



BRIER

WE HAVEN'T CHANGED...MUCH

A Brief History of the City of Brier

BRIER

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the citizens of Brier who worked so hard to create and sustain its wonderful community.

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, as Brier marks 55 years since incorporation on February 2, 1965, people still ask, “where is Brier?” and “why is Brier?” This book attempts to answer those questions.

WHERE IS BRIER, WASHINGTON?

The City of Brier is located in the southwest corner of Snohomish County, Washington, fifteen miles north of downtown Seattle. The Snohomish County-King County line defines the southern border of the city. The City of Kenmore is on the southeast side, Lake Forest Park on the southwest side, Mountlake Terrace to the west, Lynnwood to the north, and parts of unincorporated Snohomish County to the north and east of the Brier city limits.

When the City incorporated in 1965, it covered 2.03 square miles and 1,300 acres. Brier has remained small — in 2020 it is 2.13 square miles, with only small sections added through 17 annexation ordinances.



Fig. 1: Vicinity map

BEFORE THERE WAS BRIER

Brier is located within the traditional territory of the Sammamish, Snohomish, and Suquamish people, whose descendants are members of the Snoqualmie Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, Suquamish Tribe, and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. The extent to which these people used the area that would become Brier is unknown but approximately one mile east of the city is a recorded Native American placename for Swamp Creek. In Lutosheed, the language used by the coastal Salish peoples of the region, the name for the place was *dx^{wl}(ə)q' ab*, meaning “other side of something” and “a wide place.” Swamp Creek, the main body of water in the area, flows from the north at Lake Stickney, near Everett, to Kenmore where it flows into the Sammamish River, which then flows into Lake Washington.

Settlement by Euro-Americans of Snohomish County began in the 1850s with the arrival of loggers and homesteaders. The 1862 Homestead Act accelerated the arrivals of non-natives to the region as well as much of the western United States. This federal act entitled settlers to 160 free acres of land with a requirement to build a residence; cultivate the land; and improve the property for five years. Alternatively, the act allowed cash entry for \$1.25 per acre. This option required a six-month residency and the owner to make minor improvements.

EARLY LANDOWNERS AND LAND USE

Early land ownership maps show few property owners in what would become the City of Brier. Most of the land had been acquired by timber and logging companies, the majority owned by the Puget Mill Company. Most individual property owners never lived on this land. It is assumed they purchased the property to sell timber harvested from the thickly forest-covered land or as an investment for future sale.

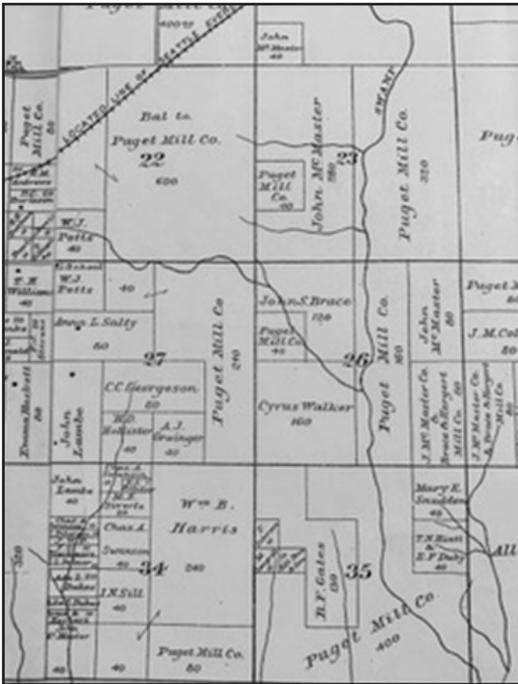


Fig. 2: 1910 plat map showing the area that would become Brier and the property owners of the time

John and Anna Salty are the only actual “homesteaders” of land that is now in the city limits of Brier. The Salty family emigrated from Finland, John in 1883 followed by Anna in 1885 with their three-year-old daughter Hilda. Prior to Anna and Hilda arriving, John built a one-room cabin on a portion of the 160 acres he acquired through the Homestead Act. Three sons were born to John and Anna while they lived on the homestead, John in 1887, Charles in 1891, and Gustav in 1907.

John and Anna Salty farmed their land to provide for their family. Listed as dairy farmers in the 1916 Snohomish County Directory, they sold milk as well as apples and blackberries that were grown on their land. Through the next decades, the vacant land of their homestead was divided and sold including the site occupied by Cedar Way Elementary School in 2020.



Fig. 3: John and Anna Salty

In September of 1896, the Salty family deeded two acres of land (44th Ave W. and 212th St SW) for use as a school. Parents in the area assisted in the construction of a hewn log, 26' x 18', one-room building known as the Salty School. This building was replaced in 1911, the new facility became known as the (first) Cedar Valley School.

By 1910, John and Anna had sold half of their homestead to W.J Potts. Part of this northwest portion of their land is located in the boundaries of what became the City of Brier. The majority of the 80 acres the Salty family retained is in the city limits of Mountlake Terrace. Their home was on the property that in 2020 is the location of the Mountlake Terrace High School.

Timber

None of the other original landowners in the area were “homesteaders.” Most of the land in this area was purchased by Andrew Pope, William Talbot, and Cyrus Walker in 1869. The men took the land in their personal names before eventually transferring their deeds to the Puget Mill Company, owned by Pope and Talbot of San Francisco, California. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, much of the land in south Snohomish County was logged leaving acres of snags and stumps.

Other Early Land Use

Land not owned by the Puget Mill Company or the Salty family was purchased between 1872 and 1891 by several speculators including James Orr, Benjamin Briggs, Toby Simean Jr., Martin Getman, and Allen Deans. In 2020, Mr. Deans' property is occupied by Abbey View Memorial Park and Mr. Getman's property is the site of the Dundee and Alderbrook subdivisions.

To encourage new uses for the stump-covered land, the Puget Mill Company, owning almost 7,000 acres, created a Demonstration Farm north of the city on Poplar Road, one of the roads that would eventually lead to Brier. The thirty-acre Demonstration Farm was used to promote the sale of five-acre parcels to potential landowners with the vision of becoming poultry farmers.

Another impetus for residential development in the area came in 1910 when the Seattle-Everett Interurban Railway began service between the two cities. This electric trolley made stops at Seattle Heights, Cedar Valley, and Alderwood Manor allowing better options for travel. The trolley was used for passenger travel during the day and moving freight at night.

People began moving to the area after purchasing their parcels from the Puget Mill Company. In the early 1920s, this area was known as Alderwood Manor. It was the second-largest egg-producing community in the United States just behind Petaluma, California. Many of these new residents started chicken farms and a few decades later there were almost 35 small chicken farms and mink ranches in the Brier area.

In the next four decades, north King County and south Snohomish County remain largely rural. A plat covering what would become the south half of Brier was recorded on October 15, 1924, in the name of Shasta Park with lot sizes of approximately 4.5-acres. The area was subdivided in 1948 as Shasta Park No. 1, Shasta Park Division No. 2 in 1949, and Shasta Manor in 1951. Lot sizes ranged from 15,000 to 25,000 square feet.



Fig. 4: Shasta Park plat

After World War II, home purchasers increasingly looked outside of Seattle to more affordable South Snohomish County and North King County. Lynnwood, Lake Forrest Park, and Mountlake Terrace (founded in 1954) began to see increased residential development. This area was in close proximity to both Seattle and Everett but still offered large lots and the opportunity to have animals.

INCORPORATION, BRIER: HOW IT BEGAN

Call for Incorporation

In September 1964, the Mountlake Terrace City Council scheduled a public hearing to consider annexing the Shasta Park area into their city. The proposed annexation area was located between 226th and 219th Streets SW east of 36th Ave W to Brier Road.

One of the goals of the proposed annexation was to connect the area to Mountlake Terrace sewers. The connection had been requested by the Edmonds School District 15 and McGrath Homes. The area included over 35 acres McGrath Homes wanted to develop into single-family home sites. The annexation would also include land where the Edmonds School District planned to build a junior high school as well as property where they were already constructing an elementary school. McGrath Homes and the school district-owned 78 percent of the proposed annexation area.

Residents of the Shasta Park area had heard of plans for annexation into the City of Mountlake Terrace beginning in June 1964. They had witnessed development in the surrounding area and wanted to keep their area rural with larger lot sizes.

Members of the Shasta Park Community Club met, formed the Shasta Park Citizens' Committee, drafted a petition, and obtained signatures of over 700 residents to a resolution protesting the planned annexation. Key points of the resolution included:

“Preservation of a natural rural and suburban community to be an objective so as to maintain, preserve and develop rural and suburban home sites with ample room for agricultural hobbies and pursuits and the keeping of domestic animals ... retention and protection of home and family privacy, as associated with ample size lots, natural woodlands, and quiet neighborhoods. It is our desire that all new developments and subdivisions have ample size lots (12,500 square feet minimum)”

Copies of the resolution and signatures were given to the Edmonds School District Board and the Mountlake Terrace City Council but both groups continued to move forward on annexation.

The citizen group retained an attorney to initiate a suit against the city council and school board on the grounds that the annexation petitions they were acting on failed to comply with Washington State laws.

On August 17, 1964, the Superior Court of Snohomish County ordered Mountlake Terrace and the school district to take no further action on the annexation pending a court hearing. This ruling was critical because on this same day the city council was preparing to take final action on the annexation petitions.

Pursuing Incorporation

Opponents of the annexation determined that the court order was only a temporary solution and it would be necessary to incorporate as an independent city to prevent similar action in the future. The Shasta Park Citizens’ Committee called a general meeting for residents of the community. An

overwhelming majority, 88 to 3 of those in attendance, expressed a desire to move forward with an incorporation study. Two of the committee's main reasons for seeking incorporation were fear of outside control and high-density housing.

While forming the committee the discussion included the name for the new city. Suggestions included Shasta, Alderwood, or Brier. Brier received 19 of the 23 votes from those attending the meeting. The name is believed to be taken from the road that would run through the city, Brier Road. The Shasta Park Citizens' Committee became known as the Brier Citizens' Committee.

Financial assistance was pledged by 271 Brier families in the amount of \$1,021 and the Brier Citizens' Committee was formed on September 24, 1964. Chaired by Richard Balser, the committee had two main objectives. One, to "conduct the incorporation study and to publish and distribute a report of such study" and two, "to prevent, if possible, any further encroachment by Mountlake Terrace into our community until the residents had the opportunity to decide for themselves whether or not they desired to incorporate."

On October 2, 1964, the Mountlake Terrace City Council and the Edmonds School District School Board conceded to the lawsuit and agreed that the annexation petitions were null and void. Despite this, the plans for incorporation moved forward.

A census was completed under the direction of the State Census Board. The census was required to determine how many signatures were necessary to move forward with

the incorporation. The population was roughly estimated at 2,325 persons. It was estimated that 200 signatures would be needed to satisfy the legal requirements to put the incorporation vote on the ballot. Two days later the committee had over four hundred signatures.

On October 5th, the Brier Citizens' Committee filed a petition with the Snohomish County Auditor for an election on the incorporation of a third-class city. This filing ensured that no portion of the area could be annexed by Mountlake Terrace until after the residents had an opportunity to vote on the future of their community. A vote on incorporation was scheduled for February 1965.

Challenges to Incorporation: The School Question

On October 20th, a problem was identified with the possible incorporation. The incorporation would require the merger of the Northshore and Edmonds School Districts. This requirement arose from a Washington State Law that mandated newly incorporated areas that encompassed parts of two or more existing school districts merge into one district. For this reason, both districts opposed the incorporation.

To address the issue, the Snohomish and King County School Strict Reorganization committee agreed that Northshore would transfer their jurisdiction in the proposed Brier city limits to the Edmonds School District to avoid consolidation. This affected about 115 pupils in the Northshore District. The agreement allowed the students to stay at their schools until the end of the school year.

A long-term solution came when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction introduced a bill in the 1965 legislature to exempt first-class districts from the requirement. The Washington State Legislature passed the law to permit school district's boundaries to be maintained without regard to city boundaries. Edmonds subsequently transferred the Northshore students back into that district. All students remained in their schools.

Opposition to Incorporation

About a month prior to the election a group formed calling themselves the Committee against Brier Incorporation. Reasons for opposition included:

“We will have less or no public health protection or service.

We have no business district.

Our taxes will be increased.

We can't possibly maintain our roads.

The Edmonds School District will 'withdraw' from Brier.”

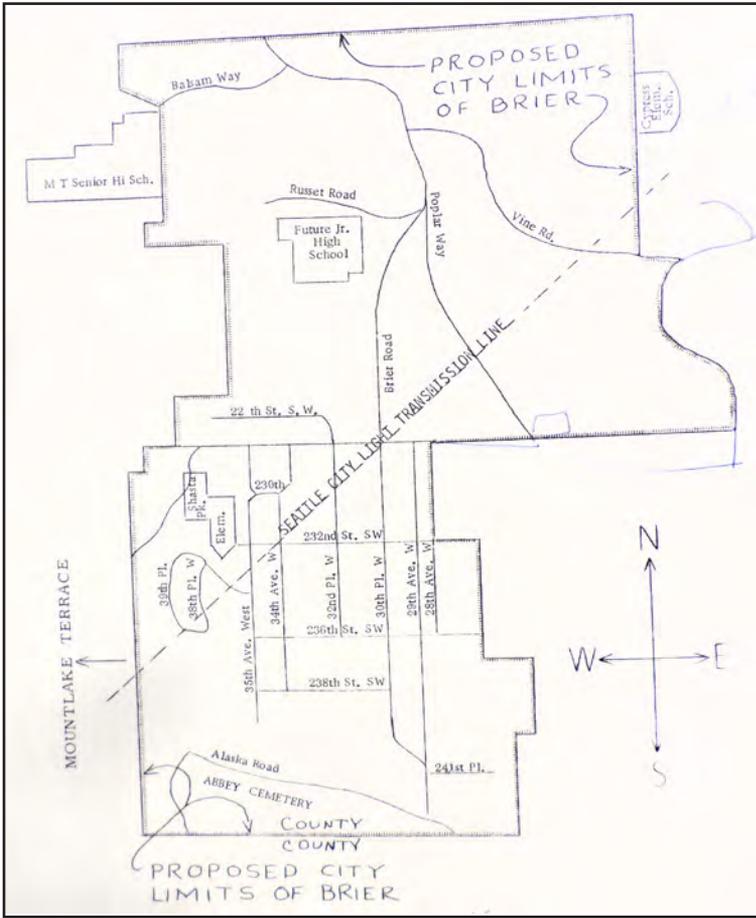


Fig. 5: Figure from the pamphlet from the Committee Against Brier Incorporation

Election Day: February 2, 1965

The community voted to incorporate in an election on February 2, 1965. Eighty-five percent of the area residents voted that day. Although only a simple majority was needed for passage, approximately 70%, of the residents voted in favor of incorporation passing 461 to 192. Brier was certified as a third-class city in Snohomish County with a Mayor-Council form of government.

On February 4th, Thomas McGrath, President of McGrath Homes, Inc. obtained a temporary restraining order halting the county's canvassing of the incorporation. The order was granted on the argument that Snohomish County Commission had not taken a census of the area to be incorporated before the election as required by law. McGrath also argued his business would "suffer great damage" if the incorporation was allowed to stand as they had been planning a housing development in the incorporated area.

On February 11th, Superior Court Judge Charles Denney ruled that the commission had acted properly in taking a census. The commission continued to canvass the votes and the election was certified.

While they waited for the Judge's decision, Mayor-elect Richard Balsler and three councilmen-elect drove to Olympia to pay the \$5.00 incorporation fee to the Secretary of State. Standing by in Everett was Councilman-elect Van Hetter. As soon as the Judge ruled the election certified, Hetter flew from Everett Paine Field to Olympia with the documents. The Secretary of State's office stayed open past five in order to receive the certification. On February 11th, Brier officially became a third-class city. To celebrate their victory, the Citizens'

Committee hosted the “Birth of Brier” bash on February 14th at Cypress Elementary School. The event served as a fundraiser to help pay outstanding debts incurred from the incorporation effort. Attendees enjoyed a potluck; a performance by highland dancers; and a square dance.



Fig. 6: Flight to Olympia

SETTING UP BRIER'S FIRST GOVERNMENT

In addition to voting in favor of incorporation, at the February 2 election, residents elected a mayor and seven council members. Richard A. Balsler, Chair of the Citizens for Brier Incorporation, had been elected mayor for a four-year term with no salary. City council members elected for two-year terms were Louis Balch, Van M. Heeter, Ed Locke, and Frank E. Wilcox. Members elected for a four-year term were Kenneth Pl Merriman, Richard Bell, and G. W. Fitzsimmons. These terms also offered no salary.

The City of Brier's first council meeting was held on February 18th at the B & D Auction House located on Brier Road. The auction house, a familiar gathering place, could accommodate the large crowd expected for this first meeting.

The meeting lasted two hours, the City Council adopting their first six ordinances. The council action established the location of City Hall, office hours, and the location of City Council meetings. The council also appointed the City Treasurer, Attorney, Clerk, and the members of a seven-member Planning Commission.



Fig. 7: First City Council meeting

Other appointments made by Mayor Balser included Stewart Green as the City Engineer; Ben Johnson as Chief of Police; and Dr. Clifford Anderson as City Health Officer. Mr. Green would receive the industry hourly rate for engineers plus a plan check fee. Chief Johnson would receive \$60.00 per month. Dan Kershner was named municipal judge at a salary of \$50.00 a month. At the April 1965 meeting responsibilities were set for the various appointments.

During the first month, by state law, Brier was to prepare a comprehensive plan. The plan articulated the goals and principles that would shape the new city including that:

“The philosophy of the city government is to retain and maintain the basic original, spacious, and semirural wooded character of the area ... and to remain relatively small, simple and intimate with a minimum of regulations and taxation.”

The plan also stated that the “policy would be to protect and encourage the development of residential areas in a manner consistent with the relatively low-density patterns already established ...to maintain the rural atmosphere...” The plan further stated that “no industrial uses are contemplated.”

During the next months, the council would adopt additional ordinances creating a drainage code and establishing an auditing committee. Other items up for discussion were installing proper traffic control and street name signs. The council asked for any residents with ideas for signs or with a woodshop to contact the city.

In July, the council held public hearings on the adoption of a Plating and Subdivision Ordinance to establish lot sizes; requirements for water, sewer, and other utilities; define sidewalk and minimum street widths, and provide for improvement of public places and dedications of park and playgrounds space.

Also in July came an announcement of the establishment of an emergency phone number of PR6-8585. Calls made to this number would cost the city 45 cents each, so residents were encouraged to call a council member with complaints or questions. The council members were divided into geographical areas to call with a request to be mindful when making a call to keep them between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.

The newly formed city sought both volunteers and part-time paid help to have a “self-sufficient community.” Three lists of positions were made. One for teenage and retired residents who could help with maintenance and

construction at a minimum wage. Another list was for adult volunteers who could help a couple of hours a week “on some worthwhile project (school walkways, census surveys, typing, or courier service).” And the third was a list of adult employees who would work on a minimum wage basis for maintenance or clerical tasks on short notice.

By August, the City Clerk had resigned and an advertisement for the position was sent out as a “Special Edition” of the Brier Bulletin. The Bulletin also printed a list of nineteen applicants between the age of 13 and 19 seeking work as part-time summer employees. Since the city could only use 12 of the applicants, they shared the names so they could obtain other local employment. Those hired would be paid \$1.40 an hour after the first 80 hours worked.

By October, attendance at City Council meetings had dropped from almost 80 people to a dozen leading to the decision to have the meetings at City Hall rather than rent the auction house.

GROWING PAINS

Brier, like any new city, had its share of growing pains. The first years after incorporation were spent setting up departments; passing ordinances; hiring staff; and making sure the residents were taken care of as promised. Even though the city was small there much to do.

The newly elected and appointed men and women worked hard with the sometimes thankless tasks of establishing the city. They usually did so with the best of intentions, but sometimes personal preferences got in the way. The city's leadership changed regularly during the years following incorporation as Brier struggled to balance its desire for limited growth with other community needs.

In November of 1972, members of the Alderwood Community Council proposed annexation into Brier. This would be an area east of Interstate 5 on 196th SW. These residents were against heavy commercial and apartment development. Within a week they removed the request, as they didn't feel Brier could provide the services they required to their area.

On August 18, 1976, the *Enterprise* newspaper reported "Hope in Brier...at long last, it appears Brier is ready to govern itself. For the first time in longer than anyone can remember the city has a seven-man city council, a mayor, and is finally over the unsavory recall fight that left Brier with a reputation that may take years to live down."

Despite these positive developments, in 1976 a group unhappy with Brier government started a small movement to disband the city of Brier with a desire to be annexed into the City of Mountlake Terrace.

It is not clear if it was the same residents that in 1977 a group formed the Concerned Citizens Group for Disincorporation. They were moving forward with a petition drive gathering signatures to have disincorporation put on a ballot. They did not proceed with this until again in March of 1978, when they renewed their effort and sent an informational sheet to Brier residents and circulated a petition to place it on a future ballot. This attempt was unsuccessful as they needed 689 signatures and fell 100 short of this requirement.

New conflicts emerged in the mid-1980s. In 1985, Brier residents voted down a proposal to replace their elected mayor with an appointed city manager. Later, in what some residents dubbed the “Battle of Brier,” the community debated revisions to the Comprehensive Plan and other proposals to allow increased development including plans for a large grocery store and retail center.

Between 1980 and 2005, the City government was in flux. There were regular recalls and resignations of mayors and council members. Other city officials resigned or were removed. These issues were well documented in articles appearing in the local papers including a lengthy piece published in the Seattle Times on June 8, 2005. Some of the controversies were personal in nature and some resulted from ongoing concerns over how to maintain Brier’s small, semi-rural character.

BRIER ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICES

Striving to maintain its original philosophy of low taxes and minimal regulation, the City's administrative staff has been small but dedicated to keeping it a pleasant place to live. In setting up its government and services, Brier often relied on close relationships with neighboring jurisdictions and agencies.

Brier Police

On March 9, 1965, Mayor Balsler named Ben Johnson as Brier's first Police Chief from a group of 16 applicants. Chief Johnson's duties included enforcing local ordinances and answering emergency calls in his unmarked family car. For this, he received \$60 per month. The Snohomish County Sherriff's department would still be responsible for maintaining law and order. Chief Johnson was responsible for setting up the police department and after a few months resigned to make way for Wayne Pearson to take over as chief.



Fig. 8: Left to Right: Mayor Dick Balsler, Ben Johnson, Snohomish County Sherriff Don Jennings

In September of 1965 Brier had its first hold-up, an armed robber and assault at the Shasta Park Grocery. The process of reporting this incident was a call first made to the Seattle Police Department. They called Radio Dispatch, Inc. who called the Brier police. Soon after this incident, the city sent green labels with the emergency phone number on them to be placed on all home telephones.



Fig. 9: Chief Johnson

At this time, ambulance services were provided by Shepard Ambulance Service and Hub City Ambulance. The City also asked residents willing to volunteer to help the police and fire departments during emergencies to leave their name with the City Clerk.

By year's end, the City obtained a used state patrol car for \$840.00. The car included shotguns, radios, and a few accessory items. Two years later, they purchased a radar unit and \$800 worth of communications equipment.

In 1966, an additional full-time police officer was hired. By 1970, the City had four police officers. In 1967 the City entered an agreement with Mountlake Terrace for them to provide 24-hour dispatching service for a fee of \$150.00 a month.

The first police station was in a small building shared with the city offices. In 1972, attorneys for Brier and Snohomish County drafted an inter-local agreement for the joint use of a police station to be built in Brier. The county would build the structure and the City would donate the land and provide maintenance for the building. Part of the facility was used for Sherriff deputies serving south Snohomish County while the other part of the building would be used by the Brier police officers. In 1974, the new Brier City Hall and Snohomish County Sherriff's Substation was completed.



Fig. 10: Installation of trailers used as Brier's City Hall

In 1975, the police department had a new member: Jenny, a specially-trained guard dog, ½ German Shepherd, and ½ wolf. She was mainly used for lost children and burglary prevention. During the 1970s, the department also led the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and “McGruff the Crime Dog” safety awareness programs in the Brier schools.



Fig. 11: D.A.R.E. vehicle

In 2020, Brier’s police department, led by Police Chief Mike Catlett, includes six sworn officers, a records supervisor, and four reserve officers. Brier consistently ranks as one of the safest cities in Washington State in a national ranking of violent and property crimes.

Fire Service

Before incorporation, fire service was provided by Snohomish County Fire District #1. There were two fire stations that responded to calls in Brier, the Alderwood Manor Station #2 (2.7 miles away) and the Seattle Heights Station #1 (3.4 miles away). Upon incorporation, the City immediately contracted with Snohomish County Fire District #1 to continue the service.

In 1970, a single bay station, Brier Station #6, was built at 232nd and Brier Road (the 2020 location of the Brier Library). The station was manned by volunteers. Volunteers drilled once a week on Monday nights for two hours. They were provided with a set of gear; radios; and free medical insurance.

In 1975, Brier contracted with Mountlake Terrace to provide fire service from their station located at 38th Ave and 228th St. just outside the Brier city limits. This agreement continued until 2005 when the two cities entered into a contract with Snohomish County Fire District #1 to provide services to both Brier and Mountlake Terrace.

In 2009, Brier worked with Fire District 1 to approve the construction of a new fire station at 21206 Poplar Way. In 2017, voters in Lynnwood and Fire District 1 approved the creation of a regional fire department known as South County Fire & Rescue. At the end of 2019, Fire District 1 was dissolved. In 2020, Brier is served by the South County Fire and Rescue.



Fig. 12: Fire station ribbon cutting ceremony

Public Works/Community Development

The Public Works/Community Department is responsible for sewer, storm drainage, and street maintenance. It oversees planning and development and issues permits for business, land use, and building within the city limits. In 1965, the street department had two full-time employees. In 2020, the department, including planning and building officials, has six full-time employees plus seasonal workers.

In 1964 there were 11 miles of surfaced roads and eight miles of gravel road in the city. In the first nine years of the city, 300 of the 745 homes in Brier were connected to sewers. In 2020 Brier's 2.13 square miles contains approximately 27 miles of streets and roads.



Fig. 13: Public Works staff install signage. Pictured on the left is Rich Maag, Public Works foreman and city employee for over 30 years.

City Boards & Commissions

Brier, like most cities, relies on boards and commissions to assist in setting and carrying out policies of different areas of the municipal government. These groups are primarily staffed by volunteers who give their time to improve the city. The main boards and commissions include the Library Board which advises the mayor on issues related to the library. A Civil Service Commission for the Police Department is required by state law. The commission oversees entry-level and promotional examinations and disciplinary action for police personnel. The City briefly had an equestrian board, but this was disbanded after a year. The Planning Commission is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations to the City Council on the City's Comprehensive Plan; land-use actions and regulations; and annexations. One of the most active boards is the Parks and Recreation Board. This group advises the council on matters concerning the parks and organizes events including Music in the Park; Sea-Scare; Dog-O-Ween; Holiday Tree Lighting; and the Traditional Egg Hunt.



Fig. 14: Music in the Park, a popular summer activity organized by the Parks & Recreation Board

CITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Sewers

Providing sewers to the new city was a major endeavor as much of the area was on septic systems at the time of incorporation. In the first nine years, 300 of the 745 homes in Brier were connected to sewers, much of this accomplished through the creation of Utility Local Improvement Districts (ULID)s and agreements with neighboring jurisdictions.

In 1966, Brier entered into an agreement with the City of Seattle/Metropolitan Sewerage System (Metro) to provide sewer. Under the agreement, Metro advanced the City of Brier \$70,000 to construct local sewers.

In the late 1960s, the City also established several ULIDs to construct sewers. A major project was to add sewers along Brier Road. There was much discussion at a series of public hearings with residents concerned about the high costs of connections to the sewer system.

Later agreements with Alderwood Water and Wastewater District, Mountlake Terrace, the Northshore Utility District, and King County Wastewater Treatment Division have been made and amended over time to receive sewer and provide treatment to the City. Additional ULID agreements and requirements to provide public sewer as part of subdivisions and other land development initiatives have helped move much of the city off septic systems.



Fig. 15: Sewer extension project

Roads

In 1964, there were 11 miles of surfaced roads and 8 miles of gravel road in the city. In 2020, there are approximately 27 miles of streets and roads. The major streets are Brier Road, Poplar Way, and 228th Street SW. Other streets that connect the city are Old Poplar Way, Vine Road, and 214th Street SW.

Brier Road

Brier Road is the main north-south connection through the city. At incorporation, Brier Road was narrow with ditches on both sides. From the City's founding discussion had occurred on improving the road.

On February 9, 1971, the city council voted unanimously to proceed with the reconstruction of Brier Road and formed an LID to finance the project. They took into consideration the safety, service, economy, and welfare of

the residents in determining the timing and scope of the project. To minimize impacts to residents from tearing up the road, the timing for the work was coordinated with the installation of sewers.

The extent of the project required much discussion. If they were to just overlay the road it would accomplish no significant widening, leveling, or straightening. The new pavement would only extend 1 or 2 feet beyond the existing ditches. Brier Road would still have a single centerline, giving one lane each way. Turning lanes and passing would be developed at intersections.

A fraction of residents that had property on Brier Road were opposed to this construction, they wanted Brier Road left alone. They felt it was good enough for local traffic and just wanted the potholes patched. They liked the rural atmosphere and felt the ditches and narrow pavement were fine. They did not want the road any closer to their front doors.

Despite these concerns, the work on widening the road went forward. The project also involved changing the alignment of the road at the south end of the city near Alaska and Floral Way. Previously the road had followed the 2020 alignment of Brier Way.

The October 1972 Brier Bulletin shared the news that the \$750,000 construction project was complete. The Knowles Construction Company was finishing up the final "punch lists." The Bulletin also reminded residents that horses were prohibited from paved areas per a new ordinance.

In 2020, most of the right-of-way on the east side of Brier Road is maintained with gravel as a horse trail. Since 1972, there have been several overlays and improvements to the surface of Brier Road.

228th Street SW

228th Street SW is the major east-west road through Brier. The road connects the city to Mountlake Terrace to the west and Bothell to the east. In the 1950s, it was a dirt trail, but eventually, the road was paved providing easier connections to I-5 and neighboring cities. There have been several projects to overlay the road and provide sidewalks to improve safety.

Brier City Hall

The first City Hall was at the home of Mrs. E. G. Towner. Mrs. Towner, the first city clerk, rented the City a back room of her ranch-style house at 22424 Poplar Way for \$50 a month. The City continued to use several temporary locations in local residences until a more permanent home was found at 23313 Brier Road.

The new facility was a 22' x 36' building constructed on a concrete block foundation at a cost of \$3,500. From the beginning, this building was too small requiring the men's restroom to double as the police department's property room.

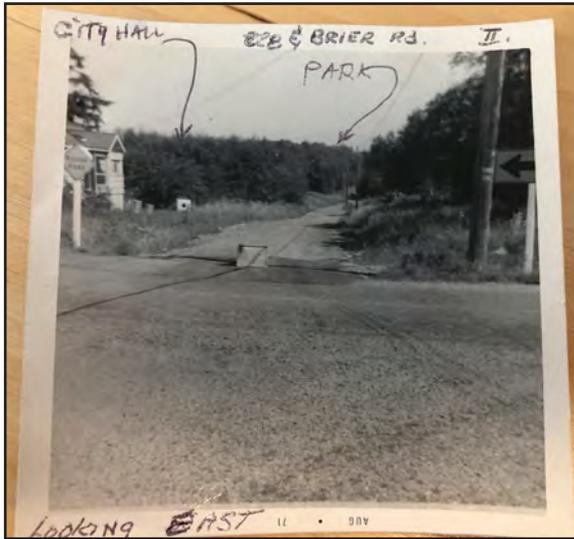


Fig. 16: Site of the current City Hall and Brier Park

In 1974, a new Brier City Hall and Snohomish County Sherriff's substation was completed on the current location of City Hall at 228th Street SW. The city provided the 1.4-acre site and handled the site preparation. The county paid the \$50,000 construction cost for the 2,100 square-foot building. The county owned the building and the city paid rent by taking care of monthly bills; providing maintenance; and other in-kind services. Under the agreement, the city would own its half of the building in 30 years. The facility housed Brier's administrative offices, police department, and a 15-person contingent of deputies from the Snohomish County Sherriff's office. The old city hall on Brier Road became Brier's first library.



Fig. 17: 1974 City Hall and Substation

In the summer of 2002, structural inspections found rot in several corners of the Brier police department. In 2003, Brier released plans for a new \$1.5 million building to replace the aging trailers that had long been the civic center.

Built on the same site, the new City Hall combined three departments: Administration, Community Development, and the Police Department. The new building opened in 2004.



Fig. 18: Current City Hall

Brier Parks

Prior to 1970, the only park was the Brier Playfield (now known as Bobcat Park). When the city started talking about obtaining land for parks, they also discussed the idea of an 18-hole golf course at the north end of the city. These plans never materialized. The Brier Playfield was once the property of the Stauffer family who had created a park and subsequently donated the land to the Shasta Park Community Club (later Brier Community Club). After the incorporation, the group deeded the property to the City for \$10 along with payment of outstanding property taxes.

In 1987, the Park Board announced a contest to rename the park. The winning entry, Bobcat Park, was from a second-grade class at Brier Elementary. They proposed renaming it after the Brier Elementary mascot, the Bobcat. Beginning in 2010, Bobcat Park has been the location for the annual Dogoween event. Participants are encouraged to dress up for a costume parade. The motto is “dogs dressed as people/people dressed as dogs.”



Fig. 19: Dog-O-Ween, an annual event in Bobcat Park

The largest developed park, at 12.8 acres, is Brier Park. Located on Old Poplar Way and 228th Street SW to the east of the current City Hall, Brier Park was one of the first parks in the city. Built in the early 1970s, the park has seen many changes. Today it includes accessible walking paths; tennis courts; fields for baseball and soccer; playground equipment; a covered picnic area; a skate park; and a horse arena.

The horse arena is one of two public arenas in Snohomish County. It is widely used by both Brier residents and riders from outside the city. Though the arena is on land owned by the City of Brier, the City has left most of the maintenance up to the horse riders. Various scouts have contributed by repairing rails and benches. Over the years, the riding surface had degraded and become very dusty in the summer months. To address the issue, the Public Works Department installed a new surface in 2019.



Fig. 20: Brier horse arena

Brier Patch, Mountain View, Wynbrook I and Wynbrook II are neighborhood parks dedicated to the City as part of the platting process for the subdivisions. The parks have playground equipment and half basketball courts.



Fig. 21: Master Plan for Mountain View Park

Other parks, considered open space parks, include City Light Woods and Locust Creek Park. The creation of City Light Woods was driven by teachers at nearby Brier Elementary asking for an outdoor education center for students. Much of the space in these parks is left in a natural state with limited conveniences other than a few benches.

Brierwood Park is the city's largest (25.8 acres). Much of the land is undeveloped to serve as a wetland and wildlife conservation area but the park also includes walking areas; a small playground; and a baseball court.

Through the years, city residents have supported the parks through neighborhood work parties; Boy Scout Eagle projects; and neighborhood purchases of playground equipment. Navy Seabees have helped move dirt; building berms; and creating hills using it as a training exercise.

Brier continues planning for future parks and recently acquired land for Hickory Park on Old Poplar Way. This property was purchased with a grant from the Snohomish Conservation Futures Fund with requirements to leave the space open with limited facilities.

Brier Library

Prior to having their own library, Brier residents were served by the Sno-Isle Regional System Bookmobile. The Bookmobile made stops at the Shasta Park Grocery and at various neighborhoods.

City of Brier Ordinance 50 was approved by the City Council in June 1974. The Ordinance established a public library. The library's first home was the former city hall at 23303 Brier Road.

In November of 1974, the City of Brier entered into a contract with Sno-Isle Regional Library to provide services. In 1991 the City was annexed into the Sno-Isle Library system with the mayor and City Council pledging they would build a new library if the citizens voted for the annexation.



Fig. 22: The original Brier Library was repurposed from the old City Hall

By 1994, the old City Hall did not meet building or fire codes. The library wanted a larger facility that offered paved parking; complied with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements; and included space for children and school groups and study carrels.

In November 1994, residents were asked to approve a \$330,000 library levy for new construction. Although the measure was favored by a majority vote it failed to get the 60 percent approval rate required for passage.

Immediately a special election was scheduled to take place in February of 1995. This time the community approved, with 78.8 percent of the vote, the \$330,000 bond measure. The old library closed in September of 1995 and construction began the following month. During construction, the Brier community was served by a bookmobile that parked at City Hall until their new library opened in May 1996.

The new 2,700 square foot building opened on the same site as the former 788 square foot library. The old library housed 8,000 books, videos, and other items while the new structure has room for 20,000 items and computer terminals. The library sponsors and hosts public events including yoga classes, Lego club, and natural yard care workshops. The non-profit organization “Friends of the Library” supports the library and community programs with funds raised through book sales.



Fig. 23: New library

BRIER SCHOOLS

Brier Elementary

In addition to the challenges to the schools posed for the issue of incorporation, the development of the elementary school (originally proposed to be called Shasta Park Elementary) was difficult due to its location on a wetland that drained into Lyons Creek. One of the reasons the Edmonds School District wanted to annex this site into the City of Mountlake Terrace was their need for sewers to service the facility. After incorporation, the school district was hopeful they could connect into Mountlake Terrace's sewer system, but they were turned down. Without a sewer connection available for the school, a tanker truck had to come twice a day to pump out the septic tanks. Eventually, they were able to connect the facility to sewers.

Once incorporation was finalized the district changed the school's name to Brier Elementary. The total cost for construction of the new facility was \$615,721.00, or \$14.57 per square foot. The 10-acre site was purchased for \$32,950.00.



Fig. 24: Construction of Brier Elementary School

Brier Elementary, located at 3625 232nd SW, opened in September 1965 ready to house 600 students in the 20 classrooms. Enrollment was heavy on the lower grades requiring 3 first grade classes and 3 second grade classes while the sixth grade only needed one class.

At the October 14, 1965 dedication ceremony, school principal John Samples accepted the keys from architect Ralph H. Burkhard and the general contractor Collins-Hunt Construction Company. Refreshments were served by the Brier Parent Teacher Association and the school was open for families to visit marking one of the first big events in the City of Brier.

Brier Junior High

Brier Junior High opened in September 1969. The school, built on twenty acres at the intersection of Brier and Russet Roads, was described as unique in several ways. The facility is built around a Learning Resource Center with 37 teaching stations (classrooms). The property also features a private nature sanctuary and conservation teaching space. At the time of construction, the facility could accommodate 924 students. The cost of construction was \$2,055,474.00, \$22.59 per square foot.

James Whittaker, the first American to reach the top of Mt. Everest, was the guest speaker at the November 20th dedication ceremony. Present at the event were representatives of the architectural firm of Bindon, Wright & Associates, and Brazier Construction Company, the general contractor.

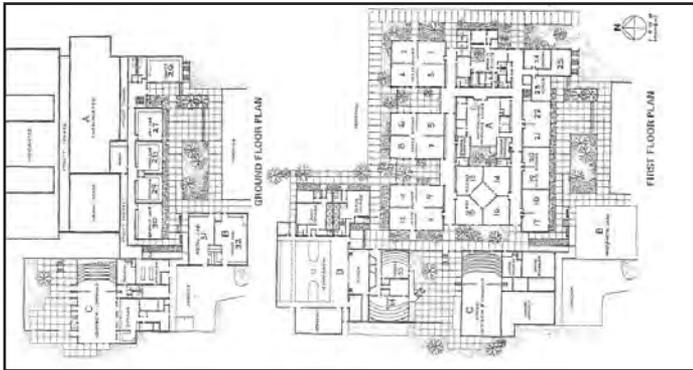


Fig. 25: Brier Junior High

Brier Middle School

In 1981 and 1982, Brier Junior High School went from having seventh through ninth grades to a middle school format with pupils in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Students from the former Mountlake Terrace Junior High moved to the new building in Brier. The name was changed to Brier-Terrace Middle School.

Mountlake Terrace High School

Prior to Mountlake Terrace High School opening in 1960, most students from the Brier area traveled across Highway 99 and attended Edmonds High School. Others attended Bothell High School.

Located at 21801 44th Ave W in Mountlake Terrace, the school was built at a cost of \$1,950,063. After 31 years the original building with leaking roofs, faulty heating system, and outside lockers was demolished. Students moved into a new \$28 million campus on the same site in 1991.

BRIER BUSINESSES

In keeping with its desire for limited commercial uses and a population of just over 6,000 residents, Brier has only a handful of brick and mortar businesses primarily located in a small “neighborhood business district” located on Brier Road. As described in the Comprehensive Plan and the city code, the purpose of this district is to “provide goods and services for the everyday needs of the immediate neighboring area.”

Located outside the neighborhood business zone, at the south end of the city at the intersection of Alaska Way and 35th Ave SW is one of the oldest businesses in Brier. On May 22, 1953, brother and sister C. Frederick and Hortense B. Harley and two others incorporated Abbey View Memorial Park, Inc. on 85 acres purchased from Allen Deans and the Puget Mill Company.

Another business that was already established on the day of incorporation was B & D Auction at 23631 Brier Road (the 2020 location of Brier Pizza & Pasta). The auction house, owned and operated by Marvin Dalton, was known to “auction any and everything.”



Fig. 26: Brier business district

Auctions were held every Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. often drawing over 200 attendees from the Shasta Park area. In front of the auction house was a small café. On most Friday nights they sold more than 70 ice cream cones. The café was open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. In 1964 the Saturday special was hamburgers for 25 cents with fries available for an additional 15 cents. Charley Ford was usually the auctioneer for the Friday night auction. A variety of items were auctioned including furniture, appliances, and antiques. The majority of items were repossessed by the Sheriff; were part of a divorce or estate settlement; came from storage companies, or were offered on consignment from area residents.

Another local gathering place was the Shasta Park Grocery Store. Originally owned by Robert and Mary Myers, you could do many things at the store, including purchasing stamps and automobile licenses. It was also a stopping place for the bookmobile and the Spichiger Berry Farm bus. In January 1966 a post office opened in the Shasta Park Grocery Store. Mary Myers was the Post Mistress. She served until the early 1970s when the post office was closed.

The Shasta Park Grocery Store was eventually renamed Brier Grocery. Made famous in 2019 when a \$12 million Washington State lotto ticket was sold, Brier Grocery has served the city for decades. Sunnie and Victor Andrade purchased the store in 1981. Their family still operates the business from the original wood-frame structure at 23607 Brier Road.

In 2020, the Brier Neighborhood Business Zone includes a hair salon; a real estate office; a coffee stand; a grocery store; and a restaurant. A revision to Brier Municipal Code was required to enable the restaurant to have televisions and to allow the coffee stand to operate as a drive-thru.

The City also allows “home occupation” business licenses. Home occupations in Brier include arborists and landscape services; accountants and dog walkers; day-care centers; and adult family homes. These home occupation licenses are intended to permit residents of the community a broad choice in the use of their properties as a place of livelihood and the production or supplementing of personal and family income.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Following incorporation, the City gradually began to fill in with new developments. The Dundee subdivision, located to the north of 228th Street and west of Brier Road, was approved for final plat in 1967. Planning for the project had begun prior to the City's incorporation and the lot sizes conformed to the Snohomish County requirements of the time. Developed by the McGrath Brothers, the project may have taken its name from Dundee, Scotland, as the developer was known for selecting names from British travel books (Seattle Times June 22, 2013). This subdivision added 85 new homes to Brier along with roads and sewers. The majority of the houses were single-story and built in the ranch style.

The Crestview Hills I and II developments brought new construction to the southeast side of the city in the early 1980s. Walcker Homes developed approximately 100 residences along with the required provisions for streets, sewer, and stormwater management south of 236th Street SW. Building types consisted of single-story, ranch-style homes, and two-story, split-level homes.

In the late 1980s, land at the northeast side of the city along Scriber Creek was platted through several phases of the Brierwood Subdivision. In addition to approximately 300 new homes, roads and sewers were added as well as the creation of the Brierwood Park. Most of the residences were two-story with generous lawns fronting quiet cul-de-sacs.

In 1996, the city council approved the final plat of the Timbervale Subdivision. This project added approximately

35 homes on the northwest side of the city. The project included provisions for greenbelts as well as sewers and roads. Other developments on the northwest side of the city during the mid-1990s included Countryside (19 lots); Chandler Park (14 lots); and Carlson Ranch (12 lots).

In 2011, final plat was granted to the Sunbrook development at the south end of the city at the King County line. Other large developments that occurred in the early twenty-first century include the Fiske, Wynbrook I and II Subdivisions in between Brier Road and Old Poplar Way. Much of this land had originally been an egg farm owned by Carl and Maria Zimmerman. Most of these properties consist of two-story houses.

Since its incorporation, most of Brier consisted of single-family residences with the small neighborhood business zone on Brier Road; the schools and fire station; and the Abbeyview Cemetery. One exception was the property owned by the United States government on the east side of Vine Road. This property consisted of twelve residences, initially providing housing for families serving in the U.S. Navy and later available as rentals to the public. In 2018 this property was purchased by a private developer and is being developed as single-family residences on individual 12,500 square foot lots.

In addition to the large developments, there have been small to medium size development projects scattered throughout the City. The City has also added land through annexations of neighboring unincorporated Snohomish County. Requirements for 12,500 square foot lots; a maximum of 45% lot coverage; large setbacks from the road and property lines; .and the retention of trees and other

natural areas maintained the semi-rural character of the area. Developers have also been required to dedicate land for parks and trails during the land division/development process. The City has also acquired parkland with grant money from the Snohomish Conservation Futures and other programs. Today, Brier remains a quiet residential area with walkable, tree-lined streets and views of the Cascade Mountains on clear days.

BRIER COMMUNITY EVENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Events and community groups helped foster civic pride and involvement in the new city. These events and activities evolved in response to local interests and are made possible through partnerships among the City and regional agencies, local businesses and organizations, and residents.

Shasta Park Community Club

In 1954, a group of residents formed and incorporated the Shasta Park Community Club. Meetings were held on the first Thursday of the month at the B & D Auction House. Their object and purpose included a “means to form enduring friendships, build a better community.” In 1959, the Alderwood Improvement Club merged with the Shasta Park Community Club as the groups were serving much of the same area and had the same mission.

The Shasta Park Community Club purchased a lot on the south side of 236th St SW and 32nd W for a playfield. Purchase of a neighboring lot allowed for an expansion with a softball diamond; a basketball area; a court for tennis and badminton; and swings.

In December of 1965, the group’s name changed to the Brier Community Club to reflect its commitment to the social and civic affairs of the new city. Most of the city’s elected officials were active members of the club.

The Community Club was the social heart of the city both before and after incorporation. In the early years, the club held four dances at the Alderwood Manor Youth

Club followed by a midnight smorgasbord. In the spring they would hold a plant and bake sale. On a weekend in August, they held "Fun Day." This event included a kiddie parade; a carnival; a men vs. boys baseball game; and an evening dance for the teenagers.

In 1965, Miss Kathy Boulton was crowned Miss Shasta Park Community Club. She and other recipients of the award participated in the local parades that occur every summer around the Puget Sound region centered on SeaFair. Over the years the Brier Community Club held their meetings at the Abbey View Cemetery and Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Mountlake Terrace.



Fig. 27: Miss Brier being presented her sash by Mayor Dick Balsler

To keep residents informed of local news, the City published the Brier Bulletin. Initially published monthly, after the first year's publication moved to a quarterly format and then when necessary. In the beginning, the bulletin subscriptions were \$1.00 for 12 issues. Residents were encouraged to call or write in with their suggestions,

ideas, complaints, and general remarks. Each issue usually had a message from the mayor.

Eventually, the Bulletin was replaced with the Brier Newsletter. The newsletter is published twice a year, mailed to residents, and posted on the City's website. The newsletter features a message from the mayor; notices for activities and events; and reminders of seasonal responsibilities.

Over the years many youth groups have been active in the city. Boy Scout Troop 60, the Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Camp Fire organizations have provided opportunities for the youth of Brier. Youth horse groups such as the Pegasus Patrol and the Brier Saddle Club regularly used the horse arena in Brier Park.

Festivals and Events

Since incorporation, the city and local groups have hosted festivals and events to foster community. In the first years, the Community Club sponsored an event called Fun Days. Brierfest eventually took its place as an annual event in 1982 run by the Brier Chamber of Commerce.

This event started as a parade for kids who were encouraged to dress up in funny clothes. The parade route ended at Brier Park for snow cones. Eventually, Brierfest included a three-mile fun run, a parade, fire department water ball fights, a horse show, pony rides, and a street dance.

Started in 2002, SeaScare takes place in August. The highlight of the event is a nautical-themed parade that makes its way down Brier Road starting at 232nd Street

SW and continues south to 238th Street SW. Long-time residents and Parks and Recreation Board members Ken Overstreet and Craig Harris came up with the concept with a shorter parade and a smaller-scale event than Brierfest which had been enjoyed by all but was a lot of work to produce. SeaScare receives sponsorships from local businesses and the assistance of many volunteers and city staff members. In addition to the parade, activities include a pie eating contest and live music.

BRIER RESIDENTS: INTERESTING FOLKS OF BRIER

Each town or city has residents that are well known for many reasons. Some because they have lived there a long time; some because they have impacted the community; and some that are just colorful. Brier is no exception.

William and Mary Wenzel

William Wenzel purchased 10 acres for \$110.00 an acre in 1933 at the property that would be 24229 Brier Road. Wenzel came from South Dakota, first living in Seattle while improving his land on Brier Road. Wenzel used an ax, saw, and lots of dynamite to blow up stumps while clearing the forested land. Using his team of horses and wagon he would haul lumber and material on the dirt road from Kenmore. Wenzel married Mary Vittone in 1937 and they moved to the farm shortly after. Wenzel kept busy with mink farming and work for the Signal Oil Company at one of their gas stations.

Jack and Gail Giesburt

Jack Giesburt, with his wife Gail, lived on Brier Road for 43 years. Giesburt was known for his display of slogans inspired by the sequential signboards used by the Burma-Shave company to promote their shaving cream. The Giesburts lived in Brier from 1959 until 2002 when they moved to Edmonds. Jack was appointed to the planning commission when Brier incorporated in 1965, and served as the chair. He parted with his last slogan: *“Has been fun, we’re moving now, so we are done, Burma Shave, that’s all folks.”*



Fig. 28: Jack Giseburt

Carl and Jeanne Zimmerman

Carl and Jeanne Zimmerman moved from Minnesota to Brier in 1950. The couple settled on a 9-acre farm on Brier Road when it was still dirt and started their South Alderwood Egg Farm. The Zimmerman’s had 7,500 chickens laying 5,000 eggs a day. Carl had an “egg route” delivering eggs to small stores, restaurants, and rest homes in the area.

In 1978, the Zimmerman's gave up poultry farming. Carl's first project after retirement was breeding quail and having a pumpkin patch growing over 2,000 gourds one year for visiting children. By 1999, he was cultivating over 10,000 tulips.



Fig. 29: Carl Zimmerman working his tulip field

Genevieve Inez Stivers

Another nursery operated from the property on the southwest side of the intersection of Brier Road and 228th Street SW. This property was owned by Genevieve and Harvey Stivers who moved to the Brier area in 1957. They selected their home so that they could harvest peat to sell to nurseries for planting and gardening.

Harvey also worked as a boilermaker in the shipyards in Seattle pursuing woodworking, beekeeping, ham radio, sailing and motorboat racing, and flying as hobbies. Genevieve was born in Duvall and worked as a housekeeper for a family in the Laurelhurst neighborhood of Seattle before settling in Brier.

In addition to the peat business, Genevieve was an avid gardener. She had two large greenhouses as well as two acres of land planted with flowers. She was famous for her flowers. Ed Hume's nationally syndicated gardening television show filmed episodes at Genevieve's property.

Marv and Ethel Dalton

B & D Auction owner Marv Dalton, and his wife Ethel, moved to Brier in 1951 from Seattle. He wanted a place where he could raise cattle and have a milk cow. In Seattle, he was selling shoes for Nordstrom. Dalton was born and raised on a cattle ranch in Utah. His early adult years were spent as a rodeo hand calf roping and bronco riding and doing stunt work for cowboy movies filmed in Arizona.

The auction house was one of the neighborhood gathering places until 1971 when it moved to a twice a month format mainly due to Dalton's declining health. During this time he tried to sell the building to a buyer that wanted to open a tavern. The business proposed to have a dance floor with music on the weekends. The applicant asked to change the zoning from neighborhood business to commercial business. When the City Council asked for input from residents, the opposition led with 190 versus 100 not opposed. The application was eventually denied.

Juan Manuel Barco

Born in Texas in 1944, Juan Manuel Barco's family were farmworkers who followed the crops working in fields from Michigan to Texas. The family loved music and gave Juan a guitar as a youngster. Barco sang, played guitar, and wrote letters for fellow farmworkers to earn money.

The family eventually settled in Milpitas, California where the children worked summers in agriculture and fruit orchards to pay for school clothes.

Drafted into the Army at 20, Barco came to Washington when he was sent to Fort Lewis near Tacoma in 1966. Barco was later transferred to what was known as the Yakima Firing Center and began playing in officers' clubs and sitting in with visiting bands. Barco played a range of music from county to jazz and rock n' roll.

Barco earned a master's degree in social work from the University of Washington. He continued to play music while working for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services for 35 years. Eventually settling in Brier, Barco continued to play at schools, music festivals, and regional events. In 2020 he was selected for a Heritage Award by the Washington States Arts commission, recognized for his compositions in the Mexican-American ballad style of music known as corrido, focusing on land rights, labor, immigration, and cultural identity.

Nick Dumas

Another local musician is Nick Dumas. Dumas grew up in Brier and was introduced to bluegrass music by his grandfather. Dumas learned to play violin in his school orchestra class. Nick took up the fiddle and joined the family band - The Three Generations which featured his grandfather, mother, and aunt.

Dumas took up other instruments including mandolin, guitar, banjo, as well as lead harmony vocals. He played in several bands, touring locally and nationally, before

leaving Brier to join the band Special Consensus. The 2016 recording of “Fireball” received a 2016 award from International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA). Nick also appeared on the album “Rivers and Roads” that won two IBMA awards as well as a GRAMMY nomination.



Fig. 30: Three Generations performs at SeaScare

BRIER—ODD & INTERESTING STORIES

Drilling for Oil and Gas in Brier

In the spring of 1972, the Standard Oil Company applied for a special use permit to conduct exploratory drilling in Brier. Drilling was not an operation that was provided for in the zoning ordinance but the planning commission considered this a “special situation” and approved Standard Oil’s request to drill for a term of 120 days. The site was a small pasture near the intersection of Poplar and Hickory Ways. The company hoped to find natural gas but would also be happy to find oil. If either was found a pipeline would be necessary once the wells were established to carry the raw product to Point Wells in Richmond Beach.

Standard Oil petitioned property owners within 500 feet of the drill site and 75% of them favored the proposal. The company assured the planning commission there would be protection to the surrounding property from disturbances of noise, fire, and waste disposal. They pledged to install safeguards to prevent injury to the general public. Steel casing in the well from surface to bedrock would prevent contamination of groundwater.



Fig. 31: Oil drilling operation

Residents of Brier began to take notice of the drilling operation when a 164-foot oil derrick, powered by four diesel engines was erected in June. Screens of plastic tarps and tall utility poles were built around the entire site to reduce the noise and visibility of the project. Guards were posted around the site as spectators were not permitted near the well.

Right after the first of June, Standard Oil started the project with a process called “spudding” and was averaging 100 feet in an hour. The Everett Herald reported that if “oil or gas is found officials say that it will be kept highly secret.”

By August of 1972, Standard Oil abandoned the well after drilling 9,677 feet at a cost of \$700,000. The drilling equipment was removed from the site and the area was cleaned up and reseeded to its original condition.

There's an Elephant in the City

Tiki the elephant made a visit to Brier in September of 1991 as the guest of Jan Corpron-Smith and Ken Smith. Prior to Tiki's arrival, a call was made to city hall to see if there were any regulations regarding having an elephant in the city. The city didn't have anything on the books that covered this, but they called the state and federal wildlife officials and their only concern was if Tiki had recently been imported.

The 6,000-pound African elephant was visiting from her home at Wildlife Safari in Winston, Oregon. The nineteen-year-old animal came to the United States when she was one. And why was Tiki in Brier? Corpron-Smith's friend had worked at the Wildlife Safari Park in Oregon and made arrangements for Tiki to visit Brier.

Kathy Centala—the Cat Lady

Kathy Centala had many names “Mother Teresa of Cats,” “Cat Woman,” and “Brier Cat Lady.” Centala gained fame from a controversy over her work with stray cats. Centala had a permit to kennel up to 20 cats in her Brier home. In addition to boarding, she took in stray cats, sometimes sick, caring for them while trying to find long-term homes. The population in her home sometimes exceeded 70 cats.

In 1992, the City Council denied Centala a conditional use permit to house more cats. She appealed the decision drawing support from hundreds of people including Brier residents and cat lovers as far away as Florida. Newspapers and television covered the story and residents even threatened a recall against City Council members that voted against the permit application. Centala eventually

gave up her fight; put her home up for sale, and moved to Arlington, Washington to start a new cat shelter. In 2020, Purfect Pals operates as a non-profit with over 600 volunteers working to end cat homelessness in the Puget Sound Region.

There's a Cougar on the Loose

Another Brier resident, Chip DiJulio was famous for his pet mountain lion. The long-time resident kept the cougar on his property and was known for escaping. One time the cat escaped and was found on Brier Road. The Police Department contacted DiJulio who came in his convertible to pick up the cat and drove through town with the animal on the back seat.

CONCLUSION

The citizens of Brier have strived to maintain a community with large lots and limited development since 1965 and to date, they have accomplished their goal. When the 1970 census was taken the population of Brier was 3,093. Forty years later in 2010, the census count was 6,087. Prior to incorporation resident George Fitzsimmons wrote in a January 9th letter to his fellow citizens “when the Puget Sound country is developed roof-top to roof-top continuously from Seattle to Everett, what a relief it will be to find a community such as Brier which has developed with large spacious home sites.”

Sources and more information

A Historic Preservation Grant from the Snohomish County Historic Commission provided funding for research and printing of the project. Most of the information was collected from the community newsletter Brier Bulletin, the City of Brier Newsletter, and newspaper articles from The Enterprise, Western Sun, Everett Herald, Bothell Reporter, Edmonds Tribune, Seattle Times, and Seattle Post Intelligencer. Information also came from Edmonds School District files and memorabilia; the Lynnwood-Alderwood Manor Heritage Association; and the City of Brier's website and staff. A morning spent at Brier City Hall in May 2019 with Brier residents sharing their memories of the city and the incorporation process was valuable for making connections for oral interviews and further research topics.

APPENDIX 1: BRIER'S MAYORS

Richard Balsler

February 11, 1965 – December 31, 1973

Jerry Chandler

January 1, 1974 – July 16, 1976 (resigned)

Ken Long

July 27, 1976 – December 31, 1977 (appointed to fill short term)

Diana Johnson

November 29, 1977 – February 17, 1978 (resigned)

Ed Locke

February 28, 1978 – November 1979 (appointed to fill short term)

Edwin Phillips

November 27, 1979 – December 2, 1980 (resigned)

Sadie Moore

December 23, 1980 – November 23, 1981

Wayne Kaske

November 24, 1981 – December 31, 1989

Mimi Opdyke

January 1, 1990 – November 12, 1991 (resigned)

Wayne Kaske

December 10, 1991 – November 16, 1993 (appointed to fill short term)

Sharon Walker

November 23, 1993 – December 31, 1997

Wayne Kaske

January 1, 1998 – September 23, 2003 (resigned)

Gary Starks

October 7, 2003 – November 22, 2005 (appointed to fill short term)

Bob Colinas

November 23, 2005 – July 16, 2020

Dale Kaemingk

July 17, 2020 – present

Brier was incorporated on February 2, 1965. In 2020, Brier marked 55 years since incorporation. People still ask, “*where is Brier?*” and “*why is Brier?*” This book attempts to answer those questions.

