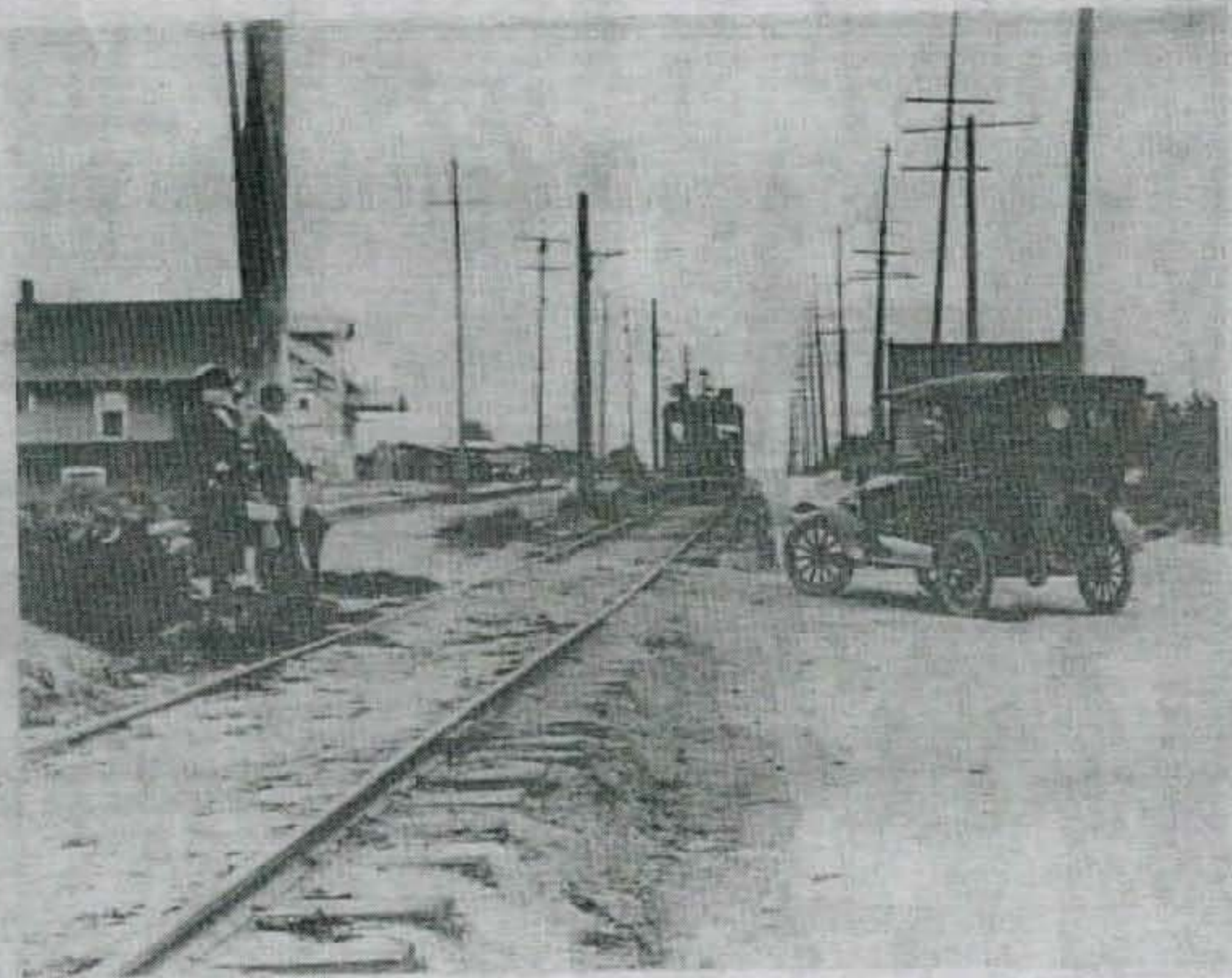


THE NUMBER 27 TROLLEY ALONG 15TH NW. (Date unknown.)

Photo by Harold Hill.



MAY 31, 1920. LOOKING WEST FROM THE CORNER OF NW 85TH AND 8TH NW.

# CROWN HILL: History of a North End community

By KARINA ERICKSON

Two centuries ago Crown Hill was like most other bumps in the area — a wooded knoll that was home for fish, birds, deer, bears and a handful of Indians who mostly camped in Greenwood and next to Green Lake. Since then it has grown into a distinctive North Seattle community with an active business district and Chamber of Commerce.

Throughout the 19th century pioneers trickled in and began clearing the land to

build homes and roads. As Seattle continued to grow to the north, more people came to buy land and settle on Crown Hill.

Legend has it that a couple of men from the city who were looking for an investment bought several lots in the area. One of the men said he had worked for so long on the steep slopes of Queen Anne Hill, Capitol Hill and Beacon Hill, that one leg was shorter than the other.

When he found Crown Hill he told all his friends about the level ground. One of them asked what he would call his district and he said, "I have seen them all; it takes the crown and we are going to call it Crown Hill."

The first settlers on the "corner" that was to become the center of the Crown Hill community were Mr. and Mrs. Lauderville who built their home on the corner of NW 85th and 15th NW in the early 1900s. This corner expanded into a small community complete with a grocery store and tavern.

Before 1913 the County Stockade took up several blocks of Crown Hill between NW 85th and NW 95th and from 15th NW to 8th NW. A large building and bath house were enclosed by an eight foot fence where men worked to clear land, cut wood and build roads for the county.

According to old pioneers, lazy husbands worked for their food and \$1.50 a day which was given to their wives. Since times were hard, some honest men had to work there just to earn a little money. But pioneers say, "Among this group were other types such as dope fiends and bad actors. The fence served to help the guards keep them from molesting society."

The roads were so muddy in wet weather that NW 85th was almost impassible. Cars had to cross the streetcar tracks several times in hub-deep mud. Mr. John Brill, Sr., finally persuaded the County Commissioner to pave NW 85th. He had to prove it was longer than a mile, however, because the city wouldn't pave roads under a mile long. NW 85th was the first street to be paved to the "corner."

Soon after that Crown Hill residents decided they wanted a paved arterial to the north. Property owners on 15th NW gave up frontage and moved buildings to make the street wide enough. They even helped pay for an extra 10 feet of road between NW 85th and NW 87th since the county would only pave 40 feet across.

After all the hard work it took to pave their corner, the residents of Crown Hill became proud of their community. J.B. Larson of the old Crown Hill News reported: "You will have to hunt quite a while to find a finer block in the city."

The Ballard Commercial Club also helped Crown Hill to get Holman Road paved. It was paved full width while the Ballard Bridge was being built.

The streetcar #27 also provided transportation to 15th NW. At the end of the line was a place called Terminal Tavern. The streetcar had to be turned around by hand at this point.

\*\*\*

Crown Hill children had a rough time before 1919. They either had to pay tuition and walk two miles to go to Whittier School, or walk several miles to Oak Lake to go to school. In 1910 residents persuaded the city superintendent to do something about the situation. Finally the city added a mile square on Crown Hill making it possible for children to go to Whittier without paying tuition.

But Crown Hill still wanted their own school. Albert Lundberg was the man who persuaded the school board that they needed a school. In 1918 a site was purchased and work began on a new six classroom school.

When Crown Hill School opened in 1919 the children were excited to have a new building with new books that had never been opened. The teachers earned \$90 per month — good money in those days. Married women were not allowed to teach. Within 20 years the enrollment grew to 225 students.

As enrollment grew, improvements were made: a new lunch portable, a gymnasium and an auditorium were built in 1949.

Enrollment continued to grow for awhile as more people moved to Crown Hill, but then it leveled off, and by 1978 the school could not have a full-time librarian or a basketball team because enrollment was so low. In June 1979 students and teachers had to say goodbye to their school and it was closed down — 60 years after the first class was held.

Crown Hill has always strived for improvement and a distinctive identity. The Crown Hill News first came out on Dec. 8, 1938 complete with community news and a church page. A local improvement club held weekly social meetings and an active PTA took care of school concerns.

The community continued to grow, adding homes and businesses throughout the next 40 years.

\*\*\*

In May 1982 Ray Tolbert of Security World became the first president of the Crown Hill Merchants Association. It was originally formed by suggestion from the Seattle Police Department's Crime Prevention Division. The Merchants' Association started the Crown Hill Fair in 1982 with four-to-five thousand people attending.

In 1986 the Crown Hill Chamber of Commerce took the place of the Merchants' Association with President Joan Sherwood, manager of the Crown Hill Seafirst.

These groups have worked constantly to improve the quality of life in Crown Hill by tackling traffic, construction and business problems and concerns.

This year's president is Carl Kuzyk, owner of CK Medical and Exercise Equipment. Projects for this year include the 1987 Crown Hill Street Fair, the 2nd Annual "Run for the Crown" 5-K Run, and a community picnic.

From the original "corner" at NW 85th and 15th NW, Crown Hill has grown into a lively community with an active business