

## Journey of the Elwha

Beach Lake is a natural low area that is filled with brackish water as a result of infiltration from water from the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The property is at the northernmost tip of Angeles Point and about one mile east of the mouth of the Elwha River. The Elwha River flows northward out of the Olympic Mountains, entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca a few miles west of Port Angeles. The dynamic forces of flooding and channel migration formed a coastal lowland valley. Beach Lake is a remnant river channel, cut off from the main river. The beach in front of the cabin reflects the erosion and deposition cycles that have occurred over the past 100 years.

Today, the shoreline is being restored through a series of projects led by the Coastal Watershed Institute, along with Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office, Puget Sound Partnership, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Go to [www.coastawatershedinstitute.org](http://www.coastawatershedinstitute.org) for more information on Elwha nearshore ecosystem restoration.



*Moving the cabin*

The shoreline is ever changing, as the geologic history of the Elwha River Valley illustrates. The river has moved and the shape of the peninsula has changed. The Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe have lived along the river's changing form for thousands of years. In the 1950s, the shoreline was armored with rip rap and concrete in an attempt to combat erosion. But upstream dams on the Elwha River rendered these efforts a failure.



*Cabin with storm surge, 1950s*

The Phillips cabin was built close to the shoreline, which put it in harm's way. Because of the changing landscape, moving the cabin was necessary. The cabin was slated for demolition, but instead was moved to a neighboring property where it will serve a new family.

*The North Olympic History Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and donations are tax-deductible. Please consider supporting the NOHC with a contribution or membership:*

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*Strait of Juan de Fuca from Angeles Point  
cover: Beach Lake Cabin prior to being moved*

# THE PHILLIPS FAMILY'S BEACH LAKE CABIN

## A RETREAT ON THE EDGE

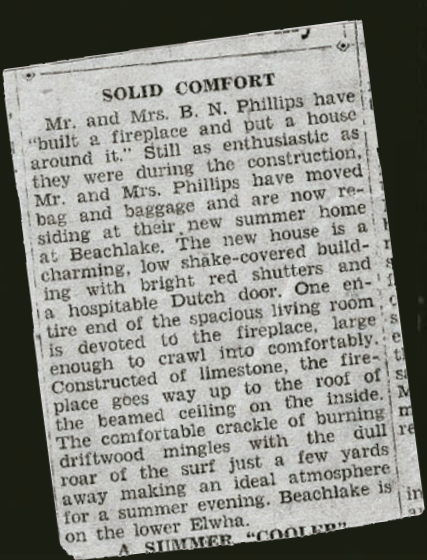


North Olympic History Center



*We connect the future, through the present, with the past*





*The Evening News, Port Angeles*

### Ben Phillips Comes to Town

The 1890s to 1910s was a period of growth for Port Angeles with logging and shipping providing jobs. Improvements in roads, schools, and infrastructure were soon to follow. Yet, financial services to support these improvements were inconsistent and problematic at that time.

In 1914, at the age of 26, Benjamin N. Phillips arrived in Port Angeles with his young bride Isabel and opened the Port Angeles Trust and Savings Bank on North Laurel Street. It was immediately successful and soon merged with other banks to become the First National Bank of Port Angeles. Phillips worked his entire life at the bank until retiring in 1976 at the age of 88. His long career and ethical banking helped the community grow into the commercial hub it is today.

### A Family Retreat

By the mid-1930s the Phillips' were prospering and purchased a 70-acre farm in the Lower Elwha River valley, with beach frontage views of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The land included a brackish water lake. The lake was sometimes stocked with trout for fishing and was often the scene for swimming and paddling rafts,

canoes, or dinghys. Beach combing amidst the ever-changing driftwood along the shore was a source of pleasure for the family and their guests. Construction of a cabin soon followed.

Benjamin and Isabel and their son James spent every summer at the cabin entertaining family and friends, sometimes welcoming more than 100 guests at annual picnics for various groups. The annual 4th of July family gathering would ultimately be attended by six generations of the Phillips family.

*Family members and friends at Beach Lake*



### The Phillips' Legacy

The couple was actively involved with philanthropic and social activities and played leadership roles in many of the groups in which they participated. Their long and committed involvement in the life of the region is an important part of the story of the Olympic Peninsula as highlighted below.



*Ben and Isabel*

*Ben:*

- Port Angeles Trust & Savings Bank - founder, 1914
- Klahhane (hiking) Club - founder and first president, 1915
- Port Angeles Public Library - trustee, 1927-51
- American Banker's Assn. - executive council, 1939-42
- Washington Banker's Assn. - president, 1944-45
- Port Angeles Community Concert Assn. - president for twelve years
- Port Angeles Rotary Club - charter member and president
- Port Angeles Chamber of Commerce - president
- United Good Neighbors of Clallam County - president, 1961
- Elks Lodge, Odd Fellows, Moose Lodge, Peninsula Golf and Country Club, Port Angeles Yacht Club - member
- United Methodist and Congregational Church - chairman of finance committee
- Rainier Club of Seattle - member
- Coast Guard Auxiliary - made a life member, 1961
- YMCA - honored for service to youth

*Isabel:*

- Port Angeles Public Library - board member
- Several area clubs - member