

History of Sierra

Sierra Country Club

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HISTORY OF SIERRA



Farmhouse on the hill.

Overlooking the Clubhouse, it is referred to among residents of Sierra as "The Five Acre Farm" and is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hansen, where they have raised seven daughters. One, Mary is still living at home and we are indebted to her for the photograph. Mrs. Hansen is the daughter of Mr. Larsen who sold the entire farm to McMillan Development Co. who developed and platted the tract of Sierra, "home of Sierra Country Club Inc." At the time of sale in 1967 the Hansens retained five acres as their own private property and are loyal and valuable members of Sierra Country Club.

Our very sincere thank you to Mrs. Hansen who graciously consented to write the following history of Sierra.

On July 26, 1853, Samuel Libbey wrote in his diary, "I first saw my Claim. Said I will take it, next day went to work, chopped the logs for my house." This was the beginning of the white man's history of the land that we now call "Sierra." As many Indian artifacts have turned up in the soil, granite bowls, arrowheads, etc., we know that they too walked this land, but we have little record of their story. We know that at one time Mrs. Libbey was so terrified of the Indians that she persuaded her husband to move to Penn Cove and Sam Walked each day to the ranch.

The original claim was for 320 acres, 111 acres of this land remained in the Libbey family until my father, Clarence Laresne purchased it in October, 1945, as a birthday present for my mother. They had dreamed of retiring to their farm some day but that dream was never realized. In the house they discovered a diary written by Joe Libbey in 1870 in which the farm was called "Oceanside Farm" so they were delighted to retain the name. The original house we believe was built in about 1865, two rooms, two stories high, built on single wall construction, wide boards, with hand cut square nails, covered with newspapers and then wallpapered. Many alterations and additions have been affected through the years to what we now call our home. The house is recorded in the national registry for historical homes.

In 1953 my father added 75 acres of woodland to the east of the farm. He contracted with Arnold Freund, a local farmer, to work the 60 acres which were cleared. Winter squash was one of the crops grown by Mr. Freund. Because of our limited summer rain the squadh raised here keeps exceptionally well through the winter. Many Seattle groceries are supplied with squash all winter long from Whidbey Island. The most successful crop was Alta Fescue grass, grown in rows for the purpose of harvesting the seeds. It is a very hardy, tall-growing grass, much prized for pasture. Many of the plants are still to be found around Sierra.

We moved here in 1949 and a few years later took over the farming. Besides raising cows, horses, sheep, pigs, and chickens for our own use we also had cash crops. These were grains such as wheat, vetch, oats, winter peas and potatoes. Later we had the fields planted to alfalfa and pastured Hereford beef. In 1965 we faced the cold reality that small farming was no longer a practical means of making a living. My father began the development of the land with the platting of ten lots on the Southeast corner known as the "Oceanside Estates." Then in 1967 he sold all but our five acres to the Sierra developers. Now you too share in the quiet, the ocean view, fresh winds from the sea, and the vibrant sunsets that have delighted us over the years.

Our sincere Thank You, Mrs. Hansen, for your excellent and well-written History of Sierra; also to daughter Mary for her beautiful color photo. I regret very much that it cannot be reproduced in color.

Chuck Weinert