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By Bill Barker

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 Winning Women’s Suffrage in Washington and Beyond

BY REBECCA MEAD

Winning women’s suffrage was a long, difficult process, but several factors contributed to its early achievement in the West, a region in rapid transition. The small size of early territorial legislatures allowed suffrage measures to pass in Wyoming (1869), Utah (1870), and Washington (1883). Since the statehood process involved convening a constitutional convention during which voter qualifications were debated, suffragists took advantage of these opportunities, with limited success. By the 1900s the entire country had experienced phenomenal expansion in industrialization, immigration, and urbanization. This process was accelerated...
Women's suffrage was seen by many as an extremely radical proposition in the West. In 1868 pro-suffrage legislation passed in Washington Territory. In 1871 the territorial legislature passed a new law explicitly prohibiting women from voting, despite a personal plea from Susan B. Anthony. The famous suffragist was touring the region, and had intended to take advantage of this political opportunity by claiming that the Reconstruction amendments granted national citizenship, including the right to vote, but the United States Supreme Court rejected this position in 1873.

The relevant case discussed by the court resulted when a number of women tried to vote, encouraged by Susan B. Anthony. Her unsuccessful appeal made her a bitter but famous woman. However, few people are aware that a number of women in Washington Territory in 1871 took the initiative. Washington Territory Legislature passed a bill that was essentially a bill in the form of a referendum. The suffragists were not new in the territory, but they were new in the state. Women's suffrage could endanger the vote to support reform candidates and measures, combined with fears that women's suffrage could endanger the campaign for statehood, led to disfranchisement by the Washington Territorial Supreme Court in 1888.

After a case in 1884 challenged women's legal votes into question their right to vote in the Washington Territorial Legislature responded in 1886 with a bill disqualifying women from jury service but explicitly stating that all American citizens, "male and female," could vote. To challenge the new law, election officials rejected the vote of Spokane resident Nevada Bloomer (who was evidently aware of their intentions), and she filed suit. In 1888 the territorial supreme court's decision invalidated the law again, stating that Congress had intended to include the word "male" in the citizenship provisions of the territorial organic act. Ignoring the precedent set by the Washington Territory Supreme Court, which resulted in the formation of the Washington Territory Woman Suffrage Association (WTWSA). Anthony was thrilled by an invitation to address the territorial legislature—this would be the first time a woman had spoken before a legislative body on this issue. Yet the suffrage bill was defeated and the legislature closed the loophole in the 1867 law that had encouraged women to vote.

Despite this setback, suffragists continued to lobby the territorial legislature throughout the 1870s. Women's suffrage failed in 1873 and 1875, but the legislature did pass laws protecting married women's property and granting limited voting rights in school district elections. A new opportunity opened in 1877 when the legislature authorized a constitutional convention to begin the process of applying for statehood. Mary Olney Brown, then president of the WTWSA, wrote newspaper articles and organized a petition campaign, and Dunway spoke at the 1878 convention. Their efforts in Walla Walla resulted in two proposed constitutional provisions relating to female voting and office holding, but both failed in the general election. In 1881, Dunway and Brown worked with prominent legislators on a new bill. When it also lost, they blamed the "liquor interests"—a charge legislators did not bother to deny.

in the West as it rapidly became settled, developed, and incorporated into the nation. Reform movements developed as existing institutions became inadequate to deal with the rapid expansion, and various suffrage was one of many progressive measures proposed at that time.

The nature of western race relations was another factor affecting support for women's suffrage in the South. Women were seeking the vote at the same time that millions of African Americans in the South were being disfranchised through various corrupt political practices and outright violence. In the West there were many different racial-ethnic groups, and although they experienced racism and discrimination, these groups were generally small and isolated from one another. Technically, African Americans and Mexican Americans could vote, while federal legislation and policies excluded Chinese residents and Native Americans from full citizenship. Therefore, discussions of voting qualifications in the West did not generate as much concern and obstructionism among white residents as they did in the South.

Western settlers carried with them these ideas about "a woman's place," but the realities of pioneer life soon revealed practicality and impracticality. As western women worked hard to build farms, businesses, and communities, their man-centered mates learned to value female intelligence and resourcefulness. They expressed their appreciation repeatedly, but they did not "give" women the vote. Suffragists won it by their perseverance and patience. Suffragists were also considered to be radical due to their alliances with such reform groups as the Prohibition Party, the People's Party (Populists), Socialists, and Progressives. These coalitions were crucial to the success of suffrage, but they provoked opposition from powerful political interests, making it very difficult for suffragists to convince territorial and state legislatures to pass such a revolutionary measure. At best, legislators would authorize a suffrage referendum, but not forcefully enter a larger suffrage campaign. As a result, politically inexperienced women suffered many defeats and disappointments as they learned how to deal with such challenges.

All these issues were significant in Washington during various phases of the suffrage movement. After the 1848 Seneca Falls convention, there was a flurry of interest, but women's rights activists suspended their activities during the Civil War. In the postwar period, voting rights were hotly debated. Suffragists tried to take advantage of this political opportunity by claiming that the Reconstruction amendments granted national citizenship, including the right to vote, but the United States Supreme Court rejected this position in 1873.

The relevant case discussed by the court resulted when a number of women tried to vote, encouraged by Susan B. Anthony. Her unsuccessful appeal made her a bitter but famous woman. However, few people are aware that a number of women in Washington Territorial Legislature passed a bill that was essentially a referendum. The suffragists were not new in the territory, but they were new in the state. Women's suffrage could endanger the vote to support reform candidates and measures, combined with fears that women's suffrage could endanger the campaign for statehood, led to disfranchisement by the Washington Territorial Supreme Court in 1888.

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in 1883 a bill disfranchising women citizens passed both houses of the territorial legislature with bipartisan support. Apparently this was a "good time to try an experiment," because unsuccessful, the problem could be corrected during the statehood application. spokesmen for the Democratic and Republican state conventions endorsed the innovation, and it was generally "conceded that ethics had become a factor in politics." Yet women's use of the vote to support reform candidates and measures, combined with fears that women's suffrage could endanger the campaign for statehood, led to disfranchisement by the Washington Territorial Supreme Court in 1888.
After the disfranchisement, many Washington women refocused their energies on the growing women’s club movement. Already anticipating efforts to overturn women’s suffrage in Washington Territory, Abby Stuart had started the first women’s club in Olympia in 1883 with the explicit goal to “give women who oppose the Suffrage Movement (or think they do) an opportunity to divest themselves of their prejudices.” They also became more actively associated with other political movements such as the Populists, the Grange, the Farmers’ Alliance, and the Knights of Labor, all of which had significant numbers of women members and suffrage supporters.

Because men tended to prioritize other measures, however, building internal support depended heavily upon activist women like Laura Hall Peters, a Populist, labor radical, and journalist. In the 1895 session several Populist legislators, including future governor John R. Rogers, sponsored a bill that passed the state senate but narrowly missed winning the required two-thirds majority in the house. In 1896, the Washington Populists included a strong suffrage plank in their election platform, which Peters endorsed in the Silver Republican, and the Silver Republican supported the “liquor interests.” In 1897, Hutton introduced a suffrage amendment early in the session, but the final vote was delayed by the measure’s authors until after the election. When senators tried to postpone the measure, they were successful until 1903, when the legislature refused to reconvene. In 1906, Senator George Piper guided the suffrage bill through the senate while the measure’s opponents were distracted by gambling legislation. Although Hutton phrased his proposals as protecting the women’s vote, his true intent was to end the “male-ruler system” that he thought prevented full voting rights.

Suffragists and suffrage supporters continued to advocate for the cause in other ways. Emma Smith DeVoe and May Arksibright Hutton, two of the state’s most prominent suffrage leaders, worked toward the common goal of women’s suffrage in Washington but vehemently disagreed on the course of action that should be followed to achieve it.

In the Pacific Northwest there were other encouraging developments. In 1902, the Seattle Labor Suffrage Association (SLSA) held its first convention in the state. The LSSA, which had been founded in 1896, had already had some success in securing the vote for women in other western states. The SLSA held its first convention in 1902, and by 1906 it had over 1,000 members. The SLSA aimed to organize and educate women in the region and to promote the idea of women’s suffrage.

The ultimate success of the suffrage movement in Washington was due to several factors. Nationally, suffragists lobbied hard for their cause, but they also worked to build support for the cause in other ways. They used mass-based techniques under pressure from an impatient younger generation. They also worked to build a broad base of support, including women from a wide variety of social, economic, political, regional, and racial-ethnic backgrounds. They emphasized both feminine respectability and working-class women, developing new tactics and arguments with particular emphasis on the need for political and economic justice for working women. They also worked to build support for the cause in other ways, including through the use of the media, public speaking, and lobbying.

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Two women who attended the Portland convention, Emma Smith Devoe and May Arkwright Hutton, returned to Washington to become major suffrage leaders. Devoe, an experienced organizer, soon became president of WESA. She used a transitional approach that emphasized both feminine respectability and femininity in her work. She then turned the state convention into a public event, drawing national attention to the cause.

The NAWSA leaders were determined to make the movement effective, but problematic. Devoe and Hutton turned the state convention into a public event, drawing national attention to the cause. They emphasized both feminine respectability and working-class women, developing new tactics and arguments with particular emphasis on the need for political and economic justice for working women. They also worked to build support for the cause in other ways, including through the use of the media, public speaking, and lobbying.

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Devoe and Hutton cooperated effectively, but problems developed in Olympia in 1909 as they lobbied for a suffrage bill. Hutton coordinated a petition drive targeting individual legislators while Devoe worked behind the scenes with prominent male politicians and courthouse aides to get the bill passed. When the bill narrowly passed the Senate, the state women's division worked to defeat it. When it failed to win enough votes, Devoe called a meeting of the women's division at the Seattle Democratic Club, where she was met with a standing ovation. Devoe then led the women's division in a march to the capitol, where they presented the petition to the governor. The governor signed the bill into law, and Devoe and Hutton were hailed as heroes.

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voters than any single organization could have managed alone. In Washington, dissidents split off to form their own organizations. Corinne Hill formed the Seattle Suffrage Club and the Equal Franchise Society (EFS). Hutton formed the Spokane Political Equality League (FEL), and there were branches of the College Equal Suffrage Association in both cities.

In 1910 Washington suffragists avoided large demonstrations, rallies, or parades partly because American activists wanted to distance themselves from the radical, even violent tactics of their British counterparts. At the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition suffragists hosted a permanent exhibit at the Women’s Building, a suffrage day, and a “dirigible balloon” with a large banner inscribed “Votes for Women.” WESA established a press bureau managed by Adella Parker and a newspaper, Votes for Women, edited by Parker, experienced journalist Mousour Hartns, and others. In addition to advertisements, posters, and billboards, suffragists distributed over 1 million advertisements, posters, and billboards, and a newspaper, “Votes for Women.” WESA established a permanent exhibit at the Women’s Pacific Exposition. Suffragists hosted radical, even violent tactics of their British colleagues partly because American activists there were branches of the College Equal Suffrage Association (EFS), Hutton formed the Spo.

Washington suffragists systematically attended meetings of granges, labor unions, ethnic community groups, churches, and other organizations seeking endorsements. They cultivated crucial farmer-labor, progressive support, with women trade unions often providing the crucial link. In 1906 the Seattle Women’s Card and Label League had sent a delegate to the state suffrage convention; in 1908 suffragists spoke before the Washington State Federation of Labor (WSFL) convention. After 1908, the Seattle Union Record consistently emphasized how female enfranchisement would increase working-class voting. Apparently at the suggestion of WSFL president Charles Case, WESA appointed a special superintendent for labor unions, Dr. Luerma G. Johnson, a powerful member of the Women’s Union Label League. State labor officials reported widespread male support among their members but repeatedly recorded suffragists that they needed to emphasize how suffrage could help the labor movement.

Suffragists in eastern Washington had even closer ties to the labor movement. One of Hutton’s key advisors, David C. Page, was a prominent socialist labor official in Spokane, and his wife Stede was secretary of the Equal Suffrage Association of Spokane. Rose A. Basset Moore (Asherhorn) was head of the Spokane Union Label League and a former organizer for the Spokane Trades Council who later became a prominent labor official in Seattle. She and a Spokane clubwoman, Mrs. Philip Stahlman, systematically visited the city’s union locals. The Spokane Spokesman-Review reported that they approached the beer drivers “in such a businesslike way and...in so pretty a manner...for next November...that the unionists sat up and took notice.” During the summer Stahlman and Basset Moore traveling and addressing union locals in the major towns, returning well pleased with the results. The Spokane women also participated in the Labor Day parade with an elaborate float symbolizing their disfranchisement.

LEFT: Uncle Sam welcomes Washington to join Idaho, Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming in this cartoon from the front page of the December 1910 issue of Votes for Women: “America the great that gave Equal Suffrage in Washington.”

FACING PAGE: A group of Seattle women participated in the formal dedication of Mayor Hiram Gill on February 2, 1911.

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As the election approached, many observers prai...
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The fourth of six children, James W. Washington Jr. was born in Gloster, Mississippi, in 1909. His father, The Reverend James W. Washington, was the local Baptist minister. Gloster, 30 miles south of Natchez, was then a small town with a lumber company and sawmill that supplied most of the jobs for blacks and whites. Natchez also had a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. As James Washington recounts in his unpublished autobiography: “I remember living in fear most of the time. When I was very young my father had to get out of town. Suddenly. It was said that he had a dispute with a white man… (who) threatened to go to the Klan about it. A white friend of my father’s hid him in the trunk of his car and drove him out of town. I never saw my father again.”

His mother, left with five children, a baby on the way, and no means of supporting them, was forced to send the children to live with relatives and friends. Washington went to live with his grandmother when he was seven or eight. While there, he quit one of his first jobs—as a delivery boy—because he was not willing to be insulted: “I couldn’t stand riding my bike to the back door of a white family’s home and have the woman who answered the door act like I was there to rob her.”

When his mother remarried, Washington returned to live with her. Mother and son shared a deep emotional bond. When he was 14, she observed him taking apart an old shoe and managed to find him a job as apprentice in a shoe repair shop.

The Great Depression and World War II stand as bookends to Irene Mair McHugh’s most productive years as an artist. McHugh (1891-1955) worked for the Federal Art Project at a time when art was considered a public good and artists an important segment of the American work force. Pay started at $66 dollars a month. The Federal Art Project—the visual arts branch of the Works Progress Administration—financed the creation of murals in hospitals and post offices and provided free art instruction in rural areas. McHugh was part of a small but important circle of Northwest artists that included Hans Bok, Mark Tobey, and Fay Chong. This photograph, taken by Marvin Boland in 1922, records Irene McHugh’s beginnings as an easel painter in Tacoma.

—Maria Pascualy

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Washington arrived in the Seattle area in August 1944. He came as a civilian, one of thousands of African Americans who migrated to the Northwest during World War II as support staff for active military personnel. His wife Janie followed in the fall. He and Janie lived in Sinclair Heights, a Bremerton government housing development occupied only by African Americans. They moved to Seattle in August 1945 into the house that is today the James W. Washington Foundation and Studio. Washington experienced discrimination from both whites and the “old-timers” blacks who had long been established in a relatively unsegregated Seattle. They referred to the influx of Southern blacks during the war as “newcomers” and “sharecroppers.”

In his autobiography Washington always emphasized the positive: “Some Blacks leave the South with a chip on their shoulder. They assume, and many of them believe now, that all Whites are dangerous. They think all Whites are out to get them. I don’t believe this because I accept everyone as an individual…. Despite the inequities in society, I found it necessary to develop ideas about the potential for good in other people.”

He began to emerge as a leader in discrimination resistance. In 1946, as chair of the education committee for the Elks Olympic Lodge, he moderated a discussion in Sinclair Heights on the topic: “Is the Negro being permitted to fully participate in the special job opportunities in the Northwest?” After the end of the war the problem of unemployment for African Americans had become acute.

After his move to the Pacific Northwest, Washington continued to pursue his career as an artist. A month after he arrived, he took the ferry from Bremerton to visit the Gallery of Northwest Painters in Seattle’s Frederick and Nelson Department Store and boldly approached its director, Theodora Lawrenson Harriman. Harriman gave him a two-person exhibition in January 1945 to 21-year-old Leo Kenney, who later became a well-known Northwest artist. Washington’s immediate success was the result of his charm and directness, the strength of his art, the relatively small Seattle art scene, and Harriman’s own dynamic personal­ity. She included him in a 1946 group exhibition in Chicago, Northwest Paintings Go East, with Mark Tobey, Kenneth Gal­lahan, and 17 other Northwest artists, and encouraged Wash­ington to meet Mark Tobey.

As postwar racial tensions led to an increasing number of Afri­can American veteran lynchings in the South, Washington made his first sculpture, The Chaotic Half (1946), carved on a four-by-four-inch block of found wood. In painted low relief, the hand of a black voter reaches for a ballot box; behind a di­agonal red line, indicating a wall, is a menacing Klansman, a swinging noose, a cross, and the all-seeing eye. In this simple work Washington incorporated his frightening childhood in the South where he felt he was constantly being watched, his disgust with the lynching of black veterans, and his hope for democracy.

In the second half of the 1940s, Washington spent several years in informal classes at Mark Tobey’s studio. With Tobey’s encourage­ment, he enlarged his scale, included collaged newspaper clippings, changed his subject matter, and began to explore symbolism. While pasted newspapers had been included in modern art

In his art from 1938 to 1944, Washington began to celebrate black achievement and community in a subtle way. His small, intensely colored pasted drawings of Baptist churches in Vicksburg—like Travelers Rest (1938)—and Little Rock still glow with his newly acquired skills using color and his exploration of linear perspective. His subjects were “impossible.” In 1943 he enrolled in a Baptist church for a year at the Lander Smith College, one of the oldest traditionally black colleges in the country. During the time Washington resided in Little Rock, the educated black com­munity was deeply involved in civil rights activism. As documented in a pamphlet from Washington’s personal archives, the Urban League of Greater Little Rock organized a program called “The Negro: Some Community Problems in Five Areas” in September 1942. Washington’s early involvement with civil rights is also com­mented by a brochure he saved titled “50th Anniversary of Negro Emancipation Celebration.” That event took place on January 1, 1943, at Little Rock’s First Baptist Church.

Throughout his life, Washington paired activ­i­sm with the pursuit of his art career. He befriended and took private lessons from white artist Har­ry Louis Freund, who was painting murals with the Treasury Department in Arkansas. In June 1943 he exhibited with Freund at Little Rock’s segregated Ninth Street United Service Organization (USO), identifying himself in the brochure as the “James W. Washington School of Art.” Freund gave a lecture as part of the exhibition and they remained friends after he left Little Rock for the Pacific Northwest.

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Since 1910, Washington adapted it to his own purposes by selecting clippings about specific racist events that he assembled.

The Making of the United Nations Charter, completed in early August 1945, focused on a particular political act of discrimination. He declared that the painting “depicts the chaotic condition which existed when the [United Nations] charter was being formulated. Black men were dying in the ‘Pacific Theater’ (symbolized by the skeletal hand) but were not represented in the formation of the charter. [Civil rights activist] W. E. B. DuBois was allowed to speak for a few minutes, but they would not let him pen an amendment, as symbolic of the city’s ‘White domination by the safety pin in the hand.’” The oil painting includes eight carefully selected news clippings that refer to specific racist events such as violence at a Paul Robeson concert.

Democracy Challenged (Lynching), painted in October 1949, the last of his works to directly address racism, is the most graphic. It is based, according to Washington, on Ezekiel 37:9, “breathe into these slain, that they may live.” He represents the scales of justice with a lynched family on one side and the Statue of Liberty barely visible on the other. Seven newspaper clippings expand on the meaning of the work. The most prominent is the headline behind the Statue of Liberty in the upper left: “Fiery Cross KKK Note Found Near Home.”

Still in the civil service, he transferred in 1949 to Fort Lawton, where he was asked to set up and run a shoe shop on the military base. His brightly colored 1948 painting of the Shoe Repair Shop (Fort Lawton, Washington) includes all of the equipment he assembled as well as some of his paintings hanging on the walls. Although he encountered racism at Fort Lawton and in subsequent civil service jobs, he managed, with some maneuvering, to maintain continuous employment and even get promoted at a time when many blacks were out of work.

After 1949 Washington’s art changed: he emphasized his belief in the interconnectedness of all people—the idea of universal spirituality. Motivated by this belief, he participated in interracial art and cultural organizations like the Seattle chapter of Artists Equity, founded in 1948. The membership roster lists almost 50 members, including University of Washington faculty members Glen Alps, Walter Isaacs, and George Tsutakawa; and Mark Tobey. Washington served as secretary and vice president of Artists Equity, founded in 1948. The membership roster lists almost 50 members, including University of Washington faculty members Glen Alps, Walter Isaacs, and George Tsutakawa; and Mark Tobey. Washington served as secretary, as did Regina Hackett, at that time beginning her career as an artist. Other members included University of Washington professors and Seattle Art Museum curators. Integration in Seattle was still a ways off, but in these shows Washington realized his idea that art is an international language. In 1950 Mark Tobey was a keynote speaker. Kenneth Callahan was involved as a juror and participant for several years.

After the art exhibitions ended, Washington organized Maundy Thursday seder suppers at Mount Zion. He invited people from all spiritual backgrounds and professions. Jacob Lawrence and his wife Gwendolyn Knight, who moved to Seattle in 1971, participated in one of these seders, as did Regina Hackett, at that time beginning her long career as Seattle Post-Intelligencer art critic.

A trip to Mexico in 1951 Washington met the famous Mexican muralists Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. While visiting Westphal, the ancient Mesopotamian site near Mexico City, he picked up a volcanic stone on impulse. This stone inspired him to make the bold change to working primarily in carved stone.

Also in pursuit of interracial harmony, Washington launched an annual multiracial art exhibition in 1948 at the historically black Mount Zion Baptist Church. He transformed the Baptist Training Union, an educational organization in the Baptist Church, into a means for displaying art. As he later explained, “Back in the 1940s in Seattle there was an exceptional Black preacher, F. Benjamin Davis of the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church. After I found out that Blacks were not welcome in an amendment, as symbolic of the city’s ‘White domination by the safety pin in the hand.’ I told him the solution would be to put on an art exhibition and invite both Blacks and Whites to participate.”

Thus began the 13-year run of the Mount Zion Art Show, into which Washington drew young black artists and some of the major white artists of the city at that time, including some University of Washington professors and Seattle Art Museum curators. Integration in Seattle was still a ways off, but in these shows Washington realized his idea that art is an international language. In 1950 Mark Tobey was a keynote speaker. Kenneth Callahan was involved as a juror and participant for several years.

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Washington at the dedication of My Testimony in Stone (1981); stone, 45˝ x 26˝ x 60˝. ABOVE: My Testimony in Stone (1981), basalt relief...

Below: A Study of Self (c. 1978), basalt relief, 20˝ x 21˝ x .6˝.
minority-owned shopping plaza in Philadelphia. He created six granite busts for what he called “The Rotunda of Achievements.” They included abolitionist Frederick Douglass; George Washington Carver, the great scientist of Tuskegee; and Martin Luther King Jr. The Rotunda of Achievements was dedicated in October 1969. As a result of racial tensions in Philadelphia, vandals attacked the sculptures shortly after they were installed. These portraits, lost to sight for many years, were only rediscovered in 2009, having been stored for years behind a wall in the office of the shopping plaza.

After 1970 Washington did not depict individuals in his sculpture, with one exception. In 1976, the year Mark Tobey died, Washington honored his former mentor with a portrait. Tobey’s portrait on a slab of limestone set on a stunning wood burl includes a summation of many of his favorite symbols. Around the same time, Washington created a portrait of himself in which he seems to be communing with a small bird. Birds for Washington symbolized freedom.

Washington’s sculptures range in size from something small enough to hold in one’s hand to monumental boulders for public spaces. In smaller works he often carved a single animal or bird with just a few chisel marks. Those few marks always respected the contours of the stone while revealing the creature itself. In his largest works he used symbols drawn from the Masons, the Bible, science and numerology, animals and birds. His large public art sculptures can be seen at public schools, libraries, churches, banks, and on the Capitol Campus in Olympia.

By the time of his death in 2000, Washington’s work was sought after by collectors and his public art had become part of the fabric of the Northwest. The highly resistant granite and basalt he chose to use for most of his sculpture was a metaphor, he said, for the difficulties of life. His early chalk drawings of African American churches, his 1940s sculpture and paintings about racism, and his stone sculptures were all dedicated to celebrating creativity as an alternative to violence and as a means to universal harmony.

In that spirit the James W. Washington Foundation today sponsors a lively artist-in-residence program that attracts artists from all over the state to work in the several studios Washington built behind his house. Each of the participating artists has responded in a different way to the spirit of James W. Washington Jr.—some to the unused stones he left in the garden, some to the tools he left in his studio, others to his poetry or recorded speeches. All of them have responded to the spirit of the house itself. His creative legacy continues to transform itself.

The living room and dining room of Washington’s house, which through his foresight and effort has been designated as a historic landmark, were transformed in 2009–10 into an intimate installation of artifacts that document his and Janie R. Washington’s life and achievements, from their roots in the South to their contributions to the cultural life of the Northwest.

**Wilderness as a Resource**

Mount Rainier National Park

**BY SARA ALMASY PORTERFIELD**

The mountains of the Cascade Range are a dramatic collection of peaks stretching from Mount Lassen in northern California to Mount Baker in Washington. The tallest and most commanding of these peaks is Mount Rainier, elevation 14,411 feet. Visible from the Washington cities of Seattle and Tacoma, Mount Rainier towers above the forested lowlands. Some people never escape the mountain’s spell; they have what National Park Service historian Aubrey Haines called “mountain fever,” the unshakable desire to climb Mount Rainier, to gain the spiritual refreshment that comes with spending time on its slopes.

Mount Rainier National Park was created on March 2, 1899. Those who believed that the majestic beauty of the mountain rated the highest degree of federal protection available at the time—national park status—had advocated and won support for the idea on a platform of preservationist ideals—solitude, beauty, and the salubrious effects on people’s minds and bodies that could be found in pristine, untrammeled wilderness. Preservationists thought nature should exist for its own sake, not simply to support human life, and that open land possessed its own intrinsic value. Conservationists, on the other hand, adhered to a doctrine of the “greatest good for the greatest number,” believing that land should be managed as a collection of resources, such as timber or minerals, and that it should be put to use to benefit the American people. While the modern definitions of preservation and conservation have changed, their different ideologies still exist.

The establishment of Mount Rainier National Park seemed at first to be a victory for preservationists, but in actuality the park is managed under a conservation agenda. People’s use of the park necessitates a management plan to prevent overuse while preserving the wilderness, experience, just as activities such as logging or mining are regulated on other public lands.

Early published accounts universally acknowledge the mountain’s beauty and grandeur and echo John Muir’s sentiments that wilderness, especially as magnificent as Mount Rainier, is a place of spiritual inspiration that fosters character development and growth. Without the early and continued local and national interest in the mountain, it likely would never have received designation as a national park.

Philemon Beecher Van Trump and General Hazard Stevens made the first successful ascent to the summit of Mount Rainier on August 17, 1870. Their climb and the press coverage it received were indicative of 19th-century interest in wilderness adventure. Summiting Rainier was regarded as the “supreme physical challenge in the region” for residents of Northwestern cities such as Tacoma and Seattle; this is indicated by the wealth of local and national press coverage. Mountain climbers were given in such publications as the Tacoma Daily Ledger, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, The Northwest Magazine, Harper’s Weekly, Scribner’s Magazine, and Overland Monthly through the end of the 1890s.

Despite having endured great hardship on the mountain—lack of food, a freezing night at the summit, serious injuries—which the papers chronicled in detail, Stevens and Van Trump observed that the beauty and power of the wilderness impressed and won support for the idea on a local level, the growing popularity of mountaineering was bolstered on a local level by the growing popularity of mountaineering.

In 1888, while on a trip through the Pacific Northwest, John Muir climbed Rainier with Van Trump. Muir’s ideas about wilderness preservation had preceded him via his friend George Bayley—who had climbed Rainier with Van Trump in 1883—and greatly influenced Van Trump and others who came to believe the mountain’s beauty should be federally recognized and preserved. In Muir, Van Trump found a kindred spirit. It can reasonably be concluded that the spark George Bayley struck with the idea of national park status for Mount Rainier certainly have agreed with Muir’s statement that mountains were “mountains of life,” responsible for the physical and spiritual sustenance of civilization.

The popular appeal and wide readership of the accounts by and about climbers on Mount Rainier served to popularize the recreational and spiritual opportunities available in the Puget Sound area. While people of the region may or may not have read John Muir’s prose glorifying nature in general and the Sierra Nevadas in particular, they would certainly have read the local accounts of their own mountain. The national trend toward an appreciation of wilderness was bolstered on a local level by the growing popularity of mountaineering.

In 1889, shortly after passage of the Forest Reserve Act and the establishment of the Pacific Forest Reserve, which encompassed Mount Rainier, Van Trump gave a speech entitled “Up the Mountain High” to a joint meeting of the Academy of Sciences and the newly formed Washington Alpine Club. In his speech, reprinted in a local paper, Van Trump discussed the “Different Lines of Ascent, and Dangers and Pleasures of Climbing.” This was printed under a subheading that declared the “Lives of Everyone Would Be Made Happier and More Healthful by a Visit” to Mount Rainier. After a lengthy discourse on the technical aspects of the mountain, Van Trump ended his speech with a short section entitled “As a Health Resort,” which addressed the benefits of Mount Rainier to the visitor’s physical well-being. Mount Rainier “as a health resort” would logically need a management plan in order to accommodate to the needs of both the wilderness and the visitor. The building science of forestry could not attend to this because it centered around the extraction of the timber and other resources a forest reserve possessed. Setting aside the land as a national park, however—as had been done with Yellowstone in 1872 and Yosemite in 1890—would ensure preservation of the wilderness in its natural state while allowing for visitation.

Mountaineers had found in the heights and parks of Mount Rainier what Ralph Waldo Emerson called the “overarch,” the spiritual glory of wilderness that had made John Muir a popular figure. These men and their philosophies had primed Americans to receive and embrace the physical manifestation of the intellectual thought they had received in the region.
When Mount Rainier was declared a national park, locals lost interest in the restaurant. The lodging was improved, and a remodeling of the lodge was necessary. When Van Trump became a sick man, he was forced to sell his hotel. It was sold to a real estate developer, who made it a hotel and operated the Longmire Springs Hotel, known for its "medical springs." The Longmire Hotel avoided the fate of the other early establishments when it was sold to a family and managed by the family until 1920 when it became the Olympic Park Inn. It was later the Olympic National Park Inn and continued to be operated by the family until 1957. It is now known as the Longmire Hotel.

The road mimicked Longmire's route to the mountain, which lay six miles inside the park. This road, which was built in 1903–04, became an important access for citizens of the growing urban centers on Puget Sound. It was the first of a series of roads built into the park. By 1905, there were nineteen miles of roads in the park, and by 1927, the park had a network of 94 miles of roads. The road network allowed visitors to reach the mountain more easily, and it encouraged more visitors to come looking for the promises of health and beauty.

The park was developed with an eye to turning Mount Rainier into a commodification of the landscape. The park was designed to be a place of profit. The national park could not be sustained if it was not profitable. The idea of the national park attracts money, but the idea of the wilderness does not. The wilderness is a collection of resources, which can be considered anything from a tract of virgin forest to a tract of open space. The wilderness is not a place, but a source of things. The wilderness is a place of potential, and it is a place of promise. The wilderness is a place of opportunity, and it is a place of potential.

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To allow wilderness to exist for its own sake would mean setting aside a reserve of land closed to all human intervention.

The second reason wilderness cannot avoid being treated as a commodity is simply because humans have created the construct of "wilderness." It is something exotic and therefore appealing, and the mystique of outdoor life adds to its exotic and therefore appealing, and the mystique of outdoor life adds to its personal automobile traffic in the park. Park service literature states that the system would be a hive of smog, automobile noise, and loud, crowded parking lots. Management programs reduce and/or concentrate the human impact on the park in order to preserve its wilderness aspects and heighten the visitor's experience, thereby preserving the commodity.

Wilderness does not exist for its own sake but for the selfish reason that "something" its own sake but for the selfish reason that "something" exists for the greatest number rather than for the greatest good for the greatest number. Even though people are visitors to these areas and the land is therefore supposedly "untrammeled," there is still an extensive trail-maintenance system, complete with signs and established campsites, that leaves no doubt humans have been there. Wilderness areas have their own administrative structures that oversee trail maintenance and management and send out park rangers to patrol the public's use of the environment.
On the heels of the Lewis and Clark commemoration, we now take up the banner for the bicentennial (2007–11) of another adventurer—David Thompson. For his many achievements—one of which was his discovery of the Columbia River’s source—the Britons and Canadians regard him as Canada’s master surveyor. While most Americans think of the Columbia as arising somewhere in eastern Washington or the Rocky Mountains to form the boundary between Washington and Oregon, the 1,206-mile river begins far up in Canada, approximately 100 miles south of Banff, Alberta. It flows north and then south, reaming out many a rocky canyon and picturesque lake along its way, before crossing the international border into Washington. Over a third of the mighty Columbia’s course lies in Canada.

It was that initial northerly flow that fooled people in the 1700s. Volumes had been written about the fabled Great River of the West—all erroneous regarding its source. In the late 1700s along came David Thompson, a highly skilled surveyor for the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC), the oldest commercial corporation in North America. Aggravated by some of the HBC’s practices, he switched allegiance in 1797 to its upstart Montreal-based rival, the North West Company. This rough-and-ready firm sent the surveyor to establish new fur posts in the valleys west of the Rocky Mountains.
Thompson's foray began near present-day Jasper, Alberta, in May 1807. He and his party tramped over the mountains and down the Blueberry River to a point on Lake Kinbasket roughly 20 miles north of today's Golden, British Columbia. Of ethereal beauty, Lake Kinbasket was essentially a widened portion of the north-flowing Columbia River, a fact of which Thompson was not yet aware. He followed the river southward where he established a log-trading fort on the shores of Lake Windermere. He named the river Kooteniae and his fort Kootenee House. Setting out southward again to explore and develop new fur posts, he found another river less than half a mile across, a point of land that is now called Canal Flats. He named it McGillivray's River (later changed to Kootenay or Kootena). He followed this river into Idaho and Montana, establishing posts like the one at Thompson Falls and exploring the territory south and west of Kalispell.

Thompson and his crew periodically packed the furs assembled at Kootenee House over the Rockies to the North West Company's post near Rainy River, first on the backs of the men, then via the network of rivers and lakes that lace the Canadian plains. In September 1810, he led his men to the mountain pass between Banff and Kootenay or Kootena. He followed this river into Idaho and Montana, establishing posts like the one at Thompson Falls and exploring the territory south and west of Kalispell.

The late start put Thompson and his men at the 5,734-foot pass on December 29, 1810, slogging along on snowshoes in deep snow and temperatures as low as –32° F. Figure 4. The party used and faintly marked Assiniboine trail. They used large canoes and reprovisioned for the return trip. Thompson understood that the river was so gentle that it was navigable by light transport. He named it the Great Columbia River.

In 1811, Thompson arrived at Fort Astoria on July 15, 1811. He was the first man in recorded history to travel the entire length of the Columbia River. Now the world would know the location of its source. The Thompson party stayed only a week at Fort Astoria, where they were received courteously by the Americans. As in all the other places they visited, the Thompson party was well received by the local people. On their return trip, they were attacked by Piegan Indians (relatives of the Blackfeet) after a few miles, losing their canoe. They continued the journey and discovered the river he called Kootenee might actually be the Columbia—the Great River of the West. Earlier he had found the source of the river—a spring that fed today's Columbia Lake. Later in May 1811 he went south to Spokane House (in present-day Washington), where a factor named Fi-nan McDonald was in charge. At the Kettle Falls portage Thompson consulted the Indians, who said the river flowed southward a long way. The explorer determined that he would continue downriver after reequipping. The Columbia, with an average fall of two feet per mile, was a turbulent watercourse with one serious rapid after another, almost all of which have now been tamed by a series of dams. Thompson's experiences had adventures but no mishaps.

Near today's Grand Coulee Dam, Thompson encountered the Okanogan Indians and, in his writings, commented on their foods of cama (a small onion) and moss bread, the latter, he noted, being a last resort before starvation. Further downriver the Nespelem Indian women used red ochre to decorate their faces while the men ran a red stripe along the parting of their hair. Near present-day Wenatchee, Thompson met people who had never seen a white man before. One asked to touch his leg to find out if he was real. After encountering many different Indian peoples along the way and portaging around the worst rapids—including The Dalles and the Cascades in the Columbia Gorge—Thompson arrived at Fort Astoria on July 15, 1811. He was the first man in recorded history to travel the entire length of the Columbia River.

JoAnn Roe has written for numerous national and regional publications and is the author of 15 books, including The Columbia River: A Historical Travel Guide (Fulcrum Publishing).
The Legacy of Theodore Winthrop's Stay at St. Joseph's Mission

Trampling Kamiakin's Gardens

BY CHAD WRIGLESWORTH

A RECENT GRADUATE OF YALE COLLEGE, Theodore Winthrop journeyed to the Pacific Northwest in 1853 and documented his travels through several regions, including the Yakima Valley. That fall, after returning to the comforts of Staten Island, New York, he organized his journals into what would become The Canoe and the Saddle, a posthumously published memoir that appeared in 1862. During his journey across the newly established Washington Territory, Winthrop spent a night at St. Joseph's Mission. Over the years, this moment has been referenced by numerous historians, journalists, and memorial makers, largely because it offers readers a rare and extended glimpse of Kamiakin, an elusive and powerful leader of the Yakama Nation who irrigated some of the first gardens in the Yakima Valley.

Kamiakin's cultivation of the valley came to a halt when the Walla Walla Treaty and Yakima War dissolved and relocated indigenous peoples in the region from their ancestral lands and waterways. In the years that followed, settlers and the Bureau of Reclamation took on their own engineering projects by constructing a series of dams and irrigation canals that transformed the valley from a so-called wasteland into a national seat of agricultural prosperity. But as irrigation canals that transformed the valley from a so-called "uncivilized and disordered. The stitching and landscape of the land transformed the valley into the valley in the 1840s and about his reputation as a gardener or a breeder and trader of some of the fastest and most desirable horses on the Columbia Plateau. At the very least, the priests must have told Winthrop the story behind St. Joseph's Mission and its irrigated gardens.

In 1847, six years prior to Theodore Winthrop's arrival at the mission, Kamiakin had traveled to Fort Walla Walla and requested that a Catholic missionary come to live amongst the Yakamas. Months later, two French priests arrived to construct a mission near Simcoe Creek. The men established strong ties with Kamiakin and by the fall of 1852 they had accepted the chief's invitation to move the mission to his summer village along upper Ahtanum Creek. There, the missionaries constructed a hut about two miles from Kamiakin's village. Although the chief refused to be baptized into the Catholic faith, it was not uncommon to find him at religious services, observing the Sabbath, or sharing food with his European neighbors.

When Theodore Winthrop rode into St. Joseph's Mission in the summer of 1853, he was eager to meet Chief Kamiakin, a leader whose formidable reputation often preceded his physical presence. Days before stopping at the mission, the Easterner made a note in his journal that a man named Kamiakin was said to be head chief among the Klickitat tribe. Days later his curiosity likely increased when the mission's resident priests—Father Charles Pandosy and Father Louis D'Héromènes—spoke of Kamiakin's accomplishments throughout the valley. At one point the priests sent two boys in search of the great chief who was reportedly nearby, but to Winthrop's disappointment the elusive leader could not be found. It is probable that Winthrop heard stories about Kamiakin driving the first herd of cattle into the valley in the 1840s and about his reputation as a gardener or a breeder and trader of some of the fastest and most desirable horses on the Columbia Plateau. At the very least, the priests must have told Winthrop the story behind St. Joseph's Mission and its irrigated gardens.

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The meeting between Theodore Winthrop and Chief Kamiakin has produced one of the most complicated and conflicted passages found in The Canoe and the Saddle. Many historians have insisted that Winthrop was impressed, even awestruck, by Kamiakin's commanding presence, reputation, and technological ingenuity. There is something to be said for this. In both his journals and memoir, Winthrop describes Kamiakin as having a "gentlemanly" disposition, "with a massive square face, and grave, reflective look" that gave him the aura of a "king."

On the surface, Winthrop's description of Kamiakin appears to be an episode characterized by moments of praise and reverence; but it also contains a deep sense of sarcasm and disgust. Winthrop's true feelings toward Kamiakin begin to emerge when the traveler offers readers a description of the chief's outer garment. He uses metaphor to symbolically fuse the geography of that article of clothing onto the verdant garden themselves, enabling him to speak of Kamiakin in a way that is respectful and dignified, but equally backhanded and insulting.

From the perspective of Theodore Winthrop, a well-educated Easterner, everything about Kamiakin's garden and tunic was uncivilized and disordered. The stretching and landscape of the green coat, much like the gardens themselves, were pitched together in "all shapes and sizes." The patches created "irregular beds of a kitchen garden," plots that were "verdant" but also "extremely unruly and "devious," like a zigzagging pathway "trodden extremely unruly and "devious," like a zigzagging pathway "trodden

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he year after St. Joseph's Mission was moved to upper Ahtanum Creek, Theodore Winthrop ar

rived on the scene to find "a hut-like structure of red clay" that was "planted upon a frame of

sticks." From a distance he could hear "reverent voices" singing at what he called a "station in the wilderness." In the glow of evening, the Easterner viewed the community as a desolate place, what he called "a strange and unlovely spot for religion to have chosen for its home of influence." However, the next day revealed a more complicated and fertile reality. When Winthrop arose that morning, Father Pandosy introduced him to Kamiakin, a vibrant and "majestic Indian in Lincoln green" who irrigated and managed several gardens at his nearby village. In a region that boasted only 6 to 12 inches of annual rainfall, the manipulation of water sustained a diverse range of crops for the Yakamas and the mission.

Richard D. Scheuerman and Michael O. Finley, in Finding Kamiakin: The Life and Legacy of a Northwest Patriot, observe that by regulating and rerouting the flow of water from a quarter-mile-long ditch drawn out to the creek in Kamiakin's valley, the chief and priests were able to raise "potatoes, squash, pumpkins, and corn in substantial garden plots." How this feat of engineering transpired remains a matter of speculation. Historians such as A. J. Splawn have suspected that

the missionaries instructed Kamiakin on matters of irrigation and gardening, while Scheuerman and Finley assert that the gardens at St. Joseph's Mission were "probably planted with seeds from Kamiakin's fields." This seems the more probable theory, considering that the priests, who nearly starved to death during the winter of 1851–52, were likely saved from that grim fate thanks to food provided by Kamiakin and nearby Yakamas. Scheuerman and Finley's speculation gains further credibility when we consider that records from the Methodist Wascoum Mission near The Dalles indicate that Kamiakin and his brothers were growing potatoes, corn, and peas from "seed made available at Hudson's Bay Company posts" as early as 1845.

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patches by a rampart or a ditch or sea, along which strips of white threads strayed like vines.” Although Winthrop confessed that the vine-like network of irrigation channels might be “understood by the operator,” he was certain that any civilized viewer would find the lack of systematic linearity “complex, impolitic, and unconstitutional.” Kamiakin’s meandering irrigation ditch was literally foreign when compared to those of a nation that favors streamlined and linear watershed management policies.

In his book Beautiful Machine: Rivers and the Republican Plan, 1755–1825, John Seelye offers an important investigation of America’s systematic politics and its peculiar attraction to linear waterways. Judging from Winthrop’s response to the nature of Kamiakin’s miniature watershed, it is evident that the young traveler had inherited intellectual doctrines that favored the streamlining of waterways for purposes of commerce and navigation. The Yakama chief may have been a master irrigator, but from the Easterner’s perspective, Kamiakin lacked an expansive vision of the waterways that had not been recognized in the federal treaties with St. Joseph’s Mission implicated the priests in an act of national treason. According to A. J. Splawn, in the fall of 1855 Colonel James Nesmith, camped about two miles from the mission under the authority of Major Gabriel Rains, expressed a belief shared by other military leaders that “the priests in charge had aided the hostile Yakimas in securing territory and produce “a fuller growth of the American nation, and life.” For settlers who arrived in the Yakima Valley after the war, Winthrop’s view of Kamiakin’s tragedy of the American Ideal, which would be manifested in “elaborate new systems of thought and life.” For settlers who arrived in the Yakima Valley after the war, Winthrop’s vision of prosperity was summed up in one word: irrigation.

In digging up the potatoes someone discovered a half a keg of powder which had been buried in the garden by the good father to prevent the hostile Indians from getting to it and use against the whites. As soon as this was unearthed, wild excitement spread and a cry arose that Father Pandosy [sic] was the person who furnished powder to the Indians; that here was the proof; that at least the mysterious means by which the Indians obtained ammunition was explained—and a rush was made for the mission building.
passed the Newlands Reclamation Act. This decision spurred the Bureau of Reclamation, a federal organization responsible for the reclamation and equitable distribution of water for purposes of settlement and irrigation in 17 and semiarid western states.

By 1905 the reclamation of the Yakima Valley was a national priority that generated a wealth of consumer confidence. According to Paul Dorpat and Genevieve McCoy in Building Washington: A History of Washington State Public Works, “between 1902 and 1913 when the price of farmland in the West rose an average of 110 percent, land within the scope of the Yakima project, although still unwatered, increased by 5,400 percent—more than any other service project in the region.” Kamiakin, the Yakima Valley eventually became an irrigated artery of the Northwest and among the most productive agricultural regions in the nation.

In response to this success, local organizations in the Yakima Valley were called upon to tell the history of the region’s prosperous transformation. The Pioneer Association and Yakima Historical Society were two local interest groups called upon to remember and preserve the past by “erecting monuments” and “marking historic spots.” Strangely enough, it was through these organizations that Theodore Winthrop and Chief Kamiakin eventually crossed paths again. On the surface, the memorial marking of Kamiakin’s Gardens in 1913 was emerging as an authori-
tative account of the Yakama Nation. That afternoon historian Stevens spoke to the crowd about the historical and political significance of the 1855 treaty while Lyman talked about the legacy of pioneer patriots. Finally, Margaret C. Splawn told the story of Kamiakin and his gardens, drawing from memories of her husband and the words of Theodore Winthrop, author of his own local popular memoir, The Canoe and the Saddle.

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The audience was treated to food and games as well as a dozen speeches by regional historians and local dignitaries. Among the most prominent were honored guests General Hazard Stevens, son of Isaac Stevens; William D. Lyman; and Margaret C. Splawn, widow of the late politician and early settler A. J. Splawn, whose historical memoir Kamiakin: The Last Hope of the Yakama (1917) was emerging as an authoritative account of the Yakama Nation. That afternoon historian Stevens spoke to the crowd about the historical and political significance of the 1855 treaty while Lyman talked about the legacy of pioneer patriots. Finally, Margaret C. Splawn told the story of Kamiakin and his gardens, drawing from memories of her husband and the words of Theodore Winthrop, author of his own local popular memoir, The Canoe and the Saddle.

That afternoon the audience’s ears were surely tuned to Margaret C. Splawn’s clever use of The Canoe and the Saddle, but it is unlikely that anyone questioned her assertion that settlers and the federal government irrigated the Yakima Valley with opportunistic equity rather than rhetorical and physical force. For most of the crowd, it was more important that General Hazard Stevens came to profess the accomplishments of his treaty-making father and that A. J. Splawn, the local hero and politician who coosed the Bureau of Reclamation into the Yakima Valley, was being acknowledged as the true father of the region’s epic and expansive history. The truth of the matter is a bit more difficult to tolerate. Only 60 years after Theodore Winthrop met Chief Kamiakin at St. Joseph’s Mission, his work went into print, making Winthrop one of the most popular writers of the latter half of the 19th century. By 1890 his national fame peaked. The Northwest town of Winthrop is named after him, as is Winthrop Glacier on Mount Rainier.

By the close of the 19th century, Winthrop’s East Coast popularity was beginning to wane, but out West things were just getting started. In 1913, for example, Tacoma publisher and writer John H. Williams issued a 50-year commemorative edition, which included Winthrop’s unpublished journals as well as 16 color plates, an elaborate historical appendix, and over 120 illustrations. Several members of the audience at the marking of Kamiakin’s Gardens actually owned copies of this luxurious tome. The late A. J. Splawn, for example, cited heavily from the 1913 edition throughout his book Kamiakin: The Last Hope of the Yakama (1917), and it is likely that historian and scholar William D. Lyman also owned a copy. At the time, he was working on the two-volume History of the Yakima Valley, Washington (1919) a book that honored Winthrop with lavish words of patriotic praise. According to Lyman, Winthrop was not only a brave adventurer, but “a gifted scholar, poet and soldier” and “the most brilliant of all writers,” whose memoir of the early Northwest had “no rival for literary excellence.”

Given the local popularity of The Canoe and the Saddle, those present at the marking of Kamiakin’s Gardens surely recognized Margaret C. Splawn’s allusion to Winthrop when she said Kamiakin was a gentleman and “every inch a king.” However, decades after the Yakama War had passed, Splawn now surmised that this once vilified chief was actually a peacekeeper who “played an important part in both historic importance of Kamiakin’s irrigated gardens.


The national and localized popularity of Theodore Winthrop and his travel memoir is a story in and of itself. After Winthrop left the Northwest and returned to Staten Island, he spent several years sifting through journal entries in preparation for writing a book about his adventures. Initially, he could not find a publisher interested in his romantic tale, but that changed in 1863 when he became the first Union officer killed during the Civil War. His death at the Battle of Little Bighorn made him a national hero. Publishers who had rejected Winthrop’s work were suddenly squabbling over his manuscripts and memoirs. As Paul J. Lindholdt explains in his 2006 introduction to a critical edition of The Canoe and the Saddle, after the book’s initial publication in 1863 it went through eight printings in four years, and in the following decade 55 editions of his work went into print, making Winthrop one of the most popular writers of the latter half of the 19th century. By 1890 his national fame peaked. The Northwest town of Winthrop is named after him, as is Winthrop Glacier on Mount Rainier.

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By Peter Donahue

THE MEMOIRS OF MARTHA HARDY

By Peter Donahue

W ell before Beat Generation
icons Jack Kerouac and Gary
Snyder haplessly idolized about
their Zen-filled experiences as fire
lookouts in the Cascade Mountains, a
skinny math teacher from Seattle was
doing her “check looks” every half-hour
direction from her lookout
just south of Mount Rainier—and writing
vividly about it all.

Martha Hardy (1907-1983) published
Tatoosh in 1946, three years after
serving as a fire lookout on Tatoosh Peak.
In what was then the Columbia National
Forest (now the Tatoosh Wilderness Area),
she served in order to relieve the shortage
of lookouts caused by World War II, and
to prove to herself and others that she could
succeed at this nearly all-male occupation.

Tatoosh opens with a pack string “nick-
tracking” through snow drifts on its way
to the top of Tatoosh Peak where “the
schoolma'ams,” as the rangers refer to
Hardy, will be left for the three-month
fire season. From that point on, the book
offers a frolicsome account of her adven-
tures and misadventures. She must “study
the country,” learning to read the terrain
and distinguish fog from visibility,
precipitation, and misadventures. She must
“study the country,” learning to read the
terrain and distinguish fog from
smoke. She must file
reports, “racking” through
snow drifts on its way
to the top of Tatoosh Peak where
“the schoolma'ams,” as the
rangers refer to
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fog from
smoke. She
must file

When a fire breaks out in the district,
she helps pinpoint it but then is left iso-
lated atop her perch
to watch as the
smoke from the spreading
fire obscures the area be-
low. As she waits for
word from Elmer about
what, if any, action to
take, she reflects upon
such legendary fires as
the 1902 Yacolt
burn or the
1933 Tillamook
burn in Oreg-
on. After many days
of anxious waiting and
watching, Elmer calls
her new home Skyo Ranch, yet when she
sells a scattering of old-growth
firs to the local mill, hoping to let the
bank, she buys an old stump ranch
and after wangling with
federal leases and after
wangling with
the
bank,
she
buys
an
old
tump
ranch
and
after
wangling
with
the
bank,
she
buys
an
old
stump
ranch
and
after

Tatoosh is illustrated with charming line drawings by Glen Rounds, and Skyo with equally charming drawings by
Martha Hardy herself. Although Hardy wrote one more book, about her lifelong struggle
with multiple sclerosis, it was never pub-
lished. She taught math at several schools,
including the University of Washington,
until 1949 when she joined the faculty at
Bellevue High School, where she taught
math, English, and Pacific Northwest
history and enjoyed a career as one of the
school’s most popular teachers until her
retirement in 1972. She was also an avid
photographer, and both of her books refer
frequently to her tending her camera about.

In Tatoosh and Skyo, Martha Hardy
shares in the pioneer nerve, know-how,
and irrepressible wit of other mid-century
women memorialists from the Northwest,
including Betty MacDonald, June Hunt,
and Charlotte Paul. As Hardy herself once
said, recalling a creative writing profes-
sor’s response to her work, “I know
something about the woods because
no matter whether he told me to write
exposition or description I always turned
in something about the outdoors.”

Peter Donahue’s new novel, Clara and
Merritt (Woodcraft of Oregon, LLC,
2010), is about longitudinal themes and
turns in Seattle in the 1920s and 1940s.

Old charts and a sense of duty
motivate her to file a fast and accurate
report. Ultimately, she masters the fire
finder, only to learn that her first reported
fire is just a plume of mist from a distant
waterfall. Much of Tatoosh deals with the
daily tedium of being a lookout, which is
punctuated by occasional terror-inducing
tasks, such as re-attaching grounding wires, in a
lightning storm. To relieve the tedium, she
domesticates a ground squirrel, which
she names Impie, and carefully catalogs the
tales and folk wisdom. She and Elmer
gerently engage in teasing
butter, and Hardy even hints of a
romantic interest between them. When
a fire breaks out in the district,
she helps pinpoint it but then is left iso-
lated atop her perch

Additional Reading

Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this issue? The sources
listed here will get you started.

Votes for Women!

Women’s Votes, Women’s Views, by Shanna Stevenson. Tacoma: Washington State

How the Vote Was Won: Woman Suffrage in the Western United States, 1865-1934, by

Feminism and Suffrage: The Emergence of an Independent Women’s Movement in America:

James W. Washington Jr.

Spirit in the Stone: The Visionary Art of James W. Washington Jr., by J. Paul Karlstrom

Eros and Light: The Emergence of Northwest Art, By Dolson Amott Tarmz. Seattle:

Mount Rainier National Park

“The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” by William
Cronon, In Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. New York:

Sunrise to Paradise: The Story of Mount Rainier National Park, by Ruth Kirk. Seattle:

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River of Memory. The Everlasting Columbia, by William Leyman. Seattle: University

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Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas often used development and ecological terms when writing for his audience, and in this rhetorical sense we can say that Adam Soward, an associate professor at Heritage College on the Yakima Reservation, has written a book, The Environmental Justice: William O. Douglas and American Conservation, that contributes to the literature on Douglas and the environmental movement. Soward provides a potential legal standard for environmental protagonists and quite possibly preserves the future. The Environmental Justice utilizes the prism of a prominent individual to illuminate wilderness and modern conservation and provides any environmental aficionados with insight into the movement’s history. Readers interested in Pacific Northwest environmental issues, legal politics surrounding the environment, and William O. Douglas would all benefit from Soward’s scholarship, so evident in this book. A critic may quibble for more detail, but the thorough annotations provide a clear trail and ultimately lead to the writings of Douglas himself—an iconic environmentalist.

As a scholar, university professor, and a “public intellectual for conservation” who sought to establish precedent for environmental rights, the author ultimately makes a significant contribution to the study of Douglas in the environmental movement as the justice “helped transition the movement from an obscure to a prominent issue in American life.” Soward then utilizes the prism of a prominent individual to illuminate wilderness and modern conservation and provides any environmental aficionados with insight into the movement’s history. Readers interested in Pacific Northwest environmental issues, legal politics surrounding the environment, and William O. Douglas would all benefit from Soward’s scholarship, so evident in this book. A critic may quibble for more detail, but the thorough annotations provide a clear trail and ultimately lead to the writings of Douglas himself—an iconic environmentalist.

The book consists of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. Soward initially clarifies his focus on Douglas to emphasize conservation, challenges, struggles, methods, and roles played. The first chapter describes Douglas’ lifelong affiliation with nature and mental ties to the Supreme Court where he has “almost frontier heritage and identification with common citizens combined to make Douglas an appealing, if slightly unusual, associate justice.” The next chapter details Douglas’ use of public utility luke in the 1950s when he contributed “essential recognizability and national prominence” to lead conservation movements on Maryland’s Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and Washington’s Olympic Coast and thus “became a leading public spokesperson for wilderness.” Chapter Three describes Douglas’ book, Wilderness Bill of Rights (1965), as a call for “a stronger and more institutionalized environmental ethic” giving “form to the environmental mood of the country.” Soward then utilizes the backstory of Washington’s Cogar Lakes, Texas’s Big Thicket and the Potomac area to shed light on the Supreme Court’s participation in Committees of Correspondence for preservation in its fourth chapter. The last chapter portrays the opinions of Douglas in the court where the justice practiced real legal, seeking to establish precedent for environmental rights. The author ultimately concludes that Douglas was a “key player in advocating a lifestyle that proved significant in both symbolic and tangible ways.” Soward offers several salient themes in his work. He emphasizes Douglas as a “public intellectual for conservation” who sought to involve and educate the public by leading people into the wilderness, calling for participation/activism and literary discourse, or writing books. Douglas believed that an environmentally-savvy public would want to preserve its surroundings, and he sought to empower the middle of people who desperately sought such protection. His court opinions revealed his belief that humans possess the right to enjoy nature. The author writes, “From Douglas’s perspective, land protected as parks or wilderness was available to all Americans as a democratic resource—whereas land dedicated to economic development or resource extraction only benefited a few—a plutocratic democratic resource—whereas land dedicated to economic development or resource extraction only benefited a few—a plutocratic

In the summer of 1957 Steve Turner and two fellow undergraduate students from Vermont’s Middlebury College, on a mission funded and paid for to drive a 1939 LaSalle convertible from the heart of wheat country—Adams County, Washington. They were not retracing Jack Kerouac’s steps in On the Road (it would not be out until September of that year); they were merely answering an ad calling for wheat harvest truck drivers. Of the three, none had driven a big truck before but they figured they could learn on the fly, which they did—at least well enough to survive with their lives and the buck of the harvest intact. Beyond that, Turner obviously learned what a haunting and sadly beautiful place Adams County can be.

Amber Waves and Undertow
Fenn, Hope, Sweat, and Downright Nocturne in Dry Wheat Country
Reviewed by Stephen Jones.

Amber Waves and Undertow, Turner describes Adams County by focusing primarily on wheat and potato producers, past and present. He weaves in his own experiences in 1957 but also more recently, spending time with farmers, processors, business owners, and even an artist who has a “boring hell garden” in Ritzville, the county seat. Located in the near center of the main wheat-growing area of the state the county is a mix of highway interchanges, gravel roads, 40 mile vistas with wheat, both front- and back-ground, buildings less ghost towns, grain elevators and small towns waiting with hopes for telephone call center jobs that may never come.

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Columbia, the magazine of northwest history

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