Bothell pioneer family featured in museum exhibit

by Bronwyn Wilson
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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 the piano up the hill to his 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 presentation 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 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 shaky 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 acquired 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 move 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 some-
one 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. North-
shore citizens know the thoroughfare today as Simonds
Road.

A newspaper photo timeline shows the progress 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 dis-
solved in 1918, but a year later
Charles opened Green's Gar-
age. 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 fea-
tures Charles cross-country
automobile trip, a venture-
some journey in 1911 that
made history. Northshore resi-
dent Terri Malinowski de-
tailed 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 Com-
pany 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 dis-
spatched to the home of Elmer
Ross, a prominent Bothell
dairy farm owner who had
purchased a new Winton 6,
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 noth-
ing to shield them from the
elements, the potential for
trouble was limitless. No mat-
ter, Charles accepted without
hesitation and the trip became
a public relations affair for the
Winton Company. It also be-
came 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 mem-
bers of the Ross family started
across the country. They car-
rried 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 Spo-
kane. 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 cap-
tured 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 teen-
ager, 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 oper-
ated 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 anni-
versaries together and raised	hree 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 technol-
y. 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 ev-
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 mov-
ning company too.

Green's display will con-
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.