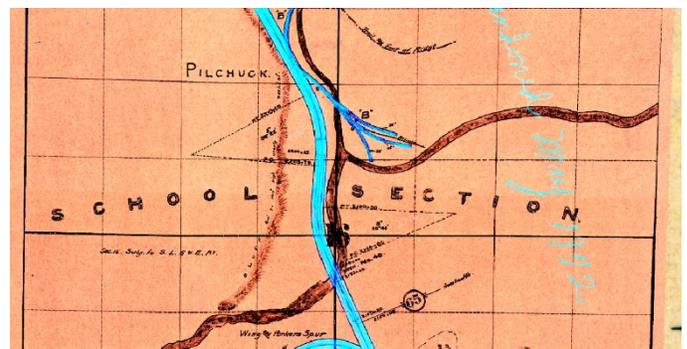
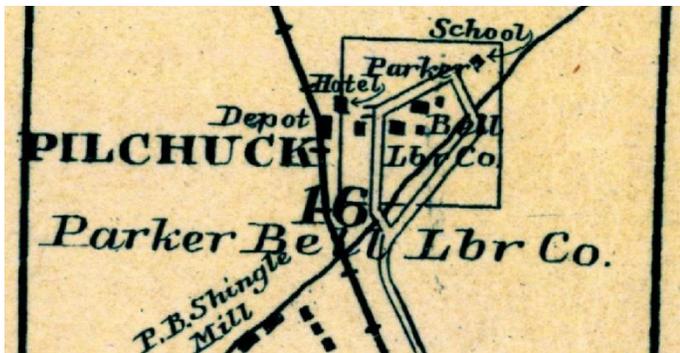


## Where the Heck is Pilchuck, WA?

Last week a friend from Arlington called because she was in the midst of researching some “railroad facts” of the area. She mentioned that some of the history fans around Arlington were also interested in recording details surrounding some of the surrounding settlements like Edgecomb, Cicero, and Pilchuck. In particular, they were interested in some of the mills that essentially defined those communities. Our mapping system has a lot of such details, so I decided to look in detail at the town marked as “Pilchuck” on the early maps, about 5 ½ miles north of Arlington along the Northern Pacific tracks.

Those of you who have driven north of Arlington on Highway 9 have undoubtedly noticed the new bridge that was opened last year. Compared to the old double arch concrete bridge that it replaced, it’s like a “super highway” bridge . . . but the County managed to preserve the old bridge, as well, because it was the last remaining example of its type! (Hopefully, we can arrange something similar when the Granite Falls bridge is replaced in the next couple years)

However, few of you probably are aware that a thriving community sat just to the west of that new bridge, with a huge mill, many houses, post office, and hotel (the Pilchuck Hotel)! On our 1910 maps, the road from Arlington approached from the south and looped around Pilchuck . . . this was the “end of local civilization” at the time, and the railroad continued north. See the road crossed Pilchuck Creek (black line).

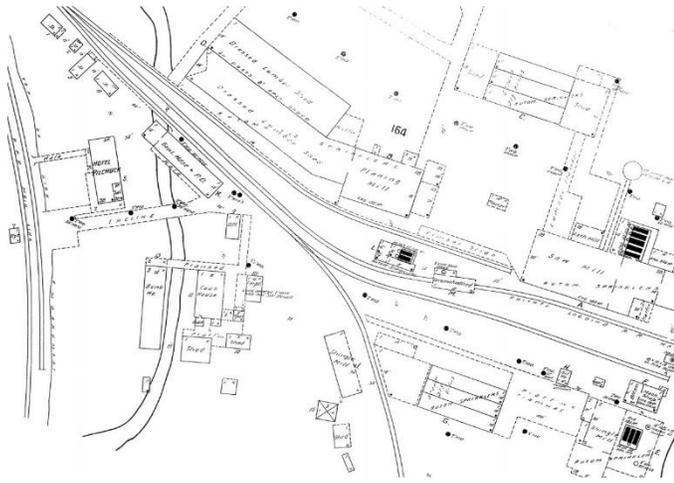


*(Hand drawn 1910 maps at left, Northern Pacific railroad map at right, NPRR rails highlighted, and spur tracks going into the large Parker Bell mill are shown in blue.)*



*(2012 aerial photograph at left, yellow dots indicate new bridge opened in 2014. Centennial Trail highlighted in green. Detailed 1909 map superimposed at right, with two red arrows indicating from where the pictures that follow were taken. One shot was taken of the hotel from the NPRR tracks, the other taken from up the hill, looking across the mill/community.)*

Pilchuck was based on the Parker Bell Mill, as shown in the enlarged map that follows. The pictures reflect what you would have seen had you been standing on the red arrows, looking in the direction of the arrows. Notice the old concrete bridge in the background, crossing Pilchuck Creek!



Notice Hotel Pilchuck at the left, built at an elevated level, well above the level of the mill. The long mill building “bends” slightly, and you can see that in the photograph below. Homes and school were located to the north of the mill.

The tracks at left on the map are now the Centennial Trail, stretching left-to-right in the picture below, along which virtually nothing is visible of a once thriving community/mill.

The hotel is at the extreme left in the picture below.

