

HERITAGE NEWS

Rainier Valley Historical Society *Volume 31, Issue 2*

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Dunlap Family Studio Portrait. Catherine and Joseph standing in back, children Charles, Liania and George sitting in front (left to right).

The Dunlaps on Lake Washington

- by Nancy Dulaney

In the local historic record, George Dunlap is usually memorialized as the 14-year-old boy who “discovered” Rainier Valley, seeing Lake Washington from the top of a tree up on Beacon Hill in the fall of 1869. I imagine the valley had existed for quite some time before the Dunlaps arrived.

His father, Joseph Dunlap, ultimately purchased 160 acres from the U.S. Government in 1873, perhaps with money he had earned in the California gold rush or from selling his farm back in Iowa. He paid \$2.50 an acre. He then settled in with his wife Catherine and their son George near a creek in an area that became

known as Dunlap’s plat in Southeast Seattle.

Their homestead was described as merely a stone’s throw from the “old Snoqualmie Trail,” said to be once the only way into Seattle from the Cascade mountain passes. Travelers by horse or oxen followed westward around the south end of Lake Washington and then northwest along the ridge heading over to the foot of Yesler Way at Elliott Bay. Today’s Renton Avenue South seems to follow part of the old trail up on the hill south of Henderson Street.

The Dunlaps offered a stopover with a large corral for livestock and lodging and meals for travelers, whether they be driving cattle or bringing mail. The family raised cows and chickens, had an



George and Joseph Dunlap in the front room of their family home.

orchard of plum and apple trees, and picked strawberries and blackberries to sell. They raised hay and tobacco. They used horses and mules on their farm, and oxen to haul the felled cedar trees down to the lake. Likely Catherine Dunlap was kept busy in her big kitchen preparing meals and putting up food in storage for later use, as many women of that era did.

The Dunlaps had surely cheered when the Rainier Avenue Electric Railway streetcar arrived in Rainier Beach, in 1891. After all, the family had deeded land for the tracks' right-of-way, opening up the valley to city folks venturing out through "the wilderness," as described by railway officials, and for the Lake Washington folks to have easy access into Seattle for work, business or pleasure for a five-cent fare.

Rainier Beach became a destination for summer picnics, rowboating along the lake, and winter ice skating, though the Dunlaps had been rowing and steamboating across the lake for years. Then Catherine passed away in 1891 back in Iowa with their daughter, followed by Joseph in 1893 in downtown Seattle. His estate was

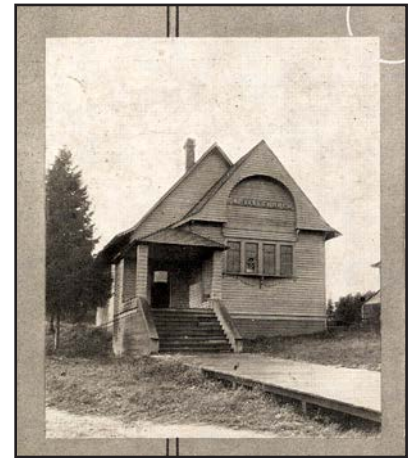
valued at \$25,000, heavy in real estate. George lived on the Dunlap plat until his untimely death in January of 1910, at age 54, while in Los Angeles where he had gone to recuperate from a bout of physical exhaustion.

George Dunlap has a biographical entry in the book "History of Washington: The Rise and Progress of An American State," a compendium of local notables published after his death, where it was written that "he was at all times, one of the most public spirited men in advocating the interests of the Rainier Valley."

His enthusiasm may have been fueled by his desire to sell real estate, especially his replatted Dunlap family property. In 1905 George sold a sizeable portion to C.D. Hillman for his notorious Atlantic City development along Lake Washington. Here George advertises his real estate in The Seattle Daily Times (5/23/1909):

\$150 EACH—2 lots close to car and school at Dunlap station. SNAP. GEO. W. DUNLAP, 57 Haller Bldg.

After a contentious debate, the Town of Dunlap, along with their Rainier Beach and Atlantic City neighbors, voted in 1907 to annex into the City of Seattle. There were pros and cons. Now Cedar River water would be available from the city, though property owners would pay for the pipes. The \$45 fee for county students to attend the Seattle High School would no longer apply. Expectations were high for sewers, lights and sidewalks by property owners and residents alike, some likely unrealistic.



Dunlap Baptist Church, built in 1901 – "the little brown church in the vale." RVHS #1993.002.0001. Columbia Pioneers Collection.

Despite all the trying, in the end, George Dunlap's probate papers reveal an unfortunate circumstance: the Dunlaps were land rich, but cash poor and in debt. In addition to the Rainier Valley property, Yakima County property had recently been purchased on contract. Adding insult to injury, the Dunlap family home, built in the early 1870s, had been destroyed by fire in 1909 and most of their personal belongings lost. About \$150 in cash, a couple of old wagons, two cross-cut saws, one horse and a roll top desk are listed among George's personal property, total value \$500.



Joseph and Catherine Henderson Dunlap School #2, built in 1904.
RVHS #1998.007.0006. Donor: Dottie Taylor Fields

A special water main levy, property taxes and interest on a loan added to other expenses left no funds for a family allowance for the newly widowed Lucretia Dunlap to support George's five young sons from his first marriage. At age 48, in December 1912, she married W.S. Morley and suggested the boys be sent to a private school near Vancouver, Washington, but the estate was not able to cover clothing and tuition costs.

The boys (George, Jr., Earl, Rutherford, Lester and Joseph) lived with their stepmother until they became farmhands, chauffeurs, and shipyard workers. In 1914, Earl enlisted in the Navy for a five-year stint. Their father's estate was not settled until September 1920, declared insolvent. Creditors were left unpaid and no distribution made to any heirs including George Dunlap's sons. The property was slowly lost to condemnation and tax assessments.

One hundred years later, the lasting legacy of the Dunlaps in Rainier Valley includes the third Dunlap School, built in 1924, still standing tall on Cloverdale Street with its some 300 students. The Dunlap Baptist Church built in 1950 on Rainier Avenue South is the Medhane-Alem Evangelical Church since 2006, with a predominantly Ethiopian congregation. Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands is on the old Dunlap Slough, just west of Pritchard Island, where cooperative farming on 11 acres is ongoing. Henderson, Fontanelle and Pearl Streets are all said to be Dunlap names and places.

Not to be forgotten, the Martin Luther King Jr. Way South roadway, originally Empire Way, runs through what was once an undeveloped, wooded ravine called the Dunlap Canyon at the south end of the Beacon Hill ridge. George Dunlap once said that he had "discovered"

that too as a boy, although the indigenous Lake People left evidence in the form of clam shells they had been there first (The Seattle Daily Times, 4/29/1908).

CLAM SHELLS FOUND ON HILLSIDE

Surveying Party Makes Discovery Leading to Theory That Lake Washington Once Had Different Outlet.

Deposit Lies Midway Between Rainier and Duwamish Valleys in Dunlap Canyon, on Projected Boulevard.

Growing the Valley

- by Eleanor Boba

Rainier Valley has a long history of agriculture, from the farms of the early settlers like the Dunlaps to Italian market farms and Japanese greenhouses. While most of these enterprises have been swallowed up by the city, in recent years the area has seen a resurgence of interest in growing fruits and vegetables. Much of this interest is driven by a focus on food justice and the needs of new immigrant populations.

Today, let's look at the history of two horticultural enterprises, one at the north end of the valley, the other at the south.

A Park Saved

The site of Bradner Gardens Park in the Mount Baker neighborhood has seen multiple layers of use. When Bradner P-patch was established in 1987, school portables still stood from the time the grounds were used for a middle school annex (1971-1975). Until 1993 the structures were used by a nonprofit, Central Youth and Family Services. And prior to all of that it had been the site of the Quinsite-Bradner housing project



Sundial at Bradner Gardens Park



Children's Garden at Rainier Beach Urban Farm, complete with scarlet runner bean teepee

(1942-53), emergency housing for veterans returning from World War II and the Korean conflict. Some folks still recall these “temporaries” around town that lasted much longer than the five years planned.

Originally set up to provide space for Mien refugees from Laos in the 1980s, the garden overcame a serious threat. Long-time gardener and activist Joyce Moty described how the neighborhood banded together to protest the city's decision to sell the land in the mid-1990s:

“The Southeast Atlantic Community Association – we had a two-year battle with city hall over trying to save this piece of land from being sold for market rate housing. And we went to the mayor's office, talked to city council people, trying to say this is really not a good idea to sell this land, but we were just citizens.”

Ultimately, the group was instrumental in getting an initiative titled Protect Our Parks passed; the 1996 law states that the city may not sell park land without replacing it in the same neighborhood. Today Bradner Gardens Park is much more than its 61-bed P-patch. The

space offers a children's garden, demonstration beds, a bee colony, art installations, and basketball hoops.

Above the Waves

In 2010, Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (RBUFW) was established on the site of a defunct city nursery in the Pritchard Island neighborhood of Southeast Seattle. The 11-acre nursery, which grew plants for the city's parks and utility properties, occupied the land from about 1937 to 2010. Some old greenhouses and sheds remain. Atlantic City Nursery and neighboring parkland existed on land reclaimed from Lake Washington when that body of water was deliberately lowered in 1916 by the opening of the Ship Canal. Much of it is still wetland. The neighborhood, no longer an island after the lake lowering, was at one time the site of a Duwamish Indian settlement.

Today, RBUFW is run as a cooperative garden and educational farm in a partnership between the City of Seattle, Tilth Alliance, and Friends of the Rainier Beach Urban



A 1952 aerial photo of the Atlantic City/Pritchard Island area shows the old nursery site as a whitish swatch of land. Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives

Farm and Wetlands. There are no individual plots at Rainier Beach. Instead, the land is managed in a way to promote education and advocacy, all while producing fresh produce for the benefit of the community.

In an interview, Sue Gibbs, a founding member of RBUFW, described some of the challenges the project faced in transforming the acreage into a working and welcoming space:

“It was a complex design team, because there’s so much going on here. We had an architect, an urban farm specialist, a wetland specialist. We finally chose Berger

Partnerships, landscape architects. So we were on the upswing and then, boom! - the farm was closed for a while [for construction]. We had just planted a bunch of fruit trees the year before; they were still young and then they didn’t get pruned and shaped. We had to rebuild the volunteer network, the staffing here at the farm, rebuild the Friends board. And that was starting to go really well, and then COVID hit.”

Despite these challenges, the farm has been able to take shape, offering space and programs for a diverse community. On any given day there may be a group of East African elders working on their

crops, a gaggle of pre-schoolers on a field trip, and young adults in the school district’s Bridges Program learning vocational and social skills. The farm also offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program; in addition to paid subscriptions, CSA produce goes to various food programs. A children’s garden and a U-pick area, a modern communal kitchen and meeting room -- all serve to fulfill the vision of the founders, in the words of Sue Gibbs, “a healthy, safe place for people to grow, live, and grow their families.”

Thanks to Joyce Moty and Sue Gibbs, a founding member of the Friends of RBUFW for oral history interviews.

What's new in the Archives!

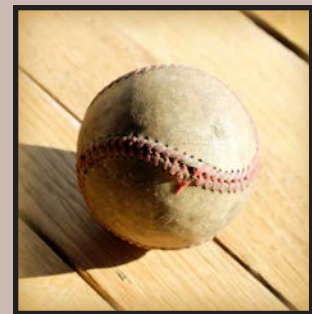


Lake People Park (Xacua'bs) benches and path, 3100 S Bradford St

- 2022.000 - Thank you Patricia Naumann for your donation of materials relating to the creation of York Park and Lake People Park (Xacua'bs). Both parks are controlled by Seattle Parks Department today.
- 2022.007 - Elizabeth Latz on behalf of her mother Anne Latz donated a signed copy of Rainier Beach Women's Club centennial book along with meeting minutes and other secretarial documents. Anne Latz was the last acting secretary for the women's club and created the centennial book. Thank you Elizabeth and Anne.
- 2022.008- Sheila Lindsley Olsen, former Rainier Beach resident, donated memorabilia from Emerson Elementary School, Sharples Jr. High School, Order of Rainbow for Girls, and Franklin High School. Thank you Sheila.
- 2022.009 - Diane Lindsley Robinson, former Rainier Beach resident, donated several items such as Emerson Grade School photographs, Holly Park Lanes bowling team photo, Seafair Gold Cup photos, Camp Fire Girls ephemera, and the Rainier Beach Athletic Club photograph below. Thank you Diane.



Rainier Beach Athletic Club, April 1934, at Emerson Grade School.
Back Row, L-R: Mort Connerton, ____, ____, ____, Nathaniel Lindsley, ____, ____, ____
Front Row, L-R: Jim Gillaland, Dave Nelson, Nels Nelson, Collings Wiener, ____
Photograph donated by Diane Lindsley Robinson.



This baseball belonged to Diane Lindsley's family – could it be a souvenir from a Seattle Rainiers game at Sicks Stadium? We're not sure, but it's old.

In memory of RVHS longtime supporters and friends, Joanne Anderson, Beverly (Blyth) Huntington and Mariana Quarnstrom

Joanne Louise Anderson, RVHS Lifetime Member

Joanne Anderson, wife of RVHS' Founder Buzz Anderson of 63 years, passed away peacefully on November 7th. Jo and Buzz met while singing in the Columbia Congregational church choir. Jo was a devoted mother to her four children Dean, Paul, Mary Ellen, and Jody and devoted to her grand and great grandchildren. Jo was known for making the best raspberry jam from her garden overlooking Lake Washington and for her sense of humor referring to Buzz's work with the "Rainier Valley Hysterical Society." (An obituary will be published in the Seattle Times).



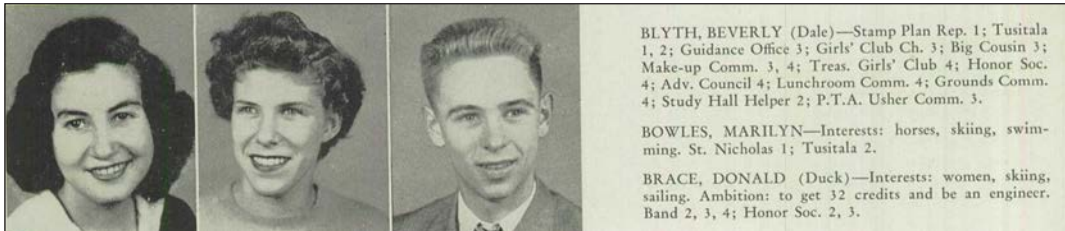
Joanne Anderson,
1928-2022

Beverly (Blyth) Huntington, RVHS Lifetime Member

Beverly Blyth's family moved to Rainier Valley when she was a baby. She graduated from Franklin High School, attended the UW and later became a secretary at Boeing. She and her husband moved to Issaquah in 1969 where she raised her family. Beverly stayed connected to her roots by supporting the historical society with her Lifetime membership and collection donations over the years. We are thankful Beverly included RVHS in her estate planning. (Please see Beverly's obituary in the Seattle Times).



Beverly (Blyth) Huntington,
1930-2022



Beverly Blyth, Class of 1948, Franklin High School Tolo

Mariana Quarnstrom, Rainier Valley community activist

Mariana was a nurse, wife, mother, and very active grandmother. Mariana was involved in every community issue that came her way and was heavily involved in the development of the Southeast Seattle Crime Prevention Council, Kubota Garden, volunteering with Eagle Scouts, and the Southeast Seattle Senior Center. Mariana received many awards for her contributions to the community, notably the Jefferson Award for Public Service. (Excerpt from Mariana's Rainier Chamber of Commerce John L. O'Brien Lifetime Achievement Award). Mariana's commitment and passion for her community will not be forgotten. (Please see Mariana's obituary in the Seattle Times).



Mariana Quarnstrom,
1944-2022

LIFETIME MEMBERS

James Adderson
Kenneth and Marleen Alhadeff
Beverly Almoslino
Mary Ellen Anderson
Teresa Anderson
J. Barclay
Rachel Bianchi
Kalman Brauner
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William and Bonnie Carrabba
Gloria Cauble
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Wyman Youth Trust
Judith Yarrow
Jody and Ed Zumwalt



Rainier Valley Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret and share the history and heritage of Rainier Valley and its people and to engage public involvement in and appreciation of its diverse cultures. Our geographic boundaries are from Dearborn Street on the north to the city limits on the south, and from I-5 to Lake Washington.

RVHS Board of Directors

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Support Rainier Valley History

If you haven't joined Rainier Valley Historical Society or renewed your membership this year, we urge you to do so now.

RVHS is a 501(c)(3) organization, your donations are tax deductible within the limits of the law.

Please clip and fill in this form and mail it to:

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*If you provide us with an address, we will be happy to send an acknowledgement of your gift.