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Western Regionalism: Views on Cascadia

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MR. KING: On behalf of the Institute, I want to thank Jim Phillips for substituting for Charles Kelly who for one reason or another could not come. I’m sure they’ll put on very a good show for you. They’re both very accomplished speakers. I just thank them for showing up.

Paul, the floor is yours.

MR. FRASER: Not a moment too soon. I always believed that anybody asked to chair one of these sessions should be possessed of what someone once called stage absence.

It seems to me that the participants should be those that aren’t trumped and are given the privilege of at least saying what they have to say. It’s the equivalent, I suppose, in modern terms of what they used to say about late Dennis Thatcher, Henry, always present, never there.

However, I have to say the things that come to mind, Henry the Fifth, you remember this, we few, we happy few, we band of brothers. There may have been, Henry, a shrinkage from upstairs, but everything that is going to happen here tonight will be worthy of hearing.

It was a bit discomforting for my colleagues and me to hear the other day at the meeting of the board of the Institute that we are in sort of a laboratory. This program may be reduced from three days to two days in coming years. Therefore, if the program tonight is any good, no one will remember it. If it is bad, next year you are down to two days. We know that, Henry, but the pressure is on.

MR. PHILLIPS: David and I can fix that.

MR. CRANE: I’m not sure I’m enjoying this introduction.

MR. FRASER: I was delayed actually by a full-length mirror, something that the press is delayed with every day. I have a very generous introduction for you coming up.

With me on my right, is David Crane, who you have heard from before, some of you who have been faithful in the course of attending these conferences and this one in particular. Crane is substituting for one of our colleagues, Gordon Rogers, who was not able to come.

James Phillips is a sort of a renaissance person who is here talking about Cascadia. He is kind of a colossus. He has one foot in upper state New York, and one foot in northern Washington, and he’s dealing with border issues in both places. Were very lucky to have him. God Bless you, Jim.
I want to tell you that British Columbia and other parts of Cascadia are said to be the home of the Sasquatch and some fascinating politicians. It is important for you to know from the outset that the Sasquatch are the ones with the big feet.

Now, let me give just you a bit of context. Crane laughs, but I help to put him as the negotiator for the salmon Treaty, he cried for a long, long time, but he did a wonderful job. Don is an ex-pat, first from New Zealand and then Cascadia and it cannot be all bad if Crane used to be among us.

The evolution of Cascadia as a notion or as a nation has followed the path from beginning as kind of a wacky political bit of nationalism on both sides of the border to a now sophisticated, quite informed economic region with an annual GNP roughly the size of Australia's, around a tenth in the world.¹

However, you must hear some of the brief early comments about Cascadia, because there priceless, as the MasterCard says. The web site which was published first in the 1980s said this “The seat of the national government will be the capitol city of Cascadia, which is tucked safely away from centers of urban decadence.”

The disclaimer came, “the Republic of Cascadia is not yet officially recognized by Canada, the United States or the United Nations, not that it is any of their business.”² I am not making this up. I am distressing Henry, but I am not making this up.

Again, “Cascadia, like all sovereign nations reserves the right to operate in its own postal system and issues its own postage stamps. Recent commemorative issues include one, micro breweries of Cascadia from Bridgeport Blue Heron to Red Hook, all your favorites are here.”

“Secondly, coffee, part of our beverage of Cascadia series, includes popular blends such as Guatemala, Antigua; and, of course, Starbucks house blend.”

“Cascadia merchandise featured on the web site, Gateway Alpaca Farm, Alpaca, natural elegance, a renewable luxury, a sustainable lifestyle; and then this one. Cascadia potato chips, super crunchy, the hot jalapeno flavor is Cascadia’s answer to a chemical weapons program.” That actually came from a web site that was existent in the 1980’s.

However, very fortunately, that fascinating period of Cascadia formal history did not last too long. It has been followed by sensible discourse in planning as a nationalistic bravado gave way to an understanding of the need for

economic harmonization and environmental sustainability by the early 1990's.

Then we were hearing things like “This isn’t a separatist political move-
ment, we are simply trying to build a livable region,” and, “Nobody has the
slightest interest in a political movement.”

By May of 1994, The Economist reported in its issue of third week of
May “North American free trade is brought home to the people of region,
how much they have in common and how much more they can gain by work-
ing together, hence the Cascadia alliance a growing array of cooperative
links through State to Province accords, business councils, city and regional
government bodies, policy institutes and task forces. 3

The basis for all of this is more than a shared dislike of the east, a peace-
ful history, common geography and interlock economics have produced simi-
lar ways of life, belief and values.”

“Cascadians don’t oppose development, but want it to be sustainable, not
constructive,” from The Economist. 4

It should probably be noted that the major cities of Cascadia, Portland,
Seattle and Vancouver, because we are talking about a region that encom-
passes at least Alberta, British Columbia, and Washington State and Oregon 5
and, perhaps, Idaho and Montana. 6

The major cities of each pioneered in planning for environmental protec-
tion and the provision of extensive green space is part of urban fact fabric. 7
Present day reality is that with free trade, the Canadian concept has become a
symbol for new activity and service to the region.

We have two speakers with interesting insight into the development of
Cascadia, Jim Phillips and David Crane.

David, an ornament of the Toronto Star, has been recruited to our side be-
cause he has been a keen observer of the North American scene. Therefore,
he has some broad things to say about the Canadian-American relationship.
In addition, most recently, he has escaped from Albuquerque to be here yes-
terday having attended at their request, a meeting of the western Governors
and some of the western Premiers.

Additionally, Jim Phillips has agreed to do double duty by telling us to-
night about those aspects of his experience in the Cascadia environment, and

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4 Id.
5 Karen Dorn Steele, Nations are Old Friends Growing Apart; As U.S. Attitudes Veer
6 See generally Thomas Walkom, Time to get into a U.S. state of mind, TORONTO STAR,
7 Joachim Blatter & Helen Ingram, States, Markets and Beyond: Governance of Trans-
to give you some of his comments as an honorary member, until midnight tonight, of Cascadia. Jim.