

Sadie Kahan

History Block 8

Cone

9/11

The Elizabethan laws of the “deserving poor” set a precedent for how people viewed and handled the unhoused. Although a higher percent of the population was impoverished back then, there were less homeless than the people of today's times. As a society we see ourselves as evolving and forever improving, but it seems we have regressed in our care for the homeless. Back then, communities cared for homeless people more than our communities do today.

According to the book Skid Road by Josephine Ensign, When Edward Moore became the first homeless person of Seattle lots of care went into him. For the 6 months that he was living out of a tent the local natives cared for him, giving tips and helping him with hunting. During the cold months Moore eventually got frostbite. The natives decided to carry him to the settlers so they could take care of him; and so the white settlers did. The frostbite was amputated and Moore received medical care until he was healed. The care provided by the natives without anything in return, and the medical care from the settlers goes to show already how much more attention the first homeless person in 1854 got then those in 2020.

During Moores recovery, it was clear to the Maynards (the couple who performed the surgery) that he was mentally unwell. It was supposed that he was abandoned by his ship and was an alcoholic sailor.

“However. Section 6 of the original poor law mandated... (Ensign 19)