

HISTORIC SOUTH TACOMA WAY



*The west side of the 5200 block of South Tacoma Way, circa 1913,
photo courtesy of the Tacoma Public Library, Amzie D. Browning Collection 158*



2011

HISTORIC
TACOMA

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In early 2011, Historic Tacoma reached out to the 60+ member South Tacoma Business District Association as part of its new neighborhood initiative. The area is home to one of the city's most intact historic commercial business districts. A new commuter rail station is due to open in 2012, business owners are interested in taking advantage of City loan and grant programs for façade improvements, and Historic Tacoma sees great opportunities in partnering with the district.

The goals of the South Tacoma project are to identify and assess historic structures and then to partner with business owners and the City of Tacoma to conserve and revitalize the historic core of the South Tacoma Business District. The 2011 work plan includes:

- conducting a detailed inventory of approximately 50 commercial structures in the historic center of the district
- identification of significant and endangered properties in the district
- development of action plans for endangered properties
- production of a "historic preservation resource guide for community leaders" which can be used by community groups across the City
- ½ day design workshop for commercial property owners
- production & distribution of a South Tacoma Business District tour guide and map
- nominations to the Tacoma Register of Historic Places as requested by property owners
- summer walking tour of the district

Acknowledgements

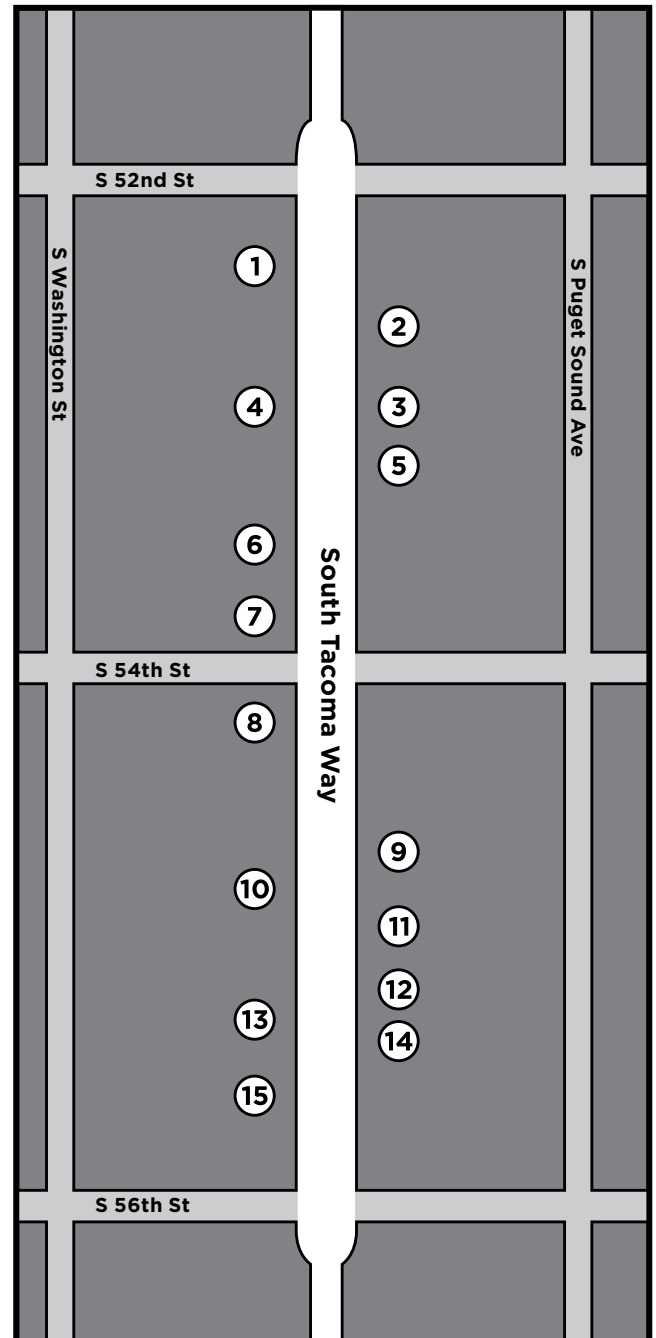
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Historic Tacoma is a private not-for-profit grassroots organization dedicated to preserving Tacoma's architectural legacy through education and advocacy. Historic Tacoma advocates for the thoughtful preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures, sites, and neighborhoods while urging policy makers, developers, and citizens to consider the value and unique qualities of historic structures. www.historictacoma.org

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HISTORIC SOUTH TACOMA WAY



5046-50 South Tacoma Way, circa 1907. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Amzie D. Browning Collection, 065

In the mid-1800s the area that would become South Tacoma was prairie land—Hunt's Prairie was the first name given to this area, which was home to a few pioneering farm families. In 1890, the Northern Pacific Railway ushered in the birth of what would become South Tacoma Business District. That year the company moved its railway shops from downtown Tacoma to the prairie land south of the city, which provided significantly more expansion flexibility than their holdings downtown. The railroad buildings ran along the tracks and extended from 56th Street to South Tacoma Way. The shops, opened in 1891, consisted of machine shops, a cooling plant, a power plant, a water well and tank, welding plant, kilns, new and old car sheds. In the heyday of Tacoma's railway history, these buildings were responsible for all the repair work west of the Mississippi, and employed about 1,000 Tacomans. Workers originally commuted on the train from the city until the trolley arrived. South Tacoma was formally annexed into Tacoma on April 17, 1891.

The South Tacoma Business District and neighborhoods sprang up in the ensuing years to accommodate the influx of laborers and their families. The first South Tacoma post office was opened in 1891, at the intersection of Orchard and South 58th Street. The post office, and the community, was eventually named 'Edison' in honor of Thomas Edison, who was a personal friend of the Northern Pacific Railroad owner, Henry Villard. In 1895 the town's name was changed to South Tacoma. It was eventually incorporated into the city. The shops occupied a large portion of South Proctor. A couple blocks east, on South Union (which would later become South Tacoma Way), the business district came to life.

Soon the town had an infrastructure: water, electricity, paved roads, a fire station, a park, a humane society, an orphanage and a public library, among other improvements. Hotels, inns and boarding houses sprang up to house the large numbers of workers and businesses emerged to meet the workers' needs. The working-class community supported additional development including churches, schools, clubs and recreational activities.

The neighborhood experienced substantial growth during the automobile era, as South Tacoma Way was Federal Highway 99, which stretched from one end of the Pacific Coast to the other. South Tacoma became a local hub for the automotive industry during this time, and the large number of automobile establishments in the neighborhood today bear testament to this era. In the 1960s the construction of Interstate 5 and the Tacoma Mall had significant impacts on the neighborhood as through traffic now moved along the interstate and shopping patterns shifted away from small locally owned stores to large scale national retailers. The railroad shops closed in 1974 when the Northern Pacific Railroad merged with Burlington Northern Railroad.

The neighborhood is again in the midst of transformations with plans for Sound Transit to place a commuter rail station at the corner of South Adams and South 60th Streets, just a few blocks off South Tacoma Way. The historic storefronts on South Tacoma Way are poised to house new restaurants, retail establishments and community services for a revitalized walking commercial neighborhood with a distinct scale and historic form.



Northern Pacific Railroad Steam locomotive #3013 circa 1938. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Amzie D. Browning Collection, 036



5210-14 South Tacoma Way, circa 1925, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Marvin Bolland Collection, BU-12965

5210-14 South Tacoma Way built in 1924

This building was constructed in 1924 specifically to house a Dodge automotive dealership. In 1928 the dealership was taken over by “Tommy” E. Burns and Walter M. Campbell. The business partnership only lasted a few years and by 1930 the company was known as Burns Autos. The following year Tommy Burns relocates his business to 728 Broadway. Another auto dealership, Feutz’s Garage Economy Motors opened at 5212, while Northwest Printing Company occupied 5214. While the businesses at 5210 and 5214 frequently change, Feutz’s automobile dealership remains at this location for most of the decade.

This building maintains the five distinct bays of the original structure, although the individual bay layout has been altered due to current tenant requirements. When used as an auto dealership the building had multiple “storefronts” to accommodate the different functions of a dealership. The second bay from the southern end was completely open to allow automobiles access for entering and exiting the site. Each end of the storefront had a recessed entry, and the top part of the window glazing had transom windows, which were typical of the period. As remodeled for new uses the structure now has doors in the center bays, while the two bays on either side are almost completely glazed with large sheets of plate glass.



Image from the 1960s, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU 13783

5213 South Tacoma Way built circa 1927

Built around 1927, this petite brick structure originally housed the Independent Grocery Company’s third store in Tacoma. A number of other businesses have also called this location home. During the Depression era the South Tacoma Cycle and Radio Company replaced the Independent Grocery Company. In 1935 this business was replaced by the Sheridan Tavern, which changed its name to the Semaphore Tavern around 1950, and continued to occupy the site until 1968.

Alfredo and Ida Gasperetti and George and Adelfa Gasperetti were owners of the Semaphore. The Gasperettis were notable business leaders in South Tacoma and owned a number of different establishments in the neighborhood. A native of Italy, Alfredo Gasperetti moved to Tacoma in 1901 and operated several different food-based businesses. In 1901 he opened the Toscano Café, which operated until 1938. He then operated Primo’s Café until his retirement in 1950. Alfredo and his wife, Ida, had two sons, Primo and George. Primo started working as a waiter at his parents’ café and opened his own establishment, Primo’s (at 8602 South Tacoma Way) in 1938 where he would often jump on stage and sing with the big band. After running Primo’s for a decade he decided to branch out into other businesses and opened a flower stand. He was also Pierce County’s largest supplier of New Year’s party favors, and one of the largest suppliers of fireworks in the county, opening his first stand, Primo’s Crackerpot, right after World War II.

The family were active members of St. Rita’s, a national Catholic church, where mass was spoken in Italian. During the early 1900s Tacoma’s Italian population grew quickly and by 1912 had formally requested a national church from the Catholic diocese. The request was granted, and in 1924 the stucco-clad building was finished. The church still has an active congregation and is located at 1401 South Ainsworth Avenue in Tacoma’s Hilltop neighborhood.



Image from 1977, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU 2517

5221 South Tacoma Way built in 1906

This building was constructed by the North Pacific Bank in 1906. The bank specialized in serving businesses and patrons that worked with Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1912, German immigrant Peter Wallerich purchased the business. His success eventually led to the construction of a new building for the bank in 1914, at 5446-48 South Tacoma Way. This building first remained vacant after the bank departed, and new tenants were not secured until 1926.

The first tenant was The South Tacoma Cycling Company, which was operated by Frankie Leslie and George Southwell from 1926 until 1930, when the store relocated to 5213 South Tacoma Way. The building remained vacant during most of the depression era.

Although bicycles were an inexpensive and common form of transportation during the early 20th century, automobiles quickly became a preferred mode of transportation during the late 30s and early 40s, and the bicycle shop was replaced by a Western Auto Supply in 1941. As the war years brought changes to the nation, the business district responded to fulfill those needs, and in the late 1940s an Army recruiting station occupied the site, followed by Andy's Army Store, a military surplus business, in the 1950s.

Although the storefront has seen some changes to the large display windows and entry, and the structure is currently painted, the basic vintage form remains intact, and is a fine example of an early brick commercial storefront. The simple rhythm of the building with two large arched openings, one for entry doors and the second for windows, is given tremendous depth and texture through the multiple layers of brick. Although currently bare, the long recessed rectangle towards the top of the building's façade was designed to showcase business signage.



Image from 1977, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU-2518

5222 South Tacoma Way built circa 1900

Constructed in around the turn of the century, this building originally housed the popular Edison Soft Drink Parlor. Tacoma had several soft drink manufacturing companies located in the Warehouse/Brewery district, near the waterfront. Although advertising soft drinks, the shop also served as a speakeasy for part of the prohibition years. The police had long suspected the shop was selling alcohol, and during the summer of 1925 Tacoma police officer Roy Colyar discovered a secret storage area with 141 pints of beer and three gallons of moonshine. "Bartender" George Paschid was arrested for the possession of alcohol and the building sat vacant for a number of years after this. By 1940, Volunteers of America was occupying the building. This national organization provided charitable assistance to the South Tacoma neighborhood, and specialized in housing and healthcare services. The non-profit group relocated in 1942. After a few years of vacancy, the structure became the home of Teresa's Café in 1945. The café was owned by Teresa and John Cacciaguidi. The Cacciaguidis lived in the neighborhood, at 4545 South Lake Union Avenue. John died in the 1950s and Teresa remained at this address until 1979.

This two-story structure has been altered over the years. The gable front (which is more common in housing forms than commercial buildings) may indicate that this structure first served as a residence. The exposed rafter tails that extend beyond the front façade of the structure are not typical in commercial buildings and are common in early 20th century houses. The upper corners of the façade are false front, and give the structure a larger, more imposing street presence than the actual mass of the building. The narrow, evenly spaced double-hung windows are common for the second floors of commercial buildings. Second floors typically housed either professional offices or living space for the building owners or the commercial occupants on the first floor. The entry level of the building is completely commercial in its design. The recessed entry door and large sheet glass windows, while not original are likely in this historic location. The transoms that were probably above the main entry and the display windows were filled in at some point.



Image from 1908, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Amzie D. Browning Collection, 066

5227 South Tacoma Way built circa 1905

Like many neighborhoods, South Tacoma had a locally owned hardware store. This building was home to Samuel F. Kennedy's hardware store from 1904 until 1908. A hardware business remained at this location, but under the ownership of Andrew Nelson. Nelson operated his business at this location from 1913 through 1919, then relocated the business several blocks away to 1327 South Tacoma Way. For an unknown reason, he moved right back to this location in 1920. His return was bittersweet; the building caught fire in 1926. The fire, which did more than \$10,000 worth of damages, destroyed much of the structure and the neighboring George's Café and Settle Meat Market and Grocery. Nelson, however, was able to save the building, and the business remained here until 1945. After the hardware store closed the Oasis Beer Parlor (later known as the Oasis Tavern) occupied the building through 1971.

This building has seen significant changes in its form, particularly due to the 1926 fire. The current false front and bricked entry are not original, and it is not known how much of the vintage structure is behind the current façade. A period photo of the Smith Hardware store shows a beautifully styled classical detailed building, with squared pilasters (a building component similar to columns) at each corner, and a finely stylized classical entablature at the top of the building. The original storefront was designed to take advantage of natural light and work with the environment, while providing the business owner with much needed light and advertising space. The recessed entry not only created larger display windows, it gave a recessed area that was sheltered from the elements. The checkerboard window panes above the display window were glazed with prism glass. Prism glass is an architectural glass, which was designed to redirect sunlight into the interior of buildings. The textured surface would refract sunlight, throwing the beams into the dim recesses of a store. In an era where the average wattage of a light bulb was 18 watts, sunlight was an important light source. The retractable awning helped provide light and sun control as needed.



Image from 1977, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU-2523

5238-40 South Tacoma Way built in 1907

This building, constructed in 1907, is part of the Peter Leonard Block, named for Peter Leonard, a prominent South Tacoma businessman. A Wisconsin native, Peter moved to Tacoma in 1891 and operated a number of different businesses, including one of the first auto dealerships in the area, which opened in 1905. Peter sold his shares in the business to his son, Edward P., in 1915. The Ford franchise was the largest in the state at the time of Edward's death in 1931.

The year that the Leonard Block was completed Steve Pease was born. Pease was one of the most colorful individuals in Tacoma's history, and partnered with Mrs. John Martinolich to open Steve's Friendly Tavern at this site in 1941. The business later expanded to occupy the building at 5242 South Tacoma Way with the name eventually changing to Steve's Gay 90's, which became a South Tacoma icon, a cabaret-style restaurant. The restaurant was decorated with architectural treasures salvaged from many of the city's demolished Victorian mansions. The large bar from the Red Front Saloon (5244 South Tacoma Way) was part of the lavish decorations added to the restaurant. Known affectionately by many as "the Mayor of South Tacoma," Pease was an active member of the South Tacoma Business Club and served for a time as their president. Pease closed his restaurant in 1977, auctioning off the antiques and historic photos that made his business a local icon. He passed away in 1991.

The original 1907 building has had significant changes; the decorative entablature complete with balustrade, no longer runs along the top of the building. The second floor still has the original fenestration pattern, with a larger window opening to the south (originally holding two narrow double-hung windows flanking a larger double-hung window) and an opening designed for a single window to the north (originally a double-hung unit as well). A 1907 photograph of the building shows a typical commercial first floor, a recessed centered front door, large plate glass display windows, and a transom (to provide the all important sunlight) on the upper portion of the main floor.



Image circa 1907, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection C132559-1

5244 South Tacoma Way lot currently vacant

The parking lot that now occupies 5244 South Tacoma Way reveals no trace of its history. From about 1880 until 1907 the Red Front Saloon operated on the main floor and provided furnished rooms and lodgings upstairs. The business was owned by Peter Leonard (who also owned the block at 5238/40 South Tacoma Way). The fabulous bar was an item later incorporated into Steve's Gay 90's (5238-40 South Tacoma Way).

Later the Coffee and Doughnuts Lunch establishment was operated by brothers Joe and Arthur "Buffino" Centoni. The establishment eventually changed its name to the Centoni Restaurant which remained in operation until the late 1920s. As automobiles became a more prominent part of life the site hosted a Texaco station from 1931 until 1934.



The interior of the Red Front Saloon, 5244 South Tacoma Way, circa 1910. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, G45.1-105



Image from 1942, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection D13481-27

5402-06 South Tacoma Way built in 1927

Dentist Paul Hallock built the aptly named Hallock Building as a business venture in 1927. Hallock's own office was located across the street at 5401 ½ South Union Avenue (now South Tacoma Way). The first tenant was Luther McKee of McKee Motors, a Hudson-Essex car dealership in operation until McKee's death in 1929. In 1931, a hardware store opened at this site. The store, in operation from 1931 until 1938, was owned by Frederick Lang. Like many of Tacoma's early residents, Lang was an immigrant. A native of France, he arrived in Tacoma in 1907 and served in the military during World War I. In 1938, Totem Stores Inc. opened a grocery store on the main floor which was replaced in 1942 by Safeway and in 1945 by Thriftway, which remained at this location until 1954.

Until 1938, a variety of physicians, attorneys, and other professionals rented office space on the second floor. Most notable among them was Dr. Edward Perry, an Ohio native, who was a heart surgery specialist. After practicing for some time in Louisville, Kentucky, he moved to Raymond, Washington and served as an army surgeon during World War I before moving to Tacoma in 1919. Dr. Perry served as Pierce County Coroner until his death in 1934. The upper story became the Eagle Hotel in 1938, which was followed by the Garland Hotel in 1942.

The photo shows the building when it was used by Safeway, although the ramp for cars to access the front showroom is visible to the right of the building, and the first corner bay by the cross street shows the boarded opening that would have allowed cars to enter the structure. The transoms on the front of the building were covered from the inside when a dropped ceiling with more substantial electric lights was added. The upper story of the building still has most of its integrity. The lower floor has been altered over time, the transoms have either been covered up or removed and the recessed front entry has been pushed out to the street. The far south end of the main façade still has the building's name visible over the door, and an original transom.



Image from 1938, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection A7241-1

5415 South Tacoma Way built in 1919

Built in 1919, the Realart Theatre was one of three theatres built and owned by Radnor Pratsch on South Tacoma Way. When the Realart opened, the newspaper claimed it was Tacoma's largest theatre, with a large pipe organ and seating for 500 patrons. The theatre had some uncommon and highly desirable features, including a nursery with large windows overlooking the screen so mothers could watch films while caring for their children, and room for baby carriage parking. The Realart operated as a theater for 40 years. Local movie patrons remember standing in line for the Saturday matinee and watching the soft ice cream machine in the market next door to see when a fresh batch of ice cream was ready.

In 1961, the theater closed and C.L. Therakauf opened the Realart Square Dance Hall in the building. In 1971, one year after Pratsch's death, the adjacent Golden Dragon Restaurant purchased the Realart and expanded the restaurant. The current main floor remodel occurred at about that time. Although the marquee has been removed, the current first floor façade merely hides much of the theatre's original brickwork, and possibly even the small leaded glass windows. This building could have much of its historic fabric uncovered and restored.

The Realart was designed by the architectural firm of Lundberg & Mahon, which formed in 1913. The firm was unique at the time because it offered architectural design and engineering services. Many of the firm's important commissions were associated with the Catholic Church and they were responsible for designing South Tacoma's Visitation Catholic Church (1912). Other major works include: St. Joseph's Slovak Catholic (1912), Washington Theatre (1913), Lynn Funeral Home (1918), Orpheum Theatre (1919), Holy Rosary Catholic (1920), Sacred Heart Catholic School (1924), Holy Rosary Catholic, Seattle (1937).



Image of Radnor Pratsch from 1936, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio D681-6

Radnor Pratsch

Tacoma builder Radnor Pratsch was born in O'Brian County, Iowa in 1883. He moved to Tacoma and lived both in Tacoma and Gig Harbor. As a yachtsman who sailed in the Trans Pacific Yacht Race twice in the 1930s and in 1962, he became an honorary life member of the Tacoma Yacht Club. He owned three theatres, including the Realart Theatre located at 5415 South Tacoma Way. Built in 1919, the Realart brought Hollywood movies to South Tacoma for over 40 years. The other two theatres were both called the Idle Hour Theatre, one at 5411 South Tacoma Way (also designed by Lundberg) and one at 5432-34 South Tacoma Way (called the Orpheum Theatre at a later date.). The theatres were built to accommodate the rapid growth of this neighborhood during the early 20th century.

Pratsch died on July 14, 1970. A year later, the Golden Dragon Restaurant, which had occupied the building next to the Realart at 5413 South Tacoma Way, bought the theatre and expanded their restaurant.



Image from 1931, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU-11081

5420 South Tacoma Way built in 1928

Contractor T. K. J. Williamson built this structure in 1928 for realtor Zachary A. Vane. The building had a cast stone front designed by Carl Biber. Vane & Company used the main floor until 1947. Several other businesses occupied the main floor as well, including Pacific Savings & Loan Association, Standard Finance Company, and jeweler B. W. Andrews. The upper floor was an apartment until after World War II when it became additional office space.

Zachary A. Vane settled in the Tacoma area in 1914 when he was twenty-one years of age. He opened a real estate office during the 1920s. Zachary was elected to the Washington State Legislature in 1932 and served the 29th district for a full twelve terms. He died in 1993 at one hundred years of age, and was survived by his wife Marie. The Zanes occupied a number of different residences during their life, and had their longest tenure (from 1922 through the 1950s) at 6014 South Warner Street, just a few blocks away from the bustling South Tacoma Way.

Although the stone building has been painted, it still shows traces of its original style with the ornamental block at the top of the façade showcasing the 1928 construction date. The keystones with an engraved "V," as viewed in this historic photo, are still intact, muted slightly by layers of paint. The original windows have been replaced with smaller units and the main floor has had substantial alterations. Although the recessed entry with the centered front doors has been replaced by a contemporary angled recessed entry. The original entablature with decorative molding can be seen hidden behind the current awning.



Image from 1924, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Marvin Boland Collection, BU-11274

5423 South Tacoma Way built in 1924

Built by contractor Thomas Holmberg in 1924, 5423 South Tacoma Way originally served as a dry goods store for Edward A. Garceau. Garceau was a pioneer dry goods merchant in Tacoma and opened his business, Ed Garceau & Son in 1903, at 5235 South Tacoma Way. The establishment was the first dry goods store in South Tacoma. When Garceau moved his business to 5423 South Tacoma Way, he changed its name to the Ed Garceau Drygoods Store. Garceau's wife, Agnes, was a bookkeeper and assisted with the business.

Born in Niles, Michigan, Garceau grew up in South Bend, Indiana. His association with the dry goods business began in 1878 in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota. The couple first boarded just a few blocks away at 5519 South Pine Street, but with a large family of nine children, they eventually needed more spacious accommodations. From 1909 until 1951 they lived in a large Four-Square home at 5814 South Puget Sound Avenue, which continued to be occupied by their children after Edward and Agnes died.

When Edward Garceau passed away in 1941 at the age of 79, several of his children briefly carried on the family business. Myrtle, one of his youngest children, had worked at the store since high school and was the last family member to operate the business. In 1974, after 71 years of operation, she closed the family store, much to the dismay of longtime customers. Myrtle died later that year.

This building still has much of its integrity, although the painted façade makes it difficult to see the decorative brick bonds that ornamented the façade. The original transoms have been removed, or more likely, hidden behind the cladding material that covers this portion of the façade. The double recessed entry was a common stylistic technique used by the builders of clothing stores. This type of entry allowed significant display space for clothing, yet helped provide additional shade to prevent display wares from sun damage.



Image of female wartime mechanics working on a 1942 Oldsmobile B44 at the Munson Motor Company, of 5622 South Tacoma Way. Holmberg built an addition for this building in 1927. Photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection D 13025-4

Thomas Holmberg

Born in Norway on January 22, 1879, Thomas Holmberg was one of South Tacoma's most prolific contractors during the 1920s, and was responsible for more than a dozen and a half commercial structures throughout the city. Holmberg immigrated to the United States in 1898 and by 1920 he was widowed with a young son, Carl. He and his son lived with Holmberg's mother, Emelie Hansen, at 1752 South 54th Street.

Holmberg contracted extensively with South Tacoma's booming auto business, working on projects for such businesses as Delin Tire Co., Munson Motor Company, and Watson Auto Co. In addition, Holmberg worked with Peter Wallerich, president of the North Pacific Bank. He also won the contract for the Wainwright Elementary School (1924) at 130 Alameda Avenue. Holmberg remarried in 1930 and he had three children with his new wife, Caroline. During the mid-1930s, the family moved to Vancouver, Washington, where Holmberg passed away in 1946 at the age of 65. Holmberg's youngest son, Edwin, became a contractor who worked in the Vancouver, Washington region. Edwin passed away in late 2009.

- 5413 South Tacoma Way 1926
Renggli Meat Market (1920s)
- 5422 South Tacoma Way 1924
The Kelley-Bushell Building (housed a J.C. Penney's)
- 5423 South Tacoma Way 1924
Garceau Drygoods (1920s-70s)
- 5428 South Tacoma Way 1924
Kelly Furniture (1920s-70s)
- 5439 South Tacoma Way 1927
Spellman's Buster Brown Shoe Store (1940s)
- 5602-08 South Tacoma Way 1924
South Tacoma Motor Company (1920s-30s)



Image from 1977, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU-2530

5431 South Tacoma Way built in 1917

Constructed in 1917, 5431 South Tacoma Way was occupied by a number of recreational establishments through the years. The Pennant offered pool, soft drinks, and tobacco products. In 1940 a new tavern opened, the Corral Cabaret, managed by George Coson and Roger McDonell. The interior was painted with murals of ranches and horse tack by Tacoma artist Ward Padelford. Items from Coson and McDonell's personal collections added additional decorative touches.

Coson was responsible for the tavern's name and theme and was an avid horse rider and ranch owner; a veteran of World War I, who rode for the U. S. Army at Fort Lewis. McDonnell rode in California. Coson lived locally in an apartment building at 5048 South Tacoma Way as did McDonell and his wife, Margaret H.

The building was constructed by Frank Yorktheimer, who worked with contractor Thomas Holmberg on a number of projects, including 3511 South 54th Street, a two-story brick office building that housed Stern's Barber Shop and South Tacoma Cleaners. The building has had its original brick facade removed. The front entry and display windows were heavily altered in the late 20th century. A vintage photo of the building has not yet been located, but it likely had a front entry similar to the other buildings in the neighborhood; large plate glass display windows with transoms and a centered recessed front door.



Image from 2011, photo courtesy of Kingstree Studios

5432-34 South Tacoma Way built in 1901

The building at 5432-34 South Tacoma Way has a diverse occupant history, and often times several businesses occupied the structure concurrently. The Fabian Sauriol Hay and Feed store occupied this address from 1901 until 1905. The Sauriol family lived at this location as well and continued to live here after the hay and feed store was closed. By 1910 the Sauriol family operated a furniture business out of this location and no longer lived in the building. Fabian Sauriol was a pioneer of South Tacoma and moved to Tacoma in 1881 from Oregon. He had four sons, William, Charles, Alphonso, and George, and two daughters, Cora and Alice. Fabian Sauriol died in 1918.

A number of movie theatres have utilized this building. The Star Moving Picture Theatre operated from this location during 1909. From 1910 to 1913 the Idle Hour Theatre operated out of this building. Both the Star and the Idle Hour were silent movie theatres. The Idle Hour theatre was operated by Radnor Pratsch, a significant businessman who owned several movie theatres in South Tacoma. In 1913, the Idle Hour moved to 5411 South Union Avenue (South Tacoma Way) and the Orpheum Theatre moves into this location. The Orpheum Theatre was run by Fabian Sauriol's son, George Sauriol, and was operational until 1929. Confectioner Emma Pratt, also operated her sugary sweets business from this location.

In 1926, the building's second level was transformed into an apartment complex, called Sauriol Apartments that lasted until 1979. From 1926 until 1930, space below accommodated a number of businesses, including the Louis Kinrod Variety Store, the South Tacoma Decorating Company, Aubry Electric Shop, and Lloyd West Sign Painting. In 1932, the Cut Rate Store offered men's furnishings. From 1933 small businesses such as Ole Westrum Meats, G. Allen Averill Grocery, Margaret Boehme Dairy Products and Sauriol's Cute Rate Drug Store appeared.

Although the storefronts have been significantly altered over the years, the basic rhythm of two street-level businesses divided by an entry door for the second level remains. These business storefronts would have followed the same pattern of recessed entries with transoms above that was typical in the late 19th and early 20th century.



William J. Hillyard

Born in Canada in 1863, William J. Hillyard was a Tacoma resident for 45 years. A building contractor who figured prominently in the development of the South Tacoma Way business district during the early 1900s, he partnered with at least three other contractors at various times including John C. Jensen, Ralph Martin, and Hallich. Hillyard's projects include the impressive Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall, where he was a member. Hillyard, and his wife Laura R., lived at 5428 South Warner in a large two story Craftsman house. Hillyard died in 1936 and rests at the Tacoma Mausoleum, just two blocks away from the world he helped build.

Hillyard & Martin

5219 South Tacoma Way 1905
H. B. Soult store (demolished)

5419 South Tacoma Way 1909
commercial store

Hillyard & Jensen

5435-37 South Tacoma Way 1919
Odd Fellows Hall

Hillyard

5239 South Tacoma Way 1921
H. Folkstead & Son store (1920s)

5442-44 South Tacoma Way 1919
Orpheum Theatre (1920s)

Hillyard & Hallich

5416-18 South Tacoma Way 1922
Hallich & Hillyard Building (later a Peoples Store)



Image from 1927, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Marvin D. Boland Collection BU-11276

5435-37 South Tacoma Way built in 1919

Designed by the architectural firm of Lundberg and Mahon (architects for 5415 South Tacoma Way), this structure was built in 1919 by the construction firm of Hillyard & Jensen for the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and Rebekahs. The Odd Fellows was a fraternal organization that served both social networking and charitable purposes. Tacoma had numerous fraternal organizations; the Elks, Knights of Pythias, the Eagles, and the Odd Fellows all helped to provide a social “safety net” at a time when the federal government did not offer welfare assistance. The Odd Fellows was the first national fraternity to accept male and female memberships and the first to establish homes for senior citizens and orphaned children.

Like most fraternal lodges, the main fellowship rooms were on the upper floors and the first floor was rented by commercial establishments. Dentist Earl L. Bird and physician A. G. Nace had offices on the main floor. Both gentlemen lived in the neighborhood. Earl and his wife Emma, lived at 6020 South Warner from 1925 through 1959. Dr. Nace, who arrived to Tacoma in 1909 was known for his service on the Metropolitan Park board and the many newspaper articles he wrote about South Tacoma’s history. Lucy Vane, daughter of Zachary and Marie Vane (see 5420 South Tacoma Way) served as Dr. Nace’s assistant. George and his wife Luneta lived at 5824 South Puget Sound from 1914 through 1959. The couple’s son, A. George Nace Jr. was a pharmacist and owned Nace’s Highway Drug Store and was an active member of the South Tacoma Businessman’s Club.

This building retains much of its architectural integrity, and is a neighborhood anchor on South Tacoma Avenue. Although the original dormers have been removed from the roof and replaced with recessed windows (likely when the clay tile roofing was replaced), as well as the original casement windows on the second floor, most key building elements are intact, including the original commercial storefronts, formal pediment over the entry to the second floor, and the paired arched windows and the paired brackets under the cornice. The three rings over the center windows are a symbol for the Odd Fellows and represent their motto of “Friendship, Love and Truth.”



Image from 1928, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, BU-11085

5446-48 South Tacoma Way built in 1914

Another structure designed by the architectural firm of Lundberg & Mahon, 5446-48 South Tacoma Way was constructed in 1914. The building housed the South Tacoma post office and the North Pacific Bank. With the relocation of the post office to South 56th and Puget Sound Street in the late 1920s, the thriving North Pacific Bank absorbed the vacant property, remodeling it into their business. The bank was named in honor of the Northern Pacific Railroad and its affiliated shops that were located in South Tacoma.

Although the two distinct doors on the entry façade have been removed, (they were a reminder of the structure’s past when it housed two businesses), the majority of the structure looks quite similar to the original building as seen in the historic photo. Even more impressive is that the building still houses a bank, which was one of the original uses of the structure. The simple one-story building is ornamented through simple changes in brick texture created by turning bricks on their ends to the short sides face out. When combined with slight differences in wall depth and small decorative tiles, the resulting façade has a simple, classical elegance, enhanced by the brick piers flanking each window, which gives the building classical details. Although the stylistic details are subtle, they were purposeful. North Pacific Bank was following the national trend of financial institutions using classical details to associate their business with the historical permanence and prestige of the classical past.

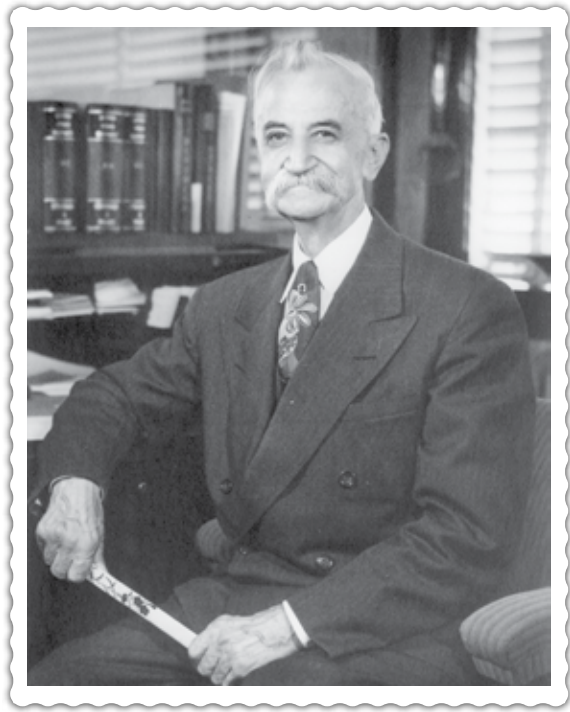


Image of Peter Wallerich from 1948, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, D33768-5

Peter Wallerich

Peter Wallerich was born in Alsace-Lorraine on April 8, 1867. He came to the United States when he was 18, taught himself English, and worked on several Iowa farms. He learned telegraphy and moved west to Almira, Washington to work at a railroad station and eventually helped to organize the Almira State Bank. In 1902 he was elected cashier. Wallerich bought all the stock in South Tacoma's North Pacific Bank in 1910 and became cashier and manager.

Wallerich had been involved in the automobile business in South Tacoma since 1924. In 1948, at the age of 81, he was still active in multiple family owned businesses and served as president of the North Pacific Bank, South Tacoma Motor Co., and City Motor. The family also owned Wallerich Agencies, an insurance company. Wallerich's involvement with the North Pacific Bank and the South Tacoma Motor Company was estimated to have provided jobs for more than 175 people in South Tacoma. Wallerich continued working as the bank's president until days before his death on October 25, 1951, at the age of 84.

Wallerich's wife, B. Maude, acted as Vice President of North Pacific Bank for many years. The family resided at 5617 South Puget Sound Avenue until the completion of the family's new home at 3634 North Stevens Street. The architectural firm of Lundberg & Mahon, which designed a number of significant buildings in South Tacoma, designed the home. Contractor E. Anderson constructed the residence in 1923. The house is still standing.



Detail of signpost at 5241 South Tacoma Way from 1927, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Boland B17459



Image from the grand opening of the Gay Nineties Room at Steve's Café in 1951, photo courtesy of Tacoma Public Library, Richards Studio Collection D57331-1

THE SOUTH TACOMA BUSINESS DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

With a foundation firmly committed to progress and service, the community of South Tacoma is proud of our history and enthusiastic about the future. The South Tacoma Business District Association helps create a great place to live, work, and shop. In 2012 the Sounder Station will open at the railroad tracks at South 56th. This development continues the neighborhood's historic relationship transportation, from railroads to the automobile and back to railroads again.

The South Tacoma Business District Association is the driving force behind a number of significant projects in the district:

- Vintage-styled street lighting
- Public art and murals
- Hanging flower baskets in partnership with Mt. Tahoma High School
- Farmer's Market, Sundays, from early June through late September
- Annual Classic Car Show each August

For more information on upcoming events and activities visit:
<http://www.tacomabusinessdistricts.com/Page.aspx?nid=66>





Photo courtesy Knights of Pythias

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