

# Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS

Fall, 2017

## 40 Years of Cuts, Shaves & Shines!

by Nancy Dulaney

In the fall of 2017, Carmen Maletta, Jr., sat down with RVHS and shared his family's story including this photo (at right) of the interior of Carmen's Barber Shop located at 1342 Rainier Avenue South, in Rainier Valley's Atlantic Street business district, aka Garlic Gulch. Carmen Maletta, Sr., is the barber in the foreground and in the back is Violi Alfarone, Carmen's assistant for many years. Local meatcutter Willie DeCaro sits on the couch with a young lady on his knee. Other unknown folks in the chairs and on the couch. Carmen Maletta, Sr., was born in Calabria, Italy, in 1897, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1903 with his parents, Sam (Saverio) and Mary (Maria), and a baby, Louis (Luigi) whom Mary had wet-nursed and whose parents unexpectedly asked at the last minute at the train station that he be brought along to America too. The



RVHS Accession #2017.002.0001

Malettas, soon to count seven children, lived in Taylor, Washington (near Maple Valley) and Carmen and his father worked at the Denny Renton Clay & Coal Co., as laborers in the tile factory, until after WWI when Rainier Valley became their home. Carmen began work as a barber in the mid 1920s and opened up shop on Rainier Avenue by 1930, his parents living just a couple of blocks away. In the early days, he advertised "Free! Big Candy Bar With Each Haircut" - 50¢ for adults and 25¢ for kids. In 1931 Carmen married Anna Picardo (of the South Park Italian truck farming community) and they had two sons, Carmen, Jr., and Donald. Carmen was forced to move his first barber shop two blocks south in the early 1950s when "an elaborate cloverleaf system" was built to speed traffic to and from the Lake Washington floating bridge (The Seattle Daily Times 6/13/1953) and the building was demolished to make way. Carmen continued to barber at 1516 Rainier Avenue South, the new location, until 1973.



Rainier Avenue North from Atlantic Street, Seattle Municipal Archives, Item No. 54469, August 23, 1949

*The Rainier Valley Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history and heritage of the Rainier Valley and its people, and to promote public involvement in and appreciation of its history and culture.*

*Our geographic boundaries are from Dearborn Street on the north to the city limits on the south, and from the I-5 freeway to Lake Washington.*

**RVHS Office**  
3710 S Ferdinand Street,  
Seattle, WA 98118  
206.723.1663

Tuesday 1:00pm - 4:00pm  
Friday 10:00am - 1:00pm  
Sunday 10:00am - 1:00pm  
& by appointment



### Upcoming:

**RVHS Holiday Open House**  
Sunday, December 3rd, 2017  
2:00pm - 4:00pm

### Dismantling Racism: A Forum for Southeast Seattle

Tuesday, December 12th, 2017  
7:30pm - 9:30pm  
Rainier Arts Center

### E-News:

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# The First Day of the Heating Oil Season in October 1946

By Andrea Watson

*Editor's note: guest author Andrea Watson is a lifetime Member of RVHS, and granddaughter of Donny Clark.*

On a typical Saturday morning in October 1946, young Donny Clark played catch while his dad, Gordon, tended to his garden. There was a noticeable nip in the air. Overnight, Seattle transitioned from an Indian summer to the chilling night temperatures of fall, triggering sputtering furnaces after a summer of hibernation. The end of warm weather and baseball season meant the beginning of heating season. Donny knew that. His dad was busier during the winter. Even on weekends his dad was busy making house calls, fixing furnaces if they had trouble over the weekend.

Gordon startled and paused as the phone rang inside the house, then he picked up his garden tools, and headed inside, assuming his day in the garden was finished.

“Ok, I’ll be right over”. Gordon said and hung up the phone. He then headed straight to his bedroom. This was a routine familiar to Donny as he waited for his dad to come out in his three-piece suit, ready to go to work. Given the wartime shortages, by the mid 1940s, the vest of a suit was typically set aside for formal business occasions, but for Gordon, looking sharp was prerequisite for a good businessman, regardless of the day, the time, or the status of the customer. His Fahey Brockman held up pretty well while threads were scarce during the war, but Gordon thought a future modern oil man might need to indulge in a new one at the high end Littler’s next time.

Ready to go, Gordon picked up his flashlight and tool kit and said, “Donny, I gotta go take a look at the old doctor’s furnace, you wanna come?”

By 1946, Doctor Joseph Hutchinson, known as “the old doctor”, had become the most well respected doctor in south Seattle. He was Gordon’s doctor, and also one of his loyal customers. He had a store front office in Rainier Beach, but most of his time with patients was by making house calls, just as Gordon did on an occasion such as this.

Gordon knew all his customers, just as they all knew him well enough that if they had



Don Clark in front of his Rainier Beach house at around the time of the article

a problem with their furnace after regular business hours, they knew they could call him at home. Donny loved going with his dad on house calls. He was proud of his dad, and enjoyed the roll of helper. In addition to that, Donny knew that the old doctor lived in that nice looking big house on the corner, and that he was the father of the great Fred Hutchinson.

Fred Hutchinson was every Rainier Valley boy’s baseball hero. He too had grown up with a ball and a glove, and played on Rainier Beach Playfields, same as Donny. During pick up games at the local ball field, the name Fred Hutchinson became part of the playfield vernacular, always comparing and dreaming to be like Hutch, as he was called.

Donny didn’t expect to see famous Fred Hutch at the old doctor’s that day. He was now playing in the big leagues. A pitcher for the Detroit Tigers. But still, of course he wanted to go help s dad, “Well sure I wanna come. Is it ok if I bring my glove?” asked Donny.

The Hutchinson three-story Victorian house stood proud with a manicured yard and detail painted window trim. Donny and Gordon walked up the steps and rang the

doorbell. Much to their surprise, when the door opened, instead of greeting the old doctor or Mrs. Hutchinson, there stood taller than life, the great Fred Hutchinson.

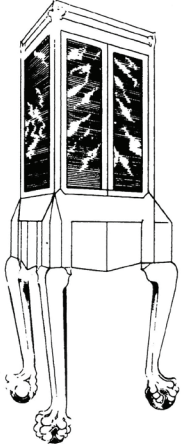
“Well hello there Fred.” Said Gordon as if they were old friends. “This is my boy here. He’s a ball player too.”

Donny, only as tall as Fred’s belt buckle, held onto his glove, and looked up at his hero, not knowing what to say. Fred wore casual clothes and a baseball cap.

After a short silence, Gordon asked, “Is the old doctor in? He wanted me to take a look at his furnace.”

Fred opened the door and led Gordon and Donny down to the basement where the old coal furnace stood helpless. Gordon, in his three-piece suit, with just his flashlight and a few tools, got the old doctor’s furnace working that day.

Meeting Fred Hutchinson on his doorstep that day was unquestionably a highlight for Donny. For Gordon, that house call was significant in that it was one of the last times Genesee Coal & Stoker did business strictly as a coal company. They had just recently bought an oil truck, and a supply contract with Time Oil Company. The busy winter of coal to oil furnace conversions began and continued for the years following that first fall day in October 1946.



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You are invited to our annual

# HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!



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Refreshments will be served.

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# Promised Land

The December installation in our Dismantling Racism series will be a screening of the film, “Promised Land.” Following the film there will be a panel discussion with participation by the audience.

Indigenous recognition is at the frontline of the battle for native sovereignty. These tribes—who signed treaties, helped settlers, and lost their land—are asking for their treaties to be honored. To redefine their recognition, to put blood quantum restrictions on who is and isn’t native enough, to redefine treaties over and over, continues a toxic cycle of colonialism where the government, and the corporations it partners with, continues to unlawfully profit off of the resources of indigenous lands at great peril to our increasingly climate-challenged world. Promised Land is a social justice documentary that follows two tribes in the Pacific Northwest: the Duwamish and the Chinook, as they fight for the restoration of treaty rights they’ve long been denied. In following their story, the film examines a larger problem in the way that the government and society still looks at tribal sovereignty.



The Northwest is arguably one of the most politically liberal regions in the country. The names of our cities and towns are in Chinuk Wawa and Lushootseed, the region’s native languages. Seattle’s logo is an image of Chief Si’ahl. If in this area, with these tribes that all kids learn about growing up in school, justice can’t be found, then how does that bode for the rest of the country? This film uses the region to spark a discussion about identity and sovereignty, but the message about whose land we inhabit and how we work to right these wrongs is universal.

Promised Land is produced and directed by Vasant and Sarah Salcedo, and sponsored by 4Culture and San Francisco Film Society. It has been chosen for the award for

Achievement in Documentary Filmmaking at the 10th Annual LA Skins Fest, and was an official selection for the 41st Annual American Indian Film Festival, Northwest Film Forum’s 19th Annual Local Sightings Film Festival, the 12th Annual Ellensburg Film Festival, and the 5th Annual Social Justice Film Festival, among others.

*December 12th, 7:30pm  
Rainier Arts Center,  
3515 South Alaska Street, Seattle*

Suggested donation \$15. All money collected at the event in excess of the licensing fees will be donated to the Duwamish and Chinook tribes.

# Bonnie Duncan Peters

Our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of Bonnie Peters. Bonnie was a Columbia Pioneer and supported RVHS over the years. Bonnie wrote a history of her family which is included in the Columbia Pioneers book in our collection. She also donated photos and memories of Franklin High School, in addition to other historic photos and artifacts.



Photo by Teresa Anderson.

From her obituary on Legacy.com: She was born Bonnie Louise Brunswick on November 1, 1919, the daughter of Herman and Winnie (nee Brannon) Brunswick. Bonnie grew up in Columbia City where she attended Columbia Elementary School until 1932, then Franklin High School, graduating in 1936. She studied at the University of Washington from 1937, graduating with a B.A. in 1942. During that time she worked at the UW library and then at the Seattle Public Library (Columbia Branch). She worked briefly for Alaska Travel Control in 1942-43 then joined The Seattle Times in the Information Bureau, known as the morgue, where she remained until 1948. In this role she was responsible for answering readers’ questions on all manner of subjects. In later years she liked to say she was the Google of her day. To the end of her life she retained a range of general knowledge second to none.



“The Mess Hall Girls” at the Halloween Dance, accession #2010.004.0002



Ida & Charles Carrington in front of house at 3814 Edmunds St - relatives of Bonnie’s, accession #2010.004.0003

## Collections Update

RVHS thanks the following donors of items recently added to our collections:

**Maria Dodds:**  
“Totem Tales from Old Seattle,” book by Don Sherwood

**Carmen Maletta Jr.:**  
Digital images of the interior of Carmen Maletta’s barber shop, S. Casal Grocery and Meat Market, Union Shop Sign, and 1973 Rainier Business District Directory Barbers section

**Mary O’Brien:**  
1880 US Census Collection & National Index CD ROMs

**SEED:**  
3 photos from Rainier Valley Heritage Parade & Festival

**Mary Charles:**  
“Orca Garden Recipes,” book written by Orca K-8 School Garden Coordinator

**Jill & Zach Davies:**  
Digital image, PSRA 3537 Brandon Street, Empire Way 2nd B-17 L-10, Birdsey & Sarah Wetmore residence

**Anonymous:**  
“Return to Seward Park,” book by Tom Tsutakawa, illustrated by Robert H. Norton and “Pictorial History of Seattle,” book by Jim Warren



Likely Fred, Nellie and daughter Helen Morton, circa 1920s, at 5411 37th Avenue South

**Frederick L. Brown:**  
“The City is More than Human,” book by Frederick L. Brown

**Theodosia Skowronek Nassar:**  
Digital images from prints of glass plates found in basement, taken circa 1920s of previous owners of property at 5411 37th Avenue South

**Brian Westerman:**  
Photocopy of publication, “South Canal and Harbor Improvements,” Seattle & Lake Washington Waterway Company, Seattle, Wash., 1902

**Puget Sound Maritime:**  
“The Sea Chest,” publication of the Puget Sound Maritime Journal, Spring 2017, Vol. 51, Number 1

**Karen O’Brien:**  
Keefe’s Hardware holiday plate, hair combs from

Materi’s Barber Shop in Hillman City at 5707 Rainier Ave S, and “Seward Park Torii Story,” documentary created by Friends of Seward Park

**Julia Cummings:**  
Photos from Rainier Lanes and local Masonic Order

**Karen Conway:**  
Gavel used in Toastmasters meetings, Toastmaster manual, photographs of Fifth Church of Christ Scientist (now Rainier Arts Center), Freemason placemat, negatives

## 2017 Founder’s Dinner

Everyone had a great time at the 5th Annual Founder’s Dinner in honor of Buzz Anderson, October 21st, 2017, at Our Lady of Mt. Virgin Parish Hall. Once again Douglas Chiechi and his team prepared a fabulous traditional Italian dinner, and the meal ended with cannoli made by Chiodo Brokerage. The live auction and raffle contained a wide variety of great items and experiences. Music was provided by the Tarantellas performing traditional Italian music on Mandolin Guitar, and Harmonica.

*Chef Douglas Chiechi overseeing the preparation of a wonderful Italian dinner*



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Books and memberships can also be purchased on our website: [www.rainiervalleyhistory.org](http://www.rainiervalleyhistory.org).

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