



# Queen Anne Cobblestone

The Newsletter of the Queen Anne Historical Society

March 2015

## Working Class Queen Anne: Part 1

By Michael Herschensohn, PhD.



*The MarQueen Hotel on Queen Anne Avenue*

It is hard to imagine Queen Anne as a working class neighborhood. The views from the ridges on the south, east and west sides have attracted large elegant houses built by many of the movers and shakers in city history. Once you leave the ring of elegant aeries though, one-story commercial buildings, a huge quantity of apartment houses and numerous industrial sites on the neighborhood fringe suggest a working class history we don't want to forget.

As this series unfolds, it will explore different working class buildings, businesses and, if we can find them, people who live, lived, work or worked in them. The choice of "working class" rather than "blue collar" to describe these subjects rests on the assumption that many of the jobs held by Queen Anne residents during most of the 20th century may have been in retail and service industry activities rather than manufacturing, railroading or shipbuilding. This series will consider buildings such as

the historic MarQueen Hotel on Queen Anne Avenue between Mercer and Roy. It was built in 1918 as the Seattle Engineering School and housed workers training at the Ford assembly plant on Lake Union. (The plant is still there at the corner of Fairview and Valley, but it now serves as a storage facility.) In 1920, the school opened the Kuay training garage (later named the MarQueen Garage and now known as the 10 Mercer Restaurant) that operated as a



*The MarQueen Garage*

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## Next Meeting: March 26 with guest speaker Kim Myran

Please mark your calendar for Thursday, March 26, 7 p.m., for a program you won't want to miss. Following this year's theme of multiple family housing on Queen Anne, we are happy to have Ms. Kim Myran join us to discuss her contribution to Queen Anne: Community on the Hill. An architect with KDW Salas O'Brien, Ms. Myran authored the first part of chapter 18, "Apartments and Development on the Hill" that covers multifamily housing development from 1890 to 1940. Ms. Myran will speak about significant buildings in the book and also about what has changed, been added to or disappeared.

The talk will take place in the narthex of St. Anne Catholic Church at 1411 1st Ave. W., which has generously donated the space for our event. Parking is available in the church parking lot at West Galer Street and First Avenue West and also in the St. Anne School's lot, 101 W. Lee St., behind the school. The program begins at 7 p.m. with light refreshments to follow.

### CHECK OUR WEBSITE

We continue to improve our website ([www.qahistory.org](http://www.qahistory.org)), including better organization of our historical database and images. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

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# Queen Anne Historical Society

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## ***WORKING: series highlights Queen Anne's working class background***

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*SIFF Uptown Theater*



*Five Corners Hardware*

school and working garage for more than 50 years. The workers who lived in the SRO apartments would have found nearby bakeries, bars, restaurants and early grocery stores to meet their daily needs. In the 1920s, the Chase bank building around the corner on Mercer was probably where they bought groceries. They likely ate some meals at Preston and Frances Smith's Mecca Café, which opened on July 1, 1930. Still housing transients, the MarQueen no longer serves blue collar guys with greasy hands.

Just down the street, SIFF's recently acquired 1926 Uptown Theater is another icon of working class Queen Anne. Designed by Victor Voorhees, the theater no longer has stairs leading to a mezzanine lounge and flanking bathrooms, and the original hall has added the two buildings south of the 1953 marquee by architect B. Marcus Priteca. The large Uptown audi-

torium is now smaller than in the beginning and "talkies" projected digitally have replaced the silent films of 1926, but the theater still serves the residents of the very many nearby Uptown district apartment buildings.

Another surviving blue collar business is the Five Corners Hardware store located where West McGraw, West McGraw Place and Third Avenue West intersect. The streetcar line from downtown used to cross this intersection too on its way to the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, but its replacement, the number 3 electric trolley, got rerouted to David Rodgers Park, and the number 2 gets you to the cemetery now. This business has been in the same family since 1938.

Our series will scoot down the hill to explore the docks along the canal where hundreds of folks still go every day to repair ships at Foss Maritime, unplug a drain at Bob Oates Sewer and Rooter or sell lumber at Gascoigne Lumber, which has been at it since 1926—obviously a big year for neighborhood growth.

The railroad spur still reaches Foss, following portions of the route of the historic Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway (SLS&E) founded by Daniel Gilman, Judge Thomas Burke and others. By 1887, it ran from the Seattle waterfront to Smith (then Smith's) Cove and then on the northwest side of Lake Washington. By 1888, the line reached Fall City to the east and Snohomish to the north, eventually connecting with the Canadian Pacific system near Sumas.

The spur that now forms the Ship Canal bike and pedestrian path once extended around the base of the hill connecting that Ford Assembly plant at Fairview and Valley to the main lines bringing the cars in

parts from the eastern United States. The SLS&E took coal and lumber down to the freighters at Smith's Cove. A careful look at historic maps suggests that the coal and lumber dock may have been on the fill now under the Queen Anne side of Elliott Avenue West.

Just north of the former railway terminus along the former shore of Smith's Cove and opposite the twisting Amgen Bridge on Queen Anne's fringe at 1038 Elliott Ave. W., Wilson Machine Works is a classic working class operation. Founded by brothers Wilhelm, Wilson and Otto Niedergesaess as Niedergesaess and Sons Electric Co., it has been around for more than a hundred years. In 1926, Wilson, his brothers no longer involved, built the two-story masonry building and changed his name to match the new company's, becoming Robert John Wilson. He painted the new office a shade of light brown,

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*Gascoigne Lumber*



*Wilson's Machine Works*

## President's Letter

By Michael Herschensohn, PhD.

There is great news about the society to share this month. Let's start with people. Two new people have joined the board. Heather Miller, who holds a doctorate in American History and who is the above ground lead of Historical Resources Inc., joined the board in November. She brings a rich background in the fields of history and preservation. She is also known for her fine writing skills. Heather lives on Queen Anne with her two daughters in a great apartment building that dates from the 1920s and overlooks our south slope. Kristi Street joined the board in January. She has strong experience in marketing and public relations. Her talents are already showing up in a marketing plan she has prepared and in this Cobblestone whose editorship she is taking over with this issue. She lives with her family in our Queen Anne Park neighborhood.

We are also delighted that lifelong Queen Anne resident Alicia Comstock Arter (who protests is no relation to the developer and his eponymous street where Heather Miller resides) has taken the reins of our archive from Verna Ness. Alicia's enthusiasm for Queen Anne history is contagious. She developed her love for archival work while taking a Historic Seattle program called Digging Deeper. The ongoing program is open to all. It visits four or five regional archives every year, introducing people to

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installed a roll top desk just inside the door and opened for business. The sign proclaiming Wilson Machine Works has not been touched, the desk has not been moved and the office has not been repainted. Overhead belt pulleys on the ceiling still drive one historic machine. Current owner Dave Wilson reports that the foundations sit on clamshells.

the rich accumulation of works on paper that our museums, governments and historical organizations store for the public good.

There is also good news to report on the grant side of our affairs. The society was the fortunate winner of a \$4,000 grant for sustained support from 4Culture. The award provides \$2,000 a year over the next two years and helps offset the cost of our operations. The society's award doubled over the previous one. There is every reason to believe that with a strong membership we will continue to be successful winning grants for sustained support.

As is often the case, the society is looking for some good people to join the board. Our greatest need is for someone with technological skills. We are embarking on a survey of modern Queen Anne for which database and mapping skills are a key component. We are also hoping to update our collections database folding our antiquated records into a modern program called Past Perfect. A board member with great technological abilities would make a terrific difference. We are also hoping that other community folks in the under-40 age bracket consider joining our board and participating in our monthly meetings as we strive to build a strong organization with, as wine drinkers say, legs.

This working class Queen Anne series will explore topics like these and reach out from time to time to follow curious bits of local history. For example, the road that ran along the beach beside the site of Wilson's shop may be the military road commissioned by Jefferson Davis and built by his later Civil War opponent Ulysses S. Grant.

*All photos by Michael Herschensohn*

### Board of the Queen Anne Historical Society

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Nicole Demers-Changelo

Jan Hadley

Michael Herschensohn

Aaron Luoma

Heather Miller

Verna Ness

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Kim Turner

Kristi Street

#### Cobblestone Graphic Designer

Katherine Garvey

#### Webmaster

Tim Barrick

### CALL FOR MEMBERSHIP

Members make the society strong. They support our work and as a group prove to funders and our neighbors on the hill that we play a vital role in the community. Our dues year runs from January to December. Many members rejoined following our special letter in December. For those people who haven't yet rejoined, we've included with this newsletter a brief description of membership categories and an envelope for sending back your dues. You can also rejoin at [www.qahistory.org](http://www.qahistory.org) and follow the link at Join.

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“KINNEAR HOME”

## Kim's Musings

By Kim Turner, Chair of Research Committee

In the course of years with the Queen Anne Historical Society I have been fortunate enough to work with many residents of Queen Anne Hill who also serve(d) on the board. Most of them, however, did not attend Queen Anne High School.

Some who lived on the Hill were students at the Lakeside School, but most are latter-day Queen Anne dwellers, having begun their lives in far-flung places away from Seattle. This has made for a richer growth in knowledge of the Hill and its homes, families and industries. We are all learning it together. So here is a small part of growing up on the Hill.

In the winter of 1950 Seattle was visited by a blizzard. I remember this well, as it was the time we built our best snowman in our yard next to the stairs at Third Avenue North between Aloha and Ward Streets. The snow was heavy—back then we brought in snow from the third falling and ate it with a little syrup poured over it. We had a fire in the fireplace and plenty of food to eat. Books to read, others to color and our small sled on which to ride down the slope to Aloha made winter a great time. How many of our members had to wear leggings when they went outdoors back then? It made for slow going in the snow, but it kept us upright most of the time. I do remember several adults slipping on the ice under

the snow cover and was glad I was small. The only drawback was that eventually we would have to go back to school! But that was all right since I had Margaret Coughlin as my first grade teacher, an older woman who wore a nearly floor-length black taffeta which crinkled as she walked. That was at the Warren Avenue School, later a victim to the city's progress, as it was torn down to make room for the 1962 Seattle World's Fair.

I note this as I watch with some glee as new condos, apartments and campuses are built surrounding the site of that fair, now the Seattle Center, thus in a way replacing all the structures which were removed between 1959 and 1962.