

# Cleveland High School

The following is an excerpt from a book I found in the Highline School District professional library. It is a little history about our old alma mater Cleveland. Keep in mind that this was written in 1951. I don't remember learning much about our area of town in Washington State History class, (but they say the mind is the second thing to go), where was this book when I needed to do a report for Mr. Brown!

The earliest pioneers in Seattle settled in the Georgetown section. In 1849, John Holgate came up the Duwamish in an Indian canoe and was the first white person to file a claim on the territory that is not Seattle. Holgate was only 19, and went back to his home in Ohio to influence his family to return with him. He did not build before he left, and as he was gone for two years, his claim was refiled upon by Luther Collins who had no way of knowing Holgate had been there first. Upon Holgate's return he filed a large claim on what is now Beacon Hill. This time his brother-in-law, Edward Hanford, was with him. Holgate was restless and could not stay in one place long, and was shot in a dispute over a claim in Nevada in 1868.

In 1851, Luther Collins staked his claim on the Duwamish, and persuaded Henry Van Asselt and Jacob Maple to come to Puget sound too. His wife and 14 years old daughter, Lucinda, were the first white women in King County. Collins was a successful farmer, and for a time ran a ferry across the Duwamish. He was considered the Daniel Boone of the Seattle group. He was drowned in the Snake River when working in a mining camp.

Henry van Asselt was one of the men who met the Denny party when it arrived, and was a long and faithful resident of Georgetown. He lived to be 85, and his wife, who was a daughter of Jacob Maple, lived to be 95. When Van Asselt and Maple arrived they were met by Chief Sealh, who bid them welcome, at the spot where the river emptied into the bay. Van Asselt drove stakes into a plot of ground where the White and Black Rivers merge, and eventually had the richest farming land around. Van Asselt was loved by both white and red men, and it is said his word was as good as gold. He was known to all as Uncle Henry. He donated the site for the first Methodist Church in Georgetown, and the first school. In 1862, Henry Van Asselt and Catherine Elizabeth Maple were married, and had the largest wedding that had been held in the Duwamish section. The couple had one son and three daughters.

Jacob Maple was the first of the Maples to file a claim on the Duwamish. His son Samuel was with him, and later John, the youngest son came. John taught school in the first school house in King county. He said later it was one of the hardest things he had ever done and he was sorry he had undertaken it. The schoolhouse was a small one-room building and was crowded with the "twenty scholars". Classes had been held in Seattle previous to this, but there had not been a building erected for the purpose. John Maple's daughters Core and Dora, were the first twins to be born in King County, and he became county treasurer in 1894. In 1902, he was killed by a falling tree. The ashes of Jacob and Samuel Maple were interred at the Boeing Field Administration Building at a ceremony in 1939.

Julius Horton owned the land which later became Georgetown. He had 160 acres of what was one of the largest and most prosperous farms along the Duwamish. Julius and Dexter Horton were brothers and Julius continued farming while Dexter was interested in finance. Julius was unusually successful in hop raising, which may be the reason the brewery was located at Georgetown. The Hortons had a son and daughter, and the son became a successful physician and was much loved by Seattle people. When he was finishing medical college in 1890, his father named the little settlement Georgetown, in his honor. Julius Horton died in 1904, the year

Georgetown became a town, and Dr. George Horton died in 1927, having acquired the largest practice in Seattle.

Joseph Foster settled on the south side of the Duwamish, and as he worked his farm he also became an influential county and state citizen. The settlement of foster was named for him. He was a member of the State Legislature where he was active for many years. It is said that it is due to a conversation he had the Daniel Bagley that the University came to Seattle. Foster had been interested in having the capitol here, but Bagley persuaded him it would mean more to have the University, so when foster returned for the next session he was a leader in this arrangement. Joe Foster also helped finance the first bank, that of Dexter Horton. Horton offered to let Joe go in as his partner, but Joe declined, although he did lend money to get the bank started.

The history of the South District is tied up in a very real way with the lives of two pioneers, Elizabeth Jane Fenton Kelly, and Mike Kelly. Mr. Kelly was a well-known deputy sheriff of King County, and Mrs. Kelly was one of the first teachers of the Duwamish school district.

The Fenton family came to Seattle in 1865 and settled on a farm about three and a half miles from the school. Elizabeth Jane and her sister Ella walked this distance, even though a good deal of it was through dark woods. It was at this time Mike Kelly entered the Van Asselt School. Mike was not there long, but when Elizabeth was 17 they met again at the singing society at Van Asselt's Methodist Church. She taught for a year in what is now the South Park District, and then she and Mike were married. The Kelly's lived here for many years. Mike was frozen to death while on a hunting trip, and Mrs. Kelly lived with a son in South Park until her death in 1936.

No history of Georgetown would be complete without some of the story of John Mueller. Mueller was the mayor of Georgetown, the superintendent of the brewery, and the first Georgetown school was named for him. He was also a member of the School Board, and it is said that by his good business methods he was able to get the school district out of debt. He married Berth Diesing in 1889 and they had two daughters and a son Chester, who is living in Seattle today. (This book was written in 1951—I'm sure the man is dead by now.) Mr. Mueller died in 1916.

The Duwamish River and the settlers along its banks played an important part in the Indian War. Canoes, carrying news of the battles, and victims of the massacres on the White River, sped down the stream constantly keeping the settlers aware of the danger. Henry Van Asselt told in after years how he and Sam Maple cared for their crops and stock and slept in the woods at night, only to have everything burned later by Leschi, as he paddled back up the Duwamish, a deflated chief.

Late in the fall of 1855, the Seattle company of volunteers built a blockhouse on the Duwamish where they remained until their enlistment was up on January 25, 1856. The blockhouse was surrounded by a stockade. It was located on Henry Van Asselt's farm, and its object was to prevent Indians from coming down the river in large force. The day after the company disbanded, the Indians attacked the village of Seattle. The battle lasted for about a week before Leschi, the Indian leader, was forced to retreat. As he went back up the Duwamish he burned everything he could, including the blockhouse.

Probably the most famous picnic Seattle has ever had was held in Georgetown on May 1, 1874. Everyone was there helping to build the railroad the little village had wanted for so long. The grade was laid out along the county road a short distance south of where the old brewery now stands. In the location of the present Lucille Street Bridge there was an old grist mill, and there the women prepared the noon dinner. After dinner some of the leading citizens were called upon for speeches. John Denny and Judge Orange Jacobs both orated a bit, but when Henry Yesler was called on, he mounted the wagon that was the speaker's platform, and said,

“Quit your fooling and go to work.” Afterward Yesler stated that this Georgetown May Day Picnic marked the end of the pioneer period in Seattle.

Georgetown was a thriving, prosperous little city from 1904 to 1910, and was eager to remain so. It had no debts and had \$5,000 in the bank. It was incorporated January 18, 1904, in the town hall, which is the site of the present library. John Mueller was chosen to be mayor, and 7 men were on the city council. In 1910, Georgetown was annexed into Seattle. A good many of the citizens did not wish this, and in protest, some of them bought stock and operated a newspaper for Georgetown in order to keep out the Seattle papers and their annexation propaganda. The paper is still operating as the Duwamish Valley News, and has only missed three issues in 42 years.

About this time Georgetown had a somewhat undesirable reputation. It seems to be impossible to establish any truth to these rumors. There were a number of saloons, as there were in Seattle, and the race track, The Meadows, was located in Georgetown. The race track, which was where the present Boeing Field now is, was attended largely by people from Seattle. Because of the brewery there was a large foreign population in Georgetown as these were the people who had been apprenticed to the brewing trade in their native countries. When prohibition was voted in, these men had no jobs and many of them either moved away or became farmers.

The first world war began shortly after the brewery was closed and brought new industries to the district. The Duthie, Todd, and Skinner and Eddy shipyards were opened and many of Georgetown's residents found employment there. With the coming of the depression, and the closing of many industries, Georgetown's residents had a difficult time, as they were dependent on these businesses for their livelihood. However, during the Second World War, Georgetown once again prospered. This time the Boeing plant the largest single industry in Seattle, employed all who wished to work there. Many allied industries began operation in this district, until once again Georgetown was a thriving community.

The Georgetown section is no longer considered as apart from Seattle, It is the largest payroll district of the city, and has all the advantages of any other section. It is the oldest historically, and the only section with a river of its own. It is the oldest historically, and the only section with a river of its own. The famous bend in the Duwamish gave Georgetown its start, and now that that bend has been filled in the industries on the same site are keeping Georgetown prosperous.

The story of Cleveland High School (God, I thought the author would never get to this), goes back to the turn of the century when Georgetown Mueller School developed a four year high school on the top floor of the building. After Georgetown was annexed this high school was dropped in the interests of economical school administration, and the south District residents had to send their children to Queen Anne, Broadway, and Franklin. This was not satisfactory, but it was felt that district would not grow sufficiently to warrant the construction of so expensive a building as a modern high school.

The residents continued to ask for a high school, however, and at the suggestion of Thomas R. Cole, then Superintendent of Seattle, Schools, it was decided to plan a six-year junior-senior high school. In 1925, the school board voted the construction of a building on Maple Hill which would be large enough to house the pupils of the upper six grades of the district. In anticipation of this, steps had been taken in 1923 toward establishing a high school by utilizing the seventh and eighth grade pupils from Georgetown, South Seattle, and Maple Schools. These pupils attended classes in the Georgetown building, and the next fall the pupils who finished the eighth grade at Concord and van Asselt were added. There were sixty-seven pupils and a faculty consisting of Henrietta Burgess, Beryl Smith, Kenneth L. Hassenmiller, and H. N. Gridley, as principal.

At this time the institution was called the Georgetown High School, however, in accordance with the general policy of the school board to name high schools after prominent American statesmen, the name of Grover Cleveland was chosen before the school left the old building. When the transfer was made to the new high school, on January 3, 1927, the pupils carried their books from the Georgetown School, up the hill to the new building, making an impressive parade.

Cleveland has always maintained a separate junior and senior high school, each having a completely different organization, although they are staffed by the same principal and vice principal. In June, 1927, when the first class graduated, there were 52 who received their diplomas. This June, 21 years later, there will be about 170.

The principals of Cleveland have been H. N. Gridley, 1923-38, Heber D. Johnson, 1938-40, Kenneth E. Selby 1940-45, and Homer Davis, 1945-?.

As you all know, Asa Mercer Junior High School was opened in 1958 and we were the first students to attend. I remember the meetings we went to telling us of the big adjustment we would have to make. Junior High was a new concept, our older brothers and sister having attended Cleveland from 7th to 12th grade. Remember being told how different school would be, going from class to class etc. And then after 8th grade those of us who lived south of Snoqualmie street went to 9th grade at Cleveland, while those living north stayed at Mercer for another year. Well, I think we all adjusted quite well, and here we are 30 years later a little older, well I guess a lot older and much wiser.

*The preceding was taken from a book titled School Histories Seattle Public Schools 1951. It was put together by the district and presented to the board by then Assistant Superintendent Kenneth E. Selby. It was hand typed not typeset and bound in a hard cover. I'm glad I have my Mac. The last paragraph of the introduction states, "A school history does not become static until the school is finally closed. Interesting events are occurring every day. New schools are built or annexed to the district. This book of histories will be out of date before it is a year old but it is hoped that this may be a continuing project; that schools already included will seek to improve the story of their growth and that new schools will immediately record any interesting information dealing with their origin and development. A reissue of this directory every ten years might provide a record of Seattle's schools which would become increasingly valuable."*