

Historic Site Map

Experience the pioneer charm of our pleasant Waterland Community.



1 **Hillgrove Cemetery**
(S. 200th St. & 16th Ave. S.)

Began in 1900 the cemetery contains the graves of many of the early settlers within the Des Moines and Burien area and was designated a Local Historic Site in 1982 by the King County Landmarks Commission. To see the cemetery contact the City of Sea-Tac's City Hall.



2 **Des Moines Beach Park**
(22000 Cliff Ave. S.)

Before being purchased as a public park in 1986, the site was once was home to the William Van Gasken sawmill, a playground for the Children's Industrial Home, and starting in 1931 a conference center for the Swedish Covenant Church. Buildings reflect a typical summer camp of the 1920s – 1940s.



3 **Saltwater State Park**
(25205 8th Pl. S.)

In 1880, James McSorley claimed a homestead then sold his land to King County in 1902. In 1925, J. Hoydn Roberts built cabins called Saltwater Grove and tented them during the summer. The property was sold to the State and the park was dedicated Aug. 20, 1933. A hatchet was buried under the flagpole to symbolize peace between Seattle and Tacoma. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had a camp here, and the stonework for the kitchen and fireplaces was done by local residents and the CCC.



4 **Des Moines Memorial Park and Flag Pole**
(S. 216th St. & Des Moines Memorial Dr. S.)

The Park and Flag Pole mark the southern end of Des Moines Memorial Drive. The drive was planted with American Elm trees in the early 1920s, starting at South Park, to honor Americans who were killed in World War I. It is one of the few remaining examples of such a memorial in the country.



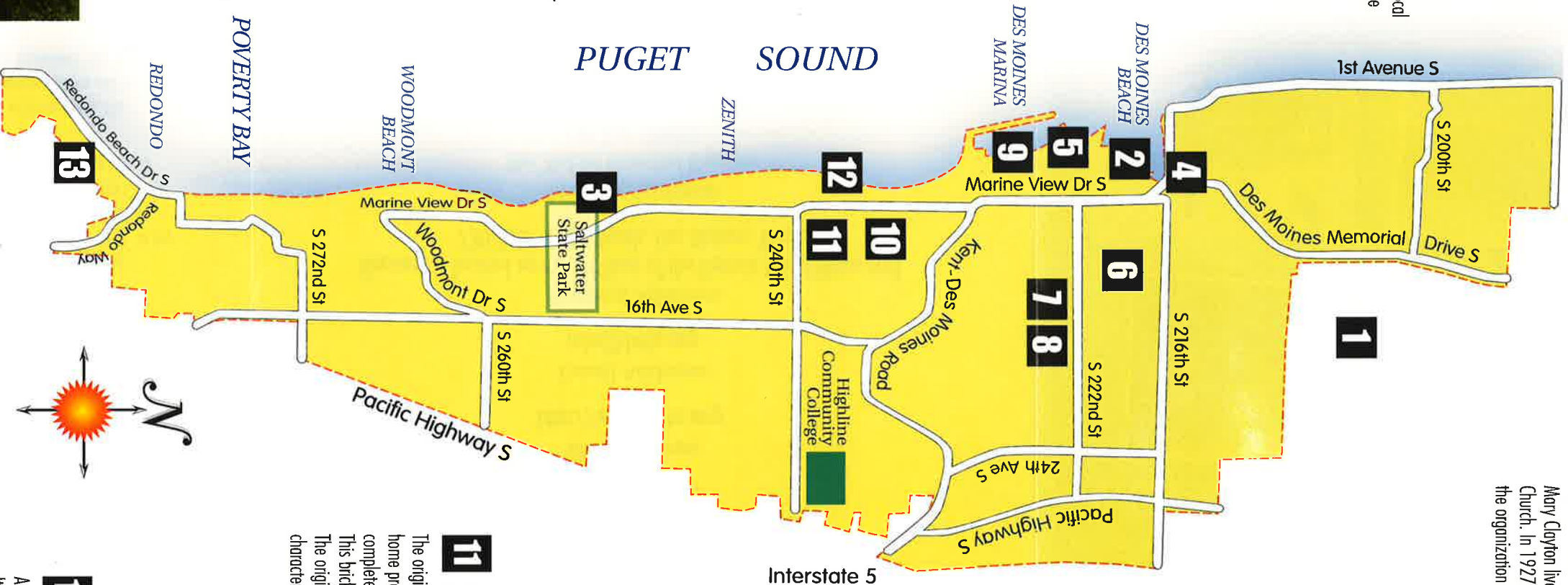
5 **Van Gasken House**
(402 S. 222nd St.)

One of the earliest homes in Des Moines. Built in 1889, William VanGasken worked at and later purchased the sawmill at the base of the cliff on the creek below. In 1892, they moved to Bonner's Ferry, Idaho, but returned in 1910. The home remains in the family.



6 **Des Moines Field House**
(1000 S. 220th St.)

Built in 1939–1940 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Des Moines Field House was known as King County Park No. 1. Currently, the site includes a community playground with bleachers, picnic shelter, and new skate board park. The rustic style Field House also was the site of the Library. Other structures built by the WPA include the Field Houses at Funnclaw, Preston, St. View and White Center.



8 **L.H. Smith / Clayton House**
(22204 9th Ave. S.)

Built in 1900 it is an example of a two-story Pioneer Classic Box House design. Mary Clayton lived in this house. She donated property to enlarge the Methodist Church. In 1927, M.A. Goy purchased the residence. The Goy family was active in the organization of the Christian Science Church.



9 **Odd Fellows Hall / Des Moines Museum**
(728 S. 225th St.)

Built in 1909 by the Commercial Club, it was purchased in 1919 by the Odd Fellows. After the only local school burned in 1925, it served as the school and has been home to numerous church organizations and community functions. It has housed the City Hall (until 1973), the Des Moines Police and Fire Departments. Currently the upper floor houses the Des Moines Museum. Entry to the Museum is free.



10 **Elser House**
(23258 Marine View Dr. S.)

Built in 1927 as the second home of Max Elser, Vernon and Melanie Elser Draper lived in the house. Melanie wrote the first history book on Des Moines and established the local museum. Vernon was the son of Daddy and Mother Draper of the Children's Industrial Home. The home was remodeled after their deaths.



11 **Masonic Home**
(23660 Marine View Dr. S.)

The original home was built in Ryvallup in 1911. By 1924 the Ryvallup home proved too small so they chose Zenith as the new location and completed construction in June 1927 at a cost of just over \$1,000,000. This brick building is an identifiable site all the way down Puget Sound. The original building is being carefully renovated to preserve its historical character while incorporating newly created, contemporary apartments.



12 **Seashore Club**
(23641 7th Ave. S.)

A vacation site developed in the late 1920s by 10 Danish families. It is a typical example of vacation cottages for the middle class of that era. The summer cottages have now been converted into permanent homes.



7 **Houplin House**
(825 S. 222nd St.)

Built by Gene Houplin in 1947, it's an example of the stone work he did. He built many fireplaces in homes around the community including the one in the concessions stand at Saltwater State Park. Mrs. Houplin was an organist and played at both the Chapel of the Bells across the street and the Des Moines Methodist Church.



13 **Seattle World's Fair Bubbleator**
(28708 Sound View Dr. S.)

Charlie Kessner of Burien was reunited with the Bubbleator that he helped build for the World's Fair in Seattle in 1962. "Who would have believed I'd be standing in front of it 40 years later," said Kessner with a laugh.

All of the homes on this map are in private ownership and are not open to the public. Please respect their owner's privacy and property rights.

Past and Present

Des Moines, Washington, a city of pioneers, is built upon the spirits of figures like Irish-born John and Bridget Moore, the first homesteaders in 1863, and Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of the first permanent heart transplant in 1982. Bordering the Puget Sound and shrouded in dense forests of cedar and fir, the community's maritime orientation has been shaped by the unique environment, creating a focal point for the entire region.

Before settlers dared to claim this untamed portion of the Pacific Northwest, Des Moines played host to Native Americans who followed the streambeds to the Puget Sound to catch spawning salmon and to dig for clams. During his 1792 explorations, British naval captain George Vancouver passed along the coast of Des Moines. He was followed by American explorer Charles Wilkes in 1841. By 1889, short years after the first homestead was granted to John and Bridget Moore, Des Moines land sold like hotcakes. The Des Moines News boasted that it is "the best and most prosperous city on the Puget Sound."

By the early 1900s, Puget Sound was a busy waterway providing transportation, food and recreation. During this time, the area attracted many summer visitors due to its recreational opportunities. First serviced by the "Mosquito Fleet", the dock was enlarged to accommodate a ferry run between the city and Vashon Island.

During the roaring twenties and the great depression, the area continued to expand and prosper. Saltwater State Park and the Des Moines Field House were established to meet the growing demand for recreational facilities.

During and after World War II, the population and business boomed, leading to the formal incorporation of the city in 1959. In the late 1960s, a small boat marina with 732 moorage slips was built followed by a 670-foot public fishing pier. Highline Community College was founded in 1961 as the first community college in King County. The current campus was built in 1964.

While Des Moines continues to develop with the times, the waterfront city still retains the charm of its pioneer history and its ties to the Puget Sound, keeping the title of the "Waterland" city up to today.

The Big Tree Inn was originally the Forestry Pavilion at the Panama Pacific International Exposition held in San Francisco in 1915. It was moved to Des Moines in the 1920s where it specialized in family chicken dinners. In the late 1940s it was moved to Pacific Highway South. It was eventually destroyed by fire.

Built in 1916, the Alder Beach Manor was situated at the end of the Brick Highway near the cross-sound auto ferry. It was a popular destination in the 1920s and burned down in 1930.

The first cross-Puget Sound automobile ferry route was established in 1916 between Des Moines and Portage on Vashon Island. The ferry terminal was located at the foot of South 227th Street. The service ended in late 1921 and the ferry dock was sold for scrap although pilings were visible into the mid-1960s.

The first grocery store in Des Moines was built in 1890 by the Young brothers. It was purchased by Peter Rudberg in 1898 and later enlarged. The store was operated by Peter until 1933 and his son Victor until 1943.



Puget Sound area map



Mosquito Fleet



Early logging



Big Tree Inn



Alder Beach Manor



Des Moines Ferry Dock



Rudberg's store



Des Moines Historical Museum

Admission is free but donations are gladly accepted!
Museum membership information
is available on our Website.

Hours:

Saturdays 1 – 4 p.m. between Memorial Day and Labor Day.
Otherwise, please call for an appointment.
(206) 824-5226

Web Address:

<http://www.dmhs.org/>

Email Address:

info@dmhs.org

Physical Address:

Museum is located on the 2nd floor of the historic Odd Fellows Hall,
730 225th Street South, Des Moines, Wash.

Mailing Address:

Des Moines Historical Museum
P.O. Box 98055
Des Moines, WA 98198-0055

Items unique to Des Moines Museum:

- Local newspapers • Several thousand historical photos • Exhibit on early maritime history
- Examples of early clothing • Historical items actually used in early Des Moines

Museum Bookstore:

One Hundred Years of the "Waterland" Community:
A History of Des Moines, Washington\$10.00
Video: Historic Des Moines, Washington — A Visual Perspective.....\$20.00
Stationary Set (containing drawings of 8 historic homes)\$10.00

This project was made possible by the generous support of:

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Pacific Highway S.

P.O. Box 98000, Des Moines, WA 98198-9800



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Des Moines Historical Sites

*See the History of the
Waterland Community
Come Alive!*

