

Glossary

The definitions for words are as they are used in the chapters.

abolitionist: a person who tried to end the practice of slavery
abrasive: smoothing out a rough surface
absentee ballot: a ballot that can be mailed in
adamant: having a strong opinion
adversary: someone who is against someone else; an opponent
affluence: having a lot of money
aghast: struck with amazement or horror; shocked
agribusiness: the business of making money by growing crops and raising animals
amendment: an addition or change to a constitution
animism: a belief that both living and non-living things have spirits
aquifer: a layer of rock that holds water
ardent: with much feeling
arid: very dry
barter: to trade without the use of money
basalt: gray or black fine-grained igneous rock; cooled lava rock
bill: a written idea for a law submitted to the legislature
bounty: money paid to a person for killing certain animals
breach: to make a gap or break, such as in the walls of a dam
cache: a large supply hidden from view
capital: money and goods needed to start a business
capitalism: an economic system where land and businesses are owned and run by citizens, not the government
capitalist: a person of wealth; a person who supports private ownership of land and business
cataracts: large waterfalls over steep cliffs
Caucasian: of European ancestry; non-Indian and non-African
censorship: the action of examining publications for objectionable statements
checks and balances: a system that limits the power of any one branch of government

civilian: not in the military
clear-cut: a place where all of the trees have been cut down
coerce: to force
commercial: having to do with selling
commodity: any useful thing that is bought or sold; products of agriculture, mining, or manufacturing
communism: a system where land and businesses are owned and run by the government
compound interest: interest that is figured on both the original amount of the loan plus accrued interest
compromise: an agreement where both sides give up part of what they want to solve a conflict
condensed milk: milk from which part of the water has been removed; canned milk
confluence: the flowing together of two or more streams
conservation: a careful preservation and protection of something, especially land and natural resources
conspiracy: a plot or secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act
continental drift: the theory that the earth's continents were one land mass and then drifted apart
cooperative: an organization owned and operated for the benefit of those using its services
coroner: a person who investigates unusual deaths
corporation: a group of people authorized by law to invest money to start or run a business
coulée: a dry streambed; a small shallow ravine
credit card: a card that authorizes purchases on credit and accumulates interest
debit card: a card where the cost of purchases will be subtracted from a bank balance without incurring interest
decade: a period of ten years
decimate: to kill a large number of the population
decompose: to decay or rot
deficient: not having enough
degradation: the decline or ruin of
delude: to mislead or trick someone
deluge: a heavy rain

dentalium shells: long thin seashells worn as jewelry and used for trade by Native Americans
derogatory: uncomplimentary; belittling
desecrate: to treat with lack of respect
destitute: with almost no means of financial support; without the necessities of life
dilapidated: run down, shabby, or out of repair
domestic arts: skills relating to housework; cleaning, cooking, sewing
domestic servant: a person who does housework
dormant: temporarily inactive
down payment: the money given at the time a loan is arranged
ecology: the study of the interrelation of animals and plants with their environment
economics: the making, buying, and selling of goods and services
ecosystem: a community of living things that interact and depend on each other
electors: people selected to vote (for president)
elusive: hidden from view
entrepreneur: a person who starts and runs a business
erratic: a huge boulder carried long distances by a glacier
evacuate: to leave
executive branch: the branch of government that carries out the laws
exodus: a mass departure
exploit: to use to an unfair advantage
exports: goods shipped out for sale
fastidious: having high standards
fault lines: break in the earth's crust with displacement of earth and rock on one side
federal government: the level of government for all the United States
feminism: having to do with women's issues and rights
finite: having definite limits
fissure: a long crack in the earth's crust
fjord: a narrow inlet of the sea between steep cliffs
forensic anthropologist: a person who determines the cause of death of ancient humans
formidable: causing fear or dread

- fraud:** deceit, especially to get someone to part with something of value
- free enterprise:** an economic system where citizens own and control most production, buying, and selling
- geography:** the study of the earth and the location and activities of the people, plants, and animals living on it
- geologic time:** the long time period of the earth's history as defined by scientists
- geologist:** a scientist who studies rock and land formations to learn the history of the earth
- goods:** items that are made, bought, and sold
- grade (roads):** to smooth out the ground to make a road
- groundwater:** water that is naturally in the ground
- habitat:** the place where a plant or animal lives
- headwaters:** where a river starts
- heavy metals:** lead, zinc, cadmium, and arsenic
- hinterland:** land isolated from other places by distance and access
- human characteristics:** land features made by people
- humane:** having compassion or consideration
- hydroelectric:** relating to electricity produced by water-powered generators
- igneous rock:** rock that came from the interior of the earth as lava
- immortal:** exempt from death; living forever
- immunity:** resistance to disease
- incense:** to make very upset and angry
- industrial arts:** skills relating to industry; carpentry and the use of machines
- inferior:** of lower quality or importance
- infirmity:** a place where the sick are taken care of
- inflation:** a rise in the general price level of goods and services
- initiative:** a process by which citizens can write a bill and get it on the ballot for the voters to pass or defeat
- insatiable:** not able to get enough
- irony:** a result or outcome opposite of what was expected
- judicial branch:** the branch of government that interprets the law and determines punishment
- Kanaka:** a Hawaiian man
- lahar:** huge mudflow filled of volcanic debris, rock, and water
- leach:** to seep or pass down through the soil
- legislative branch:** the branch of government that makes the laws
- legislators:** members of Congress; men and women who are elected to make laws
- libel:** a statement that defames or ruins another person's character
- lobbyist:** a person who studies issues and works to get legislators to vote for or against bills
- loess:** soil believed to be mainly deposited by wind
- longshoremen:** workers who load and unload ships
- lucrative:** producing wealth
- mass transit:** buses, trains, or subway systems that move large numbers of people at a time
- materialism:** an emphasis on material objects and comforts with a disinterest in cultural values.
- median:** the middle
- menial:** requiring little skill
- migrant:** a person who moves regularly to find work, especially in agriculture
- minimum wage:** the lowest amount of money a business can pay an employee
- molten:** melted by high heat, as in liquid rock
- monopoly:** when one company has exclusive ownership and control of a type of product
- motley:** a mixture of different or unusual people
- municipal:** of the city
- negotiate:** to talk to another person or group to settle a matter
- Paleo-Indians:** the first people who lived on the American continents
- partnership:** when two or more people own a business
- per capita:** per person
- philanthropy:** the generous giving of money to worthy causes
- physical features:** the natural landforms and characteristics of a place
- placid:** calm, smooth
- political party:** a group of people who have similar ideas about government
- porcelain:** the material ceramic dishes are made from
- potlatch:** a large celebration of feasting and gifts held to celebrate a special event
- precinct:** a voting region
- primary election:** the first election held to narrow down the list of candidates
- proprietorship:** when one person owns a business
- protohistoric:** when there was a drastic change in the lifestyle of the American Indians
- radical:** drastic, extreme
- radioactive:** having nuclear properties
- ransom:** money paid to get back someone who has been kidnapped
- ration:** a small supply given on a regular basis
- reactor:** a machine that produces nuclear energy
- recall:** to remove a person from public office
- reclamation project:** a large project, such as the building of a dam, whose purpose is to make better use of the land
- referendum:** a process by which legislative bills are put on the public ballot
- relief (art):** where a design is above the background
- repatriate:** to return artifacts to the place of origin
- repeal:** to cancel (a law) by official authority
- representative:** a person elected to make laws for the whole group
- resurrect:** to rejoin the spirit and the body
- retail:** having to do with selling in stores
- retaliate:** to fight back
- revenue:** money brought in from a sale
- sabotage:** the destruction of property or materials
- salary:** a set amount of money paid by the week or month
- sanitation:** relating to health, cleanliness, disposal of human waste
- sedimentary rock:** rock formed from

sand, soil, rocks, and shells
segregation: the separation of people, usually based on race or gender
semiarid: partly dry or dry much of the time
services: in economics, work people do to earn money
shaman: a Native American spiritual leader who healed the sick
shortage: when there is more demand than the supply of goods
sovereignty: self-rule; freedom from external control
spawn: to produce and deposit large numbers of eggs
spoils: goods taken from an enemy of war
strait: a narrow passageway of water that connects two large bodies of water
subsidy: money or land given by the government
subsistence: barely supporting life
suburb: a place where people live outside the city
suffrage: the right to vote
superior: of higher quality or importance
supply and demand: when both the amount of goods available and the number of buyers affect the price
suppress: to put down or to stop
surpass: to go beyond or go farther
surplus: goods left over after the demand is met
suspend: to cause to stop temporarily
tailings: what is left over after metals are separated from earth or rock
tectonics: a branch of geology concerned with the crust of the earth and its folds and faults
temperate: not extremely hot or cold
transient: a person who stays in a place briefly; a person who travels in search of work
tributaries: smaller streams and rivers that flow into a river
tule: bulrushes used by native Americans to make mats and houses
vengeance: punishment for an injury or offense
veteran: a person who has fought in war
veto: to officially turn down or reject a

bill to stop it from becoming a law
vigilante: a person who takes it upon himself to punish others
voyageur: a man who transported furs by canoe
vulnerable: easily harmed
wage: money paid to an employee by the hour
warehousemen: workers in a warehouse
weir: a type of fence across a stream that aids in catching fish
witness tree: a tree carved with lot numbers indicating that property was claimed

Index

A

African Americans, 19, 59, 76, 83, 116, 125, 144, 156, 174
 Airway Heights, 199
 Alaska, 21, 27, 35, 38, 42, 60, 61, 62, 104, 115, 122, 123, 168, 197
 Alki Point, 82
 Allied Powers, 134, 153, 154
 Almond Roca, 203
 American Federation of Labor, 152
 American Indians, see specific tribe or group
 American Revolution, 57, 61
 Aplets and Cotlets, 192
Apollo 11, 163
 Archaic-Indians, 40
 Arizona, 180
 Armenia, 203
 Army, U.S., 89, 92, 94, 96, 136
 Asia, 35, 39, 63, 113, 125, 132, 172, 173, 201
 Asian Americans, 163, 175
 Astor, John Jacob, 68
 Atlanta, 174
 Auburn, 199
 Australia, 103, 123
 Austria-Hungary, 134

B

Baby Boom, 162, 164
 Balaban, Mark, 203
 Banks Lake, 19
 Bannock Indians, 95
 Battle in Seattle, 179
 Bauer, Eddie, 202
 Bellevue, 12
 Bellingham, 12, 32, 155
 Bering Land Bridge, 38, 39
 Berkley, Charles, 62
 Berkley, Francis, 62
 Big Bend region, 113, 116
 Big Hole Valley, 96
 Bill of Rights, 211, 219
 Blanchet, Father Francis, 75, 76
 Blue Mountains, 79
 Boeing, Bill, 137
 Boeing Company, 136, 137, 155, 164, 165, 173, 199, 201
 Boeing Defense & Space Group, 199
 Boise Cascade Company, 115, 184
 Boldt Decision, 178, 187

Boldt, George 202
 Bon Marché Stores, 123
 Bonneville Power Administration, 151
 Boston University, 219
 Box Canyon Dam, 4
 Bracero Program, 157
 Brainerd, Erastus, 122
 Bremerton, 12, 155
 Bremerton Navy Base, 174
 Brennan, 101
 Bretz, J. Harlen, 33
 British Columbia, 6, 16, 18, 21, 24, 69, 119, 130, 182
 Buchanan, James, 85
 Bureau of Indian Affairs, 152
 Bush, George Washington, 75, 83, 98
 Bush, Isabelle, 83
 Bush Prairie, 83

C

Calawah River, 4
 California, 8, 10, 42, 51, 61, 62, 75, 98, 99, 105, 114, 148, 155, 179, 187, 212
 Cambodia, 173
 Canada, 4, 10, 18, 21, 32, 63, 69, 70, 76, 84, 94, 96, 105, 112, 115, 122-123
 Canadian-American Free Trade Agreement, 179, 201
 Cantwell, Maria, 215
 Cape Alava, 72
 Cape Flattery, 43
 capitalism, 132, 133, 136, 194
 Carnation Company, 118
 Cascade Mountains, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 13, 14, 26, 27, 40, 116, 120, 197
 Cashmere, 203
 Catherine the Great, 63
 Cavendish, 59
 Cayton, Horace R., 141
 Cayuse Indians, 52, 77, 78, 93
 Cayuse War, 78, 92
 Cenozoic Era, 23
 Central Powers, 134
 Centralia, 82
 Centralia Massacre, 129
 Centralia Mill, 139
 Charbaonneau, 66
 Chatters, James, 38
 Chehalis River Valley, 12
 Chelan County, 201
 Chicago Field Museum, 34
 Chicago World's Fair, 34
 Chief Joseph, 89, 94, 97
 Chief Leschi, 98
 Chile, 201
 Chin Gee Hee, 106

China, Chinese, 10, 58, 62, 64, 68, 76, 103, 106, 112, 113, 115, 116, 138, 172, 191, 201, 219
 Chinook Indians, 42, 43, 45, 51, 53, 54, 64, 69, 71, 72, 93, 94
 Chinese Exclusion Act, 89, 106
 Civilian Conservation Corps, 144, 149
 civil rights, 160, 174, 176, 190, 214
 Civil Rights Act, 163, 174
 Civil War, 99, 111
 Clark Fork River, 32
 Clark, Patrick, 105
 Clark, William, 42, 54, 57, 66-67, 69, 74, 76, 96
 Clarke, Arthur, 180
 Clarkston, 169
 Cle Elum, 116
 Clearwater River, 67
 Clovis Indians, 40
 Coastal Indians, 36, 40, 44, 46, 47, 50, 51, 58
 Coastal Range region, 11, 12
 Coast Guard, U.S., 188
 Coeur d'Alene Indians, 47, 76, 182
 Coeur d'Alene region, 119, 182
 Coeur d'Alene River, 182
 Collier, John, 152
 Cold War, 162, 165, 167
 Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, 16, 162, 169, 170
 Columbia Basin, 105, 142, 143, 147, 170
 Columbia Gorge, 18
 Columbia Indians, 47
 Columbia Lake, 18
 Columbia Plateau, 11, 16, 19, 31, 32, 33, 34, 40, 52, 54, 93
 Columbia River, 12, 18, 19, 21, 24, 28, 33, 36, 38, 41, 43, 47, 51, 57, 60, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 82, 83, 85, 92, 93, 111, 116, 117, 120, 121, 142, 150, 151, 156, 166, 168, 186, 197
 Columbian Mammoth, 34
Columbian, The, 92
 Columbia-Sinkiuse Indians, 94
 Columbus, Christopher, 59, 94
 Colville Indians, 47, 97
 Colville, 124
 Commencement Bay, 13
 communism, 136, 194, 172
 Confederacy, 99
 Congress of Industrial Organizations, 152
 Congress, U.S., 83, 84, 89, 106, 124, 134, 140, 149, 154, 160, 174, 189, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216
 Constitution, U.S., 57, 130, 136, , 176, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 219, 221

Constitution, Washington State, 215, 216, 219
 Continental Divide, 85
 Cook, Captain James, 57, 61, 63
 Cowlitz County, 91
 Cowlitz River, 12, 28

D

Dalles Dam, 162
 Dalles, The, 48, 51, 162
 dams, see specific dams
 Daugherty, Richard, 40
 Davenport, 126
 Dawes Act, 124, 152
 Dawson City, 123
 Declaration of Independence, 57, 211
 Delaware Indians, 69
 democracy, 211
 Democratic Party, 214, 223
 Denmark, 112
 Department of Natural Resources, 219
 Donation Land Claim Act, 85, 88
 Dorian, Marie and Pierre, 68
 Douglas, David, 100
 Douglas, Stephen, 84
 Douglas, William, 213
 Dry Falls Dam, 19
 Dry Falls, 23, 33
 Dust Bowl, 147, 148
 Duwamish Indians, 95, 99

E

East Wenatchee, 40
 Eastern Washington University, 41
 Eddie Bauer Company, 202
 Eells, Cushing, 77
 Eells, Myra, 77
 Eighteenth Amendment, 129
 Einstein, Albert, 145, 156
 Eisenhower, Dwight, 167
 Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act, 179
 Ellensburg, 113
 Elliott Bay, 95
 Elwha River, 19
 Emmett, Jim, 148
 Endangered Species List, 62
 England, see Great Britain
 Endangered Species Act, 178
 environmental protection, 4-5, 115, 118, 178-191, 215, 216
 Environmental Protection Agency, 178
 Ephrata, 174
 Equal Rights Amendment, 163, 177, 215
 Europe, 10, 24, 35, 39, 46, 58, 59, 61, 70,

78, 111, 135, 136, 147, 153, 203, 210
 Everest, Wesley, 139
 Everett, 12, 168, 199
 Everett Massacre, 129, 133
 explorers, 52, 53, 56-72
 Expo 74, 178, 181

F

Fairfield Air Force Base, 199
 Farm-in-a-Day, 170
 "Far Side, The," 203
 farming, 10, 12, 14, 16, 20, 94, 95, 98, 110, 114, 116, 117, 119, 136, 137, 138, 140, 142, 147, 155, 169, 170, 183, 195, 197
 fascism, 194
 Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, 125
 Finland, 112, 115
 Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S., 62, 182, 185
 fishing, 5, 8, 12, 19, 32, 42, 43, 51, 94, 98, 106, 112, 115, 155, 186, 187, 188, 197
 Flathead Indians, 76
 Flynn, Elizabeth Gurley, 133
 Ford, Henry, 140
 Forest Service, 147
 Fort Astoria, 57, 68, 69, 71
 Fort Benton, 86
 Fort Colville, 71
 Fort George, 68, 69
 Fort Nisqually, 71
 Fort San Miguel, 57, 62
 Fort Vancouver, 57, 69, 70, 71, 76, 77, 79, 84, 95, 99
 Fort Walla Walla, 86, 94
 France, 35, 57, 63, 66, 69, 70, 111, 134, 153
 Franklin, Benjamin, 210
 free enterprise system, see capitalism
 Fuca, Juan de, 56, 59
 fur trade, 10, 38, 61, 64, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 79, 84, 96, 105, 201, 204

G

Gates, Bill, 203
 Gates Foundation, 203
 Germany, 85, 111, 112, 113, 134, 135, 145, 153, 155, 156, 160, 167, 194
 G.I. Bill, 164
 Georgia, 174
 Gettysburg, Battle of, 99
 Girl Scouts, 135
 Glacier Peak, 14, 15, 27, 41
 glaciers, 20, 23, 32, 35
 government, U.S. 4, 21, 92, 95, 96, 110,

124, 131, 136, 137, 148, 158, 165, 166, 167, 173, 174, 197, 199, 204
 Grand Coulee Dam, 16, 19, 23, 33, 48, 129, 142-143, 144, 150, 151, 155, 156, 169, 182, 188
 Grant, Ulysses, 99
 Gray, Robert, 57, 64, 65, 210
 Great Britain, 21, 35, 52, 62, 65, 69, 70, 71, 82, 84, 85, 90, 103, 105, 111, 112, 116, 123, 134, 153
 Great Depression, 146, 149, 152, 153, 155, 168, 221
 Great Divide, 54
 Great Lakes, 54, 110
 Great Northern Railroads, 111, 119, 121
 Great Plains, 47, 52, 147, 148
 Green Party, 214
 GreenPeace, 188
 Groves, Leslie, 156
 Guemes Island, 72
 Guthrie, Woody, 147, 151

H

Hanford, 156, 165, 166, 174, 183, 199
 Hawaii, 61, 69, 145, 153
 Hayes, Rutherford B., 95
 Heceta, Bruno de 57, 60
 Hercules Mine, 116
 Hill, James J., 121
 Hirabayashi, Gordon, 160
 Hiroshima, 160
 Hispanic Americans, 157, 176, 191
 Hitler, Adolf, 153, 156
 HMO, 177
 Holocaust, 153
 Homestead Act, 88
 Hoover, Herbert, 146, 149
 House of Representatives, U.S. 212, 213, 216, 218, 219
 House of Representatives, Washington State, 216
 Hudson's Bay Company, 57, 69, 70, 71, 76, 78, 82, 84, 99, 105
 Hui San, 58
 Hume, Robert, 89, 103
 Hutton, Al, 115, 116
 Hutton, May Arkwright, 115, 116, 131

I

Ice Age, 33-35, 36, 38, 40
 Idaho, 7, 10, 16, 32, 39, 52, 66, 85, 86, 88, 98, 111, 115, 118, 119, 158, 179, 182
 Illinois, 84
 immigrants, 105-106, 111, 112, 138, 140, 171-176, 204

Independence, Missouri, 79, 80
 Indian Agency, 97
 Indian Agricultural Institute, 125
 Indian Homestead Act, 124
 Indian Reorganization Act, 144, 152
 Indian Self-Determination and Education Act, 178, 189
 Indians, see specific tribe or group
 Industrial Workers of the World, 128, 132, 135, 136, 139, 190
 Inland Empire Public Lands Council, 185
 Interstate Highway System, 167, 168
 Ireland, 105, 112
 Iroquois Indians, 69
 Issaquah, 106
 Italy, 113, 134, 153, 158

J

James, John, 98
 Jamestown, 56
 Japan, 10, 27, 28, 58, 106, 113, 140, 145, 154, 156, 158, 160, 168, 191, 201
 Japanese Americans, 145, 157-159, 160
 Jefferson, Thomas, 63, 66, 67, 211
 Johnston, David, 29

K

Kahana, John, 105
 Kaiser Aluminum Plant, 182
 Kalispel Indians, 47, 50, 176, 189
 Kamiakin, Chief, 93, 94
 Kanakas, 105
 Kennedy, John F., 163, 174
 Kennedy, Robert, 174
 Kennewick, 16, 169
 Kenworth Truck Company, 168
 Kennewick Man, 37, 38, 39, 40
 Kent, 118, 199
 Kettle Falls, 48, 49, 51, 169
 King County, 25, 219, 220
 King, Martin Luther Jr., 163, 174
 Kipling, Rudyard, 119
 Kittias County, 25, 116
 Kittias Valley, 171
 Kittitas Indians, 47
 Klickitat Indians, 47
 Klondike gold rush, 121, 122-123
 Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park, 20, 21
 Kootenay Arc, 24
 Korea, 162, 172, 191
 Korean War, 162, 172
 Ku Klux Klan, 141

L

Lake Chelan, 15
 Lake Michigan, 32
 Lake Missoula, 32
 Lake Roosevelt, 169, 179, 182
 Lake Union, 3, 137
 Lake Washington, 180, 181
 Laos, 172
 Larson, Gary, 203
 Ledyard, John, 61, 63
 Lees, 74, 76
 Lenin, Vladimir, 136
 Lewis County, 25
 Lewis, Meriwether, 42, 54, 57, 66-67, 69, 76, 96
 Libertarian Party, 214
 Lincoln, Abraham, 84, 92, 1111
 Lincoln County, 113
 Locke, Gary, 183, 219
 logging, 4, 12, 20, 21, 94, 100-101, 102, 106, 110, 114, 115, 119, 128, 130, 135, 137, 138, 153, 155, 164, 184-185, 196, 197
 London, 70
 Longview, 155, 184
 Looking Glass, 52
 Louisiana Purchase, 57, 66
 Luke, Wing, 175
 Lynnwood, 165

M

MacDonald, Ranald, 71
 Mackenzie, 69
 Madison, James, 210
 Makah Indians, 43, 103, 188
 Malcolm X, 174
 Mandan Indians, 66
 Manhattan Project, 156
 Mariners, Seattle, 119
 Marines, U.S., 172
 Marmes Rockshelter, 37, 40
 Martinez, Esteban Jose, 57, 62
 Mary Bridge Children's Health Center, 199
 Maryland, 99
 Massachusetts, 61, 86
 Mathews, Mark, 132
 Maxey, Carl, 175
 Maynard, David, 98, 99
 McClelland, Tom, 38
 McLoughlin, Eloisa, 69
 McLoughlin, John, 69, 76, 77
 McNary Dam, 186
 Meek, Joe, 84
 Meridith, W.L., 141

Mesozoic Era, 23
 Mexican American Federation, 176
 Mexico, 51, 60, 72, 137, 157, 168
 Microsoft Corporation, 12, 199, 203
 Minidoka Relocation Camp, 158
 mining, 20, 94, 98, 105, 106, 110, 115, 116, 119, 122-123, 130, 131, 142-196
 Minnesota, 118
 missionaries, 10, 74, 75, 76-78, 79, 86, 96
 Missouri, 79, 82
 Missouri River, 66
 Monagan, James, 105
 Montana, 32, 85, 86, 88, 89, 92, 96, 111, 126
 Montreal, 69
 Moses, Chief, 94, 95
 Moses Lake, 169
 Mother Joseph, 75, 76
 mountains, see specific mountains
 Mt. Adams, 15, 27
 Mt. Angelos, 27
 Mt. Baker, 15, 27
 Mt. Hood, 138
 Mt. Olympus, 26
 Mt. Rainier, 3, 15, 27, 30, 65
 Mt. Rainier National Park, 15, 20
 Mt. St. Helens, 15, 27, 28, 37, 41, 54
 Mt. St. Helens National Monument, 29
 Mt. Vernon, 13
 Mullan, John, 86
 Mullan Road, 75, 92
 Mumm, Debbie, 202
 Murray, Patty, 215

N

Nagasaki, 160
 National Guard, 147, 190
 national parks, see specific parks
 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, 39
 Native Americans, see specific tribe or group
 Neah Bay, 103, 188
 Neuberger, Richard, 148
 New Deal, 144, 150
 New England, 54, 76, 77, 104
 New Mexico, 40, 51, 54
 New Spain, 60
 New World, 38, 39, 56
 New York, 68, 74, 76, 81, 138, 146, 150, 149, 212, 213
 Nez Perce Indians, 47, 52, 67, 88, 92, 93, 96
 Nineteenth Amendment, 129
 Nisqually Indians, 83

Nooksack Indians, 44
 Nootka, 62, 64, 68
 Nootka Indians, 43
 Nordoff, Edward, 123
 Nordstrom, John, 123
 North Cascades micro-continent, 23, 24
 North Cascades National Park, 15, 20, 21
 North Dakota, 66, 126, 148
 North Korea, 172
 North Palix River, 103
 Northern Pacific Railroad, 89, 110, 111, 114, 115, 118, 119, 121
 Northgate Shopping Center, 165
 Northwest Evaporating Company, 203
 Northwest Passage, 58, 59
 Northwest Power Act, 186
 Norway, 111, 112, 113

O

Okanogan County, 201
 Okanogan Highlands, 20
 Okanogan Indians, 47
 Okanogan micro-continent, 24, 27
 Okanogan Valley, 116
 Oklahoma, 97, 124
 Olympia, 32, 82, 86, 98, 139, 208, 216
 Olympic Mountains, 12, 23, 26, 27, 98
 Olympic National Park, 12, 20
 Olympic Peninsula, 8, 12, 42, 43, 112, 185
 Oregon, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 68, 69, 71, 74, 75, 76, 78, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 88, 115, 118, 131, 147, 148, 189
 Oregon City, 79
 Oregon Klamath Indians, 52
 Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, 111
 Oregon Trail, 75, 78, 79, 80, 86, 148, 180
 Osborn, John, 185
 Othello, 169
 O'Sullivan, James, 142
 Ozette, 37, 43

P

Pacific Coast, 12, 23, 35, 39, 47, 58, 62, 63, 64, 68
 Pacific Fruit Company, 171
 Pacific Fur Company, 57, 68
 Pacific Ocean, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19, 24, 42, 66, 67, 85, 103, 104, 169

Pacific Rim, 10
 Paiute Indians, 95
 Paleo-Indians, 36, 38, 41, 42
 Paleozoic Era, 22
 Palouse Falls, 16
 Palouse Hills, 116
 Palouse Indians, 47
 Palouse region, 16, 31, 113, 116, 117
 Palouse River, 40
 Panama Canal, 10
 Pangaea, 24
 Paris, 63
 Pasco, 16, 106, 169
 Patterson, 133
 Paxton, Floyd, 171
 Pearl Harbor, 145, 153, 154, 157
 Pend Oreille River, 4, 50, 142
 Pennsylvania, 105, 210
 Penutian, 41
 Perez, Juan, 57
 Perry, Commodore, 71
 Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox, 93
 Peterson, Roger Tory, 12
 Philadelphia, 57, 150
 Philippines, 10, 27, 191
 Phoenix, 180
 Pickett, George, 99
 Pickett's Charge, 99
 Pierce County, 220
 Pig War, 85, 99, 105
 Pierce County, 91
 pilgrims, 56
 pioneers, 4, 10, 38, 71, 77, 79, 81, 91, 180
 Plateau Indians, 36, 40, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 93
 Plum Creek Timber Company, 184
 Plymouth, 61
 Poland, 63, 153
 Polk, James, 84
 Port Angeles, 72
 Port Townsend, 82
 Potlatch Company, 115, 184
 Portland, 97, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 132, 155
 Poulsbo, 112
 Pratt, Edwin, 174
 Precambrian Era, 22
 Progressive Movement, 130-131, 215
 Prohibition, 129, 130
 Prophet Dance, 54
 Public Utility District, 142
 Puget Sound, 11, 12, 13, 16, 25, 30, 32, 42, 65, 82, 84, 86, 99, 103, 110, 114, 118, 120, 142, 156, 168, 171, 172, 174, 177, 181, 197
 Pullman, 16, 17, 170, 177, 199

Q

Quebec, 76

R

railroads, see specific railroads
 Ray, Dixie Lee, 215
 Red Cross, 146
 Red Delicious apples, 201
 Redmond, 165, 199
 Reform Party, 214
 Reinbold, Mathias, 113
 Renton, 199
 Republican Party, 214, 223
 Richland, 16, 38, 156, 165, 169
 Ring of Fire, 27
 Rocky Mountains, 10, 20, 26, 66, 68, 76, 79
 Roosevelt, Franklin D., 144, 145, 149, 150, 153, 154, 156, 160
 Roosevelt Reservoir, 19
 Rosalia, 94
 Roslyn, 116
 Ross, Ben, 147
 Ross, James D., 151
 Russia, 63, 68, 134, 135, 138, 153, 162, 163
 Russian Revolution, 136

S

Sacajawea, 66, 67
 Sagers, 78
 Salem, Oregon, 84
 Salish Indians, 42
 salmon, 5, 8, 19, 36, 43, 44, 46, 48, 49, 50, 82, 183, 88, 103, 115, 169, 187, 188, 197, 204
 Sandwich Islands, 61
 San Francisco, 98
 San Juan Islands, 12, 72, 85, 99, 105
 San Juan Islands National Historic Park, 21
 Saukamappee, 54
 Scandinavia, 112, 115
 Schell, Paul, 190
 Scotland, 69, 70
 Sealath, Chief, 95, 99
 Seattle, 2, 12, 13, 15, 20, 25, 30, 32, 82, 95, 99, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 132, 133, 138, 141, 144, 146, 147, 150, 155, 156, 164, 165, 168, 173, 175, 177, 179, 180, 181, 190, 196, 199, 202, 203
 Seattle General Strike, 129, 138, 190
Seattle Republican, The, 1141

Seattle Urban League, 174
 Seattle World's Fair, 163, 174
 Seattle's International District, 113
 Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, 199
 Sedition Act, 135, 136
 Selective Service Act, 134
 Senate, U.S., 212, 215, 216
 Senate, Washington State, 216
 Sentinel Gap, 41
 Sequim mastodon site, 37
Seven Alone, 78
 Sheridan, Philip, 99
 shipping, 8, 12, 14, 21, 94, 98, 122, 138, 155, 164
 Shoshoni Indians, 51, 52, 54, 66
 Siberia, 35, 38
 Silver Valley, 116
 Sinclair, Louisa, 101
 Skagit River Valley, 12, 13
 slavery, 44, 65, 66, 83, 84, 85, 92
 Smet, Peter John de, 76, 82
 Smithfield, 98
 Snake Creek, 96
 Snake River, 18, 40, 116, 168
 Snake River Valley, 148
 Snoqualmie Pass, 15
 socialism, 194, 215
 South Carolina, 137
 South Dakota, 66, 126, 148
 South Korea, 172
 South Seattle Community College, 199
 Southern Columbia Basin Indians, 53
 Space Needle, 166
 Spain, 51, 52, 54, 57, 59, 60, 62, 64, 85
 Spaldings, 76, 77
 Spokane County, 34
 Spokane, 15, 16, 17, 24, 31, 32, 33, 34, 69, 91, 115, 111, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 128, 124, 130, 132, 133, 140, 142, 147, 149, 154, 155, 166, 174, 175, 178, 181, 198, 202
 Spokane Indians, 47, 48, 77, 189
 Spokane River, 119, 181, 182
 Spokane Valley, 174
Spokane Falls Chronicle, 111
Spokesman-Review, 183
Sputnik, 163, 165
 Stevens, Isaac, 75, 86
 St. Louis, 66, 67, 74, 76, 92
 St. Paul, 118
 Steptoe Butte, 31
 Stevens, Isaac, 89, 92, 93, 94, 99
 Strait of Juan de Fuca, 8, 13, 59
 Strong, Anna Louise, 138
 Sweden, 111, 112, 113
 Supreme Court, U.S., 211, 212, 213

T

Tacoma, 12, 13, 30, 32, 71, 82, 98, 116, 118, 119, 121, 155, 168, 174, 175, 187, 198
 Taiwan, 201
 Tennessee, 174
 Tertsagian, Armen, 203
 Texas, 157, 163, 212
 Thompson, Charlotte, 69
 Thompson, David, 52, 54, 69
 Timber and Stone Act, 89, 106, 114
 Toutle River, 28
 Tree Top Company, 195, 199
 Tri-Cities, 16, 32
 Truman, Harry R., 29
 Tulalip Indians, 189
 Tumwater, 82
 Turkey, 134

U

U'Ren, William, 131
 Umatilla Indians, 47, 93
 Union Pacific Railroad, 182
 University of Chicago, 138
 University of Washington, 156, 160, 173, 177, 199, 222
 Utah, 155

V

Vancouver, 29, 75, 95, 137, 155, 198
 Vancouver Island, 21, 42, 43, 60, 61, 65
 Vantage, 53
 Vantage Bridge, 41
 Vectoria, Velma, 218
 Victoria Island, 21
 Vietnam War, 172-173
 Virginia, 99
 Virginia Mason Hospital, 199

W

Walkers, 77, 78
 Walla Walla, 16, 88, 96, 98, 105, 106, 113, 115, 171
 Walla Walla Indians, 93
 Walla Walla River, 77
 Wallula, 92
 Wanapum Indians, 47
 War of 1812, 71
 Washington, D.C., 65, 84, 85, 88, 90, 92, 98, 105, 106, 212, 215
 Washington Department of Health, 182
 Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS), 183

Washington Reading Corps, 219
 Washington State Grange, 142, 170, 177
 Washington State University, 17, 40, 199, 203
 Washington, George, 63, 65, 210
 Washington Territory, 75, 85, 86, 88, 90, 92, 98, 105, 106
 Washington Water Power Company, 142
 Waterville, 91
 Wenatchee, 16, 40, 47
 Wenatchee Clovis site, 37
 Wenatchee Valley, 116, 148
 Weyerhaeuser Company, 115, 138, 184
 Wheatley, Phyllis, 65
 Whidbey Island, 91
 White, Elijah, 75, 79
 Whitman College, 78
 Whitman County, 78, 98, 116
 Whitman National Historic Site, 21, 78
 Whitmans, 21, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 92
 Willamette River, 69, 121
 Willamette Valley, 76, 79, 81, 83, 84
 Wilson, Woodrow, 134
 Wing, Luke, 163
 Winnemucca, Sarah, 95
 Wood, Erskine, 91, 97
 World War I, 129, 133, 134-137, 138, 140, 195
 World War II, 28, 164, 165, 145, 153, 154, 155, 157, 162, 168, 170, 174, 175, 176, 177, 203, 219
 World's Fair, Seattle, 166
 Women's Army Corps, 157
 women's rights, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 138, 139, 176-177, 212, 215
 Works Progress Administration, 144, 149
 World Trade Organization, 190
 Wyoming, 51, 79, 85

Y

Yakama Indians, 47, 93, 93, 94, 179, 189
 Yakama War, 93, 94
 Yakima, 213
 Yakima Valley, 116, 148, 157
 Yale University, 219
 Yesler, Henry, 99, 114
 Yukon Territory, 122, 123

Credits

MAPS

Knudsen, Scott
Rasmussen, Gary (hand drawn maps)

ART

British Library, London 58
Clymer, John 82r
Esposito, Robert (Panorama Designs)
8 c, 56-57
Harper's Weekly 90
Rasmussen, Gary 2-3 b, 9
Russell, Charles 67
Sohon, Gustavus 93

PHOTOGRAPHS

Allen, Donna 222
American Heritage Center 139
American Museum of Natural History
45 b
Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth 67
Arizona Historical Society 136
Associated Press AP 188, 190
Axtell 100, 101
Barrow, Scott 211
Boeing 198
Buffalo Bill Historical Center 82 r
California Historical Library, San
Francisco 92 t, 106 b, 114
Carlson, Laurie Winn 78
Center for Pacific Northwest Studies
105 l
Cheney Cowles Museum/Eastern
Washington State Historical Society,
Spokane 49 all, 50, 71, 110, 130,
131, 140, 150 all, 151 all, 161, 162-
163
Chesley, Paul 185
Chicago Historical Society 112
Columbia River Exhibition 183
Conboy, Larry 53
Curtis, Asahel 30, 106 t, 115
Curtis, Edward 96, 121, 122
Dartmouth College Library, Rauner
Special Collections 63
Della Piana, Leandro 83
Denver Public Library 79 t
Discovery Channel Pictures 221 t
Feryl, Elizabeth 184
Fort Vancouver 70 c
Green, Mike 9, 15 b, 31 t, 41 all, 48 b,
127 b, 142, 151 b, 182 all, 186 all, 189
all
High, Jeffrey 208-209
Hopkinson, Glen 74-75, 85

Illinois State Historical Society,
Springfield 80, 91, 92 b
Ivanko, John 206
Jacobsen, Karen 28 l
Kiver, Eugene 12 b, 27 all
Kleinknecht, Gary 32
Lange, Dorothea 148 all
Liberty Orchards 192-193, 203 l, 203 b
Library of Congress 66 c
Lincoln County Historical Society 126,
127
Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power
111 b
MacNulty, Barbara 15 t
McKinney, Bill 31 c
Microsoft 203 r
Mumm's the Word 202
Murray, Barbara 16 r, 19 t r, 31 b, 113
Museum of History and Industry,
Seattle 61 t, 95 b, 96, 99 t, 99 l, 100
t, 101 all, 103 all, 104, 105 t, 106 t,
124, 128-129, 137, 146, 157, 168,
175, 187
NASA 178-179
National Archives 172
North Central Washington Museum
117 b
Northwest Museum of Arts and
Culture/Eastern Washington State
Historical Society, Spokane 142, 181
Northwind 210
Office of the Governor 219
Ohio Historical Society 153, 212
Oregon Historical Society 45 t, 48 c,
51, 52 t, 52 b, 64 l, 64 b, 66 t, 69 b,
70 t, 72 c, 77 all, 79 b, 88-89, 93 l, 97
all, 102 all, 20 b, 155, 156, 204
Oltersdorf, Jim 201
Pefley, Chuck 2-3, 13 all, 17 b, 18, 21,
166 b, 169, 171
Sammis, E.M. 95, 99l
Shutterstock.com/Natalia Bratslavsky
180
Smith, Lori 29
Spokane Public Library 117 c
Spokesman-Review 120 t
Steen, Trygve 185 t
Stevens, Otto 16 l, 16 b
Stradling, Dale 33 l
Taylor, F.E. 102 b
Thompson, Jan 173
Till, Tom front cover 9, 22-23, 26,
36-37, 43
Timberline Press, Portland 33
Tri-City Herald 38
University of Arizona Library 158
University of Oregon 118

University of Utah Libraries 174
University of Washington Libraries 132,
133, 138, 141
Walter, Sunny 4 l, 4 b, 8 t, 12 b, 19 b r
Washington State Historical Society at
Tacoma 44, 65, 55, 86, 100 c, 108-
109, 115, 117 t, 119, 121, 122, 144-
145
Whitman Mission National Monument
78
Wilse, Anders 103 b
Wilson, Doug 28 b
Wing Luke Asian Museum 175
Yakima Valley Museum 21

All photos not listed are from the
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