Hiking Washington’s History
Judy Bentley

Hiking Washington’s History reveals the stories embedded in Washington’s landscape. It includes 40 historic trails from across the state, ranging from short day hikes to multiday backpacking trips. Brief regional histories provide context for the individual trail narratives and add another layer to the outdoor experience.

Despite Washington State’s rapid growth, a remarkable number of historic trails remain—preserved in national parks, restored by cities and towns, returned to public use by the railroads, or opened to hikers by Native American tribes.

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History Commentary
Environmental health goes hand in hand with natural beauty.
By Alfred Runte

Contemporary Makah Whaling
A Northwest Coast tribe works toward reviving a core cultural tradition.
By Janine Bowechop

Image Collections Online
Digital art.

The Atomic Pond
The Hanford site’s U-10-pond—may it rest in peace.
By Melvin R. Adams

From the Collection
Reader challenge.

Through the Indian Country
In commemoration of the Mullan Road’s completion 150 years ago.
By Richard D. Scheuerman

History Album
Viola Garfield with rhubarb.

City of Mercy
The short-lived Baxter Army Hospital brought World War II home to the people of Spokane.
By Aimee E. Nechanick

Retrospective Reviews
The novels of Helen Rucker.
By Peter Donahue

Additional Reading

Columbia Reviews
Sacred Space and the New Expedience

By Alfred Runte

Whenever I am asked about the future of conservation, I instinctively recall my past. Having grown up in Binghamton, New York, in the upper Susquehanna Valley, I remember vividly my first visit to New Jersey just after Christmas in 1952. My mother had won a trip to New York City on the Phoebe Snow, the Lackawanna Railroad's crack passenger train. My family and I entered New Jersey through the Delaware Water Gap in the glow of a winter twilight. I had never been more excited in my young life.

For all of us, it's those memories that lead to despair, reminding us these past 50 years how much our hometown landscapes have been dramatically changed. About an hour south of Binghamton, my college friends and I had a favorite place, a sweeping river overlook called Azilum. Allegedly, Marie Antoinette was to have been spirited there had she escaped the French Revolution. Although her exile failed, we escaped every summer to a glorious bluff above the river's edge, where, after a day of hiking, we smeared deep into the Pennsylvania hills. Later, we would retire to watch the sunset at Wyalusing Rocks, just downriver. The Susquehanna, 500 feet below, seemed on fire from the sky above. We thought of Henry David Thoreau: "Sky water. It needs no fence. Nations come and go without defiling it. It is a mirror which no stone can crack." Indeed, the waters of our beloved Susquehanna seemed like perfection itself.

You know what happened next. Trucks got bigger and cars got faster. Pennsylvania decided that the highway needed widening and the overlooks took the brunt of it. They are all graffiti and litter now. The farms in the valley have also changed. Most come today with trailers and gravel pits. Below Wyalusing, a big cornfield has been turned into a racetrack. Throughout the valley and across the ridgelines, cell phone towers have sprung up like weeds.

The pain of those changes runs deep, the more so because Azilum saved a dear friend's life in Vietnam. In January 1970 a mortar attack left Brad critically wounded—mortally wounded, the medics thought. Lifted off the battlefield with seven other soldiers, he was flown to the triage ward at Leon Binh. The doctors agreed all of the men would die. And indeed, one by one during the night, the others slipped away. As the zippers were closed on the body bags, Brad knew that one was meant for him. He needed something—anything—to shut the terror of those zippers out. That something was the memory of one special evening at Azilum with his fiancée and friends. On the sound of each zipper, he returned with us to our overlook, recreating that sunset in his mind. He knew that if the vision kept him alive until morning, the doctors would probably operate. He did, and so they did. Brad knows that the river got him through the night.

You can imagine my response when our congressman proposed a series of dams on the Susquehanna. That led to my first published article in March 1971—three pages in the Binghamton morning newspaper suggesting that our congressman was no friend of rivers. I still lost Azilum; I lost Wyalusing Rocks. Recently, I lost a lovely canyon in Arizona—to rock quarrying, of all things. There are no major dams on the Susquehanna, but neither is it the river I once knew.

Our anxiety about the future comes from the perspective of having known loss. As conservationists, we lack not for a perfect formula or even a new technique. By now we have probably tried them all. Rather, our problem comes with aging. These days, what does it mean to be a preservationist? Certainly our predecessors never answered this way: first go to college and get a master's degree in business administration, the most popular college major by far. A big salary is proof of a successful education and profit the goal of all.

Now that our values are being displaced, we are forgetting what they were. Forty years ago, our message was still front and center, led by the timeless wisdom of Aldo Leopold. "Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Following Leopold, our leading scientists, humanists, and philanthropists never hesitated for a moment. All believed in public spaces as America's outdoor universities. No less than formal schools and universities, the University of the Wilderness was meant to endow every American with a lasting respect for the natural world. How did we allow our country to forget that, often slipping ourselves into a business model? Perhaps if we hired more fund-raisers, the country would learn to respect us. Our historical term was conscience. Conscience is defined with the simplest of words—knowing right from wrong.
Inclusiveness is not our problem; expedience is. Expedience fears the timeless words in our arsenal: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Expedience needs us to doubt ourselves before anything wrong can fall into place.

And so we come to the heart of the problem: When did our message start sounding expedient and why are we still losing open space? To reemphasize, the problem is not with the truths we admit. It is rather with those we no longer mention because we are told they might offend. Forty years ago, global warming was just a symptom; it was hardly the disease. The disease was our willingness to exceed limits—the recognized carrying capacity of the earth.

Why should this concern us now? Because no one wants to admit those limits—even the Sierra Club. By the 1980s the term "limits to growth" had been replaced by every euphemism in the book. Really, is there such a thing as "smart growth"? Is an "urban village" in fact a village? Is growth of any kind in fact "sustainable"? How is it that a "partnership" is called "win-win" when the earth is still asked to lose? And let us not forget the king of euphemisms—"green." But again, exactly what does a "wind farm" grow if not the hope of exceeding limits? If the nation makes greener cars but doesn't limit highways, exactly what about the car is green?

The slightest concession from us—"well, the laws of thermodynamics might be wrong"—was all it took. Maybe there IS a free lunch—a perpetual motion machine, a way to tinker ourselves past natural limits. Good-bye Albert Einstein; hello Gene Roddenberry. The moment the world denied Einstein's limits, critical thinking stopped dead in its tracks. And the worst part is: we know better. From Thoreau to Rachel Carson, environmental writing has been all about respecting limits. There are some things we just can't do.

Forty years ago, what Al Gore calls the "inconvenient truth" of global warning itself came with a deeper cause. Speaking at my university commencement in 1969, Isaac Asimov said it all in his title, "Long may you live, but not forever." Although a renowned writer of science fiction, he reminded us that fiction was indeed the operable word. There was no escaping into outer space; we would never colonize the moon. Perhaps a few hundred people would get to live there, but never the 100 million being added to the earth every year. In retrospect, his prediction was all the more memorable because the first moonwalk was just weeks away—July 20, 1969.
Long before Isaac Asimov, there was a greater honesty to conservation in both word and deed. As preservationists, our predecessors freely admitted to those deeper causes. As much to the point, every form of national expedition needed to be exposed. Listen to J. Horace McFarland, as president of the American Civic Association, writing for Outlook Magazine in 1909. “Shall we have ugly conservation?” he asked. “Will we urge expediency rather than actual need as a reason for destroying our great landmarks of natural scenery? We are not making scenery; we are changing it. Shall we continue to change it, through carelessness, from beauty akin to heaven to ugliness suggesting Hades? If so, let us tear up Washington’s plan, let us billboard the White House, let us put a factory on the heights of Mount Vernon, and forget the Father of this country whose wisdom in planning for dignity and beauty we refuse to profit by!”

Where is McFarland’s honesty today, especially in the business community he represented? A successful printer and publisher from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, he spent his spare time growing roses. In 1910, still as president of the American Civic Association, he called for a Bureau of National Parks. In 1916, Congress approved McFarland’s vision, merely changing the name to the National Park Service. The point is that McFarland, although a businessman, did not see why American business should be creating ugliness. If it looked bad it was bad, no matter what his expedient colleagues tried to call it.

The never-ending mission, McFarland realized, was to open the nation’s eyes. Thus, when Niagara Falls was targeted, he felt that American inventiveness had gone too far. “Shall We Make a Coal Pile of Niagara?” he asked in the Ladies’ Home Journal. The plan was as simple as it was insidious—to divert the Niagara River for hydroelectric power by detouring the water entirely around the falls. The euphemism of the day, cheap power, left McFarland unconvinced:

Every American—nay, every world citizen—should see Niagara many times, for the welfare of his soul and the perpetual memory of a great work of God. … [Yet] the engineers calmly agree that Niagara Falls will, in a very few years, be but a memory. A memory of what? Of grandeur, beauty, and natural majesty unexcelled anywhere on earth, sacrificed unnecessarily for the gain of a few! The words might well be emblazoned in letters of fire across the shamelessly-uncovered bluffs of the American Falls: “The Monument of America’s Shame and Greed.”

If McFarland sounds refreshing, it’s because we have forgotten that sound. It remains the sound of conviction, of America the Beautiful, when we dared teach right from wrong. We fight for the land not by following Al Gore but by following McFarland.

McFarland’s final example, the spread of billboards, absolutely drove him to the wall. “The sun sets behind Crystal Domino sugar,” he wrote in The Chautauquan, “and going west, [the traveler] will find the mountain scenery punctuated by Harvard Beer and cheap clothing. [And] let the traveler indulge no hope that the awe-inspiring grandeur of Niagara will daunt the vandals, for he sees the Falls with Coca Cola on the side, while Mennen’s Toilet Powder hangs over the great gorge.”

In instructing the nation to respect natural limits, we once knew to invoke McFarland. As scientists themselves confirm, beauty is the key to a healthy ecosystem. When scientists say that open space is vital for absorbing carbon, they are also saying that beauty needs to survive. The point is that we cannot possibly reduce CO2 while making natural beauty our perennial victim. Once upon a time, we dared say that ugliness was never beauty and that to be serious about the environment we should never compromise its beauty. Expressed in McFarland’s terms, if 40 years ago we had really believed in global warming, billboards would have been the first to go.

Now, we are just as guilty of defining beauty as that which remains after beauty vanishes. Granted, a 40-story windmill is not a smokestack, but then, what will a million windmills do to the land and wildlife? Only by playing with the words have we dodged the answer. McFarland was right. The slightest tolerance for ugliness tells the public that none of us is serious about the environment. Conscience needs our original, progressive history—what is good, what is better, what is best. The postmodern mishmash we are living in disallows every progression leading to a value. It is worst in our universities, now gripped in the throes of relevance. When I enrolled in college in 1965, the facts of biology, botany, or history included the nobility of their application. As prospective
conservationists, all of us were encouraged to pursue—and believe in—the nobility of “the grand good thing.”

No more of that today, thank you. Let us, as they say, “deconstruct” preservation. Who says that people like Frederick Law Olmsted and Aldo Leopold somehow stand apart? That thinking is western—and prejudicial. To stand apart is to stand above. Again, only expedience could possibly invent today’s curriculum, one that chastises us for believing in anything lest we offend the person who believes in nothing.

Today, what historian and novelist Wallace Stegner once called our best idea is just as likely called a sin. The national parks, originally wrested from Native Americans, now deny that land to the poor. This assertion forgets the nobility of what the parks do protect. In a world of 7 billion people, open space is precious to us all. Perhaps Columbus should not have sailed. But he did sail, and millions followed him. All of us have been dispossessed. The world is spoken for, every acre of it. That is the reality our public lands address.

If there is any apology we owe the future, it is for failing to present our successors with an infrastructure that encourages preservation. Few spoke up when expedience killed our allies. As John Muir himself admitted, “Even the soulless Southern Pacific Railroad, never counted on for anything good, helped nobly in pushing the bill for [Yosemite National Park] through Congress.” What did Muir know that we have forgotten? Simply, that although railroads may have conquered the country, they had a stake in America the Beautiful. Railroads preferred not to obliterate the landscape; they rather hoped to follow it. It was the widened highway that cost Pennsylvania the Azilum overlook and the glory of Wyalusing Rocks. Married to valleys and rivers by design, our railroads were the technological discipline that kept the landscape whole.

Consequently, Europe preserved and expanded its railroads, even as we did not, adding to its passenger trains by the tens of thousands and planning where highways should never go. As just one example, by 2014 Switzerland will have banned all truck traffic from the Alps. Half of the trucks are already gone. Simply, the Swiss want their mountains pristine again. When Switzerland plans a wind farm, we therefore know the Swiss have tried their best. In the Pacific Northwest, for example, I doubt that they would convert the Columbia River Gorge into a wind farm while allowing the region to light bigger billboards.

This is to explain the battle here in New Jersey, just as it remains the battle across the world. Often, the things we want are not the things we need. If we really believe in the environment, the beauty of the landscape must always come first. Expedience begins with the relegation of landscape to a purely utilitarian role. As J. Horace McFarland warned, not to see the price of that would be to make beauty the perennial victim of everything the nation did.

In other words, the job does not end by identifying expedience. Reasonable alternatives are also needed. In technology, those alternatives are no less clear. Restore your railroads and lessen your reliance on highways. Uphold the landscape by moving through it wisely and removing the incentives for mindless sprawl. I, for one, look forward to the restoration of the Phoebe Snow. Certainly, preservation in the future will mean knowing how to build for it, and that means more than parks. Earth is the ultimate test of our sincerity, the grand good thing that unites us all.

A Seattle public historian, Alfred Runte specializes in transportation and the national parks. His latest books include Allies of the Earth: Railroads and the Soul of Preservation (Truman State University Press), and the fourth edition of his critically acclaimed National Parks: The American Experience (Taylor Trade Publishing). This essay is based on remarks presented at the 14th Annual New Jersey Land Conservation Rally in March 2010.
The Efforts of a Northwest Coast Tribe
to Revive a Centuries-Old Cultural Tradition

CONTEMPORARY MAKAH WHALING

By Janine Bowechop
According to oral traditions and the archaeological record, Qwi-dich-cha-at-h or Makah people have been hunting whales and other sea mammals and fishing in the Pacific Ocean waters from cedar dugout canoes for several thousand years. They inhabit the outer coast of what is now the state of Washington and the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Until a century ago Makahs lived in shed roof, cedar plank longhouses near the shore. The majority of food resources came from the ocean and the intertidal zone. Over the centuries Makah people developed technologically sophisticated methods and accompanying rituals for harvesting and preserving these preferred foods.

Contact with non-Indians came relatively late. Not until 1788 did the Makahs begin interacting with Europeans, as recorded by John Meares when he anchored off the coast of Tatoosh Island. Spaniards first sailed into Makah territory in 1790 and two years later made an effort to create a fort in the village of di-ya (Neah Bay). After only four months the Spaniards were forced to leave, having behaved improperly according to Makah custom.

Prior to contact with non-Indians Makahs were wealthy, in part due to the trade of whale oil. Neighboring tribes traded canoes, roots, and other goods for the whale oil and blubber that the Makah people provided. Relationships with Nuuchahnulth people on Vancouver Island were nurtured by gifts of whale products.

Early explorers, traders, and settlers were also fascinated with, and in some cases even dependent upon, Makah whaling. Whale oil was used as a lubricant for machinery in the logging camps and as lamp fuel in emerging cities in the Northwest. Victoria, British Columbia, is said to have been “lit” by Makah whale oil for a period of time, and lighthouses, created to save the lives of non-Indian ocean travelers, were also lit by whale oil. (Native travelers, with their intimate knowledge of the coastlines, islands, outcroppings, ocean currents, and wave swell patterns, did not need the lighthouses.) Certainly the non-Native development of the Olympic Peninsula and parts of British Columbia was facilitated by the availability of the high-quality whale oil that the Makahs made available. Nuuchahnulth people of Vancouver Island also supplied whale oil to immigrants.

With the increasing numbers of Euro-American settlers in the region and the continued existence of trading posts and trade vessels, Makah people saw the wisdom of negotiating a treaty with the representatives of the United States government prior to 1855. During treaty negotiations the Makah representatives understood that they would be giving up control of large tracts of land in order to continue living as they chose on selected parts of their homeland and hunting and fishing as they had done for many generations. “The right of taking fish and of whaling or sealing at usual and accustomed grounds and stations is further secured to said Indians in common with all citizens of the United States” (Article IV, Treaty of Neah Bay). The Makahs had lived in the same area from time immemorial, securing a truly indigenous position. They had also governed themselves with a sophisticated system of laws and values for centuries. Their treaty-negotiating authority stemmed from this inherent sovereignty. Makah people reserved important rights within their land and ocean territories, and the U.S. government agreed, via the treaty, to preserve and protect these rights.

“In common with” was a treaty phrase that recognized the mutual but separate interest that Makahs and United States citizens had in whaling at the time of the treaty signing. Makahs had engaged in whaling as a religious, subsistence, and economic activity for at least several thousand years. A specifically designated portion of the Makah people harvested whales during two seasons of the year. By limiting hunting to a segment of the population, the Makah tribe had created a social and management system. And because whaling required such specialized skills, very few men not born into the occupation took up whaling.

Just after the start of the 20th century, whales became scarce in traditional Makah territory as a result of unregulated hunting by non-Indian whalers. Because of the increased difficulty of bringing whales to Makah shores and concern for whale populations, Makah whalers chose to stop pursuing whales. Between 1913 and 1921 possibly only two whales were hunted and consumed by Makah people.

Though whaling was not a regular activity after 1915, whaling and whales remained an important part of the Makah imagination. Women continued to weave whaling scenes into baskets, selling them to visitors and the local general store, and even taking them to Victoria and Seattle to sell to tourists directly. Thunderbirds and whales continued to figure prominently in Makah carvings and two-dimensional designs. Even through the last three decades of the 20th century, when boys (and some girls) began to learn to draw and paint, they usually mastered drawing whales before moving on to other images such as thunderbirds, serpents, wolves, ravens, and eagles.
URING THE long continuum of Makah whaling, a drastic event occurred that preserved Makah material culture for three or more centuries. A large mud slide, possibly triggered by a massive earthquake, covered several houses in the Ozette village in January 1700 or perhaps earlier. The mud came down the hillside at approximately 65 miles an hour, flattening and covering everything in its path, which included several full-size cedar plank longhouses. The mud was followed by a layer of thick gray clay, which sealed out oxygen from the buried houses. A stream of water trickled down the hillside, underground, creating a wet site, perfect for waterlogging the contents of the houses. The houses stayed buried for nearly three centuries, until a violent winter storm exposed the artifacts. Some artifacts were reportedly pulled from the ocean bank by curious hikers during the winter of 1969–70. One of the hikers called a member of the Makah Tribal Council, alerting him to the situation at Ozette. After a brief investigation, the tribal council called in Richard Daugherty of Washington State University, who had conducted archaeological surveys in the area and at Ozette as recently as 1966 and 1967.

Daugherty prepared for site excavation starting in the spring of 1970, thinking that the excavation would continue through the fall. The excavation continued year-round for 11 years. Hundreds of students and young Makah excavators worked with the archaeologists to recover more than 5,000 artifacts. Many of the artifacts were well preserved and in near-perfect condition. Others were broken into fragments due to the pressure of the sudden mud slide.

The Makah Tribal Council determined that the artifacts would stay on the Makah reservation rather than be transported to a remote museum or university for conservation, analysis, and storage. The artifacts were stabilized at the lab on the Ozette site and then flown by helicopter to the conservation laboratory and storage center in Neah湾。
Bay, the Makah reservation’s main village. Here the artifacts were further treated, studied, organized, and shelved in a remodeled storage laboratory. In 1979 the Makah tribe opened the Makah Cultural and Research Center to provide research and education opportunities to the Makah community and others and to display the world-class collection of artifacts excavated at Ozette.

Sometimes the helicopters transporting artifacts were met by Makah elders who would identify the items for the archaeologists. At other times elders were flown to the excavation site. Archaeologists and other researchers recorded elder men talking about whale hunts and seal hunts while holding the hunting tools excavated at Ozette. Having employed similar tools as young men, they were able to demonstrate how the hunting implements found at the site had been made and used. Ruth Kirk quotes a Makah elder describing a whaling harpoon shaft excavated from the Ozette site: “This splice is here for a reason. It’s so when you spear the whale [the harpoon] won’t bounce back. Even if you had a long pole and made the shaft of it...it would bounce right back out if there’s no splice.” The elder is referring to the harpoon shaft’s scarf joint. It is a diagonal fitted coupling, similar in profile to two crocheted hook tips joined together. Splices were an important safety feature for the whaling crew. Elder men explained that if the whale rolled dramatically and the shaft stayed lodged with the harpoon, the scarf joint provided a clean separating point. The shaft would separate into two pieces rather than damage or tip the canoe, and the two pieces could be reattatched.

Makah youths learned a lot about their cultural history during the excavation. The presence of the artifacts facilitated many important discussions and inspired thoughts and memories that were transferred from older to younger generations. One young man who participated in the 1999 whale hunt said that he used to look at the Ozette whaling gear and wonder what it would be like for the man who used that gear to bring in a whale. He wondered about the spiritual and physical training, the power and the life of the man.

Ozette revealed a complex and sophisticated whaling regime. Whaling gear was excavated and brought before the Makahs and general public. Whaling harpoons, shafts, lanyards, and float plugs were discovered in the houses, indicating where whalers lived. Cedar bark harpoon sheaths were found wrapped around muskellunge shell and elk antler harpoons, ready for the next hunt. Paddles with pointed tips stored in the houses were perfectly preserved by the mud. These paddles were designed to move a canoe silently through the water as it approached a whale. Water dripped off the pointed end of the paddle, barely making a sound.

Whale bones were plentiful at Ozette. Some were even found positioned outside the houses to function as a storm water runoff system. Once all the excavated whale bones had been identified, the archaeologists found that over 95 percent of the bones were from the gray and humpback whale species, and they were able to estimate that the occupants of the two and a half houses that were excavated at Ozette hunted two to four whales each year during the period prior to the mud slide.

The archaeological record supported what Makah elders had been saying about earlier days: that whaling was central and important to Makah people, and that whaling had been ongoing for centuries. The location and abundance of the whaling gear also supported elders’ descriptions of whaling as a right limited to certain families but beneficial to the whole tribe. Nearly everything that Makah elders had taught younger Makahs or told earlier ethnographers could be supported by the artifacts excavated from Ozette. Similarly, nearly every artifact that needed interpretation could be explained by Makah elders.

EVEN AS their connection to whales continued during the years in which the Makahs did not go whaling, the tribe was acutely aware that the population of gray whales was rebounding. The removal of gray whales from the endangered species list occurred in 1994. Now the Makahs felt that the traditional relationship between their people and gray whales could resume—the tribe would be able to revitalize an important cultural tradition and create an even healthier, stronger tribal population.

Some of the younger members had continually heard elder men talk of the need to resume whaling. They understood that the same characteristics that created good whalers also made the community strong and vibrant. The elders talked again and again of the need to return to whaling. The young people listened intently and began to see the importance of reconnecting the spiritual and cultural relationship between whales and people, thereby closing the gap between the past and the present.

Within this context it was natural for the Makah tribe to announce its intention to resume hunting gray whales just shortly after they were removed from the endangered species list. The Makahs understood the process involved with delisting and knew that the population of gray whales was healthy and strong. They also
knew this because they could see the huge migrations of gray whales when they were out fishing on the ocean waters. Despite the excitement over the resumption of a central cultural activity, the tribe knew there would certainly be opposition. It was not possible at that time, though, for them to realize the enormity and irrationality of the opposition.

EVEN PRIOR to the Makah Tribal Council’s 1995 announcement that the tribe would resume gray whale hunting, Makahs had been training and preparing for the hunt. Elders of the tribe had continually discussed the rituals performed to prepare for whaling and taught the songs, prayers, and places for ritual preparation. They also offered technical explanations concerning whale hunting, sometimes using Ozette artifacts or old whaling gear that had been passed down from previous generations. Women also were told about their roles and responsibilities in the preparations and the hunt. Tradition states that the wife of the harpooner is to be still during the hunt and should not drink any liquid, for her actions are directly connected to the behavior of the whale. Grandmothers, aunts, and mothers taught younger women how to prepare seal oil, a process similar to the preparation of whale oil.

Following the formal decision and announcement in 1995, the Makahs began to prepare traditionally, politically, and administratively for the hunt. A group of tribal members brought the 1855 Treaty of Neah Bay to the United States Department of the Interior and explained the Makahs’ intention to exercise the treaty right to hunt whales, as stipulated in Article IV. Their position was problematic for the federal government, which had signed an international agreement to halt whaling, unaware of the United States’ prior formal treaty agreement with the Makah tribe. The Department of the Interior acknowledged the tribe’s legal right to hunt whales and ushered the tribal representatives to the Department of Commerce’s National Marine Fisheries Service, the federal agency that oversees the management of marine mammals.

The Department of Commerce sponsored the Makah tribe through the International Whaling Commission (IWC) whale quota recognition process. Makahs were eventually included as participants in the gray whale quota. This inclusion became formal at the IWC annual meeting in Monaco in the fall of 1997. The Makah people celebrated with a parade through the streets of Neah Bay, and the tribal council held a press conference at the Makah Cultural and Research Center.

The tribe established the Makah Whaling Commission to oversee its whale hunting. To assure broad tribal participation, the commission was set up to include representatives of all the major Makah families. With input from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the commission developed a whaling management plan. The group also established training requirements for the whalers and selected men to train for the Makah tribe’s first hunt in approximately 80 years. The training whalers began paddling in the one cedar dugout canoe owned by the tribe, first in the calmer waters near Neah Bay and then out on the open ocean. In 1993 two Makah men, working with Nuuchahnulth carvers on Vancouver Island, had built the canoe, named the qwitiiqwich (Hummingbird), which had already proved its seaworthiness.

While the rest of the world pondered whether to support the goal of the small tribe on the tip of the Olympic Peninsula, the Makah community was coming together like never before. The men were paddling every day in the canoe and...
Some accessed materials in the support, and traditional knowledge. They also spent time examining the whaling gear in the Ozette collection, noticing intricate details about the gear that the curators and archaeologists had not. Cultural and Research Center's archives turned to their elder relatives for advice, support, and traditional knowledge. They also spent time examining the whaling gear in the Ozette collection, noticing intricate details about the gear that the curators and archaeologists had not. Some accessed materials in the Makah Cultural and Research Center's archives and library, including recordings of their grandparents discussing whale hunting preparations and other topics.

As the training intensified, so did protests against the impending hunt. Makahs were characterized as vicious, savage, and bloodthirsty by animal rights activists and other groups and individuals. Because a few tribal members believed that this was not the right time to resume whale hunting, the opposition depicted the Makah community as a divided community, one that did not listen to the reason and advice of its elders. In fact, the Makah community and its friends and relatives were more unified than ever. Many other Indian people offered words of encouragement and prayers, sending their messages in person and by phone, e-mail, and fax machine.

Makahs had made the decision to resume whaling for reasons that were exclusively internal, and the tribe kept its focus internal, except where involvement with governmental officials and attorneys was required. Some tribal members enjoyed the attention that the media provided, but the whalers in training kept to their regimen and ignored the repeated requests for interviews and photographs. Even the aggressive and crude insults hurled at the whalers while they were out on the ocean did not break their concentration. The more vicious the attacks became, the firmer the Makahs' resolve grew.

The whaling crew made several hunting attempts in the fall of 1998 and resumed hunting in the spring of 1999. Prior to the hunt, the crew is required by the Makah tribe to secure a whaling permit. The tribe then notifies the U.S. Coast Guard, which enforces the exclusionary zone. When the official flag is raised on the canoe, other vessels are required by law to keep 500 yards away from the canoe. News traveled fast in the Neah Bay community when a hunt was on. Dockside reports and media helicopters provided continuous coverage of an active hunt. Prayers, songs, and traditional observances were regular occurrences during these times. Meanwhile, the only road in and out of Neah Bay was regularly watched on live television by 70 percent of the Neah Bay community.

A positive outcome of the incessant media attention was that some of the more perspicacious professionals desired to delve into the historical, legal, and cultural aspects of whale hunting. They moved from viewing a simple controversy to examining a social and cultural renaissance with complex, even inexplicable, meanings and importance. They learned what the Treaty of Neah Bay means to the everyday lives of Makah people. They were guests of honor at a community dinner prepared by the tribe, where they learned that the Makahs could be very generous and gracious hosts—and great cooks. Some of them grew to like the community so much that they still visit regularly.

Following an evening prayer session with the elders, the crew paddled out to sea well before dawn on Monday morning, May 17, 1999. They left in the canoe with no Makah chase boats. The protesters were not out early enough that morning to cause any disturbance (as some of their vessels had recently been confiscated). By the time a whale had been sighted and the canoe began its approach, the Makah chase boats were on hand, ready to assist the hunters. The crew made an approach, and the harpooner lifted his harpoon, thrust it with a force aided by ancestral strength, and gave it a little twist to make sure it was lodged in tight. Cheers of triumph rang through the small village and telephones began ringing. The conversations would have been difficult to interpret for an outsider, interspersed as they were with tears of victory and emotional outpourings of relief and accomplishment. The hunt was being watched on live television by 70 percent of the Neah Bay community.

Because the tribe agreed to work within International Whaling Commission guidelines, which have requirements for humane kills, the whalers agreed to use a .577 caliber rifle as a substitute for the killing lance. Earlier hunters used the lances after the first harpoons had been thrust into the whale, attached by lanyard to inflated sealskins. The floats kept the whale from diving and tired it out before the fatal injury could be administered with the barbless lances.

A Makah man chosen for the task by the Makah Whaling Commission supplied the final shots. He is an expert marksman by the commission's standards, an experienced game hunter, and a decorated Vietnam War combat veteran. His shots killed the whale, and the
The crew hunted the whale near the village of Ozette, about 17 miles south of the village of Neah Bay. The harpooner sank the harpoon into the whale at approximately 6:55 in the morning. Twelve hours later the canoe, accompanied by four canoes from neighboring tribes, brought the whale ashore on the beach at Neah Bay. The place they chose to land the whale was the same spot other whales had been brought to shore, according to historic photos and elders’ accounts. Many tribal members were excused from work that Monday. Most chose to be together, in celebration of an event for which the tribe had waited three-quarters of a century. Many joyous tears were shed that day.

Like most populations of Indian tribes, just a little over half of enrolled Makahs live on the reservation. By the time the whale was brought ashore, nearly every Makah in driving distance had made the pilgrimage home. It was a rainy, drizzly day. Women who normally keep out of the rain to preserve their hairstyles were walking up and down the beach, looking happier and more full of life than ever before. Elders had arranged to have cars parked above the beach so they could be brought close when the whale came in. Even people who had doubted the timing of the hunt were hugging others, smiling, and sharing in the joy.

TOP: A Makah whaling canoe with sails hoisted takes advantage of the wind while eastbound on Juan de Fuca Strait. Canvas sails eventually replaced the traditional cedar bark sails.

MIDDLE: Makah whalers bring a whale ashore in Neah Bay, c. 1910. The man in the stern of the canoe is David Fisher. Sealskin buoys keep the whale afloat.

BOTTOM: Makah village of cedar-hewn longhouses at the west end of Neah Bay, c. 1910. Canoes on the beach face the water, ready to launch.
The whale was hauled up the beach...and sung to, prayed over, and thanked for giving its life in order that the community might thrive.

Traditionally, a whale was beached at high tide and the butchering would begin after the tide receded. Because this whale hunt was so momentous, the people could not be so patient. The whale was hauled up the beach, inch by inch, by many men heaving on the lengths of two large chains. The whale was sung to, prayed over, and thanked for giving its life in order that the community might thrive. Media helicopters finally backed away when the arm motions of hundreds of people indicated that they were disrupting the rituals. George Bowechop, executive director of the Makah Whaling Commission, was quoted in the newspapers as saying, “Today the Makah have brought the whale home.” The harpooner, Theron Parker, was praised by members of the tribe and thanked by members of other tribes for exercising the most sacred treaty right the Makahs had secured. His perseverance, focus, and serious study of Makah whaling traditions were truly remarkable.

Some of the whale meat and blubber was distributed to Makah tribal members the first night, and a portion of both were reserved for a feast that the Makah Tribal Council planned to host the Saturday after the hunt. During the week people were invited to the building where the whale was being cut up and stored for the meal. They found that the blubber tasted good raw, and that the meat could even be eaten raw.

The feast, which was similar to a potlatch but hosted by the tribe rather than an individual family, was a spectacular event. All the Makahs who drove home for the arrival of the whale either stayed the week or returned for the feast, and many Indians from other tribes joined the celebration. The four canoes from neighboring tribes (Puyallup, Tulalip, Quileute, and Hoh) that came for support and to accompany the crew and the whale to the beach were well represented. Almost all the Ozette archaeologists attended, and thousands of other friends and relatives joined the tribe in this historic celebration.

At the celebration the tribe gave special gifts and words of thanks to the Coast Guard for its tireless enforcement of the exclusionary zone, which provided a safe environment for the Makah whale hunt. The day before the successful hunt, the tribe learned, a high-ranking Coast Guard official had promised that no further interference would delay the hunt. The attempts to disrupt the Makah whale hunt were an affront to U.S. law, which affirmed the tribe’s right to resume traditional cultural activity.

The celebration lasted from noon on Saturday until nearly eight o’clock the next morning. The organizers gave the floor to invited dignitaries and other special guests. Later the floor was opened up to any visitors who wished to comment. Billy Frank Jr., a Nisqually Indian who is the president of the Northwest Indian Fish Commission and well known for his vigilant support of treaty rights, gave one of his most impassioned speeches. A Massai warrior talked about being unable to create or destroy energy, only being able to transfer it. He was talking about the spirit of the whale, and he moved people to tears and a standing ovation. He also talked about the preservation of the unique characteristics of tribal rights and said that in the modern world these tribal rights are in danger of becoming extinct.

He said the Makah whale hunt proved that it was possible to turn back the clock to preserve these unique identities.

Hundreds of Nuuchahnulth relatives from British Columbia came to celebrate the whale hunt and bestow the harpooner, Theron Parker, with an additional name, which translates to “getter of the fin” (the dorsal fin and the dorsal fin area—the most prized parts of the whale—receive ceremonial treatment for several days after the hunt). Relatives from Canada and other tribes performed songs and dances to show their support and appreciation for what the Makahs had accomplished. Many thanked the Makah tribe for resuming this tradition, as it had set out to do. Many Indian people looked at whaling as an important affirmation of treaty rights.

Since 1999 the Makah tribe has not hunted another whale, though tribal whalers did butcher and distribute a whale that was injured and chased ashore by killer whales. By that time people had favorite recipes for whale meat and had experimented with various methods of rendering oil. The Makah Whaling Commission has created an educational film on Makah whaling and distributes it free to educational institutions. It is also sold to visitors on the Makah reservation.

The young man who looked at the Ozette whaling gear with wonder can now say that he knows something of what it is like to use such gear to bring a whale to the tribe, for he was the harpooner in the tribe’s first hunt in approximately 80 years. The children in the tribe today have more to look forward to than ever. At a local café one child was heard to say to his mother, “When I get big, Mom, I’m going to get you a whale.”

As one tribal member put it, “The real possibilities for the future of the Makah tribe are brighter than ever before, and much of this is because of the existence of the opportunity for whale hunting. Whether one whale is hunted every year or every several years, we will continue to apply cultural standards to our conduct in order to be prepared. We are thankful for those who offered support, or who had the patience to suspend judgment, and we are proud of the strength of our community, the wisdom of our elders, and of the many opportunities offered to us from our ancestors.”

Janine Bowechop (Makah) is executive director of the Makah Cultural and Research Center at Neah Bay. This article is based on her essay in Coming to Shore: Northwest Coast Ethnology, Traditions, and Visions, ed. by Mauze, Harkin, and Kan (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), excerpted with the publisher’s permission.
One of a series of wood block prints by Glenn Sheckels (1887–1939), “Lunch Room” depicts the Olympia Knitting Mills cafeteria, c. 1920s. Sheckels, a commercial artist, also designed restaurant menus and advertising for steamship lines. He was a member of the Puget Sound Group of Northwest Painters and exhibited at the Seattle Art Museum. The original image measures 11" x 13½".

The Washington State Historical Society's digital art collection includes but is not limited to portraiture, folk art, paintings, drawings, sculpture, and mixed media. This image and others may be viewed and ordered online at WashingtonHistory.org. Just click on Research Washington, select Featured Collections or Collections Catalog, and search on the keyword “Sheckels.”
The first time I saw the pond, it looked like a pleasant place to go fishing. The shorelines were cool from the shade of cottonwood and willows. Bulrushes, wild lettuce, and cattails grew in the marsh. Ducks and coots paddled around on the water. There was an island with trees and a boat dock with a small boat tied to it. But my boyhood reverie was broken when I noted the radiation control zone signs posted around the pond with radiation symbols and bright colors—a type of sign common at the Hanford site. Like every building and facility at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the pond was given a number, 216-U-10 pond.

Since my very first encounter with the pond, I have been struck by the irony that a pond containing atoms of a toxic element created by mankind in nuclear reactors became a flourishing aquatic Garden of Eden in the middle of a desert. The pond, like the plutonium atoms it contained, was a man-made creation that came to life in an isolated desert in 1944 at the height of World War II and met its demise (or decommissioning, in the language of Hanford) in 1984. In one of many scientific reports published on the pond, a scientist stated, "U-pond is unique among aquatic ecosystems. It has uncommonly large quantities of actinides and has contained transuranic elements longer than any other aquatic system." In other words, the pond was totally unique—contaminated with plutonium longer than any other similar place in the world.

Plutonium is named after the planet Pluto, which in turn is named after the Greek god of the underworld. Pluto is an alternate term for the Greek name Hades, which is the underworld itself. It is only appropriate then that plutonium should be found in the pond sediment and algal scum of U-10-pond.

A Radioactive Wastewater Collection Site at Hanford Comes to Life

By Melvin R. Adams

U-POUND WAS UNUSUALLY PRODUCTIVE FROM A BIOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW IN PART BECAUSE THE LAUNDRY DISCHARGES THAT WENT TO THE POND CONTAINED PHOSPHATES THAT ACTED AS FERTILIZER FOR ALGAE AND DIATOMS GROWING IN THE POND. (THE LAUNDRY WAS USED TO WASH PROTECTIVE CLOTHING CALLED "WHITES" USED BY WORKERS WHEN ENTERING RADIATION ZONES. THE WHITE CLOTHING CONSISTED OF HOODS, COVERALLS, BOOT COVERS, AND GLOVES.) SCIENTISTS ESTIMATED THAT THE PRIMARY PRODUCTIVITY OF U-POUND APPROACHED THAT OF A "HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE TERRESTRIAL COMMUNITY, A CORN FIELD...." IN OTHER WORDS, A GREAT DEAL OF BIOLOGICAL MASS GREW IN THE POND.

BUT TO LOCATE THIS INTERESTING POND IN TIME AND SPACE, IT IS NECESSARY TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING IN THE GEOLOGIC FOUNDATION. THE POND WOULD COME TO REST UPON WHAT GEOLOGISTS CALL THE STRATA OF THE PASCO BASIN THAT IS UNDERLAIN (FROM THE BOTTOM UP) WITH THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASALT GROUP, THE RINGOLD FORMATION AND THE HANFORD FORMATION. THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASALTS ERUPTED FROM VOLCANIC FISSURES STARTING 17 MILLION YEARS AGO AND ULTIMATELY COVERED ALMOST 63,000 SQUARE MILES OF WHAT IS NOW EASTERN WASHINGTON, OREGON AND PARTS OF IDAHO. AFTER THE LAST MAJOR ERUPTION OF BASALTS ABOUT 8.5 MILLION YEARS AGO, THE RINGOLD FORMATION WAS DEPOSITED BY THE EARLY COLUMBIA RIVER MEANDERING ACROSS THE BASALT AND DEPOSITING SAND AND GRAVEL. THE HANFORD FORMATION SEDIMENTS WERE LAID DOWN ON TOP OF THE RINGOLD STRATA BY A FLOOD OF BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS WHEN AN IMMENSE LAKE BLOCKED BY AN ICE DAM IN MONTANA DRAINED IN A RELATIVELY SUDDEN MANNER AT THE END OF THE PLEISTOCENE ICE AGES. THE FLOODS LEFT BEHIND GRAVEL BARS AND SANDS.

THE ENGINEERS AT HANFORD IN 1944 TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A DEPRESSION
in the topography of the Hanford West Area to discharge wastewaters and cooling water from plutonium processing and reclamation facilities, a laundry, a uranium recovery plant, an evaporator/crystallizer plant, and several laboratories. During its history from World War II through the Cold War, U-pond received some 31.7 billion gallons of water. This amount of water occupied all of the pore space in the sediments beneath U-pond. During the heyday of wastewater discharge to U-pond, so much water was placed on the ground that the pond grew at one point to 30 acres and the groundwater table below the pond rose some 75 feet above the normal water table. Hanford used enormous amounts of water for the operation of reactors and chemical separation plants and other facilities. The abundance of water was a primary reason, along with the need for secrecy, that Hanford was located on an isolated reach of the Columbia River in a desert.

During the operation of U-pond about 8.1 kg of plutonium was released to the trenches leading to the pond. The bomb that destroyed Nagasaki in Japan during World War II was made with plutonium from Hanford and contained 6.1 kg of plutonium. Lest the reader think that the pond could explode into a mushroom cloud, it is important to remember that because the plutonium in U-pond was so dispersed throughout the sediments and water, there was no danger of a “criticality”—the formation of a critical mass of plutonium to cause a release of energy. But the seemingly bucolic U-pond contained enough plutonium to make a nuclear weapon.

I never will forget my personal feelings when upon a visit to Los Alamos I saw a piece of metallic plutonium being manipulated remotely in a “glove box.” Metallic plutonium is very dense and for some reason it reminded me of gold though it was not gold in color. It did not have the beauty of gold: it was an ominous and dull metal—even ugly in a way. Perhaps it reminded me of gold because of the tremendous cost expended to produce it in even small amounts.

As a scientist I knew the plutonium was emitting alpha particles detectable with instruments, but as a poet I felt the plutonium emitted something else. There was something sinister about it—as though it was mocking us for our incredible ingenuity to create such a thing and our incredible hubris and folly to allow it to live. Suddenly I understood the extraordinary precautions of those handling it, including the building itself, with a door of enormous thickness and huge steel pins, able to withstand tornadoes or the crashing of an airplane. I was very aware that this stuff could kill us either by blast and heat from a weapon or just by entering our lungs as atoms. In a real sense the plutonium seemed to require being worshiped and housed in a complex palace of enormous expense, tended constantly by procedural ritual. It had somehow managed to achieve godlike status.

Buried in the documents resulting from the study of U-pond are glimpses of a few interesting stories that intersect with my own life. Of the five ponds at Hanford, workers planted goldfish in two—Gable Mountain Pond and U-pond. I remember my first visit to Gable Mountain Pond, a much larger pond than U-pond but without the biological diversity or the plutonium contaminants. I recall coyotes jumping from the abundant cover at the edge of the pond and rabbits and ducks and coots. The goldfish in that pond were quite large—like well-fed koi in a private pond. In U-pond the goldfish did so well that the standing crop was estimated at 75,000 individuals. I am still struck by the irony that a man-made pond devoted to the disposal of waste water could be a haven for a wide range of fauna, including the common goldfish. It is a testament to the fecundity and resilience of nature that a few fish planted in U-pond could flourish to number in the tens of thousands.

Being an avid bird watcher, I was intrigued to find in the documents about U-pond detailed studies of the birds that frequented the pond. Judging by the lengthy species lists and numerical inventories of birds visiting the pond on any given day, Hanford
scientists must have spent a great deal of time bird-watching at U-pond and the other Hanford ponds. A far greater variety of birds visited U-pond than the other ponds at Hanford. Among the perching and small birds were peewee, kingfisher, three species of woodpecker, flicker, two species of kingbird, flycatcher, phoebe, lark, magpie, raven, crow, starling, cowbird, three species of blackbird, meadowlark, oriole, finch, goldfinch, eight species of sparrow, junco, towhee, tanager, two species of swallow, shrike, three species of vireo, eight species of warbler, pipit, thrasher, mockingbird, three species of wren, two species of kinglet, solitaire, two species of thrush, robin, and bluebird. The list of waterfowl reads like a who’s who of western shorebirds, diving birds, and wading birds including, most notably, wigeons, teal, pintails, gadwalls, ducks, bufflehead, mergansers, merganser duck, red-breasted merganser, oldsquaw, merganser, ruddy duck, green-winged teal, northern pintail, American wigeon, hooded merganser, blue-winged teal, common merganser, mallard, canvasback, bluebill, lesser scaup, greater scaup, shoveler, pintail, northern pintail, wood duck, pintail, gadwall, green-winged teal, ring-necked duck, and gadwall. The studies reminded me of my college days when I was required to develop an insect collection in an entomology class. The avid scientists at U-pond must have spent a considerable amount of time to ascertain the relative abundance of insects at U-pond, including: dragonfly, damselfly, mayfly, water strider, backswimmer, water scorpion, water boatman, caddis fly, diving beetles, and the like. Many of these species would be of interest to a fly fisherman on any normal pond or lake in the American West. The scientists also reported mammals visiting the pond, including rabbits, raccoons, coyotes, deer, and rodents. I would not be surprised if members of the once-present wild horse herd at Hanford visited the pond or members of the still-present elk herd.

As a result of U-pond studies it was determined that sediments were the principal concentrator of plutonium, with concentrations in water being much lower. In the plants and animals of U-pond, the decaying algae mass was the principal concentrator. Likewise, soil sediments had higher concentrations of plutonium than tree parts. These findings confirm my memory of the behavior of plutonium. My engineering group at one time had a project to develop a machine to wash plutonium and other radionuclides from the soil. We discovered that plutonium so tightly binds to soil particles, particularly sand grains, that it was very difficult to wash out. Unlike some other radionuclides, plutonium is relatively immobile in the environment. The irony of U-pond is that a toxic element can be immobilized and shielded by the mud, sediment and soil while all around it nature goes about its normal proliferation of type and form.

Reading through some of the scientific documents written about U-pond, I am struck by the fact that they are so well-written. They were composed before the ubiquity of computers and word processing programs, yet the spelling is perfect. The species names, by convention today written in italics, are in these documents underlined—a concession no doubt to the limitations of the typewriter. The style is sparse, clear, and efficient. There is not a single wasted or misplaced word. The documents themselves, on aging, sturdy paper, are for a bibliophile like me a joy to the touch. They seem like the well-crafted furniture one might find in a good antique shop. But the cold objectivity of the documents—documents that could have been written by an alien studying the pond from space via instruments and analysis—leaves me with a hunger for something more—some taste of human perspective, of humanity, of historical context. There is nothing in the documents of the hubris of the human enterprise—the creation of a living ecosystem in the service of weapons to incinerate cities. There is no hint of the Faustian bargain involved in appropriating the secrets of the sun—the creation of elements beyond what nature itself has created. And there is no hint of awareness much less atonement at forming a living oasis in the middle of a desert—creating a magnet for all sorts of life—only to bury it when it no longer had utility.

Perhaps, then, U-pond is a metaphor for both the strength and weakness of science—the strength of objectivity beyond the reach of ideology or emotion, the weakness of a lack of human context and meaning and feeling. I long for the sturdy documents to somehow end with a poem or a painting or even a prayer—something to place the pond in perspective.

U-pond was filled with soil and planted to bunchgrass. Bunchgrass is an angiosperm (Angiospermophyta—flowering plants; 230,000 species; 70 million years old). Grasses have been on the earth less than a half-life of plutonium-244. My epitaph for U-pond: "Plutonium was born here in the year of our Lord 1945, buried here in 1985, entombed in soil and ancient grass—it never dies—may it rest in peace.”

Melvin Adams hails from the eastern Oregon town of Lakeview and now lives in Richland, Washington. He worked 24 years at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation as an engineer and manager. Adams is a published poet and author of Netting the Sun: A Personal Geography of the Oregon Desert (Washington State University Press).
Reader Challenge

The Society's Special Collections recently received from the Samis Foundation of Seattle a donation of over 150 seven-by-nine-inch glass plate negatives taken in Seattle, c. 1903-07. The images are mainly of Seattle neighborhood businesses (barbershops, saloons, markets), delivery wagons, streetcars, house construction, and construction workers (painters, hod carriers, bricklayers, carpenters, pipe fitters). The photographer is unknown and none of the locations are identified. Special Collections would appreciate any additional information our readers can supply. Are you up to the challenge? All of these images can be viewed on our Web site, WashingtonHistory.org. Just click on Research WA, then Featured Collections or Collections Catalog, and search on the keyword "Samis."
Six miles from the confluence of the Snake and Palouse rivers, Palouse Falls was among the most breathtaking landmarks along the route of the nearby Mullan Road.

FACING PAGE: John Mullan, the young army lieutenant in charge of building the Fort Walla Walla-Fort Benton wagon road.
On a windswept blacktop road 20 miles west of Endicott, Washington, is a rutted trail-crossing visible from the outskirts of tiny Benge, where the main highway to Winona meets the road to Ritzville. Even on some modern maps the diagonal path seen there is marked “Old Mullan Trail,” and while its namesake might be grateful for the 21st-century recognition, John Mullan wrote in the year of its completion 150 years ago that he had been “sent to build and construct a road.” He might have preferred we so designate this historic route even now, but in that remote district of eastern Adams County, it is definitely a trail.

Although some accounts by Mullan’s coworkers indicate his explorations of the road’s possible western routes were opposed by area Indians, numerous notable Native Americans were also instrumental in guiding Mullan’s extensive series of survey parties from 1853 to 1860. Mullan had conceived of the project as early as the spring of 1854, after being assigned the previous year as a topographical engineer to Isaac Stevens’s epic northern transcontinental railway survey project. Stevens, then Washington’s territorial governor (1853–57), ambitiously directed the work of some 240 men in an effort to find the most practical transportation route over the northern Great Plains to the Rocky Mountains and across the Columbia Basin to Puget Sound. Stevens’s main exploration party encountered little difficulty until reaching the Rockies in October 1853. He felt compelled to leave a group of 13 men in the mountains for “more detailed and thorough exploration” of this strategic section.

Young Lieutenant Mullan was placed in charge and thoroughly met his superior’s ambitious intentions for exploring the rugged upper Clark Fork district. The contingent also included 28-year-old Private Gustavus Sohon, fluent in English, German, and French. He soon distinguished himself as expedition artist and the lieutenant’s right-hand man and Indian interpreter. According to Mullan, Sohon “had a way of making friends with the Indians.” Through his interactions with area Indians, he learned the Interior Salish languages of the Flathead, Pend d’Oreille, and Spokane tribes. The men established Cantonment Stevens as their primitive headquarters of four log huts on the Bitterroot River about 10 miles south of Fort Owen near present-day Victor, Montana.

Sohon began work on what became an outstanding portfolio of landscape drawings, many of which were reproduced in the Mullan–Stevens published reports as color lithographs. His masterful series of chief portraits, drawn during his time in the mountains with Mullan and at Steven’s 1855 Walla Walla, Flathead, and Blackfoot Treaty Councils comprise what historian John C. Ewers has called “the most extensive and authoritative pictorial series on the Indians of the Northwest Plateau in pre-reservation days.”

During the winter of 1853–54, Mullan traveled over 1,000 miles and crossed the Continental Divide six times. Early in the process he concluded that “a wagon road could be easily and economically constructed from Hell’s Gate Ronde to the east of the [Coeur d’Alene] lake.” Mullan passed on his suggestion to Stevens and the War Department, noting that “with a moderate amount of labor, a first-class stage-road could be here constructed and [I] gave the experimentum crux by taking a wagon train through on my return across the mountains in March 1854.” Mullan’s work impressed Stevens and figured significantly in the governor’s request to Congress for an appropriation of $30,000 to begin construction of the proposed road.
road, which was approved in 1854. Congress authorized an additional $100,000 in 1859 to complete the road.

Stevens's and Mullan's valued guides for this work were Native Americans and mixed-bloods, including former Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trapper Antoine (of Gros Ventre and French-Canadian ancestry); Charlot—possibly Chief Victor's son—from the Flatheads; Aeneas (Ignace), a highly regarded Iroquois who wandered amongst the Flatheads; the Coeur d'Alene leader Basil; and Gabriel Prudhomme, who had also assisted Father De Smet. Palouse chief Slowiarchy guided Sohon in the summer of 1859 when the first party surveyed the Palouse country eastward to the Bitterroots along the plateau running north of the Snake River.

As Washington's territorial representative (1857-61), Stevens addressed Congress on several occasions in 1857 to vindicate his controversial Indian policy and castigate the army for not insisting upon the "absolute and unconditional submission" of the tribes. For General John Wool's "edicts" preventing white settlement east of the Cascades, Stevens branded the general a "dictator of the country." Colonel George Wright's 1856 foray into Yakama country and maladroit offering of gifts to area chiefs was also "greatly to be deplored." The "long delays," "talking and not fighting," gave "safe conduct to the murderers" of whites in recent hostilities, Stevens asserted. Even worse, according to Stevens, Wright's failure to apprehend the famed Chief Kamiakin gave him "the whole field of the interior."

Stevens was responding in part to congressional rejection of his proposed northern transcontinental railroad route in favor of the central route. But the irresistible promoter then lobbied strongly for construction of a military road from Fort Benton to Fort Walla Walla. The initial appropriation for the "Northern Overland Road" was forthcoming, and 27-year-old Mullan was named chief engineer for the work in late 1857. Despite effusive newspaper reports celebrating the anticipated "large population... soon to be attracted to" the Columbia Plateau, uncertain conditions in the interior stalled the work and Mullan and Stevens waited impatiently for the situation to change. Coastal residents aware of favorable conditions for agriculture and ranching east of the Cascades warmed to the prospect of settlement on the broad swath of prime land along Mullan's intended route, which he described in numerous press accounts. The Bitterroot Valley was "capable of grazing immense bands of stock of all kinds" while throughout the Palouse "we possess a rich, fertile, and productive area that needs but the proper means and measures... to be turned into public and private benefit."

Writing from the Colville mining district in November 1857, Indian agent B. F. Yantis added to the chorus of praise in local papers with assurances that travel to the gold strikes was now "perfectly safe for Americans in any number," and that "with the exception of Kamiakin, all the principal chiefs" of
the Spokane, Colville, Yakama, Palouse, and other area tribes had expressed "in strongest terms their friendship." But the Indians' abiding desire for peace was not necessarily synonymous with accepting an unrestrained surge of more white settlers across lands north of the Snake River. For this reason, leaders other than Kamiakin did not share the cheery sentiments of Mullan and Yantis.

Isaac Stevens's insistence that road building commence as soon as possible in 1858 aroused the ire of both military officials and Indian leaders in the Northwest. To make preparations for the project, Mullan had been dispatched to Fort Dalles where on May 15, 1858, Colonel Wright flatly informed him that "no probability" existed for work on the road that year. The ambitious road builder was ordered to remain at the fort where Wright condemned the effort as a dangerous provocation to the region's fragile peace. "Lieutenant Mullan and his party will remain here [at Fort Dalles] until he hears from Colonel Steptoe," Wright wrote in May, "In fact it is said that the proposed opening of the road through the Indian country was a primary cause" of renewed tensions in the spring of 1858.

During his months of maneuvering in Congress, Stevens had published circulars that were widely distributed in the East informing prospective immigrants of settlement opportunities in Washington Territory. Renewed gold strikes made in the Colville valley and on Canada's Fraser River in March 1858 inflamed the tenuous situation anew as streams of miners again ventured across the Cascades and onto the contested lands. Tense relations between area Indians and Americans in their scattered gold camps had continued throughout a troubled spring. HBC personnel and Jesuit missionaries could still walk safely between both worlds, but the occasional American official passing through the valley was wary of Indian intentions. Two French-Canadians headed to the strikes were killed in Palouse country in the spring, and on the night of April 12, 1858, Palouse Indians raided livestock near Fort Walla Walla.

Chief Tilcoax, whose legendary horse herds ranged across thousands of square miles from the Walla Walla valley to north of the Snake River, had harbored ill will against the whites since the days of the Cayuse War in the late 1840s and was blamed for the recent trouble. According to Jesuit historian Robert I. Burns, his influence among the disaffected Snake River bands "rivaled that of the great Kamiakin," and he had been advocating war for months as he watched Steptoe's garrison grow in strength. Tilcoax felt the Americans were responsible for the epidemics that had struck his people and the only way to rid themselves of the recurrent plagues...
was to drive the whites from the region. Father Joseph Joset, the Swiss-born Jesuit ministering to the Coeur d'Alenes, believed that Tilcoax, not Kamiakin, was most responsible for fomenting hostilities among the region's Indians and that Tilcoax "had bribed the Spokanes, and some Kalispels to continue hostilities."

Instead of heading north along the Colville Trail through the central Palouse, Steptoe rode northeast on another well-worn trail toward the South Palouse Fork after hearing that hostile Palouse Indians were in that vicinity. But for his Nez Perce proxies' familiarity with the route, Steptoe and his men would have found the area essentially terra incognita. Father Joset, who participated in events associated with Steptoe's march and was trusted by leaders on both sides, later commented that the colonel's decision to confront Tilcoax "would explain the whole puzzle" of why the soldiers used the more remote eastern route northward rather than taking the more direct Colville Trail from Fort Walla Walla. The choice of this peculiar itinerary proved fateful and led to Steptoe's defeat at the May 17-18 Battle of Tohotonimme.

The sting of the "Steptoe Disaster" had been a national embarrassment for the military, prompting the Army of the Pacific's General Newman Clarke to direct a torrent of men and supplies to the Columbia Department during the summer of 1858. Clarke issued orders to Colonel Wright for "complete submission" of the warring tribes. The 54-year-old officer who had commanded the Ninth Infantry at Fort Dalles since 1856 was known to his men as a stern but even-handed taskmaster. Wright was the principal architect of plans to invade the interior with at least 1,000 men striking from two directions.

The operation called for Virginia native Major Robert Garnett, former West Point instructor and commander at Fort Simcoe, to take 300 men north to the confluence of the Columbia and Okanogan rivers. Garnett's mission was to punish Indians who had harassed miners and at the same time flush out hostile forces and push them eastward to face Wright's larger force. The ambitious Mullan language skills at Fort Dalles, and in characteristic understatement expressed "no disposition to remain idle during the summer, but, on the contrary, was anxious to
become personally cognizant of such topographical facts as would give me a correct idea of the western section of the country through which our road would pass." Mullan saw Wright's campaign as an opportunity to further his own explorations, and he solicited General Clarke to reassign him to Wright's command. In this way and at this pivotal moment in Northwest history, Mullan came to serve as the colonel's topographical engineer with the valued assistance of Sohon and topographer Theodore Kolecki.

Wright's advance party departed Fort Walla Walla on August 7 to secure the Snake River crossing near the mouth of the Tucannon. The forward guard was soon followed by some 700 well-armed troops and support personnel with a contingent of 40 friendly Nez Perce scouts under Mullan's command, 800 horses, mules, cattle, five weeks of provisions, and, according to Lieutenant Lawrence Kip, who kept a journal of Wright's military campaign, "a very wholesome respect for the Indians" who had so thoroughly defeated Steptoe. Ever attentive to other interests, Mullan noted in careful mile-by-mile detail the lay of the land, distances, and column campsites. Wright's soldiers marched through the intense summer heat and charred grasslands that had recently been a "lake of fire," torched by Indians to deprive the soldiers of provender for their animals. The troops crossed the Snake River near the mouth of the Palouse on August 25, but the Indians who usually resided there had moved out of harm's way.

The size and pace of Wright's grand cavalcade gave Kamiakin and other Indian leaders ample time to plot a strategy of response. But the circumstances of Wright's movement were significantly different than those of Steptoe's unexpected intrusion. Time would not necessarily benefit the Indian cause in light of Wright's much larger force and superior weaponry, which included several hundred new long-range rifled muskets, additional .54 caliber Harpers Ferry rifles, perhaps several dozen of the novel Sharps carbines, and six mountain howitzers. While Angus McDonald, the HBC's chief trader at Fort Colvile, had turned a deaf ear to Kamiakin's desperate pleas for ammunition, company personnel at Fort Vancouver had been doing a boomtown business all summer supplying goods to Wright's forces.

Trailing great plumes of dust, Wright's command pressed beyond the Snake River. On September 1 the troops emerged onto open prairie where the opposing forces finally met at the Battle of Four Lakes. The Indians assembled their forces amid the scattered pines and bunchgrass between Granite and Willow lakes where the shadows of high-flying birds of prey careened along the dusty shores in the wake of Wright's advance. The soldiers' thrusts led directly into this area between a "hald butte," later named Wright's Hill, and Riddle Hill to the west. The Indians were torn down by the soldiers' improved weaponry and slowly began to fall back despite the appeals of Qualchan and Kamiakin to stand their ground. Indian resistance in the area held for some three hours before the warriors were forced to scatter in turmoil. Lieutenant Kip observed that the Indians had met "the long range rifles now first used by our troops."

The fighting bands sufficiently re-grouped 10 miles northwest of Four Lakes four days later to challenge the soldiers again on September 5 at the Battle of Spokane Plains in the decisive battle of Wright's campaign and a defining moment in the region's primal clash of civilizations. The Indians set the dry summer prairie on fire across the plains west of Deep Creek to confuse the advance of Wright's mile-long column. The smoke billowed upward like a final exhalation of Native freedom. The soldiers held ranks and marched into the mayhem, according to Lieutenant Kip, while watching "the enemy collecting in large bodies" to the northeast near present Airway Heights. Wright estimated their numbers between 500 and 700. The Indians rode parallel to the soldiers' line of march, massing in larger enclaves as they rode north.

Topographers Mullan and Kolecki, along with interpreter-artist Sohon, had joined Wright's command to render graphic details of the battle. Mullan and Kolecki's detailed map was later helpfully superimposed upon an early plat of township and sections, a 1915 project by Spokane Historical Society chair Garret Hunt and several veterans of the Wright campaign. Mullan's perspective combined with the modern section plat offers significant insight into the sequence of actions during that watershed event in Pacific Northwest history.

Sohon's striking artistic perspective of the Battle of Spokane Plains is from the relative security of the main pack train near the present intersection of Rambo and Deno roads. A half-dozen men, likely Wright and his senior aides, appear confidently on horseback atop a slight rise in the foreground flanked by a line of infantry on each side. Another line of skirmishers with a company of dragoons to their left advance ahead in the face of billowing smoke against a cluster of Indians in the distance. Once again the Indians faced the army's deadly fusillade of rifle and artillery fire. Wright estimated that some eight howitzer shells exploded in the midst of the Indians' positions as they stubbornly gave ground along their northeastern retreat toward the Spokane River.

Kamiakin and his wife Colestah, clad in battle dress with her scarlet head scarf, fought together in the battle until a cannon shell shattered a tree under which they had positioned themselves. According to family accounts, a falling branch struck Kamiakin, knocking him
Fort Benton, Montana, stood at the eastern end of John Mullan’s military wagon road. In 1862, about when this drawing was made by Gustavus Sohon, the fort was the head of steam navigation on the Missouri River.

from his horse and likely breaking his shoulder. Colestah and others took the injured chief to the family’s camp at the mouth of the Spokane River for safe haven. Lieutenant George Dandy, whose company attacked Indian positions in the pines and rocks below Deep Creek, recalled that a howitzer from Lieutenant James White’s Company D of Wright’s Third Artillery fired the shot that almost claimed the chief’s life. According to Dandy, “one of his shells tore a limb from a large tree under which some Indians were grouped; among whom...was the great chief Kamiakin of the Yakima tribe, who was seriously hurt.”

Seven hours of unremitting onslaught from the day’s first fighting had pushed the Indians along seven miles to the Spokane River where Wright found safe haven against a steep western bluff in a bend of the river one mile above its confluence with Latah Creek. The soldiers were “entirely exhausted,” but Wright commended the “zeal, energy, and perseverance” they displayed throughout “this protracted battle,” which proved to be the turning point in the interior Indian Wars. The campaign also served Mullan’s related purposes. In Mullan’s words, prior to the summer of 1858 the entire “region lying between the Spokane and Snake rivers was only known to me through the reports and maps of others...and to say where the line should or should not be located was no easy matter.” After his wartime experiences that summer, Mullan began contemplating the northerly route of Wright’s advance as the western approach across the Bitterroot Mountains. The road would follow the ancient trail through the rocky shrub steppe that skirted the Palouse Hills toward Spokane and Coeur d’Alene country. In a later memoir, Mullan credited “Sohon and his Indians” for recommending the route.

That fall of 1858, while most Yakama and Palouse Indians on the Columbia Plateau sought a return to normalcy, those with Kamiakin and Tilcoax fled beyond the Bitterroots. Tilcoax continued on to the Great Plains while Kamiakin, Skloom, Lokout, and other members of the fugitive band moved north toward Canada. When they arrived in the Pend d’Oreille country, the Indians there refused to help them, fearing punishment for harboring hostiles. Despite the cold reception, the outcasts remained until one of their horses was stolen. The disconsolate band then moved on to the land of the Kutenai Indians living near the Canadian border but were finally given sanctuary among the Flatheads by Chief Victor in the Bitterroot valley.

Kamiakin and his huddled band lived under cold skies in Montana on the Bitterroot and Clark Fork rivers before moving to hunt in the remote regions of the Canadian borderlands. They lived in makeshift slushy camps where the women dried buffalo meat into jerky and tanned hides for tepees, clothing, and moccasins. By the summer of 1860 they had returned to live in the vicinity of Lake Coeur d’Alene, where area Indians had once fought by Kamiakin’s side and where he had reestablished relationships of trust with the Catholic missionaries. Throughout the period of their mountain exile, his ménage was not bothered by army or volunteer soldiers. Since no expeditions pursued them, they gradually drifted westward to the family’s ancestral homeland in the sheltered and remote valley of the Palouse River at “Kamik’s Crossing,” north of present-day Enidicott, where their lives stabilized after years of war, turmoil, and exile.

Mullan later recalled that his road-building crew “turned up the first dirt” on the Tucannon River on June 25, 1859, to commence the arduous construction of the 624-mile route to Fort Benton. A month later, while camped at the mouth of Union Flat Creek, Mullan dispatched Kolecki and two companions to explore several possible transportation routes across the central Palouse while Mullan and the main crew continued northeast to reach the Sil-sil-cep-pow-vetsin (Rock Creek) at present-day Hole-in-the-Ground on July 13. Kolecki
passed by Kamiak's Crossing, encountered isolated Indian camps, and noted a dramatic change in the depth of the Palouse River valley as they moved eastward, with rocky bluffs 400 to 500 feet high shielding the crossing and adjacent bottomlands, which were, according to Mullan, "extremely fertile, covered with tall grass, cottonwood groves, and wild currant bushes."

Topographical engineer P. M. Engle surveyed the Lower Snake River valley in the summer of 1859 while Sohon explored possible routes through the Bitterroot Mountains to the east. Traveling upstream on the south side of the river, Engle moved from the abandoned ruins of Fort Taylor, located opposite the village of Palus, to the lands of the Upper Palouse Indians. He was surprised to find that the Palouse and Nez Perce people in this region cultivated seven large farms "amounting to from 300 to 400 acres." The Indians farmed the riverbanks as well as some of the islands in the river. "Besides wheat and corn," Engle noted, "they raise vegetables of different kinds, and gain sufficient crops to encourage them in their labors." Although Engle judged the soil in the valley to be gravelly and sandy, he astutely recorded that "the plateaus on both banks produce fine grass, offering magnificent pasture grounds."

Mullan's main road-building group and armed escort steadily pressed northeast throughout the summer of 1859 and met no Indians until they crossed the Spokane Trail in the northern part of the Palouse Country. The Palouse Indians knew that soldiers had crossed their lands and that whites planned to open a road, but the surveyors encountered no difficulty from them. Both Sohon and Engle remarked in their reports on the fertility of the Palouse soils. The rolling bunchgrass hills, once grazed by immense horse herds, were viewed as a farming region of vast potential. Mullan noted that "the soil is mostly a black loam and will doubtless produce cereals and vegetables." By the winter of 1859 Mullan had reached the St. Regis de Borgia River valley, where he established his "curious little town" of Cantonment Jordan. In desperate need of winter provisions for his men, he asked Chief Ambrose of the Flatheads for assistance. The chief provided 117 horses for a pack train that was sent to Fort Benton.

Mullan's road builders then resumed their pry bar and shovel work in March 1860 and finally reached Fort Benton at the end of July. Mullan himself was the first to lead a contingent of his men across the entire route on his return that summer to Fort Vancouver.

John Mullan predicted in the early 1860s that it was "not at all improbable that the grazier and agriculturalist will find at no distant day tracts of land that will amply repay their reclamation." News of the lush earth attracted other whites who resettled Indian lands and gradually pushed most Native peoples onto reservations. Mullan the masterful topographer and strategist is not often given to philosophic musings, but he does impart his hope to see "the country thickly populated" and "fruitful to the maximum degree," even if that meant "the fish should disappear from its creeks and rivers, and game from its forests."

But Mullan also laments the impact his work will have on the Indian population, as indicated in his 1863 Senate Report comments on the Coeur d'Alene Mission: "I fear that the location of our road, and the swarms of miners and emigrants that must pass here year after year, will so militate against the best interests of the mission that its present site will have to change... This... is to be regretted; but I can only regard it as the inevitable result of opening and settling the country... [The Indians] can never exist in contact with the whites; and their only salvation is to be removed far, far from their presence. But they have been removed so often that there seems no place left for their further migration; the waves of civilization have invaded their homes from both oceans,... and now we propose to invade these mountain solitudes, to wrest from them their hidden wealth, where under heavens can the Indian go? ... It is a matter that but too strongly commends itself to the early and considerate attention of the general government."

In the end, however, Mullan is fatalistic about the Indians' future in the wake of Euro-American expansion. He refers to "changes made until the Indian has disappeared" and "their disappearance from our midst," pending the only project "likely to save any portion...take the children and educate them under a proper system." The suggestion foreshadows the Indian Office's nationwide system of boarding schools established at places like Fort Spokane, Puyallup, and Salem.

Mullan's views may be understood in the context of his time, an era that widely portrayed progress in terms advancing the dominant Euro-American culture. But this was not exclusively the case even in mid-19th-century America, although most newcomers to the Northwest brought typical frontier prejudices of disregard for the rights and property of Native peoples. Most immigrants had scant interest in the Indian vocabularies of Father Pandosy (Catholic missionary to the Yakamas) or Private Sohon's Native American portraits. "For one that comes with a pencil," Henry David Thoreau was then lamenting in New England, "a thousand come with an axe or rifle." The latter generally conceived of themselves as agents of regeneration, making the wilderness useful for private ambition and beneficent civilization. However, as the Concord sage postulated—in language that men like Pandosy and Kamiakin would have comprehended—true human greatness also depends on a balance of primordial vitality with cultural appreciation. What frontier missionaries and artists may have contributed through books and sketches, the Native people knew from experiencing natural landscapes. Kamiakin likely would have agreed with Thoreau's celebrated observation that places "where the pine flourishes and the jay still screams" are necessary for the human spirit. ☺
Viola Garfield, 1930, holds up a giant rhubarb leaf during a rest stop near Hazelton, British Columbia. Garfield (1899–1983) was part of the Golden Twilight Caravan, which included Simon Fraser Tolmie, premier of British Columbia. The purpose of the road trip, which Asahel Curtis documented, was to examine the feasibility of an Alaskan highway that would connect with the British Columbia highway system. Garfield later became an eminent Northwest Coast Indian art scholar and spent her career training young anthropologists at the University of Washington.

—Maria Pascualy
“THE DAY THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY,” December 7, 1941, forever changed small towns and cities around the country. The bombing of Pearl Harbor instantly brought the United States into World War II. Recruiting offices were suddenly swamped with long lines of men and women eager to join the armed forces. The federal government immediately began making preparations for war, searching for and selecting sites nationwide on which to install military bases, training centers, hospitals, and other facilities.

Spokane was a good example of the prime inland locations the government was looking for, and it quickly became a center of wartime activity as military facilities sprouted up all around the city. Before long, Spokane’s streets were teeming with uniformed personnel. During World War II, Spokane was home to virtually every branch of the military. The U.S. Navy, long a presence in Spokane where reserve units trained weekly at Lewis and Clark High School, built a supply depot in the Spokane Valley at Velox and a training center at Farragut, just across the Idaho border. The Army Air Corps established units at Geiger Field and eventually constructed a supply depot at Galena, which would later become Fairchild Air Force Base. Marine Corps units were later attached to Geiger, as was a naval air station—NAS Spokane—following the war. The Air

Baxter Army Hospital, 1942–1945

CITY of MERCY

BY AIMEE E. NECHANICKY
and Army National Guard additionally created headquarters in Spokane. Among the many military installations in the city, one of the largest was Baxter General Hospital, constructed by the U.S. Army on the northwest edge of town in late 1942.

Baxter was one of over 40 general hospitals the army built in 1942–43 to replace its outmoded, understaffed prewar facilities. Spokane successfully competed against numerous other cities to land an army hospital. Cities used such tactics of persuasion as taking out full-page advertisements in daily newspapers, offering suitable site locations, free land, free utilities, and even railroad spurs for easy transportation access.

Spokane's army hospital, situated on 240 acres in the northwest part of the city, was designed to provide 1,000 beds, which dwarfed the bed capacity of the city's other six hospitals combined. By July 1942 construction at the hospital site had begun on over 100 temporary structures. Put on a fast-track plan that utilized production line methods, the schedule called for 90 buildings in 90 days.

At an estimated initial cost of nearly $3 million, this new wartime construction project was considered innovative and modern. To facilitate the completion of the hospital's first buildings, the army installed an on-site lumber yard and mill to process and cut wood in assembly-line fashion. The trusses, ends, and frames for the buildings required a total of 7 million board feet of lumber. To avoid the time-consuming loading and unloading of trucks, a lumber carrier was built to transport the finished products around the site. While on-site carpenters helped assemble the buildings, plumbers worked to cut pipes and assemble plumbing fixtures. Other teams worked feverishly to excavate building foundations and footings. This was no small feat given the fact that the construction site was blanketed with pine trees which, orders stated, were not to be disturbed unnecessarily.

The Seattle District Army Corps of Engineers planned the hospital while Moore & Roberts, a San Francisco-based contractor, was hired to construct the buildings. From an initial crew of 450 men, specialized teams implemented this new, speedy war construction. The buildings at Baxter consisted of cantonment-type, semi-permanent, one-story structures with concrete foundations, temporary wood-frame construction, composition green shingles, and a large red cross painted on each roof. Approximately 15 million board feet of lumber went into constructing the hospital's initial 124 buildings.

The hospital, named for Civil War-era army surgeon Colonel Jedediah Hyde Baxter of Vermont, was officially activated on August 21, 1942, one month after construction began. Baxter Hospital fell within the Ninth Service Command's jurisdiction, directly under the command of World War I veteran Colonel Alva B. McKie, "one of the country's leading surgeons," according to the Spokane Spokesman-Review.

In January 1943 the Army Corps of Engineers' insignia flag was lowered and that of the Medical Corps, along with the Stars and Stripes, was raised, signaling Baxter General Hospital's readiness to begin receiving the war wounded. Completed by March 1943, ahead of schedule—even after receiving orders to add more buildings—Baxter was a self-contained miniature
Newspaper accounts reported on the overwhelming immensity of Baxter Hospital, calling it "mercy on a grand scale.

city consisting of some 300 buildings that, in addition to housing patients, provided quarters for 800 to 900 Red Cross workers, civilians, army personnel, nurses, doctors, and technical workers. The hospital additionally provided recreational facilities, including a motion picture theater; chapel; library; post exchange; restaurant and soda fountain; telephone, and postal facilities; laundry service; barbecue pit; and numerous athletic fields (baseball field, basketball court, obstacle course, and handball and tennis courts).

According to a Spokesman-Review article, the hospital also boasted an animal farm and barbershop, two "rolling units designed to serve non-ambulatory patients," and "messes, clinics, storehouses, cold-storage buildings, garages, shops, gasoline stations and administration units galore." The entire facility had nearly four miles of covered walkways connecting its 60 hospital wards. The population required to maintain and operate the new hospital alone exceeded several hundred enlisted and civilian personnel. The same newspaper article noted that by April 1943 "the first cadre of enlisted men began to arrive." The following month, after a tour of the hospital by local guests and journalists, newspaper accounts reported on the overwhelming immensity of the hospital, calling it "mercy on a grand scale."

Originally, the process by which the war wounded found their way back to stateside hospitals involved field hospitals on the frontline, followed by evacuation hospitals at the rear of the combat zone. "From there," according to World War II historian Louis Keefer, the soldier either reported back to duty, received further care at a convalescent hospital, or entered a general hospital back home...; the army altered the existing plan with the addition of station and debarkation hospitals as links in the chain... At both station and debarkation hospitals, soldiers either recovered fully and returned to active duty, or they continued treatment in general hospitals in the Zone of the Interior—the Z.I.—as the army termed the United States. In fact, GIs called coming home "being Z.I.'d."

On June 24, 1943, the initial group of "Z.I.'d" patients arrived at the hospital, giving Spokane its first glimpse of the war. A newspaper account noted that the 187 wounded soldiers had been brought from the Pacific front. They came in an eight-car hospital train, their arrival a "closely guarded military secret":

Except for a band, it was a silent arrival for the men. The war had come to Spokane and no one wanted to talk; they just stood and watched as the hospital corpsmen helped the walking wounded or lifted stretchers with greatest tenderness.

Forty of the patients lay on stretchers. A convoy of hospital ambulances, buses, and trucks transported the wounded men to Baxter from the train in downtown Spokane, while a local police escort halted traffic along the route. The following day newspapers reported:

"War creeps closer to Spokane with wounded from the north Pacific lying in the long white rows of hospital beds... Even a Jap bullet that went through a boy's arm and drove through his hip lies on a bedside table... "Yes, they got me,"

Private Donald E. Patterson of Appleton, Wisconsin, said and held up his arm showing where the bullet went through...

Wounded soldiers described their encounters with enemy troops, mosquitoes, and sunburn to curious reporters at the hospital the following day. One of the more intriguing stories came from Private Carl Rees of Rock Hill, Missouri:

It was before 6 o'clock in the morning and I was just starting to get up... when I saw a Jap saber cut through my pup tent. Boy, I didn't wait for anything, shoes or tin helmet; didn't even have time to grab my gun—I ran. I never ran so fast and hard before in my life. Right through a line of Jeeps circled around my tent... I ran in my stocking feet... for about an hour before I realized I'd been hit by enemy fire.

By the time the first patients arrived at the hospital, over 500 civilians had been hired to work at Baxter, all four mess halls were open, a hospital newspaper—the Baxter Bugle—was in full circulation, and the hospital library had been established and given a big boost with donations of books and magazine subscriptions from community members. In August the hospital began holding dances for duty personnel stationed at the hospital and arranging entertainment for hospital patients. According to Baxter General Hospital's 1943 annual report:

Local talent has been most cooperative in assisting...[with] entertainment. Traveling dance bands that have played at one of the large local parks have been brought out to the hospital once each week
for entertainment of both the patients and duty personnel. Convoys of patients and duty personnel were taken to all of the big football games...tickets were furnished by the local organizations.... Transportation was furnished by the Spokane (Army) Air Depot.

While doctors and nurses oversaw patients' medical needs, another group was charged with the task of keeping their spirits up and seeing to their nonmedical care. That group was a volunteer corps of 58 American Red Cross Gray Ladies—so named for their gray-colored uniforms—trained by Red Cross staff members at the hospital. The American Red Cross program at Baxter was activated in May 1943. The eight-member professional staff, field director, and numerous Gray Ladies assisted patients at the hospital "in solving personal and family problems," or helped those in need of financial assistance.

The Red Cross dispersed over 500 loans in 1943 to patients in need of money for furloughs or "morale purposes." Gray Ladies helped soldiers fill out claims, advised them on their veterans benefits upon discharge, wrote hundreds of letters, sent hundreds of wires, and even arranged lodgings for out-of-town visitors. When wounded men were discharged from the hospital and sent home, Gray Ladies would contact their local community Red Cross chapter for follow-up assistance. The Gray Ladies also helped provide various forms of recreation and entertainment, including showing 35 mm and 16 mm full-length movies, conducting arts and crafts classes three times a week, and maintaining a recreation center complete with pool and ping-pong tables, a shuffleboard court, and pianos and radios.

Baxter's first full year of operation in 1944 proved to be its busiest. By the end of 1944, with the war still raging, the hospital’s patient load nearly doubled from the previous year. Ever ready to receive “the flow of maimed men from the far-flung battlefields of the world,” Baxter established a unique reconditioning and therapy regimen that “proved itself of inestimable value by its efficiency in returning certain types of patients to health and duty,” said the Spokesman-Review.

Baxter’s reconditioning program became increasingly important at “solving the problem of returning men to duty without subjecting them to the abrupt change of physical environment that would otherwise occur,” according to Lieutenant Ben Sufrin in a 1944 Spokesman-Review article. He noted that the old methods of hospitalization were inadequate in preparing injured soldiers for their return to duty:

Today the reconditioning division at Baxter does things differently. It is decreasing the hospitalization time of patients passing through its service. And those returned to duty are in better shape, both physically and mentally. They are prepared to carry on their duties as officers and soldiers. This is no accident. It is the result of planned convalescence. Each patient’s condition is carefully analyzed by medical officers who make a thorough study of each contributing factor. Treatment is prescribed to fit each individual case.

Sufrin noted that this treatment consisted of several different forms of reconditioning therapy, which included occupational therapy, calisthenics, hydrotherapy, self-entertainment, and diversional activities. "Through lectures, discussion groups, classes, and movies," which the hospital provided, "every man [was kept] mentally alert to the army and its functions." While the Baxter athletic department conducted physical training classes, instructors taught United States Armed Forces Institute
Hospital staff put a great deal of thought and planning into reconditioning the soldier's physical body as well as his mind. Classes to hospitalized soldiers for army or civilian credit. Hospital staff put a great deal of thought and planning into reconditioning the soldier's physical body as well as his mind. The patient was kept alert and prepared, with the hospital making "every effort to assist him in grasping the trends of world affairs, and to prepare himself by study for better service in the future to himself and to his country." The idea was to make sure that patients still saw themselves as soldiers.

Wounded personnel continued pouring into Baxter in 1945. "Large convoys of patients arrived in rapid succession," noted Baxter's 1945 annual report, with a majority of them coming from the South Pacific theatre of operation. The increase in patients spurred construction of additional buildings. Among the new buildings were barracks for the enlisted members of the Women's Army Corps (WAC). Over 150,000 women joined the WAC during World War II, the first women in the United States Army to serve as anything other than nurses. The corps began in 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, as the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), established as a branch of the U.S. Army in a compromise between the existing Army Nurse Corps and a desire to put women directly into army ranks. Despite mixed public sentiment about the auxiliary corps, it proved a huge success and on July 3, 1943, was converted to the Women's Army Corps.

In April 1945, Baxter received its first WAC detachment, which became the 77th WAC Hospital Company. Three months later a second WAC hospital company was activated at Baxter—the 122nd. The WACs were housed in four separate barracks-style buildings, with a headquarters office in a fifth building. WACs underwent a six-week medical training program at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, prior to their arrival at Baxter. Basic training was conducted simultaneously with medical training. After an intake interview to assess her individual skills, each Baxter WAC was assigned to duty around the hospital as, for example, police, medical or surgical technicians, x-ray technicians, therapist aides, or administrative staff. Although WACs were kept busy at Baxter, they still had time for recreation. The women organized their own softball team in late spring, participating in the city league and competing against other locally organized teams in games twice a week.

In the spring of 1945, Baxter acquired a detachment of foreign prisoners of war (POWs) from Fort Lewis in western Washington. Over 400,000 foreign POWs were transported to the United States during World War II. German POWs made up the majority, but there were Italian and Japanese soldiers as well. The decision to "Z.I." POWs was made in early 1942 when, according to military history specialists George G. Lewis and John Mewha, the "War Department directed the transfer of all captured enemy personnel to custody within the United States.... This was done to relieve overseas forces from the problems of guarding, feeding, and housing prisoners of war." In April 1943 there were fewer than 5,000 foreign POWs in the U.S. By the end of 1943, the North African campaign "had resulted in wholesale captures of prisoners of war by both American and British forces," increasing the total number of POWs held in the U.S. to over 170,000. Individual service commands were tasked with the responsibility of employing, housing, and occupying foreign POWs.

On April 4, 1945, 32 German POWs, along with 9 enlisted American soldiers, arrived at Baxter Hospital. With additions from Florence, Arizona, and Fort Lewis, the number of foreign POWs at Baxter swollen to 97 by August. The first group of prisoners immediately set to work constructing the branch camp where they were to be housed. Other prisoners were employed throughout the hospital—assisting with the collection of garbage, making building repairs, and helping out in the hospital's laundry. The POWs were housed in a temporary tent camp until construction of their quarters was completed in September.

Situated on the southwest corner of the hospital property and fenced off with razor wire, the POW branch camp featured three barracks, one supply room, one mess hall and kitchen, one covered latrine, one washroom, and a guardhouse. The camp did not lack amenities, however. A small library of German books accompanied some of the men from Fort Lewis, and the POWs utilized the hospital's motion picture projector twice weekly. The prisoners were allowed to use one of the hospital's sports fields to play soccer and were furnished with three ping-pong tables and a piano in their dayroom—provided "by the Red Cross for those who had musical talent," noted the hospital's 1945 annual report.

With so much going on, the hospital published a weekly newsletter—the Baxter Bugle—to keep all the branches and divisions at Baxter up to date on daily operations. Established in 1943 by the post chaplain, the newsletter was taken over by the Special Services Branch and became a major hit at the hospital. The Bugle included poems from army patients, news of the hospital's ongoing war bond drive, reports of outings with the Reconditioning Branch, general war news, a schedule of upcoming programs at the hospital, the post's theatre schedule, the Red Cross schedule, announcements of medals and awards presented to patients at the hospital, and a question and answer section.

Each weekly paper was typically 14 to 16 pages long, had a circulation of 650 copies, and included a humorous cartoon section and a sports column. Some of the columns that appeared in 1945 included parents asking for information on their sons, some of whom had died in battle and some of whom had not been heard from for an extended period of time. It was an open call to all of the wounded patients at Baxter for any word on a long list of soldiers' names. Other columns were exposed on various topics—e.g., "What is Fascism?" Each weekly paper additionally included a hand-sketched "Baxter pin-up" girl. News stories included the coverage of the contest to select Miss...
Baxter 1945 and the life stories of numerous wounded patients. The Bugle reported on celebrities who visited patients at the hospital, and no celebrity created more excitement than Rita Hayworth, who spent two days there in July 1945:

Miss Rita Hayworth of Movie fame came to Baxter yesterday for a two-day visit with our patients. After a tour of several Wards and a visit to the Occupational Therapy Shop, Miss Hayworth stopped by the Bugle office for a brief visit. She said the Hospital was much larger than she expected it to be. She also commented on the high morale of the patients. “I really enjoy talking to these boys who have given so much for our country,” she said, “and we should all do our part to back them.”

It was also the Bugle that announced the end of the war in August 1945, but there seemed little cause for relaxation at Baxter:

The responsibility and work...of the armed forces did not cease abruptly with the end of the war...the army now has 300,000 wounded men in Hospitals in this country, which represents all the battle casualties who could be moved home. Many of these men will not be released for some time.

Despite this news Colonel McKie announced in October 1945 that the hospital would soon be closing. The Bugle reported:

Following a message from the Ninth Service Command Headquarters, announcement of the closing of Baxter General Hospital came from the office of Col. Alva B. McKie, Thursday. At that time the date of closing was not made public, but transfer of patients was started immediately. Before Saturday night, 512 patients will have been sent to other general hospitals which are near their homes or are especially equipped to treat their injury or disease.

After a harrowing year, on November 10, 1945, the hospital was effectively deactivated. On November 6 the Spokesman-Review reported that, according to word from the Associated Press, Baxter would be closing and “all patients...removed by that time and employment of the majority of the civilian personnel will be terminated.” The U.S. Army announced the closure of 23 hospitals around the country in late 1945, following the fall of Japan.
Montgomery GI Bill. Baxter was seen as the answer to resolving some of the new issues that arrived with the end of the war.

All around the country, city and county agencies were dealing with similar struggles, attempting to identify an appropriate use for the hospital buildings the army had left empty and trying to accommodate a sudden influx of service members returning home from the war. Census reports show that Spokane's population increased from 122,001 in 1940 to over 160,000 in 1950. While other cities were successful in negotiating continued operation or use of nearby abandoned hospital facilities, Baxter's fate was already sealed.

By mid 1946 other plans had been conceived to utilize Baxter. The Spokane County Commissioners, the All Veterans' Council, Washington State University, and the University of Washington had all proposed plans to use some portion of the army hospital. While the county wished to acquire a portion of Baxter to relieve overcrowding in local area hospitals, Washington State University wanted to make Baxter into an extension campus to fulfill the educational needs of returning veterans. The University of Washington, however, was solely interested in acquiring equipment remaining at the army hospital to outfit its new medical school in Seattle. There was other rumored interest in the hospital as well, including its use for residential development or as a city park. Still others suggested removing structures from the hospital property for relocation to other sites.

In October 1946, Whitworth College quietly negotiated the successful purchase of the Baxter Army Hospital chapel for removal to the campus site. Purchased for only $1,000, the chapel was moved to the campus where it was placed on a new foundation. Whitworth later acquired several more buildings from the abandoned hospital. Other schools in the area quickly followed suit, including Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, University of Idaho, Washington State University, and several Spokane public schools, including Rogers High School and North Central High School. The schools acquire the structures as well as all of the equipment left intact in the buildings. A majority of the buildings were additionally converted in some manner following removal to other locations. One of the strangest but perhaps more practical conversions of a Baxter structure was done by Washington State University. The university acquired the hospital's morgue building sometime prior to 1947 and converted the air-conditioned mortician's vault into a walk-in cold storage unit for the college's new cafeteria.

Following their removal to various other locations, many of the original Baxter buildings were demolished or lost. Eight of the buildings acquired by the U.S. Navy in late 1940 and left on the former hospital site for the Naval and Marine Corps Training Center were later designated as surplus and removed in 1960 to make way for a new reserve training center. In succeeding years more structures were removed to other sites or lost to fire or demolition. Several buildings remain intact at Whitworth College.

Baxter's impact on Spokane is not forgotten. Despite the numerous military installations that had already dotted the landscape around the city, Baxter was the first and only facility to bring the war home. The Spokane home front during World War II was forever changed by the presence of the hospital and the endless police-escorted conveyals that moved through town. War stories made front-page news as soldiers relayed tales of real encounters with man's inhumanity, of terror, bravery, honor, and commitment. Today the former Baxter Army Hospital site is home to the Spokane VA Medical Center, Joe Albi Stadium, and the Navy Operational Support Center, Spokane.

Aimee E. Nechanicky is a project manager for Kauffman & Associates, Inc., a Spokane management consulting firm. She has published a series of articles on local military history, previously worked as a historic preservation compliance specialist with the City-County of Spokane Historic Preservation Office, and volunteered as a member of the City of Cheney Historic Preservation Commission. She is currently enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve.
THE Novels of Helen Rucker

By Peter Donahue

On July 26, 1956, The Bon Marché ran a newspaper ad announcing an "autograph party and tea" to be held in the store's Cascade Room in honor of the authors attending that year's Pacific Northwest Writers' Conference. The ad named 33 authors in all, but it highlighted only one: Helen Rucker, whose novel, Cargo of Brides, about Asa Mercer's 1866 expedition to "import" young women to Seattle, had just been published. Two weeks earlier, Mrs. Emily Schwabacher (wife of Seattle businessman Morton L. Schwabacher) hosted a book release party for Helen Rucker that, according to The Seattle Times, included university students dressed in Mercer Girl outfits complete with "hoopskirts over crinoline, in such colors as solferino and magenta."

Such fanfare was well deserved. In addition to her lifelong civic engagement, Helen Rucker (1903-2002) was highly active in Seattle's literary and artistic life. A graduate of Broadway High School and National Park Seminary (in Maryland), she took painting classes with Mark Tobey at the Comish School of Allied Arts and writing classes with Vernon McKenzie and George Milton Savage at the University of Washington. She also served on the boards of Cornish and the Friends of the Seattle Public Library.

After publishing several short stories in the 1940s, Rucker began writing her first novel. Her research, which took seven years, makes for a meticulously detailed work. Cargo of Brides (1956) opens in Boston in the blue-blood home of the Bancrofts, where the mother, two eligible daughters, and their teenage cousin, Marianna, mourn Dr. John Bancroft, killed in the Civil War. When Asa Mercer enters the household, he carries himself with dignity and decorum, proclaiming himself an "abstainer" and declaring that "our Seattle spring water, piped down in fir logs, fresh from the mountains, is more sparkling than any wine." He then explains his mission to the Bancroft women, and when he asks if any would like to go on his expedition, red-headed Marianna promptly answers, "I would."

From there Rucker recounts Mercer's second expedition (the first being in 1864) from New York, around Cape Horn, north to Seattle. Rucker's work—which likely drew on Roger Conant's first-hand account of the expedition for The New York Times—accurately presents the many challenges that Mercer faced, such as press reports that accused him of luring women into prostitution, businessmen who balked at backing the dubious venture, and frightened women who abandoned the expedition and fled for home.

After Marianna arrives in New York, however, she meets Scotty Campbell, a well-meaning charmer who is accompanying Mercer, and the two fall in love. Like Doc Maynard, Scotty is previously married, but having been granted a divorce from the territorial legislature, he remarries (Marianna, in Brazil). Yet, after discovering that his divorce is not legitimate, he finds himself with two wives in Seattle—a complication that generates the story's many twists and turns.

Rucker's sharpest historical insights come in her representation of early Seattle. Before she even steps off the dock, Marianna learns how social identity in Seattle is determined by the party of settlers one arrived with: the Denny party, Bethel party, first Mercer expedition, second Mercer expedition, Duwamish farmers, and so on. As Scotty informs her, the various groups are "as clannish as Indian tribes." Rucker depicts such legendary pioneers as Doc Maynard (friend of the ailing Chief Sealth); Mary Ann Conklin (aka Madame Dammable); Daniel Bagley (backer of the Territorial University); Sarah Yesler (wife of Henry Yesler and Seattle materfamilias); and Bill Grose (an early black settler and owner of the Our House hotel and restaurant). Eventually, with the help of her live-and-let-live friends in Seattle, Marianna survives her personal travails, overcomes her blue-blood prejudices, and realizes, "We can't condemn anybody wholly, least of all ourselves."

In The Wolf Tree (1960), Rucker tells the story of Sarah Lowell, an orphan girl who grows up in a mill town on Hood Canal, and Philip McCloud, the scion of a San Francisco family that owns vast
tracts of Northwest timber. When young Philip comes north to prove himself, he meets Sarah, who impresses him with her knowledge of the woods and her fluency in Suquamish. They fall in love and marry, but when Philip brings Sarah to San Francisco, marital problems arise, drawing the two apart and forcing Sarah to take a more public role in the McCloud family business.

As a reviewer for The San Francisco Chronicle wrote, "The Wolf Tree is marked with exacting research, ably written with wit and historical veracity." And indeed, despite moments of melodrama, the novel offers a gritty depiction of 19th-century logging and mill work. Readers encounter fallers, bullwhackers, boom-men, brush cats, herring chokers, swampers, and saw-dust savages. They learn how timber barons sell Douglas fir in Europe by labeling it "Oregon pine" and see how these same timber barons exploit workers and government land alike, which spurs Sarah to campaign for company reforms. When she learns the definition of the term wolf tree—"an ancient German forestry expression...[meaning] a forest tree, which because of size and position, prevents the growth of many small trees around it by usurping their space, light and nourishment"—she persuades the company to adopt more selective harvesting practices.

Helen Rucker's interest in Northwest history no doubt derived from her parents. Her father came to Seattle in 1880 and opened the Golden Rule Bazaar general store. Her mother arrived in 1900 and became active in the Washington State Historical Society and Seattle-King County Red Cross. Both parents helped found Temple de Hirsch Sinai on Capitol Hill. Her husband, B. Wallace Rucker, came from a family that extended back even further, and prior to his death in 1985 the couple had been researching a history of Jewish settlers in Seattle.

With such deep ties to the region, it's no wonder that novelist Helen Rucker would so enjoy, as she once told an interviewer, "dramatizing and humanizing history." 

Peter Donahue's new novel, Clara and Merritt (Wordcraft of Oregon, LLC, 2010), is about longshoremen and Teamsters in Seattle in the 1930s and 1940s.

Additional Reading

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

Sacred Space and the New Expidience


Contemporary Makah Whaling


The Atomic Pond


Through the Indian Country


City of Mercy


Current & Noteworthy
By Robert Carriker, Book Review Editor

During the first decade of the 21st century, bibliophiles and armchair readers have benefited from a dramatic growth in the number and quality of titles published in the fields of Pacific Northwest history, prehistory, environment, politics, and culture. That upgrade has taken place in no small measure because of the conscientious efforts of Glen Lindeman at the Washington State University Press. At the end of June 2010 Glen retired from the press where he had worked since 1988. During his tenure as editor-in-chief, WSU Press greatly expanded its catalog of titles, often giving preference to unique Washington state topics. Yes, the press issued volumes on the iconic Grand Coulee Dam and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, but it also put into print valuable tomes about bridges across the state, the Washington State Library in Olympia, Oysterville, Wahkiakum County, the Hutton Settlement in Spokane, and notorious scoundrels of Seattle.

Keith Petersen, Idaho state historian and associate director of the Idaho State Historical Society, has commented that it was Glen’s work on numerous public history projects in the Pacific Northwest that acquainted him with the significant historical issues and topics of the state and region. In addition to working on several public history projects with David H. Stratton, WSU’s legendary history professor, Lindeman is a long-time member of the Washington State Governor’s Lewis and Clark Trail Committee. Mary Read, director of WSU Press, in remarks prepared for a reception prior to Lindeman’s retirement, stated that his legacy of books he edited, and the reputation WSU Press has achieved” in the Best from University Presses list by the American Association of School Librarians.

Among the last books to cross Lindeman’s desk as editor-in-chief was Tree Top: Creating a Fruit Revolution, by his mentor David Stratton (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 2010; 120 pp., $29.95). The volume commemorates the 50th anniversary of the apple growers’ cooperative that formed in 1960 to make use of culls from the annual fruit harvest—fruit that previously was dumped into the Columbia River or just left to rot. From an idea to process and market 100 percent apple juice as a frozen product sprang many new innovations—thus, the subtitle of the book. This is public history—corporate history as it was meant to be.

An older public history project, but one that is still of interest, is Historic Photos of Washington State, with text and captions by Dale E. Soden (Nashville: Turner Publishing Company, 2008; 206 pp., $39.95). Soden, a history professor at Whitworth University in Spokane, shares his considerable knowledge of state history with readers in a preface and in five chapter introductions. The scope of the chapters runs chronologically from 1860 to 1959, though it is not clear why those dates were chosen. Each of the 200 black-and-white photographs is printed on a separate page, with a caption, and each is well documented. Members of the Washington State Historical Society will be especially proud to view this book considering that 64 percent of the printed images are gleaned from the Society’s collections. Most of the remaining photos come from the Library of Congress. Imperfections in the images have been digitally corrected when possible, but that does not diminish the value of the presentation. As Soden points out, the clarity of the photographs are a tribute to the ability of the individual photographer.

Picturing the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition: The Photographs of Frank H. Nowell (by Nicolette Bromberg, with the A-Y-P Rephotographic Project by John Stamets; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009; 128 pp., $35) features the work of a single photographer. Frank Nowell, a man with personal experience in the Alaska gold rush, was the official photographer of the AYPE, and his black-and-white images are mesmerizing. An estimated 3.7 million people came to visit the fair, which took place between June 1 and October 16, 1909. Readers will find enjoyment in seeing sights recognizable on what is today the University of Washington campus. For the 100th anniversary of the exposition, John Stamets, a faculty member in the University of Washington’s Department of Architecture, assigned his students the task of photographing the campus sites anew. His essay on the 30 “rephotographs” is highly instructive. Nicolette Bromberg is the visual materials curator in the University of Washington Libraries’ Special Collections. Her influence can be seen in the selection of photographs (from amongst several thousand 8-by-10-inch glass plate negatives) and the wonderful AYPE bibliography.

Another picture book, this one perhaps with a more limited audience, is Pacific Coast Ship Chana by undersea diver and collector Jacques Marc (Victoria, B.C.: Royal British Columbia Museum and University of British Columbia Press, 2009; 192 pp., $75).
Some 75 companies and government agencies operated vessels on the Pacific Coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Passengers were served their meals on china made for the experience. That is to say, there were passenger, freighter, corporate, and government ships, plus family yachts—some of them sailing trans-Pacific, others merely coastal—all of them using individualized china patterns. Today collectors search for intact pieces of that china, of which there are some 280 patterns. This book illustrates most of those patterns in 400 color and 60 black-and-white photographs in nine chapters and four appendices. The book can also be a resource for historians of the Pacific Coast shipping industry. Its value as a reference source for libraries, collectors, museums, and scholars is precisely the reason this volume is published hardbound.

The author contends that the camp at Cascade Locks, Oregon, was the largest of these camps, the longest-serving, most significant, and most unusual in the system. He came to this determination after studying the records of Camp No. 21, which have been preserved at the Brethren Historical Library and Archives in Elgin, Illinois. Readers of the Oregon Historical Quarterly may recall one of the chapters having previously appeared in Vol. 107, No. 4 (2006). The book includes the complete roster of 560 men who served at the camp from November 27, 1941 (yes, before Pearl Harbor!) until it closed in July 1946. After long days of physical labor the men still found time to publish a newspaper and a literary magazine. They presented plays and concerts, and on two occasions they challenged the Selective Service System in political protests.

Ken Armstrong and Nick Perry are award-winning reporters for the Seattle Times, the largest daily newspaper in the state. Some of the awards they have earned came as a result of their four-part exposé of the 2000 University of Washington Huskies football season. Some will remember this as a team that suited up 107 players, went 11–1 to win the Pac Ten Championship under Coach Rick Neuheisel, and triumphed over Purdue in the 2001 Rose Bowl to end the season ranked third in the national polls. These reporters knew they had to prove their accusations—a dozen-plus football players arrested that year with scant mention in the newspapers and minimal consequences in the courts—so their source footnotes are extensive and complete. Their review of thousands of pages of public records—many generated as a result of criminal, civil, or ethics investigations—included police reports, depositions, forensic reports, court transcripts, personnel files, employment contracts and Pac-10 and NCAA investigative summaries. Sports Illustrated picked up on the story, as did ESPN and many major newspapers. But even extensive treatment in their four-part series left many questions. So the authors have come forward with a book-length treatment: Scoreboard, Baby: A Story of College Football, Crime, and Complicity, by Ken Armstrong and Nick Perry (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010; 400 pp., $19.95 paper). This is where readers find the inside scoop on Nike contracts and the "endorsers" who took it upon themselves to enhance the contracts of football coaches. Well, you get the idea. Although not a pretty story, it is a well-written one. The University of Nebraska Press has an extensive publishing record in the fields of baseball and football, so they were a logical outlet to accept and publish this manuscript. Nevertheless, one can't help but wonder if University of Washington Press or Washington State University Press were ever asked to consider the manuscript.

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