Looking for History in All the Right Places...

...to paraphrase a lyric from a pop tune. This winter's issue of Columbia highlights the fact that history can be found in a variety of guises. For instance, Barbara Allen's essay on "heroic rides" illustrates the role of oral tradition. Sasha Harmon's description of the great volume of Indian history that can now be found in court records is another case in point.

An organization like the Washington State Historical Society must be continually on the look-out for material illustrative of our state's past. Readers of Columbia see what I think you will agree are good examples of interpretative narratives and interesting images, but that is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to what the Society holds in its stacks, or, more to the point, what we would like to put in our treasure house.

On September 1 the Society entered a new era in its collecting abilities with the instituting of the Burdette and John McClelland Curatorship of Special Collections. This position, the first one to be endowed in the Society's history, has been filled by Edward W. Nolan, who held a comparable position with the Eastern Washington State Historical Society. With this appointment, Ed has become the head of the Society's library division, but his selection transcends the administrative support to the effort that is most immediately implied in his joining the WSHS team.

The long-term import of the McClelland Curatorship is that the Society will henceforth regularly have someone "in the field" looking for the photographs, manuscripts, and objects that must continually be acquired to sustain the historical society, at least if it is to remain vibrant and relevant to researchers and the general public. And so much remains to be done in this regard, as you will discover once you've had a chance to meet with Ed.

Our thanks to the McClellands for their continued interest in and support of the Society.

—David L. Nicandri, Director & Editor

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<th>Membership Fee</th>
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<td>Individual</td>
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—David L. Nicandri, Director & Editor
COLUMBIA

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History Commentary 2
Hanford’s new mission.
By Michele Stenehjem Gerber

From the Collection 4
An 1854 map of tribal boundaries in Washington Territory.

Writing History by Litigation 5
How courts use historical evidence when making rulings on Northwest Indian rights cases.
By Sasha Harmon

The Heroic Ride 16
A look at the similarities among frontier legends of the lone horseman.
By Barbara Allen

History Album 21
The Centennial Flour Mill was razed in 1947 by one of the worst fires in Tacoma’s history.

Wilderness Stumps 22
Hollow-based logging remnants provided ready-made shelters for Northwest pioneers.
By Harriet U. Fish

Cascade Volcanoes 24
When sleeping giants awaken...
By Stephen L. Harris

The Years of Wonder 32
E. B. White’s youthful pilgrimage to the Pacific Northwest.
By Terrence Cole

Goldfield Gateway 36
The Seattle-Alaska kinship had its birth in the gold rush years.
By William R. Hunt

Bainbridge Peninsula 42
A look back at the Vancouver survey which mistook Bainbridge Island for a peninsula.
By John Frazier Henry

Columbia Reviews 46
Recent books of interest in Northwest history.
Edited by Robert C. Carriker

COLUMBIA

THE MAGAZINE OF NORTHWEST HISTORY • WINTER 1990/91

Cover: Stumps, common to the logging frontier, were used as storage sheds, post offices, tourist attractions, and homes.
(Washington State Historical Society)
On July 12, 1990, a large federal study designed to reconstruct the doses of radioactivity received by people living near the Hanford Nuclear Reservation during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s announced its Phase I results. The news was very bad.

Emissions of radioiodine (I-131) from the Hanford chemical reprocessing plants from 1945 through 1947, and releases of radionuclides from the plutonium production reactors to the Columbia River between 1964 and 1966 (the Phase I areas of examination) had been huge. Indeed, by the standards of 1990, they had been deadly and appalling. The Hanford Environmental Dose Reconstruction Project (HEDR Project) estimated that 5 percent of the people (13,500) living in a ten-county area around Hanford from 1944 to 1947 may have received radiation doses of 33 or more rads to their thyroids. Some infants who drank milk from backyard cows that had eaten contaminated forage may have received doses as high as 2,900 rads. Such doses are by far the highest known to have been received by any American population group.

When the hard scientific data that confirmed the historical Hanford doses was announced, there was no one who felt triumphant. Indeed, it was a time for lumps in the throat, rather than revenge in the soul. The Hanford region struggled to comprehend the frightening facts, as bewildement and community grief chilled the senses. Downwind residents expressed "sorrow, betrayal and relief" at finally learning the truth. Others voiced anger, and averred that they had been used as "guinea pigs."

The local newspaper's anger was directed at the Department of Energy, formerly the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), for keeping the data secret for so many years. The Tri-City Herald termed the secrecy itself "an outrage of huge proportions," and declared that the community longed for "a government that doesn't lie to it." It called for timely compensation for radiation victims or their survivors "where it is too late for the victims themselves."

Likewise, the Hanford region's congressman, Sidney Morrison, pledged to work for a compensation act if federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) studies demonstrated deleterious health effects from the doses: "The federal government owes something if folks have been harmed by these early releases of radiation."

Kristine Gebbie, Washington State's Director of Health, stated that the HEDR Project's findings reinforced the need for waste clean-up at Hanford. She also confirmed that the site's history had induced the current wary and watchful attitude of the state: "We believe that we still have to keep an eye on it [Hanford]. The past is so troubling it keeps us worrying in the present."

Together with Oregon's Director of Health Michael Skeels, Gebbie affirmed: "We do not want any future surprises regarding the releases of radioactive material from the Hanford Reservation."

The Yakima Nation, a population with close proximity to Hanford, stated that "the activities conducted by the United States government at the Hanford site since 1943 have irresponsibly affected the health of the Yakima people, and altered the Yakima-ceded land upon which the Hanford site is located.... Such events should never have been allowed to happen, and must never happen again."

During the painful days just following the news of the HEDR Project's Phase I results, the issue of culpability was discussed over and over. Many long-time and retired Hanford employees maintained that early site operators did "the best they could based on what we knew at the time." World War II reactor operator Ralph Wahlen summarized the feelings of many such workers: "Maybe limits then were not conservative enough...but no one knew better.... I think I contributed to the war effort and I think that even if there were [radioactive] releases, it was worth it."

Former Manhattan Project and AEC physician Paul Henshaw agreed: "In retrospect, it is easy to recognize important oversights.... It would not be realistic to label early atomic workers as insensitive and irresponsible.... [During wartime] work priorities were on completing production.... There was awareness of radiation hazards, but they occupied a place of secondary importance in people's minds."

The Hanford area's newspaper reiterated that the wartime atomic complex "was operated by people doing all they could to help bring an end to the costliest war in world history.... Mistakes were made. The consequences will in all likelihood prove to be tragic.... [But] these patriotic workers are not to blame."

The difficult question of postwar accountability also was raised in the aftermath of the HEDR Project's Phase I announcements. As knowledge of radiological hazards developed during the peacetime years from the late 1940s through Hanford's heyday of production and into the phased-down production of the late 1960s, did the culpability equation change? For most residents of
the Hanford vicinity, the answer was an emphatic “No!” The burden of guilt, if any, lay only with the top 1 percent or less of officials who had been privy to highly classified information. And so, while the 1990 neighbors of the eastern Washington atomic complex mourned the excesses and the hazards of long-ago times, they felt neither shame nor guilt.

In 1986 revelations about Hanford’s past radioactive emissions had initiated a community grief process in the Pacific Northwest. It encompassed all of the roller-coaster emotions of shock and denial, anger, fear, powerlessness and despair. In the Tri-Cities of Washington, “home” to the Hanford complex, the pain was particularly sharp. In this region, known for its patriotism and support of government programs, the news just plain hurt. Added to the distress over the secret contamination was the fact that other areas of the Northwest began to act as if the neighborhood surrounding Hanford somehow was to blame for the problems it had just discovered. A mantle of collective historical guilt was laid over the place. In the “atomic city” of Richland, there was the natural instinct of citizens to defend their home and their heritage. Some people denied that the evidence could be real. Perhaps a majority of local citizens were bitter that the bad news about the radioactive emissions had leaked and spread, like the contamination itself, to sully the defense accomplishments of the Hanford plants. There was a sad and sinking feeling that the pride and glory of the place had been tarnished, perhaps irreversibly. At the same time, the area underwent severe economic traumas. In 1987-88, three major nuclear projects on the Hanford site were shut down or never authorized.

In 1989 and 1990 witnessed the appearance of clear signs that the grief process of the Hanford region, and of the Northwest as a whole, had spent itself. Hope came in the form of immense waste clean-up programs at the Hanford site. In May 1989 the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (known as the Tri-Party Agreement) was signed. The DOE, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Washington agreed to work together to plan, implement and oversee the largest waste clean-up endeavor in American history. These efforts involved not just tedious custodial management of the wastes, but new and exciting research and technological developments. In concrete terms, they began to bring an estimated $57 billion of industrial activity to an area that had known periodic economic bust since atomic reactors at Hanford began to close in 1964. In terms of the hearts of Tri-Citians, they brought hope and the opportunity to touch what was fearful and dark in their history, and to make it better through their own efforts.

Today collective historical guilt does not belong in the Hanford area. The people neither accept it nor deserve it. The gigantic mass of radioactive waste that is part of the Hanford region’s heritage is not seen as a handicap or a stigma. It is seen as a challenge. Today the people of the Columbia Basin energetically go about the business of meeting that challenge. And today, in the new frontiers of waste remediation, environmental restoration and the preservation of democratic principles through open public involvement, the Hanford site leads the nation.

—Michele Stenehjem Gerber

Michele Stenehjem Gerber holds a Ph.D. in history; she works in the waste remediation effort in Richland, and has recently completed a book on the history of Hanford’s operations.
Map of Washington Territory showing the Indian nations and tribes, 1854, is the title of this 29.5"x42.75" manuscript map on linen recently donated to the Washington State Historical Society by Alvin R. and Marjorie Kantor of Glencoe, Illinois. According to a note in the lower right-hand corner, "The map is compiled from the incomplete data of the NPRR Ex & S which when complete may show some slight differences, but none that can affect [sic] the value of this copy for general purposes. By permission of Govr. I. I. Stevens. (Signed) Jno. Lambert, Draughtsman. Traced from Mr. Lambert's original map by George W. Stevens."

In addition to indicating tribal boundaries, the map contains a "tabular statement" listing the 1855 population of the Indian tribes of both eastern and western Washington Territory.

Mr. and Mrs. Kantor acquired the map at auction several years ago and recently decided that it should come back home to Washington. This map complements several other maps in the society's collections and is a welcome addition.
Writing History
By Litigation

During the past two decades, the rights of Indians in the Northwest have been the subject of numerous well-publicized and often controversial lawsuits. The outcome of much of this litigation has turned on the resolution of historical questions. In order to construe nineteenth-century laws and treaties or settle the present status of Indian groups and reservations, judges have had to determine what happened 100 years ago or more. As part of this process, they have made extensive findings concerning surprisingly varied aspects of our region's history.

The resulting court opinions and trial records have become sources of historical information for many government officials, tribal community members, lawyers and judges, among others, who regard the rulings as authoritative history. On some subjects the judges' opinions constitute the first or only summary histories published. In other words, among the most influential people writing Northwest history are judges acting in their official capacity.

Historians have played key roles in the production of this court-authored history. Because eyewitnesses to the events at issue are no longer living, the witnesses at trials of Indian rights cases have included persons proficient in researching and analyzing the historical record. In addition to oral testimony, these experts have provided the courts with copies of historic documents and often with detailed written reports setting out their interpretation of such sources. Some of the material assembled is not readily available in any other form. Indian litigation has thus generated a record which contains valuable resources for history researchers.

On the other hand, scholars who look to the court rulings for historical information will find that they have significant shortcomings: they lack depth, balance, narrative power and sometimes accuracy. For the most part, the historians who supply the data on which the judges rely are not to blame for these deficiencies. Rather, judicial opinions make inferior historical narratives because the courts' reasons and procedures for determining what happened in the remote past differ in essential respects from those of historians. Several of the goals and values which guide judges conflict with historians' central goals and values.

The contradictions between the courts' tasks and historians' traditional orientation also beget unfamiliar challenges and uncomfortable dilemmas for historians who participate in litigation as expert witnesses. The pressures of the adversary system can strain even a veteran scholar's objectivity, persuasive powers and composure. Still, by their involvement in Indian rights disputes, historians are making valuable contributions to the writing of Northwest history.

Although most trials involve a reconstruction of events in the past, suits involving
Indian tribal rights are nearly unique in their focus on events of antiquity. The litigation which confirmed and clarified Washington tribes' rights to fish off their reservations required an examination of the circumstances surrounding events in 1854 and 1855. The Puyallup Tribe's claim that its reservation included the bed of the Puyallup River was founded on actions taken by federal officials in 1855, 1857 and 1873. Recently the Supreme Court considered claims by a New York tribe based on events which predate the Union.

The history which the courts must reconstruct in Indian cases encompasses not just official acts and other recorded legal milestones, but also the unrecorded thoughts, intent and expectations of long-dead actors. Moreover, those actors include people who spoke languages now forgotten, left no written record of their perceptions, and probably had a world view radically different both from the people who must today determine their intent and from the people who recorded the events at the time.

The courts face such formidable tasks in Indian cases, but rarely in other litigation, for several interrelated reasons. First, many Indian tribes have grievances which went unresolved for decades because federal law and lack of resources prevented them from seeking redress in court. Until 1946, when Congress created the Indian Claims Commission and gave it power to award tribes compensation for wrongs committed by the United States, the courts regarded all tribal claims as political matters for the legislature to resolve. Without a special act of Congress, a court had no jurisdiction to consider a tribal complaint. Not until 1966 did Congress open the federal courts to recognize tribal governing bodies with any claims arising under federal law. Furthermore, only since the government began channeling federal funding to and through tribal governments in the 1960s have most tribes been able to develop the leadership and resources necessary for the pursuit of legal redress.

Second, tribal suits are not subject to the laws which usually prohibit aggrieved persons from litigating stale complaints and trying to prove matters far in the past. The exemption of tribal claims from such statutes of limitations derives from a complex set of legal principles and policy considerations. Federal law characterizes tribes both as limited sovereigns and as beneficiaries of a United States responsi-
bility to protect the tribes' property and sovereign status. Therefore, a tribe may not be exposed to the risk of losing its resources without explicit government and tribal consent. Because federal law preempts any contrary state law, the doctrines of tribal sovereignty and federal trust responsibility thus insulate tribes from the state statutes of limitations invoked in most federal lawsuits.

A third reason that tribal claims require the examination of events in the remote past also stems from Indians' peculiar legal history. The present relation of tribal Indians to other governments and institutions is largely determined by laws and official acts which date from bygone eras. A tribe in the Northwest is likely to owe its land base, its economic resources and limitations, and its federally-protected autonomy to a treaty negotiated in the 1850s, an executive order issued in the 1870s, and statutes enacted by Congress in the 1880s and 1930s. Through many changes in federal policy and in the tribes' conditions, these venerable laws have remained in effect.

When a tribe's rights derive from an unrepealed nineteenth-century treaty and a conflict arises about the scope of those rights, a court must determine how the treaty should be construed in present circumstances. If the meaning of the treaty language is not indisputably clear, legal doctrine requires that the court ascertain what the signatories intended by that language. The court must infer probable intent from all the circumstances surrounding the negotiation and approval of the treaty. Such a process of determining the drafters' aims may also be necessary in order to construe a statute. Thus, when an Indian tribe seeks adjudication of a dispute regarding the effect of an old law, order or agreement, the need to discover the original intent of the document involves the court in a case of historical detective work.

In recent years courts have had to determine what the United States and Northwest tribes meant by particular provisions of treaties negotiated in 1854 and 1855, where government officials and tribal leaders intended to locate the boundaries of Washington Indian reservations, whether federal representatives expected certain reservations to include bodies of water within or adjacent to their boundaries, and whether the federal government has consistently discouraged or sanctioned certain tribal activities. In order to answer such questions, judges have considered diverse historical phenomena.

Naturally, treaty rights and reservation boundary cases have provided occasions to examine the histories of particular Indian tribes. These inquiries have not been limited to the years immediately preceding and surrounding the treaties or orders at issue. For example, the trial court's opinion in United States v. Washington, the Boldt fishing rights case, briefly described the experiences of western Washington tribes not only at the time they treated with the United States but also during the following century—their reaction to non-Indian settlement in the area, their adjustments to the changes which followed American colonization, the impact of non-Indian activities on their economic life, and post-treaty transformations and continuities in tribal composition and leadership. Judge George Boldt illustrated his conclusion that "acculturation of Western Washington Indians into western culture began prior to treaty times and has continued to the present day" by noting various evidences of such acculturation. More specifically, he identified the factors which contributed to the twentieth-century decline in the number of Indians fishing for food and income.

For each tribe which was a party to the lawsuit, Judge Boldt's opinion also related assorted ethnographic and historical data on such matters as aboriginal and modern fishing practices, intertribal relations, the tribe's early encounters with non-Indians, the organization of the present tribal government, and the tribal members' efforts to cope with ecological and political change. Much of this history was previously unwritten.

In addition to tribal histories, judges in Indian rights cases must learn regional political history and the history of government Indian policy. In order to determine which groups succeeded to the treaty rights at issue in United States v. Washington, the court reviewed the background, aims and effect of twentieth-century federal policy. It traced the shift from a strategy of dismantling tribes to one of encouraging the revitalization of tribes as political and cultural entities.

The subject matter of a tribal claim may further require that the court become acquainted not just with political developments affecting Indians but also with varied aspects of the wider society's history, national as well as regional. Indian cases have provided judges with lessons on such matters as historical surveying practices, the evolution of modern fishing techniques, and the history of major engineering projects. The complaint that the state of Washington had interfered with tribal fishing rights prompted Judge Boldt to write a condensed chronicle of early non-Indian commercial fishing ventures:

At the time of the treaties, non-Indian commercial fishing enterprises were rudimentary and largely unsuccessful. In the 1840s and 1850s, salmon was packed...
RIGHT PAGE: Commercial salmon fishing, well established in the Puget Sound area by the early twentieth century, was the source of contention between local tribes and the state government. This image depicting the brailing of a salmon trap by the Pacific American Fisheries Company was taken in 1931.

BELOW: Indian claims to water and other natural resources have often prompted the collection of historic photographs and other records of changing land use. Here, Indian floating houses occupy an otherwise undeveloped beach in Miller’s Bay, Kitsap County, ca. 1905-20.

and shipped from the Columbia River and (Puget Sound) to such distant places as New York, San Francisco, the Hawaiian Islands, South America and China, but inadequate preservation techniques and slow transportation facilities caused the salmon to reach the markets in unsatisfactory condition, and it obtained a bad reputation among dealers. The non-Indian commercial fishing industry did not fully develop until after the invention and perfection of the canning process. The first salmon cannery in Puget Sound began in 1877 with a small operation at Mukilteo. Large-scale development of the commercial fisheries did not commence in Puget Sound until the mid-1890s. The large-scale development of the commercial fishing industry in the last decade of the Nineteenth Century brought about the need for regulation of fish harvest.

The sources of such a historical account are primarily testimony and documents which the litigants have proffered. As a rule, the American adversary system makes the judge a passive fact-finder, charged only with evaluating the persuasiveness of evidence presented by contending advocates. Occasionally, particularly in the appeal of a decision, judges have on their own initiative delved into and relied on historical material not mentioned at trial. *Ordinarily, however, even for facts which are the common currency of history texts, the judge must usually depend on the litigants.

*One of the most notorious of such instances occurred in a case from Washington. Justice Rehnquist’s majority opinion in Oliphant v. Suquamish Tribe drew on historical information not cited by any of the parties, including secondary sources describing the career and views of a federal judge in Arkansas at the end of the nineteenth century. 435 United States Reports 191, 198-9 (1978).
Another important feature of the adversary system is the preference for live witnesses whose statements can be tested by cross-examination under oath. To prove some distant events, the court may admit parts of the written record left by those alive at the time. Litigants in Indian cases thus occasionally rely on government documents to tell their stories. Usually and increasingly, however, they must enlist experts to locate, describe and interpret in oral testimony the documentary record and any other data from which the relevant history can be extracted.

The persons who testify regarding the historical record, referred to here as historians, need not have training and expertise in history: they may be anthropologists, archaeologists, ethnohistorians, or even geologists or biologists. Neither are they necessarily academicians. They may be private consultants, public employees, or free-lance scholars who by training or experience are qualified to research and analyze historical data. In order to describe events which they did not observe, however, they must meet criteria by which the courts identify experts.

Once classed as experts, historians and other specialists are permitted to testify in ways that lay witnesses may not. They are not limited to reciting facts and presenting documents, but may also state their opinions, even on the ultimate issues facing the court, such as the intentions of the long-dead players in the historical drama. They may base their testimony not only on primary but also on secondary sources, on oral histories or interviews, and on any other material that persons in their field typically use, even if court rules ordinarily forbid the introduction of such items.

In most Indian cases, a historian presents his conclusions orally in response to questions posed by a lawyer representing the party who hired the historian. Usually the witness has first prepared and made available to the adversaries a written narrative and analysis revealing his opinions and the basis for them. On occasion, including the trial in United States v. Washington, the expert’s written conclusions have replaced testimony on direct examination, and he has then mounted the witness stand to be cross-examined by counsel for the opposing party.

In addition to history as reconstructed by experts, the courts have sometimes considered oral history as recalled by laymen, particularly elderly Indians or even non-Indian members of reservation communities. In the treaty fishing rights litigation, for instance, the witnesses included tribal members old enough to remember grandparents who were present at the treaty negotiations or who had been told and could retell the collective memories of their ancestors. At other times, however, courts have refused to admit lay testimony regarding tribal oral history. Ironically, in the latter instances the courts have usually heard the oral history second-hand, pursuant to the rules for expert testimony, from ethnographers and ethnohistorians who have relied on elderly informants.

Whatever they offer to support their claims, the adversaries in Indian litigation identify and analyze much more historical data than they eventually present or succeed in introducing at trial. For this reason the parties’ files and often the court record may be rich repositories of historical material. In a recent case concerning the location of the Suquamish reservation boundary, documents assembled by experts but not introduced in evidence covered such subjects as early settlers’ reactions to their Indian neighbors, nineteenth-century approaches to the education of Indian
children, non-Indian efforts to acquire and develop land within Indian reservations, and the evolution of twentieth-century tribal political institutions.

After listening to all witnesses and examining all documents which the tribes, their allies, and their opponents produce, the judge in an Indian rights case has a duty not only to decide which party has correctly interpreted the effect of a treaty or statute, but also to explain the reasons for that conclusion. The resulting written findings of fact are a summary of history as the judge understands it. Yet, most historians would recognize only a crude resemblance between court opinions and a professional historical narrative. Judges' findings will undoubtedly disappoint and even frustrate uninitiated researchers who look to them for historical information.

For one thing, judges are not trained in or required to employ the conventions of citation accepted by historians. It is usually difficult and sometimes impossible to tell from a written opinion how a jurist arrived at his version of the facts. If the judge cites the sources on which he relies, he usually references oral testimony by transcript page numbers and trial exhibits by the court clerk's identification codes. A reader interested in examining the items cited in order to get further details, to see copies of the original source documents, or to assess the accuracy of the judge's account would have to consult the trial record stored at the clerk's office of the courthouse. More importantly, court opinions are short on analysis and enlivening detail and long on simplicity and overstatement.

The contrasts between judicially produced histories and those written by professional historians reflect the divergent goals and methods of their authors. Historians' efforts to reconstruct the past stem from an interest in the past for its own sake and in the influence of earlier events on present conditions, a perspective which colors their view of the past. Their cultural and temporal settings determine both the questions they ask of the past and the significance of their answers. Historians may even choose their subject in the hope that greater knowledge about the events scrutinized will enhance their contemporaries' understanding of the present; but a good historian, aspiring to objectivity, does not consciously select facts for their ability to affect people's current or future rights and interests.

Judges, on the other hand, charged with determining the respective rights of

Sometimes a tribe's effort to show continuity in its people's living patterns and resource use has depended on the testimony of elders who know the community's oral history. Such testimony may be supplemented with photographs of parents or grandparents who lived much as the treaty signers did.
people in conflict, delve into history for the help it can provide in resolving the conflict. When the parties’ rights depend on something that happened in the past, judges seek only the historical data which will affect the parties’ future. Judges must provide not only an opportunity for all disputants to submit information, but also a clear, final, and practical rule for future conduct. For this reason, the judicial process places less value on developing a complete or even an accurate picture of historical events than it does on ensuring a fair, predictable conclusion to disputes.

The courts strive for predictability in part by applying precedent—by invoking rules and conclusions set out in earlier decisions of higher courts. Contrast this practice with that of historians: far from feeling themselves bound to accept either the methods or opinions of earlier scholars, they habitually question, criticize, and revise each other’s conclusions. For historians who view one court’s version of history as distorted or incomplete, it may be disappointing to see that version perpetuated in decision after decision. For litigants, this reliance on precedent is preferable to the expense and uncertainty they face if the same questions have to be re-tried in each case.

Nevertheless, the courts’ deference to earlier rulings does not entirely protect litigants from having to prove facts already established in other cases. Legal doctrine binds judges to follow principles of law laid down by superior courts but leaves them free to explore the facts anew in each case. In the Northwest, where Isaac Stevens negotiated more than half a dozen boilerplate treaties with numerous tribes, it is therefore possible for the different trial courts to arrive at varying interpretations of the same historical events. To date, perhaps because the line separating law from fact is indistinct in Indian cases, this has not happened. Judges have tended to adopt without substantial revision the general history recited in previous cases.

For example, Judge Boldt’s construction of treaties between the United States and several western Washington tribes included the following summary of the government’s guiding purposes:

The principal purposes of the treaties were to extinguish Indian claims to the land in Washington Territory and provide for peaceful and compatible coexistence of Indians and non-Indians in the area. The United States was concerned with forestalling friction between Indians and settlers and between settlers and the government. At the treaty negotiations, a primary concern of the Indians whose way of life was so heavily dependent upon harvesting anadromous fish, was that they have freedom to move about to gather food, particularly salmon… at their usual and accustomed fishing places… The Indians were assured by Governor Stevens...
The headline story of the February 12, 1974, issue of the Tacoma News Tribune boldly announced the landmark United States v. Washington ruling of Federal Judge George H. Boldt. This controversial ruling, commonly referred to as the Boldt fishing rights decision, was based upon Judge Boldt's review and interpretation of numerous historical documents.

Although litigants in later cases have argued for findings which place greater emphasis on the government's intent to discourage the Indians' aboriginal subsistence patterns, the courts have not significantly departed from Judge Boldt's version of the facts.

Like historians' reliance on earlier historical works, borrowing from preceding court opinions for background facts can ease the judges' task; but it also exacerbates the courts' tendency to oversimplify. The application of principles developed by the Supreme Court enabled a federal appellate court to sum up the purposes of an Oregon reservation—a subject which had undoubtably been the focus of considerable research, testimony and argument—quite neatly:

The state and individual appellants argue that the intent of the 1864 Treaty was to convert the Indians to an agricultural way of life. The government and the tribe argue that an equally important purpose of the Treaty was to guarantee continuity of the Indians' hunting and gathering lifestyle. Under the guidelines established in Cappaert and New Mexico, we find that both objectives qualify as primary purposes of the 1864 Treaty and accompanying reservation of land.

The courts' synopses undeniably oversimplify and perhaps distort the complex motivations of historical actors. Because someone must win and someone must lose a lawsuit, judges and litigants alike place high priority not only on certainty and predictability, but also on clear and final resolutions. In justifying an award to one party rather than the other, a court therefore declares assertions made by the winner proven, even if they are only slightly more likely to be true than the loser's contentions. Opinions commonly recite facts which were hotly disputed at trial as if there is little or no doubt as to their accuracy.

Historians are not likewise constrained to provide unequivocal answers to either/or questions. They may explore various aspects of a question without resolving all uncertainty, discuss probabil-
ties yet not cast their lot with one possibility, declare two or more explanations equally plausible, and even speculate without damaging their credibility. Indeed, most historians deem it improper not to point out the ambiguities and gaps in their data.

To answer questions and explain discrepancies which historians might acknowledge without resolving, the courts have developed an arsenal of rules for interpreting incomplete, ambiguous and contradictory evidence. Such rules aim more at ensuring fairness or achieving policy objectives than at promoting the elucidation of historical reality.

The principles guiding the courts' construction of treaties with Indian tribes, for example, require that judges who find the language susceptible to more than one reasonable construction adopt the interpretation which the Indians probably give it or which most favors Indian interests. This doctrine reflects a policy of compensating for the fact that Indian treaty negotiators were usually at a great disadvantage: the treaties were always drafted by United States officials in English, often using technical terms, and the Indians usually could not read, did not speak English, and learned the treaties' contents through translators, sometimes in an extended chain of communication which included a limited trade jargon.

From the standpoint of a historian asked to ascertain and describe the intentions of the treaty parties, the courts' concise and one-sided restatement of the facts may seem inaccurate. But fair judges do not consciously distort facts or arrive at conclusions which disregard historical facts. They view the evidence in the light of overriding policies, including some which have evolved since the events in question. For example, although federal strategy for many years was geared to ending Indians' distinct status, the courts that construe the old assimilationist laws are aware of...
Since the ratification of the original treaties, expert testimony regarding Indian land claims has been frequently employed by regulatory agencies and courts of law. This testimony was submitted in 1891 to the chairman of the Puyallup Land Commission by U.S. Indian Agent Edwin Eells. The present policy favoring tribal self-determination. In order to reconcile past and present policy, judges may knowingly emphasize and base their decisions on facts which tell only part of the story.

It is worth emphasizing, too, that judges, unlike historians, must follow rules which limit the kinds of material they can even examine. The rules of evidence are in theory aimed at preventing judges or juries from considering statements whose reliability cannot be tested in court, material that is only marginally relevant to the central issue, or information that is likely to provoke an emotional reaction strong enough to override reason. Evidence rules also exist to ensure that court time is efficiently used and to keep trials focused. At the same time, they undeniably prevent judges from drawing on sources which historians would routinely consult.

Historians resort, for example, to second- or third-hand accounts, confident that they can assess each one's accuracy and importance. Historians also strive to understand the broad context of the events they describe. They often look at remotely related developments for the light those events may shed on such things as people's attitudes and influence. The rules of evidence, on the other hand, generally preclude judges from considering just such data, deeming second-hand accounts hearsay and much background information irrelevant.

When a judge declines to consider material because it is an unsworn statement made out of court, because it is repetitive, or because it is remote in time or place from the events on which the controversy is centered, a historian who has relied on such material for his conclusions may be dismayed. As indicated earlier, qualifying the historian as an expert witness makes possible the circumvention of these strictures to some extent. Nevertheless, the judge's application of evidence rules or other principles of law may thwart the witness' effort to present material he deems important. For instance, when the Muckleshoot Tribe claimed paramount rights in a reservation stream, the defendants sought to show through a reputable local historian that government officials had endorsed policies inconsistent with maintaining the reservation as an exclusive enclave where Indians could continue obtaining their subsistence from fish in the stream. The court indicated before trial began that it would not permit such testimony:
There is no question that many government officials in the last century hoped that Indians could be persuaded to adopt the lifestyle of independent farmers and to be assimilated into the mainstream of contemporary society. Clearly, the government's allotment policies were designed to further that end. There is no evidence, however, that the government intended to remove the Indians from their tribal reservations. Hence, even though the government policy was in fact inconsistent with a permanently segregated reservation for the exclusive use and occupancy of plaintiff's members, that fact is irrelevant to the issue in this case.

Unfamiliar rules of evidence and law are not the only hazards and frustrations awaiting historians who serve as consultants and expert witnesses in Indian litigation. Inherent in the adversarial process are a number of potential pitfalls. For one thing, although expected to provide an independent, objective opinion, the historian cannot help but be aware of his work's potential repercussions. He knows that the questions he is addressing arise from issues which need immediate resolution. Moreover, the questions are usually framed by advocates for a party with a stake in the impact of the expert's opinion. Particularly if the consultant has strong sympathies for one party, maintaining objectivity can be exceedingly difficult. Often the party's attorneys exacerbate this difficulty by deciding which arguments they wish to make and then asking whether the historian can find data to support such arguments.

Not infrequently the historical data cannot provide definitive answers to the questions the parties pose. The principles of treaty interpretation require that the courts determine what treaty-makers intended, but modern disputes often concern issues which those at the treaty probably neither foresaw nor formed any opinion about. Nevertheless, the conditions of the history experts' employment impel them to wrest from available sources the information that the litigants seek.

As a consequence of modern Indian rights cases, court records already contain a large volume of unique historical data, and future litigation will augment this library.

The consultants must then be prepared to defend their conclusions and methods against attacks more direct and hostile than academicians usually face. During pre-trial procedures and at trial, attorneys for the opposition may subject him to rigorous, even antagonistic examination. Although this questioning should aim primarily at testing the accuracy of the witness' conclusions, it may also focus on any aspects of his career or personal attributes that tend to diminish his credibility. A historian may thus be dismayed to find his professional efforts impugned for reasons which have little relationship to the soundness of his scholarship.

Finally, the differing perspectives of the judge and the historian can impede communication between the two. Some judges, mistrusting people who qualify their conclusions, highlight unknowns or weigh probabilities, may set greater store by witnesses who relate history in bold strokes, obscuring the contradictions and uncertainties that so often characterize human experience. In such circumstances, the judge may reject the testimony of a scholar who faithfully abides by the standards of academicians in favor of the conclusions of a witness who is less cautious, thorough and precise, but whose approach appears consonant with the court's values and priorities.

The credibility and persuasiveness of an expert witness can be the decisive factor in an Indian rights case. Judge Boldt considered the competing expert witnesses' demeanors, methodologies and experiences, and then accepted wholesale the conclusions of the witness he deemed more credible and reliable. But at other times judges, perhaps believing that they are as capable as any historian of interpreting historical documents, appear to give expert testimony very little weight.

Bewildering as participation in litigation can be for historians, it does have important positive features. Knowing that they will be subjected to the testing process of the adversary system should encourage historians who take part to produce high quality work. In addition, scholars involved in Indian rights cases have a rare opportunity to engage in research which has immediate relevance to practical matters of great importance. Finally, the need to answer questions raised by lawsuits has prompted the parties to subsidize historical research which might not otherwise be undertaken.

As long as there is a need to clarify the rights, resources and status of tribal Indians, there will be a concomitant need for high quality, unbiased scholarship relevant to the historical questions on which the tribes' claims turn. Such scholarship should contribute not only to a just resolution of the issues but also to our knowledge of Northwest history. As a consequence of modern Indian rights cases, court records already contain a large volume of unique historical data, and future litigation will augment this library. Viewed with an understanding of their origins, purposes and limitations, these court records can be a valuable resource for Northwest historians.

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In the small ranching community of Silver Lake in northern Lake County, Oregon, people still tell the story of the tragedy of Christmas Eve in 1894. That evening about 160 people had gathered for a program in the community hall on the second floor of J. H. Clayton's general store. Toward the end of the program a man stood up on one of the plank benches and accidentally knocked against a large kerosene lamp hanging overhead. The lamp overturned, spilling burning oil; within minutes the hall was full of flames and smoke.

The only exit from the room was through a door that opened onto an outside staircase. But as people rushed out onto the stairs from the upstairs rooms, and others tried to climb the stairs from below, the entire stairway pulled away from the building.
and collapsed. A few people managed to crawl through a small window onto a porch at the front of the building, but it also quickly gave way under their weight. Before the fire was extinguished, forty people were killed, three others were fatally burned, and many more were injured.

When the fire broke out, a young cowboy from a local ranch, Ed O'Farrell, set off on horseback for Dr. Bernard Daly, the closest physician, who lived in the county seat town of Lakeview, 100 miles to the south. O'Farrell stopped at ranches in the Summer Lake Valley and Chewaucan Valley along the way to spread the news of the fire, change horses, and arrange for buggy teams to be ready for the doctor's return trip. He made the trip in 19 hours, reaching Lakeview at four in the evening on Christmas Day; the doctor immediately set out for Silver Lake, arriving there on the morning of the 26th.

The story of Ed O'Farrell's ride exists in a number of versions, both oral and written. They differ from one another with regard to the amount of time the ride took, the weather conditions that O'Farrell encountered, and the number of times he changed horses; even O'Farrell's identity comes under question. On the surface, these discrepancies seem to detract from the story's believability. After all, the ride could have occurred only one way, so only one version of the story can be true. But the truth of the story may also reside, paradoxically, in the very fact that it exists in so many forms. That is, if we examine the contradictions among the different versions carefully, it becomes clear that they revolve around superficial details without altering the core of the story at all. What's important about the story is not how long the ride took or how much snow was on the ground or how many horses were used, but the fact that someone rode a very long way in a very short time under very difficult circumstances to get help. This bare bones structure is what all the versions of the story have in common. The details that elaborate on that structure simply call attention to the central theme of the story: the heroic effort needed to overcome the distance that separated the victims of the fire from the help they needed. The truth of the story thus lies in the way it highlights the physical isolation bred by space and distance that was, and is, characteristic of life in this ranching community.

Silver Lake is not unique among western communities. The experience of vast space and long distances has been endemic to the West as a region from the beginning of white settlement. The story thus reflects the historical reality of white settlement in the West, including the Pacific Northwest, as clustered near water, on arable land, along railroad routes, and around resource sites and urban centers. The result of these patterns is an "oasis civilization," in Wallace Stegner's words: clumps of population surrounded by varying amounts of "empty" space. And, as Robert Athearn has pointed out in his book, The Mythic West in the Twentieth Century, the isolation imposed by the distances between communities is "a Western condition that time has merely modified" but not obliterated. Indeed, while interstate highways, jet travel, and satellite television have considerably altered space/time relationships in the West, the realities of living in the region are still influenced by the distances between places and the time required to cover them. The western habit of computing travel distances in hours rather than miles persists to the present. It's likely, in fact, that one reason people in Silver Lake continue to tell the story of Ed O'Farrell's ride is that, while Silver Lake is now just a two-hour drive from Lakeview, the 100 miles between them is still perceived as a long way, and the human effort necessary to cover it on horseback in harsh weather is still imaginable.

Stories like that of Ed O'Farrell's ride occur throughout the West, recounted in local histories and oral traditions, in magazine articles and WPA guides, in popular collections of western tales and folk balladry. One such story describes Dave Crow's ride from northern Harney County, Oregon, to Winnemucca, Nevada, on the day after Christmas in 1897. Crow worked as a cowboy for cattle...
rancher Pete French, whose P Ranch took in thousands of acres of grazing lands north and west of Steens Mountain in Harney County. Through much of the 1890s French had been engaged in a series of legal and verbal battles with homesteaders who had settled on land he claimed as his own. On the afternoon of December 26, one of the homesteaders, Ed Oliver, shot and killed French about 30 miles north of ranch headquarters.

Crow, who witnessed the murder, immediately set off on a 200-mile ride to Winnemucca to telegraph the news of French's death to his family in California. His first stop was at ranch headquarters to change horses; although he changed mounts eight more times along the way, he paused only twice for brief rests. According to Crow himself, at the last stop, "the only fresh horse here was a small Indian pony hitched to a horse power water pump. This pony carried me on to Winnemucca just at 2 p.m., 48 hours after the shooting. I sent a wire to the Glens [French's relatives] at Chico."

Both Dave Crow and Ed O'Farrell made their rides in connection with community emergencies. Other stories of heroic rides in the Northwest stem from conflict between whites and Indians. One of these is set in the Lemhi River valley of Idaho where, in 1855, Mormons had established Fort Limhi as an Indian mission. The fort was attacked on February 25, 1858, by "250 hostile Bannock and Shoshoni braves." Three nights later two young men, Bauldwin Watts and Ezra Barnard,...

...after selecting and reshoeing the two best horses in the besieged Limhi corral,...had slipped out of the stockade on horseback to ride 300 miles or more for help...The pair had threaded silently past the Indian camps along the river, then galloped for the nearest Mormon settlement, closely pursued the first part of the way. They covered the frozen wilderness at an average of 50 miles a day to reach Bernard's Fort [near present-day Malad] in only six days.

Another heroic ride story in connection with white/Indian conflict is set in Montana during the Nez Perce uprising in 1877. Colonel John Gibbon had sent word to General Oliver Howard, camped 40 miles southwest of Missoula, that he and his troops were besieged in the Big Hole Basin. Howard commissioned Sergeant Oliver Sutherland to "push on day and night" to carry word to Gibbon that reinforcements were on the way. Sutherland's ride was plagued with difficulties. His Indian guide abandoned him almost immediately, leaving him to pick his way through the rugged Bitterroots alone. Then, just a day into his ride, he was injured in a fall from a fractious horse requisitioned from a ranch. Nevertheless, he reached Gibbon's camp 60 hours and some 170 miles after leaving his home base.

A third military heroic ride, this one in central Idaho, was that of Orlando "Rube" Robbins, who served as a scout in the Sheepeater Indian campaign in 1879. In early September he arrived in Idaho City with word that the supply train intended for Company G of the First Cavalry had been lost and that Captain Reuben Bernard and the 74 cavalrymen under his command were reduced to a sack of flour. Robbins "had ridden 160 miles in three days, in constant pain from a broken rib suffered when his horse fell and rolled on him."

There are stories about rides undertaken in the face of economic crises as well. In September 1855, Jules Remme of Sacramento, California, had just sold a herd of cattle for $12,500, an amount that represented his entire fortune, when he learned that the bank on which the buyer's draft was drawn had failed. His only chance to salvage his fortune was to reach the bank's Portland branch before the steamer arrived there bearing the news from San Francisco of the main bank's failure. Remme set off on the 700-mile ride up the Sacramento River valley, over Siskiyou Pass, and up the Rogue and Willamette river valleys, trading horses numerous times along the way. He arrived in Portland six days later, just as the steamer was docking, and managed to beat the disastrous news to the bank the next morning, cashing in his draft for gold.

Also determined to protect his property was cattleman Ben Snipes. In the spring of 1865, word reached him at his home at The Dalles on the Columbia River that his cattle herd at Osyoos Lake on the Washington-Canadian border was suffering from the ravages of a mosquito plague. Snipes chose his best horse and was on his way within the hour, cutting a course almost due north to make the fastest possible time, even though it meant crossing the icy Columbia River twice. He arrived at the cattle camp, 280 miles from The Dalles, in 62 hours.
These stories all bear some striking resemblances to one another: A dangerous, life-threatening or otherwise critical situation arises; someone goes to summon help, avert the disaster, or carry word of the event. He makes his trip on horseback, covering a considerable distance in a remarkably short time and under difficult circumstances; and he exhibits admirable perseverance, resourcefulness and stamina in the process. In addition to their similarities in plot, the stories are also alike in terms of their content.

Consider, for instance, the nature of the events that precipitated the rides. They were all, of course, unique occurrences—fire, murder, battle, bank failure, etc. Beneath the surface, however, they were similar kinds of events: they all represented, in some way, a challenge or threat to the established (or the establishment of) order. The heroic rider, by going for help or carrying the news of the event, or riding to prevent disaster, became the agent by which order was created, maintained or restored. Ed O'Farrell rode to fetch Dr. Daly to the scene of the fire in Silver Lake; Orlando Robbins carried word of a marooned cavalry unit; Ben Snipes hurried to rescue his cattle.

Even though the rides usually served a social purpose, all but one of them were accomplished by a lone horseman. Only in the story of Watts and Barnard is there more than one rider, reflecting perhaps the deeply ingrained Mormon habit of cooperative rather than individual action—and even they share a single horse toward the end of their journey.

The fact that most of the stories feature just a single individual suggests that the lone rider is an embodiment of the need to subordinate the desires of the individual to the good of the group while, simultaneously, upholding the deeply rooted American belief in the moral superiority of individual action. This point is underscored by the fact that the riders often undertake their missions on their own initiative. Their rides are thus made all the more heroic by the presumably selfless causes for which most of the rides are undertaken.

The riders also resemble one another in possessing the constellation of admirable qualities with which they are endowed in the stories. To a man, they faced difficulties and dangers that threatened the success of their missions. Ed O'Farrell made the first part of his ride at night; Orlando Robbins and Oliver Sutherland endured painful injuries while crossing rugged mountain terrain; Jules Remme forged a trail through a snow-covered pass; Ben Snipes swam across the Columbia River; Baldwin Watts and Ezra Barnard slipped out of Ft. Limhi undetected by Indian pickets. Almost all of the riders had to obtain fresh horses along their routes. Although Ben Snipes rode only one horse on his 280-mile ordeal, Dave Crow “changed horses nine times during the trip, commandeering a new mount when the one he was riding tired and a new one was available.” Watts and Barnard had just one horse between them by the end of their 300-mile trek. Jules Remme persuaded one reluctant rancher to sell him a horse by telling him he was a U.S. Marshal in pursuit of horse thieves. By the time he reached Portland, he could not remember “how many horses he had bought and sold.”

The riders also contended with hunger and fatigue as the haste of their departures, the urgency of their missions, and the length of their journeys often precluded taking adequate food along or stopping for sufficient rest along the way. During the last 48 hours of Watts' and Barnard's journey, “they had pushed ahead without food” and arrived at their destination "exhausted and half-frozen." On
the last leg of his journey, Jules Remme grew weak and light-headed from lack of food and had to fight to stay awake and keep his horse moving.

All of the men had not only the stamina and the wits to accomplish their assignments, but the sense of duty, determination and purpose—the grit—to motivate them to do so. An old man told Jules Remme that "nobody can ride from here to Portland a-horseback and beat that steamer," but Remme replied, "I aim to try, even if it kills me." In a similar vein, Oliver Sutherland "was aware that his severe injury in the lower spinal region could possibly incapacitate him for months. But that dispatch had to be delivered."

Naturally, there is a tremendous variation in the distances covered by the riders and in the relative speed with which they did so. For instance, it took Jules Remme six days to cover 700 miles, but Ezra Barnard and Baudlwin Watts spent the same amount of time traveling less than half that distance. Dave Crow rode over 200 miles in two days, while Orlando Robbins covered 160 miles in three. But in every story the relationship between distance and time is emphasized; indeed, the story is often summarized in those terms. "Robbins had ridden 160 miles in three days," reads the account of his ride; Barnard and Watts "covered the frozen wilderness at an average of 50 miles a day," according to their chronicler.

How can we account for the similarities among the stories of heroic rides, when clearly the events they describe are widely separated from one another in space and time? The most logical answer is that those who have shaped the rides into stories have unconsciously emphasized those aspects of the events that express the historical realities of the western regional experience in a dramatic and symbolic way. Specifically, the stories deal with three major themes: the fact of isolation created by the western environment, the historical process of extending white civilization into that environment, and the human qualities necessary to carry out that process in that setting.

The various localities described share the feature of physical separation from other settlements, which are often dozens or even hundreds of miles away; that separation is the crux upon which the story turns, for without it there would be no need for a heroic ride at all. This element of the story suggests that neither the event that precipitates the ride nor the identity of the rider is as critical to the meaning of the story as the conditions of distance and time that make the ride necessary.

Each of the rides is undertaken in response to a threat to the establishment and maintenance of white social and economic order in the western wilderness. The threat may come from the land itself, in the form of natural forces or Native inhabitants, or from economic or social disruptions or violence. Whatever its source, its impact is magnified by the sheer expanse of the land and the resultant separation of white settlements from one another. The heroic rider wages a personal battle with the land for the common good, confronting and overcoming the geographical chaos of a hostile environment to facilitate the historical process of imposing order on it.

All of the hardships that the riders face and overcome are associated with the wild and chaotic side of nature. Darkness and storms, treacherous terrain, swarthy enemies, even his own physical needs conspire against the rider. The emphasis in the stories on the difficulties of the ride not only heightens the drama inherent in the narrative action, but draws a sharp contrast between the forces of the wilderness and the human will, stamina and perseverance necessary to conquer them.

That process of conquest cast the Native inhabitants of the region as human embodiments of the wildness of the land. The prominence of the element of military conflict in the heroic ride stories thus mirrors one of the dominant themes in western American history: the bloody struggle by whites to establish political and cultural hegemony in the region.

The heroic ride stories successfully integrate these themes into what Robert Athearn has called the only true American epic. Not just an account of an incident in southeastern Oregon, or the Columbia River valley of Washington, or the Montana/Idaho border country, the heroic ride story reflects in microcosm a larger pattern of western history playing out repeatedly on the local level the broad theme of "how the West was won" by "men to match its mountains."

These stories clearly reveal that westerners perceive space as the fundamental fact of the western environment, the frontier process as the essence of western history, and grit as the premier quality of people who live in that environment and are engaged in that process. Seeing the heroic ride stories in this light explains why they have persisted in popular historical tradition from the nineteenth century to the present. Retelling them allows westerners to reaffirm their relationship with the land and to participate vicariously in the historical process of taking possession of it. As long as the prevailing theme of western history is that of establishing order in the wilderness, and as long as westerners continue to be concerned with distances between places and with the speed necessary to cover them in the shortest possible time, the heroic ride story will continue to resonate with meaning and will continue to be told.

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A SPECTACULAR BLAZE lit the sky over the Tacoma waterfront in the chill morning hours of January 31, 1947. The Centennial Mill, one of Tacoma's oldest industries and a waterfront landmark, was burning. The Orient-bound ship Hiram Maxim, waiting to load wheat from the mill, was forced to cast off from the loading dock when the fire became intense. By the end of the day all that was left of the 400,000 bushels of wheat was a 40-foot mountain of smoldering embers.

More than 150 firemen worked to subdue the blaze under severe January conditions at near-freezing temperatures. The strong off-shore wind that whipped spray from the hoses back into their faces also fanned the flames higher. Snow began to fall at noon. To make things worse, the city fireboat was partially immobilized due to an overhaul and was towed to the scene hours after the fire began. Unable to save the mill, the boat turned “Big Bertha,” its four-inch nozzle, onto neighboring Sperry Mill, preventing it from catching fire as well.

The following day firefighters were still manning three fire department pumps to keep the embers of the mountain of wheat from bursting into flame again. Losses ran to $2.5 million, making it one of the most devastating fires Tacoma has ever witnessed.

This photograph was recently donated to the Washington State Historical Society by Margaret Rowan.
It is difficult today to imagine how very large in circumference were the old-growth cedar and spruce trees of the Northwest. Many a pioneer spent the first night sheltered under the needled branches of a tall conifer or by the roundish, hollow-based remnant of a harvested evergreen tree. The latter were left by loggers who cut the main trunk above the twisted spread produced by the roots where they entered the soil. Only the straight grain lumber was harvested.

So these welcoming stumps remained, making their presence known by their size and serving hospitably for many purposes—homes for people, barns for animals, a photographic studio, and even a United States Post Office.

In 1847, the McAllister family moved from Bush Prairie, south of Tumwater, to Medicine Creek near the Nisqually River, where their first home was a large, hollow cedar stump. In her temporary home, Mrs. McAllister was able toream out and enlarge cubbyholes in the stump’s interior. Once the McAllisters built their permanent home, the stump was converted to a barn.

One huge old cedar stump on the east side of the Elwha River, about ten miles south and west of Port Angeles, became a local United States Post Office station. On June 20, 1892, William D. McDonald, the first postmaster of this remote area, opened the McDonald Post Office inside the stump, which stood south of the confluence of the Elwha and Little rivers. We know from the many surviving photographs of this stump that it sported three different roofs.

When McDonald sold his land to Thomas H. Stringham in 1898, Stringham took over as postmaster. He decided he needed more room, so he built a lean-to against the stump. The story goes that when a postal inspector came to Elwha and saw this conglomeration, he pronounced the stump and its lean-to a disgrace; therefore, the addition was removed and a new rectangular, six-sided roof was added.

The Paul Laufields bought the Stringham property some time about 1899, and later sold it to Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Eblin. Postal records tell us that Mr. Eblin was the postmaster until the post office was moved across the Elwha River to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Coventon on March 24, 1902. The site was higher on the west side of the river, and was reached by crossing the covered McDonald bridge to the area called Elwha, which became the name of the post office.

This monarch stump still stands today, occupying the same square footage it did in its post office days, but lacking some of the majestic height it formerly held. Time and nature’s ravages have taken a toll. It would certainly need a much larger roof now, as well as wall sections to fill the widening vents between the reaching roots.

Wilderness STUMPS
A Unique Pioneer Housing Alternative

This freshly cut stump appears sturdily to support its open-ended shed roof, which would probably not prove weatherproof on a stormy day.

By Harriet U. Fish

Harriet U. Fish is author and illustrator of ten books, primarily on Pacific Northwest history, and historian for the Clallam County Sheriff’s Department and the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs in Olympia.
This old-growth spruce tree, said to have stood near Clallam Bay where these trees thrived, was made useful by man's ingenuity even to the extended roof entrance built between roots. Here photographer Peter Wischmeyer developed his pictures.

Peter Wischmeyer photo, Bert Kellogg Collection
A
ger after dozing for three years, Mount St. Helens awoke abruptly last January, showering ash over Yakima and other parts of eastern Washington. If the volcano follows the pattern set during the nineteenth century, it will remain intermittently—and violently—active for decades to come.

Despite the publicity St. Helens attracts, most Americans are still unaware of the potential dangers to life and property represented by the many other volcanoes in the Cascade range. Extending from northern California into southwest British Columbia, the Cascades contain at least 20 major volcanic centers that have produced a minimum of 90 large eruptions during the last 10,000 years. Several volcanoes, including Glacier Peak, St. Helens, and Mount Mazama (Crater Lake) have produced explosive eruptions of such cataclysmic proportions that, if repeated today, would create a regional disaster.

During the much briefer span of historic time, roughly the last 250 years in the Pacific Northwest, as many as 11 Cascade volcanoes have erupted, some with destructive intensity. A century ago few persons lived in areas affected by the historic eruptions; today many thousands of people live or vacation in these areas, making potential hazards from future eruptions a serious issue.

Concern about Mount St. Helens' sister peaks is not merely academic, for during St. Helens' last eruptive cycle, 1800 to 1857, no fewer than seven other Cascade volcanoes were also reported in eruption. It is possible that Mount St. Helens' current activity may introduce a new episode of Cascade volcanism comparable to that which took place during the first half of the nineteenth century. Even if St. Helens' awakening in 1980 ultimately proves to be an isolated event, other Cascade volcanoes inevitably will erupt at some future time. In considering what kind of eruptions the future may bring, it is useful to know as much as possible about the volcanoes' eruptive behavior in the recent past.

Historic Eruptions and Their Implications for the Future
By Stephen L. Harris

Because most of the historic activity was viewed from a considerable physical distance by untrained observers, it is necessary to use caution in evaluating the reports. In some cases, it seems likely that forest fires or dust clouds kicked up by rockfalls were mistaken for eruptions. In other instances, genuine eruptions took place that are difficult to confirm. Ejec-
Volcanoes

Eruptions of ash-laden steam can produce impressive volcanic clouds, visible at a distance of many miles, but they typically leave so thin a deposit of powdery ash that it is quickly eroded away. Of the dozen or more ash columns sighted at Mount St. Helens between 1842 and 1857, only one left an ash layer that is recognizable today. Even the relatively large ashfall that Lassen Peak deposited in 1915 has largely disappeared. Human activities can also destroy evidence of volcanic deposits, such as Baker Lake reservoir, which inundated areas affected by Mount Baker’s 1843 eruptions.

In determining which reported eruptions are authentic, a few simple criteria are helpful. We may assume that an eruption occurred when one or more of the following conditions is met: 1) the presence of volcanic deposits that can be dated to the last two or three centuries; 2) direct observation of eruption-related damage to the physical environment, such as the destruction of timber or pollution of streams; 3) multiple reports of ash clouds large enough to be visible at great distances, descriptions of rock fragments being hurled into the air above the volcano, and/or specific references to the darkening or discoloration of the volcano’s snow cover by ashfalls or mudflows; 4) sightings of “fire” or incandescent material in the erupting crater, especially when accompanied by reports of “explosions” or “thunder.” Crude as these standards are, they help to distinguish a bona fide eruptive event from the heat and steam emissions that commonly precede or follow it. Use of these criteria, for example, suggests that Mount Baker...
erupted in 1792 and on several occasions between 1843 and 1880, but produced only thermal activity thereafter.

By far, the best documented pre-1980 activity was that of Lassen Peak in northern California. The world’s largest plug dome, formed about 11,000 years ago when a thick, pasty mass of lava was extruded on the shoulder of an older volcano, Lassen erupted repeatedly between 1914 and 1917. The first year’s activity consisted entirely of steam-blast (phreatic) eruptions caused by the slow rise of molten rock into the dome’s interior. Groundwater inside the structure flashed into steam, expanding the volume a thousandfold and blasting open a new crater at the summit. The columns of “smoke” that rose 10,000 to 12,000 feet above Lassen’s crest were really plumes of steam permeated with volcanic ash, pulverized rock blown from the volcano’s throat. When molten rock reached the surface in mid-May, 1915, it oozed over much of Lassen’s broad summit and spilled through a notch in the western rim of the crater, forming a tongue of rough, slaggy lava about 1,000 feet long and 300 feet wide at the crater lip. A larger lava stream disintegrated on Lassen’s steep northeastern face. Red-hot lava blocks tumbling down snowfields may have triggered the mudflows, chaotic mixtures of meltwater and rock debris, that swept 20 miles down Lost Creek the night of May 19-20. A more fluid arm of the mudflow surmounted a 150-foot high divide and plunged into Hat Creek valley, where floods traveled 20 miles downstream, causing dozens of homesteaders to scurry for their lives and burying several farms in mud about three feet deep.

The eruptive cycle reached its climax on the afternoon of May 22, 1915, when Lassen expelled a huge cauliflower cloud that rose an estimated seven miles above the volcano. Winds carried the ash cloud eastward across the Nevada desert, covering the villages of Inlay, Elko, Winnemucca, Wells and Montello with gray-white ash. Although the climactic outburst lasted little more than two hours, it produced a sizeable quantity of pumice, fragments of glassy, porous rock, and deposited a narrow lobe of ash across northeastern Nevada as far as the Nevada-Utah border.

The most devastating aspect of the eruption was a pyroclastic flow, a ground-hugging avalanche of hot gasses and incandescent rock fragments, that swept 4.5 miles down Lassen’s northeast flank into the valley heads of Lost and Hat creeks, destroying 5.5 million board feet of timber and, in some places, scouring the ground down to bedrock. Another mudflow poured through the devastated area, while four smaller mudflows streamed down the west and southwest sides of the dome as far as Manzanita Lake.

Lassen remained sporadically active until June 1917, when explosive activity ceased. Voluminous columns of steam continued to rise intermittently from several vents until February 1921. Steam vents in two of the summit craters remained active into the 1950s, and even today infrared images reveal hot spots on the dome.

At the northern end of the range, four of the five large volcanos in Washington have erupted during historic time. In 1800 St. Helens produced a large ash eruption, about the same volume as that of 1980, that blanketed the same areas of eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

In 1800 St. Helens produced a large ash eruption, about the same volume as that of 1980, that blanketed the same areas of eastern Washington and northern Idaho.

Mount Rainier erupted again on one or more occasions between 1820 and 1854, scattering a small volume of pumice over its eastern flanks. This minor event apparently did not trigger significant mudflows, but even moderate-sized future eruptions are likely to affect settlements for many miles downvalley on the east, south and west flanks of the mountain.

Glacier Peak, a relatively small cone perched atop Lime Ridge in the North Cascades, has erupted exceptionally large quantities of fragmental material since the end of the Ice Age. According to recent studies, Glacier Peak has produced nine major eruptive cycles during the last 5,500 years, most of which devastated areas many tens of miles from its summit. Thick pumice deposits extend from Glacier Peak across eastern Washington and even...
thicker mudflow deposits stretch down-valley from the volcano westward into the Puget Lowlands. Indians reported to pioneer ethnologist George Gibbs that they remembered the mountain "smoking," a reminder that this little-known fire mountain is far from dead.

Ice-sheathed Mount Baker, standing 15.5 miles south of the Canadian boundary, holds the historic record for the greatest number of reported events extending over the longest period of time. Spanish explorers noted that Baker was active in June 1792, only a month after George Vancouver had given the peak its present name. Small ash eruptions occurred intermittently until 1880.

Some of Mount Baker's 26 logged eruptions may have produced molten material, but most were steam-triggered expulsions of old, heat-decayed rock from Sherman Crater. A large bowl-shaped vent separating Baker's higher northern summit from a lesser southern peak, Sherman Crater was probably formed during a violent eruptive cycle about 8,700 years ago. Next to that of Mount St. Helens, Mount Baker's crater is the hottest and most thermally active in the Cascade range, commonly spewing jets of steam that are visible for miles.

From all accounts, Baker's most destructive nineteenth-century eruption took place in 1843. Hudson's Bay officers testified that Mount Baker "covered the whole country with ashes," while Indians reported that the Skagit River was obstructed and "all the fish died." George Gibbs, who visited the area a few years later, concluded that the Skagit salmon were killed "by the quantity of cinders and ashes brought down by the [Baker River]," which drains the volcano's east flank. It seems likely that steam explosions or earthquakes triggered avalanches of hydrothermally-altered rock from the east wall of Sherman Crater, creating mudflows that traveled down Boulder Glacier into the Baker and Skagit rivers.

Miners exploring Baker's east side some time after 1843 described a devastated area "two or three miles wide" covered with "black volcanic rock and sand, upon which were vast piles of half-burned timber apparently swept down by [the mudflow]."

Early climbers' reports indicate that slides or mudflows seem to have issued through the large gap in the crater's eastern rim on later occasions as well. Small mudflows have taken place in the same vicinity during the last two decades.

George Davidson, an engineering geologist stationed at Rosario Strait, about 40 miles west of Mount Baker, had his telescope focused on the volcano in 1854 when he witnessed an eruption. "...I found the whole summit of the mountain suddenly obscured by vast rolling masses of dense smoke, which in a few minutes reached an estimated height of two thousand feet...." Storm clouds blocked the view until the next day, when Davidson "...discovered the snow covering [Baker] was apparently melted away for two or three thousand feet below the two [peaks]. Of course the snow may not have been melted, but only covered with ashes and scoriae...." Four years later, observers in Victoria, British Columbia, reported that "...night clouds over Mount Baker were brilliantly illuminated by the light from an eruption."

At Baker, Rainier and several other Cascade volcanoes, hot water percolating through summit rock has transformed...
A year after Mount St. Helens ended a decade of quiet with the eruption of 1842, Mount Baker came out of retirement to produce its largest outburst of the nineteenth century.

Mount Baker's recent dramatic increase in heat and steam emission preceded Mount St. Helens' 1980 eruptions by only five years. Viewed in the context of the historical record, this change in the volcano's behavior may be significant. A year after Mount St. Helens ended a decade of quiet with the eruption of 1842, Mount Baker came out of retirement to produce its largest outburst of the nineteenth century. In the 1850s the two volcanoes erupted almost simultaneously on several occasions, a phenomenon noted by contemporary observers.

Between the Columbia River region along the Washington-Oregon boundary and northern California, there is a major gap in the chain of volcanoes active in the historic era. Mount Hood, standing about 20 miles south of the Columbia and 50 miles east of Portland, is the only Oregon volcano for which we have a record of authenticated eruptions. In recent geologic time, Mount Hood has staged three major eruptive cycles, all of which produced thick tongues of sticky lava at or near the...
site of Crater Rock, a massive lava dome located about 1,000 feet south of the summit. According to tree-ring dating of Hood's latest eruptive deposits, the volcano was repeatedly active roughly between the years 1760 and 1810. Lava oozing from vents near Crater Rock melted glacial ice, sending mudflows tens of miles down the Sandy and White river drainages. Some flood and/or mudflows swept the entire length of the Sandy River valley and emptied into the Columbia.

About 1800, the same year that Mount St. Helens ended a long dormant interval with a violently explosive eruption, Mount Hood ejected a large pyroclastic flow into the upper White River valley, generating mudflows that inundated Tygh Valley before emptying into the Deschutes River. Gray ash, perhaps derived from blocks of hot lava avalanching from Crater Rock, blanketed the cone up to a depth of seven inches. Hood was apparently quiet when Lewis and Clark sighted it in 1805-06, but revived again in the mid-nineteenth century. Eyewitness accounts in 1859 and 1865-66 specifically refer to the ejection of rock fragments into the air, ashfalls blackening snowfields, a "flame...that illuminated the whole mountainside with its pinkish glare" and the discovery of "hot cinders" on Hood's slopes. The thin sprinkling of gray pumice on the south, east and northeast sides of Mount Hood may derive from one or more of the historic eruptions.

Franklin Hinds, who observed the 1865-66 activity from Portland, excitedly remarked on the public's tendency to ignore a potential volcanic threat. In a letter to his family, Hinds notes that Hood's flare-ups do not "create as much excitement here as you would naturally suppose, the morning paper speaks of it as an item of news and it is soon again forgotten in the hum of business."

LEFT: Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980, from the west. Note that while a cloud of ash rises vertically, a laterally-directed pyroclastic flow pours northward through the huge gap created by the collapse of the volcano's north side.

A second Oregon volcano also may have been active in the 1850s, although the reported eruption meets few of the criteria for substantiating a genuine event. In July 1853 a Presbyterian missionary then stationed in the Willamette Valley wrote that he had witnessed "one of the Three Sisters [at least 100 miles distant] belching forth from its summit dense volumes of smoke..." If the missionary saw a real eruption, it must have been a small steam explosion at the South Sister, which is the youngest volcano is the Sisters group and the only large cone in Oregon with a perfectly preserved summit crater. The South Sister's last eruption of molten rock occurred more than 1,900 years ago, and produced the Newberry lava flow that dammed Fall Creek to create the Green Lakes, as well as the chain of glittering obsidian domes visible from the Cascade Lakes Highway southwest of Bend. If South Sister did stage a minor steam eruption in 1853, the small quantity of ash expelled would have left no trace detectable today.

While most of Oregon's many fire mountains have been virtually comatose during historic time, several in northern California, including two in Lassen Volcanic National Park, were part of the mid-nineteenth-century volcanic renaissance. Immediately northwest of Lassen Peak are the Chaos Crags, a cluster of steep lava domes extruded about 1,100 years ago. Approximately three centuries ago a series of large rockfalls, possibly triggered by the extrusion of a new dome or a steam explosion, created the Chaos Jumbles, a blocky avalanche deposit that covers 4.5 square miles. The Crags were observed steaming as late as 1854-57.

Cinder Cone, a symmetrical pile of fragmental rock surrounded by extensive lava flows in the northeastern corner of Lassen Park, is the only volcano of its kind to erupt during the historic period. Since its birth about 400 years ago, Cinder Cone has undergone several distinct cycles of activity, producing a series of lava flows during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and an ash eruption in the mid-nineteenth century. According to eye-witness reports, activity in 1850-51 generated a glow bright enough to be
ABOVE: The close proximity of Mount Rainier to neighboring population centers is clearly illustrated in this central downtown Tacoma view dating from 1911. The enormous ice cap poses the volcano's most serious threat, in the form of mudflows, to towns in river valleys heading on the mountain.

RIGHT: As the Juan de Fuca plate slides beneath the Pacific Northwest coast and plunges into the hot mantle, water in the descending slab is boiled off, lowering melting temperatures in the upper mantle and creating pockets of molten rock (magma) that erupt on the surface to form the long line of Cascade volcanoes.
visible from many different locations in northern California. One observer traveling on Nobles' Emigrant Trail, which skirts the base of the cone, stated that he found "hot cinders" covering the ground.

California's highest and only glacier-bearing volcano, Mount Shasta (elevation 14,141 feet), poses the greatest potential threat to nearby population centers. Shasta has erupted 10 or 11 times during the last 3,400 years and at least 3 times in the last 750 years. A recent study notes that Shasta does not erupt at regular intervals, but its history suggests that it erupts at the average rate of roughly once per 250 to 300 years. The chances that it will erupt during a person's lifetime are one in three or four.

Future eruptions are likely to resemble those of the recent geologic past. About 200 years ago Shasta ejected an avalanche of incandescent rock fragments 9 miles down its southeast flank and produced mudflows that extended about 16 miles down the east side. Similar but much older deposits underlie 43 square miles along the volcano's western base, including the townsites of Weed and Mount Shasta. The village of McCloud sits atop very recent mudflow deposits. The explorer La Perouse, sailing off the northern California coast in 1786, apparently witnessed part of Shasta's last significant activity and described "the flame" of a night eruption in his ship’s log. A small ash eruption at the summit was reported as late as the mid-1850s.

Nearly 35 miles east of Mount Shasta, the Medicine Lake volcano, about 130 cubic miles in volume, is the largest structure of its kind in the lower 48 states. Extensive sheets of basaltic lava mantle its outer slopes, including those underlying Lava Beds National Monument at its northern foot. Basaltic lavas usually erupt quietly, but the Medicine Lake volcano also produces molten rock that is gas-rich and highly explosive. Less than 1,000 years ago vents near the summit spewed large quantities of pumice, followed by massive effusions of obsidian lava, forming Glass Mountain and Little Glass Mountain. In 1910 a local rancher saw "flames" issuing from vents atop Glass Mountain and noted that nearby vegetation had been coated by a light ashfall. A series of minor earthquakes recorded beneath the volcano in late 1988 suggests that future eruptions are possible.

The historic record and geologic evidence agree that Mount St. Helens did not erupt alone during the last century. Between about 1840 and 1860, during the close of St. Helens' last eruptive period, as many as seven other Cascade volcanoes were also active. In the 1850s up to five volcanoes erupted in the same year. Is this temporal clustering of historic activity a coincidence, or does it have implications for the future? The geologic record is too incomplete to determine whether large eruptions at individual Cascade volcanoes are typically accompanied by activity at other peaks in the range. We do not know what triggered the near-synchronous rise of molten rock into the northern and southern ends of the range during the mid-1800s. Nor do we know whether the century of near-quiet between 1880 and 1980—significantly interrupted only by Lassen Peak—is more typical of the volcanoes' behavior than the earlier flurry of activity.

Baker, Hood and Shasta erupted shortly before St. Helens' reawakening in 1980, but were then quiet for several decades before they and four others joined St. Helens late in its eruptive cycle. If recent history offers a key to the future, it may be 30 years or more before some of the historically active Cascade volcanoes repeat their behavior.

When St. Helens' sister peaks revive, we cannot be sure that they will behave as moderately as they did in the 1800s. Some future eruptions may be as large or larger than any that have occurred since the Ice Age ended 10,000 years ago. The high ice-shrouded cones at the northern end of the range, particularly Rainier, Baker, Glacier Peak, and Hood, are likely to produce extensive floods and mudflows, some of which could endanger populated areas as far as 50 to 65 miles downvalley from the volcano. Glacier Peak and Mount St. Helens have repeatedly ejected as much as a cubic mile or more of pumice during single eruptive episodes, creating downwind ashfalls that today would create far greater havoc than did St. Helens' outburst in 1980.

The most catastrophic Cascade eruption known occurred about 6,900 years ago when Mount Mazama blew out enormous volumes of pumice, suffocating over 500,000 square miles of the Pacific Northwest under a blanket of buff-orange ash. The eruption destroyed Mazama's former summit, which collapsed to form the six-mile-wide basin now holding Crater Lake. That kind of cataclysmic event does not happen often, but it represents a sobering worst-case scenario for future volcanic hazards. More moderate eruptions at Hood, Shasta, Baker, Rainier and other Cascade peaks are inevitable. A repetition of even the comparatively small historic eruptions could adversely affect the lives of thousands of people from northern California to the Canadian boundary.

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E. B. White was one of the greatest masters of the English language who ever lived. A careful stylist with an eye for a good phrase and a funny line, he suffered and struggled with his sentences until they came out just as he wanted them. His children’s books, such as Stuart Little, Charlotte’s Web and Trumpet of the Swan, have charmed millions of readers. During his long career as a poet, essayist and humorist, White earned a unique place in American literature. His friend and colleague James Thurber said that White was the most valuable person on the staff of *The New Yorker* and the man who gave the magazine its distinctive voice and quiet sense of humor.

White once explained that he wanted to be a foreign correspondent. The problem, he said, was that, “unlike other correspondents, I seldom went anywhere or did anything... Instead of being in London, I was home. Instead of being in Karachi, I was in the barn, or in the bathtub.” To remove this obstacle, he imagined a new compass with his office in mid-town Manhattan as the center. Anything he wrote east of this point appeared in *The New Yorker* as a “Letter from the East,” and “by merely walking half-a-block over to Sixth Avenue, I was in a position to write a ‘Letter from the West.’” The system was convenient. “All I had to do was sit down anywhere, and I was somewhere.”

When he was in his early twenties, however, White traveled far west of Sixth Avenue. In 1922 he and a college friend set out across the country in a Model T Ford, eventually landing in Seattle. The year he spent in the Pacific Northwest marked a turning point in his life. The trip inspired several of his most famous essays and served as the model for the travels of Stuart Little, one of White’s most unforgettable characters. White’s own voyage of youthful discovery took him to Yakima, Seattle, Alaska and the shores of Siberia. Ultimately it led back to the East Coast in the fall of 1923, where he found a home on the staff of *The New Yorker* three years later.

Elwyn Brooks White was born in Mount Vernon, New York, in 1899. He
graduated in 1921 from Cornell University, where he had edited the student newspaper. After graduation he tried unsuccessfully to get a job as a newspaper reporter in New York. He was working unhappily as a public relations man in New York City when he learned that his college friend Howard Cushman had flunked out of Cornell. He quit his job and arranged to join Cushman on a long-dreamed-of cross-country trek in White’s $400 Model T Ford. They planned to camp out when necessary, sing for their supper in fraternity houses, and work odd jobs. The two aspiring journalists also hoped to raise money with a syndicated column describing their adventures.

Equipped with camping gear, an army foot locker of supplies bolted to the left running board, and two Corona typewriters, the two literary men of the road left New York in March 1922. White dubbed his Model T “Hotspur.”

On the open road the two young men found a great sense of exhilaration. “The highway was a blazed trail of paint-rings on telegraph poles,” White wrote years later. “It was a westering trace marked by arrows whittled out of shingles and tacked negligently to the handiest tree. In many places the highway seemed non-existent—just a couple of ruts in the plain—but the Model T was not a fussy car. It sprang cheerfully toward any stretch of wasteland whether there was a noticeable road under foot or not.”

White and Cushman both worked at a succession of small jobs as they headed west, including washing dishes, playing the piano in a cafe, cutting hay and digging ditches; nevertheless, their money ran out. In a moment of “starvation” in Montana, White sold his Corona for $20. The other typewriter had to be sacrificed as well, when the tires of the Model T began to repeatedly puncture and blow out in the Northern Rockies. White walked 30 miles to exchange the second Corona for one Goodyear tire and $7.50. His spirits brightened considerably 11 miles out of Spokane, when Hotspur “glided upon a concrete road—the first pavement since Minnesota.”

Harvest time in the Yakima Valley in 1922 found White and Cushman picking peaches and Bartlett pears for 10 hours a day at 30 cents an hour. Though the weather was hot and the work grueling, White always fondly remembered the irrigated fields and orchards of eastern Washington.

“I never dreamed that there was any country like it,” he wrote. “All around it are the bare brown sand-hills, sizzling and baking under a relentless sun. Everywhere are the ditches—little invisible streams of water tapped from the main flume which comes down from the Cascades. Every hillside in the valley is laden with fruit, and in the leveller fields grows alfalfa-hay, a rich green crop, almost before the previous crop has been stacked. There is no rain. In the mornings and evenings the brown hills are streaked with great black shadows and the world is cool. Mount Adams and Mount Rainier rise white in the west.”

After a month of picking and packing fruit in Yakima, White and Cushman drove on to Seattle in September 1922. Here they split up. Cushman was unable to find work and continued south to California, but White stayed in Puget Sound because he had finally landed his first and only real newspaper job, as a reporter for the Seattle Times.

With a salary of $40 a week, White could once again afford to own a cheap typewriter. He also began looking for a small apartment or perhaps “a quiet houseboat down on the waterfront.”

The best part of Seattle was the natural setting of the city. “This morning I walked down on the lake front and enjoyed the sights,” he wrote his mother one Sunday afternoon. “Some cities have one or perhaps two residential sections; Seattle has at least thirty. I discover a new one every time I go walking. With half-a-

The Six Brown Brothers—Fred, Harry, Tom, Alec, Cecil and Vern—were a popular roaring twenties saxophone orchestra. They played for the passengers on the 1923 Alaska cruise of the Buford. This photograph of the Brown Brothers at the Akutan Whaling Station in front of a dead whale, with “their sax-phones at the ready,” was one of White’s treasured keepsakes from Alaska.
dozen hills, two lakes and Puget Sound, Seattle's situation is most favorable for beautiful homes." One of his favorite pastimes was riding the Yesler Way streetcar down to the end of the line at Lake Washington. White also enjoyed walking along the waterfront where there were "square riggers lying at anchor, veiled in mist and sunrays."

But he wished for more sun. White said Seattle was "a very peculiar city," and he found its endless rain to be nearly unbearable. He told his father, "You would laugh at the people. They won’t admit that it rains here...and it rains all the time." In a short poem he described Seattle as the:

City of mists in the morning
City of rains at night
City of hills unnumbered
City of too little light....

E. B. White's short career at the Seattle Times proved him to be an abysmal newspaper reporter. He didn't like the routine or the regimentation, and thought the Times "entirely unreadable." After ten months he was fired. As White explained years later, "I operated, generally, on too high a level for routine reporting, and had not at that time discovered the eloquence of facts. I can see why the Times fired me. A youth who persisted in rising above facts must have been a headache to a city editor."

During his tenure at the Seattle Times, the editors had recognized White's talent, but were never certain what to do with him. "The Times sucks me on feature stuff," White said in January 1923, "because the city editor discovered early in the game that city politics appear only in humorous light to me."

Two months later the publisher asked White to write a new humor column. White said he jumped at the chance, but was disappointed when he realized that his boss had "conceived the column as a device for stimulating his classified advertising section." The publisher "named the column 'Personal Column,' ordered it set in the style of classified ads, and directed that it be run in the classified section, where, of course, it was almost indistinguishable from the ads themselves."

The column didn't attract much of an audience. White said, "Most of the readers of the Times, I think, never knew of the existence of the Personal Column." Nevertheless, White enjoyed writing jokes, poems and capsule essays, which later became his stock in trade at The New Yorker. Seattle was probably not yet ready for White's sense of humor, even when he used local material.

White loved to play with Washington place names, especially the name Walla Walla (which Howard Cushman had called Walla Ditto). "Wouldn't it bedroll," the columnist said, "if all names were double like Walla Walla? We would like to run over to Puyallup Puyallup for the weekend." He also suggested "Sedro-Woolley-Woolley."

White's career as a columnist ended suddenly when he was fired by the Times in June 1923. Yet, as he walked down Pine Street with his last paycheck in his pocket, he was happy. "I can still recall experiencing an inner relief," he wrote, "the feeling of again being adrift in life's sea, an element I felt more at home in...."
than in a city room.”

For a few weeks White had no idea what to do next. He stayed up until two or three in the morning, swam alone at night in the Lake Washington ship canal, and subscribed to two New York newspapers. He was “a poet who met every train,” and every ship that reached Seattle. And he was unemployed. A ship that caught his fancy was the steamship Buford, leaving on a 40-day cruise to Alaska sponsored by the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. For three days he tried to get a job on the Buford. Finally he decided instead to buy a ticket as far as his money would take him, to Skagway, at the head of the Inside Passage.

As White later admitted, “To start for Alaska this way, alone and with no assurance of work and a strong likelihood of being stranded in Skagway, was a dippy thing to do, but I believed in giving Luck frequent workouts.”

During the first part of the cruise White was a first class passenger, enjoying “The Country of a Thousand Wonders” from the promenade deck. White said, “I still remember how the passengers looked, leaving their bridge table to rush to the rail and see one of the ‘thousand wonders’ and then back to the bridge game again.” In the evening he danced with other passengers to the music of the “Six Brown Brothers,” an internationally-known saxophone orchestra.

The day of reckoning for White came when the Buford docked at Skagway. He was forlornly waiting on deck with his suitcase and typewriter, about to be forced ashore, when the captain mercifully offered him a job as a night saloonsman to earn his passage back to Seattle. White eagerly accepted the job. Though some of his fellow passengers were puzzled by his “metamorphosis from passenger to saloonsman,” he appears to have enjoyed his stint as a workaway seaman. The Buford steamed around the coast of Alaska and into the Bering Sea, stopping at Seward, Dutch Harbor, Nome, St. Lawrence Island, East Cape, Siberia, and other ports-of-call. By the time the Buford returned to Seattle in September 1923, White had decided that it was time for him to go back home. “I was headed now toward the south and the east, toward unemployment and the insoluble problem of what to do with myself. My spice route to nowhere was behind me....”

Nearly 40 years later, when Alaska became the 49th state, White began “digging into my journal for the year 1923, hoping to discover in its faded pages something instructive about the new state.” Instead he wrote “The Years of Wonder,” a marvelous essay about the dreams of youth and his own personal adventure in Alaska. “I was rather young to be so far north, but there is a period near the beginning of every man’s life when he has little to cling to except his unmanageable dream, little to support him except good health, and nowhere to go but all over the place.”

E. B. White captured the spirit of his adventures in the Pacific Northwest in Stuart Little, his first children’s book, published in 1945. Stuart is a New York boy who is about two inches tall and looks and acts “very much like a mouse.” His bed is an empty cigarette box, and he wears a gray hat and carries a small cane. At the end of the book Stuart fills up his little car with five drops of gas and heads north, searching for a vision of beauty and truth—somewhat like a young man in the summer of 1922 who drove to Seattle in a Model T Ford.

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Goldfield Gateway
Seattle Opens up Alaska at the Turn of the Century

ON A RECENT RAINY DAY I trudged through Lakeview Cemetery near Volunteer Park in Seattle looking for Johnny Healy. Finding the family plot confirmed what I knew of Healy's life. None of the grand schemes of his latter years, including that for a railroad linking North America and Asia via Alaska, came to anything. He died broke.

Healy was a visionary who helped give Seattle its predominant place in the lucrative Alaska-Yukon trade. In 1892 he founded the North American Trading and Transportation Company to challenge the dominance of the Alaska Commercial Company on the Yukon River. He figured that the time was ripe for a major gold discovery that would open up the north. Because Healy found his capital in Chicago, the principal headquarters was there, but Seattle gained an important shipping office.

It was not inevitable that Seattle would come to dominate the Alaskan trade. Few people in Seattle had any firsthand knowledge of Alaska in 1897. What was there to know unless you were involved in the fisheries?

But the arrival of the Portland on July 17 stirred consciousness of northern prospects wonderfully. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer proclaimed the glad tidings:

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Sixty Eight Rich Men on the Steamer Portland
Stacks of Yellow Metal
Some Have $5,000, Many Have More, and a Few Bring Out $100,000 Each
The Steamer Carries $700,000

By William R. Hunt
The crowd scene at the docking of the Portland readily conveys the excitement generated by the arrival of "a ton of gold" during a time of severe economic depression.

Rarely has a newspaper carried so significant a headline for a city's future prospects. Residents of the depression-ridden town flocked to the waterfront to marvel over the presence of stern-visaged Wells Fargo Express Company guards overseeing the removal of the precious baggage. And they watched the proud miners—sudden celebrities—march down the gangplank with a certain air of confidence.

John Wilkerson had $50,000; Dick McNulty had $20,000; Frank Phiscator had $96,000. Others had other amounts; all had rousing stories to tell.

Some of these men of legend possessed style enough to elaborate on their good fortune in detail. To newsmen and saloon patrons they described their hardships and their triumphs in the little-known north. They told of mining methods, the continuing hunt for bountiful creeks, and advised on the best routes to the goldfields.

Seattle was at once and forever enchanted with gold and the prospects of Alaska after the docking of that golden ship. But more to the point, its businessmen rallied to the opportunities. The chamber of commerce placed Erastus Brainerd in charge of alerting the world to certain facts: that Seattle was the northernmost rail terminal and seaport, and that it was the most experienced center of northern outfitting.

Thousands of advertisements were placed in newspapers all over the Midwest. In Illinois alone, 488 weekly newspapers carried ads for Seattle. To find out anything about the Klondike and Alaska, Brainerd advised, just write to the Seattle Chamber of Commerce. National periodicals—Munsey's, McClure's, Harper's—and others—also carried Seattle ads. When migrants reached Seattle they were encouraged to write to their local newspapers to describe their good reception in the Queen City. Brainerd provided stationery, postage, and even the message. A special Klondike edition of the Post-Intelligencer of 212,000 copies was sent to newspapers all over the country. In addition, 70,000 copies went to United States postmasters, 6,000 to public libraries, 4,000 to city mayors, and 15,000 to transcontinental railroads.

Brainerd's energy in establishing and maintaining a special information office within the chamber of com-
Merchants of all kinds were anxious to reap their share of monetary benefits from the gold rush. These ads from a North America Transportation and Trading Company booklet on Alaska are a small sampling of the multitude of accommodating provisioners.

commerce was commendable. He followed the Klondike news appearing in the nation’s press, and he relentlessly corrected any erroneous reports on the North or on Seattle. He churned out information in an endless stream—information on fording streams, spotting gold, making bread, and on buying the right gear in the right town.

Foreign countries were not forgotten. Crowned heads received photographs of Alaska and the Klondike. All the foreign embassies received stacks of information brochures, including Brainerd’s masterpiece, an official proclamation of the State of Washington, issued over the signature of the secretary of state, which boosted the Seattle gateway.

Most of the 1897-98 argonauts chose Seattle as their jumping-off place for its obvious geographic advantages and because its businessmen had been quicker to promote the city as the “Gateway to the Goldfields.” With this combination of geographic advantage and advertising, Seattle got a huge jump on other West Coast cities competing for the northern trade. Seattle’s rivals—Vancouver, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco—could not keep pace. In the late 1890s Seattle’s population increased by 88 percent. Shipbuilding and transportation companies zeroed in on the Alaska trade, and vendors of everything from lumber to machinery prospered with the mining boom. It was this Brainerd-inspired impetus that, as Murray Morgan noted in his delightful history, Skid Road, made Seattle “the only city in the world that owned a territory.”

As Seattle merchants responded to Brainerd’s promises to offer all the necessary supplies, its shipping companies put every ship within reach that would float in service for northern-bound freight and passengers. Some did not float too well, but their numbers assured travelers that the city was a suitable starting place.

Stampededers who reached Seattle by rail through 1897-98 were, on the whole, satisfied with the city’s outfitters. Will Ballou of Vermont noted carefully all his expenditures in his diary and considered that the prices were reasonable. A bed only cost 50 cents a night and decent meals went at 20 to 25 cents. He was a young man, and the bustle of the city fascinated him. He was not put off by “fakers trying to sell you a gold crusher, a Klondike stove or a dog team with one lame dog which would get well by tomorrow.” It was all part of a wonderful experience.

It is true that somewhat fanciful things were sold to the stampededers along with their beans and flour. A “Klondike” bicycle was guaranteed to speed you over snow and ice, and a multitude of contrivances for scooping up gold effortlessly were offered. And for a few cents a fortune teller, peering into her crystal, would tell a prospector where to look for gold. As for maps of the “lost mine,” the choice was wide.

As might be expected, the city’s entertainment district, then usually called the tenderloin, and located south of today’s Pioneer Square, was ready and willing to mine the stampededers. By August 1897 city hotels were overflowing with people waiting for ship sailings, and some of them liked to carouse in the evenings. Police interviewed some of those who had too good a time: “They were robbed, beaten,
cheated, and fought," said the Seattle Times, "and they seem in many cases to be proud of the scars they have this morning, and not to mind the loss of a few hundred dollars more or less, although it was taken without their consent." The first flow through Seattle had been western folks; then the eastern arrivals predominated and were free and easy in spending. Some hinted of greater celebrations to come when they returned with Klondike gold.

Seattle folks were no more immune to the northern hysteria than anyone else. Most of the police force joined the exodus, as did many gamblers, prostitutes, housewives, laborers and merchants. And it was a cause of scandal and merriment that the city's chief official, Mayor William Wood, who was visiting San Francisco when the Excelsior docked there with even more gold than the Portland arrived with in Seattle, promptly abandoned his constituents on Puget Sound. Wood resigned by telegram and dashed about to organize a large company of stampers for the northern venture.

Reaping Gold Rush Profits

While Seattle's better-established hardware, provisioning and service firms had a solid basis for launching an expansion into the Alaskan trade, individual entrepreneurs abounded. Farsighted men thought of everything. One prospector hauled a huge bundle of magazines north. He was a veteran of earlier gold camps and knew the value of reading material where package mail services had not been established. He speculated that each magazine would fetch up to ten dollars before he reached Dawson.

Another man shipped a stack of bicycles. He had used one earlier conveying baggage over the Chilkoot Pass. Bikes could not surmount the steepest portion of the trail, but could be wheeled along carrying 100 pounds for much of the route with more ease than backpacking would entail. Or so it was claimed. In fact, most of the bikes stampeders brought along were soon abandoned along the way.

Seattle was like a great bazaar in gold rush days. The freshest news from the goldfields swept through the city within minutes. The traffic in rumors and false reports was intense, and street corner arguments on the best ways of doing this or that never seemed to end. One debate concerned the competing qualities of pack animals. Horses and mules were shipped north in great numbers although some innovators insisted that goats would do better on the mountain trails. The success of dogs on the trail had been long established, and prices of larger breeds like Newfoundlands and St. Bernards soared to the $75-$150 range.

But more modern forms of transit received attention, too. Anyone who wanted to invest in a newly-established balloon service could do so. An inventive man announced a flight that would take a prospector from Juneau to the goldfields in only 24 hours. There would be no danger, he said, because the northern air currents are solid and steady. Apparently he did not find enough investors at $2,000 a share to complete construction of his balloon.

Both the small, individual traders and the major companies shared a particular kind of risk. It was all very well to decide that hungry miners needed lots of onions and then ship a cargo north, but it was not necessarily a "sure thing." Often enough, the market in Dawson and elsewhere was glutted with some product that too many tradesmen had hit upon. If your profits depended upon good timing—as was the case with perishables—a failure could be disastrous.
Few events of 1897-98 compared in excitement and human interest with the sailings from Seattle of northern-bound ships. Excitement was highest for the first departures in 1897. When the City of Kingston raised anchor with 200 passengers on July 27, some 7,000 interested spectators had visited the Yesler Wharf over the course of the day. "There were some tears spilled on the rough boards that floor the warehouse," a newsman noted, "but the wives and sweethearts as a rule bore up bravely and said nothing to make the grind in leaving home harder than it naturally was."

Spectators who did not know any of the passengers had to wait for the newspapers to identify those worthy of note. They had been impressed by two young men, smartly dressed in gray cadet suits. One was George Allen, a University of Washington student. His father, the former United States Senator from Washington, and other family members, were seeing him off. The cadets expected to win a fortune before returning to academic life, and would perhaps be the youngest miners in the Klondike. Alas! It was not to be. No fortune and no honor attended the northern progress of young George Allen. At Skagway he got into a little bit of trouble with the law and concluded his Alaskan adventure a few years later at Nome after being convicted of armed robbery.

The hearts of the people of Seattle went to sea with the argonauts—even with those who had been a little silly in their preparation, like the young man who had hiked up Queen Anne Hill every night wearing rough miners' clothes, hobnail boots, and carrying a pack. He wanted to toughen himself for the travails ahead. Other young men told of sleeping outside at night for the same purpose.

Dock watchers took in the spectacle with fascinated attention, but their mood was affected by that of most of the passengers. The majority of those leaving had a serious look about them, particularly those who had sold and pledged homes and other property to make the journey. Only a few men were drunk and boisterous. "It seems to be too serious a matter to start on in a drunken condition," a reporter said.

Seattle Spirit—Alaska's Bane

In James Michener's recently published novel Alaska, a rather awkward effort is made to show that Seattle interests have long been perceived as villainous by Alaskans, and that their machinations spell doom for the state's future. While it is true that Alaskans have traditionally growled and grumbled against Seattle and, more vehemently, against Washington, D.C. bureaucrats, it is simplistic to suggest a general antagonism. The Seattle area has always been the favorite wintering place for Alaskans and the leading retirement place as well. Until recent decades and the natural loss of pioneers of the gold era, the sourdough picnics, parades and other annual festivities held in Seattle were major social events.

Alaskans, even those with another base in Seattle, did enjoy derisive jokes about the "Seattle spirit." In Seattle Chamber of Commerce hype this spirit represented the entrepreneurial daring that had given the city its northern trade; in Alaska the spirit was understood as an expression of the higher reaches of rapacity and profiteering.

Alaskans sitting around a hot stove liked to exchange stories highlighting the greed of Seattle men. For example,
seemed to take in the unwanted soul. Up went the coin, the
head of St. Peter and the devil. In order to resolve the issue,
Seattle man grabbed it and departed.

Once an Alaskan newspaper editor reflected sarcastically
on the subject:

If the Seattle spirit is a good thing for Seattle the fact merely
adds corroboration to the dictum that one man's meat is
another man's poison. The suppurations of Seattle spirit have
never benefited Alaska.... The joyous manner in which
Seattle assumes that Alaska is a hackneyed feudatory of her
vain and bragging self is the cause of the widespread dislike of
Seattle which pervades all Alaska and is felt even by men who
once lived in the Sound city. Seattle hands Alaska a green
lemon on every possible occasion.

Seattle stands with the big mitt constantly extended
toward Alaska. She grafts on the territory with both hands.
She levies a wharfage tribute on Alaska freight double that
imposed upon other shipments, adds fictional charges to the
excessive rates extorted from Northern ports and distends her
elastic maw by every recourse of commercial piracy which she
can devise, or initiate.

Seattle has grown like Jack's beanstalk upon the outpour­
ing of Alaska's natural wealth and the industry of the
territory's hardy and adventurous citizens, and now she
wants to trade upon the Alaskan name. She plans a mighty
exposition for her own profit, but she does not call it the
Seattle Fair, the name would post it at once in the rogues'
gallery. She labels it the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition
which is somewhat like stealing the livery of heaven to serve
the devil in.

J. F. A. Strong, the writer of this diatribe, was only half­
serious. Another story illuminates the Alaska-Seattle
relationship. Some years after these "strong" words on
the AYP Exposition, he was elevated to territorial

governor. He was a good governor, but was disgraced
and turned out of office after a political foe exposed his
ineligibility to serve because of Canadian citizenship. Strong
had not only forgotten that he was a Canadian in taking his
oath for office, but had also repressed the existence of a wife
and children he had deserted there.

But Strong's friends did not snub him. When he and his
Alaskan wife settled into the Frye Hotel in Seattle after
arriving from Alaska, many old Alaskans called on them.
And when the couple strolled up Third Avenue, it took
them four hours to get to Pike Street because there were so
many acquaintances to talk to along the way.

Seattle Built on Gold Rush Profits
IF YOU STROLL AROUND Pioneer Square, you gain a sharp
sense of the importance of Alaska to Seattle. Of course,
there is the pleasantly evocative Gold Rush Park Museum
maintained by the National Park Service on Washington
Street, but there are many other solid reminders. Look at
those very substantial commercial buildings on First Av­
ue and elsewhere that date from the gold era. Businesses
housed in them prospered because the northern boom was a
lasting one. Rushes to Dawson were followed by rushes to
Nome in 1899-1900 and, a few years later, Fairbanks, and
were the cause of tremendous commercial activity. There
were other lesser rushes before the string ran out around
1917, but Alaskans continued to rely upon Seattle suppliers
for many of their needs.

I was raised in Seattle and often listened to my father
talk about Alaska. He had been too young and too late an
arrival for the gold rushes, but had retained a sense of those
stirring days. To him, Alaska was always a marvelous place
and one of opportunity and adventure.

For his generation, Alaska was really a part of Seattle.
Since only a comparatively few Seattle people directly
participated in the Alaskan trade, the warm relationship
must be understood as much in the spiritual sense as in a
commercial one. Alaska was part of Seattle because the city
owed so much to its development and because one's friends
had stampeded to the north or had lived there at various
times. And events occurring in Alaska have always been
treated in the city's press as akin to local news.

With this background one may appreciate the signifi­
cance of the recent decision regarding the Alaska state ferry
terminal—the choice of Bellingham as a new terminal.
The abandonment of the long-standing maritime link is a
remarkable break in the historical continuities of the North
Pacific.

William R. Hunt is Professor of History Emeritus at the University
of Alaska Fairbanks, contributing editor of Alaska Magazine, and
book reviewer for the Anchorage Daily News. He is author of ten
books on Alaska history and other subjects.
As dusk was gathering one misty evening in May, nearly 200 years ago, a blue-uniformed figure of commanding presence and incisive manner descended a ship's ladder from the deck of a three-masted square rigged sailing ship anchored off the south end of a densely forested island in Puget Sound. At the bottom of the ladder the figure quickly and expertly swung into the stem sheets of a waiting boat manned by oarsmen who, shoving off and obedient to a low but clearly voiced command, rowed steadily toward the darkening shore.

The blue-clad figure was Captain George Vancouver, and within a few minutes he was to make the first European contact with what is today known as Bainbridge Island. The full rigged ship was His Majesty's Ship Discovery, and the year was 1792.

By the time the boat had reached the shrouded shore, it was nearly dark, and observation was necessarily limited. Vancouver regretfully concluded that what had appeared earlier in the day to lead into a small inlet was only a cove, “little worthy of further notice.”

Returning to the Discovery in full darkness, Vancouver issued orders for two of his men, Lieutenant Peter Puget and Ship's Master Joseph Whidbey, to proceed early the next morning, Sunday, May 20, with surveying parties, taking the launch and cutter up the inlet southwestward, “keeping always the starboard or continental shore on board,” in accordance with Admiralty instructions.

The Discovery was anchored about a mile off the southern end of the island, but finding the “situation being somewhat incommode by the meeting of different tides,” shifted her anchorage to a point about one-half mile off a Native village on the southeasternmost point of Bainbridge Island that projects into Puget Sound across from Seattle.

Discovery’s presence there may to some degree have been accidental, since on the previous day while sailing south, probably somewhere off Whidbey Island, the fore-topsail yard “gave way in the slings,” and a spare yard, when gotten out for replacement, proved to be defective. This necessitated anchoring in a secure spot not too far from suitable trees that could be fashioned into replacements by the ship’s carpenters while firewood and water were replenished. In addition, it was reasonably close to the area of the planned rendezvous with the companion vessel, the two-masted brig Chatham. Her crew had been surveying a group of islands seen on the northern horizon from Port Discovery in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, while Vancouver moved southward to begin the survey.

With Puget and Whidbey safely on their way, and the carpenters busy with the spar replacements, other activities emerged, including the brewing of a fresh supply of that surprisingly potable antiscorbutic (scurvy-fighting) spruce beer. This was made of the liquid resulting from boiling spruce or fir boughs in a container for several hours, the remaining liquid being combined with yeast or wort, more water and some molasses, straining and then fermenting in casks for a few days.

The village of only 80 or 100 inhabitants was visited, some trading took place, and presents were given to the Natives. This resulted in a ceremonial return visit by two chiefs and a few canoes, their occupants engaging in songs while keeping time by striking the paddle handles against the sides of their canoes—“by no means destitute of an agreeable effect,” wrote Vancouver.

During the next several days a number of the officers explored on foot westward along the south shore of Bainbridge Island. One of them, ship’s clerk Henry Orchard, went further than the others and found that the cove Vancouver had so eagerly explored that first evening actually extended on into an inlet. Furnished with this information, Vancouver immediately issued orders for a
surveying trip to start early the next morning, headed by himself and accompanied by Joseph Baker, the third lieutenant.

It is at this point that the mystery surrounding Vancouver's survey of the west side of Bainbridge Island begins to develop.

Why did he fail to identify the very considerable land mass of Bainbridge Island, more than 11 miles long? A portion of his chart accompanying this article shows it as a peninsula, extending in a southerly direction adjacent to the word "Inlet" on the chart.

It is necessary to conjecture as to the probable course of events on that long and arduous day of rowing in the Discovery's yawl, which likely began before first light in weather that varied from rain and squalls to calm and light breezes.

All that is certain, nearly two centuries later, is that Vancouver and Baker, with a boat crew, spent the entire day, and perhaps part of the night, on Thursday, May 24, rowing and surveying west through what is now called Rich Passage (today's ferry route from Seattle to Bremerton). They explored Sinclair Inlet (where Bremerton is located), but ignored or overlooked Dyes Inlet, which indents past Bremerton to the north. They then reversed their course, coming back adjacent to the eastern shore of the mainland across from the west shore of Bainbridge Island, and apparently rowed northward only five or six miles before returning to the ship.

They saw no Native villages, but met "a few straggling Indians whose condition seemed excessively wretched and miserable." Vancouver concluded that the body of water to the north, today's Port Orchard, was an inlet "constituting a most complete and excellent port, to all appearance perfectly free from danger..." and was worthy of being named after Orchard, who had discovered it. Vancouver and Baker failed to observe the inlet leading off to the northwest, across
from the northerly portion of Bainbridge Island, where present-day Poulsbo is located.

Most importantly, they overlooked Agate Passage, the narrows which separates Bainbridge Island from the mainland. Had this passage appeared to view, they almost certainly would have traversed it, and returned to the Discovery along the east side of what they could then have known to be an island.

For a comparison with the Vancouver chart, see the Wilkes chart drawn from surveys made almost 50 years later, in 1841, by the United States Exploring Expedition under the command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes of the United States Navy. It was probably the first American chart of Bainbridge Island, and certainly the first official one.

An examination of microfilm copies of seven original terse, handwritten logs of each day's events on the Discovery shows them to contain a remarkable similarity of content. Two of the logs were kept by officers, First Lieutenant Zachary Mudge, and Baker. Subject matter included weather, position of the ship, activities of the carpenters and sailmakers, as well as the crew's activities—replenishing fresh water, gathering wood for fuel, brewing spruce beer, fishing, occasional floggings, and visits from and trading with the Natives.

It seems unusual that the absence of both Vancouver and Baker were not noted in the other logs, considering that such seeming trivia were recorded as the loss of two of His Majesty's puncheons, used for water, which broke loose from the raft rope while being towed.

Baker merely records in his log entry of that day: "Capt Vancouver went away in the pinnace to examine the inside of the Harbour at the mouth of which we are lying." He was strangely silent concerning the fact that he personally was with Vancouver all that day. Why? Was the omission merely an oversight, or was the Port Orchard survey with two officers and a boat crew of such short duration as to be too insignificant for Baker to record his participation?

Perhaps this was Baker's subtle way of indicating his disapproval of Vancouver's action in ordering a return to the ship instead of continuing northward along the west shore of Bainbridge Island to dispell doubt as to whether there was a water passage (which would indicate an island rather than a peninsula).

Vancouver's official published journal reads, "In consequence of this information [of Orchard's discovery of a through passage at the south end of Bainbridge Island], accompanied by Mr. Baker in the yawl, I set forth the next morning, Thursday the 24th, to examine it..."

Vancouver was well satisfied with the results of the 11 days of exploration and survey in the whole of the southern part of Puget Sound, and wrote, "Thus by our joint efforts, we had completely explored every turning of this extensive inlet [emphasis added], and to commemorate Mr. Puget's exertions, the south extremity I named Puget's Sound."

After the rendezvous with the Chatham, Vancouver gave the name "Restoration Point" to the Native village adjacent to the anchorage, "having celebrated that memorable event, whilst at anchor under it..." thus honoring the return of Charles II to the throne of England after the fall of the Cromwell government in the year 1660.

On May 30 orders were given to proceed north to rejoin the Chatham, which had been sent ahead.

With his four-and-a-half-year voyage of 65,000 miles under sail, and a cartographic achievement so remarkable that some of his charts are the basis for many in use today, Captain George Vancouver deserves a preeminent place in the annals of maritime history. While the foregoing remarks may appear critical of the great captain, let us speculate further and examine some important facts in his defense.

Adverse weather might well have been a factor. It is true that part of the day was calm during the Bainbridge survey, but all seven logs examined record "PM squally with rain," which, if encountered near the most northerly position attained by Vancouver and Baker across from the west side of Bainbridge Island, would have severely hampered observation of Agate Passage, shrouded as it must have been with enormous fir and cedar trees crowding to the water's edge.

The declining state of Vancouver's health may well have been a significant factor entering into his decision to turn
Archibald Menzies, who reluctantly complied with Vancouver's order to serve as surgeon in addition to naturalist because of the illness of surgeon Alexander Cranstoun, who was invalided home, wrote on September 8, 1792, "I had done the Surgeon's duty... & constantly prescribed for Capt Vancouver himself since we left England...."

During the voyage his health seems to have steadily deteriorated, especially in the later stages, after the rigors of surveying in Alaskan regions. When on the homeward voyage the Discovery stopped off Cocos Island in the Indian Ocean, Vancouver's growing weakness had increased to the point that he was unable to enter the ship's boat.

There may have been a strong compulsion to complete the Port Orchard survey in a short time, since that particular western area of Puget Sound held no promise of meeting Admiralty hope for discovery of any water passages which would "facilitate an intercourse... between the north-west coast, and the country upon the opposite side of the continent," where His Majesty's former subjects were located.

Concluding his explorations in the upper reaches of Puget Sound, Vancouver proceeded northward. During the ensuing two and one-half years, he completed extensive surveys of the Northwest Coast as far as the Aleutian Islands. This period included negotiations with the Spanish representative Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra at Nootka Sound concerning the return of British property seized by the Spaniards. In addition, necessary voyages were made to California and Hawaii. The long homeward voyage was commenced in December 1794, with several stops on the way. England was reached in October of the following year.

With increasingly poor health, Vancouver spent the short remaining period of his life preparing his official journal for publication. He died in 1798, a few weeks short of the age of 41, after completing one of the most remarkable and valuable hydrographic voyages in maritime history.

John Frazier Henry, a native of Seattle, is a retired banker and author of Early Maritime Artists of the Pacific Northwest Coast, 1741-1841 (University of Washington Press, 1984) and other writings on Pacific Northwest Coast history.
Peoples of Washington: Perspectives on Cultural Diversity.

Reviewed by John A. Brown.


Reviewed by Robert M. Carriker.

Reading Peoples of Washington brings to this reviewer’s mind associations with culturally diverse persons from his childhood and youth spent in Washington’s Skagit Valley. He recalls playing with children of a devout Indian Shaker family in Concrete; attending school with children of Italian fathers who worked in a limestone quarry; hearing the farewell words of a Japanese friend who was about to entrain to internment; peering over John’s shoulder of an uncle on a farmstead near Burlington as he read his Swedish language newspaper; and substituting in a “Tarheel” singing group—unaware that Washington’s best known “Tarheel,” Edward R. Murrow, then unknown to fame, lived a mere 15 miles away.


This is one of the best of the many books stemming from Washington’s 1989 Centennial. The writers know their subjects well and they avoid pedantry. Readers will find a common thread of struggle running through the book—the struggle of cultural groups seeking to adjust to life in Washington in the face of discrimination arising from prejudice, sometimes even erupting in violence, but more often in subtle demeaning. It would appear that generally the degree of its ethnicity in the so-called melting pot varies in direct proportion to distance from a predominantly Caucasian population. Unfortunately, the pot continues to boil for some groups and freezes for others.

Much has been written about Frederick Jackson Turner’s hypothesis that free land on America’s successive frontiers explains the development and character of her people. America has run out of such earthly frontiers, thus turning the spotlight on previously less noted social frontiers. It is hoped that Washingtonians will have the good sense to know that although cultural groups are diverse they need not be regarded as divisive.

John A. Brown is Professor Emeritus at Wenatchee Valley College. In partnership with Dr. Robert Ruby, he has probably written more books than any other historian living in the state.

Robert M. Carriker was educated in Washington schools and is the winner of the 1990 E. C. Barksdale “Essays in History” Prize from the University of Texas, Arlington. He is currently with the Public History program at Arizona State University.

There is continual dismay among lovers of history that professional historians often are not able to write the kind of history most non-professionals wish to read. Writers such as Barbara Tuchman, Shelby Foote, and Murray Morgan fill a need for those who want the human element unadorned with the dry, ponderous or quantitative. All of the above have their detractors, but there is no doubt that each has ably presented European, Civil War, and Washington history, respectively, to large and appreciative audiences. But for many others who feel the urge to put pen to paper, or fingers to word processors, the faults that can creep into the work of a Tuchman or Foote are magnified many times over—a penchant for the colorful tale even if the source is highly suspect or non-existent; a tendency to invent motivations and thoughts for characters; an inability to place events in the context of the broader picture; and failure to separate the trivial from the significant.

It would be easy to review a book like Remembered Drums by passing it off as a quick evening's read for the non-professional. To do so would be an injustice to the reader. Unfortunately, Jerry Eckrom violates almost every canon of sound historical writing. Writing history is never an easy task, but it is even more formidable when writing about the Puget Sound Indian Wars. First, the conflict was part of a broader pattern of Indian-white relations that Eckrom barely seems aware of. Second, it was not completely a case of white versus Indians as the great majority of Indians never joined the hostilities and in some cases fought on the side of the whites, who were almost as deeply divided. Finally, it was not exactly a war in the commonly accepted definition of the term. The largest battles scarcely qualify as small skirmishes. Most of the war posturing and maneuvering was punctuated by isolated ambushes. Thus, even the book's title deserves extensive analysis and explanation. Eckrom is aware of some of this, but prefers to attempt to reconstruct a blow-by-blow chronicle of activities. For this he draws primarily on reminiscences written many years after the event or on surmise and rumor.

There are a number of books that deal with the "Indian Wars," including Murray Morgan's recent history of south Puget Sound. Early historians such as Bonney, Bagley, and Bancroft usually write from the point of view of settlers, but cover the ground in detail. Interested readers would be well advised to consult these works for an account of the Puget Sound Indian Wars.

Kent D. Richards is Professor of History at Central Washington University. His biography of Isaac Stevens is considered the best volume on Washington Territory's first governor. Dr. Richards is currently working on Muckleshoot and Yakama Indian history.

Current and Noteworthy
by Robert C. Carriker, Book Review Editor

Realizing that the Atlantic Ocean discoveries of Christopher Columbus may seem slightly extraneous to Americans living on the Pacific side of the continent, the Columbus Quin-centennial Committee and the National Endowment for the Humanities are keying their 1992 national celebrations to the general theme of "exploration." Four new books, each associated with a future commemoration, bring that general theme home to armchair explorers of the Pacific Northwest.

Juan Pérez on the Northwest Coast, translation and annotation by Herbert K. Beals (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1989; 270 pp., $24.95) presents six documents published for the first time in English. Launching his ship from Monterey Bay, California, in June 1784, Juan Perez and the crew of the Santiago tested the waters of the North Pacific and made landfalls on the Queen Charlotte Islands, Vancouver Island, and Cape Blanco, Oregon. The excellent maps are original to this book. Voyages of the Columbia to the Northwest Coast, 1787-1790 & 1790-1793, edited by Frederic W. Howay (Oregon Historical Society Press, 1990; 518 pp., $40) is a reprint of the rare 1941 edition published by the Massachusetts Historical Society. Contents include miscellaneous papers of the ship, official log remnants prepared by Robert Gray, and the personal narratives of Robert Haswell, John Boit, and John Hoskins. Consider reading one or the other of these volumes as a starting-point for the 1992 Washington State Maritime Bicentennial.

Nicolas Point, S.J. His Life & Northwest Indian Chronicles, by Cornelius M. Buckley (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1989; 520 pp., $15.95) is both a narrative biography and a selection of 13 previously unpublished letters by a contemporary of Father Peter De Smet, S.J. For seven years in the mid-1840s Point lived with the Flatheads, Coeur d'Alenes, and Blackfeet, blazing new trails for later missionaries to follow. This is a good introduction to Washington State University's forthcoming "Sacred Encounters" exhibit about Jesuit missionaries in the Pacific Northwest.

The new edition of the Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition continues with the release of Volume 6: November 2, 1805, to March 22, 1806 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990; 531 pp., $50). In the second year of their epic journey, the Captains successfully navigate the last barriers of the Columbia River cascades, reach the Pacific Ocean at Cape Disappointment, and spend the winter at Fort Clatsop (Astoria, Oregon). Editor Gary Moulton's annotations are mesmerizing in their encyclopedic detail. Consider this an essential document for the approaching Lewis and Clark Bicentennial celebration.
**Best Buy**

I really have enjoyed the magazine. It’s the best buy on the market for Washington’s local historians.

**Bruce Harding**
Pullman

**Berner Burner**

I would like to reply to Richard Berner’s letter (*Columbia*, Summer 1990), which criticized me for being “much too flattering” in my appraisal of Washington’s New Deal governor, Clarence Martin, and his Public Assistance Director, Charles Ernst. My article, “Washington Human Services Come of Age” (*Columbia*, Winter 1989/90), argued that Martin and Ernst had made this state a national leader in implementing the Social Security program, though both men had been negligent in meeting the relief needs of the Puget Sound area in 1938–39, and had been driven from office in 1940. Berner dismissed any achievements of the two by stating: “...that this state compared so well with other states only shows how backward was the rest of the country, not how good was Washington.”

Although illegitimate, Berner’s views are all too typical of scholarship on Washington’s Depression/New Deal years. With few exceptions, the treatment of this period is characterized by an excessive emphasis on the anecdotal, by unsupported generalizations, and by some truly monumental factual errors.

Books by Earl Pomeroy (*The Pacific Slope*, 1965) and James T. Patterson (*The New Deal and the States*, 1969) are early examples of Richard Berner’s position. They see Governor Martin as conservative, even reactionary, and his administration hostile to the New Deal. Pomeroy tells us that Washington “turned sharply to the right” in 1936 and that Martin’s “most noteworthy achievements were to keep the legislature from considering relief and slum clearance in 1938 and to sponsor cuts in [relief] appropriations the following year....” Pomeroy and Patterson make no use of manuscript materials; they rely heavily on Mary McCarthy’s famous Nation article and on a staff survey in *Fortune* magazine.

This disturbing trend continues in recent books by Gordon Dodds and Carlos Schwantes. While they have gathered important new material on cultural and environmental themes, neither one does an adequate job with Washington’s New Deal politics.

Schwantes’ book, *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* (1989) is necessarily brief, but it does not go much beyond the shopworn characterizations of McCarthy. The problem with Dodds’ study, *The American Northwest: A History of Oregon and Washington* (1986), is more serious. Dodds devotes greater space to the subject, focusing on Martin’s swing to the right in 1938–39. He states that Martin and Washington voters were “unwilling or unable to pay for many social measures.” To support this claim, Dodds asserts “that while most states doubled their tax revenues in the 1930s, Washington held even. What cushioned the state from the worst blows of the depression was the United States Government.” This is not true! Washington more than doubled state revenues from 1932 to 1940. For 1938 the state ranked fourth in the nation on a per capita basis for revenues raised, and by 1940 had dropped only to fifth (see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the U.S.*, 1941, p. 240; ibid. 1942, p. 248).

Under the leadership of Martin and Ernst, Washingtonians dug deep to meet the state’s public assistance needs. Washington and Wisconsin were the first states to organize to receive federal social security funds. In September 1936, Martin called a conference of federal, state, county and private agency representatives to draw up a new welfare code. The resulting bill coordinated federal, state and county activities into a single streamlined public assistance program. Martin took this measure, which specifically repealed the Territorial Poor Law, to the 1937 Legislature. Not only did he secure the bill’s passage, but he was also able to persuade the legislators to pass an appropriations bill of $165 million, a fourth of this for relief and pensions. This was the largest appropriation request in the state’s history. Washington’s new welfare code served as a model across the country.

This 1937 social welfare legislation was extraordinarily progressive for its day, and that fact was widely noted at the time. Thus it is curious that so many historians have overlooked this accomplishment. One scholar who has acknowledged this achievement is Norman Clark. In his brief *Washington: A Bicentennial History* (1976), Clark provides an unusually full and balanced account of Martin’s record. Clark called Martin’s 1937 public assistance effort “a peaceful revolution” that “signaled the conversion of a government which had so recently been stagnant with stump farmer inertia into one which was thoroughly liberal and New Deal.”

Even more puzzling is the failure of scholars to make use of the most authoritative study on this subject—Bruce Blumell’s *The Development of Public Assistance in the State of Washington During the Great Depression*. This University of Washington dissertation, completed in 1973 (Garland reprint 1984), is based on a thorough examination of the sources. Certainly it is representative of the high standards demanded by the university’s graduate program. Blumell provides ample evidence of the overall progressive nature of the Martin/Ernst public assistance record. His account of the 1938-39 “shift to the right” makes Berner’s description of this seem a gross distortion. Blumell also maintains that comparing Washington’s record in public assistance with other states’ is essentially valid given the national scope of the Depression and the fact that the Social Security requirements were imposed uniformly on all the states (they had to match the federal funds to qualify).

Richard Berner’s view that Washington’s public assistance record does not matter because the rest of the country was so “backward” is profoundly unhistorical. Besides being factually inaccurate, it makes his position internally contradictory. How could Martin and Ernst exercise political power in 1938-39 to cut relief funds when, according to Berner, they could do nothing in 1933-37? Perhaps they found a constitutional loophole? Most politicians understand viscerally that politics is the art of the possible. If only some students of that process were as understanding!

Anyone wishing to resolve the discrepancies between my article and Mr. Berner’s letter should read Norman Clark’s *Washington* (pp. 157-68) and the concluding chapter of Blumell’s thesis.

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