

APPENDIX M
FEATURES WITHIN DENNY/LAKE UNION PROJECT AREA
FROM SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

This appendix includes a discussion and a list of the features in the South Lake Union and Elliott Bay subbasins area from the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

South Lake Union Subbasin

The aboriginal people living on Lake Union were a distinct group of Duwamish known as the Xachobsh or “Lake people” (Harrington ca. 1909). The Lake Indians were more allied with the villages on Lake Washington and Salmon Bay, maintaining a semi-autonomy from the Duwamish groups on Elliott Bay, the Duwamish River, Black River, and the Cedar River. Baba k^Wob was an elongated wet prairie which extended from the southern terminus of Lake Union to the Seattle Center, and appears to have been associated or was within the territory of a settlement or seasonal camp in Belltown (Figure 4-12). The prairie may have had camas, an important carbohydrate-rich bulb which was cooked in ovens and stored in baskets for the winter, berries and browse for deer. The lake provided freshwater fish, and perhaps salmon. A village or camp was also reportedly on the southwestern shore of Lake Union (Bass 1937:90; Tobin and Hart-Crowser 1994:15-3). The location does not fit the profile of a typical winter village location (i.e., at the confluence of two bodies of water which have salmon runs). However, a prairie such as Baba k^Wob would have provided resources that were suitable for a seasonal camp. Such camps often had houses or frames that were covered with planks or mats during a seasonal visit, especially in the summer or fall. The native trail from Dzdzlal’ic, the main village on Elliott Bay in the vicinity of the Kingdome, to Lake Union (Bancroft 1890:123) may have been traveled by Dzdzlal’ic villagers to Lake Union for seasonal or temporary forays. Another trail (United States Surveyor General 1856) branched off the Dzdzlal’ic route west from Baba k^Wob to Elliott Bay, probably to provide access for people on Lake Union to the marine shoreline, but also was the route for the people camping at Belltown to the prairie of Baba k^Wob. Waterfowl were abundant on Lake Union; ducks were startled from the lake by Duwamish villagers, which flew into a net stretched across a low area south of Queen Anne Hill.

Native people who camped on the Lake Union shoreline apparently adopted more permanent, single family dwellings after settlement by non-Indians. The ravine and marsh at the southern end of Lake Union, a prime habitat for waterfowl, was filled as Seattle grew. Some fill was apparently historic refuse while the Denny Regrade probably provided the bulk of the fill.

The old shoreline of Lake Union and the prairie which stretched between the southern terminus of Lake Union and the Seattle Center were areas where hunter-fisher-gatherer and historic Indian archaeological resources may exist. The Lake Union shoreline may have the remains of temporary camping areas for resource procurement, processing features, cooking and other domestic features, structural evidence, and other representation of the camps and/or processing areas related to the procurement of freshwater fish, waterfowl, and probably deer hunting that took place. Many of those features have been destroyed by urban development, but areas that have been filled may contain intact archaeological remains.

Seattle’s founding fathers settled on Denny Hill in the spring of 1852, close to Elliott Bay, where their vision of the future was a great harbor in Elliott Bay. David Denny’s Donation Land Claim contained most of Denny Hill, and encompassed parts of the South Lake Union and Elliott Bay subbasins. Later in 1852, Denny acquired Thomas Mercer for a neighbor on the north, on the shore of Lake Union. Seattle’s first road included part of the Indian trail between Lake Union and Elliott Bay and was built to

allow passage of Mercer's horse team to Elliott Bay (see Figure 4-12). David Denny's and Thomas Mercer's houses were one of only two houses that survived burning during the Indian War in 1855-1856. As Seattle prospered, so did David Denny. In 1871, David Denny built a fourteen-room house at Dexter Avenue North and Republican Street overlooking Lake Union where he and his son later bought the Lake Union Sawmill, which they operated as the Western Mill until 1893. South Lake Union was logged so thoroughly that by 1888, over one hundred houses were built around Mercer's land claim (Reinartz 1993:65).

Transportation types in the South Lake Union Subbasin were varied to meet the needs of a growing city. A commuter ferry operated on Lake Union, a trestled road was built over the marsh following Westlake Avenue North for the street car line, and plank roads accommodated early residents. A narrow gauge railroad ran from the foot of Lake Union along Westlake Avenue, crossing the project area to the coal bunkers on Elliott Bay at the foot of Pike Street. And, in 1909, the Lake Union area was chosen by the Northern Pacific Railroad for a belt line which encircled Lake Union. South Lake Union emerged as a manufacturing area ca. 1890, but retained traces of its residential and agricultural beginnings, demonstrated by the Central Mill and Brass Foundry, and the Queen City Box Factory coupled with Chinese laundries, Seattle Park (now Denny Park), and a hen yard with chicken coops (Sanborn 1888, 1893). Ethnic labor communities, including Russian and Scandinavian neighborhoods, were established, and were reflected in the St. Spiridon Russian Orthodox Cathedral and Immanuel Lutheran Church in the South Lake Union neighborhood.

Elliott Bay Subbasin

Permanent ethnographic period settlements were probably not along the Elliott Bay shoreline within the project area, although a probable seasonal camp at Belltown has sometimes been referred to as a village (Petite 1954). "Baq-ha-qwab" reportedly had at least two medium sized houses according to Duwamish elders who testified in a land claims case in 1927 (Duwamish et al. 1933). These houses, reportedly built by Chief Seattle and other leaders (Petite 1954) may have been representative of a village or a seasonal camp (Larson 1986:19-20). Like the reported village on South Lake Union, this location does not fill the profile of a village but the regularity of Duwamish visits to the place may have prompted people to build structures. The similarity in the terms "Baq-ha-qwab" and Baba k^Wob has undoubtedly created confusion about these two places, the prairie near Lake Union, and the Belltown camp.

The shoreline of Elliott Bay was a place for villagers from Dzdzlal'ic and visitors to Belltown to dig abundant native littleneck, butter, and horse clams year round, fish for herring and salmon, and gather crabs. Salmon fishing and attendant processing camps were also probably established by visiting Duwamish, Suquamish, and upriver Green and White River people along the shoreline fronting Downtown Seattle and Elliott Bay. Historically, the same area continued to be inhabited by local Indian people who lived in single family dwellings and camps, especially in the Belltown area, after non-Indian settlement (Figure 4-12). Indians from Vancouver Island, like the Haida, also camped along the Elliott Bay shoreline on their way to the Puyallup Valley. Suquamish and Duwamish people from the Port Madison Indian Reservation and the Muckleshoot Reservation frequently visited relatives or sold baskets, art work, and shellfish to the growing metropolis. The City of Seattle passed an ordinance in 1864 which forbade Indians to camp or reside in vacant lots, alleys, and streets in the city, but native people could still be seen along the Elliott Bay shoreline until the tideflats were filled as part of the

Denny Regrade projects at the turn of the century. Filling the shoreline destroyed the clam beds, and the eelgrass for herring, eliminating the resources that provided subsistence to the native population.

As with the South Lake Union Subbasin, archaeological remains of ethnographic and historic Indian lifeways, subsistence, and settlement may be preserved under fill along the old Elliott Bay shoreline.

The Elliott Bay Subbasin included the Donation Land Claims of two of Seattle's founding fathers, Arthur Denny and William Bell. Arthur Denny's claim contained the current Seattle downtown core and the southern half of the Downtown neighborhood of the project area. Bell's claim adjoined Arthur Denny's claim on the northern boundary between Pier 69 and Denny Way. William Bell's cabin and several early businesses were burned during the Indian War of 1855-1856. The Bell and Denny claims were occupied before those of Mercer and Denny in the Lake Union Subbasin, because Seattle grew in a northerly direction along the Elliott Bay shoreline (Reinartz 1993:60).

Transportation in the Elliott Bay Subbasin was as equally diverse as it was in the South Lake Union Subbasin. The Seattle Street Railway, a horse trolley constructed on tracks laid along First Avenue between Pike and Battery Streets, had branches across the project area to Mercer Street and Lake Union, following Eighth Avenue (Dorpat 1984:58). Early residents of Queen Anne used a cable street car line system and, later, in the early 1900s, an unusual counterbalance system was developed for travel up the steep slope of Queen Anne Hill.

The Downtown neighborhood reflects best the impact of Seattle's growing economy. Fire insurance maps recorded small businesses such as Chinese laundries, drugstores, bakeries, and boarding houses in the Belltown district that catered to workers who were employed at the shingle and siding mills, vinegar works, broom factory, and other manufacturing facilities. The Elliott Bay neighborhood was a mix of churches and factories, and included the Stimson Mill Lumber Yard and the Coleman Creosoting Works. By the turn of the century, the city was compelled to develop and implement a plan to remove Denny Hill to allow for further expansion of the Belltown district and downtown core (Morse 1989:691). Shorelines, wetlands, and ravines were filled sporadically during Seattle's development before the Denny Regrade period, but the amount of material that was removed between 1897 and the early 1930s was substantial. Spoils removed during the regrades were used to fill gullies, bluff lines and tidal areas along the shoreline that ran north along Elliott Avenue to its convergence with Western Avenue (Morse 1989:692).

