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HISTORY OF
SEATTLE

From the Earliest Settlement to the
Present Time

BY
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the Alaska Building. In 1903 J. E. Chilberg, Jafet Lindeberg and other stockholders of the Scandinavian-American Bank, purchased the southeast corner of Second and Cherry from the Amos Brown estate for \$250,000, with the intention of erecting upon it a home for the bank. The morning after they made the purchase, J. C. Marmaduke, of St. Louis, decided that he would like to erect a building on the corner and approached the Amos Brown estate with a view to buying it. When he discovered the sale had already been made he hunted up Mr. Chilberg, made him a proposition, and the two joined in the erection of the first fourteen-story steel building in the Northwest. Construction work was completed in eleven months. The building stood as the highest in the city until James D. Hoge and associates erected the Hoge Building across the corner from it. In 1914 was completed the L. C. Smith Building, which rears its forty-second story into the clouds and gives Seattle the distinction of possessing the highest office building in the world outside of New York City. The Leary Building at the corner of Madison Street and Second Avenue, was erected by Mrs. John Leary.

The first reinforced concrete structures in Seattle were the American Bank and Empire buildings, which connect and were built jointly by the American Savings Bank and Judge Burke. A. Warren Gould was the architect, and now, in 1915, he is engaged in erecting a \$1,000,000 courthouse for King County.

It is interesting to note that while individuals and companies have come to Seattle in recent years and expended large sums of money in the erection of buildings, with the exception, perhaps, of the Metropolitan Building Company, J. M. Colman and his sons, Lawrence J. and George, all pioneers, have built more frontage than any others in the city. Their block on First Avenue has a frontage of 240 feet and that across the alley fronting on Western Avenue has the same, while their gigantic dock building has about two hundred feet frontage on Railroad Avenue and immense depth both downwards and westward. In addition to these, they have, at least, a half dozen other business buildings with a frontage of at least six hundred feet.

Other pioneers have put back upon their lands much of their fortunes they acquired here. Judge Burke long ago covered five lots and Dexter Horton four lots.

A striking feature of the erection of buildings in Seattle is the work of development now being done by the Metropolitan Building Company, an organization of prominent capitalists. The company was organized in 1907 for the purpose of taking over from James A. Moore a lease he then had on the ten acres situated in the heart of Seattle, which A. A. Denny, C. C. Terry and Edward Lander, in 1861, presented to the state for a site for the university, and was used for university purposes until September, 1895. It was a tract without streets or buildings, although completely surrounded by both. The Metropolitan Company began the unique task of building a city within a city and has given Seattle some of the finest office buildings on the continent. The White, Henry and Cobb and the Metropolitan Theater buildings were the large structures completed prior to 1914, and the Stuart Building has just been finished this year, 1915. The company is not only developing the tract with buildings that will produce revenue, but it is doing all the physical work with regard to beauty of design and the artistic effect of the group when it shall be completed. The land is still owned

by the university, and the Metropolitan Building Company has increased its value not only to the extent of the buildings it erected on it but by bringing it so emphatically into the city. Howells & Stokes, the architects, have carefully preserved harmony of color and design in all the buildings and are giving to Seattle a group of structures that will be a decided ornament to the city.

The officers of the Metropolitan Building Company are, 1915, C. H. Cobb, president; O. D. Fisher, E. A. Stuart and C. F. White, vice presidents; J. F. Douglas, secretary and manager; O. D. Fisher, treasurer; and C. H. Cobb, O. D. Fisher, E. A. Stuart, M. J. Whitson, A. F. Coats, Landon C. Henry, W. G. Collins, Mark Reed, J. F. Douglas, J. H. Douglas and W. H. Talbot, trustees. Among the other stockholders might be mentioned H. C. Henry, R. D. Merrill, Grant Smith, M. G. Draham, Thomas Bordeaux and Patrick McCoy.

Many millions of dollars of outside capital have been spent in building operations in Seattle, and many times during her career outsiders have shown faith in the city's future, and that with no sentiment to tempt them to overstep their independent business judgment. One of the most interesting cases of this is the record of the investments of G. Henry Whitcomb, of Worcester, Mass. Mr. Whitcomb's belief in Seattle is so typical that it is worth relating. He was the first man in America to manufacture envelopes by machinery and has had a singularly successful business career. Early in 1898 James A. Moore, then a real estate broker in Seattle, was introduced to Mr. Whitcomb in Worcester, and, as the manufacturer was contemplating a trip to the Pacific Coast during the summer of that year he promised Mr. Moore that he would visit Seattle and see if it measured up to the description of the enthusiastic real estate man. Mr. Whitcomb brought his entire family. When he arrived Seattle had all the ear marks of a frontier town. The Klondike rush was at its height, and on the street in front of the Rainier-Grand Hotel, where the Whitcomb party stopped, dogs were being trained for harness. Mr. Whitcomb spent some weeks in Seattle and explored it thoroughly. The impression it made was apparently satisfactory, for he proceeded to purchase property to the extent of \$113,000, spread out as follows: One hundred lots known as the Lowman property, for \$25,000; thirty-five acres known as the Emerson land, near the university, for \$16,000; the northwest corner of Pike and Fourth, for \$42,000; the northwest corner of Third and Virginia, for \$10,000, and the northwest corner of Second and Union, for \$20,000. On the last mentioned property he proceeded to spend \$8,000 remodeling the building, bringing the total of his first year's investment up to \$121,000. These purchases indicated Mr. Whitcomb's faith in two things that were not accepted at that time even by many residents of Seattle—the gradual working north on Second Avenue of the retail business, and the ultimate development of the university district. It also reflected quite remarkable foresight and a confidence in the ultimate growth of the city that was not influenced by local prejudice, as he had no sentimental interest in the future of Seattle. That he was not carried away by a momentary burst of enthusiasm was demonstrated during the following year, when he purchased the southeast corner of Second and Union and proceeded immediately to erect the Estabrook Block. In 1901 he purchased practically all of what is now Capitol Hill, cleared it, paved it and placed it on the market through the office of James A. Moore. Also in 1901 Mr. Whitcomb leased the entire block surrounded by Second, Union, First and



VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM THE SMITH BUILDING, SECOND AVENUE

University—the Denny cow pasture—had the cows removed and commenced the construction of the Arcade Building, which, with the annex erected in 1907, occupies all the property. This building, still owned by Mr. Whitcomb and built entirely by him, is the largest office structure in the city, containing 351,000 square feet of floor space. In the forty-two story L. C. Smith Building there are 300,000 square feet.

In 1905 and 1906 Mr. Whitcomb acquired all the frontage on the east side of Second Avenue from Pine to Stewart, and erected the Amherst apartment building and the Washington Hotel Annex. So closely did he follow the regrade operations that the steam shovels were eating away the hill on the rear of his property while he was building on the front. His son, David Whitcomb, is in charge of the Seattle property.

Since the above was put in type the telegraph reported Mr. Whitcomb's death at his home in the eastern states.

Seattle's most unique structure, the forty-two story L. C. Smith Building, was the result of another non-resident's faith in the future of the city. The chain of circumstances that led up to the construction of the conspicuous landmark starts away back a full half century ago. At that time Miss Mary Slocum was making dresses for Mrs. L. C. Smith's mother and other women in Syracuse, N. Y. In the '80s Miss Slocum decided to join her sister, Mrs. W. E. Boone, in Seattle. In 1888 Mrs. Smith's parents, Mrs. Smith, and her son, Burns Lyman Smith, crossed the continent for a visit to San Francisco. While on the coast they decided that they had better return home by way of Seattle, in order to see their old friend Miss Slocum. They put in a week here, the most notable incident of the visit being the soaking of Mr. Boone by little Burns, who learned to play with the garden hose, and who was promptly chastised by his victim. On the return home the members of the party were warm in their praise of Seattle and Mr. Smith visited the city a few years later in order to see it for himself. In 1890 J. W. Clise left for New York City to endeavor to interest capital in the purchase of a number of properties in the wholesale district south of Yesler Way. He stopped off at Syracuse to call on his friend William Nottingham, a prominent attorney. In course of the visit Mr. Nottingham suggested that he try to interest L. C. Smith in the properties. Mr. Smith by that time had amassed a great fortune in the manufacture of the typewriter that bears his name. The necessary introduction was arranged and the three men held numerous conferences. A few months later Mr. Smith wrote one check to cover the purchase of the following properties: The northeast corner of Second Avenue and Yesler Way where the great building now stands; the Pacific Block, the northwest corner of Occidental and Main; the Grand Central Hotel Building, at the northeast corner of First and Main, and the northwest corner of First and King. Four and five-story modern buildings occupied some of the corners. Watson C. Squire, formerly governor of Washington, was the vendor. It was probably the largest individual purchase of property at any one time in the history of Seattle real estate. It was two years after he made the deal before Mr. Smith came west again to view his property. Meanwhile Mr. Clise represented him here and continued to do so for ten years. In 1909 Mr. Smith visited Seattle and Mr. Clise urged him to improve his property at Second and Yesler, as the chief building then under way in the city was in