



## Echo Lake History Tour Notes

### Start: Eco Lake School

In 1859 you would have found yourself standing here in ashes among burnt tree stumps according to the first **land survey of King County** which was conducted soon after Washington Territory was established. The government was eager to sell the land and needed to establish a reference grid to determine property lines. The surveyors noted tree types and size and other features along their lines to help set land values.

**The Duwamish Tribe** had been living in the greater Seattle area. **David Buerge**, a Duwamish historian, was able to create the map that hangs on the wall in the shoreline History Museum using the tree data from the survey for the framework and adding details learned from interviewing tribal elders. The lines of trees show the 1859 survey lines. The lines are spaced 1 mile apart. Show map, noting it is two-sided

The map shows an abandoned village at Lake Forest Park and temporary camps at Ronald Bog, Richmond Beach and Edmonds among other places, areas bogs and signs of controlled burns, and major Duwamish trails through the area. The Duwamish did **controlled burns** to clear the land to create meadows to grow desirable plants and shrubs and to attract wildlife for hunting. The burns reduced large forest fires and had many other benefits (One source suggested 80 benefits altogether.)

We will be heading down to the **Interurban trail** which follows the route of the Seattle-Everett Interurban through Shoreline. Ground for the Interurban was broken in Seattle in 1901 and by 1906 the line was completed past Echo Lake; in 1909 it was completed all the way to Everett. The Interurban ran every hour and covered the 29 mile, Seattle to Everett trip in 90 minutes. (Photo of Interurban.)

In 1905, even before the Interurban reached Echo Lake, the land was platted ready to sell for farms and speculation. This area on the east side of the lake was not developed until the early 1950s. The **Echo Lake School** built in 1957.

### Stop A: Echo Lake Park

**Echo Lake** was born about 15,000 years ago when Puget sound was filled with ice- and glaciers. The lake is 30 feet deep at its deepest and is fed by springs and runoff from the surrounding area. It is stocked with rainbow trout. No motor boats are allowed. There is an outlet in northeast corner, now through drain and culvert to Lake Balinger. (Photos of Interurban tracks and Mowatt Mil.)

**Mowatt's Mil**, a shingle mill was operating at the north end of the lake in 1900. It burned down in 1912 and was not rebuilt.

People had been accessing the lake here for years. In 1973 King County purchased the land to the north of the beach to establish **Echo Lake Park**. However, they did not improve the park until 1978. Much of the park as you see it now is on Seattle Light property (The power company bought the right of way when the tracks were abandoned.). The park was somewhat improved in 2006 as a part of the Interurban Trail project. The area around the swim beach was mostly planted with natives. Annual work parties were held in July followed by a free community picnic. The **"Completing the Arc"** was installed in 2008. The latest upgrade was in 2015 creating in the park you see it now. The Portland Loo installed in 2023, replaced an old restroom that had been removed due to repeated vandalism and "misuse."(Photo of park 1985)

The city has just bought two parcels of land on the west side of the lake to create a new park.

### Stop B: 200th Street

In 1925 the **Robinson Thoroughbred Ranch** was located across the street. The land is now part of Aurora Village. [Photo people on horses](#)

The original **Aurora Village** opened in 1960 with 50 stores featuring J.C. Penney, Pay 'n Save Drug, Lucky Stores supermarket, F.W. Woolworth 5 & 10, Nordstrom's Shoes, Ernst Hardware, Jay Jacobs, Buster Brown Shoes, Turner Jewelers and Kinney Shoes. Then, Frederick & Nelson was added in 1963 and a new 2-story Nordstrom's in 1974. [Photo of old Aurora Village](#)

Then a downward spiral started 1980's as stores started closing. It was a combination of competition with Alderwood Mall and poor management. At one point there were plans to raze everything but Nordstrom and Frederick & Nelson and build a much larger and fancier mall, but financing fell through. There were several changes of ownership and lack of maintenance. The mall became site of vandalism, drug dealers, etc. Then F&N closed in 1992 and Nordstrom too, in 1993. In 1995, everything was razed, except the Big 5, and a new mall was built with Costco and Home Depot as anchors. .

Note: **Shoreline incorporated** in 1995. The new mall gave it sufficient tax base to support a city and residents did not want to become part of Seattle or Edmonds. The name "Shoreline" goes back to the consolidation of schools districts north of Seattle in 1944. The name reflects the new school district's boundaries - the shores of Puget Sound to Lake Washington and the lines of Seattle city limits and the Snohomish County line. Seattle city limits were at 85th at that time.

An old transit station was here on leased land. Then the F&N land was purchased and a new transit station and park & ride lot built. Both Community Transit and Metro Transit buses use the center. A Rapid Ride bus to Seattle and a Swift bus to Everett leave every 10 minutes and 7 other bus lines stop here.

We will pass the 2014 **Compass Veteran Center** which offers permanent supportive housing and case management for about 21 men and 4 women who are veterans .It also offers a variety of services for them.

### **Stop C: South End of Apartment Parking Lot**

The first phase of what was to become Highway 99, was the **Pacific Highway** which was completed in 1924 by piecing together older roads, grading, straightening and paving them. The Pacific Highway stretched 1,687 miles from the Mexican border to the Canadian border. At the time it was the longest continuous stretch of paved road in the world. It was renamed **Highway 99** in 1927 when the national highway system changed the names of highways to numbers.

However, the first paved road through Shoreline was the **North Trunk Road**. It was a two-lane road paved with red brick which stretched from Seattle to the Canadian border. This road was completed through Shoreline in 1912, replacing a bumpy wagon-trail that closely paralleled the Interurban. The road veered west at 185th to give better access to the new Firland Tuberculosis Sanitarium which had opened in 1911. It then veered back east to just north of here at 195th. There were a number of bus companies operating even before the North Trunk Road was completed. [Photos of old roads](#)

**Businesses and apartments** have replace most of the homes on the north and west sides of lake. A 1936 map shows long narrow lots with homes on them and platting for the neighborhood on the east side of the lake. Note location of school (the star) on the map. A photo from the air about the same time shows the development along highway 99 and mostly forest to the east. The route of the Interurban is clearly visible going north past Echo Lake, then curving east toward Lake Ballinger. [1939 Kroll map and photo from airplane](#)

As we continue our walk will see a few old houses and apartment buildings and then walk through the **Echo Lake Waterfront Condominiums** (1986). (I have special permission to bring group through this private property.)

### Stop D: Echo Lake Lane and Aurora Avenue

In 1928, four years after Highway 99 was completed, Theodore **Millan** built a two-story **roadhouse** on a triangular lot near where the North Trunk Road intersected with Highway 99. It was just a restaurant until he rented the building to Carl a **Melby** five years later in 1933, as prohibition ended. Melby had previously been caught several times importing liquor from Canada but had no trouble opening a tavern. The tavern has changed hands several time, but is now **Woody's Tavern**. ([Photos of Melby's, Woody's](#))

Note the sign for **Scotty's Paradise Resort**.

We will pass **Echo Cove** (more info at the next stop) and also the 52,000 square foot **Dale Turner Family YMCA**. Rev. Dale Turner was a Seattle Times columnist, church leader and board member of the YMCA. The facility has a four-lane lap and activity pool, water slide, splash pool and hot tub, a full sized gymnasium with two basketball/volleyball courts, rooms with fitness equipment, a rock climbing tower, and rooms for meetings and recreation classes. It offers an array of programs for toddlers to teen and for families and seniors.

Also note the retail space on the ground floor of the apartments on Aurora.

### Stop E: Boardwalk at South End of Echo Lake

**Hermann and Minnie Butzke** were one of the first families to move into this part of Shoreline. They bought property at the northwest corner of Echo Lake in 1908, before the North Trunk Road or Highway 99 were completed. In 1912, they built a one-room cabin and moved in with their 3-year old daughter Florence. The cabin grew to a four-room house with a bath by 1917. The Butzky's grew fruit, berries, and vegetables and raised chickens. Herman used the Interurban to get to work in Seattle. He was also involved in the building of the Firland Sanitarium where he got to know some of the doctors and nurses. ([Photos family and cabin](#)).

About 1917 Herman let some doctors and nurses pass through his property to go swimming. When they asked for a place to change after swimming, he built a dressing room for them. Soon more people started to come there to swim. He gradually added more dressing rooms, a concession stand, rental boats, and a raft with a diving board and started charging 5¢ a day admission. The **Echo Lake Bathing Beach** was born! Unfortunately, Herman died in 1930. Minnie and Florence, (then 25) continued to run the Bathing Beach. . ([Photos of Bathing Beach](#))

The Echo Lake Bathing Beach was very popular. The Snohomish County Red Cross Swim Program was held here. The Edmonds School District held swimming lessons there too. But by 1966 attendance had declined due to the development of more places for recreation. In addition, the cost of operation and rising taxes made it unprofitable so they closed and sold most of the property.

Note: Florence was instrumental in establishing the Shoreline Historical Museum which opened in 1975.

The **Echo Cove Apartments** were built on the former Echo Lake Bathing Beach site in 1968. The builders "improved on nature" by digging a small lagoon which would not be allowed now. Current restrictions do not let owners even remove trees that fall into the lake. In 1979, Echo Co was converted to condominiums amid much controversy. ([Photo of cove and ad and the cove](#))

In the early 1950's, the **Echo Lake Holiday Resort** opened at the south end of the lake. At the time campers were the rage and the resort offered a place to camp overnight or for the week. There was also a restaurant and several cabins. At some point, it seemed more profitable to rent space by the month and the resort became a trailer park. The trailer park was sold in 2006. There was also an historical home, a gas station, and a used car lot at the south end of the lake. ([Photo of Holiday Resort and Weiman House](#))

Initially, the developer offered it as the site of a new city hall, but the City Council decided site preparation and maintenance would be too expensive and declined the offer. Next they proposed a large apartment complex with businesses on ground floor. This required an extensive rezone and community outreach. An agreement was finally reached which included a buffer zone between the apartments and the lake with native plants along the shore and a boardwalk for access, extensive stormwater treatment, and offering up to 100 affordable units, among other requirements. They were also required to make an effort to preserve the historic **Weiman House** on the property. (The house was put up for sale for \$1.00 with the requirement it would then be moved to a new site. )

**The Echo Lake Apartments** were completed in 2009 with 289 units. There is a 24-hour fitness center, an outdoor pool, a clubhouse featuring a residents' lounge with a fireplace, full kitchen with bar and dining area, pool table, internet cafe and leasing office, along with 459 total parking spaces. (The Blakely, a 55+ community with 200 units , is a not a part of the Echo Lake Apartments.)

#### Walk Extension:

**Sky Nursery** opened as Richmond Highlands Feed Store in 1953. It has gone through a number of name changes, expansions and focus to become the large garden store we see now. ([Photos of early store](#))

**Dunn Lumber Company** goes back to 1907 in California. The first retail store in Washington was located in what is now University Village in 1927. This Dunn Lumber has been here since 1948.

The North Trunk Road is now the paved **Firland Way**. There is still a section of the sidewalk used by the nurses as they walked between the Interurban and the Firland Sanitarium. Before the road was built supplies were brought up this way by wheelbarrow.

#### Stop E: Crista Ministries

This is the site of the earlier **Firland Tuberculosis Sanitarium**, Seattle's municipal tuberculosis hospital, which opened in 1911 to help combat what was at the time Seattle's leading cause of death. The Tudor-style administration building was completed in 1914. In 1947 the hospital was moved to the former Naval Hospital at Fircrest and this site was abandoned.

In 1948, **Crista Ministries** founder Mike Martin acquired permission to use the abandoned sanitarium site for his home for teens if he would open a rest home for the elderly. He did open one the next year and signed a 5-year lease for one dollar a year. (He was not able to purchase the property until 1959.) His mission grew rapidly: King's Schools (1950), first radio Station (1954), what became World Concern- an international relief organization (1970). It now has an array of senior housing and Kings Schools now includes preschool through grade 12. The ministry was called **Kings Garden** until 1979, when the name was changed to Crista Ministries.

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Note: I am planning a history walk through Crista is on July 20.

## Echo Lake History Time Line

Echo Lake formed during Ice Age  
Duwamish Tribe in greater Seattle

*1846 Oregon Territory*

*1851 Denny Party arrived*

*1852 King County Established*

*1853 Washington Territory*

*1859 King County Land Survey*

*1869 Seattle Incorporates*

*1889 Washington State*

1900 Mowatt Mill

*1901 Interurban broke ground in Seattle*

1904 First platting of Shoreline

1906 Interurban in Shoreline

*1908 Model T*

1908 Butzkes purchase property on Echo Lake

*1919 Interurban to Everett (closes 1939)*

1910 Railroad Camp workers in census

1910 Land donated for Firland

1911 Firland Tuberculosis Sanitarium opens

1912 North Trunk Road through Shoreline

1913 Mowatt Mill burned

1913 Butzkes move to new cabin

1912 New Platting

1917 Echo Lake Bathing Beach Opens

*1920 Prohibition starts*

1924 North Pacific Highway

1925 Robinson Ranch photo

*1927 Model A*

1927 Highway renamed Highway 99

1928 Millan Roadhouse

*1930 Playland opens at Bitter Lake*

*1933 Prohibition ends*

1933 Roadhouse leased to Melby

1934 New platting

1936 King County Land Survey

1937 Scotty's Paradise resort sign

1939 Last run of the Interurban

1939 Interurban right of way sold to Puget Power

*1944 Seattle City Limits still at 85th Street*

*1944 Statewide school district consolidation*

*1944 The name "Shoreline"*

*1947 Firland Sanitarium to Navy Hospital*

*1950 Northgate opens*

1950's Housing development on East side of lake

1950's Echo Lake Holiday Resort opens

*1954 Seattle limits moved to 145th*

*1957 Echo Lake School opens*

1960 Aurora Village opens

*1961 Playland at Bitter Lake closes*

1966 Echo Lake Bathing Beach closes

1968 Echo Cove Apartments open

1972 Land for Echo Lake Park purchased

1977 Echo Lake Park improved

*1979 Alderwood Mall opens*

1985 Aurora Village Transit Center opens

1986 Echo Lake Waterfront Condominiums

1993 Holiday Resort sold

1994 New Aurora Village opens

*1995 Shoreline Incorporates*

1995 New transit center opens

2004 Interurban Trail completed to Echo Lake

2004 Echo Lake Park landscaped

2005 First annual Echo Lake work party

2008 "Completing the Arc" installed

2008 Dale Turner Family YMCA opens

2009 Echo Lake Apartments open

2014 Compass Veteran Center opens

2015 Echo Lake Park redesigned

2023 Portland Loo in Park