WHO WAS THAT LADY YOUR TOWN IS NAMED AFTER?

By WSHS Staff

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In 1985 the State Historical Society published the monumental work of the late Robert Hitchman, Place Names of Washington. It gives the exact location of each village, town and city, each creek, stream and river, each mountain, lake, prairie—whatever bears a name and appears on a map—and tells how and when it was named.

A perusal of the book reveals that pioneers often leaned toward the feminine side in selecting names for their new towns in Washington. Here is a compilation of those names.

ADDY. Adeline (Addy) Dudrey was the wife of the first postmaster in a town platted at a place south of Colville, where a grist mill was built near the mouth of Addy Creek in the 1870s. The railroad came through in 1890, and when a post office was applied for, the name chosen was Addy, not for Addy the creek but for Addy the lady.

ALMIRA. Almira Davis was the wife of Charles Davis. Being the original merchant, he called the village Davisine. Then he sold out to two men who didn't like Davisine and realized Davis couldn't object to it being changed to Almira.

ANACORTES. Anna Curtis Bowman was the wife of the town's platter in 1876. He named the town Anna Curtis. Postal officials, in their highhanded or careless ways, ran the two names together and came up with Anacortes, which didn't bother Curtis particularly, since his family was Spanish and had originally been Cortes.

ARLETTA. Arla Powell was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Powell, who settled at the north end of Hales Passage, southwest of Gig Harbor, in 1892. Mrs. Hale admired the name of a city on the island of Malta—Valetta—and so contrived Arletta.

ARTIC. Arta Saunders was the wife of the first postmaster in this small place in Grays Harbor County. He wrote "Arta" as the name when a post office permit was applied for. But "Arta" was read as "Artic" in Washington, D. C. The error was never corrected.

ARZINA. Arzina Chamberlin, wife of the founder of this village 12 miles southwest of Kettle Falls, had in 1898 the privilege of being the first postmistress and also of providing the town's name.

CORA. Cora Davis was, in 1886, the first married woman to settle in the "Big Bottom" country on the upper Cowlitz River.
ELLENSBURG. Mary Ellen Shoudy lived with her husband in east-central Kittitas County when a townsite was platted in 1867. The name chosen was Ellen's Burgh, which was soon contracted by the Post Office Department into Ellensburg.

ELMA. Elma Austin, whose family settled on the Chehalis River before 1860, is not cited by all as the person for whom it was intended that the town be named. Some say Elmira was submitted to the Postal Department. Because there was already an Almira that name was rejected.

EVELINE. Evaline A. Porter was postmistress in 1911 when the railroad built a spur to a rail point eight miles south of Chehalis. Evaline's name was misspelled by the postal people. They never bothered to correct it.

FRANCES. E.H. McHenry was a prominent logger in the Willapa River valley. He used his wife's middle name as the town name.

HAZEL. Hazel McMartin was the first child born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter D. McMartin, who in 1903 platted a townsite at a place originally called Packard, 18 miles east of Arlington in north-central Snohomish County. McMartin preferred to honor Hazel, his daughter, rather than Clayton Packard, a timberman.

HILDA. Hilda Hulgerson was a popular waitress in a logging camp about 12 miles west of Port Angeles, so when it came time to select a name for the small place, the loggers enthusiastically nominated Hilda. She and the logging camp soon moved on.

LAWRENCE. Laura Blankenship was the daughter of the owner of a shingle mill on the banks of the Nooksack northeast of Bellingham. In the 1890s she was faintly honored by the choice of a name a little like her own.

LEBAM. Mabel Goodell was the daughter of Joe W. Goodell, founder of a town 11 miles southeast of Raymond in Pacific County. The original name was Half Moon, but postal officials frowned on two-word names. Mabel's father solved the problem. He spelled his daughter's name backward and pleased everyone, with the possible exception of Mabel.

LELAND. Laura E. Andrews was the first white woman settler on Lake Hooker (also known as Lake Leland), seven miles south of Discovery Bay in Jefferson County. Residents chose Lealand, using Laura E. Andrews' initials as the first three letters. Postal authorities almost inevitably misread it, and it became permanently Leland.

LENORA. Lenora Lucas was a daughter of a partner in the local Lucas & Sutton sawmill in Pend Oreille County. A village grew up around the mill, and in 1902 it needed a name.

LISABEULA. There happened to be, in the office of the Postmaster General in Washington, D.C., in 1890, two young lady employees whose first names were Eliza and Beulah. When a small settlement on the west shore of Vashon Island applied for a post office in 1890, the postmaster general, acting in the absence of other instructions, applied a name of his own making, undoubtedly pleasing the two ladies.
MABANA. Mabel Anderson was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nils Anderson, who, in 1912, lived on Camano Island on Saratoga Passage, four miles north of Langley. A name for the settlement was needed and J.A. Woodard made one up, using the first syllables of Mabel's first and last names.

MABTON. Mabel Baker Anderson was the daughter of Dorsey S. Baker, who built the famous "rawhide railroad" between Walla Walla and Wallula. In 1885 the Northern Pacific needed a name for a town on the east boundary of the Yakima Indian Reservation. Railroad officials decided to incorporate the first syllable of Mabel's name in the town's.

MAE. Mae Shoemaker, living in this small place four miles west of Moses Lake, was so much admired by the local decision maker, J.B. Lee, that he not only named the town for her but had her appointed the first postmistress.

MARIETTA. Mary Etta Allen, daughter of Nooksack Valley homesteaders Solomon and Mary Allen, died early in life. Until 1892 this village at the mouth of the Nooksack River was named Lummi, after the Indian tribe that lived in the area. Then the name was changed to memorialize Mary Etta.

MARYS CORNER. Mary Loftus in 1924 built a store at the crossroads of Old Highway 99 and the National Park Highway, located between Chehalis and Toledo. The crossroads has been known ever since as Marys Comer.

MARYSVILLE. Mary Comeford was the wife of the original operator of a trading post on the Tulalip Indian Reservation. In 1877 the place was named Marysville, probably after Mary Comeford, although there are those who say a priest suggested that it was the Virgin Mary, not Mrs. Comeford, who should be designated the honoree, and others who say two settlers from California named it for the town they came from. In any event, it was a distinct improvement over the original name, Slup-puks.

MAUD. Maude Morgan was the daughter of an 1885 settler at a point on the Columbia River 20 miles south of Kettle Falls in Stevens County. Maude was the first and only postmistress of this short-lived village. What happened to Maude's "e" no one knows.

NELLITA. Nellie Brueger was the wife of Ralph Brueger, living on the east shore of Hood Canal. In 1900 Brueger tired of the town's original name, Brown's Cove, and renamed it after Nellie.

OLGA. Olga Ohlert, in far-off Germany in 1890, was the mother of John Ohlert, living at the head of Buck Bay on Orcas Island. Post office petitioners asked for the name Rosario, but it had already been chosen for a place a short way up the Sound (present site of Rosario Resort). John Ohlert was the owner of a local store and dance hall, and his neighbors decided to honor his mother.
ROZA. Roza was the name of a daughter of a Northern Pacific Railway official who was among those on hand when the railroad reached Pato, at the junction of Roza Creek and the Yakima River. The name was changed in 1887.

SAPPHO. Sappho was a colorful Greek poetess of the sixth century B.C. The name is reported to have been bestowed on this former logging camp headquarters in west-central Clallam County by Joe Meeley, a construction worker of Greek origin. Robert Hitchman comments that Sappho "would not have enjoyed life in Sappho."

STELLA. Stella Packard was the daughter of Richard Packard, who established a store in a logging community on the Columbia River nine miles west of Longview. Other residents of this near-ghost town have been heard to say it was not a girl, but yonder star for which the place was named.

VERA. Vera McDonald was the daughter of a man who assisted in platting a townsite one mile northwest of Sprague in Spokane County in 1911. In 1912 the post office was discontinued, but it reappeared in 1923 with the name Veradale. Now it is Vera again.

VESTA. Vesta Dwinelle was the wife of pioneer Milton Dwinelle when this settlement south of Montesano obtained a post office in 1882.

WANETA. Waneta Harader was the daughter of J. Ward Harader, who settled north of Mabton in 1901.

ZILLAH. Zillah Oakes was the daughter of Thomas F. Oakes, vice-president and later president of the Northern Pacific Railway Company. A town sprang up beside the new railroad track 16 miles southeast of Yakima in 1892, and when the townsite was platted in the early 1900s' local developers decided to please "Mr. Northern Pacific."