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# PIONEER PRESENCES

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Volume XXIV, No. 2

February 2001

## "A Trip to the Past" - 1,000 years ago in Washington: the Pioneer spring meeting, March 10 in Seattle

On March 10, members of the Pioneer Association of Washington will go with Anthropology Professor Dale Croes and Squaxin Tribe Cultural Director Rhonda Foster on a 'virtual' visit to a tribal village being uncovered in Eld Inlet of south Puget Sound. The Pioneer Association meets in Pioneer Hall at 1642 43rd Avenue East, in Seattle.

Dr. Croes and Foster are two years into a cooperative effort which could mean up to five more years of excavation, and the preservation of artifacts which date as far back as 1,000 years. Excitement is high, as the project has already unearthed such rare finds as Squaxin fish trap stakes and nets, both never before found.

The speakers will share a variety of findings from three sites: a prehistoric village with a long house, a buried shell midden, and two fishtraps from a wet site downstream from the village.

Recently retired Secretary of State and Pioneer Association member Ralph Munro was instrumental in making the site, located on his Mud Bay property, available for research. Some school children had a chance to visit there; the state Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation has also assisted.

A joint agreement between the Squaxin Island Tribe and the South Puget Sound Community College has made it possible for college staff and students to work with tribal members who have been trained or are taking training in anthropology research skills. Because of their knowledge of tribal customs, tribal members like Rhonda Foster also recognize the significance of the findings, which might otherwise be overlooked.

Ultimately, many of the artifacts will be studied and displayed at the soon-to-be-completed Squaxin Museum Library and Tribal Center. It will be a place where people can come to learn about the long and rich culture, and traditions, of these early native peoples. Squaxin Tribe members will also have a place to study and view evidence of their special heritage.

To hear more, come at 1:00 p.m. March 10 to the Pioneers' spring general meeting. A short business meeting, family history, music, and refreshments are also part of the afternoon's program.



*photo by schacht\aslani architects*

***Future Squaxin Museum and Tribal Center***

### **Future Pioneer meetings**

Board Meeting	May 12, 2001	10:00 a.m.	Pioneer Hall
Annual Pioneer Meeting	June 23, 2001	10:00 a.m.	Pioneer Hall

## A message from the president

Things are definitely afoot as we enter 2001, and we are pushing forward with the building renovation plans.

Since the fall issue of *Pioneer Presences*, we have contracted for upgrading Pioneer Hall to better meet our needs, as well as those of our tenants: the Daughters of the Pioneers of Washington State and the Fiske Genealogical Foundation. Nationally recognized architect Steven Lee, with Bumgartner Architects, is heading the project, and has already met with representatives from all three organizations to clarify their specific needs. Additionally, electrical, structural and mechanical engineers have all begun preliminary work while the building plan is being prepared by the architects.

When all is said and done, Pioneer Hall will have an elevator that will allow access from the street level to each floor, while not allowing access to areas of the building that are closed. Also, significant improvements will be made to the plumbing system (including renovated restrooms), the electrical system will be improved and the heating system will be redone to provide both more efficient heat, as well as humidity control for the protection of our historical artifacts.

The Master Plan for how all this will be done is scheduled for completion by April 15. At that point we will have a clear picture of the total scope and cost of the project, and will be able to set priorities for the work and start our fundraising efforts.

I want to recognize David Fauver, from the Board of Directors, for the excellent work he has already done in developing the Pioneer website ([www.wapioneers.org](http://www.wapioneers.org)), helping with the technical aspects of wiring the building, establishing specifications for our new computer and developing the methodology that has allowed us to place our membership applications on the website. We have purchased a software package called "Past Perfect" that will enable us to more efficiently manage the collections within the building, as well as the Association itself.

It will be a busy and exciting year. We look forward to seeing you at the spring membership meeting on March 10.



*Robert Teague  
President, 1999-2000*

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*Pioneer Presences is published by the Pioneer Association of the State of Washington, and has been compiled and edited by Barbara Krohn since 1977. Contributors this issue are Carol Hawkins, Barbara Krohn, Bob Teague, Jeff Christensen and Mark Chamberlain.*

## The life and times of Judge John Philo Hoyt

By Mark Chamberlain

Several years ago, my father Spence Chamberlain began research on the genealogy of our family. While there were a lot of interesting people and stories uncovered, one of the most fascinating figures was my great-great-grandfather, Judge John Philo Hoyt. A highly respected pioneer of Washington State, he played a major part in the development of the Pacific Northwest.

The first Hoyt ancestor in America was born Simon Hoyt in Upway (Dorset) England in 1590. Simon travelled to America with his family aboard the sailing vessel *Abigal*, arriving in New England in 1628. By all accounts this new arrival lived the life of a simple farmer, avoiding both elective office, and trouble. His descendants, however - which included notable Civil War general William Sherman - were an ambitious and successful lot.

Seven generations after Simon Hoyt's inauspicious arrival, John Philo Hoyt was born on October 6, 1841. The son of David and Susan Hoyt, John was raised on the family farm in Austinburg, Ohio. He attended public school and, later, the Grand River Institute, where he studied to become a teacher. Those plans were interrupted, however, by the advent of the American Civil War, which John Hoyt joined by enlisting in the 87th Ohio Infantry on May 27, 1862.

By the time the Civil War ended, John Hoyt had been discharged and reenlisted three times. His ranks included commissary sergeant, second lieutenant and captain. He was an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic, and served several offices within the organization. It is said that he even met General Grant briefly during his service.

Returning to Ohio after the war, Hoyt studied law for a short time, near the family home. He graduated from the Ohio State and Union Law College, Cleveland, in 1867. Although admitted to the Ohio bar, he chose to establish a practice in Michigan, and was elected as prosecuting attorney in 1868.

The next year he met Lettie Lewis. Busy fulfilling his first term as a prosecuting attorney, he frequently travelled nearly 60 miles by sleigh during the winters to court Lettie. It proved a sound investment of effort, and John and Lettie were married on December 17, 1869: a union which later begat children June, Harold and Arthur.

Hoyt was elected to the Michigan state house of representatives in 1872 and 1874. In 1875 he served as its speaker. Fresh off that success, John Hoyt was then appointed Secretary of the Arizona Territory by President Grant in 1876. Allowed still to practice law during his appointment, he joined the local bar and was admitted into practice before the territorial Supreme Court in January of 1877.

A key period of reform was taking place in Arizona Territory during this time. The territorial code of laws were in dire need of revision, and Secretary Hoyt was given the duty of making the changes and paid \$1,000 by President Grant for the task.

On April 5, 1877, President Hayes commissioned John P. Hoyt as governor of Arizona. Two days later the *Arizona Citizen* expressed that belief "that his administration of affairs (would) be highly creditable". Hoyt was a strong supporter of public schools in the area, and was well regarded by his constituents. Despite this regard, Hoyt served as governor for less than a year and a half. Politics is a tough mistress and, after being put through the embarrassment of having to hold his post until his successor arrived in 1878, Hoyt was replaced at President Hayes' insistence by John C. Fremont. Hayes may have felt some remorse over the turn of events, however, as John Hoyt was soon offered the governorship of Idaho. The offer came as a result of accusations against then Idaho Governor Brayman, accusations which Hoyt - after much investigation - deemed so false that he declined the position, urging the U.S. government to stick with Brayman as governor.



*Judge John P. and Lettie Hoyt  
at their Mercer Island home*

After reviewing his options, Hoyt accepted a judgeship in the Washington Territory, settling on Mercer Island just outside of Seattle. In 1879 he was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Territory of Washington. The Hoyt home, constructed in the early 1880's, is the oldest inhabited home on Mercer Island. My grandmother, Betty Hoyt Chamberlain was born in this home and inherited it in the 1930's. Noted author Betty McDonald wrote her novel "The Egg and I" while living there. Later owners restored the house, and have lived in it about 30 years. The residence is on the Mercer Island Heritage Home Tour.

In 1886 the U.S. Congress amended the National Bank Act to allow new types of banks to incorporate. Local banking pioneer Dexter Horton took advantage of this new act and formed a corporation. Having retired from the bench, John Hoyt joined Horton's corporation: the Dexter Horton bank later became one of the areas major players in the banking business as Seafirst Bank, now Bank of America.

During this period Hoyt and local pioneer Arthur Denny subdivided a plat of land known as the Denny & Hoyt addition, in Seattle. Today this area is known as Fremont, an irony since the man to whom Hoyt was forced to relinquish his Arizona governorship was General John C. Fremont.

In 1888 Hoyt joined the Stevens Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, serving as commander, patriotic instructor and Judge Advocate. He was elected president of the Constitutional Convention convened to establish Washington as a state, and was one of the first to sign the state charter in 1889. From 1889 to 1896 Hoyt was as a member of the Washington State Supreme Court, serving as Chief Justice for the final two years of his service of the court.

Hoyt became a member of the Board of Regents at the University of Washington in 1898 and, three years later, became a Professor of Law there.

John Philo Hoyt died in Seattle on August 24, 1926, the same year he served a term as president of the Association of Washington State Pioneers. At the time he died he was recognized as one of the best-known of the local pioneers. His portrait is displayed in the Temple of Justice in Olympia, and his gavels have been on display in the Capitol since 1939.

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**Next Meeting of the Pioneer Association, Saturday, March 10, 2001**