



## *Feature Article*

### **Fall City: The Hotel Corner since 1886** (southeast corner of 337th SE and Redmond-Fall City Rd)



*Fall City ca. 1887 In this very early photo, the river-powered ferry run by the Rutherford brothers is shown, as well as the earliest buildings. In the notes on the original photograph, the buildings are identified as (L-R): Dr. Baker's office, Jeremiah Borst's house (built originally for Mr. Berry), Taylor restaurant, store (with dance hall above) and home, a saloon, and Stark's store, with Post Office. (Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum)*



#### **The Taylor Hotel (1886-1903)**

In 1872, when David "Doc" Taylor (left), with his wife Helen and three children, came to the area that would later become Fall City, they were the first family to settle here. His brother, James Taylor, was the first settler, arriving in 1869.

About 1886, Doc Taylor built a store on what would later become River Street. About a year later, he added a makeshift restaurant on the east side of the building, to serve those who were working in the saw mills, logging, construction and cattle drives. In 1888 he added a two-story house for his family, on the west side of the store. In those early days, places to sleep for the night were few and far between, so the Taylors began

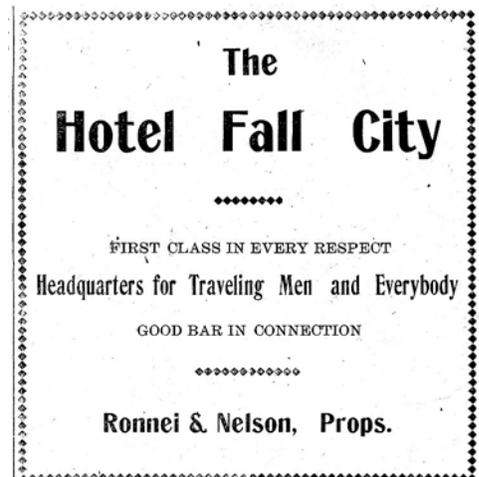
renting rooms to overnights in their home. So it was that the Taylors began in the hotel business. In 1892, the store and restaurant burned and were not rebuilt, but the Taylor House/Hotel continued to be used until it burned a couple of years later. Soon after that, Doc built the two-story Taylor Hotel at the site of their former house. The hotel had a dining room that then served as the town's restaurant. Doc's daughter, Olive, worked in the kitchen; she recalled that 16 loaves of bread, in addition to cookies, pies and cakes, were required each day.

*This 1906 photo shows a horse race on River Street. On the left is the Taylor Hotel, now with Hotel Fall City sign. (Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum)*



### **Hotel Fall City (1903-1919)**

In 1903, Doc Taylor sold the Taylor Hotel to Andrew and Karen Ronnei and Mike Nelson, who changed the name to Hotel Fall City. A large saloon was soon built on the corner west of the hotel and in 1909 the hotel was expanded to merge with the saloon. The Issaquah Independent reported improvements in 1908 and 1909 including another pool table with elevated chairs for players and spectators, a concrete sidewalk in front, a water tower, and an improved gas lighting system. A boat was also launched on the Snoqualmie River



*1907 ad, King County Record.*

“for the convenience and pleasure of the guests during the summer.” In November 1908, Western Union election returns were posted in the saloon to draw patrons. In 1911, the Ronneis bought out Nelson. Andrew and Karen ran the hotel until 1919, when they both died in the flu epidemic.

*Fall City Hotel, ca. 1939*



### **Fall City Hotel (1921-1935)**

About 1921, Lars and Inga Johansen bought Hotel Fall City and named it Fall City Hotel. Lars Johansen had been a cook aboard a Norwegian ship, but when he married Inga Bergsen, that was the end of his seafaring days. Lars and Inga were doing a good business until the night of September 29, 1925, when fire broke out and very quickly brought the structure to the ground.

After the fire, Lars built a new hotel on the site and rearranged the ground floor. He established an owner's apartment at the east end of the building and the Fall City Café at the west end, with a lobby in between. It was a wise move, and since Lars was an excellent cook, the café was soon doing a very good business. When River Street was widened and paved in 1930, the building was moved toward the rear of the lot, where it stands today. In 1933, business was so good that Lars had eight tourist cabins built along the alley behind and to the east of the hotel to take advantage of the steadily increasing tourist trade. Things went badly for Lars later in 1934, after Inga passed away. The property went downhill and Lars soon chose to sell.

### **Frank and Florence Thomas (1936-1968)**

Frank and Florence Thomas came along in 1936, bought the hotel, and Frank got things back on track. He and his wife moved into the owner's apartment,

and that made a big difference in the way the place was run. Oliver Hanson leased the restaurant in the 1940s and was making a living dishing out hot lunches and similar fare. Unfortunately, during that time gasoline was being rationed. Hanson didn't receive enough gas rations to take him from home in Ballard to Fall City and back each day, so he gave up his lease.

Following the completion of the freeway between Issaquah and North Bend in 1946, the tourist traffic through Fall City steadily declined until the eight cabins were demolished in 1964. Toward the end of Thomas' ownership, the rooms were rented to teachers and traveling salesmen. The upper floor remained living quarters in later years, and the ground floor became a series of restaurants.

### **Kaschulmist (1971-1983)**

Gordon and Ruth Townsend bought the hotel about 1968 and turned the Fall City Café into a short order restaurant and ice cream parlor. They named it the "Kaschulmist," which was a combination of the names of their three daughters, Karrie, Suzie and Mistie.



*Kaschulmist, 1973*

The Kaschulmist served 32 flavors of ice cream. Delicious concoctions, such as the Big Si, Little Si, Two Rivers, the Spar Pole, the Matterhorn and the Flaming Geyser, were sold at bargain prices. When it opened in 1971, the Kaschulmist employed two college kids and ten high school students. It was a family-run affair and it did quite well. However, the income from the eatery wasn't sufficient to sustain the mortgage payments and the building was leased to Keith Bentley in 1983.

### **Rocky's Pizza House II (1983-1994)**

Keith "Rocky" Bentley was the next owner and for a few years, Rocky's Pizza House II was the place to get a real pizza. Keith was no newcomer to serving the public, having owned a thriving pizza business in Issaquah for a number of

years. He fixed up the building and repainted the outside to reflect the ingredients in pizza and the business took off. For over 10 years, he had the best pizza Fall City had ever tasted. Rocky later leased and then sold the building to George and Pat Razzori, who ran the business for a few years, until TM Management LLC became the owner of the building.



*Rocky's Pizza, 1979*

### **El Caporal**

In 1994, the Mexican restaurant, El Caporal, moved in and has been there ever since. Manager Pedro Velasco and his staff provide good food and friendly service. They have made a number of changes, making it larger, and decorating to make you feel like you are in Mexico.



*El Caporal, 2006*

In 2017, the building was purchased by the Pete Nelson family of Fall City.

(Note: material excerpted from *Jack's History of Fall City*, by Jack E. Kelley)