

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME TACOMA

A collection of information  
regarding the origin of the  
name of the City of Tacoma,  
Washington by Gary Fuller Reese.

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## INTRODUCTION

The writer has been engaged for more than six years in a project to identify the name origins of geographical locations with the area of Tacoma and Pierce County, Washington. Nearly seven hundred such locations have been identified and to a great extent satisfactory explanations have been found for many of these locations.

For a number of these locations, research has produced an interesting number of variants. Some locations have two or more equally "strong" evidences presented for why such a location should be assigned a particular name origin.

While it is certain that further research does disclose the "real" origin in time it is equally certain that the origin of the name of the city of Tacoma will never obtain unanimous support from all concerned.

Since the name of Tacoma is closely connected to that of Mount Rainier and the attempts to get the name changed from Rainier to Tacoma it is probable the partisanship on the part of the anti-Mount Rainier people who are for the most part almost erased from the contemporary scene would eliminate any but the locally accepted Indian origin account .

The clippings files of the Tacoma Public Library and the various book and pamphlet resources of the Library were heavily used in this study. No attempt was made to include all theories of name origins, but enough are included to give the reader a headache just thinking of the forests of trees that have been cut down to provide paper for the tons of newsprint and book paper used in the struggle.

An apt title for this could very well be, "More than you care to know about the origin of the name Tacoma."

Gary Fuller Reese.

Tacoma Public Library.

## PART ONE

### THE NAME OF THE CITY

Beginning with the October, 1917, issue of the Washington Historical Quarterly(now the Pacific Northwest Quarterly), and continuing for a number of years Professor Edmond S. Meany, editor of the quarterly and professor at the University of Washington, began publishing the results of his efforts to determine correct origins of geographical location names in the State of Washington.

Professor Meany reported that thousands of letters had been sent out throughout the state and nation to anyone it was determined might be of assistance in the project.

He wrote that he made use of :

"...all known journals of discoverers and explorers, all known maps and charts, books of early travellers, all local histories available, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and many other sources."

The resulting book, Origin of Washington Geographic Names which was published in 1923 is still regarded as the most scholarly and correct name source book for the State.

In presenting Professor Meany's report on the origin of the Tacoma name in part one of this work we give the reader what we consider the most accurate of all accounts.

## TACOMA

Tacoma, principal city of Pierce County, on Commencement Bay, now known as Tacoma Harbor. The name is said to be of Indian origin, but its source and meaning have been the subjects of much debate and disputation. Of all those who have written on the subject, the best authority is undoubtedly Thomas W. Prosch. A pioneer newspaper man with a bent toward history, he had the advantage accompanying such training.

Furthermore, on September 12, 1877, he was married to Miss Virginia McCarver, whose father, General Morton Matthew McCarver, reputed founder of the City, had been dead only two years at the time of his daughter's wedding. Mr. Prosch had thus entered upon access to family traditions and records.

In 1906 and 1909, Mr. Prosch wrote and published two books--McCarver and Tacoma, and The Conkling Prosch Family- in which he tells with clearness and frankness how General McCarver founded and named Tacoma and how a contention over the naming arose at the very beginning. He shows the first settler of Tacoma to have been Nicholas Delin, who arrived in 1852 and began a small water-power sawmill. Peter Judson and family, members of the famous party of immigrants who crossed the Naches Pass in 1853, were then next to settle on the bay. There were others who found employment in and around the mill.

When the Indian war broke out in 1855, the white people left the bay and Mr. Delin sold his mill to J.L. Perkins, he to Milas(sic) Galliher, the last owner being Frank Spinning. For several years prior to 1864, the south side of the bay was deserted.

On Christmas day of 1864, Job Carr settled there. His family are often counted as the first settlers of Tacoma. In 1868, General McCarver arrived looking for a townsite that would serve as the terminus of the proposed Northern Pacific Railroad. He bought most of Job Carr's claim and acquired other lands. He had financial associates in Portland.

The first plat of the proposed town bore the name " Commencement City," a name derived from that of the bay. This plat was not filed of record. On Friday, September 11, 1868, Philip Ritz arrived at the McCarver home. He was gathering information for the Northern Pacific Railroad and had heard of General McCarver's proposal to build a town. He wanted to suggest a name. He was enthusiastic about the book, The Canoe and the Saddle, by Theodore Winthrop, in which it was

said that Indians knew Mount Rainier by the name of Tacoma. He was eloquent in advocating that name for the town.

Mr. Prosch says sleep was banished from the McCarver home that night and Saturday morning found the family still talking over the new name. (McCarver and Tacoma, p. 164.).

The associates in Portland accepted General McCarver's suggestion that the new name be put upon the plat instead of "Commencement City" and the naming was accomplished. Mr. Prosch says: "The Indian name for the land taken by the Carrs was Chebaulip. None of the citizens heeded that, and as the Indians themselves had little regard for their own names, and were always willing to adopt those of the whites instead, Chebaulip was passed and forgotten." (McCarver and Tacoma , p.162-63.).

A later and more extended publication is Tacoma, Its History and Its builders, A half century of Activity, by Herbert Hunt, published in Chicago in 1916. Mr. Hunt devotes pages 134-141 to a discussion of the name. It does not differ materially in results from the record of Thomas W. Prosch. However, he says (p. 135): "That it was favorably received may be assumed from the fact that Anthony Carr, M.M.McCarver, John W. Ackerson and C.P.Ferry each has claimed the honor of applying it to 'Chebaulip'."

The author examines each of the claims carefully and also calls attention to the facts that a hotel in Olympia and a lodge of Good Templars had each been known by the name Tacoma some months before it was applied to the new town. These two names probably emanated from the same book by Theodore Winthrop.

In 1908, Benjamin C. Harvey, of Tacoma, collected much material on the name which was published in Tacoma in 1914. (Washington State Historical Society Publications, 1907-1914, Volume II, pages 440-464.). His work was in the interest of changing the name of Mount Rainier to "Mount Tacoma." Of course many references are there made to the origin and meaning of the word.

One of the published letters is from Dr. Charles M. Buchanan, for many years in charge of the Tulalip Indian Reservation. He was the greatest authority yet developed on the Indian languages and dialects of Puget Sound. In one of his letters to Mr. Harvey, he says Tacoma is not at all a local word but an Algonkin word meaning "near to heaven," and he calls attention to many uses of the word in various forms each of the Rocky Mountains.

There are many meanings given for the word, such as "nourishing breast," "mother of waters," "frozen waters." Several writers, in the correspondence referred to, suggest that Mr. Winthrop probably heard the Indians use the Chinook Jargon word T'kope meaning "white." (Shaw's The Chinook Jargon, page 27). Mr. Buchanan thinks it quite likely as the explosive pronunciation of T'kopt by the Indian would somewhat resemble the white man's pronunciation of Tacoma.

Origin of Washington Geographic Names by Edmond S.Meany, pp.229-301.

PART TWO

SOURCES MEANY USED

Thomas Prosch was a son-in-law of Morton Matthew McCarver who is credited by most with being the actual founder of the city of Tacoma. Prosch wrote the book McCarver and Tacoma and had it published in 1906. Mr. Prosch performed many services for the Washington State Historical Society and for a number of years issued a list of pioneers who had died the year previously. This work was continued by Mr. Prosch's daughter after his death.

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Herbert Hunt, the author of the history of Tacoma, was a long-time resident of the city and spent a considerable amount of time in volume one of his work discussing the details of the naming of the city, where credit for the naming should be given and the actual origins of the name. Extracts from a portion of his work appear in this section.

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The main portion of the work by Benjamin Harvey consists of a series of letters Mr. Harvey exchanged with Charles M. Buchanan, Superintendent of the Tulalip Indian agency who was convinced that the name for Tacoma was Algonquin in origin. It should be noted that many of the locations in America thought by Mr. Buchanan to have been named independent of Tacoma, Washington, have some connection with the city.

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McCARVER AND THE NAME OF TACOMA BY THOMAS PROSCH

In August, 1868, General McCarver employed Charles A. White, an Olympia civil engineer, to survey and map a portion of his land for town purposes. In doing this White placed on the map the words "Commencement City." During the last week in October, when the three partners met alone in the First National Bank at Portland, and Steel had given his consent to the name Tacoma, General McCarver was authorized to sell lots at agreed prices in a prescribed manner....McCarver's son-in-law, C.P. Ferry, being an expert penman, was asked by the General to strike out Commencement City and insert Tacoma, which request he complied with, and the map so changed can now be seen in the Ferry Museum in this city.

From that time on the place was known as Tacoma. The events recited were complete and unquestioned at the time. Of late so many false claims in this connection have been made, and so much misrepresentation uttered, that it is well now to be explicit, clear and strong. ... The only living participants to the acts connected with the bestowal of the name are Samuel Hadlock and James Steel. These gentlemen have recently written as follows:

From Mr. Hadlock, January 30, 1905:

"Just before starting for Portland, General McCarver got Mr. Ackerson, myself and Starr together, and directing his conversation to us all, asked how we would like the name of Tacoma for the town. I readily agreed to it, and so did Mr. Ackerson. I had no objection to the name, but would have agreed to it anyway, as I considered General McCarver the principal promoter of the town, and that he had the right to give it such name as suited him. ...That is the first time I had heard the name Tacoma, and I believed General McCarver to be the author of it."

From Mr. Steel, February 4, 1905:

"We concluded that Commencement City was too long a name, and at the suggestion of General McCarver we changed the name to Tacoma."

"The name was decided upon by Mr. Starr, General McCarver and myself, in the offices of the First National Bank, Portland, and as I have said, at the suggestion of General McCarver who informed Mr. Starr and myself that that was the Indian name for Mount Rainier."

From the Seattle Intelligencer, November 23, 1868:

"The name of the new town laid off by General McCarver and known as Commencement City, has been changed to Tacoma after the Indian name for Mount Rainier. It is reported to us that great progress is making in erecting houses on the site and the building of roads has commenced."

McCarver and Tacoma, by Thomas W. Prosch. 1906.

"Tacoma, its history and its builders," by Herbert Hunt.

The following are extracts from pages 134-141 of Herbert Hunt's history of Tacoma published in 1916:

1. "The first (fact) is that the name "Tacoma" was suggested by Philip Ritz ...who had read The Canoe and the Saddle,"(and) ...in that book is found for the first time in literature the name "Tacoma."

"In spite of much Indian testimony to the contrary, Winthrop (the author) has been charged with having invented the word "Tacoma." It interests the student of early nomenclature, however, to know that on that memorable journey he also discovered that the Indians called Mount Baker "Kulshan," and the Sound "Whulge." Bitter rivalry has not risen to charge that he invented either of these. Winthrop was a better listener than some of those who followed him. Undoubtedly "Tacoma" is an Indian word; undoubtedly Winthrop heard the Indians apply it to the mountain."

2. "...the Tacomah House in Olympia which had been opened for business by Hays and Drewery May 6, 1867--more than a year before the name was given to Commencement City. September 2, 1866, two years before Tacoma got its name, the Tacoma Lodge of Good Templars had been organized in Olympia. The name is said to have been suggested by Edward Giddings."
3. "The first map on which Tacoma appears was of Western Washington, issued by Hazard Stevens, in 1870."
4. "Job Carr's version, published many years after the town was named follows:

"We had some dispute about the name. General McCarver wanted to call it Commencement Bay, but I did not like that name, nor did Mr. Ackerson. Then some one thought about naming it "Sitwell" after the old Indian chief at the reservation, but while we were discussing it one day my son said, Why don't you call the town after the Indian name of the mountain? What is that? was asked. 'Why Tacoma,' was the reply."

"That's as pretty a name as ever I heard," said Mr. Ackerson. "Let's call it Tacoma" We agreed on that name."

Tacoma, its history and its builders, a half century of activity, by Herbert Hunt. Chicago, S.J.Clarke, 1916.

Correspondence relative to the Indian names of the Great  
Mountain by Benjamin Harvey.

The following are extracts from a collection of correspondence printed in the Washington State Historical Society Publications, 1907-1914, Volume II, pages 440-464:

1. "There is a question whether or not the Indians applied the word "Ta-ho-ma" promiscuously. Colonel C.O. Ferry, an old resident of this section, says they did not and that to say they did is a mistake.  
  
"Professor W.H. Gilstrap, Secretary of the Washington State Historical Society, says: "Ta-co-bid," "Ta-ho-ma," and "Tacoma" are not generic terms which may be applied indiscriminately to any high or snow-covered mountain. They are simply the different forms as given by the different families or tribes of the Indian name for Mount Tacoma and are notably the name of one mountain, as "Pah-too" is for Mount Adams, "Seuq" of St. Helens, "Kulshan" of Baker and "Wyeast" of Hood."
  
2. Charles M. Buchanan, Superintendent of the Tulalip Indian Agency at Tulalip, Washington wrote April 17, 1908 a letter to Mr. Harvey. In part he wrote:

"I have commonly believed it to be an Indian word of Algonquin origin, and by the Algonquian stock applied to objects of unusual altitude, or, as some of them express it, "almost up to the sky" or "almost up to heaven." You will find that Tacoma, Washington, is very very far indeed from being either the first or the only possessor of the right to and use of this name. You will find a long-established Takoma Park in the District of Columbia...You will find a Tecoma in Nevada, and a Tekoma in Nebraska--you will even find a Tacome in Mexico."

PART THREE

THE NAME OF THE MOUNTAIN

Several times during the past century, citizens of the City of Tacoma have attempted to have the name of Mount Rainier changed to Tacoma. The United States Board of Geographic Names, Congress and the newspapers were all bombarded with justifications that the name of the mountain should be Tacoma.

John B. Kaiser who was director of the Tacoma Public Library between 1914 and 1924 served on the "Justice to the Mountain" committee and there are numerous pieces of literature in the Tacoma Public Library collection of his papers which tell of the "fight."

The clippings folders kept by the Reference Room staff of the Library during the 1920s during the last major effort to get the name change consist of four fully packed envelopes of information.

Numerous pamphlets, booklets and the like were published either supporting or condemning the project. Perhaps one of the most famous of these was written by James Wickersham who had served in Tacoma as City Attorney and later, after he moved to Alaska, became Alaskan territorial delegate to Congress and author of the most famous of Alaska Bibliographies. Detractors say that the Tacoma Academy of Science Proceedings which contains the paper presented by Judge Wickersham was organized for that purpose and no other to lend a certain amount of scholarship to the attempt.

One of the better stories told of the struggle is a report of a conversation between Edmond S. Meany and a Tacoman. Mr. Meany is reported to have said, "Yes, every indication is that Tacoma is the name of the mountain, it was an ancient Indian name and you and I both agree that it should be changed. Yes, you and I both know the name should be Tacoma, but both you and I also know that it isn't."

## WHY TACOMA MAKES FIGHT!

Why is Tacoma conducting this campaign for restoration of the old Indian name Tacoma to the giant peak which bears officially the name of the old British sea captian, Rainier?

Tacoma people know the history of this fight. But throughout the state, and throughout the United States--for this is rapidly becoming a question of some importance--the facts are not well known.

Briefly, here is the story:

1. Before the white man came to the Northwest the Indians called the mountain Tahoma, Takkoma and Tacobet. Pioneers and Indians themselves substantiate this statement fully.
2. The city of Tacoma was first named Commencement City. The name was changed--before there was any question as to the name of the mountain--to Tacoma. The city was named after the mountain.
3. During the period when commercial rivalry between Tacoma and Seattle was bitterest, Senator Squire, of Seattle, was elected by the Washington State legislature. That was before the days of the direct primary. Squire reflected the Seattle attitude then existing toward Tacoma as a trade rival.
4. Arriving in Washington, D.C., as the new U.S. senator, Squire quietly got the National Geographic Board to declare that the official name of the mountain was Rainier. In doing this he was helped by a Portland engineer who has since confessed that he was so instructed by the board that he was required to report against the name Tacoma. The geographic board held no hearings and acted on the inspiration of Senator Squire and its own specially directed engineer.
5. With the mountain in its dooryard, and knowing this past history of injustice, Tacoma is asking for the return of the old Indian name to the mountain.

Incidentally, immediately after Senator Squire's secret move back in Washington, D.C. a Seattle brewing company made a big campaign for sale

of Rainier beer. Was there a connection between the two incidents?  
It seems likely.

In advancing its claim for restoration of the name Tacoma to the mountain, Tacoma people, and the thousands of others who have joined in the campaign present these facts:

1. That Admiral Vancouver, who, it is claimed, named the mountain for his friend Peter Regnier, an officer of his fleet, did not see Mount Tacoma at all, but judging from his log and his charts, had Glacier Peak in mind.
2. That Vancouver was NOT the discoverer of Puget Sound, but that a Spaniard and later an American came here before the Briton.
3. That Peter Regnier's chief claim to fame came from the fact that, as commander of a British warship in the war our forefathers waged for independence, he attacked and captured the American sloop Polly, killed 23 of the crew and brutally imprisoned the rest of the sailors, making the Polly a prison ship. Can we doubt, from reading history, what sort of treatment Peter Regnier meted out to the handful of brave young men who fought for our liberty?

Summing up Tacoma's case--the case of "The Mountain that was God"--we believe the name should be changed officially to Mount Tacoma and a great wrong righted. To state it briefly:

1. Because Tacoma was the original name for the peak.
2. Because the name Tacoma was removed by questionable, if not dishonorable methods.
3. Because it is inappropriate to let one of America's grandest mountains and national parks bear the name of a man who fought American independence.
4. Because Tacoma is a better historical name.

"Why Tacoma Makes Fight! Should our grandest mountain be named for a bitter enemy?"  
The Tacoma Times. May 9, 1924. Special supplement pp. 1-2.



"THE PROOF" BY A.H. DENMAN

The following is a series of extracts from a lengthy article published by the Tacoma Times in a special supplement on Friday, May 9, 1924.

1. "...there was a gun boat of the U.S. Navy named the "Tohoma," launched October 2, 1861, commissioned December 20, 1861, all before Winthrop's book (The Canoe and The Saddle) was published. The editor quotes a very interesting letter from Brigadier General Henry C. Hodges, U.S.A. retired, who had in 1852 and 1853 been stationed as an army officer among other places at Fort Steilacoom on Puget Sound and later employed in the Cascade Mountains surveying with McClellan. General Hodges says: "I am not surprised that the navy department named one of its vessels in 1861 "Tahoma". In early days there were ships of our navy in Puget Sound and it is likely the officers knew the name which the Indians gave to Mount Rainier and when opportunity offered that name was selected. A fine name, too!"
2. "George Gibbs, eminent ethnologist and linguist came to the coast in 1852 and remained here until after the Indian war (1856)... In the Smithsonian Institution's Contribution to North American Ethnology, Vol. 1 he wrote:

"In the vocabulary of the Nisquallys, 'Tacob' is given as 'the name of Mount Rainier.' In the Winastasha --Wenatchee--vocabulary, the word 't'koma', appears with definition 'snow peak.'

"T'koma, (means) snow peak.' "

3. "James G. Swan, ethnologist and investigator for the Smithsonian...says:  
"It seems impossible for the average white man either to pronounce or write an Indian word correctly. 'Tacoma' is the white man's rendering of the Nisqually and Puyallup word 'Ta-ho-ma' with a strong accent on the first syllable. The word means snow mountain, or white mountain....William Fraser Tolmie...always told me that the word 'Ta-ho-ma' means a white, snow covered mountain."

4. "Father Hylebos...began his work as a missionary to the Indians at Cowlitz Prairie about 85 miles south of the City of Tacoma, to which city he moved in 1878...he was in close touch with the Indians often acting as their interpreter.

"The following is taken from a paper prepared and read by Father Hylebos before the Washington State Historical Society...

'Ta' in their mother tongue is somewhat of a prefix and when placed before an adjective it makes the superlative degree of that adjective...In the Puyallup Indian language the word 'co' means water; and the word 'ma' means frozen water. And so when the Puyallup looks at the Cascade Range, he hails each one of these piles of snow that composes it "homa" pronouncing the 'h' with a guttural sound....We cannot do it, we say 'coma.' Pointing his finger to the highest heap of snow which he considers the home of diety, he calls it "Tahoma"; and hence the beautiful name of Mount Tacoma."

5. "Tacoma Morning Globe of Sunday, August 3,1890, contains a very interesting article by John Flett, about the name of the mountain.

"The old indians...said that the name 'Tahoma' applied by them to that mountain, meant a woman's breast or 'pap' that feeds 'tootoosh' or milk; that the earth was their mother, for she fed them, and Tahoma given them drink and overflowed and made the grass grow rich from the white water that flowed from her. I, at the time, translated their guttural expressions which resulted in aggregating the word "Tahoma", though really no two Indians pronounced the word exactly alike."

6. "Henry Sicade, modern, educated "full blooded Indian, half Nesqually and half Klickitat," in a speech before the Mountaineers, April 7, 1916, said:

"The name Tacoma originated on Hood's Canal. The story I was told by a very old Indian woman there a number of years ago. Tacoma, Tacobed, and Tahoma are practically the same name. It is simply the different ways of pronouncing the same name by the different Indians and tribes. The Nesquallies called it Tacobed. The Klickitats said Tahoma. The word means "That place from whence comes the water." That is, it is the place from where the rivers that flow away from it arise."

"The proof," by A.H. Denman, The Tacoma Times, May 9, 1924.

Asahel Holmes Denman was born in New York, November 29, 1859 and graduated from Northwestern University in 1883. He obtained a law degree from the State University of Iowa in 1885. He came to Tacoma in 1890 to practice law. He is remembered by mountain climbers as the originator of winter outings at Mount Rainier National Park in 1912. He died in December 1940.

PART FOUR

THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE NAME

Even though it was understood that much of the "fight" to have the name of the mountain changed from Rainier to Tacoma was conducted in the columns of the local newspapers to an exhausting degree, it is also understood the over the years the newspapers have advanced several totally different "reasons" for the name of both the city and the mountain.

Part four presents several newspaper articles giving accounts of some of the claimants outside the generally agreed upon Indian origins. Included are stories of origins from Japan, Holland, Mexico and finally a joke.

MANY MADE CLAIM TO HAVING  
NAMED TACOMA

There are almost as many versions of how Tacoma got its name as there were residents here when the name was chosen.

Theodore Winthrop probably first wrote the name in his book, "Canoe and Saddle." Winthrop found the name the one the Indians used for Mount Rainier, though detractors claimed he made it up. Philip Ritz, student of the Northwest and traveler, read the Winthrop book and while in this area in September 1868 urged the name be used in place of "Commencement City," the then name.

So perhaps Ritz should be given credit for the naming, but the deed has been claimed by Anthony Carr, M.M. McCarver, John W. Ackerson, and C.P. Ferry.

Carr makes his claim because of a 5-block plat, containing 18 lots, filed by him on November 30, 1869, with the name Tacoma attached. This is the first legal filing of the name and Carr told McCarver that Portland interests were about to file another plat using the name, and he acted to save the name.

McCarver was disturbed for he was ready to file a city plat.

Ferry's claim comes through crossing out "Commencement City" and substituting Tacoma during the last week in October 1868 at a meeting in Portland.

Attending the meeting were McCarver, Lewis M. Starr, H.N. Steele, and Ferry, McCarver's occasional secretary. The men were gathered to plan a lot-selling program, and Ferry made the map change in his secretary's position.

Thomas Prosch, biographer of McCarver, claims the name had been adopted a few days earlier at a meeting in Tacoma. McCarver is supposed to have been persuaded to use the name of Ritz, and in turn persuaded his partners to adopt it.

Two of the partners years later agreed this was so.

Anyway, McCarver was beaten to the legal punch by Anthony Carr, and for former's plat, filed December 3, 1869, contained the name "Tacoma City."

The claim for Ackerson was first made in October 1878 by the publication West Shore. This version says McCarver was ready to use Commencement City, but bowed to a persistent argument put up by Ackerson for the Indian name for Mount Rainier.

In 1890 and again in 1903, Mrs. Ackerson pressed the claim for her husband in letters to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. She said he had chosen the name while waling along the beach hear the Hanson, Ackerson mill, and met 'Chief Spot' from the Puyallup reservation.

In reply to Ackerson's questions, Spot supposedly told him the mountain was named Tacoma, which stood for 'big mother of all,' and Ackerson was strongly impressed with the name.

Advocates of McCarver disputed this on the grounds the Indian had not yet learned English, Ackerson probably would not have been walking along that stretch of uninviting beach and even if he had been the mountain could not have been seen from there.

And so it went. But whoever named it, the name has stuck. Now if we could only do something about that mountain.

"Many made claim to having named Tacoma." Tacoma News Tribune, June 27,1969.

ONE MAN SAYS TACOMA IS JAPANESE

There are plenty of historians who are able to prove that the name Tacoma is of Indian derivation, but now comes a Chicagoan asserting that he has information that the name is of Japanese origin and that in that language it means "highest light."

The Chicagoan is Henry J. Bohn, 10980 Prospect ave. who presents his claim in a letter received by Frank M. Kenney, New Governor hotel, Olympia.

Bohn's letter to Kenney follows:

"Now , as to Tacoma or Tak-o-ma, putting the accent on the first and last syllable instead of the second syllable as we do, and pronouncing the first syllable 'Tak' with a 'a' sounded as in ah. In the Oriental languages many words have various shades of meaning. Just as our slang language is now wearing away the long sentences and words that convey certain thoughts-grinding down language, as it were-so for thousands of years these old languages have been wearing down like the teeth of old animals, and some simple syllable or word has a wide and expansive meaning.

"My learned Japanese friend, and profound student, Prof. Cho-yo, put it to me in this way: 'Now, strange; when I came to Seattle and see mountain and they tell me named after Indian chief, I say "No, not named after Indian chief, Indian chief named after mountain. Takoma a Japanese word; it mean highest light, topmost light, light of the world.

"Cho-yo had the most wonderful mind I have ever known, though starting to study English at 6, he never mastered the tongue, and so I quote him in his peculiar English.

"He married at middle life a young pianist he first met in my house, and to them was born a daughter, and it became my privilege to select a name for her and I selected 'Usona,' abbreviation of United States of America. I, in later years, made the 'funeral oration' when Cho-yo died. He had charge of the wonderful Japanese art exhibit at our World's fair in 1893. The widow and Usona now lives in Boston, where the bright and handsome Usona is making her mark.

"Quite interesting isn't it? Tacoma is typical of Japanese names--they name notable things not after men but idealistic ideas. The people of your territory should take away that meaningless name of Rainier, who never saw this glorious mountain, and fix upon it forever the very appropriate name of Takoma. Am I right?"

"Another angle on Mountain's name. One man says "Tacoma" is Japanese. Avers Indian was named for peak." Tacoma Times. January 9, 1930.

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#### BAIR TELLS HOW CITY GOT NAME

Nearly 40 years ago, Anthony Pittman Carr, who was one of Tacoma's founders and who passed away Wednesday, related to E.E. Bair of Steilacoom, proprietor of the Deep Sea Aquarium, the following account of the naming of Tacoma, according to a letter written by Mr. Bair to The News Tribune Saturday:

"A company of San Francisco lumbermen and capitalists bought a tract of land on Commencement Bay of 'Admiralty Inlet' commonly called Puget Sound. After building a sawmill and houses for the accommodation of their workmen, the directors came up from San Francisco to view the works.

"After looking the situation over, one of the directors asked, "What shall we name our new mill?"

"It was one of those clear beautiful mornings when the mountains seems only about a half-mile away. Another director spoke up and asked, "What do the Indians call that mountain?"

"No one knew, so they turned to Anthony Carr, who was present and who spoke the Indian language as well as the natives. A director said:

"Anthony, call up some of those Indians from the beach and we will find out what they call the mountain."



"Anthony called up a number of the Indians and in the interview that followed, "Tacoma" was the pronunciation arrived at. So they called their mill and company the Tacoma Mill Company. Later Anthony platted a townsite and called it Tacoma. Still later the Northern Pacific Railroad platted a townsite adjoining and called it New Tacoma.

"This is how Tacoma gets its name as related a number of times by the late Anthony F. Carr to the writer. The above statements are the facts as told to me nearly 40 years ago."

"Bair tells how city got name. Relates story given to him by the Late A.T. Carr." Tacoma News Tribune. April 14, 1923.

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#### THE NAME OF TACOMA

An interesting theory as to the origin of the name Tacoma is advanced by Francis E. Smith, a writer and student who has delved deep into the history of the Pacific Northwest. Mr. Smith believes the name Tacoma is a corruption of the word "Tecoma." This is the name of a very beautiful vine bearing a scarlet flower. He says: "It is an abridgement of the Mexican word "Tecomaxochital," acquired from the ancient Aztec language. The word found its way into the Mexican botanical records in the year 1551, and into the French botanical records 1778-1789. See Genera Plantarum, by Laurent de Jussieu.

"The Mexican mariners attached to the de Fuca expedition, 1592, saw the beautiful glow on the mountain and named the majestic peak TACOMA. We have sufficient authentic historical data to establish the credibility of the de Fuca record. Educated Indians, who speak the English language fluently, say that the Indians learned the word from navigators who visited the inland waters of the State of Washington a long time ago."

Mr. Smith suggests Tacomans show their appreciation of the name by cultivating

the flowering shrub. "Tecoma" in botany is a very beautiful plant bearing scarlet flowers similar in color to the arctic glow which appears on the mountain at intervals. A fine specimen of the plant, when in full bloom can be seen long distances. Some of the species of the "Tecoma" can be grown in this climate. The writer has one in a southern exposure which seems to be thriving. The creepers can be trained on posts and shaped in any form.

"One species is named for a drop of water and is used in heraldry. The arms or ensigns were besprinkled with drops. The growth of the plants in the dooryards of the homes of Tacoma would be in line with the heraldry of other nations," urges Mr. Smith. "The species of Tecoma adopted by the Metropolitan park board should be the official flower or ensign of the citizens of Tacoma."

"The Name of Tacoma," Tacoma News Tribune, December 22, 1925.

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#### DARK SECRET OF CITY NAME OUT AT LAST

Hist! For the benefit of Seattle residents who think America's grandest mountain should be called for an obscure British naval captain who fought American revolutionists, let it be known the secret of where the name "Tacoma" came from is out at last.

Some benighted pioneers of the Puget Sound country and later misguided historians have been under the impression that the Indians of this section had a name "Tacoma" or "Tachoma" or something very similar which they applied to the outstanding object of the land, a great snow-crowned mountain. Some have even been foolish enough to think the founders of this city named it after the mountain as they found it called by the natives.

But no! The name "Tacoma" is a pure Friesian, Holland, name. If the Siwashes ever heard of it, they must have got it from Siebe Jans Tacoma, who sailed from Holland in 1859, leaving his family behind him, and was never more heard from.

All this appears from a letter which has just been received by Mayor M.G. Tennent from E. Tacoma, grandson of Siebe Jans Tacoma, who lives at The Hague, Holland.

The descendant of the intrepid Siebe Jans Tacoma has written in the hope that there may be some connection between the name of the city and the journey of his grandfather to America, and that through the connection some trace of the wanderer might be found. He points out that the name of the city is spelled exactly as his family name.

"The fact is more striking," he continues, "since the name 'Tacoma' is a pure Friesian name, which moreover is limited to my family. In view thereof, I would greatly appreciate to hear from you whether there might exist any relation between the name of your city and that of my family."

"Dark Secret of City Name out at last, Resident of The Hague, Holland, sure Tacoma must be named for grandfather," Tacoma Ledger, December 3, 1926.

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#### HOW CITY GOT NAME

Tacoma. Perhaps the only word which has been discussed before local firesides more than "Tacoma" is "Rainier." Another version of the reason for the name has now been advanced. John Garvin, old settler who lived for many years on Clover Creek, told the story to Chris Turner, another Tacoma pioneer who has resided in Spanaway for 50 years at one of these same fireside chats.

It seems that many many years ago, when Tacoma consisted of scattered homes of a few hardy pioneers, a group of three men were having another "fireside" chat at the Job Carr home in Old Town, and during the evening their host suggested that they do some tree carving to commemorate the occasion. Picking out a likely tree, the three men carved their initials, and the initials of Thomas Alison, Charles Onslow and Martin Alden formed the word Tacoma. And that is how Tacoma was named according to this fireside legend told by Garvin to Turner, and relayed to The News Tribune.