INSIDE
What the “Great War” cost a Pullman soldier and his family

COLUMBIA CALLS

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NEAREST RECRUITING STATION

Designed by FRANCES ADAMS HULSTED
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REGISTRATION and program schedule for the conference and associated workshops are now available at: http://www.WashingtonHistory.org/HeritageServices/conferences.aspx. There are special registration discounts for students and Washington State Historical Society members. Registration deadline is October 15.

OFFERING two concurrent preconference workshops on Friday morning, October 19: “Researching Civil War History in the Northwest” with Dr. Lorraine McConaghy and “Researching Civil Rights History in the Northwest” with Dr. Trevor Griffey.

FEATURING notable regional historians presenting on Northwest Civil War and Civil Rights history, the conference begins on Friday afternoon. The plenary speaker on Saturday, October 20, will be Dr. David Blight, noted author and historian. Blight is a professor of American history at Yale University; director of Yale’s Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition; and author of Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory and American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era.
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COVER: Army recruitment poster, 1916, 24”x36”. Although this country was slow to enter the war, by the time peace was declared on November 11, 1918, the human toll of the Great War in the United States was greater than many imagined—not only in casualties but in the lives of loved ones left behind. See related story beginning on page 4. (Washington State Historical Society, #1960.9.32)
Billy Frank Jr. is a fisherman, and when he dies he hopes that’s how history remembers him. He is not a casual angler who passes sunny afternoons in search of tall tales and kings. Fishing is part of Billy’s DNA. It dominates his history. It defines his future. Billy has a visceral need to protect salmon and scars to show for his trouble. In a society fascinated by advancing technology, Billy will take you back to nature. He will show you the great rivers where the salmon run, and he will tell you the story of his mysterious fish.

In fact, Billy’s entire life is rooted in a war over the fish, brutal clashes that reached a fever pitch in the 1960s and 1970s. Havoc on the water aroused the attention of the country. Some even called it the great fish war of the Northwest.

The great fish war did not deal only with salmon. While the state of Washington called the crackdown on Indian fishing conservation, Indians called it racism and abrogation of a treaty. To Native Americans, fishing is a sovereign right. They ceded land to the U.S. government, but they never gave up their right to the fish. They reserved this right in a treaty and depended on the promise made in the 1850s by Isaac Stevens, superintendent of Indian Affairs: “I will write it down in the treaty that you and your people have the right to take fish at these old fishing places, and I pledge the Americans to keep this promise as long as the mountains stand, as long as the sun shines, and as long as the rivers run.”

Blacks questioned rights that allowed Indians to fish in ways they couldn’t. They scornfully labeled Native Americans “super citizens” and accused them of destroying the runs. The feud on the riverbank raised powerful questions about the definition of Indian treaties and promises between nations.

Decades ago, in a far different America, a federal Indian movement swept the country. Unknown fishermen held up their treaties and took a stand. One was a Nisqually Indian named Billy Frank. “I wasn’t the Billy Frank that I am now,” the Nisqually tribal leader told reporters in 1984. “I was a bitter person.” Says friend Tom Keefe, “When I look at Billy Frank, and I guess I know more about him than most people, I can say there is a guy who decided that he could change the world by changing himself.”

At 81, Billy wears his long gray hair in a ponytail and carries a message of perseverance around the world. Leaders of every persuasion hear the story of the Indians from an Indian who knows. “My people are still here!” he tells them again and again and again.

Billy is a onetime hell-raising Nisqually Indian and a present-day statesman. Old stereotypes that branded Indian people as lazy, ruthless savages seem preposterous when you meet Billy. The hardworking elder has made bridge building with dissenters an art. At the height of the fish wars, with battle lines drawn between the state and Indian fishermen, a staffer for then-Governor Dan Evans pronounced Billy as “friendly as an old shoe.”

Billy’s prolific family tree is filled with leaders, and he has lived his life following in their footsteps. He stands when he speaks, just like his father. “We’ve got to get together,” friend George Walter says at an Olympia coffee shop, his arms encircled. “This is the gesture when he approaches you, and it’s also his gesture for the world.” With Billy, the analogies never end. He’s like a mammoth cedar tree with roots that spread far and wide. He’s like the Pacific salmon, because he survives, returning, without fail, to the river that has marked his life.

Real life handed Billy jail sentences for exercising his treaty rights, but no monumental chip weighs him down. He could have retreated behind the walls of his Indian tribe, but he spoke out. He could have brooded in an eight-by-ten-foot jail cell, but he found humor instead. Behind bars so often he earned a promotion to jail barber, Billy quipped: “I don’t know if I’m getting better or worse [at cutting hair] but I don’t think I’ll run out of customers.”

Billy is the youngest child of a vigilant mother who taught him to respect women. He is the son of a Nisqually elder who taught him the story of his people. Should you talk salmon or treaty rights, warns Charles Wilkinson, a long-time friend, don’t underestimate the hard edge of Billy Frank. “You can’t understand Billy by just thinking of him as a hail fellow well
met that everybody loves. He also can be one tough son of a bitch when salmon are involved and Indian rights are involved. And that’s part of his greatness.”

Billy is also famous for his salty tongue “I don’t know if you remember where you were on your 75th birthday, do you?” Christine Gregoire, governor of Washington, asked Billy before a thundering crowd. “I do. You were in my office, pestering me about something, complaining about something. I actually don’t remember what that was, because it’s not all that infrequent. But you were in rare form that day. I’m told that on the way out of the office someone—who will remain nameless—commented, ‘That was an amazing meeting. I think you may actually have changed her mind.’ Billy smiled and said, ‘You win one every once in a while.’ Then the friend said, ‘But the really amazing thing was that you spent 45 minutes arguing with the governor and didn’t cuss once!’

“Goddamn it. I didn’t, did I?”

It is often said that Billy’s last name describes his attitude, and that day in the governor’s office, the straight-shooting Nisqually lived up to his reputation. “I want respect for my people. I want respect for our culture. I want respect for our natural resources.” For all the complexities that surround Billy’s life work, his guiding philosophy is simple: live in balance with the earth; there are consequences for tampering with nature. Tell the truth, even if there’s nothing more difficult. Treat people with dignity, including your enemies.

Billy’s passion is the work of many lifetimes. His journey has been slow going, tough going, and sometimes, not going at all. “They’re always coming after me,” Billy says of critics. Squabbles are so common in Indian Country that sometimes even the courts throw up their hands at the infighting. In the 1960s, Nisqually leaders labeled Billy a renegade. “He was ostracized by his own tribe and that just made him tougher than the dickens,” says Guy McMinds, a Quinault tribal leader. Sometimes Billy is begrudged for getting too much credit.

The history between the smoke shop owned by Billy’s family and the Nisqually Tribe is long and difficult. “There may never be peace,” says family. “There’s some people that don’t support him,” acknowledges Zelma McCloud, onetime Nisqually chairwoman, “but not that many. He’ll go down in history…like our Chief Leschi.” To this day, opponents in a landmark court opinion over fishing rights claim the sweeping decision tipped the scales too far toward the Indians.

Billy is a master of forgiveness. “Dad never did want to go around and start trouble,” says Sugar, Billy’s oldest son. “He always tried to settle it…. He’s strong. He can have people yell and scream and call him all kinds of names and he just smiles and walks away.” “It doesn’t matter how people treat him,” agrees Willie, Billy’s youngest child. “He’s always going to treat them with respect.”

Even so, Tom Keefe says Billy understands the anger that many Indian people hold. “There’s a side of Billy that, when the doors are closed and it’s just Indian people there, I am reliably informed he is capable of articulating the anger and the bitterness that resulted from years of oppression by state authorities. But I don’t think it dominates his life or has dominated his life. I’ve seen him really grow as a person, like you would hope any person would be capable of doing if they set their mind to it.”

The elder takes the good and bad in stride. His role as the consummate bridge builder has taken him from a concrete bunk at the Pierce County jail to a public stage where he accepted the Albert E. Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, an honor bestowed on the likes of Jimmy Carter, the president, and Desmond Tutu, the archbishop.

The onetime underdog has crisscrossed the globe in defense of Indian people and earth. His footprint can be found from the halls of Congress to Alaska’s Prince William Sound, where Billy helped tribes recover from the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

“The fight is never over—the fight for who we are and our culture and our way of life,” he says as his dark eyes light up. He clenches his fists. He smiles at the thought of his indigenous brothers in Alaska and across the world rattling the cage. Billy has been rattling cages since he was 14 years old.

How did he do it? Therein lies an extraordinary and controversial tale of courage, determination, and a guiding belief that it takes a village to move history. 🚀

Trova Heffernan is director of the Legacy Project for the Heritage Center in the office of Washington’s secretary of state and author of Where the Salmon Run (2012), a Legacy Project biography of Billy Frank from which this article is excerpted.
THE SCENE WAS THE SAME EVERYWHERE ON NOVEMBER 11, 1918: celebrations erupted all over the world and caused millions of people, speaking a handful of languages, to spontaneously dance and shout, cry and sing. Although the guns went silent on the 11th hour of that 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, the tragic truth was that the dying had not ended. This first became obvious to those on the home front as the delay in communication played cruel jokes on thousands of families.

Given the anomalies created by the reliance on the newswire services stretching to New York from Europe’s only transatlantic telegraph line in London, war news arrived erratically. In the little college hamlet of Pullman, news of the armistice came from Spokane’s
it is not surprising that the Great War (World War I, as we know it today) does not have the currency in this country that it does in Europe, or even Australia and New Zealand. The United States did not join the fight until April 1917. By that time the original combatants had buried several million strangers, friends, and relatives. Certainly there was some national notice when news came out of West Virginia on February 27, 2011, that America’s last World War I veteran, Frank Buckles, had died at the age of 110. But American cities had not been shelled. Our farm fields were not turned into scarred landscapes, devoid of vegetation, where the plows of modern-day farmers still occasionally unearth long-forgotten poisonous gas.

Even so, World War I—the War to End All Wars, as people hoped it would become—is an American story, too. Between 1917 and 1919 over 2 million Americans put their lives on hold, and more than 100,000 never came home. In the Pacific Northwest, many thousands of locals served in the American Expeditionary Forces—over 48,000 from Washington alone—and thousands were killed. Families all over the region felt it shape the course of their lives well after the guns fell silent. Mathias and Anna Hamelius of Pullman, whose son Frank went to France in 1918, was one such family. Although every family’s story is unique, reconstructing the impact of the Great War on the Hamelius family provides a window through which to better comprehend the effects of what sometimes has been called “America’s forgotten war.”

Frank J. Hamelius was not the last man killed in that war; thousands were killed in the final morning alone, although the armistice had already been agreed upon. Even Henry Gunther, who was killed at 10:59 A.M., was not the last American to die in the war. Unknown numbers succumbed in the months and years that followed. And the sad truth is that Frank Hamelius was not even the last casualty of the war in his own family.

Math and Anna Hamelius were German-born immigrants. Both of their families had ended up in Nebraska after coming to America. Math found work with the Northern Pacific Railroad and, after rising to the position of section foreman, moved to Washington in the late 1880s to work on the line between Colton and Colfax. Once the work was completed, Math returned to Nebraska, where he met Anna Weirs. They married in February 1893 and immediately began a family. Frank J., their first son, was soon followed by a second son, Charlie. Sometime after Charlie’s birth they moved to the new state of Washington. By the standards of their day they were economically successful, though not wealthy, and they enjoyed respectable social standing. Everything changed on July 28, 1898, when three-year-old Charlie succumbed to cancer. Anna never fully recovered from the loss of her young son. On top of that, Math’s job forced them to move frequently. The one constant was Pullman, but it was not the place where they resided so much as the place to which they returned.

Records indicate that all the moving around impacted Frank’s schooling. When the family returned to Pullman for good during the 1910–1911 school year, Frank was in eighth grade. Pullman was still the family’s home when Frank left for Camp Lewis in 1917. He attended the town high school for both his freshman and sophomore years, but by then he was almost 20. Deciding to make the leap to Washington State College after the end of the 1913 school year, he joined the class of 1917 in the fall.

Frank’s projected college graduation also had to be put off. Math had decided to turn to agriculture to augment the family’s income, and in March 1916 he began purchasing livestock for his 80 acres on the outskirts of town. Starting a farmstead from scratch while still employed by the railroad required Frank’s help, so school was interrupted for a year. He returned to college the following year, but his plans were again put on hold when the United States declared war on Germany and its allies on April 6, 1917. Shortly thereafter, the federal government passed the Selective Service Act, requiring all males between 21 and 30 to register for military service.
For Pullman boys Frank Hamelius, William H. Glover, Wilbur P. Kyle, and Thomas C. Puckett, and their families and friends, the Great War began on Wednesday September 5, 1917, when the four boarded a train for Camp Lewis, near Tacoma. The local paper enthusiastically reported how the first contingent of 15 Whitman County lads obtained an exemption from their draft board to join the army earlier than their assigned date. A lunch was served in their honor, where a number of local notables gave patriotic speeches. After the luncheon the young men filled out the final paperwork and paraded to the railroad depot where, according to the Herald, “vast throngs of citizens showered congratulations and well wishes upon them.”

The train reached Camp Lewis the following day. The 15 local men were part of the first small contingent to arrive at the camp; they were soon joined by over 10,000 others. Raw does not begin to describe the men or the situation. “Everything had to be learned,” wrote Lieutenant Harold H. Burton in 600 Days’ Service: A History of the 361st Infantry Regiment. “Underlying all was the effort to obtain the prime essential—discipline.” If the Palouse recruits and their new comrades were unprepared for the change to military life, Camp Lewis was in a similar state. The men spilled out of railroad cars many days before their uniforms arrived. When the shipments did arrive, there were not nearly enough uniforms to go around. Had they been privy to the motley spectacle of uniformed and civilian-clothed Americans drilling together at Camp Lewis, British and French reservations about America’s ability to help defeat the Germans would have been somewhat strengthened.

Fortune smiled on Anna Hamelius’s son in mid September when he and the rest of what became the 361st Regiment were the first troops fully uniformed. Drilling then gave way to training, which lasted the entire fall. They learned care of rifles and equipment, and underwent preliminary tests and training for range practice, performed bayonet exercises, attended hand grenade lectures and practice, studied trench warfare and, finally, according to Burton, “automatic weapons and gas defense.”

Since modern wars do not stop for winter breaks, the training continued, taking a decidedly unpleasant turn. In an effort to prepare the embryonic division for the muddy realities of the Western Front, they dug trenches and then manned them periodically for two-day stretches throughout the winter and early spring. The soggy western Washington winter perfectly simulated the conditions they would face during the wet months at the front. As unpleasant as it was, Private Giuseppe Romeo, a Seattle member of Frank’s regiment, expressed a grudging respect for the experience when he wrote in his diary, “A hard day’s drill or digging trenches at night in the rain and wind…during the cold weather…were things that one can never forget.”

With spring came rumors of shipping out. Nothing came of it. The only action the doughboys at Camp Lewis saw took place in Seattle and Tacoma, where they marched in parades. In June, however, following another spate of rumors, the 91st Division—numbering 10,000-plus—boarded eight trains headed for New Jersey where ships waited to take them to the war. According to Burton, the trains were met with good cheer and an array of items scarce in the soldier’s diet, such as chocolate and ice cream, at every small town and big city from Sandpoint, Idaho, to Chicago and the rest of the way to Camp Merritt.

One of the sergeants in Frank’s company, Oregonian Zenas Olson, remembered something else about that trip: “The opportunity of seeing the American girls along the route was one that could not be missed.” At each stop “the collection of addresses became a pastime—in some cases almost a mania.” By the time they reached New Jersey, wrote Burton, they carried with them “the accumulated spirit of the American people from coast to coast.” From Camp Merritt the troops marched to the pier at Hoboken to board the ships that would carry them across the Atlantic. As they milled about the pier awaiting their turn to board, Red Cross workers gave Frank and his friends hot coffee, lunch, and warm smiles on what would be, for many of them, their last Fourth of July.
On July 5 Frank and the bulk of the 361st boarded the British ship HMS Scotian. Over the next two weeks the troops kept busy with physical drills, guard duty, and daily boat and fire drills necessitated by the German submarine wolf packs prowling the North Atlantic. Many of the soldiers suffered from seasickness. It is hard to imagine that Frank fared any better than another of the land-locked Palouse boys. Wilbur Kyle wrote in a letter that “for six days I was so sick I didn’t know what took place and didn’t care very much.”

The ship reached Glasgow, Scotland, on July 17. The next day the entire regiment, led by Scottish bagpipers, marched through town to the train depot where they boarded trains that arrived in Southampton, England, in the early, dark hours of July 19. The next day Frank and his comrades “boarded the small channel boats and filled them in much the manner that sardines fill a can,” as one of the officers remembered, to cross the English Channel to Le Havre, France.

During three weeks of additional training in France, the newly-arrived Americans were overwhelmed by rumors about moving to the trenches on this day or that, but none of those rumors amounted to more than raising levels of adrenalin, punctuated by fear and excitement. On September 3, though, they began moving toward the front. When the final major Allied offensive began nine days later, Frank’s division was held in reserve. Since they were still at full strength, the 91st Division was guaranteed a prominent spot for the next attack. Frank and other doughboys from all over the western United States marched through mud so thick it swallowed their boots as they inched closer to the Meuse-Argonne front, passing destroyed towns abandoned by nearly all their residents. As the Americans slogged past a French unit, one of the French soldiers yelled out in perfect English, “Hello boys, glad to see you, three weeks from today you’ll be two weeks dead.”

Frank’s Company F and the rest of the 361st Regiment entered the trenches on September 20. It was not so much the seeming madness of the vermin-overrun trenches themselves that overwhelmed the senses—it was the smell. The British War Museum has taken a great deal of pride in its ability to chemically recreate that smell so that visitors can “experience” the olfactory realities of the trenches. The millions of troops who lived and died in the real trenches remained not for minutes like museum-goers, but for months at a time—if they lived. Like millions of other young men, Frank Hamelius experienced the real smell of feces, urine, stagnant water, rotten food, and death. It hung in the air and clung to everything, so that even when they were away from the front they still reeked of it. The Great War was a mole’s war, with soldiers furrowing and burrowing erratic patterns all across Europe.

The objective set for the 361st was the small town of Epinonville, which none of them had heard of before and few could pronounce. The attack was scheduled for dawn. According to Lieutenant Burton, the division members were told the night before to lighten their loads and “not to expect to receive any supplies, except ammunition, other than those carried on the person, for possibly 48 hours.” For Frank, who told a comrade during that night that he was eager “to get in and break the ice,” the last hours before the attack were anxious ones.

As the first fingers of light poked through the darkness, thousands of American soldiers scurried up ladders or pulled themselves out of their trenches and got their first view of the no-man’s-land separating the American and German lines. The Pacific Northwest boys immediately disappeared into a bank of smoke and fog so thick it was impossible to see very far ahead. As Private Morris Martin, one of Frank’s comrades, remembered, “The ground was torn up and heaved into mounds; trees were shattered, and only stumps remained.... And entwined through all this debris were great quantities of tangled barbed wire.” What would have been a slaughter field in most cases actually resulted in very few casualties.

Facing Page: Many of the earliest Washington recruits arrived at Camp Lewis ahead of their uniforms and had to train in their “civvies,” c. 1917.

Below: Camp Lewis trainees receive a lesson in grenade-lobbing, April 18, 1918.
On this day the Americans benefited from the great intangible in war—dumb luck. The Germans were in the process of reorganizing their lines and initially put up very little resistance, giving ground in chunks instead of fighting. The situation heated up in the afternoon when erratic German sniper fire gave way to concentrated machine gun and artillery barrages. By the end of the day the Americans had advanced all the way to their objective and taken a series of mostly unoccupied German lines. However, German artillery and heavy machine gun fire forced the Americans back toward their original positions. Frank and his comrades took up unprotected positions in open fields. Americans fell in increasing numbers later in the day, but no one in Frank’s company was killed on September 26.

Frank had survived his first day in combat, but the Germans still held the town, and the American high command still wanted it. He and his comrades suffered from the night chill as they reorganized in the dark, and then came the rain and wind. When morning came, they resumed the attack.

Separated by an ocean, a continent, and nine time zones, many residents in the small farm town of Pullman were thinking about going to bed about the time Frank and other sons of the Northwest prepared to renew their assault on Epinonville. As the lights began to go out in the Palouse, the cold, wet men of the 361st Regiment stumbled across gouged fields littered with the previous day’s dead. Hours later, even before folks in Pullman picked up their morning newspapers, the fighting was over on a soggy field outside a small farm town in France.

Frank and the men of the 361st began their attack at roughly six in the morning. The Germans were prepared this time, and the casualties would certainly be much heavier than the day before. American forces retook Epinonville, but the second assault suffered the same fate as the first, so the generals ordered a third attack. Frank had done his job well thus far and merited a Silver Citation Star for his conduct in the face of the enemy.

Around noon, the third attack in six hours began. Not much later, as the Americans scrambled over their dead and dying comrades, a bullet slammed into Frank Hamelius’s abdomen, and he fell to the ground. Lieutenant Wallace M. MacKay ran to him, but there was nothing that could be done; he died a few minutes later, without uttering a word. He was the first member of Company F to be killed in the war. The battle ebbed and flowed all day long, and his mud-spattered body was not recovered until late that night.

Weeks passed before the news arrived at home. The November 15 Pullman Herald declared that Frank Hamelius had
died a hero’s death and, adding insult to hyperbole, further stated that despite their sadness, when Math and Anna Hamelius were informed of their son’s death, they “rejoiced that he had been privileged to do his part.” Such absurdity from a news writer cheering on the boys from the safety of his office brings to mind Siegfried Sassoon’s retort to armchair warriors:

You smug-faced crowds with kindling eye
Who cheer when soldier lads march by,
Sneak home and pray you’ll never know
The hell where youth and laughter go.

The bullet that ripped through Frank’s body, killing him in France, now tore through his family in Pullman. The news of her son’s death shattered Anna’s fragile state of mind beyond repair, and she fell into a choking darkness from which she could not escape. In testament to her collapse, when it came time to fill out the 1920 U.S. Census form, she wrote that her son Frank was then living at home.

For nearly three years Math tried to find some way to slice through the protective shell Anna’s mind had constructed to dull the pain of losing both of her sons. Failing to do so, he made the difficult decision in 1921 to place her in the care of Eastern State Hospital, southwest of Spokane. The Great War claimed another victim: first Frank Hamelius was killed in September 1918, then the family he had been a part of died on November 11, and by June 1921 it had effectively cost his parents their marriage. Even as Math struggled through the probate court process to have Anna declared mentally incapacitated, another emotionally difficult process neared fruition. Like most American families, Math chose to have his son’s remains returned for interment. In mid July 1921 news reached Pullman that Frank’s remains had arrived on American soil. By that time Anna, who refused to believe her son was dead, was already at Eastern State Hospital. On July 31, Reverend H. J. Reynolds conducted the funeral service and the two Hamelius brothers were reunited in Pullman.

Pullman remained Math Hamelius’s home, but just as had been the case in the 1890s, it was more a base of operations than a true home. Anna returned to Pullman sometime in 1926, but almost immediately, whatever mental stability she had managed to achieve began to wither away. Her heart and mind just could not heal, and she was often found at the train depot, sitting on a bench, waiting for her son to step off the train that had taken him away in 1917. In 1928 she was readmitted to Eastern State Hospital, having been deemed insane by a Whitman County judge for a second and final time.

Anna lived out her remaining years alone at the hospital, dying there on April 6, 1934. The Great War had cost her everything. In effect, she too had died the day her remaining child was killed on the fields of France, fighting an enemy she never saw. Math could have let the hospital take care of interring her body there on the hospital grounds, as many families did, but he had his wife’s remains placed next to those of her sons. Math managed to hang on to most of his 80 acres of land in the midst of the worst economic collapse in the nation’s history. Still, he did not live on the land he owned. Exactly when or where he returned to work after his wife’s funeral cannot be reconstructed now. What is known is that Math Hamelius died at the Northern Pacific Railroad Hospital in Missoula, Montana, on February 25, 1937, the last member of a family devastated by the Great War.

James Robbins Jewell heads the history program at North Idaho College in Coeur d’Alene.
"TO EVERY MAN, WOMAN OR CHILD Who Loves Nature in all its glory, and wishes to enjoy it to the fullest extent; to those in search of health, or those who have health and wish to retain it, nothing offers greater opportunities than cycling…. Happiness in its fullness cannot be realized without its complement—health. Build up a store of health and you can face the battle of life with confidence and enthusiasm." Thus the Mead Cycle Company introduced the 1917 catalogue of its Ranger bicycle line. The catalog included every conceivable item required for cycle maintenance. For personal protection they offered a variety of water and ammonia guns that would "drive the most persistent dog to cover." This is one of several early bicycle catalogs in the Historical Society's Special Collections.
When she died at her Edmonds, Washington, home in 1926, Missouri T. B. Hanna was acknowledged as the “Mother of Journalism” in Washington, an honor that recognized her role as a pioneering woman newspaper publisher.

Often known primarily by her initials, “Mrs. M. T. B. Hanna” arrived in the Puget Sound mill village of Edmonds in 1904 and began a new, productive phase of her life. She was 47 years old, born in Galveston, Texas, on February 17, 1857. Her early years were spent in Berryville, Arkansas, where she attended Clarke Academy. She married a fellow student, J. C. Hanna, of Fayetteville, who continued his education at the University of Arkansas and Fayetteville University and then entered the mercantile business.

By 1882 the couple and their three small children had moved to the fledgling community of Spokane Falls, Washington. There J. C. Hanna was active in the Masonic Lodge and other organizations, served as city clerk, and acquired property as the small city started to take shape. But the first of several tragedies changed the course of Missouri Hanna’s life. A bookkeeper for the firm of Newport and Holly, her husband was on a business trip inspecting Idaho mines in April 1887. Early in the afternoon of April 4 he drowned when the steamer he was aboard, the Spokane—on its maiden run out of Kingston, Idaho—hit a snag on the Coeur d’Alene River and overturned. Hanna was one of six passengers who lost their lives among some twenty on board. This marked a tragic event for the family and the entire Spokane community. The local newspaper called it “one of the most gloomy accidents that has ever occurred in the Northwest.”

Now a widow with three children to support—14-year-old Kirke and daughters Florence, age 10, and Mercie, 6—Hanna entered the world of real estate and home building in the burgeoning Spokane market, demonstrating what one short biography called “unremitting energy and fine judgment of values.” But new tragedies struck. Young Mercie was injured in a bicycle accident and became something of an invalid. Kirke, who had attended the Hill Military Academy in Portland, was at home in Spokane during the summer of 1893 and working for the gas company when he took morphine to medicate a bowel obstruction and died while going to seek help. He was only 19.

Over the next decade, Hanna disposed of her Spokane land holdings and sought help for her youngest daughter at several health resorts. Her move to Edmonds in 1904 was apparently inspired by the hope that the sea air might benefit the girl.

Edmonds, a waterfront mill town, was experiencing a rapid spurt of growth—its population more than doubling during the first decade of the new century, from 474 in 1900 to 1,100 in 1910. Anchored by a small business district, many houses were being built eastward up the hill, but Hanna looked north from the business center and purchased five acres on a low bluff above the waterfront for her home in a tract that became known as Hanna Park. An oft-published advertisement boasted of “5 acres High Upland, 7½ acres Tide Lands” that provided “Good View, Fine Soil, Clam Bed, and Bathing Beach” and was only eight miles north of the Seattle city limits (although the actual distance to Seattle was double that).

Hanna plunged into the publishing business, apparently a new field for her and surely one in which, previously, women had rarely been involved. Edmonds had been without its own newspaper for eight years when in August 1904 Richard Bushell Jr.
established the Edmonds Review, which soon became the official newspaper of the town. Only five months later, on January 1, 1905, he sold it to Missouri Hanna and Frank H. Darling, a resident since 1888 and a former schoolteacher, town official, and manager of the city wharf. “Mrs. M. T. B. Hanna” was at first listed solely as editor and publisher on the masthead; occasionally the “Mrs.” was dropped. For a time, the paper was published from a shed on the wharf.

In a folksy introductory column, Hanna suggested that she needed no introduction: “We think we have sufficient nerve to run a local paper, [and so] we’ll try saying ‘How do you do’ all by ourselves.” She reviewed the recent, unstable history of Edmonds papers and argued that if the growing town was to become more than “a stopping place between Seattle and Whatcom,” it needed a solid newspaper. “A newspaper,” she told readers, “is part of a city—help it along, read it, criticize and help pay for it, but don’t kill it.” Already there was a rival paper, apparently headed by mill owners and businessmen who ridiculed Hanna’s efforts.

Hanna vowed that the Review would be politically “independent; its policy will be to best serve the interests of our promising town, Edmonds, and its neighborhood.” After references to the need for advertising and subscriptions as the financial base, she asked people to inform her of any errors that were published, commenting, “We hope to merit the good wishes of all and have our efforts appreciated in personal matters, to always find some good in each and, if we cannot, we shall hesitate, look over the beautiful sound to the snow-covered Olympics and glorious sunset—use our best judgment.”

Her earliest issues showed little local flavor, except for several references to an effort by some to secede from Snohomish County and become more allied with Seattle. There was a spate of local tidbits and considerable advertising, but most of the news items concerned state, national, and even international affairs, compiled without doubt from various news outlets. Local businesses advertised, however, and within a few months they were listed in an obvious appeal to draw local patronage. Slowly the paper took on more concerns about Edmonds, including a column of local gossip, business goings-on, and general information. This section began to expand while the paper started to engage in Edmonds boosterism. In mid March 1905 a short column boasted of the town, its businesses, school, streets, and amenities, asserting that Edmonds “is not the only town known to men, but is pretty near it.”

By summer, local content was becoming more pronounced, although the broader aspects of the paper continued to be present. In December of that year, the paper included an extensive description of Edmonds, its location, businesses, and amenities. From late September 1905 through most of 1906, Frank H. Darling was listed on the masthead as editor, which likely enhanced the local focus. But an apparent falling out with Hanna led to his departure.

During Hanna’s five years at the helm, the Review chronicled the tiny village as it developed the structural and social needs of a growing community. A 66 percent population increase in one year was said to be greater than any other city in the state. New industries arrived and others were proposed. One of the ever-present shingle mills built a deepwater wharf. Streets became graded and paved and lined with sidewalks. There was a growing need for downtown electric lighting, sewers, fire hydrants, and improved telephone service. Citizens sought improvements in overland transportation connections to nearby towns and thoroughfares. The town acquired a new railway station. A fire that destroyed several frame buildings prompted construction of cement and brick structures, including a bank. Land was cleared for a city park. An “opera house” opened with a basketball game on the gymnasium floor, and in 1909 a high school building was constructed that served for almost a century. An initial collection of 450 books led to construction of a Carnegie Library that also functioned as a city hall.

The Review itself took on a more modern appearance with new type fonts and larger headlines. The only female among the several publishers who founded the Snohomish County Press Association in March 1906, Hanna was not, however, among the 50 members of the newly created, all-male, Edmonds Chamber of Commerce.
In 1907 the Review gained a weekly competitor when a newly arrived Illinoisan, Will H. Taylor, started the Tribune. Frank H. Darling, estranged from the Review, turned up at the Tribune, and over several years the paper passed through the hands of one local entrepreneur after another until on February 10, 1910, Hanna sold her paper to the Tribune company. An Olympia editor rejoiced that the Review “will be run from now on without petticoats; it needs the fostering care of a man and is now getting it.” His celebration was a bit premature however, for other women soon had a hand in its publication. Shortly after the merger, the newly named Tribune-Review was published for 14 months by well-known regional socialists George and Alice Boomer; between 1913 and 1916, Oscar and Minnie Grace owned the paper, which Mrs. Grace essentially ran while her husband was engaged in other business and civic affairs. The Tribune-Review remained the mainstay of local journalism until it folded in the mid 1970s.

Hanna had become involved in the women’s suffrage movement early on. Women in Washington Territory had enjoyed the vote during the 1880s, until it was invalidated by a Washington Territorial Supreme Court decision. Suffragists worked for the vote at statehood and again in 1898, unsuccessfully. After the turn of the 20th century, Emma Smith DeVoe in western Washington and May Arkwright Hutton in Spokane reinvigorated the movement. As each garnered her own followers and developed separate, divergent tactics, the two leaders both feuded and cooperated toward a successful effort to secure the vote for women. In 1909 the legislature authorized a suffrage amendment to the state constitution to be ratified by the all-male electorate in a November 1910 general election.

The year 1909 is best remembered in Seattle for its first world’s fair, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. Four and a half months of festivities on the newly built University of Washington campus heralded the city’s role in regional and international commerce and social progress. It was a time of community pride and fun, but also a time to appraise social situations and examine where the community was headed.

Women seized upon the opportunity to acknowledge the roster of distinguished women’s suffrage advocates who attended the fair, including President William Howard Taft, Idaho senator William Borah, and such suffrage leaders as Abigail Scott Duniway, Anna Howard Shaw, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and suffragists from several other...
nations. Four special days at the AYPE focused on the suffrage movement, and events like a conservation congress provided opportunities for suffrage advocacy and participation by women.

Toward the end of 1909 the Washington Equal Suffrage Association (WESA), with DeVoe at its head, began to publish a monthly magazine as its official organ. Votes for Women made its first appearance in October 1909 with Mrs. M. T. B. Hanna as editor and proprietor; teachers Adella M. Parker and Rose Glass, along with Mary G. O’Meara, were listed as associate editors. In a statement of policy, the magazine asked “the attention of the public to the general question of women’s political enfranchisement and to the special consideration of the amendment granting suffrage to women which is to be voted on in this state in November, 1910.” It pledged to report on the progress of the suffrage campaign in Washington and “the struggle being made throughout the world to secure woman her political rights.” Along with an extensive account of women’s activities at the AYPE, that first issue of Votes for Women described state and county meetings of suffragists and included advertising and suffrage news on a regional and national scale.

Over the next two years, Votes for Women covered the suffrage movement in Washington and elsewhere. Articles told of both international and national events and personalities, and covered activities in the state, including its smallest towns. The paper described the doings of WESA leader DeVoe and numerous other active suffragists, well-known as well as local. Editorials by women and men appeared in its pages along with cartoons, posters, and the advertisements of business supporters. In October 1910, as Washington prepared to vote on women’s suffrage, the paper doubled in size to 32 pages.

No issue marked the critical month of November 1910—issue no. 10 was published in October and the December issue was no. 11. That issue heralded the women’s suffrage victory. Over 52,000 members of the all-male electorate voted for women’s suffrage, compared to under 30,000 against it. The next month Votes for Women called itself “THE MAGAZINE THAT WON EQUAL SUFFRAGE IN WASHINGTON.”

A front-page cartoon showed Uncle Sam holding the baby Washington as the fifth child in a family that already included the infant figures of Colorado, Utah, and Idaho. Mrs. George Smith of Alki in Seattle, Mrs. Hutton, and Mrs. Mackay stood by as a toddler Wyoming, the first state to grant full women’s suffrage, read the news. Beneath the cartoon appeared Governor Marion E. Hay’s proclamation that the suffrage amendment had become part of the constitution. Inside pages described and praised the victory, including the part played by Votes for Women, and printed congratulatory messages from across the country. But the victory failed to obscure friction within the movement centering on a break between DeVoe, with her allies, and Hanna. Adella Parker, formerly an associate editor, had apparently been forced out and started a rival paper.

In its January issue, Votes for Women—still “The Magazine That Won Equal Suffrage in Washington”—warned women, “DON’T FAIL TO USE THE BALLOT THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU.” When a month later the paper became The New Citizen, the Seattle Daily Times lightly mocked that it merely “appeared in a new dress” of “ivory finished book paper.” Mrs. M. T. B. Hanna was listed as editor and proprietor. Her daughters Florence and Mercie were the advertising manager and assistant editor, respectively, with the renowned Oregon suffragist Abigail Scott Duniway as Oregon editor. The magazine was published monthly in Seattle with headquarters in the Arcade Building; subscriptions were $1.50 a year, single issues 10 cents a copy.

Immediately taking up a new cause in the impending recall election of Mayor Hiram Gill, the paper vigorously supported reform candidate George W. Dilling, calling the special election “the most fortunate thing for the cause of equal suffrage that could possibly have happened since the passage of the amendment.” Women who had opposed or seemed indifferent to the suffrage cause now appeared to be registering to vote in large numbers. Indeed, when Dilling defeated Gill by a narrow margin, women could legitimately claim to have made the difference. Out of approximately 58,000 votes cast, 22,000 came from women, a point noted by Hanna as well as contemporary observers and later historians.

Also indicative of the change and likely reflected in other communities, the suffrage club in Hanna’s hometown of Edmonds disbanded and re-formed as a political economy club. Open to all women, the club expected to establish a course of study to “enlighten” the new voters about the state and national constitutions as well as local municipal governments.

The February New Citizen contained some news of women’s meetings and the like, but it was dominated by editorials and advertisements for a number of male candidates who had the support of women in an upcoming Seattle municipal primary election. F. W. Phelps, for instance, was likely typical of others when he wrote, “I am proud of the men of the State of Washington that they have recognized the appeal of their sisters for the right to vote, and know that through the exercise of this right, the women of Seattle will be instrumental in bringing about changes so much needed in the affairs of the municipality.”

The paper focused on women and their role in the larger society, but articles and editorials also favored aspects of general city betterment. The extensive number of items in the March 1911 issue included, for instance, a history of the Seattle Public Library, a full-page plea for humane treatment of children and animals, a call to turn a former downtown hospital into a museum of arts and sciences, and an article in
support of an $800,000 bond issue to extend the streetcar line between Rainier Valley and Ballard. April's edition had a comprehensive account of the newly established Children's Orthopedic Hospital. Indeed, the paper extended beyond Seattle to give news of women both in the United States and around the world. A page in the January 1912 issue related tidbits of women's activities in Russia, New Zealand, Uruguay, Britain, France, and Canada.

In January 1912, Hanna announced that *The New Citizen* had become incorporated and would no longer be solely the activity of the publisher. She claimed to have borne the entire cost of publishing *Votes for Women* and said she found that her invalid daughter increasingly needed her care. The hope was to make the paper a corporation owned and managed by women. That issue appears to have been the final one.

Mercie Hanna died in December 1913. Missouri Hanna continued to live in Edmonds and engaged in occasional journalistic endeavors until 1920. She died suddenly at “Fern Rest,” as she called her home in Hanna Park, on June 14, 1926, at the age of 69. Services were held in Seattle where she was buried in Lakeview Cemetery. She was survived by her elder daughter, Mrs. Florence Hamilton, who also lived in Hanna Park, a sister in Washington, D.C., and a brother in Berryville, Arkansas.

Upon her death, Hanna was heralded in the Edmonds and Seattle newspapers as the “Mother of Journalism” in Washington, honoring her significant and lengthy early role in a profession hitherto dominated by men.

Charles P. LeWarne, has written widely on Washington history, especially concerning communal and utopian settlements. His most recent book is *The Love Israel Family: Urban Commune, Rural Commune* (University of Washington Press).

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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Showcasing the Future and the Pacific Northwest

CENTURY 21 EXPOSITION

By Kevin Hodder

On April 21st, 1962, Seattle opened the Century 21 Exposition to waves of eager citizens and tourists, kicking off Seattle’s second world’s fair. To ceremoniously mark the noon opening of the spectacle, President John F. Kennedy, in Florida, pressed a golden telegraph key—the very same key that had opened Seattle’s first world’s fair, the Alaska–Yukon–Pacific Exposition, in 1909. With state-of-the-art architecture and exhibits displaying the wonders of science, Century 21 offered visitors a glimpse of what society might look like in the 21st century. While tourists focused on the fair itself, cities around the Pacific Northwest focused on something else—the tourists themselves—seeking to capitalize on publicity for the fair by luring swarms of travelers to their locales. Their goal was to bolster local economies, create jobs, and portray the Northwest as an ideal place to live. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the regional newspapers covering the Century 21 Exposition.

The Bureau of International Expositions (BIE) divides world’s fairs into two categories, notes Don Duncan in Meet Me at the Center, his book on the 1962 exposition. The first category includes fairs that run for two years, after which the fair sites are torn down. Seattle’s 1962 fair fell into the second category, in which a “fair ran for one year, BUT the buildings could be retained afterward.” Thus, Seattle found itself invested in an exposition that would live on after the gates closed and the crowds left. Seattle hosted the only BIE-sanctioned international exposition in the United States during the 1960s. Planners and promoters hoped this exclusivity would help concentrate the country’s interest on the area, allowing the region to display its unique attractions and opportunities. According to historian John M. Findlay, Century 21 “was expected both to advertise recent
growth and spur even more growth...to help shape urban change so that downtown Seattle could hold its own in the face of sprawling suburbs” as well as the charms of more well-established cities elsewhere in the nation.

The planning and preparations for Century 21 lasted much longer than the actual run of the fair. Promoting the event, obtaining building permits, acquiring funding, hiring workers, and contracting performers and exhibits were among the many tasks organizers had to complete prior to opening day. Duncan states that the “Who’s Who of the best in Seattle business and the arts” created “Century 21 Exposition, Inc., a non-profit organization,” in the summer of 1957 to oversee development and marketing of the fair. Ultimately, this organization managed the entire process from start to finish and, surprisingly, generated a profit—unlike preceding fairs that had put host cities into debt.

Washington’s two senators, Warren G. Magnuson and Henry M. Jackson, helped acquire $10 million in funding for the project. Returning to the notion that the 1962 exposition would fall into category two, Joe Gandy, president of Century 21 Exposition, Inc., commented in the April 21, 1962, Portland Oregonian that it would have been “economically immoral to spend millions of dollars on buildings only to wreck them after the fair.” As the puzzle pieces started falling into place, all that remained was to decide on the fair’s main theme. Ultimately, writes Findlay, the advent of the Cold War and the race between the United States and USSR to achieve ideological supremacy spurred organizers to suggest themes associated with life in the future and the advancement of science and technology.

Long before the Century 21 Exposition opened, cities around the Pacific Northwest were making plans and preparations to attract tourists and potential business investors en route to the fair. These very preparations ignited a sense of community and civic pride that at times took on a friendly yet competitive nature between districts. One editorial from an April 1962 issue of the Cathlamet-based Wahkiakum County Eagle featured a citizen explaining the newfound realization that “a town is a true reflection of the kind of people who live there” and that “people are drawn to places where the buildings are neat and kept up, where the parks are clean and...certainly a rundown weedy countryside does not indicate pride, ambition, and enterprise.”

In this atmosphere of community service, it appeared that citizens were not only urged to help in physical volunteer projects but in mental transformations as well. In the May 21, 1961, issue of The Seattle Times, a writer quipped that the region needed to “Smile—and look pretty!” as part of “Operation Smile,” a campaign designed “to make the visitor welcome and happy while he’s here, so he will stay an extra day, buy another meal or tankful of gasoline, take time for the local attractions, visit our stores and so on.”

This campaign was the brainchild of E. B. “Gene” Kasper, an Auburn...
As many as 145 cities and towns participated in Kasper’s pledge of positivity, earning them the designation of host city for incoming visitors.

For the most part, citizens and municipalities wholeheartedly took on the task of beautifying their public buildings and homes while maintaining an optimistic mood. Volunteering for cleaning and revitalizing the region’s urban and rural locales took place on a vast scale, which at times became almost competitive in nature. For instance, a month before the fair’s opening, a journalist for the Eagle wrote that “the ‘Clean-up, Fix-up’ campaign is getting oodles of cooperation and encouragement…our town is bound to win the trophy for the cleanest, prettiest town in Washington; and if they’re giving a trophy for the most enthusiastic participation, we’ll win that one, too.”

On a similar note, in Pasco a writer for the Columbia Basin News, referring to clean-up efforts, noted that “‘Operation Prosperity’ isn’t a job for a few garden club members and other willing workers, but a job for everyone…interested in civic development,” and quipped that “we might just like the ‘new look.’” In Bothell, officials worked to revamp their city’s image, going so far as to obliterate portions of the city’s architecture. According to Don Duncan in the April 13, 1962, Seattle Times, “two Bothell eyesores, the old Avon Theater and a feed store,” were designated to be “razed before the first tourist automobile [hit] town.”

The town was employing a type of cosmetic urban planning aimed at hiding architectural blemishes that fair visitors would scorn. After its rejuvenation by beautification crews, Duncan commented in the Times that Bothell’s business district looked “compact and well-scrubbed—like a teenager going on his first date.”

Despite the fact that Seattle would be hosting the fair, citizens around the region worked collectively to promote the virtues and beauties of the Pacific Northwest. The extent to which residents “cleaned-up” their cities testified to the level of importance the fair had in their minds.

From a regional point of view, the Century 21 Exposition was a truly inspiring event that many believed would usher in a period of prosperity for Seattle and its neighboring cities. On opening day, Governor Albert Rosellini “hailed the fair as ‘epitomizing the dynamic vitality of the people of our great state,’” but others made even more grandiose comments. A few days after the opening of the fair, Brian Morgan, writing in the April 24, 1962, Columbia Basin News, explained that “there’s one thing certain about the Seattle World’s Fair—it’s the greatest thing that has happened to the Pacific Northwest since the Indians decided not to scalp David Denny in 1851.”

Amid the splendor and celebrations, many locals saw the exposition not only as an opportunity to make a profit but also to make a statement. The city of Yakima, for example, pondered how best to tell “the Yakima Valley Apple story to visitors passing through…” on their way to the Seattle World’s Fair,” according to an article in the April 21, 1962, Yakima Morning Herald. Such was the prevalent thinking that permeated the minds of businessmen and local politicians, leading them to adopt campaigns and measures to promote transparency and accessibility to the region’s various enterprises and prospects. They further believed that the fair would promote the growth of new jobs and industries after attracting prominent investors.

Even outside of Washington, cities tried to take advantage of the possible commerce crossing their borders on the way to and from the fair. In the April 21, 1962, Portland Oregonian, Oregon’s exhibit at the fair was referred to as “the one calm oasis in the clatter of confusion the day before opening of the Seattle World’s Fair…where the harried, hectic and the unstrung drop in to relax a moment.” A comparison was being drawn between stress and disorder in Washington and calm tranquility emanating from its neighbor to the south. The primary purpose of that neighbor’s exhibit, noted the Oregonian, was “to lure World’s Fair visitors into Oregon before they return.
home,” something that most cities wanted to accomplish before the fair closed its gates. In that same April 21 issue of the Oregonian, writer Leverett Richards subtly belittled the fair with comments like this: “Seattle’s compact fairgrounds were something of a madhouse…you wouldn’t believe it to see the chaos that reigned,” pointing out the hastily put-together buildings and exhibits—contrasted, of course, with Oregon’s peaceful and welcoming state exhibit.

Not everyone was as modest in their slander, and a small minority even took a scathing or mocking tone toward Century 21. Oregon journalist Peter Thompson commented that visitors going to the fair would get “a peek at the future, a pair of blistered feet, and the realization that the advance publicists talked a lot of baloney.” Thompson noted that in many exhibits “photographs are used in great part to convey what life will be like in Century 21…and photographs just aren’t all that exciting”; he then expressed the opinion that the exaggerated hype and monumentality of the event would be what made the Century 21 Exposition unforgettable.

Another theme that went hand-in-hand with promoting the Seattle World’s Fair focused on the rewards of living in the Pacific Northwest. Foremost among them were the region’s natural beauty and recreational opportunities. The Portland-based Oregon Journal, for example, proposed that despite all the press coverage the exposition had received, there was an even greater show to be found. The Seattle Times waxed poetic: “Here you get a feeling for America’s love of the outdoors, for the great forests and fisheries....” Many outdoor enthusiasts touted such hot-spots as majestic Mount Rainier and its surrounding state and local parks, while coastal communities like Ocean Shores placed countless editorial ads luring fairgoers to a relaxing getaway on the smooth sands bordering the Pacific. Mention was made of Seattle and other ports as stepping-stones to more remote locations in Alaska and Canada, which were extolled for their game hunting, camping, and other outdoor recreational opportunities. For many out-of-state visitors, travel to and from the fair exposed them to sprawling plateaus, lush forests, snow-capped mountains and other breathtaking vistas—sights that underscored the region’s uniqueness.

While mainstream publications in the region tended to focus on tourism and economic development in relation to the fair, the Washington State Labor News painted a different picture of the exposition. This Seattle-based monthly probably provided more coverage leading up to the opening of the fair than most other newspapers. In fact, the paper dedicated its 1961 Labor Day issue to discussions about the construction and planning of Century 21. In this September 1961 issue, Governor Rosellini explained that Washington would “be introduced not only to millions of additional tourists but to some of the most important industries in our country...we have many real advantages here and I’m certain that both will want to return to our state.”

Numbered among these so-called advantages was the role Washington labor unions played in attracting business and investment to the region. As the paper reiterated in subsequent issues leading up to the fair’s opening, the success—the very existence of the fair, for that matter—was intricately connected with the Washington labor unions’ pledge not to strike during the fair’s construction. In the April 1962 issue, Edward E. Carlson, chairman of the World’s Fair Commission, acknowledged that “labor’s pledge of cooperation carried great weight in securing endorsement of the Bureau of International Expositions.” The concessions and promises made by Washington’s labor unions must have influenced national corporations to a degree or at least made businesses aware that Washington had a stable industrial base that was friendly to new investment. Although the Labor News devoted a great deal of editorial space to professing the wondrous roles of workers in the construction of the fair, it—it like the majority of other regional publications—sought to promote tourism as an avenue to “more industry, more jobs, more payroll” and creating a more “stable, diverse” economy.

Despite the fact that the Century 21 Exposition was a world’s fair bringing people and goods to Seattle from around the world, the general public tended to fixate on several things that were created locally. These were the Federal Science Pavilion (which became the Pacific
did every September, albeit with a dip in

the Marysville Strawberry Festival. (The town’s more conventional annual event, Visitors were also invited to attend the or claimed to have spoken to Martians. people who had reported UFO sightings speeches by notable UFO speakers and unidentified-flying-object fans” featuring Spacearama—a worldwide gathering of the city played host to the “first annual in mid July when, according to the Times, the city played host to the “first annual Spacearama—a worldwide gathering of unidentified-flying-object fans” featuring speeches by notable UFO speakers and people who had reported UFO sightings or claimed to have spoken to Martians. Visitors were also invited to attend the town’s more conventional annual event, the Marysville Strawberry Festival. South of Seattle, the Western Washington Fair took place in Puyallup, as it did every September, albeit with a dip in attendance attributable to the World’s Fair. Compared to the hectic hustle and bustle that went into preparing for Century 21 in other cities and towns, Puyallup remained calm and self-assured. One resident pointed out that “hospitality and beautification are ways of life here.” Preparing for both the regional fair and the expected influx of world’s fair visitors was considered business as usual in Puyallup.

Curiosity for the unusual attracted crowds of fair visitors north to Marysville in mid July when, according to the Times, the city played host to the “first annual Spacearama—a worldwide gathering of unidentified-flying-object fans” featuring speeches by notable UFO speakers and people who had reported UFO sightings or claimed to have spoken to Martians. Visitors were also invited to attend the town’s more conventional annual event, the Marysville Strawberry Festival. South of Seattle, the Western Washington Fair took place in Puyallup, as it did every September, albeit with a dip in attendance attributable to the World’s Fair. Compared to the hectic hustle and bustle that went into preparing for Century 21 in other cities and towns, Puyallup remained calm and self-assured. One resident pointed out that “hospitality and beautification are ways of life here.” Preparing for both the regional fair and the expected influx of world’s fair visitors was considered business as usual in Puyallup.

When the Century 21 Exposition closed its doors on October 21, 1962, Seattle was left with two novel structures—the Monorail and the Space Needle—which came to symbolize the city’s civic center later in the 20th century. With the passage of time, the Space Needle has even become a symbol of Seattle itself. Aside from displaying advances in science and technology, the Century 21 Exposition provided an opportunity for Seattle and the Pacific Northwest to showcase the unique characteristics and the economic, political, and social attractions that made the region a viable place to live and work. It could be argued that, for many local residents, interest in Century 21 was more about the economic opportunities that would arise from having a world’s fair in their backyard than it was about attending the fair itself. And this interest was mirrored throughout the Pacific Northwest, making it less Seattle’s fair and more of a region-wide affair.

The Century 21 Exposition, which showed millions of people a glimpse into the future, has now, ironically, become a nostalgic relic of the past. This year, 2012, marks the 50th anniversary of the second Seattle World’s Fair and another achievement as well—the passing of five decades since citizens across the region collectively put their best foot forward, gave their civic image a makeover, and exalted the Pacific Northwest’s many spectacular qualities. The job of preparing for a global festival that would spotlight the region was a challenge and an aspiration its citizens took on with determination and pride. There is no way to measure the impact of rejuvenation efforts in attracting prominent business investors and new residents, but certainly they did no harm and they brought a diverse population together in a common cause.

Kevin Hodder, a recent University of Washington graduate, plans to enter the UW Masters in Elementary Teaching program.
Photographer Virna Haffer created this portrait of Franz Brasz with one of his drawings. Although undated, it was probably taken in 1943 when Brasz, a student of Robert Henri, exhibited in Seattle. Brasz (1888–1966) was a member of the Ashcan school, a group of revolutionary painters in New York who depicted urban life with all its blemishes. Although educated on the East Coast, Brasz eventually migrated to Los Angeles and died in San Pedro.

Virna Haffer made a living as a commercial photographer in Tacoma but was very well connected with the national and international art scenes. Haffer left a legacy of personal work that is highly regarded for its experimental and technical brilliance.

She left her estate to the Washington State Historical Society.

—Maria Pascualy

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Les Canadiens

Resettlement of the Métis into the Backcountry of the Pacific Northwest

By Robert Foxcurran

Historians generally recognize the seminal economic role of the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) in Washington history, but the demographics associated with its operations in these northern borderlands are less well understood. As the HBC started to shift its operations slowly northward in 1843, the majority of its former employees—along with their Indian wives and mixed-blood or Métis family members—remained behind in what became United States territory after the Oregon Treaty with Great Britain was signed in 1846. Through the vagaries of politics and United States government policies, this sizeable population of early Pacific Northwest immigrants basically disappeared from history. Their descendants, however, now number in the tens of thousands.

Alexander Dumont, born in 1815 in the old Métis community at Green Bay, Wisconsin. He and trapping partner Joseph Laverdure were among the earliest settlers in Oregon’s Umpqua region.
This mixed-blood population still spoke French—along with an Indian language or two and Chinook Jargon, the regional trade language. Families headed by retiring HBC employees initially relocated to fertile lands south of the Columbia River. By 1830 they had begun settling around Champoeg and St. Paul along the middle Willamette River, where they lived among the Kalapuya people, a tribe that by 1833 had been decimated by a series of malaria outbreaks. Within a few years Americans, too, began to arrive. Although the Oregon Treaty was signed in 1846, the United States Army did not arrive until three years later, and the HBC did not definitively withdraw or end its influence for another 25 years. It is one thing to draw borders on a map half a world away and quite another to impose those borders on the ground.

The prevalence of the French language in the region is reflected in the vocabulary of the Chinook Jargon as well as in the modern-day names of towns and geographic features. The list of French place names along the Columbia–Snake River system and its numerous tributaries includes the Boise, Portneuf, Payette, Malheur, Grande Ronde, Touchet, Deschutes, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d’Alene rivers (and lakes for these last two), plus Grand Coulee, and the Frenchman Hills. Pacific Northwest cities, towns, and hamlets that reflect the French influence include: The Dalles, Boise, Coeur d’Alene, La Grande, St. Paul, Charbonneau, Gervais, and Disautel.

Even National Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C., hints at the French language presence in the Northwest. Washington and Oregon each chose two historical figures to represent them in the hall. Two of those four representatives were born in Quebec and spoke French as their mother tongue: for Oregon, John (or Jean-Baptiste) McLoughlin, and for Washington, Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart, founder of the Sisters of Providence mission in the West.

As mid-century approached and American settlers began arriving in the Northwest in large numbers, these proto-Canadians, with their Indian or Métis wives and children, resided in a network of a dozen or so communities throughout the region. The Americans in the Willamette valley did not begin to outnumber French speakers until the wagon trains arrived in 1843. It was not until the end of that decade that English speakers equaled French speakers in what would become Washington Territory. Farther inland, this demographic change from French to English took several more decades, depending on the specific valley.

Around 1860 the Caucasian population began to surpass the Indian population in Washington Territory. The largest set of French-speaking settlements was scattered over an extensive area known as French Prairie, above the falls in Oregon’s Willamette River valley. Its component villages were St. Paul, St. Louis, Butteville, Gervais, and Champoeg. Their story has been well-researched and incorporated into mainstream Oregon history, but this has not been the case for French-speaking settlements north of the Columbia.

The oldest such settlement in western Washington Territory and the first Catholic church, now called St. Francis Xavier, were established on Cowlitz Prairie at the uppermost point of navigation on the Cowlitz River. This settlement connected the lower Columbia to Puget Sound via a 60-mile overland trek supported by Cowlitz Indian guides, packers, and their horses. There were also a number of settlements on the far side of the
At some point a significant number chose to “blend in” as Indians. In the early 1840s, to counter the looming diplomatic and demographic offensive of the Americans, the HBC belatedly began recruiting colonists from the Red River Settlement (the District of Assiniboia) in present-day southeastern Manitoba, where a flourishing agricultural colony had developed. Prospective colonists from Red River were hesitant to risk an arduous journey and an uncertain future on leased land. Twenty-three families, most of whom were of mixed blood, assembled in June 1841 for the three-month overland trek to Fort Vancouver. After they had rested at the post for a short time, HBC chief factor John McLoughlin directed 14 English-speaking families to settle at Fort Nisqually and assigned the Catholic Métis families to Cowlitz Farms, where the St. Francis Mission and a small Métis settlement already existed.

The lure of life across the Columbia in the fertile Willamette valley was strong. Some of those who had settled on the rocky soil around Fort Nisqually drifted south of the Columbia by late 1843, while the more favorable conditions at Cowlitz brought an expansion of that colony to 64 people by the same date. The 13 French-Canadian and Métis families at Cowlitz Farms constitute the first settlement founded on a principally agricultural base in what is now Washington.
The Simmons-Bush party of American settlers overwintered at Washougal in 1844 and settled north of the Columbia at what is now Tumwater in 1845. By 1850 the total number of American settlers in the two Oregon counties about to break off into Washington Territory still could not muster a clear majority over former and actual HBC employees. In the early 1850s several thousand Americans arrived and proceeded to develop and subpartition the land, initiating the removal of the far more numerous surviving Indian residents, estimated to be about 14,000 at the time, to a tiny share of the total real estate.

A half-century later, by 1905, a significant proportion of the descendants of this initial Pacific Northwest settler group had been adopted as tribal members. Between the 1830s and 1850s the aging generation of retired HBC employees played the white settler card. By registering their intention to become American citizens, they were able to retain earlier claims under the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850, which had been enacted to encourage American settlement in the Oregon Country.

Two generations later, their mixed-blood descendants had a chance to obtain free land east of the Cascades—as Indians, not whites—receiving allotments of land under the Dawes Act. A large number of recipients were still members of French-speaking Catholic communities. This opportunity led to a further displacement of the Métis to interior reservations. Three reservations in particular took in significant Métis populations—the Flathead, Umatilla, and Colville. Some individuals still spoke French on these reservations into the second half of the 20th century.

The tribes west of the Cascades with the largest percentage of mixed-bloods were given short shrift in negotiations when it came to compensation, including the preservation of a land base. Villages along the principal transit corridors and portage points of the region experienced a higher level of trade and intermarriage than those situated in peripheral areas and thus also had a higher mixed population. The American authorities made it a priority to clear Indians from these critical corridors. Three of the tribes most heavily impacted by this dynamic were the Cowlitz, the Chinook, and the Cow Creek Band of the Umpquas. None of these three tribes received their own reservations, although recently the federal government gave recognition and token compensation to the Cowlitz and Cow Creek Umpqua people.

The status of the proto-Canadian and Métis settlers had been a major subject of debate at the first two meetings of the Washington Territorial Legislature during the winters of 1854 and 1855. Voting on the new territory’s principal ethnic issue, the assembly determined that once settlers in this special category had declared their intention to become United States citizens, they could vote and legally own and inherit property. This law only applied to males who were at least one-half white, a stipulation that also served to separate the mixed-blood families from their Indian neighbors, in-laws, and cousins.

Between 1847 and 1858, the Métis found themselves caught up in Washington Territory’s Indian conflicts. This started with Canadian “half-breeds” and their priests being implicated in both the Whitman Massacre (1847) and the Indian wars of 1855–1858. Though the final clashes occurred in the Spokane River area, earlier fights took place in the Yakima and Walla Walla valleys and in the Puget Sound region. One of the largest conflicts was fought in December 1855 at Frenchtown in the Walla Walla valley between the ranches of Louis Tellier and Joseph Laroque, and resulted in the temporary internment of the Métis and permanent removal of peaceful Indians.

Governor Isaac Stevens declared martial law the following year in Pierce and Thurston counties to deal with foreign-born settlers, including the Canadians, who were assumed to be aiding the “hostiles.” Each time a militia was organized, the Métis of the Willamette valley aligned with the local white majority, contributing their own military unit. In the outlying areas, however, their position was often more tenuous. Here they generally tried to remain neutral, or cooperated minimally as nonbelligerents.

Later in the century, when reservations were being “opened up” for settlement in the interior, the federal government...
reversed its position on separating the Métis from their Indian relations, deciding that the example of their mixed-blood cousins might encourage the tribes to settle down and become good Christian farmers and ranchers. Unlike the older, more autonomous Métis communities of eastern Montana, many of the French-speaking mixed-bloods were still close enough to the local Indians to graft themselves onto the reservations, although the burden of proof increased over time. The eastern Montana Métis had been isolated in the interior for a longer period of time. Far from their Chippewa and Cree origins, they had thereby coalesced into new autonomous tribes, competing with other tribes for buffalo, an ever more scarce resource. The long-established northern plains tribes tended to view them as enemies and successfully resisted attempts to relocate the Métis to their reservations.

Parenthetically, it was the Métis, especially those of Cree extraction from northerly regions now lying on the Canadian side of the border, who had contributed many of their daughters as wives accompanying the first wave of Northwest Company and HBC employees crossing over northern Rocky Mountain passes and down the Columbia. Employees who had come west as bachelors tended to marry local women—choosing from among the Pacific Northwest tribeswomen or, later, the Métis daughters of the first wave.

There was one major exception to this sequence involving tribes that had been resettled on the Flathead Reservation. On their own initiative, from early in the 19th century, this confederation of tribes led the way in establishing a policy of adoption and intermarriage with the French-speaking fur trade employees of Iroquois and European extraction in order to supplement their depleted ranks. The Kootenai, Kalispell, Pend Oreille, Spokane, and Flathead tribes had previously developed an alliance to face down Blackfoot Indians during buffalo hunting expeditions east of the Continental Divide. Moreover, these same tribes—along with another buffalo hunting ally, the Nez Perce—had initiated the original call for missionaries from the Pacific Northwest in the early 1830s. After these tribes were able to obtain their own collective reservation centered on the St. Ignatius Catholic Mission in the mid 19th century, they continued to adopt French-speaking mixed-bloods. The reservation extended from Flathead Lake south to the ridge above the Clark Fork of the Columbia, near where Missoula and Frenchtown now stand. Broken out linguistically, there were the Kootenai, displaced from the river valley of the same name, plus several interior Salish tribes relocating from downriver—the Catholic bands of the Kalispell (known as the Pend Oreille), many of the Spokane tribe’s Catholic members, and the Flathead people from the Bitterroot valley.

There was one final surge in adoption of Métis in the early 20th century when local freebooters were able to cajole the federal government into opening the gates of the Flathead reservation to white settlers through an allotment program. This offered one last chance for Métis cousins living off-reservation to join their relations. By the early 20th century, over half of all Métis descendants in the Pacific Northwest who had been gathered onto a reservation were situated on the south side of Flathead Lake.

By the time the Oregon Treaty went into effect, most of the French-Canadians who had emigrated west found themselves living on the United States side of the border. West of the continental divide, their descendants are more numerous in the United States than in Canada. All across the continent the French-Canadian frontier repeatedly found itself on the United States side of the border. Though a similar dynamic is widely recognized in the southern half of the trans-Mississippi West that was swallowed up by an expanding America absorbing the Hispanic mestizo population in place, it is not so recognized in the northern borderlands with les Canadiens. When they went west, they fell out of Canadian history and were often overlooked in United States history.

In Washington history the Métis are being rediscovered. The works of historian John C. Jackson have laid the groundwork, bringing the story of the Pacific Northwest Métis up through the 1850s and “dispersal.” Research and publications by historians on the Flathead and Umatilla reservations and in British Columbia have filled out much of the story since. Even so, there is a great deal of research and interpretation to be done to bring the history of this French-speaking segment of our Northwest heritage out of obscurity.

Robert Foxcurran, a retired economic analyst for Boeing, holds a master’s degree in business economics and history and is currently working on a history of the Métis in Washington.
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Slade Gorton
A Half Century in Politics
Reviewed by W. Clinton Sterling.

Slade Gorton’s teenage ambition was to be a United States senator. Never interested in inheriting his place in the family fish business, he moved to Seattle after law school and quickly established an active career in elected politics. It would ultimately see him to his youthful goal.

Gorton arrived in Olympia in 1959, joining fellow Republican reformers Daniel Evans and Joel Pritchard. Together, they formed “a force for change.” Talented and brainy Gorton cut his teeth in the rough-and-tumble of such contentious issues as public power and redistricting. He showed grit, mastery of detail and, characteristically, the courage of his convictions, sometimes to his political detriment (examples include character testimony in a libel suit on behalf of his liberal Democratic colleague John Goldmark, who had been accused of being a communist, earning him a bare-knuckled primary challenge in 1964, and an early call for President Nixon’s resignation).

His next step was toward statewide office. Gorton ran successfully for attorney general in 1968 as part of the Republican “Action Team,” which included Governor Evans, running for re-election, and Art Fletcher. In office Gorton prided himself on the quality of his deputies. He gave no favor to party, gender, or ethnicity—only to capability. In the process he created a cadre of public servants that spread throughout the state and the nation, many of whom continue to serve. Among the challenges they took on were tolerance for gambling and Major League Baseball (when the Seattle Pilots moved to Milwaukee); and they worked to beef up the consumer protection division.

Gorton fought the Boldt decision, which confirmed treaty fishing rights for Native Americans, guaranteeing them 50 percent of each annual run of salmon and steelhead. His opposition to the decision and subsequent efforts as senator on issues such as the spotted owl and a nuclear waste depository at Hanford gave him a reputation as anti-environmental, even though he also helped pass landmark environmental legislation. Gorton was never a movement conservative but more an “intellectual centrist with libertarian tendencies.”

Opposition by environmentalists and Native Americans as well as statewide dominance of liberal King County voters meant his grip on his senate seat was always tenuous. He was defeated twice for re-election. Following his last defeat he continued to serve, most notably, and honorably, on the 9/11 Commission, which investigated the security failure that resulted in the worst attack on American shores in history.

John C. Hughes has written an entertaining, informative, and humanizing biography of Senator Gorton to add to his other books in the Washington State Heritage Center’s Legacy Project. However, many of the issues relevant to Gorton’s career could have stood deeper analysis, and the author occasionally seems dismissive of some of his opponents. Those interested in a more critical analysis will have to wait for a future treatment. In the meantime, the present volume is an enjoyable introduction to its worthy subject. A free digital edition of the book is available online at: http://www.sos.wa.gov/legacyproject/oralhistories/SladeGorton/pdf/complete.pdf.

W. Clinton Sterling is the public services librarian at the Alaska State Court Law Library in Anchorage, Alaska.

Current & Noteworthy
By Robert Carriker, COLUMBIA Reviews Editor.

When Current & Noteworthy highlighted three praiseworthy coffee table style books in the Summer 2012 issue of COLUMBIA (vol. 26, no. 2), a number of regular readers reported back with genuine interest. More than monographs, even more than novels, large format, heavily illustrated tomes resonate with Pacific Northwest summer readers. Fall may have now overtaken summer on the calendar, and there may be a risk in going to the well once too often, but there are still at least three more oversize books that deserve comment. The following three books were among the six finalists for the Current & Noteworthy column in the summer issue; they just had to wait their turn. Please do not think of them as also-ran second choices.

Two of the books are products of, at least in part, the staff of History Link, the free online encyclopedia of Washington history. Power for the People: A History of Seattle City Light, by David W. Wilma, Walt Crowley, and The History Link Staff (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010; 128 pp., $29.95 cloth), recounts the century-long history of a municipally owned utility that has had a profound impact on
Washington. Seattle Light has consistently provided a stable and inexpensive source of electric power for a growing city. The success of Seattle as a technology and manufacturing center, in fact, rests upon a foundation of cheap and reliable energy. In 128 pages there are 158 illustrations.

On the other side of the ledger, however, the utility once gobbled up local investor-owned producers of electric power. City Light also built controversial dams—think of Ross Dam, the Skagit Dam, and Diablo Dam. It even got itself mired in two notorious investments: the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) and the Enron West Coast energy crisis of 2000–2001. So, yes, Seattle City Light has had troublesome periods, but as Jorge Carrasco, superintendent of the utility, writes, hydropower is a volatile commodity subject to fluctuations that are as simple as snowpack and as complex as regional energy prices. Power for the People is corporate history and needs to be balanced by reading other treatments of the same topic. This reviewer recommends Richard Berner’s outstanding three-volume series, Seattle in the 20th Century, Paul Pitzer’s Building the Skagit (1978), and Robert Wing’s A Century of Service: The Puget Power Story (1987).

Another of the dozen-or-so books written by the History Link Staff, and also a centennial publication, is Rising Tides and Tailwinds: The Story of the Port of Seattle, 1911–2011, by Kit Oldham, Peter Blecha, and The History Link Staff (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011; 128 pp., $29.95). In 128 pages there are 195 color illustrations, two of which are outstanding double-page maps of the port in 1891 and 2010.

A century ago Elliott Bay was a beehive of activity with competing railroads, but not so much with ships. A visionary civil engineer in 1895 called the city’s harbor at Railroad Avenue “a blot on the city and a menace to the lives of its people.” Uncoordinated growth in the port area after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897—an event that made Seattle both a destination port and a busy debarkation port—only made the congestion worse. Bills in the state legislature that would have authorized port districts with limited powers failed in 1907 and again in 1909.

Two years after the last rejection, however, the Port District Act passed the legislature and was signed by the governor. Two canals had influenced the politicians: the Army Corps of Engineers was making plans for Government Locks at Ballard and, in addition, the opening of the Panama Canal was imminent. Fisherman’s Terminal at Salmon Bay opened in 1914, the same year that Seattle became involved with shipping World War I cargoes and became the second busiest port in America, eclipsed only by New York City. By World War II the Port of Seattle had greatly expanded and in 1949 the Seattle-Tacoma Airport, complete with four cross-wind runways, gained international status and moved south of Boeing Field. The Bell Street Pier, a new development in 1996 at the former site of Piers 64–66, featured 11 acres of inviting public waterfront for cruise ships plus a downtown marina for recreational boats. Perhaps the only blot on the record of the Port of Seattle was their invitation to the World Trade Organization to hold its 1999 meeting in Seattle. The idea may have been a good one, but the associated riots by social activists and union workers tarnished the city’s image in the eyes of delegates from 135 member countries.

Derek Hayes—an editor whose previous accomplishments include atlases on the American West, North American railroads, and California—chose the maps in our third selection, The Historical Atlas of Washington & Oregon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011; 240 pp., $39.95). There is just as much text in this volume as in the two books reviewed above, but because of its page size and page count Historical Atlas has many more illustrations—roughly 900 total.

The largest space allotted to most of the maps is a half-page spread, which is too modest a size to function as a research tool. Sometimes the commentary on the map contains information taken directly from the map, such as “Boeing is One of the Largest Airplane Factories in the U.S.,” or in reference to Smith’s Cove, the “Largest Commercial Dock in the World.” A person actually needs a magnifying glass to find the text on the map itself. Therefore, it might be best to use this book as an illustrated catalog. Hayes discovered many long-forgotten maps in his search through state archives, state departments of transportation, university libraries, public libraries, federal agencies, various advertising commissions, and so on. If you see a map that can be useful to you, then turn to the very precise map sources listed at the rear of the book to find the home of the original and order a full copy for yourself. In the end, the beauty of this book is in its depth and breadth, and its organization and layout. Most of the maps date from before the 1950s, an era when cartography was an art form. Bird’s-eye-view maps are numerous. Not surprisingly, maps of Seattle and Portland dominate their respective states.

ADDRESS ALL REVIEW COPIES AND RELATED COMMUNICATIONS TO ROBERT C. CARRIKER, COLUMBIA REVIEWS EDITOR, HISTORY DEPARTMENT, GONZAGA UNIVERSITY, SPOKANE, WA 99258
Ella Higginson (1862–1940) distinguished herself in Northwest letters when the notion of Northwest letters barely existed. As poet, short story writer, novelist, columnist, and travel writer, Higginson sang the praises of the region, depicted the growth of its frontier settlements into booming townships, and fostered an understanding of the region that remains relevant today.

According to Dorothy Koert, author of *The Lyric Singer: A Biography of Ella Higginson* (1985), Ella Higginson (née Rhoads) and her family migrated from Kansas to Oregon when she was a child. Higginson published her first poem when she was 14 and throughout her teens and twenties continued to publish poems and stories in regional periodicals. After marrying in 1885, she moved with her husband to Bellingham Bay, prior to the villages of Sehome, Whatcom, Fairhaven, and Bellingham fully consolidating in 1903. It was here that Higginson found a permanent home and rose to national prominence as the literary chronicler of life on Puget Sound.

Higginson’s breakthrough as a writer came in the 1890s when her stories began winning contests and appearing in periodicals such as McClure’s and Short Stories. Her first collection of stories, *The Flower That Grew in the Sand*, was published in 1896 by the Calvert Company in Seattle and reissued in 1897 as *From the Land of Snow-Pearls* by Macmillan Company in New York. That same year Macmillan also published *A Forest Orchid and Other Stories*. The stories in both collections are mostly set around Bellingham Bay (with a handful set in the Willamette and Grand Ronde valleys). They are well-spun tales of domestic strain and the social drama of small-town life. In “A Point of Knuckling Down,” a young newlywed and her mother-in-law battle for household supremacy, while in “The Takin’ in of Old Mis’ Lane,” the comfortable Mrs. Bridges is pestered by townsfolk into rescuing a neighbor in need.

In the highly sentimental mode of the period, the stories combine poignant love scenes and picturesque descriptions of nature. No story captures these elements better than “A Forest Orchid,” in which the owner of a shingle mill along the Nooksack River falls for the nature-loving daughter of a logger. Much of the story could come straight out of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Nature*, including Sedonie’s reprimand of the profit-minded Mr. Gilder: “You have no joy in nature; you have no joy in yourself; you have no joy in God!” Yet, beyond the story’s Transcendentalist overtones is a vivid depiction of Northwest logging camps: “the unpainted shacks, the ugly mill, dusty brakes, the great charred stumps lifting their black forms everywhere.” The story also offers one of the best tree-felling scenes ever written. To account for these varying elements in Higginson’s fiction, Koert points to the fact that, in literature at the turn of the century, “imagination and idealism were giving way to regionalism and realism.”

Higginson also tempers the sentimentality of her stories with a subtle social critique. Since her main characters are usually women, this critique often expresses itself as an emerging sense of women’s rights. In one story, a daughter insists that her father is not being “good and generous” to her hardworking mother simply because he gives her the money she “worked for an’ earned.” In another story, when a husband justifies men’s bad behavior by arguing that they simply aren’t as good as women, his wife retorts, “They ain’t as good, aigh? Well, the reason they ain’t as good is just because they ain’t expected to be!” As Koert notes, “Ella believed in women, in their independence, in their rights to careers and to individual effort and achievement.”

In 1902, Higginson published the novel *Mariella; Of Out-West*, set in “Kulshan,” her stand-in for Bellingham. It is the story of a young woman torn between an educated professional man and a provincial working man—or, as Koert says, “the Bostonian and the typical Westerner.” Higginson was influenced by Sarah Orne Jewett, and like all good local-colorists, she carefully conveys the particularities of place, including those with historical
and social significance. She narrates the canoe races between the Alaskan, Nooksack, and Lummi tribes after they return from picking hops near Yakima; recounts how railroad company agents low-ball gullible farmers and snatch up their land; describes the slash-and-burn clearing of hillside for future development; and observes how “tide-land ‘jumpers’ were staking off lots along the water-front.” Throughout, she recognizes the effect of Kulshan’s boom on the landscape: “There were few to bemoan the sacrifice of the beautiful. ‘Damn nature; give us a town!’ was the motto of the boomer.”

In addition to her story collections and novel, Higginson published several collections of poetry. In fact, during her lifetime, she was as well known for her verse as for her fiction. Her most famous poem was “Four-Leaf Clover,” a simple lyric and one among many of her poems scored for music. In 1908, after several sojourns in Alaska, she published Alaska, The Great Country, which blends personal travelogue with a history of the territory. For a number of years, Higginson also wrote a column titled “Clover Leaves” for the Seattle Daily Times, where she reviewed books and commented on current issues. She later wrote a column for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer as well.

Higginson's prolific writing career gave the author a measure of public acclaim that benefited her civic engagement. Whether promoting local education, arts organizations, or politicians—including serving as campaign manager for Frances C. Axtell, the first woman elected to the Washington State Legislature—Higginson was committed to her community as well as to her literary endeavors. Her poem “Evergreen State” expresses her devotion to her adopted home best: “My chosen state, to thee— / Cleft by the Opal sea, / Evergreen State! / Land of the emerald ferns, / Land where the sunset burns— / To thee my heart e’re turns, / With thee I wait.”

Peter Donahue teaches English at Wenatchee Valley College at Omak, in the Okanogan valley.

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Additional Reading

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

**Billy Frank**


**The Cruelest Irony**


**Missouri Hanna**


**The Century 21 Exposition**


**Les Canadiens**


Made in Hanford
The Bomb that Changed the World
Hill Williams

In 1942, a small plane flew over three farming communities in eastern Washington. The passengers agreed. Isolated and near the powerful Columbia River, the region was the ideal site for the world’s first plutonium factory. Two years later, built with a speed and secrecy unheard of today, the facility was operational. The plutonium it produced fueled the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945. Hill Williams traces the amazing but also tragic story—from the dawn of nuclear science through World War II and Cold War testing in the Marshall Islands.

Be Brave, Tah-ty!
The Journey of Chief Joseph’s Daughter
Jack R. Williams
Illustrations by Jo Proferes

The War of 1877 forced more than 700 Nez Perce men, women, and children on an arduous trek that culminated in a battle near the Canadian border. Overwhelmed, most surrendered, but about a third, including Chief Joseph’s daughter, escaped. Nicknamed Tah-ty, she was just twelve years old. Told in her young voice, this biographical novel brings to life the momentous flight and its aftermath. Originally intended for Nez Perce classrooms, the appealing narrative and exquisite illustrations depict many aspects of the Nimiipuu Dreamer culture—especially female roles and perspectives—and touch on all that has been lost.

WHERE THE SALMON RUN
THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF BILLY FRANK JR.

BY TROVA HEFFERNAN

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