

# EASTSIDE HERITAGE CENTER



*Connections for yesterday, today, and tomorrow.*

## A Tribute to the Eastside

### “Words of Wisdom - Voices of the Past” An Oral History Project

## FORWARD

### Oral History Resource Catalog (2009 Edition)

Between 1996 and 2003, Eastside Heritage Center (formerly Bellevue Historical Society) was engaged in an oral history project entitled “Words of Wisdom – Voices of the Past.” The primary purpose of this project was to collect and preserve the memories and recollections of Bellevue’s long-time residents before those memories were gone forever.

As a supplement to the project, Eastside Heritage Center produced this Oral History Resource Catalogue. The Catalogue is a reference guide for researchers and staff. It provides a brief introduction to each of the interviews collected during “Words of Wisdom.” The entries contain basic information about the interview date, length, recording format and participants, as well as a brief biography of the narrator, and a list of the topics discussed.

The oral history collection at the Eastside Heritage Center is constantly expanding, and the Catalogue will grow as more interviews are collected and as older interviews are transcribed.

Special thanks to our narrators, interviewers, transcribers and all those who contributed their memories of Bellevue. We are indebted to King County Landmarks and Heritage Commission for funding this project.

Eastside Heritage Center Oral History Committee

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**Narrator:** Andrew Balatico  
**Interviewer:** Patti Pemberton  
**Year:** 1998  
**Format:** One Audio Tape and One Written Memoir, see note below\*  
**Transcribed:** Yes and No, see note below\*

\* At the time of the interview, Mr. Balatico was hard of hearing and spoke broken English. His wife repeated the questions after the interviewer, and the Balaticos often conversed in Tagalog. This made the final tape difficult to transcribe, and the Balaticos wrote a “memoir” instead.

### About the Narrator:

Andrew Balatico was born November 10, 1906 in the Philippines, immigrating to Bellevue, WA in 1926. He worked for many years, saving every penny until, in the late 1930s, he had enough money to buy three acres of land on Bellevue Way. He worked to clear the land, and the next summer he planted two acres of strawberries and one acre of peas. His brother Marc came to visit from Montana and stayed to help him clear 15 more acres of rented land. Their hard work paid off, and by the 1960s Andrew Balatico was growing corn and pumpkins and running a prosperous vegetable stand. He was well known and children loved to visit his pumpkin patch. Andrew tells a story of the rewards of hard work. He passed away on December 8, 1998.



*Andrew Balatico, unknown date.*



*Balatico Farm, Mercer Slough, Bellevue, about 1940.  
(L to R) Marc Balatico, unknown, Andrew Balatico, unknown*

**Andrew Balatico Topics Discussed:**

- Growing up in the Philippines
- Voyage to America
- Railroad Work
- Farming for the Japanese
- Varieties of Crops Planted
- Cannery Work in Alaska
- Renting a Farm
- Employing African-American Farm Workers
- Purchasing Property in Bellevue
- Selling Produce – Pike Place Market
- White Cauliflower
- World War II Draft Deferment
- Corn and Pumpkins
- Wife Angelina Valdez

**Narrators:** Marc Balatico Family and Friends:  
 Nora Balatico (wife)  
 Michelle Balatico Hayes (daughter)  
 Phil & Carie Walath (Nora's mother and father)  
 Stanley Smith (neighbor, son of Deane Smith)

**Interviewers:** Virginia Thompson and Mary Ellen Piro

**Year:** 1998

**Format:** One Audio Cassette

**Transcribed:** Yes

### About the Narrator:

Marceliano (Marc) C. Balatico was born in the Philippines on February 20, 1909. He immigrated to the United States in the late 1920s, settling in Bellevue with his brother Andrew. In 1968 he married Nora Walath in the Philippines and brought her to live on their Bellevue Way farm. Marc and Andrew ran their 23 acres of farm land, together with two other brothers, until 1975 when they decided to separate the property. With the 10 acres Marc acquired, he and Nora planted crops of blueberries, vegetables and pumpkins, and the couple worked the fields together with their three children. They sold the land to a developer five years later, but continued to farm on it until 1985. This property would eventually become part of the Mercer Slough Nature Park. Marc Balatico passed away on January 8, 1989.



*Balatico Family, Winters House, 1998.*

*(L to R): Michele Balatico Hayes, Nora Balatico, Carie and Phil Walath (Nora's Parents), Stanley Smith (Son of Deane Smith)*

**Marc Balatico (Family and Friends) Topics Discussed:**

- Blueberry Farming
- Land Ownership
- Child Labor
- Working the Land
- Marrying Later in Life
- Change in Farming Techniques – Loss of Truck Farms
- Early Organic Farming
- Highway Development
- Decision to Sell Farm – Crop Theft
- Selling Land to Parks Department
- Early Mercer Slough
- Hunting & Fishing
- Wildlife
- Family Relations, Finances
- Winters House

**Narrator:** Norman Blye  
**Interviewer:** Pat Sandbo  
**Year:** November/December 2003  
**Format:** Three audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### **About the Narrator:**

Norman Blye was born in a house on Main Street, Bellevue in 1918. His family had moved from Kansas to Idaho and then settled in Bellevue about 1913. His father worked on the Lake Washington ferries, and his mother ran the lunch counter on an excursion boat. After high school, thanks to the influence of his brother, Norman joined the Teamsters Union. He worked in the trucking industry for the next forty-five years and retired as the district manager of his company. Norman married Esther on November 28, 1943, at which time they both lived and worked in Seattle. The couple lived in the Rainier Beach neighborhood of Seattle for 28 years and then moved to Renton, where they still reside. Norman's interest in ferries is a life-long passion. He is an expert on the subject and has spoken to many organizations over the years. He and Esther are dedicated contributors to the Eastside Heritage Center.



*Norman Blye outside the Winters House, Bellevue, 1999.*



**Norman Blye Topics Discussed:**

- The Neighborhood
- The Baptist Church
- Sunday Outings
- Unexpected Dip in the Lake
- Early Water System
- Suda Family Tragedy
- Getting Electricity
- School Days in Seattle
- Children's Chores
- First Job
- Moving to Seattle
- Favorite Classes at Garfield High School
- School Memories
- Impact of World War II
- Playmates
- Beginning of Career in Trucking
- Swimming in Lake Washington
- Retirement Deal
- Early Radios
- How We Met
- Burning of House
- First Years of Marriage
- Vodder's Dairy
- Son and Daughter
- Memories of Old Main Street
- Travel and Adventure
- The Outhouse
- People Who Have Influenced Life
- Early Telephone System

**Narrator:** Roberta Farmer  
**Interviewer:** Mary Nicolas  
**Year:** 1999  
**Format:** Two audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### **About the Narrator:**

Roberta was born in St. Louis, Missouri on July 28, 1911. After graduating from high school, she worked for 13 years in a clinical pathological laboratory as a technician. During World War II she served in the Civil Service in Albuquerque, NM. In 1943 she met her future husband, George Farmer, who was stationed there in the Army. After he was transferred to Seattle, he called her and proposed over the phone. She accepted and moved to Seattle, and they married soon after her arrival. The couple bought a home on Mercer Island in 1945 and later purchased a large amount of land in the area now called Hilltop and Horizon View in Bellevue. George died shortly after the Hilltop acquisition in 1951 and never saw the development of the land. Roberta later donated some of the property to the Bellevue School District for the construction of Eastgate School. Upon her death she bequeathed two million dollars to the Eastside Catholic School to be used for scholarships.

[Photo not available at this time]

### **Roberta Farmer Topics Discussed:**

- Family – Parents and Siblings
- Going to School in St. Louis
- First Jobs in St. Louis and Daytona Beach
- Moving to New Mexico – Meeting George Farmer
- Husband George – Moving to Mercer Island
- Buying Property in Bellevue
- Hilltop
- Horizon View

**Narrator:** Phyllis Hill Fenwick  
**Interviewer:** Lorraine McConaghy  
**Year:** 1996 (1989?)  
**Format:** Three audio tapes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### About the Narrator:

Phyllis Hill was born in Seattle on February 4, 1913. Her parents and grandparents had come to Bellevue around 1912 and settled on the corner of 100<sup>th</sup> and NE 8<sup>th</sup> (where QFC stands as of 2009). Growing up, she lived with her family in Bellevue and Seattle, graduating from Bellevue High School in 1931. Her parents were active in the Bellevue community, her mother being a member of the Bellevue Minute Women, the Bellevue Women's Club and the Ladies Aid Society. Phyllis married Donald B. Fenwick in 1939. An accomplished artist, she was greatly interested in Bellevue history, documenting through her art many early Bellevue landmarks. In this oral history, Phyllis recalls her grandparents and her early life in Bellevue with her family in the 1920s and 1930s. Phyllis Fenwick passed away in 2004.



*Phyllis Hill (later Fenwick, left) and Ted McCreary (right) in Meydenbauer Bay, about 1920.*



*Phyllis Hill Fenwick, Winters House, 1998.*

**Phyllis Hill Fenwick Topics Discussed:**

- Mother and Maternal Grandfather
- Father
  - Education at University of Washington
  - Surveying in Alaska
  - Building Hydro-Electric Plants
- Paternal Grandfather's Death in Alaska while Gold Prospecting
- Parents' Meeting and Marriage
- Baker House
- House on First
- The Shermans
- Growing Up with a Kitchen Farm
- Bellevue Businesses
- Ferry Rides
- Shopping in Kirkland
- Influenza
- Various Churches in Bellevue
- Gypsies
- Bellevue Clubhouse
- *Bellevue Reflector*
- Prohibition
- Early Library

**Narrator:** Mitsuko “Mitzie” Takeshita Hashiguchi  
**Interviewer:** Lorraine McConaghy  
**Year:** 1996  
**Format:** No tapes available  
**Transcribed:** Yes, transcription only

#### About the Narrator:

Mitzie Takeshita was born in 1921, the daughter of Japanese immigrants. She grew up on a strawberry and vegetable farm in the Midlakes area of Bellevue. In 1939 Mitzie married a Seattle man, Mutsuo Hashiguchi, but when he was unable to find work as an electrician, the couple moved back to her parents’ farm in Bellevue. When all of the local Japanese Americans were interned in 1942, Mitzie, her husband and son were relocated to Pinedale, California, then Tule Lake and Minidoka, Idaho. After their return to a devastated farm in Bellevue, they rebuilt the farm while Mutsuo also worked a second job at Boeing. Mitzie began work as a food server for the Bellevue School District in 1955, eventually attaining 26 years of service. She was involved in many community endeavors including the foundation of the Bellevue Boys Club. She was an officer of the Bellevue PTA for 18 years, a volunteer at Children’s Orthopedic Hospital and a member of the Japanese American Citizens League. Active in local history, Mitzie was a member of the Bellevue Historical Society and prepared the exhibit “Heritage of Bellevue’s Japanese Pioneers.”



*Mitzie Hashiguchi with son Lester on the steps of the Japanese Clubhouse, Bellevue, 1941*

**“Mitzie” Takeshita Hashiguchi Topics Discussed:**

- Arranged Marriages
- Sharing with Neighbors
- Motives for Coming to America
- Typical Meals
- Building the Railroad
- Duties of Eldest Daughter
- Clearing the Land
- Mom’s Trip to Japan
- First Memories
- Reasons to Stay in America
- Living Conditions
- Japanese Community
- Constant Work for Entire Family
- Trips to Seattle
- Japanese Bath Tubs
- Religion
- Men’s Work
- Family History
- Women’s Work
- Stories from Japan
- Clothing
- Children’s Toys
- Japanese School, Traditions
- Cooking (Getting Japanese Ingredients)
- Keeping Up Traditions
- Preserving Food

**Narrator:** Ernest Hemingson  
**Interviewer:** Melissa Shogren  
**Year:** May 1998  
**Format:** One audio cassette  
**Transcribed:** No, but there is a detailed description

**About the Narrator:**

Ernest Cornell Hemingson, born in Anacortes in 1912, was a long-time Bellevue educator. His first job was at Overlake Elementary School teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade and shop and driving the school bus to supplement his meager salary of \$1,400 a year. In 1949 he was appointed principal of the Bellevue Junior High School, and he became principal of Tyee Junior High in 1960. He retired in 1974. In the interview, Hemingson describes life in Bellevue in the '40s and '50s and reflects on changes in the school district.



*Ernest Hemingson, about 1955.*

**Ernest Hemingson Topics Discussed:**

- Ancestors and Family (Norwegian Roots)
- Childhood in Anacortes
- Brush with Tuberculosis
- Studying to be a Teacher
- First Teaching Jobs
- Marriage and Move to Bellevue
- Duties at Overlake Elementary School: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Shop, Driving School Bus
- Teaching Memories
- Being a Principal
- Bellevue in 1940s – Recreation, Businesses
- Grace Lutheran Church
- Japanese Internment
- Meta Burrows Drugstore and Frederick & Nelson
- Student Unrest in the 1960s (Vietnam Protests)
- Changes in the School District



Narrator: Robert Hennig  
Interviewer: Judy Erbe  
Year: 1997  
Format: Three audio cassettes  
Transcribed: Yes

#### About the Narrator:

Bob Hennig, born April 11, 1917 in Seattle, arrived in Bellevue with his parents in 1923. His father, Adolph Hennig, purchased land on 100<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (close to where the Presbyterian Church stands in 2009) and converted it into a prosperous grape vineyard. The entire family, including Bob, worked in the vineyard and produced “Hennig’s Delicious Grape Juice” among other labels. Bob also worked at the Houghton Shipyards from 1936 through 1946. After World War II, and after marrying Eloise Whitcomb in 1942, he became a remodeling contractor. He still helped with the family vineyard and owned land adjacent to his parents’ property until 1951. Both Bob and Eloise were involved in local history and were active members of the Bellevue Historical Society and Eastside Heritage Center. Bob Hennig passed away June 18, 2007 at his home of 50 years on Clyde Hill.



*Robert and Eloise Hennig, about 1942.*

**Robert Hennig Topics Discussed:**

- Family – Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles
- Running the Vineyard
- The Hennig House and Property
- Recreation and Games
- School Sports
- Whistle Stories
- Bellevue Schools
- Whoopee Road (100<sup>th</sup> Ave)
- Depression in Bellevue
- Bellevue Landmarks and Businesses, Part I
- WWII Years in Bellevue
- Selling the Vineyard
- Marriage to Eloise
- Bellevue Landmarks and Businesses, Part II

**Narrator:** Eloise Whitcomb Hennig  
**Interviewer:** Judy Erbe  
**Year:** 1997  
**Format:** Two audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

**About the Narrator:**

One of five children, Eloise Whitcomb was born and grew up on a farm on Lopez Island, WA. She left home at 15 to study at Roosevelt High School in Seattle, later earning a BA in Education from Western Washington University. Her first teaching job was a one-room schoolhouse on Marrowstone Island. After marrying Robert Hennig in 1942, she moved to the Eastside and raised three sons. She later returned to teaching in Kirkland and Bellevue and was instrumental in restoring phonics in Bellevue schools. Mrs. Hennig retired from teaching in 1980 and passed away on June 30, 2003.



*Robert and Eloise Hennig, about 1942.*

**Eloise Hennig Topics Discussed:**

- Parents
- Growing up on Lopez Island
- High School and College
- Early Teaching Jobs
- Teaching in Factoria
- More Lopez Memories
- Meeting Bob
- WWII Years in Bellevue
- Bellevue in 1950

**Narrator:** John & Jean Henry  
**Interviewers:** Gayle Neindorff & Rick Flores  
**Year:** 1997  
**Format:** Three audio cassettes and one video cassette  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### About the Narrators:

Jean was born on an apple ranch in Hood River, OR during the great snowstorm of December 1912. Her family moved to Mercer Island in 1916, and Jean attended high school in Seattle by commuting on the steamer ferry and the Yesler cable car. Jean married John Henry in 1934 and moved with him and their two daughters to Bellevue in 1947. The Henrys were among the first residents of the Vuecrest development in Bellevue and lived in a unique house designed by architect Fred Bassetti. Jean had a variety of interests including botany, literature, poetry, gardening, and painting. This last skill brought her recognition at local art shows and fairs. Jean Henry passed away on July 18, 2005.

John “Jack” Henry was born and raised in Seattle. Always a hard worker, he began working at the Pacific National Bank in 1930 and retired in 1973 as senior vice president. In his retirement, he researched North Pacific Coast history and Native American history and volunteered at Seattle’s Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) as the curator of the maritime photograph collection. John also wrote the book *Early Maritime Artists of the Northwest Coast*, published in 1984, and was working on a second book on Native American women when he passed away in December of 1997.

[Photo not available at this time]

### John & Jean Henry Topics Discussed:

- Establishing Bellevue Sewer District
- John’s Role as Banker of the Control Commission
- Creation of the Bellevue Metro/Bus Service
- Vuecrest
- Bellevue Schools
- Jean’s Childhood on Mercer Island
- Strawberry Festival
- Courtship Memories
- Transportation

**Narrator:** Betty Adams Kimsey  
**Interviewer:** Pat Sandbo  
**Year:** 1998  
**Format:** Four audio tapes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### **About the Narrator:**

Betty's English parents immigrated to Canada, and she was born in Alberta in 1915. However, Betty and her family spent several years in England when her father was called to active duty during World War I. Tragically, her father was wounded and died, leaving a widow and three children. Her mother was persuaded by friends to come to the United States and eventually to the Seattle area where Betty grew up. In 1936 Betty married Richard Kimsey. In 1939 Dick was offered a job in Mr. Sherman's compass factory, and the couple moved to Bellevue. Dick passed away in 1949, and Betty found herself a widow with three young children. She raised her children while taking an active part in the community. In the interview, Betty describes early Bellevue Square in detail and gives thumbnail sketches of many people who influenced Bellevue's growth. Betty passed away on December 2, 2003.



*Betty Kimsey, 1998.*

### Betty Kimsey Topics Discussed:

- Parents and Grandmother
- Acquaintances
- Eugene Sherman
- Childhood Homes: Edmonton, England
- Spokane, Seattle
- Early Jobs
- Depression Years
- Marriage
- Move to Bellevue
- Sherman Compass Factory, Bellevue Landmarks
- Death of Husband
- Working while Widowed – Fixed Income
- Betty's Children
- Bellevue Square at Opening (1946)
- Bellevue Businesses and Development
- People Mentioned:
  - Kay Neumann
  - Kay Wilson
  - Babe Ulrich
  - Tom & Carol Barber
  - Berto Family
  - Guantlett Family
  - Herb Huff
  - Helen Bucey
  - Bill Stennett
  - Earl Reese
  - Rhody Burrows
  - Marty Laan
  - Irene Rudolph
  - Story Birdseye
  - Sam Boddy
  - Dr. Ray Kardong
  - Burnell Family
  - Helen Ditty
  - Climie Evans
  - Kay Barr
  - Clarence Claringbold
  - George Kardong
  - Cecil Smith

Betty Kimsey Topics Discussed continued:

- Calanthia Graeff
- Meta Burrows



**Narrator:** Charles P. LeWarne  
**Interviewer:** Mike Jackson  
**Year:** 1998  
**Format:** Five audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### About the Narrator:

Charles P. LeWarne was born August 16, 1930 in Bellevue. His father Charles T. LeWarne was a resident of Bellevue for 51 years and was the Bellevue postmaster and an active member of the business community. Charles P., who grew up in Bellevue, is an historian and has authored several books on Washington and Seattle history. He taught in the Edmonds School District for thirty years and still resides in Edmonds, WA. In this interview, Charles P. discusses his childhood memories of the Bellevue area.

[Photo not available at this time]

### Charles P. LeWarne Topics Discussed:

- Early Businesses (Post Office, Stores)
- 1930 – Depression Days
- Growing Up (Holidays, Special Events)
- Education
- Housekeeping, Gardening
- Leisure Time, Games
- Description of Paper Route
- Masonic Affiliations, Bellevue Masonic Lodge
- Car Tour Through Central Bellevue
  - Housing
  - Agriculture, Farming
  - Japanese Community
  - Winters House
  - Mercer Slough
  - Social Gatherings (Masonic Lodge)
  - Marina (Meydenbauer Bay)
- Comments on Photos
  - The Term “Overlake”
  - Churches
  - Main Street
  - Media, Communication

## Charles P. LeWarne Topics Discussed continued:

- Comments on Photos (continued)
  - Radio Programs
  - Food
  - Transportation (Floating Bridge)
  - Ferry Dock
  - Family Health Care (Dentist)
  - Phone Usage
  - 1950s
  - Climate
  - 1955

**Narrator:** L. Joe Miller  
**Interviewer:** Pat Sandbo  
**Year:** 1998  
**Format:** Four audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### **About the Narrator:**

L. Joe Miller was born in Wenatchee, WA in 1924. After his father was killed in a hunting accident in 1930 his family moved frequently. They lived with various relatives in the area and barely survived the Great Depression. Joe and his brother joined the Navy during World War II and were stationed in the United States and the Pacific. After the war, Joe studied economics at the University of Washington. He married in 1946 and had two daughters, Constance and Eileen. The family moved to Richland where he was employed by the City of Richland and worked his way up to Assistant City Manager and Director of Public Works. In 1961 Joe took the position of City Manager of Bellevue, a place he had never visited prior to that point. He was Bellevue City Manager for 17 years, retiring from the position in 1977.



*L. Joe Miller, 1968*

## L. Joe Miller Topics Discussed:

- Father's Difficult Life
- Great Depression
- Employment
  - Land Surveyor
  - Great Northern Railway Laborer
  - Crane Operator
  - Typewriter Salesman
  - Association of Washington Cities
  - Assistant City Manager & Director of Public Works – Richland
- Meeting Wife
- Improving Bellevue's Infrastructure
- Building a New City Hall & Library
- "Smart" Cities
- City "Firsts" in the Northwest
  - Urban Scientist
  - Medic One
  - Storm Drainage
  - Computer-Driver Traffic Control System
- Park System & Programs
- Management Philosophy
- Annexing & Purchasing Land for Bellevue
- Mayor & Council Members
  - Jim Buck
  - Clarence Wilde
  - Ken Cole
  - Dick Foreman
  - Ken Gates
  - Gary Zimmerman
  - Nancy Rising
  - Chris Smith
  - Joe McDonald
  - Tom Kraft
  - Milford Vanik
  - Bill Biggs
  - Roy Ferguson

## L. Joe Miller Topics Discussed continued:

- Staff Members & Department Heads
  - Dick Saunders
  - Bob Parks
  - Van Blaricom
  - Dave McAllister
  - Dan Sterling
  - Fred Herman
  - Bob McCormick
  - Sieg Semrau
  - Lee Springgate
  - Dick Cushing
  - Cabot Dow
  - Mike Quinn
- Accomplishments as City Manager
  - Physical Improvements
  - Fire Department
  - Convention Center
  - Parks System
  - Annexation Program
- Unaccomplished Tasks
- Professional Associations
- Affirmative Action

**Narrator:** Ward Russell  
**Interviewer:** Rex Allison  
**Year:** 1999  
**Format:** One audio cassette  
**Transcribed:** Partially

#### **About the Narrator:**

Born in Wenatchee in 1919, Ward moved to Seattle in 1925 and to Bellevue in 1939. Attracted by the tranquility of the area, he purchased a house on Clyde Hill with \$525 inheritance money and started a family. After World War II, Ward went to barber school and opened a shop on Main Street in 1947. In 1952 his brother Norman joined him at the shop, and the brothers later opened the Mustard Seed Tavern next door. The tavern and the barbershop were popular social spots, and many residents referred to Ward as the “Unofficial Mayor of Main Street.”

[Photo not available at this time]

#### **Ward Russell Topics Discussed:**

- Moving to Bellevue
- Clyde Hill
- Bellevue Main Street
- Bridge and Ferries
- Events and Clubs
- Stores and Buildings
- Japanese Farmers
- Working at Boeing
- Customers
- Eastside Serenity
- Hunting and Fishing
- Early Bellevue Growth

**Narrator:** Patricia Groves Sandbo  
**Interviewer:** Mike Jackson  
**Year:** 1997  
**Format:** Three audio cassettes, one video cassette  
**Transcribed:** Yes

### About the Narrator:

Patricia Groves was born in Seattle on February 23, 1916 during a snowstorm. She moved to Bellevue with her family in 1918, and they lived on 99<sup>th</sup> Ave NE in the Lochleven neighborhood. Her parents were very active in the community, being early members of the Bellevue Development Club and the Bellevue Women's Club. Pat's mother Marguerite Groves helped to establish Bellevue's first library and served as the first paid librarian when it became a part of the King County Library System. The family moved to Seattle in the 1930s where Pat attended Garfield High School. She received a teaching certificate from Seattle Pacific College (now University) in 1936, and taught in a number of Washington locations, including Bellevue in the early 1940s.

In 1942, Pat married James J. Bruce. They divorced in 1957, at which time she moved back to Bellevue permanently. Patricia married Robert "Bob" Sandbo in 1962. Pat was one of the first members of the Bellevue Historical Society and helped to revive the Bellevue Strawberry Festival in 1987. She and Bob are still dedicated members of the Eastside Heritage Center. In the interview, Pat reminisces about her childhood in Bellevue and teaching at the Bellevue Grade School when World War II began.



*Patricia Groves (later Sandbo) in front of the Bellevue Grade School about 1942.*

**Patricia Groves Sandbo Topics Discussed:**

- Early Bellevue
- Favorite Teachers
- Transportation
- Social Life
- Bellevue Grade School
- Move to Seattle
- Sports
- Garfield High School
- Typical Food
- Going Barefoot
- Board Games
- Water Systems
- Swimming in Lake Washington
- Treasures in the Attic
- Favorite Books
- Parents' Courtship
- Beginning of Bellevue Library
- Grocery Shopping
- First Radios, Early Programs
- Trips to the Dentist
- Telegrams
- Ferry Tragedy
- Letters
- First Lake Washington Bridge
- Discussion of Old Photos
  - Main Street School
  - Bellevue Elementary School
  - School Lunch Program
  - Playground Behind Main Street School
  - Things Parents Didn't Know
  - Grade School Faculty, 1942
  - Second Grade Class, 1942
  - Hand Cars (Logging)
  - Sweets
  - School Discipline
  - Picnics



**Narrator:** John Sears  
**Interviewer:** Diana Schafer Ford  
**Year:** 1997  
**Format:** One audio cassette  
**Transcribed:** No

**About the Narrator:**

Born February 20, 1917, “Fiddling John” lived in the Enatai home of his birth for all but the last few months of his life. John graduated from Bellevue’s Union S. High School in 1935 and got his first job driving a delivery van for the family chicken farm. After working at the Lake Washington Shipyards in World War II he started Fiddling John’s Tree Service, a tree-trimming company. His great love was the fiddle, and he joined the Skandia Folkdance Society in 1955 and then formed the Pioneer Trio in 1956. John was still trimming trees and playing in the Trio in his 70s. After his retirement, John was a common site at local fiddling performances, easily distinguished by his bright red socks. John Sears passed away in January of 2000.



*John Sears & Violet Cort Schafer, 1997.*

**Narrator:** Violet Schafer  
**Interviewer:** Diana Schafer Ford  
**Year:** 1997  
**Format:** One audio cassette  
**Transcribed:** No

#### **About the Narrator:**

Violet was born June 18, 1917 in Vancouver, B.C. and moved to the Eastside in 1924. She was a foster daughter of William and Ruby Ball, living in Beaux Arts Village during the 1920s and early 1930s. Violet married Richard A. Schafer in 1937, and they had two children, Lance Schafer and Diana Schafer Ford. She was an active member of the Bellevue Historical Society and longtime Beaux Arts resident. Violet passed away on August 28, 2000 in Maricopa, Arizona.



*Violet Cort Schafer, 1997.*

#### **Violet Schafer Topics Discussed:**

- May Dance and Costumes
- Ballet Classes
- Young Life in Beaux Arts Village
- Vogel Log House in Sunset Magazine
- Bellevue High School
- Going to Seattle
- Dancing in Fortuna Park
- Driving Tour - Remembering Various Houses in Beaux Arts

Narrator: Andy Sharpe  
Interviewer: Pat Sandbo  
Year: 1996  
Format: One audio cassette  
Transcribed: Yes

#### About the Narrator:

Andy Sharpe was born in Walhall, ND in 1904, one of five children. His family arrived in Bellevue in 1905 and settled on a five-acre plot near NE 8<sup>th</sup> and 108<sup>th</sup> Ave NE. Andy's first job was driving the school bus at the age of 14 years. He later drove logging and gravel trucks for King County, worked at the Lake Washington Shipyards during World War II, owned Lakeside Electric for 30 years, and finally was an electrical inspector for the City of Bellevue. He married Frances Kelfner in 1929, and they had a son, Thomas, and a daughter, Barbara. As a couple, the Sharpes were celebrated as the Bellevue community's longest residents at the Washington State centennial festivities in 1989. Andy Sharpe passed away on January 31, 1998, a resident of Bellevue for 92 years and long-time member of the Bellevue Historical Society.



*Andy Sharpe, 1996.*

**Andy Sharpe Topics Discussed:**

- Clearing Land in Downtown Bellevue
- Catholics who Became Protestants
- Religious Choices for the Children
- Immigration of Parents from England, Ireland
- Reasons for Coming West
- Names Mentioned:
  - Jesse Warren
  - Margaret & Lenna Warren
  - Mrs. D.K. MacDonald
- Japanese Farming Land on Eastside

**Narrator:** Calhoun & Harriet Shorts  
**Interviewer:** Lorraine McConaghy  
**Year:** 1992  
**Format:** No tapes available  
**Transcribed:** Yes, transcription only

### About the Narrators:

Calhoun Shorts was born in 1911 in Seattle, and he spent most of his life in the Puget Sound area. His wife Harriet, a Spokane native, was born in 1913 and came to Seattle as a young woman to find work. She found Cal, and the two were married on November 15, 1941. In 1947, they moved into a log house on Wilburton Hill in Bellevue.

The couple shared a love of gardening and, along with their son Binkley, grew most of their own food. They were inspired by books like *Five Acres and Independence* and Carla Emery's *Old-Fashioned Recipe Book*. Cal also owned a plastics-fabrication business called Fiberpane and worked as a subcontractor for Boeing.

In the 1980s Harriet and Cal deeded their home and seven acres of gardens to the City of Bellevue. The house was converted to a visitor center, and the grounds were landscaped to become one of the country's leading botanical gardens and a popular Bellevue destination.

In the last years of their lives, Cal and Harriet lived in a retirement home on Mercer Island. Harriet passed away in 1997, Cal in 2003.

[Photo not available at this time]

### Calhoun & Harriet Shorts Topics Discussed:

- World War II
- Strawberry Lawn
- 1941, 1946
- Botanical Gardens
- Housing
- Tea House
- Farming, Animals, Produce, Bees
- The Real Bellevue
- Early Business (Boeing)
- Vegetation
- Housekeeping

### Calhoun & Harriet Shorts Topics Discussed continued:

- Bellevue's Incorporation
- Commuting, Transportation
- Wilburton Hill
- Main Street
- Federated Eastside Clubs
- Mercer Island Bridge
- Roadside Council
- Education
- Growing Up
- Van Buskirk House (Interior and Exterior Design)

**Narrator:** Paul and Reda Vander Hoek  
**Interviewer:** Diana Schafer Ford  
**Year:** 1998  
**Format:** Five audio cassettes and two video cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes, Rough Draft

### About the Narrators:

Paul Vander Hoek was born in Elk, Washington near Spokane in 1915. He and his childhood friend Reda married in Spokane on her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday: July 10, 1937. The couple lived first in Seattle, then in Rockport, Washington. In 1946, they moved to Bellevue, where Paul began working at his father Arie's store. That same year, Paul formed the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce with Meta Burrows and Harry Grant. Paul served on the Chamber of Commerce for 20 years, and later was the co-founder and first president of the Bellevue Downtown Development Board. Paul and Reda had three sons: Paul Jr. ("Ted"), Lance, and Stuart. Reda passed away in 2007.

The Vander Hoek family is one of the cornerstones of the Bellevue business community. Beginning with Paul's father, Arie Vander Hoek, four generations of the Vander Hoek family have shaped Bellevue commerce. The family company, which Arie started in 1945 as Eastside Glass and Paint, is still in operation and has produced multiple branches and subsidiary companies.



*Paul and Reda Vander Hoek, Bellevue, 1953.*

**Paul and Reda Vander Hoek Topics Discussed:**

- Growing up in Ballard
- Homesteading in Bellevue
- Dutch Father & migration background
- Father's education, occupation
- Mother's background
- Parent's appearance, traits
- Family history, grandparents
- Family history research in Holland
- Family relations
- Home in Spokane
- Bellevue home on Lake Sammamish
- Childhood pastimes
- Phone Service in Bellevue
- Family's Glass Company
- Celebrating Halloween, Christmas
- Vegetable garden
- Taking the Ferry across Lake Washington
- Mercer Island Floating Bridge
- Bellevue Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Development Board
- Bellevue Downtown Association
- Stores Downtown in the 1940s
- Planning the Central Business District
- Jim Ditty, Kemper Freeman
- Elks Club
- Strawberry Festival
- Bowling Alley
- Schooling in Ballard
- Bellevue Clubhouse & Boys Club
- Overlake Country Club
- Bellevue Square
- Courtship & Wedding



**Narrator:** Dr. Roy Wahle  
**Interviewer:** Pat Sandbo  
**Year:** 1999  
**Format:** Six audio cassettes  
**Transcribed:** Yes

**About the Narrator:**

Dr. Roy Wahle was born in Ellensburg, Washington in 1921. By the time he was in high school, he knew that he wanted to be a teacher. He received a BA, MA and Ed. D. in rapid succession, pausing only to serve in the Signal Corps during World War II. In Bellevue, Roy was assistant superintendent of the Bellevue School District and developed several innovative programs in the areas of curriculum and guidance (counseling). He later served as one of the first presidents of Bellevue Community College (BCC) and taught at Seattle University.



*Dr. Roy Wahle, 1999.*

## Dr. Roy Wahle Topics Discussed:

### Interview One

- Birth date and Place
- Grandparents and Parents
- Childhood on Ellensburg Farm
- Siblings
- Schooling – Sister Pauline
- Extracurricular Activities – Music, Sports
- Recreation
- Childhood Ambitions
- Older Brother Michael
- Good Student
- Great Depression
- Farm Work
- Central Washington College of Education
- Meeting & Marrying Betty (wife)
- Signal Corps (1942-45)

### Interview Two

- Signal Corps (Cont.)
- Planning the Wedding
- Wedding Details
- Honeymoon and Future Plans
- Post-War Years: College and Babies
- Doctorate Study
- Dissertation on Highline Schools
- Teaching at Highline Schools
- Elementary School Principal
- No Plans to Teach Higher Education
- Entering Bellevue School District

### Interview Three

- Creating “The Bellevue Story” Study
- First Position at BSD - Director of Guidance and Curriculum
- Guidance and Curriculum Philosophies
- Resistance to Program

## Dr. Roy Wahle Topics Discussed continued:

- Opinion of Results
- Opinion of BSD's Curriculum at Time of Arrival
- Eliminating Grade Level Organization
- Bellevue School District's Progressive Reputation
- Other Innovations in the Curriculum Field
- Teacher Internship Programs
- Acting Superintendent
- Dep. Superintendent of Guidance, Curriculum, Research and Instructional Materials
- Were Bellevue Schools "Top-Heavy"?

## Interview Four

- First Meetings Re: Bellevue Community College
- First Years of Bellevue Community College (1967-77)
- Working in the Community College District
- Sabbatical in Washington, D.C.
- Associate Prof. of Education at Seattle University
- Fulbright Visiting Professor in India (1985)
- Community Involvement
- Bellevue Public Library
- Memorable Trips

## Interview Five

- More about Seattle University
- Highlands University in Las Vegas (1961)
- More about Fulbright Position in India
- Family's Reaction to India
- Life Lessons of India
- Indian Customs

## Timeline of Bellevue's History

- 1863 Aaron Mercer, along with his wife, Ann Stoven Mercer, is believed to have taken up the earliest land acquisition with 80.5 acres on the west bank of what is now Mercer Slough. Due to conflicting sources, it is difficult to determine when the family moved on to the property, but they did live there in 1869 and 1870.
- 1869 William Meydenbauer homesteaded land on "Meydenbauer Bay."
- 1870 A single election precinct was established on the Eastside. So few persons resided there that one precinct covered all residents from the Black River to the mouth of the Sammamish.
- 1873 Clark Sturtevant claimed land near the south end of "Lake Bellevue" and built a cabin on what is now the corner of NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He took advantage of the government grant of 160 acres for Civil War veterans and used the land to support himself by trapping mink and muskrat.
- 1880 Benson Northup settled on the southern part of Yarrow Bay.
- 1882 Patrick Downey homesteaded a 160-acre tract on Clyde Hill and built a log cabin located at the present 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 12<sup>th</sup> Street. His property became Vuecrest.
- Lucian and Mathew Sharp settled on their homesteads in what became the heart of the Bellevue Central Business District.
- Bellevue received its name from the settling pioneers. There are several stories of how the name came to be, including one in which Matt Sharp suggested "Bellevue" from the French meaning "beautiful view." Another version is that the name was taken from Bellevue, Illinois, one of the stopping points for travelers to the West.
- 1883 Albert Burrows built the first school on his land in Killarney on the west side of 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and just north of SE 25<sup>th</sup> Street. This small log cabin, built by Burrows and George Miller, had just seven students. The students were taught by Burrows' daughter, Miss Calanthia Burrows.

## Timeline of Bellevue's History cont.

1884 Hans Miller built a cabin and barn on the site of the current Robinswood Park. It was still the oldest structure in its original location remaining in Bellevue.

Ferry service began with the vessel *Squak*, captained by J.C. O'Conner.

H.E. Kelsey (for whom Kelsey Creek Park was named) was the teacher of 9 students in a shanty on Mercer Island.

1886 Issac Betchel was named postmaster on July 21, and used his own log cabin as the first post office.

The population of Bellevue was 52.

1888 Daniel Fraser built a log cabin in the Northup area – this cabin was moved to Kelsey Creek Park in 1974.

1889 Washington gained Statehood and Seattle suffered the great fire.

1890 Ove and Mary Larsen homesteaded 160 acres near Larsen Lake in Bellevue.

The first scheduled ferry service began on the *C.C. Calkins* between Bellevue and Leschi Park in Seattle.

1892 Bellevue's first bond allowed settlers to construct a two-room schoolhouse at the corner of 100<sup>th</sup> NE and Main Street. Adelaide Frances Mickels was the first teacher.

The first doctor, Charles M. Martin, arrived in Bellevue.

1896 The First Community Church (later renamed Bellevue Congregational Church) was incorporated on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

1898 Jusaburo Fuji and Mr. Setsuda, the first Japanese pioneers, arrived in Bellevue.

1900 The 1900 Census recorded around 400 people in the greater Bellevue area.

## Timeline of Bellevue's History cont.

- 1904 The Wilburton timber railroad trestle was built.
- 1907 The first telephone line reached Medina.
- 1908 Beaux Arts Village was founded, patterned around garden villages of England.
- 1910 Medina Grocery opened its doors to the first customers.  
The first Medina School opened as its own district, District #17.
- 1913 The Bellevue Community Clubhouse opened on a site at 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 1<sup>st</sup> Street.  
The ferry *Leschi* began making regular 15-minute crossings between Bellevue and Leschi Park in Seattle. This was the first ferry to carry automobiles to the Eastside.
- 1914 Bellevue's first telephone service began due largely through the efforts of Edward E. Webster who was head of Seattle's Independent Telephone Company and had built a summer home on the Eastside in 1905.  
The Japanese Community Association, the Nihonjinkai, was organized.
- 1916 Lake Washington dropped 8.8 feet after the construction of the Montlake Cut for the Lake Washington Ship Canal. This in turn created new waterfront acreage for Bellevue and uncovered farmland along the Mercer Slough.  
The first school bus service began in Bellevue. Sam Sharpe was hired to drive his own Studebaker for the Wilburton students. The first "bus driver" was his 14-year-old son, Andy.
- 1919 The American Pacific Whaling Fleet, headed by William Schupp, moved its headquarters to Bellevue.
- 1920 The Bellevue population was estimated at 1,500 residents.

## Timeline of Bellevue's History cont.

- 1921 The Washington Alien Land Law Act was enacted on March 2 forbidding Japanese from purchasing land. Due to growing acts of prejudice against the Japanese population, the Japanese Language School closed for four years.
- 1922 Evening classes in English and homemaking for the Japanese began at Hunts Point.
- 1925 Bellevue held its first annual Strawberry Festival; approximately 3,000 people attended.
- The Japanese Language School reopened.
- The Bellevue Women's Club opened the first public library.
- 1929 The Fredrick Winters house on Mercer Slough was built.
- 1930 Bellevue's first High School building opened – the Union "South" High School.
- 1940 The first floating bridge across Lake Washington opened.
- The ferries from Leschi to Mercer Island and Medina stopped service.
- 1942 Approximately three hundred Japanese-Americans were sent to internment camps on May 30<sup>th</sup>. The Strawberry Festival was cancelled due to the fact that the Japanese-Americans who cultivated the majority of the strawberry fields were gone.
- 1944 King County assumed responsibility of the public library system from the Women's club and hired its first paid librarian, Marguerite Groves.
- 1946 Bellevue Square, developed by Miller Freeman and his son Kemper Freeman, Sr. opened. The first business was the Bel-Vue Theater.
- 1947 The Bellevue Chamber of Commerce formed.
- The first Arts & Crafts fair was organized by Carl Pefley in front of his restaurant, the Crabapple.

## Timeline of Bellevue's History cont.

- 1948      The American Pacific Whaling Co. went bankrupt and closed.
- 1950      The greater Bellevue population was approximately 8,000 people.
- The Overlake School District became the Bellevue School District and the high school changed its name to Bellevue Senior High.
- 1953      Bellevue incorporated as a third-class city with a population of approximately 5,940.
- Charles Bovee was elected mayor by Bellevue's first City Council.
- 1956      Bellevue received "All-American City" status from *Look* magazine.
- 1959      Bellevue installed its first street light at Main Street and Bellevue Way.
- 1960      Bellevue's population was 12,800.
- 1961      L. Joe Miller was hired as city manager.
- Crossroads Shopping center opened at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 156<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- 1963      The second floating bridge opened on Lake Washington – the Albert D. Rosellini Memorial Evergreen Point Floating Bridge.
- Bellefields Nature Park was established on 48 acres in Mercer Slough.
- 1965      The Bellevue Fire Department formed.
- 1966      Bellevue Community College opened on January 3<sup>rd</sup> in portable classrooms at Newport High School.
- 1967      Bellevue's first "skyscraper", the 400 Building, opened at 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street.
- R. Joseph Scott established the Bellevue Philharmonic Orchestra.
- 1970      The Bellevue population, due to annexations and new housing developments, reached 61,196 residents.



## Timeline of Bellevue's History cont.

- 1972      Medic One began Eastside service.
- 1975      The Bellevue Arts Museum opened.
- 1977      L. Joe Miller resigned as City Manager, and Dick Cushing became acting Manager.
- 1980      The first woman city manager of Bellevue, Andrea Beatty, was appointed.  
Bellevue's population was 73,903.
- 1981      The first phase of the newly expanded Bellevue Square opened.
- 1985      The Bellevue Historical Society was founded.
- 1987      The Strawberry Festival was revived by the Bellevue Historical Society.

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Norman Blye, 1999. Page 7. (Eastside Heritage Center, Norman Blye Oral History Reference File)

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