

## 2021 Hay St. A Research Story by Tracy Rebstock, Archivist for the Southwest Regional Branch

It started with a phone call concerning a structure in Mason County, Shelton, WA. When I called back, the woman was looking for a house that had been razed in the 1990s. It was her hope I would find information on the property and most importantly a picture of the old house before it was destroyed. New at searching for properties, I set out to find the Mason County Assessor real property card and pictures. I found the property card first, and found pictures but they had not been processed yet. I was not sure I could find the house among all of the pictures but after only a little while I found two pictures of the property.

When I went to check my email to respond to her the following was in the inbox:

"Thank you so much for your effort in helping me to recover information on this residence. When the residence was found, it looked terrible. It looked like a hoarder's property with all the cars, lumber and projects outside and the inside was atrocious...infested with mice, disconnected plumbing, tar/smoke smells from indoor cigarette smoking and wood burning stove, and many unfinished projects with wire and insulation exposed.

I lived in this home for seven years with eight siblings and when the ninth was born, the mother had a pre-term delivery and my brother was born with only one lung and had to have special care in order to survive, not to mention his mother had to have an emergency operation because of uncontrolled bleeding. My Dad



needed someone to care for my older sister and I and we were moved to live with my

biological mother in Oregon from that point on.

My song 'House on Hay' will be published this year and I would love to send you a copy! I am receiving healing and closure through the years and this song is the final goodbye to a sad old life!

Pictures will help and any information in general! Thanks!"

I sent her the two pictures and here was her response:

"I love you, love you, love you! Wow! This is CRAZY!!! These pictures bring so much confirmation. Thank you for all your work! You are first on my list after publishing!"

I confess I felt a little misty eyed when reading her email and felt happy I could help her and her creative process.

