

19th Century Olympia Architecture

The scope of the following annotative bibliography is 19th century architecture and early pioneer building development in Olympia, Washington. The list of twenty independent sources will provide you with a vast array of information, from personal accounts of the workers, laborers and pioneers to detailed maps and schematics of many historical structures in Olympia. The sources provided each give a brief synopsis of what one would find within each source, and assists in guiding the researcher on the relevance, usability and overall view of the source and its material. Many of the annotations will list whether or not the source contains in itself any useful bibliographies and/or other source material that would further assist the reader and researcher.

Appelo, Carlton E. Deep River: The Arthur Appelo Story. 1st ed. Wahkiakum Co.: Self, 1978. To assist you in better understand the time period, this book gives you a personal account of the life of Arthur Appelo the first president of the Olympia telephone company. Written by his son and author, Carlton Appelo. It provides a detailed account on the working conditions of laborers and builders in the mid 19th century. It includes several great personal stories by Arthur of his suffering as an average laborer and builder until his success with the phone company. I found this source to be an asset by projecting me into the minds of the men who worked and lived in this time period.

Blankship, George E. Early History of Thurston County: Biographies of Pioneer Days. Seattle: Shorey Publications, 1914.

By no means is this book a literary feat, but it does provide a simple look at the pioneers' lives and vicissitude in the language of the time. Based on interviews with survivors or their families it gives a short biography on several dozen pioneers and their struggles to work, stay alive, and build their homes and businesses. The back of the book is useless as it only lists several hundred books available for purchase from the publishing company, and includes nothing related to the topic.

Cameron, Marie. Historic Olympia. Rep. Olympia: Olympia Printing Co., 1983.

This report for the most part is poorly written and very speculative without citing many sources.

What I found to be useful is it does include a comprehensive look at many of the large historical structures located in Olympia e.g. Olympia City Hall, Thurston County Courthouse, many early churches, schools, timber mills, and all Capitol campus structures. It describes very accurately the location and construction dates for each of the structures.

Carlyon, P. H. "From Shack to Palace." The Washingtonian Mar. 1928: 8-9+.

The article describes the issues surrounding the tear down of the Old Capitol Building and development and building of the new Capitol building. It discusses candidly the political positions and the opposition of the Olympian people. The largest issue was cost, and who would provide the construction. The design of the new Capitol building was reworked a half a dozen times before a consensus was made. I found this to be a marginal resource on the construction of the Capitol building; it could have certainly contained more detailed information on the government's role.

Christie, Rebecca. Images of South Sound. Grand Rapids: Pediment, 2000.

This book is mostly photographs of business and industry in 19th century Olympia. Christie provides very little written information, however many of the photographs are of men and women in various types of work all over Olympia, from logging crews to shop workers. This enabled me to gain some perspective of the environment these people lived and worked in, and helped me to better understand their life as a worker and member of the community. Good photographic resource.

Hoffman, Wally. "HISTORY." Olympia Lodge No. 1. 6 Mar. 1997. The Mason's of Olympia. 20 Feb. 2009 <http://www.olympia1.org/Olympialodgepages/olympia_history.htm>.

Hoffman describes the Olympia Mason's very well and provides a great deal of useful information. This is the most enjoyable article I have read thus far. The Mason's of Olympia are a very interesting group of people. Their organization dates back over 150 years in this area, and along with the freemasons they are a very secretive group, and their mystery fuels my imagination. The Masons were an integral cog in the development and construction of Olympia. I would dare to say they were the cornerstone in the development of most historic buildings and their beauty. The article discusses information on some Grandmasters, and the lives of many other Masons. The paragraphs on each are well described and are all relevant and instrumental in the 19th century Olympia building development. The article also discusses many events, such as the fire in the Olympia Hotel in 1904.

Johnson, Emily. "Argument in Favor of Adopting a Group Plan for the Construction of the Capitol Building." Recorder Press of Olympia [Olympia] Jan. 1927, 1st ed., sec. C: 4+.

This article provides a compelling argument for a democratic type vote on the final architectural plans for the Capitol building. The people wanted their voice heard, and took great pride in the city of Olympia. Instead of having the Washington state government decide on the structural design, look and cost of the people's Capitol the majority of residents wanted to vote. Through protest and political maneuvering a group of residents representing the whole was created to speak for all on the final project. This article gives great information on early Olympian residents and their opposition to the government control. I believe this was inevitable based on earlier accounts of the police and government officials accepting payoffs from builders in order to get building permits.

Johnston, Norman J. Washington's audacious state capitol and its builders. Seattle: University of Washington P, 1988.

This book synergizes the plentiful information available from government records, architectural files, and personal correspondence. I found it easy to follow the development of the Capitol from concept to completion. The early Olympia developers described were innovative and adopted the name, the City Beautiful Movement because they were creating a Capital city. The Capitol project itself was called Audacious because the population of only 800,000 didn't believe it was feasible to build all the building of capitol campus at the same time. Johnston is knowledgeable of Olympia history and architecture. The book is filled with photographs detailing the construction of all the structures from beginning to end.

-----"The Washington State Capitol Campus: And Its Peripatetic Planning."
Columbia Magazine Spring 1999: 16-23.

The article is very detailed and well written. The author linked his information regarding the state Capitol's design and development problems, from the late 19th century to the early 20th century.

League of Women Voters of Thurston County. A Look at Olympia. Rep. Olympia: RNW, 1966.

This report provides excellent zoning and state planning for many of the government buildings in Olympia, from development to final construction. Includes extensive information on housing and building standards for the poor working class, and gives an interesting insight in the police forces role as building and code inspectors of the day. The report discusses the corruption by police and government officials that builders had to deal with in order to get their building projects finished. I found this to be a good resource on 19th century building development in Olympia. It provides another perspective of what early Olympia builders and developers had to overcome so they could do their job and build.

Lockman, Heather. Building a capital city Olympia's past revealed through its historic architecture. Alexandria: Olympia Community Planning and Development Dept., Advance Planning and Historic Preservation, 2000.

This book provides several great resources in addition to the text. The back of the book contains a detailed bibliography, a very detailed "Olympia Heritage Register of Properties" and includes State and National registers. It also includes an excellent glossary of Architectural terms. The text itself is a goldmine of information on Olympia architecture and carpentry. A very helpful section is "Laying the Bricks and Pounding the Nails (91)." It begins with "Carpenters Unite", and discusses Olympia's first mason's Union, believed to be started by a local stonemason.

Newell, Gordon R. So Fair a Dwelling Place: A History of Olympia. 1st ed. Olympia: Newell, 1950.

Gordon Newell self published this book in 1950, and it is a treasure trove of specific information on Olympia's history. Newell does a fantastic job providing photographs with each of his descriptions. The book includes many aspects of building in Olympia, and includes information on the map makers, carpenters, designers and mason workers. Also included are details on how the railway systems and ships brought in the raw materials needed for construction. I am impressed with how accurately Newell structured the time line of the book. This is an excellent resource.

Pierce, J.Kingston. "Olympia Capitol -- A History of the Building." HistoryLink.org- the Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History. 11 Apr. 2003. Columbia. 12 Feb. 2009 <http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&File_Id=5443>.

This article contains information on the criticisms of the architecture and cost of the state Capitol building in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many believed it was a waste of money to have something so extravagant, however there were those who believed that the Capitol city should be a magnificent spectacle of modern architecture and design. Discussed in depth are various arguments on the subject and a detailed account of costs regarding the design and construction. The article is well written and researched significantly and even includes personal stories, some very humorous, of many of the workers and their families.

Polk's Olympia and Thurston and Mason Counties Directory. 3rd ed. Vol. 12. Olympia: TC Printing, 1924.

This book is very useful to find an exact cost of building a structure down to an itemized cost of the materials. It includes information on the bank or person who financed the construction with a detailed list of all the local carpenters, building companies and/or independent masons involved with the build. The book is difficult to navigate through as the information is so tightly packed you need to know specifically what you're searching for to make any use of it.

Simmons, Katherine N. "The Cultural Beginnings of Olympia." Thesis. Washington State College, 1948.

Simmons' thesis describes the religious and education influence on the lives of early Olympia residents. I found this to be a great resource because of the well researched explanations of Olympia as a town, including background information on the founders, details on how it was built. Simmons also gives an excellent account of division of labor mostly based on religious affiliations and race, which I found fascinating. Simmons provides an excellent view point of the working class and the masonry workers who helped build the Capitol Campus in Olympia.

Smead, L. "Extracts from Competition, Washington State Capitol." The American Architect 13 Sept. 1911: 106-08.

This article discusses the Washington state Capitol project and the bidding wars that resulted between Architects and builders. Competition was fierce, and caused many to underbid what they could actually do the work for in an effort to secure the job. The article did not get into any particular detail, and is basically a synopsis of the entire issue. It is not particularly helpful, but very relevant to the subject.

Stevenson, Shanna, James H. Vandermeer, and et. Al. Downtown Olympia's Historic Resources. Rep. no. 86407. Vol. 1. Olympia: Olympia Heritage Commission, 1984.

This report was very helpful in that it provided a current look at the historical buildings of Olympia. In an effort to restore many of these structures it is necessary to know as much information as possible about the original builders, and contractors. What types of materials they used, and the original building plans, along with any later additions or modifications. This report provides extensive maps, original plans and designs, along with the structures historical significance and value. Chapter 3 begins discussing the 19th century development of Olympia. The report also has a decent bibliography although not as extensive as I would have liked to see in this report.

Washington Writers Project. History of Olympia. Rep. no. 1. Ser. 1. Olympia: Unknown, Not dated.

This is part 1 of 2 of a fascinating report. It totals 8 pages, typed on a thin rice paper. The report lists in detail the altitude and size for mapping of certain locations in Olympia where large structures were to be built. It includes dates, owner's names and the actual builders of the future structures. The report specifically details the old Capitol building, the first Masonic hall, and the legislative building sites. It also includes the land, and building prices.

----- History of Olympia. Rep. no. 2. Ser. 2. Olympia: Unknown, Not dated.

This is part 2 of the History of Olympia Report cited previously. This 15 total page follow-up is written on the same rice paper with the author and date still unknown. This report lists details on the development and construction of Olympia's first school, general store, hotel, and eating place. It provides some historic detail on each of their locations, building costs and lists individuals involved in the planning and construction. The is an excellent follow-up report, very well written, and gives the nostalgic feeling of reading an actual original workman's lost diary from the 19th century.

Wilkenson, Samuel. Abstract from notes of a Reconnaissance. Raw data. Washington, Seattle. Fall 1869.

The abstract by Wilkenson provides precise details on latitudes, longitudes, and altitudes for settlers of Olympia to come in, clear land and build. This would be helpful if you need information on mapping an area or for designers and architects to develop plans on specific land sites, or build models of structural projects. Wilkenson did not make this easy to read, follow or understand. This was not written to be published as it is mostly notes and of his trip around Olympia in the mid 19th century.