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## **GEERT ZYLSTRA**

Geert Zylstra, for 15 years with the Oak Harbor Producers Company, and manager there for two years, has watched Oak Harbor grow from a village with two or three stores to its present flourishing proportions.

He was born in South Dakota in 1890 and came West with his parents five years later. The Zylstra family first lived at San de Fuca and later moved to Oak Harbor.

And while watching Oak Harbor grow, he has assumed an active part in its development. When but 20 years old, in 1910, he was proprietor of a harness and general repair shop located where the Novelty Apparel Shop is at present.

It was shortly after this time that a ferry across Deception Pass was seriously being considered by the Oak Harbor commercial club and the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce. Surveyors were arranging for a trunk road the full length of Whidby Island and egg producing was becoming popular.

Zylstra attended Oak Harbor schools and was a member of the first graduating class of the Oak Harbor High School. That was before the present building was constructed, and classes were held in a hall over one of the stores on Barrington Avenue.

In 1915, he and Miss Dora Riepma were married. Their family now consists of four children – all girls. In 1917 he began working for the Oak Harbor Co-Operative Producers Company and in 1931 he became manager of the company – the position he still holds.

Geert was just ten years old when he earned his first money. It was for clipping chickens for a neighbor, he recalls, laughing. He enjoys fishing and other outdoor recreations.

He has been assistant chief of the Oak Harbor volunteer fire department since it was organized.

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