



Dreams and Developments: A Comparison of Two of Washington's Most Historic Towns, Port Townsend and Walla Walla, 1850-1900

Columbia Magazine, Fall 2002: Vol. 16, No. 3

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Only a rare visitor to Port Townsend (population 8,500 in 2000) and Walla Walla (population 29,000 in 2000), two of the state's most historic and attractive towns, would compare their appearances and histories. But an investigation of their early years demonstrates that geography as well as early settlers shaped them. The cities are situated in dissimilar regions: one is a seaport and recreational center, the other is an agricultural and educational center. Port Townsend faces the ocean blue; Walla Walla fronts a sea of yellow wheat. The coastal city has a narrower economic base: it depends heavily upon tourism, maritime trade, and a paper mill. Walla Walla's economy rests primarily upon agriculture (wheat, onions, and grapes), a state prison, a district office of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and three colleges. Each city has a monument to an Indian chief, Chetzemoka at Port Townsend and Lawyer at Walla Walla—who, it is claimed, spared the lives of whites.

In the summer tourists in Port Townsend crowd Water Street's sidewalks, explore shops and galleries, enjoy fine restaurants, and often stay in attractive bed and breakfasts; visitors arriving in motor homes park and play at nearby Fort Worden State Park. In contrast, Walla Walla's Main Street attracts few tourists, but farmers, business people, and students stroll its wide sidewalks. Walla Walla does not experience anything like Port Townsend's seasonal traffic jams. The interior town lacks the variety of restaurants and bed and breakfasts enjoyed at the coastal resort, and few motorists occupy the nearby Fort Walla Walla campsites.

The major street names of the two towns are quite different. Port Townsend chose the names of politicians hailed in the 1850s, including Benton, Jackson, Calhoun, Clay, and Scott; Walla Walla, however, disregarded famous men, naming main streets after trees, including Pine, Oak, Alder, Poplar, Birch, and Chestnut.

Despite these and other differences, the two towns have certain similarities, including an unusual amount of government assistance in their formative decades, 17-inch annual precipitation, fine parks, lively cultural climates, proud residents emphasizing small-town life, and award-winning business districts. Port Townsend historian Peter Simpson noted that preservation of its commercial core and supporting residential community presents a remarkable picture of life in the 1890s. The same could be said for Walla Walla. The builders of fine structures at the two corners were often dreamers. They, like the earliest pioneers, favored city growth. Obviously, dominant cities had to emerge on both sides of the Cascades. The communities of Port Townsend and Walla Walla understood this, and each aspired to dominate its region. One wished to be the major city on Puget Sound; the other hoped to be the same on the Great Columbia Plain. In both places leaders and promoters, especially newspaper editors, constantly identified their town's advantages and potential as a powerful commercial city.

The history of dreams and developments at the corners fits neatly into both national and regional history. During the 1850s Americans often moved westward, developers founded many new towns, European immigrants arrived in record-breaking numbers, eastern commercial interests recognized the importance of Pacific Coast ports in establishing a lucrative trade with China, and the federal government surveyed a railroad route from Lake Superior to Puget Sound. Settlers in Washington Territory hailed these impressive and promising developments, anticipating that their particular town or region would benefit from national developments and dominate a vast hinterland. Across Washington Territory towns competed for immigrants, investments, and railroads. Port Townsend emerged in 1851; Walla Walla followed in 1858.

Speaking for many readers, Washington Territory's editors dreamed of growth and profits. A Port Townsend editor in 1871 summarized local promotion: If the capitalist comes here and spends his money, it helps the country; if the immigrant comes in and buys of him, it helps him and the country too. The speculator is the pioneer, who has confidence enough in the country to spend his money in it. A Walla Walla editor posited: To the man of money seeking new fields of investment where profit and safe returns are promised, the Walla Walla country offers opportunities unequalled. Fellow townsmen insisted that no portion of the Pacific Coast offers a better field for enterprising men.

The first settlers brought the traditional speculative spirit, and later arrivals to both sides of the Cascades sustained it, including their references to the urban prosperity of such rapidly growing places as San Francisco, a city that in 1870 counted a population of 100,000 only two decades after the Gold Rush. Eastern publications circulating on the frontier described and hailed national population growth and increased prosperity. Thus frontiersmen, like urbanites, suffered from speculative mania. Mark Twain, in writing *The Gilded Age*, a satire describing the raging fire of speculation, could have found kindling in Washington Territory. Promoters of Port Townsend seemed similar to those in Napoleon, Twain's fictional town.

Citizens of Port Townsend and Walla Walla were among those hundreds of territorial residents who dreamed of great things while building their homes, businesses, farms, schools, churches, lodges, saloons, and roads. Like other pioneers, they sought to replicate the market economy they had experienced in the East. For decades fathers and sons in Washington improved farms and businesses, dreaming of handsome profits to be made by selling land, especially town lots, to newcomers. Everyone knew that on earlier frontiers increased land values had enriched owners. Promises of a bright future sustained hard-working families who fully realized that prosperity required immigration and investors. There was little reason for families to think small.

Port Townsend enjoyed an impressive boost in 1854 when the federal government established its customs headquarters in the town. Ships traveling Puget Sound anchored there, providing business opportunities (including supplies for revenue cutters) and employment of several collectors and clerks. In 1871 the customs collector's salary of \$3,000 equaled that of the territorial governor. Until the federal government constructed a customhouse late in the century, revenue collectors and clerks worked out of a downtown office. Peter Simpson emphasized the institution's economic contribution: Nearly every merchant, wholesaler, or manufacturer depended, in one way or another, on Port Townsend being Puget Sound's port of entry. Newspapers piqued readers' interest by reporting the operations of revenue cutters, including the *Lincoln*, which seized ships for violating revenue laws. The office of customs collector prompted heated controversy. These officials were appointed or dismissed owing to their political affiliation, and regional editors and politicians reported customhouse scandals real or rumored. Walla Walla did not experience such divisive spoilsmanship in its federal Register Land Office. While residents haggled over the appointments and policies of collectors, townspeople participated in seaport life. Captains from many destinations docked their vessels at the privately owned Union Wharf or similar locations, and the crews enjoyed the town. Sailors mingled with local farmers, mariners, and loggers, who produced lumber at local mills and shipped it

through Port Townsend, often to San Francisco. Port Townsend's earliest settlers received undesirable reputations. One contemporary writer called them beachcombers of low character. A modern authority has called these first settlers the worst class of population in the world.

Besides the customhouse, the federal government helped develop Port Townsend by signing Indian treaties in 1855, thus opening up lands for pio-neers, and by building Fort Townsend in 1856 to protect the hamlet from Indian raids. The fort actually served no real purpose and was closed by Civil War officers. The army reestablished the installation in 1874 to protect the settlers from Indian depredations and to guard the Indian reservations on the West Side of the sound from the encroachment of the settlers. The federal government also played a significant role in Walla Walla's early history. In 1855 it made treaties with several tribes, removing them from the Walla Walla Valley. This significant action opened a rich region for white settlement. In 1856 the army constructed Fort Walla Walla to protect the Indians from the depredations of miners, but it soon served other purposes. Port Townsend appeared before the fort, but Walla Walla emerged after the establishment of a post.

In 1858 Fort Walla Walla's troops played a major role in the decisive Spokane Indian conflict and carried out various regional duties during the Civil War. Like Fort Townsend, Fort Walla Walla was abandoned but later reoccupied in 1873. In 1880, 100 troops served at the coastal fort while about three times that number were stationed at the interior installation. For years each city benefited from the quarter-master's purchase of supplies and services, and from the personal expenditures of troops. Enjoying this economic situation and the society of educated officers, residents of these two towns insisted that the garrisons remain despite the fact that they served little military purpose. Miners, much more than soldiers, brought local benefits. The population of Port Townsend increased to more than 300 as a result of the rush to the Cariboo goldfields. But this growth paled in comparison to that of Walla Walla. In the 1860s it became a major commercial center, serving as the port of entry into the interior mining camps of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and British Columbia. Walla Walla benefited from the transportation on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, the Oregon Trail, and the Mullan Road. Funded by the federal government and built by the army, the Mullan Road in 1862 linked Walla Walla with Fort Benton on the Missouri River. The road's promoters predicted that immigrants would use this northern route to the Pacific Northwest. Although the federal government put far more money into this primitive road than the Oregon Trail, it failed to attract the anticipated number of westward moving families, but thousands of gold-seekers hurrying eastward traveled this convenient route. Walla Walla, the western terminus of the federal project, immediately benefited from this heavy mining traffic. The road was an example of the federal government's assistance to Westerners.

During much of the 1860s Walla Walla's busi-nessmen, bankers, tradesmen, farmers, cattle-men, saloon keepers, and prostitutes profited from the gold-seekers. However, officers at Fort Walla Walla in the 1860s, like their counterparts at Fort Townsend in the 1850s, complained about mining excitements prompting many desertions.

In the 1860s Walla Walla was a mining center similar in many ways to Sacramento early in the California gold rush. Prospectors purchased goods and supplies in Walla Walla, and many of them, escaping the mountains, wintered in the town. As a result of the gold rush, the town's Main Street became the busiest one in Washington Territory, and shopkeepers boasted that their city had a larger population than any town on Puget Sound. Gold was the economic foundation, and Walla Walla residents dreaming of great city growth and the maintenance of its huge hinterland underscored a favorable geography. Settlers hailed the mild climate, fertile soil, trails and roads radiating in every direction, and the Columbia River, the great avenue of commerce.

From 1864 to 1869 Walla Walla aspired to become the capital of Washington Territory or of a territory created from the mining regions. Some residents argued that the capital should be moved from Olympia to

their community because it had a larger population and greater potential. An editor complained that there were no connecting roads to towns west of the Cascades, thus Walla Wallans, who were linked to Portland by the Columbia, considered Puget Sound to be a foreign land; in fact, one editor asserted that events in the western seaports caused about as much concern as those in the Chinese empire. Emphasizing that the timber-based economy of the West Side was dissimilar to the mining and agricultural based economy of the East Side, some Walla Wallans favored creating Columbia Territory, a new political division including much of the city's vast hinterland. The new capital, of course, would be located in their hometown. But political schemes and dubious dreams about becoming a new capital were less important than economic - considerations. When mining played out the town hoped to become a great agricultural center. According to geographer D. W. Meinig, the wheat economy of the Walla Walla valley was largely an imitation of that in the Sacramento valley. Walla Walla sought to attain the prominence of Sacramento, which prospered because it was a state capital, agricultural center, and railroad hub. Walla Walla farmers had advantages: they did not have to expend enormous amounts of labor removing trees and they did not have to wait for agricultural markets to appear. In both the Sacramento and Walla Walla valleys commercial agriculture, aided by river transportation, developed more quickly than it had during the pioneer period of the lands above the Ohio River.

While Walla Wallans could dream of their town becoming similar to Sacramento, Port Townsend citizens, like residents of other hamlets around Puget Sound, dreamed of becoming the northern San Francisco. Insisting on the inevitability of a great city emerging on Puget Sound, they predicted that their town the so-called Key City was destined to become that metropolis. A government official, speaking like a local booster, glowingly described its harbor: For depth of water, boldness of approach, freedom from hidden dangers, and the immeasurable sea of gigantic timber coming down to the very shores, these waters are unsurpassed. But its residents realized that without a transcontinental railroad its favorable geography could not lead to regional domination. An iron road was necessary for wooden wharves to prosper.

To the disappointment and disgust of Puget Sound residents, the Northern Pacific Railroad did not lay track in Washington Territory until 1871 when it established Kalama on the Columbia and started building northward toward Puget Sound. Speculators in towns all around the sound expected the Northern Pacific to do as much for their region as the Union Pacific had done for California. Port Townsend, like Seattle, Olympia, and other ports, sought to become the terminus and thus dominate a huge hinterland and become the gateway to the Orient. Everywhere excited boosters proclaimed that a terminus would mean a sharp population increase and the construction of wharves, warehouses, businesses, mills, factories, churches, and homes. A railroad assured the realization of marvelous dreams; thus speculators bought lots in locations that, they predicted, would become the Northern Pacific's terminus. Newspapermen charged that promoters and speculators in several Puget Sound towns suffered from terminus disease, or, as one editor called it, *fevre du terminus*.

Puget Sound visitors heard about and evaluated dreams of greatness. In 1871 a traveler from San Jose, California, concluded that Port Townsend, a city of lumbermen and sailors, had the best harbor and townsite on Puget Sound. He predicted that the Northern Pacific would establish its terminus in this promising place, asserting that the hamlet would be the largest city north of San Francisco and would even become its rival. But an Oregon editor disagreed, faulting the primitive townsite, ridiculing its dreams of regional domination, and asserting that Seattle enjoyed a superior location. In the 1870s Port Townsend and Walla Walla each had a leading promoter. James G. Swan (1819-1900) led Port Townsend citizens in their efforts to attract the Northern Pacific Railway's terminus. One of the most talented and versatile residents of western Washington, Swan had traveled to California in 1849 and then moved to Shoalwater Bay, becoming an oyster merchant while living among Indians. In 1857 he wrote *The Northwest Coast*, a description of his three years among the natives. In 1868 he moved to Port Townsend, a rough village that he hoped would become the New York City of the West. He became the town's most famous citizen, serving as lawyer,

justice of the peace, steamboat agent, collector of customs, and more. Determined to turn dreams into realities, Swan provided research for the Northern Pacific Railroad, hosted its officials, and pleaded with them to build into Port Townsend. To his great disappointment they chose rival Tacoma as the terminus in 1874. Discouraged but not defeated, Swan continually voiced great dreams for his adopted city to his fellow townsmen, assuring them that Port Townsend would attract a major railroad and attain regional domination. Like threadbare Colonel Beriah Sellers, a memorable character in Twain's *Gilded Age*, Swan was the eternal optimist.

At about the same time that Port Townsend's chief promoter expressed frustration with a rail-road project and sought solace in alcohol, Dr. Dorsey S. Baker (1823-1888), living at the territory's other corner, was a sober and skilled entrepreneur working to develop Walla Walla. Baker, too, had joined the California gold rush, and, like Swan, moved to a remote place, Oakland, Oregon. Demonstrating some of Swan's versatility, he worked as a physician, merchant, and farmer. In 1859 Baker cast his future with Walla Walla, the prospects of which then seemed no better than those of Port Townsend. But the economy soon changed dramatically and the newcomer prospered.

A shrewd individual, Baker benefited in the 1860s from the regional gold rush into Idaho and Montana. He became an important merchant and banker, invested wisely, and financed a narrow gauge railroad from Walla Walla to Wallula, the city's river port. While Swan dreamed of a railroad, Baker actually built one. Walla Walla's thoughtful men believed that this line promised a brilliant era. Completed in 1875, the line moved wheat and flour to the Columbia River. Thousands of wheat sacks went to Portland and many were transhipped to Liverpool, England, and other distant ports. The agricultural center, like the timber port, enjoyed a great waterborne commerce. In the 1860s and 1870s Port Townsend and Walla Walla developed and maintained their dreams of domination. Thus in 1874 Port Townsend residents rejoiced when the steamboat inspector's office was relocated from Seattle, their major competitor, to their town. Profitable frontier businesses were a stepping-stone to a community's greater prosperity. For example, in the 1850s a physician established a marine hospital in Port Townsend, the only such institution in the Pacific Northwest. For years physicians received payment from the Public Health Service. The hospital's small buildings housed mainly seamen and a few local residents. In the 1870s the institution now known widely as the United States Marine Hospital could accommodate 100 patients. In 1877 the managing surgeon boasted that this well-equipped hospital was the largest north of San Francisco. According to historian James McCurdy, this federally subsidized facility became one of the oldest and best-known government agencies upon the Pacific Coast. Ships docking at Port Townsend usually arrived in ballast and their captains had shipping orders for lumber or coal. Townspeople paid close attention to the harbor's steamers and sailing vessels, pondered their passenger lists and cargoes, and noted their destinations. Strollers visiting the privately owned and often busy wharves observed workers loading lumber onto barks and square-riggers, and fishermen outfitting vessels, including a few bound for distant northern waters. The city streets did not carry the noisy wagon traffic heard in Walla Walla or other agricultural towns. Individuals coming from a distance of up to 50 miles to trade in Port Townsend's well-stocked shops generally came by water; some even arrived in Indian canoes.

In the 1860s Walla Wallans observed a much different type of transportation. Radiating out of the agricultural center were Mexican muleskinners moving heavy cargo, express riders carrying dispatches, and stagecoaches transporting passengers. Most travelers headed eastward to distant mining camps, but some moved westward to Wallula's docks. By 1870 Main Street businessmen rarely talked about earnings from outfitting miners going to Idaho and Montana; they now conversed about the profits from outfitting farmers and ranchers taking up new lands in eastern Washington. Townspeople paid considerable attention to immigrants who arrived by wagon and crowded around the federal land office. Boosters also discussed the teamsters driving heavy wagons transporting flour and wheat through the dusty valley to Wallula; these drivers replaced Mexican mule-skinners. But in the mid 1870s the teamsters failed to compete with Dorsey

Baker's railroad. In a decade Walla Wallans had seen horses replace mules and an iron horse, in turn, replace horses.

Western mining communities sometimes failed to survive or failed to grow after mines played out; by contrast, Walla Walla in the late 1860s successfully changed from serving as a vast region's mining center to becoming a smaller region's profitable agricultural center. Residents knew that Sacramento and other prosperous places had made the same successful transition.

Both Port Townsend and Walla Walla had rough edges. Water Street housed the entire range of dives characteristic of a sailor's town. Saloons, prostitution, and shanghaiing gave it a notorious reputation. To protect local women and children from the boisterous sailors, loggers, and painted women frequenting downtown locations, a retail district situated on a bluff above Water Street emerged in the 1870s. Residents assured would-be settlers that the city was free of violence, emphasizing at one point that the local marshal was idle.

Philip Ritz, in a speech published in the Walla Walla Statesman, October 4, 1867, takes on the problem of immigration, noting the need for people:

What we want most here now is population, not that kind who came with bowie knife and revolver slung to them, no we have had enough of that class.... We want those who bring civilization with them; those who recognize [in] the scream of the iron horse the music of progress; those who see [in] the little unpretentious schoolhouse by the roadside the springs by which our national greatness will be forever fed.

Walla Walla's miners behaved about the same as Port Townsend's sailors. Drunken and rowdy men from distant locations sought excitement on lower Main Street. During the mid 1860s vigilantes cleaned out cattle rustlers, but the town quieted after mining diminished. Farm laborers, teamsters, drifters, and soldiers were as disorderly and profane as loggers and sailors in Port Townsend. In 1880 Walla Walla's respectable inhabitants complained that the city had 26 saloons and only 7 churches. Citizens in the agricultural center as well as the seaport consistently denounced local prostitution. Describing prostitutes as brazen women who were never seen to blush, an editor charged that they blighted youth and streaked with gray the hairs of a worshipping mother. Thus in both cities women and children avoided blocks frequented by prostitutes and drunks.

While boosters of Port Townsend and Walla Walla joined those in other territorial towns in seeking investors, tradesmen, and farmers, they heatedly opposed the drifters. Such individuals received more attention from contemporaries than from historians. One territorial promoter, speaking for both corners, asserted, Gentlemen of leisure are not wanted. The country is too young to support drones, hence they had better not visit it, for they will be compelled to return in a short time by the force of public opinion if not by dire necessity. The reaction to an unwanted character in Port Townsend supported this warning. Described as a deadbeat, the visitor was suspected of seeking status as a pauper with eligibility for public assistance. But a gang rubbed his head with molasses, covered him with flour, turned him over to the sheriff, who jailed him for a night and then shipped him off to Olympia. Walla Walla residents also denounced the shiftless; one of them described tramps as being dissipated, dishonest, and averse to work of all kinds, preferring a nomadic life of hardship and social outlawry.

Editors at the corners, including Alfred Pettygrove at Port Townsend and William Newell at Walla Walla, consistently aided and abetted dreamers. Both towns were county seats (Jefferson and Walla Walla), the homes of United States Circuit Courts, and important enough to attract President Rutherford B. Hayes during his 1880 visit. Residents of both towns informed their distinguished visitor about their homes, lodges, churches, hotels, shops, stores, mills, restaurants, opera houses, and telephones. Late in the century

celebrants in the two cities anticipated and enjoyed the Fourth of July, horse racing, baseball, football, and minstrels. Walla Wallans also held a popular agricultural fair. Both communities sought to establish schools, and Walla Walla was far more successful. Frontier families pushed for education, especially for boys, and boasted about skilled teachers and schoolhouses. In 1871 a Port Townsend editor urged parents to send their children to school:

Boat sailing, horse riding, fishing are all proper and right at the proper times, but they do not fit boys to become men, and if our boys have any ambition to excel in after life or to take their stand with the youth who will soon be crowding upon us from the Eastern States, they must study.

Six years later another editor complained that many local students in recent years had traveled to distant schools on the sound. Insisting that his town was the healthiest and best located in the region, an editor urged educators to establish a well-managed academy because it would save local money and earn funds by attracting students from other counties.

A normal school appeared in the 1880s but soon closed because port residents failed to support it. The town lacked an educator like Reverend Cushing Eells who, making great personal sacrifices at the other corner, established Whitman Seminary. In 1866 he and other Congregationalists opened this school in Walla Walla, but, like teachers throughout the territory, they struggled to keep its doors open. Founded in the mining era, Whitman Seminary sheltered its students from profane miners and begged for local support. Eells and succeeding educators complained that too few townspeople had received a formal education and were indifferent to private schooling; furthermore, too many private and religious schools competed for students and donations. Townspeople dismissed the seminary as a castle in the air.

Despite setbacks, Whitman Seminary endured and was a forerunner to Whitman College, a Congregational school that opened in 1882. Under President Stephen B. L. Penrose's devoted leadership it survived the depression of the 1890s and soon won national recognition. Walla Walla College, a Seventh Day Adventist institution, emerged in the 1890s, increasing local educational opportunities. Thus Walla Walla's colleges gave the community a richer culture than did Port Townsend and most other emerging towns. While editors on both sides of the Cascades pushed schooling, they opposed women's rights. In 1871 Susan B. Anthony campaigned for women's suffrage in both places and was met with editorial rejection in each community. A Walla Walla editor joked, Voting by ballot is the silent expression of the opinion of the citizens, and as no woman save a deaf and dumb one ever had a silent opinion upon any question she could not exercise the right of suffrage. A Port Townsend editor predicted that Anthony would explain how the avalanche of old maids about to be precipitated upon the latter half of the nineteenth century will serve a good purpose; how it will be their duty to prove that although a woman may have the misfortune to die unmarried, her life is not necessarily a failure.

Inspired by Susan B. Anthony's teaching, Walla Walla women led by Helen Isaacs in 1886 created the territory's second woman's club and turned it into the Equal Suffrage League in 1889. Port Townsend had no such equivalent organization, a fact that probably pleased its male inhabitants.

Both communities lacked women. According to Jefferson County's 1870 census, females made up only 29 percent of the population, and in 1889 their numbers had risen to only 30 percent. Townspeople, especially young men, regretted the shortage of marriageable women.

The 1870 census showed that 41 percent of Walla Wallans were female, a percentage that increased slightly by 1900. The sex ratio between the two towns was typical: agricultural counties had a better population balance than lumber counties. Yet, a visitor to Walla Walla in 1883 noted that a lack of women meant that men on Main Street dressed with less taste and that Chinese necessarily replaced women as cooks and

launderers. The sexual imbalance was one reason why Chinese domestics played important roles at both corners.

Port Townsend and Walla Walla had similar re-sponses to their Chinese residents their largest minority. The Chinese, nearly all of whom were male, made a significant economic contribution. A recent scholar concluded that the largest business in all of Port Townsend was the Zee Tai Company, selling Asian goods, toys, rice, tea, and opium. Ng Soon, the company's leader, won the respect of whites. Other Chinese who lived in the colony operated laundries and truck farms and served as domestics and laborers. Thus their work and investments contributed to the town's development, and they achieved, according to a scholar, a level of respect from residents who recognized their value. But neighborhood children and young toughs harried the minority, abusing them verbally and physically. The anti-Chinese element insisted that the so-called Celestials took jobs from whites, lived in filthy, disgusting crowds, hoarded money, and took their earnings to China.

The Exclusion Act of 1882 fueled hatred of this minority. In Seattle and Tacoma mobs drove the Chinese out of town, but this did not happen in either Port Townsend or Walla Walla. Furthermore, an attempt in Port Townsend to impose an economic boycott of the Chinese and their employers failed. In 1890 an estimated 1,500 Chinese, about one-fifth of the total population, inhabited the city. While residents debated the value and treatment of this minority, the local customs officials sought to prevent the opium smuggling and the entry of illegal Chinese laborers from British Columbia. Walla Walla's Chinese had different origins but similar experiences to those in Port Townsend. They initially came as miners or track layers for Dorsey Baker. In both places they served as merchants, laborers, farmers, and domestics. Each city's Chinatown attracted curiosity as well as hostility, including the charge that they made opium addicts of young, white males. In 1890 the Chinese numbered 800 or about 15 percent of Walla Walla's population. At earlier periods residents estimated the percentage to be much higher. Walla Wallans patronized Chinese laundries, drug and grocery stores; hired Chinese as family cooks; and purchased vegetables from their truck farms on rented lands. An editor -explained: They are considered the equal of any of the various classes of people engaged in market gardening. Employers hailed their work ethic; one compared the industrious Chinese with white laborers who, he charged, preferred unloading a schooner of beer to legitimate toil.

Walla Wallan Charles Tung, a successful merchant selling Chinese goods and serving as a spokesman for the Chinese community, was probably the equivalent of Port Townsend's Ng Soon. While some Walla Walla men and boys harrassed the Chinese, employers, including housewives, hailed their labor and defended them against those advocating banishment.

Walla Wallans took a greater interest in politicians than in the controversial minority. Referring to itself as the Queen City, Walla Walla in 1878 hosted delegates attending a state constitutional convention. The fact that the meeting was held there demonstrated that the town's political significance was greater than any Puget Sound port. The delegates wrote a constitution, voters approved it, but Congress ignored it. The constitutional convention of 1889 that led to statehood was held in Olympia, not Walla Walla, an indication that the agricultural center had lost its prominence. But Walla Wallans expressed satisfaction that one of their neighbors, banker Miles C. Moore, received appointment as territorial governor the last person to hold this office. As the decade of the 1880s opened, however, it seemed that Walla Walla, a transportation hub, was fulfilling its dreams. It was the largest city in the territory, a claim that could be made until 1883. On Main Street several families operated successful businesses, including the Schwabacher merchant house and the founders of the Baker-Boyer Bank, established in 1869. Port Townsend would not have an equivalent institution until the early 1880s. But to retain their town's regional importance, Walla Wallans understood the need for outside investments, increased immigration, and a transcontinental railroad. Upset by the fact that their town imported so many basic commodities from Portland, boosters in the mid 1880s sought to attract manufacturers of foodstuffs, beer, candy, soap, and much more. These individuals also complained

that their promising city attracted but few investors and immigrants, and, much worse, the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific did not build their mainlines through the Walla Walla Valley. Geography was no longer an ally.

Although Walla Walla failed to get a vital transcontinental railroad, competing major railroads built significant branch lines into southeastern Washington's wheat region, including the entrance of the Northern Pacific into the Walla Walla valley in 1889. D. W. Meinig asserted that high transportation rates, frustrating farmers nationwide, did not retard the expansion of southeastern Washington's wheat belt. Walla Wallans praised wheat growers, one writer asserting that barbarous people could not cultivate this plant. Urban as well as rural families closely evaluated wheat prices and railroad rates, but in 1887 two significant local events also attracted considerable attention Main Street's devastating fire and the construction of a new territorial penitentiary. In the late 19th century most cities in the Pacific Northwest suffered from a major fire. Port Townsend, however, did not experience as destructive a burning as Walla Walla, but in both places flames swept through their Chinatowns.

While the fire slowed Walla Walla's growth, the territorial penitentiary promoted it. Assuming that the institution would be economically beneficial, local politicians had convinced the territorial legislature to establish the penitentiary in their city. In 1899 a Walla Walla resident called the penitentiary the most important...and most extensive public institution of the state. It was the city's leading employer. Inmates provided cheap labor; in Port Townsend Indians had long played this vital role. In the late 1890s, 35 prisoners labored in the brickyard, annually producing about 1.5 million bricks; more importantly, 200 inmates worked in the jute mill, producing 1.2 million burlap bags, which were used in shipping wheat. Farmers paid only five cents a bag, and builders purchased bricks at reasonable rates; plus, the state's appropriation paid for the institution's administration and guards. Thus, the city benefited from the penitentiary and from Fort Walla Walla, and it tried to get a third government institution. Townspeople made an unsuccessful bid for a new agricultural college, but politics, not geography, meant that in 1892 the school opened in Pullman. Despite this failure to attract another state institution, few if any Washington cities in the mid 1890s received more assistance from state and federal governments than did Walla Walla. Government expenditures, not those of distant capitalists, broadened its economic foundation.

The city's population increased from 3,600 in 1880 to 4,700 in 1890, a growth rate that disappointed dreamers. In 1880 President Hayes had assured Walla Walla citizens that Washington Territory would attract a large immigration and that their area would undoubtedly have the lion's share. Hayes had correctly predicted a large population increase, but most newcomers, arriving by rail, settled west of the Cascades. In 1882 a Walla Walla booster predicted that unless rails linked the city with Seattle it had no chance of becoming a commercial center. Another resident stressed that the city must become a manufacturing as well as an agricultural center. During the 1880s Walla Wallans realized that upstart Spokane, a rapidly growing railroad center dating from 1881, had dashed their dreams of continuing to dominate an interior that Spokane boosters were now calling The Inland Empire. Recognizing that Spokane was the regional hub, some Walla Wallans moved there late in the century, seeking either the fulfillment of a dream or a chance for advancement. Republican Miles Poindexter, for example, practiced law in Walla Walla in the 1890s, recognized the city's limitations, and departed for Spokane. There he soon enjoyed political success, winning election to the United States House of Representatives and then to the United States Senate. Walla Walla boosters, often referring to their hometown as The Garden City of the Northwest, failed to be discouraged by de-partures, accepted the city's loss of eminence, and even found a positive interpretation of the depression of the 1890s. Wheat growers survived low prices, and very few businesses failed to weather the economic storm. In fact, the city's population grew much more in the troubled 1890s than it had in the prosperous 1880s, doubling to 10,000. There were several reasons for this growth, including a strong agricultural and commercial economy late in the 1890s, the movement of many wealthy farmers into town, and the arrival of refugees from the depressed Great Plains. Portland and other cities also received significant numbers of

these immigrants; Port Townsend, however, did not attract farm families fleeing severe economic conditions, partly because of their unfamiliarity with a timber-based economy. At the end of the century Walla Wallans recounted their economic history. One editor, for example, asserted that the only time the city enjoyed a genuine boom was in the spring of 1862, and since then it grew like a cherry tree, slow but sure, and it's still growing. Other writers reminded townspeople of the fact that the city and valley had never attracted outside investors the way Puget Sound had because its agriculture required less outside money. San Franciscans had developed Puget Sound's lumber industry at tidewater; by contrast, local men capitalized Walla Walla's flour mills on Mill Creek, erecting seven of them by 1866.

Many boosters argued that their town, unlike the large cities in western Washington, had not suffered from the evils of real estate booms and inflated values. In fact, it had never had an overinflated real estate boom. Having failed to attract investments as had Seattle and Tacoma, Walla Wallans in the late 1890s, emphasizing the depression's severe impact upon cities west of the Cascades, now proclaimed the advantages of being free from outside ownership. The insistence that distant capitalists would have played a harmful role in Walla Walla was more often heard at the turn of the century than earlier. But some businessmen, fully aware that the days of regional domination of eastern Washington were but a memory, still hoped and sometimes dreamed of securing outside investments, especially for woolen mills and fruit canneries that would create hundreds of jobs. Some citizens never recovered from speculative fever; for example, in 1899 a Walla Walla resident voiced an optimistic message that sounded similar to those heard 30 years earlier:

To the man of money seeking new fields of investment where profit and safe returns are promised, the Walla Walla Country offers opportunities unequalled. Industry, energy, and ambition are all the capital a man need have; the valley will do the rest. Another promoter, pointing to mansions, the Gilbert Hunt farm machinery company operating since the 1880s, and the increasingly popular annual fruit fairs of the 1890s, proclaimed that the Walla Walla valley has yielded more wealth and made more rich men in proportion to its inhabitants than any parallel strip of agriculture country in America. A visitor in 1898 praised enterprising Walla Wallans who sought a transcontinental railroad in an effort to build a great city. It would be difficult, however, for developers to attract outside money, especially for manufacturing, when their dubious townsmen pointed out the lack of timber, coal, and a mainline railroad. In 1901 historian William Lyman, speaking for those satisfied with present conditions, noted: The beautiful city stands as a monument to the wealth that has been dug out of the ground by means of wheat; furthermore, the per capita wealth of Walla Walla was only surpassed by Hartford, Connecticut; Helena, Montana; and Portland, Oregon. In 1903 Walla Walla briefly basked in national recognition. One of its citizens, longtime Republican Levi Ankeny, was elected by the state legislature to the United States Senate. Because of the senator's residence, President Theodore Roosevelt made a brief but wellpublicized visit to the city. Senator Ankeny obtained appropriations to improve Fort Walla Walla and retained its cavalrymen; his failure to be reelected, however, meant that the army could in 1910 close the unneeded fort. The local economy suffered from this decision; for example, during one year in the 1890s the fort put \$171,000 into the local economy, including payrolls for soldiers and civilians and payments to farmers for oats, meats, horses, and more. An editor explained that townspeople understood that the post was expensive, unnecessary, and only maintained as a mark of respect for the city. He added: No taps will sound to warn the townspeople that it is time to seek their beds, no reveille will sound tomorrow morning to tell them it is time to awaken. While Fort Walla Walla closed, Fort Wright in Spokane a post of no more military value remained active. This was another indication of Spokane's regional domination. Port Townsend's history in the late 1880s was much different than that of Walla Walla. The port's historian stated, The decade between 1875 and 1885 witnessed no major event.... Instead, it was a period of consolidation and development. As was the case in Walla Walla, a few manufacturers and retailers began small-scale operations in the thriving city. Like Seattle, but on a much-reduced scale, Port Townsend reclaimed land from the bay. A thoughtful observer in the 1880s described Port Townsend residents in flattering terms: they exhibited a degree of mental cultivation quite remarkable

in a frontier village; furthermore, the place lacked that brash, temporary appearance so common in Californian villages and so offensive to an Eastern man.

In 1886 Territorial Governor Watson C. Squire appreciated the town's growth and hailed its prospects. Sounding like a booster, the politician maintained that the beautiful bay had room for the entire navy and merchant marine of the United States to ride in safety at one time, that there was a very large maritime business, that the customs office stimulated both local trade and the establishment of several foreign consulates, and that the town's magnificent brick and stone buildings reflected stability. With such favorable attributes, the governor predicted, the place would be teeming with a hardy, industrious people, and buzzing with manufacturing industries. In summary, Squire was dreaming along with the Port Townsend community but not with Walla Wallans. The leader paid scant attention to Walla Walla but emphasized booming Spokane's regional domination.

Port Townsend's dreamers took heart in the late 1880s because it seemed that the city would finally receive a long-delayed and much-deserved terminus. Stories about railroad building fueled the long-smoldering speculative fires. The great excitement of 1871 again swept Water Street. Historian Peter Simpson concluded: Of all the real estate transactions that occurred in Jefferson County in the forty years after the town's founding in 1851, the three years between 1889-1891 generated fully 65 percent of the total volume. Port Townsend was belatedly realizing its old dreams. The population grew to 7,000, carpenters and stone masons erected impressive commercial buildings and private homes, electric streetcar companies appeared Walla Walla would employ horse-drawn cars until 1906 and there were many other signs, including a wagon road leading uptown. During this period of excitement the federal government was building an attractive customs house and post office building. This expensive structure, promoters asserted, proved Uncle Sam's confidence in the city's future.

Local and distant investors initiated a new wave of speculation in 1887 by incorporating the Port Townsend Southern Railroad, a line that would be built toward Portland. Two years later, at ground-breaking ceremonies, James Swan, the town's most persistent dreamer, delivered the major address to enthusiastic townspeople. That same year the Union Pacific announced that it would link Port Townsend with Portland. Responding to this glorious news, a local editor boasted that the city will be made the shipping point and supply station of a vast fleet... Port Townsend will now get its share of the wealth and commerce of Europe that annually finds its way hither and has heretofore passed us by. Residents invested about \$200,000 in the railroads that promised to transform their town and enrich them. Track layers hammered down about 20 miles of rails, and an enthusiastic editor exalted in 1890 that the surroundings of Port Townsend look very much like Manhattan Island, and I cannot help comparing the Port Townsend of the future with New York of today. Equally enthusiastic residents investing in their hometown predicted that it would outstrip Seattle and that Walla Walla wheat would be shipped from local docks.

But several economic difficulties blasted dreams and -ruined speculators. The Oregon Improvement Company, a Union Pacific subsidiary, went into receivership and could not build into Port Townsend; furthermore, the depression of 1893 shattered the regional economy. Port Townsend went into a tailspin; the population dropped to 3,400 in 1900, a decline of 1,200 from 1890. The bursting of the speculative bubble meant that properties were sold at a fraction of their cost, that all the streetcar companies folded, that banks shut their vaults, that ships remained at anchor, and that families moved from town, some seeking jobs in triumphant Seattle. Some struggling Port Townsend merchants tried to become outfitters for the Klondike gold rush of 1897, but Seattle, recognized universally as Puget Sound's Queen City, dominated this profitable business.

The federal government provided a measure of relief for hard-pressed Port Townsend. In 1893 Congress appropriated money for a new marine hospital building and admitted -patients three years later. Stories

circulated that a congressional fortification bill would mean that barracks would be constructed near Port Townsend. Indeed, Fort Worden appeared around the turn of the century, but while its garrison, like old Fort Townsend, helped the economy, it and the marine hospital could not prevent the city's long economic slumber. In fact, the federal government reduced the port's status when it moved the customhouse to Seattle at about the same time Walla Walla lost its fort. By 1900 dreamers at both corners were few; residents necessarily accepted their size. The coastal city had suffered much greater financial and emotional losses in attempting to realize impossible dreams than the interior town. Water Street suffered from wild and ruinous speculation, but Main Street escaped such devastation. Early in the new century Port Townsend boosters rarely boasted of prosperity, but advocates of growth remained active in Walla Walla. In 1906, for example, its boosters formed the 50,000 Club, hoping to increase the city's population by 40,000 within four years. Improved transportation and manufacturing, including canneries and a paper mill, would help draw this desired population. Despite the club's large membership, enthusiastic rallies, and booster buttons, its dreams of rapid development soon evaporated. Thereafter residents generally accepted slow growth and boasted that wheat had provided prosperity greater than the predictions of pioneer dreamers.

Today many residents of these two livable places enjoy their size Walla Walla ranks 29th in state population and Port Townsend ranks 72nd and criticize social conditions in metropolitan centers, including those two that had snuffed out their dreams. The large cities disrupt family ties by continuing to lure sons and daughters raised at the corners; yet, for today's residents of both towns, failed dreams have had mostly positive consequences.

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MLA Citation:

Edwards, Thomas G. "Dreams & Developments: A Comparison of Two of Washington's Most Historic Towns, Port Townsend and Walla Walla, 1850-1900." *Columbia Magazine*. 16.3 (Fall 2002): 30-42. Date accessed <http://columbia.washingtonhistory.org/anthology/fromtriballands/dreamsDevelopments.aspx>.