

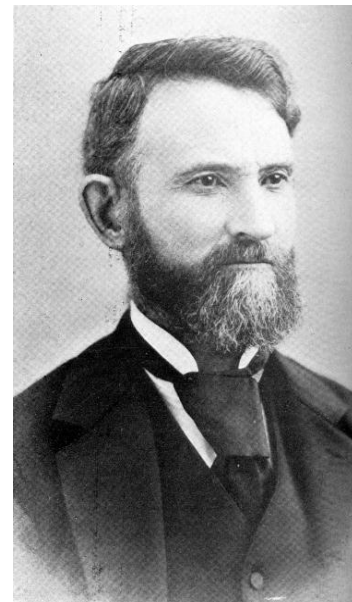
# The David T. Denny Cabin

By  
Dick Caster



The David T. Denny Cabin May 1889

Prepared for the  
Historical Society  
of Federal Way



David T. Denny circa 1880

July 27, 2011



The David T. Denny Cabin before restoration

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Historical  
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## Table of Contents

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	3
<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>David Denny Source Material</b> .....	4
<b>Denny Cabin Source Material</b> .....	6
<b>David Denny Background Before Arriving in Portland, Oregon Territory</b> .....	6
<b>Portland, Oregon Territory</b> .....	7
<b>Coming to Puget Sound</b> .....	8
<b>Exploring the Alki Area</b> .....	9
<b>Alki Point</b> .....	10
<b>Arthur Denny and Family, Borens, Lows and Bells come to Alki</b> .....	13
<b>Move to Seattle</b> .....	16
<b>Early Seattle</b> .....	18
<b>David Denny and Louisa Boren Married</b> .....	19
<b>Native Uprising</b> .....	20
<b>David Denny Comes to Queen Anne</b> .....	22
<b>David Denny’s Business Ventures</b> .....	26
<b>Western Mill</b> .....	26
<b>Water Supply</b> .....	28
<b>North Seattle</b> .....	29
<b>Land for a Park</b> .....	29
<b>Real Estate Business</b> .....	30
<b>Construction of the Denny Cabin</b> .....	34
<b>David Denny’s Real Estate Business in the 1890s</b> .....	37
<b>David Denny’s Queen Anne Mansion</b> .....	38
<b>Electric Railways</b> .....	40
<b>David Denny in Early City and County Government</b> .....	42
<b>David Denny’s Wealth</b> .....	43
<b>The Washington Improvement Company Canal</b> .....	44
<b>David Denny and Banking</b> .....	45
<b>David Denny and Schools</b> .....	45
<b>Temperance Movement</b> .....	46
<b>Anti-Chinese Incidents</b> .....	48
<b>Methodist Episcopal Church</b> .....	51
<b>Great Seattle Fire</b> .....	52
<b>Sewer Systems</b> .....	52
<b>Electric Lighting</b> .....	54
<b>Telephone Service</b> .....	55
<b>Seattle Children’s Home</b> .....	55
<b>Panic of 1893</b> .....	55
<b>Arthur Denny’s Value to the Community</b> .....	58
<b>David Denny’s Value to the Community</b> .....	59
<b>David Denny’s Final Home</b> .....	62
<b>David Denny’s Mining Work</b> .....	62
<b>David Denny’s Final Days</b> .....	63

<b>David Denny’s Burial at Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Denny Cabin between 1890 and 1965.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Removal of the Denny Cabin from Queen Anne.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Denny Cabin at Federal Shopping Way Historic Park .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Effort To Preserve Denny Cabin in Federal Way (1985- 1987).....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Effort To Preserve Denny Cabin in Federal Way (1988 - 1990).....</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Cabin Moved to Near Brooklake Community Center (Well Site 12) .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Move from Well Site 12 .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Initial Work on Denny Cabin at Historic Cabins Park.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Signs on Denny Cabin.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Plans to Restore the Denny Cabin.....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>David Denny’s Own Summary of His Life .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Contacted Descendants of David and Arthur Denny .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Historical Novel.....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Future Work.....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Appendix A – Photo Showing Construction of the Denny Cabin with Words on Back and on Envelope .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Appendix B - Photo Showing the Denny Cabin Shortly After Construction with Words on Back and on Envelope.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Appendix C – Time Line for David Denny’s Accomplishments.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Appendix D – History of the Denny Cabin.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Selected Bibliography.....</b>	<b>91</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
Figure 1	Chief Sealth	10
Figure 2	The Schooner Exact	13
Figure 3	Landing at Alki on November 13, 1851	14
Figure 4	Original Alki Cabin with roof, circa 1880	15
Figure 5	Original Alki Cabin without roof, circa 1893	15
Figure 6	The arrangement of the four claims that stated Seattle	17
Figure 7	David and Louisa Denny's Sweetbriar Cabin	19
Figure 8	David Thomas Denny and Louisa Boren Denny	20
Figure 9	David and Louisa Denny with two daughters	22
Figure 10	Drawing of the Denny's farmhouse in the swale	23
Figure 11	Western Mill Letterhead	28
Figure 12	David Denny, circa 1890	29
Figure 13	The Lake Union Road, circa 1898	33
Figure 14	The Denny Cabin Under Construction	35
Figure 15	Denny Cabin Completed May 1889	37
Figure 16	Letterhead of the D. T. Denny and Sons Real Estate Brokers	38
Figure 17	David Denny's Decatur Terrace home on Queen Anne	38
Figure 18	Looking southeast from Queen Anne Hill to Denny Cabin	39
Figure 19	David Denny on Rainier Power & Railway Co. electric rail car	42
Figure 20	David Denny and Seattle City Council, circa 1890	43
Figure 21	David Denny, circa 1880	44
Figure 22	Denny School	46
Figure 23	David Denny's membership certificate in Washington Temperance Society	46
Figure 24	Denny Cabin May 1890, showing light standard	54
Figure 25	David Denny's Cabin at Licton Springs	62
Figure 26	David Denny at his mining claim, circa 1900	63
Figure 27	<i>Seattle Daily Times</i> , Nov. 25, 1903, David Denny's death	64
Figure 28	Denny Cabin, circa 1900	67
Figure 29	Denny Cabin, circa 1938	67
Figure 30	Denny Cabin, May 16, 1938	68
Figure 31	Kiehle family home, circa 1938. Rear of Denny Cabin on left	68
Figure 32	Denny Cabin in use as Green's Tavern, circa 1938	69
Figure 33	IHOP built in 1966. Parking lot is where Denny Cabin stood.	70
Figure 34	Sketch of Denny Cabin at Federal Shopping Way, circa 1955	71
Figure 35	Denny Cabin, circa 1991	74
Figure 36	Sign currently in front of Denny Cabin	81
Figure 37	Letterhead and start of letter dated April 30, 1896	82
Figure 38	Sweet-Briar Novel Cover	83
Figure 14	The Denny Cabin under construction repeated with handwritten details on photo (Appendix A)	86
Figure 15	Denny Cabin Completed May 1889 repeated with handwritten details on photo (Appendix B)	87

## The Denny Cabin

### Introduction

The Historical Society of Federal Way (HSFW) is restoring the Denny Cabin for public display at the City of Federal Way's West Hylebos Wetlands Park located at South 348<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Avenue South in Federal Way. This monograph is intended to give a description of David Denny, show his importance to the Seattle area, describe the reason for building the Denny Cabin, describe what is known about the uses of the Denny Cabin from the time it was used by David Denny as a real estate office until it was moved to Federal Way, discuss why the Denny Cabin ended up in Federal Way and describe the restoration and future plans for the Denny Cabin.

Much material concerning David Denny is included since showing his adventurous spirit when young, his work ethic, his moral viewpoint and the fact that he was one of the most prominent men in early Seattle helps support the value of the Denny Cabin as a historic building.

Since David Denny was involved with several log cabins during his lifetime it should be understood that the Denny Cabin referred to here is the one built in 1889 for use as a real estate office. Four other cabins of note are also referred to as the "Denny Cabin"; the Alki Cabin, the cabin David and Louisa lived in when they were first married, the Licton Springs summer cabin in present north Seattle near where the present Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery is located and his mining cabin in the high Cascades. David Denny also built several homes, one referred to as a mansion, which went beyond a cabin description.

### David Denny Source Material

A statement by Arthur Denny, David Denny's older brother, in his autobiography can be used to show the importance of using reliable and truthful source material for a study such as this monograph.

The most important thing, in my estimation, is to make no wrong or incorrect statements. Let it be the pride of old settlers to state the truth. It is no time for romancing or painting fancy sketches when we are nearing the end of our voyage. The work is too serious for fiction. We want solid facts only.<sup>1</sup>

There were almost no pertinent contemporaneous published records of events from 1850 to the early 1860s. Some early advertising flyers and a few entries in the Olympia newspapers are known, as is the official account of the Indian War of 1855-1856. Seattle's first newspaper did not appear until the fall of 1863. The men were mostly too busy to keep diaries.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Armstrong Denny, Alice Harriman, ed., *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound* (Seattle: A. Harriman Company, 1908, reprint, Fairfield Washington: Ye Gallon Press, 1979), 31. This book was written in 1888-1889.

<sup>2</sup> Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), 27.

The best primary source for David Denny is, *Blazing the Way*, written by his daughter Emily Inez Denny.<sup>3</sup> She was born a short time after David Denny came to Puget Sound and grew up in his home and heard the stories of the early days many times. Most of the material used by others for the early days of David Denny comes from this book. While there is no direct reference to the Denny Cabin, the background information on the life of David Denny is extremely helpful. Even though this book was published in 1909 it is readily available from the King County Library System and the Tacoma Library System. The Historical Society of Seattle-King County (now Association of King County Historic Organizations) and the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) published a reprint version in 1985. It contains a new six-page section on Emily Inez Denny, written by Susan Torntore of MOHAI.

A good secondary source of the same material is Gordon Newell's *Westward to Alki*.<sup>4</sup> Newell got much of his material from Victor W. S. Denny, Jr., grandson of David and Louisa Denny. While Victor Denny did not remember David Denny from personal contact, he heard first hand the stories of Louisa Denny, David's wife.

Clarence Bagley wrote much information about the founding of Seattle. His material for the time before 1870 should be considered a secondary source although his detail and the naming of people and reference to letters would indicate he had written records, many no longer available, although many are still in the archives. His material after 1870 was obtained from eyewitnesses, often himself, or written records and can be considered as a primary source. He indicates his "own local recollections cover nearly all the years since Seattle's founding."<sup>5</sup> Even though he published in the early twentieth century his detail of the late nineteenth century is outstanding. He provides hundreds of names for the period and is an excellent source for knowing what organizations, boards and activities a certain individual was involved with.<sup>6</sup>

Two only partially searched sources containing unpublished primary and secondary information on David Denny are the Clarence Bagley Papers Manuscript Collection No. 0036-001, 1864-1931<sup>7</sup> and the Lawrence Denny Lindsley Papers, 1870-1973<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Emily Inez Denny, *Blazing the Way or True Stories, Songs and Sketches of Puget Sound and other Pioneers* (Seattle: Rainer Printing Company, 1909). Even though the publishing date is 1909 the copyright date is 1899, indicating most of it was written by 1899 although David Denny's death in 1903 is included. Emily Inez Denny became a published poet and the oil paintings she made starting in the late 1880s show some of the early history of the Seattle area and are often considered by historians to be iconic expressions of the reality of the time. As of this writing a recently found 38 inch by 14 inch untitled painting of hers, dated 1888, showing a view across Puget Sound, is being offered for sale by Wessel & Liberman of Seattle for \$42,500. MOHAI has a large collection of her paintings.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon Newell, *Westward to Alki* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1977.)

<sup>5</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, vol. 1, iii.

<sup>6</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, vol. 1, Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), Clarence Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1929), Clarence Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1929).

<sup>7</sup> Clarence Bagley Papers, 1864-1931, Manuscript Collection No. 0036-001, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections. In this collection there are 22 boxes with at least two containing David Denny material.

<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Denny Lindsley Papers, 1870-1973, Manuscript Collection No. 2179, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections. Lawrence Denny Lindsley was a grandson of David Denny and donated much David Denny created material.

## Denny Cabin Source Material

Unfortunately the material available on the Denny Cabin itself is very limited. The best primary sources are from what was written on the back of two photos (Figures 14 and 15 in this monograph.)<sup>9</sup> The best secondary source is the Bob Lane newspaper article that appeared in the *Seattle Times* on February 6, 1966.<sup>10</sup> This uses the information summarized on the back of the two photos plus some additional information obtained from those interviewed for the article. Beyond the two photos and the newspaper article the information is very limited and only a few secondary sources give very limited information. These are listed throughout the monograph. Several photos are available for different uses that were taken over the years.

## David Denny Background Before Arriving in Portland, Oregon Territory

David Thomas Denny<sup>11</sup> was born in Putnam County, Indiana, March 17, 1832.<sup>12</sup>

The start of David Denny's trek west was April 10, 1851, from Cherry Grove, Knox County, Illinois.<sup>13</sup> The Denny family traveled in three wagons; in addition to David the travelers consisted of David's father John, his older brother Arthur Denny, Arthur's family, and three unmarried brothers. All told, the party consisted of four wagons with seven men, four women and four children. In the fourth wagon were members of the Boren family including Louisa Boren who would become David's wife shortly after settling in what was to become Seattle. The Denny and Boren party joined forces with the John Low party of six men and two women for better protection after some troubles with Indians. This Low Party had crossed the Mississippi on May 3, 1851 and had been traveling on the south side of the Platte River while the Denny party was on the north side. They met somewhere just before the Snake River.<sup>14</sup> They were both using portions of the well-worn Oregon Trail and they followed it into Oregon Territory.<sup>15</sup> At the Dalles, on the Columbia River, they chartered a boat to take them down the Columbia River to Portland. They arrived in Portland, Oregon Territory August 22, 1851.<sup>16</sup> David Denny was nineteen years old.<sup>17</sup> They had traveled about 2,400 miles.<sup>18</sup> It had taken 134 days from Cherry Grove, Illinois to Portland, Oregon Territory.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Construction of David Denny's log cabin for his real estate office, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs, PH Coll 548, Negative Number Lindsley 5395 and Ed L. Lidsley's log cabin, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs, PH Coll 548, Negative Number Lindsley 5942.

<sup>10</sup> Bob Lane, "Builder of Lower Queen Anne Cabin was Denny Son-in Law," *The Seattle Times*, February 6, 1966, 29.

<sup>11</sup> Most early sources refer to David Denny as David T. Denny or D. T. Denny. I have usually used David Denny, a more up-to-date form, unless the name is from a direct quote.

<sup>12</sup> Emily Denny, 203.

<sup>13</sup> Emily Denny, 219.

<sup>14</sup> Emily Denny, 28-31.

<sup>15</sup> Newell, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur Denny, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Emily Denny, 233.

## Portland, Oregon Territory

The land that is now part of Washington State had been undisputed American territory only since 1846. By 1850 a few adventuresome Americans had explored the Puget Sound region. Olympia had become the customhouse in 1851 and the Washington Territory capital in 1853. Information began to trickle to those coming from the east that the Puget Sound area offered great opportunity and beauty.<sup>20</sup>

A major hindrance to settlement was the physical isolation of the Puget Sound region. The route from the south, through Portland was the most accessible. Most of the early arrivals came through Portland after coming from the east along the Oregon Trail and the last few miles down the Columbia River. Traveling from Portland to Puget Sound could be accomplished either by land from Portland via a difficult Cowlitz River portage or by going down the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean and then north along the coast, east through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and back south down through Puget Sound.<sup>21</sup>

When they left their homes in Illinois, the members of the Denny Party intended to locate in the Willamette Valley. When they were at the Dalles they met a man by the name of Brock who gave them information extolling Puget Sound as being a place for the future.<sup>22</sup> On reaching the Portland area they realized they would investigate the Puget Sound country sooner or later.<sup>23</sup>

We found Portland quite a thriving town, probably containing a population of 2,000 or more even at that early period, giving promise of future greatness. It was reported at 821 inhabitants by the census of 1850, and in 1853 claimed 6,000 hence I do not think my estimate for 1851 can be far out of the way.<sup>24</sup>

After arriving in Portland most of the party suffered from bouts of “augre”, a malarial type fever. The Willamette River valley south of Portland had a reputation for this disease. Even worse than the relatively unhealthy climate was the fact that the choicest claims had already been staked and the city of Portland had been mostly platted by earlier arrivals.<sup>25</sup>

While in Portland the Dennys, Borens and Lows began to hear stories of Puget Sound’s beauty and that it was still mostly unexplored territory.<sup>26</sup> After a brief consultation, Arthur and David decided to settle farther north while John Denny and the three other brothers decided to stay in Oregon. Arthur Denny, still suffering from traces of the

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur Denny, 32.

<sup>19</sup> Newell, 27. Emily Denny, Newell and Roberta Frye Watt, *Four Wagons West* (Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1931) provide considerable detail of the struggles of the trip.

<sup>20</sup> James R. Warren, *King County and it Emerald City: Seattle* (No City: American Historical Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>21</sup> Warren, *King County and it Emerald City: Seattle*” 26.

<sup>22</sup> Arthur Denny, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* vol. 1, 17.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Denny, 33.

<sup>25</sup> Newell, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Emily Denny, 220.



“augre” was in no condition to travel without some rest. David Denny and John Low decided to try to traverse the Cowlitz Trail north as soon as possible.<sup>27</sup>

## Coming to Puget Sound

David Denny and John Low set out to explore the Puget Sound country going on foot north from Portland.

On the tenth day of September they ferried Low’s stock across the [\[Columbia\]](#) river to what was then Fort Vancouver. From there they followed the Hudson Bay trail to the Cowlitz River, and up the Cowlitz to Ford’s Prairie. Leaving their stock there for a short time, they pushed on to Olympia....<sup>28</sup>

A small detachment of the advancing column of settlers, D. T. Denny and J. N. Low, left Portland on the Willamette [River] on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1851, with two horses carrying provisions and camp outfit....

From Ford’s prairie, although footsore and weary, they kept on their way until Olympia was reached. It was a long tramp of perhaps two hundred fifty miles, the exact distance could not be ascertained as the trail was very winding.

... Olympia then consisted of about a dozen one-story frame cabins ... and perhaps twice as many Indian huts near the custom house, as Olympia was then the port of entry for Puget Sound.<sup>29</sup>

The walk from Portland to Olympia had probably covered about 200 miles.<sup>30</sup> In Olympia Lee Terry joined Denny and Low.<sup>31</sup> Lee Terry had gone from New York to California to strike it rich in the gold fields but after failure there came north.<sup>32</sup> Captain R. C. Fray and George M. Martin were getting ready to leave for Puget Sound to fish for salmon and buy fish from the Indians to sell in San Francisco.<sup>33</sup> David Denny, John Low and Lee Terry made arrangements to voyage north with Captain Fry in his small boat.<sup>34</sup> They left Olympia on September 23, 1851.<sup>35</sup>

The leisurely voyage over the fifty-odd miles of inland Sea between Olympia and Seattle was a pleasant one....

The broad-beamed clumsy boat moved slowly with the tide before a gentle breeze from the southwest. Blue-green forests were reflected

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<sup>27</sup> Newell, 28.

<sup>28</sup> Emily Denny, 220.

<sup>29</sup> Emily Denny, 41, 42.

<sup>30</sup> James R. Warren, *Seattle 150 Years of Progress* (Carlsbad, California: Heritage Media Corp., 2001), 15.

<sup>31</sup> Emily Denny, 43.

<sup>32</sup> Newell, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Emily Denny 220, 221.

<sup>34</sup> Newell, 28.

<sup>35</sup> Date is not given but can be calculated by the one night spent camping on the way before arriving in the West Seattle Area on September 25, 1851, Newell, 28, 30.

in the placid waters disturbed only by an occasional leaping salmon or inquisitive harbor seal bobbing up to inspect the passing boat. To the northwest lay the shining snow peaks of the Olympic Mountains and to the east the mighty cone of Mount Rainier.<sup>36</sup>

They camped one night before reaching their final destination.<sup>37</sup> On the afternoon of September 25, 1851, they landed at Skwudux,<sup>38</sup> on the eastern shore of the peninsula of present West Seattle.<sup>39</sup>

The little party spent their first night on the untrod shores of Sgwudux, the Indian name of the promontory now occupied by West Seattle, landing on the afternoon of September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1851, and sleeping that night under the protecting boughs of a giant cedar tree.<sup>40</sup>

## Exploring the Alki Area

Newell records that the party of Indians that met them included Chief Sealth (Seattle).

... but the three pioneers (Denny, Low and Terry) were not alone on the shore of Elliot Bay. A party of Duwamish and Suquamish Indians were camped on the beach nearby, fishing for salmon. Their leader, a gray-haired patriarch of sixty who towered above his lesser tribesmen and wore his faded blue Hudson's Bay blanket like a Roman Emperor's toga, came down the beach to welcome the strangers.

The words of welcome were delivered in the language of the Duwamish but there was no doubt that they were sincere.<sup>41</sup>

Emily Denny surprisingly limits this meeting to a short one-sentence comment – “Fifty years ago today they camped with Chief Seattle on the promontory across the bay.”<sup>42</sup> Roberta Frye Watt, another family source, states of the landing, “Here they found a number of Indians camped, fishing for salmon, among them Chief Sealth – later called Seattle – chief of the Duwamish and Suquamish Indian tribes.<sup>43</sup> Emily Denny does indicate the Indians hired as guides on September 26 were of Chief Seattle's Tillicum group who were camped nearby but there is no mention of Chief Seattle being present or even in the area.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Newell, 28.

<sup>37</sup> Newell, 28, 30.

<sup>38</sup> The spelling varies in the different sources.

<sup>39</sup> Roberta Frye Watt, *Four Wagons West* (Portland, Oregon: Binford & Mort, 1931), 28. Roberta Frye Watt was a grand daughter of Arthur Denny with access to his diary and other personal papers.

<sup>40</sup> Emily Denny, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Newell, 30.

<sup>42</sup> Emily Denny, 221.

<sup>43</sup> Watt, 28.

<sup>44</sup> Emily Denny, 43.

Figure 1 – Chief Sealth. (Courtesy Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) Photographic Collection.) This is the only known photograph of Chief Sealth. It was taken in 1864, by E. M. Sammis, known as Seattle’s first photographer. The original features Chief Sealth with his eyes closed because he was facing a bright light. Usually the photo is doctored, as shown here, to show his eyes open. This one is taken from a colorized post card.



Denny, Low and Terry spent September 26 and 27 exploring the Dumampsh [Duwamish]<sup>45</sup> River Valley with Indian guides who lived near where they had camped.<sup>46</sup> They marveled at,

The whole forest-clad encircling shores of Elliot Bay, untouched by fire or ax, the tall evergreens thickly set in a dense mass to the water’s edge stood on every hand. The great white dome of Mount Rainier, 14,444 feet high, before them, toward which they traveled; behind them, stretched along the western horizon, Towiat or Olympics, a grand range of snow-capped mountains whose foothills were covered with a continuous forest.<sup>47</sup>

## Alki Point

On September 28, the three moved their camp to Alki Point<sup>48</sup> or as the Indians called it Sma-qua-mox. Captain Fry who had been exploring further down the Sound rejoined them. They made a temporary brush shelter with boughs laid over a pole placed in the crotch of another pole at one end, the other end being held by a crotch fastened to a tree. Inside this they placed their scanty outfit and supplies. The party discussed if they needed

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<sup>45</sup> The original Indian sound used in sources up until the 1920s was the Dumampsh River. This later became the Duwamish River. I have used what the source used. The sources are not always internally consistent themselves as Emily Denny uses both Dumampsh and Duwamish.

<sup>46</sup> Emily Denny, 43, 44.

<sup>47</sup> Emily Denny, 43, 44.

<sup>48</sup> Arthur Denny indicates the correct pronunciation of Alki is Al-ke, Arthur Denny, 35.

to worry about the intentions of the natives. They felt that those close by were friendly but they had heard rumors that those further to the north might not be.<sup>49</sup>

The site on a slight rise with a gravelly beach down to the water was placed between two large groves of trees, allowing for a view both up and down Puget Sound.<sup>50</sup>

A town site was located and initially named “New York” at the suggestion of Terry since it was felt this site would someday rival the great metropolis.<sup>51</sup> The Chinook word “Alki,” meaning after a while, was facetiously added.<sup>52</sup> This name was soon changed to just Alki.

Bagley indicates several reasons for selecting Alki.

In is not strange that this that was later called Alki should have been selected by these earliest settlers for a townsite. It was either a natural prairie or the timber had mostly been burned off. This made it easy to put up the first buildings. The beach was sandy and gravelly and the upland easily assessable. It had an unobstructed view of the Sound northward and southward and of the Olympic Mountains. The few sailing craft then visiting the upper Sound passed near it, and the smaller boats and canoes made of it a convenient port of call.<sup>53</sup>

John Low agreed to take a message back to Portland to those who had stayed behind.<sup>54</sup> David Denny and Lee Terry stayed to improve the town site and build a cabin. John Low and Captain Fry returned to Olympia and Low walked back to Portland. He carried with him a letter from David Denny to Arthur Denny. The substance of the letter was “Come as soon as you can: we have found a valley that will accommodate one thousand families.” The letter along with Low’s verbal description of what they had found influenced Arthur Denny to move the rest of his party north.<sup>55</sup>

David Denny and Lee Terry started to build a cabin (not the one referred to as the subject of this paper) that was to be the first cabin built on Elliot Bay and the first in King County. Their only tools were an axe and a hammer. The logs were too heavy for the two of them to handle so they asked passing Indians for help.<sup>56</sup>

Several days after the foundation was laid L. M. Collins and “Nesqually [*sic*] John” an Indian, passed by the camp and rising cabin, driving oxen along the beach, on their way to the claim

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<sup>49</sup> Emily Denny, 45, 46.

<sup>50</sup> Warren, *King County and it Emerald City: Seattle*, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Newell, 32.

<sup>52</sup> Clarence Bagley, *In the Beginning: A Sketch of some Early Events in Western Washington While it was Still a Part of “Old Oregon* (Seattle: 1905), 118, reprinted in Clarence Bagley, *The Acquisition and Pioneering of Old Oregon, In the Beginning: Pioneer Reminiscences*, (Fairfield WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1982). This book reprinted by Ye Galleon Press contains several short articles, letters and otherwise unpublished writings of Bagley. The use of Old Oregon refers to Washington still being part of Oregon Territory.

<sup>53</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle: From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, vol. 1, 17, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Walt Crowley, *National Trust Guide Seattle* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), 228.

<sup>55</sup> Emily Denny, 46, 47. Photos of this had written letter often appear in the literature but the original no longer exists and the photos are simulations.

<sup>56</sup> Emily Denny, 47.

selected by Collins on the fertile banks of the Duwampish River.<sup>57</sup>

Luther Collins, with three others, had preceded Denny into the general area a short time before and settled on the Duwampish [Duwamish] River slightly to the southeast of where Denny landed. This leads to an ongoing controversy as to who really were the first white men to settle in the area.<sup>58</sup>

Terry went back to Olympia to obtain a froe<sup>59</sup> to finish the roof.<sup>60</sup> He was able to return to Olympia when Collins took his scow for supplies leaving David Denny alone at the unfinished cabin, except for a few Indians. For three weeks he was alone and ill but he continued with the work.<sup>61</sup>

Despite ... interruptions and a growing lack of enthusiasm for hard work on the part of Terry, [the] cabin was completed as far as the roof by late October, but that was as far as they could go. They didn't have a froe [fro] ... the L-shaped tool used to split cedar shakes ... and they couldn't complete the roof without one.

R. Collins had patched up his scow by that time and opportunely passed by on his way back to Nisqually. Terry hailed Collins down and drifted off in search of the needed tool. David was left by himself for the next three weeks.<sup>62</sup>

Without anyone to help, Denny hurt himself and became ill.

A few days after Terry's abrupt departure the wet axe handle slipped in his hand and Denny slashed his foot so deeply that he was barely able to hobble about with the aid of an improvised crutch. Hungry, wet and cold, he finally fell victim to the malarial chills and fever that had for so long plagued the other members of the party and, for good measure he was afflicted with a severe case of neuralgia.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Emily Denny, 47.

<sup>58</sup> Watt, 30, 31. Luther Collins and his son Samuel, Henry Van Asselt and Jacob Maple staked claims September 14, 1851 on the Duwamish River. The area of the claims would be from around present day Georgetown to where Boeing Field is located. Clarence Bagley in several places discusses who was first in Seattle and the environs, Clarence Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1., 35, 41.

<sup>59</sup> Also spelled frow in some sources.

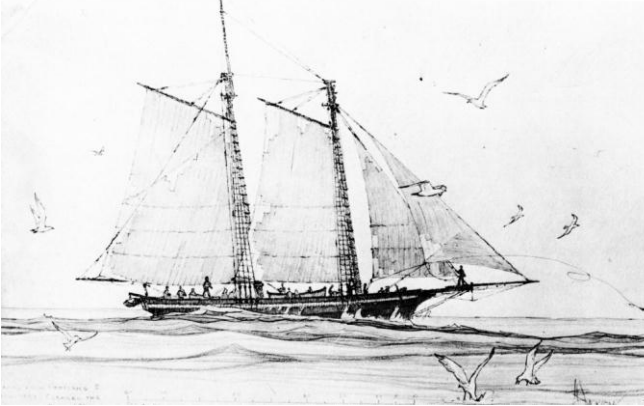
<sup>60</sup> Newell, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Emily Denny, 48.

<sup>62</sup> Newell, 33.

<sup>63</sup> Newell, 33.

## Arthur Denny and Family, Borens, Lows and Bells come to Alki



By the time John Low got back to Portland, William Bell and C. D. Boren had also become interested in the Puget Sound area.

**Figure 2 – The Schooner Exact. (Courtesy Lawrence Denny Lindsley Photographs, MOHAI, 1987.89.69, 5270.)**

Messrs. Low, [Arthur] Denny, Bell and Boren with their families hired a schooner to take them down the Columbia, up on the outside, in through the Strait, and up the Sound to Alki, reaching the latter point on the 13th of November 1851.<sup>64</sup>

Newell expanded on Emily Denny's description.

The quickest way of getting there was Captain Isaiah Folger's little two-masted schooner *Exact*, which was moored on the Portland waterfront taking on passengers and freight for Puget Sound. Captain Folger had sailed the 73-foot craft from Nantucket around Cape Horn to California the previous year, reaching San Francisco at the height of the gold rush. The Yankee shipmaster had the good sense to stay away from the gold fields, entering the *Exact* in the highly profitable coastal trade. Now he was preparing to cash in on another gold rush, this one in the Queen Charlotte Islands of Canada. A party of hopeful prospectors had booked passage for themselves and their supplies, along with a number of emigrants bound for Olympia, but when Arthur Denny approached Captain Folger with cash in hand, the enterprising skipper decided he could find room for another ten adults, twelve children and their gear.<sup>65</sup>

The *Exact* stopped briefly at Alki on November 13, 1851 to let the Alki group off. The two young men of their original party who had come earlier met them. "A few Indians

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<sup>64</sup> Emily Denny, 222, 223.

<sup>65</sup> Newell, 33.

were walking around. Some of the women miserable at finding the Promised Land a wet and gray wilderness, wept.”<sup>66</sup>

David, alone at Alki, his only neighbors a camp of native people and their headman, Seattle, caught a cold and then cut his foot with a hand axe. Bedridden in his lean-to on the morning of November 13, his fevered sleep was broken by the sound of anchor chains rattling out of the schooner *Exact*. The settlers had arrived.<sup>67</sup>

The party of 24 consisted of David Denny (age 19); Lee Terry (who had returned by this time); John and Lydia Low and their four children; Arthur and Mary Denny and their three children (one boy having been born in Portland); William and Sarah Bell and their four children (William Bell at 34 was the oldest in the party); Carson Boren and his wife and small daughter; the



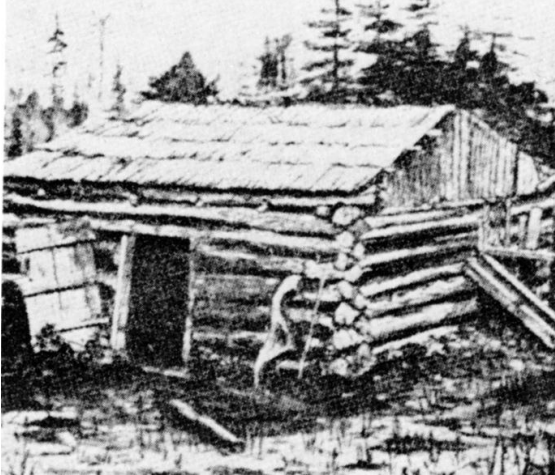
Figure 3 – Landing at Alki on November 13, 1851 in the pouring rain. (Courtesy Paul Gustin and MOHAI.) If you look closely you can see all 24 pioneers, including one baby in arms, and two Indians.

sister of Carson Boren and Mrs. Arthur Denny, Louisa Boren, who would soon become David Denny’s wife; and Charles Terry; Lee’s 22-year-old brother who did not even know Lee was at the site and was scheduled to go gold prospecting on Queen Charlotte’s Island.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Emily Denny, 49, 50.

<sup>67</sup> David Buerge, *Seattle in the 1880s* (Seattle: the Historical Society of Seattle and King County, 1986), 7.

<sup>68</sup> Edmond S Meany, *History of the State of Washington* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910), 229, 230, Emily Denny, 50, Newell, 16, 34.



**Figure 4 – Alki Cabin with roof, circa 1880.  
(Courtesy MOHAL.)**

The sight of the roofless cabin, the scarecrow thin David Denny and the aftermath of six days of seasickness did not make for a cheerful occasion. The rain was coming down hard and was unending. The site of mostly naked Indians and the smell of rancid dogfish oil did not help.<sup>69</sup>

Newell indicates the roof to the cabin was finished the second day there.<sup>70</sup>

The men set about speedily to finish the cabin. They worked all that day splitting cedar for shakes for the roof but night found them still without one. Meagre [*sic*] protection was provided with Indian mats and a piece of tent, and here they slept as well as they could the first night....

As soon as possible the little cabin was finished and all twenty-four people, twelve of whom were children, moved in. Until they could build a second cabin, those twenty-four people lived peaceably in that one room.<sup>71</sup>

The first cabin was actually Low's Cabin. After the landing a group effort was made to build cabins for Arthur Denny and his family and two cabins of split cedar for the Bell and Boren families.<sup>72</sup>

Mary Denny had brought her cook stove with her and this was set up in the middle of the one room cabin. As the wet walls and the floors dried, communal cooking started and the cabin became livable.<sup>73</sup>



**Figure 5 - Original Alki Cabin, circa 1895, showing a partial roof. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, PH Coll 548.)**

<sup>69</sup> Newell, 38.

<sup>70</sup> Crowley, 229, indicates the cabin could now be completed since Arthur Denny brought a froe with him on the *Exact*.

<sup>71</sup> Watt, 43.

<sup>72</sup> Emily Denny, 61.

<sup>73</sup> Newell, 40.



## Move to Seattle

The small town of New York Alki did not grow in population but soon had houses for everyone, the start of a general store and reasonable amounts of food from stores brought from Portland, farming on the site and hunting. Some logging was started as various ships came to the area knowing it provided a choice area for trees to take logs to San Francisco.<sup>74</sup>

The object of all who came to the Oregon Territory in the early days was to avail themselves of the privilege of obtaining a homestead donation land claim. Arthur Denny felt that every man and woman fully earned and merited all they got from this.<sup>75</sup>

Exploration of the area was also conducted.

...Boren and Bell explored the Sound as far south as Commencement Bay and east [*sic- west*] to Port Orchard. They paddled up the Duwamish and its tributaries and explored the present site of Puyallup, but they didn't find what they were looking for. Finally, as a last resort, they went exploring closer to home, paddling around Duwamish Head and skirting the vast mudflats of the Duwamish River delta to a small headland near the center of Elliot Bay's<sup>76</sup> eastern shore....

Just off the point they discovered an island of about eight acres where they had assumed there was nothing but mudflats. Between the island and the point was a salt water lagoon.... It wasn't really a harbor at all, but the southern breakwater of the true harbor, taking the pounding of the winter storms, and protecting the six-mile-wide entrance to the bay. Furthermore, this section of the bay was walled on three sides by seemingly unlimited timber ready to be felled directly in salt water.<sup>77</sup>

Arthur Denny indicates he was also involved with the exploration of a new site for permanent settlement.

In February, [*sic*] 1852, in company with William N. Bell and C. D. Boren, I [Arthur Denny] made soundings of Elliott's Bay along the eastern shore and towards the foot of the tide flats to determine the character of the harbor, using for that purpose a clothes line and a bunch of horseshoes. After the survey of the harbor we next examined the land and timber around the Bay, and after three days careful investigation we located claims with a view of lumbering, and ultimately of laying out a town.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Newell, 40 – 45.

<sup>75</sup> Arthur Denny, 38.

<sup>76</sup> Captain Charles Wilkes, who led an exploring expedition in the area in 1841, had named Elliot Bay.

<sup>77</sup> Newell, 45, 46.

<sup>78</sup> Arthur Denny, 15.

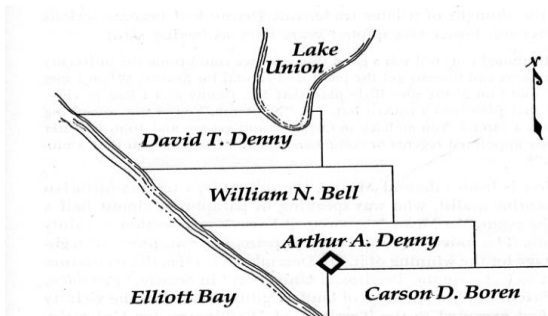
After considerable examination of the lands and waters in the area Bell, Boren and David and Arthur Denny, determined to locate four miles east of Alki Point on the east side of the bay with the four to take adjoining land claims. The harbor was better than that at Alki, the timber as good, the agriculture opportunities were greater, and the chance of a town more probable.<sup>79</sup> The explorers determined the harbor was deep enough for large ships to enter and load and unload cargo and passengers near the shore.<sup>80</sup>

In February 1852, all people, except Charles Terry and John Low, began preparations to abandon Alki for the new protected east shore of Elliot Bay, which was to become downtown Seattle. Charles Terry had established a trading post at Alki Point.<sup>81</sup> This is considered the first store in King County and opened in November 1851.<sup>82</sup> John Low and family stayed at Alki only briefly, then moved to Olympia and on to California, to return only much later to Puget Sound and the town of Snohomish.<sup>83</sup>

On February 15, 1852, the canoe [with Arthur Denny, William Bell and Carson Boren] crossed the Bay again and the explorers staked their claims. This was the actual founding of Seattle....

Without ceremony, the pioneers drove the north stake at what is now the foot of Denny Way, where the shoreline came to a point; and the south stake on the other "Point," now First Avenue and King Street.<sup>84</sup>

The friends agreed that between the points they would divide the land into equal parts.<sup>85</sup>



**Figure 6 – The arrangement of the four claims that started Seattle. (Sketch is an adaptation from University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.)**

On March 17 David Denny crossed Elliot Bay and staked his own claim just to the north of the others.<sup>86</sup> Lee Terry, who had begun the first log cabin, stayed only through the winter and then left for New York.<sup>87</sup>

Each claim embraced about 320 acres. All were in township 25 north, range 4 east, Willamette Meridian.<sup>88</sup> A new land donation law had just been passed for the northern part of the Oregon Territory authorizing 320 acres of free land for a married couple.<sup>89</sup> Of course at this time

<sup>79</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 46.

<sup>80</sup> Newell, 46.

<sup>81</sup> Watt, 66.

<sup>82</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 41.

<sup>83</sup> Roger Sale, *Seattle Past to Present* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976: 1978), 11.

<sup>84</sup> Watt, 65.

<sup>85</sup> Watt, 65, 66. Records no longer exist as to how David Denny filed his claim.

<sup>86</sup> Newell, 49.

<sup>87</sup> Watt, 11.

<sup>88</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 20.

<sup>89</sup> Newell, 49. At this time the area was still part of Oregon Territory.

none of the land had been surveyed or obtained by treaty from the Indians.<sup>90</sup>

On April 3, 1852, Bell, Boren and Maynard (who had recently joined the party at Alki) moved into cabins on their claims. Arthur Denny, who was again suffering from augre, moved in by May 1852.<sup>91</sup>

The first claims were apparently not correctly recorded. At the time this area was still Oregon Territory and claims had to be filed in the capital at Salem. Washington Territory was not chartered until February 8, 1853.<sup>92</sup> There was therefore some mix-up and delay in getting the correct official claims filed. There never was any conflict about the correctness and rights of the claimant's original claims. While the claims of Arthur Denny, William Bell and Carson Boren were re-recorded in 1853 and 1854 it appears David Denny's claim was not officially re-recorded until July 12, 1869.<sup>93</sup>

## Early Seattle

During the first year all the settlers were busy clearing off timber about their homes and in getting piles (long heavy timbers to be driven into the ground) and lumber ready to send to San Francisco where there was a ready market. The sale of the lumber provided a source of money to buy needed goods, food and clothing. In 1852 and early 1853 there were more than 20 sailing ships engaged in trade between Puget Sound and San Francisco. They were looking for piles, squared timbers, ships knees, cordwood, and shingles. This demand and the prices paid for manufactured lumber products led to many mills that could saw and shape lumber.<sup>94</sup>

While ... mills cut lumber primarily for export, Yesler's mill and others like it supplied the settlers who built their houses, barns, and sheds with its products....

Locally, as the population grew, a mercantile trade flourished. Cargo ships sailing from San Francisco brought orders of tools, stoves, clothing, household goods, china, canned goods, rope, blasting powder, guns, fishing gear, farming equipment, musical instruments, and anything else needed by settlers. Sometimes the iron ballast they carried was sold to small local foundries to be fashioned into tools and parts.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Coll Thrush discusses the Native American view of whites claiming to be the first settlers in Seattle and how the whites took land from the Indians without any payment. Saying whites were not here first and the land was stolen for the Indians summarize his view. Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle, Histories from the Crossing over Place* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007.)

<sup>91</sup> Warren, *Seattle 150 Years of Progress*, 70.

<sup>92</sup> Founding of Washington Territory and Washington State, <http://www.historylink.org>, accessed November 7, 2010.

<sup>93</sup> Clarence Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916), 563.

<sup>94</sup> Clarence Bagley, *Pioneer Seattle and its Founders*, (Seattle?: 1924?) reprinted, Seattle, Argus Print, 1925, reprinted in Clarence Bagley, *The Acquisition and Pioneering of Old Oregon, In the Beginning: Pioneer Reminiscences*, (Fairfield WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1982). This book reprinted by Ye Galleon Press contains several short articles, letters and otherwise unpublished writings of Bagley. The use of Old Oregon refers to Washington still being part of Oregon Territory for the material covered.

<sup>95</sup> Buerge, 8.

## David Denny and Louisa Boren Married

The courtship of David Denny and Louisa Boren had started before they left Illinois with their families, continued until they landed at Alki and finally came to a happy conclusion now that they were finally settled in the area.<sup>96</sup> Louisa was five years older than David.<sup>97</sup> David Denny and Louisa Boren were married in Arthur Denny's cabin on his claim near the foot of present day Lenora Street on January 23, 1853. The next morning the couple moved into their own cabin, built by David Denny, at the foot of present Denny Way.<sup>98</sup>



**Figure 7 – David and Louisa Denny's Sweetbriar Cabin. (Original drawing by Emily Inez Denny. Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, Prosch Seattle Views, vol. 1, PH Coll 27.)**

Before dark they paddled about a mile and a half north and climbed up the steep, muddy hillside to the cabin on the 320-acre donation claim, which they dated January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1853.<sup>99</sup> The claim ran from Lake Union to Elliot Bay with its boundaries on the north and south being marked by today's Mercer Street and Denny Way.<sup>100</sup>

The little log cabin at the foot of present Denny Way had no windows and the door was cut in half.<sup>101</sup>

Louisa Denny had picked sweetbriar seeds in Cheery Grove, Illinois when she left in 1851. She had kept them until reaching Seattle. She began planting them around the various homes she lived in. They spread all over town. She was referred to as "the sweetbriar bride."<sup>102</sup> Sweetbriar is a semi-climbing rose with fragrant leaves, pink flowers, and tall, prickly stems.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Watt, 89.

<sup>97</sup> Emily Denny, 273.

<sup>98</sup> Emily Denny, 228.

<sup>99</sup> This is the day after they were married when they could legally claim the 320 acres allotted for a married couple.

<sup>100</sup> Kay Francis Reinartz, *Queen Anne, Community on the Hill* (Seattle: Queen Anne Historical Society, 1993), 24.

<sup>101</sup> Watt, 90.

<sup>102</sup> Watt, 93.

<sup>103</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary of the English Language College Edition* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1966), 1473.



**Figure 8 - David Thomas Denny and Louisa Boren Denny in their 20's. (Courtesy Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries and MOHAL.)**

## Native Uprising

After several years of growing tension, open conflict developed between the settlers west of the Cascades and the Indians during the winter of 1855 – 1856. All the settlers living in outlying areas moved into Ft. Decatur, a crude blockhouse built in the vicinity of present First

Avenue and Cherry Street. By August 1856 hostilities had ended and the conflict was officially over. [Author's note: Since many have written on this Indian War, I will only provide some useful references for the war itself.<sup>104</sup> DC]

According to Warren, when the settlers made a dash to get into the blockhouse when the conflict started, David Denny had an embarrassing situation develop.

David Denny enjoyed telling this story on himself. During the day of the Indian attack, shortly after he had helped his wife and family into the blockhouse, while rushing around to rejoin the battle against the attackers, his trousers got caught on something and in the efforts to pull away, the seat split. Frantically he borrowed his wife's needle and thread, found a dark corner out of sight of the women and pulled off his britches, repaired the rip, quickly slipped back into them and rejoined the other men in efforts to keep the Indians at a distance. He always chuckled as he added, "You should have seen the size of the stitches I took that day."<sup>105</sup>

Another interesting sidelight concerning David Denny's participation in the Indian War concerns the present city of Auburn. One of the skirmishes was fought near the Green River on December 3, 1855. The site is about four miles north of the former junction of the White and Green Rivers. Lieutenant Slaughter and sixty-five men were camped in

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<sup>104</sup> Newell, 65–82, summarizes the events of the Indian War. Emily Denny gives a short discussion of the David Denny family experiences during the war in *Emily Denny*, 276, 277. Arthur Denny also gives an eyewitness account by a participant, *Arthur Denny*, 67-76. Roberta Watt also provides a description of the conflict from the standpoint of those who lived it, 228 – 259. Clarence Bagley provides excellent detail of how the conflict affected not only Seattle but King County and the surrounding area, Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 158-193.

<sup>105</sup> Warren, *Seattle 150 Years of Progress*, 80.

Brannan's Prairie for a meeting with Captain Hewitt, who came from Seattle. It was rainy and cold and a fire was built near the cabin where Slaughter and Hewitt were meeting. Slaughter was near the door. An Indian crept up near enough to make a sure shot and Lieutenant Slaughter fell dead instantly. Three enlisted men were also killed and several wounded.<sup>106</sup> David Denny was a member of Captain Hewitt's company of Seattle volunteers. Captain Hewitt's company was camped at the junction of the Green and White Rivers. When they heard the shots of the Slaughter skirmish they went to investigate, as Captain Hewitt was at the site for a discussion with Lieutenant Slaughter.<sup>107</sup> David Denny and a small party brought the body of Lieutenant Slaughter in a canoe to Seattle where it was sent back to Fort Steilacoom for burial.<sup>108</sup> Watt states that David Denny was a Lieutenant in Hewitt's company but other sources list him as simply a volunteer.

Lieutenant David Denny told how, when they took the body of Slaughter away from the cabin in which he had been killed and left the other dead behind, they could hear as they moved away the victorious yells of the savages as they took possession of Slaughter's camp, and how they found the bodies robbed and scalped when they returned the following day to bury them.<sup>109</sup>

David Denny's house was outside of the official Seattle boundary. This house, along with that of Thomas Mercer, were the only houses in King County outside of Seattle that were not burned by the Indians. The Indians later said they spared these two houses because these two families had been especially kind to the Indians. David Denny was one of the few pioneers who had taken the time to learn the Indian languages and to build personal friendships with the Indians.<sup>110</sup>

Arthur Denny and others indicate that even after the war was ended there was still great fear of possible future problems. "Then came the Indian war, which well nigh depopulated Washington Territory."<sup>111</sup> The future of Seattle after the Indian uprising was in grave doubt as many settlers moved out of the area in fear of more trouble and it was a full decade before new industry and a few new settlers came to the area. David Denny among others decided that farming was better than industry for a while.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 61. Different sources give slightly different figures for the number killed and wounded.

<sup>107</sup> Watt, 223, 225 –228.

<sup>108</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 61.

<sup>109</sup> Watt, 228.

<sup>110</sup> Warren, *King County and its Emerald City: Seattle*, 49, 91.

<sup>111</sup> Arthur Denny, 16.

<sup>112</sup> Newell, 82, 83.

## David Denny Comes to Queen Anne

On February 8, 1853, two weeks after the wedding, Washington Territory was established.<sup>113</sup> At this time the area north of the Seattle Township was designated as Township No. 25, North Range, No. 3, East, Willamette Meridian,



**Figure 9 –David and Louisa Denny with daughters Emily Inez and Madge Decatur, circa 1858. (Courtesy Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.)**

Territory of Washington. In addition to other areas, this included Queen Anne Hill and the area around the base of the hill. Between 1853 and 1859, approximately 15 land claims were filed, mostly by single men, for the land north of Seattle that included the Queen Anne area.<sup>114</sup>

In 1853, David Denny and his recent bride Louisa Denny had filed a donation land claim for 320 acres of land running from Lake Union to Elliot Bay, between what is now Denny Way and Mercer Street. In the following years they continued to acquire land around Queen Anne Hill.<sup>115</sup>

After the Indian uprising growth of businesses in Seattle stalled and the timber market went into a slump. David Denny decided that the best approach to making a living was to return to the earth and begin farming. The original honeymoon cabin on the bay, although undamaged by the Indians, had no potential as a farmhouse. It was still surrounded by heavy timber consisting of gigantic evergreen trees and jungle-like undergrowth of forest.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> [http://www.historylink.org/ content/printer\\_friendly/pf\\_output.cfm?file\\_id+5661](http://www.historylink.org/content/printer_friendly/pf_output.cfm?file_id+5661), accessed November 7, 2010.

<sup>114</sup> Reinartz, 22.

<sup>115</sup> Florence K. Lentz and Mimi Sheridan, "Queen Anne Historic Context Statement," October 2005, <http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/preservation/ContextQueenAnneStatement2005.pdf>, 3, accessed January 10, 2011.

<sup>116</sup> Newell, 83.

In 1857, David Denny set out to build a new home on a relatively clear area of his claim, “the swale”<sup>117</sup>, at what later became the area centered on present Third Avenue and Republican Street. The swale ran through the center of his claim in a willow marsh bordering Lake Union. It took a few years but the swamp was eventually drained and cleared to become part of the Denny’s Valley Farm.<sup>118</sup> The early pioneers faced land that was almost all densely covered with native vegetation. The process of converting the wilderness to farms was overwhelming in scope. It often took 20 years to convert a 160 or 320 acre claim into a farm with 80 percent of the land cleared for farming, with the remaining area being swamp or for some other reason unusable. Most of the settlers in the early years had to spend most of their time proving up their land claims, having no money and just enough to eat.<sup>119</sup> “Proving the land” was the term used for the requirement by the federal government for the settlers to develop the land so that it became productive and had dwellings on it. If no effort was made to prove the land, or it was impossible to do so, the land would revert back to the government.

Because of the Indian uprising many of the settlers living in the outer areas of Seattle decided to move to central Seattle. During the three years it took David to build his new house, the Denny’s lived in a three-room cottage in Seattle.<sup>120</sup> This house was at the northwest corner of Seneca and Second Avenue. In 1860 David Denny, his wife and three daughters lived in it.<sup>121</sup> David Denny spent much of his time farming and logging on his claim but continued to live most of the next few years in their home at Second and Seneca.<sup>122</sup> This house was destroyed in the Great Seattle Fire of June 6, 1889.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to their dwellings, settlers made other improvements, as required to acquire ownership of their claims. They cleared timber for agriculture, planted orchards and built fences, barns and other outbuildings. Indian trails were widened and rude pathways to one another’s homes were carved through the dense forest. Thomas



Figure 10 –Drawing of the Denny’s farmhouse in the swale. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, A. Curtis, PH Coll 482.)

<sup>117</sup> Swale is defined as “a hollow or depression, especially one in wet, marshy ground,” *Webster’s*, 1471.

<sup>118</sup> Newell, 83, 84.

<sup>119</sup> Reinhartz, 29.

<sup>120</sup> Reinhartz, 32.

<sup>121</sup> Bagley, “*History of Seattle*,” vol. 2, 660.

<sup>122</sup> Watt, 271.

<sup>123</sup> Clarence Bagley, “*The Acquisition and Pioneering of Old Oregon, In the Beginning: Pioneer Reminiscences*,” (Fairfield WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1982), 46. This book reprinted by Ye Galleon Press contains several short articles, letters and otherwise unpublished writings of Bagley.



Mercer and David Denny built and maintained a trail and wagon road from Yesler Way to the Mercer homestead [near David Denny's homestead] in the 1860s. The northern section of the Military Road was completed from Seattle out along the west side of Lake Union in the mid-1860s.

The pioneer period (1853-1869) shaped the ... environment of Queen Anne in a number of ways. Early donation claim boundaries established rough outlines of future plats. Important natural features were named....<sup>124</sup>

By 1860 David Denny had completed a new log house near what is now Third Avenue and Republican Street.<sup>125</sup> Emily Denny commented about growing up in this house, in the 1860s, only a few blocks from where the Denny Cabin Real Estate Office, the latter the subject of this monograph, was built in 1889.

[No] element was wanting for romance or adventure. Indians, bears, panthers, far journeys ... and all in a virgin wilderness so full of grandeur and loveliness that even very little children were impressed by the appearance thereof. The strangeness and newness of it all was hardly understood by the native white children as they had no means of comparing this region and mode of life with other countries and customs.

Traditions did not trouble us; the Indians were generally friendly, the bears were only black ones and ran away from us as fast as their furry legs would carry them; the panthers did not care to eat us up, we felt assured, while there was plenty of venison to be had by stalking, and on a journey we rode safely, either on the pommel of father's saddle or behind mother's, clinging like small kittens or cocklebur.<sup>126</sup>

Most of the land was originally used for farming. The winter of 1861 was the worst the new settlers had endured since coming to Seattle. It snowed for a week in December and the temperature dropped to four degrees below zero for several days. Lake Union froze solid for four months up to a half foot thick. Louisa and David Denny lost fruit trees. Snow stayed on the ground until April.<sup>127</sup> At the first annual fair of the King County Agricultural Society, held in Seattle on October 21, 1863, David Denny is described as exhibiting fruits.<sup>128</sup>

Roberta Watt refers briefly to a house on Lake Union built in 1870 where the eight David Denny children grew up.<sup>129</sup> The David Denny family moved into another house on the south slope of Queen Anne Hill in 1871 at Republican Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues N.<sup>130</sup> Louisa Denny, who had always grown flowers wherever she lived,

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<sup>124</sup>Lentz, 4, accessed January 10, 2011.

<sup>125</sup>Newell, 83, 84.

<sup>126</sup>Emily Denny, 113.

<sup>127</sup>Reinartz, 36. Emily Denny provides several first person comments on the weather in her book.

<sup>128</sup>Bagley, "*History of Seattle*," vol. 2, 662, 663.

<sup>129</sup>Watt, 357.

<sup>130</sup>Reinartz, 53.

expanded her gardens on this new farm. She supplied everyone in the area with flower seeds.<sup>131</sup>

Between 1870 and 1890 Lake Union was destined to be transformed from a beautiful wilderness lake to a busy industrial area. In 1872 one of the first industries to be established at the edge of the lake was the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company, which collected coal coming from Renton and forwarded it to the Seattle waterfront. In the 1870s people moving to the outskirts of Seattle started to settle around Lake Union on small farms.<sup>132</sup>

When Seattle finally began to reach the Denny's in the late 1870s, they sold much of the land that had been their farm and home in the swale. Paul Dorpat describes the meadow and marsh that was on the Denny's farm as follows (also pointing out that it now covers some of the land where the Seattle Center is now located):

Before white settlement, Native Americans had used this meadow as a gathering spot for the ritual of gifts, the potlatch....

In 1900 the Denny swale was used as a government corral for mules either returning from the Spanish-American War or waiting shipment to the Philippines insurrection. In 1903 a baseball park was built on the site. For years thereafter the cleared land between Harrison and Mercer was filled with entertainment; at the time of Louisa's death in 1916, the chances were good that either a circus was performing or carnival sideshow exhibiting in what [had been Louisa's] garden.

In 1928 the Civic Auditorium, later remodeled into the Opera House, was opened along Mercer, as was the Ice Arena. In 1939 the National Guard Armory, the present Center House, was completed. Throughout most of the '50s the Armory was used as a popular spot for bobby-sox hops. In 1962, when part of the world gathered here for a Fair with the "forward look," there was no looking back to the Denny family farm.

The next time you visit Seattle Center you can take time to relax in the grass just north of the International Fountain. You will be resting in David and Louisa's garden. There you may remember the potlatch and imagine that all around you natives are exchanging gifts.<sup>133</sup>

The four blocks just northeast of the Seattle Center International Fountain,

include the greater part of the first [major] David Denny home site, lying between Harrison and Mercer Streets and Third and Fourth Avenues, North. The log cabin in which most of the [eight] children were born stood within a few yards of the present imposing structure [Seattle Opera House.]<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Reinartz, 56.

<sup>132</sup> Reinartz, 55.

<sup>133</sup> Paul Dorpat, *Seattle Now and Then*, vol. 1 (Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1984), story number 60, p. not numbered.

<sup>134</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 69, 70.

## David Denny's Business Ventures

The settlers early discovered that David Denny was an honest and conscientious man. This was so well established that he was known as "Honest Dave."<sup>135</sup>

Like all other pioneers, he turned his hand to any useful thing that was available and needed. He cut and hewed timber for export, cleared a farm, hauled wood, tended cattle, in fact he did anything honorable. David Denny was an advocate of total abstinence and prohibitions so he would never think of opening a saloon, a common idea for many settlers. He did all in his power to discountenance the sale and use of intoxicants, which he felt, caused terrible effects among both the whites and the Indians.<sup>136</sup>

In what was to become Seattle, Arthur and David Denny developed their extensive holdings separately. Arthur Denny, who was about ten years older than David, became the more famous of the brothers and is the one usually thought of when the name Denny is mentioned in the history of Seattle.<sup>137</sup> Arthur's investments were mainly in downtown Seattle relating to mercantile operations, land investment, and banking, especially the mortgage trade.<sup>138</sup>

As previously mentioned on January 24, 1853, David Denny filed a Donation Land Claim from the United States government on land that included the southeastern slope of Queen Anne Hill and the southwestern side of Lake Union. On the previous day he had married Louisa Boren, who had trekked at his side along the Oregon Trail from Cherry Grove, Illinois.<sup>139</sup> Since he was now married, Denny could claim 320 acres of land. In the 1860s David Denny platted and developed the area between present day Denny Way to the southern shore of Lake Union.<sup>140</sup>

David and Louisa Denny operated a family farm on 320-acres centered on what is now the Seattle Center. The crops grown there provided the fresh produce for much of early Seattle. David and Louisa were generous with their land holdings, as they donated much land for parks, schools and churches to benefit the growing city. For example, they donated the land for Denny Park and the original Seattle Children's Home, which was located at the site of the current Seattle Center Fun Forest.<sup>141</sup>

## Western Mill

As David Denny made money, he plowed it into ventures that would create new jobs, new homes and new population growth for Seattle. In addition to farming, David Denny developed vast real estate holdings. He organized the Union Water System to lay mains under the new streets of his subdivisions, which had been cleared and graded by his Washington Improvement Company.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Emily Denny, 205.

<sup>136</sup> Emily Denny 205, 206.

<sup>137</sup> Sale, 11, 13, 25.

<sup>138</sup> Newell, 97.

<sup>139</sup> Crowley, 168.

<sup>140</sup> Crowley, 161.

<sup>141</sup> Dorpat, *Seattle Now and Then*, vol. 1, sections numbered 60, 63 p. not numbered.

<sup>142</sup> Newell, 97.

In the 1880s on Lake Union, at the eastern end of his land claim, David Denny developed the Western Mill, the biggest sawmill in King County for a short period of time. Seattle's waterfront had become crowded with sawmills by 1880 and other locations were needed for this rapidly growing industry. Being on the waterfront had the advantage of easy shipping to California, the orient and other locations. As more and more lumber was needed for local construction, however, being on the waterfront lost its advantage. The first company formed in Seattle for the purpose of building a mill away from the waterfront was incorporated March 9, 1882, as the Lake Union Lumber and Manufacturing Company. The capital of \$10,000 was divided into twenty shares of \$500 each. At this point David Denny was not among the shareholders. Construction of the mill was completed by July 1882 and lumber was being produced immediately.<sup>143</sup>

By 1884 the Lake Union Mill was bought by a corporation in which David Denny and son John B. Denny had controlling interest. They renamed it the Western Mill. The Western Mill obtained the latest sawmill equipment and techniques and had a diversified product line and a large capacity.<sup>144</sup>

Like many of the mills of the Puget Sound country, the Lake Union mill passed through many changes in ownership, it being known as the Western Mill Company mill in 1884, at which time David T. Denny was the principal stockholder. The additions which had been made to the original mill up to this time had greatly increased its output, it being credited with a daily capacity of 35,000 feet of lumber, 12,000 lath and a large sash and door business, the latter factory occupying the second floor of the plant.<sup>145</sup>

Following practices of the day all the sawdust, shavings and refuse slabs<sup>146</sup> were thrown into Lake Union. This ran into thousands of cords per year.<sup>147</sup> The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* criticized the mill's pollution contribution.

The greatest factor in the pollution of the waters of Lake Union is the Western Mill. All of the sawdust, shavings and thousands of cords of slabs are thrown into the lake there. . . . The most damage is done by the slabs as they have bark on them and make a strong tannic acid. This acid is a slow poison and makes the water absolutely black. A law passed in the last legislature forbidding the throwing away of this refuse into lakes or streams where fish resort to spawn, the penalty being \$100. Fish spawn in this lake to a large extent.<sup>148</sup>

After considerable public outcry the mill stopped dumping its scrap wood into the lake and began burning it. This helped to reduce pollution in the lake but filled the air with

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<sup>143</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 232.

<sup>144</sup> Reinartz, 68.

<sup>145</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 232.

<sup>146</sup> A slab is a half-curved piece cut from the outside of a log when sawing planks, Webster's, 1368.

<sup>147</sup> Reinartz, 68.

<sup>148</sup> ["Lake Union Pollution"] *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 3, 1890, p. not known.

clouds of smoke and fine ash. John B. Denny (David Denny's father) designed an elevated carrier to haul the refuse from the mill to the burner that was located across Rollin Street (now Westlake), against the east side of Queen Anne Hill.<sup>149</sup>



Figure 11 – Western Mill Letterhead, 1892. The mill is shown as a subsidiary of the Rainier Power & Railway Co. Note the 1892 telephone number, 62. (Courtesy MOHAI.)

The Great Seattle Fire of 1889 destroyed the mills on the downtown waterfront enabling the surrounding mills to increase their business even more. As discussed later David Denny lost control of the Western Mill Company in the Panic of 1893 and it became the Brace and Hagert Mill Company.<sup>150</sup>

## Water Supply

Water systems, both storage tanks and supply piping systems developed almost from the start of Seattle. David Denny found himself in this line of business also.

One of the largest of the old plants was that of the Union Water System, which was incorporated in February, 1882 by D. T. Denny [and five others.] This concern secured its supply from springs near Fourth Avenue North and Ward Street.... The spring supplied only 80,000 gallons per day and since this was not enough a well was sunk to a distance of 348 feet at the top of Queen Anne hill. It supplied the territory to the south of the hill as far as Battery Street. This system was purchased by the city in 1891.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Reinartz, 68.

<sup>150</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 233, 234.

<sup>151</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 265.

## North Seattle

The land David and Louisa Denny lived on and farmed at the foot of Queen Anne Hill was outside of the city limits until the 1880s. The area that now includes Queen Anne, west Lake Union, Interbay, Magnolia, Fremont and Ballard was loosely called North Seattle. This included the land determined by the government survey to be Township 25 North, Range 3 East, Willamette Meridian. Most of those living in this area were eager to be involved with the politics and social activities of Seattle. North Seattle residents were involved with local government, including that of Seattle. North Seattle residents, particularly those in Queen Anne, served variously in the school district that was broader than just Seattle, and in county and territorial offices.<sup>152</sup>

## Land for a Park

As Seattle grew and improvements encroached on the two downtown cemeteries, they hindered progress. One was located adjoining the Methodist Episcopal Church at the southeast corner of Second Avenue and Columbia Street. The other was near Second Avenue and Stewart Street, where the current Moore Theater is located.<sup>153</sup>

In 1864 David and Louisa Denny provided five acres of their donation land claim, located on the northeast corner of Dexter Avenue and Depot Street (now Denny Way), for a cemetery. This area already had Native American graves. The site was far out of Seattle at the time that could only be reached by a narrow wagon road. The Seattle City Council established the land as the Seattle Cemetery, with a potter's field, on January 3, 1873. By 1878, there were 124 graves in the cemetery. By 1883 there were over 200 graves and the cemetery was no longer "way out in the wilderness."<sup>154</sup>

At first, Seattle was a wild expanse of forests and the citizens were still living in the wilderness, so there was little need for a park. The Dennys still had ownership of the cemetery land. When Seattle's development became more widespread, the land was rededicated as a city park and the graves moved at city expense. The 221 graves were subsequently moved to other locations.<sup>155</sup>

However, there were a few citizens who believed that the day would come when the beauties of nature would be removed to make way for stern buildings and hard paved streets. In 1884 David T. Denny and his wife donated to the city for park purposes a five-acre tract in

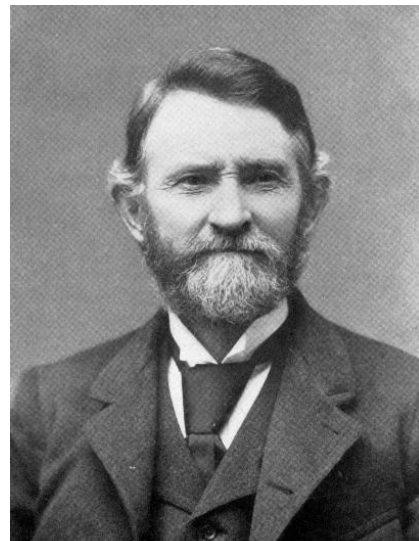


Figure 12 - David Denny, circa 1890. (Courtesy Evergreen Washelli- Cemetery.)

<sup>152</sup> Lentz, 3, accessed January 10, 2011.

<sup>153</sup> Reinartz, 186.

<sup>154</sup> Reinartz, 186, 187.

<sup>155</sup> Reinartz, 187.

[then] North Seattle. This the first park, was at first called Seattle Cemetery and Seattle Park, but its name was afterwards changed to Denny Park, in honor of its donors.<sup>156</sup>

Because of his early interest in founding parks, David Denny was placed on the first Park Commissioners Board in 1884. This board had no official authority until it became part of city government in 1890. David Denny was one of two who served on that board from 1884 to 1887.<sup>157</sup>

The land for Denny Park and the apparently coinciding cemetery,

was accepted July 9, 1884, under [Seattle city] ordinance No. 571, entitled, “An Ordinance for the purpose of converting Seattle Cemetery into a public park.” Soon after its acquisition the park commissioners [David Denny was one of two] set to work to remove the bodies and to make it a park. [With the donated land and the area formerly occupied by the cemetery] it contained an area of over five acres, but has been cut to 4.78 acres. It was supposed by the donors, as well as the city, that this park would always be far enough from the city to be appreciated, but the rapid growth of the city has placed it in the heart of the residential district and contiguous to the business center.... It is located between Denny Way, John Street, Dexter Avenue and Ninth Avenue North.<sup>158</sup>

David Denny had originally named the street marking the southern boundary of his donation land claim “Depot Street,” because he was convinced that the railroad would be laid along the route. The name was changed to Denny Way in 1895.<sup>159</sup> Denny Park exists today with slightly altered boundaries.

## **Real Estate Business**

In 1867 Seattle had 400 residents and by 1874 there were 1,800. The population of the area began to double or triple almost every year from the early 1870s onward. To fill the need for homes people began to expand into the area north of the original Seattle boundaries. David Denny got into the real estate business early with his many land holdings that included large acreage tracts. Around 1870 the area north of Denny Way and Mercer Street became known as North Seattle. Subdividing activity on Queen Anne Hill and the flats around it as far as Salmon Bay began when nine plats were filed in 1869.<sup>160</sup>

Throughout the 1860s David and Louisa Denny had steadily bought land adjacent to Lake Union. By 1880 they were the largest landholders in the Lake Union district,

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<sup>156</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 273.

<sup>157</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 273 – 275.

<sup>158</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 275, 276.

<sup>159</sup> Reinartz, 67.

<sup>160</sup> Reinartz, 58. Plats are mapped developments with lots indicated and streets marked, Webster’s, 1119.

holding over 1,000 acres, 320 of these were part of their original donation land claim.<sup>161</sup> In 1869 David Denny and his father John, seeing the opportunity for development, had filed the first plat on record for North Seattle. This was bounded by Mercer Street, Denny Way, Warren Avenue and Elliot Bay.<sup>162</sup> David and Louisa Denny subdivided their large land holdings into 11 plats between 1869 and 1889. Others platted the top of Queen Anne Hill and other nearby areas of unpopulated land. By the summer of 1871, 20 to 40 real estate transactions were filed each month for lots selling from \$50 to \$500. In 1872, 431 real estate sales were recorded for Seattle and its environs.<sup>163</sup>

In November 1872, David Denny subdivided [an additional] 500 acres of unimproved land on the shores of Lake Union, calling the plat Denny's First Addition. Denny promoted his subdivision by placing an elaborate advertisement in the newspaper describing the land and its advantages. Prices ranged from \$30 to \$100 with the usual terms of the day – about ten percent down and monthly payments of \$5. In June of 1875 he platted Denny's Second Addition and offered house lots for \$50 to \$100 each and land at \$50 to \$100 per acre, in five- or ten-acre parcels. In July, hoping to stimulate building in his subdivision, Denny offered a free second lot to all purchasers who would promptly build a house on their first.<sup>164</sup>

David Denny would soon regret having subdivided so much of his property at this early date and then not being able to sell much of it. He was now taxed at a per lot rate rather than at the farmland or unimproved vacant land rate. As the land was selling slowly until the late 1880s, these taxes were a heavy burden and helped contribute to Denny's financial collapse in 1893.<sup>165</sup>

So lucrative was the real estate business that David Denny joined in a real estate company with Judge John Hoyt. In 1888 they platted the extensive Denny and Hoyt Addition on the north slope of Queen Anne Hill, stimulating growth in the Ross and Fremont districts. Denny Home Addition, the last of the David Denny plats, was filed in 1889 at the base of the south side of the hill.<sup>166</sup>

One reason Denny's land sold more slowly than that around it was that much of it remained unlogged. Areas such as Belltown were already logged so this land sold quite rapidly. The great windstorm of 1875 actually helped Denny. In March of 1875, a wind of hurricane strength blew through Puget Sound. The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* reported, "it blew down thousands of trees, a number of houses, barns and small sheds." Clarence Bagley commented "when the storm was over, the whole country had undergone a change...."<sup>167</sup> The storm forced Denny to clean up his land to make it more appealing to potential buyers.

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<sup>161</sup> Reinartz, 59, 63

<sup>162</sup> Lentz, 3, accessed January 10, 2011.

<sup>163</sup> Reinartz, 59, 63.

<sup>164</sup> Reinartz, 59.

<sup>165</sup> Reinartz, 59,60.

<sup>166</sup> Lentz, 5, accessed January 10, 2011.

<sup>167</sup> Reinartz, 60.



During 1878-1879 a large number of houses were built along the railway line of the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company to Lake Union, many of them on David Denny land.<sup>168</sup>

In 1880-1881 the land on the west side of Lake Union, including the Outlet, was logged off. In 1886 David Denny formed a real estate partnership with Judge John P. Hoyt, Supreme Court Justice of the Territorial Court. Hoyt presided over the 1889 Washington State Constitutional Convention. The Denny and Hoyt Addition, platted March 1, 1888, was a huge subdivision bounded by Florentia Street to Woodland Park and Third Avenue West to North Thirty-ninth. Laying out five-acre parcels, they used their influence to bring the railroad through the Outlet. Denny & Hoyt's subdivision stimulated the rapid development of the northeast side of Queen Anne Hill and the formation of the Ross and Fremont districts.<sup>169</sup>

Much of the area called North Seattle was annexed to Seattle in 1883, with the rest annexed in 1890.<sup>170</sup>

David Denny was also able to own and subdivide land on Queen Anne Hill. This was the last of his 11 plats in the area. It would also provide space for his own luxurious style home, called Decatur Terrace.<sup>171</sup>

David Denny had originally worked the real estate business with his father John, but when John died, he worked with his son John B. Denny.<sup>172</sup>

In 1890 L. H. Griffith, David Denny, Edward and Carrie Blewett, and a handful of other investors on the northwest end of Lake Union put their money together to finance the construction of the Lake Union Road, planned to include both a wagon road and rail tracks. The route followed the western shore of Lake Union and connected the Ross District to Seattle.<sup>173</sup>

The Ross District was centered on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue West and Nickerson Street.<sup>174</sup>

The privately funded Lake Union Road was only partially completed, and 102 property owners and residents of the district promptly petitioned the city to complete the roadway. After much bickering, the city agreed. There was a \$6,000 lien lodged against the road by the construction company. This payment was split between the city and the citizens. The road was built on a trestle over the marshy Lake Union shore. Westlake Avenue North now follows this old Lake Union Road.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Reinartz, 60.

<sup>169</sup> Reinartz, 60.

<sup>170</sup> Reinartz, 63.

<sup>171</sup> Reinartz, 63.

<sup>172</sup> Reinartz, 63.

<sup>173</sup> Reinartz, 64, 65.

<sup>174</sup> Reinartz, 64.

<sup>175</sup> Reinartz, 65.



Figure 13 – The Lake Union Road, circa 1898. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.)

The spring and summer of 1888 saw an estimated 100 houses built in the Queen Anne Hill area. Ninety percent were built between Fourth Avenue North and Westlake Avenue. The most popular streets were Poplar (now Taylor Avenue), Lombard (now Sixth Avenue North), Farm (now Aurora Avenue), Dexter, Park (now Eighth Avenue North) and Rollin (now Westlake). The streets surrounding the Denny Cemetery (now Denny Park) began to be lined with houses. West Avenue (now Western Avenue) was transformed in the late 1880s by a new row of houses spread out from Depot Street (now Denny Way) to West Harrison Street.<sup>176</sup>

There is not a portion of the city undergoing more important changes than that section of North Seattle known as Denny Park addition [Harrison, Denny Way, 9<sup>th</sup> N, 4<sup>th</sup> N].<sup>177</sup> New houses are going up on empty land, streets being graded, lots cleared and sidewalks laid. At one point on Depot Street, which runs through the addition ... several business houses are being started. In a whole block where a year ago there was nothing but brush and stumps, now there are cozy homes. Not less than 100 new houses have been erected in that section during the past twelve months and fully twenty more are now in the course of construction.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Reinartz, 65, 66.

<sup>177</sup> Reinartz, 66.

<sup>178</sup> [“New Construction”], *Seattle Pos-Intelligencer*, September 15, 1888, p not known.

After North Seattle was annexed to Seattle in 1883, property owners worked together to implement improvements. There were still many unimproved dirt roads through stumps and slash that were dust clouds when dry and muddy streams when it rained. Between 1884 and 1898, approximately 40 petitions requested street grading, planning, paving, widening, extensions, improvements and sidewalks. Land developers often initiated these petitions.<sup>179</sup>

Wood was plentiful and cheap at the time, and planks initially made a dry clean roadway, although they had their drawbacks. Street planks were good for about ten years, after which time they inevitably broke down from wood rotting and the planks separating....

As the plank streets got old they became spongy with water, as well as horse droppings, and gave off a “royal odor.” In 1891 wooden planking was found to be a source of disease and infections, and Seattle shifted from planking to vitrified clay brick, which continued to be the main street surfacing until 1920. Bricks were considered the best wearing street surface but offered hazards, becoming dangerously slippery when wet and affording horses, and later cars, poor traction on inclined surfaces....<sup>180</sup>

Between 1884 and 1898 all of the north-south streets from Denny Way to West Highland Drive were graded. The east-west streets from Fairview Avenue N. were mostly graded, with the exception of those between Taylor and Warren Avenues. Taylor Avenue was graded to Boston Street at the top of the hill and Garfield Street was mostly graded. Grading meant a level roadbed made of dirt. None of the streets under discussion were paved and only a few had planking. Many property owners got together and built roads and sidewalks at their own expense.<sup>181</sup>

During the 1880s the growth of Seattle led to a housing shortage all over the city. Much of this was concentrated on lower Queen Anne and the south slope of Queen Anne Hill. By 1889 the south side of Queen Anne Hill was barren of trees and nearly 75 percent of the hill had been platted on paper.<sup>182</sup> The time was ripe for continuing to expand the Denny real estate business.

## **Construction of the Denny Cabin**

By 1889 the city had finally spread north to David Denny’s once isolated claim at the foot of Queen Anne Hill. He formed the real estate firm of D. T. Denny & Son in partnership with his 28-year-old son, John B. Denny for the purpose of selling city lots. The enterprise was highly successful and new homes sprung up along streets that Louisa and David had named for their religious and temporal convictions. Examples of these

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<sup>179</sup> Reinartz, 66, 67.

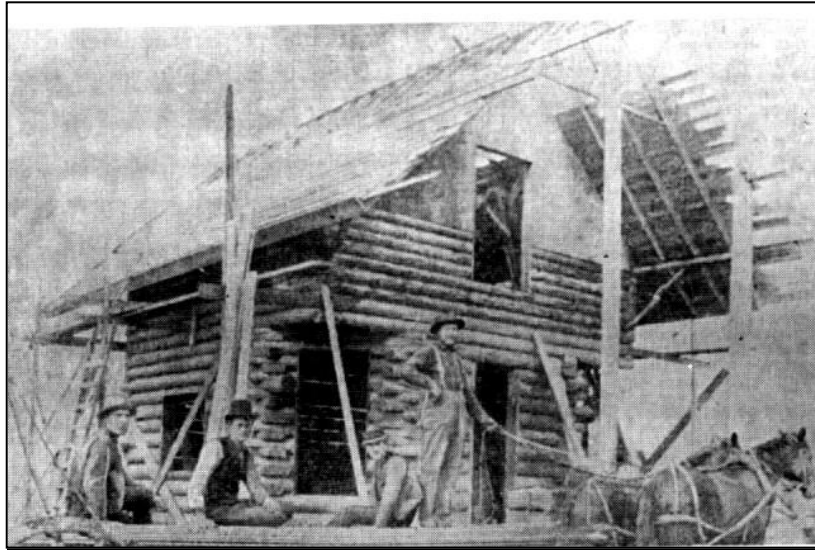
<sup>180</sup> Reinartz, 67.

<sup>181</sup> Reinartz, 67.

<sup>182</sup> Lentz, 6, 8.

included Prohibition Street, Temperance Avenue (later to become Queen Anne Avenue) and Republican Street (still exists under that name.)<sup>183</sup>

As part of his real estate operations David Denny opened a real estate office on the western boundary of his land holdings at the foot of Queen Anne Hill at the corner of Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue) and Republican Street.<sup>184</sup>



**Figure 14 - The Denny Cabin under construction in 1889 (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, PH Coll 548, Negative 5395.)**

Two photos (shown here as Figures 14 and 15)

show the Denny Cabin during construction and shortly after construction in 1889. Handwritten comments on the negative jackets and the backs of both of these photos provide the best information on the construction of the Denny Cabin.<sup>185</sup> This material is shown in detail in Appendices A and B. In 1966 Bob Lane wrote an article published in the *Seattle Times* that summarized the information written on the photos, and added information he collected about the Denny Cabin.<sup>186</sup>

Lane's article indicates the log cabin that is now known as the Denny Cabin was built in the spring of 1889. In an article published in 1966, Lawrence D. Lindsley stated he was the son of the builder Edward L. Lindsley. Lawrence Lindsley indicated he was 11 years old at the time of construction and that he participated in the construction. "I was only a boy of 11 ... I was sort of a roustabout.... I cranked the grindstone used to sharpen the axes." Lindsley indicated the logs were cut and peeled far up on Queen Anne Hill and hauled to the building site by wagon.<sup>187</sup> At the time the article was published, Lawrence Lindsley was 87.

Lawrence Lindsley had an old envelope on the back of which he had made notes. In the envelope was a negative of the cabin under construction. (This is apparently what is now in the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.) The envelope contained

<sup>183</sup> Newell, 96, 97.

<sup>184</sup> Paul Dorpat, *Seattle Now and Then*, vol. 3 (Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1997), second edition, 18, 19.

<sup>185</sup> Construction of David Denny's log cabin for his real estate office, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs ,PH Coll 548 and Ed L. Lidsley's log cabin, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs, PH Coll 548.

<sup>186</sup> Bob Lane, "Builder of Lower Queen Anne Cabin was Denny Son-in Law," *The Seattle Times*, February 6, 1966, 29.

<sup>187</sup> Lane, 29.

notes, which indicated that Edward Lindsley used 35 gallons of boiled linseed oil to treat the logs. These notes also preserved the names of the builders in addition to Edward Lindsley. They were M. M. Lemon, contractor; Harry Denny, lather; William R. Lindsley (Edward's brother), carpenter; and Theron Bosworth, carpenter.<sup>188</sup> Avis Cook indicates in a letter to Sue Floyd that Theron Bosworth was her father and is the young man in the derby hat in the construction picture (Figure 14).<sup>189</sup>

Lawrence Lindsley's old newspaper clippings indicated the cabin was originally built for David T. Denny as a real estate office when he sold lots in his North Seattle plat. (I am not sure where these old newspaper clippings referred to are located now.) David T. Denny began dealing in real estate in the 1870s, but by 1889 his real estate business had grown immensely and was now centered at the base of Queen Anne Hill.<sup>190</sup> Edward Lindsley came to Seattle in about 1875.<sup>191</sup> He became a son-in-law to David Denny when he married David's daughter, Abbie Denny on May 3, 1877.<sup>192</sup>

The first steam sawmill on Puget Sound, Yesler's Mill in Seattle, had been built in 1853.<sup>193</sup> Since that time there were many sawmills in the area so there was no shortage of sawn lumber for construction. The Denny Cabin was built as a log cabin strictly as a marketing gimmick, as log cabins were not otherwise being built in Seattle in 1889. Seattle had a sawmill within a year of settlement, so only a few log cabins were put up within the city. Bagley indicates maybe only eight or ten were built. All of these were replaced during the later 1850s.<sup>194</sup>

Bagley in 1916 indicated log cabin construction had not changed much since the 1600s.

The type of log cabin of the American pioneers has not greatly changed since the landing of the pilgrims. Usually it was about sixteen feet square. At each end of the logs the upper side was hewed into a triangular shape; the next tier had notches cut in them on the lower side to fit closely over the lower logs. About eight feet from the ground, at each end of the structure, the logs were carried from four to six feet farther and gradually shortened and sloped toward the ridge. On these were laid three or four feet apart, substantial rafters to hold the shake roof. The shakes were usually held in place by poles paled over each rafter and the two substantially fastened together with wooden pins. After the logs for the cabin had been brought on the ground and fitted for use it was the custom for the neighbors to aid in rolling them into place by means of "skids" or long poles.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Lane, 29.

<sup>189</sup> Letter, Avis J. Cook, Oak Harbor, Washington to Sue Floyd, Federal Way, Washington, no date, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>190</sup> Lane, 29.

<sup>191</sup> Reinartz, 60.

<sup>192</sup> Handwritten genealogical chart of Aaron Lindsey and Mary Newell, parents of David Lindsey, side note, undated, no author (probable collector is Marie Stowe Reed who did considerable research on the Denny Cabin from 1965 to 1980), in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>193</sup> Arthur Denny, 44, 53.

<sup>194</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 23.

<sup>195</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 23.

In the case of the Denny Cabin paid workers would have replaced the neighbors.

The cabin was finished five weeks before the Great Seattle Fire destroyed much of downtown Seattle in 1889. "I sat on Denny Hill and watched the old town go," Lindsley recalled. "I was scared to death."<sup>196</sup> The cabin, while built shortly before the Great Seattle



**Figure 15 – Denny Cabin, May 1889, (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division. PH Coll 548, Negative Lindsley 5942.)**

Fire of 1889, was in no danger from the fire. Its location was several blocks northwest of any damage done by the fire.

The cabin is a one and one-half story, horizontal hewn log cabin with a medium pitch, gable shake roof. The dimensions are 22 feet by 22 feet with the

front half bayed to give the cabin six sides.<sup>197</sup> Photographs of other structures in the general area<sup>198</sup> show them to be built of lumber rather than logs, so this verifies that the Denny Cabin was built with logs to make the real estate office more distinctive and eye catching.

## David Denny's Real Estate Business in the 1890s

The real estate business was good in the city after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889.

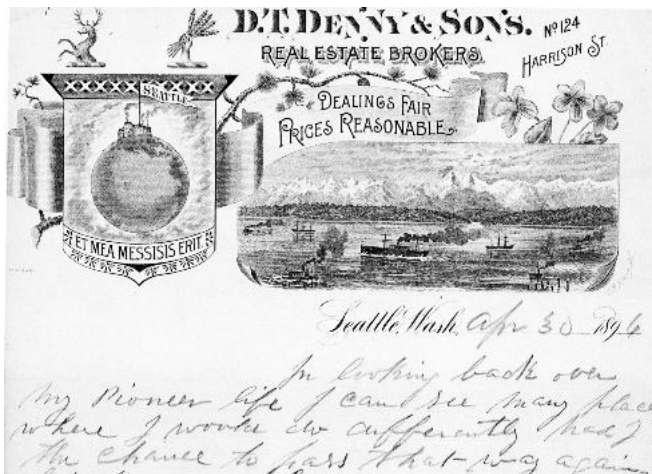
King County real estate sales in 1890 reached a total of \$23,000,000 and her assessment totaled \$44,045,275. In Seattle 2,160 new buildings had been constructed and most of the larger buildings started after the

<sup>196</sup> Lane, 29.

<sup>197</sup> Dwayne Nikulla, "Old Seattle Cabin," *King County Historic Sites Survey Inventory Sheet*, File No. 5000, 10 December 1977, 1.

<sup>198</sup> See Reinartz (for example photographs on pages 61, 63, 65 and 73.)

fire were completed. The total construction aggregated \$8,935,000.<sup>199</sup>



**Figure 16 – Letterhead of the D. T Denny and Sons Real Estate Brokers, April 30, 1896. (Courtesy MOHAI.)**

Figure 16 shows the letterhead of the D. T. Denny & Sons Real Estate Brokers as it was being used in April, 1896, advertising that their dealings were fair and at reasonable prices. The address on the letterhead is “124 Harrison Street,” about one block south and one block west of the Queen Anne and Republican address of the Denny Cabin. The letter written on this stationery and not shown here, includes a comment by David Denny in his handwriting to an unknown person, indicating he would not do anything differently if he had his life to live over.<sup>200</sup>

## David Denny’s Queen Anne Mansion

David Denny lived at the Lake Union home until just after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889.<sup>201</sup> The south side of Queen Anne Hill by the late 1880s had become a popular place for large mansions. These large houses often sat on very large double and triple lots. Building footprints were complex with many porches, bay windows, and turrets.<sup>202</sup>

David Denny erected and completed a fine mansion, called Decatur Terrace, in 1892. It was named Decatur Terrace after the blockhouse fort at the foot of Cherry Street that had protected them from the Indian attack of 1856.<sup>203</sup>

The address of the mansion was 512 Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue), near its intersection with Republican



**Figure 17 - David Denny’s Decatur Terrace Home on Queen Anne. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collection Division, Hester Photographic Collection, PH Coll 318.)**

<sup>199</sup> Bagley, History of King County, vol. 1, 424.

<sup>200</sup> This letter is taken from Newell, 118, 119. The contents of the letter is typed in the Conclusions section of this monograph.

<sup>201</sup> Emily Denny, 246.

<sup>202</sup> Lentz, 11.

<sup>203</sup> Paul Dorpat, “High Living,” *Seattle Times/Seattle Post Intelligencer*, Pacific Section, April 27, 1986, 36.

Street. It occupied an entire city block.<sup>204</sup> The address would put it on the east side of the street. Dorpat indicated it overlooked Mercer Street so it was apparently in the middle of the block, as the address would indicate. Dorpat also provides a photo of the longtime Sinett's Grocery Store as being near where the mansion once stood.<sup>205</sup>

The house had a corner turret; three covered porches with terraced stairways, extensive spindle-work and cresting and featured a detached greenhouse at the rear. The design, like many of the houses around it, was drawn out of a popular compendium of the latest domestic designs.<sup>206</sup> It had large grounds and finally provided the David Denny family with the home they had wanted for so long. Unfortunately he did not get to live there long as financial problems soon forced him to leave it.<sup>207</sup>

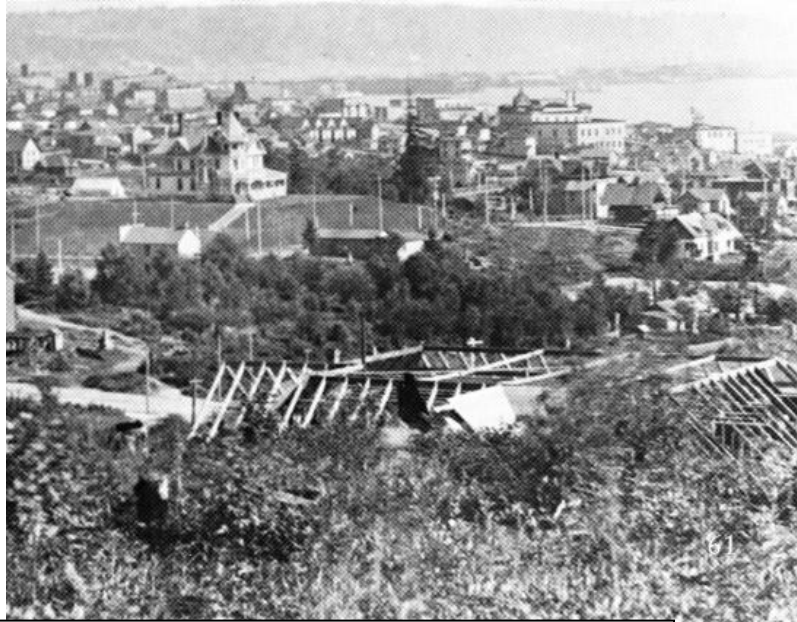


Figure 18 – Looking southeast from about halfway up Queen Anne Hill, the Denny Cabin can be seen at the bottom of the hill. (Use the small view to help identify what the Denny Cabin looks like from this distance.) Note the Denny Mansion can be seen on the left side of the photo. Both are on Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue.) The source of the photo caption, Reinartz, indicates circa 1889 but based on the brick buildings and the multistory buildings, I believe it is several years after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889. Also the Denny Mansion was not built until 1892. (Courtesy Washington State Historical Society.)



The Denny's hosted a last hurrah at the mansion on January 23, 1895, their forty second wedding anniversary. The party included the five surviving David and Louisa Denny children and most of the surviving early Seattle settlers. The party had a pioneer theme with buckskin invitations and pioneer artifacts spread throughout the house. Shortly

<sup>204</sup>Lentz, 11, 12 and Reinartz, 82

<sup>205</sup>Dorpat, "High Living," 36.

<sup>206</sup>Lentz, 11, 12 and Reinartz, 82.

<sup>207</sup>Emily Denny, 246.



thereafter when David Denny left the house for the last time in financial ruin, he paused at the door and looked back and remarked, "I'll never look upon Seattle again."<sup>208</sup>

This mansion was later remodeled into a multi-family residence.<sup>209</sup> It was torn down years ago and the terraced grounds were leveled to the current street level.<sup>210</sup>

## Electric Railways

Frank H. Osgood came to Seattle in 1883. Osgood began his Seattle career by starting a horse-drawn railway system in the downtown area. David Denny sold him some land in the Lake Union area to expand there. David Denny had large holdings of land in the area and he felt having a streetcar line to this area from downtown would be of great help in developing the land.<sup>211</sup>

From the first time Osgood heard about electricity he took a keen interest in its possibilities. David Denny was one of the three directors of Osgood's streetcar line, along with Osgood and Judge Burke. They decided, after much consideration, to gamble on the proposition of running the streetcars on electricity. At the time there was not an electric streetcar line in the world. A new expanded company was formed called the Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company under the leadership of L. H. Griffith. [Author's note: I could not find mention that David Denny stayed on as a director in the new expanded version of the company. DC] An electric power plant was completed at the foot of Pike Street. The rolling stock was equipped with 15-horsepower electric motors. The equipment was of the crudest kind.<sup>212</sup>

The horse cars were removed from the line and a new experience was started. The first electric car ran over the line on March 30, 1889. The absolute lack of experience in construction and operation caused frequent delays and ate up the capital of the company faster than expected. Gradually the railway system of this company was extended and other electric lines were constructed. Early in 1893 the company began its extension through Fremont to Green Lake<sup>213</sup>.

After building his mansion on Temperance Avenue on Queen Anne David Denny,

launched himself into riskier and more expensive civic projects ... the building of electric railways. He also built an electric railway operated as the Rainier Power and Railway Company.

The first successful streetcar line using electric power had gone into operation only two years earlier, in 1888, at Richmond, Virginia, and electric trolley was still generally considered to be a dangerous and new fangled contraption. Seattle had had a few miles of street railway line served by horse drawn cars since early in 1886. The northern

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<sup>208</sup> Dorpat, "High Living," 36.

<sup>209</sup> Reinartz, 168.

<sup>210</sup> Dorpat, "High Living," 36.

<sup>211</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, Vol. 1, 514.

<sup>212</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 516.

<sup>213</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 516. Bagley, *History of King County Washington*" vol. 1, 514-520, discusses in detail all the many electric streetcar lines that were built and operated during this time period. There were many with most consolidating into each other so it is impossible to briefly describe how many and their history.

terminus of the line was near the new Denny mansion on Temperance Street.

The horse cars were replaced by electric trolleys early in 1889 and it quickly became apparent to David Denny that the marvelous new means of rapid transit was an ideal means of opening up unimproved land to residential development. The theory made a good deal of sense; extend a car line into the hinterland, making it possible to get to work or downtown for shopping quickly and economically, and they would buy lots and build houses along the car line.<sup>214</sup>

In a sense it was a new way of pioneering for David Denny. His second son, David T. Denny II, had become an electrical engineer and was a strong advocate of the electric trolley. In 1890, the two Dennys embarked upon a most ambitious, and as it turned out disastrous, street railway building venture. The Rainier Power & Railway Company line was built in three sections under two separate city ordinances and one King County ordinance.<sup>215</sup>

The first of these, authorized in June of 1890, ran from East Lynn Street, then the north city limits, down the east shore of Lake Union to a rural lane marked Filbert Street on the plat of North Seattle. The second section, authorized early in 1892, began downtown at Third and Yesler and continued, according to its franchise, “along 3<sup>rd</sup> St., 4<sup>th</sup> St., Union, 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., Pike St., 9<sup>th</sup> Ave., Stewart St., 15<sup>th</sup> Ave., Denny Way, Pontius Ave., Roy St., and Harvard Ave. N.”, connecting to Valley Street with the section of line built earlier.

The third section was built under a King County franchise granted in August, 1891, and ran from the East Lynn Street terminus of the first section through Ravenna Park, across the old lift bridge at the present site of the University Bridge, and on north through increasingly uninhabited wilderness to what is now 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northeast. Beyond that there was nothing but forest and meadow, but it continued north for a mile into the unplatted wilderness, looped in a southeasterly direction and terminated in the middle of nowhere in the vicinity of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Northeast.<sup>216</sup>

This “streetcar line to nowhere” consistently lost money from the time its first section was placed in operation, but David Denny was not one to give up easily. Instead of retrenching he decided to expand. On August 3, 1893, David Denny & Son bought out the pioneer street railway of L. H. Griffith, the Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company, which accounted for about 35 of the 70 miles of electric and cable lines then operating in and around Seattle. The newly acquired line served the more profitable heavily populated sections of the city, and given reasonably stable economic conditions

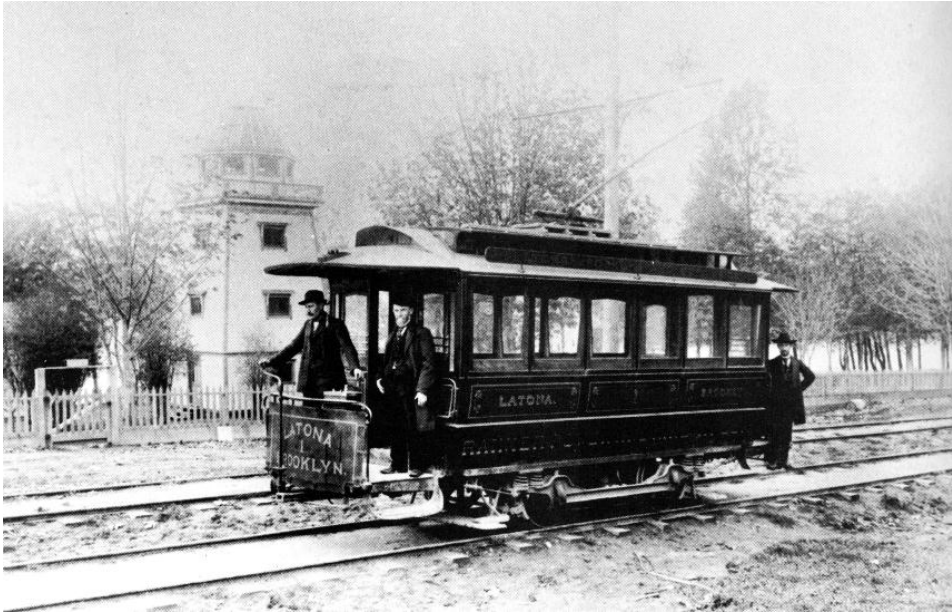
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<sup>214</sup> Newell, 97, 98.

<sup>215</sup> Newell, 98.

<sup>216</sup> Newell, 98, 99.

would probably have made the whole operation a success.<sup>217</sup> D. T. Denny & Sons purchased Mr. Griffith's holdings for \$212,000 using notes.<sup>218</sup>



**Figure 19 - David Denny on front platform, on right, of his Rainier Power & Railway Company's new electric rail car with his son David Denny Jr. on the rear platform. (Courtesy University of Washington Historical Photography Collection, A Curtis 63419.)**

David Denny's worth was said to be "in the neighborhood of three million dollars". Unfortunately much of David Denny's wealth was in still undeveloped land. His property taxes were based on speculative values and ran to the thousands of

dollars a year. Many thousands of dollars more were in accounts receivable and many purchasers never bothered to pay him for the land upon which they built, or for the lumber they purchased from his mill.<sup>219</sup>

"Old man Denny's got plenty", they reasoned. "He don't need it". They were also no doubt aware that, unlike his older brother and such other wealthy pioneers as Henry Yesler and Dexter Horton, he [David Denny] was reluctant to sue his neighbors.<sup>220</sup>

## David Denny in Early City and County Government

In 1856 David Denny was appointed to fill out a term as county treasurer until the election of 1857.<sup>221</sup> This would appear to be David Denny's first position in government.

<sup>217</sup> Newell, 99.

<sup>218</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 427, 428.

<sup>219</sup> Newell, 99.

<sup>220</sup> Newell, 99.

<sup>221</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 633.

On January 14, 1865, the Washington Territorial Legislature passed an act incorporating the town of Seattle and presented it with a charter. The town government was placed in the hands of five trustees to be elected annually. These in turn were to appoint a town clerk, a marshal and one committing magistrate. The trustees were given full authority to make needful laws, levy taxes, prevent disturbance, control disease, and make improvements. They were to act without compensation and were to be ex-officio trustees of schools of the district enclosed within the corporate limits of the town. David Denny was one of five prominent men elected to be the first Trustees. These Trustees were elected by 149 voters in the town estimated to have about 300 eligible male voters.<sup>222</sup>

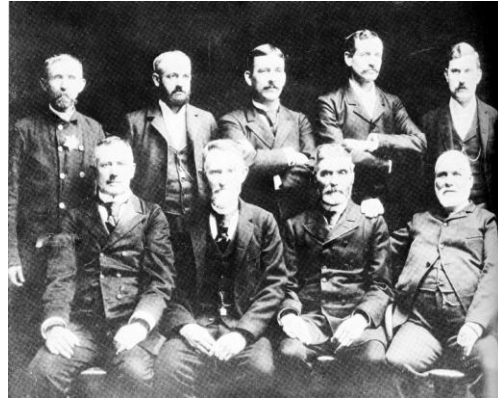


Figure 20 – David Denny front row, second from left, on Seattle City Council, circa 1890. (Courtesy MOHAI.) Note the sheriff back row, left.

On February 7, 1865, the first legislative act of the Trustees was an ordinance levying a municipal tax.<sup>223</sup> The tax provided for wooden sidewalks on Front Street. They also immediately passed a law forbidding “reckless and fast driving through the streets” and prohibited swine from running at large within the town limits.<sup>224</sup>

This form of city government did not last long. As the city grew to over 1,500 inhabitants the population in general did not like the current city form of government. The territorial legislature repealed Seattle’s city charter on January 18, 1867. Seattle received a new city charter on December 2, 1869. David Denny apparently did not choose to run for city office this time.<sup>225</sup>

Bagley devotes most of an entire chapter, *The Municipal Government*, to Seattle’s city government from 1865 to the time of David Denny’s death in 1903. It appears all of the major elected and appointed figures are mentioned and David Denny is only mentioned again as being appointed to the Seattle City Council to serve during the latter part of George W. Hall’s 1890-1892 term after he resigned.<sup>226</sup>

No reference was found indicating David Denny, unlike his brother Arthur, ever had an official role in state government.

## David Denny’s Wealth

In 1882 Seattle was estimated to have a population of 5,000 and an assessed valuation of over \$4,000,000. In 1884 David Denny’s was third in assessment value for a private

<sup>222</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 545.

<sup>223</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 545.

<sup>224</sup> Watt, 324.

<sup>225</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 546.

<sup>226</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 545-553, 559-561.

citizen, with an assessed worth of \$206,565. His brother Arthur's was first with an assessed worth of \$266,155.<sup>227</sup>

David and his family enjoyed the opportunities his wealth offered. Near the present town of Snoqualmie there were large hop farms. The major hop farm had its own hotel offering tourist opportunities to view nearby Snoqualmie Falls and the hop farms while relaxing in the tourist facility. The David Denny family, as well as other prominent Seattle families, spent time at this hotel and farm.<sup>228</sup>

## The Washington Improvement Company Canal

During the 1860s and 1870s the idea developed that cutting a channel between Lake Washington and Lake Union would greatly improve transportation between the two areas. The United States government conducted several surveys but nothing was done.<sup>229</sup>

David Denny had large holdings of land on Lake Union and no great foresight was required in the prediction of a proposed canal, when completed, would benefit the property owners of the shores of Lake Union.<sup>230</sup>

The first actual work accomplished to any degree of success toward linking Lake Washington with Lake Union was undertaken by the Lake Washington Improvement Company, which organized on March 3, 1883. The incorporators of this company were David T. Denny [and eleven other prominent men.] This company capitalized for \$50,000...

The concern proposed to construct a canal with accompanying locks a few hundred feet south of the route which is followed by the completed canal. They proposed to connect Lakes Washington and Union with Puget Sound through Shilshole Bay. The initial portion of the work started by the corporation was to link Lakes Washington and Union....

Late in January, 1894 work ... began on the cut between the lakes and in about a year water was running through it. A small lock was also constructed.<sup>231</sup>

The canal lowered the waters of Lake Washington by several feet. The lowering of the waters in Lake Washington uncovered many thousands of acres of rich soil that were almost immediately put under intensive cultivation. Lowering the water also caused the Black River to dry up and the Cedar River to be diverted into Lake Washington. This allowed for a flow through the lake that kept it fresh and pure as opposed to the stagnant conditions that had developed previously.<sup>232</sup> Through this canal millions of feet of logs were brought

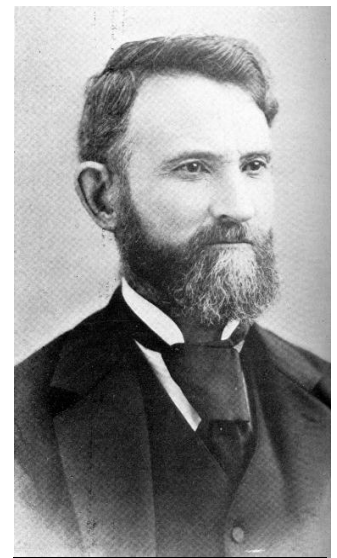


Figure 21 – David Denny, circa 1880. (Copyright 1909, from *Blazing the Way*, p 209, by Emily Inez Denny.)

<sup>227</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 547.

<sup>228</sup> Warren, *King County and its Emerald City: Seattle*, 190.

<sup>229</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 371, 372.

<sup>230</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 374.

<sup>231</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 388.

<sup>232</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 386.

from Lake Washington into Lake Union to David Denny's sawmill and other sawmills on its shores.<sup>233</sup>

The Lake Washington Improvement's canal, while providing for a flow of water between the two lakes was not deep enough for navigation by large ships. The Lake Washington Improvement Company decided that continuing the canal from Lake Union to Puget Sound was beyond their engineering and financial ability. With most of the financing being provide by the federal government the canal to Puget Sound with two major links was opened on October 12, 1916. On May 8, 1917, the canal between Lake Union and Lake Washington was open for navigation by large ships after it was enlarged.<sup>234</sup>

Often Bagley's *History of King County* volumes and his *History of Seattle* volumes use the exact same words for chapters covering the same material, but for the canal material, the material is sufficiently different that it is worthwhile to examine both. Building the canal was a costly, and at times a very controversial, issue.<sup>235</sup>

## David Denny and Banking

While David Denny's brother Arthur was involved with many banks, only one reference to David Denny being involved in the banking business was discovered. Bagley lists about twenty banks in operation in Seattle by the 1880s. Eight individuals, including David Denny, incorporated the Bank of North Seattle in January, 1889. The capital involved was \$50,000. This is the amount that most of the banks started with but some were capitalized for \$200,000.<sup>236</sup>

## David Denny and Schools

For twelve years David Denny served as school director. During that time the big Denny School was put up on Denny Way. For at least one term he was regent of the State University.<sup>237</sup>

With the completion of the Denny school building in 1884, at a cost of \$35,000, the school system had grown great enough to have a city superintendent. The Denny School, named in honor of David T. Denny, was built after the voters had decided to sell the North school property in Denny's addition. The building was demolished in December 1928.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 68.

<sup>234</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 388-394.

<sup>235</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 473 – 479 and Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 371 - 397.

<sup>236</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 473-479.

<sup>237</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 66, 68.

<sup>238</sup> Bagley, *History of King County Washington*, vol. 1, 498.

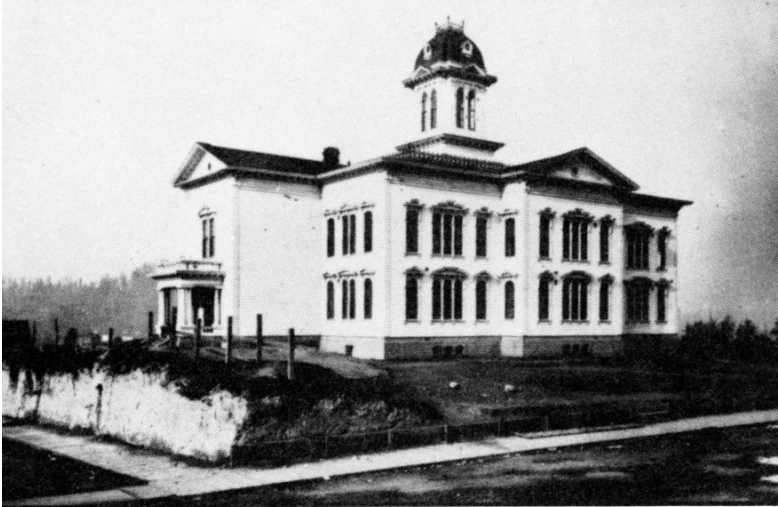


Figure 22 – Denny School before two wings were added. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collection Division, A. Curtis, PH Coll 482.)

## Temperance Movement

The abuse of alcohol was perhaps the most contentious issue to incite Seattle women to action. The temperance movement, involving both men and women, arose in reaction to the social consequences of the astounding amounts of alcohol consumed during Seattle's early years. Drinking was widespread even among children and it had a dramatic effect on family life. Much of the hostility between whites and Native Americans was blamed on alcohol.<sup>239</sup>

As early as 1866 the Independent Order of



Figure 23 – David Denny's membership certificate in the Washington Temperance Society, 1874. (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections.)

<sup>239</sup> Buerge, 66.

Good Templars was formed. The temperance movement was very much in thought at the time. In David Denny's first town plat he filed such street names as "Victory," "Light," "Banner," and "Temperance."<sup>240</sup> David Denny, with others, felt very keenly the white man's responsibility in preventing the Indians from getting whiskey. He helped organize the Seattle Good Templar Lodge and became a charter member on October 4, 1866. He was the first chaplain of the first lodge of the I. O. G. T. organized in Seattle. He was under consideration to be the Prohibition Party candidate for governor of Washington State.<sup>241</sup> David Denny once said, "Drinking did more to ruin the Indians than any other thing." The Good Templars held big rallies and paraded in Fourth of July parades. One of their first speakers was Suzan B. Anthony who spoke at an 1871 rally.<sup>242</sup>

Regarding the growing national appeal to prohibit the sale of liquor, Seattle declared Temperance Week in late January, 1883. Mrs. Francis E. Willard, the president of the national Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) spoke. As a result a local chapter of the WCTU was founded.<sup>243</sup>

In 1883 women were granted the right to vote in Washington territorial elections. Almost immediately the power of the women's vote was felt in the area of social reform. The women's zeal and action for moral reform sufficiently irritated the powerful men of the community to revoke the women's voting privileges.<sup>244</sup>

It was obvious in the early 1880s that several city officials were in support of the saloon trade and other activities that were found morally objectionable to many citizens. In January, 1884 David Denny, with his brother Arthur's son Roland and two others, were elected officers of the Law and Order League. It supported honest city and county officials in the strict enforcement of the law, helped prosecute lawbreakers, and enacted new laws. The league actively recruited women and their influence. The Law and Order League put up a number of candidates for the election of 1884. Because there were a number of apple trees in the lots where the Law and Order League held its meetings, the party was called the Apple Orchardists. Their candidate for mayor, George Kinnear, lost, but many of their other candidates won. The Apple Orchardists were able to exert enough pressure to bring about strict enforcement of the liquor laws. As a result, many saloons shut down and the sale of liquor on Sunday was restricted. The worst fears of the opposition party were realized however. The men who came to Seattle on Sunday, their only day off, from the mines surrounding the city intending to have a drink and enjoy themselves, instead went to Tacoma and other cities where what they wanted was still available.<sup>245</sup>

By 1885, with tightening economic conditions Seattle seemed to have tired of reform. Businesses organized to defeat the Apple Orchardists. With the events involving the Chinese riots (see next section) and the reduction of salaries because of the economic conditions, the Apple Orchardists faced a tough situation and most of their reforms were soon reversed.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Watt, 337.

<sup>241</sup> Emily Denny, 207, 208, Newell, 99, Bagley, "History of Seattle," vol. 2, 705.

<sup>242</sup> Watt, 337, 338.

<sup>243</sup> Buerge, 66.

<sup>244</sup> Buerge, 66.

<sup>245</sup> Buerge, 80, 81.

<sup>246</sup> Buerge,



The Good Templars Lodge had waxed and waned between its founding in 1866 and the late 1880s. Membership varied between a dozen or so and 300, with an average of about 75. In the late 1880s the national Temperance Movement came to Seattle and with the national organization promoting it, the local membership swelled. Evidence abounds that the core of the movement came from the Queen Anne Town<sup>247</sup> population. In 1892 Queen Anne Town residents joined with those immediately surrounding them in submitting a petition to the Seattle City Council with 120 signatures.<sup>248</sup>

We, the undersigned citizens, ... lovers of sobriety, and being opposed to the "Liquor Traffic," do hereby earnestly beg of your honorable body and pray that you do not [*sic*] grant an extension of the saloon limits, to or within our borders.<sup>249</sup>

The Seattle City Council granted the ban on saloons in the broad North Seattle area. One group that responded with a thank you was the Lake Union Christian Temperance Union.<sup>250</sup>

The Lake Union Women's Christian Temperance Union [WCTU] hereby tender you their most hearty congratulations and thanks for your prompt action upon the "closing ordinance" for saloons....<sup>251</sup>

In 1890 Queen Anne Town leaders moved the community's needs into the political arena. Under the name Prohibition Party, with temperance as their political rallying point, a slate of candidates was drawn up together with a party platform that challenged city hall on many issues besides temperance. There was concern about grading streets, providing water and sewer systems and developing a fire protection system. While the party operated throughout Seattle, Queen Anne residents were in leadership with Dillas Ward running for mayor and David Denny running for city treasurer. The Prohibitionist candidates did not win any positions in 1890, but they demonstrated that they had considerable strength in the city. The party would continue throughout the county, state and country for several years.<sup>252</sup>

David Denny was also a supporter of women's suffrage. Emily Denny indicates David Denny was a Republican and an abolitionist during the time prior to the Civil War and during it.<sup>253</sup>

## **Anti-Chinese Incidents**

By 1885 the Chinese had been immigrating for more than a generation into Seattle and other northwest and Pacific Coast cities and villages. A series of treaties, mostly designed

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<sup>247</sup> Queen Anne Town referred to the area including Queen Anne hill and immediate surroundings.

<sup>248</sup> Reinartz, 77.

<sup>249</sup> Reinartz, 77.

<sup>250</sup> Reinartz, 77.

<sup>251</sup> Reinartz, 77.

<sup>252</sup> Reinartz, 77, 78

<sup>253</sup> Emily Denny, 207, 208.

to protect American interests in China, had guaranteed the right of people of either country to immigrate to the other. Most of the Chinese who came to America worked for low wages, did tasks more dangerous than others would undertake and lived under conditions others found intolerable. They were perceived as posing a threat to white workers coming to the west because they would do as much or more for less pay. As a result, in 1892 Congress passed a Restriction Act prohibiting further immigration and denying permanent residence to Chinese already here who were not yet citizens. This law was not usually enforced until white workers began to find it hard to find work, and the large companies liked the ability to hire cheap workers, for example, for railroad building.<sup>254</sup>

Movements were becoming common throughout the Pacific Coast to expel the Chinese. Organized groups were becoming violent and adopted the slogan, "The Chinese must go." The culmination came in 1885 with violence, arson and murder in Colorado, Washington and other parts of the Pacific Coast.<sup>255</sup>

By 1885 animosity began to grow in Seattle, Tacoma and other cities over the presence of the Chinese. Probably the first incident in the Seattle area occurred at Squak [Issaquah] on the hop farm of the Wold Brothers. A group of whites set fire to shacks that the Chinese workers lived in, killing three.<sup>256</sup>

A combination of racism and fear of competition on the job market led to violent confrontation in Seattle between those defending the Chinese civil rights and those determined to deport them, as happened shortly before in Tacoma.<sup>257</sup> Two opposing sides formed on the issue, those favoring forceful expulsion of the Chinese, "the Anti-Chinese Party," and those indicating support for them staying or at least being expelled under controlled legal means, "the Open House Party."<sup>258</sup> It is not the purpose here to detail the events of the Anti-Chinese riots in Seattle, but to indicate the part in which David Denny played and how it affected his future popularity with many Seattleites. Details of the Anti-Chinese events in Seattle can be found in several sources.<sup>259</sup>

David Denny wrote a letter that appeared in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, on October 1, 1885, where he made the following comments as summarized by Sale:

1. Denny had spent two thousand dollars during the past year hiring foreign born, but non-oriental laborers, because times were hard. Thereafter, he wondered if he had done the right thing.
2. Denny said there were 2 million unemployed in the country and only 150,000 Chinese. If the Chinese would be evicted, who would be next?

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<sup>254</sup> Sale, 37, 38.

<sup>255</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 455.

<sup>256</sup> Sale, 39. Sale discusses the trial held in October 1885, concerning this incident and the part David Denny played concerning the trial, but I had difficulty understanding from the discussion the parts the various people played including David Denny so I have not included it here, see Sale, 42, 43.

<sup>257</sup> Reinartz, 71.

<sup>258</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 459.

<sup>259</sup> The best source for finding the day-by-day development in Seattle is the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* of the time, as it covered the incidents with fairly unbiased reporting. Also see Robert Wynne, *Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, 1850 – 1910*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1964. Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 455 – 477, provides a comprehensive summary. Sale, 37 – 49 provides a short summary as does Warren, *King County and its Emerald City; Seattle*, 79 - 84.

3. Denny wanted to know who could tell him whom he can and cannot employ.<sup>260</sup>

This letter puts David Denny on the side of the “Open House Party.”

A letter written opposing the views presented in David Denny’s letter generally supported the cause of evicting the Chinese from America, because they took jobs away from Americans, they were a “low class people with bad morals,” and big corporations liked them because they provided cheap labor.<sup>261</sup>

On November 3, 1885 mobs in Tacoma burned Chinese dwellings and forcibly made them board trains and leave the area. Federal troops were ordered to Seattle on February 7, 1886. Mobs were on the move on February 7 and gunfire erupted on the Seattle waterfront on November 8. Several in the Anti-Chinese mobs were wounded and their leader was killed as troops surrounding a large group of Chinese tried to defend them.<sup>262</sup>

Emily Denny discusses some specific events relating to David Denny and these events. She indicates that David Denny supported the position that the Chinese situation should be handled with law and order. This led to him being disliked by many Seattleites for the rest of his life.

This [financial dealing during the Panic of 1893] was not the only occasion when the canaille [the mob, rabble] expressed their disapproval.

Previous to, and during the Anti-Chinese riot in Seattle, which occurred on Sunday February 7, 1886, he [David Denny] received a considerable amount of offensive attention. In the dark district of Seattle there gathered one day a forerunner of the greater mob which created so much disturbance, howling that they would burn him out. “We’ll burn his barn,” they yelled, their provocation being that he employed Chinese house servants and rented ground to Mongolian gardeners. The writer [Emily Denny] remembers that it was a fine garden, in an excellent state of cultivation. No doubt many of the agitators themselves had partaken of the products thereof many times, it being one of the chief sources of supply of the city.

The threats were so loud and bitter against the friends of the Chinese that it was felt necessary to post a guard at his residence. The eldest son was in Oregon, attending the law school of the university; the next one, D. Thos. Denny, Jr., not yet of age, served in the militia during the riot; the third and youngest remained at home ready to help defend the same. The outlook was dark, but after some serious remarks concerning the condition of things, Mr. Denny went upstairs and brought down his Winchester rifle, stood it in a near corner and calmly resumed his reading. As he had dealt with savages before, he stood his ground. At a notorious trial of white men for unprovoked murder of Chinese, it was brought out that “Mr. David Denny was a ‘fliend’ [friend, apparently spoken by a Chinese witness] of Chinese”, [Indian and Negro.]<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Sale, 41.

<sup>261</sup> Sale, 41.

<sup>262</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 462, 469, 470.

<sup>263</sup> Emily Denny, 211, 212.

In 1884 and 1885 several home guard companies were organized to provide a body of men to aid the civil officers in resistance to any mob that might gather. One of these companies, the Seattle Rifles, was organized in May 1884. David T. Denny is shown as a private in this group. As described above, this was probably not David Denny but his son David Thomas Denny, Jr. However, since these groups were formed by volunteers and were to be ready to fight mob action, it can be assumed that those in the units were of the “Open House Party” and David Denny Jr. would be of the same belief as his father. It was apparently Captain George Kinnear’s home guard company that fired on the mob. This was not the company David Denny Jr. was in.<sup>264</sup>

In 1886 citizens of Washington Territory who supported the rights of the Chinese formed the Loyal League. Twenty-four men and women living in North Seattle were founding members of the organization. It took courage to join as they were going against the current popular mood of the time. In addition to David and Louisa Denny, four of the Denny children, Emily Inez Denny, Madge Denny, John B. Denny and Loretta Denny are shown on the membership list.<sup>265</sup>

Two ships carried away over three hundred Chinese and most of the others gradually left the area under peaceful, if stressful, conditions. The city remained under martial law until February 22, 1886 and the federal troops were kept for several months. While several persons were tried for criminal actions, no one was convicted.<sup>266</sup>

Much bitterness remained, kept alive by “unscrupulous newspapers and noisy demagogues.” Those who had wanted mob action against the Chinese formed the “Peoples Party.” The Seattle election in July of 1886, saw those who had sided with a law and order policy, the Open House Party, defeated by those who had been in the Anti-Chinese Party, now called the “Peoples Party.” Arthur Denny, who had sided with the law and order position, was defeated for mayor by 41 votes out of about 2,400. The whole city and county governments were by election turned over to the sympathizers, if not actual participants, of those that led in the use of unlawful acts during the preceding twelve months.<sup>267</sup>

## Methodist Episcopal Church

David Denny was a life long faithful member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He usually served in some official capacity offering valuable assistance to those in need with both action and pocketbook. In 1888 and 1892 he served as a lay delegate to the General Conference.<sup>268</sup>

In 1882, David Denny headed the board of trustees for Seattle’s second Methodist congregation that established the Battery Street Methodist Episcopal Church. This church moved from its Belltown location to Queen Anne in 1904. A permanent building was built in 1906 at 1606 Fifth Avenue West. The Queen Anne Methodist Episcopal Church

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<sup>264</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 471 – 476.

<sup>265</sup> Cornelius Hanford, *Seattle and Environs*, (Seattle: Pioneer History Publishing Co., 1924), 122.

<sup>266</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 476.

<sup>267</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2, 476.

<sup>268</sup> Emily Denny, 213.

was renamed Queen Anne United Methodist Church after a denominational merger in 1968.<sup>269</sup>

In 1889 Louisa Denny donated a building site for Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church and parsonage. The church was built at Kentucky and Mercer Streets. David Denny donated lumber for both these Queen Anne churches. The lower Queen Anne church was closed in 1915 and about half the congregation moved to the one at the top of the hill on Fifth Avenue West.<sup>270</sup>

## Great Seattle Fire

Seattle's rapid growth during the late 1880s developed the conditions ripe for a large fire that many American cities apparently had at some early part of their growth.

The overturning of a glue pot at 2:45 p.m., June 6, 1889, in Victor Clairmont's woodworking shop at the rear of a building located at the southwest corner of First Avenue and Madison Street, was the cause of what might easily have been taken to be an overwhelming disaster, but in truth turned out to be the first step in the growth of a new and mightier city. In about seven hours the entire business section was reduced to ruin.<sup>271</sup>

David Denny, with his main business and land interests being north of the fire, suffered only the loss of his downtown house. Arthur Denny, whose business ventures were all in the fire area, suffered severe loss. Arthur Denny, however, did not let the losses get him down, and he was one of the major players in getting Seattle rebuilt.<sup>272</sup>

## Sewer Systems

In the 1880s each house in North Seattle had its own outhouse over an open cesspool. Dirty water from household cleaning, bathing and dishwashing was thrown onto the ground, usually very close to the house. These activities quickly resulted in a high level of pollution. The problem was augmented by the rainy climate. In the 1870s, a simple public sewer system was built in the central part of Seattle. Primitive flush toilets were installed and sewage was carried via wooden box sewer pipes and dumped into Elliot Bay, Lake Union and Lake Washington. Most of the North Seattle sewage ended up in Lake Union.<sup>273</sup>

In December 1885, the City of Seattle passed an ordinance requiring all inhabited property to be connected to existing sewer lines. The city failed to follow up by implementing the law as the city expanded. The key problem was how to dispose of the enormous volume of sewage. In the 1890 election the Prohibition Party, led by the same Queen Anne residents, played a key role in the political debate.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Reinartz, 142. [Note: The author of this monograph was surprised by this information about David Denny. I grew up on Queen Anne hill and attended this church from 1950 until the late 1950s. My mother attended until her death in 1990. I was never aware of David Denny and the Denny family being involved with its original founding.]

<sup>270</sup> Reinartz, 142.

<sup>271</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 419.

<sup>272</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 419 - 428.

<sup>273</sup> Reinartz, 80.

<sup>274</sup> Reinartz, 80, 81.

After the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, Lake Union rapidly deteriorated into a cesspool. David and Louisa Denny, observing this, drew up a protest petition that was strongly supported by their neighbors in North Seattle. Seventy-eight residents signed the following petition to the City of Seattle.

We the undersigned residents of the Northern part of the City of Seattle, having learned of a project to use Lake Union as a cesspool, and having also learned of a remonstrance having been presented to your Hon. Body against the use of the same lake for such purposes, even temporarily, we wish to hereby add our protest in strong terms, against any such action of the city authorities.<sup>275</sup>

The city engineer and health officer both agreed that turning the city's lakes into open cesspools would be disastrous and began looking for another solution. The plan developed would divide the city into districts, with each district having a collection point. The sewage would then be transported to Puget Sound through eight inch and larger mains, tunnels and outlets. Storm waters would still be drained into the lakes. This plan proved too costly and was not acted on.<sup>276</sup>

The City of Seattle continued to favor simply dumping sewage into the lakes, particularly Lake Union since it was the closest and therefore the cheapest. Thomas Mercer and David Denny continued to be at the forefront of trying to get some action. They petitioned the city with an ugly description of what the city's plan would do to Lake Union. They said it would transform the lake into a "murky, bubbling cesspool of deadly poisonous waters, discharging noxious gases and emitting indescribably repulsive odors." They indicated the residential area exposed to this was supposed to be one of the city's most desirable residential districts. They also pointed out that Lake Union was the main water supply for 500 families in North Seattle served by the Union Water System. The Union Water System was now getting most if its water from Lake Union. The pollution of the lake waters with sewage would leave North Seattle residents without water and the Union Water System, of which David Denny was a principal, with a major business loss.<sup>277</sup>

Under pressure from the North Seattle residents, as well as advice from the city engineers, it was decided to go ahead with the plan to construct underground piping to Puget Sound. This proved to be more difficult than expected with the technology of the time since the tunnel was from 50 feet to 150 feet underground. Many cave-ins and undiggable areas required the tunnel to have sections rerouted. The expense of digging the tunnel used all the money needed for sewer mains and connections from individual users. As late as 1892, three-quarters of the area within the city limits and half the population were without sewer service. The issue was finally settled by the city agreeing to pay for the sewer mains and the individual property owners being assessed the cost of installing the lateral sewer lines servicing their property.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Reinartz, 81.

<sup>276</sup> Reinartz, 81.

<sup>277</sup> Reinartz, 81.

<sup>278</sup> Reinartz, 81 – 83.

It was not until the period between 1907 and 1909 that sewer and water mains were in place throughout the Queen Anne area.<sup>279</sup> It was probably shortly before this time that water and sewer lines came to the Denny Cabin. Probably the Denny Cabin during its first few years of use did not have indoor plumbing or a running water tap.

## Electric Lighting

Electric lighting was introduced in Seattle in 1885. The Union Electric Company, formed in 1890, served North Seattle and Queen Anne. Most of the mansions built on Queen Anne in the 1890s had incandescent lights. Street lighting was haphazard in the 1880s and 1890s, with incandescent lighting slowly replacing gas lamps piecemeal. There was no uniform design or standards in the street lighting fixtures. Queen Anne residents complained in 1890 that there was not a single streetlight along Republican Street from Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue) to the waterfront.<sup>280</sup> The Denny Cabin was located at the southwest corner of Republican Street and Temperance Avenue.

Figure 15 (repeated here as Figure 24<sup>281</sup>) shows the Denny Cabin shortly after it was built. The original of Figure 24 is in the University of Washington Special Collections

and shows a street light just to the right of the Denny Cabin, indicating street lighting was present when the Denny Cabin was first used. There is a utility pole outside to the left of the cabin, but it is uncertain what it supplied. It is not known therefore if the



Figure 24 – Denny Cabin, May 1889, Showing Light Standard.  
(Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division. PH Coll 548, Negative Lindsley 5942.)

Denny Cabin had electric lights inside when first built in 1889, but the owner would probably have added them shortly thereafter if it did not have them at the start.

Because of the aggressive petitioning of the city for electricity and lighting by the outspoken Queen Anne residents, the Queen Anne area had one of the best street lighting

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<sup>279</sup> Reinartz, 92.

<sup>280</sup> Reinartz, 83.

<sup>281</sup> While Figures 15 and 24 are from the same source Figure 15 shows a better view of the people in front of the Denny Cabin without the light standard and Figure 24 shows the light standard to the right of the Denny Cabin but the people are a little fuzzy.

systems in the city by the late 1890s.<sup>282</sup> David Denny and the Prohibition Party centered in the North Seattle area would have been active in these petitions.

## Telephone Service

The Sunset Telephone Company opened its first office in Seattle in 1884. By 1890 the system served the entire city.<sup>283</sup> The utility pole to the left of the Denny Cabin in Figures 15 and 24 may therefore be a newly-installed telephone pole or a previously-installed power pole serving electricity.

## Seattle Children's Home

The Seattle Children's Home is said to be the oldest charity in the city still surviving. It was founded as an orphanage and it evolved into Washington's first comprehensive health center for children. The Ladies' Relief Society, whose mission was to assist the poor and destitute, "regardless of creed, nationality, or color", planned for it in 1884. In 1885 the Society opened the orphanage in temporary quarters. David and Louisa Denny donated two lots near the Denny School at Harrison Street and Fourth Avenue N. for construction of an orphanage.<sup>284</sup>

Using relief funds donated after the Great Seattle Fire in 1889, the Ladies' Relief Society purchased 29 lots between Ninth and Tenth Avenues W. and Crockett and McGraw Streets on Queen Anne Hill. The new Seattle Children's Home on this land opened in 1905. The Seattle Children's Home developed into a specialist for children's mental health. It has expanded into six buildings and treated over 100 clients at a time. The children were no longer mostly orphans, but children from homes that could no longer provide for them.<sup>285</sup>

Today the Seattle Children's Home, located at 2142 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue West in Seattle is still in operation.<sup>286</sup>

## Panic of 1893

Bagley describes the extreme conditions of the Panic of 1893.

One of the greatest financial panics of the century struck the country in 1893. It had been plainly approaching for several years, and had been heralded from Europe, South American and other parts of the world. There had been enormous and general speculation in real estate, in railroad securities and in other elements and features of business and commerce. All had been overdone.

It seemed to be the general desire to contract debts; and money was

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<sup>282</sup> Reinartz, 83.

<sup>283</sup> Reinartz, 83.

<sup>284</sup> Reinartz, 154.

<sup>285</sup> Reinartz, 154, 155.

<sup>286</sup> [www.seattlechildrenshome.org](http://www.seattlechildrenshome.org), accessed December 27, 2010.



easily obtained by everybody for everything. The states, counties and cities, towns and districts all had the mania, and were only restrained in many instances by the legal limits set upon them. Even this was not operative in all cases, and many a community found itself burdened with debts far beyond the limit.

.... There had been a steady shrinkage of real estate and general business for three years, and substantial citizens had been greatly impoverished thereby. [This is referring to the country as a whole.]

The period of shrinkage, depression and disaster covered not less than seven years, 1890 to 1897, and was much longer than any other in Pacific Coast history....

Newspapers, churches, steamboat owners, manufacturers, merchants, all felt the pressure, and were compelled partially or wholly to yield thereto. Wages were much reduced. Clothing, groceries and farm products sold at lower prices than ever before. Rents went down until no landed properties could be made to pay interest, taxes, insurance and other charges, and failing so to do, many passed into new hands for sums less than the cost of improvements or less than the value of the land alone a few years before. Land depreciated from forty to eighty per cent and almost the only land sold for a number of years was by the sheriff for debt, by the treasurer for non-payment of taxes, and by arrangement between debtors and creditors.<sup>287</sup>

It was this major national Panic of 1893 that wiped out the fruits of more than four decades of privation, danger and hard work for David Denny. All of David Denny's railway lines were swept into bankruptcy. Everything else he owned was soon swept into the financial collapse that rose around him.<sup>288</sup> Land depreciated as much as 80 percent and the only land transfer was through the sheriff for debts. Many businesses went into receivership.<sup>289</sup>

When David Denny's many business enterprises employed hundreds of men, he paid them more than the prevailing wages. Although it was general knowledge that dishonest employees had frequently robbed him, David Denny never prosecuted one.<sup>290</sup> According to his daughter,

When urged to close down his mill, as it was running behind he said, 'I can't do it; it would throw a hundred men out of employment and their families will suffer.'" So he borrowed money, paying a ruinous rate of interest, and kept on, hoping that business would improve; it did not and the mill finally went under. A good many employees who received the highest wages for the shortest hours, struck for more, and others were full of rage when the end came and there were only a

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<sup>287</sup> Bagley, *History of King County*, vol. 1, 433, 434.

<sup>288</sup> Newell, 99.

<sup>289</sup> Paul Dorpat, *Seattle Now and Then*, vol. 2 (Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1986), 145.

<sup>290</sup> Newell, 99.

few dollars [available for] their wages.<sup>291</sup>

All of David Denny's good deeds were forgotten when the crash came. He borrowed money from the Seattle City Treasurer with real estate mortgages on his property. It turned out that the City Treasurer, Adolf Krug, was caught in a major scandal at the time for loaning money to his friend without security. David Denny was caught in the collapse and lost all the property he had used for the mortgages.<sup>292</sup>

The general attack he faced over these issues tarnished his lifelong reputation for honesty and fair play. He felt the loss of his reputation more than the loss of his money.

In the seven years from 1888 to 1895 David and Louisa Denny suffered more tragedy than most families experience in a lifetime. Two of their children were taken by death. The beautiful home on Queen Anne Hill and the farm on the swale [where the Seattle Center is now located]... even the site of the little log cabin above the bay [where they lived when first married] ... were gone, along with all the enterprises David Denny and his sons had founded. Almost overnight the man who was said to be one of Seattle's wealthiest citizens became one of the poorest. With the loss of his fortune and the attacks on his good name, came the loss of most of those who had claimed to be friends.<sup>293</sup>

One of the few banks that did not fail was Dexter Horton's bank, and David's brother Arthur was a vice-president. It held most of the creditor's claims against David Denny and filed to collect them.<sup>294</sup> David Denny had invested heavily when times were good but much of this was with promissory notes, such as the notes used to buy the holdings of Griffith's Electric Car Lines for \$212,000 in 1893. When David Denny's Rainier Power & Railway Company's financial troubles caused it to go into receivership, it was reorganized on January 25, 1895, as the Third Street & Suburban Railway Company. The streetcar episode was one of the most costly ventures of its kind in Seattle's history and it is estimated that up to \$3,000,000 was lost over it by all the investors.<sup>295</sup>

The stalwart young pioneer, David Denny, had arrived at "Smaqualmox" in 1851 with twenty-five cents in his pocket. By the end of the three years of litigation and foreclosures that followed the crash of 1893, he was left with less than that. And he was no longer young. By the time the last scraps of his estate were gobbled up by lawyers, creditors and courts, he was approaching the age of sixty-five.

Furthermore, Seattle was a far different place in 1895 than it had been in the 1850s. It was no longer a close-knit village of friends and neighbors, who shared what they had in times of want, but a city with a growing

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<sup>291</sup> Emily Denny, 212.

<sup>292</sup> Newell, 102, 103.

<sup>293</sup> Newell, 105.

<sup>294</sup> Dorpat, *Seattle Now and Then*, vol. 2, 145.

<sup>295</sup> Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, 435, 436, 440.

financial district as its heart.

This fact was brought home bitterly to David Denny when the banking firm of Dexter Horton & Company, of which his brother Arthur was the senior vice president, joined the other creditors to force his bankruptcy.<sup>296</sup>

### **Arthur Denny's Value to the Community**

David Denny's older brother Arthur Denny has usually been given the title of Seattle's founding father, not so much for being first as David Denny was, but for his business and community activities. Much has been written about him including Arthur Denny's own writings and biography<sup>297</sup>, so he will not be discussed in detail here.

In his autobiography Arthur Denny offered this about himself:

In my life work I have simply endeavored to meet obligations to my family and discharge my duty as a citizen to my country and the community in which I have lived. It has not occurred to me that I have accomplished anything above the ordinary, and if so, I should feel humiliated to claim it for myself.<sup>298</sup>

Probably David Denny would have felt the same way. David Denny put almost nothing in writing about himself.

Arthur Denny was much more involved with all levels of politics than David Denny. This included signing the document that led to Washington becoming a state in 1889 and serving in both the Washington Territorial legislature and the Washington State legislature. Arthur Denny was also more directed to banking and commercial business than David Denny was.<sup>299</sup>

Comments have appeared in the literature (and used in this monograph) that David Denny and Arthur Denny did not always get along and that when David ran into financial problems, Arthur took advantage of his brother's situation. Emily Denny, David's daughter, indicated in her book that she had no animosity toward her Uncle Arthur and thereby implies that she thought highly of her uncle.

It is my opinion that Arthur Armstrong Denny led an exemplary life and that he ever desired to do justice to others. If he failed in doing so, it was the fault of those with whom he was associated rather than his own.

A leading trait in his character was integrity, another the modesty that ever accompanies true greatness, noticeable also in his well known younger brother, D. T. Denny; neither has been boastful, arrogant or rasping for public honors.

A. A. Denny fought the long battle of the pioneer faithfully and well and sleeps in an honored grave.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Newell, 105.

<sup>297</sup> Arthur Denny.

<sup>298</sup> Arthur Denny, 12.

<sup>299</sup> See Arthur Denny's *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound* for his brief description of his activities.

<sup>300</sup> Emily Denny, 314.

It is interesting that in Clarence Bagley's series of volumes where he details the names of hundreds of people involved in business ventures, boards and organizations of various types, David Denny and Arthur Denny are never mentioned as being involved together in a business or organization after the initial settlement of Seattle.<sup>301</sup> [Author's note: Only twice have I found where they did do something together after the founding of Seattle. The first was when both Arthur and David Denny witnessed the April 1855 deed transferring the western half of Carson Boren's land claim to Edward Lander and Charles Terry.<sup>302</sup> The second was the Chronological Notes of the early settlement of that part of Washington Territory now embraced principally in King County and signed on January 1, 1880 by five early settlers, including the hand written signatures of David and Arthur Denny.<sup>303</sup> DC]

By the time Arthur Denny wrote his autobiography in 1888-1889, he had a low opinion of those who were then settling in the area, as compared to the earlier settlers of his original pioneering period.

[The original settlers earned everything they got] but we have a small class of very small people here now who have no good word for the old settlers that so bravely met every danger and privation, and by hard toil acquired, and by careful economy saved, the means to make them comfortable during the decline of life. These, however, are degenerate scrubs, too cowardly to face dangers that our pioneer men and women did, and too lazy to perform an honest day's work if it would procure them a homestead in Paradise. They would want the day reduced to eight hours and board thrown in.<sup>304</sup>

## David Denny's Value to the Community

Much of David Denny's value in the founding and development of Seattle has already been discussed. David Denny had the confidence of the community and was a community leader.

David Denny was called on to fill many positions of trust. Clarence Bagley in his classic *History of King County, Washington*, summarizes David Denny's accomplishments.

To David T. Denny belongs precedence in this list of pioneers [Bagley's books give short vignettes of many of Seattle's early pioneers and leaders]. As noted elsewhere, the three, Denny, Low and Terry, landed at Alki on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September, 1851, but Denny was the only one of the three who did not soon leave the region permanently. He was not twenty years of age until March 17, 1852 following, but, young as he was, he read the future clearly. It was

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<sup>301</sup> Bagley, *History of King County*, vol. 1, Bagley, *History of King County*, vol. 2, Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 1, Bagley, *History of Seattle*, vol. 2.

<sup>302</sup> Watt, 194.

<sup>303</sup> Included in Arthur Denny, 85, 86.

<sup>304</sup> Arthur Denny, 38.

his careful investigations and explorations that emboldened him to send to his brother and party waiting at Portland that fateful message, "Come at once."

The cabin commenced by the trio was left for Denny to finish, when Low and Terry returned to Portland. For three weeks, surrounded by swarms of strange Indians he maintained his lone outpost of civilization.

...

He soon gained the confidence of the local Indians. He learned to speak their native tongue – not the Chinook jargon – and his services as interpreter were often in demand.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January 1853, in the cabin of his brother, Arthur, he and Louisa Boren were united in marriage.... They were the first white couple married in Seattle. Their happy life together was unbroken for more than fifty years.

During this long period he exercised an important and lasting influence in the development of the city and surrounding region in many lines of endeavor. He was a conspicuous figure in commercial manufacturing and financial circles, and at the same time always prominent in the moral and religious life of the community. He was the highest type of upright, Christian manhood.

He was a member of Company C of the volunteer forces raised to protect the white settlers from Indian attacks and, with that company, scouted all over King County on outpost duty. During the battle of January 26, 1856, he was one of the most active of the little town's defenders.

During the winter he and two others had cut and hewn a lot of square timbers and hauled them out on the beach to send them to San Francisco, but when the urgent necessity arose for immediate erection of a protective block-house a lot of them went in the wall [of Fort Decatur.]

...

At times he held county offices – treasurer, commissioner and probate judge – also as city councilman.<sup>305</sup>

For commercial development, Seattle owes much to David Denny.

In the days of small beginnings, he recognized the possibility of the development in the little town so fortunately located. His hard earned wealth, energy and talents had been freely given to make the city of the present as well as that which it will be.

D. T. Denny [in 1865<sup>306</sup>] made a valuable gift to the city of Seattle in a plot of land in the heart of the best residence portion of the city. Many years ago it was used as a cemetery, but was afterward vacated and is now a park [Denny Park]. He landed on the site of Seattle with

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<sup>305</sup> Bagley, *History of King County*, vol. 1, 66, 68.

<sup>306</sup> Dorpat, vol. 1, Section 86, p. not numbered.

twenty-five cents in his pocket. His acquirement of wealth after years of honest work was estimated at three million [in 1909 dollars].

Not only his property, money, thought and energy have gone into the building up of Seattle, but hundreds of people, newly arrived, have occupied his time in asking information and advice in regard to their settling in the West.<sup>307</sup>

David Denny did not consider himself to be an inner member of the banking and business community so he chose not to join (or was not selected) to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce when it formed on April 17, 1882.<sup>308</sup> David Denny was also not among the members that formed plush Rainier Club around business interests in September 1888.<sup>309</sup>

Bagley does not show David Denny as a member in the highly influential Masonic Lodge that was first organized in August 1860, under a dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Washington, Free and Accepted Masons. Bagley seems to mention most of the influential leaders as members from 1860 until the mid 1870s, and David Denny is not among them.<sup>310</sup> He is not shown as a member during the first twenty years of the Odd Fellows, formed in August 1870, either.<sup>311</sup> It appears David Denny was not interested in joining the organizations that many of the more influential residents of Seattle joined. Most of the other major organizations came to Seattle after his death in 1903.

David and his brother contributed many things in common to the growth of Seattle but they also approached many things differently.

David was almost ten years younger than Arthur, and he lived far from the waterfront, near Lake Union; it is for him that Denny Way and Denny Park are named. He was like his brother in many ways, enterprising, hard-working, sober, a pillar of his church, generous with his land....

But there were crucial differences between the two brothers. When Seattle began its first boom period in the eighties and early nineties, David Denny became expansive, adapting his methods to those of a younger and more speculative breed ... who were into many schemes ... including mining, water, electricity, and real estate. In those later days David Denny was the pioneer to turn to if one had a plan that would be "good for Seattle" and one needed a respectable tone and a willing investor....

David Denny was no profligate or dreamer, but he did not have Arthur's sense of city land and city business.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Emily Denny, 209.

<sup>308</sup> Bagley, *"History of Seattle,"* vol. 2, 573.

<sup>309</sup> Bagley, *"History of Seattle,"* vol. 2, 577.

<sup>310</sup> Bagley, *"History of Seattle,"* vol. 2, 580, 581.

<sup>311</sup> Bagley, *"History of Seattle,"* vol. 2, 582.

<sup>312</sup> Sale, 26.

## David Denny's Final Home

For a time after the mansion on Queen Anne was taken from David and Louisa Denny, they lived in a small house near the northern edge of their old claim in Fremont. Holders of the Deficiency Judgment soon claimed that also. All that was left was a place at the family's old wilderness retreat at Licton Springs, [near where Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery is now located] which he had given to his daughter Emily in happier days. There in a small cabin David Denny lived out his final years with his wife Louisa.<sup>313</sup>



Figure 25 – David Denny's Cabin at Licton Springs, circa 1900. (Courtesy Lawrence Denny Lindsley Photographs, MOHAI, 1987.89.51.)

## David Denny's Mining Work

David Denny did not spend his final years feeling sorry for himself.

Instead he started over again, prospecting for gold in the High Cascades. The Esther, Louisa and Ivanhoe claims on the headwaters of Gold Creek were profitable for a few years until the vein "petered out" and his son Victor, then a skilled mining engineer and assayer, worked with him, driving pack trains from Licton Springs to the mountain mines and over dangerous trails from Gold Creek to Easton, the horses laden with gold ore to be shipped over the mountains by rail.<sup>314</sup>

In 1899, at the age of sixty-seven, he was given a contract to make improvements on the Snoqualmie Pass road across the Cascade Mountains. His report to the King County commissioners indicated he made 412 feet of bridges, put down 1,200 feet of corduroy, made 3,040 feet of new road and removed large amounts of rock from the road using

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<sup>313</sup> Newell, 109.

<sup>314</sup> Newell, 109.

nearly 200 blasts. The rugged old pioneer worked with the road crew, camping along the way and personally supervising the construction.<sup>315</sup>

During the summer of 1900 he returned to the Cascades for the last time, camping at Lake Keechelus, just east of Snoqualmie Pass to continue his mining activity. This was his last summer in his beloved woods.<sup>316</sup>

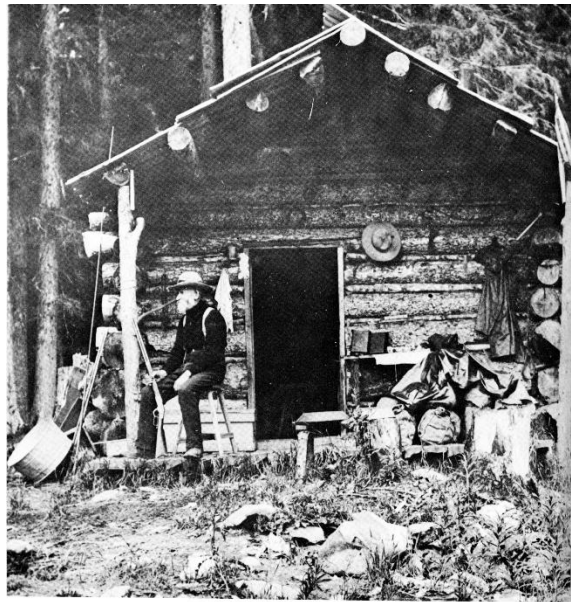


Figure 26 – David Denny at his mining claim in the **h**High **e**Cascades, 1899. (Courtesy MOHAI Photograph Collection, Image 2002.3.1470.)

### David Denny's Final Days

When Seattle started to spread, David Denny thought he could use some of his land holdings as a basis for a transportation system. In 1891 he built the Rainier Power and Railway Company.<sup>317</sup> This system operated single electric railway trolley cars from his holdings near the present Seattle Center and Lake Union, to what is now known as Wallingford and the University District. Unfortunately, riders were few. David's financial holdings collapsed with the Panic of 1893 that hit the entire nation. The value of land in the Seattle area depreciated by as much as eighty percent, making David's real estate holding almost worthless. He was unable to repay the loans he had financed for his railway and he faced the nightmare of bankruptcy.<sup>318</sup>

It was all the long-remembered Panic of 1893 that wiped out the fruits of more than four decades of privation, danger and toil . . . Everything he

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<sup>315</sup> Newell, 109. 113.

<sup>316</sup> Newell, 113.

<sup>317</sup> Crowley, 204.

<sup>318</sup> Dorpat, vol. 2, 144, 145.



owned was soon swept into the financial whirlpool that rose around him.<sup>319</sup>

Roberta Frye Watt describes David Denny's financial collapse from the viewpoint of the family.

... He grew to be a rich man but he did not stop there. He was in every way big city enterprise. He helped install the water system, the electric lights, and the street railway. To all these things he pledged himself and his fortune, that he might do greater things for his beloved city.

And then the crash came, the financial panic of '93', and David lost everything that he had crossed the plains to win. In terms of money he died a poor man. Every penny of his hard-earned wealth, which more than paid his obligations, was extracted from him.

Then, broken and sick and old, he turned again to the forest. All that he had left was a place in the wilderness that he had given to his daughter, where Washelli is now. When he left his city home for the last time he said as he paused at the door, and looked sadly about, "I'll never look upon Seattle again." Then, like a sorrowing father turning his back upon an ungrateful child, he went out of the city to his humble home in the woods.<sup>320</sup>

Gradually some maladies that had haunted him for years increased. As long as he could, he exerted himself in helping his family, especially in preparing the site for a new home. He suffered physically for several years and struggled against the infirmities of old age, never complaining and exhibiting great fortitude and patience. His mind was clear to the last and he was able to converse, to read and to give sound advice and opinions. He died on the morning of November 25, 1903, at the age of 72.<sup>321</sup>

The King County Register of Deaths shows the cause of death was Bright's disease.<sup>322</sup> Bright's disease is a kidney inflammation.<sup>323</sup>



Figure 27- Front-page *Seattle Daily Times*, November 25, 1903 announcing the death of David Denny. (Courtesy MOHAI.)

<sup>319</sup> Newell, 99.

<sup>320</sup> Watt, 378.

<sup>321</sup> Emily Denny, 227.

<sup>322</sup> Register of Deaths in King County State of Washington, Record No. 11997, Nov. 25, 1903, Washington Archives, Washington State Archives Digital Archives, <http://media.digitalarchives.wa.gov/wa.media/jpeg/>, accessed March 22, 2011.

<sup>323</sup> Websters, 182.

David Thomas Denny, who came to the site of Seattle in 1851, the first of his name on Puget Sound, died in his home, a mile north of Green Lake, at 3:36 yesterday morning. All the members of his family ... were at the bedside. Until half an hour before he passed away Mr. Denny was conscious, and engaged those about him in conversation.<sup>324</sup>

The Pioneer Association of the State of Washington presented a set of resolutions that include the following,

The record of no citizen was ever marked more distinctly by acts of probity [complete honesty in ones dealing], integrity and general worth than that of Mr. D. T. Denny, endearing him to all the people and causing them to regard him with the utmost esteem and favor.<sup>325</sup>

Gerald Nelson, who has apparently read some of David Denny's diaries (probably the ones at MOHAI), summarize what may be the true spirit of David Denny.

They [the diaries] are not filled with hoopla; rather they are reserved, taciturn, showing on the surface much of what the man himself must have shown. He "looked" at the great fire destroying his brother's city much as I imagine I would "look" at a Seafair parade today, on the surface showing nothing but inside wondering what was happening and what had happened to the corner of the wilderness he had wondered into.

David Denny doesn't fit into a history book. He was too quiet and perhaps too honest a child of nature to fit into the notion of progress that molds our country's history. Maybe sitting alone on Alki Point did something to him that we'll never know.<sup>326</sup>

## **David Denny's Burial at Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery**

What is now Aurora Avenue was originally called the North Trunk Highway. David Denny owned land on the North Trunk Highway at Oak Lake north of Green Lake. David Denny decided to turn 40 acres of his land into a cemetery for the purpose of relocating the remains of his son Jonathan from the old Seattle Cemetery.

Jonathan, one of a set of twins, lived only a few hours, [before he] died in 1867. Jonathan Denny was first buried in a Seattle churchyard cemetery at Second and Columbia. As that cemetery was replaced by businesses it was moved to the Old Seattle Cemetery. Since he has to be reburied for the third time, his parents decided to place him on family land. Thus began Oak Lake Cemetery (later Washelli) in 1884.

In 1891, David and Louisa Denny officially filed a plat of 40 acres

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<sup>324</sup> "David Thomas Denny," *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, November 26, 1903, p. not known.

<sup>325</sup> Emily Denny, 227, 228.

<sup>326</sup> Donald B. Nelson, "*Seattle Life and Times of an American City*," (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1977), 201.

as Oak Lake Cemetery. The dedication read, “The object ... in laying out this tract of land as a cemetery is to furnish a burial place for those who need the same irrespective of nationality, color or previous condition of servitude, where the rich and the poor will be on an equality, where the tax gatherers and the book agent will not ply their vocations.”<sup>327</sup>

David Denny is buried at Evergreen-Washelli Memorial Park in north Seattle. His tombstone reads **David T. Denny, born 1832, died 1903, Seattle Founder.**<sup>328</sup> Louisa Denny is buried beside him. Descendents of the sweet briar rose seeds that Louisa brought from Illinois with her grow around the family plot. Most of the land that Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery sits on was at one time the property of David Denny and large portraits of David and Louisa Denny hang in the main lobby. His electric railway car line used to run just to the west of the present grounds.<sup>329</sup>

David’s son Victor inherited the cemetery property and sold it to the American Necropolis Corporation in 1914. They renamed it Washelli Cemetery. Washelli is a Makah Indian word for west wind, which is the region of the hereafter for the Makah. Washelli Cemetery therefore means the cemetery of the land of the hereafter.<sup>330</sup>

[David Denny] recognized that the law of life is change and progress and as the frontier settlement gradually became a metropolitan city he adapted his plans to the new conditions and retained his position of leadership. As the years progressed he grew in the power of insight, of prompt and wise decision and of achievement. Although he took justifiable pride in his material success and in the honor which was accorded him because of his acknowledged ability he perhaps prized even more highly his reputation for the strictest honesty and integrity. His sobriquet was “honest Dave,” which indicates much of the confidence and the warm regard in which he was held by those who were associated with him. Although his work is done his influence is still potent and his place in the history of Seattle assured.<sup>331</sup>

## Denny Cabin between 1890 and 1965

Mrs. Ross Merrill is quoted as saying, “The building had many uses. It had been a tavern many years. It also was occupied by a kindergarten class and a men’s church group.”<sup>332</sup> Mrs. Ethel Grant, 4502 S.W. Austin St., Seattle, lived in the cabin in 1907 and 1908 with her parents Mr. And Mrs. Robert Howland and her brother and sister. Mrs. Grant said that others had used it as home before they moved in.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> Robin Shannon, “*Cemeteries of Seattle, Images of America Series*” (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 55.

<sup>328</sup> <http://www.findagrave.com>, accessed November 1, 2010.

<sup>329</sup> Shannon, 63. 66.

<sup>330</sup> Shannon, 55.

<sup>331</sup> Bagley, “*History of Seattle,*” vol. 2, 707.

<sup>332</sup> Lane, 29.

<sup>333</sup> Lane, 29.

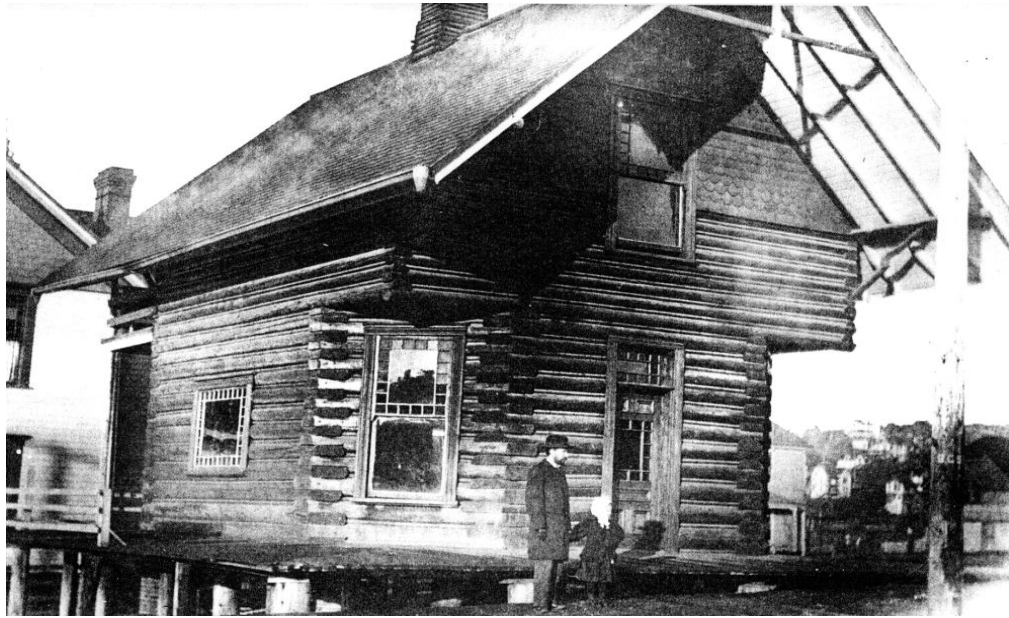


Figure 28 – Denny Cabin, circa 1900. (Courtesy Laura Kiehl and Paul Dorpat.)

The last business use of the cabin was as Green's Log Cabin Tavern. Green had originally opened Green's Tavern in 1927 in a building a block north on Queen Anne Avenue where the Uptown Theater was located but later moved to the cabin and used it as a tavern.<sup>334</sup>



Figure 29 – Denny Cabin, circa 1938. (Courtesy Washington Archives.)

<sup>334</sup> Reinartz, p. 165.



Figure 30 – Denny Cabin, May 16, 1938 in use as Green’s Tavern.  
(Courtesy Washington Archives.)



Figure 31 – Kiehle Family Home, circa 1938. Rear of  
Denny Cabin is just to the left. Stairs to second floor can be  
seen. (Courtesy Frederick Mann and Paul Dorpat.)

The only thing known about the interior of the cabin concerns its latter years of use as Green's Tavern. Kim Turner of the Queen Anne Historical Society provided the following information about the inside of Green's Tavern.

The interior as Green's Tavern was, as I remember, walk in through front door, bar to the back and on right side; jukebox on far left with pool table in between. Think I can remember six or eight bar stools in front of bar. It was not fancy. Can't remember how high the ceiling was. Nor can I remember seeing the stairs to the second floor.<sup>335</sup>



Figure 32 – Denny Cabin in use as Green's Tavern, circa 1938.  
(Courtesy Lawton Gowery.)

## Removal of the Denny Cabin from Queen Anne

David Denny was a very religious man and a strong believer in temperance so he would not have been pleased with the use of the structure for a tavern.<sup>336</sup> He hated to see liquor sold to anyone, and especially to Indians. Denny felt so strongly about temperance that in platting the streets in the area he named four in a row, Temperance, Banner, Light, and Victory. He also named what is now Fairview Avenue, Prohibition Street.<sup>337</sup>

<sup>335</sup> Kim Turner Email to Dick Caster, October 7, 2010.

<sup>336</sup> Margaret Pitcairn Strachan, "D. T. Denny," *Seattle Times*, October 8, 1944, 2.

<sup>337</sup> Strachan, 2.

After the tavern closed, the building sat unoccupied. In 1966, the unoccupied building sat on a parcel that was being cleared for an International House of Pancakes Restaurant (IHOP). John McFarland, who had a contract from the pancake house to tear down or remove the building, tried to keep it in the Queen Anne area. He worked with Queen Anne activist, Mrs. Ross Merrill to



Figure 33 – IHOP built in 1966. Parking lot just to the right is where Denny Cabin stood. (Courtesy Paul Dorpat.)

move it to Kinnear Park or some other area on Queen Anne Hill, or maybe to Alki Point at the site of the original Alki Cabin.<sup>338</sup> They could not find a suitable place or arrange for the estimated \$2,500 required to move it. Ron Agostinelli, the real estate agent for the California firm developing the cabin site for the restaurant offered to keep the pioneer building at the restaurant location if individuals or groups from the community would maintain it.<sup>339</sup> Officials of the International House of Pancakes reluctantly decided they could not keep the building on its original site as it would occupy too much of the parking space and no one had come forward to guarantee maintenance.<sup>340</sup>

## Denny Cabin at Federal Shopping Way Historic Park

Jack Cissna, Federal Way attorney, insurance salesman and president of the Federal Way Commercial Club, indicated he would pay expenses to move the cabin to the Federal Shopping Way Shopping Center in Federal Way.<sup>341</sup>

The Denny Cabin was intended to become part of the pioneer-themed Heritage Village attraction at the Federal Shopping Way Shopping Center in 1966, although it actually was never placed on the grounds of the Heritage Park. It was placed on an empty space on the south end of the shopping center. Heritage Village was located on the north end.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Lane, 29.

<sup>339</sup> "Cabin May Remain On Queen Anne," *Seattle Times*, February 22, 1966, Third Section, 1.

<sup>340</sup> "Q. A. Log Cabin To Be Moved South," *Seattle Times*, March 4, 1966, p. not known.

<sup>341</sup> "Q. A. Log Cabin To Be Moved South," p. not known.

<sup>342</sup> See [www.federalwayhistory.org](http://www.federalwayhistory.org) for the article *Federal Shopping Way* by Dick Caster for details of Federal Shopping Way.



The move to Federal Way took place in March 1966. The plan was to dedicate the Denny Cabin in its new location at 7:45 p.m., July 4 1966. The roof and interior loft were not yet in place at this phase of reconstruction as it had been dismantled for the movement from Queen Anne. The dedication was to be the opening ceremony for Federal Way's Fourth of July celebration.<sup>343</sup>

The dedication at the new location did take place on July 4, 1966. Bob Gallo, representing the International House of Pancakes, turned over the deed for the former Queen Anne Denny Cabin to Linda Andrews, Miss Federal Way of 1966. The site was next to the Federal Way Library in the somewhat undeveloped south end of Federal Shopping Way. Present to also receive the deed were Clay Hartzell, president of the Federal Shopping Way Merchants Association and the Reverend Walter Peterson, representing the Federal Shopping Way property owners. Plans were described to the audience for the restoration of the Denny Cabin. The dedication ceremony was followed by a kiddies parade and a fireworks display.<sup>344</sup>



Figure 34 – Sketch of the Denny Cabin at Federal Shopping Way, circa 1966. (Courtesy HSFW.)

Cissna was experiencing financial problems at this time, so did not have the finances to place the cabin properly in Heritage Village. In the mid 1970s the Federal Shopping Way Shopping Center went out of business. Nothing was done with the Denny Cabin from that time until the 1980s. It suffered damage from vandals as well as the elements.

In 1985, the Issaquah City Council decided to allow the Issaquah Historical Society to move the cabin to Issaquah and use a city-owned site near the freeway for the cabin.<sup>345</sup> After much initial planning, the funding and details for moving the cabin to Issaquah were never completed.

### **Effort To Preserve Denny Cabin in Federal Way (1985- 1987)**

As a result of the continuing vandalizing of the Denny Cabin in its unrestored condition in the southwest end of the former Federal Shopping Way location, efforts were begun in 1985 to find a better location and find ways to preserve it. Marie Stowe Reed, Poverty Bay Historical Society, wrote a letter to Kris Lundt, Historic Preservation Officer for King County. The letter indicates that before the Denny Cabin could be moved, a new location must first be approved by Lundt's office. Reed was trying to have it placed on the King County Preservation List.<sup>346</sup> Similar letters were sent to Joseph Nagel, Director

<sup>343</sup> "Old Log Cabin Has New Site," *Seattle Times*, June 30, 1966, p. not known..

<sup>344</sup> "Seattle's Oldest Log Cabin Moved to Federal Way" from Federal Way Jaycees Collection, in the files of the HSFW, no date.

<sup>345</sup> Donna Seese, "Mystery cabin moving to Issaquah," *Federal Way News*, October 3, 1985, A-1.

<sup>346</sup> Letter, Marie Stowe Reed, Poverty Bay Historical Society to Kris Lundt, Historic Preservation Office [King County], *Denny Cabin Preservation*, May 30, 1985, in the files of the HSFW.



of King County Parks and Recreation,<sup>347</sup> and to a “Mary” (no last name) of the Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority.<sup>348</sup>

Reed’s letters got the King County Landmarks Commission to examine the Denny Cabin for including it on the 1985 list of King County Historic Landmarks.<sup>349</sup> Apparently because of many other possible additions to the list for that year, no finalizing action was taken to place the Denny Cabin on the King County Historic Landmarks list. Also, rules at the time required a building such as this to still be situated on the original site before it could be placed on the King County Historic Landmarks list, so it was not eligible.

By June 1985, the Federal Way Shopping Center, the new name for Federal Shopping Way, desired to expand and clean up the unsightly Denny Cabin area. Tom Hesselbrock, the shopping center manager, offered to give the Denny Cabin to anyone who would move it to a new location.<sup>350</sup> In May 1987, the then-current owner of the renamed Federal Way Shopping Center, Winston Management, Inc., offered the Denny Cabin to the Federal Way Junior Chamber of Commerce with the understanding that the Junior Chamber of Commerce would arrange to move the cabin.<sup>351</sup> The Washington State Jaycee Charities officially took possession of the Denny Cabin on August 7, 1987, with the understanding the Federal Way Jaycees would move it to a new location at their expense. The Washington State Jaycee Charities valued the Denny Cabin donation at \$500.00.<sup>352</sup>

The Federal Way Jaycees started a campaign to raise funds and develop a plan to move the Denny Cabin to a new location and restore it.<sup>353</sup> The Federal Way Jaycees found they were unable to accomplish this and the cabin continued to be unused and vacant. It appears the shopping center, then under new ownership, again assumed ownership of the Denny Cabin, because the Jaycees did not live up to their agreement to move the cabin.<sup>354</sup>

## **Effort To Preserve Denny Cabin in Federal Way (1988 - 1990)**

In 1988 the Federal Way Jaycees again worked on a plan to dismantle the Denny Cabin and move it to a more suitable site in the Federal Way area. This time the group wanted

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<sup>347</sup> Letter, Marie Stowe Reed, Poverty Bay Historical Society to Joseph Nagel, Director of King County Parks and Recreation Department, May 30, 1985, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>348</sup> Letter, Marie Stowe Reed, Poverty Bay Historical Society to Mary (no last name), Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, May 28, 1985, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>349</sup> Herb Belanger, “Log cabin may become landmark,” *Seattle Times*, June 12, 1985, H2.

<sup>350</sup> Ann Hagen, “Mystery cabin in the need of a new home” *Federal Way News*, June 19, 1985, A1.

<sup>351</sup> Letter, Frank Mudrovich, Regional Manager, Winston Management, Inc., Federal Way Shopping Center to Dr. Peffer, Federal Way Junior Chamber of Commerce, *Denny Cabin*, May 11, 1987, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>352</sup> Letter, Arthur Braden, President Washington State Jaycee Charities to Robert Mudrovich, Regional Manager, Winston Management, Inc., Federal Way, WA, August 7, 1987, in the files of the HSFW. Attachment 1 of the Braden letter indicates the Washington State Jaycee Charities accepted official ownership since they were in possession of an IRS 509(a)(1) designation allowing them to accept the donation and give Winston Management, Inc a tax deductible receipt while the Federal Way Junior Chamber of Commerce could not provide a tax deductible receipt.

<sup>353</sup> Letter Douglas H. Peffer, D. C., to Federal Way Jaycees, undated, 2 pages + 4 page attachment, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>354</sup> Letter Ted Joufflas, Western States Realty & Development, Inc. to Shirley L. Charnell, Historical Society of Federal Way, July 29, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

to renovate the neglected structure, and to use it as a museum and a gathering place for the Jaycees. Although there was no definite plan or specific site, Doug Pepper indicated he hoped a place could be found on county property to avoid paying taxes. The group hoped to get donations from local hardware and lumber yards to help restore the Denny Cabin. Robert Mundrovich, of Winston Management Inc., was again contacted to donate the Denny Cabin. Mundrovich was again willing to donate it to anyone who would remove it from the site.<sup>355</sup>

Moving the cabin shouldn't be too difficult, according to Pepper. A truck with a sling should be able to move dismantled sections, he said. Costs haven't yet been nailed down.<sup>356</sup>

Bette Simpson, a Federal Way resident, and a member of the King County Centennial Commission, was trying to get the Denny Cabin honored and restored as part of the upcoming 1989 celebration to honor Washington's Centennial.<sup>357</sup>

In May of 1988 Bruce Worthington of Michael Kemp-Slaughter prepared an appraisal for the Denny Cabin in order to determine its market value to aid in obtaining money to move it. "It is my opinion that the estimated market value as of the third day of May, 1988 is Four Thousand Five Hundred Dollars. (\$4,500)."<sup>358</sup>

In January 1989, proposed construction of a road by King County where the cabin stood forced some sort of action to be taken to save the Denny Cabin that was still standing at the southwest end of the Federal Way Shopping Center. The proposed north/south road behind the Federal Way Shopping Center was tentatively planned between South 312<sup>th</sup> Street and South 320<sup>th</sup> Street, cutting through the site where the cabin stood. Two other cabins left over from the Heritage Village sat at the north end of the shopping mall. These were the Barker Cabin, built by a homesteader to the area in 1883<sup>359</sup> and a cabin Jack Cissna claimed was built by the Hudson's Bay Company, although this was actually a replica.

If the road were built, the cabins would need to be moved or demolished.<sup>360</sup> The three remaining cabins were all that remained of the Heritage Village of Federal Shopping Way. Most of the rest was dismantled in 1969 after Jack Cissna's Federal Shopping Way mall became embroiled in financial and legal problems leading to bankruptcy.<sup>361</sup>

In January 1889, several members of the newly formed Historical Society of Federal Way (HSFW) proposed saving the Denny Cabin by linking it to the upcoming

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<sup>355</sup> Kurt Herzog, "Cabin fever, Jaycees envision old log house as museum," *Federal Way News*, February 17, 1988, A1.

<sup>356</sup> Herzog, A1.

<sup>357</sup> Herzog, A3.

<sup>358</sup> Bruce H. Worthington, ASA, Appraiser and Consultant, Lamb Hanson Lamb Appraisal Associates, Inc. *Appraisal of the Denny Cabin*, for Michael-Kemp-Slaughter, Job # 88-125, May 3, 1988, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>359</sup> Dick Caster, *The Barker Cabin*, June 10, 2003, [WWW.federalwayhistory.org](http://WWW.federalwayhistory.org). Soon to be revised.

<sup>360</sup> Michele Matassa Flores, "Group plans to save three historic cabins," *Seattle Times, South Times Today edition*, January 18, 1989, H2.

<sup>361</sup> Elizabeth Moore, "Restoration seen for cabin that survived Seattle fire," *Tacoma News Tribune*, April 13, 1989, 2. It appears this same article and photo appeared in *the Federal Way News on April 12, 1989*, Elizabeth Moore, "Restoration seen for cabin that survived Seattle fire," *Federal Way News*, April 12, 1989, E1

Washington State Centennial celebration. Doug Peffer, a Federal Way chiropractor and member of the HSFW, said, “the campaign to save the cabin could be linked to Washington’s centennial, which had spurred dozens of historical projects throughout the state.” Frank Murdovich, manager of the Federal Way Shopping Center, now owned by Federal Way Limited, again said that he would give any of the cabins to anyone who was able to move them.<sup>362</sup>

Evelyn Cissna, whose late husband, Jack Cissna, started Federal Shopping Way that included the Denny Cabin as part of a historic display, said,

“It would be a loss to the community if the cabins were moved [out of the area] or destroyed. Once they’re gone, they’re gone forever.... I hope somebody will do something about it.”<sup>363</sup>

I hope somebody interested in history will get hold of it. It would be terrible to have something happen to it.<sup>364</sup>

### **Cabin Moved to Near Brooklake Community Center (Well Site 12)**

Early in 1991 the new owners of the Federal Way Shopping Center contacted Shirley Charnell, President of the HSFW, stating that the Denny Cabin would need to be moved as quickly as possible or it would be destroyed.<sup>365</sup> This definitive statement brought on a flurry of activity throughout 1991 until the Denny Cabin was finally moved from the shopping mall in December 1991.



Figure 35 – Denny Cabin, 1991. (Courtesy Ed Opstad, HSFW.)

In April 1991, Shirley Charnell wrote a letter to Cheri McCabe of the Federal Way Parks Department and to the Federal Way City Council members requesting the city council “declare a resolution that the Denny Cabin is of historic significance to the city of Federal Way and that they [the Denny Cabin and the Barker Cabin] should be moved and preserved for a future historic park to be incorporated in the city parks plan.” She also requested the city help in the removal, storage and future restoration of the cabin.<sup>366</sup>

On June 4, 1991, Shirley Charnell wrote a letter requesting the Denny Cabin and the Barker Cabin be permanently moved to the entrance of Steel Lake

<sup>362</sup> Flores, H2.

<sup>363</sup> Flores, H2.

<sup>364</sup> Moore, 2.

<sup>365</sup> Press Release, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin Moving to New Home*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>366</sup> Letter, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, to Cheri McCabe, Parks Department and Federal Way City Council Members, *Moving & Storage of Historic Cabins*, April 29, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

Park.<sup>367</sup> Stephen Anderson, Assistant City Manager, responded to Shirley Charnell's June 4 letter on June 6. The City of Federal Way's response was that the proposal to move the Denny Cabin to Steel Lake was premature, as the recently-incorporated city was just starting to develop a park plan. Until a plan was developed the City was not receptive of reconstructing the Denny Cabin (or the Barker Cabin) on city property. Shirley Charnell was thanked for her suggestion, however.<sup>368</sup>

On July 29, 1991, Ted Jouflas, representing the shopping mall, officially transferred the ownership of the Denny Cabin to the HSFW.<sup>369</sup>

In July 1991, the Federal Way City Council gave the HSFW \$6,000 toward moving and storing one of the historic cabins (the Barker Cabin being the other possibility.) This was actually \$3,000 more than the HSFW had requested. Shirley Charnell indicated she had an estimate from a professional mover for \$6,500.<sup>370</sup> An attachment to the grant application broke down the cost estimate for the total project as follows. Phase I involved,

Architect's Fees & Structural Engineer (Includes: historic research  
& documentation, photographs, design, moving consultation,  
foundation preparation and completion) - \$6,000.00  
Moving Cost Estimate - \$6,500.00  
Foundation (Preparation & installation) - \$10,000.00  
Phase I Approx. Total Cost - \$22,500.00<sup>371</sup>

Phase 2 would be to restore the Denny Cabin and open it to visitors. The primary condition attached to the grant was that the Denny Cabin would have to be moved from the shopping mall site by December 31, 1991 or the City of Federal Way grant would not be available.<sup>372</sup>

On September 13, 1991, Vern Frease indicated the HSFW could use part of Tax Lot 11 near the intersection of South 356<sup>th</sup> Street and Pacific Highway for one year.<sup>373</sup> Another letter indicates that Vern Frease decided to lease some adjoining land on a permanent basis. The land immediately west of the temporary site on South 356<sup>th</sup> Street was called the Blueberry Farm. On November 8, 1991 Mr. and Mrs. Herbert L. 'Vern' Frease provided the HSFW a Letter of Intent to lease approximately three quarters of an acre of land, known as the Blueberry Farm, to the HSFW for \$300.00 per year to place the two historical cabins (the Denny Cabin and the Barker Cabin) for permanent display and

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<sup>367</sup> Letter Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, to Joe Stevens, Park Director, City Council Members, Brent McFall, City Manager, Steve Anderson, Assistant City Manager, Jenny Schroeder, Parks Department and Cheri McCabe, Parks Department, *Permanent Location for the historic Denny Cabin and Barker Cabin*, June 4, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>368</sup> Letter Stephen L. Anderson, Assistant City manager, to Shirley Charnell, President, Historical Society of Federal Way, June 6, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>369</sup> Jouflas.

<sup>370</sup> Linda Elliott, "City aids in historical cabin rescue," *Federal Way News*, July 19, 1991, A1.

<sup>371</sup> Attachment 1 – Grant Application Historical Society of Federal Way to City of Federal Way for moving the Denny Cabin from the Federal Way Shopping Mall, July 1991. Only the attachment is available, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>372</sup> Press Release, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin Moving to New Home*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>373</sup> Letter Herbert Freeze, to Federal Way Historical Society, September 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

restoration. Permanent footings were permitted in the lease.<sup>374</sup> Because of wet grounds in the Frease Blue Berry Farm area, the Denny Cabin could not be placed on that property prior to the December 31 deadline, so another temporary site had to be found immediately.<sup>375</sup>

The dismantling of the Denny Cabin in preparation of the move began on November 23, 1991. The Denny Cabin was ready to be moved to its new site on December 7.<sup>376</sup> A last minute temporary location for the Denny Cabin was found thanks to the Federal Way Water and Sewer District. On December 11, 1991, the Federal Way Water and Sewer District gave approval for the HSFW to use for one-year, land near the Brooklake Community Center on South 356<sup>th</sup> Street. This site was referred to as Well Site 12. Only the Denny Cabin could be placed there. The Barker Cabin could not be placed there.<sup>377</sup>

A permit to move the Denny Cabin from its location at the Federal Way Shopping Center to the temporary Well Site 12 was issued by the City of Federal Way on December 13, 1991.<sup>378</sup>

The Denny Cabin was moved Saturday December 14, 1991 to the temporary Well Site 12 location.<sup>379</sup> The well site was no longer used as a water source.<sup>380</sup> In her press release concerning the move, Shirley Charnell credited many volunteers for help in the move. Hovland Architects volunteered to historically document the Denny Cabin and draft a plan for removal and placement in a new location. Tom Motland, owner of Federal Construction, offered to secure a project supervisor. Joe Chitty volunteered to be the project supervisor. Shaunessey Movers of Auburn and the Federal Way Disposal Company were retained. Forte Rentals loaned a heavy-duty forklift and snorklelift machines. Allen Redford and Tom Rager, both carpenters, volunteered to assist Joe Chitty. Bob Wood, a HSFW board member, provided key coordination with the City of Federal Way. Credit was also given to Kevin Beck of Puget Power for assisting in the coordination of moving the Denny Cabin down Pacific Highway South. U. S. West and the Washington State Department of Transportation also provided help with overhead wires. Thanks were also given to the City of Federal Way, the Federal Way Water and Sewer District, and local police and fire departments.<sup>381</sup>

Deb Barker, a Planning Technician for the City of Federal Way, inspected the Denny Cabin at the new location and declared the cabin to be an “attractive nuisance”. She

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<sup>374</sup> Letter Herbert L. Frease to Shirley Charnell, Historical Society of Federal Way, *Letter of Intent*, November 8, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>375</sup> Press Release, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin Moving to New Home*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>376</sup> Press Release, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin Moving to New Home*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>377</sup> Letter James W. Miller, General Manager, Federal Way Water and Sewer to Shirley Charnell, President, Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin – Temporary Use of Well #12 Site*, December 11, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>378</sup> Letter Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way to Robert A Wood, Director, Historical Society of Federal Way, *91-1724OT, House Moving Permit, Historic Denny Cabin*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>379</sup> Dave Weaver, "This Old House," *Federal Way City Herald*, December 18, 1991, A9.

<sup>380</sup> Letter, Shirley Charnell, President, Historical Society of Federal Way to Jim Miller, Manager, Commissioners, Federal Way Water & Sewer District, January 6, 1992, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>381</sup> Press Release, Shirley Charnell, President of the Historical Society of Federal Way, *Denny Cabin Moving to New Home*, December 13, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

recommended a no trespassing sign be posted and the gravel roadway adjacent to the cabin be secured with logs.<sup>382</sup> On February 15, 1992, Shirley Charnell responded that the HSFW had complied with most of Deb Barker's requirements, but because they only had a one-year use permit for the site, planning was required for another move to the final permanent site.<sup>383</sup>

## Move from Well Site 12

The City of Federal Way had given the HSFW notice that by 60 days from the date for moving the cabin to the temporary location, December 14, 1991, the HSFW would need to have a permit for a permanent site. On January 6, 1992, Shirley Charnell, President of the HSFW wrote a letter to Jim Miller, General Manager for Federal Way Water and Sewer District, requesting they lease Well Site 12 to the HSFW for \$1.00 a year for 99 years.<sup>384</sup> While there is no response letter in the files of the HSFW, the response was apparently negative as future actions sought the permanent site for the cabin elsewhere.

On February 15, 1992, Shirley Charnell wrote a letter to Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way, indicating the HSFW was not able to meet the February 15, 1992 deadline for having a permit for a permanent site for the Denny Cabin. No permanent site had become available. Charnell also indicated that the HSFW had made an effort to post no trespassing signs and to secure the cabin with fencing as requested in Deb Barker's December 31, 1991 letter, but some problems remained. Shirley Charnell requested additional time be allotted to meet the city requirements.<sup>385</sup>

On February 24, 1992 the City of Federal Way granted a time extension to April 8, 1992 to fulfill the permit requirement addressing the permanent site for the Denny Cabin.<sup>386</sup>

In March of 1992 the HSFW approached the Federal Way City Council to assist the HSFW in finding a permanent site for the Denny Cabin.<sup>387</sup> By March 10, 1992 the City of Federal Way had decided that the Denny Cabin might be suitable for display on city property, at least temporarily.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Letter, Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way to Robert A. Wood, President, Historical Society of Federal Way [note: responses indicate Shirley Charnell was president at this time and Robert Wood was a Director], *91-1724OT, house moving permit, Historic Denny Cabin*, December 30, 1991, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>383</sup> Letter Shirley Charnell, President Federal Way Historical Society, to Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way, *91-1724OT – House Moving Permit, Historic Denny Cabin. Your letters of Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1991*, 15 February 1992, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>384</sup> Letter, Shirley Charnell, President, HSFW to Jim Miller, Manager Commissioners, Federal Way Water and Sewer, January 6, 1992, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>385</sup> Letter, Shirley Charnell, President, HSFW to Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way, February 15, 1992, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>386</sup> Letter Deb Barker, Planning Technician, City of Federal Way to Robert Woods, Project Manager, Historical Society of Federal Way, *RE: 91-1742 OT, Historic Denny Cabin, House Moving Permit*, February 24, 1992, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>387</sup> Letter Historical Society of Federal Way, (author not shown on copy in the files of the HSFW) to Federal Way Arts Commission, August 12, 1992.

<sup>388</sup> Letter Erik Joe Stevens, Director Parks, Recreation and Human Services, City of Federal Way to Bob Wood, President [sic] Federal Way Historical Society, March 10, 1992 in the files of the HSFW.

The Federal Way Historical Society has permission to temporarily store the Society's log cabin(s) [referencing both the Denny Cabin and Barker Cabin] on city property located off of South 348<sup>th</sup> Street and commonly referred to as the "Presbytery property." ...

The City of Federal Way Parks, Recreation and Human Services Department will prepare a conceptual plan for long-term consideration on the 'permanent' placement of the cabin(s). Once the planning, reviewing and permitting process has been completed, a final determination on the disposition of the cabin(s) will be made. If it is determined that the cabin(s)' "permanent" home is the earlier referenced park property, a formal agreement shall be entered into between the Historical Society and the City of Federal Way spelling out specific terms and conditions.<sup>389</sup>

On March 14, 1992 the Denny Cabin was moved to the new permanent site on City of Federal Way property at South 348<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Avenue South at the entrance of the then West Hylebos State Park,<sup>390</sup> later to become the West Hylebos Wetlands Park, a Federal Way city park. Later the Barker Cabin was moved to this same location.

### **Initial Work on Denny Cabin at Historic Cabins Park**

Between the time of the move in March 1992 and mid-1993, little was done on the Denny Cabin. The HSFW attempted to raise funds for restoration, with little success. There were disagreements between the HSFW and the City of Federal Way as to who was in charge and responsible for the next steps. The HSFW owned the Denny Cabin and the city owned the land it sat on. No contract existed between the two entities. Shirley Charnell, President of the HSFW, spent a year trying to get a response from the City of Federal Way's Park Commission. The Commission decided to bring the matter before the Federal Way City Council for direction. Concerning the Denny Cabin, Shirley Charnell indicated that,

Except for scrapping the roof of the Denny Cabin and moving the four walls to the park, nothing has happened [since March 14, 1992.] The log skeleton of the Denny Cabin sits uncovered, on wet ground without a foundation. Termites are already eating away at the wood.

It's in a state of confusion as to who's responsible for what. If we could figure that out, we could go forward.

We don't want to worry about a long-term (environmental) process now. [The Denny Cabin] must be protected. [It] must not be allowed to deteriorate any longer.<sup>391</sup>

Two questions complicated the situation: how many improvements would be made on the relatively undeveloped land (parking, landscaping, trails, etc.) and who will pay for it.

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<sup>389</sup> Stephens.

<sup>390</sup> Letter Historical Society of Federal Way

<sup>391</sup> Linda Elliot, "Cabin restoration takes step forward," *Federal Way News*, July 8, 1993, A2.

The HSFW wanted to keep the four and one half acre site relatively natural with a gravel parking lot while the city wanted to make sure the small park would meet its high park standards with paved parking lots, play equipment, drinking fountains and picnic tables.<sup>392</sup>

In March 1994 two concrete foundations were poured for the two cabins. The cabins were placed on the foundations in April and May of 1994 with the aid of volunteer work parties.<sup>393</sup>

Starting in 1995 restoration was begun on both cabins.<sup>394</sup> (See the separate article about the Barker Cabin for the status of its restoration.<sup>395</sup>)

In 1997 the Denny Cabin roof structure was rebuilt, with structural repairs to rafters and gable ends and replacement of the roof. Split cedar shakes were provided and attached to the roof.<sup>396</sup>

## Signs on Denny Cabin

In 1939 the Seattle Times stated that Chief Sealth originally built the Denny Cabin and that it later was the Mercer home from 1850 – 1855.<sup>397</sup> Rumor also had suggested that it was built for Chief Sealth's daughter, Princess Angeline, possibly by the chief himself.<sup>398</sup>

From the time the Denny Cabin was moved to Heritage Village at Federal Shopping Way in 1966 until the year 1999, a sign was attached to the front of the cabin reading as follows:

THE OLDEST EXISTING LOG HOUSE  
TO SURVIVE SEATTLE'S GREAT FIRE (1889)  
"THE MYSTERY CABIN"  
ORIGINALLY ERECTED NEAR SEATTLE  
CENTER. IN 1939 A SEATTLE NEWS  
STORY SAID THE CABIN WAS BUILT BY  
CHIEF SEATTLE (1827-1866). IT WAS  
BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE MERCER  
HOME (1850-1855). PICTURES AND  
RECORDS INDICATED COMPLETION IN  
ITS PRESENT FORM BY DAVID DENNY  
AS A REAL ESTATE OFFICE (1889).  
THIS OLDEST STRUCTURE HAS ALSO BEEN  
A CHURCH, A SCHOOL AND A TAVERN.

All now accept the fact that the portion relating to Chief Seattle and the Mercer family is false and the cabin was not built until 1889. This sign is currently stored by the HSFW.

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<sup>392</sup> Elliot, "Cabin restoration takes step forward, A2.

<sup>393</sup> Sean Robinson, "Volunteers are needed to give historical cabins a permanent foundation," *Federal Way News*, April 7, 1994, A-6.

<sup>394</sup> "Historic Barker cabin resurrected," *Tacoma News Tribune*, 26, October 1995, page number not known.

<sup>395</sup> Dick Caster, *The Barker Cabin*, pp. 10-13. Note this article is scheduled for updating as the Barker Cabin has been completely restored and is open for public tours.

<sup>396</sup> Invoice to King County Cultural Resources Division, Seattle Washington, By Dietrick C. Jones, Past President, Historical Society of Federal Way, July 16, 1997, in the files of the HSFW.

<sup>397</sup> Nikulla, p. 2.

<sup>398</sup> Dorpat, vol. 3, 18.



A newer temporary sign was placed on the Denny Cabin from 2001 until 2008. This sign read:

#### The Denny Cabin

The Historical Society of Federal Way is restoring this historic building. Built on Seattle's Queen Anne Hill in 1889 as a real estate office for David Denny by his nephew [sic], the cabin has served as a school, a church and a tavern. In 1966, when it was about to be razed, J. R. Cissna, the visionary developer of the Federal Shopping Way moved the cabin to Federal Way as part of a planned historic park. This plan never came to fruition. In 1992 the cabin was moved to this site.

The cabin was never intended as a rustic frontier building. When first built, it was surrounded by frame buildings built with lumber from Yesler's mill, among others. Rumors about it having been built by Chief Seattle or that it survived the 1889 Seattle fires are patently absurd. Nevertheless, it is an interesting artifact of the late nineteenth century in Seattle.

The Historical Society of Federal Way intends to restore the cabin to its 1889 condition. It will be used as an interpretive center in the Historic Cabin Park. Plans for this park are being developed as a cooperative effort with the city of Federal Way, the state of Washington, the Friends of the West Hylebos Wetlands, and the Historical Society.<sup>399</sup>

### **Plans to Restore the Denny Cabin**

Originally the current site of the Denny Cabin was to be developed as a Federal Way City Park to be called Historic Cabins Park. It was at the entrance to a large state park, West Hylebos State Park. The state park and Historic Cabin Park combined to become West Hylebos Wetlands Park in August 2004 when the property was turned over to the City of Federal Way.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Prepared by Ed Opstad, President HSFW, 2000.


<sup>400</sup> <http://hylebos.org/west-hylebos-wetlands-park/how-the-west-hylebos-was-saved>, accessed April 19, 2011

The sign shown in Figure 36 was placed in front of the Denny Cabin in 2008.


## THE DENNY CABIN

*Working in the Past*

*"We have examined the valley of the Duwamish River and find it a fine country. There is plenty of room for one thousand settlers. Come at once."*  
—David Denny



David Denny was one of the original settlers and founders of Seattle. He owned much of the land that is now downtown Seattle, and had this cabin built to house his real estate sales office.



In the spring of 1889, Seattle businessman David Denny built the cabin you see here to house his real estate office, west of what is now the Seattle Center. Five weeks later, the Great Fire of 1889 destroyed much of downtown Seattle, but left this structure undamaged.

Trees for the cabin were cut and the logs peeled on what is now Queen Anne Hill in Seattle, then hauled to the building site by horse-drawn wagon. In later years, the cabin was used—still in its original location—by a kindergarten class, a men's church group, and finally, as *Green's Log Cabin Tavern*. In 1966, the cabin was moved from Seattle to a shopping center in Federal Way, and finally to its current location here in 1992.

### WHO WAS DENNY?

At the age of 19, David Denny (1832-1903) and his brother set out from Portland, Oregon to explore the area east of Puget Sound. With his wife Louisa, Denny made a claim on 320 acres of land, centered on what is now Seattle Center. The crops they grew there on their family farm provided fresh produce for much of early Seattle's population.

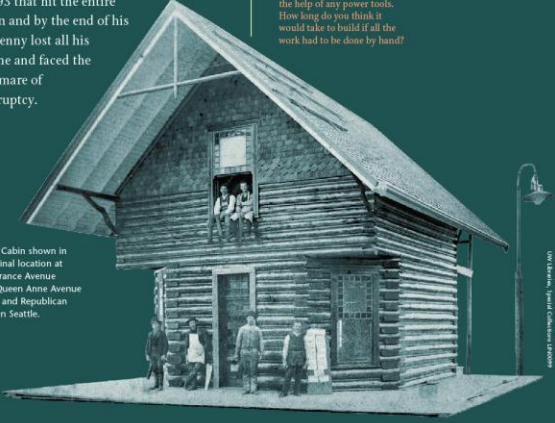
Denny eventually developed vast real estate holdings, owned a large lumber mill, waterworks, and an electric railway that provided streetcar service. His financial holdings collapsed with the Panic of 1893 that hit the entire nation and by the end of his life Denny lost all his fortune and faced the nightmare of bankruptcy.

### HOW THEY BUILT IT?

Although other buildings in 1889 were built with lumber, the Denny Cabin was built with logs. The cabin's horizontal flattened log construction, bay front and deep overhanging gable roof are unusual and were probably intended to draw attention to his real estate business.

This 22 x 22-foot cabin is one and one-half stories high, with a medium pitch, gable and shake roof. The front half is bayed to give the cabin six sides.

**Hey Kids!**  
This cabin was built without the help of any power tools. How long do you think it would take to build if all the work had to be done by hand?



Denny Cabin shown in its original location at Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue North) and Republican Street in Seattle.

Fig. 36 – Sign currently in front of Denny Cabin at Federal Way's West Hylebos Wetlands Park. (Courtesy City of Federal Way.)

Currently Bert Ross, the HSFW Facilities Committee Chairperson, is heading up a project to restore the Denny Cabin to as near the original appearance as possible and open it up for public display, along with the 1883 Barker Cabin that sits adjacent to it. The work plan is as follows:

1. Phase I has been completed. This involved developing a Scope of Work Plan that described the work to be done, a preliminary cost estimate, application for funding grants, obtaining bids to verify the cost estimate and developing the volunteer base that will be used. This monograph was prepared to provide all the available information known about the Denny Cabin.

- Phase 2 is targeted for completion by the end of 2011. Phase 2 will include major log replacement and repair work, removal of the old exterior lead paint, installation of the 1890 style windows and doors (purchased and manufactured previously), and making the Denny Cabin weather tight and structurally sound. The Denny Cabin can then be open for limited public viewing.
- Phase 3 is targeted for completion by the end of 2012 or early 2013 as additional funding becomes available. This work includes structural enhancement, painting inside and out, and installing a wood floor. Furniture and other interior items will be obtained for display purposes. At this point the Denny Cabin will join the Barker Cabin in being open for scheduled display and programs.

The Barker Cabin is completely restored and is open for visitors one Saturday a month from May through October as well as other times for special occasions and for school tours.

### David Denny's Own Summary of His Life

In the archives of Seattle's Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) there is a two-page document on the ornate letterhead of the David Denny & Son Real Estate Company. The letterhead was drawn and lettered by David Denny's daughter Emily Inez.<sup>401</sup> The letter written on this stationery is dated April 30, 1896, after the last of David Denny's wealth was gone. The letter appears to be addressed to no one in particular.



It reads as follows.

In looking back over my pioneer life I can see many places where I would do differently had I the chance to pass that way again but knowing what I do now I would come to Puget Sound to Elliott Bay and locate just as I did before except that I would make my home on the waterfront. I would marry the same woman, join the same church but endeavor to be a better Christian....<sup>402</sup>

<sup>401</sup> Newell, 117.

<sup>402</sup> Converted to printed letters by Dick Caster from the hand written version in Newell, 118, 119. I have left out commas or used commas just as David Denny did in original.

## Contacted Descendants of David and Arthur Denny

In an attempt to find out information about the Denny Cabin, two local descendents of David Denny and one of Arthur Denny were contacted. Amy Johnson, a great-great-granddaughter of David Denny was contacted. She was unaware of the Denny Cabin's existence. She referred me to her father, Andy Harris. He also had never heard of the Denny Cabin on Queen Anne. He referred me to Brewster Denny, a grandson of Arthur Denny, but he also did not know of the existence of the Denny Cabin.

## Historical Novel

The story of David Denny and Louisa Boren Denny was written in novel form in 1983, in the book *Sweet-Briar* by Brenda Wilbee.<sup>403</sup> The title, of course; refers to Louisa's bringing Sweetbriar seeds with her from Illinois to plant on her future homestead. While this is a work of fiction, Wilbee did a thorough search of original and secondary source material. This historical novel uses actual events from the time the Denny and Boren party left Illinois until shortly after David Denny and Louisa Boren married. The following is taken from the dust jacket:

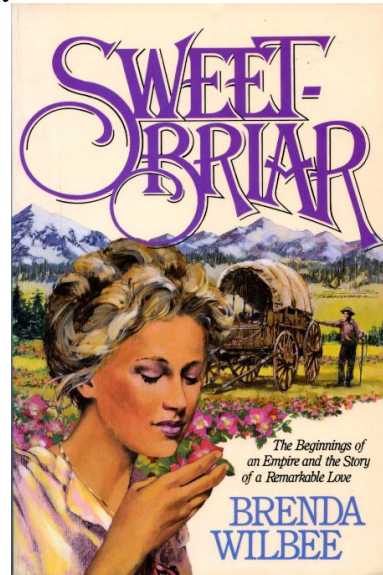


Fig. 38 – Cover of Sweet-Briar Novel. (Courtesy Harvest House Publishers.)

The Beginnings of an Empire and the Story of a Remarkable Love...

Louisa Boren journeys West [*sic*] to carve out a new way of life. Out of her rugged determination and deep faith comes an enduring love and the founding of one of America's greatest cities.

Louisa, twenty-four and unmarried, is an unusual woman for the year 1851. And she knows what she wants – David Denny.

An empire-builder, David Denny is a born pioneer and destined to be the founder of one of America's great cities. But he is only nineteen ... and the younger brother of James, whose love for Louisa runs deep.

*Sweet-Briar* is history at its best.<sup>404</sup>

<sup>403</sup> Brenda Wilbee, "*Sweet-Briar*" (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1983).

<sup>404</sup> Wilbee, dust jacket front and back.

The only apparent variation from true history in the novel, other than dialog and certain events, concerns the insertion of James, David's older brother by eight years, as a love interest for Louisa. While James did make the trip as far as Portland there is no evidence that he was involved romantically with Louisa, and this apparent fictitious relationship plays only a minor part in the book.

## Conclusions

Even though David Denny was involved with Seattle and not Federal Way, the presence of the Denny Cabin points to the personality of one of Seattle's founders and is indicative of other early area pioneers, including those true resident pioneers of Federal Way, such as John Barker. They showed integrity, had a gift of enthusiasm, had a tremendous work ethic, had an ability to keep going in tough times, became involved in their community school boards and politics, found it fulfilling to help their neighbors, and had an enduring belief in the future greatness of the area of which they were founders.

David Denny came to the Seattle area while it was still part of the Oregon Territory and was present when Washington Territory was chartered. The Denny Cabin was built one-month prior to the Great Seattle Fire and six months prior to Washington becoming a state.

Of the many cabins and buildings that David Denny built, the Denny Cabin is the only one remaining. History has not considered the Denny Cabin to be a major item in David Denny's life and therefore almost nothing is known about it. Very little was discovered during the preparation of this monograph concerning the Denny Cabin itself. The construction was completed by May 1889. The names of some of those who were involved with its construction, particularly the person in charge, Edward L. Lindsley, are known, and some of the construction materials and methods are available. Several photos have been included that show the Denny Cabin's exterior from the time it was built through its history up to the present time. Those from the 1930s show various views and will help in restoration. While there is mention of uses for the Denny Cabin after it was used for a real estate office, no exact date is known for when it ceased to serve this function. However, since David Denny had financial problems in 1893, it was probably closed as a real estate office by then.

Nothing is known of the interior of the Denny Cabin when it was used for a real estate office, and only one small insight about the interior was found during the last years of its use as Green's Tavern.

The Denny Cabin, while constructed in true log cabin style, was built in this style as an "attention-getter" for David Denny's real estate business. Sawn lumber had been available in the area for over 35 years before its construction, and all the structures around the Denny Cabin were made with sawn lumber.

The Denny Cabin, while not a major element of David Denny's life, is a representative example of Seattle's real estate boom that David Denny was a part of. It was built just at the time sewers, electric lights, telephones and wooden sidewalks were coming to Seattle. From its beginnings, the Denny Cabin benefited from electric street lights, and if not at the start, the cabin probably had interior electric lights shortly after its construction. Telephones and sewers would have been available shortly after construction.



The Denny Cabin was brought to Federal Way in 1966 as part of a Heritage Village exhibit that helped promote Federal Shopping Way, an early large type of retail mall complex that was one of many around the country that tried to combine shopping diversification with a Disneyland-type of entertainment.

Federal Way and the Historical Society of Federal Way are glad that it has been preserved and is being restored.

## Future Work

There is much more source material available that should be searched for information on the Denny Cabin and David Denny.

1. MOHAI has David Denny's diaries, a family file and other ephemera, and perhaps other photos.
2. The University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections contains various David Denny materials that have only briefly been examined. The primary collection in the University of Washington Libraries, Special Collection would be in the Clarence Bagley files, which contain material on David Denny that has only briefly been examined.
3. Two photos were found at the Washington State Archives containing photos of the Denny Cabin used as Green's Tavern, so perhaps other photos are available.
4. While there would be no living people who were in the Denny Cabin prior to its use as Green's Tavern, there should be people alive who visited Green's Tavern when it was open to the public.
5. The Seattle Public Library has genealogical files on the Denny family.
6. The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* traces its roots in Seattle to 1867. The *Intelligencer* newspaper started as a weekly in 1867, became a daily in 1876 and combined with a failing publication called the *Post*. The *Seattle Post Intelligencer* was then published until recently as a newspaper, but now is an on line publication. Searching available early copies would provide much useful information and I would assume is the most likely of the remaining sources to contain still-to-be-discovered information on the Denny Cabin. The early material is now at MOHAI. The *Seattle Times* traces its roots back to the 1890s, so this newspaper might also have material relating to the Denny Cabin and David Denny.
7. The literature contains reference to many books from 1890 through the 1930s that would probably be helpful. I have not as yet tried to locate most of these.

Any corrections, comments or leads to additional information please contact Dick Caster at [www.dickwcaster@yahoo.com](mailto:www.dickwcaster@yahoo.com).

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Barb Barney for her help in scanning the photos used.

I wish to thank Bert Ross and Marie Sciacqua for proofreading this monograph and making valuable comments.

## Appendix A – Photo Showing Construction of the Denny Cabin with Words on Back and on Envelope

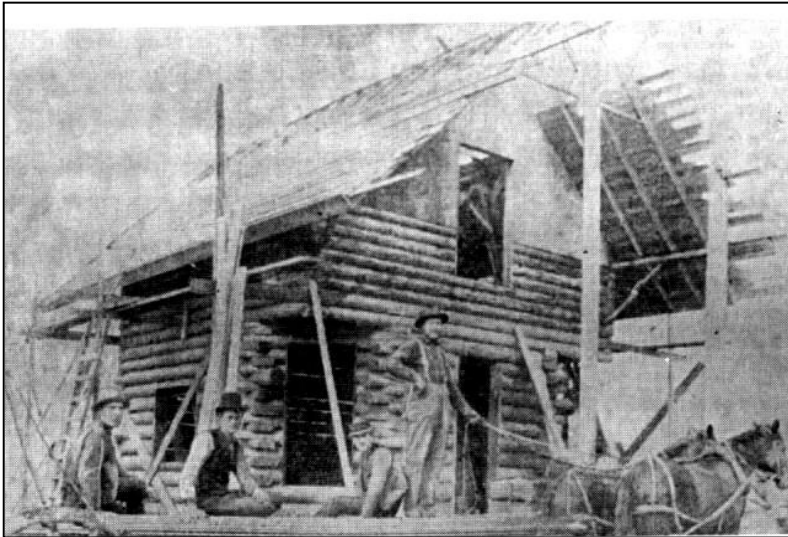


Figure 14 - The Denny Cabin under construction in 1889 (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, PH Coll 548.)

**Title:** Construction of David Denny's log cabin for his real estate office, Republican St. and Queen Anne Ave., May 1889.

**Photographer:** Unknown

**Date** 1938 [I do not know what this date refers to. - DC]

**Dates** 1938 [I do not know what this date refers to. - DC]

**Notes** The cabin was later known as the Denny Cabin.

Handwritten on verso: Ed L. Lindsley's log cabin Real Estate office in course of construction: May 1889, No. 1 Ed L. Lindsley. No. 2 Harry Denny. #5395 [illeg.] L. Lindsley, 1514 Warren Ave.

Handwritten on negative jacket: 5395. Copied from fade photo Aug 8, 1946. See also 5942. Old Seattle. Old log cabin built in 1889, finished May 1, 1889. Was built at the corner of Temperance (now Queen Anne Ave) and Republican Sts. Now Queen Anne Ave and Republican Sts. #1. M. M. Lencon Contractor, 2. Harry Denny [illeg.], 3. Wm. L. Lindsley Carpenter, 4. Theron Bosworth Carpenter. My father cut, peeled the logs and hauled these from the top of Queen Anne Hill. Used 35 gallons of boiled linseed oil. Cabin in good shape 1946.

**Negative Number** Lindsley 5395

**Digital Collection** Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs

**Order Number** LIN0062

**Repository** University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division<sup>405</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> [Http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/ll&CISOPTR=127...](http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/ll&CISOPTR=127...), accessed March 21, 2011.

**Appendix B - Photo  
Showing the Denny  
Cabin Shortly After  
Construction with Words  
on Back and on Envelope**



**Figure 15 – Denny Cabin, May 1889, (Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division. PH Coll 548, Negative Lindsley 5942.)**

**Title** Ed. L. Lindsley's log cabin near the intersection of Republican St. and Queen Anne Ave, May 1889

**Photographer** unknown

**Date** 1953 [I do not know what this date refers to. - DC]

**Dates** 1953 [I do not know what this date refers to. - DC]

**Notes** Handwritten on verso: Ed. L. Lindsley's log cabin real estate office, near Temperance and Republican Sts. Finished May 1<sup>st</sup>, 89. #5942-1948. No. 1 M. M. Lemon, Contractor; No. 2 Harry Denny, lather; no. 3 Wm. L. Lindsley, carpenter; no. 4 Theron Bosworth, carpenter. Ed cut, peeled and hauled logs top of Queen Anne Hill. Used 35 gallons of oil (linseed), on logs. Boiled Linseed oil. Still in good condition, June 6, 1931. I was 11 yrs old when this cabin was built. Helped with the logs on Queen Anne-Hill. Wm. L. Lindsley, 1514 Warren Ave. Handwritten on negative jacket: 5942. Copied Feb.1, 1963. See also 5395. Old Seattle. Building log cabin at Republican and Queen Anne Ave, May, 1889. Ed L. Lindsley's log cabin real estate office.

**Order Number** LIN0099

**Repository** University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division

**Repository Collection** Lawrence D. Lindsley Photographs. PH Coll 548<sup>406</sup>

<sup>406</sup>[http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item\\_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/11&CISOPTR=1104&CISOBX=18REC](http://content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/11&CISOPTR=1104&CISOBX=18REC), accessed March 22, 2011.



## Appendix C – Time Line for David Denny’s Accomplishments

1. March 17, 1832 – David Denny was born in Putnam County, Indiana.
2. April 14, 1848 – Oregon Territory created.
3. 1851 – David Denny traveled from Illinois to Oregon Territory on the Oregon Trail.
4. September 25, 1851 – David Denny landed by boat at present West Seattle.
5. September 25, 1851 – David Denny met Chief Sealth for the first time.
6. September 28, 1851 – David Denny set up temporary camp at Alki with two others.
7. November 13, 1851 – David Denny established permanent camp at Alki with 23 others.
8. 1852 – David Denny was one of the first to settle in present Seattle.
9. December 22, 1852 - King County established by Oregon Territorial Legislature.
10. January 23, 1853 – David Denny married Louisa Boren, first white settlers wedding in Seattle.
11. January 24, 1853 – David and Louisa Denny filed homestead claim for land between Puget Sound and Lake Union at the foot of what is now Queen Anne Hill.
12. March 2, 1853 - Washington Territory organized.
13. December 23, 1853 – Emily Inez Denny born, author of *Blazing the Way*.
14. 1855, 1856 – David Denny was a volunteer during the Puget Sound Indian War.
15. 1856, 1857 - David Denny served a two-year term as King County treasurer.
16. 1864 - David and Louisa Denny provided five acres of their donation land claim to be used as a cemetery and park. Denny Park still exists today.
17. January 1865 – David Denny was elected to be one of five trustees to head the newly formed City of Seattle government. He held this post for about one year.
18. 1866 – David Denny helped form the Independent Order of Good Templars to fight liquor sales. He was involved through the 1880s.
19. 1869 – David Denny and his father John filed a plat for land development in North Seattle.
20. 1869 – 1889 David Denny subdivided his large land holdings into 11 large plats for land development as subdivisions.
21. 1880 – David Denny owned over 1,000 acres of land on the west side of Lake Union.
22. 1880s – David Denny was involved politically to help improve roads and other services, reduce corruption and reduce the problems caused by liquor.
23. February 1882 – David Denny and others formed the Union Water System to supply water for the area of southeast Queen Anne Hill to Lake Union.
24. March 3, 1883 – David Denny was one of 12 men who organized the Lake Washington Improvement Company for the purpose of constructing a canal with locks to connect Lake Washington, Lake Union and Puget Sound. By 1894, a small canal connected Lake Union and Lake Washington, but by then David Denny was no longer involved.

### **Appendix C – Time Line for David Denny’s Accomplishments - Continued**

25. 1884 – David Denny and son John B. Denny purchased the Lake Union Lumber and Manufacturing Mill and renamed it the Western Mill.
26. 1884 – The Denny School was built to honor David Denny. During the 1870s and 1880s David Denny served as a school director for 12 years (I am not sure of exact dates.)
27. David and Louisa Denny donated two lots near the Denny School to start the Seattle Children’s Home This institution is still in operation at a different location.
28. 1885, 1886 – David Denny was a leader in trying to protect the Chinese of Seattle during the Anti-Chinese riots that led to the expulsion of the Chinese.
29. 1888 – David Denny and Judge John Hoyt formed a real estate company that platted large portions of the north slope of Queen Anne Hill.
30. January 1889 – David Denny and seven others chartered the Bank of North Seattle.
31. 1889 – David Denny platted the Denny Home addition on the south side of Queen Anne Hill. Several street names given for the plat reflect David Denny’s religious and political views; Prohibition Street, Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue) and Republican Street (still in existence) are examples.
32. 1889 – David Denny formed a real estate firm with his son John B. Denny to sell home lots in the south side of Queen Anne Hill.
33. May 1889 – Denny Cabin built to conduct the real estate business of D. T. Denny and Son at the foot of Queen Anne Hill.
34. June 6, 1889 - The Great Seattle Fire.
35. November 11, 1889 – Washington became a state.
36. 1890 – David Denny with his son, David T. Denny II, started the Rainier Power & Railway Company providing electric streetcar transportation from Seattle to the wilderness area north of Seattle.
37. 1891 – David and Louisa Denny offered a parcel of 40 acres north of Seattle that was developed as Oak Lake Cemetery. This has now become Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery.
38. 1892 – David Denny built a mansion, Decatur Terrace, at the foot of Queen Anne Hill about a block from the location of the Denny Cabin.
39. 1893 – Financial panic that swept the country destroyed David Denny’s wealth.
40. 1895 until death – After losing everything in the Financial Panic of 1893, David and Louisa Denny were forced to live in a one-room log cabin at Licton Springs (near the present Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery).
41. January 9, 1899 – Older brother Arthur Denny died.
42. 1899 – David Denny worked for King County building roads near Snoqualmie Pass.
43. November 25, 1903 – David Denny died of kidney disease. He and Louisa are buried at Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery.

## Appendix D – History of the Denny Cabin

1. 1889 – David Denny platted the Denny Home addition for land at the south side of Queen Anne Hill. Several Street names given for the plat reflect David Denny’s religious and political views; Prohibition Street, Temperance Avenue (now Queen Anne Avenue) and Republican Street (still in existence) are examples.
2. 1889 – David Denny formed a real estate firm with his son John B. Denny to sell home lots in the south side of Queen Anne Hill.
3. May 1889 – Denny Cabin built to conduct the real estate business of D. T. Denny and Son at the foot of Queen Anne Hill.
4. June 6, 1889 – The Great Seattle Fire.
5. November 11, 1889 – Washington became a state.
6. Approximately 1895 to approximately 1930 – The Denny Cabin was used for a kindergarten class, a men’s church group, and a residential home.
7. Approximately 1930 to approximately 1960 - Green’s Tavern occupied the Denny Cabin.
8. 1960 to 1966 – The Denny Cabin was vacant.
9. 1966 - The construction of an IHOP Restaurant at the Denny Cabin location forced the cabin’s removal to a new location.
10. March 1966 – Jack Cissna moved The Denny Cabin to Heritage Village, a part of Federal Shopping Way. It sat on the undeveloped empty space at the south end of the shopping center.
11. July 4, 1966 - The Denny Cabin was dedicated at the Federal Shopping Way site.
12. July 5, 1966 to 1985 – Because of financial problems of Jack Cissna and Federal Shopping Way, nothing was done with the Denny Cabin and it sat vacant and was vandalized.
13. 1985 to 1990 - Local residents began efforts to find a new location for the Denny Cabin.
14. December 14, 1991 – The Denny Cabin was moved to the Federal Way Water and Sewer District’s Well Site 12 near the Brooklake Community Center for temporary storage.
15. March 14, 1992 – The Denny Cabin was moved to a permanent site on City of Federal Way property at the entrance to the West Hylebos State Park at South 348<sup>th</sup> Street and Fourth Avenue South (now the City of Federal Way’s West Hylebos Wetlands Park).
16. March 1994 – The Denny Cabin was placed on a permanent foundation.
17. 1997 – The Denny Cabin’s roof structure was rebuilt.
18. January 2011 – The HSFW initiates plans to make a full restoration of the Denny Cabin.

## Selected Bibliography

- Bagley, Clarence. *History of Seattle*, vol. 1. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916. This is the first of two volumes, consisting of 453 pages that describe the history of Seattle up to around 1915. It consists of chapters giving the specifics of some area of interest in the history of Seattle. Bagley provides hundreds of individual names for the activities of the time period covered.
- Bagley, Clarence. *History of Seattle*, vol. 2. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916. This is the second of two volumes, containing 429 pages that describe the history of Seattle up to around 1915. In addition to chapters on specific subjects, Bagley provides one to four page vignettes of important people. Several of the chapters have material relating to David Denny, as well as a vignette of David Denny and a photo, pp. 704 - 707. Bagley provides hundreds of individual names for the activities of the time period covered.
- Bagley, Clarence. *History of King County*, vol. 1. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1929. This is one of four volumes, each running about 900 pages that describes the history of King County to around 1920. In addition to chapters on specific subjects, Bagley provides one to four page vignettes of important people. David Denny has a three-page section, pp. 66 – 68 with a photo. Bagley provides hundreds of individual names for the activities of the time period covered.
- Buerge, David . *Seattle in the 1880s*. Seattle: The Historical Society of Seattle and King County, 1986. This 115 page book supports an exhibit put on by the Museum of History and Industry explaining the rapid growth of Seattle during the 1880s and showing life in Seattle in the 1880s. Buerge provides a descriptive overview of life in Seattle in the 1880s.
- Crowley, Walt. *National Trust Guide Seattle*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998. This 274-page book provides short highlights of Seattle's history and architecture with many pictures. Several short items relating to David Denny's importance to early Seattle are included, but nothing relating to the Denny Cabin.
- Denny, Arthur Armstrong, Alice Harriman, ed. *Pioneer Days on Puget Sound*. Seattle: A. Harriman Company, 1908, reprint, Fairfield Washington: Ye Gallon Press, 1979. The reprint version has reformatted the pages and apparently added photos, as well as an introduction by Brewster Denny. The page numbering is not the same as in the original book. The book, written in 1888 – 1889, consists of short chapters (possibly letters that had originally been pieced together by Harriman) giving Arthur Denny's version of the events of his life from his birth on June 20, 1822, in Indiana until a few years prior to his death on January 9, 1899. Based on Ye Gallon Press' display of hand written signatures at the end of chapters, the original book may have perhaps contained much handwritten material.

Denny, Emily Inez. *Blazing the Way; or, True Stories, Songs and Sketches of Puget Sound and other Pioneers*. Seattle: Rainier Printing Company, Inc., 1909. This 503-page book by the daughter of David Denny is still available through the King County Library System and the Tacoma Library System. Most of the book relates to Emily Denny's experiences of growing up and stories told to her by others. Part 2, Chapter 3, *David Thomas Denny*, pp. 203-256, is a fairly detailed discussion of the part her father played in the growth of Seattle, with herself as an eyewitness. Pages 41-62 provide material relating to the settlement at Alki. Scattered throughout the book is material relating to the family coming from Illinois and David Denny's importance to the early years of Seattle.

Dorpat, Paul. *Seattle Now and Then*, Vol. 1. Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1984. This book, with pages unnumbered, contains 112 vignettes with photos of Seattle's history. Several of these discuss David Denny's importance to Seattle.

Dorpat, Paul. *Seattle Now and Then*, Vol. 2. Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1986. This 240-page book contains 86 vignettes with photos of Seattle's history. Section 51, *Double Take from Denny Hill*, pp. 140-143, discusses, with photos, David Denny's Western Mill Company. Section 52, *David Denny's Empire*, pp. 144, 145, discusses David Denny's development of electric railways in Seattle and how he lost his fortune in the Panic of 1893. Section 53, *Decatur Terrace*, pp. 146, 147, discusses David and Louisa Denny's Queen Anne mansion, and provides a photo.

Dorpat, Paul. *Seattle Now and Then*, Vol. 3, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Section 3, *Queen Anne Cabin*. Seattle: Tartu Publications, 1997. This 240 page book is part of a series showing highlights of historical homes and buildings in Seattle, and was originally published as short articles, with photos in the *Seattle Times Pacific Magazine*. Section 3, pp. 18, 19 is devoted to the Denny Cabin when it was in the Queen Anne district of Seattle. It provides a short overview of the history of the cabin, as well as five photos. There is additional material on David Denny in other sections.

Hines, Neal O., *Denny's Knoll*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980. This 465-page book is mostly about the founding of the University of Washington and the part Arthur Denny played in this. There is some detail about the early filing of claims and the locations of property different members of the Denny Party acquired in Seattle.

Meany, Edmund S. *History of the State of Washington*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1910. This 406-page book provides a basic history of the State of Washington, with very little material on David Denny. Its main feature relating to David Denny is that it names all 24 of the original Denny Party at Alki, while other sources provide only general summaries.

Newell, Gordon. *Westward to Alki: The Story of David and Louisa Denny*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1977. This 122 page book provides the part David and Louisa Denny played in the growth of Seattle. While the book provides excellent background on David Denny, there is nothing specific that refers to the Denny Cabin.

Reinartz, Kay Francis. *Queen Anne, Community on the Hill*. Seattle: Queen Anne Historical Society, 1993. This 231-page book provides excellent material for the history of Queen Hill, with much information pertaining to David Denny and the part he played in the development of the area. The real estate boom in the area that occurred in the 1880s is well described, showing why the building of the Denny Cabin as a real estate office occurred.

Sale, Roger. *Seattle Past to Present*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976. This 273-page book provides, as described on the cover, "An interpretation of the history of the foremost city in the Pacific Northwest." There is only a general overview of David Denny's part in Seattle history and nothing relating to the Denny Cabin. The book emphasizes Arthur Denny's importance rather than David Denny's. The book provides one of the best bibliographies, up to 1976, of the founding of Seattle and its early history.

Warren, James R. *King County and its Emerald City: Seattle*. No city: American Historic Press, 1997. This 294-page book gives a good description of the history of King County, along with over 300 photos and illustrations, many in color. Only two of the photos relate to David Denny, although much of the written material does pertain to the material in this monograph, 26 - 101.

Watt, Roberta Frye. *Four Wagons West*. Portland, Oregon: Binford & Mort, 1931. This 390-page book was written by a granddaughter of Arthur Denny who inherited Arthur's scrapbook and papers. She also knew most of the people in the original Denny party and grew up with her cousin Emily Inez Denny, the author of *Blazing the Way*. The title derives from the event of the Denny party leaving Illinois in four wagons.

Wilbee, Brenda. *Sweet-Briar*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1983. This 206-page book is a historical novel. The title, of course, refers to Louisa's bringing Sweetbriar seeds with her from Illinois to plant on her future homestead. While this is a work of fiction, Wilbee did a thorough search of original and secondary sources. This historical novel uses actual events from the time the Denny and Boren party left Illinois until shortly after David Denny and Louisa Boren married.

