

## **Sammamish History with Walt Carrel, President, Sammamish Heritage Society - July 27, 2022**

A very interesting conversation with Walt Carrel, current President of the Sammamish Heritage Society, as he delivered flotsam and jetsam of Sammamish history to our Zoom audience.

Walt moved here in 1986. He worked at Boeing in the Renton metrology lab in electronics. He has a chemistry degree and an MBA. He and his wife were members of the Redmond Historical Society before Sammamish was organized. The Sammamish Heritage Society (SHS) is looking to preserve what history we have. The SHS is looking for more members to help in this preservation effort

Tom Ehlers asked why preserve anything? Walt pointed out that we can learn from the past and maybe use that to better address the future. We can reuse the good and not repeat the bad. It also gives people underpinnings. Walt started as the SHS archivist, collecting and organizing stuff that people had given to SHS (editor Don Gerend comment while writing up these notes: I have boxes and boxes of the first 19 years of the City of Sammamish City Council history that are needing a new home, or shall soon be recycled).

The last ice age saw what is now the Sammamish plateau under a glacier. Under the ice a river drained melt water. The result was that river bottom clay rocks and gravel built up a ridge under the ice. rocks and sand which are very permeable but till (clay) which inhibits infiltration resulting in swamps, bogs and a few nice lakes.

After the glacier retreated some 10,000 or so years ago, a large Native American population resided along the shores of Lake Sammamish. When the Europeans brought new diseases starting in 1492 the Native American populations crashed. By the time of the Denny party in 1851 the native population was perhaps only 5% of the previous peak, with a few 100 living along Lake Sammamish.

Coal mining in Issaquah brought the railroad in (railroads got a checkerboard of land grants along the right of way that they were supposed to make available for settlement). By the 1880's the railroad owned about 1/2 of the Sammamish (or Pine Lake as it was often referred to) Plateau. 228th runs down a border of a section (square mile). The federal government kept every other section of land, and gave it away free to homesteaders. Some of the earliest houses, log cabins, in Sammamish were from these homesteaders. After being forced to sell the land many years later Hill the owner of the

Northern Pacific sold the land to himself and George Weyerhaeuser for almost nothing and formed a new company, Weyerhaeuser. It began logging the ex Railroad sections. Independent loggers started to log the homesteaded land. All was old growth forest here in Sammamish. All of the old growth (perhaps up to 700 years old) are gone and the second growth now are 100 to 150 years old. There are stumps of old growth in Evans Creek Preserve owned by the City of Sammamish, just off of SR 202.

Lumber mills were built in what is now Sammamish. Weber Point had a huge cedar shake mill. Fir and Hemlock went on railroad to Weyerhaeuser mill in Snoqualmie or to the independent mills in the Town of Monohon on Lake Sammamish. Monohon burned down three times, last time in 1922. At its largest the Town of Monohon had some 400 residents. A huge saw at the Monohon mill was moved to a mill in Preston and eventually ended up at the current location at the intersection of 244th Ave NE and SR 202. Walt speculated that perhaps the City should have been named Monohon as it was the largest town. (It even had its own post office!) This led to a side track discussion as to how Sammamish got named. It was suggested that Karen Moran might better answer that question and also the meaning of the name Sammamish which has conflicting answers.

North of Weber Point there was a village of Japanese people, millworkers, who were not allowed to live in Redmond. After the Japanese were run out it became known as Sammamish on period maps.

After the plateau was logged off and stumped, the soil wasn't really good for agriculture. Chicken farming started about 1900 and became huge until after World War II, with the largest chicken farm located where the Town Center is developing now. During the prohibition, around 1919-1933, the area was also a high producer of moonshine. Some cattle were raised on the Plateau and a lot of equestrian facilities developed later in the 20th century and resorts started around Lake Sammamish and Pine and Beaver Lakes from about 1910. There was a Boy Scout Camp on 228th on a lake near where the fire station is now.

Down Inglewood Hill Road by the lake was the Town of Inglewood, platted in 1889. Apparently a real estate company in Seattle would give a small lot in this plat to anyone who bought a house of theirs in Seattle. Also heard that a hotel in Seattle offered a lot free to visitors from elsewhere. These were 25 x 100 foot wide lots laid out like it was a flat table top. In reality it is on a steep slope where you could not build streets much less townhouses. I could find no record of any houses being built on the platted lots. Some were resold to unknowing back east. Many were reclaimed for back taxes. It wasn't until over 100 years later that the hundreds of platted lots could be tracked down and the area could be replatted and anything built on them.

A lot of the history of Sammamish can be found on the utility boxes throughout the City, including ones at the base of Inglewood Hill Road and Thompson Hill Road. These were the creation of the Arts Commission project of Claradell Shedd.

Summer cabins were built on the lakes of Sammamish in the early 1900's.

After the Mercer Island floating bridge was built in 1939 and U.S. 10 went East from Seattle through Issaquah some commuting to Seattle from Sammamish began. The Evergreen Point Bridge built in 1963 increased the trend towards Sammamish being a bedroom community.

The SW Section (square mile) of each Township (36 square miles, a 6x6 mile square) was there to support schools. Sometimes schools were located there and sometimes the land was sold

to support schools. Hence the grade school at the corner of 228th Ave SE and SE 24th St is on the southwest corner of the schools section.

Early in the settling of the Plateau the teachers could not be married and teach, so many young unmarried ladies came west to teach at the early schools and make \$35 a month. With all of the loggers and millworkers around, these ladies generally got married quickly and thus there was a lot of teacher turnover. Minnie Baker was one of those young lady teachers who after a year got married. However, she got involved in the school system and kept all the records of students, etc. from 1886 to the 1920's. Her husband was on the school board but she did the work. Her house was recently demolished.

The SHS is restoring an early house which now resides in Big Rock Park Central. Reard House, built using old growth lumber from the Monohon Mill. The exterior and interior walls were sturdily built of 3/4" shiplap. It was later purchased by Oscar Freed who ran cattle. They had a dance hall upstairs and a still hidden beneath the floor of the barn during the prohibition. It was also the location of the first office of what is now the Sammamish Plateau Water District. This house was on 212th Ave SE and set aside when the Crossings development was built. Sammamish Heritage Society and later the City worked to preserve the structure. It was moved to its present location in Big Rock Park in 2012 and is being restored by the SHS. Possible use would be small event hall with a kitchen with a museum in the parlor. Limited handicapped access restricted the upstairs to non public offices for the SHS and storage of artifacts. It is hoped that might be open to the public in a year or so. (note: another possible use would be to create a simulated century ago school room with black chalkboards and ink wells, for school field trips). News to the SHS?

The movie "Act of Love" starring Ron Howard was largely filmed at the original location of the Reard House (after they painted it a cheap ugly red) in 1980. The restoration returned it to the original yellow.

A question was raised about recording audio histories of long time residents. Walt said that the SHS has recordings of people that ran resorts and Sadlier's Store (a country store built in 1948 which was located at Pine Lake Village where the August Moon Restaurant is now). Sadlier's existed until 1985 with great sandwiches, meat, bottled milk and a hitching rail outside. Claradell Shedd mentioned that the Issaquah History Museum has a collection of recordings of people on the Plateau.

Walt reiterated that the Sammamish Heritage Society needs more people to work on projects and help preserve and present the history of Sammamish. It was suggested that high school students could possibly help on recording the history and archiving. To get involved, go to the website [www.sammamishheritage.org](http://www.sammamishheritage.org) or contact them at [Sammamish.heritage@hotmail.com](mailto:Sammamish.heritage@hotmail.com).

Notes by Don Gerend and Walt Carrel