

*Praise for Orchards of Eden:
White Bluffs on the Columbia, 1907-1943*

"A fascinating history of an early irrigation project in Washington State, based on the letters, memoirs and interviews of a White Bluffs family who tell not just of their farming experience but of the community they helped build and of the political/economic forces that influenced their successes and failures."

-- Margaret Hamilton Wood,
PhD, former resident of Columbia Basin towns, Wenatchee and Quincy

"At last--the little-known story of the orchard-based communities of the Priest Rapids Valley of Washington State before the devastating effect of the World War II Hanford Project. Told mainly through the letters and recollections of one very articulate family and assembled with extensive research material by a member of that family.

Drawn to the Valley and held there by the hope of the adequate power and water supply that would bring success, as well as by a growing love for the beauty of the river, the bluffs and the desert, the orchardists found that the realization of that hope made their beloved Valley the prime candidate for a secret plutonium plant needed for the atomic bomb. This book needed to be written for everyone who loves the Pacific Northwest and cares about its history."

-- Marthiel O'Larey,
historian and descendant of White Bluffs settlers

"Reads like a novel...Tells in vivid detail the birth, maturation and death of a tiny desert town through the eyes of one family. Their dream lasted from 1907 until the confiscation of their land for the Manhattan Project. An economic balance sheet would say that their dream failed, but this richly woven human story...tells a different tale."

-- William Keep,
college professor (ret.), desert gardener and Hanford Reach devotee

"Vivid! Authentic! The life of an isolated river community before the Hanford Project ushered in the firestorm of the atomic age...The whole Columbia River should be declared a National Monument."

-- Helen Wheeler Hastay,
educator(ret.) raised in White Bluffs

"An honest and insightful picture of the life of small farming when it was still possible. The respectable work, pride in crops, love of surroundings, and rich social life of a small rural community--all that good made the strangling economics endurable for families. If we could only reconstruct it now, with a decent return!"

-- Steven Vause,
former Washington State dairy farmer and retired teacher

"Mendenhall does a great job of combining the rich personal history of an extended family with the history of an early irrigation project and the social/economic issues facing small farmers of that day."

-- Susan Wheeler,
descendant of 1907 White Bluff settlers