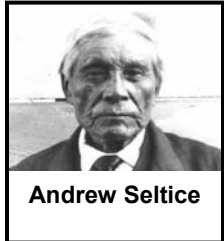


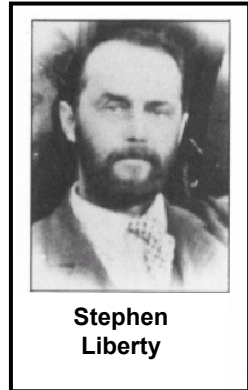
Liberty Lake's Cultural & Historical Heritage

The culture we cherish today began long before the formation of the City of Liberty Lake. The Liberty Lake area was inhabited by Native Americans centuries before the first white settlers came to the area. In 1808, David Thompson, a fur trader, arrived in the area and was soon followed by



Andrew Seltice

missionaries. Native Americans still occupied Liberty Lake and surrounding areas as the white settlers began to arrive. According to the book entitled *Memories of Liberty Lake* by Mildred Brereton and Evelyn Foedish, an early fur trader named Ross Cox told tales of the Indians holding horse races on the plains. These horse races were a part of an annual feed on the shores of Liberty Lake that was hosted by Andrew Seltice, Chief of

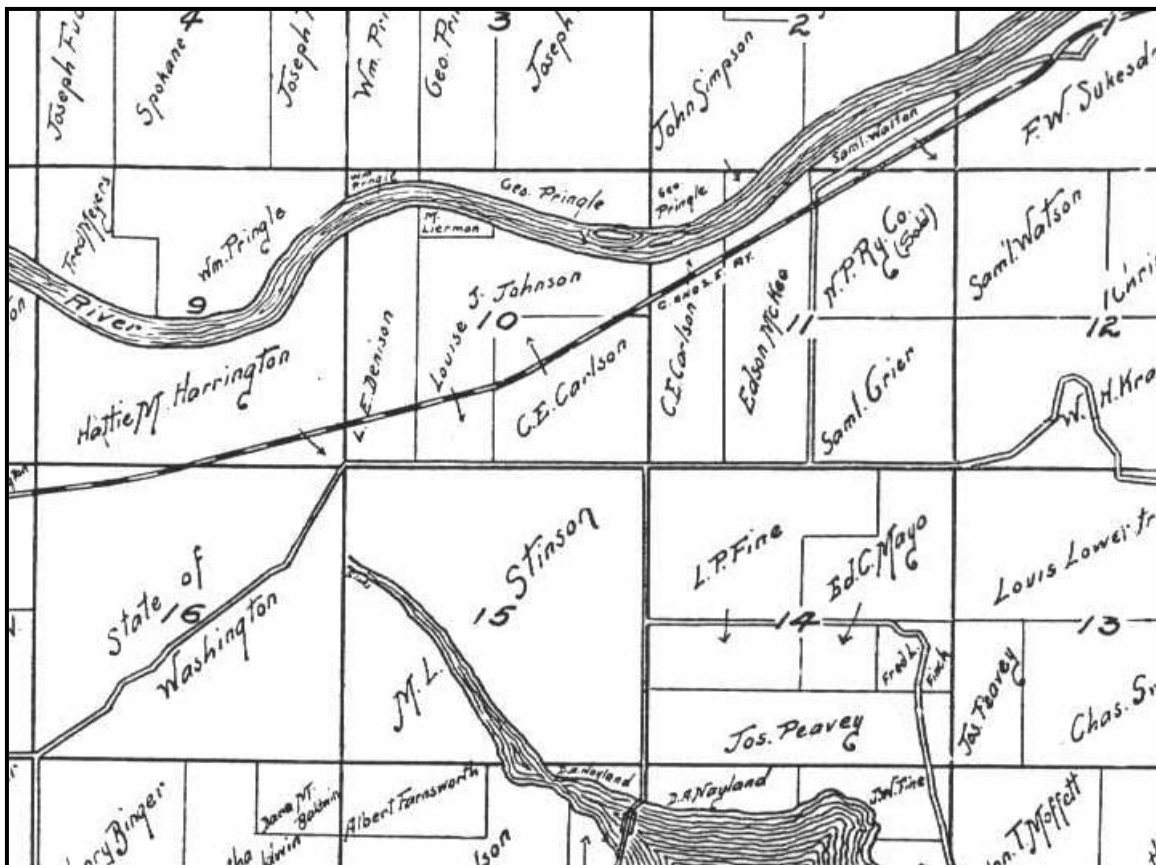


Stephen Liberty

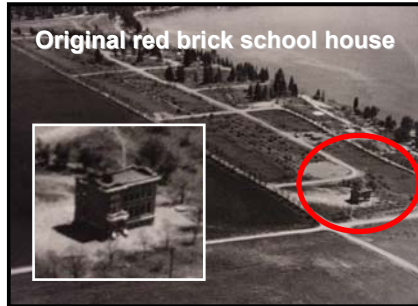
the Coeur d'Alene Indians. After the dinner, everyone enjoyed the horse races and athletic events where prizes were given out. Many families stayed overnight to hear Tecomtee, a Couer d'Alene tribe member, sing Indian songs out over the Lake. Liberty Lake was originally named Lake Grier, but was later re-named after a Frenchman from Canada, Etienne Eduard Laliberte, who came to Liberty Lake in 1871 after changing his name to Stephen Liberty while carrying mail over the Mullan Trail to Rathdrum. Stephen Liberty and his family homesteaded on the west side of the lake and he was known as a friend and spokesman for the Native Americans, and was especially close with Chief Andrew Seltice of the Coeur d'Alene Indians. The following text is from Stephen Liberty's manuscripts, "In February, 1871 I removed to Liberty Lake (so named in my honor) where I again established a home and set out about twenty five acres of orchard and continued the raising of stock. When I removed to Liberty Lake in February, 1871 Chief Seltice was my neighbor. Stillam, one of the head men of the tribe, then resided near Spokane bridge, a short distance from me. From the time of my first acquaintance with Chief Seltice and the other head men of the tribe mentioned, I enjoyed their utmost confidence."

Other early settlers may have been drawn to the Liberty Lake area and other parts of the west by the Homestead Act of 1862. The Homestead Act declared that any citizen or intended citizen could claim 160 acres - one quarter square mile - of surveyed government land. Claimants must "improve" the plot with a dwelling and grow crops. After five years, if the original filer was still on the land, it was his property, free and clear. According to records from the Bureau of Land Management, there were eight homesteads in what is now the City limits area between 1884 and 1907. The first homesteader was **James Fisher**. Fisher homesteaded land in the S1/2 of the NE portion, the NE of the NE portion, and the NW of the SE portion of Section 14 in the late 1870's. He was issued a land patent on May 15, 1884. The next to homestead was **Joseph Peavy**, in the early 1880's. He homesteaded the S1/2 of the S1/2 of Section 14 and was issued a land patent on May 26, 1888. Peavy, the areas first blacksmith, also carried mail along the Mullan Trail with his friend Stephen Liberty, who homesteaded on the west side of Liberty Lake. **Levi P. Fine** and **John J. Fine** homesteaded in the early 1880's. Levi P. Fine homesteaded the N1/2 of the NW portion and the NW of the NE portion of Section 14 and was issued a land patent on January 26, 1891. John J. Fine homesteaded S1/2 of the NW portion and the N1/2 of the SW portion of Section 14 and was issued a land patent on March 5, 1891. The Fine family lived in Liberty Lake long enough to see the new school house, mentioned below, built about ¼ mile south of them on land they had donated. **John Simpson** was issued a land patent on April 20, 1891 after homesteading the SE of the SW Quarter of Section 2 along the Spokane River in the mid 1880's. The W1/2 of the SW portion, the SW of the NW portion, the NW of the NW

Quarter, and the NE of the NW Quarter of Section 10 were homesteaded by **Charles Denison** in the late 1880's. Denison was issued a land patent on June 8, 1895. **George Bennett** homesteaded in the late 1880's in the N1/2 of the NW portion of Section 22 and was granted a land patent on July 8, 1895. Finally, **Fred Finch** was granted a land patent on March 8, 1907 after homesteading in the early 1900's in the NE of the SE portion of Section 14. See the Cultural Landmarks map for an overview of these former homestead locations. The following is a township map of Spokane County showing ownerships of acreage property that is dated September 1, 1905. Several homesteads were still owned by the original families at that time.



The Spokane Valley Irrigation company, also known as the Spokane Valley Land and Water Company, was organized in 1899 by D.C. Corbin, a well known Spokane entrepreneur. Corbin also developed the Greenacres area. The irrigation line, circa 1903, brought water from the Spokane River and Liberty Lake through the Valley View Golf Course area and along the Outlet Channel trail, then across to the Holiday Hills site today for irrigating the Greenacres district. The company was formed at a time when a portion of Liberty Lake extended up to the northwest above Sprague Ave. and formed a small body of water called Lake Loomis. According to the book entitled *Memories of Liberty Lake* by Mildred Brereton and Evelyn Foedish, a great deal of rich ground was ruined by the lake extension, so residents dug a ditch and used the water for valley irrigation, which eliminated Lake Loomis and brought Liberty Lake to its present size. The Madson family, who homesteaded on the west side of Liberty Lake, used Lake Loomis to water cattle and a law suit was started after it was drained. It was determined that if mail had been carried over the Lake Loomis area, it would have been considered an interstate and it could not have been drained. After the discovery of the Spokane Aquifer, irrigation from wells came into practice.



Original red brick school house

Also around the turn of the century, a school house for the Liberty Lake area was being discussed. One location for the school house that was being considered was Harvard and Appleway in the middle of what is now the City of Liberty Lake. It was decided, however, to build the school house at what is now the southeast corner of Sprague and Molter Rd. The school was originally a little white building and was later replaced with a larger red brick building in 1912 that was in use until 1959. Residential construction began on the site in the 1970's.

In the early 1900's, during the late fall, winter, and early spring, Valley area farmers and ranchers would take advantage of a break from ranch work and get together on Saturday night at the Spokane Bridge near the Washington/ Idaho border for dancing to hill-billy music from around 8 p.m. till dawn. Another winter activity for the locals was Saturday night 500 card parties at one of the area ranches. The basic card game involved tables of four with partners sitting across from each other and working their way up toward a top table by collecting points, with the winners of the evening prize being the partners that reach the top table or 500 points. Also during periods of heavy snow, Saturday night hay rides were available with a team of four horses, complete with sleigh bells, that pulled a bob sled holding about 20 couples sitting on a mattress of straw. The ride toured from Liberty Lake to Newman Lake and around to the Spokane Bridge where they could enjoy the dance hall. Also by the early 1900's, several resorts were being developed around Liberty Lake, and the Lake was quickly becoming a vacation destination for the residents of Spokane and other surrounding areas. Pleasure boats that



Liberty Lake train station

toured the lake were one of the many amenities that entertained visitors. The Spokane Inland Empire Railway began running electric trains in 1903 from Spokane to Liberty Lake that took around 45 minutes one way and a round trip to and from the Lake cost around 75 cents. The train originally stopped at a 6' x 6' station located at the intersection of the highway of the time, which is Appleway and Liberty Lake Rd. today. Emmett Denison, a descendant of the homesteader, lived at the junction and he would meet the train at the depot with his horse drawn stage and transport visitors south to the Lake for 25 cents. As Liberty Lake's popularity increased, the station became a depot with signage that identified it as Liberty Lake junction. More people visited the Lake around 1907 when the railroad installed a spur line along today's Liberty Lake Rd. to bring visitors closer to the lake. The Spokane Inland Empire Railroad developed the Liberty Lake Park in 1909 which became very popular for picnics and other gatherings. Traffic steadily increased from 1910 to 1913 with a two car train running every half-hour in 1910, and by 1913 a five car train ran every half-hour on Sundays and holidays, or when large weekday picnics were scheduled. The years 1910 to 1915 were the peak for the Liberty Lake Park and Liberty Lake became known as "Spokane's Inland Seashore". The natural beauty that included many different tree varieties and unusual flowers, mixed with the many attractions, made the park very popular. Visitors could rent boats from the Liberty

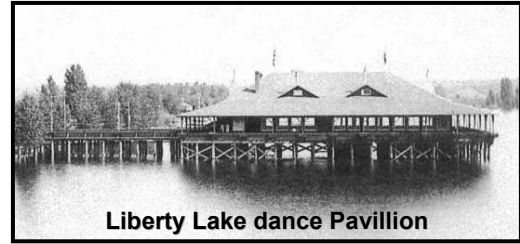


Train entering Liberty Lake



Pleasure boat "The Ermine"

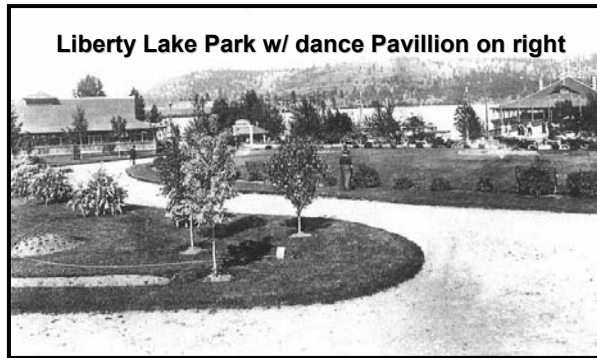
Lake Boat Company for joy rides, enjoy the live band music and dancing at the Pavillion, stay at the hotel or one of the many resorts, rent swimming suits at the Hurtig Bath House, fish, picnic, savor the dining options, or just relax. As in the days of Tecomtee, the music from the Pavillion could be heard throughout the area. All Valley picnics and other business parties became a tradition at the Lake for many people each summer, and in the winter, people could enjoy ice skating on the Lake. Automobiles were becoming popular in the 1920's and visitors could either arrive to the Lake by train or along Sprague / Appleway Ave. and then down Molter Rd. by car. Because of the popularity of fruit orchards in the Spokane Valley, fruit stands with apples lined Sprague Avenue throughout the valley area, causing it to be renamed "The Appleway".



Liberty Lake dance Pavillion



Crescent Silver Cornet Band at picnic circa 1913



Liberty Lake Park w/ dance Pavillion on right



Liberty Lake Commercial early 20th century



Liberty Lake Park advertising sign north of Appleway Ave.

The 1920's brought major changes to Liberty Lake. All Valley picnics began in 1922, and 1924 saw the biggest crowd ever for the annual 4th of July celebration. 14,000 people attended the festivities that year, with 9,000 of them arriving by train. With the onset of the automobile as the transportation mode of choice, the trains that had brought so many visitors to Liberty Lake quit running by 1926.



Herschell-Spillman Carousel

The beautifully maintained Liberty Lake Park was sold and re-named Silver City. It was converted to more of a carnival atmosphere with a ferris wheel, a swing ride, and an unusual carousel. Hand-carved wooden tigers, horses, frogs, cats, and dogs circled the elaborately crafted carousel built by artists and engineers of the Herschell-Spillman Company in 1913. The carousel remained at the Park until 1961 and today it is in the Henry Ford Museum at Dearborn, Michigan.

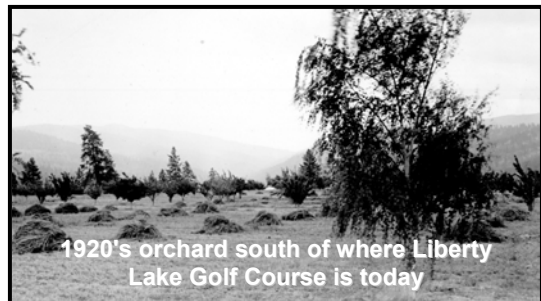
The town was also beginning to develop around the Lake with more homes and supporting businesses and services being constructed. Farming continued with much of the land being covered in orchards and eventually grass fields.



**Farming
in the
1920's**



By 1951, there were six resorts operating on Liberty Lake and four public beaches. Liberty Lake was becoming known as a suburb of Spokane and development was limited to the Lake area, south of Sprague Avenue. The Liberty Lake Golf Course, the first of the three golf courses in Liberty Lake, was constructed on the northeast corner of Sprague Avenue and Molter Road in 1959. By the 1960's, many of the original attractions around the Lake were gone. The dance pavilion at the old Liberty Lake Park was destroyed by fire in the summer of 1962. Spokane County bought and created the almost 3000 acre Spokane County Regional Park in 1966 which became the only public beach access, however, a public boat launch was also available on the north side of the Lake. Unfortunately the water quality of Liberty Lake had begun to decline, with algae covering much of the lake. By the 1970's, more resorts had closed and the Liberty Lake Park area was converted into a housing development. In 1991, the last resort on the Lake at Sandy Beach closed. Lodging today is primarily limited to the hotels located within the City limits.

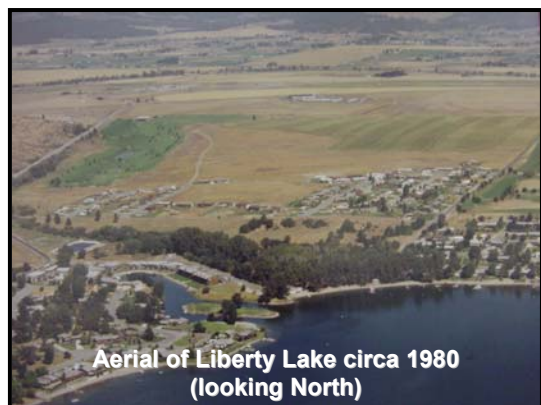


**1920's orchard south of where Liberty
Lake Golf Course is today**



**Aerial of Liberty Lake circa 1960
(looking NW)**

However, the 1970's brought a surge in activity north of Sprague Avenue that would eventually be encompassed within the City of Liberty Lake. The large hill on the west side of the City, formerly known as Carlson Hill, became known as Holiday Hills, a ski and snowmobile recreation destination with a lodge and restaurant. Holiday Hills gave visitors more winter activity choices than just ice skating. An RV Park with an A-Frame office also offered camping in the summer at Holiday Hills. Over the years, the Holiday Hills site was used for equestrian activities, snowmobile and motocross racing, youth sports camps, and ice skating. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties, Holiday Hills closed by the end of the decade.

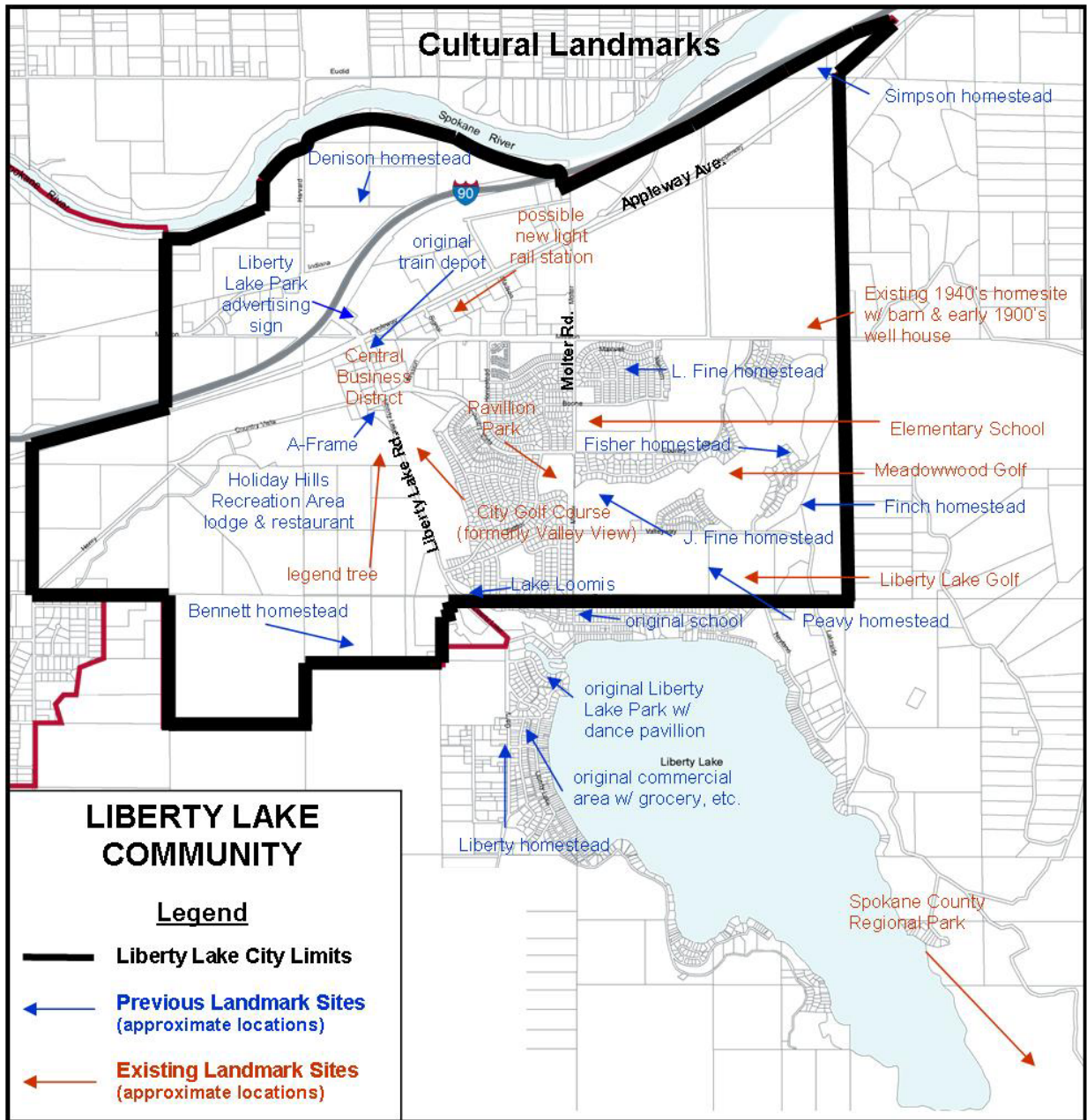


**Aerial of Liberty Lake circa 1980
(looking North)**



Recreation opportunities increased in 1973 with the development of the Valley View Golf Course east of Liberty Lake Rd. which was, at the time, the only mid length executive course in the northwest. Housing choices also expanded in the 1970's and early 1980's with the development of the Liberty Lake Heights west of Molter Rd. The Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District was formed in the mid 1970's to help clean up the conditions of Liberty Lake. Construction of the new sewer system began in 1977 and the wastewater treatment facility east of Harvard Rd. was completed in 1982. By the early 1980's, commercial and industrial development had begun with the Hewlett-Packard facility on the east side of Molter Rd. The City of Liberty Lake, as we know it today, was started by the visions of the Main Corporation, Schneidmiller Land Company, and the Greenstone Corporation. The Homestead residential development was envisioned in the late 1970's and began in the mid 1980's. The streets within the Homestead development were named after early Liberty Lake families. Housing sales boomed in Liberty Lake in the mid 1990's with the creation of Meadowwood. Meadowwood Golf Course, the third golf course in Liberty Lake, Pavillion Park, and Liberty Lake Elementary School were also completed by the time the City of Liberty Lake officially incorporated on August 31, 2001. With three golf courses in the City limits of Liberty Lake, the Liberty Lake area is now known as a premier golf course community.





Preserving Cultural & Historical Traditions



Cultural traditions were formed during the time when Liberty Lake was known as "Spokane's Inland Seashore". There were Fourth of July Celebrations with fireworks over the lake, live music and dancing at the Pavillion, picnics, boating, and most of all, memories were being created. Although the original buildings no longer exist, the memories and traditions still live on. Families still visit Pavillion Park for picnics, birthdays, and other celebrations. Every year, Liberty Lake draws huge

crowds for the annual Fourth of July celebration with a parade by the lake, and live music and dancing at Pavillion Park, which contains a replica of the original Pavillion for the next generation to enjoy. The musical traditions from years past still exist as the music echoes throughout the area. To conclude the festivities, fireworks are still launched over the lake.



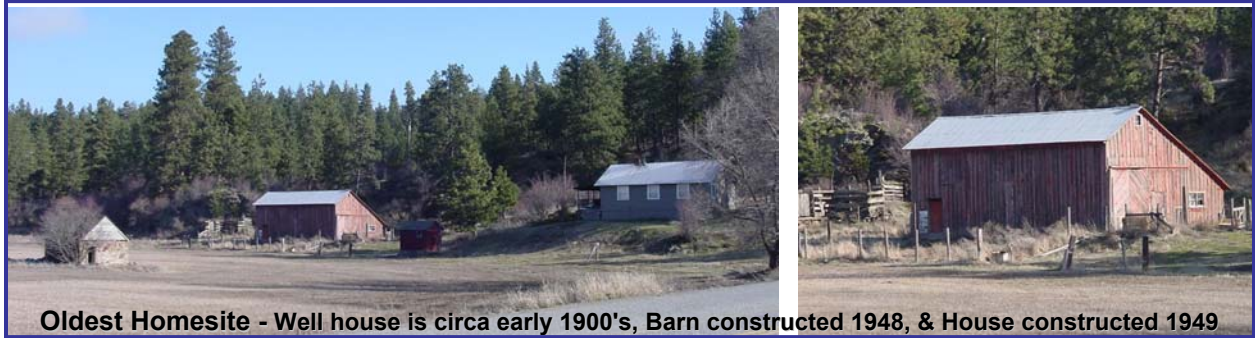
Pavillion Park also contains two memorials dedicated to families that helped establish the Liberty Lake area. Other hints of the past can be seen at the Albertson's store in Liberty Lake where lighted symbols representing the original tour boats decorate the building. In 2002, the City purchased the Valley View Golf Course, now known as Trailhead at Liberty Lake, which is located at the center of the City on the corner of Country Vista and Liberty Lake Rd. In the future, as the structures and landscape are remodeled, hopefully more symbols of the past can be incorporated. A light rail extension into Liberty Lake could incorporate Liberty Lake's railroad past into the design and displays, or within one of the parks, the original Herschell-Spillman Silver City carousel could be replicated. The Liberty Lake community



has also developed new annual traditions that have become a part of the Liberty Lake culture including an Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas Lighting Contest, Friends of Pavillion Park Holiday Ball, Community Yard Sale Weekend, and the Pavillion Park summer festival that includes outdoor movies, concerts, and other special events. Additional research into the history of the area might surface more of the past such as the possible location of a fur trading post that was rumored to have been located here, other Native American traditions, etc.

Very few historical sites and structures remain within the City area. The old Holiday Hill winter recreation area that is now being re-platted as a residential development still has the pole barn, track, and the original lodge fireplace. Unfortunately, the original lodge burned down in a fire in the early to mid 1980's.

Another residential plat that is currently under development in the northeast corner of the City, on the north side of Mission Ave., contains a homesite that dates back to the 1940's, with a well house that dates back to the early 1900's. This homesite has the oldest known existing structures within the City of Liberty Lake. The site is included as part of a park area and should be preserved and protected in the future.



Oldest Homesite - Well house is circa early 1900's, Barn constructed 1948, & House constructed 1949



Early homesite entryway

Near the homesite mentioned above, on the south side of Mission Ave., are the remains of an early entryway. It is unknown as to whether the entryway belonged to the original Fisher homestead or the later Mayo homesite, but it appears that they date back to the early 1900's. The entry markers should be moved and preserved as new residential development begins on the site.



Legend Tree

The tree pictured on the left is seen in the background of several early 1900's photographs and can still be seen from many locations in the Liberty Lake area. The tree sits on the upper northeast corner of the old Holiday Hills site. The exact history of the tree is unknown at this time, but at over 100 years old, this tree has been linked to several area legends. As development occurs on the site, this tree should be included as part of a park or open space area and preserved for future generations.

Importance and Purpose of Protecting Cultural & Historical Resources



While the majority of the early culture and history occurred around the Lake, the Liberty Lake community as a whole is continuing old cultural traditions, while developing new traditions. As more development and re-development occurs, a record of our cultural resources will be important as the City attempts to preserve the past while preparing for our future. Like wetlands, forests, and other natural resources, historic properties and culturally significant

traditions are a finite and endangered resource. Once a historic or archaeological property is destroyed, it is lost forever. Most of the significant properties in the Liberty Lake area and especially outside the City around the Lake have already been re-developed and can only be protected through replicating the original. The cultural resources mentioned above are statements of Liberty Lake's identity that set us apart from other communities. To show the importance of our community's cultural and historical resources, a cultural and historical resources element has been included as part of the City of Liberty Lake Comprehensive Plan which sets forth policies and a course of action for the preservation and treatment of our cultural and historic resources, both identified and potential.

A large part of the greater Liberty Lake community's identity is derived from its heritage. From the Native Americans and early traders who first established their homes here to the subsequent newcomers from around the world, all have left their mark. Included in the City of Liberty Lake's definition of cultural or historical resources are buildings, structures, sites, associations, objects, landscapes, or traditions left behind by a group of people. Many cultural and historical resources are over 50 years old, however, new traditions and buildings, whether they reflect the past or not, should be treated as potentially being culturally or historically significant one day; and that should be considered during the City's planning process.



A Liberty Lake Neighborhood in 2003

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Liberty Lake Aerial Photo 2002, courtesy of Justin Bennett, Remax of Spokane

Liberty Lake's Cultural and Historical Heritage was written by the City of Liberty Lake Planning & Community Development Department. This document focuses on the history of the area currently contained within the Liberty Lake City limits and was written from a basis of how the Liberty Lake community formed the traditions we cherish today. For a more detailed history of the entire Liberty Lake area, please refer to some of the above references.