

# Change Over Time

## The Lowering of Lake Washington

### William Crooker (1899 – 1956)

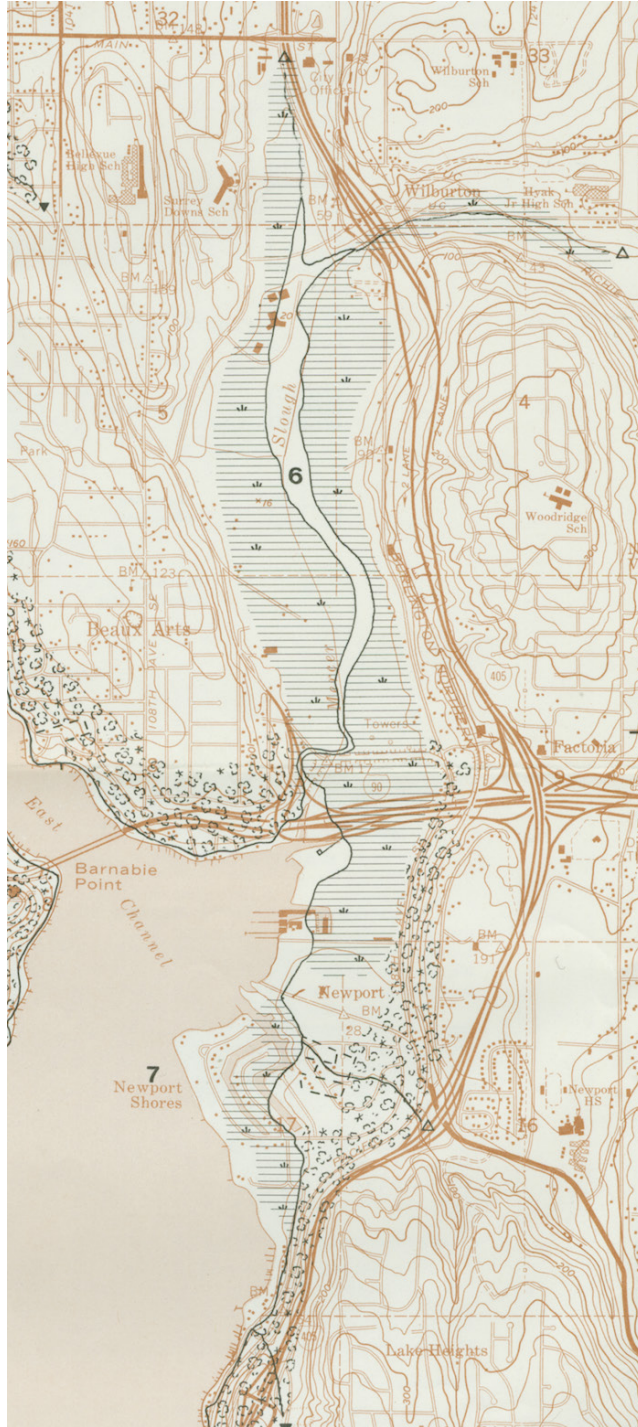


Bill was born in Ontario, Canada in 1899. He was the oldest of six children. His family moved to Washington State when he was ten years old, and they lived in Lake Sammamish and Factoria before moving to Wilburton. His family died in about 1915, and although Bill was still a teenager, he went to work for the Wilburton Mill. He was successful enough that he was a foreman by the time the mill closed in 1919.

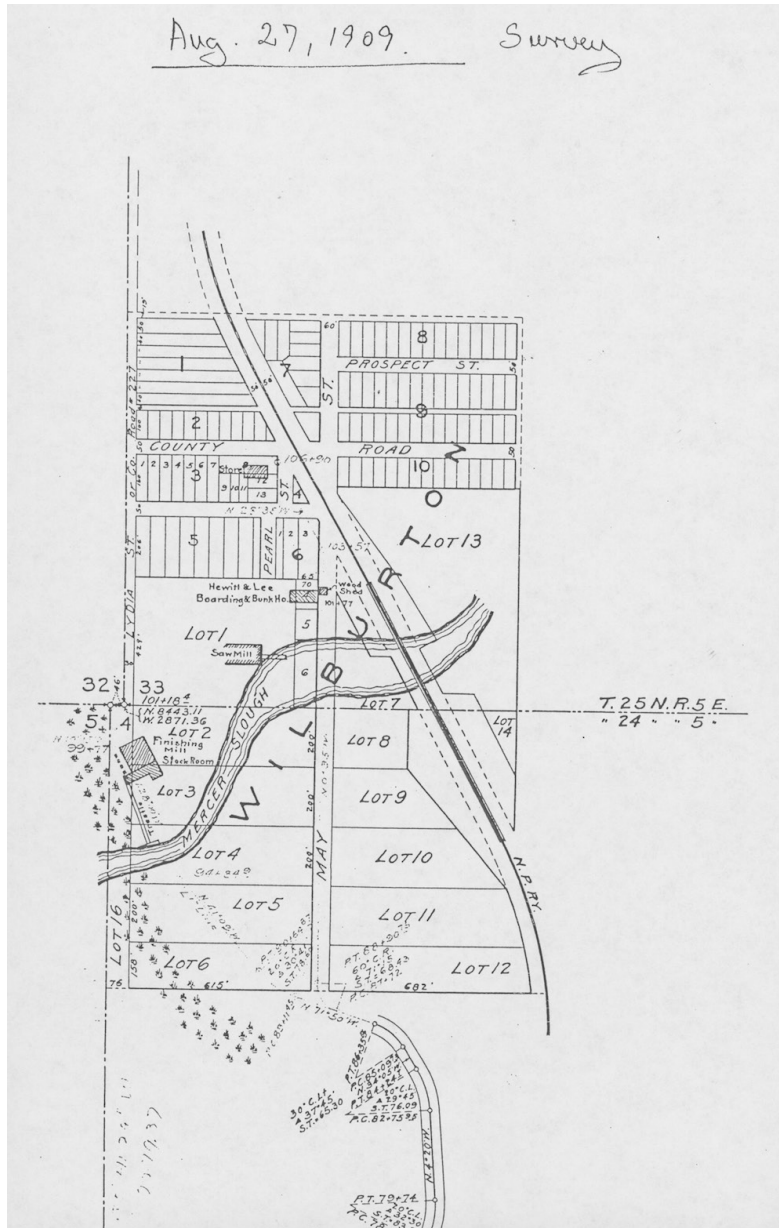
Bill became an American citizen in 1921, and he lived in Bellevue for most of his life. He was a member of a number of Bellevue organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Volunteer Fire Department.

William Crooker, ca. 1947  
Source: *Eastside Heritage Center,*  
*Ken Crooker Collection, 2008.033.001*

# Shoreline Map: Mercer Slough



Source: Michael J. Chrzastowski, "Historical Changes to Lake Washington and Route of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, King County, Washington," U.S. Geological Survey Water-Resources Investigations Report 81-1182.



King County survey of the Hewitt-Lea (Wilburton) Mill site, 1909. Source: *Eastside Heritage Center. Richard McDonald Files.*

D. C. McKee of Blake, McKee & Co., sold this week Tract 14 of Mercer Slough Garden tracts to Louis Wienecke of Chicago. Mr. Wienecke just arrived from Chicago with his wife and little girl and will build immediately and clear land and put it in loganberries.

Mr. McKee also sold Tract 13 of Mercer Slough Garden Tracts to Wm. H. Crooker of Wilburton. Mr. Crooker was formerly foreman of Hewitt-Lea Logging Co.

Mr. McKee sold Tract 28 Mercer Slough Garden Tracts to Edwin Benckert of Seattle. Mr. Benckert expects to improve at once and put in berries.

Mercer Slough Garden Tracts, about two and a half miles from Bellevue on Newport Road, are selling from \$450 to \$1200 for five-acre tracts. Some wonderful soil and a snap at the price.

News article from the Bellevue newspaper Lake Washington Reflector, March 20, 1920. Source: *Eastside Heritage Center Newspaper Collection*.

# ENATIE

BEAUX ARTS

SOUTHVIEW

\* \* \* "The Reflector" \* \* \*

The drainage project for Mercer Valley was finally passed on in the Superior Court by Judge Jurey on Tuesday last. Contract to dig ditch at about \$25000.00 bid for by Mark Richardson, sub-contractor on the Bellevue-Newport road, and accepted. Work to be started by April 22 and be completed in 90 days. This improvement is of inestimable value to Bellevue and adjacent territory as it opens up a large fertile area that will be intensively cultivated. Many ranchers already on the ground have been waiting nearly 2 years for this good news and they now feel most optimistic; which by the way might be a good time to hit 'em up for a Reflector Subscription.

\* \* Patronize "Reflector" Advertisers \* \*

News article from the Bellevue newspaper Lake Washington Reflector, April 20, 1920. Source: Eastside Heritage Center Newspaper Collection.

In the Supreme Court of the State of Washington

HEWITT-LEA LUMBER COMPANY, a corporation, Appellant

Vs.

KING COUNTY, a municipal corporation, Respondent

APPEAL FROM THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, FOR KING COUNTY

HON. J. T. RONALD, Judge

BRIEF OF APPELLANT

STATEMENT

MR. C. W. LEA, president of the appellant company, was also familiar with the conditions and use of the slough during appellant's operation. He gave a good description of the general physical conditions surrounding the slough.

The valley in which the slough is located is between hills that were formerly timbered, the valley being about one-quarter of a mile wide at the upper end and three-quarters wide at the lower end. Small streams above the slough united into one flowing through appellant's lands. Upon this stream just above the slough appellant enlarged the dam. The mill is opposite the dam. The land on either side of the channel of the slough is what is described as a bog; parts of it almost floating, but up towards the head of the slough is more solid. The variation between the depth of the water of the slough in the late fall, winter and early spring and depth in the summer and early fall is about three feet. In the winter months, when the water was highest, it was spread out over the entire flat so as to form a lake from one side of the valley to the other. From late spring until fall the water would fall within the banks of the slough. The width of the slough from bank to bank varied from fifty to one hundred feet (Abs. pp. 11-12). Appellant used the slough for towing piling and logs and [word unreadable] lumber on barges.

Testimony from the court case Hewitt-Lea Lumber Company vs. King County, April 23, 1919. Source: *Eastside Heritage Center. Richard McDonald Files.*



Photograph of a farmhouse on the Mercer Slough, 1922.  
*Source: Eastside Heritage Center. L 88.23.4.*