INSIDE
Marking the centennial of Seattle’s iconic Fremont Bridge

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COVER: Built in 1917, Seattle’s Fremont Bridge connects the Fremont and Queen Anne neighborhoods across the Lake Washington Ship Canal. Its low clearance over the busy waterway makes it the most often opened drawbridge in the nation, raising and lowering an average of 35 times a day. (Alan Dechate photo)
Walla Walla’s Frenchton: A Community In-between

By Sam Pambrun

The Frenchtown community maintained the company’s payroll by half. Simpson’s “leadership” established, not 1816, plus they do not recognize the Snake River delta as the original location of the fort. The next year, the Columbia District’s payroll by half. Simpson’s “leadership” may have had something to do with the early development of Frenchtown, a place of rich, fertile soil where Fort Nez Percé employees and freemen could thrive. Les Village des Canadiens, as early Frenchtown was called, appeared to have been related to half the métis in North America. Pierre Pambrun’s beating, it was likely caused by a combination of factors, some of which had been building over time.

There had been a price discrepancy between Fort Nez Percé and Fort Vancouver since the summer of 1829 when John Dominis, captain of the American brig Owhylee, anchored near the mouth of the Willamette River and started a trade war. He told the Pambrun family blamed Bonneville for Pierre Pambrun’s beating, it was likely caused by a combination of factors, some of which had been building over time. Pierre Pambrun blacklisted Indian headmen and their families. They were not allowed to purchase anything at any HBC post west of the Rocky Mountains. Sometime prior to 1837 the three sued for peace and an agreement was reached. The men were members of the Wlexmutmin (Twisted Hair) family, which was prominent on the Columbia Plateau and had numerous internment connections. Some of the Frenchtown spouses were kin to this family. In the midst of this squabble, missionaries Marcus and Narcissa Whitman arrived in 1836 and built a mission in the heart of Frenchtown. The mission was named Waiilatpu, the Nez Perce word for coarse grass. Just a few hundred yards east of the mission compound stood Bixapu (Pow-kah-puy, or “place of sunflowers,” the principal...
involved in the murders of Marcus and Narcissa and 11 others. Peter Skene Ogden, the HBC’s chief factor at Fort Vancouver, came up the Columbia with broadsheets of gifts to ransom the remaining 56 hostages being held at several Cayuse villages. Ogden had barely secured the hostages before the area was flooded with Oregon militia volunteers bent on revenge. The Cayuse War of 1848 ensued, during which St. Anne’s Mission was burned. Pásxapa and other Cayuse villages cleared out as the militia chased Cayuse Indians all over the landscape for two years. The five Cayuse who were eventually hanged at Oregon City for the Whitman massacre had relatives living in the Willamette Valley. Immediately following the Whitman massacre, Frenchtown experienced a large, unexplained influx of métis families from Canada and Montana, mostly immigrants related to those already living there. In spring 1855, Washington’s first territorial governor, Isaac Stevens, and Oregon Territory peace commissioner Joel Palmer arrived in the Walla Walla Valley to negotiate a treaty with the Nez Perce and Yakama Indians. Their stated objective was to relocate all the Native Americans on the Columbia Plateau to two reservations to protect them from what Palmer called “bad white men.” Several thousand Indians came for the treaty deliberations. For Frenchtown residents, the treaty meant drastic change. The 1846 boundary settlement had been hardly noticeable, but the new treaty meant the demise of the Hudson’s Bay Company. For the past 30 years the métis of Frenchtown had worked for the British, who benevolently governed the community while respecting its people’s autonomy and respecting their culture, language, and institutions. Now the Americans were passing exclusionary laws, surveying the land, and building fences. According to the treaty, Frenchtown residents “aliens in their own land.”

Two weeks after the ink dried on the treaty, Palmer and Stevens issued a press release in Portland stating that eastern Oregon and Washington were open for settlement. This contradicted what they had promised the Indian leaders and was especially egregious because the treaty had yet to be ratified by Congress. Six months from the date the treaty was signed, some 350 members of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers (OMV) rode into the Walla Walla Valley to punish the Indians for “breaking” the treaty and for sack ing and burning Fort Walla Walla, property of a foreign country. The militia marched from the Walla Walla Valley, “living off the land”—foraging food and supplies—on the way. When they arrived in the Walla Walla Valley the OMV officers were invited to dine at Fort Walla Walla with subagent Nathan Olney and Hudson’s Bay clerk James Sinclair. It is curious that they could enjoy such a feast (including “high wine” or brandy) at a place clearly identified in history as having been recently looted, sacked, and burned.

On reconnaissance up the Touchet River, Oregon volunteers encountered Walla Walla leader Peeposeommonax and five others, who approached them under a white flag of truce. Colonel James Kelly “captured” Peeposeommonax, questioned him about finding food (beef) and about blankets he had supposedly stolen from the HBC storehouse. Peeposeommonax agreed to lead the colored to his camp. Feasal that his command (some 220 volunteers) was being led into a trap, Kelly spent a cold, miserable night waiting for 5

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daylight rather than risk ambush at a narrow “defile” on the Tootch River. The next day Kelly visited Peo-peo-mox-mox’s deserted village and dug around looking for food caches. Find- ing nothing but smoldering campfires and trash, the volunteers returned to the mouth of the Tootch the evening of December 6, 1855. The next day, when the Oregon Mounted Volun-
teers crossed the Tootch and started up the Walla Walla Valley, they were attacked by a superior force of Indians mounted on superior horses. A running battle ensued through the heart of Frenchtown to the house of Joseph and Lizette Larocque.

The volunteers evicted the Larocques from their home and held up there, using the cellar as a hospital. What followed was an unusual Indian battle. It was a siege, fought between the Larocque and Louis Tellier houses (about a mile apart) from December 7 to December 10, 1855. The Indians pinned down the militia, gaining ground at night when they sniped at campfires and withdrawing during the day. The Larocque cabin was renamed Fort Bennett. The Battle of Walla Walla statistics are telling. The conflict was longer and involved more soldiers and Indians than the Battle of the Little Bighorn, but is not as recalled by General idea of Frenchtown, c. 1872, as recalled by Thomas Bergevin (1866–1958).

The Walla Walla Valley events of 1855–56, according to Sam Pambrun, the great-great-grandson of Pierre Chrysologue Pambrun, as recorded by his grandson Samuel Wright, reported that he had broken the Indians’ resistance. He was wrong.

FRENCHTOWN REMEMBERED

Two events ended the battle—the arrival of reinforce-
maments from Fort Henrietta and the Indians’ successful re-
moval of their women and children up Mill Creek on the Nee Perce Road to friends on the Clearwater at Lapousi, near the Spalding Mission. The reinforcements came via Fort Henrietta where they had rescued that fort after Indians chased off all its drama.

The Larocque cabin on December 7, 1855. The volunteers cut up the Larocque cabin on December 7, 1855. The volunteers cut up Peoo-mox-mox, saving his skin, scalp, ears, fingers, and so forth as souvenirs. The chief’s family is still trying to repatriate his body parts.

The impact of this war on the Frenchtown Community has never been adequately documented and likely will remain speculative. The battle was fought amid Frenchtown farms—some of which were appropriated for housing and rations—by people who considered “the only good Indian a dead Indian” and who likely felt the same about “half-breeds,” as the Oregon Mounted Volunteers referred to the métis. The war at French-
town was personal; it intimately involved women and children in brutal and senseless violence. Andrew Pambrun wrote of this personal war in his autobiography, a narrative that has long been charac-
terized by traditional historians as an exaggerated account of events, likely because it contradicts the status quo. On this everyone agrees: French-
town was never the same after the Wallow Walla war.

Governor Stevens declared mili-
tary law in the Wallow Walla Valley in spring 1856 and traveled there with 32 wagons, 80 oxen, and some 400 head of loose stock to renegotiate the 1855 treaty. At the same time, Colonel Edward Steptoe was building a US Army fort in the vicinity of where Stevens hoped to conduct his negotia-
tions, approximately seven miles up Mill Creek from present-
day Walla Walla. However, the Indians were hostile and Stepto-
toe, under orders, refused to allocate troops to protect Stevens. Lacking sufficient men or means to protect himself, the governor was forced to move closer to the new fort for protection.

The Indians refused to negotiate; why should they sign a second treaty when he had not honored the first one, they asked. Stevens eventually gave up. On his way back to The Dules, his “peace party” was ambushed. After a tense night of note-passing and sporadic gunfire, Stevens convinced Colonel Steptoe to rescue him the next morning. All these events were common knowledge to Frenchtown métis, some of whom remained in their homes, or what was left of their homes, according to the orders of the US Army.

The Walla Walla Valley events of 1855–56, according to Pambrun family history, made it clear that British rule in the Wallow Walla Valley had ended and American rule had begun. In their view, the Americans preferred issuing orders to “talk-
ing things over,” their God would rather punish you than succ-
cor you, the calculated use of force replaced negotiation, and people of color and their children did not fit the American ideal of model citizens.

The foregoing history of the Americanization of Wallow Walla was passed on to me by my uncles to explain why Andrew Pambrun signed in at the first Weston Pioneer Picnic in 1892 as an immigrant from Kansas, noting that he was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and his “manner of covariance” to the Wallow Walla area had been “by water.” Great-grandfather’s fils were part of his feeble efforts over the years to prove American citizenship. Three years later he died, still an alien in a foreign country.

The history of Frenchtown under American rule is fully as interesting as Frenchtown under British rule. There is the first

Of note: In the history of the failed treaty followed by Colonel Steptoe’s defeat by the Coeur d’Alene Indians in 1856, there is the chapter where Colonel George Wright was dispatched from San Francisco to punish the Coeur d’Alenes for embar-
rassing Steptoe. Wright’s purpose, Congress’s purpose, the US Army’s purpose, and the purpose of American settlers in Oregon and Washington Territories was to severely chastise the Coeur d’Alenes and any other Indians who dared to defy them. The fact is that the Oregon volunteer militia, Steptoe, and Wright were all trespassing on Indian land—Congress had not yet ratified the Walla Walla treaties. Wright marshaled 900 soldiers into Indian Territory and methodically meted out punishment. He hanged those he considered the ring-
leaders, and many others for good measure. He killed 500 Indian horses and destroyed the Indian’s winter food supplies. (See “Reluctant Warriors,” Summer 2014 COLUMBIA.) Wright reported that he had broken the Indians’ resistance. He was wrong.

FRENCHTOWN REMEMBERED
A Commercial Collaboration that Played a Part in Thawing the Cold War

ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE and little-known stories of the Cold War is the joint fishing venture that brought together thousands of Soviet and US fishermen, working together and forming bonds of friendship on the high seas of the North Pacific. From 1978 to 1990 this unique partnership, Marine Resources Company (MRC), accounted for almost 1.8 million metric tons of groundfish caught and processed at sea off the coasts of Washington, Oregon, northern California, and Alaska. For several years it was the biggest fishing operation in US waters, with over 50 vessels from both countries participating annually. The success of MRC played a key role in attracting US investment into offshore fisheries, which would restrict foreign fishing off the US coast and provide new incentives for foreign interests to link up with US companies and fishermen. At the time, the USSR had the biggest deepwater fishing fleet in the world and was anxious to ensure continued access to US stocks.

Talbot wrote a letter to Alexander Ishkov, the Soviet minister of fisheries. In his letter he described his Bellingham facility—and proposed that “your fishing organization might be interested in a joint venture with us in the processing, freezing, storage, and shipment of the hake which you now catch off our coast.” Talbot waited a year but received no response. Ishkov was a powerful, long-standing member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and had been minister of fisheries since 1940. It may have surprised him to receive a letter from an unknown American entrepreneur—if he ever saw the letter, Talbot, whose genial manners belied a tough core of stubbornness, wrote to Ishkov again, enclosing his original letter. Two weeks later he received a call from the fisheries attaché at the Soviet embassy in Washington, DC, inviting him there for discussions.

Over the next two years, Talbot attended and hosted a series of meetings in Washington, DC, Moscow, and Seattle with representatives of the Soviet Ministry of Fisheries to discuss a joint business venture. As a US 200-mile zone grew increasingly imminent, the plan shifted toward a focus on joint fishing. Meanwhile, the impracticality of using Bellingham Cold Storage for the Soviet fleet’s products became apparent, owing in part to US laws prohibiting transportation of goods on foreign vessels between the high seas and US ports. It was agreed that seafood produced by the proposed joint fishery would instead be sent via Soviet freighters to a cold storage facility in Nakhodka, in the Soviet Far East.

During this period, meetings were sometimes canceled or postponed by the Soviet side, key Soviet participants were replaced by others, and the formation of the company was delayed. “One lesson I have learned about dealing with the Soviets is that you must have patience.”—Jim Talbot

One lesson I have learned about dealing with the Soviets is that you must have patience.”—Jim Talbot

Marine Resources was finally incorporated in the State of Washington in July 1976, with ownership split equally between Bellingham Cold Storage and the USSR Ministry of Fisheries. The company now needed a general manager to implement its business plan, and Talbot asked Wally Pereya to take the job. Pereya, a prominent local fisheries scientist, had migrated west from the East Coast several years earlier and earned a Ph.D. in fisheries at the University of Washington. During and after graduate school he spent long stretches on research cruises assessing stocks off the Pacific coast. He eventually established
himself as a senior biologist at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in Seattle. In the course of a 16-year career with NMFS, Pereyra delivered papers at international conferences, represented the United States at international fisheries negotiations, and spent two years in Chile developing small-scale, artisanal ventures with local fisherman while teaching at a university.

Pereyra’s mentor at the University of Washington and later in his career was Lee Alverson, a renowned fisheries expert and administrator who headed the NMFS’s Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center (NWFSC) in the 1970s. Under Alverson’s tutelage, and through his own research, Pereyra came to appreciate the immense scale of several potential US Pacific fisheries: at the time, in the 1960s and 1970s, abundant offshore groundfish stocks, such as whiting off the West Coast and pollock (another cod-like fish) off the Alaska coast, were caught almost exclusively by foreign fishing fleets, primarily those of the USSR and Japan. Because of Alverson’s prominence in the world of Northwest fisheries, Talbot asked him to recommend a candidate to take on the job of running the new operation. Alverson immediately suggested Pereyra. In short order Pereyra, who had no business background and had never been to the USSR—though he had seen its many factory vessels off the coast and met Russian scientists over the years—left his flourishing career at NMFS to run a joint US-Soviet commercial fishing operation that existed far only on paper. He understood the potential of the groundfish resources that Talbot’s venture was targeting as well as anyone. Moreover, as he put it, “I loved the idea of actually carrying out fisheries development instead of just studying it.” — Wally Pereyra

“...and my sense of adventure was piqued by the bizarre prospect of a joint business enterprise with the Soviet Union.”

Pereyra began contacting US fishermen along the Pacific Northwest coast, inviting them to fish for a joint venture with a communist country whose fleet was notorious in coastal communities for ravishing nearby stocks. Many of the fishermen knew Pereyra from his research activities and had faith in his knowledge of the resource, but what he was proposing was risky and novel. It involved an entirely new mode of fishing that required large boats (roughly over 75 feet in length) and huge mid-water trawl nets. They would be delivering catches at sea rather than on shore, which meant more time away from home. And they would have to trust that the Soviets would not cheat them on their catches, since there would be no opportunity to see the fish weighed, as was done with shore deliveries of other species. Many on the coast were downright hostile to the entire concept. A West Coast fishermen’s union executive was quoted in the widely read magazine as saying, “It smells like a lot of rotten Russian caviar to me.”

other obstacles would also have to be overcome before joint fishing operations could get under way. Permits had to be secured from the US government, which was divided on whether to let this radically new fishery take place at all. There was intense opposition from American processing companies, who objected to competing with any new foreign entity, let alone a subsidized communist enterprise that would employ “slave labor.” Some of these companies were controlled by Japanese interests that did not welcome a new entrant in a sector they had largely to themselves. One prominent processor, New England Fish Company, was particularly vociferous in opposing MRC, and sent a high-powered attorney to make the case against joint ventures at hearings along the Pacific coast and in Washington, DC.

It did not help MRC’s case that its partner in the joint fishery, the Soviet government, was subject to US economic sanctions, championed by Washington’s Senator Henry Jackson, for its treatment of Jewish emigrants, and that it was suspected of using fishing vessels to spy on US naval operations. A headline about the new venture in the Tacoma News Tribune in August 1976 read, “Feds smell for something fishy in US-Soviet fish firm.” Washington’s other powerful senator, Warren Magnuson, expressed concerns that Soviet involvement in MRC was an attempt to circumvent the intent of the 200-mile zone legislation, of which Magnuson was the primary author and sponsor. That legislation, formally known as the Fisheries and Conservation Management Act (FCMA), also known as the Magnuson Act, was passed by Congress in 1976 and came into effect on March 1, 1977. It gave the US government a mandate to protect offshore fisheries resources, including groundfish stocks, and to prioritize their use by US interests.

The Magnuson Act was part of a much-debated worldwide movement toward extended sovereign control over ocean resources. Nations that fished heavily off the shores of other countries were generally opposed to this movement, while coastal states that wanted to control or end foreign fishing off their shores—and were frustrated by the failure of United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea to endorse this right—supported it.

When the unilateral introduction of 200-mile zones became a fait de foi by the mid-1970s, it created a major paradigm shift for maritime countries. Some were forced to shrink their distant-water activities and fleets, and their catch sharply declined. Some saw the rapid growth of a newly protected domestic fishing industry. Others began selling fishing quotas to foreign buyers. The Soviet Union, meanwhile, focused on expanding fishing off its own vast coastlines and restricting foreign access while at the same time devising new methods and entities to continue fishing off the coasts of other countries. MRC was one of many joint-venture entities formed by the USSR around the world.

Despit initial skepticism, a growing number of US government officials and politicians were gradually persuaded that MRC offered benefits for coastal fishing communities and for the long-term development of the US fishing industry: if MRC’s pioneering joint groundfish operations proved profitable, US domestic fishing and financial interests would soon have the motivation to invest in their own large processing vessels and plants, which would in turn supplant foreign fleets in US waters. The new US 200-mile zone would thus become “Americanized,” and US shipyards, marine suppliers, fishermen, and investors would reap the rewards.

The US State Department and the Department of Commerce testified in a hearing about MRC in 1976 that it was...
US policy to “maintain an open door to encourage foreign capital in American enterprises.” By early 1978, Fishermen’s News, a prominent West Coast industry publication, was editorializing that there “appears to be no reason why Marine Resources should not be allowed to operate with US vessels and US crews delivering fish to Soviet factory ships.” As Pereyra lobbied for formal permission to launch a joint fishery and opponents fought against it, the stakes were high. The annual foreign (chiefly Soviet) harvest of whiting off the Northwest coast, which was now potentially available for joint ventures, had been well over 200,000 metric tons in the years just prior to establishment of the 200-mile zone. While this represented a large potential new US fishery, it was dwarfed by the more distant Alaskan groundfish stocks, which had experienced foreign fishing levels of over 2 million metric tons, primarily made up of pollock in the Bering Sea. Taken altogether, the potential new US groundfish fisheries in the Pacific added up to substantially more than the entire annual landings of fish in the United States at the time.

Given the scale of these resources, some Northwest and Alaskan fishermen saw a compelling economic opportunity in the chance to work with MRC. They had traditionally caught salmon, shrimp, halibut, crab, and rockfish, and delivered them to local shoreside processing plants. But these fisheries had been becoming overcrowded and in some cases overfished. In particular, the lucrative Alaskan king crab fishery, which in the 1970s had stimulated a wave of boat construction and attendant financial obligations by showing signs of stress. The limited season was decreasing rapidly each year. There was a pressing need for new fishing opportunities, and groundfish represented by far the largest potential new fishery.

But intense opposition was still widespread. The most vocal and articulate fishermen in support of the joint venture, Captain Barry Fisher of Newport, Oregon, a Harvard graduate and decorated veteran of the Korean War, later described the prevailing attitude as: “Not only did Fisher and company want to continue working with foreigners, it was the goddamn Russians that we wanted to do it with.” Jim Talbot, meanwhile, received threatening letters from customers who made it clear that Bellingham Cold Storage would suffer if the joint venture went forward. “It was a gamble on my part, obviously,” he subsequently wrote in a brief memoir. “Anyone in business is dependent on his customers. For the most part, our customers stuck by us, but there were exceptions which hurt rather badly.”

Meanwhile, Talbot realized that he had to come up with a business structure that would mitigate the complexities of dealing with the Soviet bureaucracy. He had insisted that ownership in the new joint venture be equal—a crucial component, as he saw it, of mutual commitment to the MRC’s excellent service, one likely to win over even the most commercial or political difficulties arose, as they surely would. He also requested that the Soviet station an executive in Seattle who would represent the Soviet owner, have decision-making ability on important company matters, and serve as Pereyra’s co-general manager. In addition, he wanted to establish a Marine Resources office in the Soviet Far East that would be run by US and Soviet capital.

This shared day-to-day management structure in both offices would, Talbot hoped, create an additional mutual stake in MRC’s success and provide a built-in monitoring of cultures and viewpoints. It was a complicated and expensive plan, laden with potential problems of shared authority as well as bureaucratic, visa travel, and documentation requirements. But Talbot thought it would make cooperation more secure and responsible as a whole. And, he believed, it could accelerate slow decision-making and communication on the Soviet side, which he already considered to be the errant side’s issue. The Soviet side eventually agreed to this structure, pending top government approval on both sides, and to a modest initial capital investment of $25,000 by each partner. Talbot promised that the company would have an initial bank credit line in the United States based on his guarantee. His Soviet partners, meanwhile, pledged to generate some early income for MRC by arranging for the company to market Soviet fish products.

But getting approval from Soviet authorities for an office in the Soviet Far East, let alone for stationing an American there, presented a hurdle that went far beyond the capabilities of the Ministry of Fisheries. It was a decision that would need support from the Soviet government’s highest level and the blessing of the KGB and other security organs. US State Department officials asserted that would never happen, given the USSR’s sensitivities regarding its eastern borders, and they maintained that if it did not, the United States could not allow a Soviet citizen to reside in the Pacific Northwest. Yet, in early 1977 the Soviet government quietly gave permission for MRC to move ahead with its plans. Talbot was later told by his Soviet colleagues that the prime minister of the USSR, Alexei Kosygin, had personally signed off on the formation of the company and the stationing of an American in the Soviet Far East.

After many additional delays, a young fisheries expert with Alaska experience hired by Pereyra, Michael Stevens, left for Nakhodka, a mid-sized port and fisheries base on the USSR’s Pacific coast. Nakhodka had “open” status, as opposed to Vladivostok, the largest port city in the area, which was closed to foreigners. Soviet representative Valeri Latishev arrived in the United States at about the same time. Initially, the State Department insisted that Latishev reside in Bellingham since Seattle, like Vladivostok, was officially a “closed” city and the USSR had granted permission for an American to live in Nakhodka, not Vladivostok.

Latishev, an English-speaking former fish-processing mother captain and fisheries executive from Riga, Latvia, quickly took residence in Bellingham with his wife, Irina, and quickly became a local celebrity. The November 15, 1977, Bellingham Herald carried a front-page headline that read, “Soviet fishing official arrives in Bellingham,” and an article that described in detail Latishev’s background and his views on American life. Latishev commuted by car to the MRC office in Seattle several times a week, with State Department approval required for each trip. But within a few months, during which Talbot continually courted his American colleagues, improved rapidly: once, in a heated meeting, when the Soviet side made an unreasonable demand, Latishev slipped a note under the table to Pereyra that simply said, “B.S.”

T he most important outstanding matter for MRC was still permission to pursue a joint fishery in US waters. Once, in the spring of 1978, it appeared that the National Marine Fisheries Service was poised to issue the permit, but Senator Magnuson ordered the agency to backtrack, while he considered amending the 200-mile zone law to stop such joint ventures. At another point the Pacific Fishery Management Council, which was responsible for overseeing fisheries off the West Coast, voted against the permit. As the struggle over permits continued, time began to run out for a whiting fishery in 1978, just as it had in 1977. Pereyra sometimes wondered at his impulsive decision to abandon a
stable career at the NMFS for such an endlessly problematic endeavor.

Finally, in August 1978, permits for MRC's joint fishery on whiting were issued and an allocation of 7,500 metric tons was made available for har- vested. Two 280-foot Soviet processing vessels from Nakhodka, each with a crew of about 75 fishermen and processing personnel, and three US fishing boats with four-man crews came from Oregon (one of the three turned out to be underpowered and dropped out of the fishery) converged on the fishing grounds off Oregon. The lead American captain was Barry Fisher in his brand new Lady of Good Voyage, an 86-foot trawler built in Coos Bay.

The technical and logistical problems of the new fishery were daunting, as were the challenges of communication across languages and cultures. There were frequent equipment failures on the US boats and ongoing diffi- culties in devising a safe, fast method of transferring catches from the trawlers to the Soviet ships—the first attempt resulted in a slight but startling collision. The US captains had never fished for whiting before and had no previous experience with the huge mid-water trawl nets; their initial catches were negli- gible despite efforts by the Soviet fishermen—who had years of experience—to provide assistance. Both sides grew anxious as the long-awaited fishery failed to produce expected results.

Gradually the US fishermen mastered their new gear, the technical and logistical problems were worked out, and catches increased. After several problematic fish transfer experiments, they devised a reliable method: the Soviet vessel would trail the long-awaited fishery failed to produce expected results.

In the very final days of 1979, before the NPFCM could make its final recommendation, the Soviet Union in- vaded Afghanistan. President Jimmy Carter called for economic sanctions, including the elimination of Soviet licenses for US boats. The United States, however, rejected the proposal, and, in its place, the bilateral agreement that allowed the joint fishery: 

MRC's annual joint operations reached a peak of over

FACING PAGE: Jim Talbot congratulating a young participant on the conclusion of a 10-kilometer race in Nakhodka, USSR, as part of the sister city celebr- ation between Nakhodka and Bellingham.

LEFT: This chart shows the historic shifts in fishing for Alaskan pollock, a ubiquitous cool-temperature species: 1940-1990, 1990-2001, 2001-2009, 2009-2010. The intersection of the lines clearly demonstrates the inter- relationship between Bellingham and Nakhodka, which is still active today. boat finished in 8th place with 496 points, his best placing in a major regatta to date—a result he attributes to his training in San Francisco, California, area, all of the Oregon coast, and Bellingham, Washington. We number some 225 vessels in our mem- bership. . . . I should make clear at the outset of my testimony that we will, as loyal Americans, support fully whatever the US govern- ment decides to do. I want to stress, however, that the exercise of US influence, both the wisdom and effectiveness of a move which would cancel the agreement, is a matter of supreme importance to us.
The city of Seattle rises from a cluster of hills, waterways, and bridges, bounded by Puget Sound on the west and Lake Washington on the east. Seattle's Fremont Bridge, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2017, was part of the ambitious project to construct the Lake Washington Ship Canal, which connected those two large bodies of water. It required the dreams, talents, and determination of a blend of newcomers to bring the project to fruition.

Perched on the north bank of the canal that once a stream, the Fremont neighborhood received its name from community founders L. H. Griffith and Edward Blewett, who wanted to honor their hometown of Fremont, Nebraska, a village overlooking the Platte River on the main route of the Oregon Trail; it, in turn, was named after John Charles Fremont, the American explorer.

A disparate galaxy of independent-minded, talented individuals contributed to Seattle's Fremont. For example, the first job-producing industries on the north shore of the little stream gurgling by tiny Fremont were shingle mills and an iron foundry. E. C. Kilbourne (1856–1958), one of Seattle's first dentists, joined founders Griffith and Blewett to plan and expand the new community. That same year (1888) the founders hired Chinese labor to deepen the stream meandering between the traditional Duwamish settlement of Salmon Bay and Texas Chuck, the Salish name for Lake Union. More rumblings of activity along this watery crease attracted railroad enthusiasts, including the Great Northern Railway and a smaller player—the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway.

Fremont and nearby communities, led by local railroads, erected rickety trestles over Seattle waterways in the late 1890s to serve the Fremont Mill Company and other businesses. These included the Stone Way Bridge, a wooden wagon bridge across Salmon Bay, and the Latona Bridge. Meanwhile, plans were taking shape to turn the dream of an enlarged waterway into reality.

On July 4, 1854, at a civic Independence Day celebration, Thomas Mercer (1813–1898) cited advantages of a navigable passage between Lake Washington and Puget Sound. In the 1860s, Harvey L. Pike (1841–1897), son of John H. Pike—after whom Seattle's busy Pike Street was named—and Judge Thomas Burke (1849–1925), for whom Seattle's Burke Museum was named, undertook separate efforts to send logs through a narrow opening at the 1,200-foot-long Montlake Cut. In 1867 the US Navy signaled its interest in linking Puget Sound with Lake Washington but took no further official steps. In 1906 developer James A. Moore (1861–1929) was ready to invest in a cross-city canal but ran out of funds.

More light was shone on Fremont and its strategic location when former Washington State Territorial Governor Eugene Semple (1840–1908) became fixated with Puget Sound's shoreline, especially locations indicating a “cut” through the hills, from fresh to salt water. In 1895, Semple undertook to dig a canal through Seattle's Beacon Hill, linking the Duwamish tide flats to Lake Washington.

By Junius Rochester

Fremont Bridge on July 4, 1917, opening day of the Lake Washington Ship Canal.
Phinney never saw Fremont's rapid growth. In 1889, he purchased 200 acres next to Green Lake and erected an English-style manor house in the middle of his spread. Phinney invested in a trolley company named W. W. Grass, which doubled as Phinney's chauffeur. When Phinney died unexpectedly in 1893, at age 42, his wife Nellie struggled with the property—site of Seattle's future Waterway. Following his graduation from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1858, Chittenden undertook tours of duty as an officer named W. W. Grass, who doubled as Phinney's chauffeur. When Phinney died unexpectedly in 1893, at age 42, his wife Nellie struggled with the property—site of Seattle's future Waterway. Following his graduation from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1858, Chittenden undertook tours of duty as a major force in the US Army Corps of Engineers in Seattle. He tried to convince both the local community and federal officials of the Lake Washington Ship Canal's importance. In fact, he played a key role with Congress in its appropriation of $2.3 million for boat locks in the old, muddy waterway.

LEFT: Seattle Engineering Department plans for the Fremont Avenue Bridge, 1914.

BLOW: Map showing the man-made sections of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, including the locks.

FACING PAGE: Ship being towed through Seattle’s Hirram M. Chittenden Locks, c. 1935.

In 1916, the Montlake Cut was safely opened, allowing Lake Washington waters to cascade into Lake Union, which resulted in the larger lake being lowered by nine feet. On May 8, 1917, the new locks opened to boat traffic. Rear Admiral Robert Peary’s flagship, the USS Roosevelt, led a flotilla eastward through the “ditch” on the Fourth of July that year as part of the formal dedication. Sadly, General Chittenden was confined to a wheelchair following a stroke and could not attend. After his death on October 9, 1917, the Corps of Engineers renamed the Government Locks in Chittenden’s memory.

AFTER THE SHIP canal opened, the era of local bas- cule bridges commenced. Strung from Montlake to Fremont, a series of sturdy north-south sections of the Lake Washington Ship Canal. The new bridges sprang up. Their names signified their locations: University Bridge, Ballard Bridge, Montlake Bridge, and the span at Fremont. For local purposes, the Fremont moniker was stretched to include the I-5 road. Its bridge, a confluence of the burgeoning neighborhoods north of Queen Anne Hill to downtown Seattle. Paul Dorpat and Genevieve McCoy, in their 1998 book Building Washington: A History of Washington State Public Works, describe these spans as “bascule,” meaning they achieved balance like a teeter-totter, one end counterbalanced by the other.

Bard and Watchman

FRED BASSETTI, one of Seattle’s premier artists, contributed a foreword to Margaret W. Beyer’s 1999 book about her husband, sculptor Rich Beyer, The Art People Love. Bassetti wrote: “Richard Beyer is the Rieso of our time. No other artist that I know of has been more incisive in cutting to the quick, and illuminating the slant truths that hide from the rest of us.” Beyer’s most famous work, People Waiting for the Interurban (1976), stands under a pergola on a triangle at the north end of the Fremont Bridge. The five aluminum adults and one dog (with a human visage) face Fremont’s commercial center.

They are patent, serious travelers, oblivious to the surrounding bustle. Local residents claim the cluster represents the changing fortunes of Fremont. The original mill town, once isolated from the big city, hosted workers’ clapboard homes, noisy railroad traffic, small businesses, and a population in flux. Today, Fremont is a thriving community of artists, writers, young people on the move, and retirees.

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City engineers charged with designing and building links to, from, and among Seattle’s physical features faced demanding, highly visible challenges. A case in point is engineer Frank A. Rapp (1876–1923), who designed the Fremont Bridge. He arrived in Seattle in 1912 after working for the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company, for which he designed bridges and roads.

Three years into his new job his relationship with his boss, A. J. Goddard, went sour. In fact, in December 1914, Goddard sent a letter to the Seattle City Council in which he outlined a “condition” he termed “critical with reference to the bonds for canal bridges. . . .” The problem, according to Goddard, was that Rapp’s plans (prepared over a two-and-a-half-year period) were “entirely discarded” by a consulting engineer in the city engineer’s office. Goddard went on to review Rapp’s background, describing him and his efforts with such words as “incompetency,” “juggling,” “delay,” “mistakes,” and “numerous other blunders.” According to Goddard, Fremont Bridge bond sales stalled because of Rapp.

Apparently, though, no action was taken with regard to these charges—the letter was merely “placed in a file.” Despite the City of Seattle brouhaha over its designer, the Fremont Bridge opened on Friday, June 15, 1917—two weeks before the Lake Washington Ship Canal was dedicated—at a cost of $410,000.

Sadly, on April 13, 1923, Rapp took his own life at his West Seattle home after being confined to his bed for several months with a serious illness. His obituary noted that he had designed “nearly all Seattle’s important bridges” and was considered a “highly skilled bridge designer.”

In 1985, with a clearance of only 30 feet, Fremont Bridge opens an average of 35 times a day for ship traffic. The 1985 Official Visitors Guide to Fremont describes it as “The Busiest Drawbridge on the Planet Earth.” This engineering monument adjoins “The Center of the Universe,” as Fremont residents have referred to their neighborhood since the 1970s.

The Fremont Bridge boasts four control towers, only one of which operates it—the southeast tower—and innumerable coats of blue paint. This signature bridge dominates one of Seattle’s most colorful and fast-paced junctions. Automobiles, city buses, tourist caravans, bicycles, and pedestrians whiz and bend around the bridge and its seven feeder streets. Moving across the bridge is only part of the story. Underneath the span, an unending collection of boats, bird life, rodents, invertebrates, spawning salmon, bicycle riders, dog walkers, and joggers can be found roaming these (mostly) unseen precincts. Underscoring its cultural significance, the Fremont Bridge—now 100 years old—was posted to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Junius Rochester, an independent historian, is the author of seven books and hundreds of articles on state and local history. He recently received the 2017 David Douglas Award from the Washington State Historical Society.

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

Around the turn of the 20th century, one of the most popular themes of promotional literature from local chambers of commerce was the number of smokestacks a city could advertise. Smoke meant industry, jobs, prosperity. Although many Washington locations touted smokestacks in brochures designed to attract new businesses and population, Everett seems to have outdone itself in illustrating smokestacks and smoke on the city skyline. These publications brag, “The numerous industries which line the water give the name ‘City of Smokestacks,’ and are monuments to the city’s standing policy of free sites to factories.” Today smoke is not a selling point for any US locale. Times change.❖
The Thurston County Minute Women of World War I

Patriotism & Paranoia

By Jennifer Crooks

In an effort to do their part during World War I, many American women participated in home front organizations. “Minute Women” groups popped up around the country to help with war-related domestic programs and projects. These Minute Women organizations, including the group in Thurston County, which is the focus here, came to embody strong American nationalism and intense suspicion of anyone thought to be disloyal. They are not to be confused, however, with the Minute Women of the U.S.A., a post–World War II anti-communist organization.

The federal government’s official preparedness organization, the Council of National Defense (CND), was created by an act of Congress in 1916 to coordinate war-related activities inside and outside the government. The CND evolved to include state, county, and local councils of defense. Women soon became part of the organization. The Women’s Committee of the Council of National Defense was created by the council on April 21, 1917, 15 days after the United States’ declaration of war against Germany. It was chaired by noted suffragist and physician Anna Howard Shaw.

The Washington State Council of Defense, along with its own women’s committee, was appointed by Governor Ernest Lister on May 2, 1917. Members of this women’s committee—all volunteers down to the county and local level—were nicknamed the “Minute Women.” They said they were ready at a moment’s notice to help the government during the war crisis.

County and local councils of defense soon followed the establishment of the Washington council. The Thurston County Council of Defense was established on July 13, 1917, and councils for individual Thurston County communities were created later that month. Following policy, each council (county and local) had one female member who was chair of the Woman’s Work Committee and thus the leader of the “Minute Women” in her area. Ruby E. Fromme was appointed to this position for the Thurston County council. However, she resigned within a month and was replaced by Ada Sprague Mowell. Thurston County Minute Women followed the state-level Woman’s Committee’s policies of organizational hierarchy. The county was divided into units. Olympia, the county’s largest community, was organized by ward and precinct. A captain led each of the seven wards, while the precincts were overseen by lieutenants. Outside Olympia, the Minute Women organized themselves by school district, each headed by a captain. Nine of the county’s largest towns, except for Olympia, were assigned a councilor as well. There were Minute Women units in 53 communities covering most of Thurston County.

With over 300 members, the Thurston County Minute Women can be understood as an outgrowth of the woman’s club movement, whose numbers tended to be drawn from the middle and upper classes. However, the Minute Women covered a much wider social spectrum. Ada Sprague Mowell, who was active in clubs and social causes, worked as a teacher until her marriage to physician John W. Mowell. Mowell ran a prosperous medical practice and served as the first head of Washington’s Industrial Insurance Commission. Maude T. Helfonom, captain of Olympia’s First Ward, was an active businesswoman (managing the White House Hotel in Olympia during World War I) and a leader in the local Parent Teacher Association.

The demographics of the Minute Women, calculated from contemporary city directories and both the 1910 and 1920 United States Census, reveal many interesting patterns. During the war, the most Minute Women were married (77 percent). Although few were poor and at least half owned some taxable property, most were not currently employed outside the home or family farm. Two Minute Women, Lulu May Langford and Katie L. Cary, were domestic servants. While a number of Minute Women were married to city, county, or state officials (12 percent) and professionals (10 percent), a significant proportion were married to skilled (10 percent) and unskilled (4 percent) laborers.

The Minute Women may have crossed class boundaries but they rarely crossed racial or ethnic boundaries. Racism was common in Thurston County. While some Minute Women were immigrants or related to immigrants from northern and western Europe (including Germany) there were no eastern or southern European, African, Asian, or Native American women among the members. However, census and newspaper accounts indicate that members of these groups did participate in the war effort.

The activities and attitudes of the Minute Women in Thurston County demonstrated the patriotism and paranoia that they so embodied. The Thurston County Minute Women’s activities centered around five major areas: promoting food conservation, raising funds for the Red Cross, promoting war bond sales, participating in the 1918 Department of Labor’s Children’s Year programs, and collecting money to meet the expenses of the Thurston County Council of Defense. These activities were assigned to them by national, state, and local councils of defense and, for the most part, followed national program guidelines.

Initially, the Minute Women concentrated on “food conservation,” which was a voluntary rationing system implemented by the United States Food Administration. The goal was to inoculate America’s food supplies for the U.S. military and its allies. While there were relatively few laws regulating consumption, stores could only sell limited amounts of basic foods to customers. In addition, social pressure based on “patriotism” strongly encouraged people to conserve.

Applying this social pressure were the Minute Women, who promoted food conservation by running a series of campaigns that encouraged women to sign cards pledging to uphold food conservation guidelines. They held a small pledge card campaign in late July 1917, shortly after organizing, but their first major campaign began in late October. This campaign met with an initially enthusiastic response from county residents, but the Minute Women failed to meet the quota assigned them by the state Woman’s Committee.

Further Thurston County campaigns garnered more pledges, but these efforts were never completely successful. For example, the Minute Women’s next food conservation campaign in January 1918 fell almost 1,200 short of its goal of 4,000 pledges. When the third campaign took place in March, the Minute Women estimated that about 60 percent of women in the state had already signed pledges, but that left thousands who had not. Although the Minute Women doggedly promoted food conservation as a patriotic duty, there is no way to know how widely these practices were implemented on a daily basis.

The Minute Women’s second area of focus was assisting the Red Cross in its many projects to provide war-related support and relief to soldiers and civilians in the United States and overseas. For the Red Cross, the Minute Women enlisted members, sold Christmas Anti-Tuberculosis Association seals, collected donations, and held benefits.
“There is not a home in the district,” reported Flora B. Guiontext, one of the Independence area Minute Women to the December 22, 1917, Olympia Daily Recorder, “but has responded nobly to the Red Cross Christmas drive or the war fund. The little folks as well as the big ones were eager to add their contributions to help swell the war fund.”

Helping promote Liberty Loans, the government bonds that partially financed the war, was the third major task of the Thurston County Minute Women. Although the National Woman’s Liberty Loan Committee existed as a separate entity, at least in Washington the Minute Women did that work at the county level. While financial transactions were handled in area banks, the Minute Women were prominent in promoting the purchase of these bonds. The first Liberty Loan campaign took place before the Minute Women were organized, but they participated in the second, third, fourth, and fifth (Victory) Loan campaigns.

The Minute Women also participated in the Children’s Year baby-weighing project, which took the progressive goal of improved child welfare, wrapped it in the rhetoric of rhetoric of unity. The idea of unity in loyalty to America, a critical component of the American war effort, was emphasized and reinforced in the Minute Women’s speeches and activities. For example, during Ada Mowell’s speech at the opening dinner of the Second Liberty Loan campaign, she encouraged volunteers to appeal to American unity when they urged family and neighbors to support the war effort through the Red Cross and Liberty Loans. Mowell added, “If we are loyal, nothing we say will offend the person of similar leaning, which should mean all Americans worth the name.”

The unity and confidence espoused by the Minute Women often came with a harsh attitude toward dissent. In that they were not alone. War dissenters were often publicly identified and treated with contempt. This attitude was reflected in the Red Cross’s stated goal for the 1917 Christmas membership campaign (which was solicited by Minute Women and partially led by Ada Agatz): “To show the world that the American and unpatriotic remarks” were “deplorable” and “unprofessional.” Charles Carr filed an appeal to the Washington State Board of Education, saying that the decision was not justified by the evidence. He later dropped his appeal and moved to Idaho, where he died in 1922.

The baby-weighing project involved recording the weight and height of young children for the purpose of gathering data on national health. Across the nation, 5 million children were examined by 9,000 local Child Welfare Committee chairs and thousands of volunteers. The Thurston County Minute Women readily took part. All children ages five and under were to be measured and weighed over a three-day period in late July at the Olympia Chamber of Commerce and surrounding health centers.

The Minute Women’s later activities focused on raising money for the Thurston County Council of Defense’s central fund. This was an attempt to “systematize” fund-raising for the large number of sometimes confusing, often competing, and occasionally fraudulent war charities that sprang up during the period. To meet the $2,500/month budget of the Thurston County Council of Defense, the minimum acceptable “subscription” was 10 cents per month per person over 15 years of age. Many, however, donated larger amounts. The Minute Women served as collection agents, raising almost $7,000.

Those who opposed the war in any way. This is the same community whose newspapers eagerly reported the arrest of draft-evading “slackers,” a term also frequently applied to those whose support of the war effort was deemed insufficient.

Thurston County wartime patriots, including the Minute Women, were particularly troubled by those who refused to buy Liberty Bonds. In war time, they found the council had determined they could afford. Their names were included in “slacker lists” published in the local newspapers. Mowell urged other communities to follow the example of the Rochester Min- ute Women, who made their own list of those in their area who did not belong bonds.

Moving beyond listing names, the Minute Women also played a role in persecuting dissenting teachers. Teachers everywhere in Washington were under close scrutiny by “patriotic” citizens, including those in the education establishment. Superintendent of Public Instruction Josephine Cloth Preston, a member-at-large of the Washington Woman’s Committee, revolved the teaching licenses of a number of dissident teach-ers during the war. Her policy met with government approval, and in her official report, the State Council of Defense praised these actions as “unquestionably . . . one of the most effective and wholesome steps taken by any public official in the state.”

In Thurston County, the ax fell on Charles R. Carr, a South Bay schoolteacher accused of making “disloyal” state-ments. The most serious accusation against Carr, an avowed Christian pacifist, was that he made antwar remarks at a Liberty Bond meeting at his school. Witnesses testified that he said, “The world will not have us in a patriotic community with no quarter for the pacifist or slacker.” After he allegedly made these statements, he was dismissed from his position but was reinstated after many parents petitioned the school board. However, Carr’s problems were far from over.

Perhaps because of their powerful ideology, the Minute Women recorded a substantial hostile reaction against them. For example, after the war, Ada Mowell wrote in the final report of her organization that “insult was often the portion given” to the women collecting the council funds. She further noted, “The usual tales were told by the traitors in our midst of the per cent [sic] received for collecting money, etc., but these were absolutely untrue.”

Who were such “traitors”? It is possible that the Minute Women were seen as the face of the Council of National Defense as well as the hands and feet for many of its campaigns, thus making them an easy target for hostility. Perhaps it was more than misunderstanding and misdirected hostility. While the Minute Women claimed that theirs was a good and helpful organization, it had a darker side. The Minute Women were also the eyes and ears of the government. Perhaps Mowell’s statement in the Olympia Daily Recorder on March 12, 1918, best illustrates their position: A February 2, 1918, hearing was held by the Thurston County Council of Defense in Olympia in the Senate Cham-ber of the Legislative Building. This hearing was attended by about 250 people, including many South Bay residents. Carr retracted his statements and apologized, claiming that he had been misunderstood and had misspoken. But it remained that Carr had criticized the war effort in the first place, as attested to by Minute Woman Cora Agatz and other witnesses. Carr’s teaching license was revoked by Superintendent of Public Instruction Preston, who argued that the teacher’s “un- American and unpatriotic remarks” were “deplorable” and “unprofessional.”
were quickly formed. By March 11, 1920, the Minute Women of Thurston County officially became the “Thurston County Association of Minute Women.” Among other activities, the association held several teas to raise money for a historical marker sponsored by the Minute Woman Association of Washington at the battlefield of Château-Thierry, France, to honor Washington soldiers who died there. The marker was dedicated in 1924. The Thurston County and Washington associations of Minute Women slowly faded away. They became small women’s clubs that met infrequently. The Thurston County Minute Women did play a small role on the World War II home front, regularly acting as hostesses at the Olympia USO Club. They also started a cookie jar gift project for soldiers, enlisting the aid of local women’s clubs and publishing recipes in the Daily Olympian. The state organization met until at least the late 1940s, and the Thurston County Minute Women kept going into the early 1950s. Through their organization, activities, and ideology, the Minute Women reflected the powerful forces of patriotism and suspicion that engulfed the United States during World War I. While many Minute Women likely had good motives, collectively they produced a mixed legacy that included prejudice and even hatred of those considered disloyal to the American government and its war effort. Deserters ranging from draft resisters to pacifists attracted their notice. The attitude of the Minute Women can be seen as preparatory to the First Red Scare, which peaked in 1919–1920 with political and labor radicalism and government attempts at suppression.

Following the war, Thurston County was a very different place from what it had been. For the Minute Women at least, perhaps some sense of innocence was lost. Ada Mowell, former leader of Thurston County’s Minute Women, seemed to believe so. Decades after the war she reflected in a short autobiography, “Into the midst of our busy life came World War I and overnight everything changed. Olympia went all out for war work, Red Cross work, Minute Women, Council of Defense, etc. When it was over life had changed and never quite resumed its old tenor.”

Jennifer Crooks earned a master’s degree in history from Central Washington University. This article is based on her senior thesis at Saint Martin’s University.
Peter B. Kyne (1880–1957) was a prolific writer of popular western adventure-romance novels, many of which became silent films. Among Kyne’s most popular works were those about cattlemen, particularly cappy shipping and lumber magnate Alden P. Ricks, known as “Cappy Ricks,” who was forever warring with Captain Matt Peasley. The three Cappy Ricks novels appealed to Northwest readers because of their focus on maritime matters and their portrayal of Matt Peasley, who was based on renowned Northwest seafarer Captain Ralph E. Peasley.

Readers first met the duo in Cappy Ricks or the Subjugation of Matt Peasley (1916). As owner of Blue Star Navigation in San Francisco, Cappy Ricks rules the sea-freighting business. This is the era of many-masted schooners, and Peasley is one of the best captains of all—creosote cargos of all—pilings, nitrite, and green infections. Likewise, Grays Harbor does not make Peasley a Northwest legend by the time of his death in 1948. Nonetheless, the Cappy Ricks series made the real Captain Peasley of Grays Harbor famous. According to historian John C. Hughes, Kyne knew Peasley from when the author clerked for a lumber company in Hoquiam. Peasley was already recognized as a master mariner. He served as captain of the Wawona along the Pacific coast before the famous ship was chained boom sticks and sent careening downriver. When the novel was made into a film in 1922, the Humptulips Vigilant participating in well-publicized ocean races with the Commodore, another sailing schooner. His seafaring exploits were also regularly featured in the Seattle Daily Times, helping make Peasley’s Northwest legend by the time of his death in 1948.

Peasley, though, was not the only character inspired by real-life figures. The Big Swede was based on Captain Otto B. Lindholm, who sailed lumber schooners for half a century and later in life piloted steamships for Grays Harbor. According to Hughes, Cappy Ricks was based on California shipping and lumber magnate Asa Mead Simpson, who started one of the first mills in Grays Harbor (not to be confused with Sol Simpson, founder of today’s Simpson Lumber). There is no doubt Peter B. Kyne was fond of the Northwest, as further illustrated by his novel Kindred in the Dust (1920), set in a Puget Sound mill town, a company town, where the benevolent founder, Hector McKaye, nicknamed The Laird, is admired by all. Churning Port Agnew, “nestled in the Bight of Tyee and straddling the Skookum River,” contrasts with Darrow, the soiled company town farther upriver owned by McKaye’s rival. Yet, when Donald McKaye, the Princeton-educated son of The Laird, falls in love with “Nan of the Sawdust Pole,” the poor but lovely maiden who has a child out of wedlock, all of Port Agnew and the entire McKaye family are scandalized.

Only after much gallantry, tenderness, heartbreak, and anger—as well as a close encounter with death for young McKaye—does love prevail over the town’s gossip and the family’s self-importance. The novel is a melodrama, specked with absurd sentiments and racist attitudes. Nonetheless, it offers a dramatic, albeit idealized, depiction of a Puget Sound company town. In one of the best scenes, Donald McKaye, working as a raftsman after being renounced by his father, rescues The Laird when his motorboat runs a log boom, breaking the chained boom sticks and sending logs careening downriver. When the novel was made into a film in 1922, the Humptulips River, on the Olympic Peninsula, served as the location.

With the Cappy Ricks series and Kindred in the Dust, Peter B. Kyne captured the fancy of Northwest readers and moviegoers in the early 20th century. Though they have little literary merit, the novels offer an often vivid view of the region when the industries of shipping and lumber, inexplicably linked, were king. Peter Donahue is coeditor of Seven Nights on the Pacific Slope: The Autobiography of a Marine Biologist from 1905 to 1912, published by the Shaler Museum.
Growing up in Bellevue, Alan Weltzien developed a love for Mount Rainier early on. Now a professor at the University of Montana Western in Dillon, Weltzien cannot easily make trips to his favorite mountain and national park, but he still cares deeply about both. The author of several books, including two of poetry, Weltzien writes clearly, and his words read effortlessly. He has taken a difficult task upon himself in Exceptional Mountains. How can one explain to others the importance of Cascade Mountain volcanoes and why policy makers for America’s national parks must recognize problems and come up with solutions? Political engagement—not political rhetoric—is needed, he argues. And, at the same time, citizens who use the parks and forests need to be made aware of the consequences of their actions when enjoying—or over-enjoying—the mountain parks. Rainier is Weltzien’s favorite park, so it is the greatest concentration in the book, but he also has a keen interest in two other volcanoes—Mount Baker and Mount Hood.

In Exceptional Mountains, Weltzien gives readers a sort-of memoir but also a stern warning. Attendance at America’s national parks soared in the summers of 2016 and 2017, causing park managers to begin to consider taking previously unheard-of steps to limit attendance, including quotas and a three-tiered reservation system. The New York Times headlined “Are We Loving Our National Parks to Death?” (August 7, 2016) and National Public Radio has asked, “Is Yellowstone National Park in Danger of Being ‘Loved to Death?’” (April 18, 2016). Weltzien asks, when will America’s National Parks to Death?” (August 7, 2016) and National Public Radio have asked, “Is Yellowstone National Park in Danger of Being ‘Loved to Death?’” (April 18, 2016). Weltzien asks, when will management and the Mountaineers as preservationists, the conflicting voices of tourism and wilderness preservation, respectively.” There is much to be admired in this timely book.

Exceptional Mountains: A Cultural History of the Pacific Northwest Volcanoes


Exceptional Mountains: A Cultural History of the Pacific Northwest Volcanoes

By O. Alan Weltzien. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016; 264 pp.; $14.95, cloth. Reviewed by Robert Michael Carriker, a native of Washington, is currently professor of public history at the University of Louisiana, Lafayette. He has wide experience as an outsourcer and has served on the faculty at the University of Minnesota, a nation with 17 volcanoes that is venturing with questions others have never dared to ask. To his astonishment, however, the idea of entitlement grew over past decades. Cities such as Tacoma, Seattle, and Portland cannot think themselves blameless. Take Portland, for example. Approximately 2 million Oregons, more than half of the state’s population, live within 75 miles of Mount Hood. In addition, the western boundary of the Mount Hood National Forest is only 20 miles out of Portland. The US Forest Service’s designation of Mount Hood National Forest as an “urban national forest” is, Weltzien concedes, “an oxymoronic challenge and inevitably means, among many implications, auto congestion and pollution.” Weltzien may teach in the Department of English at his university but he knows his environmental history, too. Writing about Mount Rainier National Park, he notes that it was the first national park to develop a master plan (in 1929), but there has been an “anxiety” ever since that can be traced back to “Ashael Curtis as booster and the Mountaineers as preservationists, the conflicting voices of tourism and wilderness preservation, respectively.” There is much to be admired in this timely book.

Current & Noteworthy

By Robert C. Carriker, Book Review Editor.

The men and women who followed overland trails west across the American frontier between 1840 and 1869 earned every bit of praise they have received in print and media. Oddly, researchers, writers, and historians have seldom acknowledged the role of the domestic animals pioneers proded along the trail all day, everyday, for months on end. Clearly, four-legged emigrants were essential to the success of every expedition that set out from Missouri, yet their contribution has been seriously understated. And who ever thinks about the disruption to the natural scheme of things visited on the wild animals who happened to be in the path of the overland trails? After all, as many as 40,000 travelers trekked through their habitat each year for a quarter of a century.

Happily, Diana L. Ahmad of Missouri University of Science and Technology has examined the attitude of overland pioneers toward the animal kingdoms they encountered, and her conclusions are presented in a lively book, **Success Depends on the Antimatter, and Wild Animals on the Overland Trails**, 1840–1869 (Renew: University of Nebraska Press, 2016; 144 pp.; $25.56, cloth). Ahmad knows how to research a topic because she is a university archivist. She understands how to organize a book-length manuscript because she has that published one before. Even better, Ahmad knows how to tell a good story—she is a recipient of the Missouri Governor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Early on, Professor Ahmad tips her readers to read her thesis when she writes, “Success on the trails meant that the emigrants needed to alter the preconceptions they held about animals. Most would learn new ideas about domestic and wild animals as they trekked west.” Having been taught in church and from experience on the farm that humans are superior to animals, an attitude adjustment toward the lesser creatures would be required of pioneers on when the trail. It is wise, for example, to avoid over-driving the teams and, when possible, to walk alongside the wagons to reduce the load on the horses, mules, or oxen. About midway through their journey emigrants grew so fed up of beasts of burden that they assigned to them names and human characteristics.

As time went on, trail guides and advice manuals encouraged overland pioneers to love all innocent creatures, even wild animals. Thus, after seeing the large number of bleached bones alongside the Platte River, many travelers concluded it was “killed creatures that God has made.” In 1842, after one overland group shot the head off a prairie dog, the group’s leader immediately regretted what he had done and pledged never again to “attempt to kill one of them, except when driven by hunger.” Similarly, pioneer Heinrich Lienhard chopped down a tree to see if there was honey inside, but when the tree fell he found neither bees nor honey—only two black snakes, which caused him to regret that he had needlessly robbed “those harmless creatures, wholly uncalled for, of their safe home.” Killing wild animals to survive was one thing; killing for sport or curiosity harmed animal populations. This is a very enjoyable book with a viewpoint that is long overdue.

A companion volume to the above book is Wagon to the Willamette: Captain Levi Scott and the Southern Route to Oregon, 1844–1847, by Levi Scott and James Layton Collins, revised and written by Stafford Hazellett (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2015; 320 pp.; paperback, $29.95). Levi Scott and his youngest son left Iowa to follow the overland trail halfway across the American frontier, arriving in November 1844. Scott earned his reputation among his contemporaries by leading a party back to Fort Hall in June 1846 to help future travelers on the trail avoid the perilous passage through the Columbia River Gorge that often required afloat trip on a wild river. More Oregon Trail travelers lost their lives rafting down the Columbia River between The Dalles and the Willamette River than all other dangers on the trail combined. Scott later became involved in the territorial millions of dollars via the Oregon constitutional convention. He founded a town named Scottsburg near the ranch where he raised cattle.

Scott experienced many adventures in his lifetime, but the one he took the most pleasure in recounting was how he marked the southern Oregon route between Fort Hall and Oregon City. Three years prior to his death at the age of 49, Scott employed his friend, James Layton Collins, to help him write an autobiography. However, the finished memoir languished and never made it to print. Stafford Hazellett recently rescued the manuscript, edited it, and enhanced it with annotations. This book will be of interest to armchair historians of the Oregon Trail, not just those who live in southern Oregon.

The John McClendon Jr. Award is given annually by the Washington State Historical Society for the year’s best researched and written article in COLUMBIA. The 2016 award went to David Delbert Kruger, the agricultural research and instruction librarian at the University of Wyoming, for his article, “The Main Street Spirit of J.C. Penney: A Department Store Chain in the Downtowns of Washington” (Summer 2015, pp. 8–15). That article has now been expanded into a book, J. C. Penney: The Man, the Store, and American Agriculture (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017; 340 pp.; $29.95, cloth). In his article, Kruger centered attention on the corporate intentions of the company in the emerging urban areas of western states such as Washington, while the book is more of a historical biography that gives insights to James CASH Penney’s personal interests in agriculture, religion, and philanthropy. Every one of J. C. Penney’s stores adhered to the Golden Rule philosophy. J. C. Penney as a merchant prince was very different from the likes of Henry Ford or Sam Walton. This reviewer urges readers to make the jump from the COLUMBIA article to the book. Both are well-written.

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“Those men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons that history has to teach.”

—Aldous Huxley

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