

## II. HISTORY AND HISTORIC PLACES

### Background

#### Context and History

##### *Environmental context*

The City of White Salmon lies in a transition zone between the maritime climate west of the Cascade Mountain Range and the dry continental climate of the inter-mountain region to the east. Successive floods, the Bretz or Lake Missoula floods of the late Pleistocene and early Holocene, scoured sediment in certain areas and deposited sediment in other areas at elevations. White Salmon's "Upland" area is situated on a bluff approximately 550 feet above the Columbia River. The city also includes approximately three-quarters of a mile of river frontage, including two established fishing sites under tribal jurisdiction. The area's geologic history and climate greatly influenced White Salmon's pre-contact and post-contact culture and history.

##### *First People*

Humans have inhabited the Mid-Columbia Plateau and Columbia River basin for 12,000 years or more. The earliest peoples developed diverse cultural patterns and several subdialects of the Sahaptin and Chinookan language groups. A common bond among these First People was the Columbia River, an artery of commerce and cultural exchange and its natural resources. The abundance of salmon was central to the life cycles of early inhabitants.

Over time, the population of the Mid-Columbia region shifted from a hunter-gather subsistence pattern to more settled villages beginning around 2,000 B.P.E. One of the oldest known settlement sites in the area, south of Klickitat County in Oregon, dates to 9,785 years ago.<sup>1</sup>



Tsagaglatal; "She who Watches" a petroglyph at Horsethief Lake State Park. Credit: Dan Meatte, Washington State Parks

The First Peoples of the region fished for salmon in the rivers, hunted game in the upland forests and meadows, and harvested food and medicine in the prairies. Within the mid-Columbia region lithic sites, rock cairns, huckleberry trenches, quarries, camps and villages, and pictographs and petroglyphs are physical evidence of the long relationship of the First Peoples to the land.

Prior to contact with Euro-Americans, the upper Chinookan people, including the White Salmon, built, and resided in oval or circular pit houses. Constructed with a roof of poles, brush, or mats and partially sunk into the earth, some circular pit houses could be up to 50 feet in diameter and 12 feet in depth. In Klickitat County, a good example of a pit house village is the Rattlesnake Creek Site located on Department of

<sup>1</sup> [https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Field%20Guide%20to%20WA%20Arch\\_0.pdf](https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Field%20Guide%20to%20WA%20Arch_0.pdf)

Natural Resources lands north of Husum.<sup>2</sup> More than 2,000 archaeological sites have been recorded in Klickitat County.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest written evidence of contact between Euro-Americans and First Peoples in the White Salmon area, the journals of Lewis and Clark, indicate a village near the river that Lewis and Clark named the White Salmon River. The Corps of Discovery members observed multiple subterranean structures with conical roofs as they traded with the native population who spoke an Upper Chinookan dialect, most likely members of the White Salmon and Klickitat people (Moulton 1991: 118- 122).

#### *Early settlers.*

After the Lewis and Clark Expedition's brief 1805 and 1806 visit to the White Salmon River, direct Euro-American presence in the area was limited. In 1843, the first wagon caravan of 900 emigrants reached The Dalles in the Oregon Territory; however, most early Euro-American settlers continued on, following their dream to the fertile Willamette Valley. In 1853, Erastus and Mary Joslyn, traveling downriver by steamboat, disembarked at The Dalles. Later, they continued downriver and spotted fertile flat land on the north bank of the Columbia River in the Washington Territory, approximately one mile east of the White Salmon River, and purchased their homesite from the Klickitat Tribe. After the Klickitat Tribe was forced onto the Yakima Reservation in 1855, Euro-American settlement accelerated. In 1867, Mary's brother James Warner arrived and established a post office. In 1874, A. H. and Jennie Jewett arrived and settled in the uplands, today's White Salmon. The Suksdorf family arrived the same year and settled on the flatland, now Bingen.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Early development.*

Agriculture and natural resource extraction drove the early local economy. Early inhabitants of White Salmon and the surrounding area raised cattle for the eastern mines and harvested timber to fuel the steamboats. (HRA 1995 and McCoy 1987). Wheat farming and salmon harvesting also built the local economy. The Jewett family are often credited with being the catalyst of the renowned White Salmon Valley horticulture industry. The Jewett's nursery and resort became a nationally known showplace for visitors.<sup>5</sup> The Jewett family was instrumental in development of the city's water system, and they made donations of land for Bethel Church and Aeolus Park.

A ferry provided transport service between the White Salmon settlements, and Hood River, Oregon. The community constructed the Dock Grade Road to the Palmer Ferry Landing west of the present-day approach to the White Salmon-Hood River Bridge. Horse-drawn wagons transported cargo and passengers to a flight of stairs that led up the embankment to the town of White Salmon (McCoy 1987:71-80).

In the early twentieth century horticulture, particularly raising fruits and berries, was an important economic driver in the area. A combination of horticulture, railroads and roads, and land speculation led to the "Apple Boom" of the 1910s. (Patee 2016) As prosperity increased, so did discord among the upland and lowland. The questions of the day included where the roads, railroad, post office, and water source should be built – close to the river or on the upland. Theodore Suksdorf platted Bingen in the lowlands in

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<sup>2</sup> A Field Guide to Washington State Archaeology, DAHP (2003)

[https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Field%20Guide%20to%20WA%20Arch\\_0.pdf](https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Field%20Guide%20to%20WA%20Arch_0.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> DAHP Archaeological Sites Per County, March 2017, <https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/ArchyStatusMap2017.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> History of White Salmon, Washington, Gorge Connection.com, <http://www.gorgeconnection.com/white-salmon/history.php#>

<sup>5</sup> See DAHP Historic Property reports, e.g., Property ID 722160.

1892. Bingen opened its post office in 1896. Mr. Jewitt platted White Salmon and the town became incorporated in 1907.

### *20th Century Trends.*

The Spokane, Portland, and Seattle railroad came through the Columbia River Gorge in 1908 with a stop at Bingen. Was the station to be named after Bingen or White Salmon? The compromise was to name the "Bingen-White Salmon" railroad station after both towns. Thereafter, the two cities, Bingen and White Salmon, grew side by side but at different elevations. That same year electric lights came to White Salmon, along with the first fire hydrant, and in 1910 the first sidewalks were built. The Condit Dam on the White Salmon River was completed in 1913 and provided electricity to the area and as far away as Camas, Washington.<sup>6</sup> The current road connecting Bingen and White Salmon, now Washington State route 141, was begun in the 1920s and the Hood River Bridge over the Columbia River opened in 1924. Since then, economic development in White Salmon has been driven by highways rather than canoes, ferries, and steamboats.<sup>7</sup>

The area has continued to grow and since the late 1990s has become a destination for recreationists and tourists. The community offers all city services and provides retail, medical, cultural, educational, and recreational facilities. The community of White Salmon has grown from its birth in 1907 and has established itself as a vital part of the Columbia River Gorge.

### Existing Conditions

#### *Historic and Cultural Sites and Structures*

The City and its residents are proud of White Salmon's cultural heritage and history. To preserve and share that heritage, citizens of White Salmon and West Klickitat County established the West Klickitat County Historical Society in 1984. The Society's collection of data, artifacts, and pictorials are housed in the Gorge Heritage Museum, formerly the Bingen Congregational Church (circa 1912).

The West Klickitat Historic Society and knowledgeable community members consider many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings to be of local historical significance. The White Salmon 2012 Comprehensive Plan identified several notable locally significant buildings. See Table II-1.



<sup>6</sup> The Condit Dam was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but environmental and cultural concerns—as well as the cost associated with relicensing the dam—resulted in its removal in 2011. See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LxMHmw3Z-U> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HES\\_-dKUE9I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HES_-dKUE9I)

<sup>7</sup> For local newspaper stories: <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~westklic/wsbshist.html>

*Table II-1 Notable local historic buildings (2012 Comprehensive Plan)*

Site	Circa	Location/History
Red Springhouse	1870	Jewett Boulevard
Palmer Landing	1875	Vanguard Nursery
Jewett Farm Resort	1888	East Jewett Boulevard & 10th Avenue
Stone House	1889	10th Avenue at the Jewett Farm
Sampson Electric	1900	121 Main Avenue/formerly Dewey Theater
Coffin Family Home	1900	NW Lincoln & Garfield/maternity hospital
Lauterbach House	1904	Walker home since 1960s
Pioneer Building	1904	Jewett Boulevard/ made of brick from Jewett yard
St. Joseph Catholic	1904	Washington Avenue
Hunsaker Building	1905	East Jewett Boulevard at Church
WS United Methodist	1908	Main Avenue
Red & White Grocery Store	1910	East Jewett Boulevard & First Avenue/ White Salmon Glassworks
Kloster Building	1930	East Jewett Boulevard / Café and dentist office
Pioneer Graveyard, circa 1880	2009	Renovation

The George and Louisa Aggers House, known as “Overlook,” is listed in the Washington State Historic Register. The property was once part of a small 46-acre cherry orchard business on the western edge of White Salmon. The 1910 craftsman style farmhouse serves as an excellent example of Arts & Crafts dwellings from the early twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

White Salmon is also home to a notable collection of mid-twentieth century commercial and institutional buildings, several of which were designed and constructed by Day Walter Hilborn, one of the most prolific and important architects in the history of southwest Washington State.<sup>9</sup> Hilborn is credited with at least seven commissions in White Salmon, including the White Salmon Post Office (1941), B.O.E. Elks # 163, Bethel Congregational Church (1947), a movie theater, rodeo grandstand, and several private residences.

The Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) maintains an inventory of historic and cultural resources. Some of the properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).<sup>10</sup> Currently, there are no properties in White Salmon listed in the NRHP; however, investigation by DAHP representatives has determined that several historic resources may be eligible for listing in the NRHP.

History evolves and what was once new or familiar may gather historic or cultural significance over time. Consequently, the inventory of historic resources changes and expands through the years. Best inventory practices are for a community to reevaluate the local inventory each time the community updates its comprehensive plan.

The importance of periodic updates to the historic inventory is illustrated in Table II-2. A decade ago, the community might not have considered the cluster of residential dwellings near the intersection of SE Oak

<sup>8</sup> <https://dahp.wa.gov/historic-preservation/find-a-historic-place>

<sup>9</sup> See Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), “Day W. Hilborn” <https://dahp.wa.gov/bio-for-day-w-hilborn> . See also, [Project list - compiled by Michael Houser, Sept 2006 \(revised June 2012\)](#) and [Day W. Hilborn: Built to Last \(PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A, White Salmon Area Inventory of Historic Resources, DAHP (Exported 2020)

Street and West Jewitt Blvd. to have architectural significance. However, in 2020 a team of qualified historic and architectural professionals prepared Historic Property Report(s) for these residences and concluded that the properties may be eligible for listing in the NRHP because of the local architectural character.

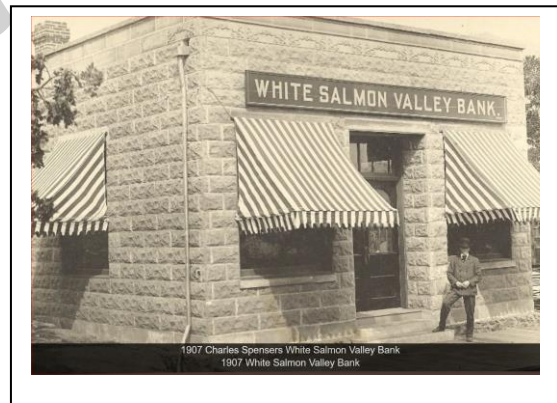
*Table II-2 Additions to the White Salmon Inventory of Historic Resources (2020)*

Location	DAHP Property ID #	Notes
267 SE Oak Street	722160	Circa 1920 residence – English Cottage Style
301 SE Oak Street	722159	1918 residence – Tudor style
345 West Jewitt Boulevard	722162	1973 – Northwest Regional Style
435 West Jewitt Boulevard	722187	1965 residence – Prairie Ranch style, aka Van Alstine House
447 West Jewitt Boulevard	722163	1940 residence – Cottage/Colonial Revival
475 SE Oak Street	722161	1974 residence – Northwest Regional style

*Downtown White Salmon: Now and Then*

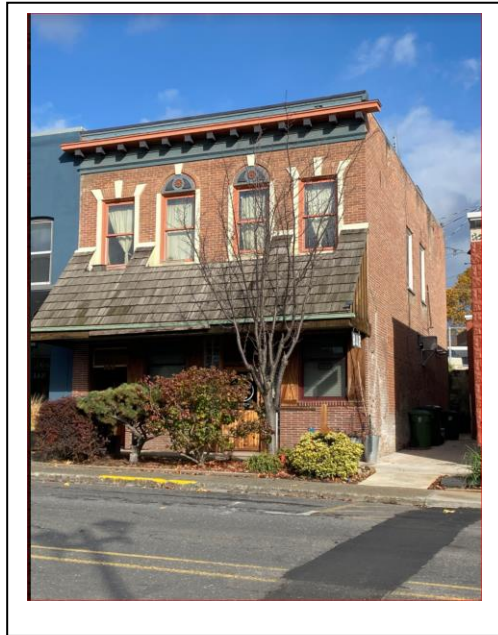
Downtown White Salmon boasts a fine collection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commercial architecture. It is a mark of good stewardship that many of these buildings remain in active use and that their respective architectural character is clearly visible. Jewitt Boulevard (aka WA Highway 141) has good architectural bones between Southeast 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and South First Avenue. Where the architectural skeleton is strong the body and façade can continue to flourish. Examples of these good bones include:

Police Station, First National Bank (aka White Salmon Valley Bank), 142 E Jewitt Boulevard. The building materials, mass and voids are essentially unchanged.



Tarwater Tavern, 130 East Jewitt Boulevard.

The brick façade, window voids and trim, and the decorative eave appear unchanged. At the first story level, the mansard style canopy masks the underlying decorative brick belt course and the original store windows and recessed entry have been altered. Though the building has been altered, the architectural bones are strong.



### *Existing Plans and Regulations*

The White Salmon Comprehensive Plan encourages the public and private identification, documentation, and preservation of historic resources. The White Salmon Municipal Code does not include discreet chapters dedicated to implement such plan policies. The City evaluates potential impacts to historic and cultural resources through Chapter 18.20, Environmental Protection, which implements the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).<sup>11</sup>

The White Salmon Shoreline Master Program (SMP) provides for protection and restoration of buildings, sites, and areas having archaeological, historical, cultural, or scientific value or significance within designated shorelands.<sup>12</sup> Shoreline jurisdiction within the White Salmon Urban area is limited to lands adjacent to the Columbia River. Those shorelands include a “Native American Tribes Fishing Site.” The Goals and Policies section incorporates many of the SMP policies relating to historic and cultural resources.

There are several Washington State and federal statutes relating to the identification and protection of historic sites and resources, which may affect development activity in White Salmon.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See RCW 43.21C and WAC 197-11.

<sup>12</sup> See SMP Section 3.4, Archaeological, Historic, and Cultural Resources.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter II, Appendix B, State and Federal Laws, relating to the identification and protection of Historic and Cultural Resources.

## Goals and Policies

Identifying and preserving locally significant historic and cultural resources is an important component of sustaining a community's cultural identity. The thought is sometimes expressed as, "How do we know it is us without our past?" Stewardship of existing built resources protects embedded energy, thereby reducing energy consumption and waste products. Protecting local historic districts can raise property values, create new jobs, and generate tourism. In White Salmon, the opportunities to create a sustainable future can be founded on natural and historic resource conservation and promotion. To achieve such a sustainable future, the City of White Salmon adopts the following goals and policies.

### **Goal H&HP-1. Identify and document historic and cultural resources within the White Salmon urban area.**

*Policy H&HP-1.1:* Maintain a comprehensive survey and inventory of historic and cultural resources within the White Salmon urban area.

*Policy H&HP-1.2:* Update the City's inventory of historic and cultural resources during each major update of the City's comprehensive plan.

*Policy H&HP-1.3:* Engage a wide spectrum of the community to plan for and conduct historic and cultural resource surveys, including, but not limited to, the West Klickitat Historic Society, business interests, civic and religious groups, local schools, and qualified professionals.

*Policy H&HP-1.4:* Work with tribal, state, federal, and local governments, and special districts as appropriate to maintain an inventory of all known significant local historic, cultural, and archaeological sites while adhering to applicable state and federal laws protecting such information from public disclosure. As appropriate, such sites should be preserved and/or restored for study, education, and/or public enjoyment to the maximum extent possible. (*Note: this is also a City SMP policy.*)

*Policy H&HP-1.5:* Maintain the inventory of White Salmon historic resources in print and digital format and make the inventory (excluding archaeological resources) available for public inspection and use.

*Policy H&HP-1.6:* Encourage interest groups to generate print and digital format maps of historic resources listed on the White Salmon inventory.

*Policy H&HP-1.7:* Actively support public, private, and tribal efforts to secure state and federal historic designation, including the Washington Heritage Register and the NRHP.

### **Goal H&HP-2. Encourage and promote private and public parties to endorse and achieve the City's archaeological, historical, and cultural goals and objectives.**

*Policy H&HP-2.1:* Recognize the efforts of the West Klickitat County Historical Society acting to create and maintain the record of cultural sites and historic landmarks (buildings, parks, trees, etc.) in and around White Salmon.

*Policy H&HP-2.2:* Provide private parties, tribes, and state and federal government agencies with a "seat at the table" when the City develops plans, policies, and regulations that might affect historic or cultural resources.

*Policy H&HP-2.3:* Encourage private and public owners of historic sites to provide public access and educational opportunities at levels consistent with long-term protection of their property's historic values and functions. *(Note: this is like a City SMP policy.)*

**Goal H&HP-3. Recognize the importance of educational materials and programming to stimulate awareness of the role that preservation and promotion of historic resources play in the city's future.**

*Policy H&HP-3.1:* Support citizen-based efforts to establish preservation and education programs, while building and maintaining information to be used for historical and economic purposes.

*Policy H&HP-3.2:* Promote the understanding of a diverse set of historical perspectives and embrace White Salmon's rich and diverse cultural history.

*Policy H&HP-3.3:* Encourage and support City staff and members of local boards and commissions to seek out and participate in educational training programs that will increase their knowledge of local history and culture and their proficiency in historic preservation law and programs.

*Policy H&HP-3.4:* Expand the use of web-based preservation tools to help the city and community identify, appreciate, and promote the rich diversity of the area's historic resources and cultural values.

**Goal H&PP-4. Incorporate historic and cultural resource sites and values into city plans where appropriate.**

*Policy H&HP-4.1:* Ensure that all City departments consider the preservation of historic and cultural resources when planning for and developing public policies and programs related to, but not limited to, parks, recreation, open space, capital facilities, housing, and economic development.

*Policy H&HP-4.2:* Ensure that publicly funded or sponsored site development and/or associated site demolition work should be planned and carried out to avoid impacts to the resource. *(Note: also a City SMP policy.)*

*Policy H&HP-4.3:* Provide encouragement and support for public and private efforts to seek grants and other sources of funds for preservation education, promotion, or development projects.

*Policy H&P-4.3:* Evaluate the costs and benefits of White Salmon's participation in preservation-related programs, such as the Main Street Program or the Certified Local Government Program.

*Policy H&HP-4.5:* Amend the White Salmon Municipal Code to adopt specific regulations for the identification, promotion, redevelopment, and protection of significant local historic and cultural resources.

**Goal H&P-5. Encourage and support private and public efforts to maintain and preserve buildings and structures on the state and local inventory of historic resources.**

*Policy H&HP-5.1:* Encourage owners of historic resources to maintain and preserve their structures.

*Policy H&HP-5.2:* Promote the use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, or standards of similar authenticity, for public and private building rehabilitation.



*Policy: H&P-5.3: If an owner alters a site on the local inventory of historic resources, require the owner to record or allow documentation of the resource prior to destruction or alteration. The City should maintain a record of such documentation.*

*Policy H&HP-5.4: Encourage owners of property containing previously identified historic, cultural, or archaeological sites to make development plans known well in advance of application, so that appropriate agencies, such as the Yakama, Nez Perce, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and Cowlitz Tribes; the DAHP; and others may have ample time to assess the site and decide to preserve historical, cultural, and archaeological values as applicable. (Note: Same as the City SMP policy)*

*Policy H&HP-5.4: Encourage development or demolition of property adjacent to an identified historic, cultural, or archaeological site to design the proposed use to be compatible with the protection of the adjacent historic or cultural resource. (Note: Similar to a City SMP policy.)*

DRAFT