

History



The first Community Club we have a record of was formed in 1904. It was called the Utopian Social Club, and included folks from both Anderson and McNeil Islands. Back then, there were not enough folks on each island to have much of a club and rowboat was the easiest form of transportation. Everyone had a rowboat so travel between islands was easy. Members would meet in each other's homes and meetings were all-day affairs. If there was a dance, they would stay the night because no one wanted to row home after dark. After a while, no home was large enough to accommodate everyone, so the get-togethers were held in hay barns. The children were brought along and bedded down in the corners. Fiddles and accordions were the accompaniment for the dances and there were pie, box lunch auctions and ice cream socials (the ice cream made by Rudy and Oscar Johnson), as well as plays and needlework auctions. By 1908 the population was sufficient on each island to form separate groups so the Utopian Social Club disbanded. Anderson Island ladies formed the Anderson Island Sewing Society and an offshoot of this group became the Cemetery Association. By 1913 the emphasis changed again and the Ladies Aid Society for the benefit of a telephone began. Next the Club was known as the Ladies Improvement Club, raising money for the inter-island phone system. Members of the phone system became the Anderson Island Social Club. In 1924, as a concession to island visitors, the ladies paid \$16 for the first road signs and two years later they erected a sign at the ferry dock that read "Anderson Island" on one side and "Come Again" on the other side — this sign is now at the Johnson Farm.

Their next project was to find a site for a clubhouse. August Burg and Gunnard Johnson each donated an acre. Husbands contributed labor and on March 28, 1930 the ladies filed articles of incorporation and became "Anderson Island Community Club," devoted to Island improvement. After the clubhouse opened, Ernie Ehrlicke would load up his generator and take it up to the clubhouse for dances. The kids then were put to sleep on folding chairs that were lined up and turned to the wall! There was no kitchen, toilet facilities or library services until the 60's. Turkey salad luncheons were held to raise money for the kitchen and bathrooms. Retirement centers came for lunch as fund raisers, the club catered affairs for the Riviera, and the Club became available for weddings and private parties for a fee. Still today, as it has for so many years, the Anderson Island Community Club continues to serve and hold this community together. This Club, with its humble beginnings, has been the center of Island Activities for over 100 years.



Pioneer moored at the dock.

AI ferries circa 1958: The nine-car Tahoma in the slip, the six-car