THE WASHINGTON TERRITORY DURING THE CIVIL WAR: PROSPERITY IN EXCHANGE FOR LOYALTY

By

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For John and Anna, whose love and patience makes all things possible.

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Introduction

From its majestic snow-topped volcanoes and rainforest in the west, across the mighty Columbia River to the dry and arid desert of the east, Washington State is a geographically diverse and beautiful region. Today, the state's roughly seven million inhabitants reflect the dramatic growth that has occurred since its statehood in 1889 when the population then numbered about 350,000 residents.[1] Like all western states but Texas, Washington State was initially a United States territory. Originally part of the Oregon Territory, a separate Territory of Washington was designated 1853 with a population of 3,965, the region's population has grown continuously like the United States as a whole.[2] And although the Washington Territory was not the locus of a single Civil War Battle, Washingtonians endured and to a limited degree shaped the Civil War, which itself emerged, in part, over the status of slavery in western territories. Most of Washington's citizens were staunch supporters of the United States during the Civil War and, like westerners generally, local issues and perspectives shaped their engagement with the Civil War. Despite its peripheral location, the Washington Territory sought to prove its worth to the Union during the turbulent years of the American Civil War.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, residents of the Washington Territory endeavored to support the Union war effort in every way possible. While their small population did not allow them to send a large amount of troops, they made a valiant effort to compensate for this seeming deficiency. During the war years the Federal war effort relied upon the support of its civilians to fund medical services for its soldiers. While not yet a state, the residents of the Washington Territory provided volunteer soldiers and participated in fundraising efforts to support the United States Sanitary Commission. Arthur Denny, the noted Seattle historian, founder, and member of the Washington Territorial Legislature, boasted proudly of

Washington's loyalty. Measuring the Territory's loyalty by its contributions to the United States Sanitary Commission, he gloated of "more contributions per capita for the Sanitary Commission than any other state or territory." [3] Newspapers of the time were replete with similar boastful tales of the good work of the territory's residents. For territorial citizens, their donations satisfied a dual goal: to guarantee a prosperous future for the territory while contributing to the longevity and well-being of the Union. While small in numbers and geographically and physically removed from the theaters of war, these settlers were determined to not to be forgotten by a nation embroiled in war, and one in which a victory could result in substantial gains for the territory.

Another motive for the generous support of the Sanitary Commission was to quell the questions of loyalty that had emerged due to the territory's origins, origins that were steeped in Democratic Party politics. While hardly a rebel stronghold, the Lincoln Administration planted Republican party surrogates in the Pacific Northwest to keep tabs on the rumors of pro-Confederate sympathies. While there may have been some merit to some of the rumors, there was no substantial threat to the Union effort from this region of the country. Speculation ran through period newspapers in the usual fashion; designed to sell papers and obviously partisan, the reporting was often at the cost of responsible and accurate journalism. As for the residents of the Washington Territory, their interests would not be supported by a Confederate victory. The generous support extended to the Sanitary Commission by these residents was contrary to pro-Confederate sentiments. If they were so disloyal, why would they have supported the health of Union soldiers? The speculations about a successful rebel stronghold never bore fruit in this region of the country.

Lincoln's embedding of trusted advisers in the region was a necessary step; he could not afford to upset the precarious balance of Union and Confederate supporters. The president sought to deny the secessionists any possible political advantage. In addition, Lincoln understood that the amount of valuable ore mined in the Colville and Rocky Mountain regions of the Washington Territory funded much of the Federal budget during the Civil War. This buried wealth attracted large numbers of eager settlers, enough to allow for the creation of the following two new territories during the war carved from Washington's original territorial allocation: Idaho in 1863 and Montana in 1864. Because of the territory's historical Democratic leanings as well as the Native American conflicts that plagued the region, the Lincoln Administration had to exercise strict vigilance in carefully monitoring the goings-on of this northernmost corner of the nation.

Furthermore, settlers in the Washington Territory were concerned acutely with the other ramifications of the mining boom. Since the earliest mineral rush, the balance of white settlers and Native Americans had been upset. The first governor of the territory, Isaac Stevens, had made it his goal to establish Indian treaties to encourage harmonious cohabitation of these lands. Indian wars and other related conflicts illustrated the challenges that this newfound mineral rush presented for the welfare of white settlers. These residents understood that they needed the protection that the Federal government could provide, protection that was predicated upon Federal success in the distant conflict.

A Union victory also held the promise of funding for infrastructure. To ensure a long and prosperous future, amenities such as the telegraph and railroad were essential to the region. Settlers of the region jockeyed for both amenities, and used the Civil War as an opportunity to draw attention to this small and distant corner of the continent. They sought to prove their significance to the greater national effort and they wished to not to be forgotten in the rush of

post-war in infrastructure improvements. Contributing positively to the war effort could garner the effects for which they sought; internal improvements that would allow the region to grow economically. While Washington's territorial citizens grappled with their own regional challenges such as Indian conflicts and the effects of gold rushes, they used the war to draw positive attention to the Pacific Northwest. Such attention promised to be just the answer to increasing the population and amenities of the region, attention that would bring the region ever closer to their ultimate goal: statehood.

The role of the Washington Territory in the Civil War is, as a whole, a largely undocumented body of history. Various components to the story have received some attention, but nowhere is the story told in its entirety. Oregon's history during this era is told well through Richard Etulain's *The Enemy Never Came*, and while it includes some Washington Territory connections, that is not its focus. Historiography of the Sanitary Commission is fairly limited. The standard historical texts of the Sanitary Commission were written by William Maxwell, Charles Stille, and Mary Massey. Maxwell and Massey's works outline the mission and scope of the work of the Sanitary Commission as a whole, while Stille's records detail specific references to the work of the commission by locale. Other secondary sources include mentions of the Sanitary Commission as evidence of the role of women during this conflict and the influence of civilian support. There are no arguments about the role of the Sanitary Commission specifically in the Washington Territory. There are works by Robert Ficken and Scott McArthur that explore the Washington Territory and its connections to the American Civil War, but neither explore nor challenge Denny's assertion. James Jewell deals briefly with the political effects of the Pig War and boundary debacle with Canada as well as the effects of the Fraser River gold rush, but these are the limits of his look at the region during the war.[4] Alvin Josephy published a

whole book devoted to The Civil War in the American West, yet the references to the Washington Territory are limited to about a page and a half, and discuss the troops sent from the region to support the war effort.[5]

The stories of the Pig War and the region's Indian Wars have been well documented by authors such as Mike Vouri and Robert Utley, respectively. The telegraph and railroad are components of the larger, territorial and state histories, and are commonly told as such. The questions surrounding loyalty in the territory are woven in through various works, with no singular volume in existence that explores this theme in depth. The story of the American frontier West, that of the Civil War, and certainly the geopolitical concerns of the Washington Territory are essential to understanding a more complete picture of the nation's history.

Of The Greater Good

The weather had not been normal as of late. Instead of the persistent rains and occasional frosts typical in late November, pervasive fog haunted the Washington Territory. Only the occasional sun and starlight breaks permeated this fog.[1] Yet, it was on this dark and dense night of November 29, 1864, that the residents of Steilacoom City and nearby Olympia were willing to brave the elements. Donning their best millinery and fashionable suits and dresses, the citizens of the Pacific Northwest turned out for one of the biggest and most successful of the war-time dances. While the proper supper and performances of the skilled musician were enjoyed by all, these dancers were well aware that there was much more at stake than a gay evening. Raising money for the United States Sanitary Fund was not just an opportunity to support the war effort, it would prove the Territory's loyalty to the Union and potentially secure the blessings that would flow from a Union victory.[2]

Indeed the Sanitary Commission as a whole contributed greatly to the health and well-being of the soldiers risking their lives in combat and in the unsanitary conditions that life beyond the battle field presented. The Sanitary Commission was funded by donations from all regions of the Union. What began as a civilian organization ordered by the federal government became a much needed extension of the government's military efforts during the Civil War. Referred to by Lincoln as the "Fifth Wheel," the USSC quickly distinguished itself as the sole agency responsible for replenishing the quickly

dwindling medical supplies needed to care for wounded soldiers.[3] The four wheels are said to be metaphorically the supports of the war effort that include: logistics, commissary, transportation, medical and surgical care.[4] Because of this need, the Women's Central Association of Relief

and medical professionals worked with New York City's civic leaders to gain representation in Washington, D.C. to help provide aid.[5] In a meeting with the head of the Medical Bureau, these delegates learned that there would be substantial need for assistance in anticipation of those who would need medical care. That delegation began to inquire as to what the medical and sanitary needs would be. This commission then became known as the Sanitary Commission, was ordered by the President and Secretary of War to work with the Medical Bureau and War Department to coordinate relief efforts. Named as the head of the Commission was Dr. Henry Whitney Bellows, a Unitarian reverend and president of the Women's Central Association of Relief.[6] From here the USSC would work in conjunction with the government's war effort. They would receive no federal funding, so the private fundraising efforts of the commission's volunteers would provide critical and lone monies.

The need for fundraising was evident as the government fell short in its ability to fully support the medical care and needs of the soldiers. Americans knew that the lives lost in war were only exacerbated from the "horrors" that resulted from being ill prepared to deal with medical needs.[7] Having learned from the British lessons of the Crimean War that poor diet, health and sanitation contributed greatly to casualty rates, Americans sought to counter those affects. More British soldiers at one time during the Crimean War were in "hospitals than on duty."[8] Begun as an exercise in "benevolent elitism," the supporters of the USSC believed in "structured charity" to contribute directly goods such as clothing, blankets, camp goods, and food.[9] USSC materials were to be distributed when it was determined that the government had failed to provide them. Then, supplies would be distributed on a basis of apparent need with an explanation given as to how the need came about and it would have to be shown why the commission was called, unless it was directly a result of the surgeon's request.[10]

The best way to understand the needs that the Sanitary Commission sought to fill is through the writings of the women who did this work. Mrs. Eliza C. Porter, the wife of Reverend Jeremiah Porter of Chicago, kept a diary that was published without her knowledge in a Sanitary Commission bulletin. In 1864 Mrs. Porter described poor hospital conditions and the work that they did to improve those conditions:

> I have just visited a tent filled with 'amputated cases.' They are noble young men, the pride and hope of living families at the North, but most of them are so low that they will never again return to them. Each had a special request for 'something that he could relish.' I made my way quickly down from the heights, where the hospital tents are pitched, and sought for the food they craved. I found it among the goods of the Sanitary Commission-and now the dried currants, cherries, and other fruit are stewing; we have unsoddered cans containing condensed milk and preserved fruit—and the poor fellows will not be disappointed in their expectations.[11]

According to the women's diaries of the time, soldiers were frequently in want of sustenance. Scurvy was the constant plague of the soldier, and the USSC sought to rectify this. As Mrs. Stephen Barker, the wife of a reverend from Massachusetts wrote in 1864,

> The Commissary Department issued vegetables in such small quantities that they did not affect the condition of the troops in any appreciable degree. Surgeons immediately sought the Sanitary Commission. The demand soon became greater than the supply. At first they wanted nothing but vegetables, for having these, they said, all other discomforts would become as nothing.[12]

Dorothea Dix, appointed by Lincoln as Superintendent of Nurses during the Civil War and a nursing veteran of the Crimean War, inspired the efforts of Henry Bellows to create a commission to support the Federal medical effort. Delegates who toured camps and hospitals in and around Washington DC saw that there were inadequate government accommodations that would give rise for the commission to take an active role in the war – as special advisors to the national government.[13] Commonly considered for their role in distributing supplies to soldiers over "preventive" aspects, the Sanitary Commission worked to reform the Medical Bureau.[14] The

jobs of the Commission's prevention goal included putting an end to "'incompetency, inefficiency, and contracted ideas'" common in the Medical Bureau.[15]

None of this aid or reform happened without substantial financial backing. The work of the USSC was nearly entirely dependent on the donations of private parties. Elaborate fundraising opportunities were common, including activities such as balls and dances that were opportunities for civilians to show patriotism and support the war effort. The Commission addressed the needs of wounded soldiers that had been overlooked previously through standard, established military organizations. "Private generosity now centered there [in hospitals of the Capitol]; and the United States Sanitary Commission had its office and officers there to minister to their thousand exceptional wants not provided for by the Army Regulations."[16] Beyond its extraordinary fundraising efforts, the effects of the USSC could be measured in the amount of lives that it saved. Indeed the Sanitary Commission proved its worth in helping reduce the morality rate. Having been inspired by the Sanitary Commission of the Crimean War in which the mortality rate decreased by 23% from 1855 to 1856, the USSC was no less successful.[17]

The commission with "exclusive direction" in the relief of armies in areas west of the Mississippi River fell under the jurisdiction of the Western Sanitary Commission,[18] an independent entity headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. The duties of the Western chapter were numerous. Among them were to provide medical supplies to Mississippi gun boats and hospital steamers, of which they had a near monopoly. They were to maintain agents and hospital stores at all important western fronts. Additionally, they set up soldiers' homes that were capable of caring for 600 soldiers a day. They built and supplied hospitals, selected and assigned nurses in the Western Department, and provided badly-needed support for Union refugees.[19] The result of this work was that they made their work as civilians and this particular agency of aid invaluable

not just to the war effort, but for sustaining the lives and well-being of the Federal soldiers well after the conclusion of hostilities. In comparison to national efforts, "...the Western Sanitary Commission did not play second fiddle; its distribution and expenditures amounted from one fifth to one fourth of the amount done by the older group and all its branches." [20] The people of the West, and the Washington Territory in particular, were committed to this work as they understood that its value went even beyond that of saving lives, promoting general welfare, and bringing about a Union victory. This was an act of patriotism, and a way that a geographically distant body could prove that while mountains may divide them, their loyalty would not waver. The Commission had become "'an expression of intense nationality – an instrument for conquering state lines and local prejudices.'"[21] As the region vied to be recognized as a vital part of the war effort, this worked helped to seal that. As Commission Historian Charles Stille noted,

> The consent of the people in a common effort, which no jealous sectarian or political rivalries could alienate them from, their confidence in the United States Sanitary Commission and constancy to it to the last, are extraordinary proofs of their trusting, unsuspicious temper, thorough disinterestedness and sympathetic patriotism.[22]

The people of the Pacific Northwest had hoped for just such a conclusion. As a whole, the people of the Pacific Northwest had only the desire to support the Union in its wartime commitment. They stood everything to gain by winning this conflict.

The work of the Sanitary Commission on a federal level is well documented in history. The reports of the Commission, its receipts, and communications are all part of the larger historic footprint of Civil War records. The historic interpretation and understanding of the Sanitary Commission exists on a national level, and looks at the efforts in several ways. The work of the citizenry as a reflection of nationalism is evident through the work of William Maxwell in *Lincoln's Fifth Wheel*. While he does place the organization within the context of the gendered nature of its work, Maxwell's analysis is largely based on its national significance as an effort of

the citizenry to show their dedication to country and cause. Historians such as Mary Massey, *Women in the Civil War*, and Judith Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition*, analyze more closely the particular significance of the USSC as women's history. Their lens is that of the opportunity that women had during these pre-suffrage years to exert their political voice and strength, commanding respect as part of the nation's citizenry. Ultimately, the Sanitary Fund saw no difference between dollars collected by women or from women's efforts than those of men, and neither did the nation. War changes everything, and for women it changed the influence on the nation that they were able to show their dedication and put forth a concerted effort to care for the needs that the federal government could not, thereby filling an important role in the ultimate successful outcome of the war.[23]

The work of the Sanitary Commission was an important step in the history of the women's movement in the United States. Massey argued that this effort, often under the leadership and efforts of women, was a significant event in the momentum of women vying to gain strength in a less than equal republic. Henry Bellows, the president of the national Sanitary Commission, also acknowledged that "women rendered their local service to the national struggle" as they contributed to the collection of food, clothing and hospital necessities and gave generously of their time to organizing fairs and benefits.[24] Further, they grew food to support the cause, giving them labels such as the "'sanitary potato patch'" and "'onion patch.'"[25] In *Lincoln's Fifth Wheel,* historian William Quentin Maxwell showed the challenges of the USSC in completing their mission, their own often divisive inside politics, and their efforts as a support agency. *Women at War* told, often through their own words, the women's experiences of being part of the Sanitary Commission, most of which became public after the end of the Civil War. Many Civil War surveys such as Allen Guelzo's *Fateful Lightning* included the efforts of this

commission as part of the overall story of the war, but did not devote significant time to drawing further conclusions. Guelzo's interpretation is that the work of the USSC was that of "benevolent elitism;" charitable efforts conducted by the well-to-do who had the luxury of time and the organizational skills to do so.[26]

Melinda Lawson's work in *Patriot Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North*, makes the case that the Sanitary Fairs, specifically, served the function of both promoting women as the moral compass of America, and promoted nationalism across the nation as they fostered competition among various regions. The opening of the Northwest Soldiers' Fair in Chicago, the first of its type, set the precedent that participation in these fairs were more than just fundraisers for a righteous cause, but were also a function of patriotism. The greatest expression of patriotism was not just to support the war effort, but to help in such a way to relieve soldiers' suffering. The Fairs directed the national conversation to a celebration of the nation-state above simply the goings-on and direction of the war. This was, as one observer of the St. Louis fair noted, "'a Union love feast.'"[27]

Lawson's work offers a clear and gendered lens revealing the role of the Sanitary Commission in the Washington Territory more than any other accounts. Indeed the boastfulness of the Washington Territory's contributions to the Sanitary Commission fall very much in line with the national mood, according to Lawson. Certainly, though geographically remote, Washington Territory did not feel less than a part of the Union effort to support its soldiers. In keeping with national sentiment, this scarcely populated territory made every effort to promote its contributions and looked in awe at the leading contributors such as New York City and Philadelphia. While Lawson's arguments and reasoning lend much clarity to the mindset of the Washington Territory, she does not analyze the contributions of the Sanitary Fairs by region or

state. Her work is focused on its national significance and its efforts as a function of nationalism. While these arguments help to place Washington Territory into a larger context, they also do not offer a nuanced view of such a place with its own, peculiar circumstances. Other than give us a national picture, there is no immediate explanation for Arthur Denney's claim that the Washington Territory was a national leader in its fundraising efforts. If this was the case, then certainly an historian such as Lawson would have made mention of this as an important part of her analysis. Lawson's work sheds further proof that the Washington Territory's claims were false, and were driven by nationalistic efforts that were further enhanced by its own, political agenda. Her work offers the most parallels, and also raises historical questions to be explored further.[28]

The dearth of scholarship on the Sanitary Commission's endeavors in the Washington Territory reflect a larger gap in the scholarship. There is no standard monograph on the impact of the Civil War on the Territory or vice versa. Certainly there is no comprehensive piece on the just the Washington Territory and her many connections to the efforts of the Civil War. While Maxwell and Giesberg both interpreted the work of the Sanitary Commission thoroughly and its historic significance, they are drawn to the national narrative with its allure as part of the American Civil War. While it does stand as a testament to the nationalism of a young nation that endured and prospered, there are also more regional stories, upon further review. Understandably, the allure of the glamorous, weeks long Sanitary Fairs held in places like Brooklyn captured the nation's imagination, national press, and attention of the nation's most western residents. Despite its well-justified claims of grandeur, the significance of the Sanitary Commission does not end with those chapters that drew attention and raised money that flowed like water. The large donations per capita of the people of the west and significant press

coverage of the time tell a story of a people who, though geographically distant, did not want to be forgotten or regarded as inconsequential. Desperate to show themselves as every bit a part of America they worked hard to make contributions. Just like on the East Coast, the women were the leaders in this work, but unlike their sister commissions of the east, they had something greater to prove. While not a state, the women of the Washington Territory saw this as an opportunity to overcome skepticism and not be written off as small and insignificant to the national landscape. This story has not been explored, nor an explanation offered.

The untapped resources of the territorial newspapers offer the best account of not only the work of the people of the Washington Territory in raising money for the Sanitary Fund, but in demonstrating their sincere interests in doing so. As to their motivations, some of this can be attributed to questions of loyalty and commitment to the preservation of Union that were in part raised due to events in the surrounding areas – Idaho to the east, and Oregon State to the south. Scott McArthur's *The Enemy Never Came* offers the best look at this question of loyalty, but is no means exhaustive in its look at Washington Territory, focusing instead on the Pacific Northwest as a whole. Hence, examining the particular devotion of the people of the Washington Territory to the USSC is an unexplored topic, and one that allows the historian to draw further conclusions about the motives of its people.

The understandable eastern bias of most Civil War era scholars and the regional focus by western historians leave much of the history of the Washington Territory under-analyzed. Indeed, despite its focus on the settled portions of the republic, the United States Sanitary Commission's reach extended well west of the Mississippi. Once stepping over this boundary, though, the jurisdiction then lay within the entity of the "Western Division." Within the west, the newspapers of the time reveal that the funds raised were usually credited by state and

territory. Sometimes, though, they are simply lumped together. While there would be disputes at times between the states and territories as they engaged in a quest to secure the largest donations, one theme remained constant. All were determined to show their pride. The newspapers and letters from the Washington Territory were consistent in their coverage of this work. All were reassured with this report:

> The devoted and unstinted sympathy and pride of the Pacific Coast in the unexampled work of mercy and love that they had made so largely their own and that the nation this side of the Rocky Mountains had only to give us one cold shoulder or to indicate its fatigue at our very dependence on her, to make us very sure of having the whole heart, and as much of the golden and silver veins as we needed, of your young and generous wealthy, put at our disposal![29]

In the Washington Territory, the first Sanitary Commission chapter was organized at Vancouver with territorial headquarters established at the Territorial capitol of Olympia, near Tumwater Prairie at the southern tip of Puget Sound. Additionally, there were locations at Port Madison, Port Gamble, Monticello, Boisfort Prairie, Port Angeles, Claquato, Yelm, Whidbey Island, Chehalis, Grand Prairie, and Clallam.[30] This is an impressive amount of organizing for an outlying territory. It shows an intentional effort on the part of these citizens to demonstrate a unified and loyal backing of the Union. The territorial newspaper *Washington Statesman* makes the claim in April of 1864 that the contribution of their territory of the Commission totaled $14, 976.99.[31] Without perspective this number may not seem impressive. The publication further asserts, though, that this represents more than $1 to every man, woman and child in the Territory. If this assertion is true, this reveals a disproportionate rate of donation to the USSC, further

showing the dedication of the region to the cause.

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This map shows the western part of the Washington Territory that includes many of the locations of the Sanitary Commission locations. It also indicates the location of Fort Steilacoom, of particular importance to this research.

Despite her geographic divide, social and economic distance from interest in slavery, and absence of the sound of guns, the people of the Washington Territory took a "lively interest in the conflict" and "in their loyalty to the Federal Government."[33] Despite these obstacles, even this western most territory proved its interest in current affairs through its donations to the Sanitary Fund. "In proportion to population, the women of the territory furnished the Sanitary Commission a larger amount of supplies than did any other state in the Union."[34]Dr. Henry Bellows himself, the head of the United States Sanitary Commission, bestowed the same

recognition upon the region. In a letter to EE Kelly, the Washington Territory's United States Sanitary Commission's agent, Bellows wrote "It is delightful to find that distance does not weaken your attachment to the Union, and that you are willing to spare from your recent civilization and new country, such liberal sums for the relief of wounds you cannot see, and cries you can only hear in your hearts."[35] Bellows recognized the receipt of $1,000, of which he said "may heaven bless your labors and raise up hosts of contributors to our holy cause."[36] The people of the Washington Territory would have to figure out for themselves how to go about raising funds that could even attempt to keep pace with the more glorious efforts of the East Coast. The Washington Standard reported at length in May of 1864 about the Sanitary Fairs in New York City. According to the reporter, the New York fairs were very elaborate, with whole apartments, themes, and costumes making up these weeks-long efforts. Of the Brooklyn Sanitary Fair, the paper report, "money pours into the treasury like rain."[37] Despite the disadvantages inherent to the Washington Territory's efforts, she was determined to compete on this national show of loyalty and commitment.

On a national scale, the Sanitary Fairs accomplished just that. Not only did they raise money for the purpose of aiding soldiers, the fairs also served as a "celebration of nation unlike anything nineteenth century America had ever seen."[38] Serving as a function of 19th century concept of the celebration of the nation-state, the fairs drew the conversation away from war itself and moved it to that of the soldiers' suffering. This also appealed to the "traditional" ideas of moral suasion, the superior virtue of women and Christian sacrifice; all ideas that stemmed from 19th century social reform.[39] According to Frederick Olmsted, the purpose of the soldiers' aid societies was to keep a "love of the Union alive through healthy social contact, expression and labor."[40] The efforts of civilians were recognized by the highest commander in the nation. The

commander-in-chief, Abraham Lincoln, also offered his assessment of the significance of the work of the Sanitary Commission, saying:

> "[These] voluntary contributions given freely, zealously, and earnestly, on top of all the disturbances of business, the taxation and burdens that the war has imposed upon us, [gave] proof that the national resources are not all exhausted; that the national spirit of patriotism is even stronger than at the commencement of the rebellion."

These efforts, whether led by the women of the nation serving as agents of morality, or as dual gendered efforts, served to set a national tone for what being a concerned and active citizens looked like. As one woman who wrote a letter that ran in the Cincinnati Times following the opening of the Northwest Soldiers' Fair in Chicago put it, the efforts simply put in motion a national competition, of which "we should not let Chicago, or any other place, be in advance of us in our efforts." Feeling emboldened by the power that her gender held, she signed the letter, simply, "A Lady."[41] Serving as "'God's appointed agent[s] of morality,'" this lady, and her fellow female citizens, would go forth with their nationalistic and moral crusade.[42]

As it did on the national level to the colleagues in the East, the burden of raising these funds and supporting this distant war fell largely to the ladies of the Washington Territory. Relying on old notions of civic virtues felt by women, Mrs. Sallie B. Thayer, an actress, delivered lectures in Portland and The Dalles. In them, she called upon the women of the west to support the war effort. She called it the "duties" of the women in the present crisis.[43] As for how to do this, besides hosting balls and other fundraising efforts, Sanitary Fund donation boxes were placed at local polling places. By strategically placing the two causes together, one political party declared, "the gratitude of the country is due to the noble defenders of our flag, and while they fight battles for the union in the field, we at home will give them the support and encouragement due to the soldiers of the Republic."[44] This co-mingling of politics and support

of the distant war effort showed the sincerity of the efforts of the Territory and her interest, despite the geographic divide, to contribute to the health and well being of the Union. The people of the west were very much part of the nation's efforts, and did recognize that they, too, could contribute to the care of the sick and wounded men. Indeed the Commission was filling a role, "doing what [the government] could not do" and was "working out a noble munificence, writing for itself on the hearts of suffering thousands, a grand history."[45]

The Washington Territory as a whole struggled to be seen as an interested and viable party to the American Civil War. The newspaper accounts of the time indicate that that they were more interested in receiving recognition from the federal government for their fundraising efforts than the actual efforts of saving lives. Of all the references to the Sanitary Commission, the amount of money raised and its correct accounting was paramount to the interests of those in need. One exception to this is the appeal from the USSC printed in the territorial newspaper urging that the Treaty of the Sanitary Commission was nearly exhausted and in need of replenishing. The article claimed that "thousands were laying without sufficient shelter, food, or attendance in the camps and depots on James River" and that many could die who would otherwise be saved with a blanket.[46] Judging by the nature of the articles on the Sanitary Commission in the territorial newspapers, the citizens of the West were motivated by their appearance and reputation of generosity and concern more than the actual relief raised. They did not, as Dr. Bellows had commented, ever hear the screams of suffering or the sounds of the guns. They could, however, make a name for themselves as loyal Americans. The accountings of the generosity of the region as reported in the newspapers prove this time and time again.

In 1863 the *Washington Standard* reported that the Oregon papers had misrepresented the amount of donations by the Washington Territory, showing it as $4,000 when in reality she

raised nearly $12,000 for the "laudable purpose."[47] The paper went on to note that the contributions should be "taken in connection with our sparse population, is probably better than has been done by any other portion of the Pacific Coast."[48] In July 1863 the paper proudly published another of Washington Territory's donations acknowledged by Dr. Bellows of $4520.77.[49] Again in 1864 another error occurred, this one traced to the donations of the Washington Territory being accredited to California. If not for the eagle eye of the Treasury of the Territory, WW Miller, Washington would be credited with $7,200, a paltry sum in comparison to the actual amount of $15,000.[50] Interestingly, Washington was very concerned with taking credit for every dollar raised for the cause, yet also took full credit for being part of the greater region when it served the purpose of touting its reputation. The territorial newspaper took credit as being part of the "coast" that contributed nearly two-thirds of all cash receipts from June 1, 1860 to October 1, 1863.[51] While the cause was important, the press was perhaps more so. Again, in 1862 the Washington Standard reported on a well attended meeting in the Territory that produced a plan of operation to raise funds, having no doubt that a "creditable sum" would be contributed. The writer also noted that much of the money attributed to the Oregon Sanitary Fund has "been contributed by citizens of this Territory."[52]

If there was recognition to be obtained, the Washington Territory kept careful accounting of each opportunity, and eagerly jumped at the chance for kudos. While it may be difficult to pin down more than the anecdotal, boastful accounts of the contributions to the Sanitary Fund, perhaps all that matters are the stories of grandeur and claims made by the Territory. The archival collections of Edmond S. Meaney, University of Washington History Professor, who was born in 1862, reveal an interesting note.[53] An undated letter written to Professor Meaney that was filed with his Civil War collection, describes the efforts of Margaret H. Keime to

validate the contributions of the Sanitary Commission. After an exhaustive search in the War of the Rebellion records, she was unable to find individual records of contributions. She wrote "there are numerous references to the great benefits derived from the US Sanitary Commission as a whole, but nothing said of the assistance given by Washington Territory."[54] Any lack of official federal recognition and posterity did not hamper the efforts of the Territory. The contributions as well as the attention paid by local newspapers to garner attention and recognition for this sparsely populated and remote corner of the nation. The local papers prove that Bellows and the powers that be on the other coast did recognize the contributions, and that was exactly what the Territory was seeking. For them, going down in the permanent, dusty record books may not have mattered in the least.

In 1864 another opportunity emerged for the people of the Pacific Northwest. They were challenged to contribute donations to be sent via Wells, Fargo & Co. free of charge, to NY City for their "Sanitary Fund Museum." The museum would feature "curious specimens of carving and other astonishing handiwork" as a fundraising scheme. The works that were sought were largely from the Indians of the Territory, all to "aid in this important matter."[55] While the success of this campaign is lost to history, it is interesting to note that the people of the territory were willing to donate to the cause in whatever form they could. Whether it was an event held in their own region or a way to support the effort on a national scale, citizens embraced and valued the opportunities to show themselves as productive members of the Union cause.

Other regions in the Territory also boasted of their contributions and wrote about the efforts with much embellishment. The *Washington Standard* reported in 1863 that the citizens of Bellingham Bay, interestingly situated close to the Canadian border and the Pig War debacle, raised $500 for the Sanitary Fund. The paper reports that "and with only a score or two of

voters, had reared an everlasting monument of her fidelity to our Glorious Union."[56] Bellingham Bay sat close to the gold fields of the Frasier River, its waterway located just south of the Canadian-United States border. Again their intentions are clear and being preserved for posterity. While they might be distant geographically and removed politically, the intentions of these citizens should never be brought into question.

At the south end of the Puget Sound, serving as the military hub of the Washington Territory, sat Steilacoom City. While the city served as a port and center for trade, the federal government looked to expand its defenses in this Territory. Created in 1853 on lands leased from Fort Vancouver, Fort Steilacoom became an important part of the defense of the Department of the Pacific.[57] Perhaps driven by their allegiance to the federal fort within their town, the people of Steilacoom went to great lengths to fundraise for the cause of the USSC. The papers of the day reveal numerous descriptions of the ball, certainly the talk of the town, but also of sustained fundraising efforts throughout the years of the war. The *Puget Sound Herald* reported in 1862 that a ball was to be held in the Masonic Hall at Steilacoom. "No pains will be spared to make this a most attractive affair, in every way worthy the occasion and the object for which it is gotten up. Let all hold themselves in readiness to contribute their mite toward this much-needed fund."[58] The extent to which this ball was planned, the careful details that the citizens of Steilacoom City tended to, and the pride evident from the newspaper coverage of the event certainly reveals nothing less than a loyal and devoted citizenry.

The hype surrounding this ball was evident through the publications of the Territory. The *Puget Sound Herald* covered this extensively, anticipating the event that was held on November 29, 1864. The ball appealed to residents beyond just that of Steilacoom City, indeed drawing attendees from the Territorial Capital of Olympia as well. The ball was hailed as "One of the

largest and most successful of war-time dances."[59] The description of Charles Prosch, editor, while often boastful and lavish in his praise of the south Sound, revealed the desire that Steilacoom, and indeed the region, had in demonstrating its devotion to the Union. While it was common practice at the time to not include a supper with the ball as a tactic to save money and increase profits, the citizens of Steilacoom decided to forgo the "starvation party" and indulge in an elaborate fundraiser.[60] Indeed no corners were cut in this region's efforts to prove their worth as contributors to the cause of the Civil War.

In his account, Charles Prosch boasted that the Sanitary Fair Ball was "the most signal success, in the matter of balls in Steilacoom, if not in the entire territory." He attributed the success to the "admirable" talents of the organizers where everything "worked to a charm." From the supper that was "recherché and abundant," to the music that was "the best we ever heard," right down to the company dubbed "numerous and unexceptionable," the ball could not be topped.[61] Further setting this ball apart from other perhaps less gallant efforts, was the decision to include a most skilled musician. The fiddler, Henry Hertz, "'proved himself not only a master of the violin but also a master of the order of dancing; for his calling was better pronounced, in point of time, than any we had before been favored with.'"[62] Perhaps just as telling as the success of the event itself was the nature of the newspaper coverage of the day. Not only were the Steilacoom and Olympia residents in attendance at this lavish event proud of their work for hosting such a civilized and refined event in the midst of the remote territory, but the attention devoted to the event by Prosch shows the significance of their actions. These were not people geographically and, as some had speculated, politically divided from the rest of the warring nation, but were very much citizens of the Republic in all that those duties and responsibilities entailed.

While the efforts of the Washington Territory in raising funds for the Sanitary Commission were impressive, the state of Oregon was not to be outdone. A rivalry ensued between the various locales of the Pacific Northwest, as noted by the newspapers of the region. The *Washington Statesman* reported in January of 1863 that, "We want our friends in the East to know that there is such a place as Washington Territory and that her citizens sympathize as strongly as Oregon, or any other portion of the Union, with our sick and wounded soldiers. We do not believe our Territory will be very far behind Oregon in her contributions."[63] The efforts of the people of Walla Walla, in the eastern part of the Territory on the Idaho border, were also organizing a ball in 1864.[64] The paper reported that the ladies of the event were considering a "starvation party" to further promote their profits.[65] As was true with Washington's fundraising reports, the various totals for regions were run displayed in the paper. The Sanitary Fund contributions on election day given by the Shoshone, Idaho, and Nez Perces Counties were $105 $100, and $47.50, respectively.[66] The Idaho Territory had newly separated from Washington in 1863 and was noted for its higher number of "semi-secessionists."[67] These secessionists were dubbed Sterling Price's "Left Wing." Despite this, the papers still touted the successes of the people of the region to support the efforts of the Union in securing a victory in the Civil War.

In the Oregon Country the trend is consistent. Engaging in an even larger rivalry with the Washington Territory, sometimes their intensity escalated this from just a friendly competition to a much more serious venture. Eager as well to prove their loyalty to a doubting nation, the Sanitary Commission organized in McMinnville, Oregon in 1863. They organized, set bylaws and a Constitution, and raised money that they sent on to Governor Gibbs. Gibbs served as the head of the Sanitary Commission in Oregon and was responsible for forwarding the money on to the east.[68] Of this McMinnville chapter, the members employed various methods of raising

funds. The ladies knitted socks that they sold for 50 cents a pair. They sold their handmade quilts for $21.50/each and held dinners. Their efforts reaped a total of $1,620.55 during the war, of which they should be proud. Some gentlemen, however, criticized the efforts of these ladies, calling their actions not "'ladylike."[69] This conclusion is most likely not a reflection of any secessionist-leaning tendencies, but perhaps a commentary on how men perceived the role of women to be at the time. No conclusions beyond that should be drawn from this information.

The initial small efforts of the Sanitary Commission in Oregon eventually yielded much greater contributions by the end of the war. The *Washington Statesman* notes that as of December 30, 1863, the Oregon Sanitary Fund's total revenues were $19, 014.10.[70] In 1864, the totals represent an even more successful effort, though there were accusations of impropriety. The *Oregon Statesman* asserts that while $52,600 was collected in Oregon State and the Washington Territory for the Sanitary Fund, only $32,000 could be officially documented. The money was said to be in the possession of Mr. Holbrook, the Treasurer. The reporter concluded that Holbrook "'had stole it.'"[71] Whatever became of this debacle is uncertain. Perhaps it was just indicative of the rivalry that had existed between the two regions. In fact, Mr. Holbrook acknowledged in 1862 that the Washington Territory was responsible for raising $11,000 toward the fund and Oregon $16,000. He noted that the Washington Territory had one-fifth the population of Oregon.[72] Given this, it is an impressive showing of support for this most important war time effort on behalf of the people of Washington. Clearly whether they were residents of Oregon or the Washington Territory, these people shared a common goal. It was a priority to show tangible support for the war effort through productive means.

It was not just the local press who noted the successful fundraising efforts of the Pacific Northwest. In 1863, Dr. Bellows acknowledged the yeoman efforts of the region. His speech

highlighted a recent letter to the editor in a local paper: "You will see that our little territory [Washington Territory] figures proudly for her size and wealth; and her contribution was received with warm applause." It is interesting to note that the loyalty of the region does not seem to be in dispute by the rest of the nation. Perhaps only political interests were at play in those conclusions. Despite their geographic distance, their generosity, though, was not unrecognized at the national level. Stille noted that "No such splendid beneficence of a state to distant objects, for general purposes under unknown almoners over whom the State had no control, and where no visible monument was to remain, was ever yet recorded."[73]

Washington Territory's claims of grand donations provoke ongoing speculation. While certainly the dollar figures cannot compare to the money that poured into placed like New York City, that did not stop the people of the territory from touting their very proud accomplishments. Certainly logic must have prevailed in the minds of these most western settlers, allowing them to realize that their wealth, as measured in dollar totals, could not compete on a national scale. The claims of proportionate donations and those by capita may be valid. With nationalism and national competition very much at play, perhaps the truth cannot be discerned. At the same time, it may or may not be that important. Whether in the most western reaches of the country, or in one of its largest and most prestigious cities, all of its residents seemed to vie to be a part of this national effort; to stake an interest in the Civil War. If this is what the legitimate and validated states of America were doing, the Washington Territory was going to follow suit and offer everything that it could muster.

Clearly the residents of Oregon and Washington Territory, despite their conflict with one another, shared a common interest. They were determined to prove to a war-torn nation their dedication to securing a Union victory. They had, after all, everything to gain from such an

outcome. They would first, though, have to overcome challenges to the loyalty of region as a whole, as well as the individual parts. In Oregon, those who didn't contribute to the Sanitary Fund raised "doubts of loyalty" as a divided Pacific Northwest played out in the newspapers and reputation of the time.[74]

We Are the Union

The generous efforts of the residents of this westernmost territory to support the goals of the Union Army did not stem simply from a sense of patriotism, but a desire to prove the extent of the region's loyalty. The Washington Territory and Oregon Country had strong roots in the Democratic Party. In 1853 Isaac Ingalls Stevens became the first governor of the Washington Territory. Known for his vigorous Indian pacification policies and as a rising star within the Democratic Party, he served also as the Territory's delegate to Congress in 1860 to nominate the Democratic presidential candidate.[1] With these strong roots in the Democratic Party, politicians speculated as to where the region's political loyalties would lie. While Stevens went on to become a Major General in the Union Army and gave his life at the Battle of Chantilly, none of this was known to Lincoln as he won the Presidency in 1860.[2] It may have been the furthest thing from Lincoln's mind.

The story of the Washington Territory and its political leanings is not one that has been documented comprehensively. Much like the story of the United States Sanitary Commission in the region, there is no standard text that tells completely the story of the region's role in the Civil War. Certainly, there is no comprehensive piece on just the Washington Territory and her many connections to the efforts of the Civil War. Scott McArthur's *The Enemy Never Came* offers the best look at this, but is no means exhaustive in its look at Washington Territory, focusing instead on the Pacific Northwest as a whole. *Lincoln and Oregon Country Politics in the Civil War Era* by Richard W. Etulain explores the question of loyalty within Oregon and somewhat beyond, but his focus is largely to the south of the Washington Territory as Oregon obtained statehood

much before Washington in 1859.[3] Alvin Josephy deals with the Washington Territory only in passing within the context of territorial volunteers.[4] Robert Ficken's *Washington Territory* is a larger view of the territorial period, offering only limited coverage of the Civil War years. Carl Schlicke's *General George Wright: Guardian of the Pacific Coast* tells much of the story of the region's military commanders, but does not comment on the question of loyalty that often intersected military decisions, at least according to the politicized newspapers of the day. The Washington State Historical Society (WSHS) has put together a useful and indexed collection of primary source materials during the years of the Civil War, but it is limited in its scope and the number of sources. Other than abstracts, the Washington State Historical Society offers no interpretation of the sources or analysis as it serves purely as a database. It represents the myriad of stories yet to be told. There are other territorial newspapers and sources that are left out of the WSHS site altogether. The particular devotion of the people of the Washington Territory and the questions surrounding its loyalty is a relatively untapped topic, and it is one that allows the historian to draw further conclusions about the motives of the territory's citizens.

Lincoln's election to the presidency was of particular interest to the residents of the Pacific Northwest. Even before Lincoln took the White House, pro-Southern advocates in the State of Oregon criticized his administration.[5] In 1861, Dr. Anson Henry, a Whig and long-time friend of Abraham Lincoln living in the Oregon Territory, reported that "There is a much stronger secession feeling in Oregon then is generally believed."[6] As a Democratic stronghold in the pre-war years, Henry's observation was correct in that there was evidence to suggest that the region could support secessionist

interests in the event of a civil war. In fact, the Pacific Northwest played host to the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC). Formed originally as a pre-war group intent on favoring the extension of slavery into the territories, Confederate sympathizers joined this secret society.[7] The KGC envisioned a slave republic, and thought that the Pacific Northwest held promise. While the mere existence of The KGC might not substantiate sufficient cause for alarm, Lincoln took no chances. The rumor mill was well entrenched in the political landscape, and "opinion makers" predicted that the Pacific Coast may even attempt to separate from the East if the rights and interests of the region were not supported by the Federal government.[8] Indeed, following Lincoln's election, secessionist intrigues in the Washington Territory plotted to overthrow the government and secede.[9] Partisans and paranoid observers envisioned that either of these outcomes could produce a Pacific Republic. While these plots never came to fruition, the regional disloyalty could be measured by the actions of Richard Gholson, the Kentucky-bred third Territorial Governor of Washington. A Buchanan appointee on the eve of the Civil War, Gholson resigned his governorship and went south to join the Confederacy.[10] Oregon's Democrats were not unlike those elsewhere in the greater west, like Colorado, in their loyalties during the war. Governor Evans was aware that vigilance, including action at times, was necessary to quell the pro-Confederate sympathizers in the territory.[11]

Meanwhile, in the Pacific Northwest, the much feared "Pacific Republic" would not come to be. The brainchild of pro slave and pro confederate advocates, the "Pacific Republic" threatened the very foundations of the broken Union.[12] Lincoln knew that he could not risk a more fragmented Union, and he also relied heavily upon the region for war time supports. The Pacific Northwest accounted for over 40 percent of United

States' production of gold from 1861-67, thereby helping to finance the Federal Civil War effort.[13] This was the result of the riches of the Colville region, an extensive mining district located in the northeastern part of the Washington Territory. Lincoln acknowledged the significance of the region by endorsing policies that were a direct benefit to them such as the Homestead Act, Morrill Act, and the Pacific Railroad Act, all of which were Whig-sponsored dreams long blocked by Democrats. These policies supported the settlers of the region and could give rise to a prosperous and secure future.[14] Very much rooted in the Whig mindset of his mentor Henry Clay, Lincoln's policies in the Pacific Northwest revealed his efforts towards creating a nation that favored westward expansion and internal improvements. Lincoln also provided federal financial support for a nation-wide telegraph system, extending all the way to the West Coast.[15]

This much feared "Pacific Republic" never came to fruition. Instead, the Pacific Northwest was the great benefactor of Lincoln's Whig agenda, and the white citizens of the region began to realize the riches that it stood to gain with Union loyalty. The doubts that Lincoln had were of small consequence. The pro-Southern sympathies were not enough to turn the region. The people of the area would prove themselves as being much more concerned with a Union victory than in forming that much feared "Pacific Republic." In fact, the Washington Territory, California, and Oregon represented a meager 0.9 percent of all white Union soldiers who fought in the Civil War.[16] Another consideration promoting the region's loyalty to the Union was the territorial dispute with Great Britain known as the "Pig War." This conflict of 1859 sought to answer the controversy over the precise location of the Canadian-United States border and the

possession of the San Juan Islands, sitting squarely between the two countries just north of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Surely, the people of the Pacific Northwest were wise to be more concerned about a threat to its borders from a foreign power than that of fighting a war to sustain planter aristocracy--a world away--and a way of life to which they had no direct connection. Lincoln understood the vulnerability of the Washington Territory, and he looked for ways to protect the region after deploying over half of the Regular Army presence to the Eastern conflict.[17] The vulnerability of the Pacific Northwest might have been the most legitimate threat that Lincoln faced; certainly more so than the tails spun about Secessionist leanings.

In opposition to the Knights of the Golden Circle, pro Federal-Government organizers in the Pacific Northwest formed what they called the Union League. Organized in Portland, its president was Governor Addison C. Gibbs. He encouraged the Unionists to intercept the mail of the Knights and to create their own "secret society" with their mission being that of opposing secessionists, real or imagined. Members of this union pledged themselves to the "unconditional loyalty to the Government of the United States."[18] The primary object of the organization was to "bind together all loyal men of all trades and professions, in a common union to maintain the power, glory, and integrity of the nation."[19] In taking this oath, its members would work toward these ends, all the while proving their unwavering support of the national union. The Union League also had political influence. Its members were prominent in forcing military command choices, such as the removal of Colonel Justus Steinberger in 1863 from Walla Walla to Kentucky. Overall, the pressing need for the Unionists is questionable, as the only accounts of the Knights and the extent of their influence during the war years exist in

post-war reminiscences and second-hand accounts.[20] In the end, The Knights, and the alleged secessionist threat of the Pacific Northwest, posed no real and viable threat to the solidarity of the Union.

In October 1861 a former express-man and employee of the Adams Express Agency, Justus Steinberger, was commissioned to raise the First Washington Volunteers. This should have been good cause for celebration in the territory. Justus Steinberger's appointment must have aided in blunting the claims of disloyalty leveled against the territory. Steinberger's promotion highlighted the territory's zealous efforts to be recognized as a viable and necessary force for the Union effort. In a letter from Thomas Scott, the acting Secretary of War authorized Colonel Justus Steinberger "to raise and organize a regiment of infantry in that [Washington]Territory and the country adjacent thereto, for the services of the US, to serve for three years, or during the war."[21] The Washington Territory's legislature heeded the call, passing quickly resolves of support for the mustering of troops. In their resolution they cited patriotic duty, civic duty, and resolve to support the Union-- and not treason--as their justification.[22] The people of Cowlitz County echoed that sentiment, in June of 1861. The *Washington Standard* reported that, despite being "far from the scene of the action," the citizens of the county pledged their "lives and sacred honor to stand by the Constitution and the Flag (sic) of our Union."[23]

As the call for raising a militia from the Washington Territory roused to the public in 1861, the *Washington Standard* was quick to urge its support. The newspaper was deeply concerned when it discovered that some of the territory's residents ~~was that they~~ saw no "justification" to rise to the call.[24] The writer challenged this apathetic

attitude, asking that if "we [are] so remote from the scene of turmoil and strife that we feel no interest in maintaining the integrity of our national honor?"[25] The paper article implored the citizens of the territory to be prepared should participation from the territory's militia become necessary. The strength of their resolve was evident through the promise of "death to the traitor" who dared to "spoil or tarnish either."[26]

This debate over loyalty in the territory was not limited to the publications of the time. General George Wright, Commander of the Department of the Pacific, wrote Washington Territorial Governor William Pickering that the Governor could now draw small arms and ammunition for the new volunteer companies from the arsenal at Vancouver.[27] The arms were to be issued only to fully organized volunteer units, and only once the loyalty of each soldier was ensured. The correspondence does not specify how that loyalty would be ascertained. Wright's military experience and time spent fighting Indians in the Washington Territory probably gave him good cause to exercise caution such that the property of the United States military should not be used for private, non-government disputes. Pickering's response to Wright's letter revealed that the Territorial Governor was concerned with the security of the area, and that the mustering of troops should not leave the region unprotected.[28] Citing the need to protect emigrants from Indians and to establish mail routes, he drafted several petitions to be carried by Anson Henry personally to the President in Washington D.C. He asked General Wright to provide the funding to allow Henry to make this trip, as it was official territorial business and that there was no other way to financially back the venture.[29] Interestingly, Pickering praised Henry's loyalty to the Union, and personal friendship with the President as an attempt to pave the way for a successful outcome.

Indeed, the call issued by President Lincoln on April 15, 1861, changed everything for the war effort. Lincoln asked for 75,000 volunteers to fill-out a new volunteer and federalized army whose purpose was to put down the rebellion. Within a month of Lincoln's request, word had reached the Washington Territory and territorial officials began to request armaments and volunteers. As the war was in its infancy, its future remained a mystery. There was no guarantee that the war would remain on the east coast, and on May 10, 1861, Governor McGill issued a proclamation to recruit a regiment of Washington Territorial Volunteers, including a request directed towards General Sumner in California to furnish "ordinary musket, rifle musket, and howitzer ammunition" to the Washington effort.[30] The Washington Territorial militia was ill-equipped for fighting, as their 1858 allotment included only two 12 pound mountain howitzers with carriages and equipment, six packsaddles and associated harness, and 26 percussion rifles and appendages worth a grand total of $920.[31] Despite McGill's enthusiasm, the recruitment of this new regiment would be painfully slow as the first six companies began their enrollment drives on May 14, 1861. Further recruitment continued for the next two years. The First Washington Territory Infantry would eventually, at its full strength, be composed of 964 men, 264 of which hailed from Washington Territory and 1,225 men from Oregon. The remainder of the regiment was made up of men recruited out of California. At the war's end, the regiment reported 209 deserted, nine honorably discharged, and 15 dead.[32] No matter the sense of loyalty and worth that the residents of the territory might have wanted to muster, their sheer numbers restricted the gravity of their contributions to the war's fighting numbers. Population, unlike loyalty, was something of which the people had little control.

Lincoln's call for men resulted in the drawing of Federal Regular Army assets from the Pacific Coast. These assets, deployed to the East, left a dangerous and significant manpower shortage in the West leaving the region in a perilous vacuum. Filling these vacancies was critical to ensure that the safety and well-being of the territory was not overlooked. In 1861, California troops were sent to Fort Steilacoom, Fort Vancouver, The Dalles, Fort Hoskins and Yamhill to stand in for regular troops who were called up for duty to suppress the rebellion of the southern states.[33] Much to the disappointment of the residents of the Washington Territory, it was California troops who would serve to garrison the military posts of the region. ~~In~~ a letter to acting Territorial Governor McGill from J.G. Hyatt, the recruiting agent for Whatcom County, ~~Hyatt~~ expressed that this decision "looks very much like a slight to the people of this Territory and that their loyalty is questioned."[34] He indicated that "we have no objection to Californians particularly but we think the preference should be given to our own Citizens (sic), for they will be only too glad to embrace the opportunity to testify their loyalty and devotion to their country's cause."[35] Hyatt's interpretation of the situation shows that he drew his conclusions based on the question of loyalty, but did not indicate that he considered the sheer numbers of population available. It is most likely that the decision was based on availability of man power, but the conversation surrounding the question of loyalty would continue.[36]

In July of 1862, Governor William Pickering wrote a letter to Brigadier General Benjamin Alvord raising the question of how to ensure the loyalty of volunteers from the Washington Territory. Brigadier General Alvord had assumed command of the Oregon District on July 7, 1862.[37] In the letter, Pickering admonished Alvord to be wary of

commissioning officers who had any possible connections to the Knights of the Golden Circle, and other secret societies that promoted anti-Union agendas.[38] In December 1862 Alvord again wrote to Pickering, and outlined his right--as he saw it--to award military promotions in the same fashion as a governor of a state. The basis for this determination, he argued, would be on a soldier's "fitness" and "loyalty."[39] Alvord did not explain how he would determine such "fitness" and "loyalty" and offers no further commentary on the subject. While the subject of Union loyalty was important, there was a notable lack of methods with which to make such a determination.

As the war years progressed, the territory's newspapers would continue to keep the idea of loyalty in the public conversation. Charles Prosch of Stilacoom's Whig-turned-Republican mouthpiece, the *Puget Sound Herald*, wrote in 1863 of a matter that he found quite troubling. There were those, he asserted, "who are possessed than considerably less brains than the law allows," who did not want to subscribe to the *Puget Sound Herald.*[40] The reason for this lapse of good judgment, he argued, was that they were at odds with the paper's politics; specifically, they were opposed to the "Union sentiments."[41] Despite the efforts of those who might stand in the way of the nation's solidarity, the territory would trudge ahead with its best efforts to "merit the blessings" of the "free and enlightened government upon its loyal citizens."[42] Prosch was an outspoken critic of those who he deemed less than loyal to the government. Beating the same drum until the end of the conflict, he pronounced in May of 1864 that those who desired to bring about the overthrow of the government should be "debarred from its advantages and privileges."[43] Prosch did not hold back in his condemnation of what he felt were the serious repercussions of disloyalty to the Union cause. His outspoken

Union sympathies showed the desire of the Territory to be recognized for its loyal ties to a greater entity.

Despite the hope that such a prospect held that this territory struggling for national recognition, Justus Steinberger found himself personally and professionally challenged by the situation to raise troops. He not only faced challenges rooted in the low population of the region, but also in his personal politics. Scrutiny of his political background would result in his temporary dismissal from service.

Colonel Steinberger's efforts to recruit men for his regiment in the Washington Territory proved far more difficult than it may have seemed. From its beginnings in 1853, the territory's population had been scant 3,950 according to the territory's first census, and with the prospect of war seeming to be very far away both geographically and politically.[44] In early February 1861, Steinberger requested permission from General Wright to begin recruiting in the San Francisco area and to use Alcatraz Island as his recruit depot. As months passed, the companies filled up slowly. Despite this slow progress, General Wright reported to the War Department that Steinberger had "...obtained an excellent class of men, and the zeal, energy, and interest he is manifesting warrant the belief that he will at an early day present to the Government a command that will do good service."[45] The remote location of the territory, as well as the allure of nearby gold riches frustrated recruiting efforts and motivated many to desert, a problem common place during the Civil War.

Every company officer who served at Fort Steilacoom faced the challenge of keeping enough men in the ranks to warrant the requisite number of soldiers with which

to muster an army. The territorial newspaper told the story of two men of Company G of the first Washington Territorial Volunteers, who had deserted and camped along the Duwamish River, presumably seeking gold. They were caught by surprise when Lieutenant G.E. Hall apprehended them as they cooked their breakfast. The two men quickly surrendered, returned to the Fort with Hall, and were brought back to Steilacoom in a "pair of bracelets" the next day.[46] By February of 1863, desertions, according to the *Herald*, were commonplace. In late January a local mill owner named Sherwood had left his rowboat under the watchful eye of an Indian overnight. The next morning he discovered that the three Steilacoom soldiers had stolen the boat and had taken the Indian with them as they made their getaway down the Puget Sound. Once the threat of capture seemed remote, the soldiers released the Indian. The soldiers were never found. Things were not improving by spring, as Company K of the First Washington Territorial Volunteers also experienced the same plight:

> The only company of Washington Territory Volunteers which was raised entirely in Washington Territory, is stationed at Steilacoom. Desertions from this company have been so numerous that it is reduced to about thirty-five men, with a fair prospect that they will desert on the first opportunity. With a high degree of prudence most of them waited until the paymaster had been around, so that they all had money to pay their expenses.[47]

It's not hard to understand how soldiers of the remote and scantly-populated Washington Territory sought a more glamorous and prosperous existence. The allure of mineral wealth was nothing new to American culture, and these soldiers might have been well served to find an existence that offered them to go and fight for the Union for than the measly pay given to enlisted men of $13 a month. The risk did not pay off for all, but they had little to lose if they planned their moves strategically.

Not every soldier who fell from the ranks of the Washington Territory's roster did

so by way of desertion. Many chose to support the war effort in the east and eagerly enlisted to serve as Union soldiers. Company K's Captain Tucker and Lieutenant Jester were "examined and approved" to serve under Colonel Steinberger to replace men who had gone east.[48] As this trend continued, Steinberger's troop strength numbers fell below the requisite amount required to allow it to be commanded by a full colonel. Recent legislation passed by Congress in 1863 gave Territorial Attorney J.J. McGilvray and the Walla Wall Union League the impetus that it needed to reduce the role of top officer to Lieutenant Colonel. The explanation offered in territorial newspapers of Steinberger's demotion offer an explanation of politics at play, not just sheer numbers. The editor of the *Golden Age* newspaper attacked the signers of a petition in Steinberger's favor, calling them secessionists. The contention of the *Walla Walla Statesman* was that this mystery man editor was weak, and didn't dare reveal himself to the loyal people of Walla Walla. Ninety-nine out of 100 of them, he argued, were loyal to the Union cause, and not aligned with the Secessionist efforts. Furthermore, if the *Golden Age* editor showed himself face-to-face with any of the signers of the petition, he would be insured "as severe a castigation as any other dog ever received."[49]

The newspapers of the time had another theory about the true motivations for Steinberger's removal from command. Citing the influence of J.J. McGilvray, Territorial Attorney, a position that was a "gift direct from the President, with whom he claims to be personally acquainted," McGilvray used that relationship to influence a change in military leadership. The result of this action on the territory was that it turned its citizenry against the present administration, and forced a "conviction of its weakness...."[50] Further, the "sum total of Col. Steinberger's offending has been that his

political views were not synonymous with those of the narrow-minded Territorial Attorney. For shame on such a procedure!"[51] If this is to be the way that the present administration was allowed to rule the "destinies" of Washington Territory and the Pacific coast, then the people were justified in demanding a change in leadership.[52] Cries of disloyalty were well at play in the Washington Territory and the Pacific Northwest region as a whole, and Steinberger's removal seemed to be a function of these politics. The *Walla Walla Statesman* editor continually asserted Steinberger's loyalty, and must have felt vindicated when Steinberger was reinstated in August 1864. The newspaper proclaimed that Steinberger's only misstep was falling prey to the powers of "the secret, conspiring Leaguers."[53] The *Oregonian* newspaper was not quite as generous in their support of Steinberger, instead relying on the court of history to be the judge. "We hope that the Colonel will prove by his faithful and zealous services, his loyalty to the nation's flag, and thus silence forever all question of criticism."[54]

Lending further credence to the claims of the territorial newspapers that Steinberger's removal was a product of the politics at play in the territory are the remarks and observations of praise that his duty station at Walla Walla had attained. In November 1863 the *Walla Walla Statesman* reported that Fort Walla Walla was among the most hygienic of places. The general health of the officers was good, and the sick list, ostensibly due to the hygienic practices of the hospital, was getting shorter.[55] Perhaps Steinberger's real crime was his long-standing association with the Democrats of the territory, as he made public when he attended the Democratic primary in April 1861.[56] Much like the rest of the United States, the Washington Territory struggled with the division created by the nation's Civil War, including the quandary of aligning with a side.

Well before Steinberger's dismissal, party loyalties were asserted and challenged in the newspapers of the Pacific Northwest. In 1862 the *Washington Standard* reprinted an article from the *Oregonian* that speculated as to the loyalties of the people of the Territory. The call for a democratic convention, according to the *Oregonian*, was synonymous with "secession."[57] The *Oregonian* challenged the recent legislation introduced by Hon. Miles Griswold of Pacific County that, had it been signed by all lawmakers, would have supported the sanctity of and avowed preservation of the Union. The *Oregonian* "regret[ted]" that they did not have the names available to print of the men who voted no to this resolution, who surely made the claim that "we are opposed to preserving the Union, the Constitution, and the laws."[58] The fact that the "fiery trials" of the Union did not have the sympathy and backing of the full membership of the Territorial Legislature was, in the opinion of the *Oregonian*, an act of disloyalty. A quick look back to the coverage of the national Presidential election of 1861, however, revealed that the *Washington Standard* praised the election of Lincoln to "heaven."[59] By 1864 the accusations from the Oregonian continued, and the *Walla Walla Statesman*, edited by Democrats, swung back at the charges of disloyalty. They regarded themselves as people not willing to "debase" themselves because they stood by the Constitution, and did not choose to "fall down and worship Abraham Lincoln and his unconstitutional acts."[60] As a final, incendiary remark, the *Statesman* asserted that Jeff Davis was "a vile traitor."[61]

In response to these concerns, though, the Lincoln Administration attempted to tamp down on any potential secessionist elements in Oregon State and the Washington Territory by installing pro-administration political appointees to key governmental positions. Lincoln quickly removed Buchanan's Oregon appointees upon his election to

the White House. Certainly Buchanan's Democratic appointees would do nothing to promote Lincoln's Whig agenda. Instead, Lincoln appointed friends who were leaders of the Republican Party in Oregon to patronage positions. They included Dr. Anson G. Henry who served as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Washington Territory, and Chief Surveyor. William Wallace, a personal friend of Lincoln from Illinois, was appointed to Washington Territorial governor, but he never went west to take the job. Henry McGill served as Territorial Secretary and acting governor during the early months of the Civil War.[62] Of these confidantes, Lincoln trusted that they would be his eyes and ears in this most remote part of the United States. He must have been concerned that should this region decide to ally itself with the South, that there would be enough power and influence there to sway the outcome of the conflict. Since he could not be there, these friends and loyal supporters kept him apprised of the political sentiment of the region. Of them, Dr. Henry was the most frequent writer to Lincoln.[63] It had been Henry who had warned Lincoln of the nature of the Secessionist sympathizers in Oregon, believing that the problem was worse than perhaps Lincoln knew.

As the war years wore on, the residents of the territory became increasingly aware of the language and tone of Henry's reports to Lincoln. By 1865 Governor Pickering, Washington Territory, wrote Arthur Denny and suggested that "I honestly…believe that…the time has come when the Union party ought to express their opinions of Dr. Henry."[64] Perhaps Pickering was aware of Henry's efforts to advance beyond the role of Surveyor General. In a letter dated January 24, 1865, the Governor revealed that he was aware of Dr. Henry's political ambitions. Henry had hoped to maneuver himself into the Governor's chair. Clearly, Dr. Anson Henry was an ambitious politico who readily

provided the Lincoln Administration with exaggerated tales of a Southern-leaning Pacific Northwest. Taking full advantage of the confidence that his old friend placed in him, Henry had much influence over Lincoln and the president's perceptions of the situation on the Pacific Coast. With little information available to either verify or deny the credibility of Henry's claims, Lincoln followed the conclusions of his trusted friend. Dr. Henry was motivated not by credible concerns of secessionist loyalties, but by his own selfish interests.

Henry remained an important part of Lincoln's inner circle when he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Washington Territory in 1861 as the war broke out.[65] Wallace ended up serving in Washington D.C. as a territorial delegate; a self-appointed position.[66] As Dr. Henry observed and reported to Lincoln the political leanings and goings-on of the region, he took note of the United States Senate race. In 1860, Republican stalwarts Edwin Baker and James Nesmith were elected to the Senate, extinguishing the careers of Southern-leaning Democrats like Joseph Lane, along with the Breckinridge Democrats were defeated in Oregon and California.[67] Henry surmised that these defeats were essential in keeping the Pacific Northwest safely in the hands and control of the Republicans. It was their election, he wrote Lincoln, which was "all that saved this coast from going with the South."[68] Henry's analysis may have been a bit extreme, as the presence of actual radical groups such as the Knights of the Golden Circle and sheer absence of slavery, were not on the minds of most citizens of the Pacific Northwest. Geographically and politically distant from these concerns, the residents of the western states and territories would go about proving their loyalty to the Union.

Ironically, the very person who insisted that there were real and credible threats to Union loyalty in the Western United States, may himself have been swept up in the fervor of the war time excitement. Beyond his self-serving agenda, Henry was simply an opportunist, whose very own loyalty might well have been in question. On September 2, 1864, the *Walla Walla Statesman* reported that Henry had recently delivered a speech as Surveyor-General. It was well know that he and the other Surveyor General Tilton, a Pierce appointee and Copperhead, were not in agreement in their politics.[69] Tilton had turned down previously the Lieutenant Colonel position of the First Washington Volunteers due to unspecified "health" reasons. Showing his own inclination to get swept up in the excitement of war, Henry admitted that he "'probably [would] have been carried by the almost irresistible current into the vortex of rebellion'" had he lived in the South during the war. To that, General Tilton replied, "'you might, but I would not.'"[70] Anson's loyalty lied in whatever predicament he found himself in and with whatever personal gain he could stand to muster. Had Anson been a reporter who was fair and balanced in his accounts to the President, he may have shared the coverage of the upcoming annual election in the Washington Territory, to be held on the first Monday in June of 1864. The *Puget Sound Herald* reported that "no time should be lost…to draw out the entire union vote in each and every count." They were aware that the "opposition" of "Constitutional or Peace Democrats" [Copperheads] were mustering their forces for election day, "avowed sympathizers with the rebellion." They would simply be taken out, though, by "early and united movement on the part of Union men," surely to face their demise at the ballot box.[71] This assessment never made its way to the desk of the busy and predisposed President in the nation's capitol.

While Lincoln's person friend Dr. Anson Henry would continue during the war to write his letters and keep the Commander in Chief apprised of the goings on in the Washington Territory, he was far too concerned about these speculative conclusions. In fact, the people of the Washington Territory would work hard to prove that they were to be trusted and had the same, if not more loyalty, than any other patriotic and proud citizens of the United States. While there were two secessionist newspapers in Oregon, the press of the time was by and large replete with unwavering patriotic support of the Union effort. In fact, the noted Seattle historian, founder, and member of the Washington Territorial Legislature, Arthur Denny, boasted of Washington's loyalty. Measuring this by the Territory's contributions to the United States Sanitary Commission, he gloated of "more contributions per capita for the Sanitary Commission than any other state or territory."[72] Given Lincoln's worries about the region, perhaps the people of the West were determined to show their loyalty. They may be a people separated from the conflict and the heart of the nation by geography, but certainly not in spirit and unity. With the Homestead Act of 1862 setting up the distribution of lands in the West to eager homesteaders, there were promises of fortune, adventure, and security for those willing to take the risk. As more railroad lines were laid and with the promise of a transcontinental railroad in its future, the West had hoped that they would be even more connected with the rest of their great nation in the near future. Certainly the people of the Pacific Northwest had everything to gain in helping to secure a Union victory.

In Our Neck of the Woods

Local events that demanded the attention and actions of its politicians and leaders dominated the attention of citizens and official of the Pacific Northwest. Prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the Pacific Northwest played host to a boundary dispute between itself and Canada that could have led to full-scale war. Still concerned with securing that border as well as keeping Native Americans at bay, the region's white residents continued to focus on these local matters once the Civil War had erupted and hoped that a victory by the United States would at once secure both their national and local interests. The settlers believed that if the resources of the telegraph and railroad came to the area then wealth and prosperity would certainly follow. Coupled with the discovery of gold in the territory as well as in neighboring Lower Canada, they looked to secure these benefits, and maintain their own sovereignty from foreign aggressors both inside and outside of their boundaries. Indeed the residents of the Washington Territory had far more at stake during the Civil War than simply proving their own devotion to the Union. Border disputes, difficult relationships with First Nations' peoples, the evolution of the mining economy and the coming of the railroads competed with the question of political union with the Confederacy.

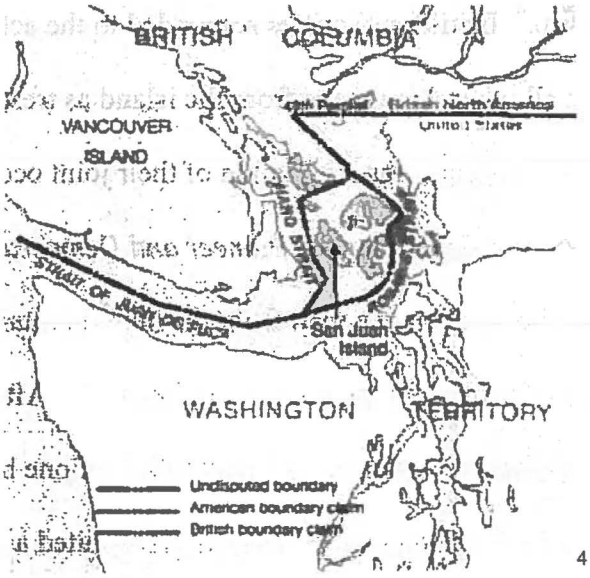
The Pig War offers a splendid illustration of these local interests. The-components of this saga in the Washington territory's history are told best through the work of several historians combined. The local standard on the story of the Pig War, the boundary dispute with the British, is *The Pig War* by Mike Vouri, the former Chief of Interpretation and Historian for San Juan Island National Historical Park. Vouri wrote his first account in 1999, and in 2013 published a revised edition reflecting his latest

research and thinking. A resident of San Juan Island, Vouri has studied extensively the "pig" incident as well as the life of George Pickett, a leading personality in the Pig War before his storied charge at Gettysburg. While Vouri's work is the standard on this story, James Robbins Jewell wrote a short essay entitled "Thwarting Southern Schemes and British Bluster in the Pacific Northwest," published in Adam Arenson's "Civil War Wests." Jewell tells an abbreviated version of the Pig War, though focuses much of his research on the perspective of the city of Victoria, British Columbia. Interestingly, Jewell does not cite Vouri's work in his bibliography. Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., wrote *The Civil War in the American West* in 1991. Josephy's interpretation of the West does not include lands that lie west of Montana. His work covers Texas and the Southwest as well, and has an extremely limited coverage of the present-day region of Oregon and Washington. Perhaps he was intentional in his geographic limits, though the title of the book is misleading and disappointing. Josephy's mention of the Washington Territory centers around its small population and its struggles to muster troops to replace those who left for service in the Civil War. As for the Indian conflicts in the region, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* by Robert M. Utley serves as the most comprehensive work of these earlier Indian war years. Utley pays particular attention to the western-most fights, paying specific attention to tying in the impact from local mining efforts in Indian relations. Save for cursory, survey histories such as *The Pacific Northwest* by Carlos Schwantes, these stories are not examined extensively as a whole. The residents of the Washington Territory recognized that while they might be geographically distant from the fighting in the east, they were aware of the value of the territory to sustaining the Federal Union's financial stability and as a check to potential

British designs on the region. The geopolitical connections of the Washington Territory and Pacific Northwest are critical to understanding the significance of the region to the Civil War efforts as well as the desire of the residents to capture the attention of President Lincoln so as to be rewarded for their efforts.

While the Washington Territory was not a military theater in the Civil War, it was an essential real estate in the sectional conflicts linking territorial expansion with the Civil War which eventually shattered the Second Party System and eventually brought on the Civil War. Washington Territory was part of the Oregon Territory which ran from California north the today's border of Alaska. In 1844 James K. Polk ran his Presidential campaign on the promise of reclaiming for the United States the disputed Oregon lands that had been under join occupation with the British. With this proclamation the British were prepared to defend the land to the western region of British North America.[1] Rather than fight Great Britain for possession of land extending to 54' 40" north latitude, Polk's administration settled for a boundary of 49'. The physical geography of Puget Sound created ongoing controversy augmented by imprecise language in the treaty portioning the Oregon Territory. In dispute was the language of the "channel" named in the Treaty of Oregon. The treaty stipulated that the boundary between the land of the two countries was separated by a "channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island" that extended south through the channel to the Strait of Juan de Fuca and west to the Pacific Ocean. The problem existed in the fact that there were two channels – not one – that fit this description. The Haro Straight, nearest Vancouver Island and Rosario Strait – nearer mainland, could be the channel that the treaty specified.[2] Both sides – the United States and Great Britain – claimed the land in dispute. Positioned squarely in the middle of the

disputed lands was San Juan Island. Laying claim to the land since 1845 was the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), based out of Fort Victoria, located several miles across the Haro Strait. By 1853 the recently established Washington Territory laid claim to San Juan. The HBC in December 1853 established Belle Vue Sheep Farm on the island's southern shore. Because of the island's natural habitat, the flock expanded from 1,369 to 4,500 sheep throughout the island. [3]



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This map illustrates the conflict between the United States and Great Britain surrounding the treaty language of where the international border was. Was it Haro or Rosario Strait that was the dividing line?

Blessed by this abundance of good soil and natural resources, increasing amounts of American settlers staked claims on HBC land and also expected the US government to back their claims' validity. Both sides recognized the significance of this disputed land and the value that it held to each respective side. The *Puget Sound Herald* reported in February 1859 that the British government understood that the Americans had sent a surveyor to San Juan Island for the purpose of "pre-empting land according to the pre-emption laws of United States, believing in the end that this Island will be declared to be American territory."[5] While the act was speculative, the potential profit was great. The

paper speculated that if the dispute was not settled soon, "trouble may grow out of these movements."[6] This prediction would prove true.

By August 1859 the Americans present on the island were few in number, only about 30.[7] Most of these settlers were there as they took it upon themselves to "squat" on this land.[8] Tempers began to flare. The pinnacle of the crisis occurred on June 15, 1859, when an American named Lyman Cutlar killed a pig roaming in his garden and "making havoc" with his potatoe (sic) crop.[9] British authorities responded to the action with threats to arrest Cutlar and evict all other Americans from the island as trespassers. The British were convinced that Cutlar's action was a violation of their joint occupation agreement.[10] According to the correspondent for the *Pioneer and Democrat*, Cutlar had dared to do a "very wicked thing" as it elicited a visit from the high dignitaries of the HBC, even if the killing was only that of a "worn out poor old boar."[11] After the killing of the pig, Cutlar tried to make amends by offering payment "short of one hundred dollars" to the Hudson's Bay Factor.[12] The incident "very nearly ignited a war, brining England and the US closer to armed conflict than at any time since Andrew Jackson won the Battle of New Orleans in January 1815."[13] The offer represented an "indignity" to in the perception of the British, whose future protection would be ensured by the presence of soldiers whose presence was required to "keep them [Americans] in order."[14] The U.S. Inspector of the Island, P.K. Hubbs, Jr., responded to the situation on the island immediately following the pig incident. He warned of an impending conflict between the competing British and American jurisdictions on the islands. The American residents found it "odious" that the "monopoly" of the Hudson Bay Company exists as well as the

American authorities of Whatcom County who assessed properties and demanded taxes be paid to the government.[15] In his estimation, "collision is imminent."[16]

Following the pig incident, Captain George Pickett encouraged Americans to settle on San Juan Island and promised military protection for "any and every American Citizen who might think proper to squat on the Island of San Juan."[17] While the incident itself did not incite actual violence between the two countries in this remote and still disputed piece of land, it did illustrate the need for the island to be continually garrisoned by the American military. But at least one solider, Major Granville Haller, remained skeptical about the pig incident itself and the motives of some of his fellow officers. It was Haller's contention that Harney and Pickett, both Southern-born, had planned to inspire a conflict with the British as part of a "plot to help the South in its growing political disagreement with the North."[18] Lending further credence to Haller's theory was that both men's Civil War records supported this; Pickett went South in 1861 and Harney, Commander of the Department of the West, failed to prevent pro-Confederate state militia from nearly taking control of the State of Missouri. The militia was commanded by Sterling Price, a Confederate General. Missouri Unionist leaders sought and obtained Harney's removal in late May at which time he was recalled to Washington, D.C.[19]

Harney made his political opinions and theories about the intentions of the British quite public. In a letter addressed to Governor Douglas of the Washington Territory, Harney alleged that the British government had "seized" an American citizen from San Juan Island and had taken him back to Vancouver's Island to be tried by British laws.[20] He would not tolerate a "repetition of the insult" and would remain on duty at San Juan

Island to work against such a thing.[21] The clash between Harney and the Governor was already evident, as the governor asserted that he did not believe what Harney had to say and that the "friendly" British government could solve this dispute in an "amicable" manner with the United States.[22] Whatever the case, the *Puget Sound Herald* reported that troops were being called from Fort Steilacoom to Bellevue (San Juan) Island as Pickett's force of 40 men was "deemed insufficient to hold possession, in the event of an attempt being made by the British to drive them [settlers] off [the island]."[23] These reinforcements would bring the total troops on the island to about 200.[24]

While the famous "Pig War" illustrated the urgency that the residents of the Washington Territory felt for the need of military protection in the West, it also added another element to the question of loyalty in the region. Not only were its residents worried about protecting their own property and interests in maintaining their livelihoods, they again found themselves in the center of a loyalty quagmire. After the attack on Fort Sumter in 1861, the order arrived for troops to leave San Juan Island and head east to support Federal efforts. District Commander General George Wright argued that these troops should not be removed because it might invite an attack across the disputed border, as he recalled an attack on the tiny frontier town of Seattle in 1856.[25] He maintained that the Regular Army forced that garrisoned Camp Pickett should remain. In fact it would be the case that both Fort Steilacoom and Camp Pickett would retain substantial military presences. Certainly the border dispute with the British played a role in that decision, and perhaps questions of loyalty as well. And to the north in Canada, the alleged pro-Confederate sympathies of some of the immigrant population offered another possible motivation for this decision.

In 1862 an American consulate post was established in Victoria, British Columbia, something never before seen on the Pacific Coast of British North America. With the Civil War underway, British and American relations had deteriorated. Lincoln sent his trusted friend, Allen Francis, to serve as the US Consul at the Vancouver Island Colony.[26] Francis was to serve as a spy in Victoria to keep an eye on pro-Confederate activity. The 1858 Fraser River gold rush had given rise to the presence of many pro-Confederate ex-patriots in Victoria, as "'the English residents sympathized with the rebels.'"[27] The transitory population as a result of this mineral rush contributed to the questionable and ever changing dynamics of the region. The thrill of seeing the elephant took hold, and word of "friendly Indians" and the hope of earning $8-$50.00 per day spread.[28] Territorial newspapers contributed to the fervor, and described the previously unfriendly Indians of the region as having developed a "great friendship for the whites," with "no acts of hostility" that had occurred.[29] Additionally, people were leaving the mills for hopes of striking it rich on "Frazer's" (sic) River.[30] Just less than a month later, newspaper accounts reveal that gold fever had infected the military as well. Army soldiers were deserting their posts and the gold was so easily had that even Indians working "merely from surface diggings" had mined successfully about 110 pounds of gold dust.[31] Just a few days later the same newspaper reported that the gold fever was "raging fearfully" as Port Townsend was reportedly "likened to a beehive," and all of the local steamers were full up with those seeking their fortunes in the mines.[32] While there may have been pro-Southern sympathizers in Canada, the stories claiming the headlines of the time were that of excited miners, not a large pro-Confederate movement. The common cause that people were rallying around was not political, but economic.

Besides presenting questions about the political loyalties of miners in the Pacific Northwest, mining also upset the natural balance of life for Native Americans. The presence of miners "badly disturbed the Indians," as the prospectors sought only mineral riches, and in European fashion, laid claim to whatever they found, despite those who might have been there first.[33] Some Indians seemed to accept the inevitable, as the Nez Perces signed a treaty in 1863 pledging not to resist the invasion of the whites.[34] In the 1850s General Benjamin Alvord had ordered garrison posts in the Washington Territory and Oregon country to protect emigrants on the Oregon Trail and mining camps on the Clearwater, Salmon, Boise, Owyhee, and Malheur Rivers.[35] This trend remained, as a large number of troops in the territories and frontier departments were ready for Indian duty under Major General Henry W. Halleck in 1863. By the end of 1862, that number was 15,000 troops, 5,000 more than in 1860, and totaled 20,000 men by 1865.[36]

This defensive presence in the territory was proven necessary as conflicts with Native Americans were inspired by the encroachment of these miners. When the Colville gold rush occurred in 1855, prospectors traveled over the Cascade passes or up the Columbia River seeking their fortunes.[37] The gold rush, despite the skepticism of some, proved to have longevity. In 1862 the *Walla Walla Statesman* reported that the earlier claims of great riches had been verified. In fact, the "enormous yields of gold" and constant new discoveries "sustained the assertion that the mines of Oregon and Washington Territory equal, if they do not exceed, both in richness and extent, any mines ever discovered."[38]

The events of the 1850s made it clear to the United States military and federal government that the security of the white settlers of the region and its longevity and

prosperity would depend greatly on continuing to keep the Indians of the region in check. The Colville strikes of 1855 were followed by the Fraser River rush to the north in 1858, sending prospectors in 1860 into the Nez Perce country where they found gold in the Clearwater River. Other mines appeared on the Salmon, Boise, and tributaries of the Snake River heading in Oregon.[39] The concerns over security and safety of the settlers in the region continued, forcing the territorial leadership and federal government to make decisions to protect the region, as prospectors would always upset the natural balance of Indians and their lands.

Conflicts with Native Americans plagued the Washington Territory and vicinity. By 1858 it was evident that the status quo had changed. As a result of more settlers moving into the area largely spurred by the mineral wealth of the region, conflicts began to make the headlines. The newspapers of the day paint a sad and often gruesome picture of violence between the region's inhabitants. Fights occurred for various reasons, and not always just with white settlers; sometimes the fighting was between Native Americans. The *Puget Sound Herald* reported in 1858 that a fight between Indians occurred near Victoria that resulted in the "killing of two and wounding of five or six redskins."[40] The cause was "rum," described in a patronizing tone as "a fine pastime for Sunday afternoon, truly!"[41] The treatment of Native Americans in the papers of the day was often replete with bias that included patronizing and demeaning language.

Conflict with Native Americans also occurred with white settlers of the region, often with guilt and innocence of the parties having been decided in very pro-white, biased courts. The *Puget Sound Herald* reported in 1858 that an Indian known as Goliah was found dead, "horribly cut up" with extensive wounds indicating "severe struggle."

The "guilty party" was immediately arrested, with forensic evidence leaving "little doubt in regard to his guilt."[42] He was a soldier who was being held at Fort Steilacoom while awaiting trial. This story had a sadly, predictable ending. According to the paper, the soldier brought for trial by the grand jury in Olympia, the territorial capital, was discharged from custody. The bloody shirt that had been found on the accused at the scene of the crime had been traded with a friend for a clean one, and the jury could not find sufficient evidence with which to secure the defendant's guilt. Interestingly, the newspaper acknowledged the bias of the day. "No one saw the murder committed, and even if such had been the case, it would perhaps be impossible in this country to obtain a jury that would find a bill against a white man for killing an Indian."[43]

Conflict also occurred in the mining location of the Fraser River. According to the *Puget Sound Herald*, the *Victoria Gazette* told an exaggerated account of the number of whites killed in an exchange with the Indians of the region, "as is usual in such cases."[44] Some hostile Indians were prepared to attack Captain Graham and his men, and fired a volley, but were then stopped by "friendly" Indians who reminded them of a treaty and understanding with the men in question. They recanted, apologized, and went on about their business. The end result was that the white settlers should expect "little more trouble" with the Indians.[45]

When 76 miners left the Dalles on June 1, 1858, they ran into a precarious situation with Skamou, a Yakima Indian at the Weenacha (sic) River. Objecting to the miners crossing the river, the Indians asserted that if they allowed such an action, the white man would make the Indians "go hungry" and then the Indians would have to "make war."[46] After negotiating with various Indian leaders who presented themselves to

the miners, they secured what they believed to be safe passage across the river. They were surprised to discover that they would face repeated attacks by the Indians until they scurried to safety at Fort Simcoe, near Yakima, but not without sustaining casualties of men and pack animals. The white men were well received at the Fort, with their medical needs tended to.[47] After quite a scare, they gathered themselves and went on their way.

The local paper optimistically reported that in January of 1858 the Indian Wars in Oregon and Washington would allow for more troops to protect the overland mail route, an important piece of communication and infrastructure for this remote region. General Harney was to release all the soldiers that he could spare for this duty, and Governor Stevens was in Washington City to press on the War Department the need to "retain a large military force on the Pacific to maintain the advantages gained over the Indians."[48]

Whether real or hyperbole, another Indian skirmish was reported in the local papers between 60 miners and several hundred Indians.[49] The final death tally was rumored to be 200 Indians and 20 miners, though the rumor circulated by Indians at the Dalles was not "authenticated."[50] Another fight was reported in the Okanogan region between Indians and Major Garnett. Six Indians were allegedly killed in the scuffle, and the Indians' aggressiveness was blamed on their concern for Major Garnett's "summary measures" in the area. They had, according to the newspaper, retreated to British possessions or Blackfoot territory.[51] Hostilities appeared calmer.

By the close of 1858, the Indian Wars in the Washington Territory came to a defined end. The conflicts in places like Spokane and Yakima wrapped up as Isaac Stevens won ratification of the treaties proposed in 1855, as the tribes involved accepted

their life on the reservations.[52] They had learned that they could not win against the forces of both the Regular army and the volunteers – regular citizens - who fought them. While there would be future disagreements and small disturbances, the history of the Indian Wars in the vicinity of the Washington Territory were largely coming to a close. For the era of fights that were fueled by the increased presence of settlers and miners seeking their fortunes, 1858 marked a decided conclusion.[53]

Besides the riches of gold, the largely Democratic residents of the territory saw the promise of internal improvements as key to their longevity and success in the region. Their local interests and needs stood in stark contrast to the position of the Democratic Party nation-wide, which considered federally funded internal improvements unconstitutional. Understood as a bulwark of economic success, the railroad held the promise of a "speedy connection with their friends, brothers and government officials on the other side of the continent."[54] As early as 1858 the hopes that the territory's residents held for a railroad line was evident as one territorial newspaper revealed. A meeting was held in Sawamish County that promoted the idea of a northern railroad line being most advantageous if it was to follow the route surveyed by Isaac Stevens, the first territorial governor.[55] The residents of the Washington Territory who attended this meeting implored the federal government to take full advantage of the right of way extended by the territorial legislature and to bring the resource of the railroad to the territory, allowing access to that the region had to offer including mineral wealth.

In 1861 a vote was held in Congress to extend the Pacific Railroad further to the West, with two lines terminating in San Francisco. Oregon Senator Joseph Lane delivered a passionate speech in which he advocated for not cutting off the rest of the

Pacific Northwest, including the land served by the Puget Sound, "the finest inland sea in the world."[56] Lane made the case that Pacific Northwest did not want to be cut off from the rest of the country. He asked, "Shall we be cut off? Is that portion of the country in which I live…to be entirely deprived of the advantages and benefits of a railroad which it is attempted to hurry through Congress without any opportunity to amend?"[57] In 1863 the *Washington Statesman* showed enthusiasm for a northern branch of the railroad that would allow the Columbia River to be tapped from the Atlantic side, and the "inexhaustible" mines of the region to be accessed. The two resources, the author argued, "give this route sufficient importance to arrest the attention of capitalists and induce railroad men to come and see us with their iron horses, bring us provisions and take away our told in exchange."[58]

For the residents of this geographically distant region of the country, the fight to receive the benefits of the railroad even continued into the years after the close of the Civil War. "On the development of this country depends our salvation as a nation," wrote one resident in a letter to the editor of the *Vancouver Register*.[59] The writer argued that the region was critical to the success of the American Civil War, and that the gold that came from the Sacramento region kept up our "national credit" during the late war years. Without it national credit would have "sunk below zero."[60] The author implored the federal government to offer railroad subsidies to the greater Pacific Northwest, and made his best effort to make clear the value of this often-neglected region of the country. "People of the East (sic) have a false idea of the value of land *per se*. Land, remote from all means of communication, is valueless."[61] He continued his argument, concluding that it is the "*combination* of circumstances [that] gives everything its value."[62] The Pacific

Northwest offered that combination of available land, mineral resources, and destinations that could serve the rest of the nation into a prosperous future just as they done had during the recent crisis.

As April 1865 dawned, a new era began in America and the Pacific Northwest. As word of the rebellion's close spread, the Washington Territory would not be left out in the distribution of spoils that may follow. The *Walla Walla Statesman* had introduced with enthusiasm the fact that Seattle, Washington Territory, had received a telegraph line, and certainly Walla Walla would follow. The only obstacle to its proliferation, the paper reported, was the lack of timber for poles.[63]

As Governor Pickering warned in his 1864 address to the territorial legislature, the Washington Territory was enjoying prosperity, but should not become complacent to the needs of the federal government. Still embroiled in a war for Union, the territory needed to heed its responsibility to not be neglectful of the "duties we owe our country" and to "aid in striking down the infamous hand of treason and rebellion...."[64]

The telegraph arrived in the Washington Territory just in time to receive the news of the war's end. The excitement was contagious. In September 1864 the telegraph had reached Olympia, and by October it connected to Seattle. December of 1864 brought almost instant news to the region.[65] Celebrations ensued as the news of the fall of Richmond signaled an end to the fighting. On April 4, 1865, the *Oregon Statesman* reported:

> "[E]verybody was taken by surprise and many looked incredulous....The telegraph office was besieged all day for a confirmation; and when it did come, Union men threw their hats with a right good will. The cannon was brought in the

> square and a hundred rounds fired I honor of the event. In the evening, an immense crowd gathered on Commercial Street and Gov. Gibbs made a speech."[66]

It had been a long four years, and this region had fought as valiantly as the rest of the Union in showing its home front support for the cause. With a Union victory in hand, the territory could press forward in pursuing its prosperous future. Mineral wealth introduced a new source of revenue and interest in the Washington Territory and vicinity, yet increased conflict with Native Americans at the same time. Amenities such as the telegraph and the completion of northern-reaching railroad lines assured that the region – while geographically distant – were still viable and essential contributors to the wealth of the nation. The Civil War presented itself as an opportunity to support the war effort to the extent that this sparsely populated region could muster. What it lacked in numbers of troops, it attempted to compensate for in proving its worth and connection to the whole.

Conclusion

The preservation of Union was the key strategic objective for the United States during the Civil War. The residents of the Washington Territory and Pacific Northwest, though geographically removed from the major theaters of war, were no different than the citizens of Ohio or Illinois in their devotion to cause of the Union. But antebellum era debates over the United State-Canadian border and concerns about the sectional loyalty of some of the miners in the territory created a sense of uncertainty about the region's loyalty to the United States and territorial leaders used the cauldron of war to demonstrate the unswerving loyalty of the territory's white population. By contributing an impressive amount of money to the United States Sanitary Commission, many concerns about the loyalty of the region were nullified. Local Washingtonians understood that their labor to preserve the Union could result in material benefits for their region. Seeking improved infrastructure that could contribute to a long and prosperous future, the residents of the Washington Territory did not want to be forgotten when a Union victory was achieved. With the support of the Federal government, they had worked in tandem to protect its residents from the increasing threats from the Native American population of the region, and believed that their future could be prosperous and successful. A solid, powerful and wealthy United States could help them do that.

The Pacific Northwest is today what it was then; a region rich with abundant natural resources. Improved infrastructure to develop and transport the material bounty to markets in the more populous regions of the United States promised to improve the material condition of the people of the region. After a Union victory achieved with the help of its territories and states in the Pacific Northwest, the residents of the Washington

Territory received what they had worked mightily to achieve. Their population grew enough to achieve statehood in 1889, and began to build their infrastructure, ensuring that there would be a future for this place and fulfilling the dreams of the territory's initial white immigrants before the war. The natural resources that extend beyond the gold that prospectors sought before to timber, cattle, and crops during, and after the Civil War, promised a healthy future. And long before the Klondike Gold Rush, evolving fishing and logging industries, which marketed their products to distant customers from the port towns of Seattle and Tacoma through the inland sea of Puget Sound redeemed the hopes of white settlers to the region before the Civil War. And these ports would become staging areas for the New Manifest Destiny that incorporated Alaskan wealth into the United States and bases to project United States economic power into the larger Pacific Basin. Not all of Washingtonians benefitted from this transition, as Native Americans lost land and livelihood. But the white population found in post-war development the vindication for its conscious devotion to the Union during the war. Indeed the region – and its residents – helped the nation survive its greatest challenge and push forward in building a strong and powerful nation.

NOTES

Introduction

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In Our Neck of the Woods

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