarks built in 1883 or soon after. It was fit for the flatiron block bordered by James, Mill (Yesler Way), Second and Pioneer Place (Square). (The reader probably will have little difficulty finding the hotel in the 1884 birdseye detail no.104. The hotel and the rest of Pioneer Square appear near the top and left-of-center.) The photograph also includes both the Ocean and City Docks and reveals the impressive width of the timber trestle that extends from shore to dock. The narrow break in the railing along this trestle’s north side is where the “ram’s horn” railroad passes on its controversial way to near Pike Street. While the 1884 birdseye also shows the railroad continuing along the waterfront, at the foot of Columbia Street it reaches a dead end at James Colman’s coal bunker. The drawing does pick up the trestle again near the foot of Madison Street but it shows no link between these two sections.”

1888 Sanborn Map

The pre-1889 fire outline of Ballast Island is not included in the 1884 Sanborn Real Estate map, but it has been drawn into the company’s next edition in 1888. **[106]** (Perhaps the earlier cartographer considered it a mere novelty while the latter one included it as a significant landmark.) A comparison of the ‘88 map with the birdseye and the view from the hotel roof shows some changes – Ballast Island has grown an arm between it and the ram’s horn that accepts a railroad spur to the north apron of the Ocean Dock. Similarly, much of the open water behind the City Dock has been built up to support its own rail connection. The 1888 map also provides an accurate accounting of the considerable size of Ballast Island, and the Ocean Dock with its shed when compared to the city block directly on shore – the block bordered by West, Washington, Main and Commercial (First Avenue South), although in this printing the latter avenue is just cut off.

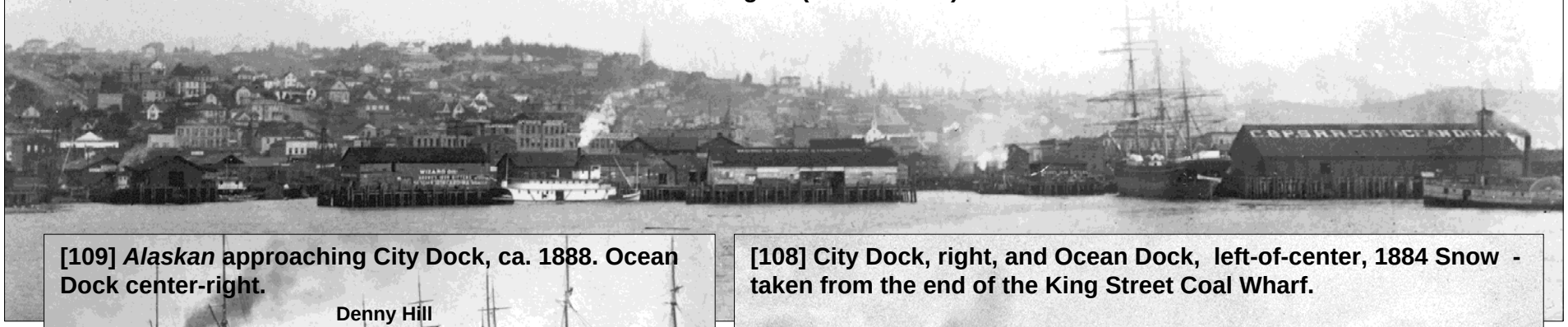
Ocean & City Docks: Album of Views

From both the imagined air of the birdseye view and open water the wide face of Yesler's developed wharf was most impressive. Although a description of its enterprise appears in the Post-Intelligencer already in 1882, it may help interpret the dock as it is seen here perhaps five years later. **[107]** "Never within the recollection of the writer . . . has Yesler's Wharf been so taxed with business as during the past week or two. Yesterday, for instance, it was covered with miscellaneous merchandise as never before, eight warehouses being full and a great quantity being spread out over the dock besides. This merchandise, with a dozen trucks and drays, a half-dozen light wagons, an occasional carriage, and three or four hotel wagons, made it almost impassable for pedestrians; while the activity, the business, the people coming and going, is to be seen at no time on any other wharf … north of California, except the wharf of the O&N Co at Portland." However, with the Ocean Dock to compare to it, none of the structures on Yesler's sprawling wharf as seen from the bay is quite so impressive as the Columbia and Puget Sound's new dock on the right of the attached photograph. On the left an early version of Colman Dock appears as the dark pier between the northern end of Yesler's wharf and the left border of the scene. On the far right the venerable sidewheeler *Eliza Anderson* passes in front of the Ocean Dock on her way for a landing at Yesler's. Somehow, a moment later the same photographer moved closer to the *Anderson* and caught the vessel again somewhat further on but now with the Columbia and Puget Sound's Ocean Dock filling much more of the frame and Yesler's wharf out of it. **[14–again]** Perhaps the earliest view of the big dock, or of a portion of it, was photographed during the visit of Villard and his entourage on Sept. 14 1883. (It was shown earlier in illustration of the thumbnail railroad history as illustration no.18.) The festooned *Queen of the Pacific* is tied to her side and the outer pilings between the vessel and the shed still extend far above the apron, a few of them higher than the lip of the roof. As noted above, it is still three months before it would be crowned with its small but comely tower. The bell tower appears in the snow scene. Most likely, it was photographed either on February 19th or 20th of 1884, a brief wet snow that was popular with the city's few photographers. **[108]** As in the birdseye the new Occidental Hotel can be found here as well. It appears just above the end of the City Dock, or a little ways right of the pictures center. Nearer the center and kitty-corner from the Occidental across Pioneer Place rises the darker mass of the Yesler Terry building with its tower marking a dark silhouette against the snow. Although, as noted above, the Occidental was for the most part built in 1883 its principal tenant, the Puget Sound National Bank, did not move in until February of 1884.

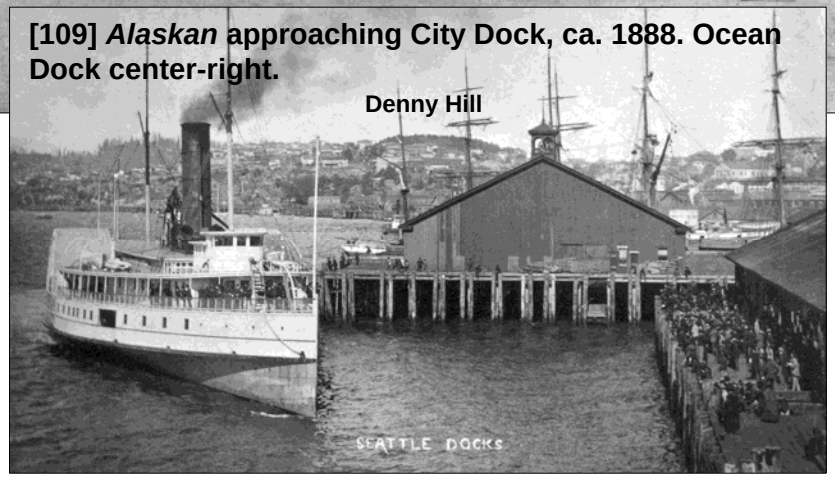
Plush Mistakes for Tough Times

Two more looks at the railroad docks show off the Oregon Improvement Company's (Villard's creation that continued to operate the *Columbia and Puget Sound* including its docks) two plush sister steamers, the *Alaskan* and the *Olympian*. In one the *Alaskan* moves in towards the City Dock **[109]** and in the other the *Olympian* rests beside it. **[110]** At 260 feet with electric lights, running water, brass beds and fixtures, deep carpets and original oil paintings these ships were the pride of the company. Built in 1883 in Wilmington, Delaware, they were then brought through the straits of Magellan to serve on both the Columbia River and Puget Sound. In 1884 the *Olympian* started its daily round trips

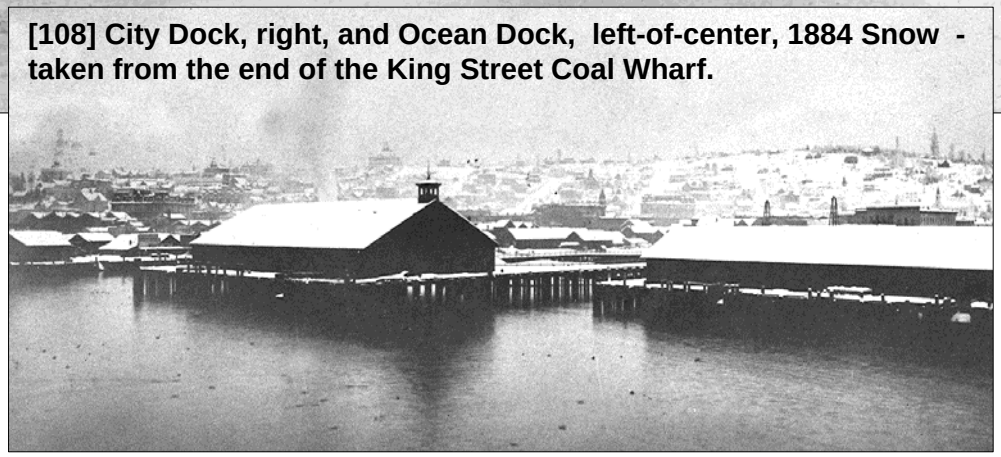
[107] Pre-1889 Fire waterfront from Colman Dock on the left to Ocean Dock on the right with the sprawling Yesler Wharf in-between. The *Eliza Anderson* enters the frame on the far right. (see also #14)

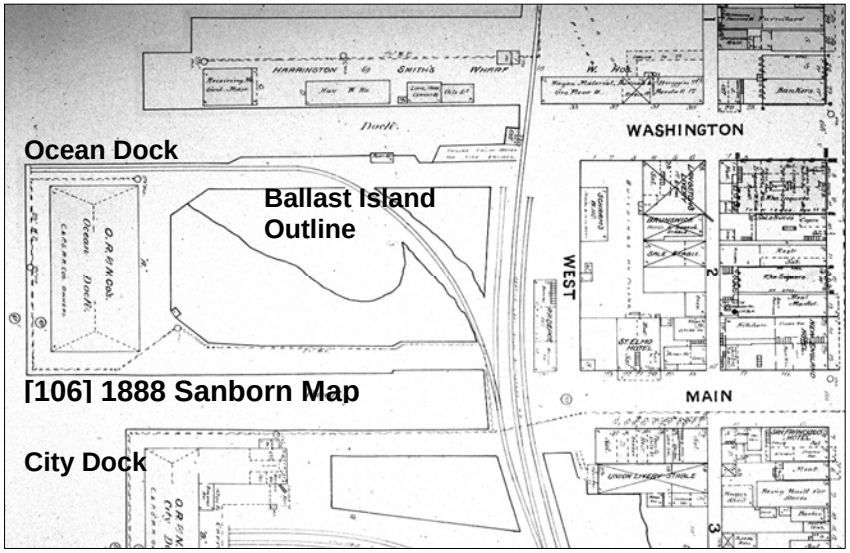


[109] *Alaskan* approaching City Dock, ca. 1888. Ocean Dock center-right.

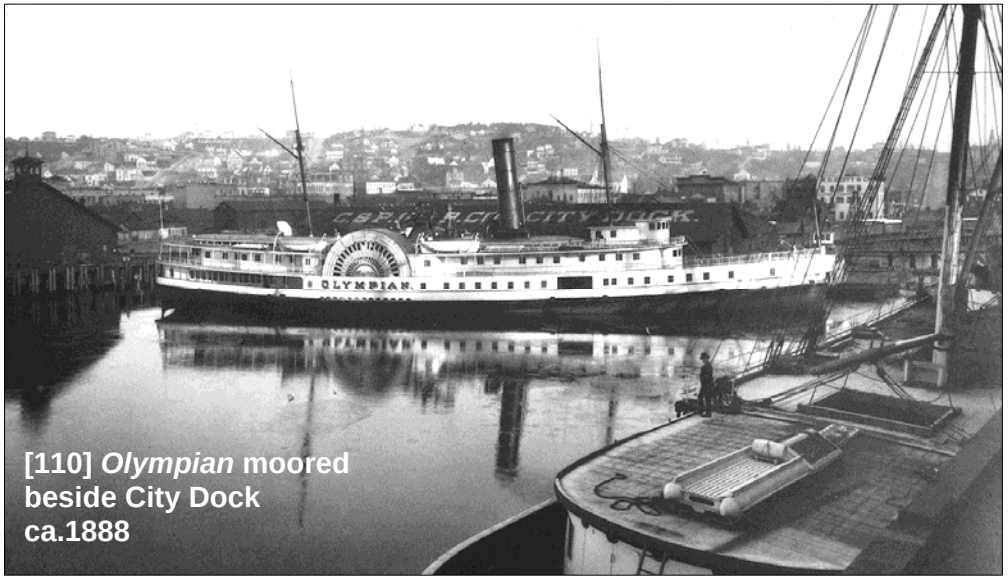


[108] City Dock, right, and Ocean Dock, left-of-center, 1884 Snow - taken from the end of the King Street Coal Wharf.





[106] 1888 Sanborn Map



[110] *Olympian* moored beside City Dock ca.1888

between Tacoma and Victoria. In 1886 it was sent down to the Columbia and for a time ran back and forth between Portland and Ilwaco. (It took five hours.) Next the vessel continued its nervous career with a brief sojourn to Alaska. By then it was obvious that both the *Olympian* and the *Alaskan* had been built and sent west with bad timing and too much gilding. Although the completion of the *Northern Pacific* to Tacoma in 1883 opened the spigot of migration, it was also followed by a national panic and depression that was at least in part the responsibility of the overheated speculations that completed the railroad. The times were better suited not to the plush but to the tough. Consequently, the sister ships became what the Lewis and Dryden marine history of Northwest waters, published in 1895, described as "the most expensive and at the same time the most useless steamers yet appearing in the Northwest." In 1906, after resting in a bone yard on the Columbia River, the *Olympian* was taken in tow for her return to the east coast through the Straits of Magellan, except this time she broke loose there and crashed against its cruel rocks.

Ram's Horn: Seven Rules - 1882

The "ram's horn" franchise that Villard arranged with the city was accepted by the city council with seven stipulations. (Earlier we introduced only two.) The general purpose was to lay tracks north along the central waterfront from the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railway*'s depot on King Street as far as Clay Street. Villard had inherited some of the waterfront property north of Pike Street that was originally given to the *Seattle and Walla Walla* by Arthur Denny and William Bell during the "Seattle Spirit" campaign of the mid-1870s. The March 1, 1882 issue of the *Seattle Daily Chronicle* listed the seven points of agreement between the *CP&S* and the interests of both the city and the waterfront property owners.

1. The sidetracks to the wharves of each landowner were to be paid for by the landowner.
2. The property owners kept their riparian rights and were not prevented from building wharves beyond the tracks. (As insisted above, these rights were speculative at best until Washington Territory became a state and decided how to dispose of its tidelands.)
3. The tracks built by the railroads had to be on a common level with the warehouses. (This point would cause some grief for the *C&PS* following the 1889 fire when it attempted to cut a foot deep trench through a new grade on Columbia Street. Constables wielding weapons and an injunction stopped the regrading.)
4. Care for the tracks over the wharves was the railroad's responsibility.
5. The railroad agreed to not keep cars sitting as obstructions. (As noted above this rule was only piecemeal and offered little relief across the eight-tracks wide Railroad Avenue that was constructed following the '89 fire.)
6. The railroad also agreed to work toward making a hook up with a planned division over the Cascades. (This point was included to remind Villard that Seattle wanted its transcontinental link within two years. For a variety of reasons it came to nothing.)

7. Finally, the franchise would not prevent another railroad from using the right of way (of the single track Rams Horn) at a rate determined by three commissioners.

"Orange Jacobs Amendment"

These seven points revealed a genius for trouble. In hindsight it is clear that the franchise should have added an eighth point that could have easily flowed from the seventh. We will call it the Orange Jacobs amendment. **[111]** (Of all the pioneers I imagine Jacobs writing it.)

8. In the event that the franchised tracks are inadequate to deal with added railroads the city should construct a railroad avenue and manage it with a city council-appointed commission to enable the safe and efficient movement of all railroads along the waterfront and to its sides in such manner as to also protect and enable access to and from the waterfront for non-rail uses.

Seattle Mayor Leonard Smith was interviewing James McNaught, Henry Villard's local attorney, while the citizens and their council were concocting the seven points (and neglecting the eighth). When asked what might the railroad do if it was not allowed to build along the central waterfront, McNaught replied, "As a citizen and property holder I fear that unless the right-of-way is granted it will be many days, or months, and perhaps years before we are connected with the outside world by rail. You see we have not waterfront enough at the southern end of town for the business of the road when built, but in the northern part of town we have a large tract of land, which will be very valuable for wharf and warehouse purposes. When Mr. Villard bought the *Seattle and Walla Walla* railroad he also bought the property in the northern part of town, and it would now be unjust to deprive the company of utilizing the property which they have bought of the citizens and paid for." On March 9, 1882, less than a week following citizen McNaught's warning, the *Chronicle* printed City Ordinance 259. Six days later it was signed giving the Oregon and Transcontinental and the Oregon Improvement companies a 35-foot wide right of way from King Street north to Clay Street – although they would never reach it. Neither, we just noted, did Villard conjure in a timely fashion Seattle's standard-gauge link with Tacoma. Opportunists of many sorts following the '89 fire would later use these failures. Warehouses were then constructed "with impunity" over the rams horn's burned trestle.

First Train: Third Rail - 1885

The *Puget Sound Shore Railroad* constructed its swooping trestle from King to Pike (not Clay), but Villard never built his north end grain elevator beneath Denny Hill. As noted, he soon lost control of the *Northern Pacific,* and so the promised service to Tacoma was sacked as well. In order for Seattle stalwart James Colman to get a railroad to his new coal bunker at the foot of Columbia Street he had to persuade the narrow gauged *Columbia and Puget Sound* – the railroad that Colman had originally built as the *Seattle and Walla Walla* – to add a third rail to the Ram's Horn for its smaller engines and rolling stock. Consequently, the first locomotive to use the freshly laid third rail was one of the original stalwarts of the *S&WW* line. *The Post-Intelligencer* of Jan 24, 1885 noted that "James Colman will in a very few days, establish a retail coal yard on the block between Columbia and Marion

Streets, as coal trains can now run all the way to his property … T.J. Milner [the assistant superintendent of the *C&PS*] at once decided to run an engine … and wisely selected the *A. A. Denny* as the most appropriate locomotive to wear the honor of being the pioneer along that line. **[112]** Accordingly the engine was hastily decorated with flags, and after some eight or ten invited guests, who chanced to be at the depot, had got on board, the whistle was sounded, and the Denny slowly rolled along over the new piece of road. The constant ringing of her bell as she moved along attracted a large number of people and shortly after, when she came to a halt at the foot of Columbia, there were several hundred people congregated there. The track was originally laid standard gauge, but as there is not standard gauge stock here the road was useless until the third rail was put down, so that the narrow gauge rolling stock of the *Columbia and Puget Sound RR Co.* could run over it."

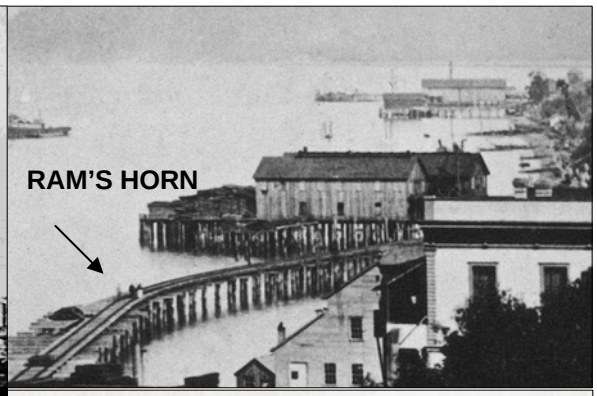
Illustrated Ram's Horn

The Ram's Horn trestle was generally lost to photography after it crossed Yesler's wharf and headed toward shore curving from Columbia to Spring Street between small warehouses off and on shore. Reaching Spring Street it ventured out into the bay before returning to the shore near Pike Street. Through part of this section the trestle crossed open water, a fact that made it possible for a bucket brigade to save its northern end during the Fire of '89. In this open section it was photographed three or four times from the elevated prospect of the bank that grew north of Spring Street and notably from the Frye Opera House at Front Street (First Ave) and Madison Street. **[113]** While the principal subjects of this classic view are the buildings on Front north of Madison the Ram's Horn is also very evident between the buildings and off shore. Just beyond the railroad trestle, the offshore manufacturing plant and parallel warehouses of the Puget Sound Furniture Company, near the foot of Pike Street, are still intact. John Leary, the company president, was also Seattle's mayor from July 1884 to the following July, a likely period for the view and, as noted above, a span of months that featured the locomotive *A. A. Denny's* first roll north on the Ram's Horn.

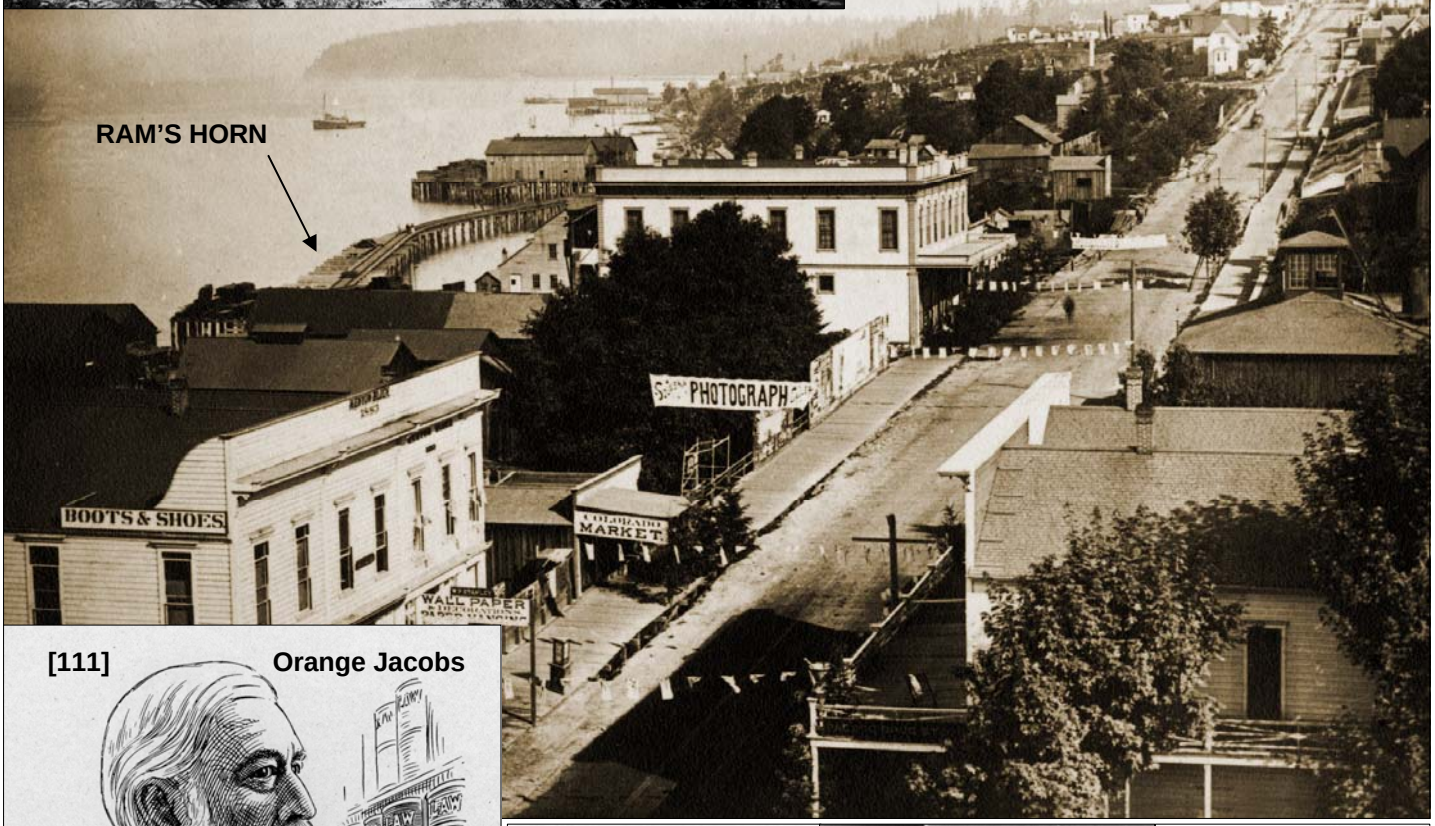
"Grand Highway"

Most auspiciously for the waterfront, 1885 was the year that Thomas Burke and Daniel Gilman began to organize the new railroad that they earnestly named the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* to indicate their intention to somehow make it over the Cascades, this time to Spokane not Walla Walla. The short and pugnacious Burke seemed to have a bully pulpit stitched to his belt, and from this he would broadcast his grandiloquence against any agent that would thwart his purposes, which he was certain were no different than the community's. **[114-116]** Burke, who had been originally against giving Henry Villard his Ram's Horn franchise, now came courting the city council for his own waterfront trestle, which the council agreed to with the ordinance that officially created Railroad Avenue. Although this new tidelands venture was, like all others, extra-legal there was that most important hope of precedence got by then venerable *Seattle and Walla Walla's* incursion into the tidelands south of King Street. Burke and Gilman asked for and were given the inner 30 feet of what the ordinance described as a 120-foot wide right-of-way, "a grand highway for railroads and other traffic"– although in 1885 this was still only open water to the bay side of the Ram's Horn. The *SLSE's* location would give it the right to charge any other railroad that

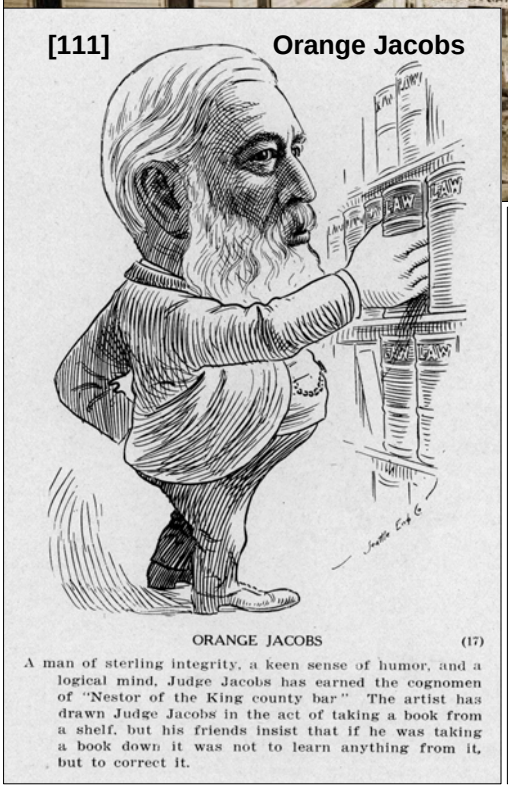
[112] Engine *A.A. Denny* somewhere on the *Seattle & Walla Wall*a line, ca. 1878



[113] View from Frye Opera House north on Front Street with section of Ram's Horn trestle approaching Pike Street.



[111] Orange Jacobs



ORANGE JACOBS (17)

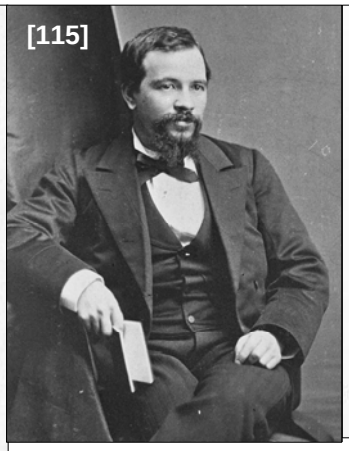
A man of sterling integrity, a keen sense of humor, and a logical mind, Judge Jacobs has earned the cognomen of "Nestor of the King county bar." The artist has drawn Judge Jacobs in the act of taking a book from a shelf, but his friends insist that if he was taking a book down it was not to learn anything from it, but to correct it.

[114]

THOMAS BURKE (309)

Judge Burke has retired from the practice of law, his private interests consuming all his time. For years he represented the James J. Hill interests in the west.

[115]



[116]

decided to take up footage on Railroad Avenue for the right to cross *SLSE* tracks to reach the waterfront.

Alarmed Improvement - 1887

Understandably, the Oregon Improvement Company was alarmed by the council's Railroad Avenue ordinance of Jan. 25, 1887 and the OIC soon went to work extending their own trestle north beyond Pike Street. In his book *Orphan Road*, Kurt Armbruster quotes a snooping *Intelligencer* reporter. "It may not be generally known, but it is nevertheless a fact, that railroad construction is actively going on inside the city limits of Seattle. A reporter yesterday, in search of news, strayed down the railroad along the waterfront when his attention was attracted by a third rail which had recently been laid along that line of road. He followed the track to the end, between Pike and Pine streets and then, to his surprise, found a large force of men … as busy as bees building and extending the track. Some were cribbing, some excavating, some timbering and others track laying … The road is being constructed through a tier of lots in the sliding district between Pike and Pine streets and is a very difficult job, especially at this season of the year. Just how far this road is to be built northward it is impossible to ascertain. The OIC owns several blocks of land a short distance beyond the present end of the track, and it may be that the road will only be extended that far, although it may be extended along the city front to Smith's Cove. The matter has been kept very quiet for some reason, but the work is being pushed with vigor."

The Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern RR - 1887

Burke and Gilman also got going. A large force was sent into the forest to cut 26,000 piles for the *SLSER's* Railroad Avenue trestle. The first piles were driven in April, and the rails arrived from England in August. The Smith Cove celebration with the setting and christening of the first rail was described in the *Post-Intelligencer* for Aug. 12, 1887. "Yesterday afternoon a party of about 20 gentlemen went down to Smith's Cove on the steamer *Violet*, their object being to inaugurate the laying of track on the SLSE. On their arrival at the company's wharf at the Cove they found the ship *Persian* gaily decked with bunting, and as the track laying party approached, cheer and cheer went up from the ship. Judge Burke … drove the first spike. After several other spikes were driven, a bottle of champagne was broken over the first rail laid on the new road. Another rail or two were then laid, and two push cars and an iron car placed on the track. Captain Dickenson (of the *Persian*) then invited the part on board the ship, where a regular jollification was held." The trestle along the Seattle waterfront between Columbia Street and Smith Cove was completed by October. A Thanksgiving Day excursion treated about 200 pioneers to a ride to Bothell and back. The rode a right-of-way which after the rails were removed was developed into the Burke Gilman Recreational Trail. **[117]** [The 16,640 foot trestle between Columbia Street and Smith Cove was built well to the bay side of the Ram's Horn and the few docks that extended from shore north of Columbia Street. Like that for the Ram's Horn, this new Railroad Avenue ordinance required that the railroad maintain its own planking and also that trains were not to "stand on the tracks longer than necessary."

Agriculture

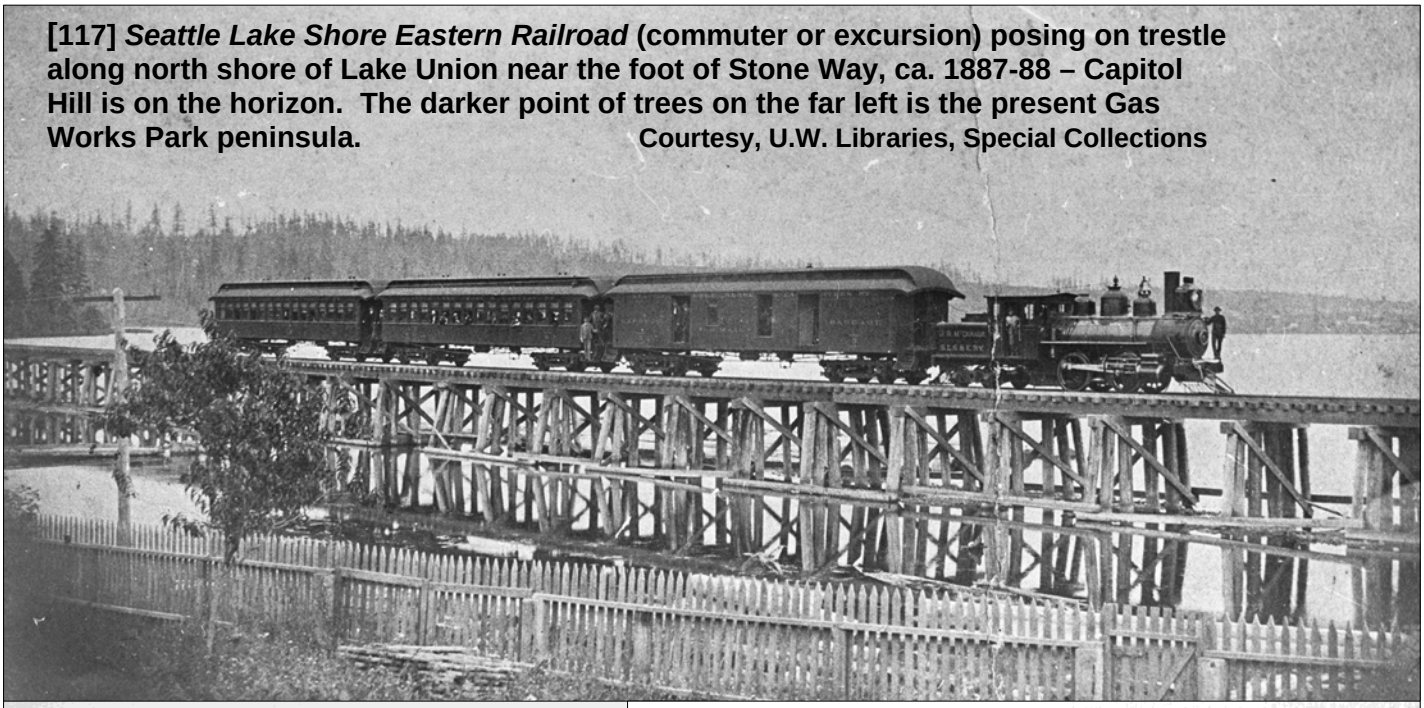
The dueling railroad's anxiousness to build north and east would soon

stimulate profound changes in the hinterlands. With its early probing into King County, the *SLSE* helped open them to not only the easier export of lumber and coal but also horticulture. Before the railroads could reach them, it was the wise farmer who planted close to Puget Sound or a navigable waterway – usually on a river like the Skagit or White up which flat bottom steamers to reach them. Without these connections to the larger communities – then also almost always located on navigable waterways – there would be little reason to grow more than one and one's neighbors could consume. But already in the 1870s a sizeable part of the "Mosquito Fleet" was flat-bottomed and so could penetrate the tributaries, and at harvest time accounted for most of the freight on Puget Sound. The early production of oats on the La Conner "flats" was a sign of the abundant potential of the Skagit Valley. For one early harvest Whidbey Island claimed a world record in wheat production – 118 &1/2 bushels to the acre. **[118]** The bales were bulky for there was as yet no baling of hay under pressure. Bales weighing up to 250 lbs were tied with hemp rope and stacked on the river steamers that were built with spacious deck room to handle this cargo. At those times much of the available room on Seattle docks and in its small warehouses was stacked with bales and sacks of hay, oats, wheat, hops, and potatoes. In terms not of total business but of agents scattered about on docks and in small waterfront warehouses. the industry most represented on the waterfront in the 1880s was not coal, fish, or lumber but agriculture.

***Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* Trestle - 1887**

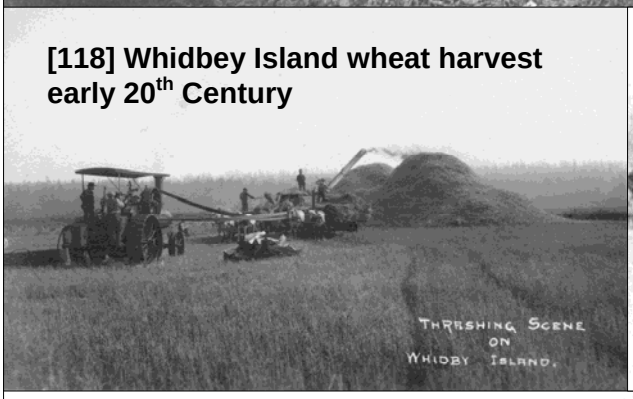
When nearly new, the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestle was photographed by Charles Morford standing on it near the foot of Seneca Street and looking north. **[119]** (A temporary employee of the railroad, the future department store manager was responsible for most of the earliest photographs taken along the *SLSE* right-of-way.) At Seneca the *SLSE* trestle was constructed 500 feet west of the centerline of Front Street (First Ave.). As expected this puts it on a line where the east side of the Alaska Way Viaduct nestles near the building between it and Western Avenue. This location, of course, will explain how following the Fire of 1889 the extensive build up of Railroad Avenue extended west from this its most easterly part. Consequently, the line-up of Commission District warehouses that was built following the fire is the same as now – although, of course, practically all of the buildings have been replaced.

Morford's view of the trestle shows the point where the Ram's Horn nearly touches the *SLSE* trestle. To repeat – again – that is the spot where the northern advance of the '89 fire was checked by a bucket line of men drenching the trestle. A suggestive difference is found in the Morford record when compared with the photograph discussed just above that showed the Ram's Horn and the furniture factory from an upper floor of the Opera House on Front Street. By 1887 the factory had retooled from turning lumber into chairs to packing salmon. Also, its two long parallel buildings have been split down the middle with the outer or bayside half being moved west to allow the SLSE trestle to make its way directly up the waterfront. We may consider this a sign for how the waterfront was valued more as a transportation corridor than as a manufacturing district. It also registers the relative clout of the *SLSE* and the Ram's Horn, for the former was home grown and got its way with the building. The latter was imported and had to snake its way along the waterfront as directed by those who had developed property along it or off it. Of course,



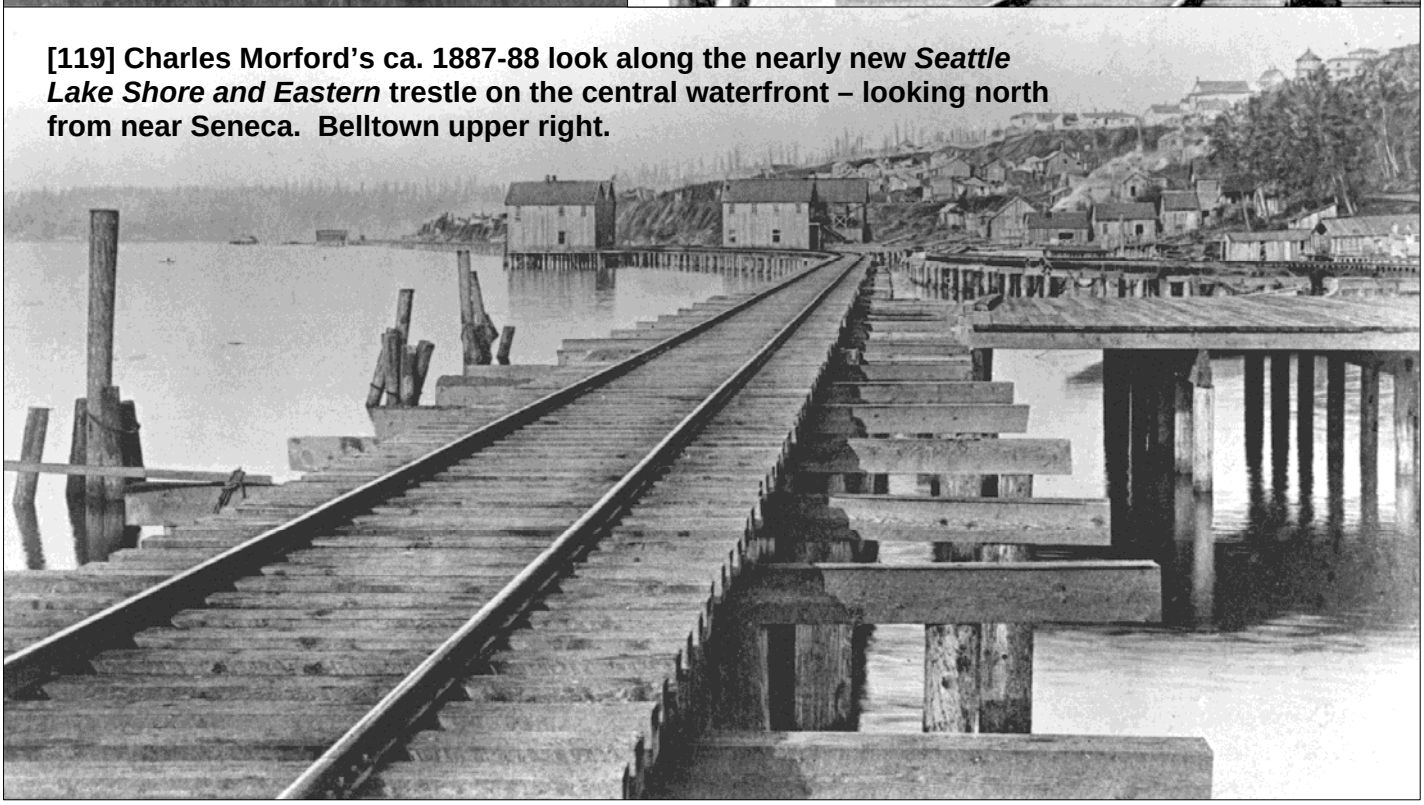
[117] ***Seattle Lake Shore Eastern Railroad*** **(commuter or excursion) posing on trestle along north shore of Lake Union near the foot of Stone Way, ca. 1887-88 – Capitol Hill is on the horizon. The darker point of trees on the far left is the present Gas Works Park peninsula.** **Courtesy, U.W. Libraries, Special Collections**

[118] Whidbey Island wheat harvest early 20th Century



Detail of #119 showing split in furniture factory at the foot of Pike Street.

[119] Charles Morford's ca. 1887-88 look along the nearly new ***Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern*** **trestle on the central waterfront – looking north from near Seneca. Belltown upper right.**



this factory may have also jumped at the chance to cooperate understanding that having a railroad run through one's plant may be a good thing.

Belltown & Below

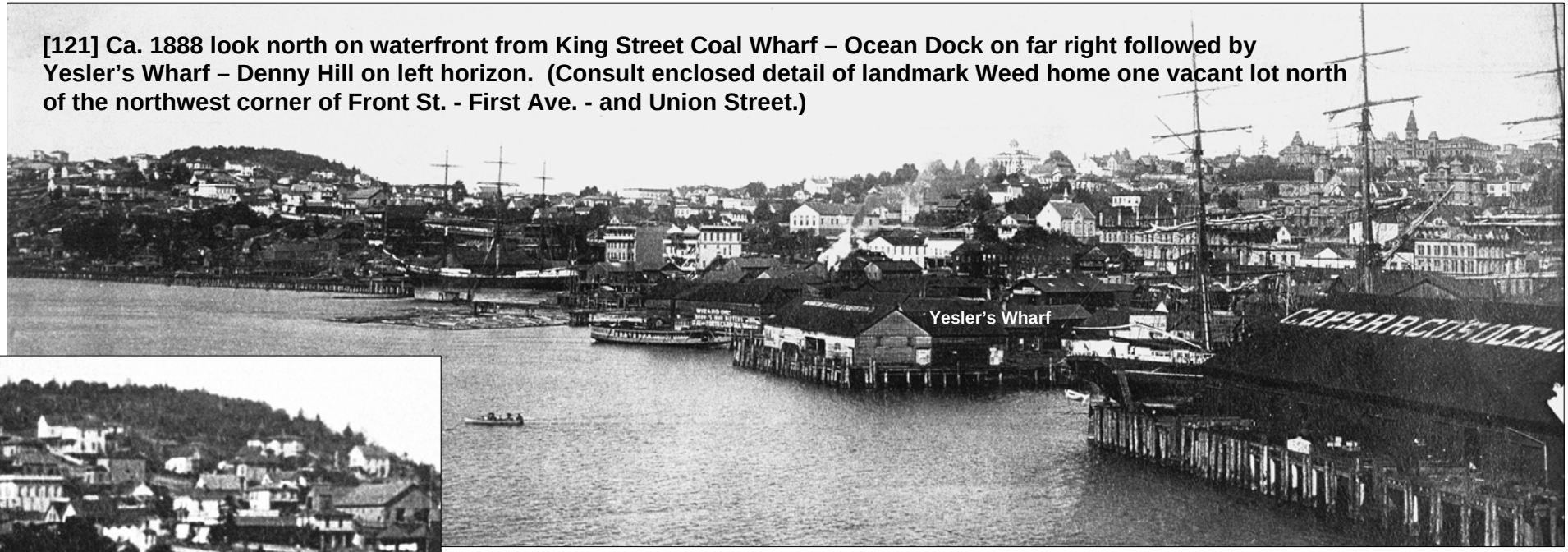
The buildings of Belltown stand above the embankment, upper-right, and this was the year – 1887 – that its original namesake pioneer, the 70 year-old William Bell, died of what was diagnosed as a "softening of the brain." (This might be Alzheimer's or a dementia that was the result of several small strokes – or something else.) Charles Morford also photographed Belltown from Belltown. **[120]** His attached view looks north from near Second Avenue and across Blanchard Street to both the Bell family home north of Bell Street and the Bell Hotel at the corner of Battery. Back on the waterfront, Morford's classic of the *SLSE* trestle is also the earliest evidence of the "lesser structures" or shacks that were constructed along the western slope of Denny Hill, especially between Pike and Virginia Streets and also just above the bluff that extended north from near Virginia Street to the Belltown Ravine between Blanchard and Bell Streets. In another ten years – especially following the great economic panic of 1893 – this neighborhood would be packed with shacks that were either low-rent or the "vernacular" creations of the squatters who built them. On several occasions the railroad – eventually the *Northern Pacific* – that owned this hillside would be lobbied by squeamish citizens to evict them but the railroad declined until it built the entrance to the north portal of the railroad tunnel directly through much of this very low-rent neighborhood. (This community and tunnel building will be considered again below.)

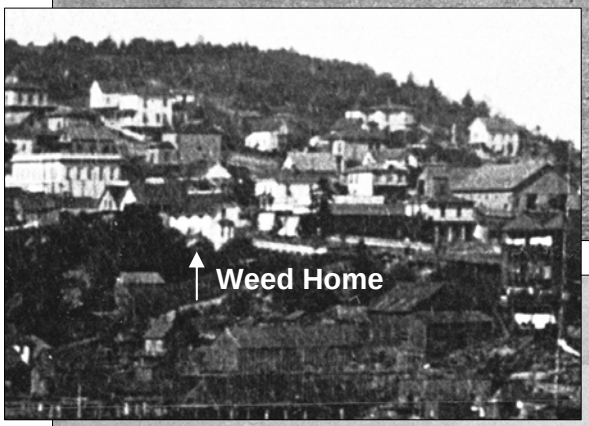
Last Pre-1889 Fire Looks at the Central Waterfront

Before we visit the waterfront ruins left by the 1889 fire we will study five late pre-fire photographs. The first was recorded from the King Street Wharf over the shoulder of the Ocean Dock, bottom right, and past the sprawl of Yesler's wharf to what this year, 1888, is still the lesser and fresher end of the central waterfront. Quite unlike the churning bay depicted in the 1884 birdseye, at this moment only one small motorboat moves across the water, and seems to be heading out from the public slip at the foot of Washington Street. Denny Hill is on the left horizon. **[121]** It has grown a cover of shrubs to nearly replace and parody the felled forest. Although homes and tenements are climbing its sides the top the hill is still reserved by its namesake Arthur Denny. His first hope was that the state capitol be moved there but the politicians were not persuaded to leave Olympia, so near the time this photograph was recorded Denny was dickering with investors to develop his second choice, the grand Victorian brick pile of the Denny Hotel, later renamed the Washington Hotel. The shoreline is here hidden behind the fence of the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestle.

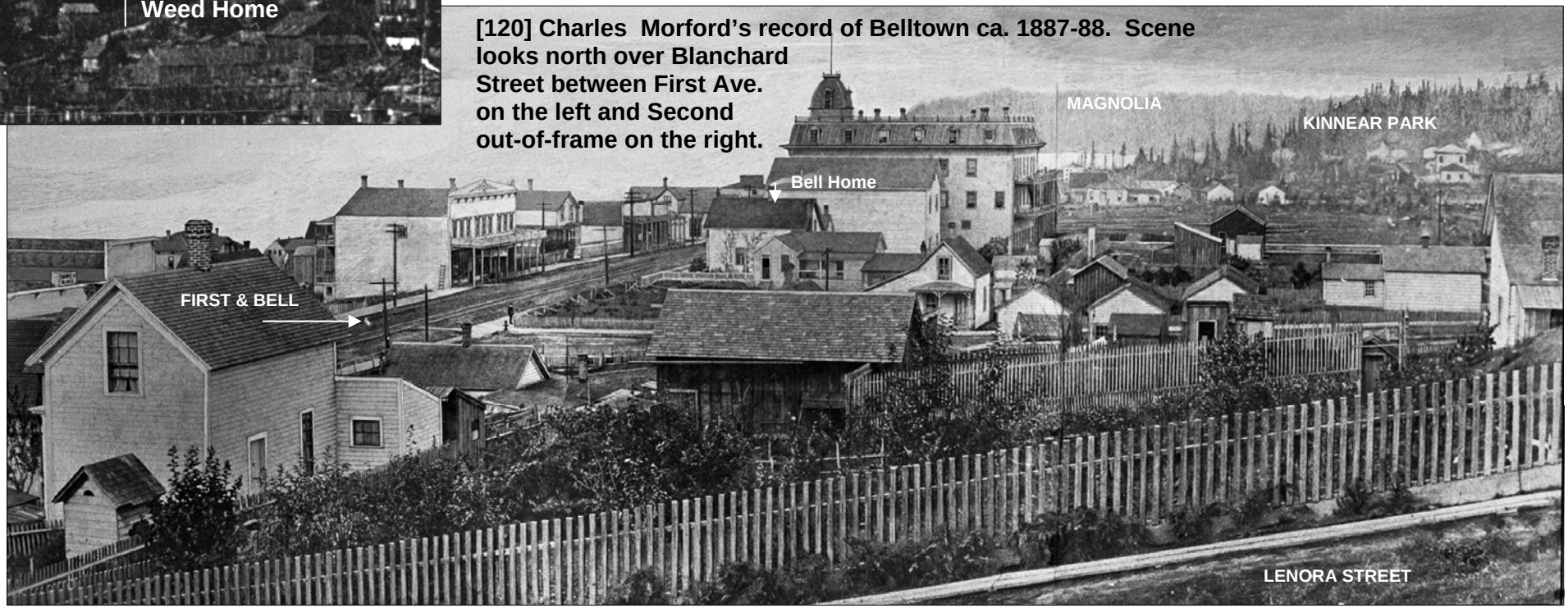
The next of the remaining pre-fire views helps "set-up" the others. **[34]** It looks north from Yesler's Wharf to another Denny Hill horizon, but more to our point, towards the intersection of Front Street (First Ave.) and Union Street. The whitewashed home of Drs. Gideon and Emma Weed – one lot north of the still vacant northwest corner of Union and Front – appears just above the center of the scene. It is as if "lanced" by the jib boom of the ship moored near the foot of Madison Street. A small section of Front Street beside the vacant corner lot shows to the right of the home. To the far left of the scene appears

[121] Ca. 1888 look north on waterfront from King Street Coal Wharf – Ocean Dock on far right followed by Yesler's Wharf – Denny Hill on left horizon. (Consult enclosed detail of landmark Weed home one vacant lot north of the northwest corner of Front St. - First Ave. - and Union Street.)





[120] Charles Morford's record of Belltown ca. 1887-88. Scene looks north over Blanchard Street between First Ave. on the left and Second out-of-frame on the right.



one of the few precipitous parts of the waterfront bank. Below that cliff the waterfront turns a few degrees to the northwest affording from its elevation a look south along the waterfront towards the by now familiar Yesler's Wharf and the King Street Coal Wharf. That is the prospect taken for two of the three remaining pre-fire views.

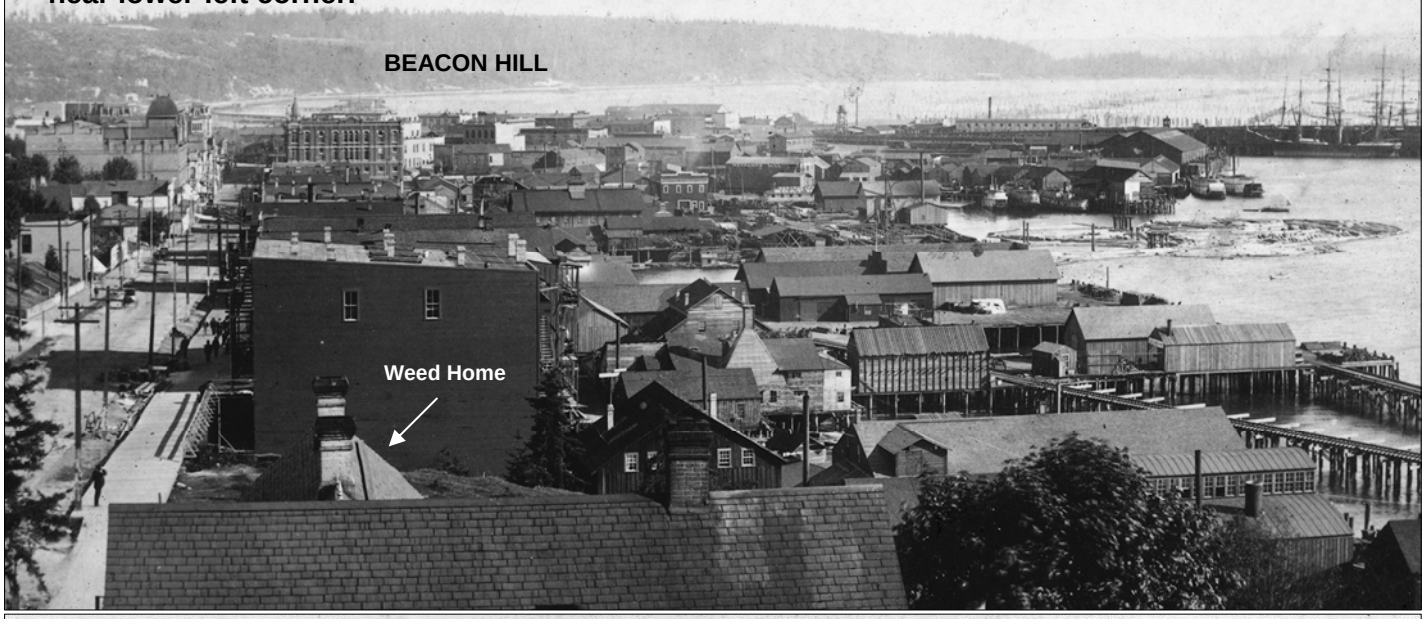
The Waterfront Looking South from Near Union Street in the Late 1880s.

The twin chimneys on the crest of the Weed roof appear again in this second view, as does the roofline of the home behind it. **[122]** That this scene was taken from a structure that does not appear in the slightly earlier detail from Yesler's Wharf is more evidence for the manic growth of Seattle in these pre-fire years – a bullishness that would only expand after the 1889 fire. (In 1888 the Polk City Directory estimated Seattle's population at 20,390; Tacoma's 13,355; Olympia's 2,408; and Port Townsend's 2,040. Each week an average of 150 new residents arrived and some of them moved on to the suburbs that could be reached on the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* -- like the new town of Ballard. The round trip suburban fare to Ballard – the service began in August of 1888 -- was a quarter.)

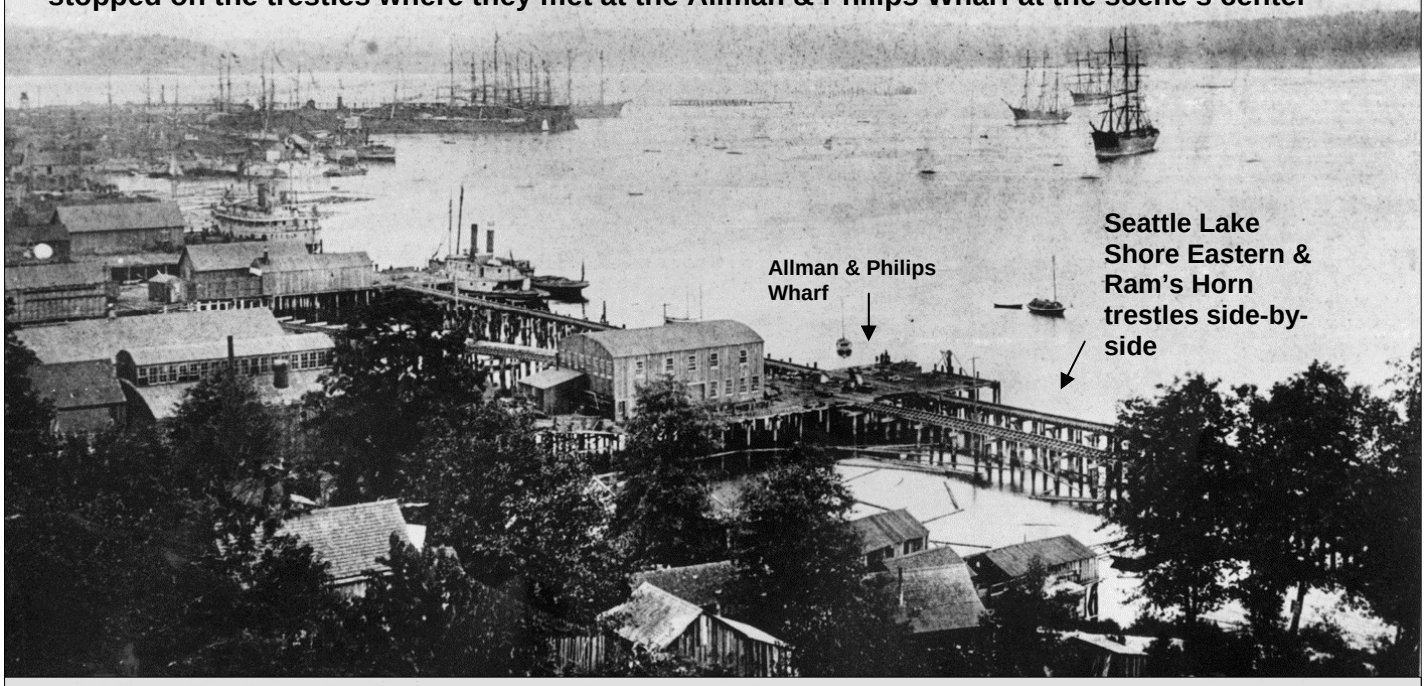
The look south over the chimney's of the Weed home in the second view is mildly deceptive in that the central waterfront below appears considerably more congested with docks and warehouses than it really was before the '89 fire. (The actual division of space between docks and bay at this time is best determined from a study of the 1888 Sanborn Real Estate Map.) In the photograph, the open water hides behind the sheds, although a section of it shows on the far right where (again) the Ram's Horn trestle and the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestles draw close. This scene (most likely 1888) segues with another view photographed nearby from another prospect on the bluff above the Union Street Wagon road. **[123]** Many of the same waterfront structures appear in both views, and here the two railroad trestles nearly touch as they cross the outer dock of the Allman & Philips Foundry built off shore between Union and University Streets – one lot closer to the latter.

The fourth and final pre-fire view looks up at the neighborhood from the bay. **[124]** It dates from a least a few months after the scene that looks over the crest of the Weed home, for a four story tenement has been raised on the northwest corner of Front and Union on the far left of the scene and kitty-corner from the Carpenter Gothic Denny home. (In the 1888 Sanborn real estate map the footprint for this apartment house is included but also captioned "being built.") The light-colored swath of the Union Street wagon road to the waterfront appears between the new apartment house and the little steamer moored on the bay side of the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* Trestle. The Allman and Philips pattern shop with its bowed roof shows to the right of the steamer's stern, and the extended two and a half story warehouse of the Seattle Soap Works appears behind and to the right of it. At this point, below the soap works, the fire was stopped on the Rams Horn and SLSE trestles. Curiously, the two tenements that faced Front Street behind the soap works were both removed before the '89 fire (perhaps by their own fire) for they do not appear in the two-part panorama (discussed next) of the ruins that was photographed from an upper floor of the tenement on the far left.

[122] Waterfront ca. 1888 looking south from a structure on Front Street – on the left – near Pike Street. Both the Ram's Horn and SLSER tracks are evident on the right. Weed home chimney near lower-left corner.



[123] Waterfront ca. 1888 from top of bluff north of Union Street. The 1889 "Great Fire" was stopped on the trestles where they met at the Allman & Philips Wharf at the scene's center



[124] Union Street wagon road far left - University Street about 1/5 way in from right border – view from Bay dates from late 1888 or pre-fire 1889.

PART TWO – 1889 FIRE to MID-1920s

The Ruins Although both the quality and borders vary in the surviving prints, the two-part panorama of the burned district printed here is most revealing. The unnamed photographer chose the relatively new apartment house at the northwest corner of First Ave. and Union Street, and recorded these two contiguous scenes less than one month following the June 6, 1889 "Great Fire" that consumed something more than 30 blocks, including most of the central business district (CBD) and the waterfront south of University Street. **[125]** Practically the entire burned district can be seen from this elevated prospect, although in its most distant sections one piece of rubble cannot easily be distinguished from another. Much of the Denny home and the orchard to its side appear on the far left, and a part of the orchard hosts one of the many tents quickly raised as temporary quarters for the businesses that were burned out.

Looking through the center of the scene we see the light-colored foundation of the Arlington Hotel (AKA Gilmore Building AKA Bay Building) on the south side of University Street between First and Post. These are the bricks that stopped the northward advance of the fire along the waterfront, although the foundation was then not so tall as it is here. (Construction started on the hotel on the 5th of May and was completed on March 1, 1890.) The hotel's foundation could not stop the fire from moving north along the boardwalk between it and the street. As the fire advanced, and after quickly tearing up much of the sidewalk north of University, a bucket brigade of about 200 relayed water from the bay up the bank and stopped the fire at the street about sixty feet north of University Street. That break in the sidewalk is easily identified in the post-fire panorama near the far end of the Front Street cable car. Next, contrasting with the dark ruins of the pilings, a section of light colored land is spread just above and beyond the hotel's foundation. It is the pile of bricks and mortar contributed by the ruins of the Northwestern Cracker Company, previously a landmark at the second lot south of Seneca Street on the west side of First Avenue.

The surviving structures that appear at the bottom right corner of the panorama are the same as those seen and described above in pre-fire photographs. These include the warehouses on the Allman and Philips wharf that were noted in the dismal report of the *Daily Press* for June 12, or six days after the fire. "From the north side of Yesler's … and extending up as far as Allman and Philips, hardly a single pile is left standing that can be utilized in replacing this portion of the city's waterfront. Gilmore's new wharf and warehouses were taken along with the other improvements in this section but are already being rebuilt. The new piles burned as rapidly and completely as the old, which were sustaining the railroad's tracks. The damage done to Allman and Philips wharf is slight. Already it is being used for the accommodations of a number of the small water craft." The ruined railroad tracks of the Ram's Horn and *Seattle Lakeshore and Eastern* Trestles can be distinguished in the field of burned pilings. By the time that the panorama was photographed, the capping and replanking of the old charred waterfront was well

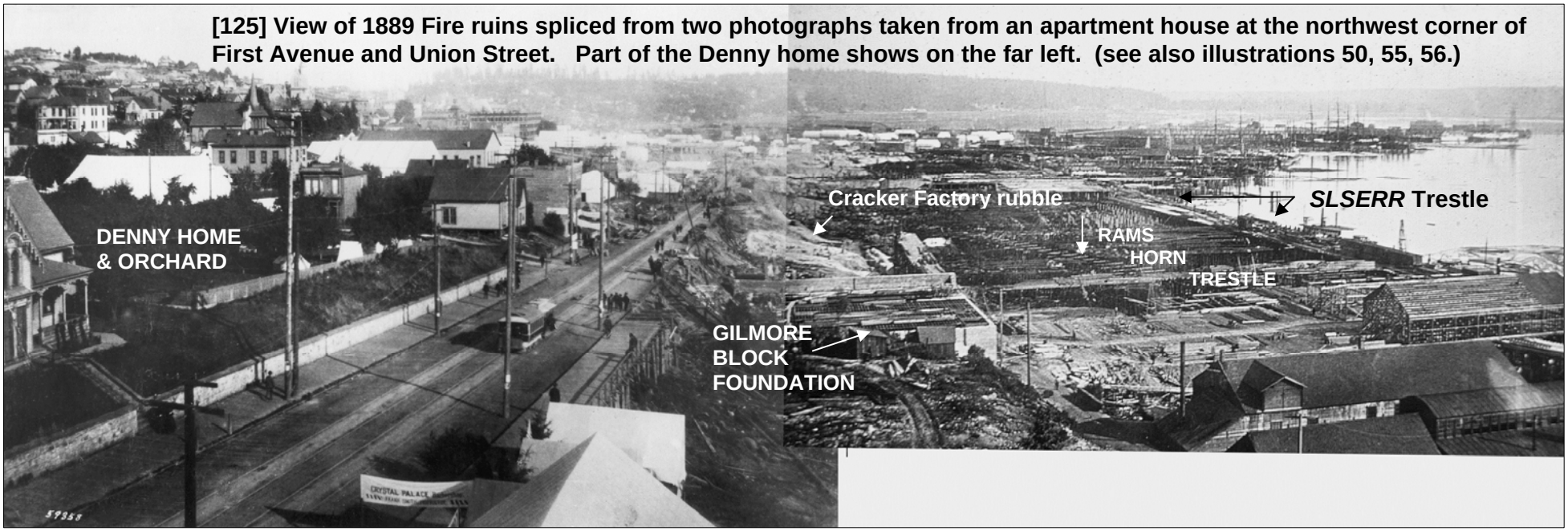
underway. And, as the *Daily Press* reported, so is David Gilmore. On the far right Gilmore, who is also building the Arlington Hotel whose foundation stopped the fire's advance along the shore, has also begun construction of a warehouse to the rear of his hotel and this time directly and defiantly over the line of the Ram's Horn. There would be five of them and as the P-I noted on July 14 "they are about completed … all constructed of corrugated iron. They are the first fireproof warehouses completed since the fire."

Capping the Piles: A Glimpse of the Seneca Ravine

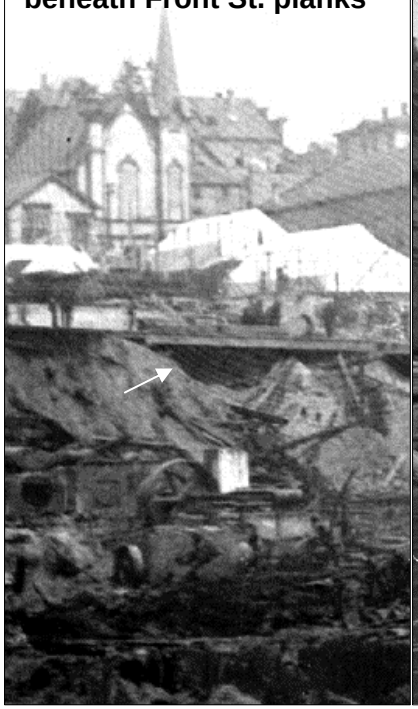
The ruins of the cracker factory – and much else – still stand in the next three photographs featured here. The first scene was photographed from the same stretch of new planking – although somewhat earlier – that is shown on the right side of the panorama of the burned district just considered. **[126]** Most of the block between University and Seneca Streets is included here. The southwest corner of the Arlington Hotel foundation appears on the far left. Significantly – for the native land – left of center (below Plymouth Church and the white tents) a slump or depression is an anomaly beneath the sidewalk on the fire side of Front Street. That is not native land – or rather it is land moved there before and during the 1876 regrade of Front Street to fill in the ravine that was once Seneca Street and the site of the native cemetery. Plymouth Church, the big-roofed skating rink across Second Avenue from it, and much else might have been destroyed by the advancing fire had it not been stopped at Annie and Amos Brown's home seen here across Front Street to the left of the Cracker ruins. While a bucket brigade worked on the trestles below it, another saved the home from all but blistered paint and burst windows. (These are the same Browns noted earlier who help build a new home for Princess Angeline at the waterfront near Pike Street.) The new lumber in the foreground of this scene is being laid over a mix of burned and new pilings. Like the *Daily Press's* sad description noted just above, first reports on the condition of the burned pilings along the waterfront were often too dismal. What the *Intelligencer* for June 21 described for the Oregon Improvement Company's warehouse at the foot of Main Street was true for many other parts of the burned waterfront including this most northerly section north of Seneca. "Twenty men are employed on the new warehouse, the floors of which are now laid. In restoring the piers to make the work solid, the old piles are cut off where they were found to be sound and good. 12x12 caps then capped them. Post or piles about 4 to 6 feet high were put on above, upon the tops of which similar caps, 12x12, were placed. This brings them up to the usual level … It is the usual method adopted in recapping or lengthening the burned tops of the piles all along the water frontage."

As the two photographs just described – the panorama and the scene from the waterfront – reveal, the timber seawall and cribbing that were constructed during the 1876 regrade of Front Street took a considerable beating first from the fire but also from those fighting it. But this wall was left in disarray following the fire, while the waterfront to the west of it and the street to the east were rebuilt and refurnished. Two months after the fire, on August 9, the *Times* announced, "A full force of men put to work Monday morning rebuilding the bulk-heads or retaining walls along the west line of Front Street. The work will be inaugurated first at the Gilmore block and continue south. For quite a distance

[125] View of 1889 Fire ruins spliced from two photographs taken from an apartment house at the northwest corner of First Avenue and Union Street. Part of the Denny home shows on the far left. (see also illustrations 50, 55, 56.)



Detail of Seneca Ravine beneath Front St. planks



[126] Fire ruins from the waterfront at the foot of University Street. View looks over fresh capping toward ruins of cracker factory, second lot south of Seneca. Remnant of Seneca Ravine left of center.

along this portion of the west line of Front Street much of the street itself was added years ago by retaining walls and what is known as the cribbing system. This cribbing, which was made of piles driven into the ground, braced and boarded up was much of it burned during the great fire of June 6. This being burned out, the street is in consequence in many places, and particularly in front of the Gilmore block, caving in. This time instead of piles sawed posts 12x14 and 28 feet in length will be used. These will be braced and boarded up with cedar scantling. The post will be set on foundation stones. It is estimated that there will be four or five blocks of this work to be done either now or in the near future." As noted above (and below), a century later artifacts of this street architecture were uncovered during excavations for the Harbor Steps project to the south side of University Street, or on the site of the old Gilmore Block, soon renamed the Arlington Hotel and much later razed as the Bay Building.

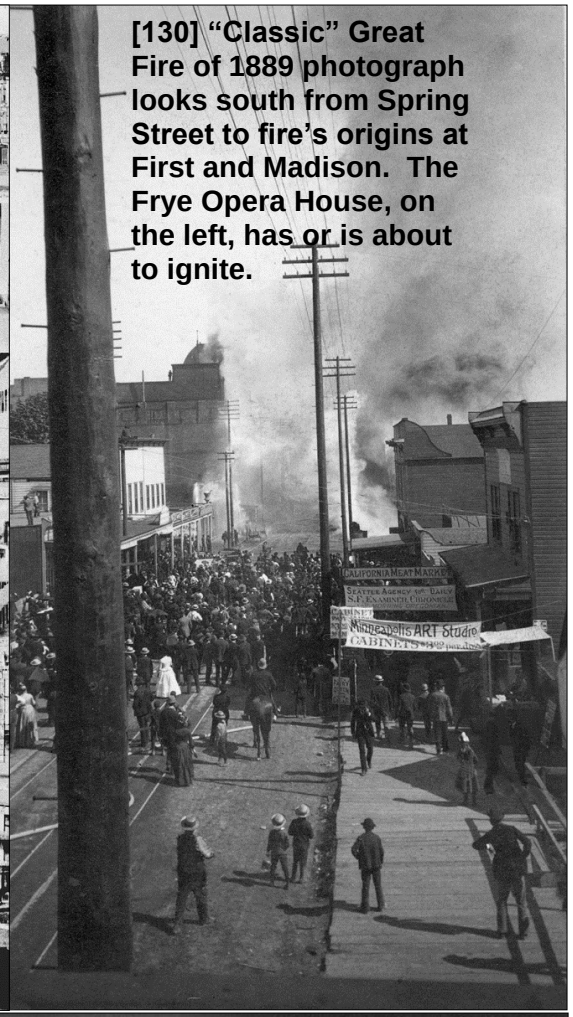
5-Day Smolder

In the two photographs that look down on the wreckage from Front Street, the Cracker Factory ruins stand on the left and the Arlington Hotel foundation (at the southwest corner of the Front and University) fills the lower right corner. One cooked fir tree stands between them beside the twisted remains of the Seattle Electric Light Company. The tree has been stripped of its branches except for those at the crown. In one scene the fire is still smoldering. **[127]** Four days after the June 6th fire the *Post-Intelligencer* reported both that "slabs and sawdust are still burning and sending clouds of smoke over town" and that over 100 permits to put up tents had been issued that day. The following day the *P-I* noted that smoke from the ruins had almost ceased. **[128]** Also on June 11, it was estimated about 200 men were working among the ruins, many of them cleaning brick, for "about three-fourths of the bricks in the burned district can be used again and there seems to be little trouble in getting all the brick and lumber necessary to carry on the building. There are fifteen brickyards in Seattle, and the city has a capacity of about 500 thousand. The only difficulty will be in securing transportation." And the paper advised, "Photos of the fire are already being sold on the street."

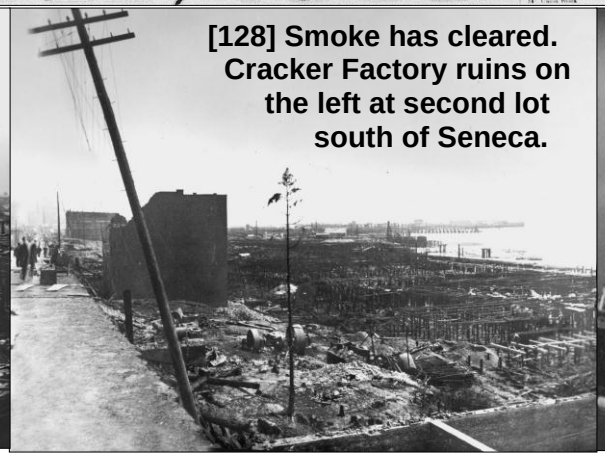
The Unlucky 1889 Birdseye

Sometime during the winter of 1888-89 the local real estate brokers Lewellyn, Dodge and Co, hired an artist to draw a new birdseye view of Seattle and decorate its borders with some of the grand new buildings then being planned, buildings like the Denny Hotel on Denny Hill and Henry Yesler's Pioneer Building at Front (First) and James. **[129]** (This last at the corner of Henry and Sarah's pioneer home and the subject of Seattle's first extant photograph, shown above.) At a point probably soon after the artist's rendering, the business district burned down and Llewllyn and Dodge were left with the anomaly of a birdseye that features the burned district before the fire including a few buildings constructed after the fire. Someone has helpfully (sort of) marked the limits of the fire on the copy of the birdseye printed here. In a June 6, 1891 review of the "Great Fire" the *Post-Intelligencer* may have inflated at least a few blocks and acres the reach of its destruction. "The burned district included forty blocks or eighty acres, exclusive of the waterfront, which comprises about twenty blocks or forty acres more – making a total of 120 acres of devastated area." (It is hard to find in any birdseye or map "about" sixty blocks that was destroyed by the fire. The newspaper especially exaggerates the destruction off the

[129] Lewellyn, Dodge and Co, new birdseye view of Seattle



[130] "Classic" Great Fire of 1889 photograph looks south from Spring Street to fire's origins at First and Madison. The Frye Opera House, on the left, has or is about to ignite.



[128] Smoke has cleared. Cracker Factory ruins on the left at second lot south of Seneca.

[131] June 6, 1889 fire reaches *SLSE* depot at Columbia Street. Scene recorded from Yesler's Wharf

waterfront. The 20 blocks of ruins described for the waterfront better suit the waterfront that was enlarged after the fire, practically all of which was constructed on pilings.)

1889 Fire Photos

Although there is a bounty of photographs depicting in all their romantic remains the ruins of the "Great Fire," there are very few – a handful – of the fire itself. The best known of these looks one block south on Front Street from Spring to the smoke billowing from the Pontius Building at Front and Madison where the fire started. **[130]** It was recorded near the moment that the heat – and perhaps some sparks – has jumped Front to ignite the west side of the Frye Opera House. Another of these few actual fire scenes looks from Yesler's Wharf towards the depot of the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern near the foot of Columbia Street. The scene was photographed around 4 pm, or about an hour and a half after the fire was ignited when a spilled pot of boiling glue swept like napalm across the solvent soaked floor littered with shavings in a cabinetmaker's shop at the southwest corner of Madison Street and First Avenue. (Two plaques on the side of the old Federal Building memorialize the event.) Driven by warm winds out of the north on an unseasonably hot June 6th, the fire quickly moved south through the mostly firetrap frame structures along First Avenue and the waterfront. Here, at the center of the scene, the *SLSE* depot is embroiled in the advancing smoke. **[131]** In another 30 minutes the depot and its dock would be turning to ash above the waterline. By 5 pm Yesler's Wharf was engulfed. The great fire made its great roar. At this time the ammunition and kegs of whiskey kept in the back of businesses along Front Street were reporting – exploding. Powder was also deliberately set by Mayor Moran, but the attempt to flatten both the frame and brick structures south of Columbia with dynamite was too late to prevent the fire from jumping Columbia and racing south both through the old style pioneer structures along the east side of First and the relatively new show-strip of brick and cast iron structures along the west side of First. The entire street was soon in flames, although the west side left better ruins. The attached photo shows the "show-strip" that was lost. **[132]**

As noted and/or intimated several times above, the northerly advance of the fire along the waterfront trestles was stopped by the good fortune that from a little ways south of the line of University Street to as far north as that of Union Street was a section of open water which the two trestles – the Ram's Horn and the SLSER – crossed and nearly touched at the narrow Allman and Philips pier that protruded into this open area. Since the wind was generally blowing from the north, the fire did not advance to the north at near the speed that is moved south. Consequently it was after 8pm when the flames first reached this the portion of the trestles over the open water near University Street. And it was also here that around 8:30 pm – like on the sidewalk above – a bucket brigade swamped the trestles and stopped the fire. Most importantly for the early portions of the city's reconstruction, this meant that the Schwabacker wharf was not destroyed and could both receive and distribute supplies.

SLSER REDO

Some brief while after the fire a photographer ventured to near the northern limit of the destruction and recorded this scene looking north from the ram's horn towards the Schwabacher Wharf and the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestle on the left. **[133]** Directly behind the photographer is the Allman and

Philips narrow wharf, and in the first days following the fire the SLSE used it for its passenger depot. For a few days it was the end of the line. Only eleven days following the fire the *Daily Press* swooned over the size of the railroad's efforts to extend its rails into the burned district. "The *SLSE* is using from 50 to 60 thousand feet of timber per day to build their road to Yesler Avenue." Nine days later (June 26) the paper continued, "The rebuilding of the trestle has been accomplished in an almost incredible time. Repairs are now completed as far as Columbia Street and it is expected that the road will be ready for the passage of cars to Yesler Ave by the end of this week." On the first of July the railroad had passed Columbia – the site of its station – and "the sleepers and joists for the track have been laid within 25 feet of Yesler Avenue. Trains will be running over the track by Wednesday." (Meanwhile approaching King Street from the south, the *Puget Sound Shore Line's* trestle was within 150 yards of its intersection with Commercial Street.) One month later the *SLSE* edged its track west a short ways because the railroad's track before the fire – the line it followed with the post-fire reconstruction – ran a little to the east of the new Railroad Avenue as prescribed by city council after the fire.

Ram's Horn Nearly R.I.P.

On the far right of the same scene, a boxcar on the ram's horn has been nailed in place as a barrier against any stock possibly rolling into the ruins. In retrospect we may read it as also a signal that the Ram's Horn would not ride again. Although the railroad tried to retain its pre-fire rights the broad opinion was that along this curving section south of Yesler Way the railroad had not been "right" by either it or the community; that is, that they had done very badly at fulfilling the franchise's agreements. Consequently, all their protest and bluster – including, as we shall see, nudging the mayor with a cowcatcher – would not succeed in getting it back. In the moment of rapprochement following the fire the *Columbia and Puget Sound* was prepared to join the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* on the brave new avenue, but there were hitches, as the *Post-Intelligencer* revealed in its July 31 summary nearly two months after the fire. "On October 9,1883 the common council granted to *Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad* a franchise to lay track on a stipulated route from Commercial Street to the northern city limits upon the road's securing right-of-way from the land owners. The *Columbia & Puget Sound* was obliged to share the route with any line from the East that might come to Seattle. Deeds as far north as Pike Street were secured from property owners. After the fire the city council hit upon a happy plan setting apart a railroad thoroughfare near the waterfront that the three companies [*SLSE, C&PS, PSSR*] might use. The idea was accepted and the work of rebuilding the old [rams horn] tracks, which was begun at Madison Street in the alley west of Front [Post Avenue], was abandoned. The city then raised the grade of the streets west of Front Street and improved several of them. When the roads were ready to use Railroad Ave they found their right disputed by several property owners just north of Yesler Ave. For instance wooden warehouses are being built on Railroad Ave. Manager H.W. McNeil of the *C&PS* said, 'When we were requested to abandon the old route and take instead Railroad Ave from Yesler Ave north to do this required heavy expenditure. We consented to go to Railroad Avenue provided we were given the same rights there as on the old route. A good many property owners executed the necessary deeds to the new avenue but some refused to do so. This makes it impossible to go on Railroad Ave as desired. But in the meantime the city has raised the

grades of the streets intersecting the old right-of-way and in several cases improved streets on the new grades. The ordinance granting us our franchise provides that our tracks shall be level with the wharf line. We cannot afford to give up our track through the city and unless we are given a position on Railroad Ave as promised we have no option left but to fight for the old right-of-way.'" And fight they would repeatedly for another five years. One irritation that McNeil neglects in his quote – perhaps it was understood by the readers – was the position that was offered to the *C&PS* on Railroad Avenue outside of the *SLSE*. Burke had made sure that his railroad was given the first 30 feet of the new, at first, 180-foot-wide Railroad Avenue; that is the part that was closest to the businesses on shore. This meant that the *SLSE* would in effect be a tollgate for all other railroads built to the water-side of it. The *SLSE* explained that it would help with the switching of cars across its line – at $5 each. Of course the SLSE would then have also been required to pay a fee to switch in the opposite direction across the other lines to get to the wharves that were quickly built up along the water-side of Railroad Avenue following the fire. But this arrangement was not so tit-for-tat, for the *SLSE* had its own pier at Smith Cove from which it could move whatever bulk materials – most often lumber and coal – it brought to it from the railroad's new hinterlands of King County and eventually Canada. In short, it would not need to get to the docks on the waterfront as often as other railroads would need to get to the commission district and the rest of the city on the shore side of Railroad Avenue.

Within a few years of the "great fire", nostalgia for the pre-fire waterfront and its eccentric railroad might be expressed. A *Post-Intelligencer* article from 1891 reminded its readers, "The old waterfront rams horn [was the] tortuous right-of-way of the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railway* running from Yesler to Madison and then diagonally across lots and blocks to Pine Street . . . The line of wharves was jagged and with no such uniformity, while such a thing as a pier was unknown, any vessel landing occupying two or three contiguous pieces of waterfront." The *P-I* did not however make note of the ram's horn's primary absurdity – it was generally idle and so gave little service to the neighborhood it curved through. Had it been tended its potential customers included Colman's coal yard at Columbia Street (which as noted earlier it did briefly serve), the Commercial Mill Company on a wharf to the south side of Madison Street, the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company's small dock at the foot of Spring, and the cracker factory shown in ruins above, the Seattle Electric Company and an Ice Manufacturer – whose ruins we have noted above to either side of Seneca – a spring mattress manufacturer, several small boats works, a tannery, a fur drier, a foundry, one photographic studio, several boathouses, a few lodgings on the west side of Front Street, and finally just out of harm's the Allman and Phillips foundry and the Schwabacher's wharf.

The Fortunate Schwabachers

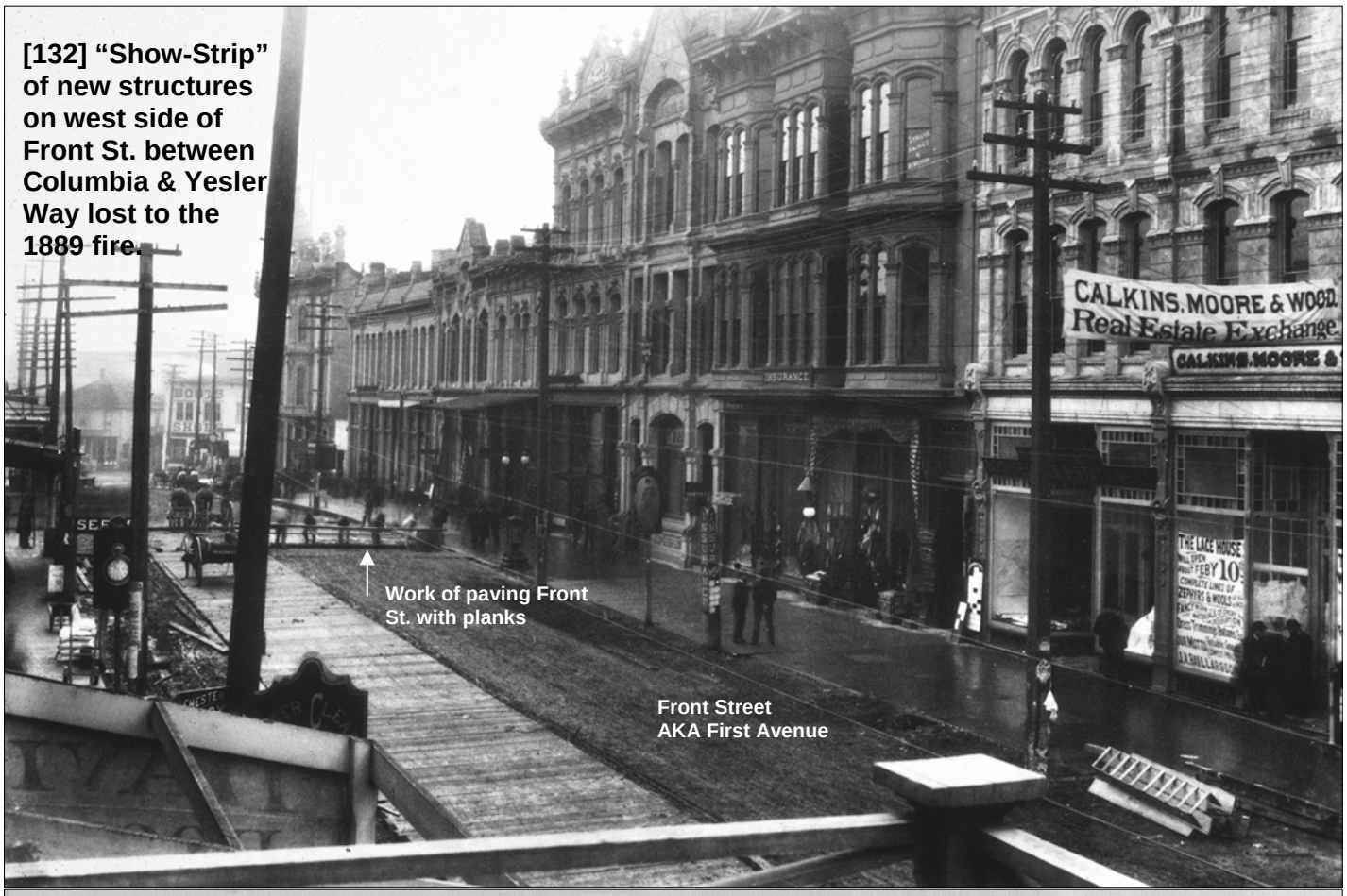
With the wholesale-retail destruction of the '89 fire came great opportunity for the Schwabacher's Wharf. In one afternoon it became the primary alternative on the central waterfront – the city's shipping center. In the first weeks following the fire most of the materials imported for the reconstruction of the city came across this wharf. The June 19, 1889 issue of the *Post-Intelligencer* can be read as a caption for this post-fire scene and its importance to the city. "Most of the shipping in the harbor now lies between the wharf at the foot of Union

Street (Schwabachers Bros) and the wharf at the foot of University Street (Allman and Philips). This is now the shipping center, it being all that was left outside the fire, except Mannings wharf in north Seattle (at Wall and Vine)." Three days later *The Seattle Times* printed its version of this alarming responsibility. "One cannot have a correct conception of the pressing needs of wharfage and more warehouse facilities at the present time without seeing the crowded condition of affairs on Schwabacher Wharf. At this wharf the wholesale grocer business of the Schwabacher firm is carried on, and besides it is the docks for all the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company's steamers. (The ORNC was temporarily burned out south of Yesler's wharf with the destruction of the City, Ocean and King Street Coal docks.) The warehouse facilities are also inadequate, as goods are dumped onto the wharf and have to remain there without shelter until called for. The ocean steamer *Mexico* on her last trip from San Francisco had a large cargo of merchandise freight, all of which was discharged on the wharf, and left exposed to the elements until called for by the merchants. In addition to this the company has to keep a special policeman to guard those goods by day and night." The *Times* failed to note that Schwabacher was then busy building the large warehouse shown in the attached view, and would soon add another to this the south side of the first. (The warehouse glimpsed behind the Schwabacher shed was seen earlier. It is part of the furniture factory and later salmon packer that was split in two for the convenient passage of the *SLSE*.) The anxious *Times* also reflected, "This wharf is at present the landing of the ocean steamers, but perhaps a more accessible berth will be found shortly, the grade to this being very steep." The paper's worries about access to the city from Schwabachers would soon be comforted. Western Avenue was improved both to the north and south within a few weeks following the fire. The steep Union Street wagon road was then only the most direct alternative.

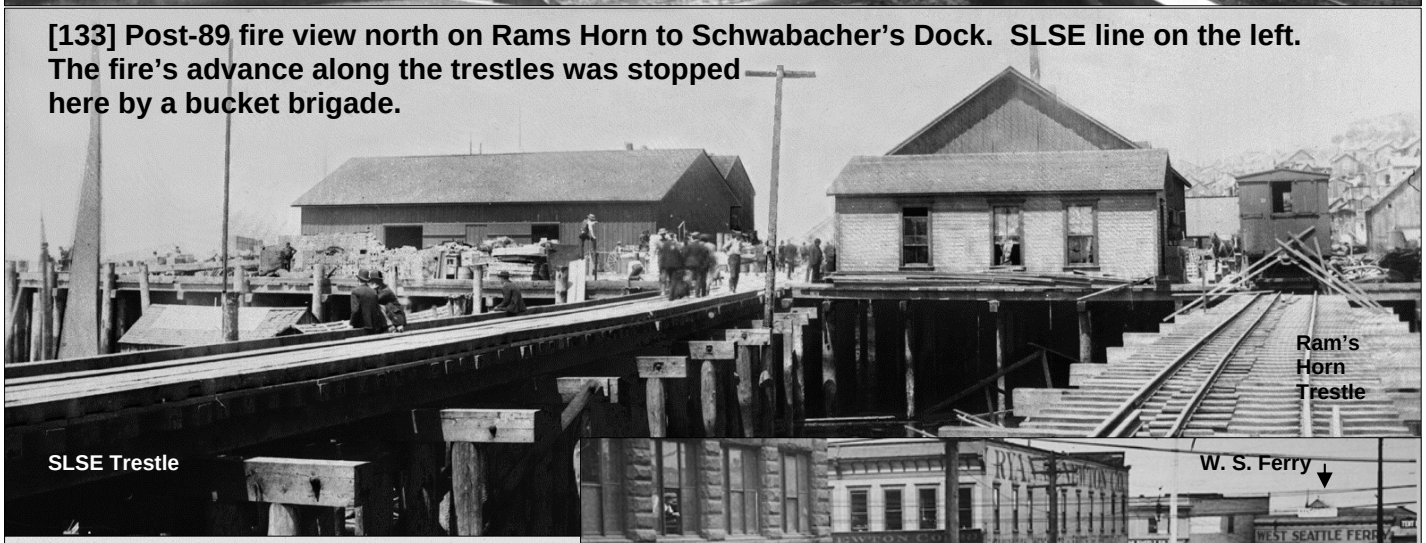
While the build-up of the ruined waterfront went more quickly than most expected, Schwabacher's Wharf still retained some of its post-fire importance. As we will make occasion to note again, in 1896 at its south side the Japanese liner *Miike Maru* began the first regular service between Seattle and Japan. One year later on the north side of the Schwabacher pier the famous gold ship *Portland* arrived with the "ton of gold" that set off the Yukon and Alaskan gold rushes of the late 1890s. The pioneer hardware and produce company was instrumental in making Seattle a U.S. customs port of entry. The firm that arrived with Bailey Gatzert in the late 1860s was still run in the 1930s by Nathan Eckstein and Morton Schwabacher, the latter a grandson of one of the founders. The Schwabacher dock (Pier 58 after World War Two) was finally destroyed for good in the 1960s. Now the old pier site must be imagined near the open-water center of Waterfront Park.

West Seattle Ferry

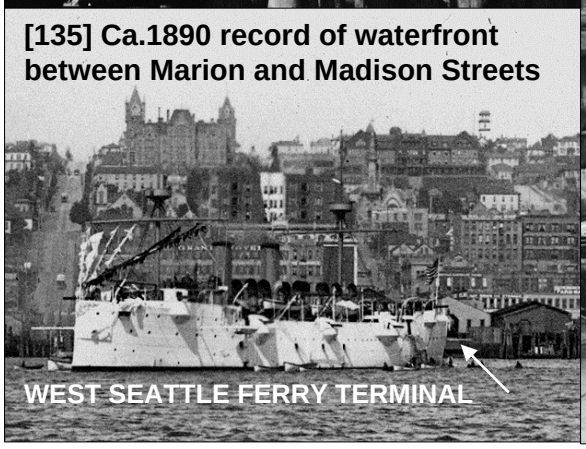
There was no want for pilings in the construction of the new waterfront, but there was for pile drivers. On June 24 the *Times* noted, "Were pile drivers more readily obtainable the activity now manifest along the waterfront would be increased two-fold, for there are several wharves which would now be in process of reconstruction if these essentials could be had. All the old and discarded pile drivers in town had been hunted up, hastily repaired and brought into requisition to meet the pressing demand, but they are insufficient." The ferry terminal was one needed pier



[132] "Show-Strip" of new structures on west side of Front St. between Columbia & Yesler Way lost to the 1889 fire.



[133] Post-89 fire view north on Rams Horn to Schwabacher's Dock. SLSE line on the left. The fire's advance along the trestles was stopped here by a bucket brigade.



[135] Ca.1890 record of waterfront between Marion and Madison Streets

[134] Looking west on Marion St. from Post through the Commission District to West Seattle Ferry, ca07.

that was not neglected. Originally, the ferry *City of Seattle* ran between Main Street and the company's West Seattle ferry terminal on Harbor Avenue. It led directly to the cable railway that took commuters to their homes high above the beach. After the fire, the ferry slip on the Seattle side was quickly rebuilt at the foot of Marion Street and on the first of July began service. Thomas Ewing, president of the West Seattle Land Company, explained to the *Times* that rather than wait for the city to build a road to his wharf, he would build it. "The entire width of the street has been built in the most substantial manner by Mr. Ewing, although it is the city's property. Of course he will later on be reimbursed for the expenditure by the city. Already the pilings and sills for large warehouses on each side of the street have been laid and the buildings will go up just as fast as the material can be obtained." Attached are views of the half-hidden ferry dock in 1890 – from the bay **[134]** – and another as seen from Marion and Post ca.1907. **[135]**

Extending Streets into the Bay

Any expedition into the local newspapers following the fire will discover many short reports or "brevities" on the rebuilding of the city – many on the waterfront. A few examples. July 2: "The Marion Street wharf will connect with Front Street in a few days … On Madison Street the rebuilding between Front and the water is to be awarded on contract and may be completed within 15 days. Work on Columbia Street to the waterfront will be commenced immediately." July 3: "Colman's wharf, at least the north end of it, is being rapidly rebuilt and the planking of Marion Street and the filling of the same will commence today." From the *PI* on the 14th: "dirt that is taken from the block being erected by H. L. Yesler at the SE corner of Front and Cherry is being well utilized. As fast as it is taken from the excavation the dirt is thrown into wagons and hauled to the western end of Columbia Street where it is dumped. This way a street is made with a solid dirt foundation." One month later the paper concluded, "The streets below Front leading to the waterfront are all about completed. Thousands of loads of dirt have been dumped in the construction and in a very short time they will be ready for graveling."

A post-fire photograph that looks north on Front Street towards Columbia from an unidentified elevated perch near Cherry Street (The reader may remember, this would put it very near the location of the Peterson Bros studio in the late 1870s) is especially revealing of this fill work at street ends on both Columbia and Marion west of Front Street. It is seen in profile. **[136]** Given the presence in the photograph of still standing ruins, it was recorded some few days after the fire and so weeks before the July 14th report just quoted. Even before the '89 fire these street ends had already received a good deal of fill. And it will be remembered from the Peterson Bros photograph of 1878, recorded from the end of Yesler's Wharf that openings at street ends were a feature of the 1876 timber seawall built along the west margin of Front Street. With the great tonnage of contributions gained from the rubble of the fire – including all those bricks that could not be salvaged – these already filled street ends were extended even further and higher into the bay. We may note that excavations on streets north of Yesler and west of First will likely bring up a great inventory of pre-fire (and post-fire for the contributions continued for years) artifacts. One of the effects of both the fire and the rebuilding of the waterfront was the pollution in the bay. In its August 4 issue the *Times* reported, "West Seattle is become quite a resort for anglers. Thither a large number of those who used to

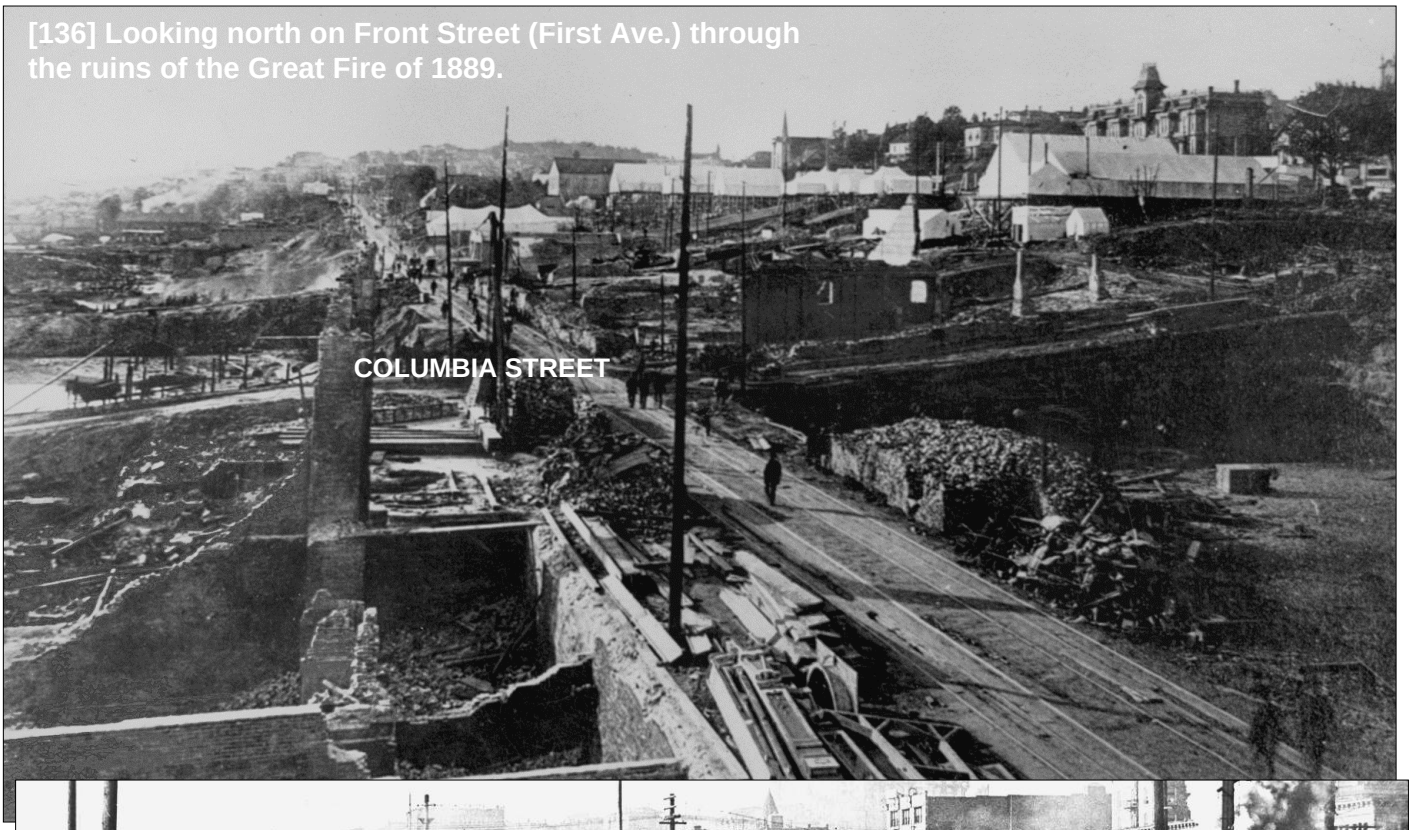
congregate on Seattle wharves wend their way for since the dumping of so much sawdust into the water about the wharves the fish in a measure seek other quarters." This meant more business for T. Ewing and his *City of Seattle* ferry.

Railroad Avenue

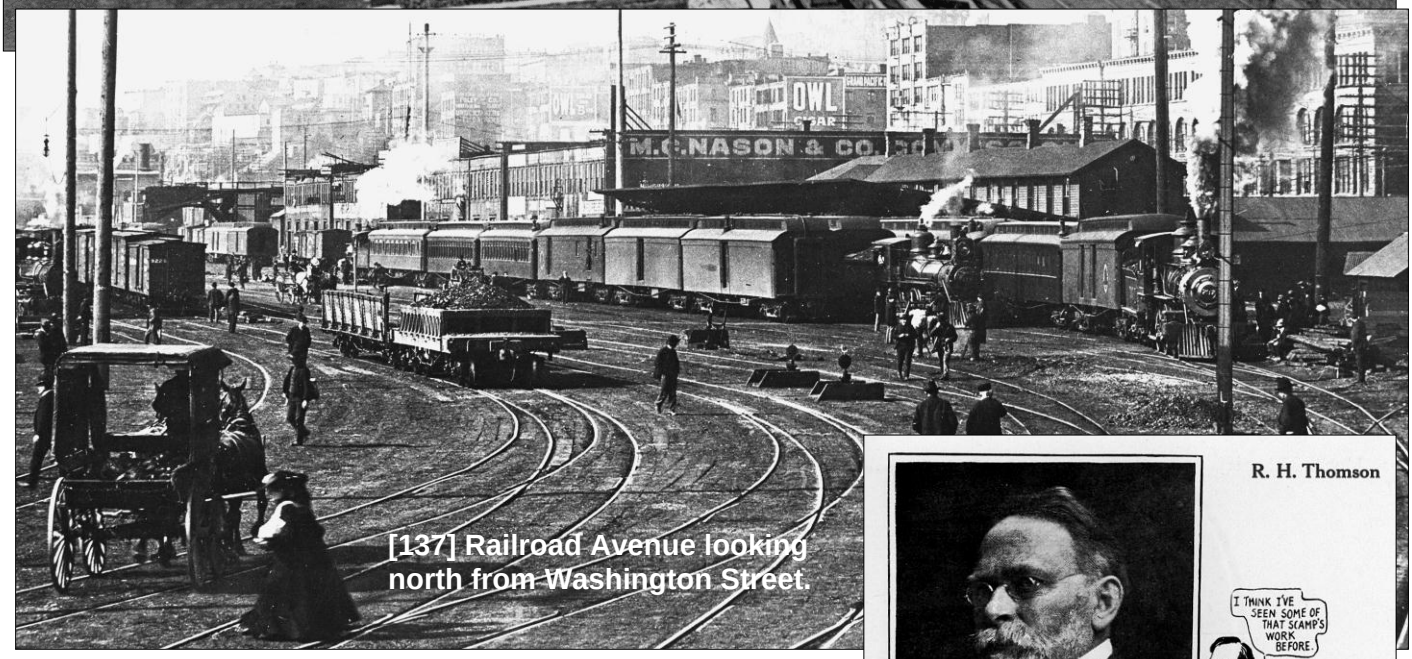
The physical and political mess that is railroad history on Seattle's waterfront can at last be sorted out – and quite convincingly – with the help of both Robert Nesbit in "He Built Seattle", his biography of Thomas Burke, and of Kurt Armbruster in "Orphan Road." But the complexities of the part of the railroads on the waterfront are still so daunting that one may be forgiven if they choose to look over the locomotives and study the Olympics instead. Certainly, after Railroad Avenue was enlarged following the '89 fire the mountains were more often hidden behind boxcars than not. The wide timber trestle supporting a swath of rails quickly became an industrial stage on which a host of would be empire-builders struggled over franchises in megalomaniac splendor. Not that there were no rules on Railroad Avenue. For instance, it was agreed that a train could not block traffic – or the view – for more than five minutes. But with routinely eight (and in places nine) parallel tracks filling the spread of splintered planks between the commission warehouses and the wharves, the view was usually another boxcar and it might take much of the afternoon to see the waterfront or to risk reaching it. **[137]** Still, it became increasingly apparent to reasonable persons that the evolving mess of Railroad Avenue had a rather simple solution. Unfortunately reasonable persons were in short supply. As already noted, Judge Thomas Burke's grab of franchise footage on Railroad Avenue's first 30 feet for the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* in the late 1880s and then 60 feet more for the *Great Northern* was made relatively easy because of the citizen's enduring resentment towards their and Burke's old enemy, the *Northern Pacific.* But for those few who were either not in the thrall of the eloquent but badgering Judge or whose pockets were not sewn to the expectations of any particular railroad, for those the solution was simple indeed. The waterfront should be managed fairly by a single municipal agency that would keep the several railroads from beating up on each other and so also on the community.

Reasonable Persons

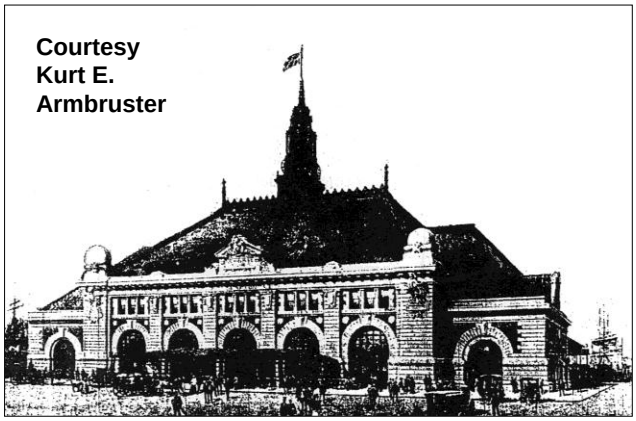
Pioneer Judge and wit Orange Jacobs was a reasonable person. In his 1908 memoirs Jacobs writes, "At the foot of Columbia Street, crossing Railroad Avenue to the west line thereof, you cross nine railroad tracks, or eighteen lines of slightly elevated railroad iron . . . I have always been opposed to those conditions; first, because they are unusual, unnecessary and dangerous; unusual, because no city can be named permitting such a nuisance; unnecessary, because one track, or, to be liberal, two tracks, with spurs to the warehouses on the west and the wholesale or commission houses on the east, where the conditions permit it, would be ample, under the control of an intelligent company or management, for all the purposes of trade and commerce: dangerous, as experience has shown: the killed and injured on this interlocked system . . . speak only by groans and death-knells." In short, whatever railroad had the self-perceived upper hand at any particular moment in these waterfront wars could not imagine how Orange's vision of reasonable cooperation would not result in a lessening of their power and territory to the advantage of their competition.



[136] Looking north on Front Street (First Ave.) through the ruins of the Great Fire of 1889.

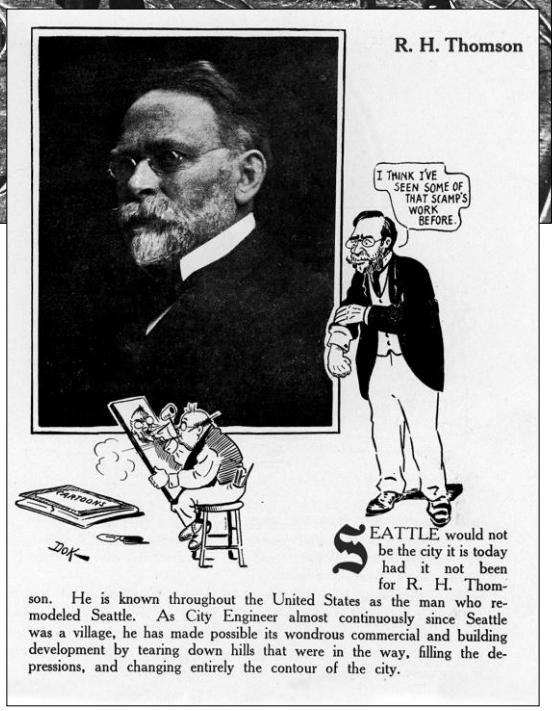


[137] Railroad Avenue looking north from Washington Street.



Courtesy
Kurt E.
Armbruster

[138]
"That Man
Thomson"



Creative Switching

However, in their clearer moments even moguls could imagine it – if they could not have the entire waterfront for themselves it might be necessary to cooperate. As it was, operations could be delayed for hours because of the creative switching that was often required of them to move a piece of freight – no matter the size – either to the commission houses or to the wharves or down the line with the least dependence on a competitor. As we will detail below, after the *Northern Pacific* and the *Great Northern* cooperated in the construction of the tunnel under the city to a Union Depot they shared on the tideflats, the mess on the waterfront did not suddenly get tidy, for the railroads continued to use it as a make-up yard. This practice was one of the principle motivations for the creation of the Port or Seattle. The practices of the modern waterfront have developed in part as a reaction to what once characterized it: battling railroads. And the physics of the modern waterfront – its wharves, its width, its role of moving traffic north and south – also descend from the many years it was monopolized by the railroads. Consequently, there can be no flight from returning to the railroad story however abbreviated or however alluring the mountains.

After the 1889 fire there would soon be several railroads battling for space on the spreading Railroad Avenue, but as already noted most of the contention flowed between the two first transcontinental railroads to reach Puget Sound, the *Northern Pacific* in 1883 and ten years later the *Great Northern*. Of course, James Hill's *GN* was active on Railroad Avenue long before its first transcontinental reached the waterfront over Stevens Pass in 1893. Hill's "front" railroad was the *Seattle and Montana* and in Seattle his front man was the poised, pumped and stubby rhetorician Judge Thomas Burke. Before Hill committed to him and Seattle, Burke would worry that perhaps the "empire builder's" front men in Everett and/or Bellingham were more effective than he. But Burke won Hill's attentions in part by managing to get even more footage on the Seattle waterfront than he had for the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern,* Burke's own creation. (Soon Burke would first lose control of the *SLSE* and then in 1892 endure its ironic purchase by the *Northern Pacific*, the railroad it had been built to transcend and abuse.) Still for Burke perhaps James Hill and his *Great Northern* were consolation enough. And for all of Hill's ambivalence and his kind words for the other east shore communities courting him, Hill could see that Seattle was clearly the coming metropolis for the region, a conclusion that was made certain in 1893, the year that the first *GN* train from St. Paul made it to the little station on the waterfront. (Still thereafter Hill would sometimes effectively make threats – to reporters or directly to the city council – that he would leave Seattle for Everett or Mukilteo if he did not get his way.) The financial panic of 1893 was tough on every community, but considerably more on the company towns like Tacoma and Everett. The reader may remember that it was the *Northern Pacific's* headlight of hostility during the Orphan Road abuse of the mid-1880s that Burke learned to reflect off the "Seattle Spirit" medals pinned to his boomer suit. Burke was a master of provincial polish, and like the *Seattle and Walla Walla* before it his *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad* was another hometown nostrum (and rostrum) for the *NP's* punishment.

The Oregon Obstruction Company

Following the "Great Fire," Burke attempted to maneuver both the courts and city council to grant Hill and his railroads the right to cross the franchised tracks of their

adversaries – principally the *Northern Pacific*, and the Oregon Improvement Company's *Puget Sound Shore Line* (now again a *NP* affiliate) – in order to reach the tideflats. But Henry McNeil, the OIC's manager, would not allow Hill to pass through his ram's horn near Jackson Street. McNeil told a city council that was ordinarily in the pocket of Judge Burke, "You're dividing up my clothes. All I need to make my agony complete is the presence of Judge Burke with more of his sawed off eloquence." In response Burke renamed the Oregon Improvement Company the Oregon Obstruction Company. The fact is that the demise of the Ram's Horn reported above was somewhat premature. The curving portion of it along the central waterfront was certainly doomed following the fire but the original section to the south of Yesler Way continued to be a vital player in the waterfront's railroad wars, primarily because this part of the horn also serviced the OIC's new City and Ocean docks south of Yesler Way and thereby had the precedent of a popular and productive history unlike its story of torpor north of Yesler Way. So it was this southern section that presented a barrier to Burke and Hill and the latter's semi-secret intentions to develop the tidelands south of King Street into a spreading railroad yard.

A Smart Farmer

This motive also explains Hill's refusal to give Seattle the splendid waterfront depot it wanted. Hill explained by pulling an old chestnut from his cap of epigrams. "It is a wise farmer who develops his farm before he builds a palace on it." In these years Hill and Burke were adamant about not sharing any "palace" or grand depot with the *Northern Pacific,* which was, as Burke portrayed it, a company "wholly lost to decency and honor." To quote from Robert Nesbit's Burke biography *He Built Seattle* [p.226], "The squabble involving the *Great Northern*, *Northern Pacific*, Oregon Improvement Company and some lesser roads on the ram's horn and Railroad Ave franchises, like radio soap operas, went on and on. Almost any Seattle newspaper during the 90s would report a battle between the Oregon Improvement Company and the police and city street crews over a stretch of track being torn up or put down. Failing that, either the *GN* or the *NP*, with appropriate newspaper fanfare, would be revealing plans for a depot or terminal calculated to freeze out the other road. Or the Supreme Court at Olympia would be reversing a favorable verdict obtained for the *Great Northern* in a local court by Judge Burke. Or Jim Hill again would threaten to leave Seattle and put his terminal at Everett or Fairhaven on Bellingham Bay. Or the ram's horn franchises would have been abolished finally and forever, only to pop up again as legally sound as ever."

The Pop-Up Ram's Horn

The reasonable Orange Jacobs figures in this long contest of the *Great Northern* to get across the ram's horn to the tideflats, as well as in that of the *Northern Pacific* to pry a place for itself on the new Railroad Avenue as privileged as was its old place along the ram's horn. When the city attempted to "divest" the Oregon Improvement Company of its ram's horn (as a favor to Burke and his Hill) Jacobs, then the city's corporate counsel, devised a compromise that allowed the OIC to hold onto its franchise by agreeing to raise its tracks – about 18 inches – to the new grade on Columbia Street. In effect, Jacobs believed that the ram's horn franchise was legal. Jacobs' compromise was soon overturned by one of Burke's crony judges but then righted again, a reversal that would later be enjoyed with the glow of satisfied revenge in Jacobs' published reminiscences. As introduced above, on another occasion

the OIC laid tracks that Seattle Mayor Ronald ordered removed, and when the mayor also took charge of the official derailing and was nudged by the engine's cowcatcher, the engineer was jailed. If we do some arithmetic on Railroad Avenue, we will inevitably feel some tenderness for the Oregon Improvement Company and the ram's horn. At first the city council set the width of Railroad Avenue at 120 feet. As noted the first 30 feet of this was given to Burke and Gilman for their *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern*, and the next 60 feet went to Burke and Hill for the *Seattle and Montana.* When 22 of the remaining 30 feet were rewarded to the *Portland and Puget Sound* (a partnership of the *Union Pacific* and the *Great Northern* that came to nothing) the *Northern Pacific* and/or the *OIC* could easily get the picture. Eight feet remained for all other railroads – including the *Northern Pacific*. Understandably the *NP* was anxious to take control of the insolvent *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* in 1892, the year Burke wrote to his wife, "Fight, fight, there is nothing but an everlasting fight all the time." Regarding the fighting, Robert Nesbit adds, "It was just getting started and was not settled until 1902."

"That Man Thomson"

During these years of railroad Sturm und Drang both the *Great Northern* and the *Northern Pacific* would surrender to the insistences of the Seattle City Engineer, Reginald Thomson, the public worker with the capacities of a prima donna but wrapped in a Methodist suit. **[138]** (Thomson titled his autobiography – strictly a memoir of his accomplishments at city hall – "That Man Thomson.") James Hill was first introduced to the brilliantly prepared Thomson when the public worker criticized Hill's plans of developing the tidelands south of King Street as ruinous to the city's plans to drain, raise and reclaim them. Hill's plans then also preferred a union depot on Railroad Avenue. Thomson famously combined the proposals and convinced Hill that the reasonable thing was to wait for the lifting of the tideland grades and then to reach them not by crossing the *Northern Pacific's* ram's horn south of Yesler Way but by avoiding it and the increasingly congested waterfront altogether with a tunnel beneath the city. As it fatefully turned out, Hill would later build the tunnel with his old adversary, the *Northern Pacific*.

Charles Mellon's Temptation - 1899

But before the boring began in 1903, Thomson and Hill joined to vigorously rebut the *Northern Pacific's* proposal to cover the central waterfront with a $500,000 terminal and more tracks. While Hill was buying up the tideflats, the *NP* was purchasing large parts of the waterfront north of the OIC's properties. It first bought Yesler's wharf and later the then still stubby wharves north of Madison Street, where in the early 1900s *NP's* surviving finger piers (now Piers 54 through 56) were constructed in conformity with Thomson's then new prescriptions for pier alignments. In 1899 the *Northern Pacific* titillated the city council with what seem to be the fulfillment of the community's desire for its own railroad palace. And *NP* president Charles Mellon invited Hill to join him in it. The grand depot would arch through the block between Marion and Madison Streets with three levels – the top for access to First Avenue, the middle for a way over the tracks to the wharves, and the bottom for trains. **[139]** North of Madison, an 800-foot freight shed would reach as far as University Street. The city would need to condemn both Spring and Seneca Streets west of First Avenue. Hill – in part, repeating Thomson – noted that such a project would effectively shut off the city from its waterfront. For

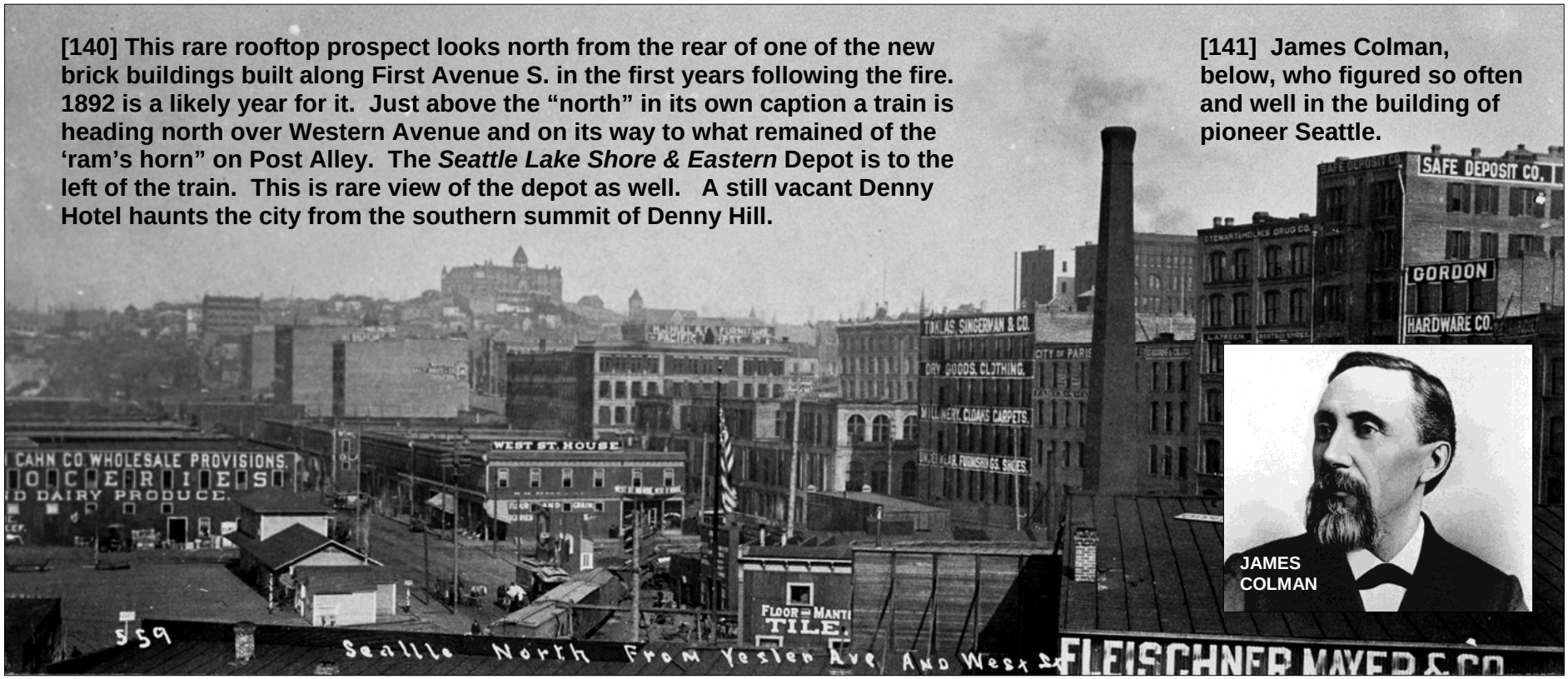
Seattle it would be, Hill told the city council, "commercial suicide." Considering that Hill had formerly made a similar proposal his criticisms were perhaps less heartfelt than those of the reasonable Orange Jacobs who made his own more homely protest. "In the future if I should desire to go to the waterfront to catch a tomcod I might be charged more for passing over private property than the fish would be worth."

Checks & Balances - 1893

Throughout these contests one player or another would step forward to suggest the "reasonable person" solution – usually a terminal company. Even Burke in 1890 was so inspired, but in his case as in all others the terms were too self-serving. In 1892, while the *Great Northern* was approaching the coast from Wenatchee (one of its many company towns along the line), it was the Oregon Improvement Company's turn to promote cooperation but, again, to no end. That year, at least for the moment, the *GN* was successful in defending its right to cross the ram's horn before the friendly court of Judge Isaac J. Lichtenburg. The council also showed its support of these rights by asking the state supreme court to once and for all void the ram's horn franchise. As summarized by Armbruster in his book *Orphan Road* the court's response was an embarrassing exposure of the suppositious status of the city's initiative in originally creating Railroad Avenue. "The justices were not impressed. They overturned Lichtenburg, denied *GN's* right to cross the ram's horn, and, as Burke had long feared, declared Railroad Avenue an illegal dedication. In their May 1893 ruling, the court asserted that it was 'no part of the functions of cities to provide facilities for railroads.'" Especially with these "due processes" and "checks and balances" things seem to be really getting out of hand.

The Emboldened Ram's Horn: 1894-95

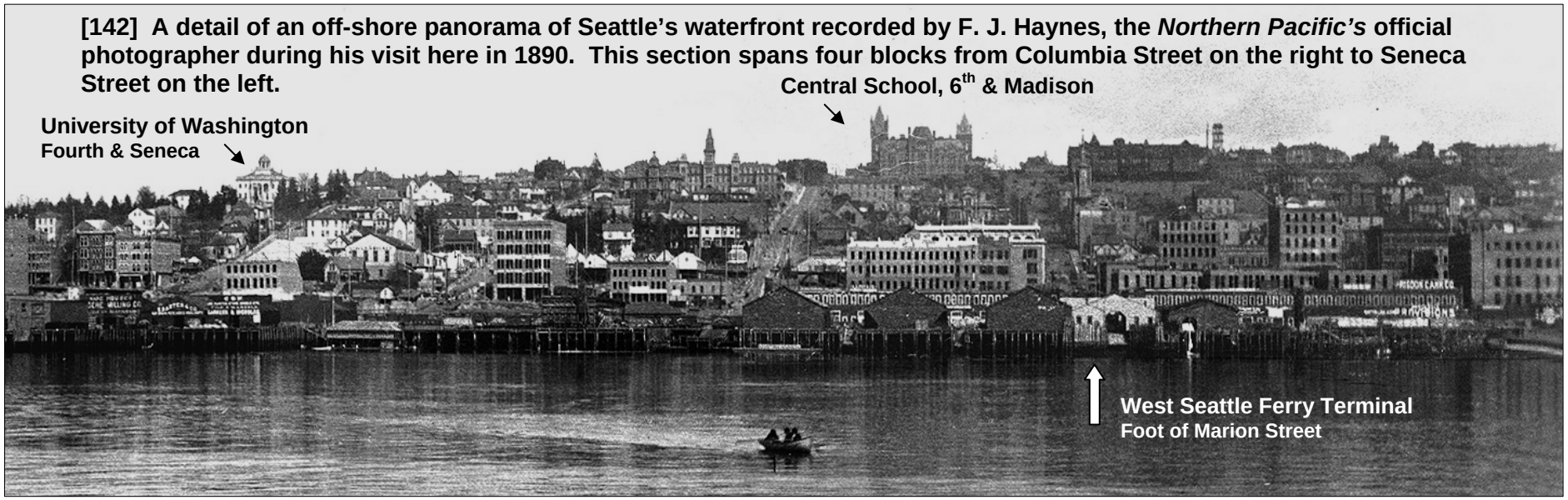
Emboldened, the ram's horn owners made their move again north of Yesler Way on Post Alley. **[140]** Reaching Columbia Street they made another show, this time of busting through a building that was in the way of their old right-of-way. After a restraining order saved his building, James Colman, the owner, worked his typical magic. **[141]** The upright engineer took the by then ancient ram's horn frustration in hand and worked a plan that the city council passed as ordinance 484 in the spring of 1894 to open up a place on Railroad Avenue proper for that abused railroad of mixed lineage. Still, the *Northern Pacific*, one of its parents at the time, was not ready to compromise its territorial habits south of Yesler Way where, as noted, the ram's horn was always more confident. In 1895 when the *Great Northern* again attempted to cross the ram's horn at Jackson Street crews from the *Columbia and Puget Sound*, then knit to the *NP,* wrecked their additions. This confrontation was like the impulsive fight in a marriage that may wind up in counseling. The battling soon turned to chummy sharing and a dozen years of charges and complaints slipped away. In the summer of 1895, the lines agreed to share four tracks on Railroad Avenue, although this again would not cross into Hill's 60 feet. The bankruptcy of the *Northern Pacific* railroad in 1893 had much to do with these conciliations. For a time the *NP* was even put in the haunted hands of James Hill and the softer and slipperier fingers of a notorious robber baron, the banker J.P. Morgan. But company cultures do not die easily and Hill continued to feel consistent ambivalence toward *Northern Pacific* operators, many of them like Charles Mellon appointed by



[140] This rare rooftop prospect looks north from the rear of one of the new brick buildings built along First Avenue S. in the first years following the fire. 1892 is a likely year for it. Just above the "north" in its own caption a train is heading north over Western Avenue and on its way to what remained of the 'ram's horn" on Post Alley. The *Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern* Depot is to the left of the train. This is rare view of the depot as well. A still vacant Denny Hotel haunts the city from the southern summit of Denny Hill.

[141] James Colman, below, who figured so often and well in the building of pioneer Seattle.

JAMES COLMAN



[142] A detail of an off-shore panorama of Seattle's waterfront recorded by F. J. Haynes, the *Northern Pacific's* official photographer during his visit here in 1890. This section spans four blocks from Columbia Street on the right to Seneca Street on the left.

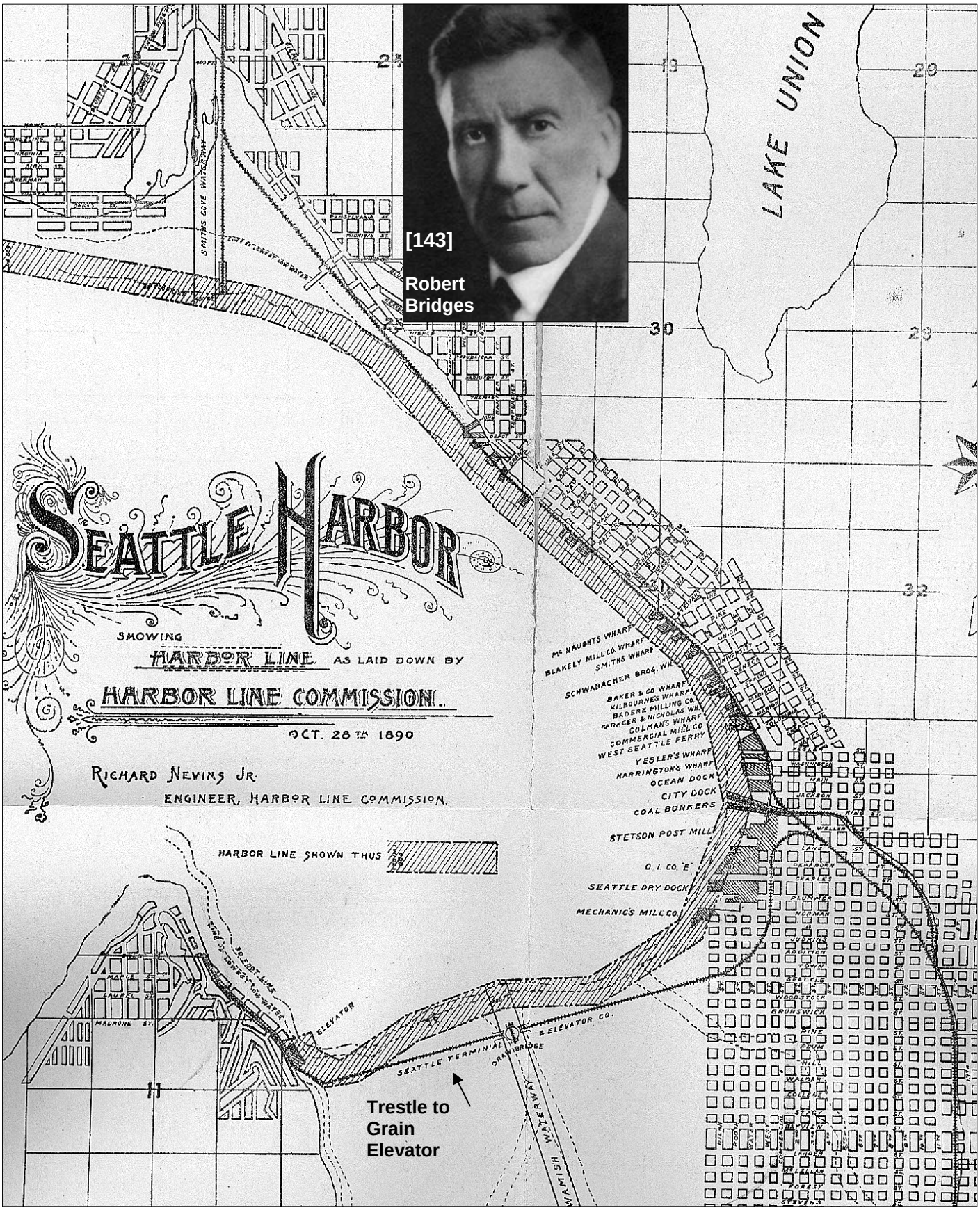
Morgan. The 1899-1900 fight over the *Northern Pacific's* waterfront depot plans are a good example of this persistent dubiety between moguls in the same monopoly.

The 1902 Armistice

Both Robert Nesbit and Kurt Armbruster mark the August 11, 1902 meeting of Hill and Mellon in Seattle as the moment of armistice when the dozen years of mixed battling was itself busted. The two agreed to share freight and passenger terminals on the tideflats south of Jackson. Although this was also a fulfillment of City Engineer Reginald Thomson's vision of nearly ten years earlier, it also meant business as usual for a more perfect union of the coal guzzling rail gorillas. Through the years of contention, the city council mostly felt the gravitas of it all – of Burke and the *Great Northern* and the courts – and although it had never mustered to take charge or to create the "reasonable" solution or even merely a shared depot it was now relieved to get both this union of behemoths and their palace at King Street. But all this business of the railroad's wrestling over Railroad Avenue was only half of it. With the coming of statehood in 1889, Washington inherited the federal tidelands within its borders. The Harbor Commission set up by the state's first legislature went about its work of surveying and proposing with considerable and conscientious rigor. When it was clear that the commission favored giving communities control of their waterfronts, the alarmed railroads and established squatters – like Henry Yesler – mobilized. About the citizen's initiative the railroads could agree. The state and by implication the city must be stopped. Under Burke's direction, they ultimately managed to shape the entire waterfront to their industry's liking, and they did it, as Robert Nesbit explains, by losing every battle (in the courts) to the state's original harbor commission but winning the war. (F.J. Haynes recorded the attached off-shore view while the commission deliberated. **[142]**)

Harbor Line Commissions One & Two

Even more than his performance on Railroad Avenue, perhaps, Burke's knack for manipulating government intentions was shown best in his handling of the harbor. As noted above, through extended litigation Burke endured a string of reversals but stayed in the battle until a second harbor commission could be convened with appointments that were to his and the railroad's liking. Robert Nesbit takes mercy towards his readers and summarizes the effects of Burke's campaign in the tutoring prose of a footnote on page 341 of his Burke biography, *He Built Seattle*. "The effect of this maneuvering was that the second Harbor Line Commission, appointed by Governor McGraw, set the Seattle harbor area beyond the line of docks. This made it possible for the owners, in most cases, to buy the tidelands on which their wharves were built." Here Nesbit introduces Robert Bridges, then the populist State Land Commissioner. **[143]** Later Bridges was also elected one of the three original commissioners for the new Port of Seattle. "When Bridges came into office, he proposed to make [the dock owners] lease the harbor area lying beyond their docks or risk having it leased to others. Their answer was effectively to remove the harbor area by having the Secretary of War [Russell A. Alger, another railroad intimate] set the pierhead line at the inner harbor line. While this did not actually move the state's outer harbor line, it rendered it ineffective by preventing any obstructions beyond the pierhead line and, incidentally, preventing any state control of the waterfront through the exercise of ownership as intended by the [state] constitution [of 1889.]" **[144]**



[144] First Harbor Line Commission map with Harbor Lines drawn in favor of public interests in shoreline use and management.

Rails Regnant - 1910

In sum, from 1885 when Thomas Burke and Daniel Gilman first promoted the idea of a Railroad Avenue for their then first proposed *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* to the formation of the Port of Seattle in 1911, the community's front porch was effectively ruled by railroads – an often squabbling regency. In 1910 on the eve of the Port's formation, a report from the Federal Commissioner of Corporations summarized their power. "For about two and one-half miles Railroad Avenue is crowded with the movement of trains and teams handling freight … There is a narrow strip of privately owned property running nearly the entire length of the immediate waterfront, thus cutting off direct access to the harbor line. These private owners may secure the right to erect wharves, the land entrance to which they will absolutely control. This situation on Railroad Avenue seems to make the provisions for public control of the waterfront of no effect in so far as this particular portion thereof is concerned. Railroads encompass the entire length of the active waterfront of Seattle from West Seattle to Smith's Cove waterway to the north. The railroads or their affiliated companies own a large portion of the docks, wharves and warehouses and control a large share of the transportation agencies operating on the waters of the Pacific Ocean and Puget Sound." It is instructive to compare this reality with an alternative vision of the waterfront shared during the years of the rails regnant.

Virgil Bogue's Waterfront Alternative

While the city or its council failed to take public charge of its waterfront, as the original state harbor commission designed for it to do, Virgil Bogue offered deliverance. In 1894, in the stiff of the economy that followed the 1893 market crash, the acclaimed engineer-planner proposed oceanic changes on the waterfront. Acting as a consulting engineer for the King County Board of Tideland Appraisers, Bogue made a study of the waterfront that was published in the *Post-Intelligencer* on January 20, 1895 and presented to the city soon after. The engineer shared a lesson learned from other world ports most of which he had visited and studied. "The greatest commercial success has resulted where there has been, either in part or in whole, municipal or other public ownership and control of dock frontage." Borrowing this time from Armbruster's partial summary of Bogue's points and proposals, "Railroad Avenue was condemned as a 'blot on the city and a menace to the lives of its citizens,' and would be moved as far as possible from the water, to make room for wharves. The existing chaos of crossings and unresolved rights of way would be tidied up and confined to the middle ninety feet of the avenue, and the remainder of the thoroughfare (widened to 214 feet) would be dedicated to wagon and pedestrian traffic. Overhead bridges would speed traffic to and from the docks. On the southern tideflats, what eventually became Harbor Island was first mapped out along with east and west channels of the Duwamish River." Bogue also proposed that "based on the desire of the people of Seattle" a single terminal company take unbiased control of waterfront switching keeping the rails free of congestion and the facilities of duplication. Bogue advised that individual railroads be allowed a single main line of track on the waterfront but share with each other a common right of way into the city. And the railroads he prescribed should also join in a union depot. Bogue's proposals were universally applauded – almost. The *Great Northern* would not cooperate and Hill would not give an inch from his sixty feet. As we noted above and will again below, 1895, the year that Bogue's visions were vetoed by Burke and Hill, was also the year that the

systematic filling of the tidelands south of King Street began with the dredging of the east waterway. In effect, Hill's and other's tidelands were getting reclaimed, and in another eleven years and one long tunnel his Union depot (soon better known as the King Street Station) opened.

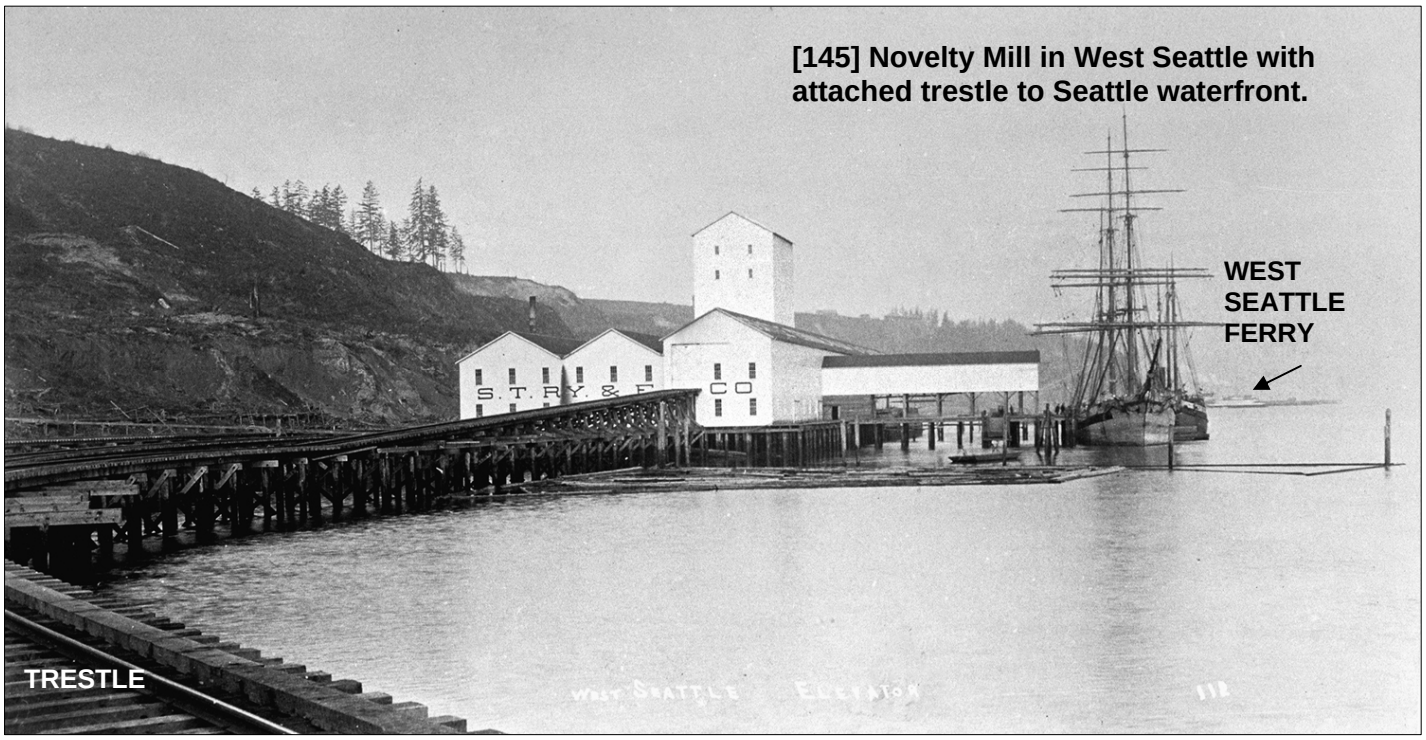
Tender Tacomans & the Grain Elevator - 1889

Terminus Tacoma, the *Northern Pacific's* "City of Destiny", was the Seattle neighbor who came quickly to its rivals relief following the "Great Fire", setting up a long tent behind the armory and temporary city hall on Union Street. The Tacomans helped feed both the victims of the fire and the many transients who were either victims or good actors with or without the flames. And by this time the railroad had also warmed up. All that was wanting on the Seattle waterfront for the *Northern Pacific* to treat it equally with Tacoma and even Portland was the grain elevator that Henry Villard had intended to build at the north end of his and the *Puget Sound Shore Line's* ram's horn before he went bankrupt and was sacked. But now Villard had been revived, and he was back and dealing again. Most significantly for Seattle he sold the *Puget Sound Shore Line* to the *Northern Pacific* for a plump million, the better to enjoy life in his mansion beside the Hudson. And it was also the better for Seattle and the *Northern Pacific*. Armbruster pulls forth the macro-irony of it all. "Thirty-six years after Isaac Stevens had mapped it out, the *Northern Pacific* was a through line to Seattle, and the Orphan Road passed into folklore." When a group of locals – Burke included – joined to build Seattle's first grain elevator on the west side of Elliott Bay and connect it to the central waterfront with a three mile trestle across the mouth of the Duwamish, the *Northern Pacific* started hauling grain to Seattle and at rates that were not inflated. **[145]** Until it was replaced by a new trestle along Spokane Street and left for the worms, the long bridge to West Seattle was also a boon to romance, for a courting swain who missed the last ferry could walk the trestle – either way. (Illustration **[146]**, the view from the Denny Hotel porch, shows the viaduct's thin line crossing the Elliott Bay.)

Lest we be confused by all this sweetness, we may recall that the community did not immediately return the *Northern Pacific's* snuggle. Seattle was still then very much in the thrall of Burke and Hill, and while the *Great Northern* was thought of as our transcontinental Tacoma could have the *NP*. As already noted, the *Northern Pacific* would be required to pay a kind of protracted penance for its earlier evils and would not get is own place on Railroad Avenue until 1895. But although slighted by Seattle out of habit, the *NP* still had its considerable local strengths. These included the acquisition first of the *Puget Sound Shore Line* from the revived Henry Villard and second in 1892 Burke's own bankrupt *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern*. The *NP's* grain service to West Seattle was another plus for the big railroad which was also generally a good bedfellow with the small railroad, the OIC's *Columbia and Puget Sound.* As noted often enough above, the *NP*, the *CPS* and the *PSSL* all shared interests in the ram's horn and the mysteries of its 1882 franchise.

Return to the 1889 Fire & the South End Ruins

Thomas Prosch, editor of the *Post-Intelligencer* and chronicler of Seattle history, recalled the destructive display of the Great Fire of June 6, 1889. "For a couple of hours



[145] Novelty Mill in West Seattle with attached trestle to Seattle waterfront.

[146] Observation roof to front portico to the "scenic hotel of the west" – the Denny AKA Washington Hotel. It straddled Third Avenue between Stewart and Virginia Streets on the south summit of Denny Hill. Although built soon after the "Great Fire" of 1889 the hotel did not open until 1903. Its first guest was Pres. Theo Roosevelt. Three years later the hotel was razed with the south summit.

after the fire crossed Yesler, the spectacle was a magnificent one, the flames rising high in the air, and covering almost the entire burned area. While the noise of falling walls, the crackling, the occasional explosions, the shouts, added to the glare and heat in making the scene a memorable one." By the following morning, the light barely penetrated a smoldering city that was disturbingly quiet. First, the efficient alarm of the Stetson and Post's big mill whistle neither awakened anybody nor called anything to order. Established in 1875, the mill was one of the first businesses to set out on trestles over the tideflats below King Street. When the fire reached it in the evening the mill and its yard were the fire's last great show and contributed mightily to the spectacle described by Prosch. Less then a week after its destruction the *Times* for June 10 reported, "The mill has given orders for rebuilding at once. A large gang of men are now at work clearing away the ruins and getting ready for the new mill. It will probably be running and turning out lumber inside of two weeks."

The *Times* continued its south end coverage with a report on the King Street Coal Wharf. "The Oregon Improvement Company will have their coalbunkers rebuilt and in working order inside of ten days. Yesterday they had two pile drivers and a gang of men working on them. Today five more pile drivers were put to work." In its next issue the *Times* continues. "Strenuous efforts are being made to have the bunkers completed by the first of next week to furnish cargoes for the many ships coming to this port regularly." How strenuous? The newspaper indicated that "no less than 400 men are at work rebuilding the main track of the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad*," – the narrow-gauged track over which the coal from Renton and Newcastle reached the wharf.

King Street Coal Wharf, Standard Theatre, Ocean Dock, - 1889

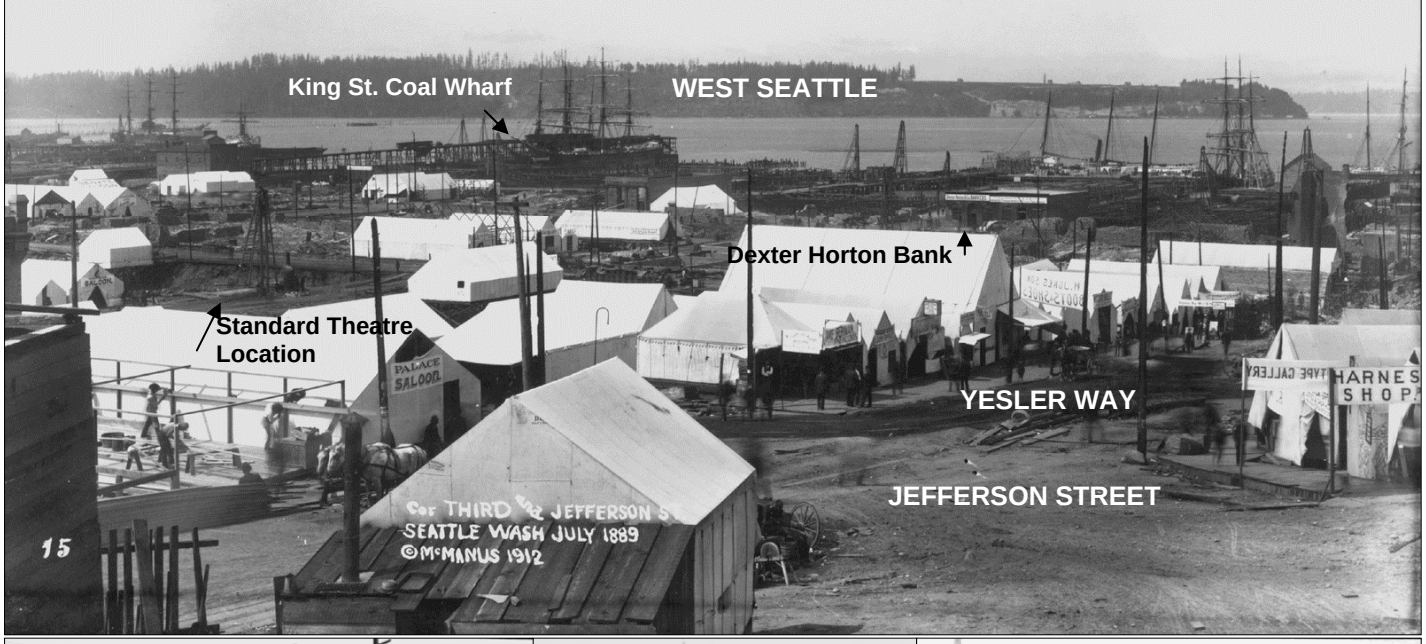
The King Street Coal Wharf appears in the accompanying photograph left of center. **[147]** The view was recorded from the front porch of the King County Courthouse – later the "Kattzenjammer" City Hall – and long since City Hall Park. **[148]** It looks over 3rd Avenue with Jefferson Street on the right, and across the burned section south of Yesler Way. The caption inscribed on the back of the temporary tent-shack in the foreground includes two dates: one for the McMannus copyright, 1912, and the other for the very approximate time that the photograph was recorded. It is an approximation. (The McMannus "July" inscription appears on a variety of post-fire views, and many of them were clearly photographed in the first few days following the fire.) More likely this is still June. By at least mid-July, many of the destroyed blocks shown here would be construction sites and cleared of ruins. While temporary, the tents that were put up in the first week following the fire stuck around for as long as they were useful. Pioneer historian Thomas Prosch recalled, "Hundreds of tents went up as by magic, and newspapers, dentists, professional men, merchants moved in to them at once …" Prosch failed to include the many saloons that were also temporarily quartered under canvas, but generally he recalled the months of reconstruction as exhilarating. "The experience of those days will always be remembered by those who passed through the fire scenes and rebuilding events, as among the most interest in their lives."

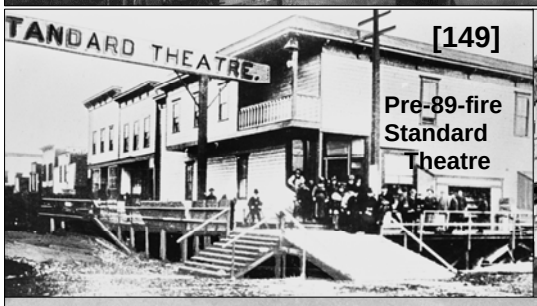
We will examine the post fire view for other signs of reconstruction. Two sailing ships sit beside the partially reconstructed King Street Wharf, and the dark horizontal mass behind them and at the top of the pier may be part of the rebuilt bunkers. Two more ships appear on the far left of the scene – one a schooner and the other a side-wheeler. They may be either in line waiting for their turn at the revived coal wharf or trading at the Stetson and Post mill whose wharf – probably still a work-in-progress – is spreading, far left, beyond the coal pier. Eleven pile drivers can be confidently located in this photograph including one that is off the waterfront and near the southeast corner of Washington Street and Occidental Avenue. It can be found here nearly surrounded by tents in the dark patch of ruins on the left. **[149]** That driver is preparing the foundation for the Standard Theatre – one of the Tenderloin District's better-known and bawdy box houses. Later renamed the Our House Theatre, the Standard was among the (about) 130 brick buildings built during 1889 – most of them in the burned district. **[150]** It took only five months to complete the theatre. Even by present standards this was fast – but not so fast as Guy Phinney. The oversized tycoon explained to a local reporter for the *Times* edition of August 14, "After the fire of June 6, I excavated about 1000 yards of dirt from my lot on the corner of Front and Seneca streets, put in a granite foundation and granite basement … built my 4 story brick building trimmed with granite … and put the roof on within sixty days from the date of the fire." The New Standard was the first post-fire brick theatre in town, and with its arches and ornaments somewhat fancier than Phinney's block. When it opened on November 18, the theatre was only one week late for celebrating Pres. Harrison's November 11 proclamation granting Washington statehood. But then, being too late to welcome in the state, there was no need for the Standard's manager to make the opening night show both patriotic and prurient.

Oregon Improvement Company New Piers, Dexter Horton Bank: - 1889

The former site of the Oregon Improvement Company's City and Ocean docks appears in the attached photograph right-of-center above the row of tents facing Yesler Way. The fire completely consumed the sizeable pier sheds and, a week after the fire, the horseshoe shaped piers themselves were still a familiar pattern of dilapidated stubs. And yet three weeks after the fire on the evening of June 26 the Ocean Dock had been improved enough to begin receiving ships, an eventuality that the *Post-Intelligencer* noted would "relieve the scarcity of landing facilities materially – it does away with the heavy pull up the Union Street hill." Schwabacher's post-fire crowding – and exclusivity – would be soon relieved. Here, perhaps a week or two after the *P-I's* announcement, ships – steam and sail – are tied respectively to the waterside of the old Ocean Dock and in the slip at the foot of Washington Street. As sure as the West Seattle Land Company has clear cut most of Duwamish Head on the right horizon and cut the right-of-way for its cable cars into the bank above Harbor Avenue, the reader can find in this scene the two substantial objects that survived the fire even while being engulfed by it. These resilient artifacts are the Dexter Horton bank – the one story brick structure at the northwest corner of Washington and Commercial (First Avenue south) – and Ballast Island, the island made (hence the artifact) of imported land. A banner with the bank's name has been strapped along its front façade just below the roofline and can be easily found above the right side of the largest tent facing Yesler Way. **[151]** The probably freshly tarred new roof of the bank

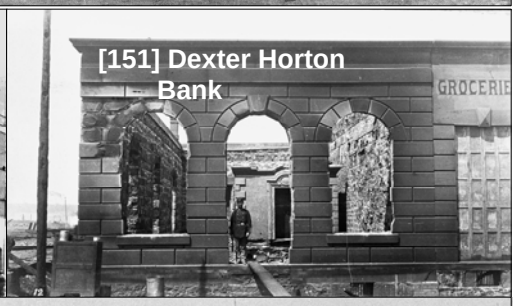
[147] The burned district south of Yesler Way as seen from the front porch of the County Court House at 3rd and Jefferson that soon after became Seattle's City Hall, AKA the Katzenjammer Kastle. The K-Kastle was named for the then popular comic strip "The Katzenjammer Kids" that included sprawling structures like what city hall soon became as it attached several additions to administer city government in the booming post-fire community. A ca.1906 view of it appears here as No.148**.**





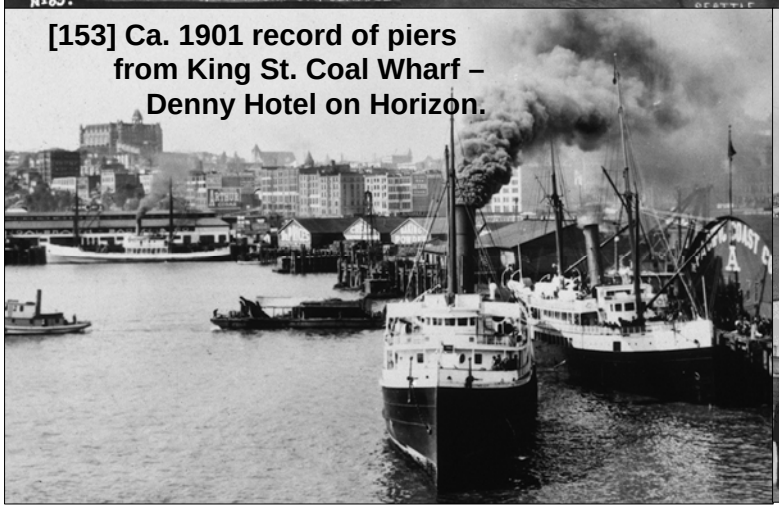
[149] Pre-89-fire Standard Theatre

[150] Post-89-fire Our House Theatre

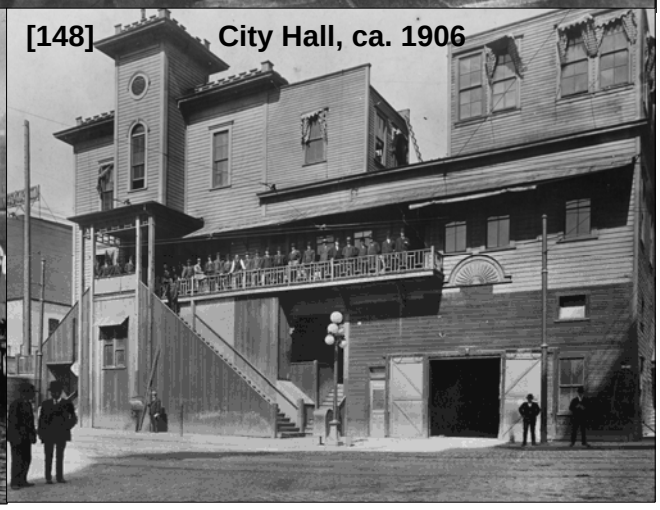


[151] Dexter Horton Bank

[152] Panorama, ca. 1890, of Post-1889-Fire waterfront from King St.



[153] Ca. 1901 record of piers from King St. Coal Wharf – Denny Hotel on Horizon.



[148] City Hall, ca. 1906

shines above its sign, and directly above the roof, and between it and the steamer tied to the far side of the pier, is the barely detectable lumpy pile of Ballast Island.

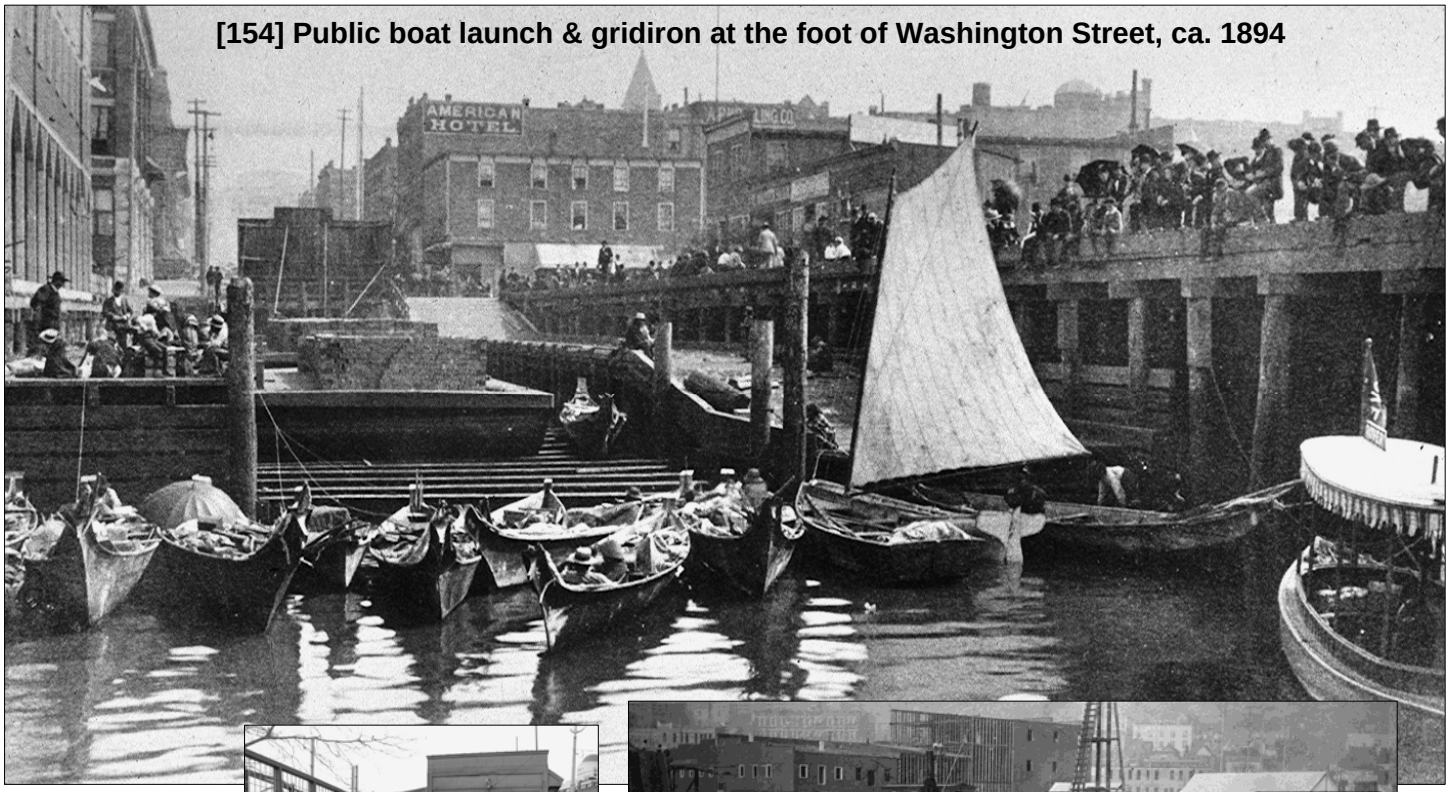
Following the fire, the Oregon Improvement Company rebuilt their Ocean and City docks in nearly the same configuration, although they extended further into the bay. The Ocean Dock between Washington and Main Street protruded the furthest. The City Dock entered the bay between Main and Jackson Streets. **[152 & 153]** The post-fire pier sheds were given curving roofs, and this new shape has continuity with the curving roof of the contemporary Pier 48 at the foot of Main Street (More on this below). The 1893 Sanborn real estate map (see No.100 above) shows the outline of the Oregon Improvement Company's two docks between Washington and Jackson Street and also the outline of Ballast Island – a variation of the ying-yang symbol – where it half-fills the open hole between Dock A, the waterfront trestle and the two narrow timber quays that lead from the waterfront to the dock. The 1893 map also shows the post-fire shape and reach of the rebuilt Yesler Wharf. The enlargement of the OIC's piers and of Railroad Avenue itself diminished the old pre-fire dominance of Yesler's wharf. The narrow Hatfield's wharf between Yesler's Wharf and Washington Street was also rebuilt following the fire, and on its south side is the gridiron for the high tide landing of scows – or anything that will fit. The gridiron extends into the bay at the foot of Washington Street, and appears in detail in a mid-1890s photograph taken from the bay. **[154]** The latter also illustrates the continued use of this rare public landing by a flotilla of native dugouts. The reader may recall (or consult) that on the far left of the 1869 Robinson panorama of Seattle, a row of dugouts also appears at the foot of Washington Street.

Ballast Island - 1889

A few photographs survive of Ballast Island – parts of it – soon after the clearing of rubble and during the early stages of the rebuilding. As already noted, the island was a staging area for Indians on their way to the White River Valley (Green River) to pick hops. **[155]** The late summer hop harvest provided about four weeks employment and often got going in mid September, but the "gathering of tribes" on Ballast Island started at least a few weeks before. With a racist reportorial tone that was then typical when treating on native subjects the *Times* for Aug. 21 (eleven weeks after the fire) describes this gathering so. "The ballast-made isle back of the Ocean dock, which is annually the camping ground of the Indians, is fast being populated with the dusky aborigines, who are gathering for the hop picking which commences soon. As the day dawns great crowds congregate about the densely-populated isle and gaze with intense interest upon the mode of preparing the morning meal. The mode is after the rude state of domestication and elicits much comment from all, especially the tourists, who stand awe stricken at the curious procedure. The native have brought their frail canoes and fishing tackles along and will spend the interregnum between now and hop picking time in catching the denizens of the deep. This is the favorite sport of the noble savage and none can excel him in it. Soon, however, his swarthy lineaments will not be subject to the tourist's intent gaze, for he will be located amongst the hopvines where he can pursue his domestic life unnoticed."

"Indian Watching" Bartering Baskets & Small Canoes

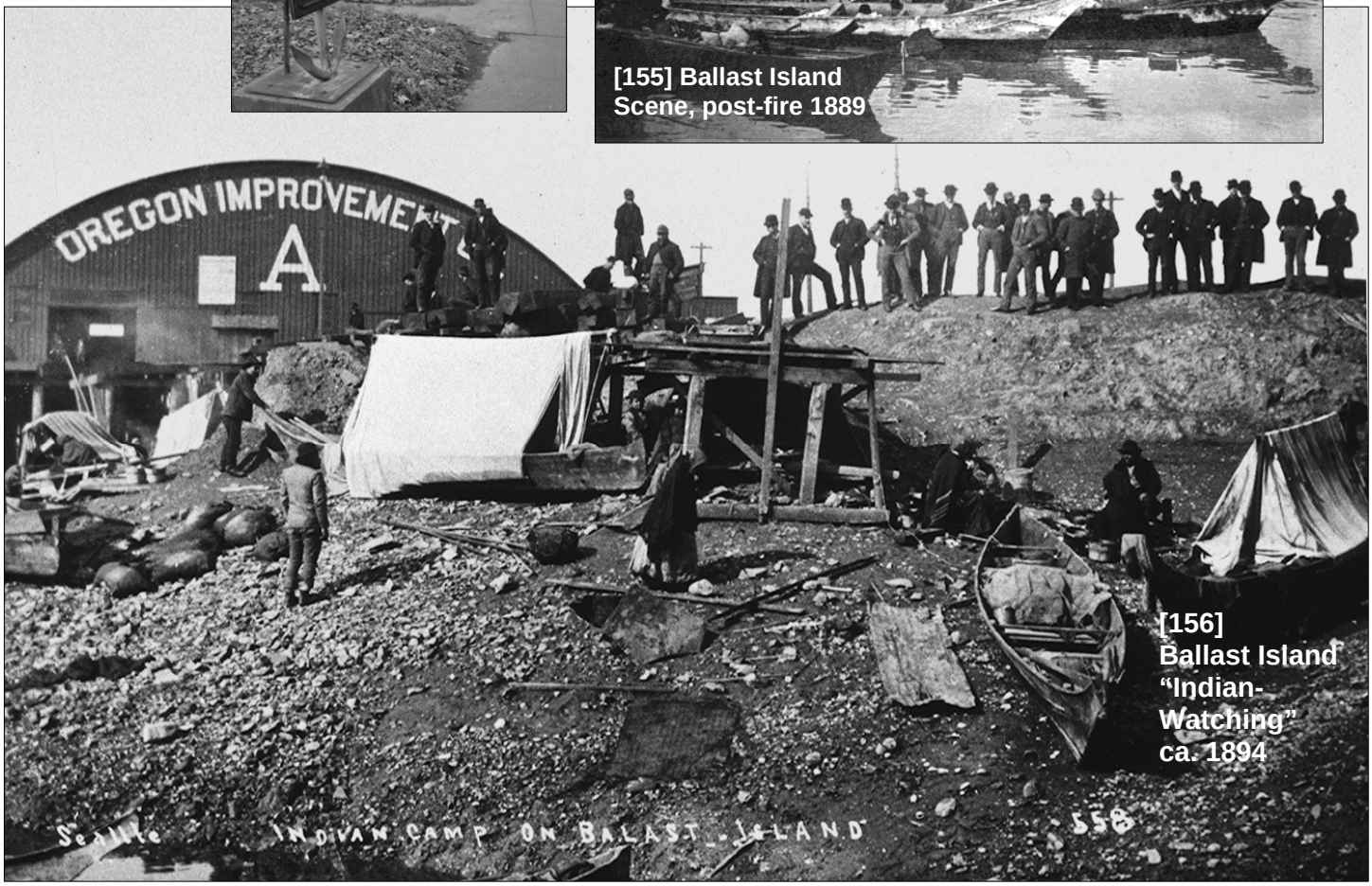
The first post-fire gathering on the waterfront's one permanent fixture – the foreign soil of Ballast Island – and the procession



[154] Public boat launch & gridiron at the foot of Washington Street, ca. 1894

Right, plaque describing Ballast Island

[155] Ballast Island Scene, post-fire 1889



[156] Ballast Island "Indian-Watching" ca. 1894

to the hops that followed was the last year of the old and prospering hop economy. The hop louse made its first appearance in 1889 and hit the crops severely the following year. Thereafter, although the annual harvest continued into the 20th Century, the hop yield fell drastically as did the price of hops sold. There were, however, other reasons for the Indians to visit Ballast Island. As noted above, the extraordinary boom in the city's population that followed the fire of 1889 brought to Seattle persons who considered the region's Indians a form of exotic entertainment. This was the second wave of "Indian watchers", some of whom were still into shooting Indians – but with cameras not guns. For the old timers who had often worked side-by-side in logging, fishing and agriculture with "those who came first," their indigenous hosts were no longer exotic. But for the Midwestern rubes they were and often enough the Indians could see them coming. There was lots of bartering both on Ballast Island and on the corners of the business district. The Indians often arrived with dugouts stuffed with goods – small totems, bows and arrows, mats, baskets – or even towing a line to which might be tied a small canoe or two for sale. It was noted at the time by savvy reporters that "many came out the loser in sharp bargains driven by Indians for curios and other Indian merchandize of which they never failed to bring several canoe loads." And another, "He is a shrewd trader and once his price is set he is not to be shaken; he will accept nothing less. Going home, the Siwash is more of an aristocrat; he has money to spend and he has lost the art of discernment, so far as the value of money goes. When he sees he buys, if he has the least bit of a notion that he wants it." (This last observation sounds like the racist version of the just as old domestic stereotype of the wifely shopping spree.) A mid-1890s photograph looking west over Ballast Island toward the Pier Shed on the Ocean Dock – by then renamed "Oregon Improvement A" – shows a line-up of "Indian Watchers" who have joined their subjects on Ballast Island in the late morning. Perhaps one or another of them will purchase a basket – if they are smart. **[156]**

Ballast Island Sanctuary - 1893

Until it was planked over in the late 1890s Ballast Island would also occasionally make it into the news. During the winter of 1891 a local paper reported, "The Oregon Improvement Company tried to remove some forty clam-selling, garbage-raking remnants of a great people" who were camped on the island. The attempt ultimately failed because, as noted, both trading with Indians and watching them were popular pursuits and not easily censored. Rather, Ballast Island became a sanctuary. In the spring of 1893 a local daily titled another story, "Exodus of Red Men from West Seattle. Sorrowful tale of sufferings and loss attending their eviction from across the Bay. Within the past week there has been a noticeable increase in the number of red denizens on Ballast Island, who are present without their usual incentive of attending the hop fields." A gang of official acting vigilantes had burned eight Native American homes along the Harbor Avenue beach on the east side of Elliott Bay. In the summer the Island community kept getting bigger. On the third of July 1895 the Times noted, "This morning 20 to 30 canoes were lined up on its [Ballast Island's] diminutive sides while almost as many tents and lean-tos decorate its top. One racing canoe, 40 feet long and 35 inches a beam, was being worked on. The racing canoes were kept carefully covered with blankets and matting the same as if they had been a race horse."

Oregon Improvement Company Bankruptcy, 1895

Unable to surmount the lingering doldrums following the economic panic of 1893, the Oregon Improvement Company went bankrupt in 1895. Two years later it was reorganized as the Pacific Coast Company (PCC), which controlled this part of the waterfront until its eventual purchase much later by the Port of Seattle. After 1895 when the filling of the tideflats south of King Street began in earnest, the Indians increasingly chose that new made land over the exotic heap of Ballast Island. In the late 1890s the open gaps between the waterfront and Piers A and B were boarded over and became part of Railroad Avenue. **[157]** In the first years of the 20th Century, when all the local railroads enjoyed the prosperity that accompanied the gold rush (Seattle's version of fin-se-cal decadence), they made lavish changes on the waterfront. The PCC realigned the piers it inherited from the OIC and in the process dredged away part of the old Ballast Island and built a brick station over another part of it.

Ballast Island Midden

Any tunnel digging in line with the viaduct and in the vicinity of Washington and Main streets will not only run into the remains of Ballast Island – including its mix of exotic minerals – but with the variety of territorial artifacts that were inevitably lost just off shore of Piners point or more likely simply thrown into the bay. Included in this will be whatever Indian traders lost or discarded while visiting Ballast Island. Consistently construction sites that seemed to promise precious waste (historic sites like near ferry docks or on the entire perimeter of Piners Point) could count on visits (usually at night) by the community's brigade of enthused amateur archeologists – or treasure hunters without portfolio. Similarly post-viaduct tunnelers might also discover near the foot of Washington Street a small field of gravestones, but they will be probably disappointed if they then expect bones or the personal treasures of the interred.

John Clay R.I.P. Oct. 3, 1460

In 1904, on the tail of the Pacific Coast Coal Company's waterfront reconstructions, a gravestone was found at the level of the old beach at the foot of Washington Street. This was then thirty feet under the street. The P-I explained, "When the chipped and dirt covered stone was pulled from its earthen bed and the words upon it were deciphered, the workmen who found it were staggered. It read 'In Memory of John Clay, who died Oct. 3, 1460.' The idea that a white man with the distinctively American name of John Clay could have lived, died and been buried on the shores of Puget Sound 32 years before Columbus discovered the Western hemisphere, was too much for them." (Perhaps if his name has been more Viking derived, like John Graysen, they may have believed.) James Franklin, a friend of John Clay, read the story and came forward – John himself had died the previous February. Franklin explained that Clay worked on the wharf behind the Dexter Horton Bank (probably the Hatfield Wharf) with granite. "John was not an expert stone-cutter and spent much of his time practicing upon small slabs. Those stones upon which he practiced were usually dropped under the wharf. When the fill was made it was buried and has lain undisturbed until discovered yesterday."

Yesler's Wharf – Post-1889 Fire

Returning to the ruins, on Yesler's Wharf the cleaning and fresh capping of the salvageable remnants was impressively swift – perhaps

too swift. On June 17 – a mere 11 days after the fire – this traditional pivot of the waterfront was described as "nearer to completion than any other wharf on the waterfront. A warehouse has been constructed on the lower end." Then less than one month later, on July 11, the *Times* reported without explanation, "The lower end of Yesler's wharf, only a few days ago replanked and repaired is to be rebuilt from the beginning. A large force of men are capping the piles and by the last of the week a new and substantial wharf will be ready for the city's use." With the help of his much younger cousin James Lowman who by then was managing his business (but not private) affairs, Henry Yesler sold his reconstructed wharf to the *Northern Pacific* in 1890. (The railroad had reached the first turn in its dogged battle to get its own place on Railroad Avenue.) As noted above, the pre-fire majesty of Yesler Wharf was lessened by the build-up of Railroad Avenue following the fire. Soon the planking extended over what was Yesler's mill pond to the north of his wharf -- as shown above in photographs taken from the back of the Peterson Brother studio at the foot of Cherry Street. [**See Nos. 63, 68, 78 & 90.**] This section was laid with tracks and a few small warehouses attached to the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* and beginning in 1893 the *Great Northern*. In 1901, after razing the post-fire Yesler Wharf, the *Northern Pacific* removed the fill over which Yesler had steadily extended his wharf since 1854. Much of this dredged fill that originally came from the city was probably towed on scows and dumped far out in Elliott Bay. The NP then built two long finger piers to either side of the waterfront foot of Yesler Way and the old site of Yesler's wharf.

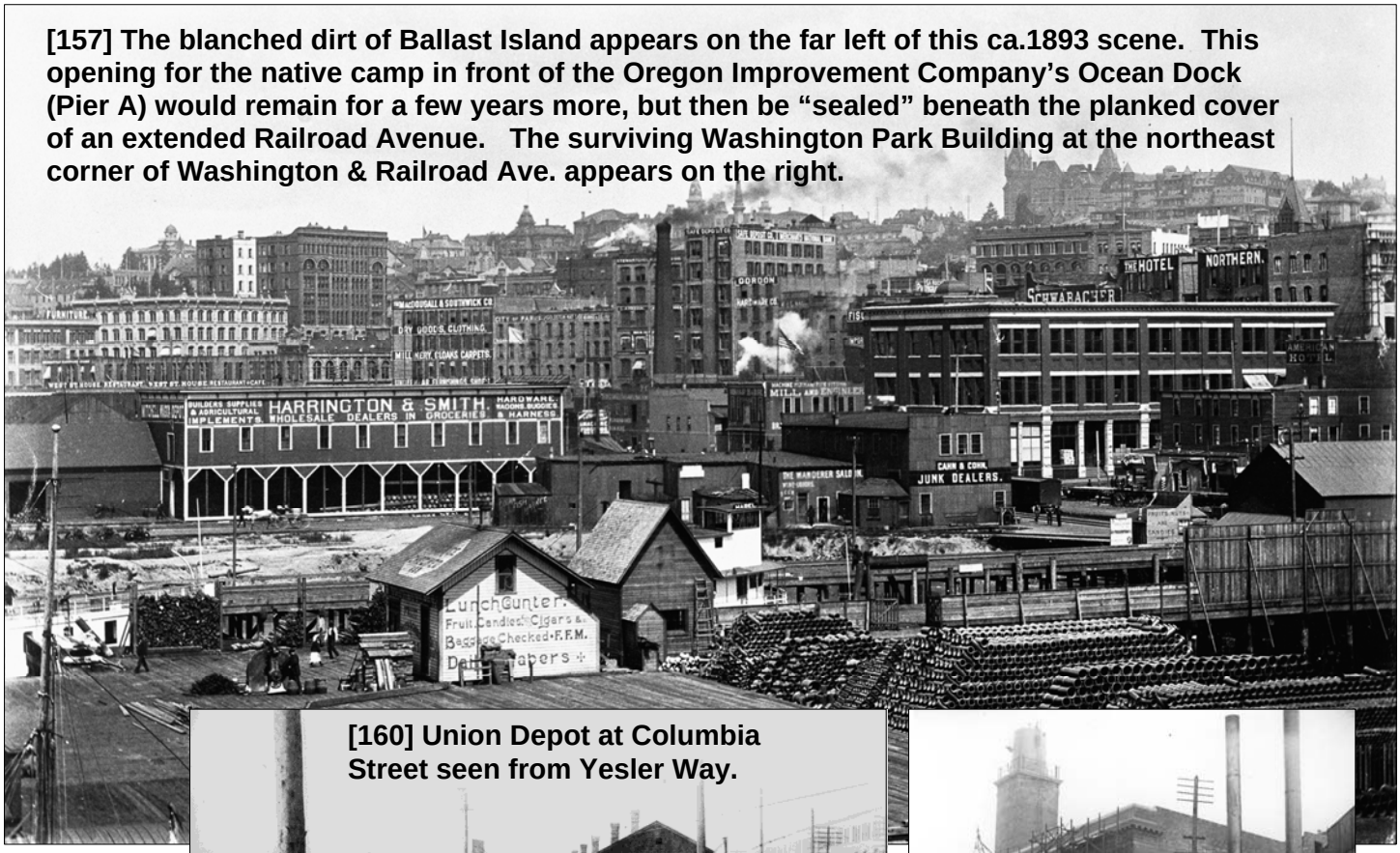
Steam Plant on Western at Columbia: 1900 - 02

Following the fire there was also a lot of dirt dropped into the old millpond, most of it before the planking. The section forms an irregular-shaped block now bordered by Yesler Way, Post Alley, Columbia Street and Western Avenue. So much dirt was packed here and so effectively that when Stone and Webster, the Boston engineering and investment firm, bought much of the block to build its steam-generated power plant it found the excavating a tough go. **[158]** In the spring of 1900, the journalist-historian Thomas Prosch amused the press with some personal recollections about the place.

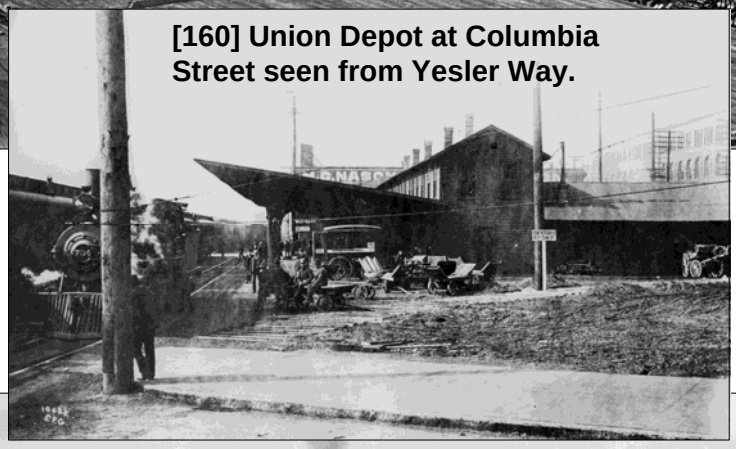
> It was only in 1889 and 1890 that that spot was filled in … At that point on Western Ave where the power co is excavating there was deep water. Steamers, schooners and small boats of commerce came up that far. The old Yesler Mill, with its wharf was there and in digging down some of the old pilings of that have been found. The earth, which is being taken out, is as solid as any to be found in the city. You would not think that only eleven years ago it was placed there. Now a corps of workmen is engaged in taking out the same earth that so much time was occupied in putting there and preparing the ground for massive buildings which will find a solid foundation in what is known as 'made land.'

Railroad Avenue Looking north from Washington St. ca. 1903

The accompanying photo looks across a planked-over Ballast Island. **[159]** On the right is the Lowman and Hanford building (AKA Washington Park Building) at the northeast corner of Washington Street and Railroad Avenue and so near (or perhaps

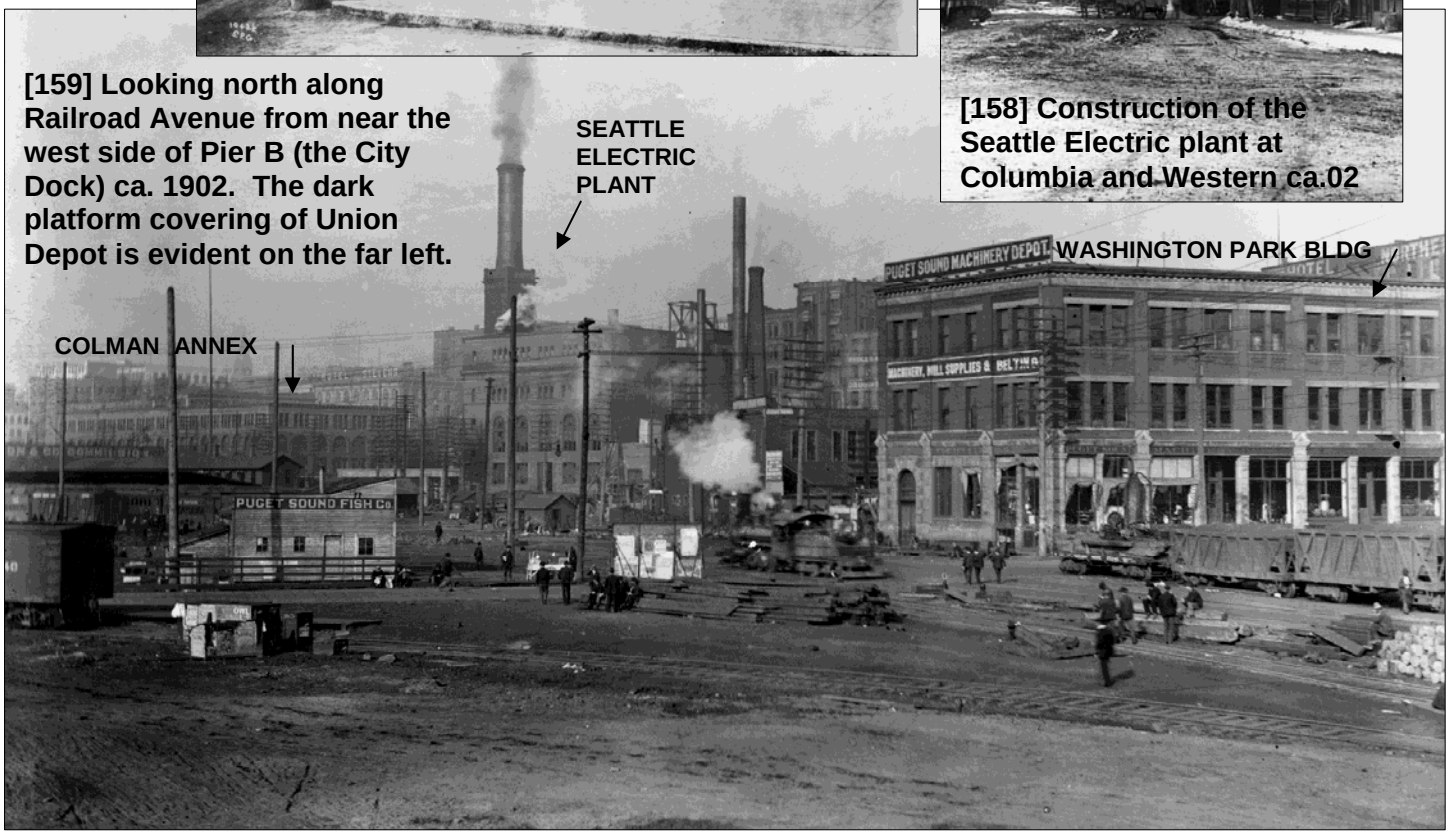


[157] The blanched dirt of Ballast Island appears on the far left of this ca.1893 scene. This opening for the native camp in front of the Oregon Improvement Company's Ocean Dock (Pier A) would remain for a few years more, but then be "sealed" beneath the planked cover of an extended Railroad Avenue. The surviving Washington Park Building at the northeast corner of Washington & Railroad Ave. appears on the right.



[160] Union Depot at Columbia Street seen from Yesler Way.

[158] Construction of the Seattle Electric plant at Columbia and Western ca.02



[159] Looking north along Railroad Avenue from near the west side of Pier B (the City Dock) ca. 1902. The dark platform covering of Union Depot is evident on the far left.

at) the site where years earlier John Clay dropped his headstone. The *PCC* track crossing in front of the photographer (whose back is to Main Street) is heading for the north slip beside the new Pier B that was built off the waterfront somewhat closer to Washington than to Main Street. The dominant smoke stack left of center is the exhaust for the nearly new Seattle Electric Company's Post Street power plant. The plant's electric dynamos were powered by steam engines fueled by coal with inevitable results. The plant's black effluvium rolled from the stack and settled on the windows, sills, rustic stone, chinking, tar roofs, sidewalks, signs, and starched collars of the neighborhood. The neighborhood, however, expected other. In a *P-I* report of Feb. 13, 1902, the not yet completed 120-foot smokestack's clean service is predicted. "From the vast circumference at the top of the stack one would imagine that when the fires are lit in the big furnaces below very clouds of black smoke would flow from the chimney and envelop the entire vicinity. On the contrary, the engineers in charge of the work state that the amount of smoke issuing from the stack will be hardly visible. The filling of the atmosphere by the black clouds of smoke will be avoided by a recently invented contrivance that eliminates practically all the soot and nauseous gases from coal smoke. It is called a mechanical smoker. The furnace fires will be fed by means of machinery and so as to cause an almost perfect combusting of all the elements of the coal used as fuel." (We will have several occasions below in photographs used to make other points to also point out the stack belching great clouds of black soot and usually into the city.)

Union Depot at Columbia Street & the Colman Annex

The photograph across Railroad Avenue includes two other waterfront landmarks that will be noted. The dark horizontal line on the far left is the fixed awning attached to the "Union Depot." It protected passengers on the track side (the west side) of the depot at the southeast corner of Columbia Street and Railroad Avenue. After the *Northern Pacific* agreed in 1902 to join the *Great Northern* in developing a Union Depot on King Street at the end of a tunnel they would build together, the *Great Northern* came across Railroad Avenue from its depot-shack next to the West Seattle ferry terminal at the foot of Marion Street to share the Columbia street depot with the *NP*. **[160]** Finally, just above the depot is the Colman Annex that John Colman built directly behind his Colman Building with rustic stone bought cheap. After the federal government had the stone shipped around the horn for the construction of the then new Post Office at 3rd and Union, its inspectors decided that it was too soft for government buildings. The stone was refused and Colman got it at an "abandoned stone price." The construction of the Colman Annex in the block bordered by Columbia, Marion, Post and Western is testimony to the initiative the locals took in dumping fill along the waterfront and, in this instance, how Colman managed to create a substantial bed for this exceedingly heavy stone building. For years the Annex was the home of Society Candies and it (and the parking lot that his since taken its place) is also distinguished – by at least one calculation – of being partly built over the buried schooner *Winward*.

The Lesson of the *Winward* for *COAL & LUMBER*

In 1900 had the *Winward* wanted to escape before the ponderous Colman Annex (perhaps) covered it, sprout new masts and make its way to sea it would have had to plough through the row of commission warehouses that faced Railroad Avenue and the eight

tracks on it and then find some open slip between the piers to reach open water. While restraining the *Winward* we might treat its fate – first the wreck at Useless Bay followed by the pile driver punching its hull while preparing the way for the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestle in 1887 and then (if indeed we have her spotted correctly) the crush of coverings substantial enough to bed the future home of Society Candies – as a sign of the passing of the Seattle that was exclusively a port city. Up until the building of short railroads into the hinterlands to gather lumber and coal, everything was done close to a waterway. The first lumber was the easiest, harvested at the shore and towed to the mill at first by hand along the shores and later by tug. The coals of Sehome (Bellingham) were easy to market because they came from mines that were a few feet from the waterfront, but in Seattle the first coal was fetched from the future site of Issaquah through the several waterways that then still linked it to Elliott Bay: the Duwamish and Black Rivers, Lake Washington, Squak Slough and Sammamish Lake. In his *Chronological History of Seattle* Thomas Prosch sketches this story.

> Coal was discovered at Squak [Issaquah] by Lyman B. Andrews in 1863, who was so impressed with the value of his discovery that he there secured four hundred acres of land. Quite a sensation was caused by the discovery. It was tested in Suffren's Iron Works, on steamers and in cook stoves, and was pronounced a superior article for almost any use or purpose. How to get it to market was the question. The first considerable lot was five tons brought out by William Perkins in February 1864, who assisted by two Indians, took a flatboat from town to the further end of Squak Lake [Lake Sammamish] having to cut his way through logs and brush overhanging the water much of the way. In consequence of this, and the wagoning of coal three miles to the other end of the route, he was twenty days making a trip of about 120 miles. [roundtrip] The people in town were so excited and patriotic, however, that they paid Perkins $18 per ton for this coal, and he lost nothing by his venture.

Perhaps predictably the Seattle and Squak Railroad Company was organized the following January but soon Andrew's coals of Issaquah was trumped by those from Newcastle. It was the same coal field but much closer and so easier to bring to market. With the introduction of short and usually narrow gauged railroads in the 1870s, like the three sections of rails involved in the 5-step journey from Newcastle to the Pike Street Coal Wharf [1871-78], the importance of coal to Puget Sound economy was made suddenly comparable with lumber. Seattle's own railroads – both the *Seattle and Walla Walla* and the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* – were more evidence that this port city was not a company town but one with a growing and diverse economy. In 1886 Lyman Andrews got his reward when he sold his coal reserves to Daniel Gilman for $40,000 and the coals of Issaquah (which was then temporarily renamed Gilman) were mined as part of the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* enterprise. **[161]** The local enterprise (or "Seattle Spirit" as they soon wanted to call it) that earlier built the *Seattle and Walla Walla* to Renton and Newcastle was probably part of what persuaded Henry Villard to buy it, thereby coupling Seattle with his own national system of improvements.

When Henry Villard arrived on his transcontinental in 1883 it was lumber, not coal, that would be the raw material at first most benefited by it. The *Northern Pacific* made the entire nation the Northwest's ready market, and the web of logging railroads was quickly spun to harvest forests remote from waterways. In 1883 Washington Territory ranked 31st among the states and territories in timber production. Twenty years later it was number one – the "Evergreen State." **[162]** Some of this lumber was still moved directly from mill to ship but most went out by rail and did not need a port city to find its market. After its arrival in 1893 the success of the *Great Northern* was made famous in part by the low rates set for returning east with logs. In this the old canard of success, "Where rails meet sails," played little part. Although Seattle welcomed the general stimulus and prestige of having the *Great Northern* use it for a terminus, James Hill did not need Seattle to carry Weyerhaeuser's' logs to Minneapolis and beyond. Still for Seattle, Hill's shipment of Japanese raw silk through Smith Cove made the new variation, "Where rails meet steam" at least for a time – from 1903 to the invention of synthetics like rayon – not merely a clumsy expression but also an apt one. In 1900 Seattle was as much a railroad town as a port city and it was in the cheaper hotels close to Railroad Avenue where both the sailor and the switchman would check in between trips inland and off.

Recalling the 1890s

We may wager than any waterfront reminiscing in 1900 would have recalled with what speed everything west of First Avenue expanded following the Great Fire of 1889. A re-reading of the papers following the fire confirms this. Already in the first months of reconstruction the locals were thrilled by it. *The Post-Intelligencer* of Oct 11, 1889 is shamelessly puffed up. "Today there is no city in the Union with a more commodious waterfront than Seattle. Streets and alleys are straight and parallel and the grade to the wharves is easy." Turn-of-the-century reminiscences would have also recalled the arrival of both the *Great Northern* and the "Great Panic" in 1893, and four years later the "ton of gold" ship *Portland* that was credited with suddenly reviving a city that was while no longer panicky still mildly depressed. This heroic rescue is, of course, mostly legendary for by 1897 Seattle was well into recovery. The mid-1890s depression had proved the resilience of Seattle's diverse wealth relative to Tacoma's narrower interests and support. Tacoma was a company town with too many of its eggs bedded in the same boxcar. In 1900 the gold rush to the Yukon and Alaska was still going – in those months when it was possible to get through the ice – and Seattle had made itself the primary outfitter for the often frantic Argonauts and so their preferred port of both departure and return. Of course the few who returned rich would then help out again, and those who were unlucky returned to a booming city that perhaps owed them something – like jobs at low wages, or consolation in the cheaper thrills along Skid Road. What may have dimmed by 1900 was what the waterfront and business district looked like before the fire. There was nothing left to remind one. After the fire, most of the rubble of the old city was pushed offshore where it was appreciated by everyone but the fish, and after the waters settled even they liked it. But fresher contributions of fill continued from construction sites throughout the decade. It was easy enough and hardly notable to detach a plank or two beside a willing business on Post or Western Avenue and do some dumping. And there where plenty of holes – or what the progressive muckrakers of the early 20th Century would refer to as the waterfront's "man traps." (There will be more below on "man traps.") The old

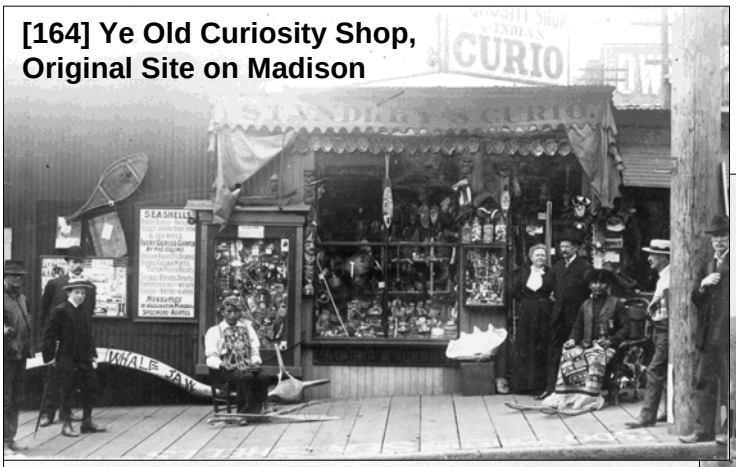
waterfront was being slabbed over and increasingly also buried, while on shore the old firetrap city was lost under grand new brick buildings. **[163]**

Curiosities & Revelations In 1904

Still, then as now, at the construction sites there could be revelations. For instance, when the row of "temporary" wooden shacks built along the north side of Madison Street west of First Avenue was demolished in 1904, it was reported on by the *Post-Intelligencer* in part because the "Free Museum" of exotic curios run by the eccentric collector Pop Stanley was one of the businesses forced to move. **[164]** "The row was built about the time of the Seattle fire and [Stanley's] Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, established some years ago, has been a familiar landmark to many Seattleites ... In removing the row of shacks much old driftwood, bits of old boats and piles blackened by the Seattle fire had been brought to light. The site of the shop was at one time part of Seattle's water front and in the earlier days a favorite landing place for Indian canoes." This last claim about Indians and their canoes may have well been correct for, as we have noted above and shown with the Robinson waterfront view of 1869, when the native land was still exposed at Madison Street (before the regrade of 1876) there was only a low bank between the tides and First Avenue. By 1904 there were many other revelations of what might have been rumored or even prescribed but not yet known in 1900 – including another widening of Railroad Avenue, the boring of a tunnel beneath the city to reach new railroad terminals and yards on the tideflats, an almost complete rebuilding of the wharfs between King and Virginia Streets, and the "make-over" of the commission district between Railroad Avenue and the hotels and businesses on First Avenue. This we will now sketch.

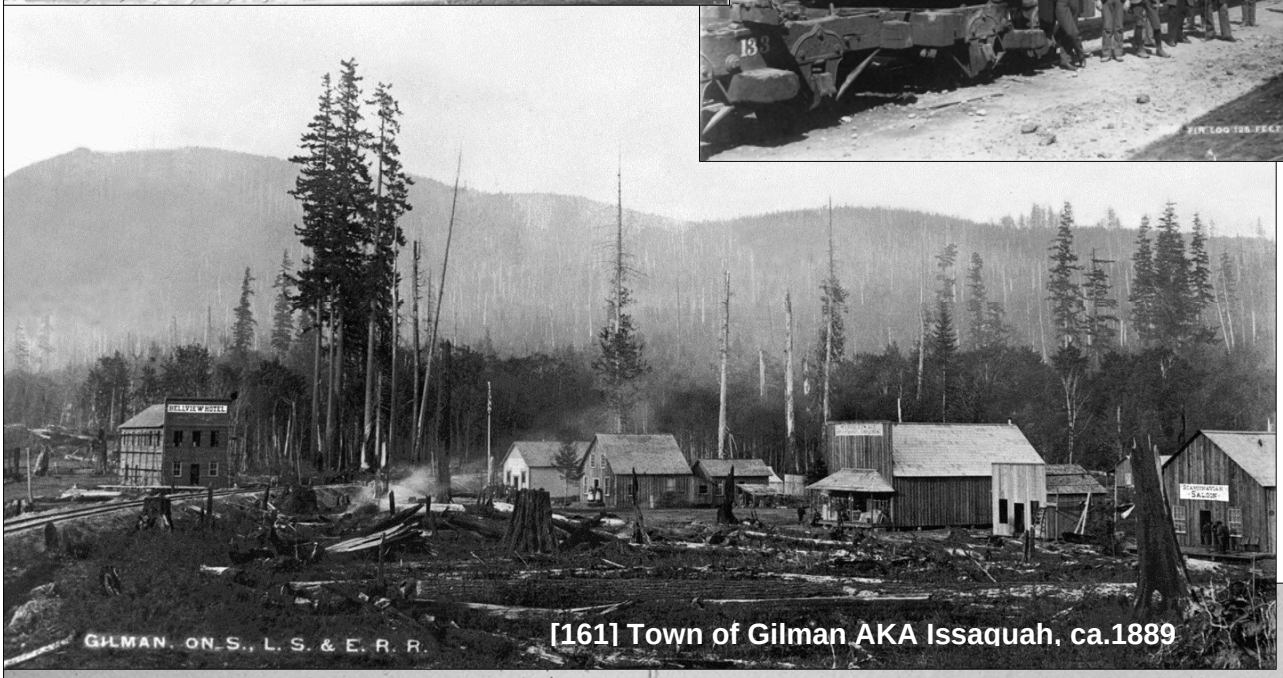
Post & Western Beginnings 1883

While Henry Villard was running his ram's horn along the central waterfront, Seattle was preparing the way for both Post and Western Avenues. The *Intelligencer* of July 15, 1883 reported, "The opening of the alley between Front and West Streets from Union south has proved a great local convenience, and has clearly demonstrated the advisability at an early day of likewise opening West Street, which would at once become one of the most useful thoroughfares within the city limits. In view of the railroad coming down, why not open West Street at once." Of course, Western – or West as it was then still called – was not soon "opened" for any appreciable distance. Post got more attention before the '89 fire. Probably the first part of Post that was developed for any length was in the section behind the new show structures that were being constructed on the west side of Front Street (First Ave.) north of Yesler Way in 1883 and 1884. **[165]** The *P-I* again reported on March 6, of 1884, "A new street is being opened west of Front, back of the Arcade, Stone and Gordon buildings. It will be an irregular street, but will be none the less convenient to the owners of the fine business properties on Mill and Front Streets." Four year later, this part of Post was paved with planks, and also in the spring of 1888 the council's street committee recommended continuing the alley (Post Alley AKA Avenue AKA Street) beyond Columbia to Madison and that "this alley from Columbia to Union be put in good repair." The implication may be that Post then existed between Madison and Union as more than a plan but in bad repair – not good. Or the hope for the latter may be a way of dressing the proposal to make the extension that had been considered for years but not initiated, or once opened but then not maintained.



[164] Ye Old Curiosity Shop, Original Site on Madison

[162] Logging train on waterfront foot of Marion St. ca. 1896



[161] Town of Gilman AKA Issaquah, ca.1889

[163] Railroad Ave. south from Madison St. trestle, late 1890s

Warehouse & Ramp: David Gilmore's Opportunities on Western & University. 1888-89

Also in the spring of 1888 a citizen petition was presented to the council requesting that West Street be extended from Union Street (where it was still on the shore side of the meander line) to Mill Street (Yesler Way). But David Gilmore soon objected. He may have been planning to build warehouses over the same open water that Western Avenue would need to cross south of Union. Gilmore was then making plans – or close to it – for his Gilmore Block (AKA Arlington Hotel) whose early foundation work would make him an inadvertent hero. As told above it stopped the advance of the '89 fire along the shore between Seneca and University Streets. After the fire, Gilmore the opportunist took advantage of the confusion surrounding the future of the destroyed ram's horn to build a warehouse directly over the railroad's franchised right-of-way. After the fire it was no longer necessary to resist the development of West (Western) Avenue when the ram's horn wreckage a ways to the west of the proposed West Street seemed opened to him. By the spring of 1889, Gilmore was also ready to connect Front Street and the SLSE trestle, and on April 5th he was granted a petition to build an incline between them. The '89 fire, only two months later, made this connection on University Street most desirable. However, within three weeks of the fire, the *Daily Press* of June 26 described steps, not a ramp. "A comfortable stairway for foot passengers has been built down the steep bank from Front Street, opposite University, leading to Gilman's Wharf, thus obviating the necessity of going down the crowded wagon trail at Union Street." At first for pedestrians only it was soon replaced with the ramp. Early in 1890. work began on a bridge for wagons and pedestrians that lasted until its last remnants were torn away with the development of Harbor Steps in the late 1990s. **[166]**

West Street and the "Worthy Council" -1889

Two days after the fire, the somewhat disabled but industrious *Seattle Daily Press* indicated that deliberations on what to do with West Street would be included on the city council agenda. "An effort is being made by certain business men to have West Street opened, straightened as much as possible and extended along the city front to accommodate the warehouse and freight traffic." Two weeks following the fire the city council established a 60 foot wide West Street south of University as far as the "city limits." Six more feet were soon added. Three weeks later the council agreed to grade and build the street between Virginia and Yesler and to give credit to "those who have done some work on this street at their own expense in a good and workmanlike manner." Within a week a "gang of laborers [was] pushing West Street north from Union. The grading of this section will facilitate the transportation of freight from Schwabacher's Union Street Wharf to Front Street." On August 9th the *Times* noted, "One of the finest business streets when fully completed will be the creation of our worthy council which for long years has born the name of West Street, but which in reality few people of Seattle could ever properly locate. Running north from Yesler Ave. it becomes a wide thoroughfare, beautiful in width and lined on either side with huge warehouses. Already West Street has 30 large warehouses facing it continuing from Allman and Phillips foundry to Yesler Ave. When the new grade above Union Street is made to connect with West St, as now completed to Steward Street it will become a magnificent thoroughfare.

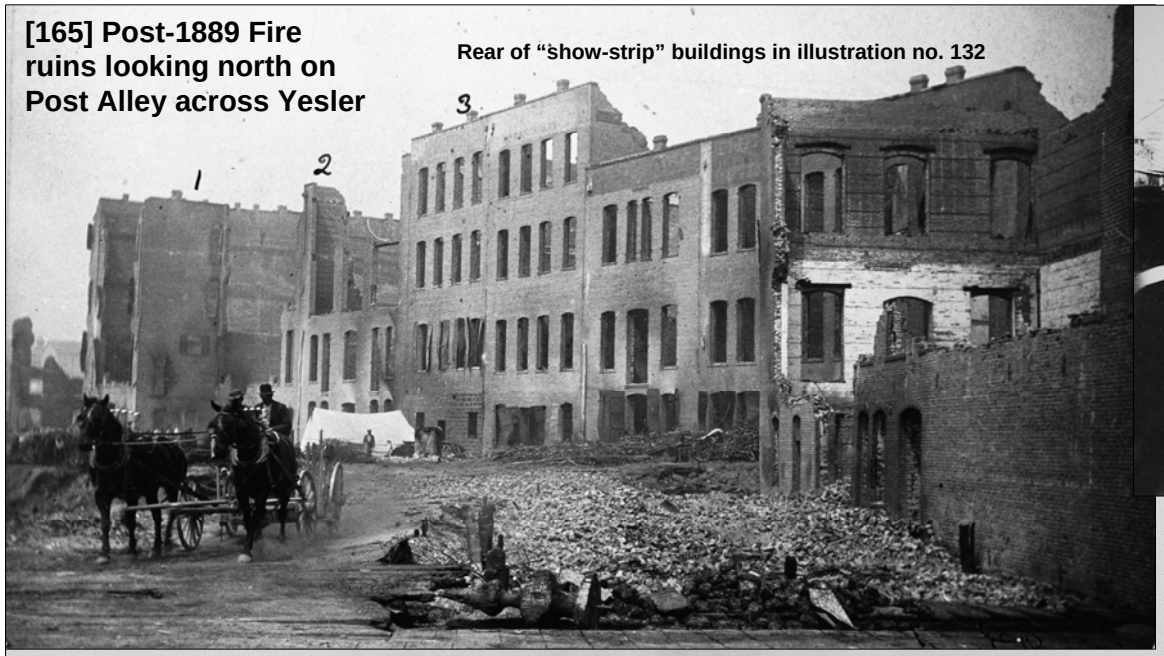
Carpenter Ulin is now at work upon heavy timbers to be used as ways for the pile drivers engage on the improvement of West Street." The pile drivers were needed, of course, because between Yesler and Union practically all of West Street was in the beginning built as a trestle beneath which the tides would be free to roam until enterprising dumping would incrementally restrict the tides here and there.

Traffic "Blockades" on First Avenue with Western Relief: -1889

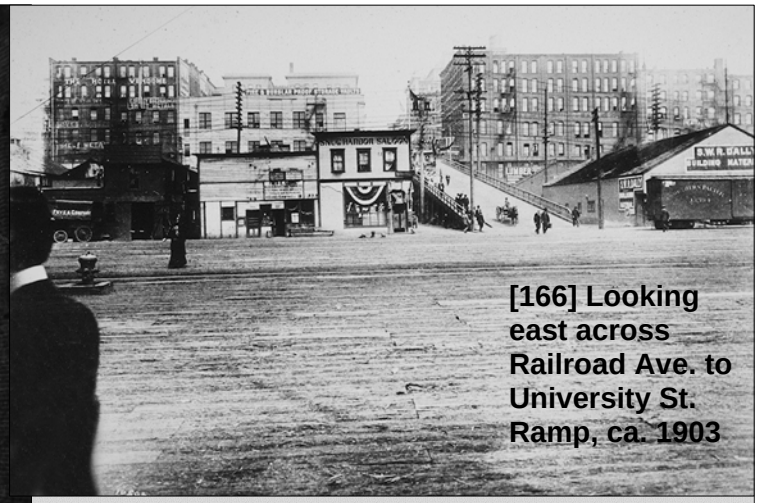
Like along the rest of the waterfront the work of pile driving, posting and planking West (Western Ave.) went rapidly. The Times of October 23rd concluded, "West Street, destined surely to become one of the principal thoroughfares skirting the waterfront will be completed today from Virginia Street to Yesler Ave by Dunhamm and Collins, the contractors. From Yesler Ave clear to Union Street, West Street is but a planked roadway laid upon bents of piling." The graded section of West Avenue north of Union as far as Virginia was completed Jan 20, 1890. From its beginning West was conceived of as relief for what even before the fire were the jams on Front Street near its Pioneer Place [Square] origins. Soon after the 1889 fire a local publisher reflected that "with Front Street opened to the city limit and widened for the retail trade and the wholesale business transferred to a greater extent to West Street much valuable time could be saved which is now lost by the blockades at times common in the present locality." This reference to "blockades" may be one of the earliest reports of congested traffic on First Avenue. By the First World War complaints about traffic jams on First Ave. would become commonplace in spite of Western being developed and increasingly discovered as the detour alternative between Yesler and Denny ways. **[167]** After the development of the Western bypass the next honking for relief came in the 1920s and described an elevated for traffic above Railroad Avenue. As noted earlier (and again below) that was the first dictum of the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

Rails on Western - Ram's Horn or Burke?: 1889

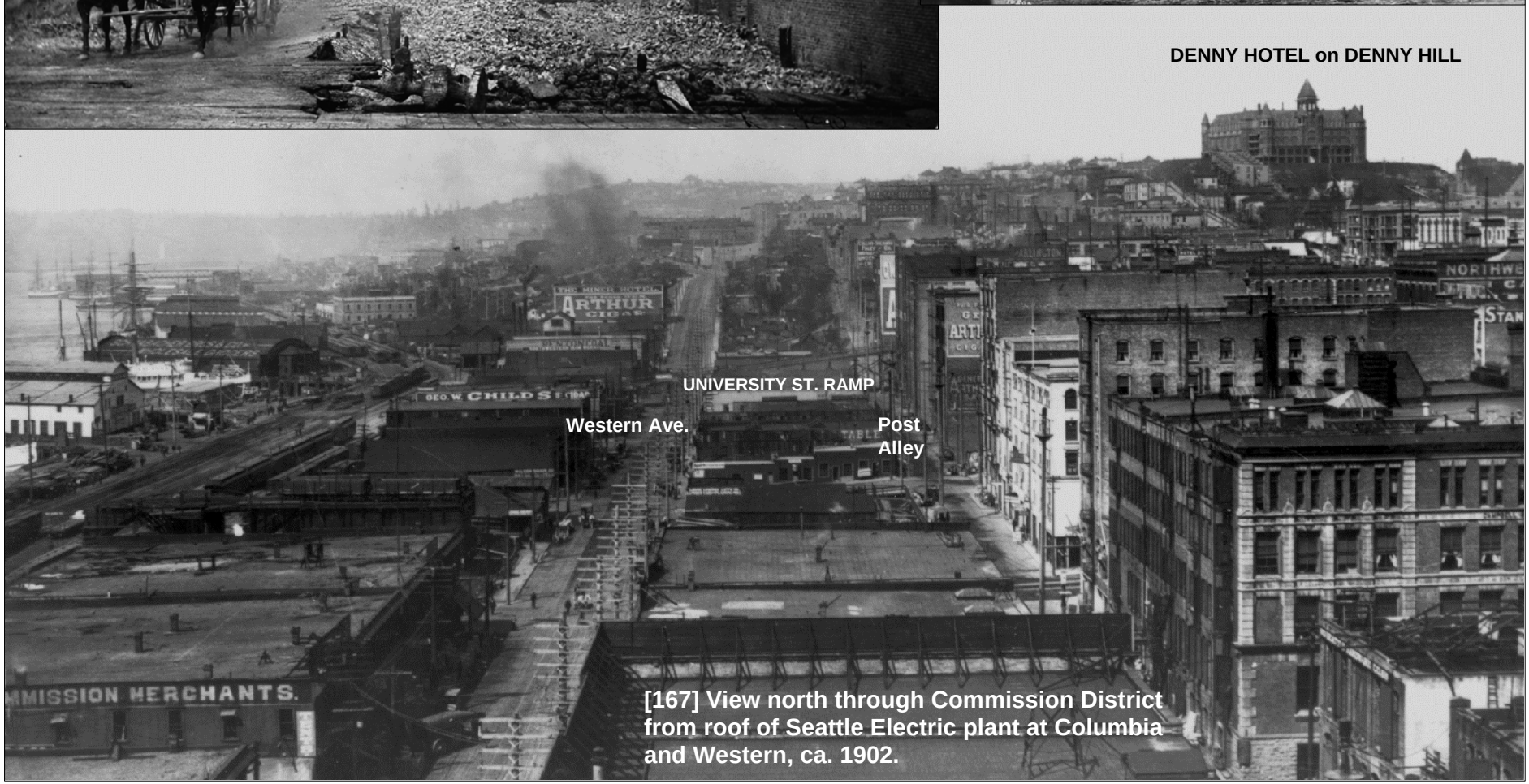
While West Street was an early work-in-progress, the *Puget Sound Shore line* and the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad* made a joint proposal that the center of West be designated for them as an alternative to the ram's horn. The *PI* report of August 9, 1889 indicates that property owners along West had consented to this arrangement. "West Street is sixty-six feet wide, and all the room we want is sixteen feet in the middle, leaving driveways on both sides. The old route [ram's horn] is good enough for us, but the property owners would like to have the blocks straightened. [The request's avoided reason was that some property owners – like Gilmore – were then building directly over the old ram's horn.] By giving us a West Street franchise three railroads [Most likely the *PSS* and the *CPS* have added the *Northern Pacific* to their count] will serve three lines of warehouses; on Railroad Avenue three railroads will serve one line of warehouses." Predictably this request was denied and the council held true to their vision of Railroad Avenue as their only waterfront street to show rails – until Thomas Burke came forward with another successful request. Burke and Gilman's interurban to Ballard, the *West Street and North End Railroad* was incorporated on Dec. 7, 1889 and soon laid track down the center of West from Columbia as far as Denny Way. Burke had the council in his pocket with pay offs that were almost certainly only that "spiritual" mix of homer pride and commanding schmoose.



[165] Post-1889 Fire ruins looking north on Post Alley across Yesler



[166] Looking east across Railroad Ave. to University St. Ramp, ca. 1903



[167] View north through Commission District from roof of Seattle Electric plant at Columbia and Western, ca. 1902.

Madison Street Cable Railway

Besides Burke's chronically troubled trolley to Ballard, another street railway used part of Western Avenue. The *Madison Street Cable Railway* crossed it. The cable cars began their service up First Hill in the summer of 1890. By the end of the year the cable line ran from a turntable just west of Western Avenue to Madison Park on Lake Washington. In the summer of 1909 the turntable figured in William H. Surber's painful discovery of the grade change made during the build up of Madison Street west of First Avenue. Filing a suit for $10,500 in damages against the cable railway's proprietor, the Seattle Electric Company, Surber claimed that while trying to climb aboard a cable car on the turntable he was required to pass between two cars and consequently fell through a hole in the table winding up in a pit nine feet deep. The 74 year old claimed "serious internal injuries [and] loss of the use of his right leg" and was in the hospital for three weeks. **[168]**

A Muckrakers' Attack on Railroad Ave. "Man Traps and Disease-Breeding Piles" 1903

Surber's experience was not so exceptional. There were plenty of hazards and holes on Railroad Avenue, a concern that reached a few local bully pulpits. In 1903 the upscale businessman's *Commonwealth Magazine* made a muckraking campaign out of cleaning up the waterfront in matters of policing, lighting, maintenance of sanitary conditions and "enforcement of municipal ordinances regulating the blockage of streets by the railway cars." The weekly tabloid wanted some of the money being spent on the new Carnegie Library to go towards fixing up the waterfront. In particular the paper decried the "man traps on Railroad Avenue [that] are yet to be guarded by railings and the danger remains so serious, so imminent, that *The Commonwealth* has brought the matter directly to the attention of the Grand Jury . . . That name 'Railroad Avenue' is in North Seattle a grim and ghastly joke. From the foot of Broad Street to the Oriental warehouse [below Blanchard] this 'avenue' is a trestle – just the narrow width of the railroad track. Few know its dizzy danger … And the danger has been doubled at night by the lack of light … Strangers arriving in the city at night, for the first time, grope around in the darkness and splash into the pools of slimy water or slip through the muddy ditches, as they go up and down to avoid climbing over or under the freight cars which are often lined up in tiers at the foot of each street, and often wonder if they have gotten off at some small country town by mistake." **[169]** The *Commonwealth's* muckraking team included Dr. F.W. Carroll, the city's health officer and secretary of the board of sanitation. Carroll's description of the state of solid waste and its handling in Seattle in 1903 is aptly retching. It is also another contribution to our understanding of what we might expect to find beneath or below.

> Three months ago Inspectors Combs and Rheinheart took a boat and attempted an inspection of the waterfront. They penetrated every nook and corner, and putting on old clothes and rubber boots, went under the docks and wharves where the boat would not take them. They found what they were looking for. Under the docks and wharves the stench was something frightful. Old vegetables that had been cast out lay about in disease-breeding piles … the

lodging houses and fruit stands had contributed much to the general filth by casting their refuse and garbage, old clothes and mattresses and all their waste into the recesses below. … The city has no regular system of scavenger wagons. There are a number of Italians who make a business of going around and carrying off the refuse for a consideration, but even these are hard to get at, and seldom come around more than twice a month. The board [of health] has been trying to get the city to build a garbage crematory. The city should have some systematic means of carrying off the filth and garbage either by a system of their own or by a franchise. Nothing was done by the council in answer to these requests except to make excuses about being too hard up and not being able to afford such a move … On First Avenue south there is a dumping ground where garbage is dumped into the Sound by wagonloads. Around this place there are many new factories in the course of construction and some already completed and in operation. From these people have come many complaints against this filthy practice. Under their roofs hundreds of men are daily earning their living and it is not right that they should be exposed to this reeking atmosphere caused by the filthy muck in the waters, nor that they should be forced to run chances of carrying disease-breeding germs to their homes. There had been many cases of typhoid fever among the laborers along the waterfront … There are many ways to remedy these conditions. A sea wall could and ought to be built to keep the tide from washing the refuse from the boats back under the wharves and piling. A garbage crematory should be built to destroy the refuse and thus eliminate the necessity of throwing it into the harbor. There are many other things …"

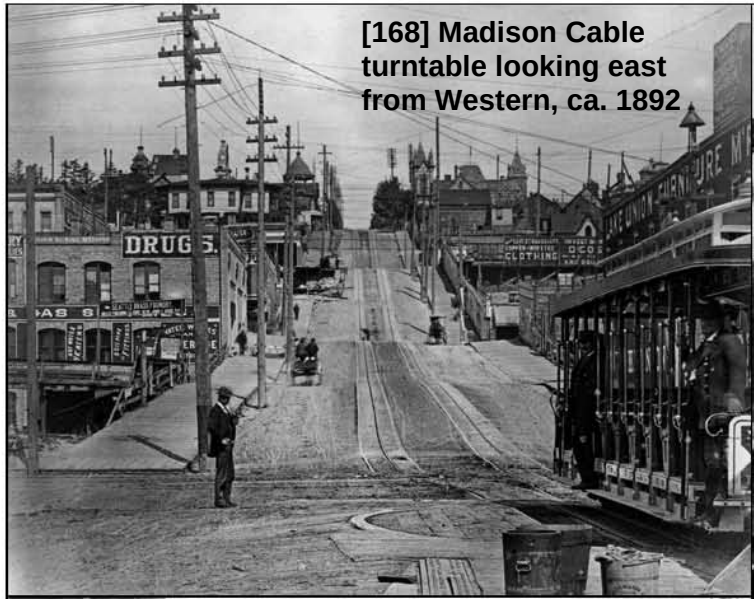
A Little History of the Waste Stream

Among these "many other things" ,moving to Bellevue was not yet an alternative. Except for a few dim bulbs strung above Railroad Avenue at street ends, neither was the package of prescriptions written by the muckraking *Commonwealth* in spite of all its investigative "facts of the matter" and public relations scolding. In 1903 the dangers of crossing Railroad Avenue still could not be transcended. There were as yet no public overpasses and rows of boxcars continued to stand like shutters to the streets. Soon at the north end the danger of falling into a man trap would at least be cushioned once the dirt excavated with the construction of the northern half of the railroad tunnel was distributed along the beach north of Virginia. Without a seawall and permanent fill the dumping of off shore fill might trap the waste behind it from the one cleansing that was available – the tides. Reclaiming the tidelands following the '89 fire had this effect. The 1891 annual report of the Seattle Health Officer to the mayor describes how the dumping by the railroad of "ashes and coal dust under their track had prevented the ebb and flow of the tide thus causing an immense cesspool into which 1,000 people living in the neighborhood [the chronically under-bathed Tenderloin neighborhood beside the King Street trestle] pour their garbage, slop. etc." Even when garbage was dumped off shore the great waste bucket of Elliott Bay returned some of this rubbish to the beaches. Municipal garbage collection did not begin until 1911, when 65 teams and one large auto truck collected an average of 250 tons daily, but not yet from every waste stream. **[170]** By 1914 the city was collecting from every district in the city, and as of that year practically everyone was

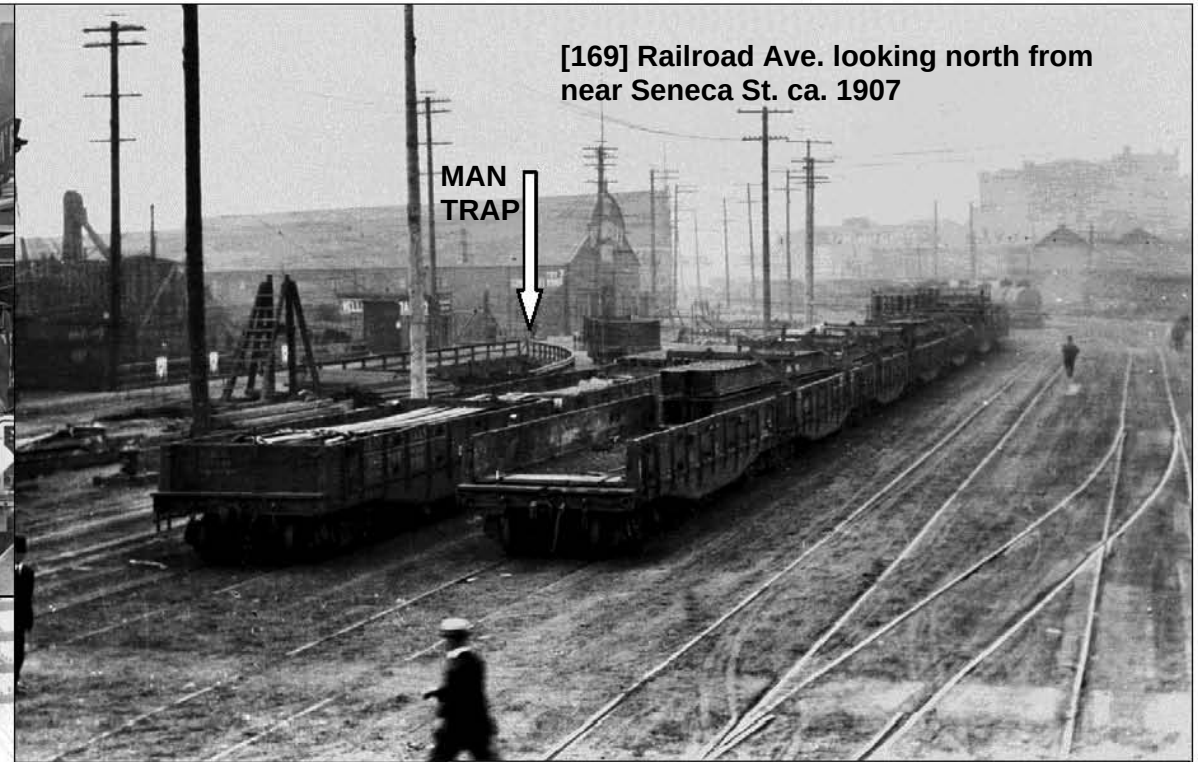
using both garbage cans and this municipal alternative. Landfills for receiving the contributions from the Health Department's wagon were selected about town. A few of these were at Smith Cove, East Green Lake, the southwest corner of Lake Union and also off its northern shore near the foot of Interlaken Avenue. The nine foot lowering of Lake Washington in 1916 exposed many more potential landfills in the sloughs like at the future Genesee Park, and at both the northern and southern shores of Union Bay, below the University and near the Arboretum. (For years this last location was a favorite digging grounds for bottle collectors.) The increasing use of oil burners following the First World War made a considerable dent in the waste stream when coal clinkers were no longer put out with the garbage. But before the municipal collecting -- for the nearly quarter-century of booming growth following the '89 fire -- there was little telling what waste would wind up where. The biggest and most inviting dustbin was the waterfront. (Again, we may be confident that any waterfront excavations like the profound digging that would be made for a waterfront tunnel will call up such a fund of both territorial artifacts and often enough precious industrial junk that perhaps the Museum of History and Industry should have a representative present during the digging.)

Western Avenue Repairs: 1890

We return beneath Western Avenue in the heart of the Commission District to briefly sample from official documents connected with two improvements there, emphasizing the two blocks between Seneca and Union Streets. These descriptions of worn trestles (or wharfs), sub-structures, bulkheads, borrow pits and the rest have still to do with an area that is years from being sealed behind the Seawall that was completed between Madison and Broad Streets in 1936. In the late 1890s LID 198 for the paving of Western Avenue describes the "general character of the work [to] consist of repairing the sub-structure of the existing bridge or wharf in said section [between Seneca and Union] of said avenue [Western] by cutting off and renewing with 10x10 inch posts to the tops of about 200 defective piles, but placing or replacing thereon such caps and stringers as may be directed, using such of the existing caps and stingers as are acceptable, and completing the work with new lumber, by replanking the roadway with five inch fir planking … and also by construction or reconstruction of sidewalks ten feet in width along both sides of said roadway." From this description is seems that a decade after its post-fire construction, Western in its offshore part of this two block section is still built above pilings although defective ones. The alternative terms used for it "bridge or wharf" express its ambiguity of type. The "general" description continues, however, with references to fill and a bulkhead "about 150 feet south of Union Street where sufficient embankment shall be made to bring the surface to the necessary sub-grade for planking, upon and in which the stringers shall be laid and bedded and the planking laid thereon with sidewalks on both sides." This short section immediately south of Union Street covers the on-shore portion of this section, for the meander line slants across Western between Union and University Streets. This is the part not touched by the tides. On May 19, 1899, Burke and Gilman's West Street and North End trolley gave their consent to the city engineer to direct the contractor to work to the limit of the company's rails that ran along the center of Western. For the contractor, the city warns that for "clearing and grubbing no old lumber or debris of any kind will be allowed to be dumped into the bay or deposited upon any streets or alleys, or upon any private property except by consent of



[168] Madison Cable turntable looking east from Western, ca. 1892



[169] Railroad Ave. looking north from near Seneca St. ca. 1907

[171] WESTERN Ave. south from University Street Ramp, ca.1904

[170]
Municipal garbage scows ca.1913

the owner of the same." On "sub-grading … the contractor will be required to find his own borrow pits for all earth required to be furnished in excess of the excavation within the limits of the improvements. No blue clay or other objectionable earth will be allowed used." While at the time a list of "other objectionable earth[s]" may have been in the contractor's pocket, by contemporary environmental standards both the sufficiency of an owner's permission for dumping "debris of any kind" and the anonymity of borrow pits will seem lax. In sum, there is little telling what might be found behind the seawalls.

Western Avenue South from the University Street Ramp - 1904

Judging by the negative number, someone from the prolific studio of Asahel Curtis took the accompanying photograph a few days before April Fools Day 1904. **[171]** The view looks south from the University Street ramp down the centerline of Western Avenue. While the photograph does not indicate why it was recorded, it is evidence of the conditions on Western a few weeks – or even days – before the planks were pulled up and the pilings below the street buried in fill. As just noted, these street planks date from 1899, and five years is about their life expectancy under the routine weight of loaded wagons serving the commission district. The line of corrugated sheds on the left were placed there soon after the '89 fire – some of them by David Gilmore - and survived another five years before they were removed, the lots filled to grade and new brick warehouses built in their place. The engineer's profile of the fill on Western shows an embankment with steep sloping sides indicating that through much of its course there was as yet no fill to either side of Western. These holes would have been hidden under planks or below buildings without basements that were themselves built above piles like the sheds shown here.

Western & Post Fill – 1910

In 1910 the city returned to Western Avenue approving emergency ordinance 25513 that reads, in part, "Whereas the present conditions on Western Avenue from Seneca Street to Virginia street is in an almost impassable state … the city may proceed with the improvement … by planking one side [to the west of the trolley tracks] thereof." More revealing, and at about the same time, Post Street got its own fill. The language of LID 2572 describes some of the techniques then used to set fill. "All filling on his improvement shall be made with material consisting of enough sand and gravel or cinders suitable for a solid foundation when tamped or water settled. The filing shall be spread in layers one foot in thickness, and each layer thoroughly rolled and compacted to the satisfaction of the City Engineer, with a steamroller weighing not less than ten tons. Portions inaccessible to the roller shall be thoroughly tamped with a rammer ten inches in diameter and weighting not less than forty pounds."

On Sept. 12, 1913, City Engineer A. M. Dimock wrote a revealing letter to the department of Streets and Sewers describing the depth of the fill on Post – from 8 to 14 feet deep – and the reasons it had taken so long to pave the block between Seneca and University following the fill. "Time needed to lapse for such a fill to be safe for paving … Also within the last three years there has been considerable uncertainty as to what improvements would be placed in Post Street or over Post Street and the surrounding vicinity, the principal question under consideration for some time being the placing of

railroad tracks within the limits of Post Street." Dimock's rails of 1913 are certainly not about the ram's horn rising again but rather refer to a proposed spur to service the basements of the hotels facing First Avenue and the new & improved buildings squeezed between Post and Western. The accompanying view of Post Street (or Alley) looks north from the Marion Street Overpass (to Colman Dock) on May 23, 1912. **[172]** (It is a point of view blocked in 1930 with the building of the Federal Building over the alley between Marion and Madison.) The narrow Post is here congested with a mix of teams and trucks but no tracks. This section of Post – for one and a half blocks north of Marion – was also the pre-fire right-of-way for the ram's horn, the part of it that was closest to shore.

Railroad Avenue in the 1890s: Adding tracks & Width.

In the weeks following the "Great Fire" Mayor Moran and the council fidgeted with the width of Railroad Avenue, and these alterations would continue throughout the 1890s and into the first years of the 20th Century as the "street for trains" widened through its business district belly from one track – with two tracks for the first primitive yard – to eight and nine tracks. This growth can be followed with the help of several photographs, maps and birdseyes – especially the 1891 Birdseye shown here in its section from the West Seattle Ferry slip on the far right to the foot of Pike Street on the far left. **[173 & 174]** Much is revealed in the artist's ambition to cartoon the entire city. The University Street trestle extends from First Avenue [still Front Street in the birdseye] to Railroad Ave at the center of this slice of the central waterfront. David Gilmore's Arlington Hotel (and its heroic foundation) rises above the southwest corner of First and the trestle. (Anyone who has a local memory that reaches the 1960s will remember the Bay Building – its last incarnation – with its ornate brick work, seedy shops, bars and peep holes. This was then the expiring center of First Avenue as "Flesh Avenue." The built environment there – often down-and-out and, since the construction of the viaduct, not so attached to the waterfront – was one of architect-preservationist Victor Steinbrueck's late heritage interests.) Kitty-corner across First Avenue, Arthur and Mary Denny's pioneer orchard survives as the greater neighborhood's one remaining pastoral feature, and their home at Union Street is also evident. Between Western and Post Avenues, the same sheds are featured that A. Curtis records in the 1904 photograph shared above.

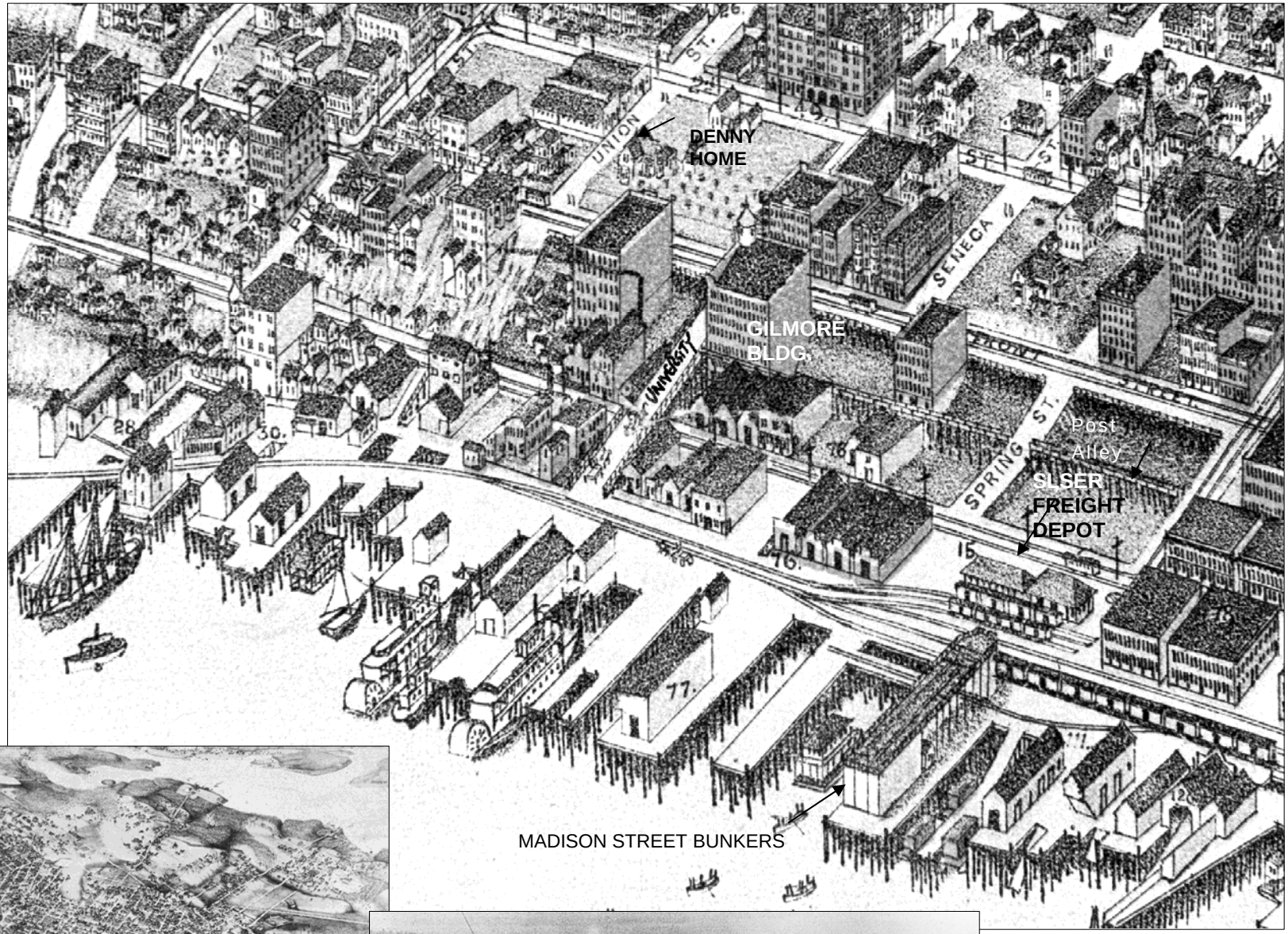
In the '91 birdseye the docks along the waterfront are still arranged like a bad comb. They are generally stubby and with the exception of the funnel shaped approaches for the West Seattle ferry, bottom right, are built at right angles to Railroad Avenue and so in conformity with the city grid. Within two years the irregularity of these piers and sheds will "shape-up" on the side that faces Railroad Avenue in order to accept more tracks. Here, at the base of the University ramp only two tracks pass. By 1893 there would be two more. As an intimation of what is to come, in the block between Madison and Spring Streets are seven tracks – three are short spurs to the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Freight Station (#15 in the map's own numbering), and one track continues two blocks south to the SLSE passenger depot at Columbia (not shown in this detail). Bravely two more tracks continue south to the confusion of rails and right-of-way rights on the Oregon Improvement Company side of Yesler Way. The seventh rail is a spur that passes below the Seattle Coal and Iron Company's big bunker at the foot of Madison

[172]

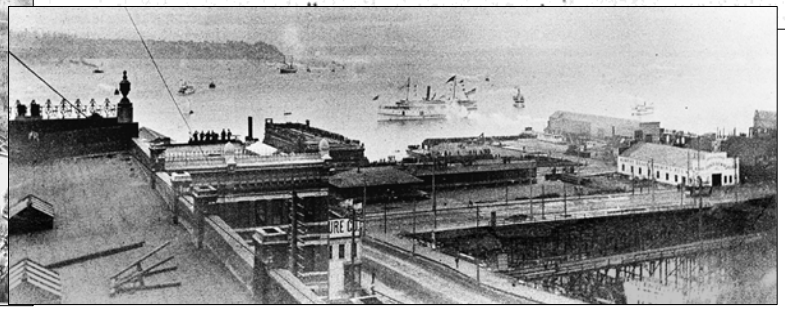
Post Street
looking North from Marion St. (On Bridge) 5-23-12.

[174]
Central Waterfront Detail from 1891 Birdseye of Seattle.

Extends from Marion Street on the right to Pine Street on the left.



[173]
1891 BIRDSEYE of SEATTLE



[175] Pres. Harrison's 1891 visit to Seattle recorded from rooftop near First & Madison. Note Post Alley & Western Avenues on pilings, lower right corner.

Street. (Today it would cross over Alaskan Way, plough through Ivar's sidewalk dining shed attached to his fish bar and plop or rather pile drive its outer end in the slip between Ivar's Pier 54 and the Fire Station # 5 taking with it a little bit of each but not disturbing the diners at the Acres of Clams except for those at the cocktail bar that is directly west of the fish bar.) The length of the bunkers would be soon shortened at the Railroad Avenue or east end in order to make room for the added tracks just described. In place of this lost section the coal company built a trestle (not for pedestrians) over the tracks connecting to a spur beside the SLSE depot. When the bunkers were dismantled in the early 20th century for the construction of the Northern Pacific's piers north of Madison Street, the section of the bunkers on the east side of Railroad Avenue survived for a short time.

Among its many features, the '91 birdseye reveals a few that will be familiar to those who have read this far. The tall ship on the far left rests in line with the paired warehouses that were cut at the waist and separated for the convenient passage of the Seattle Lake Shore Trestle in 1887. Here the railroad still passes between them. The rough condition of the steep Union Street Wagon road ascending to Front Street from Western is pictured although it can hardly be distinguished from the short section of precipitous bluff that was then still to the north of it. (But who can blame the artist for not making a fine point of this? However, we may question how he missed that the shoreline takes a slight turn to the west north on Union.) The little bridge that continues Union Street west to the Schwabacher's wharf was built soon after the fire by the wholesalers themselves in order to more easily move the cargo and building supplies off of their crowded dock. Just north (left) of the Seattle Coal bunkers is the floating home of Clark and Bartette Boat House and the scattering of small boats in the bay directly beyond it are an indication that this day's rentals are going well.

Pres. Benj. Harrison 1891 Visit & Exposed Trestle Work on Post and Western.

A rare but rough photograph recorded from a rooftop on First Avenue looks across the waterfront at the foot of Madison Street towards the steamer The City of Seattle at about 1:20 on the afternoon of May 6, 1891. **[175]** On board is Benjamin Harrison, the second president to visit Seattle. The photograph shows both the coal bunker and the SLSE station, and at its lower right corner, the exposed trestlework of Post Street and that of Western Avenue as well. This section of trestle on Post north of Madison Street is also easily found near the right border of the detail taken from the 1891 birdseye view of Seattle. There Post goes no further than the University Street ramp. Later Post would be extended north to Pike Place. But neither does Pike Place appear in the birdseye view, which shows Pike Street descending directly west of Front Street to Western Avenue at a grade probably only a few risked. Included in the drawing among the little homes bunched together to the north of Pike and west of Western is, we know, one belonging to Chief Seattle's daughter, Princess Angeline. (She would continue to live there until her death in 1896.) To the right of the homes and across Pike Street is the Miner Hotel. The relatively tall structure with a corner tower was for many years an identifying landmark at the southwest corner of Pike and Western. Above it is another hotel, the Ripley Hotel (AKA York Hotel) at the northwest corner of Pike and First Avenue. As we repeat below this is one of the few

large structures lost to the 1903-05 construction of the railroad tunnel. Passing directly beneath the hotel the tunneling upset its foundation.

Ripley Hotel, 1st & Pike: For Comparison, Two Views of Changes on Railroad Avenue.

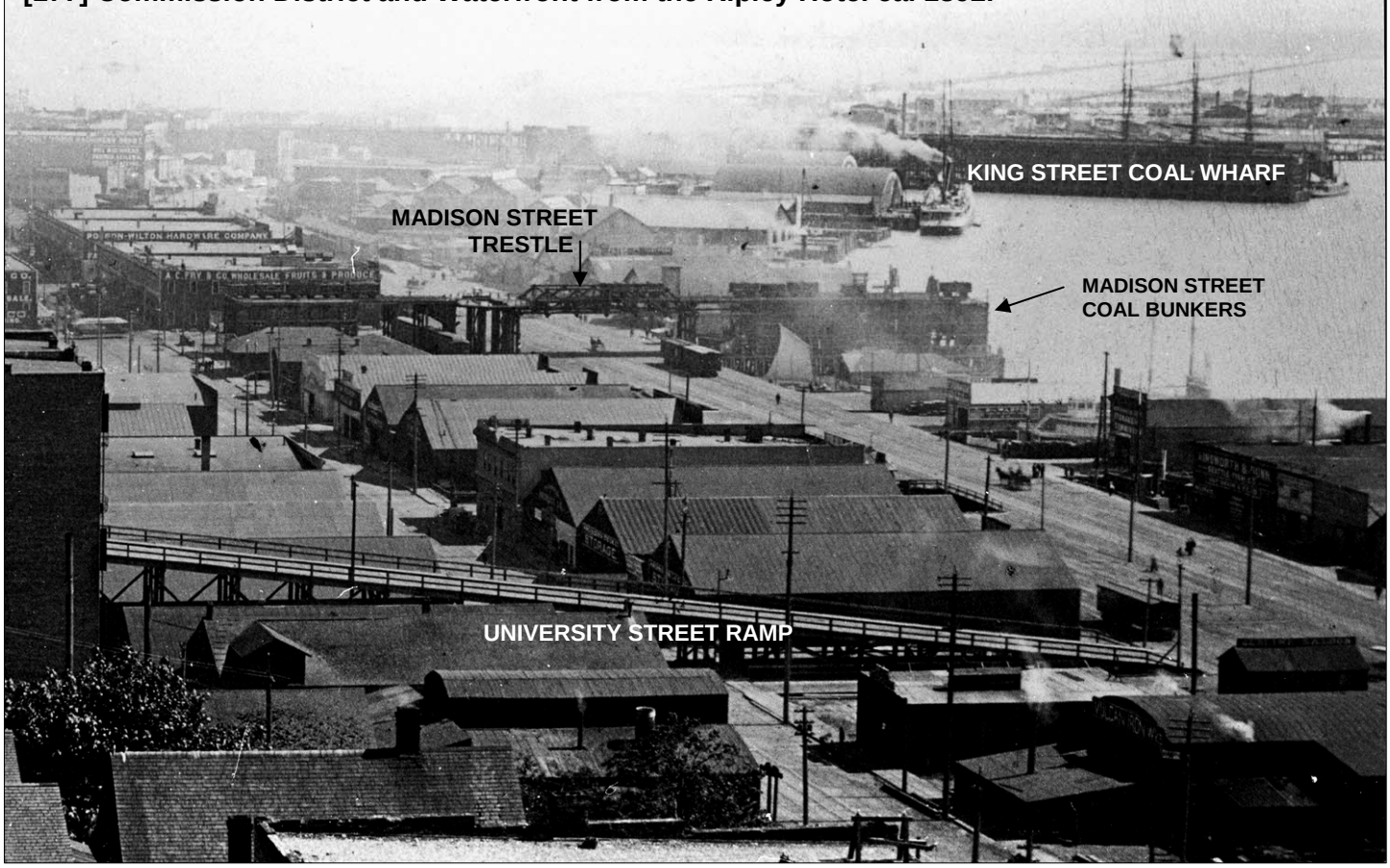
Planned before the 89' fire and built soon after it, the Ripley Hotel was a preferred prospect from which to look out on the reconstruction of the city and the waterfront. The two views printed here were recorded from within inches of each other, and when compared reveal along Railroad Avenue the widening that occurred in the early 1890s – the widening referred to above. **[176 & 177]** The dark mass of the Seattle Coal and Iron Company's bunkers stand right of center in both views. Which of the two scenes is the latest is obvious. The scene that shows the greater width or reach on Railroad Avenue is the newer one by, perhaps, a year and a few months. Also in the later or newer view, the coal bunkers make a different mark on Railroad Avenue. The eastern end of the bunkers that intrudes onto the avenue in the earlier view has been removed and replaced with the viaduct described above. The architecturally typical railroad station rooflines of the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* Freight terminal can be seen directly across the avenue from the bunkers at the eastern (left) end of the trestle. Compared to their ragged presentation in the slightly older scene, the later record shows how the line-up of both the pier sheds and the slips between the wharfs has been regularized along the western border of Railroad Avenue. Both views also show the list of post-fire familiars including the University Way trestle, the first post-fire commission district warehouses between Post Street and Railroad Avenue and, in the distance, the long extension of the King Street Coal Wharf. One pre-fire survivor that was included in the post-fire ruins, the roofline of the Allman and Phillips Foundry appears here directly to the photograph's side of the University Street ramp just before the ramp disappears behind the multi-story structure on the left. The foundry's street location is at the northeast corner of University (lower level below the ramp) and Post.

The *Northern Pacific* and the *Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern* as Bedfellows - 1890

Riding his own private car – compete with darkroom – F. J. Haynes, the *Northern Pacific's* official photographer, visited Seattle in the summer of 1890. The call was nearly proprietary for that July the *Northern Pacific* bought a majority interest in the still struggling *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern*. Included in Haynes album of his Seattle visit are a few shots of sites connected with the *SLSE* to show to *NP* President Thomas Oakes and Chairman Henry Villard. Villard was back. Predictably, Thomas Burke who was now riding in James Hill's tender was upset. To quote Burke (again from Armbruster p.127) "The city council should be on their guard … The *Northern Pacific* is going to make a last desperate effort to obstruct the *Great Northern* along the city front . . . and the city council to a man should stand like sentinels on guard to prevent the *Northern Pacific* from carrying out its purposes." As it was explained, "Seattle's friend" the revived Henry Villard and his Oregon Improvement Company was behind the acquisition, although it was the *NP* that had secured it and would in time take control. The *P-I* turned this irony on its head. "The *Northern Pacific* has treated the little road with contempt, heaping ridicule upon it, sneered at it as a 'paper road' and a line 'built of wind,' and

[176] View from RIPLEY HOTEL at northwest corner of First and Pike looking south towards Commission District and waterfront ca. 1891

[177] Commission District and Waterfront from the Ripley Hotel ca. 1892.

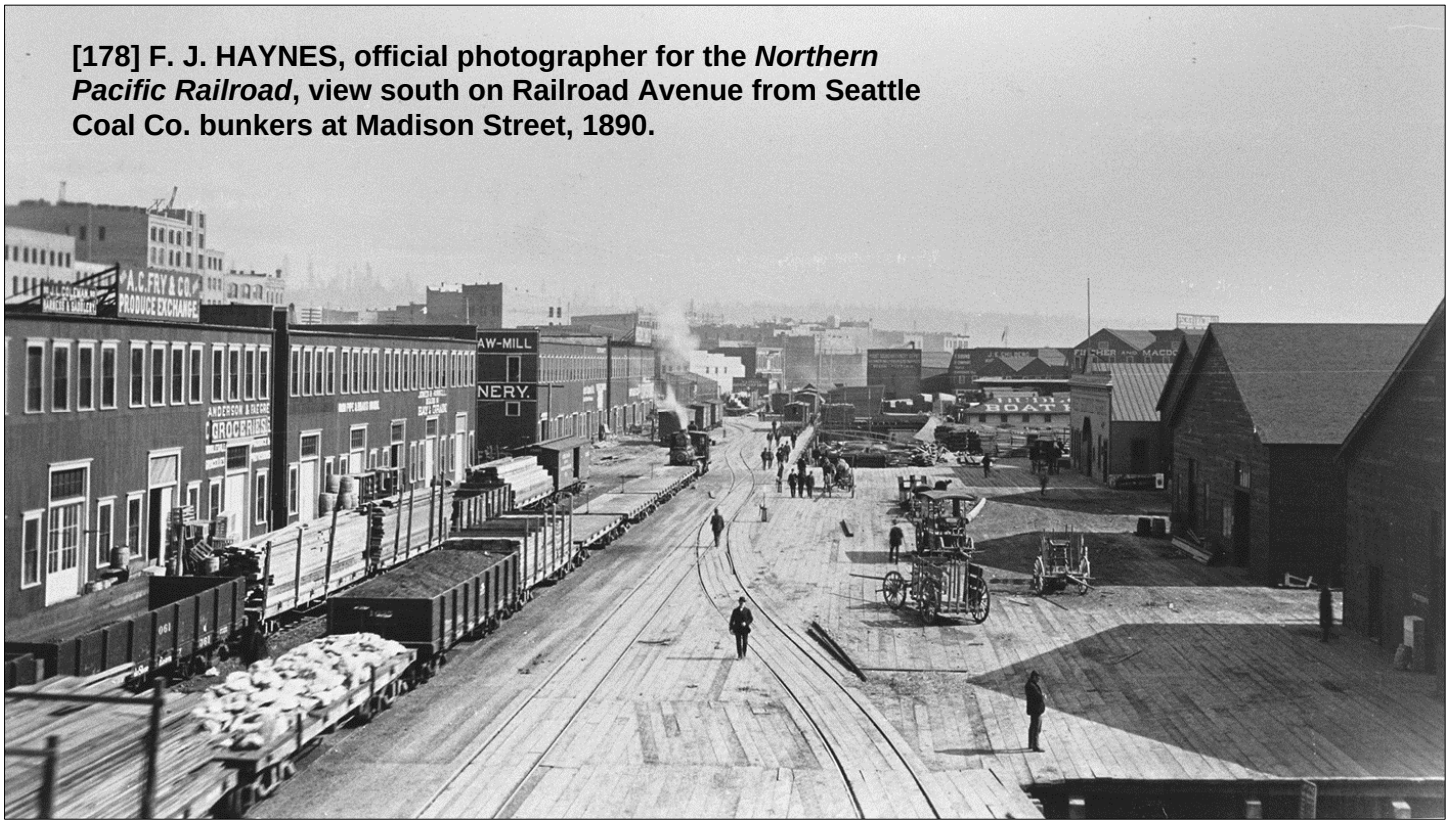


after all, it has become the pivotal point in railroading on Puget Sound. The *NP* seeks to control it, realizing its power." And this, of course, included its founding franchise on Railroad Avenue. It soon developed in the first post-fire years before the "panic" of 1893 that the *NP* did what Burke could not do; it pushed the *SLSE* north to Sumas, arriving at the Canadian border on April 13, 1891. And, as Armbruster points out, it opened a rail connection to the lumber towns along the way. "Each mill sent out from six to twenty carloads a day, and, by summer daily freight and passenger trains were needed to handle local traffic alone." (The towns along the SLSE inland line – Snohomish, Machias, Arlington, Wooley, Edgecomb, Springfield, Wickersham – the SLSE served, some with short spurs, were the "third line" of logging production and much the greatest. The first forests were harvested near tidewater, the second up waterways and short company spurs, and the third far inland by independent railroads.)

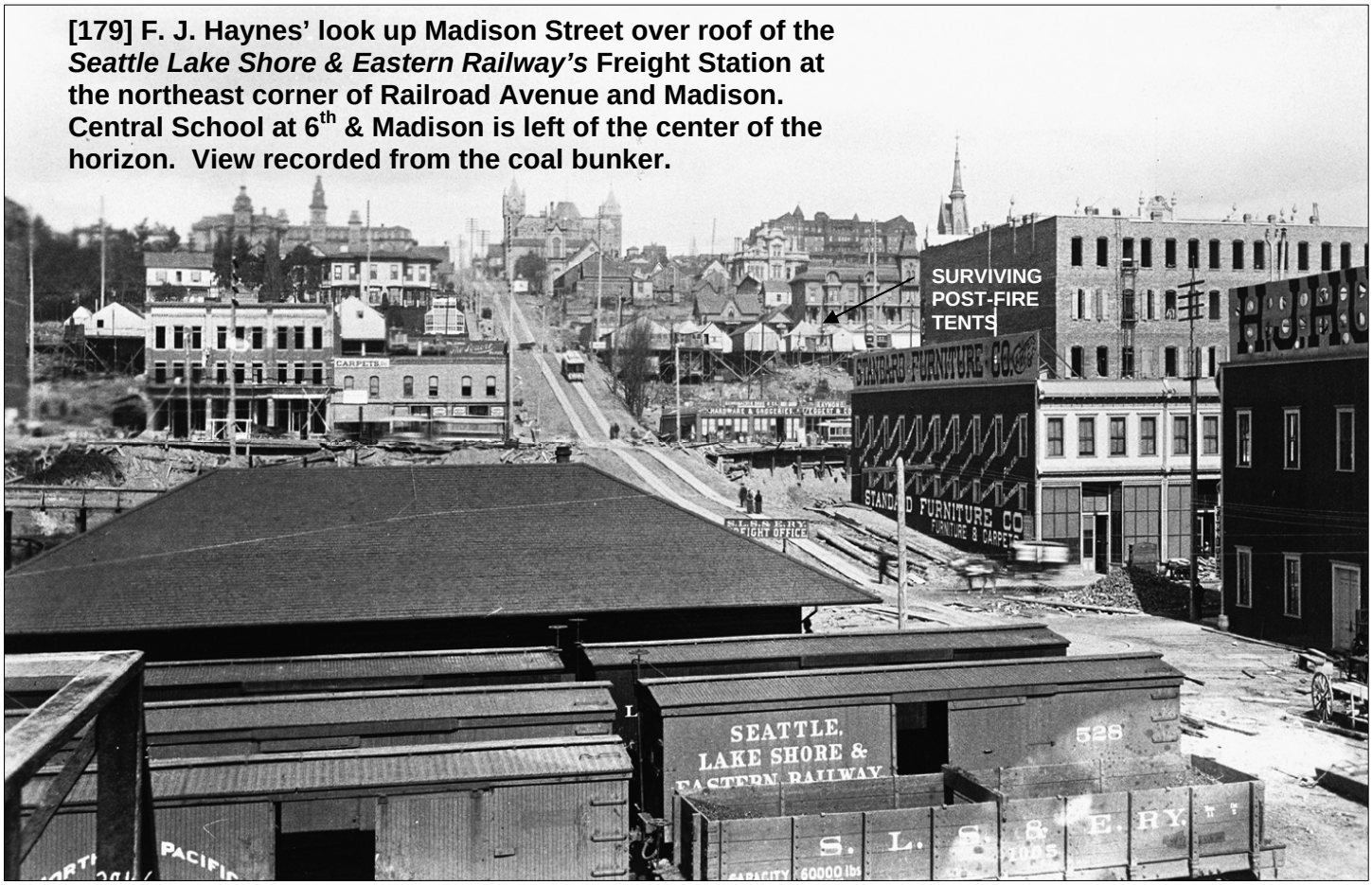
F. J. Haynes Views of the Waterfront & Railroad Ave. -1890

For two of his impressions of Railroad Avenue, Haynes climbed above it to the eastern end of the Seattle Coal bunkers a few feet north of the foot of Madison Street. The dark bunkers can be found in the accompanying panorama of Seattle that Haynes recorded from off shore – although not easily. They are directly left of the foot of Madison. For one of the surviving photographs that Haynes took from the bunker, he looked south on Railroad Avenue towards its turn at Washington Street four blocks away. **[178]** Commission district warehouses line the east or left side of Railroad Avenue and a still irregular row of pier sheds line the west border. The West Seattle Ferry terminal is also evident – its signed façade supports a flag pole that tops the horizon – and just beyond it is Budlong Boathouse near the waterfront foot of Columbia Street. The reader may remember that this boathouse was already on the waterfront before the fire. Apparently it was saved from it by a tow into Elliott Bay. A few piles of building materials cover the still trackless part of RR Ave. in front of the ferry depot. In front of the boathouse and mostly hidden behind the piles is a still unplanked and open section of the trestle. It is a sizeable "man trap." Since Haynes recorded this photograph in 1890 when the artist of the 1891 Birdseye was probably researching his drawing it is not surprising that they match in many parts including the number of rails on Railroad Avenue.

For the second of the elevated "bunker shots", Haynes made a left turn with his camera to look over the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad* Terminal and up Madison Street. **[179]** In a timely tableau, rolling stock of the *SLSE* and the *NP* are coupled below him. Left of center a Madison Street Cable Car climbs the steep block between First and Second Avenues. On this nearly new street railway, the next block between Second and Third Avenues had the reputation as the second steepest in the industry. (One short part of a San Francisco Cable had a slightly steeper grade.) An examination of the towered landmarks on First Hill can be compared with how they appear in Haynes' offshore panorama. In both, Central School is the largest structure on the horizon. It fills the block bordered by Madison, Marion, Sixth and Seventh Avenues. Since the early 1960s (when the last surviving section of the red brick landmark was razed) this site of Seattle's first dedicated high school has been part of the I-5 ditch. The central tower of Providence Hospital on the left facing 5th Avenue between Madison and Spring streets (now the



[178] F. J. HAYNES, official photographer for the *Northern Pacific Railroad*, view south on Railroad Avenue from Seattle Coal Co. bunkers at Madison Street, 1890.



[179] F. J. Haynes' look up Madison Street over roof of the *Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Railway's* Freight Station at the northeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Madison. Central School at 6th & Madison is left of the center of the horizon. View recorded from the coal bunker.

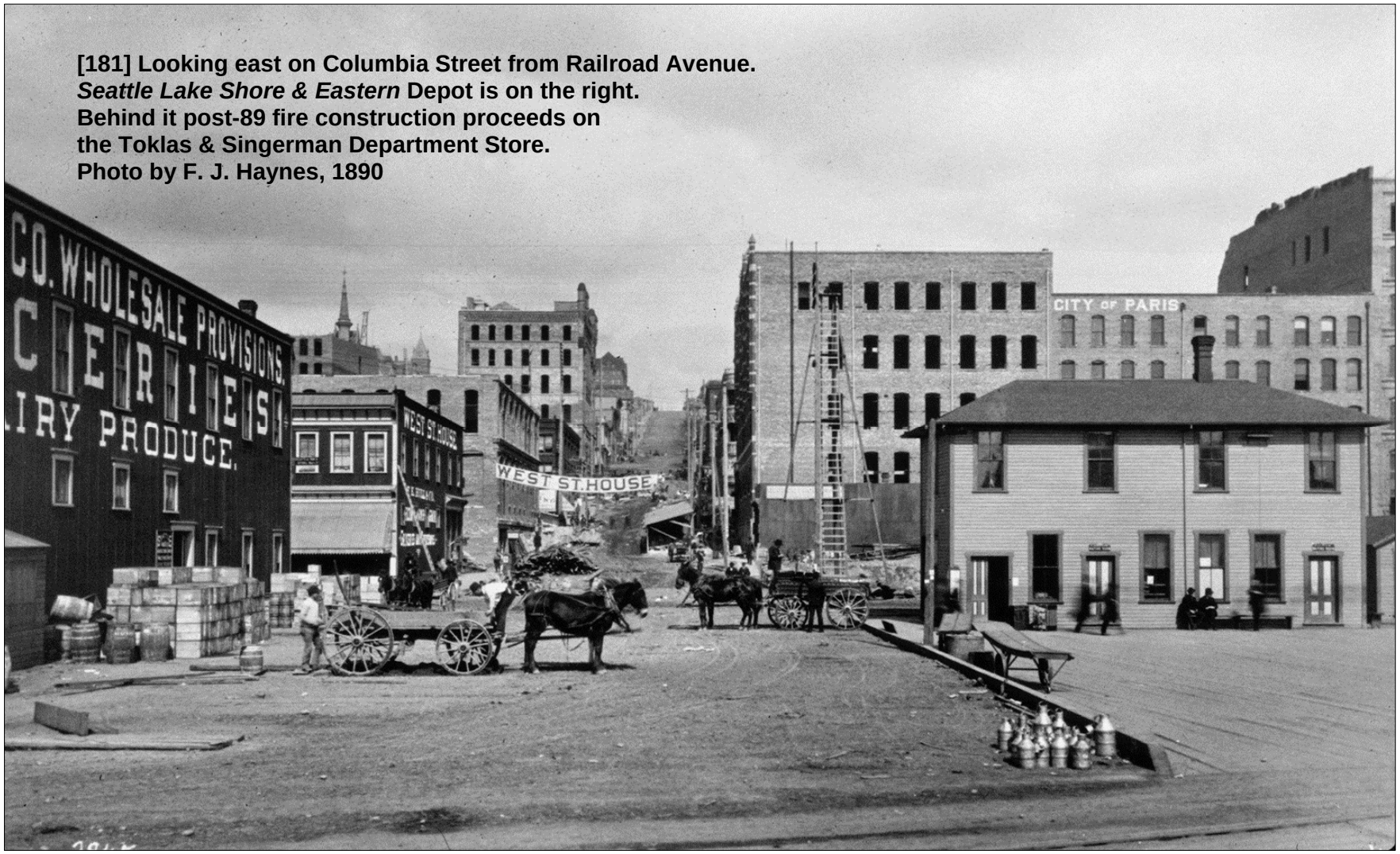
Federal Courthouse block) can also be easily discovered in both views. Even a year after the Great Fire, some of the better temporary tents built on platforms along the west side of Second Avenue survive until the lots they hold are claimed by their owners – some of them doing business in the tents – for development.

The offshore panorama extends from Pike Street on the left to Columbia Street on the right. **[180]** The Ripley Hotel, at the northwest corner of First and Pike, breaks the horizon on the far left – a witness to why it was the prospect of choice for the two post-fire photographs compared above. One block south (to the right) the rough way of the Union Street wagon road descends from First Avenue. One block more and to the left of Gilmore's Arlington Hotel, the University Way viaduct is not yet in place. Rising seven stories above Post Alley, the hotel is the largest structure left-of-center – its small pointed tower on the opposite corner barely cuts the horizon. The Territorial University building also touches the sky at 4th and Seneca, very near the center of the panorama. (This view is a wider version of #142. It may be compared to those shown near the top of this chronicle by Robinson in 1869, #52, and the Petersons in 1878, no.53.) Here, as in the view where the railroad's photographer stood above the SLSE depot on Madison, many of the larger brick buildings built after the fire to either side of Madison are still works in progress. Practically all this new construction is happening in the burned district to the waterfront side of Second Avenue. Most of these works-in-progress show their bare and unornamented backsides to the bay and many have not yet been glazed.

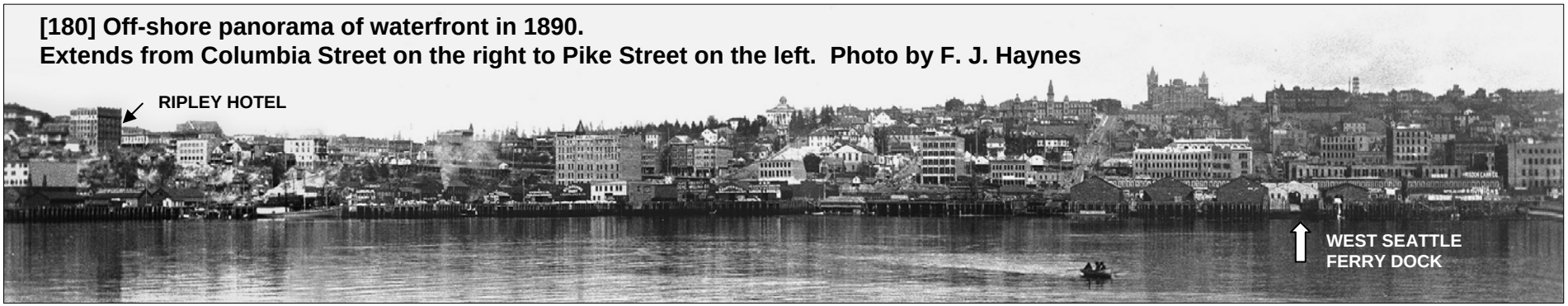
Directly on the waterfront – as shown in the Haynes panorama – the fourth pier shed to the right of Madison Street is the rear of the West Seattle Ferry terminal. The dark warehouse to the right (south) of the ferry slip may have been constructed of the building materials that were shown piled south of the ferry terminal in Haynes view of Railroad Avenue from the coalbunker at the foot of Madison. There is no shed directly south of the Ferry terminal in that view. Consequently, the offshore panorama was exposed some time after the two photographs recorded from the bunkers – long enough to build the shed. A final point about the panorama is that the Budlong Boathouse, that was seen in the earlier view from the bunkers to the south of the West Seattle Ferry has, it appears, here moved three blocks north to the foot of Spring Street. (At least, at this writing the floating structure resting along the outside pilings supporting Railroad Avenue looks very much like the Budlong Boathouse although the name seems to have been erased from the roof. Although there were many valiant tries at composing a harbor – private or public – for recreational boating on the central waterfront it has been a fitful story well stocked with nearly as many erasures as fresh scribbles.)

Railroad Depots on RR-Ave.

During Haynes' 1890 visit, he also photographed the nearly new *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* passenger depot at the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Columbia Street. **[181]** The relatively brief history of depots on Railroad Avenue is a tangle of temporary quarters and frequent doubling-ups. While there were several depot sites eventually most of the railroads found their way to this Columbia Street apron during its 16 years of service. (This was also the location of the pre-fire *SLSE* depot constructed in 1887 and shown earlier moments before it was engulfed by the '89 fire.)



[181] Looking east on Columbia Street from Railroad Avenue.
***Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern* Depot is on the right.**
Behind it post-89 fire construction proceeds on
the Toklas & Singerman Department Store.
Photo by F. J. Haynes, 1890



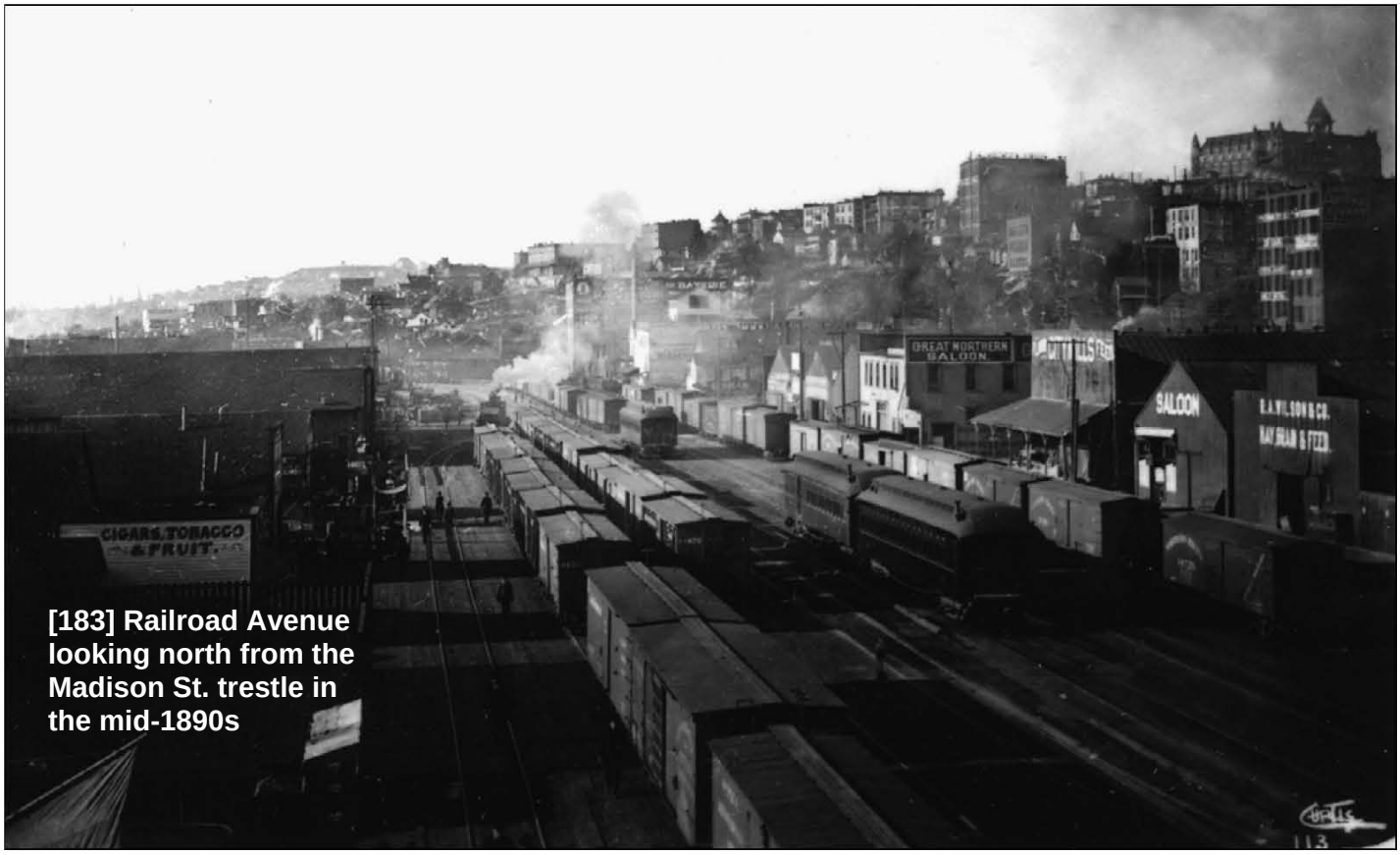
[180] Off-shore panorama of waterfront in 1890.
Extends from Columbia Street on the right to Pike Street on the left. Photo by F. J. Haynes

Passengers boarded trains here until 1905 when with the completion of the tunnel the new Union Depot was opened on King Street. In 1892, when the *NP* started to manage the *SLSE* (and not merely own most of it), this modest two-story clapboard structure became the *NP's* depot as well. When the Great Northern arrived in 1893, it located first in a glorified shed at the foot of Marion Street. (This was when James Hill, leaning on the maxim about the "wise farmer" recounted above, explained to the locals that they would have to wait a while for their railroad palace.) In 1896 the *Great Northern* abandoned its little depot next to the West Seattle Ferry terminal and joined the Seattle and International (a new name for the old *SLSE*) at the Columbia Street Depot. When James Hill and the bankers were in control of both the *GN* and the *NP,* this depot at Columbia Street was developed into a sprawling concoction that nearly filled the block between Columbia Street and Yesler Way. (In its make-shift growth during the city's same post-fire boom years, the depot was a kind of Railroad Avenue version of the Katzenjammer Kastle, the add-on Seattle City Hall that resembled the architectural thingamabobs featured in the popular comic strip of the same name.) Since the *Northern Pacific's* 1899 attempt to build a grand depot on Railroad Avenue – recounted above – was rejected by the council, this long shed with a big covered porch was the best that the mighty transcontinental railroads could offer before they moved to King Street. (On the south side of Yesler, the *Pacific Coast Railroad* built for itself a brick depot in 1903, although it too was short-lived.) After the railroads abandoned it for the "palace" on King Street, the concoction at Columbia continued to give the odd service to Railroad Avenue until 1910, when it was razed. A March 31 *P-I* report of that year noted that the old depot block was the "last of its type. It is the only shack on lower Western Avenue not demolished … The purchasers will erect a six story building [The Paulson Building] on the property at once … Everyone of the old buildings on Western Avenue from Yesler Way to Seneca Street will soon be a thing of the past … All the buildings that have been erected on the street are modern." [see #160]

Independence Day, 1895, the *D.H. Gilman*

As it is faintly scribbled on the planks of Railroad Avenue, the accompanying patriotic pose by the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* Railway's engine No. 2, the D. H. Gilman, was photographed on Independence Day 1895. **[182]** (The photographers, Kinsey and Kinsey, are best remembered for their prolific coverage of logging camps.) The train waits for its riders to return from the day's celebrations. Reporting on that Thursday the 4th, the *Seattle Times* noted that the streets were crowded for the grand parade of bands, marching units, unions like the locals for Seamen and the Newsboys, fraternal and heritage orders like the Swedish Club, the Salvation Army and "about 40 floats." Early in the day, in spite of the rain, "the waterfront was a lively place" as bands serenaded the visitors – many of them from Canada – who came for the day by steamer and, no doubt, this and other trains. The day's *Times* editorial reminded its readers that American liberties were prepared by English common law, although many of the English had been "ignorant of what they were, a condition in which the aristocracy and the clergy combined to keep them." Once the visitors were safely back in their coaches, Engine No. 2 required about six hours to reach Sumas at the international border. The engine was named the *D.H. Gilman*, we know as one of the founders of the railroad. Historian Robert Nesbit described Gilman as "a shoestring operator with a talent for keeping up

[182]
Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad
Engine the *D. H. Gilman* at the foot of Madison Street, July 4, 1895



[183] Railroad Avenue looking north from the Madison St. trestle in the mid-1890s

appearances among moneyed people." In this line, in spite of its festooned engine for the nation's 119th Independence Day, this railroad was not celebrating much in 1895. Still feeling the effects of the national panic of 1893, its total third quarter income was a paltry $623.17. A year later the *SLSE* was foreclosed and reorganized as the *Seattle and International*. It was also in 1895 that a 60-year-old Mark Twain visited all the principal lecture halls of Puget Sound – including the Seattle Theatre – while on a world tour calculated to lift him from debt. And it is from this visit that legend has him later recalling "The pleasantest winter I ever spent was a summer on Puget Sound." The scene looks south from Madison Street, and when compared to Haynes' elevated record of the same stretch in 1890, it is clear that a few tracks have been added.

Railroad Avenue from the Madison Street Coal Trestle in the late 1890s: by Curtis or Curtis - perhaps

More evidence of how straight off the post-fire city grew in spite of the economic troubles of 1893 is revealed in the accompanying photograph. **[183]** Like Haynes' view, [no.178] this one is also photographed from the coal installation at the foot of Madison Street, but it looks in the opposite direction – to the north. Also this scene was photographed not from the bunkers but from the trestle that was built around 1892 to connect them with the freight depot. Here at some only moderately busy moment during the gold rush, the eight tracks of RR Avenue – in this section – still suggest the dangerous hindrance that many found so offending both of legal statute and "reasonable behavior." For instance, should someone watering in the saloon marked on the east side of RR Avenue (to the right) wish to cross it to purchase an apple at the cigar and fruit stand marked on the left or west side of the avenue she might risk a limb. The coal trestle was not an option. The warehouses and beer houses on the right are still those constructed following the fire. Above the prominent sign for the Great Northern Saloon, the Ripley Hotel at First Avenue and Pike Street still stands overlooking the waterfront. Hunkering in the photographs upper-right hand corner the landmark Denny Hotel holds the top of Denny Hill. Even before the shell of this big hotel was completed in the early 1890s, its investors began a protracted quarrel and the landmark stood above the city empty like a haunted castle from a Gothic romance until it was purchased, furnished and finally opened in 1903 for its first guest, Theodore Roosevelt. (Although this photograph is signed "Curtis" at the bottom right corner we cannot be certain that either of the Curtis brothers – Edward or Asahel – actually recorded it. In spite of the rich contribution of both, the brothers had a practice of purchasing and "borrowing" the work of others – independently. After Asahel returned from the Alaska Gold Rush expecting that the glass negatives he had sent back for Edward to print and sell were his, he discovered that his older brother considered them the property of his studio and not Asahel's. Perhaps understandably, the younger brother walked out, and the two apparently never spoke again although both lived long lives. Of course, the younger brother's commercial and editorial photography is more helpful in the study of regional history than is the older brother's better known and much higher priced romantic impressions of the Native Americans.)

Competing Transportation: Rails & The Mosquito Fleet

Increasingly the railroads extended into areas not reached by waterways and the flat bottom sternwheelers that cautiously explored them. But the

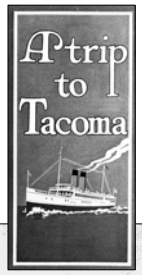
tide of immigration following the arrival of the transcontinentals (beginning with the *Northern Pacific* in 1883) was such that in spite of how quickly the web of rails crossed the hinterlands, the railroads could not keep up with developments even along the shores of Puget Sound. Consequently, while the railroads became increasingly, needed so was the "Mosquito Fleet" of mostly small steamers that served the shore side communities. The Nov. 27, 1891 completion of the *Seattle and Montana Railroad* north to Vancouver through Edmonds, Everett (then still called Port Gardner), Marysville, Mount Vernon and many other smaller towns on the coast, cut into the business of water transportation considerably more than the completion less than a year earlier of the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* inland route. It did not, however, come close to killing it. Similarly the even earlier regular rail service between Seattle and Tacoma only nicked the steamer service between them. After its introduction in 1892 the *Flyer* became the stalwart symbol of this service.

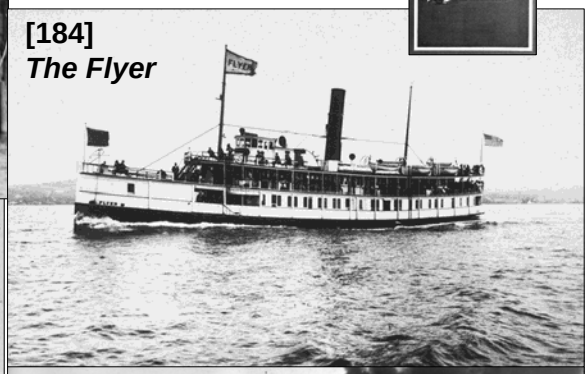
"Fly on the *Flyer*"

"Fly on the *Flyer*" was one of the better-known slogans on Puget Sound, and expressed well the Flyer's reputation for speed. **[184]** Ultimately, the ship's statistics became the stuff of annotated postcards. The *Flyer's* running time of 1 hour and 40 minutes for the 28-mile cruise between Seattle and Tacoma was so predictable that housewives along the way are said to have set their clocks by her trips. The *Flyer* was not only known for its dependable speed, but also for its smooth, vibration free ride. For the nearly quarter century she steamed back and forth between Seattle and Tacoma, the Flyer barely kicked up a wake. For most of those years she dominated that busiest of packets, burning 24 cords of wood a day doing it. She averaged between 60 and 70 thousand miles a year, and (now adapting from the postcard) through her first 16 years on the Sound carried over three million passengers on what amounted to fifty three circumnavigations of the globe or five trips to the moon, and her career was less than half run. During the 1890s and well into the 20th Century the Flyer had its own dock among the short piers and sheds built between the West Seattle Ferry at the foot of Marion Street and Fire Station No 5 at the foot of Madison Street. **[185]**

Over the years when they were both necessary and popular, nearly 2,500 individual steamers worked Puget Sound, and the great majority of them stopped in Seattle. The first were ordinarily sternwheelers and sometimes side wheelers, but eventually the efficiency and speed of propeller driven ships that averaged 100 feet in length made the paddle wheelers like the *George E. Starr* rare and aging novelties. During presidential visits, like those by Benjamin Harrison and Theodore Roosevelt, the grandest representative of this informal and competing fleet would carry the president on his Puget Sound calls followed by a tooting flotilla of lesser steamers. In 1891 Harrison rode on the *City of Seattle,* and in 1903 Roosevelt boarded the steamer *Spokane* in Tacoma for his cruise to Seattle. About thirty vessels followed the *Spokane* and about another thirty met her behind Alki Point, and together the great parade entered Elliott Bay heading for the Seattle waterfront where the *Sunday Times* for May 23 reported "the largest crowd in the history of the state [waited in] a blaze of bunting, a forest of flags, a mystic tangle of red, white and blue." They waited restively like "a gigantic caldron bubbling over with Seattle Spirit, and all in honor of one of the grandest men the world has ever known." After Roosevelt presidents generally came by train. **[186]**

[185] ***The Flyer*** **on the Seattle Waterfront ca. 1909 The steamer's Railroad Ave. dock was closer to Madison than to Marion.**



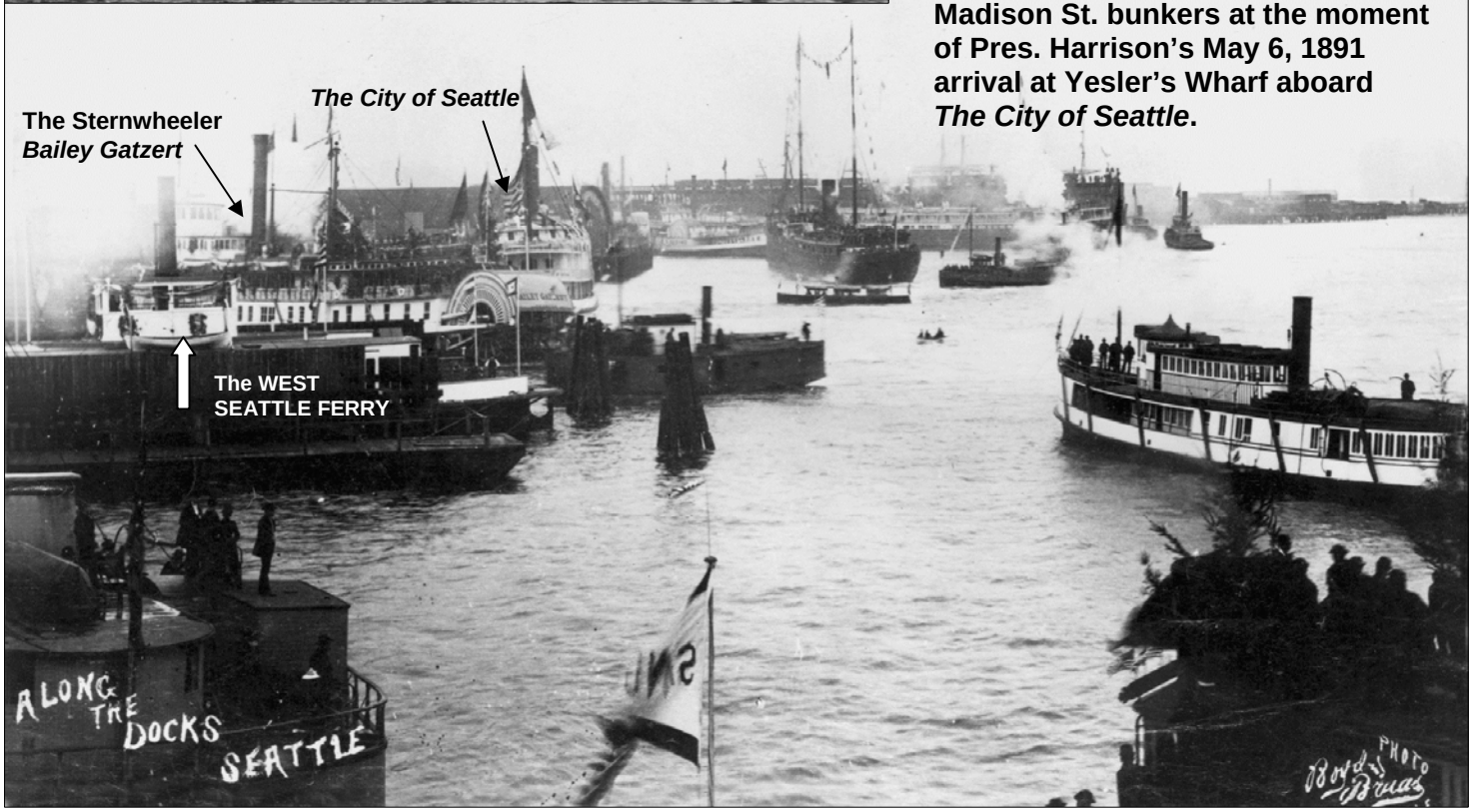


[184]
The Flyer

[186] Pres. Theo Roosevelt approaches the Seattle waterfront aboard the *S.S. Spokane*, 1903

[187]
The Yosemite

[188] Looking south from the Madison St. bunkers at the moment of Pres. Harrison's May 6, 1891 arrival at Yesler's Wharf aboard *The City of Seattle*.



The *Yosemite's* Last Packet with Dad Wagner's Band

Before and even after the membership of the Mosquito Fleet was scrapped or converted one-by-one into snub-nosed auto ferries the grander among them were also promoted for excursions. The *Yosemite* is an example. At 283 feet, the side-wheeler was too long to be considered just another "Mosquito Fleet" steamer buzzing about Puget Sound. Also its late appearance on Elliott Bay marked it as something of a boom-time opportunist. A Seattle group calling itself the Puget Sound Excursion Company purchased it in 1906 from the *Canadian Pacific Railway*. As their name suggests the owners dedicated the *Yosemite* to play and tourism rather than the ordinary labors of hauling farmers and their fruits to what was then rapidly becoming a big city. The new owners were also looking forward to 1909, the year the Alaska Yukon and Pacific Exposition promised to bring a steady summer-long stream of tourists to Seattle. In 1906, the *Yosemite* was already old for a slapping paddle wheeler. Her labors began on the Sacramento River in 1863, and for twenty years she stayed in California waters until purchased in 1883 by the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company. As part of the *Yosemite's* rebuilding for her last assignment on Puget Sound, a large dancing pavilion was constructed on her bow end (as seen in the accompanying print). **[187]** The deck where freight had previously been packed was now covered and furnished for catered excursions around Bainbridge Island accompanied by what was by then Seattle's primary good time live music, Dad Wager's Band.

Historic Landings of the 1890s

During the late 19th Century boom years a few historic landings marked the Seattle Waterfront. "As the steamers get near shore the din becomes deafening. It is 1:28 o'clock. The *City of Seattle* is only 300 yards away from Yesler's Dock. The band is playing and the people on the docks are waving their handkerchiefs to those on deck. It is 1:30 o'clock. A great cheer goes forth from the people, for the president can be see on the upper deck, bowing and smiling." **[188]** As already noted, Benjamin Harrison's landing at Yesler Wharf at 1:36 on the afternoon of May 6, 1891 counts as one of these historic visits, although its reverberations cannot compare to that of either the *Miike Maru* in 1896 and one year later of the *Portland*. Both landed at Schwabacher's wharf and both were perceived at the time as signs of coming prosperity and relief from the lingering effects of the 1893 crash.

The *MIIKE MARU*, 1st Regular Steamship Service from Japan - 1896

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon to the roar of factory whistles, the *Miike Maru* arrived on Aug 31, 1896 for two days of parades, speeches and banquets celebrating the first regular steamship service between Seattle and the Orient. Capt. James Griffith described later as the "father of Seattle-Japan trade" was involved in arranging both the new service and the fanfare. More than twenty years, later Griffith remembered for the *Post-Intelligencer* not so much what the steamer symbolized but what it carried. "The *Miike Maru* brought in a very modest cargo of tea, curios and bamboo blinds from the Orient and a few crates of bananas from Honolulu, and on the return voyage carried a good cargo of flour, lumber, nails, hoofs and horns, car wheels, electric light supplies and five tons of bicycles." The newspaper was quick to draw its own fated conclusion. "One day's Japanese shipping in Port this year [1918]

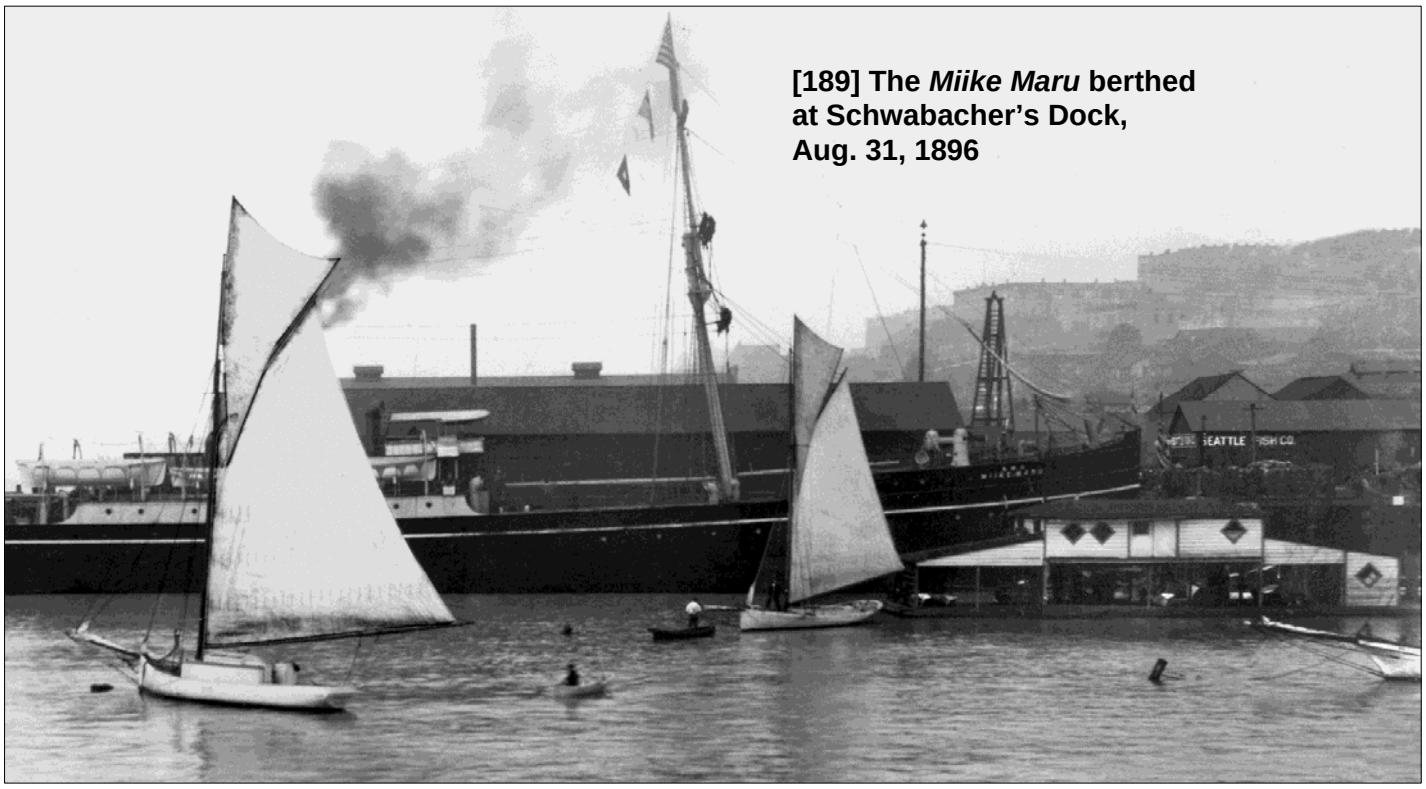
equals twelve months of Japanese shipping in Elliott Bay in 1896 and 1897. Seattle handled two out of every five cargoes in the American-Japan trade during the last fiscal year." (The *P-I* may have sensed but did not share that the 1918 statistics were skewered by the First World War and the transfer of much shipping to the safer waters of the Pacific for a backdoor route to even European consumers. Once the war was concluded, Seattle's share in all trade would plummet as would other war-time activities like ship building whose collapse contributed to the waterfront strike that quickly grew into Seattle's oft touted General Strike of 1919.)

The Post-Intelligencer's 1918 report on Capt. Griffiths and his Miike Maru continues, "Until 1896 Seattle had no direct or regular service with Japan. That year witnessed the birth of the modern trade colossus of the North Pacific. Down in the Burke Building near a window that commands a wonderful view of Elliott Bay and all its shipping, sits a sturdy figure of a man on whom the years rest lightly – a man of vision and large ideas and steadfast courage. He is Capt James Griffiths … Toward the end of 1895, when a resident of Port Townsend, Capt Griffiths conceived the idea … He journeyed to Seattle and submitted his plan to James J Hill, then on a visit to this port. As a result of their conference Hill delegated Capt. Griffiths to go to Japan as his personal representative and to enter into negotiations for the establishment of a steamship service to Seattle. Griffiths left Seattle in Feb. 1896, and in Japan began negotiations with the Nippon Yusen Kaisha … When he returned to Seattle he brought with him a party of the high officers of the Japanese corporation. On July 11, 1896 the contract was signed in St. Paul between the *Great Northern* and the Nippon Yusen Kaisha that marked Seattle's debut in the great field of Oriental trade …"

In the accompanying scene the *Miike Maru* is tied to the south side of the Schwabacher's Dock during her inaugural visit. **[189]** The view looks north from near the foot of Spring Street. This gap in the line-up of post-fire piers is the result of the depth of the water there. As we shall see below, another deep section at the foot of Lenora Street required the Pacific Coast Company to build its Orient Dock there parallel to Railroad Avenue rather than fingered out from it into the bay. Here the open water is harbor for the fanciful architecture of the Clark and Bartette boathouse on the far right. The Schwabacher's pier shed that shows to the far side of the *Miike Maru* is a transitional structure between those post-fire sheds shown earlier and a longer warehouse completed in 1899, a photograph of which will be included below. The top-most roofline (with two small vents) of the Ainsworth and Dunn's Seattle Fish Company dock shows just above the Schwabacher roofline. Another Seattle Fish Co. warehouse is identified with a sign on the east side of Railroad Avenue and seen here above the floating boathouse. The Schwabacher's Dock served as the terminal for this regular Japanese service until it was moved at the turn of the century two piers south to Frank Waterhouse's Arlington Dock near the foot of University Street, and still later to "Empire Builder" James J. Hill's *Great Northern* docks at Smith Cove.

The *PORTLAND:* Its "Ton of Gold" – July 17, 1897

Most likely the vessel that made the greatest symbolic mark in the history of the Seattle central waterfront was the steamer *Portland* that arrived at Schwabacher's Wharf carrying its "ton of gold."



[189] The *Miike Maru* berthed at Schwabacher's Dock, Aug. 31, 1896

[190] "Ton of Gold" ship *Portland* at Schwabacher's Dock, July 1897

As the accompanying *P-I's* front page for July 17, 1897 trumpeted, "Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold! Sixty-Eight Rich Men on the steamer *Portland*. Stacks of Yellow Metal!" Further down in its still oversized type the newspaper presumes, "There will no doubt be a great rush for the new discoveries, and the majority will outfit in and leave from Seattle." The newspaper's confident guess proved correct. Seattle became the principal center for the swarm of latter-day Argonauts to jump off first to the Klondike and then to Alaska. The invigorating effect was felt almost everywhere, and most acutely on the waterfront. For instance, the gross receipts on Yesler Wharf for July 1897 – the month of the *Portland's* landing – amounted to $287. Two months later the receipts for September fattened to $5200.

For years the Portland story was repeated and refined by Seattle's dailies on anniversaries of the ship's gilded epiphany. A *Post-Intelligencer* recounting from the depth of the Great Depression, 1934, is effective with its crescendo. "In the strange silence, the *Portland* drifted to her Seattle dock at 7:15 that morning. A line of bearded men at her rail, looking haggard and weary and rough in the morning light, stared back impassively at the crowd which gaped from the dock. Occasionally a hand was lifted, a few voices called back and forth. Everyone had a *P-I Extra* under his arm. But it was a strange hush. Even the hotel runners, even the driers whose hacks stood in a long line of nodding horses, were silent for once. 'Gold' the whisper ran through the crowd. Guards with rifles appeared from somewhere and stood around … The whisper, racing back and forth through the crowd, grew thru a murmur to a roar. 'GOLD!'"

That "*P-I Extra*" issued from the newspaper's reporter who earlier chartered a tug to meet the *Portland* as she entered Puget Sound. Returning quickly, the *P-I's* "Ton of Gold" extra hit the docks about the time the *Portland* came in. It actually carried more than one ton of gold – closer to two. Among the bearded men was Nils Anderson. Two years earlier he had left Seattle penniless. Now he greeted his wife at the dock with three bags worth $112,000. The *Roanoke* was next to arrive, on July 19th and carrying $3 million. Within ten day of the *Portland's* arrival, 1,500 people had left the city. The best sign of Seattle's freshly minted and gilded hysteria came from San Francisco where Seattle's mayor, W. D. Wood, was visiting. (Seattle is about 800 miles closer to Alaska than San Francisco.) Wood offered his resignation by wire and headed north – ultimately much further north than his home overlooking Green Lake.

It may be impossible to determine when in the *Portland's* short stay that the crowded view of it resting in a low tide between the Schwabacher's and Seattle Fish Co. wharves was photographed. **[190]** A portion of the Schwabacher's pier shed appears on the far right. There is plenty of room on the apron to soon build a bigger warehouse, but in this scene the dock is still open for the curious to form the first crowd to watch the coming and/or going of a ship to Alaska. It was a waterfront theatre that was repeated many times during the long life of the gold rush. **[191]** Less than a week after its arrival, on July 22, the *Seattle Times* reported that the *Portland* was preparing to return north and had "cleared at the customs office this morning. The crowd of people at the wharf occupies every square foot of space and this morning and afternoon a constant steam of people, men, women, boys and girls were down to see the *Portland* off. It is a sight to

witness the departure and a tedious delay for those who must wait. Many are the pathetic scenes of wives and mothers bidding farewell to husbands and sons who are off for the fields of gold."

An attached Andres Wilse view looks north on Railroad Avenue from the front of Colman Dock through the mishmash of small sheds– including the ferry dock – between Marion and Madison Streets. **[192]** The scene holds a number of gold rush novelties including the sign leaning from the corner of Colman Dock advertising "Portable Aluminum Houses, Frost and Fire Proof, Just the Thing for Alaska, Weight 150 Pounds." On the far right is the familiar trestle at Madison Street that reached the coal bunkers on the bay side of Railroad Avenue.

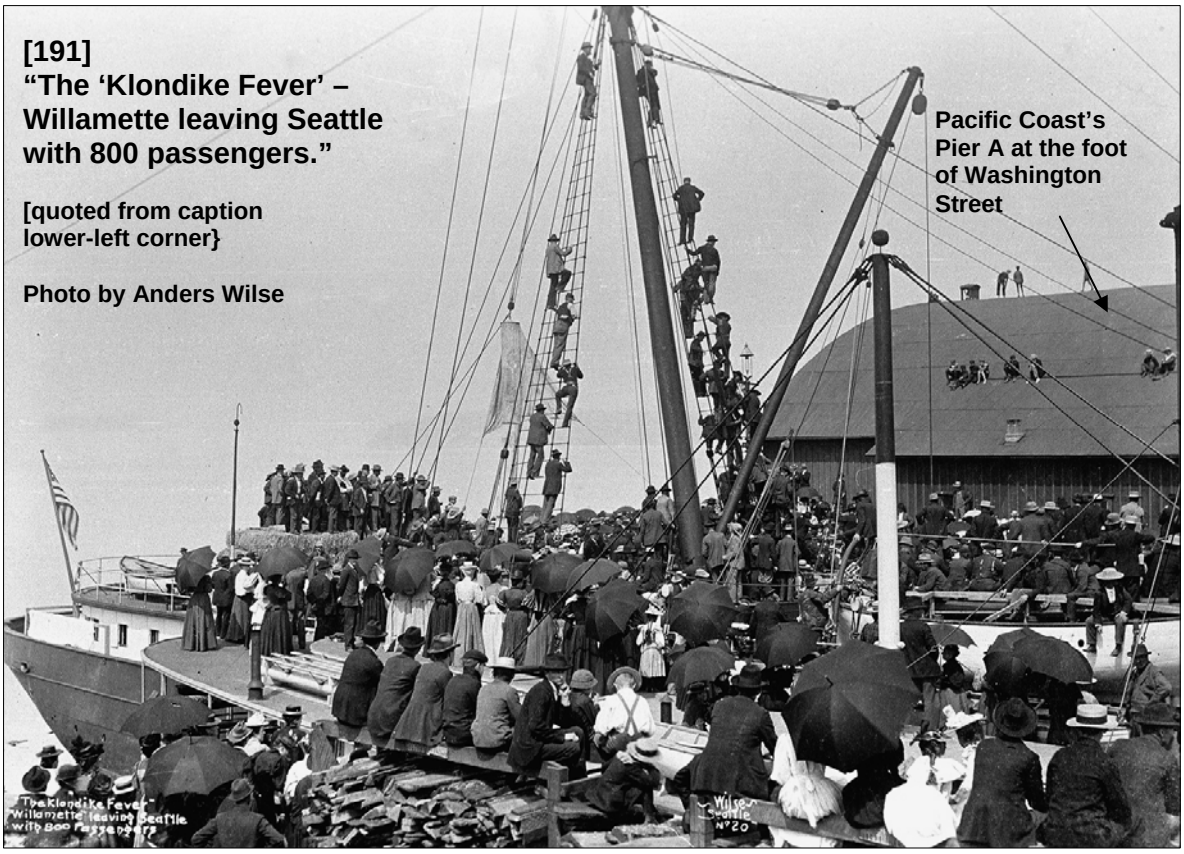
Gold Rush Statistics & Trivia

By one calculation in 1898 alone 57 steamers, thirteen tugs and seventeen steam barges and scows were constructed in Seattle shipyards. (This included the dozen flat-bottomed riverboats that Moran, Seattle's mayor during the Great Fire, built on the tideflats near what is now Safeco Field. Moran also captained his flotilla, losing one of the twelve before arriving at the mouth of the Yukon River on July 26.) Seattle's northern hegemony was also measured by the size of its Klondike Trade – by spring of 1898 it reached $25 million compared with $5 mil to other ports. The gold rush would later help pay for the rebuilding of the waterfront piers in the first years of the next century.

Another commemorative article (*The Seattle Times*, 1922) features its own bag of revealing trivia. "The arrival of the gold ship Portland in July 1897 launched Seattle on one of the most thrilling and picturesque epochs in her shipping history. In a few months it transformed Elliott Bay from a moderately active harbor into a strenuous and crowded shipping center … Seattle was able to boast that she could handle 15,000 men to Alaska every thirty days and she made good the boast with characteristic decisiveness … Thousands of stampeders poured into the city from all over the world each week and other thousands departed at the same time for the Golden North. Those who came the first winter of 1897-98 had an inspiring war cry, 'Klondike or Bust, March the Fust.' By Feb. 1898 the movement had grown to gigantic proportions and Seattle steamships were shooting back and forth as fast as their engines could drive them. In February there were thirty-two scheduled sailings from Elliott Bay, 39 in March, and 36 in April, or 107 sailings in 99 days. As the Klondike rush subsided in 1900 the Nome rush began calling more thousands to the North. In the spring of 1900 no less than 45 steamships were coming and going between Seattle and northern ports. As many as five vessels arrived or left here in a single day. In 1901 eighty ships went from here to Nome alone." The names of steamship lines that made their marks during this extended scramble included the Pacific Coast Steamship Co, Alaska Steamship Co., Frank Waterhouse Co., Empire Transportation Co. (from New York), North American Transportation and Trading Co., The Seattle Clipper Line, the Admiral Line, and the Humboldt Steamship Company.

The *S.S. Humboldt*, Mayor Wood, & Individual Initiative

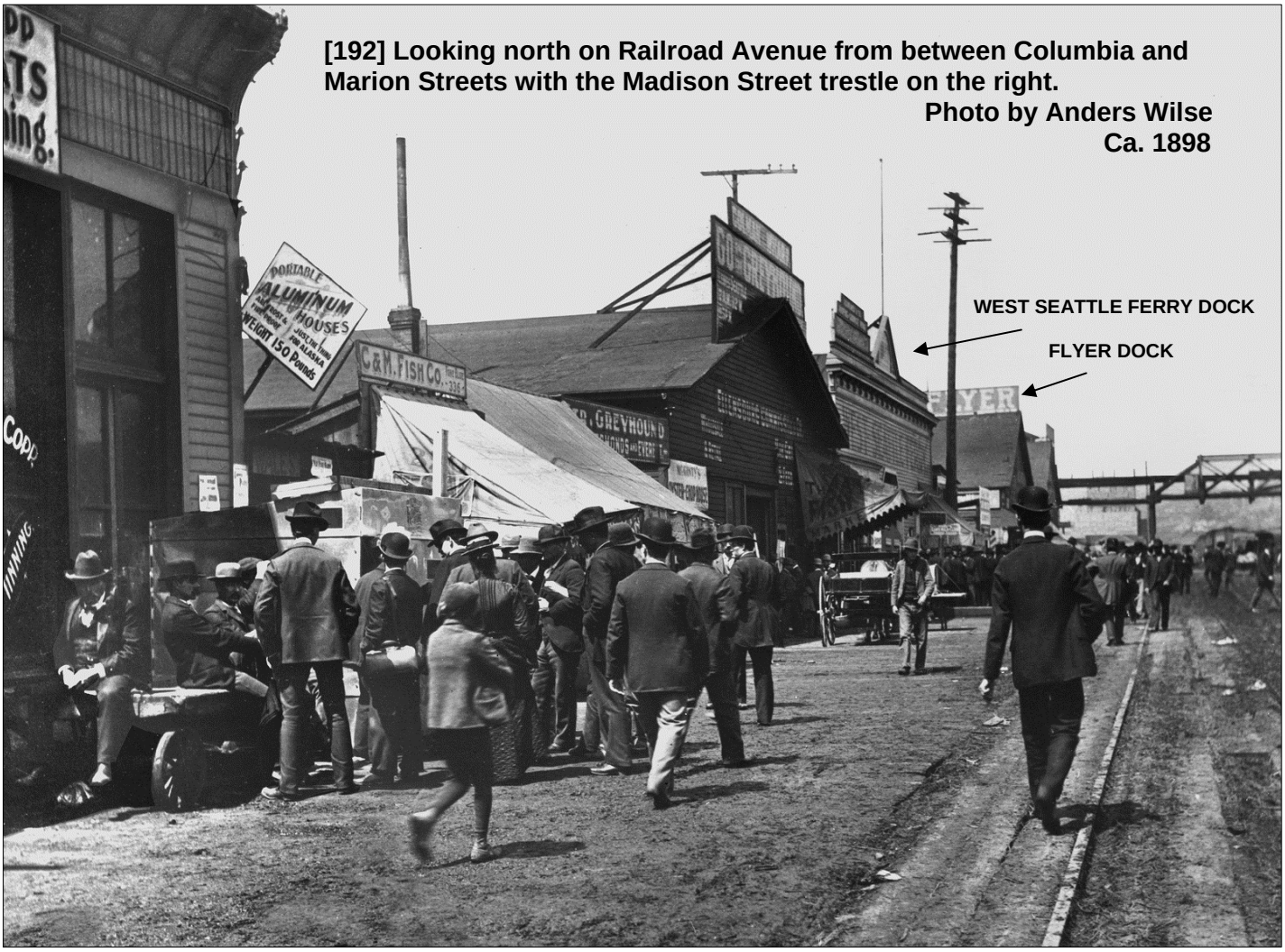
The namesake flagship for the Humboldt Steamship Company is shown in the accompanying photograph preparing to take on passengers for Nome on June 2, 1901. **[193]** These voyagers are



[191]
"The 'Klondike Fever' – Willamette leaving Seattle with 800 passengers."

[quoted from caption lower-left corner}

Photo by Anders Wilse



[192] Looking north on Railroad Avenue from between Columbia and Marion Streets with the Madison Street trestle on the right.

Photo by Anders Wilse
Ca. 1898

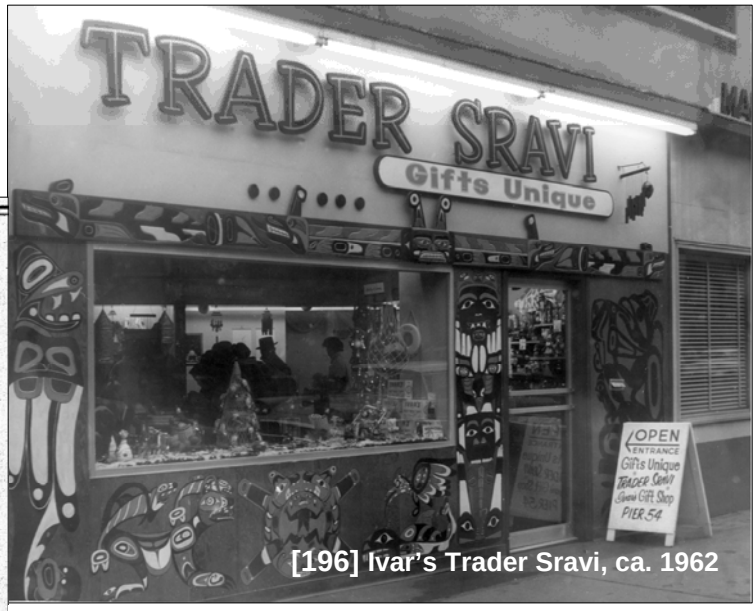
part of the second gold rush. Unlike the first, these enthusiasts need not look forward to a hard trek through the mountains once they reach port, for it was on the beaches by Nome where gold was found and all held some mix of hope and expectation that their next step ashore would be upon those gold beaches whose sands were open to public digging. The *S.S. Humboldt's* first part in the general gold rush era was in its first year, 1897, when Seattle's resigning mayor W. D. Wood chartered her for his honor's voyage north. Thereafter, the *Humboldt* was a regular in the Alaska Service. Included in this passenger list for 1901 are 35 members of a theater company booked for Nome's biggest theatre, the Standard. Reporting on this scene, the *P-I* noted, "In the crowd are many of the vaudeville stars of the States." There may have also been a few stowaways – potential ones at least. A day earlier when the steamships *Oregon, Centennial* and *Valencia* set out for Nome with a total of about 1500 passengers, another *P-I* story reported "During the day and on the eve of their departure no less than 100 stowaways were ejected." Once the paying passengers arrived, their expectation to pick or rock nuggets from the beach generally did not pan out. **[194]** The *Humboldt* serves as an example. During the 1902 season she returned with three-quarters of a million dollars in gold. However, the storied ideal of the persevering miner getting his reward hardly figures. As Gordon Newell explains in his *McCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest,* neither in Nome nor the Klondike did individual initiative count for much. "There were no bearded miners staggering down the gang plank under the weight of moosehide pokes full of dust and nuggets. Practically all the treasure was from the large gold mining corporations doing business at Dawson and had been produced by machinery rather than by pick, shovel and pan." It may be that more of those who went north during any of the strikes came back carrying paychecks more often than gold. Many others prospered providing for the basic needs and entertainments of the miners – as long as they could afford it. That was Seattle's role as outfitter for those who went north and as assay office, financial advisor, and entertainer for those who returned.

Ye Olde Curiosity Shop & "Daddy" Standley

Another Alaskan treasure arrived on the waterfront during the gold rush – Native American art. In 1899 Joseph "Daddy" Standley opened his Ye Olde Curiosity Shop near the Madison Street Cable Car turntable and soon stuffed it with the "Indian Curios" he advertised in tall letters over the front door. The Curiosity Shop was itself a curiosity – the first and still surviving waterfront stalwart to transcend the strip's ordinary preoccupation with basic needs and bulk commodities. The Curiosity Shop was stuffed with surplus needs. As a marketing museum it mixed the authentic with the ersatz and so tested the collectors and culture consumers who made it a waterfront attraction. As noted above [p95] the Shop was soon forced off of Madison Street, moving to the water side of Railroad Avenue. There its mix of stuff was piled on a variety of piers including its longest residence at Colman Dock. Later the Shop had its own "long house" at the sidewalk end of old Alaska Steamship Pier 51. "Daddy" Standley died in 1940 when the business was still at Colman Dock. Daddy was survived by Sylvester, the six-foot mummy found not in Alaska but in the Gobi Desert in 1895, who soon became the steadiest host at the Curiosity Shop. **[195]** At this writing the shop – and Sylvester – are at Pier 54, a tenant of Ivar's Acres of Clam. Earlier Ivar had tried his own promotional hand with curios and opened a curio shop beside his restaurant. The name he chose,

[193]
S. S. HUMBOLDT
preparing
to leave for
Nome - 1901

[194] Landing on the beach at Nome



[196] Ivar's Trader Sravi, ca. 1962

KLONDYKE

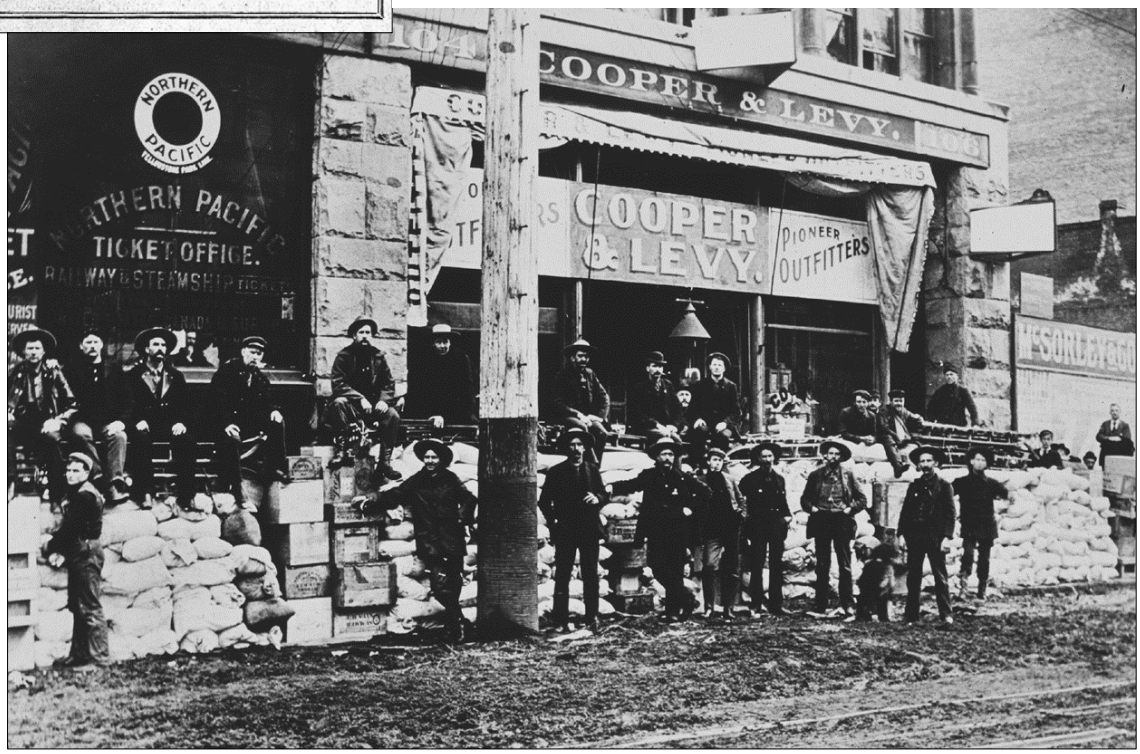
Don't get excited and rush away only half prepared. You are going to a country where grub is more valuable than gold and frequently can't be bought for any price. We can fit you out quicker and better than any firm in town. We have had lots of experience, know how to pack and what to furnish.

COOPER & LEVY

NOS. 104 AND 106 FIRST AVENUE SOUTH.

[195]
SYLVESTER
Of Ye Olde
Curiosity
Shop

[left & below] Gold Rush outfitters Cooper & Levi at the southwest corner of First & Yesler Way.



Trader Sravi's, was less exotic than it was twisted indigenous. Sravi is Ivar's spelled backwards. Ivar's curios shop was relatively short-lived but it too was cultured. Ivar closed Trader Sravi's by donating all its treasures for a super sale benefiting the Seattle Symphony. **[196]**

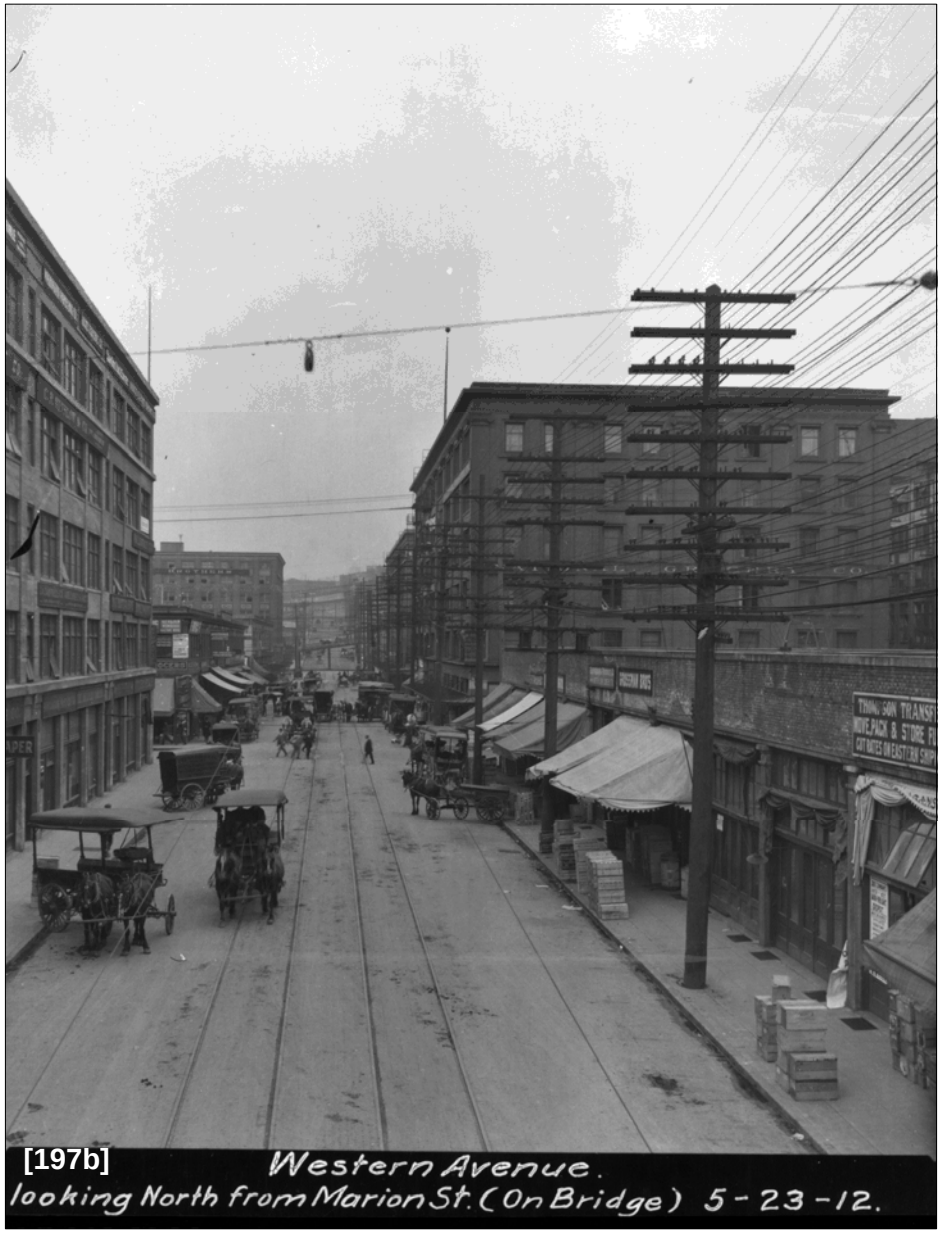
The Commission District and Western Avenue, The "Entrails of the City"

As Seattle grew so did its dependence on the waterfront. To this end the less romantic side of Railroad Avenue – the east side with its "main street" Western Avenue described by one prying journalist as "The Entrails of the City" – developed into the neighborhood of middle-men called the Commission District. This narrow neighborhood between Railroad Avenue and Post Alley was vital to the families of the city because it was from here that the city's food was distributed, including the fresh produce that was shipped to the docks each day from Puget Sound farms. **[197]** In 1907 there was an estimated 3000 farmers around Seattle and by necessity most of them sold through the commission houses along "Produce Row." The opportunities for price fiddling among this "Western Avenue Combine" resulted in such routine abuse that the vendors were given the popular name "Western Avenue Offenders." The 1907 founding of the Pike Place Market was a direct political action designed to allow the producers and consumers to meet without the interjection of the vender-offenders. **[198]** In this era of Seattle's greatest growth, domestically progressive politicians – following Teddy Roosevelt's lead – were routinely attacking the price gougers. An unexpected ally in this was *The Seattle Times*. The newspaper's editor Colonel Alden J. Blethen took a dislike for the gougers and joined city councilman Thomas P. Ravelle (a forebear of future Seattle City Councilman and King County Executive Randy Ravelle) in a muckraking attack on Produce Row running headlines like "COMMISSION TRUST RUINS FARMERS IN WHITE RIVER VALLEY," and political fables like, "I know a man who had some splendid pears. He shipped them to Western Avenue. It cost him ten cents apiece for the boxes in which the pears were packed. He paid the freight, picked the pears and put in his time on the work. The Western Ave commission men paid him seven cents a box for those pears. He lost three cents just on the boxes they were packed in." In spite of the muckrakers and the farmer's market alternative, the vendors on Western prospered, for they were also handling the bananas of Panama, the apples of Wenatchee, tons of citrus from California, pineapples from Hawaii, and just about anything digestible from anywhere whether it came by sea or land.

In the Commission District the first small sheds and warehouses of corrugated iron built after the '89 fire were replaced in the 20th Century by more substantial buildings like the Colman Annex, the Maritime Building, the Commission Building, the Paulson Building (in the place of the old depot at Columbia Street) and others. Similarly we may imagine the waterfront of the 1890s as a sprouting adolescent in need of a new wardrobe. And, as will soon be described, with the roll over into the 20th Century practically everything was changed there as well. First we will sample a few more clumsy incidents from our own waterfront Fin de Siecle.

[197] Northwest corner of Western & Madison – Commission District

[198]
Pike Place Public Market - 1907, year of its origin



[197b]

The November Storm of 1892 & the Baker-Gilmore Collapse

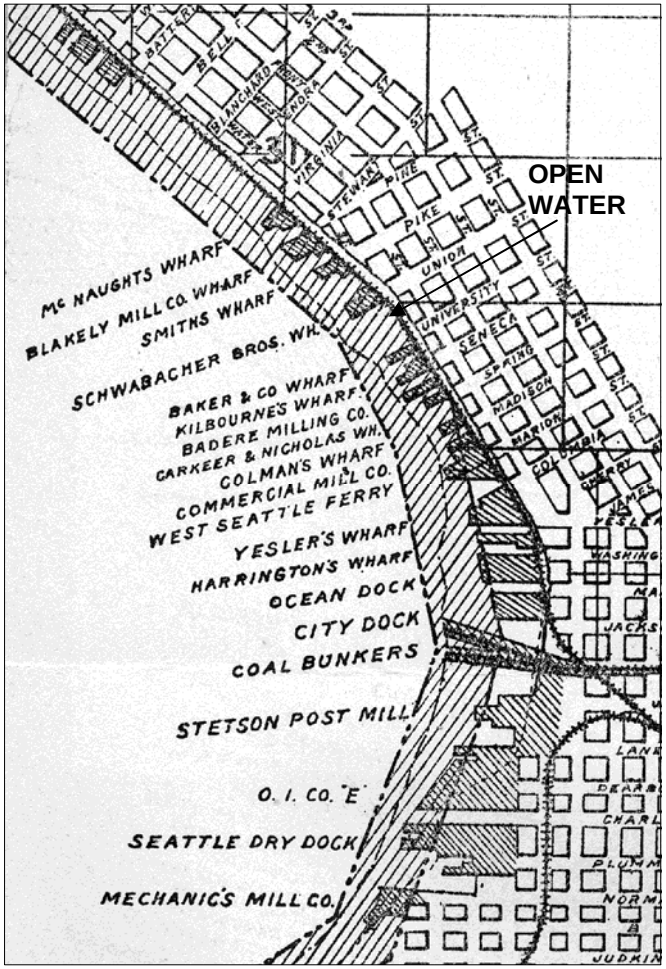
The reborn waterfront that was constructed in a rush of driving piles and passing ordinances following the '89 fire got its first great physical test in 1892 with a late November storm. The "raging storm accompanied by high and violent winds" collapsed the H.W. Baker and Company Warehouse just south of the foot of University Street and so directly in line with Gilmore's hotel. It was Gilmore who owned the wharf on which Baker built his shed. Gilmore had dared Elliott Bay, lost and taken Baker with him. As already noted, it was between University and Union Streets where the depths went peculiarly deep. One year earlier in the fall of 1891 the wharf was extended about 60 feet. This required that the outermost piles be driven in water that was over 70 feet deep. With this flimsy support the wharf fell into the water where the storm pushed it – to its north side. Baker like a number of the other waterfront operators also had a warehouse on the east side of Railroad Avenue where he managed to store the goods that were salvaged from the collapsed wharf.

Baker's place on the waterfront just south of University Street is, with the other wharfs on the Seattle Waterfront in 1891, marked on a map produced by the state's Harbor Commission. **[199 detail from No.144]** The deep water gap between Baker and Schwabacher's is also evident. With the exception of the West Seattle Ferry terminal at the foot of Marion Street, the outline of all the wharves shows how they are built at a right angle to the shoreline. Consequently, on the central waterfront north of Yesler Way they also needed to be relatively short. South of Yesler they could project further, and south of King Street there was plenty of opportunity for the new wharves to spread over the tideflats as timber quays with dimensions much larger than city blocks. In the 1891 map, the sprawling platforms built for the Stetson Post Mill, the Oregon Improvement Company, the Seattle Dry Dock, and the Mechanic's Mill are all examples.

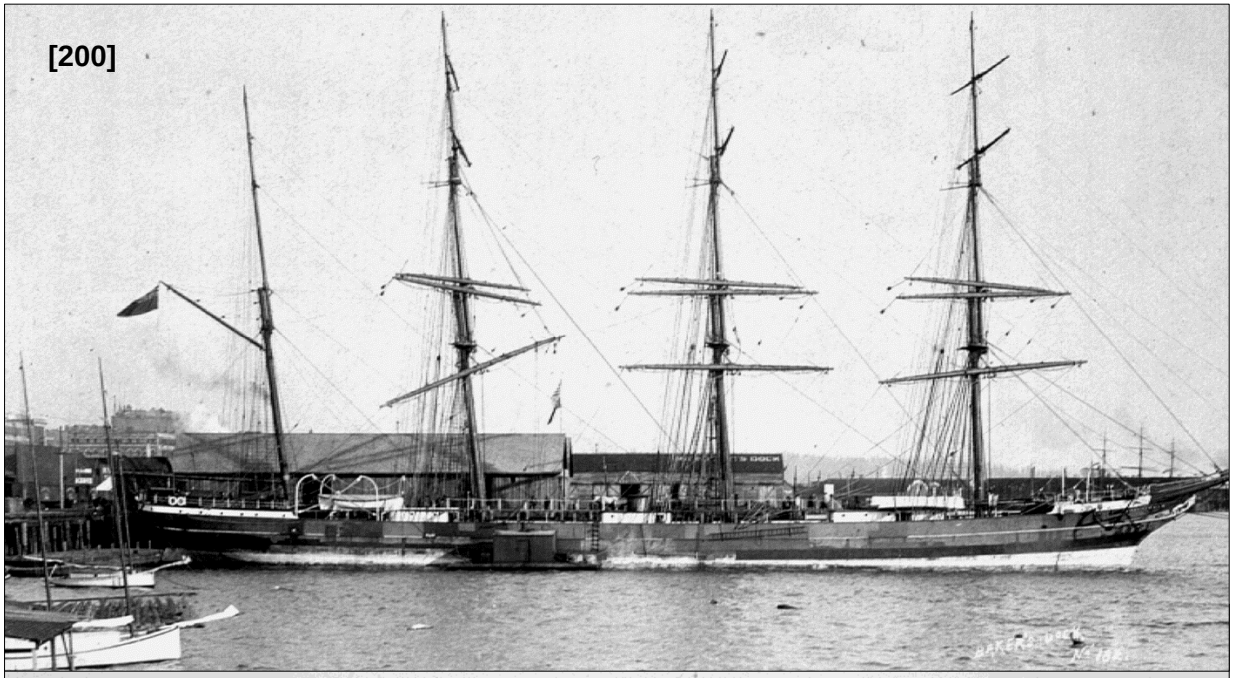
The Baker/Arlington Dock & the Cityscapes of Anders Wilse

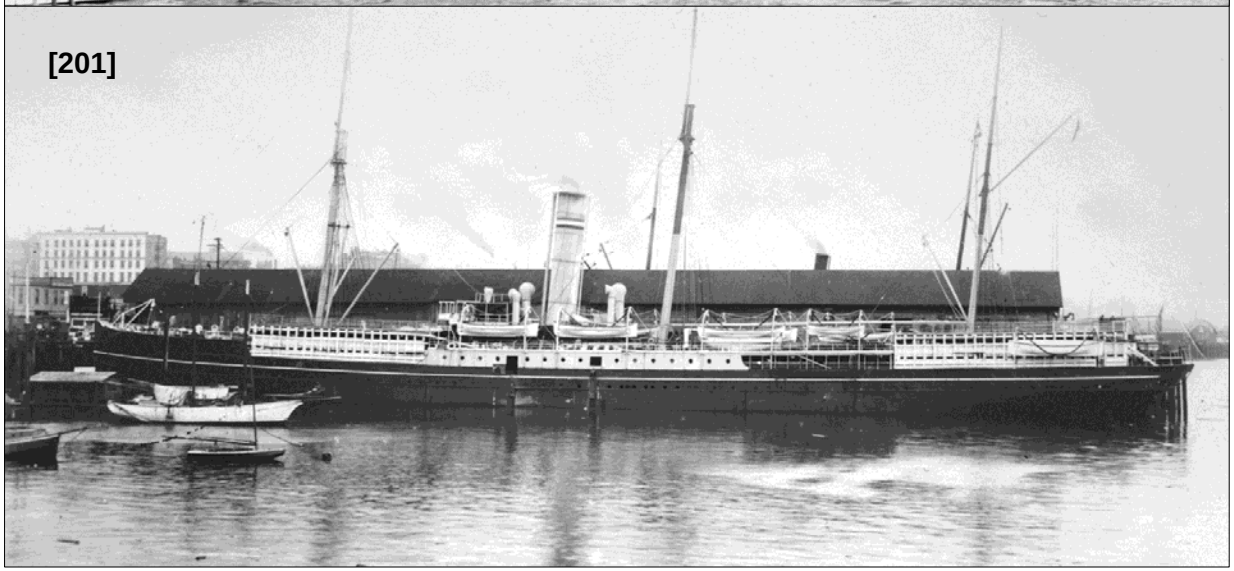
The two profiles of the Baker/Arlington dock printed here suggest that the talent for driving long piles off the deep end of University Street improved through the 1890s. Both were photographed from the Schwabacher's dock looking south across the deep water – the one early in the decade and the other late. In the older view a tall ship fills the frame from end to end, but it is the Baker Dock and not the ship that the scene identifies with its own caption, lower right. **[200]** In the later scene the old Baker dock has more than doubled in length and has a new name: the Arlington Dock - the same as that used in the renaming of the Gilmore Building (discussed and pictured several times above) as the Arlington Hotel at the First Avenue end of the University Street ramp. **[201]** (The Norwegian Anders Wilse took the later photograph before his return to Norway in 1900 where his success as a photographer ultimately earned him the status of "national treasure." Although Wilse arrived in Washington in 1890, beginning in 1897 he gave all his attention to outdoor photography. One of his last large local contracts was recording the construction of the first Cedar River pipeline in 1899-1900.)

Anders Wilse also put his lens to the Arlington Dock from a rear window in the Arlington Hotel. **[202]** Here it is seen as part of a cluster of pier sheds, in which the two longer



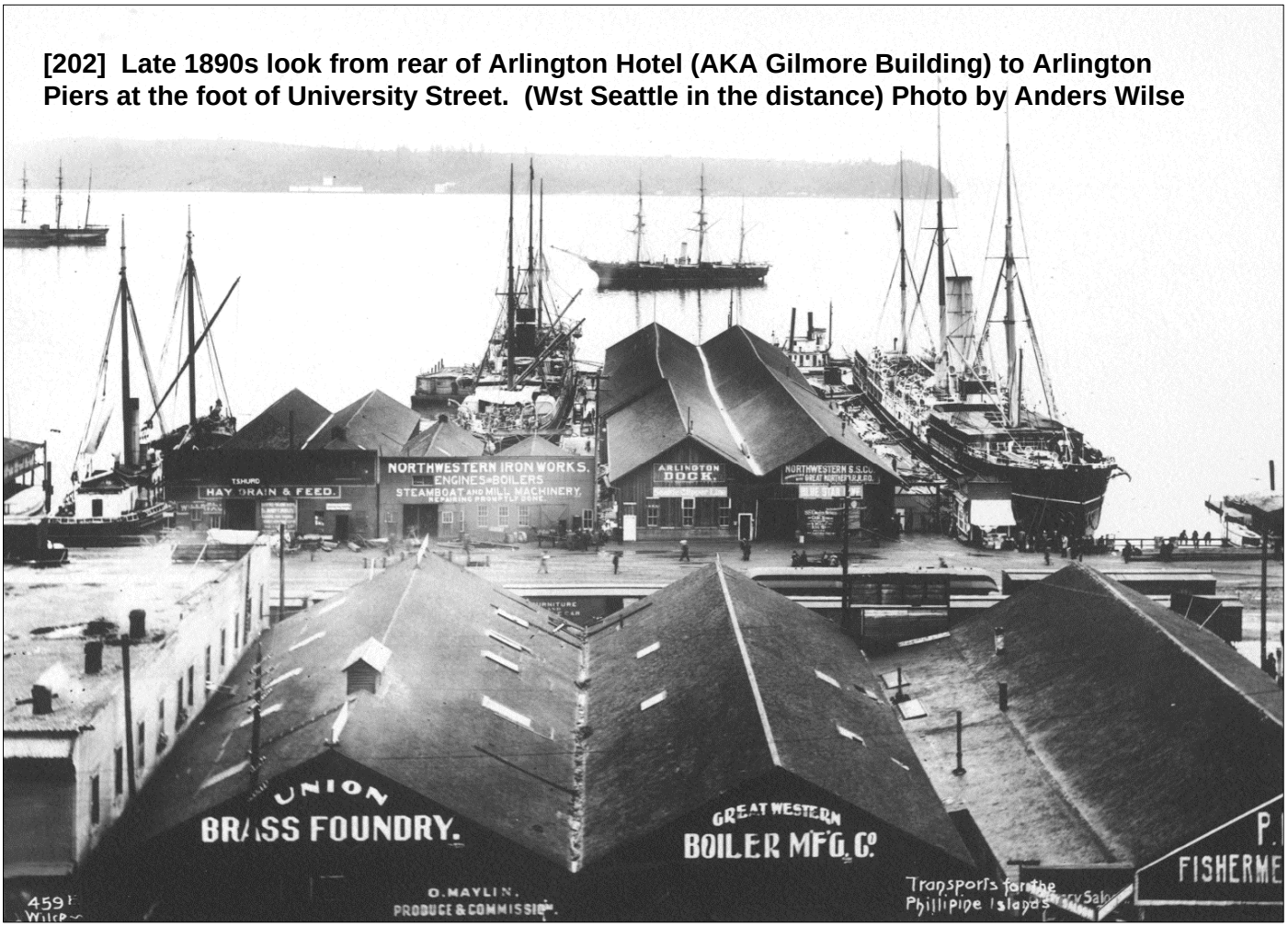
[199] Detail from the 1890 First Harbor Lines Commission map of Elliott Bay identifying wharves.
[See Illustration No. 144 for more of this map.]



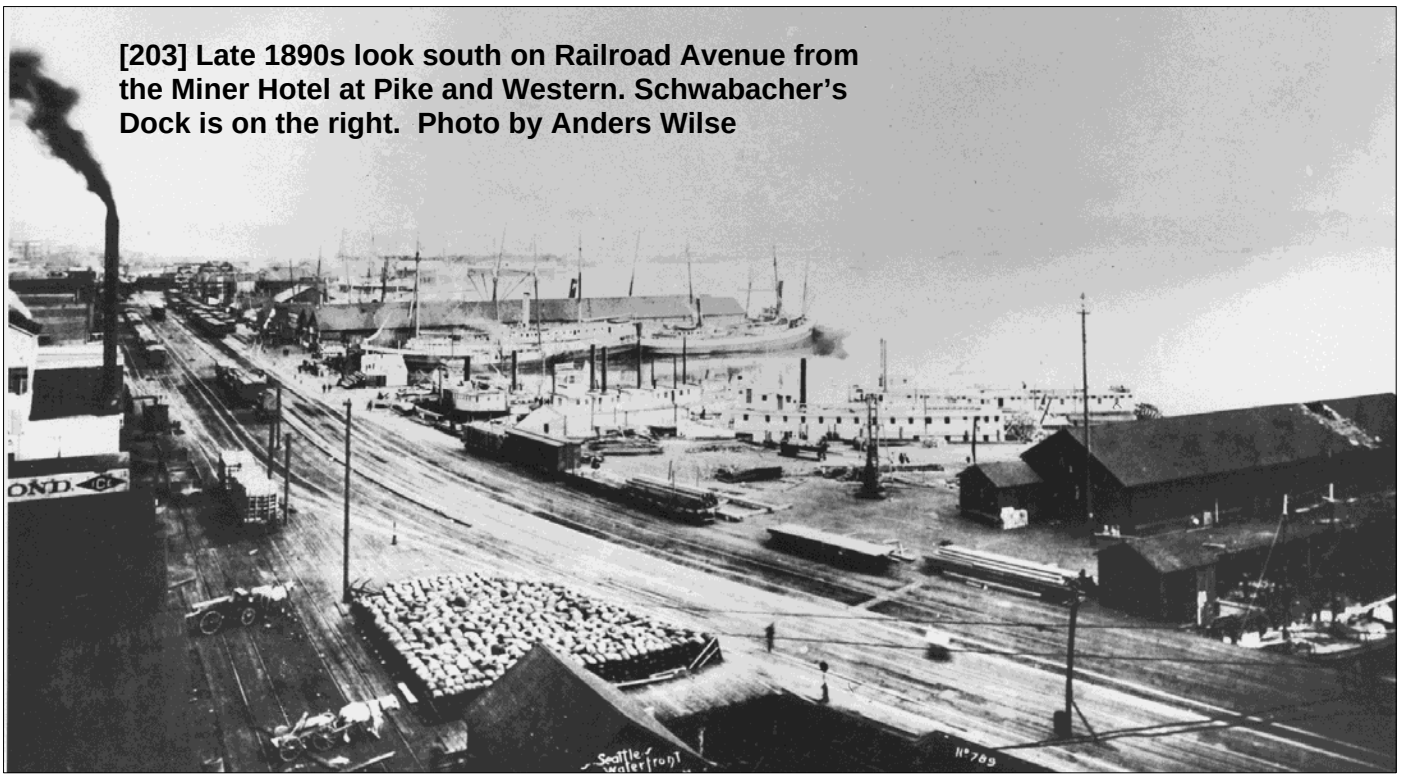


Top: Baker Dock – AKA Arlington Dock – at the foot of University Street in the early 1890s. Above: Arlington Dock – late 1890s. Both views were recorded from the Schwabacher's Dock and look across the open and deep water between it and the Arlington Dock.

[202] Late 1890s look from rear of Arlington Hotel (AKA Gilmore Building) to Arlington Piers at the foot of University Street. (Wst Seattle in the distance) Photo by Anders Wilse



[203] Late 1890s look south on Railroad Avenue from the Miner Hotel at Pike and Western. Schwabacher's Dock is on the right. Photo by Anders Wilse



sections have gained a sway in their roofline. (This, as it turns out, is commonplace for the wharves, which the reader can easily determine on any visit to the central waterfront.) Judging from its negative number, Wilse's portrait of the "Arlington cluster" dates mostly likely from early 1898. In another and later Wilse view of the waterfront – a panorama – the photographer looked south along Railroad Avenue from a rear window in the Miner Hotel at Western and Pike. **[203]** In this scene, the Schwabacher's Dock appears on the far right and the gap between it and the Arlington Dock is crowded with at least seven vessels. South of the Arlington Dock, Railroad Avenue is eight tracks wide. Further south at the Union Depot beside Columbia Street the "street for railroads" was ten tracks wide.

The Chaos of the Wagon Wheel, & the 1897 Replat.

Although the Arlington Dock was a large improvement over the Baker it was also a longer part of a general waterfront problem for which the City Engineer Reginald Thomson and his frequent associate George Cotterill devised a solution. Soon after it was adopted in 1895 it was discovered that the first tideland plat was flawed. In this Thomson and Cotterill took their opportunity to make big changes. (Cotterill was the state's agent for unraveling this new mess on the waterfront.) The 1895 plat had generally accepted the piers as Henry Yesler and other pioneer squatters had built them, but only after a long political struggle, partially described above as Thomas Burke's protracted victory over the intentions of the state's first Harbor Commission. The pier sheds and slips between them remained in a uniform line facing Railroad Avenue. Practically all the docks were set at right angles to Railroad Avenue. This, however, was a skewered uniformity. With a waterfront that turned at both Yesler Way and Union Street, the effect of all these right angles was like a wagon wheel. When the lines of the docks were extended into the bay they met like spokes. If built to absurd lengths the piers would bump into one another. While it was hardly a practical matter it stimulated sufficient proprietary anxiety that lawyers got involved on the principle that what could happen would happen. Here, again, Thomson and Cotterill seized the day to set the waterfront straight and, as it turned out, to also widen it – this last time for wagons and soon enough trucks and not tracks. The progressive and politically adept engineers convinced the dock owners – including the railroads – to abide by the 1897 tidelands replat that they had they designed because it gave uniform relief from the anxiety and potential chaos of the wagon wheel.

Finger Piers That Slant: The Thomson-Cotterill Plan

With the Thomson-Cotterill plan, the piers all ran east and west. This meant that the Pacific Coast Company's wharves south of Yesler were already in line. With its irregular shape Yesler Wharf went many ways, but when it was radically redesigned early in the 20th Century, it too would abide by the City Engineer's compass. North of Yesler Way the plans effect was sweetened with several advantages. It put the piers not at right angles to the waterfront but at a slant. This meant that the rail spurs off of Railroad Avenue could approach the docks without having to take a full right (or left) turn. And it not only decreased the angle for trains reaching the aprons, but for also ships entering the slips. And it allowed the new wharves to be built

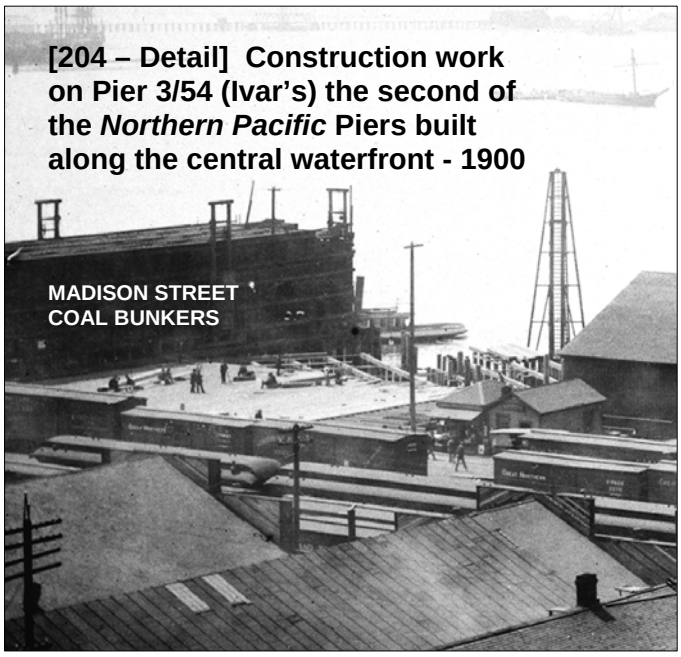
longer because the angle introduced by the plan kept the piers closer to shore and that much further from deep water and the need to sink longer piles.

The State Legislature adopted the replat on Elliott Bay in 1897, but dock owners were required to conform to it only when they were ready to rebuild. That greater waterfront sensation of 1897, the beginning of the gold rush, meant that they would be willing to construct new wharves sooner than they might have believed when Thomson and Cotterill were first charming them in 1896 with their shipshape plans. In part with the wealth and confidence got from the gold rush, most of the waterfront from Dearborn to Lenora was rebuilt in the first three years of the 20th Century. Between them the Northern Pacific and Pacific Coast Company spent two million on seven new docks and warehouses. Only the section between Yesler's Wharf and Fire Station #5 waited a few years for its conversion. But when they came, those changes were the grandest.

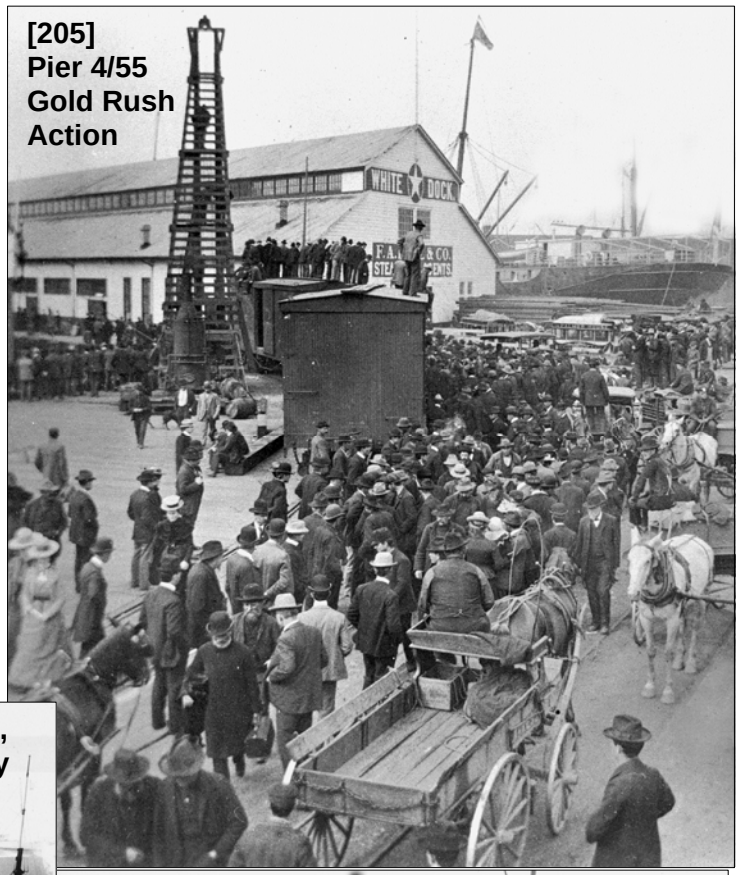
Northern Pacific
Finger Piers
3/54 & 4/55
early construction
- 1900

In the weeks before returning for good to Norway in late 1900 Andres Wilse added to his Puget Sound record, and one of the unique views he left is the accompanying photograph that was shot from the rear of the Hotel Seneca at the northwest corner of Seneca and First Avenue. **[204]** He recorded the central waterfront in the midst of its big changes. The by now familiar dark outline of the Seattle Coal bunkers at the foot of Madison Street shows on the far left. Soon it will be removed for both the enlargement of Fire Station No. 5 and a finishing of Pier 3/54 that is already a work in progress in Wilse's scene. Pier 3 (long since better known as Ivar's Acres of Clams) is receiving its first flooring directly below the bunkers. To the right and at a right angle to the foundation work on the new pier is the Seattle Steamship Company's waiting room. Nearest the scene's center it is set parallel to the tracks. (This structure can also be found in the Wilse waterfront panorama described above. One of the signs attached to the waiting room advertises the "Steamer Oregon for Cape Nome Directly." Gold was first discovered at Anvil Creek on the Seward Peninsula in 1898. After the breakup of ice in the late spring of 1899 there were about 4000 miners on the beach to either side of Nome mining claims some of which were only one shovel wide. But while it lasted, the sands were rich in gold and easy to both reach and pitch a tent beside. These tents formed a line that stretched about twenty miles up an down the beach from the Nome waterfront.)

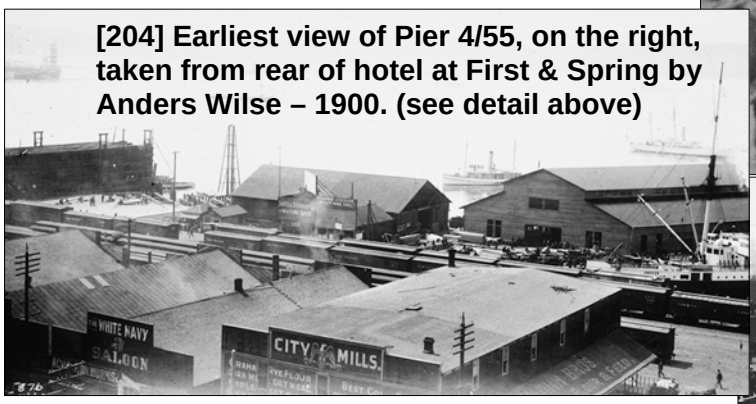
On the far right of Wilse's view is Pier 4/55, the first of the four wharves built between Madison and University Streets by the Northern Pacific Railroad. A second view shows Pier 4/55 probably soon after it was completed in 1900. **[205]** Piers 56 and 57 have not yet filled their slots north of Pier 55, but soon will. This photograph is another example of an anonymous record that carries no caption, although this crush of men (there is only a handful of women among them) is probably attending either to the arrival or departure of a vessel for Nome. F.A. Bell managed the schooners *Vega* and *Thos. F. Bayard* for the White Star Steamship Company's freight service (only) to Nome off of Pier 4/55. It can be noted that with a few exceptions the men are held in a line that turns with the railroad cars towards the pier. The relatively open area at the left side of the photograph is that trackless (except for the spurs) area reserved for wagons that was gained with the



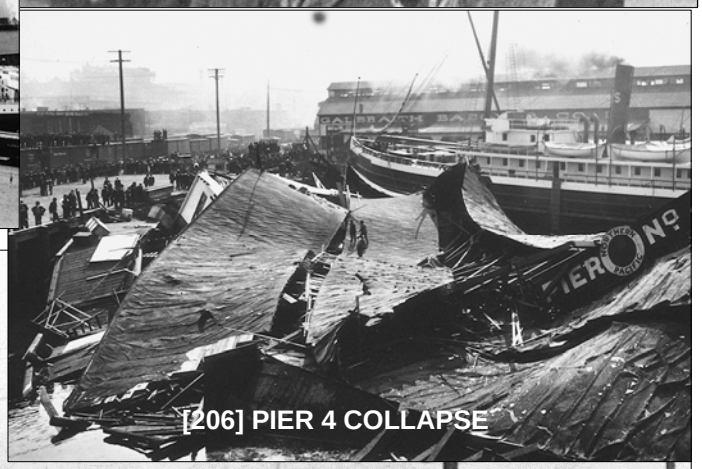
[204 – Detail] Construction work on Pier 3/54 (Ivar's) the second of the *Northern Pacific* Piers built along the central waterfront - 1900



[205] Pier 4/55 Gold Rush Action



[204] Earliest view of Pier 4/55, on the right, taken from rear of hotel at First & Spring by Anders Wilse – 1900. (see detail above)



[206] PIER 4 COLLAPSE

[207] *Northern Pacific* Piers 3 – 4 - 5

Thompson design of 1897. Both the pile driver to the left of the boxcars and the lumber stacked at the front of the wharf suggest that this Railroad Avenue extension is still a work in progress.

Pier 54 Collapse: Sept. 14, 1901

Another line-up of waterfront watchers – again both on the planking and atop the boxcars – stands before the same Northern Pacific Pier 4, –this time collapsed into Elliott Bay. **[206]** At 9:50 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 14, 1901, Pier 4 manager Fred Allen and his wharfinger George Thornton "felt a slight swaying of the structure, followed instantly by an almost imperceptible sinking of the pier. Near the water end of the pier both ran for dear life." The wharf was 325 feet long and, the *P-I* reported, "When their feet had hardly cleared the wharf proper . . . the mammoth structure went down." By day's end 10,000 had visited the site. Some may have searched for carnage but found none. Unloaded on the dock only hours earlier was 1,700 tons of concrete. And yet the concrete was not blamed. Only thirteen months earlier a piling company with the unlikely name "Perfection" had driven the supporting timbers for Pier 4. The piles were sound (perhaps perfect) but not the bracing between them. There was too little of it. Ten hours before the pier fell, President William McKinley died from assassination wounds received a week earlier. News of the wharf's collapse, which normally would have been sensational first-page stuff, was pushed to page six in the *P-I.* The collapsed Pier 4 was quickly rebuilt with better bracing. The accompanying line-up of the new *NP* piers 3 through 5 includes at the center the new number 4. **[207]** The barricade on the far left does not protect pedestrians from a hole in the wharf – that is, it is not an early example of a "man trap." Rather, it is the open slip between the Galbraith Dock, Pier 3, and the original Fire Station No. 5 that was built at the foot of Madison Street soon after the '89 fire. For a time following the construction of these new railroad finger piers to Thomson's plan, the block between Madison and Marion remained at its old width, and wagons and pedestrians were required to proceed along that section over tracks, as the team and wagon in this scene are about to do.

An Odd Block Between Madison and Marion - ca.1902

The block-long cramp in the newly smoothed Railroad Avenue is most obvious in a photograph taken from the roof of the then new steam plant at Western and Columbia, ca. 1902. **[208]** To the left of the intruding flagpole the imposing façade of Colman Dock conceals its still modest wharf. But there Colman Dock has been moved west and thereby opened up the Avenue to the new width prescribed by Thomson. Directly to the right of the flagpole remains the intruding line-up of short sheds beginning with the West Seattle Ferry Terminal. The most obvious shed to the right of the ferry dock is the terminus for the most popular Mosquito Fleet steamer, as described above. The sign on the roof reads "Steamer for Tacoma the Flyer." But another shed half-appears between the ferry terminal and the *Flyer's* dock. Like the Colman Dock its proprietor, an oyster company, has also pushed the shed west into conformity with Thomson's plan. Near the north end of this block the shed for the Seattle Produce Company still stays put, persisting with the *Flyer* Dock at the old ca.1892 line-up. Although barely visible, the 1890 Fire Station No. 5 pokes its tower between Seattle Produce and the new Galbraith-Bacon Pier 3. A latter view – ca. 1904 – looks

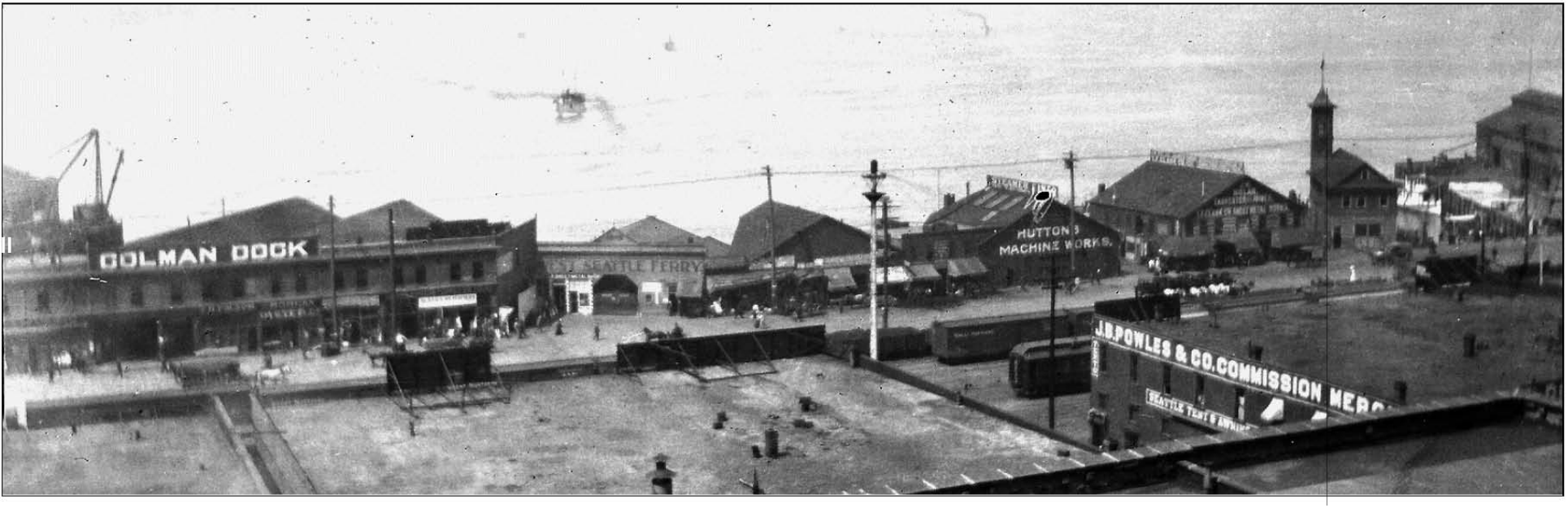
down from the roof of the Colman Building and shows the same block between Madison and Marion conforming with the Thomson's plan. **[209]** The West Seattle Ferry dock has been moved west. (To the ferry company's credit, it does not seem to have exploited this increased nearness to West Seattle in its promotions.) The three sheds between the ferry terminal and the new Fire Station No. 5 have also been moved west. The replacement of the sheds with the great Grand Trunk Pacific Dock is still six years hence.

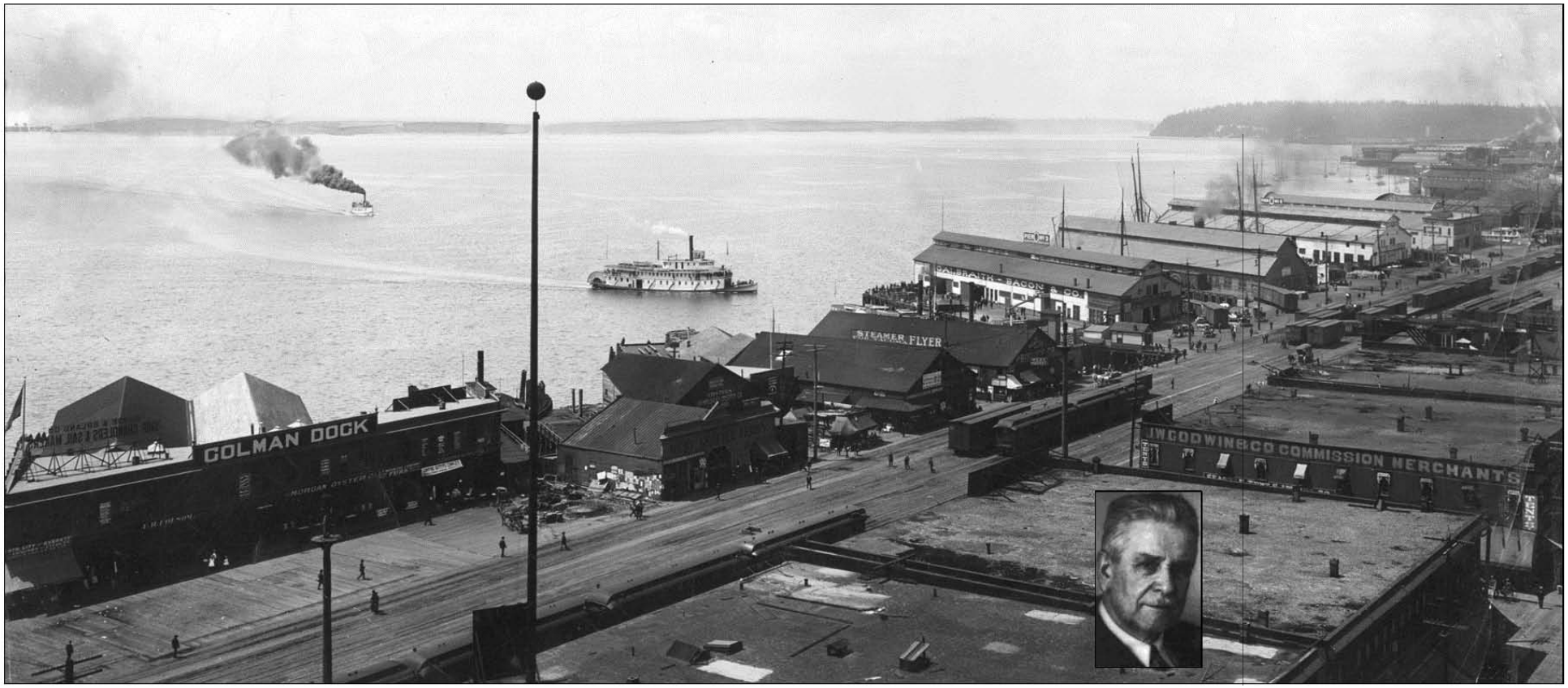
Subduing the "Unbridled Egotism of the American Adam"

It is worth noting that while Reginald Thomson and his comrade George Cotterill were waging their epic struggle to rationalize the waterfront, these opportunists were also surfing the wave of first populist and then progressive politics following the Panic of 1893 with designs also on improving – to name the most important – Seattle's pubic water, waste management, parks and streets. Great changes required, of course, a great number of skilled and dedicated people and both Thomas and Cotterill were good at spotting them. Cotterill, a prolific writer, expressed it so. "The growth of bureaucracy creates an intricate network of personal relations, puts a premium on social skills, and makes the unbridled egotism of the American Adam untenable." **[210]** In 1897, when the waterfront was signing up for Cotterill's tidelands replat, Thomson and he were still waiting on James Hill's decision to begin digging the railroad tunnel beneath the city to the tideflats. Hill had agreed much earlier that the tunnel would be the elegant solution for much of the crowding and squabbling on the central waterfront. The answer, we know, would come soon after the *Northern Pacific* and its President Mellon first began buying up much of the central waterfront and then announced plans to build the grand station and freight palace described above. And Mellon added that James Hill and his *Great Northern* were welcomed to make it a Union Depot. The Mellon plan, we know, was squashed by the City Council. Then the tunnel project was more or less joined by all players, the reticent but still resigned Mellon included.

Tunnel Preparations - 1903

More than a decade passed from the time the tunnel was first discussed and silently agreed to but postponed. In those years the combination of growth running hand in hand with the depression of the mid-1890s created a swelling sub-culture of mostly squatters on the beach and on the undeveloped pitches along the bluff above it. The railroads owned most of this land and, with a few ineffective exceptions, generally tolerated the squatting. (To repeat from above, much of the railroad's ownership dates back to the gifts of property given by locals in 1874 to build the *Seattle and Walla Walla*. Even after the community was cleared away, much of this remained undesired "in-between land" set on steep banks and narrow beaches and remained undeveloped and in reserve until much later. Surely, it is one of more delicious of local ironies that this squatters strip was ultimately replaced with a second strip of condominiums that were built below the Denny Regrade in the 1990s in tandem with the Port of Seattle's redevelopment of their former Pier 66 headquarters into the Bell Street Terminal. In between the two there was hardly any development in this section of the waterfront aside from a few tawdry sheds and oil stained parking lots for trucks.)


COLMAN DOCK
HUTTON'S
MACHINE WORKS
J.B.POWLES & CO.COMMISSION MERC


COLMAN DOCK
STEAMER FLYER
J.W.GOODWIN&CO COMMISSION MERCHANTS

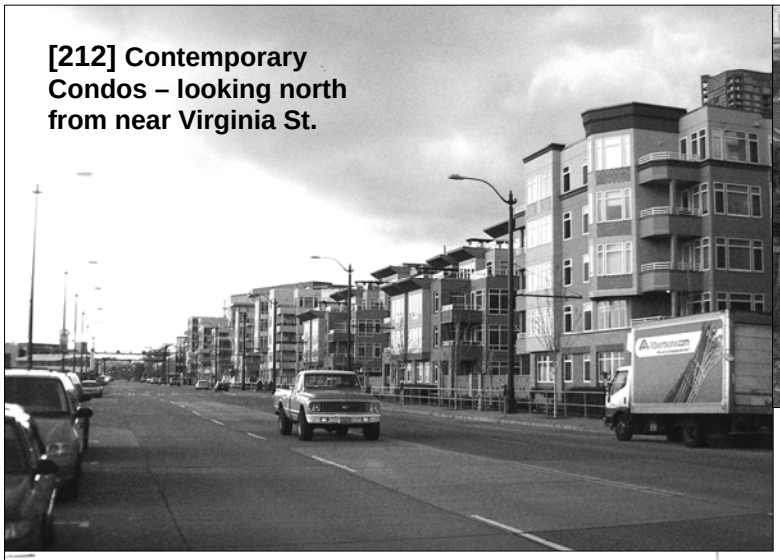
Trouble in Shantytown

In the summer of 1899 officials in charge of the city's health made a go at removing the squatters. As the *Post-Intelligencer* reported, it was not the first time. "Shantytown Must Go. Board of Health Will Make Another Crusade Against It." In the *P-I's* short but helpful article, "Seattle Health Officer McKechnie pledges to again respond to a petition by 'Shantytown' neighbors for its destruction." This expulsion, however, has some contingencies. First, McKechnie must be able to make "satisfactory arrangements with the owners of the property upon which the shanties are located." Most were built by or on lands owned by the Denny-Blaine Land Company and the Pacific Coast Company. The second "if" is that the residents include "many poor but respectable families." Really booming Seattle required such a neighborhood as an alternative to public housing, about which it as yet knew nothing. "The city has always intended at some time to make a general cleaning up of the waterfront, but from year to year the crusade has been postponed … It is estimated that fully 500 persons will be rendered homeless should the board order 'Shantytown' wiped out." Ultimately, the community could not be moved by McKechnie and his call for good health – it required a tunnel or, for a small part of it, first a landslide. On the day before Christmas Eve 1900 the *P-I* returned to report "Trouble in Shantytown. Landslide Near Pike Street Wrecks One Cabin and Damages Two Others." While, as the paper confessed, the loss was "very small," it gave an opportunity to compose another lurid description of the community. "Shantytown is thickly built up with little cabins and is one of the most squalid districts of the city. The owners of the cabins are nearly all squatters paying no rent, and it is therefore not probable that the city, or the railway companies which own most of the land, will take any action to prevent the recurrence of the landslide."

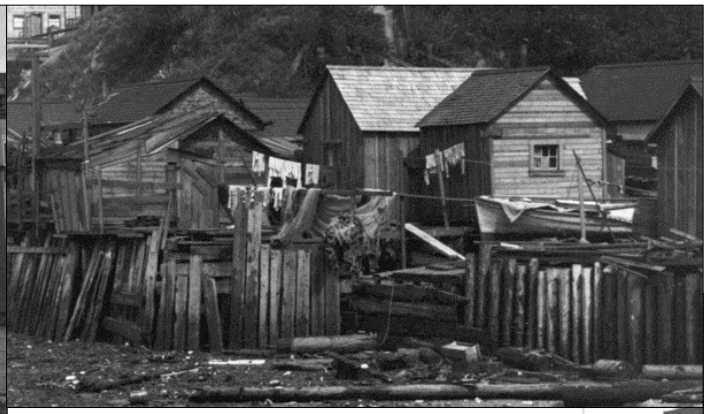
The place described for the landslide near the foot of Pike Street had been, as noted above, the home of Chief Seattle's daughter Princess Angeline. And as also described earlier (with David Buerge's help) the waterfront below Denny Hill was the ancient site of the Native American community called Baqbaqwab. The transformation of indigenous camp into a strip for squatters, some of them Indian, is one of the local chapters in the story "how the West was won." A few photographs survived of some of these "losers" camped on the beach below Denny Hill in the late 1880s. The view printer here complements the one shown earlier as illustration no.38. **[211]** This is the later of the two. It looks north from the railroad trestle about 1902, before the work on the tunnel would alter both this landscape and community. The collection of inventive squatters' homes is set at the opening to the Belltown Ravine that, as noted above, extended as far east as First Avenue before it was filled in. The ravine was finally capped with the Elliott Avenue extension in 1914. As just noted, a contemporary repeat of this general scene would be neatly ordered with condominiums all in a row. **[212]**

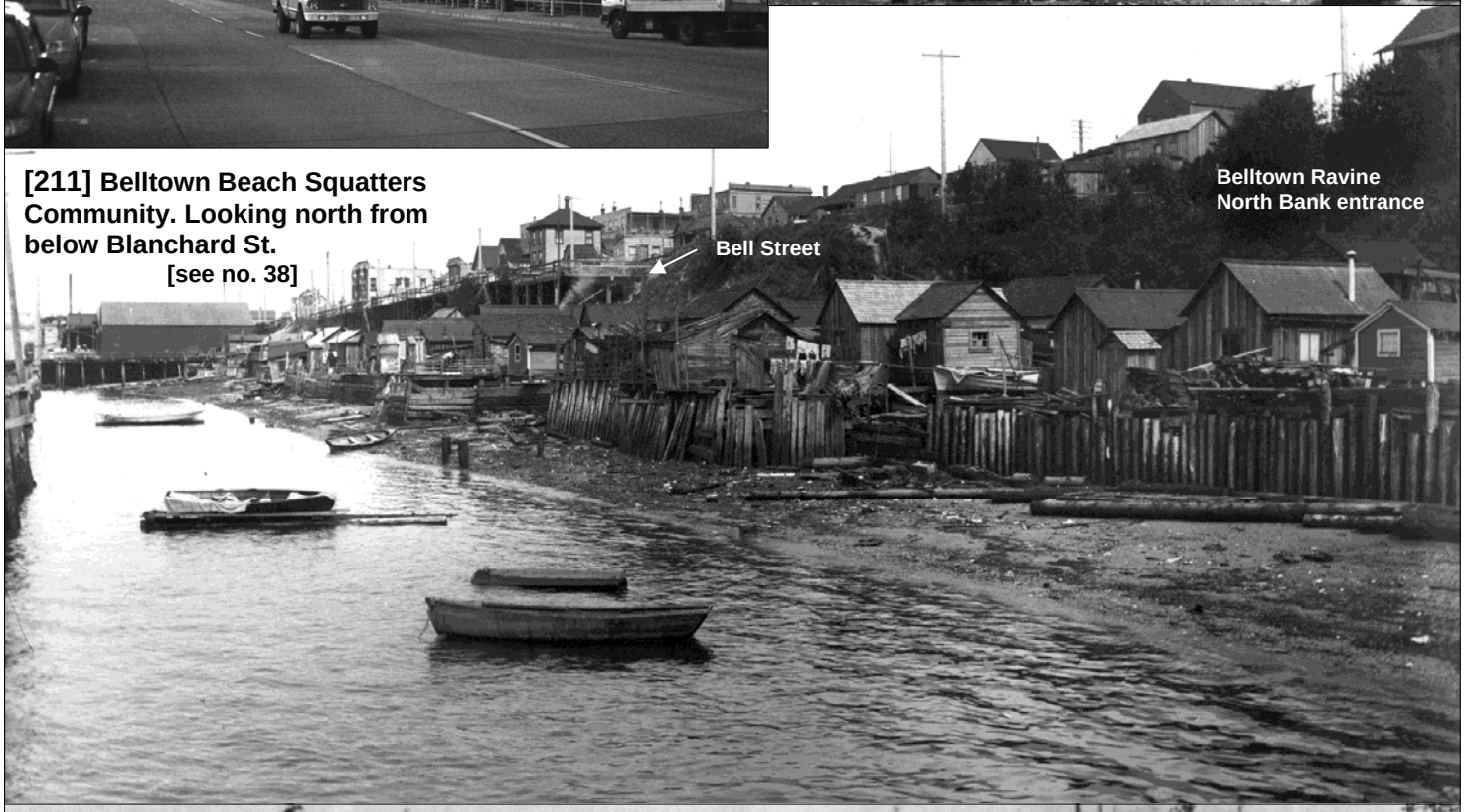
Early Life on the Beach in a "Stilt House" Rental

There are a few descriptions of life in Shantytown. A late reminiscence by Agnes Elizabeth Lucas was featured in a *Seattle Times* article from 1954 written by Lucile McDonald, the paper's long-time reporter on the heritage beat. Titled "She Threw A Rock at the Daughter of Chief Seattle" the article explains that although Agnes Kerr was born in Port Blakely in 1878 the family soon moved to Seattle. Her shanty was actually an

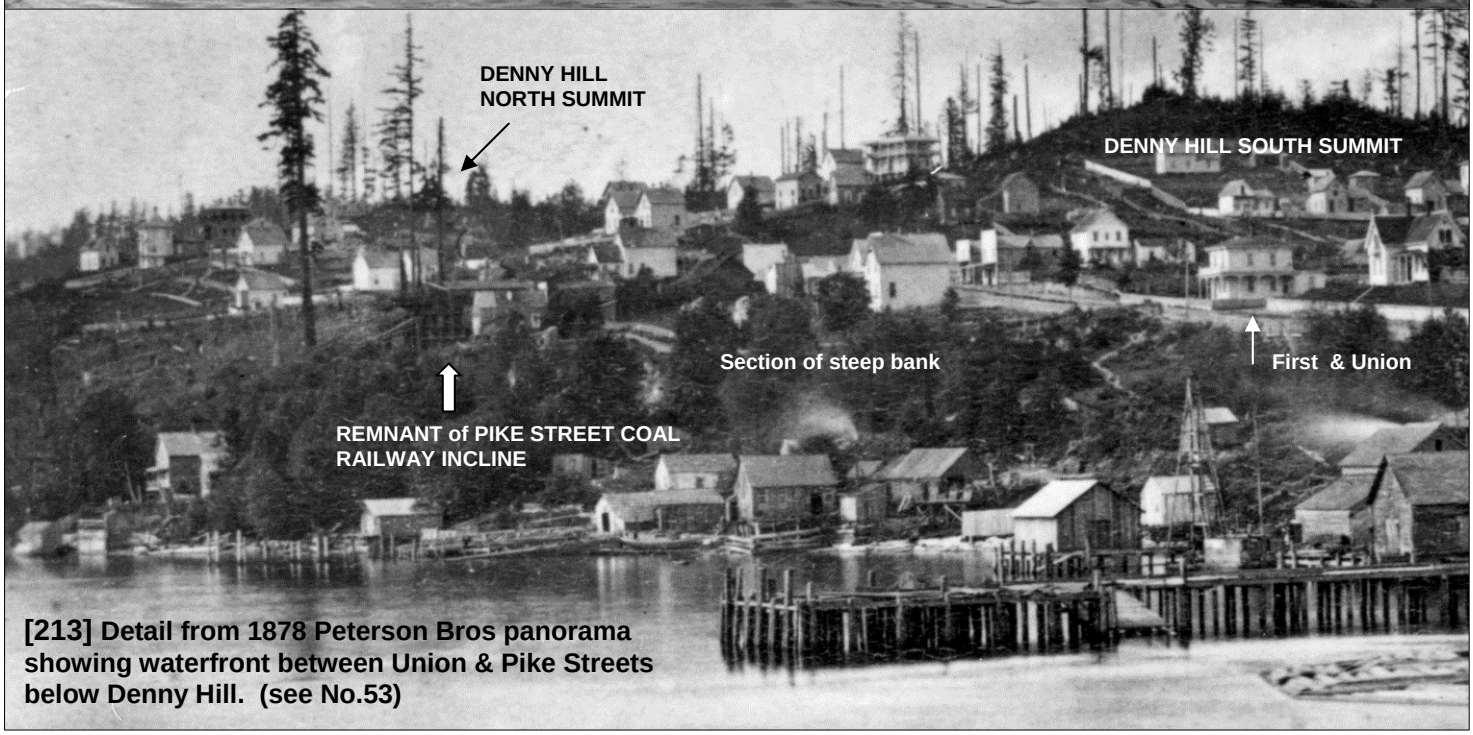


[212] Contemporary Condos – looking north from near Virginia St.





[211] Belltown Beach Squatters Community. Looking north from below Blanchard St.
[see no. 38]



[213] Detail from 1878 Peterson Bros panorama showing waterfront between Union & Pike Streets below Denny Hill. (see No.53)

early beach rental. "It was not the kind of childhood written about in books. Our first Seattle home really was on the beach in a stilt house somewhere along the waterfront between Pike and University Streets …Persons living down there went through a good many hard times. Once when I was very small and mother was having trouble paying the rent I remember the landlord said if she couldn't raise the money he'd take out the doors and windows. He meant it, too." While Elizabeth's mother was away doing housework her oldest sister Dolly started working as a baby sitter at the age of ten. "Lizzie" and her other sister Georgia were often left to take care of themselves. McDonald explains, "The beach was their favorite haunt. They gathered mussels on rocks and logs in front of the present business center and picked up driftwood there to keep the home fires burning. The two little girls earned pennies carrying a beer bucket to the brewery [probably at the foot of Columbia Street] to have it filled for neighbors. They would go to a biscuit factory on the waterfront [probably near the foot of Seneca] with a flour sack, which for 'two bits' would be filled with broken cookies. Like other stilt-house dwellers the girls visited the butcher shop to ask for the livers, kidneys and hearts, which were given away freely. In the late summer they traipsed toward the Belltown woods to gather hazelnuts by the sack full." McDonald picked her title from Agnes Lucas' version of the old story about Princess Angeline; that is, that the children threw rocks at her. "Mrs. Lucas remembers mischievously hurling a rock a Chief Seattle's daughter, Princess Angeline, who lived less than a block distant. 'She chased me to our house and I hid under the bed.'" The accompanying detail from the Peterson Bros 1878 panorama (see #53) shows the waterfront north of Union Street where Agnes Kerr would soon play and scrounge. Remnants of the coal railroad incline are also evident. **[213]**

"A Strange Settlement Under the Northern Cliff" Scenes and Sketches, 1891

The childhood memories of Agnes Elizabeth Lucas date from the 1880s, when the neighborhood by their stilt house was filling in with small warehouses and manufacturers and the railroad trestles of both the ram's horn and the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern.* Another article on beach life that we will sample is titled "The Beach-Combers." It appeared in the *Post Intelligencer* on March 15, 1891. That was still two years ahead of the Panic of 1893 that would add many more residents to the community the reporter studied. The article's sub-head exudes urban studies seriousness. "On the place, size and age of the beach community below Denny Hill and the characteristics of some of its residents." But the writing itself is a late Victorian example of what we might call the exotic picturesque. The reporter visits "A Strange Settlement Under the Northern Cliff …where the fishermen live" and describes with "scenes and sketches" the lives of "the beachcombers", the "men women and children in huts at the water's edge." The beach community described fits nicely our description above of the hillside topography north of Pike Street. It begins "at the point where Virginia Street ought to be" and extends to Battery Street. The reporter also makes a distinction between the "row of dirty, dilapidated, but picturesque huts bundled under the overhanging bank" and the "Shantytown" that is built on the "dry land above the beach in the space between West street and the edge of the bank." There the "dwellings are a shade better" and they look down "literally and figuratively, on the beachcombers below." Hopefully, the reader will remember the attention given above to the cluster of shacks at the entrance to the Belltown Ravine made from scrounged materials, including

those deposited by the tides. That is that same community, but described here in 1891. That author's rare review is both a moral and physical adventure.

> Anyone who has lived in Seattle for a year has surely heard of the 'beach-combers,' but not one man in a hundred has ever seen them and their families in the homes beneath the cliff … sometimes built on a raft anchored in the water, sometimes on piles driven in the strip of sand between the high and low tide lines, and sometimes on the beach just above the water mark . . . No road runs along the beach, but after leaving the wharf at the foot of Virginia Street you wind in and out between the houses, walking now on narrow boards laid insecurely from pile to pile, now on large logs and now on the stones. It would be impossible to find this zigzag way after dark unless you knew it as well as you know the turns and corners in your own home … A knot of men sat on a log discussing the attempt of the railway to move the hovels back on the street line "Ef I put a house here why haven't I as much right as the railroad? It's govemunt land.' said he. 'But you ain't got money and money talks,' was the laconic answer." The same speaker answered the reporter directly. "Yes, this is a fine place to live, a fine place to bring up children. You have water and wood, and the rest is nuthin'. You might's well pass your life here as anywhere."

This last about "the rest is nuthin" is the "wisdom of poverty" speaking. It is heard anciently in the Christian homily "He that is last shall be first;" later in Gershwin's "I got plenty of nothin and nothin is plenty for me." The age of at least one home in this community is noted with a description of its patriarch. "Old Billy Hoffner, a gray-haired German, had lived in one cabin for ten or twelve years. The window of it was taken from a vessel, and the side of the house built to fit it. On the outer walls is stretched brown canvas – also from the ship – fastened down with battens, and the roof covered a ship's cabin." The child Agnes Elizabeth Lucas may have met Hoffner during her own years of beach combing "under the northern cliff." The *Post-Intelligencer* reporter speculates of the number of beach homes and also on the number and diversity of their residents.

> There are now about fifty huts in the cluster, and although many of them are inhabited by lone fishermen, still, it is safe to say, that the average is two or three persons to a house. You will meet all races and colors of men, and you can hear a dozen languages and dialects. Heavy-faced Indians, black-eyed Greeks, swarthy-Italians, red-haired Irishmen and Danes, Swedes and Norwegians with flaxen locks are mingled in this cosmopolitan settlement. The men fish, do longshore jobs, pick up driftwood and lounge in the sun; while the women stand at their doors and gossip, and the children, too young to know social or race distinctions, dig holes in the cliff and the beach, make houses of pebbles and launch boats in the waves."

The reporter closes his already picturesque piece with an anonymous dark verse and ends it studying a sunset shimmering at once with religious consolation and young love.

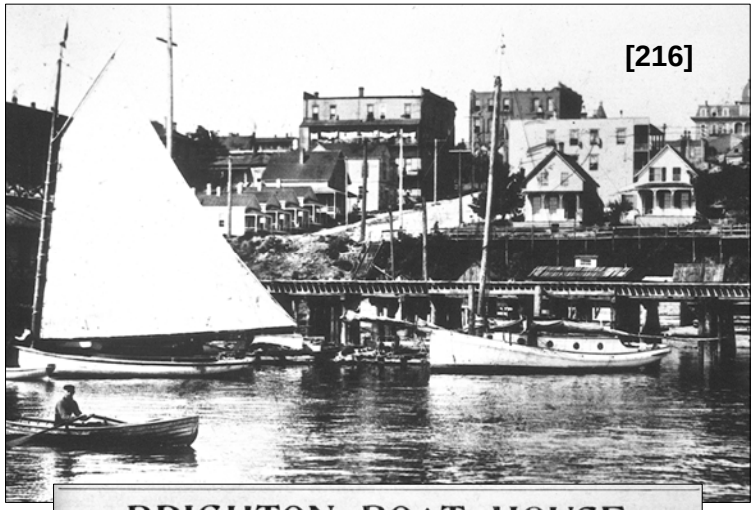
Where brackish wave laps barren sand
And sweeps from sea strange gifts to land
Shells shining from the ocean bed
And pallid bodies of the dead.

> A young man in his shirtsleeves and a young woman, bareheaded but comely … on a piazza with a railing about it …Talking in an undertone, he was earnest; she troubled and undecided. Every now and then he would strum a few bars of a tune on an old banjo, and she would tap the time nervously with a small and shapely foot. As I drew near, he was playing 'Annie Rooney,' but he suddenly changed to the old-fashioned 'Jesus Lover of My Soul.' The girl took up the words in a low, clear voice, 'Let me to thy bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll -' And I glanced at the tide creeping up between the pebbles, almost under her feet - 'And the tempest still is high -' but the tempest, if there were one, was not on the water, which lay shimmering in the rays of the sinking sun.

Beginning with the 1903 construction of the north approach to the *Great Northern* tunnel this beach community was progressively replaced with more tracks and fill. As noted in ten years more the Belltown Ravine was also packed and capped mostly with Denny Hill dirt.

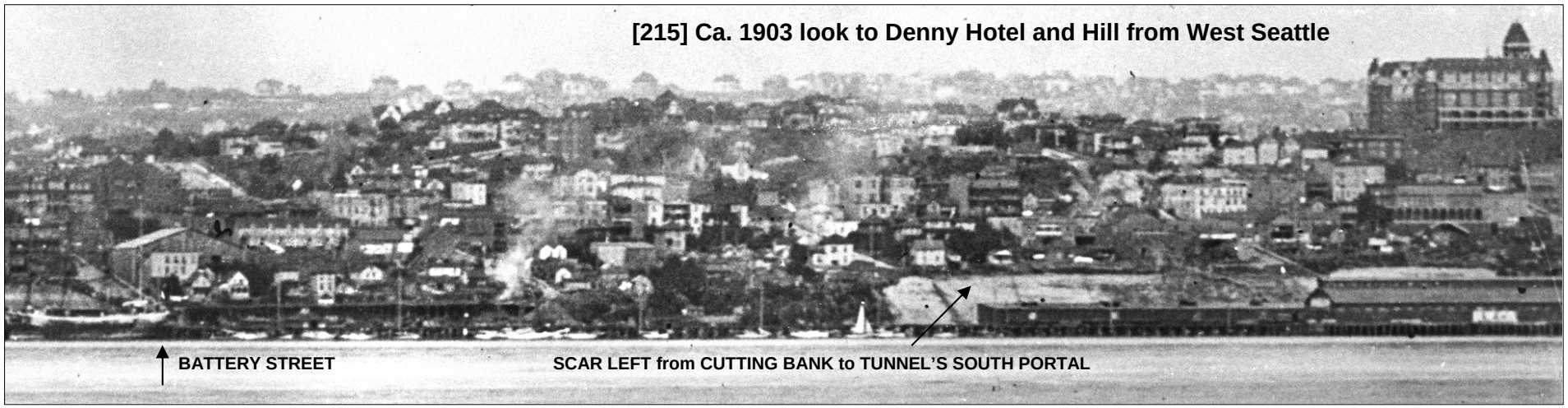
Cutting Away the Hillside - 1903

The first homes were removed in the late winter of 1903. The *Post-Intelligencer* of April 5 noted, "Some weeks ago a corps of laborers was at work by the road clearing away the small shacks and buildings that stood in the way of the tunnel mouth. This has all been done and the appearance of the street intersection at the point of beginning has been materially changed since that time." The work of cutting away the hillside to create an approach to the tunnel's north portal near Virginia Street began on the first of April. *The Seattle Times* explained, "There is approximately 100,000 cubic yards of earth to be moved north of the portal of the tunnel, while at the south end there is some 10,000 cubic yards. At the north end the dirt … is being moved by hydraulic power, a permit having been secured from the city for the use of water from the Cedar River water system for that purpose … Heavy streams of water are thrown against the wall of earth, cutting it away and carrying it back to the tide land below … The earth is very hard in places and it will be necessary to do some blasting to loosen it up in order to facilitate the work of the water." Attached here is a view of a water cannon blasting the bluff in the first days of April 1903. **[214]** Remnants of the hillside shantytown are still evident on both the left of this scene and above its center. For most of these residents – the ones nearest the line of excavation – the days are numbered. Upper-right are the warehouses and pier sheds along Railroad Avenue (Alaskan Way). The landmark Miner Hotel, with the little corner tower, shows on the horizon above the center of the photograph. (It was the roost from which Anders Wilse recorded his late 1890s panorama of Railroad Avenue printed above. (As promised and for true grit we will point to another landmark described earlier. To the right of the Miner Hotel and blocks beyond it is the oversized chimney of the Seattle Steam Plant near Columbia and Western. In spite of the company's assurances that the



[216] Brighton Boat House at the "foot of battery"

[214] Opening the south portal for the railroad tunnel



[215] Ca. 1903 look to Denny Hotel and Hill from West Seattle

emissions from their modern coal-burning furnace would be hardly noticeable the spewing smoke seen here darkening the sky was commonplace. Believe it or not, for many years that stack was a chronic contributor to central business district ecology, darkening the red bricks and terra cotta tiles of Pioneer Square and the nearby financial district architecture. Surely some of that grit is still bonded with the chinks.)

Profile of Denny Hill with Cuts, Ravines, & Denny Hotel as Seen from West Seattle, ca. 1903

Another selected view looks across Elliott Bay from West Seattle to Denny Hill. **[215]** The fresh scar of the cut made into the waterfront bluff during the construction of the north approach to the tunnel shows just right of center. The excavation extends two and one-half blocks from Blanchard to the tunnel's north portal between Virginia and Steward Streets. Much of the cut is hidden behind the Pacific Coast Company's nearly new Orient Dock, far right. The dock is built parallel to the bay because as noted above and below (several times) the water off of Lenora Street is too deep to extend an efficient finger pier. Directly above the dock and still holding the south summit of Denny Hill is the Washington Hotel. A likely date for this scene is 1903, the year the hotel at last opened after looming empty for a dozen years. Since it is difficult to detect any evidence of the regrade on Second Avenue, which like the tunnel work was also began in 1903, this view was most likely recorded not very late in the year. Although the scene lacks the sharpness that would allow a close inspection of its parts it is still possible to make out the darkened recess of the Belltown Ravine between Blanchard and Bell Streets to the left of the excavation scar and just left of the scene's center.

Brighton Boat House Foot of Battery

We will digress for the moment from tunnel work to note that many of the boats in the flotilla harbored along the left half of this view from West Seattle are probably attached to the popular Brighton Boat House at the foot of Battery. The two-story boathouse itself – with widow walk for viewing races – is hidden behind the schooner at the far left border. (The attached cartoon of Fabre's boathouse appears in the 1903 Polk City Directory. **[216]** The attached photograph of the waterfront at Battery at least "hints" at the Brighton Boat House. **[217]**) When the proprietor Frank Fabre got his start in the early 1890s, the central waterfront already had a long tradition of recreational boating. In the 1892-93 Corbett Seattle City Directory, Fabre's establishment is one of five boathouses listed on the waterfront. Ten years later Fabre's facility is one of only two. By 1910 Fabre had had it with the pollution poured along his waterfront with the sluicing of Denny Hill. He unchained his boathouse, lifted anchor and moved it seven blocks north to the foot of Bay Street. In 1915, it was still one of only two facilities for recreational boating on the waterfront. The opening of the Lake Washington Ship Canal also opened up hundreds of miles of potential fresh water mooring and most boating – including the Seattle Yacht Club – moved to the lakes. Fabre then closed his waterfront landmark and returned to the craft he learned as a youth and never left, boat building. Frank Fabre may have first noticed the Denny Hill pollution in 1898 when First Avenue north of Pike Street was lowered with erosion from high-powered water cannons. Most likely he also registered some clouding of the waters with the 1903 excavation, both at the entrance to the tunnel and from the Second Avenue Regrade between Bell and Pike Streets that

began that year. In all instances, most of the eroded bank was simply sent in torrents into Elliott Bay. It is also possible that during the actual excavation of the tunnel – a process that continued for a year and a half – some of the dirt hauled out on narrow gauged tracks also wound up in the bay. Even the considerable part of it that the practical railroads used as fill beside the railroad trestles running below Denny Hill would have continued to erode into the bay, for there would be no seawall to protect it until the mid- 1930s.

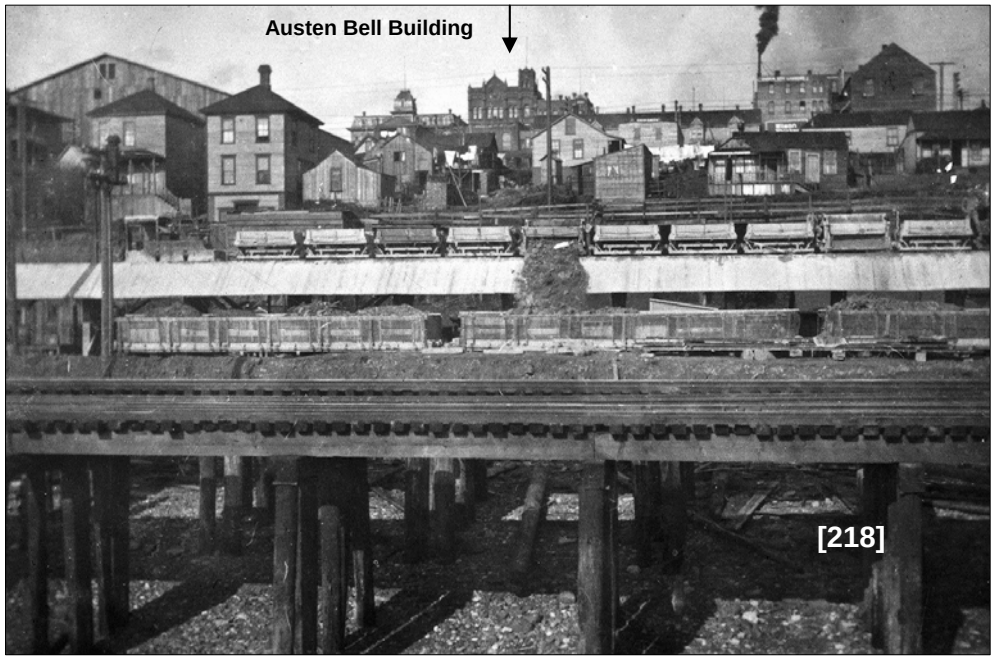
Tunnel Contributions 1903-05

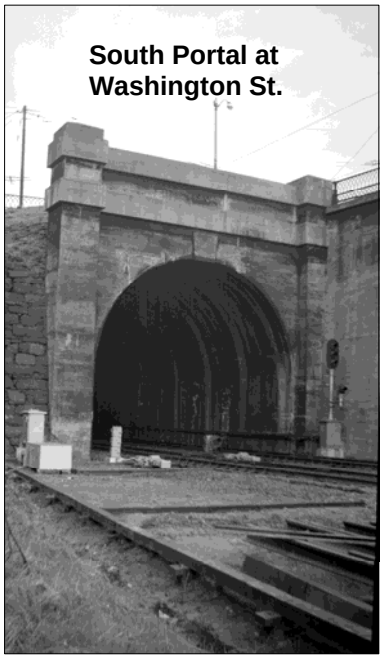
An estimated 500 thousand cubic yards of dirt was removed from the tunnel. A newspaper report at the time noted that the railroad planned that "the dirt from the tunnel will be used in filling in the adjacent tide flats." At least half of this wound up on the tideflats south of King Street where the *Great Northern* had purchased a good many acres for the development of its depot and railway yards and was scrambling to reclaim more. For the dirt carried from the north end of the tunnel, the "adjacent tidelands" may have also been anywhere along the *Great Northern* trestle as far as Smith Cove where the *G.N.* was also the biggest player and developer. The accompanying photograph looks east towards the Belltown skyline between Bell and Battery Streets. **[218]** It shows a line of the smaller cars that were used in carrying dirt from the tunnel. One of them is caught in the act of dumping its cargo into a larger railroad car, no doubt for distribution at one of the tideland targets. Of course the paralleling *Seattle and Northern* (the renamed *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern*) could have also been a target for protective fill, for the *Northern Pacific* was a partner with the *Great Northern* in the building of the tunnel. These are the same cars and electric motors that helped with tunneling under Stevens Pass for the *Great Northern*.

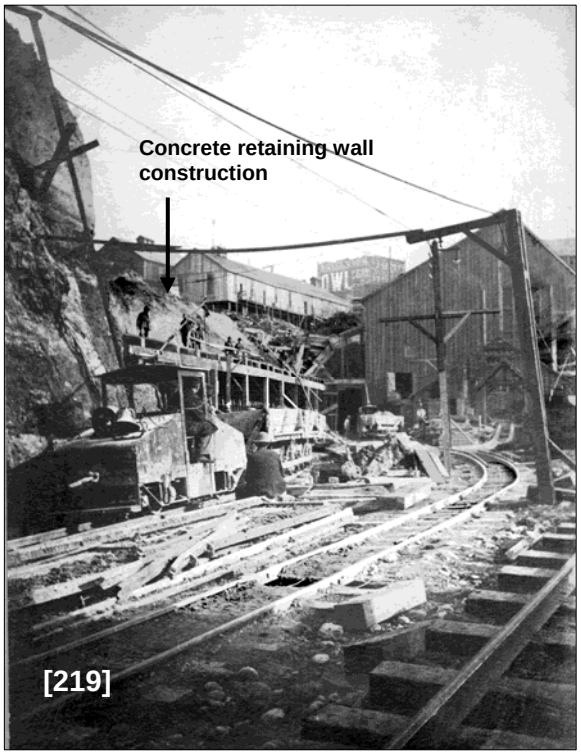
Tunnel Statistics & Casualties

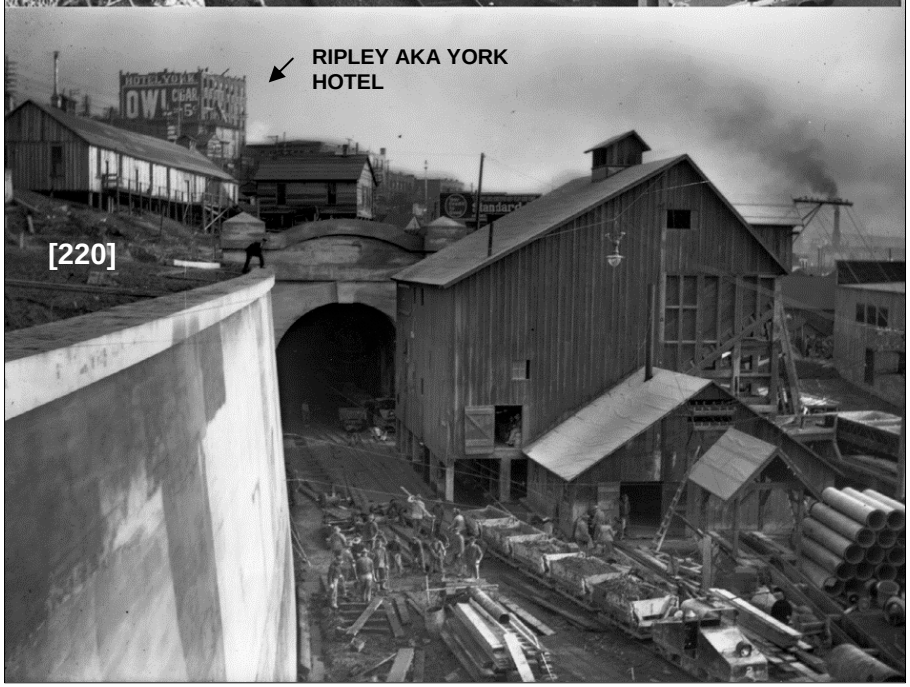
The opening of the bank for the double track that shuttled trains from the waterfront trestles to the tunnel went quicker than expected and the excavation at the north portal proper began in May. Thereafter, a force of 700 to 1000 men advanced with the boring from both ends. The workers may have taken some pride in the understanding that they were building the highest – at 25.8 feet – and widest – at 30 feet – railroad tunnel in the world. And when they met a year and a half later, they were off by a mere one-eighth inch at the ceiling and one-fourth inch at the walls. The entire tube was lined with concrete from 3 &1/2 to 4 feet thick. The deepest elevation was 110 feet below street grade at the intersection of 4th Avenue and Spring Street. It was not too deep, however, to upset the Library board. Nearby they were building the new Carnegie library immediately above the tunnel. While a little litigation ensued, thereafter whenever trains used the tunnel there was some rumbling in the library's basement stacks. The largest casualty to the railroad tunnel was near its north portal – the ornate five-story York (AKA Ripley) Hotel at the northwest corner of First Avenue and Pike Street. As already noted, the undermining of the hotel's foundations was irreversible and the hotel was razed in November of 1904.

The York Hotel appears on the horizon (with the Owl Cigar sign on its north façade) in both of the accompanying photographs that also reveal the opening to the north portal. In the scene recorded from the level of the rails work on the concrete retaining wall is still in progress. **[219]** The second view is photographed (somehow) from the top of the completed retaining wall and looks into the dark recess of the completed north portal.


Austen Bell Building
[218]


South Portal at
Washington St.


Concrete retaining wall
construction
[219]


RIPLEY AKA YORK
HOTEL
[220]

[220] The electric engines and their small rolling stock are also included in both scenes. In the later view from the top of the wall, Seattle Steam's smokestack near Western and Columbia can be found on the far right by following its black trail.

Although only 5,141 feet long, the new tunnel soon earned a reputation as not only the tallest and widest railroad tunnel in the world, but also as the longest. (This joke is so corny that it deserves whatever abuse the reader may wish to give it or the writer.) The tunnel is the longest because it runs between Virginia and Washington. It was both at Virginia and Washington – streets – where the lining crews left the completed tunnel on January 2, 1905. This was one day after James Hill began construction on the railroad palace hinted at thirteen years earlier when the "empire builder" was acting as the wise farmer and advising the locals to wait on for a while. This Union Depot, soon better known as the King Street Depot, was opened in May 1906 – but without fanfare – to a train that was twelve hours late.

"Get the Tidelands Habit – It Will Make You Money While You Sleep"
H. H. Dearborn

The *Great Northern's* preparations to build on the tideflats south of King Street were accompanied by the usual glee club of agents warbling over any land that the *GN* might want or be near. "Papa Hill" was the smart example to be followed. "That Grand Union Depot will surely be built, says Papa Hill. Who can doubt the Scriptures after that?" was H. H. Dearborn's advice. "Get the Tideland Habit, It Will Make You Money While You Sleep." **[221]** Dearborn (of the street, of course) is the real estate name most often identified with the development of the tidelands. Another of his several clever slogans, "We Hear Tide Lands Are Rising," has the double meaning of rising in wealth and also in relationship to datum. Still the dogged length of the railroad's preparations made investors queasy. Three days before the tunnel work began in the spring of 1903 the *P-I* noted that "The inquiry for tidelands is good, but only a few sales are made, many deals dependent on how soon the railroads will commence on their terminal grounds … The *Great Northern* is still after property down on the flats and is quietly buying whenever opportunity offers." In fact, the railroad was so quiet about its purchases that unbeknownst sometimes to each other, *GN* agents wound up in bidding contests for the same piece of tidelands. A sampler of more slogans suggests the excitement. "Fortune wrested from the tides." "Making the tidelands habitable." "How Seattle pushed back the sea." "Future factory land." "A new city on the tidelands." "Seattle's new smokestack neighborhood."

Tideland Statistics; Alarms & Smokestacks

How much tideland there was to lift depended upon who was measuring. Most often the size was put somewhere between 1,500 and 1,800 acres. The further the surveying crept towards West Seattle, the more acres were added, reaching well beyond 2000. This land was submerged with from 8 to 16 feet of water at high tide, although largely exposed during low tide. Sometimes in a fog ships would wind up stuck there between tides. The most famous example of this was during the delivery of "Denny's Bell" for the new Territorial University in 1861. Strapped to the deck of the ship carrying it, the bell missed the hazards in the Straits of Magellan, but also missed Yesler's Wharf. Lost in a fog, the bark *Brontes* ran aground on the tideflats. Fortunately the captain remembered what he

was delivering. It was the first time the clapper sounded and it came from the tideflats making a call for help. – (If the wind was right Denny Bell could be heard in Renton. The bell was so loud that it was said that it could wake the dead and perhaps also the leisure class.) Had the tide been in, the *Brontes* might have instead bumped against Beacon Hill. It rose steeply from the tideflats as high as 355 feet. Since the pioneer city had no ideal dry space to build a wholesale and manufacturing district or railway terminals and switching facilities it was expected early on that the tideflats would someday need to be reclaimed as its "smokestack neighborhood" or industrial park. (The move of the Stetson and Post Lumber Mill above pilings south of King Street in the mid 1870s was, as recorded above, the first big smoke producer on the tideflats. The accompanying photo taken from the King Street Coal Wharf in the early 1880s looks over the Stetson and Post site to Beacon Hill.) **[222]**

The Beach Road: So Vexatious & Expensive

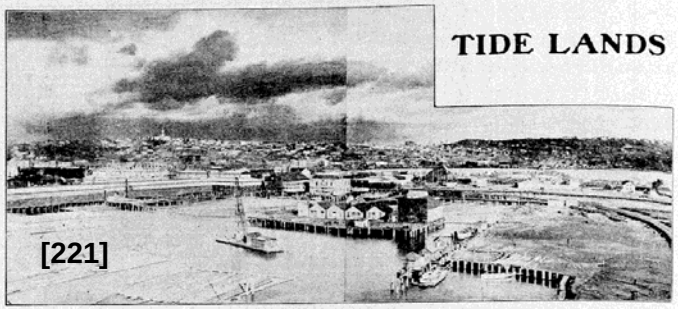
Before they were made tractable first with trestles and later with fill, the tideflats south of the pioneer village were an impediment to overland travel. In his typed manuscript *A Chronological History of Seattle,* Thomas Prosch describes the first attempts to build a way around the tideflats without having to climb Beach Hill and walk south along its ridge. "The Beach Road as it was known for 20 years, had its beginning at this time (1862) … George Holt was paid $100 for damage done his place, his being the first recorded case of damages in consequence of road making in King County. The Beach Road between town and the Duwamish Valley followed the meander or shoreline, occupying a narrow strip at the foot of the bluff next to the beach and its name was given to distinguish it from the road on top of the hill to the east. By working it annually it was passable in the summer, but in winter, owing to streams of water crossing it, slides from the bank and mud all over, it was always in bad condition and frequently impassable. The railroads of later days were built alongside of much of it, a little to the west and on safer ground. The streets of the city have long since taken the place of the beach road, so vexatious and expensive to the citizens of the 60s and 70s." [Prosch wrote his helpful chronology in the late 1890s.]

Boxes & Bulls Below Beacon Hill

Attached are two early 20th Century views from Beacon Hill. The first looks west in line with Spokane Street. **[223]** The offshore Grant Street Trestle (AKA 9th Avenue and later Airport Way) that passes through this scene (left to right) was the first high and dry (from the tides) replacement for the Beach Road. Just above the center of the ca.1903 view is the Seattle Box Company facility, one of the first businesses to locate on this southern portion of the tideflats. The second scene looks down on the Frye Packing House from a stump-strewn slop on Beacon Hill that is now part of the I-5 Freeway. **[224]** Frye was another of the earliest manufacturers to relocate on the tideflats. It required nearly 1000 pilings to rush this first tidelands rendering plant to completion in late 1894. To the east of the Frye plant, two trestles are shown – one for wagons and the other for trolleys. The plant sits between what was later developed as Stacy and Walker Streets.

The Seize The Bay Way

As noted several times above, the greater pioneer hindrance to the use of all tidelands was that they belonged to the federal government and



PAPA HILL

HAS PAID US SEVENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS CASH FOR FOUR LOTS IN BLOCK 200, SEATTLE TIDE LANDS.

IS MR. HILL A BOOMER?

THIS PROPERTY COST US SEVEN HUNDRED DOLLARS SIX YEARS AGO. EASTERN MANUFACTURERS HAVE INVESTED ABOUT $200,000 RECENTLY IN THIS VICINITY, NOTABLY PART OF BLOCK 21, MAYNARD'S ADDITION, FOR WHICH THEY PAID $90,000. SEE REAL ESTATE RECORDS.

PAPA HILL SAYS

WALL STREET SPECULATORS CAN MARK ANY PRICES THEY PLEASE ON THE BLACK BOARD FOR HIS PROPERTY, INCLUDING THE TIDE LANDS, THAT IT IS BOUGHT AND PAID FOR AND NO ONE WILL GET IT AWAY UNLESS THEY KNOCK HIM DOWN WITH A CLUB.

That Grand Union Depot will surely be built, says Papa Hill. Who can doubt the Scriptures after that?

He just about knows our $500,000 worth of South Seattle Tide Lands are for sale NOW at less than half their real value. They are also free from incumbrances. We own 75 filled and unfilled Tide Land lots. They are good for an annual advance of at least **fifty per cent.**

WE HEAR TIDE LANDS ARE ARISING.

H. H. DEARBORN & CO.

OWNERS.

ROOM "C" HALLER BUILDING. 805 SECOND AVENUE.

any improvements above them were legally insecure. What was a pioneer to do? All variety of attempts to go around this inhibition proved ineffective except the simplest one used by Henry Yesler – just do it. Other tactics like the Territorial Legislature's Oyster Act of 1867 failed. The oyster trick was to grant riparian rights for their cultivation, but before statehood the territory had no riparian rights to give. The federal government's Civil War issuance of special land claims privileges to veterans named Valentine and McKee Script added some confusion to the new state's deliberations once it got the submerged land from the feds, but in the end it was more like an irritation than an injury. Rather, it was the Henry Yesler example that worked -- the "Seize the Bay" way. As we know, the railroads were also good at this capturing, starting on the Elliott Bay tideflats with the *Seattle and Walla Walla* and followed by the ram's horn and *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* along the waterfront. As noted (far) above, all of this was both legally presumptive and ultimately effective.

The Return of the "Salt Water Lunatics"

Of course, the winners in this seizing, like Judge Thomas Burke, were disdainful of the losers or latecomers – the many pile-driving maniacs that battled across the tideflats in the years and months preceding statehood hoping to drive home a precedent. We may remember from above Burke's letter to a friend in 1888 (quoted by Robert Nesbit in his Burke biography "He Built Seattle") where he describes them as "a swarm of salt water lunatics, of high and low degree." The Seattle newspapers were sprinkled with wild west stories of tideland battles like that in the *P-I* Jan. 8, 1889 issue between Wickstrom and Kittinger. "Building demolished on the disputed Oyster beds. Yesterday about twenty men, understood to be in the employ of Peter Wickstrom, went to the claim whose ownership is in dispute between Mr. Wickstrom and Mr. C H. Kittinger, and began to drop down the pilling under a small building being erected by Messrs Allen and Nelson for Mr. Kittinger. The men at work on the building number only four and they were able to do nothing against the large attacking force. One of them however, came to the Commercial Street extension on a raft and sent word to Mr. Kittinger but before anything could be done the piles and buildings were torn down." Having come much later than Henry Yesler, Kittinger was not so fortunate as was the pioneer in his squatting and jumping.

Those Battling Harbor Line Commissions One & Two

Feeling the panache of its new pants, the state's Constitutional Convention declared that all tideland and all lands up to high water within the banks of navigable rivers and lakes belonged to the state. Furthermore the convention decreed that the state had jurisdiction over the waterfronts of all incorporated cities and towns. As already noted, the state's first Harbor Line Commission acted accordingly – all persons, like Henry Yesler, having wharves on the harbors or rivers were trespassers. In retrospect this attitude may seem to have been made for failure, but at the time the courts supported it all the way to the U.S. Supremes. But the politics of delay can bring rich rewards from new administrations. In Washington State, the ascension of Governor and Seattle Citizen John H. McGraw (1893-1897) and the work of his own Second Harbor Line Commission put Henry Yesler safely back on his wharf – or would have had the pioneer not sold his pier to the *Northern Pacific Railroad* and also, of course, had he

not died. (But by McGraw's figuring, it was the railroads that both counted and contributed.) The new commission advised the legislature that in those cases where tidelands or harbor line possession had been undisputed for a sufficient term of years, title would be given by the state with the provision that all wharves and improvements be adjusted to the established harbor lines. Of course, Burke and his camarilla managed to move the "established" harbor lines several times. The majority of cases were not as venerable as Yesler's. However, these upland owners still got long-term leases from the state at rates that were not set to inhibit business or pay for the building of bridges. (It was at this juncture that the wagon-wheel opportunity noted above fell to Seattle City Engineer R.H. Thomson and rules were set for both the attitude and length of waterfront wharves whenever their owners could get around to it.)

Smokestack Neighborhood

About the time that the Second Harbor Line Commission was beginning to shape the sands for both the squatters and the jumpers, the *Argus*, a Seattle Weekly that swayed between booming and muckraking, estimated that there were "about 500 owners of improvements on the tidelands and on the upland properties who would have the first rights." The paper also revealed its vision of what would be created once the official tidelands map were filed (March 15, 1895). "Probably no one with a business eye has viewed the tidelands which stretch across the head of Elliott Bay without being struck by the vast possibilities that lie undeveloped therein. Upon this new land would spring up myriad of lumber and shingle mills, warehouses, elevators and industrial developments of many kinds whose smokestacks would rival the firs of the neighboring hills." The Argus was standing with the "smokestack neighborhood." **[225]**

Gov. Eugene Semple's Dredging: 1895

Since many of these uplanders were too poor to develop their "rights," they sometimes partnered, but more often waived. Whichever, here was an opportunity for the former territorial governor Eugene Semple. In 1893 the state legislature wrote an ordinance allowing Semple to dredge both east and west waterways at the mouth of the Duwamish River and to be paid for by assessing the new land that was made in the process. Semple was to be given a fair price for this work plus a fair profit. But Semple did not spring to his dredging for, as we know, 1893 was not a good year to start anything formidable. But after two years of waiting and preparing, Semple began the first concerted effort to fill the tidelands by extending First Avenue south from King Street. His ambitiously named Seattle and Lake Washington Waterway Company turned on the pumps of the dredge *Anaconda* on July 29, 1895. But only after Semple made the event a historic one with speeches and band music did the dredge begin making new industrial land south of the commercial district out of the bottom muck sucked through its tubes. After adding 175 acres of new land to either side of First Avenue South of King Street, the dredging was discontinued – temporarily – in 1897. (We will note that Gov. Semple's labors followed after two score and two years of informal and random reclamation work on the tidelands beginning in 1853 with the contributions of Yesler's Mill, and later joined by others from scavenger wagons, construction waste, and railroad droppings.)

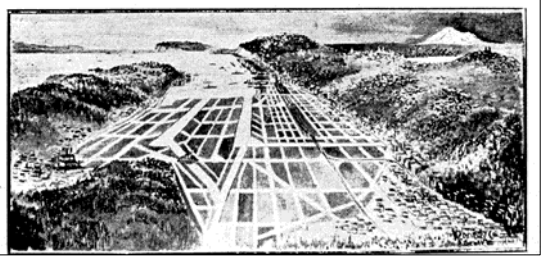
Real Estate Department

1786 POLK'S SEATTLE CITY DIRECTORY--1909.

TIDE LANDS of Seattle

Tidelands have been, and for the next five years will be, the premises where more profits can be obtained for the same amount of money invested than any other property in the City of Seattle.

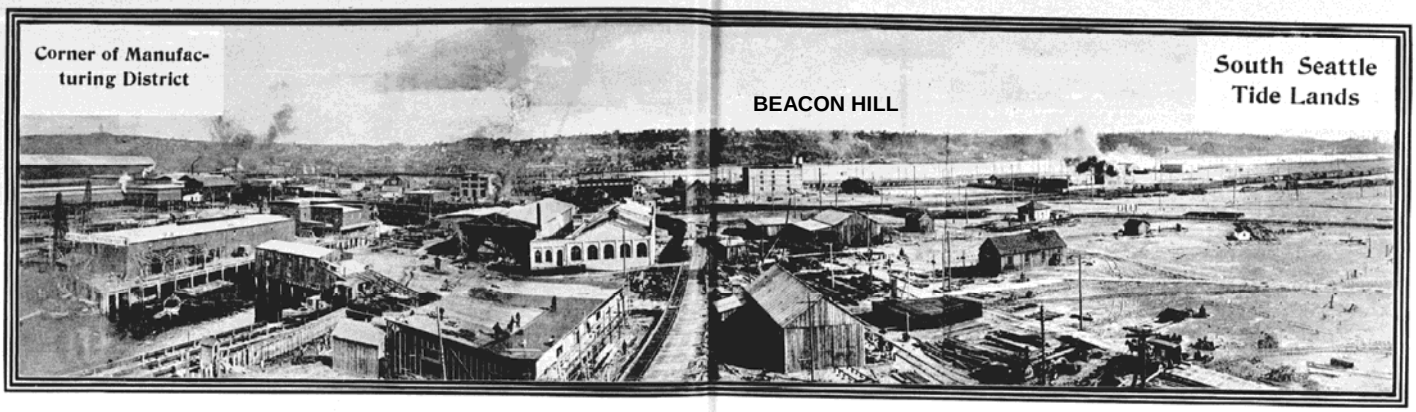
R. COOPER WILLIS, Seller of Tidelands



WE ARE TIE OWNERS

of Seventy-Five Filled and Unfilled Tide Land Lots for Sa or we will Lease for less than 5 per cent. of their value

WE PAY ALL TAXESND ASSESSMENTS



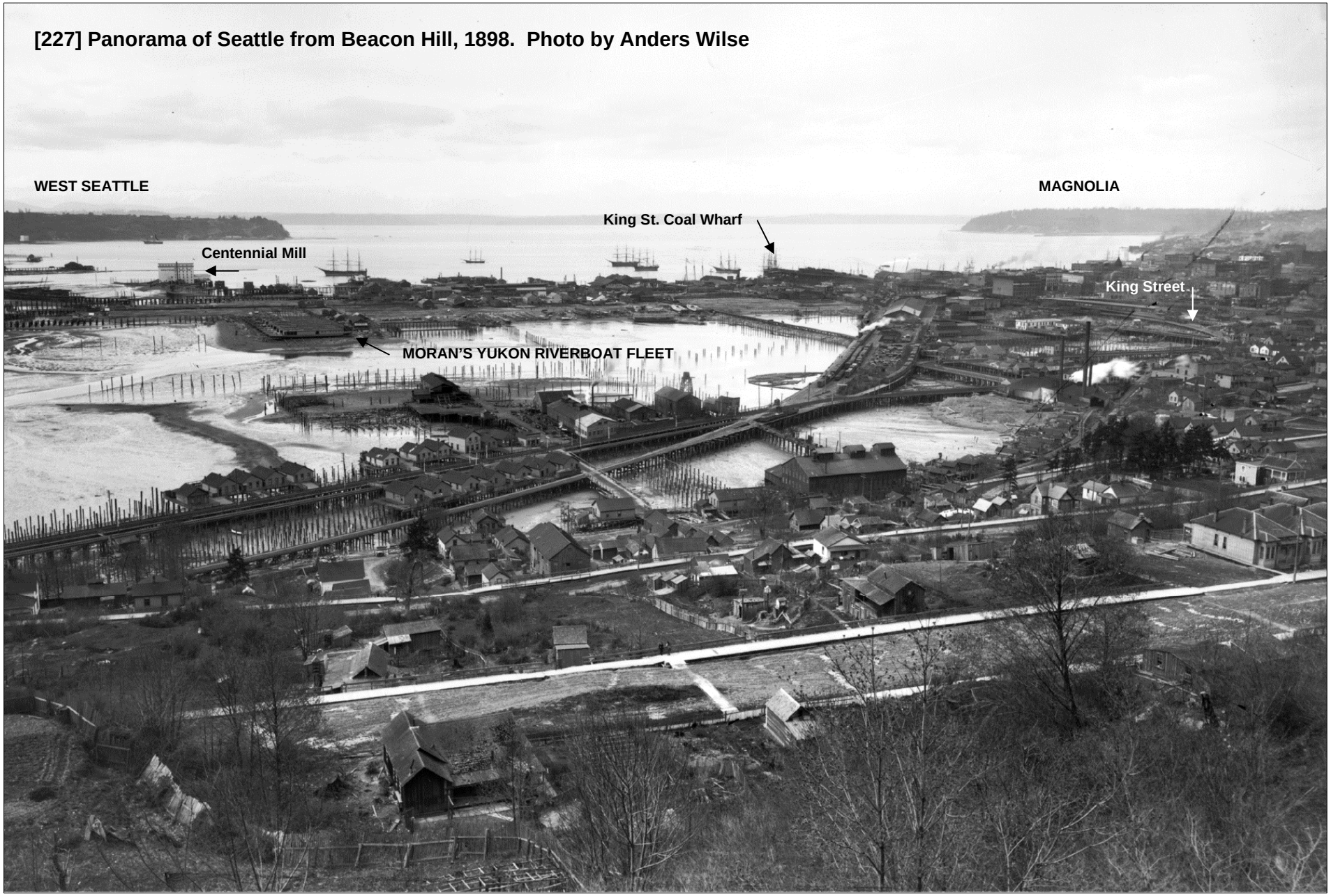
WHY LONGER PAY BIG RENTALS? BUSINESS MEN SHOULD SECURE SITES HERE AND BE THEIR OWN LANDLORDS. ADVANCE IN LAND ALONE WILL MAKE YOU RICH. THE RAILROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN PROGRESS ON THEIR TIDE LANDS, INCLUDING THE TUNNEL AND UNION PASSENGER STATION, WILL COST OVER $4,000,000. THERE ACRES OF AVAILABLE LANDS NOW FILLED, (PART OF WHICH IS FOR SALE.) TIDE LANDS HAVE ADVANCED 100 PER CENT. ANNUALLY FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS, AND ARE SURE TO ADVANCE AT LEAST 50 PER CENT. ANNUFOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THEY ARE THE MOST PROFITABLE INVESTMENT ON EARTH. ABSTRACTS SHOWING PERFECT TITLE FURNISHED FREE.

WE IEAR

TIDE LANDS ARE ARISING

H. H. DEARBORN & CO.

[227] Panorama of Seattle from Beacon Hill, 1898. Photo by Anders Wilse



The land made by the Seattle and Lake Washington Waterway Company and the many other contributions that followed it conformed to engineer Virgil Bogue's tideland plats for blocks, lots and streets. If there were competing claims or applications for the new land – and there were sometimes several claims on even single lots – the Board of State Land Commissioners decision was final except in cases of appeal. The roughly merged two views attached here look east across Semple's made land to the ridge joining First and Beacon Hills and nearly in line with Charles Street. The dredger's pipeline that joins the two photographs is spewing its contributions left of center. Both scenes are dated May 1896 and so were recorded mid-way in the first period of the *Anaconda's* dredging. And both were probably photographed the same day and from within a few feet of each other. **[226]**

Andres Wilse's 1898 Panorama from Beacon Hill

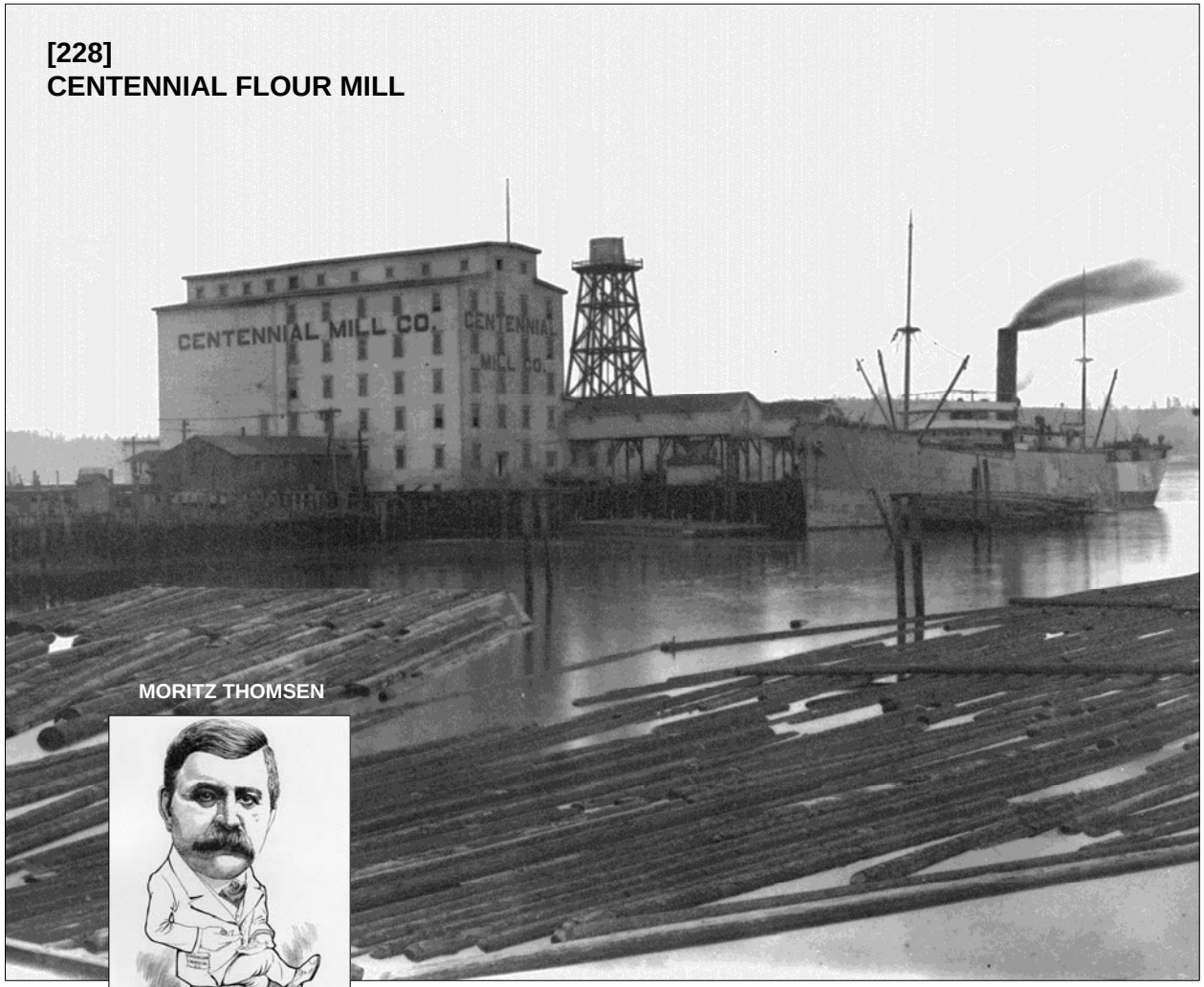
Crossing the 1896 dredging scene is the wooden wall of the railroad trestle and its warehouses. That trestle, its appointments, and much more are revealed in what is the best photographic record of tideland changes since the 1889 fire, the Norwegian photographer Anders Wilse's 1898 panorama from Beacon Hill. **[227]** One of the many revealing parts of this Wilse record is the industrious clutter in Gas Cove, far right. (Attached illustration #96 shows a detail of Gas Cove lifted from Wilse's pan. Near it are other cove scenes also recorded from Beacon Hill.) In 1889, the plant and its dock were still lapped by the tides and nestled beside the curving Columbia and Puget Sound King Street trestle that, the reader may remember, James Colman directed to shore in 1879 in order to better escape the wood-eating Teredos. In Wilse's view the fill dumped along the base of that trestle blocks the tides from reaching whatever is to the north of it, including the Gas Plant. The panorama is also a revealing display of the made land that has been formed to either side of First Avenue south of King Street. Two landmarks (or rather thirteen) show near the southern end of that fill and close to the left border of the photograph. To the east side of First (towards the photographer) Robert Moran's 12 flat-bottomed riverboat steamers, noted earlier, are being built at the southeast corner of Semple's made land. And beyond it rises the white and multi-storied Centennial Mill.

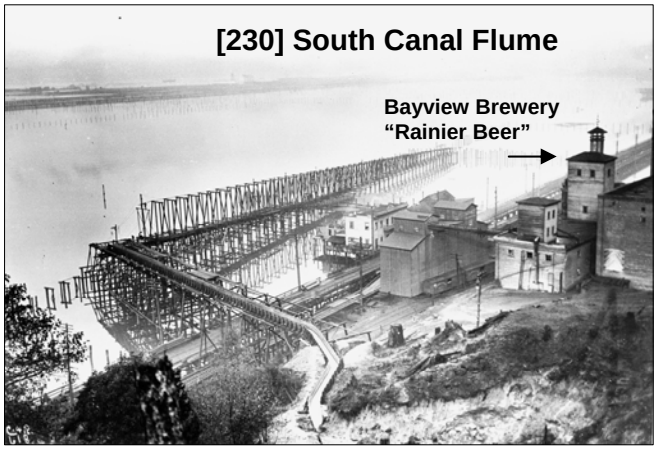
Moritz Thomsen: Tideland Trailblazer

The Centennial Flour Mill was one of the early opportunists on the new land. In the summer of 1896, Moritz Thomsen took to the shallow tidelands south of Pioneer Square in a rowboat to visit the still-submerged site of his planned mill. During the summer of 1897, an island of earth dredged from the bottom of the bay raised Thomsen's five and three-quarters acres two feet above extreme high tide. Within a year the white mass of his flourmill rose like a sail above the surrounding tides. Some of his larger smokestack neighbors were J.M. Frink's Washington Iron Works, the Denny Clay Company, and the Vulcan Iron Works. (The ca. 1902 close-up of the mill attached here looks southwest from near what is now the intersection of First Avenue S. and S. Royal Brougham Way. **[228]**. A ca.1902 tidelands panorama taken from the mill is also attached. **[229]**)

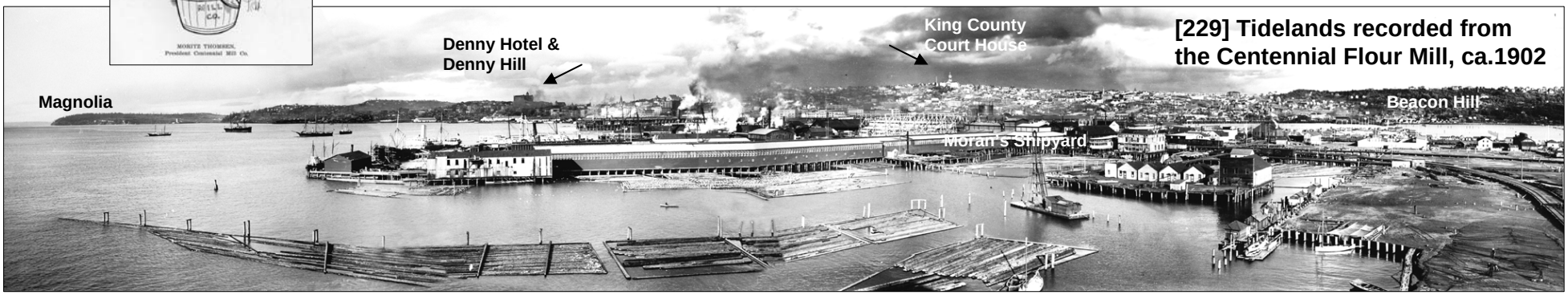
The South Canal through Beacon Hill to Lake Washington

Months after Moran's fleet was skidded from the tideflats and steamed north for Alaska, Semple resumed his dredging. During this period the Seattle and Lake Washington Waterway


[228]
CENTENNIAL FLOUR MILL
CENTENNIAL MILL CO.
CENTENNIAL MILL CO.
MORITZ THOMSEN


[230] South Canal Flume
Bayview Brewery
"Rainier Beer"

[231] South Canal Erosion


[229] Tidelands recorded from
the Centennial Flour Mill, ca.1902
Denny Hotel &
Denny Hill
King County
Court House
Magnolia
Beacon Hill
Moran's Shipyard

Company had its eye more on Lake Washington than on First Avenue. The same *P-I* article of Dec. 2, 1898 that announced the resumption of dredging added that the "great task of filling in the south tide lands [had] begun." During the 1895 ceremonies that were prelude to the *Anaconda's* first work, Semple told the assembled that in "about five years" his company would invite them all back "to witness the opening of the locks that will admit a great warship into Lake Washington." This southern opening for dreadnaughts was to be created not with dredging but by washing a part of Beacon Hill into the bay while digging a trench to Lake Washington. The site chosen for cutting the South Canal was between Spokane Street and the Bayview Brewery (later Rainer Beer) that was just north of it. The company explained that borrowing from Beacon Hill was also a necessity for filling the tideflats and answered the question "whether the evil of the mutilation of Beacon Hill is not immensely overbalanced by the benefit flowing from the filling of the tideflats" by explaining that "there are about 590 acres north of the canal waterway and east of the East Waterway that cannot be filled under the existing scheme from any other source than the hill." Several photographs of this work show the Bayview Brewery, the flume built to carry the eroded hill onto the tideflats, and the cut itself. **[230]** The impressive 4-inch thick jets of Eugene Semple's water cannons reached 300-feet in the air and "when turned onto the side of the hill" the *P-I* reported, "mud, sand and gravel crumble away like ashes before a cyclone." In those "ashes" lay Semple's defeat.

Beacon Hill declined to be carved into the neat trench that the crusading company had imagined. **[231]** The repeated cave-ins destroyed the project – the slides and politics. Semple held his dream of a canal long after almost everyone else had abandoned it and considered his dogged going on as a "specious and mischievous undertaking." By 1900, it was the consensus of both the shrewd and virtuous that the proper route for reaching Lake Washington was through the waterways of Ballard: Shilshole and Salmon Bays. Burke, of course, was with this group, perhaps because he owned much of the waterfront along the way. Another problem with Semple's path was a variation of the same charge that City Engineer Reginald Thomson had confronted James Hill with in the early 1890s. Hill had wanted to run tracks onto the tidelands directly from the south end of the central waterfront. Both Hill's tracks and Semple's canal would mount such formidable impediments to north-south traffic through the city that a great system of grade separations would be required in one case over the tracks and in the other over the canal. The solution for the tracks was the tunnel. For the canal it was abandonment. Eugene Semple's greatest contribution – besides filling a few hundred of the tideland acres – was encouraging those who disagreed with him to organize and perhaps, sooner than later, entice locals to contribute land to the north canal. Semple may have also moved the federal government to finally get serious with the canal titillations it had been sending Seattle since the 1850s, and from very early on the feds leaned toward the north route.

The Bremerton Alternative: The Puget Sound Naval Shipyard

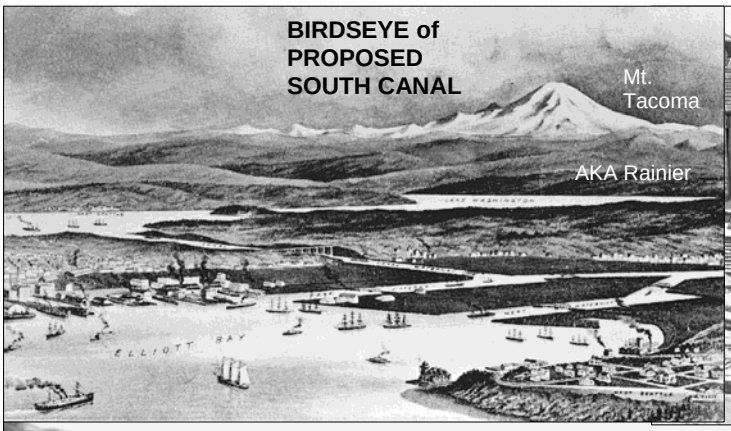
Ex-governor Semple was also wrong about the "great warship." As he already knew in 1895, the U.S. Navy had chosen Port Orchard for its naval station instead of Seattle's lakes, not because it did not prefer the fresh water – it did – but because the Navy wanted to act and in 1891, the year it committed to Bremerton, the canal was still a speculation. **[232]** Also, while a fresh water harbor for dreadnaughts would have also been less exposed to

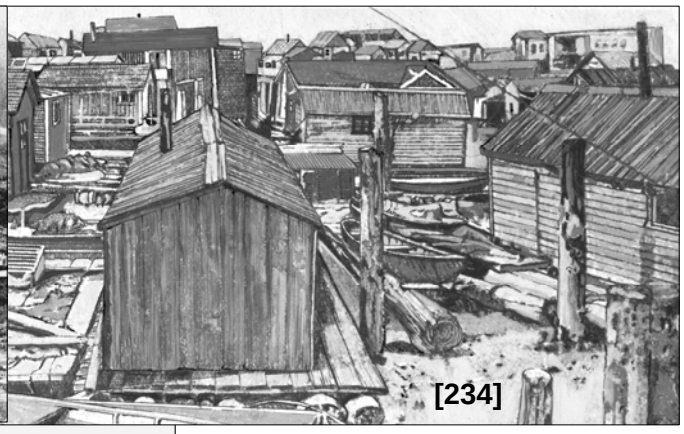
enemy attack, the route to it – the canal and its locks – was vulnerable to a single act of sabotage that could leave a fleet stranded – and/or high and dry – in an emergency for months. In 1901, the Navy took the next step of designating its Bremerton facility as the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. Soon after, the federal government made a semi-commitment to the north canal when it began dredging Ballard's bays and straightening Ross Creek, the outlet from Lake Union. The full commitment came in 1910 and the work on Chittenden Locks a year later. **[233]** Semple held to his hopes for the Beacon Hill route until 1906 when his peers in the Seattle Chamber of Commerce pressured him to return the South Canal right-of-way to King County. After nearly twenty years of an energetic can-do public/private performance (he was Territorial Governor from 1887 to 1889) Eugene Semple withdrew.

Tideland Development And The Squatters - 1902

Months before the *Great Northern* and *Northern Pacific* agreed to walk hand in hand down the tunnel to the altar of their Union Depot, the *Dailey Bulletin* for Jan 6, 1902 noted that the "list for new street grades from Railroad Avenue east to 6th Avenue under the Great Northern Plan will be taken up at a new meeting of the Board of Public Works." Although almost certainly few of them read this notice, the many squatters on both the tidelands and reclaimed lands south of King Street were vitally interested in its message. Their situation was similar to that which would transpire in the northern section of the central waterfront when the railroads at last made their move in early 1903. There below Denny Hill, a low-rent and no-rent tradition of perhaps a quarter-century – or much longer if you include the Indian presence at Baq'baqwab – was soon driven to other parts of the community. The principal difference was that on the tideflats south of King Street, the down and/or out community had gotten much the larger and often more sophisticated as well. (Attached is an early example of a screened – and retouched – printing of a news photograph whose subject is a section of this crowded community of sheds on the tidelands. **[234]**) On December 5, 1902, four months before work on the tunnel began, the *Post-Intelligencer* made its own analysis about what had to be done with this southern community in the interests of a "great northwest."

> THEY MUST MOVE: END of SQUATTERS' RULE on the sand spit. They constitute the last impediment to the settlement of the terminal problem. Though the objections of the city, of companies and of individuals have been met there remains the work of clearing inhabitants from the sand spit that the terminals of two transcontinental lines may be enlarged to meet the growth of the great northwest. All other disagreements over ways and means have been settled amicably, but the last one threatens to bring on open hostilities. The man whose arrest was arranged for yesterday said his house was his castle, and that he was rapidly converting it into an arsenal. He believed he would have at his back an army of outraged people – people from whom an inalienable prerogative has been taken. Since time immemorial these people have lived upon the sand spit, and before them the Indians held sway. For years and years the sand spit, which is south of Dearborn Street and east of Occidental Ave. has been the abode of squatters. The police have scarcely attempted much restraint upon the population. Indians, whites, Chinese, Negroes and twenty-five nationalities


BIRDSEYE of
PROPOSED
SOUTH CANAL
Mt.
Tacoma
AKA Rainier
ELLIOTT BAY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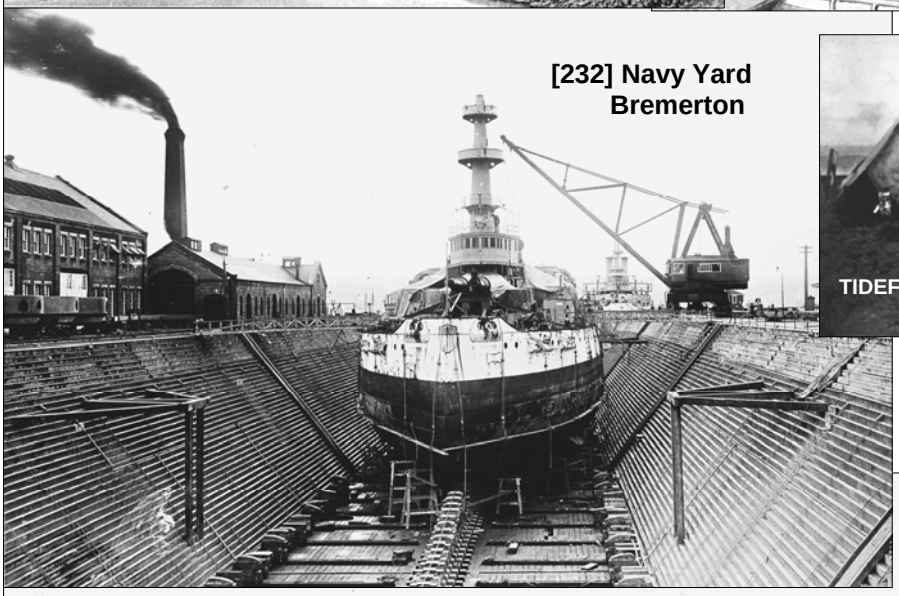
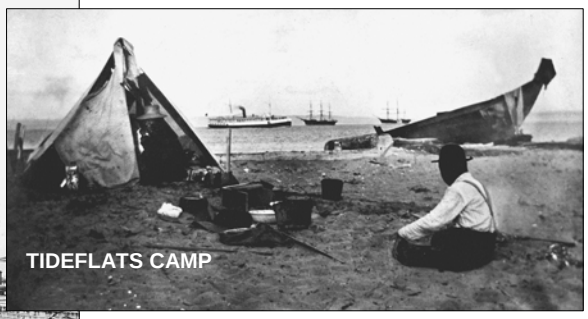

[232] Navy Yard
Bremerton


TIDEFLATS CAMP

[233] Construction
Chittenden Locks
Ballard

> mingle together without race distinction. In shanties, lean-tos, cabins and hovels the people live, and theretofore there has been no attempt upon their liberties, or if so any attempt has been rebuffed. But now their doom is sounded. They must seek other habitations where their presence will not interfere with the growth of Seattle or the rights of property. John Lee Harris … straightway began gathering in shotguns. Last night he was prepared to sleep there surrounded with guns … It is the intention of the railway company now that it has acquired a number of blocks of the tide flat property in that vicinity, to clear it of all inhabitants, as work upon the tracks of the terminals, the buildings etc. must soon begin. To teach these people that they do not own the ground, the Railroad Company has been offering them leases from month to month, through the rental was in some cases but 10 cents and in others 25 cents per month. But this idea of paying tribute to any one was decidedly against the principles of the majority, which coolly refused and used profanity.

Soon after the *Post-Intelligencer's* decree, *The Seattle Times* for Dec. 23 1902 approached the crowded tideflats like visiting an exotic camp of huckster aborigines. "Peter the Great no more certainly laid the foundation for the Muscovite capital when he started the work of filling the Nova marshes than has Seattle her own great future when she initiated the fill upon the tideflats. There are probably not less than 2,000 such shacks scattered over the flats south of the city. Those will all have to give way to more pretentious structures when the fill is completed. The new made land is a favorite haunt for the Siwash whenever he is in town. In hop-picking time he always finds a snug corner on the sand to pitch his tent and here he enjoys the holiday season of his life."

The Daily Bulletin, the organ of the Seattle business community, gave a report on the tidelands that avoided its squatters – except the immoral ones by implication – and went rapidly to the old old question of what was or was not selling and why. The issue of Jan 17, 1903 used that narrative form so popular on the business page – and we offer it here, perhaps, for the first time in verse.

> The market went up so fast
> That it had to descend with a crash,
> But now it is rising again
> At a rate set by reasonable men.

> The wholesale district, south of Yesler, has benefited much since the abolition of dance halls. A great many buildings will be altered and remodeled, fitting the district solely for legitimate business. There is but little property for sale in that section now. The tidelands have remained quiet for a couple of months. This is probably due to the speculative features that prevailed there for a year or more. It was felt that prices were advancing at an abnormal rate and that unless checked, a great many would be caught in the reaction that was bound to set in. The check came suddenly after astounding advances in property on some of the leading streets. Since then tidelands, except in well-located spots, have been a drug (sic) on the market.

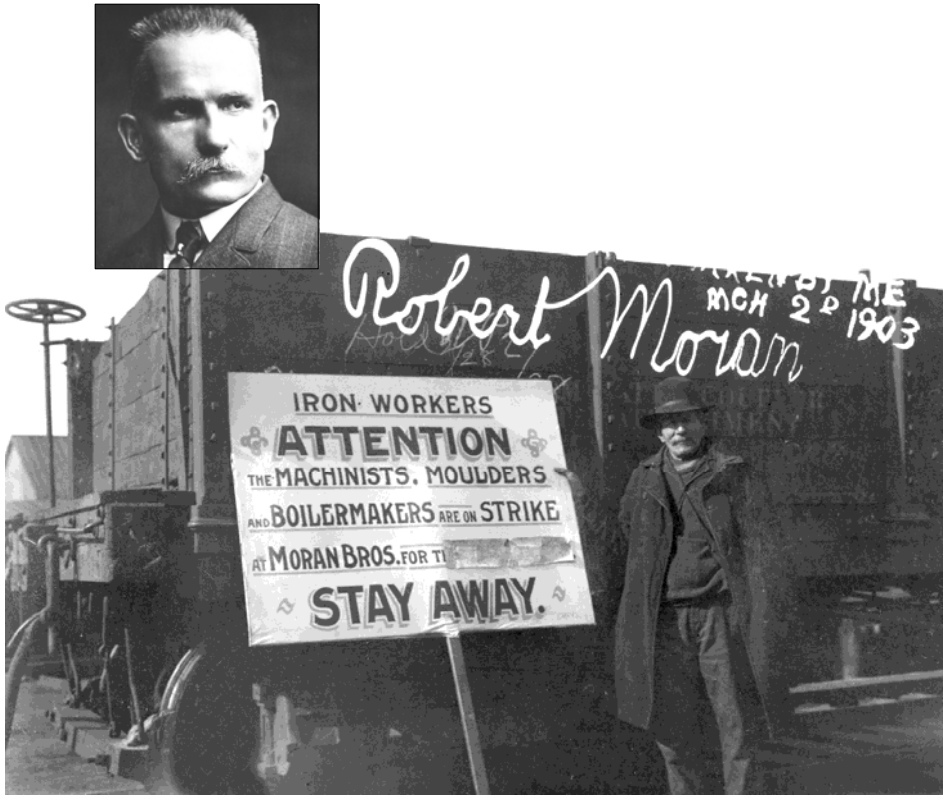
> But it is intimated that a revival is about due. The revival will be simultaneous with the commencement of the Great Northern improvements. The railroad people have purchased a great deal of property on the flats of late and they are steadily acquiring more. The fact has been kept a secret by those interested, but enough information has leaked out to show that the railroads are in earnest about their terminal improvements, and are now buying property as a necessity and not as an investment.

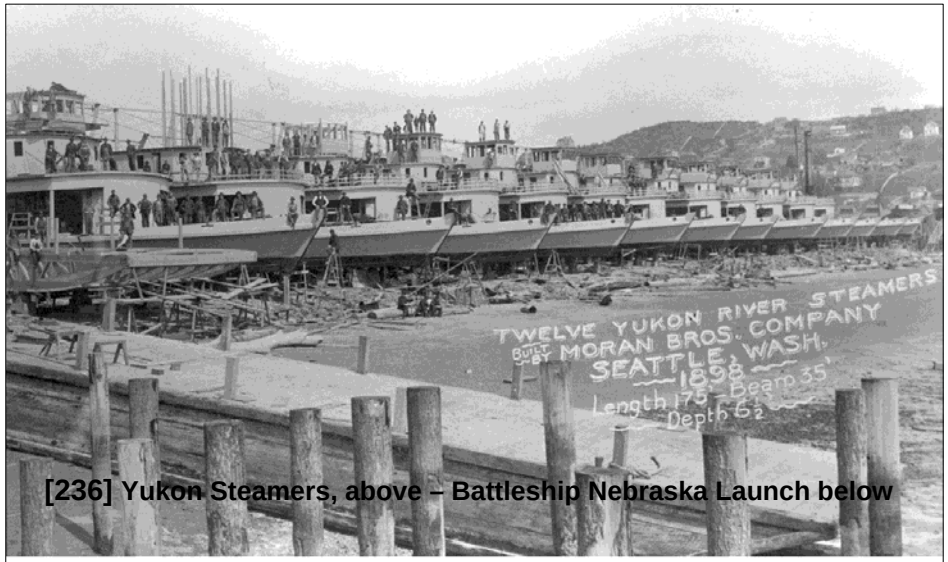
The Tidelands Improvement Club - 1902

While the railroads and the press were repairing to confront the fearsome indigents on the reclaimed tideflats another ex-governor, John McGraw, was praising the new land for its opportunities for both industry and labor. "Here are to be found shipbuilding plants, flouring mills, lumber and shingle mills, machine shops, foundries, box factories and hundreds of smaller establishments that furnish employment to a large number of our dinner bucket brigade." In 1902, a Tidelands Improvement Club was formed in the halls of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. Hatching the catchy name "The Commercial Circle" for their new section of concern south of Jackson Street, the new club's list of whereas's included "Whereas, there are many matters of a public nature requiring attention, such as the establishing of grades, paving of streets, building of sewers, laying of city water mains, laying of street car and railroad lines, location of the Union Depot, building of the South Canal, locating of railroad terminals for the new manufacturing industries and other matters necessary in a rapidly growing business section now therefore we the undersigned …" etc. And the first of the undersigned was, appropriately, the tideland developer introduced above, H. H. Dearborn, followed by Semple's company, Jacob Furth (perhaps the biggest private shaker in Seattle), George Kinnear (venerable and powerful) and others including Robert Moran, the mayor who guided Seattle through its great fire and the rebuilding that followed it. **[235]**

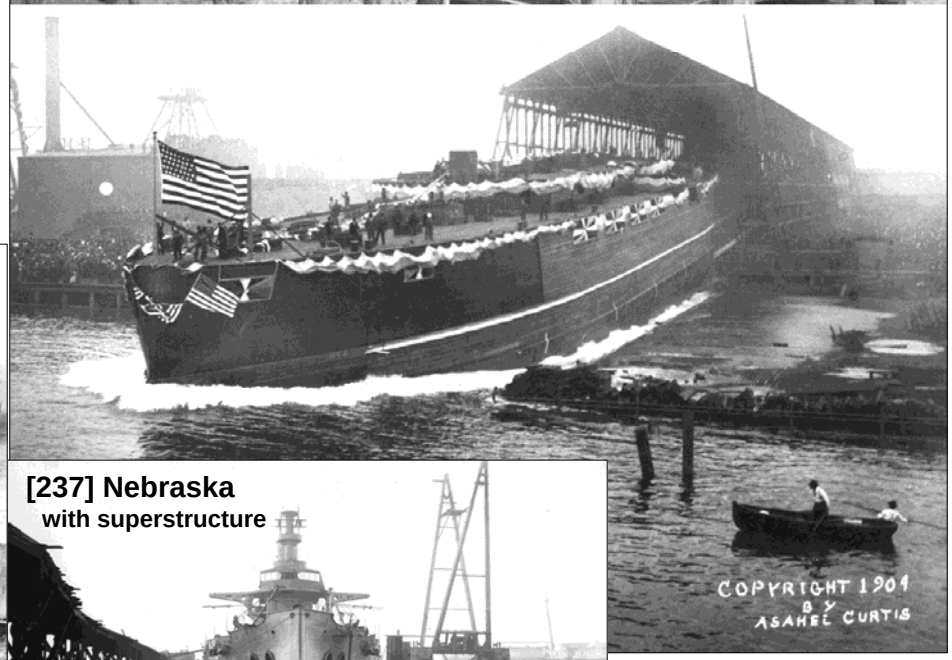
Robert Moran & "Seattle's Battleship" the *Nebraska*

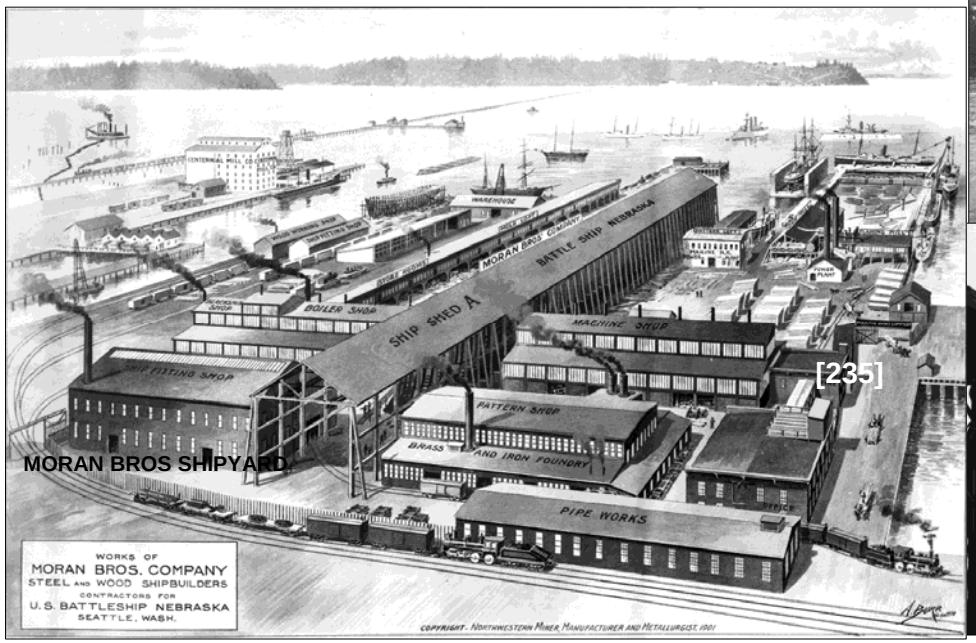
Robert Moran was the largest shipbuilder in town in 1902. After the '89 fire he moved his shop to the tidelands south of the Stetson and Post Mill. At the time he lent his name to the Tidelands Improvement Club, Moran was busy preparing for the construction of the first and only battleship manufactured on the Seattle waterfront, the *Nebraska*. It was certainly Seattle's most heralded early-20th century industrial success. (The attached illustrations include a birdseye cartoon of the Moran operation and a diptych showing at its bottom the launch of the *Nebraska's* hull at ten minutes after two on the afternoon of October 8, 1904, and at its top the tidelands work-in-progress in 1898 on Moran's 12 flat-bottom steamers, seen earlier from afar in Anders Wilse's 1898 panorama of the tideflats from Beacon Hill. **[236]**) In its first issue following the launch of the *Nebraska, The Seattle Times* rejoiced, expressing an ideology that seems perfectly preserved a century later. (It may be remembered that this is newspaper copy written in the afterglow of the Spanish-American war and its manufactured hysteria that helped William Randolph Hearst so well in increasing the number of his readers, and probably the *Times* and *PI* as well.) "Majestically and with the power of newly-created life, the battleship *Nebraska* was launched from the ways of the Moran Bros. Shipyards … amidst hurrahs from 60,000 throats, the blowing of sirens and whistles, the reverberating of





[236] Yukon Steamers, above – Battleship Nebraska Launch below





MORAN BROS SHIPYARD

[235]

[237] Nebraska
with superstructure

booms ... and the inspiring strains of the national anthem from a half dozen bands. The newest of Uncle Sam's fighting machines was consigned to the bosom of the mighty deep … to a career of usefulness in preserving the peace of the world and the integrity of the nation." Actually, the *Nebraska* might as well have been parked in a cornfield of its namesake state. It required three more years for the superstructure to be completed and the Navy to do the commissioning. **[237]** In its 13 years as part of the fleet, the 441-foot-long vessel bobbed in the doldrums of pre-war détente, and when the First World War stepped ahead in the queue of human foolishness, the resulting mayhem was primarily kept to the ground. Although the warrior dreams of young men were then still stuck to ships – still more than airplanes – the longer, faster and more powerful class of dreadnaughts that were British-built were clearly more thrilling. By comparison the relatively puny *Nebraska* was already obsolete when it was commissioned in 1907.

The Beacon Hill Butte

Giving names to the different parts of the ridge that runs between Portage Bay on Lake Union to Renton on the Black River was topographically presumptive, for it was the length and continuity of the feature that was most impressive. At its northern end, the Beacon Hill part of this ridge showed an anomalous butte that rose another fifty or more feet above the ridge near the point where the 112 foot Dearborn Cut was made between 1909 and 1912. The Beacon Butte, however, was lopped away earlier. (The profile of this butte can be found in the diptych of Robert Moran's shipbuilding shown just above, #236. The butte appears on the horizon right-of-center in the top photograph: the portrait of Moran's – to quote its own caption – "Twelve Yukon River Steamers.") Most likely, the Butte was the first instance of Beacon Hill's many generous contributions to the tidelands below it. It gave about 250,000 cubic yards that was relocated by the Lewis Construction Company to make bedding for the *Northern Pacific's* tracks, as they were repositioned away from the base of the hill for a direct approach to the Union Depot that was sited but not yet built. This work followed the 1902 agreement between the *Northern Pacific* and the *Great Northern* to develop the tidelands for both terminals and switching yards, and by 1904 the railroads owned one-third of the tidelands south of Jackson Street. Using the same mining technique that cut into the ridge approaching the north portal of the tunnel, the Butte was blasted with water cannons supplied with a head of about 200 feet from a source that was conveniently nearby: the city's Beacon Hill reservoir. The rich mix of blue clay, gravel and fresh water was carried in flumes that reached as far as three-quarters of a mile into the tideflats. **[238]**

Union Depot: The Promised Railroad Palace - 1906

The Union Depot opened May 9, 1906. In place of pomp and circumstance, there was debris on the floor of the waiting room and the driveways and walks were not paved. And, as noted above, the first train was hours late. But still the depot was grand. The St. Paul architects, Reed and Stem, may have been practicing. Eight years later they designed New York's Grand Central Station. The Seattle station was built with bricks from Renton and granite from Index. The Marble from Vermont was late in arriving – through the tunnel. The depot tower, a tribute to the campanile in Venice's San Marco Square, was also a wonderful new prospect from which to look in all directions. (The attached photograph looking south from Jackson Street shows the depot

at its best and fully completed. **[239]**) Although the tower was not opened to the public it was to a few photographers and among the records they returned with is the stitched three-part panorama featured here that looks north (and west and east) to the Central Business District. **[240]** To the right of the owl cigar sign and near the southwest corner of 4th Avenue and Washington Street is the south portal to the railroad tunnel. On the far right, the dark mass of the gas standpipe at the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and Jackson Street is fast approaching the end of the company's more than thirty years facing a Gas Cove that by 1906 was lost in the litter of fill dropped beside it. The standpipes and manufacturing plant across Jackson were razed in 1907 for the *Union Pacific* and the contributions of the Jackson Street Regrade. At its bottom right corner, the panorama includes a revealing disorder at the intersection of Jackson Street and 4th Avenue. To the north of Jackson the freshly regraded avenue is held behind the high retaining wall built for separating the grade between it and the approach to the tunnel. Both Jackson Street and 4th Avenue south of it are still built on trestles. The dating for this panorama is helped on the distant horizon where the Washington Hotel is still standing on Denny Hill. The hotel was razed late in 1906, the year the Union Depot tower was completed. (A second view that looks due east to the ridge and the neighborhood below it also dates most likely from 1906. It will be compared below with another record of the same district from the same prospect photographed in 1908 during the work of the regrade.)

Harbor Island & Charles Butler's Chickens

We would have wished that the photographer in the tower had also turned around and recorded the tidelands to the south. As noted, 1906 was the year that Semple at last acquiesced, and the result of his company's eleven years of off-and-on reclamation and canal digging would have been on display even before the Jackson Street and Denny Regrade (through the tunnel) would have added sizeable contributions to the new land. With a telescopic lens the photographer might also have seen Mr. Charles Butler and his chickens over on Harbor Island along the western shore of the East Waterway. Butler required a rowboat to get to his chicken ranch, for at that time the bridge to West Seattle and the island along Spokane Street was about one year away. The greater things that Semple and others had planned for Harbor Island while they were making it had not come to pass. A *Post-Intelligencer* feature from Jan 15, 1906 describes Butler's and the Island's unique status. "It is a low, oblong, somewhat soggy stretch of soil, its only distinctive feature being the old abandoned and dilapidate track of the West Seattle Terminal RR Co [the trestle Burke and others built across the bay to the Novelty Mill terminal in 1890] and the residence and business plan of Charles Butler. Before the advent of Butler a few years ago, Harbor Island was uninhabited. And at present he is the only resident, being a bachelor, excepting of course his dog, Angora goat and feathered flock of fowls that count up to almost three hundred strong. Twice a week he rows his product to town. He is apparently unconscious of the fact that his chicken yards are on ground that has just been selling for prices that are staggering." The buyer was the *Union Pacific Railroad.*

Two years later Harbor Island was more technically described. "The excavated material from the two channels [the East and West Waterways] was used to raise the level of the submerged land between the two basins to 18 inches above maximum high tide. The

[238]

[239]

[241]
FOURTH AVE. SOUTH FROM YESLER
NOV. 20.09

King County Court House
METROPOLITAN PRESS
OWL CIGAR
NOW 5¢
4th Avenue
Gas Works
[240]

excess of the material required to thus reclaim this area was to utilize in raising the grade of adjacent land to the same level. These two waterways have largely been completed as originally proposed, approx 7,000,000 cubic yards of material having been deposited on the adjacent low land. The dredging is still in progress."

The Union Pacific: The "Harriman Road"

As Charles Butler, the chicken farmer without farm, learned, the *Union Pacific* (the "Harriman Road") had become the next big railroad player on Seattle's south side, and soon the *UP's* steel tracks would replace his chicken tracks on Harbor Island. And also at Gas Cove heavy industry was in the way. The Gas Plant, Vulcan Iron Works, and Denny Clay Co. all were moved to make room for the *Union Pacific's* own depot that in spite of its want of a tower, covered its block with as much distinction as the Hill's Union Depot. Harriman would share it with the other fresh transcontinentals about to enter Seattle, the electric powered *Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul*. The *CM&SP* was the Railroad that also and at last fulfilled Seattle's pioneer dream by coming to it through Snoqualmie Pass. Both the great Jackson Street Regrade and the lesser Fourth Avenue Regrade were public works that were coordinated with the *Union Pacific's* Depot plans by creating grade separations between them that were done at the joint expense of the railroad and the city. In 1907, a passable Fourth Avenue was completed as far south as Holgate Street, and while the regrading of Fourth through the Central Business District continued into 1908 dirt continued to be hauled south to the tide flats on a narrow gauged railroad trestle that was built above the avenue. **[241]**

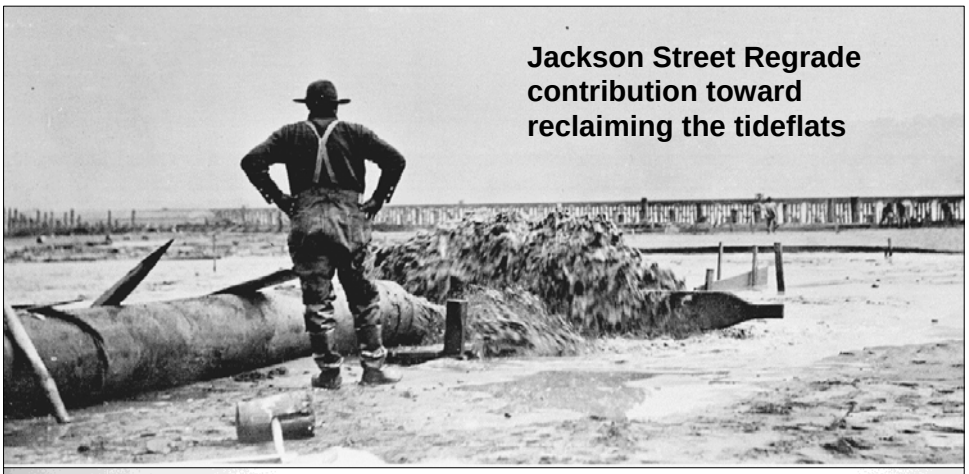
The Union Pacific Tunnel

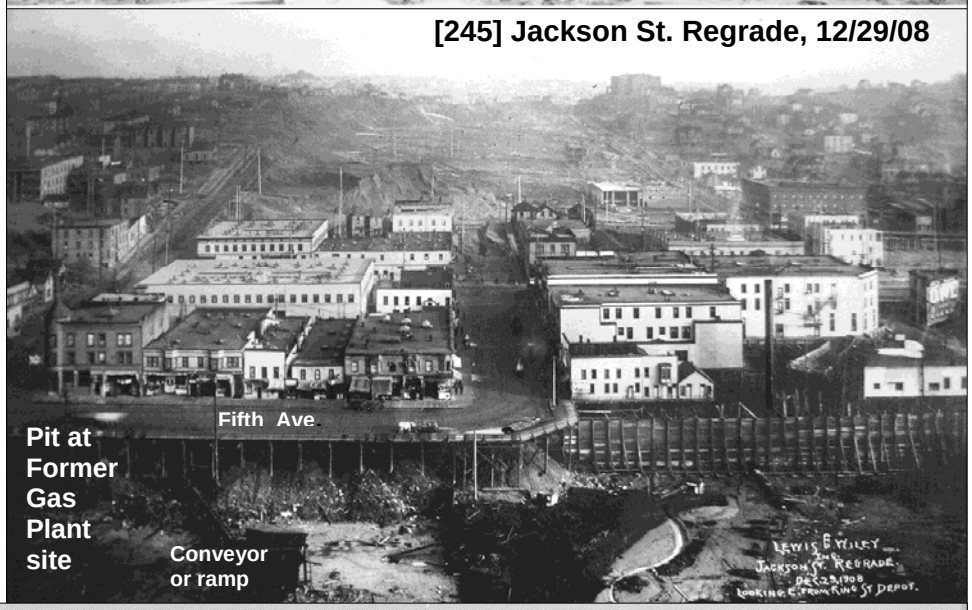
To facilitate the *Union Pacific's* ambitions to reach north beyond Seattle, it too planed a tunnel. The *Times* for May 14, 1907 was happy to relay these plans as gospel. "Within six weeks or two months time the Seattle Lighting Company will have removed its entire gas plant from the site on Fourth Avenue South to the new Mercer Street location and the *Oregon and Washington Railroad* [Harriman's regional name for the *Union Pacific*] will be in full possession of the land needed by the Harriman system for its new passenger depot. Work has started on the Harriman tunnel to be driven under the city even before the gas plant is moved, and as soon as the buildings are taken down the force of men will be increased, and the big bore driven as fast as possible." (Two photographs attached here show this early work on the *UP* tunnel. They were copied from an album filled with snapshots of the Gas Plants removal from Jackson Street and restoration at its two Lake Union sites. In the earlier view a crew begins the cutting with the large gas tank still rising above the scene. **[242]** In the later scene that looks over the lesser tank the larger tank has been removed. The tunnel opening is now crowded with the machinery perhaps for early testing or boring. **[243]**)

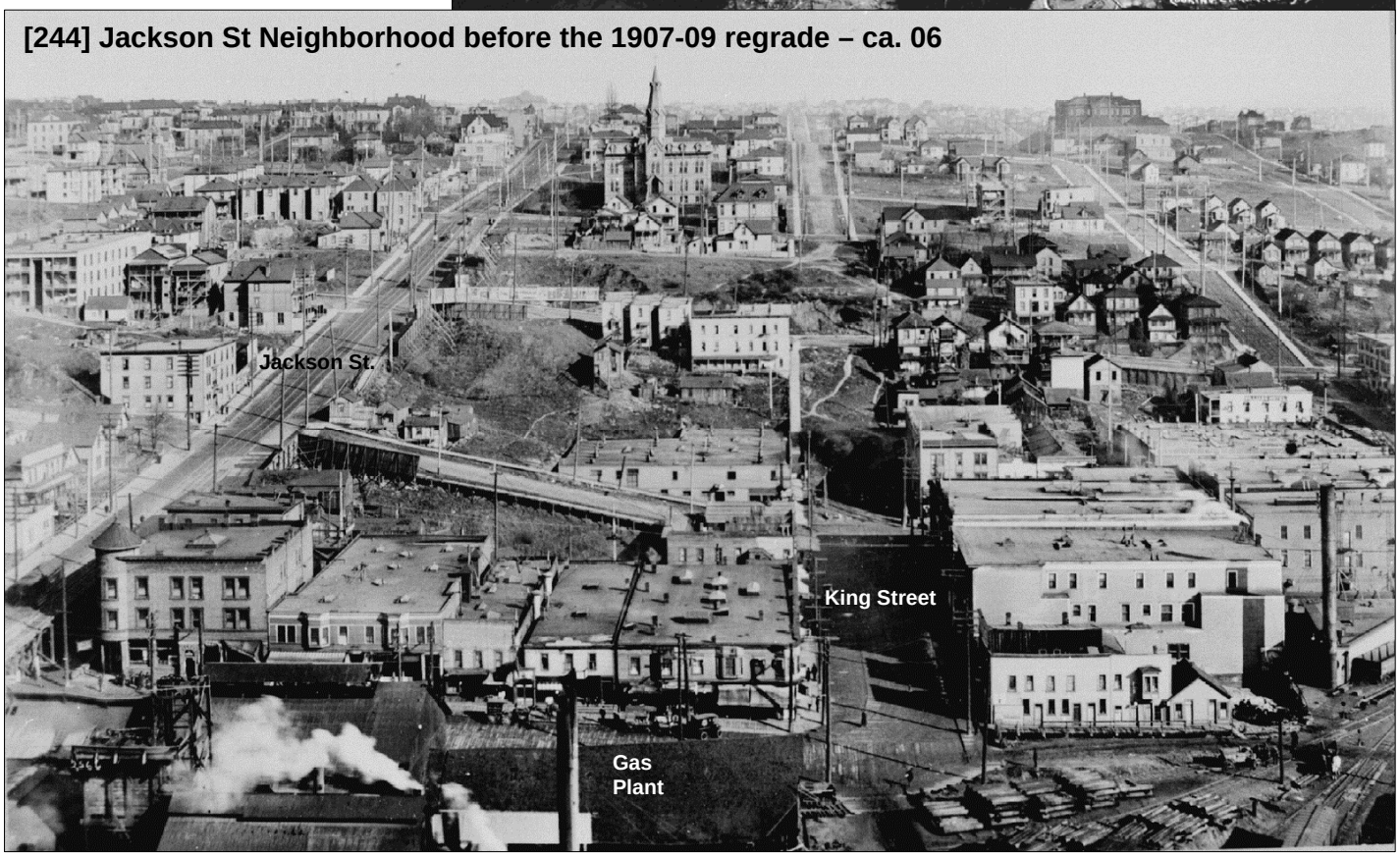
The Jackson Street Regrade Statistics: 1907 - 09

The Jackson Street Regrade had a speed and unity to it that its bigger cousin the Denny Regrade, with its many starts and stops, could not match. Although named for Jackson Street, there was much more to the regrade than the neighborhood's "main street." Jackson was merely the northern border of the regrade. From the first 1873 grading of Jackson Street, it was considered the most effective way to get from the

Below: Two stages in the *Union Pacific Railroad's* early attempts – or probes – to build a second tunnel beneath the city. This south portal was near 5th Avenue & Washington Street.







city to Rainier Valley. The 1883 and 1888 regrades and early 20th Century trestlework along Jackson were testimonies to this expectation. It was, however, the 1907-1909 regrade that made of Jackson the "Pike Street of the South." Somewhat like the Pike Street approach to Capitol Hill, Jackson was wrestled with for an easy route not only to the Rainier Valley but also, although less so, to First Hill. During the regrade the pitch on Jackson was reduced from 15% to 5%.

Like most of the Denny Regrades (except the first one of the 1880s and the last in 1929-30) and the Beacon Hill Butte and the South Canal and the north portal to the railroad tunnel, the Jackson Street Regrade also used the solvency of water. Four hoses powered by electric pumps shot six to ten million gallons each day at the stiff layers of blue clay and glacial till. The running mud was then directed through mostly wood stave pipes at an average of 4,000 cubic yards per day to not only the tideflats but also shore lands that the neighborhood's planners wanted to lift to grades many feet higher than the railroad tracks that would be the dominant feature of the tidelands. Two years of lowering the ridge with the deepest cuts of 90 feet at 9th Avenue (this put the former ridge several feet higher than the level of 1-5 at above 9th Ave) reclaimed 85 acres or fifty-six city blocks and five and three-fourths miles of streets, and raised the grade in some places as much as 40 feet. Twenty-nine of the blocks were excavated and twenty-seven filled in this balance of eroding and collecting. Thus, the efficiency of the Jackson Street Regrade is compared favorably with the "degrading" of Denny Hill, where most of the hill was simply dumped into Elliott Bay.

Of the many good photographs of this public work, we will concentrate on two that were recorded, again, from the new Union Depot tower. The earlier pre-regrade scene looks east over the gas works and up the ridge between Jackson Street, on the left, and across King Street, just right-of-center, to Weller Street on the right. **[244]** The likely date is 1906 – the year, we know, that the depot was completed and one year before the Jackson Street regrade was started. The corner of Jackson and Fifth, bottom left, was certainly one of the more fidgeted intersections in Seattle. As noted far above, Jackson was regraded as early as 1883. Here a post-1889 fire trestle on Jackson reaches the intersection at an elevation that is about 20 feet higher than 5th Avenue. This can be judged by the posture of the Buty Building (with the corner tower) at the southeast corner of 5th and Jackson. From Jackson to King Street, the grade of 5th Avenue descends, and King Street enters the backyard of the gas plant at grade. But this equality hides what is below the street level. The gas plant's yard is actually an extended wharf, although by 1906 it is free of any intruding tides. In the one block King takes to reach 6th Avenue (now beside the Uwajimaya parking lot) it reaches a grade that is cut from the native land. Through the block and one half beyond that to Maynard Alley, King Street was left not graded. Too steep, it was negotiated only by a path with switchbacks. On the far right, the smoke stack of the Rainier Power Company stands above the old rail line of the *Columbia Puget Sound Railway* where it was curved from King Street towards the shore. All the mostly clapboard structures that here face 5th Avenue and King Street were, along with the brick Buty Building, lifted during the Jackson Street Regrade and after the gas plant was razed.

The second view looking east from the depot tower was photographed on Dec. 29, 1908 when the Jackson Street Regrade was a work in progress, and a year and one half since the gas plant was removed. **[245]** The Buty Building is now elevated at a grade that connects the elevated 5th Avenue with Jackson Street directly, bottom left. On the far right, the buildings south of King Street still show the elevated timberwork beneath them. These were also raised as part of the regrade and will eventually but slowly be bedded in fill. Jackson Street, upper left, above Seventh Avenue has been "humbled," but Jackson this side of 7th is still at the same old grade shown in the previous photograph. The dark structure in the pit on the left has a long, regularly shaped and serrated or marked part that passes through its dark and roofed center. This may be a box flume for moving regrade contributions to the pit that is the future home of the *Union Pacific* depot, or a conveyor belt for moving more solid contributions like those seen piled beneath the 5th Avenue trestle, or something else altogether. (The appearance of a roof suggests that part of it needs protection – perhaps an engine to move the conveyor belt or a worker's lunchroom.)

The Washington-Oregon Depot Construction 1910 - 1911

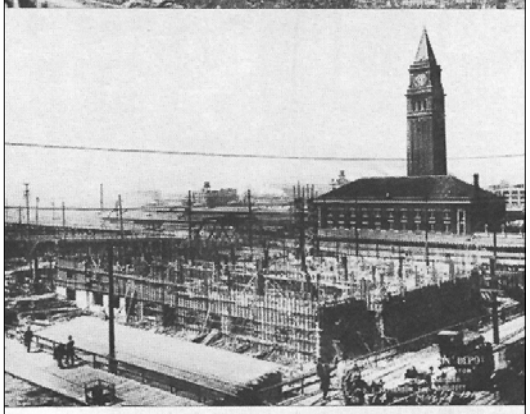
Once the *Union Pacific* was ready to appoint the old gas plant pit with its own grand depot, photographers were ready. Steel workers have climbed to the tops of three of the many rebar towers being prepared for concrete in an early scene of the depot construction. **[246]** A triptych recorded across 5th and Jackson shows the depot in three stages of construction. **[247]** The Puget Sound terminus for both the *Union Pacific* and *Milwaukee Road* railroads was completed in 1911. At its peak, the Washington-Oregon Station (its other name) employed more than 100 men in the baggage room providing for the almost 40 daily train arrivals and departures, including the *Union Pacific's Shasta Limited* and the *Milwaukee's* electric *Olympian*. **[248]**

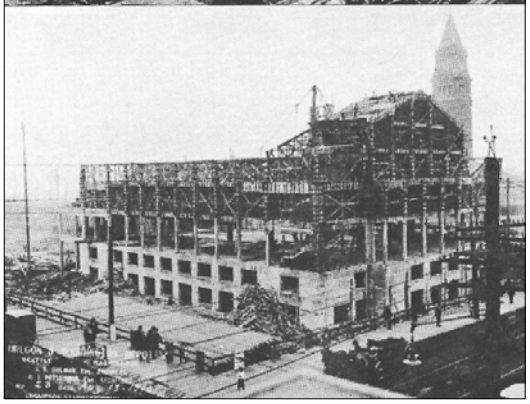
Lifting a Neighborhood East of Fifth Avenue & South of King Street.

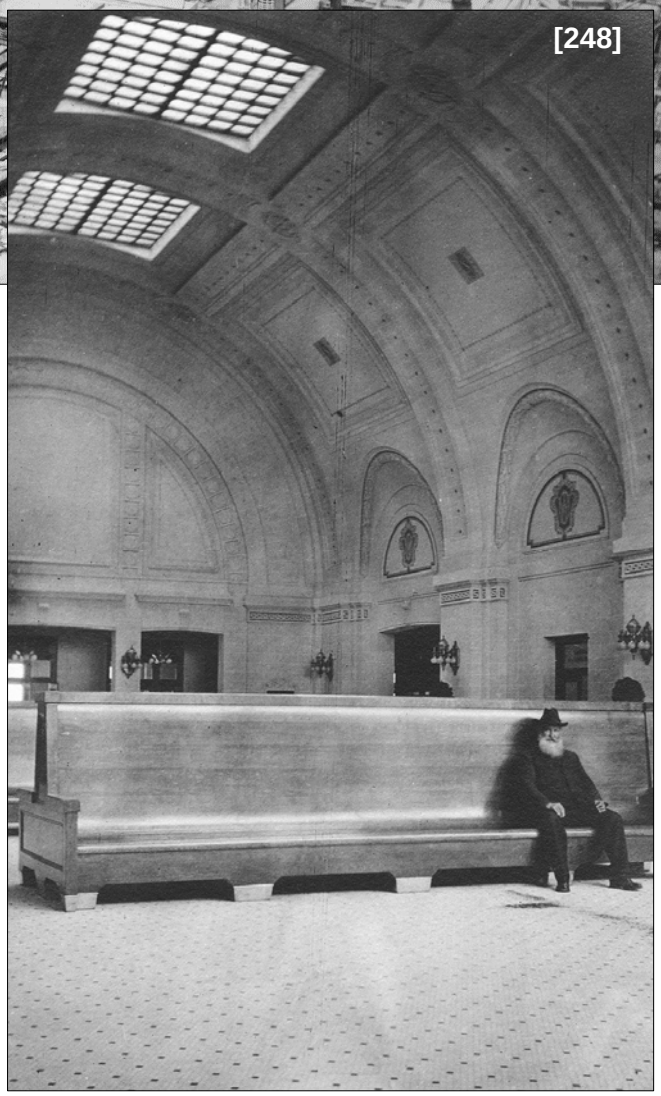
The first yards directly to the south of the depot were set below the street grades of 4th and 5th Avenues – the former built above it at first on a wooden trestle and the later built on regrade fill behind a retaining wall constructed by the railroad. In this neighborhood, the first blocks directly to the east of 5th Avenue were included in the roughly half of the Jackson Regrade blocks that were raised not lowered. These blocks straddle the old meander line – some parts are on the original shoreline and some off. In the foreground of the accompanying scene, regrade efflux reaches the feet of the photographer, but all the tenements pictured have been raised to the new grade on stilts. **[249]** The three-story apartment on the far right is propped above the northwest corner of Lane Street and 6th Avenue. Recorded more than two years later, the accompanying panorama demonstrates that some things have changed and others not. **[250]** The view looks north from Charles Street toward the new Union Pacific depot and over what is still the mess of its loading yard. The scene is dated Sept. 27, 1911, the year the depot was completed. About one-quarter of the way in from the panorama's right border, a careful search will reveal the same tenement at the northwest corner of 6th Avenue and Lane Street that was described above. The structures behind it on Weller Street also appear. They have been freshly painted. The bigger change in the panorama is in the streets. They have all been brought up to grade with fill, while the apartment houses are still standing on stilts two years after

[246] rebar towers for Union Pacific
"Oregon-Washington Depot

[247]







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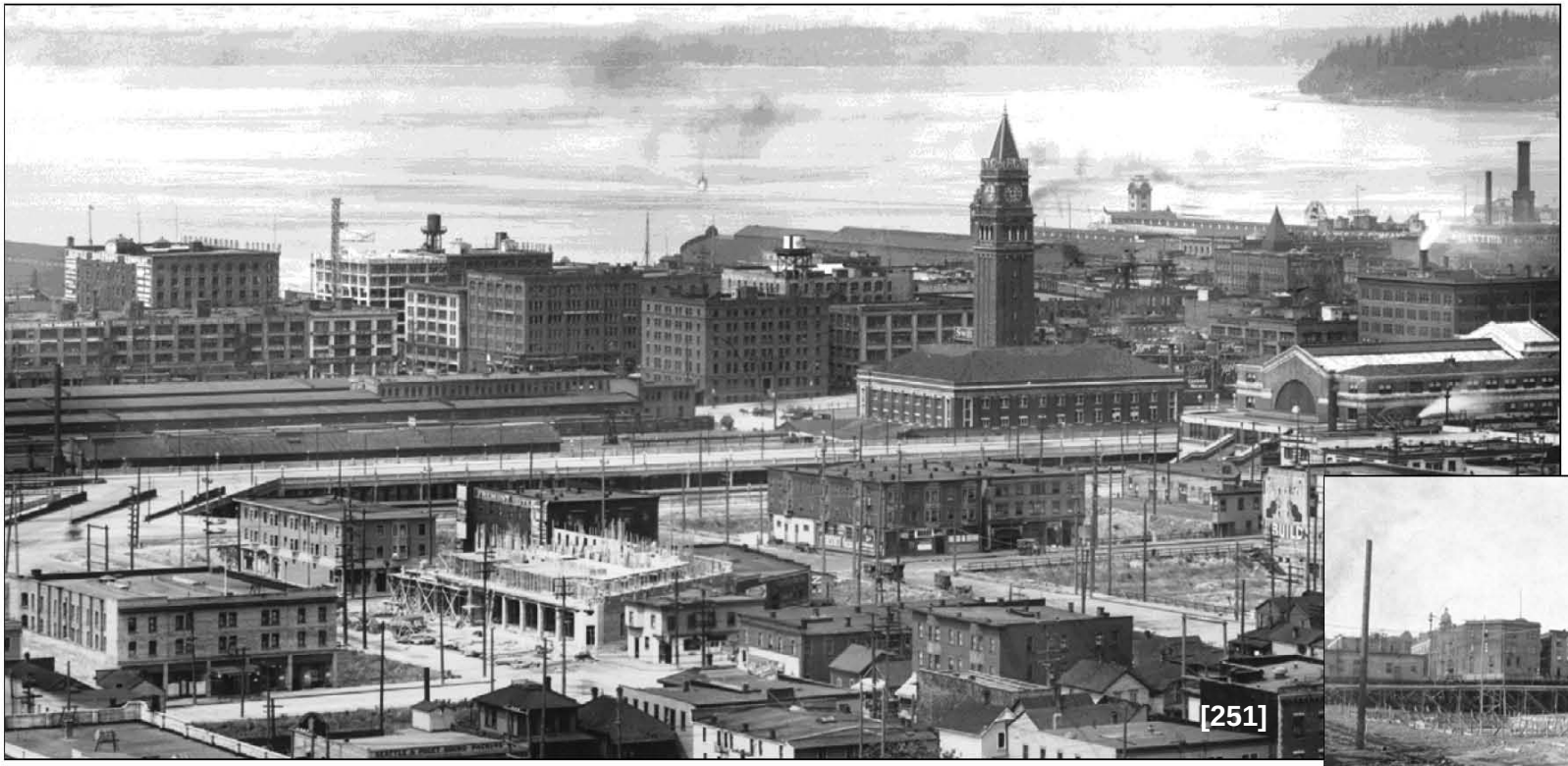

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[250]

the Jackson Regrade was completed. The stilts are more obvious beneath the apartment house on Lane, but they can also be discovered below the structure on Weller, although these supports are mostly hidden behind the fill on Weller. The reason for this procrastination is the expected one. The city's responsibility was to raise the streets with fill to the new grade of the first floors as elevated on stilts. The owners of the buildings had an alternative. They could arrange for fill to be also placed beneath their property and/or they could build new basement foundations and wait for new structures to be constructed beside them. For a number of structures the result was very deep basements. Years later, after the neighborhood became the International District (AKA Chinatown), these second and third basements inspired the stuff that urban legends are made of, stories of sunken chambers reached by tunnels and appointed for gambling, opium and other popular paying vices. Believe it or not.

A third inspection of these blocks and buildings – in late 1913 or early 1914 – looks down from the western slope of Beacon Hill near 10th and Charles Street. **[251]** The Washington-Oregon Depot yard has been completed, but the vacant lots between Maynard and Fifth Avenues and to the sides of Weller and Lane Streets have still not been filled to the new level of the raised streets.

This view also includes more quaint signs of the persistence of railroad right-of-ways long after they are abandoned. The building under construction, left of center, facing Dearborn on its north side between Sixth and Maynard Avenues, shows an odd angle on its east face that conforms to the west face of the small corner clapboard to the east of it, although the two structures will not touch. It is here that both come up against the narrow-gauged right-of-way for the old *Seattle and Walla Walla* trestle as James Colman redirected it to reach the shoreline (and, yes, escape the worms) in 1879. This line, of course, was abandoned once the *Northern Pacific* and *Great Northern* finally agreed to reconfigure the tidelands and share a depot as well. Still, the right-of-way continues to influence construction as late as 1913. (For those readers wishing to delve further into the mysteries of pie-shaped structures there are two more – they appear here in a stack. Although further from the camera and smaller, these oddities of railroad real estate can be found nearby at the southwest corner of Sixth Avenue and Weller Street. It may help to draw a line directly down from where the southwest corner of the Washington-Oregon Depot seems to touch the northeast corner of the Union Depot. This imagined line will just miss to the left the closer of the two pie-shaped artifacts of the abandoned right-of-way, but it will cross directly over the larger one that is just above it. Almost certainly both were constructed when the *Columbia and Puget Sound* narrow-gauged rails still passed through here. In the interests of fairness we will note that on the far right of the 1913-14 panorama, the tall stack of the steam and electricity generating plant at Western Ave and Columbia Street is not at the moment polluting the neighborhood.)

Depots & Tideflats from the Smith Tower - late 1913

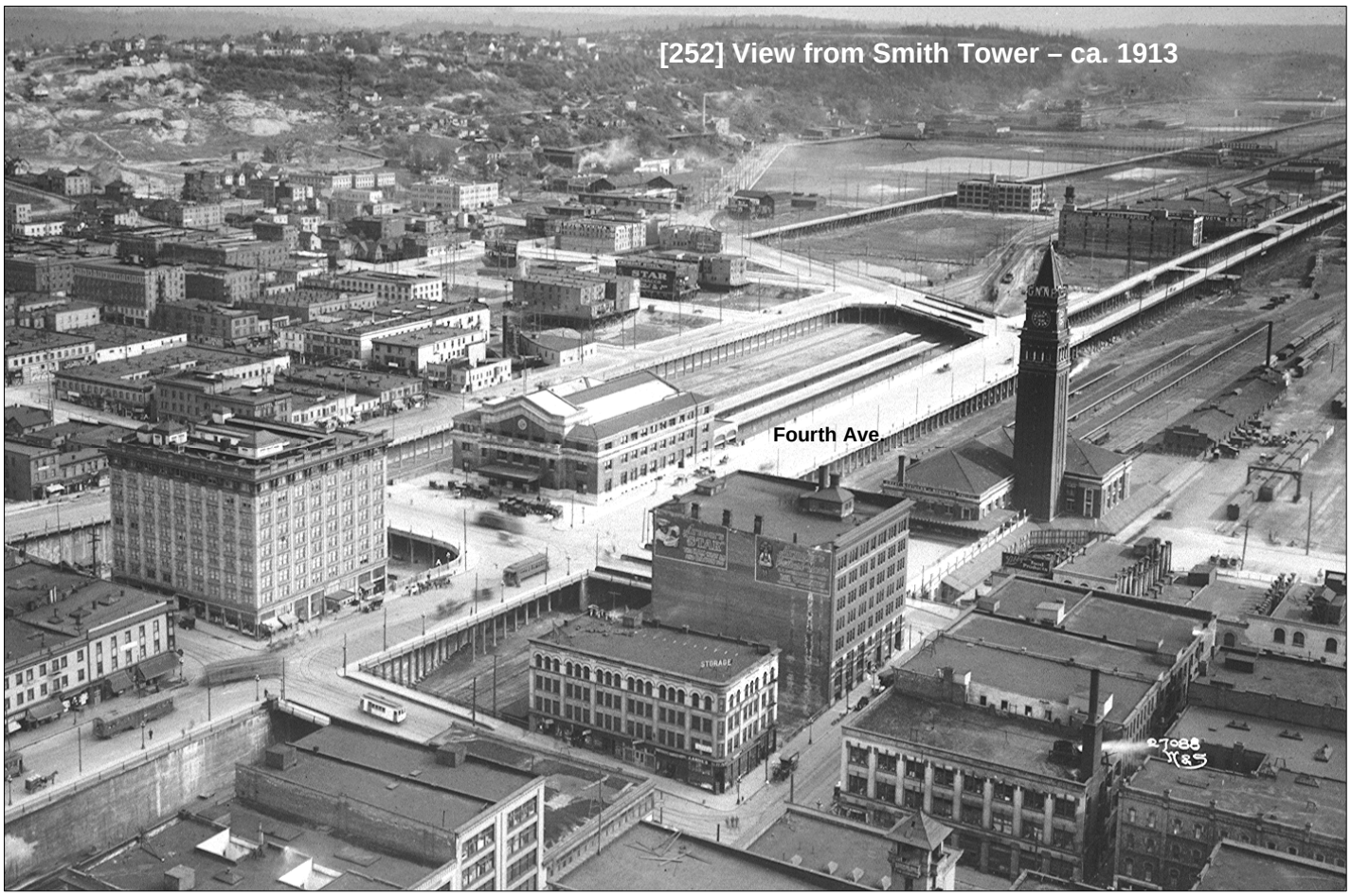
Another view of the neighborhood was recorded from the Smith Tower when it was still a work in progress – sometime in late 1913. **[252]** Construction has not yet started on the oddly angled structure on Dearborn just noted. It does not appear here. The scene also lends another prospect for studying the several apartment houses facing

Sixth Avenue that are still on stilts. The trestles on Fourth and Sixth Avenues that here proceed south over the tideflats were later dismantled when these streets were lowered to a grade that was level with the grade ultimately reached with the fill. The original grading for railroad purposes was to vary between six and 15 feet above high tide. Street grades were to be lifted on trestles (or fill) another 22 feet above the lowest railroad grade. It was later determined that the two – railroads and streets – could co-exist at the same elevation in the new neighborhood that filled with more warehouses than smokestacks. The resulting delays were tolerated for the obvious savings got from not having to create two levels of transportation on the tideflats, except where grade separations were a necessity near the terminals and south of Spokane Street where First Ave. South and Fourth Ave. South and Airport Way all pass above the rails on trestles. (The quaint original wood trestle on Airport Way just north of Georgetown was only relatively recently replaced with another nondescript concrete overpass.)

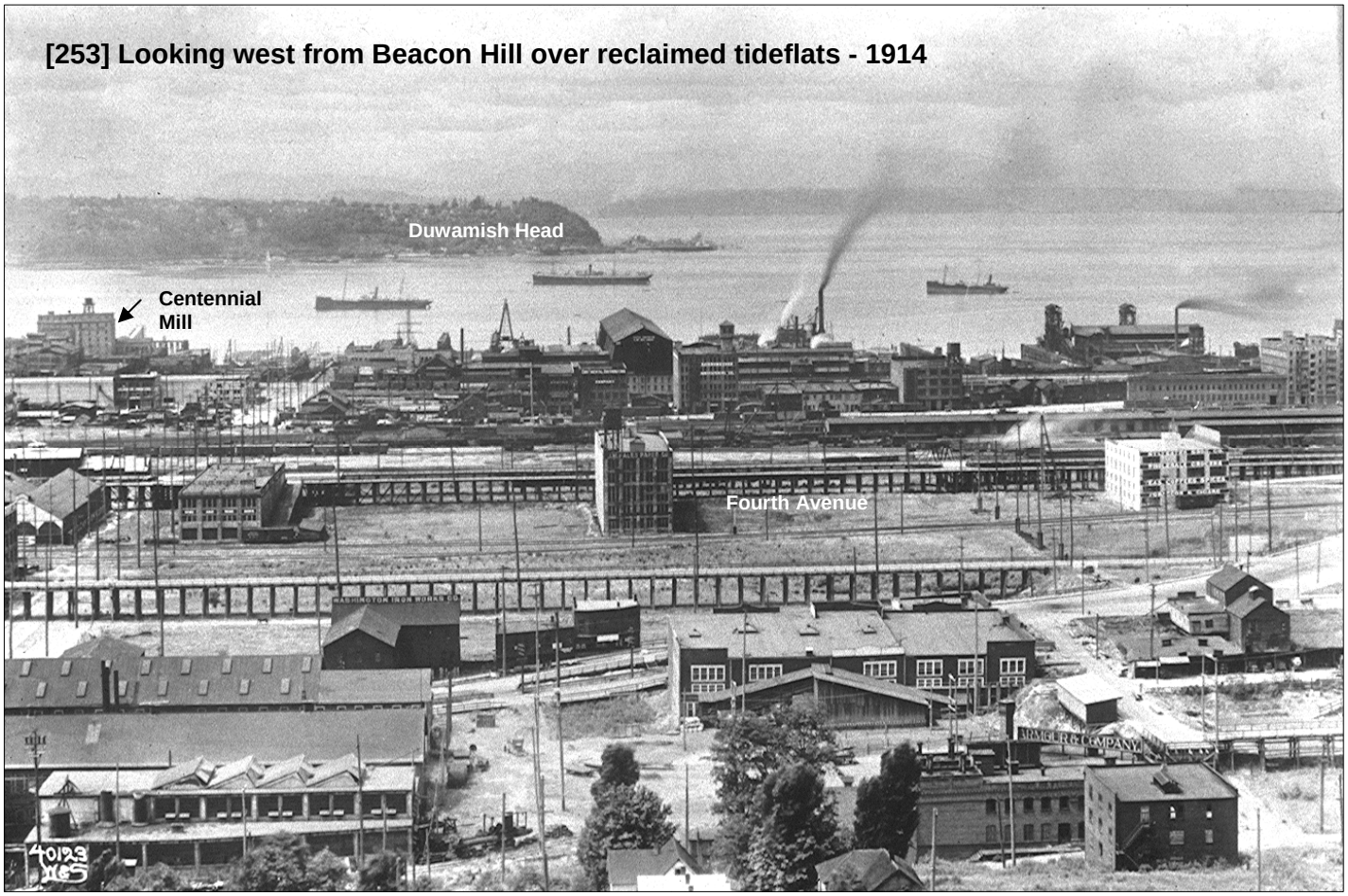
Tideflats from Beacon Hill – In line with Norman Street: 1914

The tideflats trestles on Fourth and Sixth Avenue also appear in the accompanying 1914 photograph recorded from Beacon Hill in line with Norman Street. (The line of Norman Street on the west side of Beacon Hill must be imagined, although it can easily be found in the Rainier Valley.) **[253]** Moran's former shipyard (he had sold it and moved on to Orcas Island) fills much of the waterfront, and the long shed from which the *Nebraska* was launched ten years earlier is profiled against Elliott Bay. Above it, Luna Park sprawls on the tidelands north of Duwamish head. This view can be compared with Anders Wilse's record of 1898 shown above. The Centennial Mill shown there survives here on the far left.

Before leaving the tidelands – perhaps for good – we may enjoy an elevated inspection of its fulfillment as a field of dreams for railroads and rail fans but not yet for professional sports. Both the Union Depot and the Union Pacific Depot are included on the right. **[254]** This scene was recorded sometime between the July 4, 1914 dedication of the Smith Tower, upper left, and the 1916 collapse of the St. James dome, center-left horizon, under the weight of that February's disastrously wet snow. Warren Wing, Seattle's elevated railroad buff, notes that it is unusual for passenger cars to be parked on this the west side of the King Street depot. Those long warehouses are freight depots for the *Northern Pacific* and the *Great Northern*. A magnified inspection of the original print exposes more than two dozen porters, all in white, crowded at the far King Street end of the double row of passenger cars on the scene's far left. The buildings on Occidental Avenue, to the left of the Smith Tower, are decorated with patriotic bunting. Wing says, "go figure." Usually, these tracks were reserved for baggage cars. Wing's eyeglass also discovered the number 1156 on the Northern Pacific switch-engine steaming in the foreground. Built in 1909, it was a fixture in these yards for many years. In 1971, a year after the *Northern Pacific* and *Great Northern* merged into the *Burlington Northern*, the King County Council chose these 36 acres for construction of the Kingdome. It was then that they rediscovered the nature of this reclaimed land. Test borings drilled first through 20 to 30 feet of gravel, soil and sand that had been piled upon the old tidelands to create Hill and Mellon's workplace. The drilling then continued another 20 to 30 feet before hitting earth sufficient to support the 1,864 steel pilings that

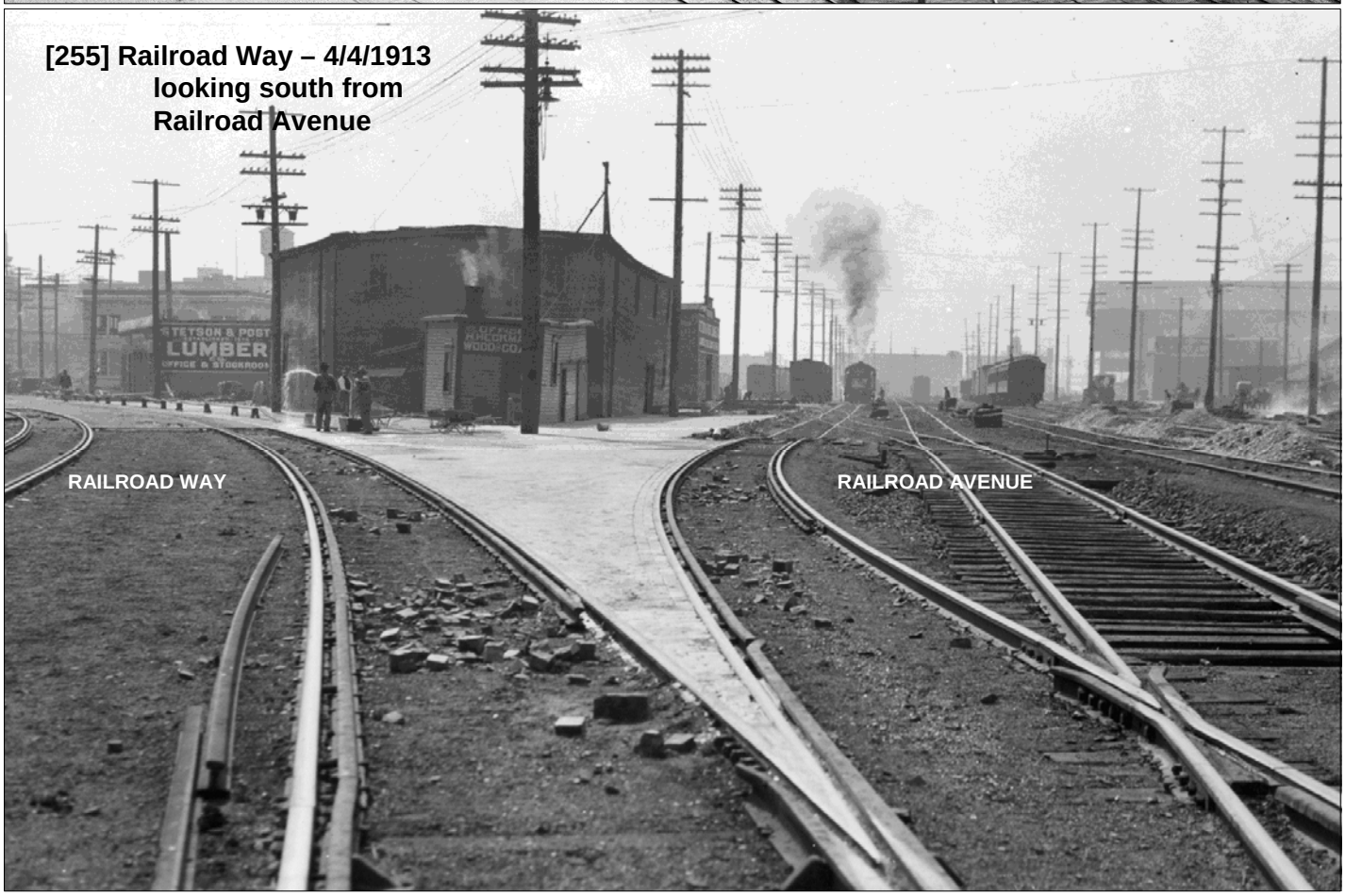


[252] View from Smith Tower – ca. 1913



[253] Looking west from Beacon Hill over reclaimed tideflats - 1914

[254] Railroad stations and warehouses east of Occidental Ave. – ca.1915



[255] Railroad Way – 4/4/1913
looking south from
Railroad Avenue

were driven an average of 60 feet into the site to support the 25-story Kingdome. Of course, the pilings were never tested for endurance, for the Kingdome lasted about as long as a Dodge Dart or as long as it took Seattle to receive its fourth transcontinental, the *Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul* in 1909, after Tacoma got its first, the *Northern Pacific* in 1883.

Warping & the Tidelands – Railroad Way, 1913

The length and number of the Kingdome's pilings recalls again what the pioneer community's favorite pile driver "Uncle Joe" Surber discovered as he was helping build the first railroad trestle across the tideflats in 1877. The mud was thirty-five feet deep, and piles sixty-five feet long were required to reach and puncture hardpan. As anyone who has explored the reclaimed land south of King Street knows it has its up and downs, and this settling surely started as soon as the fill was sucked from the bay and flooded from the hills. It is soft stuff resting on soft stuff. These warping effects appear subtley in a photograph taken on April 4, 1913. **[255]** The view looks south to the waterfront "Y" where Railroad Way, to the left, leaves Railroad Avenue (Alaskan Way), to the right. This is near the southwest corner of Piners Point shown earlier, where Stetson and Post relocated in the mid 1870s and also where Eugene Semple began his work of extending First Avenue south of King Street on fill rather than on trestles or timber quays. The scene was recorded by a photographer from the city's engineering department, perhaps as evidence of the fresh brickwork that has been placed between the rails, center-left. To either side of the new work, brick fragments are strewn between the tracks. The two Lilliputian figures standing on the new pavement near the top of the bending tracks, left, are most likely city employees. They are hosing their work – the white line of the water jet can be seen against the dark gray of the Heckman Wood Company shed. It is the noticeable bow in Heckman's wood frame warehouse that is a measure of the spring in this made land. Settling is evident in other structures as well. This rail Y is the waterfront's southern access to the railroad yards and the freight sheds – pictured above – for the *Northern Pacific* and *Great Northern*. And also by this route a train coming off the waterfront or heading for it can avoid those stations altogether. Of course the opening of the tunnel in 1905 considerably relieved the rail traffic on the central waterfront, and yet here are still five waterfront tracks running between the two rows of service poles and paralleling the vehicular Railway Avenue, far right. One day before this photograph was recorded, the nearly new Oregon-Washington Depot received the 24 cars of the Chicago Grand Opera. Their performance of Ermano Wolf-Ferrari's "The Jewels of the Madonna" at the Moore Theatre would not have happened were it not for the transcontinental railroads and the wealth they helped generate. According to the *Seattle Times* music reviewer J. Willis Sayre, this was "Seattle's first night ever of real grand opera." Tickets were a whopping seven dollars. With that amount (by evidence of an April 4th *Times* advertisement) one could have purchased 210 loaves of fresh bread at the nearby Pike Place Public Market, or 100 loaves and a few pounds of selected cheeses and have the start on a nourishing orderves concession at the theatre.

Pier Number Review

With the new waterfront design they devised in the 1897 tidelands replat, R.H. Thomson and George Cotterill also took the Adamic

opportunity to add a new pier-identification system as well. Although they may have wished to make a uniform system they were instead sensitive to the precedent set by the Oregon Improvement Company when they lettered their piers A and B – respectively the Ocean and City Docks – south of Washington Street. Thomson and Cotterill kept the letters south of Yesler but they added numbers, not letters, north of it. Earlier, the piers there had only names, and some of them still kept them. In this the new system also respected the old. Most notably Colman Dock – it got no number. Later, the Canadian railroad put their Grand Trunk dock immediately north of Colman Dock and neither gave nor got a number for it. As we learned at the top of this narrative all this sensitivity for heritage and identity was dumped in the bay near the end of the Second World War when the military gave the entire waterfront pierage from West Seattle to Magnolia a uniform numbering. This made it much easier for any corporal arriving from Ohio to find his new assignment on the waterfront.

The Pacific Coast Company

The 1897 replat was soon charged with the material gusto of the gold rush. Still, as noted this notion of a local economic revolution brought south from the Klondike is overstated. Seattle and Puget Sound – especially Seattle – were well on their way to recovery from the lingering effects of the 1893 panic when the *Portland* arrived in the summer of 1897 with its ton of gold and many ships thereafter with more tons. But there were many casualties. As noted above, the venerable Oregon Improvement Company was one of the old waterfront players that did not make it to 1897. It went bankrupt in 1895 and was reorganized in 1897 as part of the Pacific Coast Company, the PCC. (The PCC also purchased both the OIC's considerable fleet and the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad* and its coal mines at Newcastle/Coal Creek and Franklin. Soon that heir of the citizen's railroad, the *Seattle and Walla Walla,* was converted from narrow to standard gauge. However, the PCC waited until 1916 to rename it the *Pacific Coast Railroad*. Although the Coal Creek mine closed in 1929, the *PCRR* kept working the Black Diamond mines until after World War Two. The *Great Northern* purchased the *PCRR* in 1951, which in the 1970s, like much else, was absorbed into the *Burlington Northern*.)

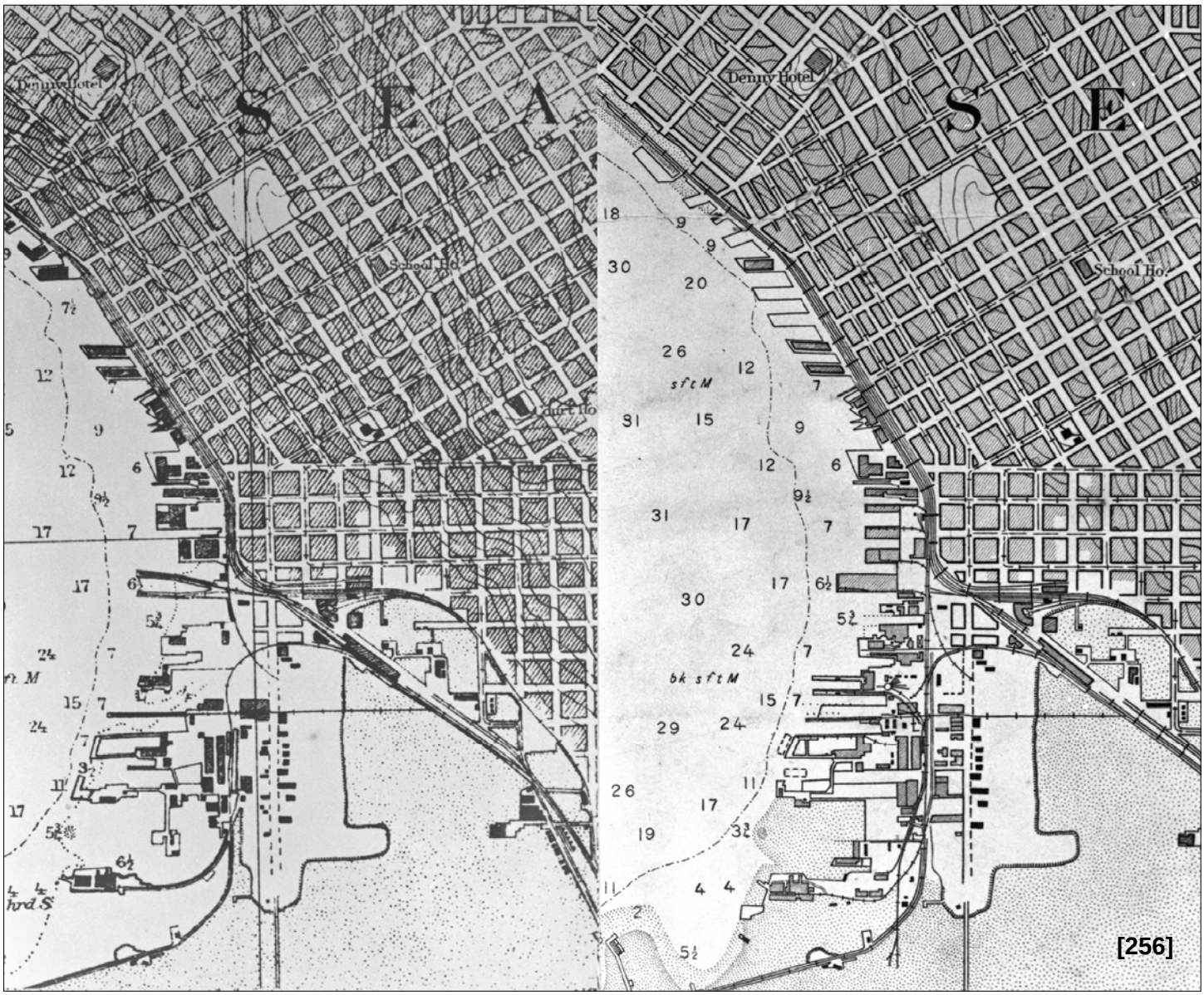
Waterfront Changes 1900 to 1903: Comparing Two Maps

Among the big waterfront changes stimulated by the new luster of new owners and the thrilling rush of gold were at the PCC's many properties south of Yesler Way – the Ocean and City Docks and the King Street Coal Piers. They were rebuilt, replaced, and multiplied. A comparison of maps printed here side-by-side shows the changes. Both are drawn from the same base map, and both in outline show the extent of Eugene Semple's reclamation south of King Street by 1900. **[256]** In the earlier map – on the left – the two-fingered King Street Coal Wharf is still in place, and above it to the north are the two large and boxish wharves B and A, holding the City and Ocean Docks between Washington and Jackson Streets. In the older map, the thin Harrington Dock is still in place just north of Washington Street, and beyond it the Yesler Dock (long since a Northern Pacific property) spreads out between Yesler Way and Columbia Avenue. Between Columbia and Madison Streets are the stubby docks shown often above – the homes most notably of the West Seattle Ferry and that "Mosquito Fleet" champion, *The Flyer*. Between Madison and Seneca Street, the

first two of the Northern Pacific's finger piers (Piers 3/54 and 4/55) extend impressively out from Railroad Avenue. To their north is the gap of deep water that reaches the Schwabacher's Pier at Union Street, and beyond it the penultimate Pike Street wharf to the one that still stands. The later map has, however, redrawn all of this waterfront pierage between Dearborn Street and Yesler Way, and also hinted at new developments north of Yesler. The King Street coal bunkers have been replaced with the largest pier on the waterfront – Pier D. In 1903, the coal was rerouted to new bunkers at the foot of Beacon Street, and their "tuning fork" is included in the newer map between the two-fathom soundings in the bay marked "7." To the north of the big dock between King and Jackson Streets are the three new finger piers – C (47), B (48), and A (49) – built by the Pacific Coast Company in 1901 between Jackson and Washington Streets. The slender Harrington wharf still extends from near the foot of Washington, but with Yesler Dock it will soon be removed and replaced by Docks 1 (50) and 2 (51), the Northern Pacific large finger piers to either side of Yesler Way. North of Yesler Dock, the waterfront has added the outline, only, of the Northern Pacific Piers 5/56 and 6/57. Finally, the dogleg in the Pike Place Pier has been removed. (We will visit this dogleg below.)

Waterfront Review - *Post-Intelligencer*, August 18, 1901

On August 18, 1901 the *Post-Intelligencer* made its review of "Improvements Along Seattle's Waterfront," including what at the time was still a rarity: screened photographs. **[257]** (The strength of the forms makes the "reading" of these illustrations more defined than the crude reproductions themselves.) In one view a section of one of the two big sheds (either Pier A or Pier B) is being moved to become part of the new Pier B/48 – in this section the last survivor on the waterfront. As can be figured from the maps compared above, the new Piers A, B, and C are positioned near the ends of Washington, Main and Jackson Streets. Previously Pier A was set between Washington and Main and Pier B between Main and Jackson. The second photograph shows the exposed architecture of what is probably the old Ocean Dock (Pier A). The caption is revealing. "Ballast Island through which the Pacific Coast Company will dredge a slip." To review, Ballast Island was made from the contributions of visiting ships, most of them here to pick up coal at King Street. No longer needed, this steadying ballast was dropped off shore between Washington and Main Streets before the City and Ocean Docks were constructed by Oregon Improvement Company in 1882-83. The Ocean Dock was built, in part, on the outer end of Ballast Island, and the timber quays leading to the dock completed the enclosure of the larger part of the island between the dock and the waterfront. When this section of the waterfront was rebuilt by the OIC following the 1889 fire, it kept the same configuration for its new docks and so also for the exposure of Ballast Island, then still the popular campground for visiting Indians. In the late 1890s, this made land was at last capped in the continuation of Railroad Avenues to the south side of Yesler Way. However, as we see here, with the PCC's new configuration of 1901 the covering of Ballast Island at its west end was removed and exposed in order to dredge it for the new slip between Piers A (49) and B (48). In the crude screened print copied from the *P-I,* this may explain the long timbers that are scattered in with the ballast of Ballast Island below the piers. A few revealing excerpts from the *P-I* reporter's description follow.



[256]

THE SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER. SUNDAY. AUGUST 18. 19

IMPROVEMENTS ALONG SEATTLE'S

MOVING THE SECOND SECTION OF THE PACIFIC COAST WAREHOUSE

BALLAST ISLAND THROUGH WHICH THE PACIFIC COAST CO WILL DREDGE A SLIP

[257] Clippings from *Post-Intelligencer* for Aug. 18, 1901 on changes along Pacific Coast's section of the waterfront.

> Within the last year approximately $3,000,000 has been expended on waterfront improvements … most of the expenditures by the Pacific Coast Company and the Northern Pacific … about one million each. With the exception of a space of two blocks these two great corporations occupy the entire waterfront from King to University Street, a distance of 12 blocks or more … Eighteen months ago decayed and rotting wharves marred this section of the waterfront. The Northern Pacific controls the Yesler, Galbraith-Bacon, White Star and Arlington docks. With the exception of the Yesler dock the piers are all completed. The Pacific Coat Co has especially to do with these wharves, the City Dock, a wharf for Alaska business, and another for regular San Francisco business of the Pacific Coast Co. Both the City Dock and the California steamer dock are competed. They are to be followed by the erection of a third wharf that will be especially devoted to Alaska Shipping. The first wharf is at the foot of Main Street. Next to it and with an intervening space is to go a large slip. This will be dredged through Ballast Island the made-ground portion of the present site of the Pacific Coast Co. dock office. The Pac Coast Company (also) recently completed the Oriental Dock at the foot of Virginia Street. The Pacific Coast Company improvements also include the erection of new coal bunkers for handling the product of its King county coal mines. As to the future location of these bunkers, however much depends on the site of the new proposed Union Depot. Each of the three wharves of the Pacific Coast Company between King and Washington streets is 400 feet long."

Only months following the Post-Intelligencer's waterfront review, the "new proposed Union Depot" was sited and the PCC could start both planning to move its coal facilities four blocks south to Dearborn Street and also to construct its new and largest of all piers, Pier D/46 at the foot of King Street and on top of some of the pilings that earlier supported the two long wings of the old coal wharf.

The Pacific Coast Company laid out a small railroad-switching yard in front of Piers A/49 and B/48. To the south between the foot of Main and Jackson streets, and so in front of Pier C/47, a three-story brick warehouse was later constructed. It was called the Eyre Transfer and Warehouse Company Building after its long-term tenant. In 1938 the Pacific Coast Company moved its general offices from the Smith Tower to newly prepared space in the Eyre building. That Eyre Storage also held the lease for Pier 47/C is revealed in the attached bay view of the water ends of Piers A through C. **[258]** The sign on the City Dock Pier C/47 (far right) reads "Eyres Storage & Distributing Company." Since the pier is identified as belonging to the *Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad,* we may assume (merely) that the photograph was recorded sometime between 1914 when the Smith Tower was dedicated and 1916, when the Pacific Coast Company finally came around to naming the old *CPSRR* after itself, the *Pacific Coast Railroad*. (But then it may have taken more time to change the sign.)

PART THREE

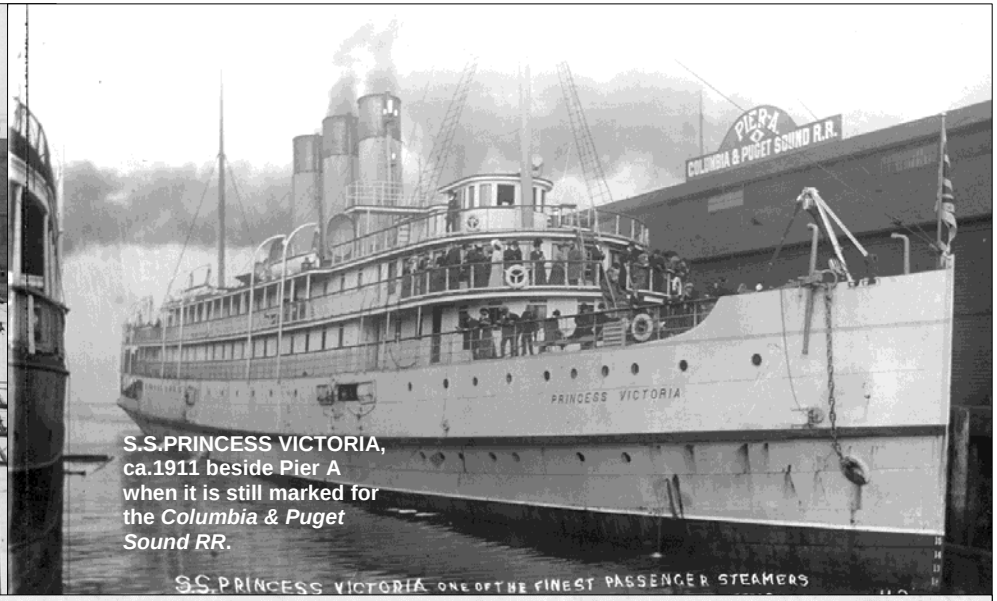
Kurt Armbruster's Story about the *Columbia & Puget Sound* Depot and PCC Pres. Henry Cannon

In his book *The Orphan Road* Kurt Armbruster shares the amusing story about how the Pacific Coast Company was ordered to at last build their new depot at the foot of Washington. "After years of discharging its patrons at the foot of Washington Street without offering so much as a lean-to, the *Columbia and Puget Sound* was goaded into building a proper depot by the new president of the Pacific Coast Company, Henry Cannon. Cannon himself had been among the hapless riders one day, and he demanded of the conductor: 'Why don't these people get off at the depot?' 'Because there is no depot to get off at,' the trainman replied. 'How long has there been no depot?' pursued his boss. 'It has never had a depot. The other fellows thought no depot was necessary, and we just dumped the people into the street.' 'The *Columbia and Puget Sound* must keep abreast with this year of depot building!' barked the executive, 'Let the chief engineer begin plans immediately on a new passenger station for Seattle – a station that will be large enough and that will be in keeping with the dignity of the *Columbia and Puget Sound*!" The new C&PS depot was completed in January 1905 and Pres. Canon opened it a few months earlier than Hill unfastened the palatial Union Depot. The photograph of the waterfront depot included here looks down from a brick block at the southeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Washington Street when the depot was new and all else nearly. **[259]**

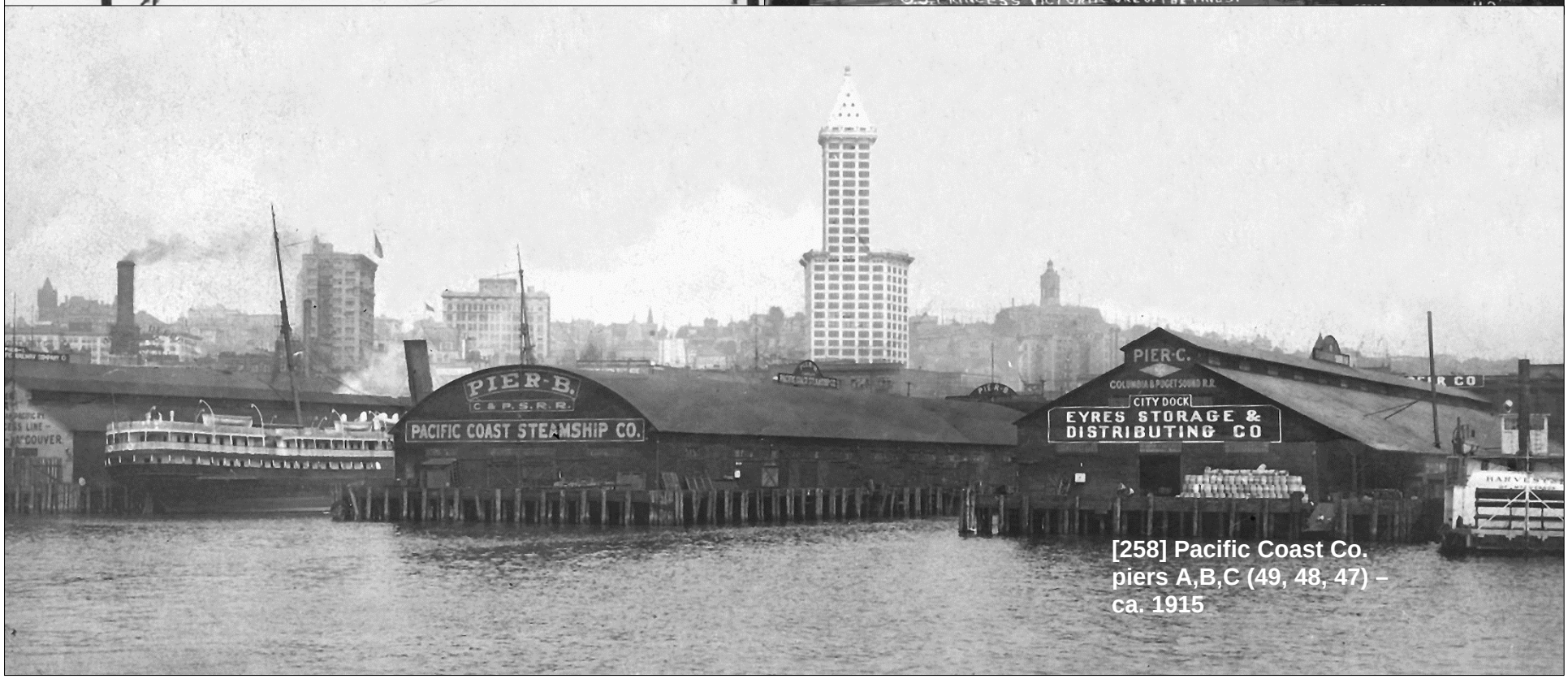
Smith Tower Comparisons: Changes South of Yesler Way, 1920s -to- 1970s

Although the new PCC piers were the same length – 400 feet – they were not the same width. An illustrative telescope of these wharves through the 20th century will quickly show where these relative sizes are headed. In the attached mid-1920's inspection from the Smith Tower, the three wharves still hold their shapes from 1901, although the Eyre building hides the front of Pier C/47. Crowding the view's right border are the two long piers that the Northern Pacific built in place of the single Yesler Dock. Heading south above Railroad Avenue from its curve at the foot of Washington Street is the elevated railroad that was planned at the end of World War 1 to carry workers to the shipyards on the East Waterway and Harbor Island and only got going after the war was over and the ship industry without war orders was withering with the new peace. The keen eye can also find here the Port Pergola, the elegant but little depot, and what is left of the *Pacific Coast Railway's* waterfront yard: all are near the foot of Washington Street. **[260]** In a later look into the neighborhood from the Smith Tower, the depot is gone – replaced with an irregularly shaped commercial building – and the boxcars have given way to motorcars neatly arranged for parking. The elevated railway is also long gone (in 1929) and so are most of Piers 47/C and 49/A. In the early 1930s the Pacific Coast Company truncated these already slim sheds so that it could widen Pier 48/B while it was also extending it much further into the bay. **[261]** A third view from the Smith Tower in the early 1970s finds

[259] *Columbia & Puget Sound* depot



S.S.PRINCESS VICTORIA, ca.1911 beside Pier A when it is still marked for the *Columbia & Puget Sound RR*.



[258] Pacific Coast Co. piers A,B,C (49, 48, 47) – ca. 1915

Pier 48 the sole survivor of all the Pacific Coast Company's early century development. To the south where the noticeable mass of Pier 46 once reached far into the bay is the Port of Seattle's first yard for containers when it still featured a row of sheds, the corner of which can be seen far left. To the right is the stripped Pier 1/50 serving in its last role as a parking lot originally developed for the 1962 Century 21. **[262]** In the last 20th-Century look – this time from the Columbia tower in 1994 – the parking lot is gone and much of the historic Yesler Dock site, far right, has been developed as another vehicular staging area for Colman Dock. **[263]** Pier 48 survives but by now without its Alaskan ferries that in 1989 moved to Bellingham and closer to Alaska for a new terminal, and lower port costs. In this view, the Port's extended Pier 46-to-37 container field seems busy enough to make a Port Commissioner forget about Tacoma.

***The Post-Intelligencer* 1901 Waterfront Review Concluded.**

Concluding this 20th Century tour of Pier 48 and its neighbor we return to the *Post-Intelligencer's* description of the waterfront in 1901. It is a testimony to the strapping growth in the dozen years since the central part of it was burned to the water line. "Few people fully realize the extent of the harbor facilities of Seattle, or comprehend that the city has an available wharfage front of about ten miles. [From Duwamish Head to Smith Cove.] A close inspection of this line, even at this early stage in the development of Seattle's waterfront, reveals surprisingly few gaps. Already five or six miles of the distance are covered by wharves and docks of some character. From the Centennial Mill [noted above] to the Occidental [sic, Oriental] Wharf, at the foot of Virginia Street, [sic, Lenora Street] there is scarcely an unoccupied space … With the filling of the tideflats the entire distance from the Centennial Mill around to Duwamish Head will be covered by wharves and docks. Already there is a great demand for tideflat wharves. The wharves on the immediate front of the city are from 300 to 500 feet in length." The *P-I's* 1901 prophesy about tideland wharves was correct – if we subtract that more intimate section of West Seattle waterfront on Harbor Avenue much of which is developed as parks.

Moving the Coal Wharf from King to Dearborn: 1903 - 1904

Two years less a few days before it opened its new depot at the foot of Washington Street the Pacific Coast Company began the dirty business of relocating its coal wharf from King to Dearborn streets. *The Daily Bulletin* for Feb. 20, 1903 describes what was involved in one of those matter-of-fact "brevities" that its readers expected. "The Pacific Coast Co has commenced work on the long delayed improvements on the southern portion of block 367 Seattle Tidelands. A space covering 446 feet out to deep water has been fitted with piles and in now being planked. There will be three slips. As soon as the planking is finished, work will be started on the coal bunkers, machine shop and roundhouse. The bunkers and all other obstructions owned by the Pacific Coast Co. in King St., will be moved off, in order to clear the depot site."

The "Chinese Wall"

The to-the-point businessman's periodical sacrificed no column inches for describing the culture beside King Street – or below it. Fortunately, for this we are given another *Post-Intelligencer* waterfront report – this one from the summer of 1905. The touring *P-I* reporter either gives or uses the

Nearly a century of changes in the piers south of Yesler Way are shown in this comparison of four views – three from the Smith Tower, Nos. 260, 261, 262, and remaining color snapshot from the top of the Columbia Tower. No. 260 dates from the 1920s, No. 261 from about 1940, No. 262 from the late 70s when the Alaska Ferries were nearly new to Pier 48 & No.263 from 1994. In this last, 48 is the only surviving traditional pier of the lot.

monumental King Street wharf's nickname, the "Old Chinese Wall." It is a fair wager that the Seattle waterfront was not then a place frequented by citizens who read devotional poetry while resting in their baths – especially not this part of the waterfront, for below the Chinese Wall the light barely penetrated. "The change in the last ten years is almost incredible. At that time all the land south of Jackson Street [sic King Street] was under water, and it was at the foot of Main Street that the famous old "Ballast Island" was located. … At the foot of King street were located the old coal bunkers that were torn down last year. These coalbunkers were known as the "Chinese Wall" and they marked the boundary between the tenderloin and the rest of the city. In their shadow more murders were committed than in any other single structure on the Pacific Coast, and it was with a feeling of relief that that old residents saw these bunkers come down and in their place a modern building erected."

Dearborn Street Coal Wharf: The *Cottage City* & The *Garonne*

Built anew at the foot of Dearborn Street the Pacific Coast Company coal wharf extended far into Elliott Bay. **[264]** For soaring grandeur, its two towers may be compared to the contemporary gantry cranes of the Port of Seattle. The open skeleton of the old coal towers suggests the stone filigree of a medieval cathedral and the symmetry strengthens this sublime allusion. Extending this analogy, in their time the towers – and now the cranes – performed like priests on the communion line of transshipment. The stationary scaffolds dropped coal and the moveable cranes boxcar-sized containers into the waiting holds of ships kneeling at the rail of what is now part of the extensive Pier 46 complex.

Both the *Cottage City* and *S.S.Garonne*, the steamers left and right of the coal towers, had busy careers in Alaska. The *Cottage City* was built in Bath, Maine in 1890 and soon brought around to the West Coast to join the fleet of Oregon Improvement Company. (Oregonians liked to point out the OIC may have been better called the Washington Improvement Company.) In 1897, the wood steamer joined in the Yukon gold rush. Also that year she was one of the dozen ships transferred to the Pacific Coast Company when, as noted above, it took control of all the property of the OIC. The primary on-shore business of the PCC was to mine the coals of Newcastle and Black Diamond and deliver them here. In 1911, while still active in her Alaska service at the entrance to Seymour Narrows, the *Cottage City* ran on rocks in a blinding snowstorm. The ship was lost but all 328 passengers were saved and returned to Seattle. The *S .S. Garonne* was the "flag ship" for Frank Waterhouse, an English stenographer (with his own system of shorthand) who became arguably the most influential shipper on the Seattle Waterfront through the First World War. When the steamer *Portland* arrived with its "ton of gold" in 1897, Waterhouse rushed to England and convinced partners to join the Alaska parade and purchase the twenty-six year old *Garonne*, a steel-hulled refrigerated cargo vessel that had earlier performed as a cruise ship between England and Australia. The *Garonne* garnered its Alaskan distinction when it was the first ship to reach Nome for the 1899 season. It dropped its anchor off shore from Nome's then still gold heavy beaches on June 20. Either by his fleet or agency, Waterhouse became Seattle's principle link with the ports of Asia. And in time of war he ran scores of ships for the U.S. Shipping Board.

Frank Waterhouse was well connected, and most of his connecting was done from the new *Northern Pacific* piers north of Spring Street.

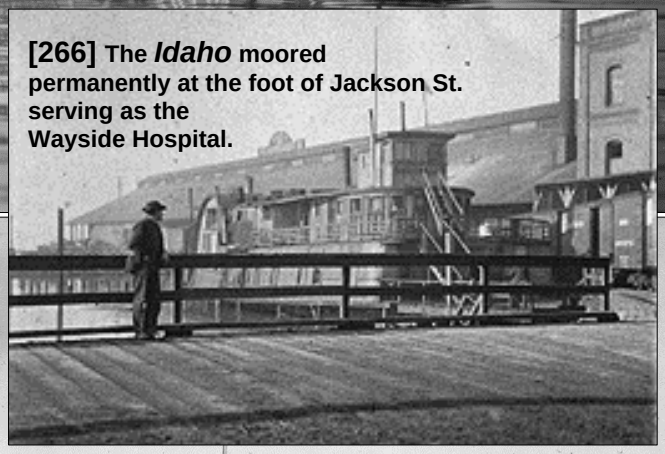
"New Jerusalem"

Rejoining the *P-I* reporter for his 1905 tour of the waterfront, he or she next turns north to Jackson Street and discoverers another exotic stop - the "New Jerusalem … Not the least interesting feature of a stroll down the waterfront is the colony of Russian Jews on Railroad Ave between Main and Jackson Streets. Most of them fled from Russia to escape the persecutions to which their race is subject in the dominion of the 'Little Father' and they daily give thanks to Jehovah for guiding their footsteps to the land of peace and plenty, where they can worship as they will and when. Some of the recent arrivals are from the bloody city of Kiev, where the massacres that shocked the world happened a short time ago and they tell tales of blood and horror seldom paralleled since the reign of the man Ivan the Terrible. The colonists earn their living as junk men or keep second-hand stores along the waterfront in which it is possible to buy everything from the proverbial needle to an anchor. On warm days the old men of the colony sit in the doors dressed in their gray gabardines, with the Talmud resting lovingly on their knees and the picture presented by these ancient Hebrews gives color to the name of New Jerusalem, as this section has been baptized by the dock 'wallopers.'"

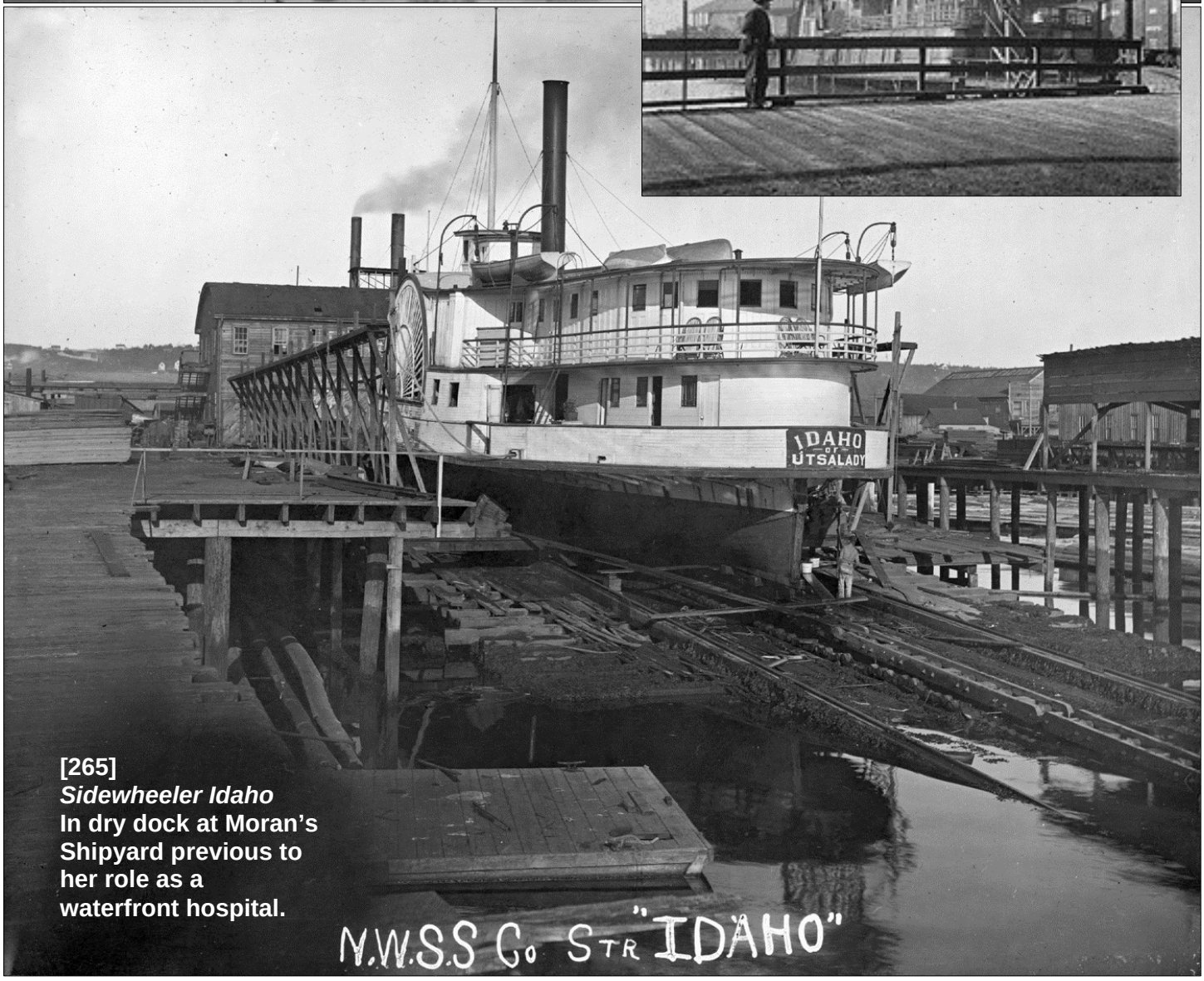
Stowaways, Bounties & the Sick on the Hospital Ship *S.S. Idaho*

Immediately across from "New Jerusalem" was the *S.S. Idaho*, a side-wheeler built on the Columbia River above the Cascades for "Middle River" service out The Dalles. After she survived the risk of coming through the Cascades, the ship was sent to Puget Sound in 1882. In the two accompanying photographs we see her both in dry dock at Moran's Shipyard on the tideflats and "moored" at the foot of Jackson Street. **[265 & 266]** The *Idaho* was not just another boat temporarily bobbing on the waterfront. Rather, she was set above high tide on pilings, and opened in 1899 as The Wayside Mission. Her benefactor, Dr. Alexander de Soto bought the steamer with money made from practicing surgery on the well-to-do and converted it into a hospital for the down-and-out. For its seven years at the foot of Jackson Street it was an attraction that would lure some cautious locals to a part of the waterfront they would not otherwise be likely to visit. The *P-I* reporter, of course, gave it a sensational review. "Travelers say that no other town in all the country owns a hospital so unique. The boat is the old *Idaho*, which saw service on the Sound thirty years ago, and old sailors affirm that smugglers made fortunes by using her to carry contraband goods from B.C. to Seattle. The story is related in connection with this old boat that illustrates the length to which the old-time smugglers would go to avoid capture. Just after the Chinese exclusion act was passed smugglers made good money bringing in Chinamen, for which they received $100 a head. This old boat had ten Chinese on board when she was chased by a revenue cutter. Seeing that she was going to be overhauled she ran into a little cove and her crew, calling the Chinamen up from below one at a time knocked them in the head and dropped them overboard. When the government vessel arrived there was no incriminating evidence on board. Ten days later there were all kinds of dead Chinamen floating around and the same men got $10 a head for finding their bodies."

[264] Pacific Coast Coal's two bunkers at Dearborn Street.



[266] The *Idaho* moored permanently at the foot of Jackson St. serving as the Wayside Hospital.



[265]
Sidewheeler Idaho
In dry dock at Moran's Shipyard previous to her role as a waterfront hospital.

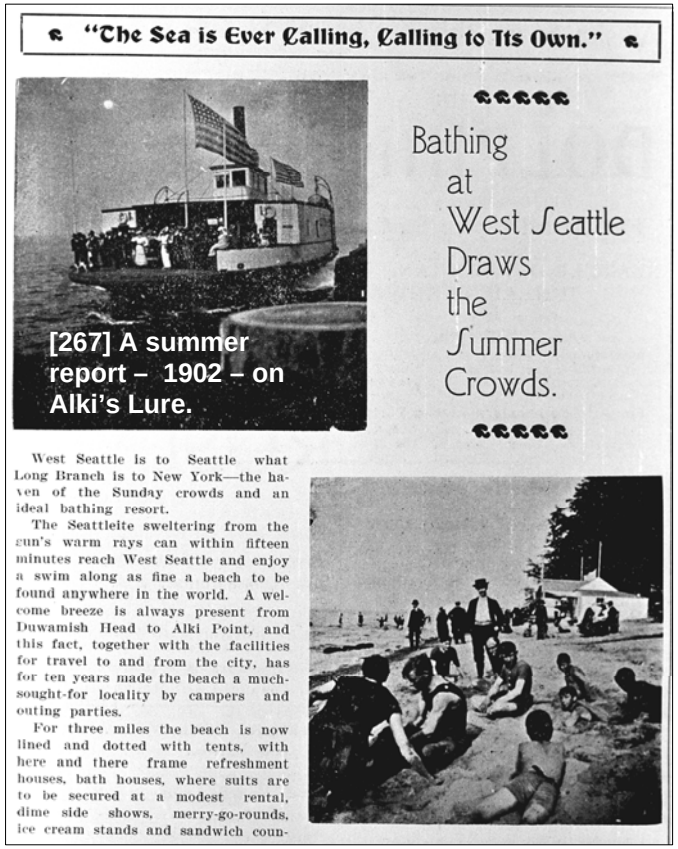
While the story smells of hyperbole the *Idaho* did do some smuggling of "Chinamen" and paid the fines. As the weekly *Commonwealth* put in it a 1903 article, "The Idaho's career was a happy instance of compensation in which an opium smuggling ship became an ark of refuse for opium victims." The hospital was peculiarly well sited for the self-treatment of high fevers. More than one delirious patient jumped into the bay. Ultimately, the good works of de Soto's eccentric hospital were in such demand that his example spurred the city to provide health care for the beat and the broke. With the 1909 completion of the new Pubic Safety Building (now the 400 Yesler building) Seattle opened its own clinic for indigent patients. Two years earlier the Pacific Coast Company, while developing the aprons for its Piers C and D, forced the Wayside Mission from its pile-bound sidewheeler and de Sota moved his hospital to a temporary site at Second and Republican, now part of Seattle Center. Soon after, the redeemed *S. S. Idaho* was laid to rest beneath fill at the foot of Jackson Street and there she abides. Here is another site that any tunnel diggers should approach with caution.

Coney Island Crush for New York Alki - 1905

Turning from New Jerusalem and the Wayside Hospital the *P-I's* reporter's summer exploration of 1905 next comes upon the long row of nearly new piers C, B, A, 1 and 2 – as far as Columbia Street – and nearly swoons over their industry. "Walking north to the busy docks of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co., where the trucks and the wagons form an endless chain and the longshoremen work like men possessed, one comes to the large wharfs where the excursion steamers for West Seattle and Alki Point land. The enormous Sunday business done by these boats puts to shame the crowds in New York bound for Coney Island. The boats cannot begin to handle the business and crowds of people are compelled to wait boat after boat before they are able to get on board." **[267]** The summertime waterfront swarm awaiting launches for Alki Beach had only two years more to run. In 1907, the year West Seattle was annexed into the city, trolley connections were first introduced across the new Spokane Street bridge reaching the then also sprawling Luna Park pier of rides and other amusements built over the shallow tidelands off of Duwamish head.

The "Alaska Flyer" and the Theft of the Seattle Totem

A nearly new Pier A is illustrated twice here – first from the top of a line of boxcars that is directed toward the northern apron of Pier B. **[268]** In the slip between the two piers are two vessels, with the steamer *City of Seattle* the more evident. So far as I know the *"Alaska Flyer,"* its nickname, was not used to ferry the summertime swarm to West Seattle. Built in Philadelphia, the plush 244-ft long steamer made it on her own around the Straits of Magellan in 1890. The following year she was chosen to carry President Benjamin Harrison from Tacoma to Seattle while on his visit to Puget Sound. Two years later she was laid up after the Panic of 1893 made her too expensive to run. She was, of course, brought out of these doldrums by the gold rush, during which Seattle controlled more than 90% of the shipping with about 40 steamers speeding back and forth to Alaska, including the *Alaska Flyer*. In 1902 she lost her "speed cup" to the *Dolphin* that beat her by half a mile after racing 800 miles, often bow to bow, from Vancouver B.C. to Skagway. Perhaps her most notorious trip north was with Seattle's so-called Goodwill Committee in 1899, a cabal of journalists and Chamber of Commerce



"The Sea is Ever Calling, Calling to Its Own."

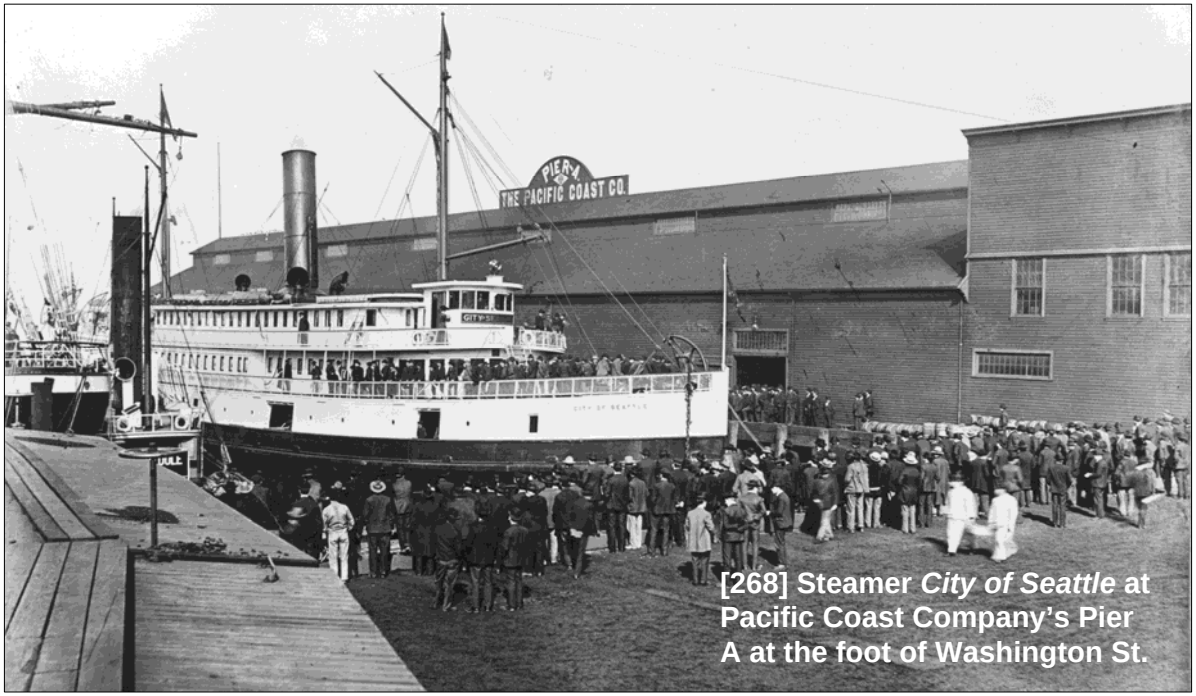
Bathing at West Seattle Draws the Summer Crowds.

West Seattle is to Seattle what Long Branch is to New York—the haven of the Sunday crowds and an ideal bathing resort.

The Seattleite sweltering from the sun's warm rays can within fifteen minutes reach West Seattle and enjoy a swim along as fine a beach to be found anywhere in the world. A welcome breeze is always present from Duwamish Head to Alki Point, and this fact, together with the facilities for travel to and from the city, has for ten years made the beach a much-sought-for locality by campers and outing parties.

For three miles the beach is now lined and dotted with tents, with here and there frame refreshment houses, bath houses, where suits are to be secured at a modest rental, dime side shows, merry-go-rounds, ice cream stands and sandwich coun-

[267] A summer report – 1902 – on Alki's Lure.



[268] Steamer *City of Seattle* at Pacific Coast Company's Pier A at the foot of Washington St.

West Seattle Ferry Terminal with the ferry City of Seattle – ca.1895

[269] A late look from the King St. Coal Wharf – ca.02

notables touring the new source for much of their wealth. On their return the *City of Seattle* was briefly anchored at Tongass Island where a ship's mate was sent ashore with an axe to acquire – without request or receipt – the most distinguished of several tall totems standing between the community and the bay. Seattle's "stolen totem pole" was first unveiled in Pioneer Square on Oct. 19, 1899 with sufficient appreciation for its "unique, startling, barbaric, and bizarre" qualities that the goodwill committee felt comforted when they were subsequently only fined for the theft. Mrs. Grace Cornish, a passenger on the 1899 trip recalled, "Everybody on board treated it as a sort of Halloween prank. But I wasn't so sure that it wasn't more serious. I had visited Fort Tongass before that and I found the Indians there proud of their community and its totems."

Late Look North from the King Street Coal Wharf ca.1902

The second record of Pier A includes Piers 1, 2 and part of 3, far left. **[269]** This is one of the last photographs of the waterfront taken from the popular prospect of the King Street Coal Wharf before it was dismantled. The unadorned water end of Pier A appears on the far right. The *North Pacific*, the sidewheeler that set a few Puget Sound records for endurance and profits during the 1880 and 1890s, crowds the freshly painted Pier 1. Behind her, Pier 2 is still a work-in-progress. The Galbraith Dock, Pier 3, has another celebrated sidewheeler by her side, the *George E. Starr*. As noted above, the *Starr* was built in 1879 on the Seattle waterfront at the foot of Cherry Street when the bay still reached First Avenue. On the left horizon the familiar hulk of the Denny Hotel stands atop the front (south) summit of Denny Hill. A likely year for this scene is 1902.

Waterfront Curiosities
The P-I 1905 Tour Concluded

The *PI* reporter concludes his or her 1905 waterfront tour with a few examples of the Victorian fascination for colorful types and professions.

> Next one strikes the fish markets where all members of the finny tribe from smelt to octopus are displayed for sale by every nationality of fishermen to be found on the globe, although the Greeks and Italians predominate. Down past all this one comes to a little curio shop, sandwiched in between wholesale commercial houses and fish markets. The Old Curiosity Shop immortalized by Dickens was possibly no more interesting than this bit of "concentrated interest," as one fanciful tourist named it. Antiquaries revel in the ancient pottery and other relics of a time to which the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. The most interesting portion of the waterfront however is the sailor. Jack Tar ashore is a study in himself and to the observer is always a source of interest and amusement. With his rolling walk and the nautical cut of his Sunday go-ashore clothes it is hard to mistake one. But the real sailor is far different from the seaman of the novelist. On shore he is rather shy and although he fears no man he does fear every woman … The sailor's boarding houses around the waterfront are always harbors for which Jack steers as soon as he strikes the dock …

> Another feature that arrests the attention of observers is the increasing number of launches on the bay. Sailing boats are not by any means as popular as they were a short time ago. Gasoline launches and electric launches are taking their places, just as the automobile is taking the place of the horse ashore … Foreign sailors in the port never fail to express surprise at the large number of these craft that can be seen skimming over the water. The foreign sailors in port also form an ever-interesting picture. From all over the world they gather and the docks are sprinkled with citizens from all countries who unite in singing the praises of the Queen City of the Pacific – Seattle. "No city in the world has a more interesting or picturesque waterfront than has Seattle. Not even New York, with its miles of docks stretching from the Battery to Harlem, along side of which vessels from all countries are moored, can boast of the cosmopolitan tinge and unique features seen on every foot of the Seattle waterfront, from the great iron works where the big battleship *Nebraska* lies to the long pier [at Smith Cove] of the *Great Northern* where the giant *Dakota* rises and falls with the tide. Factories, mills, foundries – every phase of commercial life carried on in almost every tongue that was heard on the tower of Babel, are encountered in a stroll along the front …"

New York Alki Again

While it is expected that most provincial reporter's "urban studies" of their home towns will be wrapped in civic boasting, this writer has really packed it home. It would seem by this description that Charles Terry's little village "New York Alki" – translated "New York By and By" – had in a little more than a half century outdone Gotham itself. But while impressive, Seattle's status in 1905 when compared to New York was more truthfully like a Hollywood lot where there is one of everything (but rarely more), or a monopoly chess board where a smart player has rolled the dice well and diversified, or – to really stretch our analogies – comparing Seattle and New York in 1905 is something like today comparing New York itself with its contemporary recreation in Las Vegas. As was noted earlier and will be remarked again – with statistics – in the now 150-plus years of Seattle's development, there was one relatively brief moment when it could be seriously permitted the opportunity to compare itself to New York. That was during the First World War, when shipping was so hazardous on the Atlantic that much of it was diverted to the Pacific, and Seattle was then and is still, after all, the shortest route to Vladivostok.

Yesler's Wharf "Turned Inside-Out"

While still appreciated, the *Post-Intelligencer* summer tour was more impressionist than descriptive after leaving "New Jerusalem." Consequently, we will continue north across Yesler Way and beyond it to waterfront latitudes visited earlier, near the north portal of the railroad tunnel. By 1904 the *Northern Pacific's* greatest contributions to the central waterfront, Piers 1/50 and 2/51, were in place to either side of the waterfront foot of Yesler Way. This, as noted, required the reversal of Henry Yesler's decades of waterfront dumping as he extended his wharf over new fill, most of it manufactured by his own mill. The accompanying photograph shows both a dredger at work in the slip between the two piers and beyond it a pile driver placing the

supports for the new Pier 1/50. **[270]** The northern border of the Columbia and Puget Railroad's small train yard appears behind the dredger on the slip leading to the north side of Pier A/49.

The Yesler Way Waterway & the *Admiral Evans*

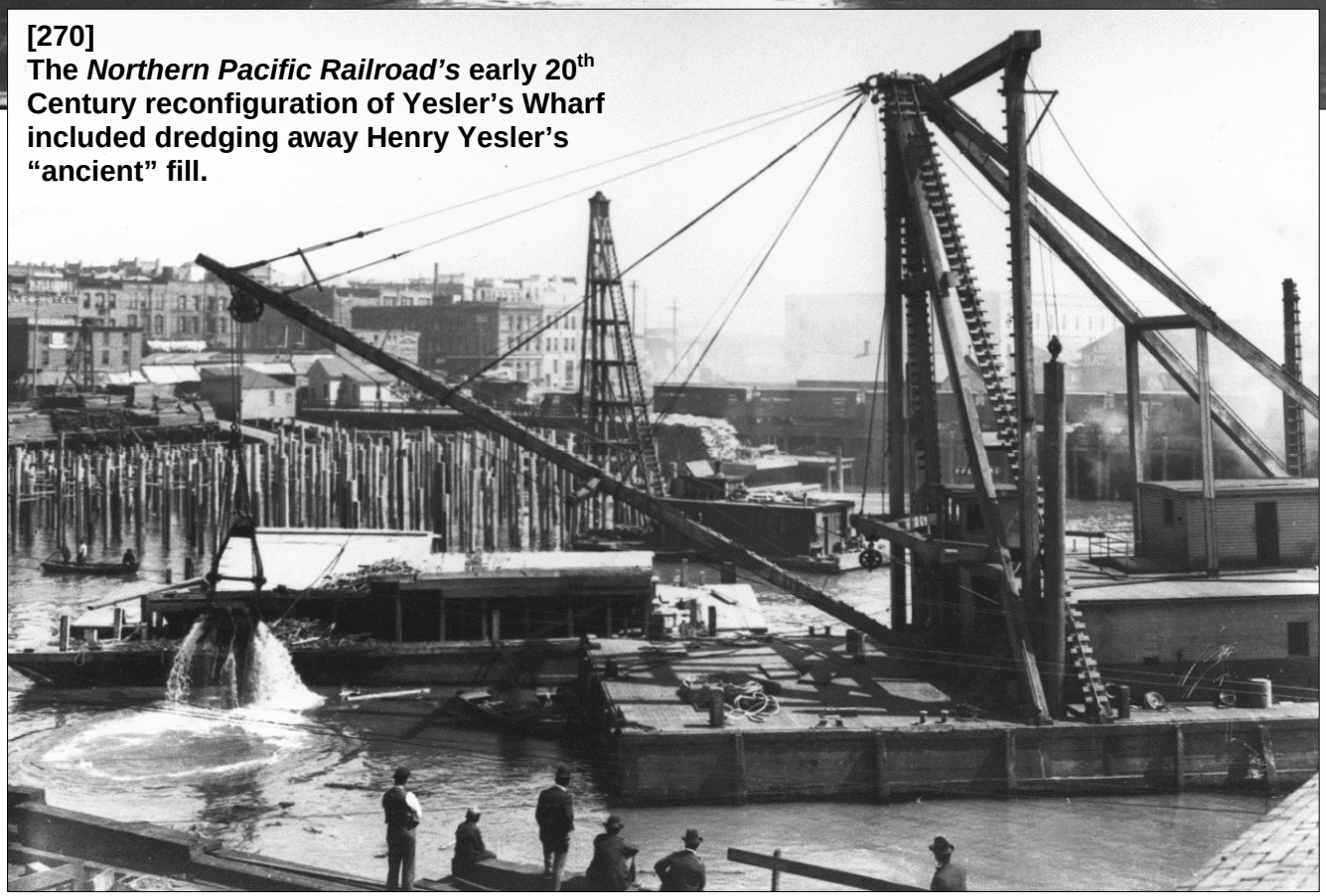
A second photograph looks in line with Yesler Way and the new slip where once was the clutter of Yesler's wharf. **[271]** The inclusion of the Smith Tower, of course, means that the scene dates from sometime after its dedication in 1914. In the beginning mariners likened its gleaming white terra cotta face to a beacon. Of the two vessels, only the *Admiral Evans* on the right is identified, and its thumbnail history is instructive of hardy maritime bluster. Formerly the United Fruit Co. steamer *Buchman* working from the east coast (hence the Portland Me attribution below the ship's name), she came to the west coast in 1905 for the Alaska trade. In 1913, while the Smith Tower was going up, the *Buchman* was both overhauled and renovated with luxuries like a smoking room with plate glass windows, six deluxe suites with private baths and brass beds and an increase of first class accommodations from 65 to 135. It was then also that she was renamed for another of the Spanish American War admirals that the vessel's new owners, The Admiral Line, used as a popular and patriotic promotion of its coastwise service. Through her 32 years working several packets between San Francisco and Alaska, the *Buchman-Admiral Evans'* most sensational adventure came twenty miles off the coast of Eureka, California, on Aug. 21, 1910 when at about 2 a.m. two pirates with the unlikely names George Washington Wise and French West tried to take control of the vessel with the intent of running her ashore and absconding with the pursers and passengers' valuables. After shot-gunning the ship's Capt. E.B. Wood, West was temporarily overcome by other officers before jumping into, and no doubt perishing in, the sea. Restrained in the engine room, West's accomplice Wise was placed in irons. He soon went mad and was committed to the criminal ward of a state asylum. The 1920s were generally glory years for The Admiral Line's west coast work. The depression-time 1930s, however, were devastating. In 1937 the *Admiral Evans* was sold for scrap.

As described above and shown more than once, the two block section of the post-fire waterfront between Columbia and Madison Streets featured a line of stubby piers that, except for having their front ends either cut away or moved west in the early 1900s for the widening of Railroad Avenue, were not replaced with the landmark Colman and Grand Trunk docks until 1908 and 1910 respectively. We will soon return to them, but for this moment we continue north to Madison Street and the line of new railroad piers between Madison and University Streets – those surviving stalwarts of what was the new waterfront in 1905.

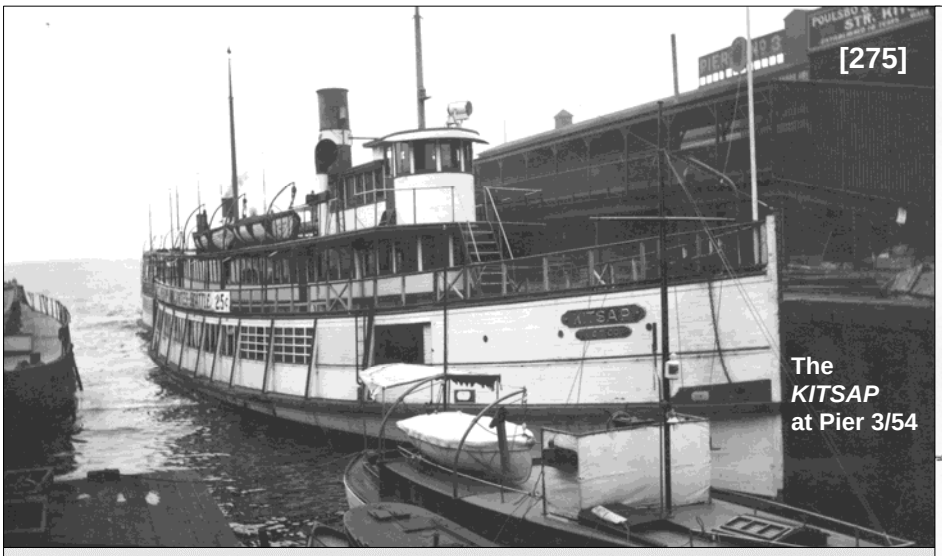
Pier 3/54

As described earlier – with the help of a late Anders Wilse photograph from 1900 – Pier 3/54, although first in line, was the second of the four new railroad piers built to the angle prescribed by Thomson and Cotterill with the new 1897 tidelands replat. The Northern Pacific's first tenants at Pier 3 were James Galbraith and Cecil Bacon. Of the two, Galbraith was the "old timer," having dealt hay and feed on the waterfront since 1891. **[272]** Bacon, a chemical engineer with some extra capital,

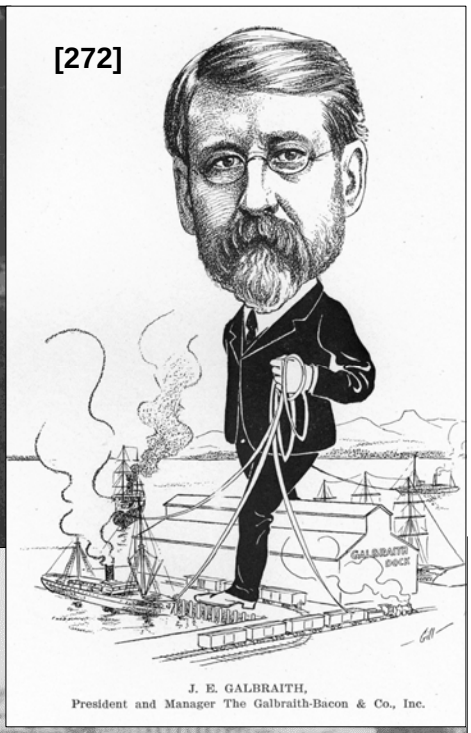
[271] Looking east up Yesler Way and through what was for a half century the site of Yesler's Wharf.



[270]
The *Northern Pacific Railroad's* early 20th Century reconfiguration of Yesler's Wharf included dredging away Henry Yesler's "ancient" fill.



The *KITSAP* at Pier 3/54



J. E. GALBRAITH,
President and Manager The Galbraith-Bacon & Co., Inc.

The CAPITOL CITY

came to town in 1899, found in Galbraith a partner, and with the increased wealth and space of these new quarters they added building materials to their stock.

The Galbraith-Bacon name is emblazoned on both the water and land sides of the pier in the two views attached. In the former the *Capital City* is edging its way, it appears, out of the south slip. **[273]** The *Capital City* and the *Multnomah*, another sternwheeler, worked from Pier 3 in daily passage to Tacoma and Olympia – the *Multnomah* leaving at 7 a.m. and the *Capitol City* six hours later. (Their names and hours are listed on the front of the wharf to the left of the Galbraith banner in the scene recorded on Railroad Avenue.) **[274]** The *Multnomah* continued in the Seattle-Olympia trade until 1911 when she was struck by the steel-hulled *Iroquois* in Elliott bay during a dense fog and sank in 240 feet of water. A number of other steamers on different calls used Pier 3 as their Seattle port. These included large ships from San Francisco and smaller ones like the *Fairhaven* that made its regular rounds between LaConner and Seattle with points in between. Pacific Tug Co. was another early tenant. When Pier 3 became the Seattle call for the Kitsap Transportation Company, it ascended to second place among the "Mosquito Fleet's" docks, surpassed only by its neighbor Colman Dock and the fleet of the Puget Sound Navigation Company – the Black Ball. Walter Galbraith, James' son, was a director of the Kitsap Company. For years these competitors ran their cross-sound steamers against one another. Pier 3 was the homeport for vessels like the *Hyak, Reliance, Utopia* and the company's flagship the *Kitsap*. Indianola, Keyport, Bremerton and Rolling Bay were but a few of their many west side ports of call.

The Kitsap

At 127.5 feet and 195 tons, the *Kitsap* is a good example of a common-size steamer, but in her lines and appointments she was a comely symbol for the entire so-called "Mosquito fleet." **[275]** She rests here between Fire Station #5 and Pier 3. Like other Kitsap Co. steamers, this one had a white band around its stack indicating its membership in the "White-Collar Line", the company nickname. This view was photographed near the time that the *Indianapolis*, a larger vessel of the Kitsap Company's competitor the Black Ball line, rammed the smaller *Kitsap* on Dec. 14, 1910 and sent her to the bottom of Elliott Bay about 300 yards off shore from her berth here at Pier 3. The steamer was soon raised and by the following May restored to again join the battle for Puget Sound traffic. In 1925, the *Kitsap* was destroyed along with two other vessels in a dock fire at the Houghton Shipyards on Lake Washington. Ten years later the "Black Ball" absorbed the "White Collar".

A scattering of signs for the Kitsap company's services are attached to the sides and roof crest of Pier 3/54 in the accompanying photograph that also shows the company's ticket window framed in white. **[276]** Near the scene's center is one of the "man traps" that critics of the waterfront's dangers often cited, and the rough condition of the planking on Railroad Avenue here at the foot of Madison Street is so apparent that it may well be the reason this image was recorded. The splintered surface in the foreground give critics a choice of complaining about plank ends that stick up or are holes in the making. Another view of Pier 3 that hides the qualities of Railroad Avenue, but is especially revealing of the pier's membership in the "Mosquito Fleet," looks towards its water end across the slip between it and the Grand Trunk Pier. **[277]** Left to right the tidy vessels here are the

'MAN TRAP'

[276]

[277]

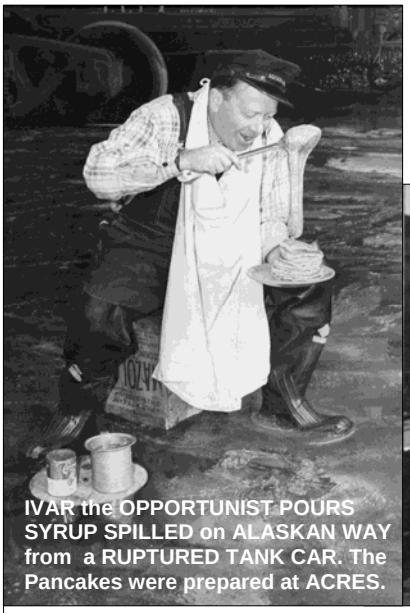
Magnolia, the *Florence K* and the *Mohawk*. (The fateful shadow of the Grand Trunk tower falls across the Magnolia.)

"World's First Air Ferry"

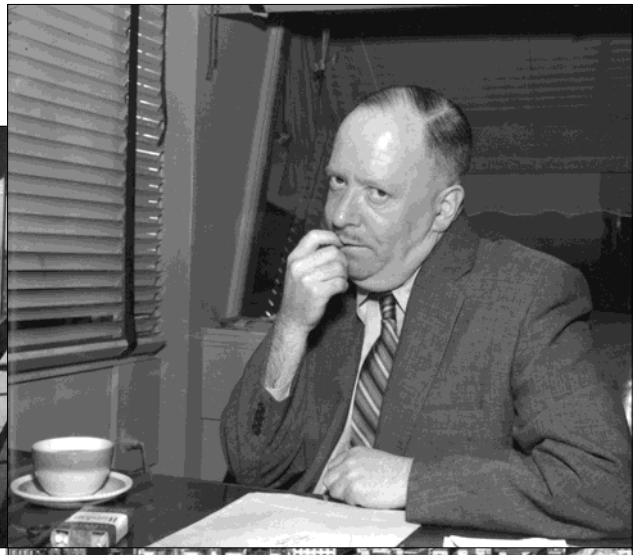
Galbraith and Bacon prospered so that they soon had a second pier built for them at the foot of Wall Street -- one they did not need to least from the railroad. Meanwhile, Pier 3 pursued its role as a transportation hub, eventually expanding to include truckers like Maust Transfer and even an air commuter service. On June 15, 1929, within a quarter tank of the Great Depression, Gorst Flying Service began its round trip service to Bremerton. **[278]** In the beginning its eight-seaters took off from the dock shown here tied to the southwest corner of Pier 3. Remarkably, the service kept on for nearly five years. In his company's first year Verne Gorst claimed – at least – to have carried more than 25,000 passengers on 2,700 round trips across Puget Sound. The time of transit for what Gorst claimed was the "world's first air ferry" was whimsically calculated as 51 minutes less than was needed by the best of the Black Ball's ferries to plough the same distance. The reason for this popularity was, of course, both the thrill of the fight and the Navy Yard at Bremerton, then a popular tourist magnet. The early success of Gorst's service allowed him to build a sizeable covered hangar that he anchored at the front of Pier 4. **[279]** It can be seen in the accompanying detail lifted from an early 1930s aerial photograph of the Seattle waterfront. (In the earlier view the Galbraith name is still emblazoned on the pier head.)

"Acres of Clams"

When Ivar rented its northeast corner for his one room aquarium in 1938, the *Northern Pacific* still owned the pier and Washington Fish leased most of it. Following World War Two Ivar opened his Acres of Clams, also on Pier 54 but at the other end of the sidewalk from his Aquarium. **[280]** In 1966 Ivar also purchased Pier 54 from Washington Fish, which had earlier bought it from the railroad. After Ivar joined what he called the "Pierage" and became a "Dock Duck," his former landlord, Washington Fish, became both one of his fish providers and tenant. Earlier, when the then 33-year-old folk singer first opened his aquarium, he also sold fish and chips from a window across the entrance from the ticket window. Within the year, Ivar's deep fried fish sold so well that Steve's Café, at the other side of the Pier 3, complained to the landlord and Ivar was told to close the window on his deep fryer. Soon Steve also closed. Had he been able to hold on through World War 2 and after – thus preventing Ivar from taking his former corner with the Acres of Clams in 1946 – Steve like Ivar might have also prospered even without the singing. The reason is that extreme commonplace of a restaurant's success: location. Set beside the fireboats the site had a great advantage for a restaurant, a state of grace that was only increased when Pier 3/54's bigger neighbor to the north, the Grand Trunk Dock, was razed in the mid-1960s and replaced with a loading lot for cars waiting to board the ferries. Thereafter, Ivar could add ferry watching to the delights directly available from the windows of his Acres of Clams. Although Ivar may not have noticed this when he first opened his aquarium, of all the docks built by the railroad, Pier 3 from its southern side is the only one that looks directly down on both the fireboats and the ferries – except the ferry dock itself, and neither Black Ball nor their successors, the Washington State Department of Transportation, was ready to allow any food service onto Colman dock that was more



IVAR the OPPORTUNIST POURS SYRUP SPILLED on ALASKAN WAY from a RUPTURED TANK CAR. The Pancakes were prepared at ACRES.



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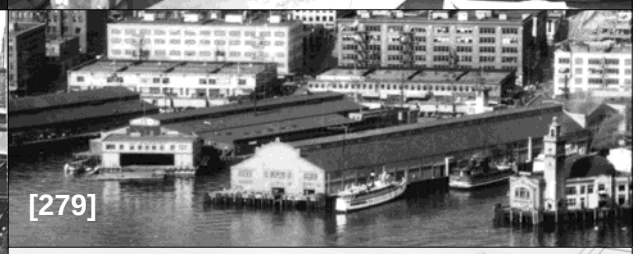

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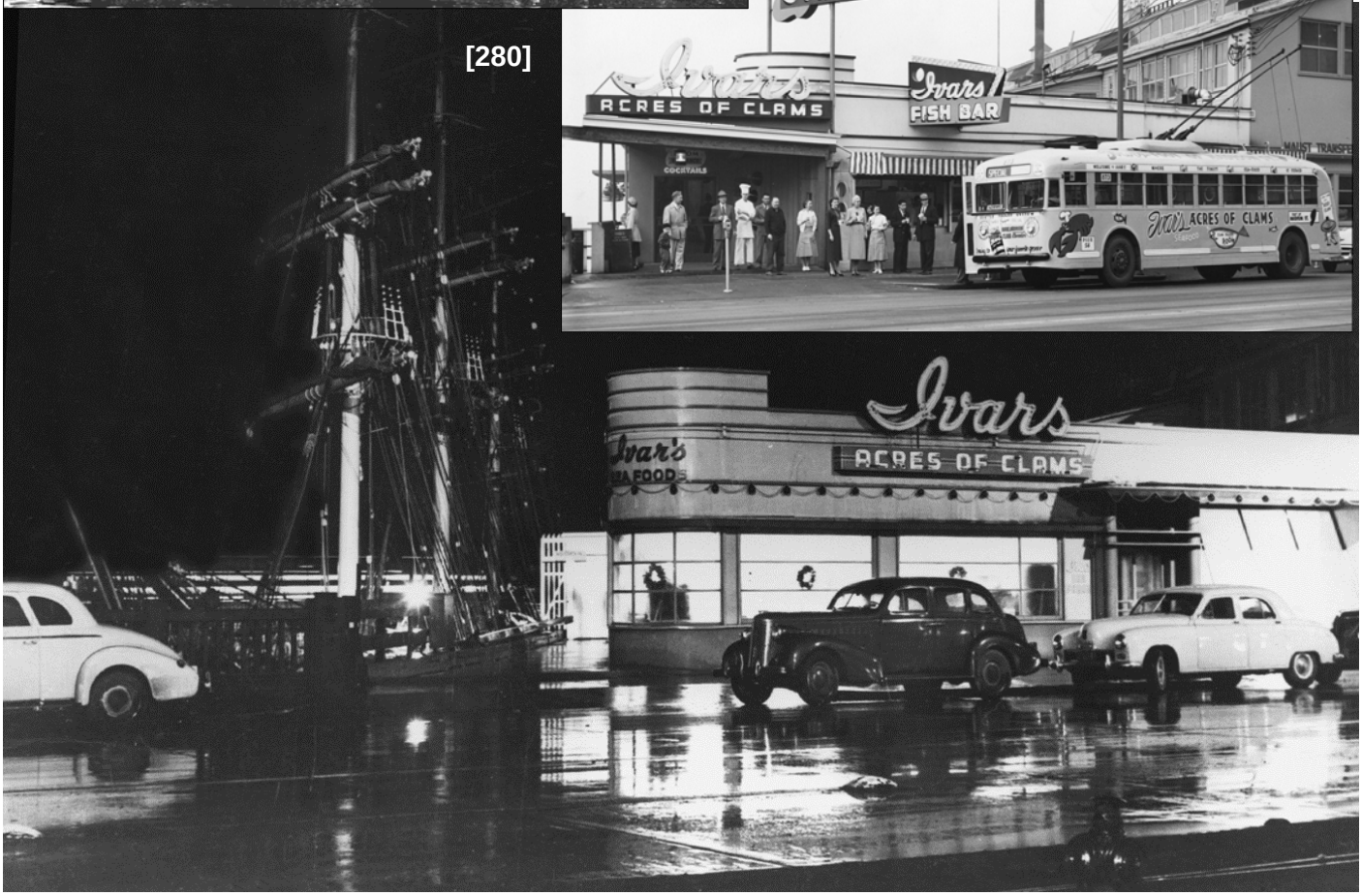

[280]

than a snack-gift shop or some other modest contribution to waterfront taste and nutrition – like McDonalds.

Pier 4/55 The *OHIO* & its Final Fated Journeys

The photograph of the sternwheeler *Capitol City* pulling out from Pier 3 (recently considered) is a detail from a wider view (included here) that exposes an unadorned Pier 4/55 in the last stages of reconstruction following its embarrassing but nonfatal collapse in 1902 – noted and shown above. **[281]** In a second display of her bay side the slip is stuffed with well-wishers waving goodbye to the passengers aboard the *S. S. Ohio* as she leaves from between Piers 4 and 5. **[282]** No explanation is needed for this general enthusiasm than "gold rush," but because we know in hindsight that most of those waving back will return flattened and a few may not make it at all, while still allowing this touching fun of hopeful farewells we would like to yell back to any of them to fall to the deck groaning while complaining about stomach cramps and request to get off in Everett. The *Ohio* is also a little tired. When launched in 1873, she was the largest liner ever built in the U.S. Here, about 35 years later, she is about to push her 360-foot iron hull – at 13 knots – to the beach of Nome. It this is 1907, it will strike an iceberg and 75 of its panicked passengers will jump overboard. Four will drown. If this is 1908, then these passengers will have to wait much longer than the nineteen bathless days they could normally expect to reach Nome. The captain explained, "I have never seen so much ice before." For forty days the passengers were kept on the *Ohio,* most of them waiting for the reluctant captain to move through the ice. If this is 1909, these waving passengers will come upon a grim surprise when the *Ohio* strikes a rock in Swanson's Bay, British Columbia. This time the captain managed to beach her, again losing four of her 213 passengers and this time the 36-year-old steamer as well.

Bulk Cargo

The same slip between Piers 4/55 & 5/56 provides two additional illustrated "lessons" for this waterfront tour north – for now – to Lenora Street. In the first we witness a fine example how to swing a log aboard a ship from a railroad flat car on the apron – in this instance the south apron of Pier 56. **[283]** Much of the early work of these new finger piers was less about rushing off for gold than about breaking bulk cargo like this and loading it piece by piece onto ships that often were not designed to specialize in it. For a few self-packing raw materials like coal, it was possible to build bunkers and chute the cargo into waiting vessels like dropping dirty clothes to the basement through a trapdoor. Most cargo – logs included – required piecemeal effort that was sometimes also hazardous – logs certainly.

***S.S. Seward* as Floating Object Lesson**

The second illustration features the steamer *Seward* – twice – as an "object lesson." **[284]** In the bottom view the *Seward* (like the tramp logger) is tied to the south side of Pier 5/56. In the top scene, the *Seward* requires more of the waterfront as she sits in waters parallel to Railroad Avenue. This is that remnant of the waterfront before the Thomson plan: the waterfront that included the gap without piers in the deep water between University and Union Streets. When she was launched on April 16, 1900, the *Seward* set a homemade record – at 215 feet the largest wood vessel built here to that time. With pockets loaded from the gold rush, the Pacific Clipper Line ordered her for its flourishing

An as yet unadorned but rebuilt Pier 4/55 after its collapse

[281]

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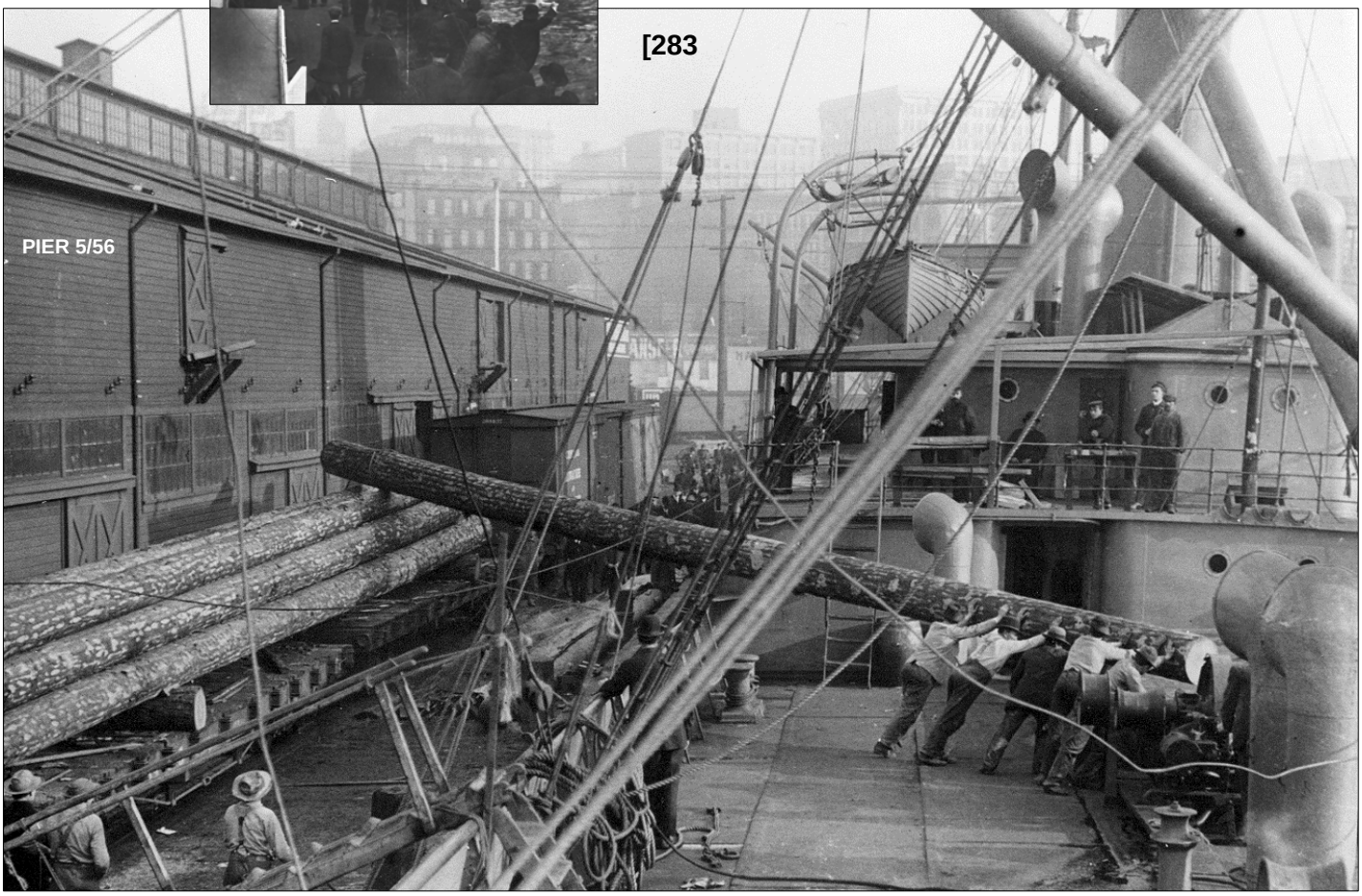
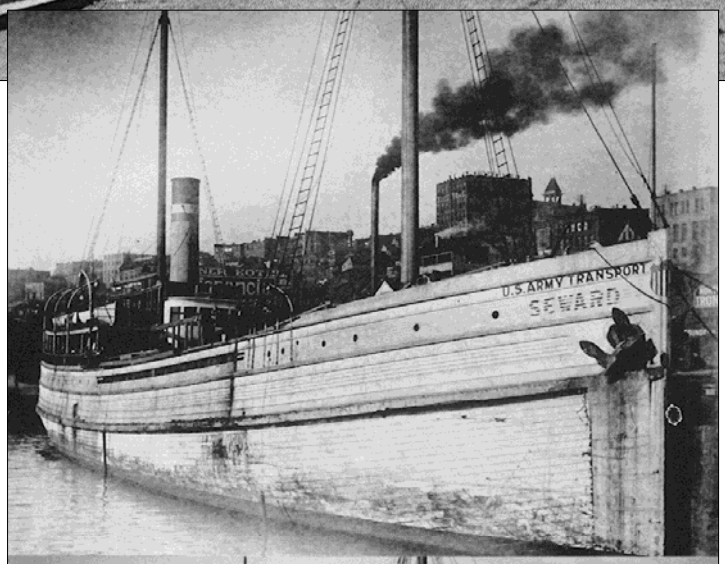
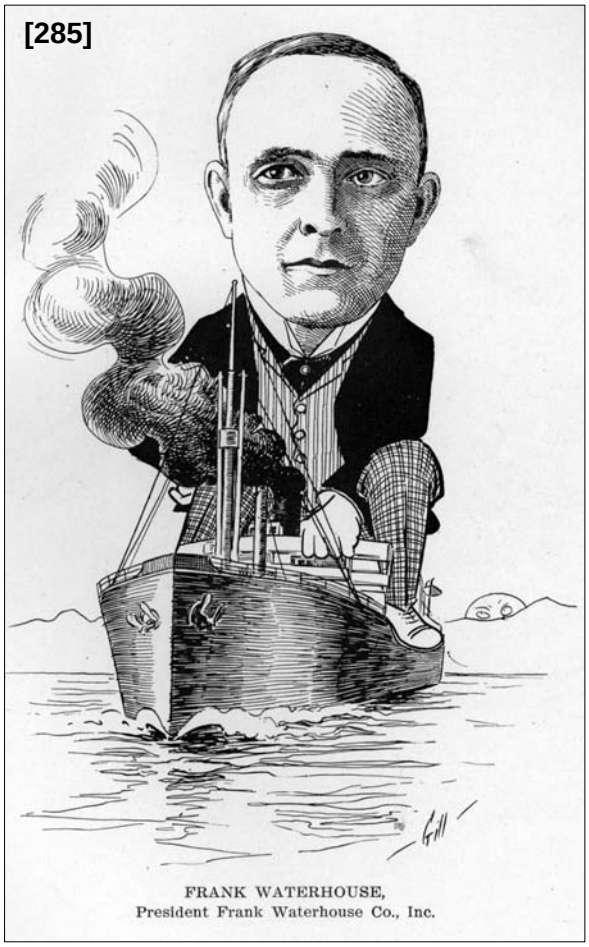


PIER 5/56

[286]
ARLINGTON
DOCK
UNIVERSITY
STREET
RAMP
SNUG
HARBOR


U.S. ARMY TRANSPORT
SEWARD

[284]


[285]
FRANK WATERHOUSE,
President Frank Waterhouse Co., Inc.

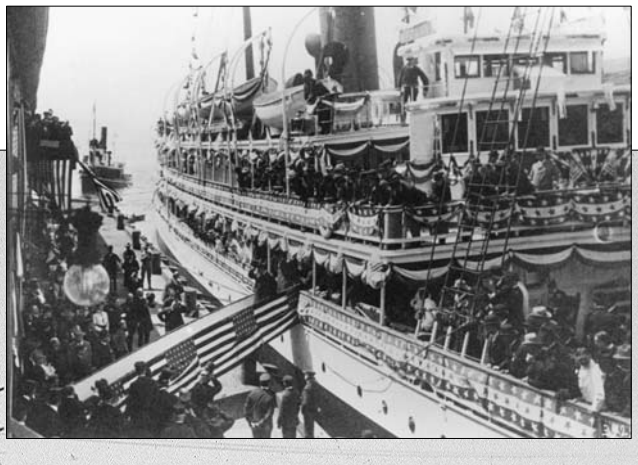
Alaska trade – but as the *George W. Dickinson* and not the *Seward*. The Dickenson never made it to Nome but was instead commandeered when still on the ways at Moran's to serve in the Philippines in the war against the Filipinos whom the United States had recently freed from Spain. For the Dickinson's owners and many other shippers who had recruited or built vessels for the gold rush in 1897-98 (including the *Ohio*, the *Portland*, and the *Garonne*), the Spanish-American war came as a relief, for the rush to the Yukon was dwindling as the bad news followed the good. The best claims were taken and most of the Argonauts were returning home with slim pickins or more often with nothing. The military renamed the vessel and emblazoned the bow with its symbol. And the federal transport service paid these operators up to $1,500 a day for the use of their ships as they carried troops and supplies back and forth between the West Coast and the Philippines. The *Seward* may not have proven such a cash cow, however. The last local citations for the *Seward* describe it first in August 1902 as "sailing for the Philippines" and two months later as "overdue at the Philippines." (These last recorded dates for the *Seward* make timing these photographs something of a puzzle. Perhaps the shining *Seward* beside Pier 5 is older that the "unshaven" *Seward* that waits beside Railroad Ave. The later also seems a bit roughed up (perhaps from basic training.) If so then this freshly painted *Seward* might be waiting to leave for the Philippines.

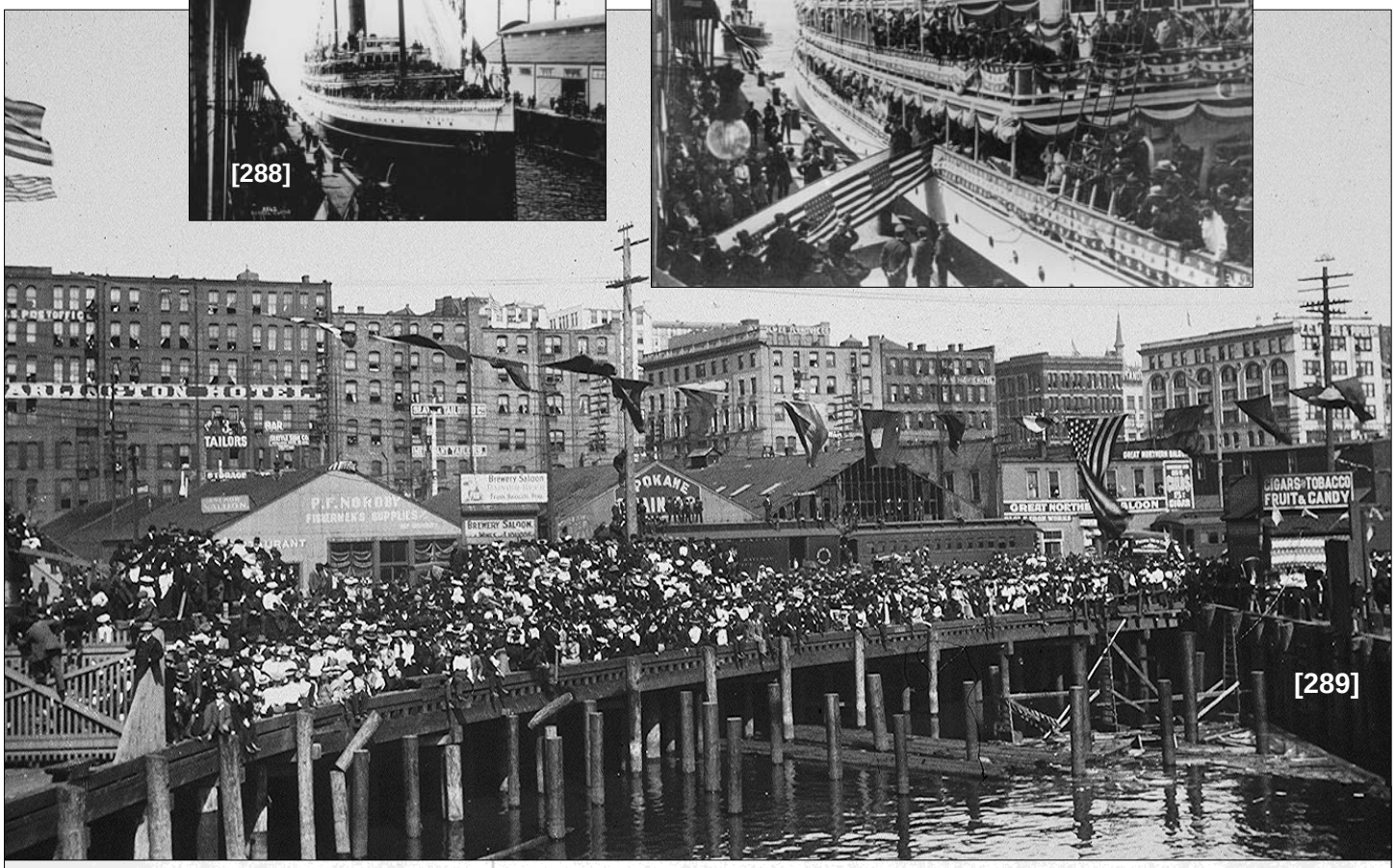
Frank Waterhouse & the Arlington Piers

Frank Waterhouse, noted above, was one of the historic dynamos of the Seattle Waterfront and had a relatively long career in the perilous service of a shipping agent. **[285]** The old-style 1890s Arlington Dock was Waterhouse's first center of enterprise. There he managed the *Ohio* and many other vessels that ferried thousands of "traveling men" back and forth to Alaska and the Yukon from this slip. While the gold rush was still under way, Waterhouse also loaded U.S. Army transports at the foot of University Street bound for Manila during the Spanish-American war of 1898-99. The attached view looks down the University Street Ramp to the Arlington Pier sided by ships connected with the Philippines and – this time – not Alaska. **[286]** Until and during the First World War Waterhouse leased, owned and ran steamships back-and-forth between Alaska and Asia for himself and the United States Shipping Board.

The second adjoining view was recorded by an unidentified photographer from the foot of Seneca Street on May 23, 1903, and probably very near two in the afternoon when President Theodore Roosevelt stepped from the *Spokane* to the north side of Pier 5/56. **[287]** Searching for Roosevelt, the crowd also stares into the name of Frank Waterhouse, partially obscured here behind the bunting hung for "old rough and ready." Another photograph shows the steamer approaching its mooring, **[288]** and a third record of the landing takes a nearly president's eye view of the celebrating waterfront. **[289]** A member of Wagner's Band photographed the view from the *Spokane.* Wagner's Band was the popular local ensemble of that time, and very possibly the musical accompaniment for the Roosevelt voyage up from Tacoma. As noted this 1903 TR visit seems to have been the last of the grand over-water arrivals at the Seattle waterfront – not counting the many visits of the Fleet.

[288]




ARLINGTON HOTEL
TAILORS
P.F. NORDBY
FISHERMEN'S SUPPLIES
Brewery Saloon
BREWERY SALOON
SPOKANE
GREAT NORTHERN
CIGARS TOBACCO
FRUIT & CANDY

[289]

ARLINGTON DOCK
FRANK WATERHOUSE & CO.

[287]

Pier 5/56 – "Telescope History" From Waterhouse to Trident Imports & Namu

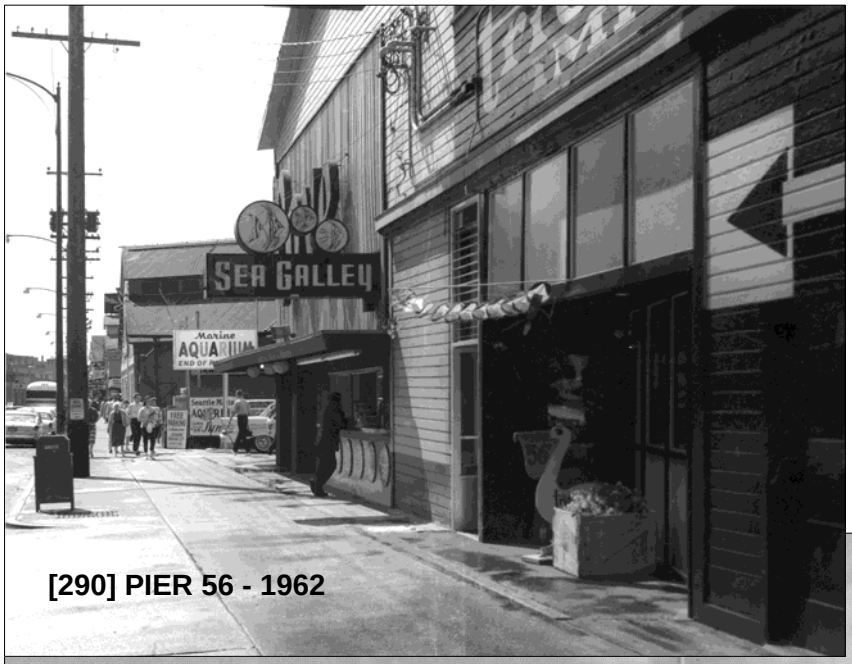
We will expose a little "telescope history" of Pier 5/56 before moving north to Pier 6/57. In 1920, after Waterhouse's string of successes in Alaska and Asia went sour and his firm went bankrupt, the Hayden Dock Company took his place on Pier 56. Ultimately the old Arlington Dock – Pier 56 – like much else on the central waterfront found its revival in recreation and tourism. During the World's Fair the Central Waterfront turned into a kind of Waterfront Midway with fish houses, restaurants, curio shops, ships-as-hotels, tours, etc. A few of these, like Trident Imports, stayed on after the fair. In 1984 Charles Peterson, owner of Trident Imports, recollected, "The water always attracts people. It's a natural attraction." Peterson claimed that when he first came on the waterfront "people didn't know how to get down there." So he constructed a huge sign atop his business to show the way. The Seattle Marine Aquarium briefly starring Namu the killer whale was another attraction at the end of Pier 57 in the 1960s. (There will be more on Namu below.) The accompanying photographs of the pier was recorded during the summers of 1962 and 1964. **[290 & 291]** In another twenty years, about twenty restaurants or cafes and twenty-five shops were busy on central waterfront piers. In the spring of 2000, Pier 56 completed its recent restoration. The modern amusements remain on the sunny south and street sides of the pier, marking a colorful harbor with the flotilla of Good Time Tour boats where previously were moored those of Bob Campbell's Harbor Tours.

Pier 57 & the Story of the Yosemite Concluded

In this off-shore view of Pier 57 – the next stop north – much is obscured by the impressive profile of the *Yosemite*, the old but sleek Sacramento River steamer that was discussed above as representative (with the *George E. Starr*, the *Flyer,* and others) of Puget Sound's so-called "Mosquito Fleet." **[292]** Here we will polish her story. Really because of her size (282 feet and 3 inches) and short stay, the *Yosemite* was not so representative of the Puget Sound fleet. She left California in 1883 when the gilded state's golden roar had long since turned to snores and Sacramento River traffic slumbered as well. In 1895, the pioneer maritime encyclopedia, *Lewis and Dryden's Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*, described the *Yosemite* as "the handsomest as well as the fastest steamer which had yet appeared in Northwestern waters." She worked 23 years in Canada before slipping south to Puget Sound. This view of her was recorded either in late 1908 or more likely in 1909. The evidence is on the left horizon. At 4th and Union the White Building (1908) looks completed and contiguous to it to the right the Henry Building (1909) is far into is construction. The side-wheeler's last mile on Puget Sound was suspicious. That summer, of 1909, the *Yosemite* mysteriously broke her back near Bremerton, hitting Orchard Rocks at full speed to the alarm of the about 1000 excursionists on board – although wrenched, none perished. **[293]** It soon became a point of maritime rumor first and legend later that the *Yosemite* was deliberately turned to shore for her insurance. (That "Arlington Dock Company" is written across the head of Pier 6/57 means that at this time Waterhouse is using it and Pier 56 as well.)

Agen Dock Pier 6/57

An earlier view of Pier 6/57 looks north across its waterside façade and also shows the profile of the Schwabacher's Dock (Pier 7/59) and a smaller version of the Seattle Fish Company Pike Street dock when



[290] PIER 56 - 1962

[291] PIER 56 - 1964

[292] *YOSEMITE* at the end of PIER 6/57 – ca 09

[293] *YOSEMITE* on the rocks near Bremerton - 1909

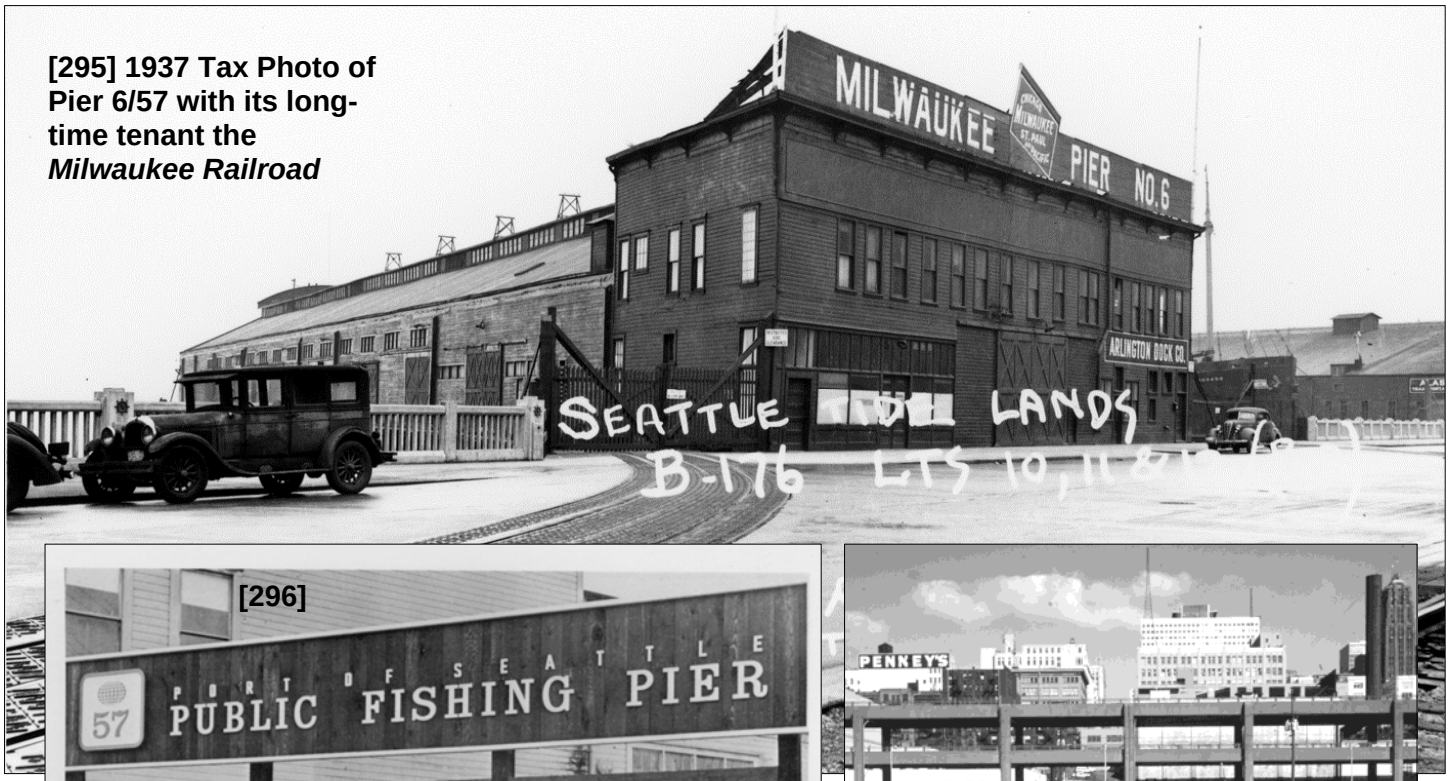
it was already run by Ainsworth and Dunn, partners that would soon rebuild and enlarge it while becoming familiar names on the waterfront. **[294]** The signage at the end of Pier 6 shows off a typical assortment of uses for the year 1903 or thereabouts. John B. Agen has the overall naming right for the moment because he paid for the dock's construction. Agen founded the Alaska Butter and Cream Company and was one of the many locals who did well by helping outfit those who were heading for the Yukon. Agen also built a substantial cold storage warehouse across Railroad Avenue at Western and Seneca. (One of its recent occupants was Immunex.) Below the Agen name and Pier number are signs for both the Gordon Dock and Grain Co. and the sizeable North American Transportation and Trading Company. This last used the pier as a Seattle port for its mostly freight services to Alaska. (This photograph also includes the by now – we hope – familiar landmarks of both the Denny and York – AKA Ripley – hotels upper left.)

The Milwaukee Pier

Completed in 1903, Pier 6 was distinguished on the outside from its three neighbors to the south with a 2-story box for offices and retailing storefronts where it faced Railroad Avenue between University and Union Streets. On the inside it was also marked by Agen's cold storage for his and other's butters and cheeses. In the 1937 photograph of it taken for the WPA survey of taxable properties, "Milwaukee," the name most often associated with the pier, is impressively displayed with block letters on a roof sign that runs nearly the entire width of the Pier. **[295]** The Arlington Dock Company name also still survives although with a lesser sign nearer the street and at the northeast corner of the pier. As expected during the Great Depression, the pier's corner storefront appears to be vacant. The WPA card to which this photograph is attached lists some of the pier basics. It is irregularly shaped, like most of the piers on the Seattle waterfront where the outer pier head line was not drawn parallel to the western line of Railroad Avenue. Pier 57 was 487 feet long on its north side and 442 feet long on its south side. The width varied from 156 feet at the sidewalk to 176 feet at the water. Counting both floors, the pier covered 69,675 square feet. Since the *CM&SPRR* owned it the railroad may have used a good number of its 13 offices and 5 toilet rooms. The pier was steam heated, and the ceiling on the first floor reached a high 14 feet while on the second floor the ceiling was a surprising low 11 feet off the floor. This suggests that much of the upper bulk on the pier's box as seen here facing Railroad Avenue was lifted for the imposing show.

Pier 57 Restored For Play

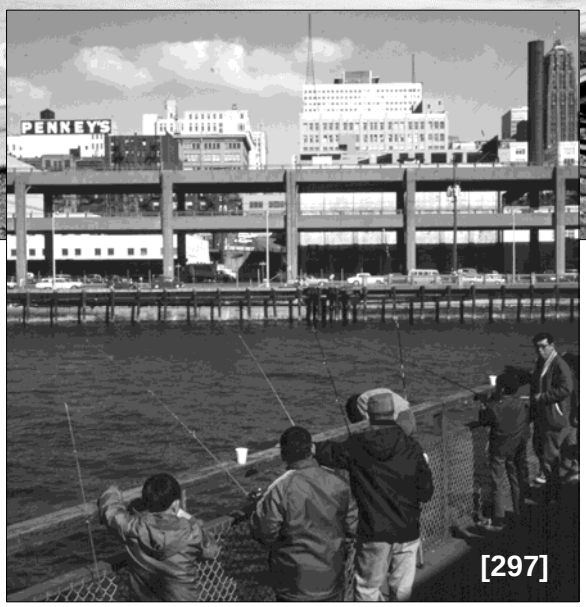
After the Port of Seattle purchased Pier 57, it soon cut "fishing holes" in the pier for public angling. Then the anglers had a choice – they could either throw their hooks over the side of the pier or fish through the holes for the critters that preferred the shadows directly beneath the dock. Attached is the Port's publicity shot for the opening ceremonies that featured the ceremonial removal of a "No Fishing" sign. And, as the caption explains, the Port sold Pier 57 to the city in 1971. **[296]** The city wanted it for the development of a Waterfront Park that was then a work in planning. The successful Forward Thrust bond election of 1968 provided the first funds needed to build the park and the adjoining public aquarium as well. Meanwhile the pier was used for fishing. **[297]** The effects of nearly three-quarters of a century of facing southwesterly weather and the sun too are evident in the view from March 18, 1974 that was recorded early in its restoration. **[298]** On its southern side the



[295] 1937 Tax Photo of Pier 6/57 with its long-time tenant the *Milwaukee Railroad*

[296]

Pier 57 - And what's a port without a fishing pier? Pier 57 is set up as a public "fishing hole" — there are, in fact, a number of holes cut into the pier through which a fishing line may pass to the waters below. Anglers of every size and shape have been catching fish of every size and shape at the pier ever since it was opened in 1968. (Photo was taken at opening ceremonies when symbolic "no fishing" sign was removed and destroyed. Pier was sold to the City of Seattle in 1971.)



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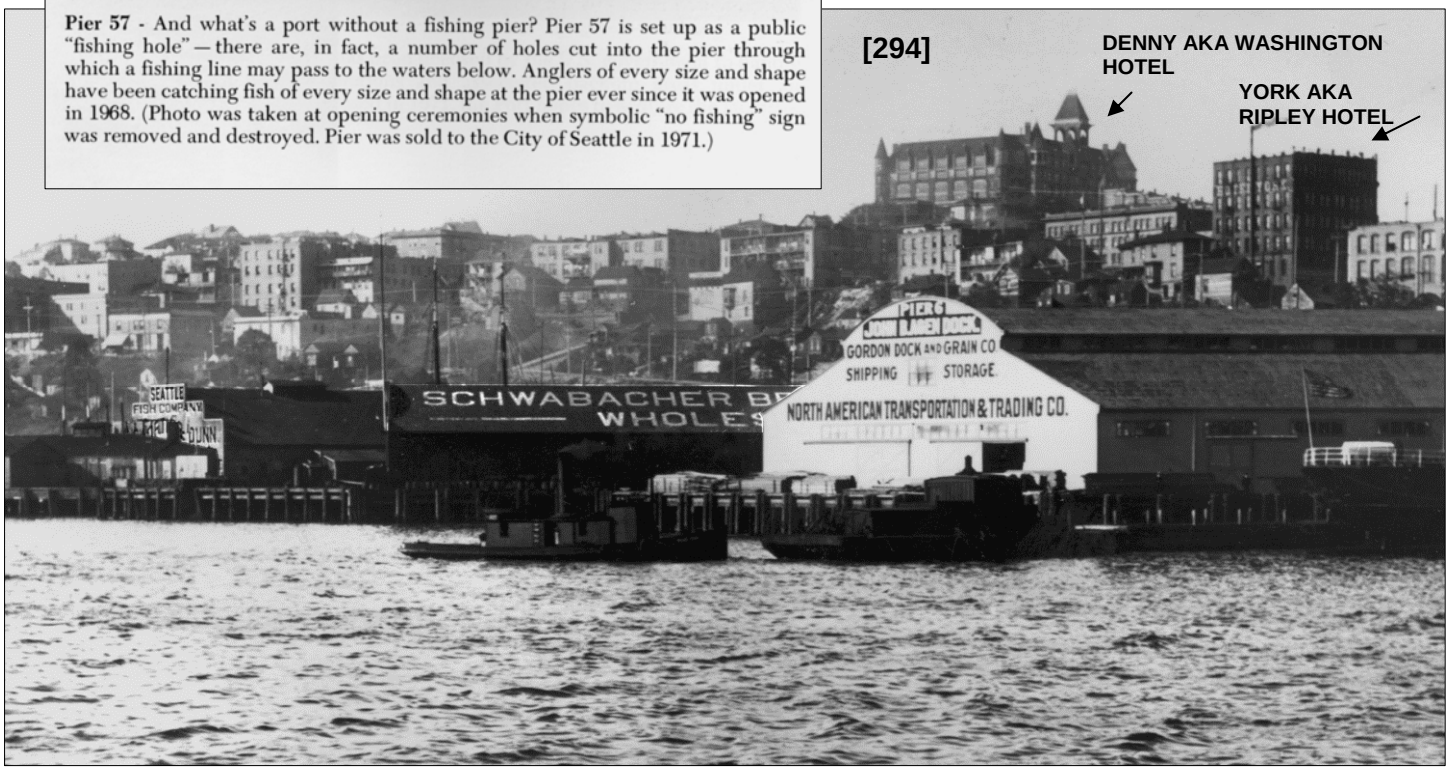

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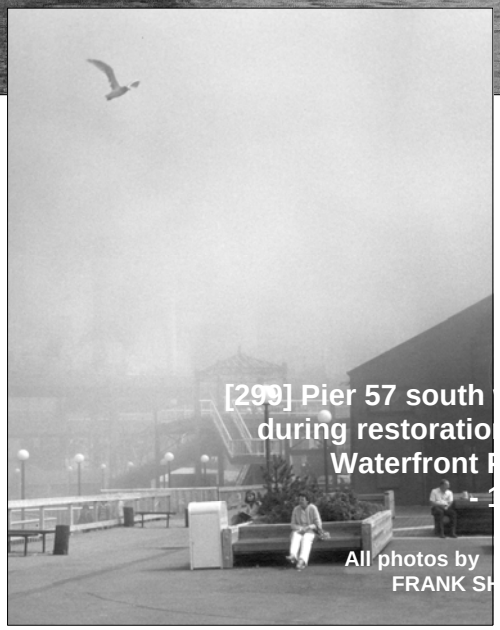
57 for Waterfront Park - 1974



[299] Pier 57 south wall during restoration for Waterfront Park - 1975

All photos by FRANK SHAW

57 outer end
completion of
Waterfront Park

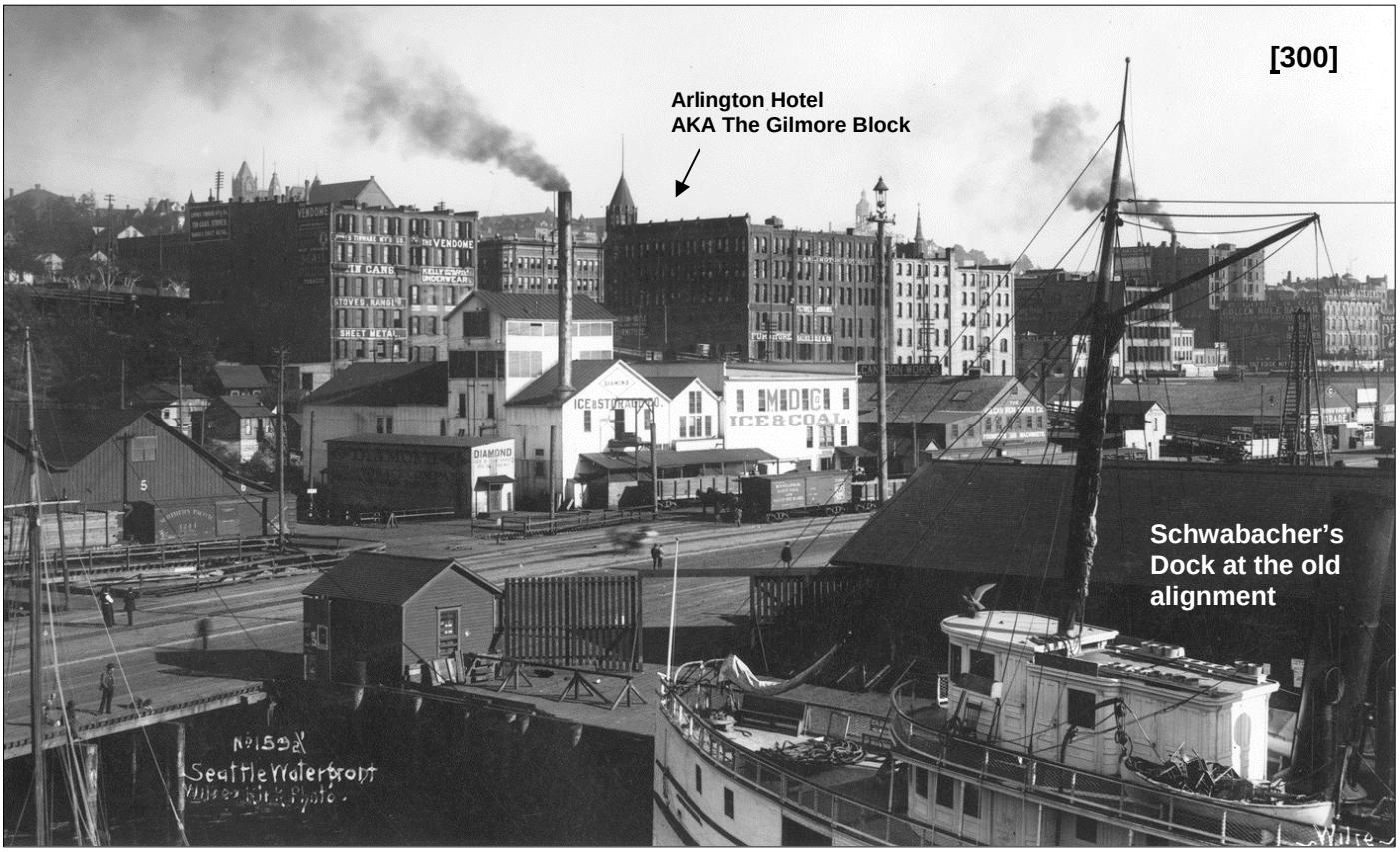
Pier appears like a great architectural centipede with fragile skin. Not only are the facing boards weathered, they are twisted. Typically the roofline wavers from the uneven settling of the piers that support the pier. The '74 scene may be compared to another photographed fifteen months later on June 13, 1975 when the pier shed was closer to being revived by the Seattle Parks Department as the southern anchor for Waterfront Park. (There will, of course, be more about Waterfront Park below.) **[299]**

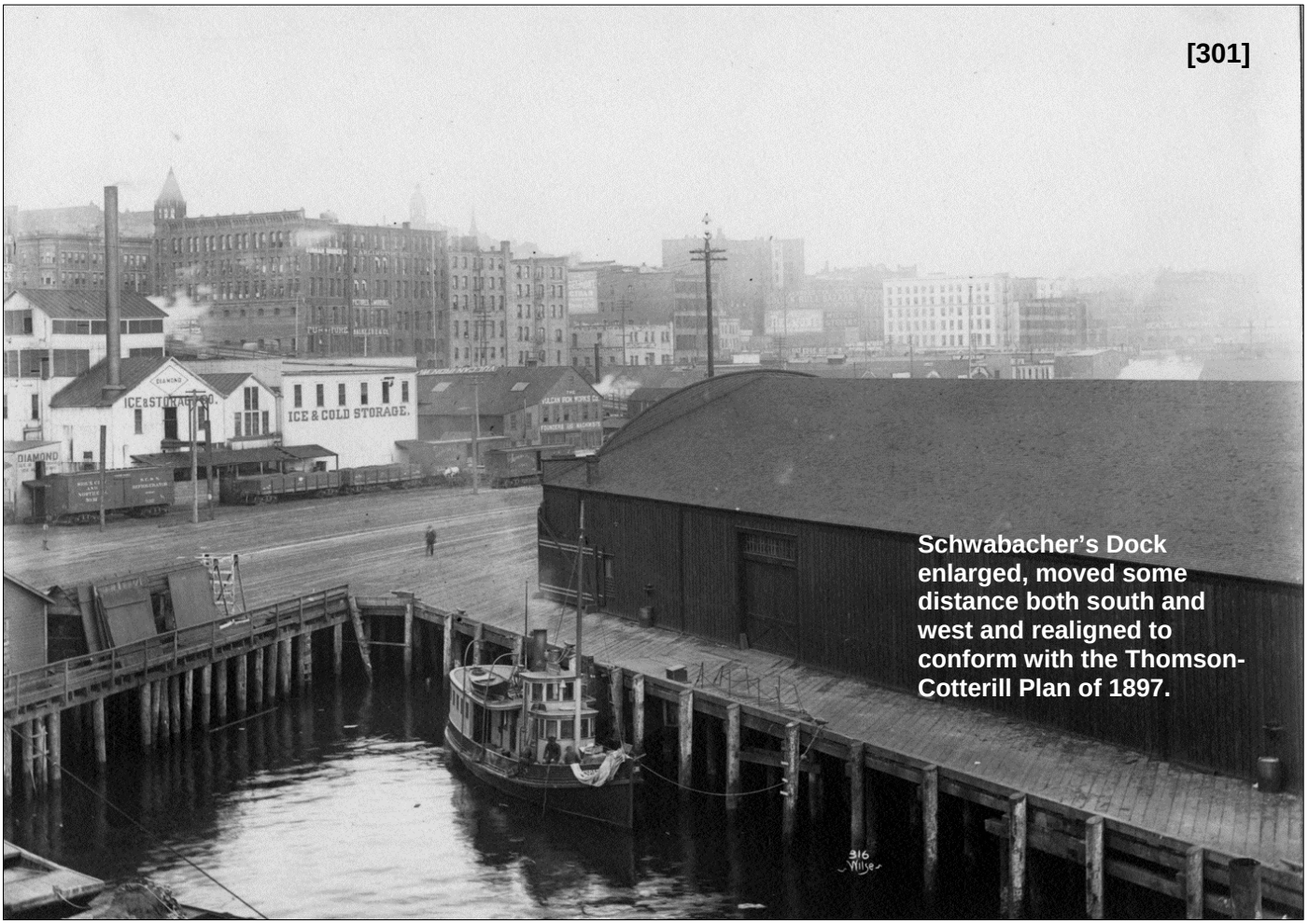
Schwabacher's Revelation: Comparing Two Wilse Photographs

Schwabacher's Dock, the most important waterfront survivor just beyond the line of the 1889 fire, was required on its own to handle the greatest percentage of the materials shipped to Seattle for its reconstruction in the first days following the destruction. Once other docks were rebuilt, Schwabacher's Bros managed to also widen their own pier and put up a sizeable warehouse. As recounted it was into the slip between the Schwabacher's Dock and the Seattle Fish Dock (at Pike Street) that the *Portland* fatefully slipped carrying its "ton of gold" in 1897. As the gold rush continued to churn the waters to either side of the Schwabacher's dock, it also climbed to the pier. Encouraged by the wealth got in part from warehousing and wharf rates, the already venerable firm built a much larger warehouse on its wharf. In the late 1890s the Norwegian photographer Anders Wilse, who was then not long for Seattle, climbed twice to the same roost that was attached – somehow – to the Seattle Fish Dock at the foot of Pike Street and took photographs looking southeast to the city. The differences between them are very revealing. **[300 & 301]**

Studying the two Wilse views attached here, the reader may easily determine that they are recorded within a few inches of each other. The easiest marker to confirm this nearness is the tall smokestack that rises from the roof of the gleaming white plant of Diamond Ice & Coal at Western and Union. In the older view, No. 301, the stack is spewing and also closer to the center of the scene. Through its length from rooftop to where it reaches the horizon, the stack can be compared between the two shots regarding how it lines up with other architectural lines and masses. In the newer record, No. 300, Wilse has turned his camera to the right and, while cutting away the left side of the Diamond plant, he shows on the right much more of the new and much larger Schwabacher's Dock.

The slip between the Pike Street Dock and Schwabachers Bros has also been changed at least in the two directions that are evident here. First Railroad Avenue has been widened to the west. The little shed that appears in the older view at the southeast corner of the slip in the new view is seen only in part on the far left. If the shed has been moved, it has not been much of a move, for it continues to line up with Diamond Plant in the new view as it does in the older view. But the southeast corner of the slip has moved a considerable distance south – perhaps as much as forty feet. Again, this move can be verified by lining up the new corner in relationship with the Diamond Ice Plant. All of this moving means, of course, that the new and larger Schwabacher's Dock has been built further to the south and a little ways to the west of the smaller pier it replaced. It has also been aligned to conform to the new Thomson-Cotterill plan. All these moves make sense. There was room to give or take to the south in the deep water gap already noted. And


[300]
Arlington Hotel
AKA The Gilmore Block
Schwabacher's Dock at the old alignment
THE VENDOME
TIN CANS
STOVES, RANGES
SHEET METAL
DIAMOND
ICE & COAL
Seattle Waterfront


[301]
ICE & STORAGE CO.
ICE & COLD STORAGE.
DIAMOND
Schwabacher's Dock enlarged, moved some distance both south and west and realigned to conform with the Thomson-Cotterill Plan of 1897.

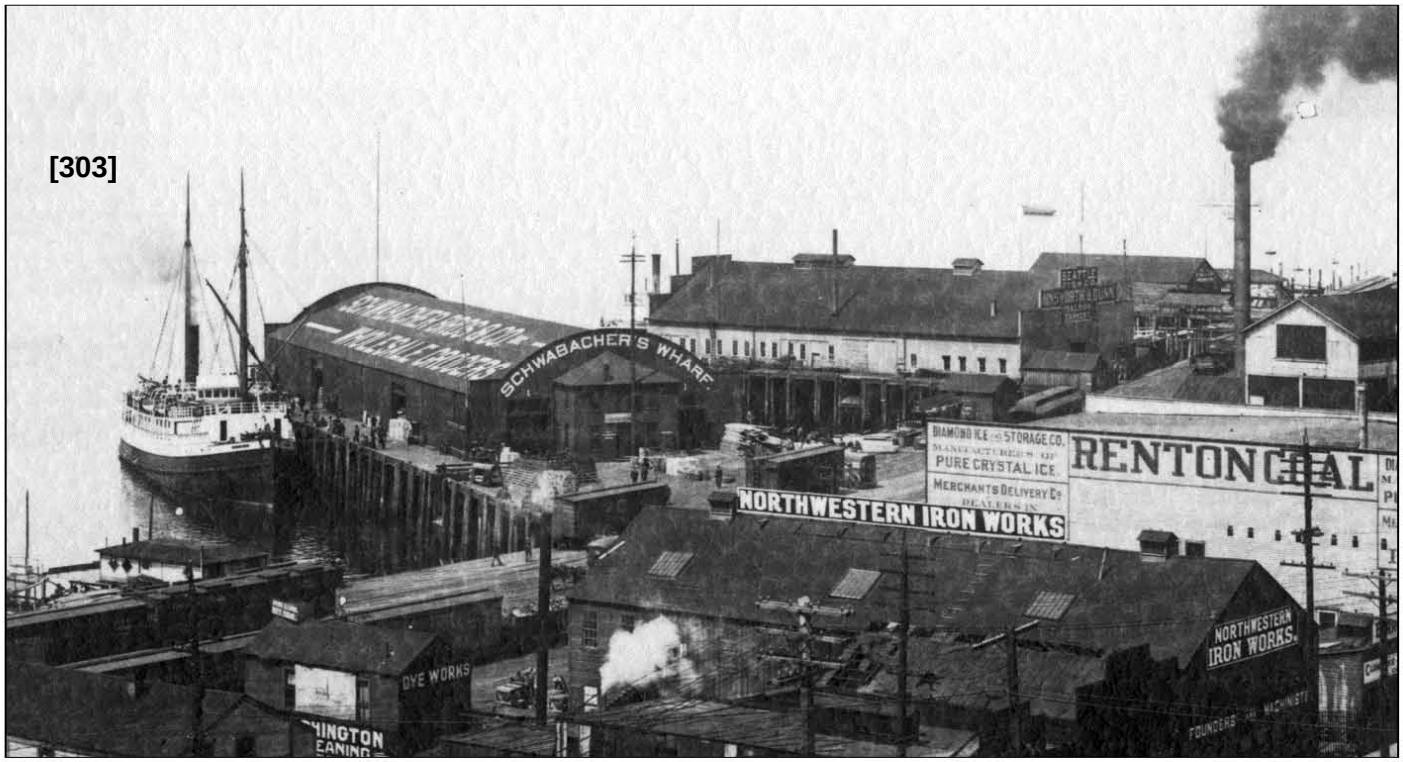
there was probably also a need for a wider slip between an enlarged Schwabacher's Dock and a new and much bigger Pike Street Dock that was perhaps already planned in the interim between Wilse's two recordings, but was not completed until nearly four years after he returned to Norway in 1900. The new Schwabacher's warehouse's move west also complied with the Thomson-Cotterill 1897 plan to widen Railroad Avenue to make a street for wagons and whatever. Actually, the old Schwabacher's shed was already set somewhat further west in relationship to the tracks on Railroad Avenue then were the old Arlington Docks to the south of it.

Yet another Wilse view, this time from the rear of one of the hotels facing First between University and Seneca, looks back at the waterfront and to a scene that shows both an enlarged and redirected Schwabacher's Wharf and to its right the Seattle Fish dock at the foot of Pike. **[302]** Even with Schwabacher's move south by about 40 feet, the slip between it and Seattle Fish is a squeeze. Of course when the Pike dock was replaced with the much larger pier that is now just beginning its second century, the new dock was aligned parallel to Schwabacher's and the rest of the waterfront. To the south of Schwabacher's, the unique roofline and windows of the Clark and Bartette boat house are evident just above the boxcars on the left. Another revelation here is how far the Schwabacher's dock and the slip beside it still extend east into Railroad Avenue, with the result that the "street of trains" is considerably narrower on the south side of Schwabacher's than it is on the north side. Later, when Railroad Avenue was widened to fill this discrepancy, the business wing or box attached to the east façade of the Schwabacher's Wharf was also sacrificed and exchanged for a small office space attached to the wharf's southeast corner. A second view (one not by Wilse) of the same south side of the pier looks again through the large open slip that reaches well into Railroad Avenue and beyond the east façade of the Schwabacher's Dock. **[303]**

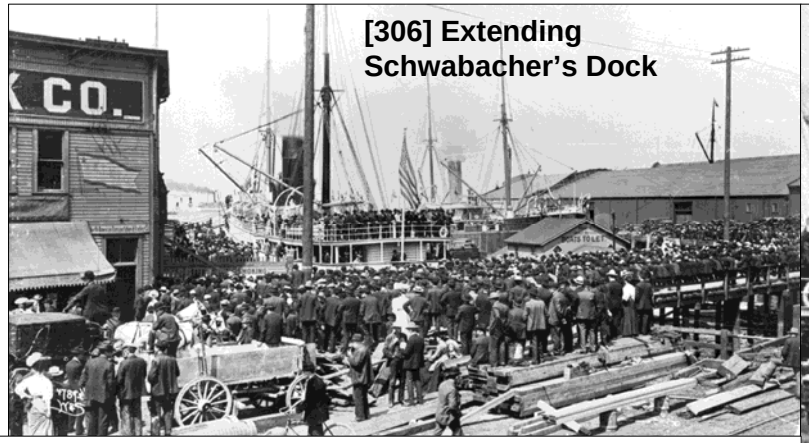
Off-shore Look Over Schwabacher's Dock to Denny Hill, First Avenue Regrade & Pike Street Hill Climb

Another and earlier off shore photograph shows the same new Schwabacher's dock nearly in profile with Denny Hill behind it and the Denny AKA Washington Hotel directly above it. **[304]** As has been suggested here one or twice, Denny Hill featured two summits and Virginia Street crossed the hill between them. The big hotel sat on the front hump overlooking the city and straddling Third Avenue between Seward and Virginia Streets. The hill was about 90 some feet higher there then the regrade. The keen eye will also note to the far right of the scene the familiar York (AKA Ripley) hotel at the northwest corner of Pike Street and First Avenue. The even keener eye can follow Pike Street to the west (left) from the York (there is as yet no Pike Place) and notice the sudden plunge in the grade as Pike descends the bank before disappearing behind the Miner Hotel that stands above the roofline of the Schwabacher's Dock at its east end. The grade on Pike is too steep for a street, but not for steps, and an enlargement of the original for this image would reveal the step work. (Below we will summarize the several "Pike Street Hill Climbs" that have been built between the waterfront and First Avenue. The reader may remember this one.) The effects of the earliest of the regrades on Denny Hill – those in the 1880s and late 1890s on First Avenue between Pike and Bell

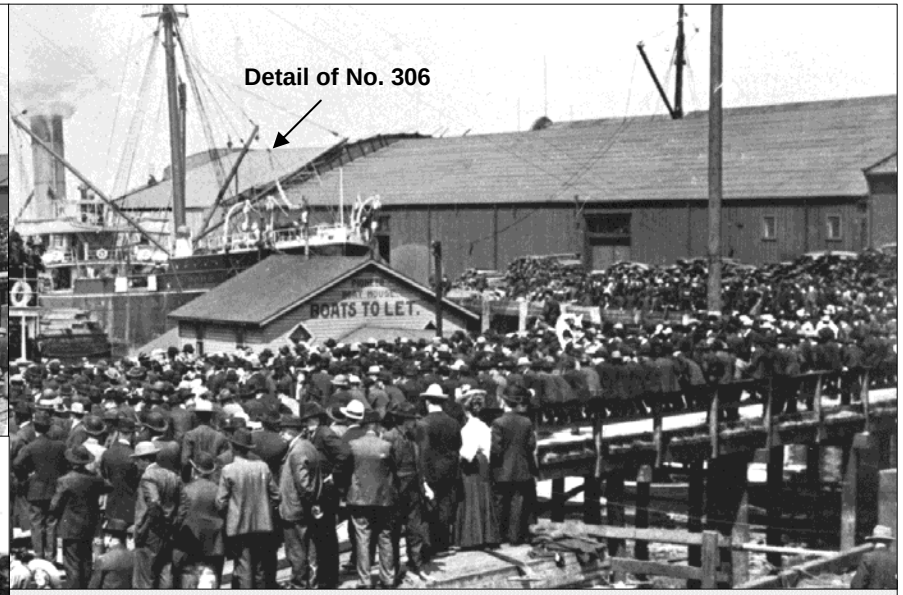
[303]


SCHWABACHER'S WHARF
DIAMOND ICE & STORAGE CO.
PURE CRYSTAL ICE
MERCHANTS DELIVERY Co
NORTHWESTERN IRON WORKS
RENTON COAL
DYE WORKS
NORTHWESTERN IRON WORKS

SCHWABACHER'S WHARF
NO.30

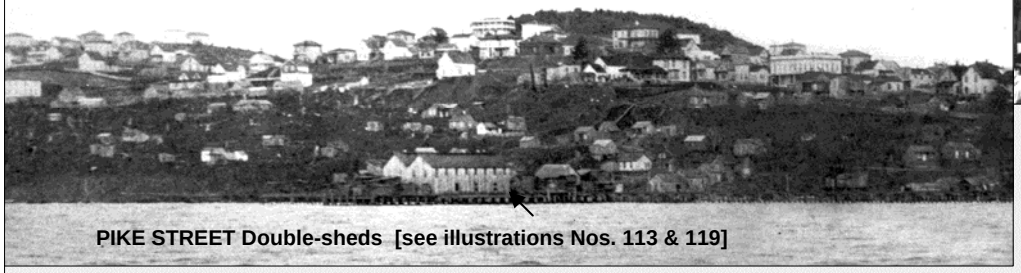


[306] Extending Schwabacher's Dock



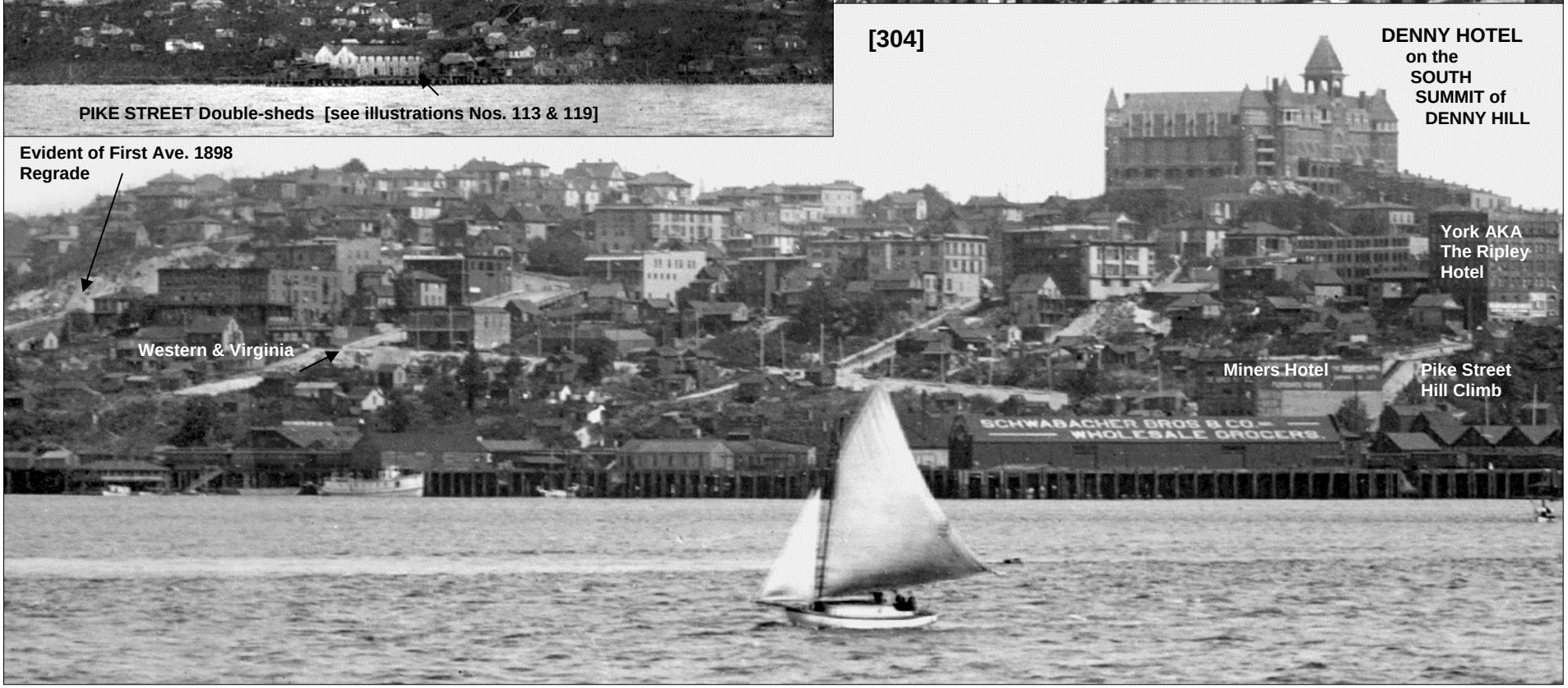
Detail of No. 306

[305] Denny Hill profile – mid-1880s



PIKE STREET Double-sheds [see illustrations Nos. 113 & 119]

[304]



DENNY HOTEL on the SOUTH SUMMIT of DENNY HILL

Evident of First Ave. 1898 Regrade

Western & Virginia

York AKA The Ripley Hotel

Miners Hotel

Pike Street Hill Climb

– can be detected left of the center in this scene and more easily on the far left. The exposed bank – the lighter colored earth – runs along the east side of First Avenue.

Denny Hill Profile Mid-1880s

Remembering the two summits and the regrades on First Avenue, this offshore view can be compared with another taken in the mid-1880s from close to the same spot on Elliott Bay. **[305]** Here the cut along the east side of First Avenue is not so clear (or contrasted), but it is there, above and to the right of the larger off-white box-shaped building that is cut off by the picture's left border. This scene also shows a line descending the bank along Pike Street – probably another hill climb, and perhaps the same one showing in the above scene but in a more primitive condition. Neither Schwabacher's Dock at the foot of Union nor the Seattle Fish dock at the foot of Pike were as yet constructed in 1885 or 86 – likely dates for this scene – and neither does the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* trestle of 1887 extend north along the waterfront. The reader may remember that when the railroad trestle was in construction the two joining warehouses seen here at the foot of Pike Street were broken in two and separated so that the railroad could drive between them. This convenience meant that the railroad did not have to curve around the structures seen here at the beach and just left of center. But it also allowed the proprietor of the split warehouses to have the best of all worlds – direct contact with ships outside of the SLSE trestle, with land to the other side and with the railroad in between. In effect the mainline was the factory spur.

Schwabacher's Dock Extension

For the last look at Schwabacher's dock, we can search through another crowded gold rush scene and determine that the dock is being extended at its bay side. **[306]** The new section appears to the right of the smokestack that is itself to the right of the American flag, which is at the scene's center. In the mid-ground and directly below the extended roof is the familiar roofline of the Clark and Bartette boathouse with the sign "Boat to Let" printed on the side facing Railroad Avenue. Some of those small boats can be seen – barely – on the far right between the piles that hold up the crowd on the timber quay for wagons and pedestrians and not trains. Of course, to the east of the little trestle is another and very large "man trap" through which to peer at pilings and the small boats.

Ainsworth and Dunn & the Pike Street Pier

On June 5, 1896, City Engineer Reginald Thomson signed building permit #1516 to Ainsworth and Dunn, proprietors of Seattle Fish, for its first small dock at the foot of Pike Street. The right angle that the dock would take from the shore into the bay suggests that at the time Thomson signed the permit, he was either clueless or powerless concerning the uniform pier pattern that he and Cotterill would prescribe in 1897. In 1903 the partners decided to rebuild their Pike Street Pier in conformity with the new waterfront. Ten years earlier, as indicated in the 1892-93 city directory, most of the fish merchants were still doing business south of Yesler Way, but Ainsworth and Dunn were then already at the foot of Seneca Street, some distance north of the waterfront's post-fire fisheries. Eventually, most of the mongers would follow Seattle Fish north beyond Union Street. (But not all. For instance, Washington Fish stayed in first Pier 4 and then Pier 3. It was the latter pier that Washington Fish eventually sold to Ivar.)

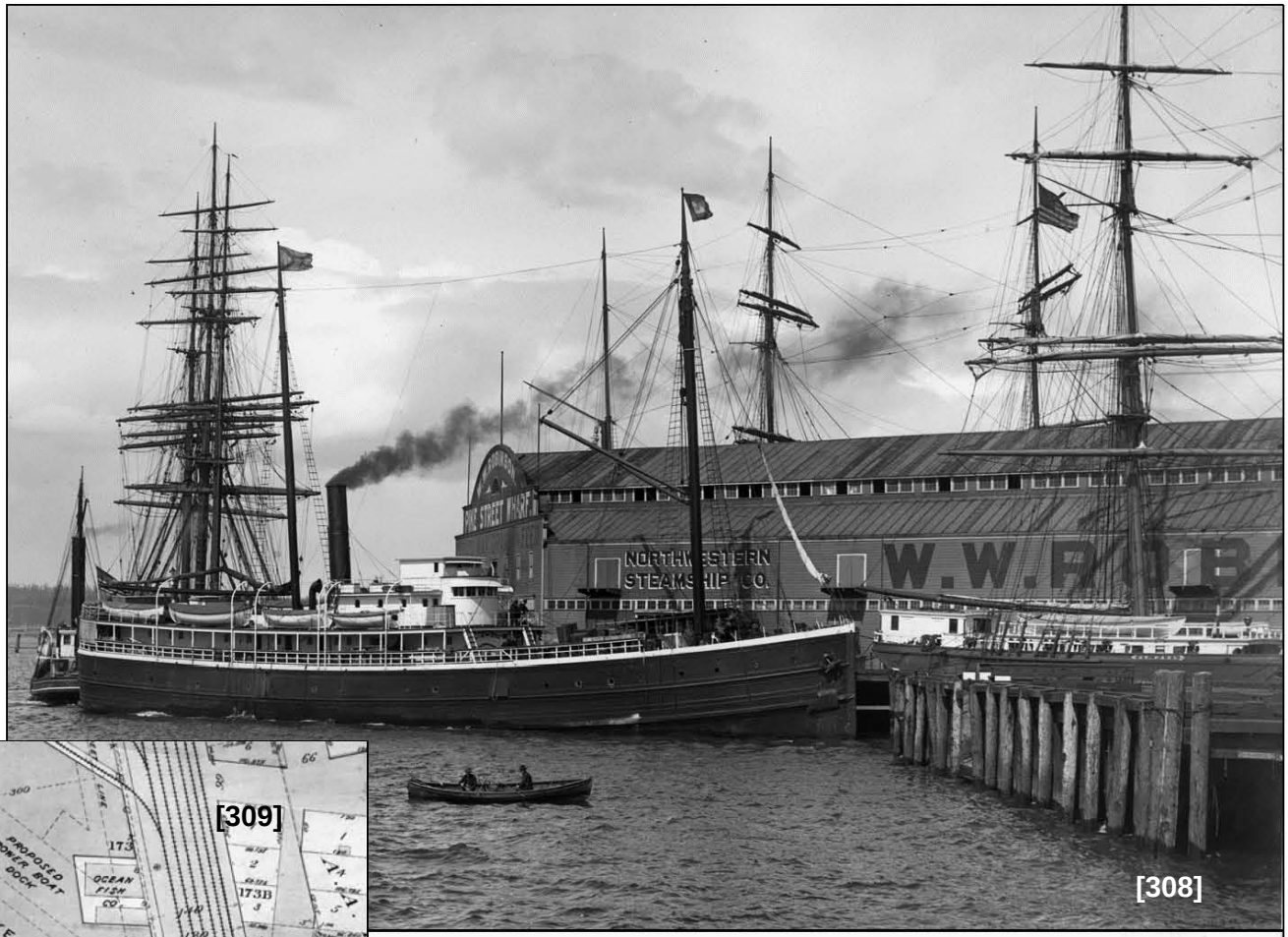
Grain Dealer W.W. Robinson & The New Pike Street Pier

After Seattle Fish moved over from Seneca Street to their new dock at the foot of Pike they, like practically every other player on the waterfront, prospered with the gold rush. In 1903, Ainsworth and Dunn began construction on a new dock that was completed in 1904 and survives as the backbone for the public aquarium. Besides their fish, the partners also handled grain and feed, and the new and much larger pier made that service much easier. Not long after completing their new pier the partners got a request for tenancy from another grain dealer, Willis Wilbur Robinson, that they accepted. By then Ainsworth and Dunn had a second pier – Pier 70 – at the foot of Broad Street. Robinson was but 33 years old when he was first listed at Pier 8/59 in 1904. Previously he had run his hay and grain service out of a warehouse near the foot of Dearborn Street (before the PCC located their coal bunkers there) and at Pier 5, one of the Arlington Piers. Robinson was a farmer from Mount Vernon, who regularly stuffed sternwheelers with Skagit Valley hay. These shallow draft vessels were capable of nosing their way to the farms sited along the fecund banks of the river. The steamers carried Robinson's loads here to the central Seattle waterfront. Until 1909 his name was emblazoned across all four sides of the Pier. But by then most hinterland hay was being hauled by the railroads.

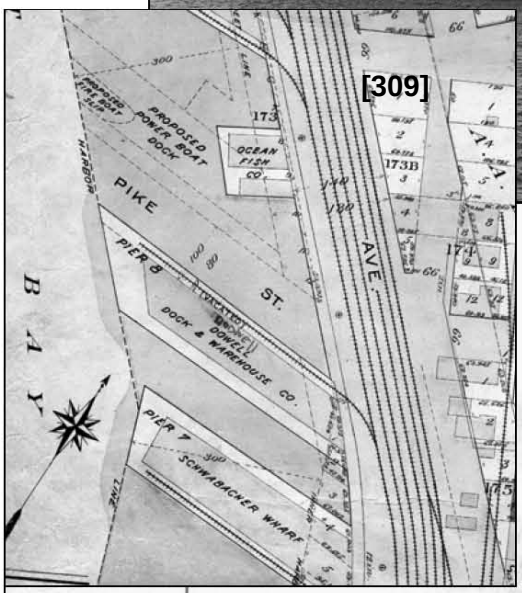
The two photographs included clearly depict the Pike Street Wharf during its Robinson years. The one looks down from the hill where soon the Pike Place Market would be developed. **[307]** The other looks to the water end of the Pike pier from the extended outer pier slip of Pier 57 and also across the outer pier slip of the Schwabacher's Dock. **[308]** The former scene shows that although the new Pike Street Wharf has been set to conform to the waterfront rule and so also the angle of its neighbor, the Schwabacher's Dock, the slip between them is still a narrow one. At the bottom-center of this view from the hill, one can also peer into the shadows and find some of the pilings that support Railroad Avenue and the shed, bottom-right. What perhaps may not be deciphered from this printing is that the level on which the pilings seem set is not the beach but rather another boarded surface. That is, the beach and the tides that wash it are below those planks. In the later scene the Steam Schooner *Santa Ana* of the Northwestern Steamship Company, another tenant (their smaller sign appears on the south wall to the left of Robinson's), is being gently maneuvered either into or out of that narrow slip. There is already a tall ship moored there, and another at the end of the pier.

Pike Place Pier Conversion to Fish & The Fishing Fleet

After the big block letters for W.W. Robinson were replaced in about 1911, the Dodwell & Co. moved in and put up their own oversized sign. The Baist Real Estate Map for 1912 shows Dodwell, a steamship agent, in place at Pier 8, although someone has corrected with pencil the mistaken spelling for its name. **[309]** Pier 8 is still listed as the Dodwell Dock through 1915, but in 1916 the firm is replaced by Pacific Net and Twine Company, and thereby begins a long history of the Pike Pier's service to fisheries: the central waterfront headquarters for the fishing fleet and fishermen's voluntary groups like the Purse Seiners' Associaton and the Fishing Vessel Owners Association. A variety of sailmakers, fish brokers and other specialists in


NORTHWESTERN
STEAMSHIP CO.

[308]


PROPOSED
POWER BOAT
DOCK
OCEAN
FISH
CO.
PIKE
ST.
PIER 8
VICTOR
BRAGEL
DOWELL
DOCK & WAREHOUSE CO.
PIER 7
SCHWABACHER WHARF
AVE.
173B
B A Y

[309]

[307]

W. W. ROBINSON.
PIKE STREET WHARF.
HAY, GRAIN AND FEED.
5900

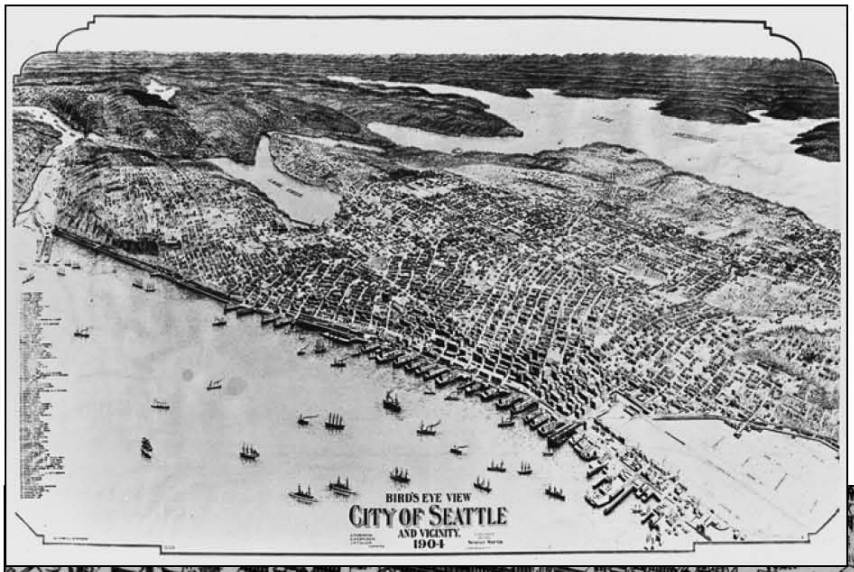
supplying the fisheries had offices on the dock. The attached photo shows a few mostly fishing vessels bobbing in the narrow slip beside the dock – a commonplace scene there even after the Second World War. **[310]** The 1912 map shows the dashed outline for both a "proposed power boat dock" and "fire boat slip" on the north side of Pier 8. Although neither was developed, the city did install a float there for small boats that survived into the late 1920s.

1904 – The Last Birdseye

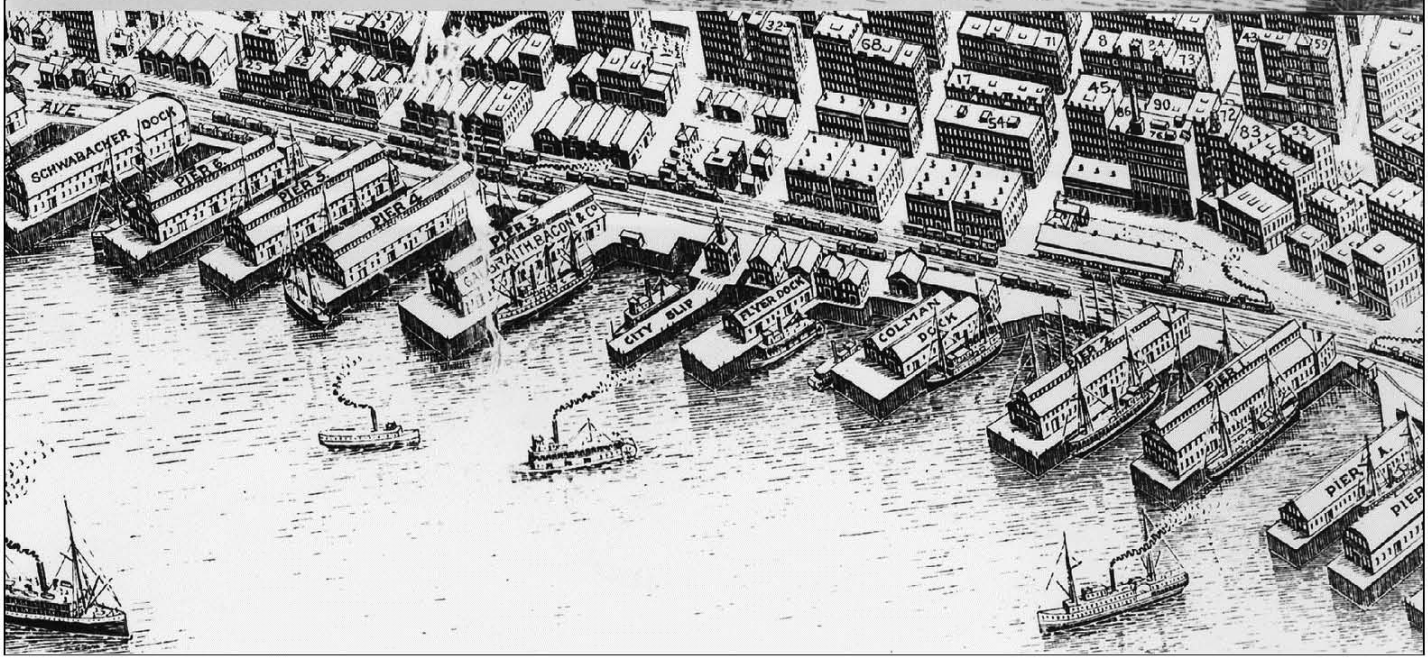
In 1904, a brave artist made the last attempt at a Seattle birdseye view, and a good part of it that depicts the central waterfront is reprinted here in two sections. **[311]** Of course any such undertaking, especially for a city with a population well over 100,000, would involve both simplification and plenty of anachronism and so invite this quibbling review. Here is one example of the latter. The Birdseye has completed the tunnel beneath the city a year early. (Note the train leaving the north portal near the right side of the top panel.) Examples of the drawing's simplifications are both the uniform vertical elevations given to all structures and the near elimination of their many other differences. For instance the *Northern Pacific* Piers north of Madison Street (left of center – and the city slip – in the bottom panel) are considerably more alike in the drawing then they actually were on the waterfront. But the artist has tried to be faithful to the unique roofline of the Schwabacher's Bros Wharf, far left on the bottom panel, although the roof itself seems to be arched like its end pieces or facades, although it was not. The small fish dock north of the Pike Street Dock and beyond that the Gaffney Dock and further what the artist names "Pier D" (thereby respecting the appellation given by its owner, the Pacific Coast Company, rather than by Thomson's new numbering system of 1897), will be soon seen again from Railroad Avenue. This uniquely configured and named Pier D is attached to the long United Warehouse Company dock that runs idiosyncratically parallel to Railroad Avenue. (What follows is yet another variation on this little history's "Deep North Waterfront Theme." As the reader who follows along will surely by now remember, this is that deepest section of the waterfront that was directly below Denny Hill when there was still a hill there. Later, these depths would be marked in a post World War Two proposal to rebuild most of the waterfront north of Madison Street with great longitudinal piers parallel to Alaskan Way in order to accommodate larger vessels. Later still, in the 1950s, the varying depths off of the central waterfront figured in the Port of Seattle's decision to develop the shallower tidelands south of Jackson Street to uniform depths and with modern facilities dominated by giant moving gantry cranes suitable for delivering containers on and off vessels much too large for the central waterfront. In the 1990s this portion of the waterfront north of Virginia Street was again developed with a long pier parallel to the waterfront designed for the use of cruise ships of such size that the battleship *Nebraska's* crows nest would only just reach the deck.)

Waterfront Aerial: mid-1920s

The distinguishing shapes and relative sizes of the several piers that seemed so nearly uniform in the 1904 birdseye may be inspected in the attached mid-1920s aerial photograph of the waterfront. **[312]** The view extends from nearly all of the Grand Trunk Pier at the foot of Marion Street on the far right to a slice of the Port of Seattle's Bell Street terminal on the left. (Five of the twelve piers shown here survive. Significantly for heritage and


BIRD'S EYE VIEW
CITY OF SEATTLE
AND VICINITY.
1904

WESTERN
AVE.
GALBRAITH, BACON & Co
INDIA
VIRGINIA
HOTEL
WASHINGTON
STEWART
UNITED WAREHOUSE CO
PIER D.
GAFFNEY DOCK
PIKE ST. DOCK


AVE
SCHWABACHER DOCK
PIER 6
PIER 5
PIER 4
PIER 3
GALBRAITH, BACON & Co
CITY SLIP
FLYER DOCK
COLMAN DOCK
PIER 2
PIER 1
PIER A

[312] Early aerial of Seattle - ca. 1926

preservation, four of them – the railroad piers 54 through 57 – are all in a row.) Pier 6/57 – the old Milwaukee Pier and since the mid 1970s the southern side of Waterfront Park – reaches further and wider into the bay than its neighbors. To its north or left is the anomaly of the narrow and short Wellington Coal Pier crowding the south side of the Schwabacher's Wharf. (This short dock is another sign of the Bay's deeper sounding at this point.) That part of the waterfront formerly taken by the Pacific Coast Company's longitudinal wharf at the foot of Lenora Street (one fourth of the way in from the left border) now extends with a new double pier into Elliott Bay. The left and longest part of this new Lenora Street Pier extends probably as far as it could reach. The short and irregular placed wharves near the center of the scene, and just left of the Pike Street wharf, are the "fish piers" at the foot of Virginia Street. (There will be a little more about them below.) This aerial is, of course, filled with "revelations." We will note only two. The Smith Tower's dominance of the skyline for nearly a half-century can be appreciated by how it surmounts the cityscape on the far right. Far from the waterfront is the enduring verdure of the First Hill habitat. The once distinguished neighborhood of old homes with wide lawns is still sufficiently domestic to spread skyward its own greenbelt that darkens the landscape east – upper-left -- of the central business district.)

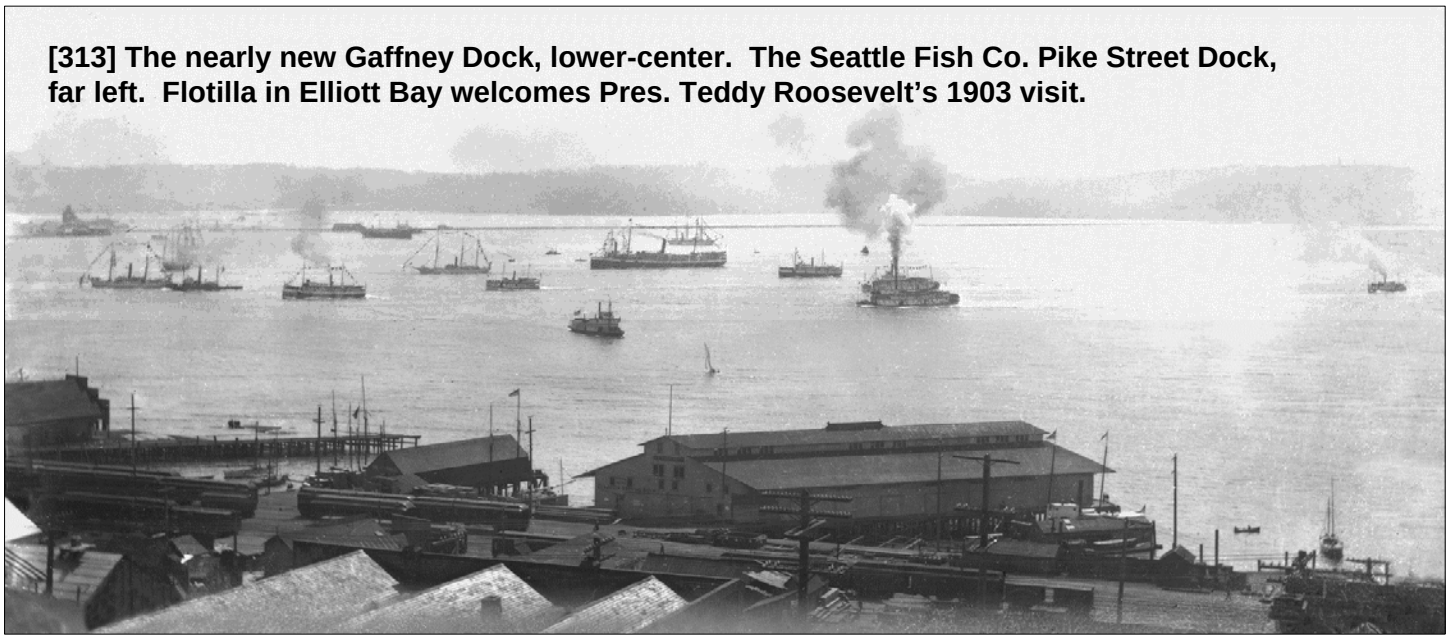
The Gaffney Dock - May 23, 1903

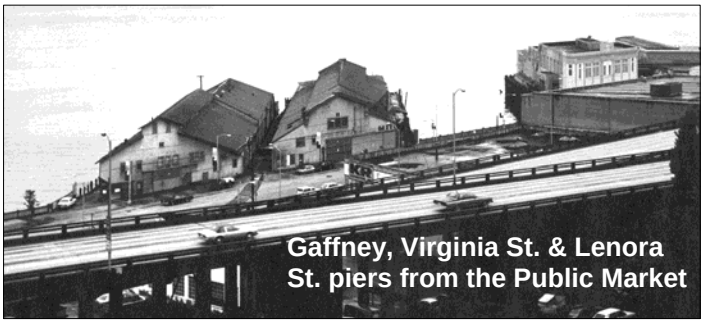
The 1904 Birdseye view shows the first half, only, of what became soon after the artist put away his pen the tandem – but not exactly twins – of the Gaffney Dock and the Virginia Street Dock. A building permit for 1901-1907 Railroad Avenue was given in the late spring of 1901, and the following year Pier 9(62) was listed in the city directory. The new pier was named for a Mary Gaffney about whom there is very little easily known except that the rents were mailed to her. The unique prospect of the accompanying photograph looks southwest from near Virginia Street and Western Avenue: Victor Steinbreuck Park. **[313]** The nearly new Gaffney Wharf at the foot of Pine Street is the scene's centerpiece. On the far left is part of the Seattle Fish Company dock at Pike Street that, we noted above, was authorized in 1896. Although the original copy for this scene has neither caption nor attribution, it is easy to date from internal evidence. The flotilla in the bay is part of the entourage accompanying Pres. T.L. Roosevelt's visit here on May 23, 1903 aboard the *S.S. Spokane*, the longer steamer shown here near the center of the scene. Directly to the right of the Seattle Fish pier, work has begun on the new Pike Street Wharf. Between this construction and the Gaffney Pier is – it will be remembered from the 1920s aerial – the anomaly of the short fish dock that would eventually grow into the longer but still relatively short Piers 60 and 61 - the piers that were destroyed for the building of the public aquarium in the mid-1970s. (The long line of the railroad trestle that, as noted above, first extended from the south central waterfront to the Novelty Mill in West Seattle in 1890 is here on its last legs, probably abandoned, and beginning its long wait for destruction.)

The Fish & Salt Docks: Piers 60-61

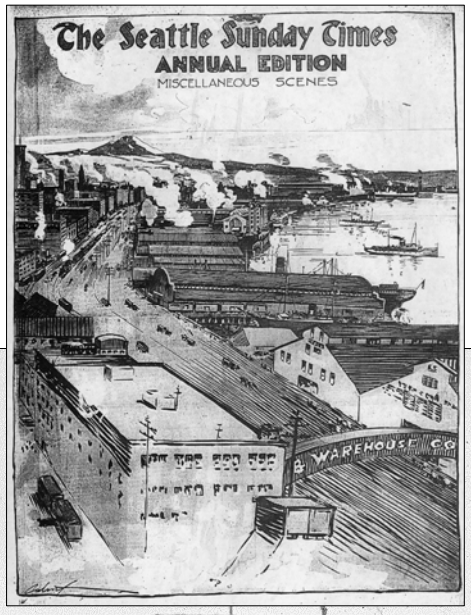
Aside from two exceptions – a pioneer pier at the foot of Wall Street and a wharf connected with the Multnomah Barrel Factory near the foot of Broad Street – the first waterfront site developed north of Pike Street was immediately contiguous to it between Pike and Pine streets. As noted, the two piers that later developed at the future site of the Seattle

[313] The nearly new Gaffney Dock, lower-center. The Seattle Fish Co. Pike Street Dock, far left. Flotilla in Elliott Bay welcomes Pres. Teddy Roosevelt's 1903 visit.

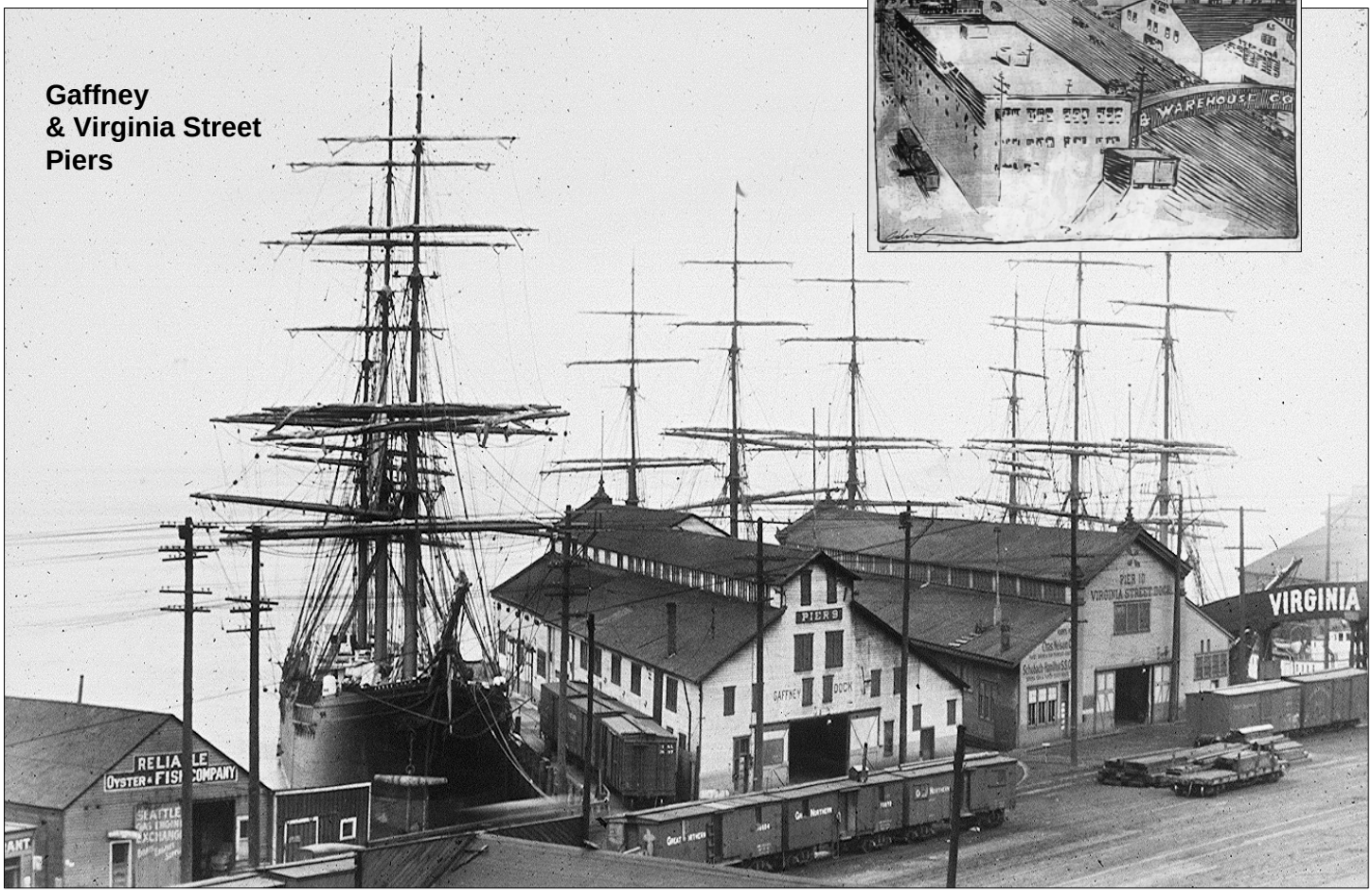




Gaffney, Virginia St. & Lenora St. piers from the Public Market



Gaffney & Virginia Street Piers



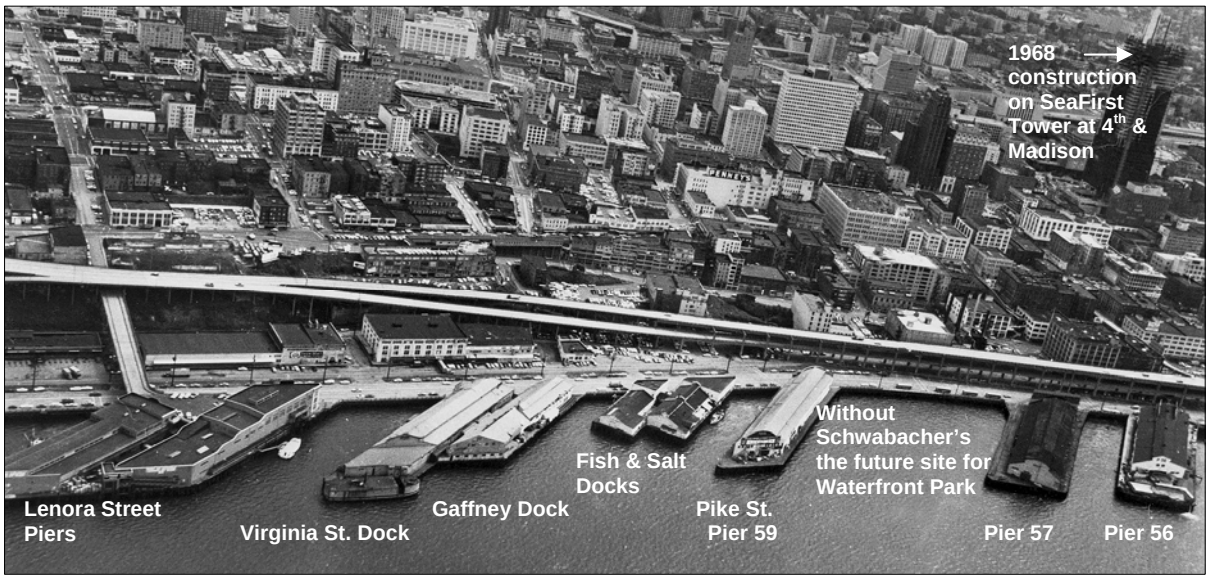
Aquarium were always dwarfed by their neighbors, the Pike Street and Gaffney piers. The early 20th century scene looks north from the second floor of the Pike Street Dock toward Pier 62 – the Gaffney Dock. **[314]** Beyond that, the view is blocked. The short pier of the San Juan Fish Company is on the far right and berthed beside it are the company halibut steamers the *Grant*, at the center of the photograph, and the *San Juan*. The name was borrowed from the islands where James E. Davis, one of the company's partners, was born in 1871, the first child born – it was claimed – to any settler on Lopez Island. In 1903 the San Juan Fish Co. purchased the salmon business of the Ainsworth and Dunn's Seattle Fish Company – but not directly. It had previously been bought in 1901 by the ambitious but overextended Pacific Packing and Navigation Company. The P.P.& N. went bankrupt in 1903 and San Juan Fish picked up its interests, including Seattle Fish. The following year the company's 284-ton fishing steamer, the *San Juan*, was built in Seattle. One of the venerable – and to the reader by now familiar – old ploughs on Puget Sound is on the left - the 154-ft. side-wheeler *Geo. E. Starr*. It may be remembered that when launched near the foot of Cherry Street in 1879, she was the largest vessel built on Puget Sound. When she retired in 1911, the Starr was tied off shore to a buoy in Elliott Bay to store dynamite.

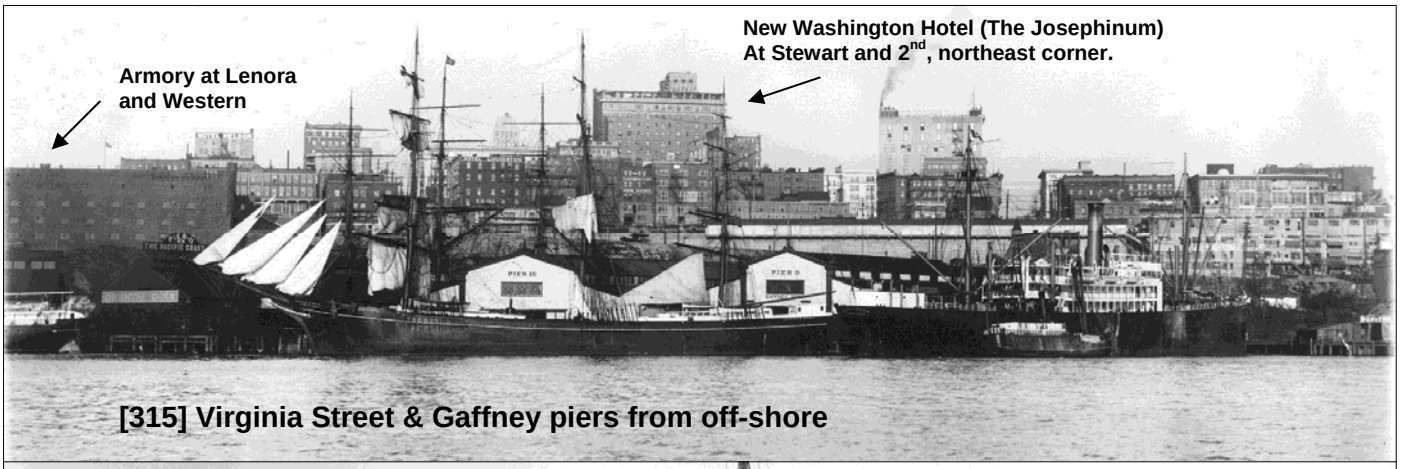
Post World War Port Purchase

In December 1945 the Port of Seattle purchased both Piers 60 and 61, the home then of two fish companies called Whiz and Palace. Port Commissioner E. H. Savage explained, "This property is too expensive for birthing fishing craft." Of course, as noted above (and below) the Port's plan then was to replace this "absolutely obsolete – Gold Rush period" waterfront with longitudinal piers many times the length of anything then (or now) existing on the central waterfront to service the big freighters that were expected to be the coming thing. And as also already noted above – and as will be again below – the "container revolution" revised the Port's post-war vision and the old working central waterfront turned increasingly to play. In 1975 Pier 60 was demolished for construction of the Seattle Aquarium. In the 1980s, the nearly twin pier Gaffney-Virginia Street sheds were razed to make room for summer concerts – the loudest thing to join the waterfront since the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

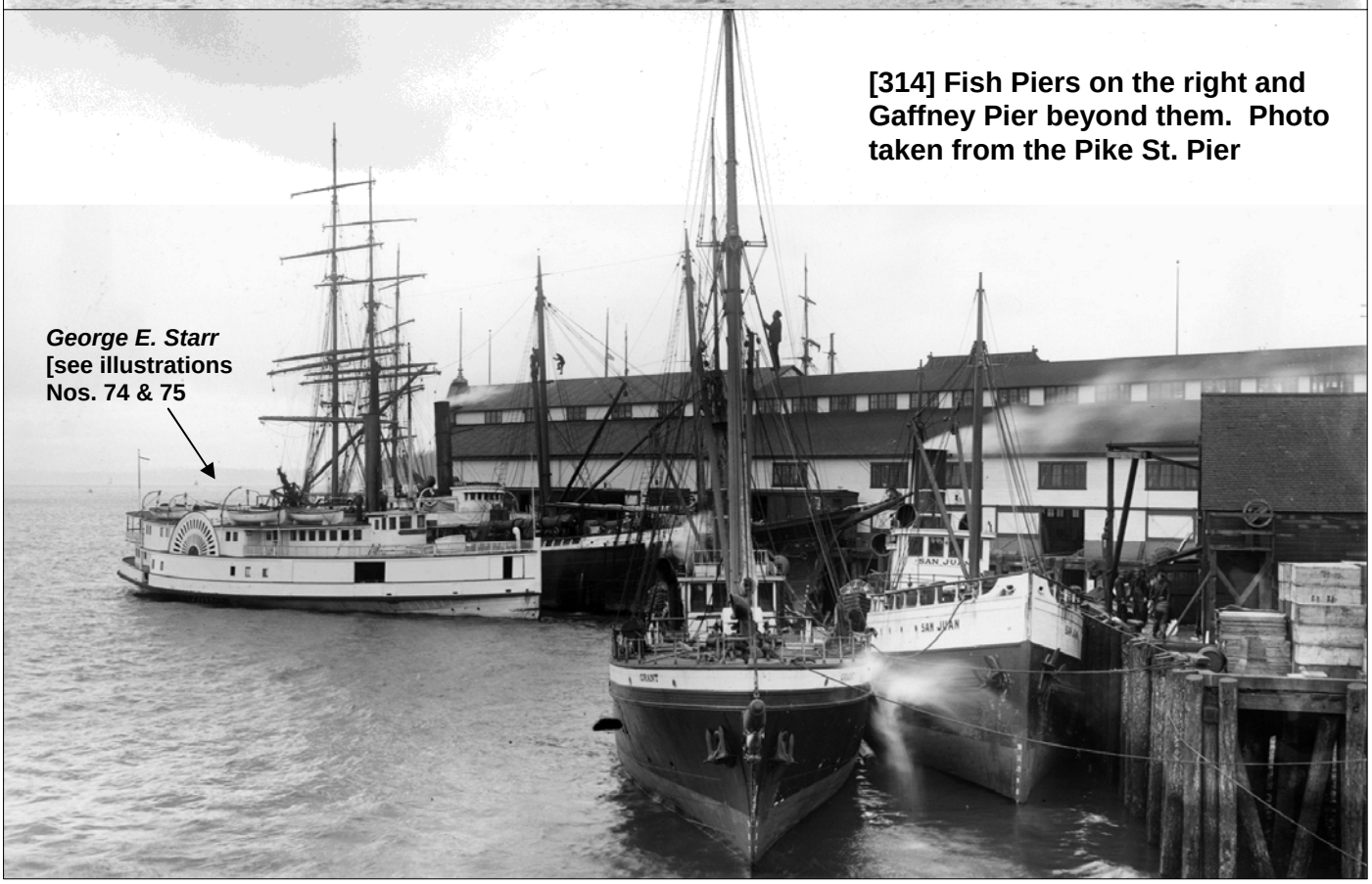
Virginia Street Dock Newsprint & One Bohemian Apartment

In the attached view, photographed from off shore, the Virginia Street Dock has joined and is nearly attached to the north side of the Gaffney Dock. **[315]** A single train spur passes between them. In the year it was completed, 1906, the new pier's architect Max Umbrecht was granted a request to extend the apron on the west side of the pier. Later the warehouse was enlarged to cover this extension, as can be seen in the mid-1920s aerial shown above. The Virginia Street Dock was also attached by an overpass to a warehouse on the east side of Railroad Avenue. Through most of its final forty years before abandonment, the Virginia Street Dock was used to receive and store newsprint paper. The shed's dimensions were 396 x 80 feet. Serviced by the *Northern Pacific* railroad, the north side of the pier was also fitted with a spur and arranged with eight large cargo doors. Trucks used for moving the newsprint to the local dailies and other printers also had access to both the interior of the shed and its aprons. As some point – probably in the 1930s – the





[315] Virginia Street & Gaffney piers from off-shore



[314] Fish Piers on the right and Gaffney Pier beyond them. Photo taken from the Pike St. Pier

Virginia Street Dock was outfitted with one spacious apartment where first Jamie Jamison, who covered the waterfront beat for the *Seattle Star,* and later his friend and fellow radio broadcaster Ivar Haglund lived in the early 1950s. Ivar was forced to move following a fire in 1956 that scorched his library and killed both his cats.

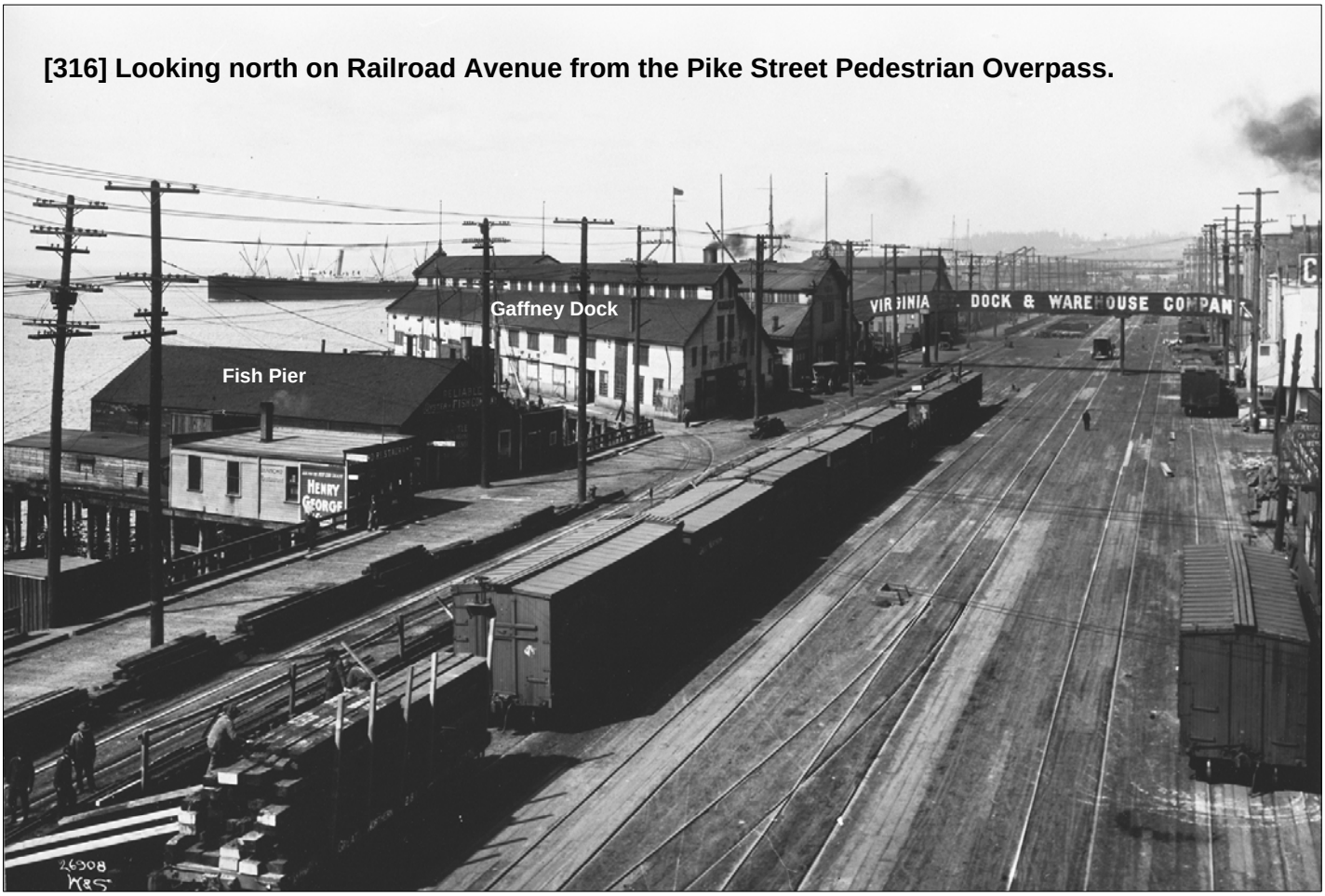
Both the Gaffney and Virginia Street Piers appear above the center of the attached look north up Railroad Avenue from the Pike Street overpass. **[316]** This pedestrian trestle extended from the Pike Place Market across both Western Avenue and Railroad Avenue and attached to steps beside the sidewalk on the west side of Railroad Avenue a few yards north of the Pike Street Pier. (This version of the Pike Street Hill Climb can be found in the 1920s aerial printed above.) Beyond the Virginia Dock and Warehouse Company overpass is the shorter part of Pier D, the Pacific Coast Company's pier at the foot of Lenora Street. On the left are the early versions of Piers 60 and 61. The former is home to the cigar-box shaped Diamond Restaurant and the shed beyond is home to the Reliable Oyster and Fish Company. The tidiness of this circa 1912 is mildly deceiving. To the far side of the Virginia Street overpass it was a still a mess following the activities associated with the Denny Regrade, and soon the construction of the Bell Street terminal. The keen eye will detect another and big hole – or "man trap" – directly below the "Ware" in "Warehouse" painted on the side of the Virginia Street Overpass.

That Dangerous Disgrace

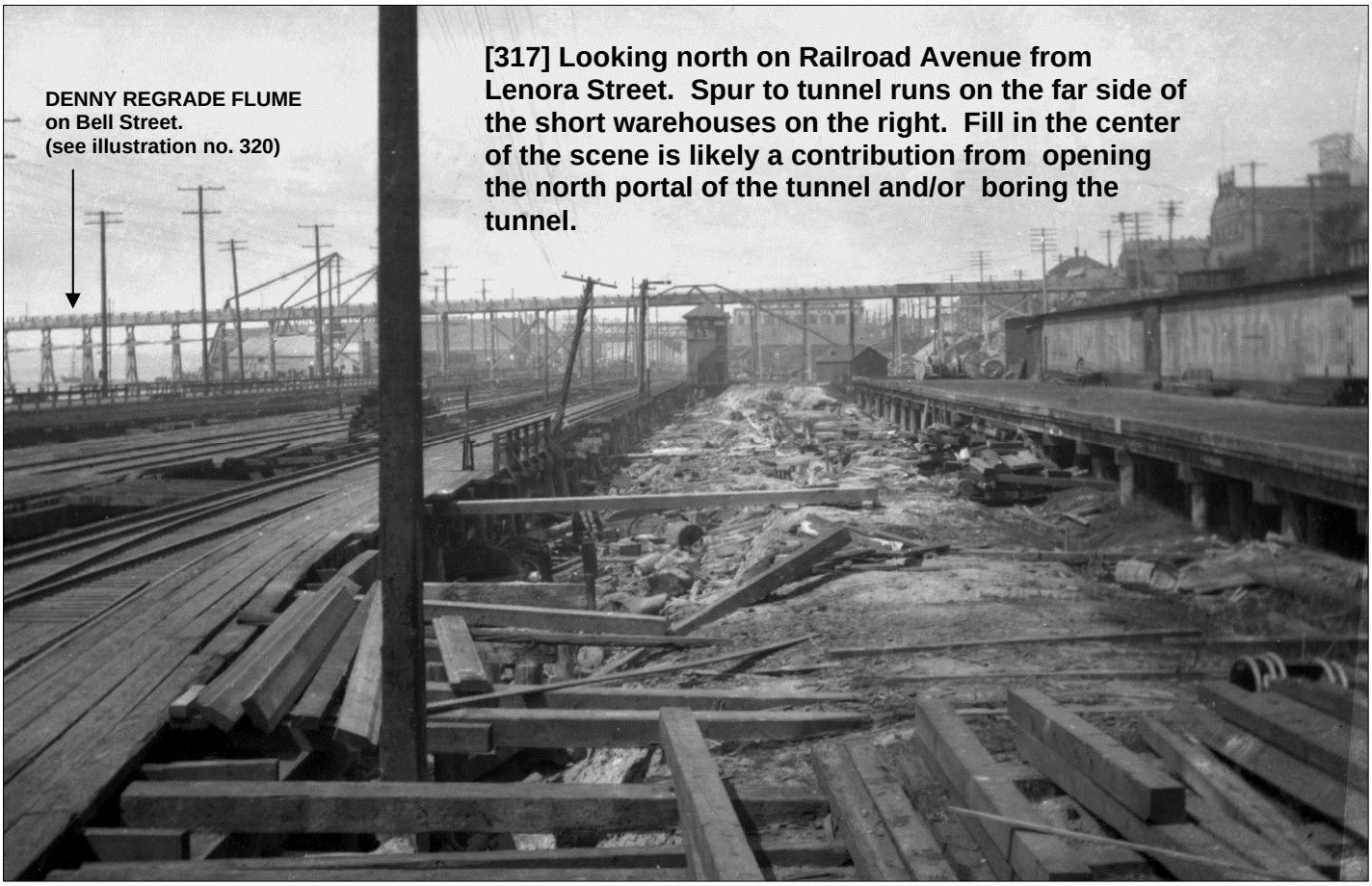
Another view photographed about 1909 looks north from Lenora Street (if it extended to the beach) and reveals the clutter. **[317]** As noted above this is that notorious "north end of Railroad Avenue" against which local pundits and guardians wailed as a "dangerous disgrace" filled with "man trips." The spur to the railroad tunnel approaches on the far side of the windowless "oriental warehouse" on the right. This low-slung line was constructed sometime after the bank was cut away in the spring of 1903 for the spur to the north portal. Near the center of the scene is the observer or yardmaster small tower, built directly south of where the spur to the tunnel leaves the mainline tracks. In the foreground the dirt beneath the rubble is an import – most likely from the cut into the bank that was required here to open the spur to the tunnel. That 1903 donation may also cover earlier contributions from regrades on First Avenue during the 1880s and late 1890s. (Soon below we will list the several regrades that made contributions to the waterfront.) The long trestle that extends across the scene and off it to the left is one of flumes constructed to move the water-rich dirt from the Denny Hill regrade into Elliott Bay.

The Bell Street Trestle & the *Tacoma Maru*

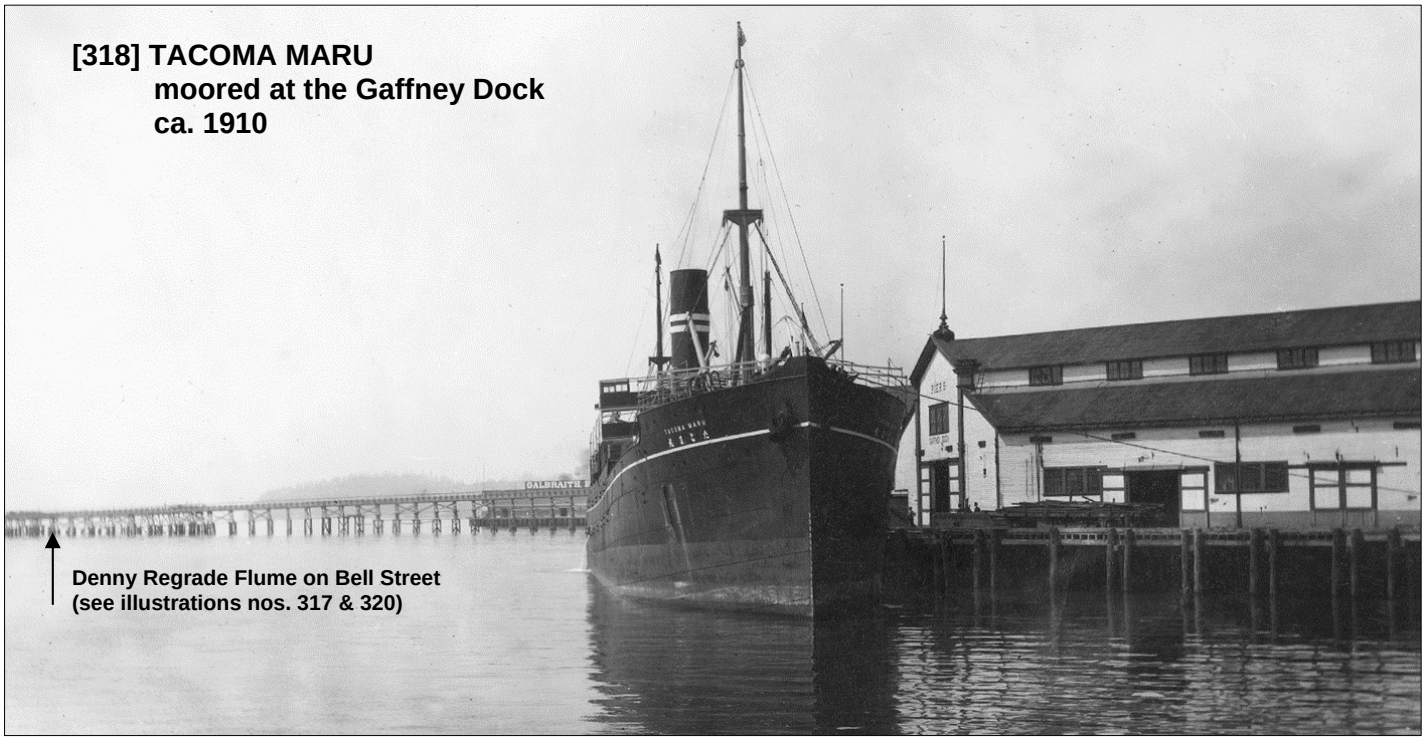
Of the three additional glimpses of the Bell Street trestle, two will permit short digressions into the lives of two more vessels. First, to the left of this portrait of the Japanese steamer *Tacoma Maru* tied to the Gaffney Dock, the Bell Street trestle extends into the bay. **[318]** Built in 1909 for the Osaka Steamship Company, the *Tacoma Maru* managed in its 35 years afloat to get around. In 1910 it delivered English missionaries to Tristan du Cunha, the "most remote settlement on earth," and in 1942 it carried 1,600 prisoners – most of them English – north from Java to work on the Thai/Burma railway. In 1944, the *Tacoma Maru* met up with the *USS Hake*. The submarine came upon three Japanese



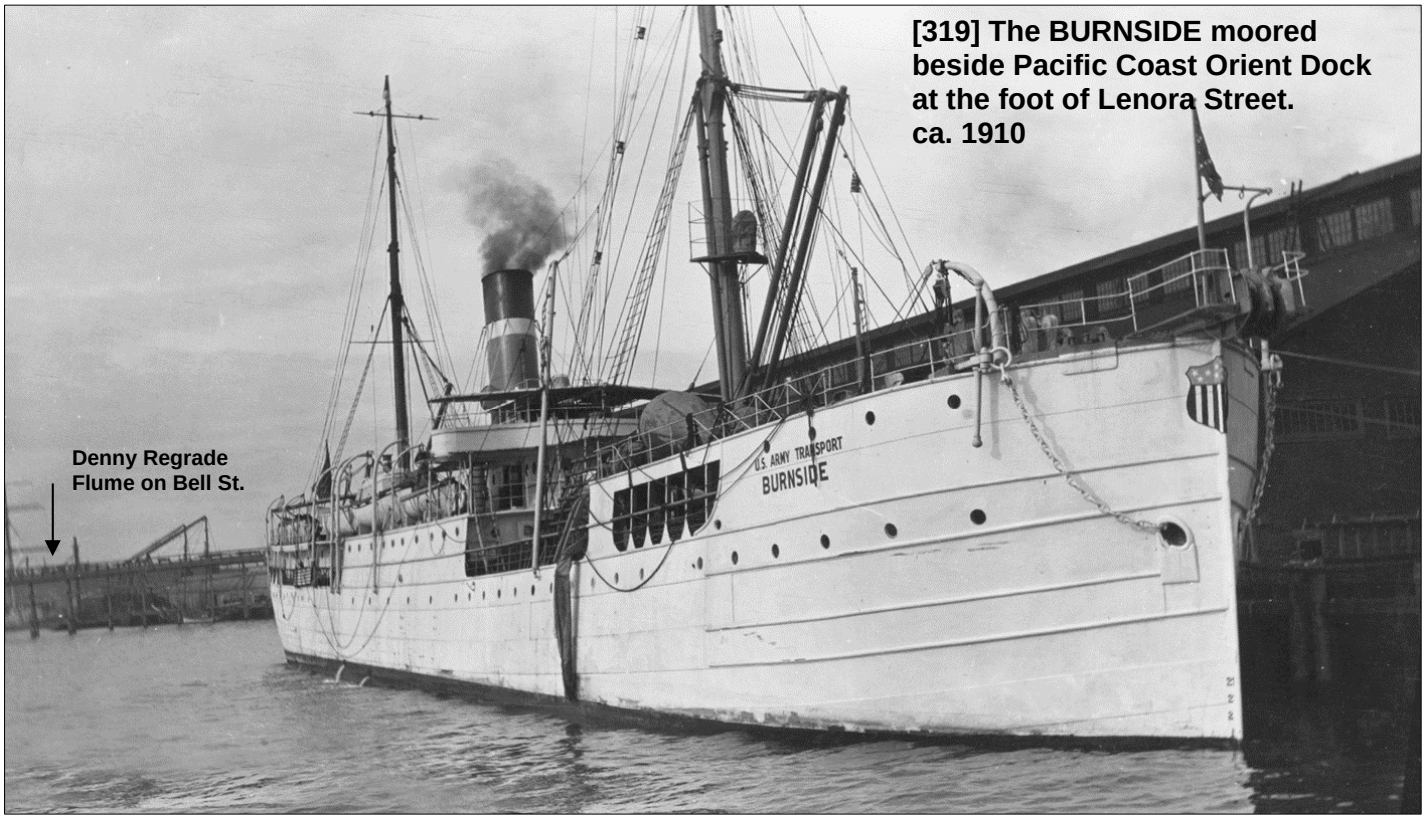
[316] Looking north on Railroad Avenue from the Pike Street Pedestrian Overpass.



[317] Looking north on Railroad Avenue from Lenora Street. Spur to tunnel runs on the far side of the short warehouses on the right. Fill in the center of the scene is likely a contribution from opening the north portal of the tunnel and/or boring the tunnel.



[318] TACOMA MARU moored at the Gaffney Dock ca. 1910



[319] The BURNSIDE moored beside Pacific Coast Orient Dock at the foot of Lenora Street. ca. 1910

vessels on the first of February. A recounting reads, "With the three targets in a line of bearing after a perfect approach, the submarine launched a spread of six torpedoes, sinking two of the three, *Tacoma Maru* and *Nanka Maru*. The attack achieved complete surprise and the *Hake* was not attacked by the screening vessels."

The Bell Street Trestle & the *Burnside*

The Denny Regrade outflow trestle on Bell Street appears again on the far left of another ship's portrait, this time the *U.S. Army Transport Burnside* as it lies beside the Pacific Coast Company's Oriental Pier – the long parallel pier that lay beside Railroad Avenue between Lenora and Blanchard Street. **[319]** By 1910, a likely date for this look at her, the *Burnside* was old booty from the Spanish-American war when she was captured as the *Rita*. Originally built in Newcastle in 1882 as the *British Yeoman,* the U.S. converted her into a cable-laying ship and stationed her in Puget Sound.

Denny Regrade Flume Seen from West Seattle - 1910

When the city began to both reach the sky with taller buildings and construct horizons serrated less by trees than by homes and landmarks, photographers started visiting West Seattle to record the changes. The result is several early 20th Century panoramas of the city photographed from near Duwamish Head. The detail from one of these selected for printing here dates from 1910. **[320]** At its center is the trestle seen three times above. This, and earlier trestle-flumes that extended at different times off Lenora and Blanchard Streets, carried and spilled into Elliott Bay the mud of Denny Hill, eroded with high-power water cannons during the Denny Regrade. The wide white scar created by this sluicing is close to the east side of Fifth Avenue where the regrade stopped in 1911. (In 1928 it began again cutting what remained of the hill east to Westlake Avenue.) The mud was drained into the flume – shown here – through a ditch that ran in line with Bell Street as far east as Fourth Avenue. The flume extended a good distance off shore before it divided into a three-headed hydra. The extensions were built on their own fill and for the most part constructed a new and submerged Denny Hill in the bay and safely away from the shore, although pouring more than half of Denny Hill into the bay did require some dredging later on. A pile driver is moored or at work in the slip between the center and left (north) branches of the flume. The light-colored patch to the right of where the flume leaves the ridge on a trestle over Railroad Avenue is fill dirt that has nearly plugged the Belltown Ravine. It seems probable that this fill was taken from Denny Hill, although it would have been more likely dumped and not washed there.

On Oct. 20, 1910 – not long after this detail from West Seattle was recorded – new grades were approved on Elliott Avenue, that after much filling and haggling with the Oregon and Washington Railroad (O&WRR) would complete the capping of the Belltown Ravine and the smooth extension of Elliott Avenue from Battery Street to its joining with Western between Lenora and Virginia Street. Like the neighborhood upheaval that seven years earlier was prelude to the building of the railroad tunnel – although to a lesser degree – this time the City Engineer R.H. Thomson instructed A. L. Walters, the Superintendent of Streets and Sewers, to remove the shacks south of Bell Street that are within the limit of Elliott Avenue "and will be entirely buried by the fill."

These were probably the last remnants of the beach community below Denny Hill and were set near the opening to the Belltown Ravine. Between Battery and Bell, the new grade on Elliott was set at about 50 feet above the old grade established in 1889.

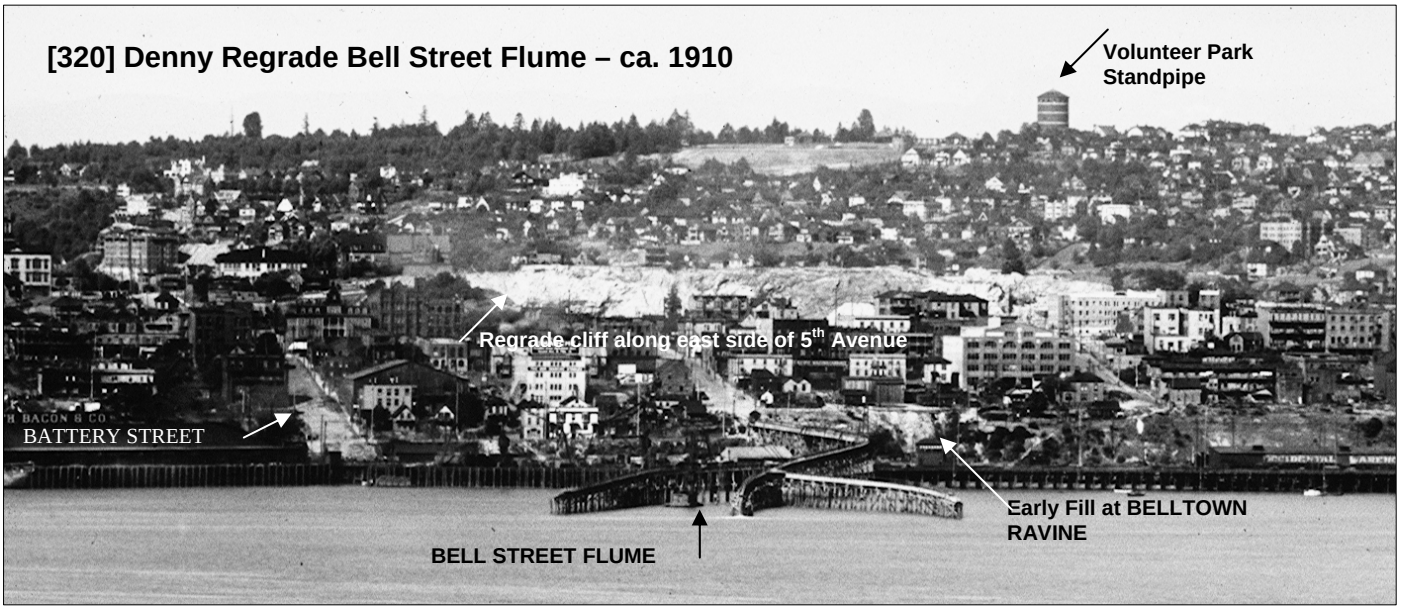
Elliott Avenue Fill 1913

Another and later look across Elliott Bay from West Seattle shows this section in 1913 after much of the new Elliott Avenue extension is in place – or seems to be. **[321]** On the horizon is Denny School at the northeast corner of Battery Street and Fifth Avenue. First opened in 1884 and later enlarged, it is here recently diminished by the Denny Regrade. When the sluicing ceased in 1911 it left, as noted above, a cliff along the east side of 5th Avenue, and in the process took Denny School's west wing. On the far right and nearly filling the block on Western between Virginia and Lenora stands the brick bulk of the Armory. Below it is the familiar pair: Piers 62 and 63, the Gaffney and Virginia Street Docks respectively. And to the left of these piers is the by now also familiar "parallel pier" of the Pacific Coast Company – its "Oriental Dock."

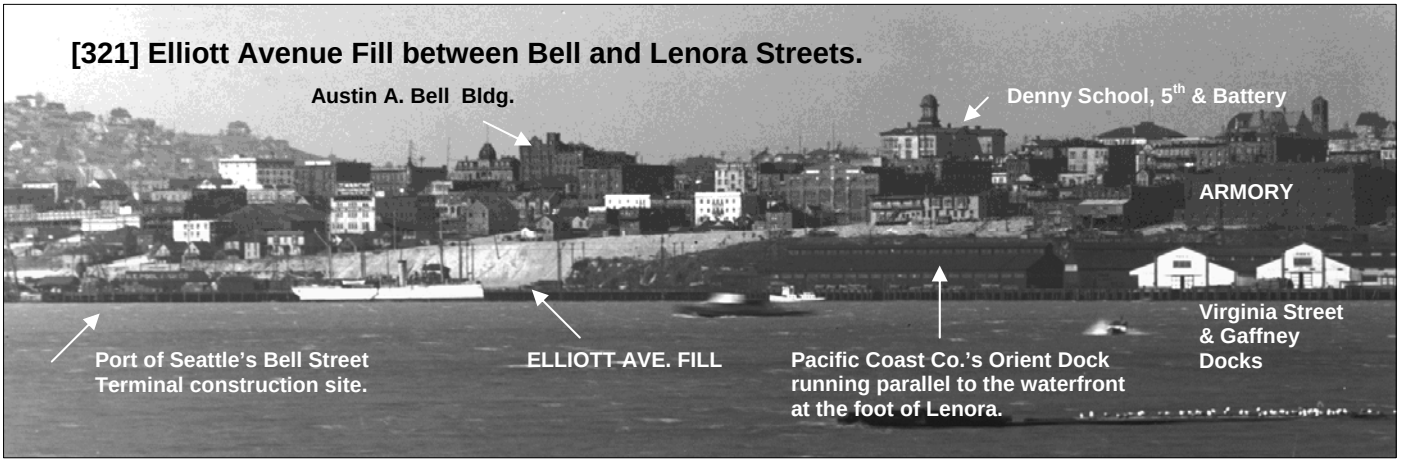
A review of this public work on Elliott Avenue through the correspondence between the contractor, the city engineer, the *Oregon and Washington Railroad*, and others is a litany of gripes and admonishments. This paper trail extends from the late spring of 1911, when the contractor F. McLellan won the bid to do the work, to the spring of 1917 when the city engineer recognized that McLellan, the original low-bidder, had at last completed the filling of Elliott and adjoining streets. In a letter to the Board of Public Works the City Engineer noted that "on account of the excessive fills it will be impossible to pave the remaining portion of this street for some time, we would, therefore suggest that your honorable body relieve the bonding company of any further liability, and when the fill has settled sufficient to hold the paving, to award a new contract." McLellan, it turned out, had failed to pay his yearly $50 fee for a $5000 bond, and the New England Casualty Company denied all liability. What everyone knew – the City Engineer, the Board of Public Works, the neighbors – was that when McLellan took the job he also got himself the bum deal of running into a railroad.

Contractor McLellan Meets the Railroad

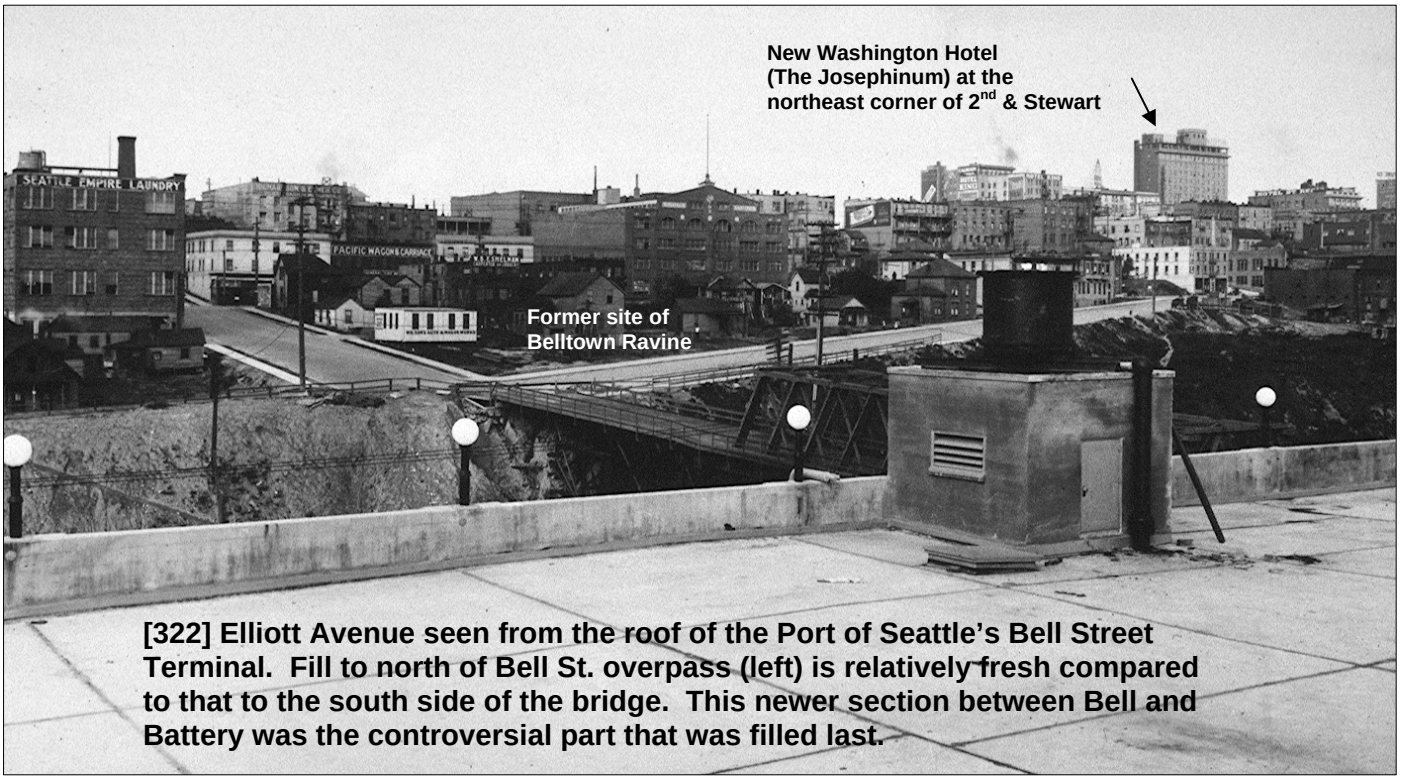
The *Oregon and Washington* – a child of the *Union Pacific* – had purchased the block bound by Bell, Battery, Elliott and Railroad Avenue, intending to daylight its own railroad tunnel there with its own north portal. This, as noted above, was the plan in 1907 when work began on the UP's south portal. By 1910, when the *Union Pacific* was building its own new tidelands depot, the need to go north under the city seemed increasingly unnecessary. And yet when McLellan started to fill Elliott Avenue between Battery and Bell, the Railroad was there to protect its property. The city had not done its part by condemning the railroad land along the west side of Elliott between Battery and Bell – land that would be encroached upon by McLellan's fill. While the city worked its legal way to eventual condemnation it encouraged the confused contractor to work on the east side of Elliott – only. The contractor's letter to the Board of Public Works from Aug. 29, 1911 is revealing. "I have suffered great loss on account of not being able to prosecute this work … I have been ordered to stop filling at practically every point on the work, so I am forced to abandon the work entirely until the streets cleared for me. I had contracts



[320] Denny Regrade Bell Street Flume – ca. 1910



[321] Elliott Avenue Fill between Bell and Lenora Streets.



[322] Elliott Avenue seen from the roof of the Port of Seattle's Bell Street Terminal. Fill to north of Bell St. overpass (left) is relatively fresh compared to that to the south side of the bridge. This newer section between Bell and Battery was the controversial part that was filled last.

with several parties to furnish dirt to make these fills, at a low figure, and on bidding on this work I took an advantage of these bids and gave the City the benefit of it. I have now lost three figures on account of not being able to place the dirt when they were ready to deliver it." Because McLellan was able to work south of Bell Street and across what remained of the outer entrance to the Belltown Ravine, much of the fill seen in the 1913 record above the large white vessel off shore from Blanchard Street was filled in 1912.

At last on May 6, 1914, the city was ready to put it to the *Oregon and Washington* with a choice. In a letter to J. R. Holman, Chief Engineer for the railroad, the City Engineer notes, "All the legal complications have been adjusted with reference to Elliott Avenue improvement between Bell and Battery. As this improvement will necessitate a large fill, would you wish to construct a bulkhead in order to keep the fill from running upon your property, or shall we proceed with the fill and let the slope encroach upon the property?" The railroad's response does not appear in the correspondence, but more than a year later a terse note of July 7,1915 from City Engineer Dimock to contractor McLellan is at least suggestive. "The litigation is now disposed of … You are hereby notified to proceed with the remainder of the fill of Elliott between Bell and Battery." **[322]**

It may be noticed that at the scene's center and directly above the fill, the homes on the streets behind it – especially on Blanchard and Lenora Streets between Elliott and Western and along the east side of Elliott as well – peek over the new fill like a shy Kilroy. (Except that "Kilroy was here" is, it seems, a World War Two invention.) This is a recapitulation of the Jackson Street Regrade – but without the flooding – where streets were raised high above their original grade and the tenement owners between them were required at their own expense to lift their structures and find whatever foundation or fill they chose to complete the construction. With this in mind, a reading of City Engineer Dimock's letter of March 15, 1912 to the homeowners at the northwest corner of Lenora and Western advising that they have their buildings adjusted to the new line of Elliott at "the earliest practical date" is painfully ironic. The letter explains what was surely self-evident to those living there. "The filling of Elliott Avenue is now in progress and it is expected that the portion of the street in front of your property will soon be improved by the contractor." Here we may pause to recall that all this work and fuss is where the Native Americans chose probably centuries earlier to establish their Baq'baqwab or north camp.

The Great Age of Regrades: 1898 - 1915

The protracted fuss accompanying the regrade on Elliott Avenue may be treated as the whimpering conclusion to the city's great age of regrades. With the Dearborn Cut (1909 to 1912), the work on Elliott Avenue (1911-1915) was the end of it for a while. There were many benefits derived from most of this earth moving. These included the permanent loan of some of that dirt to help extend the central waterfront and raise the tidelands. This was especially true of the work between Jackson and Dearborn streets. But really, tideland reclamation was given very little help from Denny Hill. The Denny Regrade was mostly about cutting and discarding. It is now agreed among persons who have studied it and are not merely excited by its engineering story that the Denny Regrade – the greatest of regrades – was not only a waste but also a mistake.

Described at the time by the "forces of regrade" with unintended irony as "a natural inhibition to the northerly movement of the city," Denny Hill was only in a few places a mild test for the horse and in every place an easy climb for the motorcar. Street access to the hill was blocked in two places – on Third Avenue north of Pine Street and on Blanchard Street east of Second Avenue. Otherwise it was not steep. Nor was it high – the deepest cut was about 110 feet near 4th and Blanchard. Most importantly this modest hill was a natural resource with views that were splendid – views that the condos that are now getting in each other's way wish they could have. Also Denny Hill was a natural feature of the cityscape that lent it imagination. **[323]** It was, in a word, picturesque. James Moore, the developer who at last opened the Denny Hotel in 1903 and renamed it the Washington, knew this and was at first very reluctant to lose the hotel with the hill. Thomas Burke understood this as well and tried in the eleventh hour to promote a tunnel on Third Avenue that would pass beneath Denny Hill and Moore's hotel and so save both. City Engineer Reginald Thomson was not persuaded.

When Thomson first arrived in Seattle in 1883, he described it as sitting in a hole and remarked that he was the one to dig it out. Thomson, of course, was the irresistible force that ultimately convinced Moore to trade his old hotel for a new one nearby on the regrade – the New Washington. But Moore agreed to this only after he cajoled Thomson in the meantime to protect the Virginia Street access to the rear of his old hotel while it was still open by not fussing with the elevation at Second and Virginia during the Second Avenue Regrade (1903-1906). This intersection was the low spot on Denny Hill, and the easy way for delivery teams and the carriages with guests and visitors to reach to the rear ofthis "Most Scenic Hotel of the West." (Virginia Street, it may be remembered, crossed Denny Hill as a little valley between the hill's north and south summits.) This exception forever galled Thomson, for when the Denny Regrade was completed, there was Second and Virginia, the highest point in the new neighborhood and acting like its summit. He still wanted to flatten it.

Arthur Dimock, whom we quoted above as one of the correspondents in the "Elliott Avenue Letters", was Thomson's successor at the public works department. Dimock was also a regrade orthodox, and wanted the streets of the regrade to continue to the north in line with what was the city's grid south of Steward Street. His 1926 recollections are, in part, a lament for this missed chance at thruway propriety. "The streets on the Denny Regrade diverge about 45 degrees from their proper direction. A few streets paralleling the shoreline and the remainder paralleling the section lines would have been almost ideal in its conformity to present necessities." The "necessities" of 1926 that Dimock was speaking around was the need to move north-south traffic through the city with greater ease and directness. And in 1926, serious suggestions that the waterfront could bring the quickest relief to this congestion had already been on the public table for a year. (We will detail this below.) Dimock was also upset with the waste of the Denny Regrade and in '26 also offered a criticism that was not often heard when the hill was being blasted away to Davy Jones. "In the Denny Hill district a large part of the soil was wasted in the deep water of Elliott Bay about 1/2 miles from the work. Part was used to fill in the valley lying east of Denny Hill. Grades in this valley were raised as much as 25 feet." As

Dimock described it that was pretty much it. The streets in the neighborhood of the bus depot at 8th and Stewart were raised with the help of the hill. But only small parts of the hill wound up on the waterfront.

Denny Regrade: First Stage

We may divide the Denny Regrade into roughly six projects. Only the middle four were included in what we called above the "Great Age of Regrades." The first stage had no interest in getting rid of the entire hill. The regrade of First Avenue between Pike and Bell streets in the early 1880s was prelude to running a horse trolley to Belltown. It seems very likely that this work made some contribution to filling in the waterfront below it. The attached photograph from the mid-1880s shows the most easterly part of the Belltown Ravine with what appears to be a uniform fill lifting its grade. Although this is speculation, the most likely source of this fill would have been the regrade on First Avenue (or Front Street), for the ravine was an obvious target for dumping what was scraped only feet away.

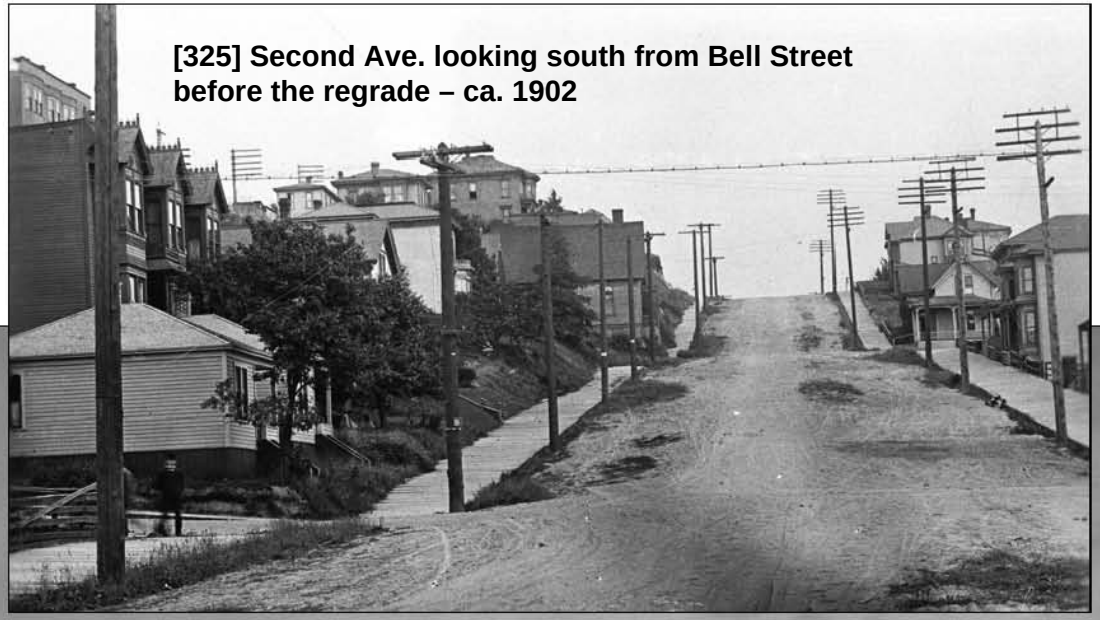
Denny Regrade: Second Stage

The second stage in the Denny Regrade was also on First Avenue and through the same section. **[324]** This project increased the cut on First Avenue and may be considered the first step into the Great Age of Regrades. (Some readers may wish to drop the "great" attribution.) It also certainly contributed to the waterfront. A *Post-Intelligencer* article for Aug. 7, 1898 headlines its description as "Grading A Thoroughfare: Work in Progress Along First Avenue, North of Pike – Deep Seams and High Ridges." The *P-I's* description of the '98 regrade features cartoons of the hydraulic sluicing work at Lenora Street with Dr. Root's landmark residence at the top of the bluff. The report notes "Decidedly the most interesting spot along the avenue just now is at Lenora Street, where the contractor is washing down the steep slope on the east side of the First Avenue … Extending from the face of the avenue to the waterfront is a long sluice box, and into this is turned the stream that carries the dirt in solution. Not always in absolute solution, however. Where hardpan has been reached the water cuts into it in grooves or channels, dislodging great lumps, which are either forced into the sluice bodily or pounded to pieces by the workmen ... the dirt is washed from the hillside into an alluvial deposit on the flats below. The process is an economical one for the contractor, saving not only the labor of many picks and shovels, but a long and costly haul of the dirt as well…"

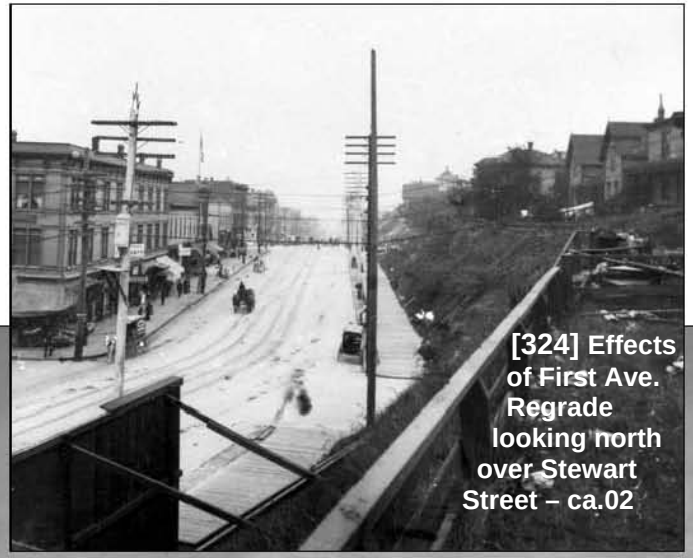
Denny Regrade: Third Stage

The third stage of the Denny Regrade began in 1903 and concentrated on Second Avenue. **[325]** This time it was also a point of belief (correct as it happened) to those involved that, more than the earlier work on First Avenue, this was the beginning of razing the entire hill. The *Seattle Daily Bulletin* for March 21, 1903 had a window seat on this bandwagon, which it was also fueling. Conveniently for this history, the *Bulletin's* trumpeting noted the waterfront. The paper was confident that the development of its northern section was dependent on removing the hill.

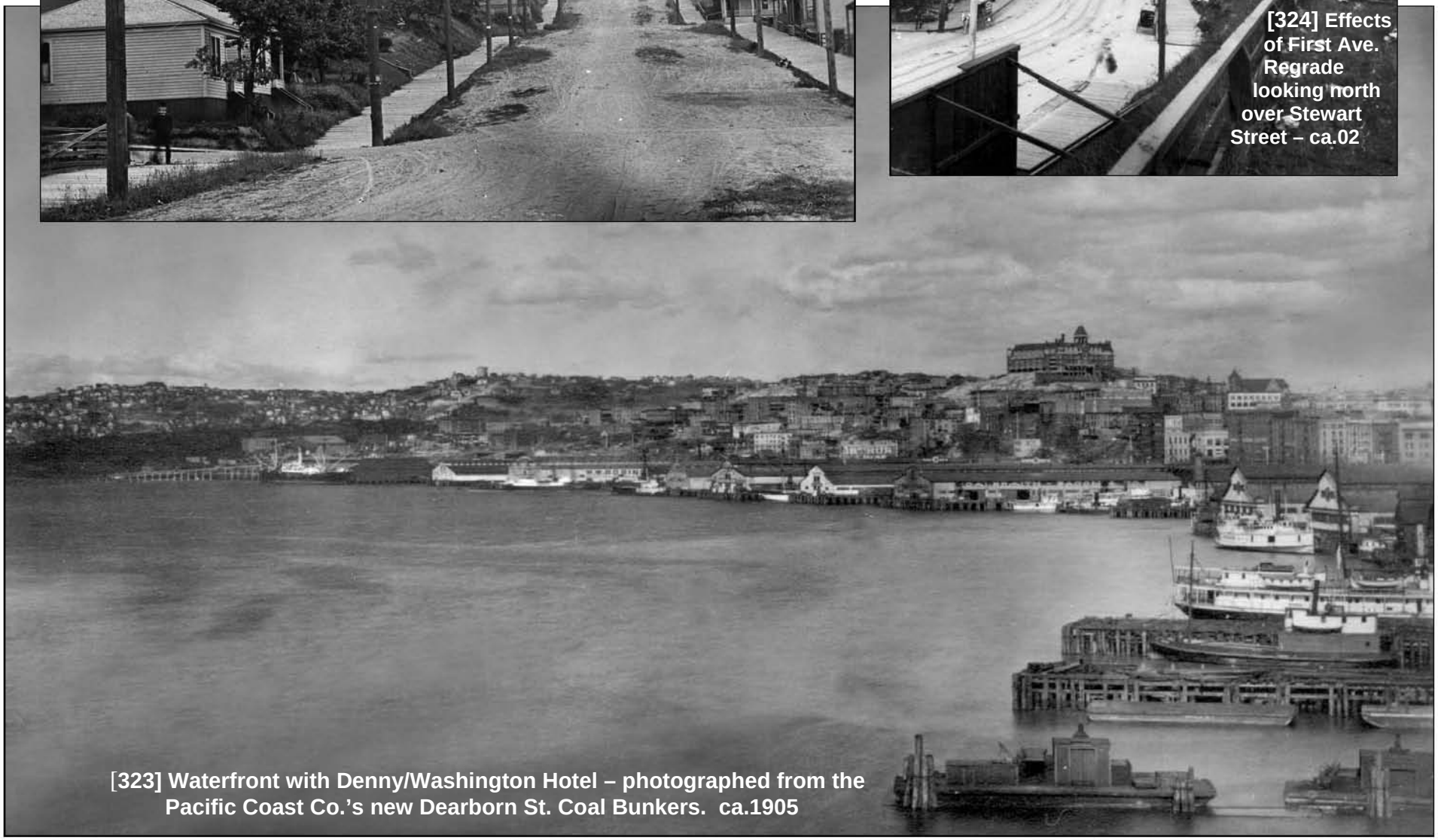
> North Seattle Hill Must Go – The District is Needed for Business – Fine Outlook for Activity Over the Entire City. The real estate market is growing steadier day by day. But a few more weeks now remain before one



[325] Second Ave. looking south from Bell Street before the regrade – ca. 1902



[324] Effects of First Ave. Regrade looking north over Stewart Street – ca.02



[323] Waterfront with Denny/Washington Hotel – photographed from the Pacific Coast Co.'s new Dearborn St. Coal Bunkers. ca.1905

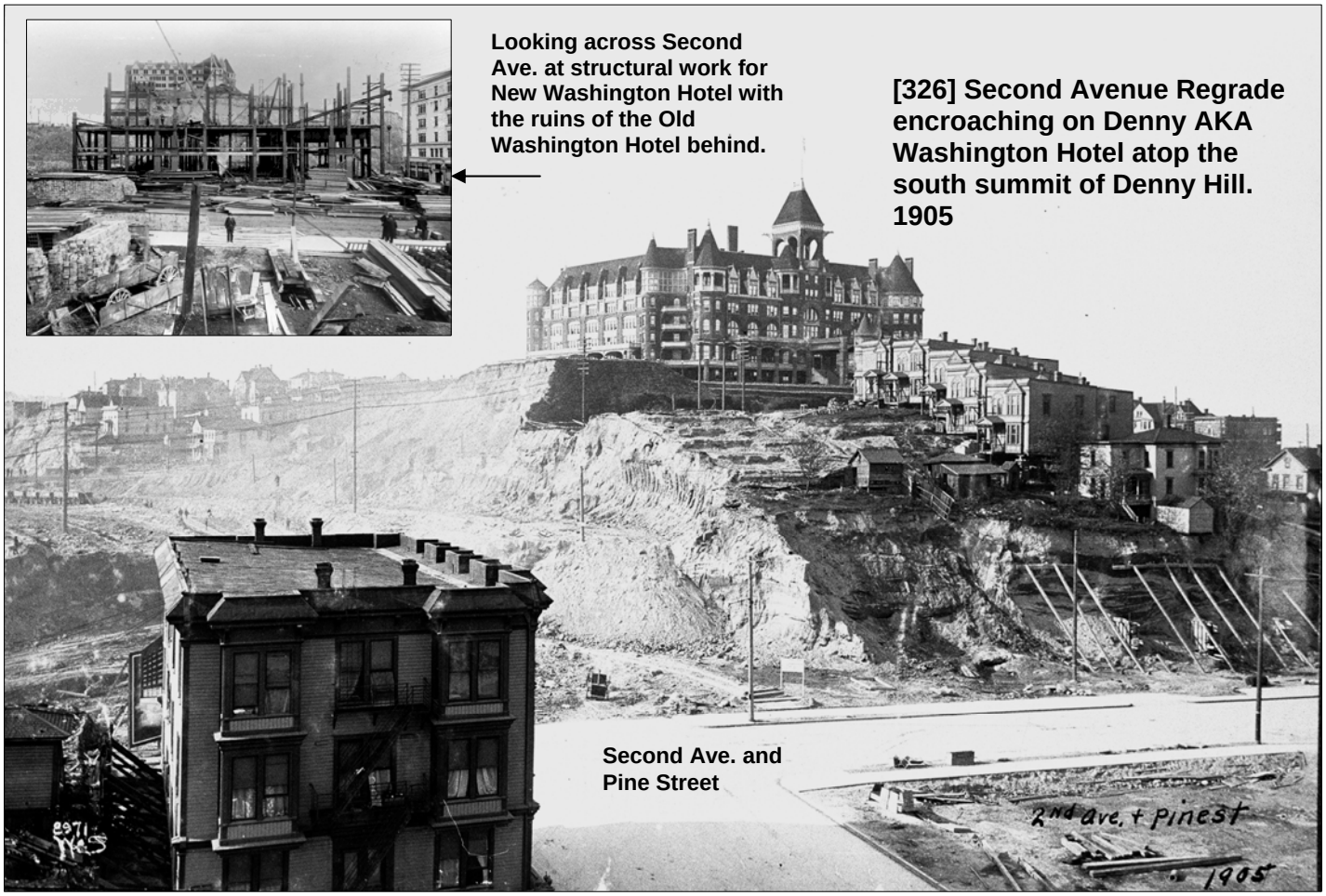
> of the most active seasons ever witnessed in Seattle, will be in full swing. Just what sections of the city will enjoy the greatest demand and receive the largest advances is difficult to say; it is not likely that many large sales in the downtown business district will occur, inasmuch as owners refuse to sell, except in rare cases and when such an owner is found he generally wants a large premium over and above the proper purchase price. It is more likely that North Seattle will receive the greatest amount of patronage from this year's investors. In spite of the supposed opposition from the Seattle Electric Company and certain city officials, it is believed the big hill to the north of our business district will finally be moved. The property owners are determined, and if they can guarantee the city against too large damages, there is no reason why this important work should not occur before this year is out. It is evident to many that in order to keep up our rapid growth, we must have more room for doing business. We need the North Seattle waterfront for dock purposes, but that section will never be very important before a large retail district, with level thoroughfares backs it up."

This last point is was almost surely wrong. In fact, after the Denny Regrade reached 5th Avenue in 1911 and slept for eighteen years before continuing, the district it had raised pretty much slumbered with it. The regrade, it turned out, was also decidedly not needed for the "natural northerly expansion of the city." Many of its cleared lots stayed vacant for years.

It is also very probable that the Second Avenue Regrade dumped much of its carvings and cave-ins along the waterfront. In 1911, as part of the correspondence connected with the Elliott Avenue Regrade, City engineer Dimock complained to the Erickson Construction Co. that the box flume on Blanchard between Western and Elliott "as left by you in your grading work in connection with the regrading of 2nd Ave." must be removed. The first curiosity of this complaint is the time that has lapsed between the conclusion of the Second Avenue Regrade in 1906 and the letter in 1911. It is also possible that this particular contribution from the Second Avenue regrade was used in the piecemeal filling that managed to nearly cover the Belltown Ravine before, as we have seen, contractor McLelland capped it with the regrade on Elliott Ave. The ravine was roughly a half block north of the general site Dimock sets for Erickson's abandoned flume.

Another feature of this central part of the Age of Regrades was the extensive work done on many city streets south of Denny Hill. Some of the cuts on Third and Fourth Avenues reached 40 feet.

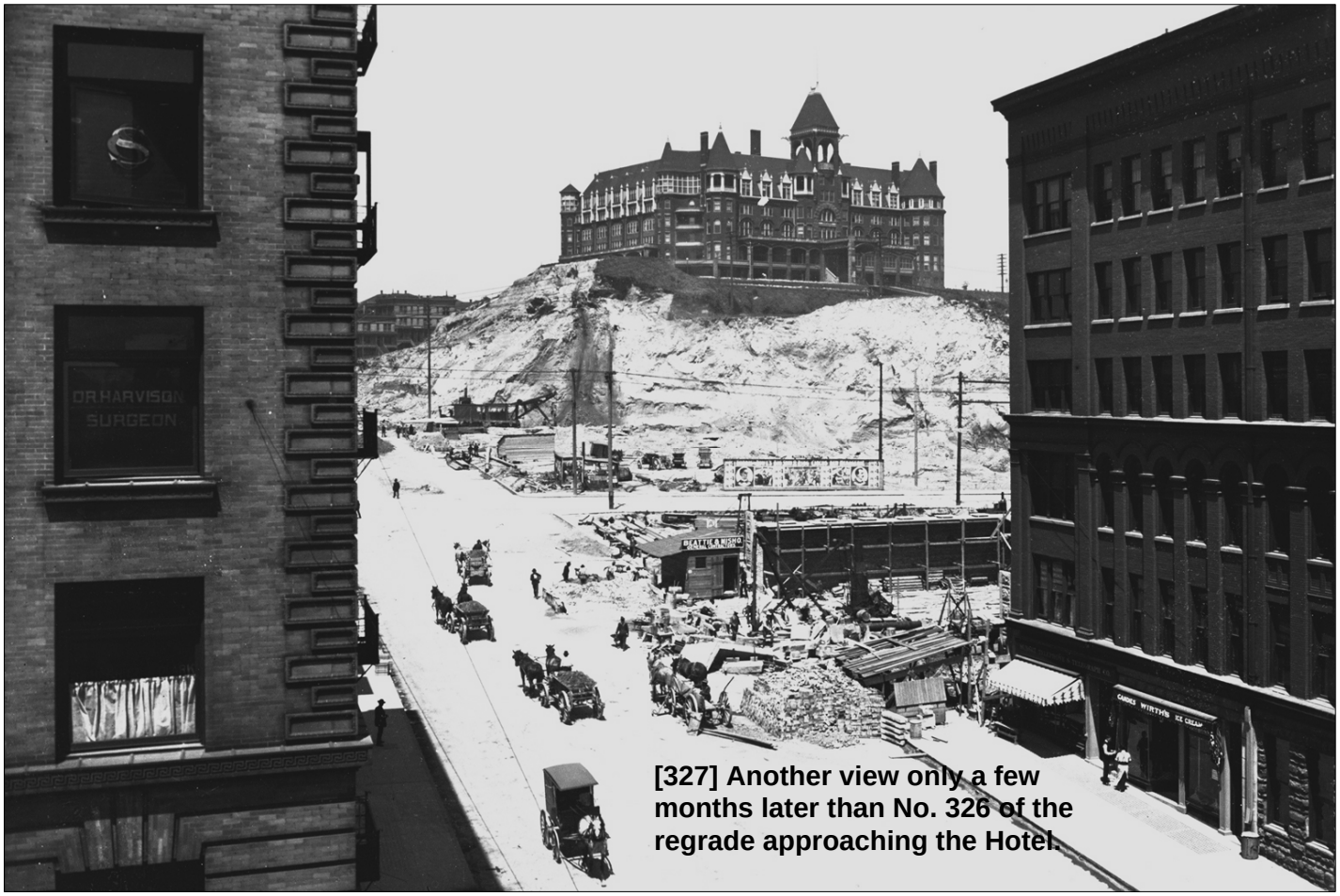
In these years there is also a dissolve between the third and fourth stages of the Denny regrade. While the work on Second Avenue was nearing its completion in 1906, the regrading of the front hump of Denny Hill began in its first block between Pike and Pine Streets. Both this work and all of the Second Avenue Regrade were done while Moore's grand Victorian landmark, the Washington Hotel, was taking care of guests and feeding curious locals. **[326 & 327]** Eventually the regrade in its fourth stage would continue



Looking across Second Ave. at structural work for New Washington Hotel with the ruins of the Old Washington Hotel behind.

[326] Second Avenue Regrade encroaching on Denny AKA Washington Hotel atop the south summit of Denny Hill. 1905

Second Ave. and Pine Street



[327] Another view only a few months later than No. 326 of the regrade approaching the Hotel.

north to Virginia Street, taking the hotel with it. The work started both on Pine and also moved east from Second Avenue. Consequently, while this fourth section of the regrade was being completed east towards Fifth Avenue, both the New Washington Hotel and the Moore Theatre were under construction on Second Avenue.

Denny Regrade: Fourth Stage

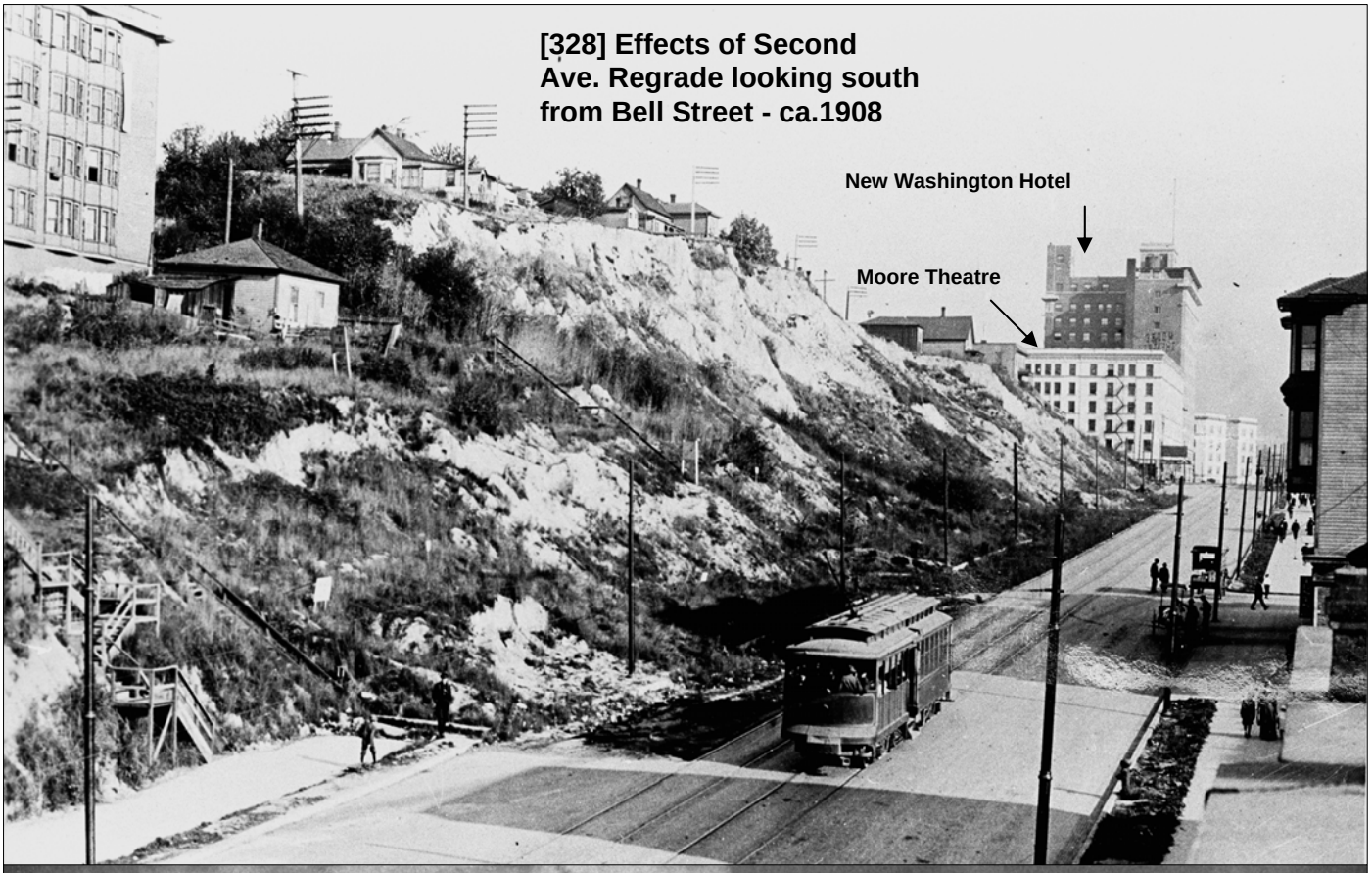
The fourth stage, then, was the regrade of the south summit – the area roughly between Virginia and Pike and Second and Fifth. There was a brief period following the regrade of the south summit and the construction in 1907 of both the New Washington Hotel at the northeast corner of Second and Stewart, and behind it also of James Moore's namesake theatre at Virginia Street, when one could stand at Second and Bell Street (where similar to Second and Virginia there was very little elevation change during the regrade) and look south along a razed Second Avenue towards the towering new hotel and grand new theatre and the temporary cliff along the east side of the avenue. (The accompanying photograph looks south from Bell Street through this completed Second Avenue regrade. **[328]**) As described at Second and Virginia, the Moore Theatre was later distinguished (barely) by standing above the highest point in the Denny Regrade. (Here the reader may inspect the grade on Second Avenue – where it ascends to Virginia – that so annoyed Thomson and Dimock.) Perhaps the most instructive part of this view south on Second is the study available of the cross-section of the northern section (or hump) of Denny Hill.

Denny Regrade: Fifth Stage

The fifth stage of the Denny Regrade was the most familiar one – the period from which survives most of the "classic" photographs that suggest Wagnerian stagecraft. **[329]** Between 1908 and 1911 the cliff left on the east side of Second Avenue was pushed (or eroded) east as far as the east side of 5th Avenue where, as noted, the razing of Denny Hill temporarily stopped. The great branching flumes shown above (from West Seattle) were used in this part of the regrade, and as a public worker Dimock would note and complain years later that practically none of this moving earth was used for reclamation along the waterfront. Rather (we do keep on repeating) it was all slipped to sea. Actually, there may have been many small exceptions during the regrade, and there certainly were after it, when building projects in the neighborhood were sometimes allowed to pick at the regrades rough edges. One big example of this was the Port of Seattle's original Bell Street Terminal, part of which was built on fill taken from near Denny School at 5th and Battery.

The "Old Quarter"

For reasons perhaps of exhaustion, and certainly a growing understanding that the new and nearly flattened acres were not inspiring the development expected of them, the Denny Hill Regrade stopped at 5th Avenue leaving another steep bank on its east side. For the next eighteen years, the pie-shaped neighborhood above the bank existed in a limbo. Since the regrade was expected at some point to begin again and raze this withheld part of the hill, neither the home owners nor the absentee investors felt any urge to make improvements or fix problems except the most dire ones. Consequently, this "Old Quarter" as it was nicknamed, was an ideal neighborhood for creative and relaxed living in which the keeping-up of Joneses compulsions were substituted with recreations like visiting Denny Park, swimming in Lake Union, and enjoying the neighborhood's proximity to the new retail district. In



[328] Effects of Second Ave. Regrade looking south from Bell Street - ca.1908

[329] Denny Hill Regrade Wagnerian scene looking south over Bell Street

1929 this minimal but often easy living was disrupted with the beginning of the last or sixth stage of the Denny Regrade, just in time for the Great Depression.

Denny Regrade: Sixth Stage

This time the regraders used steam shovels – not hoses. The shoveled dirt was dropped either directly on conveyor belts or onto railroad cars that were similar to those used in the building of the tunnel. Both the belts and tracks could be moved to accommodate the shovels foraging for dirt. The branching belts radiated like fingers ultimately joining their pickings at the main conveyor that ran west above Battery Street on a viaduct and over Railroad Avenue to a temporary but great pier where the dirt was directed to barges designed for the project. The barges were "self-righters." That is, after being heaped with the belt's contributions they were towed off shore where a plug was pulled that unevenly flooded the barge so that it capsized. While dumping its load the relieved barge would turn 180 degrees and lightened bob above the tide with its bottom now prepared to take its turn as the top and receive the next load of Denny Hill once the barge was returned to the pier. Of course, the cleverly tumbling barge was also cleverly self-draining. **[330 thru 333]** But as some loud critics pointed out, the only thing wrong with this system was that it was used.

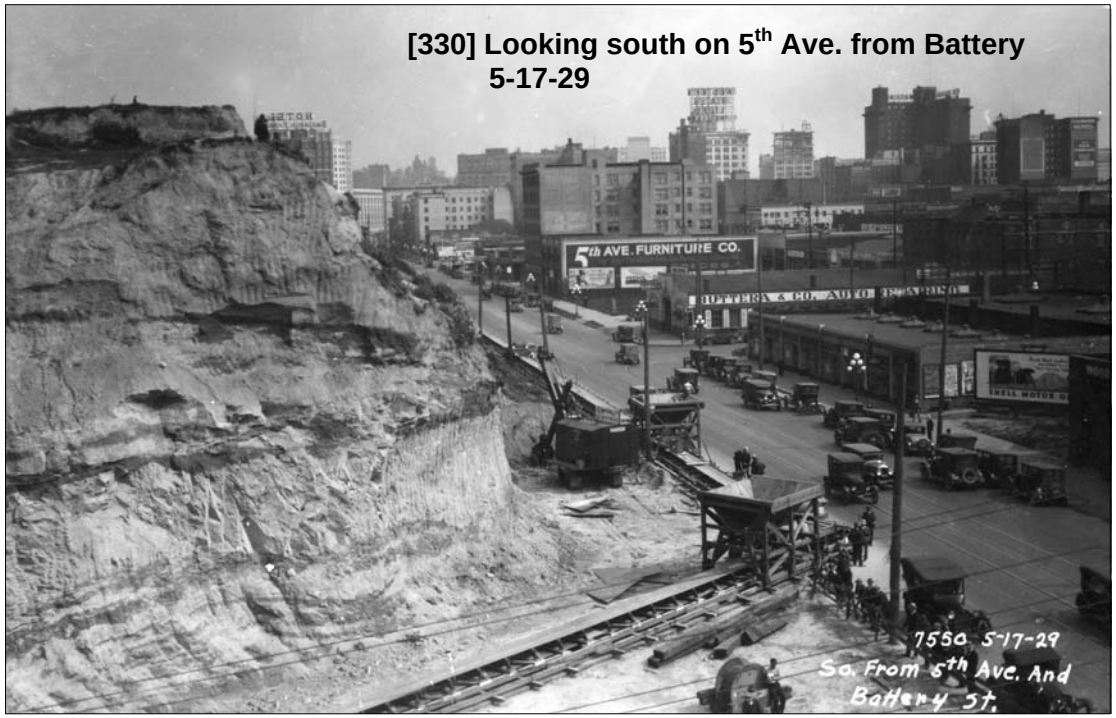
"Here's Folly"

Recalling perhaps the earnest confidence of Dimock's lessons from 1926 (noted above) the often sensational and occasionally screaming "people's daily" the *Seattle Star* made a front page attack on the regrade in its July 2, 1929 issue. With pictures of the self-dumping scows – five views in all of the conveyor and dumping technique – presented like a line-up of criminals, the *Star* headline reads, "Here's Folly of Wasting Denny Hill Dirt." The story explains, "Here's proof of folly! Railroad Avenue, doorstep to Seattle's waterfront and gateway to the Orient, is in terrible condition and a disgrace to the city. Dirt is being moved from the Denny Hill regrade that could be easily used in fill in a permanent seawall. But nothing is being done except to dump the dirt into the bay." The reason "nothing was being done" was that this was 1929 and not 1934. It was in the latter year that work began on extending the seawall north from Madison to Broad Streets. As noted earlier the nearly five million cubic feet of glacial till dropped offshore pyramided to a second underwater Denny Hill high enough to be considered a hazard to shipping. A few days of dredging reduced the summit to a safe 44 feet below the level of low tide.

"Washing Away" *The World Today*

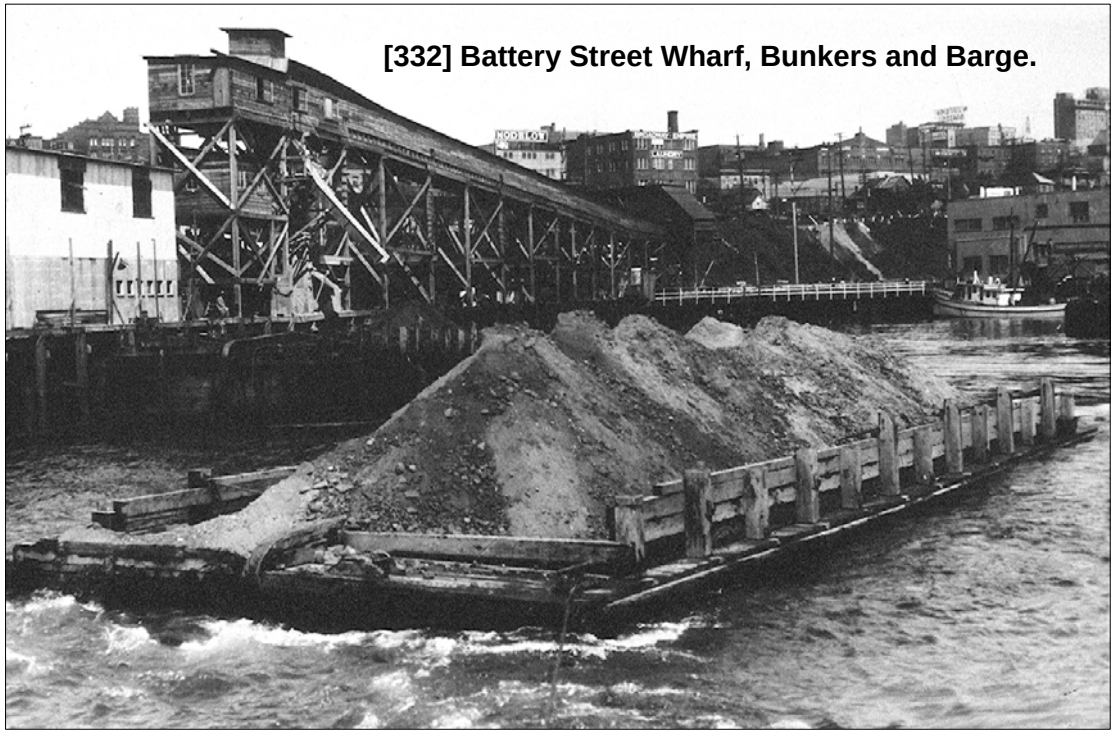
For an "independent" but biased conclusion to the Great Age of Regrades proper, we will quote in length excerpts from "Washing Away A City's Hills." It is a variety of boomer's peon to the dare-do of City Engineer R.H. Thomson by Phillip R. Keller, and summarizes the combined work above the tideflats, in the city streets and on Denny Hill as it could be calculated to the time the article appeared in July 1910 issue of *The World Today*.

> The city engineer evolved a plan by which to make the hills help move themselves out of the way. After the regrading work was started and the expenses were piling up rapidly, someone happened to think of this water and of the further fact that water runs down hill and of the additional fact

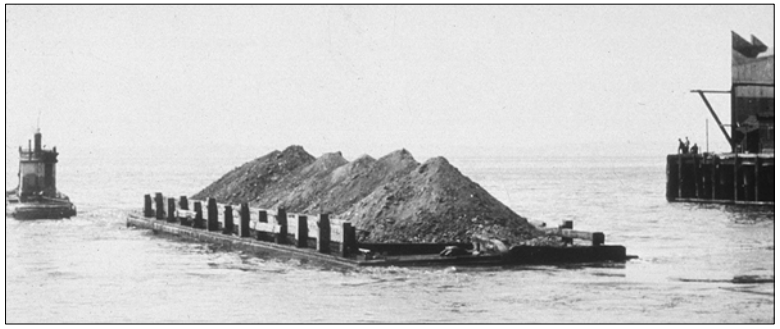


[330] Looking south on 5th Ave. from Battery
5-17-29

[331]
Battery Street
Conveyor
Belt



[332] Battery Street Wharf, Bunkers and Barge.



[333]

> that hydraulic mining is not expensive. Presto, the salt and fresh water was turned loose on Seattle's hills, and before they really knew what had happened, they were resting in the shallow part of the bay. From 75,000,000 to 80,000,000 gallons of water were used daily in removing those 16,000,000 cubic yards of hills; that is about 1/6th as much water as Chicago uses daily for all purposes. The Seattle people have removed two-thirds as much earth in their work as has been moved in work on the big ditch. (Panama Canal.) …This work has cost about $6,000,000 and will cost as much more before it is completed. It would have cost $34,000,000 if performed in the old way, with shovel and scraper …Ten years ago Seattle had a population of 80,000, and even then there was difficulty in caring for the traffic on the three or four comparatively level streets in the business district …The Seattle boomers are predicting a total of 350,000 as the result of the national count of noses in April. [This projection was ambitious by about 100,000.] When all the plans are carried out Engineer Thomson will be entitled to the credit for having turned sixty-one miles of hilly, narrow streets, into sixty-one miles of broad and comparatively level thoroughfares … Denny Hill is now sleeping under the waters in the bay, about 6,000,000 cubic yards of it. The excavations ranged from 70 to 130 feet in height. The Jackson Street project involved an area of 128 acres. Where streets were narrow, grades almost impassable, 3,500,000 cubic yards were moved. The Washington city hopes to complete her task by 1912 and then start on something that is really big. This job in prospect involves the construction of two more city streets; a mile or more in length, snatched away from the ocean at a cost of something like $18,000,000. Figures when they get large enough to be appalling are apt to become meaningless.

R.H. Thomson's "Lover" & the "Deplorable Conditions on RR Ave."

Of course the local press was rarely so kind to the City Engineer. In 1907 *The Seattle Times* decried this "five thousand dollar a year engineer" for leaving "Railroad Avenue in deplorable condition." But by then R. H. Thomson had had more influence on the shape and habitat of Seattle than any two politicians or editors. The combination of his aptitude for the job with his headstrong rectitude was not fashioned to please associates, but to meet and dominate the challenge of more and more work. As an earnest performer, Thomas was insensitive to the inevitable collection of panderers and publicists that tracked him. Below, the *Times* describes him so.

> Thomson has let the laying of a watermain drag on at the foot of Madison Street in order to shift blame on Street Superintendent Walters whom he would like the mayor to fire so he can replace him with his lover, a member of the carpenters union. Walters has been busy the past year endeavoring to hide the incompetence of the city engineer by keeping Railroad Avenue in a presentable condition by patching up the ancient planking out of the funds of his own department because Thomson has willfully neglected to replank the street as ordered. Between University and Broad Street the avenue is

> full of patches of new planking. One year ago on Jan 13, 1906 Thomson awarded a contract to O.E. Olson & Co. for the replanking of the entire thoroughfare at a price of $9,140. Olson's work has dragged on until today, more than a year after he started the work; it is nowhere near completion in spite of the fact that the contract time expired months ago. Walters has been keeping the street in condition himself in order that too much blame might not attach to the man who has now gone over to the Mayor in the latter's attempts to oust Walters and put in his stead a walking delegate for the carpenter's union."

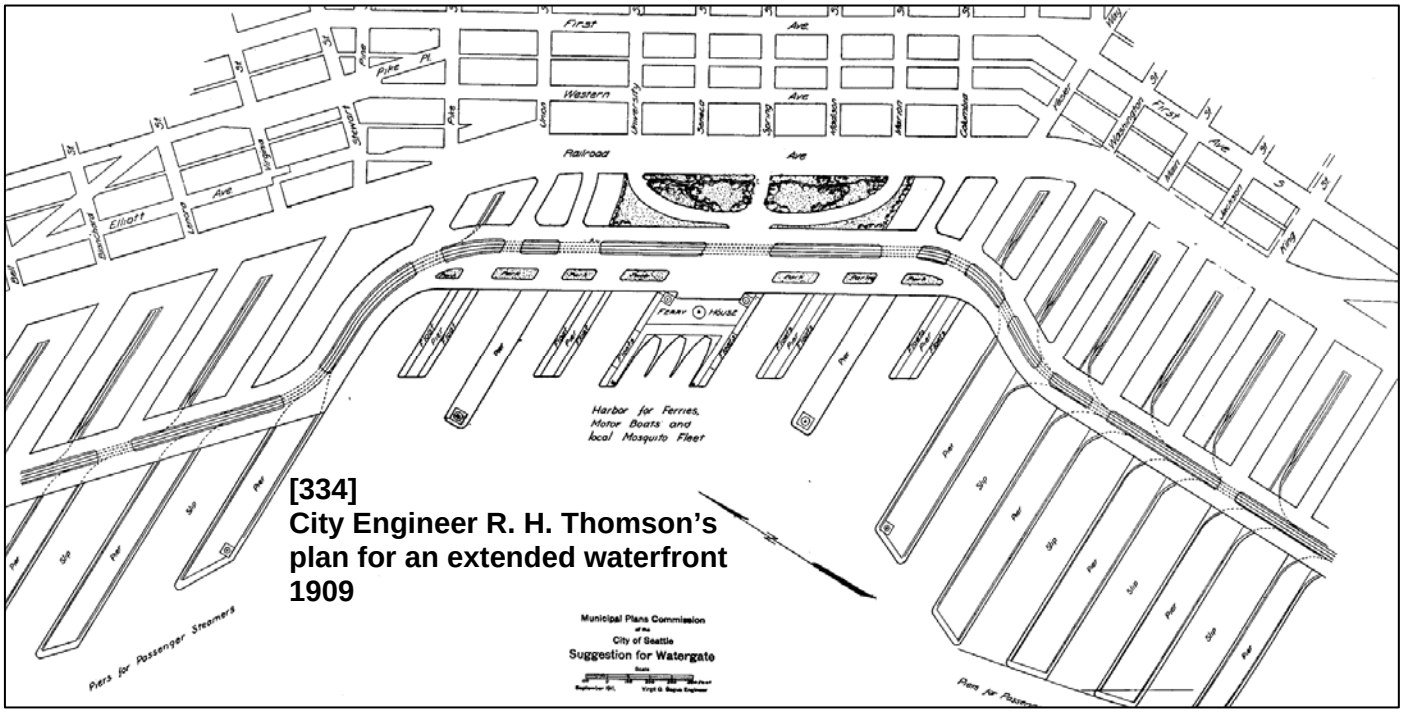
In the face of this criticism Thomson kept on working with the result that eventually the main was laid and the planks as well.

Brave, New & Appallingly Expensive

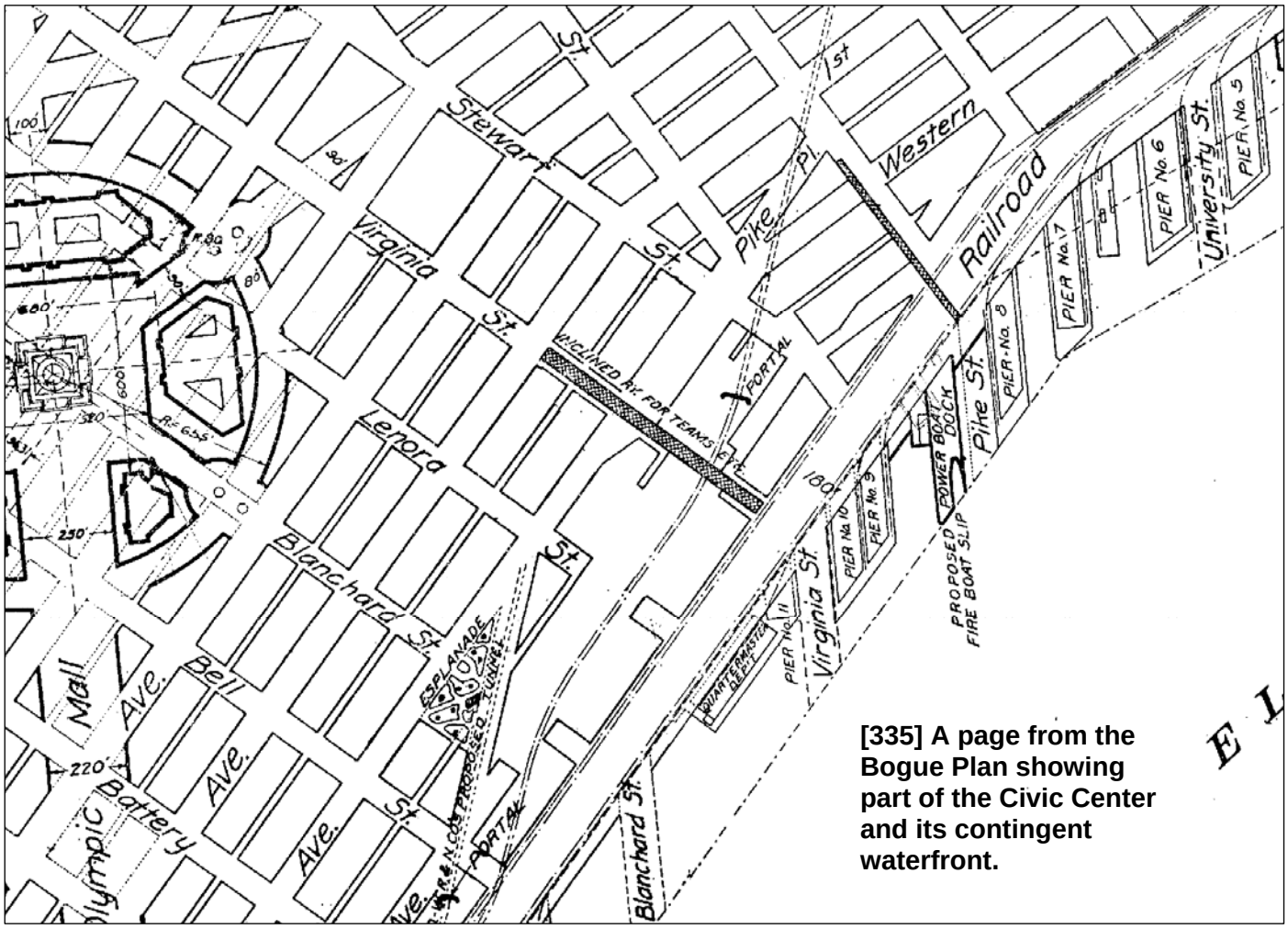
In 1907 the attentions of this City Engineer were more likely directed toward another great project – what reporter Keller of *The World Today* described above as "something that is really big. This job in prospect involves the construction of two more city streets; a mile or more in length, snatched away from the ocean at a cost of something like $18,000,000." Thomson first revealed this plan in 1909. Thomson described a sea wall one-half mile into Elliott Bay that would make room for three – not two – additional streets west of Railroad Avenue. This startling promotion came only a decade after he and George Cotterill straightened the piers and widened the avenue. Obviously now Thomson's grand idea did not take hold although it stayed around and was candidly stuffed into Virgil Bogue's 1911-1912 Municipal Plan. **[334]** At the time the cost for the City Engineer's vision was estimated at $17.5 million for a projected twenty-year construction that would have required moving dirt of such quantities that, had the city committed to proceeding, it would surely have regretted earlier dumping Denny Hill into the bay when it might have used it. Why did Thomson's waterfront plan fall from grace into the purgatory of grandiose proposals that have no chance of bouncing up to public works paradise? In spite of the *Times* attack, this city engineer ordinarily wore a gilded halo, and the gods of public works had wrapped with good fortune so many of his grand visions – like the Cedar River gravity system and the North Trunk Sewer. Perhaps the intuitive reporter was right about Thomson's waterfront vision. Without knowing the engineering, Phillip Keller recognized that "figures when they get large enough to be appalling are apt to become meaningless."

1911-12: The Seawall and The Bogue Plan

Of course, the city got its seawall but not out in the bay. The seawall – now being breached – was built along the west border of Railroad Avenue as drawn by Thomson, Cotterill and Bogue for the 1897 replat. The first part was extended along the "pioneer waterfront" between Madison and Washington Street, and was built between 1911 and 1916. [See No.92] Near the beginning of that effort, Virgil Bogue's also grand Municipal Plan was published, circulated, praised, lambasted and ultimately rejected by the voters in 1912. Bogue we have met several times above. He was one of the great planners of his day although he was certainly more effective internationally – and in Tacoma – than in Seattle. A few of the maritime features of the Bogue Plan were later



[334]
City Engineer R. H. Thomson's plan for an extended waterfront 1909



[335] A page from the Bogue Plan showing part of the Civic Center and its contingent waterfront.

adopted and/or adapted by the Port of Seattle. The long finger piers Bogue envisioned poking into Elliott Bay from practically every available shore – including Duwamish Head – were mostly never built. His attempted rescue of the Denny Regrade from its adolescent idleness was premature. Bogue's grand civic center would have been built to all sides of 4th and Blanchard and extended with Boulevards to both the waterfront and Lake Union.

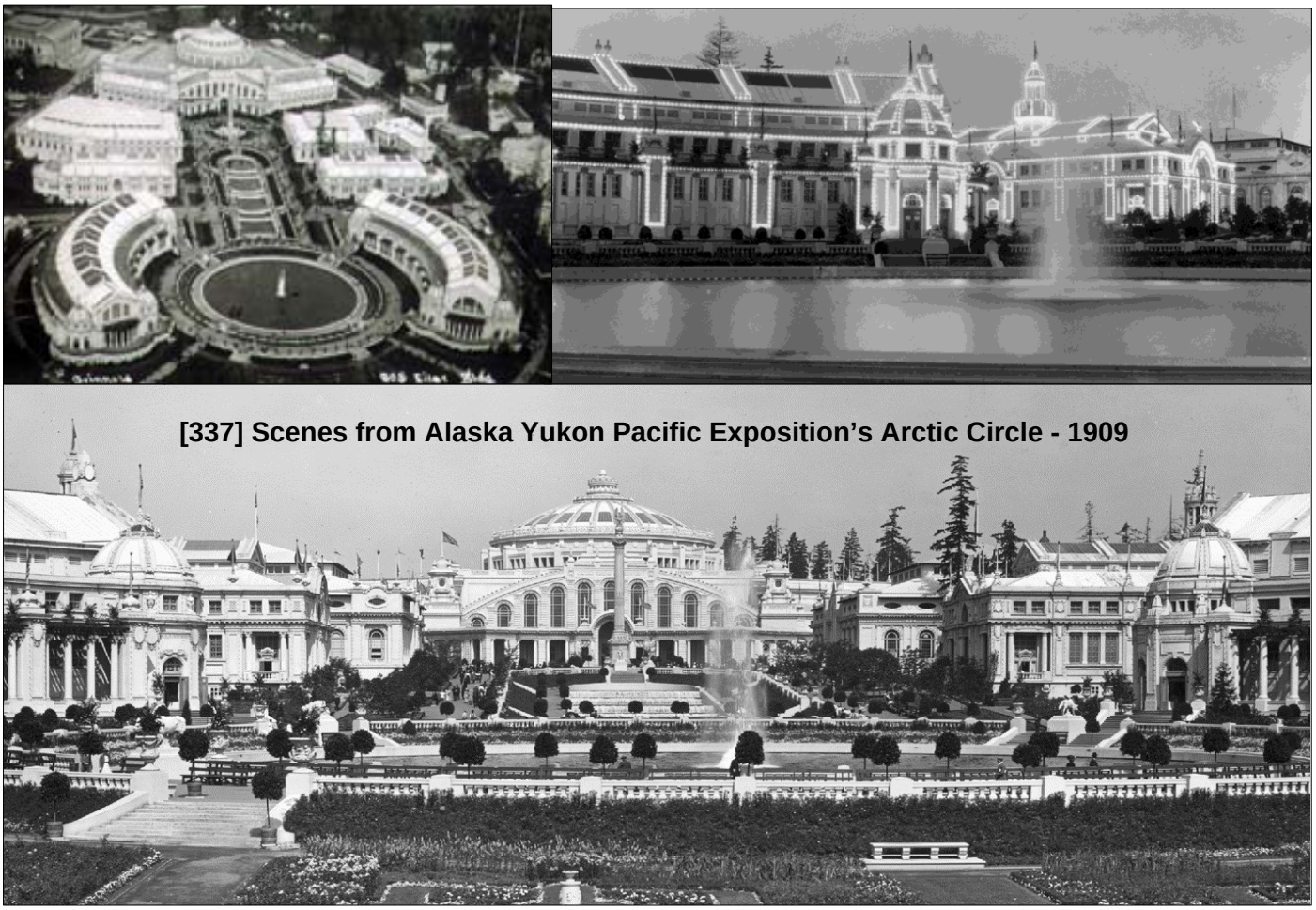
A detail from one of the many maps that were included with the plan is attached here. It shows, upper right, the outline of the Beaux Arts civic center designed by Bogue for the freshly cleared blocks of the Denny Regrade. **[335]** The southern end of this civic center is included at the top of the detail that also shows an "incline railway for teams etc." that Bogue proposed for Virginia Street between First Avenue and the waterfront. (In retrospect, this last feature is a bizarre hybrid of the retro and the progressive.) The map includes part of the route of the Union Pacific Railroad's proposed railroad tunnel beneath the city. Neither was the tunnel constructed. The civic center may have been the primary reason that the Bogue Plan was rejected. **[336]** The plan's north end implications were troubling. The possibility that the wealth of the city might follow the plan north to the regrade stirred in the old boy financial and mercantile powers dark thoughts of abandonment. As a result, they waged an effective advertising campaign against the plan from their old haunts south of Madison Street.

The Alaska Yukon & Pacific Expo Example

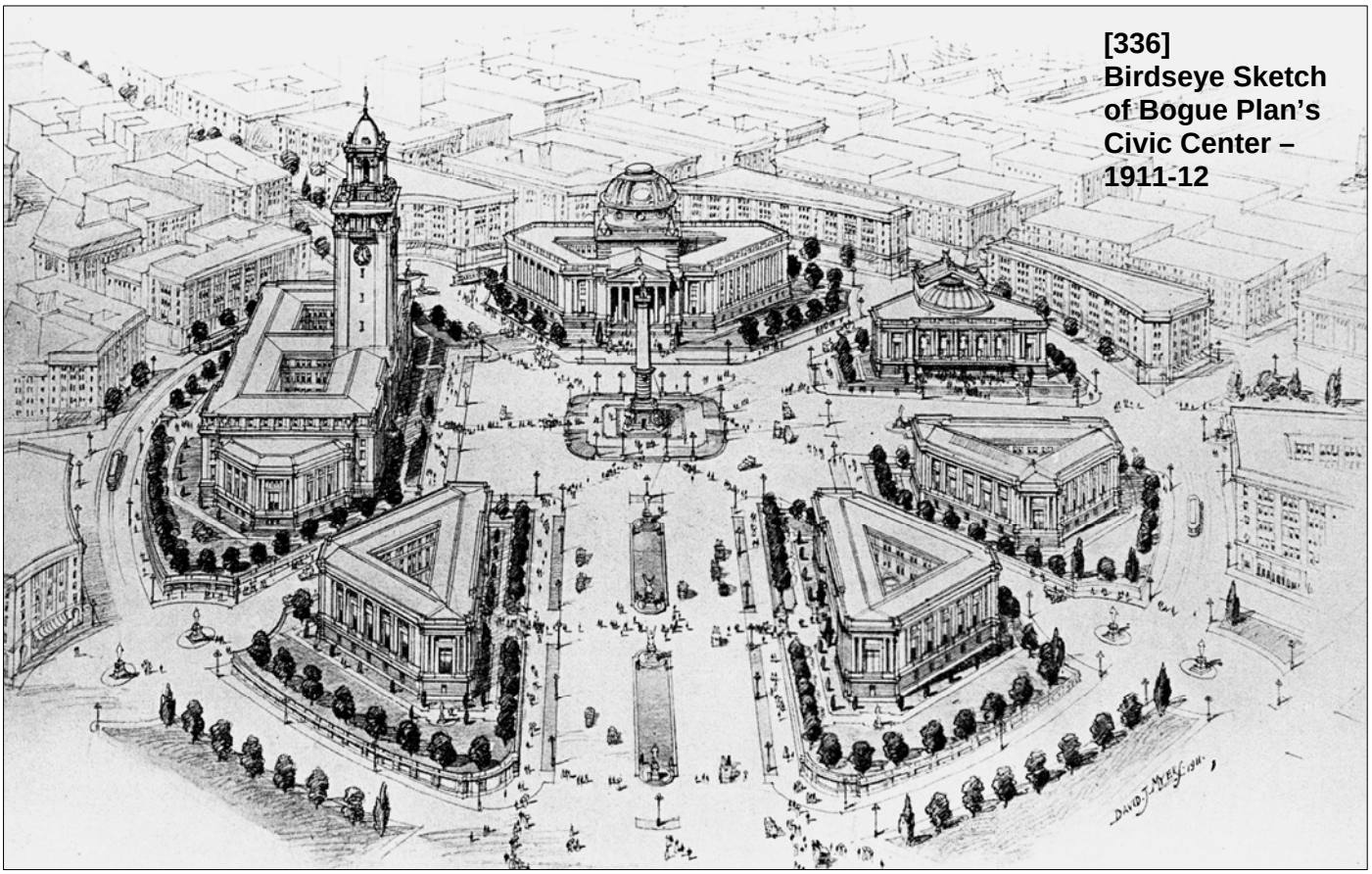
Certainly, Bogue and his handlers – including Thomson with his initiative in 1909 – hoped to buoy their plans on the wave of the city's successful Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition. The APY remade the University of Washington campus into a gleaming beaux-arts community of enlightenment and wonder through the six warmest months of 1909. **[337]** Bogue's drawing for the civic center looked like AYP central. Fond memories of the AYP did not seem to reach the voters in 1912. Earlier, however, the anticipation of "Seattle's first world's fair" did have distinguished effects on the waterfront.

Colman Dock, a 705-Ft. Addition with Tower

First the 1908 visit of Teddy Roosevelt's creation, the Great White Fleet, was something like a prelude to the events of the following summer. But the more substantial waterfront addition of '08 was a new and distinguished landmark with a tower: Previously, the pier at the foot of Columbia had been something of a showoff at the street without much behind it. That is, the Colman Dock façade, built with funds gained from the gold rush, was impressive, but behind it were only two stubby wharves supporting short sheds. Now, with the anticipated AYP, the Colman family put up the waterfront's response to James Hill's palace on King Street. The new Colman Dock extended 705 feet into the bay – enough length to handle a dozen mosquito fleet steamers, and it soon became the principal port for the Puget Sound fleet. **[338]** The dock's several slips could be raised or lowered with the tide. The comely Romanesque tower at the northwest corner topped at 72 feet above mean tide, and behind it was a waiting room with a domed ceiling. During the months of the 1909 AYP the new Colman Dock was constantly busy, not only with the regular run of Puget Sound comings and goings, but with multiple daily excursions.



[337] Scenes from Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition's Arctic Circle - 1909



[336] Birdseye Sketch of Bogue Plan's Civic Center – 1911-12

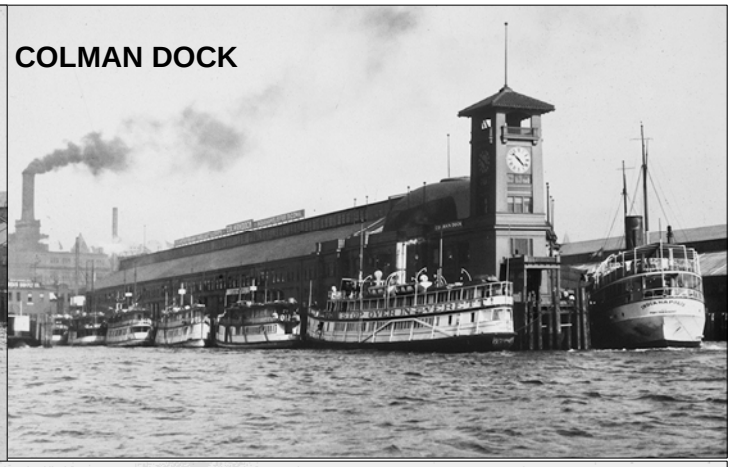
An Act of Man: Bunton's Mistake

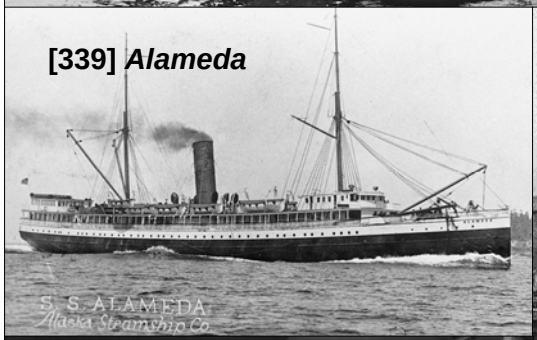
An episode illustrating the maritime maxim, "Wherever steel touches timber there is danger" visited the relatively new Colman Dock on April 25, 1912. Or to call up another maxim – one appropriate for Puget Sound's Mosquito Fleet – "Every landing is a controlled crash." That night Captain John "Dynamite", O'Brien acting as a pilot aboard the Alaska Steamship Company's ocean-going steel-hulled *Alameda* made a controlled crash out of an extremely bad landing. **[339]** As the *Alameda* approached Colman Dock Dynamite O'Brien (who got his nickname from heroically wrestling with a cargo of badly behaving dynamite) gave a "full astern" order to Third Assistant Engineer Guy Van Winter who in turn relayed it verbally to Second Assistant Robert Bunton. In a shorter version of the church social game in which a whispered message is passed on through a line of players, Bunton, who was at the throttle, either heard or understood the order as "full ahead" and quickly jerked the *Alameda* into action with the results exposed in the attached photograph. **[340]** Charging at Colman Dock at an angle from 250 feet to the southwest, the *Alameda* crunched through the end of the dock, dropping its tower into the bay and exposing the passenger waiting room beneath the dock's dome. **[341]** Slowed but not stalled, the ship continued slicing, sinking the stern-wheel steamer *Telegraph* that was berthed on the north or opposite side of the pier. **[342]** The *Alameda* might have gone up the waterfront smashing into other piers but for the quick thinking of O'Brien. When the ship first surged forward, the captain shouted for the anchors to be dropped, and after 125 fathoms of chain were out, the starboard anchor caught in time for the floating battering ram to stop its advance before reaching the waterfront's other landmark pier with a tower, the Grand Trunk Pacific Dock. Remarkably no one was killed. And, aside from a few scratches and brief soakings, no one was seriously hurt.

The *Telegraph* Gets the Message

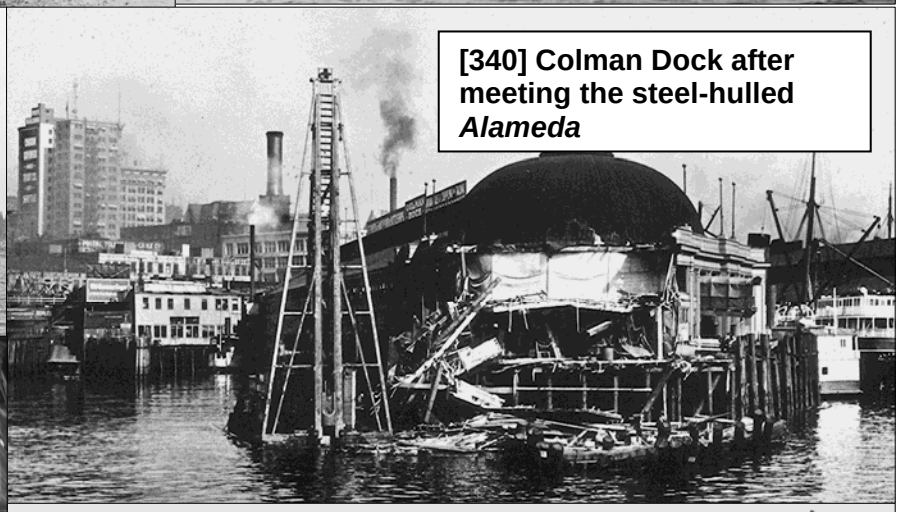
Without tragedy, this collision soon became a cartoon in the retelling – an expensive cartoon. The *Telegraph* was raised and repaired. Her owners, the Puget Sound Navigation Company, asked the federal court for $55,000 in damages but the judge made them settle for $25,000 on the grounds that sternwheelers were no longer popular. The *Telegrap*h was one of the last stern-wheelers built on Puget Sound. This slender representative of the Puget Sound "Mosquito Fleet" was constructed in Everett in 1903 for the Seattle-Tacoma run. One of the last sternwheelers built beside these waters, she drew only 8 feet of water, was 25.7 feet wide and 153.7 feet long. In the accompanying photograph of her lying along her fateful side of Colman dock, the clock in the tower reads 12 straight up. The *Telegraph* is churning the bay, her paddles perhaps preparing for the noon departure to Bremerton, a regular destination since 1910 when the steamer's builder, Capt. U.B. Scott, sold her to the Puget Sound Navigation Company. The hardy *Alameda* was merely inconvenienced by the crash, continuing its scheduled run to Alaska only a few hours late. When the Colman tower was found at sunrise floating in the bay, the hands on its big clock read 10:23. Following the crash the outer end of the Colman Dock was rebuilt with a new and taller tower, but of a different design and position. As will soon be recounted, two years later it was nearly the casualty of a neighbor's misfortune. In the accompanying photograph, that neighbor rises behind Colman Dock where its second tower is taking shape. **[343]**

[338] COLMAN DOCK

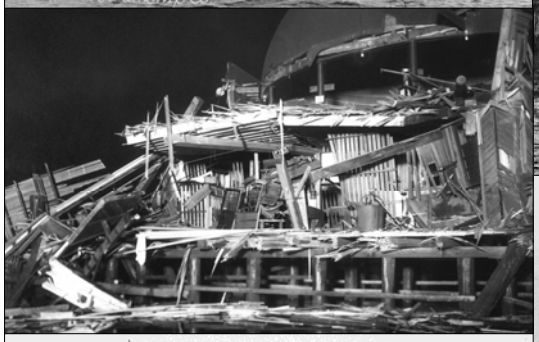




[339] *Alameda*



[340] Colman Dock after meeting the steel-hulled *Alameda*



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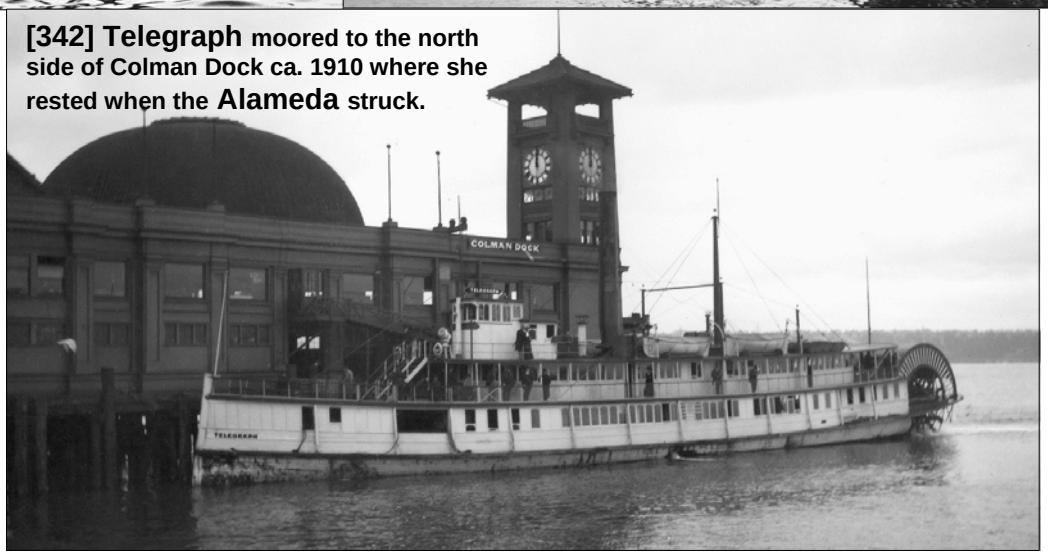
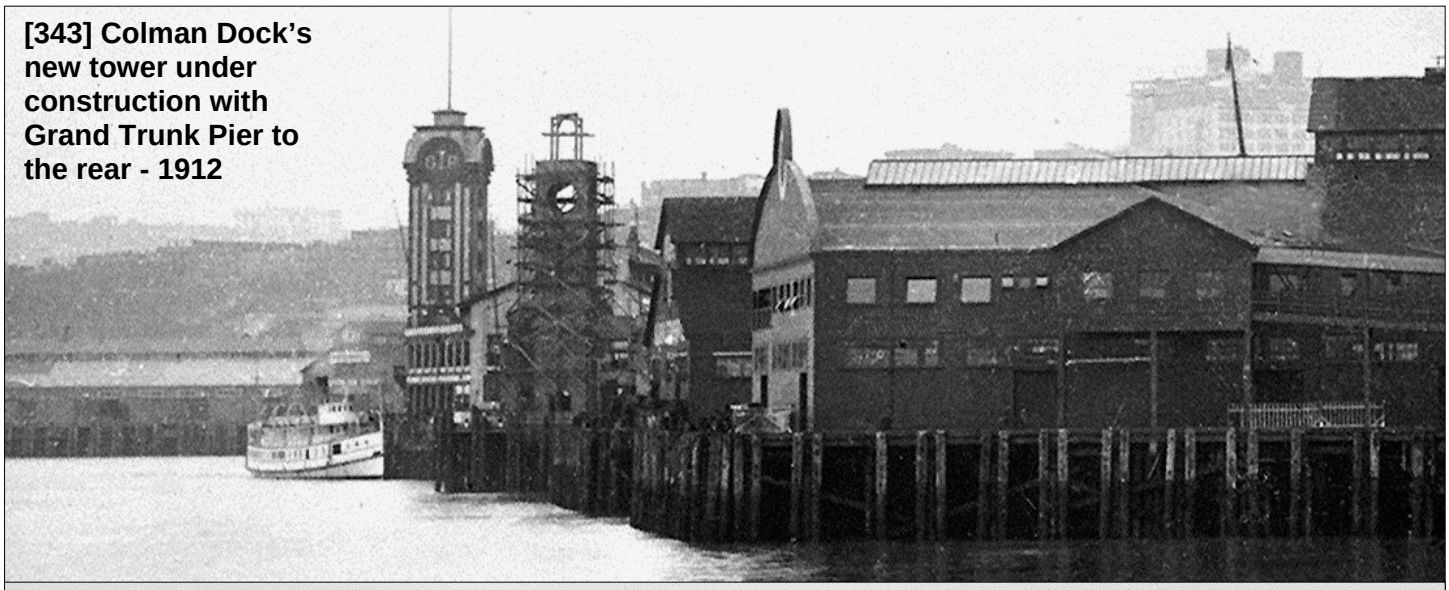
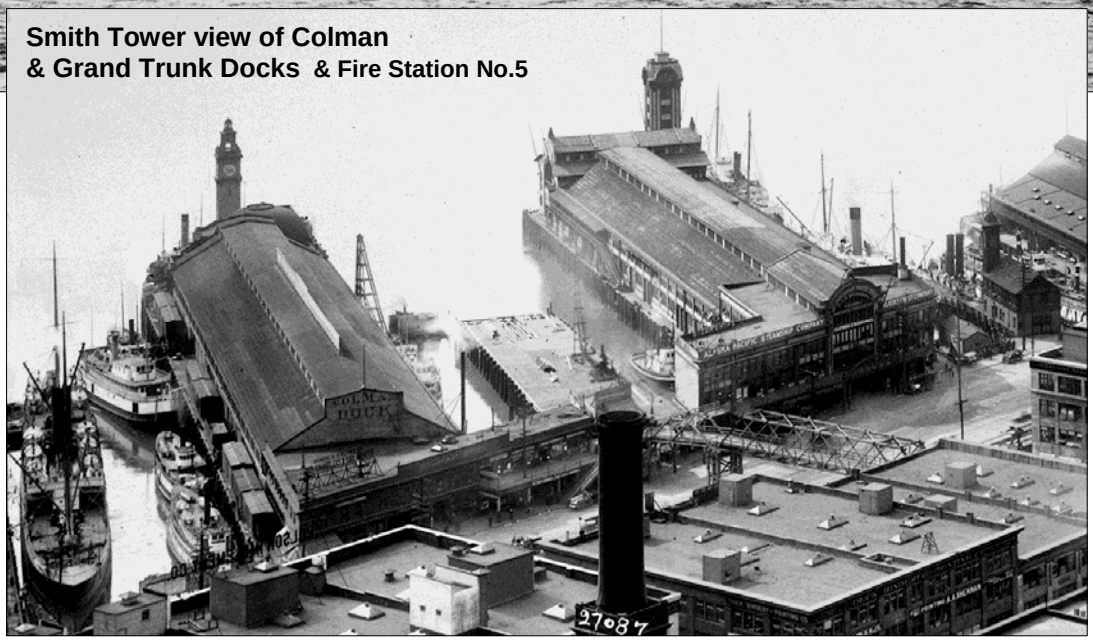


[342] **Telegraph** moored to the north side of Colman Dock ca. 1910 where she rested when the **Alameda** struck.



[343] Colman Dock's new tower under construction with Grand Trunk Pier to the rear - 1912

[344] The new Colman Dock tower on the right – the two-year-old Grand Trunk Pacific Pier on the left – the Smith Tower under construction. - 1913



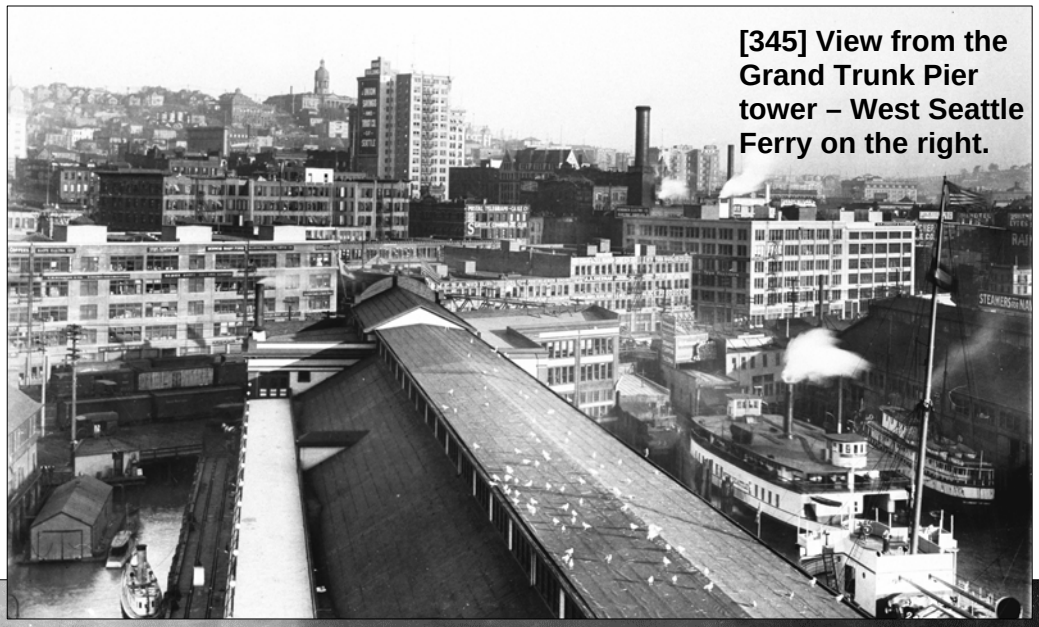
Smith Tower view of Colman & Grand Trunk Docks & Fire Station No.5

The Grand Trunk Pacific Dock: The Biggest & The Brightest

This neighbor to the north joined the waterfront's line of still new wharves in 1911 with what was at the time the largest wooden pier in North America. **[344]** (Sometimes this was stretched to the largest wooden pier in the world.) The Grand Trunk Pacific was Canada's second transcontinental railroad, and after reaching its western terminus at Prince Rupert in 1910, the railroad took up the steamship business as well, running a coastal feeder service from Victoria and Vancouver and also from its big new pier on the Seattle Waterfront between Marion and Madison Streets. (The construction of this showpiece required the destruction of one of the waterfront's busiest appointments, the dock of the legendary Seattle-Tacoma steamer, the *Flyer*.) The Grand Trunk Pacific Dock's 108-foot tower was a fine prospect from which to monitor Elliott Bay, and the city's Harbor Warden took up quarters there. The tower was also a popular roost for photographers. In one example, the ferry *West Seattle* rests at its slip at the foot of Marion Street. **[345]** On July 29, 1914, the largest wooden finger pier on at least the West Coast made the largest fire on the Seattle waterfront since the "Great One" of 1889. **[346]** (Lest someone complain, I have not included the 1910 fire on Wall Street in this ranking because a stiff wind off Elliott Bay kept its impressive incineration to the east side of Railroad Avenue. Both the Wall Street and Grand Trunk fires certainly created the opportunity for those who had either moved to Seattle or been born here since the '89 fire – and that was most of the citizens – to hear lots of fire stories from those who were here. When I started to study local history in the early 1970s it was still possible to meet with alert persons who remembered watching the 1889 fire with their parents from First Hill, which that night was, no doubt, one great theater.)

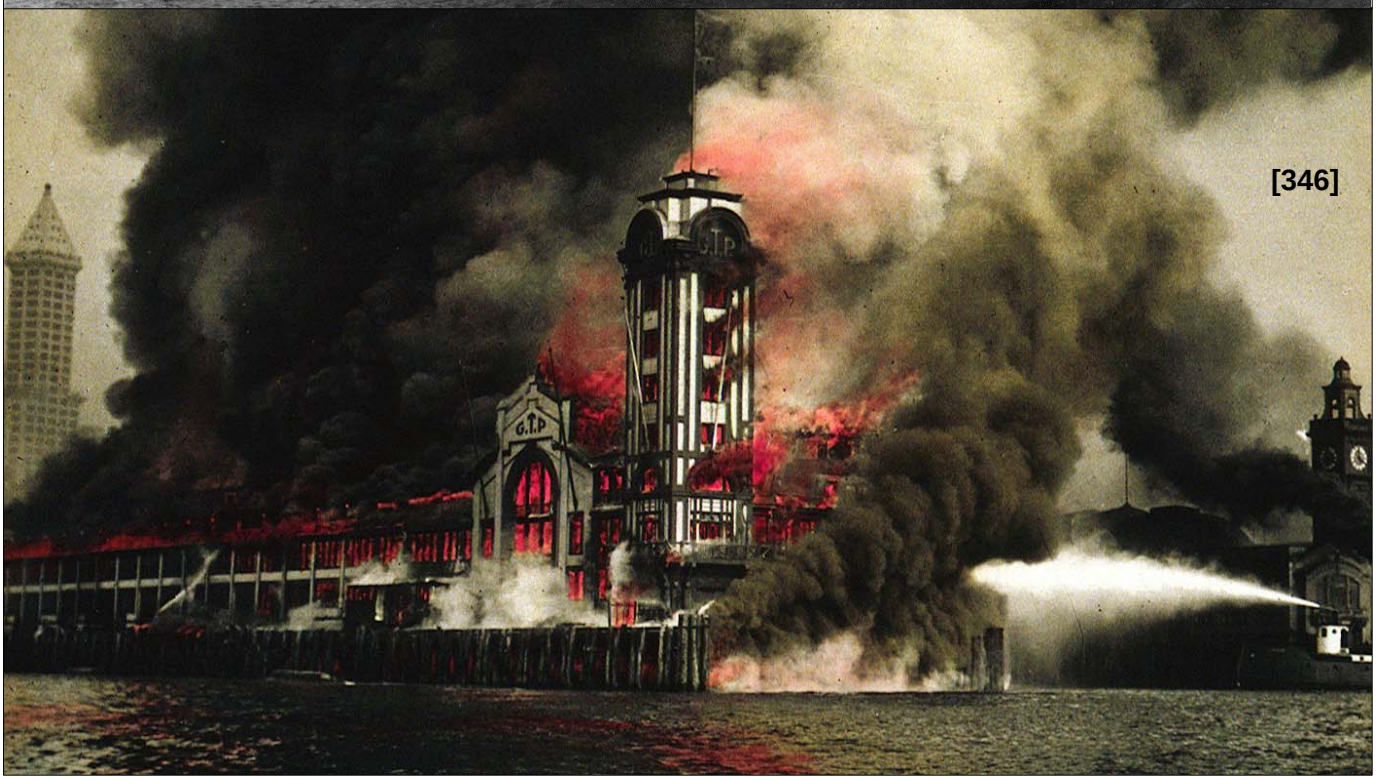
Unlike the fire that destroyed most of Seattle's business district 25 years earlier, the Grand Trunk's destruction was well recorded as camera professionals and buffs joined the crowds on Railroad Avenue, and adjoining piers, or jumped to motor launches to photograph the fire from most angles including the accompanying photograph that was recorded from the Bay some distance off the end of Pier 2 at the foot of Yesler Way. **[347]** On the far left – nearly out of the picture – is the blazing skeleton of the Grand Trunk tower. The unnamed photographer has turned to shoot what then may have seemed to be the imminent destruction of Colman Dock. And the fireboats *Snoqualmie* and *Duwamish* have joined the photographer and choose to shoot the dock that may not yet be doomed. It seems two of their three visible streams are aimed at Colman Dock, one of them reaching the clock tower that is as yet merely smoldering.

With the fireboats help, Colman Dock escaped its neighbor's fate. Badly scorched, the top of the tower was rebuilt and survived until this Spanish-style home of the Black Ball fleet was replaced in the mid-1930s with an art-deco terminal in the style of the fleet's then new flagship, the *Kalakala*. After the ruins cooled, the Grand Trunk's charred piles were recapped and topped with another long and ornate terminal of the same footprint but without the tower. This somewhat less distinguished replacement was purchased by its neighbor Kenneth B. Colman in 1945, joining it to Colman Dock for his enduring tenant, the Puget Sound Navigation Company, runners of the fabled in story and in song Black Ball Ferries. Thereafter the slip between the Grand Trunk Dock and Ivar's Acres of



[345] View from the Grand Trunk Pier tower – West Seattle Ferry on the right.

[347]
Grand Trunk Pacific Fire of July 29, 1914



[346]

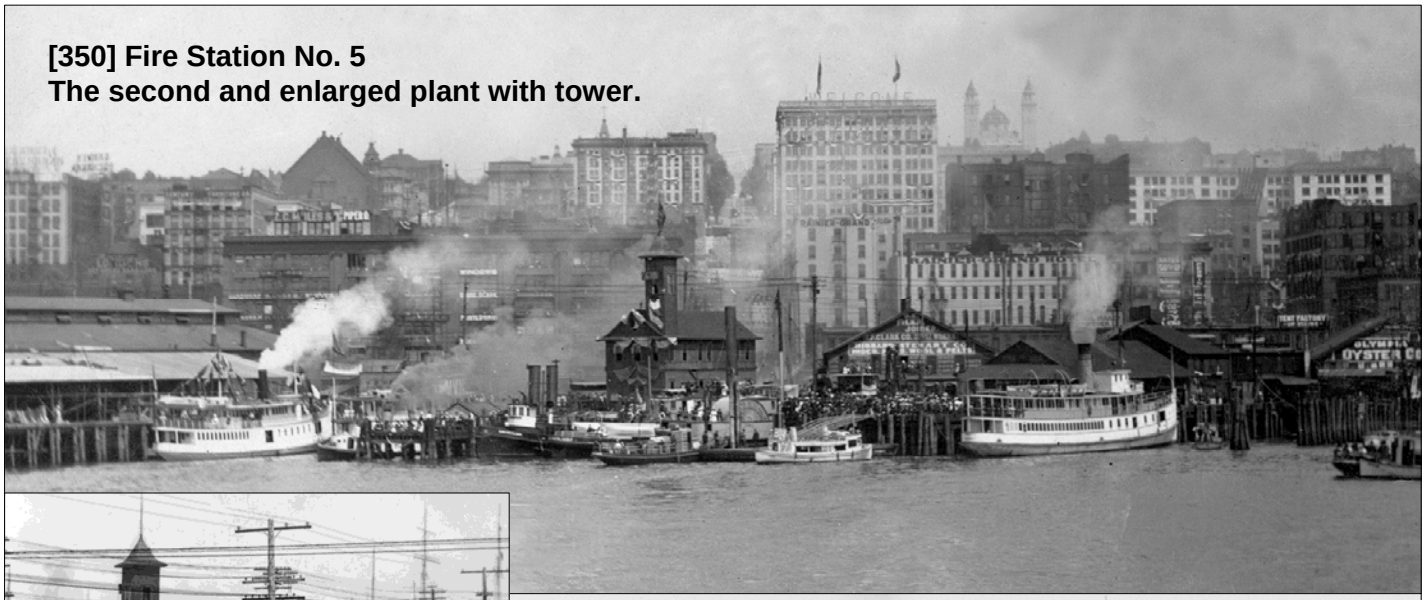
Clams was often used for the temporary mooring of vessels in the Black Ball fleet. The Grand Truck pier survived until 1964, when it was cleared away for an expanded lot north of Colman Dock for motorists waiting to board a Washington State Ferry.

Fire Station No.5: A Thumbnail History

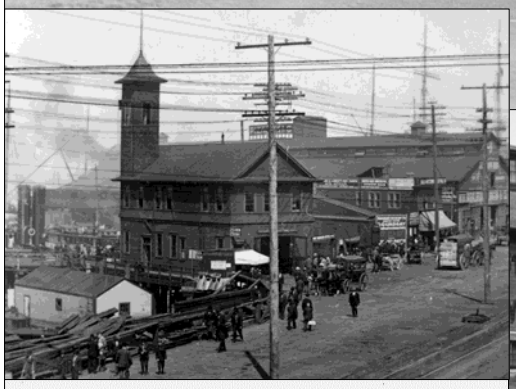
At its dedication two days after Christmas in 1963, a jazz band made of firemen and the station's next-door neighbor Ivar Haglund serenaded the surviving Fire Station No. 5. It is the fourth station on the site, and it would be right to suspect that the first was put up following the Great Fire of 1889.

The '89 fire did not stop burning after it consumed more than thirty city blocks and practically the entire waterfront south of University Street. The heat continued with a blush of shame from both the city's fire department and its then still privately owned water system. The pressure was too low and the hoses to short. Following the fire, Mayor Moran explained that rebuilding a city should include a fire department that could keep it rebuilt. The speedy result – within a year – was five new firehouses, an electric alarm system with 31 boxes, and construction on the *Snoqualmie*, the first fireboat on the west coast. New York naval architect William Cowles designed the 91-foot coal burning tug-shaped ship and the Mayor submitted the low bid to build it. The fireboat was built and tested in 1890 and given a favorable rating by T. J. Conway, assistant manager of the Pacific Insurance Association. "She did very well. Splendidly, in fact, and I shall feel justified in recommending a liberal reduction in insurance rates here." For the more than sixty wharves and waterfront warehouses constructed since the fire with a frontage of more than two miles, insurance rates were dropped by 20 percent. For 37 years the *Snoqualmie* searched for and responded to trouble along the waterfront from its berth beside Fire Station #5 at the foot of Madison Street. The first Station #5 was little more than a shed with a tower. Still, Anders Wilse elected to photograph it – or part of it – and down the ramp beyond it part of the Snoqualmie. **[348]** In a second and later scene the Snoqualmie rests beside her neighbor, Pier 3/54. **[349]**

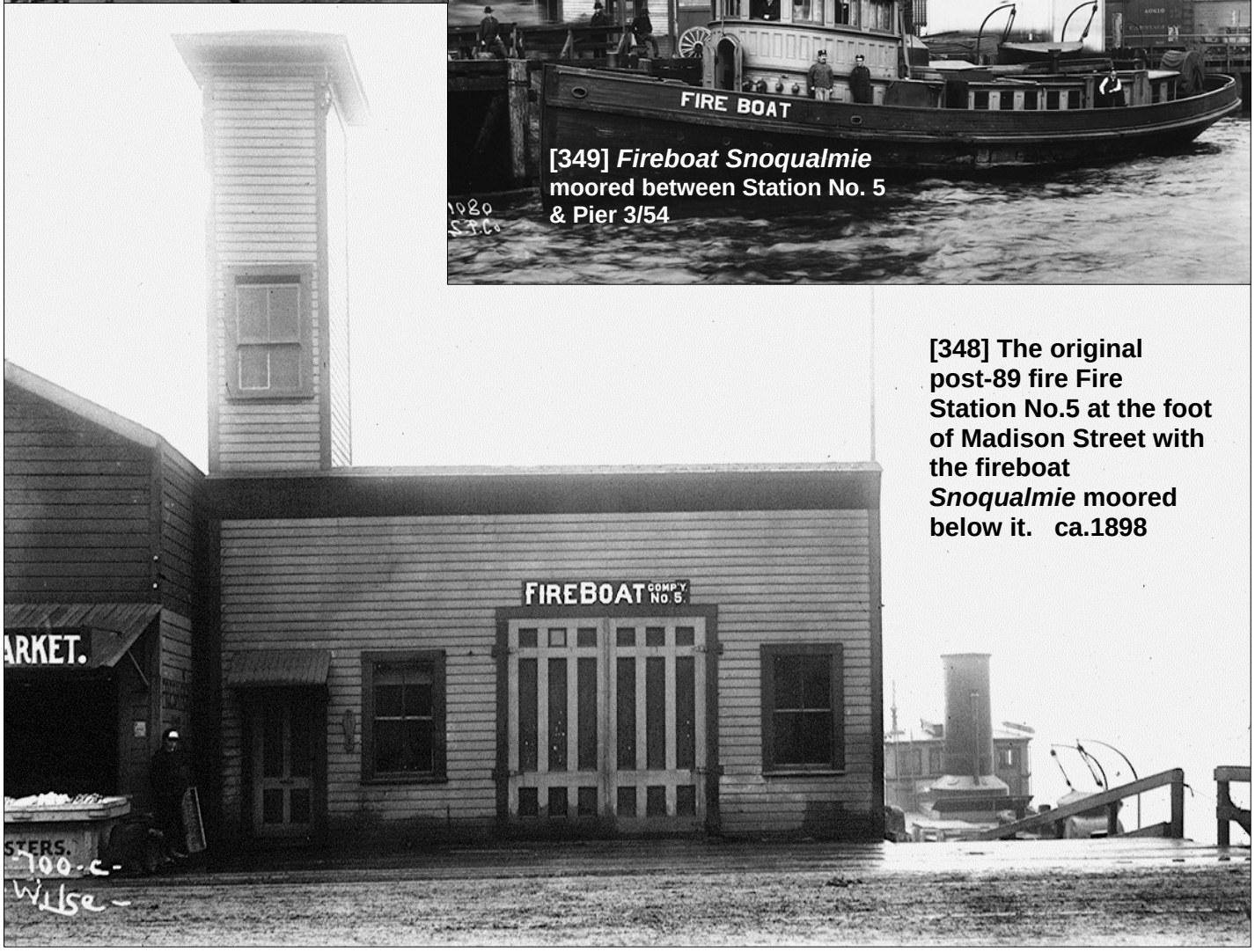
The second station was lifted in conformity to Thomson and Cotterill's plans for the Railroad Avenue. **[350]** A *Seattle Times* article for the Dec. 17, 1902 issue shows the tower on the new station nearly completed. The caption reads, "The new city pier at the foot of Madison Street, represented in the accompanying picture in an uncompleted state, will be ready for occupancy by January 15. All that remains to do is to finish the superstructure and the interior. The interior finishing will be of wood." Meaning, it will not be finished with plaster. The new station's fine pointed tower did more than dry hoses, it also performed as a landmark and an observation tower for the Harbormaster, M.C. Jensen, for the new pier had joint occupancy by both the crew of the Snoqualmie and Jensen. *The Times* article also explained, "The pier will be entirely surrounded by a railing. This is intended with special reference to keeping out the loafers who might otherwise make the place their headquarters." The fire department used the new pier as an opportunity to campaign for increasing the size of the *Snoqualmie's* crew from six to eight. When it was new the vessel ran with a crew of twelve. Of course, insurance rates figured in the request and the council was made to understand that the "insurance men contemplate an increase in rates unless such is done."



[350] Fire Station No. 5
The second and enlarged plant with tower.



[349] *Fireboat Snoqualmie* moored between Station No. 5 & Pier 3/54



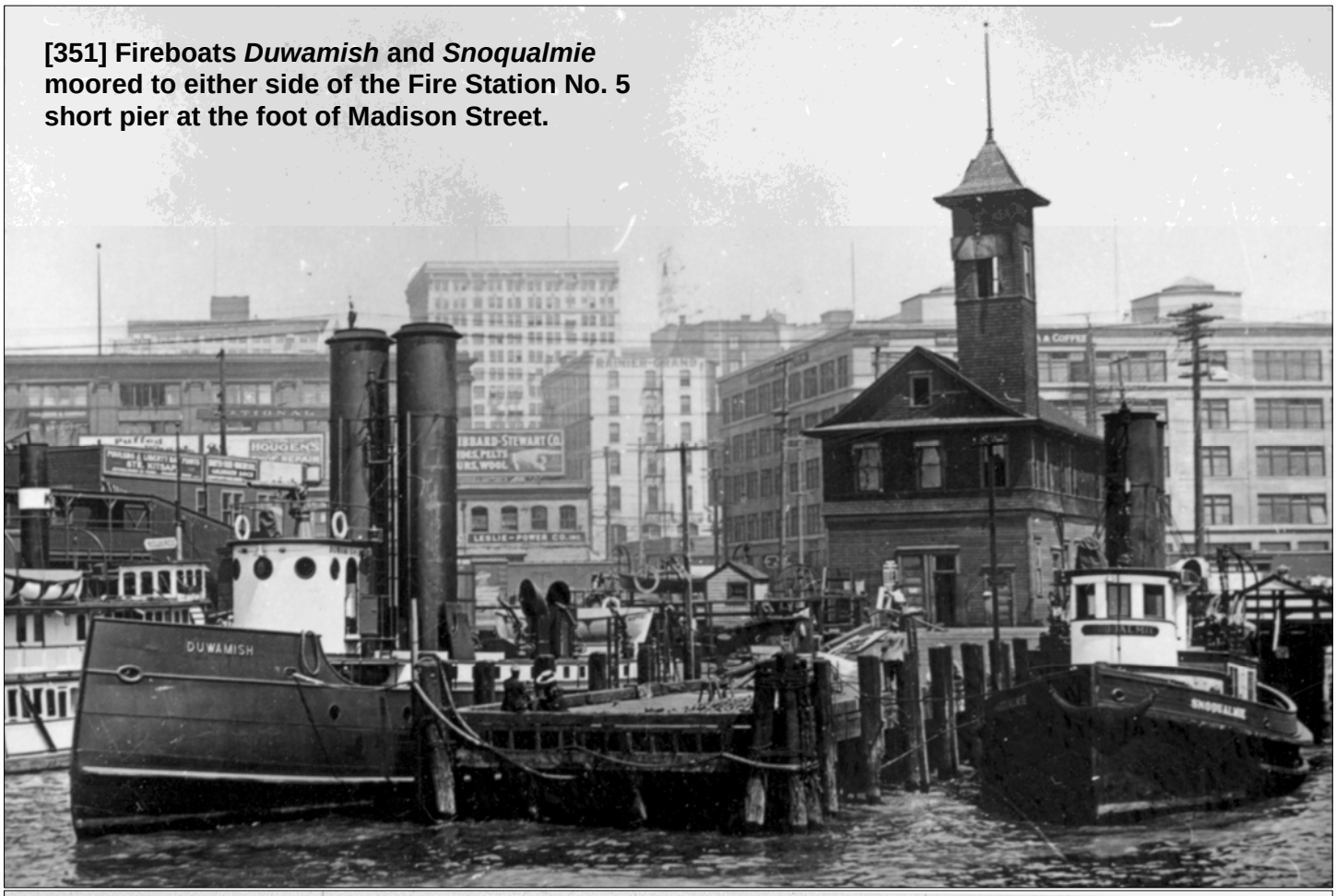
[348] The original post-89 fire Fire Station No.5 at the foot of Madison Street with the fireboat *Snoqualmie* moored below it. ca.1898

In 1909, the bigger and more powerful *Duwamish* joined the fireboat *Snoqualmie*. She was built at Richmond Beach. In the accompanying photograph, the twin-stacked *Duwamish* rests with the single-stack *Snoqualmie* to either side of the fire station dock. **[351]** The new boat was 113 ft. long and weighed a relatively heavy 809 tons. In a second view, it appears with the Grand Trunk Pacific dock before its destruction. **[352]** To the right of the *Duwamish*, and moored at Pier 3/54, is the Puget Sound steamer, *Inland Flyer*. This little 106-ft. wooden steamer was only seven feet shorter than the fireboat, but at 151 tons, it was less than half the weight.

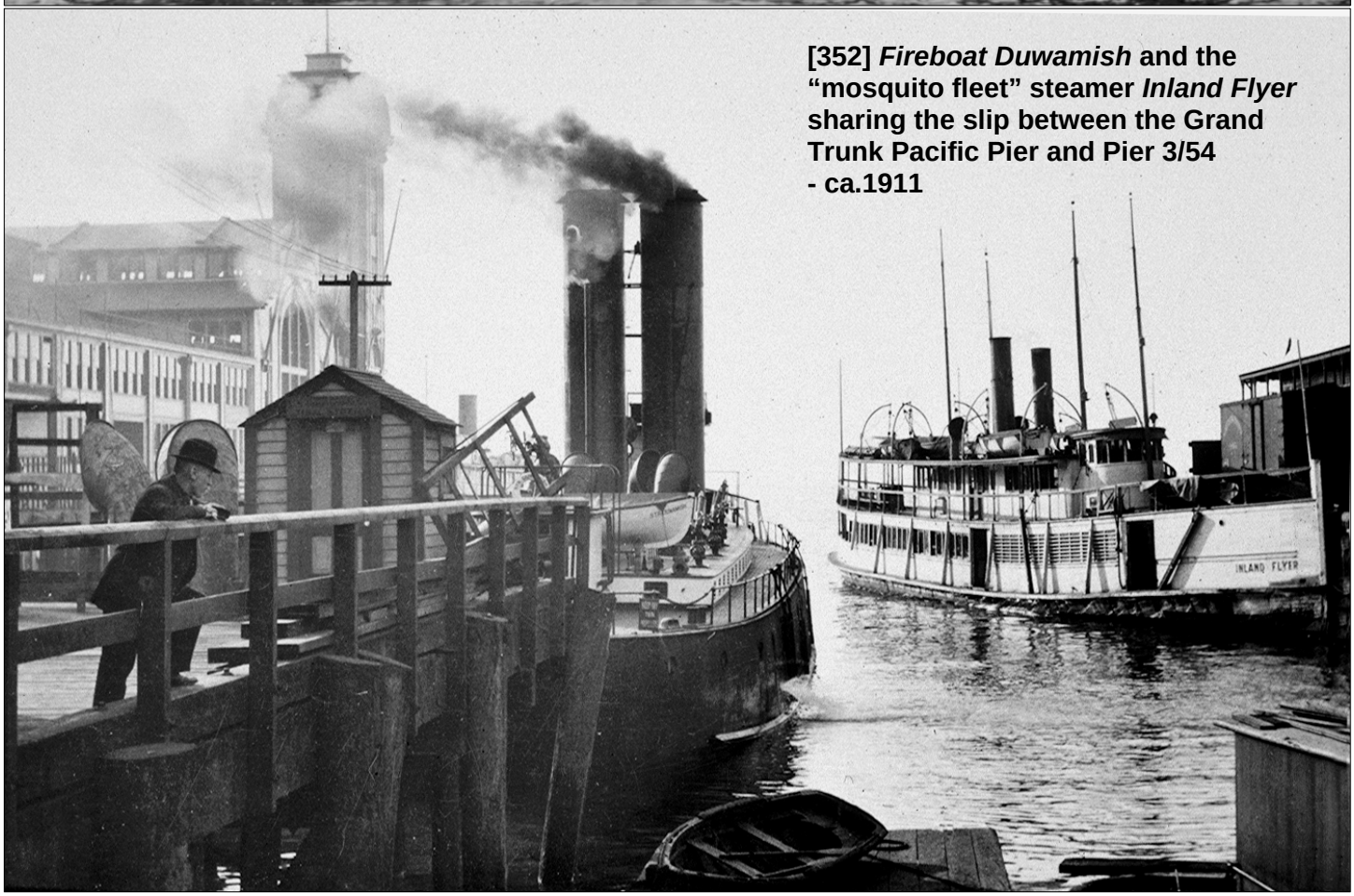
In little more than ten years, the second station No. 5 was replaced by a third plant, the brick landmark that may be remembered by some readers for it was still around during the 1962 Century 21 and even got considerable "press" at the time. In another example of his promotional savvy, Ivar playfully battled with the City Council and Fire Department for permission to paint it a fire truck red in time for the visitors expected to inspect the waterfront during Century 21. **[353]** Although both the building and fire departments objected, Councilperson Myrtle Edwards concluded, "If Mr. Haglund, who has done so much to make the waterfront bright and gay, wants to spend his own money on the fire station, I'm all in favor." One thousand of his own money – but not for the traditional red of his own choosing but for a more "designer red" picked by the city's design committee. Still, in the attached view of it that was photographed at 10:00 A.M. on the bright winter morning of Feb. 26, 1963 Ivar's handiwork still gleamed. **[354]**

The third station was completed in 1913, one year before its neighbor the Grand Trunk Dock caught fire. While the station and its force were unable to save the Canadian pier the brick veneer on the new station did manage to save itself. The landmark station at the foot of Madison was used until 1958 when it was closed, although the department continued to store equipment there and moor vessels in its slip. In 1960, Fred B. McCoy, the city's Superintendent of Buildings, let it be known that he was frustrated with the delays in the long-projected rebuilding of Fire Station No. 5. McCoy claimed, "The building is about ready to fall into the bay." Attached to the news report of McCoy's complaints was another example of a waterfront plan designed to make it friendlier to yachtsmen. City planner John D. Spaeth unveiled a preliminary sketch for "suggested developments in the Alaskan Way – Marion Street area which included yacht moorage with a "Boatel" for Yachtsmen, landscaping and over-water automobile parking facilities." Spaeth, of course, had his eye on both the worn station and the worn Grand Trunk dock that was the still intact, but barely.

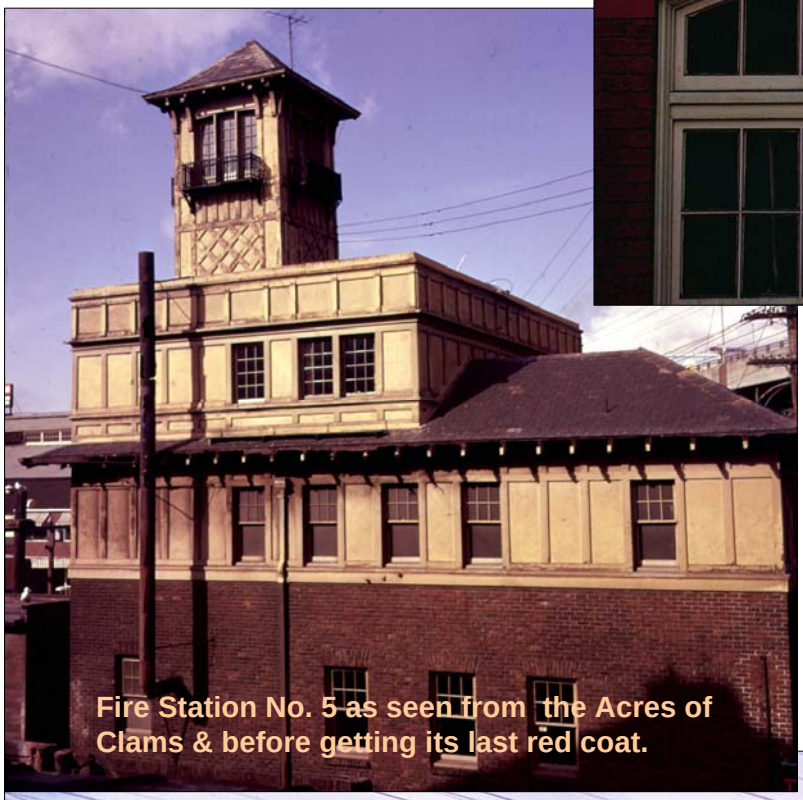
When the department announced that the brick station would be torn down and replaced by a "modern concrete structure," it incited one of the then many instances of grass roots citizen efforts in the interests of historic preservation. The best known of these was the 1961 fight to keep the Seattle Hotel in Pioneer Square. Certainly in the case of the brick fire station the objections were also in the interests of waterfront nostalgia. The first drawing of the "concrete box" that the city planned to put in the place of the ornamented station encouraged the citizens to turn up the heat on the Fire Department. The city responded by canning the box and hiring the local architect Robert Durham to come up



[351] Fireboats *Duwamish* and *Snoqualmie* moored to either side of the Fire Station No. 5 short pier at the foot of Madison Street.

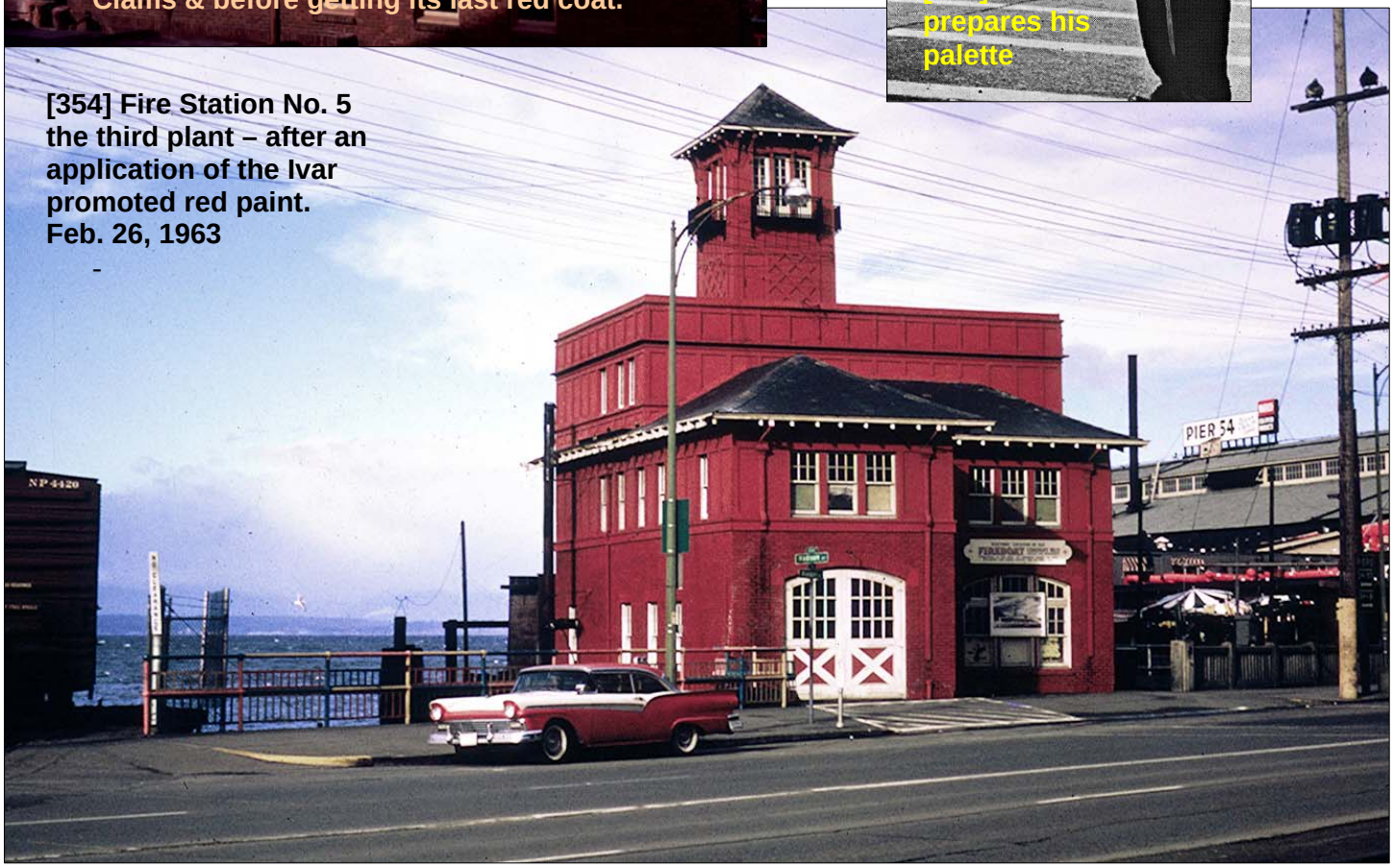


[352] *Fireboat Duwamish* and the "mosquito fleet" steamer *Inland Flyer* sharing the slip between the Grand Trunk Pacific Pier and Pier 3/54 - ca.1911



Fire Station No. 5 as seen from the Acres of Clams & before getting its last red coat.

[353] Ivar prepares his palette



[354] Fire Station No. 5 the third plant – after an application of the Ivar promoted red paint. Feb. 26, 1963

-

with a new design. While Durham's work was still in concrete, it was not so minimal as the box, and its tower was even somehow imagined by some to be an architectural allusion to the earlier tower of Station No. 5's second plant. However, like so many other minimal modern structures, like the Norton Building, the Post Office at 3rd and James, and the recently razed Public Library, and Public Safety Building, they generally looked better as artist's renderings and models than as built. Still the forces of preservation were generally pacified by Durham's design. As Byron Fish, the popular Seattle Times wit and columnist, put it too blandly for the normally droll "By Fish", "They all seem to have been won over now by the beautiful building." The winter dedication was kept to 15 minutes, with Ivar acting both as master of ceremonies and as performer, accompanying himself on a song written especially for the ceremony. (The lyrics do not seem to have survived the event.) And as noted, the Firehouse Five Plus led by Pep Perry, a retired fireman, also played and accompanied Ivar. **[355]** In one of the photographs of the event, it seems that Mayor Clinton is also singing along while Councilman Wing Luke, lower left, is certainly amused. **[356]** Although the modern gray concrete station that replaced the brick landmark is not charmed, it is considerably more functional.

More Fireboats

The *Snoqualmie* fought its last fire on Elliott Bay in 1927, the year it gave up its slip beside the *Duwamish* to the *Alki*. Like practically all fire boats the *Snoqualmie* was sturdy – almost overbuilt – and she survived for another 47 years. For a few years, she guarded the boats and moorings on Lake Union, but then was sold – it was thought – for scrap in 1934. Instead, the vessel was used in helping place anchors for the first Lake Washington Floating Bridge. It found a fourth career as a diesel freighter in SE Alaska, where in 1974 it also attended its last fire – its own, burning for 36 hours off-shore of a fuel dock at Kodiak. Soon after it took the *Snoqualmie's* berth in '27, the *Alki* became known as Bertha's Yacht, after Bertha Landes, the mayor at that time. The Duwamish hung around long enough to be converted in 1949 to diesel-electric, and become thereby "the most powerful fireboat in the world." In 1985 the Duwamish was replaced with a new aluminum and fiberglass-hulled fireboat, *Chief Seattle*. **[357]** One of Ivar's last interests before his sudden death in 1985 was to outfit the *Duwamish* as a maritime museum tied to the south side of Pier 54, and so also in its old slip. While Ivar's successors tried to keep the faith on the *Duwamish,* the city cooled to the idea while the estimated prices soared, and the effort was abandoned. Still, in 1986, the vessel was successfully designated a Seattle city landmark. Three years later she was made a National Historic Landmark. Next, in 1994, the Shipping and Railway Heritage Trust purchased the fireboat from the city. Presently, perhaps, the *Duwamish* still awaits more revivals for heritage.

1910: Fire on the North Waterfront

The fireboat *Snoqualmie* was of no great use on the windy night of June 10,1910, and it was a good thing. What is probably the second largest fire in the history of the city started on the east side of the wide waterfront trestle opposite Galbraith and Bacon's Wharf. As noted earlier the partners expanded from the foot of Madison Street soon after they became the first tenant in the *Northern Pacific's* new Pier 3/54. They built their own wharf on the former site of the Mannings Dock at the foot Wall Street. The 1910 fire did no damage to the wharf and little to Railroad Avenue because a stiff wind off of Elliott Bay pushed it to the east.

[355]

[357]

The *ALKI*

The Chief Seattle

[356] Mayor Clinton joins Ivar in a song Ivar composed for the 1963 dedication of the new No. 5.

WING LUKE

The Wall Street Pier and part of the Galbraith-Bacon sign along the crest of the pier shed can be seen in the accompanying photograph through the filter of the still smoldering fire around noon of the following day. With the memory of Seattle's "Great Fire" only 21 years old, the ruins attracted sightseers – and there were ruins. Unlike 1889 there was little chance of looting in 1910 and so no need to stop visitors if they kept to the streets. Near its start, the fire destroyed the Galbraith Bacon storehouse and stables, and the entire block bordered by Railroad and Elliott Avenues and Battery and Wall Streets. It also gutted the four story brick Glenorchy Hotel on Western Ave. north of Wall, four apartment houses, two restaurants, a hardware store and much else including more than a dozen residences. When it was roaring through the night, the light from the fire lit up the town, and those who watched its progress were convinced that the north end was doomed. But a sudden rain and quieting of the wind stopped it all. **[358]**

In the attached photo of some of the ruins, looking down Wall Street through the ruins we note what was then still a commonplace of street life. **[359]** Nearly all the men wear suits and hats, and apart from the two women in the foreground, this exploring of disasters was a pastime for men. Early in 1962, the 530 ft. long Galbraith-Bacon dock seen in the "then" was cleared for the construction of the Edgewater Inn, which opened in the spirit of if not in time for the opening of Seattle's Century 21 World's Fair. In the accompanying impression the Edgewater is still identified as the Camelot. **[360]**

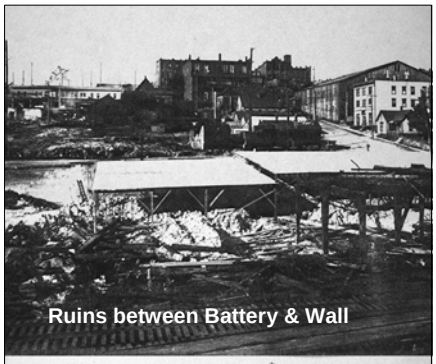
1910 – 1911: A Short List

The following short list of notable local events for 1910 and 1911 concludes with one of great importance to the waterfront. By chance, 1910 was the year that the first motorized fire apparatus was put in operation, but like the fireboat it was of no effect with the North End fire. That year there were still 38 livery stables listed in the city directory. Horses kept pulling a large part of the Fire Department's equipment until 1924 when these steady and well-groomed workers were retired. The first demonstration of heavier-than-air flight was given here in 1910, and the plane promptly crashed in a small lake in the Duwamish Valley. A local reporter advised, "Girls, if you marry for money pick an old man or an aviator." That year Hi Gill was elected mayor and opened the Skid Road south of Yesler Way to gambling, prostitution and police payoffs that benefited his Chief Charles "Wappy" Wappenstein. The following year, the newly enfranchised women recalled Gill and "Wappy" was sent to the "walled facility", while Seattle produced its first summer festival, the Gold Potlatch Days. Included in the ceremonies was a reenactment of the 1897 landing of the *Portland* with its "Ton of Gold." The accompanying photo shows that even this theatre could draw a crowd. **[361]** The Potlatch scene also includes on the left Fire Station No. 5's second version, when it had less than two years more before being replaced with the brick station that stirred the forces of preservation in the early 1960s. But easily for the future life of the waterfront, the most fateful happening of 1911 was that the voters while dumping their mayor Hi Gill by recall also created the country's first autonomous municipal corporation that was empowered to operate a port – the Port of Seattle.

The PORT of SEATTLE & Good Timing

The Port of Seattle had good timing. It was in 1914 that the Panama Canal at last opened, and the *Admiral Dewey* of the

Wall Street
-- part of restored neighborhood

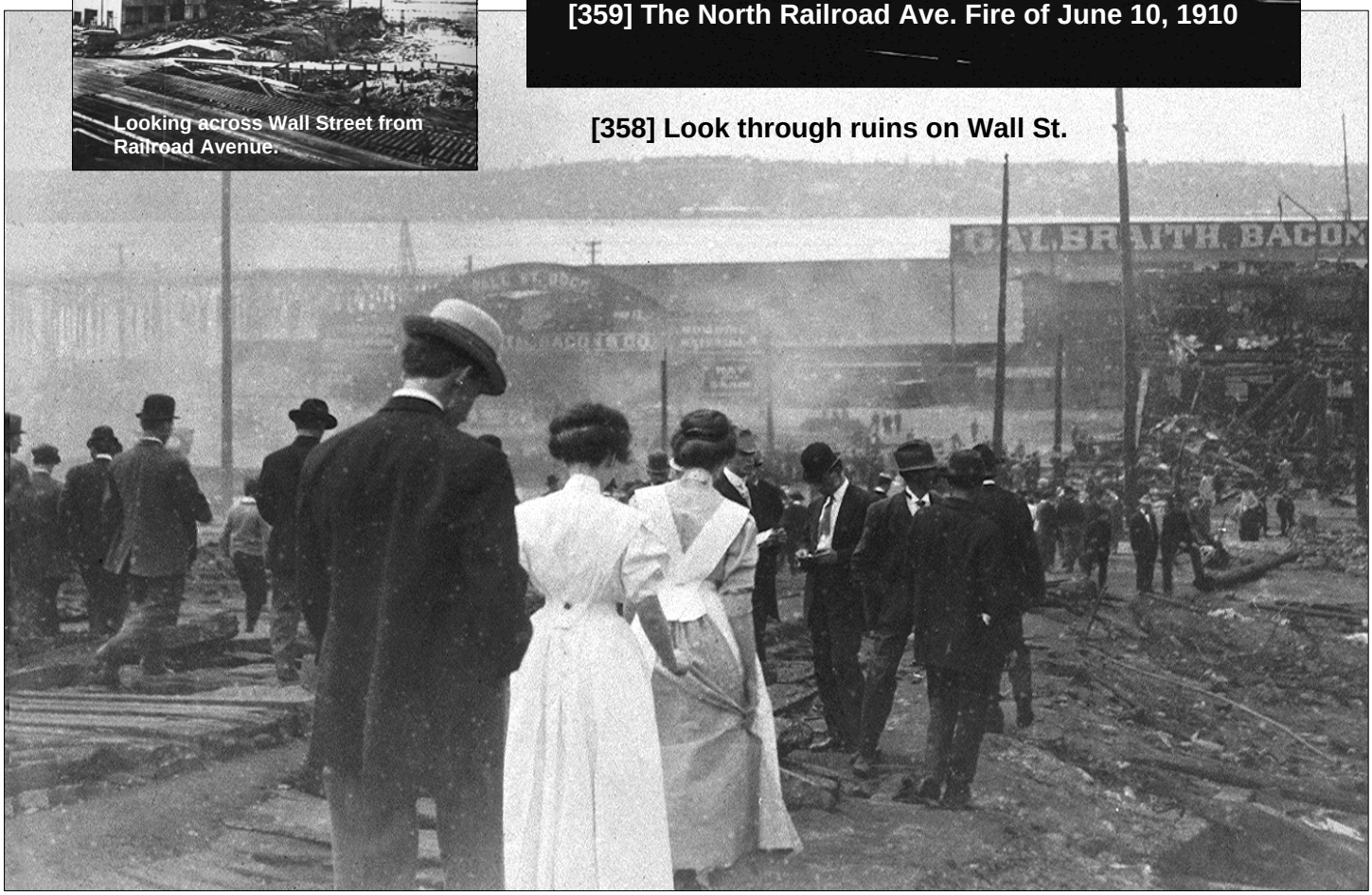


Ruins between Battery & Wall

Looking across Wall Street from Railroad Avenue.

[359] The North Railroad Ave. Fire of June 10, 1910

[358] Look through ruins on Wall St.



[360] Early sketch for the Edgewater Inn when it was still imagined as the Camelot Inn

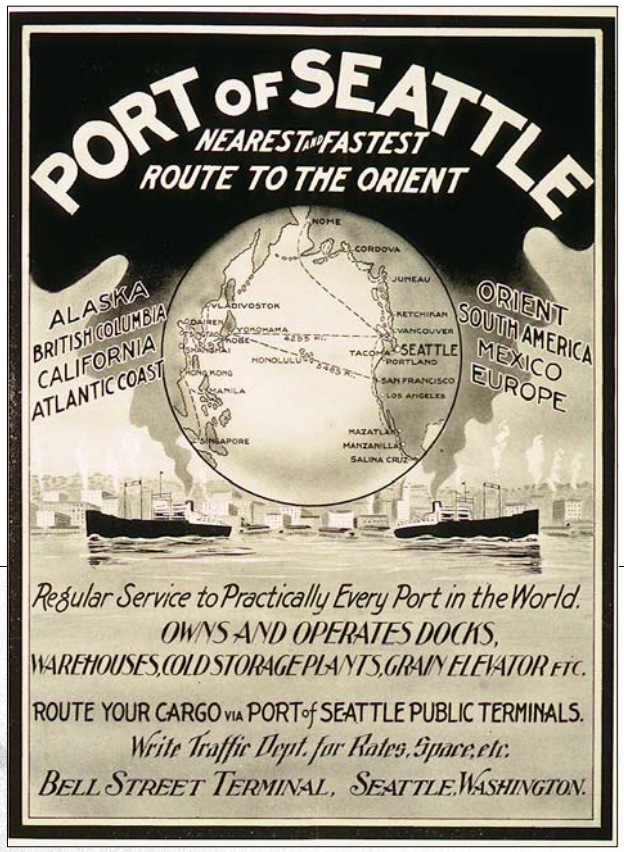
[361] Reenactment of the 1897 arrival of the "Ton of Gold Ship" *Portland* for the Golden Potlatch Days of 1911.

Pacific Alaska Navigation Co. was the first passenger vessel to pass through the canal, arriving in Seattle of Sept. 6, 1914. With the opening of the Canal local shipping expanded considerably. As noted the Port of Seattle was also peculiarly well prepared for the sudden demands made upon West Coast ports during the First World War. **[362]** Also in the beginning, especially with the construction of cold storage facilities, much of the Port's services were directed toward the booming fishing industry. The attached photograph of salmon canning featuring hand packing by a two crowded lines, back to back, of over-dressed women has been reprinted a few times in historical descriptions of the canning industry. **[363]** It appeared first in the Seattle Times for July 14, 1912 and the lead paragraph of the article it illustrates is a good introduction to the importance of salmon at that time to the Seattle waterfront and generally to the city's economy. "More than $20,000,000 is invested in the Alaskan salmon canning industry, and early this summer an army of more than 16,000 men – white, natives and Japanese with whites in the predominating in the ratio of about two to one – commenced to operate the big plants which the investment represents. These 'toilers of the sea' will work for a few weeks in each locality and before November all of them will have returned to Seattle with their clean-ups, or have retired into the wilderness to prospect until another fishing season arrives. Their labor, if the catch is normal, will result in adding about 40,000 tons of canned salmon, one of the richest foods extant, to the world's supply of nutrition." Soon much of that salmon would pass through the Port of Seattle's facilities.

Bell Street Terminal

The Port of Seattle's Bell Street Terminal was built in 1914-1915 not on pilings, but on fill taken, as noted, from a Denny Regrade site near the old Denny School at Fifth Avenue and Battery Street. In the attached view, work progresses on the transit shed that wrapped around it on the south and water sides. **[364]** The shed is built on pilings – not fill. The Port's completed headquarters on Pier 66 were connected to Elliott Avenue and Belltown by at first a timber trestle that spanned Railroad Avenue to the regrade on Elliott that in 1915, as we have described earlier, was still not entirely completed between Bell and Battery. Other ramps also reached Railroad Avenue from the Port's second floor entrance. Soon after it was opened in 1915, its roof was appointed with benches, potted plants, a solarium and a "Happy Land" where children were attended while their parents shopped – most likely – at the Pike Place Market. The rooftop pleasures, however, were enjoyed more by sailors and their dates than kids with moms, and the park was closed in 1920 as a "moral nuisance." (With little concern for the needs of World War One veterans, many of whom returned from the trenches of France with post-traumatic stress and needed comforting. But then neither "syndrome" nor "pregnant" were words yet used in public.) Besides the offices and Port Commissioner's meeting room, the new terminal also included a public cold storage at its north (right) end, considerable warehouse space and a long longitudinal berth for large ocean-going vessels along its water side. Nearly from its beginning, the Port of Seattle got involved in the business of moving cargoes across its waterfront facilities. In this it competed with both private services and other ports. It quickly constructed waterfront facilities – both innovative and of record size – that were the envy of other West Coast ports. When the freight at last began to arrive in large quantities in 1915 the Port of Seattle was ready, like no other facility on the West Coast, to service it. I borrow freely

[362]



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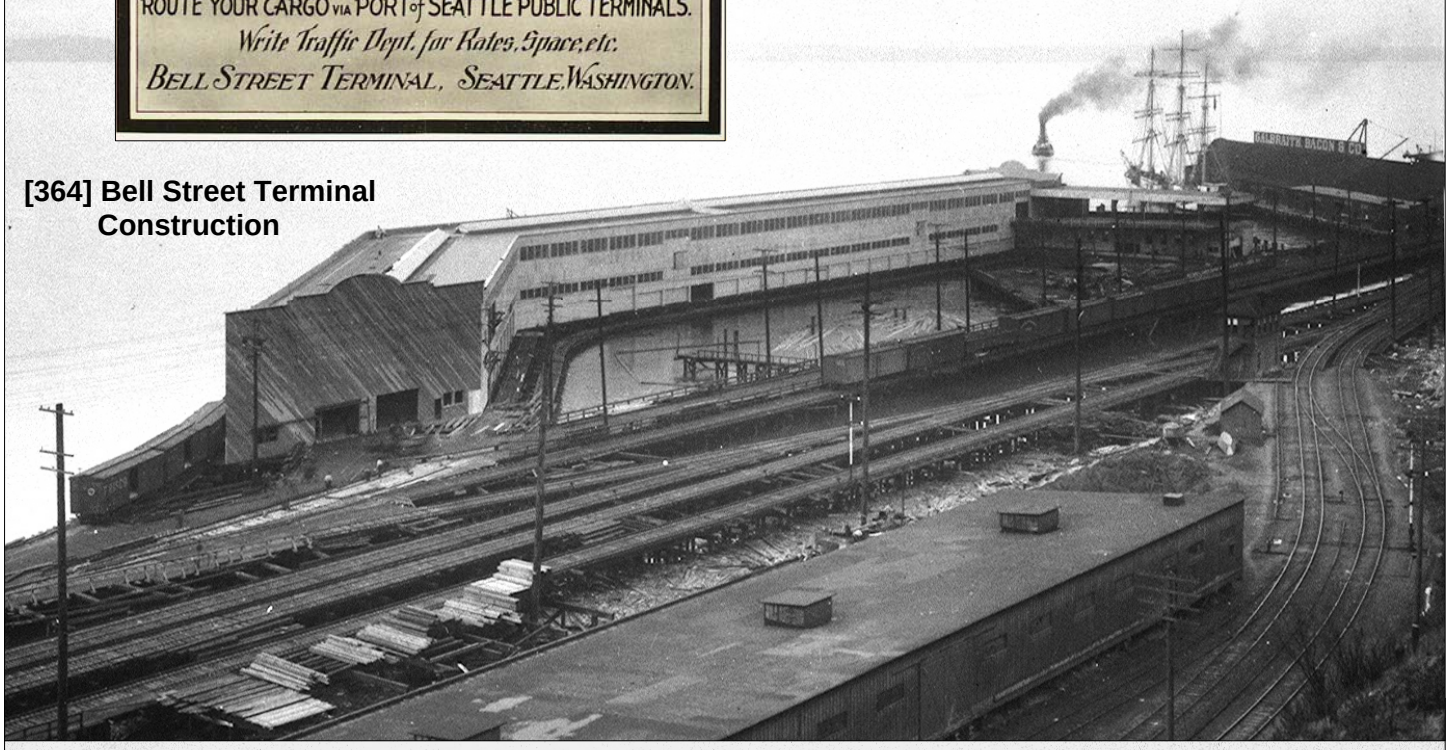
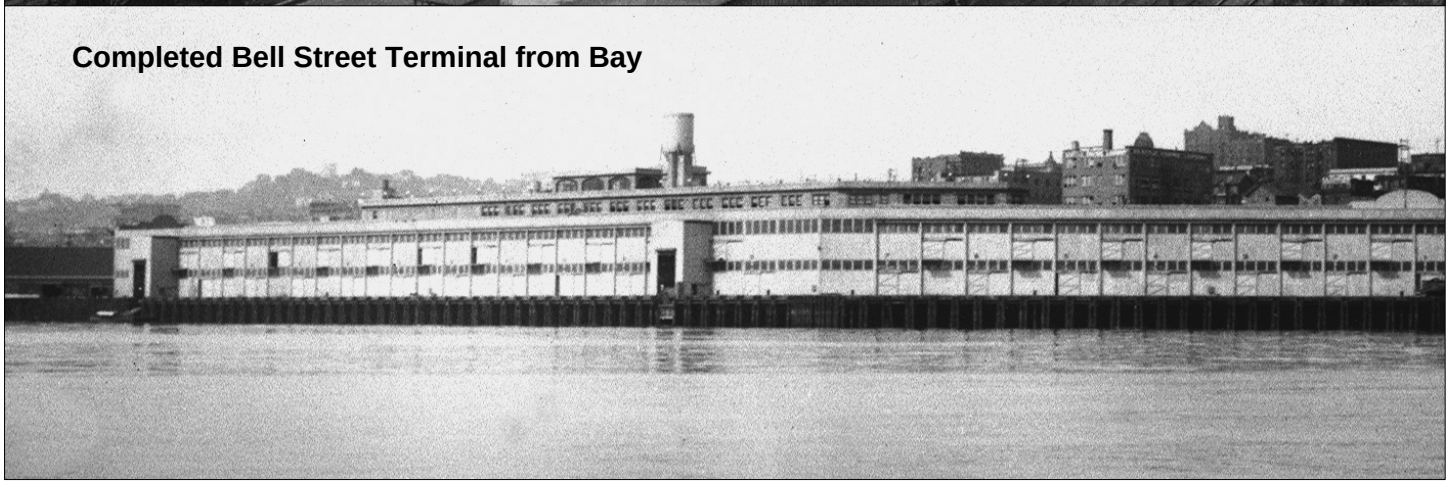
[364] Bell Street Terminal Construction



Completed Bell Street Terminal from Bay



for a brief elaboration of this last point from the standard secondary source on Port History, Padrick Burke's *A History of the Port of Seattle*.

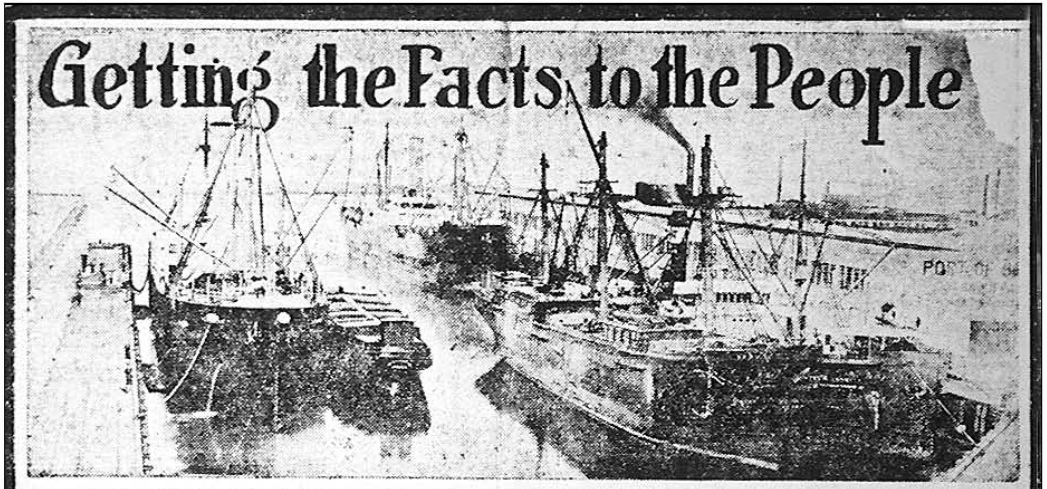
The PORT was READY

In 1908, before the public port was formed, Seattle was rated the twenty-second busiest port in the county. By 1918 it had become the second biggest port in the nation, behind only New York, in terms of the value of cargo that passed through it. It was the considerable risks that it took in spite of the repeated opposition of much of the local press and its hacks and pundits that prepared the Port of Seattle to come alive in mid 1915. Seattle did not reach its elevated rating because of its manufacturing or population base, but primarily because its public port took seriously the points made by Virgil Bogue in this 1911 Municipal Plan that the port which would succeed would do so because it offered the "most conveniently arranged harbor terminals and furnishing sites." In 1917, Burke notes, "The speed with which the terminals of the Port of Seattle could load and unload ships in its harbor was a major factor in attracting exporters and importers to Seattle. The larger Pacific vessels could be loaded and unloaded on the average of one quarter of the time that San Francisco could manage the job." Burke summarizes that "The creation of the Port was a unique political experiment. Not only did Seattle have a municipal corporation that actually owned a number of piers and wharves, but it was the only port in the county that operated these piers and wharves itself."

"Public Property … Inspected … Understood & Used Loyally."

The Port of Seattle's principal waterfront of interest was the tidal one bordering Elliott Bay. This reached, north to south, from its record-sized earth-filled pier at Smith Cove to its grain and refrigeration services along the east waterway. In my opinion – not necessarily Padrick Burke's – it was both a practical and promotional decision to situate its administrative offices directly on the waterfront across which this record cargo passed and within one of its waterfront facilities. That this Bell Street wharf was also the Port property closest to the central business district makes sense by the same practical and promotional points. There are both operational and promotional (rhetorical-symbolic) reasons for the Port of Seattle and its administration (which waged an early sales campaign across the county to direct shipping to Seattle's superior facilities) to site the administrative environment contiguous to the operational. In this regard, the point may also be made and supported with examples that in many respects, the early port work of administration and operations was seamless. In a simplified scenario of this relationship, the administration makes a decision or forms a policy that determines operations. Vice versa, the operations of the port design an innovation that changes policy and administrative practice. The most primary interaction in this loop is that of monitoring, and monitoring requires proximity. The Port's "dock masters" and "traffic engineers" were also its monitors and sometimes also its innovators. In 1914, the Port's Assistant Secretary and Traffic Manager (effectively the Port's manager) was also its first official historian. In his 1914 series defending the Port's efficiency and public responsibility against the attacks of the local press (excluding the *Seattle Star* in which he published his daily "Talks"), Hamilton Higday noted, "The port commission's dockmasters are soliciting business – and getting it! …This is public property. It should be inspected, understood and used loyally." **[365]**

Getting the Facts to the People



Stacy-Lander wharves of the port commission. These magnificent terminals are occupied under preferential assignment, not under lease, by the American-Hawaiian Steamship Co., which operates a Seattle-to-New York service, by way of the Panama canal.

Did you know that the public port utilities have cut in half Seattle's wharfage rates? Did you ever get this information from the corporation-kept press? DID YOU SUSPECT THAT A CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE, OF DISCOLORATION, OF SNEERING FALSIFICATION, EXISTS TO DISCREDIT THE SEATTLE PORT COMMISSION AND ITS WORKS?

It does. And to meet it the port commission has decided to conduct a campaign of education through The Star.

It will show how the freight-handling tolls in Seattle have been chopped, how the small shipper, the little factory, the new steamer line, will benefit. It will explain why the terminals are not paying interest on their bonds, greatly to the worriment of certain editors. The chief reason, by the way, is that only one of them is completed. It will recall a little Harbor Island history. The series of talks will be published daily on The Star's editorial page. The first will appear tomorrow. THE STAR URGES THAT EVERY TAXPAYER, EVERY BUSINESS MAN, READ THEM.

LOS ANGELES, given the entire water front of San Pedro harbor by the state of California, has expended $5,500,000 for public terminals.

SAN FRANCISCO, with state-owned waterfront, belt railway, and 30 public piers, was voted $10,000,000 additional by all California for further port development.

VANCOUVER is being given a $4,000,000 concrete pier, a 1,300,000-bushel grain elevator, and 40 acres of tide lands by the Dominion government, all Canada aiding the port.

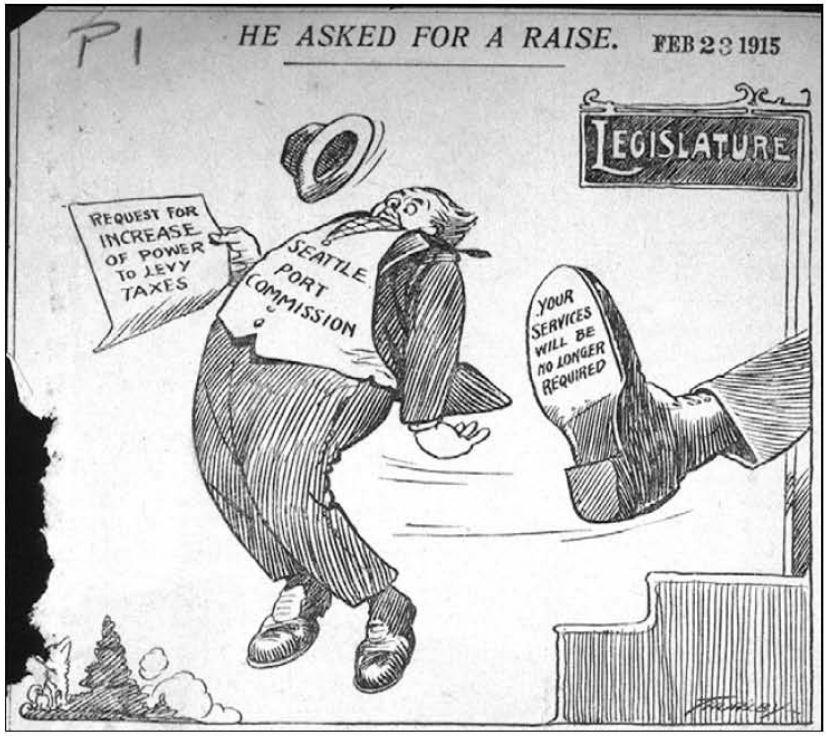
PORTLAND is expending $2,500,000 on municipal river docks.

THE PRESS of these rival cities constantly boost these projects.

SEATTLE, unaided by the state, prepares her port on her own credit. And the newspapers other than The Star knock the public utilites—port, light, water, garbage haulling, every collective effort.

NOW THE PORT COMMISSION, THROUGH THE STAR, PROPOSES TO SEE THAT THE PEOPLE GET THE FACTS.

[365] *Seattle Star* defends the Port of Seattle - 1914



[366] *Post-Intelligencer* attacks the Port of Seattle 2-23-1915

THOUSANDS DANCE ON ROOF GARDEN

Bell Street Pier Is Scene of First All-Noble Ball.

THREE BANDS PLAYING.

P.I. 7-14-1915

Innovation Declared Success—Costumes Make Up Colorful Event of Magnificence.

One thousand five hundred couples—3,000 people—last night gathered at the first ball ever tendered the rank and file of Shrinedom, in the roof garden of the Bell street pier. The occasion marked an innovation in social affairs of imperial council sessions, it being the first dance given visiting nobles generally in forty-one conventions. The affair was not confined to officers of various organizations or members of patrols and bands.

The airy costume of the Indian Orient, with its fluttering pantaloons, its short-cut coat and its tinseled multicolored adornments, swayed over the floor of Seattle's municipal roof garden, entwined with the summery flounc-

Clinging to
running horse
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Port of Seattle clipping on populist roof garden dance July 14, 1915

In the beginning, the Port was "shy" about calling attention to its administrative side. Although its two most heroic figures, the socialist Robert Bridges and the historian-engineer Hiram Chittenden, were often at odds, they were, at first, inclined to keep these difficulties discreet understanding that the Port's future was still very vulnerable to the attacks which were regularly made upon it by the local press and by private shipping and railroad interests. (Like the attached PI cartoon more than suggests. **[366]**) The first commissioners emphasized the public works of the Port, its plans for waterfront facilities, and its intent to make the port affordable and competitive with other ports – especially San Francisco and Portland.

When the Port was formed and had yet no public works, it held its meetings in the Central Building. As noted, later it took the opportunity to include its offices in one of its new facilities – the Bell Street wharf. Still the Port emphasized the cold storage and operational features of this facility. In 1914 even before the Port had moved into its new headquarters, its apologist Higday was ready to celebrate its heritage with his essay "The Port of Seattle Its History and Progress." Most of Higday's attentions are given to the Port's expectations for a great capacity to do good works but he also adds modestly to his lengthy description of the Bell Street facilities (that we already described above) that the "roof of the warehouse will be made a recreation pier, and in the top floor the permanent offices of the Port Commission will be located."

Other Early Port Facilities

The voters' endorsement of the activist Port enabled the commission to construct a list of facilities from the start – at Fisherman's Terminal on Salmon Bay and Smith Cove to the north and at the Hanford St. and Stacy St. and Lander St. wharfs on the East Waterway. Following the construction of the Bell Street wharf, the north end of the central waterfront steadily moved north to embrace it. In the accompanying view of the Lander Street Terminal, East Marginal Way and railroad tracks pass across the base of the wharf and the four story warehouse that separated it from its near twin, the Stacy Street Wharf. **[367]** With its oversized water tank and banded street façade, the sold concrete warehouse dominates the pier sheds. Unlike the Port's giants at Smith Cove – at the time "the longest earth filled piers in the world" – the Lander-Stacy complex set no records. Nor was it specialized like the Spokane Street facilities would soon be for cold storage, or the Hanford Street silos for grain: two other Port of Seattle sites on the east shore of the East Waterway. Neither did fish or commissioners distinguish Lander-Stacy like both did at the Port's Bell Street terminal/headquarters. It was for "general use."

(Locals who remember this plant before it was destroyed for the containers may be somewhat confused by this early photograph of it. In the 1920s, the two pier sheds at Lander and Stacy Streets were built out flush to East Marginal Way with ornamented additions that harmonized with the architecture of the warehouse between them. That imposing two-block-wide symmetrical facade is what may be still remembered. After the Alaska Way viaduct was extended south across these reclaimed tidelands to Hanford Street in 1959, the Port of Seattle turned Piers 28, 29, and 30 into one of its primary container fields by clearing away these buildings, filling in the slip, and setting up the giant gantry cranes for the speedy transfer of containers off and on ships parking parallel

Hanford St. Termin s built

Hanford St. Terminal construction

1915

PORT of SEATTLE

Now in the forefront among the world's greatest maritime cities, Seattle owns and operates six modern, efficient harbor terminals which have greatly benefited the producers and shippers of the entire northwest.

Seattle the Entre-pot to the Far East

Shortest and Fastest Route to the Orient

VLADIVOSTOK
GREAT CIRCLE ROUTE 4255 MI.
YOKOHAMA
KOBE
SHANGHAI
HONGKONS
MANILA
SEATTLE
SAN FRANCISCO
TO YOKOHAMA VIA HONOLULU 5485 MI.

THE people of the Port District (King County) have Invested $10,000,000 in developing a system of harbor facilities that has notably aided in upbuilding the commerce of Seattle's great terminals.

The Port of Seattle Offers Unrivaled Shipping Facilities to the Producers of the world's goods.

THE BELL STREET TERMINAL is centrally located and specially equipped for retail cold and dry storage and general local wharf business.

THE SPOKANE STREET TERMINAL has splendid cold storage and warehouse facilities for producers and growers of fruits, berries, vegetables and sea products, etc.

THE STACY STREET TERMINAL has excellent transit shed and warehouse accommodations for handling the Intercoastal Trade.

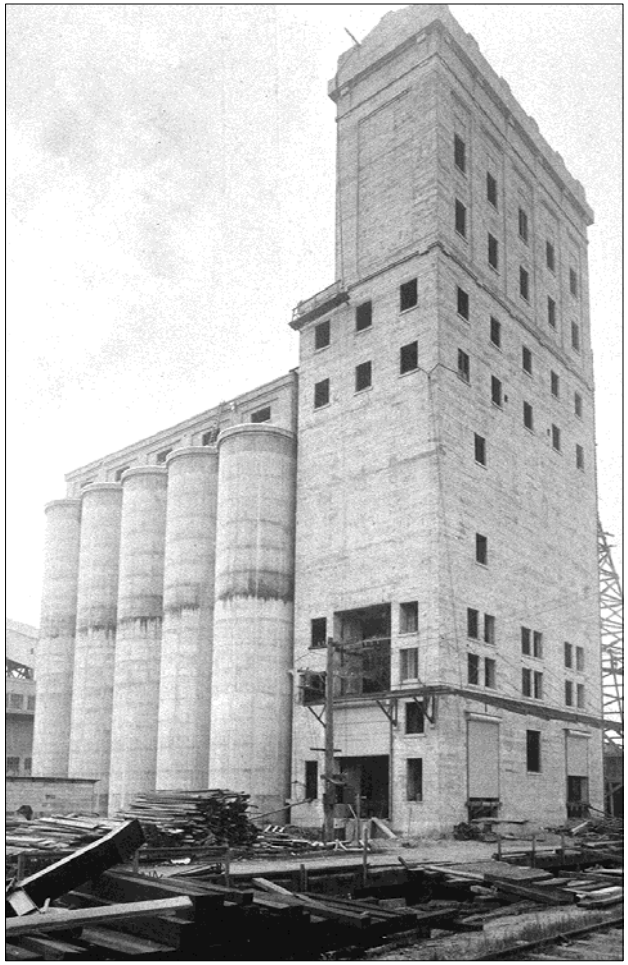
THE HANFORD STREET TERMINAL has exceptional facilities for handling grain and general cargo business.

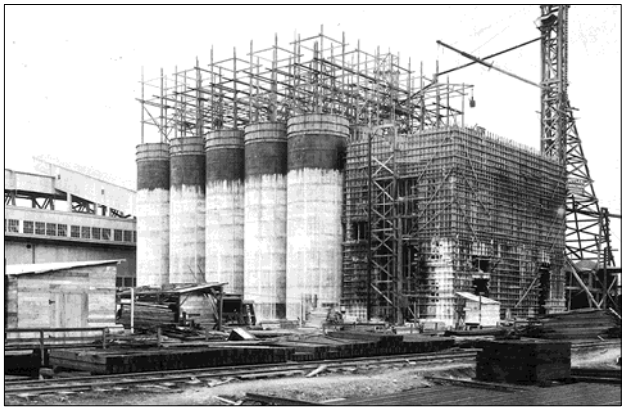
THE SMITH COVE TERMINALS have facilities unexcelled on the Pacific Coast for handling Trans-Pacific Trade.

THE SALMON BAY TERMINAL is the headquarters of the fishing fleet and is especially equipped with wharf, net warehouse, marine ways, mooring basin, etc.

Facilities Consist of Wharves, Transit Sheds, Waterside Cold, Dry and Bonded Warehouses, Fresh Fish Freezing Plant, Ice Plant, 1,000,000 Bushel Concrete Grain Elevator, Vegetable Oil Handling Equipment, Etc.

For further information address PORT OF SEATTLE, Bell St. Terminal, Seattle, Washington





to the new Terminal 30. **[368]** In better days, this field was filled with containers. Many of them now get off the boat in Tacoma. The impediment to speedy deliveries created by the wall of the Alaskan Freeway is one of the reasons that this land is no longer so inviting to containers. The historical view, No. 367, of the Lander Street terminal was photographed from the Lander Street Overpass that once spanned over the many railroad tracks between Sears Department Store and East Marginal Way.

The View from the SMITH TOWER

1914 was the year that the Smith Tower – the gleaming tile "sailor's beacon" – was completed. It was the tallest building west of somewhere (many claims were made: New York, Chicago, the Mississippi). As early as 1913, when construction elevators were operating to the top and much of the lower floors were already covered with tiles, photographers were visiting the tower. This view from the new tower was photographed some months after the Smith Tower was dedicated on July 4, 1914. The Bell Bell Street terminal is in place. **[369]** In the detail of the north end waterfront both the Pike and Bell street overpasses are evident. Between them is the overpass that connected the Virginia Street Dock with its warehouse. The Galbraith-Bacon Wall Street dock is marked, but not the Pacific Coast Company's "longitudinal" Orient Dock (Pier 11/64). It is barely visible to the photographer's side of the Bell Street Terminal and so to the far side of those near-twins, the Gaffney and Virginia Street Docks. **[370]**

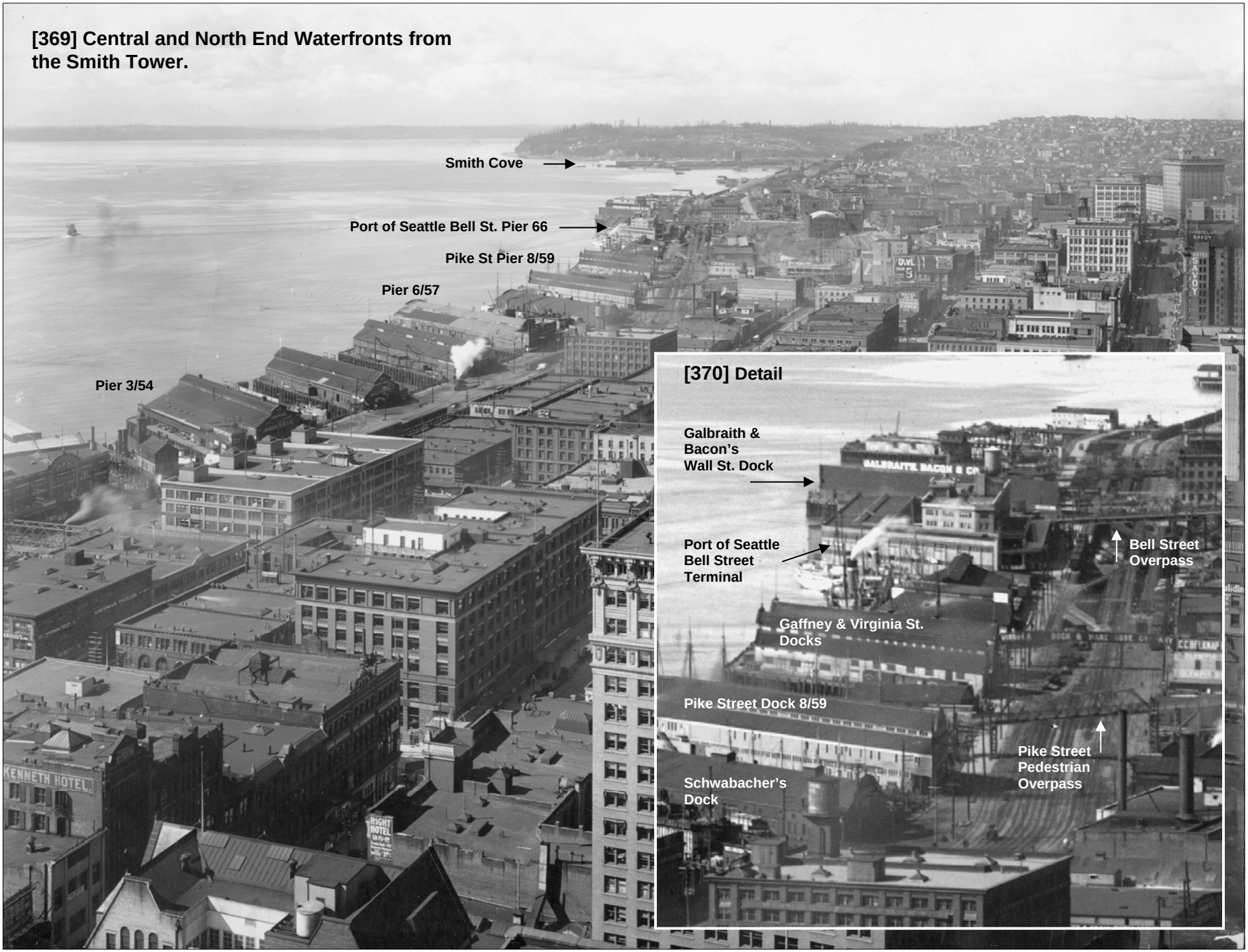
Principal Seattle Piers in 1916

The publication *North Pacific Ports* for 1916 includes a selective list of Seattle piers. As just noted, the Port of Seattle properties then included wharves at Hanford St., Stacy St., Lander St., Bell Street, and its oversized earth-filled pier at Smith's Cove. Several piers were still in the hands of railroads, including the *Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul RR* that owned both Pier 28 (named for it after WW2) on the East Waterway, and as noted above Pier 6/57 on the central waterfront at the foot of University Street. The *Northern Pacific* still owned Piers 50, 51, 54, 55, and 56 and the *Great Northern* had two terminals at Smith's Cove. Private wharves that were used by steamers included Novelty Mill, Colman Creosoting Works, Schwager and Nettleton Mills (Lumber), Fisher Flouring Mill (the first large tenant on Harbor Island), San Juan Fish Co, Albers Bros Milling Co., Seattle Construction and Dry Dock Co., Colman Dock, and the Grand Trunk Dock then still owned by Grand Trunk Pacific Steamship Co.

WORLD WAR ONE

Like the Second World War, World War One had mixed effects on the Seattle waterfront. It increased the buzz of anything having to do with fighting the war, but it had little to do with the more diverse commerce of peacetime. That was on the waterfront. In the neighborhoods, the war was often disastrous to its public works needs like fixing sewers or paving the streets. The dangers that lurked along the shores of Europe meant that Pacific Coast ports like Seattle – especially Seattle – were suddenly raising towers with floodlights to enable round-the-clock mobilization and maritime transportation. The July 15, 1917 cover page of the *Seattle Sunday Times,* headlined "Seattle Center of Gigantic Shipping Pool" included above and below a drawing of young men – great phalanxes of them – marching off to war, a promise. "We are coming, Father Abraham, 687,000 strong!" The caption below

[369] Central and North End Waterfronts from the Smith Tower.



the art explained, "From all walks of life, from all lines of endeavor, from town and village and city and plain, the men that will make up the great new National Army of the United States will come when the call to the colors is sounded next week. Universal obligation to serve, the true doctrine of democracy, will be put to the test and the answer is as good as given. The young men of the nation will march to the colors as they did to the registration booths June 5 and the various shades and textures of civilian life will be lost in the democratic olive drab of the uniform." What had been a variety of "preparedness" hysteria was now the real thing: to mobilize and march for Woodrow Wilson – who had earlier campaigned as "the president who kept us out of war," – to save Europe and "the world for democracy." Anyone who continued to criticize either the war or the U.S. joining it got a rough trip to jail. Even during the First World War it became increasingly appreciated that it was one of the most foolish of undertakings to have ever been readily joined by the only species that can enlist potty half-wits to ride bareback to perdition. This foolish war did mean, however, that for at least two years a war economy on Puget Sound would give thousands work and wages that they would later lose. On the waterfront it was a heated and vigorous and"false economy."

The accompanying photograph shows a waterfront wartime scene that is not about shipbuilding. It looks down from the Pike Street overpass onto Railroad Avenue filled with goodbyes for the troops loading the waiting train. **[371]** But the photograph also is worth a digression: a note on Pier 8/59. The Pike Street Pier's principal occupant was then the Pacific Net and Twine Company. The sign on the front of the pier notes its service for "fishing and canning supplies." With hay and grain moved for the most part by the railroads, the business that W. W. Robinson dealt at Pier 8 when it was new has been eclipsed and the Pike Street Wharf has entered its long life of serving fisherman and their fleets. In 1920, the pier was still owned by Ainsworth and Dunn. The Pacific Marine Supply Co. succeeded Pacific Net and Twine as the Pike Street Wharf's principal tenant in the 1920s.

Shipbuilding: Shattered Records

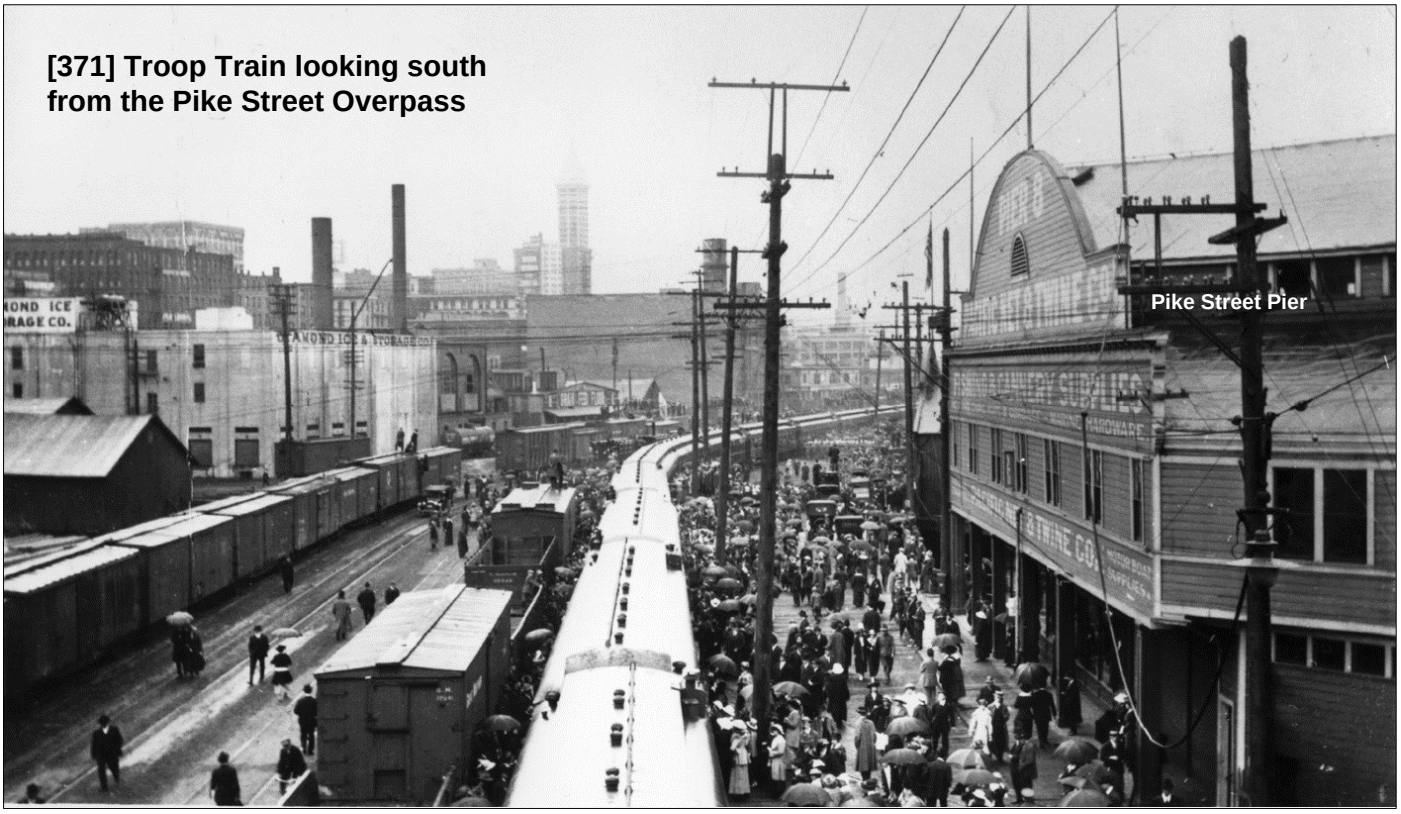
Of course – and as more than hinted above – the grandest part played by Seattle in World War One was neither with fish nor from fighting troops but in building ships and loading them. **[372]** More men stayed on Puget Sound and worked on the waterfront in the shipyards than the eleven thousand men – most of them volunteers – who joined to fight. At the Skinner and Eddy shipyards – the former Moran yard – more than 6000 men were part of the plant's muscled efforts that, *The Seattle Times* reported in the spring of 1918, "Shattered All World's Shipbuilding Records" by completing in 67 days, from the laying of the keel to delivery to the Shipping Board, the "big iron ship" *West Liange*. This beat the previous record for a ship of similar size by 18 days. The local newspapers were often flush with news related to the city's waterfront Herculeans. On the eve of mobilization the *Seattle Sunday Times* for July 1, 1917 headlined how at Skinner and Eddy the "new steel steamship *Jeanette Skinner* slides majestically into the Sound three months and three days after laying the keel" and notes the hoopla accompanying the launching. "While the crowds cheered Skinner and Eddy's own band of twenty-eight pieces added the crash of patriotic music in the pandemonium of enthusiasm." (In her *Waterfront Walking Tour* Carol Tobin notes that the Skinner and Eddy shipyard turned

out seventy-five 8,000-ton freighters in an average of 54 days each.) In *The Seattle Times* account just quoted, the reporter also notes that the Patterson MacDonald Shipbuilding Company had contracts for ten wooden ships and was preparing 22 acres on the East Waterway for the plant to build them. (Perhaps some of these ten became part of the fleet of built but unused ships that were parked for many years all in a row down the center of Lake Union.) Eight Seattle shipyards were busy all through the World War turning out both steel and wooden vessels. In the calendar year 1918, ninety-six ocean-going ships were built here with the employment of 30,000 men. They worked around the clock. Concrete ships were among the orders. The first of these to sail from Seattle, in July 1918, was the *Faith*.

Community Public Works: Priorities and Neglects

The Skinner and Eddy shipyard was only a few blocks to the rear of the photographer who took this view of reclamation work along Utah Ave. S. **[373]** Immediately behind him or her was the still familiar landmark of Sears, although then it was only a distribution center for the hugely popular catalogue. Considering Seattle's wartime boom in maritime work along the East Waterway and on Harbor Island, regrading more and more tidelands was a patriotic priority. As noted above, this labor of filling in the roughly 2000 wet acres between King Street on the north and South Seattle and Beacon Hill on East and West Seattle began in 1895 and continued into the 1930s. The war was good for the tidelands – but not the neighborhoods.

The effects of the war on other public works besides shipbuilding or related needs were draining. The 1918 annual report of the Seattle Streets and Sewer Department includes a revealing summary of what the war meant to the routines of keeping the city working while it was booming with wartime enterprise. The department's Superintendent Charles R. Case reported to Mayor Hanson that much of the work assigned the department was not finished because he could not keep his workers from enlisting or working in the shipyards. "Our entire work has been subjected to these same conditions … much of it, although absolutely essential, being left undone or done in a partial and makeshift manner. Unexpected demands on account of war activities and the needs of ever increasing population have confronted us throughout the years." Case described how railroads were unable to surmount their "switching problems with the resultant unloadings of immense tonnage at convenient sidings and transportation by motor trucks to final destinations. Streetcars have failed to fulfill requirements of travel, compelling thousands of people to use automobiles and jitneys. Every vacant house in every quarter of the city has necessarily been occupied. Almost every delivery concern has abandoned horse-drawn equipment for cheaper and faster motor-driven apparatus. In undeveloped sections of the city thousands of homes have been built. In every instance these conditions have meant more demands on this department." Case points out that with wartime work the first priority and the government's requirements next "the public needs have suffered neglect as never before. This has brought upon us during the past two months more condemnation than we would have believed it possible to endure. Threats of personal injury are not uncommon as a result of failure to provide drainage, better roads, walks, etc. to homes that are now virtually isolated for want of them; obligations that under ordinary circumstances would have been cared for but which were impossible



[371] Troop Train looking south from the Pike Street Overpass

[373] Utah Street reclamation May 6, 1918

[372] WW1 Shipbuilding In Seattle

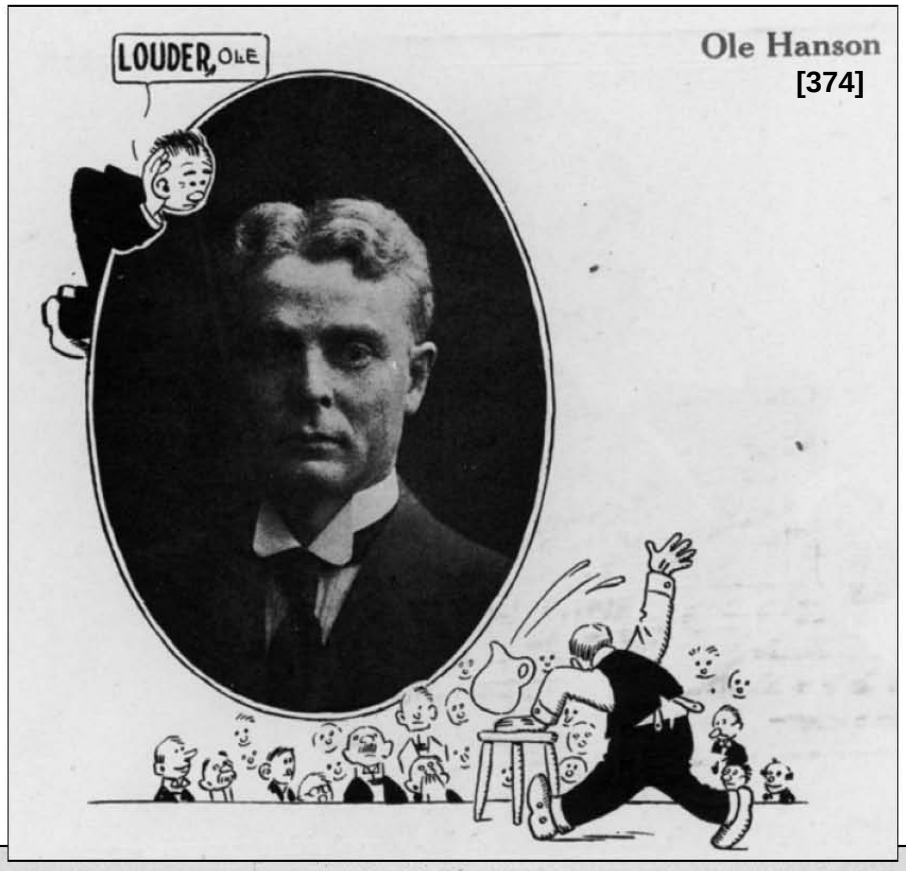
when confronted with one-half to three-fourth our usual forces, excessive cost of materials and impossibility of securing same …"

LABOR: From Steady to Wobbly – The 1919 Shipyards & General Strikes

Labor was generally encouraged during the war because of the demand for its muscle. Throughout the hostilities shipyard workers agitated for pay increases and adjustments like night bonuses. A typical response of the government was to deport the aliens among them and harass the most radical – like the members of the I.W.W.. Ole Hanson, the real estate agent turned Mayor, was all things to all people so long as either the things or the people helped him – it needn't be both. In 1918 he welcomed the delegates to the Longshoremen's 11th Annual Convention of the Pacific Coast District in the Labor Temple at 6th and Union. The silver-topped and handsome Hanson assured the delegates, "City authorities will ever be found squarely behind organized labor in every legitimate action it takes to improve and better its condition." **[374]** The Seattle General Strike of the next year did not, of course, count as a "legitimate action", but coming on Hanson's watch it was an opportune one for mayor. Like the rest of the city – even the workers – Hanson had to wait a few days for the badly timed strike to collapse on its own. Then he took credit for stopping it. Less than one year later Hanson would try to run a presidential campaign on the reputation he got, or thought he'd got, from "Standing up to Labor in Seattle" during the 1919 strike. Hanson did get close to the presidency, but not in his own lifetime. He left Seattle to try his hand again in real estate, this time founding the town of San Clemente, when Richard Nixon was a lad in Whittier. Later, of course, Nixon "retired" to his home in San Clemente.

The Seattle General Strike was started in the shipyards by workers who, when the wartime orders stopped coming, were either no longer needed or thought by their employers to be paid too dearly for the little peacetime ship building that remained. The attached strike photo was shot at Skinner & Eddy. **[375]** Without the armistice the workers lost muscle, but the strike turned general when the rest of organized labor in Seattle joined them to show the bosses city-wide worker's solidarity. In hindsight the timing for this was so bad that it is puzzling that it was not seen then. The Seattle General Strike of 1919 might have at least turned to improvisational performances of political street theatre about the charms and lures of progressive political dreams, except that most of the workers stayed home.

The first post-war year, 1919, also brought trouble to the Port of Seattle. On July 25, Commissioner Robert Bridges resigned. The *Times* explained, "Declaring that the Port Commission has fallen under political control and that its affairs are no longer conducted from its own offices, Pres. R. Bridges today announced his resignation from the port board of which he has been a member since its organization, Sept 5, 1911 . . . Bridges claims that 'My colleagues on the commission have no policy. Or if they have any policy, they don't conduct it at the Port of Seattle offices. The traffic department is now absolutely demoralized. Men, who have served the Port of Seattle and grown up with the institution becoming experts in their line, have been summarily dismissed to make room for political favorites under the direction of Commissioner Christensen and with the acquiescence of Commissioner Lippy. The common expression on the waterfront today



[374]

[375] Shipyard Strike
1919

is that the traffic department of the port has become a joke. No man in the employ of the commission can now feel that his services will receive any recognition at all. The morale of the force, particularly in the traffic department, is destroyed. The business of the Port of Seattle is no longer conducted from the offices of the Port Commission." But at that point the resigning commissioner was repeating himself. And the truth was that Robert Bridges himself was not always above managing the Port away from the office. And yet, Bridges was one of the great historical warriors of the waterfront – a man with political earnestness, a populist with a combative disposition, and a talent for rhetorical roaring. Perhaps his greatest failure was his inability to convince his fellow commissioners to take greater control of Railroad Avenue with a port-run belt line.

The Albatross & the White Elephant

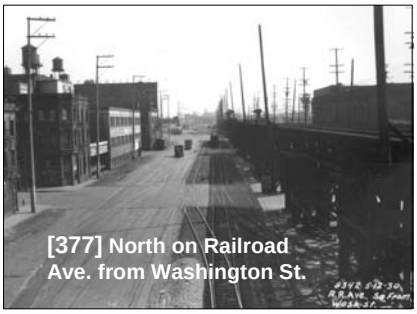
The waterfront did get a belt railway of sorts in 1919 but one that was as poorly timed as the Seattle general strike. During the war, the workers were so hard to deliver to the shipyards that Mayor Hanson ordered an elevated railroad built to carry them south from Pioneer Square to Spokane Street and from there out to Harbor Island. It started street level at First South and Washington, and from there climbed the one block west to Railroad Avenue where it took a sharp curve south to be on its elevated way without impedance to another right turn on Spokane Street, this time west to Harbor Island and even West Seattle. **[376 thru 379]** The elevated trolley was also Mayor Hanson's political response to the almost universal criticism of the Seattle Electric Company's trolley service. Hanson not only did the politic thing of ordering that the elevated be built, he also bought out the SEC, but at such an inflated price that in the 21 remaining years that trolleys were run on Seattle streets the debt could not be paid in full. While Hanson's new municipal rail system was an albatross, his new elevated was a white elephant. *The Sunday Times* of August 17 prepared the citizens to prepare themselves for a ride to Fauntleroy or Alki – there was of course no need to consider shipyards – that would be from five to ten minutes faster than the current service down First Avenue South because the railroad crossings in the industrial district would be avoided. Without fanfare, service started on the 4th of September, one week after the mayor resigned. Hanson claimed it was for reasons of health but more likely, as noted, he left to pursue his dreams of winning the Republican Party's nomination for President. Certainly Hanson was also fleeing the growing complaints over the "deal" he'd made to purchase the worn out trolley system. Streetcars were regularly breaking down and sometimes – like the Mayor – running away.

Although brand new, the elevated railway to West Seattle had a ride that swayed like a roller coaster. It was scrapped in 1929 – in time for the Great Depression. They had only ten years to remember, but the survivors of the dwindling set of West Seattle old timers still describe it as a white-knuckle thrill. Two of the better-known members of this species – Emmett Watson and Ivar Haglund – now long gone remembered the ride well. Typically, as West Seattle adolescents both were fascinated with how to get to Seattle and equally thrilled by the trolley ride across the Duwamish waterway. In his book *Digressions of a Native Son* Watson recalls, "The way you got to First Ave. from West Seattle was by thumb or street car, those rattling old orange things. They clanked and swayed over an incredible old wooden trestle, high above Spokane Street, weaving and

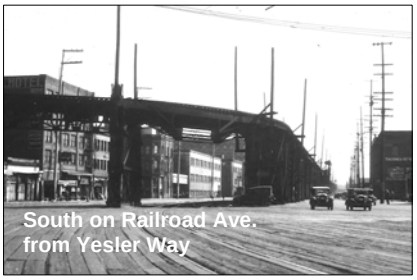
[379] Spokane Street

[378] High above Whatcom Avenue AKA E. Marginal Way

[376]

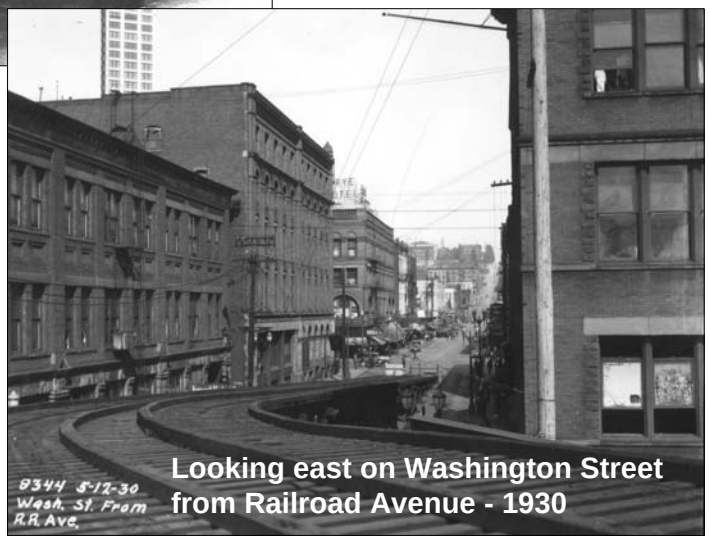


[377] North on Railroad Ave. from Washington St.



South on Railroad Ave. from Yesler Way

[376] Looking West on Washington Street across First Avenue South



Looking east on Washington Street from Railroad Avenue - 1930

shaking until you had to close your eyes to keep from getting a headache." Similarly Ivar recollects, "Some of my earliest memories are of taking the West Seattle ferry to Seattle, a ride that while thrilling was not so thrilling as that aboard the trolley. It was our rollercoaster. That thing would throw us from side to side as it stumbled along a trestle that was high, narrow and, most of the way, without guardrails. It seemed like there was nothing between you and the ground but the roofs of the buildings below you. It was marvelously scary."

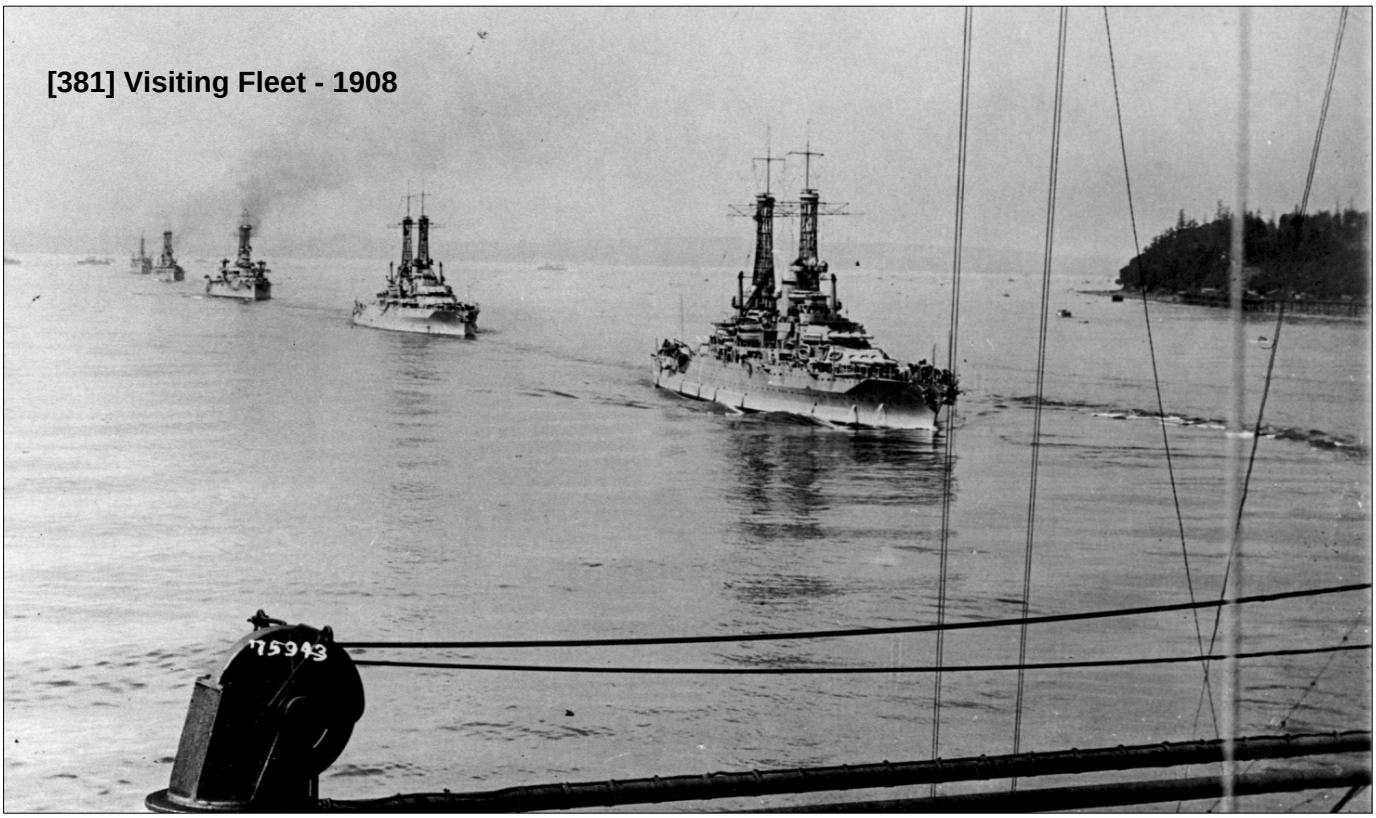
Front Door to the City: Pergola at Washington Street

The public pergola for fleet and patrol was one post-war artifact built with curves – ironwork – at Railroad Avenue and Washington Street that did survive. The historical photograph of the Pergola dates from March 24, 1921. **[380]** WWI patriotism and the yearly ritual of Fleet Week combined to develop the waterway off of Washington Street into a city gate with this ornate pergola. The city ordinance authorizing the Pergola and floats – to replace the by then old Washington Street Waterway gridiron – was approved in 1919 from plans of the city's official architect, D. R. Huntington. It was completed in 1920. The shelter and its floats were a public work described as preparing "a shore location . . .for the Pacific Fleet." Following the 1908 visit of Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet, military flotillas on Elliott Bay became something of a summer ritual. **[381]** Jack Dillon, one of Seattle's "ancient mariners", recalls the excitement of waiting here for the Navy's shore boats to pick up him and hundreds of other children and their parents to visit the dreadnoughts during Fleet Week. For many years, the shelter and its adjoining moorings were the home of the city's Harbor Patrol. After 1923 the Harbor Patrol ran its own radio station next door on Pier 50. Dillon remembers that its studio was separated by a glass partition from the passenger waiting room at the waterfront end of the dock. There his mother and he would board Canadian Pacific steamers for their frequent visits with relatives in Victoria.

In 1927 the slip below the shelter was outfitted for the regular use of small boats besides those of the Harbor Patrol. During the Second World War, this public boat landing was regularly swamped by the wakes of the water taxis that ran between it and the shipyards on Harbor Island. Both the city's float and the ramp, which reached it from the shelter, were repaired to withstand this daily washing and the weight of thousands of war workers. Private donations restored the pergola in 1973 and revived the slip's service to small boats with 200 feet of new concrete floats. The city's Harbor Patrol at last moved from the site although a campaign, led by Mayor Wes Uhlman, to site a Maritime museum there for the tug *Arthur Foss*, lightship *Relief*, ferry *San Mateo* **[382]** and fishing schooner *Wawona* **[383]** failed in part because of the encroachments of the waterway's big neighbor at Pier 48, the Alaska ferries. Other big ships that have used this slip include those, we know, of the Oregon Improvement Company, the Luckenbach Steamship Co., the McCormick line, Pope and Talbot, the Alaska Steamship Co., and the Admiral Line. It was here aboard the Admiral Line's *Curacoa* that Jack Dillon took his first maritime job as a steerage waiter in 1923 at the tender age of twelve.

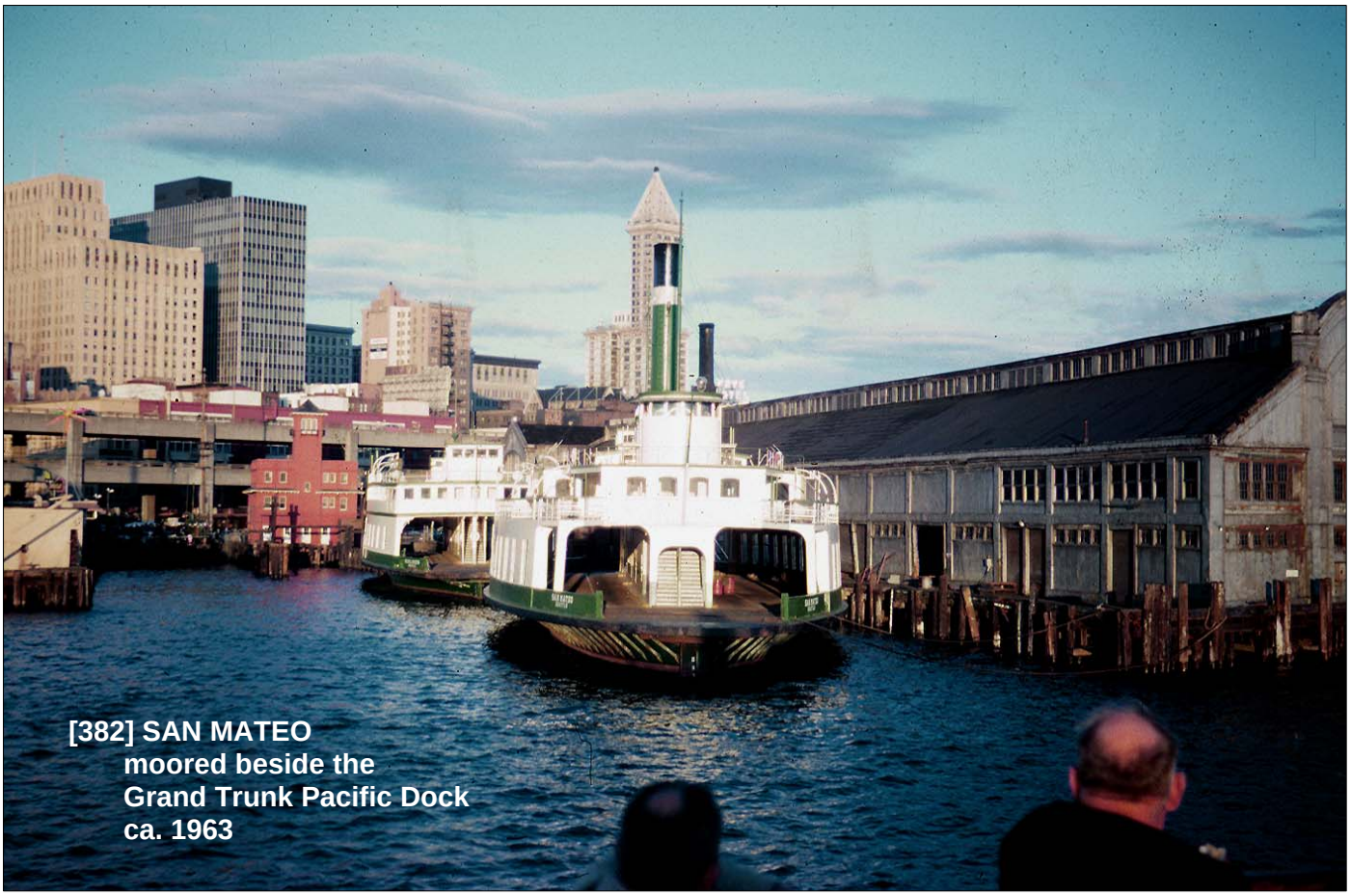
"The Seaport of Success"

In 1920 the Seattle Chamber of Commerce was ready to commit $100,000 a year for three years to "Tell The World Seattle's Story."



[381] Visiting Fleet - 1908

[380] Public Pergola
at the foot of
Washington Street



[382] SAN MATEO
moored beside the
Grand Trunk Pacific Dock
ca. 1963

[383] WAWONA
moored beside
pier 50 at the foot
of Yesler Way

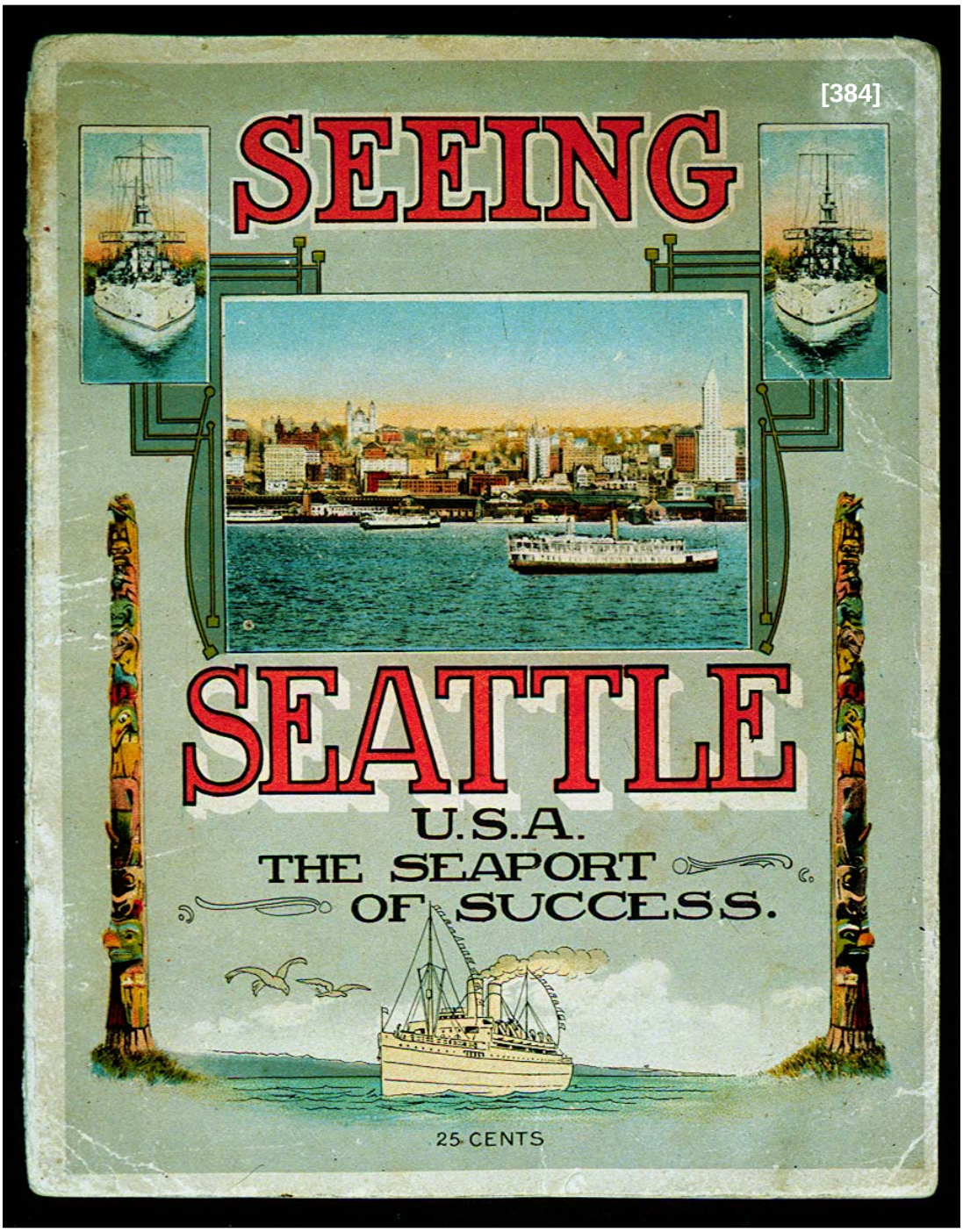
This may have been the first general campaign to promote what it called "The Seaport of Success." **[384]** Clearly the Chamber was still giddy over the Port's World War One statistics. Previously Seattle had gotten some free publicity during the Indian Wars of 1855-56, the saga of the "Mercer Girls" during the mid-1860s, the public lynchings of 1882, the Chinese Riots of 1885-86, and the Great Fire of 1889, and most of it was bad publicity. The first particular promotion that got some local funding was during the late 1890s gold rush when Erastus Brainerd, perhaps Seattle's most effective promoter, managed to quickly festoon the editorial desks and chamber of commerce cork notice boards nation-wide with pamphlets proclaiming Seattle as the gateway to the Klondike and ready to outfit any Argonaut with every possible thing that might be needed in the north, from hard biscuits, to portable aluminum sheds, and dogs practiced in pulling sleds. (This last claim about the dog's sled pulling experience was surely exaggerated, but some of the dogs purchased and taken by the miners into the child interior of the Yukon were later most helpful when the food ran out – they were eaten.) The repeated message in 1920 was that Seattle was "the pre-eminent industrial opportunity." Why? Because of location, of course. The campaign would "Tell the story of Seattle's location – close to the markets of the world – raw materials in abundance – water power – coal, and municipal and port facilities for all the varied activities of commercial life … Seattle cannot stand still. It must advance. It must have industries, greater pay rolls."

James Lowman, Henry Yesler's helpful nephew and sometimes Chamber of Commerce president, was among the chamber signatures to the campaign announcement. The 21-year old Lowman arrived on Yesler's dock in 1877 at his uncles' invitation and one year after Henry Yesler had attempted to unload his wharf and mill in a lottery. With Lowman's help, Yesler prospered, and towards the pioneer industrialist's end Lowman was in charge of the Yesler estate. Lowman lived 70 years in Seattle, dying in his First Hill home in 1947 at the age of 91. If in his time Lowman did not see it he at least heard of it. Unfortunately, he did not write it down.

Austen D. Hemion's Waterfront Tour – 1920 (as reviewed in *The Sea Chest* 1977).

Austen D. Hemion did write it down. To review the "as-built" Seaport of Success in 1920 we could consult a 1920 Kroll Map of the harbor – or better we will follow Austen Hemion as a consults the map and makes comments about it. Hemion was one of the founders in 1948 of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society. **[385]** His review of the 1920 map appears as "Seattle Harbor Piers" in the June 1985 issue of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society's quarterly, *The Sea Chest*. The Port Warden, the Port of Seattle itself, the Army Corps, The Coast Guard, the City Directories, the "Tax Man" and even map makers like Kroll have made inventories of waterfront facilities at one time or another and a few regularly. (Some of the Coast Guard inventories are detailed to the point of counting chairs and desks.) The interest in port statistics flourished following the First World War. Here we will stick with excerpts from the list prepared by Austen D. Hemion who was, when still living, one of the "lords of local maritime heritage." In his inventory-slash-narrative, Hemion goes around Elliott Bay one and a half times. He starts at the East Waterway with the Port of Seattle's Stacy and Lander Wharfs where, he notes, the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company was operating in 1920. As he moves north along the waterfront Hemion sticks

[385] Co-founders in 1948 of the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society
From Left: Jim Gibbs, Tom Sandry, Joe Williamson, Bob Leithead & Austen Hemion



pretty much with the map. For instance, the map slights the Pike Street Piers, and so does Hemion until he passes Pier 8/59 on his second run up the central waterfront when he explains that it was – as we have noted above – the home of the fishing fleet. But by then the story teller in Hemion has gotten hold of the cataloguer and his listing is filled with his digressions. This new tone takes over when he first makes it to the West Waterway. From there on his interpretation of the 1920 map are filled with explanations that carry the reader through many changes into the 1980s.

Listings From a 1920 Waterfront Map by Kroll Maps as Interpreted by Austen Hemion. Happy reading.

> American-Hawaiian Steamship Co. operating from Port of Seattle Stacy and Lander wharfs.
>
> Pacific Coast Steamship Co., (whose ships were later taken over by Pacific Steamship Co.) operating out of Piers 48 and 46 and the long pier #11 (pre-WW2 number) below Lenora.
>
> Canadian Pacific RR and Pacific –Alaska Navigation Co along with Seattle's Port Warden were in Pier 1/50. Alaska Steamship co as at 2-51.
>
> Colman Dock hosted Puget Sound Navigation Co., Merchants Transportation Co. and other local "Mosquito fleets".
>
> Grand Trunk Dock used by Grand Trunk Pacific Steamship Co. and later by Pacific Steamship Co.
>
> Pier 3/54 KITSAP County transportation Co.
>
> Pier 4/55 and 5/56 used by Royal Mail Steam Pack. Co. and East Asiatic Steamship co and Kosmos Line.
>
> Pier 6/57 used by Osaka Shosen Kaisha and Hamburg-America Line;
>
> Pier 7/58 the Schwabacher dock use by Humboldt Steamship Co.
>
> Pier 8/59 fisheries center
>
> Piers 9/60 and 10/61 used by W.R. Grace and Co., Chas Nelson Co., Matson navigation Co and Northwestern fisheries. [For the moment Hemion skips over piers between Lenora and Wall Streets including Port of Seattle Bell Street Terminal.]
>
> Pier 14 (70) operated by Dodwell Dock and Warehouse Co. and terminal of Northland Steamship co and blue Funnel Line.
>
> Great Northern's Smith Cove also used by Nippon Yusen Kaisha.
>
> West Waterway west side Ames Shipbuilding and Drydock, later Ames Terminal
>
> West Waterway east side (harbor island): Fisher Flouring Mills, Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging Company Ship yards, Lockheed's Yard No. 1 is the successor. Atlantic-Richfield Oil Co now has a dock north of Lockheed No. 1 with Todd Shipbuilding Co now using the whole northwest corner of Harbor Island in some of the same property it was using in 1920. North face of Harbor Island, no piers were shown on the 1920 map but

General Petroleum was located then where Mobil Oil is today. Nothing was shown on the map where the north half of pier 18 is now. During WW2 that area was utilized by Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Co. as was the northeast area of Harbor Island.

East Water Dock was renamed Pier 20 then, when the container pier now known at Pier 18 was built,

Pier 20 and the Shell Oil dock were made a part of Pier 18.

On east side of East Waterway was Spokane St Terminal that became Pier 24.

Hanford Grain terminal became Pier 25. When the turning basis was filled in, the grain terminal torn down and Piers 24 & 25 combined in another container terminal all named Pier 25.

Isaacson Iron Works was renamed Pier 26 and then later combined with Pier 25. The Milwaukee RR car barge slip was renamed Pier 27. The Port of Seattle has plans to incorporate Pier 27, 28 (former Milwaukee Ocean Dock) Pier 29 and 30 (presently incorporated into Pier 28 and formerly the Lander and Stacy street piers) the torn-down Pier 31, formerly the San Juan Fishing dock and Standard Oil's Pier 32, all into Pier 25 as one long container pier running the whole length of the East Waterway's east side.

The Telephone Pole Yard was renamed Pier 33 and has since disappeared.

Associated Oil Pier is now Pier 34,

Albers Milling Co. is now Pier 35 and the old LST 535 has been moored there for a long time.

What was a very modern passenger and freight terminal was built in 1925 on what is now Pier 36. Pacific Steamship Co had this terminal built. It was taken over shortly before WW2 as the headquarters of the U.S. Army's Seattle Port of Embarkation. The army rebuilt it and built Piers 37, 38, & 39, the latter being the former Connecticut Street Terminal.

When Port of Seattle gave up its Pier 40 and 41 at Smith Cove for use of the Navy, they built what they called Seattle's' Central Terminal. This was renumbered Pier 42 and later used by the Port of Embarkation and still later by Alaska Steamship Co.

Pacific Coast Coalbunkers became Pier 43. Oregon, Washington Railway and navigation Co. Pier and Elliott Bay Dry Dock Co. locations were combined into Union Pacific Railroad's terminal used by Matson in the 1930s.

King Street dock was renumbered 45.

Pier D was Pier 46 All three of these piers were combined into Pier 46 in the late 1950s.

Then in the early 1980s all the piers from Pier 37 to Pier 46 were combined, the waterways between them filled in, and now a three-berth container pier

is in that location. The southern berth is Pier 37 while the middle and north berths are numbered PIER 46. The Japanese Six Corporation used Pier 37.

Pacific Coast Terminals Piers C and A where shortened, renumbered Piers 47 and 49 and some place in the remodeling of Pier 48 the over-the-water parts were demolished and the land portions behind the bulkheads were incorporated into Pier 48.

Pier 48 was originally Pier B. McCormick Steamship Co used it, in the late 1930s and after World War 2 until they went out of business. Around 1970 it was remodeled and a ferry slip was added on the north side and has been in use by Alaska marine Highway System Since. [This was written before their move to Bellingham.] They usually have one sailing a week from Seattle to Southeast Alaska. In the wintertime the south side of the pier and the north side Pier 46 is used for moorage for the Alaska Ferries undergoing their annual overhauls.

Pier 1/50 which had been used by Luckenback Steamship Co. for their intercoastal service became Pier 50. When Luckenbach moved out, Alaska Steamship Co. moved in. When Alaska Steamship Co. moved to Pier 42 in the late 1940s, Nippon Yusen Kalsha used this pier for the sailing of *Hikawa Maru*, the only Japanese passenger ship to survive WW2. This is not to be confused with the containership *Hikawa Maru* which called at Seattle until a year or two ago. The last sailing for the old passenger ship *Kikawa Maru* from Seattle was Sept 17, 1960.

Pier 2 which became Pier 51 used for various purposes after Alaska Steam left. At time some of the Washington State Ferries were moored there. In later years the warehouse was torn down and the pier used for parking cars. Early 60s Polynesian Rest built there. In early 1980s both Piers 50 and 51 were torn down after their purchase by the State of Washington. To make way for an enlarged loading area to the ferry terminal.

Colman Dock became Pier 52 for a long time but then was renamed Colman Dock in the early 1980s.

The Grand Trunk Dock, later the Canadian National Dock had been used by Alaska Pacific Navigation Co as well as Grand Trunk Pacific Steamers and Pacific Steamship Co ships, various of the Mosquito Fleet from time to time. Puget Sound Freight Lines and Finally Black Ball transport use the pier that was was merged into Pier 52 during one of the remodelings around the middle of 1960s. For a time both the Alki and Duwamish fireboat were moored on the west side of the west waterway and the slip had no other use.

Pier 3 renumber 54. Washington Fish and Oyster Co. had a fish processing plant, including a freezer on that pier for much of the 1950s and 60s and part of the 70s. The late Ivar Haglund started his rest business with his Acres of Clams on this pier in 1946. Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society held its first meeting here on April1, 1948

Pier 4 became Pier 55 and was home for Fisheries Supply Co for over 30 years. Lynn Campbell had his office on the second floor at the outboard

end of the pier so he could look down on his fleet of Good Times and Beavers moored on the outboard face of the pier and the waterway between Piers 55 and 56.

Pier 56 was used in the 1930s by Northland Transportation Co. for their freight and passenger business primarily to Southeast Alaska.

Pier 6/57 the old Milwaukee dock like Pier 56 is primarily a restaurant and small shop venue. With the north side and outboard end of Pier 57 being part of Waterfront Park.

The Schwabacher dock Pier 7/58 was used by Alaska Transportation Co from the late 1930s until they went out of business in the late 1940s. It was mostly torn down in the early 1950s, and a small dispatchers office left on the end, and floats for mooring Puget Sound Tug and Barge tugs at the outboard end.

Pier 8 long home of Pacific Net and Twine, later Seattle Marine and Fishing Supply Co where in the 20s and 30s the fishing fleet used to gather in the spring before going north is part of Waterfront Park. The Aquarium is immediately north of Pier 59 occupied in some of the space formerly sued by Pier 8-1/2 (later numbered Pier 60) and 9 (later numbered Pier 61).

The joining Piers 9 and 10 also know as Virginia Street Piers and used primarily for the storage of newsprint from Canada were renumbered Piers 62 & 63.

Lenora St. Pier, another Port of Seattle pier, used by Canadian Pacific RR steamers from the early 1920s until they ceased operation about 1974.

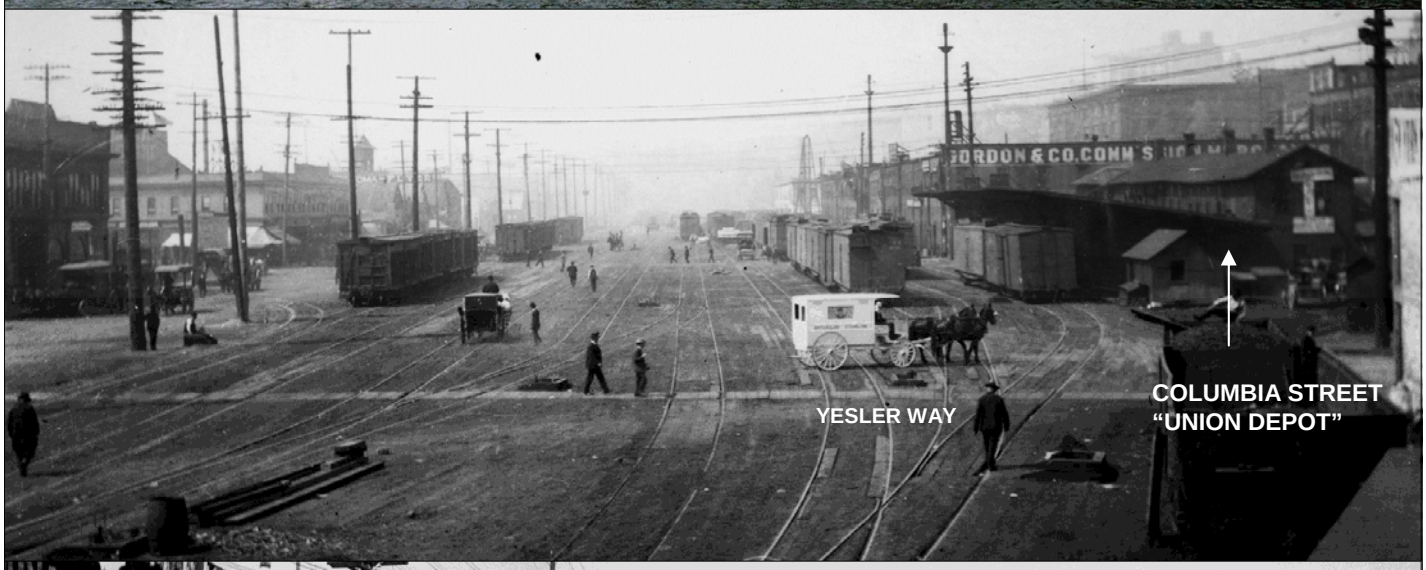
The fish dock adjoining the north side of this Pier 64 was renumbered Pier 65. Bell St renumbered Pier 66.

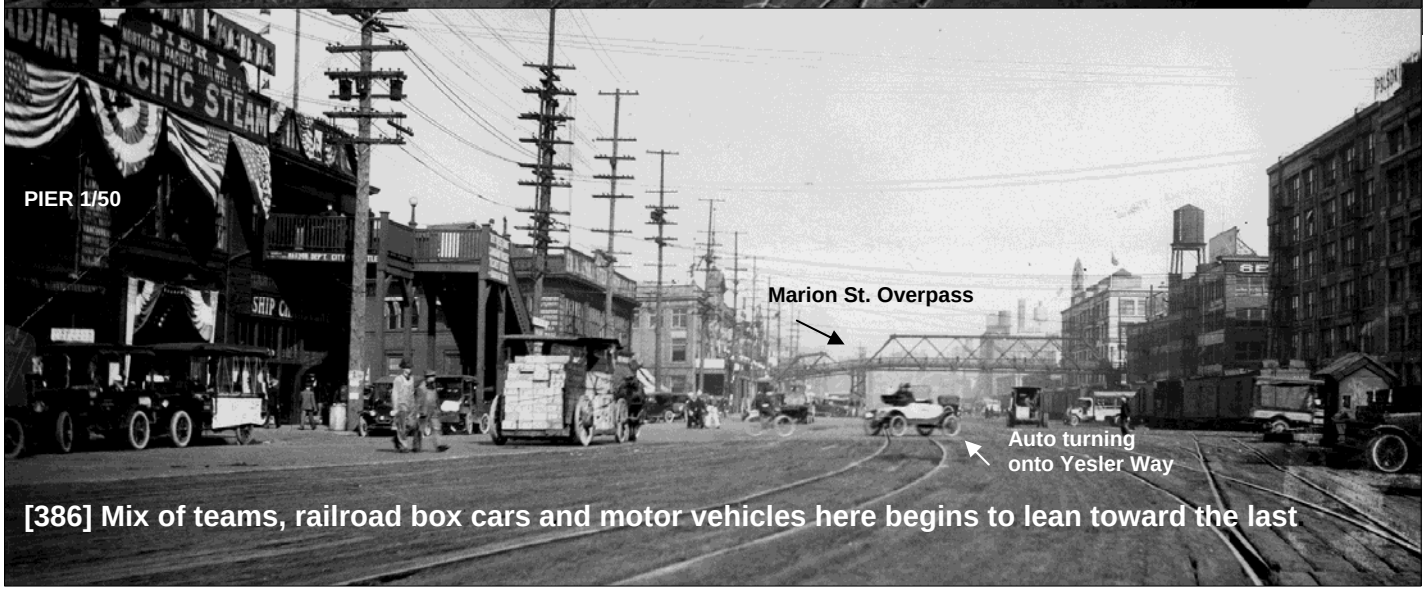
Gailbraith and Co Pier 12 renumbered Pier 67.

Booth fisheries became pier 68. The two piers torn down and Edgewater Inn was built partly over the water. Their Crown Terrace Room with large window facing the harbor featured live entertainment and usually had a program in progress about the time *Princess Marguerite* arrived to dock at Pier 64. The master of *Princes Marguerite* used to delight in coming close to the face of the Edgewater and blowing the CPR docking whistle with a long and a short and a long and a short on her melodious three chime steam whistle. This, of course, interrupted the program in the Crown Terrace, but was met with cheers, waves and blinking of the dining room's light as the ship slipped past the windows.

American Can Co pier became Pier 69. Their large plant on shore, together with the concrete pier was purchased by a Canadian interest and *Princess Marguerite* moved to that pier around 1979. She was then and is now owned by B.C. Steamship s Ltd. a subsidiary for the province of British Columbia. **[385b]**

[385b]
Princess Marguerite
at Pier 69





[386] Mix of teams, railroad box cars and motor vehicles here begins to lean toward the last.

Pier 14, formerly Blue Funnel Freighters dock, became Pier 70. In late 40s Coast Guard was based there. The north side has been used for the moorage of visiting naval craft, particularly from Canada.

Union Oil Wharf was numbered Pier 71 and continued to be used by Union Oil up to the time … this is the area of Myrtle Edwards Park and Port of Seattle Elliott bay park.

There is a fishing pier out from the vicinity of the outer end of Pier 88. Some of this fill was installed during the building of the 1-5 Freeway around 1960.

Post-War Port Reports

In 1920 the Seattle Chamber of Commerce got some unsolicited encouragement that fall with the visit to town of two specialists. First Collier Cobb, a Professor from North Carolina University announced, "Nature's forces have marked Seattle for a destiny not equaled by that of any western city." He cited "erosion as the reason" and the *Seattle Times* jumped on it. "Seattle To Be World Center – Noted Geologist Declares Queen City Is Destined to Play Important Part." Cobb had a timetable. "Sometime in the 20th Century Seattle, because of its geographical location and the kindness of nature should become the world's trade center." (We may be reminded that the World Trade Organization – WTO – made it to Seattle in 1999 or just before Cobb's alarm clock would have rung, and to much local celebration and commotion.) Earlier the head of the Army Engineering Commission visited Seattle, and on Oct 16, 1919 the *Times* reported, "Brig. General Harry Taylor returning to Seattle a quarter century since his last visit finds that Seattle's growth 'was not only astounding but almost incredible'."

Any review of port reports during the 1920s – from whatever source – may be a mix of interpretations and strategies. Nor do the critics all sing in the same chorus. Early in 1921 D.S. Fotheringham, Seattle manager of the Portland Cordage Co., made a public complaint that Seattle's high wharf charges were driving orient importers to California where shippers pay most of the wharf charges rather than the local manufacturers. These conditions, claimed Fotheringham, "helped drag Seattle down from second to tenth pace in the list of America's foreign trade ports last year." The shippers, of course, felt differently and on their own continued to hope and work for the time when the Port of Seattle would simply allow them to lease its facilities and be in general charge. The Port responded like the sheriff. Since there were not enough wharves in Seattle to allow each steamship company to be in charge, the results would be an inevitable hostility between them, and it was part of the Port's role to keep the peace on Elliott Bay. The tangled argument between Seattle and San Francisco over who was handling transfer fees correctly or fairly would go on until well after the Second World War.

In the ordinarily mystified business of promotion, then as now, much depends upon who is comparing what to what. In late 1923, the Port of Seattle tabulated its tonnage and went public. *The Seattle Times* report uses that headline prose that says, "Get it!" several times as it jabs at the reader. "Port Riding Forward On Big Wave of Prosperity …

Seattle's waterborne commerce piling up total of more than 6,270,000 tons of cargo for year 1923. Statistics announced by Harbor Department – Queen City's trade growing faster in peace time than during hectic years of recent world war. Riding the greatest flood tide of prosperity in the history of the Port, knocking the epochal war cargo record of 1918 into a cocked hat …" The "cocked hat" metaphor may seem a bit extreme when we note that the cargo tonnage of 1918 totaled 5,984,228 tons - nearly a draw with 1923. But a report of three years later – if it can be believed or if it really compares the same stuff – does blow what came earlier off its blocks. On Feb. 13, 1927 *The Seattle Times* exclaimed, "In the past year 30,000,000 tons of foreign freight, valued at more than a billion dollars cleared through the port, 308 liners sailed for the Orient, 175 sailed for Europe, 60 to South America, 378 through the canal to Atlantic ports and more than 1,000 sailed to Pacific ports. Seattle's port today ranks sixteenth in the world ports in the volume of tonnage handled." Considering that it was only thirty years previous that the *Miike Maru* pulled in at Schwabacher's Wharf and thereby began the first regular steamship service to the Orient, that in 1926 there were 308 liners that left Elliott Bay for the Orient really is something.

Comes Now The Motorcar

By 1920 the horseless carriage has been around Seattle for twenty years. However, four years after the first owner appeared with his wheeled wonder on a Seattle street, these smashing contraptions were still quite rare. In the traffic statistics for the busy intersection of the Second Avenue and Pike Street compiled by the city's public works department on Dec. 23, 1904, of the 3,959 vehicles counted only 14 were automobiles. Only one year earlier, not one of the 2,745 vehicles counted at the intersection (actually a "T") of First Avenue and Cherry Street was horseless. The count, of course, does not include bicycles. In 1904 the "cycle craze" was still making cash registers sing on Second Avenue and up Pike Street towards Capitol Hill, Seattle's two "bicycle rows." It was cyclists who were largely responsible for the Good Roads Clubs, and so it was they who even without intending it turned themselves into motorists, especially as motorcars got better and cheaper and they got older. Seattle's first auto row was its bike row on Pike Street turned over to motorcars, although for a time many dealers sold both. It was only during the World War One years that the motorcar became the commonplace and horses clumping obstructions. In 1916, when Woodrow Wilson was preparing the boys of America for their visit to France, Seattle had some 16,000 cars. By 1921 when those who could return were back there were about 48,000 cars in Seattle. In three years this number would nearly double to 88,000. In 1928 with 129,000 cars on the city's streets, they were regularly bumping into each other. And they were using the waterfront – often as a detour around the business district.

Railroad Avenue and its "services" were profoundly influenced by internal combustion. Motor vehicles increasingly took space away from the railroads, ultimately forcing the latter to do what they had previously found so difficult, to cooperate in the use of the dwindling space and tracks. **[386]** The new machines also accelerated the business of transshipment – moving shipped materials to and from places that were not served by tracks. As we will relate below, increasingly in the 1920s Railroad Avenue was a parade of teamsters without teams either moving from point to point with their low slung trucks

– the easier for loading – or waiting in line to load or unload. The shipping of motorcars themselves eventually transformed the larger members of the Mosquito Fleet into ferries and let the others go to scrap, leaving now but one survivor, the national landmark *Virginia V*. **[387]** As highways increasingly linked communities on Puget Sound's congested east shore, the old role of the "Mosquito Fleet" steamers helping east shore communities keep in touch was abandoned for a new calling – the carrying of passengers and their automobiles across the Sound to its west shore.

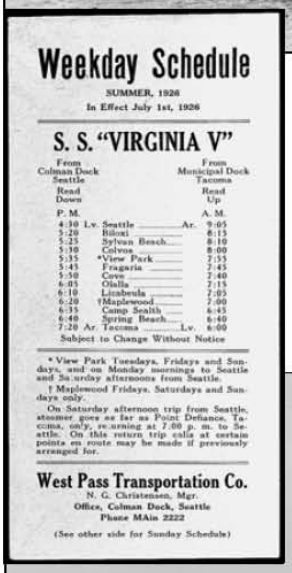
The Mosquito Fleet Conversion to Ferries

The *State of Washington* was probably the first steamer to take on an automobile – a Stanley Steamer from Hoodsport to Seattle in 1906. The building of passable roads in Kitsap County meant that increasingly the "Navy Yard Route" between Seattle and Bremerton became the way to also explore the Olympic Peninsula. **[388]** In 1915 the steamer *Tourist* started carrying cars – six a trip – twice daily between Seattle and Bremerton. It also advertised the service. The venerable *Bailey Gatzert,* built in Ballard but sent to Portland to work on the Columbia River, was returned to Puget Sound in 1918 by the Puget Sound Navigation Company to help out the *Tourist*. At first the *Bailey Gatzert* made three daily round trips on the Navy Route with four on weekends. Within two years, however, she came out of "surgery" as a vessel wide enough to carry 30 automobiles, and outfitted with a ten-ton steam elevator to carry automobiles off and on. Since the *Bailey Gatzert* was the first vessel to be elaborately made over for carrying autos it is often described as the first auto ferry on the most important of ferry routes, the one to Bremerton. In another ten years the Mosquito Fleet was a shadow of its former self as steamer after steamer was converted. We will note a few.

The Puget Sound Navigation Company (PSNC) converted its steamer *Whatcom* in 1921 and renamed it, appropriately, the ferry *City of Bremerton*. The typical conversion stripped the steamer of much of its superstructure above the main deck, made it wider with projecting sponsons, often cutting away at both the bow and stern in order to fit doors wide enough to receive vehicles directly rather than from the side or by using elevators. During 1923 the PSNC counted 28,000 motor vehicles riding the *City of Bremerton* on its Navy Yard Route. And there were then 22 other ferries in operation on a variety of cross-Sound routes. However, the home port that Seattle had made of itself for most of the informal Mosquito Fleet continued with the Ferries. In 1922 the PSNC's big *H. B. Kennedy* was renamed *Seattle*, and two years later converted into a steam ferry. The accompanying photographs of her before (as the *Kennedy*) and after show the typical effects of these makeovers. **[389 & 390]** In 1926 the *Chippewa*, another big Black Ball steamer, was shortened and widened for 90 automobiles and 2000 passengers. The conversion on the *Chippewa* and many others was made at the Lake Washington Shipyard in Houghton – but not the *Seattle*. Her changes were made at the Todd yard on Elliott Bay and when she returned to her route after surgery the *Seattle* could still reach 20 miles an hour. It took her 55 minutes, on average, to make the Bremerton-Seattle crossing.

California Ferry Conversions: 1937

With the opening first of the Oakland Bay Bridge in 1936 and the Golden Gate a year later, most of the ferries on San Francisco Bay



Weekday Schedule

SUMMER, 1926
In Effect July 1st, 1926

S. S. "VIRGINIA V"

From Colman Dock Seattle Read Down			From Municipal Dock Tacoma Read Up
P. M.			A. M.
4:30	Lv. Seattle	Ar.	9:05
5:20	Biloxi		8:15
5:25	Sylvan Beach		8:10
5:30	Colvos		8:00
5:35	*View Park		7:55
5:45	Fragaria		7:45
5:50	Cove		7:40
6:05	Olalla		7:15
6:10	Lisabeula		7:05
6:20	†Maplewood		7:00
6:35	Camp Sealth		6:45
6:40	Spring Beach		6:40
7:20	Ar. Tacoma	Lv.	6:00

Subject to Change Without Notice

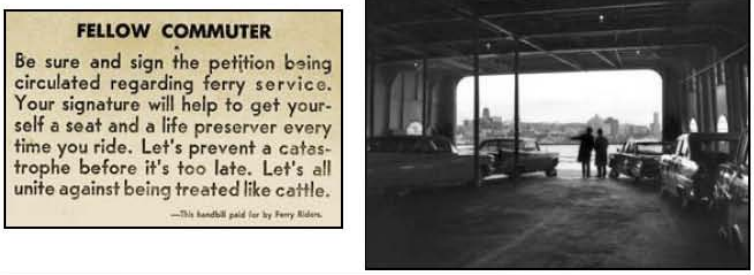
* View Park Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays, and on Monday mornings to Seattle and Saturday afternoons from Seattle.

† Maplewood Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only.

On Saturday afternoon trip from Seattle, steamer goes as far as Point Defiance, Tacoma, only, returning at 7.00 p. m. to Seattle. On this return trip calls at certain points en route may be made if previously arranged for.

West Pass Transportation Co.
N. G. Christensen, Mgr.
Office, Colman Dock, Seattle
Phone MAin 2222

(See other side for Sunday Schedule)



FELLOW COMMUTER

Be sure and sign the petition being circulated regarding ferry service. Your signature will help to get yourself a seat and a life preserver every time you ride. Let's prevent a catastrophe before it's too late. Let's all unite against being treated like cattle.

—This handbill paid for by Ferry Riders.

[392] The *CHIPPEWA* after conversion

[391] The *CHIPPEWA* before conversion to ferry service

were available and cheap. Puget Sound Navigation's Capt. Alexander Peabody embraced the opportunity to "Californicate" his Puget Sound fleet. He purchased seventeen used ferries and gave most of them Northwest indigenous names. The addled side of this is captured well by maritime author and former Port Commissioner Gordon Newell in his encyclopedic *McCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest*.

> The first of the newly-acquired diesel ferries from San Francisco, the *Kehloken* (ex-*Golden State*), entered service on the Seattle-Indianola-Suquamish route early in January 1938, replacing the steam ferry *Seattle* – ex- *H.B. Kenney* – the latter vessel being laid up. Although the replacement of the old steamer of 1909 vintage by the modern diesel-electric craft was generally viewed as an example of maritime progress, a few malcontents persisted in pointing out that, whereas the handsome old *Seattle* had operated quite smoothly at a speed of 17.4 miles an hour, the new *Keholken*, a remarkably ugly craft, progressed with considerable vibration at a rate of 14 miles an hour." **[393]**

The following year, 1939, the power and fittings were removed from the *Seattle*, the hull laid up at Kennydale on Lake Washington, and she was soon scrapped.

Colman Dock Adjustments & The *Kalakala*

The new Puget Sound maritime culture of ferry crossings, its opportunities for reverie and meditation while waiting, and its necessarily bulky side – the cars – is caught in the attached look down on the enclosed Colman Dock staging lot. **[394]** Judging by the vintage of the cars, the photograph was taken in 1935 or two years before this 1908 Colman Dock would be replaced by the Art Deco ferry terminal shaped to compliment the Black Ball's new signature ship, the *Kalakala.* **[395 thru 398]** "The world's first streamlined ferry" may well greet the motorists waiting here, for the *Kalakala* was introduced in 1935. It was a giddy year for the Black Ball because this year it also purchased its strike-plagued competitor, the Kitsap Transportation line that operated nearby from the other side of Fire Station No. 5 at Pier 3/54. With this purchase of the "White Collar Line" the Black Ball became the largest inland fleet in the world. Ironically, 1935 may be also considered the beginning of the end for the private ferry system, although it took another fifteen years of strikes, rate-hikes, and withdrawal of routes before Washington State would take control at midnight June 1, 1951. During the late spring sunset of its last day, all the Black Ball ferries that were underway paused in mid-course for one minute and lowered their flags. Sixteen ferries (all but four from California), twenty terminals, one destroyer escort, and some odds and ends were included in the transfer.

Adopted & Raised on Railroad Avenue, The Recollections of Teamster Dave Scott

It's time to again gather around *The Sea Chest* for another excerpted reminiscence. This time Dave Scott recalls what it meant to be a teamster on Railroad Avenue in the 1920s. Bill Scott, a steamboat man, adopted the orphan when he was only a few days old, named him Dave and raised him. From the beginning, Dave Scott hung around the waterfront, sometimes

The Fleet

- *21 ferries in operation*
- *their names and usual locations*
- *These broadside photos will help you identify the ferries . . .*

Tillikum is on the Seattle-Winslow run . . .

Klahowya, on Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth run . . .

Evergreen State, Anacortes-San Juan Is.-Sidney, B. C. . .

Illahee runs from Seattle to Winslow . . .

Klickitat, Anacortes-San Juan Is.-Sidney . . .

Nisqually, on the Edmonds-Kingston run . . .

Quinault, Fauntleroy-Vashon-Southworth . . .

Kalakala, Port Angeles-Victoria & Seattle-Bremerton . . .

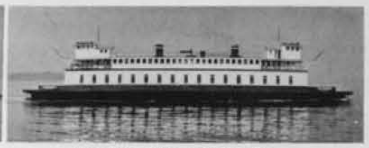
Chippewa, Seattle-Bremerton . . .

Willaps and Enetai, both on the Seattle-to-Bremerton run . . .

Rhododendron, Lofall-South Point . . . and Olympic, Mukilteo-Columbia Beach . . .

Klahanie, Mukilteo to Columbia Beach . . .

Kehlokin, Edmonds to Kingston . . .


Chetzemoka, Mukilteo-Columbia Beach . . .

Photos are arranged to show sister-ships in line wherever possible, and ferries are presented in generally similar views. All photos by Joe Williamson.

Vashion, Anacortes-San Juan Is. . . .

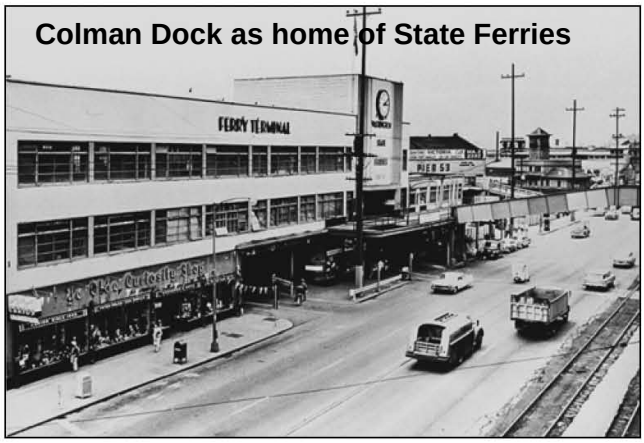
Kitsap, Lofall-South Point . . .

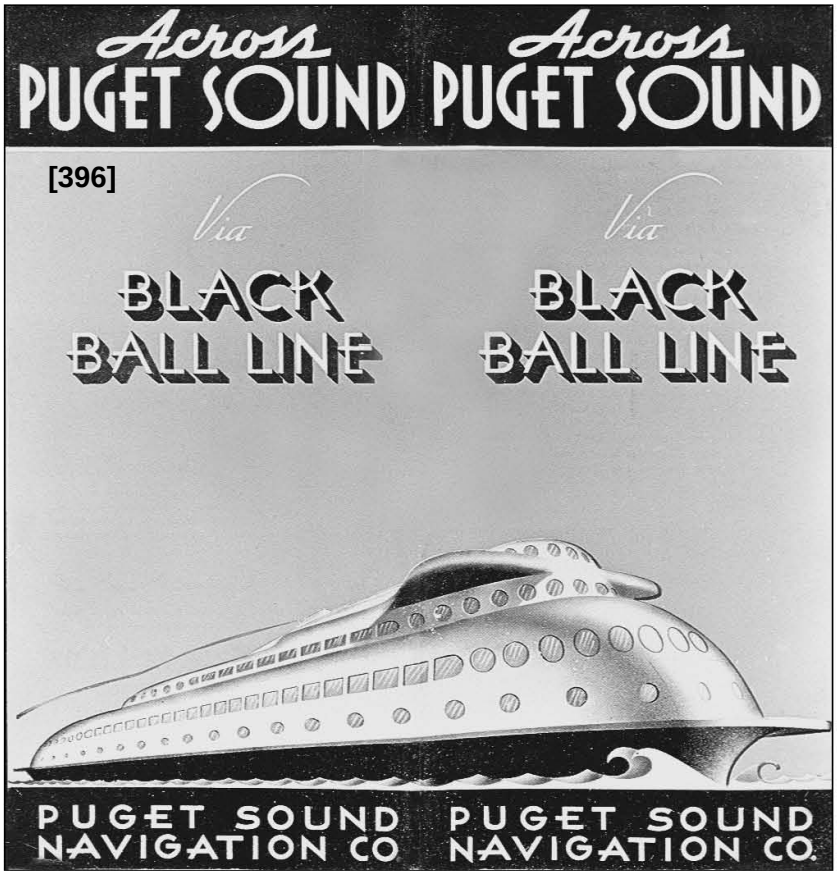
Leschi, Mukilteo-Columbia Beach . . .

Crosline, Lofall-South Point . . .

Skansonia, Tahlequa-Point Defiance.

[397]
COLMAN FERRY TERMINAL
BLACK BALL LINE


Colman Dock as home of State Ferries
FERRY TERMINAL


Across PUGET SOUND
Across PUGET SOUND
[396]
Via BLACK BALL LINE
Via BLACK BALL LINE
PUGET SOUND NAVIGATION CO
PUGET SOUND NAVIGATION CO.

COLMAN FERRY TERMINAL
BLACK BALL LINE
COLMAN FERRY DOCK SEATTLE, WN.

[398]

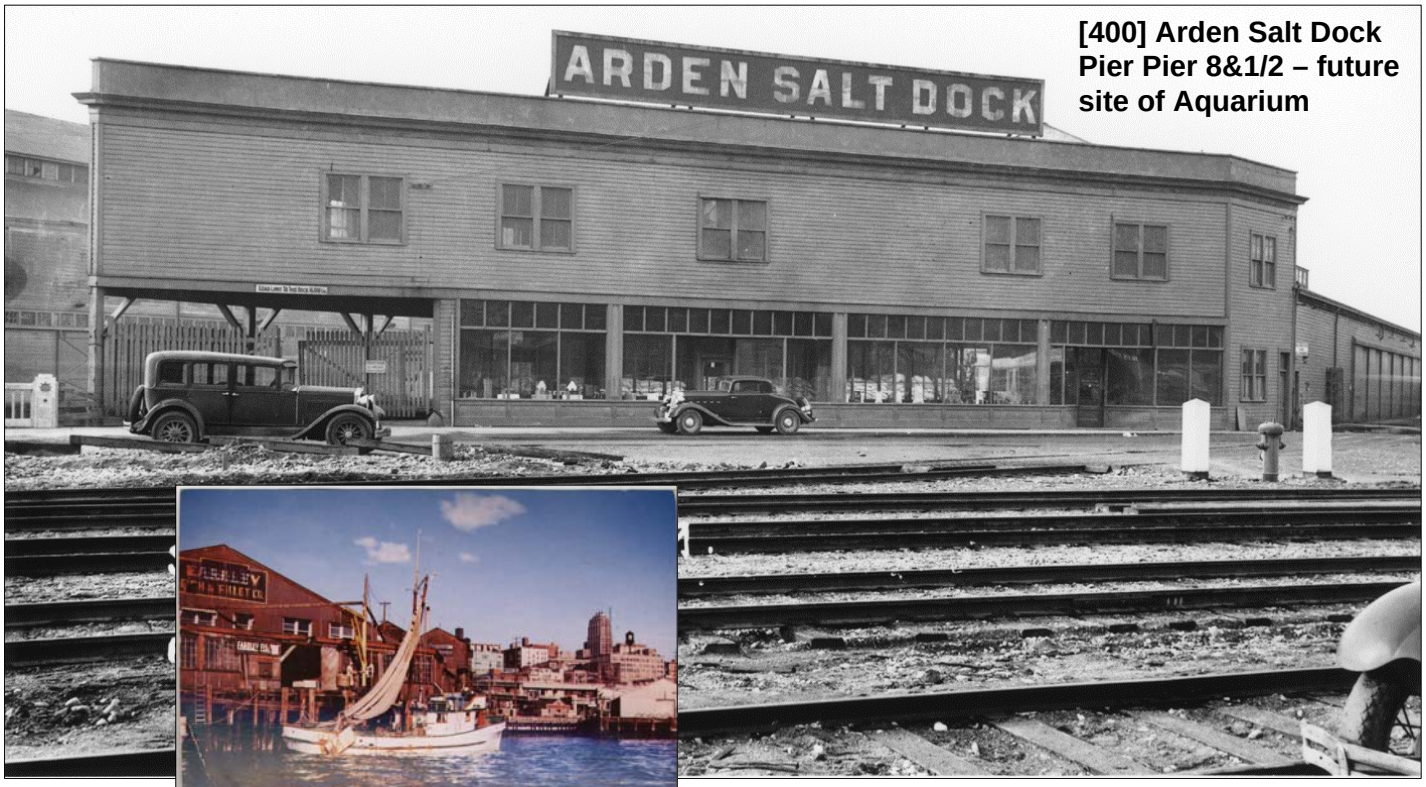
[395]
52 KALAKALA, LEAVING SEATTLE HARBOR ON MOONLIGHT CRUISE
© CHAS. R. LAIDLAW—AEROPHOTO

WELCOME HOME

working on tugs and most often on Railroad Avenue as a teamster. His first job was nearby, selling newspapers as a kid at the corner of First and Madison. Scott drove for the Lloyd Transfer Company when it was quartered in Pier 4 (55) at the foot of Seneca Street. It was a big operation. Loyd Transfer had 66 rigs at the peak." Scott was driving early enough to have handled dray wagons with teams over the wood planks of Railroad Avenue. **[399]**

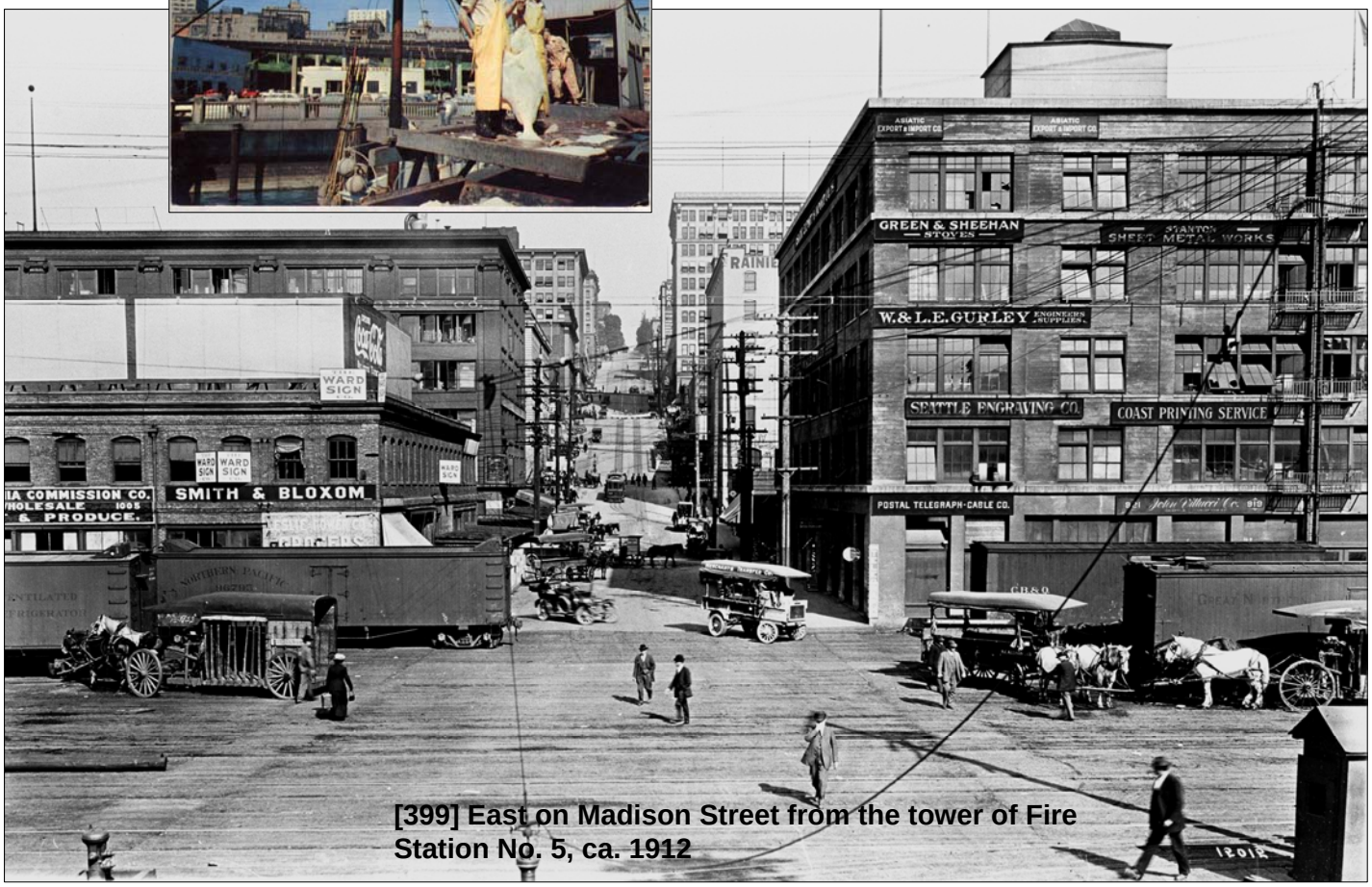
> "Some of the rigs were trucks and some horse draw … in my early days about half and half … Them days Railroad Avenue was just one chuck hole after another. The railroad tracks turned into each pier and if you did not hit those tracks just right your wagon would go skidding …That was before the days of the old Fisheries Supply Company [On Pier 4/55]. When they located there, we split the head of the dock, they on the south side and Lloyd's on the north … Just after the gas buggy had over-ruled old dobbin, we had Doanes, which were built in San Francisco. They had only four cylinders but did they ever have power! And one could never get 'pinched' for speeding. Their limit was about eight miles per hour." After hauling cotton, bamboo poles, coconuts and such for most of the day "about four o'clock the old man would give us the word that a silk ship was going to tie up at Great Northern Docks … We'd get a bite to eat, fill the tanks of all the rigs, and head for the Cove for our loads of bales of silk. Then bumpity-bump, bumpity-bump with hard rubber tires on the wood planks of Railroad Avenue to King Street Station where the extra fast trains were waiting for their cargo to head east … We sometimes had over twenty rigs hauling and we did not finish until maybe ten or eleven o'clock at night. And were we pooped! … Well it did not take long for morning to arrive and then back to the old grind again to maybe haul wood cases of salmon from Pier 40 [renamed Pier 90] to East Waterway Dock or Stacy Street for American-Hawaiian, or Pier 1 for Luckenbach. We averaged 200 cases per Doane. It was a long haul from the Cove to East Waterway along the waterfront in those days. Sometimes you'd go down a hole and wonder if the rig was ever coming up … One of the docks where confusion reigned was Pier 2 [51 at the foot of Yesler Way], the Alaska Steamship Dock. Friday night was the height of overtime duty, especially in the spring and summer. Starting in the late afternoon, the dray wagons would begin the long line up with freight … for as long as you could see down the waterfront on Railroad Avenue. We had to wait on the east side of the tracks, where the viaduct is now. I have seen the line many a time as far south as Dearborn Street. We had, of course, horse-neck wagons in the early days and most were drawn by former fire engine horses. Later on we got those heavy-duty Doans and other low bed trucks.

Another bulk item that Scott and other truckers handled was salt for the Alaska fisheries. If the order was for 200 tons or more, the steamers would make a special visit at the salt docks – the small piers directly north of the Pike Street Wharf. **[400]** Scott and other teamsters hauled the smaller orders.



[400] Arden Salt Dock Pier Pier 8&1/2 – future site of Aquarium

The small piers between Pike and Gaffney docks dealt at times in fish and/or salt.



[399] East on Madison Street from the tower of Fire Station No. 5, ca. 1912

> And the orders never seemed to come in early, always at the last minute." While waiting in line "we would walk for a mile or more to get to the O.K. Café to get dinner. One of our boys would stand by our rigs. We had to watch the dehorns (alcoholics) to see that they did not steal something off the wagons … Sometime you might watch three or four and sometimes even five rigs at a time while those guys were eating. Sometimes the skinners did not make it back because they found a bootleg joint on the way. You see, they was hitting that stuff, 'White Mule' that cost two bits a drink in those days. One drink of the stuff and a fellow could jump four feet. By the time some of them got down to their rigs they was driving blind, but you had to follow the line so it did not matter too much … Finally, you would get on the dock and there was nothing but confusion. You see, Alaska Steam would stop at every town in Alaska and at all the canneries and salteries. There might be 40 separate freight piles on that dock and all the rigs already unloading … Sometimes you had 25 or more separate, small shipments. The checker would spot you at one pile, then you would move to the next if it was open. The horses sometimes got skittish waiting while the longshoremen's jitneys sped up and down the dock among the rigs which were backed in at different angles. When I had a full load from Seattle hardware for ten or more towns I was sure to be three or four hours getting it all off." If the vessel one was loading happened to be the *Alameda*, *Victoria*, or *Mariposa* "Nine a.m. was sailing time, regardless … No matter which one, come 9 a.m., it was, 'Let go the lines!' These were the fast passenger vessels which carried the more important freight and had exact time schedules to keep. You had better have your freight on board!"

Dave Scott continued to teamster until 1941 when he was disabled by an accident and subsequently retired to Aberdeen. The complete text of his "Memories of Dear Old Seattle's Waterfront" are printed in the September, 1977 issue of *The Sea Chest*, the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society's quarterly publication.

"A Place for Colossal Commercialism" & Colorful Writing by Almira Bailey, 1927

Dave Scott's color might be compared to Almira Bailey's. The feature writer was also on Railroad Avenue for at least part of a day and may have crossed paths with Scott. In the 1920s Bailey's wrote a series on Seattle streets that appeared in *The Seattle Times*. Her description of Railroad Avenue is included in the issue for May 27, 1927. In the series Bailey usually managed to get to the street in the title about half way into her article. Like Scott, Bailey is also all about color but the art differs. Scott spent his life on the waterfront – Bailey a few moments. Her description is picturesque – more like that of a sensitive tourist than an intimate. If you read a few of Bailey's streets you will always learn something but you will also discover that from street to street she packs the same colors. Towards the bottom of the second column in her three-column article she arrives at the waterfront with the heading "Thrills Romance." It is followed with this description.

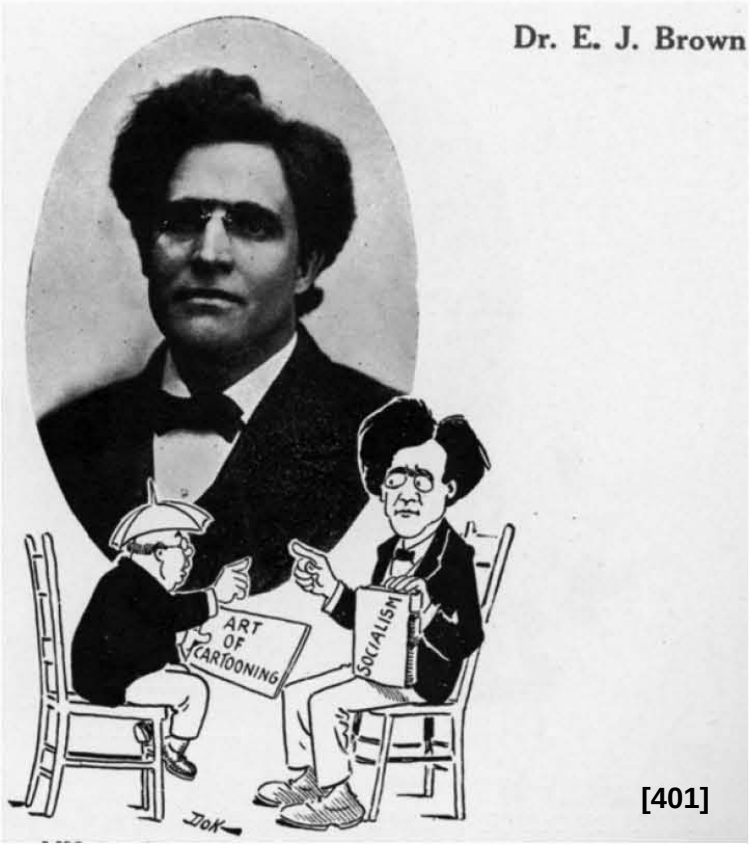
Railroad Avenue today is still waterfront, the most unsafe road to cross in Seattle, but having crossed, then to loiter there along the water. Now who would go to shows for thrills and romance when there is this way to go! Where huge boats of audacious magnitudes come in close among the deep, jade waters, and tramp steamers laden with merchandise and planetary gossip come in from world's-end, where slim tapering sailing vessels out-bound for Alaska, wait to sail, and slender, white rum runners nose in among the wharves! Not forgetting, oh mercy me, the fat, chuggy little ferries, not handsome but oh so friendly. And fish for a world comes in and goes out and waits on ice to be taken home for dinner – gold carp and rose-pink snappers, flat soles, great flounders, cheap herring, perch and pink shrimps, not to mention the brave Dungeness and nice, little buckets of clams. And in glass jars, salmon spawn like glorified currants, while smoked and dried and salted and pickled and spiced fish with salmon bellies and cod fish tongues are all savory of Alaska and Alaskan menus. Yes, Railroad Avenue is the most interesting of them all. As a street it has been unjustly maligned. The fault is not the street but those who travel there. No one should travel there, a place for colossal commercialism and not for one little Ford, where freight trains move heavily between boats and commission houses and the last of the horses move with ponderous cargoes. I suppose that Denny, Low and Boren and Terry with his New York store, could never have envisioned, in their most ephemeral dream that it would rank in value of foreign exports, next to New York and Boston – not so soon. Yesterday a sawdust town waiting for the coming of the *George E. Starr* – overnight one of the maritime triumphs of the world!

"The So-Called Guard Rail on Railroad Avenue" – Death Comes to the Petersons off Lenora Street, 1925

Two years before Almira Bailey decreed it "the most unsafe road to cross in Seattle" Railroad Avenue claimed its first three deaths by drowning. The *Times* reported on Feb. 10, 1925, that the coupe carrying Mr. and Mrs. John A. Peterson and Mrs. Peterson's aunt Mrs. Finch of Toronto "tore away thirty feet of the so-called guardrail on the bay side of Railroad Avenue at the foot of Lenora Street when it plunged into the bay." Perhaps the coupe was redirected by one of the many potholes that teamster Dave Scott was experienced in avoiding, or the coupe may have simply hit an oil skid on the planked paving and lost control. Whatever, a political splash followed the coupe's plunge. "Coroner W.H. Corson at inquest announced that he proposed to call Mayor E. J. Brown and other city officials as witnesses [including] George F. Cotterill of the Port Commission and John E. Carrol, chairman of the streets and sewers committee of the City Council to tell what they know of conditions." The *Times* noted that Mayor Brown had previously been requesting the city council to do something about conditions on Railroad Avenue. **[401]**

Mayor Brown's Urban Renewal on the Pike Street Hill Climb '24

One year earlier, the photogenic dentist-Mayor with the improved smile joined the revue of those



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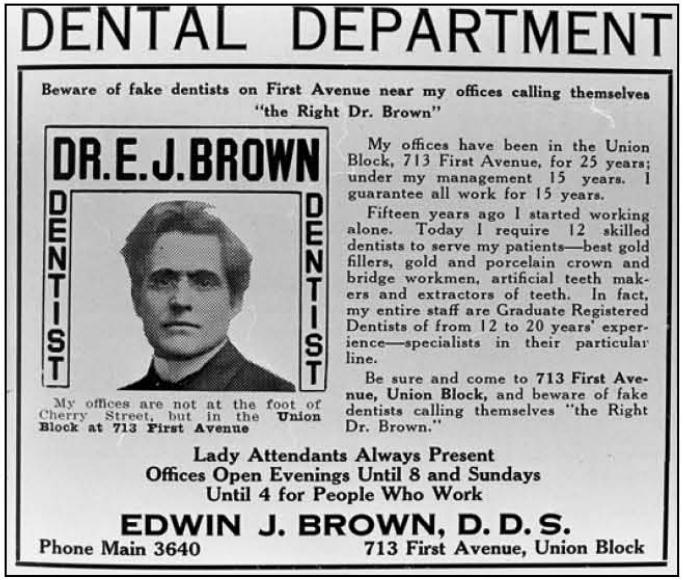


DENTAL DEPARTMENT

Beware of fake dentists on First Avenue near my offices calling themselves "the Right Dr. Brown"

DR. E. J. BROWN

DENTIST DENTIST

My offices are not at the foot of Cherry Street, but in the **Union Block at 713 First Avenue**

My offices have been in the Union Block, 713 First Avenue, for 25 years; under my management 15 years. I guarantee all work for 15 years.

Fifteen years ago I started working alone. Today I require 12 skilled dentists to serve my patients—best gold fillers, gold and porcelain crown and bridge workmen, artificial teeth makers and extractors of teeth. In fact, my entire staff are Graduate Registered Dentists of from 12 to 20 years' experience—specialists in their particular line.

Be sure and come to **713 First Avenue, Union Block,** and beware of fake dentists calling themselves "the Right Dr. Brown."

Lady Attendants Always Present
Offices Open Evenings Until 8 and Sundays
Until 4 for People Who Work

EDWIN J. BROWN, D. D. S.

Phone Main 3640 **713 First Avenue, Union Block**

[402]

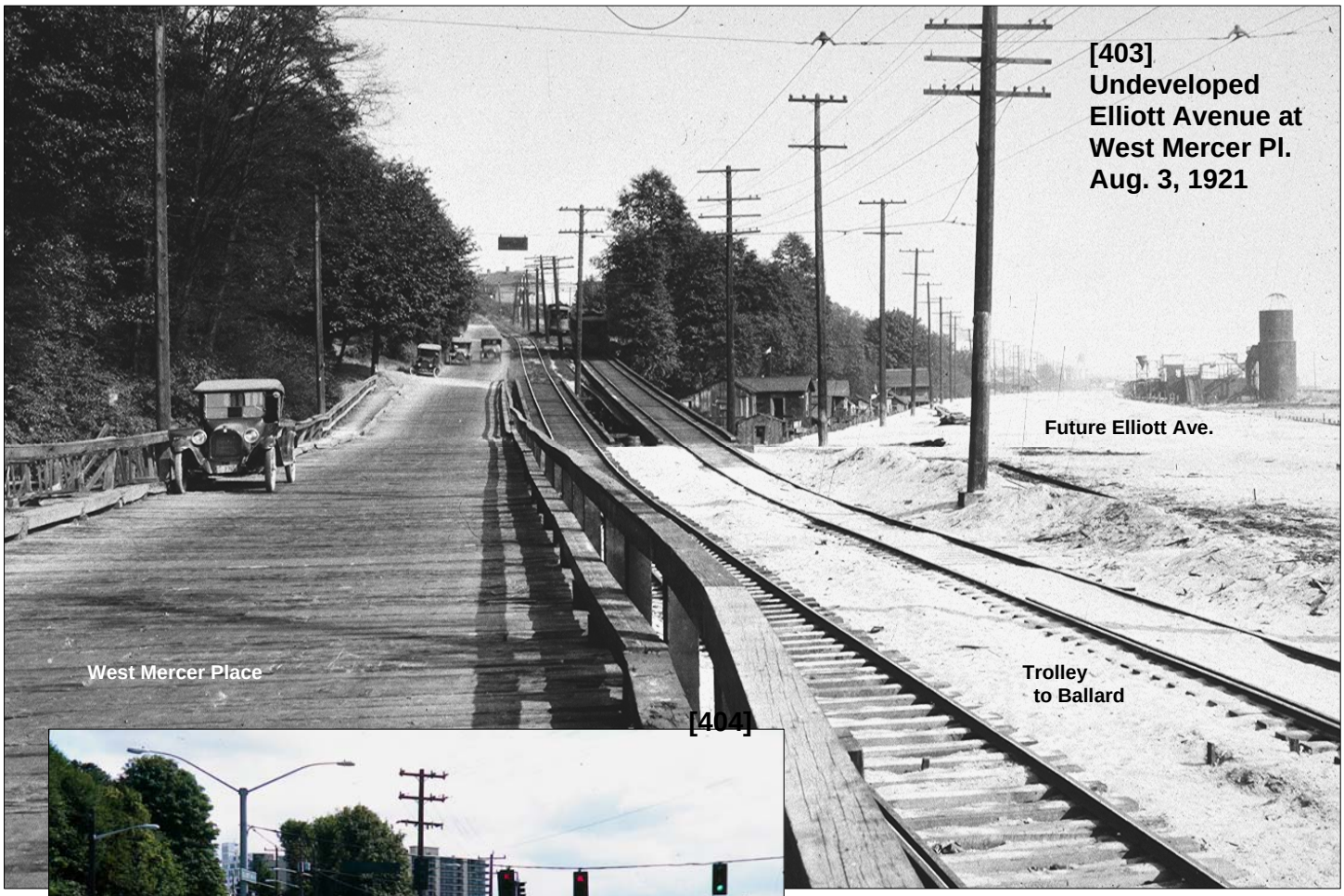
who have proposed grand plans on Railroad Avenue that ultimately came to nothing. Brown unveiled an early version of urban renewal for the Pike Place Market that featured a multi-story link between it and the waterfront spanning Railroad Avenue. (See the attached drawing **[402]**) It would have been the mother of all Pike Street Hill Climbs. Fortunately, perhaps, the proposal plan was rejected and the market was permitted to continue building the charming funk of its traditions until it was again coveted for another urban renewal in the 1960s that, as we all know so well, also failed.

Although this waterfront history has heretofore only strayed north of Broad Street to imagine Indians catching waterfowls with nets as they fly between Elliott Bay and Lake Union, we here return with a motorcar to make a point about the influence the new traffic had on Railroad Avenue and its links. (Also below this opportunity closes Part Two with a recounting of a special moment in the history of the relations between the mayor -- in this instance a fresh Ed Brown -- and the city council.)

Elliott Avenue Reclamation

The 1917 decision to extend Railroad Avenue north of Broad Street and to continue Western Avenue straight on to the waterfront was, according to Charles R. Case, the Street Superintendent at the time, "seriously retarded by war conditions." The still young Port of Seattle's "world-class public works" at Smith Cove convinced the city and the businesses along the way to share the costs. The Elliott Sanitary fill from Bay Street to Garfield St. involved raising the shore to three feet above high tide. As just introduced, the plan of 1918 also included a regrade of Western Ave. from Eagle (near Denny Way) to reach the waterfront with an extension to Elliott Avenue at Thomas Street. (This last part would have perhaps pleased David Denny, whose own name for his namesake street was Depot Street, expecting that it would some day lead to the waterfront site of a union depot.) The plan involved using contributions from the dredging of the Port of Seattle's new waterways at Smith Cove. As noted, the reason given for this sizeable project was the need to improve the central waterfront and the business district's links with the Port's facilities at Smith Cove. By one description in 1918 the "present highway to the Smith Cove terminals is up hill and down with impossible grades and a rickety plank trestle. The planking is so rough and the grade so heavy that hauling expense is said to be double the figure it would be with a water grade road."

When the work finally got underway in 1922 it featured one of the city's larger historical reclamations: the filling-in of Elliott Avenue along the waterfront from Broad Street to Smith Cove. The work of filling, grading and paving was done between 1922 and 1923 and, as planned, the continuous and wide water level link on Elliott Avenue reached Smith Cove. Just as importantly the work continued on north through Interbay to the nearly new Ballard Bridge. Soon this improvement into Ballard would figure on the list of proposed routes to be further developed for moving traffic north beyond the squeeze of Seattle's slender waistline. It was a concern that would ultimately result in the construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. At the close of 1922 when all the city's concrete and blacktop was measured it was calculated that 503,396 square yards of pavement had been laid in Seattle during the preceding year, and this brought the city's



[403] Undeveloped Elliott Avenue at West Mercer Pl. Aug. 3, 1921

[404]

[405] Developing Denny Way through to Elliott Ave.

total to 6,167,252 square yards of paving. This ranked Seattle in a list of 20 American cities of equal or greater population in third place in its ratio of paving to population.

West Mercer Place, 1921

Two views are attached here of the waterfront north of Broad Street. One was taken just before the work began and the other during it. The first was photographed looking south along the beach from where West Mercer Place ascends to lower Queen Anne from the trestle on what was then still called Water Street. The scene is below Kinnear Park, and was recorded most likely by James Lee, the photographer for the public works department, as a record of what was about to be changed. The negative is dated August 3, 1921. **[403]** (It is repeated with a "modern" view. **[404]**) The tracks that ascend the bank beside West Mercer Place are part of the West Street and North End Electric Railway (noted above in the context of Western Avenue and the post-89 fire Commission District) that Thomas Burke built to Ballard, the community he helped found. Most likely, neither the lumber mill on the right nor the squatters shacks nestled beside the greenbelt at the center of the scene will survive the upheavals of the coming creation of Elliott Avenue. A second view looks down Western Avenue where it descends to the waterfront from Denny Way. **[405]** It dates from the time of the reclamation.

Mayor Brown & W. D. Barkhuff - 1922

Returning to Dentist Ed Brown, it was in June of 1922 that he took the office of Mayor. That summer began the first of his protracted fights with the city council. Three times Brown nominated Carl S. Gassman to fill the unexpired term of O. A. Piper for the position of Street Engineer, and every time the Council rejected him. Asked for his opinion of this standoff, City Counsel T. J. L. Kennedy concluded that the Council was bound by duty to share equal responsibility with the mayor in appointments and not simply act as a rubber stamp. Brown also appointed George W. Scott, Francis R. Kelly and Charles Bolsby. Again all were rejected. When the Council next elected its own candidate, Lieu. Col. George M. Rice to the position, the Mayor first threatened to go to court but then on Nov. 29 put forward W.D. Barkhuff for the position. Barkhuff, whom we met above, was formerly in the city engineer's office. Brown also continued his threats. Rice would be arrested if he attempted to take office – the arrest would be made under an ordinance prohibiting loiterers around a public office. When the Council also rebuffed Barkhuff, Brown asked the Board of Public Works to take charge of the Department of Streets and Sewers. The Mayor carried this request to the Board while his original nominee Carl S. Gassman watched from the door. Meanwhile Col. Rice also visited City Hall, but avoided the Streets Department. Ultimately the Council was won over by Barkhuff and Rice, in a letter dated Dec. 5, while indicating that he appeared to have legal authority to serve, resigned in the interests of peace and tranquility.

PART FOUR – K. MIRACLE'S 1925 VISION to 2005

Councilperson Katheryn A. Miracle's Visions - 1925

In 1925 at what turned out to be the sunset of Ed Brown's mayoral performance, Councilwoman Katheryn A. Miracle, a member of the streets and sewers committee, mused on all the dirt remaining in Denny Hill – east of the 5th Avenue cliff – and saw within it (perhaps like a sculptor sees his or her subject in the block of granite before a chisel has set about "releasing" it) two possible solutions to the growing congestion of traffic moving north-south through the city. Miracle proposed that the dirt be used to either widen the shores of Lake Union or widen Railroad Avenue behind a seawall and including there a throughway for motor vehicles. Three and one half years later when the removal of Denny Hill was resumed none of it, as noted above, was so used. Instead the dirt was dumped into Elliott Bay.

J.W.A. Bollong's A Double-Decker Railroad Avenue Elevated - 1926

J.W. A. Bollong (the City's first Traffic Engineer who gave Seattle its first electrically controlled traffic signal at Fourth South and Jackson Street on April Fool's Day 1924) visited and studied several cities with a mind for improving Seattle's north-south traffic. On his return, Bollong recommended to Mayor Bertha Landes (1926-28) that Railroad Avenue be used as the most westerly of four major north-south arterials. Connecting with the Pacific Highway by way of First Avenue South and E. Marginal Way, he proposed that Railroad Avenue would be developed north of King Street into a double-decker elevated. The bottom level would be dedicated to the daily routines of moving freight and other business from the city to the piers or from pier to pier, but the top level of the elevated would be divided between traffic and parking. The east half would be paved as a highway and the west half developed for parking at least 2000 cars. The highway would turn and join Battery street at ground level and continue north by way of Dexter to whatever high bridge might be built above the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Fremont and then on to the Pacific Highway at the north city limits – then at 85th Street. With a few small shunts and extensions this, of course, is the route that the Alaska Way Viaduct would eventually take and lead to. The remaining three of the traffic engineer's four arterials ran up 5th Avenue (or, he suggested, perhaps 6th – an intimation of Interstate-5), a third along the top of the First and Capitol Hill ridge to a connection with Eastlake, and the fourth from Rainier Avenue up 23rd Avenue to the then very new Montlake Bridge.

City Engineer Barkhuff's Lake Union Proposal - 1929

In 1929 when the steam shovels were moving the remains of what was left of Denny Hill to portable conveyor belts, they missed altogether Councilperson Miracle's highway along the waterfront. While watching the dirt dump in Elliott Bay, Mayor Frank Edwards' City Engineer W.D. Barkhuff (who we met briefly above) had an extreme version of the Lake Union part of Miracle's vision. Taking to the air to

confirm his intuitions Barkhuff returned to earth persuaded. "I am more than ever convinced that the growth of the city northward needs a closer study of the Lake Union situation. If we grow to the northward during the next ten or twenty years as rapidly as we have during the past two decades, we will need the lower end of Lake Union for business expansion. I do not believe that it ever will be possible or desirable to develop Lake Union as a waterfront district or to provide additional shipping facilities there. We need the region more for general business expansion. It seems to me that we will have to fill in the south end of Lake Union." There had already been a long history of filling in the south end of Lake Union – about two blocks worth. Barkhuff's vision, however, was much greater. "The canal, of course, will always be protected to furnish passage to and from Lake Washington. If we could fill most of the lake, leaving the canal open, we could solve the street and bridge problems easily." Next, we are introduced to the centerpiece of Barkhuff's Lake Union dream. "Right through the center of the Lake over made ground, we could build the greatest business street of the city, connecting with the north and with a low level bridge having a lift span, which would accommodate more traffic than all the other bridges we now have across the canal. There is no question about the dirt needed for such a fill; we will have plenty of it, as we level the hills, but we might best begin by using some of the dirt now being washed away." A sense of both what Barkhuff saw from the sky and how much dirt wound up "being washed away" can be got from the attached aerial photograph of the South Lake Union and regrade neighborhoods recorded soon after the regrade was completed in 1930. **[406 & 407]**

Railroad Avenue Elevated: Pre-war Momentum

While Barkhuff was proposing a wide boulevard down the center of Lake Union, the other half of Katherine Miracle's vision – the one on Railroad Avenue (and the first of J.W. A Bollong's proposals: the one above Railroad Avenue) continued to be nurtured. Chester Morse, Bertha Landes' second City Engineer, picked up Bollong's promotion for a double-decker elevated on Railroad Avenue. In the spring of 1927, Morse described it as running between Yesler and Stewart and then continuing on a new street northeast to First Avenue at Battery. This we know is very nearly the route taken a quarter-century later by the Alaskan Way Viaduct. One variation in 1927 featured a tunnel on Bell Street connecting with the elevated. Morse pointed out that the elevated along Railroad Avenue would "stop nuisance traffic on First Avenue." The idea of the elevated was raised again in the late 1930s when V. C. Cousins, the chairman of the Seattle Traffic and Safety Council, published the details for an "elaborate program for bypassing nonstop traffic around the central business district … the project eventually should include a viaduct along Alaskan Way from Jackson Street to a point north where it could connect to Aurora Avenue."

Mayor William F. Devin's Post-War Proposal for an Alaskan Way Viaduct

Perhaps it was in part the need for a post-war distraction, or a public works equivalent of war, or the energy and mastering that were part of the war and now missed following it, or simply the bland imperative to reduce traffic congestion that induced Mayor William F. Devin in 1945 to call for a six-lane concrete and steel viaduct over Alaskan Way leading to an underground roadway through the Denny Regrade district to Aurora Avenue. **[408]** Inevitably and necessarily,

[406]
Late 1920s aerial north over Central Business District towards Lake Union

[407]
ca.1931 aerial over city showing 1929-30 regrade scar.

PROPERTY OWNERS URGE UPPER DECK FOR RAILROAD AVE.

Plans Submitted to City Advise Creation of New Diagonal Street in Heart of Heavy Traffic District.

MAR 6 1927

DOUBLE decking of Railroad Avenue between Yesler Way and Stewart Street and the opening of a new street running diagonally from Stewart Street northeast to a connection with First Avenue at Battery Street are features of a plan submitted to City Engineer Chester W. Morse yesterday by the Associated Central Business Properties, Inc., to create a new route through the heart of the city for vehicular traffic.

The Associated Central Business Properties, Inc., is the organization of downtown property owners that fathered the plan now being carried out by the city to extend Second Avenue straight through from Yesler Way to Jackson Street.

The association asks the City Council and City Engineer Morse to study its plan for an elevated roadway on Railroad Avenue as one of several plans proposed to relieve downtown congestion. The claim is made for it that it would in effect give the city an additional north and south street that would form a connecting link in the Pacific Highway between Tacoma and Everett and greatly speed up automo- travel through the business dis-

Stop "Nuisance Traffic."

Another and still more important claim is that it would also relieve First Avenue of what has come to be known as "nuisance traffic"—that is to say, heavy hauling by truck and delivery car traffic. The promoters of the plan assert that this sort of traffic has become so heavy on First Avenue between Yesler Way and the north end of the retail business district that other traffic has been driven off the street to the detriment of property values since retail trade is curtailed.

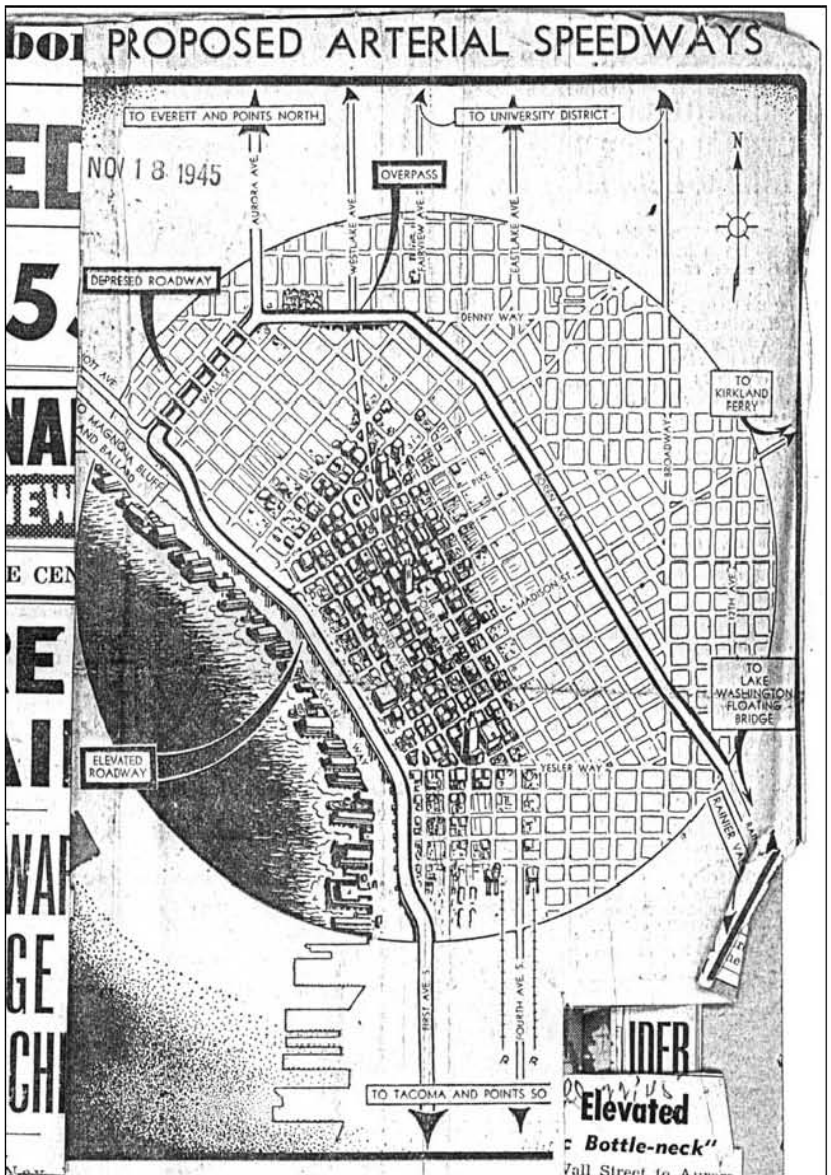
The strongest argument the backers of the plan urge in its favor, perhaps, is that it could be carried out for $1,000,000 or less and would prove the most economical of the several plans that have been proposed for speeding up vehicular traffic through the downtown business district.

$400,000 Property Estimate.

The elevated roadway on Railroad Avenue between Yesler Way and Stewart Street would be only 1,880 feet long and the length of its approaches would be 1,670 feet. The estimate submitted to the city engineer is that the elevated roadway and its approaches, with four ramps by which the elevated roadway could be reached from Railroad Avenue at intermediate points, would cost approximately $626,000.

Condemnation of property and construction of the new thoroughfare from Stewart Street to First Avenue and Blanchard Street it is estimated would cost less than $400,000.

Wearied of Council



This map of Seattle's central business district shows the plan announced by Mayor William F. Devin for relieving traffic congestion by construction of two fast arterials to route motor traffic around the business area. One by-pass route calls for a concrete and steel, six-lane viaduct forming an "upper deck" over Alaskan Way and leading into an underground roadway through the Denny Regrade District to Aurora Avenue. The second route would be a widened arterial across First Hill, along Boren Avenue, joining with Rainier Avenue on the south and connecting on the north with Aurora Avenue by an overhead roadway on Denny Way. The Alaskan Way route would cost $4,000,000 and the Boren Avenue route $500,000. matching grants. Work is expected to start on the steel and concrete

Elevated

Bottle-neck"

Wall Street to Aurora

uble-deck Structure

highway will be de-

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City Engineer Wartelle.

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[409]

a study was called for, and in 1947, when the anticipated origin-destination traffic survey was published, it stayed true to the accumulated vision of two decades for the viaduct. Basically it recommended what we eventually got – two giant expressways running north and south through the heart of metro Seattle. While the Alaskan Way Viaduct was one of these, the other was not yet the future Interstate-5 but rather – perhaps – a tunnel through Beacon Hill connected somehow with another high-level bridge over the Lake Washington Ship Canal, or a tunnel under First Hill, or both. (Instead we got the 1-5 ditch, which we might periodically remember might have been capped for relatively little more than it cost to construct it – at the time of construction.)

Picturesque Plus: The Tourist's Skyview

It was also during this post-war revival that someone first, it seems, expressed the picturesque side of a viaduct along the waterfront. Architect Joshua H. Vogel was adamant. "We've got to have the Alaskan Way viaduct. It will be of scenic benefit to tourists, for one thing. But to help out right now we should first get rid of parking on major arterials and later on minor arterials." (Here, with something for the notes section if there were one the author reflects on the view. It seems that a sizeable part of the view cadre care little for the needs of Vogel's tourist, and a few may even avoid the waterfront itself because of the great likelihood of having there the "scenic benefit" of looking at the tourists themselves with only the sides of the viaduct to compensate for it. The irony is that the devotees of the moving view have become Vogel's tourists, for the value of inspecting the city from a lofty elevation at 50 or 60 miles per hour is at best a fleeting and picturesque one, that is, one that has very little to do with the profound visions that accompany living in, working in or even deliberately visiting the neighborhood below. It is the community of the waterfront that abides with the waterfront and certainly for more than the five-minutes or so that it takes to pass through it or above it. Another irony of the view devotees is that they express little or no curiosity or interest in what the city will reveal once the viaduct is razed. Certainly to some degree, picturesque values – the devotional and/or the exhilarating – will also be found in that cityscape once it is again revealed.) **[409]**

Later we will quickly construct the Alaska Way Viaduct and also summarize attempts to deconstruct it. Here, however, we return to Railroad Avenue in the mid-1920s. While the issue of fixing up the dangerously dilapidated strip was often attached to the question of riding above it, the chronic – and so ordinarily ineffective – concerns over Railroad Avenue proper (and improper) were ultimately melded not with the building of a skyride but of the seawall – as they are again today.

Deliberating On What To Do With The North Waterfront: 1924/25

Early in 1924, the Seattle City Council's street committee invited the State Commissioner of Public Lands and the Port of Seattle to discuss fixing up Railroad Avenue, especially that most dangerous part of it north of Pike Street. With the new Elliott Avenue north of Bay Street still sparkling above its fresh fill, the contrast with dismal old Railroad Avenue south of Broad Street was obvious. These public players had considerable power to kick the railroads around for by 1924 the

once lordly companies were running down the center of Railroad Avenue on both redundant tracks and sufferance. The franchises were up. The popular proposal was to move the railroads off the center and to the east side of Railroad Avenue north of Pike Street while putting up a new and much wider wooden trestle (still over the tides) for vehicles where once there were both tracks and those long and open "man traps." Early in 1925 the City Council published its solution – to leave the trains where they were and build a new 27-foot wide viaduct west of the tracks. The Port of Seattle differed. The proposed viaduct was not wide enough, the Port claimed. When the Peterson's coupe went over the side at Lenora five days after the City Council revealed its plans the critics – including the Port – used it as a tragic lesson that more was needed than what the city proposed. The trestle's slippier new boards would surely bring with them more accidents. It was this disturbance that may well have helped stimulate Councilwoman Katheryn Miracle's visions later that year of a new Railroad Avenue behind a new seawall. But for the moment – a decade-long one – nothing came of these proposals.

Getting Out Of Town: Proposed Routes Through the North End to the Pacific Highway: 1920s

As noted, following World War One when the popularity of the motorcar grew at a bewildering rate, the city began having problems of digestion in the central business district, the slim part of town. Again, all proposals involved avoiding the CBD by moving traffic up on 23rd Ave, or on top of First and Capitol Hills (or under them in tunnels), or along the east border of the central business district (the future route of 1-5) but also along the waterfront. North of town the imagined routes were settled upon early. It meant simply getting traffic to the Pacific Highway that was being developed north of the city limits along Aurora. To make a link with that north end magnet, the suggested routes out of downtown went along either the shore of Lake Union (discounting Barkhuff's later proposal to go right up the middle of it), or along the greenbelt on the eastern slope of Queen Anne Hill (Dexter or Aurora Avenues), or up Elliott Avenue and through Interbay to the Ballard Bridge. Ultimately, all these routes – or slight variations on them – would be considered necessary in the spread or shotgun approach to moving traffic through the north end to the Pacific Highway.

Denny Regrade Links and Uses: 1920s

During the mid-1920s, the still surprisingly idle blocks in the Denny Regrade area that was completed in 1911 (as far east as 5th Avenue) and the buzz about the Denny Regrade's impending completion east from 5th to Westlake (1928-31) made that neighborhood an inviting platform over which to plan connectors between the central business district and speedways to the north. As noted, all of the elevated schemes on Railroad Avenue that were imagined and described in the late 1920s and after involved some kind of connector to Dexter Avenue – and less often Aurora – north of Denny Way. The reason that Dexter was usually chosen first as a target over Aurora may have to do with how it was described and rendered in the 1912 Bogue Plan as the new civic center's great boulevard to the north. **[410]** Another reason may be that Dexter was ready. It had been improved through the greenbelt on Queen Anne Hill and included as part of the route in 1918 for the city's try at building its own competing municipal trolley to Ballard. (Ballard was a destination repeated years later with the grassroots monorail revival with

the difference that all else, including Sound Transit, was also municipal.) Obviously Dexter was also more easily connected with the low bridge at Fremont than was Aurora. And at its highest elevation it could still be imagined as the south end connector for a high bridge over the canal leading swiftly – somehow – to the Pacific Highway. (That eventually the high bridge on Aurora and not Dexter made its connection with the Pacific Highway by cutting directly through Woodland Park was a decision of boisterous controversy in the early-mid 1930s.)

Denny Regrade Flyover to Dexter Proposal: Mid-1920s

During the term of James D. Blackwell as City Engineer (1922 to 1927) there was serious consideration given to building a "Dexter Viaduct" extending from Dexter and Denny to First and Virginia. This study actually pre-dates the Railroad Avenue elevated proposals and may have led to them. The idea was dropped as both too expensive and destructive of property values below it in the Denny Regrade District. It would have also sizably increased the "nuisance traffic" on First Avenue. By the time that the Railroad Avenue viaduct was first discussed, there was no note of any connection to Dexter Avenue by way of a flyover through the Denny Regrade. Instead, as noted above in part, the Railroad Avenue elevated was described as variously connecting to Dexter at Denny Way by way of Battery (either surface or tunnel), Bell (a tunnel), or by way of a new street climbing the ridge from Railroad Avenue past the west side of the Armory at Western and Virginia to First Avenue and from their most often to a right turn on Battery. This last route was also the one advised in 1927 by the Associate Central Business Properties Inc – a "new diagonal street in the heart of the heavy traffic district … from Stewart to connect with First and Battery." And this, again, is what we ultimately got in the early 1950s.

Clark R. Jackson's Railroad Avenue Recommendations to Bertha Landes: 1927

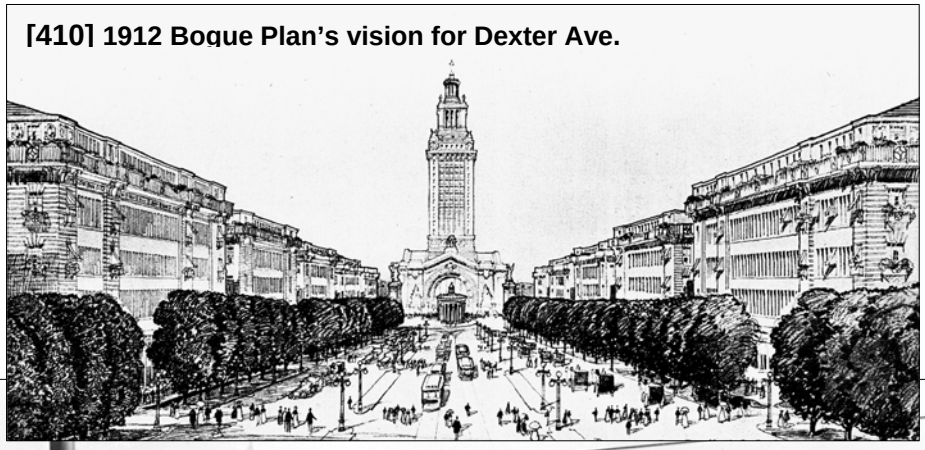
But far below all resolute preoccupations with moving traffic to the Pacific Highway lay still the dismal but darling old Railroad Avenue. On May 17, 1927, in the springtime of promises, Clark R. Jackson, the Superintendent of the Utilities Department, filed his report on the shape of Railroad Avenue with Mayor Landes and the City Council. Many of Jackson's measurements and suggestions would ultimately come to great effect. His strongest departure from tradition was the by then obvious object of desire. The tracks along Railroad Avenue should be reduced from eight to four. He recommended that once the tracks were moved the city should pave the new area made available. A reporter helpfully summarized Jackson's measurements. "From Yesler to Union the present width of Railroad Avenue is 180 feet of which 113 is occupied by tracks and 67 by roadway. Mr. Jackson suggests that, with his proposed reduction in the number of tracks a 54-foot roadway in addition to the existing 67-foot roadway be provided. He would separate the tracks so that the 54-foot roadway would divide the tracks. If the plan were carried out, Railroad Avenue between Yesler Way and Union Street starting from its easterly side would be composed as follows: Tracks, 54-foot roadway, more tracks, 67-foot roadway. From Union Street to Vine Street the Avenue is 140 feet wide of which 113 feet is in tracks and 27 feet in roadway. At Union Street Mr. Jackson proposes diverting from the avenue the 54-foot roadway, at a 5 per cent grade, over the entrance of the railway tunnel and thence to

either Battery or Bell Street passing at the rear of the armory." This last Superintendent Jackson proposal is another version of the connector to the north. Jackson makes no mention of a viaduct directly on Railroad Avenue – or does he? The *Times* reporter continues his summary. "The exact route of the new roadway from Union Street, Mr. Jackson points out, may be for determination by the City Planning Commission. He proposes an overhead roadway as a means of expediting traffic." In the context of the *Times* report, at least, this "overhead" relates to what form the "new roadway from Union Street" might take, and not to any general Railroad Avenue elevated. This interpretation seems sealed by the report's next point. "In addition, Mr. Jackson recommends that at Union Street the sixty-seven-foot roadway be widened to eighty-three feet and be extended along the west side of Railroad Avenue to Smith Cove. At Railroad Avenue and Union Street all four tracks would be aligned on the easterly side of the Avenue." By July 27, the Seattle Planning Commission was publicly supporting Jackson, however it also gave a new twist to his recommendations for the "rear of the armory." To repeat, while the Planning Commission was, like Jackson, first for paving up the center of Railroad Avenue from Yesler to Pike and then also for the construction from Pike north to Elliott of that new thruway passing to the rear of the armory, the commission was not concerned there with a connection ultimately to Dexter Avenue but rather a direct connection between Railroad Avenue and Elliott. That is how they modified the uses of a ramp to the west or rear of the armory at Western and Virginia. In this plan they also avoided the east side or front of the armory (the armory was sited on the west side of Western between Virginia and Lenora Streets) and so the point where Western Avenue is joined by the connector from Elliott Avenue. That, we know from above, was completed in 1914. Of course, this last revision of Jackson's proposal – the direct throughway between Railroad Avenue and Elliott – was not constructed. Instead the space "behind the armory" was later taken for that connector to the north and Aurora – not Dexter – the Alaskan Way Viaduct.)

New Franchises for Railroad Avenue, Fewer Tracks, & Paving – nearly: 1929

What Jackson thought in 1927 was wrought in 1929 – or seemed like it soon would be. A July report for "Railroad Avenue Betterment" notes that the railroads had agreed to new franchises earlier that spring. They called for the reduction to four tracks between Yesler Way and the mouth of the Great Northern tunnel near the foot of Virginia. Through that section, the tracks would be configured as Jackson described it – two sets of two tracks on each side of the new area opened for motor vehicles. In each case the two tracks would feature one service track laid beside a running track with the former, of course, placed alongside the properties that they would service. The construction work through this Yesler to Virginia section would be the responsibility of the *Northern Pacific,* while the *Great Northern* would wrestle with the changes prescribed for the more dismal section north of the tunnel portal. On this northern section the *GN* had the right to build parallel tracks down the center of Railroad Avenue for through trains headed for the tunnel. The 1929 agreement included that most reasonable point that was so beyond the grasp of the competing railroads that jostled for position on Railroad Avenue after the Great Fire: all the railroads held rights to the new tracks by common ownership clauses in the new franchises. The agreement prescribed the elimination of traffic hazards – most notably the man-trap holes – via the

[410] 1912 Bogue Plan's vision for Dexter Ave.



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The above view north on Railroad Ave. from the Pike Street overpass dates – probably – from 1934. It, therefore, may be less evidence of a "man trap" then a record of the avenue preparing to at last get its seawall. The placing of the pre-cast concrete forms for the seawall required tearing up the old planked throughway. The view also shows what was the condition of random fill at least at the foot of Pike Street in 1934. The view to the right looks south from Union street to Pier 6/57 and shows one of the larger early 20th-century "man traps" -- this one facing Schwabacher's Dock. The scene dates from ca.1906.

filling of Railroad Avenue and the paving of its surfaces. In effect, it meant the "construction of a broad, paved highway down the center of the wide waterfront street." The railroads were also obliged to cooperate with the filling and paving by the terms of their franchises. It was noted by City Engineer W. D. Barkhuff (the city engineer who had also just returned to earth with the vision to pave Lake Union) that the dirt for filling Railroad Avenue north of Madison Street might be taken from the Denny Regrade. But Barkhuff added that still it was "a matter of no consequence whether that earth is used or not." Still Barkhuff mused "There is no way of getting rid of all that dirt unless it is used for filling or dumped at sea and the successful contractor would be glad to have a hole under Railroad Avenue to fill up. But if Denny Hill dirt is used, the city has plenty of time to ask for it because only 350,000 cubic yards will be required … and there will be more than that amount of Denny Hill dirt to move two years hence." In fact there would still be Denny Hill dirt hanging around in those quantities, but none of it would be used to fulfill Katherine Miracles vision of 1925 or the Barkhuff convenience of 1929. Photographs of Railroad Avenue south of Pike reveal that while the *Northern Pacific* halved the number of tracks from eight to four the work of paving between them waited. **[411]** The Great Depression had intervened. At times, the new trackless area was used very much like it was before the tracks were removed – as a parking lot.

Railroad Avenue as a Great Confusion of Motorcars

The accompanying photograph looking south from the Marion Street overpass about the time that the new Railroad Avenue was announced makes the point about the indiscriminate use of it as a parking lot. **[412]** All the tracks are still in place and the planks between them, no doubt, dangerously slippery. The semi-active part here for the railroads is at the east border of the avenue next to the commission district, but even there a row of parked cars can be glimpsed between the boxcars and the tall warehouse, far left, that years earlier replaced the sprawling Columbia Street Depot. This seeming disregard for the functions of railroad tracks is perhaps even more vigorously revealed in an earlier photograph that looks south on Railroad Avenue from the elevated prospect at the front of the Grand Trunk Pacific dock. **[413]** Here the avenue is a boisterous confusion of motorcars moving and parked. Again, the boxcars are off to the east side. The Marion Street overpass crosses the top of the scene. In the view from the overpass, the northbound traffic has been segregated from the southbound by being kept to the east of the power poles that previously marked the border between the great boarded swath that was for trains and the narrow promenade for wagons and motor vehicles along the western edge of the avenue. This lesser part is paved; it seems, with a kind of macadam. But in the earlier view, part of the tracked area to the east of the poles is also stuffed with motorcars heading south, and it seems that they are perilously close to the line of cars heading north. From this evidence, at least, it seems that this section of Railroad Avenue – even without the man traps – is truly dangerous but not from locomotives or suddenly jerking boxcars.

Marion Street Overpass – More Prospects of the Changes on Railroad Avenue

Two additional views that look north from the Marion Street overpass may be compared with those just considered and with each other. They both date from the mid-1930s, when the Seawall was being constructed

[413]

[412]

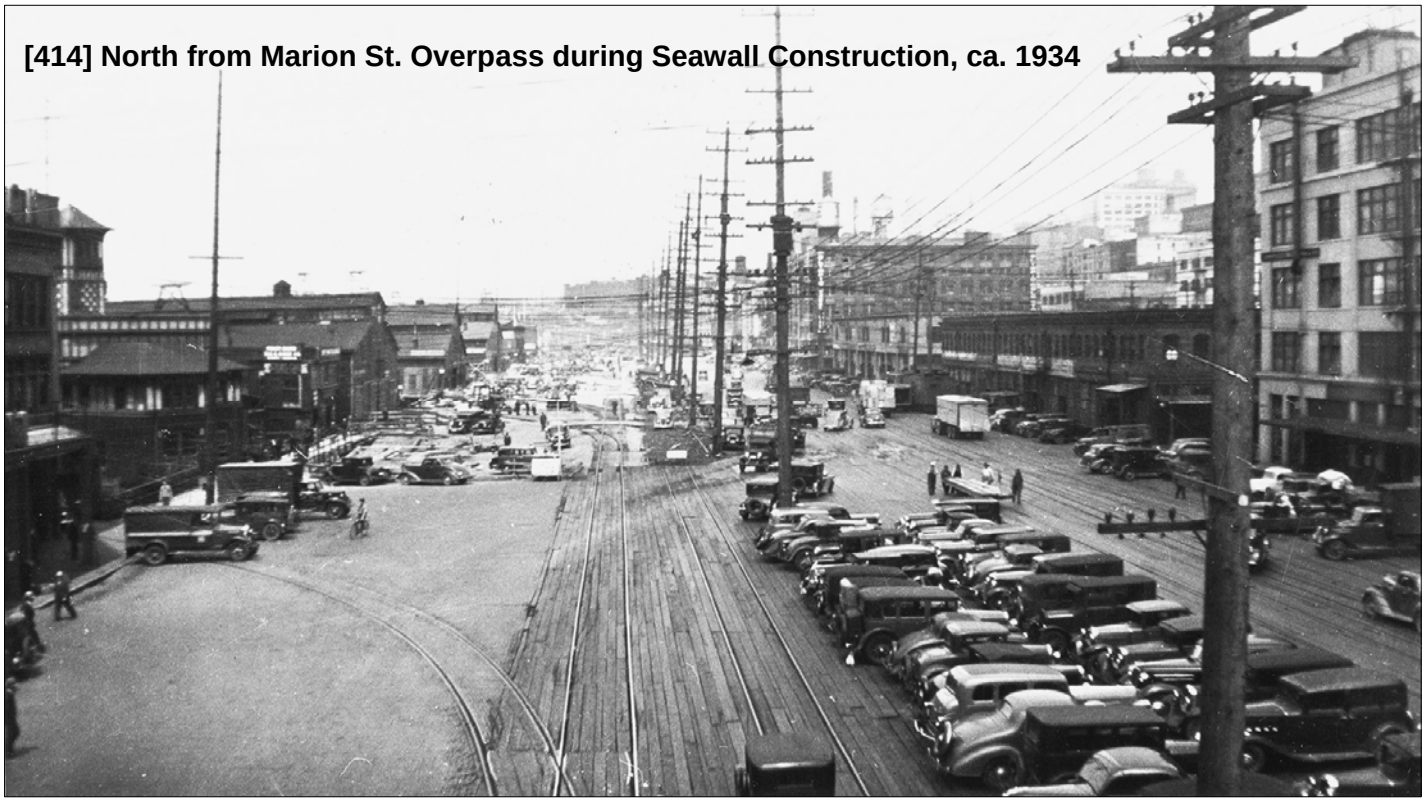
Looking south from the Marion Street Overpass – ca. 1930

between Madison and Broad. In the earlier scene – ca. 1935 – the west side of Railroad Avenue is disrupted with construction litter and workers' cars. **[414]** North of Madison, southbound traffic shares the east side of Railroad Avenue with cars and trucks heading north. In the entire scene only two box cars can be made out in the shadows right of center and they are crowded by automobiles and trucks with their backs shoved against the buildings on the right side of the scene. It is clearly difficult to figure how this Railroad Avenue could be used with any convenience or ease by railroads. In the slightly later view, also recorded from the overpass, a moving train has returned to Railroad Avenue and it is using the service side in the pair of tracks prescribed by Jackson's 1929 plan to the west side of the new motorcar right-of-way. **[415]** Curiously, Jackson's wide right-of-way for motor vehicles is used by them but only to park, and a row of whitewashed parking posts has been set to one side of the relatively narrow driveway between two lines of parallel-parked cars. The railroad's other pair of tracks on the right (east) side of the scene shows a few boxcars, but this strip is also being used by automobiles heading both north and south. To summarize the complexities of this Railroad Avenue here soon after the seawall was completed in 1936, it features, east to west, a planked section shared by cars moving both north and south and two tracks of trains; a second planked section cramped with two lines of parked cars through which a one lane driveway passes; a section of two train tracks on exposed fill; and finally a most westerly section with four lanes of paved throughway for motor vehicles. To the west of this waterfront avenue and its sidewalk, two sections of the new and ornamental guard rails constructed with the new seawall can be detected between the fire station (with the tower) and Pier 3/54 and also further north between Pier 3/54 and Pier 4/55.

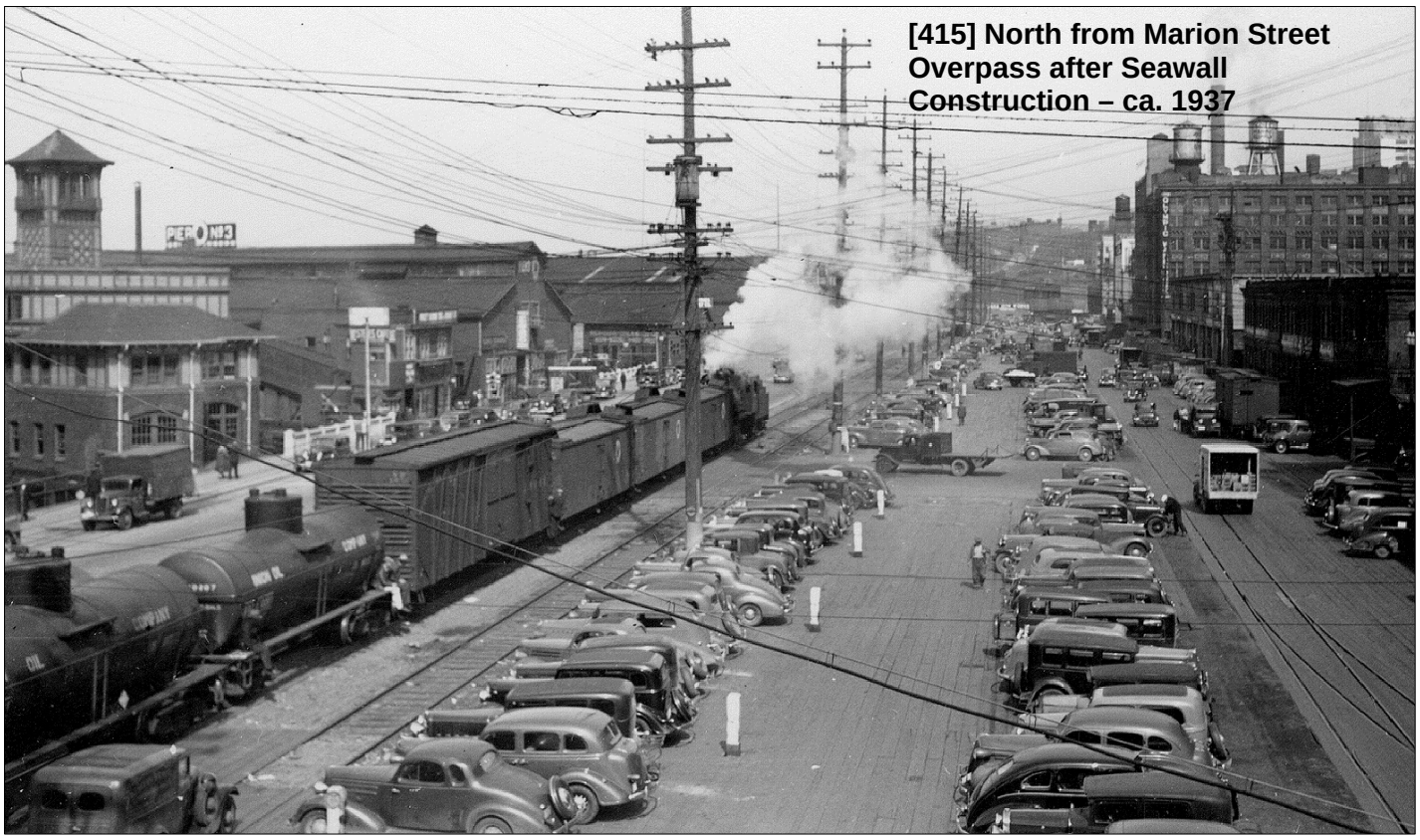
Seven years after the 1929 agreement for the makeover of Railroad Avenue, the parts about it creating a great paved motorcar throughway in place of eight railroad tracks were unevenly fulfilled. Certainly the work that was accomplished both took longer and depended more on the efforts to get a seawall built than those who did the negotiating in 1929 would have expected. At the time, they did recommend that the city and its mayor Frank Edwards withhold for a year with the filing and paving project while the issue of the harbor area leases that were expiring during 1929-30 was completed. Determining assessment costs for the improvement – that was at least in some percentage "local" – would be made easier by dealing with owners that were secure in their status.

Seawall Politics

In 1931, the state legislature agreed to provide $400,000 towards the construction of the seawall and paving between Madison and Broad Street, but the state's great impediment to public works at the time, its Governor Roland H. Hartley, vetoed it. (From Everett, Hartley was elected on a promise to "reduce the cost of government and lighten the burden of taxation." He meant it. Hartley was the "Great Governor Veto." For instance, he vetoed every legislative-approved State Parks budget of his four-year term. Most state parks were closed during the Hartley tenure – 1928-31 – and deteriorated from little maintenance and vandalism.) In spite of the governor, the City Council's Streets and Sewers Committee went ahead with public hearings on plans for improving Railroad Avenue with a concrete seawall, removal of trestles with earth fills and the replacement of all planks with concrete paving. One of the presenters, John Osseward, whom the newspapers listed simply as "residing at the



[414] North from Marion St. Overpass during Seawall Construction, ca. 1934



[415] North from Marion Street Overpass after Seawall Construction – ca. 1937

Fairmont Hotel," suggested that the city build a tree-bordered waterfront with all its services for lighting and communications run underground. (For the time it was too aesthete, but later, in 1960s, the long list of waterfront planners and plans would plant similar ideas.) In the spring of 1932, the citizens of Seattle agreed to spend $600,000 on the project, but it was generally thought that this infusion would be part of a package that included also state funds and assessments from the property owners that would be most benefited by a new seawall. The state, however, continued to defer, and the property owners considered the matching $600,000 from them excessive. They were counting on the state to rejoin the work, and at a greater rate when Hartley was gone. The property owners were also quick to point out that one of the reasons often given for the improvement was the general one of moving north-south traffic through the city. That, they noted, would not make them more prosperous. The owners also came forward with another favorite depression-time complaint. The existing city wage scale for paving workers was too high, and before any contract was signed to do the work, wages should be lowered to match that paid on private jobs. When it was first agreed that the time had come to start the project, no private contractor submitted a bid. The work was considered too complex, uncertain and so too risky. Ultimately, the Seattle Department of Engineering took it on.

Mayor Dore: Threats to Close Down Railroad Avenue: 1933

On April 23, 1933, Mayor John F. Dore, wanting "quick action" on Railroad Avenue, threatened to ban parts of it as unsafe for traffic. Dore's City Engineer, Melvin Syliassen, surveyed what he concluded was the avenue's "hodge-podge of worn planking, broken pavement and narrow rickety trestles long neglected." The Syliassen survey found asphalt "so broke up as to permit water to enter the decking causing almost total decay of much of the planking and rotting many of the stringers." The investigators looked below the trestles to discover that "many of the caps over the piles are entirely gone and a great deal of piling has been entirely eaten away by teredos so that collapse of large portions of the structure is imminent." And they took photographs, like the attached record of the consumed pilings. **[416]** Mayor Dore used Syliassen's report to do what he had threatened to do: he closed Railroad Avenue, or that part of it between University and Bays streets, not to all traffic, just to the general kind, that is, which in this case was also the politically expedient kind. One narrow traffic lane was kept open for teamsters to reach the docks, and private cars and pedestrians with business to do on the docks could use it too – but no one else. In effect, Dore shut down Railroad Avenue to what in 1933 was its own "nuisance traffic" – a popular way to by-pass downtown. Appreciating the political thrust of this prohibition the Mayor telegraphed Lacy Murrow, advising the state's Directory of Highways to come up at once from Olympia and make his own inspection to determine if Dore's disruption was due. The Mayor explained that he hoped to find state funds to fix the worst of it so that the avenue could be reopened. Of course, Dore was probing his way to funding for the big fixit – the Seawall solution. Elected twice as Mayor during the Great Depression – with Charles L. Smith in between – Dore was both brilliant and canny. He explained, "My instructions to close Railroad Avenue are not intended as a whip to speed through the permanent improvement of Railroad Avenue or to drive the property owners into line … It is a simple case that the Avenue has been unsafe for a long time and has now

developed into a positive menace to pedestrians and motorists alike. If any accident due to these unsafe conditions should occur, loss of life would be likely and the city treasury would be involved by damage liability. I sincerely hope that new arrangements for improving the avenue can be made without undue delay, however, for it is impossible to say how long it might be closed awaiting temporary repairs." Another of the frustrating turns of 1933 came on Sept. 18 when the Federal government declined to assist in the building of the seawall on the grounds that the work did not come properly within the federal highway program. The federal refusal naturally made the city wonder if it would influence the state's readiness to return with funding. With Hartley gone, the state quickly responded with an Emergency Relief Fund grant for $396,000.

Seawall Construction North from Madison: 1934-36

Nine months after Dore made his speech about closing it down, he and engineer Syliassen drove out to the north end of Railroad Avenue without circumstance and little pomp to watch Manson Construction and Engineer Company begin delivering the first of 44 test pilings at the Bay Street end of the project. The work began on Jan. 15, 1934. The support piles were 110 feet long and the work, as noted, was directed by the public works department itself. The last of the precast concrete slabs for the 6,100 foot-long seawall was laid on September 1, 1934. For nearly two years more the great hole behind the seawall – where once the tides moved with a range of more than 16 feet – through sawdust, rubble, and driftwood was filled. The filling was interrupted by one nostalgic incident that recalled how the bad old railroads used to regularly disappoint. In the summer of 1935 the filling was stalled when the railroads withdrew from their fill responsibilities at the center of the new Railroad Avenue – the section where it was agreed it could lay its tracks. Since water mains – and many other services –- could not be laid until this work was completed, the Port was told that the insurance rates for its Bell Street Terminal would be raised for want of the water. After the railroads returned to complete their work, the great network or hidden infrastructure was installed – the power, telephone, electric light, water, sewerage – and all was capped with tracks and "Seattle's New Marine Way" a concrete Railroad Avenue, sidewalk, and ornamental railing.

Seawall Work Piers 5/56 through 8/59: 1934

The work of seawall construction was proudly recorded by the city as evidence of its public work accomplishment. We will attach and briefly describe a few. As shown above (illustration no. 411) in 1934 a street department photographer used the Pike Street trestle to photograph a large hole on Railroad Avenue in front of the Pike Street Dock. This gap continued north from University Street, two blocks south of the photographer's position. The same hole, however, does not appear in an earlier ca.1918 view – included above [No. 371] – that also looks south on Railroad Avenue from the Pike Street overpass. This opening, then, may be part of the first clearing work associated with building a seawall from Madison Street north to beyond Broad Street, or it may merely exhibit the sorry state that the trestlework had come to in the few years since the First World War. In a photograph that looks down on the actual work of placing the reinforced concrete seawall forms between Piers 6/57 and 7/58, the center gap showing in the view just discussed has been in many places crossed with timbers and

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Beneath Railroad Avenue
before the Seawall
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Seawall
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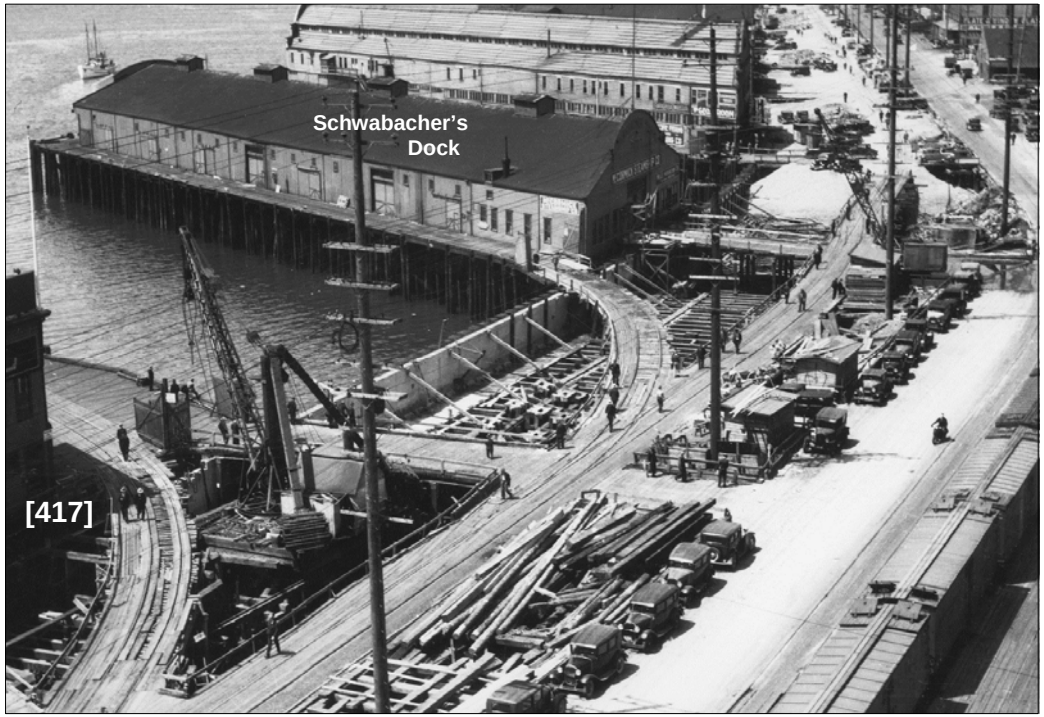
Schwabacher's
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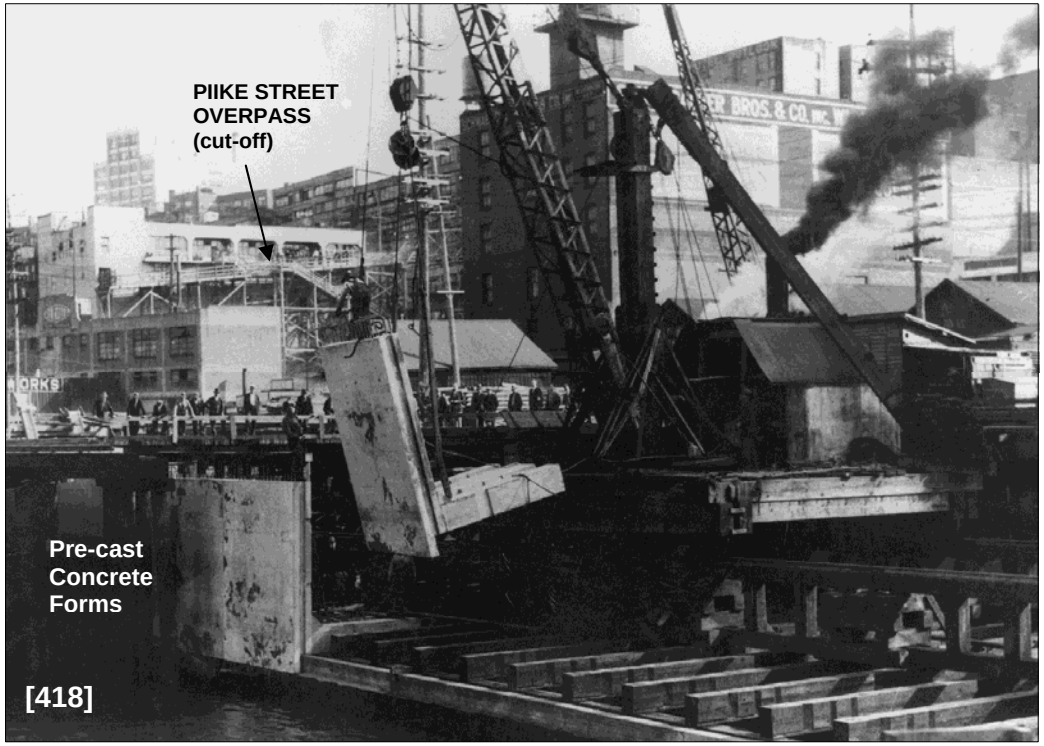

PIIKE STREET
OVERPASS
(cut-off)
Pre-cast
Concrete
Forms
[418]

shacks useful for the work of building the seawall. **[417]** The Pike Street trestle is gone, or rather temporarily cut off at the east side of Railroad Avenue. A complimentary view looks at the seawall construction from the bay side as another precast form is being lifted into place in the space between Piers 5/56 and 6/57. In this scene, the surviving part of the Pike Street Trestle is also evident. **[418]**

Seawall Before During & After

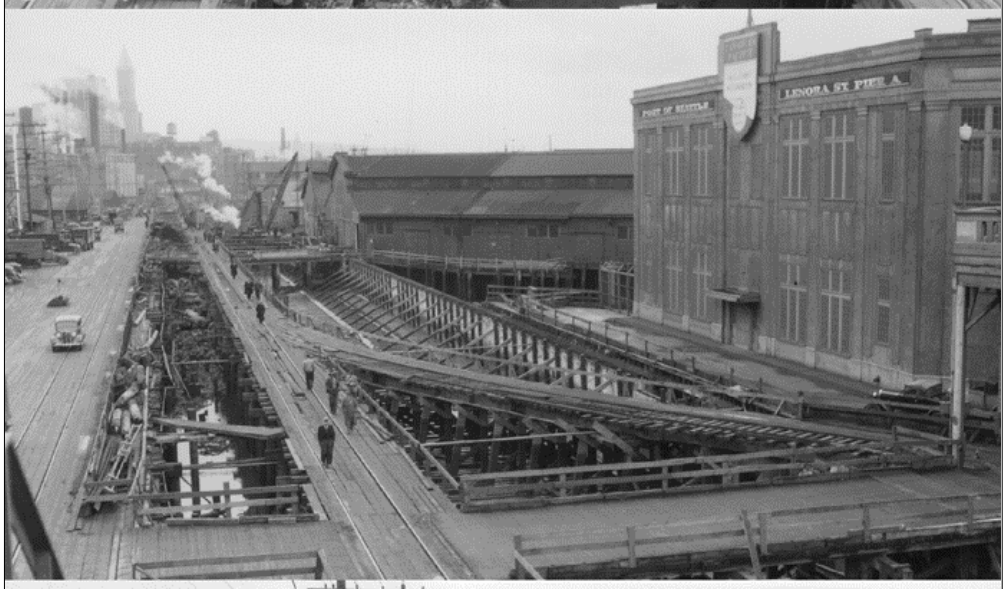
The adjoining triptych shows the "before during and after" of the seawall project as recorded from the Lenora Street overpass. **[419]** The earliest scene dates from June 6, 1934 and shows the part of Railroad Avenue where the Peterson's coupe crashed through the flimsy railing. The middle view shows the work in progress in front of the Port of Seattle's then new Lenora Street Pier 11/64, and the bottom scenes show off a freshly paved Railroad Avenue in 1936 that is more for cars and trucks than trains. Also attached are two additional post-project records that look north and south from the Bell Street overpass ca. 1938. **[420 & 421]**

Mayor Langlie's Problem Paving Railroad Avenue: 1940

The great improvement wrought by the seawall did not immediately pull behind it fulfillment for Superintendent Clark Jackson's 1927 vision of Railroad Avenue between Yesler and Pike. As we have seen earlier, the eight tracks were subtracted to four but much of the work of paving was postponed. In 1940 while Seattle Mayor Arthur Langlie described Seattle's Planning Commission as "degenerated" in an address to the Transportation Club, His Honor listed the renamed Railroad Avenue among his major problems. "The traffic in Alaskan Way South is becoming increasingly congested. It is evident that paving in the east side of the street for north bound traffic will be necessary." Fortunately, the mayor entered this priority before Pearl Harbor so it was completed. The accompanying photographs – all again from the Marion Street overpass – show the completed northbound paving in three stages. **[422-424]** In the earliest the two-lane section is paved, far right, but as yet unused. Instead the crowded two way traffic on the west side of Alaskan Way shows us what amounts to as a "before" view. In the second scene, northbound traffic is using the new lanes but it is also using the most easterly lane of the older paved area on the west side of Alaskan Way. (We may wonder if it is being studied as a reversible lane.) In the third view the north and southbound traffic has been thoroughly divided onto the two paved sections that run to either side of the western most pair of railroad tracks. (But is this the proper order of the second and third views? In the third view, No. 424 as ordered above, no traffic is using the eastern half of the older most westerly four lanes of paved roadway. Perhaps it – not 423 – should be considered the transitional view between the other two.)

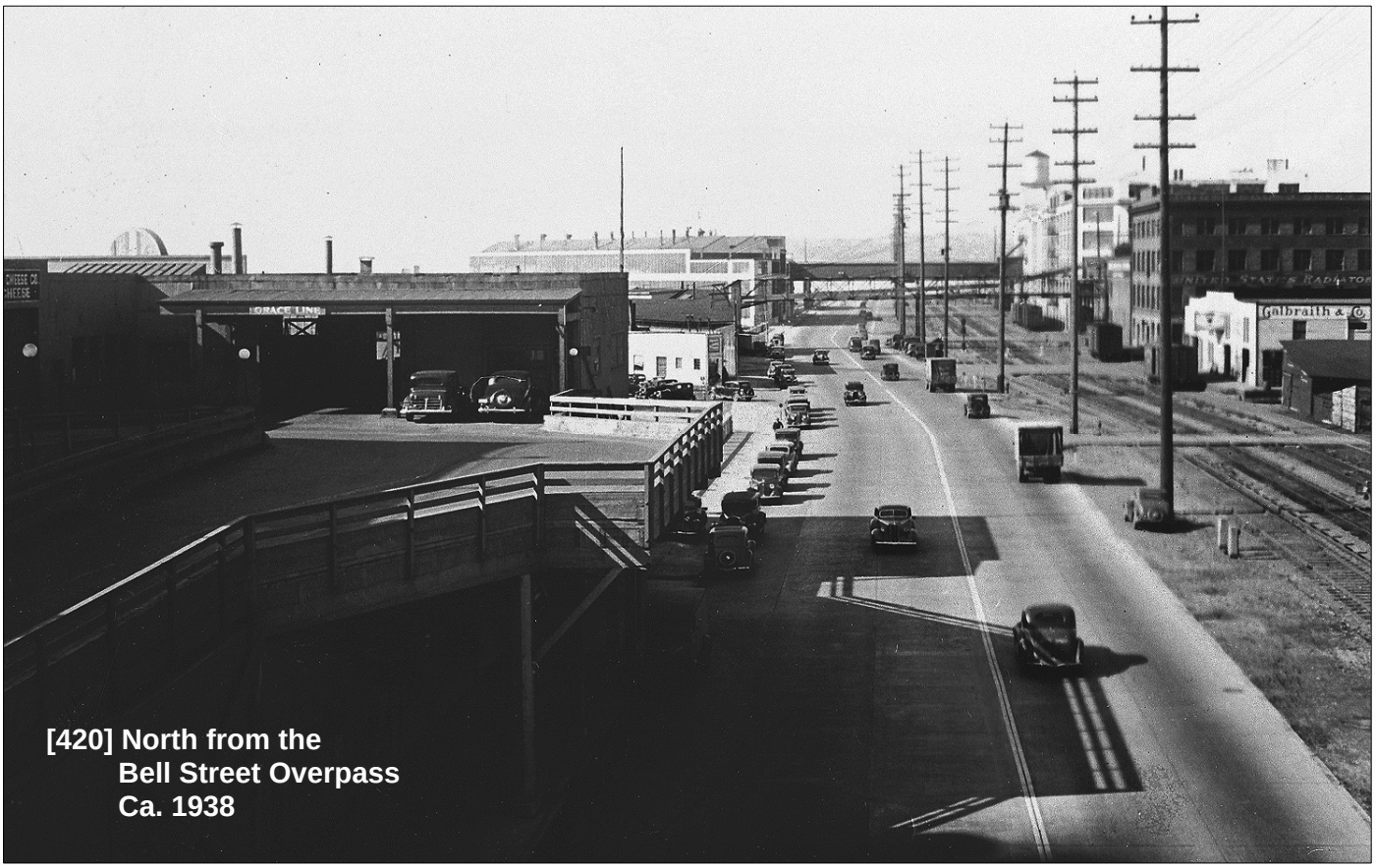
Railroad Way & Western Avoiding the Traffic on First Avenue: World War Two

One small part of the waterfront that got fixed during the war was the short Railroad Way S. that was originally designed to move trains between the waterfront and the yards south of the new depots on Jackson Street. It was re-opened on July 30, 1943 with this explanation in the local press. "A new north-south traffic route that will speed war-plant traffic through the central business district bottleneck was opened by the

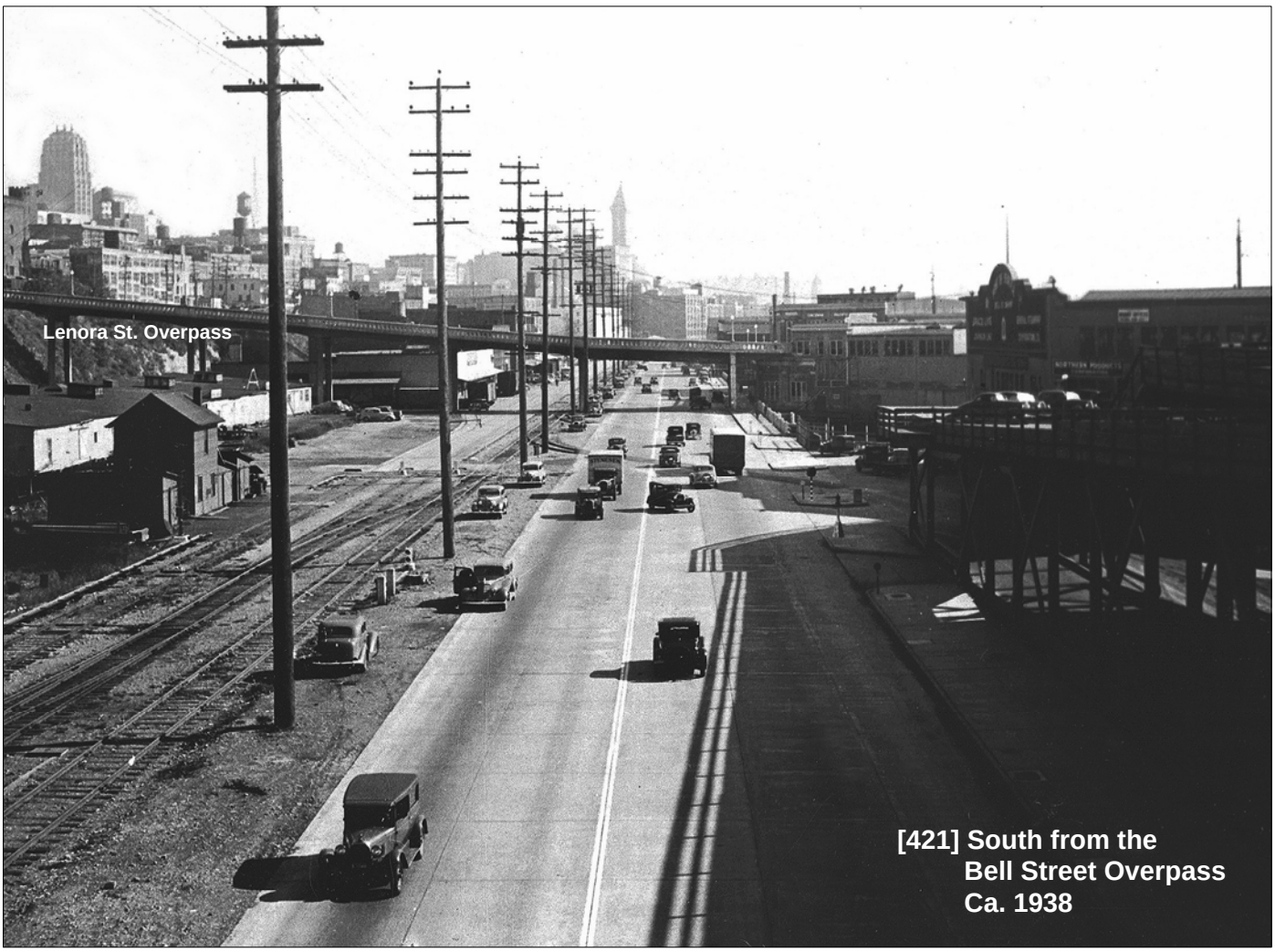


[419]
Seawall Construction - Before During After

View from Lenora St. Overpass



[420] North from the
Bell Street Overpass
Ca. 1938



[421] South from the
Bell Street Overpass
Ca. 1938

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city today with the completion of the repaving of Railroad Way between First Ave S. and South Alaskan Way. Combined with the rehabilitation of Western Ave this job offers a new north-south artery that will let much of the traffic by-pass First Ave South and much of Alaskan Way, streets already crowded. The feds removed the street car tracks from Western Ave to get the steel to lower the cost to the city to only $20,000." It is a route still used by some who wish to avoid the viaduct and stay on the surface and yet avoid the "nuisance traffic" of Pioneer Square and First Avenue.

City Hall Amusement Call it Cosmos Quay or Seatlaska Way: 1935

With the new seawall expected to hold like a good undergarment, the makeover of Railroad Avenue was sufficiently glamorous to require a name change – even before the work was done. Many were offered – so many that the "renaming controversy became the chief source of City Hall amusement and wise cracking." It even stimulated "irresistible impulses" in a few who were ordinarily poetically dormant. For instance "Portarea" was the neologism offered by Brig. General Maurice Thompson, the Adjutant General of Washington. And for any noncoms who might not get it the General explained, "You see it is a combination of 'Port' and 'Area'." Frank Chop's suggested for a new name was more exotic than his own. "Call it Hatoba, the Japanese name for 'Landing Place'." It was Chop's idea – in 1935 when all this naming was underway – that such a name would put us in good stead with our trading partner, and he added, "The accent is on the first syllable." The ex-mayor, state legislator and Port Commissioner George Cotterill, who had been through the Railroad Avenue realignment struggles with Reginald Thomson in the 1890s and who as a young man had even helped with the *Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern* Survey through the forest on the north shore of Lake Union in 1885, had several suggestions. Cotterill liked "Commerce Way" and "Seaportal" and "Matrima" and some regional names like "Pacific Avenue" and "Puget Way" and "Alaska Avenue" and "Seatlaska Way." With Seatlaska he was getting close. For a long moment it looked like Cosmos Quay might be the one, but of course it was not, for finally almost everyone let go of impulses and settled for the acceptable and in retrospect almost inevitable "Alaskan Way."

State of the Port: 1928 - 29

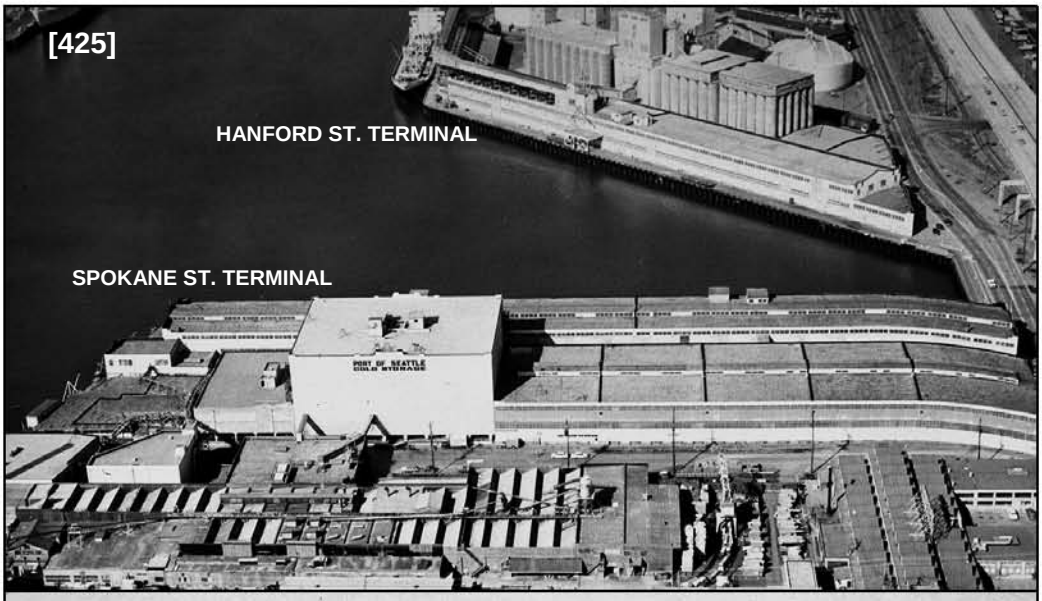
In 1928 the Port of Seattle had its own tracks (3&1/2 miles of them and some "depressed"), traveling Gantry cranes, tanks for oils, a fumigating plan, polished waiting rooms – all at Smith Cove. There was also (R.I.P. 2005) the Spokane Street cold storage **[425],** the Hanford Street Terminal including the grain elevator, the Stacy and Lander Street terminals with high speed elevators, two spiral chutes, electric tractors and trailers, the Bell Street Terminal that was combination four story fireproof concrete warehouse (with the Port of Seattle headquarters) half-wrapped in a two-story transit shed, the Salmon Bay Terminal, then at 36 acres easily the largest of any Port facility, and finally "Unit No. 15," part of the old Skinner and Eddy Shipyard No. 2 and soon – they could not have known – to be home for the sprawling community of shacks called "Hooverville." **[426]** During World War Two and after, this mercurial property was developed into the Port of Embarkation used by the military and, as noted, perhaps then the busiest piers on the waterfront. In 1928 the Port was already also acting the landlord with portions of its property. For instance the Stokes Creamery Co. has its two-year lease at the Spokane Street coal

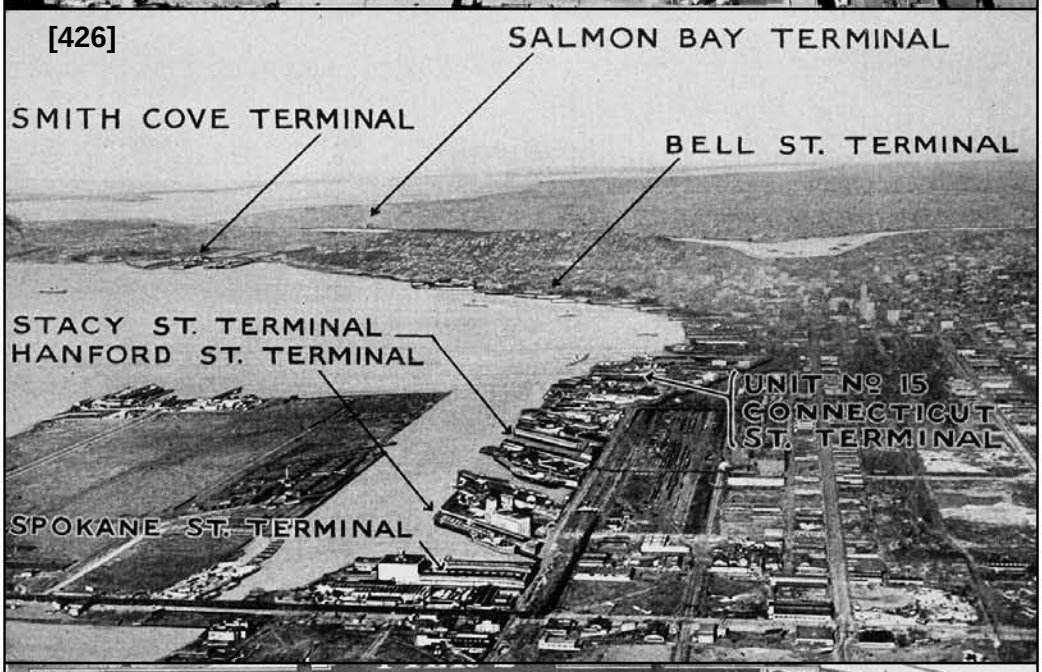
storage extended to five years more in 1927. In 1928 the Port renewed its 10-year lease for Pier 41 at Smith Cove to the American Mail Line at an annual rental of $90,000.

Shipping statistics for 1929, the last boom year, counted an average of 122 vessels either arriving at or leaving Elliott Bay each day. Ninety-eight of the 142 steamship lines operating out of Seattle were ocean-going services. Forty-five operators ran smaller vessels on Puget Sound and Lake Washington – the remnants of the "Mosquito Fleet." A no doubt nervous Port Commission resolved at a special meeting on Jan 23, 1930 (only a few weeks after the market crash) that their comprehensive scheme for port development would go forward. Feeling pressure from its competition in San Francisco and Los Angeles where the entire waterfronts were publicly owned – a cicumstance that sometimes put the Port of Seattle at a competitive disadvantage – the commissioners agreed to include virtually all of the Seattle waterfront in their plans. The upshot was that even in times of depression and recession the Port continued to buy property although they were often not ready to develop it. For instance, George Cotterill and Colonel Lamping's hopes of building a pile wharf and shed at the southern end of the Port's new Skinner and Eddy property at the foot of Connecticut Street were at first dashed by the Port's depression-time "efficiency revolution."

The Great Depression – Slipping Tonnage & Commissioners

Commissioner Cotterill, however, was not so easily depressed – or repressed. A *Seattle Times* article from June 1930 quotes the still robust commissioner on the subject of the Port's $750,000 budget for building in 1930. "This expenditure by the Port of Seattle in construction development, employing home labor and using Washington materials, has done much to ward meeting the otherwise prevailing unemployment situation …We have more than 400 ocean-going carriers of commerce every thirty days – more than 13 each day – leaving or arriving at the Port of Seattle from all of the seven seas, the six continents and the islands of the sea … It is the privilege and desire of the Port of Seattle through its own $15,000,000 system of public terminals to render increasingly adequate service to the world commerce which is our opportunity and destiny." In spite of the commissioner's boostering spirit and healing cash, the prognosis was not so good for either the patient – the Port – or the physician – Cotterill himself. The Port of Seattle's diversity slightly ameliorated the effects of the depression when compared to the greater inflexibility of the ports of Tacoma and Portland with their great dependence on grain. Still in 1932, the tonnage continued to fall and 150 Port employees took pay cuts – practically every Port Employee except the commissioners. The State Legislature fixed their salaries at $3,000 a year. Those with the lowest wages took the lowest cuts – 10 percent. The end of George Cotterill's long life of political power and unusually effective public service was plotted in the "1933 Revolution", the Port's spring elections that *The Seattle Times* described as a "defeat for the Lamping-Cotterill political machine." Lamping was out, defeated by Horace P. Chapman who made an alliance with the Commission's "minority member" Smith Wilson, thereby making a new majority with Cotterill both alone and soon defied. Finally, in 1934, Cotterill also loses in election to John A Earley who with Chapman and Wilson reaches for the broom, asking that all Port Commission employees resign, explaining that only those resignations would be





[427] 1934 Longshore Strike

acted upon by the board "where it is possible to improve the service by substituting other persons." Another of Earley's early jobs as commissioner-elect was to sit in on commission meetings as it went looking for a new Port Auditor. The former auditor, Matt H. Gormley, killed himself after a $120,000 shortage in Port funds was discovered.

Prayers & Public Relations

The oft-quoted confession that opens the Port of Seattle's Year Book for 1934 was a brief prelude to its public relations cheer leading. The first paragraph reads, "In 1932 we prayed for something to happen. In 1933 we just prayed. So many things did happen in our economic existence that few people could follow the trend. In all events we moved. The paralysis, which had gripped the country since 1929, has vanished. We are going places and doing things. It is too soon to prophesy what or where, but indications point to betterment, and it is better to be doing things than to be standing still." But in 1934, the Port and everything else on Elliott Bay was still deep into the Great Depression. Some inferred correctly that the glimmer from the future was exploding shells.

The Waterfront Strike of 1934

Readers understood *The Seattle Times'* ironic analysis of shipping on Elliott Bay for June of 1934 long before they reached the explanation near the end of the short report. "Seattle exports of wheat, flour, salmon and lumber, produced by industries which give employment to many thousands in the Northwest, reached the same level in June they were when Capt. George Vancouver and his little band of explorers arrived on Puget Sound and began selecting names for mountains, bays and rivers. They were nil. Not a pound of salmon, flour or wheat or a stick of lumber was moved over Seattle docks during the month, a result of the blight of the strike of marine workers, a report made public yesterday by the Merchants Exchange shows ... Twenty-five deep-sea vessels with a total net tonnage of 90,007 arrived in Seattle in June compared with 150 deep-sea vessels with a total net tonnage of 503,537 the same month last year. " The summer strike of the International Longshoremen's Association was coast-wide and lasted much longer than June. It continued for eighty-three days. **[427]**

Rectitude, Team-Spirit & Surveillance

In 1935 the Port of Seattle mobilized its staff. W.C. Bickford was appointed both Chief Engineer and Port Manager, and Bickford knew how to organize; during the brief one-year administration of Mayor Robert H. Harlin (1931-32) he was the city's building superintendent. In control of the Port, Bickford announced that all future hiring would be done "unhampered by political fears or influences." The Commission unanimously adopted his plan, "an ironclad system of keeping tabs on the qualifications, initiative, intelligence and the record of performance of duties by every port employee … Department heads will be required to report regularly on the temperamental, moral and physical qualities of employees as well as their individual records in performance of duties ... Every efficiency report on an employee must be passed on by a reviewing official and then by the Board of Commissioners." A few months later the *Seattle Times* quoted Horace P. Chapman, the Port Commission's new president, as he went ahead with the cheerleading. "Today the port has probably the most efficiently harmonized organization in its history, in which every member from janitor to general manager is keyed to enthusiastic action. Seattle

deserves to be the greatest port on the Pacific, and in time we can make it so. Seattle doesn't know its own power. We're going to step on the gas."

Legal Spirits & More Rectitude

Surely some of W.C. Bickford's "gas" came from bottles since national prohibition was lifted late in 1933. At the time the persistently abstaining progressive George F. Cotterill was – as we noted above – well into his last year as a Port Commissioner. More than a prudent teetotaler, Cotterill was an international leader in the prohibition movement. In 1934 he told his fellow commissioners that he would appeal to the State Liquor Control Board to make the waterfront dry. The efficient cause for this rectitude was Peter Forde who ran a café on the spreading Port property at Salmon Bay and wanted permission to sell beer and wine like his competitors who were off of Port property. Already Charles Swanson, who operated restaurants at the Port's Bell Street Terminal and also at Colman Dock, was selling spirits, and Cotterill's appeal would have stopped that too. Cotterill was confident that "The state is not going to permit the sale of liquor at any docks on the waterfront. I am sure. It not only would result in the loss of life, but would slow down work and encourage waterfront dives." (By this he meant, of course, hangouts frequented by the down and out and not sports diving, which was at any rate then still not as popular as drinking although probably more dangerous even when used with moderation.) Cotterill was again filled with his own spirit of overconfidence -- the Achilles heel of the righteous. It had served him well so many times before. This time, however, it snapped.

***The Kalakala* & You Can't Come Home Again: Once Embraced Now Disgraced**

The most splendid of mid-depression symbols for team spirit came not from the Esprit de Port of Seattle but from Black Ball. **[428]** In 1935 the ferry company unveiled its makeover of the burned out San Francisco Bay Ferry the *Peralta.* Not long after she made her trail run on July 2, 1935 and showed how well she could shake her beams and ballast (the "World's First Streamlined Ferry" was noted for its vibrations) the *Kalakala* became the worldwide symbol of Seattle and Puget Sound, until 1962 when the Space Needle supplanted her. The *Kalakala* ended her first life on Puget Sound in 1967 when she was ingloriously towed to Kodiak, Alaska and there converted into a land-anchored crab processing plant. However, in 1999 the "world's first streamlined ferry" was heroically towed back to Seattle where the historic vessel's friends hope to restore her. **[429]** (We know that it did not go well for them. This once glorious symbol was reintroduced to a community the greatest part of which had arrived on Puget Sound since the streamlined symbol was towed north. The result was a combination of annoyance and indifference. And for those hurt few it was also an opportunity to ridicule the roughed-up symbol. Perhaps these were but that small percentage of the ordinarily well-behaved Californicated Washingtonians that Emmett Watson warned us about with his Lesser Seattle campaign.) As noted earlier, in 1938 part of the old Colman Dock, including the second tower, was torn down to make way for a brave new ferry terminal done in the then fashionable Art-Deco styling of the Black Ball line's new flagship ferry *Kalakala*. On June 1, 1951 after months of squabbling over the price, the Black Ball ferry fleet was sold to the state and the Washington State Ferry sign took the place of the Black Ball beneath the big clock facing Alaskan Way on Colman Dock. **[430]** The contemporary terminal dates from

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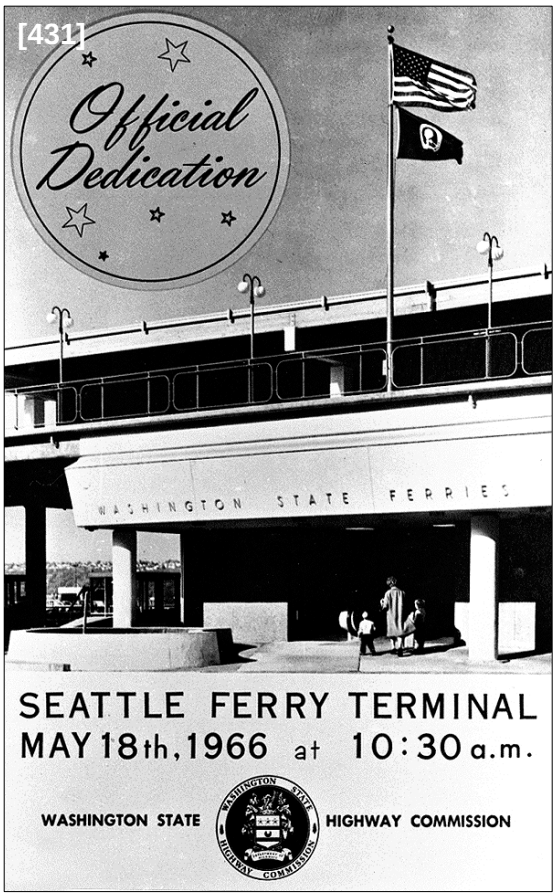
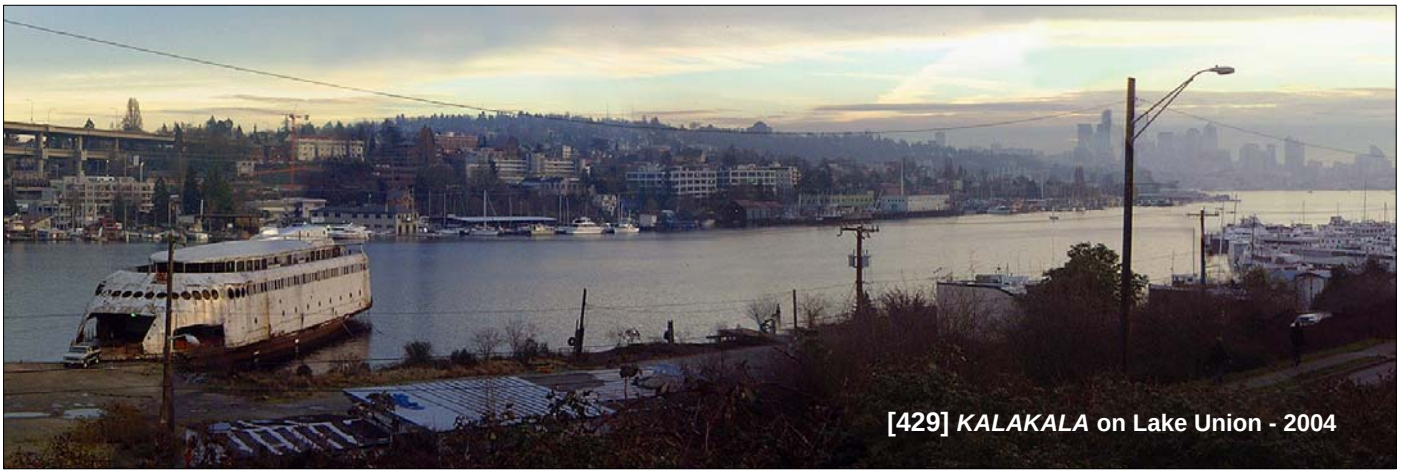


COLMAN DOCK - 2004



[429] *KALAKALA* on Lake Union - 2004

1966. When the Art-Deco Colman Dock was razed the Grand Trunk dock between it and Ivar's was also demolished to make room for handling auto traffic through the new and enlarged terminal. **[431]**

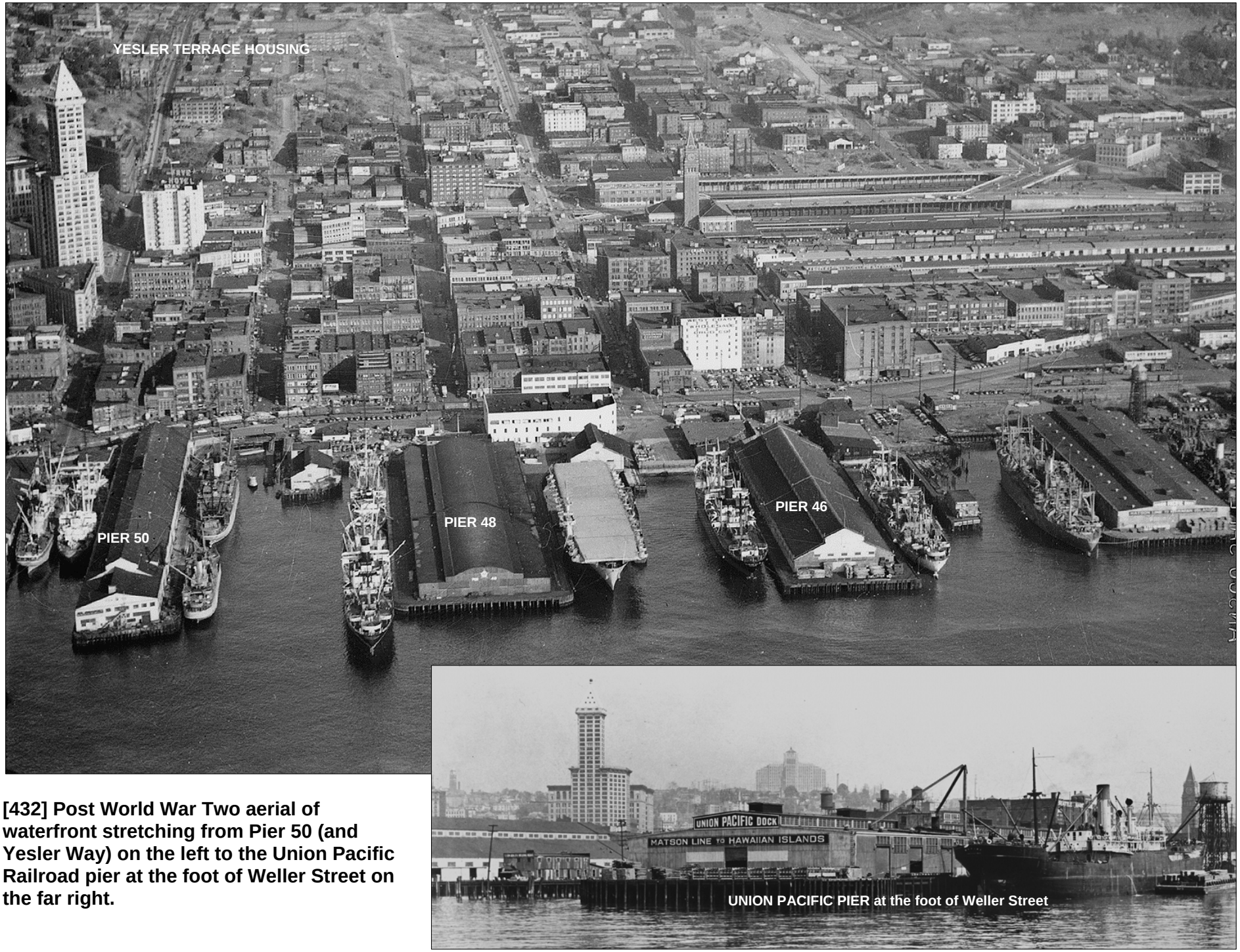
The Purchasing Port

One section of the waterfront that saw some big changes during the depression was that oldest section of it south of Yesler Way. In the first years of the Great Depression, most of the services and tenants on the waterfront either moved or turned moribund. But as explained above, the Port of Seattle was inclined then to look for deals on Elliott Bay. In 1933 it made its first overture onto the old waterfront at the Pacific Coast Company's invitation. But the PCC's offer to sell its piers south of Washington Street to the Port was suddenly withdrawn, and too late to erase the proposed sale's place on ballots for the March 14th general election. Given its lame status the sale lost, of course. The company and the Port blamed each other for the sale's failure, but neither would explain the reversal. A tax-reduction group calling itself the Building Owners and Managers Association had fought the Port's intended purchase.

Pacific Coast Company Depression-Time Changes at Piers 47, 48, 49

With its change of heart, in 1935 the Pacific Coast Company went to work on its own. The company greatly extended and widened Pier B (48) while reducing the length of both Piers A(49) and C(47). This work was done in preparation for the arrival of the Pier 48's new tenant, the McCormick Line. The changes are easily recognizable by comparing a mid-1920s photograph taken from the Smith Tower noted above [**no. 260**] with another view from the same prospect taken about fifteen years later [**no. 261**]. In the later view Pier B/48 reaches as far into Elliott Bay as both Pier D/46 on the left and Pier 1/50 on the right. Both Piers A/49 and C/47 have been reduced to fractions of their former size. The Pacific Coast Coal railroad yard between Piers A/49 and B/48 has been replaced with a parking lot. The brick building in front of piers B/48 and C/47 has also been enlarged to accommodate the offices for Pacific Coast Company and its many subsidiaries. By late 1936, the PCC had completed most of the changes, and in 1938 accepted its new tenant on Pier B/48. The McCormick Company also ran its Pacific Argentine Brazil Line from the pier. In spite of these efforts the McCormick line was insolvent, and soon after moving onto the pier was taken over by its principal creditor, the Pope and Talbot Company. Both the WWII workhorse Liberty Ships and the larger C3 type cargo ships were often at Pier 48 during the McCormick-Pope & Talbot tenure. The aerial of the same section was photographed some little time after the military changed the pier numbers in 1944. **[432]**

(Thanks to an Army Corps of Engineers inventory the lengths of transit sheds in 1941 were recorded. On Piers A/49, B/48, and C/47 they were, respectively, 145 feet, 672 feet and 111 feet. The widths, in the same order, were 60ft, 172ft, and 80 feet. Although none of these piers had mechanical handling facilities they were, of course, all connected to the *Pacific Coast Railroad*. Only the larger central Pier B/48 had water service available to vessels. In its report the Corps noted that on Pier A/49 "the transit shed is used as a fish processing plant." Most likely this is a reference to Pete Sellen. Beginning in 1918 and



[432] Post World War Two aerial of waterfront stretching from Pier 50 (and Yesler Way) on the left to the Union Pacific Railroad pier at the foot of Weller Street on the far right.

continuing for more than thirty years, the Yugoslav immigrant packed his several popular brands of salmon eggs on Pier 49 and marketed them throughout the country under the slogan "The only bait for which the fish wait." The Army Corps' 1953 report on "Piers, Wharves and Docks of the Seattle Waterfront" describes Pier 48 as operated by the Olympic Steamship Co., still for the Pope and Talbot Lines, and the Pacific Argentine Brazil Line. The enlarged pier shed covered 114,000 square feet, making it still the largest covering on the central waterfront.)

Hooverville: "Local Materials Honestly Used"

Let us now praise both the unnamed builder and the architect of this elegant little Hooverville shack. **[433]** They were almost certainly the same person: a single middle-aged man without means except those scrounged to build his tidy Great Depression home. At the front of our architect's one room studio with attached kitchen is an ornamental front porch that makes a whimsical allusion to grandeur. The bathroom is unattached and never needs attending or cleaning – at least by the owner. It is set over Elliott Bay off the end of a short dock. This minimal home was one of about 500 built in Hooverville, the largest of the several depression-time communities. **[434 & 435]** This tideflats shantytown filled the cleared acres of the abandoned Skinner and Eddy shipyard south of Pioneer Square between East Marginal Way and Elliott Bay. Most of the quarters were motley, but a few were ingenious and, like this one, even playful. Within a year of the founding, an essayist writing in the *American Architect* described Hooverville homes as made "from local materials, honestly used." In this example one of the scrounged vertical boards showing is stamped "Northern Pacific Railroad" and another "Not To Be Removed."

A Little History of Squatting Beside Elliott Bay

Squatting on the waterfronts of Elliott Bay is as old as the earliest settlers: the Dennys, Terrys and Maples. While rationalizing their squatting as "making claims" they quickly built cabins and lean-tos on land that was not yet theirs either by treaty or outright conquest. (Of course it was conquest that prepared the way for them and conquest that would later keep it their way.) These contradictions were later codified in 1865 – after the treaties – when the first municipal laws included a prohibition against Indians camping in the city. Hooverville also began in the winter of 1931-32 as a land-grab when a flying squad of down-and-out men fed up with the flophouses around Pioneer Square joined to hastily raise their shack town from the "local materials" that were just lying around. One week later, and on schedule, the city acted on its threat and burned this first shantytown down. But these men and many more just as quickly returned and built a mixed-race community that policed itself and eventually worked with city officials to tidy itself for curious visitors and the postman. One regulation required two windows in every home – as here. Hooverville mobilization began before Pearl Harbor. In the spring of 1940 residents received notice to vacate the premises. Smith Wilson, president of the Port Commission, said it would be necessary to clear the area for surveys and other studies. Then after eight years this sprawl of small shanties was torched once again – this time without much complaint or resistance. **[436]** There were plenty of other lesser Hoovervilles set about the old tideflats and riverbanks, much of which was

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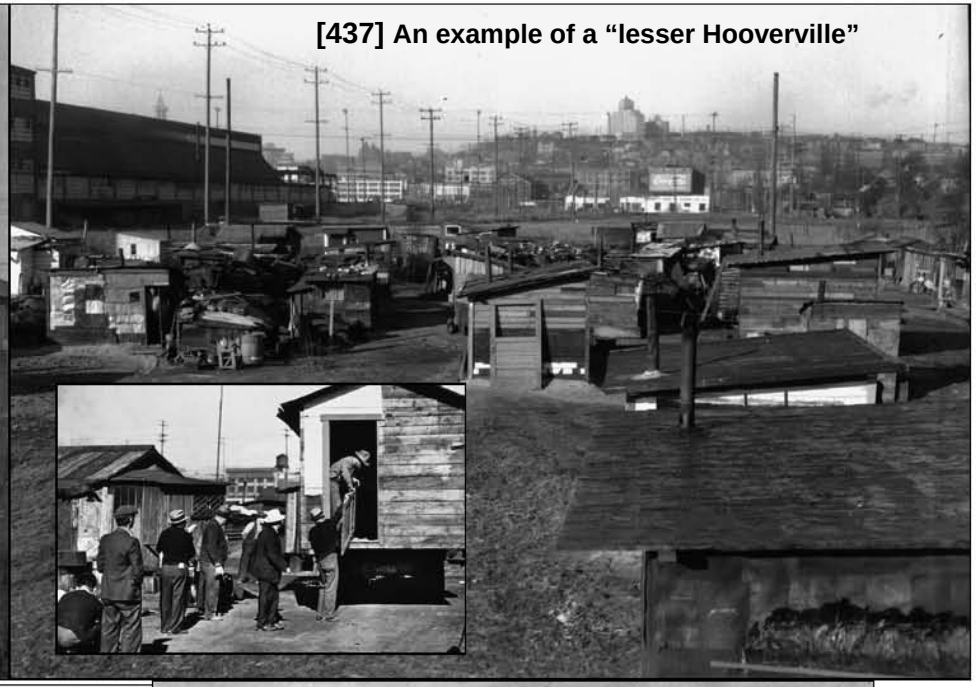
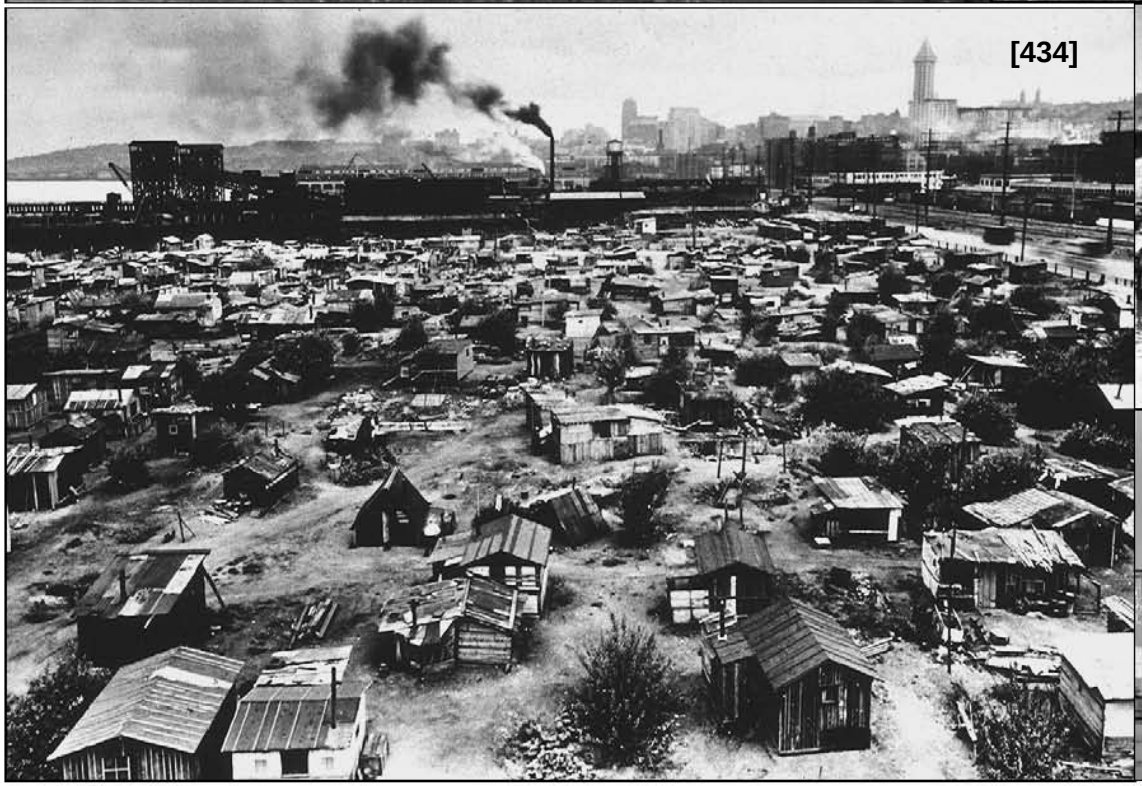


[437] An example of a “lesser Hooverville”



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still undeveloped and at least dormant during the depressions. **[437]** Many of the single men got jobs helping build war ships near where they once lived.

National Security and the Rescue of the Port of Seattle's Difficulties at Connecticut Street

The Port of Seattle purchased the old Skinner and Eddy yards from the U.S. Shipping Board in the mid 1920s. It was long imagined by both the Port and its watchers that this section of waterfront between the more developed East Waterway and the central waterfront would eventually become the site for the Port's largest services to coastwise shipping. Between the summer of 1937, when the Port announced its plans for piers at the site, to the winter-spring of 1943 when the work actually got underway, the local papers were occasionally inclined to revisit the site and usually, of course, wrote about whatever sensational or strife-ridden side to the site it could uncover. While there were not many such there were a few. For instance, already in 1937 the Port's attempt to use a new state law that permitted the issuance of bonds for a Connecticut Street pier was befuddled by Al Hughbanks, a local bond merchant. Hughbanks noted that four years earlier, Superior Court Judge Malcolm Douglas had restrained the Port from using a bond issue in connection with the former pier at the foot of Connecticut Street – the pier that had then recently burned down. In other words, the Port would need to get the voters approval if it wished to develop the Connecticut Street site. The Port's attempts to defend the process through the courts wound up with a loss in the State Supreme Court on March 30 the following year. Hughbanks had brought the case. However, when the Port and the Federal government dealt the national security card the state legislature soon turned the game in the Port's direction by passing new legislation. It allowed the Port to do what it had wanted to do earlier – issue utility bonds (payable from its earnings and not by general obligation utility bonds) to improve property – now in connection with national defense. The legislation became effective in June 1940.

None of this pleased the Municipal League's Port Committee. The esteemed Muni League preferred the terms that came with the original Port District law of 1911 requiring construction projects to be authorized by a vote of the people. But the Connecticut plans continued to grind on. Next the impressive size and price of the piers was reported – each 1000 feet long and $2,000,000 for the pair. The Port's attempts in November 1941, a month before Pearl Harbor, to persuade the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to build them were justified by the fact that the Port was losing its Smith Cove facility to the Navy and the proposed shipyard piers would make up for about half the space lost in the transfer at Smith Cove. Ten days before Pearl Harbor, the Navy indicated that it did in fact covet Smith Cove and would most likely enlarge it. Nearly a year after Pearl Harbor, on Nov. 11, 1942, the Port of Seattle and the Army agreed to construct two piers at the old Skinner and Eddy site. The port would build the north pier – the longer one. The construction, of course, would be financed through the issuance of revenue bonds -- and bonds, Congressman Warren G. Magnuson announced, would be taken by the RFC.

The construction began in the spring of 1943 with the nostalgic discovery that the old Moran Yard piling was still O.K. Daniel McEachern, the vice president of the General Construction Company, the contractors for the substructure of the new terminal, helped

drive Moran's pilings in 1895 when he worked for him. McEachern noted, "We have removed about 20,000 piling from the site of the old Moran plant … and it is as sound as the day it was driven. There was no creosoting of piling in those days and timbers taken out of the woods were used. They were driven into the ground where they were protected from teredos." In the winter of 1944, the Port announced that it expected to complete its new terminal at the foot of Connecticut Street by April 1. The dimensions had shrunk some and the price inflated – two 980x110 foot piers plus sheds for $3,000,000 with a 100-foot roadway between them. **[438]** Like the Port's big pier at Smith Cove these were earth-filled. The Port concluded by revealing what everyone already knew, that the piers would probably be turned over to the Army for operation. The construction of the Connecticut piers was an exciting reversal of something that *The Seattle Times* noted already in the summer of 1941. "No new piers have been built in Seattle for a period of 20 years and there has been little public support in a policy of port development that would anticipate needs beyond normal conditions." But in the summer of 1941 abnormal conditions were only weeks away.

A 1938 Miscellany

In 1938, while Hughbanks was dragging the Port of Seattle to the State Supreme Court, King County Commissioners were discussing how the County might make something out the last of the Denny Regrades that like the first was stagnant. (But then it was not auspicious that the first full year of the renewed regrading was 1929.) The Commissioners considered constructing a 50 million dollar transportation center that would mix water, air and surface modes. The center was a variation – or update – of the Bogue Plan that also described and depicted a large transportation center at the south end of Lake Union, but without the airplanes. In 1938 the Port of Seattle got busy at Smith Cove with some dredging and the construction of a 400-foot long shed. The Northwest Dock Directory's inventory on Seattle waterways (including the Lake Washington Shipyard in Houghton and the Lake Union Drydock on Fairview Ave.) counted about 72 wharfs. The same inventory found 57 and 34 wharfs in Portland and Tacoma respectively. Two years later, the Port of Seattle and a Portland company made a birth announcement. The Kerr-Gifford & Co. Inc leased the Hanford Street Terminal and its grain facilities with a capacity for 1,300,000 bushels for one year. Seattle Port Commissioner Smith Wilson explained, "Successful and profitable operation of our grain elevator facilities requires the control of a large volume of wheat. We are not in the wheat market. Kerr-Gifford & Co. has control of a huge volume of wheat. This lease will be advantageous to the Port and to the entire community because it will bring a large added tonnage to Seattle, which will mean additional payrolls." For a Seattle that used to eye with envy the Portland's wheat waterway, the Columbia River and try to devise ways to lure Palouse farmers to send their wheat by train over the Cascades directly to Seattle (but please not to Tacoma), this relationship was at once fulfilling and humbling. It would be the "first time any large old-time grain shipping interests of Portland have arranged to ship grain and grain products through Seattle." A representative for Kerr predicted that the arrangement "will bring large revenue to Seattle for labor, power, light and transportation."

Scrap Iron to Japan 1940

While the Port was negotiating with Kerr, it was also deliberating on whether or not to allow its piers to be used to ship scrap to Japan. On

Jan. 16, 1940 it announced that it would. Both the Peace Mobilization Council and the Washington Commonwealth Federation, a depression-time player of considerable clout, were against it. The Port rationalized its decision on the advice of a lawyer named Glenn J. Fairbrook. He told the Port what it might have wanted to hear: that only "inherently dangerous" material could be refused for handling on Port facilities. The Port's General Manager, Col. C. W. Bickford, explained that during 1939 only two percent of the goods shipped to Japan through Seattle were scrap-iron. On November 22, 1941 – days before Pearl Harbor – the Port reported that its projected revenue for 1942 would likely be less than 1940, although still show a slight increase over 1941. The *Times* story explained that the lowered expectations had something to do with scrap iron. "The largest decrease is in wharfage and labor charges, where a good share of the 1940 revenues was for the handling of shipments of scrap iron which has since been discontinued." But then this loss, it was projected, would be answered some by rentals that the federal government was expected to make for national defense purposes.

World War Two Enlistees

With the U.S. entry into the Second World War, the Great Depression was paid off in war bonds and replaced with the grand obsession of beating the enemy. Some things would stay the same. As with the depression, during the war there would be very little private shipping. The difference, of course, was that there would be a lot of government shipping. As in World War One, many sites in the southern section of the waterfront were rapidly tooled to make weapons. Of course, most of the priorities of "regular" public and private life would have to adjust to military needs and demands. Life was on ration, on hold, and too often lost. The four peacetime waterfront authorities, the Port Commission, the State Department of Public Works, the State Commissioner of Public Lands and the City's Harbor Department were all enlistees. The Port of Seattle, especially with its considerable number of both functional and fallow properties, gave and kept on giving expecting with victory – or "after the duration" – to take back what it gave, and perhaps with something added. Sometimes this expectation – for instance, at Smith Cove – took many years for fulfillment.

Port Warden's Radio Telephone Goes Silent: 1942

Of the quartet of traditional waterfront powers-that-be the Port Warden and his Harbor Patrol turned out to be the most dispensable. On the pioneer waterfront, it was the Port Warden who collected the city fees from docking vessels, kept track of their comings and goings and generally performed the role of waterfront sheriff. But in the late 1930s the Port Warden had to fight to stay relevant, and it was his command of the city's ship-to-shore radio telephone system that seemed like the best way to keep it. In 1937, after the City Council approved its renewal, Port Warden Capt. G. J. Snelling applied to the federal radio commission for a license needed to operate. Meanwhile he kept on broadcasting. The communications commission refused, but Snelling was certain that the failure to renew was an oversight. The Warden explained, "Of course we're operating. Ships coming in here are continually asking our radio station for docking orders, asking that pilots be put aboard and other matters of importance in shipping. There'll be hell popping along the waterfront if the license is not renewed." With an ally in Seattle Mayor Arthur Langlie, the oversight (or disregard)

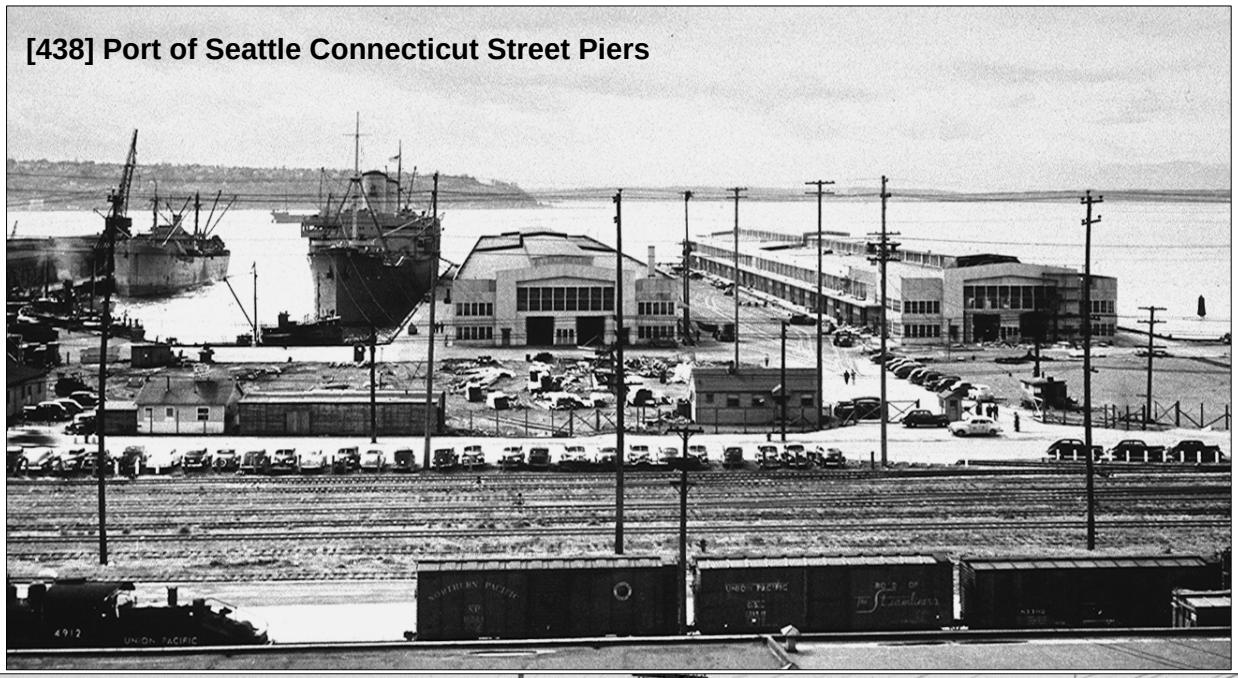
was corrected and in 1940 the station sent 1,808 messages and received 7,656. The service continued through 1941 and so into the war when both shipping slacked and transmissions were censored. After the then powerful Seattle Municipal League studied the Harbor Department's radio service and charged on Jan. 11, 1942 that its operation was both too costly and failed to act on many of the charges that it was authorized to collect, the radio was switched off the following March 15 – apparently without "hell popping along the waterfront." That day *The Seattle Times* noted, "For the first time since the First World War, the Seattle harbor wireless station went silent last night. The equipment in the Harbor Department offices in the Bell Street Terminal of the Port Commission will be placed in storage. The station had four operators. It was operating 24 hours a day under Navy censorship. As a result of war there was not enough business to justify its operation, as few ships now use their radios and many of the merchant vessels are in government service."

Waterfront Security & The Freedom to Purchase A Curio

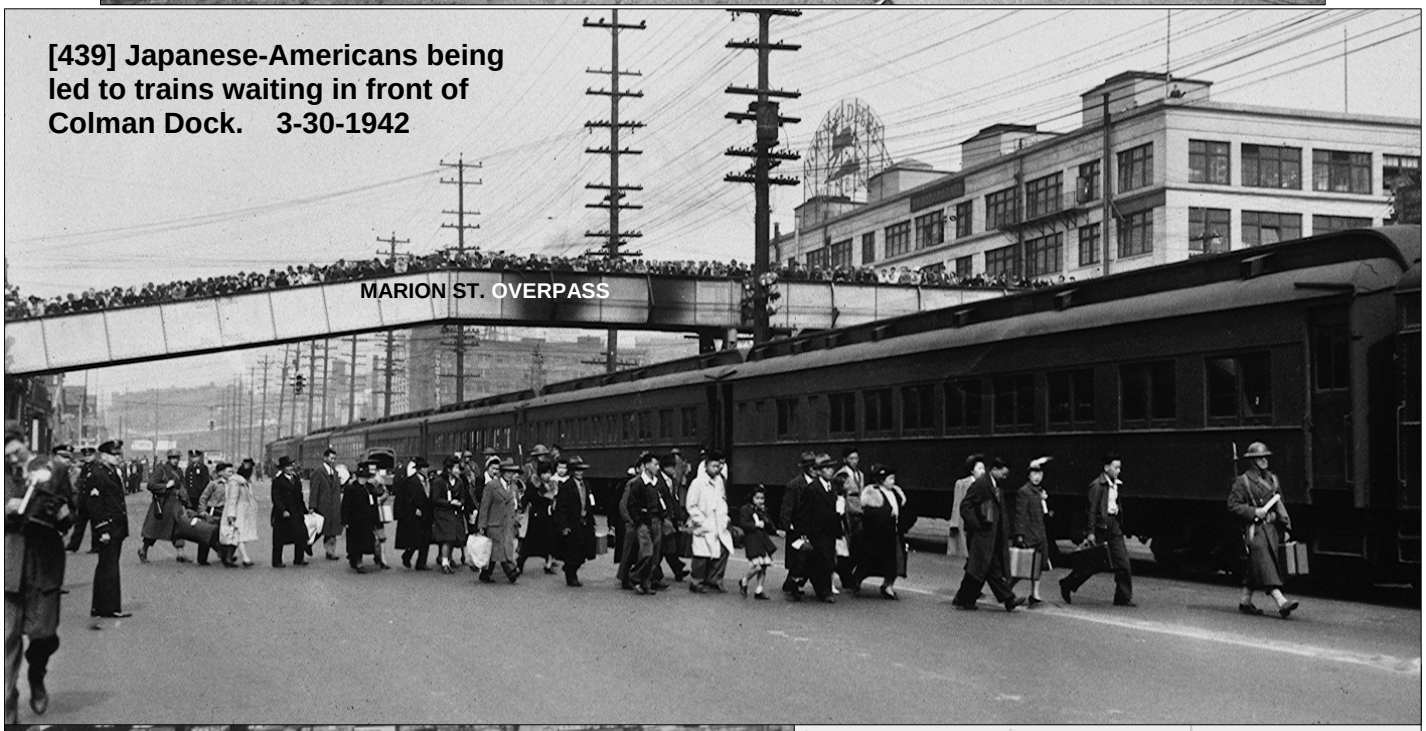
After Pearl Harbor, security became an instant preoccupation, and the military pressed for a variety of changes. On December 11th the new authorities announced that permits were needed to enter the waterfront. Of course the businesses in the restricted area between Bay and Spokane Streets howled – politely. Three days later the military corrected itself and noted that waterfront businesses were not restricted places. "This order will be enforced with judgment. It is not aimed at the legitimate citizen on an honest business venture, whether that venture be the purchase of a meal, a salmon or a curio." It may have been the first time that Ye Old Curiosity Shop was implied in a military strategy. Not so legitimate were the remaining squatters on Harbor Island. They were given fifteen days to move from their shacks.

Japanese Internment 1942

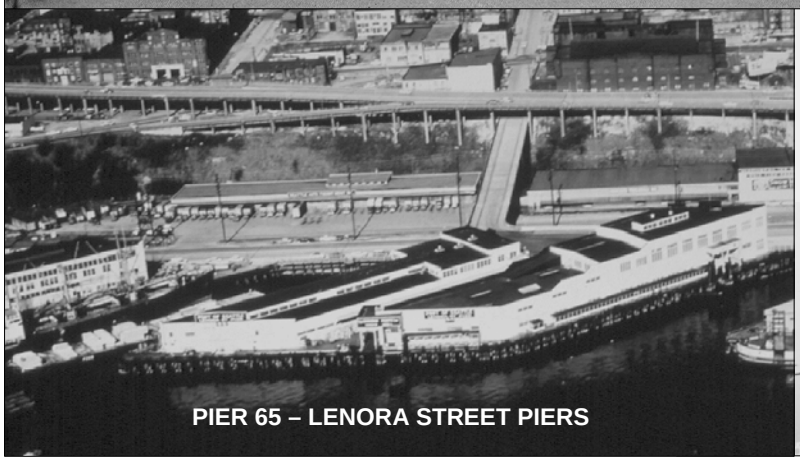
On the 10th of December 1941 the Associate Press released a story headlined "Arrows of Fires Point to Seattle." By latter reports, either buried or not printed, it was noted that white farmers clearing land near Port Angeles started the fires. The result of this and many other hysterical news stories that followed the bombing of Pearl Harbor was an incendiary to the imaginations of West Coast locals, many of whom fully expected Japanese planes to appear suddenly over Duwamish Head. The bombs were dropped instead on the families of Japanese Americans, Issei and Nisei alike, respectively, aliens living here (often for decades) and their children born into American citizenship. Uprooting squatters is one thing. Incarcerating a legal community is another. There was a deeply institutional side of this moral collapse – the general abdication of democratic courage by public leaders in the name of "military necessity," a political cart that carried Japanese-Americans from their homes, businesses, and farms into the deserts of Idaho and California and the tarpaper concentration camps quickly assembled there or adapted to enclose them. Because, it was explained, of their proximity to the Bremerton Naval Yard, the fifty-four Japanese American families farming on Bainbridge Island were the first local group uprooted. In the accompanying photograph that dates from March 30, 1942 their guarded line is led across Railroad Avenue (Alaskan Way) to the train waiting to carry them eventually to Manzanar, California. **[439]** Camp Minidoka in southern Idaho – the eventual destination for the majority of the interned families from the Seattle area – was



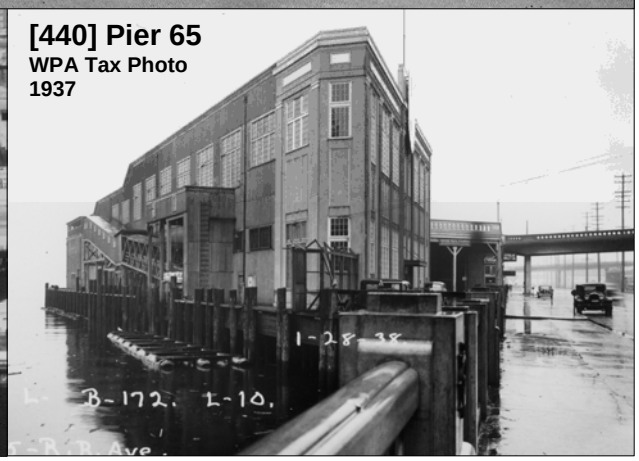
[438] Port of Seattle Connecticut Street Piers



[439] Japanese-Americans being led to trains waiting in front of Colman Dock. 3-30-1942



PIER 65 – LENORA STREET PIERS



[440] Pier 65
WPA Tax Photo
1937

not yet ready. Of course, neither the Italian nor German populations living along the Atlantic Seaboard were similarly evacuated en masse to whatever deserts might have been prepared for them in Ohio or Indiana. The West Coast action was the sad and supremely stupid fulfillment of a by then decades old anti-Asian attitude on the Pacific Coast.

Port of Seattle Worries: Smith Cove Loan & Packing Salmon

The vastly increased businesses of ship building and the movement of war supplies was handled for the most part off the central waterfront on the East Waterway, on Harbor Island and at the Port of Seattle's Smith Cove docks which, as noted, the Navy had requisitioned. In what may have been a censorable moment of investigative reporting, on March 20, 1942, a *Seattle Times* article written by a KJR Radio commentator (perhaps from a Port leak) revealed that the Port of Seattle was not happy with what they were getting from the Navy for its use of Smith Cove. Port Commissioner Smith Wilson was quoted expressing his decorous worry. "I realize," he said, "that it's pretty much the people versus the people, but after all we were elected to represent the people of the district of the Port of Seattle." Smith Wilson feared that the Smith Cove Properties might be taken not merely for "the duration" but for good. The Navy had turned them into a Seattle Annex to the Puget Sound Navy Yard at Bremerton. The truth was that the Navy was preparing to abandon its agreement with the Port and simply and cheaply condemn Smith Cove for its own uses. The Port's and the public's objections did what was most often impossible to do during wartime. The military withdrew from the condemnation and agreed to pay the Port. Meanwhile the Port struggled to re-establish its Smith Cove salmon service on the East Waterway. "We were faced with a tremendous problem," Col. Bickford said. "Not only did we not know where to go but it is difficult to estimate size of the salmon pack this year. It all depends on conditions in Alaska, the activities of the Japanese, the amount of salmon demanded by the Army and Navy and many other unpredictable factors. We have been informed the Army and Navy will take all they can get. Two packers, hearing rumors about loss of the Smith Cove property, already have moved out to Prince Rupert B.C." The Port next looked to property on Harbor Island directly across from its Hanford Dock. But in this instance the voters needed to approve. Even the normally tight-pocketed Municipal League recommended that the East Waterway Dock and Warehouse Co. docks be purchased for the Port's Salmon business and for the $900,000 asked. Two years and a few months later, John A. Early, Port of Seattle president, let it be publicly known that the Port was still worried about its Smith Cove. "There is a danger these properties will be offered to private speculators, and it might become necessary for the publicly owned ports to repurchase them at an obviously marked-up price."

"For the duration," the central waterfront activities between Schwabacher Wharf and the Port of Seattle Bell Street pier continued to concentrate on the handling of fish, groceries, hardware and Puget Sound transportation, but conditions were less than dynamic. Whiz and Palace fish were still active at the short piers between Pike and Pine Streets where the aquarium would eventually be built. With the completion of the Lenora Street overpass in the early 1930s and the increasing development of motor freight, Pier 11-B / 65 became an important center for auto freight with more than twenty such companies listed

in the 1943 city directory as quartered there. Of course, private ocean shipping was military-controlled, so all these teamsters were working for the brass as well. **[440]**

Lieu. Donald T. Adams Captain of the Port: Telling All Those Who Need To Be Told

Five months after Pearl Harbor the military seemed to toughen. Lieu. Donald T. Adams, U. S. Coast Guard, had been designated Captain of the Port, and while meeting before the Propeller Club at an Arctic Club Banquet on the last day of April 1942 he warned, "I can close any pier and not permit any ship to berth there, if that pier is a fire hazard. I have authority to lay the law down, and if the worst comes I will use it. All regulations will be enforced. I have sent a request to owners and operators of docks on the waterfront to appoint a man as director of safety for their particular property. Someone who can be contacted directly. He will receive nightly reports from the watchmen on the piers. I expect to have a meeting of these directors of safety and obtain a report from each of them on conditions on the waterfront. Shipping must be kept going. We must have our ports open. The only way to keep them open is by having adequate security. Everyone is willing to help, but they are waiting to be told." The Captain of the Port was especially concerned that high tides might carry in an oil slick that would then coat the docks and present yet another danger.

"Business as Unusual": The Mobilized Ivar, Maggie & Oscar Haglund

Lieu. Adams also told club members that the Seattle waterfront presented a special case for security. With numerous stores, shops, restaurants and offices, it had wartime hazards even in its business-as-usual. One of these unusual usual cases was Ivar Haglund's Pier 3 Aquarium. Opened in 1938, it managed to keep its door opened and its tanks circulating with "fresh" salt water from Elliott Bay during the war only because Ivar and his wife Maggie added the chore of running the aquarium to their wartime jobs. **[441]** Maggie worked as a fitter (and Union organizer) at Lockheed, and Ivar more obediently sorted bolts at Boeing. **[442]** Ivar had a third job as well, producing and performing his songs, northwest folklore and aquarium promotions on radio four mornings a week for Reliance Coffee.

Waterfront Security With Volunteers & Billy Clubs

When the fear of Japanese submarines surveying Puget Sound or Zeros flying over the West Seattle horizon slacked, the war years became routine – nervous but routine. Unlike the First World War, this time both oceans were dangerous; consequently the busy Pacific Waterway of 1917 that then accounted for much of Seattle's prosperity was quiet after 1941. The Navy was put in charge of most Puget Sound shipping. On the Seattle waterfront the security became routine: an uneventful setting made for slapstick or stupid tragedy – depending upon how the bullet flied. In 1943, it just missed a waterfront "executive" that a nervous guard mistook for a saboteur, fired upon and missed. The big shot complained and all the little shots lost their weapons. After that, soldiers and port police defended the docks with Billy Clubs and whistles. This arrangement was soon tested by a brash reporter from *The Seattle Times* who "crashed through" a red lighted check point in his auto while the "helpless watchman waved frantically and yelled." And that was wartime excitement away from the front. Some of the port police were

volunteers – graduates of a three-week course at the University of Washington. The class of June 1944 added 149 graduates to the Seattle Volunteer Port Security Force. The volunteers served 12 hours weekly -- without pay, of course. Their routines were part public relations and part open to interpretation and improvisation: "patrol the waterfront, board vessels, check for subversive activities, watch for fires and aid in keeping the waterfront safe, clean and presentable."

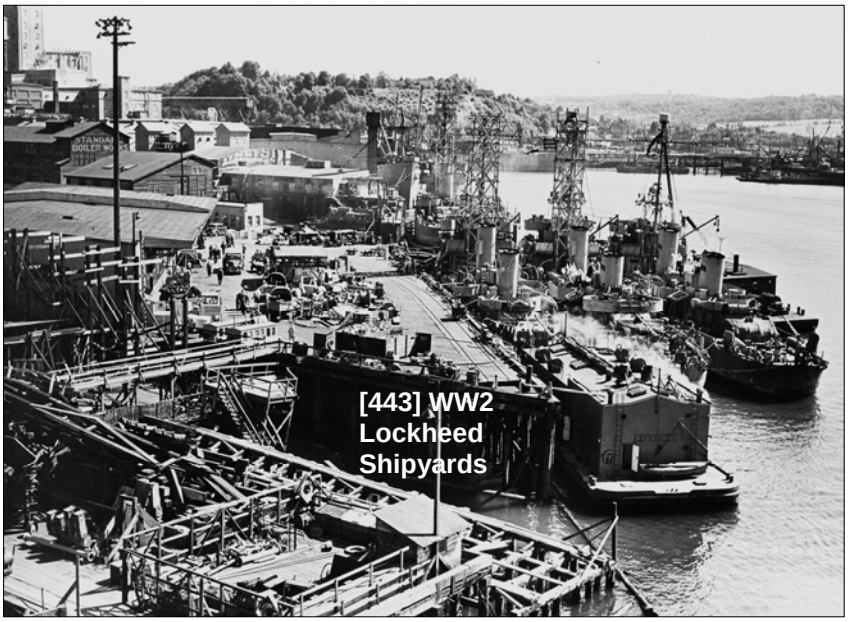
The Great Sprinkler Postponement

The Captain of the Port, Lieu Adams' nervousness about oil slicks, noted above, led to the "great sprinkler postponement." The military wanted all privately owned waterfront wharves to be retrofitted with sprinklers. The City agreed, but many locals objected. The not amused Adams replied with wartime authority. "The armed forces don't want to be caught with too little and too late … Dock owners protesting the plan have said they hold the primary interest at stake, but I say the U.S. government has an interest in the Seattle waterfront superior to the dock owners. The fact that nothing has been done in other Pacific Coast ports toward installation of sprinklers does not mean that Seattle should not protect her waterfront adequately." Adams noted that docks in San Francisco and Los Angeles, built of concrete with creosote piles, were generally more fireproof than in Seattle. Wharf owners responded that the major portion of all waterfront property was either owned or controlled by agents of the U.S. government or by the Port of Seattle, agencies that were beyond the jurisdiction of the City of Seattle. By 1944, the city's building superintendent noted that ten piers had complied and five other were working on compliance. But not the Port of Seattle. With other wharf owners the Port's resistance began in 1942 explaining that the requirement to install an under deck protective system would cost about $4 million to cover the waterfront." With military encouragement, the city responded in May 1943 with a ruling that the Port of Seattle was subject to the city building code. "Building regulations constitute an exercise of police power … In view of the fact that the Port of Seattle possesses no police powers and the state has not enacted regulations governing buildings and structures in port districts, we are of the opinion that the Port of Seattle must comply with the safety regulations contained in the building code." Still, a *Seattle Times* article for Nov. 18, 1944 reveals, "A municipal law requiring installation of automatic sprinkler equipment on all waterfront piers, as a protection against fire, is being ignored by the Seattle Port Commission, although private pier owners are complying gradually, Building Superintendent John B. Cain declared today. 'The Building Dept has written to the Port Commission asking them to install sprinkler systems on their piers and they've never even answered our letter.' " Such was the power of the Port that it did not install sprinklers under its properties until the early 1950s.

Ship Building During the World War

Federally funded shipbuilding was slow to return to Elliott Bay, although it finally arrived one year before the U.S. entered the war. **[443]** The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 created the U.S. Maritime Commission to oversee it. At first it benefited only east coast yards in its goal to build up to 50 ships a year. The first West Coast order landed in San Francisco Bay in 1939 for two C3 ships, the nearly 500-foot-long improvements over the smaller and slower Liberty Ships. Once geared up and funded

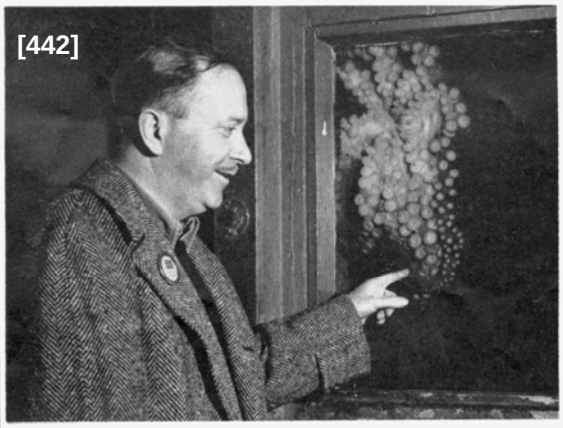
[441] Ivar's Pier 54 Aquarium



[443] WW2 Lockheed Shipyards

[444] Troops return

[442]



Oscar, in this picture, is in his cups. Ivar Haglund would like to bail him out of the tank if he could only convince Oscar he should devote his six extra arms to the war effort and help him sort nuts and bolts at Boeing.

Aquarist Boosts Pet for Rotabin; "Has Just the Touch," He Says

"If only Oscar were here to help me I'd be the champion nuts and bolts man in the plant," remarked Ivar Haglund, stocking up a rotabin. He was thinking wistfully of one of his best friends. "Oscar would be good at that sort of thing," he added. "He has the build for it."

Oscar's ability to handle nuts and bolts would be impressive, if you could interest him in the job. But when Haglund introduced him to the *Boeing News* photographer, Oscar ignored him and kept on dozing sleepily in a corner of the tank. Finally with a little coaxing he slowly unrolled his eight arms and, holding on with his several hundred suction cups, leaned against the glass window. He refused to assume a working stance.

Oscar is Haglund's pet octopus and a prominent member of the Pier 3 aquarium, whose occupants are captured and exhibited by Haglund. He runs the aquarium during the day, cleaning the tanks and feeding the fish. Nights he spends at Boeing on the graveyard shift.

In between the two jobs he handles his own radio show. Haglund goes on the air at 8:20 three mornings a week when he sings about living on Puget Sound surrounded by "acres of clams" and gives the inside dope on the private lives of his salty proteges. All the fish, anemones, swimming clams and sea life in his Alaskan Way aquarium are from Puget Sound.

"Some of them are brought in by fishermen," Haglund explained, "but most of them I go out and get myself." He has a special low-tide method of beach fishing that nets him a varied catch of sea life.

Haglund started his aquarium several years ago when he found there were more than 400 varieties of fish in Puget Sound, but that most people thought they all were salmon. He found out about the other varieties, collected them, and became what he calls an "aquarist."

"Fortunately I don't know the Latin names of any of my fish," he said. "But I've found out enough about sea life to tell people what they want to know."

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as did **Dewey Griffin,** 307; **Bob Foley,** 215; **Gil Buck,** 901, and **Chris Klay,** 901; **Al Berger,** 901, to the Marines; **Fred Brown,** 901, to the Navy; **Donald McPhillips,** 305, **Leonard Schumann** and **Glenn Brooks,** 309, to the Army. **Ford Forster,** 302, is training as an air cadet. **Bill Mayer,** formerly of 302, is now with the Air Forces in Africa. **Rex Kinsburg,** formerly of 302, is with the Navy in the South Pacific. Cadet **James Beck,** who worked in fuselage tail installation before leaving Boeing last February, received his silver wings recently at Tampa Army air field. Operating a crane at the plant until a year ago last December, **Wallace Gibson** of 301 is now overseas with the Seabees.

[445]

Seattle's yards produced plenty of "floating bathtubs" or "ugly ducklings": two vernaculars for the Liberties. Seattle's first big order was for 20 destroyers built on Harbor Island through the winter of 1940-41 by the Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding Corporation on a $137 million contract from the Navy. (After the war many of the faster C3 ships were picked up on surplus and converted for commercial use.) Besides the ship building, Seattle was a major distributor for the Army Transport Service, and the Army's Port of Embarkation at piers 36 through 39 was kept busy moving troops and what they needed to fight the war. For a few years following the war the Port of Embarkation continued to be the busiest section on the waterfront.

"Rationalizing" Pier Numbers An "Act of War"

This history began with a note on what became the Second World War's most lasting contribution to the waterfront – the uniform change charged to the names of its piers. The color side of the old system was sometimes accompanied by confusion, especially for visitors. During the 1890s, Seattle rationalized it's street names, eliminating duplicates and often trading in historical names for drab digits (especially when it annexed new sections). It was explained that this was done to make it easier for the agents of security – the policeman and the fireman – to find someone's home and for that matter their own. Similarly the military wanted a uniform system on the waterfront. Besides, most of them were from out of town. By an act of war they got it. Thankfully and perhaps inevitably a few of our piers that were renumbered during the war are still known by proper names. For instance, in the 1950 directory of Seattle Pier Numbers between Pier 24 and 91, only their number primarily identifies fifteen, and many of these are suspect. The pier listed "Pier 8, Pacific Marine Supply Co.," was then and still is more likely to be called the Pike Street Pier. But then, identifying a pier with its street end is really safer than identifying it with a mere number. Pier 54 is now almost universally known as Ivar's Acres of Clams – but not yet in 1950, although Ivar opened his Acres in 1946. The name Colman Dock is a revival from the 1980s. The military gave it number 52 and it stuck for many years until "Colman" was deliberately restored. Others like Pier 70, at the foot of Broad Street, have more recently had such unstable proprietary histories that we may be pleased to have and use the number. Somehow the name "Broad Street Pier" did not take hold.

Heritage & Street Names

(Here the author takes another opportunity to load another "footnote" in the main test – something ordinarily avoided, outside of shaded fragments – and reflect on this matter of street names. Most of the extremely rare readers of this "trainer history" will be familiar with the charm, irregularity and historical resonance of many European cities. It is not difficult to understand how Paris and London managed to escape the urge for obsessive faceless uniformity in the name of safety. Those ancient cities were not constructed nearly in an instant on grids by obsessive founders, real estate opportunists for whom curves were annoying, or merely simple-minded megalomaniacs but by thousands of intimate decisions, some of them ancient. While it requires study to understand the wrinkles in these cityscapes, still they are there in their irregular splendor to be enjoyed by citizens and tourist alike. But now there is good news for those who still would sacrifice all that for security. With the help of the satellite there can be no excuse about

not finding a place – if we have the address. This ease makes it pretty much a certainly that both police and fire pursuits are digitally guided. What historical references Seattle streets once had with personal names and lost to mere numbers can now with global positioning technology be revived with no injury to safety and only a temporary inconvenience to personal stationary and business stamps. When in the future we choose – hopefully – to recall the names from the numbers, and even ascribe new names when we have the opportunity, we will still not generally get the chance to add curves to our streets. And this for the sake of safety really is unfortunate. For as studies in London – backed by sturdy statistics – reveal, streets that curve are generally safer than ones that are straight. Why? Because more can be intimately seen of a curving street than a straight one and as we learned from many students of the city – notably Jane Jacobs – streets with eyes are the safer ones.)

End of the War
End of the World
Relief & Anxiety
1945

Post-war angst settled on the Seattle waterfront. What would come of shipping and how should the Port of Seattle handle what it still had and get back what it had loaned or leased – or what? Added to this uncertainty was the general one that reached from Alaskan Way to every other way. After so many years of nearly worldwide destruction capped with the Atom Bomb, there was no confident way of predicting how peace would prevail – or if it could. The German surrender on May 7, 1945 had been preceded by a competitive race into Germany between Russia and the rest of allies. More than a bad omen this was weltschmerz – an overture to the cold war. The incineration of Dresden in February, the Russian revenge on the population of Berlin in April, the American revenge on the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August were bad signs, although at the time only read by a few. The return of the troops, however, was a recognized delight. Here the returning ships were met by the *FS-31*, described as "a sturdy 150-foot craft, flag-dressed and carrying a 'Welcome Home' banner." The dock at the Port of Embarkation was often dressed with a brass band and twirlers in short skirts. At the Army Transportation Corps' Seattle Port, 40,243 troops disembarked between February 10th and March 10th 1946. In the seven months since V-J Day – August 15, 1945 "Victory over Japan Day" – 413,243 military passengers, the Times noted, "have walked – or run – down gangplanks" in Seattle and Tacoma and another 68,015 at Portland. **[444]**

"Port of Seattle"
At 320 Feet
Of Neon

On the sixth of October the Port announced that it would soon relight the Port Sign on the roof of the Bell Street Pier. With letters 12 to 22 feet high it read "PORT OF SEATTLE" through 320 feet. Approximately 1,500 feet of red neon tubing was used in the sign that had been blackened since Peal Harbor. The sign was first installed in late 1930 as a kind of neon mojo against the Great Depression. With its size, it was obviously not only a familiar landmark but also an unavoidable one. While preparing to relight it, E.H. Savage, President of the Seattle Port Commission put the sign in distinguished company. "It's become as much of a fixture in Seattle as the Statue of Liberty in New York, the Ferry Building in San Francisco and the Aloha Tower in Honolulu." **[445]**

Port of Seattle Plans & Speculations 1945

Within two months of V-J Day, the Port let it be known that even if the Army returned its properties, the harbor would be short about 18 berths compared to the facilities that were flourishing during the 1920s – boom years on Elliott Bay. As noted at the top of this history another point of growing concern was the incapacity of the existing piers to accommodate modern type ships. Deep offshore water made it impractical to extend the old piers. The alternatives for a modern port were inevitable: either the finger piers would have to be traded for mooring that ran parallel to the waterfront or new facilities would have to be developed south of the central waterfront. At first the former alternative was the most popular. In a report from Oct. 7, 1945, the Port of Seattle shared its already developed thoughts on planning a new central waterfront north from Colman Dock to the Port headquarters at Pier 66. It required the construction of new warehouses and track facilities. As imagined, the first step in this grand plan was the acquisition of piers 60 through 63 – the old fish, salt, and newsprint docks just north of the Pike Street Wharf to and including the Virginia Street Dock – and developing them into a single modern quay-type ocean terminal with 650 foot of frontage. **[446]**

Pres. E.H. Savage's Proposals For The "Absolutely Obsolete … Gold Rush Period" Waterfront: 1946

On November 8, 1946 the *Times* printed reporter Lucile McDonald's report on her interview w. E.H. Savage, President of the Port Commission. It became Savage's "state of the waterfront" interview. "The central portion is absolutely obsolete. It belongs to the Gold Rush period." The Port's engineering department was "considering starting at the north end of this area and removing the small docks lying between Lenora and Madison Streets, also some in the vicinity of Yesler way, and replacing them with modern reinforced concrete structures, providing longitudinal mooring parallel to Alaska Way … This property is too expensive for birthing fishing craft; we'll provide for them elsewhere." By this vision, McDonald noted, "large ocean-going vessels might some day be taking on cargo at the foot of the principal downtown streets." Savage concluded "the port will have to acquire dock sites one at a time. The existing ones were all right for sailing ships, but they will not do for berthing the 540-foot freighters we are getting. Most of the present owners realize this … The water is very deep along the central waterfront and with the projected improvements any vessel afloat could be accommodated there …When all of it will happen is problematical, but it will be in the near future. We have already taken one of the preliminary steps in acquiring piers 60 and 61 now occupied by the Whiz Fish Products and the Palace Fish and Oyster Co. This will be the first unit to be developed. Our main problem at the moment is getting back the docks leased to the army."

Gen. Manager Col. Lamport's Proposal For A 3,000-Foot Quay Between Bell & Madison Streets: 1947

A year later, this general plan was still favored by the Port. In a *Seattle Times* interview from August 24, 1947, Port General Manager Col. Lamport reiterated the same themes, although the project quay had gotten longer in the intervening year. "Between Bell and Madison Street are finger wharves which reflect what was adequate and sufficient for

the needs of an era 50 years ago … All of it is wholly inadequate to meet today's requirements. It is our plan to remove all these structures from Bell to Madison streets. We will construct a quay-type wharf that will have a length of 3,000 feet. It will accommodate any vessel afloat. This structure will support the most modern transit sheds. Every possible consideration will be given to proper rail approaches and to the receiving and delivering of cargo by truck. It will be so designed as to relieve traffic congestion on Alaskan Way. You may well ask, 'Why build a great dock running parallel to the waterfront?' The depth of water between Bell and Madison streets is so deep as to prohibit any other type of wharf construction." (At this point Lamport picks up what has somehow been a theme with variations in this history – the Lenora Street depths – and we thank him.) "You are all acquainted with our Lenora Street pier. This is a comparatively short pier and yet at its outer end there is a depth of water exceeding 70 feet. We used 120 foot piling in the construction of this short pier."

Dismal Annual Reports, Public Relations, & Maggie's World Trade Center: 1947-49

At his next "State of the Port" report on Aug. 24, 1947, Col. Lamport instructed, "The greatest centers of commerce, industry and population throughout the world are served by water transportation facilities. This is true in America. Your 12 largest centers of commerce, industry and population are all served by water transportation facilities … Every major port faces a real challenge. Seattle is no exception. We possess about the average percentage of so-called modern facilities. We need to clean out much of what is now known to be obsolete, and to rebuild in a manner that will meet the requirements of the foreseeable future." Lamport made this challenge still well before the Port of Seattle successfully responded to the coming "container revolution" with what was, of course, not a single"longitudinal quay on the central waterfront revolution," but several further south. In 1947 Warren D. Lamport felt understandably stressed. That year his Port operated at a loss of $54,592.87. In 1948 it was worse, largely because of the Longshore strike in the fall of '48. The trend continued in 1949. The first seven months showed a decline in exports under that of 1948. On May 15, before the World Trade Committee of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Port's new Commissioner Gordon H. Rowe claimed, "Out of every dollar that comes into Seattle, more than 40 cents can be credited to the Port." Given the Port's generally dismal statistics this reflected badly on the city as well. Rowe, of course, was doing his service to Public Relations, and so would the Port generally in 1949 when it hired John M. Haydon to become director of its newly formed Port of Seattle Department of Public Relations. The following year, Lamport won the Paul Bunyan award for the Port with his worldwide publicizing of Seattle as the new home of the World Trade Center that the Port opened with the by then Sen. Warren G. Magnuson's help in 1949.

Return of The Port's Pier 42: 1947

As noted above, the four piers of the Army's Port of Embarkation proved to be the most active spot on the waterfront probably during and certainly following the war. It was built on that most nondescript stretch of waterfront between the more familiar piers on the East Waterway – like the Port of Seattle's early facilities including the Spokane, Hanford, Stacy and Lander sites – and the Central Business district. Pier 42

was another new wartime construction of the Port's in this section and it unlike the piers connected with Embarkation (and, of course, the Smith Cove piers) was returned to the Port following the war, although with the request that the Navy be permitted to moor there 19 inactive ships - temporarily. The Port's Col. Lamport readily agreed noting that "under present strike conditions, the pier is 'dead' and we cannot use it at this time." The same *Times* article that relates this conditional transfer also reveals what on the east side of Puget Sound the navy was still holding: in Seattle the Todd Pacific Shipyard, Piers 2, 88, 90 and 91 (these last two Smith Cove), three docks in Tacoma and one in Everett. In fact the Pier 42 transfer lingered, until 1947 when the RFC approved a bond pay-off on it and the Port's President Savage noted "This clears everything up for us on Pier 42 … we now have clearance so we can go ahead and sign the leases with Alaska Steamship Company and Northland Transportation Company for their occupancy of the pier." (The 1950 pier register noted above lists the pier as occupied by the Alaska line.)

The Port of Embarkation Embarrassment at Plot 15: 1923 - 1949

Charles Regal, the Times maritime columnist, after describing the Port of Seattle's efforts to promote longitudinal piers on the central waterfront and gain from the federal government the right to open a duty-free Foreign Trade Zone in the East Waterway, added in a Jan 2, 1949 commentary that "Seattle's largest ship operator is, however, not a private ship line, but the Seattle Port of Embarkation with its fleet of 16 ships, including 10 transports and 6 cargo carriers. The Port of Embarkation, started early in the war, has become a permanent installation, employing 7,000 workers ashore and afloat and providing a payroll and other expenditures in this area that in the past two years totaled 132 million dollars." Understandably, when the army hinted two years earlier that it was about ready to pull out, the Seattle Planning Commission and the Port of Seattle joined to successfully convince the Army to retain its Port of Embarkation. A few months after Charles Regal published his observation of the importance of the Army's Port of Embarkation a forgotten point of its early history was revealed. In 1923, when the Port of Seattle purchased from the U.S. Shipping Board the old "Plot 15" at the Skinner and Eddy Yard, part of the purchase plan they agreed to permitted the U.S. Government "or any of its agencies" to have free berthing at anytime at all Port facilities – not just Plot 15. This agreement only came forward while the Port was negotiating with the RFC for the return of its Pier 42. The Port recognized the obvious. Had the government exercised its rights, the Port would have been "highly impeded." This story accompanied a May 18,1949 report on President Harry Truman's signature to legislation that provided "an agreeable lease arrangement for a portion of the property owned by the Port of Seattle upon which the Port of Embarkation has constructed shipping facilities. Had not the remedial legislation been accomplished, the cloud on the title would have made the financing of the port's projects impossible. The bill specifically covers Plot 15."

Port Statistics: The Failed Responsibility

A few days before Christmas, 1946, Gen. Manager Lamport paid a visit to the City Council urging them to resume the Harbor Patrol's pre-war service of gathering and publishing port statistics. His explanation for why the Port of Seattle could not take up the responsibility bristles. "Shipping men in many parts of the world

are anxious for Seattle to reestablish its prewar port statistical services." The Port cannot do it because it "is highly competitive with privately owned agencies in the same business and thus could not function as an unbiased agency." Data on vessel movements and the tonnage of what they carry in and out is in demand, but the agency that gathers and disseminates such information needs police and regulatory powers, neither of which the Port owns, but functions that were traditionally in the scope of the Port Warden and the Harbor Patrol. The city abandoned the service during the war when so much information was censored by the military that trying to keep tab of it was futile. Unable to persuade the city to resume the Port Warden's service port statistics continued to be neglected until The Seattle Merchants Exchange reorganized in late 1947 and took on the task, hoping to follow the success of the Portland Merchants Exchange that obtained its statistics directly from the shipping firms. Instead, the Seattle group was required to go the long and tangled route of getting its report from the Department of Commerce, which in turn got it from the Bureau of Customs after the data compiled in Seattle had gone to Washington before being returned to Seattle – incomplete. Two companies refused to cooperate explaining that their San Francisco offices objected.

Post-War Competition With San Francisco

At the time, the Port of Seattle was in the midst of a protracted competition with the Port of San Francisco. The latter had lower rates at moving cargo from ship to dock and was drawing shippers to San Francisco Bay that had been using Seattle facilities. In San Francisco the operation that involved one fee in Seattle required two. Here, shippers were charged by both the steamships lines and the terminal operators for stevedoring cargo from the hold of the vessel to its place on the wharf. In the spring of 1947 the Port of Seattle announced that it would lower its cargo and handling tariffs to parity with those of San Francisco – then the lowest on the coast. The Port's plans were described as "creating an uproar in Coast shipping circles." The Port's strategy was to bring the several public ports on the Pacific Coast together to set equal cargo-handling rates, a tactic that worked – again with Maggie's help. In late 1949, Lamport felt confident to report that a new system of terminal tariff charges would take effect the following year. "At long last Seattle will be able to operate on a basis competitive with California bay ports."

Trucks & Railroads: This & That

Another disadvantage that Seattle had when compared to San Francisco – and even Tacoma – was that it had no Port Railway or "belt line" to move cargo along the waterfront without dependence on the established waterfront railways. For a few moments following the war the port weighed the alternatives – either do what its first radical commissioner, Robert Bridges, had wanted but failed to do: build a port railroad alone or make attempts to get the established waterfront railroads to lower rates. The Port chose the latter. And the railroads were increasingly inclined to lower their rates because of the growing competition from truckers.

In 1952, the railroads and the truckers had a confrontation of sorts in which the shippers took the side of the railroads and the city the side of the truckers – and motorists. Regardless of the outcome – and the author has no inkling of how it resolved itself – the

situation is included here simply as a fine example of how attitudes toward transportation uses on the waterfront had changed since Railroads ruled it, and perhaps also how deciding one way or the other might just as well be done with a flip of the coin as with "serious deliberation," for every side has it merits and yet they are necessarily in conflict. The Railroads came before the City Council's Public Safety Committee asking that special permits be allowed for limited switching across Alaskan Way during peak-traffic hours, something previously denied. George Treadwell, the Port's general manager at the time, came in tow with several dozen shipping men and dock operators to urge the council to either drop or lighten its prohibition against switching between 7 and 9 in the mornings and 4 and 6 in the afternoon. Some ship cargoes, they explained, have been lost as a result to that old rival Tacoma. But City Engineer Ralph Finke wanted no changes for the Alaskan viaduct was expected to open a few weeks following. Then, Finke explained, it would be possible to see how much traffic had left the waterfront to use the viaduct. But, Treadwell countered, "This port is plagued by strikes and the shipping situation is most serious I assure you. These cargoes don't have to be handled in Seattle. There are other ports anxious to get them. Alaskan Way should be primarily to serve our waterfront." Finke was sympathetic. "These gentlemen have a problem, undeniably, but the over-all economics of the city are involved in our traffic flows." Simon Wampold, an attorney for the Teamster's Union simply urged retention of the regulations as they were because, well, they aided truck movements. And so it goes.

Seattle:
The City of Opportunity
& Playful Waterfront
Attractions: 1947

Eddying beside the post-war confusion and puzzlement on the working central waterfront were the playful industries that would ultimately prevail with pier-side attractions, seafood restaurants and nostalgia for – the old working waterfront. Published twice monthly, the booster's periodical *Seattle: The City of Opportunity*, regularly listed and/or ran advertisements for a few of the attractions on or near the waterfront. We will sample the March 4, 1947 issue.

The publication's "Sights To See" list includes the usual attractions like the "Public Market, Totem Pole, Smith Tower, and Floating Bridge," but then it heads for the waterfront where it reminds the reader on can see "Great Ships under various allied flags loading and discharging cargoes. The world's longest docks extending into salt water, curio shops, sea food booths, etc." The list then momentarily leaves the waterfront for an educational excursion to the Public Library where its "large collection of NW Pacific lore gives a better understanding of Seattle and the surrounding area." and the "Oriental Quarters" where one might make a "study of foreign peoples." But then "Sights to See" returns to the waterfront for Ye Olde Curiosity Shop and the "Aquarium Pier 53: Alaska at Spring St." where one can find – and here the copy writer has obviously consulted Ivar's own promotions – "hundreds of varieties of sea life from the North Pacific, all living." (This last reference to his critter's animation was Ivar's obvious dig at the Port of Seattle's own stiff aquarium or Frozen Fish Museum at its Spokane Street Cold Storage Terminal. It may also have been a sign of atonement for the boxing match Ivar promoted between Two Ton Tony Gelantro and his Oscar the Octopus in which the latter

lost largely because it was already "not living" at the beginning of the match. **[447]** This disadvantage was revealed only after animal rights activists complained about the poor fate of the eight-armed critter having to trade jabs even with an over-the-hill and overweight fighter like Two Ton Tony. In 1947 Ivar's Acres of Clams – also on Pier 3/54 but at the other end of the sidewalk from the Aquarium – had been opened for one year.)

Ye Olde Curiosity Shop is the one waterfront attraction that also put an advertisement in the March 4 issue. "You have not seen Seattle until you visit Ye Olde Curiosity Shop. Indian traders and importers for nearly half a century on Seattle's waterfront - Exciting Gifts and Souvenirs - See the Most Unique collection of Curios from every corner of the Globe - Fleas in Dresses! -Shrunken Human Heads! - 1,001 Oddities! - Everyone Welcome - Visit the World famous YOCS Colman Dock, - Museums Supplied, and Mail Orders Filled." **[448]**

The cited issue also includes advertisements that recall the war, including one for the Veteran's Service Center on Union Street, "They Changed the Song of Hope. They Made it a Song of Victory," and another for the "States Hotel: Veteran Owned and Veteran Operated." For those who were curious or concerned about the future of the planet, two attractions on the north side of Madison Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue's may have been of interest. First – approaching it from the waterfront – at 320 Madison was the Chamber of Mines Uranium Exhibit. This was popular. "Since the announcement of the atomic bomb, Seattle visitors give it top priority to view the specimens of Uranium – that essential raw material from which atomic energy is produced." (But please no smoking and do not slam the door.) If, however, the rock did not satisfy a little ways further up the hill was the door to Chapter Ten of the Universal Brotherhood of Light, where "free speakers on vital subjects" could be heard once a week on Sunday at 7:30 in the evening or paid "consultations for healing" could be arranged almost anytime – Monday through Friday, 10am to 4pm.

Port of Seattle Facilities: 1947

Returning to the waterfront, we may compare the playful and/or edifying fare of attractions just listed with *The Seattle Times* enumeration of Port Facilities and generalization on all terminal facilities on Elliott Bay also in 1947. "Since it was organized in 1911 and after, eleven units were constructed by the port district.

1.Pier 40-41 (now Navy's 90-91)
2. Salmon Bay
3. Bell Street
4. Piers 64 & 65 at foot of Lenora St.
5. Ferry landing at foot of Marion (Port owned only part of Colman Dock.)
6. Pier 42 901 S. Alaskan Way (Still used for Port of Embarkation)
7. Pier 38 foot of Atlantic
8. Hanford Street Terminal (pier 25)
9. Spokane Street Terminal (pier 24)
10. East Waterway terminal 11th Ave. SW and W. Hanford Street
11 Stacy-Lander Street terminal (Piers 29-and-30)

SEATTLE PORT PLANS EXPLAINED

[446]

George T. Treadwell, chief engineer of the Port of Seattle, explains the plans for port development on a portion of the central waterfront. Huge wharves, providing longitudinal mooring parallel to Alaskan Way, are included in the project. A marginal wharf will extend from Bell Street to University Street and a double wharf from University Street to Madison Street, providing nearly a mile of berthing space.

Mile of Wharves Parallel To Alaskan Way Planned

Preliminary plans for the construction of nearly a mile of modern shipping terminals on the Seattle waterfront in the area extending from Bell Street to Madison Street, replacing short, narrow piers, long obsolete, were described yesterday by E. H. Savage, president, and George T. Treadwell, chief engineer of the Port Commission.

"It is a long-range program for additional port terminals, which not only would mean much to the commerce of the port, but also would make the waterfront more attractive," Savage said. "The plans, now in a preliminary stage, involve a portion of the central waterfront where the piers are in need of complete rebuilding. To raise the necessary funds may require action by the State Legislature. The amount of federal funds obtainable will be an important factor."

Treadwell, who has completed the preliminary drawings, said the program calls for one huge marginal wharf extending from Bell Street to University Street, and a double wharf from University Street to Madison Street. The latter would be similar in construction to Pier 41, one of the most modern on the Pacific Coast.

The new terminals, parallel to Alaskan Way, would be more than 5,000 feet—nearly a mile in length. The huge marginal wharf would have a 40-foot apron, 180-foot shed and 80-foot depressed track area. Combined with the double wharf to the south, it would give berthing facilities for the largest ocean liners.

The program would call for the purchase of all of the small private piers in this area, which house many types of business foreign to the waterfront. The existing piers, which do not provide berths for large ships, cannot be extended because of the deep water on this portion of the waterfront.

Two of these, Piers 80 and 81, formerly owned by the Palace Fish & Oyster Company and the White Fish Company, already have been acquired by the port in one of the preliminary steps for the new terminal. The purchase price was about $88,000.

Another Port of Seattle project being planned is an extension of the Salmon Bay Terminals with the addition of saw-tooth mooring piers similar to those built last year at a cost of $100,000. The Port Commission recently purchased 20 acres of land west of the Salmon Bay terminals and extending to 20th Avenue West, from the Union Pacific Railway Company.

The engineering staff of the Port is gathering field information to determine the amount of dredging and clearing necessary to develop the property. The improvement will increase the mooring capacity of the terminals from 200 to 500 fishing vessels, Treadwell said. Additional net sheds, gear lockers and space for firms that serve the fishing fleet will be provided. The improvement, which will be paid for out of the earnings of the Port, will cost $250,000.

Poland Seeks To Recover Vessels

WARSAW, March 2.—(AP)—Poland's Ministry of Navigation and Foreign Trade is trying to get back the vessels seized by the Germans, but is running into difficulties—many of the ships have been converted into types of craft that makes them almost unrecognizable.

Despite this, the ministry says, 14 Polish tugs and 14 which formerly operated out of the port of Gdansk (Danzig) have been found and are on their way back to Poland. Additionally, 50 shipping cutters have been located.

KIRSTEN PLANS MARINE OUTPUT

George Gunn, Jr., president of the Kirsten Pipe Company, yesterday announced that this firm has established a marine division, which will produce a number of marine products formerly manufactured by the Webster-Brinkley Company.

Gunn, who formerly was president of Webster-Brinkley, said one of the products of the Kirsten Company will be a photo-electric pilot, automatic steering device, a product nationally distributed before the war.

"A new model of the photo-electric pilot is now in manufacture, making use of materials newly available," Gunn said. Greater ease of operation is achieved in the newest models."

Other products of the Kirsten Company's marine division are the Carlson towing clamp, a device which takes the place of splices for handling more than one tow when using a steel hawser, and a small electric hydraulic steerer.

Gunn said a number of key engineers and production men, who formerly worked on the design and production of these products at the Webster-Brinkley plant, now are on the Kirsten staff.

Experiments On Strait Tomorrow

The Coast Guard announced today that experiments planned by the Navy in the eastern end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and set for last Friday, will be held tomorrow. The experiment will be conducted from 10 o'clock until sunset in a circular area two miles in diameter, the center of which is latitude 48 degrees, 18 minutes north; longitude 122 degrees, 50 minutes west. Vessels are warned to keep clear of this area during the experiment.

[447]

Collection of shrunken human heads from upper Amazon, and "Gloria" the mummy. Seen at Ye Olde Curiosity Shop, Colman Dock, Seattle, Wash.

[448]

[449]

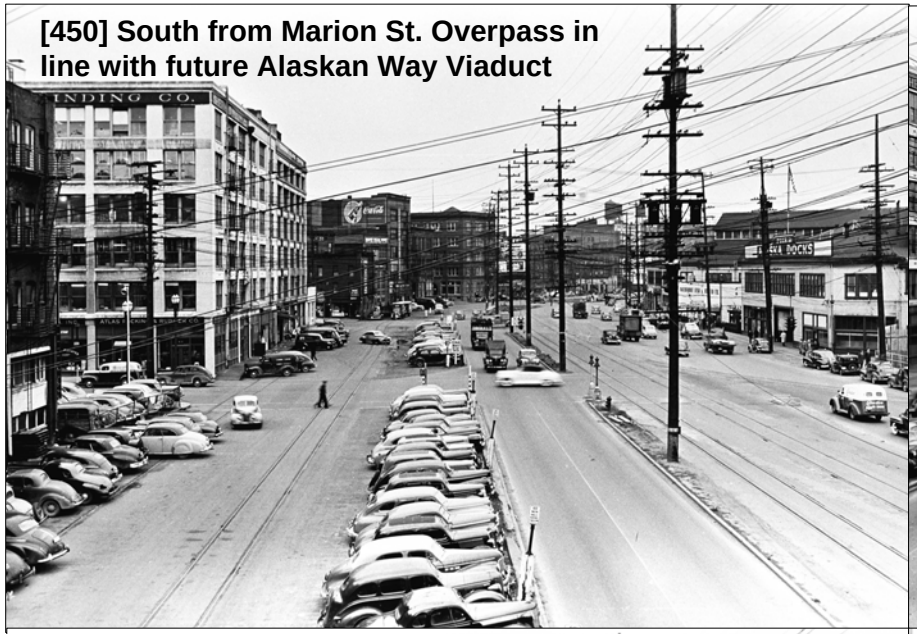
Port district properties are among more than 80 terminal facilities of various types used on Elliott Bay, East and West waterways and Duwamish waterway. Over 50 of these are shipyards, ferry terminals, oil docks, fuel bunkers, miscellaneous floats, fireboat stations, industrial plants and Army and Navy depots. About thirty are terminals used of general commerce."

Port Purchases Pacific Coast Company Piers 49 thru 45 & 43: 1950

In 1950, the Port of Seattle could at last add to its list what it wanted in 1933 but was then refused by the voters. The Port purchased the Pacific Coast Company's Piers 49 through 43 – excepting the Union Pacific Railways Pier 44, which would be procured later. The price was $1,800,000. Including the Pier 44 interruption, this amounted to 1,320 feet of waterfront extending south from Washington Street. It was a distance long enough to imagine a parallel concrete quay, and while at the time its engineers sketched plans using this new waterfront property for just such a construction the Port was prudent enough to wait. Instead, it let it be known that no changes in these properties were planned for the immediate future. The Pacific Coast Coal Co. continued to use its bunkers at Pier 43 (at the foot of Dearborn Street) and the office building at the foot of Jackson Street. With the purchase, the Port took over leases for both the Luckenbach line and Pope and Talbot. The latter stayed at Pier 48 until it discontinued its steamship operation in 1957 due largely to competition from railroads and trucks on the nation's improving highway system. The Matson Line soon took its place at Pier 48 (there were no tracks to Hawaii) as the Port's new tenant. **[449]**

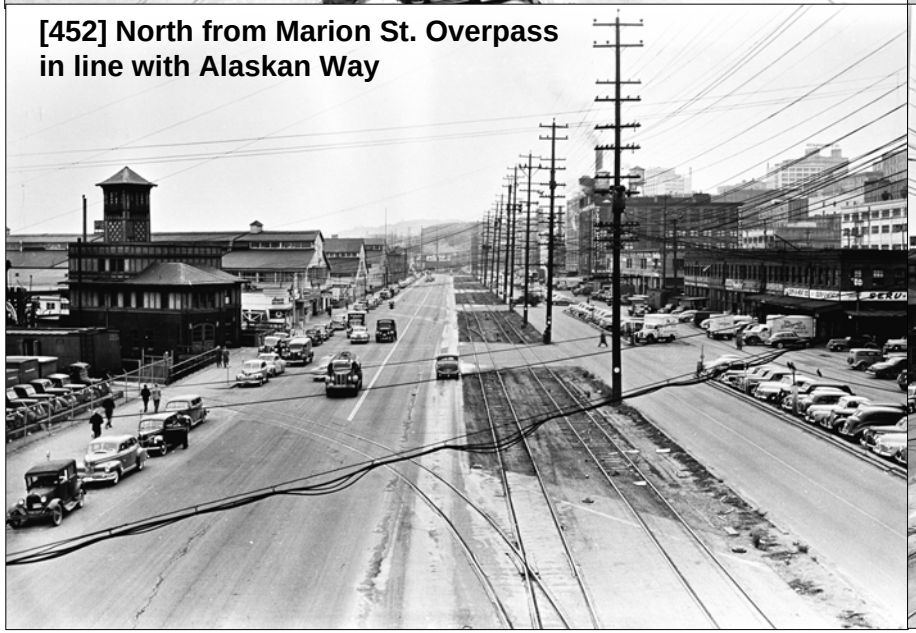
Alaskan Way Viaduct: From Bids to Dedication: 1950 - 1953

The accompanying seven photographs – **[450 thru 456]** – give what may amount to a last "official" look at the waterfront before the viaduct. A municipal photographer recorded the scenes from the best prospects – the Marion and Pike Street overpasses. Bids for the Alaskan Way Viaduct were opened on Jan 1, 1950, and the first part dedicated in April 1953. The opening program was staged on the viaduct behind the 116th Regiment Armory. The speed limit was set at 45 miles an hour on the viaduct and 30 miles an hour on the approach ramps. The link with Aurora through the Battery Street Subway was opened as Seafair Lane on July 25, 1954. Construction on the Spokane Street extension began in October 1955 and was completed in September 1959. For a brief moment before the Alaskan Way Viaduct was opened to traffic in 1953, its lanes were free for photography. The accompanying view looks down on the worn waterfront at the foot of Washington Street. To the left is the old Oregon Improvement / Pacific Coast Company properties that the Port of Seattle purchased three years earlier. The scene includes a portion of the Harbor Department's pergola, bottom right; above it Pier 50 is identified as the "Alaska Docks." Signs for Pete's Salmon Eggs (noted above) and the Main Fish Company have been tacked to the box-shaped offices of what remains of Pier 49, and the homely home of Tug Café and Tug Tavern appears lower left. The tarnished hut at the bottom-center exhibits an ambitious sign reading "Marine Transportation." "Private Parking" has been whitewashed on the blacktop behind it. The erection of the viaduct reinforced the doldrums on the waterfront by separating it from the central business district with its "concrete curtain." **[457 thru 461]**

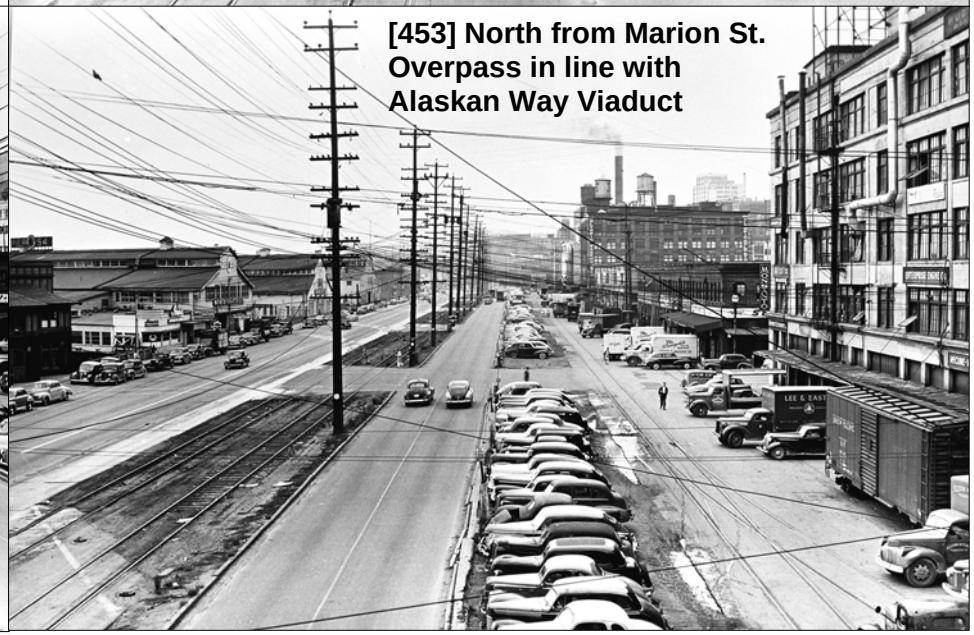


[450] South from Marion St. Overpass in line with future Alaskan Way Viaduct

[451] South from Marion St. Overpass in line with Alaskan Way

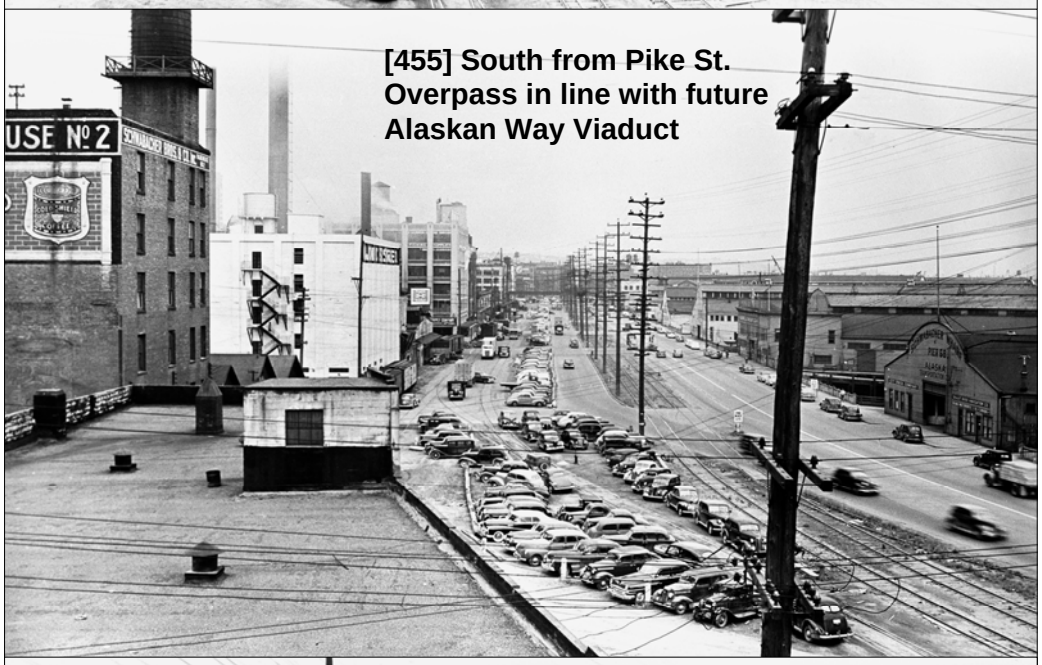


[452] North from Marion St. Overpass in line with Alaskan Way

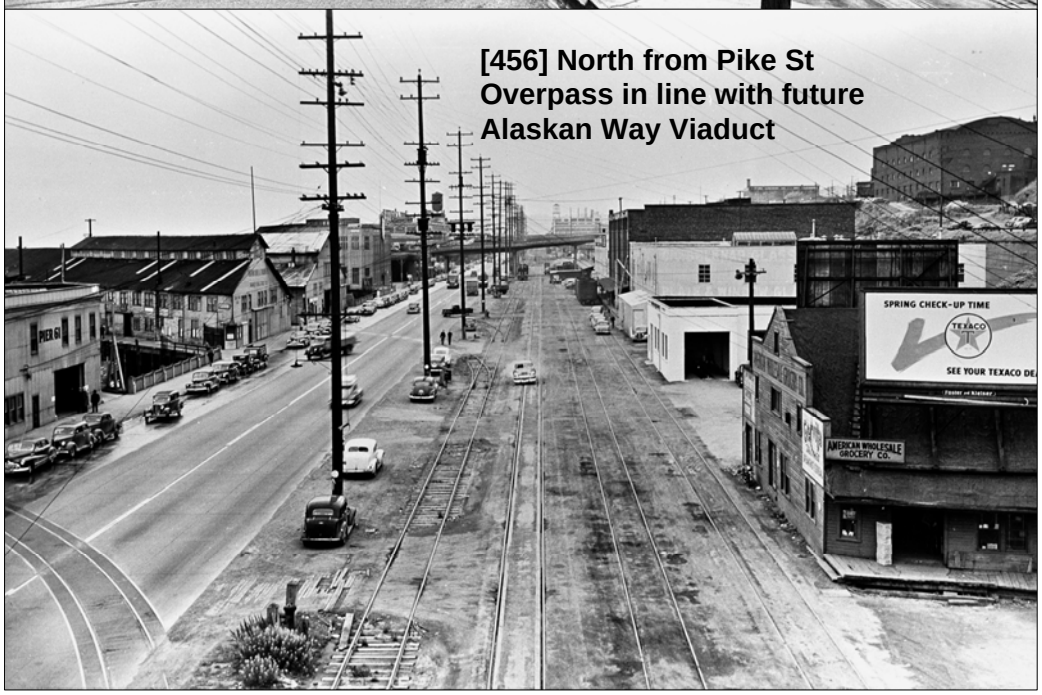


[453] North from Marion St. Overpass in line with Alaskan Way Viaduct

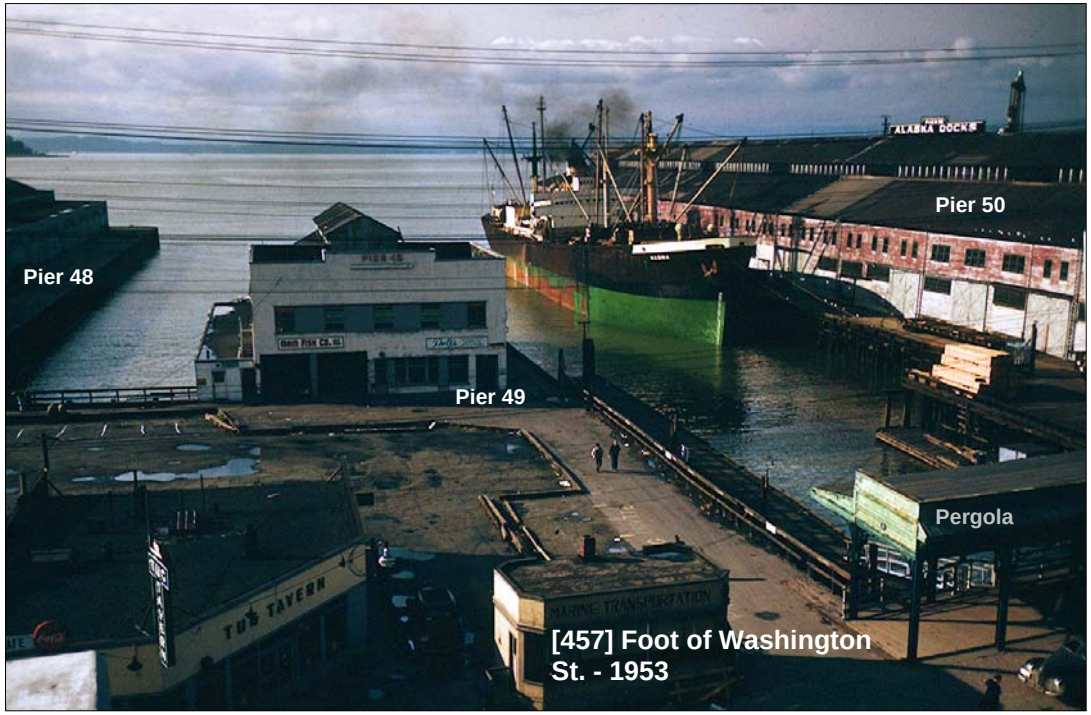
[454] South from Pike St.
Overpass in line with
Alaskan Way



[455] South from Pike St.
Overpass in line with future
Alaskan Way Viaduct

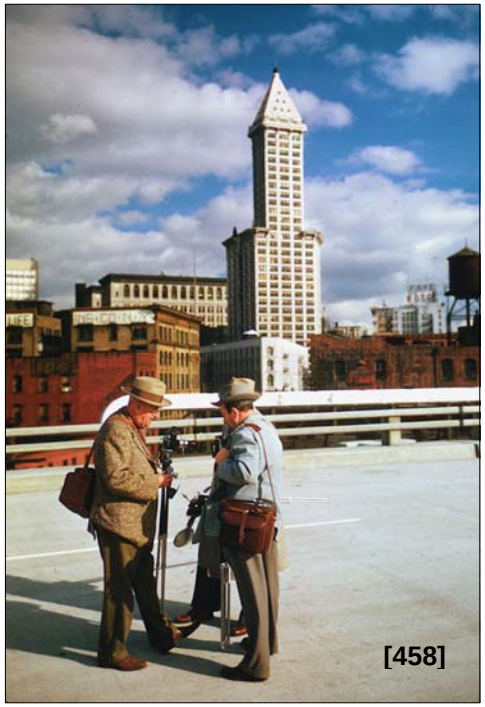


[456] North from Pike St
Overpass in line with future
Alaskan Way Viaduct



[457] Foot of Washington St. - 1953

[460]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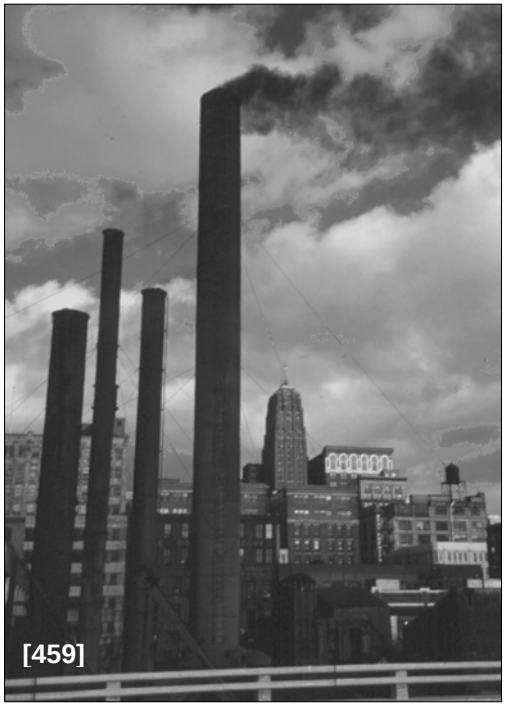
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View From The New "Chinese Wall"

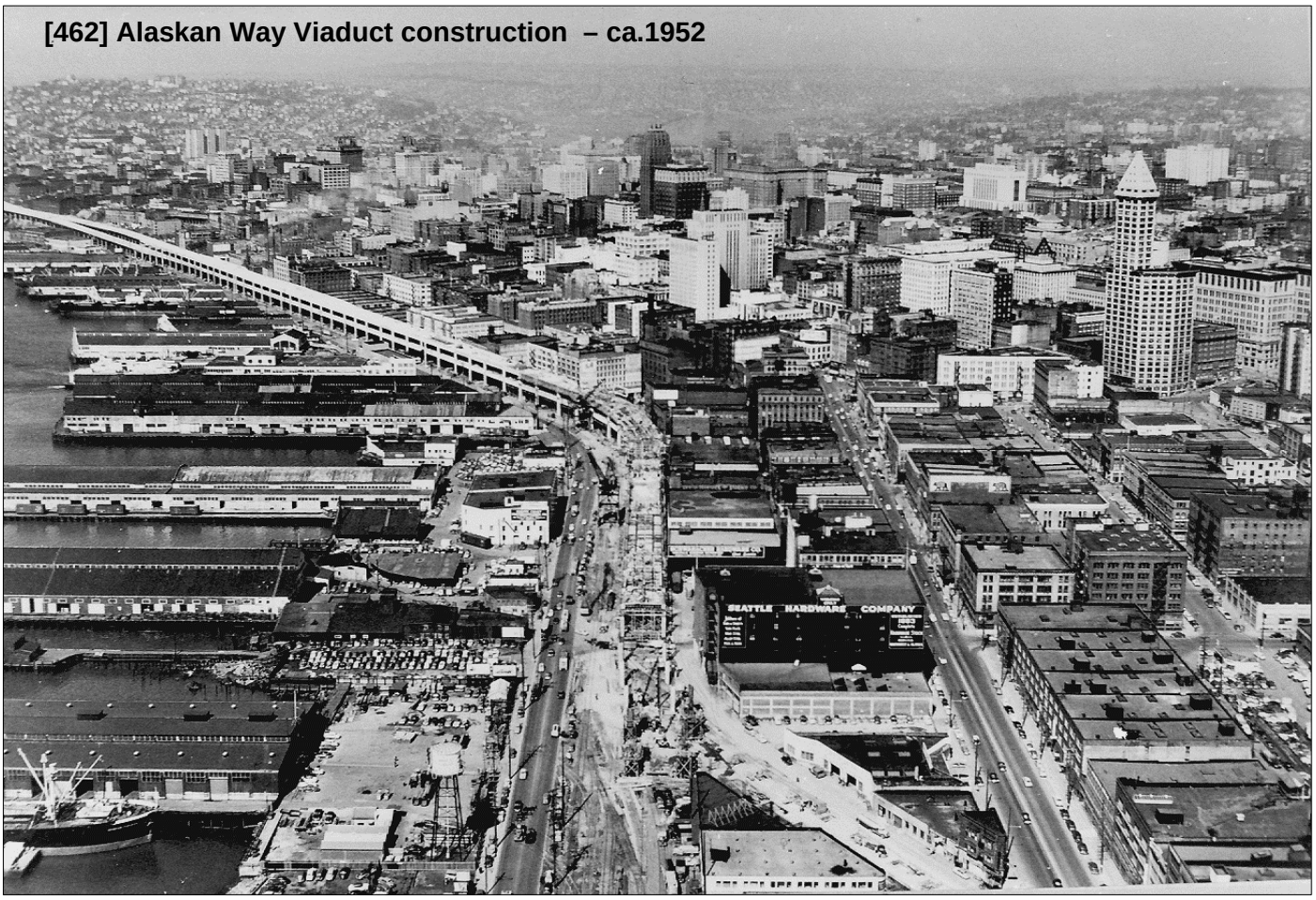
As the photographers recorded in 1953, and as Joshua Vogel predicted in 1947, the new elevated offered a splendid view of the city, while for those working below, the exhaust fumes mixed with sea air made for a more than bracing waterfront cocktail. Criticism of the noise bouncing from the concrete ceiling of the south lane on the viaduct became louder as traffic on the viaduct increased. The elevated highway was also both a physical and psychological barrier. Noting, in part, its obstruction, Jack Dillon, longtime waterfront habitué, remarked in 1984 "We who worked on the waterfront always had a feeling that we were the only ones who knew it was there. The rest of the people thought Seattle dropped off at Western Avenue. I think it is still kind of that way now." Earlier *Post-Intelligencer* Marine Editor, Don Page, had described the viaduct simply as a "Chinese wall" sealing off the waterfront into its "own salty community." **[462 & 463]**

George T. Rockrise Meets The Alaskan Way Viaduct: 1969 – 1972

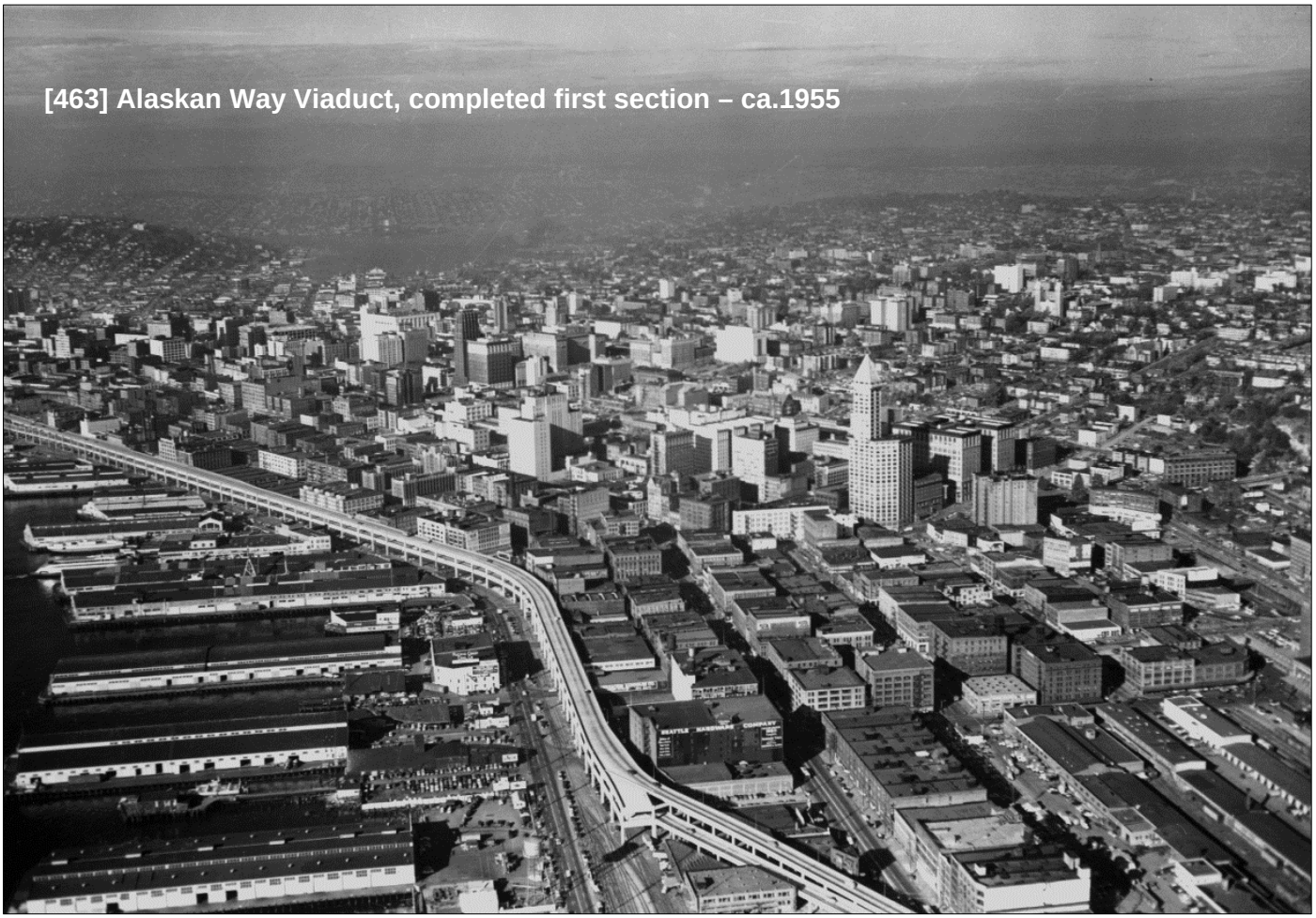
In 1969, a movement to remove the viaduct was inspired, in part, by the dislike for it shared with the Seattle Design Commission by the George T. Rockrise, the San Francisco architect hired to study and propose changes on the waterfront. Rockrise described the viaduct as a "major built-in problem", and Design Commission member, architect Ibsen Nelson counseled, "The viaduct should not be accepted as a way of life. You should question that and not assume it as a given." Three of the four alternative proposals included in the Rockrise Report called for the eventual removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct, it was hoped by 1990. Rockrise proposed replacing it with an underground waterfront tube. A fourth and grander plan included a waterfront plaza reaching as far east as the then proposed Freeway Park. With this fourth plan, the Alaskan Way Viaduct was retained, although its environmental effects were softened because good portions of the elevated highway would be covered with the plaza and park space. (A 1973 variation by local architect Donald Myers proposed "enclosing the viaduct for city-owned office space and removing street ends to open up the view for the public.") The fourth Rockrise plan also removed many of the businesses sited on the waterfront piers to spaces beneath the shelter of the viaduct, thereby opening the waterfront for an extended pedestrian promenade.

Alaskan Way Viaduct Critics: 1970s

Although none of the Rockrise proposals were followed (the final report was given in April 1972) its general hostility to the viaduct was shared by many citizens – some influential. Art Skolnik, manger of Pioneer Square Historic District, advocated its removal because the viaduct interfered with visual access to Pier 49 and the waterfront. John Alley, the Department of Community Development's manager of the city's Waterfront Park project, claimed that its removal would be a "real asset." Al Bumgardner, Waterfront Park architect, claimed that the elevated was a great impediment to the successful return of the waterfront to the people. "No amount of dollars can successfully camouflage the acoustical and visual barrier it creates." Century 21 architect, Paul Thiry, recalled how in 1947 he had criticized early plans to build the viaduct as "ridiculous without study of the whole problem of traffic congestion." In a Nov 9, 1947 *Seattle Times* article Thiry was quoted, "I've never seen an overhead construction in any city that



[462] Alaskan Way Viaduct construction – ca.1952



[463] Alaskan Way Viaduct, completed first section – ca.1955

didn't create slum conditions all around it. Most cities are trying to eliminate elevated roadways rather than create new ones." At the time he urged an underground tunnel, a plan that he still considered worthy in 1972. (In the early 1960s, Thiry had also urged that the proposed Seattle Freeway be capped with a lid.) Allied Arts joined the mounting crusade of the early 1970s to remove the viaduct. Paul Schell, then its president, descried the viaduct as an aesthetic "abomination." Schell noted that the elevated was "already costing taxpayers too much because property there is underdeveloped because of the unsightly structure." Representatives of the Seattle chapter, American Institute of Architects, described the issue of removing the Alaskan Way Viaduct as one of "great importance." Polly Lane, *The Seattle Times* authority on the built environment, in an article of September 30, 1973, summarized many of these attitudes. "There is growing belief that removal of the 20-year-old noisy, ugly eyesore is essential – to the health and economics of all of downtown, to the about-to-be developed Waterfront Park and to future development in the area adjoining Alaskan Way. In the average weekday 24-hour period the viaduct logs 44,000 vehicles. The main worry is traffic." The chorus of these criticisms and proposals were prelude to the failure of city councilmen John Miller and Bruce Chapman to convince either the council or city engineers to tear down the viaduct. In the end, as reporter Polly Lane had noted, it was probably the traffic.

The State of Public Waterfronts in King County: 1951

In the autumn of 1951, during the construction of the Viaduct, the Municipal League of Seattle used its publication *The Municipal News* to descry the lack of public waterfront. "Seattle and King County have more waterfront than perhaps any other population center in the nation. Yet its citizens are finding it more and more difficult to enjoy this vast aquatic public domain which they own." The League called for a "far-reaching regional park survey" but already, with the help of recent findings gathered by the Puget Sound Study Group, had some sad statistics to share. The news in the suburbs and on King County's shoreline outside of Seattle was the most distressing. The City of Seattle itself – within the city limits – was not so bad in that the west shore of Lake Washington blessed it with many miles of public waterfront. Mercer Island, however, was practically a public lockout. In 1951, only 60 feet of its 13 miles of waterfront were developed as publicly owned beach frontage, although there remained several narrow undeveloped street ends on the island. In King County generally less than 8 per cent of the fresh-water and less than 5 percent of the saltwater shoreline was accessible to the public, and this statistic did not include the additional 51 small lakes in the county, many of which also had no public access. In 1951 when the flight to suburbia was still reaching speed there was little and often no consideration given to reserving property for recreational uses. Aside from its weathered landing at the foot of Washington Street, the Seattle central waterfront was also recreationally impoverished. Now with the building of the viaduct, anyone proposing "lifestyle" changes for the central waterfront – and it would soon surely change its style – had to contend with the great gray way at its side. Consequently, most plans for the "modernization" of the waterfront – many catching the spirit of Seattle's plans for a "forward looking" world's fair – either address or redress the viaduct.

The Sergev-Lamping Waterfront Plan: 1956

Not counting the Port of Seattle's promotions for longitudinal piers in 1946 and for two or three years following, in 1956 S. Sergev, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Washington, and architect R. D Lamping devised the first grand post-war plan for the waterfront. Lamping had the waterfront in his family and maybe also in his genes. He was the son of Col. George B. Lamping, the former Port Commissioner. The pair's proposal was made to the Worlds Fair Commission that was established by the 1955 legislature to study the feasibility of producing a world fair in Seattle for 1959. For this, Sergev-Lamping radically rethought the central waterfront clearing it of all structures between the new viaduct and the water from as far as Denny Way to Connecticut Street. The partners also saw in the coming construction of the Seattle Freeway an opportunity to fill Elliott Bay with a floating highway reaching to a floating island on which the fair would be built. The plan was a variation of the San Francisco fair experience in 1939-40 when the 400-acre Treasure Island and its causeway connected to the nearly new Oakland Bay Bridge were constructed with reclaimed land -- most of it dredged – above the shoals north of Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay. Elliott Bay, of course, was deeper than San Francisco Bay and so its fair island would need to float. As in San Francisco, after the fair solid commercial structures would replace the non-permanent fair structures. Acting on their own, the partners were not successful in stimulating interest among members of the World Fair Commission. In its way, the plan may have also created a longitudinal wharf much grander than that envisioned by the Port of Seattle. As proposed, however, most of the waterside of Serge-Lamping's great floating half-circle was cleared not for the great ships of tomorrow but for leisurely reflection and picturesque views. **[464]**

Slumping Port of Seattle Statistics & Tuf-Luv Critics: 1959

As the community approached its Century 21 World's Fair – in 1962 and not 1959 – it prepared, in part, by inspecting its worn parts. The waterfront received low marks. Also early in 1959 the Port of Seattle got its bad report card. Tonnage figures for 1958 showed a 15-percent decrease. Seattle was the big exception – other coast ports were advancing. A *Seattle Times* editorial for May 25, 1959 sent some tough love the Port's way – not as irksome as KING TV would deliver soon after with its broadcast of the still remembered documentary "Port in a Storm." The *Times* editors wrote, "If Seattle's efforts to rebuild and expand its ocean commerce are at all successful, as we hope they will be, there will be need for substantial enlargement, improvement and modernization of terminal facilities along the city's main waterfront. New methods including use of vans and cargo containers require more storage space and contiguous marshaling areas than are available in most of our existing waterfront facilities. Increased size of cargo vessels is another factor requiring the consolidation of small piers and wharves to form larger and more commodious installations." So far the *Times* editors in 1959 sound very much like Port administrators in 1946, except that the *Times* idea of what constitutes the "central waterfront" includes that once relatively non-descript part of it over the tidelands between King Street and the East Waterway. *The Times* went on to explain that the Port of Seattle had ordered preliminary plans for a program of ocean-terminal construction centering around Piers 28 and 46 – a program that would cost between $8 and $10 million. As with the Sergev-

WORLD-FAIR SITE AND CIVIC CENTER SUGGESTED FOR SEATTLE-WATERFRONT AREA

Two Seattle men have come up with an ambitious plan for beautifying the city's waterfront and providing a maritime site for a world fair and a civic and sports center.

They are R. D. Lamping, an architect, and S. Sergev, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Washington. Lamping is the son of the late Col. George B. Lamping, a port commissioner for many years.

Lamping concedes that they have no idea how their proposal could be financed, nor how much it would cost.

"It's time Seattle did some big thinking," Lamping explained. "We've put together a challenging project which the community should consider."

Their plan calls for clearing the Seattle waterfront of all structures west of the Alaska Way viaduct and railroad tracks between Denny Way and the present Port of Seattle terminals at Connecticut Street. New piers of a floating type would be constructed from about Denny Way to Smith Cove to replace the wharfage eliminated by the project.

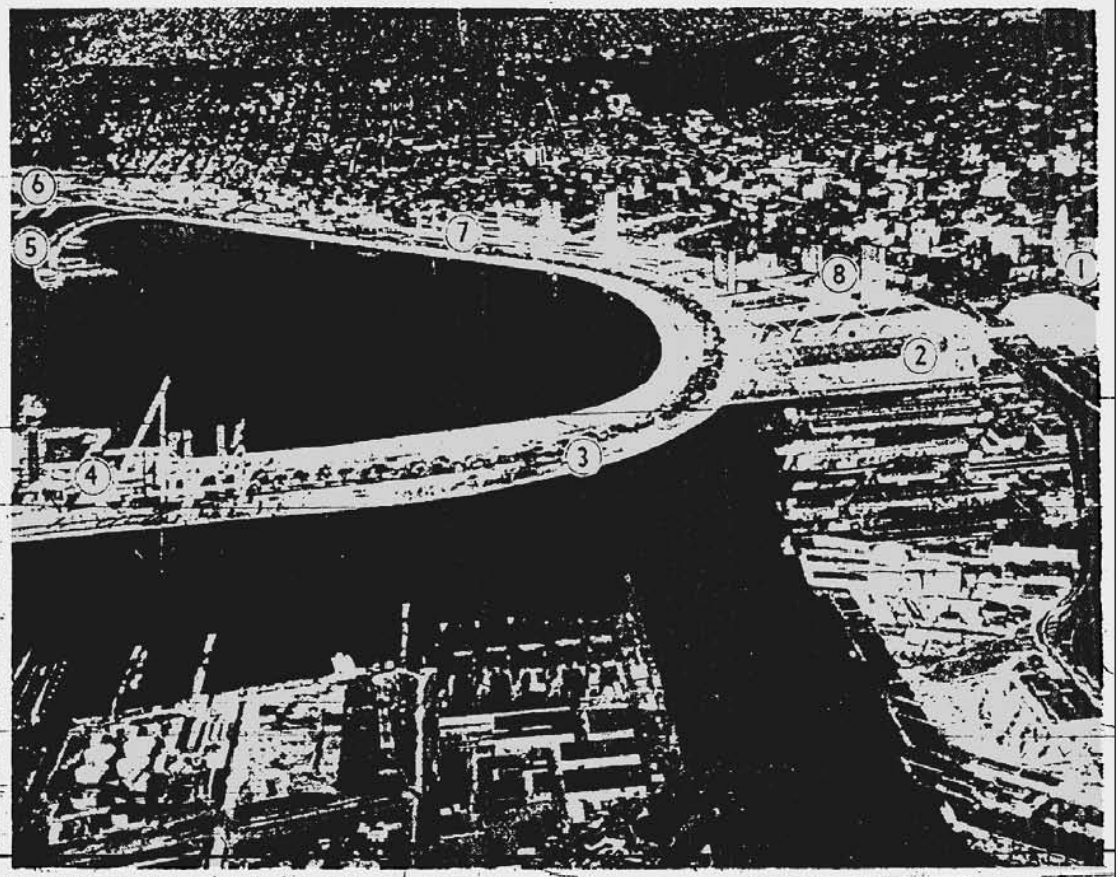
Lamping says earth excavated from the proposed toll-way through the city would be used to make a fill out to deep water between Denny Way and Connecticut Street. And a long floating roadway would be built from Denny Way south, to make a half circle out in the harbor.

At the end of the half circle, Lamping explained, a floating island similar to San Francisco's Treasure Island would be constructed. This would provide a vista drive to the floating island.

East of the floating driveway—between it and the Alaskan Way viaduct—would be the site for the world fair and sports and civic center. Exposition buildings for the fair would be on the northern portion, with an open sports field and a covered arena near the building site for the world fair and civic center.

Lamping said commercial permanent structures on the south end of the area could replace the non-commercial world fair site after the exposition closed.

He has presented the plans to the World Fair Commission, established by the 1955 Legislature to determine the feasibility of an exposition here in 1959.



WATERFRONT PLAN: This is how Seattle's waterfront would look if a plan prepared by two Seattle men for a world fair and civic and sports center were carried out. They concede that it's "just an idea," but have submitted it to the World Fair Commission for consideration. No. 1 shows Smith Tower; No. 2, a proposed sports field with a covered arena on the east; No. 3, a 150-foot-wide driveway into the harbor; No. 4, a "fun zone" on a floating island; No. 5, a floating breakwater and small-boat harbor; No. 6, the beginning of a row of floating piers between Denny Way and Smith Cove to replace wharfage eliminated by the project; No. 7, a fill, floating roadway and world-fair site between the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the harbor, and No. 8, a civic center and opera house. Feasibility of a world fair here in 1959 is under study.

Lamping plan for a floating world fair, the *Times* noted that the Port hoped to use construction of the Seattle Freeway as its first opportunity to fill in ten acres of outdoor storage space at Pier 46.

KING TV "Port In The Storm": The Documentary's Charges

The charges shoveled through the Port of Seattle's porthole with KING Television's airing of "Port in the Storm" came with numbers. 1. Lack of initiative and drive to modernize. 2. Reputation among shippers for high labor costs and low productivity. 3. Lack of forceful official and civic leadership necessary to do all that must be done. 4. Suffering from inequitable freight rates that deprive Puget Sound ports of their natural advantages as the U.S. Ports nearest to Alaska and the Far East. 5. Need to improve management-labor relations to assure shippers of price and efficiency. 6. Need to improve relations with hinterlands of our own state and attract its freight as well as freight from the East and Midwest. 7. Suffering from citizen apathy. With a hopeful pause, the documentary reminded its viewers that they still had three transcontinental railroads and a deep-water port that was a relatively short distance from the Far East. But "we have permitted our piers and cargo-handling equipment to become outmoded and inadequate to handle, on a competitive basis, much cargo that is being diverted to other ports. We have allowed our own hinterlands to ship down the Columbia River to Portland." (Somehow the show missed mentioning the belief that was unfortunately popular among shippers, that the incidence of cargo pilfering was the highest in Seattle.) Eventually the documentary's tone of uniform charges, many of which were certainly overstated and/or superheated for effect, reached for its sports jacket and like an inspirational speaker encouraged its audience not to be depressed by the depressed state of Pacific Commerce "due to the closing of China" or about the worrisome increase in Portland's hegemony over the Columbia River that would surely result from plans then afoot to open the upper Columbia River to navigation.

$10 Million 1960 Bond Issue Timed For Containers

As has been often noted earlier, the Port of Seattle had been struggling with many – and probably all – of the KING-TV charges for a long time, but often and understandably to little effect. Now with the "esprit de worlds fair" and ironic help from its media critics, the previously "apathetic" citizens of King County approved a $10 million bond issue for the Port in 1960. This came just in time to catch the golden surf of containerization. Like the rest of the shipping world, the Port of Seattle had its eyes on the bold container innovations by SeaLand and others in the mid-to-late 1950s, and by the time that KING-TV was charging the Port, the Port knew that the surf was up. The Seattle site for the "Container Revolution" would barely overlap with the old Central Waterfront and get nowhere near Colman Dock. The great longitudinal quays would be built on Harbor Island and from Pier 46 at the foot of King Street on south as far as needed – or as would develop years later, not needed. In 1961 the Port began its $5,500,000 expansion at Ames Terminal, 44 acres on the West Waterway. **[465 & 466]** And by then the port was also spending $4,500,000 for its first container terminal south of Pier 48. Once more, that non-descript portion of the waterfront south of the central business district that was sporadically enlivened in the early 20th century and through two world wars with ship building and military shipping

[465] 1961

[466] 1962

[467] ca.1972

[468]
Harbor Island preparations for containers – 1968

[469]
ca.1975

[470] ca.1980

Ca.1998 – Courtesy Port of Seattle

would be turned nondescript again, with great reaches of hard paving dappled with containers and marked by tracks and great cranes that from the sky looked like a Mondrian canvas and from land like a robotic invasion. **[467 thru 470]** (Years later when many of Seattle's containers started slipping off to Tacoma it was increasingly imagined that this section would someday undergo a new make-over. Most often it was thought that the container revolution south of Pier 46 would be replaced by the multi-use revolution – Seattle's version of London's waterfront east of the Tower. This vision was postponed in January 2005 when the Port of Seattle's seaport division agreed with Hanjin Shipping to a five-year, $72 million lease extension for use of the extended Terminal 46.)

Century 21 Enthusiasm "We Want the Best Waterfront in the World"

By 1960 the promise of Century 21 was palpable. That spring, property owners on the old central waterfront formed a technical committee that was joined by many institutional heavy hitters like Washington State Ferries, the Central Association, the City Planning Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Port of Seattle – both George Treadwell its Chief Engineer and Kenneth King its Directory of Planning – to "embark on a long-time program." (Long time programs are often "embarked on.") Kenneth King was the chair. King advised that the new committee would not settle for second best. "We don't want to be as good as anybody else's waterfront. We want the best waterfront in the world." The following February the planning group's technical report was passed on to the City Planning Commissioners for review. The content included some details that would be fulfilled and others that would not, but generally it is what we have now got – with many twists and changes in agents and locations. The plan, for instance, described what by then almost everyone believed. Ocean shipping operations would be generally developed south of Washington Street. However, the plan also had hopes for a working waterfront "north of Pine Street." Here was a survivor from the Port's post-war plans – the plans it had been nurturing by buying up whatever it could north of Pike Street – or anywhere else.

The Port's Twenty-Year Plan for the Waterfront: 1962

The plan described also included what would briefly become one of the Port's adventures, a World Trade Center on the old waterfront between Cherry and Pike Streets. Although it made only a passing (or more likely no) point of it, at the time the Port had its eyes on the then 60-year-old railroad piers: numbers 54 through 57. (As we know the proprietors there were already been through something like this when the Port looked their way while rethinking the central waterfront following the Second World War.) Next in 1962 a "20-year Plan for the Central Waterfront" was proposed. Although it was addressed to the Port and the City, it came directly down the planning pike from the waterfront property owners' initiative in 1960 and so the Port was the most active agent behind it. On May 18 when Century 21 was open but still new the plan to study a plan – at a cost of about $80,000 – was announced as a joint proposal by five of the big powers that be or were at the time: the Chamber of Commerce, the Central Association of Seattle, the Financial District Association, the Citizen's Port Committee and the Municipal League. These five would make the request and, as noted, it would be the primary agency behind it all, the Port, that would be asked. (This was not hidden – merely to form.) The 18-block development

proposed by the committee extended south from the north end of the Bell Street headquarters. (It missed the then brand new Edgewater Hotel.) Its desiderata included "tourist facilities, shops, restaurants, a world-trade center, a transportation terminal, parking facilities and high-rise apartments." (Later – quite a while later – we know that most of this came to pass in both the Port's and private developer's enterprise on the waterfront north of the aquarium and above it in the Denny Regrade District.) A.W. Monty Morton, chair of the asking committee, described it as a public-private project, with the city and the Port handling zoning, streets, use of public property and other basic planning and also negotiating leases with private investors. Morton wanted all to act quickly in order to preclude the messy construction that might result from the area being merely thrown open to private investors. The attached but rough newspaper reproduction from the Seattle Times of May 16, 1962 shows an artist's conception of what the central waterfront might look like in twenty years if the proposal for redevelopment was accepted by the city and the Port of Seattle. **[471]** (For comparison. a mid-60s clipping of the proposed Pike Place Market urban renewal is included. This is the vision that stirred the "forces of preservation" to rise for the Market's defense. **[472]**)

The World Trade Center at Madison Street Meets the Babushka

In the context of this overarching plan the time came – briefly – for the Port to advance its wish to build a World Trade Center at the foot of Madison Street. However, the most it ultimately managed to stir there was some fine acting on the part of Ivar Haglund, who holding tightly to his Acres of Clams compared himself to the "little old lady who stands between her family home and the highway department bulldozer." To illustrate this point, Ivar wore a babushka to the Port hearing that was deliberating his fate. The irony, of course and as just hinted, is that much later the World Trade Center would rise not at Pier 54 or Pier 57 – another targeted location – but to the sides and on the site of the Port's own Bell Street terminal and headquarters.

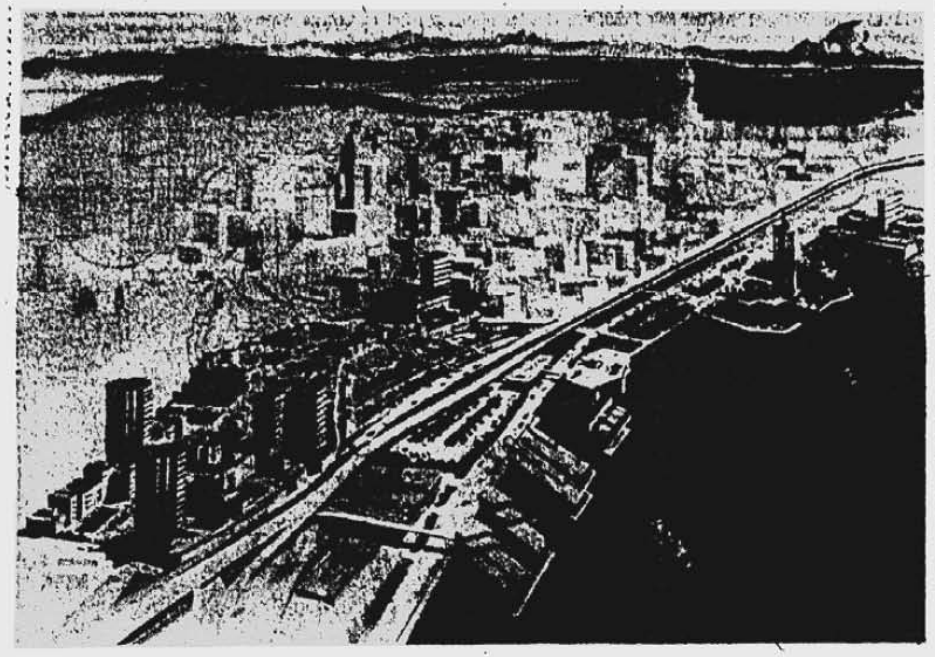
"Seattle Piers": A. R. Van Sant's Plans the Yesler Mill Site: 1961-62

As noted, in 1961 port planner and chairman of the owners planning committee J. Kenneth King, when talking up the World Trade Center, emphasized the old Commission district to the east of the viaduct, not the piers. At the time the problem with showing too much candor about the coveted piers was that so many of the pier owners and/or operators – like Ivar – had also climbed on the fish wagon to make their waterfront also "the best waterfront in the world." One of the most ambitious players among them was A.R. Van Sant, President of the Pier 59 Corporation that had taken control of the old Yesler Dock site and the two piers built there by the *Northern Pacific* 60 years earlier. Van Sant and the holding company, Marfran Co., had ambitious plans for Century 21. For instance, the $4 million "Seattle Piers" project proposed a sea circus and aquarium to rival the best in California and Florida. Phil F. Toman, General Manager of Seattle Piers Inc. announced, "The aquarium will be similar to the Marinelands, only bigger." This Sea Circus wound up, however, being produced in a leaner form with some seals, sea lions and porpoises doing seven 30-minute performances each day between Piers 50 and 51 during the half-year of Century 21. One of the plan's tenants, the Polynesian Restaurant at the end of Pier 51, was an exotic success and survived until the piers were destroyed for the expansion of Washington

[471]

20-YEAR PLAN:

New Look for Waterfront



PROPOSED: This is an artist's conception of what part of the Seattle waterfront could look like in 20 years if a proposal for redeveloping it is accepted by the city and the Port of Seattle. The two agencies will be asked to finance a plan on which redevelopment of about 18 blocks of waterfront area could be based. (See Page 1 for details.)

Renewal Plan For Pier Area Offered

The city and the Port of Seattle will be asked within the next few weeks to finance development of a plan for turning an 18-block stretch of the waterfront into a modern showplace.

Contemplated for the area between King and Bell Streets, are tourist facilities, shops, restaurants, a world-trade center, a transportation terminal, parking facilities and high-rise apartments.

The plan is based on a two-year study by the Central Waterfront Planning Committee. The study shows that present facilities are outmoded and are neither attractive nor good income property.

FIVE CIVIC organizations are scheduled to join in requesting the city and the port to finance the plan. They are the Chamber of Commerce, Central Association of Seattle, Financial District Association, Citizens' Port Committee and Municipal League.

The first four already have indorsed a resolution drafted for presentation to the port and the city. The port committee of the Municipal League has approved and the full League is scheduled to act next week.

A. W. (Monty) Morton, chairman of the committee that the preliminary study, said the cost of a plan on which to base redevelopment is estimated at $80,000.

Morton said the bulk of the cost probably would have to be borne by the city, with the port contributing a smaller share.

PRELIMINARY talks with members of the City Council indicate they favor the proposal, Morton said. Talks will be held with port commissioners soon.

Morton said the redevelopment probably would be a public-private project, in which the city and the port would handle zoning, streets, use of public property and other basic planning and would negotiate leases with private investors.

Morton said that if the city and the port agree, **work on redevelopment could begin next fall.**

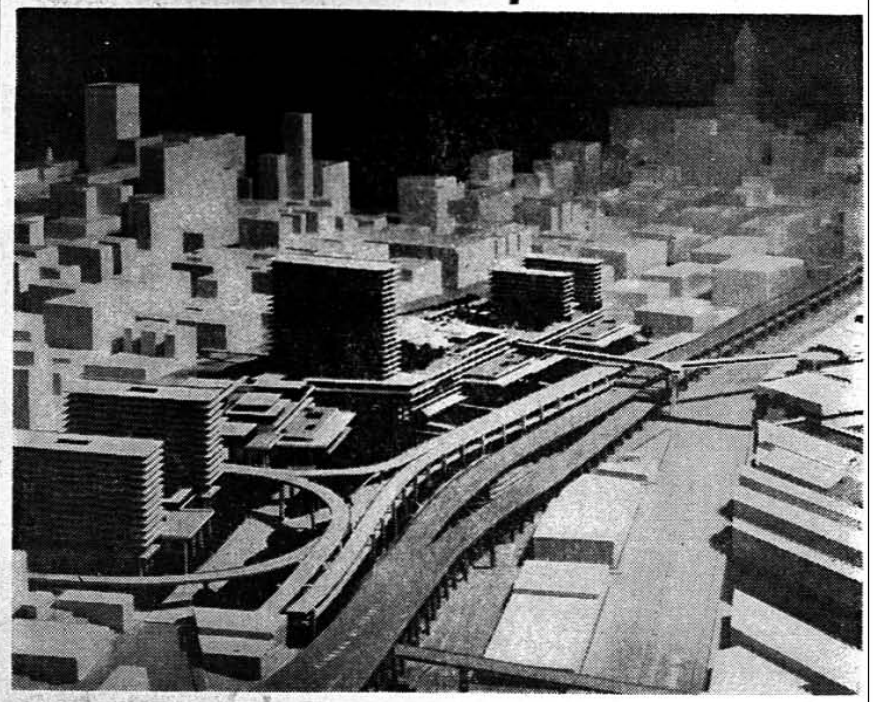
Morton urged speedy action to prevent unsupervised, hodgepodge construction in the area by private investors.

Pakistani Protest

18

[472]

Redevelopment Program For Downtown Proposed



A PROPOSAL: This architect's sketch shows how one of Seattle's blighted areas might be developed into apartments, recreation and hotel facilities, a city park, and office buildings. There would be parking for 2,000 automobiles underneath, and feeder roads into Western Avenue, redeveloping the Pike Place Market.

(This is the second in a series of Sunday articles on studies and proposals for Seattle urban renewal.)

By ALICE STAPLES
Real-Estate Editor, The Times

A $58 million program for the redevelopment of Seattle's down-town area between First and Western Avenues and Union and Lenora Streets is contained in a proposed improvement plan.

If the development were carried out for the 12½-acre Pike Place Market area and adjoining blocks has been appraised at $5 to $10 a square foot, compared with $80 to $90 a square foot for property within two or three blocks of the blighted area.

"The desparity in values is enough to indicate something is wrong," Siebert said.

A BUILD AMERICA Better team, which studied Seattle's urban-renewal needs last spring, has recommended an immediate start on planning to improve the area.

the rest of the project feasible."

Seibert said studies will be necessary to determine whether to rebuild or build around the Pike Place Market. The Seattle Urban Renewal Enterprise and the Cental Association studies have suggested various approaches.

THERE ARE 75 separate parcels of land and 25 different owners in the area designated as the Pike-Pine Plaza.

The Pike Place Market land cannot be purchased by negotiations because of a stin

Ferries' loading facilities. This razing was an ironic fulfillment of a prediction made in 1961 by the Seattle Piers developers. "We believe Seattle Piers will help the development of Colman Dock. This will be more than Seattle's answer to San Francisco's Fishermen's Wharf. It also is an answer to an often-expressed need for a tourist attraction on Elliott Bay." While Seattle Piers was the first oversize plan that recognized the central waterfront primarily as a place for play, it failed. Its plans for a 150-unit motel, 50 shops, a convention hall, and a swimming arena – all came to nothing. What did survive were its parking lot and the Polynesian. **[473 thru 475]**

Dominion Monarch Boatel from Pier 50, Century 21 & Capt. Newell

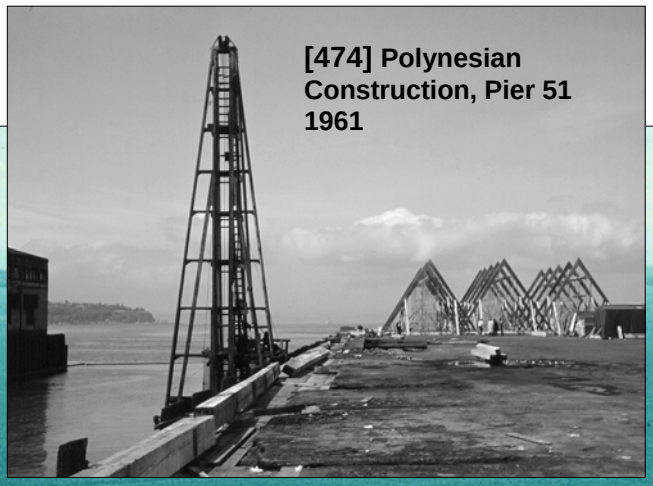
During its short active life in the summer of 1962, Seattle Piers hosted on the south side of the piers the *Dominion Monarch*, the fair's biggest of three so-called "botels" (a new word made from "boat" and "hotel"). After the long pier shed was razed, the 800-foot wharf was paved with asphalt and marked with a helicopter pad at its outer end. During its long visit piles were driven to the sides of the *Dominion Monarch* allowing the liner to be treated as a "hulk" and so not subject to Coast Guard inspection, although it did squeeze the Harbor Patrol. **[476]** Neither did Port regulations apply, since no cargo was moved from the newly cleared pier. A character dressed in a white tropical uniform of the British merchant marine often greeted visitors and guests of the 26,462-ton vessel. The ship eccentric was Gordon Newell. (Newell is the author of the *MuCurdy Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* and Port Commissioner and has been quoted here a few times.) With his considerable connections and qualifications Newell had won the tour concession for the liner. *The Seattle Times* nostalgia columnist John J. Reddin's described Newell in his uniform. Newell "easily could play Lieu Pinkerton in 'Madame Butterfly'… At the gangplank we failed to recognize our old friend and thought for a moment that it was Noel Coward playing the lead role in 'In Which We Serve.' What impressed us most, however, was the awesome height from the flying bridge – ten stories above water, and you look down onto the upper level of the nearby Alaskan Way Viaduct. Newel, sensing our Walter Mitty urge to blow the big ship's whistle sad, 'Go Ahead.' I'll bet we woke up every pigeon on the Seattle waterfront." As noted, following Century 21 the two old Alaska Piers were used for parking and the Polynesian.

Fishing From One's Window – The Edgewater at the Foot of Wall

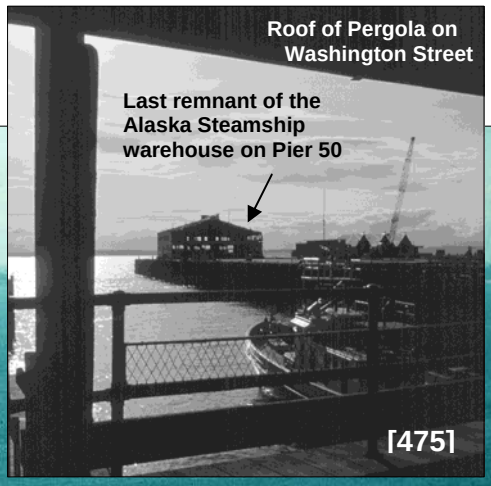
The waterfront did however get its big hotel, and almost in time for Century 21. At the foot of Wall Street, the site of the old Gailbraith Bacon Pier, work began on the Edgewater in the spring of 1961. **[477]** At the time the project was described as including a hotel, motel and apartments. Beside fishing from the window and a visit of the Beatles – who fished from the window – the Edgewater was also famous for its bar, where every summer night when a Princess boat returned from Victoria on its way to moorage at the Port's Lenora Street Pier it would pass close to the bar windows. Next whatever band was playing would stop the music and the skipper would be signaled through the window to toot his horn. **[478]**

The Waterfront Play List In Review

In review, the long list of recreational facilities proposed for the waterfront beginning in the 1960s were expressions in part of



[474] Polynesian Construction, Pier 51 1961



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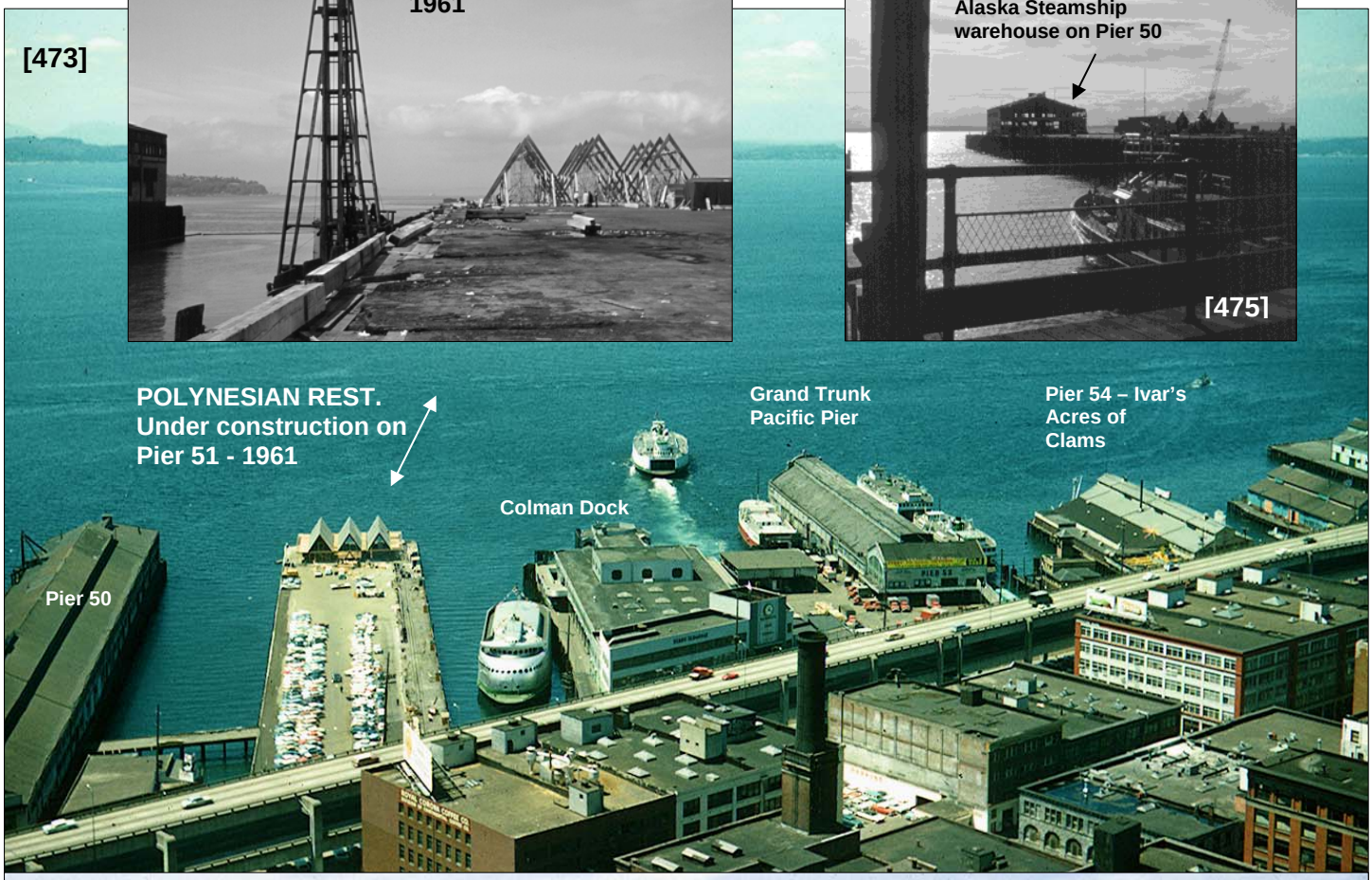

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THIRD SECTION

The Seattle Times

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1965

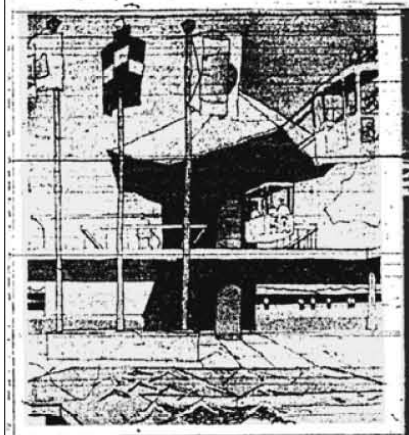
NEWS CLASSIFIED

31

[479]

$15.5 MILLION TOURIST MECCA:

Waterfront Plan Includes Park and Sky Ride



AERIAL-TRAMWAY TERMINAL AT MARINE PARK

ARTIST'S VIEW OF CENTRAL SEATTLE WATERFRONT BY 1985

[477]

By DICK MOODY

New details of a bold plan to create a $15.5 million tourist mecca from Seattle's old, hodgepodge central waterfront were outlined today by executives of John Graham & Co., architectural firm.

The proposed redevelopment project would extend between South Washington Street and Pike Street, including Piers 50 through 61.

Feature attractions would be a four-square-block park extending 500 feet into Elliott Bay from Alaskan Way, a 1,500-foot esplanade that helps to form a sheltered marina, and a new aquarium.

These features would be in the first stage of construction.

Later, an aerial tramway or sky ride would be built between the park and Pike Street near First Avenue.

A complex of motels, restaurants, gift shops and maritime-supply stores would be added. One medium-sized office building is proposed.

The Graham firm reported the results of its design study to city and Port of Seattle officials and private-pier owners at the Seattle Center. They financed the study.

The Central Association was the coordinating agency.

Graham architects said the new waterfront tourist area would help Seattle capitalize on the $30 million of tourist spending here annually.

Other features of the project are a small lighthouse on the south end of the esplanade, berthing space for Canadian Pacific Railway ships and several historic vessels, and a small maritime museum.

One motel would be built within five years, with the second to follow in the next ten years.

The firm said Piers 50 and 51 would be ideal for the motels.

The plan also contemplates moving the switching tracks east of the Alaskan Way viaduct, widening Alaskan Way from four to five lanes and relocating it east of the viaduct.

This would permit construction of a 32-foot-wide landscaped walkway along the entire downtown waterfront.

Graham executives said changes would be made at the railroad-station area at Jackson Street to allow greater use of the Great Northern tunnel, reducing waterfront rail traffic by 75 per cent.

David M. Checkley is the firm's managing director.

The east end of the tramway would be at the Pike Place Market area. Each car would hold four persons. The system would carry 700 persons an hour at a suggested charge of 15 cents each.

Further pedestrian access from downtown to the waterfront would be provided by a walkway at University Street similar to the present one at Marion.

Graham said Piers 50 and 51 also would be a satisfactory site for a World Trade Center.

[478]

the growing understanding that the old working waterfront was steadily and inevitably being replaced with a playful one. The introduction of containerization in the early 1960s made the central waterfront expendable to the interests of tourists and nostalgia. A few fish companies and sail makers stayed on, but by the 1980s most of these had also left the waterfront for the shores of the city's lakes. Ferries and tour vessels were what was left of the directly water-dependent users. [Although it is difficult to argue that meditating on Elliott Bay from the city's waterfront is not also a "water-dependent" use.] Most waterfront proposals featured a promenade that mixed tourist attractions with stations for locals to reflect on their maritime past while, perhaps, gazing into a sunset over the Olympics. Some mix of a bay view park space, a small boat landing, a historic ship harbor, a maritime museum, a promenade, an esplanade, a small lighthouse, offshore hotels, a heliport, a small showcase salmon cannery, new restaurants and gift shops and an aquarium were featured.

The Graham Plan: 1965

As hinted above, during Seattle's 1962 Century 21 the waterfront was turned into a midway for the flood of tourists that visited the fair. In the fair's afterglow, the plan for a park on the central waterfront was hatched in the summer of 1964. **[479]** The Central Association of Seattle urged the City Council to join in a study of the waterfront and the "possible development of a waterfront park, through a possible exchange of property and property rights." The Graham Plan was the result of this private/public study. A. R. Van Sant (whom we met above with "Seattle Piers"), a leader of the private pier-owners, told *Seattle Times* reporter Dick Moody, "We foresee a substantial marine aquarium, more restaurants, import shops, a marina for pleasure and fishing boats and a big city park. There would be a heliport, facilities for hydrofoil boats, a couple of motels, probably an office building, marine-supply stores, maybe three to five historical ships and a maritime museum. We might even have a miniature salmon cannery in operation, a place for fishing boats to unload their catches so people can see and perhaps the Canadian Pacific ships could take on and unload passengers on the central waterfront instead of the Lenora Street Piers."

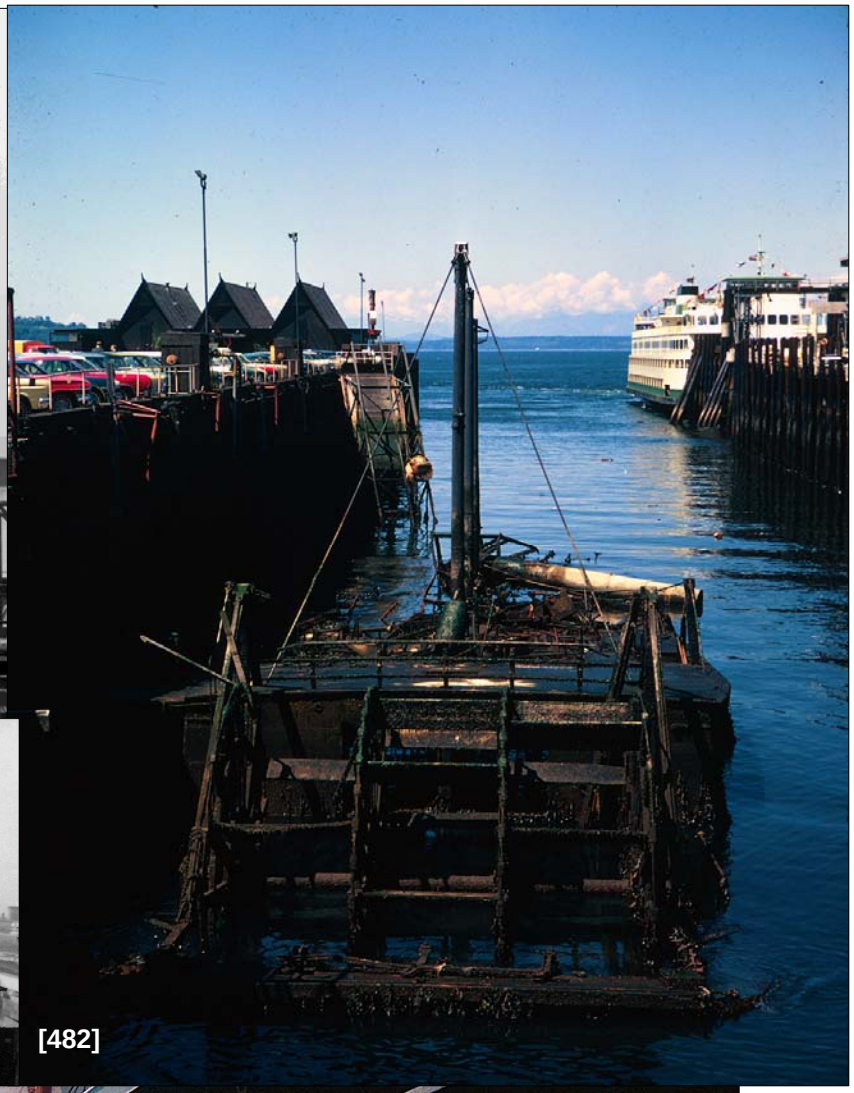
Editing it to its most sensational features, *The Seattle Times* headlined its April 9, 1965 story about the plan, "$15.5 Million Tourist Mecca, Waterfront Park and Skyride to the Pike Place Market." Seattle Mayor Dorm Braman applauded the proposal as "a very thrilling prospect." The sponsors for the plan that was named for the Seattle architectural firm that rendered it were many of the same players that had assembled in 1960 and again in 1962 including the City, the Port of Seattle, and the pier owners between Pier 50 – A.R. Van Sant – and Pier 61 – one of the two small fish and/or salt docks just north of the Pike Street Pier that were by then owned by the Port of Seattle. One of the more startling and imaginative parts of the Graham Plan was the proposal that the "relocation of the railroad tracks and Alaskan Way to new sites east of the viaduct take place over the next twenty years." Such a move would have created a much deeper playground along the waterfront, one extending from the viaduct to the bay end of the piers. Also, sightseers riding the plan's Skyride between the Public Market and the waterfront would have had it over tourists on the top lane of the viaduct.

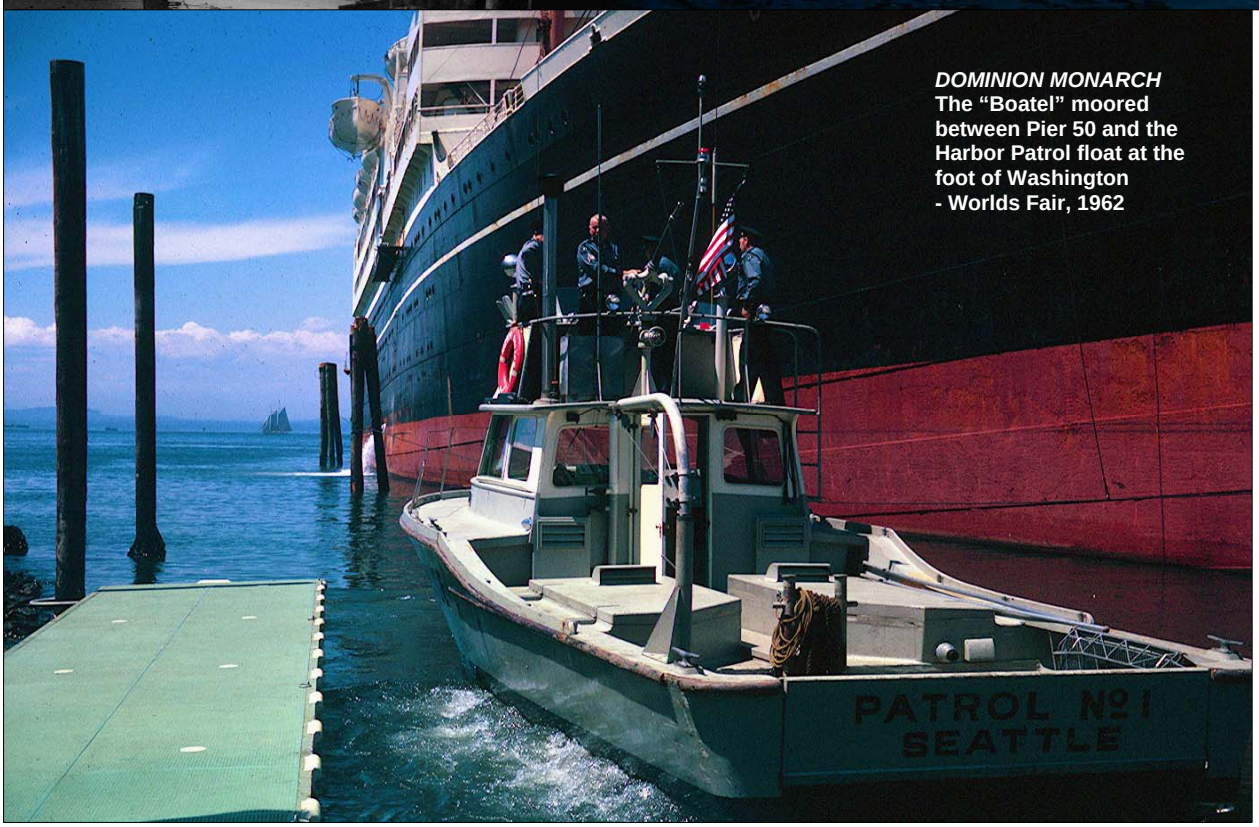
"Main Street U.S.A.": Exhibit & Don Page's Tour of the Waterfront: 1965

In the same month that the Graham Plan went public with its imagined waterfront, the as built one hosted the "Main Street U.S.A. Exhibit." A place was found for it under the viaduct between Spring and Seneca Streets. *The Post-Intelligencer's* Marine Editor, Don Page, used the visiting exhibit as an opportunity to review Seattle waterfront sites in the spring of 1965, and as he put it "show off its hospitality." We will repeat Page's tour – in brief. The columnist liked Fire Station No. 5 where, he notes, the fire fighters "will put its boats *Alki* and *Duwamish* through special firefighting and pumping exhibitions Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Pier 56, Ted Griffith's Aquarium will feature special sea lion shows. After a winter season of indoor shows it now will move to Griffith's 150,000 gallon outdoor tank for hourly show from noon to 6 pm. [More on Griffith below] Also Captain Lynn Campbell will start Harbor Tours early for four tours a day for Main Street Exhibit visitors. Pier 56 is an example of an ocean terminal that has metamorphosed into a prime complex of tourist attractions. Besides the Aquarium and Harbor Tours it is the home of the Cove Restaurant and Trident Imports. Trident sprang up during the Worlds Fair with an assortment of goods from Europe, Asia, and Latin American. Pier 51 [sic actually Pier 50] where *Dominion Monarch* parked during the World's Fair now has Polynesian Restaurant and Ye Olde Curiosity Shop. Also the *Skagit Belle* sternwheeler. Once a river freighter it was painted pink and blue for service as a showboat. That was before her bottom was banged up a few weeks ago. Her pumps were running last time we were there, and she seemed to be making a game try to become Puget Sound's only sternwheeler submarine. **[480 thru 482]** Pier 54, Ivar's under the big Octopus Sign … is home base for the waterfront character who has parlayed a guitar, a zany imagination and a feeling for people and good food into a prosperous chain of Seattle restaurants. Biggest show is Washington State Ferries – construction on its new $3 million Seattle Terminal, now midway in construction. Workmen are still tearing out the old terminal as they work to put up the new one." We will add to Page's account that with the new terminal construction, its neighbor to the north, the old Grand Trunk Dock that was built sans tower after the fire of 1914 destroyed the original, was also razed to make room for more ferry loading and, without intending it, to give the diners at Acres of Clams an even better view of Page's "biggest show."

The Rockrise Plan: 1969

George Rockrise was introduced above apropos attitude and Alaskan Way Viaduct. In 1968 Seattle hired Rockrise to make another waterfront study. It was also the year that Seattle got one of its by now worn jokes; that is, it was the year that the box came for the Space Needle – and yet somehow six years late. The SeaFirst tower – the first of Seattle's skyscrapers that when soon joined by many more would comprise the city's generic and somewhat interchangeable version of the modern American skyline – is under construction in the attached 1968 aerial. **[483]** There is no vestige of the historic Schwabacher's Dock evident in this record. Finally destroyed in 1967, the broad opening (lower right) between Piers 57 and 59 would wait six years more for the construction of one of the Rockrise recommendations: Waterfront Park.





DOMINION MONARCH
The "Boatel" moored between Pier 50 and the Harbor Patrol float at the foot of Washington - Worlds Fair, 1962

After the Graham Plan, the Rockrise creations were the next general designs to come down the waterfront. One important difference with this study from all those that came before it was that George Rockrise was from out-of-town. The San Franciscan was chosen by a committee composed of Councilperson Phyllis Lamphere, City Engineer Roy W. Morse (son of Chester), City Planner John D. Spaeth and Michael J. Cafferty; special projects coordinator for Mayor Dorm Braman. As with the Graham Plan three years earlier, the mayor was still enthused. In Braman's "opening remarks" to the Rockrise hire, we learn that things have changed at Piers 50 and 51 and may change in the Public Market if the mayor's urban renewal chances there go forward. "With the Port of Seattle having announced plans for a contemplated $40 million investment at Piers 50 and 51 and with the Pike Plaza Project in the final stages of planning at the other end of the waterfront planning area, we feel that the negotiating of this contract is most timely."

A quarter-million dollars was spent on Rockrise who included Seattle architect Paul Hayden Kirk on his team. The voters' approval of the 1968 Forward Thrust bond issue gave their work a hopeful edge. Mayor Braman also selected a Waterfront Advisory Committee chaired by lawyer James H. Todd. It included more big players like Miner Baker, Robert Behnke, Lyman Black Jr., Mechlin D. Moore, Ivar Haglund and Victor Rosellini and two venerable ones: Joshua Green and James G. McCurdy – he who funded tour leader Gordon Newell's maritime history. Todd let it be known from the start that whatever was planned would be costly, and that the $8 million attached to the Forward Thrust victory was a fragment of a development that could cost $80 million or more. That sum included – and here it rises again but in a new place – a World Trade Center. At last the Port had found a private partner to develop it – this time on the parking lots at Pier 50 and 51. Van Sant, now also closely concerned with the Pike Street Pier (one of his properties) let it be known that his plans at Pier 59 depended upon what Rockrise came up with – what was recommended. An example of a "team player," Van Sant added, "I have been a booster of developing the waterfront for 20 years, to make it more of an attraction for tourists and residents." The reference to "residents" included an especially keen interest in residents who lived on or near the waterfront.

Late in 1969 the City was ready to take the Rockrise plans for a Waterfront Park to the public for advice. At the Eames Theatre on the Seattle Center Campus, Rockrise explained his four proposals for what was expected would be "the catalyst for a magnificent renaissance of the waterfront." We sampled the four plans earlier in their relevance to the viaduct, but for the greater part they were based on the park. Three showed a mix of shops, offices, hotels and apartments along a waterfront that called, we know, for the removal of the viaduct – "possibly by 1990." The fourth plan was if anything more radical. It kept the viaduct but eliminated most of the waterfront features and activities then still intact in exchange for a much larger park than the one that was built – a park that also reached a good distance into Elliott Bay. The fourth plan also covered part of the viaduct with part of the park, and between Seneca and Spring Streets extended a plaza from the waterfront over the covered viaduct and onward east to another planned park over what was then the still new Seattle Freeway.

Rockrise requested those attending the Eames Theatre presentation to fill out a form evaluating the four proposals. Professor Maynard Arsove, an anti-freeway activist, said he was concerned because he could see only a minimum of park space. Citizens Planning Council member Wendell Lovett noted that the "amount of actual waterfront park is quite small, possibly only two or three acres." Roanoke Portage Bay Community Council President Dick Lofgren wrote, "It seems to be like a large commercial development." Wade Vaughn of the Leschi Community Council and 1-90 opponent wrote, "It is all too dehumanized, too mechanical, too man made." It offered no place where people could walk on the beach. Dr. David Rudo wanted the viaduct torn down now. Of course it was not, but neither was Rockrise's fourth alternative constructed - the big park-promenade and a plaza connecting the waterfront over a covered viaduct with a lidded freeway.

The Seattle Waterfront Association $205 Plan, 1971

The next waterfront plan came on the heels of the Rockrise study – it came biting the heels of the Rockrise study. The Seattle Waterfront Association (SWA) generally did not care for Rockrise's park, and that was a significant impediment for it. SWA members also compared the two hundred and five dollars it cost to prepare their plan to the quarter million paid out to Rockrise. (And that was an example of homespun populist demagoguery that appealed to almost everyone, even those who could see through it.) Lynn Campbell, who ran the Harbor Tour boats from the foot of Seneca Street (now the Argosy boats), was of the opinion that the boat moorage proposed by Rockrise was far too flimsy and would be damaged "in the first spring storm." Campbell said the park needed a breakwater, and he and the association suggested that one be built on the site of the former Schwabacher's Dock, or Pier 58, and that a lookout tower be built at its outer tip. Campbell and the others still held some warmth for the old working waterfront and wanted the breakwater to be used as moorage for not only visiting pleasure craft but also by a mix of historic ships and working fishing boats. Consistent with this, the Seattle Waterfront Association wanted Pier 59 to remain a home for the fish processing industry. On Feb. 24, 1971 the SWA held a press conference and, before the media, invited members of the city council to lunch with them – they did not indicate where. They told the reporters – who were expected to send the message – that the council would learn that the waterfront park that Rockrise proposed would "not be used." Hal Griffith, SWA president, criticized Rockrise for not providing "that which is most needed – an enclosed area." They claimed that three months a year is all that the outdoor amphitheatre would be used. "We feel the park should be a year-round facility."

The association's plan came with its member architect, Jean Fraley, who proposed that the Port's Piers 60 and 61 should be replaced with a display pavilion featuring removable walls for open-air summer use as well. And Fraley repeated the breakwater idea. Campbell, whose Harbor Tour boats were harbored between Piers 55 and 56, could speak disinterestedly about Pier 57. Unlike Rockwise he thought it should be kept but with a large pedestrian passageway cut through it. Apparently every member of the SWA liked one holdover from the Graham Plan, an aerial tramway, only they would have had it running from the slip between Piers 56 and 57 (Campbell's moorage in which he was not so disinterested) and up University Street to the new Freeway Park. The SWA plan also

bravely eliminated parking on the west side of Alaskan Way so that the sidewalk could be widened, and also moved the railroad tracks to below the viaduct. In all, the waterfront proprietors figured that their plan would cost about $4 million in public funds compared to Rockrise's $5.9 million. And they assured that they, the waterfront property owners, would spend several million on their own in redevelopment.

Park Commissioner Sol. G. Levy's Park Proposal for the Central Waterfront: 1951

If the plans of Rockrise (his number four), the post-war Port of Seattle and the Serveg-Lamping plan in 1956 were the grandest in design, the most radical plan of all may have been proposed by Park Commissioner Sol. G. Levy in the spring of 1951. Levy shamed the city for having no parks on its central waterfront. His solution was to remove all docks and other commercial structures from Yesler Way to Wall Street and, while they were at it, put the trains underground. Echoing the Port, he noted that several piers there had not been used in years, but understanding that the Port was picking them up Levi was afraid that they might build grain elevators in their place. He suggested that the areas south of Yesler and north of Wall Street contained plenty of space for all commercial activities, and if that was not enough, noted what had been described many times before (but much earlier): that a waterway could be dredged from Elliott Bay all the way to Puyallup for additional industrial space. As it turned, out Levi was rather right in many things but probably wrong overall – that is, with his vision. The Waterfront's recreational area did ultimately fill in the space been Yesler Way and Wall but it also extended a good ways further to the north. And the recreation that popped up in the central waterfront was surely not the kind the Park Commissioner preferred. Even Levi's intimations about the Green River valley were realized as gravel from the hills above it were spread across the fertile farm land and flood plain for industrial and service sites. However, the rails and highways routed among them made the waterway unneeded. Levi's vision of a Seattle waterfront "as beautiful as that of Rio de Janeiro" might have turned out to be one long and underused parkway.

The Seattle Waterfront Park opened in 1974. Two years later, both the Myrtle Edwards Park and the Elliott Bay Park followed and the Seattle Aquarium in one year more – in 1977. Over three years – almost suddenly – the old working "Gold Rush Waterfront" was fitted with a recreational aperture to Elliott Bay with decks, ramps, public art, and bordered by the refurbished old Milwaukee Pier and the Pike Street Pier. Between them the Schwabacher's Dock had sort of faded away.

Schwabacher's "Tuning Fork"

In 1946, George C. Lemcki Company offered Pier 58 to the Port of Seattle for $100,000. It was not worth it so the Port paid about half, $52,500. (Gratifyingly the deed still had the Gatzert-Schwabacher Land Company's name attached, and it was to it that the Port made its payment.) The Army Corps wartime Terminal Facilities Analysis described the transit shed as a "metal covered timber, 367 by 80 feet. One floor. No mechanical handling facilities. Used by Alaska Transportation Company and Skagit River Navigation Company." At first the Port tried to keep the pier open but lost money doing it and so closed it down in 1948. Four years later the shed was removed and most of the wharf as well when the Port at the

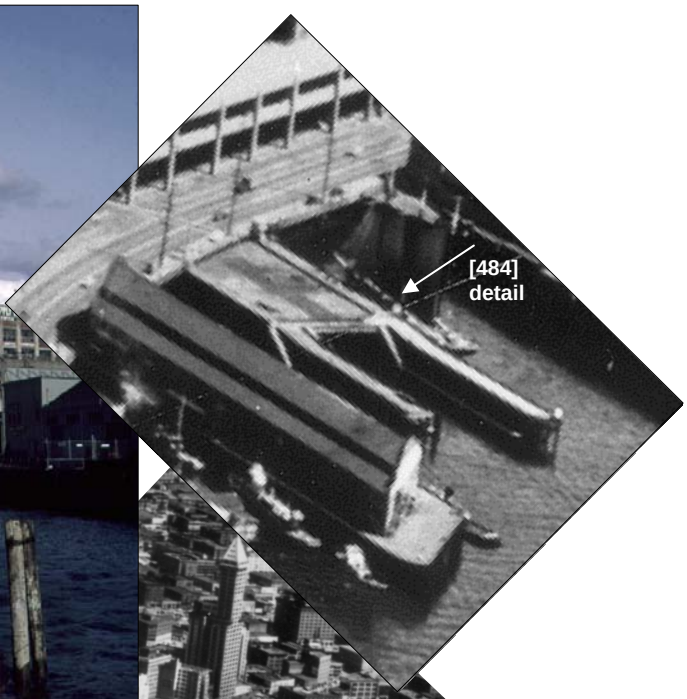
urging of small boat owners agreed to develop the site as something that had been intended often enough but never manifested on the Central Waterfront – a sizeable moorage for small boats. (That is, something grander than the relatively small float at the foot of Madison Street or the few small private floating boathouses that were around in the late 19th century and – only at the foot of Battery Street – for a few years into the 20th Century.) The Army Corps port inventory for 1952 describes this new boat haven as a "mooring for excursion boats and recreation craft. Open pile, timber – deck wharf 187 x 17 feet with two 100 x 11 foot angular finger piers on the north side." It was sometimes referred to what it looked like – "The tuning fork wharf." **[484]** While it was not unusual to prune a wharf – or extend it – for new uses this was a sizeable reduction from the 367-foot wharf described by the Army Corps eleven years earlier.

New Boat Harbor: More Vain Hopes Than Boats

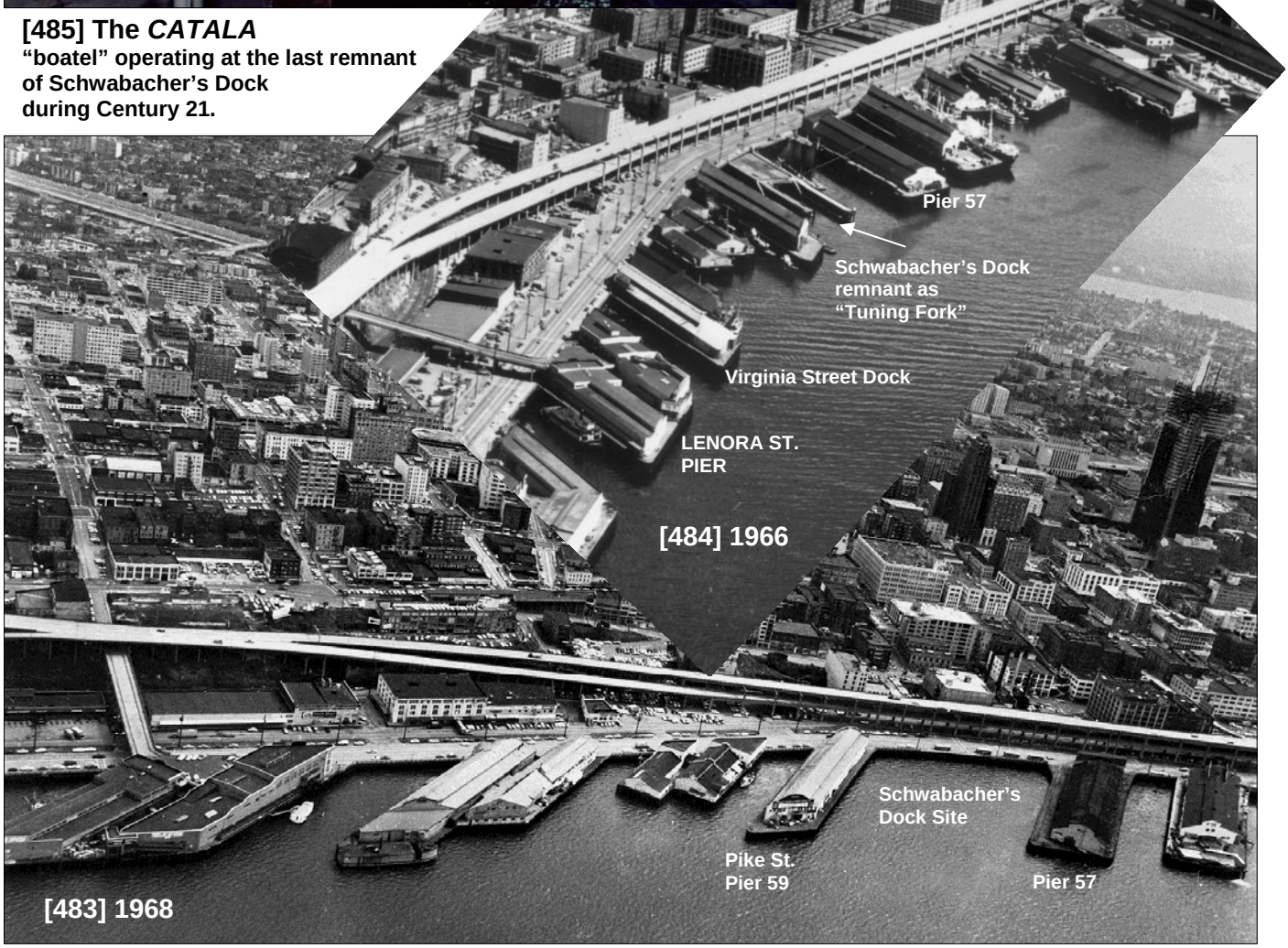
The restaurant for the New Boat Haven was built into the moorage and opened when the boating season began in the spring. At the time, the remarks of Port Commissioner E. H. Savage seem to hint of some uncertainty. "The commission has had assurance from the boating industry and pleasure-boat enthusiasts that such a haven will be well received. Not only will such a facility be a boon to local yachtsmen but also to those visiting our city from neighboring communities, such as Tacoma, Everett, Bellingham and Vancouver B.C." Clarence H. Carlander, Vice President of the Port Commission, added, "We want a restaurant which will be the pride of the waterfront and the city of Seattle." It soon developed that the New Boat Harbor proved to be primarily a testament to either the hope or vanity of both the yachtsman and the Port. The Port had spent about $50,000 to replace the old dock with a pleasure boat moorage, but after the fanfare the moorage was hardly used. In an attempt to rescue the facility, the Port lowered its rates to an economical $1.50 a day with free moorage the first half-hour, but the few yachtsmen who stayed interested suggested that the rates be dropped altogether and the facility run as a "courtesy pier" to attract visitors. Commission President Gordon Rowe reminded these already subsidized advisors that the Port charged commercial fisherman at the Salmon Bay Terminal, and to give away moorage at Pier 58 would contradict that policy. During the "yachting season" for 1953, the facility's monthly income amounted to an average of a little more than $150. The restaurant that was to be the "pride of the waterfront" apparently did not get reviewed. (Perhaps the roar of the Harbor's brand new neighbor, the Viaduct, scared them away.)

Tugs & the "Boatel" *Catala*

The unfortunate small boat experience was an ironic redemption for all those public officials and workers who through the decades withstood the criticism from small boat owners that there was no moorage for them on the central waterfront. Fortunately, the Port soon found a renter with a righteous interest in their truncated Pier 58, the Puget Sound Tug and Barge Company. Also during the 1962 Century 21 Worlds Fair the 218-foot hotel ship *Catala* was moored there. **[485]** Catala Enterprises paid for black top to dress the pier for its guests and a gangway to reach the vessel. As the "Queen" of the Union Steamship Fleet, the *Catala* was a tramp steamer dressed in a smart formal. For nearly 35 years her pointed bow was eagerly greeted at the logging camps, canneries and isolated villages between Vancouver and Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Headed for scrap in 1959, the *Catala* was instead



[485] The *CATALA*
"boatel" operating at the last remnant of Schwabacher's Dock during Century 21.



gussied-up to perform as a "boatel" on Seattle's waterfront during the fair. Along with the 682-foot-long *Dominion Monarch* and the 537-foot-long *Acapulco,* the 253-foot *Catala* was the smallest of three liners outfitted to serve as hotel ships during the worlds fair. According to Gene Woodwick, the vessels sympathetic chronicler, the *Catala* was also the only one to make a profit and stay for the duration of the fair. Already familiar to Canadians, many of the guests that enjoyed her plush quarters during the fair were the loggers, fishers and shore-huggers who had once ridden her.

In 1965 the pier described by a *Times* reporter as "the second worst eyesore on the waterfront" – without noting what was the first – "a topsy-turvy jumble of broken asphalt and wasted timbers … an unlovely monument to civic good intentions … This spring with the pier crumbling the Port called for bids on razing it. The lowest bid was $23,400 -- $13,000 above estimates." The price reflected the sad fact that for a wrecker there was nothing left to salvage in the old "ton of gold" dock. Expressing dismay, the Port figured it made no sense to clear a property for which it had no use, but adding that "if the new downtown waterfront plan ever develops" the site will be valuable. Rather than wait, the Port offered to give the broken remnants of Pier 58 to the city but the city declined for the obvious reasons – the same ones. The city added that it would gladly take the pier later when the Waterfront Plan is fulfilled. But in 1965, "later" was still a few years hence. In 1967 the Port gave in and tore down what remained of the wharf.

"Scheme E" & The Ghost of George Rockrise

Next, in 1970, City Hall fashioned its own "Scheme E" beyond George Rockrise's four alternatives. It envisioned removing traffic altogether from Alaskan Way and replacing it with a wide pedestrian walkway. Like the Rockrise quartet of plans, the added fiddling with a Scheme E did not play out. Also in 1970 James H. Todd (noted earlier as the chairman of the Mayor's Waterfront Advisory Committee) described a "people-oriented" waterfront park that resembles the park that was constructed three years later. Todd recommended buying Piers 57 and 59 and developing a walkway system connecting the park to nearby piers, restaurants, shops and ship displays. In spite of a growing hostility to the smells and noise descending from the Alaskan Way Viaduct, Todd was certain that the viaduct would have to be retained as "a vital transportation link." Todd also doubted that most of the businesses on the piers would be willing or able to relocate beneath the viaduct. However, as we will repeat below, the design of the new park still had the viaduct in mind.

Waterfront Park: The Foundations, 1971-73

Planning for the Waterfront Park got its next contribution from Ballard. During the spring of 1971, Seattle Mayor Wes Uhlman switched from his earlier advocacy of the Golden Gardens site for the Forward Thrust funded aquarium to advocating its place on the waterfront in conjunction with a waterfront park. That May, the city began its search for a park designer and in July the Bumgardner Partnership was chosen to design a 15-acre central waterfront park. The following December, Bumgardner unveiled a preliminary plan that in most parts resembles the Waterfront Park that was built. The plan also advised that Piers 60 and 61 be set aside for a water-oriented tourist attraction, most likely the Forward Thrust aquarium – if the mayor could overcome the champions

of the Ballard site on the Council, most vocally councilman Liem Eng Tuai. Failing that, the piers could be converted for an aqua circus or some other marine activity. Bumgardner envisioned a maritime museum housed in Pier 57 (As will be noted below this was a hope that survived into the mid-1980s.) The architect also included in his plans a glass-enclosed conservatory on Pier 57 at its Bay end. On June 2, 1972 the city gave Bumgardner three months to prepare working drawings for the park, and in March of the following year Mayor Uhlman gave the go-ahead on construction.

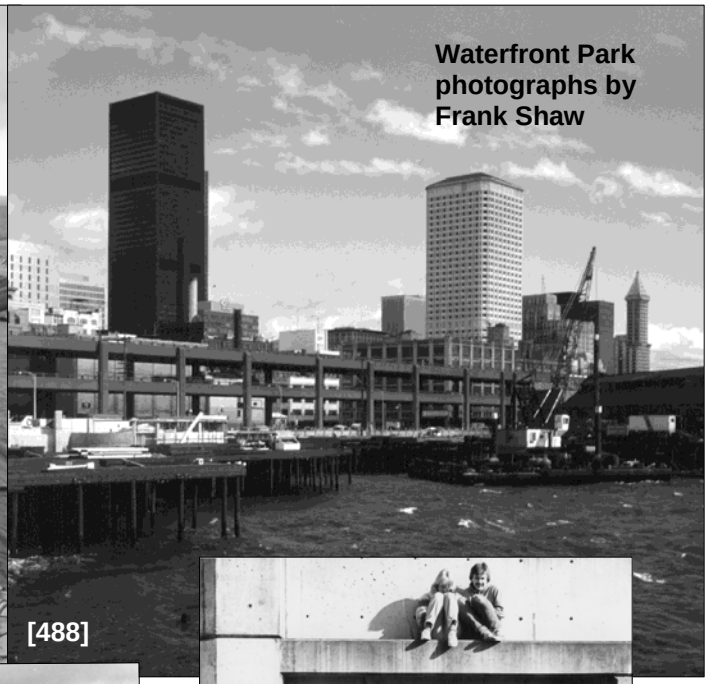
Bumgardner Park Design: Hard to See but Easier to Hear & Meditate

Like practically everything else on the waterfront the Alaskan Way Viaduct influenced the park's design. Sheltered from at least some of the viaduct's noise by the walls at its sidewalk side, it was a design that made the park hard to see except, of course, by those who visited it. But as a standing criticism, the hidden qualities that made the new Waterfront Park less obvious also made it that much less used. Of course the constituency that thinks of the waterfront as primarily a place to look out at Elliott Bay or the Olympics likes the park's hermetic qualities. The wide and curving seaboard beside open water that is its largest part is still the best place on the central waterfront for this kind of surveying. Sitting in the park at the bay and meditating on the picturesque view shares something with the disposition of those who really prefer driving above the waterfront on the viaduct to visiting it, except that meditation is not encouraged at 60 miles an hour on high. Others, however, may imagine Waterfront Park with a centerpiece of the Waterfront Association's two hundred and five dollar idea, that curving levee with a lighted tower at the end. General Construction Company crews began work on the Forward Thrust bonded Waterfront Park on Friday October 19, 1973 by preparing the gap between Pier 57 and Pier 59 with log pilings for the driving that began the following Monday. On Wednesday the city celebrated the beginning of the project with a "waterbreaking" ceremony. **[486 thru 489]**

Rudi Becker's Jar: Seattle's Only Public Aquarium - 1956

After Ivar Haglund closed his Pier 54 Aquarium in 1956, completing an eighteen year run with a long line of Oscar the Octopuses and Pat the Hair Seals, there followed a splash of rumors that someone or thing would replace it. But aside from Rudi Becker's small contribution there were no successors. One of the best loved and remembered personalities on the waterfront, Becker was – among many other things – the barker for Campbell's Elliott Bay Harbor Tours in the 1950s. Its slip was then still between Piers 54 and 55 and so beside Ivar's Aquarium. Emmett Watson described Becker as "bearded, burly and strong, and he had a deep rich voice that sometimes shook the receiver when you picked up the telephone. He looked the way Paul Bunyan pictures did in my primary school books." Ivar was so impressed with the Rudi Becker presence that he hung a heroic portrait of him in the Acres Lobby – and it still hangs there. **[490]** Ivar's long time employee Bob Lazenby remembers that "Ivar paid Rudi $50 a month rent on that picture and he thought he was getting a good deal. The way Ivar figured it if the tourists wanted to think it was picture of him well he didn't mind." Just as likely the rent was also another of Ivar's quiet good works. Rudi was a free-lance survival artist and Ivar's support meant something. But Becker was not pleased when Ivar closed down his aquarium. So he set up his own, a mason jar filled with sea water, some sand and

[486] Preparing to drive the first piles



Waterfront Park photographs by Frank Shaw

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[487] Gerald Ford on campaign

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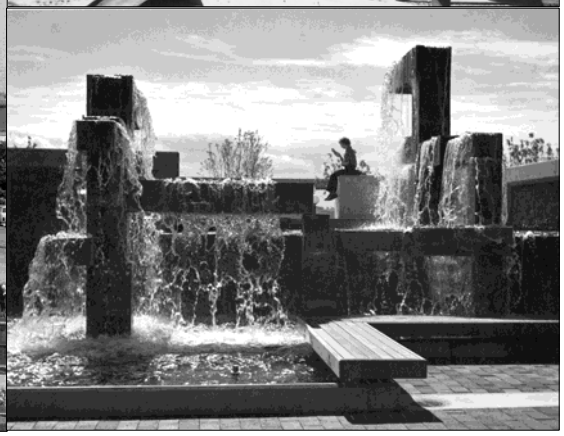


small rocks on which a few living barnacles were displayed. Next to the jar Becker mounted a sign that was a good deal larger than the aquarium and meant to shame the community. It read, "This is Seattle's Only Public Aquarium."

Seattle Waterfront: 1945 – "Live-Octopus Peep Shows" & Other Sensations

In spite all his claims concerning the educational values of his efforts, Ivar's Aquarium was generally considered a roadside attraction that happened to be sited not on a highway a few miles out of town but on the central waterfront. That Ivar's tanks could be described as something of a fish farce can be found in *The Saturday Evening Post.* In 1945 one of its regular feature writers, the novelist George Perry Sessions, wrote a post-war description of the culture along the Seattle docks. "Its waterfront, mainly along Alaskan Way, is a colorful mélange of moving shipping, tooting ferries, hypnotic smells, curio shops, live-octopus peep shows, frozen-fish museums, foreign seamen – these days mostly Russians – the piled nets of fishermen, ship chandlers' and sail makers' and riggers' stalls, ladies of susceptibility, fish and oyster booths." Such a sensational strip was not quite the spot where the Park Department imagined a proper aquarium. Alki Beach and Golden Gardens were among the possible sites proposed. Ultimately, the latter would win favor but then quickly lose it when the building of a municipal aquarium was, like the Seattle Art Museum and Benaroya Hall after it, also used as an opportunity for urban renewal. In the aquarium's case, this was renewal for the central waterfront and its perpetual struggle with decay.

The Parks Department Tests the Water For A Public Aquarium: 1950

The city first tested local waters for its own aquarium in 1950. (It was probably a coincidence that this initiative followed the brief closing of Ivar's aquarium in late 1949 after the pumps failed.) Paul Brown, superintendent of Seattle parks, announced at a Park Board meeting the following January that his department, in cooperation with the University of Washington College of Fisheries, would begin to study plans for a municipally owned and self-sustaining salt water aquarium. Like comparing the Waterfront Association's $205 dollar expenses to Rockrise's quarter-million fee, we may as well enjoy some playful parody by comparing the city's schedule with Ivar's. It required the financially strapped folk singer a few months in 1938 to build and stock a presentable aquarium, and only two weeks in 1949 to restock it after the water went sour. Twenty-seven years after its first "serious study," the Seattle Municipal Aquarium opened in 1977 and as noted not on the beach in Ballard but on a sprawling wing attached to the north side of the Pike Street Pier and paid for in part by "Forward Thrust" bond issue of 1968.

Frank McEachern's Second Choice - 1962

In the generation between Ivar's draining his tanks and the city filling theirs, there were a few private attempts to make a go of it. But would such enterprise also atone for what one anxious citizen described as "the shame of Seattle residents who ask why their major seaport is without its own aquarium?" Among the smaller municipal triumphs that rode sidecar to the 1962 Century 21 World's Fair were two waterfront animal shows. We have already briefly described one of these. Directly over the site of

Henry Yesler's original pier at the foot of Yesler Way, Frank McEachern opened his Seattle Sea Circus between Van Sant's "Seattle Piers." As McEachern acknowledged, he first attempted to lease the old Alaska Docks 50 and 51 from Van Sant to run a parking concession during Century 21. The two long piers had been cleared of their dilapidated sheds and lay bare in the shadow of the hotel ship *Dominion Monarch* that was moored we knew, to the south side of Pier 50. When he learned that the parking contract had already been awarded McEachern wound up in the 120-foot wide watery slip between the piers. With him were a few seals, sea lions, dolphins and their trainer Captain Homer Snow. McEachern explained, "I don't remember quite how." Even before the circus opened, Snow ploughed through his quota of visionary promotions when he described it as something that would rival the Marinelands of Florida and California. And Snow let it be known that he had "hopes for a 20-foot octopus." Actually, Snow's show opened late – in July – and closed for good in the fall when the titled trainer and his performers moved over to the other waterfront show, Ted Griffin's Seattle Marine Aquarium at the water end of Pier 56.

Ted Griffin's Seattle Marine Aquarium at Pier 56 - 1962

Although his stay was brief when compared to a fixture like Ivar, Ted Griffin must be counted among the handful of exalted characters to have worked the waterfront. And with claims about California and Florida he was also more restrained than Captain Snow. "Someday Seattle is going to have its own Marineland. This we hope is just a prelude." At the start "this" was 6,000 square feet of covered space, an impressive cadre of skin-diver friends and other volunteers. But most saliently "this" was, in the figure of Griffin, then still in his twenties, a kind of energized ego whose want of subtlety was made up for with physical courage combined with a heroic sentimentality that the ironic Ivar could only wonder at – and did. The Seattle Marine Aquarium opened on June 22, 1962, or in the ninth week of Century 21 and adjacent to the fair's waterfront helicopter pad. At 20,000 gallons, Griffin's main tank alone was much larger than all of Ivar's combined, but most of his specimens and claims for them were the same. "Puget Sound has more beautiful marine life than anywhere else in the world – even Key West, Florida." Captain Snow's Micki, a 600-pound dolphin, and Gertie, the only Californian sea lion around were popular additions. Gertie, however, soon left through an open gate diving to freedom in search of a mate, which she was not likely to find in Puget Sound. The lost Gerti got more attention than the captive one. In the first month following her escape in the summer of 1963, more than 300 sightings of the slim nosed Californian with the long flippers were rushed to Snow who for the most promising of them would jump to a waiting seaplane for another futile pursuit. Gertie was lost for good.

Whale Signs at Pier 56 and Ten-Foot Sharks Feeding at the Bottom of Elliott Bay

In 1962, Ted Griffin was not yet publicly associated with whales, although privately he pursued them both in his dreams and in speedboats. At the opening of his aquarium the *Times* columnist John Reddin noted, "Thus far the only whale is the figure on their outdoor sign." **[491]** But Griffin and his curator Eric Friese would harvest other excitements like Homer, an octopus captured on Puget Sound, which at 88 pounds was a record-breaker for captured octopi. Before his whale heroics, Griffin's most awesome underwater adventure was with Puget

Sound sharks – three of them, the biggest more than ten feet long. With the closure of the 1962 fair, the aquarium's attendance predictably fell off and Griffin struggled to stay solvent. Early in 1964 when things were getting desperate his publicist learned that there were big sharks prowling the bottom of Puget Sound. He asked if they had teeth, and when assured that they did the press agent convinced Griffin that he should go after them. This was not a surface pursuit but a deep plunge. The six-gill sharks were hooked with a very sturdy line that was longer than Queen Anne Hill is high. The line was tied to a buoy and dressed with ham, raw beef, and lingcod. For the aquarium, the sharks were cash cows. (This thrilling revelation of what lurks in the cellar of Elliott Bay was made, fortunately, ten years before the release of Steven Speilburg's film *Jaws,* otherwise – to use an example – even those seasoned and burly members of the West Seattle Polar Bear Club might have reconsidered their annual New Years Day plunge at Alki Beach. Such fears, however, would have been highly irrational, for to be in any danger of these sharks – and they still patrol our depths – the Polar Bears, or any swimmers for that matter, would have to dive to at least 500 feet – the level at which Griffin caught his. As the pioneers soon learned the beach at Alki is shallow.) Keeping the sharks alive was measurably more difficult than catching them, that is, it was impossible. In captivity – and in daylight – the Elliot Bay leviathans lost their appetite and most importantly their motivation. Entering the pool and the unknown armed only with his wet suit, Griffith would prod and push at them to move. He also force-fed them with mackerel. In spite of it soon the sharks all expired and hopes of maintaining the tremendous draw their exhibition engendered were lost. Still, during this brief but sensational excitement, the aquarium prospered and was able to stay open after the sharks' last roundup.

Namu From Namu - 1965

But it is killer whales, not six-gill mud sharks, with which Ted Griffin will be linked as long as men like to chase and capture things. In the summer of 1965 Griffin's whale mania was no longer a private matter. The aquarist's quest was known by a fisherman in whose nets a young male killer whale was entangled. Griffin rushed north to Namu, British Columbia to negotiate. All the bidders except Griffin retreated when they reflected on what it might take to move the whale. When, as Griffin retells it, "I was the only one left. They cut me a deal. They quoted me $50,000. I agreed to pay them $8,000, which was approximately the price of the nets." He flew back to Seattle and collected the eight thousand from friends and businesses on the waterfront. When he returned to Namu he carried a gunnysack filled with small bills amounting to the eight Gs. Griffin named the whale for the place, and the fame of Namu began the moment it set off on its 19-day and 450-mile odyssey to Seattle accompanied a strange flotilla of fans, featuring celebrities and representatives of the competing media like Robert Hardwick of KVI-AM radio and Emmett Watson who was then still with the *Post-Intelligencer.* The floating pen that Griffin and his new partner Don Goldsberry fashioned from oil drums and steel lines became a kind of bandwagon as Griffin's list of volunteers – including, in absentia, Ivar – - swelled. Griffin asked Ivar to pay for bringing the whale back. Ivar countered with the offer to feed the swashbucklers and their hounds as sent Claude Sedenquist, his head chef, along to do the cooking.

Namu's Shadow

But the Namu Odyssey also pulled a long shadow. At the start

there was the pathetic train of Namu's family – a cow whale and two calves – that for the first 150 miles followed safely behind the flotilla of aquarists, fortified members of the media and celebrities. Griffin also was told of "reports" that a "free Namu" attempt would be made, and although he would later describe it as "a complete hoax," at the time he took many precautions. As it developed these rumors of whale freedom fighters were intimations of powerful things to come.

Namu, "My Best Friend"

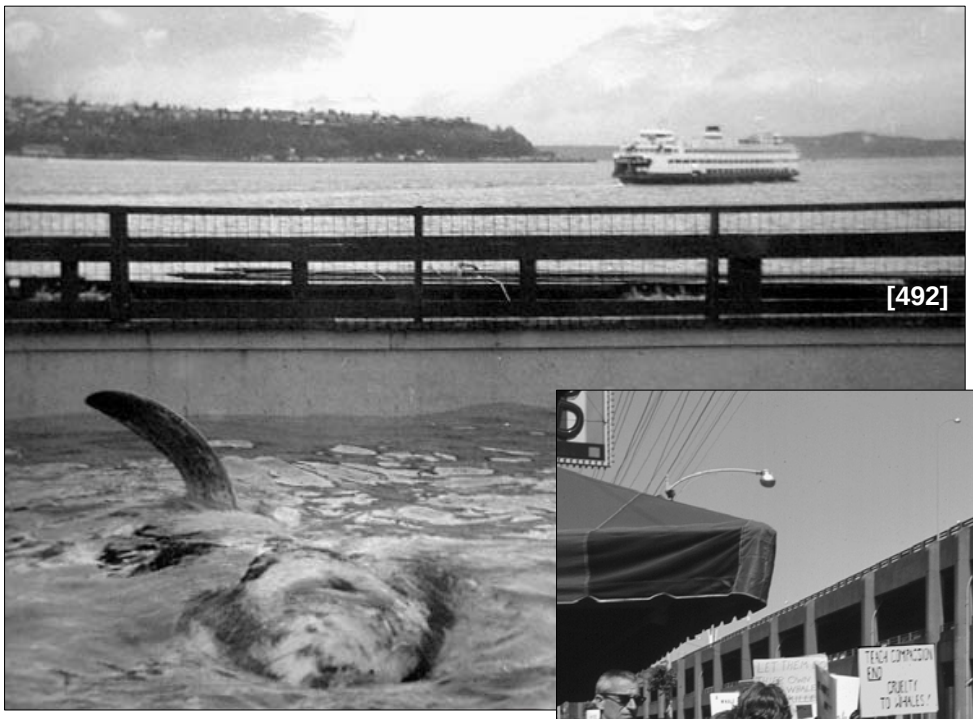
The early benefits of speculating on Namu were considerable. Once the portable pen was attached to the north end of Pier 56, Griffin recalled, "People were lined up for miles in every direction. It was a very good business for us. I was recovering my expenses very quickly." **[492]** Soon Griffin began spending time with Namu in his holding pen, and man and beast became uncannily close. The following year the film "Namu, My Best Friend" included a clip of Griffin riding the whale. It was not a documentary but rather, as the MGM blurb put it, a "warm and compelling family drama about a compassionate scientist who forms an unlikely friendship with a magnificent killer whale." The film was released on the first of August 1966, less then a month after Namu died of an infection received from polluted water in his pen. In a mix of authentic sorrow and anger Griffin seemed to blame the polluting city, describing the cause as "raw sewage" that was pumped under the whale's pen.

Ted Griffin was clearly devastated by the loss of his Namu. As he would reminisce many years later in a PBS Frontline interview, "It was one of the most difficult times of my life, and probably the only time I ever wrote poetry. But you know you're moved by great emotion to do strange things. I was resolved to have another pet, so I continued capturing killer whales." Before he retired from specimen and pet hunting in 1972 – ten years after he opened on Pier 56 – Griffin and his partner, Don Goldsberry, devised a very effective method of corralling escaping pods into circular nets that extended nearly a mile across. "We would catch anywhere from 10 to 90 whales at a time and we would take whatever we would have orders for." In their seven years of shagging, the partners sold more than 30 killer whales at sums of "about $30,000 each" to SeaWorld and other marine parks. Jeff Foster, Goldsberry's son-in-law recalled, "At that time, nobody thought much about it. You could tell the sentiments were changing. When Ted first caught Namu, he got the key to the city. That pendulum swung from wearing the white hat to the black hat." Griffin recalled, "I could see all the problems developing." And in 1972 "I just said, 'That's it.'" **[493]**

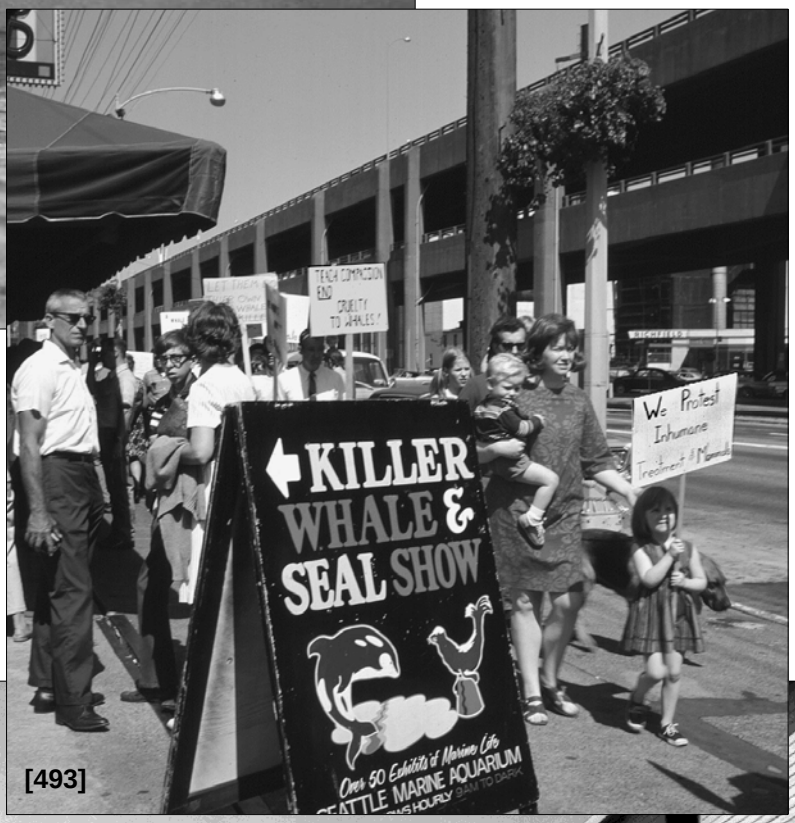
On the world stage, Griffin's waterfront saga far outshone Ivar's celebrity. During his brief fame the whale catcher was known almost everywhere. He was even consulted by the Pentagon and wound up selling a pair of killer whales to the military that were put through their rounds in Hawaii but ultimately determined to be too independent – or playful – for strategic assignments.

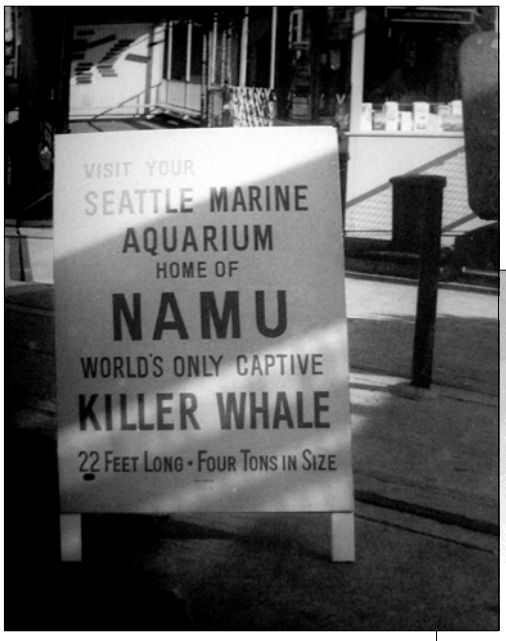
A Ballard Aquarium: Charles White's Innovative Tank at Shilshole Bay, 1965

One more historical although short-lived Seattle aquarium may be noted. When Charles R. White, the owner of the first television station in Victoria, tired of media and decided instead to go fishing, the



[490] Rudi Becker





[491] Pier 56

entrepreneur producer in him wound not stay in the boat. So he opened a unique aquarium on Vancouver Island, at Oak Bay. It featured an underwater viewing room that descended to ten feet below the surface of the bay through the center of a structure constructed just off shore. On June 18, 1965, White opened a Seattle version of his Undersea Garden at Shilshole Bay. He stocked the pen that surrounded the underwater observatory with many of the same exotic Puget Sound specimens that both Ivar and Griffin exhibited. Two sheets of glass a half inch thick separated the fish from the spectators, and during its first summer there were many of them. The aquarium claimed to draw 1,000 visitors each day. The facility, however, did not endure, perhaps because of the lure of Namu. As the City of Seattle also later determined when choosing a site for their aquarium, Shilshole Bay, although near the popular Ballard Locks, still could not tap the increasing interest in the Central Waterfront as a place of play and excitement. Nor, as noted earlier, was there any need for urban renewal at Golden Gardens.

The Seattle Municipal Aquarium: 1968 Forward Thrust Funding & The '72 Tuai – Uhlman Face-off on Locating

The municipal Aquarium was prudently planned without performing whales. The 1968 Forward Thrust election authorized a public aquarium and maritime research facility – somewhere. Two of the seven million dollars approved were directed to the aquarium and about half of the remaining five million was spent through 1973 on property acquisition for the Waterfront Park. The brewing tussle over where to site the Aquarium erupted with City Councilman Liem Eng Tuai holding out for the Ballard site against both Mayor John Uhlman and city planner's preference for a central waterfront location – probably north of Pier 59. Of course, the Central Seattle Community Council also supported the downtown site. While the City Council decided in July 1972 to put the Aquarium at the Pier 60-61 location, NEAT – for Natural Environment Aquarium Today – gathered signatures for a Golden Gardens Park Aquarium ballot initiative. On the sixth of July, with only eleven days before the deadline, the initiative organizers needed 6000 more signatures. The primary advantage of the Ballard site, its advocates argued, was the voter-approved "requirement" that the new aquarium be also a research facility, a role that was not likely, it was claimed, if the aquarium were placed downtown.

Pike Place Pier Purchase - 1973

After the Park Department purchased Pier 59 without condemnation from the Pier 59 Dock Corporation on May 30, 1973 for $585,000, its sturdy condition made the Pier an inexpensive alternative for choosing an aquarium site. In the spring of 1974 – six years after voters had approved and funded it – it was at last projected that construction on the public aquarium could begin the following summer. Now the facility was described as including not only Piers 60 and 61, but also a part of Pier 59. A Seattle Times article of April 28 explained that the water of Elliott Bay might require minor treatment periodically prior to its use in the aquarium, and that a report on the effects of noise on marine mammals was expected shortly. (As noted above, Ivar learned about the former problem in 1949 when the water that circulated through the tanks at his Aquarium on Pier 54 momentarily carried a toxin that killed off his specimens.) The article shared some of the facility's statistics. Construction would include from 35,000, to 40,000 square feet of over-water construction. A budget of $2.25 million was projected after design fees and other costs

were subtracted. It was estimated that the annual cost of maintenance and operation would be between $500,000 and $800,000. Simple arithmetic suggested that with a planned-for attendance approaching 700,000 persons a year, the new facility could at least pay for its day to day needs by requiring a modest entrance fee.

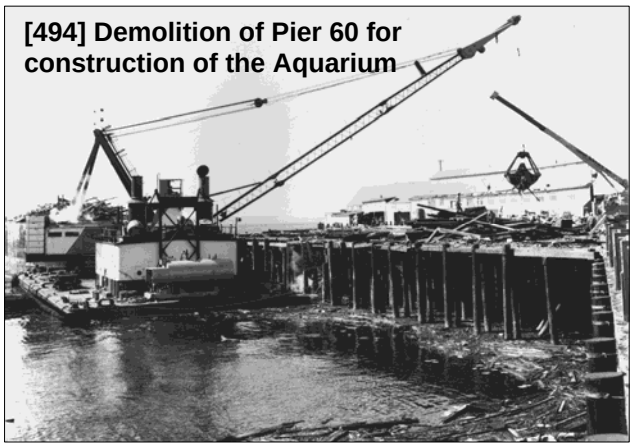
Although the summer start-up was missed, construction did begin that fall. On Nov. 21, 1974, building permit 555863 was issued for the destruction of Piers 60 & 61. The permit reads, in part, "to demolish existing pier, and construct a building per plans. City of Seattle Park Dept. owner. Cost 2 million. Seattle Aquarium Design Team." Pier 60 was demolished first, in the spring of 1975. **[494]** In a review of the Aquarium's progress *The Seattle Times* reported on Oct. 2, 1976 "the opening date has been set back until early next year due to the plumber's strike."

Frank O. Shaw & his Hasselblad

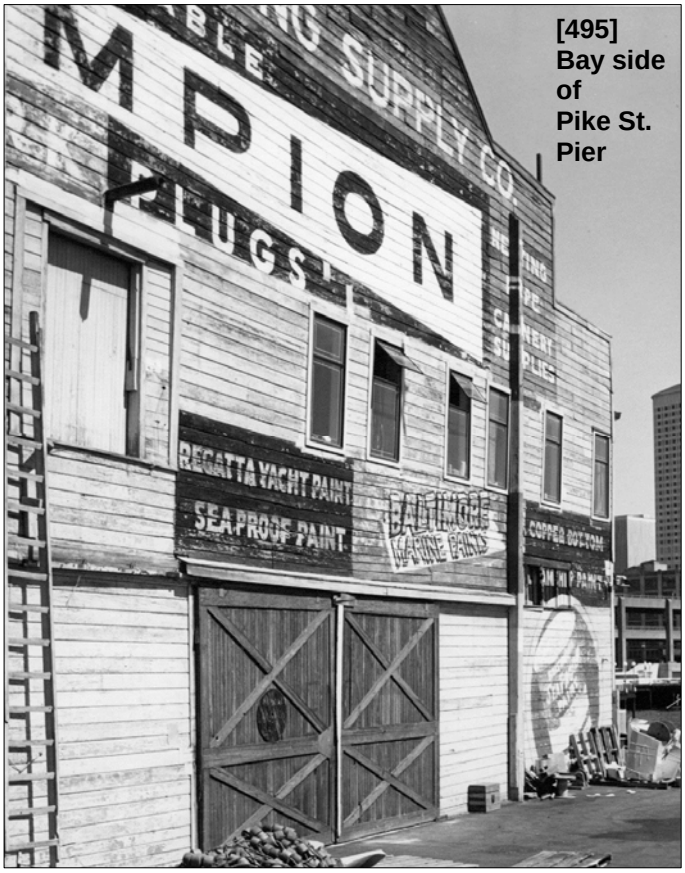
Itinerant photographer Frank O. Shaw aimed his Hasselblad at the outer end of Pier 59 on Aug. 9, 1974 when the work of building Waterfront Park was already well underway to the south side of the wharf and construction on the Aquarium was about to begin to its north side. Shaw has recorded the effects of all those years of luring fisherman, and we may imagine the sun-bleached colors of this weathered montage that ironically promotes with faded signs the effectiveness of brand name maritime paints. **[495 & 496]** As his accompanying photographs demonstrate, Frank Shaw followed the construction of both the Waterfront Park and the Aquarium. **[497 & 498]** Shaw also traced the modern changes on the historical climb that follows Pike Street between the waterfront and the top of a bluff that is a few degrees relaxed from being precipitous.

Pike Place Hill Climbs A Toenail History - 1871 to 1978

On Jan. 17, 1977 Mayor Wes Uhlman joined Paul Schell, then the director of the city's Department of Community Development, to help break the ground for the $745,000 project linking the market and the new developments to either side of the Pike Place Pier. In the grand new stairway (with elevator attached for the steepest part of the incline to serve those who either preferred or needed it) they were not building the first Pike Street Hill Climb. As we have tired to keep track of throughout this history, there is a heritage of hill climbs on Pike Street. Here is a review. It begins in 1871 with the construction on an incline to lower the narrow gauged coal cars to the Pike Street Wharf for delivery to the bunkers at the wharf's outer end. Sometime after the coal road was dismantled in the late 1870s, a stairway was constructed in the steeper upper portion of the climb. It joined with a trail at the beach end – the section near Princes Angeline's home. In 1912 or 1913, a long pedestrian trestle was built down from the Public Market that met the waterfront about 100 feet north of the north wall of the Pike Street Pier. It performed the important service of enabling citizens to cross above Railroad Avenue without harm except from the pollutants propelled from the stacks of steam engines passing beneath it. (The trestle appears in a 1913 photograph taken from the bay but not in the 1912 Baist Real Estate Map. Since these maps are prepared early the trestle may have been built in 1912.) The view from the trestle was evidently inspiring, for it was while walking down it in the mid-1920s that the future "King of the Waterfront" Ivar Haglund on his leisurely way home to West Seattle from classes at the



[494] Demolition of Pier 60 for construction of the Aquarium



[495] Bay side of Pike St. Pier

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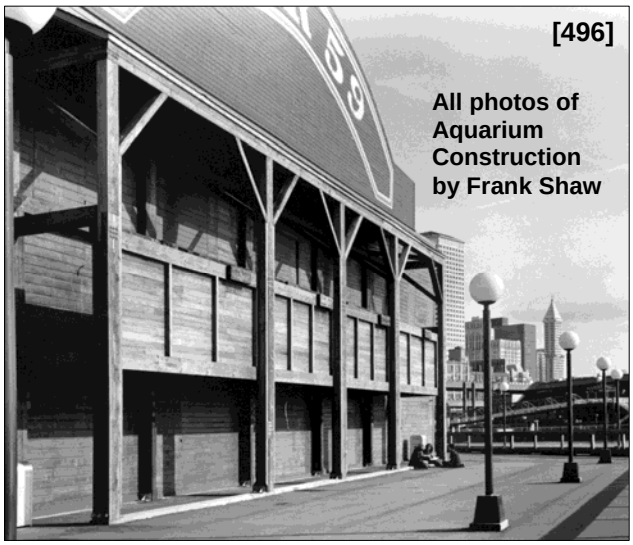

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All photos of Aquarium Construction by Frank Shaw

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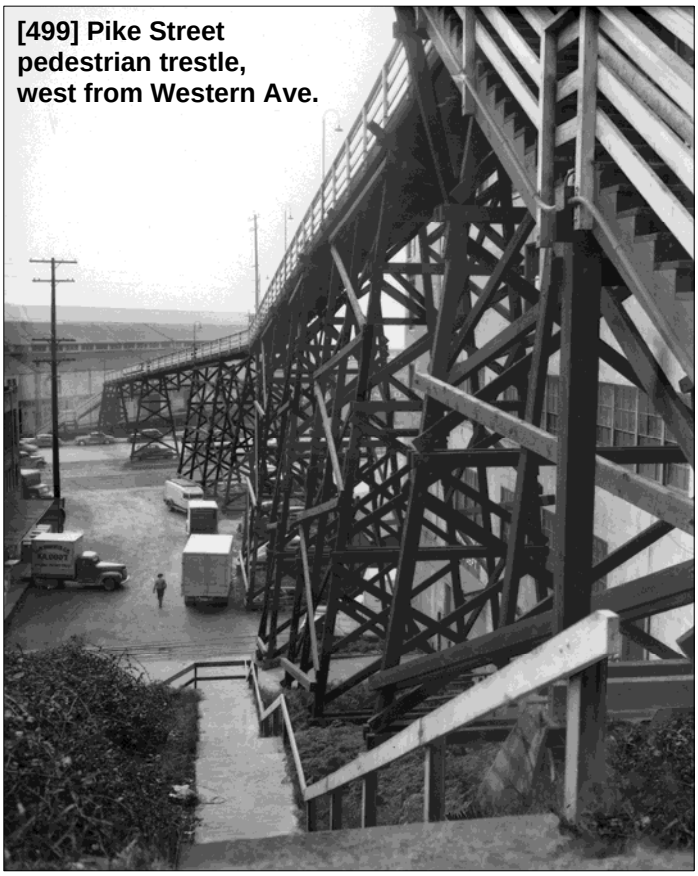
University of Washington decided that some day he would spend his life on the docks. Now barely remembered, the trestle was sacrificed with the construction of the Alaska Way Viaduct. The ground-level vernacular walkway that replaced the trestle included some switchbacks in its stairway. It is still remembered by many and was also photographed by Frank Shaw in its last days, on November 22, 1976. **[499 thru 502]**

George "Streetcar" Benson, the Waterfront Trolley & Public Art: 1982 - 2005

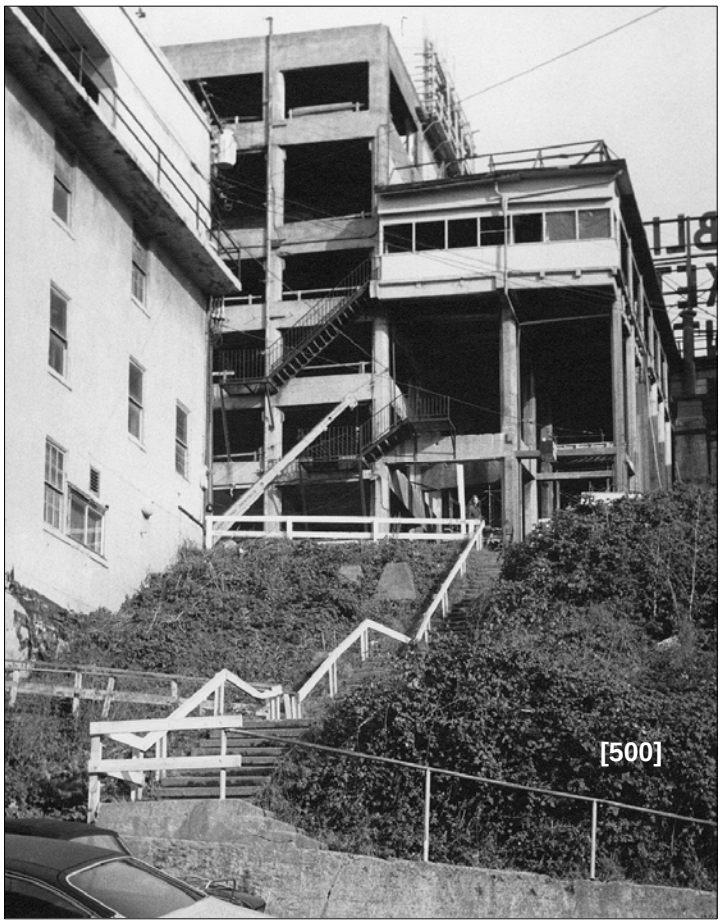
Long before George "Streetcar" Benson was a member of the Seattle City Council and still spending most of his days behind the counter of his Capitol Hill Drug Store, the area's rail fans knew him as one of their own. And once Benson initiated and brought to tracks Seattle's waterfront trolley he was cherished by his fellow fans, who only wished he'd been on the Council in the 1930s when the decision was made to get rid of the city's electric street car system in favor mostly of rubber and internal combustion. Since the line was for the most part on the waterfront, Benson's contribution was also to waterfront heritage – that big part that was railroads. At least for the purposes of a good story, the last cherished track preserved from the eight (and in places up to ten) tracks that were once stacked from side to side between the Commission District and the Wharves belongs to the trolley with a name – King County Metro's George Benson Waterfront Streetcar Line – almost as long as the track. The Benson Line began its service on May 29, 1982 with an inaugural ceremony delivered from the side of the track conveniently close to the Pike Street Hill Climb. As the accompanying photo (again by Frank O. Shaw) of George Benson addressing the celebrants reveals, the ceremony was big enough to require bleachers. **[503]** In 1990, the original 1.6 miles was extended through the Pioneer Square neighborhood to the transit center at Jackson and at this writing may – or may not – be preparing to add another 1.2 miles north through Port property – Myrtle Edwards Park – to two new stations at West Thomas Street and the Helix overpass near the Amgen biotech campus at Interbay where its delicate antique cars would get their daily grooming in a new car barn. (An alternative site for the car barn – and it seems a less expensive one – is proposed for a Pioneer Square historic neighborhood parking lot.) As a sign, perhaps, that timing can be nearly everything, the Interbay extension waited on two developments that waited on each other. While the Seattle Art Museum's (SAM) Olympia Sculpture Garden waited on the decision of whether its waterfront site would also cover part of a tunnel projected to replace the Alaska Way Viaduct (beginning in 2009), it could not be certain how its art would intrude on the trolley's original barn at the foot of Broad Street. When no likely tunnel was described as reaching it, SAM made the necessarily delayed but still upsetting announcement that the barn would have to go. Since the Benson Line was both cherished and reliable, "go" would somehow have to mean not "go away" but rather "go further." (As noted the moment of this writing the connective tissues for all this were still be massaged.) **[504 & 505]**

The Olympic Sculpture Garden: The Spirit of Sol. G. Levy Returns & the First Example of Public Art on the SAM Site Ca. 1982.

The Olympic Sculpture Garden itself may be considered a great addition to a north waterfront that with the Myrtle Edwards and Elliott Bay Parks has developed along the lines of Sol. G. Levy's 1951 vision of a landscaped



[499] Pike Street pedestrian trestle, west from Western Ave.



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Pike Street Hill Climb

GEORGE BENSON
Posing with Santa

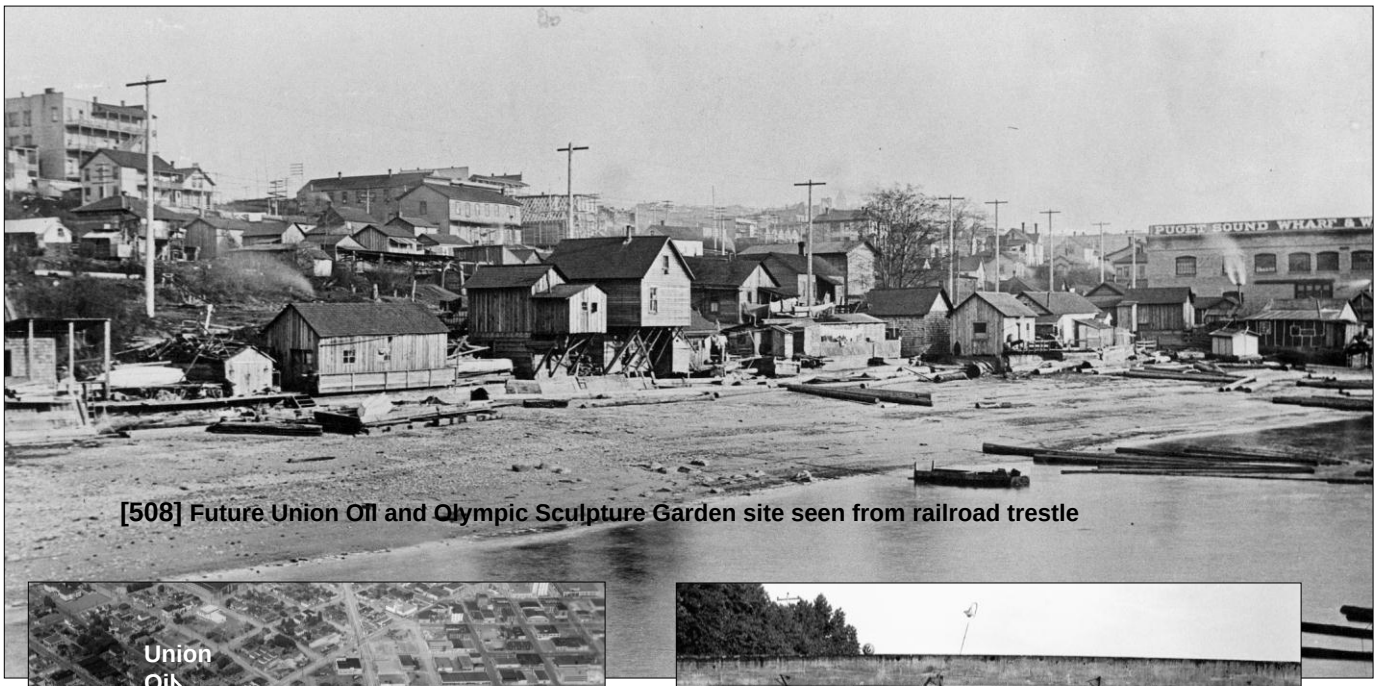
waterfront except that this waterfront is almost exactly north of the section Levy described and its antique train will not be buried but cherished – if it gets it. Attached is an early example of public sculpture on the grounds of the then future Olympia Sculpture Garden. **[506]** The halved Union 76 sign was photographed on the grounds of the old Union Oil acres in the early 1980s after the oil company had abandoned the site – except for a few artifacts like the one recorded. Frank Shaw's earlier rip-rap "sculpture" at Myrtle Edwards Park also intimates the future garden. **[507]** Also attached is an earlier view of the old cove south of Broad Street that was later developed into the Union Oil site. **[508]** The reader may remember from above the Anders Wilse photograph taken of the Indian camp at the cove recorded in the late 1890s.

Pier 48 in the 1960s

In 1958 – a full year before it was shelled by the media as described above – the Port announced its big plans to respond to the demands of the new container technology by developing the waterfront's first container field between Piers 48 and 43. Combined with the already modernized Pier 48, the three piers would, the Port announced, give a "completely integrated central waterfront pier system extending from Pier 42 through Pier 48." In the early 1980s this facility was extended again south through Pier 37. **[509]** Waterways between all the piers were filled in and a three-birth container pier developed in their place. The Port got rid of the stubby little Pier 49 in 1957, but only to improve the harbor for its oversize neighbor, Pier 48. Both the old Pier 49 site and the north side of Pier 48 were also dredged to make room for the larger ships of the then new tenant, the Matson Line. A familiar site during this work was a squirting barge in the middle of Elliott Bay. The dredged mud was barged to deep water where it was emptied not by tipping – as in 1929 and 1930 with the last of Denny Hill – but rather by blasting the piled mud with a water jet shot from a floating tower. The Port also purchased Pier 44 in 1957, completing its hold on this portion of the central waterfront and so preparing the way for the development of its first container yard. In 1960 the Weyerhaeuser Line is also listed at the Port's big Pier 48, but the following year the Matson Line cut back its freight service between Northwest Ports and Hawaii. Still, in 1962, Matson also signed a new five-year lease for the pier. The Port of Seattle approved a minimum rental of $65,379 a year that it promised to raise if shipping boomed. It did not, and Matson eventually moved off the central waterfront to less expensive quarters further south. A collection of lines including the Holland-American, the Hamburg American, and the North German Lloyd were short-time tenants on the pier before it was taken over by the Alaskan Ferries.

Alaska Ferries at Pier 48

The Alaska Ferries arrived on the waterfront in 1967, coincident with the *Kalakala's* preparations to leave it for Alaska. The ferries first used Black Ball's remaining Elliott Bay facilities at Pier 30 but then soon moved over to Pier 48, the great and sprawling Pacific Coast Company survivor at the foot of Washington. **[510]** As noted above, the old Pier B had since 1950 become another of the Port of Seattle's properties. Curiously but not surprisingly, after the Alaska Ferries began docking there the Port was seriously considering tearing down Pier 48 to in order to lengthen the Pier 46 container quay.



[508] Future Union Oil and Olympic Sculpture Garden site seen from railroad trestle

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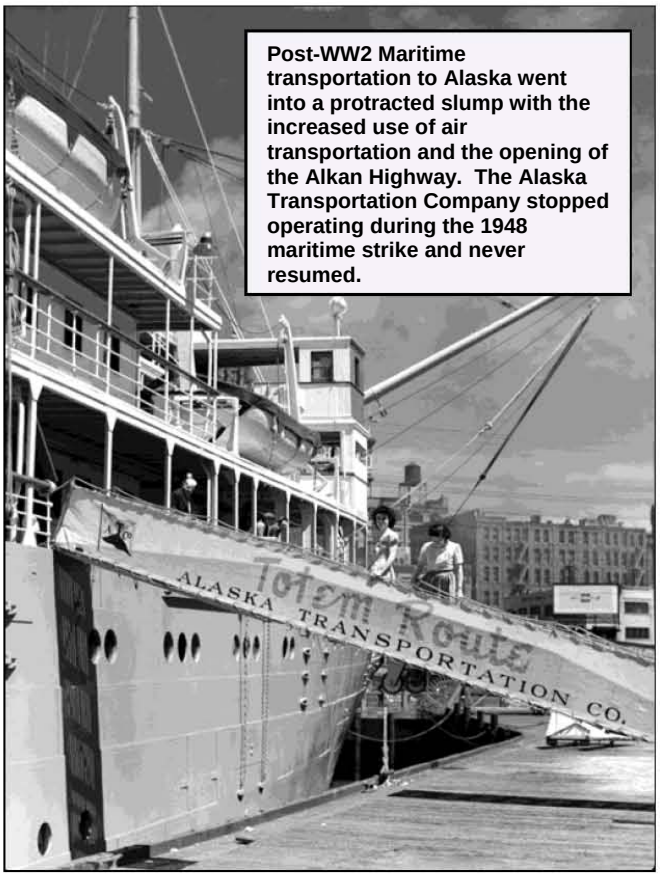
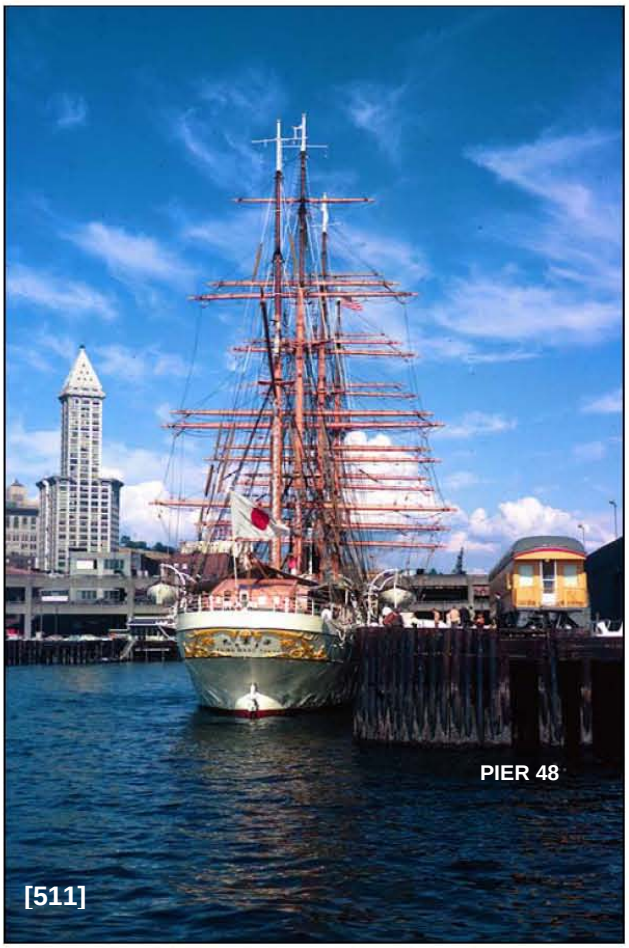
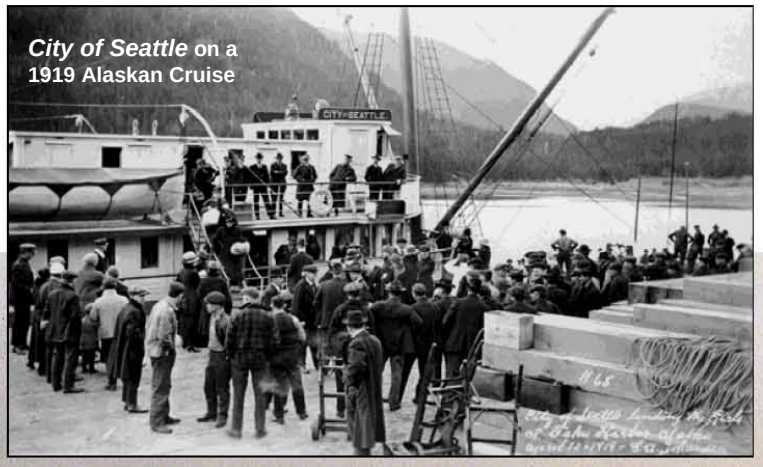
OLYMPIC SCULPTURE GARDEN SITE



Post-WW2 Maritime transportation to Alaska went into a protracted slump with the increased use of air transportation and the opening of the Alkan Highway. The Alaska Transportation Company stopped operating during the 1948 maritime strike and never resumed.





City of Seattle **on a 1919 Alaskan Cruise**

Piers 50 to 46: A Grand but Abandoned Plan - 1973

In 1973, while the small boat harbor and its welcoming pergola at the foot of Washington Street were being restored, Mayor Wes Uhlman proposed a floating museum of historic ships there. It was then that the Port of Seattle revealed what it had been probably pondering for some time – filling in the waterfront from Pier 50 south to its new container facilities at Pier 46. The plan would have razed the shed at Pier 48. With this extension to the north, a 5000 feet long concrete apron was imagined from Washington Street to South Atlantic Street. While the Port explained to those startled by these proposals that "of course, we're looking several years ahead," permits for this project were filed with the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Ecology (environmental impact statements were then a new requirement) and public comment was also invited. The gravely sand and rip-rap required to fill the area would have created a reclamation work of a size rivaling the city's regrades at Denny Hill and Jackson Street.

Alaskan Adieu

When the Port's bold plan came to nothing it was left with Pier 48 and the Alaska State Ferries – for a while. Both Alaskan heritage enthusiasts and natives began to look upon its largely empty shed as an opportunity to exhibit and market Alaskan culture. In 1976 Calista, one of the native Alaskan's regional corporations, proposed developing the pier into an Alaska Native Center with restaurants and exhibits on a native theme as well as ships and, to help pay the rent, a 298 car parking garage inside. Feeling, in part, crowded by these proposals, in 1977 the Alaska Marine Highways first began to threaten a move to Bellingham. In 1977, the Port of Seattle inspected Pier 48's deteriorating pilings with sonar gear – more than 2000 of them. The Port withheld any decision to replace the rotting piles until the Alaska Marine Highways made up its mind about staying or leaving. The ferry lease was scheduled to expire in September 1979, the year that Calista at last paid the Port $10,000 a month for use of most of the pier shed, although the native corporation was not yet ready to develop the space. Later that year, the Port went ahead with repairs to the pilings and the Alaska ferries renewed its lease one last time before its ultimate move to Bellingham in late 1989-90. Calista's native mall and entertainment center, however, never materialized. In 1976 – long before the ferries left for Bellingham – Alaska pioneer groups proposed erecting at Pier 48 a monument to Lu Lu Fairbanks, for 36 years the secretary to the International Sourdoughs, longtime editor of the Alaska Weekly and niece of the founder of the family's namesake city. Nothing came of that either. Having missed on Lu Lu in '76, Pier 48 lost its railroad car two years later. Realtor Wells McCurdy's executive railroad car was taken from the Pier to its new home at Point Defiance Park in Tacoma. Equipped with groceries and liquor for entertaining, it had been kept at the end of the northern apron since the late 1960s. Rudi Becker was a frequent user. **[511]**

The Bellingham Card

Fred Tolan, a freight-traffic expert representing the interests of the Port of Bellingham, put the advantages of this "Bellingham Card" with candor. "The Port of Seattle has the option of either letting the warehouse stand empty with no income or developing it as a tourist attraction incompatible with the safety and efficiency of the co-tenant ferry system. Also the ferries spend $123 thousand a year fueling at Pier 32 because it is not allowed to fuel

up at Pier 48 or from a barge beside it. Bellingham is also eight hours closer to Alaska and a move there would save another $140 thousand in fuel alone and allow more hours for maintenance and repair." What Bellingham did not have, of course, was population. But Tolan was quick to note, "Only twelve percent of the ferry system's passengers come from or to the Seattle area." Finally, Tolan's last reason was perhaps the most alluring. Bellingham's lease would be about half that of Seattle's.

The British are Coming – the Princess Marguerite Visit to Pier 48: 1976

With neither its Alaskan Ferries nor its native theme center, the major portion of Pier 48 remained empty except for rare uses like the annual fall Book Fair that was held on the Pier between 1995 and 1998. Also in the late 1990s, the *Princess Marguerite III* began using the northern berth of the pier. **[512]** This move of the "princess ships" recalled the 1975 visit of the *Princess Marguerite* to Pier 48 to inaugurate its upcoming historical season. Compared to Pier 64, then its operating pier, the width of the north apron at Pier 48 offered more room for the hoopla that accompanied its arrival from Victoria. The banner emblazoned below the wheel house read "1775, The British Are Coming 1975" an allusion to the then 200 years of British presence off the Northwest Coast – beginning with Capt. Cook. Had Cook not hurried past the Straits of Juan de Fuca in a fog the name may have well been changed to the Straits of Captain Cook or Cook Passage.

Bell Street Pier: Return of "Happy Land" 1993

On President's Day 1993, the Port of Seattle moved its headquarters three piers north of Pier 66 to new offices in the made-over American Can Company Pier 69. With the razing of the old pier began the construction of the Port's new happy land. The original Pier 66 was completed in the summer of 1915 and soon after its roof was appointed with potted plants, a saltwater pool, and a solarium – a place called "Happy Land" where children were attended while their parents shopped at the Pike Place Market. However, as we are moved to repeat from earlier, Happy Land developed into a retreat for babe-sitting more than baby-sitting and in 1920 the roof was closed as a "moral nuisance."

The North Waterfront: Stacking Ironies 1990s

In 1993, the new development also promised to be a happy one for users because it was envisioned as a public service and not required to also make "a big return" like the Port's marine and airport functions. What the Port built between its new offices at Pier 69 and the old newspaper print Piers 62 and 63 (the Gaffney and Virginia Street Docks stripped of their sheds) was in one section a version of the longitudinal quay that it sought after the war – one designed for the new post-war generation of behemoth merchant vessels. In the 1990s and beyond, it would attend instead behemoth tour ships. Another of the circular ironies with this new "happy land" was the Waterfront Landing Condominiums that it encouraged in a public-private effort to the upland side of Alaskan Way. They were built directly on the waterfront where a century earlier was assembled the elaborate community of squatters quarters. In between these variations on waterfront lifestyles – vernacular and designer – there had been no other domestic endeavors except for a few cheap hotels, and the closest of these was

south of Pike Street. North of Pike and below the bluff was a string of small warehouses, and vacant lots. **[513]** Also, early in the third millennium, the neighborhood got its own hotel at the former entrance to the "Belltown Ravine," the Marriott Hotel. There is in its luscious pink peach tiles no reminder of the gray Miner's Hotel, the clapboard box that once held the southwest corner of Pike and Western. **[514]** The ironies continue to stack when it is recalled how the new condominium owners were ready to fight for their views of Elliott Bay on historical grounds if the aquarium went forward to build a new plant on the site of the vacant and stripped Piers 62 and 63. Of course, for most of twentieth century, there were very few views to be had off of Elliott Bay between Pike and Wall streets because many of the piers built there, as we have had plenty of occasions to note above, were built parallel to the shoreline. In a sense historical precedent was in favor of building the Aquarium and doing it fast. There may also be a virtual irony lurking at Pier 70, which in the late 1990s got its second major makeover in a quarter century, this time for Go2Net, another of the dotcoms that did not survive the industry's collapse of 2000-01. **[515 & 516]** The Edgewater was also remodeled – at least the part of it that faced the public – but it survived.

Waterfront Awareness 1983

In the early 1980s, when the Port was first inkling about what would eventually become its make-over to either side of Pier 66 the then still young UW-based organization Waterfront Awareness described the waterfront between Piers 59 and 70 as a "virtual no mans land." The group's biggest public contribution then was its leadership in the revival of the historic Waterfront Awareness Day in May. At that time Waterfront Awareness was also hoping to build a permanent interpretive center of waterfront history at Pier 57, a function that Bumgardner, the architect of Waterfront Park, had earlier included in his plan for the pier. The group's criticisms were directed toward the section from Pier 62 through 65, which was then wrapped in barbed wire and draped with "no trespassing' signs. Charles Royer, the new mayor, had his own waterfront awareness that was downright Delphian. "I think there is a time for things. There was a time for Pioneer Square and a time for the International District. I think now its time for the waterfront."

Central Waterfront Consortium - 1983

Actually, Royer was a little early, but in that he had the company of another seaboard group calling itself the "Central Waterfront Consortium." This citizen battery was not chosen by the mayor or the council but made up of professionals – planners, architects and developers – with an interest in the waterfront. Their leader was a former Seattle city planner, the lawyer Phil Sherburne, who observed that most of Seattle's big undertakings, like Century 21, Forward Thrust, and the Lake Washington cleanup, were initiated by civic leaders, not elected officials. What this grassroots group – many of them with green pockets as well and ready to invest – described for the waterfront may be considered the last of its big plans before the current ones that were awakened with the February 28, 2001 earthquake. Its bigness, however, concentrated on the north end where, as Waterfront Awareness taught, things were dismal. The Consortium looked at the sad old wharves at the foot of Virginia Street and envisioned in their place a park – a formal garden extending the distance from Pier 62 through 65. **[517]** With prescience and real property opportunities they also imagined luxury condos across Alaskan Way from the

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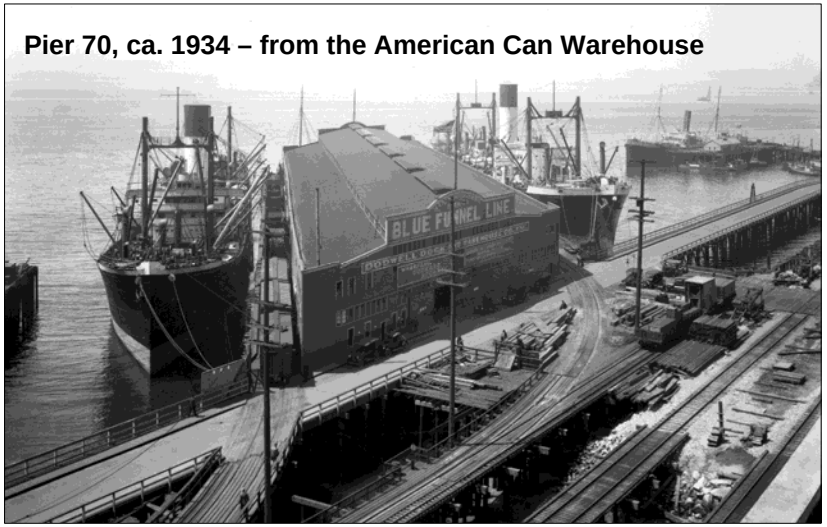
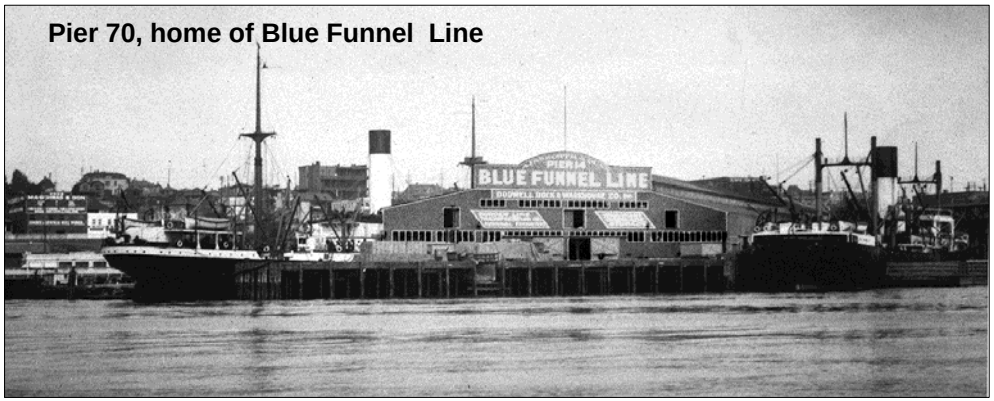


Pier 70, ca. 1934 – from the American Can Warehouse

Barrel Factory, 1870s – future site of Olympic Sculpture Garden



Pier 70, home of Blue Funnel Line

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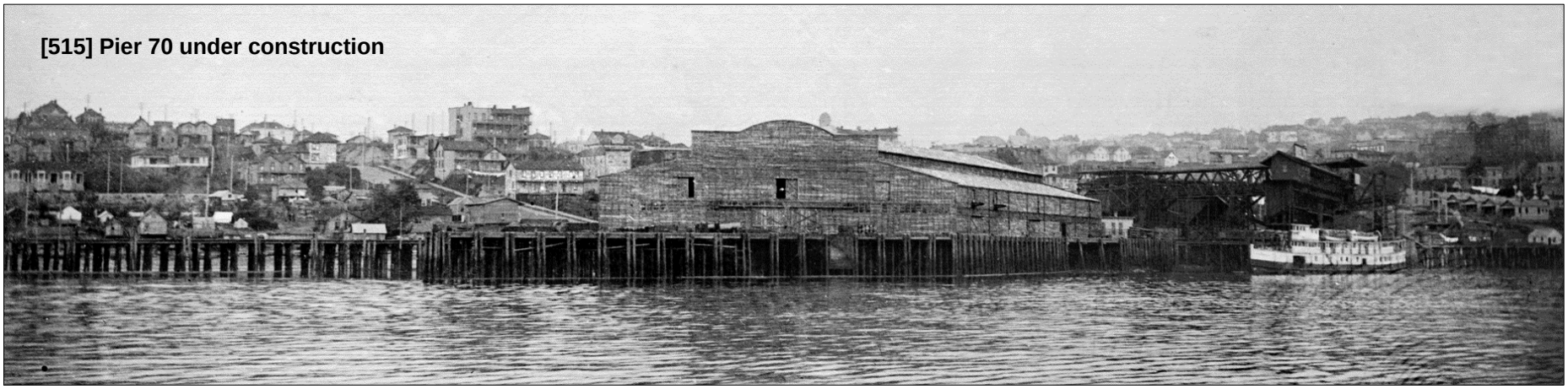


[515] Pier 70 under construction

gardens. The Consortium also wanted some of the appointments familiar from earlier proposals: wider sidewalks, narrower streets, more moorage and more shops -- more of a "people place from start to finish." In the early 1980s, there were still at least thirteen daily train operations at the north end, and many of them featured the frustrating delays of switching. The group was confident that these regular railroad operations could be staged on tracks to the south of the central waterfront. This we know was by an ancient observation. With some encouragement, the Central Waterfront Consortium, no doubt, would have made a greater impression then it did. It is however possible that their interest in the Port's properties north of Pike Street had something to do with stimulating the public body into doing what it would eventually begin to do about a decade later.

Ivar Coda:
Let There Be Light

No waterfront planner was less grand than Ivar Haglund. He ordinarily both thought and acted locally, which was, as his advertisements often advised, "at the Foot of Madison / Pier 54." For him, broad planning was choosing the color for the parking meters. Probably his most global act on the waterfront (beside his decision to make a go of it there) was the early one already noted near the top of this history – getting new lights installed along Alaskan Way. Raised in the spring of 1950, the vapor lights glowed with what, you will remember, Ivar described as a "romantic green tinge." They may well have stimulated the green chromosome in Sol G. Levy's landscaping gene a year later. But even with the lights that were strung from Bay Street to Yesler Way Ivar had local interests that went beyond brightening Pier 54. Ivar's mentor in opening his Acres of Clams – and keeping it open – was his father-in-law who was afraid unto death of crossing Alaskan Way at night. Hence the better lights. And the new lights, of course, also allowed Ivar to throw another party for the press and introduce the Seattle Chowder and Marching Society (SCMS), something created for the occasion. Many SCMS members held double membership with the Washington Press Club's Ale and Quail Society. Dressed in green, the two clubs paraded along Alaskan Way to the music of Jackie Sounders Chowder and Marching Band, another creation for the event. Standing beneath one of the new light standards, Ivar reflected for the group. "On St. Patrick's Day the soft, green lights were turned on on Alaskan Way. A day to make the Swedish sailors and the Norwegian navigators glad. For the first time since 1852 when the settlers moved from Alki Point to Elliott Bay, there is adequate light on Seattle's waterfront. In fact, not since Chief Seattle held his big tribal meetings around giant beach fires has the Seattle waterfront been so well lit up." **[518]**

Although Ivar was also a member of most waterfront improvement committees that were ever formed, he was not very good at it – except when it came to the moment of donating funds and then he often stepped forward. (He was also probably the worst port commissioner ever elected – reluctantly.) In 1975 Seattle writer Jim Faber wrote of his friend and sometimes co-conspirator, "Once, piqued by the city's refusal to repaint the old waterfront firehouse, Ivar paid for the work himself. He has long quietly supported a variety of other waterfront improvements and charities. But his lasting contribution has been that of a preservationist. Back decades before that term was popular, Ivar began hanging flower baskets along the rundown clutter that was Railroad Avenue and advertising that 'the waterfront is a many-splendored thing.' A dubious description at

that period of decline. It was the start of a movement that ultimately transformed the disused docks into one of Seattle's prime attractions for visitors and homebodies alike – the historic 'Gold Rush Strip' of import houses, restaurants, harbor tours, and other magnets, including the new Waterfront Park." It was Faber who, in the presence of the author, spontaneously crowned Ivar Haglund "King of the Waterfront" with a folded napkin in 1983, although Ivar had already been called that and many other seaboard handles. (Jim Faber was another waterfront notable and person of many talents. Faber was the first public relations director for Century 21, the Communications Director for the Department of Interior in Johnson's administration, the founder and editor of the *Enatai*, a periodical for ferry riders, and the author of both *The Irreverent Guide to Washington State* and *Steamer's Wake.*)

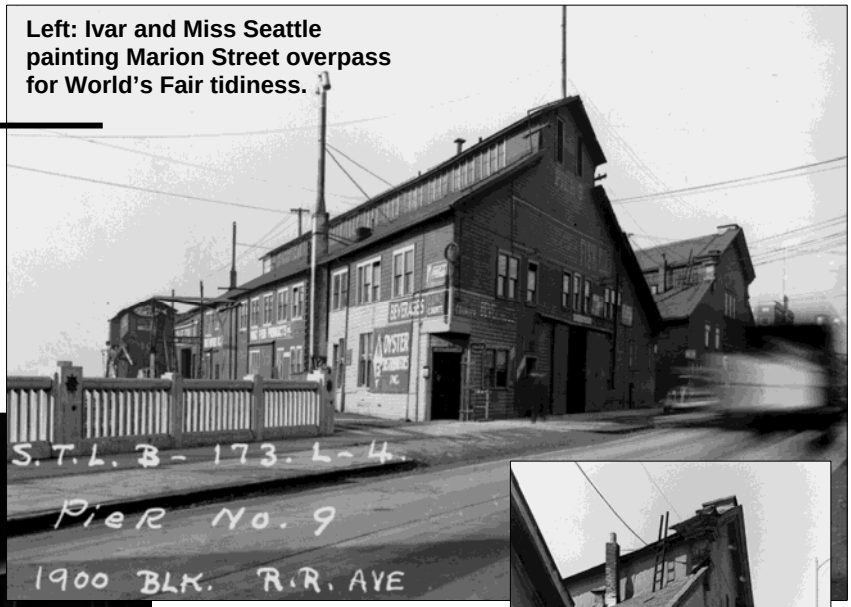
Courting the Council with Crabs & Color

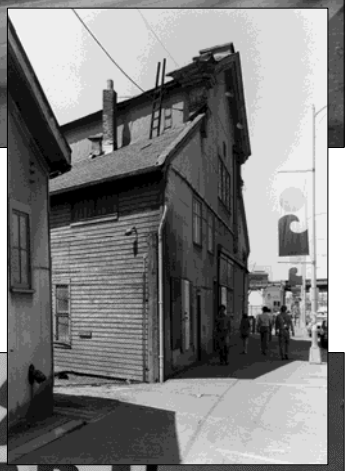
Next we will elaborate on another colorful story hinted at above. A few days before Ivar opened his Acres of Clams in 1946, he figured it was important to court the City Council. As a "radio personality" he was already keen at self-promotion. Ivar was also part of a community of media peers that often helped each other out. Bob Burant, a reporter for *The Seattle Star* (for only a short while longer, still Seattle's third daily) in a May 1 story headlined "Fireboat Paint Refused. But Ivar's Meal Offer Still On!" explained. "City Council members are going to get their free seafood dinner from Ivar Haglund aquarium owner even if Fire Chief William Fitzgerald won't accept five gallons of red paint from Haglund to paint the stack of the fireboat *Alki* which is moored at the foot of Madison Street. Haglund supported by H. E. Jamieson, waterfront journalist, [for both *The Star* and on local radio], renewed his offer at a meeting of the Council's Public Safety Committee yesterday, but assistant Chief Robert B. Rogers, who appeared for Fitzgerald, said the paint could not be accepted. Fitzgerald pointed out later that there is a long-standing department policy not to accept gifts of any kind. 'We turn down checks every week from persons who want to pay us for the heroic deeds of firemen, and don't even allow acceptance of boxes of cigars and like gifts. If we made an exception in this case it might upset that policy. We appreciate Mr. Haglund's public spirit, but must refuse the paint.' [We may note in the interests of balance that this policy was quite the opposite of the Police Department's practices at the time.] Haglund had previously informed the Council that he wanted to invite them to the opening of his new waterfront cafe for a free dinner, but that he was not sure they could come because the drab gray of the *Alki's* smokestack might offend their artistic senses. 'I'm sorry the city wont accept the paint' he said today 'but the council members can still have that free dinner'." (There is no record that I have found – no *Star* follow-up for instance – that any member of the Council in 1946 visited the Acres for their free meal. Perhaps they were anxious that they would also be offered free paint.) Two years later, Ivar actually got his way with the *Alki's* smokestack and probably the council members – or at least some of them. This time the city bought the red paint but Ivar helped apply it. **[519]**

"The Waterfront Is A Many-Splendored Thing" Ivar Haglund, 1959

Jim Faber's example of Ivar's Hollywood allusion - "a many-splendored thing" – was included in a series of advertisements he ran in 1959 when the waterfront was getting shelled by local media decrying its moribund

Left: Ivar and Miss Seattle painting Marion Street overpass for World's Fair tidiness.





[517]
Gaffney & Virginia St. docks
- above, 1937 tax pix
- right, ca. 1983

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The Seattle Central Waterfront Improvement Association meets to survey the situation.

IVAR SAID PAINT 'ER RED

V FOR VICTORY is indicated by Ivar Haglund (right) who has been goading the city for 2 years to accept 5 gallons of red paint for the smokestack of the Harbor Department's Fireboat Alki. He holds a bucket of paint (the city's—not Haglund's) while Capt. H. W. Timm starts slapping on the bright red paint with a brush. The city couldn't accept the paint from Ivar because of a rule against gifts of any kind, but Haglund is overjoyed even if it isn't his paint; pointing out the old gray color of the smokestack will no longer offend the "artistic senses" of waterfront visitors.

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Meeting the painter—

state. **[520 & 521]** Acting typically as the neighborhood's barker, Ivar answered with another of the full-page advertisements that he was then planting in the *Times* and *P-I*. Ivar was generally clear about who was responsible for his broadsides. "Some people may think I have a ghost writer, but I don't. I write all the copy." Under the banner headline "The Waterfront is a Many Splendored Thing" Ivar begins, "We were just sitting here, down on old Pier 54, quietly blending clam chowder, frying fish, assembling Crab Louis and scheming up new signs to suspend from the ceiling when Wham! – Those fellows uptown suddenly turned the spotlight on us. Just as fast as a salmon can grab a herring, the waterfront and its problems were in the headlines. Television, radio, newspapers, labor, and management, the Port Commission – all of them were staring right at us. The Waterfront Old-Timers didn't know what to think. Some of them left the piers entirely to set up housekeeping under the viaduct. So many people viewing with alarm, so many fingers pointing in dismay might cause the wharves to crumble like the walls of Jericho."

After agreeing that "more shipping would help" Ivar launched his expected offensive in defense of a playful waterfront and in the process assessed his own contributions. After all, he was paying for the ad. "Mainly because of your friendly support, I have been a saltwater sojourner for about 25 years. During that time I guess I have added a bit of color to the waterfront – maybe even a picturesque note – by establishing the Acres of Clams restaurant, a place with nautical notes and a maritime manner. You have all accepted it so warmly – its seafood, nets, clamguns, deepwater décor and all – that I am sure all Seattle loves this old street as much as I do. Not long ago a fine body of men, who feel the same as you do, joined together in a group called the Seattle Central Waterfront Improvement Association. Their aim is not to seek shipping. They just want to freshen up, to brighten up the place – to make it really a tourist attraction and a hometowner's pride. I had a can of paint and a brush, so they elected me chairman." Ivar reveals that the SCWIA had "enticed one of Seattle's leading artists, Mr. Harry Bonath, to come down and look the situation over. He unlimbered his box of paints and mixed up a colorful decorating scheme for our power poles and fences, the Marion Street Overpass and even the parking meters . . . Now should you ever get a parking ticket down here – which heaven forbid! – The blow will surely be softened by the comforting cerise of the meter … A few more jocular members tried to talk Tacoma out of its totem pole but those Tacomans are hard bargainers. They demanded Lake Washington in exchange … slowly but surely the drab spots are giving way to color. The Association is relentless. We face our task with enthusiasm because we know we have a wonderful area to work with. The Seattle Waterfront is a many-splendored thing."

In his many-splendored ad, Ivar mixes a catalogue of the new association's members with a few waterfront 1959 attractions. To name a minority: "The Old Curiosity Shop, the fireboats, Joe's Wheelhouse, the Water Tours, Trader Sravi's [Ivar's own gift shop. As noted earlier the name is Ivar's own spelled backwards.] the Grayline Sightseer, and of course Ivar's where clams and culture meet, where Republicans and Democrats resolve their differences over steaming bowls of chowder, where tourists and homefolk stuff themselves with seafood delights and point in chuckling high humor to the deep-sea décor …Well, I'm making myself hungry."

Lest we leave this history too playfully, we will include another Ivar quote that recalls both the work and what was lost. Twenty-one years after his "many-splendored" rhapsody portraying the Seattle waterfront as a sort of peaceable kingdom, Ivar reflected from his tilting desk chair for a *Pacific Magazine* interviewer Chet Skreen. "It's strictly a commercial tourist-and-visitor attraction today and I guess it is good for my business, but I miss the old waterfront taverns, the longshoremen and the tugboats. A lot of the romance has gone out of it." While appreciating that this is a 75-year-old ironist musing we may still wonder on our own, where did all the Ivars go? Are they hanging out in Belltown or Ballard; are they writing for *The Stranger* or *The Fremont Forum*; are they sitting on the City Council or a bench at Waterfront Park? **[522]**

SEATTLE HISTORICAL SERIES

IVAR LANDS AT PIER 54 !

—from an old woodcut

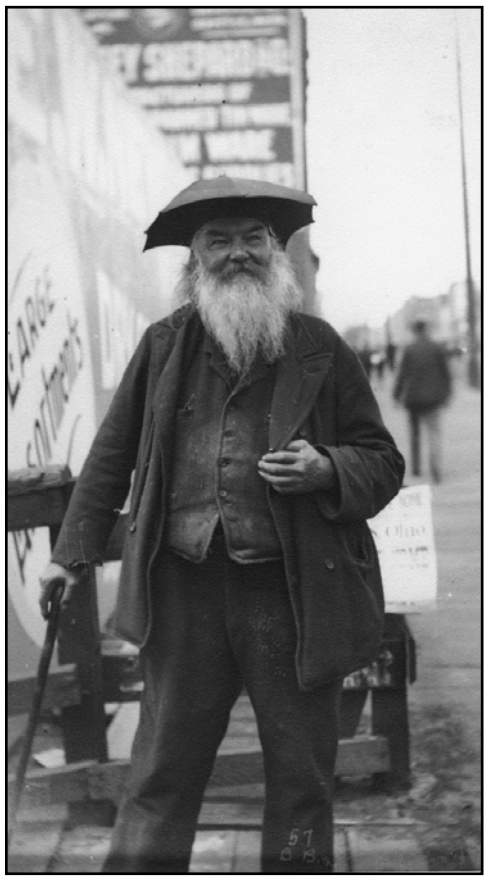
Ivar Haglund's landing at Pier 54 was an event second only in historical significance to the original landing of the first party of settlers from the schooner Exact at Alki on November 13, 1851. The settlers, to be sure, founded Seattle. But Ivar founded the Acres of Clams restaurant . . . an establishment which has given solace, succor, material sustenance and spiritual uplift to thousands of our latter day citizens.

Indeed, many local students of Seattle fact and legend insist that Ivar's achievement was an event of even greater importance than the original landing . . . and stand ready to back up their beliefs with an imposing array of facts and figures. However, since Ivar is allergic to figures (except certain types) let us suggest, rather, that you let a double bowlful of Ivar's Clam Chowder plead the case for him.

Ivar Haglund
AKA
"King of the Waterfront"
1905 - 1985

COMPARING WATERFRONT ECCENTRICS

As the Acres Advertisement on the left hints Ivar was not shy about promoting with this grandiose parody the importance of his landing on the Seattle Waterfront. As most locals still remember, Ivar ran for Port Commissioner as a publicity stunt. He tried to withdraw before the election but discovered that he could not. When Ivar then won in a landslide the Port got what may have been the worst commissioner in its history. Ivar rarely attended Port meetings and even hid from them. Robert W. Patten, AKA "The Umbrella Man," on the other hand, wanted to be a public officer. He lobbied for the job of Harbormaster on the qualification that he lived in a Lake Union houseboat. This waterfront eccentric, however, was denied.



Robert W. Patton
AKA
The "Umbrella Man"
1834 - 1913