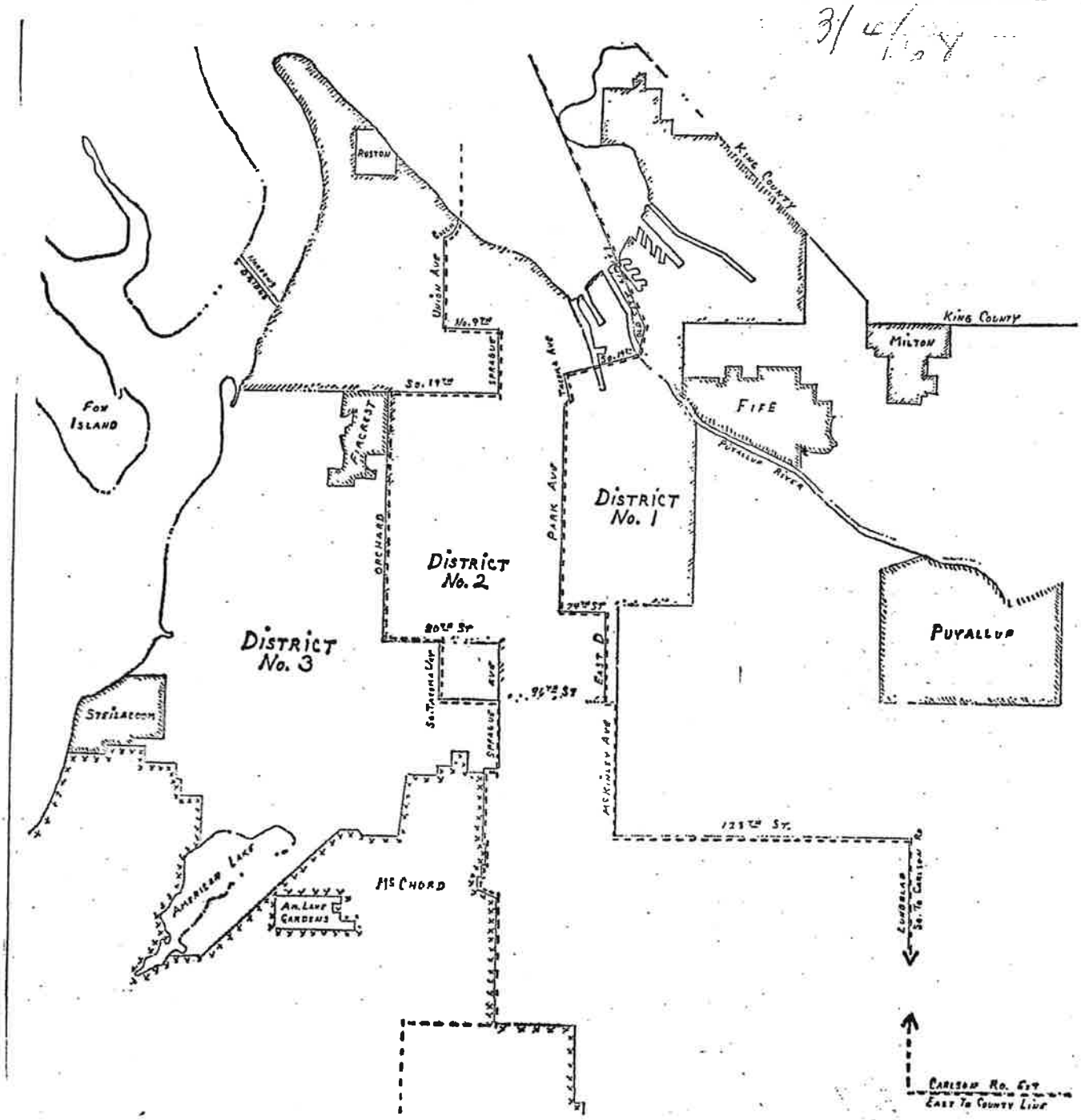
Handout #1

SO. HILL — DISTRICT #1

TNT
3/4/1968

THE TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE

3/4/68



NEW COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS—Pierce County's commissioners have realigned the boundaries of their districts as indicated on this map furnished by Richard Greco, county elections superintendent. The major changes in the boundaries are in District No. 2, represented by Commission Chairman Harry Sprinker. Sprague Avenue was the western boundary of his district and that boundary has now been shifted west to Orchard Street, between S. 19th and 80th streets. Between South 80th and 96th streets the boundary between Sprinker's district and District 3, represented by Wallace Z. Ramsdell was shifted west from Sprague to South Tacoma Way. The only significant other change was a shift eastward in the boundary between Sprinker's district and District 1, represented by Pat Gallagher. The boundary between South 74th and 96th streets was shifted from Park Avenue eastward to East D Street.

Early attempts at community development on South Hill

south hill history

Carl Vest

The Township Nineteen Association (T-19-A) is probably not well known to the contemporary population living on South Hill. Yet, at one point it played an important role in the development of a community spirit among South Hill residents.

In the early years of its settlement, South Hill was primarily an agrarian area. During those times such groups as the grange, parent teacher associations and community clubs served as community development initiators. Their meetings brought together the local people for social affairs and discussions about various community needs.

Civic projects from early roads development to the establishing of water sources can be credited to the initiative of these grass-root citizen groups. From the 1890s through the 1940s this kind of community development worked well.

But as time passed and the population increased, more and more people became concerned about South Hill losing its character as a place to live and as a lifestyle to enjoy. Also, as the number of people increased, the close knit group of early settlers began to lose its ability to develop local projects and residents increasingly had to turn to government to initiate community services. However, even given the necessity for reliance on local officials, residents on South Hill still had a strong belief that they knew best what was good for their community.

It was in this tradition that T-19-A emerged in the 1960s. It was so named because its geographical base was intended to include all the residents located in Township 19, South Hill's official federal designator. It was a grouping of about 200 concerned people. The stated purpose was, "to improve the total environment of Township 19 community by conservation and development of her natural, man made and human resources."

T-19-A was started in February 1969 by an initial set of about 50 people under the leadership of Rev. Paul Hackett. During its preliminary meetings by-laws were developed, the area to be included in the organization's base was selected and the name T-19-A was adopted. To facilitate communications, a newsletter format was developed.

Subsequently relationships were established with the Washington State Patrol about traffic safety. The University of Washington was contacted and it eventually provided a part-time planner to help. An operational rapport was cemented with the South Hill Athletic Association and with the University of Puget Sound. And, significantly, a working relationship with the Puyallup Chamber of Commerce was put in place. These activities were not done in secret; rather, they were regularly coordinated with the county officials in power at the time.

Members of T-19-A labored for about two years on the outline of a community development concept for South Hill. Probably its most significant accomplishment was an agreement to survey the residents of South Hill as to their desires for the community. Unfortunately by about 1972 the body of T-19-A had started to fragment. It eventually disappeared. However, the developed concepts survived and were subsequently used by other workers.

Carl Vest, PhD, is the Research Director for the South Hill Historical Society. He is a founding member of the society and can be reached at cvest0055@aol.com.

Handout 2

Handout 3

THE HERALD www.puyallupherald.com NOVEMBER 9, 2011

The boundaries of South Hill

BY CARL VEST
South Hill Historical Society

Creating a community boundary for South Hill is a challenging task. Some say it's just that hilly area to the south of Puyallup. Others want to refer to it as that significant part of eastern Pierce County.

The land use folks use a unique description. Pierce County Public Works has its own boundaries. Then there are the political borders that keep shifting every 10 years.

But there is an underlying system in place that should be recognized.

As for history, it must be accepted that South Hill has not been a part of the United States for all that long. Most historical events on the Hill are dated from about the early 1850s. Before then, South Hill was a part of the so-called Oregon Country, which was jointly governed by the United States and Great Britain. The area was not considered a part of either country at that point — both claimed it by right of exploration and settlement.

In 1848, when James Polk was president, the ownership question was settled. By treaty, a boundary line between the two countries was established at 49 degrees north latitude. The Oregon Territory, south of that line, was then established by the United States.

As one of the first steps in managing this new landmass, the federal government created The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850. Among other things, the law set up a universal grid system for defining boundaries.

The grid system specified that a reference point was to be located near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers. In compliance, a physical marker, known as the Willamette Stone, was placed on a hill just west of Portland, Ore.

A theoretical north-south line was then created through that point, named the Willamette Meridian. A second line was formed east-west from the same point and named Range.

Using those two lines as coordinates, the entire Oregon Territory could then be surveyed and identified. The scheme is the same as the X-Y coordinate system familiar to all high school geometry students.

Distance along the Range and Meridian lines was measured in 6-mile increments. As an example, starting at the Willamette Stone and proceeding east 6 miles would create a reference point. Then proceeding north along the Meridian for 6 miles would give rise to a second reference point.

Parallel lines which encompassed the two points created a geometric square of 36 square miles. That area was given the name Township.

Using that idea, South Hill is located four Townships east of the reference point and 19 Townships north of the same location.

Surveying of the Territory started right away, but South Hill was not mapped until 1872. The surveyor's name was William Ballard, the same person for whom the Seattle neighborhood of Ballard was named.

So the boundaries of South Hill are essentially those of Township 19. It is 36 square miles in area. It is the Historic Hill. Any other borders are superimposed on that basic system.

Carl Vest is the research director for the South Hill Historical Society. He can be reached by email at cvest0055@aol.com.

Handout 4

South Hill Historical Society
Heritage Corridor

History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society

Volume 5 Issue 1 March 2007

Geography and the South Hill Historical Society

By Carl Vest, Member South Hill Historical Society

INTRODUCTION

For some five years the South Hill Historical Society (SHHS) has been going through the process of establishing itself. A legal corporation has been formed under IRS Code 501c(3). Members have been recruited. A near term officer group has evolved. Research is being done. Archives are being created. Debates have been undertaken on the many issues relating to the establishing and planning for an organization that all hope will live in perpetuity. Such activities continue. However, having acknowledged this startup and its necessary problem-solving work, one specific question continues to arise. It has yet to be answered. It is the development of a definition of the geographical area that SHHS should use to establish its boundaries of interest. This paper addresses that question and presents a proposed solution.

A FRAME OF REFERENCE

In our local area there now exist, or have recently existed, a number of official and quasi-official groups that have in various ways developed an identification of the geographical limits of South Hill. Unfortunately, each group has focused only on a definition that is tailored for its own specific purpose. The Pierce County Department of Public Works, for example, has one definition. In the political arena, the County Council has erected identification signs on several arterials on the Hill, which taken as a whole tend to define the South Hill boundaries. Its designation is different from the one being used by the Public Works signage. The South Hill Community Plan developers in their work utilized still another unique set of boundary locations. The County's Planning and Land Use Department, through its South Hill Land Use Advisory Committee (SHAC), has still another set of definitions. The US Postal Service does not adhere to any of the other schemes. So depending on which group or record you consult, a different answer will be obtained for the boundaries of South Hill. There appears to be no common definition in use.

Since a common South Hill boundary framework does not exist, a specific one must be established for SHHS purposes. Such a definition is necessary so members of the society can work and communicate with each other and with the public at large. Moreover, SHHS members need a setting that is unambiguous for doing research, writing, talking, and accumulating historical facts.

The basic township designations for the State of Washington will be used as the starting point for such a definition. The township system for the state (thirty-six square miles each) has its center at a point near the intersection of the Willamette and the Columbia Rivers, in the southwestern metropolitan area of Portland, Oregon. An imaginary north-south line through that point is known as the "Willamette Meridian." That line extends North into the Puget Sound area. An imaginary east-west line through that same point is known as the "Range." The range line extends completely across the State of Washington, in both an easterly and westerly direction. Using maps of Washington State, and by inspection, it is concluded that the northern location of South Hill within this system, as measured along the meridian, could be entirely within, or in parts of, three Townships: 18N, 19N, or 20N. Also, again by inspection, it is determined that South Hill is located four townships to the east along the range line. Thus, a specific location on South Hill might be designated as being in Township 19 North, Range 4, East (usually written as T19N, R 4 E).

BOUNDARIES OF HISTORICAL SOUTH HILL

© South Hill Historical Society, March 2007 Map by Jerry Bates

As noted above, within each township the geographic area is divided into 36 one-mile squares. Each one-mile square is called a Section. Each section is numbered, starting with the number 1, in the northeast corner and ending with 36 in the southeast corner.

This is the coordinate system that will be used for defining SHHS boundaries in the geography of South Hill. It is the same system that is commonly used by governmental organizations. Land surveyors, land title companies, and developers also use this scheme in their work. The concepts are well known and the ideas communicate easily.

SOUTH HILL IN THE TOWNSHIP SYSTEM

Using the township grid system as a reference,

where does South Hill fit in? There are valid considerations for using at least some of the areas described by three township numbers: 18N, 19N, & 20N. As noted above, and by inspection, Range 4, East, appears to be the appropriate range number to use.

TOWNSHIP 20N, RANGE 4 EAST

Township 20N is the most northern township of the three under consideration. Most of its area covers the City of Puyallup and surrounding tracts. However, the southern row of sections, numbers 31 through 36 are relevant for adoption by SHHS when taking into account South Hill's history. There are at least two rationalizations for this reasoning.

First, Sections 31 through 36 contain the northern inclines of that geographical area we now call South Hill. These slopes are clearly shown on early maps and are particularly visible on an 1864 map, a copy of which is in the SHHS archives. That map was drawn from a survey done during the second quarter of 1864 by Henry I. Beerenson. It was filed with the Surveyor General's Office on November 18, 1864.

Secondly, various locations on these slopes are already a part of several SHHS data banks about South Hill's historical settlements. Through research it is becoming clear that much of the early history of South Hill started with migrations up these hillsides. It is suggested that these movements eventually led to the establishment of footholds further south and on top of the hill. Another example about the importance of this area comes from the strong community relationships that are known to have developed among families near present-day Woodbine Cemetery. And, also from the writings from those families whose children attended the Puyallup Heights School (in present day terms, located about Meridian Avenue and 103rd Street). It can be argued with some validity that Section 36 should not be included in this grouping. But that section does include some of the eastern slopes of the hill and should be a part of any SHHS thinking. This recommendation is further reinforced by an examination of collected SHHS data involving the Maplewood watershed and the early Tacoma Power and Water Company.

TOWNSHIP 19N, RANGE 4 EAST

All of what is now commonly called South Hill fits into Township 19, when considering both the township's northern and southern boundaries. Moreover, historically, this area has also been recognized by other organizations. At one time, for example, (in the late1960s and early 1970s), there was a Township Nineteen Association (designated by the symbol T19A), which was the precursor of the present day South Hill Community Council. It can be argued that some of the southern sections are too far south, but that thinking is about some of the very southern parts of some sections, and not the entire section line. So it seems reasonable that both the northern and southern boundaries of the township be made South Hill for SHHS purposes. The eastern and western boundaries are not so apparent and will be discussed elsewhere.

TOWNSHIP 19N, RANGE 4 EAST, EASTERN BOUNDARY

When topographic maps are consulted, it is noted that most of the township's eastern sections actually depict territory in the Puyallup River Valley and are not descriptive of what would be generally called South Hill. This is not to say that these sections are insignificant from the point of view of historical developments on South Hill. Actually it is acknowledged that, in the pioneer days, many of the hill's southern residents used a number of trails to the east to reach their properties. Before a road system was developed, it was the only practical way to reach the Puyallup River, the railroad, and a market. But after due consideration, it is rationalized that for purposes of historical data collection the eastern sections of Township 19 should be excluded from any SHHS definition of South Hill. Those Sections are 1, 12, 13, 24, 25, and 36, all of which lie east of the ridge and at lower elevations.

TOWNSHIP 19N, RANGE 4 EAST, WESTERN BOUNDARY

On modern maps the western boundary of the township corresponds to a North-South line on Canyon Road East. An initial reaction is a feeling that such a boundary is too far west for SHHS purposes. Inspections of extant early maps, however, support the idea of Canyon Road as a western boundary. A 1915 map, for example, displays settlements throughout Sections 6, 7, 18, 19, 30 and 31 (those sections that border on present day Canyon Road). Those projects are labeled with names such as Puyallup Fruit & Garden Tracts and the Fruitdale Garden Tract [Note: Fruitdale Gardens on some old maps are identified, but this project may be more properly identified as the contemporary Fruitland Garden tract]. Additionally, many of these names have been mentioned in data that SHHS has already collected in interviews with older residents, as well as from the reading of written records generated by a variety of sources.

Some may argue that the southwestern areas of the township are not historically significant. In fact, to date SHHS research has not documented much in the way of historical activity in Sections 19, 30 and 31. It is a valid argument also that some of this area should be considered to be in the Frederickson community. But it should not be overlooked that the Pierce County Heritage Corridor now exists across Section 19 (the old Military Road, circa 1840s) and that a historic dump is located at the approximate intersection of Sections 19, 20, 29 and 30. To date that dump has been mentioned in interviews by a number of older people. It apparently played a significant role in the early life of local residents from several parts of the hill. In summary it is acknowledged that these areas have not yet been subjected to the level of SHHS scrutiny, as have other parts of the township. It is believed, however, that when they receive additional focus a closer connection will be established with other parts of the township.

Thus, it is specified that the western boundary of Township 19N (Canyon Road East) be the boundary line for defining the SHHS area of interest.

TOWNSHIP 18N, RANGE 4 EAST

Township 18N is the most southerly of the three townships being evaluated. When analyzing this area an initial reaction is that none of it should be considered as South Hill for SHHS purposes. A closer examination of its northern row of sections (Sections 1 through 6), however, and a scrutiny of data already collected by SHHS, leads to the con-

clusion that the history of South Hill does in fact extend into these sectors. It can be argued with considerable authority, of course, that the western sections are closely related to the Frederickson area and that the eastern sections fit more into the Graham tract. But, even granting that such is true, it does not mean that history stops at specific geographical points and historical events that happened cannot be considered in regional thinking.

As an illustration, there is, for example, the paper I wrote about Meridian Avenue. It includes several descriptions of that highway, reaching almost to Graham in some portrayals. Also, on the western side of the Township, there are numerous connections to the Old Military Road and the old "dump." So there are a number of known and obvious South Hill connections to the northern parts of the Township and as such the case is made for including the northern sections in the SHHS area of interest.

So it is defined that the northern row of sections (Sections 1 through 6) in Township 18N, is a part of the definition of SHHS boundaries.

A SUMMARY USING TOWNSHIP DESIGNATIONS
Using the township designations the SHHS defined area of interest is as follows:

North: Sections 31 through 36 of Township 20N. That is, the southern lineof sections in Township 20N.
South: The southern boundary of the first row of sections in Township 18. That is, Sections 1 through 6 of Township 18N.
East: The bluff overlooking the Puyallup Valley (i.e., Township 19N, excluding Sections 1, 12, 13, 24, 25, and 36).
West: The western line of Township 19N. Including the western lines of Section 31 in T20N and Section 6 in T18N.

South Hill Historical Society Officers

President, Yvonne Thorp
Vice-President, Don Glaser
Secretary, Joan Vosler
Research Coordinator, Carl Vest
Treasurer, Ben Peters
Newsletter Editor, Jerry Bates

A SUMMARY USING MODERN DESIGNATIONS

Unfortunately there are not always streets or roads along all the Section lines in the designations listed above. For practical purposes, however, selections can be made using modern streets and roads, all of which pick up the spirit of the township designations. Thus, the following are adopted:

North: The northern boundary of the SHHS area of interest is defined as 88th Street, as designated by the Pierce County grid system. Where this line crosses the City of Puyallup, it coincides with 15th Avenue, SE/SW in the City's system. This is the southern line of the Western Washington Fair boundary. So a north line at 88th Street is selected. This does not include all of the southern sections of Township 20, but does include those areas adjacent to the South Hill incline that should be the most important to SHHS.

South: The southern boundary of the SHHS area is more elusive, as there appears to be no street or road near the section line. However, again by inspection, it would appear that a line at 200th Street would include all the presently known areas of interest to SHHS. So 200th Street is designated as the southern boundary. As in the north, this line does not include the most southern part of the Sections, but does include known areas of interest.

East: The top of the bluff overlooking the Puyallup River is designated as the eastern boundary of the SHHS designation. From time-to-time, as research is undertaken, it may be necessary to penetrate this line for specific reasons. But, in general, the top of the bluff appears to be a reasonable designation.

West: Canyon Road East is designated the western most line of SHHS interest.

So in summary the SHHS defined geography of interest for South Hill extends from 88th Street in the north, to 200th Street in the south. And, stretches from Canyon Road on the west, to the top of the Puyallup River Valley bluff on the east.

December 5, 2006

History On The Hill is published quarterly
Copyright 2006

South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name		
Address	**Phone**	
City	**State**	**Zip**
Home E-mail Address		

Signature _____ **Date** _____ **Renewal, check here** ☐

Annual Dues: Society membership $25.00
Note Please do not send cash.

Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:
SHHS Membership, 11711 92nd AV E, Puyallup, WA 98373