

## Vashon Island News Record On-Line

By Mike Sudduth and Bruce Haulman

Did you know that Vashon had numerous large stills producing illegal alcohol during Prohibition in 1931, or that most of Vashon Town was destroyed by a fire in 1935, or that “Vashon State Park” was developed at Dockton and built by WPA workers in 1936, or that irate islanders stormed the ferry *Elwha* and occupied it overnight in a sit-down strike to protest proposed ferry changes in 1939?

These and other interesting items can be found in the newspaper summaries from the 1920s to the 1940s being compiled by island native Mike Sudduth, whose grandparents P. Monroe and Agnes Smock owned and edited the *Vashon Island News Record* from 1920 to 1942. These summaries are part of the [VashonHistory.com](http://VashonHistory.com) website, which includes a Vashon History section, a Vashon Census Project section, a Vashon articles section, and a section that is being developed on the Japanese Presence Project.



Mike Sudduth

The *Vashon Island News Record* was a combination of the *Vashon Island Record*, and the *Vashon Island News*. The *Record*, which started in Vashon in 1907, was purchased in 1914 by Ira Case and moved to Burton because Mr. Case felt the newspaper was not giving enough attention to the South End of the island. In response to the move, Robert M. Jones started the *News* in 1916 at Vashon. For three years the Island had two newspapers - one in Burton and one

in Vashon - until December 1919 when Jones purchased the *Record* and combined it with the *News* to create the *Vashon Island News Record*. The new combined newspaper continued to be published until 1958 when it was purchased by the newly created *Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber* and ceased publication



Vashon Island News Record Office 1930s  
located near where Dr. Langland's office is now located.

The *News Record* is preserved on microfiche, and available at the Vashon Library and the University of Washington Library. In recent years, new technology has made it possible to scan the papers from microfiche and save them to a personal computer as digital images. Using these digital images, Mike Sudduth has been transcribing stories from the newspapers, stories that provide unique insights into daily life on Vashon-Maury Island.

The period from 1920 to 1942, when the Smocks owned and edited the *News Record* was one of hard times. The hard times of the 1920s when an agricultural depression hit the island and Vashon lost population as agricultural workers and families left the island. The hard times of the 1930s when The Great Depression left many islanders unemployed and dependent on government created construction jobs. And, the hard times of the early 1940s when the United States prepared for the coming war in Europe and after the attack on Pearl Harbor catapulted America into World War II.

Besides capturing and sharing this interesting period of Island history, Mike has discovered many personal family tidbits, including a published poem written by his grandfather about his mother when she was born. With the *News-Records* from 1925 to 1939 already transcribed and available online, Mike expects to complete the remainder of the 1920 to 1942 *News-Records* during this year, and as each year is transcribed, they will all be added to VashonHistory.Com website for the enjoyment of anyone interested in Island history.

Mike Sudduth is a life-long Islander whose grandmother owned and edited the *Vashon Island News Record*.

Bruce Haulman is an island historian.