

Elizabeth Jackson's story. *(This letter was in a photo album of CBHA photos, newspaper clippings, and letters, completed around the year 2000. This is the oldest first-person letter in the collection. Exact date this letter was written is unknown. Re-typed to make it more readable online. Original still in photo album.)*

I was born in Centralia, Washington in 1922. Went to school there. In 1929 my dad bought two lots (25 feet wide each) on Steamboat Island for \$300 each. They faced Hope Island and Mount Rainier. Later my dad came back with a friend, Mr. Blauvelt, who was in the real estate business. He bought 20 back lots on the island.

The island is 8.1 acres and has 126 lots now. It was owned by Northern Pacific Railroad in 1897. It was sold several times. Lloyd Crosby, who was Bing Crosby's uncle and lived in Tacoma, owned it. He paid \$2,300.00 for it in 1923. He sold to Patton in 1927 and Patton sold to Fred Carlyon. He had it platted off. He sold some of the lots to Blauvelt. Fred Carlyon owned approximately 235 acres on the mainland, now Carlyon Beach Homeowners Association.

While on the island we slept in a tent with an outside bathroom. We cooked on a camp stove while my dad and grandpa built a two-bedroom house with living room and kitchen. There was no running water or a bathroom for a long time. Us children slept upstairs. They had a building outside for the bathroom, then later a chemical toilet was moved to the back porch.

A 233-foot shaft was driven in by A. C. Patterson at \$2.00 a foot. Cost \$639.00 and there was a lawsuit over that in the abstract papers in 1928, bill unpaid. That did give us water on the island. Later a 423-foot artesian well was drilled on the west side of the island.

In 1933 we moved to Canby, Oregon.

In 1948 my dad moved back to the island and did extensive remodeling to the house. Put paneling inside, added a washer and dryer, and replaced the wood stove with an electric stove. In the early stages we had to use gas lamps because Mr. Carlyon would not let the electric lines go across his property.

There was a farm house and fruit trees in the middle of the island. They didn't get a phone in on the island until the mid-1950's. There again Mr. Carlyon would not let them.

The roads in those days were dirt and gravel and got stuck many times. The road was called Hunter's Point. It had lots of curves and was straightened out when they built the new road and blacktopped it. You used to go in front of the Rignall Hall and across to Howe Road until the fire department came in and numbered the roads and mailboxes differently. This used to be Route 1 and we had one mail carrier, Elliot Smith. In 1935 there was a fox farm in the area.

Since we were able to sell the 108-acre farm on the Willamette River where the Canby Ferry goes across, my husband and I moved up here to be close to my parents who were not well. In October 1950 we bought 18 acres from Mrs. Thornton. A four-room house, a dug well, and a barn. The bathroom was outside in a small building. With my dad's help my husband added on to the house, and wired for an electric stove. We paid \$3,000.00 for this place. It has been sold 8 times since and the last price for 11 of those acres was \$169,000. We had a fireplace built in this house and in October 1962, when we had the

Columbus Day storm, we were without electricity for 2 weeks and used that for heat. We used a Coleman stove to cook on and a white gas lamp.

My dad had television on the island in 1949 which was channel 5 from Seattle, only back and white, and you used an antenna. At low tide we could drive our car across the sand. We kept cars on this side at night. When bridge was out and my folks didn't have a phone, I would honk the horn and yell messages across the bridge. My dad pulled many a car out of the sand with his jeep when they'd go too far off. I used to pull people out, too.

Vernon, our oldest boy, started school in 1952 and at that time the bus turned around at our driveway. There were only two or three buses at that time. When he was in high school the bus took the elementary grades and the high school at the same time. They left at 6:45 a.m. and got home at 4 p.m.

Years ago, people went to Tacoma on a sternwheeler or Paddle wheel boat. It docked at the end of Noble View Road, which is now called 81st. There was a store on the road owned by the Nobles. Ella and Harold Noble donated the property Rignall Hall was built on. The date on the deed is February 1933. On May 6, 1924 a meeting was held at Noble Store for the purpose of organizing a body to undertake and carry out improvements for the good of the whole community. Mr. McGuaghy was elected Chairman of the meeting. Mr. F. A. Schmidt, Secretary Pro Tem., selected the name Rignall Civic Improvement Club. They made bylaws. They built the building, which cost \$629.17. I have the deed. They had dances, box lunches were raffled off, men paid. The bathroom was a building outside and if you were hosting an event, you had to carry the water up in a ten gallon milk can.

The Kincy's drilled a well in the 50's. A sink in the kitchen was put in, a hot water tank, and bathrooms. It was rewired to do this. Men who belonged to the club donated their time to do the work. They planned to have meetings just four times a year. The first Monday of February, May, August, and November.

In the 20's the ladies started meeting and they called it the Rignall Harmony Club. They had a meeting on Wednesday, twice a month. I joined in 1951. They had rummage sales, baked food sales. Some of the men who were retired came and played cards. Yes, some of us women played, too. They had card games in the evening. Both Rignall Civic Club and Harmony Club were potluck.

In 1929 I used to row the boat over and go up to the barn with Mr. Fred Carlyon when he milked the cow, and he would put the milk in bottles and I'd row back. He also had some sheep. He had a store and rented boats out for fifty cents. He also had a few cabins he rented out. He was a great man to us children. He and his wife Coralie were wonderful people to us children.

I had a 1930 Plymouth I drove up to see my grandparents in 1942. Because of the war you had to go 35 miles per hour. It took over 4 hours to come up here from Portland, Oregon. There wasn't a freeway and you had to go through all the towns like Centralia, Chehalis, Tenino, Tumwater, and Olympia.

I have a copy of the plat Fred Carlyon did of the property I live on now. It is dated June 22, 1953.

I have been told the road followed the bay and there is gravel on the terrace where the berries are. They wanted to move the road in and Mr. Carlyon told them they had to leave enough land that he could make lots along the bay. Mr. Carlyon died and had no children. His nephews inherited the farm.

They tried to get the state to buy it and make a park, but it was voted down. The land was sold to investors in Seattle and it was platted and became Carlyon Beach Association.

Foss tugboats used to tow logs by Steamboat Island and into Shelton. Had to go in on slack tide. Also, you saw barges with railroad cars filled with sawdust. We used to see 15 to 20 Orcas at the end of Steamboat Island when we had lots of fish. Also, we have had four gray whales come by. You can see muskrat play in the water and otters playing on rafts. We have deer, red fox, and there are deer on the island. Had a black bear that had to be tranquilized and taken off the island past year. Have sea lions in the bay barking.

In 1962 about 1,350 pieces of property were in Griffin Fire District 13. The fire department was started then. The community cleared the land and got it ready. Some of the work was hired and some donated to build walls.

There used to be a grocery store and service station up near the school, where the beauty shop is.

Rignall Hall used to be the voting place. Had to build wood stove at 5 a.m., get tables and booths read. Had to go to court house night before to get voters supplies. Booths were brought out. Voting started at 8 a.m. and closed at 8 p.m. Votes we hand counted. Inspector and 2 judges worked all day. On the General Election after 8 p.m. two more people would come in to help count. We have left hall at 6 to 8 a.m. the next morning to take ballots and count into court house. Primary election was done same way but faster. Later years, hall had to be open at 7 a.m. so workers could vote on way to work. Rignall Hall received \$25.00.

School had a carnival in old Tropics. Mrs. Whitmarsh and Frank would help out. Had rummage sale in Fourth Avenue building in town. Eighth grade went to Orcas Island and Victoria for four days (23 students) with the money they earned.

Children used to pick blueberries and strawberries for spending money.

Rignall Hall and Grange used to have Halloween parties, card games, and dances. Rignall Civic Improvement Club used to have potlucks the night of meetings. Sometimes speakers. Children all came.