

THE HISTORY OF TRAILS END LAKE

As told by Everett Sears

The area around here was surveyed by the Department of Interior in the winter of 1861 and it was divided up into 40 acre plots which were all government lots. In 1864 it was opened for homesteading. At this time Everett was showing the group a map of old Mason County. One of the 40 acre lots was homesteaded by the Pricketts for which the lake was first named. White Star Logging owned a portion that he again showed on the map and then different families owned and homesteaded other sections around. The logging between the lake and all the way to Allyn and again showing another area on the map was done and completed by 1909. Some of the timber was stored in the lake, and then where the public access is now was the railhead. This is where they loaded the logs up and there was a railway from here to Allyn. Once they got to Allyn they were rafted in the bay and towed to Shelton. The area immediately around the lake was logged out by White Star between 1926 and 1928 and by that time they had built the railhead where the Access is now. At this time Everett was again showing everyone places on the map as to where the railway ran. He mentioned that he had found signs of it in his yard when he was preparing to build. After they finished logging up here and

White Star moved out of the area and they gave, again he showed on the map an area which he said was a guestimate, to the Girl Scouts. The Girl Scouts rented it out to people that wanted to come up and camp out, the Boy Scouts used it, different organizations used it. There was the large log cabin and Everett continued to show on the map where the smaller log cabins were located. One of the log cabins burnt in 1978 and is no longer there. The Girl Scouts area was called Trails End Country Club. Everett talked to a guy a few years ago who told him that in order to get to the lake a person would have to hike in from down on South Shore.

There was no access and this was approx 1940 or 1941.

Everett said he could not find out what happened to the Pricketts, He was unable to find out when they sold their property. Some of the information that Everett got he found in the basement of Mason County Court House by getting some of the old files. Jane and John Stockler also got some of the information but they got some theirs by going to Olympia. Everett said that he and Jane spent time at the Mason County Court House gathering up most of the information. When we were building the club house a guy stop here and told me that Emma Prickett was his great Aunt and that he had a letter that she had written to her sister that was his grandmother about 1900 and she said they had 4 more years to live on this property and then they could do what they wanted to do

with it. Everett at this time mentioned that he did not know what the homestead act for the state of Washington was but he was sure that a person had to live on the property for a certain number of years before the property became yours. The Pricketts owned 160 acres. Part of their acreage took in one end of the lake and since they were the first ones to settle up here the lake was named after them. The rest of the people that owned property around this lake from 1938 until 1956 were Fred and Ilene Scone and they still owned property here up until a few years ago. Walter and Nora Keller and Celestine Chang and the rest of it was known as Trails End Ranch. Now down in the area of the Prickett homestead you could still see remnants of the old homestead as of a couple of years ago. There is a valley and the outflow from the lake runs right along where the homestead was and it would be really protected down there. The last time I was down there it was all grass. From the looks of it you could see approx 60 acres that were still clear and was at one time pasture. Again showing on the map Everett pointed to where at one time was a small town called coonville. Some people with metal detectors had gone out in that area and found several things. The road was right along the river/creek. When Everett first started coming out here he would drive up the Tacoma power line right out of Allyn thru what is now Lakeland Village and come

directly to the lake. There were a number of drunks that used to live up here. Russell Sweeney, Bill Dairden, Shaffer, and Shanley. They used to get drunk at the Allyn Tavern and then they would come up this way. One night they got stuck on the railroad track and the track up at the lake was different. During the WWII the government took over the railroad and finished it from Shelton to Bremerton. So that made the railroad government property so getting stuck on the tracks was a federal offense. Right after that which was probably around 1979 the road got shut off so you could not go to Allyn that way anymore. In 1956 a lot of the land around here was sold to Weyerhouser. Weyerhouser purchased 8 sections and again he showed everyone the sections on a map. He also mentioned that Pope and Talbot also purchased some property. Weyerhouser paid \$225,000.00 for the 8 sections. Which would be about \$35.00 an acre. In 1957 the land around the lake which is now Trails End Lake Development was purchased by South Kitsap Development Company. Primary owners were Richard Hahn and Russell Sweeney. Russell Sweeney was a crook and Hahn was a worker. In 1957 the Girl Scouts sold and moved their camp at Deveau, St Albans. On May 11th 1959 the Sound Kitsap Development Company filed with Mason County - Trails End Division I which consisted at that time of 69 lots. Division I goes from and again he

pointed to the map and showed where Division I was. The 11th of December 1960, Division II which is all the rest, was filed with Mason County and was listed as 299 lots. Sweeney got into trouble with some of the lots because he sold them to several different people so in 1960 the name changed to Mountain Development Company, but had the same owners. June 20 of 1961 the plat was re-filed as Trails End Division I and Trails End Division II as corrected and Division I then had 71 lots and Division II had 212 plus track A. This is where the real estate office was located. This is the small building that is directly across the road from the Public Access. A Water Company was formed in the spring of 1965 and used an existing well which was located at and again he showed everyone on the map. This was to become well #1 of Trails End Water District. Ira Edwards was the President of the Water Company. When I moved up here the water was \$5.00 a month. You would walk down to Edwards and drop \$5.00 in the slot and you were all set. If you got down there at the right time, Mrs Edwards would let you have all the cookies so you could get \$4.00 worth of cookies. During all this time people were talking and they kept saying, even in some of the early deeds to some of the properties, it said that there would be access to the lake for each lot – the pieces that were promised were Mud Beach, Friendship Beach, North Beach

and several more which have been sold except for the Salt Water, Friendship Beach and North Beach. Jim Tiege, Henry McCord, Mr Huttshell and some of the other people began to see the lots that were suppose to belong to the community were being sold off. So they contacted an Attorney, Mr Stephenson and they found out the only way that they could do anything was to form a club that had the right to own property. So on May 12, 1966 The Community Club was approved by the state of Washington as a non-profit Corp. with voluntary membership with the main purpose of the club was to own property. The first President was George Nelson, him and his wife still own property down here right across the road – 2nd lot down from Mc Calls, they have about 4 lots in that area. May 27, 1966 a gift deed was received by the Trails End Community Club from Russell Sweeney for the following lots, Friendship Beach, North Beach, Snag Beach – this triangular shaped lot which Everett pointed out on the map and the area that is down by the salt water. 1967 a Second well was drilled on the same property as the first well. It was put into use as soon as it was completed. Well 1 is approx 96 feet deep – it is a shallow well. It has a 2 ½ ' pump and in that well in the summer time it would have to really work hard and it would run continuously and when that happened you would start sucking air after about 28 hours, in other words you would suck

the well dry. Well 2 is 296 feet deep and goes into the main aquifer for this whole area. It has a 6" casing which is not screened at the bottom when a 4 horse pump was started it just sucked up sand since there was not screen at the bottom. So we went back to a 3 horse pump in that well. The biggest pump you can put down a well like this is a 7 1/2 horse pump and then in order to get a volume to do very much with the distance from the water tower is from the well we would have had to have a booster pump in the pump house to pump up to the water tower. In order to what was needed we would have had to drop a machine down in, drill a hole, force the screen down and then lift the casing. That casing has been in there since 1967. If it cracked or broke when it was lifted the whole well would be lost. In 1969 the unsold lots were bought by a real estate company from Port Orchard that was owned by William Wilkins with silent partners, Russell Sweeney and Tom Fader. They advertised and had a big selling of property that summer. They sold all the lots except and again Everett showed everyone the 2 lots that they held back and reserved for the water company to put its office and drill another well. These 2 lots they did not sell. So that made 4 lots that were held back and were not sold. The rest went into private ownership. 2 of the lots that Everett was showing on the map did not sell until 1989. September of 1969, William Wilkins, quit deeded one of the

lots to the community club. Which became known as Sader Beach. In 1977 the community voted and formed an LID in order to form a Water District. The Water Company, Ira Edwards was getting older, his glasses were thicker than coke bottles and he was having a very hard time reading. At this time Everett told everyone that the Edwards were pretty special people. Rather than having it sold as a Water Company, it was formed into a Water District and became Mason County Water District #2. Does anyone know where Mason County Water District #1 is? It is in Belfair. For years these were the only 2 districts in Mason County. Now there are about 30 districts. A number of community water systems became districts because of pressure brought to bear by the EPA and Health Department. As of 1994 or 95 they evaluated all the water districts and companies throughout the state and only about 17% of them could meet the standards. Only about 32 % were able to continue in operations without major overhauls. In 1979 the Water District was actually formed and purchased the Water Company and in 1980 became a full Water District with Jim Tiege, Henry McCord and Eugene Maxwell as commissioners. A 20 year bond for \$162,000.00 was sold to the Farm-home Administration at that time they decided not to use the 2 lots – again Everett shows everyone on the map. Instead, they purchased 150' square of property from

Weyehouser up on the top of Crest Drive. This is where the water tower sits today. The main reason is there about 20 feet higher than the other lots. At that time they also put in the meters which is now a requirement for all water districts and/or companies. 1984 the community club gave a lot to the water district and again he shows them on a map. Fire District #2 agreed to put a fire truck and ambulance up here and we had at that time about 12 volunteers from this area that worked with fire district #2. The Water District had the money so in 1985 they build the fire hall. That was then shared jointly by the Water District and the Community Club until the time that our club house was completed. In 1988 the club acting as administrator for the property owners contracted with Allied Aquatic to have the lake sprayed for lily pads. All the money that was used for that was donated by individual property owners and the first spraying cost approx. \$3200.00. In 1991 the club voted and sold one of the lots that were held for access to the lake to John Turner. Again Everett shows people on the map. It was a very steep lot with mud beach and not useable for what the club wanted it for. The club got \$44,800.00 for this lot. In 1992 we bought the lot on the corner where the club house sits now. We had checked out the other properties and we did not have enough property for the club house and parking and septic. Everett again when to the map

and showed where the easement ran. The club had to hire an attorney and finally got everything straightened out. In 1994 the club purchased the lot where the parking is now located. In 1992 we had the water district drill a well up by the water tower. We purchased more property up there, again Everett is showing them on the map. This would be well #3 and put a pump house up by the water tower. That well has a 30 horse pump and will pump about 220 gallons per minute. In 1994 we purchased another 50 feet and again showing on the map where well #4 is. Well #4 is not operating at this time. In order to have a well you must have 100 foot radius so the club purchased a bit more property. At that time we were also trying to get the developer that had the property between the top of Crest Drive to Coon Lake to join us and become part of our system. That way we would have had more room to drill further wells as we might need them. At the time the developer did not join our system and started selling lots. Well when everyone found out how much it would cost to drill individual wells he, the developer wanted to join but it was too late by then. In 1995 and 96 we built the club house. We built it with the money that we got from the lot plus from about 1992 until 1996 – all the money raised by Ways and Means was dedicated to going into the club house. It cost us approx. \$3400.00 because we had lots of volunteer help. We had to have the county approve

our building for occupancy the day before we had our rummage sale in September. That was the very first activity that we held in our club house. September 1996. In 1998 Fire District #2 wanted to expand and make our fire hall up here a resident fire hall where they could have an employee up here. In about 1989 or 1990 we had a couple of presidents of the community club who did not see any reason why there should be any reserve fund what so ever. And so they were paying \$1200.00 a year out of the member's dues to have the floats taken out and put back in every year down at the salt water property. \$600.00 per in and \$600.00 per out. One of the Presidents was the wife of the guy that was hauling them in and putting them back out. When Jerry Borderlawn became President in 1990 I believe that was the year, when the insurance came due in February or March he had to pay it out of his own pocket because there was no money in the treasury to pay anything. This is one of the reasons that when we re-wrote the by-laws that the reserve funds were complete understood. We have had 3 or 4 Presidents since then who thought if we got up to \$7000.00 why isn't it spent? Why don't we hire people. We had one president who did hire people to mow and take care of the beaches at \$100.00 a week. We had to raise the dues up to \$30.00 to get money back into the treasury. So when we get this other bill everything was paid for

the only thing that we did not have completed that was required when we got out occupancy permit was the bulkhead behind the building to keep the dirt up here. Where the railroad ties are. The lot that the club house sits on sloped down and then it dropped into the flat where the drain field is. The county was cleaning ditches and they brought in 350 yards and dumped it in both lots. The back footing, this is the monolithic slab which means the footing and floor is all poured at once. With the donations that we had - we already had about \$1800.00. The spring spraying that time only cost us about \$1790.00. So we have in the lake clean up fund, which does not belong to the club, there is a 16 month CD which at this time is worth \$4073.76 as of the end of June. In 2000 and 2001 the kitchen cabinets as they are now were installed. The old ones taken out. The ovens that are now in place and there was a drop-in electric range that came with them, these were given to us by one of our members. The cabinets that the ovens fit into are in the store room. The sink area came from Everett's house along with an old frig and that he had in is garage and this was the kitchen until about 2000. We then dedicated the money from Ways and Means. This took about 2 or 3 years for kitchen stuff and we got a new refrigerator and stove. In 2002 and 2003 the smoking room was added and in 2005 the generator building was started and in 2006

the disaster preparedness building was built by Nick Caraway as his Eagle Scout project. And the rest is history.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask your forgiveness for all the mistakes that you might find in this story. I was transcribing it from a tape that at times was hard to understand. I hope you enjoy the story though as much as I did. It was very interesting.

Thank you Everett for all your information gathering and a well presented History of our lake and the surrounding properties.