Jet Dreams
Art of the Fifties in the Northwest
Edited by Barbara Johns

Jet Dreams presents an overview of the visual arts in the Northwest—architecture, painting, sculpture, and crafts—in the historical and economic context of postwar development.

From the distinguished architecture that emerged in the postwar construction boom to the painting, sculpture, and printmaking stimulated by the growth of major art schools, the art of the period reflects the decade's popular belief in progress together with an accompanying anxiety. Throughout the 1950s, the region's best-known painters, Mark Tobey and Morris Graves, garnered international recognition, while Asian American and Native American artists led the way in reclaiming and reinterpreting their artistic traditions.

Linking Northwest and national concerns, this fascinating book proposes new assessments of a historical period that shapes our present vision more than we might expect.

Barbara Johns is chief curator of the Tacoma Art Museum. Other contributors to the volume are Carlos A. Schwantes, Susan Fillin-Yeh, Laura Burns Carroll, Matthew Kangas, Linda A. Smeins, and Robin Held.

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COVER: During the quarter century when horse race gambling lay outside the law, horses ran and several tracks, such as Payzah!‘s, remained open. The termination of legal gambling in 1909 means that these horses ran for the exercise—at least ostensibly. (Olympia Collections, Washington State Historical Society)
See story starting on page 14.
always enjoy it when *Columbia* magazine is able to run unusually topical or timely articles. This summer's issue is particularly strong in that regard. Western Washington has been without a horse racing facility for a couple of summers now, and the newspapers the week I write this have reported the start of construction of a new track in Auburn. Paul Spitzer's essay on the origins of horse racing in Washington thus seems especially relevant.

Or, consider Jackie Williams's essay on Fourth of July picnics—the signal historic outings of the overland emigrants on the Oregon Trail in the mid-19th century.

This summer we have been observing numerous commemorations and reflections upon the events of 50 years ago when World War II came to a close. The extensive media coverage of the liberation of Nazi death camps, the controversy over the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit, the question as to whether President Clinton will attend commemorations in London or Moscow, to name just a few topics, all speak to the salience of wartime experience in our lives. The state of Washington was especially influenced by theater-of-conflict and home-front circumstances, particularly in terms of significant demographic changes. In that regard, I call your attention to Quintard Taylor's article on the growth and experiences of Seattle's African-American community in the 1940s.

This is not the first time the works of Paul Spitzer, Jackie Williams and Quintard Taylor have appeared in the pages of *Columbia*, and so I have the honor of presenting them to you once again.

I am also pleased to publish, posthumously, Edward Whitley's "lived-history" reminiscence of the farm crisis in the Big Bend wheat country before and during the Great Depression.

—David L. Nicandri
The New World of University Presses

What's going on here? University press books being made into movies? Generating reviews in major newspapers and mass-market magazines? Finding their way onto best-seller lists? University presses becoming the presses of first choice by some of the country's outstanding authors?

What's going on is that "academic" publishing has changed dramatically, although many academics have yet to notice. Scholarly publishing is alive and well, but different—a product of production costs skyrocketing while university support for scholarly presses plummets. As a result of marketplace pressures, the distinction between academic and trade publishing has blurred, especially in the humanities, with university presses aggressively recruiting authors who write books people will read—whether or not those authors are academics. Rapidly ending are the days when a university press can afford to publish a book to sell to a hundred academic libraries and a handful of specialists.

It comes as a surprise to some academics, but no longer do university presses exist primarily to serve tenure and promotional requirements. University presses are now doing something they rarely thought about years ago—they are actually attempting to sell books. While academics have long lived under the dictum of "publish or perish," university presses—in an era when administrators tout self-sufficiency on their campuses—are living under the new dictum of "publish or perish, but do it with some business sense."

For historians attempting to break into the world of academic publishing, this new approach requires them to re-learn something historians knew a few generations back—that the best history combines imagination, scholarship and readability in approximately equal proportions. Gone are the days when a historian could spend years in archives, then take a couple of months to write up findings and expect a university press to froth at the mouth in anticipation of publishing the "great work."

Despite dramatic changes in the publishing world, my academic colleagues are sometimes astonished to learn that, when evaluating a manuscript, I do not immediately turn to the end notes. Rather, I turn to the first page. If the writing does not compel me to read on, the scholarship evidenced in end notes has no chance of persuading me that this is a publishable manuscript.

At the risk of chastisement from those academics who refuse to "pander" to the masses, I must say that I am glad things have changed. The artificial barrier between "popular" and "scholarly" history has too long been hoisted by academics too lazy to take the time to write well. There has never been any reason that a book could not be both scholarly and readable, as many of our finest historians have recognized. Those academics who refuse to play by the new rules will find that there is still a place for their work, but those manuscripts will increasingly rest in filing cabinets holding CD-ROM disks rather than lining bookstore and library shelves. And computer disks are hardly worth sending home to Mother. Even Bill Gates chose the traditional book format as a vehicle to disseminate his autobiography.

As university presses move more into the field of trade-press publishing, academic historians will face ever-greater competition to get their works published. For example, of the monographs Washington State University Press has or will publish on Northwest prehistory and history in 1994 and 1995, only three will be written by academics (we will publish another two by public historians with Ph.D.'s), and nine will be written by journalists and freelancers. Others are authored by people who have lived the stories they write about.

Some might decry this shift away from "academic" publishing. They might even say we have lowered our standard. I say they are wrong. If anything, university press standards have risen because of the greater number of authors seeking to publish with them.

There is no conspiracy against academic historians. But economics dictate that, when making a decision on what to publish, we select only the best manuscripts; readability as well as salability now play prominent roles in determining what is "best." With universities continuing to graduate history doctoral students, there should be plenty of academically trained authors for us to publish. And we do try to recruit from this pool. But many university history departments need to make a very basic shift in teaching methods if these graduates are to compete in the publishing world of the future. Quite simply, departments have to instill in their students the idea that writing is just as important as researching. They have to incorporate rigorous writing agendas into the curriculum. It might not hurt, heaven forbid, if an academic department occasionally deigned to seek advice from a university press editor when attempting to chart the course of graduate studies. Who knows, maybe a few professors, as well as their students, could learn something. For one thing, they might learn that there is no collusion against academics. It is just that the publishing world is changing, the bandwagon has been rolling for some time, and if you don't get on now, you'll be looking for your future works at the CD-ROM counter.

—Keith C. Petersen

Keith C. Petersen is an editor at Washington State University Press and author of several books about the Northwest, including River of Life, Channel of Death: Fish and Dams on the Lower Snake (Confluence Press, 1995). The views expressed here are his own.
The

GLORIOUS

FOURTH

Independence Day Celebrations on the Oregon Trail

By Jacqueline Williams
WE HOISTED a flag belonging to some of the company, and as we saw the stars and stripes floating in the breeze we felt quite patriotic.

PICNIC BASKETS were not miraculously opened by the campfire when the emigrants paid tribute to Independence Day. Colorful firecrackers did not explode over the plains. But Fourth of July celebrations with special foods, toasts of good cheer and “guns bursting in air” occurred up and down the Platte and Sweetwater river valleys along the Oregon Trail.

How amazing it is that the travelers, weary from at least two months of journeying across the continent, still had the energy to prepare for a party.

If possible, overlanders tried to celebrate the Fourth of July in the vicinity of Independence Rock, in central Wyoming. The rock derived its name from the common wisdom of overland travel that advised emigrants to be at that juncture by Independence Day so as to reach the Cascades or Sierra Nevadas before the early snows.

Just as the folks back home varied the dishes in the picnic basket, so did the emigrants. From “cornstarch” cakes to an elaborate several-course meal, the holiday food depended on the tenacity of the cook and the supplies in the provisions box. Even the lowly potato could make the meal momentous. “Our last of our potatoes, which had been saved for the occasion, made it a rare feast,” noted Margaret Frink.

Others turned the usual provisions into July the Fourth gastronomic delights by making certain that the beans were baked instead of half cooked, and that there would be “some warm bread instead of burned hoe cake.” The Loughary party displayed the flag, shot off their guns, and let the children have a picnic. It was a typical Independence Day celebration:

The few stars and stripes were raised on top of our tents, a line of men drawn up, and a salute fired from a hundred little guns and pistols. Three cheers were lustily given for “our Country,” “The Soldiers in the field” and last though not least “The Captain’s new Grandbaby.” All had a “go as you please time.” Some hunted or fished, others lounged around camp, while the children had a picnic under the boughs of a large pine tree.

Distinctive foods were just part of the William Swains’ Fourth of July celebration. The group honored the day with speeches, songs and toasts:

We lay abed late this morn. After a late breakfast, we set about getting fuel for cooking our celebration dinner.

Our celebration of the day was very good, much better than I anticipated. At twelve o’clock we formed a procession and walked under our national flag to stand to the tune of “The Star Spangled Banner.” We then marched to the hall, which was formed by running the wagons in two rows close enough together for the wagon covers to reach from one to the other, thus forming a fine hall roofed by the covers and a comfortable place for the dinner table, which was set down the center.

Dinner consisted of: ham; beans, boiled and baked; biscuits; johnnycake; apple pie; sweet cake; rice pudding; pickles; vinegar; pepper sauce and mustard; coffee; sugar; and milk. All enjoyed it well.

After dinner the toasting commenced. The boys had raked and scraped together all the brandy they could, and they toasted, hurrayed, and drank till reason was out and brandy was in. I stayed till the five regular toasts were drunk; and then, being disgusted with their conduct, I went to our tent, took my pen, and occupied the remainder of the day in writing to my wife.

Lorena Hays’s Independence Day menu contained 13 different dishes, including “quite a number of kinds of cake”; Phoebe Judson baked “cake of three varieties (fruit, pound and sponge)”; James Bascom Royal dined on frost cake; William Swain had a choice of johnnycake or sweet cake, and the Conyerses feasted on pound cake, fruit cake, jelly cake, Sweetwater cake and “a dozen or more varieties, both of cake and pies not enumerated.” Considering the fact that most of the cakes were probably baked in Dutch ovens or with tin reflectors strategically placed over makeshift-dirt ovens, one realizes how important it was to the travelers to celebrate this holiday.

ICE CREAM desserts were also featured at several holiday festivities. Taking advantage of snow in nearby mountains, ingenious cooks sweetened their milk, packed it into containers and froze the concoction in...
makeshift ice cream machines. Thanks to Charles Parke, a recipe survives:

This being the nation's birthday. . . .

Some visited two large banks of snow about half a mile from the ford on Sweetwater.

Having plenty of milk from two cows we had with us, I determined to [do] something no other living man ever did in this place and on this sacred day of the year, and that was to make Ice Cream at the South Pass of the Rockies . . . .

I procured a small tin bucket which held about 2 quarts. This I sweetened and flavored with peppermint—had nothing else. This bucket was placed inside a wooden bucket, or Yankee Pale [sic], and the top put on.

Nature had supplied a huge bank of coarse snow, or hail, nearby, which was just the thing for this new factory. With alternate layers of this, and salt between the two buckets and aid of a clean stick to stir with, I soon produced the most delicious ice cream tasted in this place. In fact, the whole company so decided, and as a compliment drew up in front of our Tent and fired a Salute, bursting one gun but injuring no one.

The Conyers party also feasted on ice cream. Sent out to bring back game for the Fourth of July dinner, the hunters found a huge snowball, which they carried back to camp by inserting a pole through the center. "The snowball was brought into use in making a fine lot of Sweetwater Mountain ice cream," noted Enoch Conyers. Presumably the cooks used a variation of Parke's method, since that recipe was similar to those found in period cookbooks.

Like other emigrants, the Conyers party spent a remarkable Fourth and ushered in the day with guns and the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner." The preparations began on July 3 when a "number of wagon beds are taken to pieces and formed into long tables." Everyone took part in the activities.

The Conyers Party's Independence Day Feast

"The day was ushered in with the booming of small arms, which was the best that we could do under the circumstances, so far away from civilization. . . . All gathered around the tables loaded with refreshments, beautified and decorated with evergreens and wild flowers of the valley, that speak volumes in behalf of the good taste displayed by the ladies, both in the decorative and culinary arts. The following is our bill of fare in part:

**MEATS**
Roast Antelope, Roast Sagehen, Roast Rabbit, Antelope Stew, Sagehen Stew, Jack-Rabbit Stew, Antelope Potpie, Sagehen Fried, Jack Rabbit Fried.

**VEGETABLES**
Irish Potatoes (brought from Illinois), Boston Baked Beans, Rice, Pickles.

**BREAD**
White Bread, Graham Bread, Warm Rolls, fresh from the oven.

**PASTRY**
Pound Cake, Fruit Cake, Jelly Cake, Sweetwater Mountain Cake, Peach Pie, Apple Pie, Strawberry Pie, Custard Pie. (A dozen or more varieties, both of cake and pies not enumerated.)

**DRINKS**
Coffee, Tea, Chocolate, and Good, Cold Mountain Water, fresh from the brook . . . .

Take it altogether, we passed an enjoyable day—a Fourth of July on the plains never to be forgotten."

The men gathered wood and hunted for game while the ladies made a flag and prepared a sumptuous repast.

Though dazzling desserts starred at mealtime, emigrants also made a special attempt to obtain fish and fresh meat. Soups, stews and fried or roasted viands prepared from antelope, sage hen, buffalo, fish, and wild fowl were added attractions at holiday tables. The Buckinghams "breakfasted at six upon Trout Strawberries & cream." Francis Sawyer's family "went fishing this morning, then came back and cooked a good dinner." Chester Ingersoll killed a buffalo and served it for dinner, and Harry Rudd killed an antelope. Since his wife Lydia had recently made fresh gooseberry sauce, perhaps they used it as a sauce for the fresh-cooked game.
Around several campfires the meat turned up in savory pies. "The crowning piece of the feast was a savory pie, made of sage hen and rabbit, with a rich gravy; the crust having been raised with yeast, was as light as a feather," recalled Phoebe Judson. Reminiscing about that day 50 years later, Judson wrote, "Not one of them is so vividly portrayed upon my mind as the one celebrated by the little band of adventurers, so far from civilization." Before going into the pie dough, the meat was fried, stewed or roasted. The juices and rendered fat made the gravy. Judson does not tell us what spices or vegetables she used, but one can imagine that she had some wild onions, salt and pepper. Any food that was not used daily became noteworthy on the Fourth. Canned foods came in that category. Along with their freshly caught fish, the Sawyers had "canned vegetables... rice cakes and other little dishes." Randall Hewitt perked up the stew pot with canned tomatoes. In 1862 it was such a rare treat that Hewitt expounded on the merits of having canned tomatoes on the Fourth of July:

A fitting close of our patriotic demonstrations of the day was in having an addition to our bill of fare at supper, which almost raised that uniform meal to the dignity of a banquet. Among our commissary stores were two or three cans of tomatoes which had kept remarkably well; ... two cans were opened, and their contents served in stew and soup. The company thought nothing ever tasted half so good. Taking surroundings into account with steady service of bacon and beans, this simple vegetable came very near being the delightful change it was said to be, on that patriotic occasion. Perhaps it was the only time tomatoes were ever served as a course at a Fourth of July banquet.

Hewitt made a good assumption. Tomato-based entrees were not popular Fourth of July dishes. But at least one other family, the Royals, served "preserved tomatoes" at their celebration dinner.

The most elaborate dinner award surely goes to the women in the Conyers group, but the two ladies who baked desserts for the Washington City and California Mining Company deserve admiration for being the most overworked. They had mixed dough, rolled crusts and stewed fruit to make pies and puddings for 92 men.

NOT EVERYONE, of course, dined on decent pastry or ate savory pies. George Keller had to make do with "a Fourth of July dinner on musty hard bread, and beef bones in a state of incipient putrefaction," which he said was as "highly relished by us, as any of the more sumptuous repasts served up to our friends in the states." Amos Steck was less appreciative of his humble fare. He recorded in disgust that after having his throat choked with it." Some diarists ignored the day and presumably dined on ordinary fare.

A Little Too Much Firewater
"OF COURSE, it was a matter of mathematical certainty that some of us would get 'glorious' upon the 'Glorious
The back of the covered wagon became a handy makeshift kitchen worktable.

Fourth,' and most gloriously were all such patriotic resolutions carried out,”
Matthew Field, wrote to his paper, the New Orleans Daily Picayune. For large
numbers of weary travelers, no Fourth of July was complete without copious
toasts accompanied with appropriate beverages.

DRINKING was not confined to holidays, but on the Fourth one did not need the excuse of ill health. Many took advantage of the national day and joined in the toasts and merrymaking. “This being the 4th of July the men must show their ‘independence’; and such another drunken, crazy, hooting, quarreling fighting frolic I seldom witnessed,” stated Jason Lee, a missionary. The drinking activity was repeated by quite a few men in celebrations along the Platte River Road. Charles Stanton, in a letter to his brother, acknowledged his overindulgence:

Yesterday, as I said before, we celebrated the 4th of July. The breaking off one or two bottles of good liquor, which had been hid to prevent a few old tapsters from stealing, (so thirsty do they become on this route for liquor of any kind, that the stealing of it is thought no crime), ... song and toast created one of the most pleasurable excitements we have had on the road."

Enoch Conyers made no excuses for too much “firewater” when he described how the men had to prop up their chosen speaker. Either the alcohol had no effect on his oratorical skills or else everyone had had too much.

The question came up: To whom should the honor be given to deliver the oration? This honor fell to the lot of Virgil J. N. Ralston. ... Unfortunately he, with several other young men of our company, went this morning to the Devil's Gate, where they obtained a little too much “firewater,” and by the time they reached the camp were considerably under its influence. But this was the glorious old Fourth, therefore the oration we must have. ... Several of the boys gathered around Virgil, lifting him bodily upon the end of one of our long tables, where they steadied him until he became sufficiently braced up, and then let go of him. He spoke for over half an hour, and delivered, off-hand, an excellent oration.

Not everyone, of course, got drunk. Some really did just drink a toast. Virginia Reed, a 13-year-old who was one of the survivors of the Donner party, wrote about the day:

We celebrated the 4 of July on plat at Bever creek several of the Gentlemen in Springfield gave pow a bowl of licker and said it shoulden be open till the 4 day of July and pow was to look to the east and drink it and they was to look to the West an drink it at 12 o'clock pow trented the company and we all had some lemminade, maw and pow is well.

As they settled in their new homes, the pioneers kept the spirit of the Glorious Fourth. The holiday remained a celebration of patriotism and a connection to those back home. As John Adams predicted, noise and dressing up, a display of the flag, and brilliant and boring orations are “celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary Festival.”

Jacqueline Williams is a free-lance food writer/educator and co-author of four cookbooks. This article is excerpted from Wagon Wheel Kitchens: Food on the Oregon Trail, University Press of Kansas (1993).
The CALIFORNIA/OREGON TRAIL is that 2,000-mile-long trace across the country by which an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 emigrants traveled to California and Oregon between 1841 and 1869. The trail began at several jumping-off points—Independence or St. Joseph, Missouri, or Council Bluffs, Iowa—converged quickly, and then followed one river system after another until it terminated in either the Sacramento Valley, California, or the Willamette Valley in Oregon. The California and Oregon Trails (along with the Mormon Trail) diverged at a point just north of the Great Salt Lake.

Traveling 10 to 15 miles per day, pioneers usually made the crossing in five or six months. The overlanders timed their departure for early April or May, just after the spring thaw, when there was usually enough grass on the prairies for the draft animals to eat.

The overland trail followed major and minor river systems—a necessity for the draft animals. It began along the Blue River in Kansas and then switched to the gateway to the Rocky Mountains West—the Platte and North Platte rivers. This gently uphill path along the riverway headed in a nearly straight line across Nebraska and half of Wyoming. In Wyoming travelers shifted to the Sweetwater, which can be followed almost to the Continental Divide. This historic point, at the south end of the Wind River mountain range, called South Pass, is almost flat grassland, even though it is 7,000 feet above sea level. So wide and gentle is South Pass that most emigrants could not detect its summit across the crest of the Rocky Mountains.

Once beyond the pass, travelers encountered real desert terrain for the first time. This high desert section of the trail headed south-
west, crossing the Big Sandy and Green rivers and following the Blacks Fork River into Fort Bridger, Wyoming. At this point the settlers bound for California and Oregon continued on the main trail northwestward, while the Mormon contingent headed due west down the nearest canyon into the Salt Lake Valley.

DIVERTING NORTH FROM Fort Bridger, travelers could take advantage of yet another river system, up the Bear Valley and around the northern end of the Wasatch Mountains of Utah, an easy way off the high desert plateau that eventually connected with the Snake River near present-day Pocatello, Idaho. California-bound emigrants considered this "detour" northwestward into Idaho a delay and a nuisance. At least two "cutoffs" were available to the foolish or impatient, but they rarely saved time.

About 30 miles west of Pocatello, at an unremarkable spot near where the Raft River (now dry) met the Snake, the California trail diverged southwestward to join the Humboldt River near Wells, Nevada, while the Oregon track continued along the banks of the Snake River across Idaho, passing through present-day Boise. At the Idaho-Oregon border the Snake River was abandoned as it turned north into impassable Hells Canyon. The trail then joined the Burnt River and followed it to the base of the Blue Mountains in La Grande, Oregon, where the crossing had to be made before the onset of snow in late October.

After crossing the Blues, travelers passed through Pendleton, Oregon, over a series of minor creek systems, and finally arrived at The Dalles, where the rest of the trip was made by a series of raft floats and portages down the Columbia River to the official destination, Oregon City. The Barlow toll road, once completed, offered an alternate route across the shoulder of Mount Hood.

Photographing the Overland Trail

FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS I have been traveling and photographing in the Great Basin area, that 1,000-mile stretch of land between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevadas. It takes its name from the fact that the region acts as a giant water sink. Rivers in the Great Basin never make it to the ocean, terminating instead in inland lakes such as the Great Salt Lake or just soaking into the ground and disappearing into huge marshes.

While driving the region's highways between widely separate destinations, I often wondered where the road I was traveling would penetrate that far distant yet steadily approaching mountain range. One has time to ponder such matters when visibility is over 100 miles. Almost always my guess was wrong, for just as the road seemed headed for a sheer wall, the river I was following would make a surprise turn and course through a previously invisible passage, dragging the road with it.

My thoughts gradually turned to curiosity about who discovered the first passageway into the Far West. How did they ever find an even remotely efficient route across a continent whose mountain ranges are always perpendicular to the direction of travel? Once while cresting a pass in eastern Nevada on an exceptionally clear day I counted nine mountain ranges between me and California. Later, consulting a satellite relief map, I discovered there were actually twelve (I just couldn't see the complete 350 miles across Nevada). Despite this uncooperative geography, a relatively flat and nearly straight-line route some 2,000 miles long was indeed
ABOVE: On trail, approaching Mitchell Pass, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

RIGHT: Trail emerging from house foundation, Oregon Trails Heights subdivision, Boise, Idaho.

OPPOSITE: Independence Landing, beginning of the California, Oregon, Mormon and Santa Fe trails, Independence, Missouri.

ON EXHIBIT

"THE OREGON IMMIGRANT Trail, 1841-1870" is an exhibition of 60 contemporary Oregon Trail photographs by Greg MacGregor. The pictures are accompanied by well-researched historical and present-day information about the site of each photo as well as excerpts from pioneer diaries.

This exhibition is on view at the Washington State Historical Society (206/593-2830) through June 18, 1995. The next venue for this traveling exhibition is the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (503/523-1843) in Baker City, Oregon, August 1 through December 1, 1995. "The Oregon Immigrant Trail" is available to venues throughout the region.

MacGregor also has a book forthcoming (University of New Mexico Press, spring 1996) that will contain many of the images from this exhibition.
found by early trappers and settlers. My initial curiosity turned into
an obsession to locate and photograph this route.

It took about a year to locate the original trail. No one I talked
to knew about such history-minded groups as Trails West or the
Oregon-California Trails Association, who for the past decade had
been mapping, marking and keeping alive the folklore and history
of the emigrant trails. A library search turned up nothing. Un­
daunted, I began examining republished emigrant diaries, along
with their crude maps, and attempted to locate the route based on
written descriptions. This simply did not work—it was too easy to
miss a location by 50 feet because land features had been altered or
the sagebrush was too high.

Two useful sources finally materialized. A modern guidebook to
the trail, initially overlooked in my research, told how to find the
required me to follow the track and make new photographs, no
matter how boring the landscape might be. Just to add visual inter­
est and scale to the images I soon began to focus on places where the
historic trail intersected with artifacts of contemporary society. It
became my approach to photograph these intersections for the ideas
they presented as well as for their graphic potential.

The problems unique to photography in desert areas were not
unfamiliar to me, but some new ones did emerge. My methodology

THE ROMANTIC INTERPRETATION of landscape, often
found in both paintings and photographs, has never
interested me, and I do not use that approach in my
work. The land in the West was used to scratch out a
living on a large or small scale by whatever scheme
people could invent. In arid climates the evidence of these efforts is
slow to heal, and it soon became obvious to me that the scars of the
trail and the overlay of modern culture that has replaced
it would be a more potent record and perhaps a truer
statement of the meaning and current condition of the
overland trail.

All of my photographs were made standing directly in
the ruts of the trail or looking straight at where they used
to be. It was sometimes tempting to wander off the track
to capture a spectacular image, but I resisted. The maps of
the trail are very specific, and I followed them whether
they led under concrete, through cities or into water.
Even when the historic track was invisible I often found
a granite trail site marker erected by the local historical
society or Daughters of the American Revolution. Small
towns remember their history, and the placing of the
markers was carefully thought out. It seems people have
always been interested in this trail, marking it with every­
things from hand-painted signs to bronze plaques.

I worked the trail in sections, usually in ten-day stints.
Some days I could travel 200 miles, others only 50 be­
cause I stopped to talk to a rancher about a section
through his land. The conversation often led to a per­
sonal tour. Many times traces of the old trail gave out and
it became passable only on bicycle, especially when a
ranching fence without a gate crossed the track. Other
times the trail just ended. In these cases I backtrack to
the main highway and began another probe farther west.
Since cattle were often in or near the viewfinder of the
camera, my biggest job was to convince suspicious ranch­
ers that I was not an advance man for sophisticated cattle
rustlers who needed photographs of their future booty.

The overland trail now passes through U.S. Forest
Service and Bureau of Land Management preserves, fac­
tory and corporate yards, private ranches, small and large
cities, and is much of the time under concrete highway.
Most restricted sites were made accessible after I explained the
nature of my project. I encountered the most difficult access when the
trail passed through Indian reservations, such as that of the
Shoshone-Bannock tribe near Fort Hall, Idaho. Perhaps these Na­
tive Americans have not forgotten the consequences of letting the
first white men pass through their country.

Greg MacGregor is Professor of Photography at California State
University, Hayward.
ured by her aunt's glowing descriptions of Port Townsend, 21-year-old Phebe Abbott left Rockton, Illinois in company with her family on March 18, 1864, bound for Washington Territory via the Oregon Trail. Despite increased settlement along the entire length of the trail, it was still a slow, difficult crossing. In a 178-page diary recently acquired by WSHS's Special Collections, Phebe diligently recorded her thoughts and the activities of daily life on the overland trail.

April 20 [Grove City, Iowa] Went to hear preaching at the schoolhouse three miles. It didn't amount to much. The minister did a great deal of hollering and made some very bold assertions, some doubt as to the truth of them. The singing was excruciating.

May 14 [Platte River, Nebraska] We had buffalo steak for breakfast which Claude gave us. It was very sweet and tasted very much like beef steak only better.

May 15 Some of us young people went to the top of the bluff to see the sun set. An artist pen should sketch the scene spread before us. A hundred white tents and wagons dotted the green valley at our feet and the beautiful boiling spring in their midst, in the distance the Platte River winding in and out among its numerous islands having for its background high bluffs. The shadows darkening upon them except their tops which glowed with the last rays of the setting sun. A young man in the train came near committing suicide by taking Opium but it was soon discovered that all was not right with him and upon questioning him, he confessed that he was tired of living and had taken the poison to put an end to his existence. He had written out the disposition of all his effects and left it in a book, but the men are in hopes to keep him in the world a while longer by keeping him in constant exercise and using proper remedies.

June 4 We started out in high spirits this morning, with sight of Independence Rock in prospect. . . Claude said we must go five miles farther to get good feed, so what we saw of the rock we must see quickly. We were disappointed for we had anticipated spending hours wandering over and around it, reading the thousands of names carved into the solid rock.

On August 2, 1864, after a trip of 121 days, the party arrived in Marysville, California, where they stayed with friends and rested. After a few days they journeyed to San Francisco by stagecoach and then boarded a ship for Port Townsend.

Acquisition of this diary was made possible by the Reno Odlin Memorial Fund and the Friends of the WSHS Library.
The FIRST DEATH of HORSE RACING

The present predicament of horse racing casts a long shadow, obscuring racing's now nearly-forgotten "death" in 1909. "Death" must be put in quotes because it was horse race gambling that was placed beyond the law in Washington, only to be legalized again a quarter of a century later. Restoration had cast its own shadow, hiding from view a century of colorful activity that ended in the 1909 "blue laws."

Horse racing evolved from informal, spontaneous amateur street betting into professional track-based, scheduled events. During this evolution the grounds for opposition changed and ultimately settled on the argument that the public needed to be protected from tempting vices. Through the years, laws protecting women and children have often indicated the direction of legislation, but in the case of horse race gambling, what happened to Indians is particularly of note.

Indians had owned horses for nearly a generation or more when Alexander Ross arrived with the Astor party. He was perhaps the first to comment on early racing after observing in 1811 the great tribal gatherings that came annually to The Dalles. Racing was common among the tribes and, given the strong heritage of gambling, so too was horse race betting. Few details are known, but the Indian mode of gambling reappropriated wealth in the extreme. Betting continued until one party owned all, and the rest owned none. It was excessive in the view of most white men—

Washington's "Blue Laws" Made Horse Race Gambling Illegal in 1909

By Paul Spitzer
impetuous and profligate. While whites also gambled, Indians “bet themselves naked,” it was said, and “suffered a disease of the blood.” Furthermore, they went so far as to wager their wives and children. In the end, they bet themselves, possibly making them other men’s slaves. Indian gambling was seen as reckless, pernicious, dissolute; it became another issue among the misunderstandings that have characterized dealings between the two cultures.

Where whites first raced and bet is not known. However, in 1841 it was reported that Wilkes expedition members enjoyed a roisterous Fourth of July ashore on Nisqually Prairie. This is five years earlier than the date Hubert Howe Bancroft, the eminent Western historian, thought was the first instance of racing. Bancroft described sailors coming ashore at Vancouver to curl, dance, attend theater and debate with citizens the speed of horses.

Thirsts, at races, almost always ran to liquor. “Blue ruin” was enjoyed along with a Mexican import called the carrera el gallo (chicken race), the purpose of which was to rip the head off a live greased chicken or goose while galloping past on horseback. Horse fun—racing and gambling—would always have, at least in such popular form, a character that put it on the periphery of respectable society until it was marginalized entirely in 1909.

How Horses Were Run

At the time of the scattered skirmishes of 1855, grandly remembered as the Indian War, settlers feared that Fort Steilacoom might be attacked. The Indians were supposedly coming to race and exchange some goods, but word spread that in the midst of the festivities the Indians would massacre the townspeople. Earlier violence elsewhere put the settlers on guard, but even at the time the whites doubted that an ambush was really planned.

Indians and whites often mixed at horse races. We know of another race near Fort Steilacoom a few years later. March 21, 1858, was a Sunday and $200 was at stake in a half-mile contest watched by “soldiers, Indians and Woodsmen.” They enjoyed the excitement again a week later and then again a few weeks after that. On April 25 the results were violently disputed. Spectators and participants “returned home with contemnaces [sic] considerably disfigured.” Settler society being fairly lenient in its youth, no laws were written against racing.

Similar activities were common in other towns. Because it occurred in the street in front of the local saloon, racing was a conspicuous part of pioneer life. In Seattle, for example, major centers-of-town streets were used. A good course needed to be free of gravel. According to local writer C. T. Conover, after Seattle’s First Avenue was graded it became the only suitable place for good racing. Except for changes of name, the same could be said of every venue in Washington Territory, particularly in horse country east of the Cascade Mountains.

Most of these contests were informal match races; they arose from two men disagreeing as to whose horse was faster. Contests could occur anywhere, any time. Consequently, they rarely carried odds, and they never carried weight. First there were the bets between the two owners, but there could also be side bets with sporting onlookers. “Each owner posed $100 to seal the deal and then bet side money as his purse and judgment dictated.” In those match races the crowds that gathered were unimportant—only wagerers counted. Large as $100 might seem, Oswald West declared the “sides” necessary because the purses were too small.

Not all racing occurred in the streets. In the 1860s and ’70s people with farms could briefly convert pastures into race tracks. Racing was observed to spread like a plague through eastern Washington and Oregon during the latter decades of the 19th century. To change furrows into furlongs, the entrepreneurial farmer posted a few placards and maybe wrote an announcement for the newspaper.

Early racing seasons lasted a butterfly’s summer—two or three days, commonly. There were tracks at Wilbur, Dayton, Turner, Ala, Long Creek, Canyon City, Baker City, and Pilot Rock. One man recalled the time when he ran a tavern near a racecourse and made $1,100 in three days. While those were handsome earnings, he pointed out that the amount did not include “what the barman stole.” It is reasonable to assume that his earnings were a good deal more than most horse owners were assured of. Earnings like this would mean that the economic center of gravity could easily shift from horse owners to track operators.

It is easy to see how the three-day season could meld with a local fair. Whether the first fairs in the early 1860s included racing is not certain. Walla Walla had fair racing in 1866. The crowds did not add much to the betting, “but when there was a celebration under way these audiences became wild and hilarious. Money was free and the lids were off.” If racing was not in place at Seattle’s first fair in 1863, it was there by 1868. The Fourth of July that year was celebrated “in clouds of dust” along First Avenue. Horse racing was as much a part of the day as fireworks were a part of the evening. The connection between racing and fairs continued for many years.

Racing was not unchallenged in popularity in the early territorial years. The pioneers were also interested in bowling, ten pins and foot races. Early settlers in the Northwest enjoyed feats of strength and agility, too. Across the border in Canada they climbed up poles and chased after pigs. Both were first prepared, following the taste of the day, slathered with grease. But sweating for pleasure held limited interest as an after-hours pastime to stump clearing. The real excitement in many communities was hard-breathing equines. Even outside of horse country, such as around Everett, horse races “were chief events of the day.”

In the dust of Yakima and the mud of Stuck Junction there was nothing like the “sport of kings.” A quarter mile of murderous charging or a flesh-
wasting three heats of three to four miles each made for a lot of fun, while the crowd camped around the finish line roiled in excitement and hilarity.

The Gambler

The word “sport” once had a usage it has now lost. In the late 19th century it referred to a person as well as an activity. “Sport” implied a gambler, one who savored the excitement of money risked. There were plenty of sports among the settlers, including some of the biggest names in piety, property and prostitution. Father Prefontaine, for one, traveled around Puget Sound holding fairs; lawyer James McNaught was a representative of the Northern Pacific Railroad; and John Considine, called “Boss Sport,” sold women, friends and liquor.

Inconsistent though it was, horse race gambling remained a respectable—or at least accepted—recreation when practiced in moderation. But immoderate gambling was viewed as an individual failing, something to be pitied rather than prohibited.

Before the 1880s horse owners were probably the bosses of racing. Very few in the Northwest racing community could be called professionals. Admittedly, a few owners would “rib up” a match race and briefly move from village to town. Any would-be professional could travel the countryside until another horse or his own reputation put him out of business. A fast horse was soon known. Running horses, operating a field with a two-day racing season, or managing bets in a nearby saloon were all opportunistic sidelines. The winners made quick money from something they, as sports, did anyway. Many owners ran stables. Some of the most active racers in Seattle, for example, were the Wyckoffs, the Abrams and the Clancys—all liverymen.

In the 1880s streets and tracks were both common racing courses. Perhaps this was because track purses were still small, usually around $50. Sometimes an interesting contest was run twice, first on a track and then on the street. One case happened in Seattle in 1881 where the first running apparently generated excitement enough to make a public rerunning more profitable. City officials cleared the streets, it has been said. The winner, a Clancy, had the distinction of being one of the first people fined for exceeding the six-mile-per-hour speed limit. In time traffic grew dense enough to make 400-yard horse drags intolerable. Speed limits aided the growth of tracks, of course, and they possibly horrified an antiracing sentiment.

Only after 1890 and the railroad's arrival did it become possible to be a real professional. Thoroughbred horses from the East and California became common. During this era elite jockey and driving clubs asserted a growing administrative influence. Longer seasons helped build more formal tracks. There were also better purses—several hundred dollars—to attract better horses. People wanted to see fast horses, and the Yakima newspaper admitted that even its reporter would not stay around to watch a “cayuse” match.

Increasingly, there were sizable amounts in betting pools that horse owners did not necessarily control; this was, instead, controlled by track owners or the fairs and saloons where the betting occurred. Money that first brought entrance, grandstand seats, advice and drinks also brought control. In the '80s the improvements conspired to wrench gambling away from the petty enthusiasts. The era of the professional had arrived. A successful track living came from reading the weaknesses of people rather than the strength of horses. This was true of the touts and especially true of the big operators, bookmakers and track owners.

Making Gambling Pay

Some if not most races were “square,” but horse racing was never very honest. It became known in the track era as
exceedingly corrupt. During the match race era, money was usually made by owners in open wagering subject to public scrutiny. Relatively small sums were involved. More importantly, the owner had a greater interest in winning than losing, although, as Oswald West mentions, sometimes this interest could use enhancing. A contest in which there were three heats, he recalls, was worked by a savvy owner. The other horse had plenty of local friends, so the first owner won the first heat to attract interest. He "chucked" the second heat to get supporters of the local horse to rush in with money they would never see again after the third heat. This was more cunning than chicanery.

In another tale West tells of plain fraud when the same owner secretly ran both horses. In this case the match money merely moved from one pocket to the other, but the side betting—the "box pool"—was as good as bank draft. There is a quaint side tale that even such one-owner races could be lost. That owner did not bother to tell a young jockey on a second-rater that he should lose, and the youngster's enthusiasm almost made it an honest race.

Another owner in Yakima apparently betrayed his loyal supporters when he chicked a race in 1880. The supporters demanded that the race be rerun and that the owner now bet on the other horse. Sentiment ran high and continued so into the evening at the saloon where one person was killed and two others wounded. The weaselly owner slipped out of town unhurt. These shootings were "sad results," the newspaper said, but it had no complaint against racing or wagering. People proceeded at their own risk.

Jockeys could always confound even the most honest owners. At least by reputation, jockeys were a dishonest lot. "The best of them deserve a bit of punishment" was a sentiment that could have been made any time between 1845 and 1909. With formal tracks too many people had a large, vested interest in the outcome of contests. Jockeys, starters and dozens of others were in positions to affect the results. The Seattle Argus heaped praise on a new track official simply because he gave honest starts. In the case of the owners, honesty was only certain if the purses exceeded the betting, and that was impossible at a track. Owners contributed 20 to 25 percent of the purse, giving them an incentive to compensate themselves somehow. The arrival at the track of thousands of bettors had changed incentives irrevocably.

Still, the appearance of honesty was needed to attract thousands of sports who would not mind leaving a few dollars behind at the track if the show was good enough. Rules were adopted, jockey clubs established, track administration changed, facilities made more comfortable and sight lines improved. Women's days were added along with other special events. Improved access by car and streetcar also helped increase attendance. However, nothing could eliminate the effect of self-interest. Fixed races seem to have been one of the acknowledged risks of playing the horses. The fix was to racing what rough outfields were to baseball—a fact of life. At best the fraud could be lessened, made less obvious, but in the end

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A Seattle interurban railway brought in a special train to handle large crowds headed for The Meadows.
it was recognized and tolerated. Lots of loose cash also made race-tracks highly profitable. Unrestricted betting, liquor at the bar, a long season, a grandstand, and a half-dollar attendance fee at a clean track near town made track operators rich men. While it would be foolish to ignore the love of horses and the gambling spirit as motives, too, it would be more foolish yet to ignore the money. Profits brought more track improvements; racing surfaces and the viewing area were built to purpose; tracks took their modern oval form; all the physical changes were improvements over what the streets could provide. Under these conditions trotting, too, became increasingly popular. Racetracks often went to shorter races and more of them to increase the betting. Yakima mixed several kinds of contests, probably for the same reason. The Seattle Meadows, with its grandstand, bar, verandah, clubhouse, circle, barns, lake and track, likely cost $40,000 to $60,000 to build. A few popular days could return half that in admission alone. These changes all made for a smoother show and a more respectable event, without the previous rough edges.

Law and Blue Crusaders

While the settlers of the 1850s were hardly interested in forbidding horse race gambling, their motives could not have been libertarian. They did not write many laws curtailing desire, or many laws of any kind, but they were not above institutionalizing virtue. In 1855 Washington Territory's legislative assembly made gambling illegal; “roulette tables, faro or faro banks, and all gaming with cards, gaming tables, or gambling devices whatever, are hereby prohibited”, not more than $100 or less than $50 was thought to be the right punishment. But betting on horses went unpunished because it was not considered gambling. This glaring contradiction perhaps needs some explanation. A horse, it was assumed, could be judged if one saw it. Bets on cards, or even racing bets from the distant saloon, were based on luck or dishonesty. Thus, it was widely felt, and not just locally, that what was skill in the paddock was sin everywhere else. Moreover, racing was wealth's pleasure and thus innocent by association; it was the “sport of kings.” The racing horse on a track and the roulette ball in a tub might not appear too different to the impartial mind. Given the opportunities for dishonest intervention, the ball might seem the better choice. However, almost all sport was tolerated in the early West. In fact, what territorial law forbade, the localities often allowed and, indeed, licensed. Port Townsend, for example, charged $15 each for gaming tables that should not have existed south of Canada or north of Oregon. By an exception in the statutes and enforcement practices, horse race gambling was beyond the law.

If one looks up “horse” in the early territorial ordinances, the only reference is to horse stealing. It was a crime they took seriously, but so naive a world would not continue. Before the end of the 19th century most communities simply had no laws to eliminate horse racing. Olympia, in 1886, suppressed houses of ill-fame and
dancing, but there was no mention of horse racing. In 1896 it was illegal to play shuffleboard in Spokane, but legal to play horses. The city of Tacoma was an exception. Already in the '80s it might have forbidden sporting on horses since all games of chance, or ones that mixed chance with skill, were prohibited. Boisterous Seattle hated to spoil a good time; in reality, others felt the same way, notwithstanding ordinances to the contrary.

In the 1880s the speed limit laws, mentioned earlier, came on the books. These might have been purely safety laws, but more likely they harbored some resentment against racing. Speed limits grew together with the extension of gambling laws. Before long lawmakers were finding ways of imposing new restraints. Section 865 of the Washington Code, published in 1881, partially forbade horse racing on Sundays. Along with rioting, fighting and dancing, the spectacle of galloping horses was punishable if it disturbed worship or family quiet. The crime was worth not more than $100, or about the same as a small match race wager.

Since Sundays were often the biggest racing day of the week, one can only wonder what the consequences would have been had the ordinance been enforced. Nuisance, however, was the ostensible target and not racing itself; if no one was annoyed, racing was tolerated. Still, there reposed in such a law a resentment justified by racing's interference with the proper activities of the Sabbath. It was an intermediary position. Similar nuisance laws, found in many municipalities, became the vanguard of intolerance; they explicitly declared that liberty had its limits. There was still little concern for the honesty of horse races.

Baby and bath water were carelessly thrown out together in the most notable town. Seattle declared illegal "stock exchanges and places where bets or wagers on the rise or fall of the prices of stocks, grains, oils or any other commodity, or on the result of horse races. . . ." To prevent commercial ruin from this ill-crafted statute, an amendment excluded the "bona fide" sale of equities.

Spokane, in another example, passed a law against "gamesters" in 1897 by which it meant vagrants, gamblers, "bunco-steerers and sure thing players." If enforced, such laws would have pretty well removed all undesirable. That, in fact, is what happened since major tracks moved out of town. However, it was not these "evil character" laws that were the models employed by race gambling intolerance; prohibition came in the form of guardianship laws.

The earliest harbinger of intolerance can be found in the Territorial Code in a charitable guise defending the weak. The law would punish "[e]very white man, Negro, half breed Indian, Kanaka [Hawaiian] or Chiness man who shall run horses on a wager of any kind, or for pass time, with an Indian . . . ." Intended to help Indians, the statute began by assuming their incompetence. The legislature wrote similar laws around that time to protect children from adults and their vices. Acting like parents and for a largely moral purpose, the law had taken alcohol away from Indians. Now it took away their right to race horses and gamble with other people. In essence, the attorney general became their guardian.

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Racing was more than a flawed sport; rather, it was a sin that poisoned society. The major newspaper in Seattle chimed in with, "No single cause of recent years has been more responsible for so much crime in the nature of embezzlement and breaches of trust as race track gambling." The newspaper of the second largest city agreed, adding the speculation that 75 percent of insurance crime was initiated by the sight of sprinting equines. To some it seemed reasonable that employees who went to the race course should be fired.

It was time for leaders, including some sports of former years, to take a stand. Judge Thomas Burke, probably the most influential person in Seattle, declared track gambling a "menace to every fiduciary institution in this city or state, and the public officers themselves." Others said racing was "the most insidious and entertaining form of gambling." It was "not right that certain men ... should be made fat and sleek at the expense of the people." It was the worst sort of betting. Governor Albert Mead declared it an "evil that preys on the weakness of man." Beginning with forgery and embezzlement, temptation led a path to disgrace, ruin, despair and suicide. Regrettably, women, innocent by nature, were the "most enthusiastic and persistent gamblers" and, naturally, needed protection. "I am going to Olympia," said Representative Ole Hanson of Seattle, "to protect the public." The public was to be protected from itself.

At the suggestion that betting encouraged business, a view that few seemed to voice openly, opponents countered that it did just the opposite; they claimed fairs and the upcoming 1909 world's exposition were better off without the "sport of kings." Most probably recognized and accepted some loss of business.

Against the forces of churches, temperance lobbies, popular activists and massive canvassing, gamblers had too few committed allies. Gamblers lost and so, too, did civil libertarians; in the rush for betterment, the matter of personal liberty as a public issue was rarely discussed. Ole Hanson fought off other crusaders so that he could be first to present a bill to the legislature. His satisfaction must have been supreme when not a single representative voted against the bill. It was then rushed through as emergency legislation before another soul could go bad.

The pioneers' republic was willing to tolerate the continuing dishonesty of racing but not the temptation of its citizens. State government and law became the means of self-improvement. No loopholes would spare the horse race gambler his punishment. In connection with wagering on races, "Any person who receives, records, or registers ... any money, checks, credits, or any other representatives of value ... [or] keeps, manages, conducts, maintains or occupies any house, room, shop, ... ground, street, park, enclosure or place ... [as] owner, proprietor, agent, employee" would be punished. There, with petty exhaustiveness and redundancy that an extract cannot capture, the law buries its teeth and masticates the offense. For the sin that emerged from the former peccadillo, the wages were one to three years in state prison. That such a law could fail, many already knew. The natural place to put money would always be on a horse's nose.

But the blue laws' upholders surely drew satisfaction in being forbidden their own temptations. They were, they knew, like children. Too few had a proper idea of right and wrong, or a "proper representation" of the facts, or a mature concern for the future. And even the ones who mastered these would succumb to infantile temptations. Such innocents lacked defenses against real gamblers. As children needed parents, so did the public at large. Thus, as once before, the attorney general became their guardian.

Paul Spitzer, now retired, worked 12 years as Corporate Historian for The Boeing Company. He is cofounder of the Pacific Northwest Historians Guild and has written articles for journals, encyclopedias and newspapers.
The DESERT Years

BY EDWARD C. WHITLEY

It is common knowledge that the 1930s—the decade of the Great Depression—were years of suffering for the whole country, and of “dust bowl” conditions on the plains east of the Rockies. Less well-known is the fact that the previous decade, the 1920s, saw the devastation of much of eastern Washington. During the second half of the 1920s many eastern Washington wheat growers actually enjoyed a degree of prosperity, relative to Depression standards.

The Big Bend is that part of eastern Washington located generally within Adams, Douglas, Franklin, Grant and Lincoln counties. Over most of the area Miocene basalt lava flows are covered with a mantle of fine loess. Free from stones, most of the regions’ fields are easily tilled. By contrast, that part of Douglas County north of Withrow was glaciated. Its fields are marred by a terminal moraine and other unique glacial features, including many large basalt erratics known locally as “haystack rocks.”

Big Bend’s semiarid climate is well suited for dry-farming. Precipitation, averaging about ten inches a year, is usually adequate for wheat, but occasional wet years with bumper crops are offset by others too dry for successful harvest. The higher areas receive a bit more moisture than the lowlands where wheat production without irrigation is marginal.

Wheat growing in the Big Bend began soon after the arrival of homesteaders. Settlement was rapid during the 1880s and early 1890s. The grassland plateau was quickly converted into a “desert of wheat.” Numerous towns grew up. Within a few years substantial farm homes stood where there had been primitive homestead shacks. Country schools dotted the landscape. Barbed wire fences enclosed the fields. A network of rural telephone lines followed the country roads that provided access to each quarter section.

Well drillers moved through the Big Bend, and their efforts assured the ranchers of dependable domestic water. The land began to exude an aura of permanence.

World War I, which came to Europe in 1914 and which America entered in 1917, had a marked impact on the Big Bend area. War brought higher prices for basic commodities such as wheat and a concomitant increase in the value of Big Bend wheat land. Every nook and cranny where a plow could be used was placed in production. Consolidation of the quarter-section homesteads into larger units, a movement which had begun as soon as homesteaders gained title to their land, increased as ranchers used their war prosperity to increase their holdings. Among them was my father, Clarence Whitley, who purchased 320 acres in the Mansfield area and later found it impossible to make his payments. When asked why he had taken on such a large debt, he responded that everyone thought the high prices would continue. As they entered a new decade many growers found themselves bearing heavy burdens of debt.

The ranchers of 1920 were committed to a dry-farming system that kept fields fallow during the summer prior to producing a crop. Summer-fallowing was accomplished with horse-drawn moldboard gang-plows. This task consumed much of the ranchers’ pre-harvest time. Long before they had finished, their plows were turning powder-dry soil, the heavy growth of volunteer wheat and weeds having drawn all the moisture from the soil. Dust storms were common because the dry loess soil easily became airborne.

Weeds, particularly Russian thistle and Jim Hill mustard, thrived in the fallow fields. While they preferred to plant winter wheat (wheat planted in the fall for harvest the following summer), farmers were forced to wait for fall rains to bring the moisture necessary for seed germination. Fall rains were highly undependable, and as often as not farmers found it necessary to plant less productive spring wheat.

Even though combines were brought into use to harvest wheat prior to World War I, most were inefficient and ground-powered (the machinery driven by a large bull-wheel). Although they would soon convert to combines, most ranchers of 1920 still used the headers and stationary threshers of prewar years. The grain was cut with headers, machines that removed the heads and as little straw as possible, and stacked it in the centers of the quarter-section fields. After going through “the sweat,” a process that took several weeks, the now dry grain was threshed by large threshing outfits that moved from ranch to ranch across the wheat country until they were stopped by winter.

That some of the old equipment was still in use during the 1920s is evidenced by the following wage scale published for the 1923 wheat harvest in the Mansfield area. Box drivers
(header boxes received the grain from the header and transferred it to the stacks or directly to the separator) earned $4.00 per day; spike pitchers, loaders and stackers, $4.50; header punchers, $6.00; combine drivers, $5.00; sack sewers on Deering combines, $5.00; sack sewers on large combines, $5.00 and up, depending on whether or not they jigged their own sacks (bounced the sacks as they filled them). Workers also received three large meals per day.

Postwar combines (machines that combined the header and separator) were pulled by large teams of horses or mules. The machinery that cut and threshed the grain was driven by gasoline engines. As demand for their services diminished, the owners of stationary threshing outfits were forced to close down, ending a romantic period in Big Bend history. For years thereafter men would speak with pride of the long hours worked and the length of their campaigns. In some cases growers continued using the old outfits, transferring field-ripened grain directly from the header to the separator.

Plagued by debts incurred during the euphoria of the immediate postwar years, confronted with growing problems from weeds and plant diseases, and watching the price for their product decline, wheat growers of the 1920s faced a difficult decade. And they were dependent on inefficient animal power while waiting for satisfactory tractors to become available. Looking back from the perspective of 1923, R. N. Miller, a farm management specialist, wrote, "Land just naturally isn't worth what it was when wheat sold for $2.00 and more a bushel. I do not think it ever was worth what many farmers paid in 1919-20."

During the last half of 1920 the price of wheat dropped radically. In February 1921 the Waterville Empire Press reported, "The year 1920 has been one of the hardest years financially that farmers have experienced for a long time."

The future looked brighter after a "big rain" in May 1921. The

**ABOVE**: Stationary threshing operations like this one were still in use in the Big Bend area well into the 1920s.

**LEFT**: The Big Bend area is that part of eastern Washington embraced on three sides by the great sweeping westward curve of the Columbia River, roughly encompassing Douglas, Lincoln, Grant, Adams and Franklin counties.
The rotary rod weeder (top right) was introduced to Big Bend wheat farmers in the early 1920s but did not become popular until later in the decade when the Wheatland plow (bottom right) came into use.

Waterville newspaper predicted that the rain "will insure the winter wheat crop and another shower in June will produce a larger crop than that of 1916-17, the banner year of all." This optimism turned out to be justified, and at harvest time farmers were able to report yields in many fields at between 30 and 40 bushels per acre. In July 1921 Waterville wheat buyers offered 95 cents per bushel for Turkey Red and $1.00 for Bluestem, for August delivery.

Prices for the mediocre 1922 crop were comparable to those of the previous year. In July 1922, Turkey Red sold for 95 cents and Bluestem for $1.05 per bushel. Farmers in the Mansfield area were further handicapped by the failure of their bank. In December 1921 the mayor of Waterville asked his citizens to help the people of the Mansfield area "who have been rendered temporarily needy by reason of short crops, the general financial depression and the very recent suspension of the Mansfield State Bank."

Conditions for the 1923 crop were generally favorable, but by July spring wheat plantings were suffering from a shortage of moisture. Early in that month the area was visited by heavy rain, which made possible a truly bumper crop. Reports of yields of 40 to 45 bushels per acre were common. However, prices were not favorable. In September Turkey Red brought 83 cents per bushel in Waterville, and Bluestem was only two cents higher. Because of the rains, the summer-fallow fields were in fine shape for fall planting.

In October the Empire Press was making optimistic estimates for the 1924 crop. Unfortunately, the remainder of the 1923-24 crop-year was a disaster for growers. By August 1924 there had been only 2.72 inches of rainfall since January 1. For the entire crop-year, beginning September 1, 1923, only 6.97 inches fell. There were reports of a few fields that, having been plowed early and kept free of weeds, produced fairly well. Mostly, yields were under 18 bushels per acre, with many half that or less. Clarence Whitley's crop in the Mansfield area was so poor that most of it was not harvested. Fortunately, low yields were partially compensated for by better prices. In November wheat in Waterville brought between $1.38 and $1.52 per bushel for hard winter and dark hard white, respectively.

Precipitation during the 1924-25 crop-year (August 1 to August 1, at Waterville) measured 10.29 inches, an amount sufficient for a good harvest. This was offset by a severe cold spell in mid December when there was no snow on the ground. Most of the winter wheat plantings were destroyed. Destruction was especially severe in "the Big Bend counties [of] Adams, Douglas, Franklin, Grant and Lincoln." Reseeding with spring wheat was costly, and yields were disappointing. July prices in Waterville were $1.25 to $1.50 per bushel.

Precipitation was scant during the next two crop-years. The 8.56 inches of rainfall during the 1926-27 crop-year was little better. The 1926 crop was as poor as that of 1924, but the 1927 crop was much improved, especially in northern Douglas County. The improved prospects for a good crop for this year are beginning to bring back to Douglas County many of the old settlers that were forced to abandon the country during the drought years, which we have passed through." Prices ranged between $1.20 and $1.30 per bushel, depending on the variety.

The 1927-28 crop-year enjoyed 11.68 inches of precipitation. Describing the crop in Douglas County, the Empire Press's editor wrote, "At Withrow ... they have a big crop this year. ... The yield in the Lamoine country is better this year than last, while in the Farmer country it is probably not quite so good. ... In Mansfield the yield will not be up to last year, owing to the hot weather in May and also to the fact that the mustard and thistle are the worst this year that they have ever been in that country." Prices were down, ranging from $1.20 to 90 cents.
As the decade neared its end, Douglas County once again began experiencing severe drought conditions. For three consecutive years precipitation was disastrously low. Yields were sharply down, and there was no compensatory rise in prices. The country was spiraling down into the worst depression it had ever seen. In December 1931 the price of hard white wheat in Waterville was 62 cents per bushel. Soft white wheat was worth only 47 cents.

During one of those dust bowl years my father and I passed Withrow and stopped at its one business establishment for sandwiches. The proprietor said that he was the town’s only remaining resident. Not many years before, it had been a community of 100. Dominating its skyline was a tall brick schoolhouse, a relic of better times for the town. As we drove on through the blowing dust we observed the fences along the dirt road, were sharply down, and there was no compensatory rise in prices. The country was spiraling down into the worst depression it had ever seen. In December 1931 the price of hard white wheat in Waterville was 62 cents per bushel. Soft white wheat was worth only 47 cents.

A region well suited for the production of wheat, as evidenced by its success today, was being turned into a desert. Adequate moisture did not guarantee the grower a successful harvest. Crops could be decimated by an attack of smut, a disease that destroyed the wheat kernels. Control consisted of chemical treatment of seed before planting. Sacks of seed wheat were dipped in a strong solution of formaldehyde. This process destroyed smut spores, but wetting the seed had an adverse effect on its germination.

Early in the 1920s a “dry treatment” was introduced. In 1923 the Empire Press carried an article recommending that farmers “fan” the seeds (hand-powered fanning mills removed weed seed and other debris) and then mix the powder (copper carbonate) in the sacks. The article advised against mixing in the drills while in the field. The report stated, “Seed wheat treated with powder had no seed injury; germination was quicker, a stronger plant was provided and much less seed was required per acre.”

The negative aspect of the dry treatment was its detrimental effect on the health of workers who inhaled the powder during mixing. Later, fanning mills were modified so that the powder could be added during the fanning process. Often, the men worked in a cloud of blue dust with no more protection than that provided by a bandanna tied across the face. The ultimate solution came when smut-resistant strains were developed. One of the early varieties, Ridit wheat, was introduced in 1925. By 1927 it was being grown on 38 Douglas County farms.

Besides disease, there was also the perennial problem of weeds in the summer fallow. The implement of choice for their control was the, rotary rod weeder. A square, rotating, steel rod moved under the surface of the plowed field, destroying the roots of the plants. Rod weeder were introduced in Waterville during the fall of 1921, and advertisements offering them for sale appeared the following year. The tendency of the rod to be fouled by stubble previously turned under by the moldboard gang-plows slowed the implement’s acceptance. During the 1920s alternative implements for preparing summer fallow were suggested, such as spring-tooth and disc harrows. However, most farmers clung to their traditional moldboard plows, which buried the stubble and left a clean surface. This was compatible with traditional dry-farming theory, which assumed that a “dust-mulch” would prevent the upward migration of moisture from the water table by capillary action. Actually, the theory was faulty and the dust-mulch was subject to wind erosion.

An alternate theory, “trashy-fallow,” became widely accepted toward the end of the 1920s, and the Wheatland plow was designed for its implementation. A one-way disc plow, it bound part of the stubble into the turned soil and left the remainder strewn on the surface. The rods of the weeders could then move under the stubble and kill the weeds while leaving the cloddy, trashy surface undisturbed and virtually immune to wind erosion. Moisture hoarded in the soil would be available in late summer to nourish winter wheat seedlings, but the amount of moisture available for storage varied widely from season to season. Tests performed between 1924 and 1931 at Waterville revealed moisture penetration ranging from 15 to 43 inches in stubble ground and 30 to 55 inches in fallow ground. The tested fallow had been kept

### PRECIPITATION IN WATERVILLE

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*Average of all available records through 1931 was 11.02 inches annually, as researched by a Douglas County agricultural agent and published in the Waterville Empire Press on January 14, 1932.*
weed free during the previous summer. Maximum moisture retention dictated that summer fallowing be completed before volunteer growth could desiccate the stubble ground. Likewise, weeding must be timely and effective.

By the mid-1930s the region was ready to put theory to work. Lights were installed on tractors and the Wheatland plows turned soil 24 hours a day. During the summer two treatments with rotary rod weeders usually sufficed to keep fields free of weeds. In late August or early September, the optimum time for planting winter wheat, moisture was available at the bottom of the tilled zone. In the past farmers had planted winter wheat in the one or two inches of surface soil moistened by late summer or fall rains, but placing the seed deeply into the stored moisture called for modified grain drills. Traditional drill placed seeds in rows six or seven inches apart. The modified drills deposited seeds in 12- or 13-inch furrows (today's deep-furrow drills sow in rows 18 or more inches apart).

As had their predecessors for years, many farmers, supplemented their income by selling sour cream from small herds of dual-purpose cows. A cream separator occupied a prominent place on most farms. Areas of scabland channel, or grasslands along the Columbia River breaks, provided grazing for cattle. In late summer herds were moved from the dry grasslands to the stubble fields where the cattle gleaned wheat missed by the harvesters. Cream checks provided for the families' basic needs, and farmers looked forward to their wheat harvests as possible bonanzas. Perhaps this year they would be able to buy needed equipment, or maybe a new car. Too often there was no bonanza. This was especially true in 1932. In March wheat prices ranged from 57 to 68 cents per bushel; in October, from 31 to 39 cents.

That the 1920s had been years of crisis was evidenced by the dwindling population throughout the Big Bend. The population of Douglas County dropped from 9,392 in 1920 to 7,561 in 1930. In the same ten-year span Grant County dropped from 7,771 to 5,666; Adams County, from 9,623 to 7,719; and Lincoln County, from 15,141 to 11,876. The early 1930s were even more difficult for those ranchers who survived, but the mid 1930s brought improved growing conditions as well as "New Deal" farm programs. In July 1933 the top price for wheat at Waterville stood at 73 cents, in August 1934 at 83 cents per bushel. As conditions improved, ranchers looked around for ways to expand. One grower in 1936 placed an 800-acre block of abandoned wheat land back in production, having been granted its use for crop rent-free. From the profit he purchased a new diesel tractor, a combine and other equipment. Cream separators would soon be gone from ranches that were acquiring electricity and farm-to-market roads. The future would bring many changes, but the basic pattern for producing wheat in the Big Bend was established by 1935.

Edward C. Whitley was a lifelong resident of eastern Washington. This essay is published posthumously.
World War II was a pivotal moment in history for the Pacific Northwest, particularly for Seattle. The spectacular growth of Boeing, the “discovery” of the city and the region by tens of thousands of military personnel and defense workers, and the city's emergence as a national rather than regional center for industrial production, all attested to momentous and permanent change.

The migration of over 10,000 African Americans to Seattle in the 1940s also represented a profound change that made the city—for good and ill—increasingly similar to the rest of urban America. That migration permanently altered race relations in Seattle as newcomers demanded the social freedoms and political rights denied them in their former Southern homes.

The migration increased black political influence as reflected in the 1949 election of State Representative Charles Stokes as the city's first black officeholder. It strengthened civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and encouraged the enactment of antidiscrimination legislation in Washington for the first time since 1890.

The wartime migration also increased racial tensions as the interaction of settlers and natives, white and black, came dangerously close to precipitating Seattle's first racial violence since the anti-Chinese riot of 1886. Moreover, severe overcrowding was particularly acute in the black community and accelerated the physical deterioration of the Central District into the city's most depressed area. But tensions also rose within the black community as the mostly rural African Americans from Louisiana, Arkansas, Texas and Oklahoma faced the disdain of the “old settlers”—blacks who had arrived in the city before 1940.

The African-American migration to Seattle was part of a much larger regional transformation stimulated by the growth of World War II defense industries. The war generated profound changes in economic and social conditions in the Pacific Northwest, prompting historian Carlos Schwantes to describe the years 1941-45 as the beginning of the modern era for the region. The Puget Sound area soon became a major center for ship and aircraft construction, which in turn stimulated other sectors of the economy. The region's shipbuilding industry was revived in 1941 after its virtual collapse following World War I, as 88 shipyards, 29 in Seattle alone, furnished vessels for the Navy, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine. Seattle's aircraft industry also came of age during World War II, although the process of growth and transformation had begun long before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The Boeing Airplane Company in September 1939 already employed 4,000 workers making military planes for the Army Air Corps and some commercial aircraft such as the Clipper airships that crossed the Pacific.

After fighting broke out in Europe, the British Royal Air Force purchased the company's B-17 Flying Fortress bombers for use against Nazi Germany. As orders came in, Boeing's work force grew accordingly to nearly 10,000 by June 1941, 20,000 in September, and 30,000 when the United States officially entered the war on December 8, 1941. In 1943 Boeing began production of the Super Fortress, a larger, longer-range B-29 bomber, from its facility in Renton. Boeing workers soon produced one B-29 bomber every five days and one B-17 every 24 hours. By 1944, at the peak of wartime production, Boeing employed nearly 50,000 workers in the Seattle area and amassed total sales of more than $600 million annually, sharply contrasting with the $70 million value of all Seattle manufacturing in 1939.
Although no other Seattle firm could rival Boeing in employment or production, other companies also experienced spectacular growth during World War II. Pacific Car and Foundry Company in Renton, which manufactured logging trucks before 1941, now produced Sherman tanks and employed nearly 4,000 workers in 1944. Shipyards in the Puget Sound area, including the Navy's facility at Bremerton and 29 yards in Seattle, employed 150,000 workers by 1944. Seattle's wartime contracts, totaling $5.6 billion, ranked it among the nation's top three cities in per capita war orders.

Greatly expanded wartime production quickly exhausted local labor pools, and in 1942 the War Manpower and Civil Service commissions began recruiting workers for plants in the Pacific Northwest. While recruitment took place throughout the country, most of the workers destined for West Coast production plants came from rural areas of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas, an economically depressed region with surpluses of unskilled and semiskilled workers, including a large number of African Americans. By war's end, 45,000 black workers and their families had migrated to the Pacific Northwest.

Although Seattle ultimately received the greatest number of newcomers in the region, its black population grew slowly at first, increasing from 3,789 to 7,000 between 1940 and June 1944. In 1942 most black workers came to Seattle as shipyard employees, and by 1943 the National Youth Administration brought to the city the first group of blacks to work for Boeing, now the largest employer in the Pacific Northwest. By war's end 4,078 (7 percent) of the 60,328 shipyard workers in Seattle were African Americans. Blacks also found work as nonmilitary government employees. Of 18,862 nonmilitary federal employees in Seattle in 1945, 1,019 (5 percent) were black. Moreover, the 4,000 black soldiers and sailors stationed at Fort Lawton in Seattle and other military installations nearby contributed to the new employment diversity of the African-American population. Wartime job demands had finally broken the seven-decade employment pattern of black workers as unskilled laborers and domestic servants.

Despite the acute shortage of workers in Seattle's defense industries, some segments of organized labor opposed the hiring of African Americans. In 1941, when President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 (a federal fair employment practices law), the Northwest Enterprise noted that it “falls on deaf ears in the far northwest.” The newspaper had valid reasons for its pessimism. Boeing had never hired blacks in any capacity. Moreover, that pattern seemed unlikely to change: in the ten weeks after the executive order became law, the company hired 1,000 new employees per week, but not one of them was black. In response, the black churches, fraternal organizations and political and social clubs organized the Committee for the Defense of Negro Labor's Right to Work at Boeing Airplane Company.

Some white Boeing workers were also attempting to integrate the company's work force. In 1940 Aero Mechanics Local 751 of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the major union at Boeing, became the focal point of their efforts. In a contest unknown to most of Seattle's African-American community leaders, or to the general public, advocates of equal employment opportunity at Boeing were soon embroiled in intra-union rivalry and forced to respond
to charges of political disloyalty and communist subversion. Local 751 was a young union, chartered only in 1935 with 35 founding members. Nevertheless, one year later it signed its first collective bargaining agreement with Boeing. Although essentially an industrial union, it was assigned by the American Federation of Labor (AFL) to the International Association of Machinists, a craft union that had long denied membership to women and nonwhite males. The prohibition on membership was offensive to some Local 751 members, who worked to eliminate the clause from the IAM ritual and simultaneously to encourage Boeing to hire nonwhite workers. In 1940 those workers invited Bernard Squires, executive secretary of the Urban League, to address a 751 meeting. Union members at that meeting vowed to open their ranks to blacks and instructed president Barney Bader and business representative Hugo Lundquist to call for removal of the membership ban at the 1940 International Convention in Cleveland.

Internal union politics quickly ended these attempts at reform, however. In October 1940 C. A. Stone, editor of the union newspaper Aero Mechanic, released an unauthorized edition in which he “exposed Communists.” Bader and Lundquist were among the accused. When a trial among Local 751 members exonerated the leadership, the IAM intervened, suspended the charter of the local, and called another trial in which 50 people, including Bader and Lundquist, were found “guilty of subversion,” which in the terminology of the IAM meant they were advocates of communism. Bader, Lundquist and most of the other members accused were expelled from the union.

With the proponents of nonrestrictive membership removed from the leadership in Local 751, the new union officers quickly rescinded the earlier decision to admit black workers. Nevertheless, pressure from the federal Fair Employment Practices Committee, the intervention of William Green, president of the AFL, and the growing labor shortage forced Boeing and Local 751 to allow the first black production workers at the Seattle aircraft plant in the spring of 1942. Under the terms of the arrangement, nonwhite employees and white women, who had been allowed to work at the Boeing plant for the first time the previous summer, were required to purchase weekly temporary permits granting them permission to work at Boeing. Union leaders unequivocally voiced their displeasure with the “temporary” opening jobs for black workers. “We rather resent that the war situation had been used to alter an old-established custom,” declared James Duncan, IAM representative of Lodge 751, “and do not feel it will be helpful to war production.”

Boeing management and Local 751 were eventually reconciled to the permanent presence of African Americans in the work force. When Boeing began gradually integrating its work force in 1942, its first two African-American employees were women. Stenographer Florise Spearman was accepted as an office worker in January. Four months later Dorothy West Williams, a sheet metal worker, became Boeing’s first black production worker as well as the first black member of Local 751. That the first African-American employees at Boeing in white- and blue-collar positions were women reflected the expanding role of black female labor both in the overall World War II migration and in the industrial workplace. By July 1943, just eighteen months after
Spearman was hired, African-American women constituted 86 percent of the 329 black employees at Boeing. However, as Karen Tucker Anderson has written, despite the obvious labor shortages, black women nationally continued to face gender and racial discrimination and thus remained an underutilized work force.

Boeing employed a wartime peak of 1,600 black workers, a presence large enough to persuade Local 751 leadership to again challenge the "whites only" provision in the membership ritual. Dick Powell, vice-president in 1945, led the local delegation, the largest at the International Convention in New York in 1945, where he introduced a resolution to remove the word "white" from the initiation ritual. Powell recalled that their aim was "to get rid of . . . a stigma on the IAM. In the 1945 convention we lost the fight to do this. We were outvoted. But it was the beginning of the end for discrimination." The succeeding convention removed the word "white" from the ritual. After a three-year campaign to obtain employment in the largest manufacturing facility in the Pacific Northwest, and another four years to get permanent union membership, the "battle for Boeing" was finally over.

Once inside Seattle plants, black workers faced various forms of discrimination, which heightened tension with white employees. Some discriminatory practices involved non-economic issues such as segregated lunchrooms and toilet facilities. In other instances black workers were denied promotion or were laid off for protesting the union policy of deducting monthly dues from the wages of African-American workers for membership in auxiliary locals while barring them from participation in regular union affairs. Occasionally a worker found herself challenging a discriminatory practice within a larger injustice. Ruby Black, for example, filed suit in Seattle Superior Court against Boeing and Local 751, asking for a restraining order against the automatic deduction of $3.50 from the pay of black female employees for a work permit while white women, also denied regular union membership, were charged $1.50. Black noted in her suit that when she complained about the higher dues for black women she was fired.

African-American workers at Pacific Car and Foundry in Renton also found that after initial employment barriers were removed they still faced opposition from various sources in management and labor. In May 1943, 29 black employees led by Marjorie Pitter protested signs announcing the segregation of restrooms. Pitter explained the incident to a Northwest Enterprise reporter: "We protested to the superintendent of the foundry. He told us the signs were ordered by higher officials and would remain." Then Pitter said tersely, "We declined to work." The company vice-president, claiming the union asked for the signs, said, "It would be company policy for a few days." Union officials denied responsibility and the protesting workers eventually discovered a fellow employee, J. Columbo, had initiated the segregated restroom policy with the approval of Captain Stretcher, the 13th Naval District inspector responsible for oversight at the plant. Columbo said "he did not appreciate skilled Negro workers . . . receiving higher wages than many whites"; and Captain Stretcher, who claimed credit for the segregated washrooms, declared that "if the black workers refused to accept the separate rooms they should resign immediately." Ultimately, black workers won their protest and Stretcher was transferred to another naval district.

Not every challenge by black workers was successful. In 1944 white workers at Doran Brass Foundry demanded separate showers, prompting a protest by black employees. Some angry black workers then announced they would take their grievance to the War Labor Board, a threat met with a retort from the foreman that "two white workers were worth more than all the colored employees of the company." All of the black workers quit in protest, but Doran Brass refused to rescind its policy and the workers were not reinstated.

In contrast to the treatment blacks received at Boeing, Pacific Car and Foundry, and Doran Brass, Seattle's shipyards eagerly employed black workers. Unlike other West Coast cities, no major company dominated Seattle's shipbuilding industry. In addition to the Todd and Seattle-Tacoma shipbuilding companies, the largest in the region, the 27 other shipyards in the Seattle area collectively employed about 60 percent of the shipyard workers. Furthermore, the powerful and racially exclusionist International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, which dominated shipyards in Portland, the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles, had

Dorothy Williams at Rainier Aircraft Training School not long before she became Boeing's first black production worker.

COLUMBIA 29 SUMMER 1995
exclusive bargaining agreements only with Todd and Seattle-Tacoma Shipbuilding.

Most of the smaller firms had contracts with the rival, racially integrated Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America. Consequently, Seattle's African-American shipyard workers were not segregated into the auxiliary locals of the Boilermakers' union, nor were they denied promotion opportunities. Moreover, racially integrated waterfront unions, including the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, the Marine Cooks and Stewards, and the Ship Scalers, applied pressure to discourage the discriminatory practices of the Boilermakers' local. While there were sporadic complaints of discrimination in Seattle's shipyards, the systematic segregation of blacks that persisted throughout the war years in other West Coast ship construction facilities did not evolve in Seattle.

Racial tension elsewhere in the city mounted as growing numbers of black and white newcomers clashed inside and outside the workplace. Such tensions were not unique to Seattle; in the summer of 1943 race riots broke out in Detroit and Harlem, and the primarily anti-Chicano Zoot Suit Riot erupted in Los Angeles. Against this backdrop of local and national racial tension, Seattle police chief Herbert Kimsey felt compelled to announce to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, "We're preparing for anything that might result from a crowded, mixed and excited wartime population."

Kimsey's concerns were all well-founded. In March 1944 a black woman was evicted from a city bus by the driver and arrested by four policemen who allegedly manhandled and cursed her. The Northwest Enterprise angrily denounced the police for using "Gestapo tactics" and speculated that the presence of black soldiers at the scene could have ignited a riot. Six months later a city bus driver advised some white persons about to board his bus that he had several black passengers and suggested they wait for another bus. One of the black passengers accused him of trying to run a "Jim Crow" bus. The driver called the man a "black nigger" and was subsequently threatened with a knife.

The violence that many feared that summer of 1944 finally erupted in August, not on Seattle city streets but at Fort Lawton. Black troops stationed there were subjected to humiliating treatment by the military and civilians. Their complaints included the Army's exclusive use of black soldiers to shovel snow in Seattle and their confinement to a single base tavern and PX while Italian prisoners of war were allowed outings to Mount Rainier and supervised visits to local bars that excluded black soldiers. Enraged by their treatment, the soldiers rioted at the fort, lynching private Guglielmo Olivotto, an Italian prisoner of war. In the mass court-martial that followed, 36 soldiers were brought to trial. After being convicted on various charges, including murder and rioting, 23 were sentenced to prison while the remaining 13 were acquitted.

Concern about the possibility of racial violence prompted Seattle Mayor William F. Devin to form the Seattle Civic Unity Committee in February 1944. The mayor set the tone of urgency in a speech at the University of Washington in July, five months after the committee was founded and only weeks before the Fort Lawton riot: "The problem of racial tensions is one which is fraught with a great deal of dynamite.... It is going to affect us not only during the War, but also after the War, and it is our duty to face the problem together. If we do not do that, we shall not exist very long as a civilized city or as a nation."

Patterned after similar agencies in Detroit and New York—cities that had experienced race riots—the Civic Unity Committee was both an acknowledgment of racial tension and an attempt to combat it by gathering and disseminating information on interracial matters, encouraging programs to reduce tensions, and making recommendations to the mayor and other officials on policy regarding racial issues. Designed to be representative of diverse community views (with the notable exception of "leftist elements" who were purposely excluded), the committee was composed of a cross-section of
citizens including a University of Washington educator, an industrialist, a Protestant clergyman, two women active in community work, two labor representatives (one AFL and the other CIO), one Jewish member, and two black members—a minister (Rev. Fountain W. Penick) and a dentist (Dr. Felix B. Cooper).

Seattle's growing black population faced increasing segregation and exclusion as "Whites Only" signs suddenly appeared for the first time in restaurants, theaters, motels and recreational areas. Businesses and public accommodations that did not openly exclude blacks often discouraged patronage by providing poor service or by segregating them from whites. The Northwest Enterprise and the NAACP campaigned against such policies, with the latter filing successful suits against some of the worst offenders. Now, however, the NAACP was joined in the campaign for racial justice by old and new allies, including the Christian Friends for Racial Equality (CFRE, formed a year earlier by a local group of black and white club women), the local Communist Party and groups such as the University of Washington black students whose direct action demonstrations integrated the swimming pool at Colman Park in 1944.

African-American newcomers faced chronic wartime housing shortages which, although shared by the white and Asian populations, were exacerbated by residential discrimination. Unlike Los Angeles and San Francisco, where black residents quickly occupied housing vacated by the Japanese, Seattle African Americans found that the new white owners and managers of the former Japanese hotels and rooming houses barred black tenants. Reverend Fountain W. Penick, pastor of Mount Zion Baptist Church and NAACP president in 1942, reported that, despite denials by owners that evictions were not racially motivated, 90 percent of the evicted tenants were black.

By 1945 over 10,000 blacks occupied virtually the same buildings that had housed 3,700 five years earlier. Migrants crowded into established Jackson, Madison and Cherry street sections or moved into newly created temporary housing projects such as Duwamish Bend Homes and Yesler Terrace. Because restrictive covenants confined African Americans to specific residential areas, newcomers soon found themselves doubling or even tripling up in houses that were already among the oldest in the city. One black defense worker attempting to purchase a home for his family in an all-white residential area was immediately confronted with various legal and extralegal maneuvers by neighborhood whites. Finally, a court ruled that the house violated Seattle's building code and ordered the family to leave.

Yet Seattle was the only city in the Pacific Northwest and one of the few major cities in the country that did not segregate blacks in its public housing projects. Jesse Epstein, director of the Seattle Housing Authority, instituted the unrestricted occupancy policy and easily integrated Yesler Terrace, Seattle's first public housing project, when it opened in 1940. Located on Yesler Hill above the city's International District, the apartments, with their sweeping view of Seattle's harbor, were a vast improvement over the deteriorating Victorian homes and craftsman cottages that housed many of Seattle's south-side poor. During a Housing Authority staff meeting in 1940 Epstein reportedly declared, "We have an opportunity to prove that Negroes and whites can live side by side in harmony ... but it's going to require skill and patience to make it work." Housing staffer Ray Adams commented that because of housing discrimination "Negroes and whites will live side by side; this in itself is revolutionary." Epstein's approach to the problem of interracial adjustment included limiting black occupancy to 20 percent and quickly moving neighboring black and white tenants who clashed to other housing units in the project.

Epstein's "social experiment" generated strident criticism and growing opposition from businessmen and residents when the Housing Authority built projects in the all-white areas of West Seattle, Sand Point, Holly Park and Rainier Vista. Those residents, already apprehensive over public housing for the white poor, including a disproportionate number of southern-born war workers, now feared an influx of southern black migrants into their neighborhoods. Conversely, some blacks were angry that the unofficial 20 percent quota to foster integrated public housing, as well as a 25 percent quota on welfare recipients, reduced their access to badly needed public housing for the sake of "social engineering." Despite such criticism the Housing Authority, unlike...
similar agencies in most American cities, refused to succumb to community demands for segregated public housing.

Seattle's NAACP and Urban League grew rapidly during the war and became increasingly vocal against injustices toward African Americans. The NAACP increased from a prewar high of 85 members to 1,550 in 1945. Moreover, a new generation of leaders emerged, including E. June Smith and Philip Burton, local black attorneys who initiated suits against discriminatory practices and lobbied for stronger state civil rights laws, and Reverend Fred Shorter, a white minister who headed the chapter from 1943 to 1947.

The Seattle Urban League doubled its membership and tripled its staff during the 1940s, benefiting from aggressive leadership by Bernard Squires, executive secretary from 1939 to 1943, and his successors Dean Hart (1944-47) and Napoleon P. Dotson (1941-50). Under their leadership the league initiated or supported antidiscrimination suits and assisted lobbying efforts for a state fair employment practices act. Both the Urban League and the NAACP increasingly relied on the support of sympathetic white organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the Jewish Anti-Defamation League and the CFRE.

The CFRE began examining cases involving public accommodations, housing discrimination and police brutality. Members campaigned against numerous racially based practices, including higher automobile insurance rates for nonwhite drivers, housing segregation at the University of Washington, and segregated cemeteries. By 1950 the CFRE had 200 members, an annual budget of $1,900, and an office in downtown Seattle. Among other public activities, it awarded an annual $300 scholarship to a minority student gifted in graphic arts and sponsored interracial meetings among the city's religious denominations.

The epitome of this aggressive new thrust in civil rights was the campaign to enact a state fair employment practices law. The first effort had been initiated both before World War II and outside the black community. In February 1939, 37th District Representative Ernest Olsen had introduced a bill barring discrimination on the basis of race, creed or color, patterned after a similar New York statute. But even the Northwest Enterprise, while expressing gratitude on behalf of local people and national observers. But as the local civil rights movement of the 1960s shattered long-held assumptions about both the Central District and the city, black community residents, indeed all Seattleites, would soon realize that in the matter of race both the best and the worst were yet to come.

**T**he migration of African Americans to Seattle during World War II continued into the postwar decade. Unlike most American cities whose economies were buoyed by wartime production only to experience a postwar slump, Seattle remained prosperous. Boeing now received Cold War-inspired military contracts and saw a steady growth in commercial airline orders throughout the late 1940s. The continuing prosperity of the city and region lured African Americans to the Pacific Northwest long after postwar industrial cutbacks forced thousands of other West Coast African Americans into the unemployment line.

The outlook for Seattle blacks in the early 1950s was so encouraging that the Chicago Defender, the nation's largest African-American newspaper, urged in 1951 that blacks leave the Midwest and the East for Seattle. The median income of black families in Seattle, was $3,314, or 53 percent above that of blacks nationally. In fact, the median income of Seattle blacks averaged only 10 percent below that for white families nationally. Not surprisingly, the city's African-American population grew by 5,000 between 1945 and 1950 as defense industries continued to lure black workers.

Seattle's expanding economy seemed capable of absorbing black and white newcomers, generating a euphoria about and pride in local conditions that masked evolving problems such as deteriorating housing, de facto school segregation and continued employment discrimination in large segments of the local economy. Nonetheless, the euphoria cast Seattle as the race relations "frontier," with its implicit suggestion that the city had managed to solve or at least avoid the problems of Southern and Eastern cities. The "frontier" model found its way into articles written by local people and national observers. But as the local civil rights movement of the 1960s shattered long-held assumptions about both the Central District and the city, black community residents, indeed all Seattleites, would soon realize that in the matter of race both the best and the worst were yet to come.

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By Linda Lawrence Hunt

A Victorian Odyssey

Two Washington women attracted the attention of New Yorkers on April 26, 1896, when the New York Sunday World ran a feature story about Helga and Clara Estby as "striking women from the west." The newspaper article, which included a formal portrait of the mother and daughter, announced their daring upcoming tramp from Spokane to New York. A few days later the Spokane Chronicle also announced this bold trek and candidly acknowledged the inevitable dangers: "Should they survive the trip their reminiscences will undoubtedly attract great attention."

Women walking unescorted across the continent was something unheard-of in turn-of-the-century America. Yet, on a sunny May afternoon, 36-year-old Helga Estby and her 18-year-old daughter Clara, adorned in full-length Victorian dresses, stepped out from the Chronicle office in Spokane to accomplish what others believed impossible. Like many Western adventurers, the pursuit of money lured them to test their limits. However, it was not gold rush fever for glamorous new wealth that enticed Helga, but the need for basic financial support to prevent homelessness. Unable to pay their mortgage and taxes, Helga, her husband Ole, and their nine children risked losing their beloved family homestead at Mica Peak unless their finances improved substantially.

News reached Helga of "unidentified Eastern parties" who offered a $10,000 wager if the trek could successfully be completed. The wager came with certain stipulations. The travelers must leave the city with just five dollars apiece, earn their way along the route, visit state capitals, and reach New York City within seven months. It was a gamble and a challenge, but having walked 400 miles once before, Helga felt confident that she could succeed. She therefore signed the contract, convinced her eldest daughter to accompany her, and announced the decision to her astonished husband and disapproving Norwegian neighbors. She then set out to save her family's home, conquering a continent and challenging conventional attitudes toward women in the process.

The story of the two women's journey is a true tale of triumph, sheer determination and luck. The undertaking attracted great attention, and newspapers throughout the nation chronicled their progress. In the course of their journey Helga and Clara crossed 14 states, several Indian reservations, mountain ranges, deserts, and long, lonely stretches of land bereft of people, towns or food sources. They experienced first-hand the awesome grandeur and variety of an American landscape largely untouched by human development. They fought off highwaymen, hobos and miners; encountered such extremes of weather as flash floods, hurricanes and snow storms; escaped from mountain lions, rattlesnakes and raging rivers; and knew well the kindnesses extended to strangers by common folk on the frontier and in America's cities.

Their 1896 Transcontinental Trek Brought Two Spokane Women Both Victory and Defeat
A studio portrait of Helga Estby and her daughter Clara taken in Spokane before they set out on their journey.
“They are walking for $10,000.00 which a New York woman has offered them if they accomplish the feat between the day they started, May 5, and the last day of November. . . .”

Before she left Spokane, Helga obtained the following letter of introduction from the city's mayor:

To Whom It May Concern:

The bearer hereof, Mrs. H. Estby, has been a resident of this city and vicinity for the last nine years, is a lady of good character and reputation, and I take pleasure in commending her and her daughter, with whom she travels, to the kindly consideration of all persons with whom she may come in contact.

Very respectfully,

H. N. Belt, Mayor

The state treasurer added his signature to the paper, accompanied by the state seal. To these female turn-of-the-century travelers this letter proved more valuable than a modern-day American Express card.

Part of the Estby story was never chronicled—the disappointing and tragic set of circumstances that silenced the two women's remarkable feat for almost 100 years. Through research in America and Norway, the details of their exceptional journey have reemerged piece by piece as their story was reconstructed.

Like many immigrants, Helga experienced travel as essential to improving one's lot in life. Born in Christiana (now Oslo), Norway, in 1860, Helga lost her carpenter father when she was two years old. Several years later her mother remarried a merchant. The family emigrated to America when Helga was 11 and settled in Manistee, Michigan. Sometime around age 17 Helga became pregnant with her ninth child, and the economic pressures must have been considerable. At least on the farm the children could be fed. If they needed to move back to Spokane, where would a bankrupt family find decent housing for 11 people? A personal tragedy added to the family's distress when, in January 1896, the Estbys' 12-year-old son Henry died.

It was in this state of vulnerability, with the potential of losing the home and land she loved, that Helga signed a contract for the unusual wager. Although the “parties” did not want their identity revealed, a newspaper reporter for the Des Moines Register wrote on October 17, 1896:

They are walking for $10,000.00 which a New York woman has offered them if they accomplish the feat between the day they started, May 5, and the last day of November. . . . Mrs. Estby said the purpose of the feat they are attempting to perform is to demonstrate the endurance of woman, on the part of the lady who is putting up the $10,000.00 prize.
Besides highlighting the abilities of women, Helga suggested another interest of the eastern woman in the May 5 Spokesman Review:

You see, there is a lady who has invented a new style garment. When we get to Salt Lake we will don this garment and wear it the rest of the way, and then when we get to New York city we will go on exhibition with it.

Just a year earlier fashion designers had created the bicycle skirt, and this is what Helga and Clara wore throughout the eastern part of their trip. Helga also talked about taking notes on their experiences to produce a book. A Minneapolis newspaper stated: "They were to share in the proceeds of a book written by the two ladies and published under the direction of the eastern parties."

Whatever the precise motive of the "eastern parties," Helga trusted the wager and planned to meet the requirements of the contract. There is no record of her husband's response, although his embarrassment must have equaled his fear for their lives. It is known that this highly dangerous decision, an action unheard-of from women with remnants of Victorian and immigrant values, met with disapproval in the Mica Peak community. Mr. G. N. Silverson, whose father was Ole Estby's best friend, recalls, "Their walk wasn't looked well upon. It wasn't right for women to do." The community's sentiments echoed cultural norms—a woman's place, especially a mother with nine children, was in the home.

This did not hinder Helga's determination. "She had a mind of her own," recalled Thelma Portch, the granddaughter who lived with her as a child. "She probably just announced to Ole she was going." During an oral interview before her death, Thelma also recalled a story that her grandmother had told her over and over:

When Helga was a little girl in a Norwegian school, her religion teacher taught the Bible story where Jonah is swallowed by the whale. However, in her science class they were also teaching about the anatomy of whales. Recognizing the discrepancy of the two stories, she tells her religion teacher that there is no way that the whale can swallow Jonah and have him live inside.

What impressed little Helga was the teacher's calm and confident reply: "Oh, Helga, never forget that with God all things are possible."

To Thelma, the importance that Helga attached to this childhood incident suggested a significant source of her courage and philosophy.

The day Helga left Spokane a Spokesman Review article quoted her very practical reasons for accepting the wager:

Why do I take this trip? Well, to make money. I've been laid up with sickness for some time and had to mortgage my farm, and now I can't see any way of getting enough money to pay interest and taxes unless I do something of this kind. I have simply got to make a stake some way, for I don't want to lose the farm and it is the only way I can see of saving it.

She clearly felt a responsibility to be the one to resolve the family's problems.

For such a lengthy trip, the two women traveled remarkably light. They each packed a small satchel of survival goods: a compass, revolver, pepper gun and powder to thwart attackers, a curling iron, knife, notebook and pen, and five dollars. They also carried pictures of themselves to sell along the way, plus the letter of introduction. They packed no change of clothing and dressed in long gray dresses, petticoats and high boots.

They went directly to the newspaper office in most of the towns they stopped in. Before long they settled into a rhythm, averaging 25 to 35 miles a day. Once they walked 40 miles in a day, equaling the distance covered by legendary mountain men—who were not burdened by cumbersome dresses. To keep from getting lost they followed the railroads—first the Northern Pacific to the Union Pacific, then the Rock Island to the Burlington and Reading. Most nights they stayed in section houses along the way or enjoyed the
"[The Indians] took out everything and looked at it. Oddly, the only thing that interested them was our curling iron, which they made us demonstrate."

hospitality of local citizens. They only slept without shelter for nine nights.

Constant rain marred the first month of their trek, during which there were only three days of sunshine. They also experienced harassment. One newspaper report stated: "Near La Grande, Oregon, a tramp attacked them and attempted to hold them up. He had been following them for several days. Mrs. Estby drew her revolver and threatened to shoot him. He still persisted in following them."

A Minneapolis Tribune article revealed the rest of the story: "Mrs. Estby was obliged to use her revolver to bring down an assailant. This was just before entering an Oregon town one evening last summer, when a dudishly-dressed man who persisted in walking to town with the ladies received a bullet in his leg."

In Boise's June 5 Idaho Daily Statesman a reporter observed: "Mrs. Estby and her daughter did not seem a bit fatigued, notwithstanding they had a long tramp during the day. In the Blue mountains they encountered considerable snow. 'We had to wade through water most every day.' The writer noted their emotional state: "The women did not seem to be discouraged and stated they hoped to return to Spokane by Christmas." Contrary to Victorian fears that such a strenuous trip might harm a woman's health, Helga appeared to be restored and refreshed by the single focus of this effort.

Shortly out of Boise the two women evidently took a shortcut and became dangerously lost for days in the desolate Snake River lava beds, a treacherous maze of cracked lava, crevices and 100-degree temperatures. In Wyoming they tramped for three days and nights without food and slept in the open air, where they barely escaped a prowling mountain lion. In Colorado they fled from rattlesnakes. One morning, after sleeping by a riverbank, they awoke to a flash flood. "It was only by holding onto shrubs that we escaped with our lives," Helga later recalled.

Washed out bridges delayed them considerably. At one point they waded for six miles through water two feet deep. Mild hunger stalked their days because of the considerable distance between towns, especially in the West. "Sometimes it was very hard and we have often gone with but one meal a day," stated Helga. "We got along comfortably when we got only two meals."

Usually they found the Indians friendly. Helga told of an episode in Utah where Indians stopped them and insisted on examining the contents of their small bags. "They took out everything and looked at it. Oddly, the only thing that interested them was our curling iron, which they made us demonstrate."

by the time they reached Salt Lake City, at eight in the morning on July 8, they were, according to the Deseret Evening News, feeling fairly discouraged. "Thus far, we have had a pretty hard time," admitted Helga in a rare acknowledgment of the potential folly of the trip. "We had considerable trouble in making our way through Idaho and over the mountains, but believe we will get along much better from now on, as the districts through which we will have to pass are more thickly settled than those which we have already traversed."

Helga stated that they hoped to find work and remain in

This photo of Helga and Clara Estby was taken in Minneapolis on their way home in 1897 and appeared in the Minneapolis newspapers.
Salt Lake for a week to “rest up and get a few pennies to help us further along.” She candidly remarked, “The journey...is not what it is cracked up to be, and I can assure you that when it is over I will never undertake such a trip again.”

The reporter also noted, “They are taking notes on the way from which they expect to write a book at the completion of their journey. ... They are quite intelligent women and converse freely and fluently. They have visited several points of interest in and about the city and expect to attend the services at the Tabernacle tomorrow.”

The two also visited Governor Wells and “reminded the News that Utah had ‘a very excellent chief executive.’”

Although they could walk untroubled for miles, they continued to face difficulties with vagabonds and others who treated them as “adventuresses.” In Denver Helga knocked down a bold highwayman who attempted to rob her. The two women became adept at using their red pepper guns to shoot in the eyes of pestering men. “It’s as good as a whole army,” claimed Clara. One day Clara sprained her ankle among rocks in Colorado, a serious enough injury to delay them for ten days. Although their contract stipulated a specific arrival date, it did make allowances for illness.

In Des Moines, Iowa, the Register announced that they arrived at 11 o’clock on the night of October 16 and stayed at the Savery Hotel. After describing the purpose of the Estbys’ journey and the $10,000 wager, the writer noted their continuing confidence: “They said last night that they expected to win it.” The reporter gave a detailed account of their contemporary apparel:

The women wear short skirts. Their dresses are of gray cloth. They are simply made and have no gewgaws and furbelows attached to them. Small hats, and leggings and shoes complete the visible outfit. They want to make enough money in Des Moines to buy themselves new shoes and mackintoshes. They are compelled to walk on the dirt roads instead of the railroads for their shoes are soon ruined by the cinders of the latter.

It was in the Des Moines paper that Helga mentioned having written and mailed home hundreds of pages of manuscript, and Clara lamented that “she was sick of the trip.”

Along the way they cooked, cleaned and sewed clothing to make money. “We did almost everything but sawing wood,” claimed Helga. Arriving in Chicago with only five cents each, they soon made money by modeling bicycle skirts in a progressive city department store, a pleasant diversion from manual labor.

In the Midwest winter winds and snows began to plague their travels, causing them to worry about missing their deadline. By November 24 they reached Columbus, Ohio, and a short article said they were in such a hurry that they could not stop. On November 29 they visited President William McKinley at his Ohio home, where he signed their document from Mayor Belt. Helga received a hearty welcome from Mrs. William Jennings Bryan, wife of the presidential candidate. Helga, like Mr. Bryan, supported free silver, a major campaign issue. Clara supported McKinley and was the favorite of the two when they reached Canton. The fact that the mother and daughter were independent thinkers and were repeatedly described as “intelligent and good conversationalists” suggests the richness of perspective their memoirs would have offered.

Subsequent news accounts appeared in Pennsylvania, a place where they experienced both difficulty from Italian miners and considerable kindness from the citizens in the Pennsylvania Dutch county of Berks. Their excitement rose as they neared the completion of their arduous odyssey. A short article in the December 5 Harrisburg Telegraph concluded: “Mrs. Estby was confident she would reach her destination on time and carry off the $10,000.00 prize. The daughter, only 19 years of age, was sprightly and did not appear to dread the remaining distance. Mrs. Estby is a slight-built but determined-looking woman of 37.”

A Reading Times account of December 19 described their almost celebrity status the night they arrived at the Hotel
Penn and many visitors came to hear them: "They recounted some of their experiences most entertainingly. They had numerous callers, including some well-known society people. A book is to be written containing incidents and experiences of their remarkable travel."

The article noted their remarks on the hospitable treatment they received during most of their trip. In answer to the question, "At what point did you experience the most trouble?" they stated, "It was on the plains near Chicago and the hoboes held us up. They followed us for three-fourths of a mile, and Clara and I walked backward pointing our revolvers at them, to save ourselves from harm."

Mention was also made of the trouble they experienced from swollen feet while crossing the mountains and from Clara's several illnesses on the trip, which caused them to stay over a few days at different periods. Clara sprained her ankle again in Pennsylvania, necessitating another delay. The reporter observed, "The girdlers feel jubilant over the near approach of the completion of their journey."

When the two reached Phillipsburg, New Jersey, someone misdirected them and they trudged nearly 50 miles off their course, resulting in further delay. "It was a grievous mistake and caused them to be caught in last night's snow storm," stated the December 24 New York World. Weary but elated, they reached New York City at one o'clock in the afternoon on December 23 and headed straight for their destination, the New York World office.

The World described the two women and their achievement in the next edition:

Mrs. Estby is well educated and has traveled considerably in different parts of the world. She is a good conversationalist and very witty. Her daughter, Clara, is nineteen years old, with a full round face and sparkling blue eyes. She has a plump, well-developed figure. She is a graduate of a Spokane High School and well educated. Both wore bicycle skirts, reaching a few inches below their knees.

They had traveled 4,600 miles and worn out a dozen pairs of shoes and three dresses each, all bought with money they earned along the way. Their entire expenses amounted to $300. Helga and Clara exhibited several trinkets, given them by an Indian chief, that "they show with pride," stated the reporter. The article mentioned that the two women planned to remain in New York for several days and then return home by rail. The same story alluded to Helga's growing fear that the woman would refuse to pay the wager because Clara's sprained ankles might not qualify as "sickness."

The front page of the New York Times also heralded their triumphant arrival. But their deep sense of accomplishment was shattered when they learned that they would not receive the wager. The "private parties" refused to consider accidents as illnesses, thus invalidating the delays that had caused the two women to arrive later than the agreed-upon date. After some negotiation the parties agreed to pay the wager if the Estbys wrote a book on their experiences. Confident in this new arrangement, Helga planned to complete the book the following summer, with Clara repeating the trip by rail to secure illustrations.

Penniless again, they were forced to stay in New York, leaving the children and Ole for another five months, until they could secure passage for their return home. On May 5, 1897, they returned to Chicago by rail and then walked to Minneapolis. Two major articles with photographs appeared in the Minnesota Times and the Minnesota Tribune, chronicling their adventures. These extensive stories showed Helga and Clara's exuberance and satisfaction with their achievement and their eagerness to return home and complete the book. A Times reporter wrote:

A story unfolded that would shine among the thrilling tales of Munchausen's adventures. This one was vastly superior, however, because true. No women unattended ever attempted such a feat before... The incidents of the trip are certainly enough in quality and quantity to fill a good sized volume. Mrs. Estby has regained entirely her fast failing health and the two will soon be under their own roof in Washington state.

Even Clara, once sick of the trip, seemed now to see its benefits: "Clara Estby considers that the trip is worth as much to her as a college course, for she has gained an extended knowledge of the country and has become adept in the reading of human nature."

With these two impressive articles and photographs in their possession, Helga and Clara left for Spokane, most likely by rail. Signatures on their introductory document proved they had visited many prominent American politicians, including the governors of Utah, Colorado, Iowa and Pennsylvania, the mayor of Chicago, the populist General Coxey, and presidential candidates Bryan and McKinley.

Their confidence changed to despair when they arrived home. There they learned that just days earlier two of the Estby children had died from what locals called "black diphtheria," a particularly virulent disease. Bertha, age 15, died on April 6, and Johnny, 9, died four days later. So contagious and deadly was the illness that Ole had insisted that most of the other children stay out in a shed while he nursed his dying son and daughter. Nor would their Lutheran pastor come to perform last rites until Ole had built coffins and buried them.

This tragedy created bitter resentment within the family, probably because Helga had not been home to help. Traditional American and Norwegian values reinforced the tenet...
that women should be at the center of the home, nurturing the children. Helga's courageous action to save her home was most likely seen as slightly mad, perhaps foolish, by those around her, especially since she came home empty-handed.

Worse than this, her choice to stake a claim for her family's future was seen as desertion, not devotion. This cruel and confusing criticism must have deeply stung a woman who had given every day of her life since age 17 to the birthing and nurturing of children and then risked her life to walk across America in the hope of providing them with a better life.

Surrounded by familial and community censorship and stunned by the loss of her beloved children, Helga sank into depression. Instead of writing a book that year, she adopted the common Victorian pattern of silence. She never spoke of the trip again, either within the family or in public. Clara, described by relatives as a very sensitive young woman, became so distraught from the animosity of family members and neighbors that she left home to live in Spokane. She changed her last name to Dore (possibly her real father's name), and remained alienated from her loved ones for many years. Eventually she reunited with her family, but the trip remained a forbidden subject.

In 1900 the Estbys lost their farm to a sheriff's sale and moved back to Spokane, where the older children took live-in jobs as domestic and gardeners. Ole began a successful contracting business with their son Arthur and later built the family a large home on Mallon Street. Helga regained her emotional health and became active in the suffrage movement, attended city council meetings, joined the Sons of Norway, and enjoyed many of the city's cultural events, especially music and theater.

In 1916, when Helga was 53, Ole died from a fall off a roof. Shortly thereafter Helga secretly began writing the memoirs of her American odyssey. Thelma Portch recalled:

I used to climb up the stairs to Grandma's attic room and watch her write. There'd be boxes and reams of foolscap, unlined yellow legal paper which she used to write her book. One day she said to me, "Now, honey, I want you to take care of this for me." But as a child I had no idea what she was talking about. Her story was so smothered, the trip had never once been mentioned by anyone in our family.

Helga suffered a debilitating stroke and died at age 80. Ida, who cared for her mother in her declining years, burned her manuscript. A distraught daughter-in-law witnessed the papers burning and managed to rescue the two Minneapolis newspaper articles. Years later she secretly gave these to Thelma. That is when Thelma learned of her grandmother's amazing trip and became convinced that "she was a woman born a hundred years ahead of her time."

During Helga's lifetime cultural criticism shook her confidence and her belief in the validity of her own reality, vision and truth. This was a profound personal loss, but it was also America's loss. The promise of the Spokesman Review—"if they survive there will undoubtedly be great interest in their story"—proved true, but it never bore fruit. There has been enormous ongoing interest in de Tocqueville's observations on the America of 1834 in his Democracy in America. Peter Jenkins's Walking Across America became a best-seller in 1980. The observations of a mother and daughter who visited with political leaders, Indian chiefs, editors and common folk would have provided a permanent historical record of life in 1896 from a female perspective. And at a time when women were rarely published, it undoubtedly would have been a landmark literary event. Not only was Helga silenced in her era, but America has forever lost all but a few scattered pieces of her story.

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In a culture with no calendar or written language, only important events would be committed to memory and perceptions passed from generation to generation. Such was the case for the Quileute Indians of the Olympic Coast. They told an unusual tale of a broken ship and promises—a story of the tribe's earliest contact with American settlers.

Their story begins with a chance meeting on a storm-swept coast near the main village, now known as LaPush. White people straggled ashore from a steamship destroyed by mountainous seas and gale-force winds. Cargo was strewn along the beach. Some items, including hardtack and dinner forks, were salvaged and distributed among the Quileutes. The forks were particularly useful for combing the thick hair of their large woolly dogs.

None of the passengers or crew understood the native language, and the Quileutes spoke no English. Communication could have become a major problem but for the fact that one of the Indians, a man called Hauwiyal, and a few of the survivors were able to converse in the Chinook trade jargon.

According to the story, the survivors remained with the tribe long enough for some to learn the Quileute language before they were taken to Neah Bay, near Cape Flattery, 30 miles north. A few years later another white man, referred to as “Stimin,” gave trade goods to the Indians as a reward for their assistance to the shipwreck survivors. Still later, “Stimin” returned, curious about the extent of tribal land. Hauwiyal escorted him to the tribe’s prairies in the forest upriver from the main village.

When American settlers subsequently arrived, they took the prairies for themselves and drove the Indians away. Eventually, the Quileutes were deprived of all their land.

So ends the Quileute story—their perception of history. There are other perceptions of the same events. Several persons recorded versions of the shipwreck, subsequent gifts to the tribe, the tour of tribal land and the loss of that land to settlers. Mid-19th-century government documents, newspaper accounts and eyewitness reports collectively describe a course of events not far removed from the Quileute story.

A number of ships have foundered along the rugged coast of the Olympic Peninsula during the past two centuries, and a few drifted ashore in the land of the Quileute people. One of these was a steamship whose passengers and crew survived to tell of a stormy night in late December 1854 when the SS Southerner ran aground 30 to 40 miles south of Cape Flattery. The ship, out of San Francisco, was bound for Portland and Puget Sound when it was bested by a series of winter storms. Fortunately for those aboard, it was abandoned close enough to the coast for nearly 50 people to wade ashore. Continuing storms smashed the vessel and its contents onto the beach near the Quileute main village. The passengers remained near the village for almost three weeks as the tempest, described as a hurricane, continued. Eventually the captain and a few of the crew members made their way north to Neah Bay to alert the outside world to the disaster. Finally the storm abated sufficiently for another steamer, the Major Tompkins, to rescue the passengers and carry them to Puget Sound. A salvage crew arrived with the rescue vessel and remained in the village for several weeks to guard the mail on board the Southerner and to save some of the more valuable cargo. Freight aboard the stricken ship included a printing press bound for the fledgling Oregonian newspaper in Portland. The press was salvaged by the crew, but its dainty lead type became earrings for the tribe. Dinnerware from
James Swan was highly sensitive to the rapid cultural changes occurring among Northwest Coast Indians.

The Quileute story mentions gifts, a reward received from "Stimin" a few years after the wreck. M. J. Andrade provided an English translation of their story in 1928. He also interviewed Quileute descendants and concluded that the "Stimin" referred to was actually Isaac Stevens, the governor of Washington Territory during 1853-57. It is unlikely that the governor ever visited the remote land of the Quileute. He did, however, send an emissary to the coast six months after the wreck of the Southerner. His representative, Special Indian Agent Michael Simmons, presented gifts to the tribe during a treaty council in July 1855.

Simmons had just completed a tour among various tribes that already had agreed to treaties. His last port of call was Neah Bay on the Strait of Juan de Fuca, home of the Makah Indians. Arriving there aboard a chartered schooner on June 22, he promptly completed his duties and departed the next day.

Stevens had directed Simmons to send a survey party into the unexplored area between Neah Bay and the Quinault River to determine the navigability of any rivers found along the coast. Although not recognized at the time, a half-dozen navigable streams flowed to the sea, and most of the unexplored land was home to the Quileutes. There is no record that Simmons conducted either an overland journey or a coastal survey from Neah Bay. Instead, he opted to keep his small group together and apparently returned to Olympia aboard the schooner.

Agent Simmons subsequently described a route to the Quinault River that could be followed on foot or horseback, south from Olympia on the Cowlitz Road to the Chehalis River, then via canoe downstream and across Grays Harbor. "The most certain way of reaching this place [the Quinault River] at all times, will be from Grays Harbor, along the beach, which is level and hard as a board. The distance is about 18 miles."

On June 25 Simmons and three companions proceeded on foot "to reach the assembly ground of the Quinault, to examine their ground and prepare to enter into treaties, reached this place on the 30th." His report noted that "the Quinault River is a handsome river some 300 feet wide [and] is navigable for canoes about 30 miles to a large lake[,] The finest salmon abound here."

Governor Stevens had briefed Simmons on his treaty expectations: "You will inform the Quinaults and the Quileutes that they will remain in their country for the present," and "[you] will get the signatures of the Quinaults and the Quileutes[,] and the remaining tribes will be treated with at Olympia."

On July 1 Simmons held the Quinault River Treaty Council with the Quileute, Hoh, Quinault and the Queets Indians. The Hoh were related by marriage, language and culture to the Quileute. The Queets similarly were affiliated with the Quinault. As was customary in the Stevens administration, the agent selected various chiefs to represent the Quileute, including Hauwiyal (sometimes spelled Howeattle) and Tahahowtl. Agent Simmons then distributed gifts, "The presents being most agreeably accepted by them, I found the men all with large knives in their hands, but all very friendly." While the Indians may have believed they were being rewarded, gifts were often distributed at the end of successful treaty negotiations.

The mark of each chief appears at the end of the July 1, 1855, treaty; Hauwiyal is listed as the Quileute head chief and Tahahowtl as one of several subchiefs. Isaac Stevens later declared, "The programme of the Treaty was prepared by me previously to my leaving for the Blackfoot Country, and the Treaty itself signed [January 25, 1856] by me after my return." The treaty document is silent concerning location of any reservations, but its terms closely resemble other treaties in the territory.

Most Indian treaties of the Stevens era were vague about the location of...
The Quileutes are a resilient people; repeated government attempts over the past 150 years have failed to remove them from their homeland. Today they live, as did their ancestors, near the mouths of the Quileute and Hoh rivers on the Olympic Coast.

A number of tribal reservations. Details were usually recorded in council proceedings written during the negotiations by a designated secretary. Government proposals, tribal objections and demands, and ultimate terms of any agreements were set forth in each of the earlier treaty proceedings. These documents were faithfully transcribed into a bound book of proceedings records—except for the Quinault River Treaty. The record of each proceeding was then submitted together with the respective treaty to the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.

When Simmons submitted his report of the Quinault River council to the governor, he added: "Proceedings of Treaty you will please find attached to my report." The report and a copy of the signed treaty were eventually forwarded by the governor with no mention of any proceedings record. If the Simmons party actually recorded the proceedings, it may have been inadvertently misplaced. Perhaps the item attached to his report was not the proceedings record but merely the treaty itself and no proceedings record was ever made. In any event, a government document that might clarify what was discussed and agreed upon is missing.

Agent Simmons later observed: "No particular spot is fixed upon by the treaty for their [Quinault and Quileute tribes] reservation, but I have recommended the land lying between Point Grenville on the south and the Quinault River on the north be set aside for that purpose. I selected this spot because it is the only one where a landing can be effected even in smooth weather. Even this is, properly speaking, no harbor, yet vessels of light draft can run in and unload in a calm time."

The mysterious "Stimin" of the Quileute story might refer to Agent Simmons rather than Governor Stevens. Simmons had first attempted a journey into the unexplored land north of the Quinault in 1854. His trip via Grays Harbor was intended to make contact with unknown tribes reportedly inhabiting the coast, but he turned back without ever reaching the Hoh or Quileute River. This aborted venture and the 1855 council on the Quinault River were his only recorded attempts to contact the tribe. The story, however, describes a subsequent visit to their main village by "Stimin"—one that included a tour upriver. Such an event did occur in 1861, but the individual escorted to the Quileute prairies was neither the governor nor the Indian agent.

James Swan had recently returned to the territory from two years in Washington, D.C., as secretary to Isaac Stevens, then a congressional delegate. Swan was again a private citizen residing in Port Townsend when in late July he embarked on a sea voyage to the Olympic Coast and the main Quileute village. "On Thursday, August 1st, I made arrangements with Hauwiyal and Wakamus to accompany me up the [Quileute] river on a visit to [the] camas prairie." After his tour Swan wandered about the main village, concluding, "I think this is the best location I have seen on the coast for an Indian Agency, far preferable to Quinault. The river admits vessels of a size quite sufficient for the purposes of the Indian department, and there is plenty of wood,
American settlers first arrived in the land of the Quileutes during the 1870s, two decades after both the shipwreck and the treaty. Most of the settlers soon claimed the fertile prairies where the camas grew. One particularly brazen soul eventually claimed more than 100 acres at the mouth of the river—right in the middle of the Indian village.

Tribal concerns about the loss of Indian lands first came to the attention of the United States government during a visit to the Quileutes in 1879. Indian Agent Charles Willoughby then heard the testimony of Tahahowtl and Hauwiyal about their treaty discussions with Agent Simmons 24 years earlier. Subchief Tahahowtl claimed he had told Simmons that the Quileutes would sell their land but insisted on retaining half of the prairie and the entire seacoast from the mouth of the river south to the Hoh, a distance of some 20 miles. “Mr. Simmons said it was good, and he would do as the Indians wished. Mr. Simmons said I have not bought your land, all I want of you is to look out for any white men who may be wrecked on your coast or come to you in distress; I want you to take care of them.” According to Tahahowtl, the agent then offered blankets and cloth as gifts to the tribe before concluding the council.

Hauwiyal recalled, “Colonel Simmons told us when he give us our papers [commissions as chiefs] that we were always to live on our own land—that we were not to be removed to another place.” Upon hearing the chiefs’ side of the story, Agent Willoughby recessed the meeting for 24 hours. Willoughby was accompanied by James Swan at the conferences, and the following morning the agent expressed to the tribe his conclusion that they had suffered a great injustice. Subsequently, he reported to the Indian Affairs Department: “Governor Stevens and Colonel Simmons at the time the treaty was made, gave [the Quileutes] to understand they were not to be removed from their present lands, nor do I think it would be good policy to remove them.”

Willoughby, other Indian agents that succeeded him in office, and the United States government then took up the fight for the tribe’s right to at least some of their original land. Two decades later judicial appeals were finally exhausted concerning the settler’s fraudulent claim to the land in the midst of the main village. Today, the Indians still occupy their villages at the mouths of the Quileute and Hoh rivers. The coast between the rivers remains as their ancestors left it, wild and unspoiled. It is now a wilderness area in the Olympic National Park.

There are often differing perceptions of the same event. A courageous battle and a cruel massacre are perceptions, for example, but neither is necessarily accurate. For some, the mark of tribal chiefs on a treaty adequately explains the loss of Quileute land. The tribe’s story suggests that their loss began with the SS Southerner disaster. From shipwreck to broken promises, it, too, is a perception, but one supported by surviving historical records.

Robert E. Steiner, a Seattle native and resident of Vancouver, is a labor arbitrator with a keen interest in early Northwest Indian treaty negotiations.
Kalakala's Hull

Your spring issue, in an article by George W. Scott (page 13 center column), states that the Kalakala was aluminum-shelled. My husband Richard L. Linkletter always reacted to that statement, which is commonly made, with a letter saying that the hull was steel coated with aluminum paint. He rode that ferry for years as an engineer in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

Incidentally, the phrase “mosquito fleet” goes back centuries, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. My Random House Dictionary dates it as 1795 but restricts it to armed boats. I wrote once to correct them.

Doris M. Linkletter
Seattle

Commentary Comment

I was disturbed by Michael Allen’s article in Columbia (Spring 1995). I feel that he distorted the views of the “new” western historians. Surely we should praise them for highlighting the excesses of the Euro-American invasion of North America and for challenging the many exercise in white filiopietism that have passed for western history in the past. I personally know professors William Cronon, Richard White and Donald Worster. I know that they constantly fight the dragons of “presentism” and “political correctness” whose teeth Allen claims they sew.

Michael Allen is apparently in the forefront of the historians who would like to lead us back to a more worshipful interpretation of the western conquest. He represents, I believe, “presentism” of a different sort—a conservative reaction to a valiant group of young historians who against all odds have shed new light in the dark and thorny woods of western historiography. To label respected historians like Cronon, Limerick, Worster and White as neo-Marxists (or neo-Marxists for that matter) is nothing short of neo-McCarthyism.

Professor Allen tips his conservative hand when he calls the respect that many have for the above historians a “cult of personality”—a clear reference to historical Stalinism.

Allen asks for professionalism and civility in the debate over western history. I have never known a more civil and professional historian than Richard White.

Thomas B. Rainey, Ph.D.
Professor of History and Russian Studies
The Evergreen State College, Olympia

Additional Reading

Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this issue? The sources listed here will get you started.

The Glorious Fourth

The Overland Trail
Powerful Rocky, the Blue Mountains and the Oregon Trail, by John W. Evans.

The First Death of Horse Racing
“Famous Horses,” “Reminiscences” and “Horse and Buggy Days,” by Oswald West.
In Oregon Review Quarterly, XXXII (1945), L (1949) and LI (1950).
The Argus (Seattle), 1902-1909, passim.

The Desert Years

Swing the Door Wide
“Seattle Race Relations during the Second World War,” by Howard Droker.

A Victorian Odyssey
Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-1880, by Julie Roy Jeffrey.

Shipwreck & Promises
What greater contrast between two artists could there be than that between Morris Graves and Jacob Lawrence, in age separated by only seven years, but in life story and creative endeavor so very different? A native son, Graves is one of the central figures in the Pacific Northwest school of painting, with its somber colors, Asian influences, and spirituality. On the other hand, Lawrence, raised in New York City’s Harlem, came west to experience are still much with him. His goal is to raise consciousness about black history, social injustices and the power of community. Grounded in urban America and concerned ultimately with reforming society, Lawrence is an artist with a cause—an engaged artist. Graves, by contrast, has sought to disengage himself from society, living in isolation, he has been a contemplator of nature, seeking in art and life to move beyond this world to the mystical and spiritual realms.

Both volumes on these two artists are valuable additions to the as yet poorly documented history of Pacific Northwest art. Each book examines a hitherto unconsidered aspect of the artist and adds significantly to current scholarship. Thirty Years of Prints is a modest but handsome catalogue raisonné of Lawrence’s works to date, with 82 color illustrations and an informative essay by Patricia Hills. Although Lawrence is best known as a painter, the print is a natural medium for his style and purpose. His simplified, graphic shapes of people, house interiors and street scenes tell his stories in a straightforward manner. His bold but limited color palette translates well to the practicalities of printmaking. And Lawrence’s political purpose is, of course, matched by the function and history of the print itself—namely to get the message to as many people as possible. In view of this, it is interesting to learn that Lawrence has instigated few of these prints himself but has been commissioned to produce them—by the NAACP, Amistad Research Center, the American Indian Heritage Foundation, Vassar College, the Smithsonian Institution and the Presidential Inaugural Committee, among others.

Graves’s little-known, late-career flower paintings are the sub-
ject of Theodore F. Wolff’s more ambitious and glamorous publication which, however, opens with just a hint of apology, as if some might think the flower unworthy. In his lengthy, sometimes repetitious essay Wolff makes a convincing case for recognizing these delightful paintings as a radical departure in the artist’s oeuvre. Graves, he says, has left behind the painful striving for transcendence of his earlier work and appears to have found new peace in “the pleasurable aspects of painting,” in beauty for its own sake, in observation of rather than meditation on nature. Fifty-eight color plates reveal Graves’s beautiful, intimate and compassionately observed portraits of flowers—portraits that seem to catch the soul of each bloom. Even in printer’s ink it is clear that the luminous, transcendent quality of Graves’s paintings has not been stilled.

Patricia Grieve Watkinson is director of Washington State University Museum of Art in Pullman and occasionally writes on Northwest art.

Sandora Haasager’s biography of Bertha Knight Landes is thorough in its approach. She covers the life of Landes from her birth in Ware, Massachusetts, in 1866 to her death in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1943, but focuses mainly on Landes’s involvement in Seattle city government between the years 1922 and 1928.

Landes developed her leadership skills in Seattle church and women’s clubs. As women’s clubs encouraged their members to move beyond private life into the public arena, Landes took that next step and, at age 53, campaigned for a seat on the Seattle City Council with a progressive agenda for civic betterment. Campaigning on effective municipal housekeeping—making the city safe, clean and moral—Landes won a stunning victory with a record plurality of 22,000 votes in the 1922 general election with a voter turnout of 82.5 percent.

As a city council member Landes was an effective leader. During several stints as acting mayor she governed first passively and then actively. In 1926 she ran for mayor and defeated the incumbent by nearly 6,000 votes. After a largely successful first term Landes was unexpectedly defeated in her second campaign by an opponent who lacked any real credentials.

In analyzing the 1928 defeat, Haasager points out that Landes herself felt she had been defeated by the “power trust” and by gender politics. Haasager confirms that an informal network of powerful interests contributed to Landes’s defeat. By 1928 the progressive movement was losing its strength, and this also negatively impacted Landes’s tenure in politics. Moreover, she had lost the support of the Civil Service League, whose employee members were out of work as a result of actions she had taken as mayor.

Like any fair-minded citizen, Landes stoically accepted her defeat. She became a speaker on the national lecture circuit, particularly on behalf of women’s issues and an expanded role for
government. Thus, she ended her life devoted to the same issues on which she had sharpened her organizational and social skills in the women's clubs. It is perhaps as a capable middle-class activist rather than a political force that Lanese should be remembered.

Margaret Hall completed her graduate training at the University of Washington. Her writing has centered on University of Washington women faculty members.

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**The Forging of a Black Community**


Reviewed by Sandra Haarsager.

The paradox of race relations in Seattle's history is central to Quintard Taylor's new book. Taylor juxtaposes the public ideal of racial equality embraced by most residents against the private prejudice and discrimination blacks encountered from the time they first arrived in the city. Taylor's book, however, goes beyond the dynamics of that theme to reconstruct how Seattle's African-American community created and sustained itself while Seattle itself was being constructed.

Taylor begins at Seattle's beginning and continues to 1990. He uses the history of another minority population in Seattle—the Asian community, which until World War II constituted the largest racial majority—to put black urban history and racial attitudes into clearer perspective. Blacks historically competed with Chinese, Japanese and Filipino residents for jobs and housing, but sometimes formed alliances with them to challenge racial restrictions. As Taylor notes, competition and cooperation among peoples of color within urban settings have been left out of most studies. That issue is of even more historical interest now that blacks in Seattle and other cities are outnumbered by Asian or Latin American populations and the concept of majority or minority loses its meaning.

The Central District of the title is the four square miles near the center of Seattle that has housed most of the city's African-Americans during the 20th century. Taylor shows how the district fostered a cultural and collective identity that went beyond response and resistance to the dominant culture. Critical to the district's identity was its churches, lodges and women's clubs. Taylor also covers class issues and divisions within the African-American community itself, topics often left out of histories involving race or gender.

A history professor at the University of Oregon, Taylor makes good use of statistics but also tells stories. There is Horace Cayton, a newspaper that championed civil rights. There is a forthcoming book on the impact of women's clubs in the Pacific Northwest. Overall, *Forging* is a carefully documented, gracefully written book.

Sandra Haarsager is coordinator of American Studies at the University of Idaho. She is author of Bertha Knight Lanese of Seattle (1994) and a forthcoming book on the impact of women's clubs in the Pacific Northwest.

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**An Ocean Between Us**

The Changing Relationship of Japan and the United States, Told in Four Stories...


Reviewed by Mary Hannemann.

Thirteen-year-old Reioko Okada was picked for the job because she belonged to one of the few segments of the able-bodied Japanese population not already fighting in World War II. Her job was to help produce the hand-made paper balloons that, filled with hydrogen, would make the cross-Pacific journey to deliver their explosive payloads to the West Coast of the United States. Okada could not then know that she would be haunted with regret over her role in the project for the rest of her life. The victims of the bomb, the only civilians "killed by an enemy instrument of war in the continental United States during World War II," were Elyse Winters, five months pregnant with her first child, and five children accompanying her on a Sunday school picnic near Lakeview, Oregon, in May 1945.

In *An Ocean Between Us*, Evelyn Iritani, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer's Asian affairs reporter, gives us four stories centering on Port Angeles that provide a view of the state's long relationship with Japan. That relationship began in 1834 when three shipwrecked Japanese sailors drifted to the northern tip of the Olympic Peninsula after 14 months at sea and were then rescued and enslaved by Makah Indians. Iritani also tells of a Port Angeles family's experience with relocation to Tule Lake, California, during World War II. Her final section narrates the story of the 1988 Japanese takeover of the James River paper mill in Port Angeles.

Through these stories Iritani explores the often uneasy relationship between Japan and the United States and uncovers the real warmth that has come to exist between the people of these two nations. The tragedy at Lakeview, for example, has resulted in ongoing contact between the town's school children and those in Yamaguchi, Japan. The paper mill purchase, Iritani explains, saved that Port Angeles industry and led locals "on a path that they hoped would ensure a better future for themselves and their children."

Iritani's book is a timely one in this era of Asian Pacific Economic Community and Washington apples in Japan. While the stories are compelling, it should be noted that they have all been told elsewhere. Iritani's contribution is to present them together and thus provide an engaging tale for those who would enter the "uncharted waters of the Pacific Century."

Mary Hannemann is co-founder of the Pacific Rim Center and Adjunct Professor of East Asian History at the University of Washington, Tacoma.
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**A Matter Of Discovery**

**June 21** Professor emeritus of history Jim Heath, on the tremendous changes brought about in American society because of World War II.

**June 28** Portland entrepreneur and developer Bill Naito looks at the enormous economic development during the war years in the Northwest and in Portland.

**July 5** Director of Portland Community Gardens Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, on the victory garden movement and its place in the development of community gardens in Portland.

**July 12** Portland architect Marjorie Wintermute, on Portland's buildings and skylines from World War II to the present.

**July 19** Portland historian and author E. Kimbark MacColl recounts the story of Portland's political life during the war.

**July 26** An Evening with Portland Authors: novelist Diana Abu-Jaber, essayist Brian Doyle, and poet Christopher Merrill.

**August 2** Maritime Public Affairs Manager of the Port of Portland Dick Montgomery, on Portland's role in shipbuilding during the war.

All events are free, open to the public, and will be held at 7 p.m. in the University's Waldschmidt Hall, Room 216 (except for the July 26 Authors' Night which is in the University's Mago Hunt Theater). There is ample free parking at the University.

For more information, or for directions to the campus, call the University's Office of Summer Session, (503) 283-7423.
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