

NORTH

(X) believed to be site of  
pioneer Ft. Decatur.  
- 365 CA Brigade, Army)

(Yesler's  
Hyatt was  
his free)

Pier 50

## Yesler Way

5.425

S. Washington St.

S. Main St.

S. Jackson St.

Purch. 1889 "to estab. public"

0.1 Acre 0.23

Purch. 1889 "to estab. public" ☐  
from H. Yerler \$152.187<sup>00</sup>

五、

1973 REMOVED \$310,000 MOD. CHES + UPS  
SOMEONE ACCESS TO WAREHOUSE ROOMS  
VIA TWO MECHANICAL UNDER PASSELS

414 Two New Volatile Hydrocarbons

# OCCIDENTAL SQUARE

O. G. A. C.

Purch. 1971 "for park, recreation  
+ open space..."

Glass roofed bench shelter  
w/ water spigot

Trees, benches, frame for canopy  
Cobblestone paving/grass plot  
Fountain

Gift of \$750 = Samuel G. Buttrick Estate  
assistance in development - 1974

[illegible]

331

032076

# OCCIDENTAL SQUARE

During the centuries that the Indians lived in the Whulge (Puget Sound) Country, this area at the edge of the Duwam Psh ("Many colored river") delta became known as the Tzee-Tzee-Lal-Itch ("Little Portage" trail) to Hyas Chuck (Lake Washington). The trail must have gone in a southerly direction, between (First and Beacon) hills, even though the "pass" between (Dearborn Street) did not exist until the 1890s. The delta had formed a long spit extending southward from the steep, forested shoreline of (Elliott) bay onto the tidal flats of the delta and provided a natural beach for the dugout cedar canoes. The larger, more spectacular beach (Alki) was the site of an ancestral village Me-Kwah-Mooks and continued as a favorite campsite after the village "moved" to Suquamish.

So it is not surprising that the "pioneer party" arriving in 1851 landed at Alki Beach where Denny and Terry were building the settler's first cabin. But the deep water along the east shore of Elliott Bay gave promise of a better harbor, so the townsite was "moved" to the only flat, dry land available - the Spit. Two hardy pioneer women, Louisa and Mary Boren, built the first cabin at the new location in 1852 and marked the founding of the City of Seattle. (The town was chartered by the Territory of Oregon Legislature in 1865, incorporated as a City in 1869; Washington Statehood authorized by Congress in 1889). To promote the settling of the Oregon Territory (by white folks) Congress authorized the Donation Land Claim Act in 1850: 320 acres given to any white who would "clear the land, cultivate and occupy it for four consecutive years" and an equal Claim to his wife. The original Claims were the basis of the Town - the Spit and adjacent shorelands to the north - and the rich, fertile Duwamish Valley south of the tidal flats.

The settlement's first industrialist, Henry Yesler, arrived in 1853 with equipment for a sawmill aboard ship, which he set up on a wharf, built a cookhouse, store and hotel adjacent to it, and dedicated the enterprise to the task of "clearing the wilderness." Having taken from Mother Earth only those trees, animals and fish that were required for their personal needs, the Indians were astounded, fascinated and angered by these alien concepts that eventually took away their tribal homelands by Treaties that they had not comprehended (the concept of personal ownership of Mother Earth). The result was the Indian attack on the village in 1856: "Battle of Seattle" and the defeat of the Indian forces by the settlers' superior firepower - the cannon of the sloop Decatur (ref: City Hall Park).

Since Henry Yesler arrived after the harbor area had been claimed, he was given a Claim to the east with a narrow passageway to skid logs down to his mill. This skid road became Mill Street and then Yesler Way. The settlers' concept of private ownership of land necessitated the division of Land Claims into Acre Tracts and those into Subdivisions with lots and streets. Real estate agents quickly became the leading occupation in the town - although one realtor was also a banker, merchant, mine owner, etc. No wonder the call to "Go West, Young (impoverished) Man!" put thousands onto the Oregon Trail! (Few persons accustomed to luxurious life of the rich could have withstood the harsh life of the wilderness.)

By a not-too-accurate Federal Survey in 1850, the Donation Land Claims were platted on a north/south east/west grid. When the rugged pioneer individualists who were the first realtors platted the new townsite in 1853, they disagreed over the proper orientation: Denny and Boren platted their subdivisions oriented to the shoreline of Elliott Bay, but Doc Maynard oriented his to the compass; hence the change of directions at Yesler Way. And so "Commerical Street" (First Avenue) did not connect with "Front Street (First Avenue South)". In the day of the horse this was no big deal; besides, this particular area was adjacent to Yesler's cookhouse which was doubling as Town Hall for meetings, celebrations, dances, etc., and the open meadow was finding use for some informal ballgames, picnics and - starting in 1860 - concerts by Frye's Band. One of the first improvements was the erection of a flagpole.

The growth of waterfront industries increased the traffic demands upon "Commercial" and "Front" Streets, especially since they were nearest the bustling wharves. The sharp "Z" turn at "Mill St." was a real bottleneck for wagon traffic. The open "meadow" by this time was known as "Occidental Square" and its use for ball games had ceased, hindered by "traffic", development of surrounding business buildings, plus the availability of open fields

away from downtown (i.e., "the circus grounds" that was "The Potlach Meadows" of the Indians and eventually became the Seattle Center; in 1883 the Georgetown Meadows with sports and carnival was opened; etc.). So "Commercial St." was projected northward across Occidental Square to "Front Street" and the Square became a triangle owned by H. Yesler. The town was growing fast - too fast - far too many merchants were building stores with the most plentiful material - lumber. A few had built with brick and an occasional one with stone: "all were jammed together in one hodge-podge mess." In 1889, an overturned glue pot set fire to this tinder town, wiping out the 120-acre heart of town. Reconstruction began immediately after the initial shock - this time only masonry construction permitted. Under construction prior to the fire, the Pioneer Building was the first stone one finished (owner, H. Yesler; arch. E. Fisher; stone mason, M. J. Carkeek). Chin Gee Hee "came in second" with the first brick building (after the fire) - the Canton Bldg at the NW corner of Washington and 3rd. Plank streets were no longer permitted and City Engineering records show that in grading streets in this area the maximum fill was 18"; also that basements of the new buildings were allowed to extend under the sidewalks to the curb lines (which, after 1960) has caused some street trees to be planted in tubs rather than "in the sidewalk").

One of the frame buildings destroyed in the fire, considered to be of historic significance, was located just a block south of Pioneer Square, in what became the "new" OCCIDENTAL SQUARE in 1971. At 117 S. Washington, at the corner by the alley, "the Salvation Army originated in Seattle, June 5, 1887". After the fire a new location was chosen and at a later date a plaque placed in the sidewalk and retained in the cobblestone paving when the site became part of the new Square in 1974.

Two new hotels were built adjacent to Pioneer Square. Just across Yesler Way to the south was the Olympic Hotel, including the conveniently located ticket offices for the railroad. (The Olympic Bldg. collapsed in 1972 and, after considerable controversy over its restoration, was removed.) On the east side of the Pioneer Building which laid claim to the first electric elevators in Seattle (restored along with the building renovation in 1974), was the 8-story Butler Hotel that became the most famous hostelry and nightspot in Seattle history. It was built by Guy Phinney (Woodland Park) in 1890 on the Hillery Butler homestead site. The dignitaries who slept there were the "Who's Who" of America, as were the entertainers, including Vic Meyers of Seattle (his home site became Pritchard Island Beach). Came prohibition - and the Feds were finally able to close its doors in 1928. In 1933, it was reduced to a two-story Butler garage! Just across the new street along the west side of the Square, the Mutual Life Building was built. A new form of entertainment was luring patrons away from stage shows - the motion picture. It is claimed that a small theatre for the showing of films was included in this building, notable only because the claim is that here was installed the first theatre organ in Seattle, built by the Wurlitzer Pipe Organ Co. to provide the proper music and sound effects for the Silent Years - it WAS a sensational replacement of honky-tonk piano previously used.

21 days after The Great Fire, Occidental Square was purchased from Henry Yesler, who was moving from his burned-out location to a site on the east (Laurelhurst) shore of Union Bay where he already (by 1894) had a small mill in operation. The new triangle was given a new name: PIONEER SQUARE, and improved with lawn, flowers, six gas lamps, and a perimeter iron fence ("keep off the grass"?). Sunday "traffic" was at a minimum, trolley, cable and interurban cars all converged upon the Pioneer Square area, so Sunday concerts resumed at the Square, with the Seattle Cornet Band and "Dad" Wagner's 2nd Regiment Band. In 1896 the first tradeship from an Asian port came to Seattle and in honor of the highly significant event that marked the inauguration of Seattle as an international seaport, a Seattle composer, Sol Asher, wrote "The Miike Maru March" in honor of the Japanese ship. Wagner's Band played it as they led a parade from Pioneer Square to Pier 58 to greet the berthing ship.

A year later another ship, the Steamer Portland, docked at the next pier (57) loaded with a "ton of gold" from the Klondike - and the Gold Rush began. And Seattle came out of the 1893 Depression - with a leap. New construction had completely filled the Pioneer Square District and so the business district began a northward trend.

The Chamber of Commerce sponsored a "professional" excursion to Alaska in 1899; members of the party included E. F. Blaine (who later was honored as "the Father of Seattle's Park System") and E. P. Piper, Editor of the P.I. Prize of the excursion was the removal - "assisted by the Indians" - of a 110 year old, 50' cedar Totem Pole from a "deserted" village (the men were away on a hunting trip) of the Tlingit tribe on Tongass Island. Brought to Seattle, the pole was immediately placed in Pioneer Square and dedicated with a "box of archives in the concrete base" - contents listed in the P.I. of October 18. The Seattle Times, not being invited to the Excursion, began to chide the P.I. as "the looters and desecrators of graves" and drew up a mock damage suit. The outraged Tlingits then secured a real grand jury indictment in Juneau, resulting in an out-of-court settlement of \$500 to benefit an Indian school near Ketchikan.

Pioneer Square had become the real hub of Seattle, a major transfer point for trolley and cable cars to all parts of town, plus the big trolley "Interurban" cars to Rainier Beach-Renton-Tacoma, West Seattle, White Center, Everett, plus connections to the ferry system across Puget Sound and Lake Washington. At the corner of Occidental and Yesler, the T.B.-R.-T. Interurban Co. built a terminal station for its cars, the Smith Tower Annex; remodelled, of course, after the "termination" of service.

As an accommodation to citizens waiting at this transfer point - and timed to become a feature of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYP) - the Park Board hired Julien F. Everett, architect, to design a pergola and underground comfort station along the south side of the Square. A proud, fully detailed description of the facility was contained in Annual Report of 1909 - "the finest in the nation". The Board also hired Seattle's first and foremost sculptor, James Wehn, to design a drinking fountain suitable for man, horse and dog and topped with a bust of the noble Chief Seattle. (Wehn was already commissioned to work on a full figure of the Chief to be placed at the new Tilikum Place.) Three castings of the fountain were made: this one, another at Tilikum Place which later went to Westlake and 4th and then vanished; and the third was placed at "the Depot" also moved at a later date to the Renton Fire Station (235 Mill Avenue).

Seattle had been too eager to rebuild after the Great Fire and did not get around to City Planning until 1903 when the famed Frederick Law Olmsted firm of Brookline, Mass., was hired to prepare a Comprehensive Plan of Parks and Parkways and then, not until 1911 did the City hire Virgil Bogue to prepare a Municipal Plan for the City itself. The Bogue Plan was too late and too specific; it recommended relocation of the already-built railroad stations and business district to the Lake Union area to relate to the planned Lake Union Ship Canal (which opened in 1917). Bogue's plan covered all phases of the City: harbor, transit, highway, civic monuments, and public halls and galleries. But it was submitted to the voters as a single package and defeated by pressure of businessmen who had too much invested to give it all up for a new site. The result was NO plan and marked the beginning of the decline of Pioneer Square into the "Skid Road" district. Seattle's Regrade Project hastened - and aided - the northward move of the business district so that buildings in the District were neglected and became the refuge for victims of the Great (1929) Depression, either in cheap hotels, or in doorways, or as an area to meet with buddies from "Hooverville" - a shantytown that had come together on the site just to the south of the shipyards of WW I fame. Seeing these men lying about in doorways and on streets was reminiscent of the logs that were not too long before seen on Yesler's Skid Road.

*totem* About 1923 Pioneer Square was redeveloped; the most prominent change was relocation of the ~~total~~ pole from a point near the apex of the triangle to a point midway along the east side of the triangle, with the notation - "placing a copper nugget at the Pole." No reference to the original base and its box of archives nor of a new box is to be found in Department or newspaper files. Other improvements: paving of walks and creation of flower beds.

In 1937 the 148-year-old cedar totem pole was extensively damaged by fire. A controversy developed over the problem of restoration or replacement and even its relocation to another, safer site; arguments came from anthropologists, press and public. Finally, the U. S. Forest Service was authorized by Congress to commission a new carving, based upon the

(over)



original design, by the Kininook and Kyan families of Ketchikan, Alaska. They were given the remains of the original. The new totem was dedicated on July 25, 1940, with "concrete poured around the uncarved base." Though it was not noted at that time, in 1956 the P.I. (9/23) made note of a box of archives found at the base, but the contents were different from the 1899 archives and no copper nugget. A 5' high iron fence now enclosed the totem.

A feature of the National Painters Convention in 1954 was a painting of the totem.

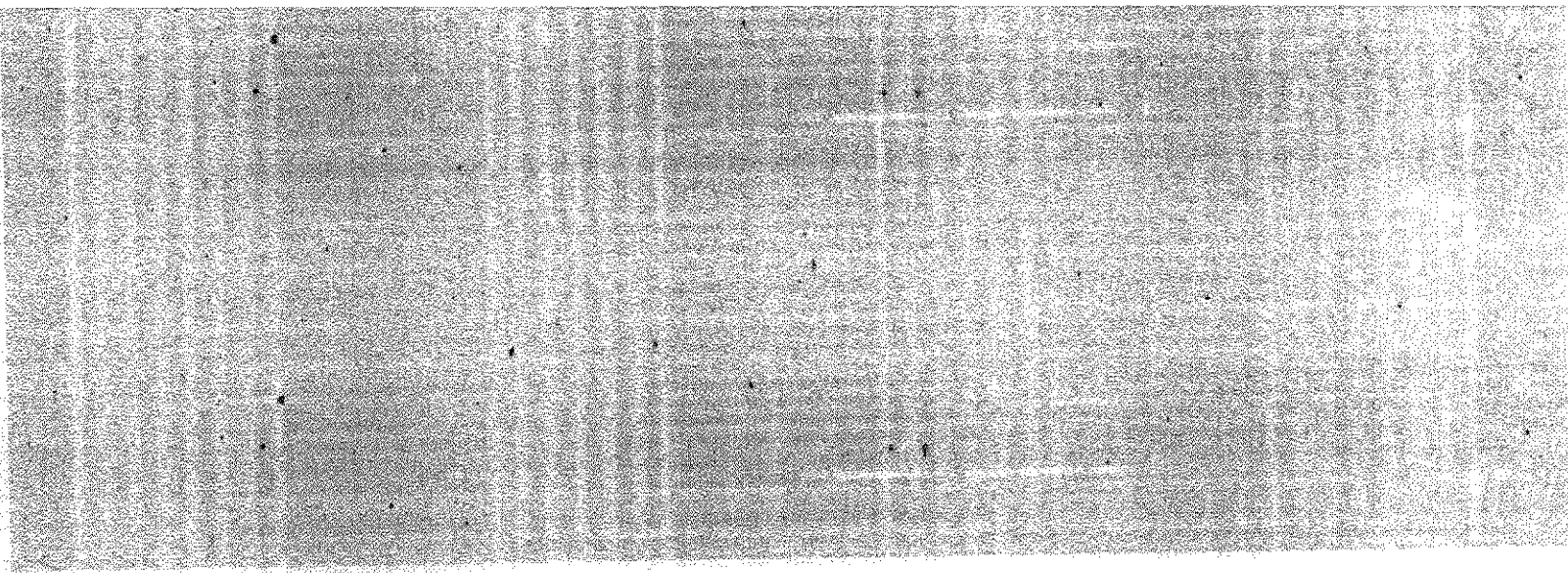
The comfort station underneath the pergola had come a refuge from the rain and cold, and became constantly damaged by abuse and misuse, so the stairways were covered with wood flooring at sidewalk level, which only challenged the would-be "patrons". In 1958 the walk areas in Pioneer Square were repaved with asphalt and the stairways were effectively sealed.

Meanwhile, the merchants in the District catered mainly to residents of the vicinity: smoke shops, cafes, taverns, that were the places where these residents gathered to meet their friends and pass the day and evening. All they asked for in a room was a bed, hot and cold water, warmth and a lock on the door. Unable to buy even that much, then a sheltered doorway and the warmth of some crumpled newspaper.

In the mid-1950s Mrs. Harlan (Myrtle) Edwards, Council member, began to advocate preservation of buildings in the District. But building owners were not interested - demolition and new structures or asphalt parking was the only way to go. Like the old Seattle Hotel - replaced with the "sinking ship" parking garage - and Butler Garage. A design contest among architects was held in 1954 but there were no funds and no interest; the Department repaved the triangle with asphalt (noted above). Mrs. Edwards' plea fell upon sympathetic ears at City Hall, who foresaw a vital Historic District as a tool to revitalize downtown and reverse the move to suburbia, complete with their shopping centers - money earned downtown and spent in suburbia.

Fire Department inspection reports of conditions existing in the musty labyrinths existing in the basements and upper floors of the old, unused buildings touched off a series of "Host Town" stories in the Seattle Times in 1960 (John Reddin), sparking enough interest that an "Underground Tour" was established by Bill Speidel, together with the Blue Banjo Tavern. The arrival in 1967 of Art Skolnik, a conservation-minded architect from New York who joined the City Architect's staff, resulted in his appointment as manager (1970) of the Pioneer Square Historic Preservation District. This opened the door for Federal money for restoration grants with matching funds from the City. The City leased needed office space in various buildings to enable owners to get funding for restoration; an asphalt parking lot plus a tavern, cafe and shop were purchased by Forward Thrust to be developed as OCCIDENTAL PARK to secure the financial success of the Grand Central on the Park project; 1900 style street lamps were installed in the District; tree lined median strips on First Avenue South and Occidental South and the rebirth of the District was under way. However, remodelling of shops, restaurants and hotels has changed the whole life style of the District: the old cigar store now sells imported cigars, wines; the Tav now has a rock music group - and there's no place for the long-time residents, except to move to Georgetown or Ballard or - - The remodeled hotels were not designed to meet the financial or social needs of the District's residents; instead, an unintended group, the retired, moved in.

In 1971 the 1909 iron pergola was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and funds for its restoration came from the United Parcel Service of New York City. The UPS had been founded in 1907 as a small messenger service at 2nd and Main by teen-age boys of whom J. E. Casey was still with the organization. Pioneer Square was completely removed and enlarged to include First Avenue to the east. The totem was restored by J. C. Hudson, Jr., Tsimshian, and moved to its 1899 position - a probing search was made but the old pole foundation was not found. In the spirit of the 1909 appearance, a triangle of lawn with an iron fence around it was planted, but the "original" flower bed along the north side of the pergola was allowed to retain the trees planted in 1958. The underground comfort station was considered for restoration but was repaved-over with cobble-



stones (from Seattle streets) as was the remainder of the enlarged Square. The Chief Seattle fountain was restored (except for the bubbler basin) and the reactivated Horse Patrol made good use of the trough. A new feature, the cedar Kiosk, was added, with a band of plaques describing the District's history (written by Ilze Jones); the remaining space quickly used for posters. New trees were planted in the new area and new wooden benches designed.

Cobblestones became a major element in the design of OCCIDENTAL SQUARE, the other dominant feature being a glass and aluminum shelter roof-and-tower with specially designed benches and steps for sitting. Pipe framing was strategically placed for mounting displays, etc. The building group at the north end was replaced with a patch of lawn, fountain pool and surround of trees. Occidental South, on the east side between the park and asphalt parking lot beyond, and in the block to the south, was closed to traffic and repaved with cobble stones.

One of the many activities taking place in Occidental Square was the building of a huge, skeletal wooden whale of Indian motif, made by Rick Lucas and Rich Reinland. Upon completion it was offered for sale. The County bought it and moved it to their new Duwamish Waterway Park in South Park.

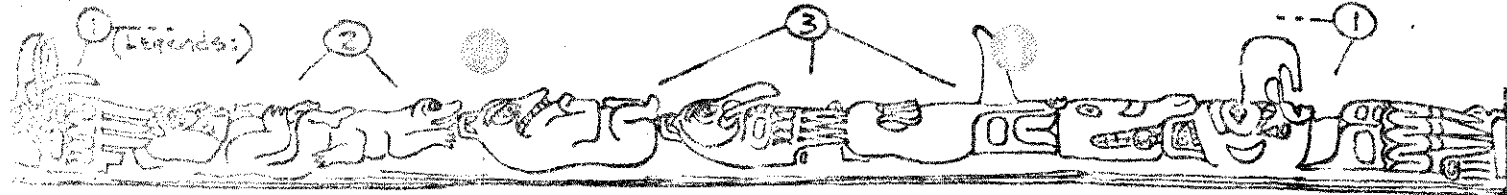
The success of the Pioneer Square District restoration was accorded national recognition when it served as a classroom for the first conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1975 and was a tribute to the vision and labor of architects like Ralph Anderson and Victor Steinbrueck, Mayor Uhlman, Councilman Bruce Chapman, Dick White, Bob Ashley, and the Pioneer Square Association, with backing by Seattle Trust and Savings Bank.

#### TOTEM TALES - PIONEER SQUARE TOTEM

Carved in cedar, 50; high: symbolizes Tlingit legends and mythological animals that represent family clans, this pole belonging to the Raven Clan, with the hero at the top and at the bottom is the grandfather or raven.

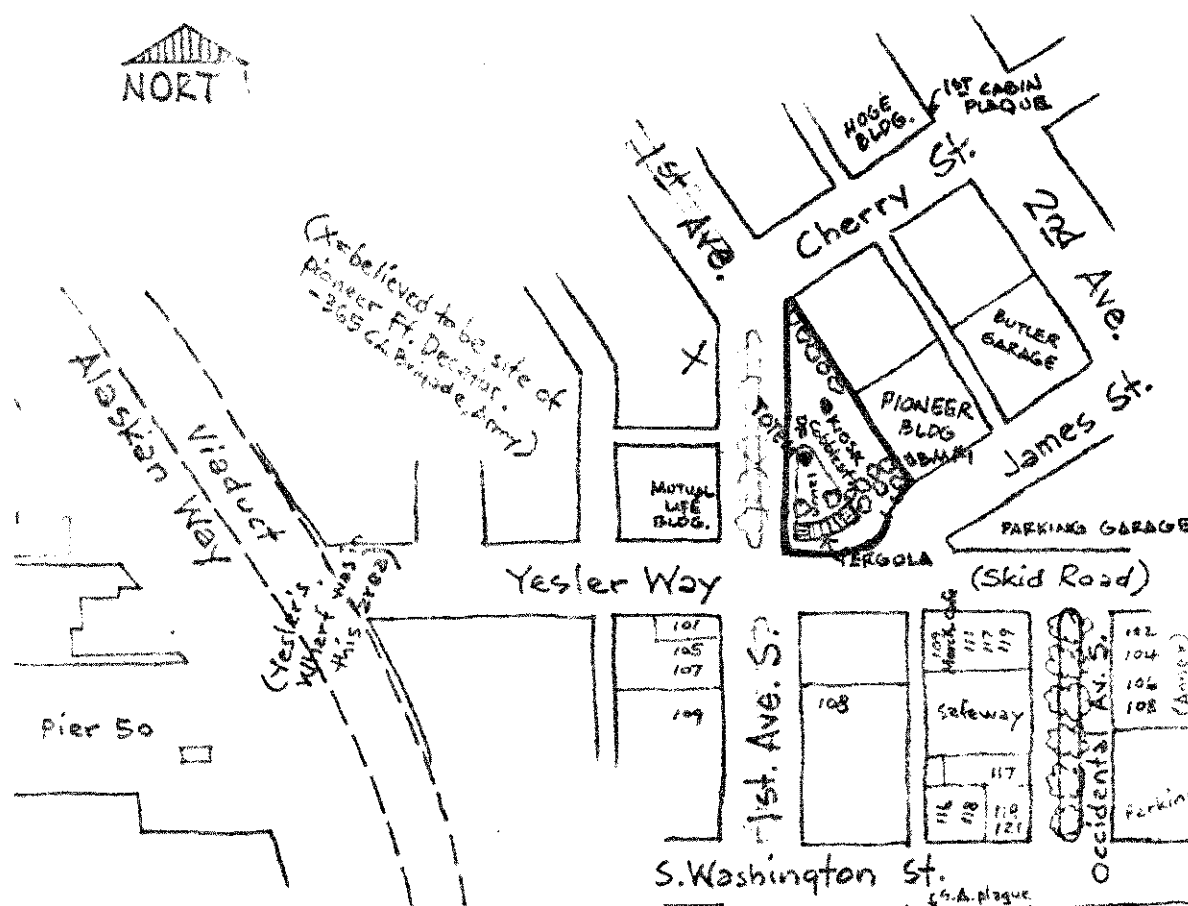
Three legends are illustrated:

1. With the moon in his beak, Raven symbolizes: people were living in a world of darkness because Grandfather Raven hid the sun and moon in boxes in his house. So Hero Raven turned himself into a hemlock needle floating on water which was drunk by the Grandfather's daughter and thus was born into the house. During childish play he freed the moon and sun and is himself turned black in escaping through a smoke hole.
2. A woman made derogatory remarks about frogs, so one changed himself into a handsome man. They were happily married until she discovered that all of his relatives and her own children were frogs. Her father finally rescued her and the children eventually became human.
3. Raven and Mink were swallowed by a Whale. When the Whale did not swallow enough fish for their appetites, they began to eat the Whale. Tiring of journeying about, they killed the Whale and were washed ashore, dirty and greasy. Mink became dirty brown color from drying himself in rotten wood and Mink became sleek and glossy.



BEAR  
MOOSE  
WOMAN  
WITH CHILD  
FROG  
MINK  
RAVEN  
KILLER WHALE  
RAVEN-AT-THE-  
HEAD-OF-NASS

## TOTEM POLE @ PIONEER SQUARE

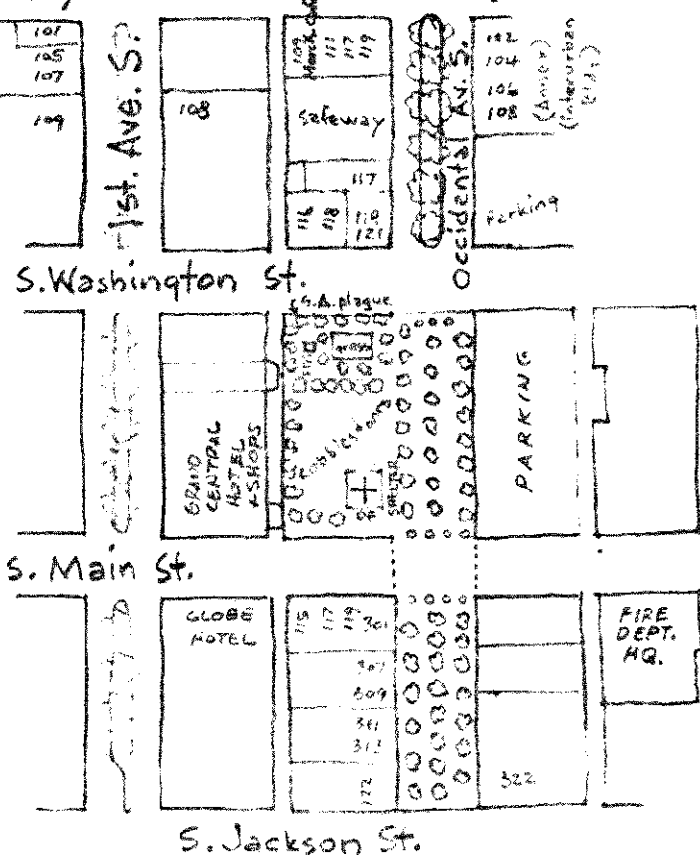


## PIONEER SQUARE

0.1 Acre (0.23)  
Purch. 1889 "to estab. public"  
from H. Yesler \$152,187  
50 James St.  
1973 RENOV. \$210,000 a Mod. City + UPS  
SERVILE ACCESS TO UNDERGROUND ROOMS  
VIA TWIN MINIMOL UNDER PERGOLA  
History Plaque Band around Kiosk

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## OCCIDENTAL SQUARE



### PIONEER SQUARE:

DF = Drinking Fountain topped with bust of Chief Seattle, with facilities for Man, Horse + Dog designed by sculptor James Wehn in 1909.

KIOSK, Cedar = Bronze plaque band: Pioneer history (see Text) - 1973 (Jones + Jones, Arch.)

TOTEM POLE, cedar = 50 ft. high, 1940 copy of 1789 original placed here in 1899.

original served by Tlingit Indians on Tongass Island (So. Alaska): copy by Ketchikan tribe

Admired in 1899 as the first historic memento owned by the city. "P. 10/18/1899.

GAS LIGHT = replica of one installed here in pioneer days.

gift of Central Association in 1962.

PERGOLA, iron = installed in 1909: designed by architect Julian F. Everett. Pergola is a 1909 with sky lights

BENCHES placed under pergola. (Placed on Nat'l. Register of Historic Places - 1971)

This was the "hub" of pioneer Seattle: first industry - Yesler Sawmill - built here, as were first buildings following the Great Fire of 1899.

Pioneer Assoc. - "PIONEER = events + people here prior to 1889." (Statehood)

"Occidental Square" was the name originally given to Pioneer Square - 1855 to 1889

"THE DESIGN ENCOURAGES IMPROMPTU ACTIVITIES."

## PIONEER SQUARE

062876