

Bothell pioneer family featured in museum exhibit

by Bronwyn Wilson
Senior Staff Reporter

Members of the community can learn more about early pioneers by visiting Ron Green's photo display at the Bothell Historical Museum.

The exhibit features old photographs, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous items like a 1923 Ford Motor Company receipt listing, among other things, \$1.89 for nine gallons of gas.

"Once a year, we try to honor a pioneer family," says Sue Kienast, Museum president.

This year the Green/Simonds family of Bothell is featured. This small slice of Bothell's history offers a glimpse of the influence the family had in the Northshore area.

Not only does Green's exhibit showcase the Simonds family history, but also the

Green family and their link to Bothell.

Henry Austin Simonds arrived in Bothell began with four horses moving a piano up a hill. They managed the task, trudging up a dirt trail while towing the heavy musical instrument behind. Soliciting the services of a team of horses was the only way Simonds could move his worldly possessions to his hilltop residence in 1906.

Henry, his wife Elizabeth, and their six children had left the biting cold winters of Oshkosh, Wis., and traveled by train to the little town of Bothell. There they hoped to begin a better life at a hilltop location near present-day Inglemoor High School.

Henry's grandson, Ron Green, currently resides in Woodinville with his wife Eleanor. He recently created a photographic display that highlights his family's history and their ties to Bothell.

"History has always been interesting to me," he says and adds, "My mother (Sarah Simonds Green) had a lot of old photographs I didn't use in the display. This is a mere sampling."

Green recalls the view from the top of the trail on Grandfather Henry's property. "It had a marvelous view," he says, mentioning that in the early days his grandparents could see everything from their high perch, from Mt. Baker and Mt. Rainier towering along the horizon in noble majesty to Lake Washington and the green valley below.

He says the view was much more spectacular than it is today because the second growth trees didn't block the beautiful vistas as they do now. He clearly remembers the dirt trail he had to climb to get to his grandfather's house.

"The trail was about 300 to 400 yards," he says and adds, "As a child it seemed about 10 miles. I was never happier in my life than when I reached the top of that trail. For a child, it was pretty daunting."

Explaining the reason Henry had decided to move his family to Washington state in the first place, Green says, "It was due to the health of my grandfather's youngest boy, John. The doctor recommended he be taken to a milder climate other than Wisconsin. My grandfather heard that the Pacific Northwest was a great

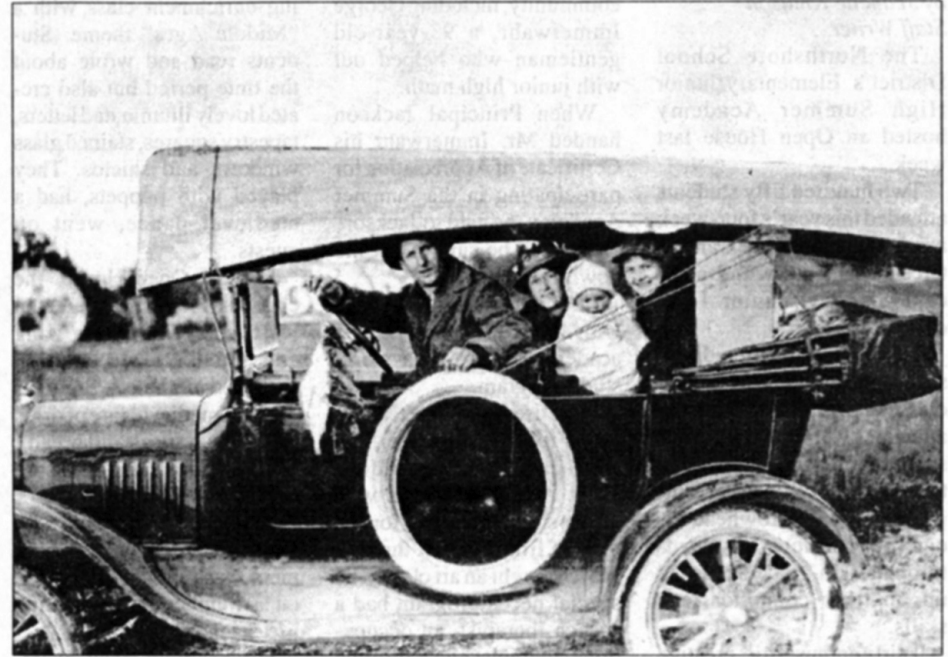


Photo taken by Bob Moyer and provided by the Green family
Back from a successful fishing trip on Puget Sound, C.H. Green holds a string of sole. Behind him are Grace Moyer and baby Ronald being held by Sarah.

area and he decided he would move out here and raise prize chickens."

Prior to arriving, Henry had learned there were 40 acres for sale on a hill in the Bothell area, and that the land was cleared with a house and nearby spring. He bought it sight unseen but soon discovered the cold facts about his hot property. The land did have a house; if that's what one would call the shabby wooden structure the family first set eyes upon. Green refers to it, though, as 'the three-room shack.' In addition, the

land wasn't what it was touted to be. Not only was it not cleared; it was also full of tree stumps as well as trees the loggers didn't want. These weren't the only obstacles facing the Simonds family and Green explains, "Between the property and the road was the Sammamish River. There was no access other than the trail up the side of the road." Henry had to build a raft of logs, load his furniture on it—including the piano—and float his belongings down the Sammamish River to the bottom of the hill of his newly ac-

quired property. The responsibility of moving it up the trail then fell to the horses.

Henry knew he and his family couldn't live in the 'shack' for long and set about clearing the land to build a new house. The cost for horses and dynamite that were needed to remove the stumps began to eat up the savings he'd set aside for a chicken farm. Henry, a former school superintendent, began to seek a paying job to fund the costly stump removal work.

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Family

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Says Green, "Clearing the land was so much work and so time consuming that when the school board needed someone to start a high school, he put in his application." Hired soon after, Henry became the first principal of Bothell High School. Even so, during the time he lived and worked in Bothell, he never gained road access to his property. It wasn't until after the family moved from the area that a road was established over the river and up his hill. Northshore citizens know the thoroughfare today as Simonds Road.

A newspaper phototimeline shows the progression of Bothell Garage, Bothell's first auto repair shop that Charles Green (Ron Green's dad) and E.A. Hildebrandt opened in 1914. The partnership dissolved in 1918, but a year later Charles opened Green's Garage. It served customers from the location where Ivar's Res-

taurant and Hertz Rentals now sit. A new building was built in 1948 that currently houses Hertz Rentals.

Another newspaper item included in the display features Charles cross-country automobile trip, a venture-some journey in 1911 that made history. Northshore resident Terri Malinowski detailed the historic trip in a 1965 Seattle Times article that had the headline, 'It was rugged crossing the country.' Malinowski explains that the Winton Motor Carriage Company of Seattle had employed Charles to familiarize new Winton car owners with their vehicles. She wrote, "At age 21, Charles Green already had been driving for the company since 1907 and was a dashing figure as he rolled through the streets of Seattle delivering and demonstrating new Wintons." The idea for the cross-country adventure began when Charles was dispatched to the home of Elmer Ross, a prominent Bothell dairy farm owner who had purchased a new Winton 6,



(l-r) Ron Green Jr. with his parents Ron and Eleanor Green on the porch at the Bothell Historical Museum. They are holding pictures from the exhibit.

Bronwyn Wilson/staff photo

gleaming in green paint. The dairyman approached Charles with a tempting offer, asking if he would drive his family across the country in the new car. The car had a removable top and no glass windows, only side curtains. With nothing to shield them from the elements, the potential for trouble was limitless. No matter, Charles accepted without hesitation and the trip became a public relations affair for the Winton Company. It also became a historical event when the motorists were the first to ever cross the Snoqualmie Pass from west to east. Says Green, "Father got a leave of absence and he and six members of the Ross family started across the country. They carried ropes and winches with

them and had to winch the car over the steep parts of the Pass that was a wagon trail. It took them a week to get to Spokane. In Wyoming, they had to wait while three new tires were delivered by stagecoach. It took my dad and Mr. Ross six weeks to get to Ohio."

In 1915, Charles had captured the attention of Henry's daughter, Sarah Simonds, and the two were married. The young businessman and his

wife greeted the birth of their son Ron in 1916 and later, son Gordon in 1921. As a teenager, Ron began working in the family business. Says Green, "I worked for Dad all through high school. In the summer I would grease cars, wash cars and sell parts. After the war in 1945, I worked with him as a partner. In 1954 I bought the business and operated it as Green Ford until it was sold in 1965."

Today, Ron and Eleanor Green make their home at the Brittany Park Retirement Community. The couple has celebrated 63 wedding anniversaries together and raised three children. Looking back on how much the world has changed since the days he and Eleanor were growing up, Green says, "We're from the generation who experienced the depression, a major world war and the rise of technology. It's amazing the things we have now that we didn't have as children."

His exhibit offers visitors a glance back to a time when life was free of fax machines and cell phones ...when everybody knew everybody in town ...when children played games outdoors, instead of indoors in front of computer screens and when horses were the daily transportation and sometimes the local moving company too.

Green's display will continue for another week at the Bothell Historical Museum in the Hannan House at Bothell Landing. After that, it moves to Brittany Park for a public showing there. Free to the public, the Museum opens on Sundays 1 to 4 pm.

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