Fears about nuclear war sparked a backyard fallout shelter fad in Spokane.

INSIDE

Prepared by Science Service, Inc.
Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching History: Presented to an outstanding certified teacher of Pacific Northwest history in an accredited K-12 school in Washington or to a nonprofit organization.

Peace and Friendship Awards: Presented to a Native American and a second individual, each of whom has advanced public understanding of the cultural diversity of the peoples of Washington.

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James Cook and Enlightenment Era Exploration in Context

By David L. Nicandri

In the summer 2015 issue of COLUMBIA, Dylan Burrows reviewed Arctic Ambitions: Captain Cook and the Northwest Passage, which I coedited with James K. Barrett. Therein, Burrows criticized the inclusiveness of our editorial approach and the integrity of our motivations. He also censured the legitimacy of the interpretation of Cook in my contribution to the anthology. According to Burrows, “profound silences haunted” the book because it “leaves in its wake the incite postcolonial critique of the heated Cook-Lono debates of the 1980s.”

This complaint was prompted by the theme statement in my essay, “A New Look at Cook: Reflections on Sand, Ice, and His Diligent Voyage to the Arctic Ocean.” The essay argues that Cook scholarship has become stuck in a “Polynesian palm-tree paradigm,” to the neglect of his high latitude voyaging—the actual zone of prospective discovery for his contemporary and his predecessors. The essay notes that Cook’s last two expeditions—the actual zone of prospective discovery for his contemporaries and his predecessors—saw Cook leave the tropical zone merely as a provisioning and staging ground.

Selectively editing what I wrote, Burrows quotes me as objecting to “its sins of ideological limitations . . . and endless rehashing of the meanings of beach crossings.” What I actually said about postcolonial scholarship and its relation to other schools of thought is this: “We need a more nuanced, perhaps more evenhanded, evaluation of Cook. This new, synthetic view would not reinstitute the hagiography—the vital science of our time. As to Burrows’s imputation that Jim Barrett and I purposefully avoided Arctic indigenous voices, I can attest that we diligently exhausted every possible avenue to secure an essay from an Inuit author, right to the deadline set by the publisher; but like Cook in his search for a Northwest Passage, we failed. In this context I recall what Allen Pinkham, a Net-Peace elder and historian, said to a room full of Native Americans at a Lewis and Clark Bicentennial meeting in Missoula, Montana, devoted to the appropriateness of tribal participation in that event: ‘We can’t complain that no one knows our side of the story if we don’t take advantage of opportunities to tell it.’

At the end of the review Burrows offers this indictment to explain our supposed evasion of responsibility:

The resource industry’s heavy contributions to the Anchorage Museum’s nearby 7,000-square-meter exhibit may explain the disproportionate emphasis on the Northwest Passage’s economic potential. Disengaged from the legacy of Cook’s beach crossings, the catalog leaves the general reader marooned, unaware of the rising cost of an increasingly navigable Northwest Passage.

Of the 20 presenting sponsors and contributors to the exhibit in Anchorage, 5 are resource industries. Even presuming the Anchorage Museum would allow its interpreters to be uncompromised by such corporate support, that small number is countervailed by the financial gifts from such entities as the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Western States Art Foundation, and CIRI, an Alaskan Native Corporation. Neither Barrett nor I had a substantial role in the final development of the exhibition. There was no connection between exhibition development and our work with the team of authors whose essays appear in the anthology. Burrows is also factually mistaken in the assertion that the anthology promotes “the Northwest Passage’s economic potential” at the expense of indigenous voices or otherwise. Essayists Harry Stern, Gudnun Bucher, Rabin Inglis, and Lawson Brigham observe in the hyperbolic surounding the so-called “New North.” Their essay points to a raft of environmental and jurisdictional limits to development in the Arctic.

The Burrows review perfectly reflects the ideological limits of the postcolonial criticism of Cook that I mentioned in my essay when I called for new and more equitable perspectives on the great navigator’s career. Having come this far, it seems incumbent upon me to elaborate on the thesis I narrowly hinted at in the anthology.

McLynn recently notes in Captain Cook: Master of the Seas, “Few things have plummeted more disastrously than Cook’s reputation,” principally because “he is the object of almost universal execration in all societies that lived through colonialism.” Even McLynn, who is largely sympathetic to the postcolonial critique, thinks that maybe academics have overdone it because they sometimes “try to swim towards the disembodied hero like sharks, determined to finish him off.”

John Robson in Captain Cook’s World writes that Cook’s reputation has suffered because modern scholars have rewritten history “ascribing present-day interpretations, morals, and attitudes to 18th-century events. Cook may not have deserved some of the adulation and praise that earlier generations have lavished upon him,” Robson continues, “but he certainly does not deserve the negative twists currently being placed on his actions 200 years ago.” The events Robson refers to are the 19th-century expeditions. Robson continues: “It is difficult to judge the

Captain James Cook, F.R.S., from the frontispiece in the first volume of the published narrative of his third expedition (Voyage to the Pacific Ocean . . . ).

Francis averred, is not repeating “the sins and errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible.”

An important semantical facet in the original idealization of Cook from the explorer’s time to the middle of the 20th century was the lack of nuance in the use of the term “discovery.” Bernard Smith observes in Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages, “The discovery of the world is really a subject for proponents. Cook was not a discoverer of new lands in any fundamental sense of the word.” I might point South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands in the South Atlantic, and perhaps Cook’s intimations of Antarctica as evidence to the contrary, but Smith’s larger point holds: wherever Cook went “there were usually people who had been settled for centuries.” Smith surmises there was a pre-literate “anti-Cook” sentiment among the indigenous peoples of the Pacific after those voyages, but it was one “that rarely surfaced. When it did take written form,” Smith adds, it did not emerge from aboriginal sources but rather, “it came from Europeans who were disposed to discredit Cook in order to advance their own interests.” Smith is referring to the Christian missionaries in Hawaii who propagated spurious histories about Cook as vengeance for, it was supposed, the sin of allowing himself to be treated as a deity.

This process has been repeated in more recent times by scholars whose motivations include the noble one of solidarity with justly aggrieved native peoples. However, this ideological unity has come at a price to historiography. In Captain Cook and His Times, Robin Fisher and Hugh Johnston refer to “the manipulation of Cook’s memory to suit current social and political concerns.” The postcolonial critique of Cook is as much an oversimplification as was the preceding idealization of Cook that it intends to supplant. This is ironic too because no explorer before or after Cook was as aware of the consequences of the encounter as Cook himself. For example, during his first voyage, Cook said of aboriginal Australians:

They are far more happier than we Europeans; being wholly unaccustomed not only with the superficial but the necessary

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Conveniences so much sought after in Europe, they are happy
its not knowing the use of them. They live in a Tranquility which
is not disturb’d by the Inequality of Condition. The Earth and
sea of their own accord furnishes them with all things necessary
for life, they covet not Magnificent Houses, Household-stuff
etc. [T]hey live in a warm and fine climate and enjoy a very
wholesome Air, so th[e] they have very little need of Clothing
and this they seem to be fully sensible of, for many to whom
we gave Cloth etc. to, left it carelessly upon the Sea beach and
in the woods as a thing they had not manner of use for. In short
they seem’d to set no Value upon any thing we gave them, nor
would they ever part with any thing of their own for any one
article we could offer them; this in my opinion argues that they
think themselves provided with all the necessarys of Life and
they have no superfluities.

Few criticisms of Western materialism have been more
incisive, especially given their vintage of August 1770.
Indeed, Cook’s biting analysis could today be considered
progressive thinking about the political economy of the mod-
ern world. Cook was not only far ahead of his own time, he
is ahead of ours. The ethos of limitless acquisition remains
unassailable except for a few pockets that embrace the limits
of growth in the interest of preserving the livability of a finite
environment. The biggest challenge indigenous cultures face
today is the global orthodoxy surrounding the discourse of
development. The postcolonialists will suggest that Cook was
oblivious to local “agency,” but in many ways he comported
himself with more sensitivity to the world’s poor (if indeed
they were poor) than modernity does.

Cook’s openness to the worldview of the Aborigines was not
an anomaly. During his second voyage he recorded the follow-
ing incident in his journal at the conclusion of a topographical
survey of Tanna, part of the Pacific island nation of Vanuatu.
Cook and his party were recrossing the island at the end of
their investigation when, as he writes, “. . . we met twenty or
thirty of the natives collected together and were close at our
heels, we judged their design was to oppose our advancing into
the country but now they saw us returning they suffered us to
pass unmolested.” Indeed, the islanders provided both food
and directions back to their ship, prompting Cook to reflect:

Thus we found these people Civil and good Natured when not
prompted by jealousy to a contrary conduct, a conduct one cannot
blame them for when one considers the light in which they
must look upon us in, impossible for them to know our real
design, we enter their Ports without daring to make opposition,
we attempt to lead in a peaceable manner, if this succeeds as
well, if not we land nevertheless and remain the footing we
thus got by the Superiority of our fire arms, in what other light
can they at first look upon us as insidurs of their Country.

The conceit of postcolonialists is that they have dis-
covered Cook’s misfeasance, or active malfeasance.
The truth is, Cook wrote up the particulars of his own
impeachment or, more properly, an indictment of the culture
that sent him on his missions. He well knew the deleterious
effects of the encounter and was equally aware of the global
pattern of abuse. After describing the damaging results of his
crew’s interaction with the Maori, Cook observed:

Such are the consequences of a commerce with Europeans
and what more to our Shame [as] civilized Christians,
we detach their Morals already too prone to vice and we
introduce among them wants and perhaps diseases which
they never before knew and which serve only to disturb that
happy tranquility they and their fore Fathers had enjoy’d. If
any one denies the truth of this assertion let him tell me what
the Natives of the whole extent of America have gained by the
commerce they have had with Europeans.

In Voyages of Discovery, Lynn Withey reminds us that,
given the trajectory of global history, no indigenous popula-
tion could remain “undiscovered forever.” A further com-
plexation, she says, lies in the fact that “some of the Pacific
Islanders welcomed ‘the Europeans.’” In that sense, “Discov-
ery was a two-way business,” although, she adds, “Certainly
the advantages in the exchange were heaped on the side of
Europeans.” Assuredly Cook felt he came from a superior civi-
lization, but he also was one of the first Europeans to come to
the sensible conclusion that the new peoples he encountered,
even those least advanced technologically, possessed cultures
with autonomous value. The many admi-
iable attributes Cook discerned in the
societies encountered over the
course of three voyages, combined with the findings of other explor-
ers like Bougainville on behalf of the French Enlightenment, guided
European culture to an apprecia-
tion for what these distant Pacific
civilizations could teach. Europe
gained the benefit of a less exalted view
of life, they covet not Magnificent Houses, Household-stuff

European penetration of the Pacific,” but Cook himself
was blind to the prospect of Christian evangelization in
the Pacific Basin and never fully envisioned the imperial
aftermath of his efforts.

With regard to the North Pacific fur trade, Cook’s 
attitude about British prospects was completely
dissimpressive, and the actual prescription for what
followed on the Northwest Coast was written by Lieutenant
James King in the official Admiralty account of the third
voyage published after Cook’s death. Given the subsequent
despoliation of tribal homelands and adjoining waters, and
the demographic displacement caused by a succession of
intruders—be they fur traders, whalers, or settlers—we can
agree with Frank McLynn’s recent assertion that what post-
colonial critics truly rebel against are aftereffects that Cook
“had nothing significant” to do with.

Bernard Smith presaged this line of thought a genera-
tion ago with the following remark, which ended his path-
breaking interdisciplinary study of Cook in the Pacific: “It
could be said of Cook more than of any other person, that he
helped to make the world one world; not a harmonious world,
but the men of the Enlightenment had so ardently hoped, an
increasingly interdependent one. His ships began the pro-
cess of making the world a global village.”

Today the cultural and economic ramifications of globaliza-
tion are oft-derided, some deservedly so, but Gascoigne points
to one salutary outcome—the interdependence of nation
states and the moderating effects derived therefrom. While
Cook’s voyages initially helped spread international rivalrys
over more of the earth’s surface, they also served to emphasize
the unity and interconnectedness of the globe.

The great navigator’s voyages “provided the maps and cul-
tural and scientific cargo for a much more thorough-going
European penetration of the Pacific,” but Cook himself
was blind to the prospect of Christian evangelization in
the Pacific Basin, and never fully envisioned the imperial
aftermath of his efforts.
In the end, the proper evaluative question to ask is not, "Were indigenous people and the integrity of their cultures harmed by the encounter?" Of course they were. Instead we should ask, "Did it make a difference that Cook was the vanguard agent in some sectors of the globe?" Admittedly, questions such as this are easier to pose than answer. William Hunt, on the occasion of the bicentennial of Cook’s voyage to the Pacific Northwest in 1978, addressed the ascension of the postcolonial “fatal impact” school of Cook historiography by asking a question related to Lynn Withey’s point—it is possible to envision a substantially different course of events? This query seems to touch on the phenomenon of what T.S. Eliot termed “ringing the bell backwards.” Europe at the time of Cook was in an expansive burst; a kind of economic, cultural, and technological “big bang” that has been swelling ever since. Many terrible things have happened over the past few centuries as a by-product of that enlargement, but William Hunt urged us not to ignore the movement’s positive aspects, citing the “energy, daring and curiosity, and the ambition of expanding knowledge and commerce.”

Hunt reasoned that anti-Cook reevaluation took hold because it “nod toward biblical sources, "the Lost Crusade", and a quest for greater knowledge and understanding that crosses intellectual and geographic boundaries—searching for what has gone before, and might come next. Cook’s motivation wasn’t the narrowness of power or wealth. He was encouraged to observe, map, and otherwise illustrate the unknown, describe the ultimate dispersion of humanity (which he did in the tropics of the Pacific and the Arctic basin), and understand the cosmic and natural principles that guide the earth’s physical processes. Western civilization, at its best moment during the Enlightenment and with Cook as its emblematic figure, was the first and only culture in history to conduct a systematic study of the world and its many peoples. That analytical model discerned many differences and many commonalities but, more importantly, was able to draw valuable lessons about the universality of the human experience. Today we continue to need explorers in search of understanding. As T.S. Eliot wrote: "We shall not cease from exploration. And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started And know the place for the first time."
Now he was going to study at college with a concentration in science to help prepare him to become a noncombat specialist. When the accelerated college program was complete, he would be ready for OCS. The patch he would wear on his jacket was a sword of valor and a lamp of knowledge (see page 7). ASTP on his jacket was a sword of valor and a lamp of knowledge (see page 7). ASTP

The ASTP men were called "cadets." Their days began with a recorded bugle call. Rolling out of bed in Duncan Dunn Hall and commanded fraternity houses, they showered, donned their uniforms, and lined up outside. After roll call, the companies marched to the dining hall. Bergh liked the dining hall. With "delicious" food, endless glasses of milk, food prepared by "civilians," and "real" napkins he could place on his lap, Bergh felt like he was eating in a restaurant. As long as they were with packs, no weapons practice, no KP duty, police areas, or scrub floors. The cadets looked forward to meeting and dating coeds. They soon found out, though, that the apparently shy women would not even talk to them. The Astp were complete, he would be ready for OCS. The patch he would wear on his jacket was a sword of valor and a lamp of knowledge (see page 7). ASTP on his jacket was a sword of valor and a lamp of knowledge (see page 7). ASTP
Bergh found college life remarkable. But for the terrible realities of war, he might easily have lost sight of what the ASTP was all about.

reported to be advancing into "China's rice bowl." Maybe thousands more like Bruce Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Chiang Kai-shek in December could straighten things out.

Another campus newspaper items focused on the Japanese: They remained a force to be reckoned with, their milita-

risan leaders had indoctrinated the nation to expect the future, holding his pipe and standing in mind—where would their war be, the women by rolling up their pant legs, turning their Garrison caps sideways, and striking comical poses. It was fun to be free. Coeds sitting on a porch were a great inspiration for silliness.

THE Evergreen brought the war back home. Stories about the ASTP cadets were numerous. The paper reported on speakers who came to campus talking about the nobility of the cause and the repugnant behavior of their foes. More impor-
tantly to a soldier, the course of the war was detailed in a series of maps showing where the action—bombing, attacking, advancing, sinking—was taking place. Generally, the news seemed good.

There was a lot to learn about the Japanese, and The Evergreen summarized lessons presented to the student body. In October 1943 a visiting speaker by the name of Frank Langlie, a former soldier, lectured at the campus on the stoic quality of the Japanese family. Not yet two years into war, the typical family ate two eggs a month, found no meat at

The German propaganda minister and Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. The appeal. One ad contained a German pris-

sons from various ASTP com-

pany reporters. Bergh wrote articles about the company's sports heroes. On the "basketball beat," he loved to write about his company's victories on the hardwood. They could be "smart heads," who "hit all cylinder" and sink shots with "uncanny accuracy." Company D's team was led by their unit commander, Lieutenant Peacock, and reinforced by a worthy second team. More importantly, Com-

pany D lived by the adage attributed to General Bedford Ford, to get there they "fustest with the mostest." Aggressive teamwork and smart leadership made them a formidable team.

Radio gossip columnist Walter Win-

cell was famous for his trademark: "Good evening, Mr. and Mrs. America . . . and all the ships at sea." That lead-in caught listeners' attention, and his juicy tidbits about the rich and famous, entertainers, and political science at Yelm High School for 42 years, and was named the 2012 Washington State Legislation's Civics Educator of the Year.

Edward Burgh Jr. is a previous contributor to COLUMBIA. He has taught United States histo-

ry and political science at Yelm High School for 42 years, and was named the 2012 Washington State Legislation's Civics Educator of the Year.
Coming Home Again

Ulysses S. Grant Returns to the Pacific Northwest

IN 1879 FORMER PRESIDENT Ulysses S. Grant's ship steamed into San Francisco Bay, returning him from a two-and-a-half-year world tour. He had dined with Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, ridden an elephant in India, and basked the Great Wall of China. But before returning home to Galena, Illinois, there was one more thing he wanted to do: revisit Oregon and Washington Territory, where he had once intended to live out his life. And so it was that on October 13, 1879, the general who had led the Union Army to victory brought his wife, Julia, to Vancouver, Washington Territory, where in 1852, as a homesick and penniless young lieutenant, he had fallen in love with the Pacific Northwest.

Grant graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1843, served in the Mexican-American War in 1846–47, and married Julia Dent in 1848. On September 19, 1852, he reported for duty at Columbia Barracks, leaving Julia, who was pregnant with their son, Ulysses S. Grant Jr., and their two-year-old son, Fred, in Ohio. His many letters to Julia were filled with his love for Astoria—a place that we see on maps, and how much he liked the Columbia River region. “I wish you could be here dearest to enjoy the fine climate we have and the wild scenery . . . the fact is my dear wife if you and our little boys were here I should not want to leave here for some years to come.”

The army established the post of Columbia Barracks on May 15, 1849, and changed its name to Fort Vancouver on July 13, 1853, and finally to Vancouver Barracks on April 5, 1879. When Grant arrived, 292 troops were stationed there. While serving as quartermaster, Grant tried many schemes to earn extra money so that he could bring his family to him. These included raising potatoes, running a store, and speculating in livestock.

Grant’s potato farm, store, and livestock businesses all failed, and he lent money to a friend who failed to repay it. In his memoirs, which he wrote in 1885 as he was dying of throat cancer, he mocked his attempts to become a potato farmer.

Luckily for us the Columbia River rose to a great height from the melting of the snow in the mountains in June, and overflowed and killed most of our crop. This saved digging it up, for everybody on the Pacific coast seemed to have come to the conclusion at the same time that agriculture would be profitable. In 1853 more than three-quarters of the potatoes raised were permitted to rot in the ground, or had to be thrown away. The only potatoes we sold were to our own mess.

Unable to raise enough money to bring his family to him, even after he was transferred in 1853 from Oregon Territory to Fort Humboldt in northern California, he resigned from the army, planning to collect his family and return to the West Coast. At the end of his life he wrote:

“I left the Pacific coast very much attached to it, and with the full expectation of making it my future home. That expectation and that hope remained uppermost in my mind until the Lieutenant-General's bill was introduced into Congress in the winter of 1863–64. The passage of that bill [which placed Grant in charge of the United States military] and my promotion, blazed my last hope of ever becoming a citizen of the further West.

While the Civil War and his two-term presidency shattered Grant’s dream of living on the Pacific Coast, as soon as he left the presidency he realized another dream—to tour the world with Julia. The Grants left the White House in 1877 and embarked on a remarkable trip that included Russia, Belgium, and Vietnam, and concluded at San Francisco in September 1879—when Grant finally was able to take his wife to his former army post.

The Grants arrived in Astoria on October 13 aboard the steamer St. Paul. Astorians hung so many flags and banners that the city ran out of bunting. Some 2,000 people greeted them at the dock. Fort Stevens fired a 21-gun salute, the cannons at Fort Canby echoed it, and Astoria saluted the further West.

By Kristine Deacon

GENTLEMEN, the geographical position of the city over which you preside, together with the evidences of enterprise and industry which caught my eye as we entered your harbor, is a sure indication that ere long one of the most important commercial cities of the Pacific coast will be your city of Astoria.

Twenty-seven years ago I first visited your state. This will make the ninth time I shall have passed up and down this beautiful and grand river. Every point of interest between Astoria and the mouth of the Columbia river and they have a custom house, distributing post office for the Territory, and a few pilots for vessels coming into the mouth of the river . . . they have no wharf . . . So much for Astoria.”

When he returned in 1879, 57-year-old Grant viewed Astoria more favorably. He told the cheering crowd in front of the Parker House Hotel:

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Back in 1852, on his first day in Oregon Territory, he had written to Julia, “Astoria—a place that we see on maps, and read about—is a town made up of some thirty houses . . . there is nothing about the place to support it; only that it is near the outlet of the Columbia river and they have a custom house, distributing post office for the Territory, and a few pilots for vessels coming into the mouth of the river . . . they have no wharf . . . So much for Astoria.”

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and The Dalles returns to my memory. I never had the pleasure of stepping shore at this particular place before, but it seems to me that when I last passed by here the hills forming the background of this thriving town were much higher than they are now. It feels like returning home again.

The Daily Astorian reported:

The people of the state were delighted when they discovered Mrs. Grant was to accompany her husband to Oregon. The women of the entire nation regard with pardonable pride the grace and dignity with which she, for eight years, presided at the White House “as the first lady of the republic.” Her absence would have taken half the society interests from General Grant’s visit here.

Julia Grant was equally delighted with the people of the Pacific Northwest. She wrote:

Our ride up the Columbia River was enchanting. The beautiful scenery on both sides of this broad, majestic river: the view in the distance of Mount Hood, lifting high his hoary head; the very, the more than pleasant, the delightful company of old army friends made this visit one to remember... the men and women were also of a superior character and physique. Surely with such surroundings one must become godlike. Nor do I wonder now of stepping shore at this particular place before, but it seems to me that when I last passed by here the hills forming the background of this thriving town were much higher than they are now. It feels like returning home again.

The Daily Astorian reported:

Two hundred citizens bore torches. “Yesterday, when the Grants sailed up to The Dalles, as a young lieutenant, trying to raise money to bring his family to him, Grant had written Julia, “I have been up to The Dalles of the Columbia, where the immigrants generally first upon their arrival in Oregon, coming by the overland route, I have made arrangements for the purchase of quite a number of oxen and cows.” It was perhaps of their return trip that Julia Grant wrote in her memoirs:

We had a delightful sail up the coast to Portland; that is, we had a pleasant party, but the sea was rather rough. I remember how the waves tossed and pitched. I said to the Captain, “If you have not placed your ballast just as it ought to be. You should have it distributed more widely.” The General was surprised at this speech and said: “Really Mrs. Grant, I was not aware that you knew how to ballast a ship.”

On the 16th, the Grants took a specially decorated train to Salem, where a brass band serenaded them from the balcony of the Chemeketa Hotel. “This was the first opportunity I have ever had of visiting this portion of the Willamette Valley, and I have enjoyed it heartily,” he told the crowd lining the streets in front of the hotel. Grant stopped briefly in Gervais, Aurora, and Oregon City, where he gave short speeches from his train, then returned to Portland to attend a concert by the Handel and Haydn Society.

The Grants left Portland for San Francisco early the next day. The former president died six years later, without returning to the Pacific Northwest. As to his wishes observation that the hills surrounding Astoria had seemed so much higher when he was so much younger. Daily Astorian editor DeWitt Clinton Ireland wrote: “While he felt, as he expressed himself, anxious to visit the place once more, the appearance of things under the flight of progress, was like a new revelation.”

Kristin Deacon is a Pacific Northwest historian whose work has appeared in the Oregon Historical Quarterly. She is a former newspaper journalist and a public affairs representative with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department.

Howard had first met Grant in 1863 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and was well aware of Grant’s reputation as a drunk:

General Grant and I shared a common wall tent between us. He had a humorous expression which I noticed at his eye fell upon a liquor flask hanging against the tent wall. “That flask is not mine,” I quickly said. “I never drink.” “Neither do I,” was his prompt reply: and his answer was not in sport. He was at that time free from every appearance of drunkenness and I was happy, indeed, to find in his clear eye and clear face an unmistakable testimonial against the many falsehoods, or exaggerations which every and madness had set in motion, especially after the famous battle of Shiloh.

\[text{General O. O. Howard, who had fought with Grant in the Civil War, was now the commanding officer at Vancouver. On August 8, Howard had written to the Grants: “I have just learned that you will probably visit my Department in September next. I have quite sizable quarters at Vancouver. The people of the state were much higher than they are now. It feels like returning home again.”} \]
December 1958 descended on the people of Spokane with 30 billboards depicting an atom-ic mushroom cloud looming prominently over the caption, “Protect yourself from fallout,” warning of the threat of nuclear war. The billboards advertised a federal booklet titled, Facts about Fallout Protection. To survive fallout, the booklet advised, “The best protection is an underground shelter with at least three feet of earth or sand above it.” For serviceable protection of the less-than-ideal but better-than-nothing variety, it recommended a “basement refuge” of sandbags piled around a wooden frame to block out radiation. “If you want to build a basement shelter with concrete or sandbagged walls and ceiling,” the booklet continued, “plans are available . . . consult your local civil defense official.” Two years later Clyde H. Friend, Spokane’s civil defense director, reinforced that message to reporters, “We are encouraging the construction of home bomb shelters.”

Newspaper stories from the Spokane area indicated that a handful of homeowners in the region responded to advice from civil defense authorities and built backyard bunkers and basement hideaways in years immediately after the mushroom cloud billboards appeared. But a strong upwelling of public enthusiasm for fallout shelters did not occur until President John F. Kennedy’s Berlin Crisis broadcast in summer 1961. In it he announced preparations for a possible military conflict with the Soviet Union over the border between East and West Berlin and laid barbwire fences that became the foundation for the Berlin Wall. Amidst the escalating Cold War tensions, Clyde Friend reported on September 1, 1961, that private shelter contractors were catching plenty of work. That same day, the Soviet Union reversed its moratorium on nuclear weapons testing and began a series of nuclear test blasts that resulted in more incentive for shelter builders. The climax of the nuclear tests occurred two months later when Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s scientists set off their record-shattering thermo-nuclear super bomb.

While the Soviet weapons testing series was gearing up to set records for destructive power and the Berlin Crisis was simmering, President Kennedy endorsed a section of a September 15, 1961, issue of Life magazine that featured blueprints and drawings to help readers engineer “A Simple Room in Basement Built with Concrete Blocks,” “Big Pipe in the Backyard under Three Feet of Earth,” “A Double-walled Bun-ker for Safety above Ground,” and other fallout shelter projects. Perhaps in response to this development, the Spokane city government decided, in the words of Councilman Gus H. Nieman, “We should do everything we can to get people interested in building shelters.” In a council meeting held 11 days after the appearance of the issue of Life devoted to shelters, Mayor Neal R. Fossen proposed that building permit fees be waived for people constructing fallout shelters. Councilman Del E. Jones and J. C. Kopet agreed. Kopet said, “We should make every conces-sion in order to get them built.”

These were for backyard bunkers and basement hiddenways. Spokane County issued shelter permits, too. On October 13, 1961, the Spokane Daily Chronicle reported that C. F. Thackwill, Spokane County’s chief building inspector, had issued approximately a dozen shelter permits in the prior four weeks. The public’s interest in shelter con-struction increased, but the permit figures did not reflect the total number of shelters built because homeowners tended to keep their shelters secret. Sum C. Guess, chairman of the Spokane Municipal League’s Subcommittee on Individual and Family Shelters, reported near the end of November 1961, “We love his neighbor, it was going to be every man for himself in the emergency.”

The secrecy surrounding shelter construction makes it impossible to obtain an exact count of shelters built in the United States, Washington, or Spokane. However, rough guesses are available. A congressional study estimated that there were at least 1,565 home fallout shelters in the United States in 1960. With the caveat that “all home shelters have not been reported to this office,” Charles C. Ralls, Washington’s civil de-fense director, informed Congressman Chet Holifield on February 24, 1960,
Little would now be known about Wagoner’s shelter if its destruction had not become the subject of a lawsuit.

BELOW: In Spokane, Chester L. Brown sends his daughters down into what was reportedly the city’s first private fallout shelter. BOTTOM: Underground, Bonita and Michele Brown are all smiles. The photos appeared in a newspaper spread titled “Shelter Is Safe, Homely.” A clipping of the spread is in a Spokane Civil Defense scrapbook. The article is dated March 1960.

FACING PAGE: An built drawing of another Spokane citizen’s underground bomb shelter—that of Dewey Allsop.

The first news of a private atomic bomb shelter established in the Spokane region had come out shortly after Clyde J. Chaffins, Spokane County’s civil defense director, personally witnessed an atomic test blast in the Nevada desert on March 17, 1953. The Atomic Energy Commission and the Federal Civil Defense Agency created a 16-kiloton nuclear explosion to gauge what would happen to full-scale mock-ups of residential structures built near the testing site’s designated ground zero. Chaffins saw that mannequins in the upstairs of the houses were destroyed in the explosion but dummies in basement shelters remained intact. The fact that the mannequins placed underground were not blown to splinters convinced Chaffins to announce to the Spokane public on March 23, 1953, that “simple basement shelters . . . give pretty good protection for people against the effects of the bomb.”

On March 27, 1953, four days after Chaffins had given his endorse- ment, Mr. and Mrs. G. R. Johnson nominated the basement of their home for duty as a shelter. Charitably, the Johnsons invited 47 of their neighbors to join them in their basement if Spokane were to be bombed. The Johnsons’ initiative and public-mindedness made theirs the first quasi-public atomic bomb shelter in Spokane.

Approximately one year after the Johnsons had given their endorsement into a shelter, civil defense officials adopted evacuation as their preferred strategy for surviving nuclear attack, and shelter activity in Spokane became either nonexistent or went unreported until late 1958 when the Spokane Daily Chronicle announced that Chester L. Brown had built “Spokane’s first private bomb shelter.”

Brown, Spokane’s chief radio engineer and chief of Spokane’s civil defense communications division, constructed the shelter as a separate underground addition to his home. The Chronicle succinctly summed up the details of Brown’s refuge:

Twelve feet square, of concrete block construction. The roof is two-foot-thick reinforced concrete. There is a two-foot-wide entrance hall from the house with doors at each end and the room has a filtered air intake and exhaust pipe and air exhaust with a blower that can be operated by hand in case of a power failure.

Spokane’s papers did not record the order of construction for the rest of the city’s private shelters. However, Wesley S. Wagoner’s shelter, mentioned in an article in the Spokane Daily Chronicle on September 9, 1960, attracted some of the earliest attention. Little would now be known about Wagoner’s shelter if its destruction had not become the subject of a lawsuit. In August 1960, the Spokane Daily Chronicle reported that Chester L. Brown had built “Spokane’s first private bomb shelter.”

The presumed number of private shelters in Spokane grew throughout the 1960s. On January 2, 1967, the Spokane Daily Chronicle reported that an official of Spokane’s Civil Defense Department—the name of the official was not revealed—estimated that the city had 300 private fallout shelters. Near the end of the decade Friend put it simply and accurately when he said on November 6, 1969, “There are more private shelters than we know about.” Among the shelter owners of Spokane, though, there were at least a half dozen survivors who were not shy about telling the world they had prepared to weather nuclear war.

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While Wagoner did not receive all the recompense he sought, his lawsuit succeeded in documenting his status as a pioneer of Spokane’s home shelter movement. Dewey Allsop was another trailblazer. If the oil-flooded Wagoner shelter was the most unfortunate among the earliest known atomic bombing places in Spokane, the Allsop den in Spokane Valley was distinguished, according to the Spokane Daily Chronicle, as “one of the most elaborate fallout shelters.”

In August 1961, Allsop said he believed that nuclear war was likely, and he advised Spokane residents to build shelters.

“Allsop said he believed that nuclear war was likely, and he advised Spokane residents to build shelters. ‘Now is the time to build one,’ he said, ‘even though we will probably not get hit until 1963.’”

The backyard bunker that Allsop built for his family came to public attention on May 3, 1961, through the reporting of Kathleen O’Sullivan of the Spokesman-Review. Home shelters were evidently enough of a novelty that O’Sullivan felt compelled to attest to the family’s sanity. She stated, “The Allsops aren’t oddballs.” According to O’Sullivan’s report, the Allsops—father Dewey, mother Lot- tice, and daughters Teddy Jane and Allisop—had a two-foot-wide entrance hall from the house with doors at each end and the room has a filtered air intake and exhaust pipe and air exhaust with a blower that can be operated by hand in case of a power failure.

According to Wagoner, the only remedy was to remove the shelter and the dirt around it and rebuild with new materials. To reconstruct the shelter, Wagoner asked the jury to award him $1,750 to excavate his old shelter, $5,000 to build a new shelter, and $2,850 to recover money he had already spent for cleaning and repairing the building. The jury, possibly sympathetic to the fuel company’s argument about the look-alike pipes, awarded Wagoner only $3,500.
Their concrete shelter measured 14 feet by 15 feet and had a domed ceiling with a seven-foot peak. The top of the shelter roof was buried three feet underground. Aside from having the hole dug in the backyard, Allsop, a machinist, did all the work on the shelter without any help from contractors. By minimizing labor costs, Allsop was able to keep the expense of the shelter to about $750. Chaffins estimated that the shelter would have cost approximately $1,800 without any added profit if it had been built by a construction company. To gain quick and discreet access to the shelter, Allsop constructed a tunnel that led from the basement of his family home to the shelter. He protected the basement entrance to the shelter with a six-inch-thick concrete door. To get out of the shelter in the event that something blocked the basement corridor, he built an escape hatch that led from the ceiling of the shelter up to the ground level of the backyard. For camouflage, he hid the concrete door of the escape hatch beneath a birdbath. By August 30, 1961, Allsop was using the birdbath to disguise a periscope. The Spy glass, Allsop claimed, would help alleviate “that cooped up” feeling which can lead to all kinds of nervous reactions.” The inside of the Allsop shelter was outfitted with other clever touches. The Allsops connected a bicycle to an electric generator to provide themselves with pedal-powered emergency lighting. For warmth, the Allsops planned to rely on their own body heat. While family shelters were typically outfitted with mechanical air blowers operated by hand cranks to refresh the air in the shelters, Allsop created a draft system that automatically exchanged the fresh air in the shelter with outside air without mechanical aid. Chaffins was so impressed with Allsop’s innovative air filter design, which didn’t interfere with the need for cranking and could, in Chaffin’s words, “blow a man’s electric fan held six inches from the outlet without the use of fan or blower,” that he sent a description of the shelter to Ralls. Ideas for shelter construction flowed both ways. To promote government-approved family fallout shelter designs, the federal Office of Civilian and Defense Mobilization financed the construction of demonstration underground fallout shelters for homeowners across the United States. Curtis C. Vandervert, Spokane’s civil defense auxiliary police chief, enrolled in this program, and the government paid for the construction of a fallout shelter in his front yard. In March 1960 the Office of Civilian and Defense Mobilization approved a $1,986 bid by a Spokane firm called Northwest Contract to tear up Vandervert’s yard and build a six-person demonstration fallout shelter made of steel-reinforced concrete. The shelter was designed to be nine feet in circumference, wide in the front, and six and a half feet tall. The roof of the shelter was intended to sit under two feet of earth. Construction began in early April 1960. Chaffins and Northwest Contract owner Bert Jesmore were among those present for the groundbreaking. Inland Empire Defense Council president Mrs. Frank Stone, Grant’s family home in England had been struck by a Nazi bomb during World War II) opened the shelter to the public at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 24, 1960. Public visitors followed a concrete path that ran across an unsold prefabricated steel fallout shelter’s front yard to the shelter’s entranceway. A house door laid nearly flat against the ground and a small window opening were approximately two and a half feet above ground were all they could see of the shelter. Beyond the door a steep flight of stairs descended into the shelter. On the day of the opening, a Spokane Daily Chronicle photographer was among the public onlookers; he documented the shelter and captured a shot of Bert Jesmore demonstrating the shelter’s ventilation system. By linking an air blower installed between the top and lower roots of a bunk bed. After the opening ceremony, Spokane’s civil defense department invited the public to shelter viewings on Wednesdays and weekends. Press accounts of the shelter did not specify the details of Vandervert’s contract with the national civil defense agency, but when the federal government gave a shelter to a homeowner in Everett, Washington, it included a stipulation that the shelter must stay open to the public for a year. Vandervert probably struck a similar bargain. By August 9, 1960, 400 families had visited the demonstration shelter at Vandervert’s home. On Sunday, October 1, 1961, 600 people visited the shelter and set a record for the largest crowd to see the shelter in a single day. The large visitor tallies in fall 1961 indicated that the public took fallout protection seriously. Early adopters of backyard bunkers and basement havens were not alone. After surveying shelter construction in Spokane, she chided the city, declaring, “Our children deserve better than this.” As criticism of shelters mounted and the tensions of the Berlin Crisis appeared to ease, citizens in Spokane and across the country vetoed the private shelter idea with their pocketbooks when they stopped buying them. On July 8, 1962, Spokane Review observer Joel Rean wrote, “Spokane’s once burgeoning fallout shelter business has fallen on dark days.” Frank Stone, of the Spokane Culvert & Fabricating Company, looked at his inventory of unsold prefabricated fallout shelters and confessed, “I don’t know what we’ll ever do with them.” Stone added, “I think about every ruin of a plant in the country has a half a dozen of these against the back fence.” Lee O’Connor is a documentary film-maker and historian formerly employed as a cultural resources specialist in King County. He is currently creating a documentary film based on his recent book, Take Cover, Spokane, from which this article is excerpted.
Much of downtown Tacoma’s resurgence in recent decades has been built on the shoulders of century-old buildings, with examples ranging from the new University of Washington Tacoma campus housed in rehabilitated warehouses to the old Union Station finding new life as a federal courthouse. Area residents can attend cultural events in two restored 1918 theaters, the Pantages and Rialto. Tacoma once had an even older, grander entertainment venue, the Tacoma Theatre, which was the jewel of the theater district. Long-time residents likely remember it as the Music Box. Work began on the Tacoma Theatre in 1888, but the vision for the theater dates back to 1873, when Tacoma was selected as the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad. In 1874 the railroad established the Tacoma Land and Improvement Company and named Theodore Hosmer as its general manager. Hosmer and his family moved from Philadelphia to Tacoma that same year.

In 1888 the Tacoma Opera House Company was incorporated, funded by $10,000 donations from each of 11 prominent Tacoma citizens: John S. Baker, Allen C. Mason, W. B. Blackwell, W. H. Fife, W. D. Tyler, George Browne, Nelson Bennett, General J. W. Sprague, C. P. Masterson, and C. B. Zabriskie. There was some debate within this group about the best location for the new theater. At that early date Pacific Avenue was already emerging as the downtown area’s main thoroughfare, but Hosmer pushed for his beloved Ninth and C Street location, where the building would stand prominently midway up the steep incline of Ninth Street. The group finally acquiesced. The railroad’s offices were housed in buildings at Ninth and C Streets—the center of what is now the Tacoma Theatre District but what was, at the time, a sparse hillside. It was while working in that office that Hosmer envisioned a grand theater for his newly-adopted city, one befitting the thriving metropolis he believed it would surely become. Even as his health began to fail and he stepped down from his position with the railroad, Hosmer worked to ensure that the land was not sold while he gathered a group of investors.

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In its report of the theater’s opening night in 1890, the Daily Ledger summed up Hosmer’s vision for the project:
The building lot Homer championed has an odd shape and, as is common in downtown Tacoma, sits on a hill, giving the building somewhat unusual dimensions: 67 feet along the front façade on Ninth; 120 feet along the back façade; 174 feet on the largest side, facing Broadway; and 165 feet on the alley side, now Opera Court.

TOP RIGHT: Program for a series of Shakespeare plays performed at the theatre in 1891.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Tacoma Theatre playbill for an 1899 farce, The Man from Mexico.

Tacoma's "Theater Row," c. 1930. The Rialto, Broadway, and Orpheum (now Pantages) theaters.

It is fortunate that these accounts exist, as there are almost no extant photographs of the theater's interior. We can rely on the first audience to behold. Above is a glorious chandelier which throws a bright golden glow all over the immense space. The walls are golden shades of yellow with tracings of blue, and the panels are raised relief work of the same general color and tone. The chairs and railings are upholstered in terra-cotta brown, and long strips of carpet of Indian design stretch down the aisles and extend between the almost innumerable rows of chairs. The eight boxes are beautiful. They gleam with golden yellow and tracings of gold and blue, and in form resemble pagodas. Their railings and handsome chairs are upholstered in terra-cotta brown against a very pleasing background of blue curtains and hangings trimmed with gilt fringe and tassels. The deeper shades in the decorations are nearer the floor. As they approach the ceilings, the blue becomes softer and the yellow and gold seem to fade.

The new Tacoma Theatre presents a grand view from the stage and the body of the house. When filled with the brilliant audiences of next week the scene will be surprisingly fine.

The seating capacity was 1,200; 600 on the auditorium floor, 320 in the balcony, and 280 in the gallery. The stage dimensions—70 feet wide, 42 feet deep, 56 feet high from floor to ceiling, with an additional 20 feet of working depth below the stage—supported the claim trumpeted in the press that the Tacoma Theatre offered the "largest stage on the Pacific coast." It required a staff of eight strong men to operate the curtains and scenery sets, handling over 10,000 feet of line for the scenes and 1,400 feet of steel wire rope for the drop curtains.

It was long before the present magnificent edifice was planned that the project was first thought of. Tacoma was marked out as the City of Destiny, and there were men within its borders who foresaw the tens of thousands who would make their homes upon the shores of Commencement Bay. A beautiful theater, fashioned in most modern elegance, a fit place of amusement in the metropolis of the new northwest, was one of the things which it was known must be provided.

J. M. Wood of Chicago was hired as chief architect for the project. He brought more than a decade of experience working exclusively in theater design around the country, as well as a team of specialists to focus on aspects of both interior and exterior design.

The architectural style was described as Modern Romanesque, but true to the style of J. M. Wood and his team, there were so many unique elements to the structure that it defied an exact definition. The exterior walls of the first story were rough-faced blue-gray sandstone from the Bellingham Bay quarries, while the definition. The exterior walls of the first story were rough-faced blue-gray sandstone from the Bellingham Bay quarries, while the definition.

The production took very sets, which he did at night in the theater by gaslight. This and Paris were theaters grand enough to have such a feature. The production took very sets, which he did at night in the theater by gaslight. This and Paris were theaters grand enough to have such a feature.

Tacoma Daily News

It was a part of the plan from the beginning that the Tacoma Theatre offered the "largest stage on the Pacific coast." It required a staff of eight strong men to operate the curtains and scenery sets, handling over 10,000 feet of line for the scenes and 1,400 feet of steel wire rope for the drop curtains.

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When Rachmaninoff Played Tacoma

It was a dry, relatively warm evening in Tacoma on February 21, 1925, as a capacity crowd made its way to the Tacoma Theatre to hear the world-famous composer-concert pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff perform. A few audience members may have had the chance to hear him live once or twice before when he played in Seattle and Portland in recent years. Others may have heard his records on their new Victra-Las. But this was the first time, and it only turned out to be a major disappointment for Rachmaninoff’s visit. Bernice Newell (1862–1937), a prominent Tacoma citizen and booster, as well as arts and society writer and editor for Tacoma newspapers for many years, was single-handedly responsible for Rachmaninoff’s visit. Although Newell was born in New York and died in California, she spent most of her life in Tacoma and was passionate about developing and promoting the city’s cultural scene.

Beginning in the early years of the century and reaching a climax in the 1920s, Newell’s “Artist Course” concerts brought a substantial number of prominent classical musicians to Tacoma. Her work was recognized in national media, and the concerts were unfailingly well-attended and enthusiastically reviewed in local newspapers. Although Newell did occasionally choose other venues for her concerts, she most commonly selected the Tacoma Theatre, with its large stage and seating capacity.

At this time, Tacoma had an active music scene of its own, with many local musicians, amateur and professional alike, performing regularly. Newell clearly believed, though, that the concert calendar was not complete without visits from some world-renowned musicians. Through her “Artist Course,” she was responsible for Tacoma concerts by some of the most famous orchestras, violinists, pianists, and opera singers of the day.

In 1925 four world-class performances were presented at the Tacoma Theatre in less than a month—Rachmaninoff on February 21, French pianist Alfred Cortot on March 3, violinist Fritz Kreisler on March 30, and Metropolitan Opera soprano Florence Easton on March 16. Ticket prices for these performances in the opulence of the Tacoma Theatre ranged from $1.10 to $2.50. Only a few months later, the theater closed to be remodeled into a film venue.

The Rachmaninoff concert was a great delight to the many people who had traveled from around the South Sound to hear the great artist play. The Tacoma News Tribune and Ledger reported:

Sergei Rachmaninoff at the Tacoma Theatre Saturday evening played a program of wonderful music before a great audience composed of music lovers and students of Tacoma and all the surrounding territory, and it is doubtful if any single artist has ever been received with more earnest enthusiasm and sincere appreciation than was accorded the great Russian who stands in the very front of world artists of the present day.

The program given by Rachmaninoff was selected from the compositions of world masters, and was played with such breadth of understanding and ease of manner as to give the impression of a giant moving larges to his followers who were eagerly-grasping for the wealth of his generous bounty. With every number came storms of applause that sounded like the falling of many waters, and the tall, spare figure, slightly bowed, with its grave, expressive face, over which a serious smile crept in response to the enthusiasm of the audience, returned many times to respond with bows, and as the program progressed, gave to the encores so greatly desired.

Eight horses filled the Tacoma stage, and the performance was enjoyed by audiences and critics alike.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the Tacoma Theatre to the city of Tacoma during the first decades of its existence. After its opening in 1912, it was another 28 years before the Pantages and Rialto theaters—neighbors on either side of the Tacoma—were built in 1918, and another nine before the Temple Theater opened in 1927. Several theaters existed under the same roof at one time, of course, but none had the staging capabilities of the Tacoma Theatre. Therefore, in addition to its use as an entertainment venue, hosting both local and visiting acts, the Tacoma Theatre also served as an important setting for community events, school graduations, and political conventions.

A sampling of the more famous visitors to the Tacoma Theatre during its earlier decades reads like who’s who of the entertainment world. Mark Twain, Harry Houdini, John and Ethel Barrymore, John Philip Sousa, Sarah Bernhardt, Al Jolson, and the list goes on. The theater was booked for multiple nights each week for 15 years. There are undoubtedly many other significant events and visitors that have been lost to history.

The theater closed in 1925 for a dramatic transition: a conversion from performance venue to film venue. The theater’s interior was completely gutted and refurbished. The stage became smaller to increase the seating capacity from 1,200 to 1,600 and the entrance moved to accommodate a larger ticket booth. An elevator and projection booths were added, and the facility reopened in 1927 as the Broadway Theatre.

The plan was also to remodel the exterior, covering the original brick with off-white stucco. However, while the building’s exterior was being cleaned in preparation for this change, there was so much excitement among Tacomans about the beauty of the newly-cleaned red brick that the owners decided to leave the exterior largely unchanged.

The group that managed the Broadway Theatre ran into financial challenges, which led to its takeover by John Hamrick, a successful businessman who owned theaters throughout the region. Renamed the Music Box, the theater began hosting a combination of movie and stage events, featuring such significant guests as Duke Ellington, City Councilman, and Benny Goodman alongside first-run motion pictures. Gradually over the decades, the stage events dwindled and the Music Box became exclusively a movie theater.

On April 29, 1963, the Tacoma City Council met to discuss an urban renewal plan for the theater district. The city had hired a prominent San Francisco architect to design a pedestrian plaza, and the Music Box was identified as a focal point for the project. Virtually unchanged since its 1927 remodel, the theater was perfect as a dramatic historic structure around which to renew the district.

The following evening, during a showing of Hitchcock’s The Birds, a burned-out bearing in a ventilating fan sparked a fire. Because the fan room was isolated, situated beneath the projection room high in the building, it took some time for anyone to notice either smoke or fire. By the time someone called the fire department, the blaze was out of control, quickly spreading to consume the entire roof of the building. Fortunately for the audience, there was no visible fire and relatively little smoke in the auditorium, and the evacuation was smooth. The crowd of ousted movie-goers, joined by those evacuated from the neighboring Rialto, watched from the street as firefighters made a valiant but unsuccessful effort against the fire, several of them escaping just before the entire roof collapsed into the building, the ornate plaster and chandeliers crashing down onto the seats.

The following morning, the News Tribune described the tragedy in detail, praising the fire department for preventing lives—there were only three minor injuries during the evacuation and the battle to save the structure. The article included a history of the theater under its new ownership as “Boiling Flames Blacken 75 Years of Tacoma Theatrical History” and “Charred Ruins Once Resounded to Voices of World Famous.” The report also highlighted the unfortunate irony of the fire: A dramatic redevelopment plan for downtown Tacoma, to include a Broadway mall, one new park and lots of new parking, was unveiled for the City Council and civic leaders yesterday by the city’s consultants. Ironically, the San Francisco architects retained by the city had singled out the Music Box Theater as one of the architecturally sound buildings which downtown should be rebuilt around. The building was destroyed by fire a few hours later.

There is no historical marker on the site of the former Tacoma Theatre, and those few who can only have seen it in photographs. That said, its impact on downtown Tacoma remains tangible. The 1963s plans for the redevelopment of the area, largely designed around the existence of the Tacoma Theatre, went forward. To this day, the Rialto and Pantages, originally the youthful neighbors of the grand old Tacoma, remain active venues for both local and visiting performances, anchoring a vibrant theater district. A few more lines from an account in the Tacoma Daily Ledger of the Tacoma’s opening highlight this lasting impact and leave one wondering what might have been:

“The beautiful theater had an opening which promises it abundant success. It is true that as the city continues to grow, other handsome play houses will be erected, perhaps in localities considerably removed from the Tacoma theatre, but this house will always be a favorite, because it marked the beginning of good amusements on Puget Sound. Playgoers will appreciate the investment that was sacrificed for their benefit, and when the city shall have outgrown an auditorium seating less than 1800 people, many of the old residents will have a fond place in their hearts for the first perfect theater in the state, and will not be inclined to desert it.”

Kim Davenport studied music at the University of Washington and Western University and is currently a writer at UW-Tacoma. Tacoma has been home to her family for several generations. Her book, “75 Years of Tacoma’s Theatre District” was released by Arcadia Publishing in September 2015.
The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew adventure stories, which appeared at the same rate as Fulton's first two novels and became widely popular.

Fulton's first two titles, The Powder Dock Mystery (1927) and The Tide's Secret (1930), are set on Whidbey Island, where Fulton had an summer home. Both follow the adventures of brother-and-sister duo Dave and Clem, parentless but still amply describes Puget Sound. He also includes all the basics of the adventure-mystery genre: dark secrets, scary hideaways, breakneck chases, daring rescues, and, in the case of The Powder Dock Mystery, a man in a fishskin mask with a maniacal laugh. The dialogue, likewise, brims with such exclamations as "That's swell, Sue!" and "Ithought for sure we were licked!"

In Davy Jones's Locker (1936), Fulton turned to the historical record, drawing on the journals of Alexander Ross and sister duo Dave and Clem, parentless but the region. Fulton amply describes Puget Sound. He also includes all the basics of the adventure-mystery genre: dark secrets, scary hideaways, breakneck chases, daring rescues, and, in the case of The Powder Dock Mystery, a man in a fishskin mask with a maniacal laugh. The dialogue, likewise, brims with such exclamations as "That's swell, Sue!" and "Ithought for sure we were licked!"

In Davy Jones’s Locker (1936), Fulton turned to the historical record, drawing on the journals of Alexander Ross and Gabriel Franchère to recount the voyage of the Tonquin to establish the Astoria for trading post in 1811. When 16-year-old Joseph Stevens then his harsh uncle's house in Montreal to seek his missing father, he immediately becomes the target of a plot to deprive him of his inheritance, which plays out in the context of competing claims on the “Spaniards’ Oregon” by Great Britain and America. Most of the novel takes place away from the Tonquin as it sails from New York, around Cape Horn, stopping in the Sandwich Islands to take on native crew members before crossing the treacherous sandbars at the mouth of the Columbia River.

With The Grand Coulee Mystery (1941) and Steve-dore as “the Negro” rather than naming him as he does in other characters, Fulton's novels, in other words, were mainstream. In turn, they were adopted by the Teen Age Book Club and Junior Literary Guild, helping to make him a very popular author. Whenever a new title appeared, he could be found signing copies with much fanfare at Rhodes, Bon Marché, and Frederick & Nelson department stores in Seattle.

With Lardy the Great (1932) and Roskie Coach (1935), both sports-oriented novels, Fulton uses generic Northwest settings. In the first, Lardy transforms himself from an overweight and awkward freshman into his school’s champion wrestler while solving the mystery of the missing opium. In the second, a young navy veteran of World War II becomes the high school coach in a small mill town, cultivating his players into upstanding young adults while meeting the town’s demand for championship teams. Fulton’s only non-Northwest novel was The Moccasin Trail (1929), about a 16-year-old boy who meets up with the Comanche-fighting Kit Carson on the Santa Fe Trail in 1835. Reed Fulton’s novels are thematically limited by the standards of today’s industrial settings, camp settings, and poverty. Yet the cover story, is about a captain of industry who builds an Edenian island. Yes, he is wounded, like the Fisher King. But there is not a word or nod to the men who with their crude, almost prehistoric, tools hewed the forests, and created our wealth, faced oppo-

James Cook and Enlightenment Era Exploration in Context


GI Joe Goes to College


Cold War Fallout


The Tacoma Theatre


“Hanging Indian,” by Michael Berry. COLUMBIA 29 (Summer 2015).

“Laura Belle Downey Bartlett,” by Nancy Coyert. COLUMBIA 27 (Spring 2013).
Margaret Tchalenko, a librarian at the Bainbridge Public Library, maintains a list of authors who now live or once lived on Bainbridge Island. Since 2009 she has written more than 400 thumbnail biographies. Among the honorees is Bennet Bronson, a past curator of Asian archaeology and ethnology at Chicago’s Field Museum. Together with Chaimin Ho, also an experienced museum curator who is currently affiliated with the Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee’s Web site, Bronson authored Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America (Bainbridge Island: CreateSpace Publishing, 2015; 306 pp., $12.75). By early Northwest the authors mean the period between 1788 and 1911.

Do not be fooled by the modest selling price. This book is a well-organized publication with five informative chapters and four appendices. With the authors’ credentials, it is not surprising that Bronson and Ho have produced an important book, one tied to deep research in documents and oral history in Alaska, British Columbia, California, Hong Kong, Singapore, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Nearly 500 endnotes identify sources used in the text, although it must be said that a formal bibliography would be appreciated. This is a positive story of immigration to the Pacific Northwest with a focus on courage, the kind it takes to adapt to a new land with strange customs and attitudes. The authors acknowledge that racism and violence in the Pacific Northwest visited Chinese immigrants on their journey to acceptance, but their resilience is even more evident in their community structure, their private lives, and their economic progress.

This volume is considered bilingual because it presents some documents in both English and Chinese.

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Before SeaFair

The Golden Potlatch was Seattle’s first recurring citywide summer festival. This 1912 photo shows a group of Seattle boosters costumed as Golden Potlatch Bug Guests participating in a water ceremony in anticipation of the July event. Town fathers used a mock version of the Tlingit culture of Alaska to instill a sense of pride and patriotism. The Golden Potlatch is considered a precursor to the American Indian Movement’s 1970 Potlatch. The Tlingit Potlatch Bug Priests performing a winter ceremonial in anticipation of the July event.

Neither a wise nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to prevent the train of the future from running over him.” — Dwight D. Eisenhower

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