



THURSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL



The Old Settler

Tragedy on Independence Creek

The Spirit of Margaret McKenny: Loving the Natural World

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THURSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL JOURNAL

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On the cover:

Left: Margaret McKenny in her later years. Photograph C2018.0.15, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

Top right: Watercolor of Margaret McKenny's cat, believed to have been painted by Margaret. Image courtesy of Sally Turnbull.

Bottom right: Eyeglasses worn by Margaret, and now in the collection of the Washington State Historical Society. Catalog ID number 2013.152.1, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

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THE OLD SETTLER

Drew Crooks

There are many ways to learn about the past. One method is through the study of songs from yesteryear. This article will examine the curious story of a pioneer song called “The Old Settler” which became a modern advertising legend. Music expert Linda Allen in *Washington Songs and Lore* has described “The Old Settler” as “the Northwest’s most enduring folk song.”¹ Indeed, this humorous ballad has survived over 130 years.

The lyrics of “The Old Settler” were written by Francis Henry, a man who played a key role in the political and business affairs of late 19th Century Olympia. Born in Galena, Illinois on January 17, 1827, he moved in 1862 to Thurston County, Washington where he resided for the rest of his life.

On one hand, Henry worked in the serious vocations of surveying, abstracting, and law. From 1880 until 1890 he was a probate judge. Henry also served as a member of several legislatures and the constitutional conventions of 1878 and 1889.

But on the other hand, Henry was a humorist who founded the U. F. & F. U., a secret society that seemed to focus on prank-filled initiations. Furthermore, Henry wrote a number of

amusing poems, including a parody of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” in Chinook Jargon. He even wrote a humorous novel, titled “Ichabod Noodles,” that has never been published. A manuscript copy survives in the Oregon Historical Society Library in Portland.



This portrait of Francis Henry appeared in the 1902 publication of “The Old Settler.” Image courtesy of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

The Old Settler
 (TUNE - OLD ROSIN THE BEAU)
 ARRANGED BY R.G. O'BRIEN

80 = ♩

I'd wandered all over the country prospecting and digging for gold. I'd
 tunneled, hydraulicked and cradled and I had been frequently sold. And I had been frequently so-l-d And
 I had been frequently sold. I'd tunneled hydraulicked and cradled and I had been frequently sold.

Repeat Chorus

Sheet music for "The Old Settler" appeared in the 1902 publication of the song. Image courtesy of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

Henry wrote "The Old Settler" in the 1870s while living in Olympia. This song provides a comical look at the pioneer experience. Too often American settlers are portrayed in very serious, even grim terms. "The Old Settler" poem is certainly different:

"I'd wandered all over the country
 Prospecting and digging for gold -
 I'd tunneled, hydraulicked, and cradled,
 And I had been frequently sold.
 Chorus -
 And I had been frequently s-o-l-d,
 And I had been frequently sold;

I'd tunneled, hydraulicked, and cradled,
 And I had been frequently sold.

"For one who gets riches by mining
 Perceiving that hundreds grow poor,
 I made up my mind to try farming -
 The only pursuit that is sure.
 Cho[rus]. - The only pursuit, &C [etc].

"So rolling my grub in my blankets,
 I left all my tools on the ground,
 And started one morning to shank it
 For a country they called Puget
 Sound.
 Cho. - For a country, &C.

“Arriving flat broke in mid-winter,
I found it enveloped in fog,
And covered all over with timber
Thick as hair on the back of a dog.
Cho. – Thick as hair, &C.

“As I looked on the prospect so
gloomy,
The tears trickled over my face,
For I felt that my travels had brought
me
To the edge of the jumping-off place.
Cho. – To the edge, &C.

“I took up a claim in the forest,
And sat myself down to hard toil;
For two years I chopped and I
[labored],²
But I never got down to the soil.
Cho. – But I never, &C.

“I tried to get out of the country,
But poverty forced me to stay
Until I became an Old Settler,
Then nothing could drive me away.
Cho. – Then nothing, &C.

“And now that I’m used to the climate,
I think that if man ever found
A spot to live easy and happy,
That Eden is on Puget Sound.
Cho. – That Eden is on, &C.

“No longer the slave of ambition,
I laugh at the world and its shams,
As I think of my pleasant condition,
Surrounded by acres of clams.
Cho. – Surrounded by, &C.”³

Henry adapted “The Old Settler” lyrics to the tune of a popular Irish drinking song called “Rosin the Beau.” According to historian Lucile McDonald, this

tune “was grafted on” to a 17th Century Irish melody titled “The Gentile Maiden.”⁴

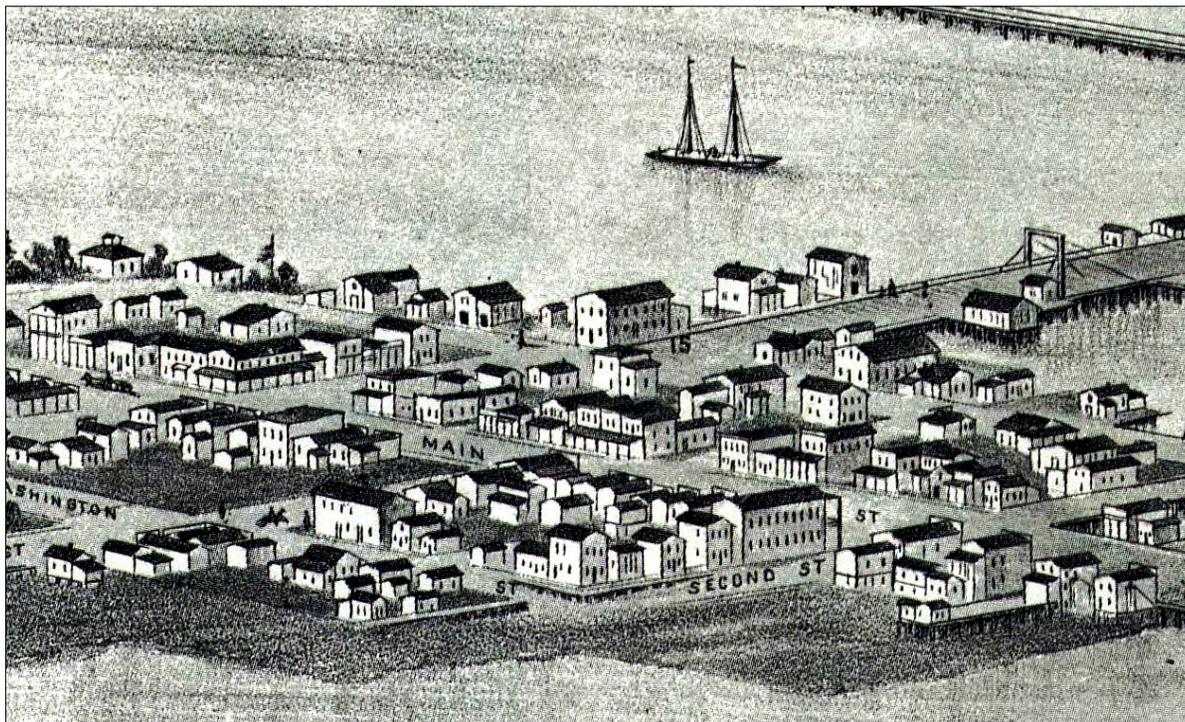
By the early 19th Century “Rosin the Beau” had crossed the Atlantic Ocean and become a popular American song. Its tune was used for an amazing diversity of songs. Besides “The Old Settler,” the melody served as a temperance song called “The Washington Badge,” a religious song known as “Sawyer’s Exit,” a political campaign song for Abraham Lincoln titled “Lincoln and Liberty,” and a populist farmers’ song called “Hayseed Like Me.”

Back in Ireland the tune of “Rosin the Beau” was used for the Irish Nationalist song “Men of the West” which referred to those individuals in the West of Ireland who supported the Rebellion of 1798 against the English. The chorus for this song runs:

“I give you the gallant old West, boys,
Where rallied our bravest and best
When Ireland lay broken and bleeding;
Hurrah for the men of the West!”⁵

In *Folksongs Of Britain And Ireland*, Peter Kennedy noted of “Rosin the Beau” that “The tune of this song has enjoyed a separate popularity as a jig-tune for quadrilles and country dances. It is also played more slowly as an old-fashioned waltz.”⁶

Now getting back to “The Old Settler,” Francis Henry wrote his song for an Olympia Choral Society concert held in Tacoma Hall on April 2, 1877. Taco-



In 1877 “The Old Settler” was first sung publicly at the Tacoma Hall, which was located on the second floor of the Good Templar’s Hall (Columbia and 4th Avenue) in Olympia. It is the structure marked “15” (near center) on this detail of Eli Glover’s 1879 birds-eye view of Olympia. Image courtesy of Washington State Library.

ma Hall was located on the second floor of a building situated on the southwest corner of Columbia and 4th in Olympia. At the time the Good Templars Hall occupied the first floor of the structure. Presently, Danger Room Comics (201 4th Avenue West) is located on this site.

The audience in Olympia on April 2, 1877 received “The Old Settler” with great enthusiasm.⁷ No doubt the positive reception derived in part from the musical talents of the man who sang the new song, Rossell G. O’Brien.

This interesting individual was born in Dublin, Ireland on November 27, 1846. Twenty-four years later he came to Olympia in the company of incoming Territorial Governor Edward Salmon. O’Brien went on to an extensive government career, including service as the Adjunct General of the Washington National Guard from 1881 to 1895. Some historians have called him the “Father of the National Guard of Washington.”⁸ Besides his government service, as the 1917 reference book *Washington West of the Cascades* noted, O’Brien “was known for his fine tenor voice and musical ability.”⁹

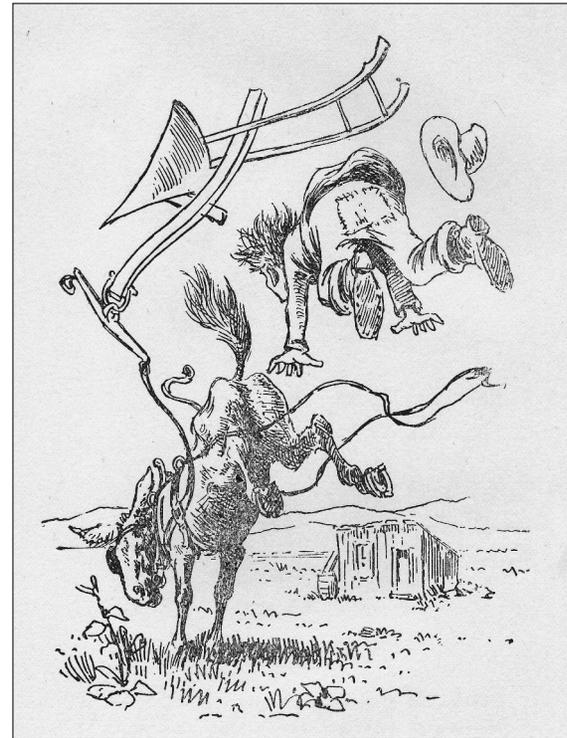
On April 7, 1877, five days after the initial performance of “The Old Settler,” O’Brien sang the song again as part of an Olympia Dramatic Club program in Columbia Hall. This building was located on 4th Avenue. The 4th Ave Tavern (210 4th Avenue East) occupies the site today.

The April 7th performance was again heartily approved by the audience, as recorded in the *Washington Standard* newspaper of Olympia:

“The song, ‘Old Settler,’ the lines of which were composed by Mr. Francis Henry of this place, and adapted to that stirring old ballad “Rosin the Beau,” was, as on a previous occasion warmly applauded. The piece fits Mr. Ross O’Brien, in his excellent make-up, to a T., and it would have a decided ‘run’ in other places besides Olympia.”¹⁰

Indeed, “The Old Settler” soon became regionally famous. By 1878 Puget Sound even had a steamboat named *The Old Settler*. Major W. H. Bell of the U.S. Army was among those pleased by the new song. Blessed with artistic abilities, he drew a series of sketches illustrating the poem and presented them to Francis Henry.

These sketches by Major Bell became closely associated with the comic song. In 1902 Mary A. O’Neil, an early Olympia school teacher and good friend of Francis Henry, published the song with Major Bell’s drawings. As noted in the publication, O’Brien arranged the music.¹¹



This sketch by Major W. H. Bell illustrated the second verse of Francis Henry's poem. Image courtesy of the Olympia Tumwater Foundation.

Henry recognized the popularity of “The Old Settler.” Later he wrote a sequel that has been variously called either the “Wail of an Old Settler” or “Social Decline.” More serious in tone and even including an environmental message, this sequel to the “The Old Settler” never achieved the success of the earlier rhyme. Here is the entire poem. The last stanza is particularly humorous:

“Some say this country’s improving,
And boast of its commerce and trade,

But measured by social enjoyment
I find it has sadly decayed.

“In the pioneer days on the sound,
When the people had little to wear,
And subsisted on clams the year
round,
We’d hearty good fellowship here.

“The thoughtful, industrious old set-
tler,
Was so fond of obliging a friend,
That if any one wanted his tools,
He’d always quit working to lend.

“At our gatherings for pastoral pleas-
ure,
Dance, pic-nic or social knock down,
One man was as good as another;
No kind of distinction was shown.

“But now when I go to a party
The people around me seem froze;
They dare not be social and hearty,
For fear they may spoil their store
clothes.

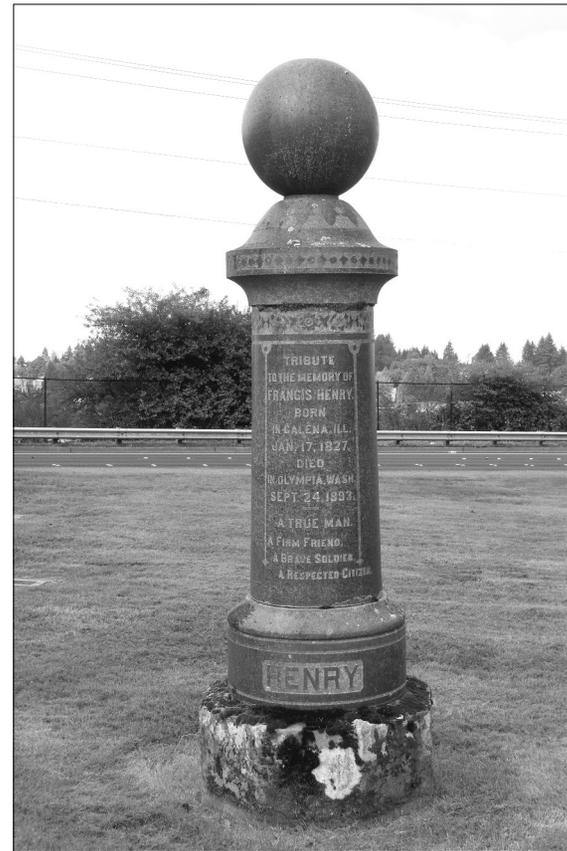
“Not only our friendly relations
Are dropped for the worship of gold,
But th’ solid backbone of the country
Is recklessly bartered and sold.

“They’re slashing and selling our tim-
ber,
Not taking the slightest concern,
For what we shall do in the future,
Without any fuel to burn.

“And wasting the nat’ral resources
Our bountiful waters contain,
They’re canning our clams and our
oysters
And shipping them off for mere gain.

“And even the climate is changing,
For only some ten years ago,
Strawberries got ripe in December,
Whilst now it brings four feet of
snow.”¹²

On September 24, 1893 Francis Henry
died in Olympia at the age of 66. He
was buried at Odd Fellows Cemetery
in Tumwater. Fittingly, his obituary
included the lyrics of his greatest crea-
tion, “The Old Settler.”¹³



*In 1893 Francis Henry died in Olym-
pia. His impressive gravestone still
stands in Tumwater’s Odd Fellows Me-
morial Park. Photo courtesy of Jennifer
Crooks.*

By the early 20th Century, “The Old Settler” song had become a recognized pioneer anthem, sung at various events commemorating the early American settlers. On March 2, 1903, for example, Washington’s Semi-Centennial [50th anniversary] Celebration was held at the Olympia Theater. Charles Moore, in character, sang “The Old Settler” accompanied by a lantern show of Major Bell’s sketches.



Ivar Haglund (1905-1985), folksinger and restaurateur, especially liked “The Old Settler” and used one line of the song to name his “Ivar’s Acres of Clams” restaurant in Seattle. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia, IMLS Digital Collections & Content.

You might think that with the passing of Puget Sound’s pioneer generation in the 20th Century, “The Old Settler” song would have also faded away. That was not to be. It was revived and kept alive by an extraordinary individual, Ivar Haglund.

Haglund was born in Seattle on March 21, 1905. He became, in the words of historian Paul Dorpat, a “Seattle character, folksinger, and restaurateur . . . [whose] escapades, publicity stunts, pronouncements, pranks, and excellent restaurants have become part of Seattle’s unique character as a city.”¹⁴

From a young age Haglund was interested in music. He started as a folksinger, and became, again quoting Dorpat, “Puget Sound’s principal champion of regional folk music.”¹⁵ Over time Haglund memorized more than 200 songs, including “The Old Settler.” He highlighted the comic ballad in his musical programs. Apparently Haglund even taught the “The Old Settler” to fellow folk singers Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie.

In 1938 Haglund established Seattle’s first aquarium at Pier 54 along with a small fish-and-chips stand. He wrote and sang a number of silly songs to promote his business ventures. These songs included such amusing tunes as “Oscar The Octopus,” “Halley The Halibut,” and “Hermie The Hermit Crab.” The aquarium prospered, but the food stand soon closed.

Haglund continued to sing “The Old Settler” on various occasions. In the 1940s he used the humorous piece of music as the theme song for his local radio program.

July 26, 1946 proved to be a turning point for Haglund and Seattle. On that day he opened Ivar’s Acres of Clams restaurant on Seattle’s Pier 56. The new eatery was named after the final lyrical line of “The Old Settler”: “As I think of my pleasant condition, surrounded by acres of clams.”¹⁶

The restaurant was imaginatively decorated inside with nautical equipment. Haglund’s aquarium closed ten years later, but his Acres of Clams restaurant remained open and became a great success.

Haglund proved to be an irrepressible entertainer. According to historian Paul Dorpat, “even after he opened his aquarium and his Acres of Clams restaurant, Ivar continued to sing on radio, on stage, and on the sidewalk.”¹⁷ He carried out a series of escapades and publicity stunts that form a modern advertising legend.

One of Haglund’s most famous escapades was titled “The Great Syrup Spill.” Dorpat has described it:

“Most of Ivar’s pranks and promotions were designed, but one of his best came by way of good fortune and artful timing. The luck: a coupling to a tank-cart hose broke and squirted a thousand gallons of syrup onto the railroad tracks across Alaskan Way

from Acres of Clams. The art: Ivar rushed to the spill with a big spoon and joyfully scooped the free sweetener onto a plateful of pancakes he had hastily prepared in the Acres’ kitchen. The internationally distributed wire picture of Ivar bent with a spoon over the spilled syrup described him as the ‘crown prince of corn.’”¹⁸

In 1958 Haglund performed “The Old Settler” on a nationally broadcast TV special. A talented musician named Earl Robinson saw it in New York. Seattle-born Robinson “was inspired,” according to musical historian Peter Blecha, “to score an arrangement suitable for a full orchestra. And that version – renamed “A Country Called Puget Sound” – made its concert debut on the Canadian national radio network, & was revived again in a high-profile appearance when the Seattle Symphony Orchestra (under the baton of the Maestro, Milton Katims) performed it at Seattle’s new Opera House in 1963.”¹⁹

Ivar Haglund died on January 30, 1985, but his restaurant enterprises continue to the present day and have even expanded in size. They presently include Ivar’s Acres of Clams, Ivar’s Salmon House, Ivar’s Mukilteo Landing, and a chain of restaurants called Ivar’s Seafood Bar. “The Old Settler” song remains an important part of the company’s advertising.

The story of “The Old Settler” shows the power of humor to help understand the past. Francis Henry’s poem tells us more about the struggles of

pioneers than many a serious essay. Hopefully it will remain part of our culture, a fascinating remnant of the pioneer era.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I remember many a trip to Ivar's Acres of Clams restaurant in Seattle with my family accompanied by visiting relatives from back East. Memories include great clam chowder and fish, relatives who tended to order hamburgers at a seafood eatery, and fascinating placemats showing "The Old Settler" poem illustrated by Major Bell's drawings. The placemats were my first introduction to the old comic ballad.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to those who made this article possible: the staff of the Washington State Library who provided key information; Karen Johnson (editor of the *Thurston County Historical Journal*) for overseeing the publication process; and my family for their support of history. Finally, this article is dedicated to the memory of the late Mrs. Carlye LaBell. A great English teacher at Olympia High School, she inspired many students, including myself, to pursue writing.

NOTES

¹ Linda Allen, compiler, *Washington Songs and Lore*. Spokane, WA: Melior Publications, 1988, page 3.

² The word "labored" is used here to replace a racist term that was in the original poem. Restaurateur/folk singer Ivar Haglund and others also chose to remove this racist term.

³ Francis Henry, *The Old Settler*. Olympia, WA: s.n., 1902.

⁴ Lucile McDonald, "Francis Henry, Pioneer Bard, Led Life Of Adventure." "The Charmed Land Magazine," *Seattle Times*, January 26, 1964, page 2.

⁵ "The Men Of The West," Irish Song Lyrics. https://www.irishsongs.com/lyrics.php?Action=view&Song_id=234 (accessed October 29, 2019).

⁶ Peter Kennedy, editor, *Folksongs Of Britain And Ireland*. New York, NY: Schirmer Books, 1975, page 630.

⁷ "The Old Settler." *Washington Standard*, April 14, 1877, page 3.

⁸ Jennifer Crooks, "Rossell Galbraith O'Brien: Olympia's Irish-American Tenor", March 13, 2018, *ThurstonTalk.com*. <https://www.thurstontalk.com/2018/03/13/rossell-galbraith-obrien-olympias-irish-american-tenor/> (accessed June 29, 2019).

⁹ Hubert Hunt and Floyd C. Kaylor, *Washington West of the Cascades*, Vol. III. Chicago, IL: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917, page 192.

¹⁰ "Our Local Dramatic Talent." *Washington Standard*, April 14, 1877, page 2.

¹¹ Francis Henry, *The Old Settler*. Copies of this booklet are in various institutional collections, including the Washington State Library, Tumwater, Washington.

¹² “Ten Years Later.” *Morning Olympian*, October 21, 1894, page 1.

¹³ “Judge Henry’s Death.” *Morning Olympian-Tribune*, September 26, 1893, page 1.

¹⁴ Paul Dorpat, “Haglund, Ivar (1905-1985),” Essay 2499, June 20, 2000, *HistoryLink.org*. <https://www.historylink.org/File/2499> (accessed July 2, 2019).

¹⁵ Dorpat.

¹⁶ Henry, *The Old Settler*.

¹⁷ Dorpat.

¹⁸ Dorpat.

¹⁹ Peter Blecha, “Ivar Haglund, The Seafood-Selling Songster: 1946,” November 2009, *Northwest Music Archives*. <http://nw-music-archives.blogspot.com/2009/11/ivar-haglund->



For over 70 years, Ivar’s Acres of Clams restaurant has been a popular eatery on Seattle’s waterfront. Photo courtesy of Enoch Lai, Wikimedia.

[seafood-selling-songster.html](#) (accessed July 2, 2019).

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 30 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.

TRAGEDY ON INDEPENDENCE CREEK

James S. Hannum, M.D.

The March 1914 issue of *The Timberman* magazine reports that the Ninemire & Morgan Lumber Company's mill, south of Rochester, had gone into operation. It was located on Michigan Hill Road, immediately south of

Helsing Junction, in the southwest corner of Thurston County. Figure 1 details the geography in that region. The mill burned on August 29, 1924 and was not rebuilt. The associated logging railroad was removed in 1925,

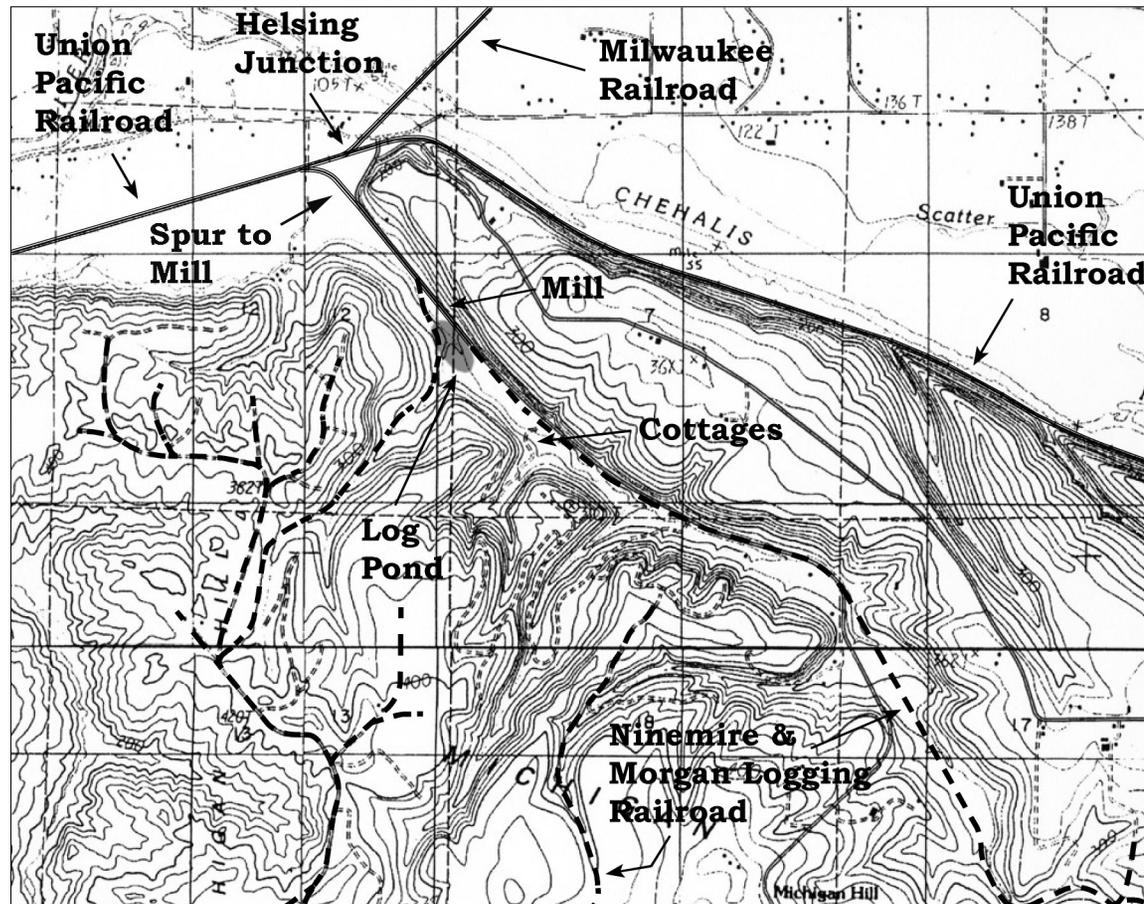


Figure 1. Geography near the Ninemire & Morgan Lumber Company mill, located in southwest Thurston County, south of Helsing Junction and Rochester.

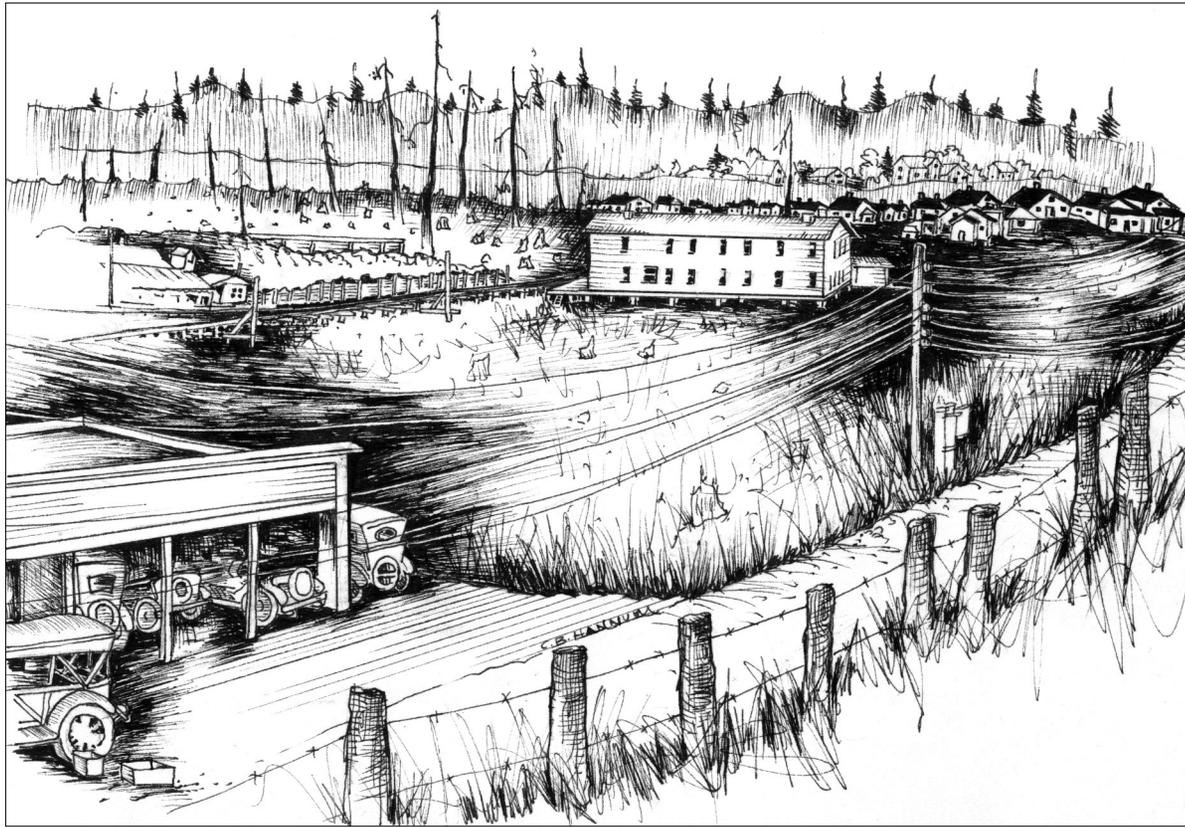


Illustration of the Ninemire & Morgan mill, inspired by a circa 1920 photograph. The garage at lower left was located along the right-of-way of the county road, as it existed then. This is not the right-of-way occupied today by Michigan Hill Road. Above the garage can be seen the northern edge of the mill. The large building near the center is the company bunkhouse. Illustration by Carol B. Hannum.

after all timber under contract to the company had been removed. I was gathering information about Ninemire & Morgan's railroad in 2001, and as part of that project, I interviewed Eleanor Montfort, who then resided in Centralia.¹

Notes from that meeting include: "Her [Eleanor's] parents moved to a home immediately south of the (Ninemire & Morgan) mill in 1917, where Eleanor

was born in 1926. She spent her childhood there and raised her own family in that house.

"When she was growing up, there was a mill pond immediately north of the house. The lumber company had created the pond by damming the East Fork of Independence Creek. South of the house was a long, narrow valley with bottom land suitable for farming.



Circa 1920 view northwest toward the Ninemire & Morgan Lumber Company mill. Unseen, to the right of the mill pond, was the eastern segment of the company's logging railroad. Photo courtesy of the University of Washington, Clark Kinsey Photograph Collection, PH Coll 516.2183.

Several cottages were located in the valley, south of Eleanor's home. In these cottages lived two immigrant Japanese families whose husbands worked in the mill. Years later, after the mill closed and the cottages ceased to exist, daffodils planted originally by the immigrants still came up in the fields plowed by Eleanor's husband each year. Unmarried Japanese men lived in the bunkhouse north of the mill, with thirteen shown there in the 1920 federal census.²

"In 1920, one of the cottages was the residence of 32-year-old Taichi (Taiichiro) Yamakawa and his family. The census declares that he, and his 26-year-old wife, Hide, were born in Japan. The family also included Mi-

dori Yamakawa, a two-year-old daughter, and George Hiroshi Yamakawa, the couple's ten-month-old son.

"Although many years have passed, and some details have become blurred, the sadness of a tragedy which occurred on Independence Creek could still be heard in Eleanor's voice. She recalled that the family's name was 'Yamaguchi,'

and their son, two-year old 'Sammy,' had drowned in the creek. She does not have a personal memory of Sammy, having learned of him from her parents. Exact dates for his birth and death have not yet been found in available Thurston County records. Eleanor recalls that Sammy's mother suffered extreme mental anguish, to the point of mental illness, after losing her son. Eventually, she went (or was sent) back to Japan, apparently without the rest of her family.

"The rest of Eleanor's story is quite mystical. During the time she made her home on Michigan Hill Road, the voice of a young child was often heard outside the house. Sometimes, these were the sounds of a youngster play-

ing in the front yard. However, whenever she went to look, nobody was there. The most dramatic event occurred sometime after she was married. Her husband was working outside and heard a small child crying. Thinking that neighbors had come to visit, he came into the house to find out who was crying. But, there was no one else in the house besides Eleanor. At that point, they went outside and could still hear the wailing for another

half of an hour. Both were certain that this was the spirit of Sammy, remaining at the place where he drowned.”

Some situations do not seem to change as time goes by. In 2020, the United States is again grappling with issues relating to conditions encountered by immigrants who wish to make a new life in America. In reflecting on those issues, Eleanor’s story came back to me. I wondered if the incon-



The Ninemire & Morgan mill property, showing what is probably the mess hall. Photo courtesy of the University of Washington, Clark Kinsey Photograph Collection, PH Coll 516.2182.

sistencies in this narrative could be resolved, and what has happened to the people involved (and their descendants) over the past century.

To that end, a variety of genealogical sources were examined, including, but not limited to, census records, the Washington Secretary of State's birth, death, and marriage indexes, and the online website *Ancestry*.

Beginning with the surname "Yamaguchi," no credible evidence could be found to suggest that anyone with that name was associated with the Ninemire & Morgan Lumber Company or ever lived at the company's camp on Independence Creek.



Looking across Michigan Hill Road, 1991. The view is northwest, from the place which formerly was the south end of the log pond. Photograph courtesy of the author.

THE YAMAKAWA FAMILY

On the other hand, significant information was unearthed for the Yamakawa family. Taiichiro Yamakawa, a married man aged 27 years, arrived in Seattle in 1915, probably for the second time. He disembarked from the ship *Awa Maru*, which had sailed from Yokohama on March 15. His permanent home in the United States was stated to be "Lochister" (Rochester), and that was also to be his final destination upon his arrival. His closest relative in Japan was a brother who lived in Chikujo District of Fukuoka Prefecture; this is on Kyushu Island, in the southern part of the Japanese home islands. Taiichiro stated that his occupation was that of a sawmill worker.³ Figure 2 is part of a 1916 map showing the location of Fukuoka Prefecture.

Taiichiro's wife was Hide Uchimaruru Yamakawa. She arrived in Seattle on board the *Hawaii Maru* on May 12, 1916; she was a 21-year-old former resident of Fukuoka Prefecture. Her destination was the residence of her husband, I. Yamakawa, at "N.M.L. Co. Rochester, Wa."⁴

Sometime after the

1920 U.S. census was recorded, Taiichiro, Hide, and their two children must have moved from the Ninemire & Morgan mill and returned to Japan, for both parents reentered the United States at Seattle in March 1922. Neither of their children, George and Midori, were with them on the *Africa Maru*. On this entry, the parents' stated destination was Tacoma. Taiichiro noted his occupation was that of "hotel laborer."⁵ However, Taiichiro's name does not appear in Tacoma city directories published by Polk, in the four years after 1922. He and his wife could not be located by examination of the 1930 federal census.

Both Yamakawa children were born in Tacoma; Midori on October 21, 1917, and George on February 22, 1919.⁶ Just one Japanese doctor, K. Ito, Physician and Surgeon, had an office there. The address was Room #2 in the New Tacoma Hotel, at 1354 ½ Broadway. That hotel was east of the Tacoma Union Station, in an area known as Japantown. Dr. Ito's residence was not far away, at 509 15th Street.⁷

Midori and George returned to the United States in the 1930s. Midori arrived unmarried in Los Angeles on Oc-

tober 30, 1937. She was a passenger on the *Tatsuta Maru*, one of three sister ships operated by Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK Line) in the company's premier, Orient-California service. At entry, her last permanent address was Fukuoka Prefecture.⁸ The 1940 federal census reports that she was married to Harry Ono and the couple had a two-year-old son, Richard. Even though she was an American citizen, having been born in the United States, Midori was interned during World War II at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.⁹ She eventually returned to Los Angeles, and was a resident of Huntington

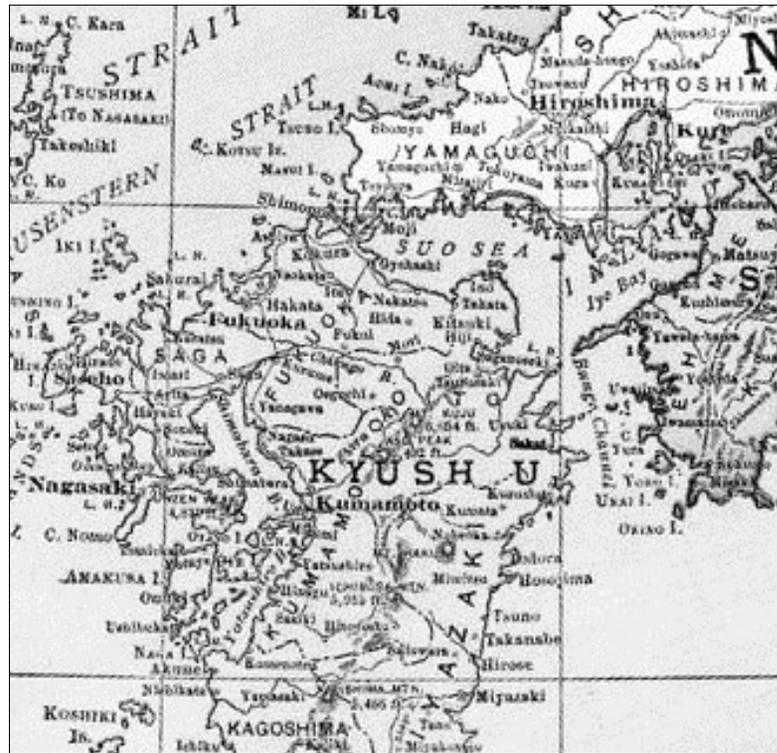


Figure 2. City of Fukuoka, Fukuoka Prefecture, Island of Kyushu, Japan, in *The Ideal Atlas of the World*, Rand, McNally and Company, 1916.

Beach when she died May 12, 1998.

George Hiroshi Yamakawa disembarked from the *Heian Maru* at Seattle on May 29, 1935. His last residence was said to have been Japan and his destination was Tacoma. The record indicates that his father, Taiichiro Yamakawa, was then living in Fukuoka Prefecture, at the town of Uenokawachi, in the neighborhood of Nishisumida-Mura.¹⁰ George obtained a passport visa in Tacoma July 25, 1940 and returned to Japan. He reentered the United States at Los Angeles on May 31, 1941; his declaration, at that time, indicates that his last permanent address was in Los Angeles. He arrived on the *Tatsuta Maru*.¹¹ George was interned during the war at the Tule Lake

Relocation Center in California.¹² Afterwards, he returned to the Los Angeles area, where he died August 1, 2005.

THE KIYONO FAMILY

Kiyono was the surname of the other immigrant family living south of the Ninemire & Morgan mill, near Eleanor Montfort's home. Shinkichi Kiyono, a married man born in Japan, sailed from Kobe, Japan on the *Yokohama Maru* on October 10, 1915. He had been in the United States previously, for his last permanent address was said to have been Tacoma, and Tacoma was his stated final destination. He was a 28-year-old sawmill worker (born November 5, 1886) who had gotten married the year before, during his return visit to Japan.¹³ The 1920 federal census reports that the given name of Shinkichi's wife was Tetsu. She arrived in Seattle in 1916 aboard the *Inaba Maru* (NYK Line), which sailed from Kobe, Japan, on October 24. Tetsu was 22 years old; birth certificates (in the United States) of the Kiyono family's children indicate that her maiden name was Fujii. The 1916 arrival record mentions that she was from Fujibayashi Mura (Fujibashi Mura), Nishimuro District, Wakayama Prefec-



Figure 3. City of Kushimoto, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, in *The Ideal Atlas of the World*, Rand, McNally and Company, 1916.



A circa 1920s photograph of Shinkichi Kiyono, his wife Tetsu, and one of their children. Photo courtesy of Lisa Nakatsu, a granddaughter of the Kiyono family.

ture.¹⁴ The 1940 draft registration card of her husband, Shinkichi, notes that he was an employee of the Carlisle Lumber Company mill at Onalaska in Lewis County, and had been

born in Kushimoto, located in Higashimuro District of Wakayama Prefecture.¹⁵ Figure 3 locates Wakayama Prefecture, in 1916.

Shinkichi and Tetsu had several children in Washington State. Yoshiko K. Kiyono was born September 5, 1917, in Thurston County. Eventually, she married Robert Nakatsu who, in 1955, was the proprietor of Bob's Grocery in Seattle. That same year, Yoshiko was a clerk at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital in Seattle.¹⁶ She held the job of financial manager at that hospital upon her retirement in 1980.¹⁷ She died November 26, 2009 in Bellevue.

Other children of Shinkichi and Tetsu include: daughter Chiyeko, born 1920; daughter Kazue, born 1923 (valedictorian of the 1940 graduating class at Onalaska High School); son Masami, born August 16, 1925 (vice-president of the 1942 class at Onalaska High School);¹⁸ and another daughter, Mary Michiyo Kiyono, born 1927.

It might be significant that Masami (the second “a” in this name is pronounced as is the “o” in “hobby”) was born in the year before Eleanor Montfort’s birth, probably right after the Kiyono family moved to Onalaska. “Masami” is a name that is commonly given to both boys and girls. However, the nickname “Sami” is typically used only for girls.

Also, possibly significant is the fact that the Kiyonos had one additional child, who died before his first birthday. His birth certificate erroneously calls him “Kaomi Kiyono” and mentions that he was a male child, born April 27, 1919 in Pierce County.¹⁹ The baby’s death certificate correctly indicates that his given name was Naomi, and he passed away at 3:00 a.m. on October 20, 1919 at “Scace’s Hospital” in Centralia. The cause of death was “Pneumonia, Lobular, Bilateral.” His family resided at Helsing Junction, where the father, Shinkichi, worked for “N. & M. Lbr. Co.”²⁰

The Scace Hospital was also known as the Employee Hospital, for it provided care for families of workers at about twenty area sawmills. The director was Lee A. Scace, M.D.²¹



A photograph made July 1, 1942 at the Tule Lake Relocation Center, Newell, California. The caption reads: “Shinkichi Kiyono, 56, evacuee from Longview, Washington, exhibits the cabinet which won for him first prize (a carpenter’s plane) in a furniture building contest. All pieces of furniture were made from scrap lumber.” Photographer Francis Newell Stewart, California. Photograph D-15, from Online Archive of California. War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese-American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942-1945, BANC PIC 1967.014—PIC, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The baby's obituary appeared on page eight of the October 20, 1919 issue of *The Centralia Daily Chronicle*. "The funeral services of Naomi Kiyono, aged five months, 23 days, the infant daughter of S. Kiyono, of Rochester, were held this afternoon at 2 o'clock from the Sticklin Chapel, Rev. H. W. Thompson officiating. Interment was in the Sticklin Cemetery. The death of the child occurred this morning."

CONCLUSION

Reviewing these data regarding the Yamakawa and Kiyono families is helpful in analyzing the story told by Eleanor Montfort. Her narrative may have been a blend of facts and events from both immigrant families. Certainly, none of her memories came from personal experience. Differences in language and social custom have probably added to the uncertainties noted here. But there must have been grains of truth contained in the tragic tale she told. The Kiyono family clearly had a child who perished. Medically speaking, a near-drowning can produce pneumonia. The Yamakawa family had a son, Masami, who may have been nicknamed "Sami"; this might have been interpreted as "Sammy" by Eleanor's parents. Moreover, the Yamakawa family did return to Japan, at least for some period, between 1920 and 1922. Much time has passed since these events, and now, there probably is no way to be certain about what happened on Independence Creek a century ago.

NOTES

¹ The 1930 federal census of Grand Mound Precinct of Thurston County, Washington reports that Eleanor D. Chaussee lived on Michigan Hill Road. She was the four-year-old (born January 26, 1926) daughter of Raymond F. and Mary A. Chaussee. Her first husband was Hoyt Countryman; after being widowed, she married Bill Montfort.

² Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920-Population, Washington, Thurston, Rochester Precinct, Sheet 17A, "N. & M. Saw Mill B. H."

³ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number M1383, Arriving Seattle, 1890-1957, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," *S. S. Iwa Maru*, Passengers Sailing from Yokohama, Japan 15th March 1915.

⁴ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number A3691, Arriving Seattle 1890-1924. Arrived May 12, 1916, Ship *Hawaii Maru*.

⁵ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number M1383, Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at Seattle, Records of the Immigration and



A Ninemire & Morgan mill logging site, showing two small bunkhouses of a type commonly moved by rail from place to place as the site of active logging changed. The caption for this photo mentions “an Asian railroad construction crew.” Photo courtesy of the University of Washington, Clark Kinsey Photograph Collection, PH Coll 516.2188.

Naturalization Service, 1787-2004, “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States,” *S. S. Africa Maru*, Passengers Sailing from Yokohama, Japan 15th March 1922.

⁶ Washington State Department of Health, Birth Index, 1870-1935.

⁷ *Polk’s Tacoma City Directory, 1919*. Tacoma, Washington: R. L. Polk & Company, 1919.

⁸ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at San Pedro/Wilmington/Los Angeles, Cali-

fornia, Record Group 85, *S. S. Tatsuta Maru*, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," Passengers Sailing from Yokohama, Japan, 12 October 1937.

⁹ Midori Ono, in United States Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, Final Accountability Rosters of Evacuees at Relocation Centers, 1942-1946, Heart Mountain Relocation Center, November 1945, Volumes I and II.

¹⁰ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number M1383, Arriving Seattle, 1890-1957, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," *S. S. Heian Maru*, Passengers Sailing from Yokohama, Japan, May 29, 1935.

¹¹ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at San Pedro/Wilmington/Los Angeles, California, Record Group 85, *S. S. Tatsuta Maru*, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," Passengers Sailing from Yokohama, Japan, arrival date in Los Angeles 31 May 1941.

¹² George Hiroshi Yamakawa in United States Department of the Interior, War Relocation Authority, Final Accountability Rosters of Evacuees at Relocation Centers, 1942-1946, Tule Lake Relocation Center, March 1946, Volumes I and II.

¹³ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number M1383, Arriving Seattle, 1890-1957, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," *S. S. Yokohama Maru*, sailing from Kobe, Japan 10 October 1915.

¹⁴ National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1965, Series Number M1383, Arriving Seattle, 1890-1957, "List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States," *S. S. Inaba Maru*, sailing from Kobe, Japan 24 October 1916.

¹⁵ Department of Selective Service, Registration Card (men born on or after April 28, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1897), Serial Number U2318.

¹⁶ AncestryLibrary.com, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, Seattle, Washington, City Directory, 1955.

¹⁷ Obituary of Yoshiko K. Nakatsu. *The Seattle Times*, December 9-December 12, 2009.

¹⁸ Brian Mittge, "Remembering The Day We Sent Our Neighbors Away," <http://www.chronline.com/opinion/>, affiliated with *The Daily Chronicle*, Centralia, Washington, June 2, 2017 (accessed 2018).

¹⁹ Washington State Department of Health, *Washington State Births 1907-1919*.



A section gang constructs a new segment of the Ninemire & Morgan logging railroad near Rochester. The caption for this photo mentions “an Asian railroad construction crew.” Photo courtesy of the University of Washington, Clark Kinsey Photograph Collection, PH Coll 516.2191.

²⁰ Naomi Kiyono, filed October 20, 1919. Washington State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Certificate of Death, Record Number 284, Registered Number 91.

Public Health Service. Railroad history has been a life-long interest, and he has written several books on the subject.

²¹ Herbert Hunt and Floyd C. Kaylor, *Washington: West of the Cascades. Vol. II.* Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917, pages 610-611.

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.

THE SPIRIT OF MARGARET MCKENNY: LOVING THE NATURAL WORLD

Sally Turnbull

Olympia native Margaret McKenny was an author, photographer, mycologist, poet, educator, conservationist, environmental activist, preservationist, landscape architect, and ornithologist. Margaret earned many of these titles while the professions were still in their infancy or were dominated by men. Well-known local author Gordon Newell stated that Margaret “was like a renaissance woman, dabbling in all sorts of arts and science”¹ and that her life “was devoted to convincing people that we are living in one of the most beautiful places in the world and that above everything else, we should preserve it.”²

Margaret was born in Olympia in 1885, and moved to the East Coast in the 1920s. Although she moved back to Olympia from New York in 1943, Thurston County would not fully realize its good fortune until much later. Her decades-long activism, arguing for environmental interests over commercial objectives, made a lasting and positive impact on our community. As a result, a number of places in the Olympia area are named after her.

EARLY YEARS

Margaret was the daughter of General

Thomas Irving McKenny and Cynthia Adelaide King McKenny.³ She was the youngest of four children.⁴ She had two brothers, twins Samuel Miller McKenny and William Belknap McKenny, and a sister, Ida King McKenny.⁵ Together they lived in a house on the corner of Capitol Way (then Main Street) and 7th Street near where the federal building stands (now the James Dolliver Building).

President Andrew Johnson sent General McKenny to Olympia in 1867 from Missouri to serve as the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of Washington Territory.⁶ McKenny was remembered for many things, not the least of which was his Civil War bravery. In the Battle of Sugar Creek in 1864, General McKenny received head and hip wounds (when he died in 1900, his doctors attributed his death to complications from these injuries). He was also president of the State Hospital for the Insane for three years, was actively interested in development of schools,⁷ was a pharmacist, and operated a pharmacy on 4th Street.

Later, he became quite involved in real estate development, building the McKenny block in downtown Olympia, and participating in building the

Olympia Hotel. Gordon Newell in *Rogues, Buffoons and Statesmen* notes that “General McKenny became a prime mover in a project to erect a truly palatial hotel with which the community could bedazzle the legislators.” With other civic leaders “he formed the Olympia Hotel Corporation, a community stock company in which scores of loyal citizens became stockholders.”⁸

He was eulogized for being “a brave soldier, a gallant officer, a good citizen, a kind and loving husband and father and an honest man. . . . [and] in every sense intensely American.”⁹ An Iowa newspaper characterized him as a man of firmness, grit and determination.¹⁰ Margaret demonstrated many of her father’s characteristics and referred to him often in her writing, always with a sense of pride and respect.

Though Margaret did not write as frequently about her mother, Cynthia, she was an early source of inspiration. In her 1929 book *Mushrooms of Field and Wood*, Margaret’s dedication reads: “To my Mother who always encouraged my excursions into field and wood, and to Mother Mary Wilfred, my first teacher



Margaret McKenny at age 12. Photograph courtesy of Washington State Library, Margaret McKenny Papers.

in nature study.”¹¹

Margaret attended the Providence Academy in Olympia, which was located only two blocks from her home,

graduating in the class of 1902. Maggie Raymond, a schoolmate of Margaret's from Providence, remembers her as "the smartest one in her class. She was always writing articles. The teacher idolized her and she idolized the teacher. They had their heads together a lot. After graduation, Sister Wilfred would come to visit and Margaret would take her around. You could see them on their hands and knees in the grass and out in the country photographing wildflowers."¹² After her graduation from Providence, Margaret attended the University of Washington and also the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Groton, Massachusetts.¹³

MCKENNY HOUSE

In 1913, Margaret, her mother, brothers and sister moved from their house on 7th Avenue and Capitol Way to a house they built at 2201 South Water Street. The house, which still stands, was directly across from the State Capital Museum (the Lord Mansion and Coach House). At that time, the area was very densely wooded and full of wildflowers.

Margaret set up a progressive kindergarten and school at the house which she operated for six years. The family lived downstairs, and the school was upstairs. Margaret charged \$5.00 per month for each student. The announcement for the opening of the school's fifth year stated that "the names of wildflowers and birds are taught, and general love and observation of nature encouraged."¹⁴

BACK EAST

In the 1920s Margaret went back East to study landscape design at Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Massachusetts. When Margaret arrived in Boston, one of the first things she did was visit the famous Arnold Arboretum, which impressed her very much.¹⁵ She served on the staff of the Coordinating Council on Nature Activities for The American Museum of Natural History. For six years she served as Secretary for the Special Publications Committee for the Garden Club of America, working on a history of American gardening. Nine of the fifteen books she published were written when she lived in New York, including *Your City Garden* in 1937 and *Birds in the Garden and How to Attract Them* in 1939.

While in New York, she also wrote a number of articles. One she wrote in the 1930s for the *New York Horticultural Society Bulletin* shows a glimpse of her philosophy on trees: "Perhaps America's slowness to appreciate the desirability of trees in our cities is a direct inheritance from our pioneer forefathers. In every old chronicle we read of how the axe rang through the land, so terrified by the great forests which stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific, our ancestors set out to destroy the trees and build themselves into checkerboard cities. Today we see how well their work of destruction was carried on."¹⁶

One of Margaret's most significant activities was her service as Executive



McKenny house on South Water Street in Olympia, 1939. Thurston County Assessor photograph, courtesy of Southwest Regional Archives Branch, Washington State Archives.

Secretary of the City Gardens Club of New York City, a position which carried great authority. She was exposed to famous naturalists and members of the National Audubon Society, and learned a great deal from them and from the vast amount of information she found in the libraries. She became acquainted with Junius Bird, a nationally-known botanist and conservationist, and Louise Beebe Wilder, a well-known eastern botanist.¹⁷ Margaret's love of nature matured in her work in New York City and her environmental interests and knowledge were strengthened.

RETURN TO WASHINGTON

In 1943, Margaret left the East Coast and returned to Washington State. In an interview, she said that Washington was "the most beautiful state in the union."¹⁸ In a poem titled "The Well Pacific," she referred to her years on the East Coast as being in exile:

"When in exile,
What I longed for most
Was the air of home,
Sweet, pure air
Flowing across my face,
Straight from the ocean."¹⁹

Shortly after her return to Washington, Margaret visited Mount Spokane as a guest of the Washington State Parks staff. The *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported that “Margaret was up every morning at 4.30 a.m. In talking about the beauty of our mountain she said wistfully ‘I wish someone would give me a mountain.’ A mountain! That knocked me off balance. Women, here below, have asked for a lot of

things, even the moon, but this is the first time I ever heard one wanting a mountain.”²⁰ Margaret held her sights high and felt that nothing was beyond her reach.

In Olympia, one of the first things she pursued was development of a radio program featuring the beauty and resources of our state.



Margaret McKenny, Alta Grim, and Mr. Price with a microphone making a radio broadcast for station KTBI, Tacoma. Photograph by Lee Merrill, from Washington State Library Collection, courtesy of Washington State Archives, Digital Archives.

In 1945, the Washington State Parks Committee hired Margaret to serve as the Committee's official photographer. She was so intense in her quests that she would often get up before dawn to catch certain lights in photographing a flower or a bird. She would sometimes sit up all night making camera studies of the moon. Some of her photography even received national acclaim.²¹

Hundreds of school children and community members attended her slide shows on wildflowers, mushrooms, and national parks. She conducted these sessions with a mixed attitude, as a 1944 diary entry mentions: "I like to show people the beauty that though it is so near them they often pass by. And yet when I'm through I feel utterly exhausted, not with the fatigue I feel after a day of photographing, but mental exhaustion. But if just one person seems to really appreciate the exquisite loveliness of a close-up view of some very simple flower, then I am revived and exhilarated again."²²

In 1953, Margaret was instrumental in forming Olympia's branch of the Audubon Society and later served as its president. Julius Peterson, an Olympia conservationist and member of the Audubon Society, recalls Margaret's direct approach. "She called me on the phone one day and said 'I'll be the first president and you'll be the secretary.'²³

THE OLD OLYMPIA WATERSHED

In 1955, the City of Olympia's Water Department needed cash, or so it said,

so the timber on the 180 acres of land known as the Old Olympia Watershed (now Watershed Park) was appraised and planned to be sold to the highest bidder. This watershed is located within minutes of the Capitol and has been described as "a steep-sided amphitheater, covered with a heavy forest of Douglas Fir; a virgin forest in the heart of the city; heritage of our native forest."²⁴ Leo Gallagher, then head of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, compared it to Central Park in New York City, stating "that although Central Park could now be sold for millions of dollars, it would not be."

Everyone had a plan for the watershed's future. The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission wanted to make the area into a park. The Olympia Planning Commission suggested dividing it into large residential lots and logging the remaining area. A member of the Washington State Game Department felt that the watershed was an ideal site for a fish hatchery.²⁵ In April 1955 an explanatory hearing (not a public hearing for input) was held at Olympia City Hall. Everything was explained except what good the public would get out of the timber in the long run. Days after that hearing, Margaret, as Audubon President and Chairman of the Olympia Garden Club's Conservation Committee, spoke out against the plan in *The Daily Olympian*. She commented on her attendance at that hearing by saying "It was announced that this was to be done, not whether the people, as a whole, wished it to be done."²⁶ She challenged the Commission with the



One of several trails in Watershed Park. Margaret McKenny's efforts to save the old watershed from logging resulted in the creation of this wonderful sylvan park. Photograph by Jer Hughes, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

question, "Why wasn't there a public meeting to discuss whether this logging should be done before a survey was made?" and argued for the creation of a park instead.²⁷

The Olympia Chamber of Commerce opposed the timber sale, insisting that the financial position of the Olympia Water Department was good. The Olympia City Commission threatened to raise water rates if more water was

not sold. Tom Allen, Commissioner of Public Works, said the City was considering using the money from the sale of the timber to expand water mains to outside areas to serve more people. The rationales continued.

Another hearing was held and Margaret presented petitions bearing hundreds of signatures.²⁸ The petitions urged the City Commission to forget about selling the timber or at least go

slowly and give more consideration to the problem. The Mayor also went on record against the proposal.²⁹ However in June 1955, the City Commission decided to let the chips fall where they might and instructed the city clerk to call for bids for logging the timber. At this juncture, Margaret organized a group called Citizens for the Future, undertaking an initiative ordinance campaign to tie the Commissioners' hands. Their goal was to preserve the Watershed Park as it stood, for public use, and to keep it from commercial exploitation.

By July 1, Margaret's organization had 2,600 signatures and needed 400 more.³⁰ Citizens for the Future held a meeting on the evening of July 4 at the State Capital Museum Coach House, to collect petitions and plan their next move, as the City Commission was planning to open bids for logging on July 5.³¹

However, on July 5, Judge Raymond W. Clifford, Thurston County Superior Court, issued an injunction preventing a contract to be awarded until after a hearing the following Monday.³² The court order was the result of a suit filed by six members of Citizens for the Future to delay action on the sale until residents could vote on the initiative. The six contended that a delay would cause no harm to the city, and maintained that the watershed timber was young and would actually increase in value over the next few months.³³ The battle was on and it was covered almost daily in the newspaper, often making the front page.

Margaret held frequent meetings at her home to discuss the group's strategy. Prospective buyers submitted their bids anyway, and the city discovered it could get \$70,000 for the timber. They criticized a "small minority" for blocking the sale and denying the much-needed funds.³⁴

Citizens for the Future lost the first round when the Thurston County Superior Court upheld a request to throw the lawsuit out. The decision was based on the incorrect legal channels being used in seeking the block, and because the logging project was properly within the legal domain of city officials.³⁵ The next day, Margaret's group appealed the Superior Court's decision to the Washington State Supreme Court. Chief Justice Frederick Hamly issued a restraining order blocking plans to log the timber until a hearing on July 29.³⁶

A series of legal moves ensued, but the final outcome was that the watershed remained intact. Citizens for the Future dropped their suit when the City placed the issue on the ballot. The ordinance adopted by the people in a special election in December 1955 stated that the watershed would never be used for anything other than an emergency water supply, or for other public purposes, unless such other use was approved by the vote of the people;³⁷ thus today's Watershed Park was created. On the anniversary of that ordinance, ten years later, the Thurston County Commissioners declared December 13 to be Margaret McKenny Appreciation Day.³⁸



On Arbor Day (April 3), 1963, Governor Albert Rosellini plants a tree on the grounds of the State Capital Museum in Olympia. Accompanying him are Sherry Ehrman, Robert Carpenter, and Margaret McKenny. Photograph C1986.43.63.4.3.7.1, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

STREET TREES

Margaret, with her intense love for trees, served on a 1957 committee in

which she was responsible for planting the English double-flowering hawthorns and eastern red maples that

are still present along Capitol Way.³⁹ Margaret remembered that “since very early days Olympia has been a city of trees and tree lovers. My father, who came here in 1867, said even then that Olympia looked like a New England town.”⁴⁰ The Street Committee, under Mayor Amanda Smith’s leadership, planted the first trees on Capitol Way from 14th Street to 24th Street.⁴¹

MUSHROOMS

Anyone who is interested in mushrooms knows about Margaret’s book *The Savory Wild Mushroom*, published in 1962.⁴² She is probably best known nationally as an authority on mushrooms. Her book is described as one of the best guides for mushroom hunters, and because of its high demand is regularly on hold at the Timberland Regional Library system.⁴³

Margaret loved to gather and cook mushrooms, but she also enjoyed photographing and painting watercolors of them.

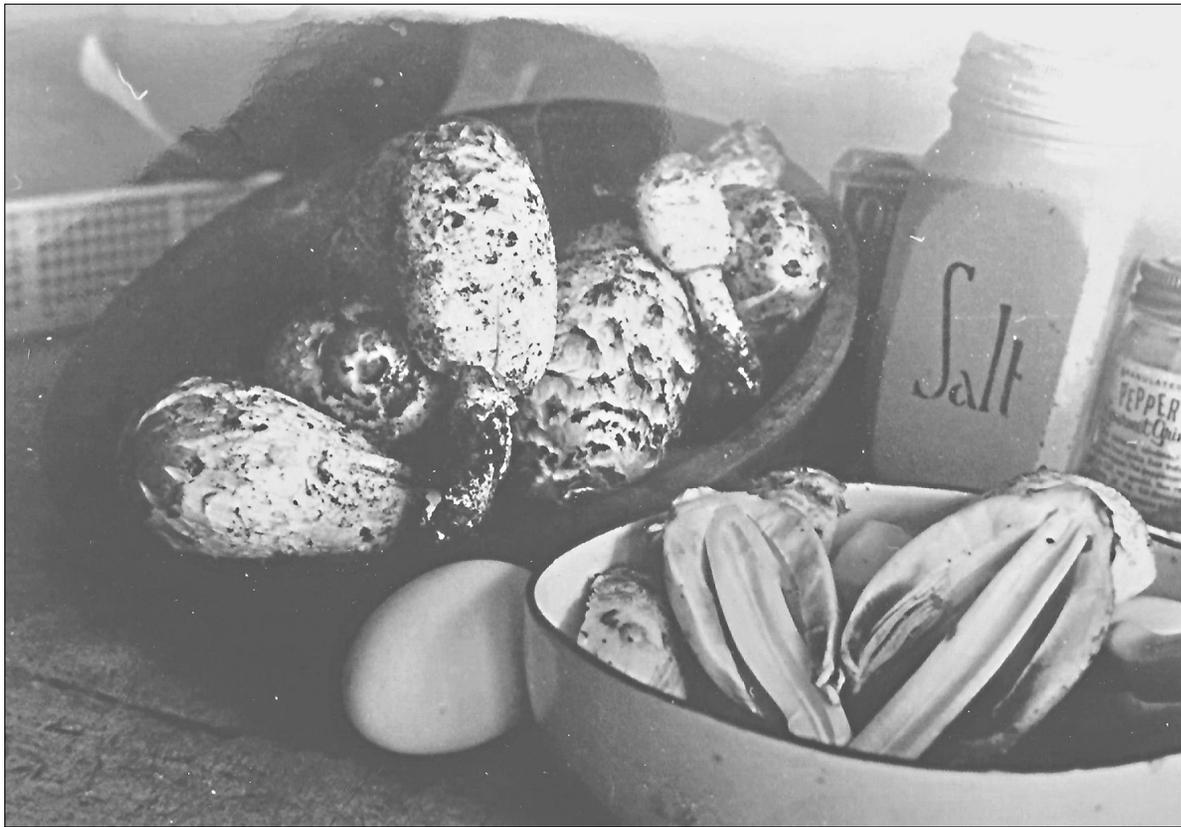
People often dropped by her house with mushrooms they had collected to ask for identification. In 1963 Margaret received the third annual award for “Outstanding Contributions to Amateur Mycology” by the People to People Committee on Fungi (now the North American Mycological Association).⁴⁴ Once when Helen Keller was in Olympia giving a lecture, Margaret, Helen, and Helen’s interpreter went on a nature walk and collected mushrooms.⁴⁵ Helen was able to identify them by their touch, as she had remembered

reading about them in Margaret’s books.

Robert Dunn of Olympia remembers finding an interesting-looking mushroom while playing in the woods in 1967 when he was eight years old. He informed his mother that he was taking it to school to show his classmates. His mother told him no, to which he replied “If I can’t take it to school, I’m not going to school.”⁴⁶ So he was off to school to show his treasure. The school called Margaret for identification. It was a *Laetiporus sulphureus* (chicken-of-the-woods), and is an edible non-poisonous fungi.

TEACHING

Children adored Margaret. Besides teaching kindergarten in her early years, she also taught creative writing. She began her classes by having the children describe: “What are the ten most beautiful things you have seen or heard this morning?” Kaye Sandahl was a neighbor and friend of Margaret’s and did much of her typing as well. Sandahl’s children played at Margaret’s house almost daily, and she said “Margaret was a wonderful influence on children. She gave of herself to all of the children and really cared about them. She saw their abilities and potential in a different way than perhaps parents do. My children were very lucky to have known her.”⁴⁷ Margaret seemed to have a driving urge to get people, especially children, to develop an appreciation for the intangibles.



A display of wild mushrooms in Margaret's kitchen in her house on Water Street. Photograph taken by Margaret; courtesy of Washington State Library, Margaret McKenny Papers.

FRIENDS

Mike Contris, a writer for *The Daily Olympian* and professor at Saint Martin's College (now University), knew Margaret well. He and Margaret worked together on educating the public, through his reporting, about local environmental issues, mushrooms, and other topics. Contris stated, "She was the first to convince me and others, through the articles she wrote, that we ought to attend to the environment."⁴⁸ He remembered that

she also had a great interest in Olympia's people.

At that time, Olympia was growing, so Contris was introduced to many newcomers through her. Professors, artists, budding authors and poets, doctors, businessmen and city officials gathered at Margaret's house on Water Street in the evenings to discuss art, eat oysters, and drink wine. Contris recalled "There she would be, at the top of her stairs, elegantly sitting in



Circa 1965, Margaret poses with a group of students and their teacher. Margaret displays her book Mushrooms. Photograph C2009.0.5, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

her big rocking chair with her huge cat on her lap. And just outside the window next to her hung a huge piece of suet and breadcrumbs scattered on the roof for the birds. She was the grand ol' dame with all of her favorites around her."⁴⁹ Contris went on to describe the living room as a "huge clutter of dried mushrooms, stacks of poems by various poets she wanted to

read, and the Indian legends she had written. She would try to help new writers get started and rewarded their creativity with her praise."⁵⁰

Charles Roe from Olympia was another friend of Margaret. He and his wife, Marilyn, sometimes visited her at her home. During the colder months, when she would turn on the heat, he

remembered the jolt of the furnace would send dust billowing around the room.⁵¹ In one of her untitled poems she reflected, "If I were a better house-keeper, I couldn't do this."⁵²

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY

In the 1950s, under Washington State Governor Arthur B. Langlie's administration, Margaret, along with several environmental groups, succeeded in preserving the Percival Cove area as a resting place for birds.

Margaret also rallied support for keeping Sylvester Park a public place. In 1955, she and others galvanized the community to oppose the construction of a parking garage underneath the park.⁵³ As with the Old Olympia Watershed, the debate was settled when the issue was put on the ballot in March 1956. The proposal to build the garage was defeated by 60% of the voters.⁵⁴

In August 1963, Margaret opposed a proposal to develop 40 acres of Priest Point Park into a recreational area to include several baseball fields. "I do not wish to speak against ball parks, but I feel the city can secure cleared land in another area which could be used for this purpose," she wrote.⁵⁵ Due to the advocacy efforts by Margaret and the Audubon Society, the City of Olympia abandoned the plan.⁵⁶ According to the hearing minutes of the Olympia Parks and Recreation Commission, a later plan proposed more passive recreational activities.⁵⁷

THE NISQUALLY DELTA

Margaret's last environmental cause before her death in 1969 was the Nisqually Delta. The 3200-acre parcel has significant cultural and historical value and includes Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, which was intended to protect the Southern Puget Sound's last major unspoiled river delta. Dan McLachlan, reporting in the *Tacoma News Tribune*, described the delta in 1979: "It is no wonder that motorists, passing by the delta...can't help but turn their heads to look out over its expanse. The delta appeals to something deep in every person's subconscious. It is a fundamental truth."⁵⁸

Weyerhaeuser proposed putting a port in the delta for log export, but the state had designated it "an area of particular concern," and environmentalists were fighting to protect it. The fight was a long one, in and out of the courts.⁵⁹

Margaret was always interested in the delta and fought for its preservation as early as 1947 when the Washington State Game Department became interested in acquiring it for game management, to include some hunting for the public. In 1964, she argued against the City of Seattle's proposal to use the delta as a place to bury its garbage.⁶⁰ When the Port of Tacoma wanted to amend its comprehensive plan to include 2,500 acres of the delta for a deep water port, she objected.⁶¹ She brought the issue before the Audubon Society. At the Port's public

hearing on the amendment in August 1965, Society members packed the hearing room. Since all public testimony could not be taken, the hearing was continued into September.⁶²

In 1965, Margaret organized a group known as the Washington Citizens Committee For Outdoor Resources.⁶³ Its purpose was to preserve the Nisqually Delta from any deep water port or industrialization. Part of her campaign was to get citizens involved in writing their state legislators, congressional representatives, and other federal, state and local governments. She wrote to Lady Bird Johnson, U. S. Senators Henry Jackson and Warren Magnuson (both from Washington State), the Department of the Interior, and many preservationists throughout the country.⁶⁴ The fact that she was known as a naturalist in both the west and the east helped the cause.

She believed the delta was of great value to colleges in studying water, and plant and animal life, as well as serving as a resting area for migratory waterfowl. Historically there was a wealth of data to be collected and assembled.

MARGARET'S LEGACY

On August 4, 1969, Margaret died in the Olympia Manor nursing home. She had suffered from arterial sclerosis and diabetes for several years, although coronary occlusion was listed as the immediate cause of death on her death certificate. Margaret's body was cremated.

Although Margaret never married and had no children of her own, she believed that children were "the hope of life."

Margaret McKenny believed in the value of preserving places like the Nisqually Delta. She ardently believed in the necessity of beauty in everyday life, and in the importance of keeping wild places wild. She knew that you couldn't approach nature by beating it into submission and she effectively led the way toward this realization. She wrote in her 1954 book *Wildlife of the Pacific Northwest*, "I feel that to be a nature lover, as I am, is to have an inexhaustible store of riches to share with others. And, if in this volume, I have shared my appreciation of this wealth, I am well rewarded."

Margaret dedicated her entire life to preserving this precious wealth. In doing so, she helped to shape the history of Thurston County in a colorful and sometimes dramatic way. She was devoted to convincing people that the Pacific Northwest was one of the most beautiful places in the world and above everything else, it should be preserved. Not unlike those who first settled here, she constantly sought new challenges and was blessed with the spirit of curiosity. As a typical pioneer, she exhibited a spirit of enterprise, great boldness, creativity, and independence in thought and action.

A lasting tribute to Margaret are the places named in her honor. Margaret McKenny Park is in Olympia at 3111 21st Avenue SE. It was purchased by

the City of Olympia in 1999 and officially named on January 13, 2009.⁶⁵ In 1992 the Olympia School Board voted to name the newest school Margaret McKenny Elementary as a tribute to her legacy.⁶⁶ It is located at 3250 Morse-Merryman Road SE. The Margaret McKenny campground is located on the banks of Waddell Creek in Capitol State Forest.

Margaret marshaled an army of people and sparked public interest in environmentalism. This enlightened citizenry helped to keep bureaucrats on the straight and narrow. The involvement often made amateur conservationists out of those people who least expected it. Author Gordon Newell said, “As a little tyke, Margaret McKenny gave me an appreciation of the thing she felt so strongly about—nature. She was one of our pioneers in that regard, and made people believe that a clear stream and a mountain meadow have greater value than almost anything else.”⁶⁷

NOTES

¹ Interview with author and historian Gordon Newell.

² State Capital Museum press release, April 10, 1985.

³ "United States Census, 1910," database with images, *FamilySearch*, (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MGVH-G8M> : accessed November 13, 2019), Margaret McKenny in household of Cynthia

McKenny, Olympia Ward 1, Thurston, Washington, United States; citing enumeration district (ED) ED 303, sheet 7A, family 137, NARA microfilm publication T624 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1982), roll 1672; FHL microfilm 1,375,685. “Washington State and Territorial Censuses, 1857-1892”, *Ancestry.com*. Provo, UT, 2006 (accessed November 13, 2019).

⁴ Three other children were born to Thomas and Cynthia McKenny (Washington Irving McKenny, Adelaide K. McKenny and Bertha McKenny), but they did not live to adulthood. *Find A Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com>: accessed November 13, 2019), memorial page for Washington Irving McKenny (6 Jul 1866–21 Aug 1869), Find A Grave Memorial no. 49816125, Adelaide K. McKenny (13 Dec 1869–13 Oct 1878), Find A Grave Memorial no. 49816593, and Bertha “Little Birdie” McKenny (26 Jan 1873–28 Nov 1874), Find A Grave Memorial no. 49816053, citing Masonic Memorial Park, Tumwater, Thurston County, Washington, USA; maintained by Elaine and Bill Schrock (contributor 46915548).

⁵ Washington State and Territorial Censuses, 1857-1892. “United States Census, 1880,” *Ancestry.com* and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Lehi, UT, 2010. Year: 1880; Census Place: Olympia, Thurston, Washington; Roll: 1397; Page: 114A; Enumeration District: 015

⁶ Margaret McKenny papers, 1871-

GARDENERS BROTHERS
INC.

Tel. El 5-6109
643 Lexington Ave.
N. Y. C.
Jan. 22, 1936.

JAN 29 9 55 AM '36

Mr. J. Frederick Dawson
99 Warren St.
Brookline, Mass.

ansd 1/29/36

My dear Mr. Dawson:

I wish to make a formal application for a position to assist you in planting the Seattle Arboretum. My qualifications are as follows:

Education: High school graduation followed by courses in botany at college, and course in landscape design, plant material, general horticulture and history of gardens at Lowthorpe.

Experience: Have had my own garden all my life. Designed and laid out wild flower and bird sanctuaries and small gardens, both here and in the West. Have made a special study of the trees of Washington and taken numerous photographs of them. These photographs have been exhibited a number of times, among other places at the Brooklyn Museum. Have also studied the birds of Washington and know their food requirements and nesting habits. Was for 5 years with the Garden Club of America assisting Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood in her work on GARDENS OF COLONY AND STATE, a history of gardening in America. For the last six months have done much original writing and editorial work on the Gardeners' Encyclopedia, edited by E. L. D. Seymour. Have made quite a study of mycorrhizal association and helped organize the New York Mycological Society, of which I am now secretary.

Publications: MUSHROOMS OF FIELD AND WOOD published by John Day of N.Y. articles in House Beautiful, Gardeners' Chronicle, My Garden and poetry in House and Garden, Poetry etc. Have now in preparation a book on western trees and a children's book on western birds.

Religion: Protestant

Salary: Open

References: Dr. George H. Sherwood, Director American Museum of Natural History, Mrs. Louise Beebe Wilder, Mrs. Robert O. Hill, Mrs. Luke Vincent Lockwood, Mr. E. L.D. Seymour.

Yours very truly,

Margaret McKim

Opposite: In this 1936 letter now in the collection of the Library of Congress, Margaret essentially applied for a job assisting in the planting of the Seattle Arboretum (now known as the Washington Park Arboretum). Her résumé included much practical experience, as well as formal botanical and design training at the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Groton, Massachusetts. A slightly later letterhead of Margaret's listed her skills as garden design, garden maintenance, conservation, natural science, arts and decoration, and exploration. Image: Margaret McKenny, Letter to J. Frederick Dawson, January 22, 1936. From Library of Congress, Olmsted Associates Records, 1863-1971, MSS52571, Washington State Digital Archives, <http://digitalarchives.wa.gov> (accessed December 10, 2019).

1969, Washington State Library MS 0252.

Morning Olympian, August 5, 1969, page 1.

⁷ Reverend H. K. Hines, *An Illustrated History of the State of Washington*. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893, page 338.

¹⁴ McKenny Papers, Box 1.

⁸ Gordon Newell, *Rogues, Buffoons and Statesmen: the Inside Story of Washington's Capital City and the Hilarious History of 120 Years of State Politics*. Seattle: Hangman Press, 1975, page 121.

¹⁵ Interview with Flo Brodie, Olympia conservationist and past president of the Nisqually Delta Association, May 31, 1984.

⁹ Obituary for "General McKenny." *Washington Standard*, November 17, 1899, page 3.

¹⁶ Margaret McKenny, Executive Secretary, City Gardens Club, "Trees in New York City." *New York Historical Society Bulletin*, circa 1930s.

¹⁰ *Daily Gate City* newspaper, Keokuk, Iowa, November 11, 1899.

¹⁷ McKenny Papers, Box 11.

¹¹ Margaret McKenny, *Mushrooms of Field and Wood*. Rahway, New Jersey: Quinn and Boden Company, 1929.

¹⁸ "From the Tree Tops." Unnamed and undated newspaper article, McKenny Papers, Box 1.

¹² Interview with Margaret "Maggie" Raymond (born 1887), Roolan Health Care Center, Olympia, May 11, 1984.

¹⁹ McKenny Papers, Box 8.

¹³ "Death Claims Miss McKenny." *The*

²⁰ "From the Tree Tops."

²¹ McKenny Papers, Box 1.

²² McKenny Papers, Box 7.

²³ Interview and documents from Julius Peterson, Olympia conservationist

and Audubon Society member, Olympia, April and May, 1984.

²⁴ The author attributes this to Leo Gallagher.

²⁵ “City Watershed Area Studied: Fish Plant Pondered; Park Plan Is Doubtful.” *The Daily Olympian*, April 29, 1955, page 1.

²⁶ Letter to the editor from Miss Margaret McKenny, *The Daily Olympian*, April 12, 1955, page 5.

²⁷ Letter to the editor from Miss Margaret McKenny, *The Daily Olympian*, April 12, 1955, page 5.

²⁸ “Hearing Asked On Watershed.” *The Daily Olympian*, April 26, 1955, page 1.

²⁹ “Judge Orders City to Halt Timber Sales.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 5, 1955, page 1.

³⁰ “Watershed Log Job Showdown Plan Set as Bid Date Nears.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 1, 1955, page 1.

³¹ “Petition Notice.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 3, 1955, page 10.

³² “Judge Orders City to Halt Timber Sales.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 5, 1955, page 1.

³³ “Judge Orders City to Halt Timber Sales.”

³⁴ Phil Rensvold, Chairman, Citizens for the Future, Olympia, “Watershed

Letter.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 10, 1955, page 16.

³⁵ “Timber Sale Foes Lose Test in Court: Suit Rejected in Watershed Plan Dispute.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 13, 1955, page 1.

³⁶ “Supreme Court Gets Watershed Fight: City’s Timber Plan Halted Until After Hearing on July 29.” *The Daily Olympian*, July 15, 1955, page 1.

³⁷ McKenny Papers, Box 7; Olympia Municipal Ordinance 3.24.010-.040. (<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Olympia/>) (accessed November 13, 2019); “Manager, Park, Watershed Vote Set.” *The Daily Olympian*, October 26, 1955, page 1; “Vote Prospect Ends Court Hearing Plan in Watershed Case.” *The Daily Olympian*, December 4, 1955, page 1.

³⁸ Resolution No. 3392, Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Thurston County Commissioners, December 13, 1965; “Margaret McKenny Day.” *The Daily Olympian*, December 14, 1965, page 1.

³⁹ “State Capitol Problems Get City Attention.” *The Daily Olympian*, January 30, 1957, page 1; “New Trees Planned Along Capitol Way.” *The Daily Olympian*, March 13, 1957, page 1.

⁴⁰ Article by Margaret McKenny, January 17, 1957, McKenny Papers, Box 13.

⁴¹ “Olympians Plan Church Cornerstone Rite, Start Tree Planting Pro-

ject.” *The Sunday Olympian*, March 31, 1957, page 1.

⁴² A revised and enlarged edition of the book called *The New Savory Mushroom* was published in 1987.

⁴³ For example, it is listed as the first book in the recommended reading list of the Pacific Northwest Mycological Society, (<http://www.psms.org/reading.php>) (accessed November 14, 2019).

⁴⁴ “Recipients of the Award for Contributions to Amateur Mycology,” North American Mycological Association website (<https://namyco.org/awards.php#amateur-r>) (accessed November 14, 2019).

⁴⁵ The excursion is detailed in the story “Infinitely More,” by Margaret McKenny. Their friendship is corroborated in Helen Keller’s correspondence from Jackson Webster, notifying Helen of friend Margaret McKenny’s automobile accident, December 18, 1962, American Foundation for the Blind, Helen Keller Archives, Box 154, General Public Correspondence 1962 So-Z.

⁴⁶ Interview with Robert Dunn, Olympia, Washington, June 18, 2019.

⁴⁷ Interview with Kaye Sandahl, legislative assistant to Washington State Senator Bill Fuller, Olympia, Washington, April 27, 1984.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mike Contris, writer for *The Daily Olympian*, Olympia,

Washington, May 5, 1984.

⁴⁹ Interview with Mike Contris.

⁵⁰ Interview with Mike Contris.

⁵¹ Interview with Charles Roe, Olympia, March 27, 2019.

⁵² Untitled poem, McKenny Papers, Box 9.

⁵³ “Park Garage Plan Provides Lively Debate.” *The Daily Olympian*, May 11, 1955, page 1.

⁵⁴ “Vote Tally” and “Trio Selected for Olympia Jobs June 4.” *The Daily Olympian*, March 14, 1956, page 1.

⁵⁵ “Park Plan Airing Shows Need for Priority List.” *The Daily Olympian*, August 9, 1963, page 1.

⁵⁶ “Recreation Commission Asks Chalet Renovation.” *The Daily Olympian*, November 6, 1963, page 1.

⁵⁷ Hearing minutes, Olympia Parks and Recreation Commission, August 8, 1963.

⁵⁸ “Nisqually Delta: Nature’s Miracle of Earlier Age.” *Tacoma News Tribune*, February 25, 1979, page 49.

⁵⁹ Flo Brodie and Del McBride, “Nisqually Chronology of Historical Events.” Nisqually Delta Association, March 21, 1978.

⁶⁰ Brodie and McBride, “Nisqually

Chronology of Historical Events.”

⁶¹ “The Nisqually Plan.” *Tacoma News Tribune*, July 16, 1972, page 70.

⁶² “It’s Full Steam Ahead as Nisqually Port Plan Hits Its First Reef.” *The Daily Olympian*, August 26, 1965, page 1.

⁶³ Mike Contris, “She’s a Staunch Nisqually Ally.” “The Crucible” column, *The Daily Olympian*, October 6, 1965, page 4.

⁶⁴ Edward A Whitesell, ed., *Defending Wild Washington: A Citizen’s Action Guide*. Seattle: The Mountaineers Books, 2004, page 314.

⁶⁵ “Margaret McKenny Park,” City of Olympia website ([http://olympiawa.gov/city-services/parks/parks-and-trails/margaret-mckenny-](http://olympiawa.gov/city-services/parks/parks-and-trails/margaret-mckenny-park.aspx)

[park.aspx](http://olympiawa.gov/city-services/parks/parks-and-trails/margaret-mckenny-park.aspx)) (accessed November 14, 2019).

⁶⁶ “Olympia: Elementary Named after Conservationist.” *The Daily Olympian*, November 30, 1992, page 13.

⁶⁷ Interview with author and historian Gordon Newell.

Sally Turnbull is retired from public service with the State of Washington. In 1984, she started research on Margaret McKenny while studying American and Pacific Northwest history at The Evergreen State College. In 1985, she hosted a public reception at the State Capital Museum honoring McKenny’s 100th birthday. Sally enjoys tasting craft beers of the Pacific Northwest.



A 2011 panoramic view of the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (now known as the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge). The iconic twin barns are visible at the left. Margaret McKenny helped save this site from industrial development. Photo by Joe Mabel; courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

WHO/WHAT/WHERE IS IT?

This object is a printing press made by Adam Ramage of Philadelphia. The press was used to print Olympia's very first newspaper, *The Columbian*. Its first issue appeared on September 11, 1852, when Washington was still officially part of Oregon Territory.

The Columbian was established as a weekly paper by Thornton F. McElroy (pictured on back cover) and James W. Wiley; they published the paper every Saturday at "\$5 per year by mail or taken at the office."

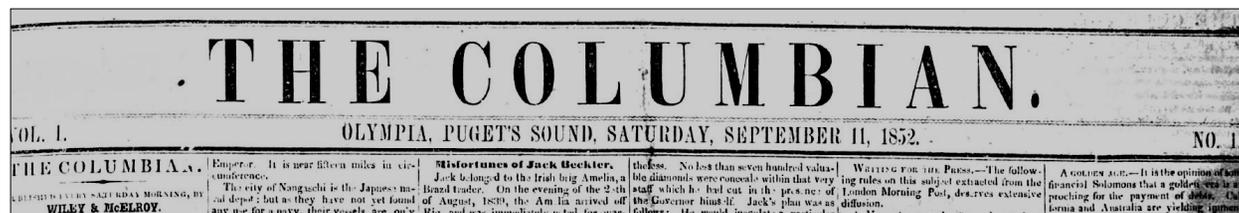
In 1922, noted historian Edmond S. Meany wrote an article titled "Newspapers of Washington Territory," in *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Volume 13, Number 3. Meany detailed the history of the Ramage press:

"The equipment for the paper was brought from Portland in the schooner *Mary Taylor* in the summer of 1852. The press was an old Ramage, so called because it was constructed by Adam Ramage, who went to Philadelphia in 1790 and is believed to have been the first builder of presses in America. This

particular press has had a remarkable history. It was used in Mexica [sic] for the printing of *pronuncimientos* until 1834, when it was moved to Monterey, California, for a similar service. In 1846, it was moved to San Francisco, where the *Star* and, later, the *Alta California* were printed on it. When Thomas J. Dryer established the *Portland Oregonian*, this same old press printed the first issue on December 4, 1850. After serving the *Columbian*, it printed the first paper in Seattle and pioneered in other towns."

Photo of Thornton F. McElroy, who co-founded The Columbian with James W. Wiley. Photo AR-07809001-ph004349; courtesy of State Library Photograph Collection, 1851-1990, Washington State Archives, Digital Archives (accessed December 12, 2019).

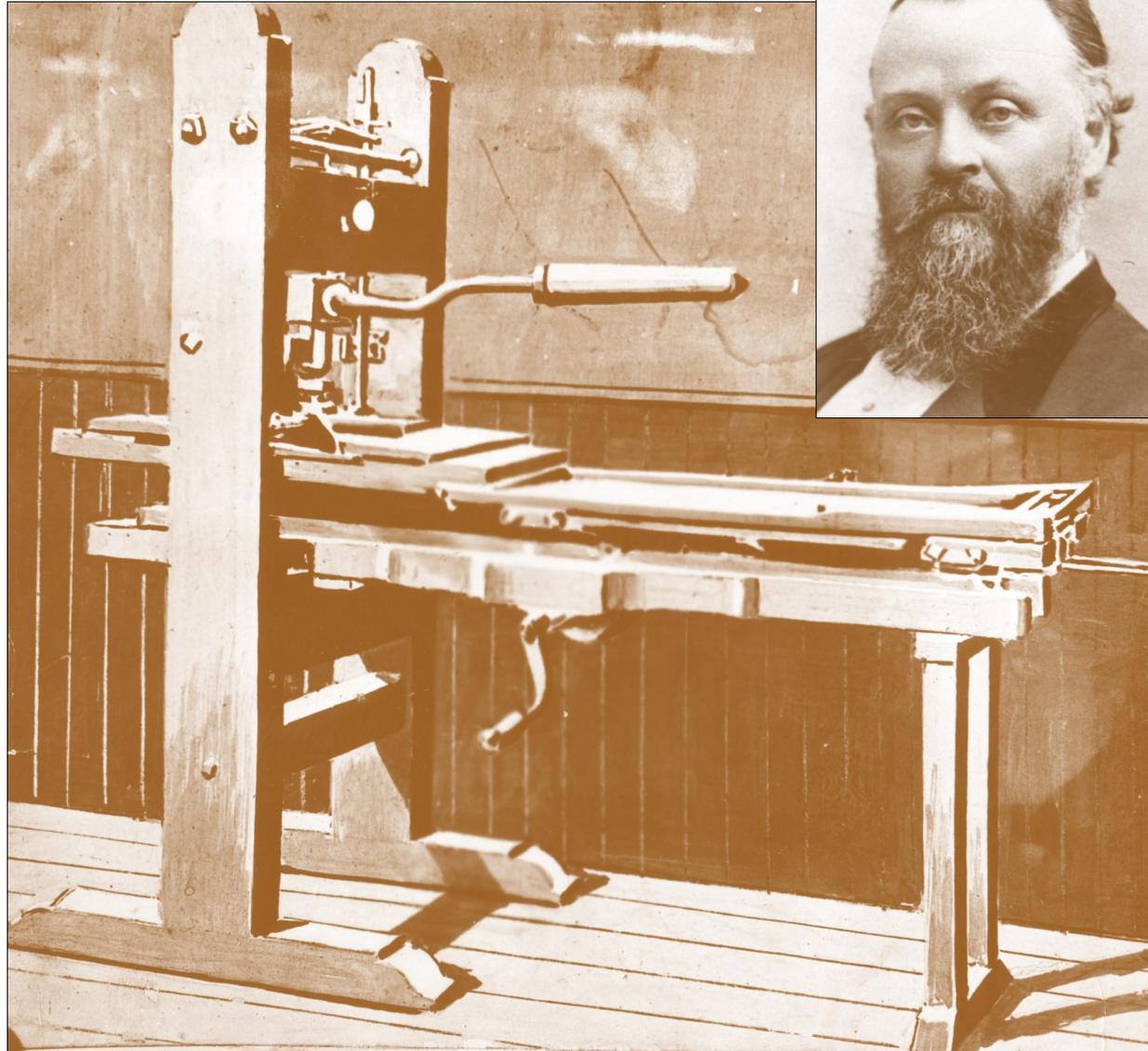
Photo of the Ramage press, photo AR-07809001-ph004571, taken circa 1935 by the Works Progress Commission; courtesy of State Library Photograph Collection, 1851-1990, Washington State Archives, Digital Archives (accessed December 12, 2019).



The nameplate, or masthead, of the first issue of The Columbian newspaper, issued September 11, 1852, by Thornton F. McElroy and James W. Wiley.

WHO/WHAT/WHERE IS IT?

A ROTATING FEATURE SHOWCASING ARTIFACTS FROM THURSTON COUNTY HERITAGE GROUPS



What is this contraption? In the early 1850s, it resided in Olympia, but is now ensconced at Seattle's Museum of History and Industry. See inside back cover for more information on the object and the man (inset) associated with it.