

# Footprints

*on the sands of time....*

ISSUE XXII

SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY 1993

## ... And a tour for mom

Give your mom the gift of history!

Take her to our society's fifth annual Tour of Homes, scheduled for May 8, the Saturday before Mother's Day.

This year's slate features six homes new to the tour. For more details on our society's big springtime event, see pages 2 and 3!

HOME  
WITH  
HISTORY



Photo by Clay Eals

**FRANCES HARRIS BORTON** shares memories during a February 1993 oral history interview.

## Life in Gatewood -- 85 years ago!

Did you ever play tricks on your teachers?

Ten-year-old **FRANCES HARRIS** (now **BORTON**) did.

Reminiscing 85 years later, she relates an anecdote from her seventh-grade year at Gatewood Elementary School in 1910, the year the school opened.

To get to school from her house at 6007 49th Ave. S.W., Frances and her friends had to climb down a gully or walk along the Fauntleroy streetcar trestle that crossed the gully. They avoided accidents by knowing the schedule for the streetcar, which ran every hour.

"It was just all woods around there, and there were lots of skunk cabbages grew out there," she said. "It was kind of swampy, I guess, and some of the kids went out for lunch, and they picked a big bouquet of skunk cabbage and brought them in to the teacher.

"She was from back East, and I don't know whether she had never seen skunk cabbage or she was just playing along with us or what. But our whole class was just snickering. We couldn't concentrate on our work because we were just waiting for that skunk smell to come up.

"So finally, she couldn't stand it. She said, 'Do you children mind if I throw these out the window?' She didn't exactly like the odor or something. The kids all had to laugh because she knew she'd been had."

For more of Frances' memories, see pages 4 and 5.



# Six 'new' homes grace 1993 tour

Kick-off ceremony at Camp Long begins at 9 a.m., features speakers

Is something a tradition when it gets to be five years old?

Certainly!

And that's the case with our historical society's annual Tour of Homes. The fifth annual tour will take place on Saturday, May 8, the day before Mother's Day, and it promises to build on the successes of the previous four tours.

Headed by **MERRILEE HAGEN**, the 1993 tour features nine sites, with six homes that have never been on the tour before.

This year's slate of sites is arguably the most diverse yet.

"We've got everything from small, fairy-tale cottages to huge mansions this year," says Merrilee, who notes that the sites range in the years they were built from 1895 to 1941.

She also notes that the sites are geographically diverse as well. (See detailed information on each site in the May 5

"Homes with History" section of the West Seattle Herald/White Center News.)

As in previous years, the self-guided tour will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets remain the same donation as always — \$5

## This year's sites

- 1. Mountain lodge**  
Camp Long  
5200 35th Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1941
- 2. Italian villa**  
4022 32nd Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1926
- 3. New England farmhouse**  
3026 39th Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1912
- 4. Huge, half-timbered mansion**  
Hainsworth House  
2657 37th Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1907  
(On 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992 tours)
- 5. Western farmhouse and beautiful grounds**  
5114 S.W. Grayson St.  
Built in 1895  
(On 1991 tour)
- 6. Two-story prairie style farmhouse**  
Villa Heidelberg  
4845 45th Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1909  
(On 1989, 1991, 1992 tours)
- 7. Colanated Dutch colonial**  
5637 42nd Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1909
- 8. Fairy-tale cottage**  
6047 42nd Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1915
- 9. English frame tudor with spectacular view**  
5919 49th Ave. S.W.  
Built in 1911

per person, except babes-in-arms.

Advance tickets are available at all tour sponsors and co-sponsors (see box), as well as area banks. Tour-goers also can buy tickets on the day of the tour at each site.

The tour will be held rain or shine, and more than 60 volunteers will serve as hosts at the nine sites.

Everyone except the elderly and handicapped will be asked to remove their shoes at all sites. Also, no food, drink or smoking will be allowed -- nor will interior photography without prior permission of the owner.

The site for this year's tour kick-off is Camp Long, a city park at 5200 35th Ave. S.W. that some people call

## Thanks to our sponsors!

We gratefully acknowledge the participation of these sponsors and co-sponsors in our society's 1993 Tour of Homes:

### Sponsors

Cayce & Gain Realty  
ERA Bianchi-Zaar Realty  
Northwest Art & Frame  
The Prudential/Benton's Realty  
West Seattle Herald/  
White Center News  
Windermere/Fauntleroy Real Estate

### Co-sponsors

Blake's Bakery  
Cat's Eye Cafe  
CondoManagements  
Liberty Bell Printing  
Morgan Thriftway  
Olsen's Valu-Rite Drugs  
Stuffed Shirt Catering





**VILLA HEIDELBERG** is shown in this detail of an original watercolor by West Seattle artist Brad Carlson. The painting is the basis of this year's tour poster, which will be on sale the day of the tour for \$5.

West Seattle's best-kept secret.

The kick-off ceremony at 9 a.m. at the park will feature presentations by several speakers, including **DUANE PENTALLA**, Seattle parks resources director, and Judge **HORTON SMITH**, who will discuss monuments on Alki Beach.

Other speakers are West Seattleites **GWEN FRASER** and **JOAN SCHMITZ FULTON** (a former member of our society's Executive Board), and state Sen. **PHIL TALMADGE** (D-34th) and Seattle City Council member **TOM WEEKS**, both members of our society.

In addition, the South Seattle Community College big band will provide musical accompaniment, and free coffee, juice, cookies and doughnuts will be served.

The 1993 tour committee, which includes **KAREN CARLSON KEMPTON**, **RICHARD VINCENT**, **SHELLY SMITH DUNLOP**, **RUSSETT**

**NORDLING**, **ERMA SCHWARTZ**, **DEB BARKER** AND **CHARLIE JUNG**, is already looking forward to next year's tour.

Merrilee, a real-estate agent for ERA Bianchi-Zaar, says another six new sites have made commitments to be on the 1994 tour.

Anyone with questions about this year's tour can call Merrilee on her pager phone at 728-4234.

### **A look at our past**

Just for nostalgia's sake, let's look back at the sites on our society's Tour of Homes, from 1989 through 1992. We salute the owners of these sites for their generous participation in the tour:

**Four years:** Hainsworth House, 2657 37th Ave. S.W.

**Three years:** Villa Heidelberg, 4845 45th Ave. S.W.; Kenney Presbyterian Home, 7125 Fauntleroy Way S.W.

**Two years:** Sumbaro Mansion, 1715 Sunset Ave. S.W.; Alki Point Lighthouse, 3201 Alki Ave. S.W.; 1503 42nd Ave. S.W.

**One year:** Holy Rosary Church, 4139

42nd Ave. S.W.; Gatewood Elementary School, 4302 S.W. Myrtle St.; White Center Park, 1321 S.W. 102nd St.; West Seattle Library, 2306 42nd Ave. S.W.; 1533 42nd Ave. S.W.; 2715 Belvidere Ave. S.W.; 4106 S.W. Findlay St.; 4857 41st Ave. S.W.; Hiawatha Community Center, 2700 California Ave. S.W.; 5114 S.W. Grayson St.; 1723 41st Ave. S.W.; 4511 S.W. Webster St.; 4605 S.W. Monroe St.; Walker Rock Garden, 5407 37th Ave. S.W.; Admiral Twin Theatre, 2347 California Ave. S.W.; 1750 Palm Ave. S.W.; 4209 S.W. Seattle St.; 1904 47th Ave. S.W.; 3029 49th Ave. S.W.; 5936 45th Ave. S.W.; 4408 Beach Drive S.W.



# Letter, interview bring a house's past to life

GLENNA GOULD has never worked as a detective, but she sure is acting like one now.

The wife of society member VERNON GOULD, Glenna is tracking down the history of the house she and Vernon have shared for many years at 6007 49th Ave. S.W., west of the Morgan Junction.

Her search has turned up historic letters, led her to the regional office of the state archives and prompted her to conduct a delightful oral-history interview with a woman who lived in the house 85 years ago.

The first early-day details of the house, which sits high above other residences along a quiet street that overlooks Puget Sound, came from a 14-page, hand-written letter dated Oct. 17, 1908, and written by FLORA BELLE McCORMICK HARRIS three months before her death from gangrenous appendicitis at the age of 39.

Flora Belle, her husband JACK WILEY, and their four children — Frances, Anne, Jack and Charles — lived at the house from 1907 to 1910.

Those years marked the dawn of a new era for the south end of West Seattle, as the entire Duwamish peninsula south to Roxbury Street was annexed by Seattle in 1907, the same year the Fauntleroy streetcar line opened.

While Flora Belle and Jack planned to sell their house to “get out of debt,” the letter clearly indicates the family enjoyed living there.

“This lot is 50 by 150, and a finer lot could not be found in Seattle,” Flora Belle wrote. “It is out in a newly settled suburb of Seattle, South of West Seattle.

“We are up on a bluff overlooking the sound, and we can see all of the boats going to and fro between Seattle and Tacoma, also see all of the Battleships and other boats going to the Navy Yard at Bremerton. We also have full view of the Olympic Mountains.

“There is a path from our yard down to the Beach, and it takes but a few minutes to go down. The children

went in bathing nearly every day as long as the weather was warm. The air is so pure here, it is benefitting every one of us.”

Glenna was pleased to find details about the house in the letter:

“This kitchen and bath room are finished off in imitation of white tiling instead of wainscotting,” Flora Belle wrote. “There is no bath tub or toilet in yet, as we haven’t city water out here. I have a fine enameled sink, however, with a pipe leading out to the closet in the back yard. The house is all wired for electricity.”

Of course, a proud mother doesn’t fail to write about her offspring:

“The children have to go to school every day on the street car — the city furnishes free tickets and they have lots of fun, but they say the poor conductor nearly goes crazy with a car full of frisky boys and girls.

## The joys

# of

“The children set up a howl every time we talk of selling this nice place — they are in love with it. Besides, they say they are tired of moving.”

One of the children, 10-year-old Frances, received special mention in the letter:

“This morning I was not feeling well, and the girls got up and built the fire and got their own breakfast, and Frances mended a rip in Charles’ trousers, and they all got off to school on time.

Frances still makes fine cakes and now can make excellent cookies.

Just now she is making some of those cinnamon rolls I used to make at home. She makes bread occasionally.

# ral

# history

“Wiley and I were

talking about her the other day, and we could not remember ever hearing of any one saying an unkind word of her or ever a complaint from any one about her.

“One woman told another the other day that she just loved that Frances Harris, and another woman told her that she always behaved herself and was such a little lady.”

Glenna located Frances recently, through the help of Flora Belle’s granddaughter, HELEN HARRIS BORTON OTT, of Anacortes. Helen’s mother, FRANCES HARRIS BORTON, the “little lady” of Flora Belle’s letter, is now 95 years old (to be 96 in June) and living in Wallingford.

Even more rewarding was the discovery that Frances’



THE GOULD house at 6007 49th Ave. S.W. as it appears today.





Photo by Clay Eals

**FRANCES BORTON (left), 95, helps Glenna Gould document the configuration of her house when she was a girl in 1907-1910.**

memory of her childhood is sharp as a pin. In a two-hour videotaped interview on Feb. 7 of this year, Frances shared warm and witty details and anecdotes of her days as a 9-, 10- and 11-year-old in West Seattle.

Her stories ranged from childhood pranks to specific aspects of her house — such as the huge window seat in the bay window.

“We used to lift the lid and get rid of everything and get it out of sight when people were coming,” she said with a smile.

She remembers the kitchen as her favorite room of the house.

“I can see my mother cooking,” she said. “Every Saturday she used to have to heat water for baths, so we always had baked beans and brown bread every Saturday. She had the fire going all day long.”

The house’s pot-bellied stove was fueled by coal brought up from the basement. Frances remembers that one time the delivery of coal got her little brother, then 6 or 7, in trouble.

“I can’t understand the coal man, but he came with a load of coal and a chute. They were supposed to shoot it into the basement, and nobody was home but him (her little brother).

“The coal man said, ‘Where should I put the coal?’ He said, ‘Oh, just dump in in the yard,’ and the darn fool did it, dumped it all in the yard. Well, my dad came home. He was so mad, he made my brother take it chunks at a time, chunks that he’d left, and throw it in the basement.

“It was the coal man’s fault for doing a thing like that. He shouldn’t have listened to a little kid.”

Frances remembers playing with other kids in the neighborhood. “Half the time we were barefoot,” she said.

Often, the neighborhood kids headed down the backyard path to Puget Sound.

“Of course, we spent an awful lot of time in that cold, cold water, but we didn’t think anything of it,” she said.

“One time my dad was down there. I guess he was going to try to make us learn to swim or something, and we were trying to avoid him for some reason, and he walked right out in his clothes. He had a pair of pants on, and he walked right out and dunked us in the water. We weren’t happy with him right then, but he did it anyway.”

Frances remembers neighbors such as the Andersons, Buchanans, Morrisons, Schmidts, Brittaines, Michaelis,

Thordleys -- and a certain boy named Kenneth Swain.

“I had a crush on him, but he couldn’t see me for dust,” she said.

Crushes weren’t her only pre-teen adventures, however.

“There used to be a huge big gully on Graham Street, and there was a bear down there. We used to go blackberry picking some- times, and somebody saw a

bear down there, and a man went out and tried to kill it and wounded it, and they had to go out and finally finish it.

“I can see that bear skin. They took the bear skin, and everybody around there got a piece of bear meat, but they had that bear skin hanging on a clothesline.”

Memories like these make oral-history interviews so much fun to conduct and so valuable to preserve.

That’s what **GLENN A GOULD** has discovered!

## Have recorder, will interview

Do you know of someone who would make the subject for a good oral-history interview?

Then you should contact **MARGE COOPER**, who is conducting such interviews for our society with an audio tape recorder.

Coordinating her efforts is **CAROL VINCENT**, our society’s president, who initiated the monthly West Seattle History Discussion Series at the West Seattle Library.

Particularly good subjects are those with memories of early days in West Seattle and White Center. Accompanying photos and artifacts are helpful, too.

Interested? Call Marge at 935-9345 or Carol at 937-6744.



The challenges of  
Harbor Avenue through

# Elvida's Eyes

## The 'terrible' slides

[Editor's note: The following is the second in a series of articles on Harbor Avenue that will appear in Footprints this year. The author is Ada Hallberg, a Beach Drive resident and society member.]

By ADA HALLBERG

I met Elvida Ellingsen Brewster when I was a little girl in the 1930s when I went to Alki grammar school with her only child, Betty.

I felt her strength and determination even though I was a youngster. Her lips, often grim, had a special large smile that turned on her brilliant eyes, already brighter than most, and her lips, whether grim or smiling, were always red, red, bright red.

The Novelty Flour Mill (which later became owned by Centennial), a cornerstone employer, had been in business for years, and it hired people from the area.

"There was quite a Norwegian settlement down there near the mill," Elvida told me. "Different ones of them worked in the mill. Then they all came up to the stores to do their shopping and stuff.

"Peterson's shipyards was down there, too.... That family is still in West Seattle, and there was Winge and Dunston.... I don't know just what years they were there.

"Further down from Peterson's was a big clubhouse where, oh, those who lived up on the hill in West Seattle and thought they were a little bit better than somebody else, they used to have some pretty wild parties down there. This club wasn't the West Seattle Yacht Club. That was down there, too. It was where we go to vote now. It's Haury's Boat House.

"Hilda Burns' dad and her mother, they had a boat-house there. They used to rent out boats. There always

---

*'In the old days, there was a Slide Patrol.'*

---



THE BIG snow of 1916 brought slides on Harbor Avenue.

was a grocery store. Don Brown owned the ferry, and he had a beautiful house right near the ferry dock. He was right on the waterfront. It got torn down. Too bad. It was a beautiful house.

"There was an awful lot of slides in those says."

Elvida's demeanor changed, and she seemed to slump as she said, "I can remember some bad slides."

The bluffs along Alki and Harbor Avenues were plagued with slides for many years. As a girl in the 1930s, I can remember mother taking hot chocolate to friends whose home had been hit by a slide down near Duwamish Head. On south Beach Drive, the house of a friend of my grandma's was smashed to pieces as it slid down the hill, but no one was in it at the time.

As recently as the 1970s, a Beach Drive home of some friends of mine was destroyed. A river of mud flowed sluggishly down the hill to the street from their lot. The family moved to a flat part of Alki and has been living there comfortably ever since.

As Elvida continued to talk to me, she appeared grief-stricken.

"I saw some terrible slides when I was a little girl," she said slowly. "In the old days, there was a Slide Patrol. I don't know who they were. Maybe they were men who lived near us, but they would take shifts all



night long, swinging lanterns for light and watching the hill for signs of a slide.

"There would be a knock on our door, and a man would say, 'Mrs. Ellingsen, we can see the hill cracking. You'd better get on over to the ferry dock,' and we would bundle up and go over to the waiting room of the ferry terminal. There was a pot-bellied stove there, and they would keep it fairly warm as we waited out the night."

One night, she said, the hill cracked terribly.

"There was a terrible slide down there on Fairmount one time. Well, there always was slides, like I told you.

---

*'This one was awful because a mother cooking dinner and her two children playing around the floor were all killed just that fast, in a slide.'*

---

But this one was awful because a mother cooking dinner and her two children playing around the floor were all killed just that fast, in a slide.

"This slide was the worst! There was this little house on the hill. A man lived there with his wife and two little children. This woman's husband worked on the railroad. He called her up one night and said he would be home, and she told him she was just putting some spuds in the oven.

"He got to Fairmount, and he seen the little house go. It happened that fast. It was a torrential downpour. Especially where they put in the cement bulkhead it was bad. They didn't leave an opening for the water to go out.

"Yes, there it was, a terrible thing. That man getting off the

streetcar coming by the Novelty mill, he could see his house before the car came to a stop.

"My sister Melba was there at the slide. She had taken coffee down that ma had made. Police were there and everybody. There was all kinds of help.

"How can you help that man? I don't remember anyone else being buried like this woman and her two children."

Elvida suddenly looked me in the eye.

"I'll tell you what," she said. "I've got some pictures of a slide, girl, and I'll give them to you. Then you'll know what a slide is all about."

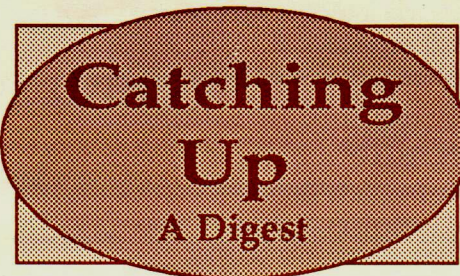
Among those photos are the ones that accompany this series of articles.

## Members' picnic coming

Remember last year's relaxing, informative and fun membership picnic at Mee-Kwa-Mooks Park on Beach Drive?

The quiet, historic and easily accessible setting worked so well that our Executive Board has chosen it as the site for this year's picnic, to be held on Sunday June 27.

The picnic, for all members and their families, will run from 1 to 4 p.m. Our society will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, buns, soft drinks, coffee and ice cream, but potluck



offerings are welcome, too.

The city's Mee-Kwa-Mooks Park lies in the 4000 block, on the east side of Beach Drive Southwest.

You will receive a flyer about the picnic closer to the event. For now, however, mark the date on your calendar!

## School preservation

Will some of our area's most historic schools be lost to the wrecking ball?

That fate is possible, under a new process called Capital Improvement Program II that may go to city voters this Nov. 2.

Under CIP II, the Seattle School District plans to renovate, modernize and/or replace 37 schools, including six in West Seattle.

The six are Cooper, Fairmount Park, Highland Park and Hughes elementary schools, Madison Middle School and West Seattle High School. (The Cooper and Hughes buildings currently are closed.)

Consultants hired by the district held informational hearings in March and April at each of the schools. Their recommendations for the six West Seattle schools will be unveiled during a final hearing to be held from 7 to 10 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1, at Lafayette Elementary School in the Admiral district.

District-wide hearings are also scheduled on July 1 and 14.

## Alki/Harbor markers

New Executive Board trustee **ARLENE WADE** is representing our society in pursuing funding for a coordinated series of historic markers along Alki and Harbor avenues.

Over the past few months, Arlene, who lives along Alki Beach, has worked closely with the Alki Community Council, a Metro mitigation panel of Alki residents, the Port of Seattle and several other city and county departments.

The idea of coordinated markers, along with artistic sculptures of turn-of-the-century bathers, is gaining support among funding sources.

Working with Arlene on the project are **MARIETTA PANE**, another Executive Board trustee, and former trustee **BRAD CHRISMAN**. Anyone wanting more information on the project or wishing to help can contact Arlene at 937-7494.

## Elliott is back

Our society's founder, first president and current secretary, **ELLIOTT COUDEN**, was hit by a serious bout of pneumonia during



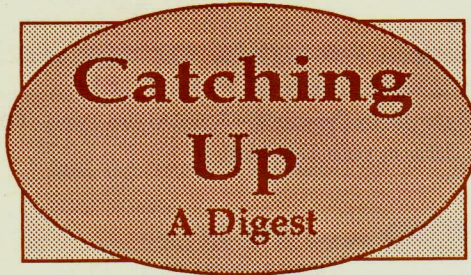
February. The illness prompted his first absence from an Executive Board meeting of the society since its inception nine years ago.

After about a month of doctor-ordered quiet at home, however, Elliott recovered completely and is back at work on projects for our society and a myriad of other organizations.

It's wonderful to have him back in good health!

## Driving-tour brochure

West Seattle artist **KAY DEWAR** is fast at work completing pen-and-ink and colored pencil renderings of about 20 historic sites for inclusion in our society's first driving-tour booklet.



The booklet should be ready by July 8, when a show of her original works will open at the ArtsWest (formerly West Seattle Cultural Society) gallery in Jefferson Square.

Accompanying the artwork in the 20-page, vertical-format booklet will be capsule descriptions of the sites and other history-related information regarding West Seattle and White Center.

Our Executive Board has not yet decided on how the booklet will be distributed and whether it will carry a purchase price.

Anyone wishing further information about the booklet can call Kay at 937-7784.

## Admiral anniversary

The Admiral Twin Theater celebrated its first anniversary under new ownership and management on April 2, 1993.

During the first year after its reopening, the Admiral screened 104 films and drew nearly 180,000 admissions, or an average of about 3,460 a week — a cause for celebration for those who worked for and supported preservation of the 1941 moviehouse!

## Mural faces

The **LANNY LITTLE** mural painted last fall on the south wall of the West Seattle Post Office is creating quite a stir, with its depiction of 92 spectators watching the "Land of Oz" float in the 1973 West Seattle Hi-Yu parade.

There's one small problem, however. When Little shot photos of people on the street to paint into the mural, he didn't take names.

The West Seattle Chamber of Commerce wants to identify all 92, if possible, and is seeking the names of 16 who are unidentified.

Anyone who can help identify the 16 faces can look at the photos used by Little at the chamber's office, 4151 California Ave. S.W., not far from the mural itself. For more information, call at the chamber at 932-5685.

## In memoriam

We celebrate the lives of two of our society's earliest charter members, both of whom served as trustees on our original Executive Board.

**ELSIE A. "POLLY" POLLOCK**, member #24, was heavily involved in many White Center organizations over the years. She died Jan. 20, 1993.

**THOMAS M. CARSLAY**, member #21, a well-known auto parts dealer and community activist in White Center, died March 15, 1993.

We also note the March 14, 1993, passing of **ERNEST W. CAMPBELL**, in Portland, Ore. Campbell, former Seattle schools superintendent, was the adopted son of West Seattle pioneer real-estate agent, school principal and Seattle City Council member **W.T. CAMPBELL**.

## Three join board

Our historical society's Executive Board has a new look as we enter the spring of 1993.

Following the resignations of three board members, three new members have been appointed by the remainder of the board.

**ARLENE WADE**, a West Seattle resident who is coordinating our society's Alki/Harbor Avenue marker project (see item on page 7), is filling a trustee vacancy left by the resignation of **JAMES JEFFREY**. Arlene's term runs through December 1995.

**MERRILEE HAGEN**, a West Seattle resident and chair of our society's 1993 Tour of Homes, is filling a trustee vacancy left by the resignation of **BOB SUMBARDO**. Merrilee's term runs through December of this year.

**CAROL MUNOZ**, a White Center resident and secretary of the White Center Chamber of Commerce, is filling the trustee vacancy left by **CLAY EALS**, who has been appointed to the vice-presidential vacancy left by the resignation of **DEB BARKER**. Carol's term runs through December 1994, and Clay's vice-presidential term runs through the end of this year.

---

### FOOTPRINTS

(Editor: Clay Eals)

Newsletter of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society  
c/o South Seattle Community College  
6000 16th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98106

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SEATTLE, WA  
PERMIT NO. 4960