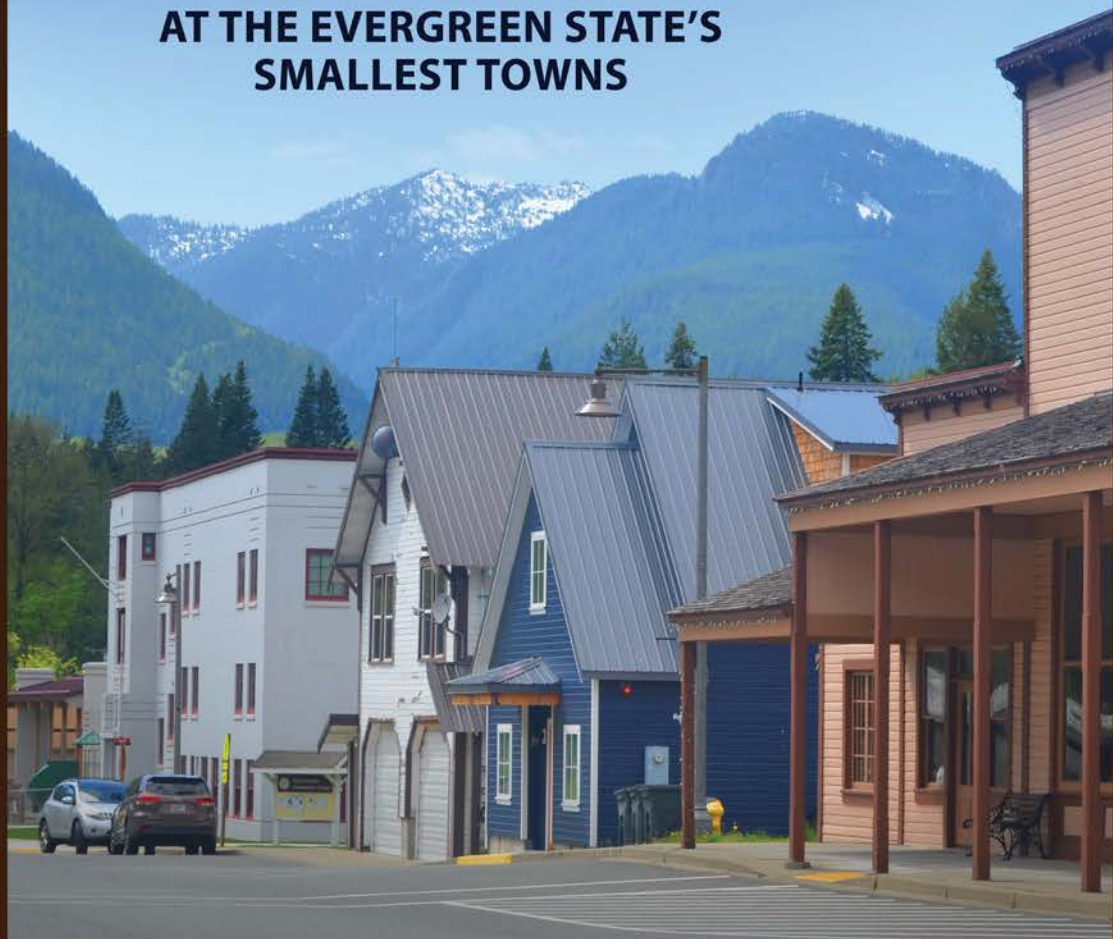# Little Washington

100 Towns
POPULATION 48–3,500

A NOSTALGIC LOOK AT THE EVERGREEN STATE'S SMALLEST TOWNS

Written and Photographed by Nicole Hardina

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TOP: Downtown Castle Rock exudes small-town charm in a low-slung, modern kind of way.

Castle Rock

Seekers and Settlers

Margaret Huntington arrived in Massachusetts from England in 1633. She traveled with her five children; her husband had died of smallpox. Two hundred years later, one of her descendants, Harry Darby Huntington, moved from Indiana to the newly acquired Oregon Territory. The Oregon Treaty, signed in 1846, resolved the joint ownership of the Oregon Territory between the British and American governments in favor of the Americans, establishing the 49th parallel as the dividing line. The next fall, H. D. Huntington arrived in Oregon. Within a few years, he'd settled in the Cowlitz Valley near the mouth of the river. He hosted a meeting in which he and other Oregon settlers wrote a petition asking Congress to establish a new territory called Columbia. Congress granted their request but called the new territory Washington.

In 1852, more Huntingtons came. William and his wife, Eliza, claimed land adjacent to that of William's cousin H. D. A large, rocky outcrop rose above the claim, which lay between Cowlitz Landing and Monticello. The name for the post office came easily. Huntington dubbed the place Castle Rock. He became the first postmaster and minister and was a member of the first territorial legislature.

Isaac Stevens's pressure campaign to move Indigenous people from their homelands was in the works, but the Huntingtons weren't the first point of contact for the local people, the Cowlitz. By the time of the Huntingtons' arrival, Europeans had been traveling to the county for more than 50 years, and several thousand people lived along the Cowlitz River in dozens of villages. The Lower Cowlitz people first encountered Euro-American settlers with the Pacific Fur Company in 1811. The North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company also traded with the Cowlitz. In 1829, a ship captained by American John Domines brought a fever; by contemporaneous estimates, three-fourths of the Cowlitz in the area died in the epidemic, which lasted for several years. The Hudson's Bay Company revised its earlier estimate, claiming that seven-eighths had died. An estimated 500 Cowlitz people remained.

As Cowlitz County grew, farming and logging became the primary industries. Castle Rock had both a shipping port and a shingle mill. By

1886, the *Cowlitz County Advocate* had published its first issue. The timber industry, led by Weyerhaeuser, was a leading employer until its decline. Castle Rock is home to the oldest house in the county, as well as the first clay brick building, constructed in 1889 using clay from the Cowlitz River.

The Greatest Disaster

On May 18, 1980, Mount Saint Helens erupted, 70 miles from Castle Rock in Gifford Pinchot National Forest. A pyroclastic flow 200 feet thick slammed into Cowlitz County, burying bridges, roads, and buildings. The Cowlitz riverbed rose 12 feet, and thick sediment in the Columbia River halted shipping in Portland. Five billion board-feet of timber—enough to build 300,000 homes—burned. Two hundred homes were destroyed. Spirit Lake disappeared under a drastic landslide. Though scientists predicted the explosion, a lack of disaster coordination and imprecise predictions prevented widespread evacuations despite months of warning signs. Fifty-seven people were killed, along with some 7,000 deer, elk, and bears, as well as innumerable smaller animals. It was the most destructive volcanic event in US history.

Over time, however, the landscape recovered, and Mount St. Helens laid claim to being the most active volcano in North America, drawing as many as 750,000 visitors annually. The biggest disaster in Cowlitz County history has become a profitable tourist draw, accounting for $100 million in tourism revenue per year.

150 Years and Counting

In 2002, Castle Rock celebrated its 150th anniversary. As part of the festivities, townspeople held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open a new walking path to the top of the granite outcrop that was part of Eliza and William Huntington's original claim—the castle rock itself.

Many people encounter the town of Castle Rock on their way to Mount Saint Helens. Several interpretive centers along the Spirit Lake Memorial Highway offer information about the volcano, including one just outside of Castle Rock. Travelers following signs from the highway into the town of

Castle Rock may be confused to find themselves at the Mount St. Helens Creation Center, the project of an anti-evolutionist former science teacher.

Downtown Castle Rock has a modern feel with a nod to its historical roots. Low-slung buildings with simple facades recall earlier times, though the buildings now host businesses from bookstores to breweries.

Now at the monument, ecologists work to protect a study zone from recreational damage by snowmobiles, campfires, and dogs. At an advisory meeting on managing the mountain into the future, Castle Rock residents weighed in. *The New York Times* reported that resident Patrice Dick said she was "disgusted" by the continued scientific inquiry into the aftermath. One citizen recommended that the US Forest Service "throw out the study zone and let people recreate." On the other side of the debate, scientist Peter Frenzen argued that researchers must study the entire ecosystem "from ant to elk" to learn how the landscape recovers.

Castle Rock today is a sleepy town. The *Cowlitz County Advocate* has closed along with several other Washington State papers, casualties of the digital age. A quaint downtown offers a variety of restaurants and shops, including Vault Books and Brew, a busy bookstore and coffee shop. Runners and dog walkers share a paved path alongside the Cowlitz River. The town has claimed the title of "Gateway to Mount Saint Helens" since the completion of the road, long before the volcano's 1980 eruption, though with a church on seemingly every block and a so-called creation museum, the town feels more like an ideological cul-de-sac than a trailhead to exploration.

The Cowlitz Tribe has fought for federal recognition since 1912 and finally received it in 2000. They continue to fight for the restoration of their traditional lands. Their tribal offices are 10 miles from Castle Rock in Longview, Washington.

CHESTER.

The Chester was built in 1897. It's 101 foot long hull was light and flexible. Being a shallow draft boat, she barely drew a foot of water when fully loaded. Chester carried passengers and supplies from Kelso, to Castle Rock and Toledo until 1918. A new highway cut into her trade and 21 years on the river had taken it's tole. She was then stripped and abandoned in 1919.

A mural in Castle Rock depicts the *Chester,* a boat used to transport people and goods between Kelso and Toledo at the turn of the 19th century.

Population: 198
Founding: 1893

INSETS L to R: Skykomish welcomes visitors to "a Great Northern town." • The model railroad in the center of town emphasizes the movie-set feeling of Skykomish. • Skykomish is in the foothills of Stevens Pass, in the foothills of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. • Environmental remediation efforts in the wake of BNSF's pollution have been disruptive, if restorative, in the town known as "Sky."
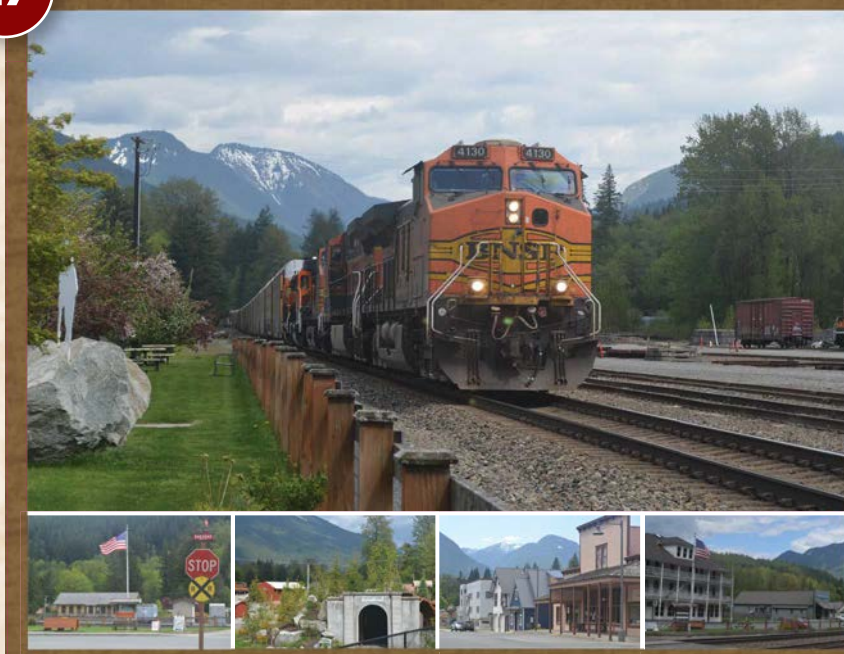
TOP: A Burlington Northern train runs through Skykomish on rail built in 1893.

Skykomish

The Great Northern Sky

James Hill was born to a poor family near Ontario, Canada, in 1838. His father died when he was 14, and James had to leave school to earn money. At age 17, he moved to the US. In Minnesota, he was a part of the volunteer corps; he couldn't serve in the Civil War, as he'd lost one eye as a child.

Hill's resourcefulness is the stuff of legend. He worked his way from literal rags to riches, eventually turning a failing railroad into the St. Paul, Minnesota & Manitoba Railway Company. Hill was known as "the empire builder". Still, people doubted his plan to take his railroad all the way to the Pacific, calling it "Hill's folly." In 1889, Hill went for it.

Hill sent John Stevens, who'd engineered the Panama Canal, to explore the eastern face of the Cascades. An associate named Haskell went looking for the headwaters of Nason Creek. When he found them, he carved the words *Stevens Pass* into a tree. Another man on the advance team, John Maloney, saw the potential for a town to support the coming rail. Maloney filed a claim and called it Maloney's Siding. With the completion of the rail in 1893, the town was named Skykomish, meaning

"inland people." The town formerly known as Maloney's Siding may have served as a fair-weather campsite for the Skykomish Tribe, though their permanent villages were farther downstream.

In short order, the population of Skykomish, well, skyrocketed. Building the Cascade Tunnel cut the track distance and energy required to get trains over the pass and employed engineers, miners, and timber workers. By 1899, when the Maloneys platted the town, 150 people called Skykomish home.

The Maloneys built a store, and Frank Wandschneider built a hotel. In 1904, a fire took out most of the town, including the hotel but sparing the store. The next year, D. J. Manning built the Skykomish Hotel and Restaurant, boasting 24-hour dining services and card rooms to entertain the railroad workers. The hotel still stands today. Patrick McEvoy was the engineer on the very first train through town, in 1893. A few years later, he moved to Skykomish and opened a saloon. Today it's called the Whistling Post Tavern. The Cascadia Hotel went up in the early 1920s. Skykomish had reached its apex.

Tunnel Trouble

Great Northern's Cascade Tunnel at Stevens Pass provided a quick solution to a tedious problem. Namely, trains crossing the pass had to traverse eight switchbacks to surmount the 4,000 feet of elevation. Each train required two engines, one to pull and one to push. All told, the traverse required four times as many track miles as the linear distance covered.

While the tunnel solved the switchback problem, it created others. In 1903, a passenger train stalled in the tunnel. Choking on the coal-powered smoke, the train crew lost consciousness before they could solve the problem. Luckily, a fireman on board figured out how to release the brakes, and the train eased out of the tunnel. In 1909, electrification eliminated the pollution issue, but heavy snow in winter led to avalanches and landslides that blocked the tunnel. Nearly 100 people died in an avalanche in 1910. In 1921, Great Northern decided to build a new tunnel.

Four times longer than the original, the new Cascade Tunnel would run 500 feet lower in elevation than the first. Engineers estimated its cost at $1 million. Nearly 2,000 men worked for three years to build the tunnel, and several men died in accidents in the process.

The new tunnel opened on December 28, 1928, three days before the anticipated deadline. While the tunnel came in on schedule, it was vastly over budget. The final cost was $25 million. The original tunnel was abandoned the following year.

Model Town

In 1852, the map of King County spanned from the Cascades to the Pacific east to west, and from Tacoma in the south to Skykomish in the northeast, 95 miles away. The eastern border later moved from the Pacific inland to Puget Sound, but the county is still Washington's 11th largest. Its 39 cities and towns are spread from river valleys to the Cascade foothills, from densely packed Seattle to sleepy Skykomish.

As the founding industries in Skykomish declined, interest in outdoor recreation began taking off. Stevens Pass became a popular skiing destination, bringing weekend visitors to Skykomish, which continued to offer hotels, restaurants, and dance halls.

In Skykomish, the high school, library, downtown businesses, and most homes are visible from the river. A sign welcomes visitors to "A Great Northern Town"—a nod to both the company that built the town and its location in the Cascades.

In the 1990s, efforts began to rectify the environmental damage caused by Great Northern. Skykomish High School students got involved, filming a documentary, *An Oily Sky,* which helped propel an agreement between the state and railroads to cleanup the pollution. The cleanup has been no small undertaking, involving lifting or relocating homes, reinforcing the levy, and excavating contaminated soil. BNSF paid a fine of $5 million and covered the cost of the cleanup, an estimated $100 million.

In 2011, Skykomish built its Town Center Park, featuring a model railroad at one-eighth scale. Just next to the actual BNSF tracks, the model train comes through, sounding its horn, though no one is there to get out of the way. There's a gift shop and a museum, and train rides are free. By September 2014, the park had transformed the center of town, and 350 people came to ride the model train every weekend.

Houses in Skykomish are small. People live on both sides of the railroad tracks, and everyone lives on the river. Tin roofs slough off the snow in winter. Porches sit a mere 6 inches above the grass. A tiny library looks like an old trading post. Light passes through the windows of the Skykomish Hotel. Put together, it feels like a model town, built for the model train set at its center. Still, there are a few cars parked outside the Whistling Post and the Cascade Cafe. Every now and again, a car crosses the double truss bridge over the river into town. The driver always waves.

A tiny model train runs alongside the actual train tracks in Skykomish. Visitors can ride the train for free and learn about the history of the railroad in Skykomish at the museum.

TOP: The arrival of the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad created South Cle Elum.

South Cle Elum

The Milwaukee Road

In the 1880s, railroad surveyors heard about the coal deposits in Roslyn, and within a year the Northern Pacific Railroad was running through Ellensburg. A few years later, they'd tunneled through Stampede Pass, and the Kittitas Valley had a rail connection to Puget Sound. Northern Pacific established a depot in Cle Elum, on the north side of the Cle Elum River. The discovery of gold in the Swauk Creek area increased migration to the valley generally, and Ellensburg was stumping to be the state capital. Even as mining explosions and labor wars complicated the burgeoning developments, another railroad sought to establish itself.

The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, often referred to as the Milwaukee Road, arrived in Kittitas County in 1909, platting the town of Kittitas in advance and bringing with them new residents and businesses. With the Milwaukee looking to chase Northern Pacific across the mountains, Samuel Packwood, a Civil War veteran and former Kittitas County commissioner and sheriff, platted South Cle Elum on the south side of the river. Cle Elum incorporated in 1911, three years after

the Milwaukee Road set up a depot, roundhouse, workers' housing, and maintenance facilities. The Milwaukee blasted six tunnels through Kittitas, including the 12,000-foot tunnel at Snoqualmie Pass, and laid more than 100 miles of track.

The Milwaukee developed more quickly than other railroads had, taking advantage of newly mechanized equipment like steam shovels. South Cle Elum populated gradually, though some note that it never stood a chance of matching Cle Elum's success. By 1920, the year of its first census, South Cle Elum had about a quarter of the population of Cle Elum, with whom it shared a water supply and school system.

The Milwaukee was fully electric by 1918 and continued operating until 1980. At one time, it had a majority of the business running east from the port of Seattle, and it carried passengers from Chicago to Seattle in 45 hours. Meanwhile, in 1915, the long-planned Sunset Highway opened to automobile traffic across Snoqualmie Pass. Governor Ernest Lister said the moment was more important than the railroad's arrival in Seattle decades prior. His words quickly proved true. Federal funds for a

road system increased. By the 1930s, travelers took the road instead of the Milwaukee to go skiing at the summit of Snoqualmie. In the 1970s, railroad mergers presented insurmountable competition to the Milwaukee, and the line closed for good in 1980. Today, the old Milwaukee Road is accessible on foot, bicycle, and horseback as part of the Palouse to Cascade Trail, also known as the Iron Horse Trail and the John Wayne Pioneer Trail.

Missionaries in the Valley

The presence of missionaries in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-19th century stems from this apocryphal story. Reportedly, the Nez Perce, on encountering Lewis and Clark, showed interest in learning about the men's religion. In response, Christian groups began sending missionaries west. In 1852, Catholic priests Louis d'Herbomez and Charles Pandosy started the St. Joseph mission near Ahtanum Creek in the Yakima Valley. The mission shared a location with Yakama Chief Kamiakin's seasonal camp. Kamiakin worked with the priests to establish the mission and use the land for agriculture. He allowed the priests to baptize his children, which spurred other Yakama people to follow. The priests exchanged language with the Yakama as well. A few years later, their relationship soured as white settlers, miners, and the Northern Pacific Railroad began exerting increasing pressure on the Yakama land and on their lives. Soldiers stationed at Fort Vancouver came to the area and assumed the Catholics were helping the Yakama. The soldiers burned the mission and the nearby Holy Cross mission. By 1858, the priests representing the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had left, some through Kittitas Valley and over the Cascades to Puget Sound.

The history of white religious incursion on Indigenous cultures is infinitely complex. One small facet of the story is that in the mid-19th century Pacific Northwest, missionaries frequently mediated between Native peoples and the US government. Both the church and government wanted to—and did—drastically change Indigenous lives. Sometimes, when the government failed, the church succeeded.

The Palouse to Cascade Trail starts in the Seattle area near the popular hiking spot Rattlesnake Ledge, taking explorers up and over Snoqualmie Pass and all the way to the Columbia River in eastern Washington.

South-Going Zaxes?

In *The Zax,* by Dr. Seuss, two groups of very similar people do their best to remain separate. One day, a North-Going Zax crosses paths with a South-Going Zax, and neither will move out of the other's way. This doesn't quite describe the relationship between South Cle Elum and its sister city across the river, but they haven't always agreed.

The two towns have considered combining a number of times, but voters in South Cle Elum have always chosen to remain independent. The towns share some services, such as policing, sewer, and water, but South Cle Elum has "[its] own mayor, city council, and zip code," as Iron Horse Bed and Breakfast owner Mary Pittis notes. Mayor Jim DeVere reinforced the division between the towns' identities, saying "It's different generations, different solutions . . . It just happened to shake out that way."

South Cle Elum keeps on keeping on. The Milwaukee depot sat empty for decades until a volunteer organization formed to restore it. In 1999, the state bought the land and buildings, as well as the railbed, which it transformed into Iron Horse State Park. The Cascade Rail Foundation pitched in on the restoration, and today, the depot holds a museum and a restaurant.

In the Seuss classic, the South-Going Zax had a rule: never budge! In the end, the world grew around the Zax. "The world grew. In a couple of years, the new highway came through." One supposes the Zax are still there, toe-to-toe on the prairie of Prax.

Iron Horse State Park falls along a section of the 220-mile Palouse to Cascade Trail (aka the John Wayne Pioneer Trail). The park features the restored Milwaukee Road Depot and an interpretive area where visitors can learn about the history of the electrified rail.

Population: 3,054
Founding: 1909

INSETS L to R: The library, open five days per week, also serves as a food pantry and community center. • Benton County farmers have a short commute to the market. • Starting in 1910, the Walla Walla to Yakima line stopped in Benton City. • Benton County makes up a huge part of Washington's agricultural wealth, producing over 100 commercial crops.

TOP: Sunflowers brighten up a stone barn in Benton City.

Benton City

A Valley Held Dear

"Every worthwhile venture usually has had a very humble beginning." So begins the history of the settling of Benton City, as told by the History Committee of the Community Development Program of Benton City. Published in 1959, the work notes 41 businesses open in Benton City and an additional 14 in nearby unincorporated Kiona. The History Committee's work tells the story of Benton City from 1853, when "the first weary, bedraggled emigrants . . . called the Longmire Train" arrived from Indiana after enduring much "heckling" by local Indians and navigating the "tricky" Snake River. The account nevertheless credits the Yakama Native Americans, under the leadership of Chief Kamiakin, with helping the settlers across the confluence of the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Conflict with Native Americans, known as the Indian Wars, prevented much settlement throughout the 1850s. By the 1870s, the Northern Pacific Railroad Company was planning its course through the Yakima Valley. In 1883, the Cascade Division of the railroad laid tracks within a few miles of Kiona, near the future home of Ben-

ton City, allowing for the movement of products and goods east. The Historical Committee's history notes that "During the summer of 1885 there were over 37,000 head of cattle, over 4,000 horses, and nearly 30,000 head of sheep shipped by rail out of the Yakima Valley to markets in Montana and Chicago." As settlers arrived on the railroad, the cattle industry decreased, irrigation canals were built, and agriculture took over.

In 1909, railroad engineer F. L. Pitman bought 158 acres of land on the north side of the Yakima River for $422, platted the town of Benton City, and put up a railroad station. Within three years, 10 trains per day rolled through, and Benton City was the main junction between Walla Walla and Yakima. As initial plans to make Benton City a prominent rail hub faltered, residents looked for another way to keep their city growing. Pitman decided to make a bid for Benton City to overthrow Prosser as the county seat; Kennewick was also vying for the title. Both cities lost to Prosser, but continued expansion of irrigation meant that Benton City could count on a secure future as an agricultural center.

WWII reduced the population of Benton City, but the 1943 construction of the nuclear reactor in nearby Hanford brought new residents. After several decades of start-and-stop growth, residents formally incorporated Benton City in 1945. Within a generation, booming agriculture brought an increase in immigrants from Mexico. From 1970 to 1980, the population of Benton City doubled to just over 2,000 people.

Though the Hanford site brought jobs, it also polluted the soil. In 1986, Benton City had the highest levels of plutonium pollution in the area, prompting a decontamination effort. Hanford remains the most contaminated site in the United States. Despite this, and despite its impact on Benton City's soil, Benton City, Kiona, and the surrounding area has continued to increase its agricultural output, from peaches and cherries to wine.

The Nuclear Threat

Benton County is home to the Hanford Site, 27 miles up the Columbia River from Benton City. As part of the Manhattan Project, workers at the Hanford Site produced plutonium for nuclear weapons from 1943 to 1987. A few years after the reactors stopped producing, federal and Washington State authorities formed a multiagency agreement to clean up the radioactive waste threatening the local environment, including the Columbia River. Historically, the Hanford Site has been a key employer in the greater Tri-Cities region. The populations of Franklin and Benton Counties tripled in the years of the Hanford Site's development and war-era production. Hanford continues to employ many of the region's residents, though the focus of the work has shifted from production to cleanup. Workers are building a facility set to open in 2023 to glassify 56 million gallons of radioactive waste now held underground in tanks. Other efforts are underway to protect the land and the Columbia River from plumes of contamination caused by liquid waste that evaporated or seeped through holding pools into the

ground. A disaster at Hanford would likely result in devastation greater than that experienced after the earthquake that leveled Fukushima, Japan in 2011. The continued success of local agriculture, including Red Mountain's celebrated wine, likely depends on the successful mitigation of this problem.

The history of Benton City is also the history of Kiona, the unincorporated community just down the road. Proximity to the railroad meant early settlers developed Kiona first, though just three families, the Neils, Brownings, and Lightles, lived in Kiona prior to the construction of the irrigation canal.

Pastoral Paradise

High above the Yakima River, just down the main road from the Kiona-Benton City High School, the Benton City branch of the Mid-Columbia Libraries sits, overlooking Red Mountain, the smallest wine-growing region in Washington, and one of the most celebrated. The Red Mountain AVA, or American Viticultural Area, founded in 2001, comprises just more than 4,000 acres and 15 wineries focused on premium wine production. With a price per ton that is three times the state average, Red Mountain is an important part of the local economy.

Visitors to Benton City will find sweeping photogenic landscapes and pastoral agricultural scenes. Stop for coffee in town and check out the view from the library, and then take the Old Inland Empire Highway or any number of side roads to the lush farmland. Sunflowers stand sentinel over lush rows of peaches, cherries, and apples. The Farmer's Market is open every day but Sunday.

The Missoula Floods at the end of the last ice age caused sediment-rich soil in the Red Mountain AVA. Good soil, a long growing season, and precise irrigation result in the best possible product, like the fruit-focused wines made by three generations of the Williams family at Kiona Vineyards.

Population: 193
Founding: 1869

INSETS L to R: Creating the Bruce Memorial Museum was the Waitsburg Historical Society's first project. • Idyllic downtown Waitsburg. • "The Waitsburg Story," a work in bronze by artist Wayne Chabre, depicts Weller Library founder Fannie Weller across from Edward Bruce, whose parents pioneered Waitsburg. • Waitsburg is an increasingly popular destination for foodies and wine enthusiasts.
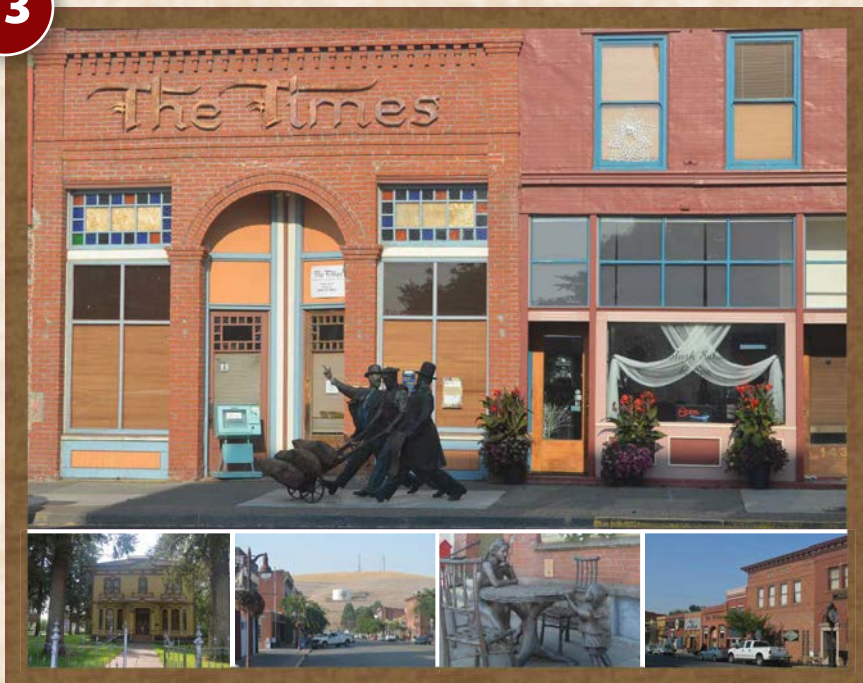
TOP: In Jeffrey Hill's "The Waitsburg Trilogy," the town's founders walk past the *Waitsburg Times'* offices.

Waitsburg

Wait's Mill Town

There are railroad towns and mining towns, fishing towns, and trading towns. Waitsburg was first a mill town. Sylvester Mather Wait, the founding father of Waitsburg, was born in Vermont in 1822. By the time he turned 30 years old, he'd made it across the country to Oregon, where he married Mary Hargrove. Wait first operated a mill and ran a dairy farm in the Rogue Valley in Oregon. It was a time of frequent conflict between the US government and local Indian nations. In 1855, local miners massacred 28 Native Americans camping near the Table Rock Reservation. The miners hoped to start a war that would lead to gainful employment as paramilitary volunteers, as the mine had seemingly run dry. The Rogue River Treaty had been signed just two years prior, supposedly guaranteeing an end to the hostilities between the US government and the Rogue River nations.

As a result of the conflict in the area, Wait lost the mill, sold the farm, and in 1864 moved to the Touchet Valley. He arrived with $1,500 and a dream of starting over. Earlier settlers Dennis Williard and William Perry Bruce, who'd

homesteaded there a few years prior, donated land to Wait, and in 1865, he started a gristmill at the confluence of the Touchet River and Coppei Creek. Shortly thereafter, residents voted to rename the town Waitsburg. Sixty years had passed since Lewis and Clark had traveled through on their return trip from their expedition. Another decade would pass before the Nez Perce people came through on the trail named for them as they fled the US cavalry, abandoning their homelands, resisting being forced onto reservations, and seeking peace in Canada.

In 1853, Washington became a territory. Sylvester Wait built his five-story mill just a dozen years later. This time, Wait's mill succeeded, creating an economy for the town. Wait bought wheat from local farmers and sold it in far-flung markets. By the time the town was platted in 1869, 100 people lived in Waitsburg.

As goes the story in many early towns, however, a fire burned through Waitsburg in 1881. The population had reached 250 residents, and they rebuilt. By then, Wait had sold the mill, but he had solidified his legacy as the founder of Waitsburg. The new owners of the mill expanded the business

to locations as far away as Milton, Oregon. Changes in technology in the 20th century brought electric power to the mill, replacing the water-powered system. The Waitsburg mill remained operational until 1957 and was a symbol of the success and growth of Waitsburg, whose population continued to expand until the turn of the 20th century. The Waitsburg Historical Society sought to preserve the mill, but a fire destroyed it in the fall of 2009. Just a few years prior, the mill had earned a place on the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation's list of most endangered places. For a town that's done so much to preserve its history, the destruction of the mill represented a significant loss.

The Waitsburg Times

Wait's mill isn't the only important institution in town. In fact, local journalism has been a successful enterprise in Waitsburg for even longer than the mill. In weekly publication since 1878, *The Waitsburg Times* is one of the oldest publications in Washington. At one point, the owner and publisher of the paper was also the mayor, Tom Baker. *Time* magazine covered the unusual story of a local politician owning the local source of news in a story called "Press Lord" that ran in 1983. According to the article, local residents found the situation unremarkable. When questioned for the magazine, their answers demonstrated the close-knit nature of the town. "It's easy for Tom," one said. "His newspaper is only two doors down from town hall." Another commented that it was "[Tom's] turn."

Preserving the Past

In the 1970s, the Waitsburg Historical Society formed in an effort to preserve the Bruce House. William Perry Bruce, one of the early settlers who donated land to Wait for the mill, built one of many impressive homes that went up in the postfire years, when Waitsburg's population was booming. The Historical Society has restored the house and named it the Bruce Memorial Museum. With just 15 minutes' notice, a docent will meet visitors and provide a guided tour of the museum and explain much of Waitsburg's history.

One such docent is Anita Baker, wife of former mayor and publisher Tom. The Bakers moved to Waitsburg in 1963 for the opportunity to own a newspaper. Anita describes herself as the "Bruce House Boss." She knows the history of this place just as well as if she were descended from its original families. On the tour, she focuses on family connections. There's a chart explaining the connections between early citizens of Waitsburg. Here's

In 2015, the city commissioned three bronze sculptures depicting scenes from Waitsburg's history. *The Waitsburg Three,* by Jeffrey Hill, honors the town's three founders, Sylvester Wait, William Bruce, and William Preston.

a piece of fabric, one of four pieces each of Sylvester Wait's four daughters took from their mother's wedding dress. Though the past is very much present, Anita says Waitsburg is changing. "Suburbs don't have a Main Street," she says. City life in Walla Walla is just 25 miles away.

Waitsburg has the distinction of being the only town in Washington to operate based on an iteration of its original territorial charter.
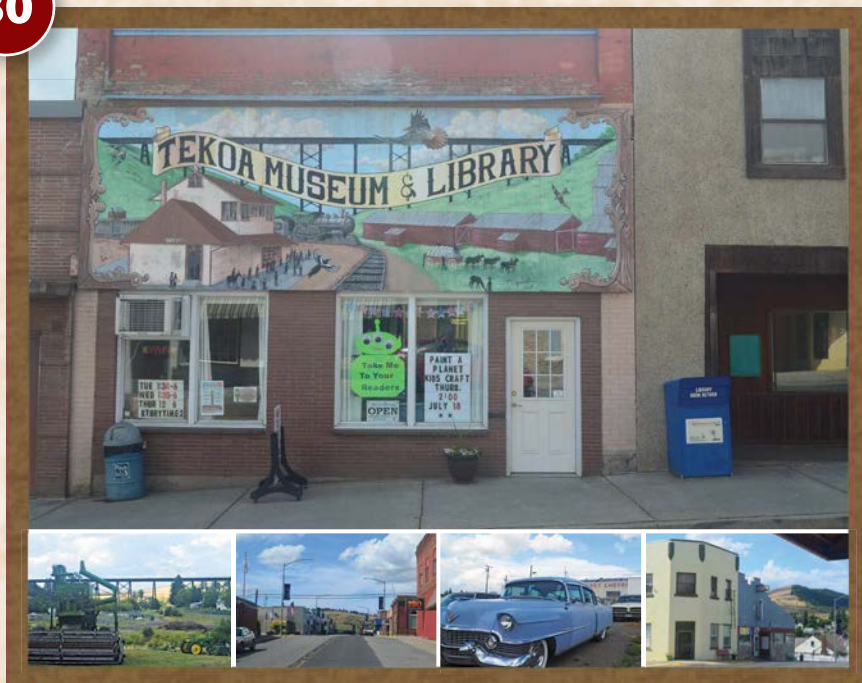
Population: 778
Founding: 1888

INSETS L to R: The funds needed to preserve the old Milwaukee trestle topped $1 million. • Tekoa is closer to city conveniences than it feels. • Walter Dorsey ran Dorsey's Chevrolet in Tekoa for 45 years. • Roof lines in Tekoa mimic the lines of the surrounding Palouse.

TOP: Public art in Tekoa ranges from an Art Deco theater to agricultural murals.

Tekoa

The Beginning of the Line

Tekoa has inspired appreciation since its earliest days. W. H. Lever's 1901 history describes the town as "a veritable dream of loveliness," a landscape "replete with feminine pride in her newly-wrought garment of green." Better farmland cannot be found, he asserts. Its water system was "the best," and its "fine six-room school-house" is evidence that "its people are friends of education." All this, and the town had "quite a large payroll."

Those receiving the payroll worked for the Oregon Washington and Northern Railroad. Tekoa went from a few claims homesteaded by David and George Huffman and John McDonald in the 1880s to a thriving town of nearly 1,700 residents by the 1920 census. Lever writes, "When it was definitely known that Tekoa was to be a junction, many places of business were opened . . . in anticipation of the expected transportation facilities." As goes the railroad, so go towns across Washington State.

Settler Daniel Truax platted the town in 1888, dividing it into 20-acre parcels. Frank Connell built a trading post to continue trade relations with the Nez Perce Indians. Tekoa's own website notes this trading post, as well as the Whitman Massacre, may have limited early settlement in the area. The site's accounting of Tekoa's history doesn't name the Nez Perce or Cayuse people but refers generally to Native Americans and explains, "Long before the first white settlers came to Tekoa, the area was part of what was known then as Great Oregon Country . . . explored in certain areas by Lewis and Clark, David Thompson, Father Desmet [sic] and Ross Cox."

Given its history, one might expect, then, that Tekoa would instead be named Coxville, Trauxville, or Huffman's Junction. Daniel Traux's wife, "standing on the porch of her house on the west bank of Hangman Creek," thought to name the emerging settlement after the biblical town south of Jerusalem, whose name means "city of tents." Other biblical references to Tekoa seem to fit the town as well. They variously describe Tekoa as the "extreme edge of the inhabited area," and the place where a "wise woman" was found to mediate between King David and Absalom. Tekoa incorporated in 1889.

A Most American Thing to Do

There are many ways to end a sentence that begins, "I wonder what people did before . . . " Digital natives will ask what we did before the internet. Before a universe of information was at our fingertips and Netflix delivered binge-watching, before TV and radio and Encyclopaedia Britannica, people gathered in small communities across the country for cultural festivals lasting days or weeks. These were the chautauquas. In the late 19th century, as the railroads raced to complete transnational lines, kicking up towns in their wake, a movement started in New York and soon spread all the way to the West. Chautauquas, first started in Chautauqua, New York, were festivals meant to inform and entertain. Authors lectured, politicians spoke, vaudevillians performed, and everywhere, people flocked to the tents. *From Bunch Grass to Grain,* a local history of Tekoa, mentions chautauquas and medicine shows at the opera house as two forms of entertainment, as well as the occasional circus. By some estimates, in the early 1920s, 40 million Americans participated in chautauquas held in more than 10,000 locations country-wide. Teddy Roosevelt famously called the traveling shows "the most American thing in America." The movement fell away during the Depression, but in recent years, a group called the New Old Time Chautauqua has restarted the tradition. The NOTC is working in partnership with Washington State Parks; their 2016 tour marked the first chautauquas in the region since 1925, a year in which the chautauqua came to Tekoa. The NOTC and Washington State Parks include Native American voices, too, partnering with the Confederated Tribes of Colville and the Lummi Nation.

Slippery Gulch Life

More than other tiny towns in Whitman County, Tekoa is picturesque. Positioned on a rise in the hills at the foot of Tekoa Mountain, the town offers vistas over the wide Palouse. A mural over the Tekoa museum and library depicts a train station in early Tekoa. The train steams down the track tucked between rolling hills. The Milwaukee trestle, built by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad in 1909, spans the hills, very much the way it looks to a visitor today, standing just a block away from the mural. Advertisements for writing camps and reading programs testify to the centrality of the library in city life. A paper alien in the library's window demands, "Take me to your readers!" The curved roofline of one building cedes to a roofline of descending notches, like a set of stairs.

The railroads saw the Palouse as a pathway to the Rocky Mountains and a ticket to economic success. Agricultural products and natural resources rumbled over the 975-foot-long, 115-foot-high railroad trestle above Tekoa to the tune of millions of dollars annually.

The combination of shapes mimics the mountain, here soft with agriculture, there sharply treed. Across a small park built in an empty space in a row of connected buildings, the art deco marquee of the recently restored Empire Theatre promises performing-arts events that will draw a regional audience. Tekoa is one stop on the Palouse Scenic Byway, and like other towns on the loop, Tekoa has signs that tell visitors what's nearby. The town of Latah, in Spokane County, is just 7 miles away, and Oakesdale is a dozen miles in the other direction. On the other hand, why not stay in Tekoa? "Imagine living in a town where folks are extra friendly," they advertise. Tekoa offers services from grocery stores to a medical clinic, and despite the boarded-up evidence of economic decline, it has numerous thriving businesses, including restaurants and a coffee shop. The noon whistle still announces lunchtime in Tekoa every day. A dream of loveliness, indeed.

The Empire Theatre reopened in 2000 after five years of volunteer labor for its restoration and more than four decades of disuse. Originally a movie theater, the Art Deco space is now a regional performance hub for local talent and visiting artists alike.

Population: 345
Founding: 1878

INSETS L to R: The Palouse encompasses a wide geographical region including southeastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and central Idaho. • Jacob's bakery opened recently in the space of a renovated former brewery, which even earlier was the home of Uniontown's opera house. • Like many small towns, Uniontown's library shares a building with the town hall. • Barrel-vaulted masonry is characteristic of Romanesque architechture, in vogue in Europe from the 10th through mid-12th centuries.

TOP: The fence along the Dahmen Barn's property is made of more than a thousand wheels.

Uniontown

Producers on the Palouse

German Catholic farmers were the first Europeans to settle the Palouse region and what is now Uniontown. History notes 1873 as the first year German immigrants settled in the area. Just a few years prior, the US government's westward expansion had moved beyond negotiating with Indigenous nations. For almost a century, the US government had acknowledged Indian sovereignty in nearly 400 treaties across the country, but the 1871 Indian Appropriations Act abolished treaty-making in favor of creating reservations by "agreement" with individual tribes and often groups of tribes. The law thus opened Indian lands for the taking. Europeans, largely from Germany and Switzerland, settled the Palouse, and their farming techniques turned the region into America's breadbasket.

Thomas Montgomery left New York in the final years of the Civil War, arriving in Uniontown four years before the Indian Appropriations Act and filing a homestead claim three years after it, in 1874. By the end of the decade, he'd established a post office and platted the town. Other early arrivals, notably L. J. Wolford, Roy Woodworth,

and a Dr. Cole, had such a hard time getting along with Montgomery that they founded their own town, Colton, whose name is a portmanteau for Dr. Cole and Wolford's son, Clinton. Today, Uniontown and Colton share a school district, and a sign on the way into Uniontown proclaims it HOME OF THE WILDCATS, the mascot of both the Washington State University and the Colton schools' sports teams.

Montgomery continued to create enemies, and eventually he was murdered, just nine years after filing a homestead claim. Despite his brief and controversial contribution, Uniontown remembers Montgomery fondly. A memorial stone in his honor stands in Holzer Park.

The settlers weathered the economic downturn known as the Panic of 1893, briefly putting on hold plans to build a magnificent church out of brick and stone. They resumed construction in 1904, and in 1905, St. Boniface Catholic Church became the first to be consecrated by a bishop in the state of Washington. St. Boniface is in the Romanesque style, with barrel-vaulted masonry in the interior and exterior towers predating the Gothic style that took hold in the middle of the 12th century.

Uniontown remains a center of agriculture, and since its founding has been a social and cultural center, as well. Of particular interest is Uniontown's history as early adopters: They had phone service in 1886 and set up internet service in 1997.

The Dahmen Barn

In 1935, local farmer Frank Wolf built a barn just north of Uniontown on Highway 195 for the Dahmen family, who used it as a commercial dairy operation for nearly 20 years. Today, the Uniontown Community Development Association maintains the barn as a community space focused on artistic education and performance. Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Art Place Foundation have contributed to the expansion and renovation of the venue. The striking fence that surrounds the barn consists of more than 1,000 wheels from every kind of machine, artfully welded together in a visual representation of both the history of the barn and the community effort that created it.

A Gem Amid the Jewels

What's the opposite of finding a needle in a haystack? Visitors to Uniontown will feel more like they've found a diamond in a bowl of emeralds. Highway 195 runs right through the center of town on its way north to Pullman from the Snake River on the border of Idaho, compelling visitors to stop at the tasting room for Wawawai Canyon Winery, Whitman County's oldest vintner. If it's too early for wine, stop in at Jacob's, a café housed in one of Uniontown's oldest buildings. Formerly a brewery and before that an opera house, Jacob's has been beautifully refurbished. Visitors with time to wander might find themselves with a pastry in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other, heading up the hill to see St. Boniface Catholic Church. Marilyn and Lee Jackson's retrievers, Katie and Kylie, will leap and bark, but they only mean to hand off their favorite ball in hopes of a game of catch. The Jacksons bought the old convent turned bed-and-breakfast a few years back, from the first owners after the church. The church

almost tore the place down, as it had become expensive to maintain and renters had caused damage to the interior. "Like the old song goes," Marilyn says, "they were going to put up a parking lot—not that they need one."

The Dahmen Barn is a former dairy farm turned art studio, gallery, and performance center, thanks to the efforts of the Dahmen family, the Uniontown Community Development Association, and countless volunteers.

Though they're still newcomers to Uniontown, Marilyn and Lee know a lot about their neighborhood. To the right of the convent lives John McCann, the bookbinder for WSU's graduate theses and dissertations. In his mid-eighties now, McCann operates J & S Bindery out of his garage, accessed through a garden path overflowing with poppies and greenery. "His wife was a master gardener," says Marilyn. To the left of the inn is the church, and to its left is Uniontown's oldest building, a two-story house owned by a WSU history professor.

Maybe, as its website says, it's Uniontown's prime location smack in the middle of the "Quad Cities" of Pullman, Lewiston, Clarkston, and Moscow—two in Idaho and two in Washington—that makes it such a great place. A visitor who takes the time to walk the small downtown and have a few conversations will learn the truth: It's the people who make Uniontown feel so special. Many of the town's buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places, so owners can't change much about the exteriors, Marilyn says. "I've got a bullet hole in my dining room window." She supposes it was from when Jacob's was a bar. A bar fight must have come uphill. "I imagine all the nuns holding their rosaries," she says. (One supposes the nuns were doing that anyway.)

Hang around taking pictures long enough, and someone will invite you to see the inside of St. Boniface. "We'll be praying, but come on in," they'll say.

Wawawai Canyon Winery is the project of retired biology professors David and Stacia Moffett. Their son Ben, who studied viticulture and enology, is the chief winemaker. Wawawai Canyon is the oldest bonded winery in Whitman County.

TOP: The Black Bear Motel offers a cartoonish interpretation of the Old West.

Population: 1,734
Founding: 1880

INSETS L to R: The courthouse in Davenport blends Colonial Revival and Romanesque architecture. • The museum has exhibits on the railroad, Indigenous cultures, and historic local businesses. • Perhaps an unlikely choice for a mascot in a region where wildcats and eagles seem to dominate, students at the Davenport High School compete as the mighty gorillas. • Davenport recognizes its champions on its beautiful town welcome sign.

Davenport

A Regional Hub, Then and Now

Davenport is more than a small town. At nearly 2,000 residents, it's the largest town in Lincoln County, and it's the seat of governance in the county. These facts, combined with the services offered in Davenport, from medical care to education, make it a regional hub. The importance of the area where the town now resides dates from long before its name was Davenport, or Cottonwood Springs before it.

Lincoln County lies just south of the Colville Reservation, between the Spokane River; the Columbia River; and the various lakes, canyons, and plunge pools formed at the end of the last ice age. Pre-contact, what is now the town of Davenport was a popular campsite along a well-used trail running east–west between the rivers. A sign in Davenport's City Park recounts the shared use of the trail by Indigenous people and settlers and notes the natural springs and lush cottonwood growth nearby, which led to the first English name of the town—Cottonwood Springs.

The first white men in the area were fur traders, followed by gold miners. The first permanent non-Indigenous resident noted in Davenport's history is Aloysius Harry Harker, who arrived in 1880. The Nicholls family arrived shortly after. A few years later, a man named John C. Davenport founded a town he named for himself nearby. John Davenport built his town quickly and lost it almost as quickly to a fire; surviving businesses moved downhill to Cottonwood Springs, which adopted the Davenport name.

Davenport fought a short-lived war with Sprague over the title of county seat, and an opulent courthouse rose on the tallest hill in town, surrounded by a great iron fence that the town dismantled during World War II and offered in contribution to the war effort. The courthouse today is a replica of the original building, which succumbed to fire only to see a complete rebuild within a year, replete with restored iron fencing.

The Northern Pacific Railroad Company roared into Davenport in 1889, warranting a new depot for the rail that would serve both freight and passengers. As the town grew, wheat became its industrial identity, and the town's success rose and fell according to the relative success of the harvest. Construction of the Grand Coulee Dam brought

workers to Davenport as with other regional communities, diversifying the town's industry and workforce. Soon, the town added medical services to the growing list of the resources it offered the region. Wheat, the rail, hydroelectricity, and medical services remain important to Davenport's economy today, but the oldest by far is wheat. One can trace a through line from the earliest area farms to today, with some farms having exceeded 100 years of continuous operation, often by the descendants of the families that started them.

The Mitten

There are three possibilities for buildings in towns that have been around for a century or more. Sometimes a building is the same as it always was—churches usually fall into this category. Fire takes a lot of buildings, and when reconstruction isn't possible, the buildings disappear, sometimes even from local memory. Then there are a lot of places that used to be something else.

The Mitten was an ice-cream parlor with wooden booths and wrought iron tables and chairs. There was a fireplace on the south wall, and in the 1930s, according to local history, all the high schoolers gathered at The Mitten. Owners Al and Oliver allowed students to run a tab until they could pay with their allowances. Prices went from 5¢ for a Coke to 35¢ for a banana split, remembers Laurence Jayne. Helen Ehlenfeldt remembers visiting The Mitten after seeing a silent movie at the Blue Mouse.

The Mitten family sold to the MacMillans and then again to brothers-in-law Albert Leipham and Oliver Barnes. A few decades later, The Mitten became The Hangar. The museum in Davenport keeps memories of The Mitten alive.

Gorillas in the West

Rolling fields of wheat and barley fall away as Davenport comes into view. The turnoff to Lake Roosevelt, a popular recreation site, is just outside of town. On the south end of town, the Black Bear Motel welcomes visitors to the place where "the pavement ends and the West begins." The motel reflects the environment of Davenport's earliest days and evokes a Wild West ethos, complete with

a jail and marshal's office, a blacksmith shop, and a trading post, guarded by two wooden Indians. Next to the hotel, the town's welcome sign boasts of Davenport's All-State Academic awards. Davenport's stately courthouse stands atop a hill, flag waving, and from its steps, most of the town is visible.

The Black Bear Motel welcomes visitors to Davenport with an eye toward the Wild West days of Lincoln County's earliest European settlements.

Though small, Davenport is thriving. Morgan Street, the main road through town, has restaurants, antiques shops, and medical services, as well as city buildings and a grocery store. A block farther into town, the Lincoln County History Museum tells the stories of Davenport's beginnings, as well as those of Sprague, Almira, and others including towns like Peach, which was inundated by the Grand Coulee Dam construction. The museum pays loving tribute to Native American artist George Flett, whose work the museum displays.

The preschoolers bustling through the museum may not know about the old Mitten diner, and the high schoolers doing a science project may not know their town was once called Cottonwood Springs, but when asked, the kids say Davenport is a great place to live. It feels like a place moving into the future.

The museum is shaped like an old barn, but there's an electric vehicle charging station in front. A small skate park inhabits the lot behind the very old police and fire station. Just up the hill are more homes from just about every decade in the last 100 years, as well as the high school. Davenport's the kind of place where just about everyone can walk to school. Unusual for the Pacific Northwest, whose schools often choose a regional animal like the cougar or eagle for a mascot, Davenport High School's mascot is the gorilla. A massive emblem of their gorilla graces the top of the highest grain elevator that stands along the railroad tracks right behind the football field. Standing on the field looking up, one can almost hear the young athletes of Davenport beating their chests.

Davenport's courthouse stands proudly atop a hill on the east end of town. From its steps, nearly all of the town is visible.

Population: 238
Founding: 1911

INSETS L to R: The old rail trestle cuts narrowly between the mountain and Box Canyon Dam. • Plans for a grand hotel fell through, but miners soon utilized the rooms as apartments. • The Cutter Theater, home to both a stage and a museum, provides many opportunities for community engagement. • The Cutter Theater and Community Center both serve as gathering spaces for events in Metaline Falls.

TOP: Metaline Falls was named one of the 100 Best Small Arts Towns in America.

Metaline Falls

Metal Miracles

Metaline Falls was born in the mines. The 1850s brought the first gold rush prospectors to the area. The placer mines they established required intensive labor for little yield. Chinese miners were among the first to extract minerals from the area; limited documentation exists about their contribution to mining, however, as dams have inundated archaeological sites and 19th-century discrimination against the Chinese seems to have excluded them from much of the area's historical record. Though the first miners were after gold and silver, lead and zinc would bring economic prosperity and large-scale development, hence the name, given by the earliest non-Indigenous settlers: the Metalines.

Before the railroad came through, a combination of pack trains and riverboats carried out the zinc and lead extracted from these early mines. In 1907, the government widened a difficult passage of the river at Box Canyon to make way for better transport. Shortly thereafter, Danish immigrant Lewis Larson and Frederick Blackwell of Maine initiated the greatest economic development in the region. With Blackwell's financial backing, Larson's Lehigh Portland Cement Company began an operation that would employ the area for nearly a century.

While Larson focused on local development, Blackwell invested in rail. His Idaho & Washington Northern Railroad reached Metaline Falls in 1910. The next year, Metaline Falls incorporated. A bridge across the Pend Oreille connected Metaline Falls with the highway in 1919, and hydroelectric projects and logging contributed to the area's development. During the mid-20th century, the Metaline Mining District was the top producer in the state and a source of zinc and lead during WWII. As industry depleted the area's natural resources, rail lines diverted efforts away from Metaline Falls. Box Canyon and Boundary Dams still employ area residents, but logging and mining have run their course.

Basketball Courts for Battlefields

The loss of a school is one step in the decline of a town, and so it's unsurprising that a town would fight to keep its school district. Such is the case with Metaline, Metaline Falls, and Ione. At the Cutter Theatre in Metaline Falls, an exhibit on local school consolidations tells the story.

Homesteaders established school districts "as soon as the number of children could justify it." The first school went up in Metaline Falls in 1902. Without buses, children walked for miles, rode horses, and forded the river to get to school. By the time schools in northern Pend Oreille County were established, professional educators viewed rural schools with disdain. Many of these educators pushed for school consolidation to encourage rural families to move to more urbanized areas and participate in larger school districts.

During the Great Depression, teachers' wages fell for three years running in Metaline Falls. Companies started closing, and homesteaders left to find work. The Huckleberry School closed in 1936, followed closely by the Forest Home, Tiger, and Lost Creek Schools. Metaline Falls' schools consolidated with Metaline's, just half a mile down the road and over the river. Consolidation both united and divided the communities: just a few miles apart, the communities of Ione and Metaline Falls became bitter rivals, using basketball courts for battlefields.

In the 1960s, the county sought to consolidate schools once again. Neither town would concede to busing its students to school in the other. "Over my dead body," one resident remarked. In a compromise, the county built the new Selkirk High School halfway between. An exchange between a mother and her son, who'd begun attending the new school, illuminates the difficulty of assimilation. "How many on [the basketball team] are from Ione and how many from Metaline Falls?" she asked. "Mom," her son replied, "This is Selkirk now."

The old Metaline Falls school, designed by architect Kirtland Cutter, has been repurposed as the Cutter Theatre, a nonprofit performing arts center, home to a theatre, library, and exhibit space.

Lead's Legacy

Tucked between the Colville National Forest and the Pend Oreille River, Metaline Falls is stunningly beautiful. Rock climbers can access more than 70 routes on surrounding limestone cliffs. Sullivan Lake offers camping, fishing, and multiple hiking trails for all levels of ability. For the less outdoorsy types, Metaline Falls hosts several annual events, from arts festivals and car shows to theatrical productions. Now more than ever, Metaline Falls could use the economic benefits of responsible tourism.

The Box Canyon Dam, built in 1955, generates enough power to supply 36,000 homes. It is a "run of the river" dam, which means it doesn't have the capacity to store the energy it produces. Its reservoir is 56 miles long.

On July 31, 2019, the Pend Oreille mine in Metaline Falls closed after more than 100 years of fluctuating economic relevance. The mine reopened in 2014 after being open only for "care and maintenance" since 2009. With the most recent closure, Metaline Falls, as well as Pend Oreille County at large, lost more than 200 jobs. Just 40 workers will stay on to maintain the mine long-term.

Coverage of the mine closure notes the divide between urban and rural communities in the Pacific Northwest. Whereas urban centers thrive on a diversity of work opportunities, rural communities that have long depended on single industries based on natural resource extraction are suffering as those resources are depleted. Prior to the mine closure, Pend Oreille County's unemployment rate was 7.2%, compared with 4.6% across the state.

Other economic opportunities may lie in the opening of a new casino not far down the road, in Cusick. The casino anticipates offering up to 80 jobs to area workers. Residents of Metaline Falls reacted to the closure with expressions of grief and concern about population loss, and they also demonstrated hope. Pend Oreille County Commissioner Steve Kiss stayed focused on resilience, saying, "We will survive."

The Pend Oreille Apartments, better known as the Miner's Hotel, took 20 years to build. Started in 1929, work stalled during the Depression. Lewis Larsen had conceived of a grand hotel, but with mining booming, a shortage of worker housing turned the hotel into an apartment building for mine workers. Today, a 600-square-foot studio with one bathroom rents for $400 per month.

An old crow and a cute chick live here!

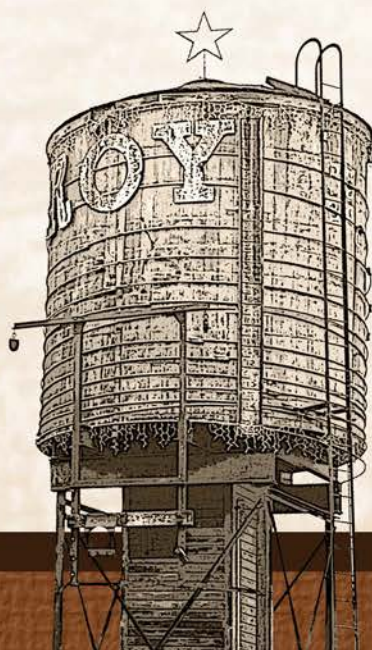# Small towns. Huge character!

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