

FALL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 293, Fall City, WA 98024

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Over The Pass, and Through The Woods ...

One of Washington's first cross-state highways, the Sunset Highway provided the first automobile route over the Cascade Mountains, a range that divides the state from north to south. When it opened in 1915, the highway largely followed the route of an Indian trail that had been developed into a wagon road. The Sunset Highway changed designations a number of times over the years, beginning as State Road No. 2, then becoming, sometimes in succession and sometimes simultaneously, the Sunset Highway, Primary State Highway No. 2, U.S. 10, and Interstate 90. The route serves as the primary east-west route in Washington, carrying traffic over the busiest mountain crossing in the state.

Snoqualmie Pass, the lowest of the state's cross-Cascade passes at 3,022 feet, has long served as a conduit for people and goods between the east and west sides of the mountains. Native communities, including the Yakama, Klickitat, Snoqualmie, various bands that would later be known as the Muckleshoot, and others, walked and, after the 1730s, rode horses over a number of mountain passes to trade and socialize.



Switchbacks on Sunset Highway, approximately one mile west of Summit. Credit Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum



Model T Ford reaches end of construction on Snoqualmie Pass, 1915. Credit Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum

West of Snoqualmie Pass the Sunset Highway followed the South Fork Snoqualmie River down to Issaquah via North Bend, Preston, and Fall City. At Issaquah it followed a cleft in the hills southwesterly to Renton then traveled around the southern tip of Lake Washington and north along what would become Rainier Avenue into Seattle.

The first vehicle crossed the pass on the newly completed, but not yet officially open, road in April 1915. James P. Scarce (1879-1941) and Henry Heisler drove a Metz roadster from Seattle to Cle Elum over the new road. *The Seattle Times*, in an article about their crossing, described two days of "grueling work and dogged determination" as the drivers made their way through mud and snow on the pass.

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Welcome Back To School!



In 1873, the first settler schoolhouse in Fall City (The Landing) was constructed, a 24-foot by 30-foot open frame building with no interior ceiling or interior walls. The rough-sawed boards used for the exterior were part of the first lumber produced at Watson Allen’s new sawmill at the mouth of Tokul Creek, and rafted down to the school site. Two small windows provided some light, and a stone fireplace provided heat. Two of the five students that year lived across the river, and James Taylor ferried them twice a day by dugout. While there were desks for the students and the teacher, the blackboard was fashioned from dark cloth stretched over a smooth board. This was the beginning of School District 20, authorized by Washington Territory Government in 1878, and the only building in Snoqualmie Valley dedicated solely to school purposes.

Today, over 7,000 students in the Snoqualmie Valley School District have started the 2021-2022 school year with a different set of challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. As with prior generations, our students and staff have adapted and persevered. We wish the very best to all staff, students, and volunteers returning to our many school buildings this September!



Save The Date!

Friday, Oct. 22, 2021

Tinkham Road Band Live!

at the Masonic Hall

Mark your calendars for our first live event in two years! We are thrilled to share an evening with you, and enjoy the live music and storytelling of local favorite, Tinkham Road. Stay tuned for details about the show, and added program fun.

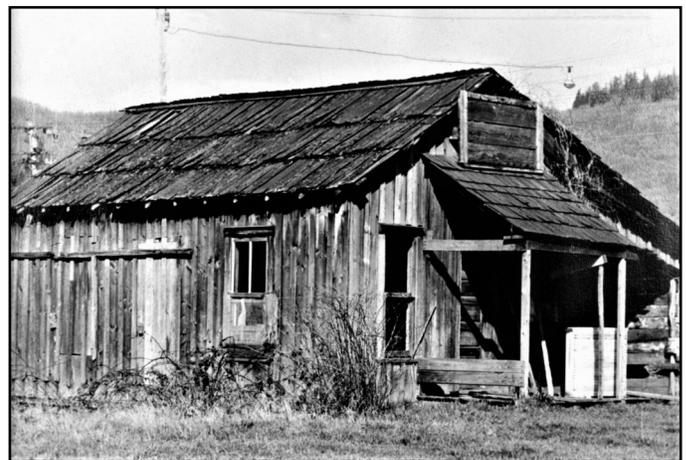


Photo: First school building, located on the north bank of the Snoqualmie River, across from Bonham’s Trading Post.
Credit: Snoqualmie Valley Historical Museum

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