

From "Business Biographies" in the Farm Bureau News, October 12, 1933:
The Farm Bureau News was published by the Island County Farm Bureau in Oak Harbor, WA between 1920 and 1950.

BARNEY NIENHUIS

Barney Nienhuis, proprietor of Barney's Store, and one of Oak Harbor's most progressive business men has been logger, automobile salesman and chicken rancher, but sooner or later always comes back to his chosen trade, storekeeping.

"Barney," as Oak Harbor folks know him, was born at 11:00 p. m. Sept. 4, 1884 in Holland, Michigan. He attended school at Holland and lived there until 1906 when he decided to come west to the land of opportunity,

His first work after he arrived at Oak Harbor was milking cows for H. Riksen. Subsequent jobs included working at the sawmill belonging to Charlie Nienhuis and clearing land for J. Capaan. He worked for the Maylor Brothers three and a half years clerking and chicken ranching for two years before establishing his first store here in 1914.

"My first business was a general merchandise store and was located where the Whidby Island Bakery is now," Barney said. "I sold out in 1921 and returned to chicken ranching."

He stayed with the chicken ranch two years, logged five years, and was an automobile salesman for three years. In June, 1930, Barney became manager of the Co-Op Store, a position which he held for one and a half years. On Feb. 13, 1932 Barney opened his present store and in a remarkably short time built the business to what it is today.

"I was just 10 years old when I earned my first dollar--splitting wood for my grandmother," Barney confided. "My grandmother was always very particular about how her stove wood was cut and I could do it just right for her. My mother, who is 76 years old is still living in Holland, Michigan, and there's nothing I would like better than going back and paying her a visit."

Barney and Mrs. Nienhuis or "Taapke" were married in 1908 shortly after he came to Oak Harbor. They both enjoy work in the store and take an active interest in "keeping up with the times" in modern merchandising.

"You've got to watch the people around you and keep on the lookout for pointers," Barney said. "One fellow doesn't know it all and nowadays you have to keep up with the very latest to get anywhere."

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