

THE DREAMER AND THE DOCTOR: A FOREST LOVER AND A PHYSICIAN ON THE EDGE OF THE FRONTIER

by Jack Nisbet

Sasquatch Books, Seattle, 2018. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. 299 pages.

Jack Nisbet ought to be declared a regional treasure. Over the past twenty years, his interest in the natural history of the inland Pacific Northwest has produced series of highly readable biographies of early explorers that have enriched our understanding of the natural and cultural history of the region. This latest book, a double biography of the botanist John Leiberg and his physician wife, Carrie Leiberg, shows Nisbet's characteristic attention both to people and to the environment. John Leiberg, an energetic, self-taught naturalist and immigrant from Sweden, was a man after Nisbet's own heart. Carrie Leiberg occupies much less of our attention, aside from several hair-raising accounts of difficult childbirths, until late in the book.

In 1887, the Leibergs' homesteaded land that lay on the southern edge of Lake Pend Oreille in Idaho, and that region of northern Idaho remained their home base. John was gone most of the time, however, first prospecting, and later as a member of federally financed survey and collecting expeditions throughout the inland Northwest. Nisbet's accounts of these trips from 1893 to 1896 form the heart of the book. Leiberg's personal combination of prospecting and botanizing skills, plus his boundless energy, produced voluminous reports that Nisbet distills into engrossing accounts of scientific encounters with the varied ecologies of the region.

Much of the scientific activity was actually "salvage botany," documenting rapidly disappearing plant life. With the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad in the mid 1880s, ranchers, farmers, miners and others poured into the region, seeking fortunes from the land, inevitably destroying the original ecology in the process. Nowhere was the destruction as acute as in its forests. The result was rapidly evolving federal policy that established National Forests and the U.S. Forest Service, a policy associated today with its best-known exponent, Gifford

Pinchot. John Leiberg was part of that process, moving, almost in spite himself, from botanist to forest expert. Between 1895 and 1905, Leiberg investigated thirteen different forests from Montana to California and Arizona for inclusion in the new national forest system. In 1905 he was appointed a forestry expert to the Philippines, then an American colony. Leiberg expected to continue that work, and to bring his wife to the Philippines as well, when he was struck by diabetes from which he never fully recovered. He died of diabetes-related gangrene in 1913 at the age of sixty. Carrie Leiberg lived until 1937; their personal papers and correspondence apparently died with her.

Consequently, there is not enough personal material for full blown biographies of these two unusual personalities remains. Nevertheless, this study of their lives on what Nisbet terms "the ragged end of frontier times" is an important addition to his existing writings and, like all of his work, enlightens us all (p. xii).

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A DEADLY WIND: THE 1962 COLUMBUS DAY STORM

by John Dodge

Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 2018. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. 288 pages. \$19.95 paper.

The saying that "everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it" can certainly be accurately applied to the Columbus Day Storm. For over half-a-century, those who experienced this infamous 1962 Pacific Northwest weather event have shared their memories. Many of these memories provide the dramatic backdrop for John Dodge's *A Deadly Wind: The 1962 Columbus Day Storm*, the first book-length history of what is termed by one meteorologist as "the strongest non-tropical windstorm to ever strike the lower 48 states" (p. 83).

Dodge, a retired journalist who spent his career as a columnist, editorial writer, and