

# Cowlitz County Register of Historic Places Nomination Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on additional sheets if needed.**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Ryderwood Community Hall (House)

other names/site number WN0320159

### 2. Location

street & number 303 Morse St. (includes 301 - 305 A / B)  not for publication

community Ryderwood, WA  vicinity

zip code 98581

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private /corporate
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal
- Tribal

#### Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		site
1		structure
1		object
<b>4</b>		<b>Total</b>

#### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the Cowlitz County Historic Register

### 4. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

- Auditorium seating 500 (movie theater added "about 1944")
- Reading Room,
- Bathrooms
- Barber Shop / Beauty Parlor later
- Billiard Room
- Fraternal Lodges after 1944

#### Current Functions

- Ryderwood Improvement & Service Assoc. office (305)
- Ryderwood History Project, Inc. office (301)
- Dining Room with attached commercial kitchen
- Auditorium with stage and hardwood dance floor. (Was formerly the school gym floor - probably ash)
- Exercise/game room

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**5. Description**

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Architectural Classification	Materials
Territorial	foundation: Concrete Block (not original)
	walls: _____ Exterior: wood covered with concrete-based lap siding Interior: original wood "bead board", most
	roof: _____ Composition asphalt shingles (not original)
	other: _____ Auditorium hardwood flooring: was repurposed by Retirees from the Ryderwood School gymnasium.

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**6. Historic Narrative**

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

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**Summary Paragraph**

"The Ryderwood Community House was the first large building completed in Ryderwood", and the largest one remaining in the center of town, Community Hall is located on the northwest corner of Morse and Third Streets. The north end is 2 stories and cannot be missed entering town. The earliest known photograph is dated 1923.

The "hipped" roof lines are distinctive and similar to other Ryderwood and Longview homes and buildings. The architect is unknown, although Archibald Norman Torbitt was Long-Bell's contracted architect at that time.

The March, 1945 "Long-Bell Log" indicates that the building was remodeled "last year" to provide space for the movie theater and lodge formerly housed in a building across the street destroyed by fire.

In the early 60's, the Auditorium's beautiful hardwood flooring was salvaged from the Ryderwood School gymnasium by Retirees and installed in Auditorium.

While many doors, windows and interior walls have changed over the years, the basic size, shape and purpose of the building have remained constant.

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**Narrative Description**

The more than 7,000 square foot Community Hall literally stands above everything around it. Only the Ryderwood Church and original Tavern were larger.

May 1928 Long-Bell Log: "The Ryderwood Community House, the first large building completed in Ryderwood... has an auditorium seating 500, a reading room, bathroom, barber shop and billiard room... Residents have formed social, civic and fraternal organizations which add to the pleasure of living in this new town."

March 1945 Long-Bell Log: "...Community Hall, remodeled by the company last year to replace one [building] across the street, destroyed by fire." A double-door entry and stage addition in the rear were added to the larger 2-story section to accommodate the town's theater/assembly hall, and the single story section includes "the (somewhat smaller) lodge and assembly hall, dining hall and kitchen (used almost nightly...)." A barber shop was located in the SE corner of the building during the logging years, but was replaced by a beauty parlor for many of the retiree years. The space is currently occupied by the Ryderwood History Project, Inc.

The upper story of the north end of the building contains original bead-board walls and ceilings; fir flooring, doors and trim. The large room has a large circle painted in the middle of the floor of unknown significance. Today, the upper floor is used for storage.

The building was originally heated with a steam system that served the "business district". The steam plant was located across Campbell Creek.

Sometime before 1964, (when the last of the Ryderwood School building had been removed) retirees installed the former hardwood (likely ash) gymnasium floor in Community Hall's Auditorium.

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**7. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for Cowlitz County Historic Register listing.)

- Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state or local history.
- Embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, style, or method of design or construction, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Is an outstanding work of a designer, builder, or architect who has made a substantial contribution to the art.
- Exemplifies or reflects special elements of Cowlitz County's cultural, special, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history.
- Is associated with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history.
- Has yielded or may be likely to yield important archaeological information related to history or prehistory.
- Is a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the only surviving structure significantly associated with an historic person or event.
- Is a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance and is the only surviving structure or site associated with that person.
- Is a cemetery which derives its primary significance from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events, or cultural patterns.
- Is a reconstructed building that has been executed in a historically accurate manner on the original site.
- Is a creative and unique example of folk architecture and design created by persons not formally trained in the architectural or design professions, and which does not fit into formal architectural or historical categories.

**Criteria Considerations****Areas of Significance**

Ryderwood, WA

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**Period of Significance**

1923-present

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**Significant Dates**

1923

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1953

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**Significant Person**

(If Applicable)

R. A. Long, Archibald Torbitt, Harry Kem, Sr.

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**Cultural Affiliation**

Logging / Timber / Reforestation

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**Architect/Builder**

Uncertain - possibly Archibald Torbitt as he was under contract to Long-Bell Lumber Company at that time.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Built in 1923, the building is significant due to its age and near-original appearance, condition and purpose. With further research, it may be possible to connect it to Archibald Norman Torbitt, Long-Bell's architect at the time.

The building is located in the village of Ryderwood, R. A. Long's unique town built for loggers and their families. In 1953, Harry Kem and investors formed Senior Estates to transform the little town one of the first "planned communities for retired persons".

The structure's hipped-style roof lines are seen on many of the homes and buildings in Ryderwood and Longview. The exterior of the building has changed very little in nearly 100 years.

Original 1923 bead-board walls and ceilings, flooring, doors and woodwork remain in the upstairs of the 2-story section on the north end of the building.

The Auditorium's hardwood flooring (likely ash) is reported by many to have been repurposed from the old Ryderwood School gymnasium.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Shown in the very earliest (1923) photographs of the town, Ryderwood's Community Hall remains the largest building seen when entering Ryderwood. Early utility maps indicate that this and other buildings in the "business district" had indoor plumbing and steam heat by 1926.

Many doors and windows have changed over the years, but the building's original size, shape and basic purposes have not changed since in nearly 100 years. The fact that this building was among the very first constructed speaks to R. A. Long's commitment to community first.

The hip-roofed territorial style was used on many homes and buildings in both Ryderwood and Longview. The possible connection to Long-Bell architect Archibald Norman Torbitt is an on-going research project. See DAHP biography in which known and suspected errors are marked.

Long-Bell remodeled Community Hall "about 1944" in order to accommodate the movie theater/auditorium and lodge that were lost when the building across the street burned "about 1942". The stage at the rear of the Auditorium was likely added at that time. It is worth noting that there were both Masons and Oddfellows Lodges in early Ryderwood.

Today's beautiful hardwood flooring in the Auditorium (that appears to be ash) was salvaged and repurposed by the Retirees when the Ryderwood School was removed sometime "before 1964". Monthly dances with live bands were held regularly through the early 2000's.

The upper floor has intact bead-board with some original 2-tone paint, as well as original flooring, doors and woodwork. There is a large red circle of unknown significance in the middle of the floor of the large room. That is said to have been the meeting space for the Masons.

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**8. References**

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Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.

“Long-Bell Log”: May 1928, p. 1-10

“Long-Bell Log”: March, 1945, p. 6

DAHP.wa.gov: Archibald N. Torbitt

**Previous documentation on file:**

- preliminary eligibility for individual listing by Cowlitz County Historic Inventory
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- previously listed in the State Register
- previously listed in the State Heritage Barn Register

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Cowlitz Co. Building and Planning Dept.  
Ryderwood History Project, Inc.  
DAHP.gov

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

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**9. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property** .38 ac.  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References for each contributing feature**

\_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983  
(Place additional UTM references on an additional sheet.)

46° 37 41 97 N -123° 04 40 01 W
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1	_____	_____	_____	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Northwest corner of Morse & 3rd St., Ryderwood, WA

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

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**10. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Cissy Sanders / Cowlitz Co. Historic Preservation Commissioner  
organization Ryderwood History Project date 4/17/2019  
street & number P. O. Box 15 telephone 360-355-7315  
city or town Ryderwood state WA zip code 98581  
e-mail cistersanzer@gmail.com  
signature Cissy Sanders

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**11. Property Owner**

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name Ryderwood Improvement & Service Assn.  
street & number 305 Morse St. / P. O. Box 143 telephone 360-295-3651  
city or town Ryderwood state WA zip code 98581  
email ryderwood@centurytel.net  
signature Daniel E. Romano / RISA President

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**12. Additional Documentation**

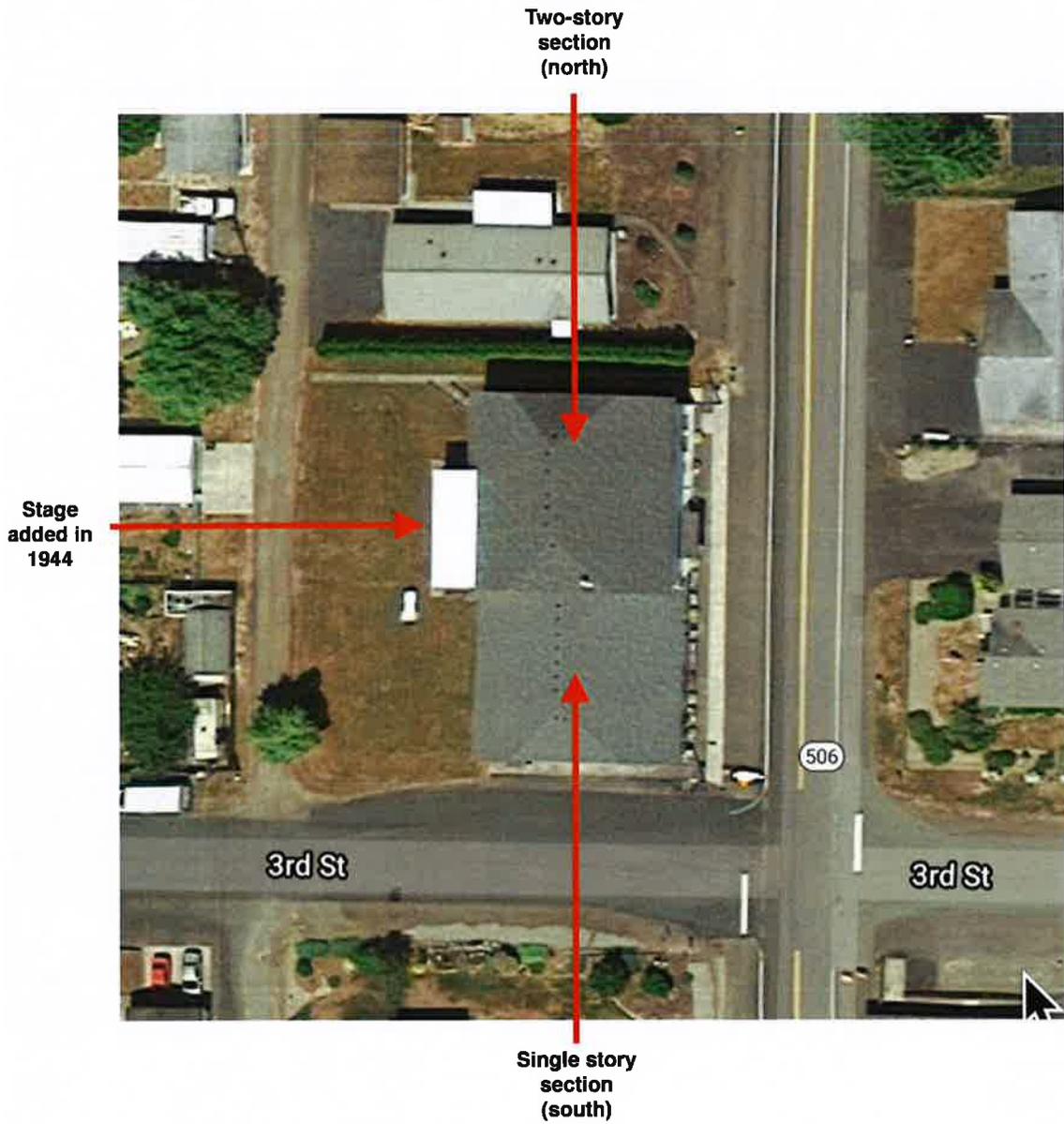
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Vicinity Maps:** A map indicating the property's location within the County.
- **Sketch map** of property. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Photos**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the Cowlitz County Historic Preservation Commission for any additional items.)



**Name of Property:** Community Hall (House)  
**Community:** Ryderwood  
**Photographer:** Google  
**Date Photographed:** Recent  
**Description:** Satellite view; 1 of 11.



**Name of Property: Community Hall (House)**  
**Community: Ryderwood**  
**Photographer: Google**  
**Date Photographed: Recent**  
**Description: Satellite view; 2 of 11.**

**Name of Property:** Community Hall (House)  
**Community:** Ryderwood  
**Photographer:** Wilson?  
**Date Photographed:** 1923  
**Source:** ?  
**Description:** Earliest known photo showing Community Hall; 3 of 11.



**Community Hall (House)**

**Name of Property:** Community Hall (House)

**Community:** Ryderwood

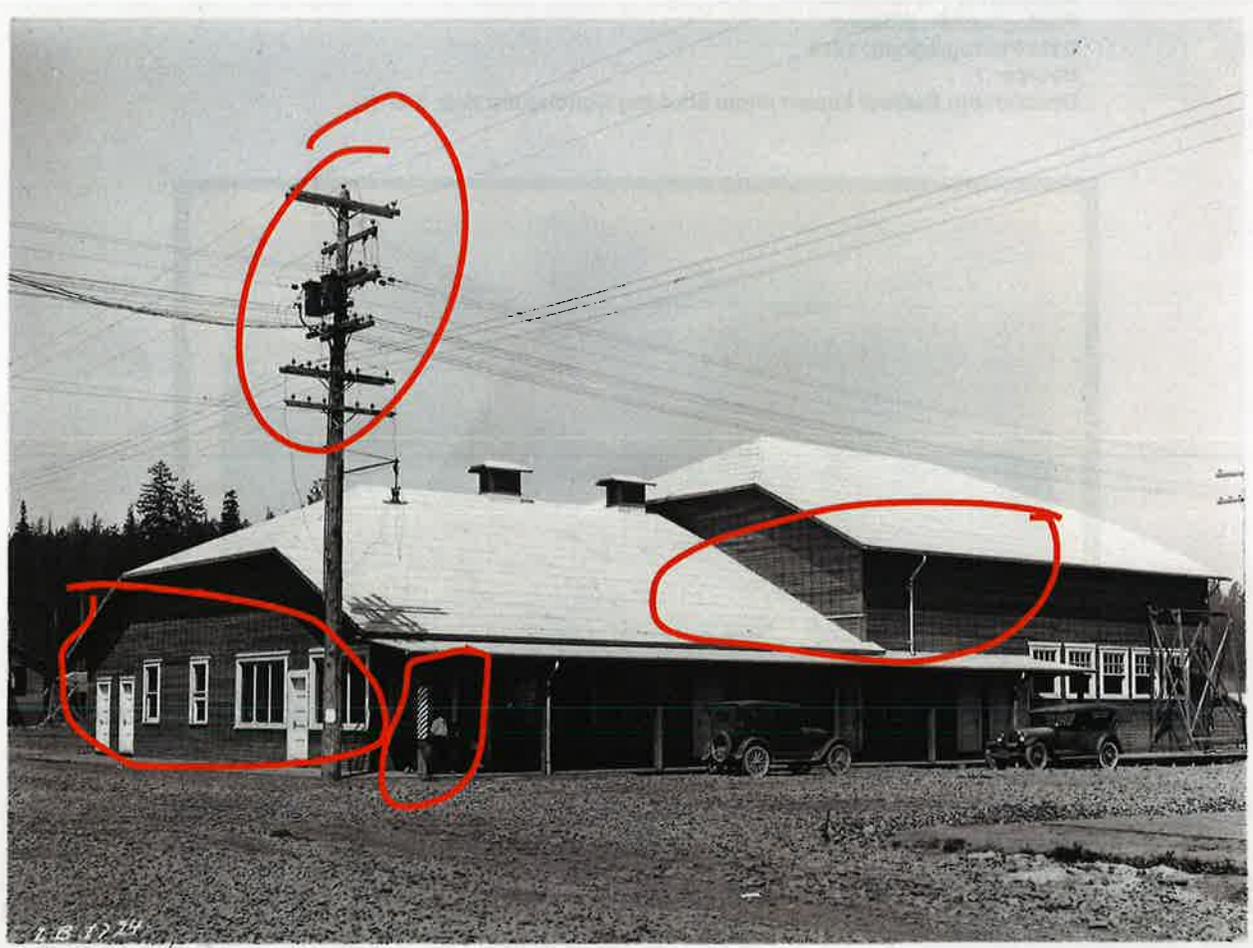
**Photographer:**

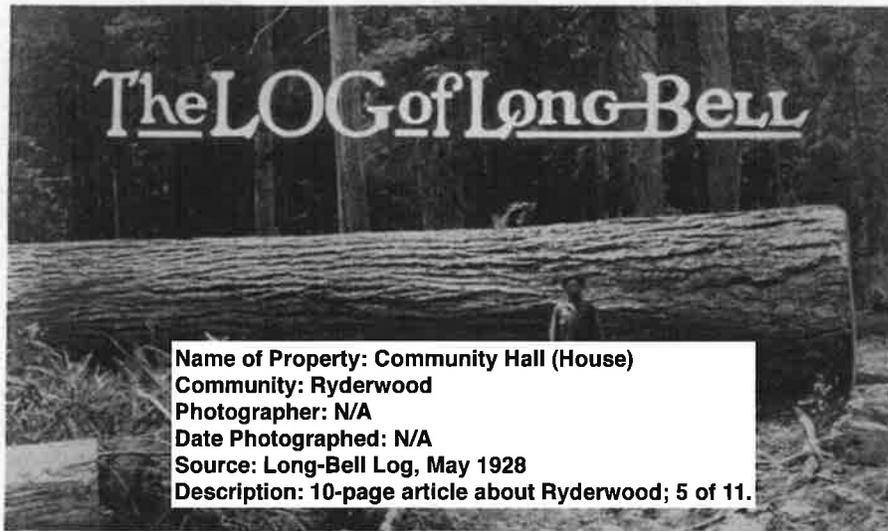
**Date Photographed:** 6/9/1924

**Source:** Longview Public Library

**Description:** earliest known photo of exterior

**Significance:** Left to right: Compare windows and doors to later photos; Barber pole - the building always housed a barber shop and beauty parlor; Ryderwood had electricity well before surrounding towns - lines were moved to alleys sometime after 1950; unpainted exterior indicates frame (stud) construction; 4 of 11.





**Name of Property: Community Hall (House)**  
**Community: Ryderwood**  
**Photographer: N/A**  
**Date Photographed: N/A**  
**Source: Long-Bell Log, May 1928**  
**Description: 10-page article about Ryderwood; 5 of 11.**

A big Douglas Fir log ready for loading in the Long-Bell timber near Ryderwood, Wn.

## We Visit Ryderwood

By ED ITO

**A**FTER going through the plants at Longview we had planned to fly our good ship "Spirit of Long-Bell" to Ryderwood, the center of logging operations, but Bogue Vandercook, superintendent of the Longview, Portland and Northern railroad, had prevailed upon us to leave the ship in Longview and make the trip over the L. P. & N. We had heard a great deal about this railroad so we gladly agreed to leave our ship on the spacious lawns surrounding the Longview passenger station under the protect-

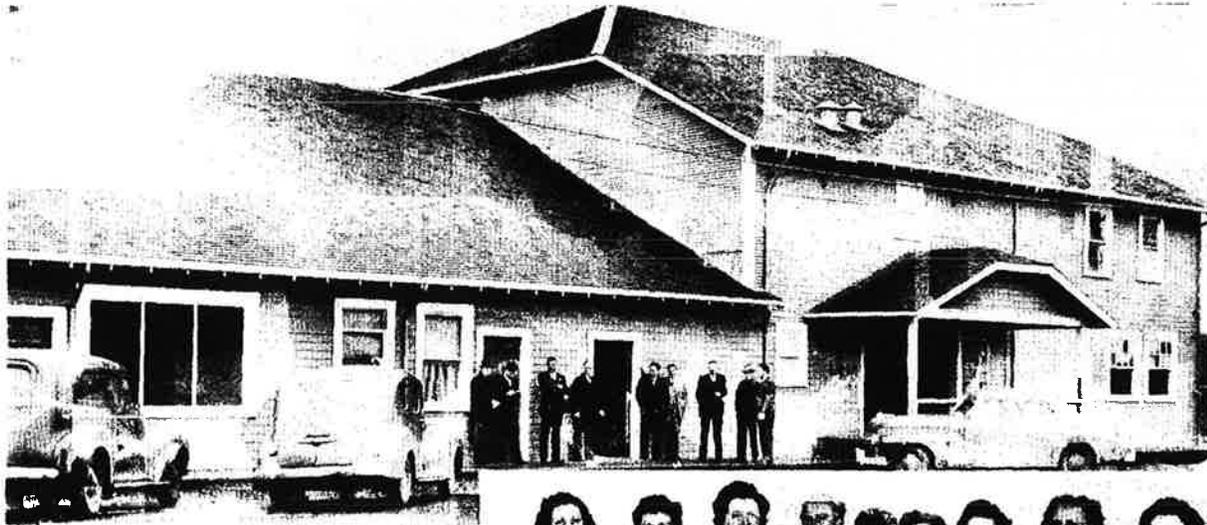
railroad that the main line systems will route four of their trains daily, giving Longview direct train service. It is also over this line that the long trains of logs are brought from the logging operations at Ryderwood to the mills at Longview.

We found the L. P. & N. a fine bit of trackage, permanently constructed in every way with gentle curves, easy grades, sturdily-constructed bridges and elevated road crossings, all built in accordance with the best and most modern methods of railroad construction. As we sped

**This is page 1 of a 10-page detailed article about Ryderwood in the May, 1928 Long-Bell Log. While it offers many photographs, there are none of Community Hall. The only reference to Community "House" (with no photo) is on page 3:**

**"Down the street from the store we saw the Sunset Theater... Just across the street was the Ryderwood Community House, the first large building completed in Ryderwood... It has an auditorium seating 500, a reading room, bath room, barber shop and billiard room... residents have formed social, civic and fraternal organizations which add to the pleasure of living in this new town."**

# AT LONGVIEW DIVISIONS



## Ryderwood (Alberta Kelly)

T/Sgt. Herbert (Snag) Marion, son of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Marion, recently came home unexpectedly, from a year's overseas duty with the Army Air Force in Europe. He left Paris, France, in a plane, and arrived exactly a week later at Winlock, Wash. Snag has completed 51 missions over Belgium, France and Germany. Before going to Europe, he was 18 months in the South Pacific, where he had 41 missions, 37 of them completed. He is the holder of the Air Medal and Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart. His brother, Howard, in the Merchant Marine, was home at the same time. It was the first time the boys had seen one another in nearly four years.

Lieut. Agnes Lacy, sister of Mrs. Tom Temple, spent her furlough here. Lieut. Lacy is an Army nurse and had just returned from England.

Ryderwood boys (and girls) home recently on furloughs: Pvt. Barbara Jean Byrd, just finished basic training at Des Moines, visiting her folks, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Byrd; Cpl. Don Davis visiting his folks, Mr. and Mrs. Mayden Davis; Charles Driggers, Navy, visiting his folks after completing boot training at Farragut, Idaho; Pfc. Wayne Temple, from Camp Roberts, Calif., visiting his folks, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Temple, and Ira Brown, Seabees, visiting his parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Brown.

A letter from Robert B. Hoffman, S. 1/c, Navy, former Ryderwood choker setter, said: "I received the January Log today. I appreciated it very much, especially as it had quite a lot in it about the Ryderwood operations. I hope you continue to send it."

Lumber is the first essential.



### Ryderwood's New Hall Serves Community

The Long-Bell Northwest Woods Safety Conference at Ryderwood February 1 provided a good chance for the picture above of the Community Hall, remodeled by the Company last year to replace one across the street, destroyed by fire. The doorway at the right is the entrance to the theater, which can be used as a large assembly hall. The doorway about which some of the safety conferees are grouped leads to the (somewhat smaller) lodge and assembly hall, dining hall and kitchen (used almost nightly by one organization or another). At the left, partly cut off, is "Cotton" Satcher's barber shop, also, in its way, something of a town forum, with "Cotton" the main master-of-ceremonies and commentator (they say). In the group at the lower right are the Ryderwood women who served a more-than-elegant chicken dinner to the safety conference at noon. They are, left to right: Mrs. F. F. Severs, Mrs. C. Singletary, Mrs. W. Cory, Mrs. Ed House, Mrs. E. L. Marshall, Mrs. C. A. Edwards, Mrs. N. J. Smith, Mrs. A. Becker and Mrs. E. A. Krause.

**Name of Property: Community Hall (House)**

**Community: Ryderwood**

**Photographer: Long-Bell**

**Date Photographed: February 1, 1945**

**Source: Long-Bell Log, March 1945**

**Description: Describes the 1944 remodeling; 6 of 11.**

was released from Cowlitz General Hospital after a several weeks battle with pneumonia, and is now back on the job.

William L. Shell, oiler and conveyer man, on the job more than 20 years and never late to work, retired last month. He and Mrs. Shell have moved to Walla Walla, Wash., to live. Mrs. Roy Bird, Cleanup Crew, was off, ill, a couple of weeks last month.

Nels Wick, who had been on other work some time, returned to his old job as trimmerman February 12.

Unnecessary absenteeism contributes to inferiority feelings.

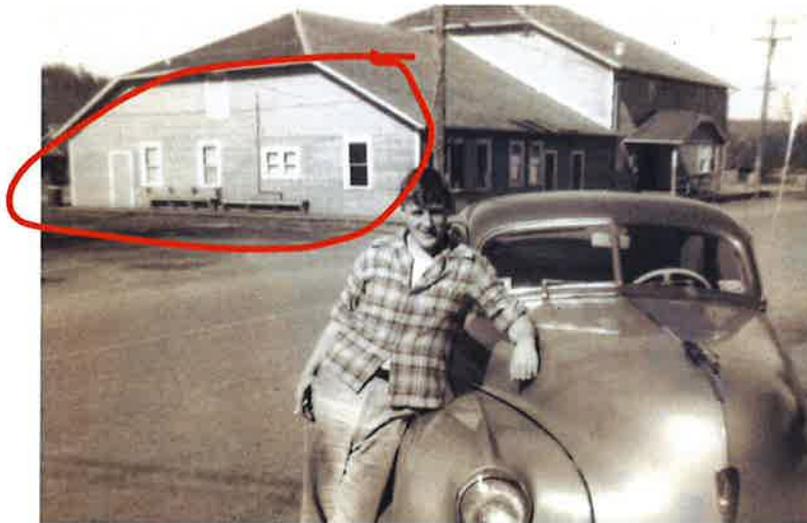
Ernie Haistenrud moved up to be inspector and Don Quinn succeeded him as first driver.

Hugh (Curly) Reece of the Longview Mill Offices Invoice Department, long active in Boy Scouts, Planning Commission, and the Keep Washington Green Committee, was named Longview's Junior First Citizen at a meeting of the Junior Chamber a month or so ago. He is a past president of the Junior Chamber and an official of the state organization.

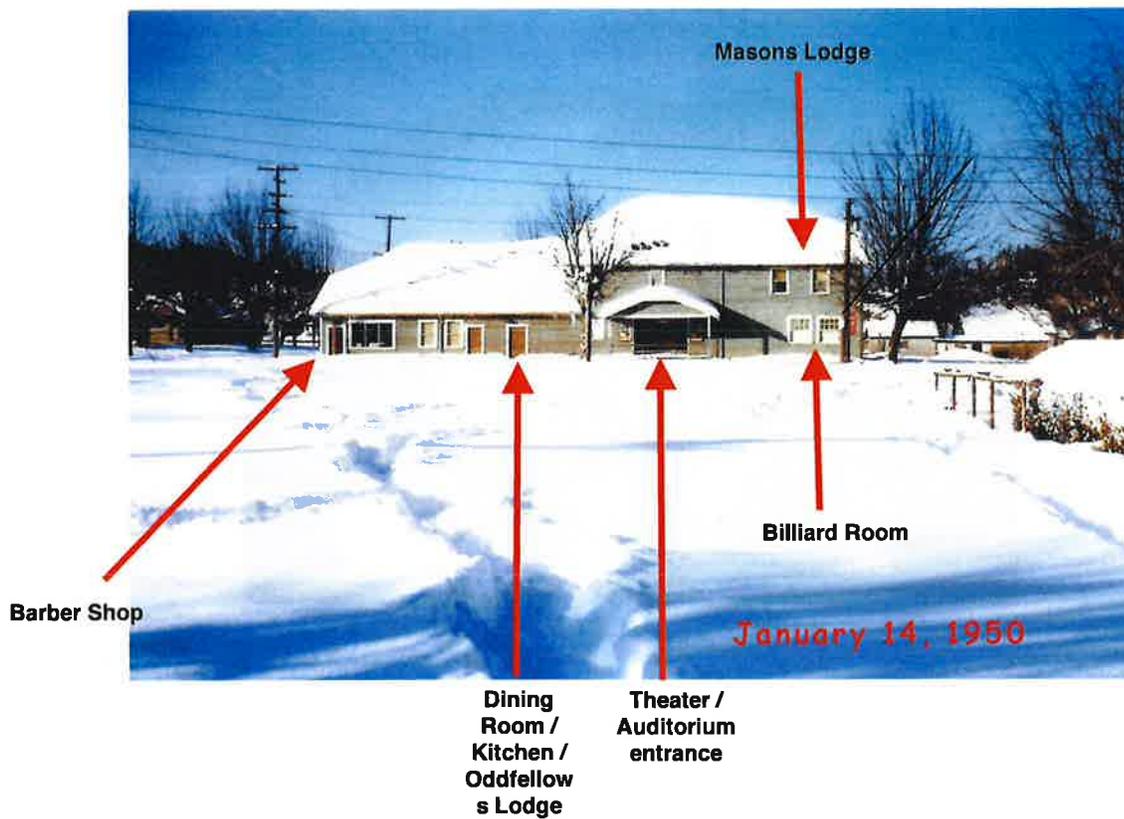
Waste fats make ammunition.

THE LOG OF LONG-BELL

**Name of Property:** Community Hall (House)  
**Community:** Ryderwood  
**Photographer:** Unknown  
**Date Photographed:** After 1944  
**Source:** Private collection  
**Description:** South view after 1944 remodel.  
Compare windows and doors to the earlier photo (#3); 7 of 11.



**Name of Property:** Community Hall (House)  
**Community:** Ryderwood  
**Photographer:** Unknown  
**Date Photographed:** January 14, 1950  
**Source:** Private collection  
**Description:** East view after 1944 remodel; 8 of 11.



**Name of Property: Community Hall (House)**  
**Community: Ryderwood**  
**Photographer: Cissy Sanders**  
**Date Photographed: December 29, 2014**  
**Source: Private collection**  
**Description: Earliest known photo showing Community Hall; 9 of 11.**





**Name of Property: Community Hall (House)**

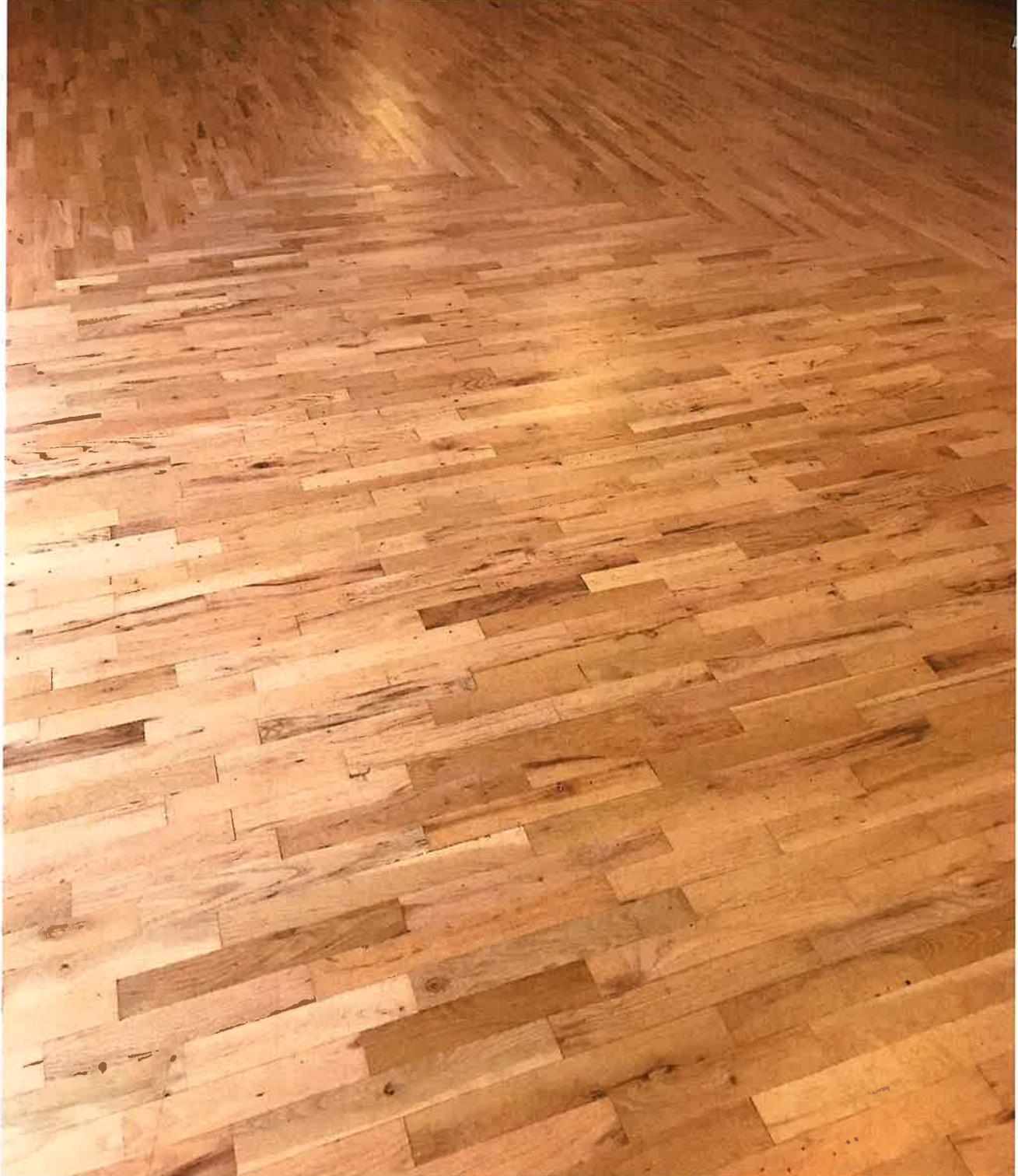
**Community: Ryderwood**

**Photographer: Cissy Sanders**

**Date Photographed: 4/16/2019**

**Source: Private collection**

**Description: The hardwood flooring in today's Auditorium was repurposed from the original Ryderwood School gymnasium; it appears to be ash; 10 of 11.**



<https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/research-and-technical-preservation-guidance/architect-biographies/bio-for-archibald-n-torbitt>

## Archibald N. Torbitt

1883 - 1958



Architect Archibald Norman Torbitt was one of the most diverse designers to practice in Washington state, with his portfolio ranging from projects completed in the Beaux Arts, Tudor, Spanish, Colonial and Streamlined Moderne styles.

He was born in Mexico, Missouri on July 1, 1883 and his formal architectural education was limited to International Correspondence School, graduating in 1906. Upon graduation, he joined the architectural office of Miller & Opel in Jefferson City, Missouri. By 1910 he had risen to the level of partner and maintained the Springfield office for the firm, which by then was renamed Miller-Opel & Torbitt. Designs by the firm included the National Bank in Fayette (1906); the Greene County Courthouse (1910-12); Landers Theater; the Heer-Andrea Store Building (1916); several buildings at Drury College; St Agnes Church (1910); the Hammond Building (1910) in Jefferson City; and two of the original buildings at Missouri State University. Reportedly Torbitt remained in Springfield working with architects Frank B. Miller and Charles Opel until 1918.

Some reports indicate that Torbitt moved to St. Louis and opened an independent practice (1918-1923), but this has not been verified. While working for architect Frederick E. McIlvain of Kansas City, Torbitt came to Longview to supervise the construction of the Monticello Hotel (1923). Once there, he entered in to a two-year contract with the Longview-Bell Company to assist them with the design and implementation of their company town.

While in Longview Torbitt designed a variety of structures for the company, primarily in the Classical and Georgian Revival styles. Projects include the Community House (1923); the Community Store (1923); the Colonial Building (1923); the Mt. Hood Building (1923); the Hotel Broadway (1924); Longview Public Service Co. Power Substation (1925); the Pacific & Northern Train Station (1925); several school buildings (1926); Longview Country Club clubhouse (1926); the Library (1926); a gas station (1927); and a variety of homes for executives at the Longview-Bell Company. Outside the city he designed the Ryderwood Theater & Lodge (1925) in Kelso; and the Skamokawa Grade School (1927).

In 1927, Torbitt moved to Seattle and formed a short-lived partnership with architect Daniel R. Huntington. Together the firm of Huntington & Torbitt designed Bryan's West Seattle Dairy (1927); and the Piedmont Apartments (1928) in Seattle. They also worked with local Hoquiam architect, Edwin St. John Griffith, to design the Seventh Street Theater (1928) and the Hoquiam City Hall (1929). For reason unknown, the partnership was dissolved after two years, and each went their separate ways.

**Name of Property: Ryderwood Community Hall (aka "Ryderwood Community House" in May 1928 Long-Bell Log  
Community: Ryderwood  
Photographer: Unknown  
Date Photographed: Unknown  
Source: Dept. of Archeology & Historic Preservation  
Ongoing research on Torbitt: This biography says he was Long-Bell's contracted architect at this time and came to Longview with R. A. Long; K.C. Museum has no info on him; given the number of errors on his time in Longview ("Longview-Bell", "Pacific & Northern" and "Ryderwood Theater & Lodge in Kelso"), perhaps the "Community House (1923)" refers to Ryderwood's Community Hall; Whoever designed the building likely designed the original Merc and former Ryderwood School. 11 of 11.**

*By Michael Houser, State Architectural Historian - January 2013*



Advertisement - Huntington & Torbitt, 1927

ice. He died in Seattle on September