



nw documentary storyboard



spring 2011

Letter from the Editor



Dear Readers,

It's hard to believe another year is coming to a close. During the last year, we've revived the tradition of publishing submissions in Storyboard. In this issue, we focus on the theme "Sense of Place." Brian Burk documents the centennial celebration of the famous Pendleton Round-Up, and our own Ian McCluskey offers a little bit of history (and a glimpse into the future) of the making of a legacy. Ashawnta Jackson asks "Where Am I From," an experience that is truly all-around American.

I need your help, readers. We are getting many amazing submissions these days - including beautiful color photo essays - that I need to know how to share with you. Send your email address so we can spread the word about this bonus venue for Storyboard - and while you're at it, let me know what you'd like to see in future issues. I'm at outreach@nwdocumentary.org.

Thanks to all of you who have supported NW Doc over the years. I'm proud to be a member of this organization and enjoy contributing as editor of our publication. We have a special opportunity for you to continue to show your support for what we do. Give!Guide is in full swing, so please contribute to NW Doc.

All the best,

Like what you see? Please consider making a contribution to NW Documentary this year to help us continue offering resources to our community. With your support we can teach young storytellers the tools for documentary filmmaking, present important programming like Homegrown DocFest that shares new works with Portland, and offer the Storyboard newsletter.

THANK YOU



Multnomah County Cultural Coalition



eventBUILDERS



Hillside Dental Care



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A LEGACY

by Ian McCluskey



At the last minute, I jumped in my car and drove to Pendleton. I didn't have tickets. I knew the Round-Up would be sold out. It didn't matter. I'd seen the rodeo before. I'd ridden in rodeos, in fact. But this year was the centennial, and a centennial only comes around, well... every 100 years obviously, but perhaps more significantly, only once in an average human lifespan.

"It's easy to do anything once," my friend Ben used to say. "The hard part is making it stick."

The Pendleton Round-Up has stuck. It's not a

single person, or group, but a collective effort renewed every year. The Round-Up is a sport event, yes. But even more, the Round-Up is a historic drama, a reenactment and retelling of a shared history.

Portlanders like me don cowboy hats and boots that we'd never wear, say, into Powell's Books. But stepping

The past is not fragile. Like weeds, it's stubborn and deep in its roots.

into Hamley's Saddle, it's pretty hard to resist buying a new pair of Wranglers.

There are thousands of rodeos in America, but only one Pendleton Round-Up. It's not the oldest or the largest rodeo, but ask any professional cowboy, and he'll nod to Pendleton with reverence. What Yankee Stadium was to baseball, the old wooden bleachers of Pendleton are to rodeo. Instead of Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, Joe DiMaggio, it's Casey Tibbs, George Fletcher, Larry Mahan. It's where Jackson Sundown, a nephew to Nez Perce Chief Joseph, rode bronc after bronc until the sun began to set, making it too dark to hold the rodeo any longer and forcing the reluctant judges to award the championship to a Native American.

World champion bareback bronc rider and country music star Chris LeDoux loved Pendleton, and told a funny story of the time he and Larry Mahan and JC Trujillo somehow ended up riding a burro into the Tapadero Motel.

The Tapadero is no longer the Tapadero, but still a motel. There are now signs posted in the Let'er Buck Room (the infamous bar beneath the grandstands) that prohibit public nudity. No public nudity? The Let'er Buck Room was once the cowboy Mardi Gras. Hamley's has made a million-dollar facelift, but the store still awards the championship saddles. Down Main Street, I find a small saddle shop and a saddlemaker practicing his craft and know Pendleton of 1910 is still here in 2010.

The people of Pendleton know their story. They reenact it in the Happy Canyon pageant adjacent to the rodeo grounds. The script has been rewritten over the decades to be more inclusive of a Native perspective. It's slapstick. And pretty corny. But still, it's a story. A shared story.

Every time I drive to Pendleton, I stop at Celilo Park, where the largest waterfall in the Pacific Northwest once roared. They say you could hear the roar from miles away. The great falls that my father and grandfather heard, and countless generations of Native Americans before, are now silent under the backwater of the Dalles dam. But the falls are still there, sonar reveals, just submerged. If the river level was to drop again, the water would plummet over the ancient rocks.

We tend to lock up the past in museums for safe keeping. The past is not fragile. Like weeds, it's stubborn and deep in its roots. You can still see the tracks of wagon wheels along the Oregon Trail, or the face of She Who Watches, a petroglyph overlooking Enche-wana, the Great River.

These fragments remain, scattered. Abandoned barns bow, but refuse to fall. The past is all around us. What is fragile is our connection to it and how we interact with it.

To me, documentary is a way to connect to the past and to activate it in the present. Documentary pulls in disparate pieces, photos, oral histories, songs, news clippings, super-8 home movies. Collecting and then telling stories creates a tangible record that can keep stories alive, reflect our values and identities, and be passed down year after year, generation to generation. A legacy.

That's what we're doing at NW Documentary. I hope in 100 years, we still are.

Ian McCluskey is the Executive Director of NW Documentary.



CENTENNIAL PENDLETON ROUND-UP

A Photo Essay by Brian Burk



We rolled into Pendleton in the early evening, setting up our tent in left field of the baseball diamond, which was starting to fill up with other tent campers. Though it was still early in the week, people were descending on the eastern Oregon wool town in droves, drawn to the centennial anniversary of the Pendleton Round-Up.



As darkness fell, we walked toward the center of town. We passed an old art deco building by the railroad tracks, now a freight depot. The stars shone overhead. At the rodeo arena, the evening's Professional Bull Riding event was just ending. Nattily dressed spectators in Western gear filed out of the arena into the large parking lot.

Photographers and reporters were getting situated at the press office, horses were led this way and that, contestants with red and white number bibs pinned to their backs sauntered around their trailers. Event officials and security guards zoomed around in golf carts and diesel pick-ups. The grandstands were already open, and the public milled about the food booths.

The delicious smells of grilled meat and fried things floated by. The arena looked fantastic, freshly painted red and gold and sporting a newly covered west section of bleachers. High school kids hawked souvenir programs.



We continued our circle around the arena to the Indian area, segregated from the Western area as it had been for 100 years. In a city park, there were craft booths where Natives sold turquoise and silver jewelry, and also fry-bread, a flat serving of dough not unlike an elephant ear.

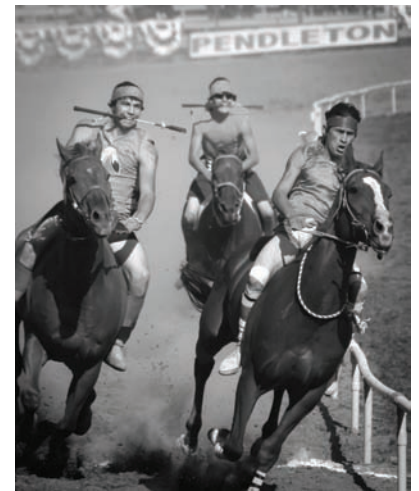


Just next to the park was the Indian village, a couple of acres' worth of tipis that served as the temporary homes for the hundreds of Natives who represented regional tribes such as Cayuse, Walla-Walla, and Umatilla.

Large yellow signs at the entrances to the Indian village forbade gang activity and gang-related clothing. As if to underscore the point, we watched three polo-shirted police officers order some young Indian men to remove the red bandanas they were wearing around their necks and over their faces.



The rodeo itself was by turns exciting, thrilling, and a little tedious, given its length. Western events like saddle bronc riding and steer roping were interspersed with Native events such as wild horse relay racing.



Four hours, hundreds of photographs, and one order of super grande nachos after it began, the rodeo concluded with a madcap wild cow milking race, a completely disorganized event that involved teams of men trying to rope and then milk some extremely uncooperative bovines.



I don't know how to ride a horse. I would be lost on a farm or a ranch. I watch the contestants who risk their health on the backs of these powerful animals with a mixture of awe and envy. I have lived in Oregon my whole life, insulated from this foreign world by the Cascade Range, and by the asphalt avenues that line the state's largest city, where the only horses to be found are those ridden by police officers. I don't think I could ever live here and feel at home, but for a few days in September, I visited, and felt welcome.

Brian lives in Portland, and took NWDoc's DIY Documentary workshop in 2008. He made "Apocalipstick," a short film profiling a skater for the Rose City Rollers. Lately, he's been working on his Portland Penny Project - check it out at portlandpenny.blogspot.com.



WHERE AM I FROM?

by Ashawnta Jackson

For most of my life, I lived in a whisper of a town in Connecticut. Tucked away against the Massachusetts border, it was the kind of place you only went if you lived there or knew someone who did. It wasn't on the way to anywhere, wasn't mentioned on the highway signs.

Maybe George Washington slept there at some point; he was known for his prolific New England sleeping habits, after all, but if he did, I never knew about it. We had a couple of churches; fields of fruits, vegetables, animals; abandoned mills hinting at the industrial boom our sleepy town once enjoyed. In a lot of ways, it was an utterly unremarkable town.

My parents, both transplants from Louisiana, moved us there when I was five and my brother was 14. We learned to straddle the North/South divide. At home, we ate gumbo for Christmas dinner, while diligently bringing casserole dishes of baked ziti to the Girl Scout potlucks. I learned about New England things such as reserved politeness, while surrounded by my parents' Southern gregariousness. I learned the dos and don'ts of proper lady behavior from my debutante mother, while learning the slight East Coast edge from my friends and my escapes — first, into the “big cities” of Hartford and Springfield, and then later into New York. Where was I from?

My parents divorced when I was a kid. I used to spend every summer, from ages 13 to 18, at my dad's house in Colorado Springs. Every day felt like waking up inside of a postcard. Mountains stretched against bright, blue skies, and the trees, reaching, aching to touch them. I'd never seen anything like it. I spent enough time there that it almost felt like home. Almost. I'd drive down Nevada Ave. with my friends, looping circles around the busy street, blaring R&B from the radio, singing along to every word, flirting with boys, and trying desperately to look older, more mature.

Once, I drove up Pike's Peak with my dad. We reached the top and looked across at the treetops, breathed in the air, cold even in summer. I looked across at all the world that felt like it belonged just to me. Where was I from?

Years later, I moved to Texas. Spent my days in the Dallas sun, a stranger to the culture. I went to concerts, raves, museums, dive bars, dance clubs, house parties, all slightly different than the ones I was used to. All slightly tinged with a particular twang that never felt quite right to my ears. People would ask me all the time, “Where are you from?” I'd tell them Connecticut. They'd laugh, tell me my accent was funny, and ask me if I'd ever been to New York. But, I took it all in. I was the girl with the

funny accent, the one getting lost going across town, the one that eventually found a tiny piece of comfort in being there, being from there. But, was that really where I was from?

I was the girl with the funny accent, the one getting lost going across town, the one that eventually found a tiny piece of comfort in being there, being from there.

I eventually criss-crossed the country, finding out that the idea of home is a lot more complicated than I'd thought. But, in my writing (in everyone's really, I'm not special) creating a sense of place is so important.

I want to close my eyes and imagine the angles of familiar buildings. I want to hear the sound of every street. I want to hear the difference between the honey-dripped New Orleans drawl and the coarse edge of an East Coast accent. I want to remember how it felt to be that small girl in that small town, aching against its confines. All of these places I've been, all of the places I'm “from,” all make the difference. The experiences of those places all weave their way into the stories I tell. In every word, I want to remember where I belong.

Ashawnta lives and works in Portland, and is the Managing Editor of the online literary magazine Rough Copy.

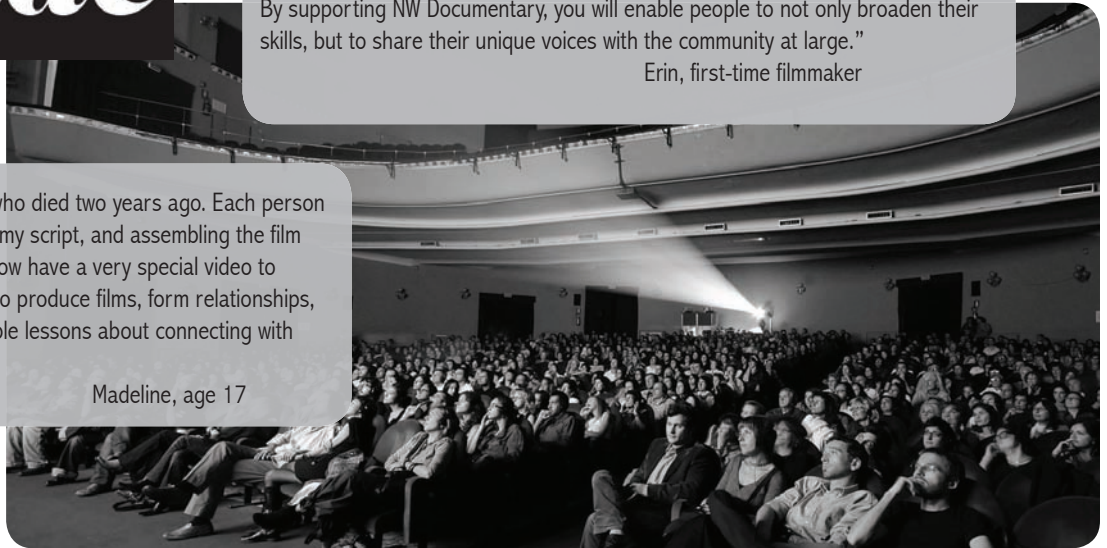
Willamette Week's **GIVE!** guide

"Documentaries are more than a film genre, but a way to preserve our heritage, exchange ideas and understand more about our world. The documentaries made by the hundreds of Portlanders who have passed through NW Documentary's doors are a growing collection of moment-in-time snapshots of our community. By supporting NW Documentary, you will enable people to not only broaden their skills, but to share their unique voices with the community at large."

Erin, first-time filmmaker

"I made a documentary about my mother, who died two years ago. Each person I worked with had helpful advice for editing my script, and assembling the film to make it just right. With their direction, I now have a very special video to remember my mother by. Coming together to produce films, form relationships, and circulate memories can teach us valuable lessons about connecting with other people."

Madeline, age 17



For the second year in a row, NW Documentary is a part of Willamette Week's Give!Guide, a special fundraising opportunity for Portland-area nonprofits. And since the program is online, you don't have to live in Portland to show your support. Just visit www.wweek.com/giveguide to make a donation to NW Documentary.

Last year, NW Documentary raised more than \$8,000 and we have set a goal to reach 1,000 people this year. Donating to NW Doc is one way to support our educational and artistic programmatic goals, but sharing the news with your friends on Facebook and through email is just as helpful!

So make sure everyone you know – especially those who love documentary art – knows about this

opportunity, and donate personally. To show how much we appreciate your support, we've gotten our community partners involved to pass along the love. Everyone who donates to NW Doc now through the end of December will receive:

- One free movie pass to Cinema 21
- One complimentary roll of film developing and processing from Blue Moon Camera

For those of you out-of-towners, consider making these great incentives a holiday gift for the people you know in Portland. And, of course, your donation is fully tax-deductible for your 2010 taxes.

Just \$25 helps kids who have lost a family member preserve their stories with a family documentary through

our Recording Resilience Program. We've partnered with fellow nonprofit The Dougy Center to offer kids who've lost someone the path of storytelling as a tool during their healing process. The results of our first workshop were powerful, and your help in continuing this collaboration will support more young people.

What's more, Willamette Week – the Portland paper that organizes Give!Guide each year – has thrown in more incentives for people who donate. The website lists all the goodies. Since the initiative began as a way to help promote philanthropy among young people, there's an exclusive drawing for all donors 35 and under who give just \$10 or more.

Thanks for helping ring in 2011 with more documentary arts classes and storytelling opportunities for all of us!



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NWDOC ALUMNI UPDATE

As usual, our alumni are continuing to showcase their original works around the country. Here's a quick update from two of them:

Christine Robins' DIY Documentary Workshop film "Period Piece" is enjoying success beyond its Homegrown DocFest premiere in 2009. Her film was recently featured in the Landlocked Film Festival in Iowa City. Christine told us the experience was highly positive and audiences especially enjoyed Christine's use of personal stories mixed with archival footage. She said one unintended, but fun, consequence of making a film about women and their first period is the fact that lots of women want to tell their story after watching the film. Christine's previous DIY Workshop Films include "Grown Up Blues" (2008) and "Jack and Scarlet" (2007) .

Tom Parker has been sharing his 2009 DIY Documentary Workshop film, "The Fowler Formula," about the rise of Honda CB160 racing in the Pacific Northwest. Tom brought his film to three festivals: Action on Film International Film Festival in Pasadena, the Orlando Film Festival, and the first ever Los Angeles Motorcycle Film Festival. There's also a special theatrical screening in January for motorcycle enthusiasts in Milwaukee, WI. Tom is now producing and directing a feature-length documentary on a Portland attempt to resurrect the legendary British motorcycle brand Norton. NW Doc Instructor Amira Dughri is director of photography. More about Tom's film at www.fowlerformula.com. Watch a fun interview with Tom at the festival at blip.tv. We're also pleased to welcome him to our Board of Directors.



Alumni: Keep us up to date! Send an email to outreach@nwdocumentary.org for future Storyboard articles.

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