

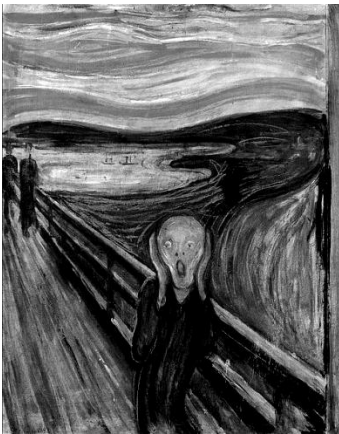
Kent Chronicles

May: 1891-1900

- ❖ Due to the popularity in fashion of a certain shade of purple, the 1890s are sometimes referred to as the

“ _____ Decade.”

- ❖ The decade has also been called the “ _____ Nineties,” a term coined in the 1920s (when it didn’t have the same connotations as it does now) to describe the decadence and frivolity of the period.



- ❖ **1893:** Norwegian painter Edvard Munch completes this famous work:

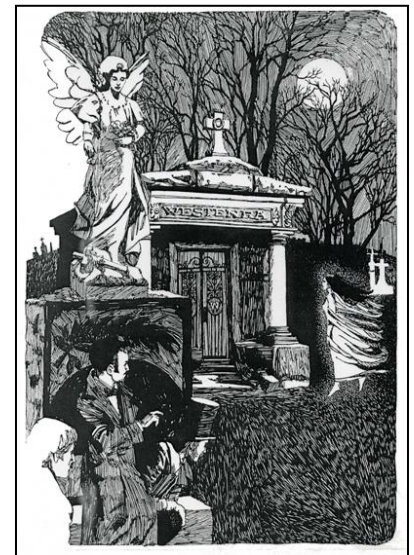
- ❖ **1893:** Known as the World’s Columbian Exposition, the World’s Fair features the White City and the first appearance of the Ferris Wheel, in this “windy” U.S. city:

- ❖ **1895:** This chemical element, number 2 on the periodic table, is first isolated by Sir William Ramsay (hint—the abbreviation is He):

- ❖ **1897:** This Irish author publishes his legendary vampire novel *Dracula*:

In the United States, the 1890s were marked by a severe economic depression sparked by the Panic of 1893, as well as several strikes in the industrial workforce. The decade also saw continuing developments in science and culture—many works of art and literature and technological inventions came out of the 1890s that are still important today. This decade also saw the first filming of a royal coronation, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia in 1896, and the first edition of the modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, also in 1896.

The 1890s were important for Kent, too. As a brand new city, virtually the entire hops crop was destroyed by a blight in 1891. A national economic downturn followed two years later; these were hard times for all. But things began to look up at the end of the decade: in 1899 Elbridge A. Stuart opened the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company in Kent, which eventually became an international company known as Carnation.



*As of April 2011, there are 84 people living in the world who are verified to have been born in the 1890s.



A class from the Taylor School, 1900

The Taylor School was located north of James Street, on the corner of what is now 228th Street and 64th Avenue. The school was open from 1892 to 1904. On the following page is a newspaper article from 1963, written by a man who remembered the school.

What interesting things do you notice about this photograph?

Former Pupil Writes History Of Taylor School

Harry E. Waid, now living in Blaine, Wash., was born in Kent, where his father arrived in 1889. Waid attended the old Taylor school and later the Kent schools. He engaged in teaching and coaching in Idaho, Washington and Alaska for a time before entering the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1929. He retired in 1960 and made trips to the various Hawaiian Islands with Mrs. Waid and their daughter, Margo, now married and living in Seattle. They also visited ten countries in Europe. Waid recently submitted the following article on his recollections of the old Taylor School. The school was located at the intersection of the Taylor Road and West Valley Highway. The article will be published in several installments.

By HARRY E. WAID

The Taylor School, as it was called, should not be confused with the "Little Red School Houses" of song and story, being neither red nor very little. Organized a few years before the turn of the century, it was somewhat more advanced and progressive than its classic prototype, though retaining some of its best features. It was situated on an acre tract at a convenient cross roads a mile and a half from the then small town of Kent, Washington on what was long since the first paved highway between Seattle and Tacoma, though in those days it was a gravelled dirt road, partly planked and trestled over the swamper portions, being muddy in winter and dusty in summer. Thousands of frogs infested the ponds and swampy acres and set up a thunderous chorus during the summer nights, the



spring and the fall nights. During the day, in season, flock after flock of wild ducks and geese flew over, often alighting nearby.

The school house was about thirty feet wide by sixty feet long, surmounted by a belfry near the front or north end. A front porch led into a corridor, from where the bell was pulled by a rope. To either side were the cloak rooms, one for the boys and one for the girls, each provided with tall window of many panes, fronting onto the porch.

The large school room was entered through doors from either cloak room. There were five of these same tall windows on either side of this room, equally spaced, with short black-boards in between. A long black board spanned the windowless south wall and one on the north or front wall, between the two entry doors. Also at the north end was a raised platform, dominated by the teacher's desk. Also, on this wall were roll-up maps and physiological charts. The maps showed the continents, our state and country and a few statistical charts anent populations, industries, political, racial and religious aspects of various regions. The other charts depicted the human body and its functions; the nervous system, skeletal system, digestive, circulatory and muscular systems. One showed the effects of alcohol on the internal organs when taken in varying quantities. A large terrestrial globe and many wooden geometrical solids

were contained on a table at one corner of the platform, although geometry, of course, was never included in the limited curriculum of this eight-grade, one-teacher institution.

Cast-iron Heater

Near the center of the room was the large conventional pot-belly cast iron heater, with the stove pipes suspended from the ceiling, leading to the chimney at the south end. The double seats with desks attached, were of maple, with let-down tops and with book troughs underneath. There were four rows of these, each accomodating two boys or two girls and about six or eight to the row, the smaller desks being near the front. There were two long recitation seats at either side of the room, near the teacher's desk.

A large kerosene lamp, with a shade and a large round wick, was suspeaded from the ceiling near the center of the room. This was used during some night or evening events, such as a Christmas program, basket social or an election. On the walls, above the blackboards were the usual pictures of Washington, Lincoln, Landing of Columbus, and the likes.

Rugged Pupils

Like a small empire, the Taylor School rose, flourished and fell. Like a small empire, it was ruled by teachers who

were, in their turn, despotic, benevolent or maybe intermediate but each and all of them overworked, underpaid and forever beset with the problem of educating and disciplining a rather rugged and somewhat cosmopolitan group of country lads and lasses. By rugged, I mean these pupils had no fancy clothes, no costly habits, entertainment or privileges and no outstanding talents or distinguished manners. They were, however, strong and healthy and for the most part, honest, thrifty, tolerant and considerate. In their overalls, hand-me-down coats, homemade shirts and gingham dresses, they represented young America at the grass roots level. And they were regimented. Patriotism, virtue, industry, charity, temperance, respect for labor, even humility, were practically brainwashed into them in their songs, their copy books, their language lessons and readers. All were used to hard work. The boys had to milk cows, plow, cultivate, chop wood, hoe potatoes, make hay, clean stables and build fences. The girls had their household chores, sewing, darning, mending, churning butter, washing, ironing or otherwise helping an overworked mother and sometimes with the outdoor farm work.

(To be continued next week)



The old school house,
the old maple tree in foreground



This photo is of the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company's factory on the corner of First and Meeker Streets. It is believed that the photo was taken on the factory's first day of operation, September 6, 1899. Below is part of a 1984 newspaper article that tells the story of the company that became Carnation.

The method of making evaporated milk is no longer a secret, but physical evidence that the ancestor of the well-known Carnation Co. made its beginning in Kent 85 years ago is hard to find.

The two-story brick building and its unusually steep wooden loading platform are long gone from the downtown corner of First and Meeker. Even the building that replaced it — and a bronze plaque embedded in an outside wall commemorating the factory — are no more. Kent operations were closed in 1916 and the Carnation Co. soon spread out all over the country.

An effort in 1971 to have Carnation's birthplace immortalized in the National Register of Historic Places was later dropped.

The Los Angeles-based company, since diversified into pet food, coffee creamer and sandwich spreads, was sold last week for an estimated \$3 billion to the Swiss chocolate and baby food giant Nestle S.A., almost 85 years to the day since the first can of Carnation evaporated milk came off the Kent assembly line on Sept. 6, 1899.

What remains of Carnation's 17 years in Kent are bits and pieces culled from a couple of books on local history and attempts by a few citizens to put down on paper the impact founder Elbridge A. Stuart had on the once thriving dairy industry in the Green River Valley.

When the Carnation milk plant was running, there was an opening in the middle of the block on Meeker and those wagons and teams of horses — sometimes there would be maybe three wagons double parked waiting for their turn to get up in there and deliver the milk into the Carnation plant.

— A former employee to an interviewer doing research for an oral history project in 1982.

Stuart, a former East Coast grocer, and partner T. E. Yerxa founded the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Co. in an old hotel. They bought equipment from a failed condensory for \$5,000 at a sheriff's auction.

The name was changed to Carnation Milk Products Co. in 1909. Stuart, who had since bought out his partner, began a quest to breed the perfect Holstein cow in 1910 when he started the Carnation research farm in the Snoqualamie River Valley city of Tolt (renamed Carnation in 1917 by an act of the state legislature).

Today, the research farm's genetics division still carries on Stuart's work through experimentation in artificial insemination, said George Wilkins, Carnation manager of communications. The dairy herd there has been joined by 1,000 cats and dogs for pet food research. The milling division develops livestock feed.

Milk was king in the old days in Kent. Carnation sales blossomed when Stuart shipped condensed and evaporated moo to Klondike miners during the Alaska Gold Rush.

MEMORIAL CARDS: Documents of History
by Lesley-Anne McLeod



An 1896 memorial card from the Museum's collection

At first it may seem a macabre collectible. But the memorial card, evidence and reminder of a death, is a fascinating record of history and manners. These cards are still in use, but those of the Victorian era are of particular interest. Full of symbolism and sentiment, they reveal the character of an age.

In the years of Victoria's reign, black kid gloves were given to all who attended a funeral. Memorial cards originated to accompany the gloves in the post to friends and relations unable to attend the funeral. Eventually the cards themselves became a major memorial. Some were very large and elaborate, and included cut paper work or original art work; they were intended for framing and hanging.

More often however, the cards were a smaller, standard size of about 3" by 4 1/2". They were of heavy card stock, usually bordered and printed in black. Simplicity was not the norm; cards were usually intricately embossed in a wide variety of designs. All the designs contained symbolic elements. The plants were evergreen; ivy indicated undying affection, the yew was a symbol of immortality. The weeping willow spoke of sorrow. Angels showed divinity, a serpent swallowing its tail, eternity. The anchor was a symbol of faith, and a broken column indicated a violent or premature death...

The Victorians knew very well that life was fragile. Most families lost at least one child in infancy or childhood. The elderly lived and died in the family home. The reality of death was ever-present, in a way that it is not in our world. Because death was a part of life, etiquette and ritual existed to ease its place in the daily round.

What are your thoughts on the custom of memorial cards, or Victorian mourning rituals in general? How do modern views and attitudes toward death differ from those of the Victorians?

1890s Fashion:

In the 1890s, the bustle disappeared from day dresses and the new day skirt style was flared smoothly over the hips from a hand-span waist and then gradually widened at the hemline.

By 1895 the leg-of-mutton sleeves swelled to gigantic proportions and were also used on décolleté evening dresses. The size of the sleeves was highlighted by the comparison of the tiny sashed or belted waist against the simple gores skirt that flared out all round to balance the massive sleeve heads.



The Gibson Girl



This particular image was a cartoon character drawn by the American artist Charles Dana Gibson. For twenty years between 1890 and 1910 he satirized society with his image of 'The New Woman' who was competitive, sporty and emancipated as well as beautiful.

Her clothes were fashionable in both America and Britain and set a fashion for skirts worn with embroidered blouses.



Another Gibson look was a shirt collar worn with a tie, a floppy artist bow, a neck cravat with stick pin bar brooch, or a crosscut ruffle jabot.

Beautiful embellished ornate blouses took on a new importance and were worn by every class. Home dressmakers did their best to emulate the fussy couture blouses and they used fine pin tucks, fine embroidery, and appliqué, or insertions of lace, faggoting, pleats and lace trim to get good effects.

(Article from FashionEra.com)

