



COLUMBIA CITY GEM OF THE SOUTHEAST



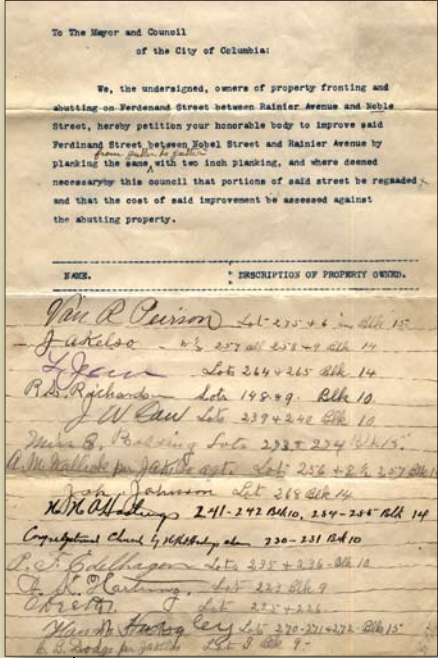
ABOVE: *Columbia City Council at its first meeting, January 10, 1893.* Rainier Valley Historical Society, 93.001.315 RVHS93_001_261.JPG

BELOW: *W. W. Phalen was mayor of Columbia City in 1905 and again in 1907 when the city was annexed to Seattle. Before moving to the Pacific Northwest, Phalen had a successful grocery business and professional baseball career in Mankato, Minnesota. In addition to serving as mayor of Columbia City, Phalen ran a grocery. He organized the first fire department, a baseball team, and the annual Rainier Valley Fiesta Parade.* Rainier Valley Historical Society 93.001.261



MAYORS:

- C. P. Hutcheson 1893-1894
- V. R. Peirson 1895-1896
- C. F. Reeves 1897-1899
- H. H. A. Hastings 1900
- J. Campbell 1900
- V. R. Peirson 1900-1904
- W. W. Phalen 1905
- A. G. Corbett 1906
- W. W. Phalen 1907



January 7, 1907, Seattle Mayor William Hickman Moore went on record to urge other neighborhoods to join with Seattle and share the city's water, light, and sewer systems, as well as benefit from a better school system.



BELOW: *In addition to petitions for sewer, lights, and water, petitions for the improvements of streets, especially Ferdinand Street, are frequent in the records of the City of Columbia. These five girls, names not known, are standing on Ferdinand Street, half a block east of Rainier. The planked sidewalk is in the background.* Rainier Valley Historical Society 93.001.404

On May 3, 1907, the Seattle City Council annexed Columbia City. The Town of Columbia was incorporated in 1892, and a five-member Town Council was established. Columbia also had a Board of Health and its own volunteer fire department.

The small town of Columbia struggled with the issues of growth and building an infrastructure to support the town's population. Complaints about and petitions for a water system, improved streets, and a sewer system were common.



Columbia achieved "city" status in 1905 when its population reached the required total of 1,500 under state law. The mayor, W. W. Phalen, called a special election and the public voted in favor of incorporation (unincorporated towns are governed by counties and lack independent legal and fiscal authority).

There was talk that year of annexing to Seattle, but residents wanted more local control over saloons. The town prided itself on having never had a saloon within its corporate limits. But opinions shifted after the tax base proved too small to maintain essential services. The vote on March 5, 1907, was 109 to 3 in favor of annexation.

Nearby Southeast Seattle was annexed earlier in the year. The town incorporated for the sole purpose of annexing to Seattle, as Ravenna had done on October 11, 1906. Southeast Seattle comprised the neighborhoods of Seward Park, Hillman City, Mt. Baker, Beacon Hill, and a portion of Rainier Valley. When it was annexed on

TOP RIGHT: *Barber shop and pool room on Rainier Avenue, 1907.* Rainier Valley Historical Society, 93.001.032

BELOW: *The Columbia City Volunteer Fire Department in 1901, on the corner of Rainier Avenue and Hudson Street. The equipment in the background includes a manual pumping cart and a hose reel cart.* Rainier Valley Historical Society 93.001.357

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