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One of professor Carstensen's students in his latter days at the University of Washington is the now celebrated historian Richard White, who responds in this issue to a commentary earlier this year by Michael Allen regarding the so-called "new western history."

Another esteemed scholar appears in our pages this fall, that being William Robbins, with his essay on two communities in the Columbia River basin—Bend, Oregon, and Richland, Washington. Robbins's essay, like James Ronda's, was originally presented as a talk at a Center for Columbia River History conference.

I am also pleased to present very interesting articles on Alaska's most unusual railroad, anti-Japanese bias in the Yakima Valley, and the first lighthouses to guide marine traffic on the Washington coast, by William Alley, Thomas Heuterman, and Sharlene and Ted Nelson, respectively.

I hope you enjoy this and every issue of Columbia magazine. It is certainly a pleasure to present it to you each quarter. Thank you for your interest and support.

—David L. Nicandri, Director/Executive Editor
Reply From an Empty Grave

When I read my scholarly obituary in the Spring 1995 Columbia ("The Demise of the 'New' Western History," [vol. 9 no. 1]), it took me by surprise. Not only was I gone, but some of my closest friends and colleagues had accompanied me to a common grave, and the gravestone read: "Good Riddance." The writer of our obituary, Michael Allen, did not want to get personal; he simply wanted it known that we were publicity-seeking leftist provincials who had to steal the few ideas we had. Luckily, we were too ignorant to steal much. I guess that's the way of the world. One moment your books are selling, you've got good graduate students, you're president of the Western History Association, and then you pick up a magazine and find out you've been too busy to notice that you are dead.

How did we come to die? As near as I can reconstruct events from Michael Allen's article, he went back East a couple of years ago and discovered shocking things. He heard people malign Frederick Jackson Turner (who is actually dead). And then, by his own account, Professor Allen went and got himself some red meat and Rainier beer and decided to get seriously western. He joined with some other right-thinking historians and hunted down the new western historians who had been inciting ignorant easterners to say such terrible things. He made the West and the history profession a better place for decent folk.

And yet, Professor Allen and his academic pose suffer from two great liabilities. First, Michael Allen gets so overwrought that he can't shoot straight. And second, Professor Allen doesn't really seem to know his targets. If somebody had to identify the new western historians from the caricature he offers in Columbia, they would be hard pressed to get even the species right.

Since Columbia's readers may be unfamiliar with the new western history, let me introduce it, before I examine some of Professor Allen's errant shots at it. Michael Allen concentrates his fire on William Cronon, Patricia Limerick, Donald Worster and myself, but the new western history is really a much broader movement. It includes many of the scholars whom Professor Allen lists as its critics at the end of his article. As in any scholarly movement, there are significant differences among the scholars involved. You might as well try to herd cats as enforce scholarly discipline.

The new western history, as its name indicates, is rooted in the old western history, which it both builds on and seeks to distinguish itself from. Professor Allen often simply misportrays or misunderstands the authors he criticizes, so let me try to list the defining characteristics of the new history.

Most (but certainly not William Cronon) of the new western historians are regionalists. We argue that the modern West is not a simple extension of an American frontier. Unlike the backcountry of the early 19th century, the trans-Missouri West was not divided on a north/south axis. In the antebellum West the Old Northwest was linked to the Northeast, and the Old Southwest to the South. The Civil War ended this dual division of westerning. In the post-Civil War West the Northeast dominated the federal government and settlement of the trans-Missouri country. The federal government took a role in developing the region out of all proportion to its role east of the Mississippi.

The trans-Missouri West also differed from the eastern frontier in its sources of population. It was settled not just by an east/west migration but by a south/north, west/east, and north/south migration. It has historically been a diverse and urban region, and the new western history emphasizes that diversity. Furthermore, Indian peoples maintained a much stronger presence and a larger land base west of the Missouri than they did east of it.

Finally, the trans-Missouri West is largely arid. This distinguishes it from other sections of the country and is critical to understanding its historical development, but in very different ways than Walter Prescott Webb indicated.

These, then, are the arguments for the West as a distinct and important historical region, but they are not the sole defining elements of the new western history. The other characteristics are:

1) The new western historians have integrated social history into the study of the region much more extensively than in the older history. We are interested in broad social trends, particularly those trends that tend to be reflected in the everyday lives of everyday people. The new western history has emphasized the broad array of groups in the West and the complexity of the relations between and among them.

2) The new western history disputes many of the cultural cliches about the West. I have, for instance, emphasized the role of
the federal government and large corporations in the development of the West. The West is not the product of individualism but has long been tied to the state. It is not the libertarian dream world that some portray it to be.

3) The new western historians do not see the so-called closing of the frontier in 1890 as a meaningful date. They stress the continuities of western history and pay far more attention to the 20th century. We are, of course, not the first ones to write about the 20th-century West, but we do emphasize the 20th century in a way that was not true of the older syntheses. The Billington/Ridge textbook, *Westward Expansion*, for example, ends in 1896. My text, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, ends in the 1980s.

This, and not Professor Allen's impressionistic parody, is what the new western history is. It is open to scholarly challenge. Martin Ridge, for example, is a cogent critic of the new western history. I learn from him even when I disagree with him. But then Martin Ridge operates within the rules that usually govern scholarly discourse. Academic controversies are often nasty, yet there is usually agreement on the grounds of argument, what counts as evidence, and how each side is to make its case. Intellectual debates in the academy are, I think, one of the few places where scholars display strengths not usually found in society at large. There is a rigor and a demand for evidence in academic debates lacking, for example, in current political arguments.

Despite his protestations of depersonalizing and depoliticizing the debate, Michael Allen's article does not show these scholarly standards at work. Professor Allen's criticism is closer to the kind of discussion that you can hear daily on talk radio. He misportrays what he critiques and substitutes a set of slogans for analysis.

Professor Allen says there are several things that led him to lay the new western history in its grave. He doesn't like the history because it is presentist, which in his rather odd definition means it "promot[es] a modern leftist political agenda." He doesn't like it because it is "provincial" and badly written. And he doesn't like the new western historians because they have nurtured "a cult of personality around outspoken 'great historian' spokespersons."

Given the tenor of the times, it is best to approach these accusations carefully. That Michael Allen does not like my politics or those of Donald Worster or Patricia Limerick or William Cronon is ultimately of no concern to me. That Michael Allen does not like my history is of more concern to me. But when his critique of that history ends up amounting to accusations of cults of personality, political correctness and leftist agendas, then his methods are precisely the personal and political attacks he pretends to disdain.

I certainly hope I am politically to the left of Michael Allen, but I don't think Professor Allen is arguing that people to his left should not be allowed to write history. And I presume that he would agree that scholars on the left might as sincerely think that history supports their view of the world as scholars on the right think that history supports their views. He is apparently arguing that leftist history is bad because it distorts and falsifies the past in the service of political ends. This is a serious charge, but the only evidence he cites is that my textbook, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, omits any discussion of Frederick Jackson Turner.

It is, I must admit, news to me that eliminating Frederick Jackson Turner from discussions of western history has formed a large part of the leftist political agenda in the United States. Michael Allen says that I left Turner out because I was trying to hide Turner's ideas from the American public. I am flattered that Professor Allen grants me such influence. Unfortunately, my right hand has been busy undoing all the work Professor Allen credits my left hand with doing.

I have written a lengthy essay on Turner that stresses his significance as an American historian, and this past year I coauthored with Patricia Limerick another book, *The Frontier in American Culture*, which examines the roots of Turner's influence in popular American culture. In toto, the new western historians Allen cites have probably devoted more prose to Frederick Jackson Turner than to any other historian, living or dead.

The new western history is, to turn to Professor Allen's second charge, provincial. We are certainly regionalists, but regional and provincial are not synonymous. We contend that regions are a product of national history and cannot be understood outside of national history and international history. Far from provincializing western history, we argue that it must be related to the larger history. One of the major points of the new history is that American historians in general have ignored the West. They have written their histories as if the whole country were the Northeast and the South. We argue that the West is essential to understanding American development. Similarly, we urge western historians to avoid narrow and provincial topics and try to understand how the development of the United States, and indeed the world, has been linked to the creation of the American West.

The new western history has engaged American historians in general in a way that western history has not done since the days of Turner or Webb. Indeed, Michael Allen seems to have gotten the charge of provincialism backward. There were certainly western
historians of the last two generations whose work deserved a wider audience, but their work and the field were neglected precisely because they were seen as provincial and antiquarian. Older work on the West may have been unjustly neglected, but it still remains true that the work of Donald Worster, William Cronon, and Patricia Limerick has made it very hard for American historians to claim to write about this country without writing about the West. Professor Allen may not like that, and he may envy the notoriety they have attained, but their influence on the writing of American history remains.

These historians have secured this influence not only by the strength of their ideas but by the grace of their prose, and this makes Professor Allen's third charge odd and surprising. The new western historians, Allen says, have trouble expressing themselves in the English language. This is bold talk from a man who uses disrepute as a verb. Patty Limerick, Donald Worster and William Cronon have given western history the reputation of being the best written academic history in the country. Far from being full of jargon, their books are accessible to a broad audience. It is one of the reasons they have gained such influence outside the academy. All of these historians easily cross over into popular writing. Their books go to academic audiences as well as the Book-of-the-Month Club and History Book Club. These are books that are, by academic standards, best sellers. They write as clear and strong prose as anyone I know. But when Gerald Nash labels the new western historians as Stalinist, fascist deconstructionists (a combination I am still puzzling over), when William Goetzmann invites us to go back to Russia, or when William Savage cities an attack largely on Patricia Limerick, "The New Western History: Youngest Whore on the Block," then we move beyond scholarly argument into slander, and if things haven't gotten personal yet, they surely do in charges of "cult of personality."

Accusations of political correctness or nurturing cults of personality are not arguments. They are slogans, substitutions for thought. It is a tactic widely used by the people (excepting Martin Ridge) that Michael Allen cites with approval for having brought the new western historians to their deserved end. But when Gerald Nash labels the new western historians as Stalinist, fascist deconstructionists (a combination I am still puzzling over), when William Goetzmann invites us to go back to Russia, or when William Savage titles an attack largely on Patricia Limerick, "The New Western History: Youngest Whore on the Block," then we move beyond scholarly argument into slander, and silly slander at that. With these attacks, these scholars have succeeded primarily in marginalizing themselves in the current debate. With enemies like this, who needs friends?

But then I'm sure Professor Allen will see the marginalization of Nash, Savage, and Goetzmann as yet another mark of the exclusionary sins of the new western history. He accuses us, for instance, of trying to exclude colonial and early national historians from the field. I am currently incoming president of the Western History Association, a body with more presidents than Kentucky has colonels. My only real duty so far has been to appoint a program committee to plan the 1996 conference. Johnny Fanghler, who bears Professor Allen's seal of approval and whose last two books were located firmly east of the Mississippi and firmly in the colonial and early national period, is the chair. Stephen Aron, who works in Kentucky, is a prominent member. If this is exclusion, then God knows how Michael Allen defines an open door.

The WHA is a tolerant place. There are many demonstrations of this, but I will just cite one. The 1996 program committee, which I appointed last fall, includes Michael Allen—academic gunslinger, obituary-writer, mortician, and, finally, gravedigger (though not mourner) of the new western history's still empty grave.

Richard White is Professor of History at the University of Washington. He specializes in western history, Native American history, and environmental history.

Michael Allen Responds

I would like to add a post-mortem, as it were, to Richard White's "Reply From An Empty Grave."

Richard White's assertion that I do not understand and therefore misinterpret the "new" western history is pure bravado. His essay leaves my definition of the new western history standing and unaltered: the new western history is a methodology utilized by historians who interpret western history by focusing on issues of prime concern to the American political left—race, class, gender and environment.

Second, there is a question of professionalism. Richard White believes that scholarly debate should be carried on within the bounds of established rules and decorum. I agree. One of the most important of those rules is acknowledging the work of previous scholars upon whose work your own is based. Richard White spends most of his critique beating up one paragraph of my essay. Yet he makes short shrift of the thesis which was the heart of my essay—that three generations of Progressive historians, using socio-economic causation theory, planted and tilled the fields that the "new" western historians now harvest and claim as their own. This is not a minor point. Indeed, the late Vernon Carstensen used the same argument with great effect in his critique of Patricia Nelson Limerick's "Legacy of Conquest" in Montana, Magazine of Western History (Spring 1988), pp. 84-85.

Finally, I address each of Richard White's points in my articles in *Columbia* (Spring 1995), pp. 3-5, and the *Historian* (Fall 1994), pp. 201-208, and I invite interested *Columbia* readers to decide for themselves who makes the better argument. I also highly recommend "The New Western History: A Critical Analysis," *Continuity* (Fall 1993), pp. 6-24, by Gerald Thompson, a bright and evenhanded critic whom Richard White studiously avoids in his essay.

I want to thank *Columbia* and its editors for publishing this debate, Professor Richard White for his clever response, and all of those people who wrote or called me over the past six months with comments of their own. And thank you, Richard White, for inviting me to be on the WHA Program Committee! That action truly evinces a belief in "diversity."
There is nothing unique about a railroad being built to exploit a region's natural resources. Examples of railroads dedicated to the transport of such materials as timber, minerals or coal are commonplace. The line built out of Yakutat, Alaska, in the early years of this century, however, turned out to be one of a kind. On a schedule dictated by the tides, this train hauled raw fish.

During the early years of the 20th century several business interests began examining the fisheries of Alaska's Yakutat Bay region. The abundant supply of fish found in these waters led some of these interests to discuss the possibility of building a railroad. Such a line would connect a cannery near the village of Yakutat with the many fishing sites located along the Gulf of Alaska coast as far away as the Alsek River, 60 miles to the south. Fish could then be hauled from the relatively inaccessible streams along the Yakutat foreland to a deep water harbor and processing cannery.

In March 1901 a Mr. A. L. Lee, while scouting locations for a cannery at Yakutat, met a party of surveyors locating a line from Monti Bay—the anchorage in Yakutat Bay—to the Alsek river at Dry Bay. He was unable to discover who was backing this endeavor, but the name J. J. Healy was men-
RIGHT: Salmon train arriving at Yakutat: "One car of coho . . . contained 7,000 salmon, of reds or sockeye, 10,000 salmon. They often brought in 3-6 cars."

BELOW: The cannery complex and railroad at Yakutat, Alaska.

tioned in connection with this survey in the Sitka Alaskan.

That same year the United States Fish Commission Steamer Albatross, commanded by Captain Jefferson S. Moser, investigated the abundant salmon resources of the many streams between Yakutat and Dry Bay. Moser's report repeated the stories that a group of Seattle businessmen was exploring the possibility of locating a railroad between Monti Bay and the Alsek River. Their plans also included the construction of a wharf and cannery at Yakutat. Moser then added, "This is mentioned simply to indicate the wild schemes spoken of in Alaska."

On January 22, 1903, three Seattle businessmen, Fred Spencer Stimson, Charles Terry Scurry and J. T. Robinson, incorporated the Yakutat & Southern Railway Company as a Washington corporation. The corporation had capital stock of $100,000, comprising 1,000 shares valued at $100 a share. In June this capitalization was increased by the trustees to $150,000. Whether these three men were the same men Moser mentioned in his 1901 report is not known.

F. S. Stimson, who was to be president of the railway, was born in Michigan in 1868 and worked with his father in the lumber business. In 1899 he and his three brothers established the Stimson Mill Company in Ballard, Washington. C. T. Scurry, born in 1878, was descended from Seattle's pioneer Terry family, whose name still graces Terry Avenue. J. T. Robinson was described as a well-known "millman" in the Puget Sound region at that time. While Stimson and Scurry remained at the corporate headquarters in Seattle, Robinson was "placed in full charge of the works at Yakutat."

Webster Brown was hired as chief engineer of the Yakutat & Southern and in 1904 began making a survey of the proposed right of way as well as a 60-acre parcel on Monti Bay for the terminus and cannery. The survey of the first nine miles to the Situk River took place between April 9 and April 16, 1904. This survey was adopted by the railway's trustees on April 30 and filed with the General Land Office in order to qualify for a grant of land under the provisions of the Railroad Act of May 14, 1899. Actual construction on the Yakutat & Southern commenced soon thereafter.

It was Stimson's intention to lay about ten miles of track that year, from Yakutat to Situk Landing on the Situk River. The railroad was standard gauge using 40-pound rails. He also began building a sawmill to provide railroad ties and the materials for the construction of a new wharf and cannery on the site of an old herring saltery on Monti Bay, a mile away from the village of Yakutat. Once the cannery was completed the railroad would be used to haul in...
60 miles down the coast to Dry Bay. When completed the following year, the cannery had a capacity of 50,000 cases of salmon a year. The sawmill, which could produce 20,000 board feet daily, continued to supply wood for packing cases once the wharf and cannery buildings were completed.

The terminus of the Yakutat & Southern was located on the wharf of the new cannery on Monti Bay. The line then made a turn to the southeast toward the Situk River. Later, a one-mile spur near Milepost Seven was added that ran to a fish camp on the Lost River. This spur was eventually replaced by a road sometime after 1938.

The Yakutat & Southern Railway and the cannery were operated by Stimson for several years before being acquired in early 1912 by Gorman and Company, which ran a number of Alaska canneries. In 1913 the Chicago concern of Libby, McNeil and Libby assumed control and ran the cannery and railroad until 1951. In that year the company was taken over by the Bellingham Canning Company of Bellingham, Washington, which operated the line until the mid 1960s. The final owner of the Yakutat & Southern, as well as the cannery, was the Marine Foods Packing Company, which ultimately filed for bankruptcy in 1971.

The first locomotive power for the Yakutat & Southern was a geared Heisler 0-4-2, No. 1092, reputed to have been in use on the New York elevated prior to that line's electrification. The Sitka Alaskan reported in June 1904 that the Alaskan Pacific Navigation Company’s Steamer Santa Ana was in port carrying a locomotive for the Yakutat & Southern. This could only have been the Heisler.

The Heisler proved to be unsuited for the needs of the Yakutat & Southern and was replaced in 1913. The replacement was a 2-6-2 Lima Prairie, No. 1057, built in 1907. The bell from the Heisler was used to announce meals at the cannery mess hall, and the rest of the old locomotive was scavenged for parts. The running gear would be reconditioned at a later date. Other rolling stock included an open coach built by the Hollingsworth Company of Wilmington, Delaware, and several specially built gondola cars for hauling salmon. There was also a hand car that could be used by berry pickers or picnickers.

For 60 years the Yakutat & Southern hauled fish from Situk Landing to the cannery at Yakutat. Since fish was the only commodity hauled on the Yakutat & Southern, the line was only in operation during the fishing season. The cannery and railroad generally started up in mid May and remained in
operation through October. Because the boats could only unload fish at Situk Landing at high tide, the railroad's schedule was dictated by the tide table. When the train arrived at Situk, the fish were unloaded from the fishing boats and dumped into the gondola cars by a conveyor belt. At the Situk Landing terminus there was a "diminutive" Armstrong turntable to turn the locomotive around for the return trip to the cannery.

Passengers on the Yakutat & Southern had no need for tickets. Fishermen, whether they worked for the cannery or were independent, could load their families, gear or dogs at the wharf and ride free to Situk Landing. In the 1930s, when conservation measures prohibited the harvesting of fish over the weekends, it was standard practice for the cannery's fishermen to ride from Yakutat to Situk on Monday and return to Yakutat on Friday. For those dogs who could not ride, the Yakutat & Southern still provided an important source of entertainment. As Frank Johnson, who came to Yakutat in 1945, wrote:

Practically every dog in town would gather at the Yakutat dock to follow the train the entire 11 miles to the Situk Landing. During the daily race, the dogs would stop at three different streams for drinks of water.

Many times at the Situk Landing I have seen the train coming in, and looked up the track to see 20 hard-running dogs strung out from 1,000 feet to half a mile down the tracks. They apparently returned to Yakutat one by one, but the next day they were ready to repeat the long train chase.

In the years after World War II the Lima engine became increasingly uneconomical to operate. The little locomotive consumed two tons of coal during the round trip to Situk Landing, and with the dwindling volume of fish being taken, such overhead became too much for the railway to bear. In 1949 the Lima was retired and placed in her shed. She was replaced with a "makeshift jack-type gas engine" that utilized the wheels and running gear scavenged from the old Heisler, which had been sitting around since 1913. The railroad also used a 1930 Packard sedan with flanged wheels.

By the early 1960s the lack of maintenance had taken its toll on the Yakutat & Southern. The ties were mostly moss covered and rotten, the rails were sprung, and the pilings supporting the bridges shaky. By this time the rolling stock consisted of a 1949 Chevrolet truck with flanged wheels and a large box on the back. According to E. M. McCracken, who rode on the line in 1963, "Almost anyone around the cannery who can drive a truck...is likely to be the 'engineer.'" The truck had to slow to crawl at all switches and bridges, and derailments were routine.

Sometime around 1965 the Yakutat & Southern ceased operations. Even before the owners of the cannery had filed for bankruptcy the lack of maintenance, especially on the many bridges, had made it impossible to keep the line operating. It was not long before the lush forests of the Yakutat foreland swallowed up much of the abandoned right of way. Some of the rails can still be seen sticking out from the thick underbrush, and some of the pilings of the bridge over the Situk River are still visible. Near the village of Yakutat engine number two, the old Lima Prairie, as well as one of the Plymouth switch engines and the Hollingsworth coach, can still be seen slowly rusting away.

The line's last owners, the Marine Foods Packing Company, officially filed for bankruptcy on January 11, 1971. Much of the track was then sold and shipped away, and the right of way reverted back to the government. The cannery site and other property was broken up and sold, with the cannery going to the Ocean Cape Corporation and all of the remaining rolling stock, including the fish gondolas and the Plymouth switcher, simply abandoned where they sat.

William Alley is a Certified Archivist living in Medford, Oregon. The author would like to acknowledge the influence of the late C. Brewster Coulter of the University of Puget Sound on this and all of his other works. Dr. Coulter will be missed by many.
PAUSING FOR a drink of water in Pioneer Square in 1915 meant sharing the fountain with horses, dogs and a bronze bust of Chief Seattle. Eventually, drainage from the trough damaged the pavement around the fountain. The cost of repairing the pavement was so high that the Seattle City Council debated building a new fountain and moving the statue. To save money it was decided to leave the statue in place, turn the water off and plant flowers in the trough. Today the flowers are gone, but the statue of Chief Seattle remains, along with the Pioneer Square totem pole, as a symbol of an earlier era.

The Historical Society gladly accepts donations of prints or negatives of regional historical interest to add to its photograph collection. (Please contact the Society before making donations.) Readers are invited to submit historical photographs for History Album. If a photograph is to be returned, it must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.
Camp Parsons, on Hood Canal, may well enjoy the best natural setting of any summer camp in America. It is also one of the few Boy Scout camps in the country to have celebrated its diamond jubilee, completing over 75 consecutive summers of activity. Today, thousands of Washington men can look back on sunny times spent "roughing it" at the old camp that lies along a deep cove near Brinnon, where the Olympic foothills almost touch the oyster-covered beach. The "Camp Parsons Alumni" include such well-known figures as former governor and senator Dan Evans, hiking guide and outdoor writer Harvey Manning, and political consultant "Gummy" Johnson.

It would be exaggerating to say that Hood Canal was on the frontier when the camp first opened back in 1919. But it must have seemed that way for a while to H. B. "Harry" Cunningham, the man in charge.

One night that first summer Cunningham's sleep was interrupted by a wide-eyed Scout named Harold Fisher. As Cunningham recalled years later,
who had conducted the very first Boy Scout encampment—on Brownsea Island, off the English Coast—in 1907. On March 10, 1912, he arrived in Seattle as part of a nationwide tour on behalf of the fledging Boy Scouts of America, and on March 12 gave a free lecture in Seattle's Metropolitan Theater, accompanied by slides and motion pictures.

Baden-Powell's lecture drew an enthusiastic family crowd and was well received—except for a few members of the Industrial Workers of the World. The IWW, or "Wobblies," wrongly assumed that Scouting was a militaristic organization. One heckler was arrested at the site. At Baden-Powell's lecture a few days earlier in Portland, the Wobblies had actually started a riot.

It may have been with the Wobblies in mind that Baden-Powell made this comment to an informal gathering of Seattle Boy Scouts during his brief stay:

Although I am a soldier myself, I tell you not to be one. Be a backwoodsman. Learn to know the woods and streams. Learn to find your way about by day or night. Be prepared for every kind of accident that may come up.

Five years later the local council found a place where the boys of Seattle could fulfill Baden-Powell's challenge. After an extensive search of Hood Canal, the council camping committee discovered the perfect site in 1917, and the camp was purchased the next year for the tidy sum of $2,400.

By 1918 the Seattle Council had itself a campsite, but the area still had to be developed. Cunningham recalled:

I wanted to build a lodge as the first building, but I couldn't hire any carpenters because of the First World War. All the men were frozen to their jobs. Then I hit upon the idea of using manual training teachers from high schools in the Seattle area.

Everything was now ready to begin work during the summer of 1919.

In many ways the property where the camp was built reflected the history of the region. On the shore of "Jackson's Cove," the site had been a logging camp. When Cunningham and the others started, they had to pull down Jackson's old barn. There was also a "bull-pen"—Jackson had logged with mules. And there were numerous
skid roads on the property. In short, despite the great wilderness location, it was hardly a pristine piece of land. Most of the trees had been logged off, and to the boys that first summer the area smelled like greasewood.

The lodge was primarily intended to serve as the camp dining hall and headquarters. Cunningham recalled:

_We worked on the lodge for about three weeks. We made the fireplace by dynamiting some enormous boulders we found on the beach.... Although the lodge still wasn’t quite finished, we decided to bring up the first boys. We brought them by boat to Brinnon and from there they walked to camp._

The “Ol’ Swimmin’ Hole” on Hood Canal, 1919. The boys were delighted to find that the water was much warmer here than in Puget Sound.

The camp was open that summer for one long session that lasted from July 7 to August 5.

_When the boys first got there the food was cooked on a huge circular saw blade near the beach. But things changed for the better as the lodge neared completion and Bill Petty, the first cook, fired up his shiny new wood and coal range. This is the menu that Petty managed to serve up for Sunday dinner, July 27, 1919: roast young pig, au gratin potatoes, lots of homemade bread, tomatoes “cooked the way the boys like ’em,” and rice pudding for dessert._

It soon became customary to wear the full Boy Scout uniform to dinner at camp. The “Scout suit” for American boys in 1919 was a dead ringer for the doughboy outfit of the day—including broad-brimmed “campaign” hats and knickers laced below the knee. (Some lucky kids got to wear knee-length Scout shorts.) It was only in the 1920s that American boys began wearing the distinguishing Scout neckerchief originally envisioned by Baden-Powell.

Though the Boy Scout uniform itself has changed through the years, the boys of 1919 came to camp for many of the same reasons that boys have been coming ever since. Even so, the need for places like Camp Parsons is far more critical today. It may be hard for us to imagine, but Seattle itself was surrounded by woodland in 1919, with ample opportunities for boyhood adventure close to home.

Consider Second Class Scout Gilbert Russell of Troop 49, who arrived at Camp Parsons that first summer. To put it mildly, he was hardly the sort of first-year camper who makes the journey these days from urbanized Seattle.

Gilbert lived in the Ravenna district...
in 1919, and as a seventh-grader he was already gainfully employed trapping animals in the woods near his home. Specifically, Gilbert set his traps in the "Maple Leaf Valley" just north of Sand Point. In just three months before going to camp, he had managed to trap enough skunks, moles, mountain beavers and muskrats to sell the skins for the (then) sizable sum of $54. (He baited his traps with chicken heads.)

Seasoned an outdoorsman that Gilbert was, he was no match for a "caper" that took place one dark night at camp that first summer—the granddaddy of all those midnight adventures that Scouts talk about for years.

It started quietly enough, with Gilbert and another Scout, Julian de Des Rochers, hiking to a small cabin about 200 yards outside the main camp to spend the night. Suddenly the "unmistakable" cry of a cougar echoed through the dark woods. Julian whispered in Gilbert's ear to wait there for a second—and then promptly ran back to camp where he bribed his brother to let him share the same cot for the night.

Gilbert's green valley on the outskirts of Seattle had never been like this. He stood shaking in the middle of the trail until, almost miraculously, a rescue party showed up, headed by none other than Harry Cunningham. The next day the story was all over camp—and it seemed believable enough. After all, cougars did live somewhere in those parts. In fact, in 1919 a man who lived right near the camp worked as a cougar bounty hunter—with many a pelt to prove it.

It was only at the very last campfire of the summer that Harry Cunningham finally admitted that the "cougar caper" had actually been (in the slang of the day) a "graft." He explained how a Ballard Scoutmaster named C. E. Williams, cook Bill Petty and himself had, you might say, cooked the whole thing up. Back then, hunting was common in the area that later became Olympic National Park.

A more welcome visitor to camp that first summer was Claude Ritchie, a pioneer Seattle Scoutmaster who worked for the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Shortly after camp opened, Ritchie arrived with a bulky, vintage press camera to record the Scouts in action. He then wrote a full-page story on the new camp, complete with photographs, that appeared in the Sunday P-I on July 20, 1919.

In the article Ritchie related what it was like to arrive at Camp Parsons with a party of new boys who had come to join the Scouts already there:

Five minutes in camp sufficed to learn that a deer and two does had visited it; that salmon, trout, and clams were plentiful; and that it was time to go swimming. 

In regard to this last the writer had heard much. There were three swimming beaches and the water, it was averred, was warmer than Lake Columbia 15 Fall 1995
At first glance, it might seem that letters from camp have stayed pretty much the same right up to the present. But on a careful reading, Charlie Harris’ note is different in many ways from something a boy might write today.

Although intended for both parents, the card is addressed only to the boy’s father (the head of the family). And notice how restrained it is for something written by a boy. Basically, it reads just like a business letter, right down to the formal close. Charlie is a boy reporting to his father with whom he seems to have a rather “businesslike” relationship.

Even so, there is something truly “timeless” about this letter. As it happens, it was postmarked on the same day the kids left camp for the city. In short, like so many letters written from camp ever since, the boy beat it home!

Not everything the Scouts did during the first summer took place in the camp itself. As Cunningham recalled, “After the boys arrived I took them on a lot of trips throughout the area during the days. At night I continued to do design work on the construction.”

As the camp session progressed, some of these trips became outdoor experiences in their own right, and Cunningham wasn’t able to lead them all. For example, on August 2 five boys left camp to spend a couple nights on the Hamma Hamma River. The Scouts were Leroy Tiornalo, Clifford Seaffe, Hjalmar Londahl, Lloyd Barclay, and Schuyler Durea. They were led by Scoutmaster C. E. Williams.

The group traveled down Hood Canal in a motor launch, and the skipper soon had the boys handling the boat like a first-rate crew. The party reached Eldon and camped at the bridge, right at the mouth of the river—spending an evening around the campfire, with the Scoutmaster telling stories.

The next morning they hiked to a cabin, some two and a half miles up the mountain, overlooking the Hamma Hamma Canyon. The boys climbed down to the river and spent what must have been a very enjoyable afternoon—managing to catch 38 trout.

In some ways these short “trips” from camp that first summer were the forerunners of the full-scale mountain hikes that took shape in the years following.

Actually, the Scouts had been using the Olympic Mountains for high-adventure hiking even before Camp Parsons opened. As early as 1914 a youthful expedition was led into the mountains by Washington historian and avid Scouter Edmond Meany (who had sat on the stage at Baden-Powell’s lecture just two years previously). On this hike the Scouts made the first ascent of a peak that is now known as Mount Tom. Meany promised that he’d name the mountain after the first boy who reached the summit. That honor fell to a 13-year-old Scout named Tom Martin (who later served as Washington’s state treasurer).

In 1919, as the first summer at Camp Parsons drew to a close, Cunningham decided to take his own look at the suitability of the Olympics for youth hiking. No stranger to leading boys in the mountains, he had guided the annual Mount Rainier climbs conducted by the Seattle Council. Cunningham put together an expedition into the Olympics that included one of the boys who had been at Camp Parsons, First Class Scout “Luke” Mathewson.

The success of this expedition laid the groundwork for a regular program of Olympic hikes that would follow from the camp in years to come. Despite his experiences on Washington’s highest peak, Cunningham was enthralled by the special magic that only the Olympics seem to possess. His glowing reports written to the Scouts “back home” included this account, published in the Seattle P-I on October 5, 1919:

We made a trip to Lake Constance, which is the most beautiful spot we have yet seen. But Luke says it ought to be, because we had to work so hard to get there. According to the map, it is about a mile and a half by trail . . . .

Wonderful scenery; the mountain rises thousands of feet straight up from
one side of the lake, and the reflection surpasses anything we have witnessed on Mount Rainier.

Anyone who has ever taken the "short" hike to Lake Constance will certainly agree—with the beauty of the scenery and the struggle to get there. (The short "trail" rises 3,400 feet!) Not surprisingly, Scout leaders who tried to follow Cunningham's route to the lake for the next few summers began referring to it as the "almost mythical" Lake Constance.

In the years that followed, Scouts from Camp Parsons fulfilled Baden-Powell's challenge to become "backwoodsmen," with a vengeance. Hiking and climbing mountains in the Olympic back country, they were also able to climb to the highest rank in Scouting. As Eagle Scouts they soon captured the admiration of the public, as did their fellow "Eagles" throughout the nation. In the 1920s a tradition began of sending America's Eagle Scouts on expeditions to places as far away as Africa.

Here in Washington, ten hand-picked "Eagles" from Camp Parsons set out in 1926 to explore an area that seemed at the time almost as remote as another continent—the very heart of the Olympic wilderness. Their route was to include the seldom-visited Queets Basin, on the "far side" of Mount Olympus.

The expedition was sponsored by a (then) major Seattle newspaper, the Star. The project was strictly high-tech for its day, with the Scouts carrying what the Star referred to as a "7XF, Simpson Radio Experimental Station." Pity the Scout who had to lug that bulky 1920s radio gear. Unlike today's hand-held models, it was about the size of a small suitcase! By means of a relay station, the "Discovery Party" broadcast daily reports from the heart of the Olympic wilderness. These were then published by the Star to a waiting public. Pictures followed when the Scouts emerged safely near Lake Quinault.

In subsequent years the "Parsons Scouts" continued to pioneer recreational hiking throughout the broad wilderness that became Olympic National Park. In addition to Mount Tom, their achievements are permanently preserved in such Olympic landmarks as Del Monte Ridge, named for the Camp Parsons cook of the 1920s, Billy Del Monte.

The Seattle area Boy Scouts were joined in this effort by boys from elsewhere in western Washington. Scout Lake in the southeast Olympics got its name from the Scouts who frequented that area. These boys may have come from Camp Parsons, but by the late 1920s the Tacoma Scouts were also
Hikers from Camp Parsons in Queets Basin near Mount Olympus, 1926. Boy Scouts pioneered recreational hiking in the Olympic Mountains.

Scouting's trademark—"fun with a purpose"—where activities like tying knots can also tie a boy to a sense of values and a code of honor.

Camp Parsons, like the generations of boys who come there each summer, never seems to grow old. In fact, with its wooded shoreline and green fields, it looks far "younger" today than when it served for a logging operation. In the heart of the camp, in a clearing at the edge of the forest, the boys can still see a living reminder of the very first

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fter more than 75 summers, the old camp on Hood Canal still serves as a base camp for high-adventure hikes in the Olympic Mountains. And it still rings with the shouts of boys—not only swimming in tangy salt water but also "doing the latest things," like wind surfing. One thing that never seems to change is summer—Harry Cunningham's lodge.

Known since 1940 as the Silver Marmot Grill, the lodge is a handsome structure and a prime example of rustic Washington architecture. A timbered verandah, over 50 feet wide, extends across the front. Inside stands the massive fireplace made of boulders found on the beach. Above the mantel in the early years hung the simplest of rules, carved in wood: "The Scout Law is the Law of this Camp."

In December 1919 Stuart Walsh, a Chicago Scout leader, visited Seattle and was invited by proud local officials to go out and see the new camp. At first the visitor from "back East" was looking forward to the journey, but he apparently suffered a change of attitude when he heard the camp was located on logged-off property along a canal. As he later explained in his book, *Thirteen Years of Scout Adventure*:

The only canal of any importance I had ever seen was the Chicago Drainage Canal... and in my mind there formed a distressing picture of a bare stretch of land on a canal bank, dotted with forlorn tents and perhaps a mess shack.

This apprehension quickly faded away when he got his first glimpse of Hood Canal looking west from Seabeck toward the rugged Olympic Mountains. And when he finally reached the camp itself he was even more impressed—giving us a description that perfectly captures the ambiance of the old camp, along the once-deserted shores of Hood Canal:

It developed that the camp site, a reservation of 280 acres, was at the water's edge on a small cove just off the main channel of the canal, with a splendid swimming beach and a great substantial lodge set in a clearing surrounded by tall firs and cedars... The lodge had an immense stone fireplace before which we sat and talked through the long evening while the newcomer from the east absorbed the atmosphere of the wilderness in large and delightful drafts.

We talked of the future of the northwest, and of the good fortune of boys who can be scouts and growing up in such a country, and of the camp and the appeal of camping.

Today the lodge at Camp Parsons is, without question, one of Washington's historic buildings. Appropriately, it also stands in a place that is a treasured part of the personal history of thousands of Washington boys and men.

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By Sharlene & Ted Nelson

Washington's FIRST LIGHTS

During and after the Civil War, Cape Disappointment Lighthouse keepers shared their commanding view of the Columbia River's entrance with artillerymen like the one shown here.

Lighthouse Beacons First Illuminated Pacific Northwest Shores in the 1850s
WASHINGTON'S OLDEST, continuously used lighthouse stands on a windswept cape overlooking the entrance to the Columbia River. Since 1856 this structure, the Cape Disappointment Lighthouse, has guided mariners along the coast and across the river's bar. Mariners welcomed the new lighthouse. The Columbia River had become a busy waterway, and captains sailing upriver needed a permanent beacon to assist them when crossing the river's treacherous bar.

In 1812, after a Pacific Fur Company ship waited several days to enter the river, men from Fort Astoria rowed to the cape, raised a white flag and set trees on fire to act "... in lieu of a lighthouse." Years later trees on the cape were topped. Offshore, captains took bearings on the "trimmed trees," steered for the cape's southerly tip and sailed through the deepest channel.

Two years after Cape Disappointment was lit, four more lighthouses stood on Washington Territory's shores to guide traffic along the coast and through the Strait of Juan de Fuca. New Dungeness and Cape Flattery began operating in 1857, followed by Willapa Bay and Smith Island in 1858. Like all United States lighthouses, they had their genesis in the establishment of lighthouses along the nation's waterways, "... for rendering the navigation thereof easy and safe."

The 1848 act establishing Oregon Territory and encompassing present-day Washington made provisions for "... the construction of lighthouses at Cape Disappointment and New Dungeness [sic]..." It was decided, however, that these two sites should first be examined by the United States Coast Survey to determine their suitability.

In 1850 Congress adopted the Coast Survey's recommendations for the West Coast's first lighthouses. Initially there were to be six in California and three in Oregon Territory—at Cape Disappointment, Cape Flattery and New Dungeness. By this time the need for navigational aids in Oregon Territory was clearly evident. Spurred by the California gold rush, maritime traffic had burgeoned. Vessels laden mainly with lumber sailed to San Francisco and returned with merchandise. The 1850 census counted 37 sawmills where there had been only a few three years earlier.

Most mills were along the Columbia and Willamette rivers, though a mill at New Market (Tumwater) was shipping lumber through Puget Sound to San Francisco. Even the Arthur Denny party participated in this new trade. Soon after they arrived at Alki Point in 1851 they began cutting trees and sending pilings to San Francisco.

In April 1852 the Baltimore, Maryland, firm of Francis A. Gibbons and Francis X. Kelly contracted with the office of the Lighthouse Establishment, which was then under the Department of Treasury, to build eight lighthouses along the West Coast. By then more beacons had been recommended, mainly in California. Cape Disappointment was the only Oregon Territory site included in this first contract.

Plans and specifications for the new lighthouses were readied. Each would be a Cape Cod-style dwelling with a tower rising through the center—except at Cape Disappointment, where the tower and dwelling would be separate. Tower heights would vary depending on location.

The contractors dispatched the brig Oriole, laden with building supplies, around Cape Horn. After work on four California lighthouses, the brig sailed north to Cape Disappointment in 1853. It sank while entering the Columbia River. The crew was saved, but the cargo was lost. Gibbons and Kelly outfitted another ship.

In 1854 Cape Disappointment's tower with its five-foot-thick base walls was finished, but the lens and its lantern (the glass enclosure for the lens) were not yet mounted atop the tower. Gibbons and Kelly's contract had provided for installation of the inefficient Argand and parabolic lighting system used in earlier United States lighthouses. After the contract was let, the Lighthouse Establishment administration was changed. In October 1852 a Lighthouse Board, composed of navy and army officers and scientists, convened to manage the lighthouses. They ordered the more efficient French-made Fresnel lenses. To accommodate the Fresnel lens and its lantern, each tower, including Cape Disappointment's, had to be rebuilt.

Finally the 53-foot-high tower was completed. On October 15, 1856, the lamp was lit and a light beamed through the largest of the Fresnel lenses. Today this 10-foot-high lens is on display at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center at Fort Canby State Park. The keepers' dwelling, now gone, was about a quarter mile away on the cape's leeward side.

By now the Lighthouse Board had authorization to construct lighthouses at Cape Flattery, New Dungeness and Smith Island. According to the Board's 1855-56 annual report, these lighthouses were to be built "... with the least practicable delay. The Indian hostilities in Washington and Oregon Territories and the difficulties attending, necessarily, operations at such distant and sparsely populated localities will doubtless account for any seeming delay in the execution of these works."

CAPE FLATTERY, on Tatoosh Island, was selected as a lighthouse site so that vessels could enter the Strait of Juan de Fuca at night. Located about a half mile from the mainland, this small island with rocky, perpendicular sides had only one access—a narrow beach on the east end. Early Coast Survey reports stated that the island lacked wood and water, and from March to August about 150 Makah Indians lived in wooden houses on rocks above the beach.

The Makahs were angered when construction activity began. They had not received payment for the island. Fearing attack by the Indians, the workmen first built a blockhouse for living quarters. They were also issued 20 muskets, but no fighting occurred.

A derrick lifted construction materials from the beach to the island's top, including two-foot-thick sandstone blocks
at Shoalwater Bay, later renamed Willapa Bay, served mariners for 82 years before beach erosion caused it to be abandoned.

BELOW: Bachelor keepers at the Cape Flattery Lighthouse shared Tatoosh Island with Makah Indians who camped on the beach below.
Lighthouse was built nearly 200 feet from the island's western bluff. By the late 1980s the eroded bluff barely supported what remained of the lighthouse.

BELOW: The New Dungeness Lighthouse's original tower (shown here) was 89 feet high. It developed cracks and was shortened in the 1920s.

The light was exhibited on December 28, 1857, through a Fresnel lens. A sailing vessel passenger later wrote, it shone "like a bright star amid the primeval gloom." The Makahs continued to use the island, and frequently one or two would stand near the lighthouse to watch for whales or changes in the weather.

The New Dungeness Lighthouse was a mirror image of Cape Flattery's, except for the tower. Standing at sea level on the end of Dungeness Spit, the tower needed extra height to increase the light's range of visibility. The original tower was 89 feet high. Its lower half was painted white, the upper half black so that it could also serve as a day mark.

Dungeness Spit had long been a hazard to navigation, especially on days when skies were foggy or smoke filled. Before the lighthouse was built several ships ran aground on the spit's outside shore. George Davidson, author of Coast Pilots, wrote, "In 1855 while we were anchored close in (to the spit), with the weather thick and hazy, a vessel from Admiralty Head had been set out on her course by the currents and came driving in with studding sails set and saw her mistake and danger only when the black hull of our vessel attracted her attention." The ship corrected its course and sailed away.

By the fall of 1858, when the Willapa Bay (originally called Shoalwater Bay) and Smith Island lighthouses were ready for keepers, the Lighthouse Board had completed the first 16 lighthouses on the West Coast. Willapa Bay exhibited its light on October 1 and Smith Island on October 18. Each had a 41½-foot tower rising from the center of the dwelling and exhibited its light through a small Fresnel lens.

The Willapa Bay Lighthouse was built to guide oyster-laden ships transiting Shoalwater Bay bound for the San Francisco market. It stood about a mile from the end of Cape Shoalwater. Difficulties supplying the station with lamp oil caused its closure from September 1859 to July 1861.

For many years Smith Island was called Blunt's Island, a name given it by the 1841 Wilkes expedition. Situated on the east end of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the lighthouse stood on the
island’s highest point, a 50-foot bluff on the southwest side. Indians crossing the strait often camped on Smith Island. Work crews built a blockhouse there for living quarters. Though the men completed their work without incident, several months after the light was lit a brief skirmish occurred between Haida Indians and the assistant keeper.

Other than such isolated incidents, tending Washington’s first lighthouses was routine. Every evening just before sunset the keeper pushed aside the curtain that protected the lens from the sun and then lit the lamp wicks. If the light characteristic was flashing, the keeper wound the clockwork machinery (similar to the chains and weights of a cuckoo clock) that rotated the lens to produce a flash. During the watch the keeper replenished the lamp’s oil, wound the clockwork machinery every two to three hours and adjusted small air vents in the lantern’s base to keep the light burning brightly.

The next keeper followed the same routine until morning when the lamp was extinguished a half hour after sunrise and the curtain was drawn around the lens. During the day keepers painted, made repairs, polished brass and cleaned the lens.

Keepers’ families lived at the lighthouses, except at Cape Flattery. Because the Makahs still occupied the island, it was perceived as unsafe for families. One lighthouse inspector did not agree. In the early 1860s, after an inspection, he reported that families should live at the lighthouse so it would “... no longer [be] at the mercy of the rollicking bachelors who have had possession since its establishment.” Despite the inspector’s plea, keepers’ families did not move to the Cape Flattery Lighthouse until 1885.

Another bachelor, 20-year-old W. H. Blake, was one of the first keepers at New Dungeness Lighthouse. To overcome his loneliness in his off-duty hours he walked the seven-mile-long spit and courted Mary Ann McDonnell. They were married in Port Townsend in 1862. Three of their five children were born at the lighthouse, and for a time Mary served as assistant keeper.

Where soil permitted, the keepers and their families raised livestock and grew vegetables to supplement their food supply. Smith Island’s first principal keeper, Captain John Vail, cultivated a four-acre garden. Initially, the keepers rowed or sailed the station boat to the nearest community to obtain supplies. Later, the Lighthouse Service tender Shubrick brought supplies two or three times a year. Everyone at the lighthouse anxiously awaited this occasion, called “Boat Day.” Besides lighthouse supplies, the tender also brought mail, books and items ordered from catalogs.

As the Territory’s maritime traffic continued to increase in the 1860s, new lighthouses at Admiralty Head on Whidbey Island and Ediz Hook at Port Angeles were built. Fourteen years elapsed before the next lighthouses, Point Wilson and Point No Point, were established. The Lighthouse Board had begun to build more lighthouses because, as they reported, “The rapidly increasing importance of the commerce of the Puget Sound ... will still be augmented by the Northern Pacific Railroad.” By 1900 six more lighthouses stood along Washington’s coastal and inland shores.

Of the first five lighthouses, only Cape Disappointment and Cape Flattery continue to serve mariners with lights in their original towers. The tower at New Dungeness developed cracks and was reduced in height in the 1920s. The original dwelling with its shorter tower still stands.

Willapa Bay and Smith Island lighthouses were victims of erosion and have been replaced by lights on steel towers. The Willapa Bay light fell into the sea in 1940, while most of the Smith Island Lighthouse has tumbled down the bluff.

Today there are 17 lighthouses in Washington that survive in nearly original condition, and nine still operate with a Fresnel lens. Their lights and signals are automated, and most vessels use electronic navigation equipment. Yet, these lighthouses still serve mariners, especially small boaters, and remind us of our maritime heritage.

The Elusive Quest for Community Stability in a Riverine Environment

BY WILLIAM G. ROBBINS

"Out of the wilderness," exclaimed Time magazine in 1950, "World War II tripped off the biggest influx in the Northwest's history; it had gained a million and a half people." The region had emerged, according to Time, from "raw wilderness in little more than a century," and "rather than a mere outpost of Eastern manufacturing and finance," it now stood on the verge of industrial prominence. The symbols of enterprise and expansion were especially apparent in "clean and airy cities" like Richland, the brand new town of 24,000 people that had blossomed in the desert near the Hanford Engineering Works. The magazine reported that Kennewick and Pasco, too, "had been virtually reborn as a result" of the activity at the nuclear reservation.

The Time article extolled the revolution in production that had taken place in the timber industry where caterpillar tractors "crashed through the fir jungles, yanking new-cut logs along," and where loggers still wore "tin" pants but now felled trees with power saws, lived in town, and drove to work each day. It praised "big companies" for practicing reforestation and developing new wood products, but it cautioned that, like the purse seiners and salmon trollers on Puget Sound, neither industry "could expand beyond certain rigid limits without inviting disaster." With its wheat and cattle production and fruit orchards already facing saturated markets, continued the Time report, the region, and especially Washington, was prospering because of federal expenditures: Boeing's airplane contracts, Bremerton's naval shipyard, hydroelectric projects, and the Hanford operation.

It was the big blue river, however, the region's symbol of unity, that kept the horde of new people from being a liability, from becoming postwar caricatures of the Dust Bowlers who preceded them in the 1930s. The river, according to Time, "seemed to hold the key to real prosperity." Uniquely fit for both hydropower and reclamation projects, the natural contours of the river and human technical genius would combine to forge the good society, to provide decent, stable living for future generations. The future, in that view, was full with the promise of progress, the hope that in this special place the next generation would banish want and indulgence.

What I find most fascinating about such discussions is the suggestion of permanence that infuses these grand mid-20th-century schemes. These narratives illustrate both the optimism of postwar imperial culture and that society's woefully unreflective sense of its own history. Although the federal presence at Hanford—and the jobs it generated—was different from the more conventional resource-based activities in the region, Hanford ultimately shared much in common with those traditional extractive industries in its inability to sustain an enduring community life.

An inquiry into the question of the Columbia's communities, therefore, must consider larger realms of cultural perception and values, especially those that involve human activity in the physical world and—in the case of Hanford—the whims of American foreign policy. These focus on nature's abundance in Columbia's country—both the river and its surrounding landscape—and the character of the communities established by the newcomers, a population that increasingly extended its control over the great waterway as the 19th century.
century advanced. Perpetually changing and increasingly intrusive outside forces, many of them global in origin, have influenced the course of events along the river and the sometimes transitory nature of its human settlements.

It is important to remember that, in terms of places long occupied by humans, the history of the Columbia country is a relatively short-lived enterprise, say 20,000 years as a median benchmark. For the period dominated by Euro-Americans, the time frame narrows roughly to 150 years, and for the interior Northwest, a century. More than 50 years ago, Peter Noyes, a respected elder in the Colville tribe, told about the time when Coyote was the really big man on earth, when there was no Columbia River, and when much of the Colville area was covered by a big lake. To the west, a long ridge of mountains prevented the waters of the lake from flowing to the ocean. Coyote was wise enough to see that if he could make a passageway through the mountains, the salmon would come up from the ocean and provide food for his people. So Coyote put his great powers to work and, starting near where Portland is today, dug a hole through the mountains that allowed the Columbia River to flow to the ocean as it does today. The salmon were then able to swim up the river, and Coyote’s people had plenty to eat.

It is proper that this story begin with the first people to inhabit the Columbia River country, human populations that were the first to establish communities and make extensive use of the region’s natural abundance. To know the River of the West and the human groups that have settled along its waterways is to recognize that the great Columbia system has been a significant force in human as well as geological history. Writer Don Holm remarked nearly two decades ago that the Columbia defied easy definition:

It is more than a waterway filled with fish, exploited by hydroelectric plants, dancing with pleasure and commercial boats and measured out for irrigation. It is, as someone once commented, an expression of a nation’s dynamic economic and social movements. It is more than just a river.

Place yourself on the mid-Columbia in the fall of 1805 in the company of the intrepid captains who were nearing the end of their epic transcontinental trek. From their entrance into the main river at the mouth of the Snake, downstream to the Cascades, Lewis and Clark sketch a dramatic picture of abundance, of a people whose lives centered on the annual runs of salmon. Traveling upstream from the Yakima River on October 17, Clark observed mat lodges on an island where Indians were drying salmon “on Scaffolds on which they have great numbers.” A few miles below Clark encountered still another village of three mat lodges and “great quants. of Salmon on scaffolds drying”:

Saw great numbers of Dead Salmon on the Shores and floating in the water, great numbers of Indians on the banks and viewing me. 18 canoes accompanied me from the point. The waters of this river [are] clear, and a Salmon may be seen at the deabth [sic] of 15 or 20 feet . . . passed three large lodges on the Star. Side near which great number of Salmon was drying on Scaffolds one of those Mat lodges I entered found it crowded [sic] with men women and children and near the enterance [sic] of those houses I saw many [sic] . . . [women] engaged Splitting and drying Salmon.

Five days later at Celilo Falls, Clark reported large quantities of pounded fish neatly preserved in baskets lined with dried salmon skins:

This Paul Kane drawing illustrates the racks used for drying salmon in the semiarid mid-Columbia River country. Lewis and Clark were impressed with the tremendous productivity of the fishery.
Those 12 baskets of from 90 to 100 w. each (basket) for a Stack. Thus preserved those fish may be kept Sound and Sweet Several years, as those people inform me. Great quantities as they inform us are Sold to the white peoples who visit the mouth of this river as well as the natives below.

Farther down river at The Dalles, Clark counted another 107 scaffolds, “which must have contained 10,000 w. of fish.” In their travels on the Columbia below the Wenatchee River, Lewis and Clark encountered more than 100 native fishing stations. And in one remarkable fall day as they were descending the river, the expedition passed 29 mat lodges where Indians were preparing and drying fish.

The native fishing villages that Lewis and Clark passed were, in fact, remarkably stable settlements whose subsistence needs were centered on both terrestrial and riverine environments—what we might call resource-dependent communities. According to anthropologist Eugene Hunn, native people along the Great River enjoyed several millennia of relative cultural and social stability—a regimen disrupted only with the northward spread of Spanish horses in the early 18th century, the entry of the fur trade in the early 19th century, and the subsequent ravages of exotic diseases.

The newcomers who came to the Columbia River country in ever-increasing numbers in the early 19th century brought with them a different cultural vision, a social imagination and core of beliefs—an economic culture, Donald Worster calls it—that viewed the natural world as capital, that obliged humankind to use that capital for self-advancement, and a conviction that the social order should promote the accumulation of personal wealth. They looked first to the plentiful fur-bearing animals of the region, to the rich soils in the valley bottoms, to the magnificent forests, and eventually to the seemingly limitless multitudes of salmon that plied the great Columbia waterway. Their collective objective: to turn the natural abundance of the Northwest to advantage in distant markets.

The pace of cultural and physical change in the Oregon Country quickened with the formal agreement between England and the United States to extend their common boundary westward along the 49th parallel to the Pacific. A swelling tide of Euro-Americans—most of them trekking overland, others coming by sea to the Willamette and Puget Sound lowlands—quickly overran and pushed aside an already decimated native population during the 1840s and '50s. Shortly after the boundary settlement, artist and writer George Catlin, who traveled upriver to The Dalles, witnessed examples of the new spirit afoot in the land:
The fresh fish for current food and the dried fish for their winter consumption, which had been from time immemorial a good and certain living for the surrounding tribes, like everything else of value belonging to the Indian, has attracted the cupidity of the "better class," and is now being "turned into money," whilst the ancient and real owners of it may be said to be starving to death; dying in sight of what they have lost, and in a country where there is actually nothing else to eat.

Imbued with a commercial ethos that viewed the natural world in terms of its commodity potential, the incoming settler and merchant population set about establishing exchange and processing centers at locations strategic to both routes of travel and to the region's abundant resources.

Under the new commercial ethic, the Columbia country's natural communities—the subsistence-oriented Native American populations—were pushed to the margins. At the same moment, exchange and processing emporiums arose to serve the purposes of converting and shipping those resources-turned-commodities in oceanic markets. Secular and commercial from the start, those settlements were boom towns of sorts, attracting large numbers of newcomers as they rode the crest of a sometimes fleeting prosperity. The external forces driving those changes were twofold: the thousands of newly arrived immigrants who stayed on to make their homes in the small towns and surrounding countryside, and the market demand for the commodities that attracted them to the region in the first place—the promise of agriculture, the magnificent stands of timber, the Great River itself teeming with fish, and the rich mineral lodes in the mountains.

The transcendent vehicle for that quickened pace of activity was the expanding ribbon of steel that linked remote places in the region to the great highway of the Columbia and then to national and international markets. The building of railroads through the interior country brought sharp increases in population, the formation of new counties, a spectacular expansion in the acreage of cultivated land and the establishment of agricultural towns, and the similar but even more exaggerated building of industrial mining towns.

Commercial activity in the interior forests—and the creation of lumber mill towns—came more slowly, following a hiatus of 20 or 30 years after the initial mining and agricultural settlements. The beginnings of Bend, Oregon, may be a classic example. Until the railroad reached Klamath Falls in 1909 and Bend in 1911, distant markets had little effect on the great ponderosa forests that stretched along the eastern slope of the Cascade Mountains. The effect of the new transportation arterials was to link nature's abundance to outside markets, to turn the area around the old Deschutes River post office at Farewell Bend Ranch into an instant city, and to set in motion the large-scale production of lumber in the region.

The Bend Bulletin heralded the "opening up" of that last great western pine region and the building of state-of-the-art facilities to mill the lumber as a "dream" become "actuality." The euphoria of the time and the setting emphasized pride in the volume of timber harvested and uninhibited boasting about the production records established in the mills. Less
obvious in historical literature was the rate and pace of change taking place in the forested outback or any long-range concern for central Oregon's towns and logging camps.

The long-term well-being of resource-based communities reminds me of Lewis Mumford's remark that the kind of stability achieved under capitalism was akin to the "equilibrium of chaos." Booming, upscale Aspen, Colorado, is perhaps the best known and most striking symbol of that boom-bust-boom phenomenon. But other settlements in the West, many of them in Columbia's country, provide stories of equally volatile local economies. Although its tenure as an extractive, resource-dependent community lasted for nearly three quarters of a century, Bend's fortunes in recent years have little in common with its past. Indeed, the greater Bend area provides a fascinating story of the conjunction between culture and nature, between economics and ecology, between a thriving and bustling lumber town and its timber wealth and what happened to the community when that forest bounty was gone.

Bend's large-volume pine manufacturers—Brooks-Scanlon and Shevlin-Hixon—represented a production system predicated on liquidating standing timber as quickly as markets and the technical ability to produce permitted. When Shevlin-Hixon began sawing lumber in its huge Bend mill in 1916, the company had amassed more than 200,000 acres of prime ponderosa timber. Brooks-Scanlon, with a small but rapidly expanding acreage, opened milling facilities with a similar productive capacity one month later. The Bend Bulletin was ecstatic:

The dream, Bend, the sawmill and lumbering center of Central Oregon, is now an actuality. . . . After years of "watchful waiting" by men who were possessed with faith that one day saws would be humming and that the vast area of Deschutes timber would be manufactured at Bend, they have today to take a 10-minute walk from the center of town to see the realization of their dreams.

Each of the large pine manufacturing facilities employed about 600 from the outset, with a ratio of about two workers in logging for every mill operative. The continually expanding cutting capacity of the plants eventually reached 200 million board feet a year—a prodigious amount, the impressive volume of timber tributary to Bend notwithstanding. The two mills employed over 3,000 workers at their peak, and for nearly 30 years the town and surrounding countryside bustled with the kind of activity that prompted the Forest Service to proclaim: "The history of the economic development of Deschutes County is largely the history of its lumber industry." A strong case can be made that Bend was the most timber-dependent community in Oregon, at least until the timber began to run out and entrepreneurs launched an effort to capitalize on a resource of another kind—namely snow.

The voracious appetite of the big mills began to place pressure on the available supply of privately owned pine as early as the 1930s when a Brooks-Scanlon official asked the Forest Service to sell a greater volume of timber to sustain the local economy. The Forest Survey of 1936 for Deschutes County predicted that private holdings were adequate to sustain the local mills for only 15 to 25 years; sustained-yield purchases of public timber "will mean a drastic reduction of the average annual lumber production of the county." The Forest Survey erred only in timing; the private stands were gone within ten years. A few short years after the nose dive in production, Brooks-Scanlon purchased Shevlin-Hixon's timberlands and mill in 1950 and promptly closed the latter, putting 850 people out of work. A booming postwar economy and the emergence of a thriving tourist and winter sports industry mitigated economic distress from the mill closure.

But Bend, the dream, lives on, despite the final closure of its last sawmill in 1994. In its latest reincarnation, a reborn entrepreneurial spirit has redirected the community's energies from milling lumber to year-round tourism, and otherwise selling the amenities of clean air, breathtaking scenery, and affordable real estate prices to out-of-state buyers. Brooks-Scanlon, too, has returned in a second life as Brooks Resources, Inc., one of the leading development groups in central Oregon. Still another development group has revealed plans to retrofit the old mill complex by the Deschutes River into a village-type, mixed-use neighborhood, complete with upscale shops, restaurants, light manufacturing, and residences. Bend's new persona has nothing to do with its past or much of anything that relates to other rural, declining communities in the region. Retirees, affluent refugees from California, and mobile business people made footloose through telecommunications are driving the development boom. Storefronts that once showcased denim working apparel, hickory shirts and logging boots now display the latest fashions in outdoor wear and other trendy fads. In a kindred change, formerly working class pubs in Bend have been refurbished with oak decor to cater to the tastes of the community's increasing number of affluent residents.

Tom Pickell, an émigré from the San Francisco Bay area and a partner in a development and consultation firm, believes that cities like Bend are the business centers of the future: "For people like myself, it's the next frontier. I want to be in economic development, and there are tremendous opportunities." Set free and footloose by money, easy air travel, and the telecommunications revolution, Pickell and others like him are independent of the traditional requirements of a centralized work base—and, I might add, the conventional notions of a sense of commitment to community and place.

The restructuring and revolution-like changes that are occurring in some local economies have wrought the obvious—open opposition among older residents suddenly hit with crowded traffic conditions, escalating taxes, sharply rising real estate prices, and the other distortions that large infusions of outside capital bring to local economies. In a
Hanford was a small farming community comprised largely of orchardists who used the waters of the nearby Columbia to irrigate their lands. More than 1,000 people were displaced in the early 1940s when the federal government made the area part of its top-secret nuclear production program.

letter to the Portland Oregonian, one disgruntled Bend resident observed that the newcomers have meant “gaudy ostentatious houses, big cars, pseudo-Italian suits, soap-opera tart dresses, and deals, deals, deals.” And, as the writer openly acknowledged, there is sometimes overblown chauvinism directed, in most instances, at the euphemistic “Californian.”

Hood River’s recent and ongoing transformation would appear to some to be an upbeat story, an example of the new circumstances and adjustments that are necessary as communities seek out their appropriate “new resources.” While local motel owners, restaurateurs, and retailers of wind-surfing gear have benefited immensely, others—service and fruit workers who depend on less expensive housing, and senior citizens in the area—very likely see the conditions in a different light.

Although some of Columbia’s communities have survived the shake-out of dwindling resources and economic restructuring, many have not. Bend, the greater Portland area, Boise, and the Spokane Valley have turned away from directly exploiting physical nature to other forms of economic endeavor. These more diverse activities have contributed to relatively robust metropolitan economies. Even a quiet, out-of-the-way, rural community like Canby, Oregon—in the view of some local boosters—envisions itself as a developing “telecommunity,” a place where work and residence are one and the same. But for many towns in the rural outback—dependent on timber, mining, agriculture, or fishing—a different story is unfolding. Idaho’s population grew by 7 percent during the 1980s, but that growth was skewed toward Boise and Twin Falls; elsewhere in the state, two-thirds of its 199 towns declined in population. The story for Oregon is much the same: 12 of 18 counties east of the Cascades lost people during the 1980s. And in the booming state of Washington, whose numbers grew by 18 percent in the same decade, six counties—all of them rural—lost population.

The explanations behind many of Columbia’s declining rural communities are all too obvious: the unraveling of the older, resource-based economies due to depleted resources; shifts in capital investment to more lucrative portfolios; the consolidation and centralization of production facilities into fewer units; and labor-saving technological advances, especially in the agriculture and timber industries. A case in point: in Oregon and Washington wood products employment decreased 25 percent between 1979 and 1986; at the same time, total production increased more than 20 percent.

In retrospect we can say with some assurance that the more rural and less traveled of Columbia’s communities are facing the sunset of an era, one—if we follow Fernand Braudel’s suggestion of taking the long view—that was relatively short-lived. What we are witnessing is not the region’s colorful boom-and-bust-tradition but a fundamental restructuring of economic and community life. According to economic analyst Richard Carlson, much of the rural West is “in the midst of a transition from resource-based industries to a technology-and-service economy.” The same can be said for the new Columbia taking shape beyond the region’s large metropolitan centers, towns and communities that are increasingly removed from their resource base of yesteryear.

Columbia’s country—as Northwesterners have known it—is changing, and in some instances in dramatic fashion. The primary victims of that transition are rural sectors of regional life, once productive and livable places that have been increasingly marginalized as a consequence of structural changes in the larger world of modern capitalism. From Butte, Montana, at the head of Silver Bow Creek, to Astoria,
Richland was an instant community, literally constructed overnight to house the scientists and engineers working on the nearby Hanford reservation (top left).

at the mouth of the Columbia River, the old production-driven end game of turning the products of nature to advantage in the market is in deep trouble, both in an economic and ecological sense. With their commodity-focused economic base seriously diminished, rural settlements throughout the Northwest struggle for survival to support local services and maintain viable, functioning communities.

A
tough the calculus for the Tri-Cities is a bit different—to the degree that the needs and aspirations of American foreign policy have directed its economy—the area’s stability, viability, and permanence appear no less volatile than those of its commodity-dependent neighbors. Hanford-dependent Richland is an anomaly, a mill town constructed to serve a particular purpose at a particular moment in time.

Today Hanford-Richland stands as an anachronism of sorts, providing employment for more than 18,000 people, most of them engaged in cleaning up environmental problems associated with nearly 40 years of plutonium production. Indeed, Hanford’s employment history may dwarf that of some of the mercurial resource-dependent communities in the region. From a peak of 51,000 construction workers, technicians, and scientists at the close of World War II, employment dropped to a low of 6,100 in 1971, only to increase to 12,000 in 1977. At the peak of Ronald Reagan’s bomb-building program, Hanford had 14,500 workers, a roster that dropped to 12,200 and then rose to the numbers of its present clean-up staff.

The big question for the Tri-Cities is: “Will there be life after clean-up?” The cost of disposing of 40 years of nuclear refuse will run to more than $57 billion over a 30-year period. One economist argues that the clean-up will bring more stable employment. And a local development council envisions the establishment of high-tech environmental firms of the kind promised for wasted mining towns like Butte, Montana. Those schemes strike me as post-industrial, post-nuclear panaceas, potential theme parks to attract Environmental Protection Agency funds and, perhaps, the modern tourist. In my more cynical moments I envision something along the lines of the remaking of the industrial center of Bend, but with a more desert-like flavor—turning the Hanford reserve into a series of tourist campgrounds, complete with bike trails, nature walks and other appropriate site-specific visitor attractions.

A former attorney general of Oregon, candidate for governor, and now president of the University of Oregon, Dave Frohnmayer remarked that the regional economy is “changing profoundly, suddenly and wrenchingly. For more than a century we were the Eden at the end of the . . . trail, the American wilderness, the land of pioneers, ranchers and loggers, a place where self-sufficiency and independence were valued above all else.” But that world of extractive economic activity is coming to a close. The American West, historian Donald Worster contends, is casting aside its old traditions, its old identity—centered in ruralism and resource-based communities. “Nowhere in the West,” Worster believes, have we escaped boom-and-bust economies: “We have not mastered the place nor built a secure civilization with its raw materials. We have not even understood it very well.” The Old West of extractive-based industrial activity appears everywhere to be retreating in the face of an emerging New West, which has yet to prove that its place at center stage will be any more durable and lasting than the one it is displacing.

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COLUMBIA 30 FALL 1995
Among the recently processed papers of Floyd Oles, former city manager of Tacoma, is a group of 150 snapshots taken in 1937-38 while Oles was general manager of the Washington Produce Shipper’s Association. These photographs, taken in the agricultural areas of southern King and northern Pierce counties, document farms, farmers and farm workers. The Japanese community is especially well documented.

The two photographs included here are representative of the images’ informal style. On the left are two young boys with their bedrolls, one playing a flute. Oles titled it, “Pea pickers on the move near Auburn” (1938). The other untitled image is of three young Japanese boys and a head of cauliflower, also 1938.
Garbed in white robe, pointed cap, and crimson- and purple-bordered cape, Ku Klux Klan field representative Tyler A. Rogers stood before some 500 to 600 Yakima Valley residents in his hometown of Wapato to describe "Ideals and Principles" of the Klan. No baiting of minorities was reported that night of March 14, 1923, so evidence that the Klan became involved in the effort then under way to remove Japanese Americans from the Yakima Indian Reservation is only circumstantial. But it would have been surprising if Klan members in the Yakima Valley, individually if not corporately, had not challenged the Japanese Americans. On the Pacific Coast the Klan's "chameleonic nature" manifest itself in anti-Japanese activity, just as in the Southwest it was anti-Mexican, anti-Catholic in the Midwest, and anti-Semitic on the Atlantic Coast.

The Klan was only one new group in 1923 drawn to the issue of leasing reservation land to Japanese Americans. The Grange went on record against the Issei and Nisei (Japanese immigrants and their children), and a wider circle of citizens became active, culminating in a mass meeting of some 1,000 persons later in March. It all seemed to indicate that the Japanese Americans had been successful in circumventing the letter of the state's anti- alien land law, or at least in postponing its effects.

The Klan's recruitment drive in Wapato, Toppenish, Yakima, Grandview and Sunnyside in the Yakima Valley was part of its accelerated growth across America in the early 1920s. The Klan fed nationally on the nativism of the post-World War I period, and membership peaked at four million in 1924. Its estimated strength in Washington reached 35,000 to 40,000 in 42 Klaverns. Yet it never achieved the influence in Washington that it had in Oregon, where it successfully supported the abolition of parochial education in 1922 and in 1923 dominated the legislature that passed an anti- alien land law. But even in Wapato its shadowy influence is credited with deciding a school board election in 1925 in which Japanese Americans indirectly were an issue.

The Wapato rally was the second of at least four held in the Yakima Valley during March 1923 that collectively attracted several thousand people. The first was held March 1 in Toppenish, the same week that some 500 attended a similar meeting in Grandview to the south. Because the Yakima First Christian Church denied facilities for that city's March 22 rally, a crowd of over 2,000 packed Yakima's Capitol Theatre to hear the Reverend C. C. Curtis of Vancouver, Washington, "exalted cyclops" of the Columbia River Klan.

Newspaper coverage of the Klan rallies organized by Rogers is curious at best. For example, neither of the Yakima newspapers nor the Wapato Independent carried stories in advance of the Wapato meeting; the 500 to 600 participants apparently learned about the talk by word of mouth or from placards posted around town.

Neither did the Yakima and Wapato newspapers editorialize about the massive organizational effort under way in the "more or less secret sessions" that preceded the public rallies. W. W. Robertson's Yakima Daily Republic reported only that "considerable sentiment" for and against the Klan had developed in the Grandview area. At the time of the big Yakima rally, the Yakima Morning Herald observed in its news col-
umns that the crowd was one of the "most cosmopolitan" that had attended a lecture there. It described a scene in which prominent Yakima residents sat next to people in dirty and greasy clothes. Nearly as many women as men were in the audience, as were a large number of children and "a few Negroes and Japanese."

The Klan gave institutional racism another partner in the Yakima Valley, but it was a more elusive presence than that of the American Legion, which William Verran, Jr. of the Wapato Independent reported from the inside as a member. Despite the Klan's continuing agenda, including the school board race two years later, the Independent told of only one more Klan meeting. Rev. C. C. Curtis returned to the valley in April and told approximately 225 persons at the Wapato International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) hall that the four principles of the Klan were the Protestant Christian faith, America for Americans, supremacy of the white race, and woman in her place and her chastity protected by every God-fearing man.

Amidst three (electric) burning crosses and fireworks, Klan activity in Central Washington culminated on August 9, 1924, in a field south of Yakima. Seven hundred initiates marched with 1,000 robed members before an estimated 40,000 spectators in a statewide installation ceremony in a field after officials in Olympia denied the Klan use of the state fairgrounds in Yakima. The spectacle was a marked contrast to the disintegration of the Yakima Valley Klan during the following two years.

When the national Klan banished Rogers from its membership on May 23, 1925, he installed himself as president of the National Organization of the Allied Patmos Patriots of the United States of America. He claimed that the Sunnyside Klan was then the only chapter remaining in the valley. The situation deteriorated beyond recovery when the Wapato resident, sued by the Klan, refused to turn over membership lists, records, robes and paraphernalia.

Even if the Klan had folded, the Issei could see the threat inherent in the sentiment of a KKK crowd so large that 35 acres and three miles of roadway were necessary to accommodate its vehicles. If burning crosses symbolized racism among private citizens, the Japanese Americans could take scant comfort in policies of the federal government.

Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall confirmed early in 1923 that presidential policy prohibited alien leases on the Yakima Indian Reservation, and the practice would not be affected by his resignation on March 4. He recognized the industry and patriotism of the Japanese Americans and their effective role in development of the Yakima Indian Reservation. Yet, he said, he also respected the feeling of Caucasians about the advisability of continued leasing to "Japs," not being influenced by the financial returns they could provide to the community or the Indians. "I am positively and absolutely opposed to the acquisition of any of the remaining public lands of the United States by aliens." This response won warm praise from representatives of the 19 Yakima Valley American Legion posts who met in February, expressing the hope that future generations of Americans would appreciate his work "at its true worth and honor him accordingly."

Even as federal officials were carrying out their policies, the 1923 state legislature in Olympia again acceded to the admitted pressure of the American Legion, if indeed any was necessary, to tighten the anti-alien land law. For example, an amendment provided that if a minor child of an alien held
title to land, the title was presumed to be held in trust for the parent. The measure passed the House 89-6 on February 16 and the Senate 39-0 on February 28.

Legislation was less important than leases to the Scripps' Seattle Star on March 2, which, in a headline atop page one, had the “Japs Moving Out as Leases Expire.” The story said the “vast main body” of Japanese-American farmers had begun leaving the Yakima Valley in a “general exodus” to Puget Sound logging camps and the ranches of Montana. Four hundred leases held by the farmers had expired on March 1, the story said, and most of the leaseholders “immediately vacated” the land, leaving only 75 to 100 remaining:

As the Japs board trains at Wapato and Toppenish with their bags and bundles or clatter out of town in their antiquated flivvers a spirit of satisfaction is plainly evident among the white citizenry, particularly the exservicemen, whose insistence that the Japs be removed [led] to the Fall exclusion order.

The story was wrong in at least two respects. If such an exodus of bundles and flivvers had taken place, why were the Wapato legionnaires still determined to carry on the fight? And why were so many of the former leaseholders going to Montana if, as the Star reported just the next day, that state had also passed anti-alien land legislation? The truth was that leases had expired and some Japanese Americans had left, but the unnamed reporter was too anxious to convey the scent of victory and depict a word picture of dilapidated caravans to delve into the complexities of subleases and other legal devices. It was with no apparent sense of contradiction that exactly two weeks later the Star, again on the front page, said, “Japs Cling to Yakima Lands.”

The headline was precipitated by Wapato legionnaires who traveled to Seattle to “obtain reinforcements in the fight.” Specifically, they wanted speakers for a March 28 mass meeting in Wapato, and Seattle councilman Philip Tindall and King County deputy prosecutor Ewing Colvin agreed to address Yakima Valley citizens. C. A. Norton, commander of the Wapato American Legion post, won sympathy in Seattle—and front page space in the Star—when he said the situation on the reservation had become intolerable. “We’ve won our fight... yet we still have the Japs with us.”

Norton said they either stayed on the land after their leases expired, or they acquired other land in violation of the law. He claimed it was practically impossible to get convictions because of lack of evidence. “In the first place, it’s so hard to identify a Jap.” Secondly, he said, apathy by United States citizens contributed to the problem, hence the purpose of the meeting—to arouse public sentiment.

Tindall and Colvin traveled to Wapato for the meeting, and so did Seattle Star reporter Bob Bermann. On the day of the meeting the headline “YAKIMA VALLEY IN JAP WAR!” was spread eight columns across the Star’s front page, above the newspaper’s name plate. In the lead story Bermann stated that the purpose of that evening’s meeting was to organize the Yakima Valley into a great army of volunteer investigators, each of whom would make it his business to gather evidence against “Japs” and unscrupulous whites.

Alex McCredy, a Wapato banker and Ford automobile dealer, told Bermann he could find no better words than those used by Seattle publisher Miller Freeman in a letter McCredy had received just that day. Success or failure of the national “Japanese problem” depended on the outcome of the Yakima Indian Reservation case, Freeman said, because it set a precedent for action of “our people and of the federal government.” McCredy said the Japanese Americans paid unscrupulous Caucasians to obtain leases and then turned the property over to them, in one case offering a $1,000 fee. “Fortunately, this white man was too good an American to accept the offer, but I am sorry to say others have not been so scrupulous.”

Bermann spent the day of the mass meeting talking to Wapato residents to further the Star’s own “Yellow Peril”
agenda and inform Seattle readers about what drew their councilman and deputy prosecutor out of town. The next day the fruits of Bermann's enterprising reporting stood next to the meeting story under a common five-column front page headline, “Yakima Valley Unites to Oust Jap Invaders.” “Wapato City Divided into Two Cliques,” read the deck headline over his interview story, which called Wapato the storm center of the war on the Yakima Indian Reservation to drive out “the Japs.” Bermann said the town had taken on the appearance “almost literally” of two armed camps. The impression throughout the state of unanimous anti-Japanese sentiment in Wapato was erroneous, he said. While the “anti-Jap” agitators were in the majority, he called the Japanese-Americans' allies numerous and powerful.

This balance of forces would have been news to readers of the Wapato Independent, who had been treated, and would continue to be treated, only to the American Legion side of the issue. Allied with the legionnaires, Bermann said, was a “fairly representative” group of businessmen led by McCredy, who was president of the First National Bank and “probably the wealthiest man for miles around.” Also categorized in this group were all the common people as present or prospective Caucasian renters of reservation land, and a few Indians who were angered by the unfair treatment they had received at the hands of same Japanese Americans.

Sympathetic to the Japanese Americans were at least 50 percent of the businessmen in the town, led by W. N. Luby and A. C. Ness, president and vice president, respectively, of the Union State Bank, Bermann wrote. A majority of the Indians were also sympathetic, not considering “the racial aspect of the case at all; they merely recognize the fact that yellow tenants by reason of their lower standard of living can pay higher rents than the whites.” The reporter also put a “certain portion” of the government employees on the reservation with the Japanese Americans, “the only construction that one can place upon the blatant way in which they are permitting violations and evasions of the [Interior] departmental ruling.”

Feeling was running high on both sides, Bermann wrote, with “anti-Jap” workers charging that Japanese-American sympathizers were actuated entirely by greed, willing to sell out their children's birthright in exchange for dollars from the illegal leases. On the other hand, the pro-Japanese citizens asserted that the agitation was being magnified, stemming partly from business rivalry and partly from political ambitions, shortchanging the Issei in the process.

C. J. Luby of the Wapato Trading Company was quoted as saying that the Japanese Americans eventually had to go. “But I am in favor of moderate methods, and I do think that the Japs should be given a square deal.” He said that for 15 years the community had been catering to these “Japs,” pitting them on their backs and taking their dollars. “It doesn't

Yatsutaro Matsushita digging potatoes in the Wapato area around 1920. Japanese Americans pioneered potato farming in the Yakima Valley.
seem exactly fair to kick them out now; we ought to sort of ease them out.” Compounding the problem was the fact that crops had been bad for two years. To eject them summarily then meant that not only they would lose everything but local businessmen would lose thousands of dollars that could never be collected, Luby said.

A less conservative stand was taken by A. C. Ness who, in addition to being vice president of the Union State Bank, was president of Wapato Orchards Company. He said the agitators reminded him of a lot of coyotes running down a poor little rabbit. He claimed there was nothing patriotic about it all, just business jealousy and the desire of one man, unnamed, to get a lot of notoriety for political purposes. Ness said he did not think it was nice or patriotic of the American Legion to push the issue while ignoring “the poor old Indians” who would be robbed if “the Japs” were driven out. The Issei paid more rent than “the Americans” were willing to offer—and, since the rent was all the money the Indians had to live on, “it seems to me that they have some right to say whom they shall rent to. The Japs will settle on land no white man can make a living out of.”

Alex McCredy told the reporter that the issue was not a local crisis but one affecting the state and the nation. He claimed to have no personal interest in the fight, that the “Jap menace” could never affect him personally during his lifetime. But it could affect “our children and it’s them that we’re fighting for.” He called evading the law so Wapato businessmen would not lose money “poppycock. Of course they’ll lose money.” He claimed to have already written his loss off his books and had forgotten about it. “For three years I haven’t loaned a penny to a Jap.”

Bermann and his editors were so taken with the Wapato conflict even before the mass meeting that they promised Seattle readers a continuing series of articles “on conditions in and around Wapato.” Any Wapato readers of the Star, too, would have seen in print for the first time the rationale of opponents to the American Legion philosophy that everyone in town knew by word of mouth; it was a side of the conflict the Wapato Independent never did acknowledge.

Some 1,000 Yakima Valley residents filled the Wapato
The communication objected to the provision that Congress shall pass no law or make any agreement necessary. He said that the final solution to the problem would be an amendment to the U.S. Constitution limiting citizenship to those whose parents were eligible for naturalization. “And make it retroactive,” he concluded. “Make a further provision that [Congress shall pass no law or make any agreement with a foreign country by which aliens can be naturalized . . . unless they are of the white race.”

Rhetoric of the two Seattle officials spurred the crowd that night to adopt a resolution petitioning the party-appointed Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work, to rigidly enforce his predecessor’s ruling. The citizens also sought an order that the Japanese Americans be made to leave the reservation at the expiration of their leases and that evaders be declared undesirable lessees and their leases cancelled. Wired to the secretary of the interior right after the meeting, the resolution stated that Secretary Fall’s ruling was being openly and defiantly disregarded and the Japanese-American population remained as large as ever.

The communication objected to the “veritable Japanese colony” the federal government had established on the reservation, calling it “the nucleus and foundation of a future province of the Japanese empire,” the future “calamitous consequences” of which were incalculable. Issei were breeding intense Japanese nationalism into their children, who in 1922 accounted for 33 per cent of the births in Wapato, the telegram claimed. All these residents could never become an integral part of “the American race” because assimilation was impossible without intermarriage, and intermarriage between American and Japanese was “unthinkable,” the telegram stated.

The citizens said they were determined “at all costs” to prevent local competition from growing into international hostility. “We have no thought of employing any other than lawful and orderly means,” but the Wapato residents confirmed their determination that, whatever the outcome, “the Japanese shall not stay.”

With the telegram wired to Washington, D.C., Bob Bermann stayed in Wapato to keep the Star’s daily series alive, producing more opinion than fact in the next front-page story which carried the headline, “Jap Invasion Called ‘Bunk.’” The “bunk” referred to how supporters of Japanese Americans felt about the citizens’ rationale in the telegram. “Maybe a couple of Japs” were still squatting on the reservation, but as a general practice, “there’s nothing to it,” the average pro-Japanese businessman allegedly told Bermann. Putting his own opinion into the story, the reporter said that minimizing the problem was a lie, as any 30-minute drive onto the reservation would reveal. “There IS something behind the agitation,” he said, calling the scale of the violations a gross affront to the “entire nation.” Hundreds of the Japanese Americans remained, he claimed.

As bad as the Wapato situation was, it threatened to be-
Yakima Valley Japanese Americans used their automobiles to visit friends and relatives in Western Washington. This photograph was taken on Snoqualmie Pass about 1917.

come worse, the third article in the Star's front-page series claimed. "The devil's cauldron is boiling. Behind the shadow of the Rising Sun of Japan, which has already cast its blighting shadow upon the valley, a second and even more sinister omen is crouching." Bermann referred, of course, to the Ku Klux Klan, which he said had no hold yet in Wapato but was an indisputable presence. Anti-Japanese agitators had conducted their campaign legally to date, but they were rapidly tiring of seeing the law evaded, and impending direct action was rumored, the story said. The reporter quoted a visiting law enforcement officer who said, "We'd rather settle it with ballots than with bullets." "Certainly fertile ground for a Ku Klux organizer," the story concluded.

Bermann turned to yet another journalistic trick in his next front-page article when he told of his automobile drive through the reservation, where he witnessed dozens of Japanese-Americans working in the fields, "from which the government has barred them"; of talking to Indians and hearing their "evasive answers"; and hearing dark threats and whispers about the Ku Klux Klan.

"A sinister tinge seemed to creep into the warm spring sunshine. The azure skies seemed to darken," he wrote. The foreboding was precipitated by unlikely perpetrators—little knots of children on their way home from school. Some were Caucasian, "rightful heirs to the broad acres of the fertile valley," and some were Japanese, all playing and romping together. This was all "a really pretty picture," until Bermann was overcome with a feeling of revulsion by the sight he beheld. He described a sturdy American boy of 10 or 11 and a little Japanese girl, "like an Oriental doll." Even as Bermann watched, the little boy laid his arm around the girl's waist and, with childish innocence, kissed her on the lips. "There before my eyes was the real Japanese problem. And not merely of Wapato. But of Washington—of America—of the whole Caucasian race."

Seattle Star editorial writers now had the documentation they needed to call again for state and federal action, "AT ONCE!" Without such steps trouble would result, as evidenced by rumors of a KKK campaign. Clearly the anti-alien land law had not solved the problem, the editorial said. "More Japs are getting control of more land every year. More Jap shacks are springing up. The Jap menace is GROWING!"

The year 1923 thus may have been the most traumatic for Yakima Valley Issei and Nisei between the benchmarks of the 1921 state anti-alien land law and Pearl Harbor. Only the Depression-induced dynamiting of seven Japanese farms near Wapato in 1933 equalled the tension of the year in which the Ku Klux Klan paraded and the Seattle Star thundered as local newspaper owners watched in editorial silence. But the American Legion and its allies notwithstanding, 1,000 Japanese Americans lived through the two difficult decades, finally defeated only by President Franklin Roosevelt's 1942 evacuation order.

Thomas H. Heuterman is a Professor of Journalism at Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow School of Communication in Pullman. His most recent work is The Burning Horse: Japanese Americans in the Yakima Valley, 1920-42 (Eastern Washington University Press, in press).
The Oregon Trail
A Water Route to the Pacific Northwest?

By James Ronda

Editor's Note
These remarks were given at the opening of the Second Columbia River History Conference at Skamania Lodge in October 1993.

When I was beginning to put words on paper for this talk, I told a friend that the subject of my remarks was the Oregon Trail. She immediately launched into a long monologue that included everything from Francis Parkman and Jesse Applegate to fading memories of a now-distant family vacation. "And," she said triumphantly, "I actually put my hands in the wagon ruts at Mitchell Pass."

Then I made the fatal mistake of saying that I was also going to talk about the Columbia River. That did it. She gave me a look that said—you dumb flatlander. "Don't you know the difference between a river and an overland trail? And besides, the Columbia was the end of the line for Oregon emigrants. Your talk is going to be pretty short—something your audience will probably appreciate." With that parting shot (I was going to say, with that benediction), my friend the college chaplain abandoned me to my own devices and your long-suffering goodwill.

Now I can't decide whether to tell you that that story is apocryphal or apocalyptic—perhaps it partakes of both. What is both striking and revealing about my friend's reaction to the pairing of a trail and a river is that she was certain they could not, should not, be linked together.

For her and for so many others the Oregon Trail is a road, a land highway. And those same folks tend to think that the trail is a road with a relatively short history—one stretching from the 1840s to the 1860s. For my friend and generations of writers, artists and filmmakers, the phrase "Oregon Trail" has come to mean endless lines of white-topped

Overland Trail
150 YEARS
Land Road along a Water Route

The following excerpt is from the diary of Samuel B. Crockett, an 1844 Oregon Trail emigrant. Original spelling and usage have been preserved in the transcription. (Special Collections, WSRS)

AUGUST

Thursday 1st—After traveling 15 miles we reached Fort Laramie which is situated on the west bank of Laramie’s fork of north Platte about 1 mile above its junction with the north fork. It is built of unburned brick and covers a considerable quantity of ground. It belongs to the American Fur Company and is kept in good order. A considerable number of Sue Indians are at this place who come here to trade. They are every way the neatest and best looking Indians that I ever saw and is the strongest tribe in North America. They desired a present of which they got and then smoked the pipe of peace with our officers.

Friday 2nd—Lay by today, trading and traveling wagons repaired.

Saturday 3d—Made 12 miles and encamped with Capt Ford at a very large spring in the black hills.

Sunday 4th—16 miles and encamped on a creek that runs through the black hills in plain view of the Rocky Mountains.

Monday 5th—Mrs. Susan Seabring died last night leaving a husband and small family of children. Traveled 16 miles and encamped on Horseshoe Creek.

Tuesday 6th—Traveled 20 miles over a very rough hilly rocky country with scattering of pine. Killed 2 buffalows and saw fresh sign of grisly bears.

Wednesday 7th—lay by repairing wagons.

Saturday 10th—Made 12 miles and encamped a creek near the Platte. Plenty of grass.

Sunday 11th—Reached the river after being absent from it several days. 18 miles. Camped on the river.

Monday 12th—Traveled 15 miles.

Tuesday 13th—Today Mr. Clark and myself left the company to go before and hunt. We accordingly went on about thirty miles when night came on and we stopped for the night and found nothing but salt water to drink passed a British [brackish?] oil spring and seen abundance of buffalows.

Wednesday 14th—Killed a fat cow this evening and arrived at Sweetwater after traveling 18 miles, we found the hills very high even to mountains and nothing but bare solid rocks. Found no buffalo where we encamped and what we had passed were very wild.

Thursday 15th—Rosaced some of the hump ribs of a buffalo for breakfast which were delicious and when done we went a mile up the creek to the Independence rock which is a tremendous castle of solid rock rising out of the level plain 100 feet high, ¼ of a mile long and half as wide. We found a great many names inscribed on it. We ascended the rock and looked up and down the valley but could see no buffalo. We went back to our camp took our meat and went about 8 miles down the creek where we found plenty. We cut our meat and put it out to dry and went to the hand to kill more, we shot 2 cows but could get neither, and returned to our meat and found the wolves had eaten the most of our meat. went up the creek and stayed with Ford’s company all night.

In Anglo-America the tradition of river-roads, empires and Eden found a congenial home in Virginia. From its earliest beginnings, the colony nurtured dreams about river highways heading west to the sunset. Late in the year 1606, as final preparations were under way for the first English voyage to what would become Jamestown, the noted geographer and imperial promoter Richard Hakluyt set down his thoughts on what English adventurers might find at both edges of America. Hakluyt and other Elizabethan expansionists were of two minds about America. No matter how fascinated they were with the material and imperial rewards the continent promised, they could not shake free from the dream of a passage to the Pacific. It was that obsession with the Pacific—"the other Sea"—that came to dominate Hakluyt’s thinking about rivers. He suggested that company agents locate their trading post on a navigable river. But no ordinary waterway would do. The geographer urged English explorers to "make Choice of that which bendeth most towards the Northwest for that way Shall You soonest find the other Sea."

Standing by themselves, those words could have led English travelers to think they might find a river canal across the country. But Hakluyt’s conception of continental river systems and expansion routes was far more sophisticated—and for our concerns far
more influential. Travelers bound up the great river highway—a road Hakluyt was certain they would find—were directed to learn if the stream's headwaters was in mountainous terrain. A source of that kind would surely complicate finding a path to the Pacific. But, explained the geographer, “if it be out of any Lake, the passage to the other Sea will be the more easy.” Prefiguring Jeffersonian speculations about the symmetrical geography of American landforms and rivers, Hakluyt insisted that “it was Like Enough that Out of the same Lake you shall find some Spring which run the Contrary way toward the East India Sea.”

This vision of river roads running east and west from a common source became the accepted geographic wisdom for generations of Virginia explorers. From Captain John Smith to Thomas Jefferson, from John Lederer to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark—a whole galaxy of dreamers, travelers and wayfaring strangers conjured the river road passage to India.

Geographic traditions are like unpredictable high energy force fields, shooting out lines and beams toward unexpected targets. What is the road to Oregon? The answers to that question were shaped by speculations and conjectures made far away from South Pass or The Dalles. For 18th-century explorers and their patrons the road to Oregon was a water highway. Rivers and the Pacific Ocean itself were the ways to reach the Northwest. The Oregon Trail as river passage got perhaps its earliest English expression in the writings, maps and travels of Robert Rogers and Jonathan Carver.

By the end of the 18th century the question of how to reach Oregon had one answer. Whether the answer came from Jonathan Carver, James Cook or Alexander Mackenzie, it was the same. The answer was water, and more especially the water highway increasingly known as the Columbia. Oregon’s trail called for canoes and paddles, not wagons and oxen.

But in the twisted sister-histories of the Oregon overland trail and the Columbia River highway, something happened to dramatically redefine the road and its potential meanings. That redefinition took place in less than a decade. It involved not only epic journeys of exploration but also a fundamental reorientation of thought about the Far West. It was as if a single generation had reinvented Oregon and its many roads.

That re-imagining of the road to Oregon began with Thomas Jefferson and the Lewis and Clark expedition. As Jefferson planned his Pacific expedition, he asked one question: What was the surest way overland to Oregon? Deeply influenced by the Virginia river
tradition, Jefferson had no doubt that the answer was a series of waterways.

The president's own commitment to an Oregon Trail river system was made plain in June 1803 when he directed Lewis to "explore the Missouri river, and such principal stream of it, as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado, or any other river may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across the continent for the purposes of commerce." Whatever else the expedition was to accomplish, its route was clear. Oregon's trail would take the Corps of Discovery up the Missouri, by an easy passage across the continental divide, and on to Pacific waters.

For two-and-a-half years Lewis and Clark struggled to make Jefferson's simple Oregon Trail fit the complexities of western mountains and rivers. Time and again the president's promising geography collided with the hard realities of snow-choked mountain passes and rivers with either too much water or not enough. By the time Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis in September 1806 they were reasonably sure that the water passage to Oregon belonged in the category of illusion. But illusion dies hard, especially when that illusion lives in the head and heart of the president. So the initial report Lewis drafted for Jefferson played hide and seek with experience and geography. On one hand it offered a glimmer of hope for a water trail and then quickly snuffed it out. "We view this passage across the continent as affording immense advantage to the fur trade, but fear that the advantages...will never be found equal on an extensive scale to that by way of the Cape of Good Hope."

Lewis and Clark blazed an Oregon passage that had only symbolic value. On a practical level, their northern track served neither the purposes of trade nor the requirements of settlement. But no matter what Jefferson's captains reported, the belief in a trail—some kind of trail, any kind of trail—to the western sea was an article of faith that would not, could not be expunged from the American bible. Lewis and Clark may have cast doubt on the gospel of a water passage, but other evangelists in St. Louis were not about to abandon the trail theology. Chief among the believers was Manuel Lisa, St. Louis's most enterprising and audacious fur trade promoter. Lisa's lieutenant was Andrew Henry, perhaps the most underrated explorer of the age.

Henry and Lisa recruited a company of fur trade explorers that included several Lewis and Clark veterans. That intrepid band pressed into present-day Montana and pushed across the continental divide into what is now Idaho. Those journeys, made during 1809-1810, convinced Henry that there were land-roads over the mountains—roads free from the hazards and hardships that had plagued Lewis and Clark.

Andrew Henry had not aimed at finding a path to Oregon. His initial reach was not so far. But once back in St. Louis there was time to consider the promised wealth of the greater Northwest. By the fall of 1811 Henry was dreaming grander dreams. And he shared those dreams with journalist Henry M. Brackenridge. Andrew Henry claimed that he had located several mountain passes to the south of the Lewis and Clark route. And, so he insisted, these passes were less demanding than similar gaps in the Alleghenies.

But Henry's assertions went well beyond the geography of discovery. Drawn by the lure of the Pacific and the Northwest Passage, Henry's words slipped from description to prophecy. He declared that horses and perhaps even wagons could "in the course of 6 or 8 days make the trek from the headwaters of the Missouri to the waters of the Columbia and the Pacific." When the Henry interviews were published in the St. Louis Louisiana Gazette on October 11, 1811, the idea of a southern pass and wagon road over the mountains was given first public expression. A southern route—combining land and waterways—existed because it had
ABOVE: Described by one contemporary as “the great emporium of the West,” Astoria was field headquarters for John Jacob Astor’s Pacific Fur Company. It was also the first American commercial and political outpost on the Pacific Rim.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: St. Louis’s most energetic and ambitious fur merchant, Manuel Lisa organized trading expeditions up the Missouri and across the continental divide. Information from those journeys prompted Lisa’s partner Andrew Henry to speculate about land roads to the Northwest.

MIDDLE: John Jacob Astor, owner of the Pacific Fur Company, the first large-scale American business in the Far West.

BOTTOM: Fur trader and explorer Robert Stuart led the first Euro-American party through the South Pass in 1812.

to exist. Restless minds were not to be denied this plain path to the Pacific. Andrew Henry had invented a crucial piece of the Oregon Trail; others were now challenged to find it.

The search for a land road to Oregon was now tied to the fortunes of the fur business. In the first decades of the 19th century few were more energetic in pursuit of “brown gold” than John Jacob Astor. His Pacific Fur Company was the first large-scale American commercial enterprise in the Far West. Astor envisioned a fur trade empire that spanned the continent from the Great Lakes to the Pacific, from the Missouri to the Columbia. Such an empire required a vast transportation system.

Astor planned trails to Oregon by sea via Hawaii and overland from St. Louis. Wilson Price Hunt, Astor’s chief field lieutenant, undoubtedly heard about southern trails and passes while still in St. Louis. But the trail that westbound Astorians followed—the one that took them through the rocky hell of the Snake River canyon—was every bit as hazardous as any path marked by Lewis and Clark. As fortune had it, another Astorian would soon make a discovery that would link the Platte River road to the Columbia by a land highway.

In late June 1812 Astor’s partners at Fort Astoria on the Columbia River decided to send a small party overland to St. Louis to carry vital company papers. The expedition was led by Robert Stuart. Stuart was an especially wise choice. He knew a good deal about the Lewis and Clark route, had talked with Hunt about his journey and evidently knew something about Andrew Henry’s speculations. What Stuart did not know was what many Shoshone hunters knew from daily experience—the location of that broad saddle in the Wind River mountains that now bears the name South Pass.

By mid August 1812 Stuart and his companions were near the mouth of the Bruneau River, close to present-day Grand View, Idaho. There they had the good fortune to meet a Shoshone who had been with Hunt the year before. This man’s geographic grasp of what is now Idaho and Wyoming was truly impressive. He told Stuart that there was a “short trace to the south.”

Robert Stuart’s route to South Pass and the precise place where he crossed the divide in late October 1812 remain points of lively debate. But two essential facts are largely inarguable. First, Stuart understood that he had located a vital pass south of the route used by Lewis and Clark. This pass was not an isolated terrain feature but part of a usable transportation system that included the Missouri and Platte rivers, land trails between present-day
That knowledge led directly to the second fact about Stuart's discovery of the Columbia River itself. Stuart knew at once that this was more than a collection of trails; it was a route. That knowledge led directly to the second fact about Stuart's discovery of South Pass—the news of what he found and its potential consequences spread rapidly within days of his return to St. Louis at the end of April 1813.

No one seized on Stuart's information and made it news more quickly than Joseph Charless. Editor and publisher of the Missouri Gazette, Charless was the city's most tireless promoter. Long before any Chamber of Commerce publicist attached the label "Gateway to the West" to St. Louis, Charless used his newspaper to advance that very idea. It was Charless who first printed the Andrew Henry interviews.

On May 8, little more than a week after Stuart's return, the Gazette carried the story. Readers were promised that the next issue they would find full details of startling geographic discoveries. And to make sure the hook was fully set, Charless told his subscribers that Stuart had found a new overland route that would make trips from St. Louis to the Columbia seem like pleasure tours to New York City.

The next issue of the Gazette delivered the goods. In a feature story entitled "American Enterprise," readers were offered a summary of Stuart's travel itinerary. But those same readers got more than simple expedition reporting. Echoing Andrew Henry's words printed two years before, Charless claimed the following: "It appears that a journey across the continent of North America might be performed with a wagon, there being no obstruction in the wheel route that any person would dare to call a mountain."

Oregon's true trail, perhaps even the elusive Northwest Passage, had been found at last. News of Stuart's journey and Charless's explanation of its meaning spread quickly. It is a textbook myth that Astor sought to keep the South Pass discovery a secret. At the end of June a substantial portion of Charless's article appeared in the Weekly Register. Published in Baltimore by Hezekiah Niles, the Weekly Register was the closest thing the young republic had to a national newspaper. Its wide circulation guaranteed that word of the new road to Oregon was all over the eastern states during the summer of 1813.

And here I need to stop the narrative to remind you of what has happened. In the brief span of a decade, from 1803 to 1813, the whole "roads to Oregon" debate was transformed in profound and enduring ways. In 1803 the road to Oregon was by water, whether the channel was the Pacific Ocean or a series of transcontinental rivers. By 1813 the talk was of wagons, not ships or boats. In the two decades after 1813 a whole host of fur trade explorers, journalists, entrepreneurs and missionaries would advance the notion of an Oregon Trail that followed river routes but kept to the banks.

If the central metaphor in the American experience is the journey—whether made thousands of years ago or the day before yesterday—then rivers and trails define that journey. Our histories flow through the great conduits of trails and rivers. Those trails and rivers were, to borrow William Cronon's memorable phrase, the roads in and out of town. In so many ways the stories of the Northwest have been bounded and directed by the presence of two corridors—the river and the trail. Each has been a channel to carry tides of energy and experience. Twisting round and about each other, they are bound together as they continue to bind us one to the other. As they have been, so are we.

James P. Ronda is the H. G. Barnard Professor of Western American History at the University of Tulsa. He has written extensively about the exploration of the American West. His latest book is Revealing America: Image and Imagination in the Exploration of North America, forthcoming in 1996 from D. C. Heath.
CORRESPONDENCE

The Best Thing Going

Columbia magazine is the best thing going! There is no equal for this type of publication—you are at the pinnacle. I enjoy the articles, the direction, the underlying current—wonderful deep Northwest history.

Thanks again for doing such a great job of bringing history to the public.

Eb Giesecke
Olympia

The Mormon Trail

In the Summer 1995 issue, a picture caption in the article by Greg MacGregor (page 11) states: "Independence Landing, beginning of the California, Oregon, Mormon and Santa Fe trails, Independence, Missouri."

This information does not agree with a map published in the August 1986 issue of National Geographic Magazine, vol. 170, page 157. This map shows the Mormon trail originating in Nauvoo, Illinois. According to the map, the trail goes across Iowa and crosses the Missouri at Council Bluffs, Iowa. Please let me know if this information is correct. I enjoyed the article and consider Columbia to be the best magazine we read. The contents are always interesting and very readable.

Jerry Hjelmeland
Seattle

[The author did further research and now concurs with National Geographic Magazine, and he thanks Mr. Hjelmeland for pointing out the discrepancy.—Editor]

Correction

In the Summer 1995 issue, the two photographs on page 25 were inadvertently transposed. As a result, the caption reads incorrectly. The picture of the Wheatland plow is on the top and that of the rotary rod weeder is on the bottom.

Additional Reading

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

Steel Rails & Fish Scales


A Diamond in the Rough


Thirteen Years of Scout Adventure, by Stuart P. Walsh. Seattle: Lowman and Hanford, 1923.

Washington's First Lights


Columbia's Country


The Battle of Wapato


The Oregon Trail


For years historians and general readers have needed a comprehensive history of the Grand Coulee Dam, which with its electric power and irrigation canals has transformed an entire region. Pitzer, a teacher at Aloha High School in Beaverton, Oregon, has converted his dissertation into a long overdue study chat aims to serve diverse readers.

This readable history covers a variety of subjects: the early promoters of the dam; the rivalry between Spokane and Wenatchee for mastery of the Great Basin; private vs. public power; the role of the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation; the Washington State Columbia Basin Commission; the construction of the cofferdam, bridges and dam; project financing through relief funds and then through congressional appropriations; the role of contractors, employment practices, union disputes, the response of the Colville Indians, irrigation of the Columbia Plateau, the workers' social life; and construction of the third powerhouse. Pitzer also provides a summary and evaluation of men involved in the dam's history, including visionary James O'Sullivan, Senators Wesley Jones and Clarence Dill, publisher Rufus Woods, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and contractor Henry Kaiser.

The study is far more than a recounting of relevant subjects and the identification of critical contributors. Appropriate stories and reasonable assessments enliven the text. Pitzer stresses that the dam's construction in the 1930s came at a unique point in time. If it had been built in the 1920s it would have been much smaller; if it had been proposed in the 1970s environmental concerns would have prohibited it. In explaining the demand for the dam, Pitzer insists that people, in moving to a new place, seek to "replicate the familiar. . . Reclamation was one of these accommodations—the way to re-create the wet East and mimic its agricultural/industrial setting." Pitzer, who correctly reminds the reader "that any study of Western development must include Eastern politics," summarizes the role of Republican Congressman Francis Culkin, a spokesman for Eastern anti-reclamation forces. The New Yorker predicted the demise of the salmon industry, a "merciless and killing competition" between Eastern farmers and Columbia Basin irrigators, and a lack of demand for power. The author, who has diligently researched the sources, provides many other insights, including information on construction techniques, the dam's effect on salmon, and how critical the project became to the World War II effort.

This splendid history does have a few gaps. The most obvious is the need for maps, charts and diagrams. By providing a more detailed account of the role of the United States Reclamation Service in the Yakima Valley and the fruitless attempts by private companies to irrigate the Columbia Valley, the author could have given readers a broader perspective. They also might have enjoyed construction workers' reminiscences about building "the Eighth Wonder of the World." These are suggestions rather than criticisms; they might be considered when the publisher brings out a second edition.

G. Thomas Edwards, Professor of History at Whitman College in Walla Walla, is an authority on Pacific Northwest history. His most recent in a long line of academic publications is The Triumph of Tradition: The Emergence of Whitman College, 1859-1924 (1992).

28 Historic Places in the Upper Snoqualmie Valley

Clark County History

Richland. Celebrating Its Heritage

Guide to Historical Resources of Whatcom County

Reviewed by Robert Keller.

One of my favorite assignments in teaching our region's history asks students to compare Columbia and the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, then justify any preferences. The correct answer is to prefer both journals, but for different reasons.

Most students describe the imposing Quarterly as "scholarly," "academic" and "professional," while friendly Columbia comes across as "popular," "fascinating" and "fun." The more perceptive students recognize that easier and more accessible writing must depend upon research that is demanding and well documented. They also recognize that, whatever their personal preferences, both journals play an important if different role for anyone who loves to study the past.

These four books illustrate such differences as well as a delight in history. Three are fairly typical non-academic local accounts; the fourth encourages non-professionals to pursue their own historical research, showing us how to proceed and where to look.

Greg Watson's 28 Historic Places in the Upper Snoqualmie Valley offers a series of vignettes and photos of sites between Mount Si and Fall City, east of Seattle, with side trips to Cedar Falls and along the new Preston-Snoqualmie Trail. The book, which calls attention to native cultures and pioneer industries, will prove useful to tourists as well as teachers who value taking students outside the classroom.

Moving south, the 1994 edition of Clark County History contains 18 short essays of uneven quality with fewer photos than Watson's Historic Places. The articles cover a wide range of topics: camas
bulbs, the Pendleton Woolen Mills, the cookery of pioneer women, Clark County transportation. Gus Nørud's account of flood control technology and Tonya Lapisto's story of Vanport provide a good antidote for those who regret losing the wild Columbia.

Traveling upriver, one comes to the Tri-Cities and Barbara Kubik's Richland, a book that inadvertently reflects the imbalance and delusions of the city itself. Kubik pays scant attention to her area's aboriginal people, although she does cite Eugene Hunn's Nēhi'w-Wána, "The Big River" in the bibliography. Seventy percent of her text is devoted to Richland after 1940. True to its title, the book celebrates the town's "climate, fertile soil, fresh and abundant water, healthy combination of country life and city living, good schools, social advantages and opportunities for economic prosperity." Environmental, political and economic problems do not exist, even in 1994.

As college students would quickly point out, the three books described above, however interesting in content, often lack documentation. When sources are cited, it is usually to secondary works, not to archives, interviews, diaries or reports.

Carole Teshima Morris urges local historians to do better, to go beyond repeating published accounts and instead practice actual research. Her Guide to Historical Resources provides an excellent handbook on method for anyone who wishes to experience that exciting quest. Although specific to Whatcom County, her general principles, advice and spirit of adventure apply anywhere.

After a helpful introduction, Carole Morris divides the task into five categories: (1) resources in Bellingham and the dozen small communities that surround it; (2) local libraries and archives, and how to use them; (3) museums and their collections; (4) a list of relevant organizations such as the Ferndale Heritage Society, Lummi Island Trust, Point Roberts Historical Society, Daughters of the Pioneers, and the Puget Sound Antique Tractor Association; (5) advice from accomplished local historians such as Galen Dyer, Ann Nugent, Keith Murray and JoAnn Roe. Comprehensive, clearly organized, and well written, Morris's book should be purchased by every historical society in the state. Then, they should pay her the ultimate compliment of copying its ideas and format for their own purposes.

One cannot really understand the past until an effort is made to uncover and relate it, whether through a high school term paper, genealogical study, book or family history. All four of these publications exemplify the endeavor to be a historian, a seeker after knowledge and truth. For that they deserve our respect and gratitude.

Dr. Robert Keller recently retired as Professor of History at Fairhaven College, Western Washington University, Bellingham. He is a distinguished teacher, writer and speaker on Pacific Northwest history.

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**Sources of the River**

**Tracking David Thompson Across Western North America**


Reviewed by John Philip Reid.

In the first decades of this century Canada desperately needed heroes—there were few. Canadians thought they had found a hero in Joseph Burr Tyrrell "rediscovered" David Thompson, a fur trader and explorer, and put him in the national pantheon right beside Sir Alexander Mackenzie. During the following decades, Thompson lost luster as the debunkers re-evaluated his services to British expansion and earlier paeans of praise were revised by more skeptical, less credulous editors. Now comes Jack Nisbet to relive the heroics and revive the reputation as he follows Thompson's wanderings. For a record comparable in geography to the account reviewed, see David Thompson's Travels in Western North America, 1784-1812, edited by Victor G. Hopwood (1971).

Jack Nisbet tells of stirring events. He is a talented writer but one who does not allow analytical thought to intrude on his story, which is purely narrative. Seldom has less analysis been written about Thompson, an intriguing, troublesome historical figure who cries out for explanation. Certain background incidents that affected Thompson's travels just do not interest Nisbet. He ignores, for example, efforts by the Piegan to keep guns from the Flatheads by pinning down the trader east of the Rockies.

But Nisbet does have a message. He makes Thompson a hero once again. Rejecting the main criticism that has been leveled against Thompson—that by wasting time among the Kootenai and searching for nonexistent waterways he permitted the Astorians to be the first to locate at the mouth of the Columbia—Nisbet argues that Thompson's "mission was to cross the mountains and distribute his trade goods as usual, then tackle the Columbia." The explorer, he contends, believed that his firm, the North West Company of Montreal, had an agreement, perhaps a planned merger, with John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, and so there was no need for him to rush down the Columbia. He uses Thompson's journals to make the point.

There is a peculiar feature to this book—it is not all history. Every now and then Nisbet leaves the early 1800s and tells us about his own experiences retracing the path of David Thompson. Though not directly related to Thompson, these brier patches are generally delightful bits of travel lore.

This is a book for many readers. It is a narrative tale that tells us much about how the British laid claim to the headwaters of the Columbia. Perhaps more importantly, it is a fine introduction to David Thompson's explorations and his greatness. Canada can again be proud.

John Philip Reid, Professor of Law in the New York University School of Law, has many publications on the West, including Law for the Elephant (1980), about the Oregon Trail, and is currently writing a book on the fur trade.
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