Where were you when the Eagle landed?

Okay, it was 50 years ago, so there’s a pretty good chance you weren’t even around…

12:17 pm (PDT) July 20, 1969

240,000 miles above Lakewood, Neil Armstrong of Wapakoneta, OH becomes the first human in history to set foot on the surface of the moon.

Dropping from the ladder of the Lunar Landing Module, Armstrong pauses for a moment…then muffs the line he’s been working on ever since NASA told him he might be the first man out:

“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

Or did he? Armstrong maintained until his death at 82 in 2012 that no, he got it right—he had absolutely put an “a” between “for” and “man”. If no one heard it, well, that was the fault of a split-second failure in transmission, a tragic glitch marring an otherwise well-crafted statement for the ages.

What’s the big deal, you ask? Well, without that “a” “man” in this context becomes synonymous with “mankind”—a concept-ruining redundancy.

To any of us watching at the time, however, the whole did-he-or-didn’t-he brouhaha would have seemed ridiculously petty, to put it mildly.

After all, just a dozen years earlier we’d seen rockets exploding with depressing regularity at Cape Canaveral. The US was trying and failing—spectacularly—to launch a satellite in an effort catch up with the Russkies and their baby moon, sputnik. Even more recently—eight years before Apollo 11—the Reds had lapped us in the space race again with Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin becoming the first human being launched into earth orbit—a feat we wouldn’t match for another two years.
**President’s Message**

Hello all, and welcome to summer 2019.

We certainly had a wonderful turnout at the opening of the Lakewood Farmer’s Market on June 4; great to see everyone there. Lakewood Historical Society will have a booth at this popular Farmer’s Market on July 23 and August 20.

And make sure to look for us at SummerFest on July 13 at Fort Steilacoom Park. Then the Lakewood Summer Concerts begin July 18 at the Pavilion at Fort Steilacoom Park. Lots going on this summer – enjoy!

We are diligently working on the new space for the Lakewood History Museum to be located in the former Terrace Restaurant and lobby of the Lakewood Theater. The City of Lakewood is redoing Motor Avenue to make it more pedestrian friendly and we will have a front row seat.

I again want to thank all those who have renewed their 2019 membership and made donations – every bit helps.

We were able to get more copies of the popular book “American Lake Vignettes” written by the late Nancy Covert. They are available at the museum for $20.

When we move to the new larger space, we will need more documents. If you have a few hours a week to docent, please give me a call at 253.588.6354. Thanks again for your continued support of the Lakewood Historical Society & Museum.

**MOON from page one**

But now, at last…after a quarter-million mile journey in a craft whose every component had been built by the lowest bidder…settling down in a lander powered by an engine that had never even been test fired…a voyage back home as dangerous as the one that got them there ahead of them…here were two of the gutsiest men imaginable—two Americans—bopping around a heavenly body like they owned the place.

Below, a few reactions to this unprecedented historical event:

I watched it with a small group of friends sitting on the living room floor at Nancy Jacobson’s parents’ home. We were all overwhelmed, proud, and in awe!

—Charlie Eckstrom, Lakewood WA

Even as we watched [the landing], some were still arguing that man should first set his own earthly house in order before going to the moon. I told them they were shrinking from the future. A society that no longer moves forward does not merely stagnate, it begins to die.

—Dr. Margaret Mead, Look Magazine, 1969

Before I share this story, please keep in mind—it was the sixties!

To be precise, July 20, 1969. Somewhere in Pierce County, a 17-year-old hippie decides to enhance an already mind-blowing event with the judicious application of a controlled substance. Result: foggy, fractured memories of lying under a laurel hedge in his backyard, amazed at how many elves are hiding in the branches. Meanwhile, half a dozen of his more responsible friends are watching history unfold in the TV room of his parents’ house. Kids, don’t do drugs.

—A. Nonny Moose, Lakewood WA

Watching [the launch], I thought, “We’re not limited to the water anymore, or the air, or even by earth’s gravity. We can overcome those limitations and move out any place we really want to go.”

—NASA administrator James Webb, Look, 1969

I watched the launch from just eleven miles away in Titusville, Florida. The Saturn V looked like one big, white candle. I was only 21 but knew I would be telling my grandchildren about it. I was there when men went to the moon!

—Witness Jim Blount, New York Times, 7/21/69

Everyone was so quiet, some just whispering, ‘God bless them, God bless them’. But I was shaky and tearful. I knew it was supposed to be the beginning of a new era in the life of mankind—but what if the thing exploded?

—Witness Lee Formica, Look, 1969

Finally, in fairness to the lunatic fringe, a few words from the man who began the whole “moon landing was a hoax” thing:

It was a great show, thanks to the billions of dollars unsuspicious taxpayers paid for it. Few if any of those watching the “moon landing” “live” at the time could have imagined…the “astronauts” they were marveling at, bouncing around the lunar lander “due to the moon’s “low gravity”, were actually being suspended by fine, super-strong wires from the ceiling of a vast sound stage…somewhere on the grounds of Area 51.

—Bill Kaysing, We Never Went to the Moon: America’s 30 Billion Dollar Swindle, 1976

### Local News

**Lakewood Farmer’s Market**

The Lakewood Farmers’ Market will be held every Saturday from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Lakewood Farmers’ Market Pavilion at Fort Steilacoom Park. It is located at the intersection of Motor Avenue and South Perry Street.

**Lakewood Summer Concerts**

The Lakewood Summer Concerts will be held every Saturday and Sunday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Lakewood Summer Concert Pavilion at Fort Steilacoom Park. The concerts will feature a variety of musical acts from around the region.

**Lakewood Historical Society & Museum**

The Lakewood Historical Society & Museum will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at 5215 Motor Ave SW, Lakewood, WA 98499.

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Blueberry Fields...Forever?

By Beth Freckleton Julian
Transcribed by Cindy Duhamel

My grandfather, George Chapman, came to the United States in 1888 from Linlithgowshire Scotland. He was a carpenter by trade and was hired by George Hemmington who had contracted to build a home for John and Ellen Flett. George met the Flett’s daughter Annie, while he worked on the Flett home. George and Annie were married in 1895 in the Flett home, where they lived with Annie’s mother Ellen. John Flett died in 1892 prior to the marriage of his daughter.

In 1947 the Freckletons purchased blueberry cuttings which were planted in hot beds on the Flett home property near the barn. When the rooted cuttings reached the size at which they could be planted in nursery rows they were moved to the current blueberry field where they grew well in peat soil. Most of the blueberry plants are the Jersey variety. There are a few Stanley plants which are located closest to the trees and hill. A cedar cabin was purchased and assembled in 1956 on the hill overlooking the low land. A well was drilled providing water for the cabin and irrigation for the blueberries. The pump house was in a portion of the tool shed at the foot of the hill. To provide water to the plants, black plastic pipes ran out into the field from the well. Hoses were attached to faucets in three places in the field. Watering took place after pickers completed a section.

My parents rented property around the blueberry field to the Flett Dairy for grazing for the dry stock. There was an electric fence around the blueberry field to keep the cows out. Our property adjoined the Flett Dairy so expectant cows could be walked over from the dairy and taken through a gate and across a wooden bridge over Flett Creek. The cows stayed until they were ready to give birth, then they were walked back to the barn. A bath tub placed near the shed served as a watering trough.

Blueberries are picked from clusters of ripe and unripe berries, the blue ones being picked while the purple and white ones are left to ripen. The season begins about July 24th and runs until the first frost. Pickers assembled at the Flett home at 7:45 a.m. and were transported in our truck to the field.

Berry pickers in the early years were my school friends. We attached coffee cans to our belts, filled them with berries and then emptied them into cardboard boxes or metal cans, which when full held 20 pounds of berries. We stopped picking at noon for a half-hour lunch break. Mom insisted we stop and eat together—under a wonderful cedar tree at the base of the hill.

At 2:00 p.m. we returned by truck to the Flett home barn where our berries were weighed and cleaned for selling to the customers who purchased them from our farm. Cleaning involved pouring the berries on a screen in front of a large fan, which blew away some leaves and stems, but further cleaning required hand-sorting and toxicant green berries and berries the birds had damaged. One end of the screen was then lifted, causing the berries to roll down the screen and collect in flats.

We sold pre-weighted boxes of berries at a small stand along Bridgeport Way or from the barn. When we needed to be away for an hour or two we would put a “pay-and-take” sign on the pre-weighted boxes of berries along with a jar for money. This was quite a conversation piece among regulars. Only once in 20 years were we aware that some money was missing.

My parents belonged to the Blueberry Growers Association which met twice a year in Puyallup. By 1956 our plants were producing more berries than could be sold on the fresh market so we began taking crates of berries to the canner, usually one of several based in Puyallup. At our most productive, approximately 2 1/2 tons of berries were harvested in a season.

My father died in 1970 but mom kept the field going with hired help. She did open a portion of the field to U-Pickers, but they were hard on the plants.

The Clover Park School District purchased part of the field from my parents in 1965 to build Lochburn Junior High School. More of it became part of the 9 1/2 acres sold in 1984 to Oak Knoll Venture. Today, approximately 2 1/2 acres are planted in blueberry bushes*.

*Editor’s note: Assuming it’s the right patch (aerial shot, left), a look from the road indicates that while the bushes—scraggly and choked with weeds—are still there, they’ve been untended for quite some time. If anyone knows when the last harvest was, please post in a comment to our Facebook page.
Silent Epic Filmed in Tacoma & Lakewood Packs Them in Ninety-two Years Later

*Eyes of the Totem* was one of three films made in the twenties by promoter H. C. Weaver in his bid to make Tacoma the “Hollywood of the North”. Directed by W. S. Van Dyke (later famous for *The Thin Man*, *Tarzan the Ape Man* and other popular features from the 30s and 40s) and thought lost until its rediscovery in the archives of a New York Museum in 2014, *Eyes of the Totem* was lovingly restored and given a new score for its re-debut at Tacoma’s Rialto Theater in 2015. Proof of its lasting appeal: *Eyes* drew a crowd of 125 people to our April 23rd showing at the Lakewood Library.

Director Van Dyke also plays Tacoma’s chief of police, shown here getting the drop on the bad guys. Speaking of bad guys: Tom Santschi, famous for taking part in filmdom’s most epic fistfight (1914’s *The Spoilers*), our suitably loathsome heavy. Our heroine, played by Wanda Hawley, thanks the old beggar who…well, no spoilers. Gotta see it. Of special interest to many in our particular audience was our well-to-do hero’s home: Lakewood’s own Thornewood Castle.
City’s History and Future are Bound to the Lakes

No discussion about Lakewood’s history would be complete without talking about the lakes.

Each one has its history and character, while collectively they provide a link that ties the community together. Here’s the skinny on a few lakes within the city.

American Lake
The largest of Lakewood’s lakes, it first bore the name Lake Tolmie. It was also called Richmond Lake, after a Methodist missionary who tried unsuccessfully to convert local tribes in the 1830s. It became American Lake informally after the first-ever Independence Day party, held north of the Columbia River and west of the Rocky Mountains. The date was 1841. Lt. Charles Wilkes and his crew of 433 sailors had been exploring the Pacific Coast. The ships cruised up the coast, naming the geographic features along the way. They reached Fort Nisqually on May 11, 1841.

Lake Louise
The often-overlooked Lake Louise was once named Balch Lake after Lafayette Balch, the founder of Steilacoom. It was later named for Louise Hopping, after Louise Hopping whose husband, William P. Hopping, owned land on the lake in the 1920s. Another story about the naming of the lake suggest that Lakes District developer Jesse O. Thomas, Jr. named the lake after a resort spot in Canada. The truth has thus far been lost to history.

Gravelly Lake
Vacation homes and well-to-do estates of Tacoma’s elite circle Gravelly Lake. It was first called Cook al chy by the Native Americans in the area. The word meant “pond lily.” It became Gravelly Lake when the lake residents observed its rock bottom and thought the name fit better.

Steilacoom Lake
August V. Kautz, the architect who oversaw the renovation and expansion of Fort Steilacoom in the 1850s, stated in his diary that what is now called Steilacoom Lake was known as Byrd Lake during his time in Lakewood. He called it that because the body of water was man-made when the Byrd Mill was created, having to do with the damming of Chambers Creek. Water built up behind the dam and filled in the lowland marshes. The Steilacoom name came decades after the mill closed.

Historical Markers of Lakewood: Second in a Series

In keeping with our goal of tracking down and cataloging every marker in the city regardless of whether we placed it or not—and with an article in this issue that treats Native American history at some length—it’s fitting we next present a marker erected long before the founding of the Lakewood Historical Society, dedicated to the memory of a Nisqually Indian who suffered what is generally recognized as the worst miscarriage of justice in local history.

Set at the base of a huge Garry oak tree in the Oakbrook shopping center (coming from Lakewood Center, turn right at the intersection of Steilacoom Blvd and Briggs Lane. The tree will be on your right); the weathered marker’s barely legible inscription reads:

LESCHI
CHIEF OF THE NISQUALLIES, MARTYR TO THE VENGEANCE OF THE UNFORGIVING WHITE MAN, WAS HANGED
300 YARDS SE FROM HERE
FEBRUARY 19, 1858
ERECTED 1963 BY PIERCE COUNTY PIONEER & HISTORICAL ASSN.

As Willie Frank, (son of Billy Frank, Jr) activist and member of today’s Nisqually Tribe, pointed out in a 2016 LHS program, calling Leschi a “chief” is somewhat misleading. A council of elders—both men and women—actually governed the tribe—as they still do today. Leschi’s renown as a warrior made him a natural choice to lead on the battlefield a “war chief” in that sense—but as soon as the hostilities were over, so was his position.

The rest of the marker, however, is all too accurate. In violation of universally-recognized rules of warfare, Leschi was arrested, charged with murder and hung for his role in the Puget Sound Indian Wars of 1855-56. Many prominent citizens, including even the army officers who had fought against him, protested the proceedings of what was obviously a kangaroo court, but to no avail.

A bit of mystery surrounds the organization that placed the marker. Googling the entire name turns up nothing; however, The Washington Historical Quarterly of January, 1920 lists a “Pierce County Pioneers’ Association” in the “Washington Historical Building”—the old state history museum that overlooks Stadium Bowl one would assume, but at an address that doesn’t exist anymore: 401 North Cliff Ave. Assuming the Pierce County Pioneers Assn. later adopted the name shown on the monument, perhaps the

As noted above, nearly 60 years of rain has rendered the marker’s message almost unreadable, but anyone worried that the Nisqually martyr might be forgotten can take heart. The Lakewood Historical Society will soon place its own memorial to Leschi—a boulder of similar size but with the inscription on a metal plaque impervious to the elements.

Detective work by some very dedicated researchers recently turned up a few old photos of the spot where the execution actually took place. Comparing them to present-day surroundings should allow us to place our marker very much closer to the scene of a 164 year-old tragedy.
to 1821 Florida had been under control of the British and Spanish who openly welcomed the Seminole as armed allies in their fights with the Americans. After Britain and Spain ceded Florida to the United States, the newly acquired territory saw a steady influx of settlers—as America’s population grew, so did the need for food and arable land. Many Seminole chiefs bowed to the inevitable and agreed to move west. Several, however, refused to sign the treaties of removal. Two were Micanopy and Osceola. Osceola (pictured at left above) was born in Alabama to Polly Coppingier, a Creek-Scottish woman, and given the birth name of Billy Powell. Upon relocating to Seminole territory his name was changed to Osceola, meaning “shouter”.

The two chiefs began to harass and kill other chiefs who had agreed to removal. They also started small-scale attacks on military mail carriers and isolated settlers. By 1835 the situation grew tense. When U. S. Indian Agent Wiley Thompson, stationed at Fort King (present day Ocala), heard the Seminole were stockpiling ammunition with money they had been given for agreeing to removal, he ended all sales of firearms and ammunition to the Seminoles. He also asked for military reinforcements.

Osceola, initially a friend of Thompson, publically displayed his outrage at his decision. Thompson, in turn, jailed Osceola until he could show better public manners. Osceola was released after a few days, but privately vowed revenge. In response to Thompson’s request for reinforcements, Major Francis Langhorne Dade, an experienced officer from Virginia, marched from Fort Brooke (present day Tampa) on December 23rd, 1835. Heading north on the military road to Fort King with 110 officers and men of the 4th Infantry Regiment and one small cannon, Dade knew he might be attacked by the Seminoles and planned well, thinking the attack would occur near destroyed river crossings or in the thick woods along his early route. Once clear of the woods, Dade called in his scouts so he could move faster in the more open country where anyone standing or walking could be easily seen.

On the fifth day of marching they were about 25 miles south of Fort King near Bushnell, Florida when tragedy struck. At about 9 am a shot rang out from tall grass, followed by a sudden storm of Seminole bullets that quickly killed Dade and a good number of his troops. Micanopy had struck. Following Dade’s death, command passed to Captain George W. Gardiner who rallied the remaining troops into a small log-protected defensive position, along with their cannon. Gardiner was a West Point graduate who left behind his pregnant wife to join Dade. By mid-afternoon, however, their ammunition was exhausted. Micanopy and 50 former slaves mounted on horseback overran the remaining defenders. Gardiner’s final words were “I can give you no more orders my lads, do your best”. The bodies of the dead were stripped, scalped and mutilated.

Except for two badly wounded privates who, with the aid of a friendly Indian woman, managed to make it all the way back to Fort Brooke, Dade’s entire command had been wiped out. Micanopy had wanted Osceola with him when he attacked Dade’s troops, but Osceola had a debt to pay. Back at Fort King, Osceola ambushed, killed and scalped Agent Thompson and four of his men.

Following the successful attacks on Dade and Thompson, the Seminole started killing local settlers and burning large plantations.

News of the Dade Massacre and other killings shocked the nation and before long thousands of U. S. troops were arriving in Florida. The first years of fighting did not go well for U. S. troops—vastly outnumbered, the Seminole proved themselves masters of guerilla warfare. The Army, however, could make up for its battle losses; the Seminole could not. Worn down by constant fighting and the steady influx of settlers filing land claims, the resisting chiefs finally signed the treaties, moving their followers near to newly formed Creek reservations in the west. In a violation of accepted protocol, Osceola was taken prisoner under a flag of truce in October 1837. He died in January 1838 from malaria and a tonsillar abscess while being held at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. Micanopy stayed free, eventually moving west where he died in 1849. After the battle, the bodies of Dade and his men were located and buried at the battle site. But in 1842 Dade, Gardiner and the remains of their entire command were moved to Saint Augustine National Cemetery and placed beneath three pyramids of native coquina stone (below).
ERRATA

Your editor regrets to report a number of errors made their way into the print version of our Summer 2019 newsletter. They have been corrected in this pdf.

Page one: Footnote relating the oft-repeated story of how there came to be no still photos of Neil Armstrong on the moon (supposedly) has been deleted.

As it happens, Dr. Ron Hobbs of NASA’s “Solar System Ambassador” program exposed the story as an urban legend in a talk he gave to Lakewood United a few days after this newsletter had gone to print. There are indeed photos that show the first man on the moon…on the moon.

Page two: We sincerely regret the stray “H” that somehow attached itself to the beginning of Charlie Eckstrom’s last name.

Page nine, 2nd paragraph: The tree in question is a Garry (not Gerry) oak.

Page nine, 3rd paragraph: Willie Frank is the son of the late Indian rights and environmental activist, Billy Frank, Jr. Their relationship was inadvertently omitted from the story.

“Market” on your calendar!
Come see LHS at the Lakewood Farmers Market
We’ll be there July 23 & August 20, 10 am-3 pm. Drop by our table near the city hall council entrance (facing Main St) to hear what’s new with your Society—and what’s old around the Lakes District, of course.

Check www.lakewoodhistorical.org for notices about more upcoming programs.