



Providence Academy
Just 600 ft. west of the Site!



FORT VANCOUVER National Site

First there was a river...The mighty Columbia flows from its beginnings in British Columbia 1,243 miles to the Pacific Ocean.

Then came the Native Americans who lived in harmony with the river. It gave them salmon and in turn, strength, wealth and power. A natural avenue of trade and transportation, the river sustained the native people for thousands of years, and then brought rapid change. By chance or destiny, those who came after - Euro-American explorers, fur traders, soldiers, settlers, builders of ships and airplanes — would alter the history of a place, a nation, a world in two short centuries.

The broad plain that rests on the north shore near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers inspired Meriwether Lewis to comment in 1806 that "It is, in fact, the only desirable situation for a settlement on the western side of the Rocky Mountains."

In 1825, England's Hudson's Bay Company built Fort Vancouver beside the Columbia River. The company's reach extended over 1.5 million square miles, dominating the western continental fur trade and making Vancouver the hub of its activities west of the Rockies.

Just 21 years later, a treaty with Great Britain gave the United States the Oregon country. The U.S. Army built an outpost by Fort Vancouver to protect settlers who followed the Oregon Trail to its end on the river. Vancouver Barracks would remain a military operations center into the 20th century, active for more than 150 years.

In 1905, Lincoln Beechy crossed the Columbia River from the Lewis and Clark Centennial exposition in Portland to Commandant Williams, making it the first aerial crossing of mail from one state to another. This is what made Pearson Field the first airport in the Pacific Northwest, and one of the oldest continuously operating airfields in the country.

During World War I, Vancouver Barracks was also the site of the world's largest spruce saw mill. 30,000 soldiers helped produce up to one million board feet of straight-grained spruce a day to make airplanes.

On September 8 of 2012, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), the largest historic and historical organization in the world, awarded Pearson Field this historic site designation.

Shipbuilding at the river's edge, dating from the arrival of the Hudson's Bay Company, peaked during World War II when the Kaiser shipyard employed 38,000 workers in Vancouver. Portland and Vancouver yards recruited women earlier and in greater numbers than any other U.S. shipbuilding center — 20,000 were at work by 1944.

Legend

Buildings	Public Parking
Food Service	Railroad
Bookstore	Restrooms
Information	Trail
Picnic Area	Viewpoint
Event Facilities	

