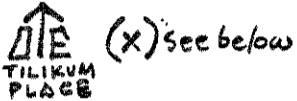


"Seattle's first statue and fountain."

Dedicated 11/13/1912 // Rededic. 12/8/75  
(3-400 lbs. / slightly oversize bronze figure)

Statue of Chief Seattle - facing south  
Mounted on rectangular base of stone.  
Sculptured bear heads - north + south sides  
Spouting jets of water into pool  
Triangular plaque on south:



Sculpt. plaque on west side:  
w/ Dolphin design (Greek symbol for water - i.e. Puget Sound + Lakes)

"SEATTLE (1783-1866)  
CHIEF OF SUQUAMISH  
A FIRM FRIEND OF WHITES  
FOR HIM THE CITY OF SEATTLE WAS  
NAMED BY ITS FOUNDERS (1853)  
1908" (date of sculpturing by JAMES A. WEHN)  
(Similar inscription on his tombstone at Squamish, Washington)

Sculpt. plaque on east side:  
"KITSAP SIGHS VANCOUVER'S  
VESSEL 1792  
FIRST VESSEL ON PUGET SOUND"

"Tilikum" is a Chinook word:  
"Greeting + Welcome"

X = Tilikums (Businessmen's Organization who sponsored [the] statue)  
□ of Elthas (Seattle spelled backwards)

In 1958 the first senior class of the Seattle Hi School (built 1957) inaugurated the tradition of honoring the Chief with clean-up-of-the-statue ceremonies on Graduation Day. The School participated in the re-dedication ceremonies in 1975.

2701 - 5TH AVE.

460 sq. ft.

About 1908 Dept. given - Maint.  
+ Impr. of "Chief Seattle Pl."  
1928: Jurisd. of "Statue of Chief Seattle."

Tilikum Rd. is in SW Seattle: re-Lincoln Pl.  
Tilikum Lane is on Vashon Island @ Burton

343

TILIKUM PLACE

063076

C. B. Bagley, R. H. Thomson, Dr. J. E. Crichton and Arnold Zbindon: the year 1907. The services of Seattle's pioneer sculptor, JAMES A. WEHN, were secured. But then arguments developed over the subject matter to be used. After "The Chief" was decided upon, more arguments came about the ability of local foundries to properly cast the sculpture. After several mishaps and poor castings, Wehn threw "The Chief" into the Bay - it was sent to New York for casting by The Gorham Co. Therefore it was not until November 13, 1912 (Founders Day) - the anniversary of the pioneer landing at Alki Beach) that the unveiling took place by Miss Myrtle Loughery, the great-great-granddaughter of the Chief.

JAMES A. WEHN, Seattle's pioneer sculptor, was born in Indianapolis in 1882 and came to Seattle with his family at age 7, just after the Great Fire. A fragile child, plagued with illnesses, his interest in art was sparked when a nurse gave him a box of crayons. He studied art here and in the east, turning to sculpture and ornamental modeling for buildings when he went to work in his father's foundry. With the encouragement of Msgr. F. X. Prefontaine (ref: Prefontaine Place), he established a sculptor's studio (Seattle's first) in back of the family home near Mount Baker district. Working on the Chief's sculpture, he used the only known photo taken of Sealth in 1864, plus Indian models who posed reluctantly and often in unpredictable ways. Association with two of the project sponsors, Professors Bagley and Meany of the U.W., caused Wehn to devote much of his career to northwest history, Indians and pioneers for which he received an award in 1960 from the Seattle Historical Society. A further result of association with the professors led Wehn to found the sculpture department at the U.W. in 1919 where he taught for five years. He sculpted the Chief Seattle drinking fountain (with bubbler for people and basins for horses and dogs) from which three copies were cast - one placed in Pioneer Square, one placed here was relocated at Westlake and vanished, and the third was placed at the depot and was moved to the yard of the Renton Fire Department. In 1936 Wehn was commissioned to design the official City Seal and made an enlargement of it for the Public Safety Building in 1950. He did a bust of the Chief for Seattle University. His many works may be found in museums and public buildings in Washington and Alaska, as well as the midwest and east, for which he won many awards. A permanent collection is housed at the Washington State Historical Society Museum, Tacoma. He served on the Seattle Arts Commission in 1956, coincidental with one of the controversies re relocation of the Chief's statue. Death came in 1973.

The difficult problem of funding for the Chief's status was finally resolved when a group of Seattle businessmen named themselves the "Tilikums of Elttaes (Seattle spelled backward)" to promote an annual festival called "Potlatch Days", featuring a Grand Parade (in which various Seattle playgrounds entered units or floats) and the sponsorship of "historic projects" (of which Tilikum Place was one). The first parade was in 1911 and continued for many years; it was renewed in 1949 with new names - Seafair and sponsored by Greater Seattle (ref: Green Lake/Aquatheatre).

In 1920 the spouting bear heads were officially turned off, the basin around the pedestal drained, filled with earth, and planted with ivy, the "old horse tub" drinking fountain removed, and the triangle repaved and recurbed.

Eight years later a major remodeling was contemplated: to place the Chief on a new and higher pedestal, night lighting, and new plaza. James Wehn was called in as consultant and endorsed the basic concept. Before the Park Board could act, it sought and was granted jurisdiction "of the status". Evidently the only work accomplished was to replant the basin and install night lighting. "We have decided not to remodel the base . . . at this time."

continued

In 1936 the West Seattle Legion, Lions and commercial clubs proposed the relocation of the Chief's statue to a "more appropriate location (at) Duwamish Head." Their proposal was denied and remained dormant for 20 years, when the Teamsters Council (whose office was adjacent to Tilikum Place) took up the proposal: the statue was not in a prominent location for tourist OR resident to find. The Teamster proposal was at the point where Aurora Avenue entered the new subway to the waterfront viaduct. This time the proposal went to the Municipal Arts Commission. Seattle University promptly made a bid for the "Chief". The Commission considered seven sites as suitable locations, recommending Denny Park as number one, but finding Pioneer Square as "very suitable" but not recommended owing to the controversy over rehabilitation of the square and district. Opinions were solicited and offered from many groups and persons, including Pioneer associations. The "predominant suggestion was for the statue to remain . . . for the present."

In 1958 the first graduating class of Sealth High School inaugurated a senior class tradition with clean-up ceremonies for the statue - approved by the Park Board and James Wehn.

Then came Seattle's second exposition - "Century 21 World's Fair" and a monorail car line built "behind the Chief's back!" So the movers became vocal again: "at least turn the statue to face the Monorail or Fairgrounds." Instead, the old basin was cleaned out and new jets and underwater lights added, the bears spouted again, the "triangle" was enlarged and repaved, trees and benches added. In 1971 the Indian students of North Kitsap School sought to move the "Chief" to Suquamish for proper care and appreciation.

DS  
1/24/74