

Marjesira Inn at Magnolia Beach

The Marjesira Inn at Magnolia Beach south of Burton represents a past when Vashon was a destination summer resort for people from the surrounding metropolitan areas of Seattle and Tacoma. Ira and Jessie Case built the four-story, shingle-clad building in 1906, and when the wharf was built the next year, the post office opened the following year, and a store was opened the year after that, Marjesira became the hub of the Magnolia Beach community.

Silas Cook, who homesteaded the area in 1878, named Magnolia Beach after his hometown of Magnolia, Iowa. His son Charles platted the Magnolia Beach Addition in 1902 with 23 100 foot lots, and in 1905 Ira and Jessie purchased lot #9.

Ira and Jessie created the name Marjesira by combining the first three letters of the names of their family - their daughter Marjorie, Jessie, and Ira. Ira was born in Illinois in 1861 and came to Seattle in 1889 where he was a banker. He married Jessie McClelland in 1899. Ira and Jessie became significant influences in the development of Vashon. Ira took a petition to the state legislature in 1912 to make Vashon a separate county, the first of many efforts to separate Vashon from King County. In 1914 Ira Case purchased the *Vashon Island News* because he felt the south-end of the island was not receiving the coverage it deserved, and moved the publication to the Hatch Building in Burton. With the loss of the *News* to Burton, Robert M. Jones began publishing the *Vashon Island Record* at Vashon in 1916.

In December 1919 Jones purchased the *News* from Case and combined the two papers into the *Vashon Island News-Record* which continued to publish until 1958 when it was purchased by the *Vashon Beachcomber*. Ira also led the effort to have King County open the Portage-Des Moines ferry route in 1916, the first auto ferry to the island, and 8-year old Margaret christened the ferry *Vashon Island* that served the route until it closed in 1922.

Ira was also instrumental in pushing for the development of roads on the south end of Vashon. He led the effort to have the Shawnee Road built in 1913, which connected Magnolia to Burton by going up Shawnee Creek and over the hill to Burton. In 1920 he was successful in having a water level road constructed between Burton and Magnolia, and in 1932 the road from Magnolia to Tahlequah completed. This was the last link in uniting the road now known as Vashon Highway, from the north to the south end of the island.

Ira was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1920 to represent Vashon. He was appointed Assistant Director of Agriculture for the state in 1925 and served until his retirement.

The Magnolia Post Office opened in 1908 in the Marjesira and Ira served as postmaster until his death in 1939 when Jessie became postmaster until the post office closed in 1953. The store opened on the 2nd floor in 1907 and was moved to the first floor in 1923, where it operated until it closed in 1958 a year before Jessie died.

Today Marian Brischle, the daughter of Margaret Case and the granddaughter of Ira and Jessie, owns Marjesira. Jacqui Lown who manages the house has lived there since 1986 and holds an annual Friends Thanksgiving each year.



The original photograph was taken in about 1910 and shows the Inn decorated for the Magnolia Beach Water Carnival, with guests and the Case family standing on the upper deck. The wisteria planted by the Case's can be seen beginning to grow on the left side of the building.



In the 2010 photograph the wisteria reaches across toward the middle of the building. The Inn itself is little changed. The seven bedrooms on the top floor still are lettered “a” through “g”. The dormers on the top floor have been expanded, the stairways on both sides have been removed, and a bulkhead has been added along the beach. But otherwise Marjesira Inn remains much as it was when originally constructed in 1906.

1910 Photograph – Vashon-Maury island Heritage Association

2010 Photograph – Terry Donnelly