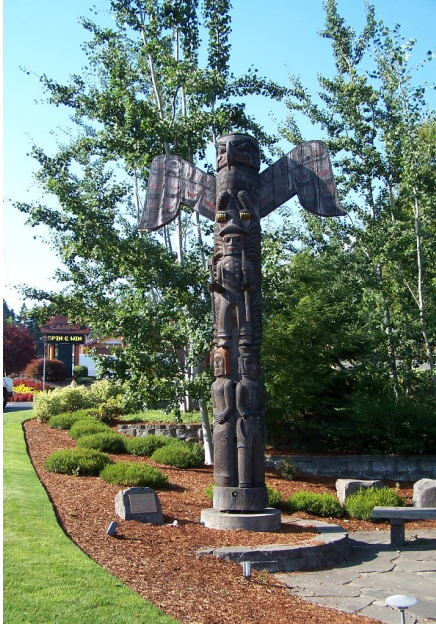


# A Walking Tour of La Center, Washington Celebrating 100 Years as a City in the Pacific Northwest



Prepared by Barbara Maureen Vining for the La Center Museum Association

## A WALKING TOUR OF LA CENTER, WASHINGTON

Here lies the peaceful and scenic City of La Center in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, rich with culture and tradition with a heritage steeped in steamboats and sternwheelers, logging and mills, apples and prunes, and farming traditions of everyday folks who used excess grain (such as wheat), cream and eggs as commodities to exchange for services and supplies which they lacked.

Prior to the European settlement of present-day Southwestern Washington, Native Americans roamed the Lewis River (Cathlapootle) region while hunting the abundance of deer, pheasants, grouse, salmon, berries, wapato, and other plants and animals. As early pioneers traveled up the rivers to claim homesteads, they were met by the “Green Desert” of tall evergreen trees hiding the landscape all around them. Rivers were the easiest way to travel around as clearing trees presented a formidable task.

On December 7, 1875, John H. Timmen donated land to plat the original site of the town, which would eventually be known as La Center. Early settlers called the area “Timmen’s Landing” in reference to his boat landing along the East Fork of the Lewis River. Over the years, the area was known for the Lewis River Post Office. Finally, on August 23, 1909, Clark County Commissioners recognized the Town of La Center as a municipality.

This walking tour book was assembled with the intent to bring alive a part of the past for you and to give you just enough of a sample of the history of the area to entice you to quest for more information, hopefully keeping the history alive this way.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although the preparation for this booklet has been done under the auspices of the La Center Museum Association, many community members not associated with the Museum Association have given time, information and photographs to make this a complete tour guide for you. The document before you was prepared by **Barbara Maureen Vining** with the assistance of the following individuals:

**Dr. Barbara Barnhart**, *historical photographs, editorial remarks, historical information*; **Janice Fillman and Margaret Colf Hepola**, *historical information, editorial remarks and personal interviews*; **The Colf Foundation** *for underwriting the expenses to produce the final document and copies*; **Alice Peters**, *assistance with the City of La Center historical archives, numerous photographs*; **Cathy Winston**, *assistance with the City of La Center historical archives and references*; **Amy and Rick Chase**, *historical photographs and personal research*; **Georgia Buckbee**, *La Center Evangelical Free Church scrapbook maker and archivist*; **Oscar Perez**, *First Independent Bank archival materials*; **Ron Chamberlain**, *personal interview, details of La Center’s history*; **Roel Vining**, *for underwriting the cost of the preliminary drafts and galley proofs for the editors*; **Roberta Emmerick**, *Pollock family history by way of personal interview*; **Kevin Erickson**, *La Center Tavern history by way of personal interview*; **Deanna Vining**, *modern-day photographs and gathering data from businesses*; **Michaela Vining**, *modern-day photographs, layout and design*; **Sydney Wise**, *for editing the final copy*; **Staff at the La Center Community Library**, *for assistance in locating historical Clark County references and publications*; **Ray and Louise Denny**, *for review of material*.

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Site 2	<u>Old Victory Bell/War Memorial</u> <b>725 Highland Road, La Center High School</b> DIRECTIONS: <i>From the high school parking lot, walk East towards the portable buildings (School District offices); situated between the District Office and the high school gym is The Old Victory Bell. The war memorial is situated between the front entrance to the high school and the parking lot.</i>
Site 3	<u>La Center Community Library (Old Hospital)</u> <b>1402 Lockwood Creek Road</b> DIRECTIONS: <i>Drive East on E. Fourth Street until it becomes Lockwood Creek Road. Just past the City Park, the library stands on the south side of the road. Park in the parking lot, then go exploring inside and outside the building.</i>
Site 4	<u>La Center Elementary School &amp; Intermediate School</u> <b>700 East Fourth Street</b> DIRECTIONS: <i>Drive West on East Fourth Street from the Library. Just past Highland Road, turn left (south) into the School parking lot.</i>
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Site 20	<u>The Leona Sternwheeler</u> <b>Just off Pacific Highway, south side of Lewis River</b> DIRECTIONS: <i>Drive to the First Independent Bank and turn on road which winds past the sewage treatment plant. Continue down the road, under the bridge, off towards the west. Park at the boat landing at the end of the road. Look south across the East Fork of the Lewis River during low river stage levels.</i>
Site 21	<u>John Pollock's Grave and Old Homestead</u> <b>NW Pollock Road</b> DIRECTIONS: <i>Drive out of La Center on Pacific Highway (La Center Road) and turn East onto Timmen's Road. Drive ¼ mile, then turn left (north) onto NW Pollock Road. Continue on the road until it almost ends. The gravesite is just before the final turn in the road to the north.</i>
Site 22	<u>Currently Fire Station and Parking Lot (Site of Old Prune Drying Building)</u> <b>SW Corner of Fifth Street and Birch Avenue</b>
Site 23	<u>Bronze "Mother Bathing Child" Statue</u> <b>Near New TDS Building, Just South of 210 East Fourth Street</b>
Site 24	<u>Wood Carvings in Sternwheeler Park</u> <b>Sternwheeler Park, Just South of Fourth Street</b>

Item	Description
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## REFERENCES

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| APPENDIX A | Renaming the Streets of La Center   |
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## Site 1. The La Center Cemetery (Mt. Zion Cemetery and I.O.O.F. Cemetery)

**Location: Highland Road, West of La Center High School**

The La Center Cemetery is a combination of the Mt. Zion Cemetery and the I.O.O.F. (International Order of Odd Fellows) cemeteries. Many gravestones mark the burial sites of some of the early settlers and business people in the La Center area. It is interesting that the great grandchildren of some of these early settlers still live in the area today.

### Examples of notable people buried here:



William and Hannah Weir, ancestors of Claudia Long; John T. Pollock (1864-1924), son of John Pollock (1824-1868), who is buried on Pollock Road, south of town; John Pollock is the great grandfather of Roberta Emmerick; William B. Brezee (1868-1932); Galatin Kinder (1802-1875); Charles Rhodes (1901-1978); Mary Bell (Harrell) Mason (1868-1903) and Levi Alfred Mason (1853-1934), ancestors of Margaret Colf Hepola and Annabelle Bauman.

### Captain William and Hannah Weir

William G. Weir (1834-1902); Pioneer and Columbia River Captain

William G. Weir was born in New Jersey as one of fifteen children; five of his brothers died in the Civil War. Although he spelled his name "Weir," his children changed the spelling the "Wier." He co-owned a trading post and log store with Mr. Aaron Seeley from Iowa for a while. After Mr. Seeley stole the money from the store and the receipts from the Post Office, he sold his store to take up river boats. For a short time, he was the Postmaster for the Lewis River Post Office. His real love was with river boats. He purchased "The Swallow" from Mr. Arnold and placed it on a regular Lewis River to Portland run in 1872, exchanging dry goods and supplies for farmers' eggs, butter, cream and honey. He successively captained The Hydra, The Latona, The Dewdrop, and the Lucia Mason.



Captain and Mrs. William Weir

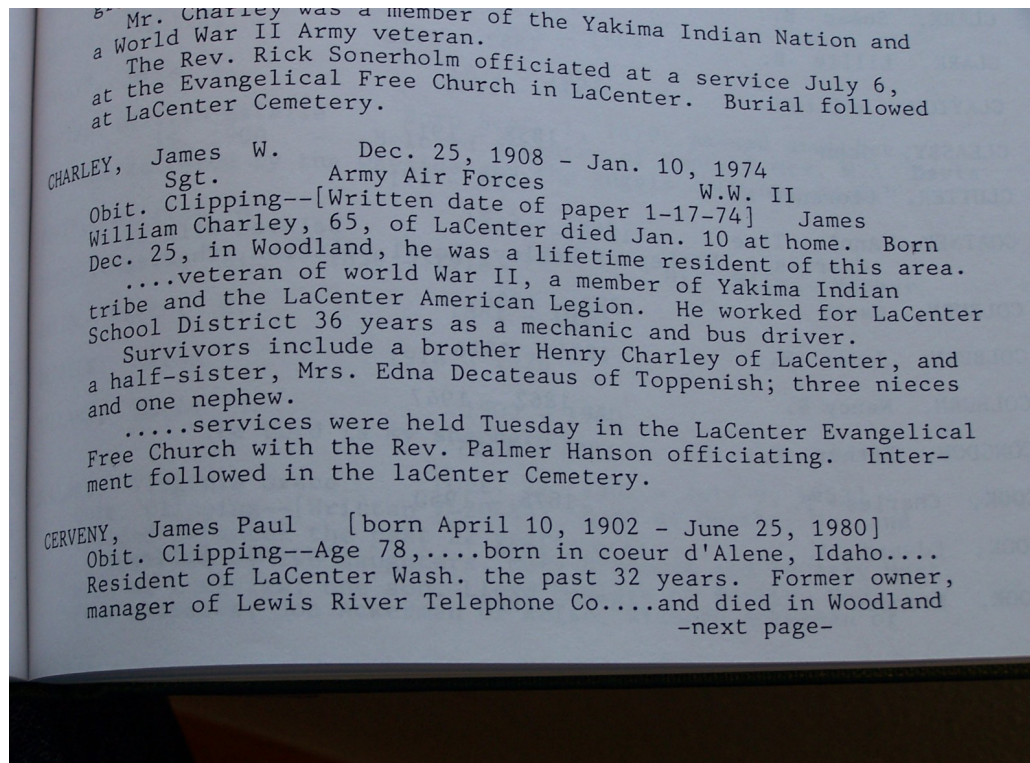
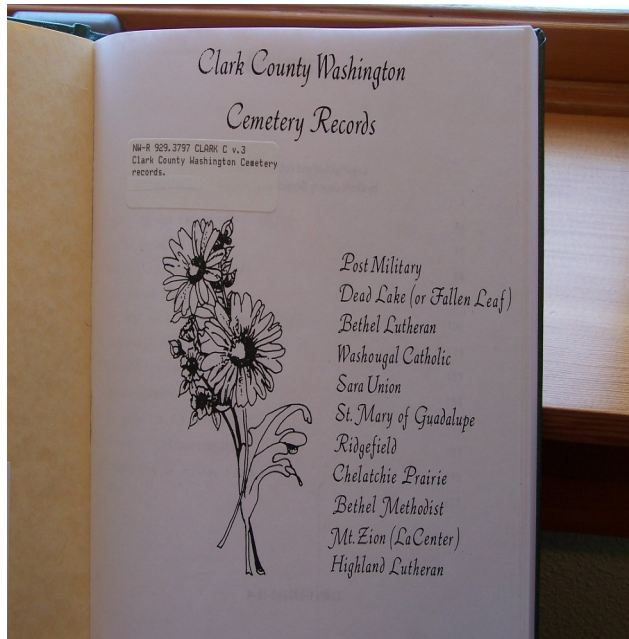


## Clark County Washington: Cemetery Records

The Clark County Genealogical Society has published a Cemetery Records Book. Volume 3 includes Mt. Zion (La Center) Cemetery, the I.O.O.F. Cemetery and Highland Lutheran Cemetery. Copies of these books are located in the reference section of the La Center Community Library. Copies may be purchased from the Clark County Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 5249, Vancouver, Washington 98668-5249.

This publication is a good start for those who are interested in studying more about the lives of those buried in the La Center Cemetery.

Below is an excerpt from the book, showing how the information about the deceased is laid out. For early residents, this is an excellent source of information. The facts for this publication were gleaned from a variety of resources, including the obituary entries in local newspapers at the time of the person's death.



## Site 2. Old Victory Bell and War Memorial

Location: La Center High School, 725 Highland Road



The old La Center School located where the parking lot north of the New Phoenix Casino is today. The building was built in 1908. It was torn down in 1938 to secure funds to build a new school.



Front entrance of the current La Center High School



The Old Victory Bell originally hung in the La Center School which was built in 1908 and torn down in 1938. It had disappeared from La Center for a long time until the early 1990's when it was discovered in excellent condition. The current monument represents the completion of Jacob R. France's Eagle Scout Project on April 4, 1996. Donations from graduates of La Center School, community members and local organizations brought the Victory Bell back to its rightful place in the hearts of students of all ages.

*--From the recollections of Dr. Barbara Barnhart*



The La Center High School Gold Star Veterans Memorial sets in front of the steps of the current La Center High School.

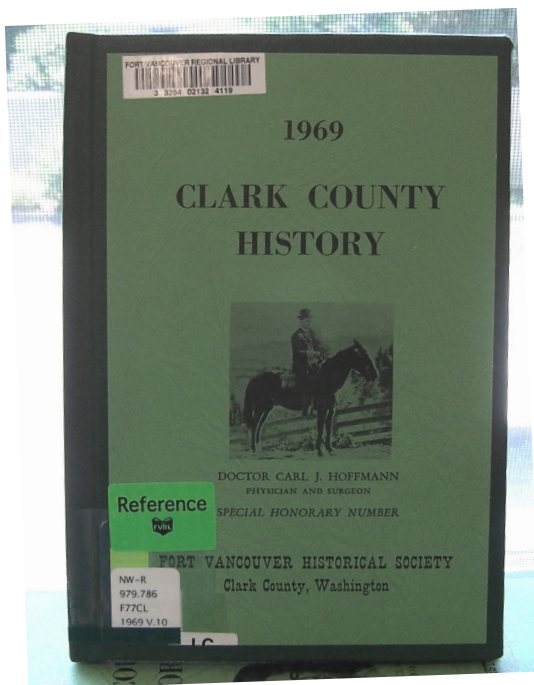
High School students who served and died in any war are honored on this memorial. Currently, students who served and died in World War II and Vietnam are listed and honored on this memorial.

**Site 3. La Center Community Library (Zener Home and Hospital)  
Current Location of Building: 1402 Lockwood Creek Road**



Dr. Charles Zenner was an early doctor in the La Center area. His office and hospital were located in his home on Fifth Street. Above, Dr. Carl Hoffman, in the wagon, also practiced in La Center before moving to Woodland.

The Zenner (Zener) Home and Hospital was built circa 1902 to 1905 near current day East Fourth Street and Cedar Avenue .



Dr. Charles Ralph Zenner (Zener) moved to La Center in 1905, at which time he established a medical practice here. He received Dr. Carl Hoffman as an associate in 1907. Dr. Zenner and his wife had a six-bed clinic and a drug store in their large home, which was located on East 5<sup>th</sup> Street (currently known as East 4<sup>th</sup> Street). Dr. Zenner went on to White Salmon and then to Vancouver. Dr. Carl Hoffman set up practice in Woodland, Washington after one year of practice in La Center. Dr. Hoffman became endearingly known as “the Saddle Bag Doctor,” as he traveled about the county on horseback with medicines carried in saddlebags. Other doctors who practiced in La Center were: Dr. Lasater (1909); Lowell Solomon (1882) was a registered Practitioner of Medicine; Dr. W.L. Freeman (1897); Dr. R.S. Davis (1876 to 1902), pharmacist and physician; H. Blair (1887), physician and druggist; E. Eland (1887), physician and druggist.

This book devoted to Dr. Carl Hoffman is located in the La Center Community Library.

# The La Center Community Library

**Location: 1402 Lockwood Creek Road**



The La Center Community Library is part of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library system. The Friends of the Library for La Center was formed with the initial vision of establishing a library locally so that residents did not have to travel very far for library services. The Friends of the Library were joined in their efforts by Robert Colf, one of the owners of the old hospital building at the time, Dick Colf of the Colf Foundation, and Margaret Colf Hepola, whose mother worked as a teenager at the old hospital. Thus began the campaign to save the old hospital building, which was scheduled to be razed in fire training exercises. The Friends of the Library are still active in raising funds for programs and furnishings in the library.

In August of 2001, the building was moved to its current location, one-half mile from its former downtown location. On May 8, 2004, the La Center Community Library opened its doors to the public.



While touring the library grounds, be sure to check out the names on the bricks from donors and the wall memorial of library donors inside near the elevator. Also, look for the bronze plaque on the outside of the building, commemorating the preservation of this historical building and the birth of a community library. The picture inside the library on the north wall is of Dr. Carl Hoffman, the Saddle Bag Doctor.

(excerpt from Northwest Renovation. 5/4/2007. "A Building Reborn in La Center" by Mike Shepherd)  
". . . The restoration is as historically accurate as possible with some exceptions given the need to prepare the building for its role as a 3,380-square-foot modern library on three floors. An elevator was installed to meet code and give patrons of physical disability full access to facilities. Other improvements include an underground geothermal heating and cooling system, steel fire escape, networked computers, and professionally landscaped exterior plaza incorporating bricks that were sold as one of the many Friends of the Library fundraising events."

## Site 4. La Center Elementary and Intermediate Schools

**Location: 700 East Fourth Street**



The Front Entrance and Offices for the La Center Elementary School (right) and the La Center Intermediate School (left) were built as part of the renovation project of the school district and was completed in 2004.



The Mary Gabrielson Building is part of the Elementary School now. In 1936, La Center residents approved an \$18,900 bond for a new school. This eventually became known as the Mary Gabrielson Building after a beloved school teacher, who taught at the La Center School District for 36 years from 1929 to 1965. She is buried in the Highland Cemetery.



The Round Building, built in 1969 according to a plaque on it, was dedicated as the John L. Gary Elementary School in memory for devoted service as a superintendent to La Center Schools from 1949 to 1962.



The current cafeteria was built in 1969 as a multi-purpose building. The building was dedicated in memory of Thomas E. Marsden for devoted service as a superintendent to La Center Schools from 1967 to 1970. The first multi-purpose building, which was built in 1952 behind the Mary Gabrielson building, was torn down as part of the 2004 remodeling project of the La Center School District.

## Site 5. Heritage Center (Site of Old Zener Home and Hospital)

**Location: 419 East Cedar Avenue**



The Heritage Center sits near the site of the Old Zenner Home and Hospital. The center is owned by Genteel Investments and currently serves as office space for businesses, a restaurant, and has a conference room for rent. The clock tower was intentionally designed in a style reminiscent of the architecture reflecting La Center's past.

This aerial photograph taken by Spencer B. Gross Photogrammetric Engineering in 1990 shows the location of the old Zener (some sources spell it "Zenner") house and hospital before it was moved in 2001.



## Site 6. City Hall (Site of Old Tavern)

**Location: 214 East Fourth Street**



The building which houses the current City Hall was built as a tavern, named “Podunk,” by Burt Huss, a local logger and former mayor of La Center. Burt Huss owned a home and a barn between this building and the newest TDS building located just to the southwest of this site. The aerial photograph below was taken in 1990. Neither the old Huss house, nor barn existing any more. Even though the current building for City Hall is there, note that the newest TDS Building has not been built yet.

### HISTORICAL TIDBIT

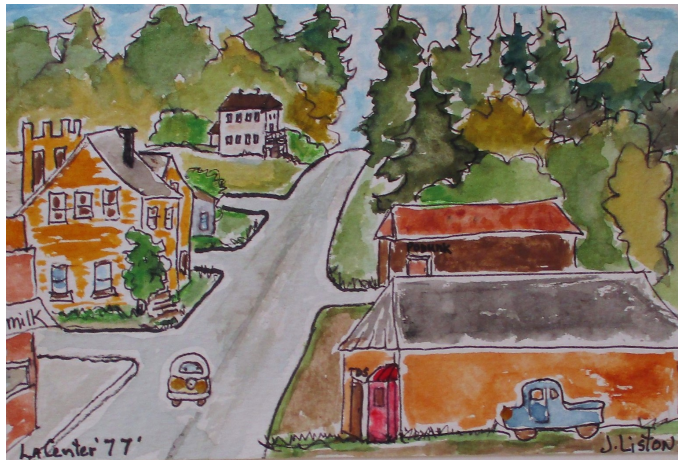
Burt Huss believed that prior to La Center getting its current name, it was called “Podunk.” Although no official records show that the town was called “Podunk,” Pete Weir recollected that his father wanted the town’s name to be “Podunk” at one point. This is why Burt Huss chose to name his Tavern, “Podunk.”



Aerial Photograph (Spencer B. Gross, 1990)

### HISTORICAL TIDBIT

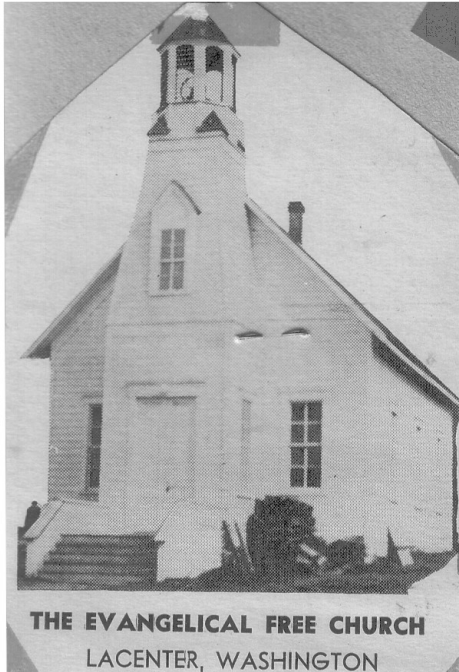
Over the years, elected city officials met in different locations. One former city council member remembers when city council would sometimes meet in one of the old taverns. Another of those places was a very old house on West 9<sup>th</sup> Street. According to some former city council members, the old toilet seat took a bite out of their seats as it had a big crack in it. To make matters worse, there was no heating, so it also gave a chilly welcome as sometimes it was covered with frosty ice crystals.



Local artist Jeanine Liston painted Burt Huss’s old tavern (1977) with the “Podunk” sign right above the tavern entrance door. Traces of the front are still visible today.

## Site 7. Renovated Building/Old Church/Old Parsonage

Location: NE Corner of Fourth Street and Birch Avenue



There is great speculation about the original date this church was built. We do know that a Methodist congregation owned it prior to the Evangelical Free congregation. City plat maps dated 1914 place the church at its current location and as an M E Church (refer to Historical Tidbit on next page).

The building does not sit squarely on its lot, which might indicate that it has been moved. John H. Timmen donated 2 lots to a newly formed Methodist Church in 1881. This would have originally placed the Methodist Church just west of Aspen as he did not own lots at the building's current location. A newly formed Evangelical Free congregation bought the building from the Methodists in 1935 for \$800.00. The 2-story addition on the south side of the building was begun in 1938-1940. In 1950, the congregation added the structure to the north to make room for more classrooms. The charter to form the Evangelical Free Church was signed in 1936. In 1969, the congregation began building a new church, then moved out of the old one in the 1970's.



Rick and Amy Chase are the current owners of the building. They purchased the building in 2007 and began renovations including adding a foundation to the building, some cosmetic improvements to the façade, and adding embellishments, such as the sidewall shingles at the peaks and replacement of the doors with leaded glass versions.

## The Parsonage Next to the Church

**HISTORICAL TIDBIT:** The M E Church recorded in 1914 probably refers to a “Methodist Episcopal Church.” This church was established in the United States at the Baltimore Christmas Conference in 1784. In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church--South, and the Methodist Protestant Church merged to form the Methodist Church.

**HISTORICAL TIDBIT:** There was a story circulating around about the building of the parsonage in 1944. Apparently, lumber was in short supply at the time, so the local lumber yard owner donated the lumber and marked it with “Property of La Center Church.” Much of that lumber was mistakenly sold to local contractors. Needless to say, many homes around the area have lumber in them marked, “Property of La Center Church.”



The current small house just East of the old church was built in 1944 as a parsonage for what was then known as the La Center Evangelical Free Church. The cost of the parsonage was \$2,500.00 as recorded in a scrapbook prepared by Georgia Buckbee.



The Old La Center Church and Parsonage in 1944

## Site 8. Lewis River Telephone Company (now TDS Telecom)

**Location: 210 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**



Today the Lewis River Telephone Company is run by TDS Telecom, a national provider. The old building along Fourth Street is currently used for conferences and training by TDS. The following is a short history of telecommunication services in La Center from the late 1800's to today. The information was gleaned from Janice Fillman's Chronology of La Center.

The Cape Horn Telegraph Company established service from La Center in 1892. In 1907, the La Center and View Telephone Company incorporated. Mr. J.P. Cerveny purchased the La Center Telephone Company in 1947 from Mr. and Mrs. L.W. Short. In 1948, the La Center Telephone Company offered 24 hour service to La Center and Amboy. From 1953 to 1956 the company transitioned from operators and switchboards to automatic dialing for the towns of La Center, Amboy, View, and Fargher Lake. In 1956, telephone company was incorporated. By 1963, the name was changed to the Lewis River Telephone Company, Inc.



As remembered by Ron Chamberlain, a current employee for TDS Telecom in La Center, prior to the renovations which changed the face of the old building, there were two garages with entrances at both ends of the building with their bay doors facing modern-day Fourth Street.



(Spencer B. Gross, 1990)

The most recent TDS building (on left) was built after the 1990 aerial photograph on the right.

**Site 9. La Center Video and More and All Sport's Pizzeria  
(Soehl's Market)**

**Location: 121 East Fourth Street**



The building currently housing "The La Center Video Store" and the former "All Sports Pizzeria" was purchased in the late 1990's from Elmer Soehl by Brian Chang.

After the building was purchased by Brian Chang in the late 1990's from Elmer Soehl, a succession of video stores and pizzerias operated from the building. The La Center Video Store was opened in 1995 by Toni Smith, who operated it until 2001 at which time Jo An Stadler began operating the video store. In January of 2004, Rusty and Patty Jo Applen purchased the business. They are the current owners. In late Fall of 1995, Jo and Ray Currey opened Giovanni's Pizza. They later sold the business to Sue and Jim Kupfer, who then sold it to Julie Kelly. Julie Kelly renamed the store "All Sports Pizzeria." As of July 23, 2009, "All Sports Pizzeria" closed its business.

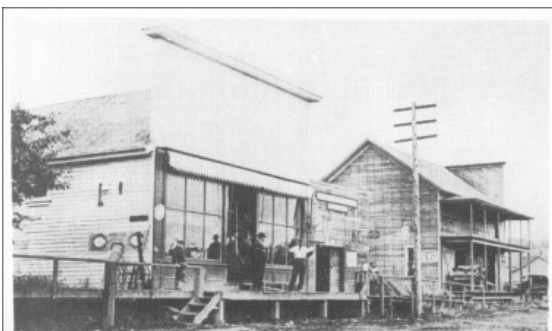


Prior to the current building being built in 1938 or 1939, the Bradway Mercantile store was there. The old wooden store had one or two steps in front of it. In 1943, Alfred "Butch" Soehl purchased the store from Mr. Bradway. It was then known as "Soehl's Market," where Alfred Soehl cut meats to sell locally. Sometime after 1948, Butch's son, Elmer Soehl, began cutting and wrapping meat for the store. He sold the store in the late 1990's (Bryan, 1998).

**Site 10. LiL' General Store and Shell Station (Kane Brothers)  
Location: 127 East Fourth Street**



The building currently housing the LiL' General Store was built in 1914, as can be seen on the front of the store even today. The Kane Brothers Store was the prominent store operating from this building over the years. It was the first store in the building in 1914. The current parking lot and Shell Station was once occupied by Falk Motor Sales and prior to that Finnegan's Feed Store. Brian Chang purchased this building nearly 20 years ago (Chang interview, 2009). The entrance to the old store used to be in the center of the front facing modern-day Fourth Street. The front windows and entrance have been boarded up and painted and a side entrance has been constructed, which outlets directly to the fuel pumps.



This photograph is of Fifth Street (now Fourth Street) taken somewhere between 1909 and 1914. The present Li'l General Store building (then the Kane Bros.) was built in 1914 between the two structures— about where the telephone pole is shown above.



Falk Motor Sales once occupied the Li'l General parking lot area—1964 Proceso yearbook photo

**Site 11. C&C Hair and Nail Company and Top Dog Grooming  
(Site of La Center Bank; Old Post Office; Farmer's Insurance; Loan Office)**

**Location: 115 East Fourth Street**



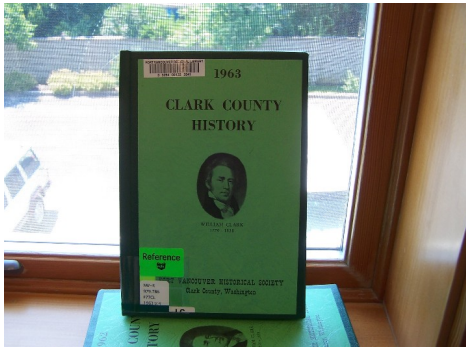
This building currently houses the C&C Hair and Nail Company (est. Sept. 2008), which is owned by Chris Nutter, and Top Dog Grooming (est. Nov. 2006), owned by Vickie Barnhart. The building owner is R.T. Equities. Most recently, other businesses occupying the building have included Farmer's Insurance and a Loan Office.

The La Center Bank used to occupy this building before the bank crash in the 1930's. Subsequently, in 1937, the La Center Bank moved to Woodland. The La Center Post Office moved into part of the building, while various other businesses occupied the other part. A map from the city archives, dated 9/6/74, shows that a café occupied the west side of the building, while the Post Office occupied the east side of the building. In 1980, the post office took over the entire building. Former post master, Jack Fillman, reportedly secured wood from old area post offices to use in the post office. Today's post office is located east of town just off Lockwood. As the building changed ownership and different businesses rented space, the old bank vault was too heavy and cumbersome to move, so it was left in place. Today it can be seen inside C&C Hair/Nail Company. Its stash today is an assortment of hair care and beauty products.



## History of La Center Area Post Offices

The information regarding the post offices in the area was mostly gleaned from the article written by Guy Reed Ramsey, entitled "Postmarked Washington" In Clark County History, 1963, published by the Fort Vancouver Historical Society with added interest notes from Margaret Colf Hepola and Janice Fillman.



The Lincoln Post Office was the first recorded post office in the area. Established in 1866 (dis. 6-28-70) by Reuben T. Lockwood, it was located at the mouth of Lockwood Creek on the Lewis River. It was disbanded in 1870. It is suggested that he had to row a boat to St. Helens to pick up the mail. Henry C. Comegys established the Stoughton Post Office on October 1, 1873 (dis. Jan. 26, 1881) in association with a small trading post just ½ mile up river from the former Lincoln Post Office site. The Lewis River Post Office was established by Captain William G. Weir at Timmen's Landing on March 3, 1873. The Post Office was co-located with a trading post owned by Captain Weir along the Lewis River near the site of the current La Center Bridge. Captain Weir's associate, Mr. Aaron Seeley from Iowa, absconded with the funds from Captain Weir's store, while he was away. This prompted Captain Weir to sell his store to his brothers-in-law J.C. Miller and J.W. Gaither. At that time, J.C. Miller became postmaster; later, the post office was disbanded on June 19, 1874. On August 10, 1874, John H. Timmen re-established the Lewis River Post Office. The post office name was changed on January 3, 1877 to the La Center Post Office. Over the years, the La Center Post Office was moved back and forth from locations along the Lewis River then up the hill, until it most recently occupied the building which now houses Top Dog Grooming and C&C Hair/Nail Company.

**HISTORICAL TIDBITS:** Although no where is it recorded that La Center was ever spelled as "La Centre," some residents have mail bearing the postmark of "La Centre" from the early days of the post office operations in the 1880's. The last postmaster for the Stoughton Post Office was Calvin G. Harrell (postmaster from 1878 to 1881), who was a brother to George Harrell. The Harrell family came to the La Center area from Monroe County and the town of Smithville, Indiana. George Washington Harrell was the father of Mary Bell Harrell, who married Levi Alfred Mason. Mary Bell Harrell Mason and Levi Alfred Mason were the grandparents of Margaret Colf Hepola and her sister, Annabelle Bauman.

## Site 12. The La Center Tavern, Established 1923

**Location: 107 East Fourth Street**



The current La Center Tavern was built and established in 1923. The La Center City Council used to meet at the tavern sometimes in the past (Chamberlain, 2009). The wood in the bar and columns along the wall behind the bar are original and made of wood from the area. Until not too long ago, a large mirror hung on the west wall of the tavern (Erikson, 2009).



In 1910, Spencer's Pool Hall and Tavern moved to the site of the current La Center Tavern.

Spencer's Pool Hall & Tavern and La Center Bank

**HISTORICAL TIDBIT:** In the early pioneering days of the area, south of the East Fork of the Lewis River was dry territory, while many saloons operated on the north side.

Site 13. The Trellis  
(Old site of Laundromat, various businesses, near old Rhodes Mercantile)

**Location: 103 East Fourth Street**



The Trellis is currently owned by Anthony E. Sharrah. The trellis is an eclectic home and garden décor store at the corner of Aspen Avenue and Fourth Street. Home and garden art there includes original art, garden art, statuarics, fountains, bird baths, and planters. Anthony Sharrah purchased this building in 1997, at which time he did extensive renovations. Prior to him purchasing the building, it was a barbershop and a Laundromat. Businesses since 1997 include: the Trading Post home décor store; The Gift Connection gift shop; the La Center Farmer's Market, La Cleaners drycleaning pickup; and finally, The Trellis.

Just to the west of The Trellis once stood the large La Center Mercantile run by the Rhodes Brothers. Charles L. Rhodes (1901-1978) operated the old La Center Feed Store for five years, whereafter, he operated the old Rhodes Brothers Mercantile store with his brother Ralph for 23 years. Charles L. Rhodes is buried in the Mt. Zion (La Center) Cemetery.



## Site 14. The Palace Casino ((Site of Old Woodward Hotel)

**Location: 319 Pacific Highway**



Today's Palace Casino is owned and operated by the Michels Development Company from Nevada. The Palace Casino houses the Lucky Dragon restaurant. It sits on the site of the former hotel and restaurant built and operated by E. Matt A. Woodward. Matt Woodward built his hotel and restaurant in 1924 just on the west side of the newly built Pacific Highway. Later, he built a small building just to the south to be used for dancing. Doria and Walter Ferguson purchased the hotel from Woodward in the 1940's and converted the dance hall into a roller rink. Over time, the hotel and dance hall served as a hot air balloon shop, a boarding house, a Laundromat, and a café (Hob Nob Café).



The Woodward Hotel Complex was a busy local spot early in the century. Today, 64 years later, the building is called Timmen's Landing and houses a restaurant, lounge and card room.

(from City of La Center archives)



(from Bryan, 1988)

On the sites of the hotel and the auto sales business just to the north, Darrell E. Lee and Ed & Robin Runyon built the La Center Café, the first card room in La Center. By August of 1985, Darrell E. Lee had built "The Other Place," another card room. Ultimately, Darrell Lee owned three card rooms in La Center. In 1997, Darrell Lee sold his card rooms and restaurants to a Texas businessman, named Jack Duncan. By 1998, Timmen's Landing was built, which was the right part of the current Palace Casino. Sara's Mexican Rose restaurant operated in Timmen's Landing. Later, the Michels Development Company bought Jack Duncan's businesses.

**Site 15. Chips Casino (Site of Haskins Auto Sales and Garage)**  
**Location: 320 Pacific Highway**



Chips Casino and Restaurant are currently located at 320 Pacific Highway. The Michels Development Company of Nevada currently own and operate Chips Casino. In 1924, George Haskins built an auto sales shop, auto repair shop and ran a gasoline station at this site. Haskins garage later became Eino's Garage when Eino Rajala purchased the property in 1945.



**Site 16. Site of Old Blacksmith Shop and Old Union 76 Station**  
**Current Site of the Last Frontier Casino 415 Aspen Avenue**  
**Current Site of the New Phoenix Casino 225 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street**



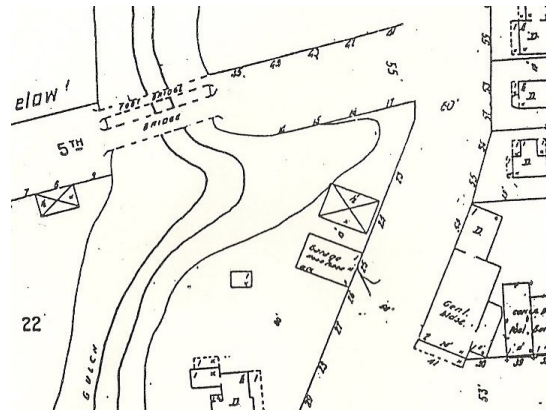
The Last Frontier Restaurant and Casino and New Phoenix Casino with the Twin Dragons Restaurant occupy this site today. They are owned by George Teeney. Inside of the Last Frontier Restaurant are many photographs on the walls depicting the old days in La Center.

This site once held a Union 76 Station and a blacksmith shop, which used to repair local tractors and farm equipment. A canyon and gully, today named Muddy Creek, ran through this property at one time. A drainage system was devised to divert water from overland into a network of pipes. One can still see Muddy Creek just west of the current day Police Station.

The aerial photograph of the site was taken in 1990. It shows that the New Phoenix Casino has not yet been built. According to a 1914 (1915) Map drawn by the Sanborn Map Company of New York, a garage sat in about the same position as the Last Frontier Restaurant and Casino.



(Spencer B. Gross, 1990)



Sanborn Map Company (1914)

**Site 17. Site of the Old Fanning House (a.k.a. Mayor's Corner)**  
**Location: Fifth Street and Pacific Highway**



This Dutch Colonial house was built in 1904 and is often referred to as the Fanning House or Mayor's Corner. It is located at the corner of Fifth Street and Pacific Highway. It was first owned by Sylvester Fanning, who had a number of careers, including teacher, writer, and owner of a general merchandise store in La Center. Later owners included two former mayors of La Center: Nicholas Rashford (1930's) and Don Lotze (1980's). As time passes and history becomes more obscured by waning memories and loss of printed archives, variations in the history are sometimes reported. One such variation of the history of this house is that another source indicates that the house was built by Nicholas Rashford, who was a timber baron at the time, and that he lived in the house prior to Sylvester Fanning.

Most recently, the building has served as a Bed and Breakfast, followed by a beauty spa. The building is currently (2009) vacant and zoned for business.



## Site 18. The Grange Building Location: 328 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street



One of the first Grange Halls built in Washington was right here in La Center. On July 8, 1874, the Patrons of Husbandry Grange No. 48, a local Grange chapter, was established. This was not too long after the National Patrons of Husbandry was formed in Washington, D.C. on December 4, 1867. Grange structure is organized as national, state, county, and local. In “A Bite of History,” edited by Joan Wolverton, the La Center Grange No. 48 “*was considered the first Grange*” established, then, in the Washington Territory as Washington was not yet a state. The Vancouver Area Chronology reported on August 17, 1899 that a new Grange hall was being built “*due south and down the hill from the hall’s location*” at that time in 1899. The 1899 structure is the believed to be the second Grange Hall built and is the one still standing today.

*“The National Grange is the nation’s oldest national agricultural organization . . . It was formed in the years following the American Civil War to unite private citizens in improving the economic and social position of the nation’s farm population.”* (Source: The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry website; <http://www.nationalgrange.org>)



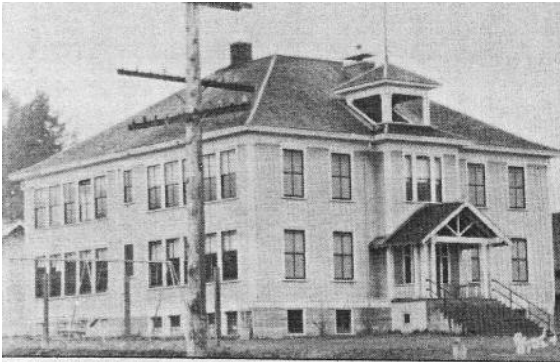
The Grange Hall is currently undergoing remodeling to update the front entrance of the building to be compatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act to offer easy access into the building.

## Site 19. Site of the Old La Center High School

**Location: Currently a Parking Lot just north of the New Phoenix Casino**



The Old La Center School was built in 1908 and was torn down in 1938 to secure funding for building a new school, which became the Mary Gabrielson Building. The site of the original building was just to the east of the corner of Pacific Highway and Fifth Street (then, known as Sixth Street). Members of the class of 1938, during their 60<sup>th</sup> reunion in August of 1998, had a picture taken on the old steps in front of the, then, vacant lot. A few days after their photo, the steps were gone and the New Phoenix Casino parking lot was being built. The Spencer B. Gross (1990) aerial photograph shows the shadowing of the steps in the center of the photograph on the bottom left of this page.



The La Center School located on the Old Pacific Highway and Sixth Street was built in 1908 and served all local students until it was torn down in 1937.

According to a few local residents remember the high school as being on the top floor of the building. This school housed students from grade one through grade twelve.



The two-story LaCenter School built in 1908 can be seen on the top left of this photo, surrounded by trees. In the water—on the east side (or right side) of the bridge is a sawmill; flume trestle on the bank to the north of the mill brought timber down from logging areas for shipping and milling. The white “hangings” near the river bank behind the sawmill are laundry clothes, according to Jack Fillman.

## Site 20. The Leona Sternwheeler

**Location: Just off Pacific Highway, south side of Lewis River, west of bridge**



THE LEONA

The Leona was a sternwheeler once owned by the Willamette River Transportation Company. It was a competitor of the Mascot. The Leona began service in 1901 and was eventually sold and tied up in Portland. A new owner brought the Leona back to La Center in 1912 for extensive alterations. While it was being worked on, it caught fire and drifted to the south shore of the East Fork of the Lewis River just west of the current bridge. It burned and then sank.



To this day in 2009, the Leona's hull and various iron components can be seen along the south shore of the East Fork of the Lewis River just across from a boat landing on the north shore west of the bridge into La Center. Much of the iron has completely oxidized and can be seen as bright red-orange stains in the soil along the edges of the hull.

## Site 21. John Pollock's Grave

**Location: NW Pollock Road**



This is the gravesite of John Pollock. It is a single-plot cemetery on his original property near the East Fork of the Lewis River. By agreement, the owner of the land must maintain the gravesite.

Current owner and caretaker of the plot is Tom Wooldridge, a local historian. Recently, this headstone was placed by Tom Wooldridge as La Center's Centennial Celebration is this year in August (2009). It has replaced the old wooden sign which formerly hung here.

John Pollock was the son of Scottish immigrants. Although he was born on a boat in the docks at Belfast, Ireland, while the family was en route to America, he is still considered Scottish. John was one of 6 children. John Pollock's father's name was John Thomas Pollock. He also had a son, who was named John Thomas Pollock or John T. Pollock, who is buried in the Mt. Zion Cemetery.

John Pollock was a lawyer, who was appointed by the President to work as an Indian agent with the tribes in the Lewis River valley. He was given the honorary name of "Chief White Swan." He died of pneumonia on February 6, 1868, after riding on horseback in drenching rain from a legislative session in Olympia.

John Pollock had three children, named James Alexander, Lucinda Jane, and John Thomas. He was a first cousin to President James Knox Polk, whose family changed their name from Pollock to Polk. Roberta Emmerick is a living descendent of John Pollock. Her mother, Doria Marie (Pollock) Ferguson, was the daughter of John Pollock's son, James Alexander Pollock. Doria Marie Pollock was born in 1905 near Jenny Creek. She married Walter Leonard Ferguson, then moved to La Center in 1942, where they owned and operated the old Woodward Hotel.



The historic town of La Center was nestled on the north bank of the East Fork of The Lewis River. Until the new highway was completed in the mid-1920's, the town's Main Street ran from the river north to Fifth Street.

## Site 22. Site of Old Prune Drying Building

**Location: SE Corner of Fifth Street and Birch Avenue  
(formerly 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Alder Street)**



*Nelson Prune Drying Building*

Before the current Fire Station was built, an old building just to its west in the parking lot area was used to dry prunes. The prune industry of Clark County turned out to be a boon followed by a bust. The prune industry in Clark County began in 1876, when Arthur Hidden, a Vancouver businessman, began planting Italian prunes. The cool climate and rich, sandy soils were so well suited to these type of prune trees that by 1929 there were 865,405 trees, which produced a record crop of 29,266 tons. Since 1876, prune dryers and canning companies were being built all over the county. A strong demand for these prunes developed in Europe, which gave impetus to the blossoming industry. During the war, trade embargos on Germany thwarted the shipment of Clark County prunes to Europe. California began to offer year-round prune crops, which undermined the seasonal prune crops of Washington. Successive years of freezing winters and flooding in the 1930's and 1940's, coupled with an invasion of thrips (small insects) and brown rot eventually damaged the production of prune trees in the area. The United States government ended up paying prune growers to destroy infected trees as part of an eradication control program to stop the spread of prune tree diseases. This sad story of the devastation of monoculture and a narrow genetic base in a crop has been repeated in various parts of the United States since then. It includes the Southern Corn Leaf Blight of the 1970's, the demise of sunflowers in North Dakota, cotton in the Southwest, and tobacco in the Southeast.

**HISTORICAL TIDBIT:** Rumor has it that some years ago a man went missing for a while. He was found dead, hanging in the old prune drying building.



An engineering drawing from the City of La Center archives (Hay, 1974) shows a Warehouse and Fruit Drying Building at the SE corner of the former 6<sup>th</sup> and Alder streets, which are now Fifth Street and Birch Avenue.

**Site 23. “Mother Bathing Child” Bronze Statue**  
**Location: Near the new TDS Building in La Center**  
**Behind the TDS Training Building on 210 4<sup>th</sup> Street**



*“In the summer of sparkling waters, amidst the blooms of the new season, in the caress of an easterly breeze, stood a ‘Mother Bathing Child.’”*

--from Jim Demetro’s website



## “Mother Bathing Child”

The “Mother Bathing Child” bronze statue near the new TDS Telecom Building was the first stature of this kind developed by Jim Demetro, a Battle Ground, Washington artist, who produces “dynamic bronze sculptures.” Indeed, they are dynamic as they integrate flowing water or burning fire into the sculpture. The following are excerpts from his website:

“From his studio, in Battle Ground, Washington, Jim combines the elements of earth , water, and fire, they are the product of a relentless pursuit to capture the spirit of a timeless moment.”

Artist: Jim Demetro

21727 NE Allworth Road  
Battle Ground, WA 98604

**Site 24. Wood Carvings and Totem Pole by Adam MacIsaac**  
**Location: Sternwheeler Park and First Independent Bank**

Adam MacIsaac is a local artist living in the La Center area. He is devoted to learning and mastering Columbia River art. This art form was produced by those who spoke the Chinookian language in the Columbia River region. He has studied under NW Coast artist Duane Pasco. He has also traveled to learn the styles of the Bella Coola tribe of British Columbia. He has traveled to Yakutat Bay in Alaska to study art there.

According to his biography posted by the Stonington Gallery of Seattle, Washington:  
*“Adam’s true passion is to recreate accurately the artwork of the Northwest Coast tribes as a means of bringing recognition to their culture and elaborate artwork. By using traditional carving tools, paints, and pigments, Adam achieves this goal by highlighting the artistic intricacies innate to each of the Northwest Coast tribes.”*

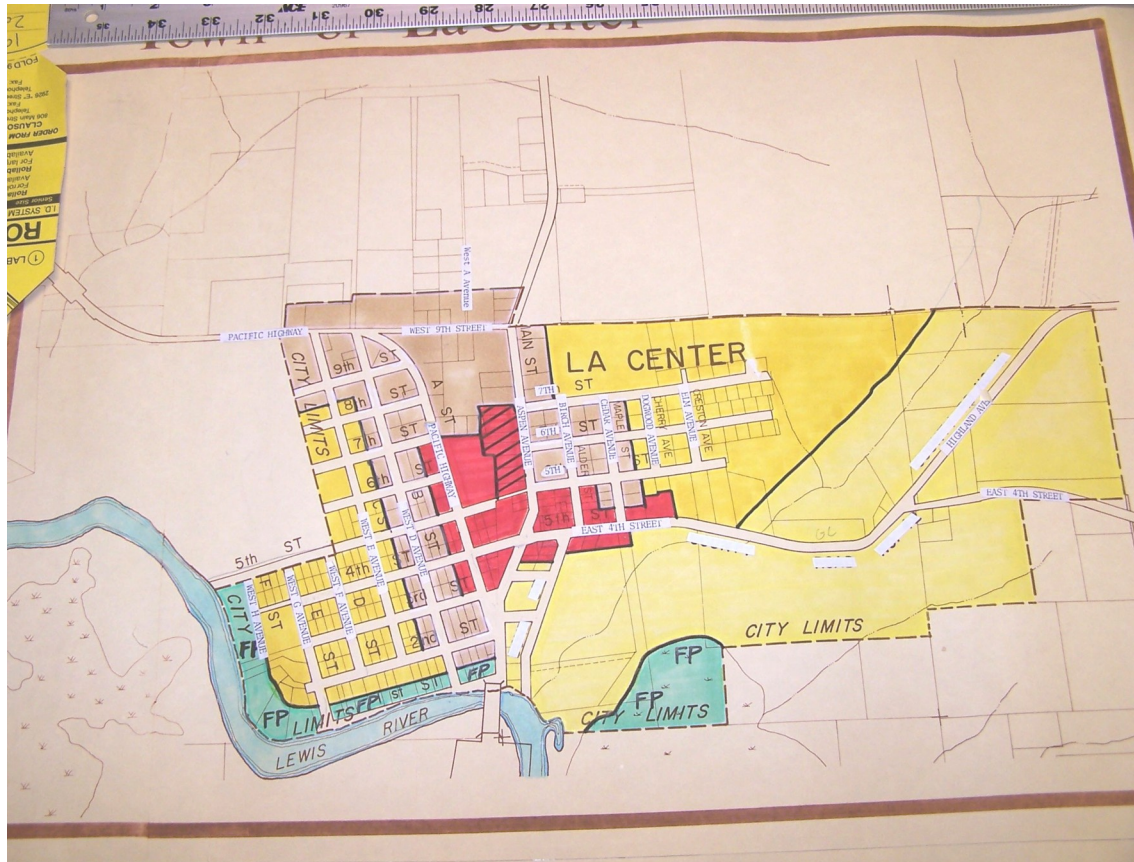


Adam MacIsaac carved the wooden totem pole which stands on the western side of the First Independent Bank. He also carved the frog sequence in Sternwheeler Park.

Adam has worked locally with Chinook artist Tony Johnson on the architectural carvings in the Cathlapootle Plankhouse, located in Ridgefield, Washington.



APPENDIX A: Renaming the Street of La Center (1959; 1987)



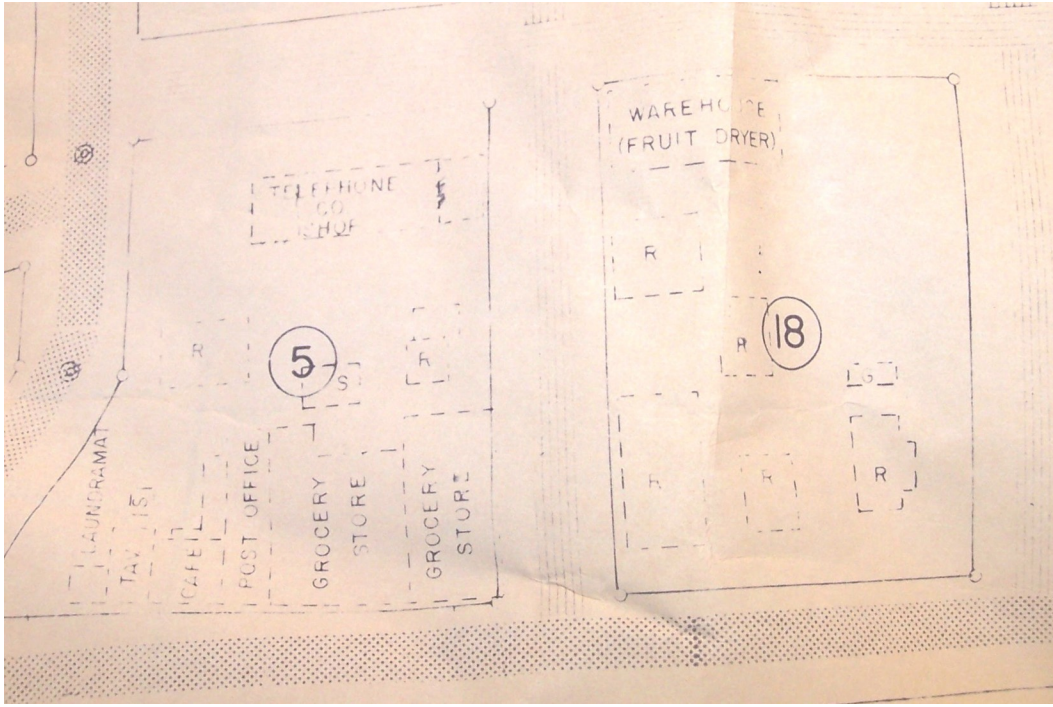
Clark County Planning & Code (August, 1987)

<u>Old Street Name</u>	<u>New Street Names</u>
Creston Avenue	Elm Avenue
Cherry Avenue	Dogwood Avenue
Maple Street	Cedar Avenue
Alder Street	Birch Avenue
Main Street	Aspen Avenue
County Road 41	Highland Avenue
County Road 42	Fourth Street
A Street	Pacific Highway
B Street	West D Avenue
C Street	West E Avenue
D Street	West F Avenue
E Street	West G Avenue
F Street	West H Avenue

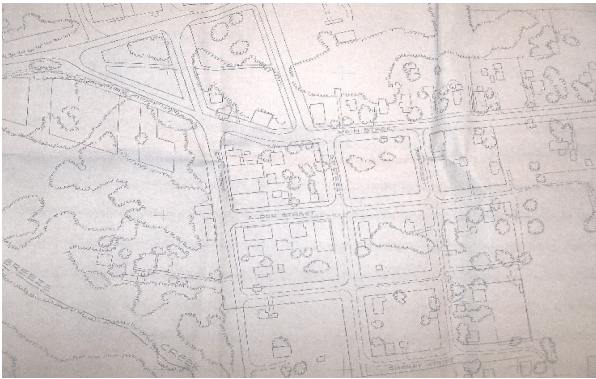
Over the years the streets have changed names in La Center. In the survey by Pettijohn Engineering Company (1959), Laurel Street was renamed to Maple Street.

In August of 1987, the proposed street name changes (which are the ones used today) included that all street running north to south would become "Avenues," while streets running east to west would become "Streets."

**APPENDIX B. Archival Maps Renaming & Drawings  
From the City of La Center Archives**



Survey of La Center (Hays, 1974)

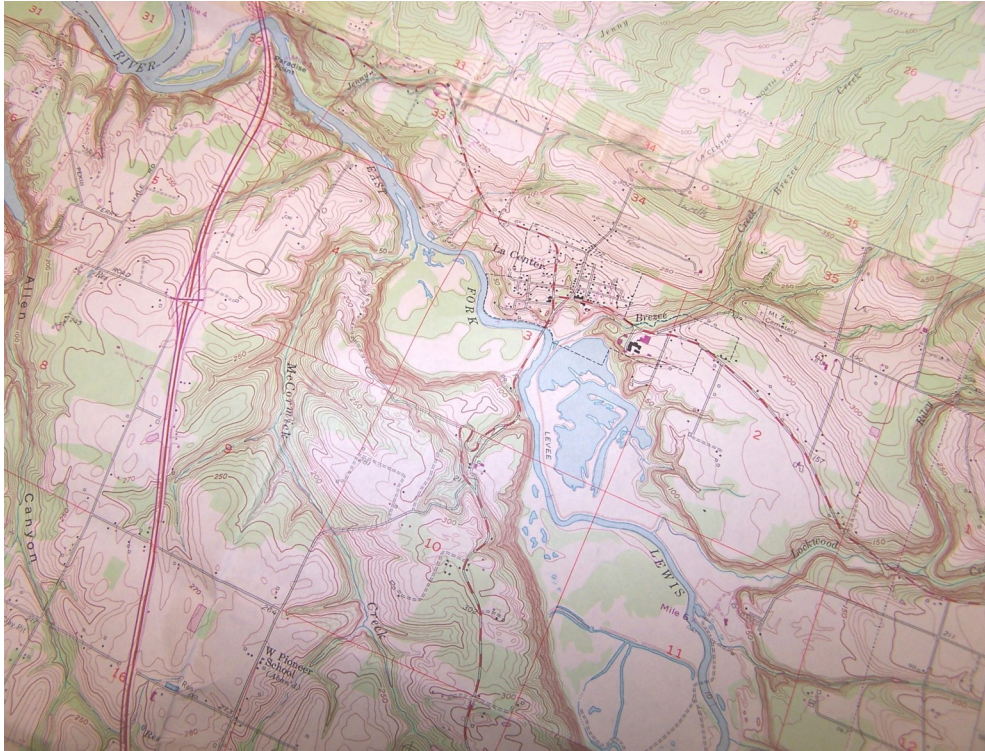


Survey of La Center  
(Minister-Glaeser, 1988)



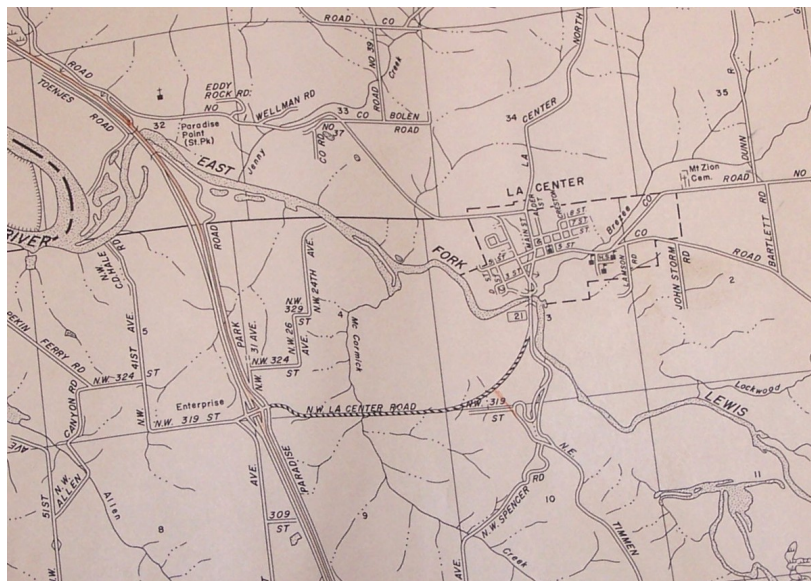
Microfiche in City Archives

## APPENDIX C. Maps of La Center From the City of La Center Archives



USGS QUAD MAP, 1970

The above USGS map shows the roads to and from La Center prior to an interchange being built for La Center. That became Exit 16 and La Center Road was developed then. The Road Map for Clark County, Washington (1978) shows the proposed interchange at I-5 and the proposed La Center Road to the interchange.



Clark County Road Map (1978)

## APPENDIX D. Historical Businesses of La Center

**Sources: The Northwest Gazeteer (1883, 1887); Clark County History;  
Janice Fillman Chronology (2009)**

<u>Date/Year</u>	<u>Name of Businesses</u>
1872	Weir & Seeley Trading Post; Weir & Seeley Log Store
1873	Miller & Gaither Trading Post
1874	First Grange Building Built
1875	Davis physician and drugstore; Old Man Lyon's blacksmith
1879	new wharf and dock constructed
1880	Mrs. Pieper's dry goods store; George Barr's steam operated flouring mill; George Barr's saw mill
1882	The Palace Hotel is built
1883	O.M. Bernard harnesses & saddles; George Barr flouring and saw mills; Calvin & Sheldon carpenters; A.J. Culbertson hotel called "The Palace"; S. Daghish general merchandise (sold out); R.S. Lyons blacksmith; Miller & Gaither general merchandise; J.H. Timmen hotel "River View"
1887 saloon;	H. Blair physician and druggist; E. Eland physician and druggist; A.L. Forbes  Gaither & Forbes general merchandise; Gus Grove hotel; H. Harrold barber; Thomas Headley blacksmith; Hobert & Kinder general merchandise; Jacob Jessen livery stable; T.P. Atwell attorney; A.H. Roper carpenter
1904	A.L. Bougher & Sylvester Fanning bought the Reed and Bennett general Merchandising store; tin shop; drugstore; butchershop; harness shop; "The Palace Hotel"
1906	3 saloons, 3 hotels, shipyard
1914	Rhodes La Center Mercantile; Spencer's Pool Hall & Tavern; The La Center Bank; Bradway's Mercantile; Kane Brother's Store; Finnegan's Feed Store
1920	Brothers' Mill
1930	Brevik and Anderson garage; small drug store; post office; little fire house; Hobert's Store; Headley John Deere

## APPENDIX E. Businesses of La Center as of 2009

### Sources: TDS Telephone Book; City of La Center Website; Personal Interview of Business Owners

First Independent Bank (facts from archives of Oscar Perez, Bank Manager, 2009)

**Location: 305 Pacific Highway**

*The First Independent Bank will celebrate 100 years of operation in 2010. First Independent Bank is the oldest state chartered bank operating in Clark County, having been chartered on February 21, 1910. The La Center location became the 12<sup>th</sup> office for the bank when it held its Grand Opening on Thursday, July 15, 1976. Donna Anderson was the first acting manager of the bank. This is a full service bank with direct deposit services, safety deposit box service, complete trust services, savings and checking accounts, and a variety of loans and money saving media. Although First Independent Bank owned its whole lot, it donated the land just north of the bank to the City of La Center for use in the city park system. The totem pole located just west of the bank was carved by local artist Adam MacIsaac, who specializes in Pacific Native American detail.*

La Center Marketplace/Gorilla Grill/Chevron Station

**Location: 419 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite A101**

*These businesses are owned by Don Rhodes, who also owns the Paradise Truck Stop at Exit 16 on I-5. The La Center Marketplace convenience store, grill and gas station have been in operation since June 2003. The owner of the building and grounds is Genteel Investments.*

It's All About You

**Location: 419 East Cedar Avenue, Suite A210**

*This business is owned by Stephanie Berry. It's All About You provides various services, including hair cutting, hair coloring, permanents and tanning, as well as other spa services. The business started in this building in March of 2004.*

Curves of La Center

**Location: 419 East Cedar Avenue, Suite C203**

*This business is owned by Billie Jo Schoberl*

*(formerly Billie Jo Manuel) and managed by Ruth Ostrander. It is a fitness center devoted to cardiovascular improvement, strength development and weight consultation and products for women. This Curves franchise began in Woodland in 2001, where it was owned by Kathleen Graham. She moved the business to La Center in May 2003, where it occupied the now-empty space next to The Market Place. In December of 2003, Billie Jo Schoberl purchased this business, which moved to its current location on May 6, 2009.*

Smiles Family Dental

**Location: 419 East Cedar Avenue, Suite C201**

*This family dental center is owned by Dr. Bryan Johnson. Dr. Jeromy Dixson is a partner dentist at this location. This branch of Smiles Family Dental opened at the La Center location in 2007.*

The Purple Bee Cafe

**Location: 582 Pacific Highway**

369-6518

Altered Image LLC

**Location: 560 Pacific Highway**

263-2151

Country Charm Acres

**4010 NE 397<sup>th</sup> Circle**

263-2982

La Center Tavern

**107 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**

263-9920

La Center Video & More

**121 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**

263-5262

Chips Casino

**320 Pacific Highway**

263-2988

Last Frontier Casino

**415 Aspen Avenue**

263-1290

New Phoenix Casino

**225 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street**

263-1290

The Palace Casino

**319 Pacific Highway**

263-2988

Baker Janitorial  
**523 East Cedar**  
263-8841

Caring Corner Preschool & Childcare  
**135 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-6934

Fitzgerald Associates  
**730 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street**  
931-3943

Griffith Gravel & Conveying, LLC  
**419 East Cedar Avenue**

Kinderland Daycare  
**910 Pacific Highway**  
263-7529

La Cleaners, Inc.  
**627 East 13<sup>th</sup> Street**  
991-4915

Seppanen Construction  
**419 East Cedar Avenue**  
263-7950

Sole to Soul Reflexology & Bodywork  
**419 E. Cedar Avenue, Suite A209**  
608-3126

TDS Telecom  
**200 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street**  
Customer Service 1-877-837-8372

Top Dog Grooming  
**115 E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-3434

LIL' General Food Store  
**127 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-2029

The Trellis  
**103 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**  
904-5876

Mershon Financial  
**419 East Cedar Avenue**  
263-5522

La Center Market Place  
**419 East Cedar Avenue Suite A101**  
263-4552

La Center Community Library  
**1402 Lockwood Creek Road**  
619-1800

La Center Police Department  
**105 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-2745

La Center School District  
**725 Highland Road**  
263-263-2131

La Center Elementary School  
263-2134

La Center Intermediate School  
263-2136

La Center High School  
263-1700

La Center Evangelical Free Church  
**111 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-2217

La Center AYSO Soccer  
**263-3594**

Highland Lutheran Church  
**38809 NE 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue**  
263-2302

Highland Lutheran Church Pre-School & Kindergarten  
**38809 NE 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue**  
263-2303

La Center Berry Farm  
**38412 NE 94<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
263-1040

City of La Center  
**214 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street**  
263-2782

The Crowning Touch  
**1242 East Lucas Street**  
263-6890

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