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D. B. Cooper’s hijacking and the evolution of air travel security
COVER: One of four parachutes provided to Northwest Orient Airlines to fulfill the ransom demands made by Dan Cooper, aka “D. B. Cooper,” during his hijacking of Flight 305 on November 24, 1971. All four parachutes were loaded aboard the Boeing 727 jet at Sea-Tac International Airport, along with $200,000 in cash. Cooper got away with the cash by parachuting from the plane somewhere over southwestern Washington. See story beginning on page 5. (#2013.35.1, Washington State Historical Society)

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The Civil War in America’s Collective Memory

By David W. Blight

If the American Civil War exercises a powerful hold on our country’s historical memory—and there are many, including myself, who contend that it does—the next question is why, and that is the focus here. Our historical or collective memory helps us define who we are as a nation. Like individual memory, it has everything to do with identity. Finding an identity when you’re young and as you grow older is a struggle between remembering and forgetting. Memory is that thing we often cannot live with, but we also know we can’t live without it. And it’s exactly the same for nations, peoples, cultures.

In Legacy of the Civil War, published in 1961, the American poet, novelist, and critic Robert Penn Warren wrote: “The Civil War draws us as an oracle, darkly unskilled and portentous of personal as well as national fate.” He’s saying that if this country has an oracle in its past—a place we go to in our history and ask it questions about who we are, what’s our story—it’s in the Civil War and the cluster of problems that caused it and emanate from it.

Memory exercises a powerful hold on our history and asks us questions about who we are, what’s our story—it’s in the Civil War and the consequences arising from it. There is my working list of the reasons why I think the Civil War and the consequences arising from it have a hold on our collective memory. The first is demographics. Population growth in the 20th century, the two World Wars, mass migrations, and the oratorical voice of the civil rights movement, stepped to the microphones and delivered a short, transcendent oration to the world on the meaning of the unfinished American story. This momentous decree came as a beacon light of hope and a call to the nations, peoples, cultures.

The second item on my list is loss. There’s no other experience in American history quite like the Civil War in terms of death and loss, not to mention its social and cultural impact across our society and over time. The official number of Civil War casualties is 620,000 dead and about 1.2 million wounded. But there are historians—David Hacker is one—who have concluded that the total number of Civil War dead may be as high as 820,000.

Now if you were to take just the 620,000 figure, per capita to the American population—a little over 30 million in the 1860s—and project that to today, we would have lost over 7 million soldiers in Vietnam per capita. That’s the scale of death in the Civil War generation versus the scale of death in the Vietnam generation.

The point he making is that, here we are on the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and black folk are not free. He is, of course, drawing at that moment on the Civil War centennial, which had been going on since 1959. But the centennial commemoration had almost never been about the story of emancipation. It had almost never been about the story of black freedom. It had almost always been about the great and glorious struggle of the blue and the gray. If anything, it had been a pro-Confederate commemoration and celebration—so anti-civil rights that one would have wondered, had emancipation ever happened at all?

What Lincoln was really saying in his speech was that the first American republic, that one created four score and seven years ago, is being killed and we’re going to make another one. King, in his speech, was saying that 100 years ago a second American nation, a new republic, was founded out of emancipation; but here we are 100 years later, and it hasn’t worked—we have to create yet another one. That speech is a work of genius. First and foremost it is about the meaning of the memory of the Civil War, later we get to the part about the dream little children are supposed to have.

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the North into Maryland, headed toward the battle of Antietam and the greatest turning point of the war, Carrot writes:

There was nobility in the idea that there ought to be a peace without victory. Yet in August, 1862, America’s tragedy was that it was caught between the madness of going on with the war and the human impossibility of ever stopping it... The peace-makers could not be heard until the terrible swift sword had been sheathed, but the scabbard had been thrown away. And now the Confederacy was carrying the war into its enemy’s territory....

Fourth, if you want to look for the beginning of modern, centralized, big government, you’ll find it in the Civil War. Lincoln’s administration, the first Republican administration, made the government an engine of social change. It created the first income tax; the Morrill–Land Grant Acts, which allowed for the creation of colleges all across the country; the Homestead Act, so important to the history of the West; and the transcontinental railroad. And last but not least, the federal government performed the largest act of property confiscation in all of American history—the emancipation of the slaves.

In 1860 the value of slaves as a financial asset was approximately $3.5 billion—the single largest financial asset of any kind in the American economy, greater than all manufacturing, all railroads, all industrial capacity put together. In historical time, it was destroyed overnight, destroyed as a means of winning a war.

Fifth on the list of reasons why the Civil War looms large in our collective memory is that we have made it into a story of unity. We love the unity narrative of the blue and the gray, the reconciliation of the North and the South, the clashing of hands across the bloody chasm. We love that long aftermath that allows us to say, “Yes, we had that horrifying Civil War back in the 19th century, but we got better for it.” William Dean Howells, often called the “Dean of American Letters,” cautioned us on this particular narrative in 1900 when he said, “What Americans always like is a tragedy, as long as they can give it a happy ending.” And not have to worry about what the cost might have been along the way.

The last item on my working list is the fact that we have raised some generations, finally, on the understanding that the Civil War period is our first great racial reckoning; and out of that reckoning, that horrible bloodletting, was born a different country. That different country is going to take a very long time to come to terms with racism. We’re living in a whole new era of states’ rights. It’s happening in the Supreme Court, and it’s especially happening in state legislatures.

There are hundreds upon hundreds of bills before American state legislators—particularly in the roughly 35 states that have Republican majorities in their legislatures—to bring power of all sorts away from the federal government, back to the local, back to the states.

Sometimes things you agree with can come from state exercises of power—women’s suffrage began first in states, before there was even a federal amendment. But the hundreds of bills mentioned above aim, for example, to either eliminate or make whole states sanctuaries from the Environmental Protection Agency, or limit if not get rid of the Endangered Species Act, or require the Federal Bureau of Investigation to get the approval of a local sheriff to make an arrest. These seem to be acting to alter or blunt federal authority over all sorts of things and perhaps even turn around the past century or century and a half it has taken to create a modern American social safety net. They appear to embrace a version of federalism we had some right to believe was buried in the mass slaughter of the American Civil War.

William Penn Warren, who saw the Civil War as an oracle of America’s past, called history “the thing you cannot resign from.” Alas, history just keeps happening. And every time you think that part of our history is over, oh, no, it’s not over. Especially if it’s a big question like race or federalism. History is never over— we don’t have a choice. 10

David W. Blight is a professor of history at Yale University and director of Yale-Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. His most recent work is American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era (Harvard University Press, 2011). This article is excerpted from a keynote presentation given on October 20, 2012, at the 64th Pacific Northwest History Conference in Tacoma.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Get rid of this first section of the 14th Amendment, and this place flies apart. Our first racial reckoning—we have to go back to it.

I f you’re looking for legacies of the Civil War, struggling with its memory, you don’t have to look far. Even above the issue of race—and the fact that we have an African American president—stands the great question of federalism, the distribution of power between state and federal authorities. We’re living in a whole new era of states’ rights. It’s happening in the Supreme Court, and it’s especially happening in state legislatures.

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When a man named D. B. Cooper parachuted from a Northwest Orient Airlines jet with $200,000 cash in November 1971, he was neither the first nor the last airplane hijacker in the United States, but he was—and still is—the only one who got away with the money. The changes in airport security that soon followed—added to a string of security measures already in place—made skyjacking more difficult to pull off. Over 40 years later, though, following the implementation of additional security precautions, the threat of air piracy looms larger than ever.

Last year, on March 2, 2012, the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) marked the 50th anniversary of its history as an organization specifically charged with protecting flights of commercial aircraft in the United States. Today, members of the service belong to the larger Transportation Security Administration (TSA), itself one of 17 federal agencies under the control of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The federal government formed
FACED WITH NEW PRESSURE...
In 1971 the FBI could claim an institutional history spanning more than six decades and a record of zero unsolved aircraft hijackings on U.S. soil.

The report does not explain the impact of Cooper’s crime on airline personnel, law enforcement, and the general public. Prior to the Cooper skyjacking, the bulk of domestic hijacking activity was seen as a political ploy by individuals seeking to further their cause. However, this event marked a turning point in airline security, with particular focus on Dan Cooper. The flight and the hijacker’s escape captivated the nation, drawing widespread public interest and media coverage.

A'BULLETIN FROM THE F.B.I.
Following is an artist’s conception of the hijacker who exited Flight 305 from Portland on November 24, 1971. While studying reports of the event, the FBI bulletin reported the case—code-named NORJAK—delivering the facts succinctly:

A lone white male, wearing a black suit; white shirt; and a black tie; and sporting a heavy smoker of Raleigh filter tip cigarettes, Cooper emerged from the cockpit of Flight 305. He was described as being average in height and weight, with dark brown or black hair parted in the middle and average to well-built stature. Cooper was in his mid-40s and was described as being very calm and intelligent, with no particular accent or mannerisms.

Cooper’s demands included $200,000 and a political asylum application. He threatened to blow up the plane if his demands were not met. The FBI was able to determine that Cooper had used a forged passport and that the hijacking was part of a larger plan to escape to Cuba for political reasons.

When the aircraft landed at Seattle, Cooper exited the plane and was captured by authorities. He was later sentenced to 30 years in prison and is still serving time today.

Explore the Cooper Exhibition in Tacoma
ON VIEW AT THE Washington State History Museum through January 5, 2014, COOPER explores the history of air travel security, with particular focus on Dan Cooper, who hijacked a Boeing jet in 1971, parachuted from the plane over southwestern Washington with $200,000 in cash, and was never brought to account for his actions. Curated by the Historical Society’s own Fred Poyer and Owen (Perry) Whiting, COOPER employs artifacts, first-person accounts, FBI documents, and a mock-up of a 727 interior to tell the story of this unresolved skyjacking and its connection to airport security in the present day. Visitors can get a feel for what air travel was like in the 1970s and delve into the topics of skydiving, forensics, and commercial aircraft design. They will see some of the money from the $5,000 cache found buried on the north shore of the Columbia River and the four parachutes provided to Northwest Orient Airlines as part of the ransom demands, and a rear airframe from a Boeing 727 like the one Cooper hijacked. Check our web site, WashingtonHistory.org, for a current listing of Cooper-related programs and activities such as the November 29 talk by Geoffrey Gray, author of Skyjack: The Hunt for D. B. Cooper.

The November 29 talk by Geoffrey Gray, author of Skyjack: The Hunt for D. B. Cooper, and the November 30 “Cooper Symposium” will explore the history of skyjacking and airline image evolution. The Cooper exhibition was made possible in part by the generous support of The Oregonian.

The FBI’s response to the Cooper hijacking was a turning point in aviation security. The event highlighted the need for more comprehensive security measures, which led to the creation of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 1974.

The FBI continued to investigate the Cooper case for over two decades, but no concrete evidence was found to link Cooper to the hijacking. However, in 2008, the FBI announced that they had reopened the case and were still actively searching for Cooper. The investigation remains ongoing, with no definitive conclusions as to the fate of Dan Cooper.
Cooper’s polite, calm demeanor—not to mention his incredible escape—endeared him to a public that was already looking for reasons to subvert authority.

Repercussions of NORJAK

ONE OF THE PRIMARY differences between Cooper and the extortionist skyjackers who emulated him is that Cooper was never apprehended. Because of NORJAK (the FBI’s code name for the Cooper case) and its ripple effect, the federal government implemented a number of reforms—both procedural and technological—to prevent such crimes from recurring. One such reform, implemented early on, was a device called a “Cooper vane.” Cooper escaped by requiring that the plane’s rear airstair be lowered during his flight. The Cooper vane made it impossible to open the rear airstair in flight. Some airlines went a step further, sealing and covering the airstair so that it could not be used.

In December 1972 the FAA mandated that airlines post armed security officers at passenger boarding checkpoints. A month later, in January 1973, scanning of passengers and carry-on luggage with a metal detector also became mandatory. During this period, airports began installing x-ray machines and magnetometers to meet the new requirements. If such devices were not available, airline personnel were instructed to conduct a “pat down” to check for weapons and explosive devices.

The response to the skyjacking problem was not limited to domestic action. The Nixon administration had already enacted a number of reforms abroad, beginning with the Hague Hijacking Convention of 1970. Signatories to this reform, also known as the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, agree to prohibit and punish hijacking of a civilian aircraft that takes off or lands in a country other than the one in which it is registered. The 1971 Montreal Convention made hijacking a criminal rather than political act. The Anti-Hijacking Act of 1974 empowered the president of the United States to suspend air transportation between the United States and nations that abetted skyjackers, and authorized the secretary of transportation to impose sanctions against nations that did not maintain minimum aviation security standards.

The 1974 act also required the FAA to continue the screening procedures initiated in 1972 and 1973. Though this legislation was not enacted without controversy, these measures appeared to have achieved some measure of success—no hijackings were successfully achieved on American soil in 1973, and the number of attempts decreased after that point.

The United States’ answer to aviation security has often been reactive rather than proactive. While Cooper and his imitators served as the catalyst for dramatic changes within security agencies, the hijacking of Northwest Orient Airlines Flight 305 was indicative of the ongoing issues faced by the nation in combating danger in the skies. These issues are present today but with new challenges as the motives behind skyjacking and the nature of terrorism evolve.
Specimens, Celebrity & Art

Three Facets of the Mowachaht Artifacts Collected by Captain Cook

By Lara Davenport-Ray

Mowachaht artifacts that Captain James Cook collected in the 1770s are highly prized and continually of interest to museum visitors around the world. Not only are they valued as artistic works and ethnographic specimens of a pre-contact Pacific culture, they gain importance as relics of Captain Cook’s celebrity.

The Mowachaht tribal community, situated on the western coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, makes up one part of the Nuu-chah-nulth cultural-linguistic group (historically referred to as Nootka) and half of the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation (MMFN). According to tribal tradition, the Mowachaht have resided on the northwest coast of Vancouver Island since “the very beginnings of time.” Their traditional lands include the harbor Yuquot, or Friendly Cove.

Archaeological evidence shows that people have been using the Yuquot village site for over 4,300 years. In the 1770s, the native cultures inhabiting modern-day Alaska, British Columbia, and Washington enjoyed a rich existence and culture based on whaling and river fishing. The Mowachaht were known among the Nuu-chah-nulth cultures as particularly skilled traders. They gained advantage through competitive and controlled exchanges, inserting themselves as middlemen wherever possible.

The objective of Captain Cook’s 1776–80 expedition was to discover a Northwest Passage, or sailing route, through North America. The Northwest coastline, which Cook called New Albion, seemed the most appropriate place for a continental passage, but so far it had yielded only rocky coastlines. In 1778 Cook and his crew—made up of British sailors, a dozen career naval officers, and one expedition artist—approached Vancouver Island after three months at sea in bad weather.

Cook’s two ships, Resolution and Discovery, were in urgent need of refitting. After 25 days of exploration along the coast, Cook ordered the ships into what he called Nootka Sound, in the belief that the name for the Mowachaht people was “Nootka.” The sound offered a respite with fresh water and an abundant timber supply. As Cook’s ships sailed into calmer waters, the Mowachaht inhabitants came out to welcome them, eager to initiate trade.

Mowachaht memories of the moment of first contact were recorded in oral histories. Cook and his officers recorded theirs in log books. Both native oral histories and European journals represent first-hand accounts created with their respective audiences in mind. Read together, they form a balanced picture of the first interaction.

Mowachaht oral history describes this most curious arrival:

On a foggy day in 1778, the people of Yuquot heard strange noises coming from the sea. They went out to investigate and discovered a large boat drifting around, lost in the fog.
notes they heard were the bells on the ship. The Mowachaht guides told the ship to Yaquina because they welcomed and fed the visitors, who were not in good health. Captain Cook and his crew stayed to repair their ship and to do some trading…. The story of this encounter has been passed down for generations to the present day.—Ha-Shilth-Sa, March 9, 1778

Cook found the local people to be welcoming, hospitable, eager to trade, and unafraid of their visitors. In a journal entry dated March 29, 1778, he wrote:

We no sooner drew near the inlet than we found the coast to be tolerable and the people came off to the Ships in canoes without shewing the least mark of fear or distrust. We had at one time thirty two Canoes filled with people about us, and a groupe of ten or a dozen remained along side the Resolution most part of the night. They seemed to be a mild inoffensive people, showed great readiness to part with any thing they had and took whatever was offered them in exchange, but were more derostous of iron than any thing else, the use of which they very well knew and had several tools and instruments that were made of it.

After studying firsthand accounts of this encounter, J. C. H. King, former curator for the Americas at the British Museum, concluded that some oral traditions related the white men aboard as “fish come alive into people.” The Mowachaht believed salmon were supernatural beings that lived beneath the sea and sometimes took the form of men. If the salmon were pitable, eager to trade, and unafraid of their visitors. The writing in Cook’s third journal shows a noticeable effort toward achieving ceremonial purposes and symbolized the status of community distinctive. He described the natives of Nootka as people of today’s leading scholars in the relevant fields of history, anthropology, and science.

The British began with a binding ceremonial phase. Tribal leaders greeted the ships by paddling up in canoes and delivering an oration while throwing feathers and red ochre into the sea. Following the official welcome, the British joined with the Mowachaht into a permanent relationship of status and trade, and the Mowachaht began to coast the Europeans into trading away their valuable metals. As J. C. H. King describes, “Some artifacts were acquired as part of a process of testing and trading by the Mowachaht with these new visitors…designed to exploit British naivete and avarice.” The Mowachaht must have found the British naive indeed.

From the British perspective, barter began almost immediately. This was followed by intermittent trade in both raw materials and ethnographic objects. Entertainments were interrupted throughout the interaction. Neither party had any significant understanding of the preexisting meaning behind the objects they acquired. The Mowachaht placed high value on metal objects. Hooks, buttons, and metal instruments had practical purposes onboard ship. Melted down and made into tools, they would change the Mowachaht way of life, making curving and cutting easier. Nuu-chah-nulth communities relied on mats and rattles to help convey cosmologies to their children as well as to illustrate social status. British sailors saw these objects as unimportant or valuable that would entertain and fascinate people back home.

The materials exchanged were subject to two contrasting systems of valuation. By 1778 the Mowachaht were part of a large system of trade and gift-giving that stretched along the Northwest Coast. Metal was also a valuable good for trading with neighbors. The Mowachaht hoped the British would trade exchange with them, and that they would receive much of the metal in return. The British placed high value on things that were immediately useful to the refitting of their ship. This included raw materials like timber for masts and grass used in caulking. The Mowachaht claimed ownership of these local natural resources. Cook relates in his journal (April 22, 1778) that the procurement of timber or grass required the permission of an owner and payment.

The Moment we landed I sent some to cut grass not thinking the Natives could or would have the least objection, but it proved otherwise for the Moment our people began to cut they skimmed them and told them they must Makook for it, that is first buy it... there was not a blade of grass that had not a separated owner.

Through trade the crew acquired locally constructed artifacts, tools, and ceremonial items. Many were everyday objects, such as fishing hooks and lines. Other objects, like a dish or blanket, held both practical and ceremonial value. The buying and selling, haggling and bartering, was a way of trading the status of the Mowachaht and the meaning behind the objects they collected were much more complex than he understood or documented.

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MOWACHAHT CONCEPTS OF OWNERSHIP AND POSSESSION WENT BEYOND PHYSICAL OBJECTS. THEY ALSO CLAIMED OWNERSHIP OF NAMES, SONGS, AND DANCES.

When the expedition arrived back in London in 1780, the objects collected by the crew entered a new chapter in their existence. As anthropologist Igor Kopytoff explains, there is a biographical story behind every object. The artifacts collected in Nootka Sound retained their physical characteristics, but human consideration of their qualities shifted focus once they entered the European market. Ownership of the objects, meaning and value were determined using new criteria.

The expedition returned to London without a captain, Cook having been killed in battle on the shores of Hawaii.
ITEMS ACQUIRED FROM COOK’S CONTACTS IN THE PACIFIC BECAME THE CORE OF POPULAR EXHIBITS...FEEDING EUROPEAN HUNGER FOR THE EXOTIC.

Today Western museums often seek to portray Cook’s collection objects simultaneously as ethnographic specimens and mementoes of Cook’s expedition. This most recent “chapter” of their history has proved to be the most complex. At the British Museum, some Mowachaht objects from the Cook contact period appear in the “Enlightenment Gallery.” This room is decorated to reflect the 18th-century style of European cabinets of curiosity. In this environment, the museum hopes to tell the story of the formation of the British Museum collection. Eighteenth-century ethnographic specimens are housed next to navigational chronometers, sextants, and compasses. Exhibit panels explain that early explorers gathered ethnographic collections intended to represent “customs and cultures from around the world.” One case holds a Wedgwood cameo of Captain Cook along with a Mowachaht bowl, comb, and bark beater collected by his crew. The ornamentation on the Mowachaht objects is described along with possible uses and social status associated with their ownership. In this environment, the artifacts shed part of their character as Mowachaht objects and gain cultural significance as mementoes of Cook. Hooper attributes this to the “Captain Cook phenomenon,” which generally results in a tenfold increase in value for any object associated with Cook. Hooper speculates that because no actual coral or burial site remain, there is no focus for cultic attributes as models of simplicity untainted by European vice and as savage pagans in need of civilization.

Cook remains a celebrity. Exhibits of objects associated with Cook continue with great success. In a recent article, Steven Hooper described the frenzy that arose surrounding a walking stick purportedly made from the club used to kill Captain Cook at Kealakekua Bay, Hawaii. It eventually sold at auction in 2003 for £500,000, almost $1 million, with the lack of any supporting evidence as to its provenance. Today’s museum visitors and antique dealers have as much in interest in Captain Cook as did his contemporaries.

Cook collection artifacts entered a third “chapter” in their existence when the function of the objects as ceremonial instruments and their status as Captain Cook mementoes were put aside. Their form came to be analyzed with solely aesthetic criteria, and they acquired new meaning as art. Northwest Coast style and form were defined and cataloged by 20th-century scholars such as Franz Boas and Bill Holm. In his text Potlatch, Boas describes the shapes and forms used to convey specific ideas. Some artisans and craftsmen of the day began to use these works as textbooks, and their artwork often followed the prescribed forms. Art scholars and dealers now had definitive texts by which to evaluate the authenticity and quality of Northwest Coast art. Studies, analysis, and cataloging of Boas and Holm may have inadvertently placed strict limitations on native creativity. Interest in Northwest Coast art by academics and anthropologists appears to have dramatically affected the production of modern First Nations material culture.

When Cook’s crew returned to Britain, the country was in the grip of the first Romantic movement, and the British were suffering a crisis of national identity. Britishness was actively created. Researchers believe that prior to European contact, remarkably similar styles and modes of decoration were used in communities as far north as the Alaskan coast and as far south as Puget Sound in Washington. Pre-contact Nuu-chah-nulth objects show little surface decoration. After European contact, styles all over the Northwest Coast evolved quickly. Decoration using patterns and slits was used to enhance central icons and symbols. The reason behind such dramatic stylistic change after European contact is a matter of speculation. Perhaps more intricately decorated objects were found to more highly valued goods at barter.

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The Cook collection objects represent excellent examples of precontact First Nations material culture. Although this gallery falls within the ethnographic department of the British Museum, a large amount of historical information on Captain Cook is included in the display. The museum must have many examples of Northwest Coast tribal material, yet curators have specifically chosen to illustrate the Mowachaht tribe. Many Cook objects are displayed in the limited space available to showcase all U.S. and Canadian cultures. No doubt the exhibit curators understand their visiting public. These particular objects pique visitors’ interest and feed the public’s insatiable fascination with celebrity. Even today, these items have failed to shake off their association with the persona of Captain Cook. Modern museum displays emphasize the links between early Mowachaht material and European history.

Cook collections continue to provide a focal point of disagreement between Mowachaht and European systems of knowledge. In Europe, the Mowachaht objects have come to act as ambassadors of a faraway culture. They are tangible yet somewhat detached from the Mowachaht people, having become entrenched in the celebrity of Captain Cook. Once Cook objects left Vancouver Island on the Discovery and Resolution, they did not meet Mowachaht eyes again for two centuries. In 1979 the British Museum held an exhibition commemorating Cook’s death. On this occasion, Jerry Jack was probably the first Mowachaht ever to visit the museum. Some First Nation communities still hold Europeans accountable for the great change and population devastation that took place soon after first contact. Evidence of early encounters, like Cook objects, accentuates these negative emotions.

By the time Cook entered Nootka Sound in 1778, the Pacific coast of North America had been inhabited by Native Americans for hundreds and in some cases thousands of years. From the Mowachaht perspective, the future of objects collected by Cook and his crew is clear. Long before Cook arrived, the Mowachaht had a developed idea of property rights. Regardless of the fact that the terms of the 1778 exchange were agreed upon by the Mowachaht, the objects that were brought back to Britain are regarded by the Mowachaht-Muchalaht First Nation (MMFN) as part of the direct inherited rights of specific chiefs. Their status as “Cook Collection” objects obscures their importance as part of Nuu-chah-nulth cultural heritage. As a nation, they would prefer to build tribal facilities where they can safely house their own cultural heritage. If the objects cannot be returned, the MMFN believes the tribe should at least have authority over their presentation and interpretation.

The future of Cook collection artifacts is complicated by contrasting Mowachaht and European perspectives. Objects collected at Friendly Cove in 1778 have come to represent both the cultural group that constructed them—precontact Nuu-chah-nulth people—and the cultural group that collected them—English explorers of the 19th century. In addition, they exhibit unique artistic aesthetics. During each chapter of their existence, the objects acquired new meanings and values. They are not simply ethnographic specimens, reminders of Cook, or pieces of art. They have the ability to represent every phase of their life history. By manipulating the environment in which they are displayed and selecting interpretive information, museum curators influence how people view the artifacts. To facilitate relationships between museums and tribal groups, many museums welcome tribal guidance on interpretation and presentation of objects in their collections. The museums act as cultural middlemen, attempting to transmit knowledge from tribal groups to their visiting public.

The Washington State History Museum and Anchorage Museum have embarked on a joint exhibition focusing on Captain Cook’s time on the Northwest Coast. As this exhibition unfolds, it will be interesting to see how the Mowachaht artifacts are interpreted. Will they be displayed as remnants of Cook’s celebrity, as examples of 18th-century precontact tribal culture, as art, or a mixture of all three? To what extent will Mowachaht advice influence interpretation and display? In developing a plan for their joint endeavor these two museums face an interesting challenge, but they also have a unique opportunity to inaugurate an exciting new chapter in the “biography” of these historic artifacts. The ownership status and interpretation of the objects Cook collected have become the new unknown edges of the map.
Pacific Northwest Women in Roles of Tribal Leadership

Poplar American culture seems to view Native American tribes as traditionally male dominated, led by warrior chiefs. History shows, however, that at least in the Northwest, the roles of men and women have been “complementary but equal,” as cultural anthropologist Lillian Ackerman put it in her well-regarded study of Columbia Plateau tribes. Ackerman explains that women owned the food they gathered and could trade any surplus for whatever they wanted.

The female role of gatherer was seen as being on a level with the male roles of hunter and fisher. Women “appeared to have a great deal of informal political influence,” Ackerman wrote. Although most village chiefs were men, she found instances of women serving in that capacity before the reservation era.

Jumping to the more recent past—beginning in the 1950s—we find that a number of forceful and effective Northwest Indian women have attained tribal leadership positions and played key roles in furthering the interests of their people.

Lucy Covington (Colville)

Born in a tepee on the Colville Indian Reservation in north central Washington, Lucy Covington (1910-1982) attended reservation elementary schools and graduated from Haskell Indian Boarding School. In 1929, she married fellow student and construction worker John Covington. She worked as a teacher and later in the shipyards. Covington later went on to become a successful cattle rancher on the Colville Reservation.

Covington was a fierce defender of tribal sovereignty. In 1970, she was elected to the Colville Business Council—the governing body of the Colville Confederated Tribes. Covington was re-elected to the council for planning, organization, and development. Three years later, in 1973, Covington was re-elected to the 14-member council. Covington served as president of the American Indian Press Association, to come to the Colville Reserve, publish a newspaper, and help the tribe around $30,000.

When the tribe was considering the possibility of selling its land, Covington’s anti-termination candidates for the council appeared to be on the verge of approving the termination. Covington, who had been financing lobbying trips to Washington, D.C., by selling some of her cattle, called for reinforcements. She asked Charles Trimble, founder of the American Indian Press Association, to come to the Colville Reserve, publish a newspaper, and help her mount a campaign to promote anti-termination candidates for the business council. Covington met him in Spokane where, he said, “She sat me down in a room at the Indian Center there and told me what she expected of me. She wanted a newspaper that would tell what a tribe means to its people and its community, and that was worth to them in terms of land, natural resources, and most of all their cultural heritage.” She had a name for the newspaper, Our Heritage, and described the logo she wanted for it.

Our Heritage was a key to our efforts to win back our tribal status and to establish a government and economic stability. One of the first of these women was Delores (Dee) Pigley, of the Siletz Tribe. She grew up on the grounds of the Chemawa Indian School at Salem, Oregon, where her parents were employed. She worked there for a time at the post office and was employed by the Social Security Administration in Salem when the Siletz became the second tribe in the nation to attain restoration of its federal status.

Pigley won election to the interim council for planning, organization, and development. Three years later, in 1982, when the tribe adopted a constitution and elected a permanent governing council, she became its president.

Pacific Northwest Women in Roles of Tribal Leadership

Women of Power

By Roberta Ulrich

Below: Lucy Covington (right) poses outside a teepee with her mother, Nellie Moses Fridland, (center) and grandmother, Mary Moses (seated), widow of the famed Chief Moses. Covington was a successful cattle rancher as well as a fierce defender of tribal sovereignty.

Facing page: Dee Pigley, one of the longest-serving tribal chairmen in the Pacific Northwest, has led the Siletz into innovative programs.

image
Chair. It fell to her to lead the tribe as it established social services and an economic base. The Siletz faced enormous problems. A survey by a consulting firm showed that more than a third of tribal members within its eight-county service area were living below the poverty level. Medical services for the band's families was less than half the state average. There were severe alcohol-related health issues in nearly every family. More than a quarter of tribal families lived in substandard housing.

As Pigsley’s tenure began, the tribe settled its dispute with the state over fishing and hunting rights—an issue that had come close to derailing the tribe’s restoration efforts. Another agreement, this one with the federal government, provided the tribe over 3,200 acres of forest land, supplying the basis for a modest logging business.

Pigsley led the tribe through a major shift in its relationship with the federal government. Called self-governance, the policy permits a tribe to manage its own programs, such as health care and education, without government supervision. Although the tribes must account for the money, they are free to design their own programs. The Siletz Tribe was among the first few dozen in the nation to take on full responsibility for its own programs.

Pigsley also led the tribe through the long, contentious process of developing a casino. Governor Barbara Roberts vetoed the tribe’s first choice of a site near Salem. Residents of Lincoln City, on the Oregon Coast, raised a storm of protest when the second choice, just north of the town, was approved. Criticism died down as the tribe, including its casinos, became one of the areas’s major employers and casino visitors brought additional commerce to the seaside town. It also helped that the Siletz, like other tribes, contributed large sums of money to local causes.

A no-nonsense administrator, Pigsley, who remains chair, keeps the tribe focused on the future. She told the crowd at a tribal gathering held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of restoration, “We’ll continue to advance our social, economic, and political initiatives in a manner that respects the sovereign rights of other Indian tribes, the state of Oregon, and local governments.”

Sue Shaffer (Cow Creek Band)

Shaffer, who was born to be chair of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians in southern Oregon, was a position she held for over a quarter century (1983–2010). Her grandmother, mother, and then Shaffer herself kept the tribal records while the government ignored the band for most of a century, despite a ratified treaty. A small, slender woman, she uses facts and figures to make her arguments. She does not raise her voice. She sees goals clearly and does not let anything deter her.

Ironically, termination gave Shaffer the opportunity to attain the tribal recognition she had been seeking for so long. The government had included the Cow Creek Band among the tribes in the Oregon Termination Act of 1954—a fact tribal members learned years later. When other tribes began seeking to reverse their terminations in the 1970s, Shaffer saw a chance. Gathering historical fact and legal expertise, the band filed suit seeking compensation—promised but never paid—for 800 square miles of land the Cow Creeks ceded to the government in 1853. The band then began seeking recognition from the federal government. While the government negotiated a settlement of the Cow Creek claim, it balked at recognizing the tribe, even though it had tacitly admitted recognition when it included the Cow Creeks in the 1954 termination act.

Led by Shaffer, the Cow Creeks went to area congressmen Jim Wexner. He introduced a bill, which was quickly passed, granting the Cow Creeks recognition as of December 1982. Banking its in $1.5 million settlement, the tribe drew down interest and used that money to purchase small pieces of land as sites upon which to establish businesses.

Then it established its own programs, such as health care and education, without government supervision, including the National Congress of American Indians, the Canyonville Park Board, Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, Oregon Council for the Humanities, Native American Rights Fund, Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, and a host of others. She has been honored by numerous organizations for her civic contributions.

In keeping with Shaffer’s philosophy, the Cow Creek Band has produced job opportunities and instituted low-cost health insurance for tribal members and a college scholarship program, but it does not make regular payments to tribal members. She commented at a 1998 congressional hearing:

Tribal development efforts continue to focus on benefitting our surrounding communities as well as our tribal membership, and we have not asked for any handouts or bail-outs…. It has always been our tribal philosophy and practice to build our communities (tribal and national) in a cooperative manner for the common good in furthering our desire to help build and support strong and independent families.

Shaffer then set about making the Cow Creek Band a major economic factor in Douglas County. After Congress passed the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988, the Cow Creeks became the first Oregon tribe to get into the gambling business, building a modest establishment in 1992 and later expanding it into a major casino and hotel that drew travelers off busy Interstate 5.

With Shaffer at the helm, the tribe asserted its sovereign right to be free of state and local taxes and regulations. Casino revenues, which have soared since 1982, are earmarked for a number of projects to state and local building code standards, paid local fire departments the equivalent of taxes for fire protection, and paid state police for some regulatory activities on tribal land. Even before its casino-fueled affluence, the tribe donated $25,000 when the city of Canyonville needed $103,000 in matching funds to obtain a federal grant for water system improvements. Since then the husband who returned from World War II an alcoholic. Divorced with five children still at home, she became a licensed practical nurse and a drug and alcohol counselor.

As the Siletz Tribe began efforts to reestablish itself during the void of termination, it invited Harrison to help create a tribal alcohol treatment program. In doing this, she became active in tribal affairs and was eventually elected to the tribal council, even though she was not a member of that tribe. As a council member she traveled to Washington, D.C., to plead for the tribe’s restoration. The Siletz became the first tribe in Oregon to win re-recognition. That experience, Harrison said, helped prepare her for the Grand Ronde restoration efforts a few years later.

She was working in Coo County as a counselor dealing with court jail inmates when a drunken threat propelled her home to Grand Ronde as the tribe was beginning its efforts to regain recognition. Although a core group had continued to hold meetings during the termination years, many members had scattered in search of jobs. As enrollment clerk, Harrison set out to find them. She started with people who knew and got them to make lists of people they knew. She went door to door in search of those on the final tribal roll in the 1950s or their descendants. She drove down every road in the Grand Ronde area and eventually collected 1,200 names.

When Congressman Les AuCoin agreed to sponsor legislation to restore the tribe, he said he would need material to show that the surrounding community approved of the tribe’s return. Harrison, by that time community coordinator for the tribe, went back to knocking on doors. She and others collected 103 letters of support from city and county officials, civic groups, business people, and neighboring tribal governments.

When she and four other tribal members paid their own way to Washington, D.C., to testify in support of the restoration, she took her son and daughter along to witness the historic moment. Harrison led off the tribal testimony saying, “We are speaking up today for our right to exist.” She made the point that the land given up by the tribe beginning in the 1860s could have been supporting tribal members all those years and that the services the government provides to Indians is payment for that land. “We feel we paid, more than...
adequately, when we gave up valuable land in exchange for smaller, less valuable parcels,” she said. “These services are due for our people; we’ve already paid dearly for all of them.” The restoration breached through Congress without opposition, and the Grand Ronde Tribe was restored in 1983. Harrison was elected to the tribal council and served 27 years, including three terms as president, before she retired in 2001 at the age of 77. The tribe then named her an ambassador to other tribes, non-Indian organizations, and government agencies, where her friendly, low-key approach won friends and allies for the Grand Ronde people. While chair she presided over the tribe’s eye-popping growth as its Spirit Mountain Casino, 60 miles west of Portland, became Oregon’s top tourist attraction. The profits were poured into construction—a handsome tribal headquarters, housing subdivisions, a full-service medical clinic, plus services for tribal members and organizations to community projects and organizations. By 2006 the Grand Ronde Tribe had donated more than $35 million to nonprofit organizations.

Harrison served on the tribal council from 1984 to 2001, and chaired the council from 1995 to 2001. She managed to remain deeply involved in state and tribal organizations where her common sense approach gained widespread respect for both herself and her tribe and served on the boards of numerous Indian and non-Indian civic entities, receiving achievement and service awards for her contributions. She remains active in organizations and continues to speak her mind at tribal meetings.

Lavina Washines (Yakama)

Although Washington tribes did not face the trauma of termination, as did so many of their Oregon neighbors, they had other battles to fight. The Yakama Nation, whose 1.13-million-acre reservation spreads across south central Washington, has had its own struggles, many of them related to salmon fishing. The late Lavina Washines (1940–2011), who served as tribal chair in 2006 and 2007, was in the thick of those battles, both in and out of office. While growing up she learned the traditional ways of gathering and preparing food and knew that young tribal members would learn those skills to pass on to future generations. Yet she embraced modern American culture when it would enhance the lives of the Yakama people.

Salmon remain central to Yakama traditions, and their diminishing numbers have been a primary concern of the tribe. As chair, Washines could point with pride to the three tribal hatcheries already in operation and the fourth being constructed under her tenure. She was equally supportive of the modern technology used to can and freeze fish at the intertribal facility on the Columbia River’s north shore. She delighted in the revival of a traditional skill, the making of a steelhead-based food called “sump.” Washines described the delicacy as dried, coarse like bran—sometimes with huckleberries added—and mixed into other foods.

One of the highlights of her tenure as chair was the tribe’s acquisition of Lyle Point, a traditional fishing site on the north shore of the Columbia near Lyle. Washines had long been active in the river tribe’s decades-long effort to replace traditional Yakama fishing sites that had been destroyed in 1939 by the construction of Bonneville Dam. When development of a housing complex was planned for one of the proposed replacements—privately owned Lyle Point—in the early 2000s, Indians and environmentalists both objected. The development plan was halted when the Trust for Public Land purchased the property. Two years later the Yakama Nation bought it and restored it as a tribal fishing site.

Throughout her life, particularly as council chair, Washines was adamant about protecting the Yakama’s water, self-confidence, strength of character, and determination. She said, “We respect everybody. We want to live in harmony with all people. We’re here for good; we are not leaving. We must learn to get along. We will never consent to assimilation. Our way is strong.”

Fawn Sharp (Quinault)

The Quinault Indian Nation elected one woman, Fawn Sharp, to succeed another, Pearl Capehorn Bolster. Sharp is an attorney who was introduced to legal issues as a child attending American Indian Organizations (NIFWC) meetings with her mother. Sharp’s mother worked for longtime Quinault chair Joe DelCruz, and Sharp was exposed to innumerable discussions related to the Boldt Decision, which was a key element in the Indian fishing rights conflicts of the 1970s. She graduated from Gonzaga University in Spokane at the age of 19. After receiving her juris doctorate from the University of Washington Law School in 1995, she worked as a private attorney in Aberdeen and served as an administrative law judge for the State of Washington before going to work for her tribe.

Sharp told UW Law, the University of Washington Law School’s alumni magazine, that she always planned to return to her tribe but did not concentrate on Indian law. Instead, she studied commercial, contract, and tax law in order to help the tribe become economically independent. A classmate recalled her as “the class dynamo.” She joined the Quinault government as a staff attorney and became, in succession, managing attorney, associate judge of the Quinault Tribal Court, and director/secretary of the tribal Enterprises Board. The tribe owns a casino-resort on the Washington Coast and encourages tribal enterprises.

Sharp was elected president of the tribe in March 2006. Like officials of most small governments, she deals with finding creative ways to support government administration and human services. There are also the health and poverty issues that affect most tribes, but she has one problem fewer tribal leaders face: with 23 miles of Pacific Ocean shoreline, the Quinault prides itself being a “Native American” tribe. “We fear that constructing the dams would add to the sad legacy of problems caused by decades of neglect and damage to ecological processes that are vital to the salmon resources protected by our treaty with the United States,” she said. This issue brings her full circle to the days when she sat with crayons and coloring book, listening to discussions of the Boldt decision.

THIS IS A RAYING a sampling of Pacific North American women who are or have been in roles of tribal leadership. There are many others, including Rebecca Miles, who at 32, became the youngest chair in the history of the Nisqually Tribe. Lillian Ackerman wrote that early missionaries found tribal women “hauhgty and independent.” Today’s women tribal leaders could hardly be described as “haughty,” but they do carry a grand tradition of self-confidence, strength of character, and determination.

Roberta Ulrich grew up in Pullman and gradu- ated from Washington State University. Her 50-plus years of newspaper reporting included 25 years with United Press International and 13 at The Oregonian. She is author of American Indians from Termination to Restoration, 1953–2006 (University of Nebraska Press, 2010).
CALL FOR PAPERS

The Washington State Historical Society, permanent sponsor of the conference, invites proposals for sessions, panels, posters, and workshops on the “Citizenships” theme and on topics related to next year’s 125th Anniversary of Washington Statehood. For more information, visit: www.washingtonhistory.org/support/heritage/pnwhc/.

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Lincoln and Oregon Country. Politics in the Civil War Era


Reviewed by Michael F. Conlin.

Michael F. Conlin is an associate professor of history at Eastern Washington University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. His current project explores how the popular understanding of the Constitution shaped the popular perception of the U.S. military during the Civil War.

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HIS fine oral history recounts the struggles and long-delayed satisfactions experienced by several Nisei—or second-generation Japanese—veterans upon their return to Hood River, Oregon, after World War II. In filling a “gap” in studies on Japanese Americans after World War II, this book helps to redress a neglected issue of Nikkei resettlement in the Pacific Northwest. (The term “Nikkei” refers to Japanese emigrants and their descendants.) Using interviews, local histories, and government documents, Tamura gives us a comprehensive narrative of displaced Japanese who returned to a community that both maligned them as traitors and sought to deny them their constitutional rights. Despite the familiarity with which its Nikkei sons and daughters served in combat, Hood River treated wartime returnees with an alarming measure of bigotry and racism. Tamura, whose father and uncle are among the interviewees, succeeds in giving us a rich, multilayered story of a particularly dark episode in the tragic history of Japanese relocation.

Part I provides a history of Japanese settlement in the Hood River Valley, emphasizing the cultural hardships endured by immigrants whose industriousness served as a stabilizing force in the community, yet also earned them the animosity of their white neighbors. In Part II, Tamura takes the reader through the outbreak of war and the promulgation of Executive Order 9066, which led to the relocation of Hood River’s Nikkei to internment camps throughout the West. As families endured the privations of camps in Minidoka and Tule Lake, young men enlisted in the U.S. military, serving with distinction both in Europe and in the Pacific.

Part III narrates the community’s attempt at preemptive exclusion of its Nikkei returnees. As early as November 1944, the Hood River American Legion Post 22 tried to prevent the sale of property to Japanese and to purchase all Japanese-owned real estate. The American Legion also removed the names of Nikkei soldiers from a community memorial, a move which triggered an immediate backlash. Despite condemnation from around the country, town leaders and the local press remained adamant, even publishing warnings to “lapes” not to return to the area. The final section of the book describes the changed status of Hood River today, and by way of a meditation on the nature of otherness, public courage, and private determination, revisits the remarkable (and remarkably forgiving!) men who made up the core of this oral history.

Nisei Soldiers is a superb read, an excellent source of Northwest social history, and a welcome addition to the literature on Japanese internment.

Eric Currengham earned his doctorate in history at the University of Oregon. He is author of Fascinating the End of History: Nichida, Zen and the Psychodelic Eclipse (2007).

A native of Oregon, Blake Stonecker teaches American history at Waldorf College. He is the author of The Great War: American Cities at War (2013), a collaboration with the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Peel Park, and More Sawdust (2013) and is working on a variety of projects about activism and counterculture in the Pacific Northwest.

Esther Pohl Lovejoy and a Life in Activism


Reviewed by Blake Stonecker.

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ether Lovejoy began to fight for pure milk legislation as soon as she became the first female Portland City Health Officer in 1927. The battle was in part personal. Just a few months earlier, her son had died—likely due to impure milk. But the battle was also political. Lovejoy considered such protective measures for children to be “the business of the whole community.” In March 1909, the Portland city council passed an ordinance that shifted milk inspection authority from the state dairy commissioner to the local city health board. Eight months later, the city council passed an even stronger pure milk law. The victory validated Lovejoy’s tenure in office. But Kimberly Jensen illustrates that Lovejoy’s fight for pure milk also revealed the shortcomings of Progressive Era politics. “Policy makers would never really attend to the business of protecting the health and safety of women if those same women did not have the political clout of the vote and the consequent ability to hold elected officials accountable.” Within months, Lovejoy turned her attention to the fight for women’s suffrage in Oregon, a battle that won women the right to vote in 1912.

Lovejoy’s fight for pure milk legislation and women’s suffrage are compelling early examples of what Jensen terms constructive resistance, “the ability to take effective action against unjust power.” Most remarkably, Lovejoy practiced constructive resistance on every conceivable scale. At home, she divorced her second husband, before divorcing her own second husband. Lovejoy became one of the first female graduates of the University of Oregon Medical College, but the American Legion expelled her after World War I. Lovejoy next rose to the appointed position of City Health Officer and then won election to the United States Congress in 1920. Throughout these early chapters, Jensen masterfully grounds a Pacific Northwest narrative in the national political and social contexts of the early 20th century.

Like many Progressives who supported American involvement in World War I, Lovejoy became disgusted by militarism after 1919. In particular, she detected how war impacted women, a lesson brought home to her throughout her activism in France during World War I and Smirna during the Greco-Turkish Civil War. Lovejoy thereafter completed her best work outside the Pacific Northwest, traveling all over the world under the aegis of the American Women’s Hospitals and the Medical Women’s International Association. These missions all centered on her desire to help women and children impacted by poverty, natural disaster, and war. Oregon’s Doctor to the World illuminates how sex discrimination motivated one woman to promote feminism, social justice, and public health around the globe. Jensen also argues that we can appreciate Lovejoy’s international work because it continued the projects and passions all centered on her desire to help women and children impacted by poverty, natural disaster, and war. Oregon’s Doctor to the World illuminates how sex discrimination motivated one woman to promote feminism, social justice, and public health around the globe. Jensen also argues that we can appreciate Lovejoy’s international work because it continued the projects and passions}

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F

ether Lovejoy began to fight for pure milk legislation as soon as she became the first female Portland City Health Officer in 1927. The battle was in part personal. Just a few months earlier, her son had died—likely due to impure milk. But the battle was also political. Lovejoy considered such protective measures for children to be “the business of the whole community.” In March 1909, the Portland city council passed an ordinance that shifted milk inspection authority from the state dairy commissioner to the local city health board. Eight months later, the city council passed an even stronger pure milk law. The victory validated Lovejoy’s tenure in office. But Kimberly Jensen illustrates that Lovejoy’s fight for pure milk also revealed the shortcomings of Progressive Era politics. “Policy makers would never really attend to the business of protecting the health and safety of women if those same women did not have the political clout of the vote and the consequent ability to hold elected officials accountable.” Within months, Lovejoy turned her attention to the fight for women’s suffrage in Oregon, a battle that won women the right to vote in 1912.

Lovejoy’s fight for pure milk legislation and women’s suffrage are compelling early examples of what Jensen terms constructive resistance, “the ability to take effective action against unjust power.” Most remarkably, Lovejoy practiced constructive resistance on every conceivable scale. At home, she divorced her second husband, before divorcing her own second husband. Lovejoy became one of the first female graduates of the University of Oregon Medical College, but the American Legion expelled her after World War I. Lovejoy next rose to the appointed position of City Health Officer and then won election to the United States Congress in 1920. Throughout these early chapters, Jensen masterfully grounds a Pacific Northwest narrative in the national political and social contexts of the early 20th century.

Like many Progressives who supported American involvement in World War I, Lovejoy became disgusted by militarism after 1919. In particular, she detected how war impacted women, a lesson brought home to her throughout her activism in France during World War I and Smirna during the Greco-Turkish Civil War. Lovejoy thereafter completed her best work outside the Pacific Northwest, traveling all over the world under the aegis of the American Women’s Hospitals and the Medical Women’s International Association. These missions all centered on her desire to help women and children impacted by poverty, natural disaster, and war. Oregon’s Doctor to the World illuminates how sex discrimination motivated one woman to promote feminism, social justice, and public health around the globe. Jensen also argues that we can appreciate Lovejoy’s international work because it continued the projects and passions
Before it was a Western-themed town, Winthrop, Washington, was a Western town. And it still is. Aside from the replica storefronts, designer vacation homes, and streams of RVs and Harley riders that have arrived since the North Cascades Highway opened in 1972, the fundamentals of year-round living in and around Winthrop have changed little in the past 100 years. There’s no better testament to this fact than Mrs. Hugh Fraser’s Seven Years on the Pacific Slope (1914), a first-hand account of life there from 1905 to 1912.

Mrs. Hugh Fraser was the name under which Mary Crawford Fraser (1851–1922), an American raised in England and Italy, wrote her memoir. Fraser, who had settled in the Methow Valley two years earlier through a connection with Guy Waring, the Harvard-educated pioneer who had founded Winthrop, became acquainted with Mrs. Fraser to become acquainted with “the cream of Winthrop society.”

A hundred years ago, just as today, the Methow Valley was comprised of small family farms and ranches situated on the edge of the wilderness. The most prized acreage in this dry region had irrigation—or, as locals say, “on the ditch.” Alfalfa was the main crop, but it “can climb like a cat and live through a blizzard.” Whether packing into the backcountry to a mining claim or making the 40-mile trek down valley to board the steamer for Winchester, a sturdy team was invaluable. This reliance on horses meant that everyone, including Fraser and her son, partook of horse trading and horse breeding.

In addition to reporting on land and livestock, Fraser carefully observes how valley residents conduct themselves. She notes the independent-minded valley’s thorny dealings with county commissioners, as well as the rivalry between Winthrop and Twisp, the larger, officially chartered town nine miles downstream. She comments on the speculative land deals that take place (“The town, like all its kind, was spattered with real estate offices”) and the lapses into lawlessness (“I suppose a man with a lawless mind is an outlaw”).

According to Sheila McLean, great-granddaughter of Dick McLean (called Mackenzie), a savvy and free-wheeling trader who ran the store in the rival settlement of Heckenkoldon, now part of Winthrop, along with his wife and numerous six children, McLean is a central figure in Seven Years—along with Martha Filer (called Old Lady Tiler), who leased Fraser a house on the bench above the town and kept her current on all the local goings-on. Then as now, Winthrop was a small town, and it did not take long for Mrs. Fraser to become acquainted with “the cream of Winthrop society.”

FACING PAGE: Mrs. Hugh Fraser.

Despite the pressure of the surroundings—or because of it—Fraser stayed in the Methow beyond the short visit she originally intended. When friends from more populous, more accessible locations would ask why she lived in the Methow, she would give the pat reply, “Because it’s God’s country.” Then, to herself, she would answer, “Because of the green glory of its summer mornings, the awesome beauty of its winter nights, the bloom of its unfarmed soil, because our tired souls can breathe more freely under the vast circle of the Methow sky; because every star and tree and hilltop has become a landmark on a journey of rejuvenation; because (perhaps, the strongest of all) the Methow Valley is an unqualified as its ancestors, as its neighbors, as its neighbors, as its neighbors.

According to Sheila McLean, great-granddaughter of Dick McLean and editor of the Methow Grist, “Mrs. Fraser’s book caught values still shared in my family and community. She gave me new ‘memories’ to enjoy.”

The trappings of contemporary life aside, the Methow Valley that Fraser portrays in Seven Years on the Pacific Slope—the pines, cottonwoods, aspen, mountain vistas, summer lightning, winter quiet, river shows, spring calving, deer herds, eagle encounters, alfalfa fields, and the valley residents themselves—remains mostly the same.

Peter Donahue is editing an edition of Seven Years on the Pacific Slope for the Shuler Historical Museum in Winthrop, a division of the Okanogan Country Historical Society.
A group of Lincoln High School students, c. 1914, test fabrics as part of their chemistry class work. Lincoln High, in Seattle’s Wallingford neighborhood, was the city’s second high school when it opened in 1906 with 900 students. More than half of the first graduating class of 1909 was composed of girls. This photograph by Curtis & Miller is part of the Washington State Historical Society Collection.

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