

STEILACOOM HISTORICAL



MUSEUM QUARTERLY

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Fall, 1986

NICK DOERING

On the day Washington Territory became a state, Nick Doering and Emma Whitzel were married in Steilacoom—November 11, 1889. Nick had come West from South Dakota. He travelled with his horses on an emigrant train looking for a place to settle, looking for the "land of opportunity." After choosing Steilacoom, he sent for Emma to join him.

The new couple quickly settled into their new life. According to *Bonney's History of Pierce County*, the horses and Nick went to work hauling for the Crystal Bay Lumber Company. By 1891 The

Continued on Page 6

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Joan Curtis, Bette Bradley — Editors

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Steilacoom Museum Association like any volunteer organization depends totally on the availability, interest and generosity of its membership to make it and keep it viable. Your Association of 16 years boasts approximately 380 family memberships and is still growing. As the sponsor of several notable events (Apple Squeeze and Salmon Bake) and projects (Bair Store, Museum, Orr Home, *Quarterly*) our organization has become extremely well known in the entire Puget Sound area and beyond. Without the willingness of you to volunteer your time and energy when called on, none of this would have been possible. Having just recently witnessed the enthusiasm involved in one of the most successful Salmon Bakes of recent years, I would like to applaud and thank you for your continued support of local historical preservation.

Tom McAvoy

SUCCESSFUL SALMON BAKE

"One of the best Salmon Bakes yet!" That's the report from Tom McAvoy and Don Rehbarg, chairmen as they evaluated the 16th annual bake. The experienced workers enabled the lines to flow smoothly and the salmon was praised as the best ever. Almost the best ever included a profit of \$2,339.86. Our thanks to all who cooked, baked, served, set and cleaned up, husked corn, etc.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Annual Apple Squeeze	October 12
Annual Christmas Dinner and Meeting	December 6
Nutcracker Ballet	December

STEILACOOM LIVES OUT IT'S FIRST 100 YEARS

The Strange Destiny Cut Out for Washington's First Incorporated City Continues Unbroken As It Emerges As A Sunny, Peaceful, Residential Suburb of Picturesque Charm

(The following article was written in 1952 by Charlie Mann as Steilacoom celebrated its Centennial)

"Steilacoom's unique history shows it has had more battles, more boons and more almost flattening depressions than any other Community in the Pacific Northwest. And more plain feuds between individuals and families, too!

For 101 years, since the Big Three Founding Fathers, Lafayette Balch, John Chapman and Leumuel Bills, staked out a trifle over 300 acres each, and fought to have their Name live in History as Port Steilacoom, New Steilacoom and the Town of Steilacoom—the unbroken pattern of Hope and Reverses has followed to this day.

Surely Destiny willed it that the old Town must ever be limited to a methodical, very slow development as a city of small homes filled with people who earned their living everywhere BUT the Town they called Home.

As far back as the dreary post-Civil War period between 1865 and 1875, Steilacoom's first Citizens were already folding up and moving their families and businesses to Seattle, Olympia, Tacoma and the Puyallup Valley—probably up the old Byrd's Mill road that connected Steilacoom, Custer and Puyallup via the back hill section of South of Tacoma, and now known as State Historical Road No. 1. Glimpses of that time show where Steilacoom lost population and almost gave up the ghost. Labor and rough building materials were cheap, and hardware, glass and furnishings were expensive and brought by boat from San Francisco. Most of what few "Old" buildings that remain in Steilacoom today, in 1952, were built in a period when a 6-room house could be completed for less than \$500! One twentieth of today's costs!

One of those swift, history-changing Events that altered the whole Metropolitan Aspect of the entire Puget Sound Country came around 1854, when the vigorous John M. Chapman almost had Pierce County's very name changed to Steilacoom County. A few deft moves late of an evening on the part of the Seattle settlers who were jealous rivals of the folks at Steilacoom, put the kibosh on both this move, and the Chapman-inspired move to make Steilacoom the State Capital instead of Olympia.

Back in 1869 the whole North Pacific Coast was agog with the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad. Steilacoom's hopes were high. So was Seattle's. But New Tacoma won, even over Old Tacoma, as well as Steilacoom.

The County Seat even moved to Tacoma in 1880.

The destiny of Steilacoom had innumerable periods of Hope and Optimism. The establishment of America's first Federal Prison on McNeil Island, with Steilacoom as the Mainland Port; the conversion of old Ft. Steilacoom to Western State Hospital; the coming of the steam, and later electrified, streetcar line from Tacoma via 11th St., Regents Park and Chambers Creek brought bright new hope of Summer Homes and Commuter Dwellers from "The City," only to result in a further draining away of home-town Business enterprises. Then the late Henry Hewitt's pre-World War I plans for a great steel mill, financed by English capital, to boom Steilacoom's payrolls and Henry's vast land holdings between Steilacoom and Tacoma; then the Match Factory in the abandoned steel works buildings; and finally, the greatest bubble of hope in its history, the start of the Puget Sound line of the Northern Pacific in 1912. This was to temporarily hurt Steilacoom's rows of summer homes on the beach, but quickly replace them with Industry.

Then came the World War II boom, with Ft. Lewis overflowing into every vacant Steilacoom home; the Pacific Traction line replaced the old Chambers Creek streetcar line. Many Steilacoom residents helped build Ft. Lewis—but it too boomeranged and blocked the land along Steilacoom's entire Eastern border, creating a Civilian No Man's Land which exists to this day.

And, of course, Steilacoom for years was Mail & Shipping Port to the most of Long Branch Peninsula and North Bay, as well as Anderson and McNeil Islands, before the coming of the ferries and good auto roads, and later the Narrows Bridge, ruined the passenger, mail and express boating activity out of Steilacoom.

Then, the original Cascade Paper Company on Chambers Creek, in which dozens of Steilacoom families lost their life savings as the post-War depression bankrupted this important Steilacoom payroll.

But the Boom since 1930 has erased the stings of these ups and downs.

Steilacoom's residential population has doubled since 1930.

The Automobile Age, that at first shrank Steilacoom, to the benefit of areas nearer the larger cities, has reversed the trend, and today, Steilacoom is re-booming anew with many fine new homes. Its "Payroll Base" lies scattered in a circle 15 miles away from Town—McNeil Island, Western State Hospital, Chambers Creek's four busy industries—the two huge gravel pits, Chambers Creek Lumber and West Tacoma Newsprint Co.; the Veterans Hospital; Ft. Lewis; McChord Field and Mt. Rainier Ordinance Depot, together with nearly 100 families who live and play in Steilacoom but commute daily clear to Tacoma!

Destiny long ago foretold Steilacoom as a 100% Residential village. Nothing that has happened between 1851 has changed what Fate has decreed to be the ultimate Development for Washington's oldest Town.

Washington Standard, February 10, 1882 (Olympia Newspaper)

"While it is reported that the committee has reported favorable on Mr. Brent's bills to admit this Territory as a State, we have not the slightest thought that the bill will become a law."

ALYCE'S WINNING PIE

Congratulations to Alyce Wartenbe, whose yellow Delicious apple pie placed fourth in the Crisco and Family Circle Magazine American Pie Celebration recently. Sixty-four contestants competed in Washington state with apple pies made with a Crisco shortening crust. The winner will compete in Nashville, Tennessee in November in the national contest. Stop by the Bair Drug Store and sample Alyce's apple pie or one of the many other pies she is famous for.

APPLE PIE RECIPE

(by Alyce Wartenbe)

6 cups Washington Yellow Delicious apples (sliced)

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon corn starch

1 teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

¼ teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons butter or margarine

2 tablespoons frozen apple juice concentrate

Peel and slice Washington Yellow Delicious apples. Mix dry ingredients separately. Add to apples in a microwavable bowl. Cover with plastic film and heat on high in microwave for 10 minutes. Pour into crust. Rub cold water around edge of bottom crust to help seal. Lay top crust over pie. Trim to ½ inch larger than pie plate. Crimp edges. Cut 1 inch slit in center to vent. Bake at 350 degrees until golden.

3 cups flour

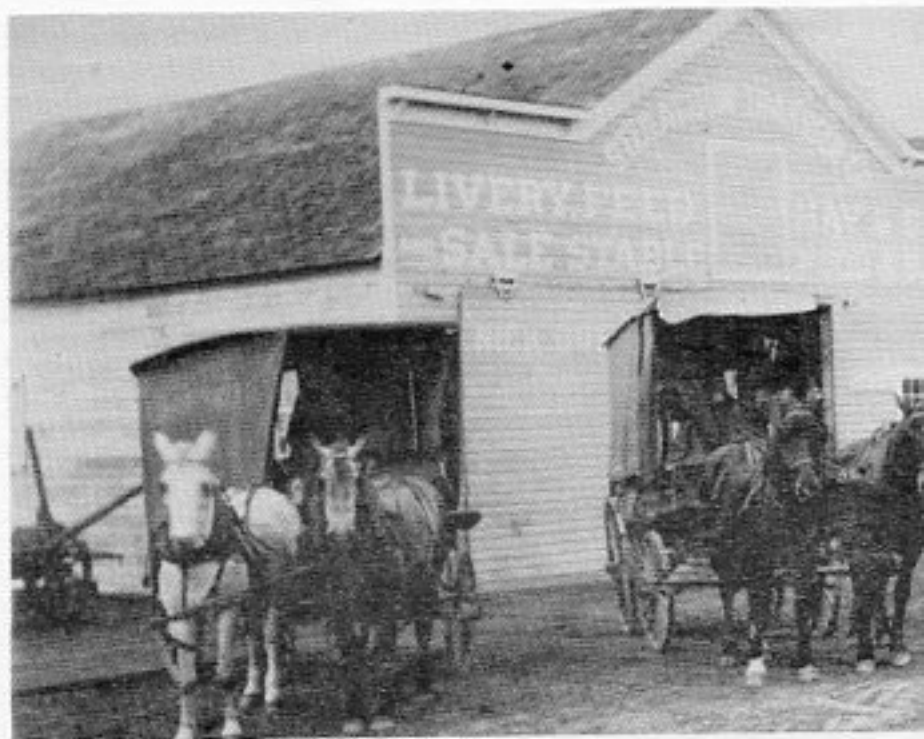
½ cup Crisco Shortening

½ cup butter flavored Crisco

½ teaspoon salt

¼ cup cold water

Mix dry ingredients together with fingers. Mix in cold water with fork. Chill for ½ hour or more before rolling.



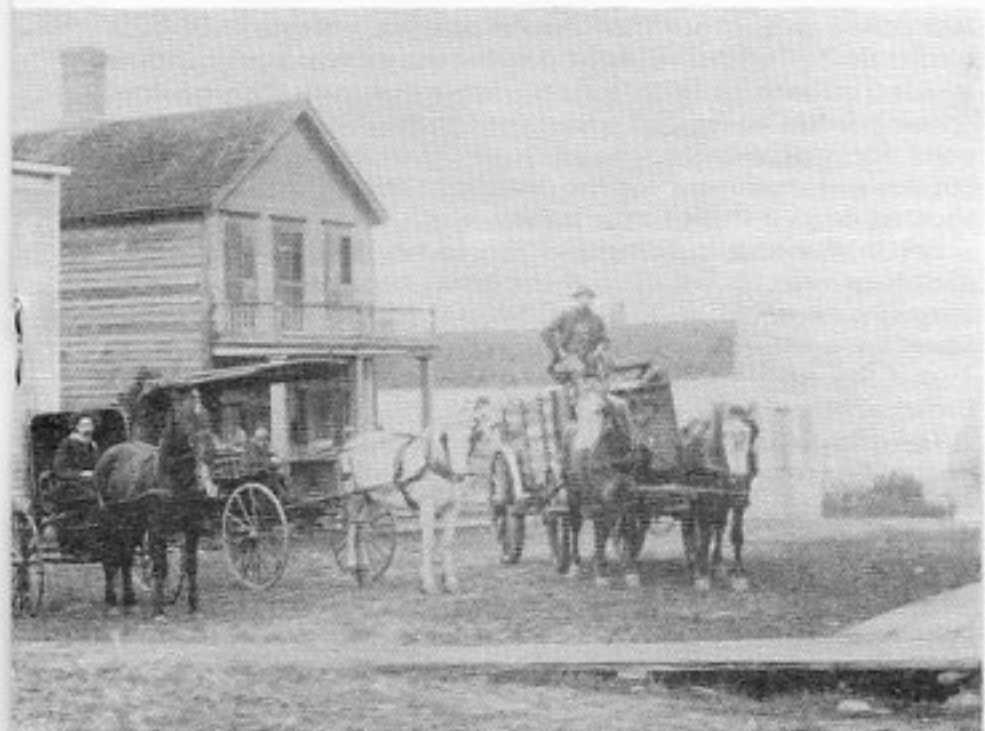
NICK DOERING—continued

Steilacoom Express with Nick Doering as Proprietor was running three times a week between Steilacoom and Tacoma.

With the advent of the Tacoma Steilacoom Electric Railway in 1891 summer homes quickly dotted the beach. Doering became indispensable as he hauled furniture, provisions and all the necessities needed to supply families while they summured in Steilacoom away from the city. Late in the season he hauled load after load in his moving van back to Tacoma as the procedure was reversed.

Council minutes of 1892 indicate Doering made a bid for furnishing gravel for the streets as the Town began a vigorous program to develop its streets. According to Nick's son, Russ, his dad was never on the Town Council. It would have been a conflict of interest to serve and also do business with the Town. His company was responsible for the grading of Steilacoom Boulevard and the Chambers Creek Road in addition to many of the Steilacoom streets through the next fifty years.

Many of the jobs were seasonal. During the fall and winter months the teams of horses were active hauling wood to Steilacoom homes. At times eight to ten woodcutters were employed. After the wood was cut into four foot lengths in the nearby forested areas



Doering Business and Family Home

it was hauled to the woodyard at the top of Main Street to season and dry. The wood was then cut into 16-inch lengths for the wood stoves or into 24-inch lengths for the fireplaces.

In the spring the teams were used for plowing as the residents prepared for the growing season. The horses were there when basements needed to be dug or stumps pulled. The clatter of their hooves and the rattle of the wagon could be heard long before they arrived at their destination to put in a long day's work.

By 1900 a picture shows the Steilacoom Transfer Company at the corner of Wilkes and Commercial with the Doering home on the right. The Doering family was busy—Emma caring for her young children and participating in the Ladies Aid at the Oberlin Church and Nick, meeting the demands of his business and serving his community as a Mason and church member.

The Coming of the Northern Pacific

The pace was to increase and the Steilacoom scene to change, however, as news spread that the Northern Pacific Railroad would build a line along the waterfront. The property on the waterside of Commercial Street was purchased for right-of-way. The buildings on the properties to either be moved or torn down. Doering swung

into action as he began plans for his new livery stable to be built further down Commercial behind where the present bank building stands. It was to be larger—three stories high with the first floor opening onto Commercial where the horses were housed. The second floor opening onto the alley off Lafayette Street stored the buggies and equipment and the third floor held the hay which was shunted down a shoot to the horses.

Beside the new building was the family home. Nick would always be near his horses so if there was any disturbance during the night he could go to them. Several houses on Commercial Street were moved up to Lafayette by Doering at the same time. Two of those houses still stand owned by Doering's grandson, Nick Brown.

The minutes of the Masonic Lodge indicate that after the Lodge had sold its property on Commercial to the railroad for \$10,000 in February, 1910, Doering was given permission by the railroad to move the old building to his property on Lafayette. The understanding was that the Lodge would have use of it until the new Masonic Lodge was built. Thus the old Masonic Temple continued to be a building of many uses—grocery store on the first floor with the second floor used as a meeting place for many years. The Town Council held its meeting there, as did other groups. Dances were held occasionally, but since Doering didn't advocate dancing—they were discontinued—the windows boarded up and the second floor became a basketball court for the sportsminded youth.

The teams of horses hauled sand and gravel for the laying of the roadbed for the railway. Activity was at an all time high as workers were hired to meet the deadline in December, 1914 when the first train went through the Town. Russ Doering remembers as a child of six trooping down to the new station to sing a welcoming song. "A big wig gave me 2-bits for singing so loud." (Editor's Note: See *Quarterly Winter*, 1984).

Soon after the railroad began its regular schedule, electricity came to Town. The poles were floated in by water. Doering hauled them out and set them up around the Town before the wires were strung.

Expansion of the Business

The Steilacoom Transfer Co. was expanding. Even the name as it became The Steilacoom Fuel and Transfer Co. Not only wood but also coal was delivered to Steilacoom homes. The coal came from Bucoda, Buckley and stoker coal came from Utah in carload lots. Egg coal was small so it could be used to fire up the kitchen ranges.

Tom Lester, who had started working at 15 as a barn boy for \$25 a month, was hired on as a driver. After working at DuPont John

Andrews came to Steilacoom with his six teams of horses and secured a job with Doering. A job he held for 25 years.

The second truck in the Tacoma area was purchased by Doering. It was a Randolph which was the fore-runner to streamlined trucks. At that time, however, the heavy drayage wagons and teams were still the backbone of the company.

As cars became more common vacationers would drive to Steilacoom, leave their cars and take the gas powered *Eagle* to reach their summer homes at Longbranch or McNeil or Anderson Island. The *Eagle*, captained by Glen Elder, was a familiar boat as she plied between the mainland and the islands. Always, the astute businessman, Doering saw a need and an opportunity.

The second floor of the business was turned into Steilacoom's first parking lot. The charge was two-bits a day. Most weekends during the summer months 20 to 30 cars were stored there. As the whistle tooted on the *Eagle* announcing she was coming in on a Sunday evening, the Doerings readied themselves for the onslaught. Every spare person was utilized as the cars had to be moved by pushing and pulling to get the right car out as its owner walked up Commercial Street from the dock.

By the late 1920's Doering was contracting for bridge work, road construction and oil delivery. Oil was first delivered in 50 gallon drums for home fuel, then in 500 gallon containers and finally by pumper truck. With the advent of motorized vehicles delivery expanded to include southern Pierce County.

The Depression Years were lean ones for the Doering family, as well as everyone in Steilacoom. Nick depended on his own sons to help with the company. During this time he retired. As the 1930's ended business began to improve.

An enterprising businessman, who had adapted to the changes of Steilacoom and the surrounding area for over fifty years—Nick Doering—the emigrant teenager who had come from Germany—had prospered. His church, Oberlin Congregational, honored him at its annual meeting in 1941 naming him "Trustee Emeritus" in appreciation of his many years of work for the church. His large family and thriving Steilacoom Fuel and Transfer Co. would testify to his efforts. He died in September, 1942. Emma died in 1952. His son, Russell, and his grandson continued the business before selling to Lakewood Fuel Company in 1971.

**JOIN US FOR THE APPLE SQUEEZE
OCTOBER 12**

FIRST APPLE SQUEEZE—1973

A confident committee publicized the first Apple Squeeze on October 21, 1973 as the "1st Annual Apple Squeeze." On October 12, the 14th annual event will occur. The number of people attending and the array of merchandise have expanded, but the primary objective remains the same—community participation in a fun event.

To promote the Squeeze the *Quarterly*, which was in its infancy, was "sent throughout the town to familiarize citizens with the work of the Association." Attached to the *Quarterly* was a pink flyer inviting all to the Squeeze. It stated "Bring your apples and jug: Make your own cider. No charge. Everyone welcome."

Chairmen Harold Hellyer, Don Rehbarg and Steve Brightman chose Perkins Park for that first Squeeze. Knowing the unpredictability of October weather, large tents borrowed through Harold Feaster were set up. They were needed as a gray drizzle continued throughout the day. Presses were provided by Clyde Davidson, Lyle Dunkin, Tom Hedges, Harold Hellyer, Dick Johnson, Fred Schwab and Bob Stevens.

Ham Rideout's name is the first to be recorded in Harold Hellyer's big leather book. The "Bible" of the Apple Squeezes contains the history of the past 13 events and the names of those who have lined up to take their turns at the presses. Ham used four kinds of apples, a total of 40 pounds to make eight gallons of cider. The book "closed" at 116 that year. In 1985 the book listed 329 names. Estimated attendance for that first year was over 500 people with 700 gallons of cider produced.

Although no charge was made for the use of the presses, the Association's coffers were enriched by a \$310 profit from the sale of coffee and donuts (60 dozen sold), donated jams and jellies and jugs and cups of freshly squeezed cider. Also, many visitors, fully expecting to be charged for the use of the presses, made contributions.

Apples were identified by Larry McGraw, Horticulturalist for the Oregon Historical Society. Exhibits of many varieties of apples, information on the care of fruit trees and a display of pruning equipment were also featured.

In addition to the three chairmen the following were the pioneers of the event: Gerry Evanson, Anne and Lynn Daubenspeck, Peter Favre, Art Bacon, Fred Rosevear and Tim Sheldon.

A letter from Lee Merrill on November 5, 1973 complimenting the committee stated, "I thought Harold's suggestion last spring was a good idea but little did I believe that even you three could

carry it off so efficiently for a truly whole town involvement."

The "truly whole town involvement" has grown into a Puget Sound involvement as squeezers come from all directions to participate. This year the basic formula remains—bring your apples to be pressed, sample the many tasty apple items and bring apples to be identified. That committee knew it had a good thing going when it advertized "1st Annual Apple Squeeze" back in 1973.

The News Tribune, August 7, 1926

"Fire of an unknown origin completely destroyed the Soundview Inn and boathouse on Saltars Point at 6:15 this morning, after a hard battle which eventually brought out over 300 Steilacoom residents, many of whom were scantily clad.

"The inn, a boathouse almost as large, and smaller buildings destroyed, were valued at about \$10,000 and were the property of Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. Green, who had operated this inn on the waterfront for the past five years . . .

"The news of the fire was quickly broadcast to all parts of Steilacoom by means of the old monument bell in the business district, and within a few minutes nearly 300 residents were on the scene. . . ."

WHAT TO TEACH OUR DAUGHTERS

- Teach them self-reliance.
- Teach them to make bread.
- Teach them to add up bills.
- Teach them to wear thick warm shoes.
- Teach them to wash and iron clothes.
- Teach them to make their own dresses.
- Teach them to cook a good meal.
- Teach them how to darn stockings and sew on buttons.
- Teach them every day, dry, hard, common sense.
- Teach them to say "No" and mean it, or "Yes" and stick to it.
- Teach them to wear calico dresses and do it like queens.
- Give them a good, substantial common school education.
- Teach them that a good, rosy romp is worth fifty consumptives.

Weekly Intelligencer—November 22, 1879

SALAMAGUNDI

- ★ Donations have been received in memory of Ethel Scholes and Edna Gaul, long time Steilacoom residents and Association members. Memorials may be mailed to Box 16. Those making contributions can indicate a specific project such as Museum, Orr Home or Wagon Shop for which the money is used, or it can be donated to the Association in general.
- ★ Evidence of a "secret" drinker of many years ago was uncovered by Bob and Marjorie Johnson when they recently re-roofed their home at First and Champion. Two rye whiskey flask-shaped bottles and an amber medicine bottle were discovered under the eaves. The attractive bottles, obviously from days long before Prohibition, apparently were hidden by a former owner or tenant of the house, which pre-dates 1900. Alas, the bottles, donated to the Association, were empty.
- ★ An interesting group of photographs depicting the story of the Bair Drug & Hardware Store from its construction in 1895 until today continue on display at the store. Commemorating the tenth anniversary of the reopening of the store under Association ownership in 1976, the display will remain through the Apple Squeeze. Don't miss it!

Front Page Photo: Nick and Emma Doering with their young family, Circa 1900.

Steilacoom Historical
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