

By Lydia King Frehse
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Landscape of Seattle: Rugged Beauty

HILLTOP COMMUNITY, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON: As our jet plane neared Portland, there was a noticeable stir among the passengers.

Looking out the windows first to the north and then to the south we could see at one time five great mountain peaks; Rainier, Baker, Adams, Hood and St. Helens. It was an unforgettable experience.

Thirty minutes later we landed at the Seattle airport. We had spanned more than three-fourths of the distance between the Atlantic and the Pacific in less than six hours.

NOW REUNITED with the "western branch" of our family we marvel once again at the spectacular beauty of our great Northwest.

Its mountains and valleys, its lakes and rivers, its islands, the Sound around which Seattle is built and the variety and color of its abundant flora.

Nowhere except in England have we seen such a profusion of flowers. They do not seem to grow on stems with leaves; the latter are hidden by the sheer mass of color and bloom.

And everywhere in this hilly city are entire yards of rock gardens to mask the uneven terrain and to bridge the steep grade from street to house. Here shrub and vine and flower are often blended into one colorful carpet.

HILLTOP COMMUNITY occupies the top of a low mountain six miles south of the beautiful suburb of Bellevue. You arrive here by driving across the floating bridge which spans Lake Washington.

In the meantime one crosses the intervening Mercer Island. Here is an ideal setting for the modern homes which are well hidden in the wooded slopes of the mountain top. Every glass wall and window looks out on its own special landscape bringing it into the rooms until one is scarcely conscious of living indoors.

TO THE SOUTH Mt. Rainier hangs in the blue sky like an ice cream cone, its lower stretches often obscured by mist.

To the west one looks out over Lake Washington and Seattle's interesting patterns to the snow-capped Olympic range.

From the northern slope Mt. Baker looms in the distance and to the east is the Cascade range where skiing is the accepted sport.

The Hilltop occupy a rugged terrain with an aggressive ground cover of such graceful plants as deer fern and sword fern and tall brackets higher than your eye, interspersed with such shrubs as salal, wild currant, blue elder and prickly Oregon grape.

Here mountain beavers have left deep holes and during a visit 11 years ago when much of the mountain was as yet unoccupied, I saw two deer stop and nibble at the greenery as they passed by the glass wall of the living room.

ON THE SOUTHERN slope it is the Douglas fir which dominates the landscape. This is one of the great coniferous trees of our northwestern forests. Named for an early explorer, it is handsome and stately with its symmetrical, conical outline.

Its feathery appearance is due to the abundance of its inch-long

needles arranged all the way around the stem. The numerous pendant cones are distinguished by three sharp bracts which protrude from between the scales while its deeply furrowed bark stands out as a cinnamon-brown.

Today there are left in the United States about 500 million acres of forest. Of these trees, it is the Douglas fir which leads in the order of their abundance.

AMONG THE less important trees are such deciduous species as the Oregon maple, noted for its large and beautifully shaped leaves and the small vine maple which makes a spectacular scarlet spot against the green coniferous slopes of autumn.

One of the most beautiful of native trees is the Pacific dogwood which is much used in landscape groupings. It is larger than our eastern dogwood and the small central flowers are surrounded by five

or six large white bracts instead of four.

We have seen a number of these trees with autumn bloom, a trait which is also evident in the yellow Scotch broom which is everywhere abundant.

AN UNUSUAL and exotic ornamental is the monkey tree, a native of Chile. This small conifer has its stiff branches arranged in whorls of five, each covered with short overlapping scale-like leaves. These grow closely applied to the branch giving the tree a peculiar bare-like look.

It is widely planted in our warmer climates. I remember seeing one such growing at Istanbul in a marble-floored garden which once belonged to the Sultan of Turkey. Such are a few impressions of our Pacific Northwest, the most spectacular remaining area of what was once the great American wilderness.

Next Spring's Opera Season Is Announced

The first news of next spring's Metropolitan Opera Season in Detroit has been announced by Wilber H. Mack, president of the Detroit Grand Opera Association, sponsors of the Metropolitan's visit.

Mack stated that seven operas—six evening performances and a Saturday matinee—would be presented in Detroit's Masonic Temple Auditorium, beginning May 25 and concluding May 30.

Chosen for opening night is Puccini's "La Boheme," followed in order by Mozart's "Don Giovanni," Gounod's "Faust," Massenet's "Manon," Verdi's "Aida," Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" (the matinee) and Verdi's "Falstaff."

The opening night performance will again benefit the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

"It is evident Detroit and Michigan are again going to have an opera week of the very first magnitude," said Mack. "It is a pleasure to report that the work of organizing this brilliant cultural event is already well along, under the leadership of the chairman and co-chairman of the opera season, Mrs. Theodore O. Yntema of Bloomfield Hills and Mrs. Lynn A. Townsend of Birmingham."

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It's Concert Time

When the annual Birmingham Lions Club fall concert rolls around, local Lions can't even enjoy reading the morning paper over a leisurely cup of coffee. Instead they must attend an organization breakfast at Machus' Restaurant. Among those giving up their mornings are (from left, seated): Harris

Machus, Harold Kalbfleisch, Otho Corsant, Dick Young, Raymond Peck and Richard Thomas. Standing (from left) are John Taylor, Russel Berger, Walter Denison, Ed Kurth and James Couzens. The concert, featuring pianist Peter Nero, will be held at 8:30 p.m. Oct. 9 at the Birmingham Theatre.

Coming to B'h'am
Dan Tyson, director of admissions of Rockford (Ill.) College, will visit Seaholm High School Wednesday.
Rockford is an independent college of liberal arts and sciences for men and women, northwest of Chicago. It is presently developing an entirely new 304-acre campus for 1,200 students.

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