INSIDE:
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"mountains of
eternal snow"
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FRONT COVER: Detail of a painting artist Paul Kane created in 1847 of Mount St. Helens during a period of activity. This "mountains of eternal snow" was an active volcano throughout the mid 19th century and had been active five years before the Corps of Discovery's period of Pacific Northwest exploration. See related story beginning on page 29. (Courtesy of Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas)
Making Meaning in the Exhibit Halls

Exhibits require space, objects, and ideas, but above all they require visitors. Exhibits exist to help visitors look, think, feel, and create meaning that makes sense to them. But different visitors make different meanings. Public response to our 9/11 and Pulitzer Prize-winning photographs were especially provocative in this regard.

Exhibits staffs aim to entice visitors to connect their lives with the exhibits’ ideas. The choice of words and objects; the color of the gallery paint; the graphic text, placement of cases, arrangement of objects within cases; the video or audio, if any; the interactive devices and lighting all help engage visitors. When everything works, visitors are moved to take part in a dialogue with each other and with the exhibit in meaningful if sometimes surprising ways.

Who puts the exhibits together at the Historical Society’s museums? Who are the people working behind the gallery walls? Paint and arrangement of cases and objects are part of exhibit design now done by SueSan Chan, who has joined us this year in place of now-retired longtime staffer Richard Frederick; she also helps keep the project on schedule. Maria Pascualy produces graphic text and videos. Curtis Williams installs the electronic equipment and sets the lighting. Melissa Parr’s main exhibits job is creating and managing exhibits that travel to small museums around the state, but she also lays out cases and advises on the care of objects. As head of exhibits, I often identify exhibit themes, write exhibit text, work with guest curators, and negotiate with institutions, such as the Smithsonian, that lend us exhibits.

All of us lift, carry, prod, point, attach, detach, and measure as necessary, while advising, cajoling, and helping one another. We collaborate with members of other departments so that all parts of the visitor experience work smoothly together. Gauging how our exhibits can help visitors have a personally meaningful museum experience is a constant and welcome challenge.

—Redmond J. Barnett, Head of Exhibits

The Exhibits Department of the Washington State Historical Society creates and maintains exhibits that have historical accuracy, intellectual rigor, and community interest by combining disparate resources in novel and meaningful ways.
By Les Eldridge

As a boy I watched World War II seaplane tenders and other naval vessels pass daily in front of my parents' rented beach cabin just north of Sand Point Naval Air Station on Lake Washington. When my dad, a chief boatswain's mate, returned from combat, he started me reading C. S. Forester's "Hornblower" series. I was hooked on naval fiction. Later, as I taught and wrote maritime history, I was fascinated by the nautical innovations of the mid-19th century: the changes from sail to steam, from round shot to exploding shells, from wooden hulls to armor. "A wonderful backdrop for a sea saga," I mused, and my first novel was born.

The waters of the San Juan Islands were the setting for a unique confrontation between Great Britain and the United States in 1859, a conflict that arose from the ambiguity of the treaty language delineating the border between British Canada and Washington Territory. On the eve of the Civil War, American officers from both the North and the South were involved in the resultant dispute over who owned San Juan Island—Great Britain or the United States. Each faction was suspicious of the other's motives as they faced the Royal Navy.

I was formerly assistant to presidents Charles McCann and Daniel Evans at The Evergreen State College and was, occasionally, permitted time to teach. During my course preparation, I noted that the Pig War, with intrigue lurking among the American officer cadre, was an ideal dramatic launching point for a sea story. The presence of raiding Haida Indians and frequent shipwrecks heightened the drama. Nautical innovations of the period lent their own excitement and made this a challenging time for naval officers. Submarines, mines (called "torpedoes"), spar torpedoes, and the revolving turret all were first battle tested in the American Civil War.

The writer of maritime historical fiction has many useful guideposts to help him on his way. His plot lines are selected from among dozens of actual and exciting incidents, and his historical characters help shape the interactions of his fictional heroes. Any novelist who uses actual historical characters looks for those who are most memorable—dynamic, flamboyant, or just plain "over-the-top." The Pig War had more than its share. George E. Pickett, captain of the American contingent on San Juan Island (and later of The Battle of Gettysburg fame), was a party-loving, story-telling, last-in-his-West-Point-class officer whose pride in his bravery and military accomplishments was exceeded only by the length of his curly, perfumed hair. He was also insecure, arrogant, and short-tempered.

Another historical character, Captain James Alden of the United States Coast Survey steamer Active, served aboard Vincennes in Puget Sound in 1841 under the irascible Charles Wilkes. In 1859 he was a cartographer-commander on loan to the navigationally prestigious Coast Survey. His frequent diversion of Active from surveying to aid in shipwreck rescue and Indian attack response infuriated his Coast Survey superior, George Davidson.

Despite his derring-do, Alden was frequently indecisive. At Norfolk in 1861 he failed to question the orders of a drunken and incompetent base commander to leave USS Merrimack in port as the Confederates approached, thereby presenting them with the hull on which the CSS Virginia, a powerful Rebel ironclad, was built. And at Mobile Bay in 1864 he stopped his ship to complain to Admiral Farragut of the "torpedoes" (floating mines) ahead, prompting Farragut's famous signal, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" Real characters as complex as these are a fiction writer's delight.

So, here was a tempting canvas to paint upon: the broadsides of British frigates in Griffin Bay threatening a company of United States infantry on the heights above; a strong-willed Crown colony governor, James Douglas, determined to oust the Yankees; and American officers torn between defiance and risking a foreign war when there was a civil war in the offing. Who to insert, fictionally, to strive, to dare, and to succeed or fail? Rory Dunbrody and Tobias St. John, of course!

History has largely forgotten that tens of thousands of men from the bottom of the 19th-century social order—African Americans and Irishmen—risked their lives in front-line naval conflicts during the Civil War. What if, I thought, two such officers—best friends—found themselves on opposite sides? Since my days at the University of Washington, in Irish
history classes taught by Giovanni Costigan, I had been aware that many Confederate crewmen were Irish. I thought it would be interesting, in dialogue and culture, to contrast Irish and Southern accents and experiences. Rory Dunbrody was born, in fiction, in North Carolina, where his father, fresh from County Galway, was starting a shipyard in New Bern (spelled “Berne” in 1837). His mother died at his birth and his father, with two other children and a new enterprise, sent Rory to his Uncle Liam back in Connemara to be raised. He returned at age 14 to the United States Naval Academy, and we meet him aboard Active as a “passed midshipman” who has completed the lieutenants’ examinations but for whom no lieutenant billet is available.

While periodically teaching maritime history, I noticed that photographs of Union Civil War navy crews often pictured significant numbers of African-Americans. I then read Jeffrey Bolster’s excellent Black Jacks (Harvard University Press, 1997), and learned that blacks—freedmen and slaves—were common aboard ship in the early 19th century and were sometimes pilots and even merchant captains. I next decided that Tobias St. John would join the novel. Tobias is Antiguan-born, a mathematics prodigy educated in the tolerant Quaker city of New Bedford, Massachusetts, where the whaling crews were often 50 percent African American or Native American. Tobias left whaling for the navy, and we meet him aboard Active as an acting sailing master (navigator). His navigational skills brought him to the highly respected United States Coast Survey and enabled him to counter, somewhat, the racial bias he experienced as one of the very few black naval officers of the day.

The actual players in the Pig War continued to enrich the narrative of my story. General Winfield Scott, the “Great Pacifier,” brought his considerable bulk and commanding presence to the dispute. Rory has made a favorable impression on levelheaded Captain Geoffrey Phipps Hornby, Royal Navy (later admiral of the fleet). As naval liaison to George Pickett, Rory is able to help both Scott and Hornby realize their mutual desire to keep the dispute from escalating.

Army Engineering Lieutenant Henry Robert, builder of the San Juan gun emplacements at Point Roberts, was
impossible for me to resist introducing as a colleague of Rory's. While constructing the American redoubt under the guns of the Royal Navy, they discuss other topics, including Robert's desire to write rules of order for conducting the endless meetings he attends with settlers in his engineering capacity. It was too good a chance to pass up for a little Northwest bragging to go with the combat action.

Other Northwest connections find their way into the novel. Lieutenant Roswell Lamson of Oregon is one of Tobias's shipmates and friends aboard USS Wabash at Port Royal, South Carolina. Elsewhere in the novel, Rory and Pickett, in a conversation about Pickett's half-Indian son, James Tilton Pickett, discuss Washington Territory governor Isaac Stevens and his role in the hanging of Chief Leschi.

The mention of James Pickett leads me to a truly delightful feature in historical fiction writing. From among several scholarly yet divergent accounts of actual events, the fiction writer may select the one that best advances the story line. Michael Vouri, in The Pig War (Griffin Bay Books, 1999), mentions James Pickett as living with the Collins family in Grand Mound, Thurston County. Edward Longacre, in Pickett, Leader of the Charge (White Mane, 1995), places him with the Collins family in Bellingham. I know Michael Vouri to be an excellent historian, but I would have chosen Grand Mound in any event. I needed George Pickett to meet with Tobias and Rory at Steilacoom in 1861 on his way to say goodbye to young James in Grand Mound. Pickett then leaves the Northwest to join the Confederacy.

Another Northwest example of story line choice involves the Vincennes. At the 1861 Battle of the Head of the Passes, Vincennes was commanded by Robert Handy. He apparently misread a signal from the squadron commander ordering Vincennes to "disengage the enemy." Handy read it as "abandon ship," then lit a fuse to the Vincennes' powder magazine, wrapped himself, toga-like, in the American flag, and led his crew off the sloop of war before she was due to blow up. The magazine failed to explode—that much is history. At least four historians have written accounts as to why the magazine did not ignite. No two agree. I simply added a fifth version, with Tobias going aboard from USS Preble and cutting the fuse. My account is just as plausible as the other four.

As writing the novel progressed, I stumbled over many a historical surprise. Even after writing and teaching maritime history for 30 years, I wasn't expecting to find the high incidence of armed tugboats in the Civil War. The first tug you encounter in Chesapeake Command is in the Pig War segment—the redoubtable Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) steamer Beaver. The Beaver, in 1834, was the first steamship in the Pacific and served as a cargo carrier and towboat until her demise in the 1880s. During the Civil War, tugs were extensively converted to war vessels because they were readily available and both navies were essentially being built from scratch. Their significant buoyancy easily accommodated heavy naval ordnance. At book's end, Rory's first command, the fictional CSS Old Dominion, is a converted tug. CSS Manassas, the first ironclad ever to fight in a fleet action, was a converted Mississippi towboat.

I was already familiar with the significant role of Hawaiians in Northwest history. Hundreds worked for the HBC in the 19th century. Many intermarried with members of various Salish tribes. Because my character Tobias was a whaler and navigator, I studied the history of Polynesian wayfaring and star navigation. I discovered the Hawaiians' reputation as fine sailors and whalers. New England whale ships often arrived in the Pacific with only two thirds of a crew, knowing they could fill the empty billets with prime Hawaiian seamen. So I wrote in Kele Kalama, the fictional Hawaiian whaler-turned-shepherd on the HBC's San Juan farm. Kele tells Tobias of his son, Kekoa, who studies the ancient star compass navigation in Tahiti and Micronesia because Hawaiians ceased to use it many years before King Kamehameha. The character Kele is loosely based on John Kalama, a Hawaiian who settled in Puget Sound in the 19th century. The city of Kalama is named for him.

It was a pleasure to begin my novel in familiar Northwest waters, amid historic events I had taught about for years. This setting and period formed an excellent point of departure for my fictional characters as they found themselves in the midst of civil war and for myself as I penned their adventures across the seven seas.

Les Eldridge has retired from careers as a college administrator, county commissioner, corporate executive, mediator, and administrative law hearings officer. With Drew Crooks and the late Frances Barkan, he was co-author of The Wilkes Expedition: Puget Sound and the Oregon Country. The Chesapeake Command is his first novel.
The 20th century was eight months old when a reconnaissance party of seven men and a string of pack mules headed up Ruth Creek and over Hannegan Pass into the wet and fog of what is now North Cascades National Park. Their job: locate a rail extension into eastern Washington linking Bellingham Bay with Spokane.

The exploration continued over three years, with crews lugging heavy surveying gear across steep mountainsides and bone-numbing streams. Then, on July 19, 1903, an official announcement appeared on the front page of the Whatcom Daily Reveille: “The Bellingham Bay & British Columbia Railroad Company will positively extend their line through eastern Washington to Spokane.” At Spokane, it said, the BB&BC would connect directly with transcontinental railroads. This North Cascades route, the story added, would be shorter than competing lines across the mountains and elevate Whatcom (soon to become the city of Bellingham) “to a point of supremacy on Puget Sound.”

It seemed as if an old dream was finally coming true. Nothing so ambitious had been attempted in the Cascades—not by the Northern Pacific Railway through Stampede Pass, nor by the Great Northern Railway at Stevens Pass. For one thing, this northern route would cross a much wider stretch of mountainous terrain. Tunnels would have to be bored in awkward places, outcrops blasted, trestles erected.
BB&BC Engine No. 4, acquired new by the railroad from the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1891, was originally a wood-burner used on regular freight and passenger service. This classic railroad photo of engine and train crew was taken in 1908 by photographer Fred Jukes at Sumas.
The man behind this vision was a New Hampshire-born civil engineer named John Joseph Donovan, no stranger to building railroads. J. J., as he was called, stood a solid five feet eight inches tall. He was a gifted orator, and he could be shrewd and tenacious about what he wanted to accomplish. If Bellingham Bay and eastern Washington could be linked by rail, Donovan told people, greatness would follow. Bellingham (incorporated out of Whatcom and Fairhaven later in 1903) would grow and prosper. Pacific and transcontinental trade would converge. If not, he warned, Bellingham’s prospects would be limited.

Expectations had been raised before with bitter results. In 1873 local residents felt abandoned when the Northern Pacific picked Tacoma as its Puget Sound terminus. Later, locals mistakenly pinned hopes on the Great Northern’s transcontinental route ending at Fairhaven. Now the modest BB&BC, with some 45 miles of track ending at a creek downstream from Mount Baker, was promising what the two rail giants had failed to deliver.

The track started at the Sehome Wharf on Bellingham Bay, ran up Railroad Avenue past the BB&BC’s gabled depot, then turned northeast to Sumas and the United States-Canadian border. There, it swung abruptly southeast, ascending Saar Creek Canyon and “Big Hill” on a tough 3 percent grade. The route then dropped into Columbia Valley, through virgin forests to Kendall where it turned east, paralleling the braided North Fork of the Nooksack.

From 1880 to 1890, track mileage in Washington increased more than sixfold. Nowhere did anticipation and speculation run higher than in the communities along Puget Sound from Olympia to Bellingham Bay. River until reaching Glacier Creek. Logs, cedar shakes, and the occasional passenger riding in wooden, open-platform coaches were the BB&BC’s bread and butter. Freight stops appeared about every mile at places like Strandell Siding, Watson No. 2, Mogul, and Badger.

The railroad was headquartered over 900 miles south on the second floor of the Mills Building in San Francisco. The impressive structure belonged to Darius Ogden Mills, multimillionaire financier and major stockholder of both the BB&BC and its sister firm, the Bellingham Bay Improvement Company (BBIC). It was here at 220 Montgomery Street in the city’s financial district that decisions were made affecting not only the future of the railroad, but Bellingham as well.

Why the distant interest in Whatcom County? Back in the 1860s a syndicate of California investors, Mills included, began acquiring West Coast coal mining operations, the Bellingham Bay Coal Company among them. The lower grade coal was mined under what is now downtown Bellingham, then stored in waterfront bunkers before being shipped by schooner to lucrative markets on San Francisco Bay.

The shareholder list of Bellingham Bay Coal and its parent, Black Diamond Coal Company, was a Who’s Who of San Francisco wealth during the Gilded Age. Mills and William C. Ralston presided over the Bank of California. J. B. Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and Alvinza Hayward had amassed fortunes in mining.
Louis McLane was Wells Fargo's chief of West Coast operations. W. R. Hartshorne owned a steamship line.

By the late 1870s, the Sehome venture had become problematic. The coal's high sulfur content resulted in mine fires, prompting the Californians to close the operation in January 1878. Despite this, coal company president Pierre Barlow Cornwall suggested the owners hang onto the several thousand acres of real estate owned by the coal company. Cornwall, according to his son and biographer, Bruce Cornwall, was convinced that, based on "natural advantages... someday Bellingham Bay would become the site of a great city."

The elder Cornwall was an optimist. So were newcomers arriving by boat, many buoyed by hopes that the Northern Pacific, or some railroad, would still terminate at Bellingham Bay. The decade of the 1880s saw the largest expansion of railroads in the history of the country, particularly in Washington Territory. From 1880 to 1890 track mileage in Washington increased more than sixfold. Nowhere did anticipation and speculation run higher than in the communities along Puget Sound from Olympia to Bellingham Bay.

Lottie Roeder Roth, in her two-volume History of Whatcom County explains the phenomenon: "It was the day of paper railroads and paper town sites and paper bonuses. Thousands of men came to the West without a definite destination, but with the wild hope that they might 'strike oil' by locating in some future great railroad terminus." James Blaine Hedges, in his book, Henry Villard and the Railways of the Northwest, describes "a veritable orgy of bidding" among Puget Sound communities to be the terminal city. Some Bellingham Bay businessmen in the 1880s offered the value equal to a quarter of their property to anyone who would build a railroad across the mountains, terminating at the bay.

Farther north, across the border, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was building its transcontinental line, which would run along the north bank of the lower Fraser River on its way to the future Vancouver, B.C. The Fraser, in places, flows less than 10 miles north of the Canadian border. If a railroad were to be built from Bellingham Bay into British Columbia, connecting with the Canadian Pacific, transcontinental traffic could be diverted south to a nearby United States port.

On June 21, 1883, the California syndicate created the BB&BC Railroad Company, installing Cornwall as president. The articles of incorporation promised to "construct, equip and maintain a railroad to be operated by steam power" from Bellingham Bay northeast to where it would join with the CPR at Mission, B.C. What the BB&BC owners had apparently overlooked was that the Canadian Pacific claimed an exclusive right to build railroads in British Columbia. As a result, BB&BC construction toward Canada was temporarily slowed.
BELOW: This 1911 BB&BC brochure highlighted scenic Nooksack Falls, seven miles east of Glacier, where the North Fork of the Nooksack River is joined by Wells Creek. Once a source of electricity for Bellingham, these falls were also seen as a potential means of generating power for trains crossing the North Cascades.

OPPOSITE PAGE: John Joseph Donovan, known as J. J., was among a number of talented young men with an engineering bent drawn to building railroads in the Pacific Northwest.

The Canadian government intervened in 1888, forcing the CPR to relinquish its monopoly. The railroad then made a clever move. It built a spur line off its transcontinental route at Mission, B.C., to Sumas, providing a junction there with American lines. On March 1, 1891, the BB&BC reached Sumas and the beginning of the CPR track. The Seattle Lake Shore & Eastern Railroad (which became the Seattle & International and eventually the Northern Pacific) followed suit later that year. While the BB&BC's 23-mile route from New Whatcom to Sumas carried some transcontinental Canadian traffic, it was not the bonanza railroad owners had counted on; neither was the outcome of the June 22, 1891, celebration in New Whatcom welcoming the arrival of the first CPR train.

Preparations for the train's arrival included bands and displays of the American flag and Britain's Union Jack. The plan was for a "grand arch of water" to frame the locomotive and cars of the train coming down Railroad Avenue. What ensued was an out-of-control water fight between two local fire companies entrusted with creating the aquatic arch. Published accounts say the windows of some of the CPR's finest passenger cars were broken by cannonades of water, dousing Canadian dignitaries.

Just as the chaos settled, some locals "inspired, perhaps, by something even stronger than patriotism," according to Lottie Roth, decided the British flag was displayed higher than the American flag and endeavors to correct the oversight. In doing so, the Union Jack fell to the ground and was trampled. Suddenly, the BB&BC had an international incident on its hands.

What effect this had on relations between the BB&BC and CPR has long been the subject of debate. Local promoters continued to bill New Whatcom as "the American terminus of the Canadian Pacific" even though the CPR was also moving freight and passengers over the competing Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern line.

The railroad map was constantly changing as one line attempted to outflank the other. Nelson Bennett, the Northern Pacific's contractor on the Cascade Division and Stampede Pass tunnel, built his Fairhaven and Southern Railroad from Fairhaven to the Skagit coalfields and Sedro (later Sedro Woolley) in the late 1880s. By acquiring the failed Bellingham Bay Railroad and Navigation Company, which had largely existed on promises and paper, he built to the Canadian border at Blaine by 1890. Bennett then sold his railroad holdings to the Great Northern, which was maneuvering north along Puget Sound into British Columbia.

By 1891, the Bellingham Bay & Eastern Railroad was laying track to the Blue Canyon coal mines at nearby Lake Whatcom, extending the line to Wickersham and the Northern Pacific's Seattle-Sumas line 10 years later. The much ballyhooed Puget Sound & Idaho would never leave Bellingham Bay.

Railroads, real or imagined, were driving local economies and land values. "No single factor...will tend to put fat on the price of real estate as rapidly as the coming of a railroad," wrote the editor of the Palmer Mountain Prospector in Loomis. During this period of expectation, the BB&BC was selling off former Bellingham Bay Coal Company land as house lots. It changed the name of Sehome to the more marketable New Whatcom. By 1889 the railroad had created the Bellingham Bay Improvement Company (BBIC) to handle real estate sales and build one of the largest lumber mills on the coast. The company would also provide the town with electricity and water.

Cornwall's "vision city," as Lottie Roth described it, was gaining credence. What was missing was the long-awaited major rail terminus and port. Across the mountains in Okanogan County, farming and stock raising were becoming
widespread, but growers and ranchers lacked direct access to Puget Sound markets. At the same time, gold and silver mining was drawing thousands to isolated pockets in and around the North Cascades. The work was tough, but getting there was sometimes even tougher. One man who saw opportunity in finding a way across the vast mountain barrier was J. J. Donovan.

In 1898 Donovan came on board as BB&BC superintendent and chief engineer. Soon he was locating an extension from Sumas to the North Fork of the Nooksack River and beyond. J. J. was born September 8, 1858, in Runney, New Hampshire. His parents, Patrick and Julia Donovan, were Irish immigrants. Patrick worked as a laborer and later foreman on construction of the Boston Concord & Montreal Railroad (BC&M) through the foothills of the White Mountains. When the boy was four, the family moved to a small farm along the BC&M tracks in neighboring Plymouth. There, young Donovan, the eldest of six surviving children, could watch the early afternoon mail train, pulled by a wood-burning steam locomotive, head northeast along the Baker River toward Wentworth and Warren.

With little money, Donovan entered the state normal school in Plymouth (now Plymouth State University) in 1875. There he met his future wife, Clara Isabel Nichols. After graduation in 1877, Donovan fulfilled his obligation to teach two years in the state, then enrolled in what is now Worcester (Massachusetts) Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in 1880 to become an engineer, graduating valedictorian of his class in 1882.

He was among a generation of bright young civil engineers from the Northeast drawn to railroad building in the West. WPI classmate and friend John Q. Barlow, of Northampton, Massachusetts, became a senior engineer for the Union Pacific. Virgil G. Bogue, a graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, at Troy, New York, discovered Stampede Pass for the Northern Pacific. John F. Stevens, of West Gardiner, Maine, who, like Donovan, originally trained at a state normal school to become a teacher, was a locating engineer for the Great Northern Railroad when he chose the Cascade pass later named after him.

Fresh out of WPI, Donovan went to work for the Northern Pacific's transcontinental construction in western Montana. He started as a rod man and leveler with the NP, then worked his way up to supervising engineer on the Cascade Division of the railroad over Stampede Pass and on to Tacoma. He moved north to Whatcom in 1889, first going to work for Nelson Bennett as chief engineer of the Fairhaven Land Company, the Skagit Coal and Transportation Company, and the Fairhaven & Southern Railway, for which he also supervised construction.

When he joined the BB&BC at age 44, Donovan was part owner of the Lake Whatcom Logging Company and vice president of the Bellingham Bay & Eastern. He had also been hired in 1890 by the Great Northern to look over sources of the Skagit for a northern rail route over the Cascades. Despite the Great Northern's selection of Stevens Pass, Donovan did not give up his quest. BB&BC construction hadn't progressed beyond Sumas in the summer of 1900 when Donovan sent his assistant engineer, John J. Cryderman, and six others to reconnoiter the North Cascades as far as the upper Skagit River (now Ross Lake) for a cross-state railroad route. It was a wet journey.

They were not the first white men to explore this overwhelming country of glacier-shrouded peaks and deep valleys. Members of Henry Custer's Northwest Boundary Survey had been there in the late 1850s. Prospectors followed. Attempts to locate a wagon route through these mountains in the 1890s fizzled. The Cryderman party covered similar ground but with an eye toward railroad grade and what Arthur M. Wellington, author of the 1887 bible, Economic Theory of Railway Location, called "the most value for a dollar which nature permits."

In a diary kept on the 1900 trip, surveyor H. M. Wellman described how he and S. C. Anderson on a rare clear day climbed to within 1,000 feet of the summit of a 7,574-foot peak (later named Whatcom Peak) to take sightings. On their return, the two were socked in at Easy Pass for three days and nights by fierce wind, rain and snow. Cryderman predicted in his reconnaissance report that a route over Hannegan, Whatcom, and possibly Beaver passes "would be the scenic route of the United States."

*The diary, along with engineers' field notes, maps, and BB&BC correspondence, is part of the Bellingham Bay Improvement Company Collection at Western Washington University's Center for Pacific Northwest Studies in Bellingham.
The assistant engineer concluded that tunneling would be required at two passes west of the upper Skagit—a 3,000-foot bore under the summit of Hannegan Pass (5,066 feet) and at Whatcom Pass a 4,000-foot tunnel below the 5,206-foot summit. The BB&BC would still have to negotiate the crest of the Cascades some miles distant to the east.

Cryderman recommended the use of hydroelectric power for locomotives pulling loads over steeper mountain grades. "Beginning with the Falls of the Nooksack (Nooksack Falls)," he wrote, "the power stations could be located so that at no place need...to exceed 10 miles apart, and power could be doubtless furnished to the mines in the vicinity sufficient to pay for all operating expenses."

Today, a premier backpacking trail covers the nearly 40 miles Cryderman described as a route between Ruth Creek and the upper Skagit River (now Ross Lake). From the Skagit, Cryderman and Donovan decided on a course up Ruby Creek. From there, they considered any one of three or four approaches to the Cascade crest and then down to the Methow River, according to available preliminary survey maps and notes.

East of the Cascades, Donovan intended to follow the Columbia River from the mouth of the Methow to the Spokane River and up that body of water to the city of Spokane. Preferences for a Cascade crossing would change.

Okanogan and Whatcom county newspapers watched developments closely. Reports on the railroad's lofty ambitions routinely made front page headlines in the Reveille, a newspaper given to florid speculation. On December 19, 1902, the Reveille's front page story read, "There now appear to be very plausible reasons for believing that the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway will connect with the BB&BC in Spokane in place of the Santa Fe [Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad]." And "BB&BC Surveyors Find a Route Across the Range Far Superior to G.N. or N.P. Passes," a Reveille headline proclaimed on August 27, 1903.

The Reveille on July 19, 1903, predicted that Bellingham Bay would become a port of the Edward H. Harriman lines (Union Pacific, Oregon Short Line, Southern Pacific), which would meet the BB&BC at Spokane. If that happened, the Reveille stated, "It will mean that Bellingham Bay will outstrip Seattle and all other points on Puget Sound for commercial supremacy and the vast trade of the Orient."

These were heady times. Donovan was telling people in Spokane in November 1903 that construction on the cross-state extension would begin the following spring. Two to three years would be required for completion. Traffic carried across the state by the BB&BC, Donovan said, "will come from the building up of the territory directly opened by our line."

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Anxious to get started, Donovan recommended beginning construction immediately in the Methow Valley from Twisp to Pateras at the mouth of the river. There, the line would connect with steamers on the Columbia River and the Great Northern Railway 50 miles downstream at Wenatchee. "It will pay from the start," Donovan, went on. "I can secure the right of way, locate and cross-section the line and do a large amount of grading for..."$50,000, and next year we can complete the work. There is no danger of losing money." The week after Donovan wrote that letter he traveled to San Francisco for meetings with the railroad board of trustees.

On his return to Bellingham March 4, 1904, the normally self-assured Donovan told reporters that plans to start work on the Spokane extension had been placed on hold. He blamed anti-railroad sentiment in the state and the lack of available money. But there were also changes taking place within the organization. Cornwall, who had overseen the BB&BC and the BBIC as president and had taken a paternal interest in the fledgling bay communities, fell ill and retired in June 1904. He died the following September 25. One of the original principal
stockholders, Alvinza Hayward, had died seven months earlier.

The presidencies of the railroad and improvement company went to H. H. Taylor, a nephew of Mills. The new president's distant, calculating manner contrasted sharply with the upbeat nature of Cornwall, who visited Bellingham Bay on numerous occasions. Taylor demonstrated little enthusiasm for the BB&BC, and even less for the Spokane extension. "I don't think the plan connected with the proposed railroad to Spokane is a possibility," he wrote to Glen C. Hyatt, land agent for the BBIC in October 1905. Taylor added, "The agitation (for the extension) cannot do any harm, and one can see where it might do us considerable good."

Business people in both Bellingham and Spokane attempted to raise the necessary financing to keep the Spokane extension alive. Donovan urged the California syndicate to participate, but the owners declined. The effort fell short. Donovan played his last card in early 1906. He traveled to New York seeking financing or a buyer willing to undertake the ambitious construction project. However, a condition Mills placed on the sale of the railroad was that real estate of the BB&BC and the improvement company be part of any transaction. "This package deal did not generate any enthusiasm among the Easterners," wrote Beth M. Kraig in a 1981 master's degree thesis for Western Washington University entitled, "A Slow Game." It is the most detailed account of the California syndicate's efforts to turn Bellingham into a major Pacific Coast city.

Taylor wrote Hyatt on March 20, 1906, complaining, "The present situation [of the BB&BC] is most unsatisfactory," adding, "There is nothing to do but to await developments." He recommended "managing the property at a minimum expense consistent with safety." On March 31, 1906, Donovan resigned. "I am somewhat disappointed in that I failed to interest some Eastern capital here [in the Spokane extension], but that is a condition which may change before long," he told the Reveille. The condition never changed.

Taylor expressed little sorrow over Donovan's departure. Donovan resumed his timber business interests with Julius Bloedel. Their company, eventually named the Bloedel-Donovan Lumber Mills, went on to become one of the largest forest products firms on the West Coast. Still, Donovan maintained that a Spokane extension, regardless who built it, would be the one thing "that would make this [Bellingham] a great city," he said in a letter to a friend in 1911.

When he returned to Worcester Polytechnic Institute in 1913 for his son John's graduation, the elder Donovan presented a thesis for his delayed professional degree in civil engineering. It was titled: "Proposed Railroad from Bellingham to Spokane." This paper suggested a route farther south to Lake Chelan, then up the Stehekin River to the portal of a 7.2-mile long tunnel under Pelton Basin and 5,400-foot Cascade Pass. The line he called the "Bellingham & Spokane"
would then follow the Cascade River to the Skagit at Marblemount and continue to Bellingham. What changed Donovan's mind about the earlier, more dramatic routes? One factor must surely have been cost. Another seemed to be the threat of avalanches. In his thesis Donovan stressed that the Stehekin route would "be free of all danger of snow during the winter. The importance of the last consideration will be realized by all who remember the loss down, burying and killing 62. Donovan's Columbia when a second slide came for the very same reason. Rock slides and mud slides continue to pose hazards.

At Stevens Pass, a giant snow slide roared down Windy Mountain early March 1, 1910, sending cars and locomotives of two Great Northern trains into the ravine below. The death toll from the Wellington Disaster was 96. Just three days later a Canadian Pacific Railway crew was digging out the track from one avalanche at Rogers Pass in British Columbia when a second slide came down, burying and killing 62. Donovan's earlier suggested routes would have run below steep mountainsides, some prone to avalanches. The North Cascades Highway is closed during winter months for the very same reason. Rock slides and mud slides continue to pose hazards.

Donovan's dream never materialized. Glacier Creek became the end of the line, initially a jumping off point for miners heading up into the Mount Baker mining district. Originally called Cornell, the little settlement there took the name of Glacier in 1904. One passenger train a day operated each way between Glacier and Bellingham, according to a 1907 timetable. The roundabout trip took three and a half hours, a travel time eventually shortened by the automobile and the more direct Mount Baker Highway (State Route 542).

BB&BC passenger and freight revenues, which had tripled during the first three years of the 20th century, declined after 1904. With BB&BC ownership passing to the next generation, the heirs were less interested in holding onto a railroad that was not going anywhere financially. Darius Ogden Mills died January 2, 1910, leaving his interest in the BB&BC to his daughter, Elizabeth Reid (wife of Whitelaw Reid, the United States ambassador to Great Britain) and son Ogden Mills, a New York philanthropist and financier. Ogden Mills was looking for a buyer.

By March of the following year the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railroad (subsidiary of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul) was making inquiries about the availability of the road and its sister line, the Bellingham Terminals Railroad. There were also discussions later in 1911 with prominent Pacific Northwest businessmen. The outcome was the sale of the two railroads to a newly formed holding company, Bellingham Securities Syndicate. The principals included Inland Navigation owner Joshua Green, Tacoma Smelting Company owner W. R. Rust, Julius Bloedel, J. J. Donovan, and Bellingham banker E. W. Purdy and Hyatt, who became president.

Bellingham Securities then transferred the railroads to the Bellingham Northern (BN), a new subsidiary of the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound, netting a handsome profit. In 1918 the BN was absorbed into the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul's (Milwaukee Road's) Puget Sound Extension, a system of short rail lines that fed into the trunk line at Tacoma and Seattle.

J. J. Donovan remained in Bellingham where he died January 27, 1937, at his Garden Street home. He was 78. Much was made of his accomplishments as a businessman and civic leader, but little about his unfulfilled dream.

By the 1960s the former BB&BC line had been shortened to terminate at Limestone Junction, eight miles southeast of Sumas. An 11-mile spur line built for log trains in 1916 from Goshen Junction up the Nooksack's Middle Fork to Kulshan was abandoned in 1942. The end came in 1980 when the bankrupt Milwaukee Road shut down its Puget Sound Extension routes.

The BB&BC was one of several schemes to build railroads across the half-million acres of mountain wilderness that today make up North Cascades National Park. None of these endeavors was successful, which is why today one cannot hear the groans of diesel pulling trains up steady mountain grades or see scars of rail development. The only traces are the trails—once used by railroad surveyors—now turned over to outdoor enthusiasts.

Today, a stretch of track between Sumas and Lynden is used as a spur line by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe two or three times a week. The old Bellingham Terminals right-of-way remains along the waterfront and up Squalicum Creek. Most of the mountain routes Donovan envisioned have been under the protection of the North Cascades National Park since 1968. In the 21st century Glacier is a town tailored to year-round mountain recreation. Gary and Heather Graham occupy the original Glacier depot, which his grandfather purchased from the Milwaukee Road in 1932. Railroad Avenue in Bellingham remains, but without the tracks that once defined the broad thoroughfare.

Ceremonial water arches are no longer encouraged on city streets.  

George T. Foster retired in 2002 from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer where he was a reporter for over 30 years. His last assignment was covering public transportation. Currently, he is working on a railroad history of the northern Cascades. He and his wife, Leslie Ann Rinnan, live in Seattle.
Pioneer Llamas

MacDonald (Doc) Simmons, on the right, and his brother, Benjamin Franklin Simmons, show off their llamas, brought to Shelton's Point by an old sea captain around 1876. Doc kept a small zoo, which also included a buck deer, a parrot, and some other birds, to attract customers to his Pioneer Saloon. The saloon also featured an oyster room where the bivalves could be ordered in any style at all hours. Doc and Benjamin were sons of Michael T. Simmons, who led the first overland party to settle north of the Columbia River.
Arming the Soviets

The Forgotten Story of the Auburn Lend-Lease Depot

There are many overlooked stories from World War II, but few have vanished as completely from the collective consciousness as the story of the huge Lend-Lease Depot in Auburn. The ports of Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland played a key role in supplying our troops while they were fighting in the Pacific, but they were also important in supplying Lend-Lease materiel to our allies, primarily the Soviet Union.

The Lend-Lease program was initially an arrangement approved by Congress in 1941 whereby the United States supplied military equipment and armaments to the United Kingdom and its allies. The program was originally intended as a loan in return for the use of British-owned military bases before the United States had entered World War II. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, President Roosevelt pledged that the United States “would give all possible aid to Soviet Russia in its defense against Nazi Germany.” Eventually, the Lend-Lease Act was extended to provide assistance to any country fighting against the Axis powers. The largest recipients, however, were Britain and the Soviet Union, with the Soviets receiving over $10 billion in aid by the end of the war.

By early 1943 supplies had begun to stack up at all three Pacific Northwest ports, and some system was urgently needed to prevent logistical chaos. It was at this point that the United States government decided to construct in Auburn the largest of the nation’s 10 “holding and reconsignment points.” The other holding and reconsignment (H&R) points had been built at Elmira, New York; Lathrop, California; Marietta, Pennsylvania; Montgomery, Alabama; Pasco, Washington; Richmond, Virginia; Shreveport, Louisiana; Voorheesville, New York; and Yermo, California.

According to the army’s official history of the Transportation Corps, H&R points were meant to serve “as reservoirs where equipment and supplies that could not be promptly moved overseas were held until they were called to the ports.” The Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 gave added impetus to the movement to build such facilities because it implied that a tremendous volume of supplies would move through American ports. Since most Lend-Lease supplies went to Great Britain at the outset of the war, the earliest of these facilities were built near the East Coast. Just a few days prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Transportation Division had recommended that H&R points be built in California to back up the ports of San Francisco and Los Angeles, and in Washington to support the ports on Puget Sound as well as Portland, Oregon. This plan was approved, and on December 31, 1941, the chief of engineers was told to begin selection of sites immediately.

Initially, the general staff was worried about Japanese bombardment of the West Coast, so sites were selected away from the seaboard. The initial West Coast H&R points were built at Yermo and Pasco. The point at Yermo turned out to be unsatisfactory because of its isolation and climate, which made it difficult to attract workers. In a probable attempt to deal with these issues, another H&R point was built at Lathrop, California, just south of Stockton.
The Auburn H&R point was likely an analogous effort to deal with the distances separating Pasco from the major Pacific Northwest ports.

A government-issued report on the Transportation Corps noted that the buildings at these sites were constructed according to a standard plan:

One story, 960 feet long and 180 feet wide, with platforms for loading and unloading rail cars running the full length of each side and a platform for handling truck freight at one end. The open storage areas were provided with adequate tracks so that freight could be unloaded from cars with crawler or railroad cranes and placed in the space it was to occupy without additional handling.

Except for Yermo, a huge desert location east of Barstow, California, the sites averaged about 600 acres. No provisions were made for the storage of refrigerated cargo or for storage of ammunition and explosives. Therefore, special army backup storage facilities were built for export ammunition and explosives, including facilities at Marysville, Washington, and Beaver, Oregon, on the Columbia River. In addition, special army piers were designated for shipment of such cargo, including facilities at Mukilteo, Washington, and Beaver.

Since War Department funds were not available when construction of the H&R points began, Lend-Lease funds provided most of the money for these projects. By February 1944, $43 million in Lend-Lease funds had been consumed for this purpose.

The initial impetus for building the H&R points was to facilitate shipment of Lend-Lease cargo. However, a decision was ultimately made that general army cargo bound for overseas destinations could also be stored there. A further policy decision dictated that such points be used only to temporarily house freight designated for overseas shipment and not for general storage.

During the period 1942-45, the 10 holding and reconsignment points received shipments equal to approximately 293,000 carloads—about 8,790,000 short tons. The Transportation Corps did its best to make sure the H&R points never became clogged with excess cargo. They attempted to keep about 50 percent of the storage space available for emergency shipments. As an example of their efforts, during fiscal year 1945 the amount of freight on hand more than 60 days dropped from 11,000 to 3,500 carloads.

In June 1943 the government obtained land a few miles southwest of Auburn. The area involved 72 tracts, totaling 600 acres. Civilian contractors, working under army engineers, moved in July to begin construction. Storage began in mid October.

By October stories began to appear in the Tacoma Tribune and the Auburn Globe-News about the huge new depot. The depot contained 12 large warehouses, providing 2 million square feet of closed storage. The frame construction buildings had concrete floors and foundations. Six were heated. Railway tracks and loading platforms flanked the length of each warehouse.
The site encompassed 44 acres of covered storage facilities and included 41 miles of railroad tracks, with 30 sets of rails laid parallel in one sector. According to the November 24, 1943, Globe-News, the warehouses would be joined by "shops, roundhouses, a mess hall, fire station, dispensary, cafeteria, bachelor officers' quarters and two administration buildings."

The site was two and a half miles long by half a mile wide. Auburn was chosen for the project because of the junction there of transcontinental railway lines and its proximity to the deepwater ports of Seattle and Tacoma. Portland was also listed as a shipment point for supplies from the warehouses. In fact, Portland became the primary port of choice for shipment of Lend-Lease materiel to Russia. Since Russia was officially neutral in the Pacific war, goods could travel between the United States and Russia safely as long as they were carried on Russian flagships. Therefore, all Lend-Lease supplies to Russia across the Pacific had to travel on Russian ships.

According to Robert H. Jones in The Roads to Russia, almost half of all Lend-Lease supplies to Russia were shipped through West Coast ports, and Portland, along with the smaller Columbia River ports of Longview, Kalama, and Vancouver, Washington, played the major role. The Oregonian, in a July 6, 1969, feature story, explained that the government did not want the Russians "snooping around their naval yards, and the Columbia River had no such installations." The same article shows that before, during, and after World War II, 668 Russian ships called at Columbia River ports and transported 4.2 million tons of goods valued at over $2.1 billion. That is about 20 percent of the total of $10 billion in Lend-Lease goods sent to the Soviet Union during the war.

At the beginning of the war the Soviets had a shortage of ships, a situation the United States soon remedied. According to Jones, by June 30, 1942, we had transferred 53 cargo vessels and six tankers to the Russians for the North Pacific run. North Pacific is a very general term, by the way. Although the majority of ships sailed from the Pacific Northwest to Vladivostok, many ships took the perilous voyage through the Arctic Ocean across the top of Russia. Jones supplies the following numbers for such voyages:

- 1942 .................................... 23 ships
- 1943 .................................... 32 ships
- 1944 .................................... 34 ships
- 1945 .................................... 31 ships

Such trips could only be made during a few months of the year and only with the help of a fleet of icebreakers. The primary purpose of such voyages appears to have been providing supplies for the Siberian airfields used by the Alaska-Siberia air route, through which the United States sent 7,925 aircraft from Great Falls, Montana, to Russia.
Colonel W. R. Hazelrigg, officer in charge of depot operations, said in a statement on October 23, 1943, that the center should relieve congestion at ports of embarkation and in railroad yards throughout the country. He added that the depot was scheduled for full operation by January 15, 1944. Woodworth & Company of Tacoma employed as many as 1,200 men on the construction project at an estimated cost of $11 million. Employment of 2,000 civilians was expected once the project was completed—this, in a community with a prewar population of 4,000. A private housing project had already been built and another federal project was on the way.

On November 24, 1943, the Auburn Globe-News reported Colonel Hazelrigg’s invitation for everyone to attend the dedication ceremony for the point: “The sky will be dotted with planes simulating strafing and bombing—army jeeps and amphibians and various types of combat equipment will be here in numbers. It will be a great military display such as this city has never seen before, one in keeping with the dedication of the nation’s largest holding and consignment point, through which will pass provisions for the Allied nations.” The colonel went on to say that after December 1, 1943, the facility would be closed to the public.

The December 2, 1943, News Tribune reported on the new facility’s dedication ceremony, which took place that day:

The dedication drew the most dazzling assemblage of military and civilian dignitaries this city has ever seen to witness the driving of the golden spike which formally tied together the four transcontinental railroads serving this huge project. Brigadier General Robert H. Wylie, assistant chief of transportation, War Department, Washington, D.C., deftly drove the golden spike clear to the heel of the rail with one solid blow as the crowd of 3,000 cheered.

The crowd included schoolchildren and business proprietors. Junior and senior high schools closed in the morning at 9:15 so students could attend, and the Auburn Chamber of Commerce announced that places of business would close from 9:30 to 11:00. An army band from Seattle played the national anthems of Great Britain, Russia, China, and the United States. Lend-Lease allies were represented by the following Seattle-based dignitaries: Harold C. Sean, British Consul; I. M. Lomakin, Soviet Consul; and Kiang Yi-Seng, Chinese Consul.

According to the December 1, 1943, Auburn Globe-News, Colonel L. M. Nicolson, director of storage, Office of Defense Transportation, spoke at the ceremony about the history of the project and the depot’s operating capacity, and noted, “This new facility will play a significant role in the battle of the
Pacific and will afford substantial relief to the overburdened railroad terminal and public storage facilities in the Puget Sound area."

Once the dedication ceremony was over, the depot seemed to fade from the public eye, probably due to wartime censorship regulations. Local newspapers only rarely made some reference to the holding and reconsignment point, or simply "the Point." This is somewhat surprising, since the depot was clearly the largest employer in Auburn for a number of years and played a major role in Auburn's growth as a city.

Only two significant news articles appeared after the dedication. On August 23, 1944, the Auburn Globe-News carried an article headed, "Italian Prisoners Employed at Point." The article said that labor shortages had made it necessary to bring in a group of Italian POWs, the 55th QM (Italian) Service Company, consisting of four Italian officers and 215 men, to work at the point. One United States officer and six soldiers supervised the Italians, who were, according to the same article, "housed at the Point in barracks formerly used by employees of a construction company." They received only the normal $24 per month allotted to all POWs, part in cash, and part in coupons to be redeemed at a post exchange branch from Fort Lewis that was established at the point.

The report went on to state that the Italian POWs were occasionally allowed to leave the point for "sight-seeing and educational tours," but whenever they were off the military reservation they were required to have "securely sewed on the left arm of their shirt and left side of their caps the identifying emblem ITALY." The article closed by assuring the public that the POWs were
ABOVE: Russian ships docked at the Port of Seattle to load Lend-Lease supplies during World War II, as they did at the ports of Tacoma and Portland.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Brigadier General Robert Wylie drives in the golden spike connecting four transcontinental railroads at the formal opening ceremony of the new Auburn Lend-Lease depot. Colonel W. R. Hazelrigg, commander of the new point, is standing third from left.

not there to replace civilian workers, but had been brought in to help with a serious labor shortage.

There are conflicting estimates of the number of people working at the point. The army’s accounting of total personnel at all 10 H&R points provides us with at least one reliable snapshot on April 30, 1945:

- Officers ..................... 249
- Enlisted Men ................... 124
- Civilians (direct hire) ........... 4,052
- Contractors’ personnel .......... 609
- Prisoners of War .................. 681
- Italian Service Units ............ 590
- TOTAL ....................... 6,305

The Army Transportation Corps history shows that the Auburn holding and reconsignment point actually handled 574,761 short tons of cargo in 1944 and 242,549 short tons in 1945, below the average for such facilities. (The numbers for Pasco for the same years were 655, 913 and 682,909, respectively.) It seems likely, however, that the Auburn point would have played a key role in the Pacific theater had the war not been cut short by the surrender of Japan after the United Stated dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The final newspaper article concerning the Auburn H&R point is related in a way to the Italian POWs. The teamsters’ union and other groups apparently protested to the War Department about the use of POW labor, especially after the end of the war. A September 26, 1945, Globe-News article read: “Men Needed At Point.” It goes on to say that the Italian POWs would no longer be used, and the point was being transformed to an all-civilian personnel force under civil service rules. It notes that the depot employed 575 people at that time, 35 percent of whom were women.

Some Auburn residents remember the H&R point, but few have come forward with any detailed information. Roger Campbell, a retired railroad employee who was a clerk for the Northern Pacific in Auburn at the time, remembers a lot of cargo marked “Government Goods.” He also recalls that some of the cargo was carried to port by truck. Two of the main trucking companies involved were Clark Transfer in Auburn and City Transfer in Kent.

Ed Eckes, a railroad employee for 47 years, worked at the Auburn roundhouse in 1942-43, prior to joining the navy for the duration of the war. During that period he occasionally worked as a fireman on switch engines and saw trainloads of tanks destined for Russia sitting in the rail yards. He recalled that the site of the H&R point had been agricultural land belonging to Japanese and white farmers. In addition, Eckes remembered that some Italian internees from merchant ships worked at the roundhouse until 1946 when they all left for home. He heard that at least one came back later. According to Campbell, when the war ended most of the workers were transferred to Ogden, Utah, but some were sent to the H&R point at Pasco.

The Auburn point, or at least a portion of it, still exists as the General Services Administration Depot. The Boeing Company also occupies part of the site, but other industries have been established in the area, so it is no longer easy to find unless you are specifically looking for it. Why did the Auburn Lend-Lease depot fade from memory so quickly and completely? Perhaps the Cold War had something to do with it. Maybe people did not want to discuss their role in providing supplies to the Soviet Union, even though the Soviets were our allies during the war. The activities of the depot surely made a large contribution to the war effort by supplying our allies with vitally needed materiel.

William E. Saxe served 35 years in the United States Air Force. He became interested in Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union while serving as air attaché in that country in 1990-91. After retiring from the military, he went into education and now teaches social studies and Chinese language at Washington High School in Parkland. He is currently working on three military history book projects.
During World War II, Greater Spokane acquired an unusual number of war-related facilities for a town its size, including four military bases, three large support facilities, and a military hospital. Tremendous organization was needed to establish this constellation of military assets. In most cases, city leaders lobbied Congress heavily, knowing that bringing these facilities to the Spokane area would spur fast economic growth. Spokane had to vie with cities on the west side of the state, but in its favor was an inland location—making it safer from attack—and its abundant, inexpensive real estate. In some cases boosters donated land or money to “sweeten the deal.”

Fort Wright
Fort Wright had been on Spokane’s west side for many years and was its only pre-World War II military post. In the mid 1890s citizens of...
Spokane, with a population of roughly 27,000, found out that the government was planning to build an army base in the Northwest. Could Spokane get this post, giving its economy a boost? An emissary sent to Washington, D.C., returned after six weeks and reported that the post could be acquired for a 1,000-acre gift of land, free water, and $15,000 cash. This was right after the Panic of 1893—not an easy time to raise money. Most of the land was donated, and contributions of $500 and $2,000 were made by individuals. A local Mozart club gave a concert and raised another $1,200. The total of $3,700 was not nearly enough. With a deadline looming, citizens donated more land and on December 31, 1894, held a huge Christmas raffle in the Auditorium Building, Spokane’s new grand theater. People donated everything from a mince pie, furs, and dish sets to a colt and newspaper subscriptions. Finally, Spokane raised the needed cash and acreage, and the George Wright Military Reservation was established in 1899.

In 1941 the headquarters staff of the Northwest Air District moved from Felts Field, Spokane’s airport at the time, to Fort Wright. From 1941 to 1943, Fort Wright was the headquarters of the Second Air Force (which eventually directed activities in 14 states), and of the regional Army Air Corps (which was renamed the United States Air Force in 1947). A number of regular and reserve army units were housed at Fort Wright during World War II. Basic training was a major function of the post.

In 1943 Fort Wright became headquarters for the Second Bomber Command, with control over all northern bases. A convalescent center was added in 1944, as many young men who had witnessed tragic events were returning with what was called “operational fatigue, or war weariness.” Today we would recognize this as post-traumatic stress syndrome. Classes and activities were offered to help these psychologically distressed men try to rekindle an interest in life. A sample list of classes included: metal shop, vehicle repairs, airplane mechanics, map reading, typing, archery, volleyball, learning to raise food in “Victory Gardens,” and animal husbandry—hogs, steers, pigeons, laying hens, and riding horses. When asked at the time how many people were in the hospital, an officer evasively offered that the number was “classified.”

Two years after the end of World War II, an article in the Spokesman-Review stated that “Fort Wright is rated as a permanent base and its hospital will continue in use by whatever air forces may be stationed here.” But as time went on, the need for the post dwindled. Fort Wright was closed as a military installation in 1958.

Other bases and defense facilities were built in the Spokane area either just prior to the country’s entrance into World War II or soon after. Tens of thousands of civilians worked on construction of these installations, and thousands more worked in them after construction.

Geiger Army Air Force Base
In 1937 city leaders proposed to the government that Felts Field, the airport on the northeast side of the city, be used as an Army Air Corps installation. The War Department inspected Felts Field, finding it unacceptable. In 1939 an alternate plan was adopted. On the west side of the city construction had already begun on 1,280 acres for a new “super airport” called Sunset Field. Spokane agreed to let the military take over this operation—banning all civilian use—and the field was leased to the government for one dollar a year. The army and the Works Progress Administration jointly constructed the runways. A local construction company built 110 buildings in 10 months. In 1941 the army changed the name of the facility from Sunset to Geiger Field in honor of Major Harold C. Geiger, a dirigible pilot and graduate of the United States Military Academy.
During the war Geiger Field hosted large numbers of B-17s and C-47s. The 922nd Engineer Aviation Regiment occupied the base in 1942. In late 1947, when the facility was returned to the city, Spokane acquired an air facility considered unsurpassed by any city in the West and longer than most commercial fields in the country. Geiger Field was renamed Spokane International Airport in 1960.

**Spokane Army Air Depot**

After convincing the War Department to acquire Geiger for Spokane, city leaders decided to establish yet another military installation. The Army Air Corps was considering a supply depot in the Northwest. In 1941 Spokane began to vie with Everett for the new $20 million aircraft, maintenance, and supply facility. Washington Congressman Henry M. Jackson suggested to Congress that Everett would be the best location for the depot. Jackson hinted that he would make an important announcement in Everett in August 1941, but on the scheduled day Jackson announced that he would not be going to Everett.

Meanwhile, Spokane city leaders stressed the security benefits of being away from coastal areas. After their experience with Geiger, these leaders were not surprised to learn that land for the facility would have to be donated. This meant that they needed to raise a large amount of money quickly. The Spokane Chamber of Commerce organized a luncheon meeting of 100 business leaders. Stressing patriotism and business benefits of the project, they launched a fund drive. In just 30 minutes individuals, local banks, and businesses contributed $40,000. By the end of the week there was more than enough money to buy 500 acres of farmland. With this offer for the government in hand, Spokane was chosen for the facility.

Over the years there were several variations of the official name, Spokane Army Air Depot; locally the facility was known as Galena. It was situated about four miles west of Geiger. The country entered the war three months after the decision was made to build the depot at Spokane; the need for construction became urgent. Galena would be unique in that it was not only a large aircraft repair and maintenance center but also an Army Air Corps base.

Because of the demand for workers during wartime, 25 percent of the workers at Galena were women. Many men did not think women would be able to fulfill job requirements. Despite these prejudices, the women at Galena learned radio repair, welding, carpentry, lathing, and parachute construction. A high school industrial arts teacher was lent to the government to teach carpentry. He said he was appalled when he first learned he was to teach women. Later he said, “You can’t beat them.” Workers earned $75 a month during training and $125 once their training was complete.

It took about 12 months to build Galena’s 252 buildings. The airplane repair facility alone covered 12 acres under one roof. At its peak in the summer of 1944, 10,000 civilians were employed at Galena. Most of the time at least 3,500 servicemen were stationed at the Galena Army Air Corps facility. The majority of them received basic training there; some pilots received flight training there as well. The post included 150 barracks buildings and a 1,500-bed hospital. In June 1947 the 92nd Bombardment Group relocated there. In 1951 the facility was renamed Fairchild Air Force Base in honor of Muir S. Fairchild, a general who had recently died while serving in the Pentagon.

**Farragut Naval Training Station**

Built at the southern end of Lake Pend Oreille, near Athol, Idaho, Farragut Naval Training Station was by far the largest military operation in the Greater Spokane area, and the second largest naval training center in the country—only the facility at Great Lakes, Illinois, was larger. Farragut was built to train 30,000 recruits at a time in six self-contained camps. In addition, there were advanced training schools and
a large hospital. Including naval personnel permanently assigned there, as many as 45,000 people worked at the center at any given time.

KEY TO THE SELECTION of this site was its inland location, where it was considered secure from coastal bombardment. The site was selected in March 1942.

By midsummer 13,384 workers were involved in construction; by year's end there were some 30,000 workers on site. The training center was named after Admiral David G. Farragut (noted for saying, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!")}, a Union naval hero during the Civil War.

After completion in 1943, each of the six camps hosted a mess hall that could feed 5,000 people in two shifts and employed 92 cooks and many other "mess cooks" for kitchen chores. Each camp boasted a drill hall, a recreation building, and a swimming pool where the goal was to teach nonswimmers how to swim. Imagine the personnel needed for this small city—doctors, dentists, hospital corpsman, chaplains, military trainers, sailors to dispense clothing. The permanent personnel numbered 5,000. In addition, there were 5,000 graduates all the time in a "school group" being trained in such things as radio work, cooking and baking, storekeeping, and signal training. The 1,500 hospital beds increased to 2,000 in 1944.

Training of recruits in the boot camp initially required 13 weeks, but as more and more personnel were needed to man ships, training time was reduced to six weeks. Before its deactivation in 1946, Farragut had trained nearly 300,000 men.

Naval Supply Depot

As with Farragut, the site of the Naval Supply Depot was attractive to the military because of its inland location. In addition, since railroads helped define Spokane's economy, the site allowed inexpensive transportation of goods to the coast.
The site was originally a wheat field situated about 12 miles east of Spokane. Construction began in May 1942, less than a month after its selection, and continued until its completion on New Year's Day, 1943.

Over 2,000 civilian employees worked at the depot handling enormous volumes of material. One warehouse, for example, stored supplies for two complete hospitals—prefabricated housing, X-ray equipment, 5,500 hospital beds and mattresses, 137,000 hospital blankets, mops, brooms, and other essential equipment, plus all the medical supplies a good-sized hospital would need. At one point in 1944 supplies at the depot included insect repellent—7 million bottles and 50,000 gallons in bulk. The depot held 660,000 pounds of medicated cotton, $5 million worth of generators, millions of feet of electrical cable, bow doors for landing craft, steering equipment, 110,000 buckets, many cargo nets, 45,000 pairs of shoes, stacks of pallets full of paint, and carloads of naval clothing. Keeping track of the constant shift of goods must have been a difficult task in those days before the advent of computers. One warehouse alone used seven carloads of finished lumber each day just to make shipping boxes.

**Mead and Trentwood**

Toward the end of 1941, construction began on a plant at Mead, Washington, just north of Spokane. Alcoa (Aluminum Company of America) won a contract to build and run this plant and another at Trentwood, in a former orchard in the Spokane valley. According to Lou Farline, who was employed at the Mead plant and was assistant superintendent of construction at Trentwood, the Trentwood plant was patterned after a rolling mill built in McCook, Illinois, in 1938. Notes on the drawings for these two plants were in Russian, as the plans were also used for a rolling mill in Stalingrad. Though there had been talk of building the plants in Portland, they were moved inland for security reasons.

In 1942 three shifts worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week to build the plant. At the time, the mill at Trentwood was the largest building under one roof west of the Mississippi. Because of the flat land, and because there was little else in the area, one could see the lights of the plant for many miles.
Bauxite was shipped in from Jamaica to Baton Rouge and then by rail to Mead. There, molten aluminum was cast into ingots (50-pound units called "pigs") and straight bar metal. It was then shipped to Trentwood, remelted, mixed with other alloys, and rolled into sheets, some of which were used for aluminum airplane propellers and Quonset huts. However, the plant primarily manufactured "aircraft sheet." This hard alloy sheet then went to Boeing for the manufacture of airplane bodies. President Roosevelt had committed the country to a schedule of 50,000 planes for the war, so a huge quantity of aluminum was needed. Trentwood had a 20-million-pound capacity per month during those years.

More than half the workers at both plants were women. They ran cranes, drove trucks, worked in the mill, and operated other machines. At capacity, between 4,000 and 5,000 people worked at Trentwood. Unbeknownst to most employees, asserted Lou Farline, the Trentwood plant was infiltrated with undercover FBI agents to ensure security. One might be a janitor, another a laborer, but their main job was to watch for sabotage. All workers were colored badges to indicate where they were stationed in the plant. Only those who passed a security check could hold supervisory positions. They wore gold or silver badges and could move freely about the plant but had to log in and out of each area. Security guards were placed in guard towers every 200 feet around the perimeter. To keep alert, guards moved to a different tower every 15 minutes, logging in and out of each station.

In January 1946, about five months after the end of World War II, Mead and Trentwood were shut down and put on standby. Only maintenance crews remained. Ordinarily, Alcoa would have had first rights to the plants, but the government had an antitrust action pending against Alcoa at that time. Kaiser was allowed to purchase the plants without protest from Alcoa.

**Baxter General Hospital**

Following a now familiar pattern, the city donated 160 acres in northwest Spokane in 1942 in order to establish a hospital for the care of wounded servicemen. The 1,500 bed hospital was named for Jedediah Hyde Baxter, a Civil War soldier with a distinguished record in the military who ultimately became surgeon general of the United States. Designed with pitched roofs, the 150 wood-frame buildings were meant to be temporary. Patients were cared for in one-story wards; administration sections were mostly two-story structures.

In addition to surgical and hospital facilities, Baxter housed its medical and nursing staff—mostly hospital members of the Women's Army Corps (WACs)—and its Red Cross, civilian, and technical workers. Until it closed in 1945, Baxter offered a theater, libraries, post exchange, restaurant, soda fountain, chapel, recreation center, as well as telegraph, telephone, and postal facilities. Specializing in what was called "reconditioning therapy," Baxter's staff analyzed each patient's condition, then applied occupational therapy in order to get patients back to active duty as soon as possible. These therapy practices were innovative at the time. When ready, patients could participate in outdoor calisthenics and "diversional activities" such as sports, lectures, and educational guidance. They could also learn to use certain power tools and saws.

**Spokane Derived Many Long-Term Benefits from These World War II Facilities**

The city gained an airport from Geiger (now Spokane International Airport) and an air force base from the Spokane Army Air Depot (now Fairchild Air Force Base). Kaiser was the largest private employer in Spokane County in the late 1970s and 1980s. In the mid 1990s it rolled aluminum for most of the beverage cans in the country. It now makes aluminum sheet and plate for aircraft.

Part of the Baxter Hospital site is now a large veterans' hospital. Farragut Naval Training Station has had a number of uses since the war. It is now a state park and a navy submarine research center, where large model submarines are tested acoustically. Seventeen warehouses and other original buildings from the Naval Supply Depot are now part of the Spokane Industrial Park, housing nearly 50 businesses, about a third of all enterprises in the park.

At Fort Wright, the charming red brick buildings with large white-trimmed porches still stand in a lovely setting among beautiful trees and grasslands. Ironically, some of the buildings are used by Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute where students from Mukogawa Women's University in Japan come to learn more about American culture and language. Useful during World War II, these facilities have remained valuable assets to the region for over 60 years.

A Spokane native, Carolyn Hage Nunemaker is a graduate of the School of Music at Northwestern University. She taught stringed instruments in the Spokane Public Schools and is author of Downtown Spokane Images, 1930-1949.
My Dear Wife and Children...

The Society's Special Collections recently received an outstanding diary and 39 letters written from the Klondike by Robert Haddow to his wife and children in Tacoma in 1898 and 1899. In February 1898, Haddow, in company with three other Scotsmen, left Tacoma to seek their fortunes in the Klondike. A devoted family man, he wrote frequent, lengthy letters (often from 40 to 60 pages) detailing the pleasures and hardships of life in the goldfields. Marvelous in their detail, they provide a depth not often seen in family correspondence from the Klondike and are a welcome addition to the WSHS Special Collections. Haddow's grandson, George Haddow, edited and privately published the diary and letters in 1998.
Lewis and Clark and the Cascade Range Volcanoes

Born of volcanic fire and shaped by glacial ice, the serrated peaks of the Cascade Range dominate the geography of the Pacific Northwest. The snow-capped peaks more than fulfilled the expectations of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. When they left their 1804 winter quarters at Fort Mandan on the Missouri River, Lewis and Clark were armed with cartographic information about the Pacific Coast that had been gathered by British explorers. They must have been anticipating their first sighting of a geological feature totally unfamiliar to them—a volcano.

In April 1803 President Thomas Jefferson sent Captain Meriwether Lewis his lengthy instructions for the expedition being planned. Included in the long list of “inquiries” under “Other objects worthy of notice” was the brief two-word notation, “volcanic appearances.” Following Jefferson’s advice, Lewis gathered the latest available geographical information and constructed a single map with the information. This map was carried across the continent and used for comparing the expedition's field observations with the best available 18th-century geographical information of North America. Volcanoes were included in Lewis’s research and became important features along the exploration route.

Aaron Arrowsmith, a British cartographer, published in 1802 a revision of his 1795 map of North America. His map was the single most important item of pre-expedition cartographic data gathered by Jefferson and Lewis. Relying on Captain George Vancouver's material, Arrowsmith placed Mount Rainier, Mount St. Helens, and Mount Hood on his map. This information aided in the identification of the “mountains of eternal snow” observed by the expedition in the Pacific Northwest.

Captain William Clark, the corps cartographer, supplemented his map-making with information from a number of sources he encountered along the expedition’s route. In St. Louis he obtained John Evans’s “Map of 1796-97.” Evans was the cartographer for James Mackay, who was employed by a Spanish company to explore the Missouri River to the Mandan-Hidatsa villages on the Knife River. Clark marked

Above: Mount Hood was a dominant landscape feature and the first of the Cascade volcanoes seen by the Corps of Discovery during its exploration of the Columbia River.
"Conjecturall" on Evans's map, across
the "Montagne de Roche [Rocky Mount-
tains]," which contained a "Mountain of
Eternal Snow." Evans had drawn on
his map a dormant volcano on the east
side of the Rockies.

The mysterious "old volcano" eluded the corpsmen as they
laboriously proceeded up
the Missouri River toward
the western range. The mountains with
their snow-capped peaks were spectacu-
lar, but a towering cone that dominated
the landscape was missing. Even the
western slopes were absent of the vol-
canic features Vancouver had reported
seeing. The British maritime explorers
had considered the volcanic peaks they
observed to be part of the "dividing
range" and the source of the Columbia
River drainage. After building dugout
canoes the corps had to travel 10 days
down river from the Rocky Mountains
before they glimpsed the landmark the
British had described; even then its
identification was indefinite.

On October 18, 1805, Clark noted
in his journal, "Saw a mountain
bearing S.W. Conocol form Covered with
Snow." He was not specific as to which
of the corpsmen had spotted the dis-
tant peak or from exactly which point
the sighting was made. In recent years
local investigators have researched this
event and concluded that a volcano can
be seen from an elevated position 1,200
feet above the Columbia River. There
is no scholarly unanimity on this issue.
However, Mount Hood is visible from
Clover Hill (1,130 feet), a bluff over-
looking the Columbia on the eastern
side of Wallula Gap, roughly two and
a half miles south of the Washington
town of Wallula. On the day of the
recorded sighting the corps was on the
river in the vicinity of Wallula Gap.

The captains, with their knowledge
of the British discoveries and appel-
lations, were cautious in their iden-
tification until their sighting could
be checked against Lewis's composite
chart. The next day, farther down the
river, in the vicinity of today's Umatilla
River, Clark climbed a 200-foot basalt
cliff and made a startling discovery. He
wrote, "I discovered a high mountain
of emence hight covered with snow," and added, "a range of mountains
in the Direction Crossing a conacal
mountain S.W. toped with snow." From
Vancouver's information he postulated
that the second snow-capped peak in
the west was Mount St. Helens but
refrained from attempting to name the
dormant volcano sighted again in the
southwest. He was also the first to ref-
erece a new discovery—a mountain
range between the Rocky Mountains
and the Pacific Ocean.

The Pacific Northwest is characte-
rized by the Cascade Mountains, a lofty
range extending north and south from
the Columbia River. Intense friction
between the Pacific and North Ameri-
can tectonic plates created the range
that has an average width of more than

OPPOSITE PAGE: Clark's journal entry
for April 22, 1806, notes that he "as-
sended a high hill from which I could
plainly See the range of Mountains which
runs South from Mt. Hood as far as I
could See. I also discovered the top of Mt.
Jefferson which is covered with Snow."

BELOW: Lewis and Clark were the first
Euramericans to record the existence of
Mount Adams. Having initially mistaken
it for Mount St. Helens, the captains
chose not to name their find.
Mount Adams was shaped by a series of lava flows between 25,000 and 10,000 years ago. Its massive bulk starts with an 18-mile-wide base and slopes upward to a flat summit. Its gentle lower slopes rise to a mile and a half above the Cascade Range.

Lewis and Clark had initially observed another snow-capped peak far to the southwest. They were looking at a mountain to which British explorers had assigned the name “Mount Hood” a decade earlier. The captains were hesitant about this identification. After questioning the Indians about the local language, they repeatedly called the peak that loomed majestically in the distance “Timm or Falls Mountain.” “Timm” is akin to “Tum Tum,” an expression that was sounded in deep tones by the Indians to indicate the beating of the heart and imitating the constant pounding sound of the falls tumbling down over a bed of polished lava boulders. “Falls” is an explanation of the aboriginal term—cascading water at the “Great Falls of the Columbia” (later known as Celilo Falls).

Clark eventually identified the peak that had been described by the British and made the necessary corrections. He interlined his October 25, 1805, journal entry, “This is the Mount Hood of Vancouver,” and added, “This Mountain
proves to be Mount Hood,” to his route map identification of the peak.

Mount Hood was named in 1792 when Vancouver sent Lieutenant William Broughton across the bar of the Columbia River to search for the mythical Northwest Passage. Broughton went more than 100 miles up the river and noted that in the east he could see a magnificent mountain peak, which he drew on his charts as Mount Hood. This act was in honor of the British admiral, Lord Samuel Hood, who had signed the original instruction for Vancouver’s expedition. Broughton's opinion was that the Columbia River terminated in the drainages of the towering peak that dominated the landscape. His placing of the volcanic peak on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains resulted in cartographic confusion for the captains until they sorted out the actual topography.

ABOVE: The most distant of the five Cascade volcanoes sighted by the Corps of Discovery, Mount Rainier did not present itself to their view until they were on their return journey.

BELOW: Lewis and Clark had their first sighting of Mount Jefferson on March 30, 1806. They named it in honor of the expedition’s driving force, President Thomas Jefferson.
Mount Hood (11,235 feet) was known by the Indians as "Wy'east," named after a son of the Great Spirit in Upper Chinookan legends. More than two centuries have passed since its last major eruption in October 1790. Clark described a legacy of this volcanic activity when he recorded that sand deposits in the rivers known today as Hood and Sandy were derived from Mount Hood's volcanic mud flows. Hood's sharp pyramid peak became a major landmark for future emigrants who followed the Lewis and Clark Trail down the Columbia River. Oregon's highest volcanic peak still vents steam and gas, an indication of the intense heat boiling beneath the mountain.

Lewis and Clark's cartographic challenges continued. On November 4 Clark and the other journal writers misidentified Mount St. Helens as Mount Rainier. Clark later deleted the passage and wrote, "Mount Hellen bears N" and above his December 7 journal entry he added: "Mt St Helens is the mountain we mistook for Mt Reaneer." He had sorted out the identification of the pinnacle by November 25 but still used his creative spelling when he wrote: "Mt St Hilians can be seen from the mouth of this river."

Sailing off the Pacific Coast in October 1792, Vancouver had observed a volcanic peak and named it to honor the British ambassador to Spain and his personal friend, Baron Saint Helens, Alleyne Fitzherbert. The captains scrupulously used known nomenclature instead of engaging in wholesale patriotic renaming of British place names. After checking their field observations with Lewis's composite chart, they correctly identified the volcanic peaks on their homeward trip up the river in 1806.

Nearly eight decades later, in 1980, Mount St. Helens (8,363 feet) lived up to its Indian name, "Lawala Clough" meaning "smoking mountain." The damsel of the Three Guardians of the Columbia erupted and blew 1,300 feet off the top of her picturesque peak, blunting the perfect snow-capped cone. Today, the volcano's height and shape change constantly as a new lava dome rises within the summit crater. The slumbering volcano is a relatively new wrinkle of the earth's surface. Its history has been marked by at least nine significant eruptions. One had occurred a mere five years before the corps canoed down the Columbia.

The volcano periodically erupted between 1831 and 1857. Hudson's Bay Company fur traders reported that the mountain filled the air with ash. Lewis thought Mount St. Helens was "the most noble looking object of its kind in nature," and Clark considered the mountain "perhaps the highest pinical in America."

Exactly when Mount Rainier was first sighted by the corpsmen is left to conjecture. Doubtless the captains pored over their charts during their winter at Fort Clatsop (1805-06) and worked on identifying the volcanic peaks they had observed. It would take a little clear weather in the spring and a lot of luck to finally sort out the cartographic information they had gathered and correlate it with information collected from other, earlier explorers.

Clark made a side trip during the corps' homeward, upriver journey on April 1 to search for the confluence of a southern tributary to the Columbia River. At the mouth of the present Willamette River he recorded sighting five snow-capped peaks. His field observation was probably the foundation for sorting them all out. He used the British name for the distant northern snow-capped peak (Mount Rainier) but never got the spelling correct, alternating among several variants.

Discovered by Vancouver in May 1792, Mount Rainier was named after Rear Admiral Peter Rainier, the grandson of Huguenot refugees who had gained fame for defeating American colonists in the Revolutionary War. Pronunciation of his French name was anglicized to "Rainy'er" by the British and has now been Americanized to "Ray-ner." Its ice-covered dome and white snowfields contrast starkly with the rocky ribs protruding from its sides. Mount Rainier (14,411 feet) had several slightly different indigenous names. Most were variations of "Tah-ho-ma," meaning "the Mountain." Washington's highest mountain is one of the world's most extensive single-peak glacier systems. The tallest of the Cascade Range volcanic peaks has been subject to many name-changing campaigns, but it still retains its French name. At several spots on the lower reaches of the Columbia River the distant northern peak can be sighted.

On March 30, 1806, Clark recorded another mountain sighting that the corps considered significant: "Discovered a high mountain S.E. Covered with Snow which we call Mt Jefferson." It was yet another distant, snow-clad peak, this time situated south of the Columbia River. On April 6, after conferring with Clark, Lewis summarized in his journal their findings of "conical pointed mountains covered with eternal snow." The next day Clark described the features of Mount Jefferson: "Like Mt. St. Helens its figure is a regular Cone and is covered with eternal Snow."

Mount Jefferson (10,487 feet) is the second highest volcanic peak in Oregon. After this American discovery the British attempted to emphasize their claim to lands in the Columbia River drainage. The peak was called "Mount Vancouver" by employees of British fur-trading companies. However, it retained the name assigned to it by Lewis and Clark to honor their president. The sharp-pointed peak is an extinct volcano.

The Corps of Discovery found more than an intangible "Mountain of Eternal Snow." The captains observed five different mountains, two of them previously undiscovered by Euramericans. Additionally, they recorded the existence of a mountain range between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean—today's Cascade Range. Cartographic information collected by Lewis and Clark is their geographic contribution to our Pacific Northwest history.

Retired veterinarian Allen "Doc" Wesselius is a member of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, past president of the foundation's Washington chapter, and a longtime enthusiast of the Corps of Discovery and Pacific Northwest history.

COLUMBIA 33 SUMMER 2006
Pursuing the Real "Matt Peasley"

By Joe Follansbee

Ed Van Syckle wanted the truth about Captain Matt Peasley. He knew all the adjectives people applied to Peasley: "daring," "picturesque," "a lusty sailorman." But doubts chewed at his reporter's instincts. Was this man everything people said about him? Peasley gave him a chance to find out when in 1927 he invited Van Syckle to sign on as an ordinary sailor on his schooner Vigilant. "Be down here at 7 A.M.,” Peasley ordered.

Captain Ralph "Matt" Peasley, c. 1940. In the years after his retirement in 1931, Peasley served as a state liquor control inspector and ran unsuccessfully for Grays Harbor County sheriff. In 1941, just after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he renewed his master's license, but he never went back to sea.
Van Syckle literally missed the boat. He packed a bag and put it on board the night before shipping out. The next morning he headed down to the dock in Grays Harbor, a small port on the Washington coast, but an open drawbridge blocked his way. He arrived at Vigilant’s berth a half-hour late. His bag was on the dock and the ship was gone.

Van Syckle bawled. The 25-year-old imagined the Aberdeen Daily World firing him for missing an exclusive. (“What a scoop!” his boss predicted.) The Cappy Ricks books and Saturday Evening Post stories had made Captain Matt Peasley a household name. He was the archetypal sea captain, a living cliché. No other merchant skipper would match his fame. And he was sailing away.

Van Syckle brightened when he saw that the Vigilant was still in the channel. He ran up and down the wharf searching for a boat that could take him to the ship. He begged a fisherman for a ride. “Naw, can’t do it,” the fisherman said. Van Syckle called on a tugboat captain. The man agreed to ferry the reporter.

A quarter of an hour later, the tug came alongside Vigilant and Van Syckle climbed aboard. Peasley, dressed in a high pressure cap, black topcoat, and sea boots, extended a mallet-like hand to the young man. “He said something like, ‘Well, it’s about time,’” Van Syckle remembered. Peasley seemed authentic so far.

Van Syckle had a long face, a high forehead, some extra nose, and a good reporter’s eye for detail. He reminisced about his voyage and the now-forgotten Peasley in a memoir published in On the Harbor: From Black Friday to Nirvana, a history of the Grays Harbor area. The Peasley trip fell in his lap only a year after he started at the Daily World. He would sail from Aberdeen to Honolulu on the five-masted, 1,600-ton topsail schooner Vigilant. Her masts were 130 feet tall, and she measured 260 feet from bowsprit to taffrail. Her cargo was 1.6 million board feet of lumber. “I daydreamed all the time about sailing on that gorgeous lumber schooner,” he wrote.

Van Syckle watched the 61-year-old Peasley give orders from the Vigilant’s poop deck. The six-foot-one “complete lord and master of his ship” weighed 190 pounds, had clear, blue eyes, and a walrus mustache that framed a quick smile. Peasley had no time for Van Syckle as the ship approached the North Pacific. The mate ordered Van Syckle into the forecastle. He assigned him to “watch on watch,” four hours on and four hours off. Van Syckle memorized the names of the masts with his fingers: fore, main, mizzen, jigger, and spanker. On deck, Peasley checked the trim of the sails. “He’d look over the stern, too, and in the tropics, he’d always check ‘the morning bank,’ the big bank of clouds all purple and orange on the horizon.” Peasley steered Vigilant south to the coast of Mexico, then west to Hawaii. “After you caught the trade-winds, all you had to do was lash the wheel and she’d sail herself,” Van Syckle wrote. “I’d lie on my back and watch the wind in the sails; the dolphins would play at the forefoot and flying fish would dart away.”

Van Syckle’s assignment gave him the special privilege of spending evenings with Peasley in the officer’s mess. The meal was often codfish “tongues and sounds,” a delicacy

Captain Ralph “Matt” Peasley’s favorite command, the five-masted lumber schooner Vigilant, was probably the last large wooden vessel built in Washington. Constructed in 1919 in Aberdeen, the ship was one of the last commercial sailing vessels in the Pacific. Vigilant was wrecked off the coast of Chile in 1948.
"boiled with some sort of sauce." The fare disagreed with the landlubber reporter: "Sometimes I would sneak a potato or a cabbage head."

The captain spun yarns over a drink. Ralph Erskine "Matt" Peasley was born in Jonesport, Maine, on May 30, 1866. His father, Henry C. Peasley, farmed, fought in the Civil War, and commanded ships. His mother, Elizabeth Rose, taught school. Her son left school at age 14 to learn seamanship from Grand Banks cod fishermen. Ralph commanded his first ship, a two-masted, square-rigged brig, at age 22. He came around Cape Horn to Seattle around 1888 and worked for a logging crew before finding his way to Aberdeen, where his sailing career took off.

Peasley earned a reputation for daring. West Coast mariners talked about his time as master of the schooner Louis, which he brought to the mouth of the Yangtze River after a typhoon. He had never seen the river before, but he did not trust the Chinese pilot. He took the ship up the river himself, brought the Louis safely to port, and set a passage record.

But his reputation in 1927 had as much to do with fiction as fact. Around 1900 Peasley met Peter Bernard Kyne, a clerk for the Dolbeer & Carson Lumber Company, Peasley's employer at the time. Kyne reviewed ship master's reports, and most were dry, factual, and managerial. Peasley's, on the other hand, carried more color. His writing was "terse, laconic, and not treating with dignity those things staid old shipping offices expected to be treated with dignity," Kyne wrote. Kyne penned short stories and novels in his spare time, and Kyne magnified Peasley the man into Peasley the character. In 1915 Kyne published Cappy Ricks or the Subjugation of Matt Peasley.

Cappy Ricks tells the story of a fiery young ship's captain named "Matt" Peasley and his relationship with Alden P. Ricks, president of the Blue Star Navigation Company. The two men are stubborn, bullheaded, and unwilling to give an inch on any issue. They are, however, cut from the same cloth: Peasley is the master mariner and Ricks the master businessman. Two more Cappy Ricks books followed. "When I started the Peasley stories," Kyne wrote, "I took Capt. Ralph Peasley as my character, intending to write only one story. But he furnished so much good stuff that I could not stop."

The books propelled Peasley into celebrity. People wanted their picture taken with him. A pair of photos, probably from the 1920s, shows Peasley and a pretty young woman with luxuriant dark hair. She is identified as an "actress." A stiff breeze blows a light dress away from her bare legs and feet.

Businessmen sought Peasley for his name. In 1919, an Aberdeen shipyard run by Gordon Frazer Matthews fell on hard times. Other yards had work and he feared his shipwrights would defect. He decided to risk $250,000 and build Vigilant, the biggest ship he had ever constructed. His main problem: He didn't have a buyer and the Vigilant was fast draining his available cash. His solution: Ralph "Matt" Peasley.

The story goes that Peasley was standing on the poop deck of the Fred G. Wood as it passed by Matthews' yard. Vigilant stood on its blocks only partially complete, but Peasley liked
what he saw. Peasley's brother, who was traveling with the him, said, "Ralph, there's a fine new five-master building. Why don't you go over and take her out as master?" Matthews spotted Peasley at the same moment and thought to himself: I've known Peasley 20 years; if I could convince him to command Vigilant, I could raise the money to finish her.

Peasley, however, was under contract to the E. K. Wood Lumber Company, owner of the Fred G. Wood. Peasley told Matthews: If you can convince my boss to release me, I'll sign as Vigilant's captain. Matthews traveled to San Francisco and met with C. A. Thayer, the secretary-treasurer of the company. "Peasley's one of the best skippers we've got," he told Matthews. "But if it'll help you out, we'll see what we can do." Matthews then spoke with Walter Wood, president of the firm. Matthews and Wood struck a deal. Another captain would step forward to buy Peasley's interest as master of the Fred G. Wood. This would release Peasley to captain the Vigilant. In return, Matthews sold E. K. Wood Lumber Company a 60 percent "managing interest" in the Vigilant. Now Matthews could parade Peasley in front of other potential investors. Matthews quickly sold the remaining 40 percent of the vessel and recouped his quarter million dollar investment, and she was launched at 11:15 in the morning on December 20, 1919.

Vigilant nearly wrecked on her maiden voyage. Twenty-five days out of Grays Harbor, bound for Sydney, Australia, the deck load of lumber shifted in a gale. Vigilant listed six degrees. The lumber threatened to tear away the masts and rigging. In one account, Vigilant drifted helplessly toward the Great Barrier Reef. The "current was within a hair's breadth of grinding her on the reef" when it suddenly shifted and "carried her clear," Peasley told a reporter. Fifty miles from Sydney, he radioed for a tug, which brought him and the cargo safely into the harbor.

The story was vintage Peasley. Newspaper reporters met the ship and its skipper at every port, salivating for a new hair-raising tale. In 1920 hurricane-force winds destroyed whole forests on the Olympic Peninsula and nearly sank Vigilant 100 miles off the Washington coast. Peasley called the storm "the most terrifying" of his career, worse than a typhoon he had experienced off the coast of China.

The Vigilant's captain would get into tight races with other sailing ships; one losing captain complained he didn't know he was racing. Peasley lectured about the race to an Aberdeen women's group. "Marine and Fiction Character Addresses Optimists," read the headline above the newspaper account: "Give me a ship that sails," Peasley declared. "I want no screech of a whistle nor throb of engines; the sight of straining sails fills me with a never-ending pleasure. There will never be any steamships for me."

Van Syckle listened as the seaman sipped his whiskey. Peasley milked his "down east" persona. "Pay her off a mite," he'd tell the man at the wheel," Van Syckle recalled. "Then he might say, 'Steady as she goes.' The reporter wondered whether the man was real or imaginary. "After a while, he began living the role that Kyne had created for him—talking with phrases from the books, and taking his morning constitutional, strutting back and forth across the poop, a cigar stuck in his mouth."

Peasley's fame sometimes made him uneasy. People hailed him on the street by his fictional name, "Matt." A sailor once teased Peasley about his nickname. "That's all right, call me Captain Matt," Peasley said. "That's because I don't care anymore... When those stories first began," Peasley added, "I used to be mightily embarrassed—yes, and pretty mad about it too. I'd never turn my head an inch when I'd hear someone call me that—even the pretty girls! But a person can get used to anything."

Van Syckle and the Vigilant arrived in Honolulu 31 days after leaving Grays Harbor. The return trip from Hawaii to Bellingham on Puget Sound took 27 days, and there Van Syckle signed off. In 1930 Peasley gave up command of the Vigilant. ("I never had a more noble ship.") In 1931 his last command, the 45-foot auxiliary sloop Linda, had a 50-horse power engine. He died in 1948 at the age of 82.

Van Syckle worked at the Daily World for 43 years. He died in 1986. Did he find the real Peasley? The man was "bigger than life, and he lived up to his character," Van Syckle wrote. "In later years, I think he worked it up a bit," he added. "But it wasn't conceit. It was just part of being 'Matt' Peasley."
LABOR RADICAL AND POPULIST STATE SENATOR

Thomas Jefferson Miller was a pioneering Washington labor leader and populist politician. A member of the Cigar Makers' International Union and the Knights of Labor, he participated in the Great Southwestern Rail Strike of 1886, and then came to Washington at the time of the 1889 Newcastle coal strike. He served as a Populist Party senator in the fifth and sixth legislatures (1897 to 1900) and finished his political career as mayor of Tumwater. Miller's story exemplifies the radical character of 19th-century unionism and the progressive nature of populist politics in Washington. His life reminds us that passionate labor activism can lead to positive political and social change.

Cigar Makers' Union

Miller was born October 30, 1857, in Anneville, Pennsylvania. By the time he was 17 years old Miller began an apprenticeship in the cigar making trade. Learning the cigar business had a great impact on the direction of his life, affecting the development of Miller's education and his social conscience.

Cigar making was among the first American trades to form a powerful national union. Under the leadership of a strong, military-minded German, Adolph Strasser, the Cigar Makers' International Union built an organization that successfully controlled strikes and established benefit pools for its members. Cigar making was an itinerant occupation; workers traveled from town to town, stopping where work was available. Because workers were constantly on the move, they gradually promoted unionism, as though it were gospel, across America.

Cigar making factories in most towns were small. Usually six to eight workers would occupy the benches, rolling cigars by hand or working from molds as "fillers" or "bunch breakers." Because the work was monotonous, cigar makers often pooled their wages to hire a reader, or lector, while they worked. Thus workers who could not read nonetheless became conversant with the works of classical writers as well as contemporary social reformers such as Henry George and Edward Bellamy.

After completion of his apprenticeship, Miller tramped across the Northeast and Midwest, plying the cigar trade and organizing Cigar Makers' locals. From 1880 to 1882 he rode the rails through New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana. He traveled under an assumed name—"Charles H. Howard" or "Henry Howard"—ostensibly, he said, to "save his family any possible embarrassment" over his itinerant lifestyle. More likely he assumed these aliases to cover his increasing involvement in radical labor activities.

In 1883 an incident occurred that would come back to haunt Miller later in life. In January he arrived in Palmer, Illinois, seeking work as a cigar maker. Here he met...
a 17-year-old girl, one Mary Alameda Moore. Using his alias, “Charles Howard,” he married Mary in Decatur. Upon returning to Palmer, Mary told her mother of the secret wedding. During an ensuing confrontation, Miller refused to provide a home for Mary, claiming poverty. He left thinking he would never hear of Mary Moore again and drifted west.

**Southwestern Railroad Strike**

In 1885 Miller landed in Kansas where he became active in Terence Powderly’s Knights of Labor. He was appointed to the executive committee of Knights Local 101 in Parsons, Kansas. There he became involved in one of the major labor disputes of the 1880s, the Great Southwestern Rail Strike. Early in March 1886, a Knights local in St. Louis refused to handle freight on the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Within days Knights workers blockaded all rail traffic on Jay Gould-owned lines in the southwestern states. Parsons became a major center of action. On March 6, Local 101 unionists blockaded tracks, forcing all freight and passenger traffic to a halt. By the following week 4,000 men were on strike in Parsons, and the Knights’ executive committee, with Tom Miller acting as financial secretary, was meeting around the clock to plan actions.

Within a few days the first skirmishes of the strike took place, and victory went to the unionists. The company attempted to send out a freight train, but union men decoupled the engine and banked its fires. Further attempts to dispatch trains were foiled when strikers surrounded the engines with hundreds of men. Knights threw eggs, pulled dignitaries from cars, and disabled locomotives. Tensions escalated. On March 30 news came that a passenger train had derailed outside town. Strikers had removed the fishplates and spread the rails. The train’s mail agent was seriously hurt.

The strike ended April 2 when Kansas National Guard troops entered Parsons to man the trains. Attempts by the sheriff to prosecute the Local 101 executive committee failed because Parsons’ justices were all Knights of Labor members.

**Newcastle Coal Strike**

Following the rail strike, Miller continued to be active in the Knights of Labor, attending the 1887 General Assembly convention in Richmond, Virginia. In 1888 he came to the Pacific Northwest where he participated in Knights organizing activities at the Newcastle mines. Newcastle in King County was the center of a lucrative coal industry. In 1888 mine workers at Coal Creek, a mile above Newcastle, were involved in a conflict over jurisdiction that pitted the Knights of Labor against the Miners’ and Laborers’ Protective League. In late December the dispute culminated in a clash over the right of a Miners’ League member to work a “breast,” or mine face. The Knights contended the opportunity should go to one of their own. When, on January 2, 1889, the Miners refused to concede, the Knights ordered a work stoppage. Miners’ League members ignored the order and continued to work.
The campaign that fall took its normal course, with all candidates choosing character assassination over reasoned discourse as the preferred method for gaining election.

In 1891 coal miners in Issaquah, Newcastle, Black Diamond, and Franklin went on strike against the mine owner—the Oregon Improvement Company. In retaliation, the company brought in African American miners from Missouri. The black miners did not realize they had been recruited to work in Franklin as strikebreakers. Isolated and far from home, they had little choice but to work in the mines. The striking miners, many of whom belonged to the Knights of Labor, turned violent, and the governor ordered in the Washington national guard. The state militia was also sent in during the 1889 strike in which Tom Miller participated. In the photo above, members of Company I pose with their firearms and mascot. They had been ordered to report to Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Green at the Franklin mines on July 3, 1891, and served there for more than a week until the situation quieted.

On June 4 the Knights brought in 100 to 300 miners (reports varied) from Gilman and McAllister to enforce the mine shutdown. Armed with rifles, they marshaled at Newcastle. There they cut telegraph lines, posted sentries, and boarded a train going up to the Coal Creek mine. Rioting broke out as the train stopped at a trestle to load workers. Boarding miners were tossed off the train, falling 40 to 50 feet to the creek bed below. Others were beaten senseless. Rifle shots were exchanged. Three Knights fell to gunfire, and at least one miner was killed. In the aftermath of the riot, the sheriff and militia were called in and the mines reopened. Eighteen union men, mostly Knights, were arrested for rioting. Miller avoided discovery and headed to Tacoma, arriving there the next day.

Miller's early labor activities were recalled often during his political career. His opponents accused him of being a radical unionist involved in riot and property damage. Such a background should have eliminated him from consideration as a serious political figure. But conditions in Washington during the populist era turned that liability into a political strength.

Populist Leader

After arriving in Tacoma, Miller went to work at the Wanly Cigar Factory. Later he moved to Aberdeen where he met his future wife, Mattie Stewart. In 1891 they settled together in Olympia and Miller set up a cigar factory. His political career began the following year when he was elected as a delegate to the Thurston County Democratic Party convention. There he created a stir by demanding the exclusion of national bankers from the party. He also advocated Henry George's single tax proposal. George believed that property should be taxed according to its potential value, encouraging property owners to develop land rather than hold it for speculative purposes.

In June 1892 Miller switched allegiance to the Peoples' Party, an emerging third party espousing populist principles. In August the Thurston County Peoples' Party convention nominated Miller for the Washington State Senate. When this nomination was announced, one James Lane went wild with enthusiasm. According to the Morning Olympian, he "tore open his shirt collar to give his windpipe free play, calling on the convention for three cheers."

Between August and the November election, Tom Miller campaigned around Thurston County. He encouraged women to join the party, spoke for the single tax, and refuted charges that he had led a train riot in Chicago. To demonstrate his solidarity with working people, he displayed numerous union cards. Still, he was defeated by J. C. Horr.

After the election Miller remained active in union affairs. In February 1893 he was elected president of the state's Labor Congress. As a highly visible representative of labor viewpoints, he became a target for attack by pro-business elements. At various times he was charged with labor agitation, accused of being a "cunning and dangerous" communist who wanted to "slay" those who did not follow socialism, and a radical "skunk and pest."

In June 1894 Miller was selected as a delegate to the state's Populist Party convention in Yakima, where he was elected chairman. Following the event, he returned
to Olympia in proper populist fashion, traveling "by foot and handcar." At that time it was said of Tom Miller that he "carries the [Thurston County] Populist Party in his vest pocket." Once back in Olympia he set out to prove the truth of that statement. He orchestrated a purge of the leadership and took over control of the party. He first deposed the party leader, Dr. Newell of the Knights of Labor, then secured for himself a second nomination for the state senate.

The campaign that fall took its normal course, with all candidates choosing character assassination over reasoned discourse as the preferred method for gaining election. One notable controversy stemmed from a Tacoma speech in which Miller allegedly defamed the American flag with the following statements:

"Why should we stand by the flag? Why should we stand by the Stars and Stripes? They mean nothing to us. Every star and every stripe represents so much poverty, so much misery. This flag may be all right for plutocrats, but it means nothing for us. I address slaves, not freemen."

Such sentiments were not well received by most voters. Miller finished fifth in an eight-man race, garnering only 491 votes.

Election of 1896

Populist political momentum peaked in 1896, and Miller rode this high tide into the Washington State Senate. He was elected to serve in the Fifth Legislature—the "barefoot schoolboy" legislature. The circumstance that allowed Miller to win election was the uniting of three previously hostile forces—the Populists, the Democrats, and the Free Silverites—into one melded, or "fusion," ticket. By working together, the three parties were able to take control of the legislature and elect Populist governor John Rogers, perhaps the ablest chief executive in
Terence Powderly at the tenth Knights of Labor Convention in Richmond, Virginia, where T. J. Miller was also in attendance.

Following the Great Southwestern Railroad Strike, popular attitudes toward strikers changed. Sympathy for strikers diminished. This view of strikes is summarized in C. J. Taylor's picture caption, "The regulation end of the strike.... The 'Scab' drives, the Agitator rides, and the Striker gets coldly left."

Washington history. Miller was instrumental in persuading his fellow Populists to unite with the Democrats, and in this political act he made his greatest contribution to Washington history.

The primary issue of the 1896 political season was fusion: could the three political parties of the left form a united front to win the November election? During the week of August 12 the three parties held simultaneous conventions in Ellensburg. The question dividing the parties was a simple one: how should the various state and national offices be shared among the three groups? Miller's Populists came to Ellensburg as the most powerful of the three parties. The majority sentiment among Populist delegates was initially against fusion. The selection of the convention's temporary chairman pitted fusionist Tom Miller against antifusionist C. L. Cline. Cline was easily elected on the first ballot. It appeared there would be no united front against the Republicans in November.

In the ensuing days of the convention, Miller and his fusion allies lobbied middle-of-the-road delegates to persuade them to unite with the Democrats. Miller moved a compromise, that the convention proceed to nominate the three-party conferee committee's fusion ticket and that any unfilled positions be assigned to Populist candidates if no agreement with other parties could be reached. Delegates accepted this position. The Populist convention endorsed the fusion ticket headed by John Rogers, assuring victory in November.

Returning to Olympia after the convention, Miller worked to bring about the same fusion of political parties in Thurston County that had been achieved at the state level. Having reached this goal, he was voted acting chairman of the Populist-Democratic-Silverite fusion convention and won the fusion ticket nomination for the state senate. With fusion came new respectability. In the past Democratic newspapers had routinely excoriated Miller as one who would "agitate and inflame the laboring classes," a cunning and dangerous oracle who would "scatter the seeds of discontent and disloyalty," a man of "condemnable sentiment" who practiced "only the arts of the demagogue." Now he was found to be a man of "marked ability, sound judgment, and pleasing address," possessing "an analytic mind well stored with the results of careful reading and mature reflection." He was "emphatically a man of the people." On November 6, Thurston County voters elected Miller to the state senate by a margin of 198 votes.

Populist Senator

In the legislature Miller proved true to his populist convictions. He attempted to limit the salaries and perquisites of government officials and refused to accept state supplied stationery and stamps. He introduced bills to limit railway passenger and freight rates and to regulate telegraph charges, and he voted to ban religious observances during legislative sessions. During the Sixth Legislature Miller introduced resolutions supporting direct election of United States senators and establishment of the initiative process. He proposed legislation to protect consumers from adulterated foods and regulate telephone rates.

Miller's major concern in the Sixth Legislature was to gain funding for a new state
capitol. He orchestrated a successful effort to get an appropriations bill through the legislature and to establish a capitol commission. Governor Rogers vetoed both of these bills. When asked by a fellow senator if he had voted for Rogers, Miller said, "I wish I hadn't." By 1900 the era of fusion politics was over. The Democratic Party reestablished its primacy, and the Peoples' Party disappeared as an effective political force. Miller joined most other Populists in moving under the Democratic umbrella, but his senate seat went to another Democratic candidate, and Miller found himself out of elective office.

Marriage Scandal

In 1904 Tom Miller was elected mayor of Tumwater and reelected in 1906. During his first term an incident occurred that could have ended his political career—the public discovered that Miller had two wives. The story attracted considerable attention around the state and in the Midwest.

In April 1905 one Laclede Howard, a Midwest millionaire, died in St. Louis. In May a mysterious woman named Mrs. William Leafgren surfaced, asserting that she was Howard's widow and making a large claim against the estate. Attorneys for the Howard estate determined that Mrs. Leafgren was none other than Mary Alameda Moore, the girl Tom Miller had married during his youth. Apparently, Mary was attempting to defraud the Howard estate of $500,000. Estate attorneys discovered Tom and Mary's marriage certificate and located Miller's mother from her truthfully given name on the license (recall that Miller wedded Mary Moore using his alias, "Charles Howard"). Lawyers located the Palmer, Illinois, boardinghouse operator who hosted Miller during his stay there and brought her to Olympia. There she identified the mayor of Tumwater as Mary's true husband. Miller admitted the same.

Having neglected to divorce Mary Moore before wedding Mattie Stewart, Miller was in a condition of bigamy. He quickly brought suit against Mary for divorce. At that point the story became public knowledge, and the details were front-page news. In the end, Mary Moore Leafgren's claim was denied and she received no part of Laclede Howard's estate. Tom Miller continued his political career, unfettered by this blot on his character.

Last Years

During World War I Miller's loyalty came under suspicion due, presumably, to his radical unionist past and his Germanic origins. He was known to have referred to England as "perfidious Albion." In the last years of his life he continued to follow the cigar making trade, working from his front porch when he no longer had strength to run his factory. Thomas Jefferson Miller died on January 6, 1921, at 63 years of age, and was buried in the Tumwater IOOF (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) cemetery where his grave may be seen today. To the end he never wavered in his support of populist ideals, and he was fortunate enough to have lived to see many of his radical notions embodied in law.

During Miller's first term an incident occurred that could have ended his political career—the public discovered that he had two wives.


Jon Holdaway is a humanities teacher in the Bethel School District in Spanaway. Thomas Jefferson Miller's great-grandson, he has been an active union member for 23 of his 25 years as a educator.
THE NOVELS OF ALAN HART

By Peter Donahue

No writer's career stands out more in Northwest literary history for its uncommon path than Alan Hart's. In the 1930s and 1940s, Hart became an accomplished novelist. In the late 1940s and 1950s, he made his mark as a medical researcher. Today, he is remembered primarily for his transsexual identity.

Alan Hart grew up Alberta Lucille Hart in Oregon. After attending Albany College (now Lewis & Clark) and Stanford University, Hart earned her medical degree from the University of Oregon in Portland. In her mid 20s, following therapy and a hysterectomy, Hart transitioned to being a man, assuming the name Alan L. Hart. He married and became a physician in remote Gardiner, Oregon, where his identity was soon questioned. Within six months, he relocated to rural Montana. As Hart authority Brian Booth points out, "The challenges of Hart's passing as a man in the medical profession and literary circles for four decades involved a complicated life of deception and discrimination, and led to numerous moves, job changes, and financial challenges."

Hart went on to live in various cities, including Spokane, before obtaining a master's degree in radiology at the University of Pennsylvania in 1930, and, eventually, a master's degree in public health from Yale. In 1925, Hart's first wife divorced him, and he married Edna Ruddick, with whom he remained until his death. In 1930 he moved back to the Northwest where he held hospital positions in Tacoma and Seattle.

As Hart established his medical career he began writing to supplement his income. Over seven years he published four novels depicting idealist doctors who fight illness and disease while also confronting professional arrogance and local ignorance. Hart's fiction rests squarely in the mode of realist writers such as Sinclair Lewis and Theodore Dreiser. Three elements, however, separate his work from other large social novels of the period: Hart's expert knowledge of the medical profession, his detailed depictions of the Northwest, and his subtle insights into sexual desire and identity.

In Doctor Mallory (1935) a young doctor battles the 1918 flu epidemic in a poverty-stricken fishing village on Oregon's Siletcoos River, sacrificing career, marriage, and ultimately his life for the dream of rural health care. The novel meticulously depicts rural medical practices while vividly evoking coastal Oregon in all its social bleakness, circa 1918.

In The Undaunted (1936) Dr. Richard Cameron makes his way to Seaforth (read Seattle) to take a position at Safe Harbor Hospital. On the train he meets a young woman from Spokane, and when he makes certain assumptions about her she asks, "Do you expect a woman to be what she seems?" to which he replies, "Not at all. I am not that simple-minded." Later, when they drive through the Cascade foothills, he balks at making love to her and warns her, "Don't trust the men, my dear girl, and don't trust yourself. We're, all of us, slaves to biology." Only today, with the knowledge of the author's transsexual history, does the full suggestive-ness of such passages become apparent.

Pursuing a treatment for "pernicious anemia," Dr. Cameron ventures to the state university to solicit the help of a fellow researcher, who tells him that "Seaforth...is a raw city in a raw young state" and then warns him that coming to Seaforth "is like dropping into a scientific vacuum." (For a contemporary view of Seattle's medical profession, see Michael Byers' 2004 novel Long for This World.) Thus rebuked, the good doctor establishes a backwoods facility and, against the will of his superiors, proceeds with his research. He is aided by Sandy Farquhar, a talented "x-ray man," whom critics view as a stand-in for Hart himself. Despite his medical skills, Farquhar is hounded by his peers for not fitting in and must "develop an inordinate courage in order to live at all."

Dr. Cameron becomes enamored of Puget Sound after taking a ferry to Battenridge Island. Despite complaints of becoming "mildewed" by the rain, he admires how the city across the bay "leaped gulches and lakes and sprawled carelessly over
bluffs.” Yet, to continue his research, he must return East.

Hart’s third novel, In the Lives of Men (1937), is that rare literary artifact, the Tacoma novel. The title comes from the Hippocratic oath, which pledges physicians to keep the secrets “in the lives of men which ought not to be spoken abroad”—an allusion, critics agree, to Hart’s gender identity. It also refers to the private, often lurid, details of the community that Dr. Jim Winforth must keep to himself as he joins his father’s practice.

Lying in the shadow of Mount Sehoma on a bluff above Terminal Bay, Fairharbor (read Tacoma) is known as the City of Destiny by its “dog salmon aristocracy.” It has been a boomtown since the Northwestern Pacific Railroad chose it, over Seaforth, for its Northwest terminus. Mills and smelters crowd the tide flats, filling the air with a “familiar acrid odor.” The city’s high society builds its mansions on the hill above the downtown and attends dances at the ornate Fairharbor Hotel. Its prominent families include real estate barons and timber beasts. Fairharbor also has a skid road, called Lava Flats, where gambling and prostitution prevail. Set between 1890 and 1909, In the Lives of Men offers a sweeping account of one of the most historically important yet unfairly ridiculed of Northwest cities.

Seven years later Hart returned to Seaforth with Dr. Finlay Sees It Through (1942). About a doctor who returns to restore the hospital he founded, the novel depicts the strained politics of hospital administration in the Pacific Northwest at the height of the Depression.

Though Alan Hart lived in Connecticut at the time of his death in 1962, his ashes were scattered, according to his will, in Port Angeles. Though largely forgotten today, Hart’s four richly detailed novels give an unparalleled portrait (step aside, Grey’s Anatomy) of the medical profession in Oregon and Washington.

Peter Donahue is author of the novel Madison House, which won the 2005 Langum Prize for Historical Fiction, and the short story collection The Cornelius Arms. He is also coeditor of Reading Seattle: The City in Prose.

Additional Reading

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

Bellingham Bay & British Columbia


Arming the Soviets


Inland Military Empire


Mountains of Eternal Snow


Celebrity Sea Captain


Thomas Jefferson Miller


David Thompson stands patiently in the wings of the continent's historical stage while Lewis and Clark's Corp of Discovery completes its return voyage across the mountains and down the Missouri River to St. Louis. Rather than being dressed in a brass-buttoned uniform representing a newly formed nation, Thompson is clothed in the rugged outfit of a fur trader. When his time comes, he will be well-represented by a legion of Thompson admirers with an abiding affection for this man whose endurance, energy, and competence as explorer, cartographer, naturalist, ethnographer, linguist, boat designer, astronomer, journalist, and storyteller seem so much larger than any one life might contain. Despite the author's previous book, Source of the River (1994), Thompson's accomplishments remain more recognized and understood in Canada than within the United States. But with Nisbet's second book, Mapmaker's Eye, there is little doubt that this imbalance will be corrected.

Nisbet builds on a phenomenon that Thompson followers have long known—that his personal story creates an empathetic response that can briefly override the long-term ecological and social devastation that accompanies the fur trade story. Perhaps this is due to Thompson's unassuming manner. Or is it the fact that he was never celebrated in his own time? Maybe it is the result of what we have all discovered with Lewis and Clark, that setting off into the great, unknown fires our collective imagination.

The enormity and breadth of Thompson's activities is mind-boggling. He repeatedly crossed rugged mountain ranges, forded innumerable cold rivers, met and defused tensions among tribes that had never before seen Europeans, measured and took readings by day and night to a degree bordering on obsession, and accurately mapped nearly a third of the continent. His enormous drive extended long after he left the mountains, pushing him to reconstruct the narrative of his adventures and create a series of monumental maps. While Thompson may have hoped that his efforts would result in monetary gain, they did not. By the time he died in 1857, he and his family had been struggling for years to make ends meet.

Mapmaker's Eye showcases the talents of both subject and author. It is as though Thompson's interests, abilities, and life have inspired Nisbet's own development as a writer, naturalist, and educator. This symbiosis enables the book to go beyond merely illuminating the complex chronology of Thompson's travels west of the mountains. Nisbet helps us see Thompson's world through the explorer's own eyes by providing reasoned understandings of the emotional texture of his life. The book's many fine illustrations, created by several significant artists of the day, add to the reader's experience. Written as a companion piece to an exhibition at Spokane's Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, the volume contains original works by Paul Kane and others. This combination of words and imagery represents a stunning achievement for author and museum alike.

This reviewer particularly appreciated Nisbet's ability to build relationships and tell the story of First Nations and American Indian peoples whose tribal memories shed an indigenous perspective on Thompson's travels. These and a host of other sidebars pick up fascinating detail and provide context to Thompson's story. My favorite is Nisbet's interview with a boat builder who has replicated Thompson's ingeniously designed watercraft. WSU Press has done an admirable job in designing a book will be appreciated not only in this bicentennial season but for years to come.

William D. Layman, a Wenatchee-area mental health counselor, is author of River of Memory: The Everlasting Columbia (2006) and curator of the companion exhibition of the same name organized by the Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center.
original location near Newport, Washington. Formally called the Diamond Lake School, it is often referred to as the Jore school in honor of the homesteader who donated the land on which it was built. EWU Professor Seedorf draws on a number of interviews with former students who attended the school between 1914 and 1929. Through their stories we are reminded of the unique challenges that accompanied early 20th-century rural schooling.

Many experiences are quite similar to current school culture: "playground hierarchy," the prescribed curricula, the eighth-grade examination. Ron Geaudreau shared his belief that "back then a little country boy who didn't have a jack knife and slingshot just wasn't properly dressed" for school. Stella Geaudreau discovered that she was much more than a teacher: "I learned that in a rural school, kindergarten through eighth grade, I would have to be nurse, doctor, mother, counselor, cook, custodian, baby-sitter, referee, and diplomat." Families experienced hardships difficult to imagine in the context of a contemporary public school experience. There were long walks and horseback rides in miserable weather, lard pails used as lunch boxes, and the need to either board or rent an apartment in order to send the student to school beyond eighth grade. Rita Seedorf has enriched this history of rural education with her research and writing.

The same appreciation should be given to University of Idaho Professor Mary C. Blew. On January 1, 1934, Imogene Welch began keeping a diary. Her niece, Mary Clearman Blew, has that diary, and subsequent ones Welch kept over the course of 50 years. Blew presents a story that plays between fiction and creative nonfiction as she attempts to fill the gaps left by the absence of elaboration in the journal entries. The reader is invited into an experience of sorting out the narratives themselves as well as Blew's interpretations of them.

The story of Imogene Welch is unique in that it is a narrative shared through personal reflections, yet it is also common in that it portrays elements of her experience as a woman teaching in the rural West. The story is divided into two periods: the Montana years, September 1940 to August 1942, and the Washington years, August 1942 to January 1945. The diary entries are supplemented by Mary Clearman Blew's own memories of her aunt and her personal reflections on and interpretations of the entries.

The description of the work of the rural schoolteacher is a reminder of the evolution of a job over time. The regular work of maintaining the school building, cooking for the children, and stoking the fire to warm the school complemented the actual day-to-day teaching schedule. Sometimes the job demanded even more, as when Imogene Welch undertook to register everyone in the school district for sugar rations during World War II. While tales of low resource availability and paltry salaries generally characterize stories of rural one-room schoolhouse teachers, such jobs did offer an uncommon level of independence and mobility for a woman. These freedoms came at a price, however—witness Imogene Welch's anguish at the prospect of remaining unmarried and the longing she experienced for her old life back on the family homestead. Welch's story provides a view of World War II through the eyes of a woman who was geographically isolated and emotionally detached from events taking place in Europe and East Asia.

It is with passion, caring, and commitment that Mary Clearman Blew shares her aunt's story. She weaves her own life experiences in with the narrative from Welch's diaries. Blew's discussions of her daughter's recent troubles with mental illness reveal her deep engagement with the story. Through this work of creative nonfiction, the reader is transported between two worlds—a world of historical events on a grand scale and a more personal world of human events. It is a treat to experience this historical narrative through her voice.

John Traynor, Jr. began his academic career teaching at the secondary school level. He is currently on the faculty of the School of Education at Gonzaga University.

There is a lot to consider about bridges: their design, the construction methods used, and any safety innovations. The authors of the book under review urge readers to also consider viewing bridges as historical landmarks. The United States Army built the first bridges in Washington Territory from hewn logs. They were good enough for horses and wagons, but no longer serviceable when auto registration in Washington increased to 186,000 vehicles in 1920. At that point bridge construction became a specialized science in the use of steel, concrete, beams, girders, and slabs. Eventually the utilitarian value of bridges yielded to aesthetics.

Prepared in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation, this book represents three decades of study by the agency's employees and others. During their research Craig Holstine and Richard Hobbs searched for documents in 36 repositories. But do not think of Spanning Washington as an inventory of the 7,200 bridges in the state. Actually, it considers only those bridges meeting a series of "evaluation factors" that qualify them as having historic value. The commentary, supported as it is with maps, plans, and more than 200 photographs, makes this an exceptionally interesting book. The authors educate the reader about types of bridges and then offer four chapters on what bridges tell us about the progress and time line of Washington history. Only then does the book concentrate on individual historical bridges in the state, moving region by region. Spanning Washington is the most uniquely informative book on Washington history yet to appear in the 21st century.

William Scudder is the supervising ranger at Old Mission State Park in Cataldo, Idaho.

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On the 10th anniversary of our move to downtown Tacoma, the Washington State History Museum proudly presents an exhibition that takes a look at the monumental museum construction project and how the presence of the new museum has impacted and continues to impact the City of Destiny. Photographs, drawings, architectural models, and artifacts combine to tell this unique story. A members-only event on August 8th marks the exhibit's opening, and a symposium on August 9th focuses on the gradual revitalization of Tacoma's urban core.

AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS

Exhibit Opening Celebration

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 7:30–10 PM

Join us at an opening reception for the exhibition, History in the Making, when we kick off our 10th anniversary celebration. Please make your reservation by calling the membership desk at 253/798-5902 by July 31.

SYMPOSIUM

Urban Revitalization in Downtown Tacoma

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 10–4

The museum hosts a free symposium for members and the general public. The morning session focuses on our neighborhood’s past and its significant growth over the last 10 years. The afternoon session looks at the possibilities for growth and change in the coming years. For more information or to register, please call 253/798-5890.