

Once again, our late local chronicler of Stanwood area history, Gustav Joergenson, on the railroads:

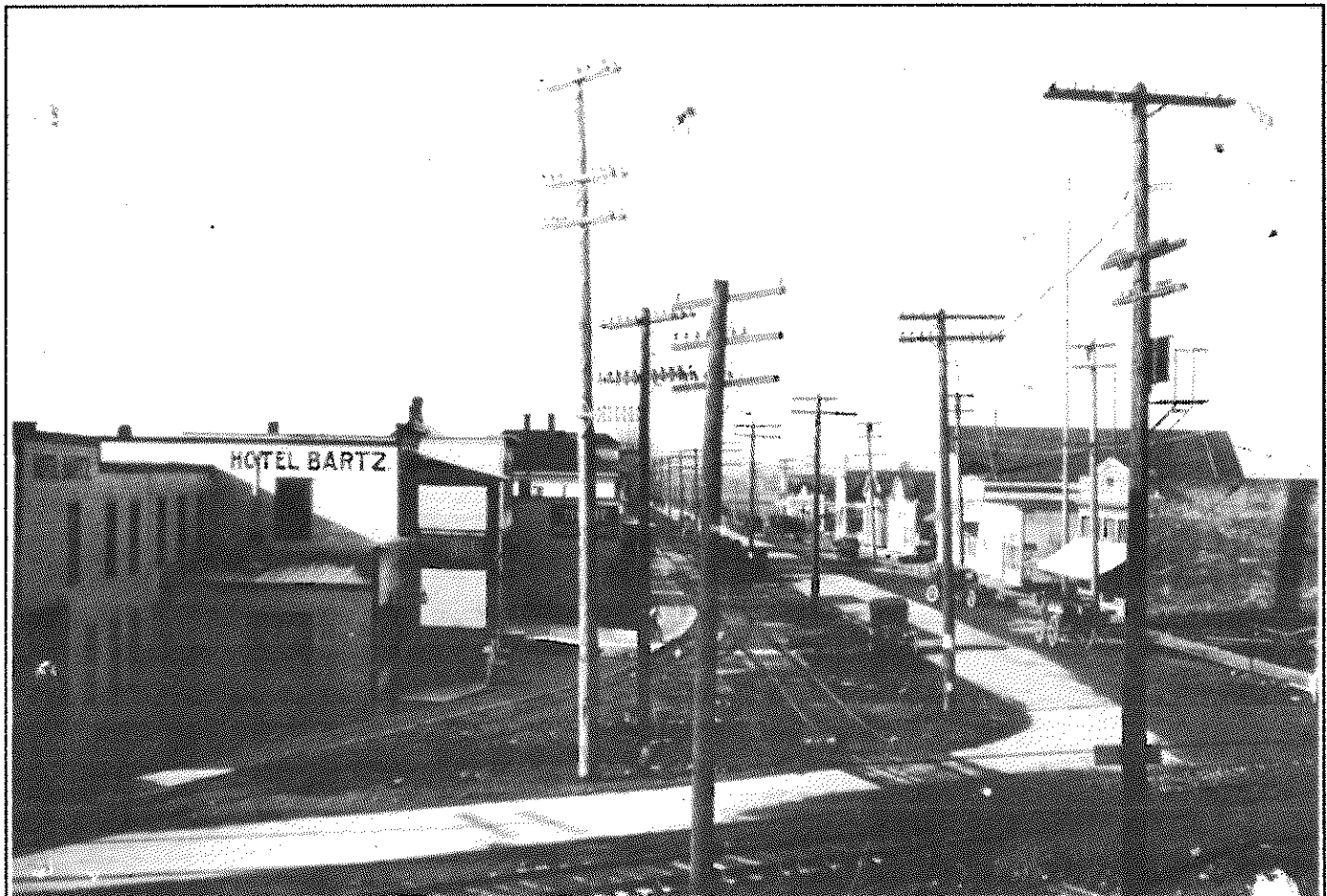
The year of 1890 will undoubtedly stand as one of the most important years here. The coming of the railroad and the locations of them - the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern - was a very powerful factor in shaping our future. [The arrival of the railroads] put an end to that great American frontier life here and its wonderful saga of most exciting romanticism and adventurous travels. These unknown parts of our country...had always been isolated from the turmoils of a strange and civilized world by a gigantic wilderness of evergreen forests that surrounded them. From now on things would be different.

That frontier life...had developed a very original and wonderful culture all its own, where most people learned to understand and to appreciate good neighbors, so it was comparatively easy for people to

move into the pioneer settlements and wherein they were so welcomed by the whole little neighborhood.....

Railroads now ripped open our settlements everywhere... a new day arrived... many strange people from far and near came into our communities, either as workers, speculators, or as genuine bums, all of them making things ready for the gay nineties or what was possibly worse, the great financial panic that went like a hurricane over the whole country.... [end of article]

The writings of Gustav Joergenson that we have been using in our recent newsletters come from a manuscript donated to SAHS by Alex Gedstad, nephew of G. Joergenson. As some may know, Joergenson wrote a history of the "Twin Cities" published in a serial format in the *Twin City News* beginning April 1, 1948. This series was sponsored by the former Meadowmoor Dairy, a large local milk products company in Everett with family connections in Stanwood. We owe much to the Meadowmoor Dairy for having this produced for it is one of the few written sources of historical information on the Stanwood Area. The writings we have and are republishing in this newsletter are edited selections from the original manuscript of this series.



View of East Stanwood looking west during the time of the H & H Railroad. The Hotel Bartz, built in 1911 & now gone, took advantage of its proximity to railroad travelers. This view is the best we've found of early East Stanwood also showing the intersection of the H & H and the Great Northern. The date of the photograph is not known; it may be a Juleen photograph.

STANWOOD AREA RAILROADS

Mr. Joergenson's words are histrionic but true; the railroads arrived here a little later than the rest of the country, but had no less an impact. There were rumors of railroads reaching even Utsalady. A land company thought this so much a certainty, it created maps of them. (See our exhibit that shows a once dreamed of Utsalady, McMurray & Eastern R.R.) However, the mill at Utsalady closed in December, 1890 so any hope of prosperity that the railroad might bring to Camano was lost.

It was a Great Northern subsidiary, the Seattle & Montana R.R. that finally negotiated the connections and put together the track from the Skagit River to Port Gardner. To the great dismay of Stanwood, which was located near the mouth of the river, the railroad did not quite reach the town. Despite an alleged offer of \$4,000 the railroad could not be convinced of the importance of putting a track directly into Stanwood. The railroad had stops in Silvana, Norman, and Milltown for milk, mail, and passengers, but it built a depot a mile east of Stanwood.

Near the depot there were a few houses, the remains of a lumber camp and a deep quagmire, water, and brush. According to Mr. Joergenson, an attempt was made by D.O. Pearson and George Ketchum in 1892 to plat and locate a town near this depot and establish a new road between it and Stanwood; but this was during a depression and there was apparently not enough incentive at the time. The existing road was described as a dust bowl in the summer and a bottomless mudhole in the

winter. In around 1894, a Mr. Rabel cut planks for making it about 18 feet wide and it was eventually gravelled and then bricked.

According to The Stanwood Story (v.1, p. 17) when the spur from the depot that was talked of never materialized, merchants and farmers boycotted the railroad and began to ship by steamer. In 1893, farmers banded together and bought a steamer which they named the *City of Stanwood*. All went well until January 1894 when the ship burned at the water's edge off Port Susan Bay.

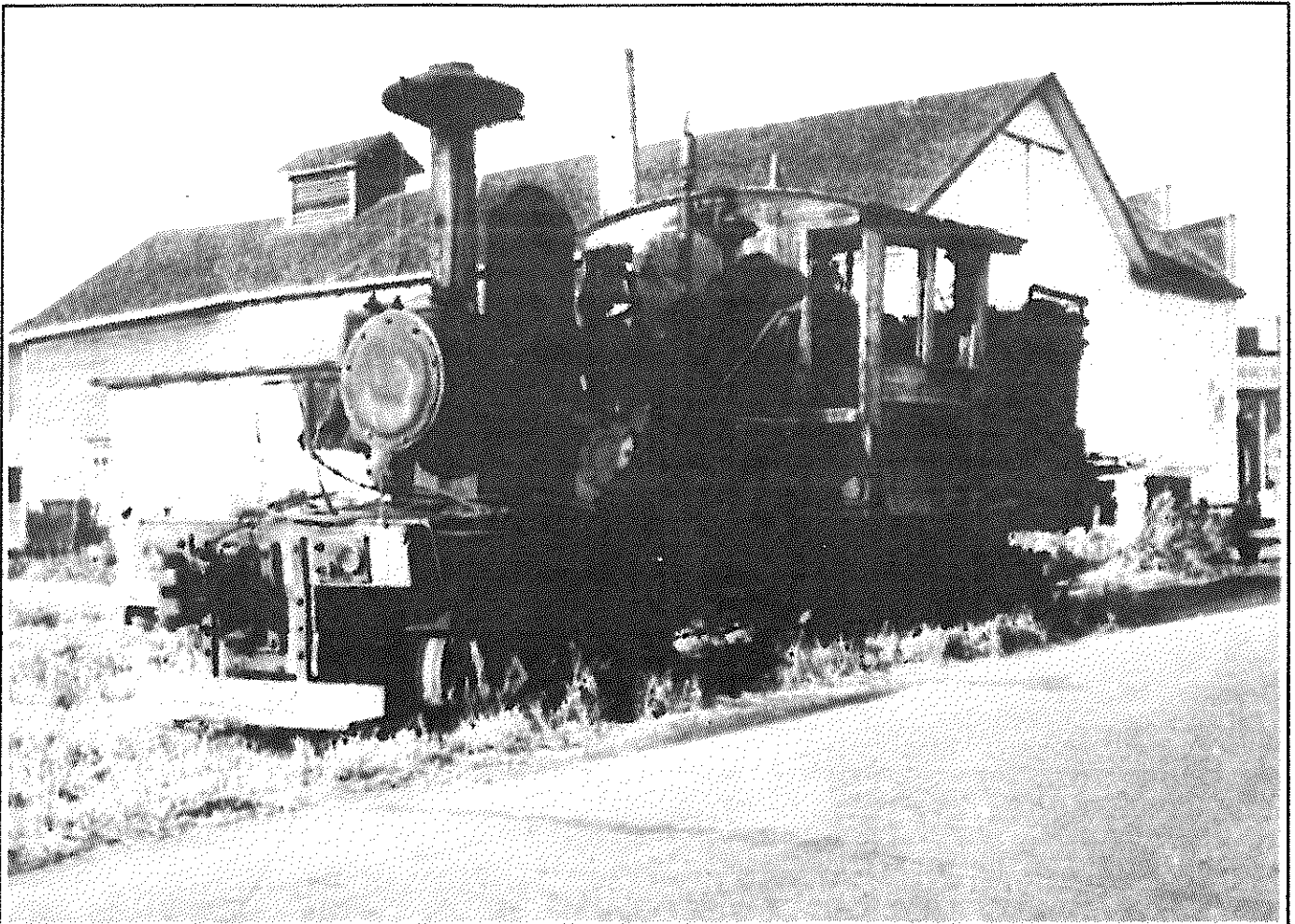
East Stanwood eventually began to be formed but that did not solve Stanwood's need for its own transportation to the depot. As a result, Stanwood started the H & H street railway in 1904 (see next article) that ran until the mills' decline in the 1930's.

In the early years, Stanwood & East Stanwood had more railroad activity than now, though the spur in East Stanwood was recently reactivated to be used by North Star Cold Storage to ship frozen seafood. In 1965, another spur was built around the north end of Stanwood (the now consolidated Stanwood & East Stanwood) to transport food products from Twin City Foods.

After the closing and dismantling of the BN depot in 1971, the trains still run through town but seem more of an anachronism. The future of rail transport, which in one century changed so many lives, will be an interesting story to continue to witness as we enter the new century.



HALL & HALL RAILROAD – THE SHORTEST PRIVATELY HELD RAILROAD IN THE WORLD presumably with proud sponsors and owners standing by. This is the first version: the gasoline motor engine made in Everett and the street car from the Seattle street car line.



HALL & HALL RAILROAD as many remember it after it fell into disuse in the late 1930's. It rested here (in the general vicinity of the current Texaco & Twin City Foods) until it was finally hauled away for WWII scrap. This Climax Engine was #407, 20 tons, built in 1903. This photograph was taken by C.W. Mendenhall, provided courtesy of John T. Labbe. A photograph similar to this was made into a postcard (see v.1, p. 93 in the The Stanwood Story).

The story of the H & H begins in 1890 when the Seattle & Montana R.R. ran its tracks about a mile east of the town of Stanwood. After a few years of inconvenience, Stanwood parties (presumably lead by A.S. Howard, owner of Stanwood Lumber Co. at the time) planned the franchise to operate a street railway between Stanwood and the depot. After the usual political hoops and loops, the County and Town of Stanwood allowed John W. Hall to operate the streetcar to deliver people, mail, and products between Stanwood and the depot. (See Whitfield's History of Snohomish County, Washington, v. 1, p.505.)

The last spike of the track of the H & H was driven October 25th, 1904. Early newspaper accounts refer to the railway as a street car line. It had a gasoline motor engine made in Everett specifically for the H & H and a regular street car for passengers purchased from the Seattle street railway company. Most of the early photographs depict these two railcars. One photographer (The Stanwood Story, v. 1, p. 92) labeled his H & H photo (facetiously?) the "Stanwood Flyer".

Then, in November 1905, the Stanwood Tidings reports that Hall had acquired a new 18-ton engine for the H & H. The type of engine is not mentioned but a picture in the Stanwood Story (v.1, p.93) shows a Shay-type depicted presumably as this 2nd engine. However, another source refers to the 2nd engine as a Baldwin Locomotive. The final engine, remembered most by residents as the "dinky," was a Climax logging engine.

Though a search was not exhaustive, there were few newspaper references to the H & H in the years after its establishment. Its schedule shows that it ran back and forth 3 times day. In 1918 it stopped taking passengers and began running the Climax. In the 30's it apparently ran only when the lumber yards were running. A 1932 McClure Newspaper Syndicate cartoon proclaims it the "Shortest Railroad in the World". Its demise is recorded in a Seattle Post-Intelligencer article in 1938 but, oddly, this researcher could find no reference to its final run in the Stanwood paper.