

# Prairie Gazette



Summer 2019 The Official Publication of the Lakewood Historical Society

Museum: 6211 Mt. Tacoma Drive SW, Lakewood WA 98499 OPEN Wed-Sat, 12 Noon-4 pm (253) 682-3480

## 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...

But even if not, let's pretend you're as old and decrepit as your friendly newsletter editor anyway. Then cast your mind back to that unforgettable day—whether you were there or not (use a little imagination—this is *history*, you pups! Reminiscences, beginning on pg. 2, may help put you in the proper frame of mind...)

**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.

See *MOON*, pg 2

*Below: Landing spots of the 6 successful moon missions. Apollo 13, aborted mid-flight, barely made it back home.*



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**MEETINGS**

The Lakewood Historical Society formed in 1998 to preserve and share Lakewood's rich history through programs, displays and publications. The Society offers frequent programs on topics of historical interest. Most programs are free and open to the public. Visit us on Facebook or our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org

**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 docents. 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...setting 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*



Sue Scott

*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 unsuspecting 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

**Recent Donors to LHS**

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**TO THE MOON!**

**Attend a Lunar Block Party at The Museum of Flight**

9404 E Marginal Way S, Seattle



Three days of celebrating like it's 1969 at the only place in the world where you can see the **command module Columbia** on the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing. Live music, special events and activities—morning, noon and night. Mark your calendars and check museumofflight.org often.

**Friday, July 19, 2019**  
**Saturday, July 20, 2019**  
**Sunday, July 21, 2019**

# 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 Hemmingston who had been 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.



George Chapman, with the help of his wife, began the Flett Dairy in 1902 at the location of the Flett home. He sold the dairy in 1910 to Robert Portman and the cows were eventually moved to a new location, the one known to Lakewood residents as the Flett Dairy from the 1940's through the 1960's.

George then purchased 38 acres from the John Bradley Donation Claim in 1906. Today this property is occupied by The Church at Lakewood, Stoney Creek Apartments, the remaining blueberry field, Lochburn Junior High School and

some of the homes stretching out to Bridgeport Way, west of the school. George and Annie grazed cows on the high ground and planted crops in some of the low peat soil.

My mother, Ellen Chapman, was born in 1902 and married my father, Adam Freckleton, in 1936. My parents moved into the Flett home in 1941, where Ellen's father had lived alone since her mother's death in 1921. Ellen inherited her father's 38 acres upon his death in 1946. From 1942 until 1948 Adam and Ellen raised celery and potatoes in what was to become the blueberry field.

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 barn. 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 tossing out 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-weighed 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 cannery, 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.

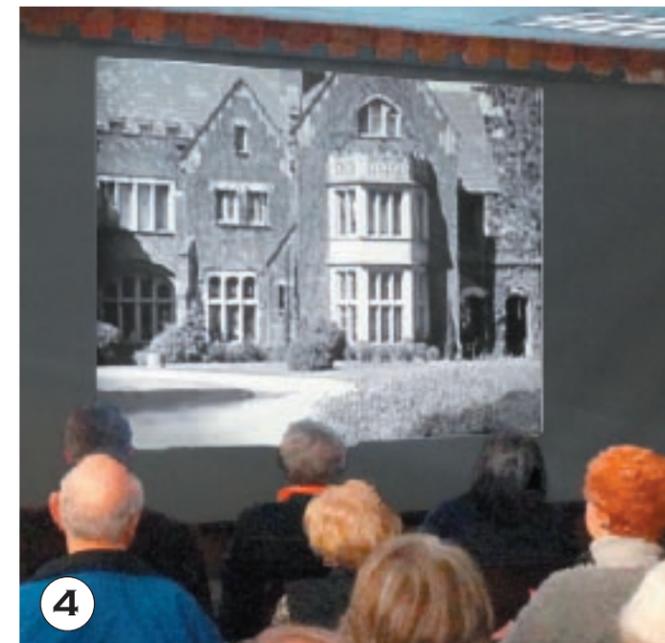
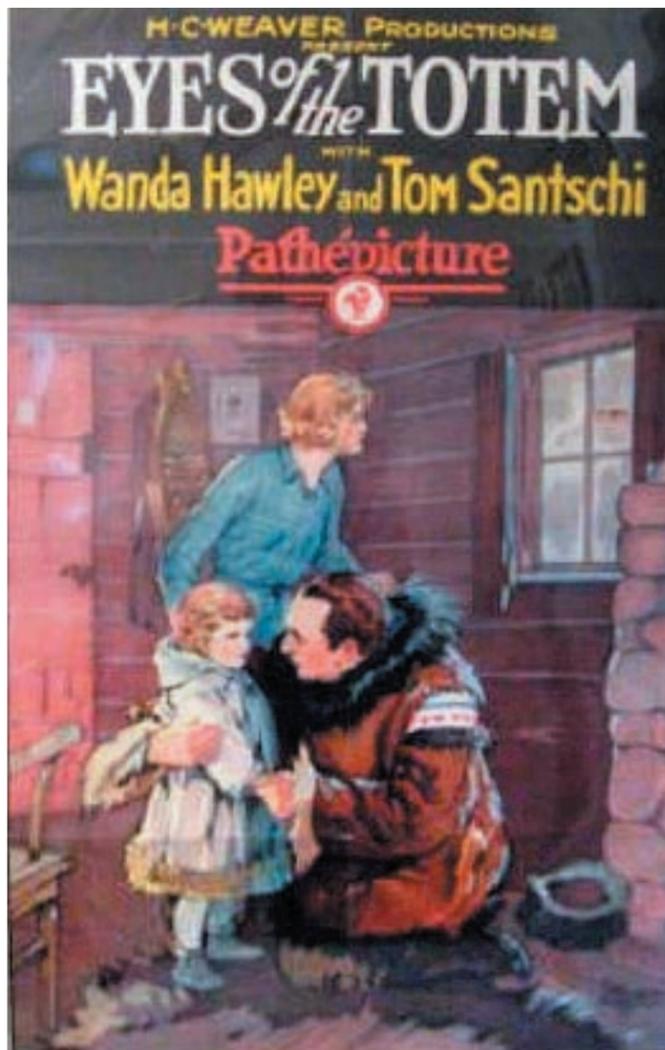
The Clover Park School District purchased part of the field from my parents in 1965 to build Lochburn Junior High School. More of it became



Where George met Annie: The Flett House. Built by the author's father and where he wed her mother—daughter of the home's owner—in 1895.

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.*



⑤ LHS President **Sue Scott** welcomed the audience and introduced...

⑥ ...**Bill Baarsma**, former mayor of Tacoma and current head of the **Tacoma Historical Society**, who filled in much of the story behind the film, its makers and the process of rediscovery and restoration.

As fiscal agent and keeper of the film, we thank THS for allowing us to show *Eyes of the Totem* to our large and appreciative audience.

## 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.

① Director Van Dyke also plays Tacoma's chief of police, shown here getting the drop on the bad guys. ② Speaking of bad guys: **Tom Santschi**, famous for taking part in film's most epic fistfight (1914's *The Spoilers*), our suitably loathesome heavy. ③ Our heroine, played by **Wanda Hawley**, thanks the old beggar who...well, no spoilers. Gotta see it. ④ 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, 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



1939 map of the Lakes District courtesy of Tacoma Public Library Pacific Northwest Room

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.

Historian Herbert Hunt wrote the native tribes called the lake Wheatchee, meaning loosely "... underhanded or deceitful" because the area was known to be the site of odd occurrences.

Regardless of the names, then or now, Lakewood would not be what it is today without these lakes. They provide recreation, water for plants and faucets as well as some of the best views found inland of the South Puget Sound.

# 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.



Sketch of Leschi, circa 1858.  
Artist unknown

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.



Offering of fruit, placed by person(s) unknown, at the base of Leschi's monument—photo taken 06/23/15

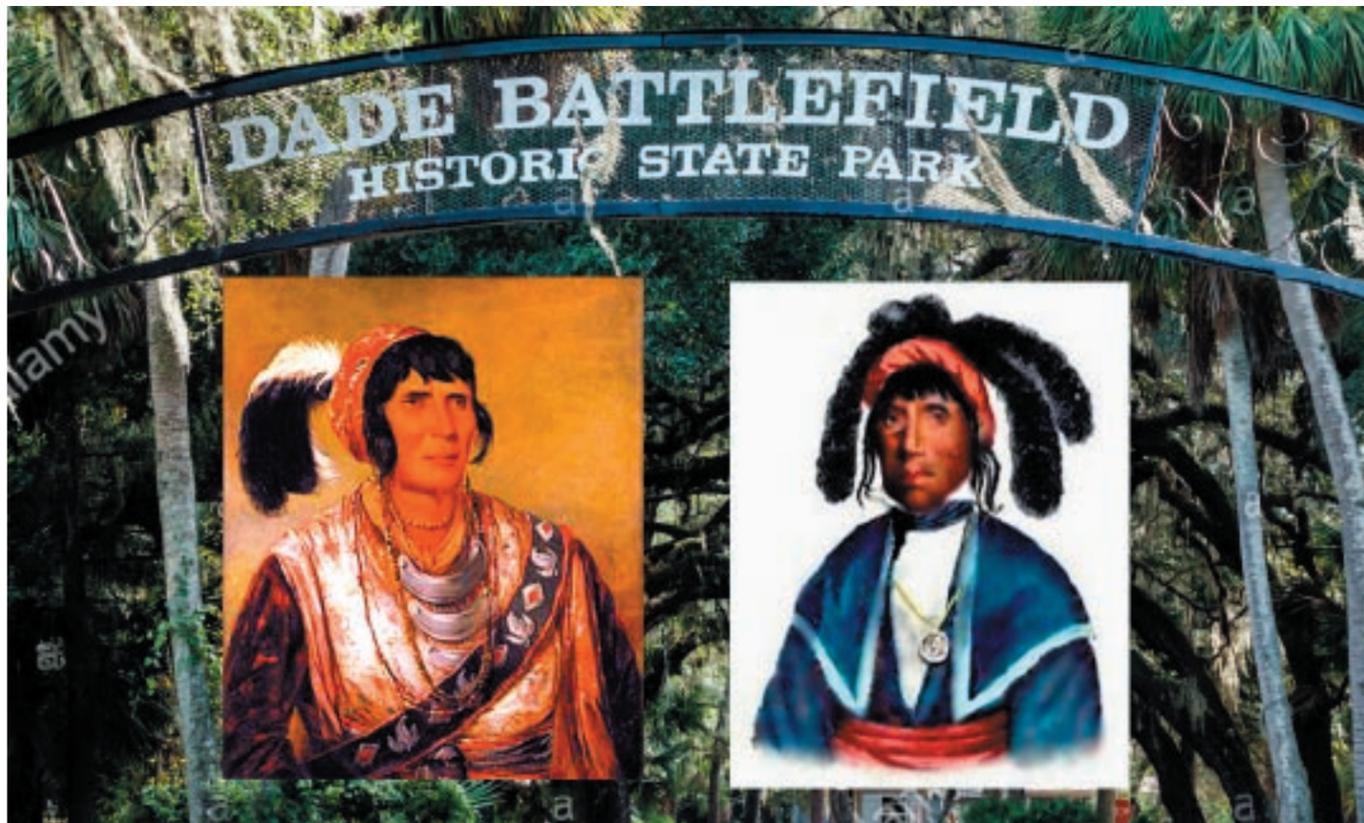
The rest of the marker, however, is all too accurate. " & Historical" was added because their one requirement for membership had become a bit too stringent by 1963, namely "...residence on the Pacific Coast prior to the year 1870." In violation of universally-recognized rules of warfare, Leschi was arrested, charged with murder and hung by 1963, namely "...residence on the Pacific Coast prior to the year 1870." In violation of universally-recognized rules of warfare, Leschi was arrested, charged with murder and hung by 1963, namely "...residence on the Pacific Coast prior to the year 1870."



A name memorialized in schools, neighborhoods—and on a street sign very near the place the gallows stood.

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.



## LHS Board Members and Lakewood Residents Visit Forgotten History of 1835 Dade Massacre

Story and Photos by Phil Raschke

During a recent visit to Florida, Lakewood Historical Society members and residents of Lakewood took time to visit the small National Cemetery located on the grounds of St. Francis Barracks in historic Saint Augustine.

The Cemetery is the final resting place of **Major Francis Langhorne Dade** and 108 men under his command who were attacked and killed on December 28, 1835 by Seminole warriors under the command of a chief named **Micanopy** (pictured at right above).

The attack was a result of Seminole resentment over rapidly increasing settlement of traditional Seminole lands by American settlers coupled with efforts by the government to remove the Seminole to new lands west of the Mississippi.

**The Seminoles**, which loosely translates as “Wild Ones” or “Runaways”, were not a true Native American tribe. An amalgam of several local tribes and runaway slaves known as **Seminole Maroons**, they had crossed into unsettled Florida lands to escape fighting in the north. Prior 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 Coppinger**, a Creek Indian-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 fire-arms and ammunition to the Seminoles. He also asked for military reinforcements.

Osceola, initially a friend of Thompson, publicly 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.



LHS Board Member Phil Raschke (left) with Lakewood residents Lonnie Lai and Bob Lawrence.

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*).





## Lakewood Historical Society

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## 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](http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org) for notices about more upcoming programs.