KING COUNTY LANDMARKS COMMISSION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM
201 S. Jackson, Suite 700
Seattle, Washington 98104

Commission Approved
4/27/2023

LANDMARK REGISTRATION FORM

PART I: PROPERTY INFORMATION

1. Name of Property

historic name: NEELY, SR, AARON AND SARAH, FARM

other names/site number: Hori Furoba; Fukuda Dairy Ranch; Ace's Farm; Pete's Farm

2. Location

street address: 12303 SE Auburn-Black Diamond Rd, Auburn, WA

parcel no(s):
212105-9011: 0.5 acres; land owned by King Co.; improvements owned by Neely Mansion Assoc., Inc.
212105-9156: 0.63 acres; land and improvements owned by Neely Mansion Assoc., Inc.

legal description(s): see page 2

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:
- ☒ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property:
- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

4. Property Owner(s)

name: Neely Mansion Association, Inc.
c/o Carol Grimes, President
PO Box 738
Auburn, WA 98071-0738

name: King County
c/o Real Estate Services
500 Fourth Ave., Suite 830
Seattle, WA 98104

5. Form Prepared By

name/title: Sarah J. Martin, consulting historian
On behalf of the Neely Mansion Association, Inc.
organization: SJM Cultural Resource Services, LLC
date: February 2023
address: 3901 2nd Ave NE #202, Seattle, WA 98105

6. Nomination Checklist

- ☒ Site Map (REQUIRED)
- ☒ Photographs (REQUIRED): *please label or caption photographs and include an index*
- ☒ Continuation Sheets
- ☐ Other (please indicate):
- ☐ Last Deed of Title: *this document can usually be obtained for little or no cost from a title company*

2. Location Cont'd

Legal Description (Source: King County Online Parcel Data) – See figure A4

212105-9011 (0.5 acres): POR NW 1/4 STR 21-21-05 DAF: BEG AT N QTR COR SD SEC TH N 89-16-14 W ALG N LINE SD NW QTR 289.45 FT TH S 00-30-05 E 34.50 FT TO INTSN WITH CURVE ON S MGN AUBURN-BLACK DIAMOND RD #1563 & TPOB (RADIAL CENTER OF SD CURVE BEARS S 08-24-28 E 328.11 FT) TH CONTG S 00-30-05 E 184.09 FT TH S 89-53-55 W 133.45 FT TH N 00-30-05 W 135.38 FT TO SD S MGN SE 336TH ST TH N 62-26-10 E 32.91 FT TO PT OF CURVE (RADIAL CTR BRG S 27-33-50 E 328.11 FT) TH ALG SD CURVE & S MGN ARC DIST 109.70 FT SUBTENDING CENTRAL ANGLE OF 19-09-22 TO TPOB -- AKA LOT "A" AS DELINEATED PER KING CO LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT NO 8705016 RECORDING NO 9102200617

212105-9156 (0.63 acres): POR NW 1/4 STR 21-21-05 DAF: BEG AT N QTR COR SD SEC TH N 89-16-14 W ALG N LINE SD NW QTR 219.45 FT TH S 00-30-05 E 30.00 FT TO TPOB BEING PT ON S MGN AUBURN-BLACK DIAMOND RD #1563 TH CONTG S 00-30-05 E 257.25 FT TH S 89-53-55 W 203.45 FT TH N 00-30-05 W 70.00 FT TO SW COR PARCEL CONV TO KING CO UNDER REC NO 7903010831 TH N 89-53-55 E 133.45 FT ALG S LINE SD KING CO PARCEL TH N 00-30-05 W 184.09 FT ALG E LINE SD KING CO PARCEL TO INTSN WITH CURVE ON S MGN AUBURN- BLACK DIAMOND RD #1563 (RADIAL CENTER SD CRV BEARS S 08-24-28 E 328.11 FT) TH ALG SD S MGN & CRV TO RIGHT HAVING RADIUS 328.11 FT THRU CENTRAL ANGLE 09-08-14 ARC DIST 52.32 FT TO PT OF TANGENCY TH S 89-16-14 E 17.82 FT ALG SD S MGN TO TPOB -- AKA LOT "B" AS DELINEATED PER KING CO LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT NO 8705016 RECORDING NO 9102200617

BACKGROUND & RESEARCH

This nomination seeks to update and streamline previous King County Landmark nominations for the Neely Mansion (1982) and the associated Hori Furoba (1996) in order to document the current property boundaries and extant resources as well as the full scope of the property's history and significance. This effort also includes a revision of the 1974 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Neely Mansion.

Consulting historian Sarah J. Martin completed research and drafted this report between September and December 2022. Research repositories included King County Historic Preservation Office, Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), King County Archives, Washington State Archives Puget Sound Regional Branch, University of Washington Libraries and Special Collections, White River Valley Museum, and the Neely Mansion Association. Additional research included interviews and correspondence, as well as review of secondary-source literature and numerous online collections, including Washington State Archives, Seattle Public Library's *Seattle Times* and *Post-Intelligencer* historical archives, and Newspapers.com.

Martin conducted a field survey of the nominated property on September 15, 2022. The fieldwork included photographic documentation and visual inspection of the setting, property, and built features. She wishes to thank the Neely Mansion Association, Carol Grimes (president), Julie Acosta (vice president), Linda Van Nest (treasurer), and Hilda Meryhew (secretary and historian) for their assistance gathering research and photographs as well as reviewing draft nominations.

PART II: PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

7. Alterations

Check the appropriate box if there have been changes to plan, cladding, windows, interior features or other significant elements. These changes should be described specifically in the narrative section below.

☐ Yes	☒ No	Plan (i.e. no additions to footprint, relocation of walls, or roof plan)	☒ Yes	☐ No	Interior features (woodwork, finishes, flooring, fixtures)
☐ Yes	☒ No	Cladding	☒ Yes	☐ No	Other elements (site)
☒ Yes	☐ No	Windows			

Narrative Description

Use the space below to describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance, condition, architectural characteristics, and the above-noted alterations (use continuation sheet if necessary).

INTRODUCTION

The Neely Mansion, named for its original owners and residents Sarah and Aaron Neely, Sr., is located at 12303 SE Auburn-Black Diamond Road, southeast of Auburn in the bottomlands of the Green River Valley, the ancestral home of the Muckleshoot people (figures A1, A2, A3 & A7). Completed in 1894, the impressive Late Victorian-era residence was once part of a sprawling 180-acre farm, although most of the acreage has been split off from the residence leaving just 1.13 acres (figures A4, A10 & A11). The residence showcases an eclectic style with rich ornamentation reflective of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The nominated property includes two surviving buildings from the later tenant farm era: a 1930 furoba or Japanese bathhouse built by leasing tenant Shigeichi Hori and a ca. 1940 farm shed used by longtime leasing tenant Pedro (Pete) Acosta (figure A5). Following years of neglect and vacancy, a local grassroots effort emerged in the 1970s to save the deteriorating residence that led to the formation of the Neely Mansion Association (NMA), which directed major preservation projects to rehabilitate the property for use as an interpretive heritage center.

LOCATION & SETTING

The nearby city of Auburn (2020 pop. 87,256) is located 25 miles south of Seattle in a fertile river valley with a rich farming tradition. The greater valley is part of a complex river system fed by snowmelt from the Cascade Mountains as well as winter and springtime rains. This watershed has changed considerably since the mid-19th century due in large part to settlement, major floods, and flood control projects. The once-dominant White River joined the Green River near Auburn, flowing in a meandering path northward toward Kent and Tukwila where it merged with the Black River to become the Duwamish River. The ever-shifting channels of the Duwamish formed a delta that emptied into Elliott Bay at Puget Sound. A major flood in 1906 diverted the course of the White River toward Commencement Bay at Tacoma, leaving the Green River to continue flowing through the existing White River channel near Auburn toward the Duwamish.[1] To control flooding in the valley, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the Howard Hanson Dam on the upper Green River east of Auburn

[1] Florence K. Lentz, *Kent: Valley of Opportunity* (Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1990), 9. Alan J. Stein, "White River Valley (King County) – A Thumbnail History" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #3583, 2001). Accessed Sept. 2, 2022. https://www.historylink.org/file/3583.

in 1962. The Green River flows approximately 790 feet (0.15 miles) east of the Neely residence and briefly formed the east boundary of Aaron and Sarah Neely's landholdings, which at the peak encompassed much of the land in Section 21, Township 21, Range 5E. The adjacent SE Green Valley Road generally follows the path of the river and appears on maps dating back to the early 20th century.

The SE Auburn-Black Diamond Road and the adjacent BNSF railroad track form the north boundary of the nominated property. This historical roadway developed in the late 19th century and connected the mines and forests of the Cascade foothills with the rail network at Auburn. It later became a branch of Primary State Highway 2 that connected Tacoma with Snoqualmie and was designated State Route 18 in 1964. SR-18 was realigned and expanded to a four-lane controlled access roadway between the Green River and Auburn in 1994 (figures A12 & A13). This included a newly configured off-ramp that was constructed just west of the Neely residence on former Neely property. West of the off-ramp is the northern part of the Muckleshoot Indian Reservation, located in Section 20.

The area immediately south of the nominated property is privately owned farmland and was once part of the Neely family landholdings. The area beyond this to the south remains primarily farmland thanks in part to King County's Farmland Preservation Program. The land is part of the Upper Green River Valley Agricultural Production District established in 1985 and is one of five such areas protected from development.

SITE

The property is accessed from SR-18 via a short gravel driveway (figure A5). A large, two-post wood sign marks the entrance and identifies the property as the Neely Mansion. A secure chain-link gate across the driveway limits access to the property, and a modern chain-link fence encloses the 1.13-acre parcel. The gravel driveway extends south into the property along the west fenceline, and sunken railroad ties lined with three flowering cherry trees separate the driveway from the lawn in front of the residence.[2] The **residence** (1894) is located near the center of the parcel and is oriented north toward SR-18. The **furoba** (1930) and a **well house** (1990) are located directly behind the residence. A **farm shed** (ca. 1940) situated along the south fenceline is the only surviving farm-related outbuilding. A **gazebo** (1995) is located in the lawn east of the residence.

There are several other landscape features worth noting. A **flag pole** near the northwest corner of the residence and a **trellis** in the lawn southwest of the residence were built in recent decades as part of Eagle Scout projects. Northeast of the residence is a towering Sitka Spruce, believed to have been planted around 1910. Beyond this, in the northeast quadrant of the property, is a low-lying, flood-prone area where one old apple tree survives from a once-thriving orchard. Nearby, a short picket fence surrounds a small area that includes a two-disc plow used by tenant farmer Pete Acosta and a 1928 Fordson tractor that is similar to the one he used.

[2] The Neely Mansion Association planted the cherry trees in 1994 as part of the centennial celebrating the construction of the residence.

Site Evolution

The earliest-known photograph showing the broader farm landscape is a panoramic image taken in 1926 of the Fukuda family's dairy operation. This photograph, split into a series of images (figures C11 to C15), shows at least 13 buildings on the property, ranging from the main residence and large dairy barn to smaller residences and farm-related outbuildings. Similarly, King County Tax Assessor records and aerial imagery from 1930 to 1965 document at least eight buildings on the property during those years (figures A11, C17 to C19 & C21-C22). Leasing farmers Pete and June Acosta lived in a one-story, five-room dwelling that was built in 1942 and remodeled in 1954 (figures C21 & C22).[3] It is no longer extant.

The large dairy barn was located south of the nominated property and demolished by the mid-1960s. Over time, most associated outbuildings were demolished or relocated to adjacent properties. The King County Tax Assessor records note that a building burned in 1944 and that other buildings were lost in 1947, 1950, 1956, and 1963. The two surviving outbuildings – the furoba and farm shed – were salvaged from the surrounding acreage and moved to the nominated property in 1998.

RESOURCES

Neely Residence, completed 1894
Contributing Building

The two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame residence has a balloon-frame structure, is situated on a concrete foundation, and has a square plan that measures 25' by 25' (figures A6 and B1-B8). Porches project from the north and west elevations, and a two-story square bay projects from the east elevation. The exterior is clad in horizontal weatherboard siding accentuated by many sawn and turned decorative elements that evoke a variety of popular styles of the late 19th century. There are 30 1/1 double-hung wood windows, each with an entablature as well as routed decorative side trim and decorative scroll work as a window sill apron. Only the windows in the northeast corner second-story bedroom are original. The remaining windows are wood replacements. Separating the first and second stories is a dentilated belt course that encircles the building. At the roofline is a frieze decorated with garlands that are regularly spaced between ornately carved brackets supporting the roof eaves. The pyramidal roof has cedar shingles and is crowned by a decorative ridgecap and a railed rooftop platform or widow's walk. There are two interior brick chimneys, one on the west slope of the roof and the other on the east.

Projecting from the center of the **primary (north) elevation** is an impressive two-story bay with a pedimented gable and first- and second-story porches (figure B1 & B14). Two risers centered on the north side of the porch access the home's primary entrance, which has replacement double-leaf wood doors with glass panels and the original glass transom above. The second-story porch functions as a balcony accessed from a second-floor interior door. Each porch door is centered on the elevation with two windows on either side. The pedimented gable includes diamond-shaped shingle cladding and a

[3] King County Tax Assessor, Property Record for parcel no. 212105-9011.

circular window. Beneath the gable is a frieze decorated with garlands that are located between ornately carved brackets supporting the roof eaves. Both the first- and second-story porches are supported by turned posts with ornately carved elements and are enclosed by a wood railing made of simple rectangular members. A dentilated belt course separates the first- and second-story porches and a row of vertical turned spindles serves as a decorative frieze on the first-story porch. An exterior wood staircase at the northeast corner functions as a fire escape for the second-story balcony.

The **west (side) elevation** features another ornately decorated porch that spans the full width of the first story (figure B4). Like that of the north elevation, the west porch includes a dentilated cornice and a row of vertical turned spindles that serves as a decorative frieze. The porch is supported by turned posts with ornately carved elements and is enclosed by a wood railing made of simple rectangular members. A west-facing ramp at the north end accesses the porch, where there are two single-leaf doors leading to the home's interior – one into the dining room (north) and another into the kitchen (south). There are six windows on this elevation, three on each story.

A defining feature of the **east (side) elevation** is a two-story square bay with a hipped roof at north end (figures B7 & B8). The bay has four windows at each story and also includes the dentilated belt course and frieze decorated with garlands and ornate brackets that are found elsewhere on the building. There are 10 windows on this elevation, five on each story.

The **south (rear) elevation** has symmetrical fenestration, with three windows on each story (figure B6). All of the decorative features – the dentilated belt course, the frieze with garlands and ornate brackets, and decorative window elements – carry through to the rear elevation.

Interior

The interior spaces of the Neely residence are arranged in a common **square plan** with a wide center hall (figure A6). A square plan is three rooms wide (including the hall) and two rooms deep, typically with four rooms downstairs and four or five rooms upstairs. The interior is characterized by high ceilings and spacious enclosed rooms.

In 1962, Aaron Neely, Jr., recalled the interior of the residence as follows: "'Downstairs were the stiffly proper parlor, opened only on elegant occasions; the family sitting room, the dining room and the kitchen, with its big pantry. The walls were plastered in white and each room had its kerosene-burning chandelier which pulled up and down. The fixtures were set in ornate embossed medallions of plaster on the ceiling.' (The family also still used homemade candles.) 'Lower walls were wainscoted with costly curly maple paneling.'"[4]

A series of rehabilitation projects in the late 1970s through the early 1990s saved the residence after years of neglect. As a result, the interior reflects a mix of historic and replacement materials. For example, the wood flooring has been replaced with fir flooring on the main level, while the original fir flooring upstairs is intact. The tall baseboards and door and window trim are a mix of original and replacement throughout the house. The walls are finished with a thin layer of sheetrock over the

4 "Faded Mansion Recalls Early Days," unidentified newspaper, May 6, 1962: A-8. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

original lathe. Most of the wainscoting is original. Both hallways, the front parlor, and dining room have painted wood finishes. The kitchen, family sitting room, and all upstairs rooms have stained wood finishes.

The primary double-door entry opens directly into the voluminous **center hall** which accesses all main-floor rooms (figure B15). There are several features of note in the hall. The double doors at the entrance are custom-built replacements, and the original doors are located upstairs on display. The transom above the entrance features the original etched glass.[5] The tall 12-foot-high ceiling includes an original plaster medallion in the shape of a horseshoe, from which hangs a replacement light fixture. The walls feature tall baseboards, wainscoting, and walls with a paint finish. A towering straight-run staircase along the east wall leads to the second floor. The newel posts at the base and top of the staircase are custom replacements as are the balusters lining the staircase. The second-floor balustrade includes original balusters and a third newel post at the north end of the hall that was salvaged from an old Auburn residence built in about 1890 for Dr. Alexander and Sarah Hughes (figure C7).[6]

The other first-floor spaces include a front parlor (northeast corner), dining room (northwest corner), kitchen (southwest corner), and a family sitting room (southeast corner). A former kitchen pantry space, located at the south end of the center hall, now functions as a restroom. There are several notable features throughout these spaces. The **front parlor** has a square bay window with four windows on the east wall; an exposed brick fireplace on the interior south wall, with the notation "ASN & SN 94" above the opening; and a 12-foot-high ceiling with an original plaster medallion and replacement light fixture (figures B16 & B17). The **dining room** also has an exposed brick fireplace on the interior south wall and an original plaster medallion with a replacement light fixture as well as a single-leaf exterior door (replacement) leading to the west porch. A non-historic built-in cabinet is on the south wall next to the fireplace. The **kitchen** includes a woodstove and stovepipe situated on the interior north wall (figure B18). The cabinets and sink are replacements. The former pantry space now functions as a bathroom. Aaron Neely, Jr., recalled in 1962, that the big square kitchen was the heart of the house. He said, "There were no cabinets as we know today, just rows of shelves and bins in the pantry for storing big quantities of everything."[7]

The **family sitting room**, as Aaron Neely, Jr., referred to it, was in the worst condition prior to the interior rehabilitation.[8] As a result, most finishes in this space have been replaced, however, one notable feature is the exposed brick fireplace on the interior north wall. Similar to the fireplace in the

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[5] The transom window was removed when the home fell into considerable disrepair and was targeted by vandals. The window was returned and reinstalled during the 1980s renovations. According to the Neely family, the window was shipped from Scotland and installed during construction. Fred and Mary Hardin, *History of the Neely Mansion* [booklet], (Neely Mansion Association, 1982), 18.

[6] The Hughes residence was located across from Auburn's Pioneer Cemetery and was last owned by Daisy Erickson. It was demolished in 1990. A Fred Meyer shopping center occupies this area today. The Hughes and Neely residences were built by the same builder – Dennis Leahy. White River Valley Museum Collections, photograph catalog nos. PO-00485 and PO-00649.

[7] "Faded Mansion Recalls Early Days," unidentified newspaper, May 6, 1962: A-8. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

[8] Ibid.

front parlor, this one features the notation "ASN & SN 1894" above the opening. A full-height closet to house mechanicals is adjacent to the fireplace. A wood-panel door on the interior west wall accesses a storage closet beneath the main staircase.

The **second-floor spaces** include the center hall and four bedrooms that are located at each corner of the house. At the south end of the center hall, an office now occupies a space that originally functioned as a storage and luggage closet.[9] The second-floor ceilings are 10-feet high and all plaster medallions are original except for the one in the southeast bedroom. The original flooring and much of the trim and baseboards remain intact. Like the first-floor spaces, the second-floor walls are finished with a thin layer of sheetrock over the original lathe. It is believed the bedroom walls were whitewashed as no evidence of wallpaper was ever found, except in the primary northeast bedroom where traces of wall and ceiling paper were documented.[10]

The wide **center hall** accesses all second-floor rooms (figures B19 & B20). There are several features of note in the hall, including two corbelled arches, wainscoting on the walls, and a single door with a glass panel on the north wall that lead to the second-story balcony. The **two north bedrooms** are slightly larger than the **two south bedrooms**, and each includes a small closet. Located above the front parlor, the primary bedroom is in the northeast corner and features a square bay with four windows on the east wall and a small closet on the interior south wall. A door in the southwest bedroom accesses a staircase to the attic.

Change Over Time & Integrity

The residence received little maintenance or change in its first eight decades. Exterior photographs of the residence show it falling into disrepair by the late 1930s (figures C17 & C18). It was in very poor condition by the 1960s, when the last residents (hired farm workers assisting Pete Acosta) occupied the house. The Auburn Arts Council and its successor the Neely Mansion Association led a major rehabilitation that began in the late 1970s and took nearly 15 years to complete. The work was completed in three phases. **Phase one** included site work, roof, foundation, and securing the building envelope. **Phase two** focused on installing new mechanical systems such as electrical and heating as well as plumbing that connected to the well and a new septic system. Exterior work included repairing and painting the wood siding and ornamentation, repairing and replacing the wood windows, and rebuilding the porches. **Phase three** focused on the interior.

The following is a list of the known changes to the residence:

- Photographs from the 1930s through the 1950s show a small addition attached to the back of the residence at the east corner (see figures C17, C18 & C24). It is no longer extant.
- Electricity was first installed in the residence in the late 1930s or early 1940s, probably when Neely family members briefly reoccupied the home.
- Phase one renovation site work began in 1979 with the grading of a temporary driveway. Volunteers removed two-and-a-half tons of debris from in an around the residence, removed

[9] By the 1950s, when Filipino farm workers were living in the house, this upstairs hall closet was quite deteriorated and being used as a pigeon roost for racing pigeons.

[10] Currently, there are original wallpaper pieces on display at the residence.

the first-floor flooring to accommodate foundation repairs and construction, secured door and window openings, and removed concrete pads in preparation for construction.[11]

- Sound Construction of Federal Way lifted and excavated under the residence and poured a new concrete foundation (figure C35). According to a local news account, "Contractors dug out a crawl space, removed what was left of the floors, inserted three big I-beams under the mansion and carefully jacked it up. Considerable bracing was completed throughout the house, and rotted boards were replaced. After the foundation was in place, the home was gradually lowered onto it, and the steel beams were removed from beneath." The work was completed in 1981. Although no formal archaeological study was done as part of the work, objects and artifacts from the period of occupation were recovered from around and beneath the residence.[12]
- Sound Construction installed a new roof, rebuilt the front porch, and one of the fireplaces by September 1981 before a labor dispute halted work on phase one.[13]
- Phase two exterior work began in 1984. Volunteers painted the exterior in 1984 with donated materials.[14] New custom-built wood windows and doors were installed. The windows in the northeast upstairs bedroom were repaired and re-installed. The original front doors were salvaged and are kept inside. Plumbing, electrical, and heating systems, as well as a new septic system and an upgraded water well, were completed in the late 1980s.
- Phase three interior work began in the late 1980s and was completed by the centennial celebration in 1994. (See photos taken before interior renovation, figures C36-C39.) Work to the interior included installing new custom-milled wood flooring on the first floor. Wood trim and baseboards were salvaged where possible, resulting in a mix of new and salvaged material in the house. Thin sheetrock-finished walls were installed over salvaged lathe throughout the building. The plaster ceiling medallions were salvaged, except for the one in the southeast family sitting room. The kitchen received new wainscoting and cabinets.
- An exterior wood staircase at the northeast corner was installed in 1992 to serve as a fire escape. It was replaced with the current wood staircase in 2022 (figure B7).

The Neely Mansion is one of the few 19th century farmhouses left in the Green River Valley. Thanks to an impressive multi-decade renovation, the residence has been saved and today reflects much of its historic character. It remains on its original site with a north-facing orientation, thus retaining its integrity of **location.** The **setting** has changed over time, with the highway reconfiguration, the subdividing of the land, and the loss of many related farm structures. Importantly, though, the area remains rural in character and retains significant associations with the adjacent furoba and farm shed. Strong integrity of **design** is reflected in the building's original square massing, center hall plan, and interior arrangement. Despite decades of neglect in the early and middle 20th century, many original materials survive on the exterior and interior, while in-kind materials replace those features that were

[11] "Neely Mansion yield: tons of junk," *Auburn Globe-News*, May 22, 1979: n.p. "Careful touch needed to remove Neely 'pads,'" unidentified newspaper, August 10, 1979: n.p. Both articles from Hilda Meryhew's scrapbook.

[12] Quote from "Once proud Neely house lives again," *Tacoma News-Tribune*, April 12, 1981: H-10. "Relics uncovered during restoration of historic mansion," *Seattle Times*, May 29, 1981: B-1.

[13] "Neely Mansion project may resume," unidentified newspaper, October 12, 1981: n.p. Article from Hilda Meryhew's scrapbook.

[14] "Neely mansion supporters ready to paint," *Seattle Times*, August 8, 1984: G-2.

missing or deteriorated. The multi-phase rehabilitation of the late 20th century resulted in good integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. The residence's impressive and ornate character recalls the aspirations and successes of the Neely family, resulting in strong integrity of **feeling** and **association**.

Hori Furoba, completed 1930
Contributing Building

The Hori Furoba is a wood-frame bathhouse associated with the property's Japanese American tenant farm history. Completed in 1930, the furoba was built by Shigeichi Hori, who lived in the mansion with his family from 1929 to 1936. (Current images: B4-B6 & B9-B10. Historic images: C17, C24, C27, & C28.)

The furoba is located approximately 10 feet south of the residence. This one-story building features a rectangular plan that measures approximately 10' by 16' and rests on a concrete slab foundation (2015). It has horizontal weatherboard exterior siding and cornerboards over 2" by 4" framing. The side-gabled roof has replacement cedar shingles and visible rafter tails. Situated over the entrance is a half-round metal gutter connected to a downspout that is attached to the building's northwest corner. A tall metal chimney pipe extends from the south slope of the roof near the southeast corner.

Entry into the furoba is through a single-leaf, five-panel wood door (replacement) on the north elevation. The entrance includes a stone step landing. Other openings include two windows on the south elevation: a six-light hopper window and a rectangular opening with wood-clad, hinged panels and a fixed interior plexiglass panel.

The interior is divided into two rooms. The exposed wall and roof framing and wood plank flooring reflect a utilitarian and functional character. The larger front room is illuminated by the six-light wood window on the south wall. The unadorned rectangular space has no built-in features and is interpreted as a laundry and washroom, which is how it functioned historically. An opening on the room's east wall leads to the smaller back room. An oval-shaped wood and metal soaking tub with a wood-finished base occupies the south part of the room. A metal stovepipe is situated at the southeast corner of the tub beneath which is a fire pit. The plexiglass window with wood-clad, hinged panels is on the south wall above the soaking tub. A half-wall finished in horizontal wood planking partially encloses a modern, non-functioning toilet in the northeast corner.

Change Over Time & Integrity

Since its construction, the building has been used by various tenant residents primarily as a bathhouse and storage area. A 1939 photograph of the furoba, taken about a decade after its construction, suggests physical changes to the building have been modest (figure C17). The building was nominated a King County Landmark in 1996. The nomination report by Mildred Tanner Andrews provides an excellent overview of the building before it was rehabilitated in 2015. Known changes to the furoba are listed below.

- At an unknown date prior to 1996, the original wood plank flooring was removed, leaving a dirt floor.[15]
- At an unknown date prior to 1996, a second exterior door and window were installed in the smaller back room.[16] The door is no longer extant, but the window opening remains on the wall above the soaking tub.
- In the 1980s, leasing tenant farmer Pete Acosta moved the furoba approximately 75 feet west of the residence where it remained until 1998 (figure A15).[17]
- In 2015, SWCA Environmental led a team of volunteers in an archaeological excavation of the approximate original site of the furoba before a new concrete slab foundation was poured (figures C41 & C42). No report was produced following the excavation.
- In 2015, using rehabilitation plans drafted by BOLA Architecture + Planning, Big Fish Construction did a complete rehabilitation of the furoba (figures C41 & C42). Work included repairing and reusing existing materials where possible. The design and materials of those features needing replacement were based on the 1939 photograph and personal recollections. Construction included:
    - Pouring a concrete slab foundation at the approximate original site;
    - Removing the old roofing materials and installing a new cedar-shingle roofing over the original framing, with a half-round gutter over the entrance;
    - Installing a metal chimney pipe;
    - Repairing and reusing existing siding, as well as installing new siding where it was missing;
    - Installing a new exterior five-panel door on the north elevation;
    - Installing a new a six-light hopper window on the south elevation to match the historic sash; and
    - Installing new wood-plank flooring throughout the interior.

The Hori Furoba is the only known wooden Japanese bathhouse associated with a farm that still exists in King County. This rare building clearly illustrates its original use as a family bathhouse that was used by those living in the adjacent residence and working on the surrounding farm. Despite having been moved a short distance, the furoba retains its integrity of **location** because it has been relocated to its approximate original site behind the residence. The **setting** reflects the important association between the residence and the furoba. Strong integrity of **design** is reflected in the building's intact original massing, form, and two-room interior arrangement. Despite long periods of vacancy and neglect, original materials survive (exterior siding and framing) while in-kind materials (cedar shingle roof, 5-panel door, six-light window, pipe chimney) replace those features that were missing or deteriorated. The thoughtful rehabilitation resulted in good integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. The furoba's functional and utilitarian character is an important reminder of daily life and traditional customs among the Japanese Americans who used it, resulting in strong integrity of **feeling** and **association**.

[15] Mildred Tanner Andrews, "The Hori Furo," King County Landmarks Registration Form (Seattle, WA: King County Historic Preservation Program), sec. 6, pp. 1-2.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

Acosta Farm Shed, completed ca. 1940
Contributing Building

The Acosta Farm Shed is a wood-frame outbuilding associated with the property's Filipino American tenant farm history. Completed in about 1940 by an unknown builder, the shed is the only surviving farm-related structure on the property. Pete Acosta, who leased the farm and lived on the property (though not in the mansion) from 1942 to 1989, used the shed for a variety of purposes. (Current images: B5 & B11-B12. Historic image: C26.)

The shed is located south of the residence and furoba and is situated along the south property line. This one-story building features a rectangular plan that measures approximately 10' 4" by 14' 7" with a six-foot lean-to on the south side. It rests on a raised concrete pier foundation. It has a mix of exterior claddings that include 5'5" horizontal board siding on the east and west elevations and tar paper secured with wood battens on the north and south elevations. Horizontal plastic strips have been nailed in place where boards are missing or gaps have formed.[18] Vegetation clings to the north side of the building. Rolled asphalt covers the gable roof. The eaves have exposed rafters and roof framing. There are two doors: a single-leaf, hinged wood door with four vertical panels is on the west elevation and a double-leaf, hinged wood-clad door on the east elevation. A wood ramp accesses each door.

The interior is one open space that is currently used for storage. The roof framing is exposed and serves as additional storage space. Modern plywood panels are affixed to the 2" by 4" framing. The flooring is made of wood panels. All of these features reflect a functional character that is typical of a farm shed.

Change Over Time & Integrity

Since its construction, the building has been used primarily by tenant farmer Pete Acosta for storage of tools, equipment, and wooden produce boxes and occasionally for butchering.[19] The shed appears in few older photos of the farm (figure C26). Known changes to the shed are listed below.

- The shed was usually situated on skids and was somewhat portable.
- It was moved to its current location in the early 1980s and situated on raised concrete piers with ramps built to access the interior. The lean-to shed roof was attached about 2014.
- In the late 1970s or early 1980s, horizontal plastic strips were nailed to the exterior where boards were missing or gaps had formed.

The Acosta Farm Shed is the only surviving farm-related building on the nominated property. It clearly illustrates its use as a multi-functional farm outbuilding. Despite its relocation, the farm shed retains its integrity of **location** because it was built as a moveable resource to be relocated on the farm property

[18] June Acosta acquired these surplus plastic strips from Heath Techno Plastics, where she worked for approximately 15 years. Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 11, 2022.

[19] Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Sept. 15, 2022.

as needs evolved. The **setting** retains its agricultural character and reflects the important associations between the shed and the other buildings. Strong integrity of **design** is reflected in the building's intact original massing, form, and open and unfinished interior. The shed's surviving materials reflect its changing use and the ingenuity of the Acostas to repurpose the outbuilding, thus resulting in good integrity of **materials** and **workmanship**. With its functional and utilitarian character, the shed retains strong integrity of **feeling** and **association,** particularly with the Filipino American farmers who used it.

Resource 4: Well House, completed 1990
Noncontributing Structure

A small, wood-frame well house is located directly behind the residence at its southeast corner (figures B6 & B13). Completed in 1990 as an Eagle Scout project, it is the second well house to occupy this spot. The well itself dates back to the early-to-mid 20th century, and before that the residents relied on nearby spring water. The well house has a gable roof with composition shingles and is clad in board-and-batten siding.

Resource 5: Gazebo, completed 1995
Noncontributing Structure

Eagle Scout Matthew Sales built the gazebo in 1995 (figure B8). The wood-frame structure is located in the lawn east of the residence. It is free standing, open on all sides, and has a hexagonal roof. Reminiscent of the Neely residence, it includes simplified turned spindles and brackets at the base of the roof.

PART III: HISTORICAL / ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

8. Evaluation Criteria

Designation Criteria:

- ☒ A1 Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history.
- ☒ A2 Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.
- ☒ A3 Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, style,or method of design or construction or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ A4 Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
- ☐ A5 Property is an outstanding work of a designer or builder who has made a substantial contribution to the art.

Criteria Considerations:

Property is

- ☐ a cemetery, birthplace, or grave or property owned owned by a religious institution/used for religious purposes
- ☐ moved from its original location
- ☐ a reconstructed historic building
- ☐ a commemorative property
- ☐ less than 40 years old or achieving significance within the last 40 years

Historical Data (if known)

Date(s) of Construction: 1894, 1930, ca. 1940, 1990, 1995	Other Date(s) of Significance:	
Architect: N/A Designers: David A. Neely & Aaron S. Neely, Sr. (residence)	Builder(s): Dennis Leahy (residence), Shigeichi Hori (furoba)	Engineer: N/A

Statement of Significance

Describe in detail the chronological history of the property and how it meets the landmark designation criteria. Please provide a summary in the first paragraph (use continuation sheets if necessary). If using a Multiple Property Nomination that is already on record, or another historical context narrative, please reference it by name and source.

Introduction

Aaron and Sarah Neely bought 120 acres of bottomland property from the Northern Pacific Railroad near the Green River in southern King County in 1881. They gradually cleared the land for farming and a fruit tree orchard, eventually expanding the farm to 180 acres. They first lived in a log house on the property, and in 1894 they completed an impressive two-and-a-half-story residence that is now among the oldest surviving buildings in the Green River Valley. Beginning in 1908 and for the next eight decades, the Neely family leased the property to a series of tenant farming families, including immigrants of Swiss, Swedish, Japanese, and Filipino heritage. By the 1970s, the old Neely residence

had fallen into disrepair and a local grassroots effort was underway to save it. The surrounding farmland acreage was split off leaving just 1.13 acres with the residence, furoba, farm shed, and other ancillary features.

The Neely Mansion property meets King County Landmark **Criterion A1** through its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history. The property is significant for its association with the settlement and agricultural history of the Green River Valley in the late 19th and 20th centuries. It reflects several important themes in the valley's history, including the mixing of Indigenous and settler cultures; the growth and development of the area during the railroad era; the tenant farming economy of the early and middle 20th century and the strong associations with Japanese and Filipino immigrants; and the citizen-led effort to save, preserve, and maintain the property for use as an interpretive heritage center.

It also meets King County Landmark **Criterion A2** for its association with **Aaron S. Neely, Sr.**, (1849-1931) and **Sarah Neely** (1860-1930) who are important figures in the history of the Green River Valley of south King County. As a child, Aaron traveled west on the Oregon and Overland Trails with his parents, David and Irena Neely, arriving in Washington Territory in 1854. They were among the first waves of immigrant settlers who brought profound and permanent change to the central Puget Sound area and to the Indigenous peoples living there. Aaron not only witnessed this change, he participated in and influenced the transformation of the upper Green River Valley as a landowner, farmer, and employer, as well as through his service on the local school board and as a longtime road supervisor. Sarah managed the large household and farmstead alongside Aaron, contributing to their success. In his *History of King County* (1929) Clarence Bagley credited the couple for their civic engagement and contribution to Auburn's upbuilding and improvement. Late in life, Aaron was a fixture at annual gatherings of early settlers and their families. The Neelys' influence and aspirations are reflected in the fine residence they built for their family in 1894.

The property meets King County Landmark **Criterion A3** as the residence embodies distinctive physical characteristics of a type, period, and style. Aaron Neely, Sr., and his father David Neely designed the residence, and it was built in 1894 by Auburn-area builder Dennis Leahy. It is an outstanding example of Late Victorian-era transitional architecture exhibiting characteristics of the earlier Italianate and later Queen Anne styles. The two-and-a-half story residence features a square folk form and pyramidal hipped roof with stylistic embellishments applied to the porches, cornice line, and windows. The availability and proliferation of folk house forms and Victorian-era embellishments were made possible by the railroads, which provided local lumber yards with an abundance of pre-cut building materials.

Lastly, the property meets King County Landmark **Criterion A4** for its likely potential to yield information important in prehistory or history. The property has a long history of residential occupation and farming and is in close proximity to early transportation routes, Green River crossings, and the Muckleshoot Reservation, giving it a high probability for yielding important information. The property may hold layered historic artifacts from decades of immigrant family tenancy and farm workers not found at other farmsteads in King County. Indeed, objects and artifacts routinely have been uncovered during ground-disturbing renovation projects and the one narrowly focused archaeological excavation in 2015. The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic

Preservation (DAHP)'s WISAARD database identifies several archaeological sites within a half-mile radius of the nominated property and considers this area to be of very high potential for archaeological sites.

The White and Green River Valleys: Transformation in the 19th Century

When Sarah and Aaron Neely, Sr., purchased the nominated property in 1881, the heavily forested area along the upper Green River was largely inhabited by Muckleshoot Indians and small subsistence farms. The area was remote for settlers, accessed by wagon trails and river crossings, but was on the verge of settlement and town growth enabled by the developing railroad and transportation network.

Aaron had the advantage of having lived in rural south King County since 1854. As a child with his parents, David and Irena Neely, he was among the earliest groups of European Americans who settled in areas farther north along the White River (now the Green River) near present-day Kent. Aaron and Sarah's move to the remote upper Green River Valley in the 1880s to carve a farmstead out of a forested river valley was an extension of his parents' efforts to do the same in the lower White River Valley in the 1850s and 1860s. Both generations brought and influenced tremendous change to the Indigenous Coast Salish peoples who lived in the valley and to the landscape that had sustained them for thousands of years.

Newcomers Bring Change

The White River Valley (also known as the Green River Valley) has long been an important place to the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited the Puget Sound region. This area remains the home of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, whose membership is made up of descendants of the Duwamish and Upper Puyallup people, as well as three bands that occupied the lands of the White and Green rivers watershed in the mid-19th century, as newly arriving settlers staked claims. These bands of Lushootseed speaking peoples were the Stkamish on the lower White, the Smulkamish on the upper White, and the Skopamish on the upper Green.[20] The fertile valleys and their abundant resources that had sustained generations of Indigenous peoples attracted newcomers, and by 1855 the White River Valley was "the most desirable place to settle" in the nascent King County.[21]

Early newcomers filing claims in the White River Valley included Henry Adams, Samuel Russell, Moses Kirkland, Robert Beaty, Enos Cooper, Harvey H. and Elizabeth Jones, John and Nancy Thomas, as well as David and Irena Neely of Tennessee.[22] Many of these initial claimants, including the Neelys, chose to settle in fertile lowland areas and along waterways serving as key transportation routes. The Neelys and three young sons, John, Aaron and Samuel, traveled west on the Oregon and Overland Trails in

[20] Florence K. Lentz, *Kent: Valley of Opportunity* (Chatsworth, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1990), 10. Alan J. Stein, "Auburn – A Thumbnail History" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #675, 1999). Accessed Sept. 2, 2022. https://www.historylink.org/file/675.

[21] Lentz, 14.

[22] Lentz, 14. David and Irena Neely's 320-acre claim was located along the east bank of the White River in sections 14 and 15, Township 22N, Range 4E, in present-day Kent.

1854 as part of a wagon train led by Alexander Yantis of Missouri. Neely also led the wagon train for part of the journey. The group traveled into Washington Territory via the new immigration road to Walla Walla and was among the first immigrant trains to cross the Cascade Mountains via the Naches Pass, a trail long used by the Yakama, Walla Walla, and other inland tribes.[23] The pass connected the Yakima Valley east of the Cascades with the present-day Bonney Lake area west of the mountains. The White and Green rivers were only a short distance beyond.

Mainstream histories have traditionally downplayed or outright ignored the presence of Indigenous people in accounts of early-day Seattle and King County. In fact, newcomers arriving in the 1850s and 1860s were "often shocked" by the large numbers of Native people living in the central Puget Sound region.[24] The budding immigrant settlements around King County were "at once both white and Indian,"[25] with the settlers' successes relying heavily on the contributions of Native people, from their mill labor to subsistence provisions.[26] With these increasing interactions came conflicts over the use of land. Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens sought negotiation through treaties with representatives of Native tribes. Muckleshoot ancestors were signatories of the Treaties of Medicine Creek and Point Elliott in 1854 and 1855, respectively, which stipulated that in exchange for large tracts of ceded land they would retain small reservation homelands and would be free to fish, hunt, and gather the resources in the places they had done so for thousands of years.

A year after settling on a 320-acre Donation Land Claim near present-day Kent, David Neely's family fled to Seattle amid threats of unrest along the White River that became known west of the Cascades as the Treaty Wars.[27] Soon after, on October 28, 1855, Native people attacked farmsteads between present-day Kent and Auburn killing nine settlers. In early 1856, David served six months with the Washington Territory Volunteers as a 2nd Lieutenant in Captain Edward Lander's Company A. The conflicts throughout King County resulted in a dark chapter with more than 60 deaths among both Indigenous and settler populations and half of the White River Valley settlers selling their claims.[28] In the aftermath, the Supreme Court of Washington Territory convicted Nisqually Chief Leschi in the death of Colonel A. Benton Moses. Chief Leschi was hanged at Fort Steilacoom in 1858. Meanwhile, the

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[23] "Vol. III," *Pioneer and Democrat* [Olympia, WT], Sept. 16, 1854: 2. "Immigration to Washington," *Pioneer and Democrat* [Olympia, WT], Oct. 14, 1854: 2. Sharon Boswell, *King County Historic Settlement Context, 1850-1920* (King County Historic Preservation Program, 2017), 36, 61-62. Accessed Sept. 2, 2022. https://www.kingcounty.gov/~/media/services/home-property/historic-preservation/documents/resources/king_county_historic_context_vol_1.ashx?la=en

[24] Quote from Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-over Place*, 2d ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), 42. See also Patricia Slettvet Noel, *Muckleshoot Indian History* (Auburn, WA: Auburn School District No. 408, 1980), 24-29, 67. A census of Native peoples by George Gibbs in 1854 estimated 50 bands of Skopamish on the upper Green River, 8 bands of Smulkamish on the upper White River, and 30 bands of Stkamish on the lower White River.

[25] Matthew W. Klingle, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 38.

[26] Thrush, 47-49.

[27] For more information about Donation Land Claims, see Junius Rochester, "Donation Land Law, also known as the Oregon Land Law" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #400, 1998). Accessed Sept. 30, 2022. https://www.historylink.org/File/400.

[28] Lentz, 15.

Neelys were among the first settler families to return to the valley where they farmed and participated in the continued development of the area.

In 1857, the federal government established the Muckleshoot Reservation on land southeast of present-day Auburn (figures A7-A10). As pressure from increasing numbers of settlers grew, Indigenous people from throughout the region moved to the Muckleshoot Reservation. Despite the assurances presented in the treaties, "Indigenous people found themselves caught up in a transformation of their world."[29] They were being pushed out of their semi-nomadic seasonal lifestyle that was dependent on shared access to natural resources and into the wage economy and a system of property ownership. By the 1870s and 1880s, many Native people were traveling great distances for seasonal work in the developing agricultural and extractive sectors. Some even purchased their own tracts of land, as did Samuel Chalemahan, Sr., a Muckleshoot man who later sold his 10-acre tract along the Green River to Aaron and Sarah Neely.[30]

Railroad and Town Building in the White River Valley

Small farms and trade centers preceded the platting of communities in the White River Valley. According to an 1877 account in *The West Shore*, a magazine of the period, the forests were "giving way to farms," and "what has been cleared and cultivated in patches reveals the wealth of what remains in large areas in its primitive wilderness."[31] Sawmill and railroad development along the White River in the 1880s opened up the valley to town building. Among those clearing the forests and constructing the rail lines were Indigenous and Chinese laborers, many who lived in temporary camps along the route. The harvested timber was milled for local development and, as the transportation network developed, more distant markets.[32] However, railroad companies were initially plagued by ownership challenges resulting in long stretches of intermittent service, but eventually settlements along the Northern Pacific branch line through the valley included Kent, Slaughter (later Auburn), and Stuck (figure A8).

Following the completion of the railroad, the Northern Pacific had considerable amounts of land to sell, some of it prime lowland acreage alongside rivers and streams. Those already living in the valley, including both settlers and some Indigenous people, purchased much of this prime acreage for its agricultural potential and for access to rivers and crossings. Others sought opportunity in town development as the Northern Pacific advertised its surplus land for sale in promotional materials to prospective buyers on an international scale, luring immigrants from around the world to the Northwest. Property owners up and down the valley filed town plats in anticipation of an influx of people and increased development. In 1886, for example, Levi and Mary Ballard platted the Town of Slaughter, named after Lieutenant William A. Slaughter who was killed in 1855 during the Treaty Wars. The community incorporated in 1891 and was renamed Auburn a few years later. It grew into a robust

[29] Thrush, 80.

[30] A grantee index documenting the acquisition of land by individual Native people in King County has 120 entries recorded between 1874 and 1891. King County Archives, Seattle, WA.

[31] G.H. Atkinson, "White River, King County, Washington Territory," *The West Shore,* Oct. 1, 1877: 1.

[32] Boswell, 98-101.

farming community in the early 20th century, with 600 residents in 1901; 2,000 residents in 1915; and 3,906 residents in 1930.[33]

Agriculture in the White and Green River Valleys

The area's earliest non-Native residents settled in the flat, fertile bottomland of the White River Valley and grew produce largely for their own subsistence. The federal government's 1860 agricultural census of King County recorded 73 farmers. Valley settlers Patrick Hayes and Thomas Alvord were among the first farmers to raise produce for commercial sale, including potatoes and onions. They and others were soon raising peas, cabbage, carrots, and turnips, as well as planting orchards that produced pears, plums, and apples. Farmers added livestock as infrastructure and finances allowed, producing meats, dairy products, eggs, and textiles. By 1870 the number of farmers in King County had grown to 272.[34]

The first specialized commercial crop to be produced in the valley was hops. Early settler Ezra Meeker and his father Jacob of Puyallup Valley to the south are credited with establishing the hop industry in Washington Territory in the mid-1860s. Within a few years, hop fields were planted in the Puyallup, White River, and Snoqualmie valleys, as well as Squak Valley near present-day Issaquah. Pioneering hop farmers in the White River Valley included "P.C. Hayes, who planted nine acres in 1875, and C.M. Van Doren, who followed with 20 acres the next year," and "by 1883, nearly 50 farmers had begun to produce hops along the White River and around the small community of Slaughter."[35] However, Aaron Neely, once established in the upper Green River Valley, never grew hops. Nevertheless, hop production was such a big deal in the valley that the *White River Journal* had regular columns called *Hop News and Notes* and the *Weekly Hop Report* well into the 1890s.[36]

Behind the enormous growth in hop production was a seasonal labor force of pickers that included many Indigenous people, as well as white and Chinese laborers. Ezra Meeker reported that 2,500 Native people "came from all parts of Puget Sound, from British Columbia, and even from the confines of Alaska" to the Puyallup Valley in 1882 to pick hops.[37] In 1890, *The West Shore* reported that "ninety-eight canoe loads" of Indigenous people from southern Alaska arrived in Seattle on their way to hop yards in the White River Valley.[38] Demand for cheap labor led some hops farmers to hire Chinese workers for lesser wages than white and Indigenous laborers, fueling anti-Chinese agitation that

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[33] Boswell, 82. *Washington State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, (R.L. Polk & Co., 1901), 432. *Washington State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, (R.L. Polk & Co., 1915), 491. "Renton and Auburn Gain in Population," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Apr. 27, 1940: 11.

[34] Lentz, 15. Boswell, 85.

[35] Boswell, 89, referencing *The West Shore*, 10 (11) 1884:348-349.

[36] For example, "Hop News and Notes," *White River Journal*, Feb. 2, 1893: 2; and "Weekly Hop Report," *White River Journal*, June 16, 1894: 3.

[37] Ezra Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States, Being a Treatise on Hop Growing In Washington Territory From the Cutting To the Bale* (Puyallup, WA: E. Meeker & Co, 1883), 18.

[38] *The West Shore,* Sept. 13, 1890: 75.

contributed to the expulsion of Chinese from the region in the mid-1880s.[39] By 1890, Washington farmers were producing nearly than 9 million pounds of hops valued at $1.5 million while employing some 15,000 people annually.[40] Soon thereafter, the regional hop industry declined due largely to an aphid that damaged the crop and also to economic challenges resulting from the nationwide financial panic of 1893. Importantly, those participating in the regional hop industry had laid a foundation for subsequent farmers pursuing other commercial farming endeavors in the valley.

Dairy production emerged as a leading alternative to hops for valley farmers, particularly with growing demand from the nearby population centers of Seattle and Tacoma, as well as the railroad, mining, and lumber camps throughout the Cascade foothills. Between 1890 and 1900, farming in general grew beyond subsistence to market production, aided by railroad development and an expanding road network as well as advances in mechanization. During this same period, the number of milk cows in King County more than doubled, and by 1900, King County was the largest producer of milk in Washington.[41] As more farmers took up dairy farming and increased their individual production, commercial creameries opened in Kent and Auburn to serve the expanding consumer market. In 1898, the Pacific Coast Condensed Milk Company plant (later the Carnation Milk Products Company) opened in Kent and was hailed as the town's "greatest enterprise" in 1909 when it employed 250 people.[42] In Auburn, the Borden Condensed Milk Company opened in 1903 and by 1909 employed between 75 and 100 people and bought milk products from 250 area dairy farmers.[43] Japanese immigrants, including the Fukuda and Hori families who leased the Neely property in the early 20th century, contributed significantly to the area's dairy industry. (Japanese dairy farmers are discussed in more detail below.)

Meanwhile, concurrent with the growth of dairy farming, berry and vegetable production in the valley expanded. Fields between Kent and Auburn grew loganberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, currants, and boysenberries, as well as celery, cabbage, carrots, beans, and peas. Many small-scale and independent farmers formed granges and cooperative organizations, such as the White River Berry Growers' Association, in order to keep control of the handling, processing, and distribution of their products, as well as to pool resources for marketing and to better navigate changing industry standards and technology.[44] Truck or garden farming gained favor as a way for small-scale farmers to truck their fruits and vegetables directly to local markets for sale. Seattle's Pike Place Market opened in 1907 to provide a place for area farmers to sell products directly to consumers and became a destination for generations of valley farmers, particularly during the truck farming heyday of the 1920s and 1930s.[45]

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[39] Priscilla Long, "White and Native American hop pickers attack Chinese workers in Squak (Issaquah) on September 7, 1885" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #2746, 2000). Accessed Sept. 6, 2022. https://www.historylink.org/file/2746

[40] Cynthia Nims, "Hop Farming in Washington" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #21315, 2021). Accessed Sept. 2, 2022. https://www.historylink.org/file/21315. "Hop Growing in Washington," *New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1891: 9.

[41] Boswell, 94.

[42] M. F. Mayhew, "Kent, King County, Washington," *The Coast*, vol. XVII, no. 6 (June, 1909): 385.

[43] No Author, "Auburn, Washington," *The Coast*, vol. XVII, no. 6 (June, 1909): 389.

[44] Boswell, 94.

[45] Lentz, 46-47.

Many area farmers sold produce to the Libby, McNeill & Libby cannery in Kent, which operated for decades and employed hundreds of seasonal workers at a time including women.

Growing markets and increased production translated to a near-constant need for laborers, especially during harvest season. Immigrants from Europe and Asia filled much of the labor needs of dairy and produce farmers in the valley between 1900 and 1920. Those with agricultural backgrounds found a natural fit working on farms or in the commercial processing facilities. Italians and Swiss joined Germans, English, and Irish in the farming economy. The largest group of immigrants to the valley during this period came from Japan. As soon as personal circumstances allowed, aspiring immigrant farmers sought land to lease as a first step in building a farming business. Aaron and Sarah Neely and their descendants leased their farm south of Auburn to a series of immigrant families throughout the 20th century, including the Gallis (Swiss and Swedish), the Fukudas and Horis (Japanese), and the Acostas (Filipino). Additional context regarding the longest-tenured immigrant groups who leased the Neely property – the Japanese and Filipinos – is provided below.

Brief Overview of Japanese American Dairy Farmers

Most Japanese immigrants, arriving in the Pacific Northwest beginning around the turn of the 20th century, were younger unmarried men from agricultural areas in southern Japan. Many were recruited by American labor contractors to replace Chinese laborers who had been barred by anti-Chinese immigration laws and worked as wage earners in the extractive and farming industries. In 1900, there were 118 Japanese living in the White River Valley and 3,212 in King County. Many ultimately returned to Japan, and some came back to the U.S. with family to build lives and businesses. [46]

State and federal laws and agreements restricted the lives of Japanese immigrants (issei) and their American-born children (nisei). Since statehood in 1889, Washington State law prohibited Asian immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens which barred them from owning land. The restrictions limited many to leasing land or purchasing property in the names of others, including their American-born children. In 1907, the so-called Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japanese governments severely restricted the immigration of Japanese laborers, which led to more family immigration and to more Japanese women immigrating as picture brides, so named because husbands selected them by their photographs.[47]

Despite these discriminatory hurdles, many Japanese newcomers settled into produce farming in areas around O'Brien, Thomas, Auburn, and Kent. Others found wage work in the blossoming dairy industry and turned to dairy farming, although the start-up costs of buying cattle and machinery made it more challenging. In 1910, there were just 13 Japanese-operated dairies in the White River Valley.[48] As these operations grew in the bustling regional dairy economy, they provided employment and opportunity

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[46] Stan Flewelling, *Shirakawa: Stories from a Pacific Northwest Japanese American Community* (Auburn, WA: White River Valley Museum, 2002), 22, 31. Mildred Tanner Andrews, "The Hori Furo," King County Landmarks Registration Form (Seattle, WA: King County Historic Preservation Program), sec. 7, p. 2. U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Census Bulletin Population Washington* (Washington, DC, 1921), 5.

[47] Flewelling, 34-35 and 45-47.

[48] Flewelling, 59.

for newly arriving Japanese immigrants and extended family networks. By 1920, there were "83 Japanese dairy farmers in Washington State "who owned nearly 5,600 milk cows, over 95 percent of them in the White River Valley."[49] These farmers supplied 50 percent of Seattle's milk in 1922.[50] More broadly, the number of Japanese farms in Washington State grew from 316 in 1910 to 699 in 1920, with roughly half operating as dairy farms.[51]

The promise of opportunity was short lived for Japanese farmers. The rising numbers of Japanese Americans in King County reached 10,954 by 1920 and was met with organized and legislated discrimination.[52] Having long been the targets of discrimination from labor organizations that considered Japanese Americans a threat to white farmers and wage earners, Japanese farmers now faced the prospect of losing their businesses and livelihoods with the discriminatory Washington State Alien Land Law passed in 1921 and 1923. Although directed against Japanese farmers, it prevented non-citizens from owning or leasing land in the state. Co-sponsored by Representative James T. Jones of Kent and championed by Senator Howard Taylor, whose district included part of the White River Valley, the law targeted Japanese farmers in the valley. The new draconian and xenophobic law devastated Japanese farmers, as intended, forcing many out of farming and to relocate their families.[53] Further, the federal Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 implemented strict immigration quotas. The number of Japanese farms in Washington State fell sharply from 699 in 1920 to 246 in 1925. Similarly, the number of Japanese dairy farms fell from 83 in 1920 to 22 in 1925.[54]

Among those few surviving Japanese-run dairy farms in 1925 was that of Matasuke and Toki Fukuda. They managed a dairy operation with a herd of 80 cows on property they leased from Aaron and Sarah Neely from 1915 to 1929. An outbreak of tuberculosis among dairy herds in the valley in the late 1920s further contributed to the hardships of Japanese dairy farmers, and may have spelled the end for the Fukudas who moved to California in 1929. Dairy industry officials reportedly found Japanese-run dairies "to be unduly afflicted by the disease."[55] Many dairy cows were destroyed or removed, devastating the few remaining Japanese dairies, including that of Shigeichi Hori, a dairy farmer near Kent, who was forced to sell his stock and equipment. He later recalled, "A cow originally worth $225, sold at $75 on the average. It took me more than ten years after that to pay off my debts. The Japanese dairy farmers in the White River district all went bankrupt one after another at the same time and for the same reason."[56] Following the loss of their dairy business, the Hori family relocated to the Neely property that had been vacated by the Fukudas and was now owned by Aaron Neely, Jr. Leaving commercial dairying behind, the Horis grew produce and eventually opened a grocery business in Kent.

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[49] Flewelling, 59.

[50] Flewewlling, 59; John Isao Nishinoiri, "Japanese Farms in Washington" (University of Washington (dissertation), 1926), 23-24.

[51] Flewewlling, 59; Nishinoiri, 10 and 12.

[52] U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Census Bulletin Population Washington* (Washington, DC, 1921), 5. Flewelling, 41-47.

[53] Flewelling, 72-75.

[54] Nishinoiri, 10 and 24.

[55] Flewelling, 61.

[56] Flewelling, 61, quoting Kazuo Ito, *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*, trans. Shinichiro Nakamura and Jean S. Gerard (Seattle: Japanese Community Service, 1973), 477.

It is not clear how the Fukudas and Horis skirted the lease prohibitions of the Alien Land Law, but the Neelys' actions suggest they were sympathetic to the plight of Japanese farmers during this period.

World War II brought significant consumer demand to the agricultural sector along with major labor shortages. Adding to the shortage in the valley was the federal government's forced removal and imprisonment of Japanese Americans who were deemed a threat to national security during the nation's war with Japan.[57] Throughout the month of May 1942, those of Japanese descent living in the valley were evacuated and sent to the Pinedale Assembly Center in California before being transferred to Tule Lake, the government's largest incarceration camp for Japanese Americans during World War II.

Arguing against evacuation was Floyd Oles, manager of the Washington Produce Shippers Association, who warned of dire farm labor shortages in the valley. Indeed, as the last Japanese Americans evacuated, the U.S. Farm Security Administration announced plans to open a migratory labor camp northeast of Auburn to accommodate as many as 75 families who would aid in cultivating and harvesting crops. Even school children from Seattle assisted in the harvests near Auburn, as part of the Youth Farm Aide Camp. Tremendous demographic change and property redistribution resulted from the evacuation. Local newspapers reported that 60 percent of the redistributed acreage went to local farmers and 40 percent went to non-resident immigrants including Italians and Filipinos.[58]

Brief Overview of Filipino American Farmers

Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, the Philippines became a U.S. territory and Filipinos became U.S. nationals. As a result, they were not excluded along with other Asians from migrating to the U.S. In fact, in the early 20th century, both the government and private industry enticed Filipinos to the U.S. through programs that provided funding for Filipino students to study in America (Pensionado Act of 1903) and through contract work on Hawaiian sugar and pineapple plantations and later on California farms. Between 1906 and 1946, for example, Hawaiian sugar planters recruited more than 125,000 Filipinos to work their fields. Most workers were young, unmarried men from the Visayas and Ilocos regions of the Philippines.

The biggest wave of Filipino migration to Hawaii occurred between 1920 and 1929, with some 73,996 making the journey. Among this group was 16-year-old Pedro (Pete) Acosta who arrived at Maui in 1928 from the Ilocos region. Like many, he worked a few years and moved to California to work in the agricultural fields there, hoping to earn enough money to not only support his family back home but to bring them to the U.S. Most Filipinos living in the U.S. in 1930 were in California (30,470); Washington had the second-largest Filipino population (3,480). With strict immigration laws in effect toward Chinese and Japanese, Filipinos became the fastest-growing segment of Asian immigrants in Washington. However, their immigration was significantly impeded in 1934 by the Tydings-McDuffie Act, which promised eventual independence to the Philippines, changed the status of Filipinos from

[57] Executive Order 9066, February 19, 1942; General Records of the Unites States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

[58] Flewelling, 205-206. "Auburn Farm Camp to Open on Wednesday," *Seattle Times*, May 17, 1942: 20. "Auburn Labor Camp Ready for Workers," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, June 21, 1942: 6. "It's the Berries for Youthful Campers," *Seattle Times*, Aug. 16, 1942: Rotogravure section: 1, 26. Lentz, 65.

nationals to aliens, and limited the number who could immigrate to just 50 per year. This quota remained in place until 1965.[59]

Filipinos began moving into the Green River Valley in the late 1920s. Finding work during the 1930s Depression was difficult and mostly low-paying, and most Filipinos living in King County worked as farm laborers, railroad workers, food processing plant workers, and as laborers in the extractive industries around Seattle. They faced heightened discrimination and hardship when jobs were scarcer, particularly from anti-Asian labor groups. For agricultural laborers, work was grueling and seasonal which meant moving frequently to find work, working multiple jobs, and living in bunkhouses, shacks, or boxcars.[60]

Like the preceding generations of immigrant farm workers, newcomers including Acosta sought contract work and leases as first steps in building a farming business. Post-war tenant farmers faced many of the same challenges as earlier generations, including labor shortages and working cooperatively with fellow farmers to negotiate with processors and distributors. They also faced new challenges, among them a post-war valley landscape that was transforming to attract more industry. Annexation and infrastructure projects enabled tremendous growth, thus increasing land values and taxes that made planting acreage more costly for small-scale producers. Filipino farmers and other small-scale producers navigated the changing agricultural economy through a mix of cooperative business, selling produce directly from the farm to consumers at local markets, and even bartering. Some took second and third jobs to make ends meet during slower seasons.

Important to the survival of Filipino tenant farmers were their strong family ties and community networks. Interracial marriage was common among Filipino men given the immigration restrictions and the small numbers of unmarried Filipino women who migrated to the U.S. The result was a variety of blended families of Filipinos who married Japanese, Indigenous peoples, Hispanic, and white and Black Americans. These diverse Filipino American communities set down roots throughout the Puget Sound region. Cultural and community clubs formed in Seattle, Tacoma, Bainbridge Island, and Algona in south King County.[61] In the early 1950s, a Filipino Community Hall was constructed in Algona, and Pete Acosta and other Auburn-area farmers and laborers often gathered there with friends and family. These extended networks of family and friends grew strong bonds to sustain each other during challenging times.

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[59] Fred Cordova, Dorothy Laigo Cordova, and Albert A. Acena, *Filipinos, Forgotten Asian Americans: A Pictorial Essay, 1763-Circa 1963* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1983), 17-18, 19-21, 27-28. Alma Davenport, "Acosta Family Narrative (1942-1989)," (Unpublished manuscript prepared for the Neely Mansion Association, March 2018), 1. Cynthia Mejia-Giudici, "Filipino Americans in Seattle" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #409, 1998). Accessed Sept. 2, 2022. https://historylink.org/File/409.

[60] Cordova, et al, 41. Cynthia Mejia-Giudici, "Filipino Americans in Seattle."

[61] Linda Holden Givens, "Algona—Thumbnail History" (HistoryLink.org Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History, Essay #11140, 2015). Accessed Oct. 18, 2022. https://historylink.org/File/11140.

Postwar Change Impacts Farmers

Following World War II, infrastructure projects and annexation transformed the valley from an agricultural center to a hub for industry. The Valley Freeway (WA-167) was under construction by 1957 and would ultimately connect Auburn with Kent and Renton to the north via a four-lane highway. Closer to the Neely property, the State of Washington designated SR-18 a state route in 1964 and realigned and expanded the roadway. The project took a portion of Neely-owned farm fields (figures A12 & A13). Construction of Interstates 5 and 405 was also underway during this period and would provide important regional connections for south King County. The completion of the Howard Hanson Dam in 1962 brought relief to valley residents, farmers, and business owners alike, who had long been plagued by flooding. It also further enticed industry to the valley, most notably The Boeing Company, which spurred single-family residential growth. Government financing through the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration resulted in suburban residential development all over King County.

King County voters of the 1950s and 1960s favored incorporating communities and annexing new areas into their jurisdictions in order to better control development. Established communities like Kent (incorporated 1890) and Auburn (incorporated 1891) annexed outlying areas into their boundaries, while others became newly incorporated, such as Bellevue (1953), Normandy Park (1953), Medina (1955), Des Moines (1959), Mercer Island (1960), and Lake Forest Park (1961). With landscapes changing all around them, small-scale farmers were impacted through increased land values and fewer available acres to farm.[62]

The rapid change coincided with the formation of citizen-led organizations that emphasized collecting local history and preserving places. For example, the White River Historical Society organized in the 1950s. The Auburn Arts Council and its successor the Neely Mansion Association focused efforts in the 1970s and 1980s on saving and renovating the Neely residence. Meanwhile, public concern for rapidly diminishing farmlands peaked in 1979 when King County voters authorized formation of the county's Farmland Preservation Program. In 1985, five Agricultural Production Districts were part of King County's new comprehensive plan, including one in the Upper Green River Valley that stretches from the former Neely property southeast to Enumclaw.[63]

Property Ownership & Tenant History

In the early 1880s, the Northern Pacific Railroad Company began selling its surplus land in the Green River Valley. In 1881, Aaron and Sarah Neely negotiated a mortgage with the company to purchase 120 acres for $312 in the northwest quarter of Section 21, Township 21, Range 5E (figures A7-A10, C1 &

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[62] BOLA Architecture + Planning, *Mid-Century King County: A Context Statement on Post-War Residential Development*, *2017*, p. 7. Accessed online Dec. 22, 2022. https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Mid-CenturyKingCounty_ResidentialContextStatement_2017.pdf Stein, "White River Valley (King County)—Thumbnail History."

[63] King County, "Farmland Preservation Program," website. Accessed Oct. 11, 2022. https://kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/wlr/sections-programs/rural-regional-services-section/agriculture-program/farmland-preservation-program.aspx

C2).[64] The railroad sold the adjacent Lots 2 and 3, approximately 20 acres each along the west bank of the Green River, to Samuel Chalemahan, Sr., and Dan Woodwadin [?], for $104.65. Both were Muckleshoot men who were noted on the deed as "Indians."[65] It is quite possible they lived on this property; Chalemahan is recorded in the 1885-86 *Seattle City and King County Directory* as a farmer at this location. In 1889, the Neelys purchased the north 10 acres of Lot 2 from Chalemahan and soon acquired the south 10 acres of Lot 3.[66] By 1920, they owned 180 acres in Section 21.[67]

Aaron and Sarah Neely first lived on a 120-acre property west of Auburn in Section 14, Township 21, Range 4E. As early as 1881, Aaron built a small cabin on their new property southeast of Auburn, "west of where the big house now stands."[68] By about 1885, the Neelys and their growing family had moved into the cabin.[69] They gradually cleared the timber and brush from the land, transforming it into a diversified farm with fruit trees, a herd of dairy cows, and other stock. The farm never produced hops. The property soon included a barn (64' x 110) and a buggy and wood shed (24' x 24).[70] Aaron Neely, Jr., who was born in the cabin in 1886, later recalled of this period, "Only part of our place was cleared…and beyond us the valley was all woods. The road was only a wagon trail."[71] The family, including children Julius, William, Lenore, Carrie, Aaron Jr., and Sarah, moved into their grand new residence in 1894 (figure C5). They occupied the residence less than a decade before moving to Auburn in about 1902. Oldest son Julius lived at the farm following his marriage to Iva Huffman in 1903 but remained there only a few years. Aaron and Sarah Neely continued to own the farm for many years, transferring ownership to their two children Aaron Jr. and Lenore (Dolan) in 1928. Sarah and Aaron died in 1930 and 1931 respectively.[72]

As a reflection of his status among valley residents, Aaron Sr. was featured in late 19th and early 20th century promotional histories, including H. K. Hines' *An Illustrated History of the State of Washington* (1893) and Clarence Bagley's *History of King County Washington* (1929). They emphasize his family's early settler story and their actions to acquire land and shape the early landscape through business and civic engagement. Bagley's history described Aaron Sr., as "one of the leading fruitgrowers of the

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[64] Deed, no. 27284. Northern Pacific Railroad Co. to Aaron S. Neely. 120 acres of Sec. 21, Twp. 21N, Range 5E. Mortgage indenture March 24, 1881; deed filed January 24, 1889.

[65] Warranty Deed, no. 18813. Northern Pacific Railroad Co. to Samuel Chalemahan, et. al. Lots 2 and 3, Sec. 21, Twp. 21N, Range 5E. Mortgage indenture January 1, 1881; deed filed March 16, 1887. Chalemahan is recorded in the 1884 Assessment Roll for King County as paying taxes on the 40 acres.

[66] Warranty Deed, no. 42884. Samuel Chalemahan, et. al., to Aaron S. Neely. Lot 2, Sec. 21, Twp. 21N, Range 5E. Filed Dec. 2, 1889. Assessment Roll for King County, 1905.

[67] Assessment Roll for King County, 1905.

[68] The small house reportedly burned down in the 1950s or early 1960s. "Faded Mansion Recalls Early Days," unidentified newspaper, May 6, 1962: A-8. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

[69] This circa 1885 date is based on available period sources. Although the 1885 King County Directory lists the Neelys as living at their first property in Sec. 14, Twp. 21, Range 4E, the 1884 Abstract of Property Holders in King County is the first to show Aaron Neely paying taxes on his new property in Sec. 21, Twp. 21, Range 5E.

[70] Fred and Mary Hardin, *History of the Neely Mansion* [booklet], (Neely Mansion Association, 1982), 15.

[71] "Faded Mansion Recalls Early Days," unidentified newspaper, May 6, 1962: A-8. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

[72] "Mrs. Neely's Funeral Will Be at Auburn," *Seattle Times,* Nov. 27, 1930: 27. "Aaron S. Neely, Pioneer, Will Be Buried Tomorrow," *Seattle Times,* Oct. 13, 1931: 28.

district," with a "large orchard of four hundred apple trees." He credited Aaron and Sarah for their contribution to "Auburn's upbuilding and improvement," by investing in lots and building homes.[73] They were active in local civic and social circles in Auburn. Aaron served on the local school board and as an area road supervisor for many years. Both were members of the Auburn Masonic (FA&M) and Odd Fellows (IOOF) organizations and auxiliaries. They donated property in Auburn for a new Masonic temple that was completed in 1924.[74] The Neelys participated in an association of Duwamish Valley pioneers that formed in 1917 to organize an annual summer picnic of early-day settler families, a tradition that continued into the 1950s. Aaron served as its president in 1924.[75] Shortly before his death in 1931, he was pictured in the *Seattle Times* attending the annual picnic and recognized as the group's oldest member at 88 years old.[76]

Aaron Jr.'s portion of the property included the residence and north half of the total acreage. Aaron Jr. and his wife Vi Rena lived briefly at the Neely farm during World War II (figures C3 & C4). Following his death in 1974, the property transferred to their daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Fred Hardin, who negotiated the transfer of the residence to the Auburn Arts Council in 1978 (more on this below).

Tenant Farm Families

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, immigrants from around the world made their way to King County to work on farms, at processing plants, and with the railroad and the extractive industries. The influx of newcomers fueled a growing agricultural sector. In the last decade of the 19th century, King County's population nearly doubled, from 68,989 in 1890 to 110,053 in 1900. It nearly tripled the following decade, reaching 284,638 in 1910. Much of the growth was concentrated in and around Seattle, which had a population of 80,671 in 1900 and 237,194 in 1910.[77]

With land ownership out of reach or outright forbidden for many new arrivals, leasing a farm or working as a farm laborer was one way to participate in the growing local agricultural economy. For much of the 20th century, three generations of the Neely family leased the nominated property to tenant farm families who lived and worked there. Their individual stories illustrate the broader social, cultural and economic trends discussed above, as well as the evolution of agriculture in the valley. Importantly, these family stories demonstrate the rich diversity of the farming community around Auburn.

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[73] Clarence B. Bagley, *History of King County, Washington*, Vol. II (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1929), 862.

[74] The Auburn Masonic Temple is extant and located at 10 Auburn Way S. The City of Auburn designated it a City Landmark in 2002.

[75] Duwamish Valley School and Pioneer Association records, 1917-1959. Special Collections Library, University of Washington, Seattle.

[76] "Old-Timers of Duwamish Attend Picnic," *Seattle Times*, June 28, 1931: 3.

[77] U.S. Census Bureau, *Twelfth Census of the United States Census Bulletin No. 52: Population of Washington by Counties and Minor Civil Divisions* (Washington, DC, 1901), 4. Accessed Sept. 30, 2022. https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/bulletins/demographic/52-population-wa.pdf U.S. Census Bureau, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Census Bulletin Population Washington* (Washington, DC, 1911), 12 and 18. Accessed Sept. 30, 2022. https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1910/bulletins/demographics/359-population-wa-composition-and-characteristics.pdf

Ernest and Hannah Galli Family (1908-1914)

European immigrants Ernest and Hannah (Simu) Galli leased the Neely property and lived in the residence from 1908 until 1914 (figure C8). Prior to this, Ernest worked as a dairyman at Klineberg Dairy Farm in Thomas, Washington, where he met Hannah who was working as a domestic cook. Both had recently immigrated to the U.S. Ernest was from Eggiwil, Switzerland, an area known for its cattle raising and dairy farming, and Hannah was raised on a farm near Haapakyla, Sweden. By the time the couple married in 1908, they were experienced in the business of dairy farming. Leasing an established farm allowed them to grow their business and to build capital so they could purchase their own farm.

The Gallis' dairy business milked as many as 200 cows per day. They hired others to assist in the dairy operation, including Ernest's brother Frederick Galli and fellow Swiss immigrant Rustle Killian. Hannah's brother Herman (Simon) Simu also briefly lived at the property. These hired men lived in small houses on the property built for farm laborers. Each day, Ernest or the hired men loaded milk onto the family's wagon for hauling to Borden's Condensed Milk Company plant in Auburn, followed by cleaning the barn and preparing feed for later in the day.[78]

With a successful business and growing family, the Gallis sought to purchase the Neely property and residence with no luck. Instead, they purchased a farm north of Auburn and ended their lease with the Neelys in 1914. The couple had two children, Theodore (1909) and Arnold (1911), while living at the Neely property. Their daughter Florence (1914) was born after they moved.[79]

Matasuke and Toki Fukuda Family (1915-1929)

Japanese immigrants Matasuke and Toki (Nakamura) Fukuda leased the Neely property from 1915 to 1929. Both family history and public records suggest Matasuke and Toki journeyed separately to the U.S. and perhaps traveled back and forth several times in the early 1900s. Both were from Japan's Hiroshima Prefecture. Matasuke first sailed from Kobe, Japan, arriving at the Port of Seattle in February 1900. The ship's manifest notes that he was married, worked as a farmer, and this was his first time in the U.S., although family history suggests he may have spent time in California before this. Toki and their three young sons (Sentaro, Sanzo, and Manki) remained in Japan. Toki followed a few years later, sailing from Kobe and arriving in October 1905. The ship's manifest notes this was her first time in the U.S. and that she was "to join [her] husband Fukuda Matasuke in Auburn Wn."[80] Their sons followed later.

Family recollections suggest Matasuke moved around before settling in Auburn, living in Seattle, Kent, Yakima, and Portland.[81] However, most ship manifests and birth and census records related to the

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78 Ancestry.com. *1910 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006. Theresa Ball, "Galli Family Narrative (1908-1914)" (unpublished manuscript, prepared for the Neely Mansion Association, March 2018), 1 and 6.

79 Ancestry.com. *Washington, U.S., County Marriages, 1855-2008* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. Ball, "Galli Family Narrative (1908-1914)," 1, 3, and 5.

80 Ancestry.com. *Washington, U.S., Arriving and Departing Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006.

81 "Matasuke Fukuda" (unpublished manuscript, Neely Mansion Association collections, n.d.).

Fukudas between 1900 and 1920 reference Auburn and Seattle. In about 1915, Matasuke leased the Neely farm where he and his family worked as dairy farmers managing a herd of 80 cows. Several members of their extended family lived on the property and assisted in business (figures C9, C10 & C11-C15). At least four of the couple's children were born during the time they leased the property: Tokiko, Yoshiko, Rokuro, and Masako. Their other U.S.-born children were Daihachi, Haruko, and Goro.[82]

The Fukudas had maneuvered the increasingly restrictive immigration laws targeting Asians, but they could not avoid the economic hardship resulting from discriminatory land laws targeting Japanese American dairy farmers in the 1920s. Their dairy business apparently weathered the hardships longer than many, surviving through at least 1926. They ended their lease and relocated to California in 1929. Some of the family settled in the San Francisco area, while others lived near Los Angeles. During World War II, the family was among the hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans that the federal government imprisoned. The Fukudas spent the war years at the Manzanar War Relocation Center in California.

Shigeichi and Shimano Hori Family (1929-1936)

The Hori family story is similar to that of the Fukudas and other Japanese American farmers in the valley. Shigeichi Hori was raised on a small farm in the Hiroshima Prefecture of Japan and immigrated to the U.S. by way of Victoria, British Columbia, in 1907. When he returned to Japan to marry Shimano Otoshi, who was also from the Hiroshima Prefecture, he was working as a farmer in Christopher, just north of Auburn. The couple traveled together from Yokohama, Japan, to the U.S., arriving in Seattle on March 11, 1914.[83]

The Horis lived in the O'Brien and Kent areas in the late 1910s and 1920s. With assistance from extended family members, they purchased a herd of cattle and built a dairy business. Like other area Japanese dairy farmers, the Horis could not overcome the hardships of the discriminatory land laws and the outbreak of tuberculosis among dairy herds in the valley. They auctioned off their herd and equipment and start over. Shigeichi later recalled, "A cow originally worth $225, sold at $75 on the average. It took me more than ten years after that to pay off my debts. The Japanese dairy farmers in White River district all went bankrupt one after another at the same time and for the same reason."[84]

With little option but to start over, Shigeichi found work with Oregon Life Insurance Company. The Hori family relocated to the Neely property that had been vacated by the Fukudas and was now owned by Aaron Neely, Jr (figure C16). The Horis and their five children, Tadao (Jack), Masao (George), Haruko (Mary), Tamaru (Johnny), and Taruo (Frank), lived in the Neely residence and worked the farm from late 1929 or early 1930 to 1936. The Horis maintained a small dairy, grew strawberries and rhubarb,

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[82] Research notes compiled by the Neely Mansion Association. "Matasuke Fukuda" (unpublished manuscript, Neely Mansion Association collections, n.d.).

[83] Ancestry.com. *Washington, U.S., Arriving and Departing Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2006. Theresa Ball, "Hori Family Narrative (1929-1936)" (unpublished manuscript, prepared for the Neely Mansion Association, June 2018), 1-3.

[84] Flewelling, 61, quoting Ito, 477.

and sold cherries, apples, and pears from the Neelys old fruit trees. They sold strawberries from a roadside stand that was located just west of the current driveway (figure A14).[85]

Shortly after moving to the Neely property, Shigeichi Hori constructed a furoba (bathhouse) behind the residence. The two-room wood building was a typical feature found on Japanese farms in the Green River Valley. Some farmers even built makeshift communal furobas under a tent for seasonal farm workers. The Fukudas reportedly built an earlier furoba on the property of which there is no trace.[86] The families constructed furobas because the bath is a valued tradition in Japanese culture. Mary Hori Nakamura later recalled of the furoba her father built: "We would wash ourselves outside the tub and rinse ourselves off [in the front room] and then [go into the back room and] get in the tub to soak. The whole family took baths every night."[87] The Hori furoba is the only such structure known to still exist in the valley, and it is an important reminder of daily life and traditional customs in the Japanese American agricultural community.

The Horis left the Neely property in 1936, the same year they lost their young son Tamaru to meningitis. The family opened a grocery business, the SH Food Store, in Kent. Shimano died in childbirth in 1940, and the family lost the grocery business when they were incarcerated during World War II, first at Pinedale Assembly Center in central California and then to Tule Lake Relocation Center in northern California where they spent three years. Shigeichi remarried and returned to the Auburn area following the war and later moved to Seattle where he died in 1988.[88]

Pedro (Pete) and June Acosta Family (1942-1989)

Aaron Neely, Jr. leased the farm to Pedro (Pete) Acosta during World War II, ushering in a new era in the property's tenant farm history. In 1945, Pete married June Johnston, and together they lived and worked on the farm until 1989. The Acosta family's long association with the Neely property illustrates the rich contributions of the broader Filipino American community to the story of agriculture in the Green River Valley.

Pete's path to the U.S. from his home in Asingan, a community on the northern island of Luzon in the Philippines, began in 1928 at age 16 when he and his brother left to work in the pineapple plantation on the Hawaiian island of Maui. They hoped to earn money to send back to their family and to one day bring their mother and sisters to the U.S. After two years, he migrated to the mainland where he worked as a farm laborer in California. Likely working as a seasonal laborer, he continued northward and in 1935, he worked on a farm in Grays Harbor County, Washington. In 1940, he and two other

85 Ball, "Hori Family Narrative (1929-1936)," 1 and 4.

86 Mildred Tanner Andrews, "The Hori Furo," King County Landmarks Registration Form (Seattle, WA: King County Historic Preservation Program), sec. 7, p. 5.

87 Mary Hori Nakamura, as quoted in Andrews, sec. 7, p. 5.

88 Ball, "Hori Family Narrative (1929-1936)," 7-8. Ancestry.com. *1950 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2022.

Filipino men lived together and worked as farm laborers in the Cedar River district of King County, Washington.[89]

Acosta transitioned from a seasonal farm laborer to a tenant farmer when he leased the Neely property in the early 1940s. Leasing afforded him the opportunity to stay in one place, to employ others as farm laborers, and to grow roots and relationships in the community. Pete married June Johnston whose parents William and Caroline Johnston owned a tire shop on West Main Street in Auburn that Pete frequented and where he met June. His marriage to June, a white woman, reflected a common pattern of interracial marriage among Filipino men. Their daughter Julie was born in 1946, and she fondly recalls many similar interracial families in rural south King County and attending school in Auburn with children of similar backgrounds.[90]

The Acostas never lived in the Neely residence, but some of their long-term and seasonal farm laborers did. Instead, Pete, June, and daughter Julie lived in a small wood-frame house southwest of the mansion that was built in 1942 (figure C20). Pete built an addition to the house and remodeled it in 1954 (figures C21 & C22).[91]

The Acostas grew rhubarb, peas, corn, green beans, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers, thornless blackberries, strawberries, apples, pears, and potatoes. They were among the first to grow Yukon and Denali potatoes in the valley, following Pete's visit to an experimental farm in Palmer, Alaska, where they had engineered potatoes to grow in a short farming season. For several years, Pete journeyed to Alaska to acquire bags of seed potatoes. They also raised goats, chickens, many varieties of ducks, and geese.[92] The Acostas were members of cooperative farmer organizations that negotiated with processors and distributors on their behalf. They participated in the direct farm-to-market economy, first by trucking their produce to Pike Place Market in Seattle and then by selling it at a roadside stand on their leased farm property. June made sure that the produce sold in the stand was always fresh right out of the field. Even bartering with neighbors and networks of friends and family was a common practice. For example, Pete traded with and bought items from nearby Muckleshoot tribal members including fresh-caught salmon and fresh-kill venison.[93]

Pete and June worked together in managing the farm. As the grower, Pete planted, tended, and tilled the crops with the assistance of field hands. For those crops requiring seasonal pickers, June served as the field boss who hired and managed the laborers and kept track of how many flats of berries and sacks of beans that they brought in. In 1948 and 1949, June drove their old farm truck to Pike Place Market where she sold their produce from a stall (figure C23). She made the trip every day between

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[89] Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 11, 2022. Alma Davenport, "Acosta Family Narrative (1942-1989)," (Unpublished manuscript prepared for the Neely Mansion Association, March 2018), 1. Ancestry.com. *1940 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

[90] Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 11, 2022. Cordova, et al, 139.

[91] King County Tax Assessor, Property Record for parcel no. 212105-9011. The house is no longer extant. After the Acostas moved off the property in the late 1980s, the land on which their house stood was sold. The house was destroyed in a controlled fire training exercise for a local fire department.

[92] Davenport, 3.

[93] Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 11, 2022.

June and September, while her sister Betty cared for young Julie back at the farm. In later years, June managed their roadside farmstand at the Neely property, which was frequented by locals and the occasional busload of shoppers from other parts of King County (figures C30-C33). When the Acostas could no longer find enough seasonal help at harvest time, they opened a U-pick business where shoppers picked their own basket of fruit and produce for purchase (figure C29). June did much of the cooking for family and farmhands during the busy harvest season, while Pete cooked more during the slower winter months.

Many extended family members and friends contributed to the farm operation over the years. Those who lived and worked year-round on the farm included Pete's lifelong friend Ace Sarmiento and Pete's cousin Joe Acosta. Ace also leased property from the Neelys and was an exceptional farmer in his own right who sold his vegetables to area canneries, including the Libby, McNeill & Libby cannery in Kent. When he had workers come in to pick the raspberries, blackberries, peas, beans, and cucumbers, his cousins' wives, Hazel LaRosa and Lou LaRosa, worked as the field bosses much like June did with Pete.[94] Joe worked alongside Pete and Ace and occasionally traveled to Ketchikan, Alaska, to work in the fish canneries. Both men lived in the Neely mansion, and Ace occupied the portion that is now the kitchen and dining room. They kept homing and racing pigeons in a small upstairs room of the mansion, and they used an old rhubarb shed to keep cocks for sabong (cockfighting), a legal sport in the Philippines but illegal the U.S.[95] During the summer and busy harvest periods, family and hired seasonal laborers descended on the farm to help out. The most labor-intensive harvesting involved blackberries, strawberries, beans, and peas, and Julie recalls as many as 25 laborers working in their five to 15 acres. Relatives of Pete, including Tony Sapigo and Pat Sapago, lived seasonally in the mansion and worked at the farm year after year. Hired laborers included Muckleshoot men, Mexicans, and even youth on summer break from school who were bused to the valley from Seattle and Tacoma. Julie recalls this always brought "a pretty good crowd" to the farm with much activity and excitement.[96]

With the death of Aaron Neely, Jr., in 1974, property ownership transitioned to his daughter Mary Hardin and her husband Fred. The badly deteriorated Neely residence was fenced off as the Hardins negotiated its fate with preservation-minded locals. Meanwhile, the Acostas continued to live in their residence and farm the leased property until about 1989. Julie recalled that farmstand shoppers often inquired about the fate of the fenced-off residence. She and her family had a front-row seat to the effort to save and restore the old residence.

Auburn Arts Council

[94] Hazel (Johnson) LaRosa worked as a surgical technician and was married to Ace's cousin Felix LaRosa. Her sister Lou (Johnson) LaRosa worked as a cook at the local A & W and was married to Ace's cousin Eduardo LaRosa. Hazel and Lou's sister Gladys also helped in the fields. Ace married and retired in 1975, and he and his wife Paula lived with his cousin Felix and Hazel on their small farm farther down the valley. Ace died in 1978. Source: Julie Acosta, email correspondence, Jan. 23, 2023.

[95] Andrews, sec. 7, p. 5.

[96] Davenport, 2-3. Julie Acosta, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 11, 2022.

The monumental effort of saving the deteriorated Neely residence began with the filing of a National Register of Historic Places nomination in 1974. Completed by Robert Gaines, Auburn Chamber of Commerce, the designation made the property eligible for federal rehabilitation funds. The Auburn Arts Council negotiated with Mary and Fred Hardin to acquire it. The Hardins ultimately donated the residence to the Arts Council, which then had to come up with $12,000 to purchase the remaining half-acre of land. In 1978, 12 people co-signed a mortgage loan to complete the transaction. The Arts Council formally organized as a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization in 1979 with the hope of using the Neely residence as a cultural center for the arts and historic preservation in the community.

Arts Council members who were instrumental in launching the effort to save the Neely Mansion included Leta Craig, Aletta Thorn, Effie Weeks, Hilda Meryhew, and Joe Koch. Sandy Jackson served as the Arts Council's first Neely Mansion project coordinator. The Arts Council secured funding through the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) and received a grant from King County, both of which required matching funds. The group organized fundraising initiatives, including an art auction (April 1979), a Christmas Home Tour (December 1979), and a Haunted House (October 1980 and 1982). The Haunted House, done in partnership with the Auburn Jaycees and drama students from Auburn High School, was wildly popular. The 1980 event attracted 6,000 visitors over eight nights and raised $9,400.[97]

The Arts Council hired architect Art Skolnik to plan and oversee the major rehabilitation project.[98] Skolnik organized the project into three phases, and ultimately it would take more than a decade to complete the work. The Arts Council and Skolnik saw the completion of most of phase one work, which included site work, roof replacement, a new foundation, and securing the building envelope; however, the project soon encountered financial challenges too difficult for the small volunteer group to overcome. Their fundraising could not keep up with their obligations to match grants and pay off the mortgage. Further complicating the situation was a stoppage in work at the property in September 1981 due to a labor dispute between the management and employees of the Arts Council's primary contractor Sound Construction Co.[99] By spring 1982, the public and elected officials were questioning the management of the project, suggesting, "Nearly all of the $109,000 of government grant funds has been spent on restoration…[and] it still looks like a dilapidated old house."[100] The challenges even caught the attention of King County Councilman Scott Blair, who was puzzled by the cost of the restoration project and asked, "What's the end objective of this?"[101] These challenges resulted in King County taking ownership of the half-acre parcel (212105-9011) on which the residence sits.

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97 Hilda Meryhew, "Auburn City Council & Neely Mansion," unpublished recollections, Sept. 2022.

"Buying Time," *Auburn Globe-News*, August 9, 1978: n.p. "Mansion grosses $9,400 as 'haunted house,'" *Auburn Globe-News*, Nov. 4, 1980: A-2. Newspaper clippings in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

98 "Mansion to Resume Its Splendid Style," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Apr. 15, 1979: B-8.

99 "Neely Mansion project may resume," unidentified newspaper, Oct. 12, 1981: n.p. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

100 "Neely Mansion - $109,000 later," *Auburn Globe-News*, Apr. 2, 1982: n.p. See also: "Mansion-restoration plan faces financial problems," *Seattle Times*, Mar. 17, 1982: G-2. "Unpaid $12,000 loan snags Neely project," *Auburn Globe-News*, Apr. 4, 1982: 2.

101 "Neely restoration puzzles councilman," unidentified newspaper, Sept. 4, 1982: n.p. Clippings in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

Neely Mansion Association

Out of this difficulty emerged a new group of volunteers led by Virginia Haugen who were eager to face these challenges. Calling themselves the Neely Mansion Association (NMA), this nonprofit historical society merged with the Arts Council, taking over their assets and assuming their debts. The group incorporated in 1983 for the purpose of "the restoration and preservation of the Aaron Neeley [sic] Home."[102] Seven women formed the founding Board of Directors: Virginia Haugen, Twila Bartholomew, Pat Berens, Linda Geiszler, Jennie Rice, Mary Tungsvik, and Linda Van Nest.

When the NMA acquired the residence, it was a shell of a house (figures C35-C39). The organization finished phase one construction tasks and gave immediate attention to cleaning and painting the exterior of the residence to show the community that visible progress was taking place. The NMA raised funds through grants, fundraisers, memberships, and private donations over several years to complete the remainder of the work. They continued the Haunted House fundraisers and also hosted Christmas bazaars, holiday teas, and Mother's Day teas for many years. Phase two work included installing new mechanical systems as well as completing building exterior tasks. Phase three completed in the early 1990s focused on interior renovation and finishes. The organization had no historic photos of the interior to reference during renovation, relying instead on clues within the building as well as research of 1890s-era trends. Pat Hallowell, then-NMA president, her daughter Laurie Hallowell, an interior designer, and Lynn Henke, an antique dealer, guided selections of wall finishes, colors, and fixtures.

The NMA board paid off the $12,000 loan in August 1987, with the final payment donated by Joe and Alice Koch, who had been involved since the Arts Council days. Joe had a special affinity for the Neely Mansion because his mother, a Swiss immigrant, had worked there as a cook feeding the crews who worked the farm and knew the Galli family who lived there in the early 1900s.[103]

With much of the major rehabilitation work on the residence complete, the NMA opened a historical display room inside the residence in 1990. (For a photo of the NMA board during this period, see figure C40). The organization also turned its attention to learning more about those who had lived there. Members of the Neely, Galli, Fukuda, and Acosta families were invited to a centennial celebration on August 20 and 21, 1994.[104] Cherry trees were planted in honor of the families who had lived there. It was around this time that the NMA came to realize that a dilapidated outbuilding was actually a Japanese bathhouse built by former tenants. The furoba was designated a King County Landmark in 1996. Prior to its rehabilitation in 2015, the NMA partnered with King County Historic Preservation Office to host a public archaeological excavation at the original location of the furoba before returning

[102] Articles of Incorporation of Neeley [sic] Mansion Association, Aug. 31, 1983.

[103] "Neely mansion supporters ready to paint," *Seattle Times*, Aug. 8, 1984: G-2. Linda Van Nest, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 28, 2022.

[104] At the time, the NMA wasn't yet in communication with members of the Hori family. Linda Van Nest, Interview by Sarah Martin, Oct. 28, 2022.

it to this location. Led by SWCA Environmental, a team of volunteers completed the excavation in September 2015 (figures C41 & C42).[105]

Architecture & Builder

The 1894 Neely residence is a product of the late 19th century Victorian era, a period in American residential architecture that spans approximately 1860 to 1900. This era of rapid industrialization was fueled by the expansion of railroads resulting in changes to American house designs and a proliferation of popular styles across the U.S., including Second Empire, Italianate, Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Shingle Style. The increasing availability of mass-produced windows, doors, claddings, and ornamentation through mail-order catalogs brought the extravagance of Victorian-era design to cities, towns, and farms across the country.

The Neely residence is among the oldest surviving farmhouses in the Green River Valley and embodies the distinctive physical characteristics of an eclectic and fashionable residence built in the late Victorian era. It is an outstanding example of transitional architecture exhibiting features of the earlier Italianate and later Queen Anne styles on a square folk house form with a balloon-frame structure. By the time the residence was complete, the popularity of the Italianate style had largely given way to the Queen Anne style and its many variations, but geographic location and personal preferences certainly resulted in eclectic house designs. The building's references to the Italianate style include its two-and-a-half story square, boxy form; low-pitched hip roof with bracketed eaves; and strong vertical orientation with the two-story entry porch, full-height square bay on the side elevation, and tall narrow windows with elaborated crowns. The Queen Anne influence is reflected in the elaborate front and side porches as well as the patterned shingle cladding of the front-facing gable above the primary entry.[106]

Architectural historians Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings call the square hipped roof form one of the fundamental house types of the 19th and 20th centuries, a favorite of generations of designers and builders because it allowed for considerable variation in size, spatial organization, and style.[107] A quite fashionable house like the Neely residence could easily result from this common house form when embellished with various claddings, bays, dormers, porches, and distinctive roof ridgeboards. The residence's front-facing centered gable indicates a center hall interior plan, with rooms located in each corner of the house on both floors. The Victorian era is very much on display on the interior, which is characterized by a formal entry, high ceilings, and spacious enclosed rooms.

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[105] No report was produced following the excavation. Although the property has no archaeological sites recorded in the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's WISAARD database, the property is characterized by DAHP as very high risk for archaeological sites, and there are several pre-contact sites recorded nearby.

[106] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 283-284; 348-350.

[107] Ibid., 314-315. Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular: Buildings and Interiors 1870-1960* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 2009), 167-172.

Aaron Neely, Sr., harvested and supplied the lumber for the construction of the residence, and it was processed at his father David Neely's sawmill located in present-day Kent. The father-son team designed the residence, and Aaron hired Auburn-area builder and carpenter Dennis Leahy and his assistant George Hulbert to build the home. No professional architect is associated with the residence. According to the family, Aaron was a craftsman with excellent carpentry skills. He built cabinets for friends and neighbors and helped in the construction of an area schoolhouse.[108]

Builder Dennis Leahy (1844-?), a native of New York with Irish heritage, was active as a builder and carpenter in the Green River Valley from the late 1880s to the early 1900s, although his life and career are not well documented.[109] His earliest known commission was a false-front general store building constructed for Dr. Levi W. Ballard in 1886, the same year that Ballard and his wife Mary platted the Town of Slaughter (Auburn). His store, ornamented with a wooden star in relief on its high false-front façade, is no longer extant (figure C6).[110] Leahy also is credited with building an impressive two-story residence for Dr. Alexander and Sarah Hughes in about 1890 (figure C7). It was located along Auburn Way North across from Auburn's Pioneer Cemetery but was demolished in 1990 and last owned by Daisy Erickson.[111] His other known commissions include a residence (ca. 1894) for William Andrews in Stuck, and a hop house (ca. 1894) for D. W. Lytts, located on his farm along the Green River.[112] In addition to his professional activities, Leahy was a charter member of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Valley Lodge #60, established June 10, 1898.[113]

Summary

The former Neely property has an incredibly rich history that reflects several significant themes in the greater story of the Green River Valley. It has witnessed the mixing of Indigenous and settler cultures, development brought by ever-changing transportation networks, contributions of immigrant tenant farmers, and citizen-led efforts to preserve and document this place. The residence, furoba, and farm shed – as well as the surrounding farmland – are important physical manifestations of these themes and embody the stories of those who have called the property home.

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108 "Faded Mansion Recalls Early Days," unidentified newspaper, May 6, 1962: A-8. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook. Fred and Mary Hardin, *History of the Neely Mansion* [booklet], (Neely Mansion Association, 1982), 18.

109 *Washington Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Seattle, WA: R.L. Polk & Co., 1889), 796; King County, Washington, Census, 1892. U.S. Federal Census, 1900. *Washington Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Seattle, WA: R.L. Polk & Co., 1901), 432.

110 Clarence B. Bagley, *History of King County, Washington*, Vol. I (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1929), 713, 716.

111 White River Valley Museum Collections, photograph catalog nos. PO-00485 and PO-00649.

112 Bagley, 713, 716. "Auburn Notes," *White River Journal*, Oct. 20, 1894: 2. "Auburn Notes," *White River Journal*, Aug. 25, 1894: 7.

113 Bagley, 718. Leahy and Aaron Neely, Sr., could have known each other through their involvement in the Odd Fellows organization.

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Section A – Maps & Aerial Images

Figure A1. Map of King County region, with star showing location of Neely property, 2022.

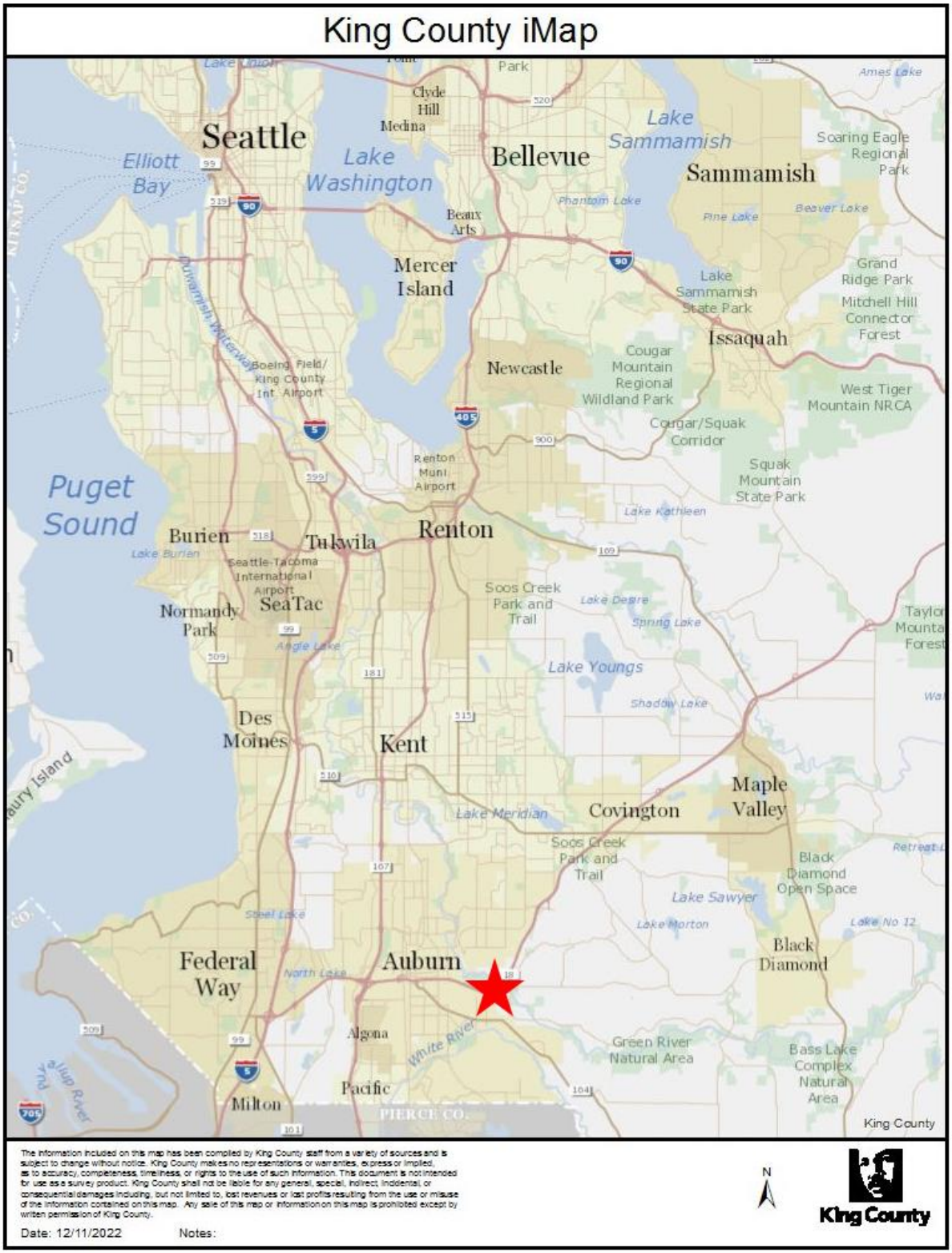


Figure A2. USGS Topographic Map, Auburn Quadrangle, 2020.

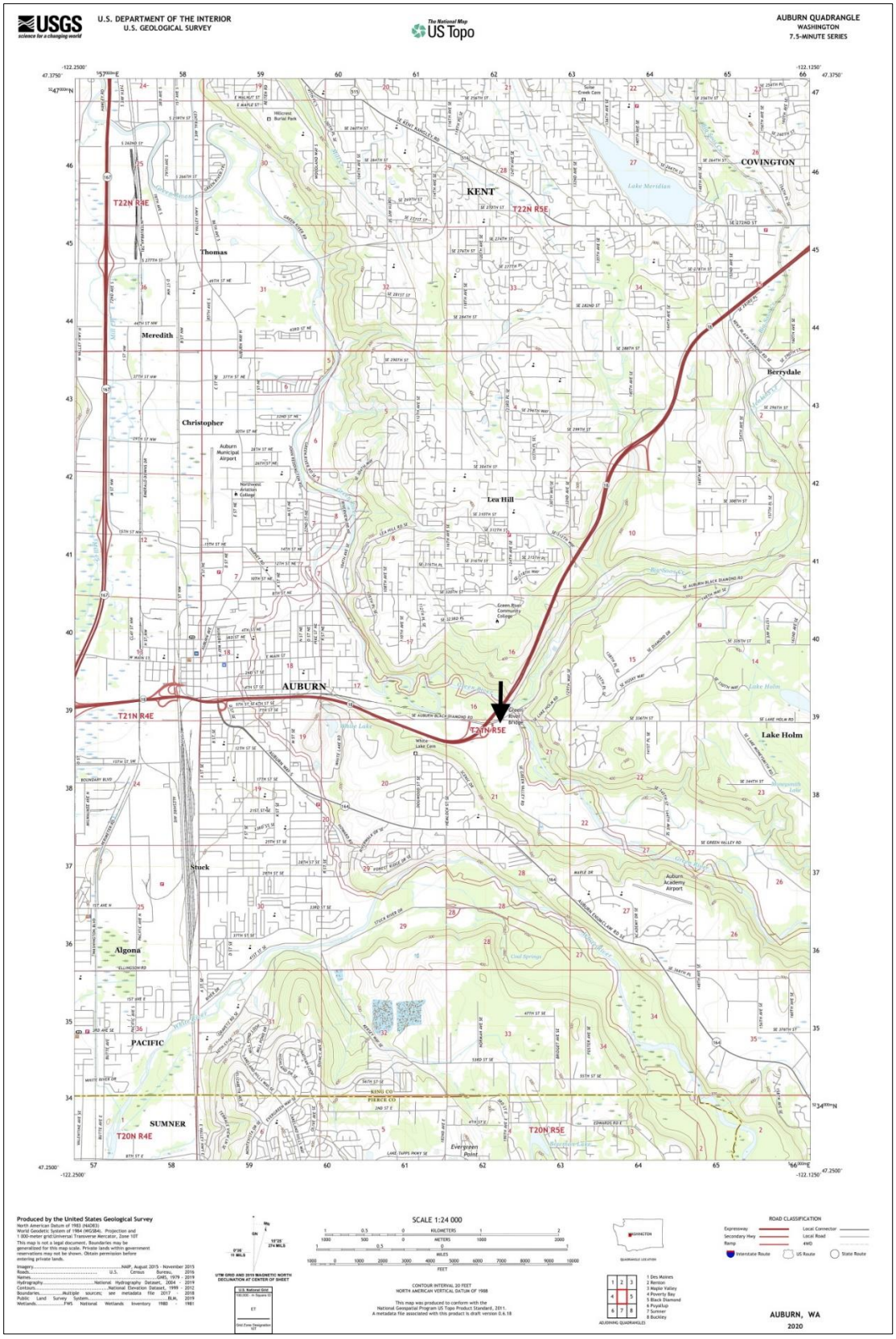


Figure A3. USGS Topographic Map, Auburn Quadrangle (partial), 2020.

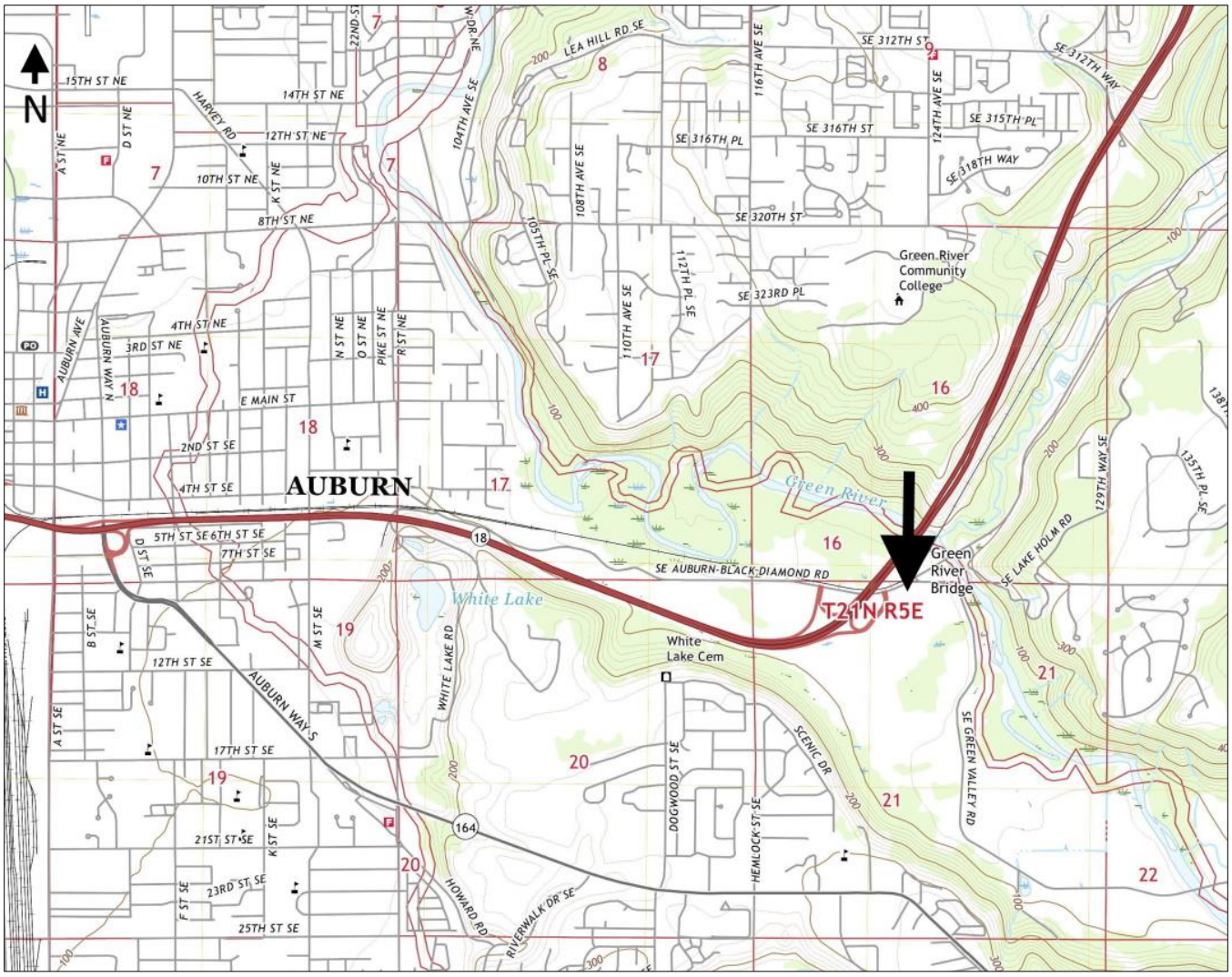


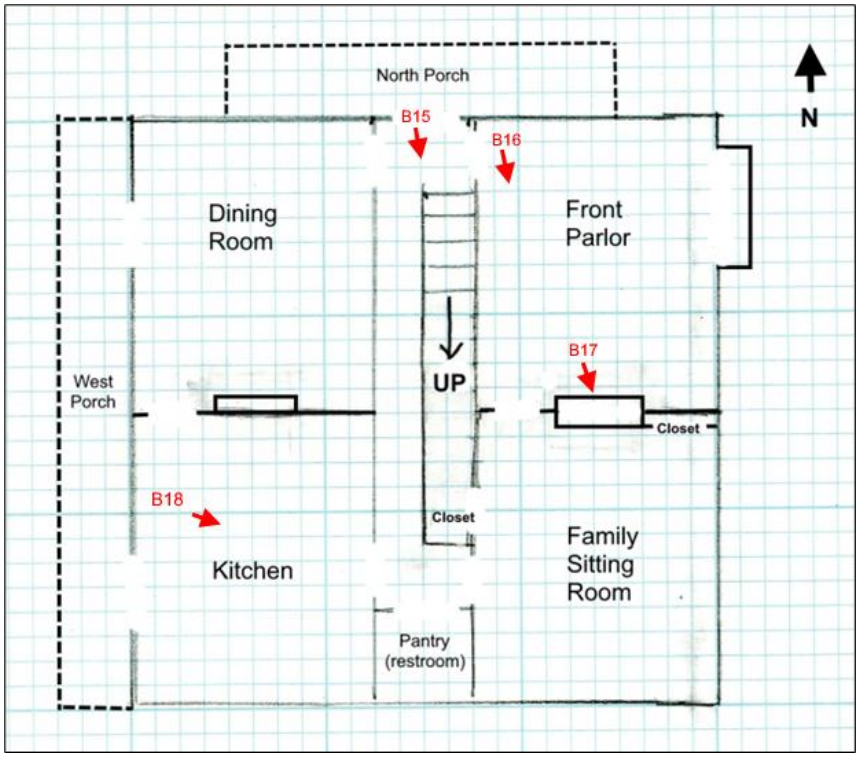
Figure A4. Aerial image of property, current site. Parcle nos. 212105-9011 and 212105-9156.

Figure A5. Aerial image with site features identified, 2022 (with photo directions, B1-B14).

A. Neely Residence
B. Hori Furoba
C. Acosta Farm Shed
D. Well House
E. Gazebo

Figure A6. Rough sketches of house plan, with photo directions (not to scale).

First Floor



Second Floor

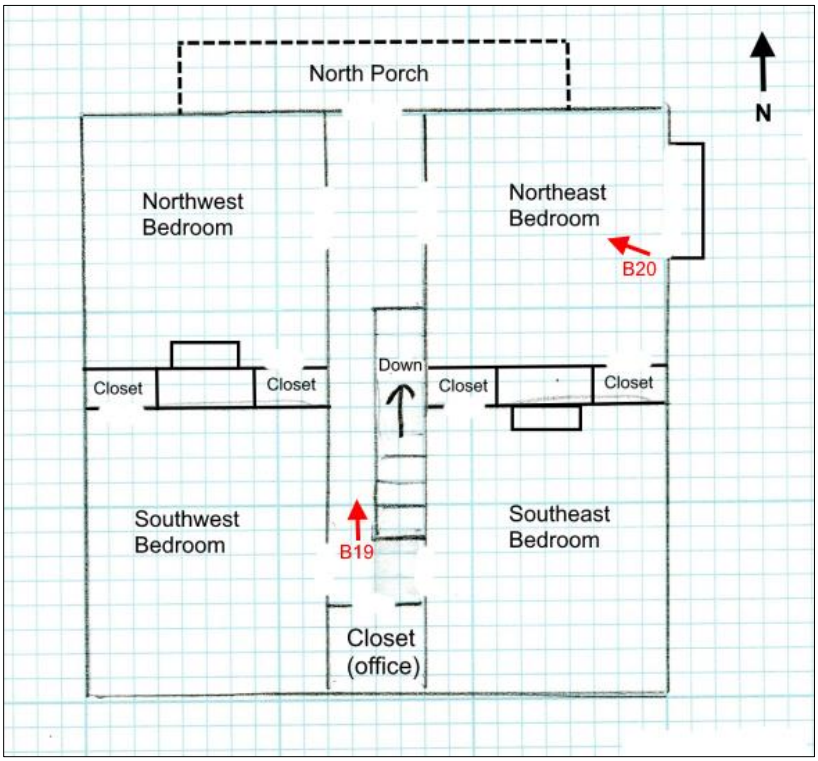
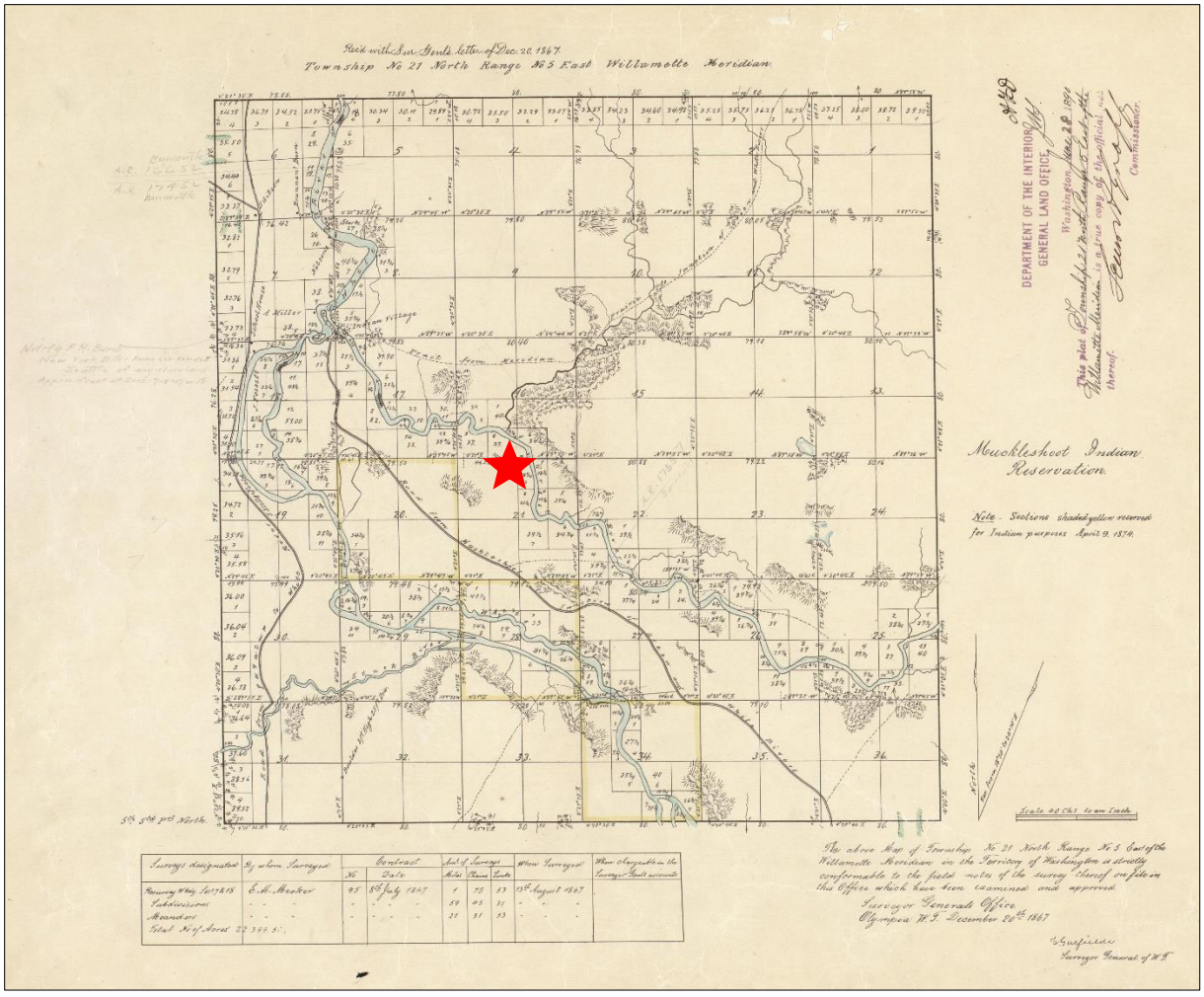


Figure A7. Land Survey Map of Township 21N, Range 5E, 1867.



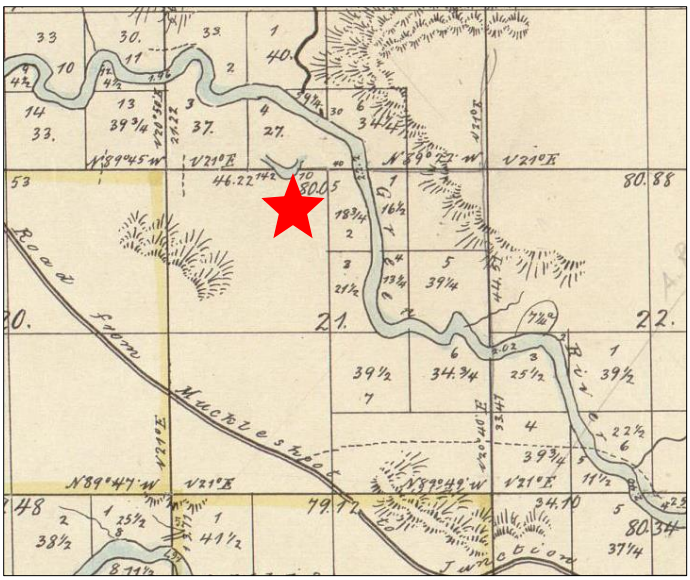


Figure A8. Anderson's New Map of King County (partial), 1888.

- Diamond denotes location of David and Irena Neely's Donation Claim at White River.
- Star denotes location of Aaron and Sarah Neely's property southeast of Slaughter (Auburn).

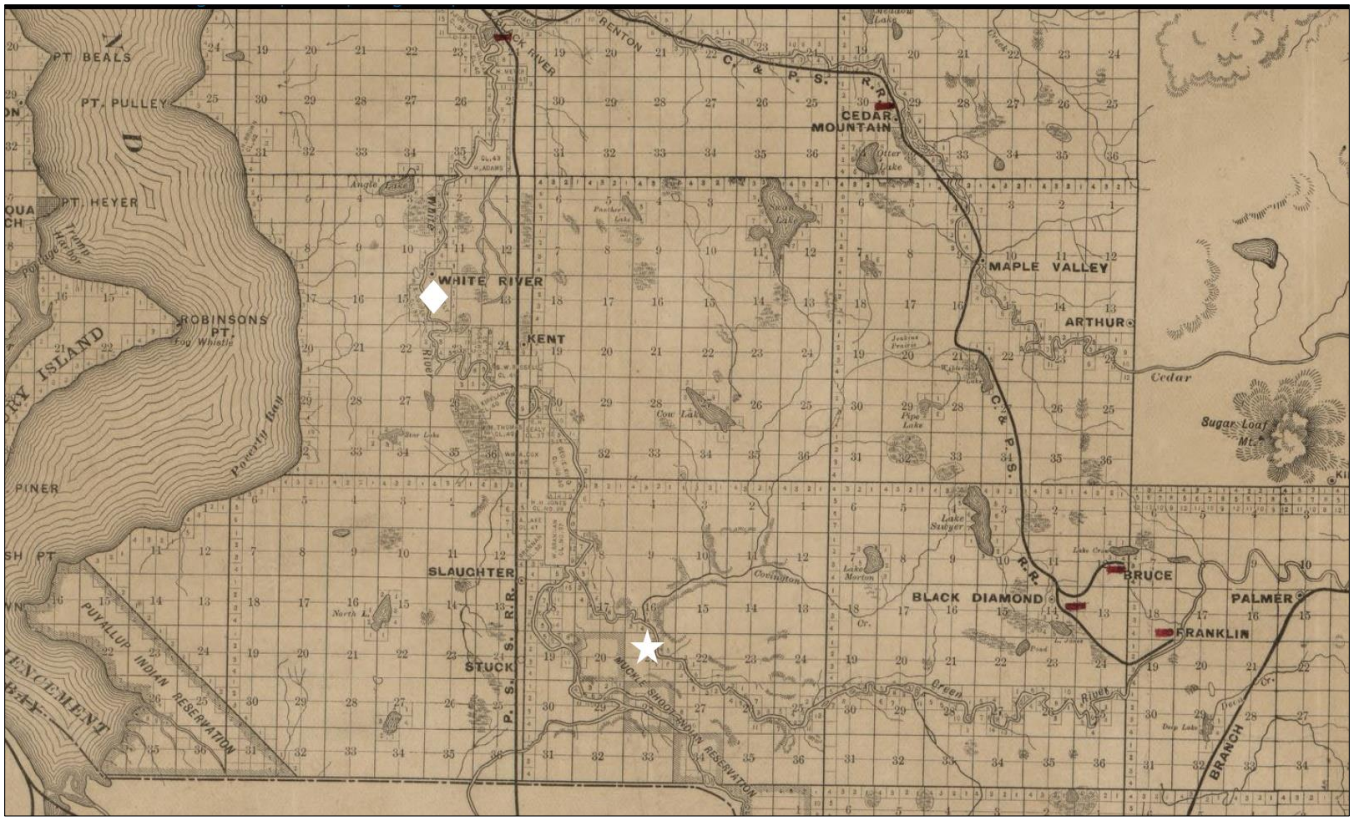


Figure A9. USGS Topographic Map, Tacoma Quadrangle (partial), 1897.

- Arrow denotes location of Aaron and Sarah Neely's property southeast of Auburn.

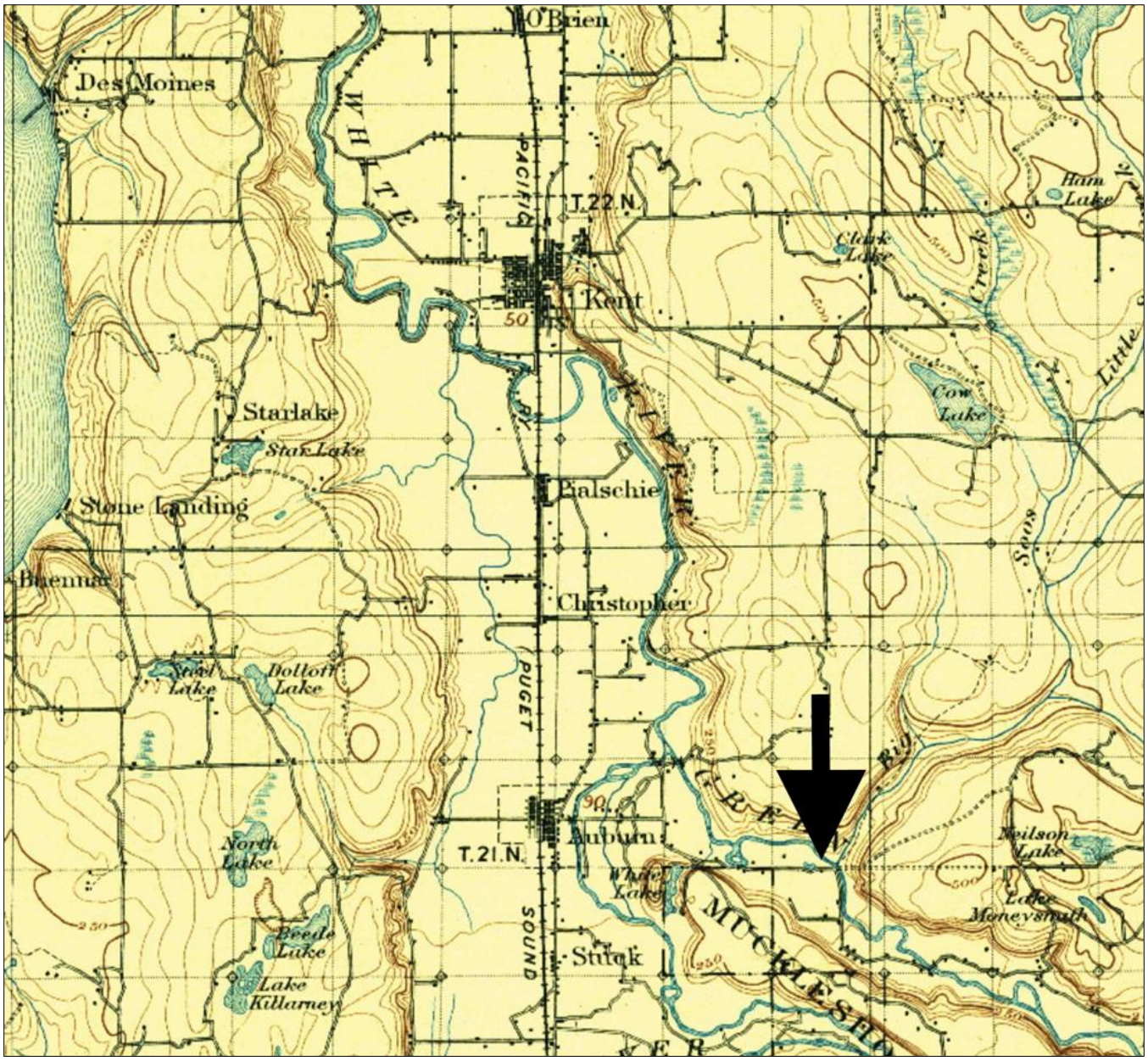


Figure A10. Township Map, Kroll Map Co., 1907. (Township 21N Range 5E)

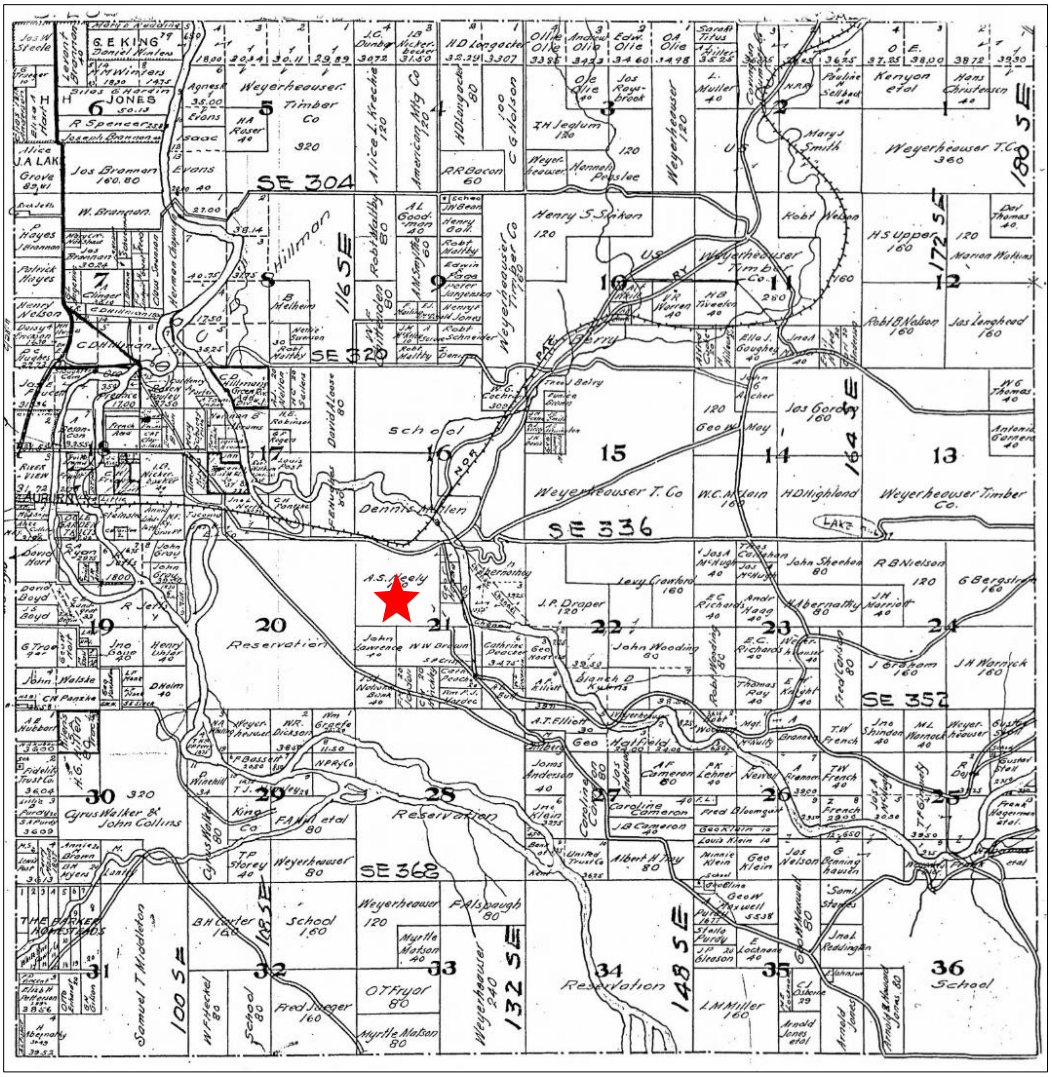


Figure A11. Top and bottom left: Aerial images of property, 1936. North is at the top.

2022 aerial image for comparison

Figure A12. USGS Topographic Map, Auburn Quadrangle (partial), 1949.

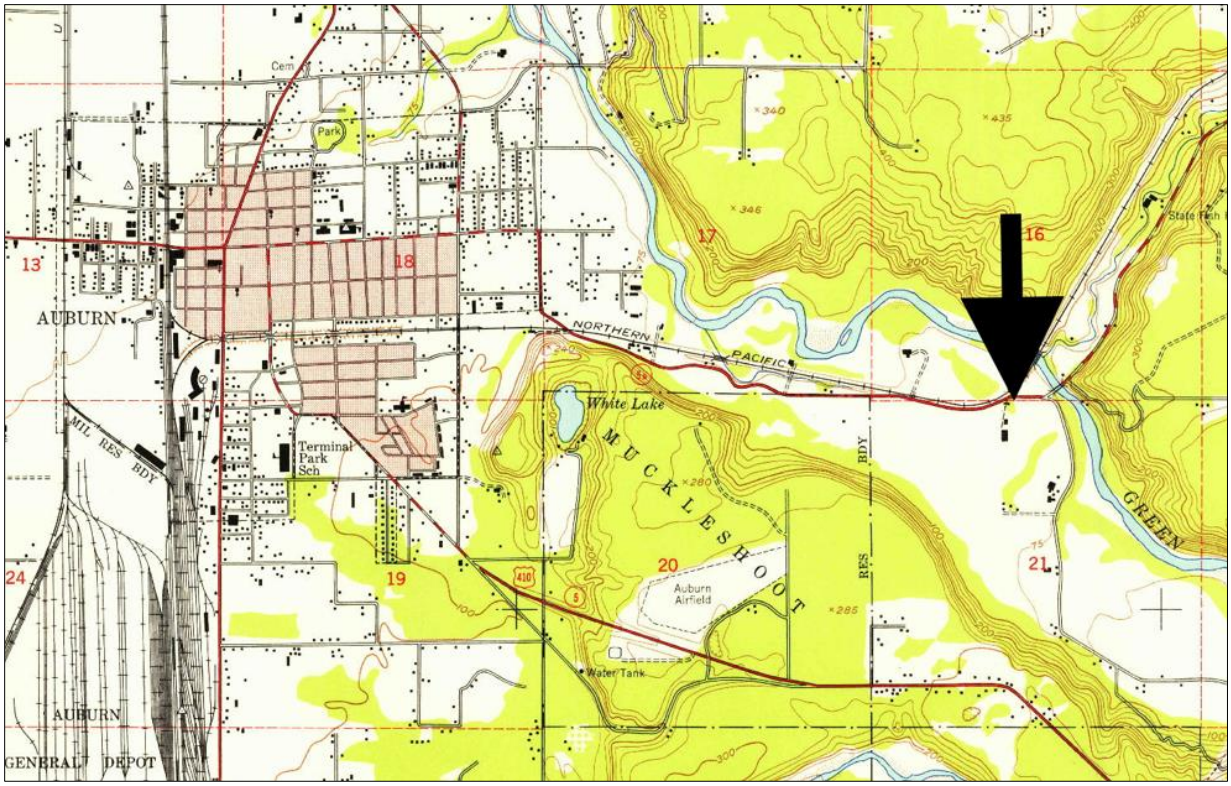


Figure A13. USGS Topographic Map, Auburn Quadrangle (partial), 1983**.**

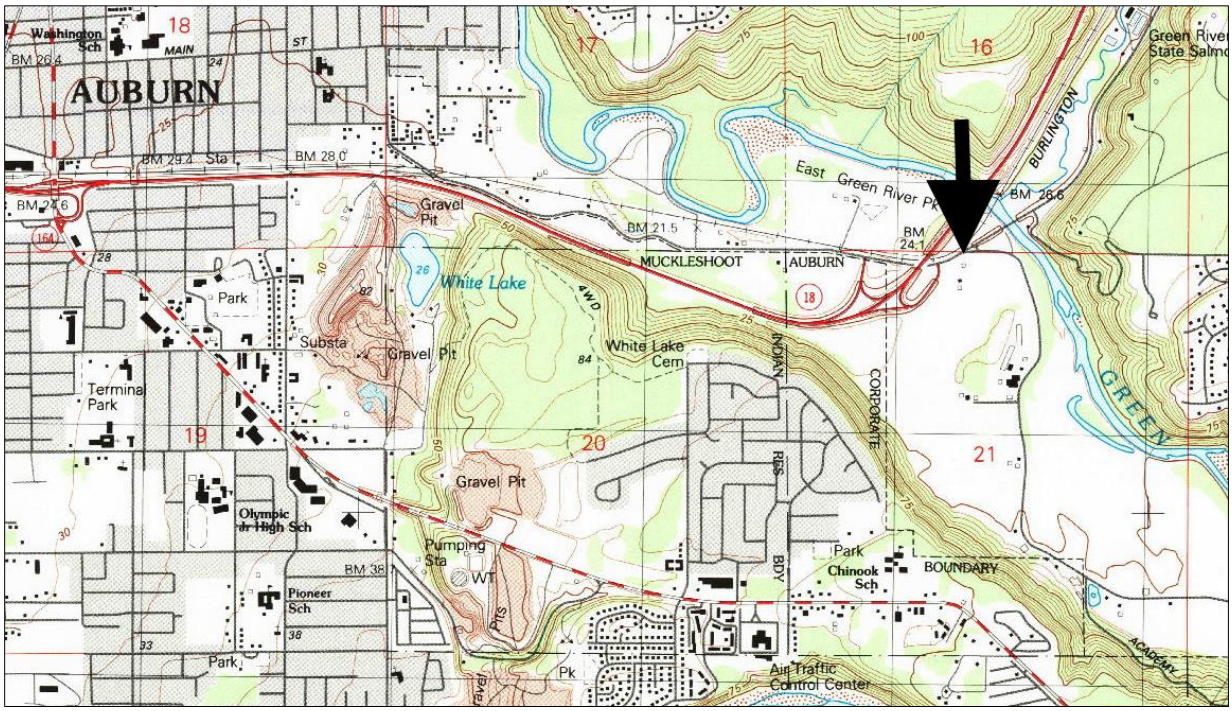


Figure A14. Sketch map of the Hori farmstead of the 1930s, produced in 1994 from the recollections of Mary Hori Nakamura, daughter of Shigeichi and Toki Hori. Note the furoba drawn directly above the residence. (North is at the bottom)

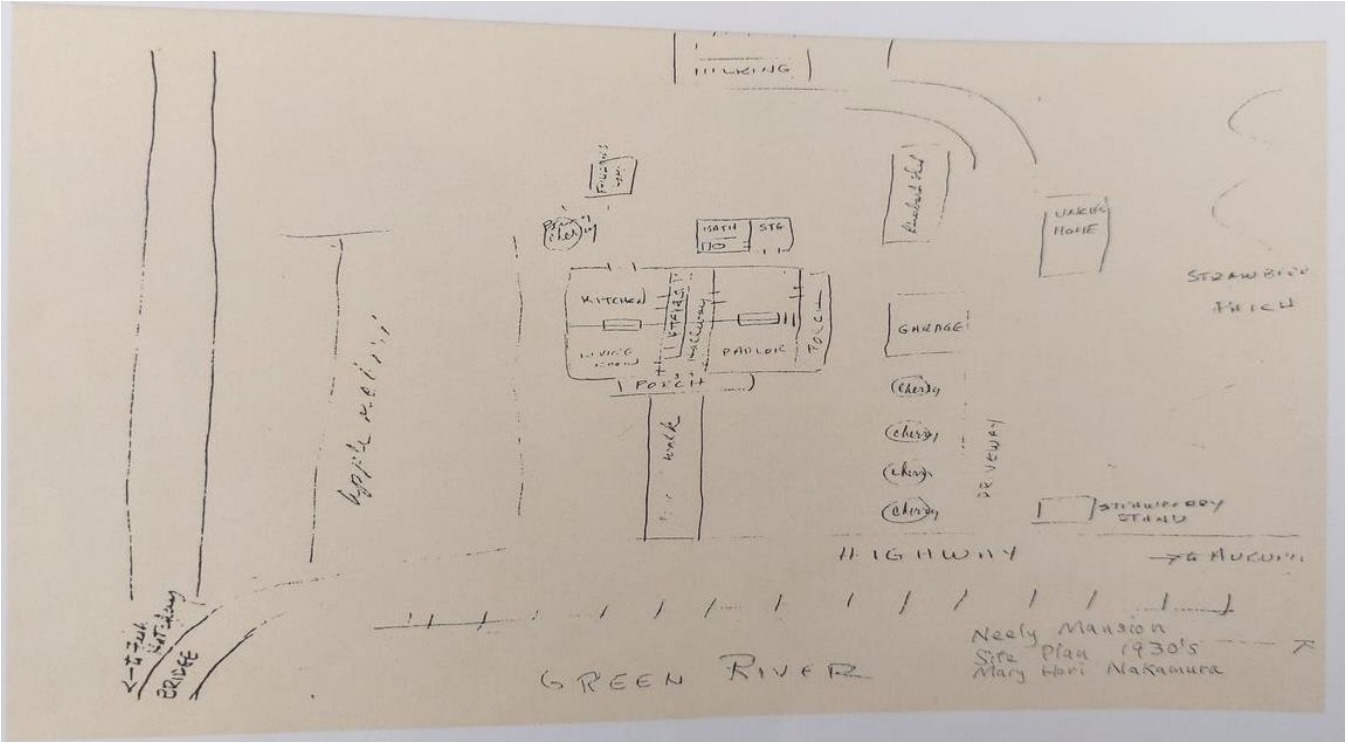
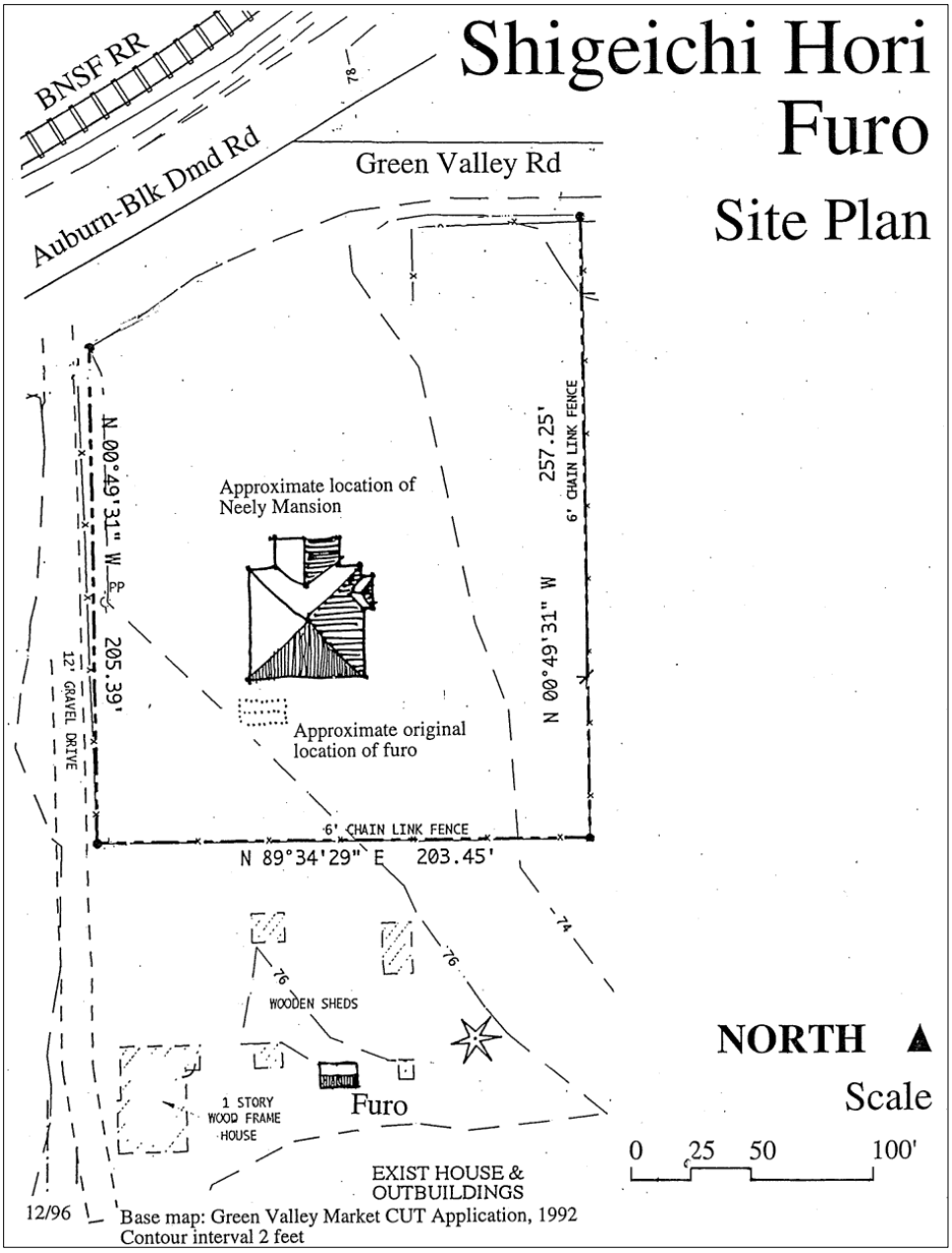


Figure A15. Site Plan of the property before the furoba was relocated in 1998.



Section B – Recent & Current Photographs (taken by Sarah Martin, 9/2022 unless otherwise noted)
Figure B1. Neely residence, primary elevation (camera facing S)

Figure B2. Entrance, driveway, and front yard (camera facing N)

Figure B3. Driveway and parking area west of residence (camera facing S)

Figure B4. Neely residence, west elevation (camera facing E).

Figure B5. Hori furoba and trellis, south and west of the residence (camera facing SE)

Figure B6. Neely residence, south (rear) elevation, furoba (left) and well house (right) (camera facing N) – taken by Linda Van Nest, 9/2016.

Figure B7. Neely residence, east elevation (camera facing NW)

Figure B8. Neely residence, east elevation, and gazebo (camera facing W)

Figure B9. Hori furoba (camera facing SE)

Figure B10. Hori furoba (camera facing NE) – taken by Linda Van Nest, 9/2016

Figure B11. Acosta farm shed (camera facing SE)

Figure B12. Acosta farm shed (camera facing W)

Figure B13. Well house (camera facing E)

Figure B14. Neely residence, primary entrance (camera facing S)

Figure B15. Residence interior – staircase (camera facing S) – taken by Linda Van Nest, 12/2022

Figure B16. Residence interior – first-floor parlor (camera facing S) – taken by Linda Van Nest, 12/2022

Figure B17. Residence interior – parlor fireplace detail (camera facing S)

Figure B18. Residence interior – kitchen (camera facing E) – taken by Linda Van Nest, 12/2022

Figure B19. Residence interior – 2nd floor center hall (camera facing N)

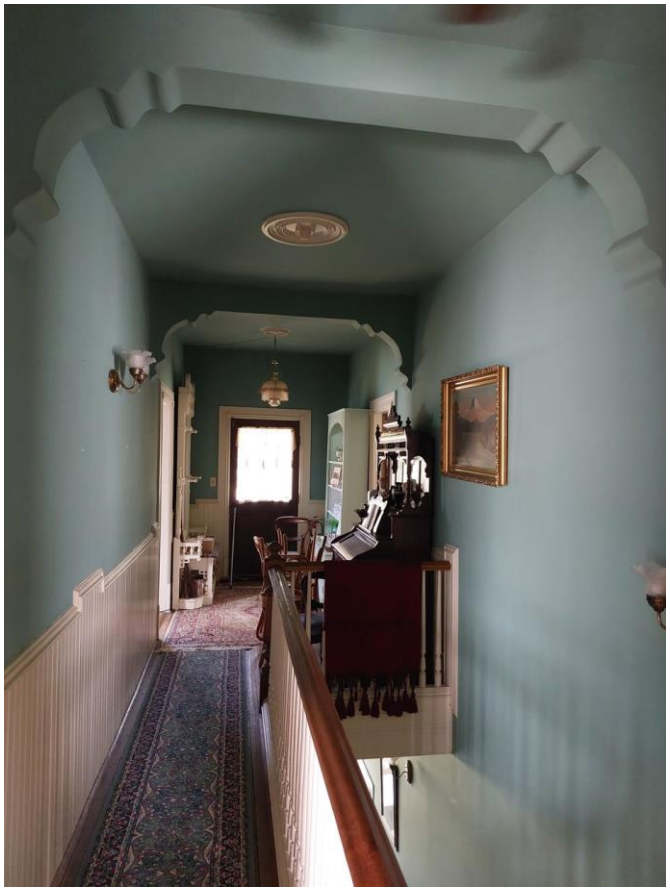


Figure B20. Residence interior – NE corner bedroom on 2nd floor (camera facing NW)

Section C – Historic Photographs & Clippings

Figures C1-C4. (Left to Right) Aaron Sr. and Sarah Neely and Aaron Jr. and Vi Rena Neely. Source: Fred and Mary Hardin. “History of the Neely Mansion (pamphlet).” 1982.



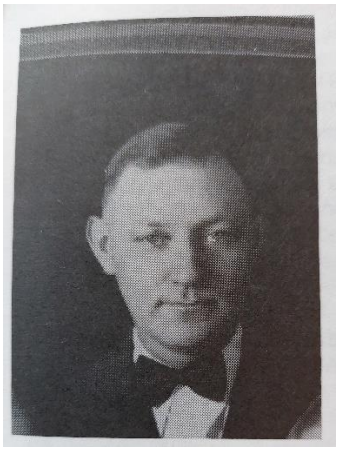



Figure C5. Earliest-known photograph of the Neely residence, taken shortly after its completion in 1894. The identities of the individuals pictured are not known but they are members of the Neely family. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections.

Figure C6. Dr. Levi Ballard's general store building, constructed by **Dennis Leahy**, ca. 1886. Source: Clarence B. Bagley. *History of King County, Washington*, Vol. I (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1929), 716.

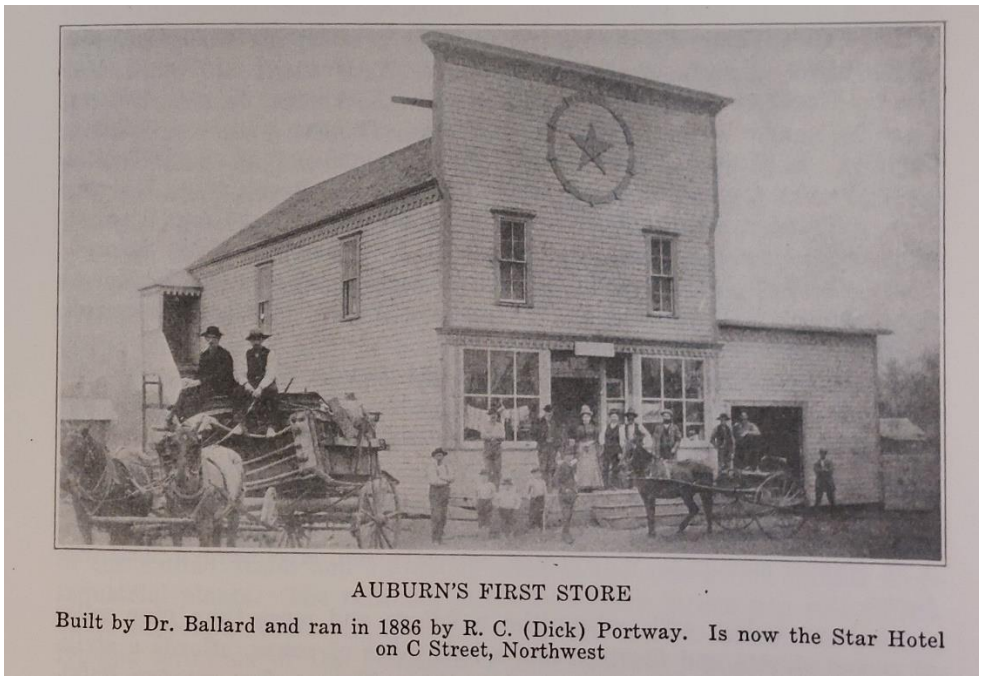


Figure C7. Dr. Alexander and Sarah Hughes residence, constructed by Dennis Leahy ca. 1890. It was demolished in 1990 and last owned by Daisy Erickson. Source: White River Valley Museum Collections, photograph catalog no. PO-00485.

Figure C8. Ernest and Hannah Galli family pictured sitting on the porch of their new home shortly after leaving the Neely property. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections.

Figure C9-C10. Sentaro and Hisako Fukuda, ca. 1920. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

Figure C11. Sentaro Fukuda and Tomiko Fukuda (child), with the highway and railroad in the background, 1926. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

Figure C12. Fukuda family members, with residence in the background, 1926. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

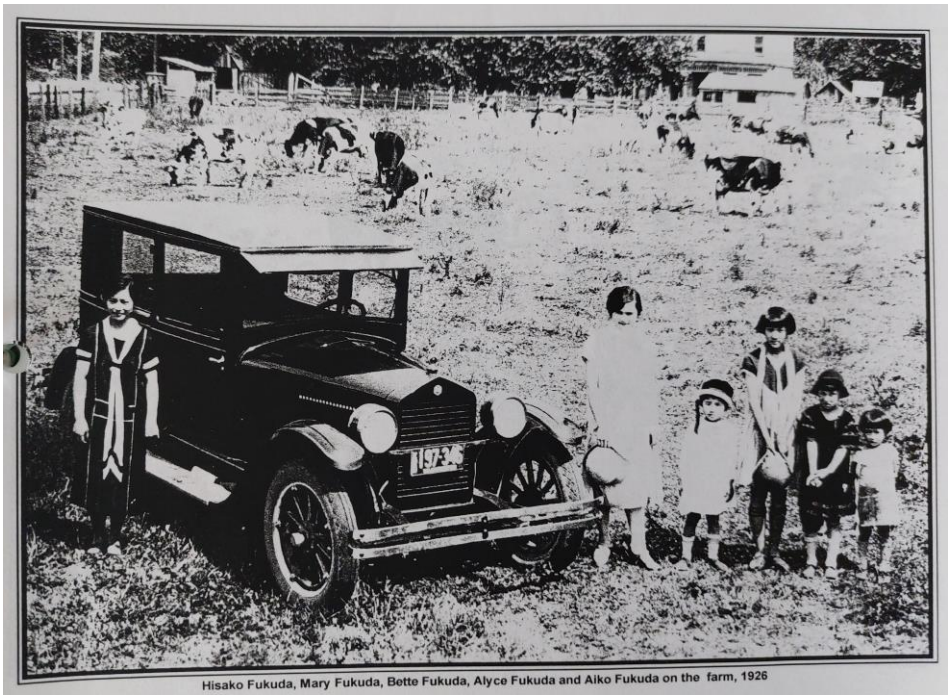


Figure C13. Fukuda family members, with farm buildings in the background, 1926. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

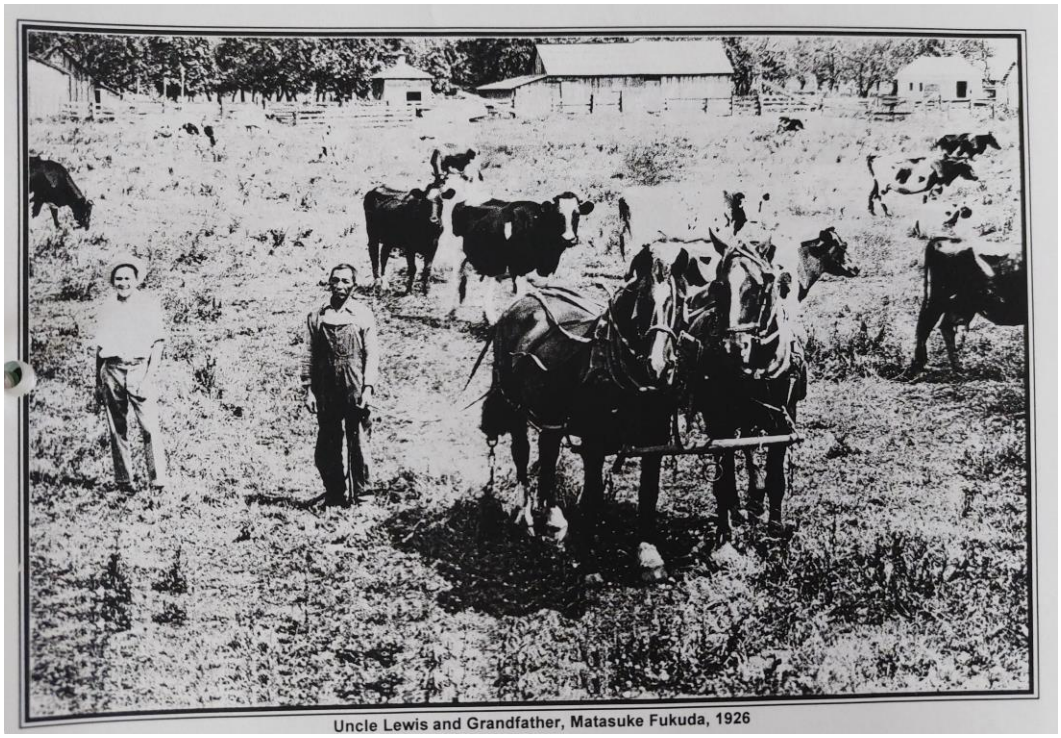


Figure C14. Neely Mansion (left) and workers' quarters (right), with Fukuda family dairy cattle in the foreground, 1926. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

Figure C15. Fukuda Dairy Barn, 1926. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Fukuda family.

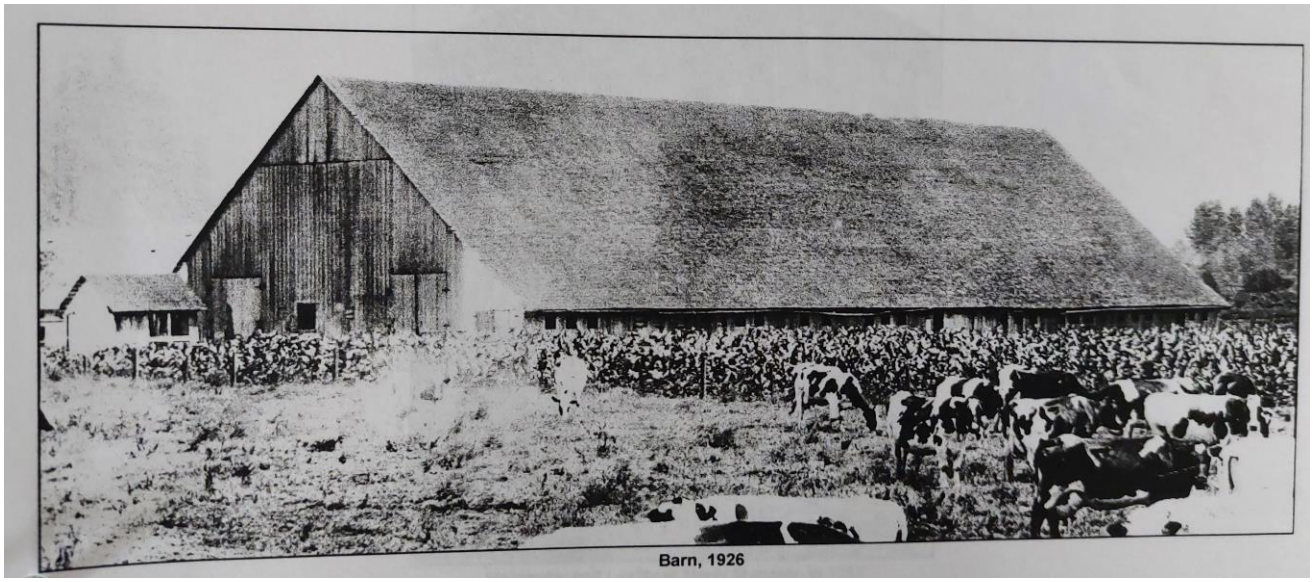


Figure C16. Shimano and Shigeichi Hori, ca. 1930. Source: Neely Mansion Association Collections & Hori family.

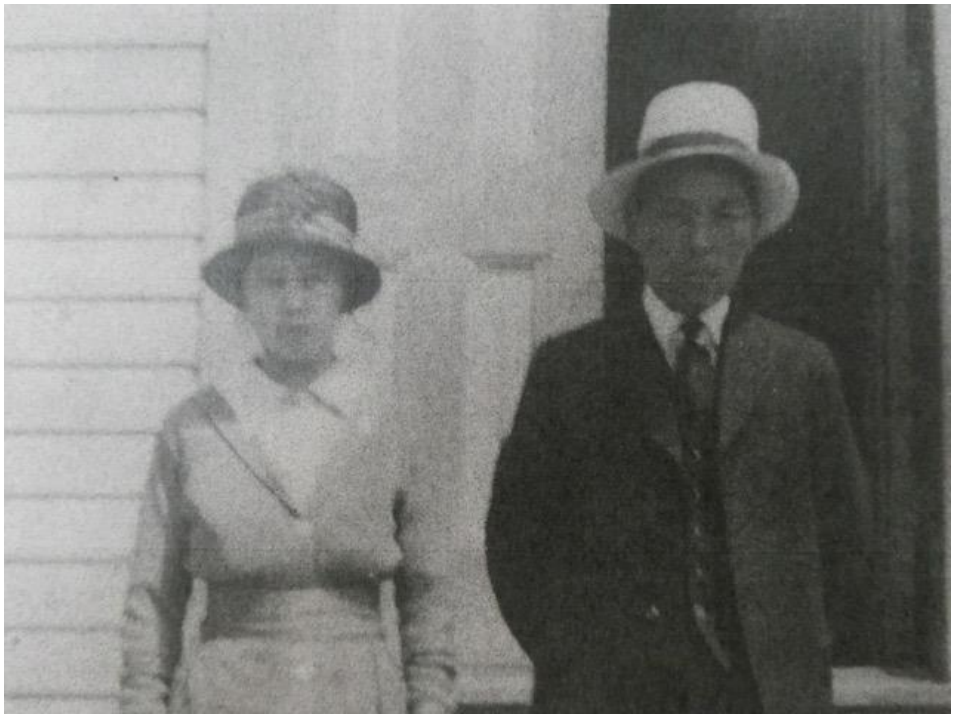


Figure C17. Neely residence, showing the west (side) elevation and porch and the adjacent furoba (bathhouse). Source: King County Tax Assessor Record, 1939.

Figure C18. Neely residence, showing the east (side) elevation. Source: King County Tax Assessor Record, 1939.

Figure C19. Worker housing on the Neely farm. Source: King County Tax Assessor Record, 1939.

Figure C20. June & Pete Acosta, with daughter Julie, 1946. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figures C21-C22. Pete and June Acosta's house on the Neely farm. Source: King County Tax Assessor Record, 1956 (top) and 1963 (bottom).

Figure C23. Pete and June Acosta's Pike Place Market stall permits, 1948 and 1949. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C24. Neely residence, south (rear) elevation. The furoba is pictured at the left and rear addition is at the right, 1957. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

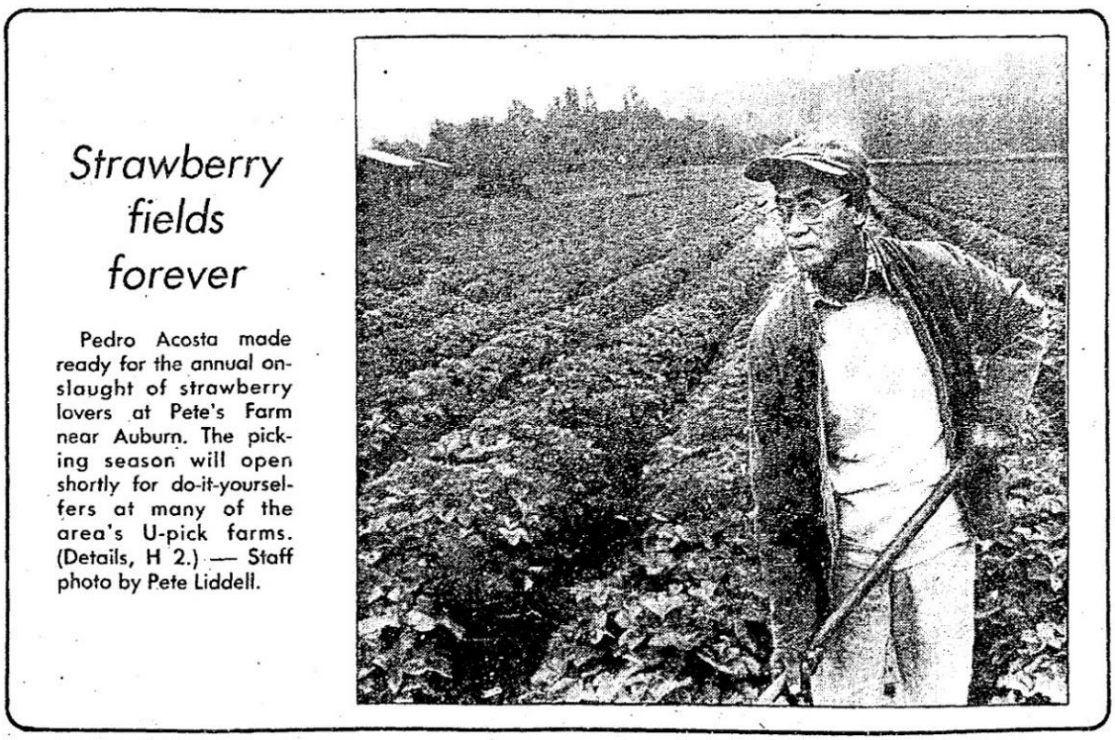
Figure C25. Unidentified Filipino farm workers and Julie Acosta pictured on a farm truck in front of the old dairy barn. It was demolished in the 1960s. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C26. Pete Acosta is pictured in front of the Acosta farm shed. Note that it is situated on skids, ca. 1970. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C27. Neely Mansion, 1972 (camera facing NE). Source: White River Valley Museum Collections, PO-00410.

Figure C28. Neely Mansion and furoba (gable roof), 1973 (camera facing NE). Source: NRHP nomination.

Figure C29. *Seattle Times*, May 31, 1978, p. 91.



Strawberry fields forever

Pedro Acosta made ready for the annual onslaught of strawberry lovers at Pete's Farm near Auburn. The picking season will open shortly for do-it-yourselfers at many of the area's U-pick farms. (Details, H 2.) — Staff photo by Pete Liddell.

Figure C30. Pete's Farm stand, with the Neely residence in the background, undated. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C31. Bus service to Pete's Farm stand, undated. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C32. Undated photo of June Acosta (left) assisting customers of Pete's Farm stand. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C33. Pete's Farm featured in *Valley Observer*, Sept. 10, 1980. Clipping in Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

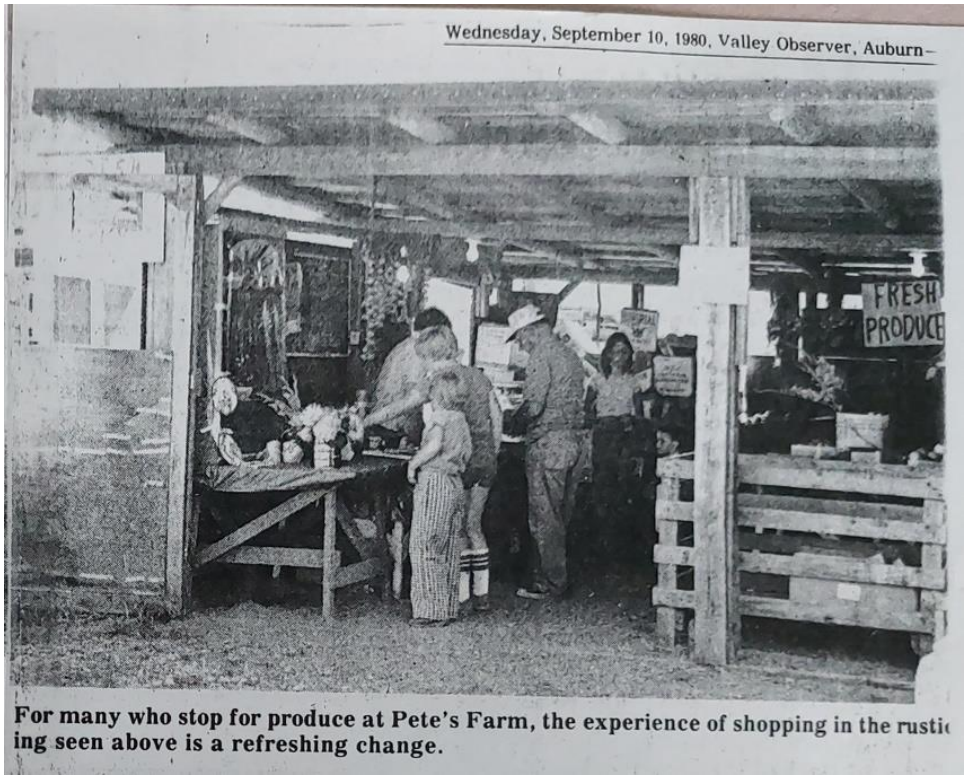
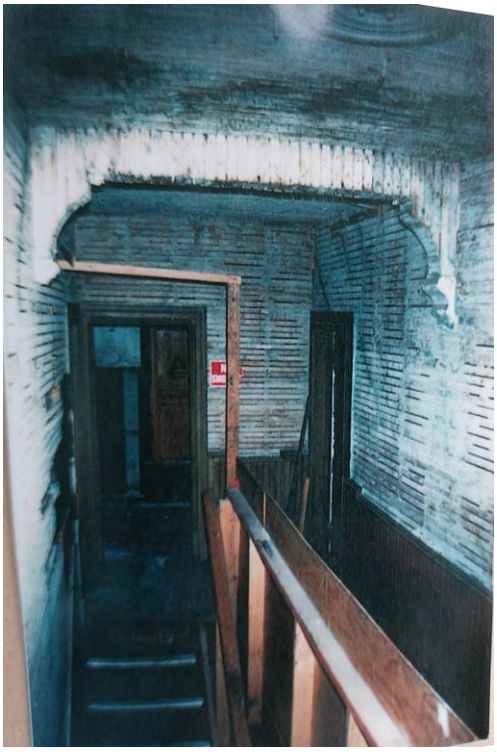
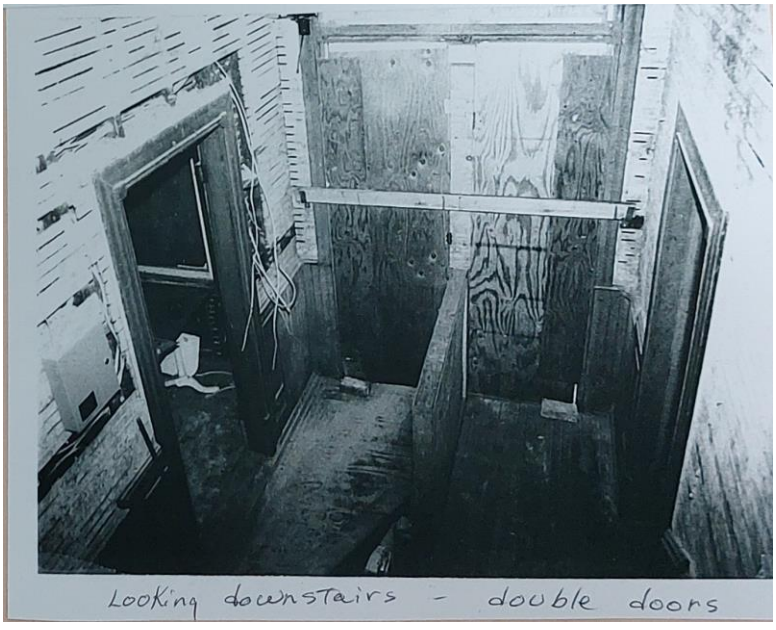


Figure C34. Pete Acosta is pictured mowing the grass next to the Acosta family residence, with the Neely residence in the background, ca. 1980. Source: Julie Acosta personal collection.

Figure C35. Residence fenced off and undergoing phase one work to secure exterior and complete foundation repairs, ca. 1981. Source: King County Assessor.

Figure C36-C37. Photos of interior, ca. 1984. (Left) Second floor hall. (Right) Primary entry and hall. Photos taken by Linda Van Nest. Source: Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.





Figures C38-C39. (Left) Interior of front parlor. (Right) Exterior of front parlor. Ca. 1984. Interior photo taken by Linda Van Nest. Source: Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

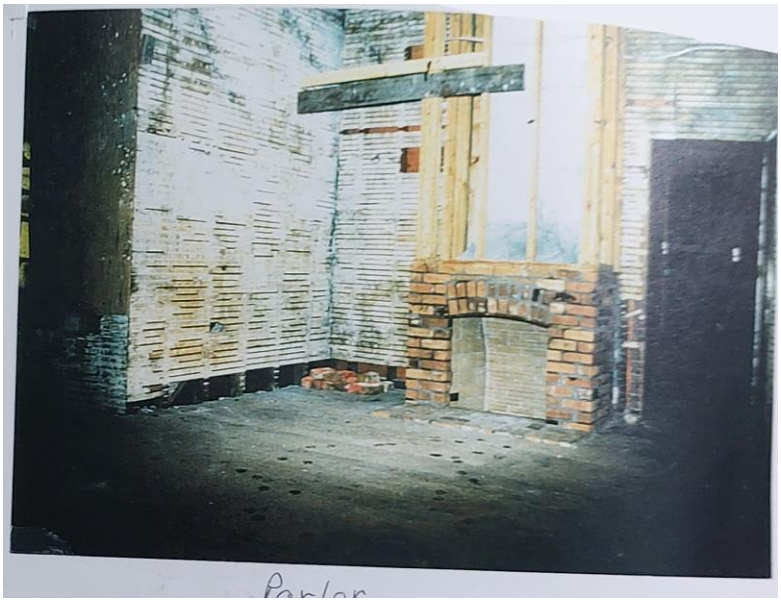


Figure C40. Neely Mansion Association, Board of Directors, 1993. (Back row, left to right: Bernice Lowe, Pat Hallowell, Twila Bartholomew, Lynn Henke, and Clarissa Nelson. Front row, left to right: Chrystal Geiszler, Chris Watters, Linda Geiszler, Linda Van Nest, and Jenny Rice. Not pictured: Hilda Meryhew and Gale Harpold. Source: Hilda Meryhew Scrapbook.

Figure C41. Archaeological excavation, Sept. 2015. Photo taken by Linda Van Nest.

Figure C42. Archaeological excavation, Sept. 2015. Photo taken by Linda Van Nest.

PART IV: MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

9. Previous Documentation

Use the space below to cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form (use continuation sheet if necessary).

Previous documentation on file:

- ☒ included in King County Historic Resource Inventory
- ☒ previously designated a King County Landmark
- ☐ previously designated a Community Landmark
- ☒ listed in Washington State Register of Historic Places
- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing
- ☐ (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☒ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings, Survey #:
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering, Rec. #:

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ King County Historic Preservation Program
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other (specify repository)

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