

STANLEY MAPLE

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Interviewed by: Jonlee Joseph

Jonlee: I'm interviewing Stanley Maple from the Maple family who settled in the Duwamish Valley.

Jonlee: Would you go through the genealogy of your descending from Jacob Maple?

Stanley: Jacob Maple was my great grandfather and his son John Wesley Maple, was my grandfather and John Wesley's son Charles Sumner Maple was my father. My father was born on the 22nd day of July, 1869 on the banks of the Duwamish River. As a child he had playmates with Indians almost exclusively. I was born in the town of Georgetown which is now part of Seattle. It is the area just north of what is now Boeing field. I was born May 20, 1906 on Ellis Ave. in Georgetown. Georgetown at that time was a separate town, not part of Seattle and it was just like most west towns, the business of the area lent itself to a lot of saloons, a lot of drinking establishments and my father had three daughters and my brother and myself making five.

At one point he decided a town with that many saloons was not a very good environment for his daughters. So he went up on top of Beacon Hill which is Graham St. east and west, so he went up on the top there and bought some acreage. It was more land than he actually wanted and, as he and his brother Al were very close, he sold his brother Al about an acre and a half. But the remaining portion which is probably around four and a half acres remaining, he turned into a small farm. We had everything on that piece of property.

We raised our own pork and at one time four cows, which I was given the privilege of milking before I went to school. We had chickens and we had our own fruit and berries and everything. The property was laid out so that we had a summer house made of small logs and we spent a lot of time out there in the summer. It was a structure made of poles and had a bark roof. On one



side was planted Morning Glories and the other side was Honey-suckles and we had sort of a little fountain in front of it. It as very nice place. It was out in that area where mother had her clothesline, we had quite an elaborate clothesline up there.

The house that my dad built was a two storied structure. But it did have an attic and it had a partial basement. It was a sort of the wonder of the area at that time because it was the first place in the area to have electricity and people would come from quite away in order to see this house with electricity. Everybody thought it was pretty wonderful just to be able to snap a switch and get light. You didn't have to fool around with a lamp and with matches and what have you.

Prior to building the big house, my dad had built a small three room structure which was just a simple accommodation, some place where he could hang his hat while he was doing the actual building of the building. There was a bedroom on each end and in the middle was the kitchen and the dining room. It was an all purpose thing. We couldn't wait to get out of there and into the big house.

Jonlee: Your dad was a carpenter?

Stanley: Yes, he was self taught.

Jonlee: He was also a dairy man wasn't he? You told a story the last time we were together of moving up to Beacon Hill. Would you please tell that story again for the tape and how the dresser...

Stanley: When I was sixteen months old, too young to remember very much but of course in order to move, we had to use the horses and the carriage and we would take several loads going up Graham St. and on one of them there was a dresser with a mirror on it and I was stacked into the wagon and I could face the mirror and see what was going on. Like a rear view mirror in a car today. I do remember that ride up. There was one place on the way up which was a famous stopping ground for everybody who wanted to rest their horses for awhile. It was quite a pull up there for a team. I use to watch the low slung beer wagons come up Graham St, over Beacon Ave and right down to Rainier Valley on the other



side. It was a common custom to stop and gather wild pluming like blooms and put that in the horses halters so it kind of decorated the horses on the way up there. They would also carry sacks of grain that were kind of sewn together and they could throw them over the horses back and give them traction so they have something to bear down with. They could pull a bigger load that way.

Jonlee: If they put the sack of grain on their hind quarters?

Stanley: No, up front, just back of the neck. They were draft horses and the decorations were wild spirea that they would cut and put in the halter, the harness of the horse, plumage you know and it looked very colorful.

Jonlee: I remember you saying your father had a dairy farm, was that down in Georgetown?

Stanley: No, the dairy farm was up further toward the meadows which is beyond, it would be south of what is now the airport. Not the Seatac Airport, but the Boeing Field Airport.

Jonlee: Your great grandfather and his brother, their ashes are buried out there?

Stanley: Yes, Samuel Maple which is a great uncle of mine. He had a claim on I think was 160 acres I'm not positive, just right along the Duwamish River and he had to go to Salem, Oregon because it was Washington was not a state and you had to go down there in order to sign the papers and prove up on the property. That property became my father's through inheritance at the time King County put in the Airport. My dad rented the area out to first, an Italian family and then the Japanese and he wasn't getting enough rent out of it to even pay the taxes so he let it go. He said he was going to tell the county to come and get it. They can have it, which he did. Then he found out that they were putting the airport in and he thought he better get his property back. So he went and paid the taxes and I think he about broke even.

My dad and his brother had a dairy farm up there and it was all hand milking of course, they didn't have machines to milk in those days and so it was necessary for he and his brother Al to



get up at 2:00 o'clock in the morning and start the milking so they could have milk to take into Seattle by wagon and they had certain customers that they sold their milk to, but some restaurants bought it. They didn't have the inspection system that they do now you know, they would never would get by with it.

Jonlee: You know there is a story I was reading from the newspaper articles about the Maple family and how during the fire in Seattle, the people from the dairy farm came in and where they usually sold milk for five cents a gallon, they were selling it for ten cents a glass, because there was no water in town. They did well that day.

Stanley: The great fire in Seattle took place, my dad first was cognizant that something was wrong because the sky was darkened and small amounts of ash was falling into the Duwamish area from the city. Then he saw flat cars coming in with fire equipment on them on the railroad and that's the way he knew that the great fire was taking out a lot of buildings in Seattle. First Ave which was called Front St. at that time was the main thoroughfare in Seattle and I remember that the Indians use to hold races on it. There was a theater down there, I don't remember the name of the theater but it had an upstairs and doors that would open and you could stand in there and look straight up First Ave. First Ave was paved. it was bricked and was not a very good surface for racing horses on it because a horse could slip and fall and so forth, but that didn't seem to make much difference to the people and we would always try to attend the theater so we would have the privilege of walking up the stairs in the theater and open these doors and looking out to watch the Indians race on Front St.

Jonlee: Isn't there a story too, I seem to remember from the newspapers, about one of your ancestors racing up First Ave?

Stanley: I don't remember. But of course a lot of what I know about the early days of Seattle, I get second hand. I wasn't old enough to actually participate myself. But my dad was, a veritable fountain of information regarding what happened in those days.



Jonlee: When I first met you at the Pioneer Association, you were suggesting to me that I should have met your dad, talked to your dad for the stories.

Stanley: He could tell you anything. Boy, I'm telling you that man, I don't know how he could do it. But you see when he was a young fellow, the University of Washington was just built and at Fourth and University. So his father thought it would be kind of nice if he got a little university education. Which is about equivalent to a high school now you know. There was a cousin, I cannot remember that woman's name, but she lived in what they call Bell Town which is on upper First Avenue in an area there. My dad boarded with her and he went to the University and his tuition was paid in produce. John Wesley had a farm of course and the garden produce paid his tuition. I don't remember how long my father went to the University. I think a couple of years, but he went home every weekend. In the meantime he boarded with this lady cousin up in Bell Town. He had quite a bit of experience and a lot of the people that were going to the University at that time are kind of famous in the history of the town. Streets are named after them and that sort of thing. He had some clippings and I don't know where they are, showing with the names of people who were attending the University at the same time my dad was. That would be kind of nice to have but I don't know where it is.

Jonlee: I came across an article that there's a book in the museum of History and Industry by Helen Maple Brown. An autobiography. Have you ever looked at that?

Stanley: No, but the Duwamish Diary is a very good book. That was written like the Duwamish River was a person. He told it in the first person. My dad gave me copies of that, He gave all these granddaughters a copy of Duwamish Diary. I think it went out of print because they sold there edition out and they didn't go to do it anymore. I'll look for it after a while, I may have it over here.

Jonlee: I think someone else has a copy but I haven't read it yet.



Stanley: It's not a big book. It's put together by these school kids.

Jonlee: Cleveland High school, 1943.

Jonlee: So do you want to talk a little more about your life. You told a story about when your dad was ready to die, what that was like. Would you mind telling that again for the tape? When your dad was older and ready to die, he went to bed, he wasn't feeling well.

Stanley: Dad never had a regular doctor and he had never been in a hospital in his life. I was grown up. Dad like I say, had never been in a hospital and one morning, he was unable to get out of bed. His legs just wouldn't work and that kind of concerned him you know. One of his daughters, Clara my middle sister lived in a house quite close to him and she was over there when he was having trouble trying to get out of bed and he said, "you better call Stan and tell him that I am having this trouble". So Clara called me, I was working for Shell Oil Company at that time and I came up and dad said, "I think I'm going to have to have a doctor. I can't get out of bed, I can't function for the first time in my life." So I had an awful time getting the doctor, but I finally did and I got one to come out to the house and all he did was call for an ambulance and said, "I'm going to put you in a hospital and get you checked out." He was kind of an Osteopathic physician, it was the only kind I could get a hold of. There is a hospital in Seattle that specializes in the Osteopathic patients and so they put him in there. My sister Clara could drive and she took a car and followed the ambulance. I rode in the ambulance and they put a lead vest on my dad and started taking X-rays of his chest area and the head of the hospital said "Your dad has tuberculosis" I said, "What?" I asked, "How long has he had that?" And he said, "Probably not very long, but he's got it now and he can't stay here. We're going to move him, he's got to go to Firlands which had facilities for taking care of people with TB" I said, "I thought moving him would probably kill him." Well he said, "We'll leave him here until this afternoon." So my youngest sisters daughter was going to stay with



grandpa and she did. She was with him when he died and I had gone back to work. I couldn't do anything for him you know and she fed him a little soup. He didn't have any appetite and by two-thirty, three o'clock that afternoon, he passed away. He didn't have much of a stretch in the hospital, he was just there from that morning. When they took him out of the house on a stretcher into the ambulance, it was raining very gently, it was kind of an appropriate way for the old boy to move out.

Jonlee: Thank you for telling that again. You were raised on Beacon Hill then?

Stanley: Well most of the time, you see I moved from Georgetown when I was sixteen months old. I was there through my high school days. I went to Franklin High School. I graduated in 1924. I wasn't in the service. I registered for the draft but people who worked for the oil companies were kind of exempt and they didn't take them if they could get away from it.

Jonlee: Were you working for Shell Oil?

Stanley: I was working For Shell oil. I started January 10, 1927 for Shell Oil Co. and I worked for them thirty nine years and seven months. I tried to make forty years, but they were in the process of breaking up the divisions and gave me choices that weren't any choices really. I knew if they moved me out of the area, in a little while I would have to retire and I had to move back if I wanted to stay in the Northwest and it would cost me lots of money. So I decided to retire which I could do. Shell was a good Company to work for. When they move you, they handle all the expenses and you were always assured of a job. Some outfits when they move you they want to fire you or retire you, you're on your own. It didn't make any difference where you were if you were in Timbucktu, you stayed there.

Jonlee: So you stayed active in the Pioneer Association, because I remember Edith Johnson knowing you.

Stanley: There was a fellow in Shell Oil Co. by the name of Charles Halstrom. When my dad died, old Charlie just closed down. He was in charge of the department and they all came up to the



cemetery where the funeral services were going being held. I thought that was pretty big of him.

Jonlee: I want to ask you because there were some articles about the Duwamish Valley Pioneer Association Meeting once a year in lower Woodland park, do they still meet?

Stanley: No, I think the moving lights of that group are all gone, they are all dead. There was a fellow in Georgetown by the name of August Tollner who was not one of the original pioneers but he was a newspaper fellow as well as a Notary Public, etc.. He was kind of a moving light there in the Duwamish Pioneer Association.

My dad shunned publicity and he didn't want to be in the spotlight and there were those who wanted to be in the spotlight but they didn't have the qualifications. My dad was a good friend of mine. He would teach me a lot of things.

Jonlee: One time you were going from Beacon Hill

Stanley: We took the streetcar into Seattle and at that time, I was probably six, seven years old, something like that. There were lots of Indian ladies on the street corners selling baskets and my dad having been raised among indian children and he knew their families as a rule, so he and his brother Al were more at home speaking Chinook jargon then they were in English. As a matter of fact that anytime they wanted to carry on a conversation between themselves and would sooner not have their children know about what they were talking about, they would go into this Chinook. I never did learn the language, I just learned a few words of it. Anyway, my dad would hold a conversation with these Indian ladies and they would talk about old times when they were living in Georgetown and he'd get engaged in this conversation and was not cognizant of the fact that there was a whole bunch of people circled around them listening to this jargon. It was just a curiosity to them and he'd look and see all these people around there and that really buzzed him, he took off and I thought he was going to leave me, this little guy. Hey dad! I began to think what am I going to do if he disappears? Anyway he just



didn't like to have people around him that he wouldn't talk to in his Indian language if he thought people wanted to hear it.

He had very good and close friends among the Indians. I know my grandfather John Wesley Maple was a source of advice to a great number of people. They would come from quite some distances to ask him if they had some kind of a posing question that bothered them and they didn't know how to work it out themselves. They would ask John Wesley. To a certain extent, my dad had some of that. I remember as a child there were people that I didn't know personally but my dad knew, would come and talk to him. He couldn't give legal advice but he would use common sense sort of think. I wish I had inherited more of that.

Jonlee: Would you mind mentioning your mother was Emma Coleman? Where is her ancestry from because you just went to a reunion in Morton for that side of the family. So she must be a pioneer family too.

Stanley: My mother was a Coleman and the Colemans were kind of a large group that settled over in Eastern Washington. My mother was born on a ranch outside of Ellensburg. I've never been to the place. But I have a cousin who lives at Morton who is interested in that portion of the family. Mother, when she was a fairly young woman came over the mountains with her family and the story is that she had her youngest brother in the saddle with her. This cousin that lives in Morton says that can't be. The facts of the thing is that the kid was not in the saddle with my mother. But anyway Emmy, when she got over went to school where John Wesley had been talked into teaching and he had very little formal education. But he was pretty gifted in a lot of different things, even though he had no formal education, he was smart enough so that a group of the early people thought that he would make a good treasurer of King County, and he was elected as the King County Treasurer. He had a lot of opposition, but he held the office for some time, I don't know for how long. While he was Treasurer of King County, he employed my father, his son and not wishing to show any favoritism, they had more than one shift



in this working for the Treasurer Department. I can't understand why, but they had a night shift and my dad was put on that night shift. Of course he was use to getting up in the middle of the night to milk cows. So he held that job.

Jonlee: So how did you father Charles meet your mother Emma?

Stanley: My granddad, John Wesley was teaching school there and my mother was one of his pupils. Just exactly how my dad and my mother met, I just don't know. They were married for a good long time. My mother didn't live as long as most of my family did because she died when she was 59. But she worked herself to death, she absolutely wouldn't rest. She worked on everything, but she was one of those kind that had to be doing something productive all the time. To sit down and do nothing apparently she figured that as a kind of sinful thing to do. The time that it would take to go from point A to point B, that's wasted time. So when she sat, she was darning a sock or doing crochet work or something. She had to produce something. I never saw the woman walk. I saw her walk to church because I would walk with her but all around the house, it was kind of a dog trot. She wanted to get there and start some project. I think that actually took her at 59. She had to help some people someplace, she had to do something for somebody. If any of the neighbors needed some help with the birth of a child, why she was an excellent midwife. No special training, she'd go into the neighbor's home and do the laundry and cook the meals and do all of those things that were necessary and she'd probably stay there for three or four days. Then she'd come home. By the time she came home, there would be more work and she would have to do that.

When she passed away, she was very well known by a lot of people and she had a big turnout at her funeral.

Jonlee: Thank you for telling that, I didn't hear that story last time. When I look at the newspapers articles on your family, it's more about the men, so it's wonderful to hear this story about your mother. But the men in your family lived into their late 90's



didn't they? You are just following tradition because you are a young 92, right?

Stanley: There's only five generations between the Revolutionary War and myself. I can't understand it, but that's what it is right on down the line. They were long lived people. They were active. John Wesley Maple, my father's father, he didn't live too long. He got killed by a falling tree. He was cutting wood on south Beacon Hill close to where the Van Assalt School is now and when he didn't come home for lunch, they didn't think too much about it, but when he didn't come home for dinner they thought something of it. They went and found him and he was pinned down by an alder that had broke off, run back under another log and then over his chest. I don't know how long he lived, but he was all by himself. He died before I was born. My brother had seen him. Of course all my sisters had seen him.

Jonlee: You're the youngest in the family?

Stanley: I'm the only remaining one. I have two nieces. She had three sisters and each one of those sisters had a daughter and then I come along and get married and then I have a daughter. So the name Maple will fall on its face as far as I'm concerned.

Jonlee: You have beautiful great granddaughters.

Stanley: Oh my yes, they are my only reason for living. The oldest one just had her thirteenth birthday. She is too darned smart, but she gets it honestly. Debbie is in the advanced class of her school and Abigail, her sister is about two years younger is following right in her footsteps. She can't have her older sister walking away with all the laurels. I have talked with the school teachers. She reads at the College level right now and I said, "Holy smoke!" Her father, my grandson Claud, it doesn't seem that he had a childhood at all. He just went from babyhood into work. He 's been with Tacoma City Light for a number of years now, in fact I don't think it's too many years now before he can retire.

Jonlee: The pictures of them are beautiful. They look bright and they look confident and happy.



Stanley: Debbie, the oldest one just had her 13th birthday.

Jonlee: I want to go back a moment because in reading some of the newspaper articles, I just want to check this out. John Wesley Maple had the old, what the newspaper article said had the phonetic spelling, "Mapel".

Stanley: No, John Wesley didn't go for that but a lad by the name of Ely did and he's buried in Mount Pleasant up there in the family plot. I haven't been there in a number of years and I decided I wanted to find it and take one last look. A friend of mine took me up and we found it. I use to be able to go right to it, but things have changed. It's on top of Queen Anne Hill. We have a monument up there for the family. It's a huge piece of a block of granite. The name carved in it. Uncle Ely is buried up there in a plot next to it. He isn't in the same plot, but right next to it. It's a shaft goes up in the air and it's Mapel.

You've seen the genealogy. Telferd did it.

Jonlee: I wanted to ask you because there is always some confusion and I asked you last time, but I just want this for the tape. Maple Valley was not named after any member of your family, right?

Stanley: It's vine maples growing along the river up there. The only thing that is named after the family is the Maple School. It's directly above Georgetown on the side hill. That's where the Maple School is. They tell me that John Wesley's picture is up there in that school. It's the same picture that is in the Pioneer Hall.

Jonlee: The one by Beula Norman?

Stanley: No, Beula Norman painted a picture of her grandfather Jacob. In the entry way to Boeing Field, that's a place I want to get to before I die. I was there when they dedicated his stone. This fellow I believe worked for either the Times or the P.I. He was interested in the early pioneers and he got permission from the few that he knew had enough authority that he could exhume some bodies that were buried on the side hill there just off Graham St going up to Beacon Hill. He wanted to have what they could scrape together out of these graves cremated and put under this



rock and since they figured that was where the old homestead was you know.

Jonlee: I could take you sometime.

Stanley: Well I've got the fellow in my lodge that's interested. He's the one that went to the Mount Pleasant Cemetery with me. He's no connection to the Pioneers but he is a good friend of mine. You see now there's a service station right there. I think this rock is right in the middle of the service station.

Jonlee: I telephoned Boeing Field and they said it's down by the Administration building and it's in an area by itself. I haven't been down to it either, but I have directions to it.

Stanley: I have a picture, but I don't know where it is. It was taken when they had this dedication of this thing and I'm in it. In fact I and the rock are about the only thing you can see in it. It must have been cold because I had a long coat on.

Jonlee: Perhaps we could meet there. You let me know and I'll meet you from the direction I come from.

Stanley: From the head lady up there at Morton. She made kind of a form for each one of the children, like of my mother and my mother had two sisters June and Ethel. A slug of brothers. She knows she doesn't have all the material she needs. She wanted survivors like me to fill in the blank spots. I have to have a lot of help to do that. I'll have to go to my niece that lives in Lakewood and her son is a prolific son of a gun. He's been married about three times and he's got kids all over the place. Muriel, the only other niece I've got lives in Seattle.

Thankyou Stanley Maple