Whatcom County Poor Farm

Preliminary findings and historic evaluation.

Prepared by T.G. Heuser Company

September 2022 –May 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared between September 2022 and April 2023 at the request of Joel Douglas of the Northwest Annex Preservation Committee and the Veterans Memorial Center of Bellingham and contains the work thus far completed toward a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) application. This work includes a Preliminary Historic Evaluation detailing under which Criteria and Areas of Significance the Whatcom County Poor Farm building is eligible for the NRHP as well as an explanation for why the building has the integrity to convey its historic significance. Following this evaluation is a full historical context that includes the history of the Whatcom County Poor Farm and the surrounding area, biographies of the Poor Farm building's architect and builders, origins of poor farms in the US and Washington state, and brief comparisons to other county poor farms in Washington state. This report was prepared using material sourced from Whatcom Museum, Center For Pacific Northwest Studies, Whatcom County Public Works, Whatcom County Tax Parcel Viewer, the digitized *Bellingham Herald* and other newspapers, Historylink.org, Kitsap History Museum, Yakima Valley Museum, Monroe Historical Society, Ancestry.com, and others.

2. PRELIMINARY HISTORIC EVALUATION

The Whatcom County Poor Farm building (now "Northwest Annex") is a deeply significant and vitally important historic resource whose association with and contributions to Whatcom County's and Washington State's outstanding agricultural and architectural legacy, as well as its community development and social welfare, tell a rich and layered story and because of this the building *must be preserved*.

This building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion A, at the local level of significance in the areas of: Agriculture, Community Planning and Development, and Health/Medicine. The Period of Significance starts with its construction in 1927, and ends in 1945, the year Whatcom County leased out the surrounding farmland and ceased to manage its operations directly from the Northwest Annex. The building is strongly associated with the unrivaled agricultural output of the North Bellingham and broader Nooksack River Valley region during the early twentieth century when this region became the state's largest producer of poultry and dairy by the mid-1920s. As the central location from which the Whatcom County government managed around 100 acres of farmland, with a substantial output of dairy and poultry products through the labor of its staff and residents, the Northwest Annex is directly associated with and contributed to the area's agricultural development and dominance.

Closely tied with the Community Planning and Development of the North Bellingham area, the building also served as a focal point for the surrounding community who defined themselves by its presence. Local sports teams adopted "poor farm" into their team names and surrounding property owners described the location of their farms in reference to their direction and distance from the Poor Farm. Numerous social groups such as the North Bellingham Grange as well as

local churches either directly advocated for the building's design and later improvements, and/or frequently brought services, entertainment, and sundries to its residents.

The building also has a direct association with the history of Whatcom County's and Washington State's welfare and medical practices. Whatcom County constructed it at a time when major reforms and improvements swept through the field of public charity and welfare that demanded larger and cleaner spaces with more amenities and better medical services. As a result, construction of new and improved buildings typically designed in revival styles occurred all across the state of Washington during the 1920s. Whatcom County's Poor Farm building then went on to serve as a vitally important place of refuge and care for the increasing number of poor and medically vulnerable residents during the Great Depression, until the state and federal government gradually rolled out new forms of welfare, such as state pensions and later Social Security, from 1933 onward.

Aside from Criterion A, the building is also significant under Criterion C as an outstanding and likely the largest scale example of a Tudor Revival style building in the Bellingham area, designed by the area's most prolific architect during the early twentieth century, F. Stanley Piper. As an expert designer whose mastery of and predilection for the Tudor Revival style defined his career, the Northwest Annex is arguably his greatest expression of the style in terms of its scale and is therefore one of his most outstanding achievements.

While the building has endured some alterations since Piper's time, mostly to the interior, but to the exterior as well, the exterior overall retains sufficient integrity for the building to convey its multiple areas of significance. It remains in its original location, and retains its original footprint. The building's stucco exterior, decorative half timbering, steeply-pitched roof with crossing and overlapping gables, gable over arched entry, and gabled dormers are all hallmarks of the Tudor Revival style and appear mostly intact. The original leaded-glass chapel windows with Tudor Gothic Revival arches also remain, as do many of the building's original wood sash three or six-over-one windows.

To conclude, the Northwest Annex is exceedingly historically significant by multiple measures as stated above. It is also one of the last remaining poor farm buildings in the State as the vast majority have long since been demolished, making the building vitally important to telling multiple aspects of both the County's and the State's history. Demolishing it would represent a tragic loss to the State's, County's, and local community's heritage, one that the community deeply respected, and closely identified with for as long as it functioned as an institution of public welfare.

3. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Common Name: Northwest Annex

Historic Names: Whatcom County Poor Farm, Whatcom County Farm, Whatcom County Home

Address: 5280 Northwest Drive, Bellingham, Washington, 98226

Location: The Property is on southeast corner of Northwest Drive and Smith Road in the North Bellingham area of unincorporated Whatcom County, Washington

Parcel No: 3902344163910000

Township: 39 North

Range: 2 East

Section   34

Size (footprint):   Approximately 22,000 square feet

Original Use: Healthcare - sanitarium, hospital

Current Use: Government - government office

Current Status: Pending demolition and redevelopment

Construction Date: 1927

Designer: Architect F. Stanley Piper

Builders: Andrew A. Dunn & Fred J. Hallert

Original Owner: Whatcom County

Areas of Significance: Agriculture, Architecture, Health/Medicine, Community Planning and Development
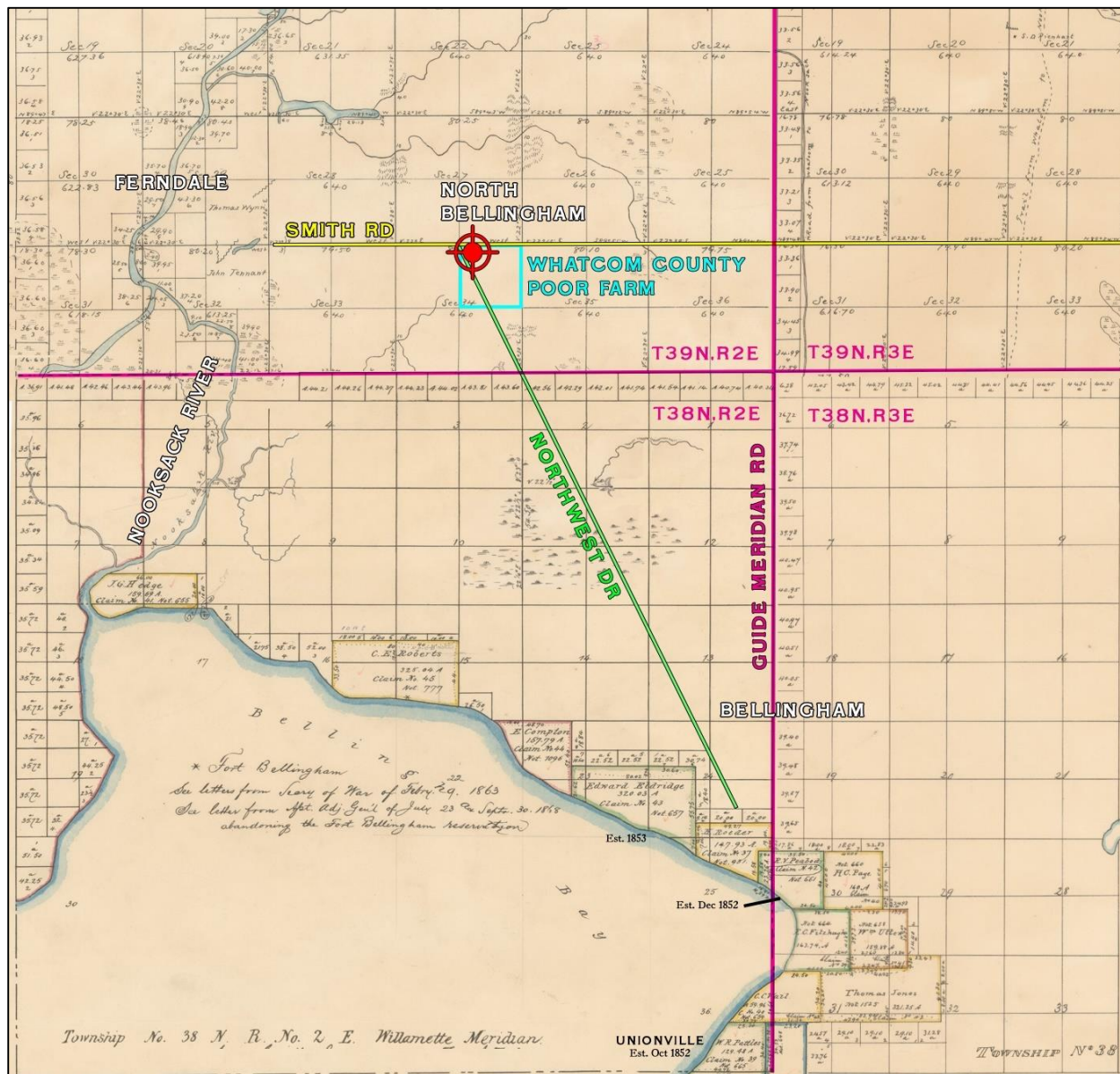
Period of Significance: 1927–1945

Significance Criteria: Criteria A and C

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4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical Overview of North Bellingham and the Ferndale / Bellingham Bay Region.

Rough Composite image of four Casdastral Survey maps created between 1864-1874 (Bureau of Land Management).

North Bellingham is a rural/suburban region of unincorporated Whatcom County consisting of small clusters of single-family homes to the north and west of the subject property and small farms around small patches of forest to the south and east. North Bellingham occupies a unique geographical position between the City of Bellingham to the south and the Town of Ferndale to the west in which both cities influence its development. However, given that the subject property and its immediate surroundings are closer to Ferndale and remain relatively under-developed, its later, post-1870 history tracks more closely with that of Ferndale and the Lower Nooksack River valley region.

Early surveys of the area of North Bellingham and Whatcom County more broadly describe this region as one of dense forest, swamps, and creeks. The Native American Lummi and Nooksack tribes occupied this region for thousands of years prior to European settlement. The Lummi territory originally included the San Juan Islands and Washington Coast from Point Whitehorn on the Straight of Georgia and northwest of Ferndale, down to Chuckanut Bay south of Bellingham. Nooksack territory laid inland along the Nooksack River as far east as Maple Falls. These tribes hunted local game, fished for Salmon and Shellfish, and gathered fireweed shoots and established camps, houses, smokehouses, and fishing weirs along the Washington coast, and the entire spans of Nooksack River and Whatcom Creek.

Spanish explorer Manuel Quimper was the first European to approach the region when his ships entered present-day Bellingham Bay, initially naming it Gulf de Gaston, in 1791. British explorer George Vancouver arrived the following year and named the bay after Sir William Bellingham, the British Navy's chief accountant who had raised money for the expedition. For the next several decades, the primary contact between native tribes and Europeans was through fur traders from Fort Langley, a trading post established in Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1827, some 30 miles north of the subject building.

Starting in October of 1852, the first Euro-American settlers began staking claims along the shore of Bellingham Bay approximately 6 miles southeast of the subject building. These claims later became the settlements of Whatcom, Sehome, Bellingham, and Fairhaven. The first settlers, some of whom arrived at the direction of Lummi Chief Chow'it'sut, established a lumber mill on Whatcom Creek and various coal mines nearby which were built and operated with the assistance of Lummi workers. Other more distant native tribes such as the Haeda were not as welcoming as the Lummi and frequently raided these early Euro-American settlements as well as the Lummi.

Within a few years, settlers took action to minimize raids and assert control in the region. First came the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty in January of 1855. This treaty established the Lummi Reservation west of the Nooksack River and other reservations throughout Puget Sound area further south. Just over a year later, the U.S. Army established Fort Bellingham on the coast of the bay, immediately east of the Nooksack River delta. These actions secured existing settlements and opened additional portions of the coast and inlands, including the present-day Ferndale and North Bellingham areas. The Lummi on the other hand, were devastated during this time. Their population due to raids and diseases brought by settlers dropped below 600 by 1857 from a high of over 2000 some years prior.

A year later, the Fraser River Gold Rush in Canada brought thousands of prospectors into Bellingham Bay. As the prospectors passed through the recently taken Nooksack River valley lands on the way to Canada, they found these lands to be especially fertile and suitable for farming. After hearing these reports, Whatcom County Sheriff John Tennant and his Lummi wife Clara filed the first land claim in the Nooksack River valley in 1859 at what the Lummi then called "Si-lat-sis" and is now Lake Tennant: just 1.5 miles west of the subject building. Several

other settlers and returning prospectors soon followed throughout the 1860s. They claimed lands farther up river around the future sites of Ferndale and Lynden and the areas in between with most if not all lands claimed by 1890.

This trend of inland settlement intensified after the burning of the Whatcom Creek lumber mill in 1874 and the closure of the Sehome coal mine in 1878. These devastating events prompted bay-area settlers to move farther inland to seek the abundance of farming opportunities there. The migration quickly prompted Whatcom County commissioners to establish the voting precinct of "Jam" in 1874. The new precinct centered on a massive logjam on the Nooksack River that extended south from present-day Ferndale's city center for nearly a mile. It was at this time that a settler named Peter Galiger (also Galligar) acquired the subject property as part of a 160-acre U.S. land patent consisting of the Northeast ¼ of Section 34 in Township 39N Range 2E and approximately 2 miles southeast of Jam. Not keen on the name of Jam nor on the logjam itself, local residents adopted the name of "Ferndale" in 1875 and collaborated to clear the logjam. After clearing it in February of 1877, commerce expanded in the area with ferry service beginning as early as 1879.

Galiger himself, whose involvement in the jam-clearing effort is unknown, had little time to enjoy it relative to his neighbors. A nearby homesteader murdered Galiger over a domestic dispute on December 1, 1878 and fled the county never to be found. Galiger was reportedly buried on his land in front of the subject building, but the exact location of his burial site is no longer known. Finding no heirs to his estate, The state of Washignton escheated Galiger's land.

The following decade was overall an economic boom period for Whatcom County during which the population grew six-fold. The communities of Bellingham Bay recovered from the losses of the 1870s with the arrival of the Washington Colony from Kansas while the lower Nooksack River valley's post logjam growth continued. Growing pains ensued as many residents new and old disputed over land use and ownership, but ultimately, they succeeded in reviving the region's lumber industry and made significant investments in land transportation.

While the Washington Colony restored lumber milling on the bay (with some difficulty), the lower Nooksack River valley established its first lumber mills. Of these, the most successful were that of the Shelter Brothers, established on Deer Creek in 1882 just one mile north of the subject building, and that of the Monroe Brothers within Ferndale proper circa 1885.

To better service the new mills and escape the challenges of transporting over the rough waters of the Nooksack, Northwest Diagonal Road (now Northwest Drive) was completed as a dirt road in 1884 with stagecoach service following soon after. The new road followed a northwesterly path from the settlement of Whatcom, cutting through Galiger's original homestead up to Smith Road just a half-mile east of Ferndale where it then turned due north. Smith road, which had connected Ferndale to the Galiger homestead since circa 1873, was then extended east along the north border of the subject property then up to and beyond Guide Meridian Road in 1887. These roads were later planked then converted to gravel before being paved much later. Meanwhile, the Bellingham

Bay and British Columbia Railroad Company extended a rail line from Bellingham Bay to the Canadian border starting in 1883. Completed in 1891, it passed through Ferndale and continued north to Sumas, WA on the Canadian border. The new track initially served existing farmers, lumber mills, and logging camps in addition to brick manufacturing after the discovery of clay in 1891 around the Brennan train station southeast of Tennant Lake about 1.5 miles west of the subject property.

Despite the interruption of the 1893 economic panic and a number of devastating local fires in the area, the growth of the previous decade continued and allowed the area's fledging industries and education system to solidify. In 1893, the year of the economic panic, the transcontinental Great Northern Railroad completed its rail extension to Bellingham and Ferndale from St. Paul, MN by way of Seattle. This and continued improvements to local roads around the same time connected the region to demand for lumber, shingles, and agricultural products from across the continent after the economy recovered. Thus, lumber mills and logging camps opened rapidly along the Nooksack River valley while farmers established the area's first large-scale creameries, evaporation plants, and canneries to mass-produce and distribute their products. This industrial growth was reportedly so fast that the region's relatively low population growth of only 30% between 1890 and 1900 was not enough to keep up with it.

Meanwhile the much larger population growth during the 1880s necessitated expansion of public services. Excluding the communities on Bellingham Bay, only a few, single-room schools had been built between Ferndale and Laurel (approx. 3 miles NE of the subject property) by 1889. Into the 1890s, nine new school districts were established including one for North Bellingham. The wood frame school building that once stood across Northwest Drive from the subject property, which is identified in the 1914-16 Kroll Atlas of Whatcom County and a 1938 article of the Bellingham Herald, may have been built at this time. Not long after establishing the school, the County established a poor farm (later "county home") on the subject property in 1900. It consisted of a two-story wood frame building with accommodations for a dozen residents and the surrounding farmland and old growth timber. It provided housing for the county's poorest residents as well as petty criminals who worked on the farm during their time there.

Just a few years later, Whatcom County had become the state's largest producer of shingles at nearly 10,000,000 shingles per day by 1903. The Ferndale area was a major center for this production with its many lumber and shingle mills spread out across vast reaches of surrounding farmland being fed timber from logging camps farther east and north in the county. Meanwhile, Bellingham, which had incorporated as a city in 1903, had lumber mills of its own along its waterfront, as well as a booming Salmon industry after numerous canneries had been established there in the 1890s to fill demand from more distant markets. Pacific American Fisheries in particular, became the largest canning operation in the world. These canneries sourced their salmon from the Nooksack and other nearby waterways where previously Nooksack valley farmers reportedly had long caught them as a food source and fertilizer for their crops.

Going further into the twentieth century, Whatcom County's population more than doubled to over 50,000 by 1920. Most settled in Bellingham where they sought the vast number of opportunities offered by its industrialized waterfront. However, many settled within and around the North Bellingham / Ferndale area, purchasing smaller plots of farmland from the larger homesteads established in the previous century. As a result, the area immediately surrounding the Whatcom County Poor Farm, often referred to as the "Poor Farm Corners," started to take on a bustling life and identity of its own. Between 1900 and 1920, local residents established a blacksmith/garage, small grocery stores, multiple churches, and meeting halls for political activities, social clubs, and dances around the intersection of Northwest Diagonal and Smith Road. Local youths formed sports teams with names such as the "Poor Farm Pirates" and played on makeshift fields on the poor farm property. The Bellingham Gun Club later established its shooting range on the southern edge of the Poor Farm in 1921 where it has remained to the present day and the Bellingham Chapter of the National Aeronautical Association built a temporary landing strip on the north and east edges of the farm in 1927.
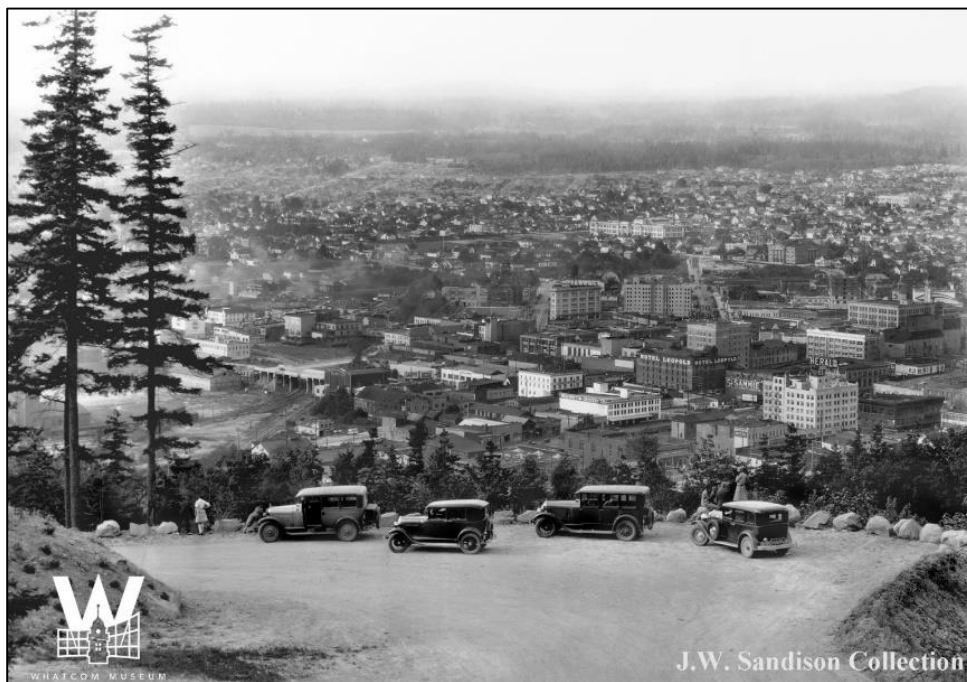
Downtown Bellingham from Sehome Hill, 1929.

Around this same time, the wider region's long-established dairy and poultry industry caught up with the lumber and salmon industries. The region became the largest poultry producer in the state through agricultural mergers and had the world's largest dry milk plant in the town of Lynden on the upper Nooksack. Meanwhile, supported in part by this vast farming industry, Bellingham entered a period of unprecedented real estate speculation. In 1926, it built its largest building to that point, the 6-story Bellingham Herald building, designed in part by Bellingham architect F. Stanley Piper. The Herald building then quickly lost its position after the completion of the 15-story Bellingham Hotel in November of 1929. Designed by architect Robert C. Reamer, it included a 162-foot-tall metal spire containing the world's largest neon sign at the time.

Origins Of Poor Farms In The United States And State Of Washington

Artist's reconstruction of Prince William County Poorhouse in Virginia ca. 1800 (Louis Berger Group).

According to historians David Wagner and Harry C. Evans the poor farm has its origins in two transformative shifts in European society. The first was a change in attitude toward the poor following the Protestant Reformation that began in Germany with the writings of Martin Luther in 1517. In Medieval Europe, the offering of food and shelter to those in need as well as the giving of alms both during church services and in the public realm (also known as "outdoor relief") was a central part of the culture and considered a social obligation. Under this paradigm, Catholic monasteries typically housed and cared for the poor. However, in areas where Protestantism first took hold, society began to take a negative view of the poor as generally lazy and unproductive and that begging should be repressed rather than encouraged. Given the significant decline in revenue following the reformation's elimination of collecting indulgences, it is only natural for the churches and monasteries who lacked those funds to see the poor as a burden to be punished.[1]

As the ideas of the reformation spread to England, King Henry VIII exploited the concept for his own political ends. He separated the Church of England from papal authority, seized church property, and centralized the state under his control. Local relief efforts, traditionally handled by churches up to that point, greatly diminished thereafter resulting in rampant unchecked poverty according to Evans. By 1601 the problem prompted the monarchy under the rule of Queen Elizabeth, to codify a new Poor Law, which imposed an unprecedented tax on its citizens to address the situation. The law also made a new and very important distinction. It devoted the funds to the care of the sick, diseased, aged, and anyone else otherwise incapable of self-support through no fault of their own and insisted that the able-bodied beggar, vagrant, or intemperate (the "unworthy poor") be "kept in continual labor."

The former could apply for monetary relief or were boarded in poorhouses or private homes while the latter could be auctioned off into servitude or were placed into a "workhouse" which was "a

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[1] An indulgence was a payment one made in exchange for the forgiveness their sins from the Catholic Church.

correctional institution in which actual discipline (cells, bread and water, instruments of punishment such as the ball and chain and later the treadmill) was to be imposed." Bible reading was often mandatory in these houses along with "other character-building activities" intended to reform its "inmates." Although more often, both the "worthy" and "unworthy" poor lived under the same roof, resulting in the interchangeable use of the terms "workhouse" and "poorhouse."

Operating under English law, the English colonists of North America used all the above methods, including outdoor relief and resettlement, for managing the poor.[2] By the early 19th century, establishing an institutional facility such as a workhouse or poor farm prevailed over other methods, which were found to be too costly and either encouraged poverty or were too cruel. Although there were many town-based poorhouses, the county-based system of Pennsylvania, which established the first poor farm in 1773, prevailed over time and served as a model for poor farms in Washington State and elsewhere.

The poor farm was simply a natural adaptation of the poorhouse/workhouse concept to the primarily agrarian and rural landscape of the early United States. In addition, the overall concept was to find a balance between the comfort and cruelty of previous methods that could provide necessities to those who really needed them, but deterred the "unworthy" poor and instead reformed them into more-productive members of society. These institutions were generally voluntary (unlike their English predecessors) to all who lived in them, which included people from all backgrounds. Children, parents, the elderly, men, women, as well as abled and disabled both in mind and body. All who were able (including the elderly) were put to work in the farm fields or in the house. This work was also expected to make the institution self-sustaining and thus even less of a tax burden. County officials had ultimate oversight and appointed a superintendent and matron (usually the wife of the superintendent) to manage day-to-day operations.

Proponents of this system produced studies demonstrating its early success in reducing costs and occurrence of poverty, but ultimately conditions at most farms quickly deteriorated and poverty continued to be problem. Houses were often poorly constructed, unsanitary, and poorly furnished. Frequently, and particularly in the winter when poor farms had the most applicants for relief, there was little work for inmates to do. Those who were capable of work were often unskilled and/or too slow to get their institution to a point of self-sufficiency leaving farms dependent on prison labor or other means to remain functional. Despite rules against the possession and consumption of alcohol in these institutions, alcohol use was very common and even occurred among staff. Political bosses frequently used poor farms as a tool in a system of political spoils in which county officials often appointed people to operate poor farms based on their political support rather than their qualifications for the position. As a result, management constantly shifted, resorted to cruel treatment, and often mishandled finances leaving those who depended on the poor farm for their survival to suffer for it.

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[2] Resettlement was the bureaucratic procedure of consigning groups of poor people back and forth between towns. See: Katz, Michael, In the Shadow of The Poor House, 21-22.

The vicissitudes of industrialization and capitalism along with rapid population growth up through the late 19th century intensified deteriorating conditions at many poor farms through overcrowding. This prompted reformers to advocate for larger and more durable facilities with additional services such as medical care, which increased costs.

The Washington Territorial Legislature first enacted laws governing poor relief in 1854. These laws established that families were primarily responsible for the care of their poor relatives and in cases where the poor had no relatives, the responsibility for their care fell on the counties who were empowered to establish poor farms to care for them, but only if they were determined to be deserving of such care. The earliest known poor farm to be established in Washington was in Vancouver, Clark County, in 1873.[3] To name a few others, King County, Washington followed not long after in 1877 at Georgetown (now a neighborhood of South Seattle), Pierce County at Sumner in 1889, Thurston County at Littlerock in 1893, and Whatcom County much later in 1900 north of Bellingham. By 1926, Washington had 24 poor farms with a combined population of 862 people with ten farms containing ten or less people.[4] The poor farms of Washington all experienced the same challenges of those established in the east decades earlier and went through similar waves of deteriorating conditions and overcrowding followed by reform, increased funding, and expansion throughout the early twentieth century.

With the onset of the Great Depression resulting in massive layoffs and erasures of fortunes in risky investments, another wave of individuals seeking relief at poor farms resulted in dangerous levels of overcrowding. The poor economic conditions made the construction of additions or new buildings prohibitively expensive in most cases. So, to relieve the overcrowding, state governments began passing legislation to provide old-age pensions and other types of welfare in order to provide poor farm residents with other forms of housing. California and Wyoming were the first to do so in 1930, with Washington following suit later in 1933 and the federal government (through Social Security) starting in 1935. The process was gradual, especially since most people were not immediately eligible for Social Security. However, over time, state governments often took control of poor farms and either converted them to hospitals or nursing homes or shut them down completely. In 1937, Washington State officially abolished 17 of the state's 24 poor farms and gradually phased out the remaining seven over time.

Overall, the vision set forth by those who pioneered the idea of a poor farm being a self-sustaining institution capable of reforming people out of poverty while caring for the most vulnerable at little to no cost never fully came to fruition in either Washington or elsewhere. Poor farms frequently needed to either lease out their farmlands to a capable farmer, hire farming staff, or rely on prison labor to supplement the labor of their residents.

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[3] Multnomah County, Oregon, directly across the Columbia River from Vancouver, had established its poor farm at Portland ten years earlier.
[4] For comparison, the Whatcom County Poor Farm had approximately 100 residents by 1926 and was severely overcrowded at that time.

Whatcom County "Poor Farm" 1900–1909
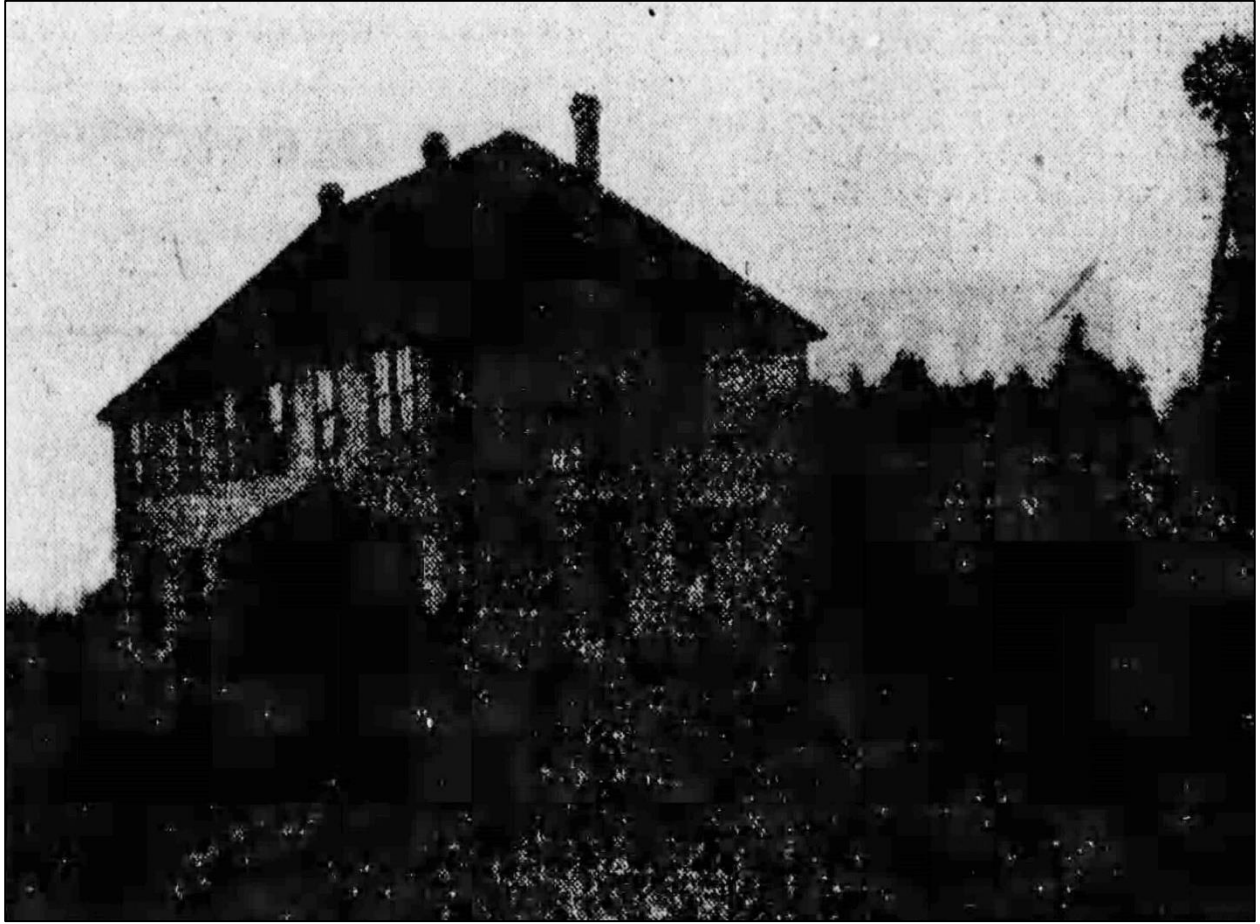
The original Whatcom County Poor Farm Building (Bellingham Herald, August 12, 1905).

In February of 1900, Whatcom County purchased approximately 160 acres of land from the State of Washington for $2,300 (on mortgage) for use as a county poor farm. Prior to this, the Sisters' Hospital, in the town of Fairhaven (now a neighborhood of Bellingham), had been housing the county's poor residents. Using the King County Poor Farm as a model, Whatcom County cleared four acres of land planted half of it with fruit trees, and hired contractor John McDonald to construct a two-story wood frame building measuring approximately 40 by 80 feet to house up to a dozen "inmates" as they were called at the time. The farm was operational by August of 1900. James B. Brand (ca1840–1919) a Scottish immigrant, who had come to Whatcom County with his family by way of Eastern Washington in 1891, was the farm's first superintendent, but only for the first year of its operation.

Although occasionally younger men, women, and children stayed at the farm on a seasonal or temporary basis until they found better opportunities or support elsewhere, the majority of residents were poor, elderly men with physical and/or mental challenges. Some were alcoholics who had been sent to the farm from the county jail. They often escaped in search of more alcohol only to be brought back again. Those who were able helped the farm's superintendent and matron maintain the farm consisting of cows, pigs, chickens, fruit trees, and timber. Aside from an ample

quantity of food provided, living conditions were otherwise very rough at the farm during its first decade.

A 1905 expose revealed that the interior of the home and its furnishings were, undecorated, dirty, and dilapidated and aside from daily newspapers and disintegrating magazines, there was little else to entertain residents. Despite the harsh conditions, the county continued to reduce annual funding for the farm from a high of $2470.57 in 1905 to a low of $1676.23 in 1908. Thus the fledgling institution had become a "poor farm" in every sense of the term. That is, the poor farm quickly became as poor as, if not poorer than the unlucky individuals who had come to reside there.

Instead of addressing the issue, the county sought out opportunities to extract additional cost savings from the poor farm land. Facing a shortage of wood fuel for the county courthouse, the county sent county prisoners out to clear timber from the poor farm land. To get around the law that prohibited prisoners from working more than five miles away from the county jail, the county built a second jail at the poor farm for a cost of $565 in May of 1908. Aside from multiple disputes over the quality of food served to the prisoners and one escape, the pilot program, which concluded in mid-September, succeeded in its original goal. Within a few short months, the prisoners cut enough wood to fuel the courthouse for two years: an amount worth nearly double the cost to construct the prison on the farm.

The early success of this scheme, however, could not conceal the farm's inhumane conditions from the two new county commissioners voters had elected into office just two months later in November of 1908. In fact, perhaps the scheme's financial success along with the death of the farm's superintendent that same month emboldened the new commissioners to take action. In short order, they appointed a new superintendent in December, toured the farm in January, and enacted sweeping reforms after reporting on the harsh conditions that persisted there.[5]

Bill Pollard, an early poor farm resident who died in 1908. (Bellingham Herald, June 9, 1908)

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[5] Peter Miller had previously been a federal marshal from Lynden, Washington.

The "County Farm" 1909–1926

Whatcom County Farm primary west elevation and south elevation, view facing north as it appeared ca. 1920. This photograph was likely taken from the roof of the North Bellingham School across the street. (J.W. Sandison collection, Whatcom Museum)

In May of 1909, the county commissioners declared "that all of the available money that can be expended... is to be appropriated" for the improvement of the [poor farm] building and its furnishings. A month later, they codified the prison labor program into law with a new goal of clearing and cultivating additional land to make the farm more self-sustaining.[6] Lastly, to reduce the stigma associated with poor farms, the county commissioners officially renamed the institution to the "County Home." Although the name did not immediately take hold in the local vernacular. Instead, it gradually shifted from "Poor Farm" to "County Home" by way of the intermediate name of "County Farm."[7]

Throughout the summer and early fall, the County Farm as it were, received a staggering $12,000 makeover. Improvements brought much-needed structural repairs to the existing building as well as hot water, a septic system, new plumbing, gas lighting and a 50 by 50-foot addition with a basement filled with the farm's first crop of potatoes. After these vast improvements, the County

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[6] While residents of the farm had always and would continue to work on the farm, their contributions were neither adequate nor reliable enough to keep the farm fully functional.

[7] This was likely due to its increasing publicity around its productivity in succeeding years.

Farm entered an era of continuous expansion as well as increasing productivity and consideration for its residents.

The population of residents (excluding prisoners) gradually increased from 25 in the expanded main building to about 100 spread out in multiple converted or purpose-built structures constructed between 1910 and 1927. These structures included a 22-bed hospital and a new prison that increased capacity from five to ten. Meanwhile, prisoners cleared and cultivated land by as much as tens of acres per year until clearing about 120 acres. Occasional publications of the farm's activities reveal an ever-increasing variety of produce including oats, wheat, rye, barley, clover, peas, beets, cabbage, apples, corn, and even tobacco along with processed foods such as cream, canned fruit, apple butter, and sauerkraut. Bushels and boxes of these crops totaled between 10s and 100s while cans of fruit reached over a thousand. The animal population followed suit as well. For instance, the farm went from having two horses, five cattle, and three pigs in 1911 to having three horses, 20 cattle, and 20 pigs by 1917 all providing ample meat and dairy for residents and prisoners alike.

Life itself at the farm fluctuated over time. Within a few years of overseeing improvements to the County Farm, the county commissioners dismissed its superintendent Peter Miller in February 1913 after neighborhood residents lodged unspecified complaints against him. If one report from a former resident is any indication, Miller may have been guilty of cruel treatment of the residents on more than one occasion. Whatever it was, the County thought it safer to appoint Chris C. King, a marshal from Lynden, WA to succeed Miller. King, with his wife as the farm's matron, went on to serve as the County Farm's most regarded superintendent until 1931.

Up through the early 1920s reports described Mr. and Mrs. King as "most excellently qualified" and the farm as "prosperous and thrifty" and "spotlessly clean" with residents "happy and content" and prisoners "accorded excellent treatment." In fact, many criminals reportedly preferred to work at the farm in lieu of jail time or fines and one resident even paid $2000 for the privilege of retiring there in 1922. The all-around positive sentiment about the farm also had a significant cultural impact in the surrounding community as North Bellingham was often called the "Poor Farm District" or "Poor Farm Corners" and local sports teams proudly started to adopt "poor farm" into their team names as early as 1910.

Chris C. King. (Bellingham Herald, October 21, 1933)

However, this did not mean life was perfect. Maintenance and sanitation issues periodically emerged as management struggled to keep up with the farm's rapid growth. Despite their reported contentment, some residents still chose to leave and two sadly committed suicide. In addition, one County Commissioner reported in 1923 that, at no fault of superintendent King, many residents

felt neglected by their children and younger relatives "on the outside." As a result, outside groups such as the Whatcom High School Dramatic Club and Salvation Army Band of New Westminster gave multiple performances while Bellingham Real Estate Association took residents on driving tours and the Optimist Club donated a radio.

While certainly well meaning, this nearly 20-year piecemeal approach to problem solving finally reached its breaking point in 1926. Reaching a population of over 100 residents that year with an official capacity of 65, the farm was dangerously overcrowded. As a result, the main house held up to seven beds in each room, had additional beds in curtained-off common rooms, and even had a cot in its 6.5-foot-tall basement. Even then, still others had to sleep in a variety of dilapidated outbuildings. Even worse than being overcrowded, many of these buildings were a fire hazard, including the main house, which was "in deplorable condition, badly ventilated, poorly lighted, and inadequately heated." Starting in September, County officials and nearby community groups banded together to plan for a new $75,000 fireproof building, one truly worthy enough to be called a home.

Construction of the County Home 1927

After touring county homes as far south as Portland, Oregon in late 1926, the county commissioners and superintendent King selected those in Monroe, Port Orchard, and Yakima, Washington as model institutions for their future County Home building. Between January and April of 1927, the county commissioners selected Bellingham architect F. Stanley Piper to prepare the plans, approved the issuing of $75,000 in bonds to fund the new home, and awarded the construction contract to Bellingham builders Dunn & Hallert.

The plans called for a low and rambling one and half story building with basement, reinforced concrete block frame, concrete tile roof, and stucco exterior arranged in a five-part plan roughly consisting of a 275-feet long and 42 feet wide central block with three wings: one off-center and one at each end. All primary operations and resident rooms were on the first floor with the upper level for staff housing. The central block contained living quarters for up to 170 residents in single and double rooms as well as wards for four, six, and twelve. The larger south wing contained the hospital with operating room while the smaller north wing contained a 60-person chapel. Plans also called for multiple dining rooms, sitting rooms, sewing rooms, reading rooms, smoking rooms, and sun porches. Upon completion, the original structure was demolished and the pre-existing concrete building at the rear was retained as an annex building with a capacity of 40.

Work on the basement and foundation began in mid-April and upon the sale of the county bonds to Blyth, Witter & Company of Seattle on June 2, a ceremonial laying of the cornerstone took place on June 4. The cornerstone reportedly contains a history of the homestead along with newspapers and other documents. On November 1 Whatcom County held an opening ceremony consisting of speeches from local public officials, superintendent King, architect F. Stanley Piper, and even Prince William of Sweden along with live music from Mahoney's Orchestra and the Bellingham Elks' band.

Whatcom County Home 1928–1945

Whatcom County Home, north elevation and primary west elevation, view looking southeast. Photo is estimated to date from near the time of the building's construction in 1927. Note well the absence of dormers on the south wing (far right) (J.W. Sandison collection, #8500-8501 Whatcom Museum)

During its first few years in the new building, the County Home continued to operate largely like it had before, albeit under dramatically improved conditions. Mostly, it was a home for the old-aged and poor, some of whom worked on its increasingly productive farm alongside county prisoners. Although by this point, the prisoners no longer resided at the farm. The expanded and modernized hospital provided high-quality care to both residents and non-residents alike. On a regular basis, multiple denominations performed religious services in the chapel wing and numerous social groups and bands came to visit and entertain the residents. Residents were even given fishing licenses.

The improved conditions made so many people seek residency that the county had to require an application and exam for entry. Among those seeking residency were numerous relatively well-to-do retirees who bequeathed their multi-thousand-dollar estates to the county (worth up to $150,000 today) in exchange for lifetime care. As a result, of the initial wave of interest, the Home was nearly at capacity with 150 residents by 1930. Unfortunately, the good times were short lived.

Falling ill in January of 1931, the County Home's 18-year Superintendent Chris King stepped away from his duties and by May, he resigned. His departure signaled the beginning of the end of the County Home as it had been known for the past three decades and the worsening economic depression would hasten its demise. What followed was a rapid increase in the County Home's population and deteriorating conditions as more and more people struggled to sustain themselves and their elders and sought refuge and medical care they could not afford in urban centers. By February 1934, the population (not including staff) reached nearly 300 with 12-14 beds per room, 8 in the chapel, and dozens more in the largely windowless garret spaces above the main floor.

As similar institutions existed across the state and the nation more broadly, the problem of overcrowding was a systemic one. Thus, following the precedent set by states like California and

Wyoming in 1930, Washington State passed its first old age pension law in 1933. With the expressed purpose of alleviating overcrowding, the law provided up to $30 per month to its more able-bodied senior citizens to live on their own or in boarding houses. These relief efforts accelerated following the election of President Franklin Roosevelt and the repeal of nationwide prohibition on alcohol (18th amendment) at the end of 1933 with the latter opening a much-needed stream of tax revenue to fund and expand relief efforts.

While these pensions did manage to start reducing the County Home's population after 1934, it remained well above capacity for some time. Furthermore, in October 1934, the County commissioners slashed the Home's budget by over 25% for 1935 forcing the County Home to require outside relatives to pay for resident care. A month later, the local Democratic Party swept county elections holding the majority on the board of county commissioners.

What followed was a complete shakeup in the management and staff of the County Home followed by reports of favoritism, bitter political infighting, widespread corruption, and highly questionable financial practices that affected nearly every aspect of county operation from the County Home all the way up to the commissioners themselves. Given the Bellingham Herald's strong republican bias, the true extent of the corruption can be challenging to gauge. However, it did report broad bipartisan support for an ultimately unsuccessful recall election against the majority democratic county commissioners who were accused, among many things, of working with a political boss named L.H. Darwin to establish a political machine in Whatcom County. The turmoil lasted through 1937.

Ultimately, the main takeaway is the tragic impact this tumultuous period had on the County Home. Stuck in the middle and often used to serve political ends, residents became increasingly neglected. After concluding a two-month survey of the County Home and its hospital in June of 1935, the local Pomona Grange specifically found the residential side of the home to be "revolting." Among the issues reported were multiple bug infestations, an unventilated and poorly lit attic space referred to as a "bake oven," "insipid" food, filthy beds, no attention from doctors and seldom from attendants, absentee management, and so on. Meanwhile, the farm operation was nearly at a standstill with reports of goats running wild and destroying surrounding public property.

As the county started to sort out its political disputes and internal corruption and as federal funding came through the Social Security and Works Progress Administrations from late 1935 into 1936, conditions gradually improved. Among these improvements were a new ventilation system and several dormer windows constructed onto the roof to provide more lighting and fresh air for residents occupying the second floor and additional pensions to rehouse residents elsewhere.

Although evidence of division within its operation existed earlier on, the county officially divided the institution into three operations, the home, hospital, and farm, each with its own manager in May of 1936.[8] In April of 1937, County commissioners voted to end forced labor at the farm for

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[8] The hospital had its first birth in May of 1929.

good calling it "bad practice" upon recommendation of the state welfare department who had taken over management of the County Home and Hospital just three months prior. As the state continued to expand its welfare operations, 17 county poor farms shuttered across the state and converted into nursing homes by November of 1937 while the remaining ones converted or shutdown soon thereafter.

The transition for the Whatcom County Home was more gradual. Repairs, remodeling, and upgrading for expansion of the hospital continued into the early 1940s. An American flag and flagpole raising ceremony organized by the local Bellingham Elks lodge in August of 1943, officiated the institution's transition to a state-run hospital. Meanwhile, during the farm's final years, the National Youth Administration brought in roughly 30 youths aged 18 to 25 to live in the rear annex building on the farm and perform farm and maintenance work while they took classes in agriculture in 1938. The County continued to maintain the farmland until 1945 when it rented out the land to a private farmer and split the profits.

Whatcom County Home, primary west elevation, view looking northeast. A rough composite of two photographs estimated to date from the 1940s. Note well the addition of dormers to the south wing (far right) (J.W. Sandison collection, #8500-8501 Whatcom Museum)

Whatcom County Home Building 1945–Present.

The state-managed Whatcom County Hospital continued to operate until 1963 when it became a county nursing home, which ran until 1988. In 1988, a private organization called Regency Care Group took over and after constructing a new building elsewhere, vacated the property in 1991. In 1993, Whatcom County completed renovation of the building for use as an office complex for its planning, building, and engineering departments and continues to use the building for this purpose at present.

Other Washington State Poor Farms

Snohomish County Poor Farm

Snohomish County Poor Farm, ca. 1893 (Monroe Historical Society).

Snohomish County Poor Farm addition, ca. 1907 (Monroel Historical Society

Snohomish County established its Poor Farm in 1893 on a 40-acre site comprising the present campus of EvergreenHealth Monroe Medical Center and a portion of the Evergreen State Fairgrounds on either side of state highway 2. They constructed the first building on the south side of highway 2 near the medical center, in a simple, two-story wood frame building that held 20 beds. Around 1907, the county constructed a larger two-story Free Classic style building in front of the original and designated it for the women, a staff of 7 or 8, and hospital space.[9] The original building from that point forward was for men. The farmland itself was primarily on the other side of highway 2. It reported had potatoes, cows, hogs, and chickens as well as horses for plowing. The farm sold its surplus dairy and farm crops to support its operations.

Snohomish Poor Farm, 1925 (Monroe Historical Society).

In 1925 the county commissioned a much larger two-story, 100-bed, stucco-clad facility designed in the Mission Revival Style at a cost of $90,275. It was located immediately west of the old buildings and faced 179th Avenue Southeast. The old buildings were demolished four years later. After farm operations ended in 1940, the facility continued to be used as either a hospital or nursing home until it was demolished in 1992.

Yakima County Poor Farm

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[9] Fairly common among institutional buildings in Washington state, Free Classic is a subset of Queen Style that replaced elaborate Victorian ornamentation with Classically inspired elements.

Cropped aerial photo showing the Yakima County Poor Farm buildings and immediate surroundings as they appeared in 1949 (Central Washington University).

The Yakima County Poor Farm opened in 1910 on a 40-acre site bordered approximately by the present-day West Washington Avenue on the North, South 64th Avenue on the West and Occidental Road on the south. Designed by architect Winfield Perrin, the original building (not pictured above) was a three-story wood frame structure designed to house up to 40 residents. The surrounding farmland was initially planted with apples trees and "small fruit" and vegetables.

Within five years, the farm, which was reportedly very orderly and well-managed, started producing a surplus to sell and begin offsetting its costs. However, despite increasing surpluses from that point forward and a long-standing belief that the farm could be self-sufficient, it does not appear the farm ever succeeded in doing so. The farm earned a total of $2032 from surplus sales in 1920 while its costs that year were significantly higher at $7165.

The following year, 23 people lived at the farm and unlike other Poor Farms such as Whatcom County, which depended heavily on prison labor; the Yakima County Poor Farm produced its surplus through the labor of its Superintendent, a hired hand, and some of the residents. One resident in his late 80s named James Cogswell even worked from morning until night. Together they maintained the farm's hogs, chickens, cows, and horses as well as its diverse set of crops including, alfalfa, onions, apples, and other tree fruits. Daily life, while not incredibly entertaining, was generally peaceful, centering mostly around card games, conversation, smoking, and well-rounded meals. If ever residents grew bored with the routine, they were free to come and go into town as they pleased.

Although records are scarce upon initial research, the farm appears to have grown significantly from the mid-1920s and into the early 1930s. New buildings were designed and constructed during

this period. One of them (near center of the above aerial photo), whose date of construction and original purpose is unknown, bears a striking resemblance to the overall massing of the Whatcom County Poor Farm, albeit on a much smaller scale. It is unknown when the farm ceased operations, but at present, it functions as a minimum-security correctional facility.
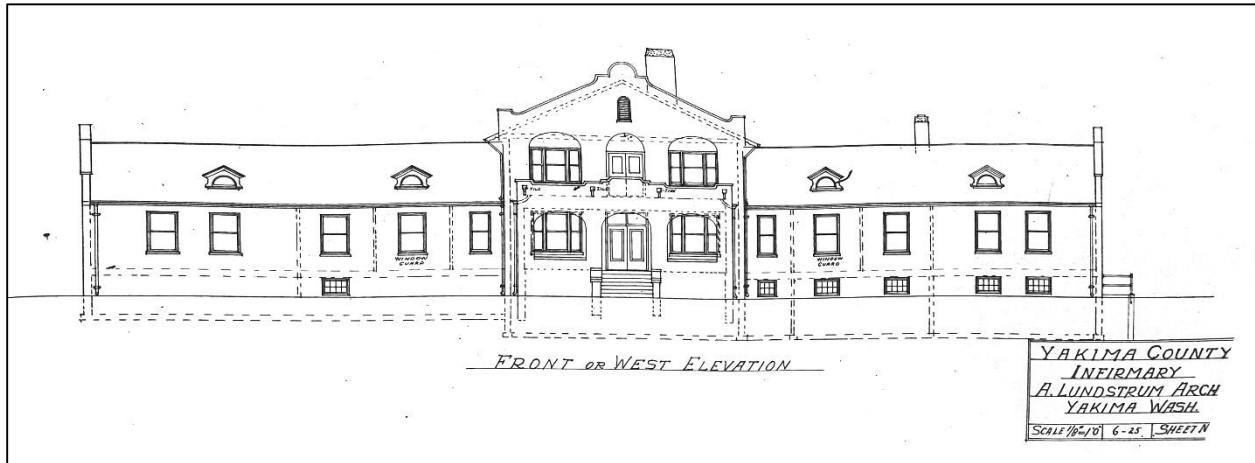
Photoshop-adjusted photo of an architectural drawing, June 1925. (Yakima Valley Museum, Accession # 0098-081)

Kitsap County

Kitsap County has a long and varied history of practicing various methods for the management and care of its poor residents prior to establishing a Poor Farm. Between 1877 and 1896, they paid the lowest bidder (typically hotels) to provide them with room and board. From 1896 when the County acquired the bankrupt Sidney Hotel, the poor were boarded there until 1902 when someone purchased the building from the County and turned it back into a hotel. The County's first Poor Farm was established in 1902, but instead of being directly owned and operated by the County, the County contracted with private individuals to house the poor on their farms.

It was not until 1917 that Kitsap County assumed direct management of its poor. At this time, the County constructed its own poor farm facility on the land behind South Kitsap High School and called it Sunnyview Farm. A new building was constructed ca. 1929–30 largely by prison labor. It was 101 by 61 feet and contained a basement. At some point, a separate hospital building was constructed as well. Sometime after World War II, Kitsap County decommissioned the Poor Farm and transferred its remaining residents/patients to Firlands in King County. South Kitsap School District purchased the facility thereafter and used the hospital building for some classes for a few years until it was demolished in 1974 to make way for a new high school building.

Clark County Poor Farm

Clark County Poor Farm Building circa 1898. (Clark County Heritage Register)

Established in 1873 near the present-day intersection of East 25th Avenue and Northeast 78th Street in Vancouver's Hazel Dell neighborhood, documentation of its activities begins in 1898 with the construction of a two-story Folk Victorian style building. At that time, it housed sixteen residents, nine of which were children, and had seven acres of surrounding land under cultivation. The building burned down in May 1923. A new building, with a capacity of 35, was constructed in 1926 in a "scaled-down iteration of the Italian Renaissance style," designed by Portland architects DeYoung and Roald. The farm had 50 acres of land under cultivation at the time and included hay, grain, potatoes, a vegetable garden, cows, chickens, and hogs. Like Whatcom County Farm, the Clark County Farm also depended on prison labor and struggled to reach self-sufficiency, but reportedly came near it by 1936. In partnership with Washington State College (now Washington State University) State and County, officials converted the farm operations into the Southwestern Washington Experiment Station in 1943 to train war workers how to farm after World War II. The residence building continued to operate as a private nursing home until the Experiment Station expanded its operations in 1949. The building was nominated to the Clark County Heritage Register in 2013.

Architectural drawing of the replacement Clark County Poor Farm building, 1926 (Clark County Heritage Register).

Skagit County Poor Farm

Skagit County Poor Farm building, 1910 (Bellingham Herald).

Established in 1907 on Calhoun Road along the Western Bank of the Skagit River, Skagit County Poor Farm was reportedly one of the most successful poor farms in the state having turned a profit by 1910. The farm was also noted for its exceptionally kind treatment of its residents compared to other poor farms. Designed in a restrained Colonial Revival style, the building was expanded with a large rectangular wing by 1918. The farm later became into a nursing home and was demolished in 1966.

Skagit County Poor Farm building, 1920 (Skagit History Facebook page)

Architect F. Stanley Piper

F. Stanley Piper, undated.
(Whatcom Museum, 1995.1.3772)

Frederick Stanley Piper (1883–1950) was born in Hull, Yorkshire, England on July 7, 1883. At the age of seventeen, he earned a degree in architecture from Blundell's College at Tiverton, Devonshire. He worked as a draftsman for the well-established firm of King & Lister in Plymouth, England until 1907 when he immigrated to the United States. He entered the country at New York City and traveled immediately to Seattle, where his brother lived. While in Seattle, he briefly worked for another (unidentified) architect until he relocated to Bellingham by May of 1909 where he formed partnership with architect Thomas H. Carder (1868–1962). Also a native of England, Carder had immigrated to the United States just five months prior to Piper. The pair likely came to Bellingham upon the invitation of fellow English Architect William Cox (1842–1921) to collaborate with him on the design of the Carnegie Library in Anacortes, Washington, first announced in the Bellingham Herald in June of 1909 and completed in March of 1910.
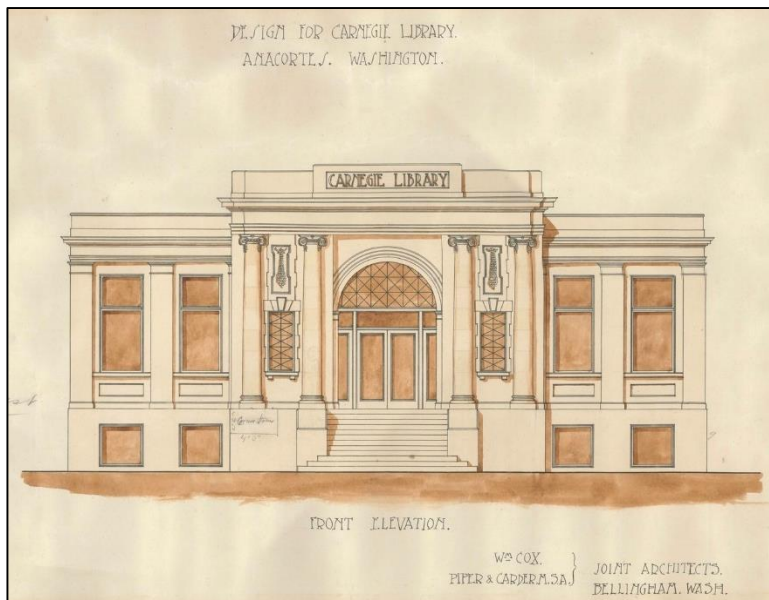

Architectural drawing of the Anacortes Carnegie Library, 1909. (Anacortes Historic Photo Archive via Bill Mitchell Mural Project.)
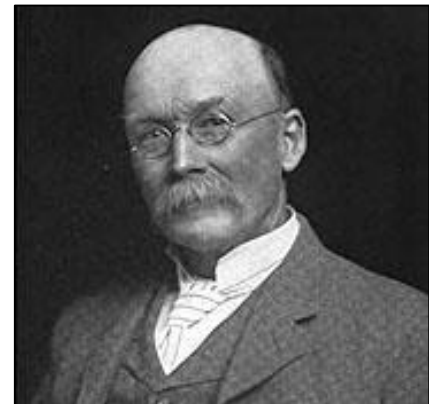
Undated photo of William Cox. (Dept. of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.)

Cox, who was then only three years away from retirement, had been practicing in Bellingham since 1889 and would therefore have had many connections to offer, if not a legacy to pass on to the newly arrived architects he took under his wing. Thus, the pair quickly found work including a large Four-Square style residence for local lawyer Newton K. Staley (1909) and the three-story Northwest Hardware Company building on Holly Street (1910). An anonymous owner even selected the pair to design a six-story, steel-frame, commercial building in 1910, but evidence of its construction is absent from the historic record and contemporary views of Bellingham's central business district (Figures 1–3).

These initial projects were markedly different from those that would come to define Piper's style starting in 1910 with the design of the Mrs. Charles Brown House on Forest Street, first published in January and completed later that year. Several others soon followed such as a pair of homes at 905 and 909 Maple Street designed for W.H. Beach and completed in June 1910, and the landmark James and Catherine Scott House at 521 15th Street (a Washington Heritage Register property) completed in 1911.
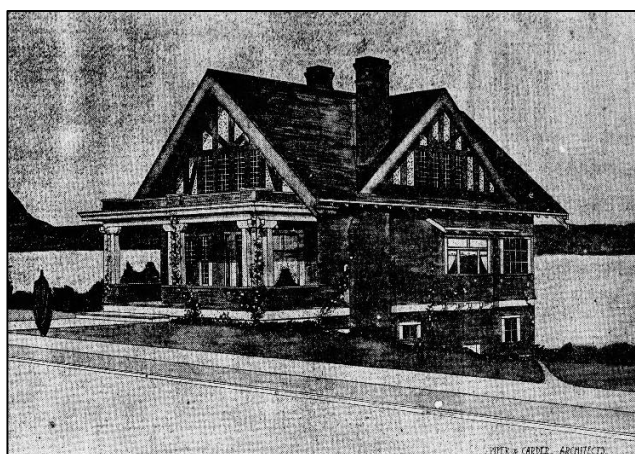
Mrs. Charles Brown House (Bellingham Herald, Jan 2, 1910).

James and Catherine Scott House. (J.W. Sandison Collection #664, Whatcom Museum)

All were designed in either the Tudor Revival and/or Craftsman styles both of which have their roots in Piper's native England. Architectural historian Carroll Meeks aptly described this fusion of styles as "synthetic eclecticism," a "commingling of elements in a single building." And although newspaper announcements of these homes cite Carder as the designer along with Piper, Carder had moved back to Seattle before any of them were built. So it is unknown what role, if any, Carder had in their actual design. The *Bellingham Herald* last mentioned their partnership on April 18, 1912, the day after it announced that Piper had won a contract to design the Bellingham National Bank Building at 101-111 E Holly Street (1913) in collaboration with Seattle architect John Graham, Sr. (1873–1955) (Figure 4).[10] A month later, Piper began advertising as a solo architect. After going independent in 1912, Piper soon married Minnie H. Bell (1890–1937), reportedly a frequent visitor of Bellingham, at her hometown of Booneville Missouri, on April 30, 1913. Piper

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[10] Reported as six stories at the time, this may have been what eventually came of the six story building originally drawn by Piper in 1910.

quickly drew up plans for their new cross-gabled Craftsman style home at 1600 Knox Avenue where excavation began on March 21, 1914. Curiously, Piper did not actually obtain the permit until April 29, 1914, the eve of his first wedding anniversary, perhaps making it more of a symbolic gesture to celebrate the first year of their marriage.

Piper Residence at 1600 Knox Avenue, Bellingham (Red Fin, 2018)

The Pipers, who raised one son, were both very socially engaged. Among other activities, Minnie served as secretary of the YWCA and local Red Cross chapter and F. Stanley was a member of the Kiwanis club as well as the Episcopal Church and the Bellingham Yacht and Country clubs most of whose buildings he designed.

From the late teens into the early 1920s, Piper went on to become Bellingham's preeminent architect designing many of the city's most iconic and ornate structures in a variety of revival styles such as Gothic, Beaux Arts, Spanish, Colonial and French Chateauesque. These include:

1. Fine Arts Building at 314 East Holly Street (1923) (Figure 5)
2. Bellingham Fire Station # 1 at 201 Prospect Street (1926)
3. Great Northern Railroad Station at the foot of D Street (1928) (NRHP)
4. St Paul's Episcopal Church at 2117 Walnut Street (1927)

Great Northern Railroad Station (Google Street View, Sep 2012).

However, two designs stand out in particular as his crowning achievements in the city. The first is his Gothic Revival Bellingham Herald Building at 1155 North State Street (1926) and the second is his French Chateauesque Eldridge Mansion at 2915 Eldridge Avenue (1927).

Eldridge Mansion (Trulia, undated).

Herald Building, 1926. (J.W. Sandison Collection, Whatcom Museum)

The Eldridge Mansion in particular, bears striking similarities to Piper's design of the Tudor Revival style Whatcom County Home built in the North Bellingham district outside city limits that same year. The two buildings share a stucco exterior, steeply pitched roof, tall chimneys, projecting bays, arched and projecting entryway with adjacent turret, and gabled dormers as common features, albeit at different scales and configurations. Given the Whatcom County Home's impressive footprint of approximately 22,000 square feet, it is his largest Tudor Revival building and his greatest achievement outside the city. Other Tudor Revival buildings Piper designed during and after this period with a similar sprawling form to the Whatcom County Home include the Bay Street Public Market at 301 West Holly Street (1926) and the McMurtrie Auto Court at 3005 Northwest Avenue (1933).


Bay Street Public Market, 1926. (J.W. Sandison Collection, Whatcom Museum).

McMurtie Auto Court, 1932. (J.W. Sandison Collection, Whatcom Museum).

Despite the dramatic decrease in commercial activity and construction brought on by the Great Depression of the 1930s, Piper quite successfully weathered the economic storm by largely pivoting into more practical commissions that were often funded by federal relief programs such as the Public Works and Works Progress Administrations. Published projects of this type included the remodeling of seven Bellingham School District buildings and alterations to numerous commercial buildings throughout the city. Piper also designed some new buildings during this time including Sumas Grade School (1933), Fairhaven Junior High School (1937), First Congregational Church (1937), Acme Grade School (1938), and the Grandstand at Lyden Fairgrounds (1940).
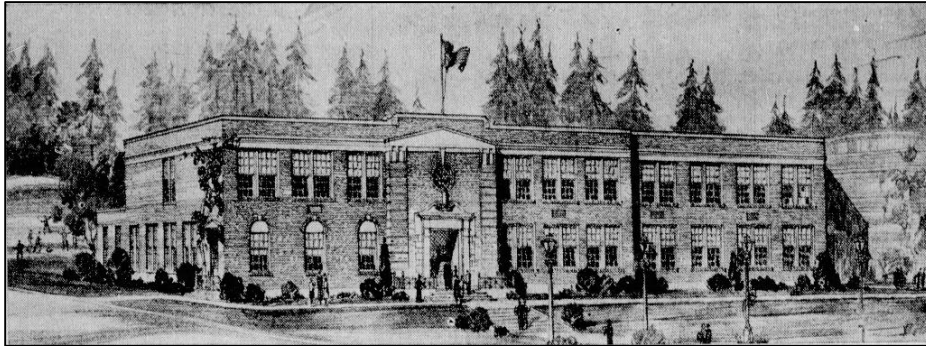
Architectural drawing of Fairhaven Junior High (Bellingham Herald, May 7, 1936).
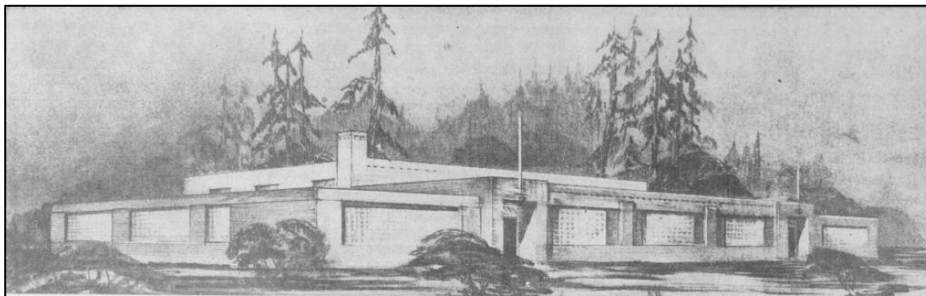
Architectural drawing of Acme Grade School. (Bellingham Herald, December 9, 1937).

While elements of his earlier practice carried over into these Depression-era designs, Piper had made a clear transition to the architectural trend toward Streamline Moderne in an effort to stay relevant. Meanwhile, although Piper joined a Home Building Program in Bellingham that offered loans to prospective homeowners in 1936, his first published residential commission since the 1920s was not until 1941. That year, he designed an unusually late example of a Colonial Revival style home for J.R. Wilkinson at 519 16th Street.

After the United States entered World War II following the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Piper devoted a portion of his practice to the war effort. In 1942 and 1943, Piper designed two decontamination centers for St Luke's and St Joseph's hospitals at the request of Civilian Defense and Medical Aid units in the city and remodeled a number of buildings into apartments into war worker housing under the National Housing Agency.[11] One other major project during this time, though not expressly for the war effort was the United Airlines Terminal and Administration building at Bellingham Airport (1942) (Figure 6). After the war, Piper

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[11] Remodeled buildings include the College Inn building on High Street, opposite Western Washington University, the Moose Hall on Cornwall Avenue, the Sandwick building on the northwest corner of Harris Avenue and 11th Street, and the Little Theater Guild building at Prospect and Flora Streets.

obtained the last major commission of his Career for the design of the new Whatcom County Courthouse in collaboration with Seattle Architect John W. Maloney (Figure 7). They initially estimated the costs at $600,000, but later increased the estimate to $1.4 million resulting in the loss of the contract and a protracted lawsuit. Although Piper went on to advertise home design services up through at least 1948, he passed away in 1950 after an extended illness.

According to the NRHP nomination of Bellingham's Central District, Piper designed the largest number of commercial buildings (13) there in comparison to other architects. Over his entire career, Piper is said to have designed over 60 Bellingham commercial buildings and residences many of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. However, more thorough search would likely identify dozens more.

Builders Dunn & Hallert

The contracting business of Dunn & Hallert was a short-lived partnership between local building contractor Andrew A. Dunn (1864–1957) and local bricklayer Fred J. Hallert (1857–1943) that was active between 1926 and 1928. It appears that Dunn and Hallert formed this partnership in order to take on the two largest projects of their careers: Sunnyland School at 2800 James Street (1926) and the Whatcom County Home (1927).

Andrew A. Dunn was born on December 22, 1867 in New Britain, Nova Soctia, Canada. Sources conflict on the time of his arrival to Bellingham with his obituary placing him here by 1888, but with the 1891 Census of Canada placing him at North East Margaree, Novia Scotia in 1891. At that time, he was employed as a carpenter. On July 3, 1894, he married Augusta Marz (1890–1924) in Whatcom County, Washington. The couple would go on to raise five children. Dunn took up farming for a time around 1900, but his primary vocation was carpentry. His earliest known work was the construction of his own house at 1433 James Street in 1904, which he and his wife owned and occupied until 1938. Dunn's known works aside from the Whatcom County Home are primarily residential and educational buildings with exception of one office building he constructed for the Bloedel Donovan Lumber Company at their cargo plant (1917) and the Church of the Assumption (unknown). Dunn's last published work was a house adjacent to his own at 1437 James Street (1930).
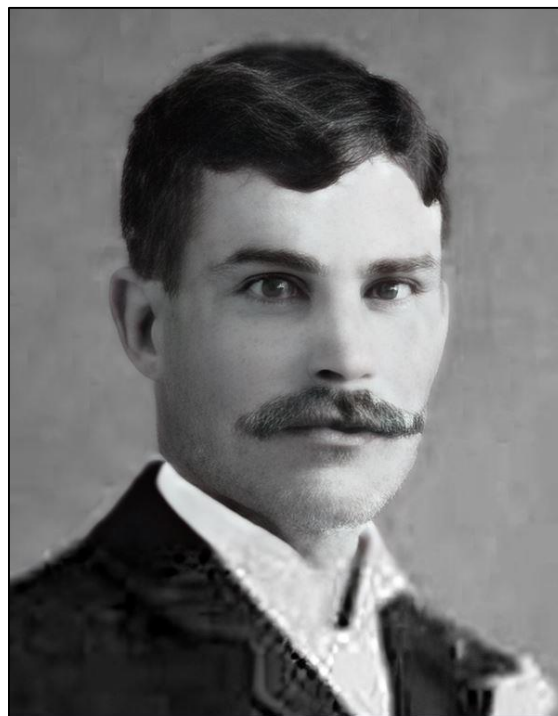
Andrew A. Dunn. Digitally enhanced and edited from a low-resolution photograph. (James Di Cecca, Ancestry.com)

Fred J. Hallert was born on November 4, 1857 in Statten, Germany. He came to the United States ca. 1880 and lived in the Seattle area. He married Mary E. Reichel (1869–1897) in 1887 at Tacoma, Washington and the pair raised three children. In 1890, the Hallerts became homesteaders at Custer, Washington in 1890, but are said to have relocated to Bellingham around 1893. All available records identify Hallert's occupation as a bricklayer and he was a charter member of the Bricklayers' Union. Aside from his works with Andrew A. Dunn, he is credited for building a home on Williams Street (1921) and installing a cast stone, one-piece fireplace in the home of J.M. Goheen at 2809 Northwest Avenue (1928). Hallert passed away in 1943 at the age of 85.

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6. ADDITIONAL FIGURES

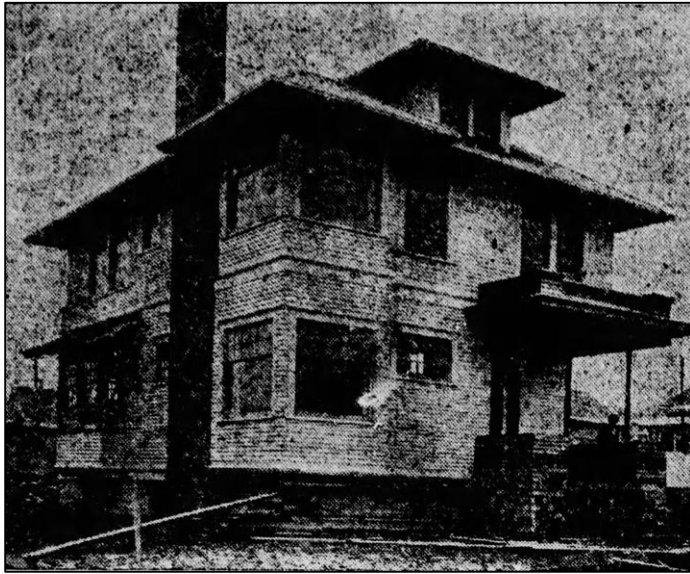### Other Works of F. Stanley Piper

Figure 1. Newton K. Staley House. (Bellingham Herald, December 25, 1909)

Figure 2. Northwest Hardware Co. Building (Bellingham Herald, December 25, 1909)

Figure 3. Unbuilt building for anonymous property owner in Bellingham's central business district.
(Bellingham Herald, January 1, 1910)

Figure 4. Post Card featuring the Bellingham National Bank Building in Bellingham, WA.
(http://wagenweb.org/whatcom/postcards/bnb.htm)

Figure 5. Fine Arts Building at 314 E Holly Street in Bellingham, WA, circa 1923 (J.W. Sandison Collection #5551 Whatcom Museum).
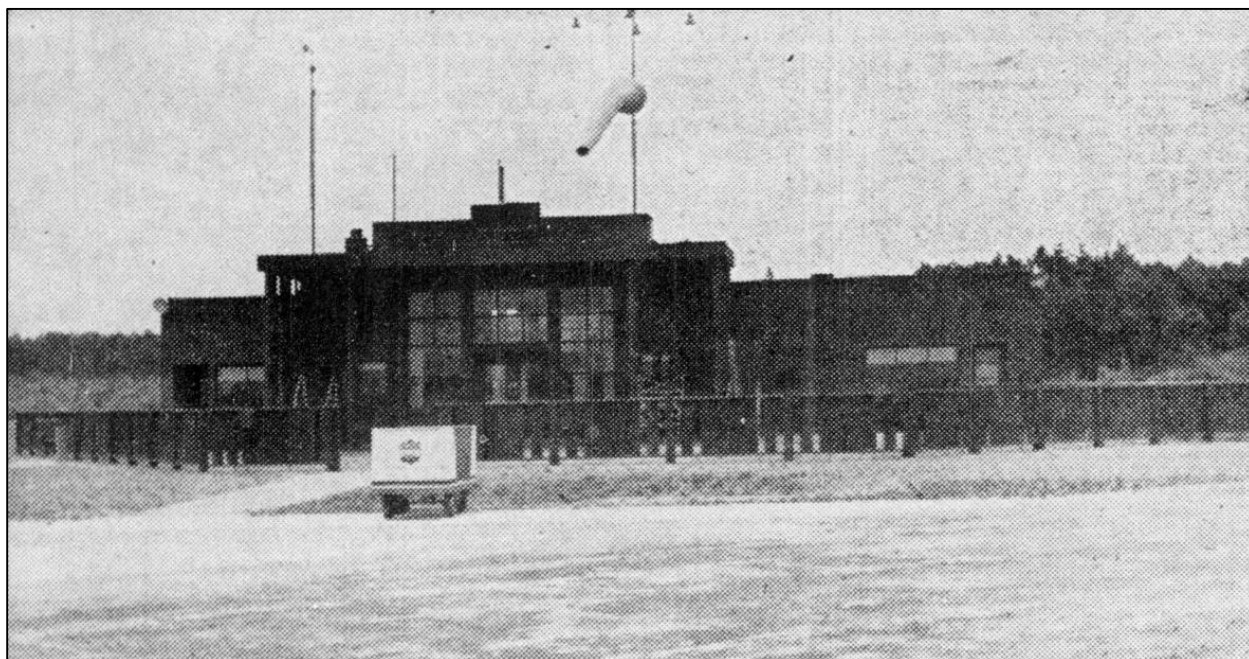

Figure 6. United Air Lines' administration building at Whatcom County Airport (Bellingham Herald, July 10, 1942).
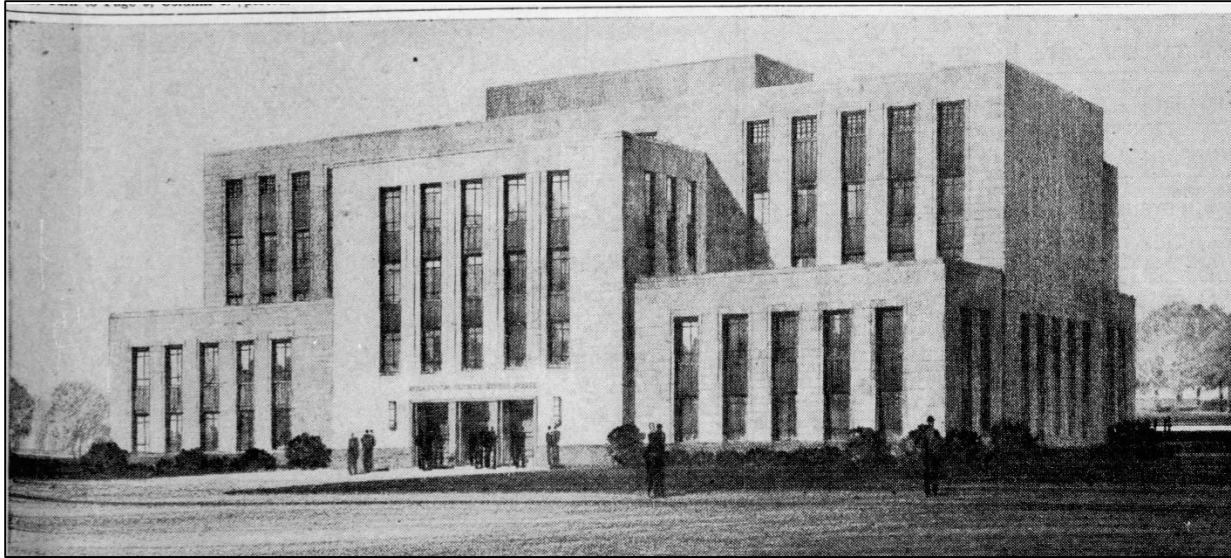
Figure 7. Proposed Whatcom County Courthouse. Designed by F. Stanley Piper in collaboration with John W. Maloney (Bellingham Herald, September 26, 1945).

7. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CRITERIA

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.