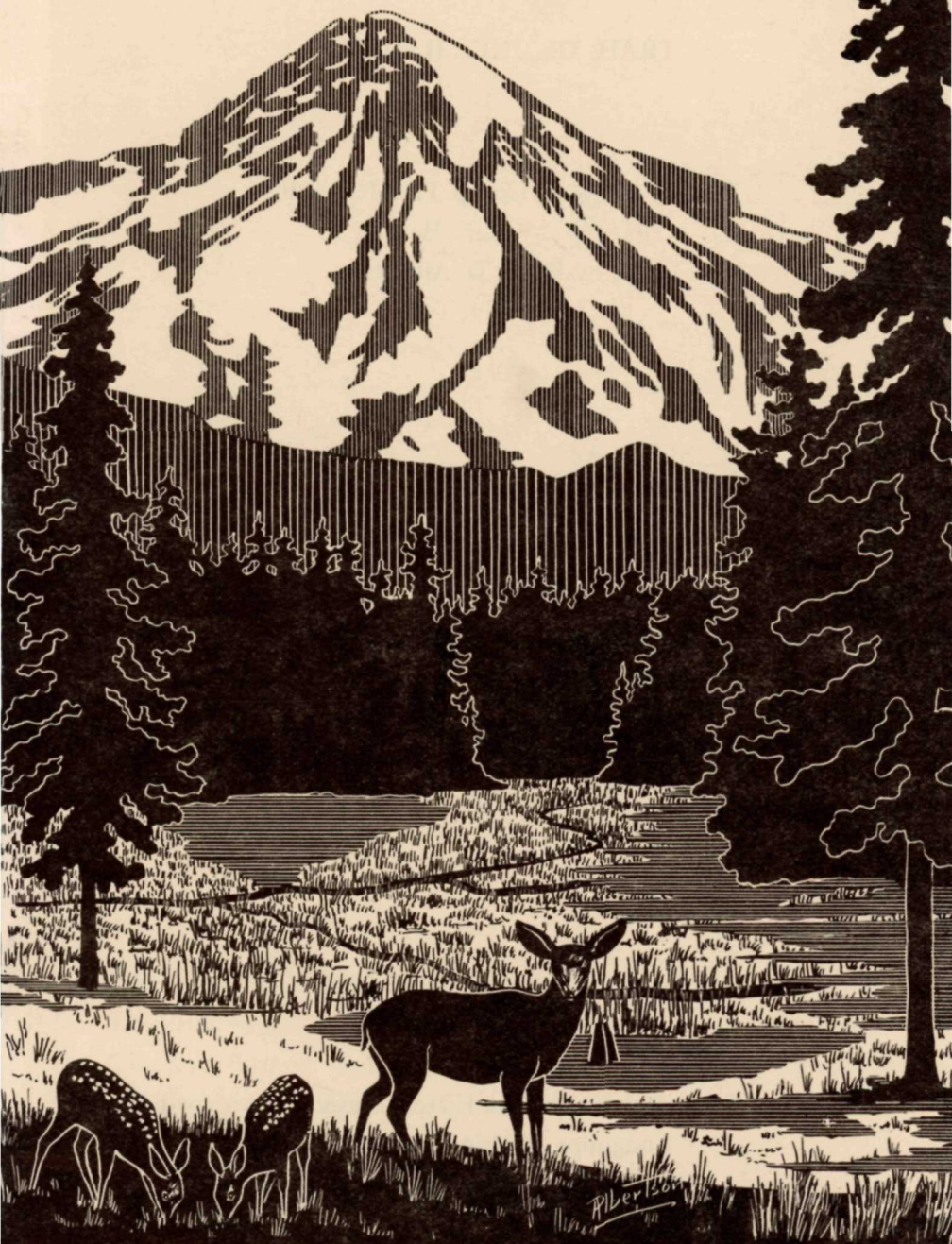


# TRAIL OF THE SHADOWS



MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

## TRAIL OF THE SHADOWS

Text by Terry Wynkoop, Park Naturalist

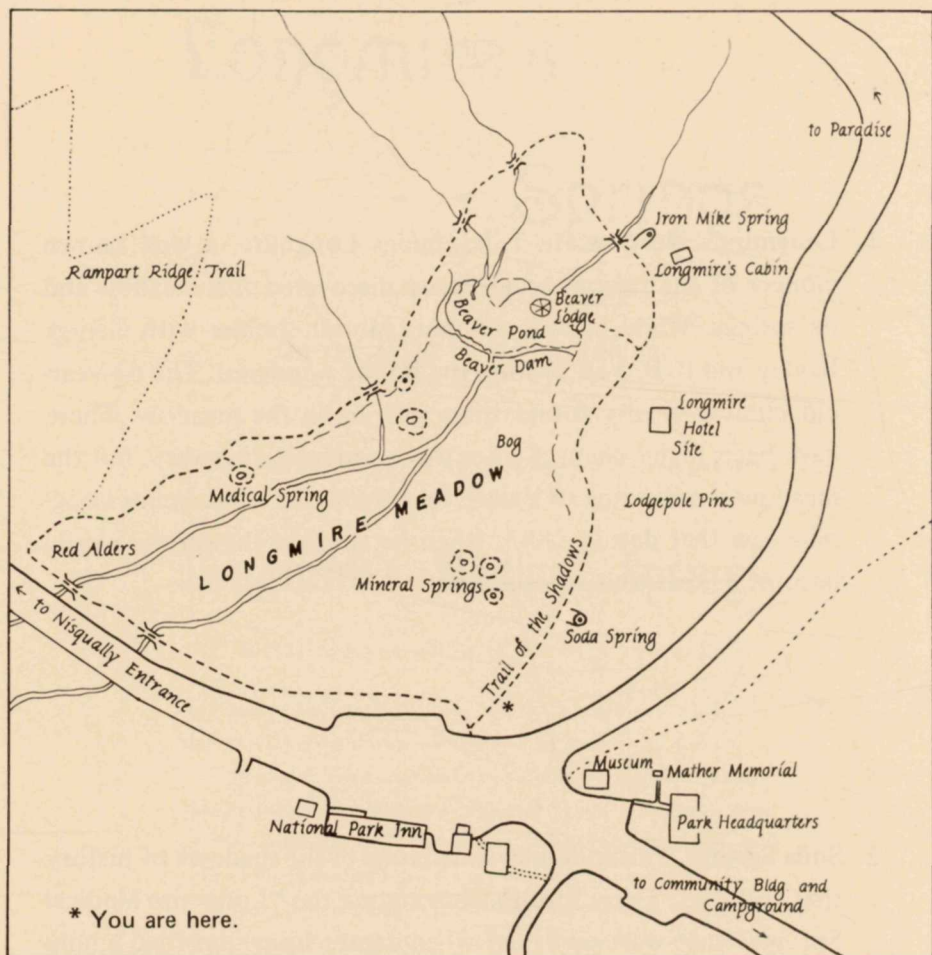
Drawings by Mark Hanson

Cover by Roger D. Albertson

Mount Rainier Natural History Association . . .  
a non-profit group to help study and interpret  
Mount Rainier National Park  
for its visitors

*For catalog write:*

Mount Rainier Natural History Association  
Longmire, Washington 98397



Take a half hour out of your busy schedule and walk this short loop trail. With the help of this booklet, the trail will take your footsteps through shadows—shadows created by the forest and meadows and the shadows of the history of Longmire Springs.

The numbered stakes match the paragraphs in this booklet.

1. **Longmire's Meadow.** In 1883 James Longmire, a well known pioneer of the region, accidentally discovered this meadow and its springs. While he was climbing Mount Rainier with George Bayley and P. B. Van Trump, the horses wandered. The 63-year-old climber finally found them grazing in the meadow. There have been many changes since this accidental discovery, but the meadow is returning to a state very similar to what James Longmire saw that day in 1883, when he thought the springs would become a great tourist attraction.

2. **Soda Springs.** This rock enclosure is one of the shadows of history that still lives. These springs were among the "Longmire Medical Springs" that were analyzed when James Longmire filed a mineral claim on this area in 1883. The springs contain soda, magnesium, iron, and sodium chloride. Such springs were popular as health tonics in the 1890's, so Longmire built several bath houses in addition to this rock work for visitors he hoped to attract to Mount Rainier. Watch for signs of his development along the trail.

In 1888 James Longmire told John Muir, "Drink at these springs and they will do you good. Every one's got medicine in 'em. A doctor said so—no matter what ails you."

# Longmire's

# - - Springs

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On the Road to Mount Tahoma.

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A Word to the Afflicted. An Antidote for Disease, prepared  
in Nature's Own Laboratory.

## Longmire's Medical Springs,

WITHIN EASY REACH OF OUR PEOPLE.


Are now open for the public. Why go abroad when you  
may find Nature's own restoratives at your very doors?

The best recommendations of the wonderful curative  
properties of these waters is afforded by the cures performed  
of those afflicted with rheumatic pains, catarrh, piles and  
other affliction that have been pronounced incurable.

The present means of reaching the Springs from Yelm  
Station, on the N. P. R. R., is by gentle saddle-horses, trains  
of which will leave August 1st and 15th, and September 1st  
and 15th.

Passage including board, for round trip, \$12. Board  
and treatment at the Springs, \$8 per week.

ELCAINE LONGMIRE, Yelm, Wash.

 In corresponding please mention that you saw this ad-  
vertisement in EVERY SUNDAY.

Elcaine Longmire placed this ad in *Every Sunday* (Tacoma)  
August 9, 1890.

3. **Longmire Hotel.** In this area, now reclaimed by lodgepole pine, James Longmire cleared the forest to build a modest hotel for his resort. The four brown posts roughly form the dimensions of this structure.

The hotel was rustic. Virinda, James' wife, cooked for the family and guests over a campfire until a stove was packed in on horseback. The smell of fresh baked bread was welcome to hungry travelers then, as now.



#### 4. Handiwork of a man and a bird.

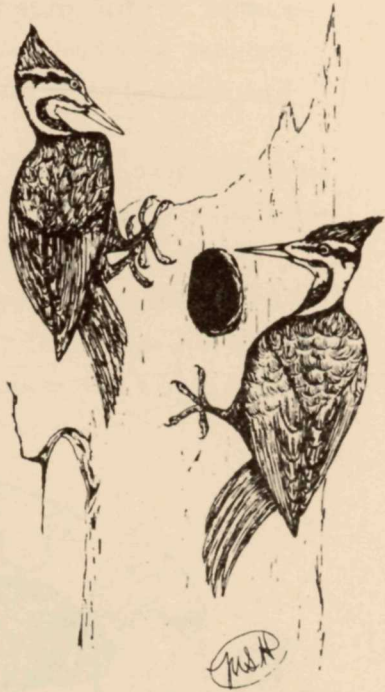
Others have worked here besides man. The oblong holes in this tree were made by the pileated woodpecker as he searched for insects to eat. This crow-sized bird can cut a hole this size in a matter of minutes.

Look higher on the right edge of the tree and you will find two porcelain insulators. These were attached to the tree to secure phone lines in the early 1900's.

The tree's natural defenses have since begun to react to both the woodpecker holes and the insulators. Resin can be seen in the holes. This material walls off the living portion of the tree from the hole.

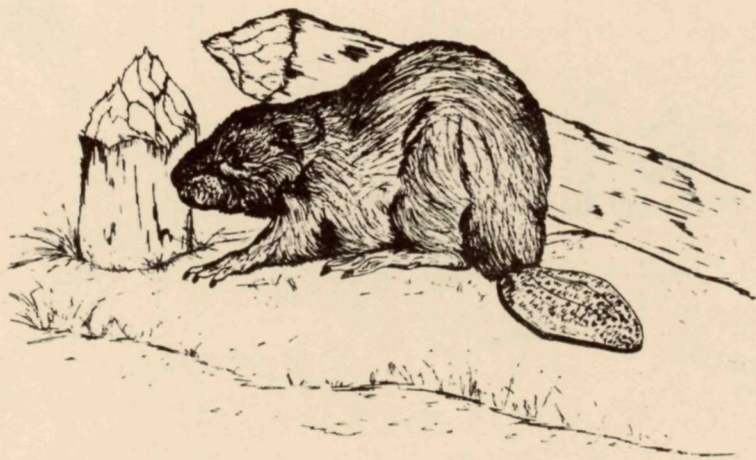
The insulators are also being affected by the natural processes of the tree.

The tree is slowly growing around these objects. If the growth continues the insulators will be completely overgrown by the tree.



5. **Beaver Dam.** Travel down this spur trail to your left. It will lead you through the shadows of the forest to a pond of water.

This pond was formed from the construction of a dam. It was not built by man but by the original dam builder, the beaver. There were no beaver here during the days of the resort, but look closely around the edge of the pond and you will find the stumps of small trees that have been cut down. Occasionally, one may see a beaver swimming about the pond at dusk. Beaver have returned to the meadow very recently.



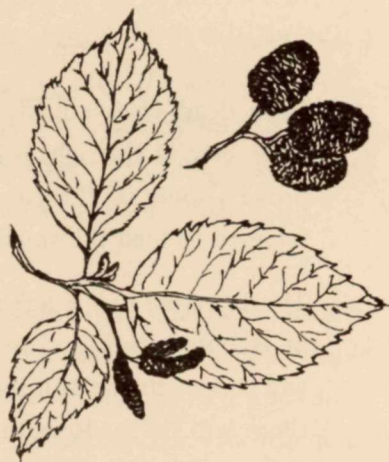


6. **Longmire Cabin.** In 1888 Elcaine Longmire, son of James Longmire, built this cabin and applied for homestead rights on land adjoining his father's. Elcaine and his father wanted this additional land for further development of the mineral springs as a resort.

This cabin, like the soda springs seen earlier, is a living shadow of the history of the Longmire era. It was used mainly to store meat, but outlasted all the other resort buildings.

7. **Iron Mike** is a popular name of this mineral spring. The name was given to it because of the apparent iron content of the water and the rust color of its deposit. The spring drains into the meadow where it is dammed by the beavers. Iron Mike and Soda Springs are the only springs of many in the area still showing the development made by the Longmires. Others have returned to their natural conditions over the years.

8. **Plant Pioneers.** The shadows of the present forest were broken when these Douglas-fir trees fell. The opening has become the new home of a "pioneer" tree, the **red alder**. Like human pioneers, plant pioneers are usually replaced by later arrivals with the passing of time.



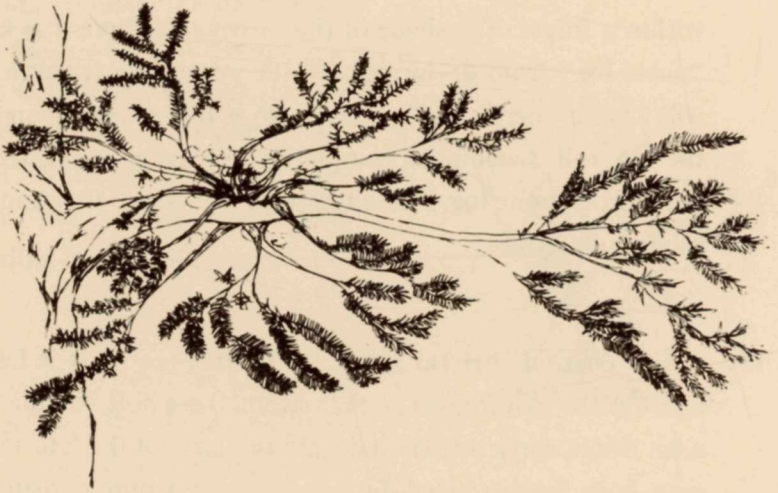
9. **Multipurpose trees.** This Pacific yew not only produces shadows but is an important food source for the animals and birds of this forest. Notice the rings of holes surrounding the yew's trunk. This is evidence that a woodpecker, the yellow bellied sapsucker, has been feeding here. It pecks rows of holes in trees to let the sap run from them, then returns to eat the sap and insects attracted to the holes. In time this Pacific yew may house a nest of birds or squirrels, adding to its list of many uses in the forest.



10. Even dead trees contribute to the shadows in the forest. The dead snag to the right is being decomposed by fungus and in the process some of the energy that once formed this Douglas-fir is released to feed the small seedlings at the base of the snag.

The dead tree to the left is being broken down through the work of termites, ants, and other insects. Eventually both dead snags will return to the soil where their energies will help insure that there will be shadows in the future. Perhaps early resort visitors witnessed the death of these trees.

11. More shadows are being produced from this evergreen tree than normal. Looking up toward your left, you will see unusual branching for a W. Hemlock. Abnormal growth such as this is caused by mistletoe. The mistletoe invades the tree limb and causes it to grow in many different directions at one time. The result is called “witch’s broom.”



12. **Rampart Ridge** in front of us casts great shadows on the meadow. This rock outcropping is part of the mountain. It was deposited here during one of Mount Rainier’s early volcanic eruptions. This rock type, called andesite, is the bedrock on which the forest and meadows were formed. More examples of andesite can be found further along this trail. Watch for them.
13. **The Longmire Meadow** has undergone many changes in its life-time. The resort development of the meadow is hardly visible today. The shadows of the past have slowly changed due to the on-going forces of nature. The springs still remain—mostly cold,

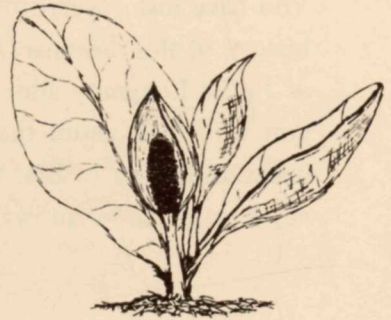
some lukewarm (about 73° F). The light color of the soil in the meadow is due to the mineral deposits from these springs. The high mineral content in the water and soil of the meadow hinders the growth of some plants but is an ideal situation for the rushes, blue-eyed grass and cattails you see before you.

14. **The downed log** behind this post has become a small forest within a forest. The shade of the surrounding trees has kept the “nurse log” from drying out. As the young plants develop, they will absorb energy and moisture from this nurse log and finally the log will decompose completely. As many as ten trees may grow on this one log. These ten trees will create the shadows for other young trees.
  
15. **A fire charred** this Douglas-fir. The tree (or what is left of it) was burned in a forest fire that swept the whole Rampart Ridge area. Some early settlers date the fire around the late 1890’s. It may have been started by some of Longmire’s visitors. The record is not clear on this, but most of the Douglas-fir trees of this ridge were either burned down or damaged to such a degree that they have been slowly dying since then. Longmire used cedar to build his resort. Do you see any evidence of his logging?
  
16. The walkway to your left will lead you to one of James Longmire’s “medical springs.” Like similar springs throughout the meadow the soil is light brown or “rusty” with the mineral deposits of the water. This spring is rich in sodium and other minerals, but any improvements in health were probably due to relaxation and the pure mountain air rather than the tonic waters.

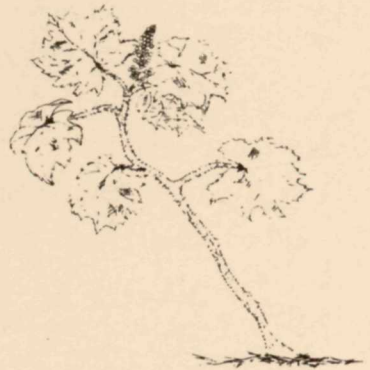
The water is bubbling because of carbon dioxide that is escaping along with the water.

The 50 or so mineral springs of the Longmire meadow may have their origins deep within the depths of Mount Rainier, but no one knows for sure. What do you think?

17. **Skunk cabbage and devils club** are two of the more numerous plants found along this stream. The giant leaves are part of the diet of the local deer population. You may see one or two feeding beside the stream.



18. Look back into the Longmire meadow. The broadleaf tree near you is the red alder. The shade of this tree helps create the proper light conditions for the growth of the skunk cabbage, and other delicate plants of this marshy section of the meadow. The red alder also provides organic materials and nitrogen to the soils which are needed for good evergreen growth. As time goes on, the alder will be shaded out and replaced by taller growing evergreen trees.



19. **Natural destruction** is evident by these rocks and small trees. This area has experienced a great mudflow similar to that which took place in the Kautz Valley in 1947. Mudflows can be found in all the major river valleys of the park. These mudflows are a natural process of erosion but are very destructive to the forest.

You have just covered one-half mile in distance and 80 years in history of **this meadow**. As your footsteps fade away with those of James Longmire and countless others over the years, perhaps you will think about the changes that took place here and the basic continuity of life. We hope you enjoyed your short journey through the shadows of past and present.

*Please return this booklet to the box at the end of the trail.  
If you wish to keep it, deposit 10¢ in the coin slot.*

*We hope that you have enjoyed  
your trip. You will find other  
self-guiding nature trails in the  
park at Ohanapecosh, Paradise,  
Sunrise, and Kautz Creek.*

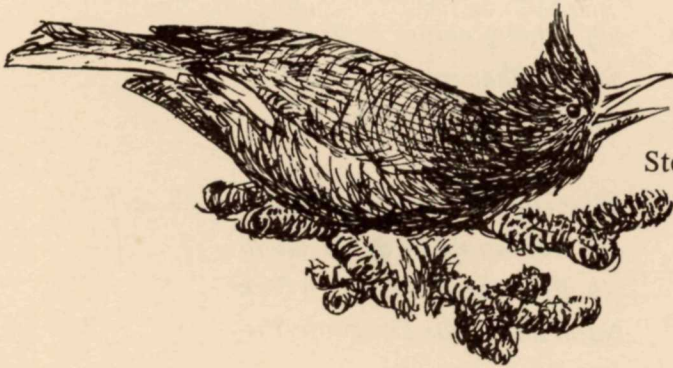
*Your comments on the booklet  
and trail would be appreciated.  
Kindly leave them with a Park  
Naturalist at the Longmire Vis-  
itor Center or write:*

*Superintendent  
Mount Rainier National Park  
Longmire, Washington 98397*

Gray Jay



Steller's Jay



Sketched by Laura Dassow