

PIONEER PRESENCES

Newsletter of the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington

September 2011 Volume XXXIII No. 1

Next Meeting

Saturday, October 22, 2011
Business Meeting 10:00 a.m.

Followed by family history
talk and featured speaker
**State Supreme Court Judge
Gerry Alexander**
1:00 p.m.
Pioneer Hall

Table of Contents

Featured speaker	1
President's message	2
Board meeting minutes	3
In memoriam	4
Family history	5
New Trustee bio	6
New members	7
Members' Corner family history	8
Meeting dates 2011-12	9

Contributors for this issue:

**Mary Louise Hammond,
Junius Rochester,
Robert Selene, Sandra Selle,
Teresa Summers, Joe Wert,
Gary Zimmerman**

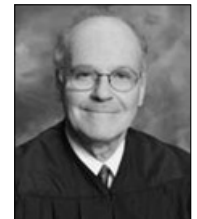
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Featured speaker for the October 22nd meeting is Washington State Supreme Court Justice Gerry L. Alexander

“Abe Lincoln and the Pacific Northwest”

We are pleased to announce State Supreme Court Justice Gerry Alexander has graciously agreed to be our featured speaker at our October 22nd meeting. Gerry Alexander was first elected to a seat on the Washington Supreme Court in 1994. He joined this state's highest bench at that time with over two decades of trial and appellate court experience behind him, having served as a judge of the superior court for Thurston and Mason Counties from 1973 through 1984, and as a judge of the Court of Appeals, Division Two, from 1985 through 1994. In the year 2000, Justice Alexander was re-elected to the Supreme Court. Shortly thereafter, his colleagues elected him to a four-year position as chief justice, effective January 8, 2001. Chief Justice Alexander was re-elected to that position in November 2004 and 2008 and was re-elected to the court in 2006. Although Justice Alexander stepped down as Chief Justice on January 11, 2010, his nine years of service in that position gives him the distinction of being the longest serving Chief Justice in the state's history.



Justice Alexander has deep Washington roots. He was born in Aberdeen and, at an early age, moved with his family to Olympia. He graduated from Olympia High School, which, at the time, was located within sight of the Temple of Justice. After receiving an undergraduate degree in history from the University of Washington, he served as a lieutenant in the United States Army Infantry, and then returned to his alma mater to earn his J.D. in 1964. Justice Alexander has been designated as a distinguished alumnus of the University of Washington Law School and has been awarded a Doctor of Laws by Gonzaga University.

— www.courts.wa.gov



Justice Alexander's topic in October will be “Abraham Lincoln and the Washington Territory.” Lincoln never visited the Territory of Washington, yet he had an impact on our area. And though we were not yet a state during Lincoln's presidency, Congress created the federal Territory of Washington in 1853.

Lincoln appointed the fourth and fifth territorial governors of Washington Territory, as well as three territorial supreme court judges. All these men made important contributions to what would become the 42nd state in 1889. We look forward to Judge Alexander's commentary on our 16th President's influence on our part of the United States.

(Information drawn from an essay presented by Justice Alexander on February 2, 2002.)



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Telephone 206-325-0888
www.wapioneers.org

Pioneer Hall Hours

In September and October, open houses are held the second and fourth Sundays of each month. In November, December, January and February, open houses are set for the second Sundays only.

Time: 1:00 pm to 4: pm.

Volunteers are needed to staff Open Houses. On-the-job training provided.

Board of Officers

President	Junius Rochester
1st Vice President	Robert Selene
2nd Vice President.	Steven Rochester
Secretary	Kathy Durgan
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Historian	Gary Zimmerman
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Dave Brazier, Louise Jones-Brown,
Gayle Johnson
(Term to June 2012)

Mary Louise Hammond, Peggy Parietti,
Joe Wert
(Term to June 2013)

Carol Hawkins, Larry Puffert,
Teresa Summers
(Term to June 2014)

Pioneer Preferences

Teresa Summers, Editor
newsletter@wapioneers.org

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President's Message — A pioneer library

To understand how and why our forefathers and mothers ventured west, we often search genealogical sources, ask bookstores to recommend regional histories and look for color and adventure in historical novels. Everyone has favorite books about our region's history. Today I'm going to stick my neck out and use this column to offer my choices. And after taking a look at this short list, don't be shy about sending me other titles and authors. As a writer, researcher and neophyte genealogist, the following books have given me insight into the pioneers of our great Pacific Northwest. The following books are not given in any particular order.



Murray Morgan, *Skid Road, an Informal Portrait of Seattle* (New York: Viking Press, 1951 and more recent editions). Murray (whom I knew and admired) hits his stride with amusing and brisk stories about our Queen City. This book is considered a popular classic. Morgan's *Puget Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound* (Seattle: U. of Washington Press, 1979) is another breezy look at our far corner.

Roger Sale, *Seattle Past to Present* (Seattle: U. of Washington Press, 1978). Roger (one of my breakfast companions at Madrona's Hi-Spot each Wednesday) has sketched a more or less contemporary picture of Seattle's growth from village to "Big City." His gossipy asides about our founding fathers and mothers are delightful.

Roberta Frye Watt, *Four Wagons West, the Story of Seattle* (Portland, Or.: Metropolitan, 1931) is written by someone who was (almost) on the scene. Her grandfather was Arthur Denny, one of Seattle's founders. Recounting the adventures of her family's 1851 covered wagon ride across the unfriendly Great Plains brings the pioneer story into clear view.

Robert E. Ficken and Charles P. LeWarne, *Washington A Centennial History* (Seattle, U. of Washington Press, 1988). This spare volume (you won't be overwhelmed) was written by the authors (both friends of mine) for our state's Centennial in 1989. Bob and Chuck keep things going, seem to touch on every major local event and personality, and provide useful sources and a valuable index (important to serious readers and historians).

Robert Hitchman, *"Place Names of Washington"* (Tacoma, Washington State Historical Society, 1985). (I knew Bob Hitchman. He also edited an historical newsletter called "*The Crows Nest*.") Who would believe that a "directory" could be entertaining reading and also provide clear, succinct historical references. *Place Names* is a book that should be in every local pioneer's library. Sometimes a quick look here (the equivalent of glancing at the Internet – where I occasionally find suspicious sources) is all the reader may need to answer crucial questions.

Edmond S. Meany, *"History of the State of Washington"* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1950). Although Meany's work has been worked over and updated by contemporary scholars, the book remains a local classic. Professor Meany's surprising vignettes and asides about our state's founders cannot be found elsewhere. The *History* is a great source for cross-referencing and depth on a host of regional topics. I could go on and on but the above volumes hold core values for students of our pioneer days. Some day we may expand this list, with your help. Good reading!

— Junius Rochester, *President*

Minutes — annual meeting, June 25, 2011

Following are high points of the June annual meeting, abridged and submitted by Junius Rochester, President. Secretary Carla Hendrickson recorded the original minutes.

- The Annual Meeting/Salmon Bake drew about 65 people. In the absence of President Junius Rochester, First Vice President Mary Louise Hammond presided.

- Treasurer Sandra Selle reported that the Association has investments of approximately \$146,000, a certificate of deposit valued at \$55,000, savings of \$40,000 and an operating fund of \$1,500. Annual expenses totaled \$20,000. We have reduced the annual insurance cost by accepting a higher deductible. Although dues revenues are down, rentals continue to provide income.

- Maintenance Vice-President Steven Rochester reviewed the following projects: 1) the outside of the Hall has been pressure washed; 2) wood on the building's front has been primed for painting; 3) the backyard/beach area has been cleaned up and covered with bark; 4) plans are underway to resolve the building's settling problem.

- Claire Raaum reviewed the Daughters 100th Anniversary celebration, which was attended by 54 women from throughout the State of Washington.

- Helen Smith produced and Chris Raaum filmed a fifteen-minute video depicting the Association's history and activities. The video was shown to guests and is available for sale (\$10).

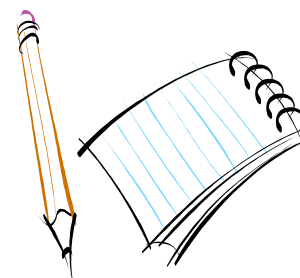
- Gary Zimmerman reported on eight new members and asked for a moment of silence to honor members who are deceased.

- The Nominating Committee presented a slate of officers, which the membership approved.

- Carol Hawkins asked for volunteers to staff Sunday Open Houses at Pioneer Hall.

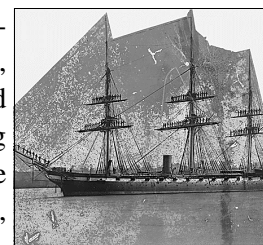
- Teresa Summers presented her family history, followed by Guest Speaker Les Eldridge, who discussed his books about local history.

The meeting was adjourned to enjoy the traditional Pioneer Annual Salmon Bake.



Pioneer Association annual meeting — June 25, 2011

“Confederates on the Northwest Coast” was a fitting topic for the Civil War Sesquicentennial celebration, which author Les Eldridge presented at the Pioneers Annual Meeting, June 25, 2011. It was the 140th for the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington. Les set the mood for his fascinating historical report by leading the audience in a sea shanty. His accompanying slides of maps, ships, Union and Confederate officers added richness to the story, depicting the interplay of French, Mexican and Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC) interests in the Civil War, and their presence on the West Coast.



Pioneer Member and Family Historian Teresa Summers proudly relayed a portion of the biography of her fourth great grandfather, Etienne Lucier, who came to the Northwest from Canada as a voyageur with the Wilson Price Hunt party in 1812. He was an original “Astorian,” helping establish a fur trade outpost for the Pacific Fur Company at the mouth of the Columbia River. Eventually he immigrated to the Oregon Country, settling in “French Prairie,” where he staked a land claim. He is recognized as the first farmer in the state of Oregon.

— Mary Louise Hammond

Reminder: reinvest in our past and future—It's the time of year again when membership renewal notices go out in the mail to all our current members. So when you receive your renewal form, please continue your involvement and support. Our annual dues of \$20 is a true bargain for continuing support of our museum, library, special collections, quarterly meetings and presentations and conservation efforts. We also encourage lifetime members to join in making an extra contribution to help us maintain our programs as well as newsletter publication and distribution.

KEEP A LOOKOUT FOR THOSE RENEWAL FORMS!!

In memoriam



We'd like to take a moment to recognize and honor those of our membership who have died since the Spring of last year. They all leave proud pioneer legacies which will live on in our Association for years to come.

Beverly A (Griggs) Jensen passed away in Tacoma on January 30, 2011, at the age of 91. She had joined the Association in 1968. Her grandparents, John and Petra (Nielsen) Holm, were the pioneers in her family. Her grandfather was born in Goteborg, Sweden, in 1847 and her grandmother was a native of Bergen, Norway. John and Petra were married in Tacoma on September 2, 1888. They raised their family of four children, all born in the 1890's, on McNeil Island. Their oldest daughter, Alice (Holm) Griggs, joined the Association in 1967 and Alice's daughter, Beverly, signed up the following year.

William E Young, of Olympia, passed away the day after Thanksgiving last November. He had been a member of the Association since 1974. A Spokane native, he was descended from his great-grandparents, James Williams and Mary Primrose, who came from Boston to Washington Territory in 1874. They were married on Bainbridge Island and raised their family there.

Rose Irene (George) Weiss, who joined the Pioneers in 1980, was a descendant of August Lars Hultman, a pioneer arriving in Seattle in 1887. Rose was born in Hollywood, Washington, in 1918. That community is now part of Woodinville. Rose was 92 years old when she passed away in November 2010, while a resident of Redmond, not very far from her place of birth.

Barbara Ann (King) Walton died at the age of 91 on October 3, 2010, in Seattle. When she joined in 1969 she cited her pioneer ancestor, Henrietta L. (McColl) King, who was born in Spokane in February 1889.

— Gary Zimmerman

Purchase a vision of the past



DVD Cover Picture
courtesy of Christian Raaum,
Cerviking Video — www.cerviking.com

At our June 25th annual meeting, attendees were thrilled with the opportunity to see and hear a beautiful new video featuring Pioneer Hall.

This entertaining new 11-minute color DVD describing the history and activities of the Pioneer Association is available for sale (\$10) at Pioneer Hall. To obtain a copy or screen the video please contact the Hall by telephone 206-325-0888. Seattle's landmark Pioneer Hall celebrated its 100th anniversary last year and is located in Seattle's Madison Park at 1642 43rd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98122. The Hall is not open every day so please telephone before dropping by.

We are so impressed with the ultra-professional work of Photographer/Editor Christian Raaum and his crew: Terry Murphy - Producer/Writer; Doug Irvine - Lighting Director; Dick Foley - Narrator. The video portrays the Hall and its occupants at their best.

Chris and his mother Claire Raaum are both members of the Pioneers of the State of Washington. Chris graduated from Montana State University 1976 with a degree in Film and Television. He has been involved in television and video production since 1977 and was a Producer/Photographer/Editor for KOMO Television for 22 years. He founded Cerviking Video in 2000 and has won numerous awards including one National Emmy and seven regional Emmys for his work.

Helen Smith, a member of the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington, commissioned this work for the Daughters' 100th Anniversary celebration earlier this year. She is also a past trustee of the Pioneer Association and a frequent contributor to our organization.

— information provided by Chris Raaum and Gary Zimmerman

New life for lakeside landscape



Pioneer Hall's sun-dappled backyard. Notice anything new at our building? Next time you are there, go in the kitchen, open the back door and take a look at the back lot. It looks completely different than it did six months ago.

After months of discussion and many good ideas as to what should be done with the area which had become overrun with trash and weeds and was a total eyesore, the Board finally decided to clean it, weed it, and cover it. We discussed making it into a usable area, maybe a picnic area, or a small park that could be rented out. In the end, however, we decided that any of these ideas involved too much maintenance and in addition, we would have to provide security. In the past, this area has been used as a dumping ground and late-night party area.

Anyway, in late May, Samuel Dean of *Landscape Doctors* and his crew came out and spent about three days moving rocks, weeding and cleaning up the area. They then laid a porous weed barrier sheeting on the sloped area and thick black plastic on the flat area. After pinning this down, the entire area was covered with 13 yards of bark dust. They claim it should control weeds and look nice for five to seven years. In the meantime, enjoy the view! — Joe Wert

∞ Thank you, Joe, for your efforts on this project. It looks great and we are proud of the “do-over.” ∞



Martin and Stratman families to be featured in October

“Great-Grandma saved that from the Seattle fire.” We three kids knew the lump of metal was precious — not because it had once been a stack of coins, but because it represented survival. Whenever Grandma told the tale, my mind conjured a comic-book image of a heroic Fannie Stratman frantically loading a cart to save her father’s wares while flames blazed behind her.

Of course it wasn’t like that. As I matured, so did the story. The cast of characters grew while the list of hardships lengthened to include financial loss, politics, a libel suit, incarceration, a Knights of Pythias power-play, a humiliating public divorce, the

Great Seattle Fire, orphaned children, stubborn pride and unclaimed cremains left in a cemetery storage locker for 97 years.

Like so many Pioneer families, mine is a story of second and third chances in life. I hope to show them due respect during the family history presentation on Oct 22nd. — Sandra Selle

Check your workshop — donate tools for Hall maintenance

Board Vice President Steven Rochester is creating an on-site tool kit for use in keeping up the Hall and grounds. He would appreciate donations of usable tools in good condition that might be helpful in preserving our historic premises. To date we have only a couple items, and when a problem arises that might be easily repaired or fixed, we cannot get to it right away due to unavailability of simple household-type tools many of us use every day in fixing up our own homes.

Here’s a list of suggested items for a basic tool kit: Tool box, medium-weight hammer, tape measure, screw drivers (Phillips and flat head), pliers (needle nosed and grooved), good-quality accurate level, vice grip, wire cutters, cordless drill, utility blades and holder, metal straightedge, putty knife, duct tape, electric sander, staple gun, pre-packaged assortment of nails and screws, heavy-duty flashlight, light electric sander.

Great idea, Steve! Anyone having items to donate please contact Steve at 206-718-3847.

(A trip to, or gift card from, a local hardware store might be an option for those of us who don’t have a basement or garage containing any unused extra tools.)



— Editor

Tradition of community service continues within local historical family



We are honored to welcome Gayle Johnson as a new Board Trustee for 2011-2012. Nominated for this post by her uncle, outgoing Trustee Leonard Gayton, Gayle is a Seattle native. She is a fourth generation member of prominent local pioneers. Gayle’s great grandfather John T. Gayton arrived in Seattle in 1889 as a coachman for a Mississippi family. A founder of one of Seattle’s leading African American families, he worked as librarian for the U.S. District Court for 20 years.

Gayle graduated from the University of Washington with a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science. Gayle is currently the Chief Development Officer for Sound Mental Health, where she is responsible for developing and leading an aggressive fundraising and awareness campaign for this private, non-profit organization which has been serving the Seattle and King County community for over 45 years.

Gayle’s love for giving back to the community has led her to work for a variety of non-profit organizations: Executive Director for the Alki Foundation (the political arm of the Greater Seattle Chamber of Commerce) and Local Government Relations Manager for the Chamber; Campaign Director for United Way of King County; Community Relations Director for Alliance Education. Because of Gayle’s public engagement work while at the Alliance for Education, she was invited to speak at the Harvard School of Education about best practices in engaging the public on education issues.

Gayle’s civic involvement includes and has included:

- CityClub Board Member
- Former President of Greater Seattle Chapter of The Links, Incorporated
- Board member Powerful Schools
- Member of the African American Family Caregiver Forum sponsored by the Alzheimer’s Association
- Board member African American Community Health Network
- Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club
- Board member, University Child Development School
- Executive Board, Seattle Branch of the NAACP and former Education Chair
- Board Member of the Health Workforce Institute
- Board member, Schools First
- Founder of “Friends of the African American Academy”
- Citizens’ Advisory Committee For the 2003 Family and Education Levy
- Chair of the Diversity Research Committee School of Dentistry at the University of Washington

In 2009 Gayle received the 2009 Spirit Award from Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle. We are sure her great-grandparents would be proud of her and we are grateful for her willingness to serve as Board Trustee of the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington.

— Information and personal photo provided by Gayle Johnson



John Thomas (J.T.) Gayton (1866-1954), ca. 1900

www.bing.com/images

Pioneers of Washington: An association of the lineal descendants of the pioneers of Washington Territory, dedicated to the preservation of family heritage and the history of Washington State.

Welcome new members!

Diane Elaine Little (née Hornbeck) a resident of Shoreline, is a regular member descending from two early residents of Washington Territory .William Henry Blake, who was the first lighthouse keeper on Dungeness Spit (arriving in 1857). He was a native of Sandwich, County Kent, England, and arrived on the Olympic Peninsula at the age of 20. He served as Lighthouse Keeper from 1857 to 1868. In 1862, William Henry Blake married Mary Ann McDonnell. In June, 1869, he was elected the sheriff of Clallam County. Diane's mother has been a member of the Association since 1966. Diane's grandfather also became a member of the Association in 1966.



Washington State Flower

Melissa Rae Branson (née Little) is Diane Little's daughter. Both Diane and Melissa have a second pioneer ancestor: George Oulette, who was born in Ste Marie-de-Beuce in the province of Quebec, Canada. George came west and was in Port Madison, Kitsap County, by 1858.

Karen Reid (Hornbeck) Bertram, residing on Bainbridge Island, joined the Association in late June. She is the sister of Diane Little, also descended from William Henry Blake and George Oulette. Karen has a five-year old daughter, Keira Mireille Bertram, who has just received a Junior Membership.

[All of this activity in one family is the result of Diane Little's mother, Marilyn Catherine (Ward) (Hornbeck) Lux motivating her entire family to pay attention to their northwest heritage. Four generations of this line have been members of the Association.]

Janis Cooper Maloney was introduced in the last issue of *Pioneer Presences* and now her granddaughter, Kimberly Cooper Maloney, has just joined as a Junior member. Janice and Kimberly are descended from Hazard Irwin Miller, who arrived in Seattle while residents were sweeping up the ashes from the June 1889 fire.

Dr. Arthur Russel Griffin recently joined the Association. His grandfather, also an Arthur R Griffin, joined the Association in 1924. The grandparents were married in Seattle on May Day 1889, just a few weeks before the Seattle fire. Seattle Congregational minister Rev. John Damon performed the ceremony. Our Historian Gary Zimmerman found a copy of their marriage certificate and forwarded it to Dr Griffin, who lives on 43rd Avenue East, just a few doors away from Pioneer Hall.

Helen Marie McCulloch is a Seattle resident whose great grandparents, Heinrich Wilhelm Herkenrath and Elizabeth Herkenrath, immigrated from Neunkirchen, Germany, arriving in Seattle in 1881. Their eight-year old daughter, Helena, came with the family and would become Helen's grandmother. Helen has submitted extensive family research materials to the Association archives.

Richard Ashton Paulson, Jr., is the great-grandson of Paul Paulson and S. Ella (Hutchinson) Paulson who came to Seattle in September of 1873. The pioneers are buried in Lake View Cemetery, along with many of their descendants. The family acquired their plot in Lake View in December, 1879.

Peter Lyle Bryan recently visited the Hall on a Sunday Open House. He was visiting from his home in Weaverville, California. A few weeks later we received his application for membership and his announced intention that he plans on moving to Seattle. Five generations back, his Bryan ancestor was the president of the Pioneer Association in 1897-98. Edgar Bryan crossed the plains in 1852 as a boy, was educated in Olympia, and attended the territorial University. But you know all of that because there was an article about him in the last issue of *Pioneer Presences*. Edgar's tombstone inscription reads, "Assessor, Umbrella Manufacturer, Tombstone Seller."

Guntis Ernesons does not come from a territorial pioneer family, but he has a strong interest in Pacific Northwest history and has received a gift Associate Membership from a friend who wants to support his interest in history.

— Gary Zimmerman

Open Houses need your support

Carol Hawkins has issued a call for volunteers to help host open houses at Pioneer Hall. We need your enthusiasm in "showing and telling" our story in a way that appeals to visitors of all ages. Open Houses are held the second and fourth Sundays in spring, summer and fall, and the second Sundays in November, December, January and February. The Hall is open from 1:00 to 4:00 on those days. Please contact Carol at 425-644-5058 and offer to help.

Members' Corner, Selene family history — *Robert Selene, First Vice President-elect, provides fascinating material on his family's story*



My grandparents on my father's side arrived at Ellis Island from Sweden in the 1870's. Tuls, Hannah and Emil Eilenson arrived in Olympia via train after spending time in Kansas where Tuls's father had moved earlier. Where the train tracks ended in Olympia, they took a boat north to Birch Bay where they homesteaded 120 acres half a mile from the beach. They built a log cabin, cut timber and cleared land for potatoes. My father, Robert G. Selene, and his brother, Fred Selene, were born in the cabin. My great-uncle Emil was unhappy with the Eilenson name and changed it to Seline, an area in Sweden where the family had lived. He found the name was often mispronounced "Sea Lion," so he changed it again, this time to Selene. [Editor's note: 1900 federal census for Birch Bay Precinct, Whatcom County, Washington, shows Tuls and Hannah Seline and three sons, with the eldest, Emil, born in Kansas and the younger two, Robert and Fred, born in Washington.]

Uncle Emil became a prominent builder and built a home for my mother's parents, the Gossages, who lived in a neighborhood next to the Selene farm (Kickerville). The Gossages were a fairly large family and came to Kickerville from Illinois to work in the timber industry. My grandfather, Joe Gossage, later farmed.

In the late 1800's my grandfather Eilenson came to the farm (at Route 1, Blaine) from Assaria, Kansas, to help build the family home. Grandfather Tuls had a team of oxen and a sled which he used to pull the lumber for the house across the ice at Drayton Harbor in Blaine. I was born in that house in 1920. My grandfather Tuls was great for digging stumps and burning the roots. One time he fell in a hole when the roots were burning and shortly afterward died from the injuries.

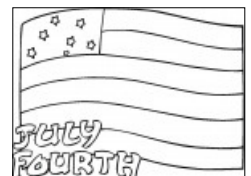
My father stayed on the farm for many years as a very successful dairy farmer. He was one of the first stockholders of the Whatcom County Dairy Men's Association. It later became Darigold. My father never would own a tractor or gas machine. He believed everything should come from the farm and his pride and joy were his large draft horses. The farm was very productive with great peat soil. The district was known as "pleasant valley." The district had a store, grade school and church. My father was chairman of the School Board for several years.

My parents moved to Bellingham where my father joined the police department. Later he became an animal control officer for the department before retiring. My father was always very active in the Whatcom County Old Settlers Association.

I married Arlean Osier in Bellingham in 1941 and moved to Olympia where we owned and operated Olympic Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home, serving over 12,000 people.

Update on Lake View Cemetery article

Our Board President Junius Rochester reports he received a letter from D.P Van Blaricom in early June in response to his June 2011 *Pioneer Presences* story entitled "Where They Are Buried." Junius recognizes he did not mention many notable pioneers in that story, Thomas Mercer among them. Mr. and Mrs. (Janice) Van Blaricom are members of the Pioneer Association. Mr. Van Blaricom provided the following fascinating historical details about the Mercers in his letter:



"[Thomas Mercer] was my great-great grandfather's brother and they crossed the Oregon Trail together in 1852. Thomas was a very prominent early Seattle citizen and Mercer Island was named after him at the same July 4th picnic where the early Seattle settlers also named Lake Washington and Lake Union. His homestead was at the south end of Lake Union and that is why the roadway there is named Mercer Way . . . As I'm sure you know, Thomas and Aaron's younger brother Asa, who is buried in Wyoming where he wrote "*Banditti of The Plains*," (the historical exposé of territorial corruption and the basis for the movie *Shane*) was the first president of the University of Washington and brought the so-called 'Mercer Girls' to Seattle. In spite of Asa's greater notoriety, however, his older brother Thomas was the more distinguished local citizen and should not be overlooked. Dexter Horton, who [sic] you do mention, was a member of the same wagon train (Bethel Party) as Thomas and Aaron and they supposedly lent him the money to make the journey . . . I recently donated Aaron's 'plains rifle' (from the Oregon Trail crossing) to the Eastside Heritage Center, where it is on display in the Mercer Room of the Winters House in south Bellevue on Mercer Slough near their original homestead site. Large photographs (restored by Boeing's Art Department) of my great-great grandparents hang on either side of the rifle. Aaron and Ann are buried in Mount Pleasant cemetery on the top of Queen Anne Hill."

July 4, 1854

— Junius Rochester

The Northwest Passage

The term “Northwest Passage” had no meaning in the aboriginal world. In every direction throughout the Pacific Northwest, however, “passages” existed, i. e. waterways which Indians used in the same manner we travel the national system of highways today. Students of the Enlightenment (1760's to mid-1800's) in Europe and America believed that a water passage existed across the North American continent – a direct route to riches of the Indies. Even Thomas Jefferson, in late life, and after Meriwether Lewis reported otherwise, believed that rivers and lakes could combine to whisk traders from one coast to the other.

Chinese explorers may have been the first “outsiders” to nudge our west coast. But they were not crossing the American continent. Later, familiar names such as Christopher Columbus, Vasco Nunez de Balboa and Hernando Cortez contributed to the Great Dream of a Northwest Passage.

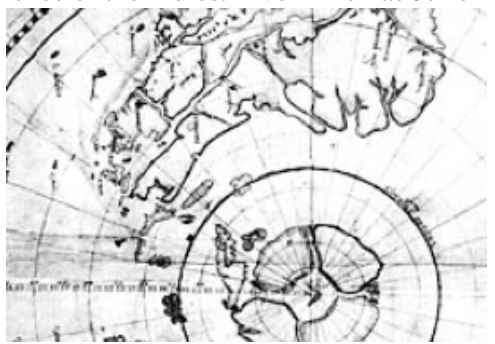
In our Pacific Northwest, the likely mythical journey of Juan de Fuca in the 1590's, whose Greek name was Apostolos Valerianos, gave impetus to the dream. Juan de Fuca claimed to have sailed – for the Spanish – more than twenty days in a “channel” (Strait of Juan de Fuca?) until he entered a “broad sea” (Puget Sound?). He embellished his story with sightings of gold, silver, pearls and people dressed in animal skins. This is a wonderful tale, which I hope is true; but confirming details have never emerged.

After Spanish incursions, Czar Peter the Great sent Russian sea-otter hunters westward to what was later called the North American continent (many believed that Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula and Alaska were joined). Vitus Bering and his ship’s doctor/scientist, Georg Steller, returned with startling news: “America” was just over the eastern horizon.

After these early 1790's to early 1800's probings, the search for a Passage was driven by commerce, not dreams. “Soft gold,” or sea otter (and other) skins, were sought by trading companies: Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Frazier and David Thompson of the Northwest Company (English/Canadian); Lewis & Clark (U.S. government); and the Astor parties of the Pacific Fur Company (U.S.).

These brave, and sometimes foolhardy, men drew maps, wrote journals, collected specimens of every kind and told exciting stories to rapt audiences in Europe and along the Eastern Seaboard. This information contributed to lore our Pioneer antecedents absorbed when deciding about traveling westward to the beautiful Pacific Northwest.

— Junius Rochester



Mark your calendars—meeting dates set for coming year

The Pioneer Association Board has set the dates for Board and general membership meetings for the 2011-2012 year.

At each membership meeting, a program and family history speaker will give a presentation. The Board also reminds all members they are welcome to observe Board meetings if they wish to attend. All meetings are at Pioneer Hall.



October 22, 2011	Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
	Membership Meeting	1:00 p.m.
January 21, 2012	Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
March 24, 2012	Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
	Membership Meeting	1:00 p.m.
May 5, 2012	Board Meeting	10:00 a.m.
June 23, 2012	Annual Meeting/Speakers	10:00 a.m.
	Salmon Luncheon	~12 Noon

**Pioneer Association
of the State of Washington**

1642 43rd Avenue East

Seattle WA 98112

<http://www.wapioneers.org>

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Luna admires the new
paint job at the Hall

NEXT GENERAL MEETING:
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22,
2011

BUSINESS MEETING 10 a.m.

SPEAKERS AT 1:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER: PLEASE SEE PAGE 3
FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON MEMBERSHIP
RENEWALS