

SOUTH PARK SEATTLE'S BACKYARD GARDEN

South Park was first settled in the 1850s, but the town was not platted until 1889. A post office opened in 1892, and the town incorporated in 1902. The Duwamish River bounded the town on the east and north, 1st Avenue S bounded it on the west, and Roxbury Street bounded it on the south.



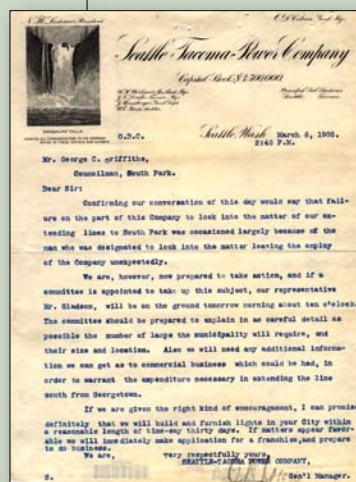
The Grant Street Electric Railway provided trolley service to Seattle, with trains crossing a wooden drawbridge over the Duwamish. Most local industry was centered in nearby Georgetown, so South Park retained a rural character. It was home to many Japanese and Italian farmers who sold their produce at Pike Place Market. South Park farmer Giuseppe "Joe" Desimon became

quite successful and began acquiring property at Pike Place. By 1941, he owned the Pike Market Company.

The lack of a safe water supply was the biggest issue facing the town. The town council explored the possibility of getting its water from Georgetown (which had mains that ran through South Park) or from nearby farms, but none of these plans turned out to be viable. An independent water company's supply ended up being contaminated by sewage. The continuing water woes, along with difficulty in securing electrical service, were large factors in the decision to petition for annexation. As the town continued to grow, it was clear that these problems would only become more acute.

MAYORS

- S. J. Bevan 1902–1903
- G. C. Lingenfelter 1903–1905
- A. G. Breidenstein 1906–1907



LEFT: Water wasn't the only hard-to-get utility in South Park. The town also tried unsuccessfully to acquire electric service. The Seattle-Tacoma Power Company was one of the firms that did not find providing power to South Park economically feasible. Seattle Municipal Archives, City of South Park City Clerk's Files, Record Series 9174-03

ABOVE: *Charles and Clara Cushman built a home on Cloverdale Street in South Park in 1893 and ran a general store-type business on their property, selling live birds, eggs, tools, and many other goods. This photo shows them with a fish Charles caught at the mouth of the Duwamish River.* Southwest Seattle Historical Society/Log House Museum, 2006.39.10

South Park citizens voted 131 to 59 for annexation to Seattle on March 23, 1907. On May 3 of that year, South Park's 0.87 square miles and 1,500 residents became part of the city of Seattle.

BELOW: *Although South Park was fairly rural, there were a few industrial ventures in town. This 1896 photo shows John McAllister's brickyards.* Museum of History & Industry, SHS8413



BELOW: *South Park School opened around 1902, and became part of the Seattle School District at annexation in 1907. There was a slough near the school where schoolboys could often be found afloat on small, unstable rafts. Frequently the boys would arrive at school in wet clothing.* Museum of History & Industry, SHS15438



ABOVE: *The Grant Street Electric Railway traveled over the Duwamish River to South Park on this wooden drawbridge. For South Park residents, the trolley provided a convenient way to travel to Seattle to shop or to sell produce at Pike Place Market. This photo was taken around 1891.* University of Washington Libraries Special Collections, La Roche 160

