

Sound Spots

The Music of the Duwamish Peninsula

The Duwamish Peninsula is full of hotspots where music makes history. These places inspire our community of sound makers and listeners. This year-long exhibit is an opportunity for the Southwest Seattle Historical Society to celebrate music as an important aspect of our community's culture—past and present.

Share with us your favorite Sound Spots, and explore the music history from our Alki, West Seattle, White Center, and South Park neighborhoods.
As music history is made—this exhibit will grow.



Pete, Ivar, And Woody

In the fall of 1941, musicians Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger recorded two songs on Alki Point as houseguests of Ivar and Margaret Haglund.

Guthrie and banjoist Seeger were touring the West Coast together with The Almanac Singers, a New York City-based folk music group founded by Millard Lampell and Lee Hays. The group was touring to support the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO)—a federation of unions for industrial workers. The pair of folkies played several union halls in the Northwest and needed a place to crash while in Seattle.

Haglund, a musician himself and known collector of folk songs recorded the folkies during their stay, capturing the songs "Talking Columbia" and "Jackhammer Blues". At the beginning of the first song Guthrie can be heard giving a shout out to Margaret and 'Ee-var' – Ivar's proper name pronunciation.



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Paul Dorpat

Left to Right:
Woody Guthrie (1942)
Pete Seeger (1944)
Ivar Haglund (1941)

Listen to the recordings at the listening station



The Embers and The Hour

In the 1960s, two West Seattle venues became the hottest jazz spots in Seattle—The Embers and The Happy Hour Tavern.

The Happy Hour Tavern in the admiral district originally opened in 1945. It was primarily known as a sports bar, until West Seattle High School graduate, Kerry Kinsey took over in 1960. "The Hour," as it was affectionately known, featured jazz jam sessions with locals including Woody Woodhouse and Mike Mandel, and visiting stars like Charlie Byrd and Stan Getz.

Kinsey then opened The Embers in 1964 on Alki, offering cocktails, dining, dancing, and live jazz. The Embers became a popular nightspot—High profile guests included Robert Culp, Bill Cosby, Quincy Jones and West Seattle's own Dyan Cannon. While musicians like Dave Lewis, George Griffin, Gene "Corky" Corcoran, Bill Franklin, and Larry Coryell performed. It later became a Rock n' Roll venue, and ultimately demolished in 2003.



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SWSHS



Left to Right:
Stan getz (1950s)
The Embers (1980s)
The Benbow Inn and Happy Hour (1960s)

Listen to the recordings by artists at the listening station



Penny Lane to Easy Street

In 1987, Easy Street Records in West Seattle started a half-a-block up from its current location, as a record store named Penny Lane. Penny Lane Records opened in the summer of 1969. The owners, Willie Mackay and Paul Portteus, Jr. got their start working for Portteus' father at General Record Service, a record warehouse in Georgetown, WA. Due to a record sale boom in the late 1960s, Portteus' father urged the two to open their own record store, and offered to invest in the store by supplying their initial inventory of records. The two chose the small town of West Seattle as their first store's location for its close proximity to the warehouse. Influenced by the Beatles they named it Penny Lane.

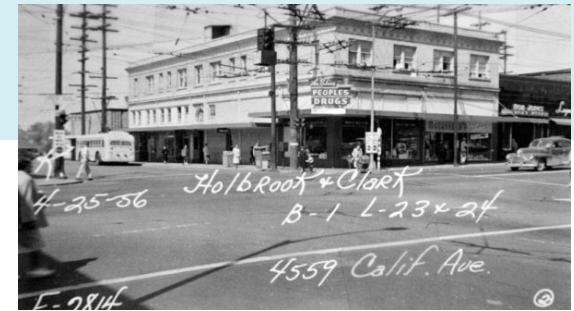
In 1979, Mackay and Portteus opened a second store in Lakewood, WA—Portteus left the business soon after. In 1987, Penny Lane employee Matt Vaughan, took over the West Seattle store and in 1988 changed the name to Easy Street Records. A year later Vaughan moved the store to the corner of SW Alaska St and California Ave SW in the long-vacant Hamm Building, now a city landmark.



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Left to Right:
Easy Street Cafe (1997)

General Record Service Warehouse building
on River St. (2017)

The Hamm Building (1956)

Listen to the recordings of West Seattle Bands at the Listening Station



The Boles Basement

On March 22, 1960, Tacoma based band *The Ventures* recorded their hit song “Walk—Don’t Run” in one of the most reputable recording studios in Seattle—Joe and Virginia Boles’ basement on SW Admiral Way. Hobbyist audio engineer, Joe Boles, started recording local and touring band’s live performances in venues across the Northwest. Boles purchased an Ampex model 351-2 tape recorder to capture stereophonic studio sessions in the couple’s basement, creating his own business J. F. Boles Custom Recordings.

Boles’ can be credited with capturing the original “Seattle Sound” including the chart-topping song “Come Softly to Me” by *The Fleetwoods*, in 1959, recordings of West Seattle’s own *The Dynamics*, and “Louie Louie” by *The Wailers*. Boles also recorded national performers, including Bobby Darin, Buck Owens, and singer Pat Suzuki.



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Left to Right:
Joe and Virginia Boles (1950s)
The Fleetwoods (1950s)
Buck Owens (1960s)
Pat Suzuki (1960s)

Listen to Boles’ recordings at the listening station

