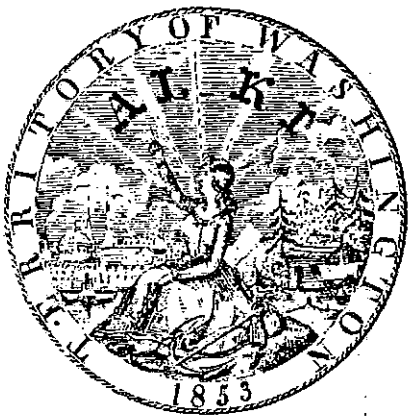
Journeys to the Past

Historical Documents of Washington



Washington State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State

JOURNEYS TO THE PAST

Historical Documents Of Washington

Prepared by the staff of the Washington State Archives

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Mike Colton - Tumwater High School
Mike Curtis - Capital High School
Rebecca Downey - Timberline High School
Dale Martin - Tumwater High School
Robert McIver - Tumwater High School
Robert Safsten - Bellingham High School

State Archives branch staff members Tim Eckert, Jim Moore, and Mike Saunders also deserve our appreciation for contributing local record samples to the project.

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PREFACE

The Washington State Archives was originally created in 1909 to deal with the problems of controlling and preserving the records of the government of Washington. It currently operates under legislation passed in 1957, and is a division of the Office of the Secretary of State. The purpose of the Archives is to preserve the historically valuable records of state government in Washington and make them available for research. Most of the holdings are drawn from the current records created by the State through an appraisal process. Records are judged to be "archival" if they have enduring historical significance, taking into account the research needs of historians, genealogists, demographers, legal researchers, and the many other groups which use the resources.

The charter of the Archives also includes responsibility to ensure that historically valuable local records are preserved, protected, and made available for public use. In meeting this responsibility, a system of regional state archives has been established throughout the State. Each branch is staffed by a professional archivist who is responsible for accessioning archival records from cities, counties, and other local agencies. The regional branches also provide secure storage conditions for the records and reference service to the public.

Under the terms of the Public Records Law (RCW 40.14) and the Public Disclosure Act (RCW 42.17), public records are open and available to anyone. Certain kinds of information are restricted from public scrutiny to protect the privacy rights of individuals and to protect the security of current investigations. Almost all archival records are open for research, however, and may be used by any person having a reason to search them. No charge is made for the inspection of public records, although no archival materials may be removed from the premises.

Teachers and students who wish to request access to Washington's public records should contact a member of the Archives research staff or a regional archivist during customary office hours.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

"Journeys to the Past" centers around a collection of facsimiles of original historical documents selected from Washington's State archival resources. Directed towards the high school level, the project has been designed to be used as an instructional supplement in Washington and Pacific Northwest history courses.

The study of primary source materials in the classroom can help students develop a feeling of history from the perspective of those who actually lived the events of the past. As they learn how to read an historical document, students will find significant information which they can use to test the various statements and theories that have become accepted historical "facts". Secondary sources, such as textbooks, often present issues in a manner which is overly simplistic and subject to the interpretation of an intermediary. This is to be expected, since it is the task of the historian - the author of the text - to weave hundreds of historical details into a greater context. By having some of the original documents available for use in conjuction with textbooks, however, students themselves will be able to share in the role of historian: deducing facts, observing trends, and forming their own generalizations. This, in turn, will help students grasp a better understanding of the value of historical records and the many sources of research that are available. History will seem more relevant and exciting as they become aware that both public and private collections contain important clues as to what was actually happening during other eras.

The inspiration for this project was derived from a package of facsimile documents designed to be used in Illinois schools for the study of local history. This concept was not particularly new; in fact, the distribution of facsimiles of original documents for display and study is quite common. The idea of systematically selecting a collection of state documents and packaging them along with a teacher's guide for use in schools, however, is innovative.

The Washington State project has been considerably expanded in scope. Before any documents were selected, the Washington State Archives decided on a topical/chronological approach for the collection, and an outline was drawn up which covered a broad range of Washington's history, from the formation of the Territory in 1853 through World War II. The themes chosen were those which seem to highlight the State's history and are covered to some degree in high school texts.

The next step was to invite a committee of social studies teachers from various secondary schools to refine the outline and

other elements of the project. Based upon the observations and suggestions of the committee, as well as an inventory of relevant archival holdings, fifteen categories of study were decided upon, with a varying number of documents in each category. Through subsequent meetings of the Teachers Advisory Committee and other educational groups, the concepts and the document selections were further refined.

The project outline was greeted with enthusiasm by the educators and by the Washington Commission for the Humanities, which awarded the Archives a grant to pay for the printing of the documents. Endorsements were received from the Washington State Social Studies Commission, the Washington Centennial Commission, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Description of Package Format

Facsimiles of the original documents have been reproduced on parchment-style card stock to enhance their aesthetic appeal. Printed on the back of each facsimile is a typed transcription of the document text. The original spacing, spelling, deletions, and corrections have been retained as in the original text.

Following each transcription is a set of questions concerning details and the implications of the document. The questions have been prepared in an effort to encourage a more accurate observation of the document and to stimulate discussion of the subject area. Questions may pertain to the document itself, to the document in relation to others in the category, or to larger themes. In some cases, they require deductions and generalizations on the part of the students, or research using other sources.

The source for each document as it is filed under the State Archives classification system is also provided on the back of the facsimiles. Sources have been noted for two reasons: so that students can readily find the originals should they desire to do more research on a particular topic, and also to demonstrate the diversity of materials that are available for public access. Unless otherwise noted, all the original documents are held by the Washington State Archives.

Copies of the transcriptions, question sets, and sources have been included in the instructor's manual to facilitate classroom presentation. Also included in the manual are introductory narratives for each subject category written by Dr. Keith Murray, Professor Emeritus at Western Washington University. These historical summaries have been prepared as an instructional supplement for those teachers who may be unfamiliar with a particular subject area. They are not intended to take the place of a good classroom text, but rather to provide a general context for the documents in the collection.

Document selection was based primarily on content and on how well an individual document represented the theme of a particular subject

category. Other criteria for selection included the length of the document, its format, and the clarity and accuracy of the information in the text. An effort was also made to include as many different types of primary sources as possible. Correspondence, legislation, court case files, and military orders were the most common record types used.

Classroom Use

The use of original documents in the classroom goes back many hundreds of years, in a notable instance to the first universities established in Germany during the Middle Ages. The original history seminars consisted of small groups of students who would study historical documents one at a time, very closely and from every angle, to see why and under what conditions the documents were created, and their role in recording historical events. The idea was that primary sources must be thoroughly studied for a proper understanding of the information they impart. Only then can history be written. Thousands upon thousands of such seminars created the basis for much of the history we read today.

The modern classroom application of historical records as teaching aids can raise a variety of questions and problems, and it is therefore important that instructors remain flexible with their use. Curriculum schedules and student reading levels may vary. Terminology, format, and writing styles of certain documents may be unfamiliar. Teachers may be asked to explain what "really" happened because students are used to relying on the precise explanations of a textbook. Instructors should not feel responsible for knowing everything about all the documents. Instead, they should become a source of guidance, helping students to discover how to find more information about a particular person or event.

Originally, the idea for classroom use of the "Journeys" collection centered around discussion of the documents by an entire class. Students would be given copies of the documents (or view them as a class on an overhead projector), and each document and category would be discussed as the class reached the corresponding point in the textbook. This would allow students to use a specific piece of historical evidence to deduce a generalization that may or may not support the textbook position.

An alternative would be to break the class into small groups or seminars, assigning each group a specific document or category to discuss and research. Students would be asked to examine a document or documents before consulting other sources. Based on the document examination, they would form a conclusion or generalization about the issue or event, and write it down. Following this exercise, students would then be asked to study other sources, then consider the subject again, writing or discussing their first conclusions in light of the additional information they had obtained. In this way, students would better understand how conclusions and opinions are changed as a result of re-evaluation based upon additional information.

Another concept applicable to certain document categories would be

to simulate a trial using the documents as court exhibits. This approach subjects the documents to critical examination by students in an adversarial situation. It encourages oral expression in a formal proceeding, exposes students to a judicial process, and encourages analytical thought and deductive reasoning in resolution of a legal issue.

Instructors may also assign students to roles as journalists. Each student would report on an historical issue or event as if it had just occurred, using the documents as sources of information. This concept can be expanded in various ways. For example, some students could report objectively while others could take editorial positions representing a particular region, constituency, or philosophy. The Indian Wars, I.W.W, and Women's Rights categories could be used in this way. The journalist role-playing approach allows students to exercise their writing skills, while closely examining a slice of history as if they were participants or, at least, on-site observers.

The documents can also be used for comparative studies such as the similarities and differences between the territorial and state governments. While the "Journeys" collection contains insufficient documentation in any one category for complete comparisons, selected documents, along with other available materials, can support such studies.

There are a variety of ways the document collection, as it is now composed, might be used in the classroom, and the above suggestions are merely examples of how elements of the collection can be woven into the fabric of different course plans.

Future "Journeys"

The "Journeys to the Past" collection is only a representative sampling of the more than 75,000,000 historical documents preserved by the State Archives and its regional branches. The Archives recognizes that, as a sampling, the collection lacks depth and limits certain classroom uses such as comparative studies. There are many possibilities for the expansion fo the project to include more documents and additional subject categories. A larger collection, drawing upon the holdings of other archival repositories, was originally planned, but was dismissed due to limited resources. Hopefully, the availability of "Journeys" as it is now constructed will lead to a more comprehensive collection - perhaps as a centennial project.

The Archives welcomes suggestions and ideas from teachers on how to improve and expand the collection. We hope that "Journeys" will be a useful classroom tool and that you will share with us the innovative ways in which you have found to use it.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF WASHINGTON STATE

Bands of wanderers from Asia came to North America, according to available evidence, between 25,000 and 30,000 years ago. Some of their descendents, the ancestors of our Northwest Indian groups, arrived in this region between 10,000 and 15,000 years ago. At the time of their first contact with white traders, the Indians had developed a highly complex social and economic system with a set of ethical values and kinds of religions that differed considerably from those that the Europeans brought with them.

The history of white men in Washington began when explorers searching for a Northwest Passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean found sea otters and fur seal whose pelts could be sold for huge profits in the markets of Europe and China. A steady parade of ships came and went, manned by Spanish, English, American, or occasionally French or Russian crews. Some were traders, and some explorers, and by 1815 they had charted and named most of the bays, rivers, sounds, and islands of the Northwest Coast. In the interior, overland expeditions were sent by British fur companies to establish trading posts along the inland rivers. The American government sent a party of explorers under the command of Lewis and Clark to report on the animals, plants, inhabitants and geography of the area. After an arduous overland journey, they reached the Pacific Ocean in 1805. They returned in 1806 and reported their findings to the nation.

Eventually, American fur trading companies also established posts at the mouths of the chief rivers leading from the interior. The partners of John Jacob Astor opened places for trading on the Columbia, Spokane, Okanogan, and Snake Rivers. At once their English competitors build rival posts, until the region north of the Columbia and the Snake were dotted with fur-trading establishments.

After the failure of Astor's enterprise, the Hudson's Bay Company overcame all competition and set up its central headquarters at Fort Vancouver, on the banks of the Columbia, near the mouth of the Willamette River. The Company built many inland posts for trade and encouraged farming around these forts. The Hudson's Bay Company was the supreme authority in government and trade in the Northwest until 1843.

Into the fur-trading paradise created by the Company, there came occasional Americans, starting in the late 1820's. Some were traders, trappers, and mountain men, but many came as missionaries to convert the native Indians to Christianity. Around the mission stations there soon developed small, more or less permanent communities of American citizens. Many of the neighboring Indians died of diseases contracted from traders or missionaries, for they had little immunity from European diseases. As a result of one such epidemic of measles, the Whitman mission was destroyed by Cayuse Indians in reprisal for the deaths of the Indian children. Other settlements, however, developed rapidly, and the settlers demanded

that the United States assume governmental control over the whole Oregon country, which then stretched from California to Alaska.

Because of a previous joint-occupation agreement, neither the United States nor Great Britain could set up a legal government which had exclusive control over the Pacific Northwest. While the Americans waited for their country to do something about a boundary between themselves and the British, the settlers formed a provisional government for the whole Oregon region in 1843. Three years later, a treaty was signed between the United States and Great Britain which settled the boundary issue at the 49th parallel except for the San Juan Islands. In 1848, Oregon was organized as a separate territory of the United States.

The new territory was much too large, however, and too sparsely settled for efficient government. After three unsatisfactory years, the settlers living north of the Columbia asked Congress to divide Oregon, and to form a new territory. In March, 1853, Congress agreed, and the Territory of Washington was organized.

There were only a few thousand whites and perhaps thirty thousand Indians living in Washington Territory, which included what is now Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana. Acute sectional rivalries began to develop due to mountain barriers and poor methods of communication. By the late 1850's, there were three main population centers in the Territory. One was located in the Snake and Clearwater Valleys, extending from Walla Walla to Lewiston. Another was centered in Vancouver, on the Columbia River, and the third center was situated in the Puget Sound basin. It included the towns of Olympia, Steilacoom, Port Townsend, Seattle, Coupeville, and Whatcom.

Population growth was slow during these early days. In spite of generous land laws giving large portions of Indian lands to settlers (often without signing treaties with the Indians), not many people made the difficult trip across the Great Plains or came by ship around South America. Gold discoveries in California, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia drained away many of the male settlers who were already living in Washington Territory. Trouble with the Indians over lands taken from them for which they had received no payment led to a brief but costly war in the late 1850's and this, too, held settlement back. In 1863, Walla Walla, the largest town in the Territory, lost much of its political and economic power base to Boise when Idaho Territory was organized.

The Civil War brought little prosperity to such a remote region, and the Depression of 1873 hurt the Territory badly. High hopes had been raised when the Northern Pacific Railroad had been chartered to build from Lake Superior to Puget Sound, but because of the Depression, the railroad ceased construction. The Puget Sound towns had no highways to the interior and no railroads, so they had to depend on ocean shipping to get raw materials to

market. Even lumber, the region's most abundant resource, was hard to sell at a profit, for freight rates were high. Consequently, homesteaders and merchants, alike, found themselves in financial difficulty.

In 1876, a majority of voters approved the idea of becoming a state as the solution to their economic woes. In 1878, electors went farther and authorized a constitutional convention to meet in Walla Walla to write a charter of government. Their disillusionment with the Northern Pacific, however, strengthened by suspicions about railroads in general, led to opposition from all railroad companies concerning statehood. Congress listened to the railroad officials, and refused to accept the new constitution or to transfer North Idaho back to Washington.

In 1879, Henry Villard, a German immigrant in Oregon, gained control of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company which had transportation rights in the lower Columbia Valley. Within two years, he and his financial backers had taken over the bankrupt Northern Pacific and Villard had been elected president. His plan was to join the Portland-Vancouver area with the town growing up around Spokane Falls. The land policies of Villard and the Northern Pacific Railroad incensed the farmers through whose properties the swiftly completed line passed. The road completely cut off Walla Walla and stopped before reaching Puget Sound. Nevertheless, after Villard was ousted and the railroad was finally finished across the Cascade Mountains in 1883, thousands of people moved to Washington.

Throughout the 1880's, Congressional and Presidential control was equally divided between Republicans and Democrats. The Democrats were afraid of this uneasy balance and took steps to refuse admission to any petitioning territories. In the election of 1876, shortly after Colorado had been admitted to the Union, the electoral votes of that state had cost the Democrats the Presidency. After that, the leaders of the Democratic Party did not want to allow the admission of any more western states, lest they also vote Republican.

While Congress was debating various admission bills, the labor policies of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company began to cause serious rioting in Washington Territory. Chinese laborers had been imported to work in the railroad-controlled coal mines, and Caucasion miners had lost their jobs. The latter, infuriated when they and their families were evicted from Company-owned towns, drove the Chinese from mines in Tacoma and Seattle. In Congress, Democrats cited the riots as proof that Washington was too unruly to be able to govern itself. No prospective western states were given consideration for statehood through the first adminstration of President Grover Cleveland.

After the election of 1888, however, which the Republicans won, a bill was passed in both houses of Congress which provided that North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington were eligible to be considered for admission to the Union. A constitutional

convention for Washington Territory met in Olympia during the summer of 1889. After a delay caused by severe fires in the business districts of Spokane, Ellensburg, and Seattle, a general election was held and the voters approved the work of the Convention. The only articles that were rejected were those dealing with women's suffrage and prohibition. Congress and President Benjamin Harrison approved the Constitution as well, and Washington entered the Union on November 11, 1889. Montana and the two Dakotas were also admitted in 1889, and Idaho and Wyoming joined the Union the following year.

1890 was a good year economically for Washington. Several towns grew to become small cities, and the reconstruction of the burned areas of Spokane, Seattle, and Ellensburg provided jobs and markets for many workmen and suppliers. The Great Northern Railroad would connect with Seattle in January, 1893, and the anticipation of a competitor to the Northern Pacific line brought land speculators to Puget Sound in droves. The panic of 1893 a few months later, however, hit Washington very hard. Silver mines closed, lumber mills went out of business, banks failed by the scores, farm produce wouldn't sell, and the railroads, which had caused the brief flurry of prosperity, were blamed for the hard times. The railroads, coupled with other forms of "Big Business", were accused of destroying both public virtue and prosperity in America, causing the rise of political radicalism.

In 1897, gold discoveries in the Yukon Valley in Canada changed the dismal picture dramatically. Almost immediately after the news of the Klondike strikes, Seattle changed from a quiet, depression-ridden seaport to a boisterous center for gold-crazed adventurers, determined to get to the Yukon by any means possible. Gold brought a tremendous and permanent growth to Seattle and to all of western Washington, while the Klondike served as a market for the produce of eastern Washington. The population of the State more than doubled in a decade. The importance of the Alaskan and Yukon strikes was highlighted by a world's fair, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held in Seattle in 1909 to celebrate the exciting developments of the previous ten years.

Barely had the Alaskan excitement subsided when the First World War struck the economy of the State. Again there was feverish activity. Airplane manufacturers searched the forests of the region for the kinds of lumber suitable for the construction of fighting aircraft. Shipbuilding eclipsed even the furious construction schedules of the late 1890's. The permanent population continued to increase, and, by 1920, it appeared that Washington was on the way to economic independence and political maturity.

In the early 1920's, however, a collapse in agricultural markets adversely affected the economy of Washington. The deforestation of the seemingly inexhaustible timber stands of the western mountains forced the mills to operate further and further from their sources of supply, increasing costs considerably. There was no heavy industry

to compensate for the reduction of lumbering employment and profits, since shipbuilding had dropped abruptly after the War ended, and dockyard strikes in 1919 contributed to closing the shipyards. Several years before the Depression of 1929-1940, Washington found itself faced with a real problem of unemployment, with consequent political and social unrest. Population during the 1920's hardly increased at all.

The nationwide business depression struck Washington with the same savage force that those of 1873 and 1893 had done, but it lasted much longer. Agriculture, already hurting, was prostrated. Almost all lumber mills either cut back on production or closed entirely; many never reopened. Millions of dollars of federal money were poured into the State for welfare or public works to put the jobless back to work. Many of the unemployed journeyed to the Grand Coulee, where they built the largest dam in the world, as a part of an enormous hydro-electric and reclamation project in the Columbia Basin. The production of cheap electric power in turn made possible the development of a light metals industry in the Pacific Northwest.

Federal public works expenditures were further expanded after the outbreak of World War II, when, in addition to federal appropriations for power production and reclamation, billions of dollars worth of war contracts for shipbuilding, aircraft construction, and atomic energy projects were awarded to industries in the State. Population in actual numbers exceeded even those that came during the Klondike gold rush, although the impact of the increase was not as great.

The reclamation phase of the Columbia Basin project made startling changes in eastern Washington. In the early 1950's, the Boeing Company began producing commercial jet planes, and within fifteen years, was the largest employer in the State. By the 1970's, the Alaskan oil discoveries added new refineries and new jobs to the economy.

In the early 1980's, as Washington approached the centennial of its statehood, another downturn in employment coupled with high inflation of prices again hit the State. This time, however, there was a better cushion of unemployment benefits and welfare than in any of the earlier depressions. The nuclear power industry, at one time thought to be the key to future prosperity, turned into a nightmare, with concerns about safety and the failure of the Washington Public Power Supply System.

No one can predict the future of power production, the lumber industry, or production of airplanes. The "boosterism" of a century ago has given way to pessimism. Yet Washington still retains what it has always had - a good climate, plenty of water, and recreational facilities - elements which make it one of the most attractive places in the world to live.