

HISTORICAL DRIVING TOUR of LAKEWOOD, WA

HISTORIC SITES and of the Lakes District

For further information on area history and resources consult:
www.historyofstielacoom.com
www.lakewoodhistorical.org
www.lakewood-chamber.com
www.tacoma-public-library-northwest-room
www.tpl.lib.us
www.pierce-county-library.org
www.lakewoodgardens.org
fortlewismuseum.com
mchordadairymuseum.org
 Heritage Advisory Board

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 Compiled by the Lakewood Landmarks Heritage Advisory Board 2013.
 For further information please contact: www.cityoflakewood.us



LAKEWOOD POINTS OF INTEREST

- Boatman-Ainsworth House, 1855** (Private Residence)
Originally the structure was built as hunting cabin for one of the men who helped construct Fort Steilacoom, Willis Boatman, in 1858. It was expanded into a house in 1878 by Captain John Ainsworth, founder of the Oregon Steam Navigation Co. The house was also owned by Walter J. Thompson, a territorial legislator and founder of both Merchants National Bank of Tacoma and Tacoma Savings Bank. Boatman-Ainsworth House is listed on the NR, WHR and LLR.
- House of Donuts, 1959**
In 1959 the Cheatham family opened the House of Donuts and operated the business for over 50 years. This Google style building has been a local landmark sweet spot for decades.
- Hopkins House, 1917** (Private Residence)
This lake side house was constructed by one of the contractors for Fort Lewis in 1917 and used as a summer home until 1932 when artist Milda Hopkins and her husband James acquired it. Milda was an artist featured in the Tacoma News Tribune from 1962-1978 and exhibited in Handforth, Frye, and at the University of Washington. This intact craftsman house is on the LLR.
- Cole/Smith House, 1914** (Private Residence)
Built in 1914, this vernacular two-story residence remains intact with original form, windows, doors, siding, chimney, even light fixtures. If the 1914 owners were to pass this house today they would immediately recognize it as their own. It is a strong example of an intact historic structure. Listed on the LLR.
- Washington Heritage Register • NR – National Register • LLR – Lakewood Landmark Register**



Old Settlers Cemetery

- Old Settlers Cemetery, 1855**
The property was designated in 1855 for use as a cemetery for pioneers and their decedents by Frank and Lena Clark. It is the final resting place for over 170 pioneering members of the community that later became Lakewood. The only modification to the property is the addition of residents and a Works Progress Administration era (1930s) fence erected to prevent horses from kicking over the gravestones. This property is listed on the LLR.
- Byrd Cemetery, 1853**
This 1890 cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in the state and was actively used between 1853 and 1882. It is believed that about 100 pioneers are buried here, first person was Adam Byrd (who had a grist mill which served the early settlers) who selected the site for his burial. Once the state purchased the surrounding property in 1890, the site deteriorated to the extent that today only 19 graves can be identified. Listed on the WHR.
- Woodbrook Hunt Club, 1938**
The Hunt Club was established in 1924 and the clubhouse and kennels have been in use since 1938 at the edge of the 7,000-acre Fort Lewis military reservation. It is the Pacific Northwest's only hunt club and one of the few clubs of its type in the western United States. It is based on English hunting traditions. Listed on the NR and WHR.
- Judge Wilson House, 1893** (Private Residence)
The Judge Wilson House, a Gothic Revival two-story structure, was built ca. 1885, the same year the Western Steel Company built a plant in the vicinity hoping to make the area, known as Lakeview, the new Pittsburgh of the west. Judge Wilson was the superintendent of the short-lived company which closed by 1893.
- Judge Wilson House**

TIMELINE of HISTORICAL EVENTS IN LAKEWOOD

<p>1841 The Hudson Bay Company brings a group of settlers from the Red River Valley in Canada. Fort Nisqually cannot supply the settlers with the supplies they were promised in Canada. Most settlers leave. A few stay and one builds a cabin where the Fort Steilacoom buildings are today. All of the Red River settlers are gone after a couple of years.</p>	<p>1844 Joseph Heath moves into the abandoned Red River Valley settler's cabin. His expensive lifestyle in England has forced his family to sell their estate to pay his debts. He comes to the Puget Sound in hopes of sending money home. He keeps a journal of his 4+ years of effort to carve a farm from the wilderness. He dies in March 1849.</p>	<p>1846 The Puget Sound area becomes American Territory</p>	<p>1849 In May a group of Snoqualmie Indians come to Fort Nisqually to check on a Chief's daughter living with a fort Indian. A gun fight starts between the groups and an American, Leander Wallace, is killed. The United States Army arrives in August and need shelter. They move into the Heath farm and build Fort Steilacoom.</p>	<p>1853 Washington becomes a territory.</p>	<p>1855 Byrd Cemetery is established and used for pioneers until 1882.</p>	<p>1858 Willis Boatman constructs a hunting cabin. Chief Leschi is tried for murder and hanged.</p>	<p>1861 The Civil War begins. Federal soldiers are called back east. The fort is staffed by volunteers.</p>	<p>1868 Fort Steilacoom is decommissioned.</p>	<p>1869 The Federal Government buys the Hudson Bay Company assets in the Northwest.</p>	<p>1870 Washington Territory buys the Fort Steilacoom buildings from the Federal Government, and they become a mental hospital.</p>	<p>1874 The Federal Government donates the former military reservation to Washington Territory for use as an "asylum for the insane and no other purpose."</p>	<p>1878 John Ainsworth adds on to Boatman's hunting cabin to make the Boatman-Ainsworth House look as it does today.</p>	<p>1889 Washington becomes a state. John Flett builds a house. Flett Dairy is a business who operated numerous decades in Pierce County.</p>	<p>1911 Thornewood (Castle) is constructed.</p>	<p>1912 Tacoma Speedway holds its first race on 5 mile, then 3 1/2 mile, then 2 mile tracks.</p>	<p>1914 Cole/Smith house is constructed.</p>	<p>1917 Hopkins House is constructed as a summer retreat, typical of lakeside retreats on American Lake.</p>	<p>1919 Villa Madera (Villa Carmen) built on 18 acres of virgin evergreen forest on the shores of American Lake.</p>	<p>1920 Tacoma Speedway and Indianapolis are the only two Class A tracks, Tacoma's is the faster of the two. Shortly after the grandstands burned and re-built at \$80,000.</p>	<p>1922 Rhodesleigh is completed, an English Tudor country estate for Henry A. Rhodes.</p>	<p>1924 Tacoma Speedway fails and becomes Mueller Harkins Airport.</p>	<p>1929 Mueller Harkins Hanger is constructed to service the Tacoma Airport.</p>	<p>1932 Custer School, also known as the "Little Red School House" is constructed.</p>	<p>1937 Colonial Center is complete, one of the first planned suburban shopping centers in Washington State including Lakewood Theater.</p>	<p>1938 Little Church on the Prairie is created out of an old grocery store building. Woodbrook Hunt Club moves into its building and kennels. Lakewold Gardens created by Eulalie Wagner.</p>	<p>1939 Norton Clapp calls Rhodesleigh home.</p>	<p>1946-53 Chauncey Griggs obtains preliminary drawings for a house by Frank Lloyd Wright. The house is completed with the assistance of young architect Alan Liddle.</p>	<p>1965 Washington State leases the farm to Pierce County to be used as a park.</p>	<p>1996 Lakewood takes over management of the Fort Steilacoom Park. Lakewood incorporates.</p>	<p>2006</p>
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Byrd Cemetery



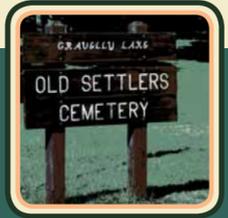
Boatman-Ainsworth House



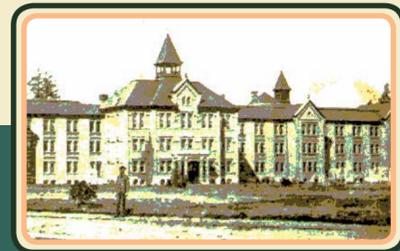
Rhodesleigh



Fort Steilacoom Park



Old Settlers Cemetery



Western State Hospital



Tacoma Speedway



Lakewold Gardens

START HERE!

For a brief driving tour of historic sites in Lakewood begin at Flag 1 and proceed following the flags to as many sites as you wish to visit. Please remember that some sites are private residences and places of business. Points of interest are also provided for further exploration.

HISTORICAL DRIVING TOUR MAP

1

Lakewood History Museum

6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW, Lakewood
This local history museum is a wonderful springboard for the driving tour upon which you are about to embark. The museum includes an illustrated timeline of local people, places and events that have shaped the community that has become Lakewood today. Explore the exhibits including a homestead cabin, post office, and many rotating and traveling displays that provide an often changing opportunity to learn about Lakewood.
**Lakewood Historical Society website*

2

Lakewood Theater, Colonial Center

6120 Motor Avenue SW, Lakewood
In 1937 Norton and his first wife Mary Davis Clapp developed Lakewood Center, one of the first shopping centers west of the Mississippi. This center included the Lakewood Theatre. The Colonial Revival architecture of this complex was echoed throughout the area with the cupolas and colonial style architecture found on both large and small commercial structures and residences nearby the center. The development of Lakewood Center had the largest impact on the architectural style of Lakewood's blossoming suburban landscape and created the atmosphere of a traditional sense of place in the suburban landscape.
**Draft LHAB Nomination for Lakewood Theater, Historylink.org, Cinematheatre.org, Images of America: Lakewood; Photo Draft Lakewood Heritage Register Nomination*

3

Little Church on the Prairie

6310 Motor Avenue SW, Lakewood
This Church structure started out as a grocery store that was adaptively reused in 1938 to become a community church. Since that time it has grown with the community and is still an active part of the Lakewood community with the church and educational programs.
**Tacoma Public Library NW Room, Images of America: Lakewood, Historylink.org; Photo: Tacoma Public Library NW Room*

4

Ft. Steilacoom

9601 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood
August 24, 1849 arrangements were made to rent 1 square mile of the Heath Farm (est late 1844) from the Puget Sound Agricultural Company for \$50/month initially to house 23 men and a bugler for a U.S. Army post which grew to include several structures that sheltered white settlers during Native uprisings. The post includes four buildings constructed in 1857 which stand today near the parade grounds. The fort thrived until the Civil War when military focus shifted to the war on the East Coast.
**Photo: HistoricFortSteilacoom.com*

5

Western State Hospital

9601 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood
While the need for care of the "disturbed" was addressed and a program started, it was not until 1874 that an act of Congress approved donating the land of the former military reservation to the Washington Territory for use as an "asylum for the insane and no other purpose."
**National Register of Historic Places Fort Steilacoom, Tacoma Public Library NW Room, Historylink.org, Historic Fort Steilacoom.com*

6

Marker for Chief Leschi

8111 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood
Chief Leschi was tried for murder for his part in the "Indian Uprising" that took place in 1855. His first trial resulted in a hung jury. The second trial convicted him of murder. Many white settlers and military men assisted in his defense. Military officials would not allow his execution on the military reservation, so Leschi was taken from the fort and hanged in a grove of oak trees between the fort and Byrd Mill near the head of Chambers Creek.
**National Register of Historic Places Fort Steilacoom, MOHAI, Historylink.org Photo MOHAI & Historylink.org*

7

Custer School (Little Red School House)

7801 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood
This rural school house, also known as the "Little Red School House" was constructed in 1932 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in the summer of 1987.
**National Register of Historic Places Nomination Custer School (Tacoma), Images of America: Lakewood, Historylink.org, Tacoma Public Library NW Room; Photo: National Register Nomination for Custer School/Little Red School House*

8

Original Flett House Location Marker (Bradley Block House 1855)

7718 Bridgeport Way W, Lakewood
This house was originally constructed in 1889 for John Flett's family, early pioneers in the west settling in the Lakewood area. The original 1889 house was moved from its original location (marked here) to the current site located at 7704 Bridgeport Way.
**Washington Heritage Register Nomination Flett House, Tacoma Public Library NW Room Archives*

9

Mueller Harkins Hangar

4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Building 5, Lakewood
In 1922 R.A. Mueller & L.H. Harkins acquired the Tacoma Speedway and built an airport for Tacoma. The hangar was built in 1929 for \$10,000 and used for Airport Admin, then pilot training in the 1930-1940s (Washington Air College) and was the site of many air shows. It was instrumental in training regional pilots and supporting the war efforts. The property was acquired by Clover Park Tech College in 1949. It is one of the few hangars of its era in the nation to remain intact in its original location.
**Photo: Tacoma Public Library Image Archives*

10

The Tacoma Speedway

4500 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Building 3, Lakewood
In operation from 1912-1922 the Tacoma Speedway was the only Class A track other than Indianapolis. Tacoma's was faster. It began as a 5 mile dirt track then shrunk to 3.5 mile course then down to a 2 mile oval course built of two-by-fours laid on edge with 18 foot high banks on the curves. The grandstand burned in 1920 and rebuilt for \$80,000. The Tacoma Speedway Assoc failed in 1922 due to cost of grandstands and stolen gate receipts- the track was sold to become Muller-Harkins Airport.
**Images of America Lakewood; Photo: Tacoma Public Library NW Room*

11

Lakeview Train Station & Post Office

108th St SW & Lakeview Ave SW, Lakewood
This site is the former location of the Lakeview Train Station and Post Office. The train station that, in November of 1885, a mob of Tacoma residents (including the Mayor and Council) forced the last 200 Chinese residents of Tacoma to walk 9 miles to, then board trains to Portland. Now it is in the vicinity of a thriving, predominantly Korean-American, business district. **Images of America: Lakewood, "Unhappy anniversary: Tacoma expelled Chinese 125 years ago"*

12

Lakewold Gardens

108th St SW & Lakeview Ave SW, Lakewood
In 1908 this property was a 5-acre parcel developed for use as a summer home. In 1918 the owners acquired the neighboring 5-acres and used the property as a country retreat. In 1925 it was named Lakewold, meaning lake woods. In 1938 Eulalie Wagner created the gardens that are a destination for residents and visitors. Lakewold Gardens is listed on the WHIR and LLR.

