

TRAVELOG – RIDE AROUND THE SOUND

ALASKAN WAY – Our ride begins on Alaskan Way at the foot of Spring Street on downtown Seattle’s Elliott Bay waterfront. Two blocks north of our starting point is historic **Miner’s Landing** (Pier 57). Here on August 17, 1897 the *S.S. Portland* docked with a ton of Yukon gold in her hold. Newspapers had published the ship’s arrival well in advance and five thousand spectators crowded the waterfront to witness the start of the Klondike Gold Rush.

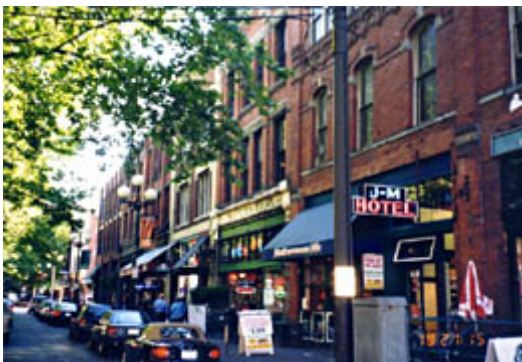


Seattle waterfront ca. 1913
[Photo: University of Washington Digital Archives]

Alaskan Way was originally known as Railroad Avenue. Built on timbered trestles, it evolved in the late 19th-century to handle cargo at the piers along Elliott Bay. Trains, wagons and trucks used the roadway and as shipping increased so did congestion. In 1903-04 a railroad tunnel was built beneath the city between Virginia and Jackson streets, siphoning through rail traffic away from the waterfront.

In 1934-35 the seawall and land fill were extended north to Broad Street, enabling the roadway to be paved. It was renamed Alaskan Way. Road congestion, however, continued. Work on the double-deck Alaskan Way Viaduct began in 1950 and it opened to traffic in 1953. In 1959 the viaduct’s southern extension opened to S. Holgate Street.

South of Columbia Street, the blocks extending inland from the waterfront constitute **PIONEER SQUARE**, Seattle’s original late 19th-century business district. Today Pioneer Square is a National Historic District with well-preserved period architecture and a very colorful history. Our route turns east on Yesler Way. Look for the neighborhood’s namesake, a small triangular plaza at the intersection of Yesler, First and James, originally known as Pioneer Place. It contains a totem pole and statue of Chief Sealth. The **Pioneer Square Pergola** (1909), framing the south edge of the square, was originally a shelter for the Yesler and James Street Cable Car Company.



First Avenue S. looking south from Washington Street [Photo: HistoryLink.org]

The tall, slender skyscraper two blocks east is **Smith Tower**. Completed in 1914, it rises 42 stories to a pyramidal peak and was for many years the tallest building west of the Mississippi River. Its 35th floor has the elaborate Chinese Room (a private dining venue) and a wrap-around observation deck. The tower’s elevator is still operated manually.

Yesler Way, formerly Mill Street, was once a dividing line between more respectable areas to the north and the “restricted district” to the south, where vice and a red light district were tolerated. An early name for the area was Skid Road, recalling the practice of “skidding” logs along an inclined path to a mill pond.

Our route now follows First Avenue South, one of the main commercial streets of old Pioneer Square. Note the handsome façades lining First. The Great Fire of 1889 destroyed most of the district’s wooden buildings, but by the early 1890s more substantial multi-story structures of brick and stone, built mostly in the Romanesque Revival style, helped the young city shake its frontier appearance.

Today Pioneer Square is home to art galleries, antique shops, bookstores, cafes, sports bars, nightclubs and

Internet companies. The concentration of night spots and entertainment venues and proximity to CenturyLink Field and Safeco Field make Pioneer Square a nightlife nexus. The district's galleries host an **Art Walk** the first Thursday of each month.

There are numerous sites of interest in Pioneer Square. **Milepost Thirty-One**, at 211 First Avenue S., has interactive displays about the Highway 99 tunnel project that will replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the history of remaking the city's shorelines. **Waterfall Park** at the corner of Second Avenue S. and S. Main Street, is a tranquil oasis of cascading water and greenery located on the site of the first UPS office. Learn more about the seminal event in Seattle's early days at the **Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park**, located in the 1889 former Cadillac Hotel building at 319 Second Avenue S. The **Seattle Metropolitan Police Museum**, 317 Third Avenue S., documents the history of law enforcement in the city dating back to the appointment of the first marshal in 1861.



Looking south along Second from Pine Street ca. 1880
[Photo: Univ. of Washington Libraries Digital Collection]

In Pioneer times the area south of Jackson Street and east as far as present day Fourth Avenue S. and Airport Way was known as the **DUWAMISH FLATS**, a low-lying zone of tideflats bordering the southern end of Elliott Bay. Here the Duwamish River had built up a delta crisscrossed by many small, shifting channels. In the early 1900s this low lying land was gradually filled with material from Beacon Hill, the high ridge east of the flats, to make the Flats more propitious for commerce. It converted the winding, shallow Duwamish River into a straighter, deeper navigation channel called the Duwamish Waterway. At the point where the Duwamish drained into Elliott Bay, the project also created **Harbor Island** from fill and dredged material. When completed in 1909, this was the largest artificial island in the world, covering 350 acres.

As you travel south on First look west and note the large cranes and superstructures of giant cargo vessels berthed on the Duwamish. Royal Brougham Way (formerly S. Connecticut Street) passes between CenturyLink Field and Safeco Field. The former is on the site of the Kingdome (opened in 1976 and demolished by implosion in 2000). The district between King and Spokane streets is still known as SoDo ("South of Dome"). Mr. Brougham (1894-1978) worked for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* newspaper for 68 years, most of the time as sports editor.

Another landmark along our route is the former **Sears Building**, at First S. and Lander. Today it houses Starbucks' global headquarters. Erected in 1912, it initially served as Sears' regional administrative and mail-order distribution center. A clock tower (now crowned with the Starbucks' green and white mermaid logo) was added in 1915 and it became a retail store in 1925. Starbucks moved in in 1997. Sears continued to operate a retail store here until early 2014. Just south, the **Living Computer Museum** (2245 First Avenue S.) contains artifacts representing the evolution of computer technology dating back to the 1960s . . . "*Hello. My name is HAL.*"

First Avenue passes beneath the Spokane Street Viaduct, a multi-lane elevated roadway connecting Interstate 5 with the West Seattle Bridge. Several blocks south our route crosses a 5/8-mile long bridge above Union Pacific's Argo Yard, a complex of sixteen railroad tracks. In clear weather the bridge offers a grand view of Mount Rainier – its snowcapped 14,411-foot summit is 56 miles southeast of here, as the crow flies. Next, follow the pedestrian and bike path across the **First Avenue South Bridge**. These twin bascule-lift spans were built over the Duwamish River in 1956 and 1988. The northbound span is the older, but has been completely rebuilt. Vessels and barges call at riverside docks stacked with containers and other cargo.

The route crosses West Marginal Way S.W. and leads to Highland Park Way, which begins a long climb up the West Seattle Ridge. Ninth Avenue S.W. continues south through **Highland Park**, a leafy residential area in the southeast part of **WEST SEATTLE**. The hilly peninsula of West Seattle, flanked on three sides by water, has always had a feeling of apartness from Seattle. In fact the first non-indigenous settlement in the area was on Alki Point, on the shores of Puget Sound. The **Log House Museum** (well off our route at 3003 61st Avenue S.W.)

chronicles the birth of Seattle. Alki was the first town in King County. Charles Terry arrived at Alki Point on April 13, 1851, on the schooner *Exact*, and brought ashore merchandise to start a store. He platted the town on May 8, 1853. Incorporated in 1902, West Seattle was annexed by its larger neighbor in 1907. In the first decade of the twentieth century Seattle gobbled up seven other neighboring municipalities, including Ballard, Columbia City, Georgetown, Ravenna, Southeast Seattle, South Park and South Seattle, swelling its population from 80,671 in 1900 to 237,194 in 1910!

Turning west on S.W. Henderson Street, the Olympic Mountains are visible on the western horizon (weather permitting). As our route crosses S.W. Roxbury Street (Seattle city limits) we enter **WHITE CENTER** (pop. 14,000, elev. 381 ft.), a census-defined place in unincorporated King County. The community's nickname "Rat City," may refer to a prevalence of rodents or the location during World War II of a R.A.T. (Relocation and Training Center) in the area. Yet another theory stems from the acronym "Restricted Alcohol Territory," applied to certain areas. The Rat City Roller girls, a women's roller derby league, started training at White Center's Southgate Skating Rink (9696 17th Avenue S.W.). White Center has a diverse ethnic mix. According to the 2010 census, after White (47%), the largest ethnic groups are Asian (22.3%) and Hispanic or Latino of any race (21.5%).



S.W. 152nd Street in downtown Burien

Our bike path zigzags, eventually reaching Fourth Avenue S.W. We follow this long straightaway for 2.2 miles. Crossing 128th Avenue S.W. we enter **BURIEN** (pop. 49,900, alt. 358 ft.), located between SeaTac and Puget Sound, nine miles south of Seattle. After several failed attempts at incorporation in the 1980s, Burien residents approved cityhood in 1993.

The route turns west along S.W. 152nd Street, passing through the city's central business district. The streetscape is a pleasant mix of retail shops enhanced by sidewalk cafés and flower baskets on lamp poles. Burien has a large number of restaurants catering to the city's sizeable Hispanic community, nearly 21 percent of the population.

At the western edge of Burien bluffs drop steeply down to the shore of Puget Sound. Our route follows Maplewood Avenue S.W. to **Three Tree Point**, a prominent shoreline feature. In 1841 Cmdr. Charles Wilkes named this triangular wedge of land jutting into the Sound Point Pully, for one of the quatermasters on his expedition. Its present name, recalling a trio of trees, has come into favor through popular usage.

In the early years boats traveling up and down the Sound docked at a pier on the north side of the point. Maplewood Avenue continues along its southern shore, lined by two- to four-story homes on the bluff side and by garages, cabanas and private beach access plots on the water side. Our route slowly ascends the wooded bluff.

NORMANDY PARK (pop. 6,400, alt. 328 ft.) is named for a 1920s-era proposed real estate development that called for distinctive architecture in the French-Normandy style. Although the plan faltered in the Great Depression, the area became popular in the 1940s and 1950s and the community incorporated in 1953. Our route winds down the bluff again through **Cove**, a neighborhood of upscale homes on large lots with saltwater views. **Marine View Park**, south of 208th Street, offers gravel trails through woods down to the beach.

Our route joins First Avenue S., which offers another great view of Mount Rainier. **DES MOINES** (pop. 30,030, alt. 89 ft.) is midway between Seattle and Tacoma. Depending on wind direction, there is a procession of airliners either descending or climbing to or from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport – the south ends of its runways are a little over two miles north of the city. On the morning of April 2, 1956, a Boeing 377 Stratocruiser operated by Northwest Orient Airlines en-route to Portland, Chicago and New York, began losing altitude after taking off from Sea-Tac. The plane ditched in Puget Sound off Maury Island's Point Robinson, southwest of Des Moines. All 38 passengers and crew survived the water landing and made it out of the plane.

Des Moines Beach Park has 635 feet of beachfront, a salmon-bearing stream and the Covenant Beach Historic District, site of a church camp from 1931 to 1987. The city's central business district faces a large marina and

residential neighborhoods climb the hills overlooking Puget Sound. The first cross-Sound car ferry service operated between Des Moines and Portage (on Vashon Island) from 1916 to 1921.

The route follows Marine View Drive through the community of **ZENITH**, now part of Des Moines. Look for **The Legend on the Sound**, a former Masonic Home set on a sloping lawn overlooking the sound and islands. Completed in June 1927, the majestic castle-like design makes it a landmark. Sadly, this elegant old building is now largely vacant. Perhaps the McMenamin Brothers can restore and repurpose this property like they have with many others in Washington and Oregon.

We follow 16th Avenue S. along the eastern edge of **Saltwater State Park**. The park embraces the forested canyon of McSorley Creek and includes campsites and 1,445 feet of tidewater shoreline.

The route leads us to **FEDERAL WAY** (pop. 92,800, alt. 463 ft.), a sprawling suburban city extending from Puget Sound eastward across a series of wooded ridges to I-5. The commercial core is along Pacific Highway (SR-99) and **The Commons at Federal Way**, a shopping mall. Our route follows **Military Road** through the eastern part of Federal Way. Congress appropriated funds in 1850 for the construction of this road to link Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River with Bellingham. It followed ridgelines and high ground as much as possible. Army troops worked with pioneer settlers to survey the road and this section was completed in 1860. The first road surface consisted of cord wood cut from the surrounding forest.



Browns Point Lighthouse

S. 304th Street takes us due west. Steele Lake is glimpsed through trees south of the road. Our route jogs north and west to Dash Point Road (State Route 509), which leads through **Dash Point State Park** and crosses into Pierce County.

The community of **BROWNS POINT** occupies its namesake headland commanding the entrance to Commencement Bay and the port of Tacoma. Most of the street names derive from Native American words or phrases. The **Browns Point Lighthouse** (1933) is on the site of an earlier aid to navigation erected in 1903. The lighthouse was automated in 1963. The adjacent 1903 Keeper's Cottage is part of **Browns Point Lighthouse Park**. The Points Northeast Historical Society rents out the keeper's cottage, and the renter serves as an honorary "light keeper" and opens the lighthouse for tours on Thursday and Friday afternoons. The Society also operates two museums by the lighthouse. The **History Center** features changing historical exhibits, and the **Boat House Museum** displays a replica surfboat and maritime artifacts. The museums are open Saturday afternoons.

Rounding Dash Point, our route follows Marine View Drive along the north shore of Commencement Bay. Tacoma spreads over the hills that rise above the bay's southern shore. The Puyallup River empties into the bay at its eastern end and the delta plain forms a low-lying area known as the **TACOMA TIDEFLATS**. This port district has a series of long waterways lined by industrial activities. Mount Rainier is a commanding presence, less than 45 miles away. From this proximity and sea level vantage the volcano's 14,000+ foot height is all the more impressive.

As you ride along Marine View Drive you will be able to glimpse through a tank farm the M.V. *Kalakala*, a historic former Puget Sound ferry moored on the south side of Hylebos Waterway. Rebuilt in 1935, on the salvaged hull of the fire-damaged former San Francisco Bay ferry *Peralta*, the *Kalakala* sported sleek Art Deco styling and was known as the world's first streamlined ferry. The vessel was taken out of service in 1967 and sold to an Alaska fish processor. An entrepreneur interested in restoring the historic ferry acquired the boat and had it towed to Seattle in 1998. Fundraising stalled and the *Kalakala* was shifted from Lake Union in Seattle to Neah Bay, and eventually to the resting place where you see it today. The Coast Guard has declared the vessel a hazard to navigation and the controversy continues.

The route follows 54th Avenue E. to **FIFE** (pop. 9,405, elev. 23 ft.), home to car dealerships, warehouses, fast-food restaurants and motels. We turn west on **Pacific Avenue**, its primary arterial just north of and parallel to Interstate 5. In the pre-Interstate era Pacific Highway (U.S. 99) was the “Main Street” of the West Coast. Check out the **Poodle Dog Restaurant**, at the corner of 54th and Pac. Highway. In business since 1933, their lounge is branded The Pup Room and the outside exterior sign is a work of vintage neon art.

Pacific Highway crosses the Puyallup River, changes its name to Puyallup Avenue and enters **TACOMA** (pop. 203,500, elev. 243 ft.). Settlers arrived on the shores of Commencement Bay in the 1850s and 1860s. A post office was established in 1864 in a bayside district now called Old Town. The Northern Pacific Railroad picked Tacoma as the site for the tidewater terminus of its transcontinental line in 1873 and the city incorporated in 1875.

Tacoma’s population exploded from 1,098 in 1880 to 36,006 in 1890. In these early boom years Tacoma became known as “The City of Destiny.” The last decade of the 19th century saw Tacoma gradually lose its role as the preeminent port on Puget Sound. In 1893 the Great Northern Railroad selected Seattle as its western terminus and in the late 1890s the Klondike Gold Rush focused the world’s attention on Seattle. Still, Tacoma prospered, attracting mills, warehouses, shipyards and all the commercial and financial trappings of a city.

The **Tacoma Dome**, on the hillside several blocks south of our route, is a multi-purpose event venue. Opened in 1983, the T-Dome is one of the world’s largest wood-roofed structures. With a seating capacity of over 20,000, it’s also one of the Pacific Northwest’s premier concert venues, attracting such acts as David Bowie, Britney Spears, Celine Dion and AC/DC. The dome houses the **Shanaman Sports Museum**, displaying memorabilia of local teams and sports figures.

Our bike route leads from Puyallup Avenue (which becomes S. 24th Street) to Market Street, which in turn leads north through the central business district.



Link light rail runs along Pacific Avenue, flanked by handsome façades of repurposed former warehouses in Tacoma’s Museum District.

Today, Downtown Tacoma is a vibrant urban core with restaurants, entertainment venues and attractions. The southern part of the district rises gradually from the tide flats along Thea Foss Waterway. Its northern precincts stand atop a bluff overlooking the waterway and Commencement Bay. The western edge of downtown ascends a ridge. The southern blocks of Pacific Avenue, downtown’s main street, form the **Museum District**, centered on the handsome early twentieth-century former brick warehouses lining the west side of the thoroughfare. Many of these historic buildings are now part of the 46-acre **University of Washington Tacoma** campus.

On a later visit, consider taking in some of the attractions in the Museum District: Le May-America’s Car Museum, Washington State History Museum, the Museum of Glass, Children’s Museum of Tacoma and the Tacoma Art Museum. Another compelling architectural highlight of the district is Union Station, a 1911, Beaux Arts-style former railroad station.

The upper (northern) end of downtown has another cluster of attractions. The **Theater District** centers on the intersection of Ninth and Broadway. **Broadway Center for the Performing Arts** is a complex of three venues hosting ballets, symphonies, live comedy, musicals, concert bands, popular music and other events. Two historic entertainment venues opened here in 1918. The beautifully restored **Pantages Theater**, now home to the Tacoma Symphony, is the last remaining building of the renowned Pantages chain. Rounding out the cultural collection is the restored **Rialto Theater** and **Theatre on the Square**. The Theater District also has shops and restaurants and is the home of the city’s *First Night* New Year’s Eve celebrations.

On the route: Market Street becomes St. Helens Avenue. The **Stadium District**, centered on Division and Tacoma avenues, takes its name from the landmark **Stadium High School** (look north in the vicinity of St. Helens and Division avenues). Built in the early 1890s to be an elegant hotel, it burned in 1896 and stood derelict for nearly a decade. It was rebuilt and opened as a high school in 1906. Stately homes and apartments dominate the neighborhood, which has commanding views of the bay. The northern edge of downtown Tacoma blends into leafy neighborhoods of comfortable, well-tended early twentieth-century homes.

Wright Park extends south from the intersection of N. First Street and Division Avenue. Opened in 1890, it reflects a classic English public park design with expanses of rolling lawns and statuary. Among the park's more than 700 trees, representing 100+ species, are 33 state champions. The park's 1907 Victorian-style **W.W. Seymour Botanical Conservatory** showcases exotic plants and seasonal displays. Across 'G' Street from the park, the **Karpeles Manuscript Museum** hosts changing exhibits of famous documents.

Our route follows N. Yakima Avenue through the North End, a neighborhood of tree-lined streets and lovely homes with occasional views north to Commencement Bay. Yakima Avenue leads to the **N. 23rd Avenue Bridge**. Built in 1909, the bridge spans forested Buckley Gulch. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the span is closed to motor vehicles. West of the bridge the bike route zigzags to N. 26th Street and follows the latter westward for two miles.

The **Proctor District**, centered on N. 26th and N. Proctor streets, is another North End neighborhood featuring a wide variety of interesting shops, eateries and businesses. **Chalet Bowl** (26th and Adams) is Washington's oldest continuously operating bowling center – opened in 1941. The historic **Blue Mouse Theatre** (on Proctor north of 26th), opened in 1923 and is the state's oldest operating movie house and fittingly the venue for fortnightly screenings of *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Crossing Highland Street, the tops of the towers of the Tacoma Narrows Bridges are visible to the west. Our route zigzags through a residential neighborhood to N. Jackson Street. Passing beneath Highway 16, look for the **Scott Pierson Trail** at the southern end of the southbound off-ramp from SR-16. Its name honors a local landscape architect and urban planner who lobbied for the creation of a dedicated trail across Tacoma and The Narrows.



Looking northeast over the Tacoma Narrows Bridges

The twin suspension spans of the **Tacoma Narrows Bridges** carry Highway 16 across The Narrows and link the city with Gig Harbor and the Kitsap Peninsula. The northern span opened in 1950, replacing the original Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which had come to be called “Galloping Gertie,” for its habit of undulating in windy conditions. This aerodynamic design flaw caused the bridge to break apart in a windstorm on November 7, 1940, only four months after it opened. The southern span opened in 2007. The paved bike and pedestrian trail parallels the south side of the highway and leads onto a 10-foot wide barrier separated bike/ped lane along south side of the southern bridge. The suspension bridge is 5,400 feet long. Its towers rise 510 feet and the distance between towers is 2,800

feet. At mid span you are 187.5 feet above the water channel. The Scott Pierson Trail ends at the 24th Street interchange at the north end of the bridge. Our route continues along 14th Avenue N.W. and Reid Drive N.W. through wooded gently rolling country with occasional views of The Narrows.

At the intersection with Soundview Drive we enter **GIG HARBOR** (pop. 7,985, alt. 60 ft.). Washington's “Maritime City” centers on its namesake inlet, a long narrow bay of Puget Sound and its picturesque bayfront district retains the flavor of a fishing village. Seeking refuge from a storm in 1841, members of Cmdr. Charles Wilkes' expedition discovered the bay by chance and named it for their gig, a type of sailing longboat. Settlement began in 1867 and around the turn of the twentieth century many immigrants from the islands off the Croatian coast formed the nucleus of Gig Harbor's fishing industry. Boats still fill the harbor and marinas and docks line the

shore. The central business district clusters along the southern half of **Harborview Drive**, which runs for just over a mile along the west side of the bay. The 1.5-mile **Waterfront History Walk** parallels Harborview and N. Harborview drives and includes 48 interpretive markers. **Ferry Landing Park**, at the southern end of Harborview, overlooks the narrow harbor entrance. Pilings in the sound mark the site of a ferry dock for the Tacoma ferry, which operated from 1928 to 1940.



Skansie Netshed dates from 1910 [Photo: City of Gig Harbor]

Sixteen historic netsheds dating from 1910 to the 1950s, an architectural legacy of the old fishing port, remain along the harbor's west shoreline. Built of rough, hand-hewn fir, they were used to store fishing nets and gear. **Skansie Brothers Park**, at Harborview Drive and Rosedale Road, includes a fishermen's memorial, the classic 1910 **Skansie Netshed**, the 1908 Andrew Skansie House, Jerisich Dock, a pedestrian pier and public boat moorage. The park is also a venue for outdoor summer concerts.

A second business district, located at the north end of the bay, was the location of the original town. Here the **Harbor History Museum** features exhibits on South Sound Native Americans, pioneer settlers, water transportation, boatbuilding, commercial fishing and bridging the Tacoma Narrows. In the north end commercial district, **Finholm View Climb**, next to Finholm Market at 8812 N. Harborview Drive, provides a quintessential view of the bay with a backdrop of Mount Rainier.

At the upper end of the bay our route turns east on Vernhardson Street (96th Street N.W.), which drops down to cross Crescent Creek, then climbs. Near the top of the grade, we turn north on **Crescent Valley Drive N.W.**, which runs for just over three miles through rolling, wooded terrain with scattered homes [very narrow shoulder]. At the southern end of Crescent Lake (glimpsed briefly through trees), our route turns west on 144th Street N.W. After ¾-mile, we turn north on Peacock Hill Road [gravel shoulder]. Our bike route leads through rolling, wooded country, crosses into Kitsap County, then zigzags. We pass Mace Lake to the west – its surface covered with water lilies.



Long Lake from its namesake park [Photo: Kitsap County Parks]

Olalla Valley Road S.E. takes us north [narrow shoulder]. Long Lake Road S.E. passes near the eastern shore of its namesake body of water. **Long Lake** (elev. 118 ft.) is two miles long and from ¼- to ½-mile wide and up to 12 feet deep. Homes line most of its shoreline. Fish species include rainbow and cutthroat trout, largemouth bass, perch, bluegill and crappie. The road curves west around **Long Lake County Park** at its north end, crossing Curley Creek, which drains north to Yukon Harbor on Puget Sound. The park offers lake access, a swimming area, fishing pier, picnic areas, sports fields, a playground, restrooms and a community center.

Watch traffic at the crossing of busy Sedgwick Road (SR-160). Our route zigzags through increasingly urbanized countryside.

We approach **PORT ORCHARD** (pop. 13,150, elev. 13 ft.) from the south on Mitchell Avenue S.E., which drops down to the central business district. Port Orchard lies across Sinclair Inlet from Bremerton. Passenger ferries scoot across the bay between the two cities, while vehicles have to follow the highway many miles around the head of the inlet. Wooded bluffs back the downtown district, which extends along the shoreline lined by marinas and boat sheds. The town became seat of Kitsap County in 1903.

Attractions include the **Veterans Living History Museum**, with military memorabilia; the **Log Cabin Museum**, containing early 20th-century furnishings; and **Sidney Art Gallery and Museum**, housed in the 1908 Masonic Temple, with displays of turn-of-the-20th-century businesses and industries. **Marina Park**, at the foot of Sidney Avenue, has a boardwalk and gazebo overlooking the docks. The park offers great views across the inlet to the Puget Sound Navy Shipyard in Bremerton and is the scene of annual events, including *Fathoms O' Fun Carnival* (late June to July 4th). **Port Orchard Public Market**, one of the largest in the region, sets up in the park Saturdays from late April into early October. The **Port Orchard Public Market** is downtown at 715 Bay Street.

Our route follows the highway around the west end of Sinclair Inlet. The community, known as **GORST** (pop. 600, elev. 52 ft.), an amalgam of car dealerships and retail stores, straddles the intersection of SR-16 from Tacoma and SR-3 from Shelton. Depending on the tide, you may detect the pungent odor of tideflats that ring the shore.

Ahead large gray ships of the Navy's reserve fleet, including several aircraft carriers, signal our approach to **BREMERTON** (pop. 38,200, elev. 10 ft.). Turning away from the inlet, we pass through **CHARLESTON**, formerly a separate municipality, absorbed by Bremerton in 1927. The West Sound's largest city occupies a hilly site flanked by saltwater inlets. Its older precincts lie between Sinclair Inlet and Port Washington Narrows. Homesteading began here in the 1870s and logging was an early industry.

As early as 1877, the Navy considered the area's protected inlets as a site for a naval station. In 1891, the townsite was platted and Bremerton's long relationship with the Navy began with the branch's acquisition of 190 waterfront acres for a shipyard. A massive drydock, largest on the West Coast, was commissioned in 1896.



Ferries dock within walking distance of downtown Bremerton. The shipyard is to the left, a large marina to the right. Manette Bridge spans Port Washington Narrows. [Photo: City of Bremerton]

Today the **Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility** covers 179 acres extending along 1½ miles of Bremerton's Sinclair Inlet waterfront. PSNS is the largest naval shore installation in the Pacific Northwest, serving the Navy's Pacific fleet with maintenance, modernization, recycling and logistical supply. As the area's largest employer PSNS is indelibly intertwined with Bremerton's economic wellbeing. Although PSNS is a **National Historic District**, public access is limited due to

security reasons. The yard's iconic feature is the 250-foot **Hammerhead Crane**. Erected in 1933 and capable of lifting 250 tons, the crane has been inactive in recent years. The west end of the yard contains a portion of the Navy's reserve fleet, storing a large number of inactive vessels. At the peak of World War II, the Bremerton area was home to an estimated 80,000 residents due to the heavy workload of shipbuilding, repair and maintenance required for the Pacific war effort. Most of the employment was temporary, though, and only 27,678 residents were left in the city by the 1950 census.

The opening of Kitsap Mall in suburban Silverdale in 1985, triggered a flight of retail businesses. The downtown movie house closed and Bremerton's five department stores fled to the suburbs. Revitalization of the central business district began in the 1990s. A waterfront boardwalk and marina opened in 1992. A new ferry and transit terminal debuted in 2004. New buildings went up, historic properties were refurbished, museums, restaurants and new retail shops opened.

Today downtown Bremerton has numerous attractions. Many tourists arrive aboard a Washington State Ferry, a scenic 60-minute ride across Puget Sound from Seattle. Ferries dock at the **Bremerton Transportation Center**, a multi-modal terminal also used by Kitsap Transit buses and passenger ferries to Port Orchard and Annapolis. The

terminal is within walking distance of downtown. The **Bremerton Boardwalk** parallels the shoreline and marina. At its north end is the **USS *Turner Joy***, a naval memorial museum ship open to self-guided tours.

Harborside Fountain Park, just south of the ferry terminal, features five copper-plated fountains shaped like submarine fins. Nearby the **Puget Sound Navy Museum**, housed in the shipyard's original 1896 administrative building, contains displays on the history of the shipyard and the Navy in the region.

The **DOWNTOWN ARTS DISTRICT**, centered on the blocks radiating out from Fourth and Pacific, has a collection of galleries, museums, performance venues and night spots. **Kitsap County Historical Society Museum**, at 280 Fourth Street in the 1950 former First National Bank Building, has exhibits documenting the city from pioneer days through the mid-1900s. Across Fourth Street, the **Aurora Valentinetti Puppet Museum** has changing displays of puppets and marionettes from its collection of more than 600. The Amy Burnett Gallery (402 Pacific Ave.) contains the unique **Pyrex Museum**, displaying about 1,000 pieces of the vibrantly colored vintage glassware.

Fans of presidential trivia might be interested to note a bronze plaque on the corner of the Eagles Building (on Pacific between Fourth and Fifth). It indicates this is the place where the now famous phrase "*Give 'em hell, Harry*" was first uttered. On June 10, 1948, President Harry S. Truman was speaking from the balcony of the Elks Club to a large crowd gathered on Pacific Avenue. Legend has it that a man yelled out "*Give 'em hell, Harry!*" This is a matter of dispute, however, as local newspapers quoted the man as having shouted "*Lay it on, Harry,*" while the president's public papers reported it as "*Pour it on, Harry!*" Nevertheless, the President's response was, "*I will, I will.*"