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Reaching Out to New Readers with Columbia

In the early 1960s the Ohio Historical Society dared to convert its historical quarterly from the scholarly format typical of such journals to one commonly called “popular history,” intended to capture the attention of readers whose interest in state and local history is high, but is not as intense as that of teachers and other professionals. The director of the society was promptly called before the Ohio Academy of History for what he says was “an accounting” of the decision to make so rash a change. The reaction of that professional group was not just unapproving; it was adverse to the point of being vituperative.

Since then an increasing number of state societies have followed the Ohio example and begun publishing journals of history unashamedly patterned after the national magazine American Heritage, which pioneered the field in the early 1950s. Now, with this first issue of Columbia, the Magazine of Northwest History, this state’s historical society joins them.

It is not that regional history is undeserving of the serious, solemn treatment given it by scholars. But Washington has been well served in this field for many years by the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, published by the University of Washington and distributed by this society to its members. PNQ, as it is called, serves the essential purpose of making contributions to the knowledge of history by publishing the results of original research. It goes onto the shelves of libraries and collectors as a permanent record of the past, although those shelves serve less than adequately as instruments of research because PNQ is not fully indexed, a shortcoming that eventually must be remedied. Every state deserves a scholarly history journal. Washington has one in PNQ.

But history should be read by many others besides historians and serious history buffs. And why is that? Perhaps it is to overcome widespread apathy about acquiring knowledge of what has gone before—apathy like that of our companion who, when driving through Kalama, was told that it was here that railroading began in 1872. “So what?” he responded.

That could well be the reaction of anyone who didn’t know that it was the Northern Pacific railroad, following the route surveyed by the first governor, Isaac Stevens, that connected this new territory with the rest of the country and set Washington free from the bonds of isolation.

Disinterest stems from ignorance. The English are disinterested in American football. They don’t understand it. Americans are wholly apathetic about cricket, a popular British sport, for the same reason. And so it is with the whole, continually unfolding drama of the past. This drama is history—what actually occurred. But History, with a capital H, is the written record of those occurrences. It is not the mere reporting of a series of often unrelated happenings, but the piecing together and interpretation of them in ways that make them understandable.

In our kind of democracy, decisions are made and attitudes shaped by balloting, free discussion, intensely pursued salesmanship through the media, the thought processes of highly placed judges, and the actions of elected leaders. If present-day situations that call for judgments cannot be evaluated in terms of like situations that have been dealt with and decided upon in times past, then some very bad decisions and actions can result, and too often do.

Some knowledge of history and its lessons does not fade or become forgotten. The failure of the attempt to legislate improved morality through the prohibition of alcohol is an often-cited example. But now wholesale illegal smuggling of addictive drugs makes the rum-running of the 1920s seem insignificant.

Rum-running by water was a major enterprise on Puget Sound, Willapa Bay and the Columbia River. It couldn’t be stopped. The drug runners use planes. They can’t be stopped either. This doesn’t mean that drug use should be legalized, like liquor. It does mean the problem has to be attacked from a different direction.

Besides a desire to provide educational material, there are other reasons for publishing history attractively packaged and interestingly written. Readership needs to be encouraged. If elements of entertainment can be introduced into the treatment of otherwise serious material, it will have more appeal.

And then there is the element of pride. What has been accomplished by the people who have struggled to develop this northwest corner of the nation in the 140 years since the British flag came down should not go unappreciated by those who are the beneficiaries of those efforts, just as the achievements of the present should not be unknown to those who come after us, as they will be if the processes of history are neglected.

Columbia, the Magazine of Northwest History will reach relatively few people. We wish it could reach them all.

It has been small efforts—many of them—that have built Washington and the Northwest. This is one more.

—John M. McClelland, Jr., President, Washington State Historical Society
Who Was that Lady Your Town Is Named After?

In 1985 the State Historical Society published the monumental work of the late Robert Hitchman, Place Names of Washington. It gives the exact location of each village, town and city, each creek, stream and river, each mountain, lake, prairie—whatever bears a name and appears on a map—and tells how and when it was named.

A perusal of the book reveals that pioneers often leaned toward the feminine side in selecting names for their new towns in Washington. Here is a compilation of those names.

ADDY. Adeline (Addy) Dudrey was the wife of the first postmaster in a town platted at a place south of Colville, where a grist mill was built near the mouth of Addy Creek in the 1870s. The railroad came through in 1890, and when a post office was applied for, the name chosen was Addy, not for Addy the creek but for Addy the lady.

ALMIRA. Almira Davis was the wife of Charles Davis. Being the original merchant, he called the village Davisine. Then he sold out to two men who didn't like Davisine and realized Davis couldn't object to it being changed to Almira.

ANACORTES. Anna Curtis Bowman was the wife of the town's platter in 1876. He named the town Anna Curtis. Postal officials, in their high-handed or careless ways, ran the two names together and came up with Anacortes, which didn't bother Curtis particularly, since his family was Spanish and had originally been Cortes.

ARLETTA. Arla Powell was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Powell, who settled at the north end of Hales Passage, southwest of Gig Harbor, in 1892. Mrs. Hale admired the name of a city on the island of Malta—Valetta—and so contrived Arletta.

ARTIC. Arta Saunders was the wife of the first postmaster in this small place in Grays Harbor County. He wrote "Arta" as the name when a post office permit was applied for. But "Arta" was read as "Artic" in Washington, D.C. The error was never corrected.

ARZINA. Arzina Chamberlin, wife of the founder of this village 12 miles southwest of Kettle Falls, had in 1898 the privilege of being the first postmistress and also of providing the town's name.

CORA. Cora Davis was, in 1886, the first married woman to settle in the "Big Bottom" country on the upper Cowlitz River.

ELLensburg. Mary Ellen Shoudy lived with her husband in east-central Kittitas County when a townsite was platted in 1867. The name chosen was Ellen's Burgh, which was soon contracted by the Post Office Department into Ellensburg.

ELMA. Elma Austin, whose family settled on the Chehalis River before 1860, is not cited by all as the person for whom it was intended that the town be named. Some say Elmira was submitted to the Postal Department. Because there was already an Almira that name was rejected.

EVELINE. Evaline A. Porter was postmistress in 1911 when the railroad built a spur to a rail point eight miles south of Chehalis. Evaline's name was misspelled by the postal people. They never bothered to correct it.

FRANCES. E.H. McHenry was a prominent logger in the Willapa River valley. He used his wife's middle name as the town name.

HAZEL. Hazel McMartin was the first child born to Mr. and Mrs. Peter
Mary Ellen Shoudy,
Ellensburg's namesake.
D. McMartin, who in 1903 platted a townsite at a place originally called Packard, 18 miles east of Arlington in north-central Snohomish County. McMartin preferred to honor Hazel, his daughter, rather than Clayton Packard, a timberman.

HILDA. Hilda Hulgersen was a popular waitress in a logging camp about 12 miles west of Port Angeles, so when it came time to select a name for the small place, the loggers enthusiastically nominated Hilda. She and the logging camp soon moved on.

LAWRENCE. Laura Blankenship was the daughter of the owner of a shingle mill on the banks of the Nooksack northeast of Bellingham. In the 1890s she was faintly honored by the choice of a name a little like her own.

LEBAM. Mabel Goodell was the daughter of Joe W. Goodell, founder of a town 11 miles southeast of Raymond in Pacific County. The original name was Half Moon, but postal officials frowned on two-word names. Mabel’s father solved the problem. He spelled his daughter’s name backward and pleased everyone, with the possible exception of Mabel.

LELAND. Laura E. Andrews was the first white woman settler on Lake Hooker (also known as Lake Leland), seven miles south of Discovery Bay in Jefferson County. Residents chose Lealand, using Laura E. Andrews’ initials as the first three letters. Postal authorities almost inevitably misread it, and it became permanently Leland.

LENORA. Lenora Lucas was a daughter of a partner in the local Lucas & Sutton sawmill in Pend Oreille County. A village grew up around the mill, and in 1902 it needed a name.

LISABEULA. There happened to be, in the office of the Postmaster General in Washington, D.C., in 1890, two young lady employees whose first names were Eliza and Beulah. When a small settlement on the west shore of Vashon Island applied for a post office in 1890, the postmaster general, acting in the absence of other instructions, applied a name of his own making, undoubtedly pleasing the two ladies.

MABANA. Mabel Anderson was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Nils Anderson, who, in 1912, lived on Camano Island on Saratoga Passage, four miles north of Langley. A name for the settlement was needed and J.A. Woodard made one up, using the first syllables of Mabel’s first and last names.

MABTON. Mabel Baker Anderson was the daughter of Dorsey S. Baker, who built the famous “rainwide railroad” between Walla Walla and Wallula. In 1885 the Northern Pacific needed a name for a town on the east boundary of the Yakima Indian Reservation. Railroad officials decided to incorporate the first syllable of Mabel’s name in the town’s.

MAE. Mae Shoemaker, living in this small place four miles west of Moses Lake, was so much admired by the local decision maker, J.B. Lee, that he not only named the town for her but had her appointed the first postmistress.

MARIETTA. Mary Etta Allen, daughter of Nooksack Valley homesteaders Solomon and Mary Allen, died early in life. Until 1892 this village at the mouth of the Nooksack River was named Lummi, after the Indian tribe that lived in the area. Then the name was changed to memorialize Mary Etta.

MARYS CORNER. Mary Loftus in 1924 built a store at the crossroads of Old Highway 99 and the National Park Highway, located between Chehalis and Toledo. The crossroads has been known ever since as Marys Corner.

MARYSVILLE. Mary Comeford was the wife of the original operator of a trading post on the Tulalip Indian Reservation. In 1877 the place was named Marysville, probably after Mary Comeford, although there are those who say a priest suggested that it was the Virgin Mary, not Mrs. Comeford, who should be designated the honoree, and others who say two settlers from California named it for the town they came from. In any event, it was a distinct improvement over the original name, Slup-puks.

MAUD. Maude Morgan was the daughter of an 1885 settler at a point on the Columbia River 20 miles south of Kettle Falls in Stevens County. Maude was the first and only postmistress of this short-lived village. What happened to Maude’s “e” no one knows.

NELLITA. Nellie Brueger was the wife of Ralph Brueger, living on the east shore of Hood Canal. In 1900 Brueger tired of the town’s original name, Brown’s Cove, and renamed it after Nellie.

OLGA. Olga Ohlert, in far-off Germany in 1890, was the mother of John Ohlert, living at the head of Buck Bay on Orcas Island. Post office petitioners asked for the name Rosario, but it had already been chosen for a place a short way up the Sound (present site of Rosario Resort). John Ohlert was the owner of a local store and dance hall, and his neighbors decided to honor his mother.

ROZA. Rosita was the name of a daughter of a Northern Pacific Railway official who was among those on hand when the railroad reached Pato, at the junction of Roza Creek and the Yakima River. The name was changed in 1887.

SAPPHO. Sappho was a colorful Greek poetess of the sixth century B.C. The name is reported to have been bestowed on this former logging camp headquarters in west-central Clallam County by Joe Meeley, a construction worker of Greek origin. Robert Hitchman comments that Sappho “would not have enjoyed life in Sappho.”

STELLA. Stella Packard was the daughter of Richard Packard, who established a store in a logging community on the Columbia River nine miles west of Longview. Other residents of this near-ghost town have been heard to say it was not a girl, but yonder star for which the place was named.

VERA. Vera McDonald was the daughter of a man who assisted in platting a townsite one mile northwest of Sprague in Spokane County in 1911. In 1912 the post office was discontinued, but it reappeared in 1923 with the name Verdale. Now it is Vera again.

VESTA. Vesta Dwinelle was the wife of pioneer Milton Dwinelle when this settlement south of Montesano obtained a post office in 1882.

WANETA. Waneta Harader was the daughter of J. Ward Harader, who settled north of Mabton in 1901.

ZILLAH. Zillah Oakes was the daughter of Thomas F. Oakes, vice-president and later president of the Northern Pacific Railway Company. A town sprang up beside the new railroad track 16 miles southeast of Yakima in 1892, and when the townsite was platted in the early 1900s, local developers decided to please “Mr. Northern Pacific.”
CENTENNIAL HALL OF HONOR

Beginning in 1980 the State Historical Society, acting on nominations received from the public, has annually selected approximately 10 persons to be included in a Centennial Hall of Honor which will total 100 when the state centennial year is reached in 1989. Thus far 65 persons have been selected. Some are pictured on these pages. All are listed here.

Nominations for 1987 are now being accepted. The anonymous committee which makes the final selections is guided by the assignment given it at the outset—to select, from among all nominations of Washington citizens received, those persons who, at some period in history, made contributions of such merit and lasting worth in some field of endeavor that he or she deserves a degree of fame and recognition that will endure indefinitely.

The committee is aware that some of the most worthy may have been overlooked in the nominations made in past years. It is particularly hopeful that now, with only 35 places remaining to be filled, no one in any of the 39 counties of Washington who stands high in esteemed memory will be overlooked in the consideration of candidates for the Centennial Hall of Honor.

Nominations should be received at the offices of the Society, 315 North Stadium Way, Tacoma, WA 98403, by August 1, 1987, and must be accompanied by fully documented biographical accounts, together with any pleadings on behalf of the nominee that the nominator cares to make.

Photos courtesy of the Washington State Historical Society.
These have been selected so far to the Centennial Hall of Honor.

INDUSTRY
Arthur R. Anderson, William E. Boeing, John Fluke, Thea Foss, Sam Hill, Ezra Meeker, Mark E. Reed, Oscar Wirkkala, Rufus Woods

HUMAN ENDEAVORS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

ARTS & LETTERS

SCIENCE
Dr. Walter Brattain, Dr. Wilbert McLeod Chapman, Dr. Ernst Gunther, Dr. Belding Scribner
Eastern newspapers, recognizing the intense public interest in the “Oregon Country” after settlement of the “54-40 or Fight” dispute with Great Britain in 1846, signed up correspondents to send in regular news reports. On this page is such a report carried by the Washington, D.C. Republic, on February 1, 1853, the year Washington Territory was created. It begins by saying, “Nothing of extraordinary importance has happened since last advices,” but then reports in three paragraphs on the Monticello (Longview) convention held in November, at which residents of Northern Oregon drew up a petition asking Congress to create the territory of Columbia. This convention and one held previously near Toledo were decisive in bringing into being what is now the state of Washington.

Oregon.

Nothing of extraordinary importance has happened since last advices.

The Columbia had some difficulty on the 20th December in getting out of the Columbia river, on account of ice. The brig Bordeaux was beached near the mouth of the Columbia river on the 13th, and would be a total loss—passengers all saved.

Passengers from Oregon state that when they left the Columbia river was frozen over so that teams crossed on the ice as low down as the mouth of the Willamette, which is less than a hundred miles from the ocean. This is a very extraordinary circumstance, and indicates the commencement of a severe winter. At Vancouver's, six miles above Willamette, on the north side of the Columbia, the snow was near two feet deep, where a winter frequently passes without a single snow at all.

The result of the Presidential election was known in Oregon forty days after the day on which the contest took place.

The Oregon Legislature met at Portland on the 7th of December.

New gold discoveries have recently been made near Table Rock. There are now a large number of miners engaged in working them.

On the 9th of December Dr. Evans read before the Oregon Legislature a communication on the geology of the country.

The gold mines of Rogue River valley, and other localities near the southern boundary of Oregon, are being wrought to considerable profit. Gold
in small quantities has been discovered on several small tributaries east of the Cascades. And gold has been found on most of the small streams entering the Umpqua, as well as the main stream. Also, on the south fork of Santiam and on Calapo­olah creek, &c.

Eastern Oregon has been generally much underrated. That portion, including the valley of Flathead lake, the valley of St. Mary’s, the headwaters of Kooskook or Clearwater, and the Spokane, and other districts in that region, afford fine pastureage and many beautiful sites for agricultural communities. Sufficient information has already been obtained to render it probable that many portions of Oregon will prove rich in useful minerals, and its soil for many agricultural produce is unsurpassed. It also affords a rich and interesting field for scientific research.

Saline and Chalybeate springs exist throughout the Willamette valley, and the valleys bordering the coast range of mountains; and, in fact, in almost every part of Oregon that has been visited.

The convention recently held in Northern Oregon adopted a memorial, which has been forwarded to Congress, praying that all that portion of Oregon Territory lying north of the Columbia river, and west of the great northern branch thereof, should be organized into a separate territory, under the name and style of the “Territory of Columbia.”

This prayer is justified by numerous reasons set forth in the memorial. The present Territory of Oregon contains an area of 371,000 square miles, being entirely too large to be embraced within the limits of one State. Its seacoast is 650 miles in extent. The proposed Territory of Columbia contains an area of about 32,000 square miles. It presents natural resources capable of supporting a population as large as that of any State in the Union of the same size.

We perceive that G. N. McCahan, recently an active member of the California Legislature, was elected President of the convention which proposes the creation of the new Territory of Columbia.

The number of letters mailed in the post office at Portland, for the steamer of December 4, was 1,165, the largest number ever mailed for one steamer at that place.

Hon. Delazon Smith, who has arrived in Oregon this year by the overland route, publishes a letter in the Portland Times, in which he asserts that “there are, perhaps, from 3,000 to 4,000 fresh graves between the Missouri river and the Dalles of the Columbia; and if the mortality has been equal on the California route, twelve or fifteen per cent. of this year’s immigration are dead.”

The Columbian says:

“[We neglected last week to notice the seizure, by the collector of customs for the district of Puget Sound, Colonel S. P. Moses, of the ship Thracian, for the alleged offence of procuring a fraudulent enrolment in the district of San Francisco. It seems the said vessel is owned by a foreigner, but has been engaged in coasting in the lumber business with papers made out in the name of an American citizen, contrary to the laws of the United States regulating commerce.”
WHEN WASHINGTON

A "One-Man Factory" That Ought to be Closed

HAD AN INCOME TAX

By Philip Roberts
A little-disputed political axiom in Washington says that the voters are no more likely to approve an income tax than Oregon voters are a sales tax. Repeated attempts to obtain approval of these taxes on both sides of the Columbia have been defeated.

And yet Washington actually has approved a tax on personal or corporate income, not once but four times. How and why this was done, and the fate of the four approved taxes, is pertinent to debate about Washington's tax system, which is renewed each time the legislature meets and with particular vigor when, as now, a new governor is in office who would like to do what his predecessors could not—bring about reforms that would spread the tax burden more evenly and make state revenues less susceptible to the ups and downs of the economy as measured by retailing.

Altogether, 10 income tax proposals have been submitted to Washington voters since 1930—three by initiative and seven as proposed constitutional amendments. Those put on the ballot since 1934, in contrast with those prior to that year, have not been well received.

Nevertheless, many state leaders, including Dan Evans when he was governor, have expressed hope that reform involving an income tax might someday be achieved, and that Washington could cease to be one of only eight states getting along without this reliable source of income.

In the beginning—during Washington's territorial days from 1853 to 1889—government in Washington was supported entirely by property and poll taxes. A few years after statehood was achieved in 1889, the poll tax, requiring payment of a fee before one could vote, was eliminated. That left the property tax as the main support of government.

Most people found the property tax to be fair. Much of government in the first half-century of statehood benefited property owners directly and the ownership of property was considered a good measure of a person's ability to help pay for the costs of government.

As early as 1895, however, 17 states imposed taxes on personal income, and a federal income tax proposal received strong support, particularly in the states where Progressive Republicans dominated the political scene. In 1911, the Washington legislature voted overwhelmingly in favor of ratification of the "federal income tax" amendment. The ratification passed both houses of the legislature on the third day of the session. There was almost no opposition.

Meanwhile, property taxation continued to maintain government services in Washington and the load was not heavy, amounting only to 1.4 percent of the market value of the taxed property in 1910, for example.

By 1920, however, the property tax rate had nearly doubled. The constitution contained no tax limitation, so in 1922 and again in 1924 a number of groups joined in the first attempts to pass initiatives reducing and placing upper limits on property tax rates. Both failed, even though they had broad support from business and agricultural organizations.

Two "blue ribbon" tax committees were appointed in the 1920s to make recommendations for tax changes. The first committee, appointed by Governor Hart in 1921, made suggestions only to improve uniformity and administration of the system. Governor Roland Hartley in 1929 appointed a committee to examine the tax issue again. The next year, his "blue ribbon" group, reporting back, agreed with the earlier committee, but concluded that a net income tax should be enacted in order to reduce the burdens of property taxation.

Despite their recommendation, Governor Hartley did not support income taxation and when such a bill passed the legislature in 1931, he vetoed the measure. Hartley was firmly convinced that government costs, especially education and highways, were excessive. He favored economy and no new taxes. His veto of the 1931 income tax measure met with predictable hostility from tax proponents, most of whom had favored the tax as a means of reducing the escalating property taxes. Many labor organizations supported an income tax, as did the state's largest farm organization, the Washington State Grange.

The Grange, which had included the adoption of an income tax in its legislative agenda for almost a decade, took a key role in the controversy and became a prime proponent of the measure. The leadership spearheaded a drive to put the issue before the voters in the form of an initiative. They planned to couple the income tax initiative with a measure to cap property taxes at 40 mills, or four cents on the dollar. Landowners, particularly farmers who were "land-poor," knew such a measure could help stave off foreclosures. The low farm prices wouldn't bring sufficient income to boost them beyond the income tax exemption limit, but their property no longer would be burdened by high taxes.

As the Depression deepened in the early 1930s, property taxes, even at high rates, did not yield enough to support county and city governments, because so many property owners could not pay anything. Tax delinquencies became so prevalent that newspapers carried whole pages of legal advertising listing property taken over by counties for non-payment of taxes. This was a largely futile procedure, because much of the property could not be sold when put up at auction. It was not uncommon for teachers to be paid with war-
rant-interest-bearing promises to pay at a later time, which
teachers often sold at large discounts to moneylenders to get
enough cash to live on. What was needed, rather desperate­
ly, was another source of tax revenue.

As early as June 1931, county grange organizations
passed resolutions favoring an income tax. At the
same time, the State Grange made clear its opposi­
tion to any other form of taxation and to any increase in
existing taxes. Speakers pumped up interest, if not enthusi­
asm, for the income tax by declaring it “the only solution” to
the prospect of higher real estate taxes. Legislators who had
supported the 1931 attempt frequently appeared before
grange audiences. When State Senator Charles W. Hall
asked a Clark County grange for their help with the tax
measure, for example, the group promptly selected a “tax
committee” to further the income tax initiative.

The organization fought against the adoption of a sales
tax as strongly as it fought for a tax on income. Crandal H.
Clark, the managing editor of the Grange News, regular­
ly reminded readers of the organization’s implacable opposi­
tion to a sales tax. “The (sales) tax is levied against those least
able to pay.... we will never support it.”

Members of the State Tax Investigation Commission,
who had recommended the income tax in 1930, backed the
Grange’s efforts for an initiative. The Grange state officers
met with several attorneys in early 1932. Together the group
drafted a lengthy initiative. The petition they released did
not call for a “flat rate” tax or one which would be calculated
as a percentage of the taxpayer’s federal income tax obliga­
tion. The act specifically stated that the tax would be a
“graduated income tax” with the resulting brackets, exemp­
tions, deductions and credits borrowed from the federal sys­
tem, although not a carbon copy of it.

The drafters apparently believed their initiative was so
lengthy due to details which were important to circumvent­
ing the constitutional objections the state supreme court had
found in the 1930 “franchise tax” act. They carefully de­
clared that the purpose was “to tax all annual income within
the state as such, and not as property.”

When the Grange released the initiative petition, some
newspapers around the state voiced opposition. H.A.
Chadwick, conservative editor of the Seattle Argus, com­
plained that the initiative petition was “26 sections long, fills
No organized opposition appeared, however.

Despite the document's bulk, the Grange, with a statewide membership of almost 30,000, and other supporting organizations gathered 67,000 signatures on the initiative. They needed only 50,000.

It is unclear why the drafters did not attempt the more difficult but surer step of attempting to enact a constitutional amendment. The supreme court had issued a clear decision in a case two years before that "income" is "property" and it specifically interpreted the constitution as forbidding assessment of property taxes unequally. Perhaps, proponents thought, if the act were challenged, the economic consequences of the Depression would cause a majority of the court to reassess its earlier decision, in which three of the nine judges had dissented.

More likely, the initiative promoters recognized the more immediate political reality. The two-thirds vote by each house of the legislature needed for a constitutional amendment, given the pre-1932 makeup of those bodies, might have looked like an impossibility, particularly since Governor Hartley's veto in 1931 could not be overridden.

They had to consider the time factor, too. After two-thirds passage in both houses, a constitutional amendment still required a majority vote from the electorate. The tax question needed immediate attention.

Charles Hodde, now retired after a long and distinguished career in the Washington State Legislature, was a Colville potato farmer at the time and was active in the State Grange. "I spent about six weeks in Seattle campaigning for the measure in 1932," Hodde recently recalled. "I'd speak at six or seven meetings every day. So many people were out of work that they'd have meetings and the prime topic was unemployment."

He attributes some of the enthusiasm for the 1932 measure to the economic times. "The tax exemptions (provided in the income tax proposal) were two or three thousand dollars, so hardly anyone would have been paying anything then," he remembers. "People just weren't making that kind of money then."

Even though the tax initiative appeared to have wide popular support, news of another successful initiative petition pushed the income tax measure out of the headlines. Editors (and readers) found more interest in the initiative to repeal the state's unpopular "bone-dry" law.

Also on the 1932 ballot was a second tax initiative which had received the requisite number of voter signatures. It was the 40-mill limit initiative, which was to place a ceiling on property taxes, a measure which had failed twice in the 1920s. Opposed by school officials and most county government officers, the initiative had support from signers of the income tax petition. Both measures would work toward reducing property taxes, either directly in the case of the 40-mill limit or indirectly through an income tax. Even the normally antitax Argus editor grudgingly agreed that adoption of both measures might be desirable if it would "shift tax from property to income."

The economic condition of the state made it clear that some form of tax increase would be necessary in 1933. If "no income tax, a sales tax will be passed," the Argus editor prophesied the week before the November election. "Use your own judgment," he advised in an editorial pointing out the pros and cons of each side of the issue. The Seattle dailies were surprisingly silent concerning the income tax proposal, although the Spokane papers opposed the initiative.

The day after the election, the press reported the initiative's passage, buried beneath banner headlines reporting Franklin D. Roosevelt's election and the repeal of Prohibition. The voters approved the measure and the margin was overwhelming—322,919 to 136,983. More than 70 percent of the voters favored the income tax. The Times noted without comment that the income tax measure outpolled all six of the other initiatives on the ballot, even the Prohibition repeal. The repeal of Prohibition and the 40-mill limit polled more than 60 percent of the vote.

Shortly after the measure passed, a group of Seattle businessmen joined in bringing suit against State Tax Commissioner Samuel H. Chase and the other two commission members, charging that the initiative was unconstitutional. William M. Culliton, a Seattle insurance broker, headed one group who filed the action in Superior Court in Thurston County. Culliton, then a partner in the Triad Insurance Agency, was "influential in Republican politics," a member of the American Legion and cofounder of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Washington Athletic Club. Besides operating his insurance firm, he maintained a ranch near Thorp.

As the Depression deepened, property taxes, even at high rates, did not yield enough... What was needed, rather desperately, was another source of tax revenue.

A second businessman, Earl McHale, headed another group which also filed on constitutional grounds in Thurston County. McHale owned two dozen service stations in three states, having built his firm from a single station he had acquired on his arrival in Seattle in 1915. The two cases were consolidated for trial and appeal.

At the close of the trial, Superior Court Judge D.F. Wright ruled that the initiative was "wholly unconstitutional." The tax commission then appealed the two cases to the state supreme court. It was represented by Attorney General G.W. Hamilton and John W. Hanna. Lawyers from five
Seattle firms argued for the two businessmen's groups and counsel from 12 other firms appeared as amici curiae. Business opposition to an income tax was solid.

A decision did not come quickly. During oral arguments, Justice Kenneth N. Parker could not participate because of illness. His vote would have been pivotal. When a vote was taken the court was deadlocked at four to four. Soon Parker resigned and the court then rescheduled a rehearing as soon as the new justice, to be named by the governor, took his seat on the bench.

Democratic Governor C.D. Martin appointed James M. Geraghty of Spokane, his executive assistant, to replace
Geraghty's position on the tax issue as a "litmus test" for his appointment, tax supporters knew Geraghty supported the Parker. Although Martin stated publicly he did not use Geraghty's position on the tax issue as a "litmus test" for his appointment, tax supporters knew Geraghty supported the measure. So after announcement of the tie vote, the rehearing was scheduled for shortly after Geraghty was sworn in, and supporters of the tax were confident of success. But the vote surprised both sides. The tax supporters were stunned. The court announced its five-to-four decision, striking down the income tax, on September 8, 1933. The act was held unconstitutional, because it violated the state's 14th Amendment. Net income was "property" under the Washington Constitution, and all income was one class of property. A graduated income tax, therefore, violated the uniformity requirement. The fact that the tax had been adopted through an initiative "is of no controlling importance," Justice Holcomb wrote in the majority opinion.

Lawyers for the state argued that similar income tax laws had been passed in Idaho and Montana and the high courts of those states found nothing unconstitutional about them. Holcomb flatly distinguished those cases: "Our Constitution is to the contrary," he pronounced. Justice Main concurred with Holcomb's opinion; Mitchell wrote a concurring opinion and was joined by Millard. Justice Steinert wrote a third concurring opinion.

Counsel for the state analogized the income tax to the state's inheritance tax, passed without significant opposition more than 30 years earlier, but Holcomb's majority opinion disputed the analogy. "The inheritance tax is really not a tax at all," the justice wrote, less than 25 paragraphs after he had written that "it would defy the ingenuity of the most profound lexicographer" to define "income" without referring to it as "property." He reasoned that the inheritance tax was, in fact, "an impost" because it was "laid but one time, and not annually, as is a tax."

Justice Blake authored a long dissent (six pages, compared to four pages total for all three majority opinions) and he was joined by Beals, Tolman and Geraghty. Clearly, between the time of the initial hearing and announcement of the decision, one member of the majority had switched sides. Geraghty, predictably, had voted for it. His vote should have swung the balance in favor of the income tax.

The press speculated about who might have switched, but as the Associated Press wire story concluded, there was "no way of knowing who switched as there is no record announced on a tie."

The press generally endorsed the decision. "Although the people of Washington voted the income tax law on themselves, they will applaud the decision of the court," the Times editorialized. The editorial writer noted what may have been an unintentional deciding factor in the case. "One glance at the dreadful blanks mailed out by the State Tax Commission was sufficient to convince them they did not want the new system nearly so much as they previously had assumed they did."

Might the "switching" judge have received a tax form between the two hearings? Perhaps, or he may have received adverse comments from others. Charles Hodde, who supported the income tax, says he believes the mailing may have been a crucial factor. "The tax commission boxheld the entire state with tax forms" in early 1933, he notes. "Most people weren't familiar with tax forms of any kind because they didn't have to pay federal income taxes—their incomes were below the limit—and when they got a four-page form in the mail from the state with all the questions on it, I think it frightened them." Hodde concludes that had the tax commission "not been so fast in mailing out the forms, the court might have gone the other way."

The tax supporters were indignant when the decision was announced. "The majority of our Supreme Court is a bunch of juridical clowns," fumed Edgar J. Wright, a contributing editor in the Grange News. "They make the old Constitution jump through the hoop of what they deem, at the time, to be the present popular sentiment." Another writer in the same issue, John M. Reynolds, urged the people to begin impeachment proceedings against the majority of the justices for " flaunting democracy." He warned that "nullification of laws by courts must stop."

Meanwhile, the editors of the Spokane Spokesman-Review praised the court's action. The opponents of income taxation conceded they had been caught napping in 1932. Thankful that the court had so narrowly supported their view, the tax opponents promised that, in future battles, the going for any income tax would be less smooth. They were on guard from that point.

The majority of our Supreme Court is a bunch of juridical clowns," fumed Edgar J. Wright in the Grange News. "They make the old Constitution jump through hoops."

Soon after the stunning setback, the Washington State Grange resumed its agitation for an income tax. The leadership decided against another initiative drive. This time, an income tax law would have to be passed by the legislature and signed by the governor. They would hold on and hope for a change on the highest court either in personnel or attitude. The income tax opponents became better organized after the 1932 election. The Washington State Taxpayers' Association, founded in 1921 and reorganized a decade later, took the leadership against the income tax.

With the property tax limited by the 40-mill law and income taxes declared unconstitutional, the Washington State Legislature in 1933 was faced with serious revenue problems. As a stopgap measure, the legislature authorized a
When the income tax provision finally reached the state supreme court in 1936, the court disposed of it on the same five-to-four vote as on the 1932 proposal. Nothing had changed, the court concluded. Income taxes still violated the state constitution.

Despite the demise of the income tax and several of the other revenue-raising sources included in the Revenue Act, the basic tax scheme enacted by the legislature in 1935 remains to this day the prime source of state revenues. Admissions and fuel oil taxes were later eliminated by the legislature, and the gift tax, vetoed in 1935 but reenacted six years later, was repealed in 1981. The inheritance tax, originally passed in the Populist Era at the turn of the century, was ended by the initiative in 1981.

Why did the income tax, which was approved by such a huge margin in 1932, lose so badly ever after? Many observers believe that after 1937, income taxes were no longer considered a live issue. Other taxes were meeting the state's needs. The country emerged from the Great Depression. Oregon adopted an income tax at the same time Washington first attempted it, and then rejected all efforts to enact a sales tax. Citizens in both states considered one big tax enough.

Charles Hodde says he believes the income tax proposals fared poorly because, with the sales tax and business and occupation tax, the tax system "wasn't so obvious—people didn't see that they had to pay a higher price for things because of those taxes."

But, more than anything else, he attributes the state's refusal to adopt the income tax to one important fact: After 1937, "people simply started making more money." Too, the sales tax was no longer anathema to farmers since items purchased for agricultural use were exempted from it. Passage of the 40-mill limitation appeared to satisfy property owners concerned with property tax increases, although exceptions carved out for various entities have had the effect of surpassing the limitation.

Perhaps self-interest was not the only reason for the change of views. Voters may have believed that state government was amply funded from the sales tax. The system seemed to be working, so they were reluctant to change it. Old habits, once established, prove hard to change. But it is intriguing to speculate about what shape today's government would have taken had just one supreme court justice in 1933 not changed his mind—or, perhaps, had not found a complicated tax form in his mailbox.

Philip Roberts has been a research historian, magazine publisher, newspaperman and criminal justice investigator, and has practiced law. He is working for a doctoral degree at the University of Washington.
This first issue of Columbia properly gives prime attention to the Wilkes Expedition, because this fall the people of the Northwest will have a chance to see significant portions of the Smithsonian Institution's already famous Wilkes collection. The traveling exhibit, which will be displayed in three cities in 1987, can be seen at the museum of the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma from October 3 through December 27. Many items collected while in the Northwest, paintings, drawings and maps done by members of the expedition, and modern aids to understanding and interpretation make this possibly the best such traveling exhibit the Smithsonian has ever put together—as well it should be, since it was the need for proper care and custody of the Wilkes material that led to the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution in 1858.
The United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-42 commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes (overleaf) greatly added to our knowledge of the world. It filled in maps, such as this one outlining the linguistic groups of Northwest tribes, and retrieved thousands of cultural artifacts, including Northwest Indian masks (above right). Americans ached to make a
On April 19, 1841, the men on board the United States exploring vessels Vincennes and Porpoise, two weeks out of Honolulu, felt a change in the wind. The warm air blowing up from the tropics was overwhelmed by a great surge from the north, and within 24 hours the temperature dropped 30 degrees. Only a third of the way on their journey from the Hawaiian Islands to North America, the crews already felt the continent’s cold breath.
Nine days later they raised Cape Disappointment, the headland at the entrance of the Columbia River. The bar spanning the river mouth was marked by an unbroken line of white breakers forbidding passage. To men grown used to the brilliant foliage of the tropics, the majestic gloom of the American coast inspired feelings of awe, but perilous as it was, the scene was a thoroughly welcome one, and it had the feeling of home. Two years and four months had passed since they had last seen the continent's shore as they sailed out of Norfolk, Virginia, to the sound of brass bands and booming cannon, full of hope and enthusiasm for the voyage they were beginning.

On that languorous August day in 1838 they had been 490 officers, sailors and civilians on board a naval squadron of six sailing ships. Largest was the three-masted sloop-of-war Vincennes, the flagship of the expedition's commander, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes. Forming a lovely line behind Vincennes as they passed the Virginia capes were the store-ship Relief, the brig Porpoise, the sloop-of-war Peacock, and the schooners Flying Fish and Sea Gull. They made up the United States Exploring Expedition or, as it came to be known, the Wilkes Expedition.

It was the first maritime expedition sponsored by the government and, like many government projects, it was sired by hope and born in controversy. In the early days of the republic, many Americans regarded scientific research as something suspect—the idle pastime of bored aristocrats. This and a fervent desire to minimize government expenditures kept the nation from giving science the kind of support it had long enjoyed in Europe. It had taken considerable skill and effort on the part of Thomas Jefferson to persuade Congress to appropriate the $2,500 needed to finance the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1804-06. The pride engendered by the stirring reports of those Western explorers obscured the fact that pilots leaving United States harbors had to rely on British charts. This irony was lost on government accountants who brought about the dismissal of Ferdinand Hassler, a Swiss geodesist hired by Jefferson to provide the country with charts of its own coasts. They thought his services were too expensive. Europe's low opinion of America's intellectual environment surfaced in a sympathetic note sent to Hassler by the explorer Admiral A.D. von Kruzenstern. "In Russia," he wrote, "your talents would have been better appreciated."

The scientific maritime expeditions mounted by European nations, beginning with James Cook's first voyage in 1768, were the space probes of their day. Cumulatively they revolutionized human understanding of the natural world and individually they brought glory to their sponsors. American navigators were making significant voyages of their own, but these were private affairs. The precious information they put in their logs was considered to contain business secrets, and the logs were routinely destroyed when they returned home. As the fame and import of scientific voyages grew, an increasing number of Americans ached to see their own nation make a public contribution to the expansion of human knowledge and win renown.

The man who eventually realized the dream was Jeremiah Reynolds, an enterprising newspaper editor from Ohio. His enthusiastic advocacy of a national maritime expedition grew out of his early fascination with the ideas of John Cleves Symmes Jr., an eccentric Western visionary.
Writing to the naturalist Asa Gray about the United States Exploring Expedition, geologist James Dana commented on his commander, Charles Wilkes: "I much doubt if with any commander that could have been selected we should have fared better or lived together more harmoniously, and I am confident that the Navy does not contain a more daring or driving officer." Dana's remains one of the more balanced judgments of the man and certainly one of the more generous. Another expedition member, passed midshipman William Reynolds, sailing home in the brig Porpoise, mused in his private journal that his commander, whom he admired at the beginning of the voyage, should by then have been hanged, "...only that he deserved impaling, long ago."

The man who inspired such thoughts was born on April 3, 1798, to a rich New York family. A great-uncle of his had once been imprisoned for libeling King George III, but in Charles Wilkes' personality, rebellion had been translated into willfulness. At times it served him well, but it was almost his undoing. Desiring a life at sea over the wishes of his family, who hoped he would go into banking, and unable to get a midshipman's warrant because of politics, Charles Wilkes entered the merchant service where he distinguished himself for his intelligence and a formidable attention to detail. When the captain of a ship on which Wilkes was serving discovered he had left his charts at home and was faced with navigating the English Channel, Wilkes drew him a detailed chart from memory.

After entering the navy in 1818, Wilkes made his reputation as a navigator by taking youthful command in Valparaiso, Chile of a sealing ship whose captain had died, and bringing her back safely to Boston in record time. His skill in mathematics facilitated his appointment to the Coast Survey where he worked with Ferdinand Hassler. He gained the reputation of being the best-qualified surveyor in the navy and was made superintendent of the Depot of Charts and Instruments in the capital. It was at this time that he became involved with the National Exploring Expedition and was sent to Europe to purchase instruments for the first cruise, aborted in 1829. His appointment to command the expedition while only a lieutenant shocked many, but he succeeded as his backers had hoped in getting the enterprise under way.

Even though Wilkes was a skilled navigator, he was no sailor and still less a leader of men. On several occasions he nearly wrecked his ships by his ham-handed attempts to demonstrate seamanship, and his conceit and spiteful paranoia kept those under him in an almost constant state of consternation and exasperation. The vituperative testimony directed against him at his court-martial following the cruise resulted in an official reprimand for his conduct and prevented him from getting a command during the Mexican War.

Although the cruise was over, in Wilkes' mind the expedition would not end until the specimens it had collected were studied and the results of the investigations were published. Toward this end he drove scientists and politicians as dictatorially as he had the men aboard ship, and after years of effort, he got the job done. Unfortunately, his skills as a writer were no better than his seamanship, and his magnum opus, the five-volume narrative of the voyage, was panned by critics.

Made a captain in 1855, he succeeded in getting a commission during the Civil War, and in 1861, he was at sea in command of the San Jacinto on the lookout for Confederate raiders in the mid-Atlantic. In early November he stopped and boarded the British mail steamer Trent out of Havana, Cuba, and seized the Confederate commissioners James M. Mason and John Slidell. His action provoked an international incident that nearly pushed the United States and Great Britain into war. Wilkes was hailed as a popular hero and triumphantly welcomed home in Boston, but President Lincoln had to weather a storm of international protest. After several other incidents in which Wilkes acted in a high-handed manner, he was recalled from active duty, court-martialed and suspended from service for three years.

In 1866 he was made rear admiral on the retired list. He spent his last years overseeing the editing and publication of his expedition's last works and venting his spleen in an enormous autobiography done in longhand so horrendous that it defied transcription for nearly a century. When he died on February 8, 1877, the New York Tribune briefly summed up his career. "He was a brave and fearless officer, and though severe in discipline was admired for his courage and heroic deeds." His role in the great U.S. Exploring Expedition was not mentioned.
New discoveries awaited Wilkes at every turn. Above, expedition members measure the mammoth trunk of one of the great evergreens they encountered near Astoria—probably a Douglas fir or Sitka spruce. Top right, naturalists drew and cataloged thousands of species, including a local garter snake.
who believed the earth was hollow and that its habitable interior could be reached through openings at the poles. In an age when people could still believe unicorns frolicked in Louisiana, Symmes’ theory was no stranger than others floating in the popular mind, and he developed a wide following, particularly among fellow Westerners who seemed delighted that one of their own could have come up with such an imaginative idea. They hailed him as the “Western Newton,” and beginning in 1822 Congress was bombarded with memorials from Western legislatures calling for an expedition to be sent in search of “Symmes’ Hole.”

Reynolds became Symmes’ agent, but in time he became less enamored with the notion of a hollow earth than he was with the possibilities of polar exploration. Reynolds appealed to any group who would listen and gradually broadened his theme to call for a national maritime expedition to benefit commerce and science. In 1828 he seemed near success. Support was widespread; several naval officers including an eager young lieutenant, Charles Wilkes, offered their services, and the government overhauled the sloop-of-war Peacock to serve as an exploring vessel.

But the bill that would have funded the expedition was killed in the Senate, and eight more years of tough lobbying were required before Reynolds succeeded in getting full congressional approval. The interdepartmental strife and bickering generated during this period delayed the program two years more. But in 1838 the expedition, which many despaired of ever seeing, finally began to take shape.

Its commander, Charles Wilkes, was selected from far down on the naval list. Personality was not a strong point in his favor. Reynolds had earlier judged Wilkes, a prickly New York aristocrat, to be “exceedingly vain and conceited,” but unlike most naval officers, he had a genuine aptitude for science and had demonstrated skills in navigation and hydrography. He was one of the very few who could operate the sophisticated equipment that had been purchased for the expedition and, more importantly, he had a reputation for getting a job done. Wilkes’ appointment provoked howls of indignation from senior officers, but once in charge he cracked the whip with singular resolve.

It was to be a navy show. Wilkes loathed civilians and sought to cut as many as possible from the expedition’s rolls. Even Reynolds was ceremoniously excluded from the enterprise he had worked so hard to create. Wilkes believed he could fill scientific positions from the officer and medical corps at less cost, and when he found he could not, he grudgingly allowed a few civilians to remain, among them geologist James Dana, conchologist Joseph Couthouy, naturalist Titian Peale, gardener-botanist William Brackenridge and philologist Horatio Hale.

When the squadron finally set sail the mood on board was high. They were to explore parts of the South American coast, look for evidence of an Antarctic landmass, and survey and map island groups in the Pacific. They were also to gather information about the western coast of North America—particularly the area called Oregon, where the United States shared sovereignty with Great Britain—and to survey San Francisco Bay.

But the tensions and disputes normal among men in close quarters on a long cruise were exacerbated by Wilkes’ obstinate, overbearing nature, and morale began to sag. Wilkes claimed he played the martinet to maintain discipline, but he seems not to have been acting. Innately suspicious, he frequently imagined mutinous cabals. Officers were demoted or sacked and sent home, and seamen flogged with depressing regularity. Naval regulations forbade more than 12 lashes with a cat-o’-nine-tails, but on one occasion Wilkes had 50 meted out. He complained to
This painting, attributed to Wilkes himself, shows his flagship *Vincennes* in Disappointment Bay on the coast of Antarctica. The expedition explored 1,500 miles of coastline, confirming that the icebound region was indeed a continent.

the scientists that their specimens smelled bad.

Nor was the trip without tragedy. The *Sea Grill* was lost with all hands in an Antarctic storm. On the Pacific island of Malolo the murder of two midshipmen by Fijian natives prompted an attack in which the Americans destroyed two villages and killed 87 natives.

Yet, in spite of these tribulations and disasters, the expedition was enormously productive. Ill-charted island groups were mapped with precision, new islands were discovered and, in early 1841, 1,500 miles of the Antarctic coast (now called Wilkes Land) was charted, confirming its continental dimensions. All the while, the "scientifs" were busy amassing huge collections of specimens, identifying new species and collecting artifacts and information from the exotic cultures they encountered. When the slow-sailing *Relief* was sent home in May of 1839, her hold was
So Huge a Collection—
What to Do with It?
Open the Smithsonian

When the United States Exploring Expedition sailed from Norfolk, Virginia, in 1838, Secretary of War Joel Poinsett (after whom the poinsettia is named) had already made arrangements with the American Museum in Philadelphia to care for the specimens to be collected. One of the museum’s more popular displays was a five-legged, six-footed, two-tailed cow giving milk to a two-headed calf. This scholarly institution was managed by Franklin Peale, brother to Titian Peale, a naturalist in the expedition, and neither he nor Poinsett doubted its capacity to tend whatever was sent its way.

How wrong they were became abundantly clear when the first shipment of specimens arrived from Rio de Janeiro, the accumulated result of the first six months of the three-year voyage. It contained 50,000 specimens. This was followed by others, and the flood quickly swamped the ability of the museum to absorb them. Of great concern was the fact that many of the containers in which the specimens had been packed were damaged and their contents needed attention. Worse, the trove was being plundered by individuals seeking souvenirs.

To better care for the burgeoning store, Poinsett ordered the collections sent down to Washington where they could be more closely supervised, and knowing full well the government’s disinclination to spend money conserving them, he looked elsewhere for the necessary funds. A likely source was the bequest left to the United States by the English aristocrat James Smithson, an amount of $500,000 that was to be dedicated to the “increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.”

A museum to house the collections seemed a logical candidate for the bequest, but many years of political wrangling were required before Congress made the money available. In the meantime, Poinsett hurriedly gathered together several friends and scientists and created the Washington National Institute, a caretaker organization that assumed the care of the expedition’s collections as well as several others that had been floating around the capital looking for a home. Subsequently, they were all housed in the Patent Office, a newly constructed Doric pile on F Street between Seventh and Ninth, but the constant flow of material quickly overwhelmed even these spacious surroundings, and even more quickly consumed the institute’s budget.

When Wilkes returned home, he took charge of his expedition’s collections, got government money to supervise their study for eventual publication, and came to dominate the institute’s administration even as his collections dominated the Great Hall of the Patent Office. By January of 1843 they were drawing enormous crowds, and Ralph Waldo Emerson judged their display “the best sight in Washington.” Made superintendent of the institute that summer, Wilkes consigned its other collections to side galleries or the basement and hectored the staff into passive acquiescence. When it became obvious that the institute was unable to carry out its function adequately, Congress established the Smithsonian Institution and stipulated that the expedition’s collections should come under its care.

The Smithsonian originally conceived of itself as something of a lyceum, a forum where knowledge could be diffused through lectures and publications. Its first executive, scientist Joseph Henry, disliked the idea of curating exhibits, but the acquisition of the collections changed all that. They contained literally hundreds of thousands of specimens. Most of them were shells, but there were also 50,000 plant specimens, 7,000 mineral specimens, 4,000 zoological specimens of which 2,000 represented new species, and 2,500 cultural artifacts from all over the world (one was the skull of Vendovi, a Fijian chief whom Wilkes took hostage and who died less than a day after the Vincennes docked in New York). The public interest in these objects and the demand that they be seen redirected the Smithsonian’s development. In 1849 it moved into a new and more spacious headquarters, the turreted Romanesque pile of red brick that still stands on the Mall. A multitude of the expedition’s specimens was prominently displayed on two floors and the building became the National Museum. Today the collections generated by the U.S. Exploring Expedition, the germ of the world’s premier museum system, are but a small part of an ever-growing collection whose number of specimens is beyond counting and whose significance is beyond measure.
crammed with what had been collected up to that time.

As 1840 drew to a close, the men on the remaining four ships longed for the expedition's end. During their stay in Hawaii, Wilkes fought with his officers, dismissed Couthouy and ran a marathon 18-day session of courts-martial. When the sailors' enlistments expired and neither the promise of extended liberty with an advance in pay or the threat of being marooned succeeded in producing enough reenlistments, he had the resisters jailed and flogged until they changed their minds. Sullenly, the expedition resumed its course. In December the Peacock and Flying Fish were ordered to conduct surveys in the central and southern Pacific and afterwards to rendezvous with Wilkes at the Columbia River.

In 1841 the territory called Oregon encompassed the land from Russian Alaska to Spanish California and from the Pacific to the Continental Divide. Since 1818 the United States and Great Britain had agreed to occupy it jointly, but for most of that time only Britain had maintained a presence there, through the agency of the Hudson's Bay Company. Small numbers of Americans began to drift in after 1828, and by 1836 a few missionaries had established themselves in the Willamette Valley and in isolated locales east of the Cascades. These and a sprinkling of mountain men formed the American community, which by 1841 was numerous enough to spur the British to bring in 120 Canadian settlers from the Red River in an attempt to forestall an American takeover.

Wilkes came at a crucial time in Northwestern history. Oregon had begun to loom as an issue in the national consciousness, and diplomats from both countries realized that the terms of joint occupancy could not be extended indefinitely. The American proposal to extend the national boundary along the 49th parallel to the sea was countered by Britain, which wanted it extended only to the Columbia, whose banks would become the border the rest of the way to the Pacific. Wilkes came to show the flag in the disputed region, but also to collect information toward a better basis for a decision.

Unable to enter the Columbia, Wilkes headed north, narrowly avoiding shipwreck off Point Grenville, and spending an anxious, rainy evening feeling his way into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The next day the two ships swept up the strait, their crews awed by the vast forests mantling the cloud-wreathed shores, and anchored in Discovery Bay. Captain George Vancouver had come here exactly 49 years before, and while the land looked much as it had then, its people had experienced considerable change.

The wealth of knowledge brought back by the Wilkes Expedition was represented by tens of thousands of specimens and objects which formed the basis for the Smithsonian's vast collection. Among these were Northwest Indian baskets and masks (top left and above), which were obtained from Hudson's Bay Company traders.
In Vancouver's time the native people had been trading with Westerners for little more than a decade. They wore skins and blankets and were eager to trade their bows and arrows for copper. While still in the strait, the Vincennes was boarded by the crew of a large canoe, and one of the natives wore corduroy pants and a scarlet capote. He spoke enough English for Wilkes to direct him to take a letter to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Nisqually requesting the services of a pilot and interpreter.

Wilkes was unsure of the reception he would receive from the Company, but soon learned that they intended to give him whatever service they could. Piloted to the fort, the Vincennes and Porpoise anchored in the roadstead off Sequalitchew Creek, where the flora of the new land continued to exert its fascination. "The forrist trees," wrote John Dyes, taxidermist on the Vincennes, "of the largest size grow to the Very Warter's Edge where you may cut a mast or stick for a Line of Battle Ship. I never saw Sutch large forrist trees in any part of the world before." And the great ramified inlet on which they sailed in from the sea elicited similar rhapsody. "Nothing," wrote Wilkes, "can be more striking than the beauty of these waters without a shoal or rock or any danger for the whole length of this Internal Navigation, the finest in the world."

It was to prove an extremely significant observation, and it underscored the conviction many felt that since the United States had a claim on these shores, Britain must surely yield its own. Some, like R. B. Robinson, the purser's steward on the Vincennes, were "astonished that our Country should let them get such a secure footing as they already have got on this land."

When the Peacock and Flying Fish failed to rendezvous with him at the Columbia, Wilkes began to fear that they might have come to grief somewhere in the Pacific. With only half his resources available for the work ahead, he doubled his efforts. After Wilkes landed at Fort Nisqually, chief trader Alexander Anderson aided him in the construction of two log cabins, one to serve as an observatory for the instruments used to determine and check longitude, and the other for the use of chart makers. Next, Wilkes divided the expedition into groups and sent them off to survey the region. The Porpoise and two of Vincennes' long-boats were sent north to chart Admiralty Inlet, and others were manned and sent out to explore Hood Canal and the intricacies of Puget Sound above the narrows.

Their work added some detail to Vancouver's earlier chart. A new inlet, Hammersley, was added to the clutch at the head of the Sound; the eastern arm of Hood Canal was mapped, and the north arm of Port Orchard was found to connect with Admiralty Inlet, making the land east of it insular rather than peninsular. Wilkes named it Bainbridge Island. To strengthen the American connection to waters the British had discovered, Wilkes affixed names—some 261 in all—to prominent features of the waters and land around them. An indifferent speller, he sometimes took liberties with the names of those he honored. Hammersley Inlet was named after midshipman George Hammersly, and McNeil Island after William Henry McNeill, captain of the Hudson's Bay Company steamer Beaver. The name of Ketron Island was an attempt to reproduce that of William Kittson, a helpful Company carpenter. When confronted with the nominal complexity of George Musolas Colvocoresses, a Greek immigrant serving aboard the Vincennes, Wilkes simply shortened the surname to Colvos and used it to identify the passage west of Vashon Island. Another misnomer involved Wilkes' mistaking the dogwoods flowering above a
cove on the Kitsap Peninsula for apple trees, which led him to name the place Apple Tree Cove.

Besides surveying the Sound, Wilkes sent out parties to examine the interior. One led by Robert Johnson, a lieutenant on the Porpoise, was taken on horseback by native guides over Naches Pass, thus becoming the first American party to cross the Cascades. They passed down the Yakima River valley to the Columbia and traveled the long route up its banks to the Hudson’s Bay Company posts of Fort Okanogan and Fort Colvile. Under the June sun they traveled next up the Spokane River to the Tshimakane Mission where they met Mary Walker, the hardy wife of missionary Elkanah Walker. Her commanding manner succeeded in securing fresh horses for them from the Spokane Indians, and she stayed up late that night sharing her passion for natural history with Johnson and his men. From Tshimakane the party crossed over to Henry Spaulding’s mission at Lapwai on the Clearwater River, and then down the Snake River to Fort Walla Walla where they met Marcus Whitman. On July 15, 60 days after they had left, the party returned, saddle-sore and weary, to Fort Nisqually. They had been awed by the immense country they had seen, but not favorably impressed. Recalling the vast stretches of sage and bunch grass north of Fort Walla Walla, William Brackenridge—a gardener but no prophet—was emphatic: “Not two acres out of a hundred would produce wheat that would pay the farmer for his trouble.”

Wilkes himself led another party from Fort Nisqually...
An Admiring Son
Told WSHS about Charles Wilkes in 1910

In 1910 the Washington State Historical Society honored Commodore Charles Wilkes by erecting a monument outside Dupont in Pierce County, near the place where he and members of his exploring expedition first came ashore in what is now Washington.

The Society invited Edmund Wilkes of Salt Lake City, a civil engineer and a son of Charles Wilkes, to address the gathering. He wrote that he could not come to Tacoma because of a physical ailment, but did send the speech which is reproduced in part here.—Ed.

I am under deep and lasting obligations for myself and all the descendants of Charles T. Wilkes. You have erected a monument for his acts, and to his memory, and we, his descendants, most sincerely thank you.

Some of you may wish to know what character of man my father, Charles Wilkes, was. He was indeed the most self-contained man I ever knew, rarely asking advice of anyone. He made up his mind quickly and carried it into execution even more quickly whatever conclusion he arrived at. Fearless in the discharge of his duty, a rigid disciplinarian, but a very just man. He was a man without vice of any kind. I never even heard him swear, which can be said of few sailor-men. In his family he was always kind and pleasant parent, demanding obedience of his children, but in a kind and loving way. He was a true American and loved and honored his country's flag as he did his Bible. He was a scientist and astronomer prior to his taking command of the exploring expedition....

He took command of the six ships of the exploring expedition in 1838, consisting of the Vincennes, his flagship, purchased from France; the Peacock, captured in 1815 from the British by the Hornet; the Porpoise, a brig which had been in the service some twenty years; the Relief, a store ship, too old for any record of her; and two fore-and-aft schooners named the Sea Gull and the Flying Fish, purchased from the New York pilots.

I doubt very much if today any marine insurance underwriter would take the risk of a dollar on the whole outfit. Three of the ships went around the world and accomplished a wonderful amount of valuable work for the advancement of science....

In December two years ago, at a banquet given by the National Geographical Society in Washington, D.C., Truman H. Newberry, the then secretary of the navy, said: "Lieutenant Wilkes' squadron of six wooden sailing ships, the largest being of 700 tons displacement, sailed out from Norfolk in 1838 and passed through the Straits of Magellan on its peaceful mission of exploration and scientific investigation to mark out the pathways of commerce, over which was destined to sail seventy years later, from the same port, the magnificent fleet of today bearing the peaceful greeting of this nation to the maritime countries of both hemispheres. ("The Great White Fleet" sent around the world by President Theodore Roosevelt.—Ed.)

"The operations of the Wilkes expedition extended over a region of ten million square miles, within which more than five hundred islands were charted, more than 2,000 drawings of costumes, scenery and natural history were brought back, together with thousands of botanical and geological specimens. Wilkes also realized the dream of his life in the discovery of a large body of land lying within the Antarctic Circle, which he named the Antarctic continent, now called Wilkes Land.”

From the Antarctic Captain Wilkes returned to Sydney, New South Wales, and there he met Sir James Ross of the British Navy, commanding the Erebus and the Terror, and who was preparing to go to the Antarctic. Captain Wilkes gave him a chart of the route and also advised him to strike the eastern end of the Antarctic continent. Sir James went and discovered "Erebus and Terror land" and on his return to England ignored Wilkes entirely and an unpleasant controversy arose. A few years after Ross' statements were traced by the Royal Geographic Society, and Commodore Wilkes was presented with a handsome gold medal endorsing his statements and acts. Captain Wilkes was also endorsed by the English, a German, and a French navigator. The medal here referred to was on exhibition at the exposition at Seattle (Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.—Ed.)....

From Sydney Wilkes sailed to the Fiji Islands. The Fiji group consisted of over one hundred islands. The inhabitants at that time were savages—cannibals. In surveying the islands two of his officers, Lieutenant Woodward and Charles Wilkes Henry, were murdered by the savages on the island of Moloka. The next day Commodore Wilkes landed on the island, destroyed three of their villages, and captured their king, and took him as a hostage for their good behavior in the future. He made them surrender in their own way, giving up their arms, which are now in the national gallery in Washington, D.C.

He then went to the Samoan Islands and made a treaty with Malietoa, their king, which gave the United States the harbor of Pango-Pango with the adjoining lands. This is now the United States coaling station. From the Samoan Islands he went to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), arriving there just as the French were
about to obtain possession of those islands. With the king of those islands, his counselors and the missionaries, he succeeded in breaking up the negotiations with the French. The Sandwich Islands have ever since looked upon us as their sponsor and friend.

Subsequently, with the Vincennes, Porpoise, and the Flying Fish, one of the schooners, sailed to the Straits of Juan de Fuca and entered Puget Sound. The Peacock was ordered to take a more southern route, to look for some islands of which Captain Wilkes had heard, but which did not exist.

Wilkes commenced his survey of your section at Commencement Bay, on which your city (Tacoma) is located. In a few weeks the Porpoise and the Flying Fish were ordered to the mouth of the Columbia River to commence a survey there.

The survey in your section was completed on Saturday, July 3, 1841. July 4 was Sunday. On Monday Captain Wilkes celebrated our natal day, the anniversary of our great nation's birth.

Of this celebration I have frequently heard my father speak. The marshal of the day was the sergeant of marines. My father had given instructions to his officers not to give any orders to any man. All orders were to come from the marshal. The procession was formed at the ship with the oldest jackie carrying the large flag at the head of the procession. Then came the band, two snare drums, a fife, a Kent bugle, and a cornet, not quite equal to the bands of today. Then came the marines, about thirty, then the jackies, about 300, and the two oxen drawing the two howitzers for the noonday salute. Then followed the Hudson's Bay cart with the grog and table utensils for the banquet. The rear of the procession was brought up by Vendovi, king of the Fiji Islands, whom my father had as a prisoner, taking him to the United States. Vendovi appeared in the royal robes of the Fiji Islands, consisting of a breechclout, and a white turban, and the rest as he came into the world.

You have in your Historical Society a correct account of the celebration. Suffice it for me to say that the old sailors that I saw as a boy always spoke of the Fourth of July at Nisqually as having been a splendid time. I have often heard my father say that all his crew, after three years of the most arduous work a sailor could do, marched out of the ships in good health and ready and willing for duty, and he had no hospital ship along with him either. From the fifth to the fifteenth my father was loading his ships for the Columbia River.

On the 15th of July, 1841, Wilkes received a notice by runner, from Captain Hudson, of the loss of the Peacock on the Columbia River bar. He immediately got under way for the mouth of the Columbia.

While in Puget Sound the ship carpenter's gang went ashore, by my father's order, and got out masts and spars for every ship in the squadron. The gun decks and spar decks of the Vincennes were loaded with timber for the Columbia River. This was the first load of lumber that ever went out from this section.

When the fleet arrived at Vancouver, Washington, Commodore Wilkes had to provide for the officers and crew who had escaped the wreck of the Peacock and who had arrived at Vancouver. Therefore on arrival at the Columbia River port, he did one thing never done before or since by a naval officer of the United States Navy, and that was to purchase a vessel, put it in commission, and pay for it by a draft on the treasury of the United States. This vessel was the amorphodite brig Onward, which he renamed the Oregon and which sailed with the fleet for New York after he had changed it to a full-rigged ship....

More than a year after this my father reached New York harbor with the ships in better order than when he left.

Throughout his long, varied and controversial career Wilkes, shown above as a rear admiral during the Civil War years, continued to serve the navy—and the country—with the stiff-backed resolve that helped make his voyage a success.
Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver, where they were down the Cowlitz River to the Columbia and Fort George, earlier the site of John Jacob Astor’s post, Astoria. From there he and his men made their way to the Hudson’s Bay Company headquarters at Fort Vancouver, where they were greeted warmly by its Chief Factor, John McLoughlin. During the following week McLoughlin and his assistant, James Douglas, entertained Wilkes and his men and freely gave of the information they had acquired about the region. Not surprisingly, Wilkes was favorably impressed by the order and discipline maintained at the post, and he greatly enjoyed the affable company of McLoughlin and Douglas on tours of their establishment and during the long after-dinner conversations with brandy and cigars.

His impression of the American missionaries in the Willamette Valley was less positive. He may have been predisposed to such an impression. On his way up the Willamette Valley he met the Reverend Jason Lee camped on the river bank and observed condescendingly that his party was “...annoyed with musquitoes & sandflies—being Methodists however they were used to such accommodations before they left the U. States.” Almost without exception he judged his countrymen to be “low, vulgar and unclean,” and he compared their settlements unfavorably with the Canadians’, which were marked with “cheerfulness and industry.” When a group of Americans approached him with their plans for a provisional government, he was not sympathetic. He was determined, however, to assert the American claim to the region, and upon his return to Fort Nisqually, he had the Fourth of July celebrated with all the show and pomp he could muster.

Once the festivities were done he put his men back to work surveying, moving Vincennes down Sound while another overland party descended the Chehalis River to Grays Harbor. On July 27 he received word that the Peacock had been wrecked trying to cross the Columbia bar. The ship and its precious cargo of specimens, charts and instruments were lost, but all the men survived, and the Flying Fish had entered the river unscathed. The incident underscored what Wilkes had already come to believe—that the Columbia was not a safe entryway into the region, and that if U.S. claims to the Oregon Territory were to be meaningful, they must include Puget Sound.

Unwilling to risk the Vincennes on the bar, he sent it ahead to San Francisco Bay where it met another overland party, sent to explore the interior of Oregon south of the Columbia and northern Spanish California. The Porpoise and Flying Fish surveyed the Columbia as far as The Dalles. Wilkes had hoped to send another party across the Rockies to scout a route for emigrants coming into the territory, but the wreck of the Peacock eliminated that possibility. To replace the Peacock, he purchased the brig Thomas W. Perkins from the Hudson’s Bay Company and rechristened it Oregon. By October 31, the expedition had completed its work and headed home. On June 11, 1842, the Vincennes entered New York harbor, and by July 2, the rest had landed.

They had hardly done so when Wilkes filed charges against several of his officers and they against him. In the resulting furor, the public’s interest waned and was soon diverted, to the romantic accounts of John Charles Fremont’s explorations of the West, and to the Mexican War.

Nevertheless, the Wilkes Expedition had an immediate effect upon the negotiations in process on the Oregon question. Barely 20 days after the Vincennes docked in New York, a report on the expedition containing Wilkes’ views on the value of Puget Sound was delivered to the Senate. There, it helped to crystallize the negotiating position from which the Americans never retreated.

For those interested in the history of the Pacific Northwest, the Wilkes expedition provides a window through which to view the region at a crucial time in its history. Aside from the official published report, Wilkes and several of the expedition’s members kept journals of their experiences which have proven to be veritable gold mines of information. But perhaps the greatest tribute to the expedition was that it was not the last. In spite of its shortcomings, the difficulties it encountered and the controversy that constantly surrounded it, it made a more than handsome return on its original investment. The work of its “scientists” profoundly affected the development of American science, and their accomplishments inspired other men and other expeditions. If the expedition did not immediately win the renown its creators had hoped for, its contribution to knowledge was far greater than they could have dreamed.

Illustrations for this article are courtesy of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (unless otherwise noted).

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The natives never actually welcomed the white Americans who came to settle the West. For the most part they tolerated and sometimes were even cordial toward others who came earlier—explorers, Catholic missionaries and fur traders. Their motives were easily understood. But the white Americans came not to trade or to evangelize, but to claim land as their own—land that was part of what the Indians said belonged to everyone. The concept of private property as it pertained to land was beyond their understanding.

It is not surprising, then, that the Indians resisted the invasion. Even after little-understood treaties were signed by some tribal leaders, conveying title to the United States of broad areas and allowing Indians to keep some places where they could live unmolested, many continued to resist. This resistance led to violence—terrible violence sometimes—as the Indians, out of desperation or the misguided hope that they could successfully repel the invasion of whites, committed so many acts of depredation that army units were sent West to provide protection for the settlers and hunt down and punish bands of marauding Indians.

The influx of American emigrants began in 1843, and by the time the Oregon question was settled in 1846, and the border with Canada was settled at the 49th parallel, the wagon trains heading west from Missouri had increased in number steadily. The Indians took notice and felt threatened. Even the missionaries were settling down to stay. After Marcus Whitman led a large emigrant train westward in 1843, he seemed more interested in developing the country than in saving Indian souls. The first serious manifestation of Indian resistance occurred four years later with the Whitman Massacre at Waiilatpu, which in retrospect seemed almost inevitable. The resulting campaign of reprisal by white volunteers came to be known as the Cayuse War.
THE TRAGEDY UNFOLDS

1. September 9, 1860. Forty-four emigrants cross Castle Creek. One mile further on, the massacre begins and four men are killed. Thirty-six hours later, as the massacre continues, seven more persons are killed. Thirty-three emigrants survive, including four soldiers that desert the group.

2. September 13. After abandoning wagons and supplies and fleeing on foot, survivors camp at point on Owyhee River three miles west of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Boise, now abandoned. The attack resumes.

3. The two Reith brothers, who left the group after the party moved from Castle Creek, overtake the four soldiers at their camp on the Malheur River.

4. Three of the soldiers attempt to cross the Blue Mountains, but two are killed at the headwaters of the John Day River.

5. October 2. The Reiths finally reach the Umatilla Indian Agency, and a relief party is dispatched but is unable to locate survivors.

6. October 4. General George Wright orders Captain Frederick Dent to proceed from Fort Dalles to Fort Walla Walla to obtain supplies for an expedition to rescue victims and to punish the guilty Indian tribes.

7. October 11. Captain Dent leaves Fort Walla Walla with full equipment.


9. Lieutenant Reno scouts the area around Burnt River and finds Chaffee and Munson.

10. Reno finds the mutilated bodies of six emigrants who had left the camp on the Owyhee a few days earlier.

11. October 24. Lieutenant Anderson locates 15 emigrants, 10 alive and 5 dead and cannibalized, at camp on the banks of the Owyhee River. Dent arrives the next day with the main body of troops.

12. Ambulances and wagons with supplies sent from Fort Walla Walla meet Dent and survivors at the Grande Ronde River.

13. October 27. Bad weather closes in, and the search for other survivors is abandoned. The expedition crosses the Blue Mountains in a blinding snowstorm, reaching Fort Walla Walla November 7 with the 12 it has rescued. Three others had reached safety on their own.
In 1848 gold was discovered in California, and a few years later in Washington and Oregon. The tide of immigration became a flood. The Indians could see that they were losing their lands, that their way of life and their very existence were in jeopardy. Something had to be done. Sporadic raids were made on settlements up and down the coast, isolated parties of travelers and supply trains were attacked and plundered, cattle were stolen, and murders and atrocities perpetrated with increasing frequency. It has been estimated that between 1846 and 1856 over 700 whites were killed by the Indians in the Oregon Country, few of these in actual battle. There seems to be little doubt that many of the outbreaks were the fault of the whites who regarded the Indians as an inferior species entitled to little consideration. Often the slightest Indian incident led to massive retaliation by the settlers, many of whom had developed a hatred of the Indians while crossing the continent. Indian women were molested, and captured Indian children sold into slavery.

In the meantime, Congress made matters worse for the Indians by passing the Donation Land Law, further encouraging settlement of the Pacific Northwest and requiring that regular army troops provide protection for emigrants. Territorial authorities undertook to negotiate treaties with the Indian tribes and persuade them to move onto reservations. Some of the later conflicts with the Indians were also of sufficient magnitude and duration to be designated as wars, such as the Klamath War of 1852, the Rogue River War of 1853, the Yakima War of 1855-1856, and the 1858 campaigns in eastern Washington Territory by colonels Edwin Steptoe and George Wright.

Wright’s battles effectively brought to a close warfare with the Indians in Washington Territory, but emigrants on their way to the Pacific Northwest still had to pass through some extremely dangerous areas in order to reach their destination. The summer of 1860 happened to be a comparatively peaceful one. Troops were kept busy in the field, mapping, working on roads, visiting Indian tribes and escorting emigrant trains. However, as the summer progressed, the Shoshone or Snake Indians, in particular, became restless as they watched the ever-increasing flow of white immigration moving along the Oregon Trail. The Mountain Snakes, or Bannocks, in contrast to the more docile Digger Snakes, were athletic, well armed and formidable. They were not at all impressed with the power of the whites. They roamed in bands of 60 to 100 warriors for several hundred miles along the Snake River from Old Fort Boise as far south as the California Road. They had long constituted a “considerable annoyance” to travelers on their way to the far West.

In the latter part of June, a detachment of troops was attacked by hostile Snakes near Harney Lake in southeastern Oregon, and reinforcements had to be sent to their relief. Later in the summer Digger Snakes raided the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in north-central Oregon and stole 40 horses. No one saw large numbers of Indians anywhere, but warnings of sizable encampments were common, and white settlers feared an attack by a large body of marauders. As a precaution, Colonel Wright, who in July had relieved General William S. Harney in command of the Department of Oregon in the aftermath of the “Pig War” (San Juan Island Controversy), ordered Brevet Major William N. Grier with a squadron of dragoons onto the Boise Road to provide additional protection to the emigrants moving over that portion

Nineteenth-century publishers often pandered to the public’s lurid interest in Indian misdeeds. Above is the title page of a turn-of-the-century “boy’s” book from which the illustrations to this article were taken.
The savagery of the frontier was sometimes exaggerated, but often real. Between 1846 and 1856, an estimated 700 whites were killed by Indians in the Oregon Country.

of the Oregon Trail. As a result, most of the summer passed without additional problems.

On September 1 Wright issued an order that all troops in the field were to return to their stations at Fort Walla and Fort Dalles. The military had been informed that the last of the year’s emigrants had passed what was considered to be the final danger point on the Oregon Trail. There seemed to be little left for the soldiers to accomplish, and snow would soon start blocking the mountain passes. Colonel Wright traveled to New York, and on September 20 he was pleased to be able to inform the adjutant general at army headquarters there that as a result of the last two years’ military operations, the emigrant routes in the Oregon Country had been rendered “perfectly safe” for travelers, although he still felt that an army post should be established near old Fort Boise. As Wright penned this report, he was unaware that just a few days earlier one of the worst massacres in the history of the Oregon Trail had taken place.

Ironically, Major Grier and his two companies of dragoons spent several weeks in the area where this occurred,
protecting the main body of emigrants. Just before the tragedy, Grier found no Indians in force anywhere along the trail, nor even any evidence of their having been numerous in the vicinity. Told that there were no more travelers in the rear, he believed that all had passed the danger areas, so when he received Wright's order, he returned with his command to Fort Walla Walla.

Unknown to Grier, a party of 44 persons remained on the trail—17 men, 4 women and 23 children. With their eight ox-drawn wagons and 100 head of stock, they had safely completed the long pilgrimage over the plains on their way to the Willamette Valley. On most of the journey they traveled with a large train headed for California. After leaving the Portneuf River they were accompanied for six days by troops dispatched by Lt. Col. Marshall S. Howe—from Fort Hall along the south bank of the Snake River to a point three days’ travel above Salmon Falls, where their escort left them. Four discharged soldiers joined the party at the Portneuf.

The emigrant party then consisted of Elijah Otter, his wife and 10 children; Joseph Myers, wife and 5 children; Alexis Van Orman, wife and 5 children; and David Chase, wife and 3 children. The remainder of the group was composed of nine unattached males and the four ex-soldiers.

At Salmon Falls, about 140 miles down the Snake River from the mouth of the Portneuf, the travelers for the first time encountered Indians who were threatening. For the next few days, except for the theft of two yoke of oxen and the discovery of the body of a murdered member of the train which preceded them, all was quiet as the little caravan moved onward until it reached a point about 50 miles below Salmon Falls. Here the trail crosses Castle Creek near its entry into the Snake. About a mile farther west, at approximately noon, September 9, 1860, the wagon train was suddenly surrounded by a large band of Mountain Snakes or Bannocks, shouting, screaming, and attempting to stampede the cattle. Their number had been estimated at as high as 100, most of them on foot. They were well armed with guns, bows and arrows, knives, and spears.

The emigrant party formed a corral of their wagons about a hundred rods from the river. The Indians then made signs of friendship and indicated that they wanted something to eat. When they had been fed, they permitted the caravan to move on. As soon as the corral was broken up and the travelers had reached a nearby spot less suitable for defense, the Indians began an attack in earnest. The emigrants formed a new corral and put up a spirited defense. Under a rain of bullets and arrows, it was not long before four of their men, Lewis Lawson, Judson Cressey, Charles Kishnell and William Ottley, were killed and several persons wounded. There were casualties among the Indians as well. During the “heat of the engagement” the four discharged soldiers mounted their horses and galloped away. In his subsequent report, Colonel Wright commented: “I have learned that the party originally would have probably made a successful defense against the Indians, for they appear to have fought desperately, but for the base desertion of four ... of the men, who mounted on the best animals, embraced the first opportunity for escape. Thus abandoned, the re-

The Indians’ hit-and-run tactics made it difficult for settlers to defend themselves along the Oregon Trail.

remaining men were too weak in numbers to defend the women and children.”

After 36 hours of continual fighting, the emigrants, being out of water, broke up the corral and tried to reach the river to alleviate their thirst. By this time their cattle and oxen were unmanageable because of hunger, thirst and arrow
Expeditions to hunt down raiding Indians and search for massacre survivors were sent out from posts such as Fort Walla Walla. These treks could be long, arduous—and often fruitless.

wounds. A withering fire from the Indians now forced them to abandon their wagons and attempt to flee. Joseph Myers’ brother, John, was killed as the corral broke up and Elijah Otter and his daughter, Mary, were both killed as they tried to leave their wagon. Mrs. Otter and 3 of her 10 children, refusing to leave, were captured by the Indians and killed. With 11 of their party now dead, the remainder, 18 of them small children, escaped in the night while the Indians were occupied plundering the train, dividing up the livestock and burning the wagons. Over the next 10 days these people made their way on foot, carrying the smaller children, to a point on the Owyhee River about three miles from the abandoned Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort Boise. Here they encamped and built shelters of willow and grass.

The attacking Indians followed them for four days, whooping and yelling much of the time. In their new camp, it was not long before the survivors found Indians watching them and lighting signal fires. Those who later entered the camp seemed to be from a different band of Shoshones.

In the meantime two brothers, Joseph and Jacob Reith, who also fled when the wagons were abandoned, set out westward from the camp in an attempt to reach Fort Walla Walla for help. They overtook the four discharged soldiers the following day and traveled with them up the Malheur
River to the foot of the Blue Mountains where they lost the trail. Three of the soldiers attempted to cross the mountains but were attacked by the Indians near the headwaters of the John Day River, and two of them, Shaumberg and Murdoch, were killed. The survivor, Henry Snyder, traveled day and night for a week, finally reaching the camp of a George E. Cole on Willow Creek, 100 miles east of Fort Dalles, bringing the first news of the disaster. He was in a desperate condition, exhausted, incoherent, almost starved, and initially thought to be the only survivor.

Meanwhile the Reith brothers and the fourth soldier, Charles Chaffee, returned to the main road where it crosses the Malheur River. Here they encountered an elderly survivor named G. Munson and one of the late Mrs. Otter's sons by a previous marriage, Christopher Trimble. This boy, although only 11 years old, was said to have killed several Indians in the fight at the corral. He and Munson had pushed ahead of the main party, which they reported was in dire straits, in yet another effort to obtain assistance. Chaffee killed his horse and butchered it and left most of the meat with young Christopher, who took as much as he could carry back to the camp on the Owyhee. Munson and Chaffee proceeded to the Rum River where they "gave out" and decided to remain, try to catch some salmon, and await the rest of the party. The Reiths continued on until they reached the Umatilla Indian Agency. They arrived there October 2 in a state of complete exhaustion, having subsisted on wild berries and some fragments of meat from the dragoon horse.

The evening of the Reiths' arrival the agent in charge of the agency, Byron Dawes, sent out two mounted men with a pack animal, and the next day he followed it with a wagonload of supplies. After eight days these men returned, weary and discouraged. They had seen footprints of women and children but no survivors.

The Indian Department lost no time notifying the army of the disaster, and on October 4 at Fort Dalles, Captain Frederick T. Dent, the brother-in-law of Ulysses S. Grant, received an order from Colonel Wright to command an expedition to be fitted out at Fort Walla Walla to proceed to the site of the massacre, assist any survivors he might find, and if possible punish the murderers. Dent reached Walla Walla October 9 and two days later was able to move out with 60 dragoons under Second Lieutenant Marcus A. Reno, 40 infantrymen, mounted on mules, under Second Lieutenant R. H. Anderson, and a well-equipped pack train under Mr. T. Wright. Jacob Reith and Assistant Surgeon L. Taylor accompanied the search party. It took Dent six days to reach the Powder River, where, dissatisfied with his slow progress, he sent Reno with 40 lightly burdened men to scout ahead in the vicinity of Burnt River, while Dent followed with the main body of troops.

On the evening of October 19, on a small branch of Burnt River, Reno encountered Munson and Chaffee, almost naked, without fire and starving. He clothed and fed them, left a small detachment to care for them, and pushed rapidly onward as far as the Malheur River. Having found nothing further of interest, he went back to a camp he had established on the Burnt River. As he was returning he discovered fairly fresh tracks of women and children, so he hurried on although daylight was fading. Within two miles of where the road left Burnt River he came upon a ghastly scene. "Gleaming in the moonlight, dead, stripped and mutilated, lay the bodies of six persons." After three weeks at the Owyhee camp these people had gone ahead of the other
members of the party, fearing they would be murdered by the Indians if they remained in the camp. They appeared not to have been dead more than four to six days. The throats of Alexis Van Orman, his 17-year-old son, Marcus, and Samuel Gleason had been slashed. Their bodies were pierced with numerous arrows. Mrs. Abigail Van Orman had been whipped, scalped and “otherwise abused.” Two Otter boys were killed with arrows. Reno buried the bodies.

Since Lieutenant Reno had noted prints of children’s bare feet among the moccasin tracks, he hoped they might lead him to the four younger Van Orman children, who were believed to have been taken captive by the Indians. He followed the trail but soon lost it on the bank of the Snake River. These children, Eliza, Minerva, Lucinda and Reuben, ranged in age from 8 to 14 years.

Because the deaths of the people whom Reno found had occurred fairly recently, Dent felt there might still be hope of finding survivors, so he dispatched Lieutenant Anderson and 35 men with light packs to search carefully the area between the Malheur and Owyhee rivers. On the evening of October 24, on the banks of the Owyhee River, Anderson found 10 emigrants alive in their makeshift camp and the remaining 5 dead. After “anxious consultation and prayer... those still alive were keeping life in them by eating those who had died.” Four children who died were devoured first. Later, the putrifying remains of one of the men were disinterred and were in the process of being cooked and eaten when the rescue party arrived.

When Dent appeared on the scene the next day, he described the living as “skeletons with life in them; their frantic cries for food rang in our ears incessantly.” They had been stripped of their clothing by the Indians and left to perish. Those still alive were Joseph Myers, his wife Mary, and their five children, Elizabeth Chase, her daughter Mary, and 13-year-old Emeline Trimble, the older sister of Christopher. “The dead in camp (consumed)” were David Chase, Sr., two of his young sons, Elizabeth Trimble and an infant of Mrs. Otter. Just before Dent’s arrival, the body of 11-year-old Christopher Trimble had been found a short distance beyond the Owyhee. He had volunteered to stay with the Indians in their camp three miles away, so that he could arrange for salmon to be taken occasionally to the survivors. The Indians demanded personal possessions, articles of clothing, firearms and ammunition in payment for these transactions. Two weeks before the rescue the Indians heard the emigrants discussing their fading hopes for rescue by the soldiers. The word “soja” apparently alarmed them and led them to break camp and depart, killing the boy before they left. “His body had been much disturbed by the wolves.” Anderson buried the remains found in the camp and those of young Trimble.

The survivors were carefully fed; officers and men shared clothing and blankets with them. Litters and panniers were constructed for their transportation. An express was dispatched to report the rescue to Major Enoch Steen, the commander at Fort Walla Walla. By this time the surrounding hills were covered with snow, and when the party set out for Fort Walla Walla on October 27, it was in a heavy storm of rain and sleet. With the weather closing in, saving the lives of those the army had rescued became all-important, and there could no longer be any thought of pursuing the murderers or searching for the kidnapped Van Orman children.

The march over the Blue Mountains was a weary and painful one, with snow falling much of the time. At the Grande Ronde River the party encountered the ambulances and wagons sent out from the fort with an abundance of

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Grim and determined, Chief Standing Bear of the Poncas.
closings, blankets, provisions and other comforts contributed for the emigrants by the "officers, ladies, laundresses, and men of the post." Even forage for the worn-out animals was included.

When the command reached Fort Walla Walla November 7 without further loss of life, Dent expressed his thanks to all who had participated in the rescue. "To their zeal, skill, and energy, I attribute our success, and to their humanity, the fact that we have brought into this post, alive and safe, the wrecks of fellow beings we found on the banks of the Owyhee and Burnt rivers." The final count showed that of the party of 44 emigrants, 11 were killed with the train at the corral, 7 were killed along the road, 5 died and were eaten, 2 men were killed in the mountains, and 4 children were taken prisoner, a total of 29. There were 15 survivors, the 12 rescued by Dent and the 3 who made it on their own. This doleful tale is only matched in the annals of pioneer tragedies by the fate of the Donner party in 1846. It will also be noted that the events here described took place not far from the site of the better-known massacre of the Alexander Ward party in 1854 on the banks of the Boise River.

After Colonel Wright received Dent's report he agreed that Dent's prompt return with the survivors had been the proper decision. Wright assured the adjutant general that every effort would be made to rescue the four prisoners when melting of the deep snow now blocking the mountain passes made searching possible. He pointed out the difficulty his men would have even then in tracking down and punishing elusive, warlike, well-armed nomads.

Except for its part in the rescue, the army was subjected to considerable criticism for its role in this affair. Much of the information which the public received through lurid and sensational accounts in the newspapers came from one of the survivors, Joseph Myers, who with his family had gone to Salem, to be with another of his brothers. Myers became increasingly critical of the army, and later of his fellow emigrants, with each succeeding interview. Myers put much of the blame on Colonel Howe, who, he said, was disliked by the emigrants, prejudiced against them, and contemptuous of their fear of the Indians. The Indians, Howe said, would cause the travelers no trouble if they were kept from coming near the caravan. Ill feeling was caused when Howe arbitrarily intervened in an argument which took place at the Fortneuf camp concerning two oxen loaned by Munson to Van Orman in return for board, and which he wanted back when he considered changing his destination from Oregon to California. Following this incident, Myers says Colonel Howe gave a party one evening and invited some of the women, who declined to attend. Myers asserts that Howe became enraged at this and therefore refused to furnish them with a military escort, although he later relented and let them have a lieutenant and 22 men, but only for the first six days of travel. Myers also said the four ex-soldiers who joined the party at the Fortneuf were actually deserters.

Quarrels would inevitably have occurred during this whole lengthy ordeal, but Myers, as the only surviving head of family who lived to tell the tale, is less than charitable in his comments regarding his fellow travelers. He implies criticism of Van Orman in the matter of the oxen and later accuses him of refusing to let Miss Trimble accompany him when he led his group away from the camp on the Owyhee. He tells of Otter trying to surrender and make a deal with the Indians just before they shot him. He is particularly critical of the Chases. Mr. Chase's death he attributes to gorging himself on salmon. The fact that Mrs. Chase lost two of her three children he blames on her selfishness. He says she ate too much herself and starved her children, believing it was better than having the parents die and leaving the children "to the mercy of the wolves." Mr. Myers boasted of saving his own wife and five children and quoted his wife as saying that they should all stay alive as long as possible because she believed Providence, in response to their many prayers, would yet deliver them.

Thirty-one years later Emeline Trimble, now Fuller, was encouraged to publish her reminiscences. At the time of the rescue this 13-year-old girl was the sole survivor of the original 12 members of the Otter family. She had made her way to the camp on the Owyhee with some of the other members of the emigrant party, barefooted, carrying in her arms her one-year-old sister and leading four of her little brothers and sisters. They traveled mainly at night and hid by day, subsisting on wild vegetation, two of their dogs, and an emaciated stray cow they found. She gives a heart-rending account of her search for her brother Christopher, after his final disappearance.

She felt they might have made their way to Fort Walla Walla, but for the entreaties of Joseph Myers who protested that he could not travel so fast. She had few fond memories of the Myers family, the only one in which every member was spared. She says it was not prayer but greed which saved them, that the Myers family shirked all the labor of gathering fuel and sustenance, and stole the carefully divided rations belonging to others when they were out of the camp.

After her arrival at Fort Walla Walla she stayed with the family of Lieutenant Anderson until a cousin came for her from Salem. After this she stayed with relatives in Linn County, Oregon, and attended school. She always spoke kindly of her treatment by the residents of the various communities in which she lived after her rescue. In 1863 she married John A. Whitman. After his death she went back to
Just like in the movies, settlers did “corral” their wagons to fend off attack, often their best defense against arrows and bullets.

Wisconsin and married Melvin Fuller. This marriage lasted only four years, but in spite of this she seems, for the most part, to have led a happy and prosperous life.

During the two summers which followed the massacre, three separate expeditions were sent out from posts in Washington and Oregon to attempt to find the Van Orman children. None was successful. A few survivors of the massacre are said to have accompanied the troops on at least one occasion, hoping they could identify some of the Indian culprits. Attempts were also made by civilians to organize rescue expeditions, but these failed to materialize for lack of funds and support. On one occasion a party of Nez Perce Indians was sent to attempt to locate the children.

In August 1862, a Mr. Zachias Van Orman appeared at Fort Walla Walla. He was a resident of Oregon and the brother of Alexis Van Orman, who with his wife and oldest son had been slain in the massacre. For two years Zachias Van Orman had been seeking his brother’s other four children. This time Van Orman planned to accompany an expedition onto the emigrant road commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Rueben F. Maury. While he was waiting at the fort a friend of Van Orman’s arrived at the post from the east. He had seen the children in Cache Valley, Utah, but had been unable to rescue them because of the enormous ransom demanded by the Indians. Accordingly, the uncle of the children changed his plans and made his way to Camp Douglas at Salt Lake City, where he enlisted the aid of Colonel Patrick E. Connor, who had established the post that summer.
The Mountain Snakes had again been on the rampage. Emigrants and settlers had been killed, mail and telegraph stations attacked, agents murdered and horses stolen. These happenings had kept Connor’s troops busy. Then Van Orman located a band of the Bannocks under Chief Bear Hunter in Cache Valley where they had been holding the children. However, by this time, only the ten-year-old boy remained, his three sisters having died in captivity.

On November 20, Connor dispatched Major Edward McGarry with 60 men to rescue Reuben Van Orman. McGarry’s orders stated that if a careful search failed to locate the boy or obtain his release, he was to bring to Camp Douglas three principal men of the Bear Hunter’s tribe as hostages. He was also to investigate whether any of these Indians were guilty of complicity in the massacre, and bring any he believed involved to Camp Douglas for trial. “You will not fire upon the Indians unless you find it necessary to the proper execution of your instructions.”

McGarry marched to Cache Valley, where on November 22 he met Zachias Van Orman, who informed him that Chief Bear Hunter and 30 or 40 of his tribe were encamped about two miles distant. At 1 a.m. McGarry left his horses under guard in the nearby settlement of Providence, advanced to the Indian camp on foot, and found that all but two squaws had departed. Returning to where he had left his horses, at 8 a.m. he was attacked by 30 or 40 Indians. He ordered his men to mount and kill every Indian they saw.

After a two-hour skirmish, Chief Bear Hunter rode up with 20 or more of his warriors under a flag of truce. He said that Reuben had been sent away a few days earlier when the Indians learned of the approach of the troops. McGarry demanded the immediate delivery of the boy and seized Bear Hunter and four of his braves as hostages until this was accomplished. Bear Hunter sent three of his men to bring in the boy. At noon the next day they returned with Reuben, who after two long years in captivity was turned over to his uncle.

The hostages were released. Three Indians had been killed in the skirmish and one wounded, without any casualties among the soldiers.

When Reuben was brought in, only his blond hair and blue eyes suggested his race. With his darkened skin, dressed and bedaubed with paint like an Indian, he more closely resembled his captors than his rescuers. He appeared to be in good physical condition, but hardly seemed to appreciate the efforts of his liberators, which, as far as he was concerned, had simply interrupted two years of wandering with Chief Bear Hunter’s tribe. In fact he is said to have acted “like a regular little savage” when reunited with a member of his family, fighting, kicking and scratching as the paint was washed from him. There could be no doubt that his sudden reconversion to white civilization must have come as quite a shock to this impressionable child. At the same time one can imagine the feelings of his uncle who had spent two years and over $5,000 trying to find him.

General George Wright, who was now in command of the Department of the Pacific, sent his commendation to Connor and McGarry for their successful performance of the delicate task of rescuing Reuben Van Orman. It does not seem too much to say that the courage, dedication and persistence of the boy’s uncle are beyond praise.

Zachias and the boy remained for several months in Utah, with the uncle employed by the quartermaster department at Camp Douglas at times and at others serving as a scout for Colonel Connor. In the latter capacity Zachias Van Orman participated in what he later referred to as “The Slaughter on Bear River.”

Unfortunately, depredations by the Mountain Snakes had continued until Connor, with 200 soldiers of the Third Regiment of Infantry, California Volunteers, and the Second California Volunteer Cavalry engaged 300 warriors of the same tribe of Bannock Shoshones in battle January 29, 1863, on the Bear River, in what two months later would become Idaho Territory. The battle took place in bitter, subzero winter weather and deep snow. Two hundred twenty-four Indians were killed, including Bear Hunter and two other prominent chiefs. Connor lost 15 men killed and 53 wounded, of whom 1 officer and 6 enlisted men later died. Many of the men suffered from frozen feet. This was one of the few pitched battles against Indians, involving large forces on each side, fought during the Civil War. For this victory Connor received the congratulations of General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck and was promoted to brigadier general.

When last heard from, Zachias and Reuben were encountered in the autumn of 1864 by soldiers from Fort Boise on an expedition up the Snake River to Salmon Falls, and employed by their commander as guides and interpreters. Much later the uncle went to Chico, California, but in 1896 was back in Douglas County, Oregon, at which time he was applying for a pension. In his letter of application he refers to the rescue of his nephew but gives no clue as to what happened to the boy later. Did he return to the family home in Wisconsin? Did he accompany his uncle to California? Did he stay in Oregon? It would be of interest to learn what the future held in store for Reuben Van Orman.

Dr. Carl Schlicke, a Spokane surgeon, is president of the Eastern Washington State Historical Society. An earlier version of this paper appeared originally in the Pacific Northwesterner, publication of the Spokane Corral of The Westerners. Dr. Schlicke is the author of a biography of Colonel George Wright.
A rare opportunity to see deep into the mystery that has always surrounded the notable exploring accomplishments of the French naval officer, Jean-Francois de Galaup de Lapérouse, will end on April 12 when the only showing of an unusual exhibit, “The Lost Voyage of Lapérouse,” closes at the University of Washington’s Burke Museum.

Lapérouse and all his crew disappeared in the South Pacific 200 years ago after an exploring and trading expedition up and down the western coast of this continent. What happened to him remained a mystery until 1826 when a Dutch merchant saw articles of French origin on an island in the Santa Cruz group. Subsequent searches and investigations, which included questioning of many natives, revealed what had happened. The ships of Lapérouse were caught in a severe tropical storm and wrecked. The presence of French articles among the natives indicated that there were survivors, but what happened to them remains a mystery.

In the 1880s the site of one wreck was found and a number of articles recovered. In 1962 a second was located and investigations have continued, now using modern underwater gear. No clues have yet been found concerning the fate of the survivors, including, possibly, Lapérouse himself.

Because much of what Lapérouse recorded in the early part of his voyage was sent back to Paris at several stops, the accomplishments of the expedition are known and were published in four volumes with an atlas that includes 69 maps and plates.

The end of the voyage was the ultimate tragedy for Lapérouse but not the only one. After visiting and charting the island of Maui, Lapérouse sailed to the Pacific Northwest in 1786, sighted Mount St. Elias in Alaska and discovered Lituya Bay, where 21 of his men were lost when their boats were capsized in a riptide at the bay entrance.

Lapérouse was the first European to enter Monterey Bay in California. The tragedy in Alaska delayed him and he did not spend as much time charting the West Coast as he had planned. Such a task would take a long time, as Captain George Vancouver subsequently demonstrated.

Lapérouse is ranked by historians with Cook, Vancouver and Malaspina as having led the most significant of the many commercial and scientific voyages undertaken in the latter half of the 18th century.
Treaties on Trial: The Continuing Controversy Over Northwest Indian Fishing Rights.
Reviewed by Dr. Gordon Morris Bakken.

This book is the report of the American Friends Service Committee on the background and implementation of U.S. v. Washington (1974), which granted certain Indian tribes fishing rights in waters under Washington State jurisdiction. The federal district court case, interpreting treaty language of the 1850s to grant fishing rights, was upheld five years later by the United States Supreme Court in a six-to-three decision. This book narrates the origins of the case and its final disposition before the nation's highest court, arguing that the case honored our national legal commitment to Indian tribes and promised the beneficial use of a natural resource by Indians and all other citizens of the United States. The author portrays the treaty tribes as protectors of the fisheries environment and managers of traditional fishing grounds.

Treaties on Trial is one of a growing number of books generated by Indian claims under treaties for the natural resources of America. These books range from special-interest pleadings to measured social science analysis. Among the books readers may find to be useful comparative reading are Charles DuMars, Marilyn O'Leary and Albert Utton's Pueblo Indian Water Rights (1984), Jerry Kammer's The Second Long Walk: The Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute (1980), Robert D. Arnold's Alaskan Native Land Claims (1976), and the Final Report (1979) of the Indian Claims Commission. What is troublesome about some of this literature is its litigation-generated "law office history" and its advocacy thrust.

Treaties on Trial does not pretend to be an analytic social science history of a law case. The author summarizes the plight of the Indian tribes and their cultural linkage to fishing. She chronicles the legal path of the tribes to their ultimate victory before the federal courts, and outlines the challenges to the tribes in the Indian overcrowding of the waters and in the allocation of the catch among the tribes. The book goes a long way toward explaining to the lay audience how one group of Americans can have greater rights to natural resources than another group of citizens. From a lawyer's perspective, the book does not deal with fundamental constitutional issues like federalism in a meaningful way, and confines the legal analysis of treaties to a very selective group of cases. From the historian's perspective, the book's failure to deal with a rich literature is regrettable. Although citing some of Paul Prucha's works, the author does not attempt to deal with his The Great Father (2 vol., 1984) and its interpretation of the federal role in Indian resource allocation and regulation activities under treaty. Further, the author does not come to grips with Thomas Lund's American Wildlife Law (1980) and put U.S. v. Washington in the larger context of federal policy of wildlife management. Finally, the book does not take advantage of books directly on point, such as Kent D. Richards' Isaac I. Stevens: Young Man in a Hurry (1979), to put the original treaty-making process in historical context. Despite these limitations, this book does afford readers a useful summary of the Indian situation and an understanding of a very important case in our constitutional law.

Gordon Morris Bakken is a Professor of History at California State University, Fullerton. He is both a lawyer and a historian, and has written three books on the development of law in the American West.

Ever Westward the Land.
Reviewed by John McClelland.

Published pioneer reminiscences about the Northwest are numerous. Usually they were written late in life by persons whose memories had dimmed and from viewpoints tinged with nostalgia. They are, nevertheless, useful, for they provide insight into a period that suffers from a scarcity of documentation.

This volume is refreshingly different in that it is not based on memories, but on contemporary writing in the form of journals and letters written by members of a family which originated in Cornwall, on the coast of southern England. They settled finally in 1852, after an arduous sea voyage and long wagon-train treks across the continent, on the Grand Mound prairie northwest of Centralia.

Exeter University in England is the publisher because one of its retired professors, A.C. Todd, has made a study of Cornish emigrants and the reasons they departed. This is the story of the Samuel James family. James was a moderately prosperous farmer who owned his land, but decided to sell and go to the New World for reasons different from those of most Europeans who flooded into the United States in the mid-19th century. James was a Methodist and chafed at the tithe he was forced to pay to the Church of England. He objected also to paying high taxes to support British military ventures into the Middle East, of which he disapproved.

The James family eventually became so numerous at Grand Mound that the settlement was for a period known as Jamestown.

David James of Bainbridge Island, a great-grandson of Samuel, assembled and edited the many letters and journal entries which form the basis of this important historical record of the 1850s in the Northwest, when land was free and raw and those who came first laid the foundations that were to endure. It is, only incidentally for us, a valued record in Cornwall also, as it explains why the oppressions of another time drove away some of its people.
The Metis in the Canadian West.
Reviewed by Jacqueline Peterson.

American readers interested in the history of the fur trade and the struggle for dominion over the vast landscape of the Canadian and American northwesterns will no doubt be amazed to learn that one of the century's monumental works on this subject has been inaccessible for 40 years. While neither the name Marcel Giraud nor the name of the peoples he so vividly evokes are yet familiar to most Americans, they should be. The recent translation and republication of The Metis in the Canadian West, originally issued in 1945, is thus cause for celebration on both sides of the international border.

Giraud, who until his retirement held the chair of North American history at the College de France, first fell under the spell of the West as a result of conversations with American soldiers assigned to southern France in 1918. He was especially captivated, as generations of North Americans have been as well, by the epic saga of Euro-American penetration of the continent's interior and the resultant conflict between Indian and white. Armed with a passport and a Rockefeller fellowship, Giraud embarked in the 1930s on a study of that interaction, which in its published form still has few equals in scope, detail and dramatic appeal.

In contrast to the history of limited and strained personal contacts, irreconcilable cultural differences, and violent confrontation which characterizes most writings about Indian-white relations in the U.S., Giraud set about to tell a different kind of story. He discovered, upon his arrival on the Canadian prairies, a new and largely unheralded people: Metis-born of innumerable marriages of French- and English-speaking fur trade personnel to native women—whose crucial intermediary role in the development of the Northwest had only been glimpsed by earlier scholars. Giraud's intent was to reveal the origins and social history of this at once hybrid and uniquely separate group, which three times during the 19th century took up arms in defense of its members' claims to the soil and to nationhood. Despite the messianic leadership of Louis Riel, the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 and the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 were put down, and the Metis' claims to a homeland were denied. Thereafter, as white farmers and ranchers transformed the contours of the aboriginal landscape, the Metis were flung to the marginal corners of the greater Northwest, resigned to the landless poverty in which Giraud found them in the 1930s.

Based on extensive archival research in Canada and Europe and on personal interviews throughout western Canada, Giraud's work cuts a commanding swath. Following a discussion of the human and physical environment of the 17th-century Northwest, Giraud insightfully compares the penetration of the West by the English out of Hudson Bay with that of the French and Scots Norwegians from the St. Lawrence which, in the 18th century, resulted in the birth of two distinct hybrid groups: English-speaking half-breeds and the more numerous French-speaking Metis. Echoing the majority of Canadian historians, Giraud attributes the emergence of Metis nationalism to the calculated suggestions of white fur-trade officers rather than to a unique core of original Metis ethnic characteristics. Interestingly, however, Giraud's rich data provide ample evidence for an emerging Metis identity and culture combining European and native antecedents, which allowed the group to carve out an important social and economic niche by the mid-19th century.

Giraud traces the evolution and migrations of the Metis of Red River, the Canadian Northwest, and North Dakota and Montana through the transformation and dislocations of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Little space is allotted to the Metis Rebellions. Rather, Giraud focuses on the larger questions of Metis collective psychology and on the group's seeming inability to adapt, in the wake of the fur trade's decline, to the influx of white settlers and the shift to a modern, capitalist economy. These larger questions might profitably serve as the basis for a fresh look at Indian-white relations south of the border. In fact, it may not be amiss to suggest that the rediscovery of the Metis may be the most important development in the recent writing of Western history in North America. Certainly, Giraud's work will stand as an indispensable introduction to a rapidly growing field.

Yet, The Metis in the Canadian West is not without serious flaw. Giraud is impressively faithful to his sources. However, most of his sources—white fur traders, missionaries, travelers and governmental officials—are inherently biased. As outsiders and spokesmen for the dominant culture, they, like Giraud himself, were unable to shrug off the tacit assumption that the superiority of Euro-American civilization would ensure its triumph over primitivism. Thus for Giraud, burdened with the evolutionary and racist thinking of his time, the native half of the Metis equation was a weakness, an impediment to development, rather than one of two resources for the invention of a new, uniquely North American mentality. From the vantage point of the 1980s, Giraud seems to have missed the obvious: that, however briefly, the Metis posed an alternative to the inevitable death and destruction too often linked with the European conquest of native North America. These criticisms notwithstanding, The Metis in the Canadian West is one of the major works of our time, whose translator, George Woodcock, is to be commended for accomplishing a herculean task with grace and insight.

Jacqueline Peterson is an Associate Professor at Washington State University and coeditor of The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Metis in Northern America (University of Nebraska Press, 1986).
Experiences in the Promised Land: Essays in Pacific Northwest History.
Reviewed by Dr. William D. Rowley.

Instructors and, to a lesser extent, students of Pacific Northwest history will welcome this recent anthology. The editors have combined various articles published no earlier than 1959, and most since 1970, with some previously unpublished articles to cover the entire range of the region's history from early American settlement to the modern period. Thoughtful introductory essays precede the four sections into which the collection is divided: (1) "Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement," (2) "From Frontier to Urban-Industrial Society," (3) "Reform and Repression," and (4) "The Modern Era." These divisions nicely demarcate the history of the region and make the book a workable companion to the history texts used in Pacific Northwest college classrooms.

The articles selected, however, deal only with Washington and Oregon state histories. Those who think of the Pacific Northwest as a wider region will be disappointed in this focus. Fortunately, the editors chose not to bother themselves, or the readers, with the amorphous question of whether the Northwest is a distinct region. Although the extensive bibliography covers this recurring debate, too often the debate is a quagmire in which regionalists entangle themselves to no great profit.

Stewart H. Holbrook's term "The Far Corner" emerges frequently in these pages, although no excerpts from his writings or those of other "popular writers" are included. More to the point, these essays illustrate incidents in the movement of the region from a peripheral status to a modern urban industrial existence. Clearly, "The Far Corner" lagged behind the rest of the nation in the pace of industrialization. The remoteness of the region, however, did not insulate it from the conflicts of American history—exploitation of native peoples, despoliation of natural resources, callous corporate disregard for human welfare, the suffering of the Great Depression, and the struggle for racial justice.

These distressing themes make it quickly apparent that this volume is not merely a celebration of the glorious past of a beautiful region. These are sophisticated, critical, scholarly essays executed by some of the foremost students of the region's history. Finally, a rich and helpful bibliography of books and articles on the four divisions of the book provides students with term paper assignments, and easy access to the key works of Pacific Northwest historical scholarship. Those who labor in the vineyards of classroom history instruction will rely on this work.

William D. Rowley is Professor of History at the University of Nevada-Reno, and the Executive Secretary of the Western History Association.

Reviewed by Dr. Iris Engstrand.

This beautiful book was designed to accompany an exhibition of the same name first held in 1985 at the National Museum of Natural History to honor the United States Exploring Expedition of 1838-42, led by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes. The exhibition, which is a marvelous tribute to the research and work of scholars from the Smithsonian Institution, Library of Congress, National Archives, and Historical Division of the Navy under the direction of Herman J. Viola of the National History Museum, is now traveling to various institutions throughout the country and will be in the museum of the State Historical Society in Tacoma from October through December. The enjoyment of this book, which stands very well on its own, can only be enhanced by a look at the material results of an unprecedented voyage.

The Wilkes Expedition was the first American effort to equal the accomplishments of Europeans in exploring and charting the unknown areas of the world. In less than four years, the men under Wilkes would confirm the existence of Antarctica, chart hundreds of islands and harbors in the South Pacific, map 800 miles of the Pacific Northwest coast, and gather so many natural history specimens that the Smithsonian Institution would be created to hold them. But despite an abundant collection of plants, animals, minerals, cultural artifacts and exquisite illustrations, the expedition was beset by trouble and torn by dissension. Not all of the original six vessels returned home, and of the 490 sailors and civilians who sailed in 1838, some would die, several would desert, and many would harbor a deep resentment of their demanding and difficult commander. Upon his return, Wilkes faced charges of oppression, cruelty and illegal punishment, and was reprimanded by the Secretary of the Navy. Nevertheless, the expedition was a huge success and Wilkes supervised the publication of 23 volumes of findings.

The book is a collection of excellent and highly readable essays, including an overview of the expedition by Herman Viola. There are separate treatments of botany, vertebrate collections, invertebrates, geology and James Dana, anthropology, ships, surveying, Wilkes, the National Gallery and the Smithsonian. The three appendices, list of references, and finely reproduced illustrations are a fitting accompaniment to this scholarly product.

Iris H. W. Engstrand is Professor and Chair, Department of History, University of San Diego. She is the author of Spanish Scientists in the New World: The Eighteenth Century Expeditions.

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COLUMBIA 47  SPRING 1987
In 1922, when the city of Longview was founded, those working on the project needed a vantage point from which they could look over the broad valley at the confluence of the Cowlitz and the Columbia where the city was to be. Hence this perch between two trees on the hillside near Rainier on the Oregon side of the Columbia, where the engineers could get something close to a bird's-eye view. Aerial photography at that time was almost unknown.

Readers are invited to submit historical photographs for History Album. Columbia pays $25 for any photo published. If a photo is to be returned it must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope—Eds.
The Washington State Historical Society adopted the above statement about itself for use through 1990, the year before the Society reaches the age of 100. It is one of the oldest cultural institutions in the Northwest.

The Society was established by leaders among the state's pioneers in 1891 and was chartered by the Legislature as a state institution in 1901.

The Society engages in a variety of activities in fulfillment of its mission—to gather, preserve and protect the pertinent surviving evidences of the past in the form of artifacts, written records, photographs and paintings; to interpret that past; and to educate succeeding generations concerning it.

It has, since 1912, maintained a large museum at its headquarters in Tacoma, which is now being completely redesigned. Eventually the exhibits will be remodeled, to make them more useful in displaying the state's history.

The records collections of nearly a century are housed in the research library and are used extensively by researchers and serious students.

The Society publishes books, the most recent being Place Names of Washington by Robert Hitchman. History Highlights, a quarterly newsletter, goes to all members. Catalogs for special displays in the museum are also published. The most notable exhibit in many years will be one coming to the Society museum from the Smithsonian in October, November and December, bringing a wide selection of items collected in the Northwest by Charles Wilkes' United States Exploring Expedition in the 1840s.

The first historical journal in the state—the Washington Historical Magazine—was started by the Society in 1893, but did not survive. At the turn of the century four issues of The Washington Historian were published. Then in 1906, Professor Edmond Meany of the University of Washington began publication of the Washington Historical Quarterly which, in 1936, after Professor Meany's death, became the Pacific Northwest Quarterly with which the Society has long been affiliated.

With this issue the Society begins publication of Columbia, the Magazine of Northwest History.

Membership in the Society is open to all. Membership includes a subscription to Columbia or Pacific Northwest Quarterly, History Highlights, admission to museum functions and a 15 percent discount on books and other items purchased in the museum shop.

The categories of membership are as follows:

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