



QUEEN ANNE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Queen Anne Cobblestone

The Newsletter of the Queen Anne Historical Society, Seattle, WA  
[qahistory.org](http://qahistory.org)

December, 2016

## Upcoming QAHS Meeting! *Remembering Queen Anne's Grocery Stores*

*Aegis Living on Galer  
3<sup>rd</sup> West at W. Galer  
Thu. January 26, 7:00 p.m.*

We are pleased to present members Jan Hadley and Alicia Arter who will discuss their detailed research on the many small-business grocery stores formerly present on Queen Anne.

In 1911, there were over 25 neighborhood stores listed in Queen Anne alone; many went on to be operated by the same family for 20+ years.

Come join your friends and neighbors for an entertaining evening on Queen Anne history.



*Aasten Market (1936)—one of our neighborhood grocers (courtesy of QAHS Archives)*

## Cobble, Cobble, Cobblestones

*by Michael Herschensohn*

Queen Anne is blessed (bicyclists disagree about that) with many cobblestone streets. Every fan of Queen Anne history knows that the stones provided traction for horses struggling up the hill. Most history buffs can't explain their conservation, although their prevalence on steep streets suggests they helped both horses and horseless carriages navigate the slopes for a long time. Even though the street surfaces are not official city landmarks, they are charming anachronisms someone at the Seattle Engineering Department, now SDOT, decided to protect.



7th W. at West Blaine (photo by M. Herschensohn)

The most notable Queen Anne cobblestone streets on the west side of the hill can be found at Blaine where it drops down off Queen Anne Boulevard at 7th Ave., and on Howe as it plunges from the steps below 7th to 10th. On the east side, there is a stretch of cobbles on Warren N. running south from Lee that the Fire Department favors. Queen Anne has the greatest share of Seattle's 93 cobblestone streets with the east side of Capitol Hill a close second.

In March 1993, the city surveyed its cobblestone streets assessing the quality of the stones and ranking them per five standards of conservation from excellent to poor. In January 1996, the Seattle Engineering Department and the Department of Neighborhoods signed an agreement that provides a procedure for maintaining the two top categories. It included storing the best blocks from the most deteriorated streets for eventual repairs to the best ones. The city has generally respected the terms of agreement, but tight budgets and relatively low traffic volumes on the protected streets have made it a low priority. The promise to reevaluate the condition of the streets every five years does not seem to have been kept.

Repairing stone block streets today is just as arduous as when they were laid down in the first place. Blocks are laid by hand and tapped into place in a bed of tamped sand, usually over gravel. The paving blocks fit tightly together in their beds of tamped sand which acts as a cushion and level to compensate for minor irregularities in the gravel or soil. The last  
*(continued on page 2)*

We are grateful for support by



CULTURE

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The Queen Anne Cobblestone is published throughout the year by the Society, and may be reached at P.O.B. 19432, Seattle WA 98109.

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**The Queen Anne Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by Federal law.**

**The Archives of the Society are located at Bayview Manor, 11 W. Aloha St., Seattle, WA 98119**

Bruce Jones, Newsletter Editor  
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*(Cobblestones—continued from page 1)*

step involves sweeping fine mason's sand into the thin joints between the stones. David Williams, local geologist, writing in a 2009 website blog, provides some more history: *"Between the 1890s and 1910s, sandstone cobbles were a popular road-paving material in Seattle. The most commonly used varieties came from quarries in Wilkeson, a small town about 45 miles south of Seattle. Workers could easily cut the brick-sized blocks, which provided good traction for horses, although horse shoes did wear down the stone. And the stone cobbles lasted longer and created less of a mess than the mud or wood of the past."*

Turns out Seattle's blocks are not cobbles at all, but rather setts. Even

more troubling, Wikipedia reports that setts are cut from granite where ours, Williams points out, are cut from sandstone. Again according to Wikipedia, "A sett is distinct from a cobblestone in that it is quarried or worked to a regular shape, whereas the latter is generally a small, naturally-rounded rock. Setts are usually made of granite."

Queen Anne Historical Society is now faced with a dilemma. For decades, it has published a newsletter called The Cobblestone honoring our historic paving stones. With this new understanding of 'cobble,' the society may be compelled to change the newsletter's name to The Setts, a choice that doesn't resonate quite like cobblestone!

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## President's Letter

I am sure everyone is delighted by the wonderful articles Jan Hadley and Alicia Arter have been sharing in the *Queen Anne Magnolia News* and on our website ([www.qahistory.org](http://www.qahistory.org)) about the history of grocery stores in our neighborhood. Grateful though I am to Joe Veyera, editor of the *News*, I encourage our members to visit our website where photos can be clearer and (on occasion) in color. I hope you will consider Alicia and Jan's careful research on these stories and their enthusiasm for them as great reasons to support the society and rejoin now.

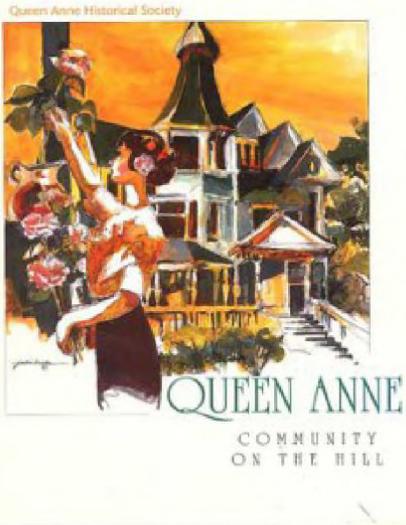
Our January 26 meeting to be held at 7:00 pm at Aegis Living on Galer will focus on Jan and Alicia's work. They will explore myriad details about eating on Queen Anne that have yet to find a place in their work. To borrow an expression my mother used in the strangest contexts, it will be a 'delicious' meeting.

New board member Marga Rose Hancock has taken over soliciting new members and asking existing members to rejoin. The process is laid out in the notice in this copy of the Cobblestone. I hope you'll take advantage of the on-line link through PayPal. It does make life easier for your all volunteer board.

Thanks to Alicia Arter for having served as the society's archivist. That role has been taken over by Roger Neale who is doing a smashing job particularly as the Bayview Retirement Community has asked us to move. Bayview needs our (free) space as they add apartments to their facility.

The loss of our office at Bayview means the society must find a new office. Developer Joe Geivett has generously offered a storage locker at no cost through the summer, but a new space at no or minimal expense is required. Any suggestions you might have about where we might find such an office (10' by 10' with a window is all we need) would be great. You can always contact me through [info@qahistory.org](mailto:info@qahistory.org). (continued on page 3)

## Please renew your [QUEEN ANNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY](#) membership



*Our Award-Winning Book  
Available at [shop.qahistory.org](http://shop.qahistory.org)*

The Queen Anne Historical Society appreciates interest, engagement, and support from Queen Anne residents and businesses and all who share a regard for the history of the people and places of Seattle's Queen Anne neighborhood.

The Society, directed by a volunteer Board of Trustees, offers programs and tours throughout the year -- in addition to ongoing research, collection, and preservation of Queen Anne history. Recent engagement includes completion of the successful [landmark nomination](#) of the [Power Control Center / 157 Roy](#), and a set of articles on the grocery stores of early Queen Anne.

### Member benefits:

- ✓ Subscription to the Society's informative newsletter Cobblestone and new article notification (optional);
- ✓ Membership discounts for attendance at Society tours, meetings, and events;
- ✓ Opportunity to nominate/draft content on Queen Anne people, places, & occasions for publication in Cobblestone and posting on the Society website. Patrons and benefactors may sponsor essays, subject to Board approval. **RENEW ONLINE:** [Click HERE](#) for the Society's membership transaction page.

Or pay by mail, sending check payable to "Queen Anne Historical Society" to QAHS, PO Box 19432, Seattle WA 98109. THANK YOU!

*(President's Letter—continued from page 2)*

Nicole Demers-Changelo, Leanne Olson and I attended a recent meeting of the Uptown Alliance's Urban Development Framework Committee. At that meeting real estate developer Maria Barrientos presented the plans for the block now occupied by Teatro Zinzanni. The project is sensitive to the Urban Development Framework for Uptown. Its 160-foot tower on the Roy Street side, if built, signals the changes we can expect as South Lake Union spills over into the areas around Seattle Center. The Barrientos project covers all but the south west corner block which has been reserved for affordable housing. Uptown Alliance committee members lamented that the design of the two projects was not being coordinated. While the Alliance has re-branded the lower Queen Anne area as Uptown, the Queen Anne Historical Society and its Landmarks Preservation Committee remain vigilant in the quest to defend the historic neighborhood quality of this integral part of our community.

I am delighted to report that the Queen Anne Historical Society has been awarded its third consecutive award for Sustained Support from 4Culture. This is a great honor and testimony to the society's vitality. The award is for \$5,000 over the next two years, an increase of \$1,000 over the 2014-2016 period.

There is no doubt that we would not be able to continue our fund-raising successes with 4Culture and other granting organizations without the ongoing support of our members. I hope you will help sustain our record and rejoin the society before the end of December. Happy Holidays.

*Michael Herschensohn, President*



*Markets at Queen Anne Ave. and Boston (1956 and 2007)—see QAHS Mtg. Pg. 1  
(courtesy of QAHS Archives and Bruce Jones)*

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*Bigelow Foods in the 1950's—see Kim's Musings  
(courtesy of QAHS Archives)*

## KIM'S MUSINGS

### WINTER 2016

Many years ago, I worked as shelver and labeler for a local grocery store, Bigelow's Foods, located on Fifth Avenue North in the 500 block, between Valley and Aloha Streets. This was a summer job, and I enjoyed both the mathematical challenge of stocking the shelves, washing the produce which came in several times a week, and keeping the general appearance of the aisles looking 'smart.'

I learned about the differences in mark-up over cost so that the items were at a fair price for the customers, and gave the store income over cost. Victor and Ivy Bigelow had come to the U.S. from Canada in the 1940's, and took over the store about 1950. We always bought from them, and from Aloha Meats across the street, whose meat and dairy products were always

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fresh and delicious. On some occasions, we had to go into downtown Seattle and left our grocery list with the Bigelows, who would collect our meats order from the Swansons at Aloha Meats, and deliver them to our front porch in two or three boxes. During the summer I worked there, I got to accompany Victor Bigelow in delivering those orders all around the South Slope of Queen Anne Hill. A year later, October 1, 1957, I began a three years' job delivering the Seattle Post-Intelligencer to 100+ households on the streets from Mercer Street to Galer Street, and from the east side of Fifth Avenue North to the west side of Aurora. Those were halcyon days, and I miss being that young and ready to learn about the wonderful world of Queen Anne Hill. Hope all your holiday season is a good one!

*Kim R. Turner*