The Encounter

AS IF THE 1992 observance of the maritime bicentennials of Gray, Vancouver, and Fidalgo were not already quite pregnant with historical import, all afficionados of American history will have recognized by now that the international Columbus Quincentennial neatly overlaps our more regional observance.

Already some of the cultural issues surrounding the quincentennial have become quite distinct. If the Columbus observance had happened to occur 20 years ago, about the time when Columbus Day became a national holiday, it would have had an Italian character. It was the Italian-American community, after all, that led the movement for the creation of the Columbus holiday, which has since lost some of its luster.

In this new era of efflorescing Hispano consciousness, Columbus' Iberian connection, as opposed to his Italian ancestry, is getting the most play. Not that everyone is getting ready to "celebrate."

It was commonly asserted during our recent state centennial that Native Americans had no reason for joyfulness. If that was true, imagine how little enthusiasm descendants of the original Americans will have for the 500th anniversary of the onset of the European invasion.

These threads come together in this issue's maritime bicentennial essay by Delbert McBride, a contributor to our state centennial series, writing a much-praised piece on Indian artistic traditions in the Northwest. Now he returns, with a Northwest version of the great encounter between the Europeans and the indigenous peoples.

The River

WE TAKE GREAT pleasure in presenting the first in yet another series of articles we will be publishing—on the history of the Columbia River—in Paul Pitzer's essay on the myth of Grand Coulee Dam. In this new series we will be keying on the bicentennial of Robert Gray's "discovery" of the Columbia by focussing on the great river of the West's role in regional history.

The Exhibit

NOT SINCE "Magnificent Voyagers," which was featured in the very first issue of Columbia back in 1987, has the Society been quite so to the forefront of historical interpretation as we are this summer with "Russian America: The Forgotten Frontier." Produced by the Society in concert with the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, "Russian America" will be a featured event in the Goodwill Games Arts Festival. This exhibition is every bit as compelling as "Voyagers," detailing the great story of the Russian exploration of North America, the maritime fur trade, and the cession of Alaska to the United States (otherwise known as "Seward's Folly") in 1867. To give you some flavor of this intriguing chapter of Northwest history, we are pleased to present an essay by James Gibson on the relationship between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Russians, which is excerpted from the exhibition catalog being published by the Society.

—David L. Nicandri, Director

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Fortunate are those who can know about their family's past because an elder member had the good sense to write what otherwise would have gone forgotten to the grave. And fortunate are historians who put high value on ordinary personal accounts, not just of those who are prominent, rich or famous. An increasing number, judging from what we see, are looking back on long, eventful lives and concluding that something ought to be written about them.

Some produce full-scale autobiographies, as did Frederick Ayer of Seattle recently with his handsomely printed Memories of an Unplanned Life, and some just do some reminiscing for the fun of it, as did Mary Jean Taylor of Tacoma, who sees the humorous side of a life marked by accidents and other mishaps in her paperback, Never Mind the Bumps. Then there is the autobiography of Judge William Wilkins of Bellevue, now 95, and the remarkably detailed life story of another Tacoman, Floyd Oles, who served in three wars.

These and other personal accounts, more in transcript than book form, usually cannot be found in book stores. Far from being commercial ventures, they are turned out, often laboriously, for friends and especially for descendants whose sense of family is much enhanced by a knowledge of what forebears did, how they lived and what they thought of history as they observed it being made.

Each such writing makes some contribution to history. However minor it may seem now, the passage of time will turn it into source material of the kind that provides authenticity to accounts of the past written by those who undertake to bring it to life with words.

An unknown number—but they are many—decide early in life to write personal accounts. These take the form of diaries and journals that usually are kept in secret to avoid being suspected of immodesty or an egotistic assumption that what one has done or thought will be of interest to others. American Heritage recently published parts of what it said may be the finest and longest running journal ever written—by a man who lived through the Civil War period and the second half of the nineteenth century. It had been hidden away but fortunately preserved for almost a century. Regarded as literature now, we wonder what its author considered it to be.

During what is called the Great Depression, this kind of grassroots history was produced in Washington by persons desperately in need of work to avoid being hungry. A cadre of government-paid workers roamed the state recording what those who qualified as pioneers remembered about "the early days." The result was the much-valued As Told by the Pioneers, printed in three volumes.

This half-century-old work inspired a unique book sponsored by the 1989 Centennial Commission entitled As I Remember, a Personal Record for Washington Residents (published by Sasquatch Press), now available in book stores for $15.95. It is for persons who have never kept personal records and may not know how to begin. Some blank, lined pages are provided for such beginnings, preceded by examples of what others in Washington's past have done, such as Phoebe Judson (a Nooksack Valley settler), Ezra Meeker of Puyallup, Henry Villard of railroad fame, and Orange Jacobs, a political pioneer. It could have cited more recent works by or about Dorothy Lawson McCall (mother of Tom), Col. William Greeley, Henry Broderick, R. A. Long, Kemper Freeman, Sr., and Norton Clapp.

Perhaps it is more the inertia of laziness than modesty that keeps more personal accounts from being written or brought to light. And since I am too modest to confess to being modest, and I have not yet followed this advice, what is my excuse? None, really. Those of us of senior vintage should just get to work. History needs us. —John McClelland, Jr.
Although both the Russian-American Company (established 1799) and the Hudson's Bay Company (established 1670) enjoyed fur-trading monopolies in North America and represented rival imperial powers, they had virtually nothing to do with each other until the 1830s. There were good reasons for this want of contact. For one thing, the two firms penetrated the New World from opposite directions and it took some time for the older Hudson's Bay Company, which had some French and even Canadian opposition, to span Rupert's Land (the watershed of Hudson Bay), cross the mountains, and meet the Russian-American Company on the Northwest Coast. Additionally, the Russians were preoccupied with the maritime fur trade (mainly sea otter) and the British with the continental fur trade (chiefly beaver), so there was no ecological overlap. Furthermore, neither company really had anything that the other wanted.

The Russian-American Company did suffer from a shortage of supplies, especially provisions, but the Hudson's Bay Company initially had only enough to meet its own needs. Moreover, Russian Alaska was not an easily accessible market, given the direction and terrain between, say, New Archangel (Sitka) and York Factory, or, worse yet, London. Meanwhile, the Russians had found other suppliers: American trading vessels that had pre-empted the sea otter traffic from British vessels by the time the Russian-American Company was formed and that could just as easily bring trade goods for the Russians as for the Indians; and Alta California's productive missions, which sold wheat and beef to the tsar's men clandestinely before, and lawfully after, 1822, when the ports of the new republic of Mexico were opened to foreign trade.

Contact between the two companies grew nearer in the 1820s. By then, the trading hinterlands of the two companies were finally starting to overlap. Following the merger of 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company assumed and rejuvenated the North West Company's operations west of the Rockies in New Caledonia (upper Fraser River basin) and was contemplating expansion northwest into the Yukon River basin and westward to the Pacific coast, while the Russian-American Company was getting more and more land furs from the continental interior through native middlemen. More importantly, free-wheeling American coasters were increasingly infringing upon the monopolies of both companies, particularly that of the Honorable Company (Hudson's Bay). On the northern coast the "Bostonians," or "Boston men," as they were called by the Indians because almost all of them sailed from that port, operated in waters that the Russians clearly regarded as theirs but could not patrol. A tsarist decree of 1821 to ban foreign vessels from the coast north of 51° was largely in vain, partly because the goods brought by American ships were only half the price of those brought by Russian ships.

American ships caused problems for the Russians. Whenever they made deliveries to Sitka, they seemed to poach sea otters and smuggle to the Tlingits. Moreover, American supplies were mostly traded for Russian fur seal skins, which fetched from 15 to 25 rubles each in St. Petersburg or Moscow but only 8 rubles at Sitka; the Russians would have preferred to market the skins themselves, of course, but they lacked anything else (such as hard currency) that the Yankees would accept in return, and even skins had to be replaced by bills of exchange after 1829 because of the depletion of fur seals.

As overhunting depleted the sea otters, New England shipmasters traded for more land furs, primarily beaver from the interior via the Skeena, Nass, and Stikine river valleys. In the early 1820s, American coasters were getting 3,000-5,000 beaver pelts annually; a decade later they were taking double this number. In so doing, they offered the Indians more than the Bay men, who consequently had to follow suit and pay more for fewer pelts. Thanks to this competition, which the Indians naturally welcomed, the price of beaver (and hence the terms of trade) rose fivefold on the coast during the 1820s.

**American Traders Challenged**

The Russian-American Company could do nothing about the encroachment of American traders, other than protest unsuccessfully to Washington, because it was so dependent upon them for supplies. The Hudson's Bay Company lay under no such restraint. George
Simpson, governor of the company's Northern Department, was determined to counter the "American opposition." Following his inspection of the Columbia Department (Oregon Country) in 1824-25, Governor Simpson began making the HBC leaner and meaner by restructuring and rationalizing its operations and eliminating its competitors. The merger of 1821 had disposed of the Canadian competitor, and the Russian-American Company was normally an insignificant rival because it was preoccupied with sea furs and neglected the interior. The main threat, though, was what Simpson called the American "birds of passage," that is, transient traders without permanent bases. To thwart them, the governor decided to employ both trading vessels and trading posts. Fort Vancouver was built in 1825 on the northern (and presumably eventually British) bank of the lowermost Columbia River opposite the mouth of the Willamette (and became departmental headquarters and entrepôt), Fort Langley in 1827 on the Fraser River just above its delta, Fort Simpson in 1831 near the mouth of the Nass River, and Fort McLoughlin in 1833 on Queen Charlotte Sound. The Dryad, or Stikine, affair in 1834 was exceptional: the Russians prevented a Hudson's Bay Company coaster from ascending the Stikine River to establish a post that would have intercepted the flow of furs downstream to the Russian redoubt of St. Dionysius at its mouth.

This strategy of the Hudson's Bay Company entailed several other essential elements: trustworthy information, suitable vessels, competent seamen, and tradeable goods. The information was provided by Lieutenant Aemelius Simpson, who was made head of the HBC's "naval department" in 1827 and who in the following years reconnoitered the northern coast and submitted a detailed report on the coast trade. Several ships were built on the coast or brought from England, but they proved too small or too slow, and at first the captains, too, proved unseaworthy, knowing too little and drinking too much. The shipping did not become satisfactory until the HBC decided in 1828 to deploy three vessels on the coast—two to make the yearly voyages from London to Fort Vancouver and return, and one to stay on the coast—and in 1831 hired four American officers, all veterans of the coast trade, and bought an American brig, the Lama. Trade goods proved more problematical, owing to damage to cargo on the "London ship," the late arrival of same at the Columbia River, and even shipwreck. It was not until 1835 that the Hudson's Bay Company's supply of trade goods for the coast trade became sufficient.

Thus by the mid-1830s the Hudson's Bay Company was in a position to oust the "American adventurers," even offering the Indians more for their furs than the Yankees and incurring short-term losses in order to gain sole control of the trade and recoup in the long run. Some American traders persisted, mainly because they enjoyed an additional source of coastal profit: Sitka's demand for provisions. So Governor Simpson had to usurp that market as well as the Indian market. And by now he was in a position to do just that, thanks to the success of HBC farming at several posts, principally Fort Vancouver. As part of his economy drive of the mid-1820s, the governor had directed the factors of the posts to become as self-sufficient as possible and replace costly imports with "country produce," that is, locally produced commodities, including provisions (fish, game, crops, and livestock). Some posts soon developed productive farms; Fort Vancouver was meeting its own food needs by 1828, and by 1835 it was provisioning the London ship instead of vice versa. From the mid-1830s the Willamette settlers, mostly retired HBC servants (until 1843, when they were overwhelmed by American migrants), were growing excess wheat, which they exchanged for goods at Fort Vancouver. These surpluses enabled Simpson to approach the Russian-American Company as early as 1829 and offer to supply Russian America with Columbia provisions and English manufactures in return for furs, currency, or even promissory notes. This offer was repeated in 1832 and again in 1836.

Initially, the Russians hesitated, not wanting to have to rely upon a competitor for something as vital as food. But by the mid-1830s they were more receptive to Simpson's proposal, thanks to two circumstances. One was the withdrawal of American vessels from the coast trade. They were being shadowed and outbid by British coasters, and furs were becoming scarcer year by year anyway, so that the business was less and less profitable. The Yankees were further discouraged by the refusal of the Russian government to renew the 1824 American-Russian convention, which had admitted American trading vessels to Russian America's waters and ports for ten years. One of their number, the Pearl, was seized after the expiration of the convention in mid-April 1834. Besides, other ventures in the North Pacific, including Sea of Okhotsk and Bering Sea whaling and the California
The agreement was to remain in force even in the event of hostilities between Britain and Russia (not a remote possibility in view of their worsening relations...) hide and tallow trade, promised New England’s shipowners higher returns. So, fewer and fewer American ships made the Northwest Coast to trade furs and supply Sitka. The other circumstance was the disappearance of Sitka’s supplemental source of provisions, the missions of Alta California. Their production had been disrupted by periodic droughts in the 1820s, and after 1821 prices had risen in accordance with the influx of American traders, who offered the missions and ranchos better and cheaper goods than the Russians. But the body blow came with secularization in 1834. Both the Spanish padres and the Indian converts were released and the fields were abandoned. At that point, the Russian-American Company really no had other choice than the Hudson’s Bay Company as a supplier since delivery from Russia overland via Siberia or overseas via the Cape or the Horn took too long and cost too much.

Thus, in the summer of 1838, Simpson and his superior, John Pelly, the HBC’s governor, visited St. Petersburg and the Russian-American Company’s head office to negotiate an agreement. Early the following year, Simpson and Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell, one of the directors of the Russian firm (and the governor of its Alaskan colony in the first half of the 1830s), met halfway in Hamburg and signed what the Bay men came to call the “Russian contract.” Wrangell had volunteered to negotiate for the Russian side if Simpson proved to be the British representative because he believed that Simpson wanted the accord so badly that he would agree to more favorable conditions for the Russian-American Company. The agreement consisted of nine articles, which took effect on June 1, 1840, for a term of ten years. The Hudson’s Bay Company agreed to deliver annually to Sitka at fixed prices (payable in bills of exchange on St. Petersburg) 8,400 bushels of wheat, 15 tons of salted beef, 8 tons of butter, 8 tons of wheat flour, other provisions from Oregon, plus various English manufactures as well as 5,000 Canadian land otters, and to drop its claim for £22,118 (135,000 silver rubles) in damages in the Dryad, or Stikine, affair. For its part, the Russian-American Company agreed to lease the lisière, or Stikine Territory, a ten-mile-wide coastal strip of the Alaskan Panhandle between Cross Sound (a line between Cape Spencer and Mount Fairweather) and Chatham Sound (54°40’ north latitude), to the HBC for an annual rent of 2,000 land

Sitka, the capital of Russian America, suffered repeated shortages of foodstuffs, and was the main market George Simpson had in mind when he developed his policy of diversification in the wake of the declining fur trade.
otters, to abandon St. Dionysius Redoubt, and to discourage American coasters from calling at Russian America's ports to sell goods, except in emergencies. The agreement was to remain in force even in the event of hostilities between Britain and Russia (not a remote possibility in view of their worsening relations; indeed, the Russian government ordered the Russian-American Company to negotiate the pact because it wanted to curry Great Britain's favor in matters involving the Balkans and Turkey).

The accord was mutually advantageous. For the Russians it meant that their supply line had been resecured, and they could sever the troublesome American connection. The last American order was placed in 1839 and received in 1841. The oceanic supply line was now cheaper: 65 to 114 rubles per ton for the freighting of Russian goods on Hudson's Bay Company ships versus 194 to 254 rubles per ton on Russian-American Company ships and 180 rubles per ton on Russian navy ships; moreover, on the HBC's ships the goods were insured against damage or loss. The English manufactures proved superior to the American, and Oregon grain more plentiful than California grain, as well as cheaper and cleaner. Now the Russian-American Company obtained so much grain that it even agreed to meet Kamchatka's needs, in return for a ten-year monopoly on the peninsula's trade.

Because of this bounty, the company was now able to liquidate its costly holdings in California, comprising Fort Ross, Port Rumyantsev (Bodega Bay), and several ranchos. These had been established in 1812 as hunting and farming bases. By 1820 the local sea otters and fur seals had largely been hunted out, whereupon farming became the focus of attention, but it did not prosper in the face of the inimical climate and insufficient farmland. The venture was nevertheless retained, perhaps out of sheer inertia or as a facet of the imperial contest for California. By the late 1830s, however, Russia was clearly being outdone on the Pacific slope by Great Britain and the United States, and in 1841 Russian California was sold for 30,000 piasters (silver dollars), or 42,857 rubles, to John Sutter, who was to pay mostly in wheat. Its sale, as well as the abandonment of St. Dionysius Redoubt in 1840, saved both money and labor for the Russian-American Company. St. Dionysius Redoubt had cost 12,000 rubles yearly in upkeep, and Russian California had been losing 14,000-15,000 rubles annually in the late 1830s.

The redundant manpower (even though most of Ross's was infirm) was sorely needed. From 1838 through 1842, for example, 101 company employees returned to Russia and 80 died in the colony while only 67 recruits arrived, a net loss of 114. Additionally, leasing the lisière to the Hudson's Bay Company incurred political as well as financial benefits in that, by clearly demarcating an international boundary, it served to mute American territorial pretensions and silence American protests over the non-renewal of the 1824 convention; it also eliminated the basis of territorial conflict with the British in the "Kolosh [Tlingit] Straits."

The lisière was now off-limits to Russian-American Company operations, but the company had not been able to compete with its British rival in the coast trade anyway because the latter offered the Indians higher prices and better goods. The Russians still sent a trading vessel into the Kolosh Straits every summer, but from 1851 through 1859 the Tlingits virtually ceased trading with them, channeling nearly all of their traffic to the HBC. That organization had strengthened its coastal position with the establishment of Fort Victoria in 1845 to replace Fort Vancouver as the company's Columbian headquarters when the American-British boundary was extended along the 49th parallel from the Rockies to the Pacific in 1846.

Owing to intense competition among American, British, and Russian traffickers for more than half a century, the coast trade no longer offered much to the Russian-American Company (it considered the lisière "very poor" in sea otters, for example), so it turned to Kodiak Island, the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutians, and the Kuriles, where the absence of keen competition and the implementation of conservation measures had sustained furbearers. In contrast, sea otters became extinct on the Northwest Coast. At the same time, the company began to spread its economic risk by diversifying into other ventures, including the Shanghai tea trade, the Kamchatka retail trade, and the California ice trade.

The chief benefit of the 1839 agreement to the Russian-American Company was the reliable supply of abundant and economical provisions...
were likewise needed now, so Forts McLoughlin and Taku, or Durham, were abandoned in 1843 and Fort Stikine, or Highfield, which had replaced St. Dionysius Redoubt, in 1849.

The coast trade was now, in Simpson's language, "tranquil." It was also substantial and profitable. In the early 1840s, the HBC's coast trade yielded up to 10,000 beaver and land otter (plus small furs) annually; nearly all of these returns came from the lisière, which in 1843, for instance, furnished 12,343 pelts worth some £8,000. These collections were particularly valuable in that they offset the decline in returns from the lower Columbia basin. The lisière's 1843 returns, for example, were equal to one-half of those of the lower Columbia and between one-sixth and one-fifth of those of the entire Columbia Department.

The Hudson's Bay Company gained, too, from the delivery and sale of supplies to Sitka. It did have to go to the trouble and expense of creating a subsidiary, the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, with farms at Nisqually and Cowlitz that produced more wool and hides than wheat and beef, but the former found a profitable market in Britain and sufficient of the latter was obtained from Fort Vancouver's farm and bartered from the Willamette Valley's settlers to meet the terms of the "Russian contract." The HBC paid the Willamette settlers in goods at the rate of three shillings per bushel of wheat, which it then sold to the Russians for about six shillings (including freight costs to Sitka); the resulting profit amounted to some £750 yearly. For British (mostly) and Russian manufactures, the HBC charged the Russians £13 per ton for delivery to Sitka on chartered vessels, which in turn charged the HBC only about one-third that freight rate; this profit equalled almost £4,000 in 1844. Altogether, the Hudson's Bay Company netted £1,805 in 1841 and £1,461 in 1842 on the 1839 agreement.

Contract Renewal

Thus, both the Russian-American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company benefited from the terms of the 1839 accord, but when it was renewed for another ten-year term, from June 1849 until mid-1859 (when the charters of both companies were due to expire), the terms were altered thanks to the rapidly changing political and economic geography of the Far West. For one thing, the provisionment clause was dropped because the British were no longer able to fulfill it. This inability stemmed from two new realities: the completion of the international boundary between British North America and the United States, and the California gold rush. In 1846 the Treaty of Washington put an end to the "joint occupation" of the Oregon Country by extending the international frontier along the 49th parallel from the Rockies to the Pacific via the Strait of Juan de Fuca. This impeded (by means of squatters and revenuers) the Hudson's Bay Company's use of most of its Columbian agricultural property, including its most productive farm at Fort Vancouver and both farms of the Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, as well as the Columbia routeway to its New Caledonia posts. The HBC was left with sizable farms at Forts Victoria and Langley only, and, in fact, they alone largely met the provisionment clause of the 1839 agreement in 1848 and 1849.

In 1848 gold was discovered at the mill of John Sutter, the same man who had bought Russian California seven years earlier (and who did not make his final payment until 1852, seven years overdue). Gold fever was caught by thousands, including Hudson's Bay Company servants and Willamette Valley settlers, who rushed to Sutter's Mill to make their fortune, leaving their Columbian farms to languish. Chief Factor James Douglas wrote to Governor Mikhail Teben'kov in 1849 that it would be "very difficult" for his company to provision Sitka at any price, since some two-thirds of the white settlers of the Oregon Country had abandoned their farmlands for California's gold fields. "Everything has been aban-
(in 1854, 1855 or 1856) to £1,500, the demand for land otters on the Chinese market at Kiakhta having fallen, thereby making the skins paid by the British less desirable to the Russians.

The "Russian contract"—the little that remained after the dropping of the provisionment and freight clauses and the lowering of the lisière's rent—was renewed four more times. In 1859 it was extended until the end of 1861, when the Russian-American Company's charter expired, on the condition that the Hudson's Bay Company engage in the trading of the lisière's furs only. Earlier, the Russians had granted exclusive rights to the trading of other products (principally ice) to San Francisco's American-Russian Commercial Company. That firm's competitor, the North West Ice Company, had in 1853 signed a six-year contract with the Hudson's Bay Company for the purchase of glacial ice from the lisière for $14,000 annually, which was nearly double the HBC's yearly rent of $7,200 (£1,500). This competition had lowered ice prices in California and consequently Russian profits on sales there.

When the Russian-American Company's charter was extended in June 1861 until June 1, 1863, so was the agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company; it was renewed again until June 1, 1865, and once again until June 1, 1867. When this last renewal was being discussed in 1865, the Russians offered either to lease the lisière again or even sell it to the Hudson's Bay Company, which chose to rent; if it had opted to buy, the length of British coastline would have almost doubled, and the Alaska boundary dispute at the end of the century would have been avoided. The HBC apparently saw little or no commercial value in the mainland panhandle, and its disinclination to purchase left only one feasible buyer for the colony—the United States.

Neutrality Pact

Meanwhile, the Russian-American and Hudson's Bay companies had signed another accord, strategic rather than commercial, that led indirectly to the Alaska cession. This was the neutrality pact at the time of the Crimean War between Russia and the allies Britain and France. This conflict represented the first serious military threat to Russia's sole overseas colony. Russia had been at odds with rival great powers earlier, of course, as in the rift with Britain in 1807 and the war with Napoleonic France in 1812, but at those times Russian Amer-
...by the early 1850s Russian America was much more self-reliant and much less dependent upon neighboring and competing countries...for its existence.

ica was not an attractive prize, being thinly colonized and weakly developed. By the middle of the century, however, it was a much ripper plum, containing more Russians and enjoying considerable seaborne trade (tea from Shanghai, ice to California, provisions to Kamchatka, salt from Hawaii), as well as whaling and regular round-the-world voyages. Moreover, the Russian-American Company simply could not afford adequate naval defenses, and the Russian navy was no match for the combined British-French fleet.

This glaring indefensibility of the colony (which was a key argument of advocates of its disposal) prompted the HBC and the Russian-American Company in early 1854 to agree to neutralization of colonial territory and shipping of both firms in the event of war, which erupted shortly thereafter with Britain and France (hostilities with Turkey had begun the previous year). France did not officially recognize the agreement but did honor it. The pact did not exempt shipping on the high seas or preclude a blockade of colonial ports, but during the war no Russian ships were taken and no blockade was mounted in Russian American waters. Sitka was intimidated when it was visited for two weeks in the summer of 1853 (that is, just before the formal declaration of war with Britain and France) by the 36-gun British frigate Trincomalee, but secure two years later when an Anglo-French squadron dropped anchor in Sitka Sound. The company’s only losses during the war were three vessels that were seized in 1854-55 on the nonneutral Asiatic coast of Siberia. During the war Russian America was supplied from California and Chile by the ships of neutral nations, although at greater expense; also, at least two company ships (the Alexander II and the Nakhimov) were operated in colonial waters under the American flag and with American crewmen. In 1854, 1857, and 1858, the colony was supplied by ships from Europe, and when Governor Stepan Voevodsky left in 1858 there were enough supplies on hand for one year.

Russia, as the weaker party, obviously had more need of the neutrality pact. Britain nevertheless favored the agreement so that Russia would not feel compelled to sell Russian America to the United States in order to preclude a British seizure; in other words, the Hudson’s Bay Company in effect accepted the agreement in return for a continuation of the liseître lease. Russia’s minister to Washington, Edouard de Stoeckl, noted that this British kindness, “this act of affability, which is so little in harmony with English egotism, had a secret reason behind it. A rumor was gaining currency at the time that we were preparing to sell our colonies to the United States; and it was in order to block such a sale that the British government gave its approval to the agreement between the two Companies.”

This, then, was the first time that the prospect of American acquisition of Russian American territory was officially acknowledged. Furthermore, the future price of the Alaska purchase was first mentioned at this time. While the neutrality pact was being negotiated, the governor of Russian America (through the company’s agent in San Francisco, Peter Kostromitinov) arranged a fictitious sale of the colony to the American-Russian Commercial Company for three years (May 1, 1854-May 1, 1857) for $7 million in order to forestall a British seizure in case of war.

Stoeckl devised another plan to issue licenses to Russian privateers to enable them to operate out of San Francisco against British and French merchants in the Pacific in the event of hostilities. Both of these schemes were aborted by the signing of the neutrality pact, but they reflected the extent of American sympathy for Russia and raised the possibility of a sale of Russian America to the United States.

A Stronger Russian America

Thus, by the early 1850s Russian America was much more self-reliant and much less dependent upon neighboring and competing countries, colonies, and companies for its existence. It had come a very long way since the turn of the century, when the colonial capital itself had to be retaken from the Tlingit Indians, the tsar’s imperial chamberlain had to rescue the colony from starvation by sailing to San Francisco to plead for Spanish provisions, and the promysleniki had to partner rather than contest rival American coasters. The Russian-American Company had achieved this feat by enlisting more and more government support in the form of able naval officers as colonial governors (e.g., Ferdinand P. von Wrangell, Adolf Etholen, and Mikhail Teben’kov) and ship captains and also by diversifying the colony’s economy. Meanwhile, the Hudson’s Bay Company was being impaired by political compromise and changing fashion.

That Russian America, albeit remote and exposed, was able to weather the Crimean tempest attests to its remarkably strengthened position. Its robust state serves to remind us that it was not ceded to the United States in 1867 because it was no longer economically viable; political and strategic factors motivated St. Petersburg to dispose of a quite healthy colony.

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This picture postcard depicts one of the most spectacular and hair-raising events of the Ellensburg Rodeo—the stagecoach race.

The Ellensburg Rodeo is steeped in traditions, but they are somewhat different from what one might think. The word rodeo usually conjures up images of the wild West, and the rugged individualism and independence that supposedly went hand in hand with life on the cattle ranching frontier. While there no doubt was and is ample supply of such individualism in the rodeo arena, it took the exact opposite quality actually to organize and stage rodeo events. The men and women who founded the Ellensburg Rodeo in 1923 were modern, community-minded citizens working in a group effort of huge proportions. They were motivated not only by a desire to celebrate a vanishing way of life, but also by a modern entrepreneurial drive to promote their community and generate commerce. From their efforts Washington's world-famous rodeo was born.

Rodeo is a relatively young sport. They emerged during the last quarter of the nineteenth century just as the “Cattle Kingdom” had reached its summit and the West was becoming a more settled region. The first rodeos were impromptu amateur affairs held in conjunction with the annual roundups in cattle country. Having gathered together their herds for branding and sorting, cowboys often used the occasion to exhibit to one another their skills in riding, roping and bulldogging. Competitions sprung up naturally among top hands as their fellow cowboys looked on.

But when non-cowboy spectators began to appear on the scene, these simple ranch rodeos began to make the transition that would eventually take them into town and into the world of modern rodeo. The newly emerging townsmen of the post-frontier West possessed a huge appetite for nostalgic re-creations of the “Wild West” in dime novels and Zane Grey Westerns, and in the rodeo arena. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Westerners flocked by the tens of thousands to enjoy the new sport of rodeo.

Ellensburg lay in the heart of a thriving cattle region. Thousands of cattle and horses grazed the rich meadows and semi-arid plains of the early Kittitas Valley. The roundups that characterized cattle country were commonplace among the Kittitas cowboys. So, too, were the impromptu competitions and rodeos that had emerged elsewhere. By the early 1920s, Kittitas Valley cowboys had taken the process one step beyond the strictly amateur category. At least two ranches in the valley were staging regular contests or, as the locals called them, “Sunday rodeos.”

Clovis Chartrand, a long-time valley resident, remembered one of these Sunday rodeos at the “upper river bridge, which is where the Thorp bridge is now, west of Ellensburg.” Ben Ferguson, a Kittitas Valley cowhand and rodeo competitor, described his family’s promotion of another Sunday rodeo: “[W]e had all them horses and my brother and a couple of friends put on a rodeo.... My brother, he just wanted to have some fun. Just got a neighbor boy or two up here, went out and rounded them [cattle and horses] up. They got a wagon load of poles and made the corral and made the arena [and] chutes.” During the early 1920s the Fergusons were staging rodeos “every other Sunday.” It was not unusual for 100 to 300 spectators to attend.

The economic potential of all this activity did not go unnoticed. Ferguson remembered that several townsmen saw “that we was having a big time” and began to discuss the possibility of staging a rodeo in the Ellensburg city limits. Sometime around 1922 a group evidently came to ask the Ferguson brothers to assist in the staging of the first Ellensburg Rodeo: “They [the

How the Ellensburg Rodeo was Born

By Michael Allen

"LET'er BUCK!"
Actually, two groups combined with local cowboys to promote the creation of the Ellensburg Rodeo. The Kittitas County Fair Board, which included townspeople and rural citizens alike, proposed the inclusion of a rodeo in the venue of the Kittitas County Fair, held annually in the early fall. A rodeo, they reasoned, would enhance the quality of the fair and increase attendance. Local businessmen and professionals were quick to jump on the rodeo bandwagon. A rodeo would draw out-of-town visitors to Ellensburg, generating tourist revenue and promoting the community's business prospects and prestige in the region.

These rodeo boosters immediately faced a huge obstacle: they needed a great deal of money to buy land for the grounds, construct an arena and stage the proposed three-day event. At the urging of newspaper editor Clifford Kaynor, businessman Clarence Fitterer and several others, the Kittitas County Commissioners started the ball rolling on April 1, 1923, budgeting $10,000 for the purchase of 18 acres adjacent to the fairgrounds in northeast Ellensburg. Since the land cost $6,450, the balance would be used to construct the arena and bleachers. Still, this was not nearly enough money to pay for the lumber, tools, horse teams and huge labor force necessary to construct the grounds. In a bold move, the Fair Board called upon valley residents to donate materials and labor for the construction of the rodeo grounds, and they set Thursday, June 14, as the date of a "field day" to build the new arena.

Communal work projects like the Ellensburg Rodeo field day are just as much a legacy of Western heritage as the pioneers' purported individualism and independent spirit. Barn raisings, corn husking parties, quilting bees and cattle roundups all exemplified the communal nature of Western America. Ellensburg's field day was actually a series of work days held in June of 1923. However, the work reached a crescendo on June 14 when over 500 valley men and women turned out to work on the grounds.

The Ellensburg Evening Record served as the voice of the field day organizers. On Monday, June 11, the Record previewed the official plan: "Every Man Urged to Report to his Strawboss at 7:30 Thursday Morning—All Superintendents and Foremen Have Been Over Job and Know Work to Be Done—Men Unassigned Should Bring Picks and Shovels." In a Tuesday article entitled "Women of the Valley and Town Respond" the Record discussed the "Feed" local women had planned for Thursday noon: coffee, "weenies on buns," ice cream and other morsels had been donated by local merchants and would be prepared and served by women on the grounds building site. Another Tuesday article stated optimistically that "Movie Men May Come to Field Day" and noted that one moviemaker supposedly wanted to film a "good slow action comedy of some banker or lawyer in the pick and shovel brigade."

Scores of men worked on the grounds for days prior to June 14. Cowboy Howard Thomas remembered, "I was riding for Cooke's...on Parke Creek...." Can you spare me for a few days to work on the Rodeo," I asked Mr. Cooke. He said 'I can give you a week.' So I brought four horses, plows, and a spring tooth harrow, and a scraper. I drove them in town..... When it was light enough to see I was going to the grounds and when it was too dark to see I was coming home.

Five hundred men with over two hundred horses assembled on Thursday and set to work. They graded a road, a racetrack and the grounds, rerouted Wilson Creek around the site, built corrals, fences, three bridges and a grandstand, plumbed new water mains, dug ditches and pruned trees. Their accomplishments were, as the Record's headlines shouted, amazing: "COMMUNITY EFFORT IS SUCCESSFUL. Business Men, Farmers Work on Fair Grounds."

These young Indian women comprised the Rodeo royal court of 1929. "Queen" Helen Nason (center) is descended from Kittitas Valley Indians; the Princess on the right is her younger sister Minnie. Minnie and the girls' mother still reside in Ellensburg.
This 1929 action shot shows local cowboy Wynn Vickerman in flight from a bucking bronc. Mr. Vickerman still resides in Kittitas County.

Sight of Toilers Working in Common Cause Inspiring." After several hundred men stayed over to work on Friday, the *Record*’s headlines concluded that "Cooperative Work Has Astonishing Results." The rodeo arena was ready to go.

Kittitas County Fair Board members, businessmen and rodeo enthusiasts spent the remainder of the summer planning the first Ellensburg Rodeo. Dr. H. F. Pfenning served as "superintendent" for a three-day show that was slated for September 13-15. Pfenning and his committee began by inviting the entire Yakima Indian nation to attend and participate in the rodeo. Then they scheduled 18 major events and advertised the rodeo as the "greatest Wildwest Roundup in the State." By early September Kittitas Valley residents waited anxiously to see if the upcoming rodeo would be the great success for which its creators hoped.

Howard Thomas, who helped organize and competed in over ten Ellensburg rodeos, remembered that first rodeo as "a good one." Mrs. Lillian Pope noted, "You knew pretty near everybody that was riding in it...it really made a difference [because] it was really more of a local show." Chalmer Cobain described the contestants as "regular cowboys. They wasn’t these drugstore cowboys or these fellas that don’t do nothing but just follow rodeos. They was real cowboys and they would ride and have wild horse races, stagecoach races, [and] chariot races."

In addition to the events Cobain remembered, there were grand entry parades, bucking bronses and bulls, calf roping, relay races, bulldogging and special races for Indian contestants. The *Record* reported that the "Riders are Skillful and Horses and Steers are Wild." More importantly, the *Record* noted that well over 500 rodeo fans had been turned away and that "Hundreds Are In Overflow Crowd; Grandstand Filled:"

The crowd overflowed the 200 additional seats put in... lined the roadway down the hill, covered the corral and rodeo fences in every direction, and on the steep side hill and in approximately 50 cars on top of the hill.

Despite a few problems caused by the large crowds, most in attendance reportedly "yelled and cheered and thoroughly enjoyed Ellensburg’s first real rodeo." Local cowboy Frank Woods was named "Champion Buckaroo of the Roundup" at the conclusion of Saturday’s show. The *Record* applauded Dr. Pfenning and the fair board and "the hard work of the men responsible for its success." On Sunday the stock was driven home, cowboys packed up their gear, the Indians rode back to the Yakima Reservation, and local businessmen counted their generous receipts. Everyone looked forward to the next year’s rodeo.

It is interesting to speculate on the motivations of the Ellensburg Rodeo’s founders. While it is no doubt partially true to say that Ellensburgers staged a rodeo as a spontaneous celebration of their frontier lifestyle, this is not an entirely accurate picture. The Ellensburg Rodeo was far more commercial than a ranch rodeo or even a "Sunday rodeo," and it was not a direct, natural offshoot of the pioneer lifestyle, for in 1923 there was no such lifestyle. The Kittitas Valley frontier had vanished over two generations earlier. Interestingly, the desire to stage a rodeo can be attributed partially to nostalgia. This was a nostalgia felt by townsmen and many valley residents for a pioneer way of life that was already foreign to their world of automobiles, airplanes, moving picture shows and radio broadcasts.

Indeed, it is the modern, Chamber-of-Commerce-type boosterism and promotion that overshadows the frontier characteristics of Ellensburg’s first rodeo. Townsmen, businessmen and professional men, most of whom spent precious little of their time bucking hay or riding horseback, were in the forefront of the rodeo movement. They were joined by local cattlemen and farmers, but all looked upon the event as a grand way to foster business and promote their community around the Northwest.

Of course, memories of the frontier still lingered, and in at least one important way the people of the Kittitas Valley relied upon their frontier heritage to create their rodeo. Volunteerism—the community spirit of the pioneer days—provided the base upon which the Ellensburg Rodeo was built. Without communal labor the cries of “Let ‘er Buck!” may never have resounded through Ellensburg’s splendid new rodeo arena.

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Picnicking on the beach during the summer of 1990 could mean parking the Winnebago and hooking up to all the conveniences of modern living. No need to miss a favorite TV show or kindle a fire to roast the hotdogs and marshmallows.

A day in the wilderness nearly a hundred years ago provided none of these amenities. Yet, looking at this idyllic scene, photographed at Arcadia in August 1895, one wonders if we haven't somehow lost the art of the picnic. It appears as if the ladies have just finished afternoon tea. The teacups, plates and an arrangement of greenery and driftwood grace the fern-draped table. The ladies relax in their finery in rocking chairs while one prepares to play her guitar for the others. A more tranquil escape from the routines of everyday life cannot be imagined.

Arcadia is located on a point at the south entrance to Hammersley Inlet in southeast Mason County near Shelton.
When B. L. Lambuth offered this colorful invocation of Longview in 1926, the “model city” was four years old and thriving. It had already attracted substantial attention among planners and engineers with articles in professional periodicals such as American City, Parks and Recreation, Proceedings of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Architect and Engineer, as well as British and Canadian planning journals. The public was simultaneously being introduced to Longview through an advertising campaign in the Literary Digest, Saturday Evening Post, and regional periodicals. A typical full-page spread proclaimed the remarkable location, climate and opportunities in the new industrial city of the Pacific Northwest. It was beautiful, permanent, clean, moral, growing, thriving. It offered “genuine opportunity to persons who seek a place for industry, who seek property investment, who seek an ideal place in which to live.”

In conception and location, Longview was a byproduct of the changing regional structure of the wood products industry. The Long-Bell Lumber Company of Kansas City had grown by cutting and marketing southern pine lumber. By the end of World War I it was clear that good timber was growing scarce in the South but was still abundant in old growth stands in the Pacific Northwest. In 1918 and 1919, Long-Bell responded by purchasing tens of thousands of acres of forest land in northern California, southern Oregon, and especially in southwestern Washington, where the company bought 70,000 acres in Lewis and Cowlitz counties from the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company. Wesley Vandercook, the company’s chief engineer, studied Astoria, Portland and the confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers as sites for a mill and shipping facilities. Early in 1921 the company acquired the Cowlitz site. Its advantages included rail access, proximity to the timber stands, and deep water for overseas shipments.

Working backwards, company chairman R. A. Long realized that a successful mill operation employing several thousand workers would generate and require a substantial town. Early in 1922 he purchased not only the mill site but also the rest of the valley: a total of 14,000 acres. His decision was to develop his own “industrial city” to house his workers and to take advantage of expected regional growth with the expansion of lumbering and related businesses on the lower Columbia. In one sense, his intention was preemptive and protective, to prevent haphazard and undesirable development near his mill. At the same time, the erection of a new city offered Long the chance to fulfill what he clearly saw as a personal duty to match business success with civic accomplishment.

For specific plans, Long drew on an informal “Kansas City school” of urban planning that had developed in the prairie metropolis. The dominant figure was Jesse C. Nichols, a highly successful real estate developer who had made his Country Club district of Kansas City a national showcase for good urban design. As a friend of R. A. Long, Nichols visited the Cowlitz River site in 1922 and offered basic advice on planning layout and regulation. Also involved was George Kessler, the designer of Kansas City’s nationally known park system and con-

This promotional brochure cover depicts Longview as an idyllic suburban community with lawns and trees in verdant abundance.
After one year of development, middle class Longview residents lived west of Jefferson Square while working class families clustered in the Highlands and St. Helens districts closer to the mill. The map is taken from the program of the Pageant of Progress held in the summer of 1924.

The influence of Kessler was probably apparent in the integrated park system of the new city. The six-acre civic center provided both a physical and symbolic focal point, as well as a buffer between the business and residential zones. Dredging turned swampy Fowler’s Slough into the interconnected pools of Lake Sacajawea. The two million cubic yards of earth pumped out of the slough were used to fill and grade residential districts. West of the town site, 400-foot Mount Solo was preserved as regional open space with hiking and riding trails.

Also like Nichols’ developments, Longview was “zoned” by the use of restrictive covenants in subdivision dedications and deeds. Land use zoning as a popular tool for public regulation of development was an innovation that dated only from the adoption of a comprehensive zoning code in New York in 1916. In new developments that did not yet have a municipal government, private use of restrictive covenants allowed a developer to guarantee the same stability in the pattern of land uses. In addition, the state of Washington had not yet adopted legislation to allow smaller municipalities to zone themselves. The planners therefore divided Longview into a number of distinct districts with different limitations on the size, value, type and use of all buildings within the district. There was a retail district, a wholesale district, a light industrial district, a small apartment district west of the civic center, an expensive “West Side” neighborhood (where houses had to have a minimum value of $3,000), and the more modest St. Helens neighborhood (minimum $1,000), the working class Highlands neighborhood near the mill, and the Olympic neighborhood west of Lake Sacajawea (where the minimum price of houses dropped with distance from the lake). The Longview Company reserved the right of approval for house styles, fences and grading. The restrictions ran for 20 years (to 1943 or 1944) with provision for automatic extension.

The plan of Longview was “state of the art” as it was understood in 1922 and 1923.
Development of the central business district was also carefully managed, with Commerce Street designated as the main business thoroughfare. As the first major business structure, the company-oriented Columbia River Mercantile anchored the downtown. Architects carefully designed other business buildings to provide retail space on the first floor, office space on the second floor for Commerce Street and corner properties, and high-class apartments on the second floor along the secondary business streets. Buildings that were surfaced with gleaming terra cotta cost a few hundred dollars extra to erect but returned several thousand more on resale.

The final characteristic that links Longview to the Nichols approach is its ambitious scale. With the approval of R. A. Long, Kessler and Hare designed a major city rather than a mill town. The amount of residential land and the size of the commercial district were scaled for a community of approximately 50,000 people. The plan gave Longview a framework to grow into. Rather than spreading outward from a single center, with resulting inefficiency and waste from a continual building and rebuilding of close-in districts, Longview grew "inward" or "together" from its several different nuclei. A map of 1926 shows seven distinct clusters of development separated by open land—retail district, mill, railroad district, St. Helens, West Side, Olympic, and Columbia Valley Gardens neighborhoods. As the city neared its goal of 50,000 population by 1930, the districts were expected to fill out and touch one another, and complete the city plan.

Longview was not a utopia intended to promise a distinct way of life for a select circle of believers. Nor was it a company town where the major employer retained direct control over the lives of employees as landlord, storekeeper and police force. Instead, Longview was squarely within the American mainstream as an up-to-date example of the "open community." It was built for growth and intended to accommodate all comers who could pay the asking price, either for residential property or for industrial sites. As R. A. Long put it in 1928 in his address at the dedication of Long High School, it was "a city open to all—a city free from the domination of any interests—a city where all legitimate entrepreneurs would be welcome—a city designed along the most modern lines—a city that would profit by the mistakes of other cities—a city that would be clean and beautiful."

In practical terms, Long's ambitions translated into two more specific goals. First, the town was intended to support

For many years, the Monticello Hotel was the focal point for community social life.
the company by attracting high quality, family-oriented workers. The aim was the same as in Lowell, Massachusetts, in the 1830s or Pullman, Illinois, in the 1880s, but without the undemocratic element of social control and compulsion. Second, the town was to generate money as a real estate development. The steps taken by the company in the early 1920s—building the 200-room Hotel Monticello as one of the first major structures, helping to start up a newspaper, promoting the town through advertising—were the same as those taken by city boosters in Chicago or Denver two and three generations earlier. To meet these goals, Longview had to match the values of the American middle class in the 1920s—businesslike, pleasant and socially conservative.

The development of Longview was in the hands of the Long-Bell Company and its employees. Grading for the first streets started in August 1922. Wesley Vandercook supervised the construction of 14 miles of dikes to protect the low-lying site from floods. Many of the construction workers were housed in temporary two-room buildings brought in on skids. The first permanent housing was also built close to the mills to meet the needs of workmen, including both a dormitory and 250 small bungalows in the St. Helens and Highlands districts that were financed by the Longview Company. The first lot sold in February 1923, and dedication ceremonies for the town took place on July 23 when the hotel opened for business.

From that point on, the growth of Longview is really two stories. The continued planning and development of the real estate enterprise can be traced in the correspondence and records of the Long-Bell and Longview companies in the Longview Public Library and in Kansas City. The growth of Longview as an American community can be followed in its newspaper and in the records of the Longview Chamber of Commerce at the Cowlitz County Historical Museum.

The continued promotion of the town was very much R. A. Long's personal enterprise. Company correspondence reveals a continuing concern by its treasurer and other executives in Kansas City about the cost of the development, with repeated suggestions to sell off raw land rather than developed land to generate a stronger cash flow. The managers on the scene, in contrast, agreed that a high-class development had large up-front costs for roads, utilities and land preparation but argued that the return on investment would be
much higher in the long run. Long used his own influence and money to support public amenities. Over several years in the latter 1920s he paid directly for landscaping Broadway and Lake Sacajawea, for street trees, the public library, and the city high school. Accounts estimate that he put roughly $1 million of his personal funds directly into the city.

Community development followed a pattern much like that in other American cities in the 1920s. Longview was incorporated as a municipality in February 1924, with its residents assuming responsibility for the standard range of city services. When the town staged its Pageant of Progress July 31 through August 2, 1924, to celebrate "the opening of the giant manufacturing plant of the Long Bell Lumber Company...and the first anniversary of the new city," the order of march for the parade gave some idea of the evolution of the community. There were floats or decorated automobiles from merchants, auto dealers, banks, civic clubs, and fraternal and social organizations.

The Longview Chamber of Commerce vigorously promoted the continued growth of the city. Its efforts at industrial recruitment supplemented those of the company, and it added a special interest in tourism. Indeed, Longview in the 1920s was proclaimed a tourist mecca of the Northwest, midway between majestic Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens and the grandeur of the Pacific Ocean. Completion of the bridge across the Columbia in 1930 placed the city on the direct route from Puget Sound to Portland or the Oregon coast.

An exception to Longview as an ideal community was its casual institutionalization of racism. As in most other cities of the 1920s, Longview's restrictive covenants limited residence to "persons of the white race." The only omission was several blocks east of the business district, half a mile from other residential areas.

We can test both the achievements and problems of the mid-1920s with contrasting descriptions by visiting journalists. Writing in Forbes in 1924, Agnes Laut offered a rave review. Expecting to visit a frantic and slightly sleazy boom town, she found herself instead in something closer to an ideal. She stressed Longview as an experiment in enlightened self-interest and praised the boulevarded, flowered and tree-lined Broadway as the rival of Fifth Avenue or Riverside Drive in New York for beauty and magnificence. Geddes Smith, in contrast, looked at the same magnificent distances with considerable skepticism. Writing in The Survey in 1927, he noted the survival of the "temporary" worker housing of Skidville and other low-quality housing as an anomalous note in a model city. He found the city hard to find among the empty blocks around the railroad station and civic center.

I began to wonder about preplanning of this sort when I walked or was driven over blocks and blocks of paved but empty streets in Longview. Here stood the hotel, far from the railroad. There beside it, the public library, far from most of its readers. At the center of town, the shops, far from the customers.

Like much of the rest of the United States, Longview took a long time-out during the Great Depression. With the city's population passing 10,000 at the end of the 1920s (far short of the original 30,000 goal), local boosters confidently predicted a population of more than 20,000 by 1940. In point of fact, the total was only 12,385. The Long-Bell Company, which had put $9 million into the town site and more than $40 million into its mills, drainage and logging operations during the booming 1920s, was forced into retrenchment and reorganization by the Depression. It returned to profitability only in the 1950s (a few years before the merger into International Paper). Robert A. Long died in 1935.

The depression years also brought an additional phase in Longview's career as an experiment of city planning. One of the curious products of the New Deal was the "subsistence homesteads" program, established in 1933 by the National Industrial Recovery Act "to provide for aiding in the redistribution of the overbalance of population in industrial centers." The program combined a depression-era concern with urban unemployment, in the fervent belief in the moral superiority of going "back to the land." During 1934 and 1935, the Subsistence Homesteads Division in the Department of the Interior began to build several thousand homes in four types of communities: 1) for stranded industrial workers, 2) for farming combined with part-time decentralized industry, 3) for stranded farm populations, and 4) for industrial workers on the edge of existing industrial cities (farmettes).

Longview was chosen as the site for a community of the latter type. The federal government paid the Longview Company $28,500 for 141 acres in the Columbia Valley Gardens area, a district on the west edge of the city that the original plan had set aside for precisely such semi-subsistence housing. The Subsistence Homesteads Division (later...
subsumed under the Resettlement Administration and Farm Security Administration) built 60 houses of four, five or six rooms on approximately two acres each. A garage and an outbuilding on skids were also provided with the intention that occupants keep a cow and chickens as well as gardens. The initial families were selected from 450 applicants and moved in on October 27, 1935. All of them were local residents with employment in the Longview/Kelso area. Most were in debt or had no assets, and earned an average annual salary of $1,059. Members of the new community formed a nonprofit association and bought the project from the federal government for $174,900 to be paid over 40 years. The members in turn bought their homesteads from the association over the same time period. Compared to many of the projects elsewhere around the United States, the Longview homesteads were built with no local opposition and few problems. Rex Willard, regional director of the Resettlement Administration, commented that Longview was one of the best models for the nation, an “ideal laboratory social test for this type of thing in the entire United States.”

Not until a new Northwest resource boom arrived with hydroelectric power and war production around 1940 did Longview begin to grow. The construction of a Reynolds Metals Company aluminum plant in 1941 helped to diversify the town’s economy. War production demands also boosted the wood products industry. When the city celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1949 (one year late because of the Columbia River floods of 1948), the population had reached 20,000, to be followed by slower but steady growth in ensuing decades.

Perhaps in reaction to the self-satisfaction of its developers, recent architectural and design critics have tended to be somewhat negative in their evaluation of Longview. David Streatfield of the University of Washington has commented on the town’s “old-fashioned” formality of design as a relic of an earlier era of planning thought. Architectural historian Roger Montgomery has called it both “overdesigned and underdeveloped.” Steve Dotterrer has agreed that the plan provided amenities for Longview residents but that it lacked an understanding of the social and economic forces that were to push the city in directions unforeseen and unaccommodated by the plan.

To an outside observer, however, it appears that Longview has entered the last decade of the century with its original plan largely intact and functional. Population within the city reached 23,349 by 1960, 28,373 by 1970, and 31,052 by 1980, with another 9,830 in the adjacent urbanized area west of the Cowlitz River and 14,080 in Kelso and its environs east of the Cowlitz. The urbanized area has thus reached the population total anticipated by Longview’s builders, but finds it spread over unanticipated distances by multi-automobile households.

This postwar population growth has been adequate to support housing that has filled most of the gaps that so bothered Geddes Smith. Longview’s greatest design disappointment is shared with cities like Washington and Cincinnati that are 20 or 50 times its size, for the decline of rail travel and the demolition of the depot in the 1960s left Broadway as a ceremonial street without a ceremonial function. Automobile-oriented strip development has certainly altered the balance of retail activities but has not destroyed the proto-urban core. In the center of the city, however, recent reinvestment has brought some new life to the business district. R. A. Long Park (Jefferson Square) remains a focal point for city-wide or area-wide civic institutions such as the library, city hall and community college. The old neighborhoods, especially West Side and St. Helens, retain their original identities and still support something like the community that R. A. Long hoped for.

EDITOR’S NOTE
An earlier version of this essay was prepared for the scripting of the Cowlitz County Historical Museum’s new survey exhibit, and it is re-printed herein with their permission.

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Jefferson Square and the Monticello Hotel (opened in 1923) divided the city’s business district to the east from its up-scale West Side neighborhood.

...Longview has entered the last decade of the century with its original plan largely intact...
In 1792, when Captain George Vancouver sailed and charted the verdant western shorelines of what is now the state of Washington, the sciences of anthropology and ethnology were developed hardly at all in any systematic fashion. It remained for the later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scientists with their calipers, excavating tools and interminable notebooks.

A popular concept of the late eighteenth century was that of the "noble savage." This was conceived, however, by stay-at-home philosophers in their cozy, book-lined studies rather than by the more rough-and-ready types actually out in the field exploring, mapping, bartering with Native people they encountered—occasionally fending off sudden, unpredictable hostile attacks or becoming sacrificial victims of clashes between divergent cultures. This happened to Captain James Cook, Vancouver's commanding officer on an earlier expedition in Hawaii. A few years before, in 1775, Spaniards under Bruno de Hezeta painfully discovered this while attempting to replenish their water supplies at a point which Quinault oral tradition places near Moclips. They were unaware that this was a sacred place connected with the coming into womanhood of female members of the tribe, promising death to those who profaned it. Semi-legendary narratives of this episode have passed down to present tribesmen, made more relevant because of later deception and oppression practiced by those considering themselves of the "superior" race.

For such reasons, the Vancouver Expedition proceeded in a cautious but outwardly friendly manner in their meetings with the Native inhabitants. Aside from one or two minor crises, a rapport was established that aided later Britishers who arrived to trade and set up posts reaching from the Columbia to Russian America.

Traveling on a sea past a vast forest, broken by pleasant meadows reminiscent of the English countryside, and backed by towering mountains, these explorers envisioned a land which would soon become populated (by their British compatriots) and prosperous.

Those westward-bound land-hungry Americans who began arriving in the 1840s did not initially fare as well as the "King George" men who maintained consistent policies not in conflict with the strong Native belief that the earth could belong to no individual and must be conserved far into the future.

Some contemporary scholars have wryly commented that only anthropologists and children (of various ages) retain an interest in American Indians, and that serious historians neglected or skimmed over this extensive subject. Others have deplored the role of Natives as only bit players in the historical drama of Euro-American culture, this perhaps enforced by early accounts which tended to treat the indigenous population as merely another feature of the wilderness landscape, along with terrain, weather and wild beasts.

In recent years there has been a more conscious striving toward an equitable balance, as evidenced by numerous studies of the historic role of the Indians, some researched and written by Native Americans themselves.
"...some of the inhabitants found no difficulty in visiting us; this they did in a very civil, orderly and friendly manner..."

Original Sources are Scattered Widely

The basic source material on Vancouver in the Northwest is the three-volume official account, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific and Round the World* (London, 1798), with an atlas of maps and engraved plates; plus the voluminous writing of Hubert Howe Bancroft; and Professor Edmond Meany's book, *Vancouver's Discovery of Puget Sound*, largely based on the original *Voyage*, with additional notations on the explorers themselves and prominent British figures for whom many of our geographic features were named. Meany also edited an unauthorized journal kept by an unnamed crew member of the *Chatham*, discovered in New Zealand in the early 1900s. Robert B. Whitebrook checked and listed Vancouver's Puget Sound anchorages, and Bern Anderson has edited the journal of Captain Peter Puget, the original of which is in the London Public Record Office. Notes of the expedition's botanist, Archibald Menzies, were published in Victoria, B.C., in 1923. Dr. Ema Gunther made extensive studies of the artifacts collected, most now in European museums. More recently, local authors Murray Morgan and Robert Wing have included the Vancouver explorations in their books *Puget's Sound* (1979) and *Peter Puget* (1979), respectively.

Other references continue to crop up in rather unexpected places, such as a century-old volume entitled *Zig-Zag Journeys in the Great Northwest* by Hezekiah Butterworth, illustrated with some fanciful woodcuts of Vancouver on Puget Sound.

An Abbreviated Chronology

On March 16, 1792, the *Discovery* and the *Chatham* left the Sandwich Islands, sailing eastward. The *Discovery* was a sloop-of-war, 100 feet, with a crew of about 100; the *Chatham*, slightly smaller. The coast of New Albion, just below Cape Mendocino, was sighted on April 17. On the 27th an inlet (named Deception Bay by Meares) appeared. On the 29th they met Captain Robert Gray at sea, and on the 30th entered the famed Strait of Juan de Fuca, following its south shore to a point they named New Dungeness; then on to Port Discovery, where the ships lay over for refitting and exploratory trips.

On May 18 both ships sailed southward, the *Discovery* taking the eastern branch of the inland waterway, the *Chatham* the western. Port Orchard, Vashon Island and other points received names. Puget and some others were sent on a seven-day exploration of the southermost waters, later to be designated as Puget's Sound. They returned to the *Discovery* at two in the morning, May 27. On Sunday, June 3, all hands were given a well-deserved day of rest; and on Monday, birthday of King George III, Vancouver formally took possession for the British of the lands discovered, the inland waters and the outer coast to 39°20' north latitude. They were in present-day British Columbia waters off Point Grey by June 13, and continued northward through July and on into August. On August 28 Vancouver's ships anchored at Nootka for important meetings with the Spanish lasting about a month.

Encounters with the Indian Inhabitants

While villages and canoes were sighted along the Washington coast, the first direct contact was made after entering the Strait of Juan de Fuca with the people of Classet, the Makah Tribe. Vancouver recognized these as resembling and being related to the Nootka of Vancouver Island. Their territory was along the coast south of Cape Flattery (to Ozette) and along the southern coast of the strait to the Hoko River.

The journal states: "...some of the inhabitants found no difficulty in visiting us; this they did in a very civil, orderly and friendly manner, requesting permission before attempting to enter the ship; and on receiving some presents, with assurances of our friendship... very politely and earnestly solicited us to stop at their village." Vancouver declined, mainly because the anchorage was too exposed. He states: "The few Natives who came off resembled in most respects the people of Nootka. Their persons, garments and behavior are very similar; some difference was observed in their ornaments, particularly those worn at the nose... instead of the crescent..."
Engraving, Port Townsend, showing the Native inhabitants' mysterious poles, which remained inexplicable to the explorers until it was confirmed years later that they were supports for nets to snare low-flying waterfowl.

worn at Nookta, these were straight pieces of bone. Their canoes, arms and implements were exactly the same. It is mentioned that the language was also the same, but they did not approach whites with a similar degree of formality as the Cook Expedition had found, probably because they had over the intervening years become more familiar with strangers.

The explorers passed some permanent villages with wooden plank houses similar to those of the Nootka, but in their first actual contact with Coastal Salish Indians at the New Dungeness anchorage they saw temporary summer habitations, "...being composed of nothing more than a few mats [probably of cattail rushes] thrown over cross sticks.... The inhabitants seemed to view us with the utmost indifference and unconcern; they continued to fish before their huts as regardless of our being present as if such vessels had been familiar to them, and unworthy of their attention."

The Coast Salish tribes occupied territory Vancouver's groups would be exploring over the next two months, and were linked by language into two divisions—the coastal, including Clallam, Twana, southeast Vancouver Island and Strait of Georgia; and the Nisqually dialect group, to which almost all the Puget Sound Indians belonged.

It was here that the party encountered structures which mystified them and which are depicted in two of the engravings from sketches made on the spot. "On the low land...erected perpendicularly, and seemingly with much regularity, a number of very tall straight poles, like flagstaves or beacons, supported from the ground by spurs...." At first it was thought these might be used for drying fish, but seemed too high and far apart. Whether their purpose was of "a religious, civil or military nature, must be left to some future investigation." Later Indian informants have confirmed that these were erected on the flyways of waterfowl, with nets stretched across in season, to snare the birds as they came in for a landing.

At Discovery Bay two or three canoes of Indians brought fish and venison for sale, the latter being especially welcome since the crew had little luck in their own hunting efforts.

The similarity to the people of Nootka is again remarked: "though less bedaubed with paint and less filthy in their external appearance. They wore ornaments in their ears but none were observed in their noses...they were clothed in the skins of deer, bear and some other animals, but principally in a woolen garment of their own manufacture, extremely well wrought." This was undoubtably a mixture of mountain goat and dog wool, as Clallam territory was more or less the center for weaving cloaks or blankets of these yarns.

"What was very extraordinary, they offered for sale two children, each about six or seven years of age, and being shown some copper, were very anxious that the bargain should be closed." Vancouver prohibited this trade, showing his strong disapproval. It is possible that these were captive slave children. The Spanish recorded that several were purchased and taken to Mexico in the belief they were being rescued from either slavery or cannibalism. The Northwest Indian institution of slavery continued into the mid-nineteenth century when it was prohibited by numerous treaties.

Another instance of customs deplored by the whites was the beheading of captives taken in war, and displaying of the heads in front of the villages as trophies of war. An instance in present Port Townsend is described thus:

We found...two upright poles set in the ground, about fifteen feet high, and rudely carved. On the top of each was a human head, recently placed there. The hair and flesh were nearly perfect and the heads appeared to carry the evidence of fury or revenge, as in driving the stakes through the throat to the cranium, the sagittal, with part of the scalp, was borne on their points some inches above the rest of the skull.

Between the stakes a fire had been made, and near it some calcined bones were observed. It is ironic that at the time this grisly discovery was made, heads of criminals executed in civilized London were displayed in similar fashion.

Puget was not too favorably impressed with these people, who must have been Chimacums, the only non-Salish-speaking people encountered on Puget Sound. They were constantly warring with the Salish and suffered considerable oppression from their lesser numbers. According to Puget:
The people in their persons were low and ill made, with broad faces and small eyes. Their foreheads appear to be deformed or out of shape comparatively speaking with those of Europeans. The head has something of a conical shape. They wear the hair long with quantities of red ochre intermixed with whale oil or some other greasy substance that has a disagreeable smell. Only one man had a thick beard, the others wore a small tuft of hair on the point of the chin and on the upper lip like mustaches; on other parts of the body they suffered Nature to have its course, which was as well supplied in the common run of men except the breast, which was totally destitute of hair. Square pieces of ear shells [probably abalone] were hung to small perforations in the ears with small rolls of copper. Necklaces of the same materials as the latter were used, also around the ankles and wrists. Their garments consisted of the skin of an animal tied at the two corners over one shoulder, the upper edge coming under the opposite arm, by which both hands were free. The rest of the body was perfectly naked. They had no other arms than bows and arrows pointed with barbed flints, and long spears in their canoes. These consisted only of a log hollowed out, sharp at both ends and tolerably well constructed for paddling. The paddles were short and pointed at the ends.

Another Puget Sound encounter was with seventeen Indians in six canoes. They resembled the Clallams at Port Discovery, who had no knowledge of the Nootka language, and had nothing to trade except bows, arrows, and woolen and skin garments. One fur appeared to be that of "a young lioness," correctly identified by Menzies as a cougar or puma. Bartering also went on with some Twana Indians for beads, iron and copper, but they declined to come ashore at the white men's camp.

Puget and the Suquamish had a meeting at aptly-christened Alarm Cove (probably present-day Van Geldern Cove). Puget tried to call some Indians alongside his boat, but they held back, so presents of sheet copper, looking glasses and trinkets were tied to a piece of wood and left floating. The Indians recovered these presents but remained shy and distrustful. Puget had the boats beach for a noon meal and to put out seines for salmon. At that time six canoes filled with Indians were seen approaching. The explorers had muskets, and a line was drawn in the sand which the Indians were to stay behind. The canoes pulled off and were joined by others, with much parleying among themselves. Suddenly the Indians landed again, stringing their bows in readiness as they did so. Puget was confident of his position, but did not want an open fight. He had one of the boats' swivel guns loaded with grapeshot fired over the water. This seemed not to impress the Indians much, but during the excitement Puget's party assembled and prepared to embark. Suddenly the Indians showed an about face, unstrung their bows and began to barter their bows and arrows. Thus, coolheaded action succeeded in turning what might well have been a fatal encounter into another friendly meeting, albeit somewhat strained.

A second meeting, much more propitious, took place May 23. This was at Nisqually Reach, and Puget says:

We again set out and pulled for the supposed termination of the southern arm [of Puget Sound], where from the appearance of the low country, we expected to find a river.... We were joined by some canoes with various articles for traffic, such as bows, arrows, etc. Their behavior was the opposite from what we had experienced from the Indians at Alarm Cove; these came alongside the boat with the greatest confidence and behaved themselves with much propriety—a commerce was therefore established for their different articles, carried on with the strictest honesty and apparently to the satisfaction of both parties.

The river mouth was not explored. As Puget says:

The water had shoaled quite across to 4 and 5 feet; that stopped our further progress toward the shore as it was falling tide and I was fearful of causing more detention, which would have been the case had we grounded. These friendly [Nisqually] Indians followed the boat a considerable distance up the west arm which we were now pursu-
From a popular history for young people, published in Boston in 1890, comes this wood engraving of Vancouver's ship Discovery.

This engraving from Vancouver’s Voyage is probably the first rendering of majestic Mount Rainier.

...though they had sold all their articles. In their persons, customs and manners, they appeared to be of the same tribe with those on Alarm Cove, the only difference a friendly disposition. Their canoes, weapons and paddles are of the same construction. They did not leave us until after we had passed the SSW Channel, and still conducted themselves in the most inoffensive and peaceable manner.

There follows Puget's account of his visit to Eld Inlet, at the extreme southern end of the sound:

An Indian village made its appearance from whence some canoes came off perfectly unarmed.... On our way down [to the termination of the inlet] we landed for a short time and were received by the inhabitants with all the friendship and hospitality we could have expected.... About sixty in number, of all ages and descriptions, they lived under a kind of shed open at the front and sides. The women appeared employed in domestic duties such as curing clams and fish, making baskets of various colors and so neatly woven that they are perfectly watertight. The occupations of the men I believe consist chiefly in fishing, constructing canoes and performing all the laborious work of the village. Though it was perfectly curiosity which had induced us to land, yet that was the sooner satisfied by the horrid stench which came from all parts of these habitations, with which they appeared highly delighted. The natives had but two sea otter skins, which were purchased, and a variety of marmot [mountain beaver?] rabbit, raccoon, deer and bear skins were also procured. The men had a war garment on; it consisted of a very thick hide from the moose deer [elk] and well prepared. I have no doubt it is a sufficient shield against arrows, though not against firearms. It reaches from the shoulders down to the knees; this however was got in exchange for a small piece of copper. They likewise disposed of some well constructed bows and arrows...their faces were ornamented with streaks of ochre and black glimmer [mica]...every person had a fashion of his own and to us who were strangers to the Indians, this sight conveyed a stronger force of the savageness of the native inhabitants than any other circumstance we had met with, but not their conduct, friendly and inoffensive, which already merited our warmest approbation.

...Though we could not behold these ornaments with the same satisfactory eye as themselves, yet in receiving looking glasses, each appeared well satisfied with his own fashion, at least the paint was not at all altered. They likewise had their hair covered with the down of birds, which certainly was a good substitute for powder, and the paint only differed in the colors and not the quantity used by our own fair country women. In these two instances, we meet with some resemblance to our own customs and I
believe the above mentioned ornaments were of a ceremonial nature for our reception at the village.

On Saturday, June 2, Joseph Whidbey of the *Discovery* landed at Penn's Cove, Whidbey Island, to take angles, and saw hordes of friendly Indians arriving from every direction to view the strange white men. Gifts of roasted roots, dried fish, venison and fresh water were brought, Natives following the white men wherever they went. The scene is described thus: “Deer playing about in great numbers, rich black soil, grass which grew to three feet in height, ferns nearly twice as high, and an abundance of freshwater streams.”

The Indians were very curious about the skin color of these white sailors. Whidbey is said to have unbuttoned his clothing to demonstrate that he was naturally white all over, and not painted. He deduced that these particular Indians had never seen Europeans before, although judging from articles they possessed, such as metal, they had been in communication with more distant trading tribes.

When the small boat was stuck in mud on the receding tide, the Indians were most cooperative, and the chief himself helped them get the boat floated into deeper water. Whidbey told of Indians estimated at about 600 in number, and bands of little white woolly dogs which were sheared for their wool.

The Natives furnished their new friends with fish, and traveled on foot around to the other side of the cove to continue contact when Whidbey's small boat moved on to the north to rejoin the *Discovery* and the *Chatham*.

The attitudes of the Indian women in these early meetings bear mentioning. Having only recently arrived from the relatively free-and-easy morality of the South Seas, it was no doubt startling to the lusty British sailors to find the virtue of high-born Salish girls guarded as jealously as that of vicars' daughters in their own Georgian England. A crew member's journal states: “The women are very modest in their behavior, and cannot bear the most trifling attacks of gallantry. An indelicate word will often bring tears to their eyes; but as there are few societies without a bad member or two, so it was here.”

Some noted the Indian custom of frequent bathing; however, the use of paint and oil on face, body and hair, and the lack of proper soap somewhat offset the effects of bathing. There were also comments on the prevalence of both lice and fleas among the Natives.

There was evidence of an earlier occurrence of smallpox among the Indians, acquired from other tribes or from direct but undocumented white contacts. This writer's grandmother told of a Salish ancestor who escaped an epidemic, presumably smallpox, which wiped out her village. It was brought by strange men in a sailing ship and can be dated about 1780. The Indians called them “So-so-nah,” their term for people of unknown origin.
The girl had been isolated in a menstrual lodge some distance away. On discovering her village decimated, she fled to the foothills where she managed to live for several years, with only wild creatures as companions, until captured by a hunting party headed by the son of a Nisqually chieftain. They married and had nine children, unusual for Indians of early days. Many descendants still live in the area.

The journals mention men with pockmarked faces. Possible evidence was also found of a smallpox or measles epidemic near Discovery Bay: "We found a deserted village capable of containing an hundred inhabitants. The houses were built after the Nootka fashion, but did not seem to have space that appeared to have been formerly occupied, were fallen into decay, their inside, as well as a small surrounding space that appeared to have been formerly occupied, were over-run with weeds, amongst which were found several human skulls and other bones, promiscuously scattered about."

While carved and painted house posts are mentioned for tribes farther to the north, these do not seem to have been observed around Puget Sound. However, most Indians were occupying mat houses in their seasonal search for food, and in general the explorers declined to enter the plank houses for reasons of caution against possible ambush.

While there may have been petroglyph-carved boulders visible from the water, no mention is made of these. This is not unusual, considering that a few years later Lewis and Clark, tireless observers of the scene, passed down the Columbia among some of the richest petroglyph and pictograph territory anywhere without any indication they had seen these. During this period there was much speculation about hieroglyph rocks and possible connections with lost civilizations.

It was at Port Discovery that Menzies, Hewitt and Swaine began to collect those artifacts which eventually wound up in the British Museum and Cambridge University Museum. Many another expedition member, also acquired many items, their present whereabouts unknown.

Carved bracelets of mountain goat horn in distinctive Salish style, a wooden figure inlaid with what was then a precious material, bottle glass, and a human figurative food or grease bowl reminiscent of potlatch feast dishes found farther north, were collected at Restoration Point on Bainbridge Island and provide somewhat of a puzzle for anthropologists to this day. It was noted that a number of the arrow points traded were of thin iron as well as stone and bone, indicating a lively trade even in pre-contact times. It is certain the Indians were skilled traders before the white man came. Hiaqua (dentarium shell), beaver skins and beads were media of exchange; and as soon as obtained, copper and iron along with sea otter skins were financial standards along the western coast.

Some historians conclude that Indian vices were fewer than those of white people of that day. In spite of a naturally abundant environment, a combination of gluttony, waste and careless improvidence sometimes led to periods of temporary famine. Another vice, as seen by whites, was gambling, the passion for which led to almost unbelievable sacrifices.

Cannibalism of even the token kind was considered almost non-existent, and some tribes expressed abhorrence of the practice. Some Indians made fun of white men for eating dog and horse meat, and certain of the fish-eating coastal tribes even placed venison in the same derogatory status. Intoxicants were unknown until introduced by whites, and were at first resisted as shameful and downright disgraceful, causing the drinker to lose control of his spirit power.

Conclusion

Careful reading of the early accounts give Native Indians a better bill of character than has been manifested by many historians. Home life embodied strong attachments to wives, children and the aged. Though at times women's workloads were unfairly apportioned, some women held high positions of respectability and had nearly the status of chieftains. These people received strangers hospitably, practiced a simple, unostentatious religion, were generally men of honor, simple industry and physical skill. Their vices were not necessarily crimes, though occasional cruel treatment of enemies seemed unnecessary. The crimes of treachery, drunkenness, atheism or idolatry were more likely to be found among the ordinary Europeans, for all their condemnation of such things.

These conclusions may not be radical or startling, but they can perhaps bring about a fuller understanding of the aboriginals first encountered by white explorers.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

While every effort has been made to stay true to eighteenth-century documentation, some liberties have been taken with archaic spelling and the literary style of a more leisurely age. Where undocumented Native American oral material is included, it stems from long association with tribal elders, several no longer among us, who were descendants of various tribes encountered by the chroniclers of that era of first contact in the Pacific Northwest.

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The Mystique of Grand Coulee Dam and the reality of the Columbia Basin Project

By Paul C. Pitzer

The Grand Coulee Dam is one of the major tourist attractions in Washington. Every year thousands of people travel to eastern Washington to visit the huge structure. Most have heard about the dam’s extraordinary size and the power it produces, yet many do not realize that the green fields and productive farms they pass on the trip are a byproduct of the great dam. There is a significant contrast between the mystique of Grand Coulee Dam and the reality of the Columbia Basin irrigation project.

In 1933, the newly elected Roosevelt administration began to finance and construct Grand Coulee Dam and the Columbia Basin Project. The venture was controversial, especially in the East where some disapproved of public power and others objected to expensive Western reclamation efforts. A few questioned the wisdom of putting such a large and costly undertaking seemingly in the middle of nowhere, far from any market for its electricity.

To counter criticism, backers of the dam and its builder, the Bureau of Reclamation, conducted a public relations campaign that lasted over a decade; the outpouring of Grand Coulee publicity was prodigious. “It has been estimated,” wrote popular historian Stewart Holbrook, “that a definitive shelf of Grand Coulee books, pamphlets, magazine articles and newspaper stories would run to more lineal feet, or greater poundage, or would...far exceed all other writings which...have been devoted to...the Columbia and all of its tributaries from source to mouth.” The result was an image of Grand Coulee Dam that took on a larger-than-life mystique. Freelance journalist Richard L. Neuberger underscored the success of the effort when he wrote in 1942, “Everyone in America has heard of Grand Coulee.”

Neuberger, more than anyone else, helped build Grand Coulee’s image. A liberal Democrat, he strongly endorsed construction of dams by the federal government and he readily joined the ranks of Grand Coulee boosters. “Man’s Greatest Structure,” he called it in 1936, and a year later he labeled it “The Biggest Thing on Earth.” He went on to write about it in Harper’s, The New York Times Magazine, The Christian Science Monitor, Nation, The New Republic, American Magazine and Survey Graphic, not to mention his 1938 book, Our Promised Land. Neuberger often repeated the claim that the United States was building the biggest man-made thing on the face of the Earth. Other publications picked up the phrase, and in its many variations it became Grand Coulee Dam’s standard metaphor.

Neuberger was not the only source of Grand Coulee propaganda. An article in Barron’s in December 1933 began, “Out on the Pacific Coast the New Deal has started a power project that ultimately will make Muscle Shoals and Boulder Dam look like adventures with building blocks.” Six months later Newsweek called Grand Coulee the “greatest power, reclamation, and flood control project ever conceived,” although the accompanying map placed Grand Coulee at about the location of Wenatchee, indicating that some in the

For a number of years through the 1940s and early 1950s, farmers like Joe Hodgins moved their sheep across the top of Grand Coulee Dam to their summer range in the Okanogan Highlands near Republic on the north side of the Columbia River. The sight of the sheep on the road above the spillway crest, flowing with water, made a spectacular picture, and photographers were generally on hand to capture it.
East were a little hazy about the location of the great dam. *Newsweek* had also overlooked Robert Bradford Marshall's 1919 plan for a California water development which was ten times larger than the Columbia Basin Project.

The *Seattle Times*, among others, called Grand Coulee "The Eighth Wonder of the World." That inflated sobriquet caught on and became part of the dam's legend even before the first bucket of concrete was poured. "The World's Greatest Dam," will create an electrified paradise, promised *Popular Science Monthly* in 1936. They compared it to five of the great pyramids of Egypt.

In 1935, while Congress debated authorization and funding for Grand Coulee, Rufus Woods put out a special eight-page edition of his *Wenatchee Daily World*. Its headline declared that at Grand Coulee Dam reclamation engineers were harnessing "Two Million Wild Horses!" Woods sent copies to every legislator in Washington, D.C. It would be wrong, he wrote, for the country not to complete "the World's Greatest Project."

The story of the United States building the "biggest thing on Earth" was dramatically played by project backers as a positive accomplishment which they contrasted against the gloom of the Great Depression. Government promoters used every avenue to tout their achievements at Grand Coulee. In 1941, as part of its publicity campaign, the Bonneville Power Administration hired Woody Guthrie to write songs about the Northwest and its hydroelectric development. Guthrie wrote, "from the rising of the river to the setting of the sun, the Coulee is the biggest thing that man has ever done."

No one doubted that Grand Coulee Dam was big. But as early as 1933, when Representative Knute Hill had claimed that the dam would be the largest of man's structures, the Portland Oregonian suggested that the congressman had overlooked the Great Wall of China. The reality, as historian Murray Morgan correctly wrote, is that Grand Coulee Dam was "the largest concrete structure
in the world, one of the biggest things built since the Great Wall of China.” But the backers of Grand Coulee were successful in making it seem to be the biggest, and their influence was worldwide. In 1939 the China Weekly Review reprinted an article written in Shanghai which said, “From the standpoint of general interest, the Grand Coulee Dam is the largest monument ever made by man on this earth.”

In the 1930s Grand Coulee was the most massive dam in the world. But soon many earth-filled structures greatly exceeded its volume. Recently, Itaipu Dam on the Brazil-Paraguay border in South America has captured the record as the world’s largest concrete dam. When Grand Coulee’s first two powerhouses were completed in 1951, it was the world’s largest power generating station. That honor was lost to the Krasnoyarsk station in Siberia during the 1960s, but regained in the late 1970s when Coulee’s third powerhouse was built. Coulee retains a tenuous hold on the title; however, projects now under construction in the Soviet Union and South America will be larger when they are completed.

In 1938, Neuberger had called the dam the “World’s Greatest Engineering Wonder.” Indeed, the engineering and construction accomplishments at Grand Coulee were formidable and in no way should they be underestimated. This was reaffirmed in 1955 when the American Society of Civil Engineers listed Grand Coulee Dam and the Columbia Basin Project as one of the seven civil engineering wonders of the United States. However, as D. C. Riddle, chief engineer for one of the two conglomerates that built the dam, wrote for Civil Engineering in 1936, “In working out the construction problems presented on such a vast scale at Grand Coulee Dam, no startling novelties have been attempted. On the contrary, the selection of tools

Spokane artist George H. T. Brinkerhoff made the original of this drawing, and it hangs today in that city’s Civic Building. It is typical of the promotions done nationally through the 1930s by backers of Grand Coulee construction. The purpose was to convince Americans that they were building man’s largest structure and to secure their support for its completion. Considering the number of people who have heard of Grand Coulee Dam, it is reasonable to conclude that the effort was moderately successful.
I climb the rocky canyon where the Columbia River rolls, 

seen the salmon leaping the rapids and the falls; 

The big Grand Coulee Dam in the state of Washington 

Is just about the biggest thing that man has ever done.

and methods was based on proven experience." An editorial a year later in Pacific Builder and Engineer added, "Reclamation engineers are fond of saying that 'Boulder [Dam] was just a laboratory we built in order to find out how to build Coulee.'"

While management of the Columbia River and construction of the dam was a Herculean accomplishment, the project was largely a novelty of size and, while remarkable, it was not as exceptional as the contemporary articles in the press indicated. But the mystique created in the 1930s is today perpetuated. In a 1983 article the Wenatchee World stated, "Grand Coulee Dam stands as one of the paramount construction projects of the 20th Century... It was a task that tested to the limit man's knowledge of engineering in the 1930s."

Commenting in 1934 on one of the problems relating to construction of Grand Coulee, an article in Public Utilities Fortnightly stated that the anticipated surplus of Grand Coulee power would be utilized only if some miracle happened. "There might be a war which would crowd the Pacific Northwest with eager workers and their Saturday nights with wassail." A generation later Stewart Holbrook reflected that most people had heard "that Grand Coulee was the greatest powerhouse in the world; that it 'won World War II' because it supplied the energy that made the aluminum for 60 percent of American planes; and that because of it, too, the government atomic plant was established at Hanford...." Holbrook's comment was typical of publicity about the dam during and immediately after the war.

And in fact, in October 1940 the government had declared the dam a national defense project. A few days later a sizable quantity of electricity from the as yet unfinished generators was sold, in advance, by the Bonneville Power Administration to the Aluminum Company of America. It was earmarked for defense purposes. Interior Secretary Harold L. Ickes urged faster completion of the Grand Coulee generators. Work on the second and third generators was speeded up while the fourth through sixth were granted high priority by the War Production Board. The Bureau of Reclamation and the press throughout the Northwest and the nation heralded each new generator and boasted of the enormous contribution made to the war effort by every increase in power output.

In February 1944 the sixth large Grand Coulee unit turned for the first
time. But after the sixth, no more of the anticipated eighteen generators were installed during the war. By October 27, 1942, the War Production Board had suspended the priority for Grand Coulee Dam and stopped work on the second powerhouse entirely. The decisive battles of the war were over before the last two generators began production, and even earlier it was clear that further capacity at Grand Coulee would have no effect on the outcome of the fighting. In all, about one-third of the planes built in the United States during the World War II used aluminum produced from power generated at Grand Coulee Dam.

Grand Coulee power went not only to aluminum production, but also to what was then a “mystery project” at Hanford. As the Wenatchee Daily World reflected in 1948, “It was this hydroelectric power which made possible the development of the atomic bomb at Hanford—development which shortened the war and saved the lives of thousands of American boys and billions of dollars.” It was the contribution to the atomic bomb as much as the aluminum that led writers to extoll Coulee’s contribution to the Allied victory. Whether or not the atomic bomb was necessary, or if it appreciably shortened the war, is today the subject of an ongoing debate among historians.

In either case, the Bureau of Reclamation and others pointed to the power that created aluminum which made planes which won battles, or to the electricity that yielded the material crucial for an atomic bomb which they felt had shortened and ended the war. A contraction of the steps led promoters of the dam to a conclusion that credited Grand Coulee directly with the victory. It stretches the point to write about Grand Coulee, as journalist Marc Reisner did in 1986, that “It probably won the Second World War.”

While Coulee may not have won the war, the war clearly won Grand Coulee. The sudden need for large blocks of power ended claims by detractors like Republican Representative Francis D. Culkin of New York, that nobody would ever buy the electricity, and that it would have to be sold to “Jack Robinson Rabbit.” If nothing else, World War II made Grand Coulee Dam an unquestioned economic success. It was this sudden and overwhelming success that solidified the mystique of Grand Coulee Dam.

Although power production turned out better than anticipated, there was an environmental loss. The annual run of salmon above Grand Coulee ended, and the new reservoir covered the historic Indian fishing grounds at Kettle Falls. But the Bureau of Reclamation made heroic efforts to transplant the runs into streams below the dam and to compensate with fish hatcheries. The effort has been somewhat successful. Grand Coulee was one of the early multiple use dams, and for many, the loss of fish was offset by greater gains. In addition to power and irrigation, for example, as far back as the 1920s, proponents argued that Grand Coulee Dam would contribute to downstream flood

There's a building in New York that you call the Empire State,
I rode the rods to 'Frisco to walk the Golden Gate;
I've seen every foot of film that Hollywood has run,
But Coulee is the biggest thing that man has ever done.
control. And when Congress author­ized it in 1935, one of the stated pur­poses of the project, written prominently into the legislation, was flood control.

All was well until the spring of 1948. By June 12 the Columbia River at Grand Coulee had swelled to a startling flow of 585,000 cubic feet per second. This caused considerable damage down­stream and carried away Vanport, north of Portland, then one of the larger cities in Oregon.

In the wake of the flood, the river management program of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation received understandably harsh criticism. The Bureau of Reclamation had all along been quietly straightforward about the degree to which Grand Coulee Dam could affect downstream flooding. Of the estimated $487 million cost for the Columbia Basin Project forecast in 1943, only one million dollars was written off to navigation and flood control. The Bureau of Reclamation asserted that Grand Coulee Dam had never been built with flood control as a major factor, and indeed, the 1948 flood was of such magnitude that it would hardly have affected the outcome downriver in any event.

Nevertheless, the Bureau undertook a study of the problem. The Army Corps of Engineers suggested that one million acre feet of the reservoir’s nearly ten million acre feet be vacated each spring as a flood control measure. A Bureau of Reclamation inter-office letter commented, “Regardless of the actual benefit that can be achieved, a concerted effort on our part might, at least, have considerable psychological value.”

In 1961, in a letter to Senator Henry M. Jackson, Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd Dominy elaborated on the problem faced by the Bureau, and on its solution. “Grand Coulee Dam was not designed specifically for flood control operation. The disastrous flood of 1948, however, showed conclusively that control of large floods could not be achieved by levees alone and would require, in addition, reservoir storage. Since that time Grand Coulee Dam has

(Continued on page 36)
Vanessa Helder (1903-1968) was more interested in an "art challenge" than in chronicling the dramatic construction of Grand Coulee Dam and its environs. Fortunately, though, she maintained a folio collection of her 1940-1941 watercolors and, in 1954, sold a series of 20 illustrations to the Eastern Washington State Historical Society in Spokane.

At the time, a local newspaper columnist acknowledged Helder's aesthetic contribution by stating, "In her portrayal of the Coulee industrial scenes one can feel the vigor and immensity of the project. Her colors are consistently the tawny beige and brown tones of the familiar hills. In working with the stark masses of building and dam construction she uses her medium in a forceful manner."

Vanessa Helder was born in Seattle and educated at the University of Washington. In 1934 she won a two-year scholarship to the Art Students League in New York. She returned to the Pacific Northwest, worked briefly as a commercial artist designing candy box containers, and shortly thereafter had a showing at the Seattle Art Museum. Her artwork, "accurately realistic," was already recognized by several New York gallery dealers.

In 1939, Helder became an instructor at the Works Progress Administration's Art Center in Spokane. Helder taught watercolor and oil painting at the Art Center from 1939 until 1941 or 1942. According to an associate and friend, Mr. Robert Engard, she was a "good teacher, well liked by her students, and was able to interest many local residents in art."

Helder and Engard were regional artists who found inspiration in the local countryside. Helder "preferred to work on site" and the two companions explored the region in search of artistic subject matter. Engard recalls that Helder owned a 1935 Ford V8, and that the artists traveled with "watercolors and sketching materials, used dinner plates for palettes, and the steering wheel and a piece of plywood for easels."

They traveled south to Lewiston and the Snake River country, north to Kettle Falls, and virtually anywhere in the Palouse within a 50-mile radius of Spokane. According to Engard, Helder's "best work was of the Palouse country" and she continued to execute commissions of her watercolors for exhibition and sale at the Macbeth Galleries in New York.

To the best of Engard's recollection, he and Vanessa Helder only spent two or three weekends at Grand Coulee, but "she may have returned to the area later." Helder evidently knew one of the engineers associated with the Bureau of
Reclamation, and the artistic travelers were granted permission to go on site in an effort "to get a feel for the project." They had to wear hard hats, were under constant supervision, and were not allowed to make sketches while actually on the dam. They did, however, make numerous sketches from the vantage of Vista House and the nearby community of Electric City.

Helder probably completed her watercolors from her many field drawings. Engard is certain that he recognizes several completed watercolors that were only depicted in sketch form during their forays. Helder's redeeming talent was her adeptness at "coloring and lighting," qualities that are quite evident in the Grand Coulee Dam watercolors.

Interestingly, there are reports that several national periodicals, Life and Fortune for example, were interested in utilizing Vanessa Helder's watercolors as illustrations for articles on the completion of Grand Coulee project. The bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and America's entry into World War II evidently prohibited the publication of her artwork for "national security" reasons.

Vanessa Helder married an architectural engineer in 1943 and the couple moved to Los Angeles. Helder remained active artistically and was well known in the southern California art community. Residents of the Inland Empire, however, remember Vanessa Helder for her visual portrayal of the construction of Grand Coulee Dam, harbinger of electrical power and economic prosperity.

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The human cost of Grand Coulee has also been exaggerated. Craig Sprankle, Information Officer for the Bureau of Reclamation at Grand Coulee Dam, notes that tourists continue to ask if any workmen were entombed in the dam when it was built. Grand Coulee publicity in the 1930s frequently centered on the speed at which contractors poured the concrete. Nearly 80 men died during construction, but no one was buried in the process. What Joseph Stevens wrote about Hoover Dam would be equally true of Grand Coulee: "The idea of workers forever entombed in the great structure they had helped build was so irresistibly poetic, so deliciously macabre, that it became the basis for the most enduring legend of Hoover Dam...."

Grand Coulee Dam was, then, the biggest masonry dam ever constructed, but it was not the biggest manmade thing on Earth. It was a notable engineering accomplishment, but it was not the greatest engineering wonder as was claimed by its champions. It was not designed with any measure of downstream flood control in mind. The power it generated facilitated the Allied victory in World War II, but Grand Coulee hardly did the job single-handedly. And finally, there are no bodies buried in the concrete. Whether or not these are myths (in the true sense of the word), or only exaggerations, is a matter of definition. Indisputable is the bigger-than-life mystique created by Grand Coulee Dam advocates which persists today.

That pervasive mystique masks the reality that Grand Coulee Dam is but one element of the larger Columbia Basin Project. For at Grand Coulee, reclamation and power generation are intrinsically linked. The huge dam creates a lake from which irrigation water is drawn. Power from the generators turns the pumps that raise the water about 270 feet into an equalizing reservoir. The sale of the rest of the electricity pays all the costs of power generation and subsidizes most of the reclamation bill.

The Bureau of Reclamation stands at the center. Its dam creates the electricity and it governs the flow of scarce water. But unlike the commanding position that historian Donald Worster attributed to the Bureau in the arid Southwest, in central Washington the politics of irrigation are jealously guarded by local farmers and even more by urban entrepreneurs.

The symbiotic relationship between power and irrigation was the vision of newspaper editor Rufus Woods, of lawyer Billy Clapp, who is credited with first suggesting construction of the dam in 1918, and of James O'Sullivan, another lawyer. They were typical of the professionals and businessmen in eastern Washington who saw irrigation of the one-million-acre-plus project as a way to build an agricultural-industrial empire in the Columbia Basin. That empire would provide farmers with cheap, abundant water and farmers, in turn, would provide a market for a growing industrial complex.

In the 1930s, the New Deal added the aspect of planning to the vision. New Deal historian Richard Lowitt called it the goal of the "Planned Promised Land." The idea was to create small irrigated farms and self-sufficient communities where the economy was controlled, soil fertility assured, and productivity guaranteed. The rich reclaimed land would replace submarginal land in other locations. The project would benefit perhaps 80,000 families, including many dust bowl refugees.

In 1937 the Columbia River Basin Anti-Speculation Act formalized the goals by limiting irrigated farms to 40 and 80 acres. Owners of larger tracts would be required to sell their excess land. Under the new law, landowners formed three irrigation districts and signed contracts with the government for delivery of water.

In keeping with the idea of planning, the Bureau of Reclamation hired Dr. Harlan H. Barrows of the University of Chicago to undertake what came to be called the Columbia Basin Joint Investigations. This series of 28 studies involving over 40 government and private agencies, attempted to solve problems before they were encountered. Early on, Barrows realized that the Anti-Speculation Act was myopic and he recommended altering the law. The studies and Barrows' recommendations resulted in the Columbia Basin Project Act of 1943 which allowed the size of farms on the project to range from 10 to 160 acres, depending on the quality of the land.

World War II delayed reclamation construction for about ten years. Finally, in 1952, the first water from behind Grand Coulee Dam arrived on the land. But with the water, unforeseen problems developed. Unwilling to accept the land limitations, many wheat farmers, mostly on the east side of the project, withdrew over 300,000 acres. Post-war inflation raised construction costs beyond anything anticipated. And drainage of surplus irrigation water...
quickly became an unexpected headache. Only $8 million had been allocated to pay for drainage facilities, and many times that amount was needed. Furthermore, farmers, then caught between higher costs, the need to mechanize, and declining farm prices, chafed under the landownership limitations.

The Bureau of Reclamation attempted to negotiate a new contract with higher repayments in order to cover the rising costs. But the farmers argued that power revenues should pay the bills, as had been promised in the past. The bitter controversy continued from 1954 until 1962 when both sides finally agreed on revised repayment contracts. They raised the average cost of water delivery for each acre of land from $85 to $163.50. The repayment period, however, was extended from 40 to 50 years so that the cost per year was actually reduced in the initial years of the contract.

In 1957, after intense lobbying by project supporters, Congress amended the anti-speculation limitations of the Columbia Basin Project Act. Despite objections from the Bureau of Reclamation, the new law allowed any individual to own up to 160 acres, while a husband and wife might own 320 acres. The law also liberalized leasing restrictions and allowed farmers to rent land and receive water as long as they did not

This dramatic photograph made during construction of the foundation of Grand Coulee Dam gives evidence of the fact that large dams are not single blocks of concrete. Rather, they are a series of columns which successive pourings of concrete, lowered in buckets from the cranes seen here, raised at the rate of about five feet every few days. Later, additional concrete called grout welded the columns together forming the solid structure seen today.

Here, at 2:06 p.m., Governor Martin pulls down the large handle and releases four cubic yards, or about eleven tons, of concrete (the first of the eleven million cubic yards that ultimately formed Grand Coulee Dam). The grey mass dropped into the center of Block 16-G, and into it Martin also deposited a metal box full of documents as a cornerstone. The governor got into the rhythm of the work and placed eight more loads, guiding the large drop bucket and jockeying the concrete into position with an electric vibrator. A representative of the contractor, the MWAK Company, then handed the governor a check for a few cents as a token payment for the time he had "worked."
An analysis of the Columbia Basin Project today is significantly different from that for which the visionaries or the planners had hoped.

Yet, since the middle 1960s, a new organization, composed largely of professionals and businessmen, has lobbied the government to complete the Columbia Basin Project. Called the Columbia Basin Development League, they argue, as did their predecessors, that increased irrigation will enrich eastern Washington and benefit the state and the Pacific Northwest.

But there are unanswered questions. Who will pay the cost of such a construction, now estimated at well over two billion dollars? Is there enough water both to generate needed power and irrigate more land? Is more reclaimed land really needed? Will farmers on newly irrigated land pay more or the same as farmers in older adjacent areas? How much should power rate payers subsidize irrigation?

In 1992 the completed Grand Coulee will be 50 years old. The mystique of the giant dam continues undiminished. In the shadow of that mystique, the reclamation issue continues to raise questions. Although everyone in America may have heard of Grand Coulee Dam, few outside the immediate area can identify the Columbia Basin irrigation project. The vision of the agricultural-industrial empire of north central Washington and the New Deal's goal of the "Planned Promised Land" for that region have not materialized. On the positive side, the project has not generated a huge self-perpetuating bureaucracy and it is doubtful that the Bureau of Reclamation is the "power to reckon with" that Donald Worster found in California.

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During the final stages of the construction of Grand Coulee Dam, a series of on-the-scene radio broadcasts were transmitted live to a national audience of eager listeners. At a time when television was still in its infancy, these radio broadcasts effectively served to reinforce the grandiose aura of the dam and increase national awareness of the project. The radio transcript partially reproduced here, which was aired on the Columbia Broadcasting System on October 4, 1941, commemorated the inauguration of power from the first of the 18 Grand Coulee generators. The chief announcer was the well-known CBS Los Angeles newsman Chet Huntley. He was assisted by a team of support announcers who were positioned at several key vantage points around the base of the dam. The vivid and exaggerated visual descriptions they provided, coupled with the dramatic sound effects of the rushing water, all contributed to the mystique of the project that was popularly termed "the biggest manmade structure of all time."

Chester Robert (Chet) Huntley, born in Cardwell, Montana, on December 11, 1911, had early career ties to the Pacific Northwest. Besides attending the Cornish School of Arts and the University of Washington in Seattle in the mid-1930s, Huntley received his first professional news broadcasting experience with radio stations KPCB in Seattle and KHQ in Spokane. In 1939 he moved to Los Angeles, where he eventually became a key news broadcaster for CBS and, later, ABC. In 1955 he made his final major career relocation to New York City, where he teamed up with David Brinkley to host the well-known NBC Huntley-Brinkley Nightly News Report. Huntley received numerous awards for his news commentaries. He died in 1974, a few years after retiring.
The O’NEIL EXPEDITIONS
A century ago this summer the Olympics were explored

By Robert L. Wood

Because they do not lie athwart the beaten paths of commerce, the Olympic Mountains were not explored until late in the nineteenth century. As so often was the case in exploration of the American West, the United States Army led the way, the 21st Infantry making the first organized attempt to explore the Olympics. On May 22, 1882, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Chambers dispatched Lieutenant Willis Wittich to reconnoiter a route and construct a trail from Fort Townsend to the Dungeness River. He was accompanied by a packer, pack train and several enlisted men. Later that summer, Lieutenant Thomas H. Bradley set out with a similar party to extend the trail.

The troopers attacked the Olympics with considerable energy, and after several months of hard labor they succeeded in cutting a route to and across both branches of the Dungeness. Upon reaching the last range of foothills, the men abandoned the project. Two years later another party, under Lieutenants Charles M. Truitt and Willson Y. Stamper, attempted to reopen the trail, but the men were out only ten days.

Fate selected Lieutenant Joseph P. O’Neil, 14th Infantry, to unlock the region’s secrets. Stationed at Fort Townsend from July 8, 1884, to April 29, 1885, he had no opportunity to visit the Olympics, but he did make inquiries. He received scant information and concluded the mountains were as wild as Alaska, noting that the Indians did not go beyond the foothills, and only a handful of troopers, hunters and prospectors had ventured past the perimeter.

After his transfer to Vancouver Barracks, O’Neil persuaded General Nelson A. Miles to send out an exploring party—with O’Neil in charge, of course. The journey was authorized on July 6, 1885, and the lieutenant was provided with a detail of enlisted men and civilians, plus pack mules. One of the men, Private John Johnson, had been in the Olympics, having helped build the 1882 trail.

The party proceeded to Port Angeles, where the men conferred with some citizens who offered advice. The explorers planned to follow the Elwha River because it appeared to head into the center of the mountains, then cross the divide and descend to the Pacific Ocean via the Quinault River.

Leaving Port Angeles on July 17, the expedition at first utilized a right-of-way that had been partially cleared for the county road; then, guided by an Indian, they followed an old, ill-defined trail that was overgrown and obstructed by windfalls. The Indian deserted them, however, when he realized where they were going, and neither promises of big pay nor threats of death induced him to remain. He camped with the party reluctantly at the base of the mountains, then quietly slipped away during the night.

Although the first range of foothills was less than five miles distant, progress proved slow. Upon reconnoitering the terrain ahead, the men discovered the way was blocked by dense forest, almost impenetrable underbrush, and by cliffs, canyons, precipices and windfalls. Accordingly, the plans were revised. Instead of attempting to follow the Elwha, O’Neil shifted the line of march toward Mount Angeles. The revised itinerary called for the party to proceed southeasterly to the head of the Dungeness River, then travel southward along the main divide toward the mountainous center. Scouts would then be sent out in various directions to explore the interior. When these explorations had been concluded, the expedition would descend the Quinault River to the Pacific Ocean and follow...
the coast to Grays Harbor.

O’Neil’s general plan called for scouts to go ahead each day to prospect a route; based upon their reports he would select the most promising way. Trail cutters would then clear the path. The pack train would operate in the rear, relaying supplies from camp to camp.

The men put in long hours of hard work. They had breakfast at five o’clock, were busy working on the trail by six, and, except for a lunch break, they worked steadily until dinner time at six in the evening. Despite the strenuous labor which called for adequate nourishment, the men were “almost fasting,” suffering from short rations because they had had poor luck hunting. Nevertheless, they made the best of the circumstances, doing justice to their diet of pork, bacon, flour, beans and coffee.

The conditions ahead varied, and the men soon discovered that although they might progress as much as five or six miles on some days, on others they could advance no more than a quarter mile. As they progressed they also noted that the hills became steeper; consequently, the mules often lost their footing and rolled down the steep slopes, making it difficult to get them back on the trail. However, by July 24 the party had reached the base of the first range of snow-clad peaks. After having cut a trail through the tangled forests of the foothills, the little expedition was presently in a position to move into the high country and establish a base camp, then set out and explore in various directions.

Less than a month after leaving Port Angeles the expedition succeeded in crossing the first range, which overlooked the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and O’Neil established the party’s headquarters on the second range. Here, the men detected traces of former hunters, including an old, deserted cabin. Game was now abundant, but its wildness was further evidence that it had been hunted in the past.

O’Neil was impressed by the views of snow-covered mountains rising in “wild, broken confusion,” but he picked out what he thought was Olympus, the crowning point in a range that appeared to circle on itself. “There is no regularity about their formation,” he wrote of the Olympics in general, “but jumbled up in the utmost confusion, and the only regularity which does exist is that the ranges nearest the Strait and Sound seem to run parallel to those bodies of water.” He predicted that the day would come when the future state of Washington would “glory in their wealth and beauty.”

The lieutenant decided to divide his party. Harry Hawgood, one of two civilian engineers, would go on up the Elwha with one division, then work his way to the ocean. O’Neil would take the other division and proceed southeasterly along the divide, eventually making his way to Hood Canal.

Hawgood’s party had little more than started when it met disaster. After crossing a large stream, the pack animals lost their footing, and the equipment and supplies were swept away by the river. Hawgood had no alternative but to return to headquarters. Meanwhile, the party led by O’Neil proceeded as planned. Up to this point the party had been sustained by government rations, but now the game was almost tame and the men did not want for fresh meat.

Eventually the terrain became too rugged for the pack train. Leaving the mules at “Noplace,” the men explored on foot. O’Neil and Private Johnson traveled southward for several days, but suffered a mishap and became separated. Upon returning to camp, O’Neil sent everyone out to look for the soldier, without result. The party then returned to its base camp. Meanwhile, Johnson worked his way out of the mountains on his own. Shortly afterward, a courier arrived with orders for O’Neil to report to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the lieutenant had to terminate the exploration.

O’Neil had performed a valuable service. Although his expedition did not succeed in crossing the Olympics, it stimulated interest in exploration of the country. Five years later, a more ambitious group, the Press Expedition, succeeded in crossing the Olympics during the severe winter of 1889-90. But that party had no more than emerged from the wilderness when O’Neil returned to the Olympics, this time in command of a much larger expedition.

The lieutenant had been re-stationed in the Pacific Northwest on August 8, 1887. Aside from his military duties, he served as secretary to the Oregon Alpine Club, which had been founded on September 23, 1887. A year or so later the club proposed that a scientific expedition investigate the North Fork Quinault River, in the district explored near the conclusion of the 1890 expedition.
Olympic Mountains. As a result, O'Neil decided to complete the explorations he had begun in 1885, and with the club's help he succeeded in having another exploration ordered.

The proposal called for the club to furnish the scientific staff and most of the money, with the army providing the leadership (Lieutenant O'Neil), several enlisted men and a pack train. The "Olympic Exploring Expedition" would traverse the Olympics from east to west, making numerous side trips in the process. O'Neil expected to be in the mountains about three months and to explore 1,600 square miles. The intention was to obtain detailed information about the country. While half the party engaged in building a pack mule trail, the remaining men would scout the way and explore. The scientists from the Oregon Alpine Club would study the geology, flora, fauna and ornithology as well as map the region and its topography. The highlight of the exploration would be the ascent of Mount Olympus and placing upon its summit a copper box containing a record book.

The lieutenant left Vancouver Barracks on June 9, 1890, to visit Puget Sound and make arrangements. Consequently, he decided to approach the mountains from the southeast, via Hood Canal, then cross the ranges to the Pacific side. He was told that a good trail led from Hood Canal to Lake Cushman, which lay hidden among the foothills. The lake was known but the country beyond was largely unexplored. The expedition would follow up the Skokomish River to its head. After attempting to locate the terminus of his 1885 trail, O'Neil would proceed westward and come out at whatever point on the west side of the mountains the expedition could attain.

Orders authorizing the reconnaissance were published on June 20. O'Neil selected ten enlisted men—three noncommissioned officers and seven privates—from among numerous volunteers. The "scientific corps" sent by the Oregon Alpine Club consisted of a botanist, a geologist and a naturalist. The expedition also included a civilian packer, a dozen pack mules and several dogs.

The men were well supplied with arms, ammunition, tools and provisions. Game would be relied upon for food, supplemented by plenty of flour, hardtack, beans, bacon, coffee, sugar and other essentials. Calculated to last 100 days, the supplies weighed about four tons. Because the pack train could not transport all this material at one time, relaying would be necessary.

The story of the Press Expedition's adventure had not yet hit the newsstands when O'Neil's expedition arrived in Fort Townsend on June 26. By July 1 everything was ready, and after an all-night run on a steamer, the expedition arrived at Lilliwaup, a landing place on Hood Canal. The expedition then headed for Lake Cushman, said to be six miles distant via a good trail. O'Neil expected to camp at the lake that night. The trail had not been maintained, however, and was often blocked by windfalls; and the men spent much time extricating the mules from mud holes. As a result, the pack train did not go more than three or four miles that day, and the party had to bivouac in a swamp. The next morning the expedition proceeded to the lake, where it was transported to the west shore on a log raft. Here the troopers established Camp No. 1. Beyond this point a good trail extended up the river about five miles to a miners' camp which proved to be the last outpost of civilization. Beyond it, the expedition had to cut its way through impenetrable forest.

O'Neil established a work schedule similar to the one he had used in 1885. After breakfast at six o'clock, the men worked steadily all day until seven in the evening, when they had supper. They had an hour's rest at noon, but generally utilized the time to mend their camp outfit, wash clothes, and so on. Tired as they were at day's end, they spent the twilight hours fishing for trout, which were abundant in the river.

The expedition came to a abrupt halt just beyond the miners' camp because a precipice rose sharply from the water's edge. The men called it Fisher's Bluff, for one of themselves, and established Camp No. 2 nearby. Only a week had passed since they left Fort Townsend, but already the troopers faced the challenge of the jungled forests and precipitous slopes of the Olympics. This bluff was the first major barrier. The pack train could not avoid it by crossing the river because the stream was too swift at this point. Therefore, the men had to build a path over the obstruction. They tackled the job energetically and soon accomplished the task. Beyond this point, however, every step was gained by hard work—tangled windfalls had to be cleared, gulleys bridged, and the trail cut across bluffs and spurs. The need for workmen became paramount and di-

The Press Expedition

Because it was the first organized exploring party to cross the Olympics (the so-called "Watkinson Expedition" in 1878 was a private outing that crossed the edge of the mountains), the Press Expedition received much attention from the media, especially its sponsoring newspaper, the Seattle Press. The nineteenth century "hype" was heightened by reason of the fact that the party made the trek during the winter and spring months.

The Press Expedition was inspired by the call of Elisha P. Ferry, governor-elect of the new State of Washington, that someone unveil the mystery surrounding the Olympics. In order to steal a march on other would-be explorers, the Press Party entered the Olympics at the onset of winter, but the men paid dearly for their audacity. From December 1889 until May 1890, the explorers literally bullied their way through the wilderness, following the Elwha and Goldie rivers to Low Divide, then attacking the tangled rain forests of the Quinault valley. When the expedition started out, it consisted of six men, four dogs and two mules. Six months later, when the party reappeared, there were five men (one having called it quits early in the game), three dogs and no mules. The lost animals were the only casualties sustained.

Although the Press Expedition received most of the glory, the thorough, detailed examination of the Olympics was accomplished shortly afterward, during the summer of 1890, by Lieutenant O'Neil's second expedition.
After scouting in various directions and finding the way impracticable, the men became discouraged. Although they were now encamped near the base of the first divide, the outlook was not promising, and they almost gave up hope of going farther with the mules. As a matter of fact, they considered sending the animals back to the post and packing the loads themselves. All through July they had worked on a trail about a dozen miles long and, still confined in the deep, narrow canyon of the river, they were “like rats in a trap, seeing the sunshine only at noontime.” The invention of a flying machine appeared to be the only solution to the problem. Nevertheless, O’Neil was unwilling to turn back with the pack train. He decided to fall back upon his former tactics. He would suspend trail building and send everyone out to scout for a way.

Near Camp No. 5 the expedition was confronted by Jumbo’s Leap, the second major barrier. This box canyon was so called because an old hound by that name had made a daring leap into it in order to avoid being left behind during one of the scouting trips. Although the men had been able to cross the gorge, the pack train could not go on until a bridge was built. In fact, this project proved to be the most difficult and hazardous work undertaken by the expedition. Eventually, however, the men succeeded in bridging the chasm.

Most of the men were willing to admit defeat at this point and declare the Olympics impenetrable by pack animals, but O’Neil inspired them to new efforts. After all, he pointed out, had they not successfully overcome two major barriers?

Eventually, the men discovered that it would be possible to ascend and cross the first divide near the headwaters of the Skokomish River. After searching many days, they had located what appeared to be a route that might lead them to the Quinault and the distant Pacific. Within a few days, if everything went well, they would set up a base camp on the main divide. Foot parties would then be dispatched in all directions to explore the Olympics thoroughly—not just go across from one side to the other as the Press party had done. The expedition was, in fact, now encamped “within a day’s march of the divide.” North Pass, the ridge’s low point, was less than four miles distant but 2,500 feet higher. Convinced the mules could cross this pass and reach the heart of the mountains, O’Neil was anxious to begin exploring. He therefore called everyone together, complimented the men on what they had accomplished, reminded them that they had overcome many obstacles, and outlined his plan. He was certain they could reach the grand divide with the animals and supplies, and replacements could be easily obtained by sending the pack train back to Hood Canal. This would
permit them to work “without fear of the dread enemy of adventure, hunger,” and the explorers could work outward in all directions. Should the pack train be unable to go beyond the grand divide, the solution was simple—the mules would be taken to Hood Canal and the men, packing the supplies on their backs, would strike out in various directions, going down the several rivers to finish the explorations. The completion of this work would mark the halfway point of the explorations.

O’Neil now divided the expedition into four units. Three foot parties would be dispatched to explore, while the other men finished the trail and escorted the pack train to the central camp. Upon completing their assignments, the foot parties would rendezvous at the new base camp on the grand divide. Shortly afterward, they would again venture forth, exploring to the north and west, thus undertaking the final phase of the expedition’s work.

When the conference concluded, the men retired and “slept their last night under blankets for almost a moon.” The next morning, which was August 17, the various foot parties left camp. During their absence, the men left behind extended the trail to the main divide, establishing several camps along the way, plus a base camp on the divide itself.

One foot party explored the Duckabush and Dosewallips rivers, following those streams to Hood Canal. Another returned to Jumbo’s Leap, then struck southward to explore various rivers on the southern flank of the Olympics. O’Neil led the third foot party, which examined the Quinault and Humpilups rivers and then proceeded to Grays Harbor. The foot parties returned to Hood Canal by steamer, rail and stagecoach, then walked up the mule trail to the new base camp.

During O’Neil’s absence, the trail workers had once again become discouraged after crossing the first divide because they had not been able to locate a route that the pack train could use to cross the grand divide and descend into the Quinault valley. Everyone except O’Neil believed that the pack train would have to return to Hood Canal, but the lieutenant declared his intention of going out the Quinault because he had found a good route down its valley. Once again he resorted to the tactic of sending out every available man to look for a route. One of the parties found a feasible way via a pass which was later named for the lieutenant. This meant that the expedition would be able to complete the mule trail across the Olympics and take the pack train to Grays Harbor. Time was critical, however; the end of summer was but two weeks away and, with the advent of autumn, storms would likely rake the mountains.

The lieutenant called everyone together on September 10 and outlined what lay ahead. Within a day or two he would again divide the expedition and send out foot parties to complete the explorations, with the remaining men assigned to take the pack train down the Quinault. The next day the explorers prepared for the final trip through the mountains. Everything they did not intend to carry on their backs was made ready for transport to Fort Townsend via Hood Canal.

The men then moved across the grand divide and established Camp No. 15 on the Quinault side. They also completed the trail from O’Neil Pass down to the Quinault.

Two days later, O’Neil gave the men their final instructions. Nelson Linsley, one of the Oregon Alpine Club scientists, was to have charge of a party that would explore “the northern part of the range,” excluding the district examined by O’Neil in 1885. Linsley’s party would climb Mount Olympus and leave the copper box on its summit. Another party, headed by O’Neil, would accompany the pack train until it was sure of getting through, then explore the rivers southward. The balance of the men would escort the pack train to Grays Harbor. The various assignments were expected to take about a month; when they were completed, the explorers would return to Vancouver Barracks. Meanwhile, the pack train would link up with a group of civilians representing the Hoquiam Board of Trade which was building a path from Grays Harbor to assist the expedition.

On these last foot missions, each man was expected to carry 25 pounds of flour, 2 pounds of yeast powder, 1 pound of salt, a half pound of tea, 4 pounds of sugar, from 6 to 8 pounds of bacon, 2 pounds of smoked meat and a half pound of chocolate. In addition, they packed axes, guns, ammunition, cooking utensils and a shelter half each. The packs averaged 60 pounds each, and the men quickly discovered they were loaded to the limit of their capabilities.
The Linsley party left Camp No. 15 on September 13 and descended the mule trail to the Quinault. After following the river several miles, the men climbed out of the valley and headed in a northwesterly direction toward Mount Olympus. About a week later they arrived at the base of the mountain. During this time they had had to climb up and down in order to cross the rivers and canyons that intervened. Before attempting to climb Olympus, they reconnoitered the peak and concluded from what they could observe that the southwestern side offered the most favorable terrain. The next day they started down the Queets in order to work around to the mountain's southwest side. Here, one of the men became separated from the others. Consequently, he traveled alone down the Queets to the ocean where he was befriended by the Indians, and then made his way to Grays Harbor. Meanwhile, the rest of the party climbed the southern flank of Olympus, and three men made the “summit climb,” ascending what they took to be the peak. Although the copper box they left has never been found, the men apparently climbed one of the crags that make up the South Peak of Olympus.

According to his instructions, Linsley was supposed to split his party after climbing Olympus and explore the Hoh and Quillayute rivers. However, by this time the men were almost shoeless and their rations were running short. They concluded that the sooner they reached civilization the better, and so they followed the Queets, which afforded the most direct route to the ocean. They traveled the beach to Grays Harbor where they were reunited with their former company. They then awaited the appearance of Lieutenant O'Neil.

After Linsley's party left for Mount Olympus, the other men completed the mule trail to the point where the Grays Harbor people had agreed to meet the expedition. The pack train reached the forks of the Quinault on September 24. O'Neil now sent it, under charge of four men, to Vancouver Barracks via Lake Quinault and Grays Harbor. The lieutenant then turned his attention once again to exploration. Accompanied by several men, he set out to reconnoiter the Queets and Raft rivers. The men eventually arrived at the Indian agency at the mouth of the Quinault. Here, O'Neil learned to his disappointment that Linsley had not followed his assigned route upon leaving Mount Olympus.

The explorers were feted with a splendid banquet by the citizens of Hoquiam on October 4. Two days later the expedition disbanded. The civilians returned to their homes, and the soldiers proceeded to Vancouver Barracks.

The Oregon Alpine Club was well satisfied with the results of the expedition, although the costs had exceeded all expectations. On October 22 the club honored the explorers with a lavish banquet in Portland, Oregon.

Shortly after he returned to Vancouver Barracks, Lieutenant O'Neil began working on his official report of the exploration. On November 16 he submitted it to the Assistant Adjutant General, Department of the Columbia. The expedition had explored roughly the southern half of the Olympic Peninsula, an area more or less equally divided between lowlands and mountains. O'Neil wrote in some detail about the topography and streams as well as the natural resources, and he noted that timber was to be the great production for many years. Much of the district, however, was rough and precipitous, cut by deep canyons and gorges; O'Neil recommended that this country be set aside as a national park “where deer and elk could be saved.”

On December 6, 1890, O'Neil gave a public lecture about the expedition in Portland. He concluded his presentation by again recommending that a national park be established. Although the mountains had no geysers, they had, he felt, “every other requisite for a national park,” and they were the last home of the elk.

Lieutenant O'Neil, who went on to become a brigadier general, lived to see his wish come true. On June 29, 1938, four weeks prior to his death, Congress created Olympic National Park—nearly a half century after he had proposed it.

Joseph P. O'Neil's place in the history of the Olympics is assured. Without doubt, he did more than anyone else to make the Olympics known, to sweep away the ignorance that prevailed regarding the country. His 1885 reconnaissance provided a preview of what the region was like; the 1890 expedition completed the task. The latter, in particular, did a great deal of work scouting, mapping, exploring and collecting scientific data and specimens. Perhaps its greatest accomplishment, however, was the building of a pack mule trail across the mountains. Although this trail was not the forerunner of a highway, it did become a major route of entry, and hikers today often relive the expedition's adventures as they follow the explorers' footsteps through the Olympics.

Robert L. Wood is author of several books on the Olympics, among them, Men, Mules and Mountains: The O'Neil Expeditions.
The Butte Irish: 
Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925. 
Reviewed by Timothy Sarbaugh.

Recent historiography has attempted to demonstrate the diversity of Irish-America in contrast to the traditional urban-Eastern models of Boston and New York. Dennis Clarke's Hibernia America (1987) and Timothy J. Meagher's From Paddy to Studs: Irish-American Communities (1986) were anthologies that attempted to promote and encourage the undertakings of such pioneering monographs as The Butte Irish by David M. Emmons. Based upon a successful search and meticulous reading of archival materials, Emmons narrates the rise and decline of Montana's most famous Irish mining community and provides analysis concerning what he sees as the salient features of this working class community—class formation, immigrant assimilation, industrialization in the West, Irish-American nationalism, and working class radicalism.

Emmons accentuates the uniqueness of the western Irish community of Butte and compares it to the rest of the Irish in working class America. He cites many instances of how Butte is distinct: the only copper mining camp to become an industrial city; a community with a higher percentage of Irish than any other American city at the turn of the century (26%); a city that was western in location yet eastern in its industrialization, Catholicism, politics; and finally, a community less influenced by the eastern-oriented social pathology of discrimination because it was established by Irish immigrants.

Emmons points out that Butte was first and foremost a mining community made up of a large Irish working class, a community that would appear to be a seedbed of radicalism, but which proved to be an enclave of working class conservatism. Preservation of safe, steady employment and Irish culture in the "most dangerous" mining town of the West took precedence over working class radicalism and revolution. Finally, Emmons uses the Butte experience to challenge standard theories that attempt to explain the origins of Irish-American nationalism. The working class radicalism of Eric Foner and the middle-class respectability of Thomas N. Brown do not fit the Butte Irish nationalist. Instead, Emmons argues, "...an independent Ireland made them feel good not because it elevated them in social rank or gave expression to the social radicalism but because they were historically conditioned to wish it."

The Butte Irish should be consulted by all serious scholars of the American West, immigration, Irish-America and working class history. The extensive bibliography and exhaustive footnotes alone are worth the purchase price.

Clark Spence is past president of the Western History Association, author of numerous books on mining and Montana, and Professor of History at the University of Illinois.

The Gibraltar: 
Reviewed by Clark C. Spence.

This is a detailed analytic study of socialist politics in Butte, the city regarded as the "Gibraltar" of unionism at the turn of the century. With a population of 60,000 in 1910, Butte was both a working man's town and, as a corporate domain, heavily influenced by the powerful Anaconda Copper Mining Company. Here, in this ethnically diverse, copper-coated community, socialism and militant unionism battled industrial capitalism.

Never a large group, some Butte socialists had been allied with the People's Party of the 1890s. After much of the Populists' platform had been absorbed by the two major parties, many of these leftist supporters coalesced with the more radical labor union advocates and drifted into the new (1902) Socialist Party of Montana to form the revolutionary wing of the Butte working class movement. Because of internal strife, mismanagement and an uncompromising opposition, the party made little progress in local elections; but in 1911, about the time the Socialists captured Milwaukee, it elected a mayor and five aldermen in Butte. At the end of the 1914 election, it had a mayor and a sheriff, and held a majority of the seats on the city council. The mayor and sheriff were soon ousted by impeachment, and the 1915 election in effect marked the end of the Socialist Party as a significant force in Butte and in Montana.

These moderate political actionists focused on immediate reforms like home rule and control of corrupt government, and their deep-seated differences soon prompted an open split with the more radical IWW socialists who sought reform through control of production and distribution. Corporate adversaries were successful in frustrating both groups in a conflict which Calvert chronicles in microscopic detail. The author focuses on voting patterns, the bitter struggle of the IWW, the Metal Mine Workers' Union, the Butte Workers' Council and, finally, the ties with the Nonpartisan League. Much of this story was played out in the environment of a generally hostile wartime and post-war reaction to radicalism, and ended with a final swamping in the Republican landslide of 1920.

This is a definitive treatment of both men and ideas that demonstrates that socialism fared no better in Butte than elsewhere in America after the heyday of the progressive era—and generally for the same reasons. It is based on a wide variety of sources—printed material, newspapers, union organs and an impressive array of city, state and federal records. It includes a number of cartoons, nine tables analyzing election results and 16 pages of photographs.
Current and Noteworthy
by Robert C. Carriker, Book Review Editor

One of the accomplishments of the 1989 Washington Centennial was the interest it generated in local history. Newspapers, rich with files on local personalities, were among the first to capitalize on a growing interest in city and county histories. The Kitsap County Centennial Committee, for example, assisted local authors in identifying 50 noteworthy community leaders, biographies of whom were published weekly in The Bremerton Sun. As part of the Centennial, the articles were edited by Fredi Perry as Kitsap: A Centennial History (Bremerton: Perry Publishing, 1989; 114 pp., $16.95 paper). Port Madison, Washington Territory, 1854-1889 (Bremerton: Perry Publishing, 1989; 226 pp., $35), also by Fredi Perry, covers the territorial period of Bainbridge Island.

On the other side of the state, the Statesman-Examiner, Colville’s weekly newspaper, prepared The People ... Who Will Live in Colville Area History (Colville: Statesman-Examiner, 1989; 159 pp., $16.95 paper). In keeping with the state centennial theme and Colville’s 100th anniversary, a local committee selected 100 outstanding families or individuals that “went the extra mile” for Colville.

A narrative treatment by newspaper editor Arthur G. Dwelley of the Tenino Independent called Prairies & Quarries, Pioneer Days Around Tenino, 1830-1900 (Tenino: Independent Publishing Co., 1989; 70 pp., $10.95 paper) may be the best of the city histories. Dwelley re-creates the events of the first stage of Tenino history with judgment and good humor. A follow-up installment covering the years 1900-1920 will appear in due course.

And finally, there is Renton: Where the Water Took Wing (Chatsworth, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1989; 136 pp., $25.95). Approximately 100 pages illustrate the history of the city in historic photographs and a text written by David M. Buerg.

The Centennial impulse similarly encouraged a variety of state organizations to publish reflections on their past, including: A Shared Experience, A History of Washington State’s Human Services from Territorial Days to the Present, sponsored in part by the Washington Commission for the Humanities (Department of Social and Health Services Centennial Committee, 1989; 59 pp., paper); Folk Arts of Washington State, A Survey of Contemporary Folk Arts and Artists in the State of Washington, edited by Jens Lund (Tumwater: Washington State Folklore Council, 1989; 108 pp., $14.95); and Celebrating Washington’s Art: An Essay on 100 Years of Art in Washington, by Martha Kingsbury (Olympia: 1989 Washington Centennial Commission, 1989; 89 pp., paper). The most entertaining of this group undoubtedly is Cartooning Washington: One Hundred Years of Cartoon Art in the Evergreen State, text by Glen Baron, and edited by Maury Forman and Rick Marshall (Spokane: Melior Publications, 1989; 182 pp., $13.95), while the most dynamic is The Friend of the Family, 100 Years with Washington Mutual by Murray Morgan (Seattle: Washington Mutual Financial Group, 1989; 189 pp., $12.95). Murray Morgan, of course, is one of the great literary treasures of the state, and admirers of his prose will enjoy the manner in which he makes even banking history sound interesting.

Additional Reading
For topics covered in this issue...

Furs and Food


The Mystique of Grand Coulee Dam


Longview


Let’er Buck


The O’Neil Expeditions


Viewpoints and Visions in 1792


Railroad Ties

I really enjoyed the article, “The Tie that Binds,” by Arthur G. Dwelley in the Winter 1989/90 issue of Columbia. Mention was made of a previous article by the same author on the narrow gauge Olympia and Tenino Railroad, which appeared in the Fall 1987 issue.

I was born and raised in Chehalis, Washington. All through the years I have driven old Highway 99 and noticed the abandoned railroad right-of-way which parallels the highway at some points. My father, who lived in Olympia around 1912, always told me that a narrow gauge railroad used to run there, from Olympia to Tenino. But this is the first time I have ever run across any possible information about the same.

David Payne
Grapeview

Too Nice a Face

Michael Green is much too flattering in his portrayal of Governor Clarence Martin and Charles Ernst (“Washington Human Services Come of Age,” Winter 1989/90 Columbia). That this state compared so well with other states only shows how backward was the rest of the country, not how good was Washington. Martin and Ernst, at the end (1939-40), were returning to Hoover’s doctrinal approach to unemployment and relief, and to the poor laws predating the New Deal. Green is plainly uncritical in putting a nice face on the state’s relief program.

Ernst shared with Martin the view that the family was the primary social and economic unit, and its members must bear primary responsibility against reversals in its fortunes—any able-bodied person could find employment, by their opinion.

So unpopular was the administration’s program by the 1940 campaign that even governor-to-be Arthur Langlie supported pension initiative #141, promising to raise the state’s monthly pension contribution from $30 to $40, and thereby qualify for federal matching funds and eliminate the “preferred claim law” which required the pensioner to assign his property to the state. The initiative passed by a 100,000-vote margin, suggesting that the voters saw little in the state’s pension program to congratulate.

Rich Berner
Seattle

Hanford

The article, “Historical Access to the Hanford Record,” published in the Winter 1989/90 issue of COLUMBIA, contained several inaccuracies concerning the Department of Energy (DOE) Public Reading Room and the availability of the “Hanford Historical Documents.” Since those statements could be misleading to your readers—either directly or by implication—we would appreciate your making the following corrections.

• The Reading Room is open six days a week. As a cost-saving measure and as a result of low usage, the facility was closed on Saturdays during a six-month period of 1989. However, seven-day operations were resumed in June 1989.

• The “Hanford Historical Documents,” which were released in 1986, were distributed to at least six locations in the Northwest, including public libraries in Seattle, Spokane, Yakima and Portland, to make them available to as many people as reasonably possible. Currently, all of those documents are available at the DOE Public Reading Room in Richland.

• Searches of the Reading Room catalog are done at no cost for both the general public and Hanford personnel. However, the Reading Room does not have the staff to perform document searches of other reports referred in the “Hanford Historical Documents” for members of the public.

John Burk
Director of Communications
Westinghouse Hanford Company

AUTHOR’S REPLY:

At the time that the article was written in the early spring of 1989, the Department of Energy’s Public Reading Room had been closed on Saturdays since December 1988. There was no public indication that it would reopen on Saturdays.

The first and second large batches of Hanford Historical Documents (a total of 39,000 pages released in February 1986 and April 1987) were distributed to at least six locations in the Northwest. However, the hundreds of documents released since that time have not been so distributed. These documents eventually will make their way into the “public sector” through such standard channels as the Office of Scientific and Technical Information at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the National Technical Information Service in Virginia. In working through these offices, a researcher must know specifically which documents he/she wishes to request, and must pay by the page for full reports.

Searches of the Reading Room catalog indeed are done in a helpful and prompt manner, at no cost, to all users of the facility. That has never been questioned. Within its budget constraints, the Reading Room in Richland is a useful and important resource. Additionally, the fact that so many documents pertaining to Hanford’s history have been declassified and released at all, places the Hanford site far ahead of many other sites and industries in terms of openness and disclosure. It is very commendable, and it sets a high example that should be followed at other facilities. The historical record belongs, after all, not to companies, nor to federal agencies, nor to historians. It rightfully belongs to the American people. The Hanford site now is taking a national lead in environmental restoration, and is working very diligently and innovatively to deal with the trespasses of the past.

Michele Stenehjem
Richland

Correction

In my article on Bodega y Quadra and George Vancouver in the Spring 1990 issue, the footnote on page 19 states that Vancouver was appointed Post Captain upon his return to England. I recently received a letter from Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, who edited a magnificent and definitive edition of The Voyage of George Vancouver, noting that Vancouver received this promotion on August 28, 1794, prior to his return.

Freeman Towell
Victoria, B.C.
Exploring Washington's Past  A Road Guide to History
Ruth Kirk and Carmela Alexander

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