Pioneer Travel in Feminine Fashion

On SIDESADDLE to the COLUMBIA

By Laurie Winn Carlson

FROM TODAY'S VANTAGE point of nearly ceaseless mobility for everyone, it is difficult to imagine that travel in the 1800s for a woman—if one had the opportunity—meant riding horseback seated precariously on a sidesaddle. When a woman wanted to go anywhere beyond the wagon ruts, rail lines, or waterways, she had to do it on horseback, and until past the turn of the century nearly all women in the West rode sidesaddle. It strains the modern-day imagination to figure out how they even sat on the strange-looking devices let alone attempted to control a feisty mount while wrapped in thick skirts, whalebone-ribbed corsets and a bustle, and relying on the use of only one stirrup. It is a wonder women traveled by horseback at all—but they certainly did, and many pioneered the West on their peculiar "lady's" saddle.

#OrHi 96908, Oregon Historical Society, Portland

Mary Richardson Walker's sidesaddle brought her across the continent with the missionary party of 1838. Purchased in St. Louis, the saddle has a leaping horn and a pocket to hold a parasol.

Early birds to the Pacific Northwest, like Protestant missionaries Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding, who trekked across the continent in 1836, had to come by sidesaddle. They brought supply wagons but had to abandon them along the way—the going was too difficult for wheeled vehicles. On horseback the women kept up (usually riding ahead to avoid the dust) with the fur trade caravan they accompanied to the Rocky Mountains. From Fort Laramie to Fort Walla Walla—nearly 2,000 miles—the women rode horseback. The sidesaddles they rode are an important part of western history because without them the women would have remained behind. Narcissa Whitman wrote:

> *Husband has got me an excellent sidesaddle, and a very easy horse. He made me a present of a mule to ride, the other day, so I do not know which I shall like best—I have not tried the latter.*

Surprisingly, the sidesaddle was actually a liberating piece of technology compared to the earlier riding equipment for women. It allowed a woman to ride alone on a horse rather than seated behind and clinging to a man. In the American colonies a woman had to "ride pillion," sitting sideways behind a male rider (her husband or manservant) with her feet on a little wooden swing that hung from one side of the pillion, which was no more than a hair-stuffed fabric cushion strapped to the man's saddle. Without a cinch around the horse's middle, a pillion could slide around when the horse was in motion, making it awkward, uncomfortable and definitely difficult. Nevertheless, many early frontierswomen made the trek into Kentucky and Ohio on pillions. Saddles for women, built of leather or heavy carpet over a wooden tree, with a stirrup instead of a wooden swing for the left foot, were gradually imported from England and Mexico. They allowed a woman to sit by herself, but she had no way to stay seated if the horse acted up—she

could only shift her weight to retain her balance in the saddle.

In 1830 a French riding master came up with an innovation that changed feminine riding: a third horn. The addition of this extra horn, which curved downward, allowed a woman to keep her seat by pushing upward against the horn with her left or stirrup foot. Called the "leaping" or "jumping" horn, with it women could take their horses just about anywhere, even over fences and rock walls. Using the foot in the stirrup to press the left knee up against the leaping horn, and pressing downward against the leaping horn with the right thigh, a rider could effect a three-point balance. The grip was effective and safe, and women began adding jumping horns to their sidesaddles, despite the objections of naysayers who warned that the leaping horn could entrap a woman on the saddle, endangering the rider if the animal fell.

The innovative leaping horn came at just the right time for American women. The Erie Canal was finished in the mid 1830s, funneling travelers and immigrants into the Great Lakes district and beyond. The Indian Intercourse Act of 1834 forbade settlement in the Indian Country, the region beyond the Missouri River, subject to removal by the military if necessary. Settlers had to push on past or leapfrog farther west into the Oregon Country and California. At the same time, the fur trade was nearly over, the beavers having been trapped out of the drainages, weakening the British hold on the northwestern part of the continent through the Hudson's Bay Company. The western lands were ripe for settlement, and seated on sidesaddles purchased from St. Louis or Santa Fe saddlers, women pioneered the way west alongside men.

Courtesy National Park Service, Whitman Mission National Historic Site, Walla Walla

Drury Haight painting of Narcissa Whitman done from a sketch made by artist Paul Kane. Narcissa's writings provide a firsthand account of her sidesaddle journey West in 1836.

THE FIRST TWO American women to make the cross-continental trek were the aforementioned Spalding and Whitman, young wives who accompanied their husbands westward to build Christian missions for the Indians. They probably had seldom, if ever, ridden horseback—especially Narcissa who had grown up in New England villages. Eliza had been reared on a farm but had spent years at school and teaching, seldom venturing out of the classroom.

No American women had ventured so far west before Eliza and Narcissa; how was a female to prepare for such an undertaking? Speculation about whether or not the women would even survive the trek did not make it any easier.

Narcissa's "outfit" included "gentlemen's boots," which she had her brother-in-law make up for her. Both women took "life-preservers," so that if they happened to "fall into the water" they would not drown. The life preservers were made of "India-rubber cloth, air-tight, and when filled with air and placed under the arm" prevented one from "sinking." Each of them fastened a tin cup and knife in a scabbard on her leather belt, to be used at mealtime.

The women wore capes, also made of India-rubber cloth, to protect their clothing from rain. The two married couples slept in a ticking-cloth tent handstitched by the women, which had a curtain down the middle for privacy. There were also "plenty of Mackinaw blankets, which answer for our bed and bedding, and when we journey [we] place them over our saddles and ride on them," Narcissa explained.

To the Indians of the Rocky Mountains and plateau, the sight of two white women at the 1836 rendezvous was astonishing for at least one reason: the white women rode "hung from the sides of their horses," as the Indians put it. Certainly the sight of the strange women, with their odd clothing and camping gear, must have been intriguing, but their style of riding and their peculiar saddles were probably of the greatest interest to the Nez Perce and Cayuse, people entirely devoted to horse culture. The native women could not let them out of their sight—even fighting between tribes over who would get the missionary teachers to live with them.

Once they left the rendezvous, the missionaries still had to cross the mountains, the harsh Snake River country, and the rugged Blue Mountains before they reached the Columbia River. The going was far from easy: "Came fifteen miles today . . . the ride has been very mountainous—paths winding on the sides of steep mountains. In some places the path is so narrow as scarcely to afford room for the animal to place his foot. One after another we pass along with cautious step."

Riding horseback was preferable to riding in the Dearborn wagon, though; by the time they were crossing southern Idaho's rugged Snake River terrain, Narcissa wrote,

One of the axle-trees of the wagon broke to-day; was a little rejoiced, for we were in hopes they would leave it, and have no

more trouble with it. Our rejoicing was in vain for they are making a cart of the back wheels, this afternoon, and lashing the fore wheels to it—intending to take it through in some shape or other. They are so resolute and untiring in their efforts they will probably succeed.

She is referring to her husband Marcus, who had walked much of the way in order to bring the wagon along. The women had long-past abandoned riding in the rough, over-loaded contraption, but Marcus refused to give up. His herculean effort to take the wagon, even in pieces, was thwarted by their fur trade escort who finally convinced him to leave it at Fort Hall.

The journey was difficult for everyone. One of the missionary party, a young handyman named William Gray, collapsed along the trail and had to be propped behind an Indian on horseback in order to keep up the pace. Eliza and Narcissa endured, riding nearly eight hours that day, "without any nourishment."

Traveling before river ferries were established meant crossing waterways swollen with spring runoff from the winter snowpack in the Rocky Mountains. Wrote Narcissa: "We were so swarmed with mosquitoes as to be scarcely able to see—especially while crossing the Port Neuf, which we did, just before coming into camp. It is the widest river I have forded on horseback." No doubt they were wearing their life preservers.

Courtesy Cheney Cowles Museum, Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Spokane

Mary Dix Gray also rode cross-continent with the missionary party of 1838. She and Mary Walker, as well as Narcissa Whitman two years earlier, were pregnant on the trip.

By mid August the heat was nearly unbearable as they crossed the desert near American Falls on the Snake River. The caravan had been stopping only once a day to eat and feed the animals as they were passing through the country sometimes frequented by the formidable Blackfoot tribe. As soon as they were in safer territory again they stopped twice a day, once for "nooning" and again at night. "I expect this to be a great mercy to us weak females, for it was more than we could well endure to travel during the heat of the day without refreshment."

Driving across southern Idaho today, through the barren, rocky desert covered with sagebrush, the wind blowing continuously beneath summer's hot sun, one finds it incomprehensible that they could make such a trek. Narcissa wondered at her own endurance, "Was there ever a journey like this performed where the sustaining hand of God has been so manifest every morning." She wrote the day after that they had crossed a section of waterfalls where two horses had been swept over and rescued after nearly an hour and "much difficulty." What Narcissa does not mention in her writings is that she is in the early stages of pregnancy, certainly making travel much more arduous. At one point she commented:

Husband rode an Indian horse when he had never mounted before and found him a hard rider in every gait except a gallop, and slow in his movements, nor could he pace as mine did, so for the last six days we have galloped most of the way where the ground would admit of it.

WHEN THE PARTY arrived at Fort Vancouver, the Hudson's Bay Company headquarters on the Columbia River, Eliza and Narcissa found the gentlemen of the HBC quite sophisticated and cultured. Their wives were mixed-bloods (Scottish-French-Indian) who enjoyed needlework, cribbage and horseback riding, just like their upper-class counterparts in Europe. The missionary women were included in the social activities of the fort during their visit; Narcissa noted that she and Eliza "are invited to ride as often as once a week for exercise, and we generally ride all the afternoon."

Madame McLoughlin, the chief factor's wife, rode with them. Narcissa wrote:

She keeps her fashion of riding gentleman fashion. This is the universal custom of indian women, and they have saddles with high backs and fronts. We have been recommended to use these saddles, a more easy way of riding, but we have never seen the necessity of changing our fashion.

The gentlemen's wives and daughters wore the latest fashions imported from London, accessorized with beaded leggings beneath their silk skirts. Straddling two cultures, the women rode the same Indian-style saddles as their mothers, but were certainly intrigued by the first glimpse of how white women rode horseback. American women never did adopt the style of Indian saddles, but it was not long before many Indian women chose calico skirts and sidesaddles of their own, crossing the divide between the cultures.

Myra Eells, another missionary wife who made the overland journey to Oregon in 1838, wrote a letter to her sister

Special Collections, Washington State Historical Society

This elegant Tacoma equestrienne is suited appropriately for riding in the 1890s. Her skirt has an uneven hem and is buttoned to the back of her right side. On horseback, the skirt would be freed to drape over both ankles.

back East, advising how a woman should prepare for making the crossing on horseback:

> *For the horseback journey, they ought to have good strong dark colored clothes, a gentleman should have home-made blue cloth for his clothes, a strong stout box coat, thick boots and shoes, a cap and a broad brimmed felt hat. A lady should have a good green merino or pongee dress, and a loose calico dress to wear when she does not need her cloak. Her underclothes as well as the gentleman's should all be colored. They ought to have three changes to wear on the journey. . . .*

It was, after all, a three-month crossing!

Myra recommended that a woman wear "gentleman's calf shoes" and be well-supplied with stockings. Another important accessory was a veil; at least two or three were necessary because, "When she journeys it is always in the sun. There are no trees here except a few in the Mts. and along the water courses." Myra's veil lasted until she got to Oregon, but was "all worn out."

Myra continued in detail, "She should have an India rubber cover for her bonnet, and a cape made of the same. It is so windy that she cannot carry an umbrella, and besides they are likely to get broken, I believe mine is the only one that reached here." (There were four missionary women in her party.) Lastly, a reminder to "take some raisins and figs," for a woman's "own comfort."

EIGHT YEARS LATER, Tabitha Brown, a 66-year-old widow, made the crossing to Oregon via the southern route, later called the Applegate Trail. She was part of a wagon train whose members decided to follow a shortcut, but disaster ensued and item after item had to be left along the way until Tabitha had only her horse to ride. They struggled through mud, rocks and water up to the horse's sides, crossing a "twelve-mile mountain." Once past it, she saw ahead of them another, the Calapooia, "besides many miles to travel through mud, snow, rain and hail. Winter had set in. . . ."

By this time Tabitha had been left behind on the trail, in the company of an even older gentleman, Captain Brown. They attempted to ride on and overtake other travelers who might be going the same way. Captain Brown became dizzy and ill and fell off his horse on the second day. Tabitha, alone with the old gentleman, "was afraid to jump down from my horse to assist him as it was one that a woman had never ridden before." Indeed, how would she ever get back on? The captain was too weak to stand up, but she led his horse into a little sunken spot a few steps from him, and "with much difficulty" and a long stick she helped him remount. The two continued on, Tabitha leading the man's horse across "a wide, extensive, solitary place, and no wagons in sight!"

Nevertheless, when night came she unsaddled the horses, tied them, made a tent from the wagon sheet she had folded under her saddle, and "then helped up the bewildered old gentleman, and introduced him to his new lodgings upon the naked ground." They had no food or fire, but when morning came Tabitha saddled the horses, the captain helped her mount up, and they managed to catch up with other emigrants and continue traveling with them.

In a letter she wrote to relatives back in the East detailing these "adventures of the Oregon Pioneer," she mused that they might say: "I wonder if she is anything like what she used to be?"

In 1850 Margaret Frink and her husband went West seeking gold in California. They took a well-prepared team of five horses and two mules, and saddles for both husband and wife. It was a wet April on the prairie when they went off the "beaten path" and the horses' legs sunk into the wet sod. Margaret stood and held the team for two hours in the drenching rain while her husband, with the help of some passersby, spaded out the wagon wheels. When the wagon was eventually pulled out of the mud, the two vowed never to

leave the beaten track again. Margaret concluded "after that, to ride my pony in preference to riding in the wagon."

After leaving Fort Laramie, the going became difficult. "We started at twelve o-clock to-day, traveled fifteen miles, and went into camp at five o'clock. The road was among and over the spurs of the Black Hills, and very rough. I rode horseback the most of the day. Many wagons were being abandoned. Every day we pass good wagons that have been left for anyone that might want them."

IN THE 1852 MIGRATION Francis Sawyer was suffering from a painful toothache by the time she reached the Sierra Nevadas. She stayed in the saddle, though, crossing the summit at 9,000 feet elevation, "over snow six feet deep." She traveled until ten o'clock at night before they found a level place to pitch camp. Riding in the darkness had been difficult; especially because Francis "could not see the path in the dark, so I just gave my mule the rein and let it follow the others." They went 25 miles that day.

Twelve-year-old Sarah Pratt, crossing the same year, wrote, "After the usual ceremony attendant upon such occasions we left cherished homes and started for the 'far west,' that land of golden hopes and yellow fancies. Our hearts beat high with expectations. . . ."

By July her trip diary was more concise, and more eloquent—Tuesday, July 13: "Clear, very warm. hilly horses suffer with thirst walk most of the way. ride on the pony in the afternoon . . . a number of graves . . . feet blistered."

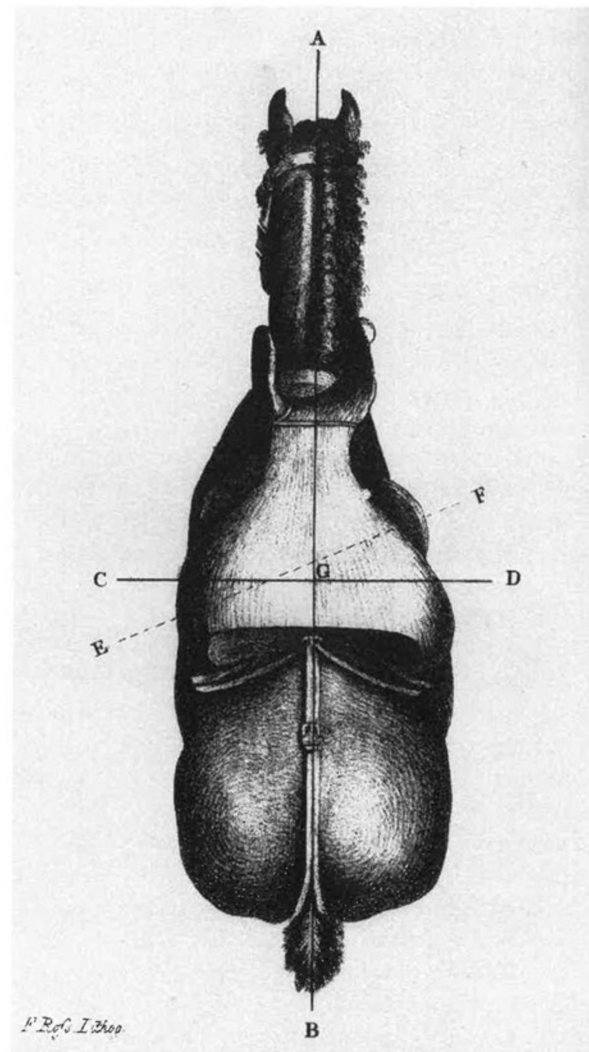
When they reached the Platte River they had to swim the horses across to reach ungrazed grass. Sarah wore an India rubber life preserver and rode astride, a fact so significant that she noted it in her travel diary along with her first sight of "buffalo on opposite side of the river. . . ."

An eleven-year-old girl, Harriet Scott, wrote to her cousin, "I rode on horse back most of the way but I got very tired of it there was some places on the road that is almost impossible to travel we reached Oregon city on the 30th makeing our journey six months long. . . ."

While many women roughed it on horseback across the continent, once they arrived in the crude villages of the West, getting around was not much easier. It is hard to imagine anyone riding a carriage in early-day Portland, Oregon. In 1851 Harriet Talcott described the town's conditions: "Gentlemen go about with big boots suitable for mud, as there are no sidewalks, and the Main Street is full of huge fir stumps and deep mud holes."

But there was excitement and opportunity all around, and it did not take long for women to adapt to the fast pace of western settlement. After two years in Oregon, Elizabeth Hutchinson wrote to relatives in Illinois about her 15-year-old niece: "Pauline has grown more since she left home than she had for several years before. She looks considerably like a woman and every hair on her head is full of ambition. She begins to talk of silks. Spanish sidesaddles Young Lawyers etc." Exactly the sort of upward mobility that characterized the Victorian era—even in far-off Oregon.

How to Sit a Sidesaddle



From *The Young Horsewoman's Compendium of the Modern Art of Riding* by Edward Stanley (1857)

TO SIT A sidesaddle, a rider positions her right leg at the front of the saddle, fitting it in the "crutch" between the two curving horns. The left foot is positioned in the stirrup, just like riding astride. The hips face forward, the waist straight and shoulders facing front. Grasping the reins between the fingers of the left hand and holding a whip in the right hand, her weight can be evenly balanced. When faced with an unruly horse, or simply to stay seated during rough going, the rider's legs grip the leaping horn by pressing down against it with the right thigh and up against it with the left knee, gripping it between knee and thigh.

A lady's saddle was an expensive item in the 19th century; an 1847 Oregon Mission inventory placed a value of $18 on Narcissa's sidesaddle. At a time when women working in New England textile mills made two dollars a week—a wage higher than that of teachers or domestics (who earned 50 cents to a dollar a week)—a saddle represented months of work, something out of

reach for nearly all women except the upper class or those who had gambled everything on going to the frontier.

The mobility a horse and saddle offered was imperative for women with careers in the West; Dr. Bethenia Owens-Adair in Oregon, and Hilda Erickson, a Utah midwife, raced on sidesaddles to attend their patients. Even outlaws like Belle Starr brandished pistols while mounted on a sidesaddle.

The security of the leaping horn allowed women to enter show business in the earliest Wild West shows, where female riders in long skirts remained on sidesaddles during horseback races, trick maneuvers and wild bronco saddle busting. A few years later, riding astride in shortened skirts got a lot more attention, but even Annie Oakley rode sidesaddle in the ring and in parades, until she adopted the bicycle in her act.

Special Collections, Washington State Historical Society

Amy Louise Bond during her honeymoon in eastern Washington in September 1900, riding sidesaddle with a friend behind her. Sidesaddles were a popular wedding gift from grooms in rural areas.

Equestriennes had to be better riders than men. They had to develop perfect balance and coordination with their mounts because their weight was so oddly distributed, and their size and strength made it imperative for them to learn techniques for controlling large animals. Horseback riding has always held an element of danger and difficulty, but swathed in a dozen yards of fabric, corseted with whalebone stays (riding corsets were cut shorter in the hips to allow some movement), and mounted on ill-trained frontier horses, it was even more difficult for women.

There were accidents: Eliza Spalding was thrown and dragged, with her foot caught in the stirrup, through the Snake River barrens; Mary Walker, pregnant and in tears, collapsed on the ground at the end of a day's ride and had to be bled and "rubbed" thoroughly in order to mount again the next day during her trip across the Rockies. Arizona pioneer Sharlot Hall suffered back injuries after a spill from her sidesaddle but went on to ride painfully over most of northern Arizona as she chronicled the area's history. Most women stood up and got right back on the horse, just like today's riders. After all, medical attention in the 19th-century West usually meant a round of "bleeding" by someone brandishing a lancet to remedy injuries sustained in a fall.

Women could study do-it-yourself riding manuals, learn from a proper riding instructor or, like many rural girls, grow up on horseback. Most girls rode astride, just as boys did; when they became "young ladies" they changed their style. But there were many women who had never ridden astride and refused to try.

CONTRARY TO SOME ideas about western women, they were not at all eager to become "mannish maidens." Women adamantly refused to give up sidesaddles; even ranch girls were reluctant to be seen riding like men or wearing trousers. It was upper class eastern female tourists to the West who introduced trousers, and the first women to ride astride in public did so in Boston and New York State. Western women were adamantly opposed to it for several reasons.

In the West women had often left everything behind—family, friends, home, possessions—in order to make the trek. Preserving their dignity and self-respect was important to them, as was keeping their femininity. No matter if a woman's mount was a rangy mustang, a half-broken mule or a miner's stubborn donkey. Riding like a proper lady, in the same style as European royalty, told everyone that she was feminine, dignified and respectable.

Even if she lived in a sod hut or an unchinked cabin miles from the "civilized" world, on a sidesaddle with her calico skirt fluffed around her she was as good as anyone anywhere. Even if she cobbled the sidesaddle out of a discarded men's saddle, removing a stirrup and sitting so the horn was hidden by her skirt—on a sidesaddle, she was a lady.

In the late 1890s riding astride began to slowly creep into acceptance, and women began to ride with divided skirts, culottes that could be buttoned up the front when walking. Newspapers and magazines carried pros and cons of the new style, but by 1915 only a few sidesaddles were still being sold, mostly in the deep South. During World War I women helped the war effort by participating in wild horse roundups and breaking horses for the cavalry; in England they rode remounts for the fighting. By the time the war ended, women in the West who rode horseback did it astride, in clothing just like men's. By then, though, most women had abandoned the horse for technology; the bicycle—and eventually the motorcar—usurped the saddle, even for queens.

Laurie Winn Carlson lives near Cheney and is author of a book about early missionary women in Oregon, On Sidesaddles to Heaven *(Caxton Press, 1998).*

COLUMBIA

The Magazine of Northwest History

A quarterly publication of the

VOLUME THIRTEEN, NUMBER ONE

David L. Nicandri, *Executive Editor*
Christina Orange Dubois, *Managing Editor & Designer*
Craig Tyler, *Editorial Assistant*
Robert C. Carriker, *Book Review Editor*
Carolyn Simonson, *Copy Editor*
Joan Martin, *Membership Secretary*

RESEARCH CONTRIBUTORS
Elaine Miller, Edward Nolan, Joy Werlink

FOUNDING EDITOR
John McClelland, Jr.

OFFICERS
President: David Lamb, *Hoquiam*
Vice-President: Robert C. Carriker, *Spokane*
Vice-President: Joe Taller, *Olympia*
Treasurer: David R. Edwards, *Tacoma*
Secretary/Director: David L. Nicandri

EX OFFICIO TRUSTEES
Gary Locke, *Governor*
Terry Bergeson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*
Ralph Munro, *Secretary of State*
Senator Sid Snyder, *Long Beach*
Representative Val Ogden, *Vancouver*
Senator Patricia S. Hale, *Kennewick*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
J. D. Alexander, *Seattle*
David Ammons, *Olympia*
Robert Blethen, *Seattle*
Charlotte Chalker, *Tacoma*
Robert A. Clark, *Spokane*
Steve Conway, *Tacoma*
Joe DeLaCruz, *Hoquiam*
Thomas Dixon, *Tacoma*
Brian Ebersole, *Tacoma*
Charles Fowler, *Olympia*
Billy Frank, Jr., *Nisqually*
Erasmo Gamboa, *Seattle*
Jean Gardner, *Seattle*
Kelso Gillenwater, *Gig Harbor*
Daniel K Grimm, *Puyallup*
Kathryn W. Haley, *Tacoma*
Barbara Hedges, *Seattle*
Jim Honeyford, *Sunnyside*
Ruth Kirk, *Lacey*
Suzanne Lebsock, *Seattle*
Kent D. Richards, *Ellensburg*
Irwin L. Treiger, *Seattle*
Peter von Reichbauer, *Dash Point*
James Watts, *Richland*
Elizabeth A. Willis, *Tacoma*
Carole Zuppe, *Spokane*

COLUMBIA (ISSN: 0892-3094) is published quarterly by the Washington State Historical Society.

Entire contents © 1999 by the Washington State Historical Society. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without written permission from the publisher.

All articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in ***Historical Abstracts*** and ***America: History and Life***. *EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:* Inquiries and submissions should be directed to **COLUMBIA**, WSHS Research Center, 315 N. Stadium Way, Tacoma, WA 98403; 253/798-5918. All unsolicited manuscripts and photographs submitted must include return postage (in stamps) and suitable packaging to ensure their safe return. Although reasonable care will be taken with materials received, no responsibility can be assumed for unsolicited materials, including photographs. *BOOK REVIEWS:* Address all review copies and related communications to Robert C. Carriker, Department of History, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA 99258. *POSTMASTER:* Please send address changes to Washington State Historical Society, 1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma, WA 98402.

♲ PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

COLUMBIA

THE MAGAZINE OF NORTHWEST HISTORY ▪ SPRING 1999

From the Editor 2

History Commentary 3
How will we write the history of Hanford?
By Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi

On Sidesaddle to the Columbia 9
Pioneer women rode the Oregon Trail in truly feminine fashion.
By Laurie Winn Carlson

From the Collection 15
Planning for the construction of a "Nicaragua Canal."

The Washington State Capitol Campus and Its Paripatetic Planning 16
Piecing together the people, events and issues that influenced (and interfered with) the design of the capitol group.
By Norman J. Johnston

Rivers of the West 24
Alexander Mackenzie's initial expedition in search of a northwest passage led him to the Arctic Ocean.
By Barry Gough

The Kaiser's Navy Surveys Puget Sound 38
Looking for the perfect naval base.
By Terrell D. Gottschall

Notices/Additional Reading 44

Columbia Reviews 46

***COVER:** Ten years before Lewis and Clark set off on their famed expedition to the Pacific, Alexander Mackenzie, a Scottish explorer and fur trader for the North West Company, had completed, with his voyageurs, a similar journey farther north. This documentary painting by contemporary artist Howard Sivertson depicts voyageurs making camp at a pleasant spot after a day on the move. (Courtesy of Howard Sivertson, Grand Marais, Minnesota)*