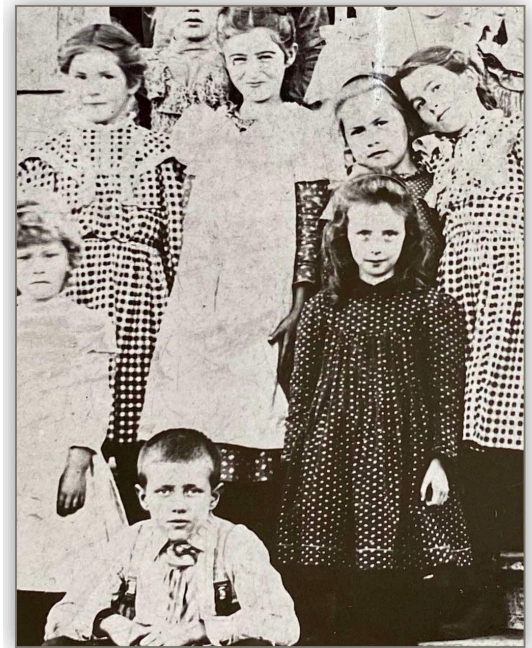


The Button Sisters

By Patti Henshaw with Elaine Gliman

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Genealogy is like building family puzzles with interesting puzzle pieces waiting to be found and fitted together to form stories about our ancestors. One of the most prized puzzle pieces we are always hoping for is that story of a unique family event. In addition, one of the nicest surprises for me, when I started researching family, is learning about cousins that I wasn't fully aware of who have those wonderful stories to share with me. I met my second cousin Elaine Sturdivant Gilman for the "first time" in 2014, although she has lived in Kingston since 1969 and she remembers seeing me as a young child. Elaine's and my grandmother were sisters and I remember visiting her grandmother, my Dad's Aunt Lil, several times while I was growing up on Bainbridge Island. One of my favorite family photos is the school photo of our grandmothers, the two little girls with matching dresses. This photo was most likely taken in 1899 or 1900 shortly after they arrived on Bainbridge Island with their parents Robert and Lillian (Whitworth) Button. My Dad, Jim Henshaw, called them the Button Sisters. My Dad loved telling family stories and I recall him telling me that his mother had arrived on a scow-barge to the island shortly before the photo was taken. Elaine says she started being a "genealogist" when she was very young and loved hearing family stories from her grandmother. So this is the story told to her about our grandmothers arrival on Bainbridge Island.



THE BUTTON SISTERS IN THEIR CHECKED DRESSES,
LILLIAN ON LEFT AND MARGIE ON RIGHT,
ABOUT 1899.

In 1899 Margie and Lillian Button, found themselves in the late afternoon on the beach on the north side of Eagle Harbor, now called Hawley Cove, with their family possessions on a scow-barge waiting for their father Robert Button to return with an oxen team and wagon. Their mother had stayed in Seattle and would arrive later by Steamer ship. Margie was 10 years old and Lillian was 8 years old. As they waited on the barge they could see one of the Indian summer camps further down the beach. Their father told the girls to not be afraid and the girls weren't bothered by anyone as they waited. Young Lillian recalled watching the tide go out several times as they huddled together to keep warm for two nights waiting for their father. In the early morning after the second night, Lillian was woken by the sound of the metal bells on

the oxen and they could see the light from the wagon lantern coming down the path. Their father had returned and the girls cried "tears of joy" as they were so happy to see him as they had never been so scared. Lillian remembers riding on the wagon on a narrow bumpy path to Wing Point dodging tree branches and bushes to a house with a spiral staircase that went to a second floor room that was like a crow's nest of a ship. The family was in that house a short time before moving to Madrone (later Winslow) to a house behind the Congregational Church. The Button Family came to Seattle because of the Gold Rush after traveling from New York by sailing ship down the east coast to Panama. They took a train across the Panama Isthmus to the Pacific Coast and then traveled by sailing ship to Seattle. The reason they came to Bainbridge Island is because the ship's Captain had told Robert Button that there was a large mill on Bainbridge with lots of jobs available. The 1900 census shows the Button family owning a house in the Eagle Harbor precinct and Robert Button working as a ship's carpenter.

Lillian Button married Lester Morrill (Lester worked at the Hall's shipyard and later took over his father's drugstore) in June 1911 and they would raise four children, two girls and two boys. Margie married Ward Henshaw (Ward would later become a Captain on the mosquito

fleet and Washington State Ferry System) in October 1909 and they would raise four children, three boys and one girl. The houses that the Button sisters lived in with their husbands and raised their children are still present. The Morrill house, built by Charles Morrill, father of Lester, in 1911 is on the corner of Hawley and Eagle Place. And the Henshaw house built in 1914 by Ward Henshaw is located at 342 Winslow Way West.



THE MORRILL HOME IN THE PAST - AND TODAY



THE HENSHAW HOME IN THE PAST - AND TODAY



BAINBRIDGE ISLAND SCHOOL, 1899 OR 1900.

PATTI'S GRANDFATHER IS WARD HENSHAW, ON PORCH, THIRD FROM LEFT. HER GRANDMOTHER IS MARGIE BUTTON, THE GIRL IN THE CHECKED DRESS ON THE STEPS, TO THE LEFT OF THE BOY WITH THE BASEBALL BAT.

PATTI HAS PROVIDED THIS PHOTO AND ALL THE STUDENT NAMES TO THE B.I. HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
(AND YES, WE DO THINK SOMEONE ERASED THE TEACHER'S FACE!)