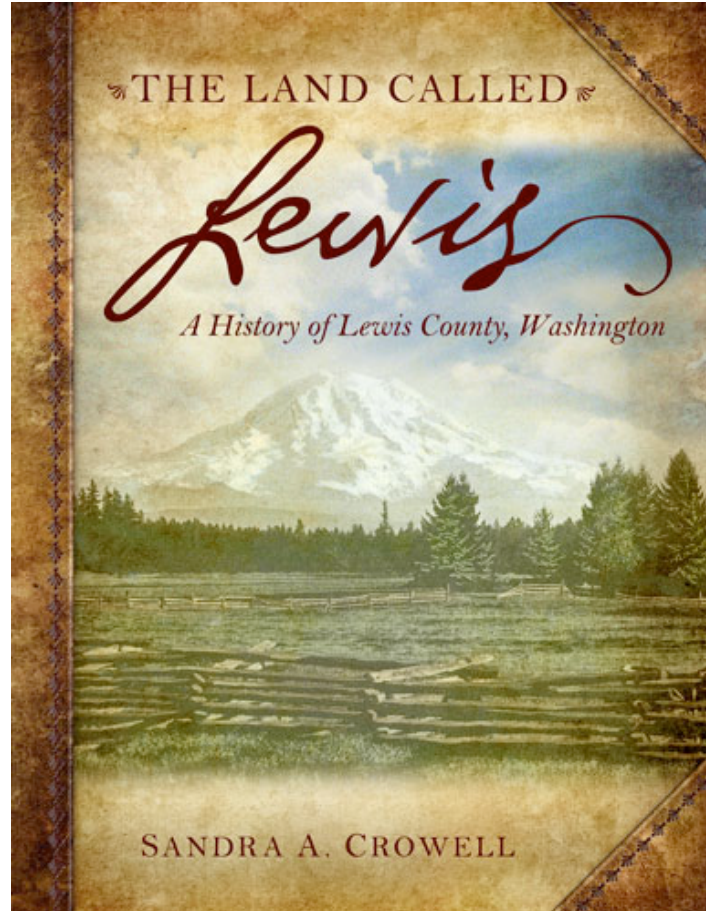


Educator's Guide to



A Comprehensive and Entertaining History of Lewis County

Introduction

Local history researchers have told the stories of many of Lewis County's families and communities, but until the summer of 2007 there has not been a thorough, overall history of the county. Now, that need has been met with the publication of *The Land Called Lewis*, a panoramic view of the county's history from the days of the Cowlitz and Chehalis tribes to the modern era.

Author Sandra A. Crowell, former Centralia College instructor and Director of Literacy provides a context for Lewis County history studies, offering a sweeping view of events that have shaped the area into what it is today. This book, in connection with local histories, offers a variety of useful teaching tools.

In telling the story of the county's growth and development, several themes are evident in the book. These themes can be taught on their own merits, or tied in with other classroom subjects to give students a local point of reference. Each theme can be related to the larger context of national and international history. Here are some areas that educators might wish to consider in the use of *The Land Called Lewis* in the classroom:

Transportation

One theme that surfaces repeatedly is transportation. The author writes: "Throughout its history the development of Lewis County has been linked to transportation. From the days of Indian trails to nearly impassable muddy roads to the steamboat era, the movement of people and goods has been a major issue" (page 175).

The Land Called Lewis begins with an explorer paddling a canoe up the Cowlitz River – the only practical means of transportation at that time – and concludes with thoughts on the importance of today's Interstate 5.

From the photo next to the table of contents, showing the old Michigan Hill Road, to a Chapter 20 view of the freeway near Chehalis, the book's words and pictures document the development of transportation, including walking, canoes, covered wagons, steamboats, stagecoaches, trains, motor vehicles and airplanes.

One can note that, while the rivers facilitated early transportation (canoes, steamboats) they were a hurdle to other types (pages 43, 67).

Some whole chapters – such as Chapters 6, 7 and 8 – are devoted primarily to telling the transportation story, but it is evident in other places as well.

Here are some pages where transportation highlights can be found:

- 1 – Simon Plamondon paddles up the Cowlitz and finds an ideal landing spot
- 2 – How the Indians made canoes
- 10 – Waterways were the first highways
- 12-13 – Plamondon's long walks crossed the country and went to the Yukon and back
- 13 – The canoe's "middleman"
- 14-16 – Land called Lewis: main corridor of early travel
- 20, 38 – The Oregon Trail
- 29 – Railroad construction spurs plan for city of Centerville
- 42-46 – Construction of Military Road and Pacific Highway
- 46 – Why was the Military Road only a partial solution to transportation needs?
- 46-50 – Steamboats on the Cowlitz
- 50 – What method of transport brought about the end of the steamboat era?
- 51-70 – Emergence of the railroads
- 52 – Why did Lewis County have train service long before the transcontinental railroad was completed?
- 57-58 – Chehalis residents fight for railroad stop
- 59, 70, 76, 83 – Importance of railroads to development of towns
- 85-86 – Early rugged routes to Eastern Lewis County
- 99-100 – Upper Cowlitz River used for transporting timber
- 132 – Steamboats helped farmers ship crops
- 93 – Railroads vital to growth of logging industry
- 133-134 – The rigors of riding in horse-drawn vehicles
- 140 – Dairy truck drivers took on extra duties

- 161 – WPA built modern Centralia-Alpha Road (previously a well-traveled settlers’ trail – page 86)
- 167, 176 – White Pass Highway completion boosted Eastern Lewis County economy
- 173 – Lewis County’s small but important aviation link
- 175, 176, 179 – Importance of Interstate 5

Economics

The growth of an economy is inevitably linked to good transportation routes. Even in the days of the Native Americans, it was “location, location, location.” Page 4 tells the reader: “Situated between the Columbia River and Puget Sound, and between the Cascades and the Coast Range, Cowlitz and Upper Chehalis villages were strategically located for trade.”

Economic potential brought the first white men to the area. Explorers such as Robert Gray, by ship, and Lewis and Clark, by land, charted the region which was ideally situated to open trade routes with China (page 10). Other people came because of a desire for money-making opportunities in a new land (page 19). When Simon Plamondon ventured up the Cowlitz River he realized that it was a prime area for obtaining valuable beaver pelts for his employers, the North West Fur Company (page 1). Another major economic venture soon followed: the white settlers’ first big agricultural effort – the Cowlitz Farm (pages 16-17), in what is now modern day Southern Lewis County.

Economic development affected social decisions as well. For men to claim more land, they needed to be married, and girls as young as 12 walked the aisle (pages 30, 38). Because of the large land claims, though, the resulting families were somewhat isolated (page 31). And thus, they needed good transportation.

Since then, towns have grown or dwindled, based largely on their capability to move their products and produce to larger markets (see Transportation section). Early Chehalins recognized this in their battle with the railroad to establish a permanent stop in the town (pages 57-58).

Chapter 15, “Crops and Hops,” shows how local economic growth can be affected by the fortunes of agricultural enterprises. Three man-made factors brought about the decline of the strawberry industry (page 135) and a disaster at sea, disease, and changing times spelled doom to the once-thriving hop industry (page 145).

Chapter 18 begins with accounts of how people coped with economic hard times during the Great Depression of 1929 (pages 158-162) and World War II (pages 164-166)

As an economy develops, financial institutions become a necessity. How did a man with a large safe become the county’s first banker? (page 71) An employee of that bank went on to establish the county’s only community-owned bank, which continues to operate today (page 177).

Even the illegal moonshining business valued a good location, as is shown by the story of the still at the Evaline chicken house (page 163).

Agriculture

The big crop in Lewis County was timber. Indians were the first loggers, using timber for shelter and canoes, but the earliest white homesteaders regarded the trees merely as “impediments” (pages 92-93). The commercial value of the wood became evident before long.

Transportation, again, was a key factor in logging, from oxen power (page 94), to horses (page 95), to steam (page 96), railroads (page 97), and even the ancient river itself (pages 99-100). Trains were the logical solution to timber transportation needs before trucks became feasible

(page 63). Other gas-powered equipment eventually came on the scene (page 114). Mills dotted the riverbanks (page 93) and were built as close as two miles apart along some railroad lines (page 60-61, 101)

Timber in the 21st century has become a cultivated crop in some instances, just as other crops which once grew wild have been “domesticated” to make for “easy pickings.” For example, Native Americans harvested naturally growing berry and root crops but managed the land by using fire to eliminate encroaching trees and weeds. They supplemented their diets with wild game (pages 3-5).

In 1838, the Hudson’s Bay Company established the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, and the Cowlitz Farm became a huge enterprise on Cowlitz Prairie (pages 16-18). Agriculture became so successful and vital, that it superseded the once thriving fur trade (page 18) and proved to the world that the Northwest had productive farmland. How did this stimulate settlement?

Chapter 15, pages 132-145, tells the overall story of the county’s “Crops and Hops.”

Ethnicity

Issues related to ethnicity, race and discrimination are often in today’s headlines. Lewis County, like the whole U.S.A., is a “melting pot,” as described in Chapter 17.

The book takes note of the ethnic makeup of the county, from the Native Americans to the present-day population of Hispanics.

Some myths are debunked: Did the original people here actually identify themselves as “tribes,” or was that a white man’s creation? (page 2); were the groups of Indians ruled by “chiefs?” (page 6); what was the first ethnic group in the county to employ the concept of a referee? (page 7).

What factors led to the decline of the population of the Cowlitz Tribe? (page 9)

The book includes accounts of white discrimination against other Caucasians (page 19); whites against natives (pages 31, 32-33), and natives against whites (pages 20, 24, 32).

There are also accounts of those of different ethnic backgrounds working in harmony, evidenced by the mixture of languages at the Cowlitz Farm (page 16).

Lewis County has its own Black Heritage: George Washington, a benevolent black man, founded Centralia. He experienced prejudice because of discriminatory laws but also acceptance from whites such as his foster parents (pages 27-29). He was a great benefactor of white people in his later years. There’s also the account of the “Old Colored Church” in Winlock, where black and white worshipped together (page 152).

Pages 53-54 tells of Chinese workers who labored to build the railroads through the county, and “The Great Melting Pot” chapter reports on the Japanese, who faced hostility when they first took up mill jobs (page 153-154). The chapter tells of other ethnic groups as well: The Finns, the Blacks, the Swiss, the Greeks, the Polish, the Jewish, the Russian-Ukrainians, and Hispanics.

How many Lewis County residents realize that the Ku Klux Klan, probably thought by many to be only a southeast U.S. movement, actually had a heyday in Lewis County (pages 156-157), but without the widespread racial terror normally associated with the group?

Ethnic discrimination against those of Jewish descent brought unwanted national attention to the area in 1939 (page 157).

Health Care

Health problems that are rare or more treatable today were much deadlier in early Lewis County. Many died from the “cole sick,” perhaps a strain of malaria (page 13); women died while giving birth (page 13), and everyone feared measles and typhoid fever (page 18).

While some women died giving birth, the children themselves sometimes didn’t fare much better (page 20, 26)

Smallpox (page 28) and consumption (tuberculosis, pages 87-88) were major threats in Lewis County at one time. Indians suffered from diseases brought by the white men (page 32).

In the timber industry, working conditions were breeding grounds for disease (page 98).

Nonetheless, some rugged individuals managed to live to great ages, including Mary Kiona (pages 8-9), who lived at least 115 years, and Simon Plamondon, who lived to be nearly 100 (page 15).

Page 173 reports on the state of modern health care.

The Wars

The first major war to affect Lewis County residents was the Indian War of 1855-56. There was more fear than fighting for those living in *The Land Called Lewis*, but measures were taken to protect the settlers' economic resources, and the people were on their guard. The Fort Borst Blockhouse and the site of Fort Henness are reminders of these times of trouble. See page 4 and “Times of Unrest,” Chapter 4.

The book also tells of Lewis County residents who served their country, many at the cost of their lives, in the two great wars of the first half of the 20th Century.

Page 141 recounts the effects of World War I on the local economy, and pages 119-123 relate the story of the tragedy in Centralia on Armistice Day 1919, following World War I. Why were passions so high during this time?

World War II is referenced in connection with local Japanese who were interned during the war (page 154), the role of the Chehalis airport in wartime (page 173), and the effect of the war on Lewis County residents, including the workers who built bomber wings in Chehalis (pages 164-166).

A special chapter, pages 168-169, tells of the local efforts to recognize casualties of all wars, and the new Veterans Memorial Museum is referenced on page 177.

What was happening in the U.S. and in the world during these times?

The People

Within the pages of *The Land Called Lewis* are the stories of many individuals who helped make the county into what it is today. Biographical information on these people can be found on the following pages:

Eliza Saunders Barrett, Chehalis businesswoman, 35, 57, 70, 72-74

Joseph Borst, Centralia pioneer, 22-23, 34

Mary Adeline (Roundtree) Borst, 22-23

Pierre Charles, early explorer, 8, 14, 25-26

John Cutting, Napavine settler, 24-25

Levi Adrian Davis, Eastern Lewis County settler, 80, 86, 174, 186

Lewis Hawkins Davis, Western Lewis County settler, 21, 35, 44-46, 57, 80, 134, 174

Sidney S. Ford, early settler, 23-24, 32, 34, 40, 133

John R. Jackson, early government official, 19-21, 40, 42-44
Mary Kiona, 5, 8, 9, 146
Matilda Koontz Jackson, early settler, 20
Joseph Mauermann, Pe Ell area settler, 26
May Randle McMahan, Randle area settler, 90-91, 176
Simon Plamondon, first white settler, 1-2, 9, 11, 12-15, 17, 24, 35, 37, 39, 40, 51, 82, 84
Schuyler Saunders, Chehalis pioneer, 35, 70, 73
Chief Scanewa, Cowlitz Nation, 6, 8, 9, 13, 24, 149
Isaac J. Stevens, first Territorial Governor, 20, 23, 24, 32-36, 41, 51
George Washington, Centralia founder, 27-29, 34, 45, 56, 74-76, 168, 176
Mary Jane Cooness Washington, Centralia city planner, 29
William F. West, father of Chehalis, role in railroad location, 57-58; other history, 71
W.F. West, 71-72, donated land for school, 71; St. Helens Hotel, 71-72

Her-Story

As author Sandra A. Crowell points out, “‘His-story’ tends to overshadow ‘her-story,’ the story of the many women like Matilda Koontz Jackson who tamed the frontier by making it ‘home’.”

The Land Called Lewis certainly tells the stories of the women who performed such important roles in the development of the area.

Besides Matilda Jackson herself (page 20), who made John Jackson’s courthouse into a seat of hospitality, there is the story of sharp businesswoman Eliza Saunders Barrett who carved out her own niche in the Chehalis business district, only to see her efforts eventually thwarted by fires of unknown origin (pages 57, 70, 72-74).

There was Mary Adeline (Roundtree) Borst (page 23), whose lifestyle can still be appreciated in tours of the well-built Borst home at Centralia’s Fort Borst Park. And the story of George Washington would be incomplete without the story of his wife, Mary Jane Cooness, who had the first sewing machine in the area and named many of the city’s streets (page 29).

There were women such as May Randle McMahan (pages 90-91, 176) who endured many hardships to maintain a home in Eastern Lewis County, as well as Karolina Mauermann, who faced wolves, cougars and an isolated life in the Pe Ell area while raising eight children.

History students can also learn from shorter passages in the book of other notable women such as Veronica Plamondon (page 13) and a rugged Randle area settler known only as “Mrs. Chilcoat” (page 88). There are more modern pioneers referenced, such as Centralia College’s Minnie Lingreen (pages 34, 172), and Katharine Kemp and Margaret Corbet (page 172).

Among the first inhabitants, the Indian women had a voice in some matters, but not in others (page 7). And then there was one of the most well-known Indian women of all, Cowlitz tribe member Mary Kiona (pages 5, 8, 9, 146).

The Towns and Cities

The communities which were established in *The Land Called Lewis* are another important thread throughout the book.

Most of them receive treatment in passages devoted to them, but they are, necessarily, also referenced throughout the book, in connection with other historical events.

Here's an overview showing page numbers for some of the major passages focusing on cities and towns:

Adna – Borst holdings, 23; railroad links, 59, 60; town history, 80; home of first known war casualty, 169

Boistfort – early days, 4, 14, 23-26, 35; railroad, 68; timber, 98; hops crop, 143-145; University of Washington, 176

Centralia – Sidney Ford, 24, 32; founder, 27-29, 45; Borst blockhouse, 34; railroad, 53, 55-56, 59-60, 69; China Creek, 54; streetcar, 65; history, 74-76; Alpha Road, 86; industry, 75; timber industry, 102-105, 110, 176; Armistice Day Tragedy, 119-123; mining, 124-127; 130-131; plums, 137; power source, 146; Jewish temple, 156; immigrants, 157; hard times, 158-161; entertainment, 159, 191; civil defense, 164; charity, 165; War Memorial, 166, 168-169; schools, 170, 172, 186, 187; modern economy, 177; Farmer's Exchange, 180; service station, 182; hat fashion, 183; flood, 188

Chehalis – Saundersville, 23, 30, 35; school, 30; trails, 42, 86, 87; railroad, 57-62, 78; streetcar, railroad, 65-66; history, 70-74, 76, 83; furniture factory, 102; lumber industry, 103-107; Galloping Goose, 117; dairy, 118, 140-142; coal, 124, 126-127; powder plant fire, 128; berry industries, 134-135; plums, 137; cascara plant, 139; immigrants, 150, 153, 155; hard times, 158; airfield, 161, 173; Boeing, 165-166; WWII, 166; Green Hill, 171; industrial port, 176; museums, 177; fire horses, 182; St. Helens Hotel, 185; street paving, 186; taxi, 189; theater, 191

Claquato – founded, 21; Indian War, 35; Military Road, 44-46; unsuccessful courthouse, 57; Henry Stearns, 80

Glenoma – First settlers and history of area, 88-90, 113

Kosmos – logging town, 112-113; dams, 146, 167

Mineral – railroad, 59; early days, 3, 84-85; logging, 101, 112; coal-mining, 129

Morton – Cowlitz Indians, 3; railroad, 59; early days, 83; post office, 84; surveys, 85; Henry Temple, 86-87; oyster stew, 88; cedar bolts, 100; lumber, 112-113; birthplace of Peterbilt truck designer, 113; mercury capital, 129; dairy, 140-141; hospital, 173; Loggers Jubilee, 174

Mossyrock – Otis Plant Cutting, 25; originally Mossy Rock, 27; blockhouse, 34; Indian Wars, 34; gateway to East End, 84; trail 86, 90; settlers, 89; gold discovered, 128; agriculture, 135-136; dairy truck drivers, 140; dams, 89, 146-149; KKK, 156-157; Depression, 160

Napavine – founded, 24-25; logging railroad, 67; history, 79, timber boom, 106-107

Onalaska – railroad, 67-68; mill town history, 115-118, Depression, 158, 160

Packwood – early traveler, 8, 42, 84; mail delivery, 85; Cora bridge, 86; CCC Camp, 102; dam, 146; hard times 161, 162; White Pass Highway, 167, 175-176;

Pe Ell – early days, 25-26; railroads, 60-62, 64; timber, 92, 97, 109-111; immigrants, 155; Depression, 158, WWII, 169; funeral 182; school, 187

Randle – first settler, 88; May Randle McMahan, 90-91; shake mill, 103; railroad, 113; agriculture 132-133; cheese, 141; hops, 145; KKK, 157; White Pass Highway 167, 175-176

Riffe – first settlers, 88-90; dairies, 140; dams, 146-149

Toledo – farming operation established, 14; Cowlitz Farm, 16-18, 132; steamboat era, 46-50; early development, 81-83; Borden, 118; cigar factory, 137; Cheese Day, 142-143; hops, 145; flooding from dams, 149; school, 188

Vader – railroad, 59, 68; town, 80, 81; KKK, 156

Winlock – early days, 76-78; ship knees, 102; timber mills, 107-108; egg industry, 137-139; Egg Day, 138-139; immigrants, 150-153

Some Firsts

- 11 – First recorded visit to Cowlitz River by white man
- 12 – The first settler, Simon Plamondon
- 13 – First newborn of white ancestry in county
- 14 – County region first direct inland route from the Columbia to Puget Sound
- 14 – First permanent church north of Columbia River
- 16 – The first corporate farm
- 18 – Mrs. George Roberts first European woman buried
- 19 – First American citizen to own land in Lewis County
- 26 – Boistfort first settlement with school
- 29 – Mary Coones Washington owns first sewing machine
- 37 – Lewis County operates first legal entity in what will become Washington Territory
(photo, page 40)
- 43 – Military Road “one of first” identifiable roads
- 47 – *Bell* is first steamboat to ply Cowlitz in Lewis County
- 51 – First section of northern transcontinental railroad bisects Lewis County
- 76 – Winlock first incorporated city in Lewis County
- 78 – County’s first telephone line connects Winlock and Toledo
- 80 – Henry S. Stearns the county’s first auditor, surveyor and school superintendent
- 84 – Simon Plamondon probably first white man to see Eastern Lewis County
- 84 – Vance site of first Eastern Lewis County post office, 1886
- 92 – Indians were first timber harvesters in Lewis County region
- 99 – Cedar is Eastern Lewis County’s first cash crop
- 141 – Darigold in Chehalis operates state’s first feed blending system
- 165 – For first time, women hired in large numbers for manufacturing jobs, becoming Rosie
the Riveters of World War II
- 171 – First juvenile institution in Washington opens in Chehalis

There are many other topics spread throughout *The Land Called Lewis*. There’s information on the early characteristics of the county, the efforts to form an effective government; a historical “time line” section, bibliography, index, and – throughout the book – many photos of early day scenes.

**This guide was prepared by John Martin
Editor of *The Land Called Lewis***

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