

Portion of Interlaken was set aside in 1913 to honor Louisa Boren, the first unmarried white woman to come to Seattle, settled at Alki in 1852. Married David Denny (Seattle's first wedding - "the sweetbriar bride" because she had brought a sweetbriar rose from Illinois). Monument erected in 1915 by Pioneer Association. (Plaque on a rock) Her father, Carson Boren, built first cabin in City of Seattle, in the vicinity of 2nd & Cherry.

BOREN PARK

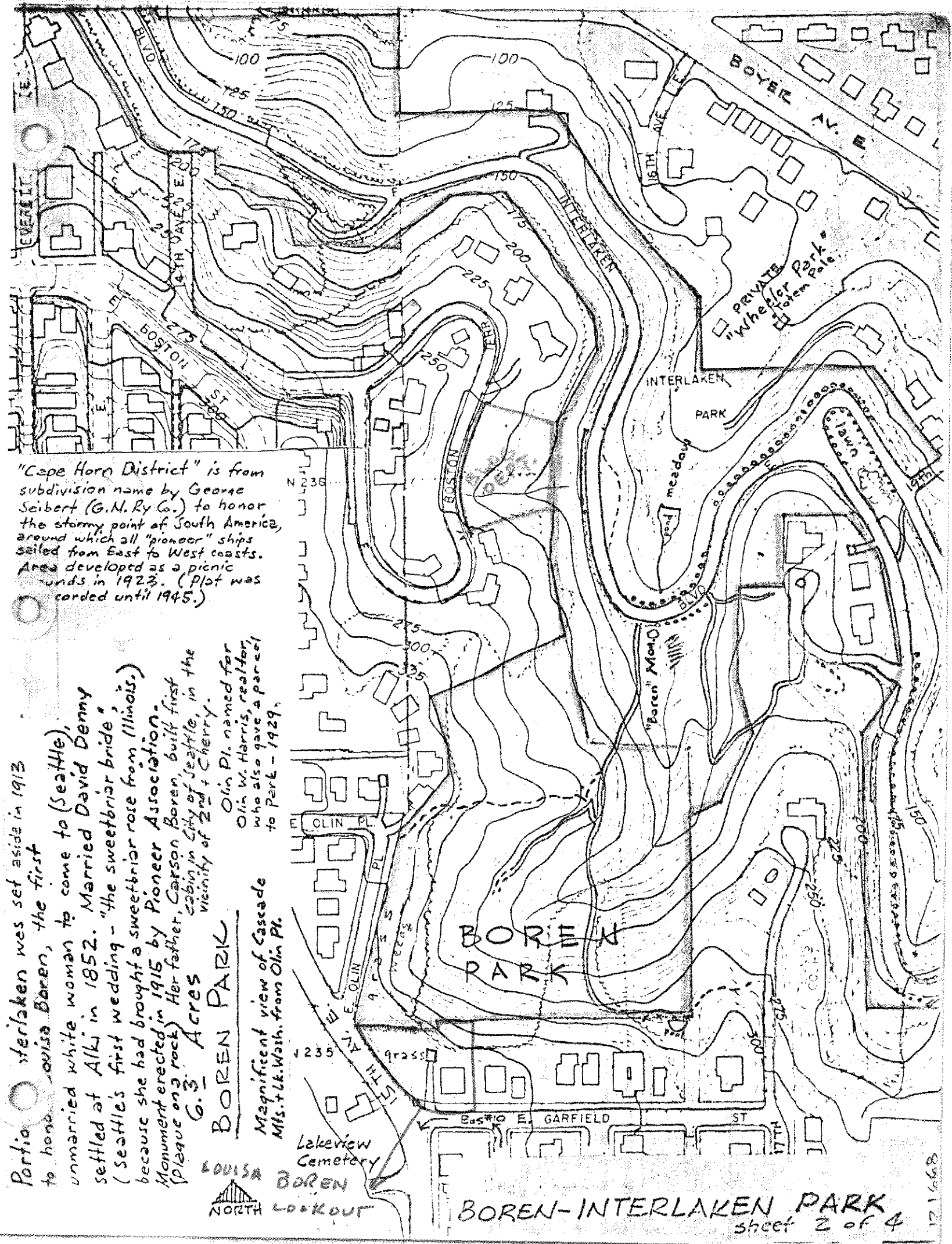
Magnificent view of Cascade Mts. & Lk. Wash. from Olin Pl.



LOUISA BOREN LOOKOUT

Olin Pl. named for Olin W. Harris, realtor, who also gave a parcel to Park - 1929.

"Cape Horn District" is from subdivision name by George Seibert (G.N. Ry Co.) to honor the stormy point of South America, around which all "pioneer" ships sailed from East to West coasts. Area developed as a picnic grounds in 1923. (Plot was corded until 1945.)



The improvement in the design of bicycles, replacing the high wheel with the small one, caused a "bike boom" in Seattle from 1895 to 1899 comparable to the 10-speed boom of 1971 when the adult market pushed US sales from 5.6 million in 1965 to 8.5 million in 1971. Traffic was a minimal hazard in 1896 but the cracks between the planks with which the streets were paved presented a real problem. So the Assistant City Engineer, George F. Cotterill, walked around the city and developed a 25-mile system of bike paths for the 55,000 residents who owned 10,000 bicycles. His route went through the ravines and along the bluff that has since become Interlaken Park. The path forked in the "Park", one branch coming down from City (Volunteer) Park, joining the path that went along the bluff above Lake Union from "downtown" and the one in (Washington) Park extending along the Lake. At the fork in Interlaken a lunch/rest station was built, called "Halfway House" (just north of 19th on the boulevard). In developing their proposed system of parkways for Seattle, The Olmsted Brothers of Massachusetts in 1903 recommended this ravine/bluff area for acquisition. Condemnation and purchases began in 1905, continuing until 1970 - a total of 27 transactions.

The park area had been covered with a heavy stand of conifers, which were logged off during Pioneer days, being replaced with hardwoods and some second growth conifers. The park is located on the north slope of Capitol Hill, a geologic feature that existed before the Vashon Ice Sheet of 14,500 years ago. However, the glacier reshaped the hill (and all the hills of Seattle) with overlying till: glacial melt-off deepened the ravines and washed away some of the glacial till. Earlier deposition by glaciation consisted of sands, clay and gravel and some tilting of strata has made the (Park) area vulnerable to slides especially after the logging and more recent excavations for streets, sewers and homesites. The park provides a suitable habitat for a great variety of wildlife; many species of birds are year-round residents and others winter there or are seen as migrants in the spring or fall; there are squirrels and mice, the largest mammal now is the raccoon; some reptiles and amphibians have been observed; and, of the insects, the butterfly is the most spectacular of the abundant species.

One of the earliest developments by man in the park area was at the northwest end (now Seattle Prep and I-520); at an early date it became the Catholic Bishops Cemetery of the Holy Cross. (According to legend, one of the burials was the Irish wife of a man named O'Brien. By request she was buried in a load of soil her husband had shipped from Ireland. When Calvary Cemetery was acquired, the bodies from Holy Cross were moved, including the Irish soil for Mrs. O'Brien!) In 1905 the Swedish Baptists acquired 10 acres of the site and built Adelphi College. Financial reverses in 1918 caused the grounds to be sold to Seattle College which occupied the campus until 1931 when they moved to Broadway and Madison to become Seattle U. The high school became Seattle Prep (Jesuit) who expanded the building complex in 1970 and demolished the old Priests' House on Delmar Drive and the iron bridge across the boulevard from the House (Schmidt Hall) to the campus.

The Catholics were first to develop another school on the perimeter of Interlaken Park: the Convent of the Sacred Heart (Forest Ridge) at "Thompson's Point" on Marple Ridge (north from 18th and Galer). (Lucius E. Marple was an early day property owner.) The site was selected for a convent because it was so far removed from the wickedness of Seattle. The main building was built in 1870 as a boarding school for 100 girls, but by 1930 there were so many students that boarding was discontinued and it became a junior college. But both attendance and maintenance grew until they were forced to move in 1971 to Somerset in Eastgate. "In consideration of an exchange of property" the Park Board in 1911 granted "a perpetual easement" from Interlaken Boulevard to the "Academy, its successors and assigns". (minutes of 1/3/1911) In 1971 the buildings were leased as Day School, later as a Hebrew Academy.

Engineer Cotterill's bicycle paths were well chosen routes, for many became the basis for Seattle's boulevard system. This branch from Washington Park to Volunteer Park was recommended by The Olmsteds and identified in 1903 as the Volunteer Hill Parkway. At that date the property was owned by many, but their holdings were tracts not yet subdivided into lots. The Olmsteds advised immediate acquisition "to head off ill-advised attempts

to subdivide the ridges and ravines which had been allowed to return to their "natural" state - second growth forest. However, there were some spectacular views of mountains, lakes and bay, and therefore was a very popular scene for the bike riders as well as hikers and strollers who came from town via the Broadway trolley car that ran along 10th Avenue. "INTERLAKEN" must have been a popular name for this area for it was quickly adopted in 1905 as the name for the new park, as well as a plat filed that year by the Interlaken Land Co., a small area along the southeast edge of the park. (There was a summer resort in Switzerland located on a river between the Thun and Brienz lakes named Interlaken). So the property condemned for a park and parkway purposes enclosed this bike route from Washington Park to within two blocks of Volunteer Park and also to Roanoke Park, just a block from the trolley car.

A chain of boulevards was being developed along Lake Washington, more or less along the Bicycle Route, and 14th Avenue south from Volunteer Park was being built up with mansions to become known as Millionaire Row. So the boulevard through the new park was developed from Washington Park, across a timber bridge over the gully that became 26th Avenue, along the slope to cross the ravine beside 20th Avenue on another timber bridge, following the bike route around to Halfway House, there to make a hairpin turn alongside the ravine crossing it at grade and on upward past the Convent under construction, thence to 19th and Galer and west to Volunteer Park. This route became the most popular one from town to Lake Washington, and the "speedway" for horsemen in Washington Park. The boulevard in Interlaken became such a speedway for automobiles that it became necessary for the Department to furnish a horse for an officer to patrol in 1906 - two years later the officer was put on a motorcycle. By then the Olmsteds had developed a plan for the improvement of the cindered bike path west from the Halfway House to Roanoke Park, cutting through the Adelphi College property and connecting Delmar Drive and 11th Avenue to Roanoke. Two more "rustic" bridges were required, one east of Adelphi up the ravine from the Delmar bridge; the other across the ravine that became BOREN PARK. In 1913 5 acres of Interlaken Park were set aside to honor Louisa Boren Denny, 86 years old at that time. Her husband, David T. Denny, had died in 1902. She was the first unmarried white woman to come to Seattle, being one of the Pioneer Party as was D. T. Denny; theirs was the first wedding in the new settlement in 1853. The year before, Louisa and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Carson Boren, were paddled across Elliott Bay by two Indians and, in the densely wooded and wild shore, cut down enough trees to build a foundation for the first cabin of the future town. A plaque commemorates the site at the northwest corner of 2nd and Cherry, not far from the shoreline of that day. Known as the "sweetbrier (rose) bride" because she had brought seeds from the East, she spent much time trying to beautify the town. But she also typified the rugged pioneer spirit; made her own moccasins, shot game, chopped wood and raised eight children while she was feeding horses, milking cows and trading with the Indians. It was, for those pioneers, a life of privation, inconveniences, anxieties, fears and dangers. She died in 1916 at the age of 89, one of the last survivors of that pioneer party of 1851. (The Dennys' gift of property in 1884 created Seattle's first public park and founded the Park Department: re DENNY PARK) The boulevard from Galer to Washington Park was identified as Interlaken Boulevard, and the new portion from Roanoke to the hairpin turn was named West Interlaken Boulevard. The area began to develop with homesides and property owners began to request driveway access to the boulevards which began to create several problems. One of them was the address confusion, resulting in a renaming of the boulevards by Council Ordinance in 1953. Also, Department records listed the park and boulevard separately for expense account purposes: since the park was allowed to develop "naturally", the "park" listing was soon dropped and not restored until the mid-1960's.

The improvement of West interlaken Boulevard was given an unique feature in 1915 when the "entry way" at Roanoke Street was distinguished with a memorial light and drinking fountain to the memory of Dr. H. B. Bagley. This Viewpoint entry was cut off from the Park upon construction of the second floating bridge and its connection with I-5 in 1966.

History: BOREN/INTERLAKEN PARK

One by one the rustic bridges were replaced. First to go was the one across the gully that by 1912 was being developed as a street for people in automobiles rather than on foot or horseback, and the bridge was supported on a center pile and only had 10' clearance. So the boulevard was realigned and a new reinforced concrete span was built with brick ornamentation and posts with "a single ball cast iron lamp of plain design". Clearance under the arch was 15'6" - "ample for modern trucks and moving vans". The three remaining were replaced with culverts and fills because this method was cheaper and required less maintenance; the one near Adelphi in 1920, the one near 19th in 1934, and the third one two years later. But if culverts are not maintained properly then stagnant swamps and pools develop or water floods across someone's yard or under a house.

Since the early days, 19th Avenue has been an important route to the park. A trolley car line was developed on 19th after 1900, deadending at Galer, and the new boulevard into the park. From here a system of paths through the forest was developed with rustic foot bridges, benches and picnic areas. Many strolled all the way to Washington Park. About 1940 the trolley car and tracks were replaced with a trolley coach which was not operable from either end as were the trolley cars, so a "slice" of park was taken to permit a turnaround loop. Meanwhile across the park a plat approved in 1927 by the Council indicated a right-of-way for 19th Avenue between the Boulevard and Boyer Avenue (enabling motorists to proceed through the park rather than going around the park.) The Park Board objected on the basis of hazard, steep slope and detracting from the beauty of a fine drive - but it was done anyway.

From the beginning, the "West" boulevard has been plagued with the problem of earth slides. The homesites that sought the beauty of this natural park and clustered about its edges caused excavations and fills and trenches for utilities, resulting in changes to the natural soil and drainage patterns, aggravating a condition described by The Olmsteds in 1903 as "liable to slides". The most tragic slide to date occurred in 1942 in the area known since the Bicycle Paths were developed as "Cape Horn" - a small picnic plateau lying 100' above the boulevard and 75' below 15th Avenue. (Its name came from the stormy point of South America, around which so many ships came, bringing settlers, supplies and furnishings.) It was a stormy December morning when the earth slid, carrying the family of dentist George Grapp down the steep slope - his wife was killed, the doctor was hospitalized, but their daughter miraculously thrown free; their luxurious home completely demolished. The area had been bought in 1923 by G. L. Seibert, Great Northern Railway official, who used the picnic grounds until, with his son-in-law F. S. Merritt, he decided to sell it as real estate in 1927 but did not record the plat, and so it was not developed with streets and utilities by the city. Additional earth was removed from the plateau and a gully filled in over a network of drains, the street paved, and the first homes built in 1933. The Grapp home was built on this fill, as was a neighbor's - it slid down the year before. (In 1945 the Cape Horn residents requested "annexation" to the city.) The three lots in the "old gully" were bought for \$1 each by the Building Department to prevent sale "and another tragedy". The boulevard is frequently closed for weeks or months at a time during the rainy months because removal of the saturated material would only activate additional flowing of the uphill portion of the slide area - all to the "annoyance" of residents whose driveways front on the boulevard.

In 1929 Emil E. Pelz offered an exchange of property adjacent to the viewpoint in Boren Park, proposing the vacation of that portion of 15th Avenue not developed when 15th Avenue was realigned to bypass Boren Park in exchange for property he owned beside the viewpoint. The Engineering Department declined on the basis it would be better to retain the street area and buy the Pelz Parcel; Pelz refused. After his death the city moved to condemnation which the court would not sustain. His widow, Dr. Freda E. Pelz, a prominent professor of Commerce at Seattle C.C., also refused to negotiate. Upon her death in 1968, the heirs sold willingly and the house became a center for Specialized Adult Recreation, then a neighborhood center, then boarded up and a proposed buyer went to court, but the city demolished the old house in 1974 - and an alleged ghost was dispossessed.

History: BOREN/INTERLAKEN PARK

Once the boulevard offered spectacular views, particularly of the 1909 AYP Expo; now the auto has found closer and more impressive views of those mountains; the boulevard now offers a secluded oasis from the asphalt/urban jungle.

History: BOREN/INTERLAKEN PARK