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A Changing of the Guard

For the first time since John McClelland, the founding editor of COLUMBIA, turned these pages over to me, we will witness a changing of the guard entrusted with the quarterly production of this magazine. I refer to the impending retirement of Elaine Miller, our photo archivist and one of the few members of the Washington State Historical Society staff family whose tenure precedes mine. For over 20 years, Elaine has diligently and creatively helped the production crew in the identification of those images that provide the perfect illustrative accompaniment to our succession of narratives. This duty, of course, was on top of her recurring responsibilities in making the Society’s collections accessible to researchers coming to the Research Center on appointment, or otherwise.

I’m reminded, in saying this, of something Robert Carriker, our book review editor since Volume 1, Number 1, said for the benefit of his peers when he departed the board of trustees, to wit: many state historical societies have staff members whose sole responsibility is production of the magazine, whereas with our Historical Society, everybody’s contribution to COLUMBIA is in addition to their main responsibilities with the organization.

In this issue, Elaine was responsible for the History Album portrait feature on William Gilstrap, my predecessor many times removed. The story of the “Tozier Heist” is my single favorite episode in organizational lore, and I hope you enjoy its telling, along with all the other contents of this number.

—David L. Nicandri, Executive Editor
By Alfred Runte

In 2001, the town of West Yellowstone celebrated the opening of a new museum. The air was filled with hope for the future. Some talked openly about restoring rail passenger service to Yellowstone—the very reason this community exists. Well, you see where the president, Congress, and the presidential candidates have been on that issue. Everyone is still looking to save Detroit—still hoping to build a greener car—which explains why the West Yellowstone centennial was such a challenge. Normally, we consider a centennial to be a celebration; the West Yellowstone centennial begs for deeper insight. With gasoline prices continuing to climb, why is the nation still wearing blinders? If the environment is to survive—let alone the economy—why do we not see the need for railroads?

Our national parks, it has been said, are "the best idea we ever had." The forgotten history, even in Yellowstone, is how much that idea owes to railroads. With the Sierra Club still 20 years into the future, Yellowstone began as a railroad park. In 1872 the Northern Pacific Railroad was its chief promoter. By 1900 every railroad in the West wanted the prestige and patronage of a national park. Addressing the Sierra Club in 1895, John Muir himself admitted the debt. "Even the soulless Southern Pacific R.R. Co.," Muir noted, "never counted on for anything good, helped nobly in pushing the bill for [Yosemite National] park through Congress."

It was still Yellowstone—THE national park—that every railroad hoped to emulate. Beginning in 1883 the Northern Pacific, initially stopping three miles short of the northern boundary, held a monopoly over the park and its visitors. That monopoly was broken here in West Yellowstone exactly 100 years ago when the Oregon Short Line, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific, brought in the first passengers from Ogden, Utah, via Pocatello and Idaho Falls.

Naturally, the Union Pacific hoped to make up for lost time. An amazing period of promotion followed, highlighted in 1915 with Union Pacific's offering at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Although meant to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal, the great fair offered the transcontinental railroads a chance to promote North America.

Even the Panama Canal could not steal that business. The cities and towns of America—and yes, now its major national parks and monuments—belonged exclusively to the railroads.

It was the perfect opportunity, Union Pacific decided, to tout its new gateway at West Yellowstone. Thus, in 1915 a second Yellowstone National Park arose on the shores of San Francisco Bay. Aply, the four-and-a-half-acre model was described as "titanic," the best of Yellowstone brought "true to life." More than a model, the railroad promised, "this Yellowstone reproduction is the largest exhibit ever erected at any World Fair, involving the use of two million feet of lumber and the expenditure of half a million dollars." Even Old Faithful Geyser was present, the railroad announced with pride. "At regular intervals, uniform with those of its prototype, great gushes of vast volumes of boiling water and steam are thrown high into the air." Nearby lay Yellowstone's "Golden Gate—as though lifted from its home in the Rockies and set down near its Pacific namesake." Afterward visitors might make their way to "Hot Spring Terraces, fed by the water from the Great Falls of the Yellowstone, which pours in a rushing torrent over the lofty precipice with a grandeur akin to the original, possessing irresistible charm."

And the railroad had just gotten started. Between eruptions of Old Faithful, "the great Spectatorium," with seating for 1,000 guests, recreated the mud pots and other wonders. Central to the grounds, a giant circular relief map further provided a bird's-eye view of Yellowstone—showing all "the important geyser and other plutonic formations; hot springs, roaring mountains, lakes, falls, cascades, grottoes, government roads, trails and other outlines." Nothing before had been "attempted on so large a scale—somewhat more than one acre in area." Union Pacific again credited the exhibit's artists, who, as "enthusiastic lovers of Yellowstone National Park," had brought alive, in miniature, its "remarkable contour, water, river and mountain effects."

Last but certainly not least, standing guard over the entire exhibit stood the rustic Old Faithful Inn. "Its exterior is, in size and construction, a replica of its prototype in faraway Yellowstone"—in all details "exact," promised the Union Pacific. "The hewn-log pillars, railed balconies, multi-gabled roof, and, high above all, the eight flapping pennants, are all there."

No wonder the American people were falling in love with their national parks. Then America's largest corporations—
today's equivalent of Exxon/Mobile and Microsoft—were among the parks' strongest allies. Not to be outdone and, indeed, in a direct challenge to the claims of the Union Pacific, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway was presenting its own six-acre exhibit—an indoor model of the Grand Canyon. Over a 30-minute excursion, visitors observed the model in "an electric observation parlor car," stopping at "seven of the grandest and most distinctive points." More than 100 miles of the canyon were on display, the railroad reported, "reproduced accurately, carefully and wrought so wonderfully that it is hard to realize that you are not actually on the rim of the Canyon itself."

There is the meaning of West Yellowstone—unabashed pride in the national parks. What became of that pride? Do you see a railroad here this morning—I mean a working one? Do you see any passenger trains in your station? You see the buildings Union Pacific deserted when it abandoned Yellowstone National Park. What you no longer see is a living history—the pride of 1908 serving the park today.

For once, let us be honest before all our cultural prejudices lock stubbornly into place. Yes, the automobile and the airplane came to compete mightily with the railroads. Yes, the federal government, under the sway of the highway lobby, subsidized that competition, until the interstate highway system—often running parallel to the railroads—allowed trucks to take their business. That explains the economic history. Today's celebration begs for the rest of the story—how the railroads, forgetting their pride, came to see the public as an albatross, and how the nation—excusing citizenship—allowed the entire culture to believe the same. Pride is the belief in citizenship—the conviction that people matter. Citizenship means respecting the need for everyone to make the culture work.

Before World War II, even our business schools were teaching that profit was the increment of money remaining after doing something useful for the country. By the 1960s the railroads had joined other large corporations in taking America down a different path. Rather than rise to the needs of American culture, most railroads threw in the towel. If they could not have all the passenger business, they wanted none of it. The passenger train had to go. John Muir's railroad, the Southern Pacific, actually advertised against its overnight train between Los Angeles and San Francisco. "The Lark is a beautiful train. Unfortunately, she cannot fly."

Effectively, the few railroads maintaining their pride were isolated, having lost their critical connections with other trains. By the time Congress approved Amtrak in 1970, barely 400 passenger trains survived in the United States out of the 5,000 still

Completed in 1903 from a design by Seattle architect Robert C. Reamer, the station at Gardiner, Montana, greeted arriving trains and Yellowstone visitors, c. 1910. Five miles by stagecoach into the park, visitors arrived at Mammoth Hot Springs and the National Hotel, marking the beginning of a five-day tour. As the caption on the photograph indicates, the Northern Pacific Railway had the original park entrance, although the original station was three miles north at Cinnabar. The last passenger trains arrived in 1955; the station was demolished in 1954.
operating in 1960. Initially, Amtrak only made it worse. On the company's first day, May 1, 1971, it slashed the fleet by more than half—from 400 to 184 trains. And most of those, their former owners confidently predicted, would be gone within five years.

What was Amtrak meant to accomplish? The organized death of the passenger train. What had the railroads gained from Amtrak? The perfect scapegoat for ending their corporate citizenship—someone the public would blame instead of them.

It happened so fast we barely thought about it or argued it. It was all over in a decade. Granted, we were distracted by the Cold War and the Vietnam War; it was a decade of violence and assassination. That is just the point. We allowed ourselves to be distracted because it was easier than standing firm. Perhaps the railroads were right. Did we need the passenger train? Not if it could no longer pay its way.

The Union Pacific Railroad brought the first passengers to West Yellowstone in June 1908, then exhibited Yellowstone in 1915 at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Featured on this souvenir postcard, the stunning attraction of the exhibit was a full-size replica of Old Faithful Inn. The back of the postcard reads: "The most pronounced success at the Panama-Pacific Exposition is the four-acre exhibit contributed by the Union Pacific System. Old Faithful Inn, seating 2,000 with the Official Exposition Orchestra of eighty men, is the popular place to dine."

What if that had been Union Pacific's attitude 100 years ago, or Congress's in 1872? Would West Yellowstone be here, let alone Yellowstone National Park? Recall that park visitation, in a nation of 100 million people, was barely noticeable at the time. In 1915, the same year Union Pacific built its great exhibit beside San Francisco Bay, the real Yellowstone had only 51,895 visitors, of which 44,477 came by train. By the 1920's—for barely enough passengers to fill Yankee Stadium, spread over a season of 90 days—five major railroads competed here. Even as the automobile became serious competition, and well past World War II, the railroads of the West took pride in the fact that they—as corporate leaders—had helped build and protect the national parks.

The point is that the railroads reaching for Yellowstone were expected to obey simple rules. In John Muir's words, they may have been soulless—and profit-motivated—but government insisted they believe in citizenship. Corporate citizens, no less than everyday citizens, were expected to serve their country. People knew better than to call their government obstructionist; after all, Americans still believed in government. A hundred years ago, the Progressive Movement was in its heyday; Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House. No one told Teddy—that is, dared to tell him—that Wall Street was exempt from citizenship.

Now that government has obligingly allowed the exemption, look at the mess we are in. In 1978 the airlines, applauding deregulation, promised us cheaper flights and better service. Now
they charge us to carry luggage, ask for legroom, or even request a window seat. If necessary, they hold us hostage on the tarmac lest we bolt for another airline. Meanwhile, if our railroads in the 1960s claimed to be losing money, think of the losses on the airlines today. Even totaling their profits since the Wright brothers, they have now lost more money than they ever made.

How did our railroads save the national parks? Again, it was by making their preservation possible—by agreeing with the public to practice citizenship. It began with the railroads thinking about the landscape—learning to respect it through moderation. Thus Frederick Billings, as president of the Northern Pacific, demanded that his contractors heed the scenery. Did you realize that Billings, Montana, is named after a conservationist? Henry David Thoreau may have disliked hearing the train whistle from his cabin on Walden Pond, but I wonder what he would say about the Massachusetts Turnpike. A railroad brings change to the landscape, but not that kind of change. When Lady Bird Johnson talked about beautification, it was the highway she had in mind.

As John Muir learned to admit, and as we have forgotten, the stewardship of a railroad is innate. It needs to follow natural contours; it remains a sliver across the land. Compare Interstate 90 west of Missoula with the abandoned Milwaukee Road. A century from now, the scars of the highway will still be visible. The former railroad, at a tenth the highway’s width, has virtually disappeared.

By respecting the land, a railroad builds respect for community; after all, a passenger train is a community. Shared expectations build into shared experiences and a shared respect for the land. There is no stopping a passenger train to dump your garbage or paint graffiti across the cliffs. There is one gateway—THE gateway—not 50 casinos along the road. A billboard next to a railroad is virtually pointless, because the train is passing through. Just as the railroad, by constructing modestly, ensured that the greater landscape would survive, the passenger train initiated travelers into a shared belief in a common good.

Now we are hearing it from Al Gore, the former vice president of the United States: without the discipline to reduce CO₂ emissions, the world as we know it will collapse. I sympathize and agree with Gore that global warming is a problem. What brought on the problem in the first place, though, was our retreat from the sustainability of railroads. In transportation, our best disciplinarian—our best preservationist—is out of sight and out of mind. In his own documentary, An Inconvenient Truth, Gore traveled in a chauffeured limousine. The rest of the time he spent on airplanes. Really, was there never a train he could take?

The inconvenient thing about speaking the truth is that few people ever want to hear it. We are not in the least prepared for global warming; we are entirely dependent on fossil fuels. Long ago, a country serious about the environment, let alone global warming, would have invested every spare dime in railroads. Instead, we have had stimulus packages—$152 billion recently—to prop up our spending at Wal-Mart. Very likely that same Congress this fall is wringing its hands over the Amtrak budget, arguing whether there is money left for a train.
Dare Montana say it—and Wyoming and Idaho? Mr. President, instead of a tax rebate—another binge at Wal-Mart—we would prefer that you restore our trains.

Why isn’t Al Gore saying that? There is no hope for reversing global warming without, yes, facing some inconvenient truths. Today we are a nation of 300 million people; the world is close to 7 billion. There is your warming problem. At 3 billion people just 40 years ago, the world refused to listen to Paul Ehrlich and Barry Commoner, Garrett Hardin and Isaac Asimov. They warned us about overpopulation, but our political correctness disallowed the debate. Who were the descendants of Christopher Columbus to tell the world not to populate? So we shut up about it, and even our universities invoked the taboo, until suddenly here we are—right where Paul Ehrlich’s 1968 book, The Population Bomb, told us we would be—running out of room, running out of resources, and heating up the planet.

This is no time for a panacea—another 40 years with our heads in the sand. There will always be cars, but we also need our railroads. There is no such thing as a “greener” car. It will still depend on oil-based asphalt—and land-gobbling highways. It will still encourage mindless sprawl. Business Week recently reported that just the parking lots surrounding our shopping centers cover an area the size of Connecticut. A better solution remains a disciplined civilization—a railroad civilization—which so frivolously threw away. Before the planet can cool, we must cool the idea of highways, period. In Europe, electrified railroads provide needed balance, allowing pavement and sprawl to be confined. There again, Montana once had that railroad—the electrified Milwaukee Road. What happened to that marvelous piece of engineering? It was torn up. Our one electrified railroad today—Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor—is entirely in the East. We are all our railroads to be electrified, tied to a combination of wind, solar, and hydroelectric power, think how that would reduce global warming and our dependence on fossil fuels.

The point is that the need is here. Our population has tripled in less than a century. Meanwhile, every year the nation loses the equivalent of Yellowstone National Park—2 million acres—to the inexorable march of urban sprawl. Fifty Yellowstones make a California. At the present rate, in 50 years another California will be lost to asphalt. We are just kidding ourselves if we think we can reverse that outcome by building windmills for plug-in cars.

Our way of moving needs discipline, too. As Garrett Hardin, the noted human ecologist, reminded us, we can never do merely one thing. The solution lies in many things that properly intersect. For this comparison, we need only look at Europe, which still runs tens of thousands of passenger trains every day. Europe never bought into the argument that its railroads were expendable. Having built them once—having made the investment—Europeans considered them too valuable to let go, and too valuable for carrying people to allow them just to carry freight.

Today, our business school graduates are trained to protest: “But Professor Runte, that is socialism.” I say no, it is citizenship—it is civilization. For once forget the label and look at the result. Europe is ready for global warming; ready if its airlines collapse; ready if gasoline exceeds ten dollars a gallon; ready to move and survive. We are not ready for the sniffles, let alone the flu. With barely 1,550 passenger railcars, and just 300 trains, Amtrak doesn’t even have the capacity to serve tiny Delaware when oil reaches $250 a barrel, let alone the entire country.

That is what happens when a country throws an investment away—tearing up the old just to build something new. That may have been legitimate for the horse and buggy, but the argument was stupid when it came to railroads. Even on its best day, the fastest car could never beat the fastest train. Now Europe has trains exceeding 200 mph; high-speed trains are being extended all the way east to Moscow. In Berlin, the German federal railroad system just opened a $4.6 billion central railroad station that operates on four levels. Pick your level in the station; pick your train, and go—north to Sweden, south to Italy, east to Russia, and west to Spain. Europe is not bemoaning what it threw away; it knew a future of scarcity would one day arrive. If West Yellowstone were in Bavaria, or in the Alps, you would never have lost your trains in the first place.

We know when we are doing the right thing. Again, recall the words of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1915. “The Panama Canal is the world’s greatest commercial achievement. There is nothing to compare with it and a grand International Exposition to celebrate the realization of this dream of four centuries is eminently appropriate. In no sense is this exposition simply a local or California undertaking. Every state and all the people are alike interested and it is a simple duty that all feel a responsibility and pride in its success.”

With that identical commitment, and identical pride, Union Pacific founded the community of West Yellowstone, and then announced, at the exposition, its pride in Yellowstone National Park. Once upon a time, even our robber barons knew how to build a country—how to profit without tearing it down. They joined us, in the words of John Muir, in building for beauty as well as bread. If that kind of citizenship is suddenly too big for us, no amount of hand-wringing will suffice. Neither Al Gore nor the Nobel Prize will save us from having lost what we really need.

Even if global warming were not an issue, we should want the land preserved. Until West Yellowstone is again a railroad town, Yellowstone cannot properly function as a national park. Until the United States is again a railroad country, we cannot properly save the land. If you begin saying that tomorrow, your centennial will have been a success. Starting tomorrow, then, and starting in earnest, remind us that Yellowstone needs its trains back—and so do we all.

Alfred Runte lives in Seattle where he is executive director of All Aboard Washington, the state’s leading advocate for passenger rail. A specialist on transportation and the environment, Runte’s most recent book is Allies of the Earth: Railroads and the Soul of Preservation (Truman State University Press). This essay is based on remarks presented on the Centennial of West Yellowstone in June 2008.
By John Daughters

At age 46, in 1907, Ellen Powell Dabney came to Seattle to teach at then-new Lincoln High School and began a career that spanned the next three decades. Her background, education, and experience fit well with the growth and direction of the Seattle school system, and her classes in "cookery" at Lincoln High helped launch her into a leadership role in the emerging home economics movement.

Under visionary superintendent Frank B. Cooper, the Seattle public school system attracted teachers from far and wide; and the pay scale for Seattle Public Schools, low as it was, ranked higher than many school systems around the country. Doris Pieroth, a Seattle historian and writer, describes these new teachers as both older and more experienced than was typical elsewhere. They were interested in the prospects of a professional career despite the prohibition on marriage for female teachers. This was certainly true of Ellen Powell Dabney.

Born in Illinois in 1861, Ellen Powell was the daughter of a Methodist minister and a mother who shouldered the burden of farm life while her husband traveled his church circuit. Ellen frequently accompanied her father to camp meetings and other church gatherings and assisted with the music and other tasks. From a young age she was exposed to discussions of church sermons and current events. The Reverend and Mrs. Powell motivated, educated, and enabled their children to succeed; and their sons and daughters found successful careers in teaching, ministry, law, and journalism.

Ellen Powell entered nearby Lincoln University at an early age. She studied natural sciences for three years, went on to Illinois Female College in Jacksonville, Illinois, where she studied music and art for a year, and wrapped up a year at Chicago Female College with a diploma in hand.

Ellen Powell Dabney
Leading the Home Economics Movement in Washington

ABOVE: Ellen Powell Dabney shortly after her arrival in Seattle in 1907. Dabney was the founding president of the Washington State Home Economics Association.

The choices for a woman with five years of college in the early 1880s were limited. While most other professions were considered the domain of men, teaching was one of the main occupational options available to women. Following the lead of her older sisters, Ellen Powell took that path. Her first teaching job was at the Henderson (Kentucky) Female Seminary, where her subjects included history and science. Life in Henderson included a social network of teachers and church people, and within those overlapping circles she was introduced to James Rumsey Dabney, the county judge. They courted through much of 1883-84 and were married Christmas Day of 1884. With marriage, most women, including Ellen Dabney, gave up careers outside the home. The family grew with the birth of two boys in Henderson.
In 1886, at the end of James Dabney’s term of office as judge, the Dabneys decided to move west. The relocation to Spokane Falls, Washington Territory, was motivated in part by James Dabney’s hope of appointment to a federal office. He also aspired to capitalize on the Spokane land boom that had taken off with the completion of a rail connection from Spokane Falls to the East. The pull west also came from Ellen Dabney’s side of the family. Powells had been going to Oregon since the 1850s. Ellen’s older sister Martha had traveled with an aunt and uncle to Salem, Oregon, in 1870 where she taught school for 10 years before moving on to Portland and, eventually, Seattle.

IFE IN SPOKANE BEGAN with great hope, even though someone else was tapped for the coveted federal appointment. Church life was active, as always; another lot or two was purchased; James’s career as an attorney was in the building stages; and he dabbed in local business and Democratic Party politics. In Spokane Ellen gave birth to three more children. But the optimism of 1886 had fizzled by 1894. A second try for a federal appointment went nowhere, James’s law career was stagnating, and the Panic of 1893 sent land values plummeting. Some folks left Spokane, including the Dabneys. Back on Kentucky soil, this time in Hopkinsville, James Dabney continued to practice law. A year after the family’s return to Kentucky, he died of typhoid fever, and Ellen was left to support herself and five children. More fortunate than many widows, she was able to fall back on her education and teaching experience. Hopkinsville had, at the time, two schools for women: South Kentucky College and Bethel Female College. Ellen Dabney taught at both: botany and physiology at Bethel in the morning and art at South Kentucky in the afternoon. An accomplished artist, she also painted china in her spare time for extra income.

Teaching continued in Hopkinsville until 1902 when she moved to Hancock County, Illinois—closer to her mother and the siblings who remained in Illinois. During the next few years she taught art at Carthage College and sciences at Carthage High School. Teaching science was still a male teacher’s domain, and her insistence upon being given the opportunity was a demonstration of her self-assurance and ambition. Her “First Grade County Certificate” qualified her to teach a wide range of subjects, including Physiology and Hygiene, “with special reference to the effects of alcoholic beverages, stimulants, and narcotics on the human system.”

She was clearly qualified to teach subjects ranging from English and history to science and art, but her primary interest remained in the sciences. Summer sessions at Valparaiso College in Indiana focused on science courses, and a registration with the Clark Teachers’ Agency in 1905 highlighted botany, zoology, and physiology as her preferred subjects. Her registration with the Clark Teachers’ Agency reflected dissatisfaction with the position she already held. Her salary at that time, listed as $55 a month, was lower than what schools offered for comparable positions out west and in many of the larger cities. In addition to stating a need for greater pay, she also indicated that...
Domestic science, or Home Economics, as it came to be called, was seen by most of its adherents as the application of science and economy to the home, a term that also meant the larger community beyond the family abode. This scientific background and concern for the greater community was certainly the case for the woman considered to be the founder of the home economics movement, Ellen H. Richards. The first woman admitted to MIT and a chemist involved with issues of municipal sanitation, Ellen H. Richards convened a group of interested people at Lake Placid, New York, that ultimately led to the formation of the American Home Economics Association.

Attracted to this developing movement, Ellen Dabney applied to Teachers College at Columbia in New York and began a one-year study of home economics in 1906, coming into contact with the primary center of the emerging field at one of its key locations. When the American Home Economics Association was formed in December 1908, Ellen Dabney was listed as a founding member.

In May 1907 she applied to Seattle Public Schools. Her choice of Seattle was not accidental. In addition to its reputation as a growing, progressive city with a good school system, it was also the home of her younger brother, John H. Powell. He had built a reputation as an attorney, served a term in the state legislature, and was on the University of Washington Board of Regents. Her inclusion of his name and address as a local contact on her application seems astute. She began teaching cooking and nutrition courses at Lincoln High that fall.

Her oldest daughter, Margaret, enrolled at the University of Washington, and the two youngest, Helen and Elmer, entered Lincoln in its first year. Particularly close to her oldest daughter, Ellen Dabney must have been heartbroken when Margaret became ill in late 1907 and died early the following year. Despite the death of her daughter, Dabney’s life in Seattle took root. Her two youngest children graduated from Lincoln High School in 1910 and went on to the university, and she was named the first supervisor of home economics for the Seattle schools. Nearing age 50, Ellen Dabney had found her place at last. Her career at the schools and the rise of home economics were intertwined. In April 1911 she presided over the first convention of the Washington State Home Economics Association as its founding president, and in the summer of the same year she taught at the University of Washington.

The period before World War I is frequently portrayed as one of energy, ambition, and progress for Seattle and the country as a whole. That was also the case for Ellen Dabney. In addition to her expanding duties in the schools, she continued to

Ballard High School
students examine coffee and tea
for the presence of tannins. Early
adherents of Home Economics
attempted to put the emerging
field on a scientific foundation,
with a particular emphasis
on chemistry.
teach summer quarters at the university and developed a statewide curriculum for home economics; she also immersed herself in the work of the Washington Education Association and the Washington State Federation of Women's Clubs, serving as chair of standing committees on home economics for both organizations.

The women's clubs were a powerful force in Seattle, exemplified by the election of Bertha Knight Landes, president of the Seattle Federation of Women's Clubs, to the Seattle City Council in 1922 and the office of mayor in 1926 on a platform of "municipal housekeeping."

Besides her education and club work, church continued to be an important part of Ellen Dabney's life. Membership in downtown Seattle's Plymouth Congregational Church completed the trio of overlapping networks of school, women's clubs, and church activities in which she moved. Family purchase of farmland at Maltby, Snohomish County, also brought her into the orbit of the Maltby Congregational Church where, with an almost "home missionary" kind of zeal, she frequently would bring guest preachers from Seattle during a period when the Maltby church had no regular minister.

Ellen Dabney's circle of influence was not confined to Washington. She continued to be active in the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) at all levels, serving on the Finance Committee of the national organization, and speaking at and helping to organize state, regional, and national conferences.

During World War I she took a leave of absence from Seattle Public Schools and worked with the U.S. Food Administration in Washington, D.C. Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s she continued to travel extensively to conferences of the AHEA, the National Educational Association, and, the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection.

In the first years of the Great Depression, Ellen Dabney was a member of the Women's Employment Committee, part of a mayoral commission on improving economic circumstances in Seattle. The committee was headed by former mayor Bertha Landes and Evangeline Starr, an attorney who became King County's second female justice of the peace.

The American Home Economics Association held its annual convention in Seattle in July 1936. In advance of the convention, Dabney worked with the local committee and wrote an article on Seattle and its schools for the AHEA Journal. "It has been the aim of our leading citizens to establish our educational system on a broad, firm foundation with ideals to match the stability and grandeur of our mountains," she wrote, reflecting an obvious pride in her city and in the school system she had helped build. Her health continued to decline through 1936 and by late fall she was no longer able to work her habitual long hours. Ellen Powell Dabney died in January 1937 at age 75, still an employee of the Seattle Public Schools.

From the vantage point of the 21st century, the field of home economics may appear dated and old-fashioned, but to women like Ellen Powell Dabney it was an emerging profession that allowed them to apply their knowledge of the natural and social sciences to the home and the larger community. Through the home economics movement, women's clubs, and church networks, women were active participants in the development of Seattle and Washington in the early 20th century. While the blinders of class and race sometimes confined their vision, Dabney and others like her were nevertheless part of the Progressive Era and helped expand the role of women in American society.

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FROM A FEW DESERTING SAILORS seeking refuge to the thousands of immigrants who followed and worked under labor contracts in Washington's resource extraction industries at the turn of the 20th century, the Japanese struggle for survival, acceptance, and prosperity was continuous. Outside the Japanese American community and academia, few in Washington today are aware of the significant numbers of Japanese who, dispossessed of both land and opportunity in Japan, immigrated to the Northwest. Part of their legacy was their contribution to the labor force and economic growth of the state, particularly in railroad construction and the lumber industry.

The trickle of immigrants, especially those working in the timber industry, began in the late 19th century and burgeoned in the early 1900s. Between 1901 and 1908 more immigrants from Japan—over 20,000—entered the United States through Seattle and Portland than from any other country. In the first decade of the 20th century, 20 percent of Washington's Japanese immigrant population was working in the timber industry. They were mostly
young men who had fled Japan to escape military conscription or search for better jobs and wages than they could get in Japan at that time.

This was an era of huge railroad and lumber industry expansion in the Northwest, and labor contractors took advantage of this new supply of cheap labor. The three major transcontinental railroads in the Northwest—the Northern Pacific Railroad, the Great Northern Railway, and the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railway—had a great need for workers. Their earlier source of low-cost labor dried up because Congress had banned immigration from China in 1882 and the Chinese population had largely been expelled from Washington in the mid-1880s. The big mill at Port Blakely had a contingent of Japanese workers as early as 1888.

A bookman, or foreman—appointed by the contractor or sometimes elected by the crew—was in charge of the Japanese in a logging camp or mill. He took on the role of translator and also facilitated the salesmen who traveled to the camps to sell Asian foods and supplies to eager Japanese customers. Sometimes the bookman received a 5 percent commission for his efforts, a considerable sum in a camp with a large Japanese crew.

According to Kazuo Ito in *Issei: A History of Japanese Immigrants in North America*,

At the end of the month a gambling boss came with his hangers-on and relieved the Issei of much of their money. Some gamblers brought prostitutes, with souvenir drinks of beer—fifty or sixty bottles plus a fifty-gallon keg—introducing themselves and their company with the relaxed nonchalance of [an] old friend. It was really a queer scene. My friends and I were “three no boys,” that is, no drinking, no woman buying, no gambling.

Originally there were large numbers of Chinese employed at the Port Madison Mill on Bainbridge Island, but they were all discharged in December 1875. According to anthropologist Ronald Olson in his 1924 University of Washington undergraduate thesis, once the emperor allowed significant numbers of Japanese to immigrate, many young men arrived from Japan with only one suit, a bedroll, and less than $10.00 to their name and no passport. No questions asked about the passport. They could go to work at the mill right away for $1.30 or $1.40 a day. They also got meals and a place to sleep.

The men had little to do besides working, gambling, and sometimes acting rowdy,” said Kihachi Hirakawa, who started working in the mill in 1890 and wrote: “In the camp of the sawmill there were 24 Japanese living together at the same place.... They were working every day except Sunday, but every night were gambling until midnight or 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning.... I couldn’t sleep by their noisy talk or sometimes (they would) quarrel or fight.”

In Mukilteo, in 1903, the Crown Lumber Company had a crew of 85 Japanese who were employed in camp by a Mr. Noguchi.

LEFT: Dressed in their Sunday finest, a group of Walsville Lumber Company Japanese workers and their families pose for a photographer on August 18, 1911.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Pausing from their work on Walsville Lumber Company’s railroad grade, these Japanese steam shovel crew members are dressed in “tin pants” and Filson wool “cruiser” coats to ward off the omnipresent rain and cold facing loggers of all ethnic origins.
The Tacoma Eastern Railroad was world-famous for its ability to bring long trains of one-log carloads night and day out of the woods of Kapowsin, Mineral, and Morton. However, it was also the means by which 100,000 tourists arrived at the gateway of Mount Rainier National Park. The contractor responsible for much of the grading we see today along the Tacoma Eastern Railroad was William H. Remington, who employed some 300 Japanese workers to do grading for him in 1904.

Pierce County had recently enacted a head tax of two dollars a month for each worker of Asian descent, merely for the privilege of working there. The new poll tax went into effect on May 1, 1904, and was first deducted from the men's pay on the June 21st payday. When the Japanese learned of the county payroll deduction, they immediately demanded their pay in full from the paymaster. When he refused, the indignant men demanded that the Remington construction foreman make up the difference. All attempts at negotiation broke down quickly. Outnumbered, the foreman and the paymaster fled for the safety of the station car situated at the end of track. There the two men were held captive by an angry mob. They were allowed no food or water while they anxiously awaited rescue and spent a sleepless night worried that they would be lynched, shot, or worse yet, roasted to death if the car was set ablaze.

The next morning a representative of the Remington Construction Company, Sydney Plummer, alighted from the construction train accompanied by Sheriff McCulloch. When the sheriff arrived, the striking laborers liberated their captives who stuck close to the sheriff until they could all safely leave. According to the June 23, 1904, Port Townsend Daily Leader, Plummer was able to convince some of the men that the tax was legitimate: "One-half of the men employed went back to work, but the others, still disgruntled, struck for good, and returned to the city. The paymaster and foreman also left their positions and returned to Tacoma."

Careful government surveys in 1909 counted 2,240 Japanese working 67 mills and camps throughout Washington. This was roughly 5 percent of the timber industry labor force. A glimpse of Issei and Nisei life in the woods and camps can be seen through vintage photographs, oral histories, ephemera, and historical documents that connect the stories with the faces.

Seen as second-class citizens—subhuman by some—and barred from citizenship, the Japanese nevertheless exhibited their humanity, compassion, and drive to succeed in stories both told and untold. Take, for example, this brief news item in the November 1911 edition of West Coast Lumberman about a Japanese father and son working tandem for Pacific National Lumber Company, at National, Washington, near the entrance to Mount Rainier. "A Japanese, about 18 years of age, slipped off the dock. His father started down a ladder to rescue him and fell, breaking his leg." It was known that the son died from his fall, but that is all. The Japanese immigrant experience between 1885 and 1942 was punctuated by many such industrial and familial tragedies.

The Japanese appear to have been as susceptible to the vices of the logger as any other ethnic group. A 1902 Japanese labor handbook admonishes:

As a laborer in the countryside, you will toil from dawn to dusk with only shots of whiskey and cigarettes to enjoy. Beware of gambling! Why did you leave your home and cross the wide Pacific to endure hardships in this foreign land? It was to enrich your family and benefit your homeland. Then, why try to forget your long days of toiling by gambling?

The June 28, 1919, Eatonville Dispatch carried the following humorous item:
Last Sunday Eatonville was accorded the supreme honor and privilege of entertaining the County Sheriff and a bevy of his "acquaintances." The party was the guest of Mr. K. Miyamoto, a Japanese mill-worker in the employ of the Eatonville Lumber Co. Mr. Miyamoto entertained his friends with some novel sights, notably an amber colored liquid used as Mr. Miyamoto explained "for experimental purposes." As the guests had taken a large amount of this liquid for the purpose of showing it to their Tacoma friends, they were entertained in a little game known as "Break the bottle." This proved very amusing and entertaining. On account of lack of County transportation the Eatonville City truck was pressed into service to carry the "experiment" liquid to Tacoma. This, however, proved disastrous because of the peculiar actions of the truck after the cargo was safely stowed aboard. After criss-crossing the road a number of times, it finally sloughed into a ditch and turned over on its side. The escort vouchsafed the information that the truck was loaded.

Snippets of information from varied sources paint a fleeting picture of Japanese life in the lumber camps and mill town of Walville, Washington. In a love triangle rivaling a pulp fiction novel, Tony Matsuo, a foreman of Japanese millworkers in Walville, and his henchmen murdered three Japanese laborers and buried them in shallow graves. Tony turned fugitive.
In the ensuing months, an innocent man committed suicide and the reputation of a married Japanese woman became a casualty in this sordid affair that rocked the Japanese community on the West Coast.

Walville Lumber Company and its mill town had a large population of Japanese who worked in the mill and woods and, according to pictorial evidence, ran a steam shovel—a decidedly skilled occupation.

Amidst the blackened stumps of logged off, burnt-over land, Walville's Japanese set up a sumo ring and participated in a Northwest sumo league. Baseball was popular in the state's lumber industry, and many mills, camps, and company towns fielded teams. The Japanese formed separate teams.

Typically, the Japanese workers had their own camp or boardinghouse—referred to in those days as Jap Town—and these can be found in mill towns and in-the-woods camps on various maps. It has been noted that Japanese camp buildings were often known as shacks. According to Ronald Olson, the condition of the Japanese housing usually mirrored that of the white workers in the camp; if the whites' buildings were run-down then so were those of the Japanese. If the whites' were painted and well kept, so, too, were those of the Japanese and their families.

The Japanese cemetery, one of the last traces of Walville, was for decades almost completely overgrown by brambles and undergrowth. Someone with an interest in its inhabitants has recently reclaimed it from the brush and restored its former dignity. The family names of some of those buried there are Koyama, Nakashima, Okabe, Satomi, and Nakayama.

Born in Fukushima Prefecture, Shichiro Kuma-saka, at age 17, and his brother, Juji, were called to Seattle by their father, Sataro, in 1919. "What I remembered all through my life before World War II was the work that I did at the sawmill at St. Paul, a suburb of Tacoma, where I went as soon as I arrived in the States," he recalled.

Tatshiro Matsui from Shiga prefecture was the bookman there, and under him fifty or sixty Japanese were working. I labored diligently, making nearly $3.00 a day for ten hours work, since we were young, sometimes we took overtime work and went as long as twenty hours without sleeping.

In the Japanese camp at St. Paul most men were wholesome workers and we played judo, tennis and baseball.... As for baseball, along with some Japanese students in Tacoma we organized the Taiyo Club.

Japanese wages often were 15 to 25 percent less than the wages of white workers doing the same job. This was not always the case, and at St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, once the largest mill in the world, the Japanese were allowed the privileges of union workers though not allowed by the union to join. Japanese workers also worked laying tracks for railroad logging in St. Paul & Tacoma's large logging camps near the Carbon and Puyallup rivers.

The 1915 Timber Workers Employment Guide was a vest pocket reference to many mills and camps in Washington. The guide gives the nominal size of the mill or camp along with a brief description of working conditions, payday, whether a dollar per month for "hospital" was deducted, and so forth. Another interesting feature was the caveat, "Employ Japanese" or "Many Japanese." In addition to bunk quality—rough, fair, or good—it was noted if a company was a “poor place to work" and whether it was friendly, tolerant, or hostile where unions were concerned.

Washington's Japanese labor force seems to have fostered at least a few Issei-owned businesses. Founded in 1928 by Japan-born Fujimatsu Moriguchi, the Northwest Asian supermarket Uwajimaya has its roots in a humble Tacoma-area food cart out of which Moriguchi sold fish cakes to Japanese loggers and fishermen. Born in Yawatahama, Japan, on the island of Shikoku, Moriguchi had learned to make fish cakes and other Japanese specialty foods in the Shikoku village of Uwajima. After the internment, Moriguchi relocated to the Seattle area and founded the now-famous Uwajimaya.

Until World War II, Japanese workers made up a significant percentage of the labor force in Washington's lumber industry. The Japanese communal experience is made poignant by the existence two very different documents—a sketch by a Japanese boy who grew up in a mill community and, out of fond memory, drew a map depicting where the Asian and white families lived; and a United States government letter notifying Weyerhaeuser's Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company mill that their Japanese employees were about to be interned.

Here are some demographics on Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Mill's Nikkei (people of Japanese ancestry) employees as of December 1941: Japanese nationals, men, 42; Japanese nationals, women, 11 (one listed as cook, others apparently employees' wives); American citizens, men, 15; American citizens, women, 7 (apparently wives); American citizens, children, 27 (apparently 12 different families). Nearly half of the Japanese nationals had been employed for over a decade.

Because of American xenophobia and racism, the Japanese lacked the protection of full citizenship and civil rights and thus had neither the political voice nor the power to speak for themselves against discrimination and internment. Internment was a harrowing ordeal for Japanese immigrant families and created for them a severe disconnect from their prewar past of the previous four decades. An understanding of the Japanese immigrant community's economic and cultural contributions as well as their struggles is critical for contemporary Washingtonians. Their history and experience is echoed today in the current controversy over immigration reform and illegal workers.

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William H. Gilstrap was active in the early arts community in Tacoma where he helped organize the Tacoma Art League, taught art classes, became curator of the Ferry Museum. He was appointed secretary of the Washington State Historical Society in 1907. The strangest episode in Gilstrap's career is the "Great Tozier Heist."

Captain Dorr Francis Tozier collected thousands of Northwest Indian artifacts in his travels with the United States Revenue Cutter Service. Tozier entrusted his collection to the Ferry Museum in 1900 while he searched for a buyer.

In 1909 a group of Seattleites promised to pay Tozier's asking price of $40,000. When Tacoma could not match the offer, Gilstrap unwillingly consented to give up the collection, with the exception of a group of baskets that were to be kept as payment for housing the artifacts. Thirty "workmen" were sent to Tacoma to retrieve the collection. When they decided to take the baskets as well, an incensed Gilstrap protested loudly. The men pushed him into his office and locked the door, but he continued to yell, so they shut the transom over his door. Only when the last artifact was loaded on the steamer to Seattle was the key turned and Gilstrap allowed out of his office.

The next day the Tacoma Ledger headline blared: "HOLD CURATOR PRISONER DURING RAID ON CURIOS -- Gilstrap Overpowered by 30 Brawny Men." The collection was eventually dispersed amongst the Heye Foundation (now the National Museum of the American Indian), the Burke Museum, and the Seattle Art Museum.
By Gregory Nobles

In the chilly depths of February 2007, the birding community back in Boston got somewhat a-flutter about the sighting of a bird rare to the East Coast—Townsend's warbler, a species that typically spends more time in the Pacific Northwest. I followed the story with some interest, partly because of the rarity of the sighting, which any birder, like myself, would find intriguing.

Even more to the point, as a historian writing a book on birds and natural history in early 19th-century America, I also found the story of Townsend's warbler of interest because of the man for whom the bird was named—John Kirk Townsend (1809-1851). The Philadelphia-based naturalist's account of his travels in an 1834 exploratory expedition to the Pacific Northwest—Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River (1839)—has become a classic narrative of natural history in the then-young nation. Townsend collected dozens of western birds and sent their preserved skins back to the East Coast, where many of them came into the eagerly waiting hands of John James Audubon (1785-1851), the great artist/naturalist and, as it happens, the human centerpiece of my book.

In addition to sharing his specimens with Audubon, Townsend did him the great honor of naming a warbler after him, and Audubon's warbler still appears on checklists of birds in the American West. (Townsend called the bird Sylvia auduboni, although it is now more accurately described as the western version of the yellow-rumped warbler, Dendroica coronata. According to the standards of scientific nomenclature, it was unseemly for the discoverer of a new species to give the bird, animal, or flower, one's own name; naming something for a friend, though, was fine and, indeed, a mark of great respect.) In turn, Townsend had two western birds named in his honor: Audubon favored him with Townsend's mocking thrush (now called Townsend's solitaire), and Thomas Nuttall, Townsend's fellow naturalist and traveling companion to the Northwest, assigned a black-throated wood warbler the name Townsend's warbler—a label that, as our Boston birders can attest, has certainly stuck. (The scientific name for Townsend's solitaire is Myadestes townsendi, and Townsend's warbler is Dendroica townsendi.)

The naming of the western specimens did not stop there. In 1838, soon after acquiring the skins of the birds Townsend had collected, Audubon wrote his close friend John Bachman, "I have made bold enough to name a new Woodpecker after you; it is another species of Hairy Woodpecker from the Columbia River sent to me by Townsend, and I think you will be quite astonished to see that at this moment no less than 19 species of this interesting tribe are in my published plates.

Indeed, the "specious species" I refer to in the title of this essay come from one of the later plates (CCCCXVII) in Audubon's magnificent four-volume collection of avian art, The Birds of America (1827-1838), in which Audubon depicts ten views of six allegedly different western woodpeckers. One is labeled "Audubon's Woodpecker," and three others are labeled for Audubon's friends: "Maria's Woodpecker," "Philip's Woodpecker," and "Harris's Woodpecker." ("Maria's Woodpecker" was named for Maria Martin, Audubon's occasional background and plant painter;
“Phillip’s Woodpecker” for Benjamin Phillip, a British patron and friend of the Audubon family; and “Harris’s Woodpecker” for Edward Harris, Audubon’s first real benefactor and long-time friend and traveling companion.

Unfortunately for Audubon’s friends, ornithologists now consider most of the woodpeckers in the plate to be various forms of the hairy woodpecker—not distinct species—and the names have not stuck. Still, even if their names no longer appear in modern guidebooks, Audubon’s friends could perhaps take posthumous pleasure in the fact that they have been painted into posterity in The Birds of America.

I raise the issue of these misnamed western specimens not just to point out a few ornithological errors on the part of early 19th-century naturalists. Rather, my aim is to point out a larger west-to-east connection in early 19th-century natural history: the collection of western birds by eastern naturalists and, by no means incidentally, the process of classifying them with both Latin binomials and the names of friends. At a time when American ornithology was still in what one historian has called its discovery phase, the prospect of identifying and, perhaps equally important, naming a new bird gave naturalists a remarkable opportunity for making a significant contribution for science—and for enhancing their own reputations as well.

It also gave them an opportunity for enhancing the reputation and, perhaps implicitly, extending the reach of their nation. Beginning in the late 18th century, especially in the wake of American independence, American naturalists had struggled to assert an increasing confidence that the American environment was not just a degraded form of the European, nor were the fauna that inhabited it. Then, in the early years of the 19th century, and especially in the wake of the Lewis and Clark expedition, naturalists understood that North America opened up a new world of scientific opportunity, a vast expanse of territory inhabited by innumerable new species, where nature itself seemed different from that of Europe. The task of American naturalists, then, was to go into that environment, seek out new species, name them, and, in the process, lay scientific claim to them for the United States. In that regard, natural history and national history became increasingly—and, I would argue, intentionally—intertwined.

Audubon’s self-appointed task reveals both the scientific and the political ambition inherent in early national natural history. In the original printed “Prospectus” for The Birds of America of 1827, Audubon had boldly (and perhaps foolishly) promised that his work would eventually contain upwards of 400 drawings and encompass all the species he could encounter on the continent. But his use of the term “America” in the title of his work did not refer to the North American continent as a whole. Rather, it served as a form of shorthand for the emerging—and expanding—new nation, the United States. As early as August 1820, for instance, Audubon wrote to Henry Clay, his fellow Kentuckian and speaker of the United States House of Representatives, that “after having spent the greater part of Fifteen Years in procuring and Drawing the Birds of the United States with a view of publishing them,” he had “a desire to complete the Collection before I present it to My Country in perfect order.”

The critical terms there are “Collection,” “My Country,” and “perfect order.” The Birds of America was as possessive as it was comprehensive, attempting both to depict, classify, and in some cases name all the avian species in North America. In the process, it both encompassed and defined them as “American” in national rather than generically continental terms. While we might excuse Audubon for making an occasional ornithological misidentification, as in the case of the western woodpeckers, we have to understand the impulse behind the appropriation of these species: they were symbols of a much larger enterprise in which both art and science served an expansionist agenda and, indeed, anticipated the acquisition of much more than birds.

Making nature truly American would require a truly American sort of naturalist, and Audubon had a useful model in mind: himself, the self-styled “American Woodman.” One had to be willing to take physical risks in the pursuit of science, he argued, or risk becoming that most loathsome of scientists, the “closet-naturalist.” It might be easy enough to sit in one’s armchair and read from a text and take the word of others; nothing, however, could replace “personal observation when it can be obtained,” of actually seeing the birds.
Townsend and Nuttall collected fossils, mammals, and birds-almost everything that they (and Townsend's funders back in Philadelphia) could possibly want.

They certainly gave Audubon what he wanted—even if they didn't always do things the way he might have wanted. Townsend, for instance, once killed a bird but—because it was moulting and not in the full beauty of its plumage—threw the specimen away, figuring he would find another; unfortunately, he never did. Perhaps he learned a valuable lesson about always keeping specimens, no matter how disappointing they may appear. Townsend also learned a useful lesson about using the right ammunition for the right bird. On the same trip, while hunting cranes along the Columbia River, he suddenly saw a small owl alight on the branch of a nearby tree, and, not taking time to reload with smaller shot, he put a rifle ball through it. He got his bird—the Little Columbian Owl, Audubon called it, or Short Eared Owl—but as Townsend admitted in sending it to Audubon, the specimen was "somewhat mutilated, in consequence of having lost one wing by the ball." Audubon painted the owl in profile, with the better side showing.

Better the wrong gun, perhaps, than no gun at all. Audubon often praised Townsend's naturalist companion, Thomas Nuttall, for his fine eye and field-based expertise, but he also took several subtle digs at his method. Soon after Townsend and Nuttall set off for the West, Audubon wrote John Bachman about Nuttall's limits as a specimen collector: "Nuttall will not seize those in the manner of others or shoot them as we could do, for the good fellow cannot swim a yard and I believe never had a Gun to his shoulder."

With that emphasized "we," Audubon slyly but certainly separated Nuttall from his more firearm-friendly compatriots. Sure enough, Nuttall sometimes failed to get good specimens because he did not use a gun. Once, according to Audubon, Nuttall came upon a female Anna's hummingbird perched on her nest in a low oak bush, and by cautiously approaching, "he secured the bird with his hat." In the meantime, the male hummingbird "fluttered angrily around, but as my friend had not a gun, he was unable to procure it."

The same thing happened with a western species of whippoorwill that Nuttall described to Audubon but could not capture: "It was frequently seen by him," Audubon noted, "often within a few feet, but was not procured, probably because he was not in the habit of carrying a gun on his rambles." In the end, Audubon named this bird he had never seen and thus never drawn in honor of his unarmed friend—Nuttall's whippoorwill—but the honor carried a slight taint: Audubon listed it under "Species Seen... But Not Characterized."

Still, those weaknesses of collecting technique aside, Townsend and Nuttall had gone much farther across the continent than Audubon himself would ever go, and they made an enormous contribution to his work. The collection of western bird specimens they sent to Audubon proved absolutely essential to the completion of a work that carried such an ambitious title as
With the Nuttall and Townsend specimens, Audubon had more birds from more of America than he had dared hope.

The Birds of America; with the Nuttall and Townsend specimens, he had more birds from more of America than he had dared hope. In October 1836, when Audubon actually saw the specimens they brought back, he all but shouted his joy to his friend John Bachman:

I have purchased Ninety Three Bird Skins! Yes 93 Bird Skins! — Well what are they? Why nought less than 93 Bird Skins sent from the Rocky Mountains and the Columbia River by Nuttall & Townsend! — Cheap as Dirt too —... Such beauties! such rarities! Such Novelties!

At the moment Audubon first beheld the western birds, Townsend and Nuttall immediately rose to a lofty place in his personal pantheon of fellow naturalists. They had willingly, even eagerly, accepted the rigors of research and repeatedly gone far into the field to find the specimens that Audubon would use to complete The Birds of America and thus make his massive contribution to defining the American-ness of nature in the United States.

Audubon never underestimated the impact of his work in the world of natural history. A little over a year later, when he was anxiously awaiting the arrival of more western specimens from Townsend, he wrote his friend Bachman, "Should the birds come in time, I will of course publish the whole of the new species, and my Work will be the Work indeed!" To publish "the" book about birds would set him, an American, apart from the naturalists in Great Britain, where "about one thousand niny tiny Works are in progress to assist in the mass of confusion already scattered over the world." Whatever else one might say about The Birds of America, Audubon's huge, four-volume collection of avian art, it could never be called "niny tiny."

Distinguishing The Birds of America from the "niny tiny Works" of the "closet naturalists" in Great Britain and Europe was only one part of appropriating nature for the nation. Audubon and his naturalist allies also had to wrest possession of nature from the native inhabitants of North America—even as they had to acknowledge a significant degree of scientific debt. When Townsend and Nuttall reported on their exploration of the Columbia River region, for instance, they noted a wide variety of information about bird behavior they had gained from the local Indians, ranging from the best method of obtaining waterfowl ("[T]he Indians have adopted a mode of killing them which is very successful.") to the preditory habits of the Arkansas flycatcher ("The Indians of the Columbia accuse him of a propensity to destroy the young, and eat the eggs of other birds.") and the migratory patterns of the Canada jay ("The Indians...say, that they are rarely seen, and that they do not breed hereabouts."). So went the exchange of information, from native inhabitants to naturalist, from West to East; Townsend and Nuttall relied on...
the Indians, Audubon relied on Townsend and Nuttall, and the third-hand bird descriptions subsequently made their way into Audubon's writings, where he included them without question or complaint.

When Audubon set off on his own exploratory trip to Labrador, the northeastern frontier of North America, in 1833, he hoped he would have as much successful access to ornithological information from Native American sources: "I had conceived that I should meet with numberless Indians who would afford me much information," he wrote, "...and who, like those of the far west, would assist me in procuring the objects of my search." Unfortunately for Audubon, the native population had already been reduced along the Labrador coast, and he could only lament, "Alas! how disappointed was I when... I scarcely met with a single native Indian, and was assured that there were none in the interior." While implicitly invoking the image of the "vanishing" Indian, Audubon still explicitly acknowledged the role native people might have played in the collection of information that was so crucial to the work of natural history.

Yet Audubon and his ornithological allies drew the line at one form of intercultural exchange: using Indian names. As we have seen, that was a source of honor and authority they reserved for themselves. "Fout-sah," for instance, the name Townsend heard Chinook Indians call a small warbler in the Columbia River region, never gained a hearing in scientific circles back in the East. Instead, that was the bird Townsend named for his friend Audubon, giving it the binomial nomenclature Sylvia auduboni, thus assigning it the authority of a Latin term in the Linnean classification of nature. In general, rather than adopt Indian names for birds—birds that Native Americans often knew better than the visiting and certainly inquisitive naturalists—these pioneers of American natural history almost always considered it necessary to discard the Indian name and give the bird a new one.

This rejection of Indian names may seem in some ways "natural" itself, an inherent tendency to take possession of a part of nature by giving it a name that comes from and thus makes a more memorable reference to one's own culture. But modern scholars remind us that something can get lost in the translation—or, indeed, the lack of one. Natural history, Michel Foucault has observed, "is nothing more than the nominating of the visible." For naturalists and Indians alike, the visible included everything that could be seen with the naked eye, without the assistance of microscopes and other sophisticated optical technologies. In that regard, all people could be on an essentially equal footing, able to hear and see and name things according to their observations: one name might be just as descriptive and therefore as "accurate" as another. Today, notes Jared Diamond, many ornithologists and other students of nature have come to understand that "knowledge of vernacular names allows biologists to plumb the detailed knowledge that traditional peoples possess about local species." Indeed, they also understand that the naming practices of "traditional peoples" often contain their own systems of classification based on "the wisdom that our forebears accumulated over millions of years of hunting/gathering existence."

However much urgency ethnobiologists now feel about the need to discover and preserve these Native American names and systems, their 19th-century naturalist predecessors seemed only marginally interested; they took note of Indian observations of birds to serve their own purposes, but they reserved for themselves the right to give the bird its moniker—all in the name of science, of course, but also in the name of their nation. Like their European counterparts, they shared a passion for classification, for revealing the underlying order in nature and then imposing an overarching order on their revelations. In that sense, naming a bird meant more than just reproducing its call or describing a distinctive feature of appearance or behavior; it also defined a means of classifying a part of nature and, in a sense, of taking intellectual possession of it. For Audubon and his ornithological allies in the early republic, classification was not just a way to establish categories in natural history; it also offered a way to establish the authority, not to mention the prominence, of natural history within a larger context of national history. Put differently, classifying and naming could be both practices of science and promotions of one's self and one's civic identity.

Clearly, ornithology did not determine national destiny, nor did the United States need naturalists in order to pursue its nation-building agenda in the 19th century. Quite the reverse is true: naturalists needed to align their scientific agenda with that of the nation. Science, then as now, is seldom politically neutral, and in the era of early national expansion, the pursuit of knowledge could fit quite comfortably with the possession of nature. To bring it back to the birds, let's simply say that long before the American eagle spread its wings over the whole continent, Audubon's depiction of a few warblers and woodpeckers defined a part of the scientific agenda that would eventually help Americans anticipate the extent of their continental reach.

Gregory Nobles is a professor of history at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta and director of the Georgia Tech Honors Program. His is currently at work on two books: Naturalist Nation: The Art and Science of Birds in Audubon's America and Whose American Revolution Was It?: Historians Interpret the Founding, the latter co-authored with Alfred F. Young.
The death of PE

A Modern Indian Leader Whose Life Was Forfeit in the Puyallup Land Fight

BY NATHAN ROBERTS

Peter Stanup traveled the path between Tacoma and his home on the Puyallup Indian Reservation many times during his life. Born about 1855, around the time of the Medicine Creek Treaty, Stanup grew up a reservation Indian. As a child, he could see the small town called Tacoma City across the tide flats gently sloping into Commencement Bay. Between the city and the reservation stood cool, green forests and the wide estuary of the Puyallup River where the old Judson Mill sat inundated and abandoned. When he was around 20 years old, young Stanup witnessed the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad (NP) and saw the city's population and boundaries expand, shortening the road to Tacoma. After statehood in 1889 he traveled that road for new reasons, adroitly inserting himself into the complex society that Indians and non-Indians had created on the shores of Commencement Bay.

The road to Tacoma is an apt metaphor for Peter Stanup's life and work, which connected two very different societies. For him it was a physical activity that had to be regularly undertaken, and the way was not always clear or safe. Throughout his life Stanup likely traveled on foot, horseback, or wagon through rain, snow, and heat. He may have traveled alone, with friends, missionaries, or Indian agents. In the early 1890s, he and his wife Annie traversed the road in a horse-drawn carriage that some said was overly fancy for an Indian. But Stanup knew the road and the people well. He knew where his friends were, knew the safe places to have a drink, talk politics and religion, and discuss the most pressing issue of the day—the valuable Indian reservation lands at the edge of the expanding metropolis.

Stanup's opinions on that topic made him something of a local celebrity. In Tacoma he spoke at public meetings, and newspapers referred to him as an "Indian authority" on certain topics. Influential Indian agent Edwin Eells praised Stanup for being an exemplary Indian and a "remarkable personage," showing him off to visiting politicians and Indian policy reformers. Though Stanup's charisma, good education, and keenness for the spotlight made him a well-known figure, his stance on the Puyallup land question made him a polarizing one. In the early 1890s he was a spokesman for a portion of the Puyallup Indians who sought an end to federal supervision of Puyallup land. Local non-Indians often applauded Stanup for his political activism because it supported their desires to see...
Puyallup land opened for sale. In short, Peter C. Stanup was a prominent, influential, and well-liked Puyallup man whose disappearance on May 16, 1893, on his way home from Tacoma, puzzled and surprised nearly everyone on the reservation and in the town—everyone except those who murdered him.

Stanup's disappearance quickly elicited a common trope from Tacoma newspapers. In the press, Peter Stanup became a well-worn icon of non-Indians' expectations: another Indian who had met his demise at the crossroads of excessive drinking and inevitable misfortune. The story, with intricate details that grew ever more sensational over the six days that Stanup was missing, generally presumed that while drunkenly stumbling homeward from Tacoma he had fallen into the Puyallup River and drowned. A week later Stanup's body was pulled from the river, apparently corroborating the rumors. However, the Tacoma coroner ruled out death by drowning when he reported that Stanup's lungs were free of water, his neck had been broken, and lacerations on his arms indicated a struggle. Somewhere along the road home, or perhaps at his home, as some Indians later alleged, Peter Stanup was killed for his outspoken stance and his controversial activities during the Puyallup land debate.

As no investigation was launched, Stanup's murderer(s) will probably never be known. Even so, his life, work, and death illuminate the intense personal, political, and social divisions that Indians and non-Indians experienced during the Puyallup land debate. Though the land had been guaranteed by the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek for the Puyallup Indians' "exclusive use," the large reservation stood at the eastern door of the expanding "City of Destiny." City planners and real estate investors were preoccupied with the increasing value of the Puyallup lands and, as Caroline Gallacci noted in her dissertation on the history of Tacoma, the reservation boundaries were "constantly tested."

The dispossession of the Puyallup Tribe and the difficulties tribal members experienced in trying to regain their land, beginning in the early part of the 20th century, were not inevitable outcomes of either their proximity to Tacoma or rising land values. Though resident Indian agent Edwin Eells constructed a plan to sell the Puyallup Reservation's "surplus" land to non-Indians and ensure continued federal supervision of the tribe's
Stanup's story challenges us to think not of a Gilded Age capitalist and Indian at odds but rather as both embodied in the same man. By tracing the last few years of Stanup's life we can see how Indians and non-Indians regularly defied simple categorization as urban or rural, beneficent or greedy, modern or traditional. Stanup's motivations and actions made him incomprehensible to many of his contemporaries who thought of Indians as either "progressive" or "traditional." His story exemplifies a modern, urban Indian who participated in the possibilities of both gain and loss during the growth of Tacoma. His involvement in business and politics made him a controversial figure. To someone, his activities were so far out of the bounds of acceptable behavior as to make him dangerous.

Stanup had watched the region swell with the arrival of the railroad, but it was statehood in 1889 that moved the debate over Puyallup allotments from a predominantly local stage onto a national one. Many voices arose to contest the future of Puyallup land. City planners, real estate developers, and boosters argued in newspaper and complained to their congressmen that an expanding western metropolis should not be stalled for the sake of Indians. Pierce County residents, meanwhile, clamored that they were unfairly taxed for maintenance of roads that ran across the reservation while some of the most valuable lands in the county (farmland and tidelands on the reservation) went untaxed. Coal and produce, especially hops, flowed into Tacoma from the Puyallup Valley and the NP guarded its monopoly on transportation across the reservation.

Agent Eells labored to keep the Indians and their land under federal supervision, and many Puyallups agreed that the federal government was their best ally against encroachment from outsiders. Stanup and other Puyallups argued for rights as citizens while businessmen in Tacoma used Stanup's arguments to get hold of Indian land once the sale restrictions were lifted. The new Washington State Legislature, in response to the appeals of constituents, passed a law removing restrictions from the sale of Puyallup allotments. Though that law was only a symbolic gesture until the federal government responded likewise, its passage demonstrated that local citizens would actively challenge the authority of the federal government where economic development and Indians were concerned.

The multitude of voices reached a crescendo and Congress intervened by creating the Puyallup Indian Commission on August 19, 1890. The commission was charged with investigating and ruling on 10 issues regarding the Puyallups and their land. Ostensibly the commission was a disinterested body of three men drawn from remote corners of the country. But no interested parties believed that the Puyallup Reservation would be the same after the commission's work was finished.

Stanup's position on the future of Puyallup allotments was a simple one from his point of view. He argued that Indians who had fulfilled their vows to "civilize," that is to take on the federally-directed social norms of white Americans, which many Puyallups had done for decades, should be given the same rights as those same white Americans. Though Edwin
Eells allotted the Puyallup Reservation and the allottees received patents in 1886, the federal government dictated what Indians could and could not do on their land. The government preferred that Indians farm. Timber-cutting and mining usually were not allowed. Leasing land to non-Indians for grazing or farming was acceptable for two-year terms, if the allottee was elderly or infirm. Leasing the land for non-Indians to live on was not permitted. The federal rules governing the use of Indian land were meant to protect Indians until a time when Indians could manage their own affairs. Stanup argued that time had come.

Stanup’s allies were other Indians, such as his childhood friend and business partner Jerry Meeker, who wanted the benefit of their rising property values. Stanup’s other most significant ally was Frank C. Ross, an entrepreneur and head of a Tacoma real estate syndicate. Ross, along with Stanup and other Puyallups, engaged in two activities that challenged the federal government’s ability to dictate the realm of Indian decision-making. First, Ross and his business partner Hugh Wallace hired Stanup and Meeker to convince Puyallup allottees to sign over the land once the federal government lifted restrictions on its sale. Second, Stanup organized Indian laborers to construct a railroad across the eastern arm of the reservation near Brown’s Point. Ross funded the railroad, but the Indian laborers built across their own allotments. While Agent Eells argued that the Indians had not been paid fairly for signing the lease agreements and that the Indian-built railroad was merely a method for Ross’s land syndicate to gain access to the reservation, the Indians saw the railroad as opening opportunities to make economic decisions independently of the federal government.

When Stanup and other Puyallups challenged the federal government, they had to deal most directly with Edwin Eells. Eells was a dedicated and influential Indian agent who believed that the federal government and Indian reformers understood and acted upon Indians’ best interests. Eells believed that his most important duties were instructing the Puyallups in the federal government’s programs of assimilation and defending them from influences that threatened to undo the government’s good work.

Aside from liquor, Eells’s chief concern was the encroachment of whites who wanted the valuable reservation land. But Eells was not oblivious to the circumstances that had engulfed the reservation; he realized that compromises between the numerous non-Indians flooding into the region and his own protectionist stance were necessary. Moreover, his plan for compromise was informed by his belief that the Puyallups would never make use of large parts of the reservation—namely, the forests, hills, and tidelands.

Eells trusted the federal reform ideal of Indians as farmers, and when the Puyallup Indian Commission asked Eells for his suggestions for most fairly disposing of reservation land, he composed a map and accompanying rationales for how the Puyallup Reservation could be equitably diminished and the “surplus” offered up for sale. Eells told the commission: “[I]t appears to me that the land which the Indians do not use and in all probability will never use should be sold to those who can and will use it.” Eells was determined that the federal government would dictate the way in which land sales unfolded.

Eells saw Stanup’s arguments for independence as the foolish echo of white men’s schemes and not as the valid demands of a man yearning to be free of the federal government’s yoke. Although he attributed to Stanup a great deal of intelligence and ability, Eells was unable to separate Stanup’s opinions and decisions from what the agent believed were inherent Indian liabilities of gullibility and licentiousness.

As the relationship between Stanup and Eells deteriorated, fissures deepened between the two camps of Indians who followed them. Eells and Stanup, both of whom were supported by some tribal members, claimed to speak for the entire tribe. Ruptures within the tribal community were difficult for non-Indians to understand. When newspapers and politicians heard one Indian’s point of view, they often reported that they had heard the Indian point of view. Stanup and Eells knew this, of course, and worked to convince the commission that the Puyallups spoke with one mind. Solidarity became a tool that tribal members on both sides of the issue used in their appeals to bureaucrats and lawmakers.

Both camps—those who wanted the land restrictions lifted and those who accepted Eells’s plan for a diminished reservation and another decade of federal supervision—claimed to be “good” Indians who had held up their end of the bargain by
following the government's instructions to "civilize." Though the Puyallups were unable to make federal policy, they understood that they possessed a type of familial power within the government's paternalistic hierarchy. Indians were able to influence political decisions by appealing to the government's sense of fairness and a general lack of understanding among non-Indians that tribal societies could also be divided over modern political and economic issues.

In February 1891, Stanup and his followers presented the Puyallup Indian Commission with a mock tribal council that suggested Indian solidarity and the entire tribe's commitment to the federal bureaucracy and non-Indian civility. Stanup was backed by a petition with 112 names and the presence of 60 or more tribal members, including some influential elders. Dick Sennewah, one of the elders, told the commission, "I want to live on [my land] and have just the same rights that white settlers do and to do what I please with it." Two other men, Tommy Lane and Atwin Jackson—both allotees and men of whom Eells had favorable comments in his annual reports to the commissioner of Indians Affairs—also delivered speeches to the commission. After the speeches were finished, Stanup told the commission: "Whatever they have said, they have spoken our whole mind." Stanup read a resolution thanking the commission for fair treatment and for "the speedy opening of the reservation." The Indians responded "Aye" in adoption of the resolution and the Puyallup band played a selection while those assembled shook hands with the commissioners. The meeting concluded when Atwin Jackson, referencing the music and the mock tribal council, made a final, joking appeal to the commissioners, "I want to ask you something, gentlemen. What do you call that? Tell me if that is [an] Injun way." Laughter followed, and Commissioner B. F. Harness replied to Jackson's shrewd rhetoric, "It sounds like white man's ways."

Eells warned tribal members not to be fooled by Stanup and the other Indians who chose to work with Ross. Nevertheless, the Puyallup Indian Commission found that Puyallups had signed 146 contracts. Between them, Ross and Wallace were party to 75 percent of those contracts. Peter Stanup, Jerry Meeker, and other Puyallups also made contracts to buy out their neighbors' lands. In all, the contracts covered nearly 9,000 acres and the Indian lessees secured between $30,000 and $40,000, which was undeniably far below the real value of the land.

In response, Eells attempted to discredit the business activities between Stanup and Ross by claiming to know that they used liquor to entice Indians to sign lease agreements. Even if Eells exaggerated the extent to which Ross and Stanup took advantage of the allotees, it was evident that Stanup personally benefited from his association with Ross. He allegedly received a commission for each lease/purchase contract he convinced Puyallup allotees to sign; and, according Eells's memoirs, the horse-drawn carriage in which Peter and Annie Stanup rode to Tacoma was a gift from Ross to cement their dealings.

While Stanup worked for himself and made speeches about freeing others from federal supervision, some of the Puyallup leadership was alarmed by his activities. In 1892, Stanup traveled to Washington, D.C., to petition congressmen and reformers to support the Allen Bill, a measure that would open up the reservation. In a letter to the Commission of Indian Affairs, Eells wrote that "the Head Chief and two Sub-chiefs, the Chief Justice, and several headmen of the Puyallup Tribe" approached him because they were concerned that Stanup was going to Washington, D.C., to speak against their interests and they "wanted him watched."

The Indians who did not follow Stanup's lead likely had many reasons for their chosen stance. Maybe they felt that Stanup was giving those who had worked hard to be "good" Indians in the government's eyes a bad name. Perhaps they sided with Eells because of a sense of allegiance to the federal government. It is also worth considering that regardless of a common heritage or, more amorphously, a shared "Indianness," other Puyallups may not have understood Stanup's motivations for participating in modern, urban real estate dealings.

An important question therefore remains open: if Stanup was as adept as he appears to have been, why did he not help other Indians negotiate lease agreements for larger sums of money? Was it because he was contracting for land himself and because Ross and Wallace paid him to encourage the Indians to accept smaller amounts? That Stanup had a hand in securing agreements from allotees for the benefit of Ross, Wallace, and himself appears quite likely. If, after the fact, some of the Indians or their families saw Stanup's actions as hostile, sneaky, or detrimental—as the Indian leadership believed them to be—it is possible that the Indians decided to handle this problem as they had before non-Indians arrived on the shores of Commencement Bay. The tribe had always had ways of dealing with members who went astray and threatened its interests.

The Northern Pacific also took offense when Peter Stanup's activities endangered its monopoly on transportation across the reservation. Having suffered numerous setbacks, the railroad finally connected directly to Tacoma in 1887. With its terminus secured, the NP attempted to consolidate its power around the southern Puget Sound region. Several factors made that consolidation both important and profitable. In 1876, when coal was discovered in the foothills of the Cascades, the NP secured a right-of-way across the Puyallup Reservation. The NP's exclusive relationship with the Puyallup Tribe endured partly because the tribe refused to grant access across the reservation to other local railroads. Twice in 1889, by
Document signed by Jerry Meeker acknowledging payment of $150 from George Wallace. Though papers like this one appear to show that Meeker and Stanup worked against the interests of other Puyallup Indians, it is important to remember that neither Stanup nor Meeker nor any of the allottees could foresee their future dispossession.

BACKGROUND IMAGE: Allotment map of part of the Puyallup Indian Reservation.

ABOVE: Jerry Meeker attended Forest Grove Indian and Industrial School along with Peter Stanup. The two worked with Tacoma businessmen and Puyallup allottees in numerous controversial real estate deals.

LOWER RIGHT: Handbills or "bulletins" such as this circulated throughout Tacoma around 1900 as the fate of Puyallup land was then decided by a single Indian land commissioner.
Meetings like this one were probably not uncommon events in the late 19th century as issues of concern to the entire reservation community came to the fore. Factions developed among the Puyallups over the fate of reservation land.

direction of the secretary of the Interior Department, the Indians held a council to vote on whether to allow the Portland and Puget Sound Railroad Company access to the reservation. Both times the council voted against the measure.

In addition to the NP’s monopoly on transportation across the reservation, the railroad also controlled the development and planning of Tacoma’s shoreline. In an attempt to escape the NP’s high prices for freight shipping, local businessmen eyed the Puyallup River and appealed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assess the navigability of the river. Unfortunately for farmers, the corps determined that the river was not worth improving because of its low summer levels and frequent logjams. The NP’s monopolies seemed impenetrable until 1893 when Stanup and other allottees began building Frank Ross’s railroad along the eastern arm of the reservation.

The Ross-Stanup railroad set in motion the final showdown between Stanup and his many adversaries. After Eells heard about the railroad project, he ordered the Indian police out to the work site to stop construction. But on three occasions the Indian laborers rebuffed Eells and the police. Then, on May 4, 1893, Eells called out the military.

Ross and Stanup planned to reach Seattle with the railroad and connect to the recently arrived Great Northern. Such a connection would certainly have threatened the NP’s monopoly and undermined the federal government’s authority over the use of Indian reservation land. In addition, according to Jerry Meeker’s recounting of the 1890s land dispute, Eells worked as an NP agent where the railroad’s dealings with Indians were concerned. Eells cried out that Ross was taking advantage of the Indians while Stanup and the Puyallup laborers argued that they should be allowed to build on their own allotments.

Soldiers camped on the reservation, and the local newspapers excitedly reported the possibility of an “Indian War.” The Tacoma Daily News stated that the soldiers in the camp occasionally quarreled with the Indian laborers. The opposing groups of men exchanged taunts and, according to the News, the Indians rolled logs down the hillside toward the soldiers. But the soldiers’ presence did not stop construction. Instead, Eells attempted to get a court order to halt the project. The U.S. District Court judge in Seattle, Cornelius Hanford, sided with the Indians and handed down an injunction against Eells and the soldiers. The Indians celebrated a bloodless victory over the army, and the railroad construction continued.

While the Indians laid track and the soldiers waited on the beach, the captain of the troops, his lieutenant, and Eells concocted a scheme meant to subvert Judge Hanford’s order. Neutralizing Stanup was central to their plan. While Eells and the captain made a show of being close friends, the lieutenant feigned a friendship with Stanup. According to the plan, the lieutenant’s job was to convince Stanup of the futility of his enterprise and to persuade him to stop construction. Eells and the officers agreed that liquor was the best way to entice and dissuade Stanup. Though Eells constantly worked to keep liquor away from the Indians, he felt no shame about participating in the orchestrated intoxication of a man he knew as “a remarkable personage.” What happened next as a result of this scheme is entirely a matter of speculation.

Eells’s memoirs offer a suspicious account of the night Stanup disappeared. Was Eells an accomplice, or did he merely record a story that fit both local rumor and his own opinion of Indians? What if the lieutenant was determined to change Stanup’s mind but Stanup was steadfast in his convictions and not merely the inebriate that Eells claimed? Then perhaps the soldiers thought they knew something about
the making of “good Indians” and chose another avenue of neutralizing the Indian leader. Maybe the soldiers had had enough of the Indians’ hilltop taunts and courtroom victories and exceeded their orders.

Eells’s narrative states that Stanup imbibed with the soldiers until he became immeasurably drunk. Then he wandered down the road until his brother-in-law found him and took him home. From Stanup’s home, recounts Eells, the two men went back out into the evening in search of liquor; Stanup passed out from his drunkenness but eventually returned home. According to Eells, Stanup’s brother-in-law left him, not at his house where his wife would have seen him, but propped against his gate alone. And then, too drunk to make his way to the house, Stanup stumbled into the night. What we know for certain is that Stanup and his Indian laborers defeated the soldiers in court and embarrassed them in the press. Moreover, Eells and the soldiers saw Stanup as the lynching in crushing Puyallup activism. Somewhere along the road, someone decided it would be best if Stanup was out of the picture. The following day, May 17, Stanup did not appear for work at the railroad construction site.

The path that Stanup traveled was a dangerous though potentially profitable one. Once the coroner reported that Stanup was murdered, numerous theories and rumors circulated about the possible killers. Eells stated in his memoir that he was suspected of hiring two Indians to kill Stanup, but the matter was dropped after police questioned one of them. As George Castile notes in his essay on Eells, the Indians signed a petition stating their belief that “Eells and his confederates” wanted Stanup out of the picture to expedite the dispossession process. This accusation appears confusing but for Jerry Meeker’s testimony that Eells worked for the Northern Pacific. According to Meeker, Eells had once recommended that Stanup and Meeker also work as NP agents, performing essentially the same tasks they performed for Ross. Meeker recalled, “He and Peter argued and fought about it because we were acting as agents for other buyers than the R.R.” Regardless of who murdered Stanup, the rationale was likely the same. Whoever killed Stanup, he met his end because a politically active Indian who was outspoken about the role Indians should play in urban economic development was a dangerous man to be in 1893. Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure.” For not fitting nicely into the roles dictated by power brokers of the day, Peter Stanup was lashed with extreme displeasure.

Stanup’s death did not stop the railroad’s construction, but a court order handed down three weeks later, on June 6, did end the Ross-Stanup railroad. By the recommendations of the Puyallup Indian Commission, the Puyallup Reservation was opened for sale. Congress passed the Indian Appropriations Act in 1893 and largely realized Eells’s vision for disposing of Puyallup land. It was certainly not what Peter Stanup had envisioned; Indians did not get to participate in the planning or development of Tacoma. Moreover, the Puyallup Commission appointed “guardians” to many of the remaining Puyallup allotees. The “guardians” were supposed to take the Indian landholders’ best interests to heart and prevent them from losing out in the competitive real estate business. In actuality, these “guardians” were local real estate agents and businesspeople who had a vested interest in dealing in Puyallup land. As Eells and others had feared, the Indians were largely cheated out of the money their land was worth.

Sadly, Stanup’s death was not the only Indian life lost in the Puyallup land debate; numerous Puyallup landholders died under mysterious circumstances in the ensuing decades. A large number of Puyallup landholders who died between 1890 and 1910 were reportedly hit by trains. And yet, like Stanup, the stories of these deaths lack congruence. We are asked to accept that for no clear reason people who had been living around trains for much of their lives had suddenly begun lying down on the tracks. Alcohol was used once again as a handy excuse for Puyallup mortality. The Indians’ deaths allowed their “guardians” to easily and legally claim and dispose of their land. The Puyallup Indian Commission was replaced by a single commissioner in 1897: Clinton A. Snowden was a Tacoma real estate investor who saw to it that Puyallup land sold cheaply and quickly. The final undoing of Puyallup land was rendered in a court case in 1909. Frank Ross’s land syndicate

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**Stanup’s death was not the only Indian life lost in the Puyallup land debate; numerous Puyallup landholders died under mysterious circumstances in the ensuing decades.**

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Nathan Roberts is a graduate student in history at the University of Washington. His primary focus is on the native peoples and environmental history of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
Between 1904 and 1914, billions of postcards were sold and mailed in the United States and around the world. There were greeting cards of every description for every occasion imaginable. A large number of these were “actual photograph” cards. Images of anything a camera could capture were printed on postcard backs and mailed or kept as mementos. Amateur photographers printed their own pictures on photographic postcard paper. As a result, there exists a unique record of the period, a record that is of great interest to historians and researchers.

The images below are examples of “actual photograph” postcards from a large collection recently donated by Lee Lynch of Los Altos, California, in memory of her father, Victor H. White, who collected thousands of Washington-related postcards. The Lynch/White collection is a welcome and significant addition to the Historical Society’s holdings, especially the fine images of fledgling towns across Washington taken between 1908 and 1914. These cards capture moments from a time before paved roads and automobiles became ubiquitous, when small towns were social and commercial hubs. The Special Collections department is always interested in adding postcards, photographic or otherwise, to its holdings.
MENACE in the SKY

Japanese Balloon Bombs of World War II

By Mac Carey

ON A CHURCH PICNIC outing in Bly, Oregon (Klamath County), on May 5, 1945, Elsie Mitchell, the minister’s wife, and five local children found a strange object in the nearby woods. As they attempted to drag it back to their picnic site, the object exploded, killing all six of them. A report of the incident appeared in the next day’s newspapers; the cause of the explosion was said to be an “unknown object.” There was no follow-up report on the source of the blast, and the tragic event was barely even mentioned again in the press.

In actual fact, the “unknown object” was a Japanese bomb—one of many such devices that the United States military had been well aware of and quietly searching for over the previous seven months. The device was part of a large-scale Japanese assault against the United States using unmanned hot air balloons armed with explosives. The Oregon incident resulted in the only such fatalities on the American mainland during World War II.

The Pacific coast remained in a heightened state of alert during the war, with the realization that residents were living in a likely combat zone and that the population density and industrial capacities of such cities as Portland and Seattle made them particularly attractive targets to the Japanese. Even so, West Coast inhabitants were far from suspecting that they would be attacked via hot air balloons or that the government would try to keep information about the attack from the American public.

The Mitchell Recreation Area memorial, near Bly, Oregon, commemorates the deaths of the six Americans who died there as a result of a balloon bomb explosion: Elsie Mitchell, age 26; Dick Patzke, 14; Jay Gifford, 13; Edward Engen, 13; Joan Patzke, 13; and Sherman Shoemaker, 11.
Though now associated with leisure and sporting activities, the hot air balloon was once a commonly employed wartime technology. Balloons were used for the purpose of espionage during the Civil War, and Germany employed hydrogen-filled zeppelins to rain bombs on London during World War I. In a unique twist that was the brainchild of Major General Sueyoshi Kusaba, Japan resurrected the hot air balloon during World War II as part of Project Fu-Go, utilizing balloons and the activating effect of the jet stream to launch explosives across the ocean toward the Pacific Northwest. Project Fu-Go, which lasted from fall 1944 to early spring 1945, was considered retribution for the “Doolittle Raid,” an American sneak attack of B-25 bombers over Japan led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle on April 18, 1942.

In September 1942 a Japanese seaplane launched from a submarine twice dropped incendiary bombs over the coniferous forest of southern Oregon. Recent heavy rains prevented the bombs from igniting the devastating forest fires their makers had intended, but in 1945 Japan decided to try again. This time they planned an attack that could be carried out without the use of precious manpower.

One 3,000 bomb-laden balloons were launched in March 1945, the highest output in any one month. The balloons traveled at an altitude of 35,000 feet, carried east by the jet stream. It took three to four days for the balloons to reach the American mainland. Most were dragged off course or fell into the water before reaching their destination. Two actually returned to their launch sites. In all, the Japanese launched 9,000 balloon bombs, of which only 300 were found or observed in the United States.

The dots on the above map indicate places where balloon bombs were located. The highest concentration was along the Pacific Coast, but some went as far east as Michigan and Texas.

Above: The balloons traveled at an altitude of 35,000 feet. Carried by the Pacific winds, they reached the mainland in three to four days.

Right: Exploded view of a balloon bomb. The white protrusions on either side are incendiary bombs. An antipersonnel bomb hangs beneath the center of the device. The Japanese military launched 9,000 such weapons, but the vast majority were dragged off course or fell into the water before reaching the West Coast.
Of those that arrived, few reached the level of destruction the Japanese military had hoped for. Although their designers originally intended them to either land in forested areas where they would cause panic and destruction, most reached the ground without detonating. The few exceptions were the Mitchell case, two small fires, and a temporary blackout when one of the balloons landed on a power line near the Hanford site of the Manhattan Project in eastern Washington.

A small boy in Yakima discovered one of the bombs while outside playing. Thinking it was a toy airplane, he wound the propeller until it was within a 16th of an inch of setting off the explosive. In Moxee, Washington (Yakima County), a shepherd found a fallen balloon containing live bombs. He dragged it behind his automobile to a shed where he kept it for two weeks before authorities learned of the incident and took the device away. Native American children in Wapato, Washington, found part of a paper balloon and turned it into a backyard teepee.

Though the balloons were detected early on with radar, military stations established to down the balloons were ineffective, successfully capturing only about 12 of them. The military then set up recovery teams to remove balloons that had been tracked via radar. The recovered balloons were sent to a Washington, D.C., lab for study. Most of the devices were concentrated along the Pacific coastline, but some were discovered as far east as Michigan and Texas.

Newsweek reported on the balloon bombs in January 1945, in an article entitled “Balloon Mystery.” The wartime Censorship Department quickly contacted newspapers and radio stations, asking them not to report on the incidents so as to discourage the Japanese or at least prevent them from refining their efforts. This ploy proved successful. The Japanese military, deciding that the balloon bomb mission had been a failure, soon abandoned the project. Information about the balloon bomb incidents was not revealed to the public until August 1945—at the time of the Japanese surrender and the war’s end.

Each balloon was 35 feet in diameter and carried several bombs. Early balloons were made of rice paper, while later models were constructed of latex and silk. The original goal had been to make 12,000 devices, but only about 9,000 were produced. These were launched from production facilities along the eastern coast of the Japanese island of Honshu, though the American military at the time speculated they had been launched from submarines near the West Coast. Many of the balloons were constructed by teenage girls whose small, nimble fingers made them perfect for the job.

The first balloon was launched from a factory on November 3, 1944. The first report of a balloon discovered on the ground occurred in December 1944. Hundreds were spotted in Alaska headed south toward California around the time of the April 25-26, 1945, United Nations security conference in San Francisco, but all landed in the water before making it that far south. Sightings trickled off in May, and the last recorded balloon sighting occurred in June.

Eventually the balloon threat fizzled out without the massive destruction that had been anticipated by the Japanese. To the relief of the American military, the fear that the balloons might contain deadly germs rather than explosives was never realized. Neither was the Japanese threat that suicide bombers would be sent over in balloons.

While the balloon bombs have lost their menace, their repercussions can be felt to this day. In 1987, workers who had assembled some of the balloons sent 1,000 paper cranes and a letter of apology to the families of the Oregon picnickers who died in the May 1945 balloon bomb explosion. Part of the letter read, 

We participated in the building of weapons used to kill people without understanding much beyond the knowledge that America was our adversary in a war. To think that the weapons we made took your lives as you were out on a picnic! We were overwhelmed with deep sorrow.

Over 60 years later, more than 90 percent of the bombs are undiscovered.

In 1955, a full 10 years after the attacks, a bomb was found still partly lethal despite corrosion. In 1992 a nonlethal bomb was found between Barter Island and Fort Yukon, Alaska. An estimated 200 of the devices remain hidden and may still constitute unexploded ordnance.

Mac Carey is a graduate of George Mason University in northern Virginia. She currently lives in Izmir, Turkey, but makes her home in Leesburg, Virginia. She has published articles in Learning Through History, Northern Virginia, and Mysteries.
Snohomish County's western border encompasses the Puget Sound shoreline from Woodway to Stanwood, including the port city of Everett. Most of the county's eastern half is within the boundaries of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Its history would take many pages to recount, and Snohomish County: An Illustrated History, the volume from which this article is excerpted, takes on this very task.

Any survey of the history of Snohomish County must take into account what has been called the “Second Great Age of Discovery”—those decades in the late 18th century when Europeans and Americans charted coastlines and attempted to fill in large gaps on maps of the Pacific Northwest. Three hundred years earlier, during the “First Age of Discovery,” such mariners as Columbus, Magellan, and Cabot had located new continents, islands, and oceans. European settlement followed, but with vast areas remaining unknown. During the “Second Great Age of Discovery” Europeans and Americans ventured out to map some of the northern Pacific’s vast unexplored regions and seek opportunities for commercial gain.

The enigmatic northwest coast of North America proved challenging. There Russian fur traders from Siberia moved east and south along islands and coastlines, and Spaniards hoped to extend empire and religion north from established colonies in Mexico. After the American Revolution, vessels flying the flag of the young United States entered Pacific Northwest waters. Other nations came too, mostly to seek profits by gathering sea otter and other pelts valued in China. However, the dominant actor was Great Britain.

The British sought wealth through trade and by extending geographic and scientific knowledge, factors that interwoven with their quest for a water route through the continent—the fabled Northwest Passage. Sir Francis Drake briefly had touched a region he called New Albion in the 1570s; although historians have long thought this was northern California, recent speculation suggests Drake ventured along the coast of Vancouver Island. Two centuries later James Cook, John Meares, and others of their countrymen unquestionably plied the northern coast. In 1792 their mantle passed to Captain George Vancouver, then in his mid 30s and seasoned by two decades at sea. That spring the HMS Discovery—a three-masted sloop-of-war—and its tender, the brig Chatham, entered the inland sea Vancouver would name Puget Sound. For a month his men charted its waters and named prominent features.

Born of well-to-do parents in Norfolk, England, probably in 1757, Vancouver entered the British Navy at age 14 as an apprentice on James Cook’s second great expedition to the South Pacific Ocean. A few years later he was a midshipman on Cook’s third voyage, which sailed north along the Oregon coast to the Bering Strait and Siberia. After Cook was killed in the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, Vancouver, who was attacked while protecting his ship in the incident, returned to Britain. Commissioned a first lieutenant, he served in the Caribbean during the latter months of the American Revolution and its aftermath.

Vancouver’s northwest mission grew from a sovereignty dispute with Spain that arose when the Spanish commander at Nootka Sound, on present-day western Vancouver Island, seized a British ship. Late in 1790 Vancouver was selected to command the Discovery on its expedition along the northwest coast of North America. Instructed to receive the properties seized at Nootka, he was also ordered to acquire “more complete knowledge, than has yet been obtained, of the northwest coast of America.” Specifically, the government wanted accurate information about any waterway that might “facilitate an intercourse, for the purpose of commerce, between the northwest coast” and “the opposite side of the continent, which are inhabited or occupied by His Majesty’s subjects.” He was to investigate “the direction and extent of all such considerable inlets, whether made by arms of the sea, or by the mouths of large rivers....” There were specific references to the rumored Strait of Juan de Fuca—named for a Greek sailor who had told of an opening he entered two centuries earlier—and whatever sea or strait might lie beyond.

BY CHARLES P. LEWARNE
With 101 crewmen aboard the Discovery and 45 more on the Chatham under Lieutenant William Broughton, Vancouver set out down the Thames early in 1791. During the voyage east around the Cape of Good Hope to Australia, the South Pacific, and the Sandwich Islands, the men encountered storms, illness, and unfriendly natives. Vancouver proved to be a harsh, sometimes erratic, taskmaster. In mid April the expedition passed California and headed north. A chance meeting with an American trading ship commanded by Captain Robert Gray increased curiosity about waters beyond the Strait of Juan de Fuca and also alerted Vancouver to the possibility of the Columbia River, which he had passed on a cloudy day without noticing. Although Broughton later sailed up that river, Gray returned in the interim, and his discovery—named after his ship, Columbia Rediviva—enhanced the American claim to the region. Spanish ships also plied the northern waters. They sailed through the Strait of Juan de Fuca but then turned north instead of south, apparently underestimating the extent of that passage. They did leave the name Camano on certain features, however, honoring Jacinto Caamano, commander of the frigate Aransas, which was surveying those waters out of Spain’s Mexican base at San Blas.

On April 29, 1792, Vancouver’s ships anchored a few miles inside the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Several days later they moored near the entrance to Puget Sound in a sheltered bay that Vancouver named Port Discovery after his ship. Here the men erected tents ashore, made repairs, encountered native people, and explored the environs. They sighted and named Mount Baker before exploring farther south in the inland sea. The party divided into three groups at Restoration Point, a southern tip of present-day Bainbridge Island, which the explorers named on the anniversary of the British monarchy’s restoration in 1660 after Oliver Cromwell’s reign. Vancouver himself explored the middle section of the sound; a small sloop commanded by Peter Puget explored the southern reaches. Lieutenant Joseph Whidbey proceeded north to investigate the island that would soon bear his name and the nearby mainland.

ABOVE: Detail of George Vancouver’s chart, “Coast of Northwest America with trackes of HMS Discovery and Armed Tender Chatham.” Many of the names Vancouver gave to features in the Puget Sound region continue in use today.

INSET: As no indisputable portrait of Captain George Vancouver (1757-1798) has come to light, this wax figure makes an admirable stand-in. Vancouver died at age 40, but his legacy lives on in the journals of his voyage to the Pacific Northwest, a place hitherto uncharted and unexplored by inquisitive, ocean-going Europeans.
Whidbey found the Indians friendly and exchanged presents with them. Despite evidence of previous trade, these natives were clearly unaccustomed to meeting whites. Of the land he wrote: “eastern shore [with] a shallow flat of sand, on which are some rocky islets and rocks, runs out, until within half a mile of the western shore forming a narrow channel...in nearly a NNW direction, for about three leagues.”

Late in May the groups reunited. The passage from Port Townsend to Tacoma was named Admiralty Inlet, in honor of the supervisory board of the Royal Navy. Early June was spent in a region that would become part of Snohomish County. There a negligent apprentice caused the Chatham to run aground. Helped by the Discovery’s crew and a flood tide, the brig later set sail once more. Weather and “great fatigue” slowed exploration. The crewmen fished, enjoyed onshore recreation, and on June 4 celebrated the birthday of King George III. That Monday they were given “as good a dinner as we were able to provide for them, with double allowance of grog to drink the King’s health.” Early that afternoon the commander took the action he had been anticipating when he led several officers ashore to a spot possibly on Tulalip Bay on today’s Tulalip Indian Reservation. Amidst formalities that included “a royal salute from the vessels”—a 21-gun salute, according to one member of Chatham’s crew, Vancouver took possession of “New Albion” from 39 degrees 20 minutes north (level with northern California) to the entrance of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, including islands in the straits and the interior sea. He named the land New Georgia and the sea the Gulf of Georgia for his king. Possession Sound was named to honor the event. The large, broad bay became Port Gardner for Sir Alan Gardner, a vice admiral who had been Vancouver’s mentor, and that to the north was Port Susan, quite likely for Gardner’s wife.

Vancouver’s description might also apply more broadly to today’s Snohomish County:

The inlet here terminated in an expansive though shallow bay, across which a flat of sand extended upwards of a mile from its shores; on which was lying an immense quantity of drift wood, consisting chiefly of very large trees. The country behind for some distance, was low, then rose gradually to a moderate height; and, like the eastern shores of the inlet, was covered with wood, and diversified with pleasant inequalities of hill and dale...the whole presenting one uninterrupted wilderness.

Vancouver had eyes to the future:

The serenity of the climate, the innumerable pleasing landscapes, and the abundant fertility that unassisted nature puts forth, require only to be enriched by the industry of man with villages, mansions, cottages, and other buildings, to render it the most lively country that can be imagined; whilst the labour
of the inhabitants would be amply rewarded, in the bounties which nature seems ready to bestow on cultivation.

Archibald Menzies, the expedition’s botanist and a man who was destined to become renowned in his field, rhapsodized over the flat lands near Everett:

A Traveller wandering over these unfrequented Plains is regaled [sic] with a salubrious and revivifying air impregnated with the balsamic fragrance of the surrounding Pinery, while his mind is eagerly occupied every moment on new objects & his senses rivetted on the enchanting variety of the surrounding scenery where the softer beauties of landscape are harmoniously blended in majestic grandeur with the wild & romantic to form an interesting & picturesque prospect on every side.

Thus the first Europeans to view Snohomish County described the land.

The morning after the ceremony a light breeze allowed the ships to sail out of Possession Sound. A friendly Indian chief cautiously brought fruit and dried fish aboard to exchange for trinkets. Despite unfavorable winds, the ships worked north, eventually beaching just south of the present-day international boundary at Birch Bay. Then Vancouver continued on to the rendezvous at Nootka Sound where the issues revolving around the conflict with Spain were discussed, though not thoroughly resolved. Vancouver continued explorations in Alaska before returning around Cape Horn to Britain in October 1795. Thereafter he prepared his journals, defended...
himself from accusations by a disgruntled former crewman, and battled increasing illness. In 1798 he died and was buried in Petersham, England.

Vancouver’s voyage into the sound he named for Peter Puget occupied little more than a month out of a four-and-a-half-year voyage. Yet, it defined major outlines of the coast and waters, and outstanding physical features were named. For all his observations, Vancouver did not note the rivers that flowed into the ocean and sound, including the Columbia, the Snohomish, and the Stillaguamish. The climactic event of those weeks took place in Snohomish County when he landed to claim all such lands for his country.

Over the next half century, Great Britain and the United States survived as the major players in what would be called the Oregon Country, that vast land bordered by Spanish California, Russian Alaska, the Pacific Ocean, and the crest of the Rocky Mountains. In a peculiar but pragmatic arrangement, the two nations jointly occupied the region for nearly three decades between 1818 and 1846. Most of that time Britain’s Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) dominated the economy and politics from its regional headquarters at Fort Vancouver on the north bank of the Columbia River. Fort Langley at the mouth of the Fraser River to the north was opened in 1827, followed in 1833 by Fort Nisqually on southern Puget Sound, and Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island 10 years later. Company boats plied Puget Sound, including the Beater, the first steamer in Pacific Northwest waters. These passed by but gave little formal notice to the eventual Snohomish County shoreline. As fur trading waned and increasing numbers of white settlers entered the region, it became clear that Americans would supplant British dominance. This reality was confirmed by the 1846 treaty, which established the 49th parallel and the Strait of Juan de Fuca as the border between British and American lands and resulted in HBC offices moving to Fort Victoria.

That agreement resulted in part from a second great exploration of Puget Sound. By the 1830s, forward-thinking Americans in the federal government were anticipating a

The c. 1845 Currier & Ives lithograph above depicts the 20-gun sloop-of-war Vincennes, which was the flagship of the United States Exploring Expedition, commanded by Lieutenant Charles Wilkes (1798-1877), left. The five-year, around-the-world expedition studied and charted the west coast of North America—including Puget Sound—in 1841, 50 years after Vancouver had been there.
Readers will be hard-pressed to find many farm novels being written today. In the 1930s, however, when one out of every four Americans lived on a farm, novels depicting farm life were as common as wheat stubble and harvest mites. Yet, more often than not, when one out of every four Americans lived on a farm, novels depicting farm life were as common as wheat stubble and harvest mites. Yet, more often than not, when one out of every four Americans lived on a farm, novels depicting farm life were as common as wheat stubble and harvest mites. Yet, more often than not, when one out of every four Americans lived on a farm, novels depicting farm life were as common as wheat stubble and harvest mites.

The misfortune of Elizabeth Marion (1916-1989), who was reared on a farm near the town of Spangle, in Spokane County. She published three impressive novels set in the Palouse: The Day Will Come (1939), Ellen Spring (1941), and The Keys to the House (1944), all of which perceptively depict the rigors and rewards of mid-century farm life in eastern Washington.

Marion's approach to her subject recalls Midwest novelist Hamlin Garland's notion of “veritism,” which combines a sharp eye for realistic detail with the author's personal vision. Marion, in these terms, draws an exacting picture of daily farm life while also scrutinizing the turbulent emotional lives of her characters. Indeed, while the virtues of community almost always prevail in Marion's novels, her characters often lead lives of quiet desperation.

In The Day Will Come, the adult children of a domineering mother seek a place on the homestead farm bequeathed to them by their hardworking father. Among the children is the nephew Steve, raised on the farm but now a stockbroker in Spokane. In longing to restore integrity to his life, Steve dreams of returning to the farm of his childhood and marrying his niece Penny, who in her acute appreciation of the region represents everything that's good about it.

Meanwhile, Henry, the youngest, sets off to buy the rundown Bjernsen place and marry a scandalous older woman named Ragni to achieve his dream of operating his own farm free from maternal meddling. Behind such familial discord lies the enduring Palouse landscape, where “the wheat grew in sunlight and silence, careless of all save growth.”

The Day Will Come is a commendable first novel—"sensitively told and deeply felt," according to The New Yorker—yet Marion's literary talents are developed even more fully in Ellen Spring, in which the title character flees her oppressive marriage to find refuge in an abandoned Palouse farmhouse. Over the course of the changing seasons, Ellen and her 10-year-old son find the support, friendship, and sense of belonging among their rural neighbors that enable them to thrive in the unfamiliar surroundings. While the neighbors are not always the most affable sort (and can be downright crabby), they know they can rely on one another, and when Ellen's estranged husband intrudes upon her new life, they rally to her side.

Among Ellen's neighbors—and one of Marion's most memorable characters—is Noah Dunne, a retired farmer-turned-handymen. As Noah restores the farmhouse where Ellen and her son live, he imparts to them a calm understanding of the country and its inhabitants. He even waxes philosophical now and then, remarking at one point on how he would rather die in spring than winter, because winter “is kinda hard on the folks who have to bury me,” and “You can see a long ways in the wintertime when there ain't no prettiness to get in your eyes and confuse you.” Whereas in spring, “the world's so good to look at there ain't anything else to do but die.” One might expect this kind of fatalistic insight from the stern New England farmers found in a Robert Frost poem, yet coming from Noah, it's accompanied by a bemused wink-and-a-nod that's unmistakably western.

In The Keys to the House, Marion takes a darker turn, recounting a young farmer's discovery of his mother's affair with the farmhand who murdered his father. Max Kenny works the family farm, and is content doing so. He values work without questioning the necessity of it. He feels most at home in his barn and sees the barnyard as “a world in itself.” So when he uncovers his father's unmarked grave in the orchard, life as he knows it comes undone. And to restore equilibrium to his world, he must leave his farm community, drive across the state, and confront his father's murderer in a seedy beer parlor along Seattle's First Avenue.

Here, as in each of Marion's novels, the city—whether nearby Spokane or distant...
scientists was among the 490 men who set out in a six-vessel flotilla. An essential goal was to obtain scientific knowledge worldwide, but developing American interests overseas made commercial considerations a major factor. Sailing out of Norfolk, Virginia, and then New York harbor late in the summer of 1838, the expedition ventured to South America, the Antarctic, the South Pacific Islands, and Hawaii before touching the west coast of North America.

Aboard the sloop-of-war Vincennes, Wilkes led his men into the Strait of Juan de Fuca on May 1, 1841. Just as Vancouver had done a half century earlier, they anchored in Discovery Bay before proceeding to survey Puget Sound and its surrounding landforms. Impressed by both, Wilkes headed overland to HBC headquarters at Fort Vancouver. He returned to Fort Nisqually in time to celebrate with ceremony and frivolity the first Fourth of July in what would become the state of Washington.

Wilkes then divided his men into separate parties to explore specific areas. Two groups went overland—one across the Cascade Mountains and the other toward Grays Harbor—while a small maritime party headed to survey Hood Canal. The task of exploring the waters and shoreline of Admiralty Inlet was assigned to Lieutenant Commander C. Ringgold, who commanded the Porpoise. The ship was a 230-ton gun brig, previously used and modified by Wilkes.

At Nisqually on May 13, 1841, Wilkes prepared Ringgold’s specific orders. Starting his explorations near Vashon Island, he was to move “north, examining and surveying all islets, and the shores of both sides of the straits, particularly all those bays etc., that afford shelter for vessels, not only as harbors, but for temporary anchorage.” Upon reaching Whidbey Island, Ringgold was instructed to “pass into and survey Possession Sound to its extreme end, and all its inlets, etc.”

The crew was instructed to keep meticulous records; make correct triangulations; and measure latitude, longitude, and altitude, barking or whitewashing large trees for markers. Full soundings were to be taken daily and tides measured. The men were to sketch the land. Commercial potential was to be noted: “You will endeavor to obtain all the information that may lay [sic] in your power, relative to the geological formation, and capabilities of the soil for agriculture...also all minerals... All water-courses and brooks that may afford water for shipping will be particularly noticed.”

Nor were the indigenous people ignored: “The names of the Indian tribes, numbers, and extent of districts belonging to them, it is desirable to get; all curiosities, etc., you will of course preserve.” The small party sailed north—investigating Whidbey Island—and then turned east, noting “much good land.” They gave the name Saratoga Passage to the strait separating Whidbey Island from the island he called McDonough, both terms honoring a War of 1812 naval hero and his flagship at the battle of Lake Champlain. The former name has survived, but the latter was forgotten when, a few years later, a British officer designated the island Camano, apparently to recognize the earlier Spanish presence.

Vancouver already had dubbed the waters between that island and the eastern shore “Port Susan.” Wilkes’s men praised its deep waters, except for the shallower northern portion, which was “an extensive marsh and mud-flat” with a creek passing through. They measured a curving, nine-mile, land-locked shoreline, reaching three and a half miles across the inlet.

Wilkes accepted Vancouver’s name of Possession Sound to describe the passage between Whidbey Island and the mainland; it was four miles long and two and a half miles wide. A “fine stream” (most likely the Snohomish River) emptied into the sound, but it had four mouths, none deep enough “to admit boats at low water,” possibly because a bar or flat extended across the entrance. Ringgold’s crew encountered “many canoes” carrying Indians, some possibly from the southwest. Their dress resembled that of others the men had seen. They wore leather hunting shirts, beads, and shells, and the women also wore brass bells and trinkets. Some had brass rings on wrists and fingers and a few were tattooed. Several were draped in blankets fastened by wooden pins around neck and shoulders. The Americans thought the people “filthy” and coated with dirt, and conjectured that they suffered from bronchitis or “tubercular consumption.”

The men measured Port Gardner Bay as being six miles square, with anchorage only on the south side. At its center lay Gedney’s Island, a mile and a quarter long and a third of a mile wide, with a shoal off the southwest point. The point marking the southern boundary of Port Gardner, where “the bank drops off suddenly,” was named Point Elliot. Elsewhere he found little suitable anchorage. Farther south, Ringgold labeled two small promontories Point Edmund and Point Wells, the latter for a crewmember.

After spending more than nine weeks at their task, Ringgold and his crew rejoined Wilkes on July 20 at New Dungeness on the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Their report became the basis for that portion of Wilkes’s narrative that described the northeastern part of Puget Sound. Other regions received greater consideration from Wilkes and his writers, but the shoreline destined to become Snohomish County won their general praise. Within a few years white lumbermen, settlers, and prospectors filled in the details of the area’s river valleys and inland features.

Charles P. LeWarne, a Pacific Northwest author, historian, and educator, is coauthor of Snohomish County: An Illustrated History (Kelcema Books, 2005), along with David A. Cameron, M. Allan May, Jack C. O’Donnell, and Lawrence E. O’Donnell.
Seattle—represents the antithesis of life in the Palouse, where the fields, hills, creeks, wind, and sun instill a vitality and virtue in the inhabitants that the city only saps. Marion’s passion for the Palouse becomes most evident in her lyrical yet subdued descriptions of the landscape, and in her respect for a people who manage their difficulties by “laughing with a whole heart at the calm little business of daily life.”

It’s no wonder then that Elizabeth Marion remained in the Palouse region throughout her life. After graduating from high school, she worked for the Spokesman-Review in Spokane, where she befriended fellow writer Ruby El Hult, with whom she maintained a lifelong correspondence that the two eventually compiled into The Cockalorum Chronicles: New Words Between Old Friends (1980). In the 1950s, she worked for the Standard Register in Rockford, a small town about 25 miles southeast of Spokane, where she met and married Eugene D. Saunders.

Marion, however, never published another novel. Although she wrote two more, she failed to find a publisher for either, despite favorable reviews of her first three; and according to the Washington State University Libraries, where her papers are held, both manuscripts are now lost. Nevertheless, the achievement of Elizabeth Marion’s three published novels remains significant. Though long overlooked, their contribution to Washington letters and American farm literature deserves renewed attention.


Additional Reading

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

Ellen Powell Dabney


Tall Timber


Peter Stanup


Audubon’s Western Woodpeckers


Menace in the Sky


Snohomish County


Correction

In the Summer 2008 issue of COLUMBIA, the article “To the Brink and Back,” by Michael McKenzie, has a photograph of Saddle Mountain Gap on page 25. The caption for that image incorrectly places Saddle Mountain Gap in northeastern Oregon. It is actually in south-central Washington near the present-day town of Beverly.

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WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Washington State Historical Society invites nominations for its annual awards recognizing excellence in advancing the field of history in the state of Washington through writing, teaching, historic projects, understanding cultural diversity, and volunteerism. The award categories are:

- David Douglas Award—Recognizes the significant contribution of an individual or organization through projects, exhibits, educational products, or any other vehicle that informed or expanded our appreciation of Washington history during the previous year.

- Governor’s Award for Teaching History in Washington State—Presented to an outstanding certificated teacher of Pacific Northwest history in an accredited Washington K-12 school or to a nonprofit organization. The awards committee welcomes nominations of persons who demonstrate effective teaching by any measure of excellence.

- Peace and Friendship Awards—Presented to a Native American and a second individual, each of whom has advanced public understanding of the cultural diversity of the peoples of Washington.

- Robert Gray Medal—Recognizes distinguished and long-term contributions to Pacific Northwest history through demonstrated excellence in one or more of the following areas: teaching, writing, research, historic preservation, and service to local historical societies.

This year’s awards are to be presented at the Society’s annual meeting on June 20, 2009. Nomination letters (and 16 copies of any supporting documentation for each nomination) are due February 13, 2009. Mail to: WSHS Awards, ATTN: Lauren Danner, 211 – 21st Avenue SE, Olympia, WA 98501.
Finding Chief Kamiakin
The Life and Legacy of a Northwest Patriot
Richard D. Scheuerman and Michael O. Finley
Photographs by John Clement

The arrival of unprecedented numbers of White immigrants incited a cataclysmic upheaval that would threaten the very existence of the Plateau's native people. Chief Kamiakin, a prominent Yakama leader, resolved to fight for their traditional way of life and against desecrations upon the land. Finding Chief Kamiakin is his story.

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Barb Owen

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Paperback • ISBN 978-0-87422-293-7 • $24.95
Frequently writer John Sonnichsen lives in the Channeled Scablands outside Cheney, Washington. His curiosity about the world-class floods that carved the landscape surrounding his small ranch comes naturally. In Bretz's Flood, his second book, Sonnichsen examines the man who discovered the cause of the Scablands, the man for whom the floods have been named: J. Harlen Bretz.

As the subtitle to this book states, the level of understanding about ancient geology of the Pacific Northwest reached by J. Harlen Bretz is, indeed, remarkable. Today geologists argue with each other over certain details of the great floods that swept across northern Idaho and Washington between 12,800 and 15,000 years ago. But this much is generally accepted: perhaps up to 40 floods (or as few as 2 or as many as 100!) came out of waters backed up into ancient Lake Missoula, a Lake Superior-sized body of water created by an ice-dam impasse on what is today's Clark Fork River. When the dam broke, an estimated 380 cubic miles of water swept across the Big Bend area in central Washington at more than 50 miles per hour, gouging out tons of soft basalt rock and turning the landscape into a moonscape of coulees, falls, and channels that are now called "scablands." The energy released by the rampaging water may have been equivalent to the explosion of a hydrogen bomb every four seconds for ten straight days. Or think of it as 191 times the magnitude of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The floods carved a new channel for the Columbia River, flooded the crest of Wallula Gap, and then continued on its way to the Willamette Valley and the Pacific Ocean by cutting a V-shaped Columbia River Gorge.

Bretz left his native Michigan to teach biology at Franklin High School in Seattle (1908-1911), but geology was his passion. He prepared himself to enter graduate school in geology at age 27 by methodically reading his way through the science section of the Seattle Public Library. Weekend field trips raised questions for him about the formation of Grand Coulee, a site just then coming under investigation by the American Geographical Society. After earning his doctorate at the University of Chicago, Bretz remained in the Midwest as a professor.

His research interests brought an appointment to the faculty of the University of Washington, but only for one year. Colleagues hostile to his hypotheses about the contours of central Washington forced him to return to the University of Chicago. Here, with a department that respected his ideas, Bretz labored for years to prove his theory about post-Ice Age floods that altered the Washington's landscape. In 1923 Bretz published his ideas and for more than a decade afterward defended his thoughts against scholars who charged that he was inventing a biblical catastrophe that did not happen. Bretz's theory was not widely accepted until the 1970s, and in 1979 he received, as an apology of sorts—at the age of 96—the Penrose Medal from the Geological Society of America. Bretz's Flood is not a retelling of the floods or their effects. Rather, it is a biography of a geologist on a quest for answers in the 1920s and 1930s. Maps could have aided the reader.

Bill Scudder recently retired from the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department where he was the founding ranger for Old Mission State Park. He lives in Cataldo, Idaho.

Plowed Under
Agriculture and Environment in the Palouse
Reviewed by Katherine Aiken.

The Palouse area of eastern Washington and northern Idaho is a "visually arresting" landscape with hills that are "beautiful, identifying a place that is quite unlike any other." While perhaps not as well-known as some other agricultural regions in the United States, the Palouse has enjoyed a long history of bountiful agricultural production. Andrew Duffin has set out to explore wheat farming in the area and to reexamine "our ideas about American farming since the mid-nineteenth century." He succeeds in doing both.

Palouse farmers sought to maximize their profits through increased production. They added acreage and applied innovative technologies. In fact, Duffin argues that while farmers are often stereotyped as conservative, in fact "Palouse and most other American farmers have been quick to use new products and methods when convinced they can reduce manual labor or make their operations more efficient and profitable."

New technologies such as the moldboard plow, helped farmers achieve their goal of increased production and higher profits. At the same time, the plow, "a standard implement in agriculture worldwide, gouged the soil and exposed a great deal of it to rainwater—making it more prone to erode." Farming practices such as stubble burning, tillage on steep slopes, and increased use of tractors also contributed to erosion, none more than the established practice of allowing ground to lie fallow.

Scientists and farmers alike acknowledged erosion but were "unwilling or unable to embrace reform that challenged basic assumptions" of increased acreage and increased yields as the path to increased production and higher profits. Even New Deal conservation plans failed to halt soil erosion. Innovations during the 1950s including chemical herbicides, fertilizers, pesticides, and new wheat varieties, resulted in a rise in crop yields and continued negative impact on soil levels in the Palouse.
While Aldo Leopold and others advocated a new land ethic, Andrew Duffin notes that in the Palouse “the most remarkable thing about the new land ethic was its conspicuous absence.” Despite all of the available information, summer fallow continued to convince Palouse farmers to alter their fundamental assumptions regarding production.

Andrew Duffin has provided us with an excellent study of agriculture in one of the nation’s most productive farming areas. He deftly includes perspectives from farmers and scientists, and his discussions of innovative farming practices are both informative and accessible to general readers. Specialists in agricultural history and environmental history will glean much from the book.

Duffin concludes: “Palouse agriculture in many ways operates according to the national agricultural agenda that preaches short term gains and de-emphasizes landowner responsibilities, creating a kind of dissonance with nature.” This seems to surprise Duffin, but perhaps it would be even more surprising if farmers made decisions inimical to their immediate economic interests. Living on the land does not necessarily result in farmers being better stewards of the environment than any other Americans.

Katherine Aiken holds a doctorate from Washington State University and is associate dean for the College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences at the University of Idaho. Her most recent book is Idaho’s Bunker Hill: The Rise and Fall of a Great Mining Company, 1889-1925 (2005).

Current and Noteworthy
By Robert Carriker, Book Review Editor

The Weyerhaeuser Environmental Books Series of the University of Washington Press has been publishing provocative volumes since 1991. Part of the series’ broad appeal is the subject matter. Volumes have examined the natural history of Puget Sound, Northwest salmon fisheries, irrigation agriculture, and the effect of automobiles on Washington’s national parks. The series editor, William Cronon, enlivens each volume with a thoughtful foreword. Volumes 19 and 21 are noteworthy.

Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place, by Coll Thrush (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2007; 376 pp.; $22.95 paper and $28.95 cloth) is not an ordinary narrative of Seattle history. It has an environmental outlook, yes, but it also contains elements of Native American history, urban history, and geography. Thrush may have created a new field, the urban indigenous frontier. Most cities in their rush for development, Thrush argues, either eclipsed the influence of the native inhabitants or, at best, tolerated their presence until economics forced them away. Seattle is not like that. Initially, in the territorial period of the 1850s, Indians and whites battled as enemies, but after mending their relationship the two cultures worked shoulder-to-shoulder to bring Seattle from what was once a “Little Crossing-Over Place,” known only to Indians, to a sawmill town of pioneers, and finally to a diverse metropolitan area.

As late as the 1880s the influence of Native Americans in Seattle was clear and indisputable. Seattle, in fact, sold itself to others with its Indian name and with Indian images. The intertwining of the two cultures, however, began to fracture after the arrival of the railroad in 1883, and by the time of World War II the break was substantial. Even so, Seattle maintained then, and continues to maintain today, an important urban Indian community within its boundaries. Thrush makes his points and he cinches them up with argument and evidence, not the least of which are 32 well-chosen illustrations. The captions for the photographs are exceptionally informative. Equally educational is the unique 46-page “Atlas of Indigenous Seattle.” Utilizing an early 20th-century manuscript by Thomas Waterman and the field notes of John Harrington from the same period, Thrush worked with Indian scholars, linguist Nile Thompson, and cartographer Amir Skeikh to create an atlas of what Native Seattle looked like before 1851.

Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest, by Kevin R. Marsh (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2007; 192 pp., $35 cloth) asks some tough questions about the validity of the post-World War II wilderness movement. In order to create key wilderness areas in Oregon and Washington at Three Sisters, North Cascades, Mount Jefferson, Alpine Lakes, and French Pete, writes Marsh, a consortium of agencies took action. Using the aforementioned wilderness areas as case studies, Marsh examines the roles played by, and the ideologies of, the United States Forest Service, the timber industry, and environmentalists. This book is about “myriad negotiations and compromises among a host of competing interests,” suggests William Cronon in his foreword. He concludes: “If you wish to know why Americans care so much about wilderness, there are many wonderful books you will surely want to read. But if you wish to know how Americans have actually made decisions about whether or not to protect a given acre as wilderness...then this is the book you need to read.” It was the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964 that altered the course of the politics.
A morsel of genuine history
is a thing so rare
as to always be valuable.

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