

off April 2001

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Not on disk

Walt Hunziker, Interview

By Roger Sherman

Nov

Date??? Winter 1998

Interview was
Bill Hunziker -
father was
Stanley -
Walt was
(is) cousin

Bill - Walt said that he was only two and a half months old when the Calista went down (Calista went down July 27, 1922).

Bill - Walt - When we moved down to the Columbia Beach, the Atalanta was the boat that was familiar to me. It was standard procedure, if you were standing on the dock, for the mate to throw you the line, throw you the painter line, pull out the big line and put it over the pile, so Ole Swenson could _____????

He has quite a bit of stuff on various old time seamen, including Bart Lovejoy.

Bill - Walt - I got all of that from the Coast Guard. Then, I also went to the government records building, over there on, beyond Laurelhurst, out towards Sand Point, in Seattle. And I have discovered that you can get all of the reports of the hearings of accidents and you can get copies and they look like an old radio script. The ferry Puget is a good story because the engineer was a little absent minded. He liked to be with people. One time he was up in the mens smoking room eating his lunch and they were coming into the landing there at Mukilteo. Dad gave the old bell system and nothing happened. He just went (dad) heavily to the port side so he wouldn't foul up the dock and was headed for the beach. He said he had himself braced, but the engineer got into the engine room and had it going full reverse about the time they touched the beach, but they were still hung up there for awhile.

Bill - Walt - The one where the City of Mukilteo burned, I've got that one also. There were many accidents. By the time we got into 1937, by that time, Alex Peabody, of Black Ball Line, purchased the Kitsap County Transportation Co. He bought them out. By 1938, we had the Bainbridge on the run and one time, the engineer on watch that time made the oiler throw the clutch in ahead instead of reverse.

Q-Roger - Now this Washington Navigation Company, I don't remember that one?

A-Walt - That was from Tacoma south, the Scanzky family owned that and developed it. They always say the scanzy ferries and now today, out of all of these, the Scanzonia is the one in the canal between Lake Union and Union Bay. Some lady owns her and has her tied up permanently and fixed up so she will lease it out for parties and receptions and that type of things. That is a ferry built that still exists.

Q-Roger - The Island Navigation Company, did that latter turn into Black Ball Lines? Joshua Green, I think, had the Island Navigation Company?

*change Walt
To Bill
on 11/14/93*

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A_Walt----He had the Puget Sound Navigation Company and Alex Peabody bought him out.

Q-Roger----There was an Island Navigation Co. out there too?

A-Walt----Yeah, I wonder if that was Nearhof? I'll bet you would find that in the Kline book. (She was author of Ferryboats and the Virginia V).

Walt----As far as Whidbey Island history goes, my parents gave me a movie camera when I was age 13, 16 mm silent movie camera and I, ah, among the productions I made was a 400 foot reel of a travel log on Whidbey Island. I've got, of course, ferry boats that were going then. I've got people going aboard and the Puget leaving, heading to Mukilteo, I've got the Coupeville Indian Water Carnival, festival, some pictures of the Indian dances, on the platform on the main street before you go onto the dock.

Walt----The Kalakala was pretty exciting when it first came out.

Walt had a box full of pictures and articles and stuff relating the maritime history. He was going to leave me certain pictures, but forgot and took them with him.

Walt----We all looked at him, there's a very eccentric romanticist who is completely out of touch with reality. He'd come around and we're going to get the Kalakala back. Well you're crazy. You have to get it off there, you've got to keep it from sinking, you've got to tow it and once you get it here, another three and a half million dollars and you could have-----

Roger----Or more. I mean, just the Virginia V, they needed three million just to bring that up to Coast Guard standards.

Walt----Yeah, a new boiler, right. She's wrapped up in plastic over there, as you may know in Lake Union on this side of Lake Union.

Roger----I heard that they had a million and a half into her and were looking for more money.

Walt----Yeah, they do. I guess that's one of the problems. The Kalakala people and the Virginia V people and whoever else are after the same source of money. But anyway, some angel came up with \$100,000 for the Kalakala according to the news.

Walt----My consciousness was coming into its realm by this time, that was the mid-thirties. Then by 1937, we got the Kitsap on the run, on the Columbia Beach run, following the Puget, after Alex Peabody had purchased the Kitsap County Transportation Company and those extra boats. We got that and then about the same time, he reached out to the San Francisco Bay people and purchased a flock of boats, the old wooden

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electrics, all gone now, then, the four California steel electrics which are still very much with us, as you know. (I didn't know). The Ilahee, the Klikitat, the Quinault and the Nisquale. They had these hand outs showing the Indian names adapted to the former San Francisco boats. The Golden Age became the Klahonee???, the Golden State became the Klakan???, the Golden Bear was to have been the Chetzemoka, Of course, it was wrecked on the way up from Frisco, but so the Golden Poppy became the Chetzemoka. I had a fella, a student in school, whose dad was the chief engineer on the Golden Poppy in the bay area. When he retired and my dad retired, he came up with his trailer and visited my dad for a couple of days and then he went out on the Chetzemoka which was on the run then and went down in the engineer and the chief gave him a couple of former log books which this man had kept when it was in the bay area. There's stories like that.

Walt----The Golden Bear just didn't make it. That was the first one they tried to get up here and got into a storm. I thought of that when they tried to tow the Kalakala. She was in worse shape than this one was at the time.

Roger----I don't remember reading about that one.

Walt----That was in 1937.

Roger----I remember one of them that they were towing up here, they boarded the car deck up and then they got into heavy seas and smashed those boards and of course they had it sealed at the back too, so then they got all that water in there. But, it stayed afloat and I thought they brought it on in.

Walt----Well, this stayed afloat and they did bring her in. I don't know if they used the hull for a scow or not. I have, ah, of course the Klahonee, her sister ship was finally sold by the company or the state and some guy bought her and took her up the Duamish across from Boeing and somebody torched it. I have some snap shots, I don't know if I've got them or not. Ron Burk in our society went up and went aboard and you could get down in the engine room. It had the Ingersol-Rand engines are still sitting there and ah, that was a big afternoon. I like to, I haven't finished my job yet, but each time I get a chance, I guet a scrap of wood off some of these boats and I have them in mini storage and I want to make picture frames of the vessel from which that stuff had its origin. If I live so long, I'd like to get that done, then I would just hand them off to the maritime society or someone.

We were looking at some of Walt's pictures.

Walt----That's my attempt to color when I was in grade school, but that's the old restaurant down by the Columbia Beach dock.. August and Marie Bardall build that and opened it on July 4th, 1924. And Augy was my dad's deck hand for 32 years. There's always something, some kind of disaster. The egg association co-op truck went through one of those wooden slips at Mukilteo and that was December of 1937. It just caved in.

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Nobody was hurt but it just caved in. I think they ran to Edmonds for a few days until they got that replaced. I've got millions of things. This is that wreck where the oiler put the clutch in the wrong way and cleaned out the Mukilteo dock. They ran to Edmonds for several days after that too.

Walt----As far as references go, I could photo copy some of this and then you could say, yeah, I'd like a better picture of that, I could come back and you could take a picture. To much for one session.

Roger----Yeah, pictures are going to be a problem. I've got the equipment here now to copy pictures. I like these nautical cartoons because you just don't run across these anymore.

Walt----Passes. Of course that was the good old days when the family could ride free if the head of the family was working on the boats. That's the only picture I've got of the old hall at Columbia Beach. That's the old Nearhoff ferry dock. That's probably the Central or Second or City of Clinton. I'm sure that 60 foot _____ ????? was the criteria (for license) way back then. Because Elva Nelling was a captain on these Nearhoff boats, very competent sailor but to get his license, he had to come over and deck with my dad to get his time in and then he went up for his license and then mate and here he is, he's probably in the mate, beneath the captains roll and then as time went on, they just worked opposite for several years as captains. They each had their own crew.

Walt----I understand, go back a ways, when tugs began to have diesel engines that a diesel tug, per say was never defined by the government, so they recognized no such thing as a diesel tug, so an engineer could work there without having a license, they gave it a captain ?????? The way I understood it. I know that's been changed.

I think I probably started this tape on the wrong side, but I didn't have any sort of heading. This side starts with the older stuff.

Walt----They tied up the Clatawa during the winter time, how many winters, I don't know, but they ah, Bart (Lovejoy) was involved in that. Here's the YMCA gymnastic team that practiced in the nights in Everett and there's Bart, and there's my dad. The Lovejoy family provide the route for him to work his way up. So that's all the Camano, that same time. This may be like a picture you have of the Camano and the Fairhaven.

We are talking about different pictures he is showing me.

Roger----This is a good view of the Langley Wharf. They commented somewhere along the line about, you know, how they had the U down there and someone said there was another dock like that around. I don't remember where that was.

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Walt----I don't either, right now, but the ferry slip was ultimately put on this side and there are some pictures of that as we go along.

Roger----Now, did I talk to you about the Atalanta being, not the Atalanta, but the Clatawa. They eventually converted that to a car ferry.

Walt----Yes, they did and that is discussed in Kline and _____???? (Ferryboats book). My dad went on to be a captain on the Clatawa. I don't know how long, three or four years or whatever. Then she was converted to a ferry and apparently the same steam engine at the beginning. In the very late 20's, she was dieselized and I remember as a first rate kid, on the Clatawa, the diesel engine being the second ferryboat in the summer, lets say 1930, something like that, running extra _____????? Then there's the Calista.

Roger----You said he skipperd the Clatawa. What was his connection with the Calista?

Walt----He was purser.

Roger----Ralph McGinnis was purser on the Calista too.

Walt----Yeah, he went on to be that. Here's the Everett-Langley Clatawa. He always referred to her as his first command. This was 1920. Here he is as Captain and my mother and they were married in 1917.

Roger----God, I wish I'd had this picture when I did the first book.

Walt----There's Bart, this is an aunt and uncle of mine. I just saw the summer cottage that his niece has up on Lopez. They'd come down and ride, just like the Lovejoys invited them. Here's Bart. This is probably on the Clatawa. There's Bart and my dad and my dad's younger brother and then Cliff Baker. I don't know if he was just a deck hand or---I don't think he was the engineer. Here's Bart and my dad. Apparently my dad was still a deck hand when Bart was captain. In this book, they'll say on the steam ferry Whidby, Bart was captain and dad was mate, so that was after 1919, somewhere in the early 20s. My dad was the first licensed captain on the Mukilteo run and she (Kline) shows in here that Russel Taylor was first, but he wasn't there to stay.

Roger----I didn't know that the old ferry Whidbey was made into a cannery.

Walt----It eventually went on to be just a machine shop, but they pulled her up out of the water, the Snohomish River and she sat there as the Rosario, of course, the Whidbey was expanded to be the ferry Rosario and then when the Rosario was retired by the state, or whoever, somebody bought it. And it sat there a long time. It's all gone now. Here's the, Mukilteo and there's my dad, the skipper and Elwood ??? Meling ??? who worked up with him from the Meeroff boats.

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Talked about other pictures. Walt said that Ralph McGinnis was called Mickey.

Walt----On the old City of Mukilteo, it was originally built to be a double ender and they made maintained a single ender so they wheel house and the other wheel house, Ralph McGinnis had for his pursers office in those days. He was our neighbor. He just lived a couple of houses away along the beach there. That was the Puget. The Puget replaced the City of Mukilteo after she burned in 1933. There's some good cartoons in there.

Walt----We're now getting out of the era because we're back about sixty years ago because there's my boat that my dad built for me in 1938.

Walt----Fred Reeve????bought into the Island Transportation Company. I think he achieved a controlling interest, about the time the Calista went down. His son Alvee??? lives in Ballard about a mile from me. He's getting to be an old guy, tough time hearing, but he sure had a lot of information. My dad used to work for his dad. My dad also used to work for your James grandfather.

Roger----Someone that the wheelhouse on the Atalanta is still down an Alki beach someplace. I came across an address. It was owned by one of the Lovejoys and it was built on as part of their house. I tried to look it up on a Seattle map and failed, but I don't know, it's probably long gone now, but it was there for quite awhile.

Walt----Some latter pilot houses were scattered around, I think near Ferndale, another one is out on the Tulalip Indian reservation. I enjoyed going over to the Magnolia bluff last Friday morning and watching them bring her (Kalakala) in.

Roger----I guess she's open for tour now.

Walt----Yeah, the further away she is, the better she looks. Ah, she's a wreck now. He came to our meetings for about eight years. Everyone smiled and just sat on their hands, including me, and thought this guy is crazy. He wants to bring the Kalakala back, get it off the ground, bring it across the Gulf of Alaska, get it down here and still three and one half million dollars to restore it for any type of good. But he has already done the impossible, the first phase and conceivably, he'll get some support. I'll start giving him a few bucks here and there.

Roger----Well, at \$8.00 a crack, he's going to make quite a bit.

Walt----Well, if you go down and look at it, you're looking at junk.. (Back to pictures) That's my dad. He retired off the ferry named the Olympic, brought around from Chesapeake Bay, which is resting comfortably in Eagle Harbor, on Bainbridge. She was privately purchased and got her over by the marina somewhere.

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Roger----Is she restored at all? They had one ferry up here, they did a movie several years ago in Penn Cove and they had some old ferry from someplace. Don't know which one it was. It might have been that one.

Walt----I honestly don't know. My problem is that I had that time gap of 41 years in California. I have all of these deep seated memories, then I came back ten years ago and picked up on them and I've enjoyed every day since I've been back. There's things that happened in between that somebody has to tell me about or I have to look up. But he (Walt's dad) just assembled all that stuff. My ferry was the Vashon and I paid cemetery visits to each of them in Alaska. There's the Clatawa, that's when I first had consciousness of her. Bert & Olson???? she was quite a gal. She was the one that said that Captain Manyon showed her how to apply her paper napkin under the coffee and saucer on the Kalakala to keep the coffee from spilling out to half full. The vibration was pretty wild.

Roger----I know they knocked the windows out of her the first time they took her out. They just had to throttle her back. Apparently she was capable of going a lot faster than she did.

Walt----That could well be. There was a problem with the basic alignment with the engine and the drive shaft.

Roger----You think that's what caused it, huh?

B:ll Walt----Yeah, I read that somewhere. Maybe in one of our sea chest journals. Of course, I do have pictures of the ferry Whidbey (not sure of spelling. The other Whidby was without the e). Here's her construction, and then she went on to be _____????

Roger----Do you remember any stories which your dad told you, happenings, interesting things?

Walt----I wonder if he (Bill McGinnis) mentioned the Jensen family. There were, I think there were three or four brotheres, I believe and Jake Jensen was not on the boats, but he was down at the Langley dock quite frequently. When I came along as a kid and knew him, he a fruit buyer for some cannery in Seattle, all of the cherries and whatever would be brought down and put aboard. My dad knew him way back in the early days and there was the story that he used to laugh about was when----Jake didn't like to dive off the Langley dock like the other guys did. They would take breaks, put on their bathing suits and dive, just like the picture. He didn't want to go in, so they just held him down and put a life preserver around him and tossed him over. He survived.

B:ll Walt----The night the City of Mukilteo caught fire, you know, here she is. The ferry at Columbia Beach angled off to the north and our house along the beach was north of the ferry dock approach, so you could look out the window and see the ferry straight ahead

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Some of the people, the parents were friendly with, in Langley would be on the boat and ride to the city and my grandfather Hunsiker's telescope was in the house and we would use it. And my dad would, of course, be in the wheel house and if the folks, say, Margaret Camperman and her sister would come up to say hello. He'd be there and greet them like out the window. After they traveled over one time, at a social gathering, Margaret said that, well, we were going to go up and visit Stanley but knowing that Margaret has a spy glass we had probably better not.

Roger----Lovejoys (Puget Sound Freight Line) owned those yellow freight boats that used to come up after the steamers went out of business. One was called the Indian.

Bill----The Indian and the Warrior.

Roger----The Warrior came into Oak Harbor and the Indian was the one on the Powell River run, I think. wasn't it a bigger boat?

Bill----They used to go by our place and I'd look out there and see them. Just as a casual observer, I never saw much difference between the Indian and the Warrior. They looked like sister ships.

Roger----That's Puget Sound Freight Line. Tom Lovejoy is president.

Bill----Now, wonder if you have a picture of the Whidby (ferry) and the ferry landing at Langley. It shows where that slip was put in beyond the U shaped dock. It was a pretty good picture.

Roger----I've got one picture that shows the Clatawa unloading cars on kind of a rickety looking pier. That was in Langley.

Bill----All of those slips were primitive looking, by todays standards, single lane and all entirely of wood, wood planks and hand winches.

Spent quite a bit of time talking about the Deception Pass ferry, the Oak Harbor-Utsalady ferry and Berte Olson, the woman skipper. I already have extensive information on the boats and Berte.

Bill----(looking at pictures) This is the standard picture, that's the Clatawa. Here's the ferry Whidby and here's the Langley dock with the ferry slip added. My first conscious memories are of this. My dad was mate and purser. Bart Lovejoy was skipper. I remember that very clearly. That was in use for quite awhile, even after the Whidby. I think she was sold to the Black Ball Line and went down to the Mukilteo-Columbia Beach run. Then the old Beeline was put on there by the Whidbey Island Transportation Company. I think there was some changes. There was a Whidbey Transportation Company, like a subsidiary of the Island one and Reev was kind of a pivot person in some of that change over. The Whidbey Island Transportation Company was controlled by Captain Reeve. But that kind of emerged out of the Lovejoy company.

Roger----Who was it that bought the Island Transportation Company?

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