

WEST SEATTLE

THE CITY RECLAIMS ITS BIRTHPLACE

The largest annexation of 1907 occurred on July 24, when West Seattle was brought in. The addition of more than 17 square miles of land increased Seattle's physical size by one-third. Besides being the biggest neighborhood, it was also the oldest. The Denny Party landed there in 1851, before moving across the bay to found Seattle.

West Seattle incorporated in 1902, but as with other annexed neighborhoods, the growing community had a less-than-adequate water supply. The town was successful in attracting a private telephone franchise, but had no luck enticing a company to provide public transportation. The residents voted in 1904 to borrow \$18,000 to build their own electric streetcar railway system, the first municipally run network in the country. It was completed by the start of 1905 and ran one mile from the ferry dock up along California Avenue to the southern city limits.



Town politics centered on the issue of annexation. Many residents wanted to join with the City of Seattle to gain access to the clean and plentiful Cedar River water supply, the municipal electricity plant, and superior public safety services. Others wanted to maintain local control. Both sides were interested in annexing the surrounding unincorporated communities of Youngstown, Spring Hill, and Alki Point. The pro-Seattle faction needed to obtain a land corridor over which to bring Seattle water and power, and the anti-Seattle faction wanted to extend the municipal streetcar line south and west of what were then the city limits. These nearby communities rebuffed West Seattle's efforts to annex them in 1905 and again in 1906.

The city sold the streetcar line to the Seattle Electric Company in December 1906 for \$30,000. The Seattle Electric Company then constructed a separate streetcar line from Youngstown, through Spring Hill and over to Fauntleroy, connecting the California Avenue line with the new line in what is now the Junction. A flurry of real-estate activity and home building followed, and on May 25, 1907, the three communities voted to join the city of West Seattle with the promise of further annexation to the city of Seattle. West Seattle now comprised the entire West Seattle Peninsula covering 16.34 square miles from the Duwamish Head to the north, Puget Sound to the west, Elliott Bay and the Duwamish River to the east, and South Park and what is now SW Roxbury Street to the south. On June 29, 1907, West Seattle residents voted overwhelmingly, 325 for and 8 against, to join the city of Seattle.



ABOVE: This 1900 real-estate brochure sings the praises of West Seattle as a suburb to Seattle, as "Brooklyn is to New York, or Oakland is to San Francisco, and is a place of same relative importance." Southwest Seattle Historical Society/Log House Museum

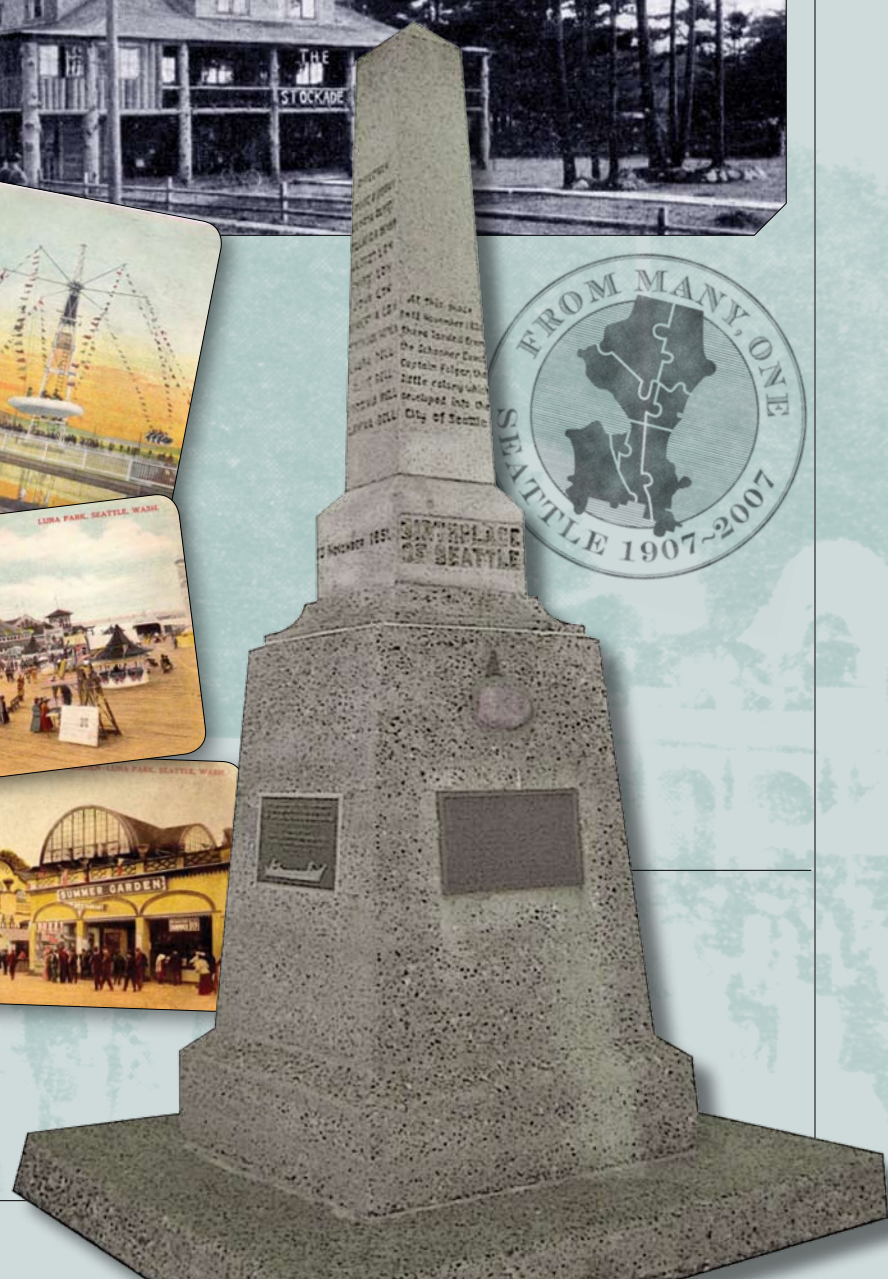
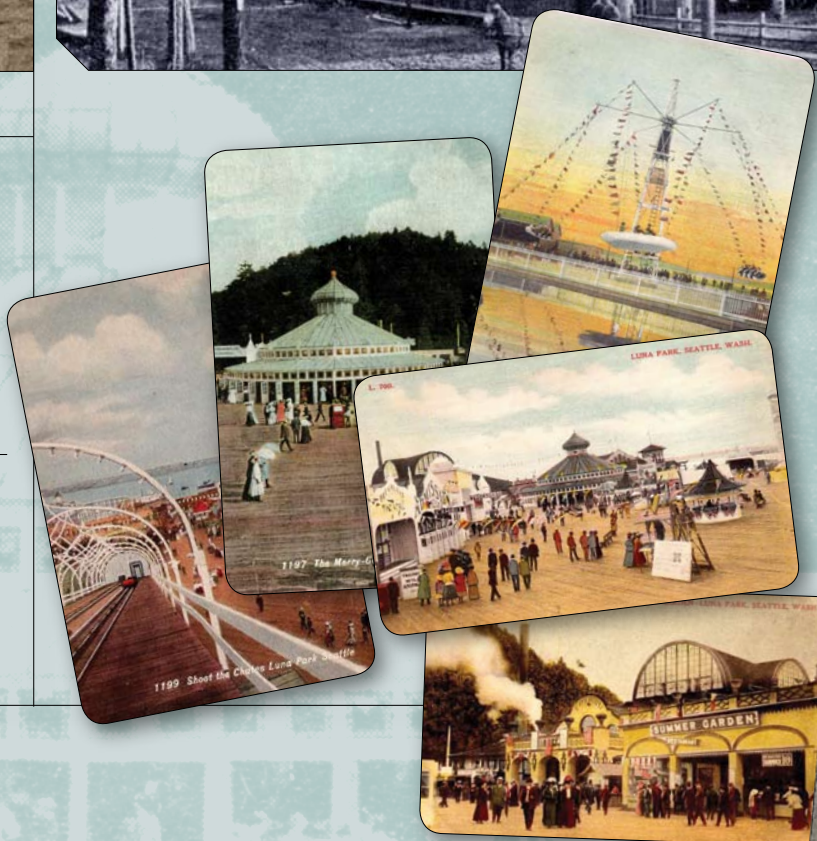
BELOW: Alki Point was a community of resorts and vacation homes catering to well-to-do Seattle residents, and viewed itself as a community distinct from the city of West Seattle. The Stockade Hotel claimed to be "one of the finest summer hotels in the Pacific Northwest." In the annexation elections it served as a polling place for Alki residents. Southwest Seattle Historical Society/Log House Museum



ABOVE: The West Seattle business district was located on Railroad Avenue (now Harbor Avenue) with its center near the West Seattle Ferry Dock (located near present-day Seacrest Park). This 1901 photograph shows businessmen W. H. Hainsworth and D. W. Brown standing in front of the ferry terminal. Southwest Seattle Historical Society/Log House Museum

RIGHT: Visitors to Luna Park sent many a postcard.

FAR RIGHT: This granite monument was dedicated in 1905 on Alki Point, where the city's first settlers landed in 1851. The obelisk listed all the names of the male settlers but it wasn't until the sesquicentennial celebration in 2002 that the pioneer women became memorialized with an addendum plaque of their own. Photo by Alan Stein



From Many, One: 1907-2007
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