

Historic Flows, Flow Problems and Fish Presence in Clover Creek---1924-1942: Interviews with Early Residents



West view along Clover Creek in Parkland, WA near C St S during a Pierce County cleanup, late summer 1973 (photograph by Fred L Tobiason).

Fred L. Tobiason

A Report for the Clover Creek Council and WRIA 12 Watershed Planning Committee

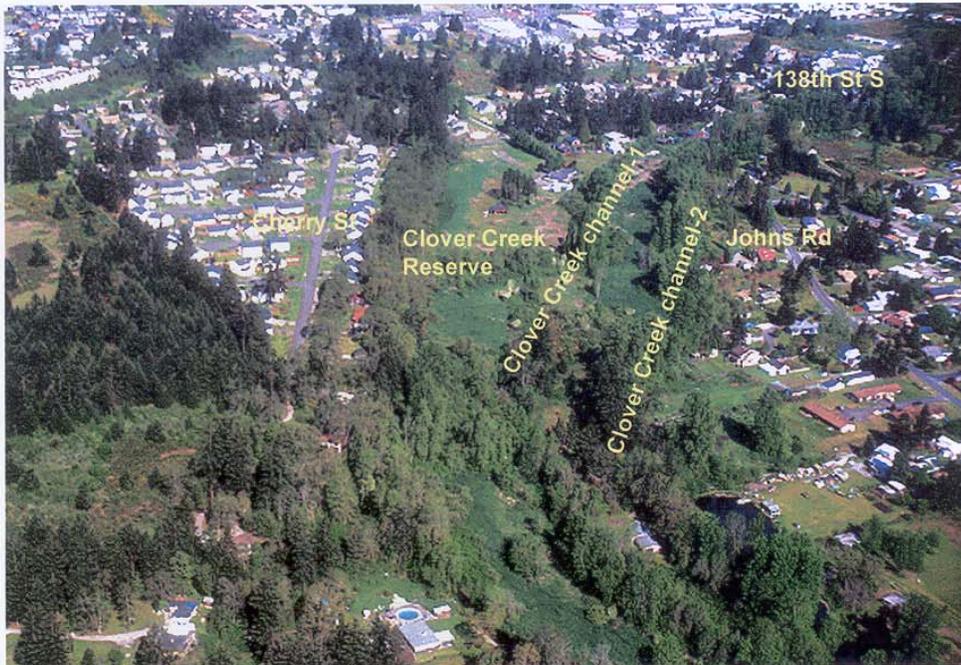
Historic Flows, Flow Problems and Fish Presence in Clover Creek---1924-1942: Interviews with Early Residents

**Fred L. Tobiason
Professor Emeritus
Department of Chemistry
Pacific Lutheran University
Tacoma, WA 98447**

**July 18, 2003
Edition 1.0
Second Printing**

**Copyright © Fred L Tobiason 2003
Tacoma, Washington**

**Published by Fred L. Tobiason
14307 7th Ave S
Tacoma, Washington**



Aerial 1. A view of the Clover Creek Reserve looking toward 138th St S and Pacific Ave. Note the two channels of the creek probably created around 1895 for hop farm irrigation. This is the split in the original Clover Creek referred to in the report. Also note the two ponds along the creek in the lower right corner. Photograph by Fred L. Tobiason, April 2002.



Aerial 2. Looking from Spanaway Loop Rd toward Pacific Ave along Tule Lake Rd. The present Clover Creek runs down a channel that was constructed in 1967 through the present Parkland Prairie Natural Area, on into the Schibig-Lakeview Nature Preserve to join with Spanaway Creek. Photograph by Fred L. Tobiason, April 2002.

Summary

Personal interviews were conducted with long-time area residents who had historic roots in the Parkland area. The focus was on the water flow conditions and on the presence of salmon and trout in Clover Creek during the summer and early fall months prior to 1942, and finally on the reasons for the intermittent drying and deterioration of the stream.

Information gathered in these interviews consistently brought out that Clover Creek from Canyon Road through what is now McChord Airbase flowed with large quantities of water throughout the year. During the summer and fall months there was always plenty of water in the stream until around 1939-1940. At that time there were Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects (or the formation of drainage districts) to prevent flooding, and in some way the streambed seal was broken as dredging and bulldozer work took place from east of Pacific Avenue upstream to around 138th St S. There is evidence that dredging also took place from Schibig's farm upstream through the Pacific Lutheran University (PLU) campus around the same time. From this time on, the stream started to dry on occasion in the summer, and salmon and large fish presence in the mid-range of the stream disappeared. However, there were still sightings of fish, especially nice trout, in the creek through the 1950's and 1960's. Many remember fishing and catching cutthroat trout as well as steelhead and salmon (probably coho) in the stream. Chum salmon were also observed in the stream, but there was no mention of chinook salmon, although the salmon in Figure 3 is apparently a chinook salmon.

Prior to 1940 the stream riparian zone was continuous with a consistent water flow and abundant fish presence. Even after 1940 some salmon were observed in the stream up to 1946, and up to the middle '60's large cutthroat trout had been caught throughout the Schibig marsh (old Smith Lake area)/Spanaway Creek. Many early Parkland family members remember swimming in Clover Creek around Pacific Lutheran University during the summers of 1928-1940 and even later. Every May during campus cleanup day, PLU students would have tugs-of-war across the water-filled stream. The now-endangered western pond turtles and western gray squirrels were present, too. The date of the Clover Creek hop farm irrigation ditch created near Johns Rd was about 1895.

Introduction

Since 1940, a midsection of Clover Creek has had the tendency to dry up during the summer months even though there were considerable volumes of water in the upper reaches, e.g., at Waller Rd and at the end of Golden Given Rd. This study was prompted by propositions put forth by watershed consulting experts and Chambers/Clover Creek planning board members that Clover Creek has a history of intermittent flow, being low- to no-flow during many summers. Records available through Pierce County and early water-flow records from the U. S. Geological Survey have been inconclusive in providing convincing evidence for a model of intermittent

or ephemeral flow. Early State of Washington Territorial Survey maps (e.g., 1873) showing a broken stream line are interpreted to mean an ephemeral stream reach. Although it may not be the full fact, there is consistency between the smaller creeks plotted on the maps (1) and later survey maps. However, an older 1853 Puget Sound Agricultural Claim map and an 1895 U. S. Geological Survey map show a continuous perennial stream (2). Many times when the flows in Clover Creek are discussed, positions are put forth that perhaps, historically, it dried up in the summer. Much speculation has been in various hypotheses, based on the nature of the geological strata of this prairie area, that historically this stream would have ephemeral or intermittent flow. During the last couple years (2001-2002), all of lower Clover Creek has indeed dried up, and even Spanaway Creek, which never dries up, has not been sufficient to feed the lower portion of the stream (3). Clover Creek disappears into the ground in several places above 138th St S to just below 136th St S.

This report is intended to provide information to better understand what the flow characteristics were for this creek during one range of earlier years, that is, from 1924 to 1942, with some information given for later years on the flow and fish conditions. It is interesting that when Pacific Lutheran Academy was founded near Clover Creek in 1890, the creek was considered a good source of water (4, 6) and an advertisement for the area in the Tacoma New Herald Annual in 1909 (6, 7) describes Clover Creek as an abundant source of pure water. The City of Tacoma also took water from Clover Creek and places like the Melville Springs by flume from 1884-1909 (5, 7) for drinking water and later for general use. See a timeline of water events for Clover Creek in Appendix I.

The information in this report is primarily based on 27 interviews that were conducted from January 2003 through June 2003 with early area residents or people with historic roots in Parkland. These people had clear memories about Clover Creek back to 1924, but especially during the years from 1928 to 1942. The interviews focused on the flow conditions for the stream during the summer and early fall months and on the presence of fish, and then finally on the reasons for the intermittent drying of the stream (9).

Interviews included in this report were with Cambern family members: Tom Cambern, born (b.) 1938 and Peggy Dean, b. 1914; Ramstad family members: William Ramstad, b. 1923 and Helen (Topsy) Kylo, b. 1930; John Clark, b. 1921; Robert McConnell, b. 1926; Stuen family members: John, b. 1917, Elizabeth, b. 1919 and Mark, b. 1921; Schibig family members: Alice Schibig, b. 1937 and Robert Schibig, b. 1930; Robert McCormick, b. 1920; great-grandson of homesteader Peter Smith, Robert E. Jones, b. 1924; Al Daniels, b. 1925; Oswald Ellingson, b. 1919; Al Greco, b. 1923; Donald Ford, b. 1923; Gene Lundgaard, b. 1929; Robert Olsen, Jr., b. 1937; Tom Richards, b. 1938; Jim Searce, b. 1936; John Slipp, b. 1917; Reinke family members: Mary. A. Grbich, b. 1927 and Ralph Reinke, b.1933; great-granddaughter of homesteader Christopher Mahon, Joan Allard, b. 1918; great-grandson of homesteader Christopher Mahon, William Ristvet, b. 1923; Ed VanAntwerp, b. 1911.

All of these individuals have historic roots in this area. Some additional interviews completed were not included in this report if no added information about stream flow or fish was obtained.

There has never been any trouble finding out about flooding problems connected with Clover Creek since people remember the events associated with floods, and like to photograph high water. However, the problem of documenting low flow is a bit more difficult since only people really connected to the creek take notice—that includes people who fish and swim. A couple early pictures of flooding are shown below.



Figure 1 and Figure 2. Flooding pictures taken near Pacific Lutheran University during the 1930's. Clover creek at that time flowed through a riparian line of apple trees planted around 1892. Courtesy of PLU Archives.

The Interviews

This **Cambern** family interview was conducted with **Tom Cambern, b. 1938**, and with his aunt, **Peggy Dean, b. 1914**. Tom Cambern's grandfather and grandmother (Paul and Murial Cambern) moved to Parkland in the mid-1920's, around 1926, and had a home at 13106 Pacific Avenue S. This location is right at the junction of Pacific Avenue and Clover Creek. Tom's parents were Richard and Myrtle Cambern who operated the service station there, which Tom took over and ran until 1997. Richard's sister (Tom's aunt) Peggy Dean, after marrying, lived in an adjacent home, and a home across the street on 131st S until around 1975. These homes were on the bank of Clover Creek just north of where the stream crosses Pacific Avenue. Tom still lives in Parkland, and Peggy now lives in University Place. Tom remembers young people running their model A cars through the stream water where the A Street bridge is now and also remembers needing to put in a temporary bridge across the creek in the fall so that they could pick apples in their orchard. Tom also recalls stories from people saying that the stream **ran year around prior to 1940**, until some dredging took place upstream (east) of Pacific Avenue. A photograph showing a large king salmon caught by Julie Respelaux around November 10, 1936 is shown in Figure 3. Notice the nice trout in the picture, too. His Aunt Peggy was 6 years old when her father Paul Cambern moved to the Pacific Avenue site, and she was in her

early 20's in 1933. She is now 88 years old and still has vivid memories about swimming in Clover Creek throughout the summer. She recalled **that the stream never dried up prior to the late 1930's**. They would dam the creek some to create deeper swimming holes. She **remembers salmon** and water being in the stream until the late 1930's. She recalled hearing that **salmon spawned** around their place but does not recall actually seeing that. At that time, she recalled that dredging was done upstream from their place (east of Pacific Ave). There were bulldozers in the creek making holes but she was not sure just where this took place. After that dredging the stream started drying up and the salmon disappeared. [Author's note: This could correspond with writings about splitting the channel into two distinct channels prior to 1940 above what is now the Clover Creek Reserve as documented in the WRIA 12 Plan Technical Assessment (3). However, it is most likely that this channel was split for hop farming irrigation purposes around 1895 (14).]



Figure 3. Large king salmon and trout caught by Tom Cambern's aunt Julie Respelaux and cousin near Pacific Ave S in early November, 1936. Photograph, courtesy of the Tom Cambern family.

The **Ramstad** family interview was conducted with **Helen (Topsy) Kylo, b. 1930**, who lives in Parkland and **William Ramstad, b. 1923**, who lives near San Diego, CA. These were Anders Ramstad's children. He was an early professor at Pacific Lutheran University (then PLC). Topsy Kylo distinctly remembers learning to dog-paddle across the stream below the hill (1936) at Pacific Lutheran University during the summer. Her brother Bill (now 80 years old) vividly remembers swimming

throughout the summer in a swimming hole down the hillside from PLU across from where Memorial Gym is now. He has clear memories from 1930 until the late 30's of **lots of water being in the stream throughout the summer**. He left home for the service in 1942. He was not a fisherman and does not have memories of fish in the stream.

These comments are consistent with the photograph taken below of Clover Creek in 1930 or 1931 during the summer. Topyy Kyllö knew that Janet Hauge, the baby next to the one adult in this faculty kids party photograph, was 1 or 2 years old then and Hauge is 3 years older than Topyy. This dates the photograph as about 1930 or 1931.



Figure 4. Clover Creek in 1930 or 1931 taken probably in July or August just east of entering the Pacific Lutheran University campus at Park Ave S and 124th St S. Photograph from Professor A. W. and Mrs. Ramstad, courtesy of Pacific Lutheran University Archives.

The **John Clark** interview. John, **b. 1921**, lives on Cherry St in Parkland, upstream and above the Clover Creek Reserve (see Aerial 1). He remembers riding his bicycle from 36th St and L St in Tacoma to fish in Clover Creek before moving in 1935 to his present location. It was good fishing. He caught many **cutthroat trout**, fresh water clams and crawdads. He **saw salmon** but never fished for them. Many people used pitchforks to catch them in the stream. **The stream never dried up during the 1930's**. When he was 16 years old (1937) he recalls working in the creek during the spring and summer. He recalls that Johnson grass (canary reed grass) was a big problem in the stream. He does not recall any dredging in the stream from where he lives down through the Clover Creek Reserve land (the stream split stretch). That was all done much earlier, probably pre-statehood. He does recall that an LID [Author's note: Maybe Drainage District # 22] was formed to correct the flooding problems. John also remembered going to a LID meeting about flooding when he was 16 or 17 years old. There was dredging done above Pacific Avenue up to D St

(now 4th St E). The seal of the streambed was broken by the bulldozers and the water started disappearing. [Author's note: This is consistent with Peggy Dean's recall of events.] He did not recall that any more work was done where the main split was created for the hop farm.



Figure 5. From the 1933-34 PLC Saga; summer or early fall picture taken along PLU hillside. Note many large leaves on the trees. Photograph was taken sometime between 1929-1930. Here the creek is running right along the hillside.



Figure 6. PLC Saga picture, later May, 1938. Annual Tug-of-War across Clover Creek. Several different years' pictures were found showing this event and a full creek.

The **Robert McConnell** interview. He lives on the south branch of the main channel of Clover Creek east of the Clover Creek Reserve, Parkland. Robert, **b. 1926**, lived at 115th and Park Ave until 1947. He is now about 75-76 years old and used to live on the creek where he hunted, fished and trapped all through his youth from Chambers Creek (but mostly from the present McChord Airbase) up to the Tacoma Sportsmen's Club area of Frederickson. When he was 8-10 years old he trapped mink and muskrat and would see an occasional otter. He fished a great deal and at 10-14 years old caught many **cutthroat, sea-run cutthroat, steelhead and salmon**. The steelhead would be in pools—he also remembers **seeing baby salmon and steelhead** in pools. He remembers always fishing for trout, but many times catching and losing steelhead and salmon (as his leader would break) up until around 1938-39 when dredging occurred around PLU to control flooding and the lower creek started drying up. He remembers having one big steelhead on in a hole that is now Mottler's back yard (Tule Lake Rd and C St S where the old channel went towards PLU) and

remembers specifically killing one with a rock down by PLU and taking it home. The North Fork and the main channel of Clover Creek were dredged east of Pacific Ave. No dredging was done on the main channel split above 138th St S around the old hops farm, but Robert recalls that some work was done above the split towards Brookdale Golf Course. Subsequent to some dredging activity, he remembers the creek starting to dry up in the lower parts around 1938-39 (**12, 13**). He left for the military service in 1943.

Interviews with the **Stuen** family members. The Stuen family homestead was located on the PLU bluff where the Stuen Hall dormitory is now located. The father, Ole Stuen, was the first teacher at PLU to have a graduate degree. **Mark Stuen, b. 1921**, now lives at Tacoma Lutheran Home and is 82 years old. He vividly remembers swimming in the creek throughout his early years. He recalls swimming on the east side of Park Ave (could be the hole in the Ramstad picture—this was the Lund family home property). The creek was dammed up and he remembers water being up to his waist (6-12 years old) in places. He also fished but was not good at it. He caught small fish (trout) and remembers **seeing large fish—(maybe salmon)** in the stream. Bob and Sid Glasso used to fish there all the time recalls Mark, but both are gone now. [Authors note: The Glasso boys were mentioned by a number of people as being great fishermen.] **Water flowed all year around** but he does not recall just when the creek stopped flowing. They dredged through PLU so that the college could build on the flood plain. Water was diverted around 1939-1941. He recalls there used to be a river of water upstream by the present Brookdale Golf Course.

John Stuen, b. 1917, now 86 years old, lives in Bellingham. He remembers talk about salmon and also remembers when he was 12, diving into the creek during the summer. His dad did not fish and John was not good at fishing ---but when in the 5th grade he was given 6 gold hooks and went fishing when the house was being painted but he could not catch anything. Then one of the Glasso brothers came and caught trout using their own lures; they never went home without fish **and the creek never went dry**. In 1941 John went into the Navy.

Elizabeth (Stuen) Willis, b.1919, now 83 years old. She remembers at 5 years old wading in Clover Creek and sitting down to cool off in the stream. Mothers with their families would go down to the creek for picnics and to play for the afternoons. She recalled her father coming to the Newcomers School to study English.

Schibig family interviews. **Alice Schibig, b. 1937**, lives on the farm that was part of the Peter Smith land claim on Spanaway Loop Rd S. She remembers swimming in the creek in the summer months, but that it also got pretty low at times. Then they would go to Spanaway Creek to swim. At this time Clover Creek flowed north of the Schibig home through their apple orchard and joined Spanaway Creek after making a big turn south near what is now McChord.

Robert Schibig, b. 1930, still lives on Spanaway Loop Rd S. He lived on the Schibig (Lakeview) Dairy (delivered milk for years), which was part of one of the earliest homesteads in Parkland. Bob remembers the **creek flowing all year around**, coming through the PLU campus across Park Ave S and by the John Richards' swimming pool. The stream ran down along the hill and crossed in pipes under what is now Spanaway Loop Rd. In the early years there was no bridge nor road. It flowed through the orchard and across the swamp and then made a left turn and joined with Spanaway Creek much closer to McChord. **Bob remembers the creek flowing until dredging was done** through or near the PLU campus for flood control (between Park and Spanaway Loop Rd S). Sprinker was County Commissioner then. After that, the creek did not flow well. Earlier it always flowed but would disappear into the marsh. He remembers his dad damming the creek (1939-1940) to flood the fields behind the Schibig farmhouse to irrigate the field for farming. There was no brush in the marsh area at that time and they used to hay there. He remembers that there were lots of fish. Sometimes in the late '30's or early '40's the swamp area and creek would dry up and the cattle would cross into the neighbor's place and he would have to go after them. The cattle would always cross the creek when the creek became very low. During the 1950's the stream would dry up at their place in the summer.

Interview with **Robert McCormick, b. 1920** near American Lake. Their family moved to Parkland in 1929 and he still lives in the original home near 116th S and 8th Ave E. He has memories of fishing from Parkland up to Frederickson when 12-14 years old—he recalls that the fishing was good. His fishing buddy was Dr John Kretilla. He remembers **water always being in the stream** during that period, and also remembers that there was a drought in 1931-33 when many wells went dry. The water in the creek was low then but **the creek did not go dry**. [Author's note: According to Kris Kauffman, the years between 1929 and 1932 were dry and flow data from this period are used as low-flow standards in the region.] He also remembers how beautiful the blue and yellow prairie flowers were during the springtime in the mid-'30's. There was a picnic area by Clover Creek School down in a meadow by the creek---families went there for years, mostly on Sundays. [Author's note: This is probably near to or on the Naches Trail Preserve.] Robert also remembers stories about British troops running their flocks of sheep in the valley when they were camped there prior to statehood (about 1860-1880)—this ruined much of the land. In 1943 Robert went into the service.

Interview with **Robert E. (Bob) Jones** (Peter Smith's great-grandson), **b. 1924**. He still lives next to the old Smith Lake area. There was the Bogstad place by Tule Lake (formerly owned by Elder), Professor Burton Ostenson's place and then the Smith homestead. He used to fish a lot from Tule Lake down Spanaway Creek to the Loop Rd area. He caught many large **cutthroat trout**, 10-15 inches long; probably some were sea-run cutthroat. This was in the 1930's. Just as many fish were going up Clover Creek as up Spanaway Creek at that time. He remembers lots of water being in the stream and also **remembers that Clover Creek ran all year around**. Bob does have clear memories of **large fish, probably steelhead, spawning** in the

gravel beds near Bogstad's home. Another memory deals with water taken from the Melville Springs (now Parkland Light and Water area on Yakima) which was run to the Tacoma flume along the east side of Tule Lake and into the flume in the Soldiers Garden at Schibigs. This would become blocked occasionally causing flooding (the screens would plug up) and when undammed many fish would be found in and picked out of pools left in the field. He recalls when Cooley, a Drainage District Commissioner and mushroom farm owner living on the north end of Gonyea field on 10th Ave, arranged for a steam shovel to work in the creek from near Pacific Avenue on through PLU to Schibigs. That broke the seal of the stream and water-flow problems began. Water would go into the ground before it reached PLU. There were few trees in the Schibig marsh (Smith Pond and channel—cleared in early 1860's) and there were islands then. Many fish were caught there. [Author's note: Cooley was also one of the Drainage District Commissioners who was recalled for causing creek problems in 1939—Tacoma Times articles (12, 13).] Peter Smith used a massive steam shovel, burning fir wood from the islands in Smith Pond, and channeled a ditch straight west over what is now McChord Air Base. This is known as the Smith Ditch and was one of the first major drainage projects in the area (1863). Nowadays when that term is used, it probably includes Spanaway Creek from the Loop Rd to McChord. In 1943 Robert went into the service.

Interview with **Al Daniels, b.1925**. He lived two years in southeast Tacoma and then moved to A St and 129th St S. He hiked mostly east of Pacific Ave and remembers drinking water from the creek, wading a lot in the creek, catching crawdads, and that **there was always water in the stream**. He does not remember the dredging. He did recall that Brookdale Golf Course had fishing for kids 16 and under where they could fish for **steelhead and other trout**. He played golf when 13-14 years old. He remembers when 12 or 14, maybe around 1937-1938, the **creek ran all year around** and he had no recollection of when the creek dried up.

Interview with **Oswald Ellingson, b. 1919**. Oswald is now 83 years old and has always lived in the same house, on 119th St S. He remembers that Clover Creek flowed all year around until the WPA (like LID District or Drainage District) ditched the creek from Pacific to 138th St S. Probably went farther up- and downstream. He recalls that the WPA project was going on in 1938-39. This started before the beginning of the Parkland Fire Department. He remembers playing in the creek when he was 12 and 13 years old. **It never dried up**. He fished and caught trout but was not a great fisherman. In the Schibig marsh there were **cutthroat trout** caught. He never saw salmon in the upper creek but never specifically looked for them. He does recall that **people caught salmon** in the Smith Ditch (where Spanaway Creek and Clover Creek come together). **Salmon and steelhead** were caught in the Schibig marsh area even in the 1950's. [Author's note: Tacoma Times articles appearing in May 1940 attest to WPA ditching back in 1939 (12, 13).]

There were ponds down past PLU. One fishing trip he remembers was with Orville Dahl when they fished from PLU down through the Schibig farm out to the ponds that were throughout what is now McChord Air Base. He remembers catching fish. Part

of the water from the ponds flowed northward out from McChord and over to lakes in Lakewood.

Interview with **Al Greco, b. 1923**. Al Greco was born in Parkland in the same place where he now resides. His brother Joey managed the PLU golf course in the early years. He did a lot of fishing in Clover Creek from the time he was around 7 years old (1930) until around 1941. He remembers catching many trout (**rainbow and cutthroat**) from east of Pacific Ave down through the Schibig Dairy. There were ponds behind the Schibig farm. Also fished around Spanaway Loop Rd and in the Spanaway-Clover Creek marsh. Most of the trout were from 8-12 inches long, but he specifically remembers catching an **18-inch rainbow** under the Pacific Ave bridge when Pacific Ave was a two-lane highway. He also remembers catching a 16-inch trout on the PLU campus. Another thing that he remembers is catching **suckers 20 inches** long in the creek. He remembers distinctly that the **creek flowed all year around, and even in the summertime** there were holes that were waist deep. There was no problem until the dredging started east of Pacific Avenue. He always heard that this broke the seal in the creek. Then on top of that, Brookdale Golf Course used to take water from the stream to water the greens. He does not remember seeing salmon in the stream. Al Greco remembers an attorney named Arthur Hoppe who worked with neighbors trying to protect the creek, and remembers that problems definitely started after the dredging or bulldozer work east of Pacific Avenue.

Interview with **Don Ford, b. 1923**. Donald Ford was born in Tacoma. His father was Morris Ford who was principal of the Parkland School. The family moved to Parkland in 1936 when Don was 14 years old. Prior to that his dad, Morris, was educated at PLC (Pacific Lutheran College) and had his first teaching job at Riverside School in Puyallup. Don now lives on the creek near Tule Lake Rd. He did not fish but played and hiked along the creek a lot and remembers that **Clover Creek flowed all year long** from the time that he remembers until the early 1940's. He left for World War II in July 1943. He remembers that the creek through the PLU campus was 9 to 15 feet wide and 10-12 inches deep, in some holes much deeper. Some dogpaddled in the creek, but those of his age would hike down the trolley tracks to Little Spanaway Lake to swim. He remembers catching buckets of crawdads, and **seeing many turtles** along the creek [Author's note: probably what is now the endangered western pond turtle], sometimes 3 to 4 at a time on certain old logs down towards Schibig's. Back then the creek flowed through the old PLC apple orchard (planted in the late 1800's) all the way to where Keithley Middle School is, and then down through the Schibig orchard that Peter Smith planted after the Civil War. They used to take their shotguns and go down into the Schibig area and hunt ducks and pheasants that would be eating the apples which had fallen from the trees. Many deer would come into the area, too. Don also especially remembers the **salmon, and the steelhead** that would follow spawning salmon up the creek through this time. They would catch them (usually with rocks or clubs) to take home to their mother for a meal. He remembered that from some vantage points one could **see at one time 30-40 salmon** (12-18 lbs) going upstream in October or November. He recalls seeing the

salmon backs out of the water. He also recalls the large hooked nose on some of the salmon. (At this point Don recalls Robert McConnell's running a trap line every morning before coming to school and that he would earn as much from muskrat and mink pelts as some workers in mechanical jobs.) Also, he remembered that McConnell was a great fisherman and caught many nice fish—he would many times give fish to Don's parents for meals, **15-16 inch long cutthroats** caught near Schibig's. Even in the driest times he remembers **the stream having a lot of water** in it. Don also remembers problems starting after some farmer east of Pacific Ave was digging into the creek with a bulldozer, but does not remember from observation any of those dredging events.

Interview with **Gene Lundgaard, b. 1929**. He grew up in Anacortes and came to PLU in 1947 as a student and then finally joined the faculty. He is a fisherman. He remembers that the **creek dried up in the summers intermittently by then**, but that people caught some small trout even around PLU. He does not remember any salmon in the stream. He used to take his kids fishing a great deal down on Spanaway Creek as it goes through the Schibig marsh area (now the confluence of Clover Creek and Spanaway Creek). They caught **many nice trout** in that area all the way up to the middle '60's. He did not recall ever seeing any salmon at that time.

Interview with **Robert Olsen, Jr**, Parkland, **b. 1937**. The Olsen family came to Parkland in 1947 when Robert Olsen took a position of Professor of Chemistry at PLU. They lived right on Clover Creek on the lower campus. Robert, Jr. remembers the kids swimming in the creek in a deep swimming hole on a corner turn on the campus right past the Richards' home. He also remembers clearly that the creek **dried up many times in the summer when they arrived in 1947 and in later years**.

Interview with **Tom Richards, b. 1938**. Tom Richards' dad, John Richards, was an architect for PLU and lived right on Clover Creek at Park Ave S and Clover Creek at 604 124th St S where they moved in 1937. Clover Creek ran right past their swimming pool that was dug in the early '40's with the use of a large steam shovel. Tom remembers the steam shovel being around a long time, but does not remember its being used through the campus. The stream ran right past the back porch until 1966—pictures taken sometime in 1967 show that the stream had been diverted down the Tule Lake Rd S channel (11); also see Aerial Photo 2. The creek was an important part of the family life and they fought to maintain the creek as a healthy stream going through the PLU campus. He remembers the beauty along the creek and again had no memory of any dredging on the PLU campus. When he was a kid the stream ran all year around, mostly 8-10 inches deep. He recalls that there was a deep hole by the Olsen's home, maybe 3 ft deep. There were still **salmon** in 1938 and even in 1940-41 there were still salmon—his grandfather fished for them. When he was 3 and 4 years old he remembers big fish going by their place in not much water. He remembers fishing up along Pacific Ave when he was young and catching **trout** 6-8 inches. He has a picture of the creek taken the very first time that the creek

went dry (Figure 8). Some photographs from Tom Richards' album (put together by his father who was a good photographer) are shown in Figures 7-12.



Figure 7. Clover Creek at the Richards home prior to 1939, summer time, courtesy of Tom Richards.



Figure 8. Clover Creek July 2, 1939 at the Richards home at Park Ave S and 124th St S at corner of PLU campus. Courtesy of Tom Richards.



Figure 9. Picture recording the first time Clover Creek went dry by the Richards home probably in the summer of 1940. Courtesy of Tom Richards.



Figure 10. Clover Creek around 1942 during the summer with the Richards boys, Tommy and Johnny. This shows low-flow during the summer compared to earlier years. Courtesy of Tom Richards.



PADDLE WHEEL 1945

Figure 11. The paddle wheel that was located near Park Ave S, summer 1945. Courtesy of Tom Richards



Figure 12. A view along Clover Creek, July 1938, toward Park Ave S, courtesy of Tom Richards.

Interview with **Jim Searce, b. July 18, 1936**. When Jim was 1 year old his family moved from Collins Road in Parkland to a farm that was located at what was then the end of Spanaway Loop Rd (right on the inside of the big curve near 170th St S). When in High School Jim drove and helped with the milk truck route for the Schibig Lakeview Dairy. Land was condemned for Fort Lewis just prior to World War II and the farms South of 176th St, what is now called Audubon Springs (Schultz farm), and the Schmeckle and Slater farms were removed. Jim's father, Edward Russell Searce, was the first president of Elmhurst Power and Light. His grandfather had a chicken ranch on both sides of Clover Creek where Brookdale Rd crosses into Mayfair (right where a big red ranch house is now). There was a large turkey farm covering the Mayfair area. Jim spent early years on his grandfather's farm and remembers there being lots of water in the creek (North Fork of Clover Creek) and that always flooded. Jim's recall was that the North Fork of Clover Creek was channeled some- where in the early 1940's.

Jim fished the creek coming into Spanaway Lake (now known as Coffee Creek) and Spanaway Creek. There was one lake near his home called Turtle Lake that had many **western pond turtles** in it.

Jim's dad and his grandfather traded at the Cambern's service station. They stopped there many times. Jim vividly remembers his father talking about Clover Creek **being red with salmon** and that there would be **yearly runs** prior to the '40's—just before McChord Airbase was established. The salmon would come right by the Cambern's

station. [Authors note: Searce's recall ties in well with what was stated by the Camberns.]

Interview with **John Slipp, b. 1917**. John lived in Parkland on Spanaway Lake near the island on Roberts Rd where his father moved in 1920. He fished a lot on the outlet creek, inlet creek and Spanaway Lake. At age 10 he started keeping records. There were mostly **native cutthroat trout**, 10-14 inches in the creek; in the lake they were larger, 16-17 inches, and thicker. John never fished to the Schibig marsh. He **never saw any salmon** in Spanaway Creek from about 1926-1934. There was a brook lamprey (Lampretra) that lived mostly in the larval stage in the silt and then developed a sucking mouth and in a short time went through the breeding and adult cycle where the adult died. There were **western pond turtles** near the edges of the lake---he doesn't remember any little turtles in 1932-1933, but the bullfrogs were already here by then. [Author's note: There were bull-frogs being raised near 136th St S and B St in the late '30s.] He collected freshwater fish for the Pt Defiance Park Aquarium, 1945-50. There were two types of minnows in the Clover Creek one a red-sided bream (Richardsonius) Also there were big suckers in the millpond on Spanaway Creek. Many **western gray squirrels** ran throughout the Parkland area; there never was a time that he did not see a western gray squirrel. However, the population dropped precipitously in the middle '50's. Before 1950, these squirrels ranged through Tacoma all the way to Pt Defiance Park and the gulches (there were notes published by Slipp in the Tahoma Audubon Towhee). He remembers talk of bulldozing and steam shovel work near the campus, maybe not on the campus. An attorney, Authur Hoppe (Slipp's neighbor), did much fighting for PLU campus area residents and for the stream, trying to keep the bulldozers out.

Interviews with **Reinke** family members: **Mary A. Grbich, b. 1927**, now resides in Puyallup. Their father and mother were Albert and Minnie Reinke who were descendents of homesteader families from Colfax (father) and Snohomish County (mother). Their father worked for the Columbia Powder Co. in Frederickson, and they lived there near the plant until 1936. The family moved to Spanaway in late 1936 and then to Parkland (Brookdale) in the early spring of 1939, to the inside corner on north of 136th St S and east of B St S. The back yard of the home was on the North Fork of the creek—they owned the land all the way to B St. [Author's note: In 2001 a newer home and land right on the corner was purchased by Pierce County Water Programs. The home, owned by George Vanik, was torn down and the land reserved for preservation.] Mary attended Parkland Lutheran School. She moved from the family home in November of 1946 when she was married but came back for a while in 1947.

She has vivid memories of her brothers **catching salmon and steelhead**, 1939 until about 1942. The salmon were large, some 20-25 lbs. She was one of six children and the fish were important to the family. Mary also remembers that they caught buckets of **crawdads** and boiled them along the banks of the stream. She remembers that there was a large turkey farm on both sides of the North Fork around Mayfair. [Authors note: This was the first farm east of Jim Searce's grandfather's

chicken farm.] She remembers that the North Fork of the creek always dried up at that time, **but that the main fork ran all year around**. Her brothers did a lot of duck hunting in the wintertime. They always had ducks in the ponds behind their home. [Author's note: There were several species of ducks in the pond in April 2003.] She has memories of individuals digging in the creek when they were building homes up near the golf course, 1940-41. [Author's note: This corresponds to McConnell's memory about work above the split in the main stem.] This caused trouble in the main channel—she remembers the **main Clover Creek channel drying up in 1942**. She does not remember the projects that went on in 1938-1939 around Pacific Avenue up to the North Fork--see Tacoma Times articles (12,13). The Steins who lived across 136th St near the cemetery raised bullfrogs.

Interview with **Ralph Reinke, b. March 1933**. He now lives in Tacoma. He is the brother of Mary Grbich. One of his first memories is going out into the Clover Creek headwaters-marsh area to hunt ducks with his father. Parts of the big swamp and wetlands in that area, where the Tacoma Sportsmen's Club is, had many ducks and geese. His dad shot ducks there in 1936-37—the first years Ralph went. There was a definite creek that stayed in bed during the summer, but there was a year-round marsh at the headwaters. He and his two brothers (Earl and Albert) fished from Schibig's dairy (near McChord) to just below the Frederickson school (Clover Creek Elementary) numerous times. They also fished in Spanaway Creek up past Tule Lake. These were the years **1939-1947**, starting after they moved to Parkland. They would fish, spring through fall, spending all day on the creek. They also did a lot of **duck hunting** where Waller Rd comes down to two large dairies that were located there. The irrigation ditch that ran closest to Johns Rd in the split was dry during the summertime, with a healthy flow on the 152nd St side (see Aerial Photo 1). They caught many **steelhead** in Clover Creek, up to 20 lbs, but they never took **the salmon** home to eat since they were beat up when arriving that far up the creek (136th St S). He vividly remembers one steelhead, about 22-23 lbs, that Bob Horbart caught in 1940 and brought over to show the family. The salmon were reddish, so they were likely silvers. They tended to see the salmon lower down the stream--he saw many salmon throughout the Schibig and PLU campus area. They also caught dogfish (**chum salmon**). They did find good steelhead fishing in a nice gravel stretch between 136th and 138th St S. There was a very nice gravel bottom in that stretch of stream alongside of Steins who lived nearer to 138th St S.

Even after 1942, they always looked for fish and Ralph remembers seeing a **few even up to 1946**. After that, there were no big fish in Clover Creek. Ralph is shown in a picture with a **20-inch steelhead and some trout** that he caught (Figure 13). The steelhead is one of the last he remembers seeing. He also remembers when he and his brothers caught 100 **cutthroat** in one fishing trip in the South Fork of Clover Creek—all had their limits. Sometimes they would catch rainbow trout up to **15-20 inches** and would catch **brown trout** (1940's) in the summer and fall in the North Fork—they disappeared after a few years. They caught **steelhead in Spanaway Creek**, too, and he remembers the **salmon rolling** in Tule Lake in the fall. Fish came up Spanaway Creek after they stopped seeing them in Clover Creek (by '45-

'46). Cutthroat trout were always around in the spring and fall--the largest cutthroat that he ever caught was about **27 inches long (a sea-run trout)**. The sea-run trout came up following the salmon and steelhead. He remembers that they saw the Glasso brothers quite often fishing around the Brookdale Golf Course. **The South Fork of Clover Creek never dried up, but finally did around 1944** when it went into the ground at 134th St S. The North Fork would dry up every summer in June.

He remembers that some group started digging near McChord in 1939 and worked there way all the way through the PLU campus up to Pacific Ave. He does not remember people working (digging) in the North Fork. They did do a survey by Horbarts and Steins near 138th St S. He remembers that he and his brothers would rip the signs out. He remembers that many people bought into the idea that if the creek channel would be widened and made deeper there would be no flooding.

They caught buckets of **large crawdads**, boiled them, and the family would eat them along the stream. They used crawdads for bait and he also remembers that someone had a business selling crawdads for bait at 134th St S and Pacific Ave S. This person would use a screened box (1x3x1 ft³) to catch them and would store them in a deep tower container located on the stream at 134th St S and A St. They had great times as kids on Clover Creek. Ralph joined the military in 1950.



Figure 13. Ralph Reinke in the fall of 1944 or 1945 holding a 20-inch steelhead and some nice trout caught in Clover Creek between 136th and 138th St S. The last steelhead they remember seeing. Courtesy of Ralph Reinke.

Interview with **Joan Allard, b. 1918**. Her father was Frank Allard (an architect) and they lived in Seattle until the early 1930's. She is the great-granddaughter of Christopher Mahon who homesteaded a claim in Parkland in 1852, located where the Brookdale Golf Course is now. She remembers coming down to the farm and being around the creek and especially remembers during the summertime her father catching **large messes of trout** about 12 inches long. They always had plenty of trout to eat after a trip to Parkland. Does not remember anything about salmon, but does remember that the hop crops failed throughout the area—she did not remember just when, but thought it was in the late 1800's. [Author's note: There was an aphid infestation about 1890-95 that wiped out all the hop crops from Puyallup throughout Parkland. In 1947 hops were started in Orting on a limited basis. Dorothy Cardon, Director, Meeker Mansion, Puyallup, WA, April 3, 2003 (14).] This probably fixes the date of the irrigation ditching on the Clover Creek split downstream from the golf course in about 1895.

The family moved from Seattle to Parkland, 1932-1933. Her father managed the Brookdale Golf Course that was built in 1930 and her mother ran the restaurant in the clubhouse that was built in 1932. She remembers in 1933 and 1934 steelhead coming up by the clubhouse (January or February). She remembers that the North Fork would dry up by late June, especially around 1932. The golf course was all hops between the 1st and the 18th holes.

Interview with **William Ristvet, b. 1923**. His father was Charles Ristvet and his mother was Mary Mahon, daughter of Matthew Mahon, who was the son of Christopher Mahon. William is the great-grandson of Christopher Mahon who homesteaded a claim in Parkland in 1852, located where the Brookdale Golf Course is now. They now live on Fruitland Ave, Puyallup, but he lived on the main stem of Clover Creek on part of the original Mahon land claim, near the fourth hole of the present golf course, until he went in the military service in 1943.

He remembers good water flow and steelhead being in Clover Creek as well as catching steelhead there. There was a spring, used for water by their family, that flowed off the hillside near their home into Clover Creek. Later the spring ran into a wooden box (maybe 2x2 ft²) and was then piped into a 8" wooden pipe under ground (under and across what is now a fairway by the 4th hole) to the creek. He vividly remembers trout coming up that pipe and being in the cold water storage box. They caught trout by hand there often, just using a few crickets to lure the trout to the surface.

Interview with **Ed VanAntwerp, b. 1911**. Ed lived on 660 ft of Clover Creek just west of Pacific Lutheran University and just east of the Schibig Dairy from 1938-1942. He remembers **a creek 12-18 inches deep that flowed all year around**. He remembers seeing salmon but that they did not bite readily and that they were pretty fast in the water. He remembers that he and a person named Lorigian caught a nice salmon, split it in half and they each had nice meals from it. He vividly remembers that a power shovel started down on Schibig's land and worked its way up the creek.

He helped every night collecting money to hire lawyers to stop the project started by Cooley. The lawyers were Hoppe and his partner, and the case was heard by Judge Card. They blocked it for a while (12, 13), but failed in the long run.

Stream Destruction and Intermittent Flow

Although there had been many intrusions into the creek prior to the 1930's, it appears from the interviews that major changes taking place around 1938 to 1941 landed the final blow to Clover Creek. First there were the WPA projects during the years 1938-40 that were carried out through drainage districts without legal easements. Tacoma Times articles appeared in May of 1940 discussing recall of the drainage commissioners Cooley and Kronlund as well as court action against these detrimental projects (12, 13). There were also the many individual projects going on along the stream. Then there was the enormous dredging project at McChord Airbase in 1938-39. See Figure 14 below showing the 1400 ft ditch and one of the two 12-foot diameter pipes in place. Then there were the individual landowners altering the stream and streambed above the split at the Clover Creek Reserve as they constructed their homes. All of this corresponds in time with the increasing disappearance of the salmon and steelhead runs that once came up the stream.



Figure 14. The McChord Airbase channel dredged in 1938 with one of the **two 12-ft diameter culvert pipes, 1400 ft long, rolled into place, courtesy of the Tacoma public Library**

The replacement of the road bridges along with further channeling in between B St S and C St S in 1966, and the final diversion of the stream away from the Pacific

Lutheran University course in 1967 down to the Tule Lake Rd S channel put the final capping on a long chain of events that nearly destroyed this urban stream. Since the lack of year around water flow is probably the biggest factor in sustaining yearly coho salmon runs, correcting this should be the highest priority in future stream restoration projects.

Conclusion

In all of the interviews conducted in this study about Clover Creek, the picture put forth is one of a creek that flowed consistently throughout the year until 1939 to 1941, and even later above Pacific Ave. There were many eyewitness reports of significant steelhead, salmon runs and large native cutthroat trout present in this stream, including sea-run cutthroat. These fishing reports were validated by avid fishermen. These runs continued until around 1941, even during the driest of summers. A picture emerges of habitat, salmon, steelhead, and cutthroat and rainbow trout; western pond turtles, western gray squirrels, deer and good trapping. This all started to change somewhere near 1940 when dredging or bulldozing action took place east of Pacific Avenue. By 1943 to 1947, the stream for sure had intermittent drying periods. Even though there are some inconsistencies among the memories of people interviewed, both from photographs and the overall oral interviews, a picture of a relatively healthy Clover Creek with salmon, steelhead and trout, and a healthy riparian area for wildlife are supported. In addition, it seems that the date of the hop farm irrigation ditch construction near Johns Rd would be around 1895. Also, it seems that the inconsistency between the 1870-1873 State of Washington Territorial Survey maps that suggest an ephemeral stream because of an absent stream line is hard to support, based on the all-year-round (perennial) flow that people experienced in these early years in the mid-reach of Clover Creek. It is possible that the reason for the absent stream line being near the Peter Smith homestead was due to this section of creek being in a Federal area, known as the U.S. Garden Reserve. This was military land deeded to support Ft Steilacoom (15). This study gives support to the historical records that suggest Clover Creek flowed as a continuous stream, and that there was an abundance of fish in the Clover Creek stream system, similar to that found when the homesteaders first arrived in the territory.

Acknowledgements

Help from Kerstin Ringdahl (PLU Archives) and Dave Berntsen (PLU), and valuable discussions with Kris Kauffman are greatly appreciated. Historic map information from Dave Seabrook and extra help in obtaining names for early Parkland residents from Topyy Kylo, Tom Cambern, Robert Jones, Mark Stuen and Nina Larson are also much appreciated. Help with library research from Al Schmauder was also much appreciated.

References

1. T19N, R3E, WM, State of Washington Territorial Survey Map, L.P. Beach, Surveyor General, January 17, 1873; and personal discussion with Kris Kauffman, WaterWrights, Inc. April 4, 2003.
2. E-mail communication, Dave Seabrook, on a 1855 Puget Sound Agricultural Land Claim map and an 1895 U.S. Geological Survey Map, Tacoma Quadrangle 1894-95 map, reprinted 1924, showing Clover Creek as perennial stream, April 8, 2003 and personal communication, April 22, 2003.
3. Chambers-Clover Creek (WRIA 12) Watershed Plan, Technical Assessment, Robinson & Noble, Inc., Tacoma, WA, 2003, p. 7-59.
4. Walter C. Schnackenberg, **The Lamp and the Cross** (Saga of Pacific Lutheran University from 1890-1965), Pacific Lutheran University Press, Tacoma, WA, 1965, p 14.
5. Philip Nordquist, **Educating for Service** (History of PLU from 1890 to 1990), Pacific Lutheran Press, Tacoma, WA, 1990.
6. Richard D. Osness, **From Wilderness to Suburbia**, Parkland, WA, Richard Osness, 1976.
7. Gene A. Nadeau, "Clover Creek: Past and Present," History 494, Thesis, Pacific Lutheran University, Tacoma, WA, 1983.
8. Gene A. Nadeau, "Clover Creek: The disappearing stream," The Towhee, Tahoma Audubon Society, XV, Summer, 1983, pp. 1,3.
9. Kirk Sinclair and Richard Carter, "Intermittent Flow on Clover Creek: Causes and Possible Solutions," Washington State Department of Ecology, Southwest Regional Office, 1986.
10. Britton Pettit, "Physical, Biological and Anthropological Characteristics of Chambers-Clover Creek Basin," University of Washington, Tacoma, March 6, 2000.
11. Robert Kondrat, "The Environmental Impact of Relocating Clover Creek and a Pilot Restoration Project to Restore the Asphalted Section," Duke University, Durham, NC, May 1, 1998.
12. The Tacoma Times, "Clover Creek Drainage Case is Back in Court," May 17, 1940.
13. The Tacoma Times, "Voters in Drainage District 22 are to Meet on Friday Evening," Thursday, May 2, 1940.

14. Personal communication, Dororthy Cardon, Director, Meeker Mansion, Puyallup. The hops aphid infestation is documented to have happened between 1890 and 1895. April 3, 2003

15. Section 8, T19N, R3E, WM U.S. Garden Reserve Land Claim Description map, Olympia, Surveyor General, May 3, 1881.

Appendix I

Clover Creek Timeline of Events

1833-1880's. Creek flowed with abundant fish (salmon) and wildlife (**6, 7**).

1833-1843. Hudson Bay Company developed Fort Nisqually and formed the Puget Sound Agricultural Company (1839) to develop sheep and cattle farms over large areas including the Parkland prairies (**6, 7, 8**).

1851. Thomas and Agnes Tallentire established their home on 640 acres between 121st St S and 138th St S (**6**).

1852. Christopher and Elizabeth Mahon homesteaded 640 acres on the present day Brookdale Golf Course, Mayfair area, from Waller Rd to Golden Given Rd and between 125 Ave E and 152nd St E. He named the creek Clover Creek after the tall wild clover that grew along the banks (**6**).

1853. Andrew F. Byrd built a dam impounding the marsh waters of what is now Steilacoom Lake (**10**).

1853. Peter and Martha Smith settled the 320-acre land claim near the area that is now PLU, Washington High and Schibig-Lakeview Nature Preserve (**6, 7**).

1863. Peter Smith applied and obtained the first permit allowing him to channel the creek to drain the swamp and marshland on the Smith Claim, known as the Peter Smith ditch (**6**).

1880's. Captain John C. Ainsworth moved Clover Creek off his flood plain near the Town Center, Lakewood. Teams of horses with slip scoops were used to dig a new channel and sheep were used to pack the channel bottom (**6, 8**).

1884. Charles B. Wright began his water company, a forerunner to Tacoma Light and Water Company, by taking water from Clover Creek by flumes to Tacoma (purchased in **1893** from Wright) (**7**).

1894. Dam built on the Bresemann homestead on Spanaway Creek to power two water wheels used in the furniture factory (**10**)

1895. The main-fork split-channel was constructed from the area just upstream of Golden Given Rd down to 138th St S. This was done to irrigate a hop farm in this area—much of which is now the Clover Creek Reserve near Johns Rd. [Author's note: This date is always listed as prior to 1940; however, the hop crop failed throughout the area by 1895 and was thought not to have started again, except in Orting (**14**).]

1904. PLU received a letter from the Tacoma Utilities warning of contamination of the creek water with cesspool leakage (5).

1909. A description of Parkland appearing in the Tacoma New Herald Annual describes Parkland as having the pure water supply of Clover Creek in almost inexhaustible quantities (6, 7).

1924-1942. Personal interviews indicate that the water still flowed all year around in the main stem of Clover Creek with people swimming in the creek; salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout being caught; and wildlife still plentiful (**present report, 2003**).

1929. Pierce County developed Tacoma Field that was donated to the Army and became McChord Field in May 1938 (7).

1938-1939. McChord Channel project. In 1938, the Army used an eighty-ton drag line to dig a channel 20 feet wide and nearly 1400 feet long. Then in 1939, 1400 feet of 12-ft diameter steel pipe constructed at the side was rolled into the creek and covered (7).

1938-1940. WPA projects launched along the creek for flood control. Bulldozer apparently used east of Pacific Ave and a power shovel used west of Pacific Avenue. TNT articles on May 2 and May 16, 1940 discuss the citizens legally trying to stop this project that was destroying the creek (12, 13).

1940. Dam constructed at mouth of present Lake Steilacoom. No fish ladder was put in place.

1940. Clover Creek dried up for the first time near Pacific Lutheran University and ran low every summer after this (**present report, 2003**).

1967. Clover Creek was diverted to the overflow channel that had an asphalt bottom all the way from Pacific Ave to the entry into the Schibig marsh (plans approved March 15, 1966 and signed off in January 1968).

1969. The county replaced bridges, increased the width and depth of the Clover Creek Channel, and asphalted the streambed from Pacific Av S to B St S (plans issued December 23, 1968, Pierce County Public Works).

1985. Parkland-Lakewood Sewer Project was completed.

1987. First volunteer group called the Clover Creek Coalition was formed by (Tom Steele) to try and obtain perennial flow back in the stream and to bring salmon back.

1991. The Clover Creek Council was incorporated as a nonprofit citizens' organization with a mission to restore the creek and related habitat to support salmon runs.

1995-1997. Volunteers built temporary wooden fish ladders above Steilacoom Lake.

1997. The first significant return of coho salmon to the stream in 57 years. [Author's note: Students Pat Marquardt and Mike Nelson saw a 2-ft salmon (steelhead ?) in Spanaway Creek at the Gonyea House on Spanaway Loop Rd S, July 22, 2002.]

2000-2001. Four permanent fish ladders were constructed in Clover Creek above Lake Steilacoom with funds from the City of Lakewood and the Pierce County Conservation District.