

# Try the whalebone soup with a side of tight boot corns



**Matt Winters**

A “Bill of Fare” from about 1879 advertises these enticing main courses:

- Umbrella with Rain Water Sauce
- Tree Toads, Fried and Stuffed with White Mice
- Stewed Cat, Boston Style
- Spiders’ Toes, Breaded
- Humming Birds, Stuffed with Old Shoes
- Buzzards’ Eyebrows, Larded
- Fried Buffalo Robes (very tough)

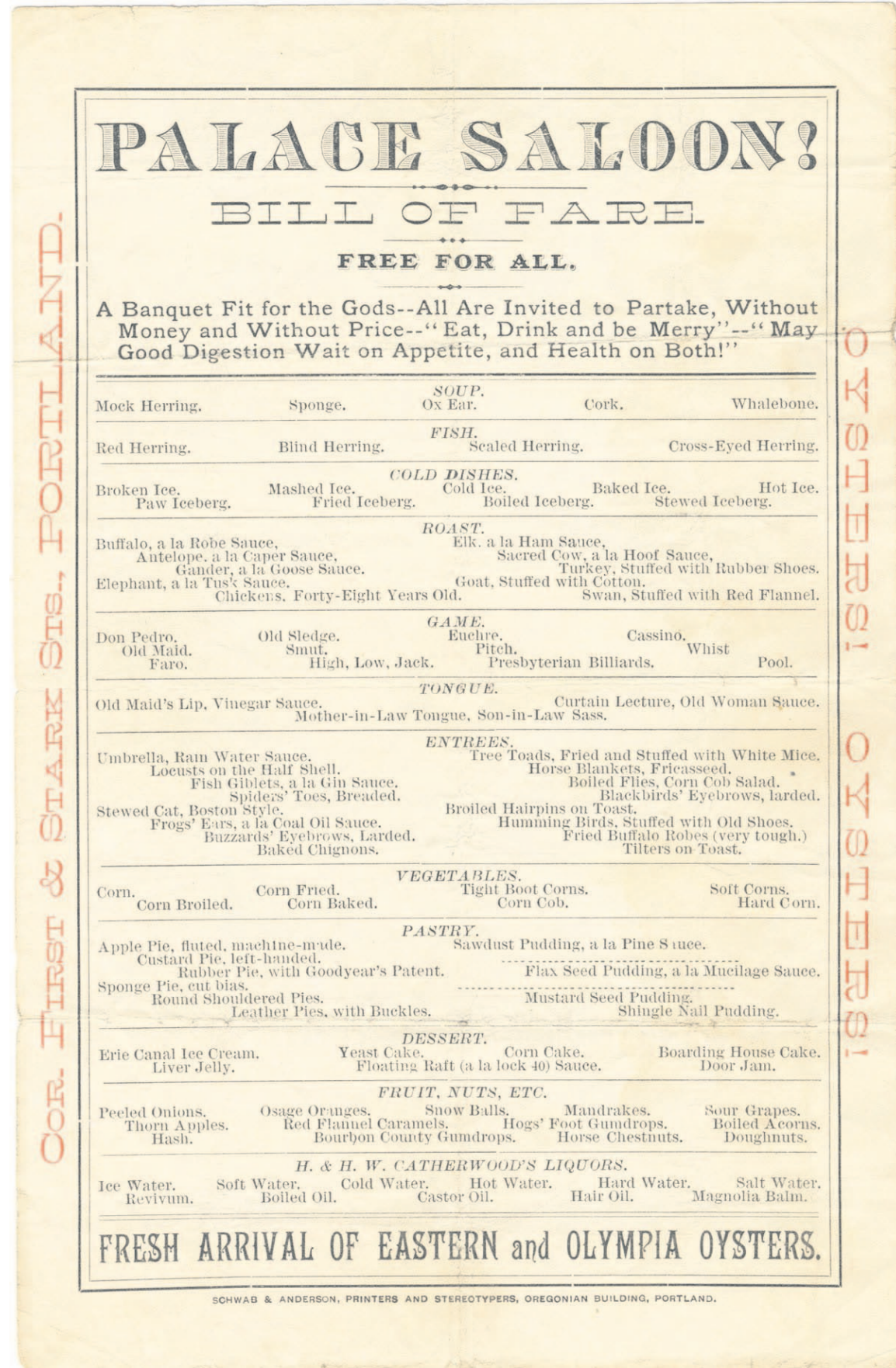
Peter Williams, Ireland-born proprietor of the Palace Saloon, had a hearty 19th century sense of humor, steeped in western folklore. His obituary in the *Morning Oregonian* of July 29, 1880, noted he “was a genial, impulsive and generous-hearted man.” Williams’ saloon at the corner of First Avenue and Stark Street near the Portland waterfront was feet away from what is now the Homeless Veterans Center — appropriately enough, since he served during the Civil War as a sergeant in the 1st Washington Territory Infantry.

Folded many times and obviously carried around for years in someone’s wallet, this novelty advertising item initially attracted my attention because it refers to Olympia oysters, the little native shellfish that played such a big role in the earliest settlements around Willapa Bay and south Puget Sound. But this worn document also is a rare tangible link to the Pacific Northwest’s obscure role in the war between the states.

## NW Civil War

From the tremendous [www.historylink.org](http://www.historylink.org) encyclopedia of Washington history, we learn that at the outbreak of the war, the white population of “the entire territory, which until 1863 included all of present-day Idaho and part of Western Montana, was just over 11,500.” Busy chasing rumors of gold, there wasn’t a flood of volunteers when the first territorial militia was activated in May 1861.

An early historian observed, “The blare of trumpet, and soul-stirring throb of drum, that sounded so continually in the ears of people in the Eastern States, hardly penetrated to their quiet homes, and when they did it hardly seemed probable that any patriotic response on their part, if made, could be of any benefit.” Only 361 Washington people stepped up to join several county-based militias, including the Puget Sound Rangers, while fewer still joined the territorial unit. Eventually, of the 1st infantry’s 10



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companies, only one was actually made up of territory citizens.

Peter Williams, like most members, enlisted at the Army fort on Alcatraz Island, California, off San Francisco in early 1862. Initially in Company A, Williams sailed for Fort Vancouver on April 30, 1862. From there, he served in Walla Walla, and later as a member of companies E and H, in what is now Idaho at Camps Lapwai and Boise.

Although some other Californians serving in Idaho participated

in one of the West’s most horrendous war crimes, the massacre of Shoshone Indians at Boa Ogoi in the state’s far southeast corner, the 1st Washington Territory Infantry was an easier-going outfit. They helped feed settlers and some Indians, while also fighting outlaws. Of an estimated 800 to 1,500 infantrymen who served over the course of the war, 12 died of disease, and 10 from accidents and other causes, including one murder.

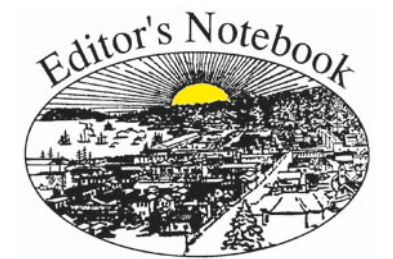
According to *History of Wash-*

*ington: The Rise and Progress of an American State* by Clinton Snowden, “During the winter of 1864-65, which was very severe, many immigrants were overtaken on the trail by the early snowstorms, and would have starved but for the aid furnished from Fort Boise and other military posts. On Dec. 20, Capt. Seidenstriker wrote to Gen. Alvord from Fort Boise that ‘A large number of emigrants are living around this vicinity, and a great many of them have families



Findagrave.com

Peter Williams’ grave is in Portland’s Mount Calvary Cemetery. It indicates the Washington Territory Civil War-era soldier was 45 when he died, although U.S. Census records show he was 41.



in fact nearly all of them. They are in a state of actual destitution and want, which is the more aggravated by the extreme severity of the winter.” The captain sought after-the-fact permission to feed settlers and Indians near the fort.

## The aftermath

Thanks to genealogical research, (www.tinyurl.com/pl18v5q), we know Peter Williams served as a hospital steward during his service in Idaho. Thus, he probably wasn’t out chasing stage robbers and hostile Snake Indians with fellow 1st infantry soldiers. By 1870, the U.S. Census lists him living in Portland, serving as a clerk to the medical director of the Department of Columbia Quartermaster.

By 1872, city directories find Williams ensconced in his career as saloonkeeper. He and his wife, Joanna Dempsey, had a daughter, Carrie, in 1869. Who knows — maybe they have descendants still living in our region.

Williams died at age 41 from the impacts of alcoholism, perhaps a victim of H. & H.W. Catherwood’s Liquors he served at Portland’s Palace and Welcome saloons. Distillers of “Brunswick Club,” “Catherwood’s A. A. A.,” “Mountain Dew,” “Old Special,” “Red Tape,” “Three Feathers” and “Upper Ten,” the firm may have been annoyed to see Williams describe its products as Castor Oil and Soft Water.

I’m happy Peter Williams’ humor survived, giving us a chance to remember him.

—M.S.W.

Matt Winters is editor and publisher of the *Chinook Observer* and *Coast River Business Journal*.

## Open forum

### FERC: Say no

Open letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC):

The many regulatory requirements for permitting Oregon LNG’s terminal and pipeline are stated in your Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Their proposal clearly violates part, if not all of the Clean Water Act, the Rivers and Harbors Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Golden Eagle Protection Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and most importantly, the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA).

Why is FERC taking the word of the applicant that everything can be fixed by mitigation and by other means? The Skipanon Peninsula is made of dredge spoils from the lower Columbia and Skipanon rivers. Exploratory drilling has been done to try and find bedrock. There was no bedrock found at the depth of 350 feet. How can a huge gas terminal be built on this kind of terrain?

Oregon LNG seems to have all the answers you want to hear. Your DEIS is full of holes and won’t hold water. This isn’t the first DEIS I have read. Your other EIS for LNG projects are sorely lacking, too. In the communities where these enterprises are proposed, the citizens say that FERC is a rubber stamp agency for energy companies.

Show us that FERC does not

stand for Forget Environmental Restrictions Commission. Do not give Oregon LNG the green light. Exporting LNG would exploit our communities and our state, and have huge environmental impacts. This is also true for the Jordan Cove LNG project in Coos Bay.

LORI DURHEIM  
Astoria

### Blowing bubbles

How big can a soap bubble get? Depends on the soap and the amount of wind it takes to sustain it, right? The other salient factor is that it’s still a bubble and you won’t have anything tangible left after it pops.

Astoria may be at the mouth of one of the great rivers of the world,

but that doesn’t make it a world-class port. There is no incentive to off-load or on-load any cargo here but timber and fish. We do not have a high-usage track spur, nor do we have an expressway running nearby.

The idea that we will become a freight and transportation hub is delusional. Enlarging the airport to accommodate 747s is, once again, delusional. We don’t generate enough traffic to keep a small carrier profitable, so what is all this arm-waving about?

I don’t think it’s about making Astoria a commercial center. I think it’s about liquefied natural gas (LNG). Admittedly, it’s a bit more obtuse and grandiose, but it’s still about a pipeline to the coast with a degasification plant to make it shippable to Asia. Our efforts to put an end to this

foolishness have been successful to date, but each new approach is troublesome.

So, while they’re making pretty bubbles and making us think they are real, we must remind ourselves that though Clatsop County has already rejected LNG, when we consider the huge profits that accompany such an enterprise, we must expect victories to be temporary, but in the end worthy of the effort. We will have preserved a unique place in an increasingly unremarkable landscape.

We must and we will prevail. In the end, it will come down to votes and though we may not have the money, we do have the votes and that surely is enough.

JACK GUYOT  
Astoria



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