

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORCHARDS AREA
FOCUSING ON SILVER STAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
By Sandy Hayslip

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: What was here before us?

CENTRAL GUIDING QUESTION: The students will gain some basic knowledge about the history of the Orchards community and the Silver Star School neighborhood. Students will be able to identify some of the factors that help to create and support the growth of a community.

REQUIRED CBA COMPONENTS: Both the 3rd and 4th grade Evergreen CBAs will be addressed in this project. Students will look at the cultures of both local Native Americans and early homesteaders . They will learn about a few of the milestones in the development of their community of Orchards economically and geographically.

CURRICULUM STRANDS: The students will focus on the Native Americans of the Orchards area, homesteaders Richard Covington and Napoleon Bonaparte McGillivray, maps over time, features of the area including Silver Star Mt., the history of Silver Star School, and the Sifton streetcar.

DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS ABOUT CULMINATING ACTIVITIES:

- (1) You will be able to identify a few simple features of the Orchards area on a map. You will also be able to describe some of the changes maps make over time by comparing maps from different periods.
- (2) You will be able to complete a Venn diagram comparing the diet of the local Native Americans and the homesteaders of early Orchards.
- (3) You will be able to write a newspaper article reporting when, why and how your family came to Orchards and the Silver Star neighborhood.
- (4) You will be able to make some connections between local historic people and the naming of features (roads, schools, etc.) in the Orchards area and across Clark County.
- (5) You will illustrate your sense of the community of Orchards by sharing news pertaining to the area from newspapers, television or other sources.
- (6) You will bring “artifacts” to school from different generations of your family to increase your understanding of time periods.

RELEVANT SECONDARY SOURCES: There isn't a comprehensive age-appropriate historical resource available for Orchards. Good instructional strategies will be applied to a basic history curriculum. The students will have a variety of formats to show their new learnings.

RELEVANT PRIMARY SOURCES/ARTIFACTS:

- (1) Possibly analyzed and unanalyzed artifacts from the "Vancouver Uncovered" archaeology project pertaining to food and food preparation, tools, transportation and travel.
- (2) Photocopies of pictures from the Museum's photo archives and other sources.
- (3) Artifacts/objects from past periods of history brought by teacher and students.
- (4) Simple teacher created age-appropriate history stories of the area.
- (5) Invitations to community members to tell about their memories of early Orchards.
- (6) Topical speakers
- (7) Field trip to the Pedhora home to see actual artifacts from the Covington Native American archaeological site.
- (8) Field trip to the Covington House and a tour to the site where the Covington cabin originally stood.

RUBRIC: A rubric would address students' enthusiasm for the unit. The quality of student work and knowledge gained factually and conceptually would be the criteria for assessment.

EXTENSIONS: The students could make a book illustrating the history of Orchards. A timeline could be created for the milestone events in Orchards history. Make a personal timeline of students milestone events as a prep to writing an autobiography. Fill in a simple blank map of the area. Connect historical people, places and times (matching games). Map overlays to illustrate time passing and physical change. Interview "old timers." Make an advertisement prunes or the streetcar line.

TO DO: Teacher must create a basic blank map of Orchards area. Check out books from the library about pioneer living, the Oregon Trail and local Native Americans. Also check out fiction books of the period.

Books, Photos, Maps

Arnold Map Service. Arnold's New Pocket Map of Vancouver and Vicinity. 1986. Vancouver, Washington.

Clark County Historical Museum. Archival Photograph Collection

Clark County Genealogical Society. Clark County Pioneers: A Centennial Salute. 1989

Clark County. Map of Clarke County, Washington Territory. 1888. County Records, Rail Road Surveys and Other Authentic Data.

Columbian, The. "Past was plum-full of Prunes." Based on Ted Van Arsdol's book Land of Prunes; the Rise and Fall of the Prune Industry in Clark County Washington.

Columbian, The. Photo Files. Photographers Steve Lane and Janet Mathews (Orchards Mural), Jim Shinn (Silver Star Mt. Map), and Allen Thomas (Silver Star Mt.)

Covington, Richard. 1846 Map and 1855 Sketch of Fort Vancouver. Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Covington House Postal Card. Photograph taken by Ken Vermillion. Dexter Press, West Nyack, New York.

Freece, David. History of Street Railway Systems: Vancouver, Washington 1889-1926. Portland State University, 1984.

Hayslip, Sandy. Photographs of Silver Star Mt. Vancouver, Washington; 1993.

Jollota, Pat. Naming Clark County. Clark County Historical Society, 1993.

Landerholm, Carl. Vancouver Area Chronology, 1784-1958.

Metsker, Thos. C. Maps of Clark County, 1870-1883. Metsker Maps of Tacoma, Seattle and Portland.

Metsker, Thos. C. Metsker's Atlas of Clark County, Washington. Page 11.
Metsker Maps of Tacoma, Seattle and Portland. 1937.

Phillips, James W. Washington State Place Names. University of
Washington Press, 1971.

Podhora, Betty and Rudy. Documents on Covington Native American
Archaeological Site #45CL422. 1992.

Van Arsdol, Ted. Vancouver on the Columbia. Windsor Publ., Inc.,
Northridge, California; 1986.

Van Arsdol, Ted. Land of Prunes; the Rise and Fall of the Prune Industry in
Clark County Washington. March 1973. Vancouver, Washington.

United States Bureau of the Census. 1871 and 1900. Washington, DC
National Archives and Records Administration.

Washington State Historical Society. Washington State Historical Museum
Field Guide. 1997.

Silver Star Elementary School in Vancouver's Evergreen School District is located on land that once was a Donation Land Claim. The government gave newly acquired land to early pioneers willing to settle and farm the land. The land upon which the school resides today once was claimed by pioneer Napoleon Bonaparte McGillivray in 1853. Napoleon's land claim bordered that of another prominent citizen in the Vancouver area at the time, Richard Covington. They shared a quarter of a mile of property line.

Richard and Ann Covington were born, raised and married in London, England. As a young couple, they were hired by the Hudson's Bay Fur Trade Company to teach the children of its employees at Fort Vancouver. They traveled by ship around South America stopping briefly in the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and arriving at Fort Vancouver in 1846. They immediately began teaching at the Fort. A half-yearly exam taken by the Fort students on June 1, 1847, proved that the highly regarded new teachers had done a fine job of teaching the children. Because land north of the Columbia River was becoming part of the United States, Hudson's Bay employees, including Richard Covington, filed for donation land claims. Richard and Ann Covington filed claim # 43 on April 11, 1848, for 640 acres on Fourth Plain, now the community of Orchards. The Covington's square mile of land was located about 7 miles northeast of Fort Vancouver. They soon finished a cabin which served as both a home and boarding school for children of Fort Vancouver employees. By 1850, census records listed 10 people living at House No. 16, Boarding School. They were:

<u>Family Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Birth Place</u>
Covington, Richard	31	Male	Farmer	England
Covington, Ann	25	Female		" "
Hall, Jane	12	Female		Sandwich Islands
VonPfister, John	8	Male		Oregon Territory
McIntosh, Donald	15	Male		" "
McIntosh, John	10	Male		" "
Birnie, Mary A.	10	Female		" "
Birnie, Alexander	8	Male		Hudson Bay
Grant, James	8	Male		Oregon Territory
Ogden, Isaac	10	Male		Hudson Bay

The boarding school was not listed on the 1860 census, so it assumed that it closed some time in the 1850s. The Covingtons never had any children of their own.

Richard Covington was a very talented man in his time. He was a justice of the peace, county clerk and school superintendent for Clark County. He joined the Rangers for 101 days during the 1856 Indian uprisings. Richard was well educated, a mapmaker, an artist, a musician and much more. The Covingtons brought a violin, guitar and the first piano. Richard could also sing. Richard and Ann hosted many early gatherings. A famous friend who visited often was Ulysses S. Grant, a future president of the United States. Grant served at Fort Vancouver from 1852 to 1853.

In January 1867, the Covingtons sold their property to William C. Hazard for \$2,100. Richard had been appointed by President Grant to head the United States Patent Office. He continued in that job throughout President Grant's term. The Covingtons moved to Victoria, B.C., for a year. After that, they returned to the Sandwich Islands and lived there the rest of their lives.

The cabin they built in 1848 on their land claim still stands today. It is the oldest building still standing in the Vancouver area. The Covington house was located northeast of the 5 Corner intersection in the front yard of the house at 9605 N.E. 79th St. Silver Star School's boundary lies only about 100 feet east of the site. The Evergreen School District placed that little corner of land in Sunset School's boundaries. Because the house was so historic, citizens raised money to save the house. In 1928, they dismantled the house and moved it to upper Main Street in downtown Vancouver where it was rebuilt and remains today.

Silver Star School sits on the 1853 land claim of Napoleon Bonaparte McGillivray. Napoleon Bonaparte was born in August 1825 at the Hudson's Bay Company post Lake of the Woods in Manitoba, Canada. He was the son of Simon McGillivray, a Hudson's Bay Company officer and his Indian wife.

Napoleon and 3 of his siblings came to Fort Vancouver to work in 1839. He was employed at the Fort until 1844. After that, he homesteaded at Howell's Prairie. He then joined the Army and served in the Mexican War with John C. Fremont at the Bear Flag Rebellion in California in 1846. Napoleon campaigned from Monterey to Los Angeles helping to capture San Luis Obispo. After that, he went overland to Missouri with Commodore Stockton. Napoleon returned briefly to Vancouver, but soon left for the California gold rush. He spent 2 years prospecting for gold. Then, he became a guide to the gold fields from San Francisco to Sacramento.

Napoleon returned to Washington County in Oregon where he met and married Sarah M. Flett on May 26, 1853. Sarah was born in the Red River country of Canada. Her father, William Flett, was originally from the Orkney Islands. Sarah's mother was a Saskatchewan Indian woman. Napoleon became an American citizen in Clark County District Court on November 18, 1853, so that he could file for a Donation Land Claim. Two months later, he filed land claim #64 and settled on 321.14 acres on Fourth Plain bordering Richard Covington's land claim for a quarter of a mile.

Like many men of the time, Napoleon fought in the Indian Wars of 1855. He joined as a civilian and helped in getting the Yakimas onto a reservation. Later in life, he was classified as a veteran and was able to receive a pension.

The McGillivrays had either 4 or 5 children, depending upon the source of information. They were Simon, Edward, Katy, Samuel and Susan. Samuel is not mentioned on census records and in other resources. In 1879, Napoleon made a 2 year trip back to Canada to search for his father.

The McGillivrays lived in Portland, Oregon, during Napoleon's later years. In 1902, the family resided at 116 Park Street. From U.S. census records, it appears that it may have been a boarding house. Lodgers are mentioned on census records. Napoleon Bonaparte McGillivray died on July 13, 1906, and was buried at Greenwood Cemetery. A boulevard in east Vancouver was named after the adventurous pioneer of early Orchards.

The community of Orchards was originally named Fourth Plain. Fourth Plain was one of the 6 plains identified by the Hudson's Bay Company. It was a very large, flat piece of land and the 4th "plain" from the Columbia River. The residents of Fourth Plain eventually desired a different name for their community and decided on Orchards because of its fruit tree industry.

Many roads in the community have been named after pioneers that had land claims in Orchards, including Covington, Gehr, Jaggy and Padden. Orchards pioneer names have been used in the community and across the county. An example is Covington Middle School.

Native Americans have hunted and lived on the land that is now Orchards for at least 4 thousand years. The Covington family reported an Indian village on the west side of their property in 1856. The nineteen acres of land on the west side of the claim remains wooded and primitive today and is a native American archeological site. It borders the Interstate 205 freeway and Padden Expressway. It is easily seen from both highways.

Today, those 19 acres belong to the historic Pedhora family. Over the years, they fought to prove that the archaeological site was native American so that it could be preserved forever. Many generations of Pedhoras have lived on the land beginning in 1897 when they bought 80 acres of the Covington land claim. The Pedhora's original family house and barn still stand on the southwest corner of the Covington land claim. The significant native American site is part of that 80 acres from long ago. The Pedhora family has found native artifacts on its property over the years. They have preserved them and eagerly share them with visitors. Their goal is to preserve the site from development and vandalism and educate the public about its contents and history.

Two formal archeological digs have been done. In 1972, an archaeological dig was done when Interstate 205 was being built because the native site was on freeway right of way land. It was called the Schultz Marsh Site after the previous landowner. It was a salvage archeological project. One thousand artifacts were found on this temporary hunting campground. The Chinooks and Cowlitz used the site to hunt for root crops, acorns, deer and elk. They cleaned and processed the food on site. Yakima and Klickitat natives also frequented the site. The artifacts found in 1972 include flakes of stone, fire rock, arrowheads, spear points and a knife. The 1972 artifacts are catalogued at the Smithsonian Institute.

The Podhoras petitioned for a second archaeological dig in 1992 when the Sunnyside Meadows housing subdivision was being planned. Twenty seven holes were dug on the highest portion of the ridge. Artifacts were again found in the area including 253 stone scraps, fire-cracked rock, charcoal and burnt earth. The developer of the subdivision was asked to not build on the significant areas of the land. The fact that part of the land was forested helped protect the Native American site.

Silver Star School was named after the high mountain with twin peaks east of the school in the Cascade Range. It is 4,390 feet tall, second in height to Mt. St. Helens in southwest Washington. Silver Star is also an 8,000 acre area which includes Silver Star Mountain, Bluff Mountain, Little Baldy, Sturgeon Rock and Pyramid Rocks.

In the late 1800s, there were mines on Silver Star Mountain and in the region. In 1874, Silver Star quartz specimens contained silver and lead. Coal and copper were also found in the area. Sheep were grazed on the mountain in the 1920s. Cattle replaced sheep in the 1930s and existed there until 1964. Four major fires consumed the mountain between 1902 and 1929 including the famous Yacolt Burn of 1902.

Today, Silver Star Mountain is enjoyed because of its diversity. People like to hike its many trails, visit the Indian Pits, cross county ski and enjoy its many wildflowers in the spring and summer. In the region, it is said that it is safe to plant your tomatoes when the snow has disappeared on Silver Star.

The turn of the century brought about an interest in public transportation. Two electric streetcar lines were planned. One of the lines was to go 7 miles northeast of Vancouver to Orchards. About 200 people lived in Orchards at the time.

A group of men decided to purchase 180 acres of land from the Calder Donation Land Claim to build a city and extend the new streetcar line 2 more miles. The community was to be called Sifton after the president of the group, Dr. John W. Sifton, a dentist. The Sifton depot was built in time for the streetcar's grand opening on June 30, 1910. During the first month, 9,000 people rode the new streetcar line.

The stops on the line were named after early property owners of the land the streetcar line crossed. From 33rd Street in Vancouver, the line went northeast and stayed close to Fourth Plain Road all the way to Sifton. The streetcar stops were Falk, Stapleton, Jamison, Sparks, Jaggy, Roney, Bonzo, Hartfield, Parkway, Orchards, Gehr and Sifton. The 3rd stop was named for the Walter Sparks family (see photograph).

Streetcar rides cost 15 cents for a one way trip. Children often rode the streetcar to school. Soon a freight car was needed to haul products to Vancouver. The flourishing prune industry used streetcars to haul prunes. Children skipped school to shake prune trees during the harvest. Events were planned in Orchards, such as the Prune Harvest Festival.

Ridership went down, however, and the line struggled to stay in business. The new community of Sifton did not grow and thrive as planned. Business improved for a short time during WWI. Thousands of workers were needed for the spruce mills and shipbuilding industry. Many of the workers settled in the Orchards area and rode the streetcar to work. After the war ended, the number of passengers went down again. Other forms of transportation were gaining in popularity, especially the automobile. The line closed in 1926 after running for 18 years and 6 weeks. The line had carried over 10,000,000 passengers.