Yakama-Cowlitz Trail:
Ancient and modern paths
across the mountains
TWO CENTURIES OF GLASS

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ON THE COVER
“Cowlitz Valley – Tatoosh Range” is the description of this hand-colored glass lantern slide from the Tacoma Public Library, circa early 1900s. The Tatoosh Range (modern spelling) is not far from Mount Rainier, and this image appears to include the geologic features known as Pinnacle Peak (on the left) and The Castle. This slide and many others were donated to the library by Tacoma-born Donald H. Cooper.

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Judy Bentley searches the landscape, memories, old photos—and occasionally, signage along the trail—to help tell the story of an ancient footpath over the Cascades.
As the team at the Washington State Historical Society was putting the finishing touches on this Summer 2018 issue, it really dawned on me how lucky we are to have so many wonderful and talented history writers living and working here in the Pacific Northwest. And this issue, in particular, highlights places you can visit this summer and experience history in person.

From stories about the Yakama-Cowlitz Trail and the 50th anniversary of North Cascades National Park, to a gallery of photos of WPA projects, to the reviews of current and vintage books, it’s an honor to be a place for talented writers and photographers to share the fruits of their explorations and research with COLUMBIA readers.

While many of our contributors are professionals with several published pieces to their credit, COLUMBIA depends on new and emerging writers, too. We’re very happy to help develop the talents of Northwesterners who already have a passion for history, but may not think they have what it takes to write an article about their favorite historical topics.

So, if you’ve never written for COLUMBIA, we encourage you to consider doing so now. A great first step is to send an email to editor.columbia@gmail.com with a sentence or two describing the topics that interest you, and what you might like to write about for the magazine.

Also, if you haven’t already, please be sure and give a listen to our new COLUMBIA Conversations podcast – maybe while you’re on the way to one of the interesting destinations featured in this issue. We post a new episode about once a month, and it’s a great way to hear the voices of our writers and other people doing interesting work to preserve and share Pacific Northwest history.

As always, we love to hear from you with your thoughts on COLUMBIA, and your questions and comments. Reach us via editor.columbia@gmail.com.

**Contributors**

**Leonard Garfield**

Noteworthy (Book Reviews)

Leonard Garfield has been executive director of Seattle’s Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) since 1999, and before that he had a long career in historic preservation and arts and heritage administration.

**Judy Bentley**

Yakama-Cowlitz Trail

Judy Bentley is a writer, historian, teacher, and hiker. She taught for more than twenty years at South Seattle College and is author of several books, including *Hiking Washington’s History* and *Walking Washington’s History: Ten Cities*. Curiosity propels her interest in historical trails; she wants to know how the path came to be and who has been there before.

**Lauren Danner**

Crown Jewel Wilderness

Lauren Danner, PhD, is a writer and historian based in Olympia. She focuses on public lands policy, Pacific Northwest and environmental history, and outdoor recreation. She previously served as a college professor, museum director, and Washington State field coordinator for the Lewis and Clark bicentennial.

**J. Tucker**

Research, Explore, Photograph, Repeat

Jenny Tucker was born and raised in Bremerton. Coming from a long line of shipyard workers, she has always had an interest in maritime and other local history. Tucker is owner-operator of Sticks & Stones Photography, and she shoots for several local publications and for Historic Seattle. She resides in Edmonds.

**Peter Donahue**

Used Books

Peter Donahue is the author of the historical novels *Madison House* and *Clara and Merritt*, both set in Seattle, and *Three Sides Water*, a new trilogy of short novels set on the Olympic Peninsula during different historical periods. He has written about Northwest literature and authors for COLUMBIA since 2005.
For more than a decade, the Washington State Historical Society has made it a practice to select one work from each annual IN THE SPIRIT Contemporary Native Arts exhibition to add to its collection.

In 2011, a necklace created by artist Denise Emerson was chosen. The necklace is comprised of two pieces of woven beadwork that are connected by three strings of beads at the bottom, with one string of beads extending from the top of each to form the necklace. The two pieces of woven beadwork are red with black letters that say “Jan 26 1855” and “Point No Point Treaty.” Each piece has two black dogs facing outward below the lettering.

Emerson writes, “This piece was inspired by the Point No Point Treaty that was signed by many tribes here in the Northwest. I am an enrolled Skokomish Tribal member, and I wanted to create jewelry with the name and date of the treaty to commemorate the event. The dog is a well-known Skokomish symbol and is known hereabouts as the ‘Skok Dog.’”

The Treaty of Point No Point is named for that area of Kitsap County northeast of Port Gamble where tribal leaders and government officials met to negotiate. Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens officiated, meeting with leaders of what were then called the Clallam, Chimacum and Skokomish tribes. The treaty was signed on January 26, 1855.

On the occasion of the centennial of the treaty in 1955, historian Charles Gates wrote:

“The record of the government in the handling of Indian affairs is by no means without blemish. The chiefs were often put under considerable duress in the negotiation of treaties and were disappointed afterward by the failure of the superintendents and agents to carry out the policies and commitments to which they had agreed.”

Gates also wrote that on the first day of the parley, “issues in dispute were thoroughly aired, and a number of chiefs spoke their minds with some vigor,” but, ultimately, by the next day, “the Indian resistance weakened, and those who spoke out at first in protest subsequently joined with their more conciliatory comrades in offering the white flag of peace.”

Sovereign Native governments descended from those who signed the Treaty of Point No Point include Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe and Skokomish Indian Tribe.

(IN THE SPIRIT Contemporary Native Arts
Saturday, June 30 – Sunday, August 12
See Washington State Historical Society’s 13th annual juried exhibition of contemporary Native art at the History Museum. Works on view typically include textiles, sculptures, paintings, carvings, and basketry, and many are available for purchase. An artist award ceremony will be held July 1 at 3:00 PM.

The exhibition culminates on Saturday, August 11 with IN THE SPIRIT Northwest Native Festival, a free all-day public celebration featuring a Native arts market, dance, song, food, and other inspiring cultural interactions presented in partnership with Tacoma Art Museum.)
Nine thousand years on the Yakama-Cowlitz Trail

Judy Bentley explores an ancient pathway through the Cascades.
Many ancient trails cross Cascade Mountain passes. For thousands of years, native people traveled to the mountains in the summer to hunt, gather, and trade. Of all the crossings, archaeological evidence identifies one as possibly the oldest: the Yakama-Cowlitz trail over Cowlitz Pass, southeast of Mount Rainier. Human evidence on the trail has been dated to 9200 BP (Before the Present). “I’m sure that parts of what was later known as the Yakama-Cowlitz Trail were probably used that early,” says Rick McClure, now retired from his career as an anthropologist for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. McClure has been tracing the trail from the west side of the pass for more than 30 years, using the tools of archeology, oral tradition, maps, travel accounts by early settlers, and his own explorations.

The trail connects two watersheds and two peoples: the Cowlitz and the Yakama. A band of the Yakama, the Naxchiish-lama, lived in the Tieton River watershed with winter villages on or near the Yakima River. The Yakama were wealthy in horses and known among Indian tribes as traders. The Cowlitz lived along the Cowlitz River, roughly separated at what is now the Mossy Rock Dam into lower and upper Cowlitz groups. The upper Cowlitz were also known as the Taytnapam. They called the trail aipzxkan ctcet and taytnapamikan ctcet, two Sahaptin names according to tribal elder Jim Yoke.

Both groups wintered in villages in the valleys. As the weather warmed and the snows melted, when berries were ripe and grass was growing, the people moved to the high country. They spent weeks at the top, gathering huckleberries,
hunting mountain goats, and finding mates. They stayed until the weather cooled, a signal that the fall fish runs would begin in the rivers. Everyone went into the mountains, moving as a people—old and young—in no particular hurry, according to Nathan Reynolds, ethno-historian for the Cowlitz Tribe.

As a result of thousands of years of travel, social interaction and marriage between these two groups, the Taytnapam share cultural characteristics from both sides of the Cascade crest. They speak a dialect of Sahaptin, typical of the east side of the mountains, rather than a dialect of Salish from the west side although many were bilingual. The Taytnapam wore two braids and a type of basket hat more common to east side tribes. The name Taytnapam means “people of” the Tieton.

Sitting in a tipi along the Cowlitz River near Packwood, surrounded by younger members of his tribe and a translator, Taytnapam elder Jim Yoke gave a remarkable interview to anthropologist Melville Jacobs in the 1920s. Yoke listed more than 250 landmarks in his ancestral world, names of mountains, streams, huckleberry fields, and significant rocks along the Cispus and Cowlitz rivers to the crest of the Cascade Mountains and beyond. He claimed the land by naming it, echoing Coyote, a prominent figure in Native American storytelling.

“In this country, when the country had its beginning, in the myth age, Coyote named all these places in this land,” Yoke told Jacobs. “He named all these places in this land, (such as) the rivers, (and the) places where fish were to be obtained (and so on).” Yoke named sites that began as far west as Kelso, where the Cowlitz River flows into the Columbia River, and as far east as what is now Union Gap, just south of the city of Yakima—“That is as far there as I know.” He identified places to find strawberries, to fish for sturgeon, to dig camas root, to hunt for mountain goats, and to find the prized blue clay for paint.

In the network of paths and landmarks he described, Yoke identified one central route that headed east up the Cowlitz River Valley between Mount Rainier and Mount St. Helens and followed the aptly-named Summit Creek to Cowlitz Pass. A trail from the east followed Indian Creek, a tributary of the Tieton, and the trails met at the top where the two peoples camped in the meadows.

The first several thousand years of the trail are known only loosely through archaeological research. The last 175 years are more firmly recorded. Traffic over Cowlitz Pass increased between 1830 and 1855 when trade increased among tribes and with the British and Americans. Notes on the Indian trails through the upper Cowlitz country begin appearing as early as the 1850s. Railroad survey
correspondence in 1888 reported that the Taytnapam took their furs to the Hudson’s Bay Company trading post at Cowlitz Farm along an “Indian trail.”

L. J. Davis, an early American settler in the valley, explored the headwaters of the Cowlitz River in the late 1800s, looking for areas to settle and a possible railroad pass. He hired an Indian guide for $1 a day and followed an Indian trail along the river for 50 miles. A settler who came to Randle in 1913 described “the old Yakama Trail” as “a regular highway” because Indians crossed the mountains on it bringing their worldly goods. The trail first appears on maps drawn from the 1910s to 1920.

The route the Cowlitz took to the mountains is now discontinuous. Wagon roads, a tourist road, logging roads, Forest Service trails, and Highway 12 followed parts of the trail through the Cowlitz Valley. Despite lines on old maps, the physical evidence for the trail is slim—a few peeled cedar trees, a rock shelter, a trench beneath the salal, abandoned road grades. But the feel of the land—the places where travelers would have stopped on their long-ago treks to the pass, the good fishing spots, the meadows, the creek whose path leads to the summit—have little changed. It is possible to trace and hike several miles of the ancient trail.
The historic trail began in the upper valley of the Cowlitz River, known as the Big Bottom—a wide, nearly flat expanse, spectacularly green, and bounded north and south by forested mountains (see map no. 1). For thousands of years, the river flowed the length of the valley, southwest from the Cascades, toward the Columbia River. It flooded, changed course, flowed into new channels, and deposited fertile soil.

Since the early 1960s, dams have controlled its flooding and generated power. An estimated 100,000 fall chinook once swam upstream as far as the Tilton and Ohanapecosh rivers. In recent years, fewer than 2,000 salmon have traveled up the river; some must be transported around the dams if they are to reach their spawning grounds.

Indians fished at Cowlitz Falls, where a rock in the river was the geo-center of the Cowlitz world. Xwani (Coyote) had a sweat lodge at the falls and named landmarks from there, according to Cowlitz tradition. Jim Yoke identified the place near the falls as cq'umi, “where a great many people used to stay and obtain fish.” There were several rapids where the river “boils and bubbles.”

No signs lead to Cowlitz Falls today—a handwritten post in the window of the entry house at Lewis County PUD’s park proclaims to the curious that “There is no Cowlitz Falls.” Falls Road, however, crosses the Cowlitz River near Taynapam Park on two parallel bridges, one for pedestrians, the other part of a “haul road” for logging trucks. Three miles upstream is the dam that drowned the falls and impounded the water.

An old wagon road along the route of the Yakama-Cowlitz Trail can be felt underfoot and seen through the woods. Courtesy Judy Bentley.

Man overlooking Cowlitz Falls before the Cowlitz River was dammed in 1994. Courtesy Lewis County Historical Museum.

Opposite: Cowlitz basket by Mary Kiona, circa. 1900. Negative No. NA676. Courtesy University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division.

Native American carrying a burden basket. Courtesy Roberts Collections, Humboldt State University Library.
at the confluence of the Cowlitz and Cispus rivers into Lake Scanewa, named for an important Cowlitz headman.

The rock the Cowlitz remember—the bedrock where Xwani had his sweat lodge—was blasted away to build the foundation of the dam, now sealed off by high fences. The scene is an industrial interruption in a landscape of second-growth forest and occasional clear cuts. The falls at the center of Cowlitz creation live only in memory and a few photographs.

Although the Cowlitz sued to prevent construction of the dam, their suit was thrown out of court because they had no legal standing. The Cowlitz never signed treaties giving up land and refused to move to a reservation on the Olympic Peninsula. Instead, they settled in place, eventually moved to reservations of other tribes (mainly the Yakama), or moved to cities in western Washington and Oregon. Today a few Taytnapam descendants continue to live on a plot of Indian Trust land along Kiona Creek near present-day Randle, a salmon fishing place where “long ago a great many people used to be,” according to Yoke. Formal recognition of the Cowlitz Tribe did not come until 2000, well after the Cowlitz Falls Dam was built.

Beyond the falls, the ancient trail coursed north of the river, past a rock shelter, Kitchen Rock. A few miles west of Packwood, the trail wound past a mountain named Tiska’ya, meaning clever skunk spirit. Yoke gave his interview on land across from the mountain, land bought by a math teacher from Seattle in the 1950s. During her summer vacation in 1943, Martha Hardy had served as a lookout on Tatoosh Mountain and fell in love with the Cowlitz Valley. She named her homestead Skyo after the skunk spirit mountain.

Past contemporary landmarks—the Cowlitz Valley Ranger District office near Randle and the White Pass Country Museum in the logging town of Packwood—comes the Highway 12 exit for La Wis Wis, where the Taytnapam camped at Awxanapaykash, the confluence of the Ohanapecosh River and the Clear Fork of the Cowlitz River (see map no. 2). The site is now a popular Forest Service campground, next to the “blue hole,” a calm widening of the Ohanapecosh River. The landscape beckons as a place to camp, to dip bare feet into blue-green water, to daydream and rest before a hike to the crest. “There are also fish (caught) at that place,” Yoke related.

Interpretive signs at La Wis Wis herald the medical significance of the Pacific Yew and the historical significance of a picnic shelter built during the 1930s depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The native past, however, is less visible. Behind a park guard station is a road grade layered over the Indian trail, felt primarily as a path less overgrown than the forest around it.

Another indication of the trail is the presence of peeled cedar trees, sometimes called basket trees. On their way into the mountains, Indians made rectangular cuts from the bark of cedar trees and stitched them into baskets for berry collecting. The key to recognizing them is the cut marks at the top and bottom of the peeled section. Six thousand such culturally-modified trees have been identified in the Gifford-Pinchot National Forest.

A great many people used to stay and obtain fish. There were several rapids where the river boils and bubbles.
Pinchot National Forest. The last peeled cedar trees at La Wis Wis were documented more than 50 years ago and probably peeled more than 100 years ago.

“You won’t find any Indians on that trail,” wise-cracked Jerry, a campground host at La Wis Wis, and that’s true compared to the past. Human use of the high country increased in intensity about 3,500 years ago and continued until about 200 years ago. The Taytnapam were estimated to number as many as 1,000 before the first recorded disease, a virulent Asian flu, swept through in 1829, dropping their numbers to an estimated 350 around 1840.

Yet they persisted. Mary Kiona, a niece of Jim Yoke’s, lived in the Cowlitz River Valley for 100 years until her death in 1970. In the winter Kiona regularly crossed White Pass or Cowlitz Pass on snowshoes to visit her relatives east of the crest, carrying a basket held by a “tumpline” or strap across the top of her head. She was famous for her basket-making and is represented by a snow goose atop the cedar story pole at the White Pass Country Museum in Packwood. The story pole in front of the museum includes representations of other members of the Kiona family: a salmon for her uncle who supplied fish to settlers, and a beaded bag for his wife.

For the next few miles east of La Wis Wis, the old Indian trail has been mapped in parts, but it is hard to find. The Indians traveled along ridges when possible, following water upstream and avoiding the underbrush. Along a terrace above the confluence, a place less changed by the shifting currents of the river, a trail parallels the Clear Fork upward for a short distance.

Highway 12 followed the old trail in several places through the valley, but the trail departed from that route east of La Wis Wis where Forest Service Road 45 intersects. It passed the Laurel Hill viewpoint, which also has remnants of the Hot Springs Auto Road, built in 1924 and 1925 to carry tourists to a resort at the Ohanapecoh hot springs. The road is now a shaded grade through the woods, overgrown with salal, laurel, and vine maples. It crossed Carlton Creek likely in the same place as the Indian trail. The bridge across the creek no longer exists, but there are clear remnants of a car campground on the north side.

Road 4510 cuts off from Road 45 to the northeast, passing Summit Creek campground, another likely stopping place on the way to the mountains. Beyond that, Road 45 continues through a clear-cut to Soda Springs Campground. Here the hiker is on well-defined ground, the beginning of the last four miles of the ancient trail to Cowlitz Pass (see map no. 3). The route has been authenticated, reconstructed as Forest Service Trail 44, and clearly marked as the “Historic route of the Yakama-Cowlitz Indian Trail.”

The soda springs themselves are a few yards downhill to the west. Water bubbles out of the ground and turns rocks bright orange as it flows into Summit Creek. According to Mary Kiona, “Generations of Indians bathed there until whites fenced it off and charged an entry fee.” Operating under the name Tumac Mineral Springs and later Mt. Rainier Mineral Springs in the 1940s, local entrepreneurs tried to bottle and sell the water with the slogan, “Be healthy, be happy, be wise, and let Tumac help you normalize.” However, the water darkened when bottled, which made it a hard sell.

From the Forest Service campground and trailhead parking lot, the trail starts close to Summit Creek but soon moves up the ridge, roughly following the creek but not always in sight or sound of water. The Indians typically traveled along
ridges when possible, following water upstream and avoiding the underbrush. Trail 44 is a constructed trail, not just a beaten path. The word “route” on the sign seems carefully chosen, not claiming that this is exactly the trail used by the Cowlitz and Yakama people, they may have fanned out over the landscape. But archaeologist Bill Roulette has said the key factor in interpreting the historical significance of any contemporary trail “is not whether the existing tread was worn in the ground by Native Americans, but rather, if the route followed by the modern trail is the same as that used by Native Americans.” Travelers of all centuries would have the same goal—to reach the pass by the easiest way.

Hikers on this modern version are headed for the upland lakes, for fishing, for cooling off, for the wildflowers and for hunting elk in the fall. It’s an uphill slog, crossing a creek on large water-smoothed rock slabs. Past Penoyer Lake, Trail 44 briefly merges with the Pacific Crest Trail and then goes southeast for about a half mile to a benchmark—an official, distinctive round metal disc mounted on a boulder by the U.S. Geological Survey.

This benchmark is the entry to Cowlitz Pass. Trail 44 heads east to Tumac Mountain, named for two “Macs” who raced their herds of sheep to the meadows each summer. Sheep grazed in this area, devouring vegetation, from the early 1900s through 1945. Trail 1142 heads southeast toward Shellrock Lake, crossing briefly through flat meadows before heading down amid a scattering of ponds and small lakes, most unnamed. It connects with the Sand Ridge trail, the contemporary route from the east side to the pass.

This series of meadows on the Cascade Crest—the flat land where trails converge from many directions—is Cowlitz Pass. An early settler mentioned “the signboard tree” at the pass, but there is no handy wooden sign now to mark the pass. Rather, one meanders until the trail leads downhill to the east, indicating the pass has been crossed.

Nor is there any obvious sign that “the people” have flowed through here. Horseshoes rather than moccasins and boot soles have deepened the trail’s tread. Unlike Cispus Pass to the south, there is no dramatic vision scape, no sweeping views east and west into distinct watersheds. Although Mt. Rainier (called taxu’ma by Xwani) looms grandly to the northwest, the pass itself is visually unremarkable.

Yet this is distinctly a crossroads. A network of trails leads off in several directions, with the sense that at any moment, someone could come around a bend, on foot or horseback. Many have passed through. William Packwood, who is credited with “discovering” the pass, and James Longmire (of Mt. Rainier fame) came through in the early 1860s. William H. Carlton led a survey crew looking for a suitable railroad pass in 1867. Prospectors rebuilt the old trail in the early 1900s. W.H.B. Kent, ranger for what was then called the Mt. Rainier National Forest, reported work on the trail in 1907.

In 1916, future U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas camped overnight in the meadows. He had brought a newspaper and read about the outbreak of World War I to a sheepherder. Because of the justice’s extensive environmental advocacy, this wilderness area of the national forest was named for him. But the name Cowlitz Pass, after the river into which
Summit Creek flows, has stuck. Because railroad surveyors discounted this pass and trail as “impracticable” for a railroad, Cowlitz Pass remains largely unchanged—its huckleberry bushes, its ponds, its location in the commanding presence of Mt. Rainier.

Native people spent many days at the crest, the Taytnapam joining the Yakama in large camps. The Yakama moved into the mountains to hunt and avoid the heat in the eastern valleys. They all collected huckleberries, blackberries, elderberries, salmonberries, strawberries, salal berries and hazel nuts. They hunted deer, elk, and mountain goat.

Remnants of the trail from the east side are harder to find. The westernmost Yakama village on the Tieton River was Miya’wax, meaning headman or chief. Like Cowlitz Falls, Miya’wax was drowned by a reservoir behind a dam, this one Rimrock Lake behind Tieton Dam, completed in 1925 as part of the Yakima Irrigation Project (see map no. 4). The ancient trail from the east side forked above Miya’wax to routes across Cowlitz, White and Tieton passes.

As a boy wanting to improve his health, Douglas would walk from his home in Yakima and follow an Indian trail to Cowlitz Pass. In his book, Of Men and Mountains, Douglas described coming up from the Tieton by this trail to reach “the great plateau at the foot of Tumac Mountain that is dotted with dozens of lakes.” Ray Paolella, a lawyer, outdoorsman, and admirer of Justice Douglas, has mapped the William O. Douglas heritage trail. Paolella believes the main trail went up the east side of Indian Creek, forded the creek, then headed to the pass. He has family history to support that. Susan Flint Paolella’s ancestors went up Indian Creek to Cowlitz Pass and down Summit Creek to Ohanapecosh on the way to their climb of Mt. Rainier in 1881, following both sides of the Yakama-Cowlitz Trail.

A contemporary hiking group on the east side of the pass, the Cascadians, have informally marked a steep, rocky trail to a ridge overlooking the site of Miya’wax. From the overlook, the way to the village can be seen to the west, in the valley between Kloochman Rock and Goose Egg. The Yakama would have followed the ridge—not the valleys, gulches and ravines—down to the village site. More research, mapping, and ground tracking is needed for the east-side route.

What is the evidence for an ancient presence at the pass? A few archaeological studies have been done on the east and west sides. Most important was finding a projectile point of a very early style (stemmed lanceolate), a discovery that dates human use of the pass more than 7000 years ago.

The most significant evidence is the landscape. What resonates most strongly is a sense that “this is a good place” or “this is the right way to go.” I felt this at Cowlitz Falls, in the bottomlands of the Cowlitz River near Kitchen Rock, at the terrace above the “blue hole” at the confluence of the Ohanapecosh and Clear Fork, at Soda Springs, at Cowlitz Pass, and overlooking what had been Miya’wax. These are the signs that people have been here for centuries in what has been called wilderness. As Ivan Doig phrased it in Winter Brothers, we are merely the latest of thousands, a community of time and place.
Glacier Peak and White Chuck River valley from Lake Byrne, 1963. A Forest Service wilderness reclassification study of Glacier Peak in the mid-1950s piqued the interest of conservationists, who valued heavily timbered river valleys on the western slopes of the Cascades as access corridors to alpine areas. The Forest Service valued these valleys for their merchantable timber. Courtesy North Cascades National Park Service Complex Museum Collection, NOCA 11751.

Climbing boots, leather with Tricouni Swiss nails, felt lined cuff, and leather laces, 1940s–1950s. Courtesy of The Mountaineers Archives, MTR.2014.18.
Columbia 15 | Northwest History

Crown Jewel Wilderness

On the 50th anniversary of North Cascades National Park, Lauren Danner explains how a love for the land became a quest for preservation.


It all started with Glacier Peak. This “somber king on throne of granite” is not granite at all, but a volcano composed of layers of pumice and dacite. Its last known eruption was 1,100 years ago, but modern geologists believe that when Glacier Peak erupts again it will be especially destructive. Famously remote, Washington’s fourth-tallest mountain requires miles of hiking through difficult terrain just to reach the base. It did not even appear on a map until 1898, though it was long known to Native Americans, who called it Tda-ko-buh-ba or Dakobed (Great Parent). Dazzlingly beautiful as it floats above surrounding peaks, Glacier Peak “bestows familiarity only to those willing to strive for it.”

A group of Wenatchee citizens in 1926 proposed that Glacier Peak—a favorite destination of outdoors clubs like the Mazamas and Mountaineers—be set aside for recreation under Forest Service supervision. Five years later, the Forest Service approved a 233,600-acre Glacier Peak-Cascade Recreation Unit. Little more than a name change for the mountain’s alpine high country, the new category satisfied locals who wanted to see Glacier Peak reserved. The Depression forestalled further action until 1938, when the Forest Service approved a new land classification order that expanded the area to 275,000 acres and renamed it the Glacier Peak Recreation Unit.

The label was a Forest Service attempt at systematic land use classification. In 1929, the Forest Service implemented regulation L-20, which allowed the creation of Primitive Areas for national forest recreation; however, regional foresters were instructed that “no hard and fast rules” or standards could be universally applied to the use of such areas. In 1938, the same year the Glacier Peak Recreation Unit was created, the Forest Service proposed the U-regulation, new rules for reclassifying primitive areas as wilderness. Under these rules, areas of more than 100,000 acres would be renamed Wilderness Areas and require the approval of the Secretary of Agriculture. Those between 5,000 and 100,000 acres would be called Wild Areas and could be established by the regional forester. No roads, logging, or special use permits were allowed in either. Both designations required public notice. If public opposition to proposed boundaries emerged, the regional forester had to conduct public hearings and submit the testimony to the Chief of the Forest Service or the Agriculture Secretary for a final decision. If the Forest Service were to reclassify Glacier Peak as a Wilderness Area, a process requiring boundary studies, public notice, and possibly hearings, the area would enjoy stricter protection.

In 1940, Acting Chief C. M. Granger released more than half the land around Glacier Peak, citing mineral values and a proposed highway over the mountains. This left 347,525 acres held for possible reclassification. Then the United States entered World War II, and reclassifying primitive areas fell down the Forest Service’s list of priorities. It focused instead on fulfilling its founding mission of utilizing the nation’s timber, and logging on the national forests increased accordingly. Federal timber sales nearly doubled during the war, although the national forests supplied only 10 percent of the wartime timber needed. Most timber still came from private forest lands. Forest Service historian Gerald Williams writes that near the end of World War II, the agency “told Congress that the national forests, especially in...
the Pacific Northwest, could take more of the national timber burden,” Congress allocated more funds for road-building and timber planning, and the Forest Service responded by increasing the amount of timber harvested from the national forests.

The postwar housing boom shifted demand for national forest timber into high gear. When the war ended, the Forest Service ordered all regions to create timber plans for all “working circles” containing marketable timber. A working circle was an area, typically 100,000 to 500,000 acres in size, used to calculate how much timber an area could produce. This informed the “allowable cut,” the maximum quantity that could be harvested while maintaining a sustainable forest. After the war, many regions increased the allowable cut on their forests, citing better timber data, better access, and more efficient equipment. Further, the move toward intensive management and ever-higher yields expressed the national belief that maximizing natural resource utilization was a moral imperative. Prosperity was writ large in the tracts of suburban housing that were the right of every hardworking American. In this context, the Forest Service’s reasoning that its “overriding purpose was not so much to protect the national forests but rather to develop their resources,” as historian Paul Hirt wrote, makes sense.

The timber industry also found itself in a wholly different situation than before the war. Three years before Pearl Harbor, Washington State relinquished its standing as the nation’s number-one timber producer as big companies moved southward into Oregon and California. Nevertheless, the timber industry accounted for nearly half the state’s workforce in 1939, evidence of lumbering’s continued dominance.

With its vast hydroelectric resources, Washington was ideally positioned to take on defense manufacturing needs when the nation entered the war. Aluminum and chemical production, shipbuilding, and aircraft construction quickly pushed the timber industry from the forefront of the state’s economy. Labor statistics bear this out. In 1939, 46 percent of the state’s workforce was employed in the lumber industry, while only 1 percent worked in shipyards. By 1944, lumber employment had dropped to 17 percent, while shipyard workers made up 32 percent. Those trends continued into the 1950s. From 1947 to 1953, employment in lumbering fell 8 percent while employment in the aircraft industry skyrocketed 154 percent.

As private lands were cut over, and with few sustained yield replanting programs, many timber companies turned to the national forests. The Forest Service’s philosophy of multiple-use, wherein the many uses of the forests were balanced for maximum public benefit, devolved into the pursuit of one dominant objective: maximizing timber harvest.

The Forest Service’s eagerness to promote logging led it to undervalue the demand for recreation. As historian Samuel Hays suggests, the agency “seemed to be trapped by its own internal value commitments” to timber harvest, and unable to acknowledge or respond to increasing public interest in wilderness.

That public interest grew proportionately with Washington’s population. Wartime economic diversification meant Washington gained more people during the war than any other state but California. Between 1940 and 1950, Washington’s population grew by more than one-third. During the 1950s, it grew another 20 percent. Most of the impact was felt...
in urban areas such as Seattle, where the new industries were located. As the manufacturing industries grew, so did professions that supported the new residents, including health care and education.

Flush with postwar prosperity and plentiful leisure time, Washington’s growing urban middle class took off for forests and parks in unprecedented numbers. They geared up with surplus military equipment or new, lightweight equipment from companies like REI, and set out to hike, backpack, climb, ski, snowshoe, fish, boat, and more. During the 1950s, membership in the Mountaineers doubled to more than 4,000. In the three years from 1952 to 1955, recreational visits to Forest Service Region 6 national forests (comprising Oregon and Washington) increased by more than one-third, and membership in the Mountaineers grew at precisely the same rate. When outdoor enthusiasts arrived in their national forests, many found cutover slopes, muddy rivers, and slash piles. Recreation groups, historical allies of the Forest Service, began to pressure the agency to set aside more unspoiled land.

Increasing population and growing demands for recreational resources steered conservationists and the Forest Service on a collision course. Internal Forest Service documents from the time show the agency purposely emphasized multiple-use to mollify recreation and conservation groups, but in reality logging was always given precedence.

Indeed, in the years after World War II, the Forest Service reconsidered recreation use at Glacier Peak only in fits and starts. In 1946, the Glacier Peak Recreation Unit was renamed Glacier Peak Limited Area. The Limited Area designation, unique to Region 6, prohibited road-building and resource extraction until further studies could be undertaken, and could be undone at will by the regional forester.

In 1950, the agency began another study of the area, this time to consider reclassification from Limited to Wilderness Area. In late 1951, the agency admitted it had not devoted enough time to the reclassification study but noted that outdoors groups had generally agreed on boundaries earlier that year. Two years later, the Forest Service was still saying it planned to proceed with reclassifying Glacier Peak, but nothing happened.

In June 1955, University of California-Berkeley political science professor Grant McConnell was enjoying the summer break at his cabin in Stehekin. A longtime North Cascades enthusiast, McConnell climbed around Lake Chelan in the late 1930s and early 1940s with the Wyeasters, a Portland mountaineering club. During World War II, he was rescued from the Pacific Ocean when the destroyer on which he was stationed sank in combat. McConnell spent a month recuperating in a cabin under Si Si Ridge, west of Stehekin. Captivated by the area’s beauty and tranquility, he and his wife Jane bought a cabin on the banks of Company Creek, a tributary of the Stehekin River, and moved there after the war ended. In 1948, the McConnells moved to Berkeley, where Grant earned his doctorate, then joined Berkeley’s faculty and began a prolific and prominent career as a political scientist with an abiding passion for conservation.

The McConnells returned to Stehekin each summer, and it was while there in 1955 they heard rumors of a Forest Service timber sale in the valley. Stehekin, accessible only by foot, boat, or plane, had remained virtually unchanged since the 1930s. But after World War II, people returning from the war, like McConnell, moved there, and the tiny Stehekin school reopened for the first time since the early 1940s. The tourist trade picked up again. With gas rationing over, people began vacationing, and remote Stehekin was an ideal escape from the bulging Seattle suburbs and other urban areas. Stehekin appealed anew to land developers, who began buying old homesteads and subdividing them. Predictably, the timber industry became interested in the mostly untouched valleys along the Stehekin River. Specifically, the Stehekin watershed interested the Chelan Box and Manufacturing Company, which foresaw that logs cut there could be floated downriver to Lake Chelan, chained into rafts, and towed to the company’s mill near Chelan. Talk of logging the Agnes Creek valley, a major tributary of the Stehekin River that drains a large geographic area from Dome Peak to Suiattle Pass, was especially widespread. Much of the valley was part of World War II began, and the Forest Service focused on its founding mission of utilizing the nation’s timber. Logging on the national forests increased accordingly.
the existing Glacier Peak Limited Area, and McConnell felt much of this secluded, isolated haven should be part of any new wilderness area.

McConnell was not the only conservationist interested in the fate of Glacier Peak. Later that summer of 1955, three backpackers were camped in the snow near Suiattle Pass when they saw a helicopter overhead, bringing equipment to a proposed mining operation on nearby Miners Ridge. About halfway through a forty-mile trek that included Railroad Creek, Lyman Lake, Suiattle and Cloudy passes, and Agnes Creek, the trio felt this “very upsetting” incident made their objective all the more imperative. They were there on assignment to get an idea of what the Glacier Peak country looked like and report back to their organization, the Mountaineers.

As one of the oldest and most respected outdoors clubs in Washington, the Mountaineers had followed Forest Service activities at Glacier Peak for decades, in part because the mountain was a popular destination for club outings. In 1953, the Mountaineers Conservation Committee noted preserving wilderness values at Glacier Peak was “a tremendous project, but a very vital one.” The group’s monthly newsletter hinted at its apprehension about the Forest Service’s ability to apply multiple-use principles to Glacier Peak. Time and again, proposed Forest Service wilderness “tragically eliminates most of the river areas which contain the virgin forests.” The Mountaineers urged members to backpack into the remote, difficult-to-reach area, taking pictures and writing reports to help develop boundary recommendations. Agnes Creek was called out as one of several areas of concern.

1949 Mountaineers Summer Outing map. The 1949 summer outing began with a camp at the Trinity Mine in the upper Chiwawa River valley. From there camps were made at Buck Creek Pass, Image Lake, and Lyman Lake. At that time there was no trail over Spider Gap so the group split with the “backtrackers” heading back over Buck Creek Pass with the pack animals and the “backpackers” continuing on to Spider Meadows and a camp at Leroy Creek. Climbing activities included Glacier Peak, a spectacular rock climb of Sitting Bull, and a beautiful day on Chiwawa Mountain. Courtesy of The Mountaineers, https://mountaineers.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ARCH/pages/524585/Custom+Maps.
The Mountaineers had reason to fear the possibility of eliminating valley floors and forests from the wilderness area. In an effort to demonstrate its commitment to the principle of multiple-use, the Forest Service habitually omitted merchantable timber found in river valleys. In this scenario, recreationists got the high mountain vistas and timber companies got the lowland trees. Conservationists dubbed the result a “wilderness on the rocks” or “starfish wilderness,” since such wilderness areas hugged barren ridges and steep slopes. To raise awareness about what such a wilderness would look like, the Mountaineers sponsored more trips into the Glacier Peak region in 1953 and 1954.

In 1954, the Mountaineers and others interested in wilderness preservation gained valuable insight into the Forest Service’s priorities. A few hundred miles south of Glacier Peak loom the Three Sisters, a cluster of mountains that includes three of Oregon’s five tallest peaks (Mount Hood and Mount Jefferson are taller). The Forest Service had set aside nearly 200,000 acres surrounding the Three Sisters as a Primitive Area in 1937, adding another 55,000 acres the following year. In 1954, the Forest Service proposed reclassifying the Primitive Area into Three Sisters Wilderness Area, much as it was doing with Glacier Peak. The proposal eliminated 53,000 acres of low-elevation forests and offered instead two new, high-elevation Wild Areas at nearby Diamond Peak and Mount Washington. Local conservationists were outraged by this quid pro quo, which they viewed as trading irreplaceable old-growth forest for wind-scoured alpine ridges with little harvestable timber. A “loose-knit collection of hikers, scientists, and social liberals” gelled into a unified opposition group, Friends of the Three Sisters. They would spend the next three years fighting the Forest Service proposal, and the Mountaineers closely tracked their work.

Back in Washington, the Mountaineers appointed Polly Dyer chair of the Conservation Committee in January 1955. Dyer had moved to Seattle from California in 1950, joining the Mountaineers and becoming a prominent member of the Olympic Park Associates, a watchdog group formed to protect Olympic National Park. Polly took several trips to the Glacier Peak area in 1955, including one with representatives from the Forest Service and the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, a regional umbrella organization dedicated to keeping its member clubs informed of conservation issues. That trip left from Darrington, on the west side of the mountains, and followed the Suiattle River and Sulphur Creek to Meadow Mountain, familiarizing club members with the “Shangri-La of the Cascades.” But Dyer’s Railroad Creek-to-Agnes Creek journey with two other Mountaineers, Phil and Laura Zalesky, was by far the more significant trip for future activism in the North Cascades.

Flush with postwar prosperity and plentiful leisure time, Washington’s growing urban middle class took off for forests and parks in unprecedented numbers.

The Zaleskys had been hiking in Glacier Peak country for several years by the time they invited Polly Dyer to see the eastern side of the range in July 1955. Phil Zalesky taught in the Everett School District, and he and Laura were members of the Everett Mountaineers. After reading an influential Harper’s magazine article by Bernard DeVoto about the effects of overuse on the national parks, Phil had written to his congressman, Rep. Jack Westland (R-WA), expressing his concern. Receiving an unsympathetic reply from Westland’s office, Phil contacted the Seattle Mountaineers Conservation Committee, where he met Polly Dyer. She had not seen the Glacier Peak country before—most Seattle Mountaineers hiked in the closer-to-home Interstate 90 corridor around Snoqualmie Pass—and the Zaleskys asked her to come on a backpacking trip.

Sitting in a Stehekin café after their trek while waiting for the downlake ferry, the trio probably looked a bit bedraggled. But their ice axes caught the eye of a resident who had come to the dock to collect her mail. Jane McConnell wandered over and asked what they had climbed. Agnes Creek, Railroad Creek, Miners Ridge, Cloudy Pass, they responded, adding they were members of the Mountaineers conducting a study trip. You need to meet Grant, Jane insisted, because he was concerned about proposed logging in the Stehekin valley. Thus the McConnells and the nascent Seattle conservation movement, all of them professionals enjoying the fruits of the midcentury economic boom, first connected. The importance of this chance meeting would become increasingly clear over the next decade.

In fall 1955, Polly and John Dyer visited the McConnells at their home in Berkeley, and Polly and Grant began talking about ways to protect Glacier Peak and the Stehekin valley. As Conservation Committee chair, Polly kept a close eye on the Three Sisters controversy, and she saw how the local group...
enlisted help from national conservation organizations such as the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club. When the Dyers lived in California, Polly’s husband had climbed with Sierra Club executive director David Brower, and they maintained the friendship after the Dyers moved north.

McConnell’s interest was both personal and professional. In a 1954 article in *Western Political Quarterly*, he argued the conservation movement had become “small, divided and frequently uncertain.” Original Forest Service Chief Gifford Pinchot’s utilitarian philosophy emphasized material uses of natural resources for “the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run.” Humans were at the center of this argument: their needs were paramount. This starkly conflicted with the approach recently expressed by Aldo Leopold, whose wilderness thinking had evolved toward an ecological perspective. Leopold asserted that humans were part of a larger ecological system and could not be elevated among other elements. Natural resources had values that could not be expressed in economic terms, and those should be considered equally in land use decisions. McConnell realized that Glacier Peak could be a flash point for this conflict and, possibly, a means to create common cause among conservation groups.

In this spirit, McConnell invited Brower to speak to his political science class about the role of interest groups in conservation. Brower grew up wandering the hills around Berkeley and joined the Sierra Club in 1933. A prolific climber, he recorded seventy first ascents during the 1930s, but found time to edit the Sierra Club Bulletin beginning in 1937. In 1939, he made a Sierra Club film about Kings Canyon that helped win support for its creation as a national park. After serving in the ski troops of the Tenth Mountain Division during World War II, he returned to the Sierra Club, accepting an appointment to the board of directors and leading high trips. In 1952, Brower became the 7,000-member club’s first executive director and led its transformation to a national organization dedicated to wilderness preservation. Rangy and charming, with vivid blue eyes and a wave of white hair, Brower proved an effective leader of the growing movement.

Beginning with the first Biennial Wilderness Conference in 1949, the Sierra Club in the 1950s became a major proponent of wilderness preservation and national park activism. The Dinosaur National Monument campaign exemplified this new approach. A proposed dam on Colorado’s Green River that would have flooded parts of the exceptionally scenic monument was defeated under the leadership of Brower and the Sierra Club, resulting in what many view as the first victory of modern environmentalism.

McConnell believed the North Cascades, like Dinosaur, warranted national attention because the wilderness there was largely unknown, scenically magnificent, and one of the largest such tracts remaining in the continental United States. The Sierra Club could bring national credibility to the issue, and Brower was the key. Brower accepted the invitation to speak to his Berkeley class, and McConnell used the opportunity to show him slides of the North Cascades, hoping to pique his interest. It worked. McConnell re-upped his lapsed Sierra Club membership, Brower installed him on the club’s Conservation Committee, and they began strategizing how the Sierra Club could become involved in Glacier Peak.
To Brower’s way of thinking, the North Cascades was a natural issue for the Sierra Club to tackle, in part because it was a wilderness issue and potentially a national park issue. His strategy was four-pronged: 1) act locally and activate the grassroots; 2) influence the broader conservation community through meetings and private contacts; 3) get national publicity; and 4) lobby policymakers in Washington, D.C.

Step one was connecting with McConnell and, by extension, local conservationists. Brower utilized his connections in the Northwest to build a grassroots base of support. In addition to the Dyers and now the McConnells, he had a good friend in Seattle who became the lodestone of the regional effort to preserve the North Cascades. Irish-born Patrick Goldsworthy had been a Sierra Club member since 1940. He had worked as a “horse,” carrying equipment for photographer Cedric Wright in California, who first introduced him to the Sierra Club. After serving in World War II, Goldsworthy was an assistant trip leader under Brower, taking over when Brower’s efforts in national conservation became a full-time enterprise. Like Grant McConnell, Goldsworthy held a doctorate from Berkeley, his in biochemistry. Appointed to the University of Washington Medical School’s research faculty in 1952, Goldsworthy and his wife, Jane, moved north. Goldsworthy wanted to see the Cascade Range up close, and on a colleague’s recommendation, hiked to Cascade Pass. Deeply impressed, he decided to join the Mountaineers to learn more, and in 1953 the Goldsworthys completed the club’s climbing course.

Late in 1953, Brower flew to Seattle to discuss forming a Pacific Northwest chapter of the Sierra Club with the Goldsworthys and Dyers. The foursome sent letters to every Sierra Club member in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska, inviting them to join. The Pacific Northwest chapter’s sole objective was to work on conservation issues, starting with Glacier Peak.

With the enlistment of Brower and the Sierra Club in California, and the ongoing activities of the Mountaineers in Washington, Glacier Peak was poised to become a nucleus of conservation activism. The Glacier Peak issue attracted local and national attention, and many saw it as an important test of the Forest Service’s commitment to wilderness.

The conflict over Glacier Peak continued until 1960, when the Secretary of Agriculture overruled the local Forest Service office to create a large Glacier Peak Wilderness including some of the river valleys that conservationists deemed critical to the wilderness experience. By then, though, the rift between the Forest Service and conservationists had widened beyond repair. Conservationists joined together to push for a wilderness national park in the North Cascades, a battle that ultimately took ten years to resolve.

Crown Jewel Wilderness: Creating North Cascades National Park recounts how the politically sophisticated conservation movement leveraged the national pro-wilderness mood and the magnificent mountain scenery to win permanent protection for the North Cascades.
I have always been drawn to rusty, old, dilapidated structures. In my adult life, I take pictures of these things, including structures built by the Works Progress Administration (later renamed the Works Projects Administration, and both known as the WPA) in Western Washington in the 1930s.

As a small child growing up in Bremerton, one of my favorite things was to explore in the woods behind my grandparents’ house and search for visible legacies of a 1930s economic recovery program.

Research, Explore, Photograph, Repeat

Photographer J. Tucker searches for visible legacies of a 1930s economic recovery program.

Whatcom Falls Bridge, Whatcom Falls Park at 1401 Electric Avenue, Bellingham

This is one of the first WPA projects that I fell in love with – a beautiful stone arch pedestrian bridge located in a serene wooded park. The bridge was built entirely by WPA in 1939. It was constructed from Chuckanut sandstone, salvaged from the Pike Building (built in 1891 on the corner of Holly and State streets in downtown Bellingham) that had recently burned to the ground. A 1936 fish hatchery at this park was also funded by the WPA and is still in operation today. Whatcom Falls Park was established in 1908 and is well maintained, attracting visitors in all seasons.
artifacts. I would get so excited at the smallest treasure—a piece of broken glass, a doll arm, a torn piece of clothing. I wanted to know the stories behind those items. My family nurtured my curiosity (or maybe just tolerated it) and that curiosity has evolved into an interest in history, especially in the Pacific Northwest.

Photography connects me to the past and to the land. It also brings up questions about how my work fits into the landscape—either past, present, or future.

My interest related to the Works Progress Administration originated at Forest Park in Portland, Oregon, at what is referred to by locals as “the witch’s castle”—a beautifully built, two-story stone structure in the middle of the lush woods. It has the look of an abandoned castle hidden in the forest—one that is slowly being reclaimed by moss and ferns. I was enthralled by this structure. When I got back home to Washington, I couldn’t get it out of my mind. I did some research and read that it was built as a restroom and was a WPA project from the 1930s. The WPA part turned out to not be true, but by the time I found that out, I was already too attached to the other WPA sites I had begun to discover around Western Washington. I decided to continue with my photography project, and it’s expanded to include brick masonry, art deco design, and even some roadwork.

Firland Sanatorium (now CRISTA Ministries), 19303 Fremont Ave N, Shoreline
Located on 34 acres in the Richmond Highlands area North of Seattle, the Firland Sanatorium was built in 1913 as a tuberculosis hospital. It was designed by Seattle city architect Daniel Huntington in Tudor Revival style, and includes several buildings connected by tunnels through which patients were transported. The completion of this building led to the North Trunk Road (now Aurora Avenue North) being paved in bricks, at the insistence of the doctors at the Sanatorium, so their patients and the families could have more ready access. Prior to this, supplies were cored to the Sanatorium in wheelbarrows. Repairs to several of the buildings and improvements of the sanatorium grounds, including landscaping and road repair, were funded by the WPA in 1936.

Port Townsend sidewalks, residential neighborhoods in the vicinity of Fillmore and Jefferson streets, Port Townsend
Between 1937 and 1939, nearly 15 miles of residential streets were paved and nearly 10 miles graded and improved by WPA funds in Port Townsend. Prior to this, the sidewalks were wooden or concrete and had been maintained (or not) by individual property owners. This type of WPA sidewalk stamp can be found on corners of seemingly random residential blocks in the residential section of Port Townsend.
My process for this project goes in the following stages—research, explore, take photos, repeat. The research phase generally takes a few weeks or months. Information on WPA projects can be problematic because most of the sites rely on multiple funding sources; some of the documentation does not follow a straight line.

After researching sites, I invite my two photography assistants to go exploring with me. I’ll map out a few WPA sites in a few different counties. My assistants are passionate about our work; they provide running commentary and random Pacific Northwest history facts, one usually provides lunch, one usually holds an umbrella over my equipment, they work cheap, and they’ve been with me from the beginning… Yes, they are my parents!

My hope is that my photographs will inspire you to find your own places to explore, be they WPA sites or other historical buildings. Our landscape is continually changing and we are losing historical places at a rapid pace, especially here in Western Washington, so there is no time like the present to get out there and explore.

You may not have to go far to find a WPA project. You may, in fact, drive or pass by one every day on your way to work! ☃️

All photos courtesy J. Tucker.

McMillin Bridge, crossing the Puyallup River on State Route 162, parallel to the Foothills Trail, Orting

This bridge is one you have to be looking for in order to find, unless you happen to live in Orting or Puyallup. It crosses the Puyallup River and runs parallel to the Foothills Trail, which is a nice pedestrian path built on an old railroad bed. The bridge itself is unique in its design. It was built in 1934 using WPA funding. It is a truss style bridge that was built using concrete instead of wood. It was made of hollow-box construction, which involved pouring concrete around hollow wooden shafts (to make for lighter and cheaper construction). Its 170-foot main span was the longest reinforced concrete truss in the United States at that time. It was conceived of by Homer M. Hadley, a local bridge engineer, who wanted to showcase the versatility of concrete. The McMillin Bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and is in the Library of Congress’ Historic American Engineering Record.
Washington Park Arboretum Bridge to Pinetum/Willcox Footbridge, Seattle

This reinforced concrete structure with decorative brickwork is actually a sewer trestle that crosses Lake Washington Boulevard at Lynn Street. It was originally designed in 1910 by architects Willcox & Sayward. Starting in 1933 WPA funding allowed for a substantial amount of other work to be done in the Washington Park Arboretum. This work included clearing, development of trails and displays such as Azalea Way, and completion of stonework seen throughout the park, including work done on this and other stone bridges, and the basalt gateposts at the entrances to the park.

Kirkland Cannery/King County Food Processing Plant/State Cannery Number 4, 640 8th Ave, Kirkland

This 11,000 square foot clapboard wooden structure was built by WPA in 1935 and opened as a free public cannery in 1936. Local families were encouraged to bring in home grown vegetables and fruits to be canned. In return for the canning services, families were required to contribute one-third of their canned goods to state and county institutions to support other families in need. In 1938, at the height of production, the cannery is said to have produced 400,000 cans of food for 10,000 local families. Once the economy started recovering, the state sold the cannery to the City of Kirkland for $44.79. The City then leased it to private investors, and it became Kirkland Custom Cannery. A new owner has recently made a commitment to restore the building’s exterior to the way it looked when it was first built by the WPA.

Renton Fire Station #1 (now Renton Historical Museum), 235 Mill Avenue South, Renton

This art deco style fire station was designed by Ivan M. Palmaw, a Russian architect who emigrated here and studied architecture at the University of Washington. This was his first solo commission. The building was funded by the WPA and took two years to complete, allegedly due to the WPA’s mission of hiring unskilled (often from white collar ranks) workers. The fire station was completed in 1942, and it stands out in Renton today as a beautiful example of the late art deco style architecture that many WPA buildings were known for, especially the decorative friezes (waves) at the roofline, the horizontal grooves, and the rounded corners.
AGENTS OF CHANGE:
Extraordinary Jewish Women of Washington State

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, Washington State Jewish Historical Society has announced a new exhibit called Agents of Change: Extraordinary Jewish Women of Washington State. It will be viewable online, and a traveling version will also visit several Washington communities this year.

WSJHS executive director Lisa Kranseler writes, “Over the last half century, Jewish women have been a force for change in every aspect of life here in Washington State. From philanthropist Becky Benaroya to Sleater-Kinney co-founder Carrie Brownstein; from President Obama’s ambassador to Switzerland, Suzi LeVine, to longtime Seattle Public Librarian and Book Lust author Nancy Pearl, we’ll be focusing on women who have made significant changes in their fields and our world.”

The exhibit is curated by Jeff Schwager, a Seattle journalist and playwright. Schwager adapted the Gregory Award-winning production of The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay for Book-It Repertory Theatre and directed Beyond the Pale: Jewish Voices from Russia and the New World at ACT.

For more information, visit the Washington State Jewish Historical Society website at wsjhs.org.

WASHINGTON DAHP CEMETERY GRANT PROGRAM


A new statewide Historic Cemetery Grant program from the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP) is accepting applications through Friday, June 29. Cemeteries around the Evergreen State that are more than 50 years old are eligible to receive grant funds to complete capital projects associated with cemetery rehabilitation and preservation.

Grants will be awarded through a competitive application process reviewed by DAHP’s Cemetery Advisory Committee.

Criteria for funding include relative historic significance; relative percentage of military burials in the cemetery; project’s impact on future maintenance and operation costs and provisions provided for long-term preservation; urgency of the project; accessibility of the cemetery to the public; and the extent to which the project leverages community and volunteer support.

Application materials can be downloaded through DAHP’s website: https://dahp.wa.gov/HistoricCemeteryGrant

For more information, contact the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation’s Julianne Patterson at 206-624-9449 or send email to jpatterson@preservewa.org.

Don’t delay! Grant applications are due Friday, June 29, 2018, with grant awards to be announced in August.
**SEATTLE**

**Neighborhood history blog leads to a book project**

Seattle’s Central Area neighborhood long had a mixture of nearly every race, and for many years, a mix of every occupation and profession, too. This has been changing, with new arrivals more homogeneous and often employed in the city’s booming technology sector.

For the past five years, a grassroots oral history project has created and posted online interviews and photographs of the Central Area in a blog; the site’s content will soon become a published book.

Using historic and contemporary photographs, The Storied Central Area will explore the rich diversity, ongoing changes and gentrification of one neighborhood. The book will be comprised of selections from the nearly 50 interviews originally published on the People of the Central Area and their Stories blog (http://centralareaomm.blogspot.com/).

Blog founder and photographer Madeline Crowley is thrilled with the evolution from online to print publication. “This heartfelt portrait of a neighborhood shares stories of lives lived with joy, achievement, poverty, privilege and prejudice,” Crowley said. “Each piece shines with its own radiant honesty . . . it’s a telling slice of local history as it shows the rich diversity lost when an influx of capital displaces those who built communities into a city.”

The Storied Central Area will be published next year by Chin Music Press.

**Photo courtesy Madeline Crowley.**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY**

**Heritage Capital Projects help strengthen community history**

Quilcene Historical Museum in Jefferson County was honored by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for the group’s work to preserve an 1892 Victorian mansion known as the Worthington House.

The project received the 2018 State Historic Preservation Officer Award for Stewardship because it “really stood out to the awards committee as a shining example of tireless stewardship,” said Nicholas Vann, State Historical Architect with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

The Worthington House is part of Worthington Park, a multipurpose heritage site open to the public. Quilcene Historical Museum acted to protect what they saw as a deteriorating but culturally and historically important private residence and restore it as a community asset. For more information about Worthington Park, please visit quilcemuseum.org.

Funding for the work came, in part, from Heritage Capital Projects, a program administered by the Washington State Historical Society in support of heritage projects around the state.

For more information about Heritage Capital Projects, please visit WashingtonHistory.org/HCP.

**The Worthington House has witnessed many changes in its more than 125 years, as seen here (L-R) in the 1890s, circa 2000 and in 2017. Quilcene Historical Museum is restoring the structure with help from Heritage Capital Projects, a program administered by the Washington State Historical Society. Photos courtesy Quilcene Historical Museum.**
CHIEF SEATTLE
AND THE TOWN THAT TOOK HIS NAME
By David Buerge
Reviewed by Leonard Garfield, Executive Director of Seattle’s Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI)

Seattle readers have been waiting well over a century for a biography of the city’s namesake, and with David Buerge’s new history, it is safe to say the wait is over. In “Chief Seattle and the Town that Took His Name,” Buerge does what no other historian has achieved: he presents a portrait of Chief Seattle that is as complex and fascinating as the man himself. Drawn from written records, contemporary histories, anthropological studies and tribal knowledge, Buerge gives us a richly nuanced view of a leader who indelibly shaped both the Native world and the emerging city that ultimately bore his name.

Few historical figures are more widely known, or more frequently invoked, than Chief Seattle. But almost nothing is known of his standard biography, even less of his attitudes and motivations. He is perhaps the most famous unknown person in American history. Buerge comes as close to giving Seattle voice and substance as anyone ever has.

Although often cast as enigmatic, from the start of his long life, Seattle was a vivid figure—a savvy politician, a strong military leader, and a skillful negotiator with Native and non-Native alike. He was at once tough and engaging, and always a formidable presence.

Buerge reports that as a boy Seattle witnessed the arrival of Vancouver’s sailing ships in Puget Sound. When Americans arrived decades later, Seattle—already an acknowledged and forceful war leader—exercised an uncanny skill at welcoming the new wave of settlers, ensuring their survival, and understanding both the promise and dangers that the newcomers offered. His critical role in the region’s incipient fishing industry and his friendship with industrialists like Henry Yesler, reflected a prescient understanding of the unfolding economy that few others—white or Native—possessed.

Buerge’s history, like all worthy biographies, goes well beyond the individual he is portraying. Buerge shows us a young city coming of age, a contested land where newcomers undertook a hostile takeover from the region’s First Peoples. But when the inevitable violent conflict between whites and Natives broke out in the mid-1850s, Chief Seattle was a trusted figure to both sides. For years, Seattle worked hard to build partnerships with white leaders to advance the interests of his own people and help them secure an enduring presence in a world that was changing with each passing year.

By the end of his life, Buerge reminds us, Seattle’s critical support for the first Americans, his trust in the city’s promise, and his almost lyrical reminders that we are stewards but not owners of the land, went largely ignored and eventually forgotten. More painful, not one square inch of the city’s land had been reserved for Seattle’s people, an omission that Buerge calls the city’s “original sin.” In reminding us of that central truth and giving us a generous but penetrating portrait of the man who embodied the transformation from Native land to American city, David Buerge’s biography of Chief Seattle is thorough, thoughtful, and essential.

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ARMISTICE RINGS OUT ACROSS THE PALOUSE

When what’s now known as World War I officially ended 100 years ago this autumn, communities around Washington witnessed some of the largest civic celebrations many Evergreen State towns and cities had ever seen.

On the morning of November 11, 1918, the festivities in Pullman were no exception, as photos from Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections (MASC) at Washington State University Libraries clearly show.

In their coverage of the celebrations, The Pullman Herald wrote:

Pullman’s 4,000 inhabitants were roused from their slumbers at midnight Sunday [November 10, 1918] by long blasts on the college siren and the clanging of the city fire bell, and as if by magic every one of those inhabitants became at once aware that the great world struggle of democracy versus autocracy was at an end and that democracy had triumphed… within 15 minutes the main streets of the city were a seething mass of humanity, every bell in the city was ringing, horns were blowing, cans rattling, and every pair of lungs was being put to the crucial test.

The language and the visual displays of 1918 would most likely not pass muster with today’s more culturally and politically sensitive standards for public discourse, but the images from Pullman unmistakably demonstrate that the intensity of the Armistice celebrations weren’t only an urban phenomenon.

In many cases, the record outpourings of joy and relief a century ago—in communities large and small—would stand for more than 25 years, supplanted only when “VJ Day” came and World War II ended in August 1945.

Special thanks to MASC at Washington State University in Pullman for providing the image for this installment of Washington Gallery. MASC holds 17,000 linear feet of primary source materials, 65,000 rare books and other printed items, and several unique collections related to Pacific Northwest history. In recent years, MASC has created nearly 100 digital collections with more than 200,000 digital objects.
THE HISTORICAL ROMANCES OF ZOLA ROSS

Zola Ross (1907-1989) remains one of the Northwest’s most prolific writers, publishing nearly 40 mysteries, historical romances, and (with co-writer Lucile McDonald) juvenile novels, most of which are set in Washington State. Her historical romances are particularly notable for affording readers, as literary critic Helen Hughes observes about the genre, both realistic period detail and romantic wish-fulfillment. In effect, a Zola Ross novel delivers both escape and a lesson in history.

Born in Iowa, Ross grew up in California, and several of her early novels take place in the California-Nevada region. In 1937, she married Frank Ross, a mariner, and moved to Seattle. While Frank served in the Navy during World War II, Ross began writing. She took an evening writing class at the University of Washington with Dr. George Savage and was soon publishing in “the pulps”—the popular fiction magazines of the post-war era. She published her first novel in 1946 and for next three decades published about a book per year. By the mid-1950s, Zola Ross was one of Seattle’s best-known authors, regularly appearing at autograph parties in the book departments of the Bon Marché and Frederick & Nelson.

Her historical romance novels earned Ross her greatest acclaim. Published by Bobbs-Merrill, a leading house for popular fiction, Ross’ novels gave many readers their first understanding of Northwest history. The novels offer love and adventure along with a solid grounding in the historical record. And while her characters are highly romanticized, the historical events never are.

Focusing primarily on the settlement era, Zola Ross’ novels range across Washington Territory.

Ross’ plots are formulaic, led by “spirited heroines” and “brute heroes,” as Hughes dubs the stock characters found in historical romances. In this regard, Ross’ novels could readily be set in Colonial America, Victorian England or any other place and time. But they’re not. They’re set in the Northwest, and based on exacting historical research. And yet, while Ross does not sanitize the past she depicts, her version comports with the kind of American exceptionalism (often racially inflected) found in other popular genres of the 1950s, such as Western films.

Selected Zola Ross novels

- **The Green Land** (1952) tells the tale of the many Washington towns competing in 1873 for the Northern Pacific railroad terminus. Though residing in Olympia—a town “puffed with coming importance”—neither Raleigh Mead nor his wife, Caroline, care much about the railroad. Raleigh is busy falling in love with another woman, while Caroline is a suffragist fighting for women’s rights. Only when they reunite in Tacoma, the City of Destiny, do they both realize neither can live without the other.

- **Spokane Saga** (1957) describes another great fire. John Gordon is a real estate magnate in the growing city when its own 1889 fire strikes, burning much of downtown. Out of the ashes rises Charity, his attractive niece, becoming a notable figure in the city as it rapidly rebuilds. As several suitors vie for Charity’s notice, green-eyed Philip Storm, determined and unorthodox, ultimately wins her heart, leading to fresh promise for the lovers and the city they’ve pledged themselves to.
Ross’ legacy, however, goes beyond her published works. She also taught writing for nearly four decades. In 1957, she took over Savage’s class at the UW, and she also taught at what is now the Lake Washington Institute of Technology for 26 years. Scores of her students published books that were first drafted in her classes, and in 1983 Governor John Spellman honored her for her “distinguished career in literature, especially her work with aspiring writers.” She urged young writers to write every day and to revise vigorously.

In 1965 she co-founded, with Ralph B. Potts and Lucile McDonald, the Pacific Northwest Writers Conference, which to this day brings writers, agents, and publishers together and sponsors writing contests, including the Nancy Pearl Book Award.

Ross was fond of quoting Samuel Johnson, who said, “Anyone who writes for anything but money is a fool.” Zola Ross died at the age of 82, leaving behind a single unpublished manuscript, a book of writing advice titled The Magic of Plot. (Photos courtesy Peter Donahue.)

YAKAMA-COWLITZ TRAIL


CROWN JEWEL WILDERNESS


RESEARCH, EXPLORE, PHOTOGRAPH REPEAT

Major Public Works Projects in Washington State, an interactive online map maintained by the University of Washington. http://depts.washington.edu/depress/map_WPA.shtml


MAPS & LEGENDS: OLYMPIC PENINSULA BEACH HIKE


In The Golden Witch (1955), Meg Beaumont, abandoned by a husband pursuing gold in the Yukon, must fend for herself in Seattle, “a seeking, wanting town on its way.” Meanwhile, attorney Michael Dark—unlike his friend Jason Ten Eyck, a merchant and rival for Meg’s attention—wants no part of the Gold Rush or the city’s exploitation of miners. So Michael joins the Washington Volunteers and ships to Cuba to fight in the Spanish-American War. When he returns, he defends Meg on charges of murdering her husband—and wins her heart.
ACTIVIST BEACH HIKE 1958

A stretch of pristine coastal land along the northern coast of Washington was caught in a tug-of-war over a proposed highway 60 years ago this summer.

One of the people tugging on that rope was a 19-year old college student named Donna Osseward.

Nowadays, Donna Osseward is retired from a career in computers, and is serving as president of Olympic Park Associates (OPA), a private group that supports and advocates for Olympic National Park.

Back in August 1958, Osseward and others took part in a famous beach hike along that contested strip of the Washington coast. The hike was led by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, who was raised in Yakima and who was known for his love of the outdoors in the state he considered home.

Donna Osseward spoke recently with COLUMBIA Magazine about her family’s decades of love for, and work on behalf of, Olympic National Park.

Osseward’s father John Osseward helped found OPA in the late 1940s. But the group’s efforts were first mobilized during World War II to protect trees within the park.

“The founders of the organization got together back in 1943 when airplanes [for World War II] needed spruce trees and spruce wood,” Osseward said. “It was suggested by some of the lumber interests in the state that maybe the park would be a good source of that.”

“Congressman [Henry M. “Scoop”] Jackson came out to Seattle and held a hearing,” Osseward said. Several people spoke in support of protecting Olympic National Park’s trees, Osseward said, including her father, his friend Irving Clark, Sr. and two Boy Scouts who had hiked extensively in the Olympics.

“They testified at the hearing, and the result was they decided there were enough spruce trees elsewhere,” Osseward said. “The spruce in the park weren’t needed for the war effort.”

The 1958 hike was also organized in response to a threat.

“There was talk of people on the peninsula hoping to increase interest in tourism, and they wanted to put a highway down the coast just like the Oregon Coast had,” Osseward said. “They thought it would assist in the revenue efforts that they were having out there on the peninsula.”

There were 72 hikers in the group, including Justice Douglas plus his dog Sandy. They left Ozette on August 19 and hiked to Cape Alava. From there, they hiked south for the next three days, covering about 20 miles to reach La Push.

Was the effort to stop construction of the highway successful?

“I would say that it quelled the fires for putting a road out there,” Osseward said. “And as you know, there’s no road there. So you could say it’s had 60 years of success so far.”

Beach Hike Place Names

Ozette, according to James S. Phillips
“The name for the lake and adjacent Indian Reservation is derived from that of the southernmost Makah settlement, called Ho-selth.”

Cape Alava, according to Henry R. Wagner
“Alava was probably José Manuel de Alava, the commandant at Acapulco. The name first appears on López de Haro’s Carta Reducida showing the results of the Quimper exploration of 1790, and later on Pantoja’s map and others.” [Though Hitchman and others say Quimper had originally called it “Punta de Hijosa.”]

La Push, according to Edmond S. Meany
“La Push, a town at the mouth of the Quillayute River, in the southwestern part of Clallam County. It is a Chinook jargon word meaning “mouth,” and originated in the French la bouss [or “la bouche”]. [Hitchman writes that Quillayute is a Native term that means “joining together of rivers,” in this case, the Sol Duc and Bogachiel that merge to become the Quillayute.]”

Is there a geographic name you’d like to know more about? Or a great story about a geographic name that you’d like to share with COLUMBIA readers? Please send email to editor.columbia@gmail.com.
The history of the past is but one long struggle upward to equality.

—Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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