



THURSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL



Welcome to our first issue!

**How the Northern Pacific Railroad
Came to Thurston County**

**Nancy Jim Parsons: The Life and
Legacy of a Cowlitz-Nisqually
Native American Basket Weaver**

**A Perfect Day for Flying—Charles
Lindbergh Soars Over Thurston County**

**Happy 50th Birthday, Lacey!
A Photo Essay**



Table of Contents

- 3 The Genesis of the County Journal**
*Charles B. Roe, Gerry L. Alexander, Shanna Stevenson, Janine Gates,
and Carter Hick*
- 4 From the Editor**
Karen L. Johnson
- 5 How the Northern Pacific Railroad Came to Thurston County**
James S. Hannum, M.D.
- 21 Can You Identify This Photo?**
- 23 Nancy Jim Parsons: The Life and Legacy of a Cowlitz-Nisqually
Native American Basket Weaver**
Drew W. Crooks
- 35 A Perfect Day for Flying—Charles Lindbergh Soars Over
Thurston County**
Karen L. Johnson
- 43 Happy 50th Birthday, Lacey! A Photo Essay**
Erin Quinn Valcho

On the cover: *In 1927, Charles Lindbergh and his airplane Spirit of St. Louis soar over the State Capitol building while Olympia residents crowd the roofs of nearby structures. See story on page 35. Photo courtesy of Washington State Archives: Lindbergh over the Capitol Building, 1927, by Vibert Jeffers, Susan Parish Photograph Collection.*

THURSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL

The *Thurston County Historical Journal* is dedicated to recording and celebrating the history of Thurston County.

The *Journal* is published by the Olympia Tumwater Foundation in cooperation with a wide range of public and private entities within Thurston County.

Publisher

Olympia Tumwater Foundation
John Freedman, Executive Director
Katie Hurley, President, Board of Trustees
110 Deschutes Parkway SW
P.O. Box 4098
Tumwater, Washington 98501
360-943-2550
www.olytumfoundation.org

Editor

Karen L. Johnson
360-890-2299
Karen@olytumfoundation.org

Editorial Committee

Drew W. Crooks
Janine Gates
James S. Hannum, M.D.
Erin Quinn Valcho

Submission Guidelines

The Journal welcomes factual articles dealing with any aspect of Thurston County history. Please contact the editor before submitting an article to determine its suitability for publication. Articles on previously unexplored topics, new interpretations of well-known topics, and personal recollections are preferred. Articles may range in length from 100 words to 10,000 words, and should include source notes and suggested illustrations.

Submitted articles will be reviewed by the editorial committee and, if chosen for publication, will be fact-checked and may be edited for length and content. The Journal regrets that authors cannot be monetarily compensated, but they will gain the gratitude of readers and the historical community for their contributions to and appreciation of local history.

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation

Written permission is required to reproduce any part of this publication.
Copyright © 2016 by the Olympia Tumwater Foundation. All rights reserved.

ISSN 2474-8048

THE GENESIS OF THE COUNTY JOURNAL

*Charles B. Roe, Gerry L. Alexander,
Shanna Stevenson, Janine Gates, and Carter Hick*

*Thurston County Journal Project Committee of the Board of Trustees,
Olympia Historical Society and Bigelow House Museum*

Many counties in Washington publish a periodic journal in order to memorialize their history. Despite the rich history of Thurston County, no such journal has existed here. This journal is designed to overcome that glaring omission.

The effort to publish a history journal for Thurston County began in the summer of 2015 when the board of the Olympia Historical Society and Bigelow House Museum formed a Journal Committee. Shortly thereafter, the Committee approached other historical associations and interested private and governmental entities within Thurston County with a proposal to discuss the collective publication of a history journal for the county. Over the succeeding year, meetings were held at which the following organizations and entities were represented:

Chehalis Indian Tribe,
City of Lacey,
City of Olympia,
Daughters of the Pioneers of
Washington,
Lacey Historical Society,
Old Brewhouse Foundation,
Olympia Historical Society and
Bigelow House Museum,

Olympia Tumwater Foundation,
St. Martin's University,
South Sound Heritage Association,
South Thurston County Historical
Society,
Squaxin Island Tribe,
Thurston County, and
Tumwater Historical Association

At these meetings, enthusiastic support developed for publication of a county history journal.

Despite the unanimity of thought on the need for such a journal, the representatives of the various organizations and entities spent considerable time addressing practical issues such as the need for a journal manager-publisher, an editorial board, and long-term sustainable funding. Fortunately, the Olympia Tumwater Foundation volunteered to initially fill the management position. On the financial front, the organizations and entities unanimously agreed that funding for an initial "pilot journal" should be secured in order to demonstrate to potential funders exactly what form the journal would take. Thanks to the generosity of the following groups and entities for their financial support which has made this first edition a reality:

City of Lacey,
City of Olympia,
Olympia Historical Society and
Bigelow House Museum,
Olympia Tumwater Foundation,
Tumwater Historical Association,
and individual donors

A regularly published journal, which contains articles about the history of Thurston County, is much needed. Its existence will enrich the lives of all who presently live in the county as well as those who will live here in the future.

We hope you enjoy perusing this first issue of the journal and invite you to join us in supporting its permanent presence in historically significant Thurston County.

FROM THE EDITOR

In the preceding article about the genesis of this historical journal, no mention is made of the fact that Charlie Roe was the spark plug for this whole idea. Although many individuals, groups and government entities have taken part (and I hope will continue to participate), Charlie deserves primary credit. Gerry Alexander and Shanna Stevenson, among others, have had a hand in this venture from nearly its inception.

I also thank John Freedman, executive director of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation (OTF). When

approached about publishing this journal, John readily agreed, initially offering the use of OTF office space and equipment to whomever might be chosen as editor, and subsequently allowing me to serve as editor in addition to my regular duties as curator of the Schmidt House archives.

Thanks are also due to the groups and individuals who donated funds making the publication of this pilot issue possible (see list at left).

Thanks too to those who agreed to serve on the editorial committee: Drew Crooks, Erin Quinn Valcho, Jim Hannum, and Janine Gates. This group has reviewed, edited and proofed the following articles (in addition to having written them!).

I invite you to submit articles about any aspect of county history, including personal recollections. The articles should be factual, well-researched, and well-sourced. If you have an idea for an article, but don't feel you have the necessary writing skills, our team may be able to help. If you love to write but don't have a compelling subject, our team may be able to help there, too. Unfortunately, the *Journal* cannot pay authors for their articles.

Please contact me if you have corrections to or comments about the *Journal*.

Karen L. Johnson
360-890-2299
Karen@plytumfoundation.org

HOW THE NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD CAME TO THURSTON COUNTY

James S. Hannum, M.D.

INTRODUCTION

Construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad in western Washington began in 1871 along the Columbia River, at a place which shortly became known as Kalama. That settlement was the southern terminal for this earliest local segment of the railroad. At the time, a second terminal had not been selected, although plans called for it to be sited somewhere on Puget Sound. By 1873, Tacoma had been chosen as the northern terminal, and regularly scheduled trains began running between Kalama and Tacoma in May 1874.

These historical facts, as they relate to Thurston County, are best understood by describing the background in which these events occurred. Early on, the residents of the county fully expected that the northern terminal of the railroad would be in Thurston County. Speculation in land was rampant, especially in 1871. The mood of the business community ranged from manic that year to profound depression in the latter half of the next, when it became apparent that the Puget Sound terminal would be somewhere farther north.



Isaac Ingalls Stevens, who led an 1853 survey party to determine the route for a northern transcontinental railroad. This photograph was made December 31, 1861. Stevens was killed in September 1862 at the Battle of Chantilly, Virginia. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress: Prints and Photographic Division, digital ID cwpb.00757, Timothy H. O'Sullivan, photographer.

CONGRESS AUTHORIZES A NORTHERN TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

To understand the events that occurred in the 1870s, it is helpful to look back at 1853, the first year of the Franklin Pierce presidency. Pierce and Isaac Ingalls Stevens were former classmates at West Point and Stevens had supported Pierce's bid for the presidency in 1852. Stevens was rewarded for his support by being appointed the first governor of Washington Territory. At the same time, the federal government had commissioned a survey for a northern transcontinental railroad route. Stevens, who had served many years in the Army Corps of Engineers, was selected to make the survey while travelling to his new post.

Major George B. McClellan (later General McClellan, commander of the Union's Army of the Potomac during a portion of the Civil War) was a member of the survey party for at least part of the journey. McClellan and Stevens came to different conclusions as to what route should be used for the northern railroad with each man submitting his own report. Stevens recommended a path over the Cascade Mountains, while McClellan favored a course similar to that used half a century earlier by Lewis and Clark, along the Columbia River. No choice between these two options was made at the time. Indeed, that issue was not finally resolved until the 1880s.

No further action was taken until

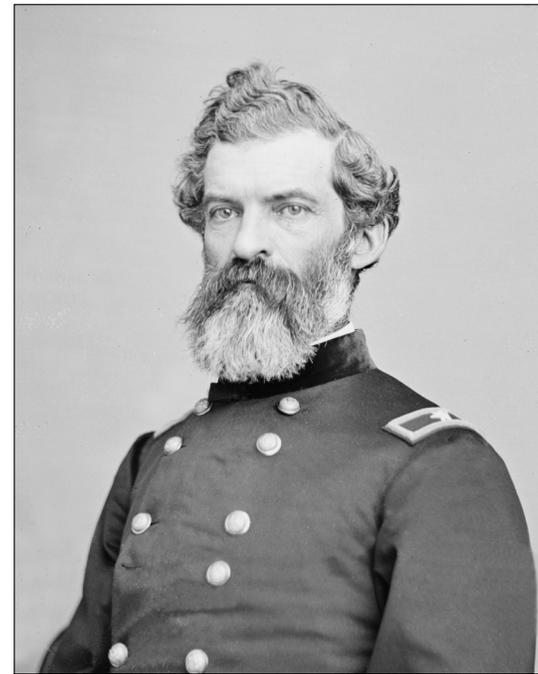
Congress chartered the Northern Pacific Railroad Company (NP) in 1864. President Lincoln signed the legislation on July 2 of the same year, but the country was preoccupied with the Civil War and construction did not begin until several years later. A novel plan was used to build the line, with work commencing at both the east (Duluth, Minnesota) and west (Kalama, Washington Territory) ends of the railroad. The most daunting problem faced by the fledgling line was financial. Although it received several million acres of land as grants from the federal government, that property was of little value to the company until the railroad was actually built. Then parcels could be sold to farmers, miners, and other business people, providing a revenue stream. The result of this situation was that most of the money used for construction came from the sale of bonds, which sold poorly during periods of recession or economic panic. In addition, congressional authorization for the NP required the western segment be completed to a terminal on Puget Sound no later than December 17, 1873.

It is reasonable to wonder why Kalama was chosen as the starting point for the western part of the line. Clearly, it is not on Puget Sound, which the railroad was tasked to reach. There are several reasons. Portland was nearby and, at that time, was the largest city west of the Cascades. It was easily accessible by river boat from Kalama. Also, the Columbia River, between Kalama and the ocean, was ice-free through-

out the winter. In addition, the depth of the river at Kalama was approximately the same as at the mouth of the Columbia, so any ocean-going ship that could get into the river could sail all the way to Kalama. Finally, as the line was built north from Kalama, along the Cowlitz River, there would be an immediate opportunity to earn income that would help offset the cost of construction.

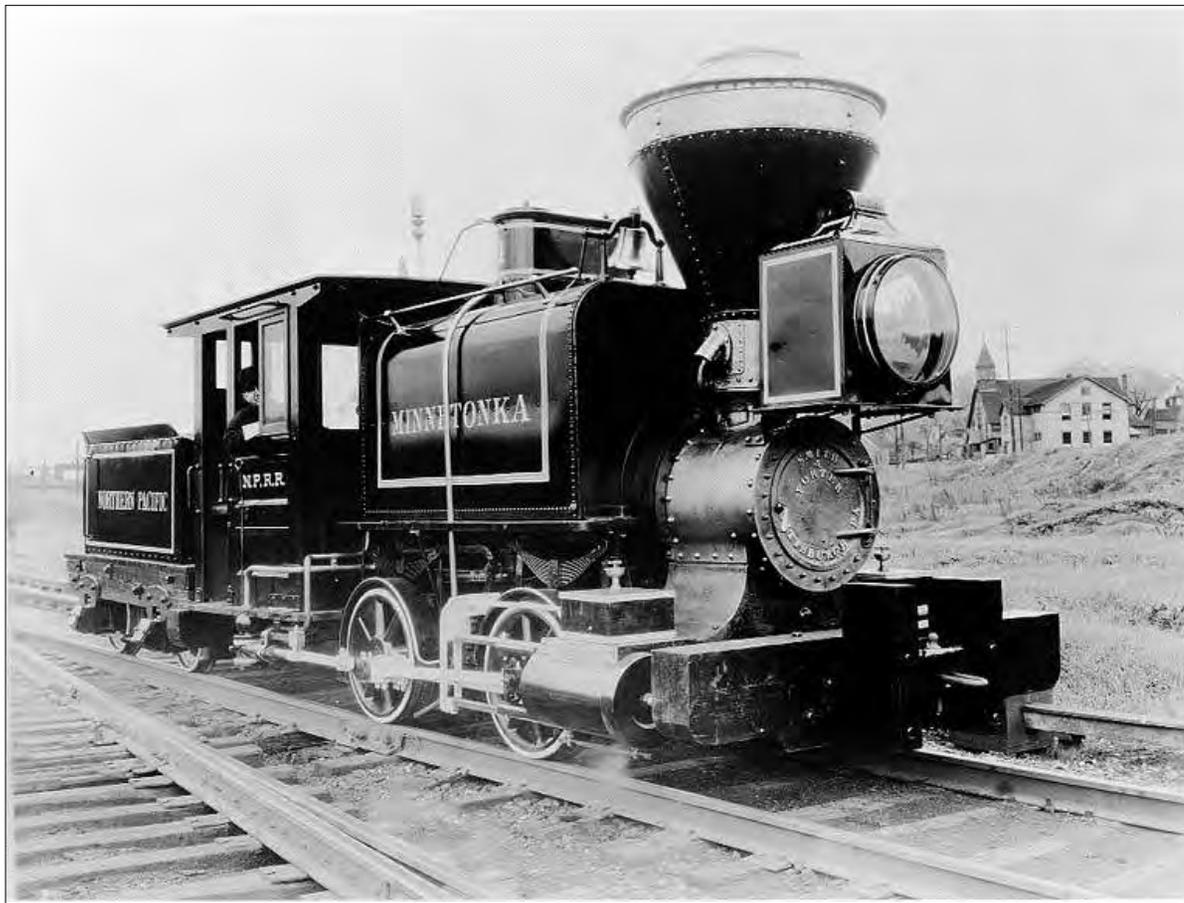
Of course, before the railroad was built, nobody really knew what sort of traffic it would carry or in which direction that traffic would flow. Those questions could only be answered after a decision was made about which path to follow to the Great Lakes: would it be through the Cascades or along the Columbia River? Nonetheless, building began at Duluth in July 1870. Former Union Army General John Wilson Sprague was named general manager of the Western Division of the NP. Construction material as well as a small locomotive arrived at Kalama on July 10, 1870. The engine, the *Minnetonka*, had been built earlier in 1870 by Smith & Porter of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Transported around Cape Horn, it carried #302 on the NP roster.

Of interest to Thurston County residents is that in 1886, this locomotive was sold to Benjamin Buckman Turner. He operated it as #3 on his Black Lake & Sherman Valley Railroad, between the west side of Budd Inlet and Black Lake. Turner's bankruptcy in 1888 sent the engine to



General John Wilson Sprague, general manager of the Western Division of the Northern Pacific Railroad during its construction. A resident of Tacoma, Sprague received the Congressional Medal of Honor shortly after his death in 1893 for his actions at Decatur, Georgia, during the Civil War. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Division, digital ID cupb.05921, Matthew Brady, photographer.

the Port Blakely Mill Company, where it continued as #3. The Polson Brothers Logging Company of Hoquiam bought it in 1895 and renumbered it #1. It was retired in 1928. Subsequently, it was repurchased by the Northern Pacific Railway (successor to the NP) and restored to original specifications. The *Minnetonka* is now displayed in Duluth at the Lake Superior Museum of Transportation.



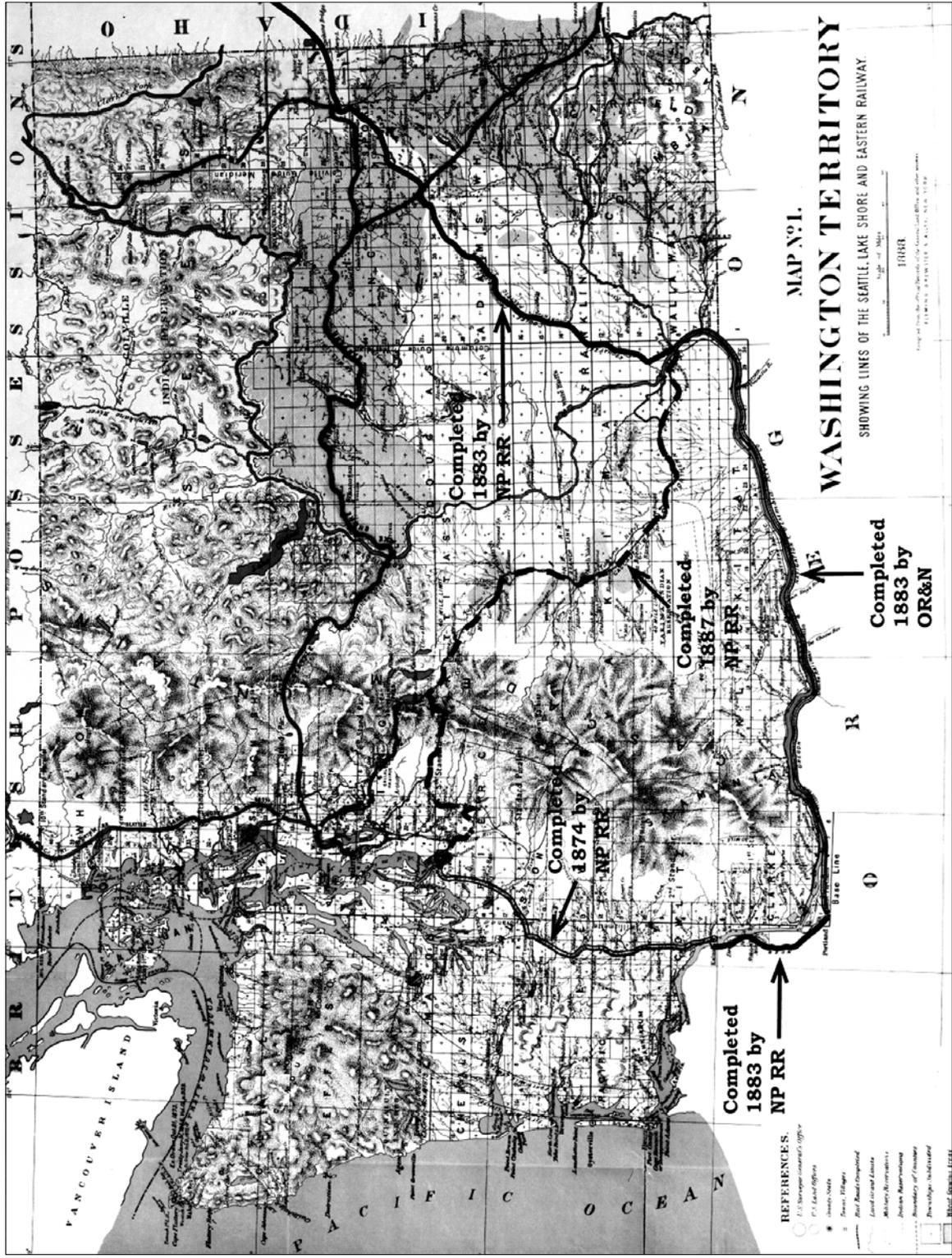
Above: Undated photograph of the Northern Pacific Railroad's Engine #302 after restoration and renaming as Minnetonka. Photo courtesy of University of Washington Digital Collections: PH Coll. 1291, TRA0246.

Opposite: Map showing segments of railway used at various times as part of the transcontinental route of the Northern Pacific Railroad. The background comes from the 1888 Map No. 1—Washington Territory—Showing Lines of the Seattle, Lake Shore & Eastern Railway, by Fleming, Brewster & Alley, New York.

TRANSCONTINENTAL LINK COMPLETED

The construction of the NP in Thurston County will be discussed in the final part of this article, after outlining how the railroad's transcontinental line was completed. Not until several years after 1874 was an unbroken rail link established be-

tween Tacoma, in western Washington, and Minnesota. Work on that project, in eastern Washington, did not start until October 1879. The task began at Ainsworth, a town newly founded by the NP on the east side of the Columbia River, immediately south of modern-day Pasco. The new right-of-way was designated



the Pend d'Oreille Branch and it extended northeast to Sandpoint, Idaho. Approximately one year later, the NP built a narrow gauge railroad from Ainsworth south to Wallula. It was operated by the Walla Walla & Columbia River Railroad (also narrow gauge) and was used to deliver construction material to Ainsworth. Undoubtedly, much of that freight had arrived at Wallula via the Columbia River.

Several important events occurred in 1881. The narrow gauge line between Ainsworth and Wallula was converted to standard gauge and the NP began operating that segment of track itself. At Wallula, the NP could interchange traffic with the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company railroad (OR&N), which ran along portions of the south bank of the Columbia River and had itself been converted to standard gauge in 1881. Henry Villard, who controlled the OR&N, managed to gain temporary control of the NP as well.

The OR&N began continuous train service between Wallula and Portland in 1882. The NP completed several important projects of its own in 1883. It built a line north from Portland, on the west side of the Columbia River, to Goble, Oregon (across the river from Kalama). In the same year, Henry Villard presided over a ceremony (at Gold Creek, Montana) driving the last spike in the segment of track between Wallula and Minnesota. However, trains from the east could still not reach Tacoma and to travel as far as Goble, they also had

to run over OR&N track between Wallula and Portland. Finally, in 1884, a rail car ferry was placed in service between Goble and Kalama and the NP finally could provide a somewhat disjointed transcontinental service.

But a surprising event occurred in the last month of 1883. Henry Villard was outmaneuvered by rivals and forced to resign from the boards of both the NP and the OR&N. The new leadership at the OR&N felt they had the NP at a disadvantage. They tried to increase fees payable by the NP for running trains along the Columbia River over OR&N track.

This prompted the NP to reconsider building its own line into western Washington. A decision was made to construct the Cascade Branch of the NP. By November 1885, track originating from Pasco had reached Ellensburg. The branch was completed in June 1887, using a series of switchbacks at the summit of Stampede Pass. With that, the NP finally had its own continuous transcontinental railroad between Tacoma and the Great Lakes. Work had already started on a tunnel under Stampede Pass in January 1886. It was opened to traffic in May 1888, greatly improving efficiency on the Cascade Branch.

How this broader history affected Thurston County can now be more easily understood. Several factors caused Olympia to fail in its bid to become the western terminal of the



An 1883 photograph of the Northern Pacific station (on right) at Tenino. The bunting on the buildings was in celebration of the joining of the rails at Gold Creek, Montana. Photo courtesy of the Tenino Depot Museum.

railroad. They will be discussed at the end of this article.

SELECTING A PUGET SOUND TERMINAL

Though chartered in 1864, until 1869 the NP lacked a source of funds that could be used to start building. But in 1869, the banking houses of Jay Cooke agreed to broker the sale of bonds worth \$100 million toward construction of the line. Before this deal was struck, Cooke insisted that an additional survey be made of the route in western Washington, including a recommendation for the site of a terminal on Puget Sound.

A member of the NP Board of Directors, Thomas H. Canfield of Burlington, Vermont, was selected to lead the survey party, which travelled by train to San Francisco and then overland to Portland and farther north. Canfield's findings, published in *Partial Report to the Board of Directors of the Northern Pacific Railroad*, tended to favor Port Townsend for the western terminal, mostly because there had been little land speculation there and property could be acquired cheaply. Palmer's "The Northern Pacific Railroad and Its Choice of a Western Terminal" describes the Canfield party's inspection of various places on Puget

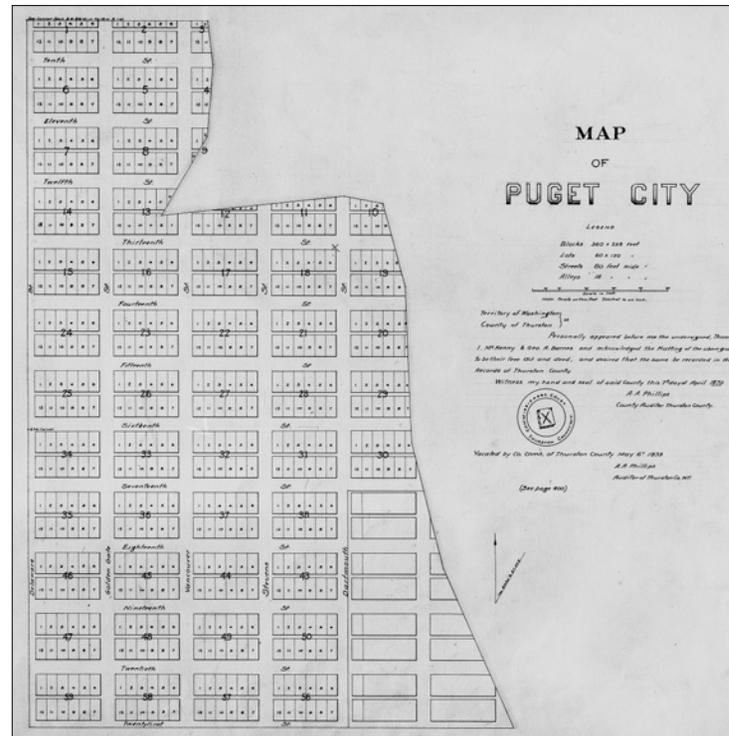
Sound: “The Oregon Steam and Navigation Company had provided a steamship for the benefit of the survey group. Something less than three days were spent on it touring about the waters of Puget Sound. Though the party examined possible sites extending from Olympia on the south to Bellingham Bay and Victoria on the north, Canfield did not feel he had sufficient time nor local knowledge to make good recommendations. He, therefore, hired James G. Swan to make reports on specific sites.

“The first prospective site was Budd’s Inlet near Olympia. Swan’s examination revealed its most shining attribute to be its proximity to Portland. He consequently inferred a sooner completion date for the rail section to that point. The greatest disadvantage of Budd’s Inlet was the large expanse of mud flats exposed at low tide.”

Swan went on to critique several other locations and all his descriptions appeared in Canfield’s report. Nisqually Harbor was felt to be on a par with Budd’s Inlet in terms of suitability. Steilacoom was rejected because it offered no protected harbor. Commencement Bay (the site of “Old Tacoma”) was felt by Swan to be

unsuitable because the water there was too deep for ships to easily find anchorage. Seattle received a potentially positive recommendation. Generally negative recommendations were given to Whidbey Island, Fidalgo Island, and Bellingham Bay. Not unexpectedly, Swan, a prominent resident of Port Townsend, found that place to be the most favorable, as did Canfield.

However, when construction of the NP began at Duluth, Minnesota in July 1870, a western terminal had still not been specified. Nonetheless,

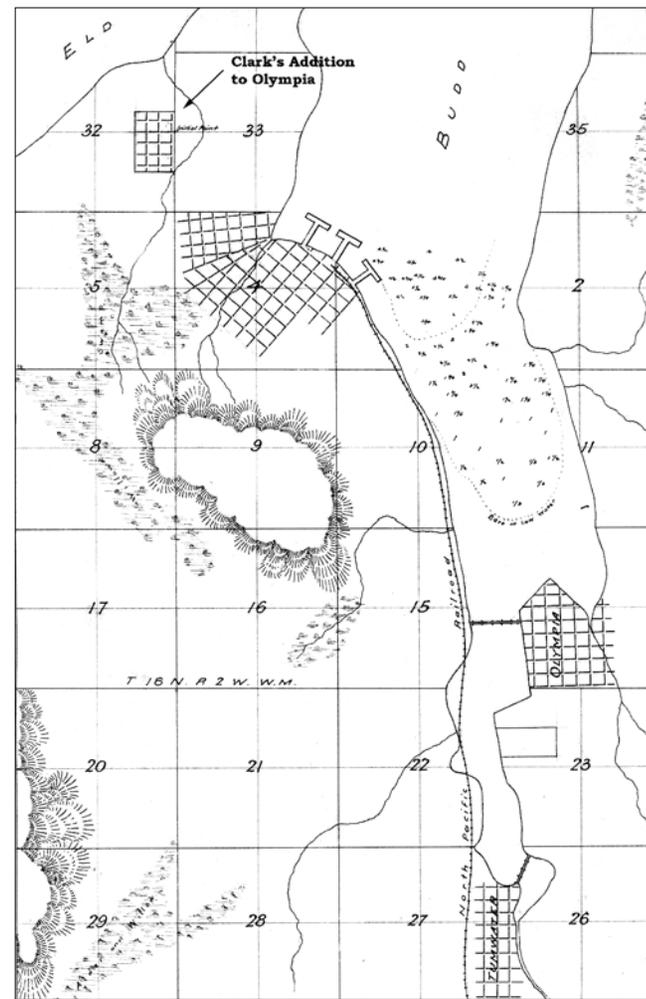


Plat of Puget City on Hogum Bay. It was recorded April 7, 1870 and vacated (returned to the status of non-platted land) May 6, 1873, after it was clear that the railroad would not terminate there. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives—see bibliography.

a frenzy of land speculation was already well under way in the Puget Sound country in general, and Thurston County in particular. Butler's Cove, Boston Harbor, Hogum Bay (Puget City), Gull Harbor, and of course Olympia all represented themselves as the probable site for the terminal.

On July 23, 1870, Olympia's *Daily Pacific Tribune* reported: "**Olympia the Terminus! ---The First Stake Driven!** The long agony is over. The painful suspense suffered by the people of Olympia and rival points on Puget Sound, for a year or two, is ended. Olympia is the favored spot. Puget City (or Hog'em), Steilacoom, Tacoma, Seattle, and all other claimants for the distinction, are left out in the cold. Alas for the calculations and hopes of the many who have been purchasing and speculating in lots and acres at the only eligible places (so represented) for the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad! They have all come to grief.

"At about 7 o'clock, this morning, the Northern Pacific Railroad surveying party, under Col. Fife, commenced operations at the water's edge in Olympia. Their initial spike was driven in the center of Adams Street, between Third and Fourth Streets, at tidewater. It bears this inscription: N. P. R. R. Sta. 1, established July 23, 1870. J. P. Fife, Eng."



Clark's Addition to Olympia, as platted in 1871. Note the presence of the projected line of the "North Pacific Railroad" along the west side of Budd Inlet. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives—see bibliography.

Unfortunately, placement of a survey stake was by no means a guarantee that Olympia was going to be the terminal. In fact, over the next two years, railroad surveying parties were spotted frequently in several locations around the county. Clearly, some of those surveys provided

valuable information to the NP as it fine-tuned its right-of-way. However, it is easy to imagine that others may have been performed merely to disguise the company's real intent.

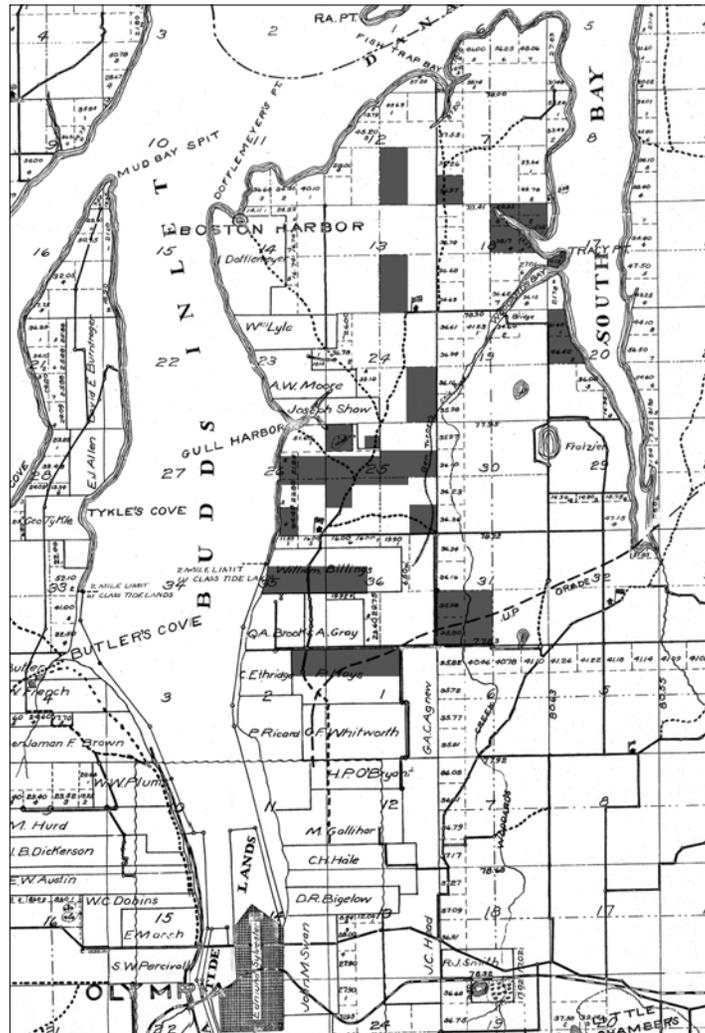
In December 1870, Marshall Blinn and several other businessmen orga-

nized the Olympia Branch Railroad Company, with capital of \$400,000. Its purpose was to negotiate with the NP and bring the railroad to Olympia under the most favorable circumstances. Numerous Olympia-area residents pledged to donate land to the NP for its terminal facilities, with those properties to be held in trust by Blinn until the arrangement was finalized. One proposal considered was to offer land, which today comprises Watershed Park, to the NP for use as the terminal's rail yard.

**IRA BRADLEY THOMAS, SECRET
AGENT OF THE LAKE
SUPERIOR AND PUGET SOUND
LAND COMPANY**

Ira Bradley Thomas, a resident of Herkimer, New York, appeared on the scene in the fall of 1871. In October, he purchased several pieces of land, all of which were northeast of Olympia. These properties were separate from the parcels held in trust by Blinn. Some were located near Gull Harbor and others, on the west side of South Bay.

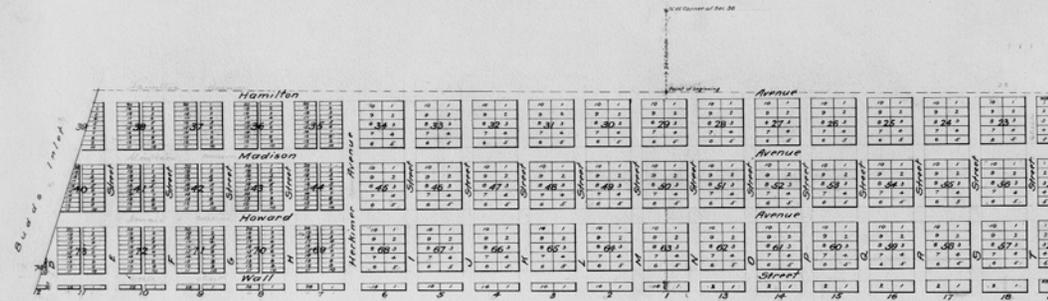
By the beginning of 1872, the NP indicated that downtown Olympia would not be the terminal. The January 26, 1872, *Kalama Beacon* reported: "So far as we hear, the surveys of Budd's Inlet as to the R. R. terminus on the



Land purchased by Ira Bradley Thomas in 1871. The parcels are shaded gray. Background map is The County-Engineer's New Road Map of Thurston County, Washington, 1909. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives: AR-270-B-003089.

Thomas' ADDITION to Olympia Washington Territory 1872

Situate in Sections 35 & 36 on Claim No 37 of Township 19 Range No 2 West Willamette Meridian.



Know all men by these presents that I, Ira B. Thomas, the legal owner of the land hereinafter described, and hereinafter, lying being and situated in the County of Thurston and Territory of Washington, to wit, commencing at a point twenty four (24) Chains South of the North West Corner of Section thirty six (36) in Township Nineteen (19) North of Range Two (2) West, and running thence West to the Meander shore line of Budd Inlet, thence South along said meander line to the South West Corner of the William Billings Donation Land Claim, thence East Eighty Chains and twenty five links (80.25) thence North sixteen (16) Chains, thence West thirty one (31) Chains to the place of beginning, for the purpose of laying out a town site to be called Thomas' Addition to Olympia have caused the above described lands to be platted with Streets Sixty (60) feet wide, Herkimer Avenue Ninety feet wide, Madison and Howard Avenues Eighty feet wide each, Hamilton Avenue as hereon shown, Alleys sixteen (16) feet wide, Lots and Blocks as hereon numbered and shown Streets as hereon named, and for the purpose of dedicating to the Public the Streets, alleys and Avenues, have caused this Plat to be filed in the Auditors Office of Thurston County in Washington Territory.

In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Seal this fifth day of July 1872
Witness my hand
Ira B. Thomas

W. Byron Daniels

Recorded at request of Ira B. Thomas July 5th 1872
A. R. Phillips
Auditor of Thurston Co. W.T.

Description
Lots East of Herkimer Avenue 50 x 120 ft.
West 25 x 120
Herkimer Avenue 90 ft wide Other Avenues 80 ft wide
Streets 60 ft wide Alleys 16 ft wide.
Scale 200 ft to an inch (unless not so noted to an inch)

Washington Territory,
Thurston County,

Be it remembered that on this fifth day of July 1872 before the undersigned a Notary Public within and for said Territory personally came Ira B. Thomas who is personally known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the annexed instrument of writing as party thereto and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed for the uses and purposes therein mentioned.

In testimony Whereof I have hereunto set my hand and Affixed my Official Seal of my Office in the Town of Olympia in said Territory the day and year first above written.

E. L. Smith
Notary Public



E. M. Morgan
C. F. & Surveyor Olympia

1872 plat of Thomas' Addition to Olympia Washington Territory. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives—see bibliography.

east or west side will not be reported on for some weeks yet.”

Later in 1872, Ira Bradley Thomas used some of his land, within the William Billings Donation Land Claim, to plat Thomas' Addition to Olympia, Washington Territory. This raised suspicion that the terminal would be on the east side of Budd

Inlet, at Gull Harbor. *History of Thurston County, Washington*, by Rathbun, suggests that Thomas was actually associated with the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Land Company. The land company was similar to a modern-day holding company in that the NP was under its control. But the primary goal of the NP was to build a railroad, while

the purpose of the land company was to make money. The Lake Superior and Puget Sound Land Company accomplished this by selling the lands granted to it and through speculation on townsite properties.

In an attempt to conceal his relationship with the land company, Thomas had entered into a secret trust agreement with one Philo Osgood, who apparently had become the legal owner of the Thomas properties by February 1872. Incredibly, Thomas also sold the parcels to Edward S. Smith, an acknowledged agent of the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Land Company. This deceptive behavior was so effective in hiding the actual ownership of these properties that in 1893, titles to them were still being contested in court.

BUILDING THE RAILROAD IN WESTERN WASHINGTON

This is a good place to review the progress of railroad construction in the early 1870s. Groundbreaking for the western segment occurred at Kalama in May 1870. With the arrival of construction materials and a locomotive in July 1870, work on the roadbed began. Col. J. B. Montgomery had the contract to build the first twenty-five miles of the line, from Kalama to the Toutle River. That segment was finished in April 1871. Montgomery also received another contract to construct the next ten miles of track to the north. The terrain in the first four of those ten miles presented several challenges,

including the excavation of 60,000 yards of rocky material from the “Big Cut,” building a bridge over the Cowlitz River, and driving pilings for a three-quarter-mile trestle. Separate crews worked on all these projects at the same time.

It is important to note that some portions of the path taken by the railroad, when first constructed, were later re-engineered. The original Cowlitz River bridge was approximately 0.8 mile to the north of the one now in use. Montgomery’s crew used a construction site known as “Pumphrey’s” at the north end of the four-mile segment described above; it was located immediately northwest of the older Cowlitz River railroad bridge. Sited on the east side of Olequa Creek, Pumphrey’s was opposite the future village of Olequa, which developed on the creek’s west bank.

J. L. Hallet was awarded the contract to build thirty miles of railroad to the north of the thirty-five total miles completed by Montgomery. Hallet’s construction began at two places. One crew worked northward at milepost 35, while a second proceeded south from “Hodgden’s,” (within the Stephen Hodgden Donation Claim; “Hodgden’s” was approximately one mile west of downtown Tenino). The May 30, 1872 *Kalama Beacon* reprinted an article from Olympia’s *Tribune*: “From a gentleman just in from the railroad front we learn something of the work on this end of the railroad. “The bed of the road is ready for the

ties and iron for a distance of nearly ten miles [to the south] from the place of beginning near Hodgden's . . . Mr. Hallet has also a large force operating on the southern end of his section, approaching every day nearer the men on this end of the line. In another six weeks it is expected the two forces will meet, the road being entirely graded and ready for the ties. To lay the ties will take about four weeks, to lay the track about as many more, and on the first of October the iron horse will be running over the completed road to Hodgdon's Station [immediately southwest of the future site of downtown Tenino], sixteen miles from this city [Olympia]."

A few months before that article appeared, the March 8, 1872 *Kalama Beacon* described the situation in Olympia: "The locating engineer corps, now surveying the terminus site in, and adjoining Olympia, under superintendence of Hubert C. Ward, C. E., has concluded surveys on both the east and west sides of Budd's Inlet, and about 1st May (as rumored) the terminus site at Olympia will be decided upon in the proper quarter, and very probably a further letting to tide-water from the northern end of Hallet's contract."

SPRAGUE ASSURES OLYMPIANS THE TERMINAL WILL BE ON BUDD INLET

But in Olympia, the natives were growing restless. On June 26, 1872, Marshall Blinn wrote a letter to John Goodwin and John Sprague, inquiring where the NP terminal was

to be located. The response appeared in the July 6, 1872 *Olympia Transcript* and seemed reassuring: "**Terminus Settled** – The growlers in our community about the tardiness of the Railroad Company in settling the final terminus on Budd's Inlet, can now rest with ease. The following letter from the Company's Agents fixes the point on the east side of the Inlet. A depot will be made at Tumwater, Swantown, and the terminus on the Wylie Claim. We feel confident that the road will be built to this point by the 1st of January, next. This is all and more than the people could ask of the Company.

"PUBLIC NOTICE, Olympia, July 4, 1872. *To donors of Lands, etc., for railroad purposes:* The following letter was received by the undersigned [Marshall Blinn] on the 3rd inst., and is hereby made public for the benefit of whom it may concern.

"Sir: - We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 26th inst., requesting us to announce to the donors of land at Olympia where the line of railroad referred to in our communication to you of the 30th of April, 1872, and at what point it terminates.

"Said line of railroad runs to the east side of Budd's Inlet to the Billings or Wylie donation claim, said claim being in sections 25, 26, 35, and 36 of township 19 range 2 west and a point will be selected on one of said claims for freight and passenger depots where said line will terminate.

Very respectfully yours, John N. Goodwin [and] John W. Sprague, *Special Agents, N. P. R. R. Co.*”

Reinforcing this statement of intent was the fact that on July 5, 1872, Ira Bradley Thomas platted Thomas' Addition to Olympia, located within the Billings donation claim. However, Thomas died intestate (without leaving a will) shortly thereafter, on October 9. That posed a problem for the NP, which would have preferred to have clear title to these lands, rather than awaiting the result of Thomas' probate.

THE NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD FLIRTS WITH BANKRUPTCY

“The Northern Pacific Railroad and Its Choice of a Western Terminus 1869-1887” describes the precarious position and deteriorating condition of NP finances toward the end of the summer of 1872. It was imperative that a western terminal be selected quickly, so that investor confidence (and bond sales) might be stabilized. A selection committee was formed from the NP Board and sent urgently to Puget Sound in late September. It was critical that the railroad be completed before available funds were exhausted. After touring Puget Sound for a week, the committee eliminated all sites except Tacoma, Seattle, and Mukilteo. Apparently, the demise of Ira Bradley Thomas had eliminated Olympia from consideration. Competition for the terminal became even more intense than it had been previously. It would take nine more months for the com-

mittee to recommend a finalist from among the three towns still in the running.

OLYMPIA ELIMINATED FROM COMPETITION FOR THE TERMINAL

By the fall of 1872, the decision to bypass Olympia was common knowledge. The November 2 edition of the *Kalama Beacon* reported “The next forty-mile extension from Hodgdon's northward down the sound, will soon be announced as let for construction. . . . We copy from the *Olympia Tribune* the following description of the line of route:

“The line of the road extends from Hodgdon's (Tenino) to Yelm Prairie, from there to the vicinity of the claim of a man named Temple, a mile and a half from the Puyallup River”

The article also said that a one-mile extension of the railroad, from Hodgden's to the spot where the Tenino station was to be built, was almost completed. The December 7, 1872 *Beacon* noted: “On Monday last, the turn-table at Tenino (the northern terminus) was in working condition, having been completed on the previous Saturday.”

The April 19, 1873 *Beacon* confirmed that Col. Montgomery was the recipient of a contract to build forty miles of railroad north of Tenino. Clearing and grubbing (essentially, stump removal) had already begun. The May 17 *Beacon* reported that Montgomery's contract



1876 Territory of Washington map, drawn by C. Roesser. The Northern Pacific Railroad was in full operation through Thurston County. The Olympia & Tenino Railroad, a narrow gauge line conceived after Olympia was bypassed, had been surveyed and partially graded, but would not start running until 1878. This map was published by the U. S. Department of the Interior, General Land Office.

had been extended to one hundred miles, which would have taken the rails to a point about thirty miles north of Seattle.

TACOMA CHOSEN AS PUGET SOUND TERMINAL

“The Northern Pacific Railroad and Its Choice of a Western Terminus 1869-1887” notes that the NP committee to select a western terminal met on June 30, 1873 and recommended Tacoma be chosen. The full board accepted the recommendation on July 3, 1873, making it official.

The final routing into Tacoma was described in the July 21 *Beacon*. “The road-bed is graded eleven miles from Des Chutes to the Nisqually River, across which a second bridge is to be erected so soon as construction trains can reach there.

“One mile northward of Nisqually, the new line directly toward Tacoma diverges westerly from the recently located line to the Puyallup, and is said to be only a distance of twenty-two miles from the Nisqually to the Terminus.”

THE PANIC OF 1873

Adding to the railroad’s financial headache, the Panic of 1873 began officially on September 18, 1873. It was induced, in part, by the fragile monetary condition of the NP. Jay Cooke’s New York and Philadelphia banking

houses failed. In an unrelated housekeeping move on October 13, 1873, the NP conveyed all Thurston County properties donated to it, and held in trust by Marshall Blinn, back to their original owners.

Capping an almost superhuman building effort, the NP held a “last spike” ceremony for the Kalama-Tacoma right-of-way on December 16. The railroad had met its congressional mandate by a single day!

WHY THE TERMINAL WAS NOT LOCATED ON BUDD INLET

Why Olympia was eliminated from consideration for the NP’s western terminal is a question that has been debated since the decision was made in 1872. Several factors influenced the choice. Olympia was closer to Kalama and construction costs to go there would have been less than for places to the north. On the other hand, a longer right-of-way would net the company significantly more sections of saleable property, through government land grants.

The site selected in Tacoma had an excellent harbor. It was near the Tacoma mud flats and distant from “Old Tacoma,” where the water was too deep for anchorage. The Olympia harbor, had it been chosen, would have required frequent dredging.

The overriding factor in choosing Tacoma was financial. NP finances were precarious, despite bond sales, soon after construction began. During 1872, the company realized that,

in any case, it would need to build as far as Tenino. After that, it could decide how far north it would be possible to extend the line before one of two events occurred: funding ran out, or its congressional mandate expired. No doubt the NP considered Olympia to be its primary fallback option for a terminal until Ira Bradley Thomas died. After that, Tacoma moved into the fallback position. In mid-1873, the NP Board of Directors realized they could not reach farther north than Tacoma before time on their mandate expired. As it turned out, the railroad just barely made it to Tacoma in time.

Fortunately, the disappointment and anger experienced by local residents when Olympia lost its bid to be the terminal, has faded long ago. Budd Inlet still has a pleasing appearance and is environmentally cleaner than it would have been, had the terminal wound up there. As the saying goes, “Be careful what you wish for!”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armbruster, Kurt E., *Orphan Road—The Railroad Comes to Seattle, 1853-1911*. Pullman, Washington: Washington State University Press, 1999.

Blankenship, Georgiana Mitchell, *Early History of Thurston County, Washington*. Olympia, Washington: Publisher not identified, 1914.

Canfield, Thomas H., *Partial Report to the Board of Directors of the Northern Pacific Railroad*. Private circulation, 1870.

Dwellely, Arthur G., *Prairies & Quarries—Pioneer Days Around Tenino—1830-1900*. Tenino, Washington: Independent Publishing Company, 1989.

Palmer, Robert Dean, "The Northern Pacific Railroad and Its Choice of a Western Terminus 1869-1887." Seattle, Washington: Master's Thesis, University of Washington, 1968.

Rathbun, J. C., *History of Thurston County, Washington*. Olympia, Washington: Publisher not identified, 1895.

Government Sources

Washington State Archives, Thurston County Government, Auditor, Plats, Right of Way, Volume 1, pages 23 (Puget City) and 42 (Clark's Addition to Olympia); Volume 2, page 12 (Thomas' Addition to Olympia).

Newspapers – Various dates
Olympia Daily Pacific Tribune
Olympia Transcript
Kalama Beacon
Washington Standard

Dr. Hannum is a retired physician and surgeon who spent his early years in Michigan. He arrived in western Washington in 1971 as a member of the U.S. Public Health Service. Railroad history has been a lifelong interest, and he has written several books on the subject.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS PHOTO?

Overleaf: Last year, the Tumwater Historical Association donated this framed photo to the Schmidt House, owned by the Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

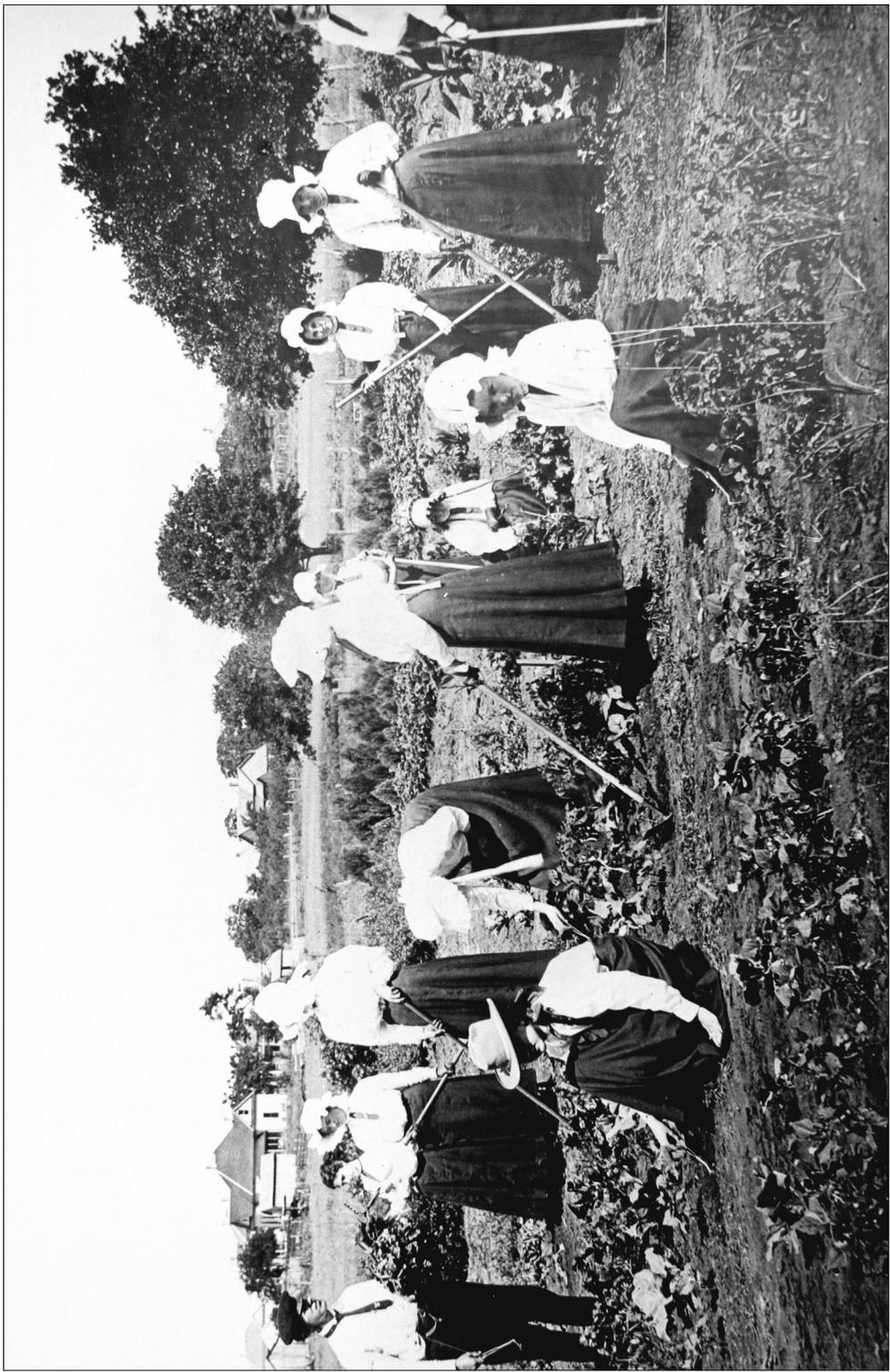
The photo shows a group of girls working in a garden. The girls are for the most part dressed alike, with white blouses, dark skirts, ties, and bonnets. To the left stands a man holding a garden tool and a bunch of beets or radishes. The title of the photo is merely "Tumwater Countryside, circa 1900. Courtesy Olympia Brewing Company."

The framed photo was once displayed at the old Sambo's Restaurant in Tumwater.

Unfortunately, nothing more than that is known. Who are the girls pictured here? Were they from a local girls' school? Where was their garden located?

If you have any helpful ideas, please contact curator Karen Johnson at 360-890-2299 or at Karen@olymtumfoundation.org.

If we receive any useful information, we'll print it in a future issue of the *Journal*.



Tumwater countryside, circa 1900. See previous page. Photo courtesy of Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

NANCY JIM PARSONS: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF A MASTER COWLITZ-NISQUALLY NATIVE AMERICAN BASKET WEAVER

Drew W. Crooks

Baskets were traditionally important to Native Americans of the South Puget Sound region as both practical storage containers and honored prestige items. Even more, basket weaving was a major form of artistic expression for Native women of the area. Over time there have been a number of master basket makers in the South Puget Sound region. One such artist was Nancy Jim Parsons, a Cowlitz-Nisqually basket weaver who lived from circa 1871 to 1918. She created baskets during a time of great change when Native Americans were being pressured to assimilate into Euro-American society. Like many other Native individuals, Parsons worked hard to preserve aspects of traditional culture. Fortunately, a number of her baskets survive in public and private collections. Study of these baskets, combined with historical research, has led to a greater understanding of Parsons and her wonderful cultural legacy.

TRADITIONAL BASKET MAKING

Native basket making techniques of South Puget Sound included coiling,



Nancy Jim Parsons (circa 1871—1918) was a master Cowlitz-Nisqually Native American basket weaver. She left a tangible legacy of wonderful baskets for future generations. Photo courtesy of a private collection.

twining, and plaiting. Nancy Jim Parsons concentrated on creating coiled baskets. Anthropologist Marian Smith commented about this type of basketry in her book titled *The Puyallup-Nisqually*:

“Coiled water-tight baskets were made by women and used for stone-boiling, for holding liquid foods, and for picking berries. There can be little doubt that the coiled basket overshadowed the twined basket, however useful the latter might have been. Prestige attached to the maker of any coiled basket and especially to the makers of fine ones. All little girls learned the technique but in

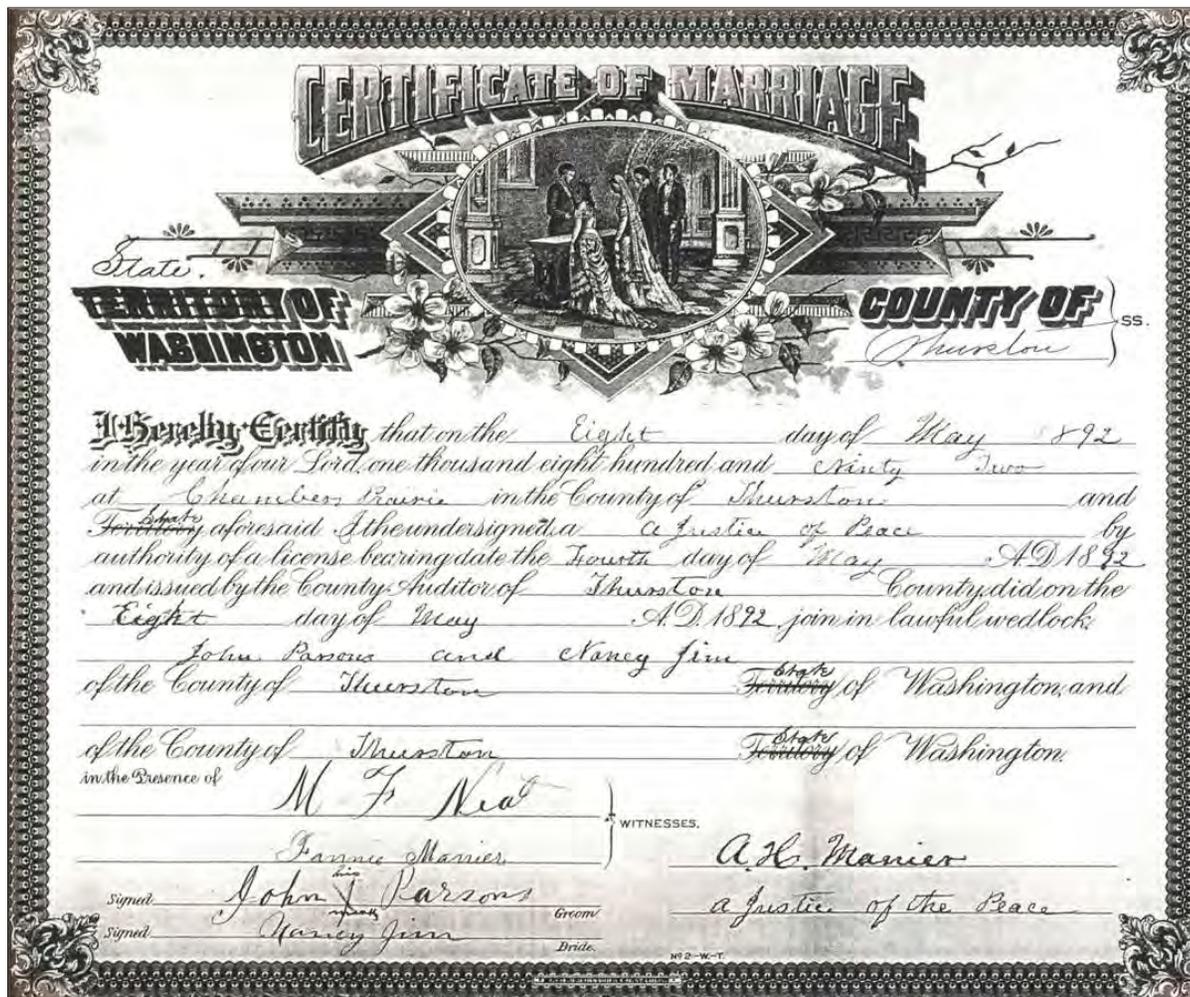


This large berry basket with a braided rim, created by Nancy Jim Parsons, is part of the collection of the Washington State Historical Society in Tacoma. Coiled with full imbrication, the woven piece features a mountain-and-tree design. Photo courtesy of author.

later life only those ‘who were good at it’ actually engaged in it. Such baskets were items to be accumulated, given as gifts and exchanged in trade, and, consequently, bore an economic importance.”¹

Also, local historian Delbert McBride noted in his writings that coiled baskets remained significant after the introduction into Native American culture of such Euro-American items as iron or copper kettles. He stated that “Indian women continued to make beautiful and serviceable coiled and other types of basketry, and took great pride in their workmanship. The possession of ‘hard’ baskets made from cedar root was considered a form of personal wealth and prestige, and these were handed down from generation to generation, being carefully handled and stored to keep them from dirt, mildew and insect damage.”²

Through time, Native basket makers of exceptional skill lived in the South Puget Sound region. Sadly, many of these master basket weavers are now forgotten. But fortunately, memories of a few remain. For example, an individual named Si-ah-gut is known to have created excellent examples of coiled basketry. Like Parsons, she was Cowlitz-Nisqually. Judge James Wickersham of Tacoma collected some baskets directly from Si-ah-gut in the 1890s and recorded a little information about her.³ But we know more about Parsons and her work. This knowledge comes from historical research, much of it carried out by



This marriage certificate for Nancy Jim and John Parsons records their May 1892 marriage in Thurston County by Justice of the Peace A. H. Manier. Image courtesy of Washington State Archives.

Delbert McBride, and study over time of baskets preserved in private and public collections.

THE LIFE OF NANCY JIM PARSONS

Nancy Jim Parsons was of Cowlitz-Nisqually Indian descent. Delbert McBride noted that the basket weaver was also “possibly” part Yakima.⁴

Intermarriage among regional tribes was common. In any case, this artistic individual was born in present-day Southwest Washington around 1871.⁵ Her father was a man named Jim, and records identified the future master basket maker before marriage as Nancy Jim.⁶ Parsons’ marriage license listed the maiden name of her mother as Taleth.⁷

As seen in her portraits, Parsons grew up to be a dignified individual. She was especially proud of her long hair.⁸ Parsons, according to Delbert McBride, “learned to make baskets in her girlhood, instructed and encouraged by her older female relatives. She immediately showed considerable talent in her original de-



In Lacey's Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery the gravesite of Nancy Jim Parsons is marked by a small obelisk. The birth year recorded on the stone is apparently incorrect since marriage records and censuses indicate that the basket weaver was born in either 1871 or 1872. Photo courtesy of author.

signs, adapting older themes, which, she said, came to her in ‘dreams.’”⁹ Parsons became an active basket maker, weaving baskets from the 1880s to her death in 1918.¹⁰ On May 8, 1892 Nancy Jim married John Parsons at Chambers Prairie in Thurston County. A. H. Manier, a Justice of the Peace, officiated at the ceremony.¹¹ At that time, 21-year-old Nancy resided at Nisqually. Her 22-year-old husband was living at Nisqually and working as a farmer.¹² John was a Nisqually Tribal member with a Euro-American father and a Native American mother.¹³

Nancy and John Parsons stayed on the Nisqually Indian Reservation after their marriage. Delbert McBride noted that they resided “on John’s allotment on Reservation Road, on the Thurston County portion” of the Reservation.¹⁴ The couple had no children. The 1910 Federal Census listed John Parsons as a farmer and his wife as a “basket weaver in own home.” The Census also noted that while John Parsons was illiterate, Nancy was able to read and write.¹⁵

On March 17, 1918 Parsons died of stomach cancer at her family home.¹⁶ That day the Session minutes of the Nesqually (Indian) Presbyterian Church stated “. . . we extend to our dear brother John Parsons, our most sincere sympathy in his sad bereavement in the death of his beloved wife, who passed away at seven o’clock this morning.”¹⁷ Both John and Nancy were members of the Church.



Catherine McLeod Mounts (1845—1933) assembled during her long lifetime an excellent collection of Native American baskets. This collection included a number of baskets made by Nancy Jim Parsons, a friend and possibly a relative of Catherine. Photo courtesy of a private collection.

Parsons was buried on March 19 at the Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery in present-day Lacey.¹⁸ Established in 1852, this cemetery holds the remains of many early inhabitants of the Lacey area.¹⁹ A small obelisk with the basket weaver's name, and an apparently incorrect birth date of 1868,²⁰ was erected at her gravesite. John Parsons later moved to the Chehalis Indian Reservation.²¹

NANCY JIM PARSONS' BASKETS

Parsons made baskets during a time

of strong efforts to assimilate Native Americans into Euro-American society. Boarding schools, land allotments, and other reservation policies put great pressure on traditional Indian culture.²² In a sense, Parsons' basketry was a form of cultural resistance which helped preserve a major form of Native artistic expression. At the same time, the turn of the 20th Century was a golden age for non-Native collecting of Indian baskets.²³ This popular interest in basketry, often expressed in home decorating, must have strengthened

the market for Parsons' baskets. Furthermore, as seen in the example of sewing baskets, at least some of her work was influenced by Euro-American cultural patterns and market demands.

Baskets created by Parsons are preserved in several collections. Especially significant for understanding Parsons' basketry is the Mounts Family Collection, which includes a group of baskets specifically known to have been made by this Cowlitz-Nisqually master weaver. Catherine McLeod Mounts, an individual of part Cowlitz and Quinault ancestry who lived from 1845 to 1933, assembled much of the Mounts Collection from circa 1890 to 1920.²⁴ The collection meant much to Catherine Mounts. Delbert McBride, the great-grandson of Catherine, described the situation in a 1985 interview:

“Because her mother and grandparents had brought her up in the Indian ways, this collection of baskets and other artifacts was her accumulated wealth. She kept most of these things stored away. Her large coiled basket collection was kept mainly in white cloth bags and, probably, the reason that they look like they haven't been used or misused was they were taken care of with a great deal of pride. There were other baskets

that she actually went out and picked berries in. They have the rawhide or deer skin loop that you can put a carrying strap on. By the time I was a child, I remember they were well-caked inside with blackberry juice and huckleberry juice. Those were her working baskets, but



A shallow bowl-shaped basket made by Nancy Jim Parsons is preserved in a private collection. The looped rim piece is also coiled with full imbrication. The geometric design is especially imaginative. Photo courtesy of author.

these [in the white cloth bags] were her show pieces. In fact, she could have started a little museum, right on her own.”²⁵

Interestingly, the Mounts Family Collection was studied in 1916 by noted anthropologist Herman Haeblerlin. Catherine Mounts and other Indian elders served as informants for a book written by Haeblerlin and Erna Gunther. It is titled *The Indians of Puget Sound*.²⁶ This work, published by the University of Washington in 1930, has been used as a textbook in many college classrooms over the years.

Both family tradition and early museum records identify a number of the baskets in the Mounts Collection as coming from Nancy Jim Parsons. Why so many from one weaver? Because Catherine McLeod Mounts had a personal connection to the master basket maker. As Delbert McBride wrote, “It is thought that Nancy was a relative of Catherine Mounts – at any rate, they were always very close, and many of the finely-crafted baskets which Nancy produced in her lifetime were either traded or were gifts to Catherine and younger members of the rapidly growing Mounts family, living nearby.”²⁷ Baskets made by Parsons can also be found in other collections. For example, two beautiful baskets attributed to her were displayed in an exhibit held at the White River Valley Museum in Auburn, Washington. This exhibit, titled “Masterpiece Baskets: Washington’s Native Treasures from Private Collections,” ran from April through August 2005.²⁸

Parsons’ baskets are graceful pieces done in the Cowlitz-Nisqually style. Interestingly, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has had an excellent reputation for coiled imbricated baskets among fans of Native American basketry. Anthropologist Otis Tufton Mason, for example, stated in his early

20th Century study of Indian basketry that “. . . the western or Cowlitz district produced the perfect imbricated basket, with more coils to the inch, more stitches in the same space and also more beautiful designs.”²⁹ The Cowlitz and Nisqually Tribes were connected by close economic and social ties. “This closeness,” observed scholar Robin Wright, “is reflected in the similarity of coiled basketry designs produced by these groups.”³⁰

Parsons created coiled baskets, called *sialt* by the Nisqually,³¹ that were decorated with imbrication. Noted art historian Bill Holm has described this kind of basketry:



This picture shows the bottom of the Parsons basket depicted in the previous illustration. Note the meander bottom with two rows of beargrass beading. Beading is considered by many basketry experts as a Cowlitz stylistic trait. Photo courtesy of author.

“The tribes of Puget Sound excelled in the making of hard baskets of cedar root sewn so firmly as to be watertight. The roots were split into long splints and a narrow strip from the smooth, outer surface of the root was used to sew a bundle of the coarser strips from the inner part into a continuous coil. Nearly all coiled cedar root baskets were decorated to some degree, usually by a process called imbrication in which strips of decorative material were folded and tucked under the stitches of cedar root as they were made.”³²

The basketry of Nancy Jim Parsons was traditionally produced with natural native plant materials. Parsons used cedar root for the coil of her baskets, and wild cherry bark, horsetail root, cedar bark, and beargrass for the imbrication. Natural dyes were also used by the master basket weaver, especially Oregon grape bark to dye white beargrass yellow. According to anthropologists Nile Thompson and Carolyn Marr, “The [Oregon grape] bark was gathered in the summer when it was easier to remove. To make the dye, the bark was bruised and then boiled in water. The beargrass was then either put into the boiling dye for fifteen to thirty minutes or left to stand in a cooled dyebath for two to seven days. In both cases the length of time in the dye determined the darkness of the yellow.”³³

During her lifetime, Parsons made various types of coiled baskets: large baskets capable of holding many berries, small berry baskets, shallow

baskets suitable for storing sewing supplies or trinkets, and delicately crafted miniature baskets.³⁴ The rims of her baskets are also worth considering. They are either braided or looped. Bottoms of the baskets are usually meander in style. They often have beading with beargrass, a Cowlitz stylistic trait.³⁵ An imaginative mixture of geometric patterns and—on occasion—stylized human figures made up the imbricated designs on Parsons’ elegant basketry. She often used variations of the mountain design, a motif common among Puget Sound Salish tribes.³⁶

CONCLUSION

Why should we study Nancy Jim Parsons and her baskets? This Cowlitz-Nisqually weaver was a true master of an ancient art form. Her tangible legacy of baskets demonstrates great artistic skill and determination. Simply put, she is significant as a master weaver who created wonderful basketry that we can enjoy today. Furthermore, her life and work sheds light on Native American life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This was a time of major change when Parsons, like many other Indians, strived to preserve elements of traditional culture in the face of assimilation efforts. In other words, studying Nancy Jim Parsons and her work helps us understand aspects of Native cultural continuity and change in the South Puget Sound region.

Research needs to be done on other master basket weavers of this re-

gion. This includes weavers of the distant past as well as more recent craftspeople. In modern times we have lost some great basket makers. For example, Hazel Pete of the Chehalis Tribe died in 2003³⁷ and Bruce “Subiyay” Miller of the Skokomish Tribe died in 2005.³⁸ The lives and legacies of recent weavers also deserve investigation in order to better comprehend the ongoing and flourishing traditional art of Native American basketry.

NOTES

¹ Marian W. Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*. Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, Volume XXXII. Original publication: New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1940. Reprint: New York, NY: AMS Press, 1969, page 305.

² Delbert McBride, “The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection,” n.d., page 1.

³ *Ibid.*, pages 1-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, page 2.

⁵ The marriage return for Nancy Jim indicates that she was born in 1871 (Marriage Return for John Parsons and Nancy Jim, May 1892, Thurston County Marriage Returns, 1891 and 1892, Southwest Washington Regional Archives, Olympia, WA), while census records suggest the date of 1872 (for example, Census of the Nisqually Indians of Puyallup Consolidated Agency,

Washington, taken by Frank Terry, United States Indian Agent, June 30, 1900, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, Roll 408, Puyallup [Chehalis, Clallam or Skallam, Nisqualli, Puyallup, Quinaielt, Skokomish, Squaxon, and Other Indians], 1894-1900, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy No. 595, Washington, DC, 1965, page 0474). In contrast, Parsons’ gravestone records a birth date of 1868.

⁶ For example, the name of Nancy Jim is used in the marriage return for John Parsons and Nancy Jim (May 1892) and their marriage certificate (May 1892, Thurston County Marriage Certificates, Washington State Archives, Olympia, WA). In the 1893 Nisqually Indian Census, Nancy’s father Jim was recorded as being 75 years old, and living with his daughter and son-in-law (Census of the Nisqually Indians of Puyallup Cons[olidated] Agency, Washington taken by Edwin Eells, United States Indian Agent, June 30, 1893, Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, Roll 407, Puyallup [Chehalis, Clallam or Sklallam, Nisqualli, Puyallup, Quinaielt, Skokomish, Squaxon, and other Indians], 1888-93, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy No. 595, Washington, DC, 1965, page 0377).

⁷ Marriage Return for John Parsons and Nancy Jim, May 1892.

⁸ Del McBride, transcript of an interview by Judith Irwin, April 1-2, 1975, page 1.

⁹ McBride, "The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection," page 2.

¹⁰ Washington State Capital Museum, "Del McBride's Reflections on the People of Salmon and Cedar" videotape, circa 1985.

¹¹ Marriage certificate for John Parsons and Nancy Jim, May 1892; and marriage return for John Parsons and Nancy Jim, May 1892. A local newspaper reported the following on May 7, 1892: "Indian Marriage. – Two Nisqually Indians, John Parson [s] and Nancy Jim, were married this week." *Morning Olympian*, Olympia, WA, page 4.

¹² Marriage return for John Parsons and Nancy Jim, May 1892.

¹³ *Ibid.* John Parsons was listed as the son of William F. Parsons in the 1879 Thurston County Census, Southwest Regional Branch, Washington State Archives.

¹⁴ McBride, "The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection," page 2.

¹⁵ Yelm Precinct-Nisqually Indian Reservation (part of), Thurston County, Washington, United States 13th Census (1910). Viewed on microfilm, 13th Census, 1910, Washington, Reel 20, at Washington State Library, Tumwater, WA.

¹⁶ Death Certificate for Nancy Parsons, Record No. 49, filed March 19, 1918, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Washington State Board of Health, Olympia, WA. The *Morning Olympian*

newspaper printed an obituary for Parsons on the second page of its March 19, 1918 issue:

"Mrs. Parsons Dies. Mrs. John Parsons, age 40 [sic], of Nisqually, passed away at the family home Sunday morning. She is survived by her husband. Mrs. Parsons was a native of the state of Washington. Funeral arrangements in charge of Jesse T. Mills will be announced later."

¹⁷ "Nesqually (Indian) Presbyterian Church, Pierce County, Washington, History And Sessional Records, 1896-1920," transcribed by Dale Sadler, typescript, no date.

¹⁸ Death Certificate for Nancy Parsons, Record No. 49, filed March 19, 1918.

¹⁹ For more information on the cemetery where Nancy Jim Parsons is buried, see Lacey Museum, "Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery," 2003. This brochure also notes that "Because of its historical significance to the Lacey community, the cemetery was placed on the Lacey Historic Register in 1994 and the National Register in 1995."

²⁰ See endnote #5 for records that give the dates of 1871 or 1872 for the birth of Nancy Jim Parsons.

²¹ In 1925, for example, John Parsons is listed on both the census of the Chehalis Indians and the Nisqually Indians. Census of the Chehalis Indians of Taholah Agency,

Wash., June 30, 1925, taken by W. B. Sams, Superintendent and Census of the Nisqually Indians of Taholah Agency, Wash., June 30, 1925, taken by W. B. Sams, Superintendent, Indians Census Rolls, 1885-1940, Roll 564, Taholah [Quinaielt, Chehalis, Nisqualli, Skokomish, and Squaxin Island Indians], 1915-25, National Archives Microfilm Publications, Microcopy No. 595, Washington, DC, 1965, pages 0466 and 0473.

²² Assimilation efforts are described in Cesare Marino, "History of Western Washington Since 1846," in Wayne Suttles, editor, *Handbook of North American Indians Vol. 7: Northwest Coast*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990, pages 172-175.

²³ For more information on this surge of non-Native interest in Indian baskets, see John M. Gogol, "1900-1910, The Golden Decade of Collecting Indian Basketry." *American Indian Basketry Magazine*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1983, pages 12-29.

²⁴ McBride, "The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection," pages 1, 3 and 4.

²⁵ Del McBride, interview by Carla Wulfsberg, October 28, 1985. Quoted in a label that was part of "A Tribute to Del McBride" exhibition at the Henderson House Museum, Tumwater, WA, 1999.

²⁶ McBride, "The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection," page 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, page 2. Anthropologist Marian Smith commented on the importance of baskets as gifts among the Nisqually and Puyallup Tribes: "Coiled baskets have retained their position as gifts of value up to the present time." *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, page 148.

²⁸ Visit by the author on July 3, 2005 to the White River Valley Museum, Auburn, WA.

²⁹ Otis Tufton Mason, *Aboriginal American Indian Basketry: Studies In A Textile Art Without Machinery*. Santa Barbara, CA: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1976, page 428. This publication is a reprint of Mason, "Aboriginal American Basketry: Studies In A Textile Art Without Machinery," in *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution for the Year Ending June 30, 1902. Report of the U. S. National Museum*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904.

³⁰ Robin K. Wright, "Masterworks of Washington Native Art," in Robin K. Wright, edited, *A Time of Gathering: Native Heritage in Washington State*. Seattle, WA: Burke Museum and University of Washington Press, 1991, page 79.

³¹ Smith, *The Puyallup-Nisqually*, page 309.

³² Bill Holm, *The Box of Daylight: Northwest Coast Indian Art*. Seattle, WA: Seattle Art Museum and Uni-

versity Press, 1983, page 56. For more information on the techniques of coiling and imbrications, see Nile Thompson and Carolyn Marr, *Crow's Shells: Artistic Basketry of Puget Sound*. Seattle, WA: Dushuyay Publications, 1983, pages 26-30.

³³ Thompson and Marr, *Crow's Shells: Artistic Basketry of Puget Sound*, page 24.

³⁴ McBride, "The Mounts Indian Artifact and Basket Collection," page 2.

³⁵ For example, anthropologist Carolyn J. Marr in one of her articles noted that "A basket from the early twentieth century made by Nancy Parsons of the Nisqually Reservation shows definite Cowlitz influence (Washington State Capital Museum, Cat. No. 270/16). The base of her basket is decorated with strips of beaded bear grass, as is the Wilkes piece." "Salish Baskets from the Wilkes Expedition," *American Indian Art Magazine*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Summer 1984, page 47.

³⁶ Thomson and Marr, *Crow's Shells: Artistic Basketry of Puget Sound*, page 36.

³⁷ Lisa Pemberton, "Nationally Renowned Chehalis Tribe Basket Weaver [Hazel Pete] Dies." *The Olympian*, Olympia, WA, January 4, 2003, pages C1-C2.

³⁸ Cindy Yingst, "Indian Elder [Bruce] Miller Dies." *The Olympian*, Olympia, WA, February 6, 2005.

Drew Crooks received a bachelor's degree in history and anthropology and a master's degree in museum studies from the University of Washington. For over thirty years he has worked with various museums in South Puget Sound, and has written a number of articles and several books on the region's heritage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to recognize the work of the late Delbert McBride, curator emeritus of the Washington State Capital Museum in Olympia. During his lifetime Del shared his extensive knowledge of regional history and anthropology with many people. He collected key information about Nancy Jim Parsons, who happened to be a friend of his great-grandmother Catherine McLeod Mounts. Del's writings provided the foundation for this paper. Other experts have also contributed information and insight. They include Cecelia Carpenter, Bill Holm, Carolyn Marr, Dale Sadler, Marian Smith, Nile Thompson, and Robin Wright. Finally, my thanks go to the staff of the Washington State Library for their assistance; to Karen Johnson for editing the *Thurston County Historical Journal*; and to my family for their support of my historical research and writing.

A PERFECT DAY FOR FLYING— CHARLES LINDBERGH SOARS OVER THURSTON COUNTY

Karen L. Johnson

On May 21, 1927, Charles Lindbergh cut a historic swath through the skies over the Atlantic Ocean, when he completed the first non-stop flight from New York to Paris. “Lindy,” as he quickly became known, was an instant hero—or as instant as was possible in those days before smart phones and Facebook.

When Lindy returned home from Europe, he was awarded the Orteig Prize,¹ an accompanying \$25,000 check, the Medal of Honor (America’s highest military decoration),² and worldwide recognition. Not content to rest on his laurels, however, Lindy used his newfound fame to promote one of his pet projects, the U.S. Air Mail Service. And promote he did, piloting his plane *Spirit of St. Louis* on an air tour³ lasting over three months and covering 48 states, our own Washington included.

In early September 1927, Tumwater businessman Peter G. Schmidt was chairing the aviation committee of Olympia’s Chamber of Commerce. Schmidt had previously headed the Olympia Brewing Company until Prohibition destroyed the beer in-

dustry. He then shepherded his family and stockholders into a series of business ventures, including ownership of several upscale hotels throughout the Northwest. No stranger to publicity, politics or good ol’ hometown patriotism, Schmidt



Charles Lindbergh is shown here with a model of his airplane Spirit of St. Louis. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress: LC-H25-126717-C, Harris & Ewing Collection.

and other committee members saw an opportunity to join the fervor accompanying Lindbergh's visit to Washington State.

Schmidt knew that in just a few days, Lindy was due to fly from Seattle to Portland. As long as he was in the area, why not drop in on Olympia? Schmidt fired off a telegram to Seattle's Mayor Bertha Landes,⁴ asking her assistance in persuading Lindy to deviate from his course by just a few miles for a fly-by of the state capitol buildings.⁵ Mrs. Landes lent enthusiastic support to the idea. But just to be sure, Schmidt sent a similar telegram directly to Lindy.

Olympia Mayor James C. Johnson also telegraphed the famous aviator: "On behalf of the citizens of the capital city I extend to you an invitation to kindly fly over our city and the beautiful capitol buildings on your trip from Seattle to Portland. Our entire citizenship is greatly interested in your flight and the great work you are doing."⁶

The *Morning Olympian* placed a telephone call to Donald Kehoe, Lindy's chief aide, who accompanied him on the entire nationwide tour. After advising Kehoe that schoolchildren would be on hand to witness the fly-over, Kehoe said, "I shall tell Colonel Lindbergh of the children, and I am sure he will not disappoint them."⁷

With no additional arm-twisting needed, Lindy altered his flight plan—after flying over Fort Lewis, he

would swing a few miles west to visit Olympia.

As the big day approached, the *Morning Olympian* alerted the citizenry. "Air Mail Week" was proclaimed by Mayor Johnson.⁸ Schools announced that children would be released from class when Lindy flew over.⁹ Plans were formulated to get people on the roofs of the major buildings in town. The fire department would herald Lindy's approach with six long blasts on the fire siren. Word got out that Lindy would drop a personal "air mail" message to school children as he flew over the capitol campus about 10 a.m.¹⁰

By 9:30 on the morning of September 14, Olympia was hopping. The roofs of the Insurance Building, Temple of Justice, Capital Apartments, and Olympia High School were crowded with rubberneckers listening for the drone of an airplane. School kids thronged the lawns around the Capitol building.¹¹ Photographers jostled for the best angles. And then . . . wait for it . . . yes, an engine! Approaching fast! A speck in the northern sky . . . growing larger . . . the fire siren howling . . . It must be . . .

But it wasn't. A nugget of fool's gold, this plane was just an advance party for the real thing. Piloted by Lt. Philip Love,¹² the scouting plane was doing just that—scouting the route for Lindy himself. And several minutes later, the hero finally appeared.¹³



The Spirit of St. Louis soars over the State Capitol building while Olympia residents crowd the roofs of nearby structures. Photo courtesy of Washington State Archives: Lindbergh over the Capitol Building, 1927, by Vibert Jeffers, Susan Parish Photograph Collection.

The *Morning Olympian* waxed dramatic: “It was only for a moment that the Spirit of St. Louis and its pilot hovered over Washington’s seat of government but in that time every capacity for hero-worship, every depth of adulation within the city and its people was touched to its bottom-most point as a united populace glimpsed for a moment America’s outstanding hero of this age, and voiced all that it could offer in terms of praise.

“Flying graceful as a bird on wing, he came out of the north, travelling at a high speed, and straight as an arrow, he shot toward the capitol dome, dipped and circled. A warm sun beat down out of a clear sky. A lazy breeze lifted out of the southwest, stirring the flags on the capitol group and the high school. It was a perfect day for flying. The crowd at the capitol grounds recognized the monoplane which had carried the Norseman of the Air across the sea

to France, and began shouting and waving. Lindbergh swung off away from the capitol and darted over the city, lingered for a moment and came back. On his second trip he maneuvered for position, dipped and dropped a message of greeting, addressed to the city of Olympia. Lifting, he circled to the right, straightened out, and disappeared. . . .”¹⁴

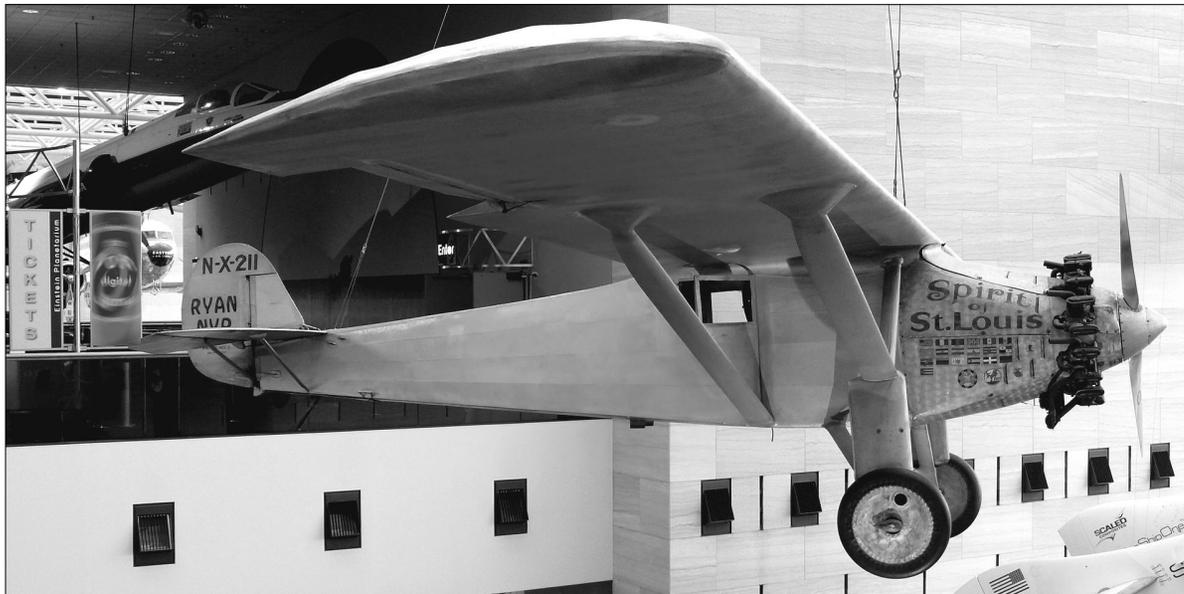
In a related article, the *Olympian* wrote: “A. B. Smith, ground man at the state house, was the first person to reach the message thrown over by Colonel Lindbergh . . . The throw was perfect. It struck the ground midway between the new capitol and the Temple of Justice. School children and adults rushed for the message. Smith beat them all, and proudly held aloft the long canvas

bag in which the greetings were encased.”¹⁵

Smith and some helpers had to hold up the message for half an hour while throngs of adults and kids crowded close to read the words signed by Lindy himself:

“Because of the limited time and the extensive itinerary of the tour of the United States now in progress to encourage popular interest in aeronautics, it is impossible for the ‘Spirit of St. Louis’ to land in your city.

“This message from the air, however, is sent to you to express our sincere appreciation of your interest in the tour and in the promotion and expansion of commercial aeronautics



Today, the Spirit of St. Louis is on permanent display at the National Air and Space Museum (part of the Smithsonian Institution) in Washington, DC. Photo courtesy of Ad Meskens via Wikimedia Commons.

in the United States. We feel that we will be amply repaid for all our efforts if each and every citizen in the United States cherishes an interest in flying and gives his earnest support to the air mail service and the establishment of airports and similar facilities. The concerted efforts of the citizens of the United States in this direction will result in America's taking its rightful place within a very short time as the world leader in commercial flying."¹⁶

The message was also signed by Harry F. Guggenheim, President of the Daniel Guggenheim Fund for the Promotion of Aeronautics, and William P. MacCracken, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Aeronautics, Department of Commerce.

Lindy's visit to Olympia was over quickly, but it had long-term consequences. Although a small, rustic airfield had existed on Bush Prairie south of Tumwater since about 1911, Lindy's famous fly-over and support from Peter Schmidt¹⁷ and other influential community members spurred the City of Olympia to purchase the airfield property in 1928.¹⁸ The city soon started improving the field by paving runways and taxiways and building hangars and offices. Today, the Olympia Airport, operated by the Port of Olympia, proudly claims to be "among the oldest public airports in the United States."¹⁹

Thanks to men like Charles Lindbergh, who dropped in on a perfect day for flying.



Newspaper headlines announced Lindy's fly-over on September 14. "Lindy Salutes Olympia While Enroute South." Morning Olympian, September 15, 1927, page 1.

For further reading: the Timberland Library system has one copy of Lindbergh's autobiography, *We: the Darling Flyer's Remarkable Life Story and His Account of the Transatlantic Flight That Shook the World*. Many other books have been written about Lindbergh's life, describing his son's kidnapping and murder, and his work with artificial hearts, America's involvement in World War II, and ocean conservation.

And for further viewing: Visit www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/1927-movie-footage-of-lindbergh-in-seattle-takes-your-breath-away/ to see rare footage of Lindbergh's 1927 visit to Seattle.

NOTES

¹ Immigrant Raymond Orteig worked his way up from a busboy to owner of two hotels in New York. In 1919, he offered a \$25,000 prize for the first nonstop flight between New York and Paris. (That's almost \$350,000 in today's money.) "Raymond Orteig-\$25,000 prize." www.charleslindbergh.com (accessed August 18, 2016).

² The Medal of Honor was presented to Lindbergh by President Calvin Coolidge. The accompanying citation read: "For displaying heroic courage and skill as a navigator, at the risk of his life, by his nonstop flight in his airplane, the 'Spirit of St. Louis,' from New York City to Paris, France, 20-21 May 1927, by which Capt. Lindbergh not only achieved the greatest individual triumph of any American citizen but demonstrated that travel across the ocean by aircraft was possible." "Lindbergh, Charles A." U.S. Army Center of Military History. www.history.army.mil (accessed September 14, 2016).

³ Lindbergh's cross-country journey was financed by the Daniel Guggenheim Fund, established by aviation enthusiasts Daniel Guggenheim and his son, Harry. The tour visited 92

cities in 48 states (at that time, Alaska and Hawaii had not yet achieved statehood); Lindbergh gave 147 speeches over the course of the tour. "Guggenheim Tour-48 States." www.charleslindbergh.com (accessed August 18, 2016).

⁴ Not only was Bertha Landes the first female mayor of any major U.S. city, she was the only female mayor Seattle has ever elected. Although she was widely acclaimed, she was defeated for re-election and served only one term. Seattle Municipal Archives. "Mayors, 1890-1948." www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/seattle-facts/city-officials/mayors (accessed August 18, 2016).

⁵ "Lindbergh May Fly Over City." *Morning Olympian*, September 13, 1927, page 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, page 6.

⁷ "Famous Hero Will Fly Over Capitol Dome." *Morning Olympian*, September 14, 1927, page 1.

⁸ "Air Mail Week Is Proclaimed." *Morning Olympian*, September 13, 1927, page 1.

⁹ "Lindbergh May Fly Over City." *Morning Olympian*, September 13, 1927, page 6.

¹⁰ "Famous Hero Will Fly Over Capitol Dome." *Morning Olympian*, September 14, 1927, page 1.

¹¹ The State Capitol building was still under construction when Lind-

bergh flew over it. It was not completed until 1928. "Olympia Capitol—A History of the Building." www.historylink.org (accessed August 18, 2016).

¹² Phillip Love was a friend of Lindbergh's, and accompanied him on the nationwide tour. Love flew a Fairchild monoplane, and brought along Donald Kehoe of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Kehoe served as Lindbergh's business agent and aide on the tour. "Plane Flown by Lindbergh's Aide." *Dallas Morning News*, September 27, 1927, page 10.

¹³ "Lindy Salutes Olympia While Enroute South." *Morning Olympian*, September 15, 1927, page 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Lindbergh's Message Is Recovered by A. B. Smith." *Morning Olympian*, September 15, 1927, page 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, page 8. According to the same news article, Smith intended to frame Lindy's message and present it to "the Chamber of Commerce for display. Later, he said, he proposes to claim it for his own souvenir collection." It is unknown if the message still exists in the Smith family.

¹⁷ In 1939, just twelve years after Lindbergh's history-making flight in a single-engine single-seat monoplane, Peter G. Schmidt became the first person from the Pacific Northwest to cross the Atlantic on Pan

American's newly-inaugurated Boeing Clipper series, among the largest aircraft of the time. Schmidt House Archives, Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

¹⁸ "Airport Site Acquired." *Morning Olympian*, March 4, 1928, page 1.

¹⁹ "History." Port of Olympia. www.portolympia.com/124/History (accessed August 18, 2016).

Karen L. Johnson has volunteered and worked in the museum field since 2001. Her interests in early transportation and the pioneer era have led to organizing two stagecoach runs between Olympia and Longview, writing many articles on local and regional history, and co-authoring with Dennis Larsen two books about a Washington pioneer.

Overleaf: *Charles Lindbergh's flight over the Atlantic Ocean inspired many catchy songs. Seen here are just a few pieces of sheet music dedicated to Lindy.*



HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY, LACEY!

A PHOTO ESSAY

Erin Quinn Valcho

What began as the rural farming community of Woodland in the late 1800s has grown into the modern, thriving city of Lacey. As Lacey reaches its 50th year with a population of nearly 45,000, it's time to celebrate its roots and look forward to a bright future.

LACEY FIRE DEPARTMENT HELPS BUILD A CITY

The Thurston Fire District #3 (Lacey Fire Department—LFD), which started out in 1948 as an all-volunteer organization, included many community leaders among its ranks.



Thurston Fire District #3 (Lacey Fire Department). Photo courtesy of the Daily Olympian.

When the City of Olympia began to annex land that encroached on the newly-created fire district boundaries, the LFD banded together with North Thurston School District, the Lacey Chamber of Commerce, and Lacey business owners to form the Committee to Incorporate Lacey. Although a 1964 attempt at incorporation failed, Lacey was successfully incorporated on December 5, 1966.¹

This photograph (previous page) was taken on October 5, 1964 in front of LFD headquarters on Pacific Avenue. To raise awareness for Fire Prevention Week, Eliana Herrera (Miss St. Placid High School, left) and

Patty Zilsdorf (Miss North Thurston High School, right) pose in the back of a Model T fire engine driven by Marsh Pugh, a volunteer firefighter. In the background at left is the Russell House, later Lacey City Hall and Lacey Museum. At right are the truck bays which later became Pope John Paul II High School.

PANORAMA RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Morris “Moe” Loveless, looking to build a new style of retirement community, put together what he called a finance-yourself plan. By paying more than a house was worth, retirees would gain security in their end-

of-life-care; the extra money would finance future construction. In 1963, Loveless’ company, Arbutus Building, built the first three homes of what would become Panorama City.² In just two years, 220 units were built. Loveless is pictured here (on left) at a groundbreaking ceremony on July 23, 1964.

By 1983, Panorama was billed as a “city within a city” offering its residents all of the services, activities and medical care they might need. For a security deposit and a



In 1964, Moe Loveless, at left, joins a groundbreaking ceremony at Panorama City. Photo courtesy of the Daily Olympian.



South Sound Shopping Center. Photo courtesy of the Homann Collection, Lacey Museum.

monthly service charge, residents were guaranteed a place to lease for life.³ In 1987, Panorama Corporation became non-profit and came under ownership of the residents.⁴ By 2016, Panorama had grown to 1,250 residents and more than 800 housing units.⁵

THE SOUTH SOUND SHOPPING CENTER

Bob Blume, a local real estate developer, envisioned Lacey as the perfect spot along Interstate 5 to build a modern shopping center, the first of its kind in the South Sound region. Unable to secure financing from Olympia banks, Blume went all the way to New York City to get fund-

ing.⁶ The mall's grand opening took place on October 12, 1966.⁷

The lack of cars on the right side of the mall indicates that this aerial photograph (above) was likely taken in the summer of 1966 after Sears had opened, but the rest of the mall had not. At left is Interstate 5. At the top of the photo, Sleater-Kinney Road runs parallel to the mall. The Lacey Drive-In movie theater is visible at the top right. The theater held approximately 500 cars and was a favorite local hangout until a windstorm damaged the screen in 1981. It was torn down in 1988 to make way for the Fred Meyer Shopping Center.

LACEY CITY COUNCIL EVOLVES

In 1973, Lacey voters approved the Optional Municipal Code changing Lacey from a strong mayor form of government to a city manager/city council form of government. In the 1973 fall election, Mayor Thomas Huntamer, left, was replaced by William Bush, seated. Former Mayor Albert Van Andel is pictured at right.⁸ This photograph was taken circa 1974 in Council Chambers in the original City Hall building (later the Lacey Museum).



Lacey officials. Photo courtesy of the Ken Balsley Collection, Lacey Museum.

LACEY LIBRARY'S QUEST FOR A HOME

The North Thurston Library Association formed in 1963 with the mission and dream of bringing a library to the Lacey community.⁹ By 1966, the association had moved out of its bookmobile into a new storefront location at 4140 Market Square in Lacey.¹⁰ In this undated photograph (right), the old bookmobile is apparently being used as a fundraising tool. The “thermometer” at left shows that \$10,000 has been raised toward the \$15,000 fundraising goal, probably for the storefront location. Not until 1990, after years of grassroots fundraising and support by the City of Lacey, would the busiest branch in the Timberland library system¹¹ get its own building.

A NEW CITY HALL

Karen Fraser served on Lacey City Council for over seven years, five of those as Lacey’s first female mayor. Fraser went on to spend eight years as Thurston County Commissioner, four years as a state representative and 23 years as a state senator.¹² Fraser is pictured here (photo page 48) with Lenny Wilkens, formerly of the Seattle Supersonics basketball team, cutting the ribbon at the City Hall dedication ceremony in 1979.

When the City of Lacey was incorporated in 1966, the fire district provided office space in its headquarters in a 50-year-old farmhouse on Pacific Avenue.¹³ But by 1968, the city had already outgrown the space and in 1971, a temporary structure



North Thurston Library Association bookmobile. Photo courtesy of the Ken Balsley Collection, Lacey Museum.

was built behind it. Needing a permanent solution, the city began a hunt for land to build on. In 1979 the property at 3rd Avenue and College Street was purchased and the new City Hall was dedicated on September 17, 1979.¹⁴ City Hall has been expanded three times since then, most recently in 2009, when a new wing with three floors and a basement was added.

NOTES

¹ “City of Lacey: Incorporation.” Lacey Museum Research Files.

² Berta Kasmar, compiler, *Panorama History, The First Fifty Years*, 2011.

³ “Panorama.” Lacey Museum Research Files.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ www.panorama.org (accessed October 15, 2016).

⁶ “Blume.” Lacey Museum People Files.

⁷ “South Sound Ready for Grand Opening.” *Daily Olympian*, October 11, 1966.



Karen Fraser and basketball star Lenny Wilkens cut the ribbon at the Lacey City Hall dedication ceremony in 1979. Photo courtesy of the City of Lacey Collection, Lacey Museum.

⁸ “Tuesdays Primary Offers 2 Key Proposals.” *Lacey Leader*, September 12, 1973.

⁹ “The Library Story.” Lacey Library Scrapbook, Lacey Museum.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ As of 2014 circulation statistics. www.trl.org/About/Pages/LibraryStatistics.aspx (accessed October 14, 2016).

¹² www.karenfraserforlgtgovernor.com/bio (accessed October 14, 2016).

¹³ “City of Lacey: City Hall.” Lacey Museum Research Files.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Erin Quinn Valcho is the Lacey Museum curator and has been a museum professional for 18 years. She received a master’s degree in museum studies and anthropology from the University of Denver. She found her calling in the lab of an archaeology dig, where she discovered the joy in researching the stories that objects and historic photographs can tell.
