

March 18, 1993

Nathan R.
C/O View Ridge Elementary
202 Alder
Everett, WA 98203

Dear Nathen R.,

The first known white men to pass threwh our unknown town was in the year 1856, by Major George B. McClellan, who led a detachment of regular troops from Fort Stillacoom to Fort Whatcom overland, cutting a military road through the forest as they went. This trip was necessary to secure an inland trail due to a dispute between the U.S. and British Columbia over our boundary lines. The new McClellan trail followed the Pilchuck river northward from the Town of Snohomish. Turning into the forest nearly east of what is known as Getchel, it passed through the Burn, picked its way down the Wallis hill, traversed the prairie, known as Kent's Prairie, and crossed the Stillaguamish River near the Forks. Soon after their trip the road was soon over grown by brush and second growth firs, with little evidence of any person passing this way.

As a dashing young Major, who was already showing signs of those qualities which afterward made him the idol of his troops, and upon reaching the town of Snohomish, he managed to secure the Chief of the Snohomish Indian Tribe as a guide across the Burn. At the time of their crossing of this vast burned and charred area, many of the trees had yet to grow back in. Asking the Chief as too how many years since the great fire had wiped out the forest, the Chief looked to his warriors, consulted with them, then he held up his arms and told of thirty-six snows on his fingers. If his guess was correct this would have placed the fire at about 1820. The cause of this vast disaster of nature, it is believed that only one thing could have been the cause, lightning, but no one will ever know.

Little has been recorded about the next person to pass through this beautiful valley, and as records show, it was James L. Kent, who "squatted" on Kent's prairie in 1878 or 1879. James built a house for his wife, and together they lived in their home along with her mother and father. Today the area is still referred to as Kent's Prairie, but little is told about its history.

Until the year of 1884 the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River was known as "Starve Out Valley," for the reason that up to this time all the settlers were bachelors, who went into the woods form Stanwood, with packs of blankets and provisions, and by the time a shake shanty had been built, a few trees cut, the "last bit of bacon was in the pan, fried," the last batch of sour dough was baked on the coals in a cedar board fireplace, the packstrap settler hailed a passing Indian (Siwash as they were called) canoe and went to Stanwood for more supplies. Many never returned and the places were taken by others, with many of the same results.

The next known settler, and the first at "The Forks" was B.C. Schloman, who took up the farm in the year of 1882. Names of the others to follow that same year have been lost with time, with the exception of Cal Marsh who taught school at the Haller school for one term, and in 1894 he returned to West Virginia, where in June of that year he married his long time love, Lora Bird McDougal, then returned to settle here.

1883 marked the beginning of the first real immigration to this still true wilderness area of the Washington Territory. Those who had braved the unknown, and ventured into this area where, L.H. Smith, C.J. Murphy, Mathew McCaulley, Charles Peel, Carl Knudson, Marion Gooding and Henry Jones. This can be considered as the beginning of a white settlement in the woods.

1884 brought many more people into our wilderness, with them was the first white women who came and stayed. On the first day of March Mr. and Mrs. Collingwood took possession of an abandoned claim, and built a fine home. The same year, Ed. Fisher, Mr. Parks, James McCullough, George Moore, Jay Lock, James Shields, Christian Fisher, Timothy Ryan and Dan McMillan were among the settlers.

The very first Fourth of July celebration occurred this year, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kent, on Kent's Prairie. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Kent's father and mother, Ed. Lewis and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Condent. A picnic was held and they feasted on a calf and held races.

1885 saw very few settlers, those coming in were Malachi Ryan, John Hancock, William Connors, G.W. Lindberg and Wm. Laughlin. The first school house in the vicinity was opened on Kent's Prairie, and was taught by John Condit. The students this year were two white children and twelve Indian children.

In 1886 we saw the establishment of the first logging camps in the spring. Both were located a short distance above the forks of the river, Al Mores on the North Fork, and Bill McGee on the South Fork.

In 1888 our first store was built by Tvette & Johnson, about a half a mile from the forks of the river. Much of the lumbar used was brought in by canoe from Florence. The use of a safe was unheard of in those days and the use of a grease pot buried in the ground was used, this was in case of a fire, the important papers would be saved. The store was located in an area that was then known as Jewel City, which only existed a short time.

This same year we saw the establishment of our first postoffice, the same being known as the Schloman postoffice. This was located on the Schloman ranch, and Mr. Schloman was the postmaster. In 1889 the postoffice was moved to Jewel city, but the name was not changed, this postoffice was located at Tvette & Johnsons.

1888 also brought the first and only steamboat up the river, this was the little steamer Gleaner, Capt. Gove at the helm. This little boat made four trips up the river to the forks, carrying goods to the store and to the logging camps.

In 1889 we had the first Blacksmith shop built by J.L. Likens, this was located on the North side of the river. In the same year the first Hotel was built by Al Densmore and Lee Rogers, at the confluence of the river, on what is now a sand bar. The wood used was also shipped in by canoe. The same year we saw the construction of the first saw mill, located on the south side of the Stillaguamish river, by Rumph & Andrews, this being located on the ground that would be called Haller City.

In 1890 the first store was built in Arlington by Earl & McLeod, two railroad contractors who were putting in the railroad that would cause our town to boom. About one moth later, John Z. Jones built a general

store on McLeod Avenue.

The original plat of Arlington was filed March 15, 1890, by J.W. McLeod, Victor Hugo Smith, A.B. Palmer and S.W. Sisco. They took the liberty to name it Arlington, after Lord Henry Arlington of the notorious "Cabal" Cabinet of King Charles II of England.

The original plat of Haller City was filed just fifteen days later, April 1, 1890, by C.N. Hills, Simon Rumph and G. Morris Haller. The name of Haller city was chosen for the memory of Mr. Haller's brother who drowned just after purchasing 30 acres of land in that area.

With the platting of Haller City, the rapid growth had begun. The Walker House was built, a large three story hotel, the Workman Hall, The Haller City Shingle Manufacturing Co., and Tvette & Johnson moved there store from Jewel City, this being the end of that town.

George Morrill established the first newspaper in Haller City in 1890, moving it from its short time in Stanwood, then known as The Stillaguamish Times.

The first steam locomotive, of the Seattle Lakeshore & Eastern Railroad, pulled in to our town in the spring of 1890, and the true beginning of our prosperous growth began. For many years the Twin Cities would fight over the growth and business from the residents of these two towns, Arlington and Haller City. The beginning of the end of Haller city was when the railroad built their depot in Arlington.

Many of the stores were moved from Haller City to Arlington, and Haller City became the residential district.

The first church was built in 1891, by the Free Methodist, with Rev. Frank Vanderveer being the first pastor. This building still stands today.

The twin cities continued to bicker with each other and in July of 1900, several citizens tried to get the two towns to incorporate, but this did not go over well.

In October our first bank was established, the Arlington State Bank.

In June of 1901, the public circulated a petition asking the Haller and the Arlington school districts to build a high school to be shared by the two communities. This was passed in short time and the new school was soon built.

In march of 1902, our citizens once again tried to incorporate, but once again these attempts failed.

On May 5th, 1903 once again the voters of Arlington and Haller City were called to the question of Incorporation, the only difference was that this attempt was successful, and our city was officially recognized as an Incorporated city in Washington. Our first elected officials were:

Mayor, J.M. Smith; Councilmen, Neil Brown, W.G. Fowler, C.A. Hudson, D.S. Baker and J.B. Riley; Treasurer, Adolph Behrens and Clerk, C.H. Tracy.

The population of Arlington at this time was under 1400.

Our first city fathers decided that it would be better to develop the town slowly and not put us into debt. Well this led to many of our problems with water, sewer and fire protection.

In 1904 a water and franchise was granted to J.A. and C.B. James, and they fell threw by not completing their obligations. The franchise was known as the Arlington Light & Water Power Co.

In September Mr. C.H. Crippen and Mr. C.T. Meascher of Snohomish took over the water franchise and made it succeed.

Our first working water mains and fire hydrants were installed and turned on in April of 1905. The city council had purchased two hose carts and fire hose, but no fire department was established.

In May of 1905 our first town hall was built at the corner of Third and McLeod. This was a wooden structure 30x36 feet in size, containing a council chamber, and a room for storing fire apparatus. Cost of this building was \$533.

In December of 1905, two of our citizens lost their homes, and the firefighting equipment was useless without a fire department. The editor of the Arlington Times wrote a letter to the public, and action was soon taken. Part of this editorial I shall quote for you:

"The city hose cart, which like Shakespear's Fallstaff, has a habit of arriving on the scene after the danger is over with, finally put in an appearance in a some what dilapidated condition, having tumbled off the viaduct spanning the dismal swamp, injuring one of the wheels." "There are somethings which are so patent and obvious that they scarcely seem to merit comment. One of those is the childlike indifference, neglect and delay on the part of Arlington in the matter of fire protection."

On December 22, 1905, our volunteer fire department was established. The original fire department consisted of forty-two members, all volunteers, and today we maintain a crew of 3 paid members and around thirty volunteers.

In May of 1906, we saw the graduation of our first high school class, the class of 1906. This class had three graduates, Miss Arlie Brown, Miss R. Lee Persun, and Mr. Warren Brown.

In 1925, our city hall was moved into a new concrete structure at the corner of Third and Olympic (originally called Railroad), and is still used for the same today.

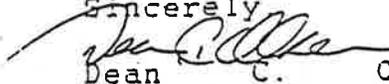
Today, Arlington has a population of approximately 5,000 people and covers an area of approximately 5 1/2 square miles. We still have a large wood products industry, a large aero space technologies industry, and a large boat manufacturing plant. Our down town has not changed much in the last 90 years, and the people are usually very polite and friendly.

We have four grade schools, one middle school (6th, 7th, and 8th grades) and one high school. Our newest school is due to open this fall and the name has not yet been decided upon, but many people are pushing for the name of Kent Prairie Elementary, after the land it was built on.

I hope the information enclosed can be of assistance to you. If I can assist you in any way feel free to contact me at any time. I hope that history of your area will be as important to you as it has been and continues to be too me. I am in the process of writing a book on the history of Arlington, part of which I have given to you.

Best wishes to you in the future.

Sincerely


Dean C. Olsen
Arlington, WA 98223