2019 Issue 2 | Free

SPARK

The magazine of Humanities Washington.

"He began his life already an outcast."

ALSO INSIDE:

- *Race, history, and computing*
- *The fonts of Washington authors*

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

SPARK is a publication of nonprofit Humanities Washington, our state's affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. At community venues across Washington, we hold hundreds of free events each year where scholars, authors, artists, and activists discuss everything from Washington State history to current social issues.

Published in the spring and fall each year, *SPARK* is a free magazine based on those conversations. It's available at cultural organizations throughout the state, or you can have *SPARK* delivered for free to your door by signing up at humanities.org/subscribe.

EDITOR:
David Haldeman

LAYOUT & DESIGN:
Tarsha Rockowitz

COPYEDITOR:
George Abeyta

More stories online at humanities.org/blog
Find a free event at humanities.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Cover photo by David Haldeman.

INSIDE

Welcome

Define "the humanities." You might be tempted to list academic disciplines such as history, literature, and philosophy. However, Webster's dictionary offers another definition for the humanities in its singular, most personal form:

Humanity: compassionate, sympathetic, or generous behavior or disposition.

For the last two years, Humanities Washington has been fortunate to have Debra Holland at the helm of our Board of Trustees. She embodies this definition of humanity, and is a terrific example of how the humanities are best delivered and received: with curiosity and open-mindedness. This person is a walking, talking embodiment of the word we sometimes struggle to define.

Debra Holland leads by example. She commutes by ferry, where for years she and fellow passengers gathered around their mutual love of books at a monthly "Ferry Tales" book club. To attend one of our programs, Debra gladly makes her way to numerous places across our state, from Port Townsend to Spokane, and more. She leads meetings with grace, empathy, and patience. She listens, and genuinely weighs opposing viewpoints. She has advocated for funding for Humanities Washington in the halls of Olympia and in Washington D.C. Debra often notes that "The world is run by those who show up." She not only shows up, but her inquisitiveness and kindness make wherever she shows up a better place.

As past board president, Debra will continue to advise incoming president David Powers. Debra, thank you. You embody the best ideas that define humanity. Humanities Washington continues to thrive thanks to you.

With sincere appreciation,

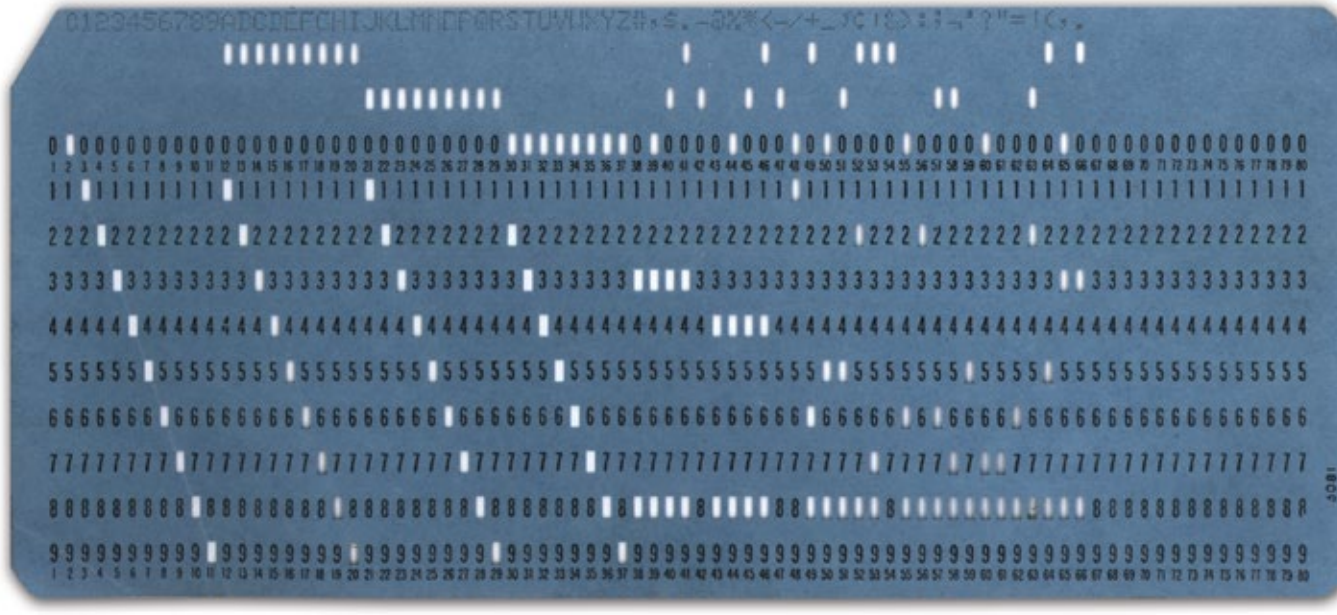
Julie Ziegler, Chief Executive Officer
Humanities Washington

Debra Holland | Photo by Brad Kevelin.

CODE BLACK

As IBM's first Black systems engineer, Clyde Ford's father had to navigate racial tensions—and his company's troubling history.

By **Clyde W. Ford**



▲ IBM-style punch card. | Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

I held fast to an overhead bar as the elevated train I rode in swayed side to side, rocketing into Manhattan from the Bronx. When it dove beneath the Harlem River, everything outside the car went dark, and I caught a reflection of myself in the window: a ballooned Afro, pork chop sideburns, a blue zoot suit with red pinstripes, a fire engine red turtleneck, a trench coat with its collar turned up.

On that fall day in 1971, I was young and Black, defiant and angry, and more than ever determined not to be like my father. Yet there I stood, about to report for work at IBM, where he'd worked for twenty-five years.

* * *

A generation earlier, in 1947, my father stared across a similar threshold, into an IBM office in New York City. He was a member of the Greatest Generation and had been a first lieutenant in the famed 369th Black Infantry Regiment of the US Army. At twenty-seven years old, he cut a handsome figure in his dark gray suit, red striped tie, and wide-brimmed hat with a satin band. But instead of defiance, he masked diffidence; instead of anger, he displayed anticipation; instead of determination not to be like his father, he stood ready to prove to everyone, including his father, that he deserved to be the first Black systems engineer to work for IBM.

It was the late 1940s, post–World War II America. Anything was possible! Duke Ellington swung jazz. Jackie Robinson swung a big-league bat. Brown v. Board of Education swung through the courts. Nowhere were new possibilities and promises felt more deeply than in Harlem, which was then Black America's gravitational center. In a City College classroom on the edge of Harlem, an accounting professor invited one of her students to dinner. The Black GI arrived at her swanky apartment dressed to the nines, and Thomas J. Watson Sr., founder of IBM, stepped from the shadows. Watson offered my father a job, and a Branch Rickey–Jackie Robinson moment ensued: the start of an unknown chapter in the history of modern-day computers.

My father described himself as the "black sheep" of his family, which he meant quite literally. In the mid- to late 1800s, my great-grandfather, Thomas McLeod of South Carolina, who had Scottish ancestry and was perhaps a slave holder or the child of a union between a slave holder and a slave, fathered children with my great-grandmother, Abbie Davis. From that union came several generations of my father's family, some fair enough to "pass" for White. My father believed that his darker skin placed him at a disadvantage. It also made him perpetually distrustful of others.

Skin color conveyed intelligence, my father believed. Lighter skin meant greater intellect, darker skin the opposite. My father read widely of such racist views in books and articles by authors such as Arthur Jensen and Charles Murray, and he did nothing to counter what he read.

Even with the theories of these authors debunked, and their reasoning shown to be corrupt, my father argued in their favor, despite all the contrary evidence of his own substantial intellect and his many fine accomplishments. His vociferous support of this self-inflicted racial wound was a constant source of friction between us.

When I was in high school, a typical afternoon would find me parked in New York City's Schomburg Library, devouring books on Black history. I savored the accounts of men and women whose greatness had not found its way into the texts forced on me at school. Then I'd come home to a man lamenting being born with dark skin.

* * *

"C'mon, Dad," I said. "You don't have any suspicions about why Watson hired you?"

"I suspect IBM needed a Blackie."

"But they already had one. T. J. Laster was hired six or eight months before you."

He bristled. His body stiffened. "He was in sales. I was in systems engineering."

"Okay, but why you? Why'd Watson hire you?"

My father paused, and a long silence enveloped us. He turned away from the vista over the Hudson to put a hand on my shoulder.

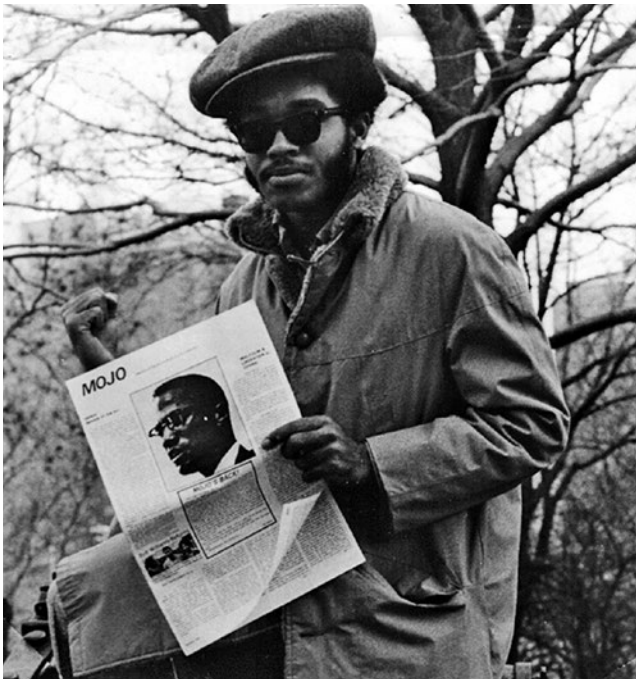
"I'm tired," he said. "Let's sit."

We walked to a nearby picnic table, where I swung into a seat. My father turned back toward the Hudson, then, leaning on his cane, slowly lowered himself onto the bench. He tucked his legs under the table, finally turning to face me. A sly smile creased his lips.

"I ever tell you about the time they sent me to a business meeting which turned out to be a meeting with a prostitute?"

His self-knowing chuckle reassured me that he'd reveal nothing more about Watson. My father's fondness for secrecy resembled that of IBM's.

▲ Ford's father in the mid-1950s with his IBM collegues. | Photo courtesy of Clyde W. Ford.



▲ Ford in the late 1960s. | Photo courtesy of Clyde W. Ford.

* * *

IBM's secret history began in the 1920's, not long after my father's birth but certainly well before he had any inkling of his coming entanglement with the company. It began at a time when eugenics was all the rage.

Eugenics promoted thinly veiled racism under the guise of pseudoscience. Eugenicists proposed several tools to cull America of undesirable human beings: sterilization, birth control, incarceration, miscegenation laws, immigration restrictions, and even death. In the early 1900s, as many as thirty states had passed eugenics laws that allowed forced sterilization or that restricted marriage between individuals of different races.

American eugenicists, led by Dr. Charles Davenport, elevated their movement internationally with the help of prominent eugenicists in Germany. In 1926, Davenport, head of the Eugenics Research Association, an outgrowth of the Eugenics Record Organization, which he also headed, received funding for a two-year study of "pure-blooded negroes," Whites, and

> *I savored the accounts of men and women whose greatness had not found its way into the texts forced on me at school. Then I'd come home to a man lamenting being born with dark skin.*

their undesirable mixed-race offspring. In 1928, Davenport chose the island of Jamaica for the study.

Enter Thomas J. Watson and IBM.

With Watson's newly minted company eager for the business, IBM engineers worked with the ERO at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory to design a punch card format for collecting all the information needed to report on racial characteristics. Watson's engineers also worked out the details of adjusting the various sorters, tabulators, and printers to provide Davenport and the ERO with the output they required.

Thanks to IBM's assistance, the success of the Jamaica Project allowed the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and Davenport, to announce plans for a global study to identify mixed-race individuals as a first step toward their elimination in favor of "racially pure stock."

By the end of the 1920s, IBM's involvement in advancing racial purity had only just begun. Thomas J. Watson understood the power of harnessing information technology in the service of racial purity. Five years after his involvement with the Jamaica Project, he placed IBM in the service of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich, using the lessons learned in creating Davenport's racial identification system to help Hitler identify and exterminate Jews. The IBM punch card templates for the Jamaica Project on miscegenation and for Nazi Germany's campaign against the Jews bore a striking resemblance.[1]

Thomas J. Watson hired my father less than two years after the end of World War II, two years after he had finally recouped the extensive profits his company made in support of Hitler and the Third Reich.[2] Now, under a new Thomas J. Watson, the founder's son, IBM pursued a remarkably similar strategy in support of apartheid, with an even more powerful arsenal of digital computers at the company's disposal.

Beginning in 1952, IBM leased Hollerith machines to the South African government through its South African subsidiary, much as it had with the Third Reich, to tabulate results of the 1951 census.[3] That census became the basis for determining the racial category to which a person belonged. In 1965, IBM bid unsuccessfully for the contract to create the passbooks designated for Blacks, but the company won the bid to create the "book of life," a passbook required of the non-Black population.[4] However, by 1978, IBM had seized control of the business of creating and maintaining passbooks both inside and outside of the Bantustans.

Watson and his IBM did not create my father's wound of color, but working at IBM, with its long history of technology in the service of racial purity and oppression, appears to have never allowed that wound to heal. My father's belief in the importance of skin color in determining one's destiny only grew stronger over the years of his employment. IBM's dark history, however unconscious, seems to have gotten under my father's skin.

[1] Edwin Black, *War against the Weak: Eugenics and America's Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Washington, DC: Dialog Press, 2012). This well-researched and heavily documented book is the basis for the assertions in the excerpt regarding IBM and the eugenics movement.

[2] Edwin Black, *IBM and the Holocaust* (Washington, DC: Dialog Press, 2001), 419-24. This well-researched and heavily documented book is the basis for the assertions in this excerpt regarding IBM and the Holocaust.

[3] Michael Kwet, "Apartheid in the Shadows: The USA, IBM and South Africa's Digital Police State," CounterPunch, May 3, 2017.

[4] Kwet, "Apartheid in the Shadows."

Clyde W. Ford is an author living in Bellingham. The above is excerpted from *Think Black: A Memoir* by Clyde W. Ford, copyright 2019. Reprinted with permission by Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. Ford is currently presenting his free Humanities Washington talk, "Let's Talk about Race," around the state. Find an event at humanities.org.

the BATTLE *that* MADE CHIEF SEATTLE

By **David Buerge**

▲ Arrowheads found at the site of the battle on the Duwamish. No consistent Native presence was known at the site, leading the author to believe these likely came from the attack. | Photo courtesy of David Buerge.

He was born an outcast—until a single act changed his life, and the whole of the Pacific Northwest.

When Euro-American fur traders began appearing on the west coast in the late eighteenth century, smallpox and other diseases they brought killed at least 50% of the Native population. Native societies crashed, and desperate groups began raiding to restore their populations, killing men and enslaving women and children. To find an event as apocalyptic in western history, we would have to go back to the Black Death in the fourteenth century.

It was during this time of brutal social upheaval that a child named Seattle was born. Partly because one his grandmothers had been enslaved by northern raiders—and Puget Sound tribes considered enslavement a permanent stigma both on the enslaved and his or her descendants—he began his life already an outcast. Further, one of his parents may also have come from the White River village called Flea's House, near modern Kent. The village was regarded as socially low, probably because it had been decimated by disease that left many of its children orphans—making them, in the eyes of other tribes, poor marriage choices. Even though he was raised at a different village downriver called Stuk, Seattle's supposedly tainted lineage bedeviled him. As late as the 1950s, George Adams, a state legislator and member of the Skokomish tribe near Shelton, derided him as "…an ex-slave who lived at Fleaburg."

How did Seattle become one of the most respected war leaders and visionaries of his time, and two centuries later one of the most well-known Native Americans in the world? It all hinged on a single event—a battle an untested Seattle decided to risk as a young man.

While not especially tall, Seattle was robust, good looking, intelligent, and had a powerful, articulate persona that attracted notice on both sides of the Sound despite his supposedly lowly background. By the age of 20, Seattle was part of a confederation of tribes organized by his kinsman Kitsap, a Suquamish war leader. Consisting of tribes spanning central Puget Sound to the Cowlitz River, Kitsap formed the confederation to try to halt raids from the north. Their meeting place was Old Man House, an immense wooden longhouse taking shape on Agate Passage that separated Bainbridge Island from the Kitsap Peninsula. Kitsap invited each group to add a section to Old Man House as a sign of commitment. It extended nearly 600 feet—at the time it may have been the largest wooden structure on Puget Sound.

At one point, word reached the confederation that up-river raiders planned to make a pre-dawn raid on villages at Elliott Bay, so leaders from the bay met in council at Old Man House. Debating how to defend against the raiders, council leaders called for suggestions. There had already been several down-river raids, and everyone knew the complicated nature of the Duwamish watershed. At a point just above the confluence of the Black River, the valley narrows and the river makes a series of sharp bends.

After several ideas had been discussed and found wanting, Seattle asked to speak. But who would listen to someone from his supposedly low social standing?

A spirit power Seattle acquired as a youth, Thunder, was said to give him his powerful, intimidating voice. He demonstrated this at winter dances, moving down the center of a longhouse, booming out his spirit's song as he shook his wooden, duck-shaped rattles. A distant cousin would later recall that when Seattle spoke in anger, it was the listener who shook.

So while Seattle's proposal was a gamble on his part, the council listened.

He suggested dropping a large fir tree growing on the bank near a riverbend so it spanned the water only a few inches above the surface. The night-time raiders would not see the barrier until it was too late, and warriors Seattle had hidden in the nearby woods would ambush them in their confusion. Impressed, the council gave Seattle command.

A day before the expected raid, Seattle and his followers reached the bend. Using stone adzes, it took much of the day to drop and position the tree so as not to be readily seen in the dark. As night came, they waited. Sure enough, with the rhythm of paddles, five canoes rounded the bend.

Immediately, three collided with the barrier and were swamped before their crews knew what happened. At that moment Seattle and his warriors leapt shouting from their hidings and

▲ Chief Seattle.

showered the struggling men with arrows. Those gaining shore had their heads bashed with clubs. The crews reaching the bank were met with more arrows, clubs, and knives in a brutal, bloody rout.

It was a smashing victory. To his growing reputation, Seattle added bravery, murderous skill, and, best of all, success.

A few years later, then a respected warrior, he joined Kitsap and hundreds of Puget Sound warriors in an armada of war canoes that attacked northern raiders—the Cowichans of Vancouver Island—in their home waters. It was a tactical disaster but a strategic victory that stopped northern raiding. Kitsap eventually established peace with the Cowichans through intermarriage, a traditional means by which groups encountering a powerful invading people supplanted violence with the obligations of marital ties and kin etiquette.

> *He single-mindedly attempted to build a peaceful, bi-racial community where Native and White people could prosper.*

For decades, Seattle remained a fierce war leader who led many terrifying raids, which frightened many of the colonizing Whites. When Britain's Hudson's Bay Company entered the region in the 1830s, the clerks at its Puget Sound trading post, Fort Nisqually, attached more negative epithets to Seattle in the *Journal of Occurrences*, its daily log, than to any other Native leader. One writer even inked his hope that Seattle's own people would murder him.

But among his own he enjoyed a reputation for openness and generosity. Outliving three of his four wives, he enjoyed matchmaking, and he had a quirky sense of humor. Hosting a potlatch and standing on a catamaran close to shore loaded with gifts, he threw them into the water and enjoyed watching his laughing guests plunge in to retrieve them. During a wrestling match he greased an athlete he sponsored with tallow so the opponent could not keep hold of him. When not pursuing foes in his great canoe propelled by teams of paddlers, he traveled the Sound accompanied by a flotilla of kin, and approaching other parties he would bellow, "It is I, Seattle!" to reassure them of his peaceful intent.

When he reached his late 50s, Seattle was of an age when leaders were expected to council and broker peace. Native tradition held that leaders were expected to be "slow to take offense,… to maintain peace in the family," and "talk good" to others. This was not Seattle in his earlier days, but observing the pace of American settlement, the settlers' aggressive resolve and

penchant for violence—and mindful of Kitsap's accommodation with the Cowichans—he abandoned his role as a war leader and became an impresario, inviting Americans to visit and settle in his homeland. Because most had not experienced his earlier behavior, American settlers did not appreciate just how breathtaking his transformation was. He single-mindedly attempted to build a peaceful, bi-racial community where Native and White people could prosper. His powerful reputation, brilliant oratory, and extraordinary tool-kit of skills made this seem possible, and so impressed the Americans he brought to the east side of Elliott Bay that they named their community after him.

Sadly, his vision of a peaceful, multiracial society based on Native tradition did not survive. Although a majority of the early young, male American settlers were happy to marry Native women, their more elitist and racist colleagues dismissed them as "Squaw-men." These later newcomers had no intention on intermarrying with "savages." Instead, officials drove Native people to reservations far from the frontier settlements in whose creation they had so enthusiastically participated. It took more than a century before White Americans began to contemplate how savage was their own behavior.

Seattle is the largest city in the world named after a Native American. His speeches, real and apocryphal, are considered some of the greatest ever made. All of this had its origin in a chance he took, a battle he won, and a legend birthed on the lower White River two centuries ago. His character and vision make him an inspiring namesake for a city whose residents have yet to grasp how his upbringing, bravery, and wisdom enabled him to envision a community marked by a devotion to progress and humanity. Only by emulating his tolerance and vision may the city eventually achieve its claim of being world-class.

David Buerge is a historian to the Duwamish tribe. He is the author of *Chief Seattle and the Town that Took His Name*, published by Sasquatch Books, from which this piece was adapted. He is currently presenting his free Humanities Washington Speakers Bureau talk, "Who Was Chief Seattle?," around the state. Find an event at humanities.org.

▲ Lake Burien. | Photo by David Haldeman.

FAMOUSLY, CHIEF SEATTLE saw the buying and selling of land as absurd. ". . . The Great Chief above who made the country made it for all . . . ," he said during the Point Elliott Council in 1855.

But ironically, the lake that saw one of the most important events in Seattle's life is now sealed off from the public by private land—even though the lake itself is publicly owned.

According to Duwamish historian David Buerge, Lake Burien was likely where, as an adolescent, Seattle went on his vision quest. These quests were rites of passage for those in Seattle's tribe, and for many Native youth. For several days Seattle fasted, cleansed himself with fir bark, and dove into the center of the lake where the spirit lived. Then in a dream vision, he acquired the power of Thunder, which was said to give him his booming voice and commanding presence. These traits later helped him guide the direction of the city that now bears his name.

Now Lake Burien is surrounded entirely by private homes. As reported by *The Seattle Times*, though the lake itself is owned by the state, there is not a single point of public access, and the lake is nearly impossible to view from ground-level. Lakefront property owners have fought attempts to create public access to the lake. As a result, Burien's namesake lake is virtually invisible in the town, and few know its connection to a legendary figure in Northwest history.

—David Haldeman

A MAN ENRAPTURED

Billy Graham spent his life declaring the end was near. That gave American evangelicals a new beginning.

By **Matthew Sutton**

▲ Billy Graham with President Gerald Ford at the White House in 1976. | Photo composite by Tarsha Rockowitz and David Haldeman. Photos courtesy of the Library of Congress.

On September 23, 1949, President Harry Truman revealed to the world that the Soviet Union had conducted a successful test of an atomic bomb. Two days later, a handsome, lanky, thirty-one-year-old evangelist stepped up to the podium in a makeshift tabernacle erected on a vacant lot in southern California. "I think that we are living at a time in world history when God is giving us a desperate choice, a choice of either revival or judgment," the preacher blustered in a southern twang. "There is no alternative! . . . God Almighty is going to bring judgment upon this city unless people repent and believe—unless God sends an old-fashioned, heaven-sent, Holy Ghost revival."

The young Billy Graham warned the sixty-five hundred people who had packed into the revival tent that now was the time for salvation. "Across Europe at this very hour there is stark naked fear among the people, for we all realize that war is much closer than we ever dreamed," he warned. "Russia has now exploded an atomic bomb. An arms race . . . is driving us madly towards destruction! . . . I am persuaded that time is desperately short!" But he did not despair. Throughout Graham's career he reminded his listeners of God's promise to the Hebrews in 2 Chronicles 7:14, "if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Like most other fundamentalists and evangelicals, Graham did not just see this verse as a promise to ancient Israel. He also believed it applied to the modern United States. Judgment was coming, but it was never too late to repent and find redemption.

Graham's ascension into the center of American religious life marked a new point in the history of modern evangelicalism. He was a product of the new evangelicalism that sought to find better ways to appeal to outsiders rather than the old fundamentalism that too often produced ugly internecine squabbles. He masterfully integrated the apocalyptic theology of his predecessors with the irenic disposition and respectability of the new evangelicals. He never doubted that faith and American nationalism walked hand in hand and he believed that God had selected the United States to help prepare the world for the coming judgment. Advising presidents, meeting with foreign leaders, and counseling political policy-makers, he achieved the influence that the faithful had long prayed for. As Graham came to represent the public face of evangelicalism, he demonstrated that efforts to rebrand the fundamentalist movement had been a stunning success.

Though Graham had achieved mainstream respectability and political influence, he never doubted that the end times were close. Although he believed, like so many others, that the specifics of biblical prophecy were vague enough to guarantee vigorous debate, he made apocalypticism a central component of his ministry throughout his entire career; the second coming was one of the topics that most animated him. His invocation of apocalypticism served to instill in followers a belief that time counted and that it mattered how they spent their lives. "Fifty years ago," he explained early in his career, "a few evangelical ministers preached that Jesus is coming and, although their audiences listened with interest, few thought that their beliefs would ever find wide acceptance among the religious and secular leaders of the world." But in the wake of the world wars, the Great Depression, and the hydrogen bomb, things had changed. "A doctrine," he effused, "which was written off fifty years ago as irrelevant, inconsistent and impossible had become the great hope of the church in the middle of the twentieth century." He recognized that apocalyptic fears were playing a role in global politics. "Many world leaders," he insisted, "are consciously aware that we are on the brink of a world catastrophe and impending judgment." His goal, however, was to instill hope. With Jesus, the men and women attending his crusades, reading his books, or listening to him on TV or radio could find salvation.

"

His invocation of apocalypticism served to instill in followers a belief that time counted and that it mattered how they spent their lives.

"

During Graham's evangelistic crusades, he routinely warned that Jesus would soon return to separate the sheep from the goats. At a 1950 southern California revival he confessed that his calculations regarding the rapture's imminence had been evolving. "I'm revising my figures," he explained. "Last year in Los Angeles I thought we had at least five years, now it looks like just two years—and then the end." While neither Graham's pistachio-colored suit nor the sins of humanity brought down God's immediate wrath, his message did not change. "We do not know whether we have one year, two years, five years, or ten years," he preached a few years later. "But one thing is certain– there is a feeling in the air that something is about to happen. Men sense that they are rushing madly toward a climactic point in history." Shortly after the Soviets' launch of Sputnik in 1957, Graham again defended his apocalyptic sensibilities.

▲ Graham in Germany in the mid-1950s. | Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

"The Church," he told a national radio audience, "has all but lost its emphasis on this thrilling doctrine which is so clearly taught in the New Testament. I know that some have gone over-board and twisted and distorted the prophecies. I realize that many have foolishly set dates. . . . But the truth is that the Church has been most effective in the world when she has lived in momentary expectancy of the return of Christ." Graham understood that premillennialism was much more than an abstract doctrine; it invigorated faith and inspired action that would hasten redemption in a sinful world. "The Church," he urged, "must re-discover this great doctrine which is so clearly and amply taught in the Bible."

As Billy Graham neared the end of his life, he both tapped into and continued to fuel modern American apocalyptic beliefs. In 2010, the elderly evangelist updated and reiterated his premillennial convictions . . . . "Now at ninety-one years old," Graham explained to readers, "I believe the storm clouds are darker than they have ever been. . . . Benevolent hands reach down from heaven to offer us the most hopeful warning and remedy: 'Prepare to meet your God.' . . . The signs of His imminent return have never been greater than now." Graham's signs included the 9/11 attacks, the global economic recession, the ever-growing power of the state, the environmental crisis, the influence of godless popular culture on American society, secular school curricula, and the rise of multiculturalism. Although Graham told *Christianity Today* that he regretted the way his political involvement had compromised his ministry, that did not stop him from taking out national newspaper ads during the 2012 campaign counseling Americans to vote for candidates "who will support the biblical definition of marriage, protect the sanctity of life and defend our religious freedoms." While he didn't explicitly say "vote Republican," his message was clear.

Graham's work illustrates how, for over a century, evangelical leaders have masterfully linked the major issues of every generation to their reading of the coming apocalypse with the goal of transforming their culture. While the signs of the apocalypse have changed over time, they have never stopped appearing for evangelicals. Discerning their meaning has given the faithful a powerful sense of urgency, a confidence that they

▲ An evangelical megachurch in Houston, Texas, in 2013. | Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

alone understand the world in which they are living, and a hope for a future in which they will reign supreme. They also know that their critics will soon face the wrath of the Almighty and the torments of hell. The anticipation of Armageddon has been good to Billy Graham and good to American evangelicals as a whole.

In his 2010 book *Storm Warning*, Graham perfectly encapsulated 150 years of evangelical apocalypticism, with its blend of despair and activism. "Listen!" he preached. "The distant sounds" of the four horsemen of the apocalypse "can be heard closing in on the place you now sit reading. Above the clatter of the horses' hooves arise other sounds—the metallic thud of machine guns, the whistle of flamethrowers and mortar rounds, the crackle of burning schools, homes, and churches, the high-pitched shriek of missiles zeroing in with their nuclear warheads, the explosion of megaton bombs over our cities." But there was always room for hope. "If the human race would turn from its evil ways and return to God," he promised, "putting behind its sins of disobedience, idolatry, pride, greed, and belligerence, and all the various aberrations that lead to war, the possibility of peace exists. But when we see society as it is, with anger and violence around us, who can anticipate such a transformation?" Who indeed.

Matthew Sutton is the Edward R. Meyer Distinguished Professor of History at Washington State University. This excerpt has been adapted from his book *American Apocalypse: A History of Modern Evangelicalism*, published by Harvard University Press. Sutton is currently presenting his free Speakers Bureau talk, "The Chosen Voters: Evangelicals in Modern America," around the state. Find an event at humanities.org.

HAIR PIECE

A lot of social dynamics are playing out on your head.

By **Jefferson Robbins**

▲ Photo by Nina Strehl/Unsplash.

▲ Photo by Riccardo Trimeloni/Unsplash.

"It's a very fine line between having the agency to do whatever you want with your hair, and also knowing that none of our decisions exist in a vacuum," says Anu Taranath. "They're always informed, consciously or unconsciously, by these larger social ideas about beauty."

Taranath, a University of Washington professor, sees hair as a signifier of culture, race, social pressures, and belonging. Her Speakers Bureau presentation, "Tangled: Why Your Hair Matters To Society," examines how we express ourselves through our hair—on our heads, on our bodies, short or long, kinky, curly, flowing or shorn—and what replies we receive from the cultural norms we brush up against every day.

"We just have to look at Michelle Obama's trajectory," Taranath says. "How she groomed her hair said a lot, and how she was not able to groom her hair said a lot."

Humanities Washington: What led you think of hair as a touchstone for this talk?

Anu Taranath: I work a lot with racial equity, and know the discomfort that people often have when they have to talk about issues of race, and what that means for people's lives these days. We're not often taught how to talk about any of this, and I wanted to think about a way to have a conversation from a side angle—maybe not approach it straight up, but come at it through the back door. And when you talk about hair, you're

really talking about all these big issues. I look at conversations about what beauty is and who defines it, and how it gets regulated and enforced. I look at early Chinese migration to the United States, and the way Chinese hair—especially Chinese men's hair—was seen as a threat to the American way of life. In early advertisements and caricatures, the long braid of many Chinese immigrant men's hair was held up as this spectacle for ridicule. We talk about the ways that Native American boarding schools, not only in the U.S. but also in Canada, created a particular type of ideal that Native American children must adhere to, and that meant cutting off their long hair. We also look at Black hair, and what Black hair has meant in different communities and different parts of the United States, and the struggles of meaning over what beauty is.

Do industry and media today push us to think negatively of our own hair?

How could they not? So much of who we are is determined by our sense of "I'm not that" or "I want to be that." That leads us to think a couple of things—on the one hand there's something really exciting about being able to change our look. But then again, what does that mean in the larger context? If I dye my hair blond, as a woman of color, that perhaps gets read in a very particular way—different than a White woman who's a brunette wanting to be blond.

We saw Black Americans' hairstyles change greatly in the 1960s and '70s, using less product and allowing hair to grow more freely.

But you also see a lot of fear and denigration of that too. Hair pride is really important in communities, but it never happens in isolation from the rest of society. So while we could say the United States is a more accepting society maybe than it was thirty to forty years ago, it has not been an easy ride for many folks who have hair that falls outside of White beauty norms. And this presentation also asks questions about body hair—what kind of hair is okay to have on what parts of your body? Women who have hair in their armpits means something. Women who don't shave their legs means something. Instead of focusing on the individual, what the presentation is trying to do is ask lots of societal questions: "Why is it we recoil from X or Y?" We have a certain kind of image that says women should look this certain way—and often it's women's bodies that are being policed, rather than men's.

There's a pretty common trope in movies of women changing hairstyles in response to life changes—divorce, trauma, ambition to succeed.

And again, it helps us understand what hair means. Even without the plotline being around hair, something significant has happened to a character we know. When a woman says, "He's an ass, I'm cutting my hair," it means she's taking control of her life, she has more agency. We have all these associations with hair. On the one hand hair is about domination and control, and wanting to belong, but on the other side of the conversation are the people that want to disrupt that.

Your most recent project for Speakers Bureau had to do with children's books. Does hair have a place in children's-book mythology?

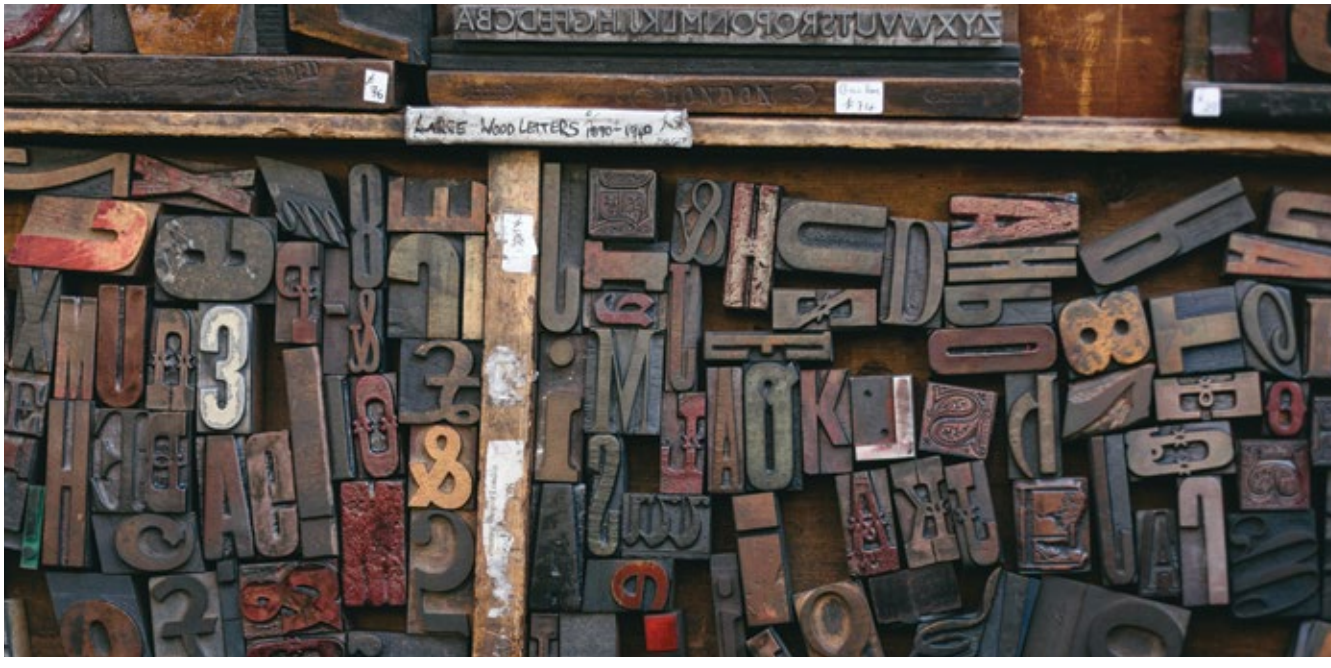
Think Rapunzel—it's a great illustration of the usefulness of long hair. But many cultures and traditions around the world have legends about hair, and what it means when it is cut, or when it's not cut. Especially when it's unbound, not contained in certain ways. In South Asian mythology, women who are seen as "wild" have hair that is not braided. So those things you see in children's literature—and you also see, over the last fifteen years, a much greater emphasis on all different kinds of beauty, in a lot of the body-positive children's literature that's wanting to be more conscientious about diversity and difference and identity.

Anu Taranath is a professor at the University of Washington specializing in global literature, identity, race, and equity. She is currently presenting her free Speakers Bureau talk, "Tangled: Why Your Hair Matters to Society," around the state. Find an event at humanities.org.

THE FONTS OF WASHINGTON AUTHORS

What do Northwest writers actually write in? We asked.

By **David Haldeman**



▲ Woodblock type. | Photo by Bruno Martins/Unsplash.

Fonts are unsung heroes—they subtly but profoundly color how we feel about a text. The experience of reading Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech through the stately serifs of Times New Roman might make you feel a lot different than reading it through the toddler-in-clown-shoes filter of Comic Sans.

So it stands to reason that most authors have strong feelings about the font in which they write. We asked a dozen Northwest writers about their chosen font, from poets to journalists to bestselling authors. Note that these aren't the fonts in which they *publish* their final work. These are the fonts in which they write, revise, and play.

Garamond | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"I like how subtle Garamond is as a font, graceful but not precious. I feel like it stays out of my way when I'm bullying my ideas around. It's clean, readable, lovely—sort of like the excellent handwriting I've never had."

— Sharma Shields, *The Cassandra* and *The Sasquatch Hunter's Almanac*

"It's slender enough that it doesn't make the text look bulkier than the ideas, if that makes sense, and it doesn't make me feel dull, like Times New Roman does. I can't write in too-fancy of fonts, because I don't want the font to distract from the actual words."

— Maya Jewell Zeller, *Yesterday, The Bees* and *Rustfish*

"Garamond was, if I recall correctly, used to print Latin, and has that feel to me—a certain restrained elegance and authority in its clean lines. My own handwriting is awful—inky hieroglyphics—and so the conversion from that scribbled text to the sharp contours of Garamond (translatable by exactly one person) is a profound one: the mess becomes text, a visceral transformation of the emotional, sloppy, self-indulgent first scribbly immersion in language to The Word, something that may, might, could—possibly, someday—speak to someone else."

— Tod Marshall, Washington State Poet Laureate 2016-2018

Times New Roman | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"The font isn't fancy, just clean and simple and easy to read. And I like 14-point for the same reason—its readability, which is neither too small or too large."

— Charles Johnson, National Book Award winner, *Middle Passage*

"I'm a bread-and-butter writer, not one of those fancy-pants reveal-my-personality-through-my-serifs kind of writer. Back in the old days, I was a purist, using only a 12 point Courier mono-spaced font, because that was the way things were done. None of that kerning jazz. But times change, you know, and I can adapt a little. So my font of record is Times New Roman. I want my font to be the same in whatever program I'm using."

— Garth Stein, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*

"I use Times Roman because it's a serif font. I was a design major and was always taught that serif fonts are easier to read, easier on the eyes, and have a softer aesthetic. Also the kerning (letter spacing) with some sans-serif fonts is terrible and my mild O.C.D. goes bananas."

— Jamie Ford, *The Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* and *Love and Other Consolation Prizes*

"I am not fond of it. It is too strict, but does the job. I have not found a font that has the spirit I wish for. They are all too harsh, some too narrow, others too round or feel too flat. Handwriting is by far superior."

— Claudia Castro Luna, Washington State Poet Laureate 2018–2020

Georgia | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"If the Georgia font were a person, I think they would be non-binary, have a great sense of humor, and their astrological sign would be Libra. I like it because it's practical and fancy without being too much of either or both."

— Anastacia-Reneé, Seattle Civic Poet 2018-2019

Handwriting | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"My first three novels were written on Olivetti and Remington typewriters. I've no idea of the font. The nine books that followed, however, were composed by hand on yellow legal pads with ballpoint pens—and that's the way I much prefer to write. Every week or so, I'll dictate what I've scrawled to my office assistant, who'll type the pages on an Apple computer: its prevailing font is Helvetica. (Should she ever switch, I'll tell her to go to Hel(vetica)."

— Tom Robbins, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues* and *Still Life with Woodpecker*

Lucida Grande | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"Once I became a convert to Apple products, Lucida Grande quickly became my favorite font (it was evidently also a favorite of the OS developers). I think what I most like about it is the clean lines, the lack of serifs, and the balanced spacing between letters."

— Nancy Pearl, *Book Lust* and *George & Lizzie*

American Typewriter | AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"My favorite font on my Macbook was American Typewriter. That's because in the old analog days, I wrote for years on a 1939 Royal that weighed the same as a Sherman tank. Once, a metal piece of type—a letter, I think it was the 's'—came loose and struck me and nicked my forehead. My type choice literally made me bleed! I have had to switch to a Dell laptop for work and I complain about Word and Microsoft endlessly. At least they killed Clippy. My laptop doesn't have American Typewriter, so I use whatever the default is—Calibri. Very blah but it gets the job done."

— Knute Berger, journalist, *Crosscut*

WhaTever | AaBbCcDDEeFfGgHhIiJjKKLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSSTtUuVvWwXxYyZz

"I generally write with whatever default font pops up—as long as it has a serif. (Cambria 12 point, it looks like on the novel I'm finishing now.) But Word could trick me into writing in just about anything if that's what opened up with the program, I suspect, except maybe WingDings. (Do they still make WingDings?)"

— Jess Walter, *Beautiful Ruins* and *Citizen Vince*

NEWS

from Humanities Washington

New Think & Drink series asks: What is the internet doing to humanity?

For decades we were told by internet visionaries and social media companies that connectedness was inherently good. Now, after a rise in mass shootings linked to online hate groups, along with screen addiction, misinformation, privacy violations, and skyrocketing levels of anxiety and depression among the young, a backlash has emerged.

Yes, the world has been radically altered by the internet, but is the backlash truly justified? Join Humanities Washington for our 2019-2020 Think & Drink series, "The Wired Mind: How the Internet is Changing Humanity." At events across the state, explore the social and psychological effects of our internet-saturated world. Is the internet making us happier, safer, and smarter—or miserable? View the full series at humanities.org.

SPOKANE: OCTOBER 8, 2019
Magic Lantern Theatre

SEATTLE: OCTOBER 9, 2019
Town Hall Forum Space

YAKIMA: OCTOBER 16, 2019
Gilbert Cellars

TACOMA: NOVEMBER 6, 2019
McMenamins Elks Lodge Spanish Ballroom

Poet Laureate awarded $100,000 for Columbia River poetry project

Claudia Castro Luna has been awarded a major fellowship from the Academy of American Poets for a project about the Columbia River. "One River, Many Voices/Un Río, Muchas Voces" will celebrate the river through free poetry readings and workshops in towns along the Columbia. "I view this project as a chance to build community through the power of the written and spoken word," said Castro Luna. "These meetings will be explorations of place and history, of language, of the power of words and songs to define ourselves, to express core notions of belonging." More information on the project can be found at rivervoiceswa.com.

2019-2020 Heritage Arts Apprenticeship teams announced

From Indian classical dance, to Northwest Coast Native arts and crafts, to stone carving, hip hop, and much more, The Center for Washington Cultural Traditions is excited to announce selections for the 2019-2020 Washington State Heritage Arts Apprenticeship program.

Created to encourage people to learn a traditional trade, craft, or skill, the Heritage Arts Apprenticeship program conserves and helps carry on cultural traditions important to Washington's communities. Program participants may teach or study occupational arts, storytelling and other verbal arts, dance, culinary traditions, music, and much more.

These skilled and experienced master artists and tradition bearers will work with and mentor one apprentice each, teaching skills related to a tradition in their community. The Heritage Arts Apprenticeship program will culminate in a free event to introduce the public to these unique cultural traditions. View the full list of teams at waculture.org.

Stay up to date at humanities.org

bedtime stories | FUNDRAISER

This fall, join us for an evening of food, wine, and words at one of our Bedtime Stories fundraisers.

SEATTLE, OCTOBER 11,
FAIRMONT OLYMPIC HOTEL

Featuring Charles Johnson,
Claudia Castro Luna, and Sonora Jha

SPOKANE, OCTOBER 25,
THE SPOKANE CLUB

Featuring Sharma Shields, Jess Walter,
and Ben Goldfarb

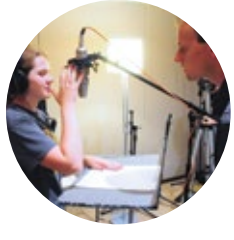
humanities WASHINGTON | h w

OUR MISSION

Humanities Washington opens minds and bridges divides by creating spaces to explore different perspectives.

OUR PROGRAMS

FAMILY READING uses storytelling and discussion to explore cultural and ethical themes in children's literature and emphasizes the importance of families reading together.

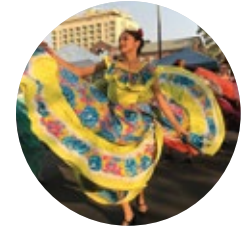


GRANTS assist local organizations in creating opportunities for their community to come together to discuss important issues using the humanities.

SPEAKERS BUREAU draws from a pool of leading cultural experts and scholars to provide free conversational lectures in communities throughout the state.

THINK & DRINK brings hosted conversations on provocative topics and new ideas to pubs and tasting rooms in Bellingham, Spokane, Seattle, Tacoma, and Yakima.

WASHINGTON STATE POET LAUREATE builds awareness and appreciation of poetry – including the state's legacy of poetry – through public readings, workshops, lectures, and presentations throughout the state. Managed in partnership with ArtsWA.



CENTER FOR WASHINGTON CULTURAL TRADITIONS is a new effort to amplify our state's rich, diverse living cultural treasures through research and special programming. Managed in partnership with ArtsWA.

humanities WASHINGTON | h w

130 Nickerson St., Suite 304
Seattle, WA 98109

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Changes? Please make the corrections on your address label, check the appropriate box below, and return to Humanities Washington.

- ☐ *Name misspelled*
- ☐ *Contact person changed*
- ☐ *Address wrong*
- ☐ *Duplicate mailing*
- ☐ *Remove from mailing list*

Or send changes via email to spark@humanities.org