

Imagining Astoria in the 1800s

Fiction contest continues

By **ALYSSA EVANS**
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR



This week marks the second entry in Coast Weekend's fiction writing contest. To participate, send in a short story, no longer than 250 words, to aevans@dailyastorian.com. Entries can be continuations of published prompts or new works of fiction.

The following is Astoria poet Mary Lou McAuley's story, "How 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' came to be written."

"This was part of some research I was doing for a RiverSea Gallery show called 'Imagined Astoria,'" McAuley said. "I was working at the library at the time."

McAuley knew that Washington Irving hadn't visited Astoria. After some research she located his nephew, who researched the

American Fur Trading Co. for his uncle and was paid some of John Jacob Astor's money.

"It just seemed like some fun to have Pierre's 'All Hollow's Eve' vision become the basis for 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,'" McAuley said.

"How 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' came to be written"

A discovery in the basement of the Astoria Library verifies how "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving really came to be written.

Author and friend of John Jacob Astor, Washington Irving was commissioned to write about the American Fur Trading Co. Irving agreed to use Astor's resources from the Columbia Basin outposts. But, Irving insisted on producing his own book rather than the public relations book that Astor wanted. So he used Astor's money and hired his nephew, timid and bookish Pierre Munro Irving.

The pages appear to be a rough draft of

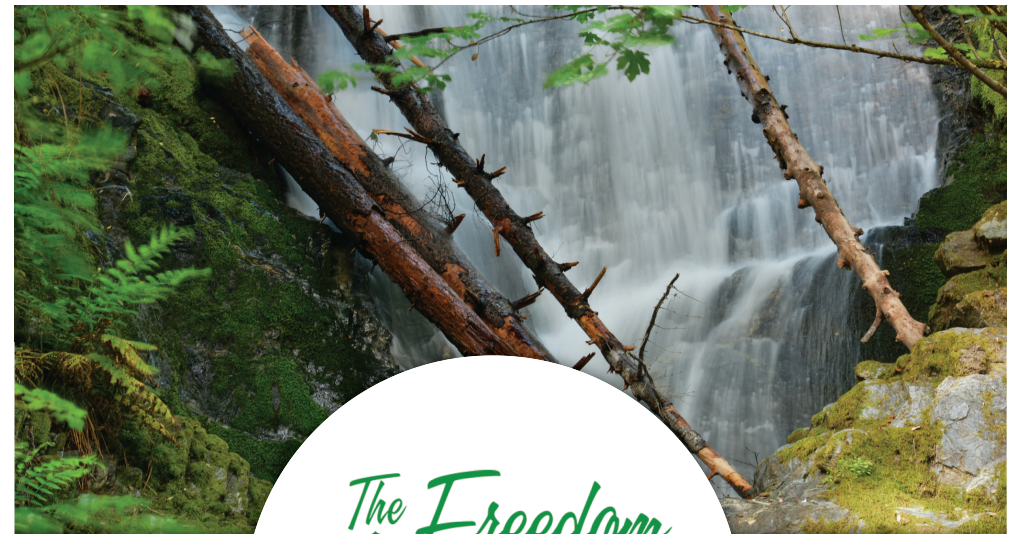
the last pages of his research on Astoria. Most of the text is obscured due to exposure and age. But the most intriguing words come from the personal comments as the young Pierre was recovering from a fever before setting sail for San Francisco and thus home to the Hudson Valley:

IRVING, Pierre Munrosee IRVING, Washington fragment/ correspondence to Washington Irving/1819/Fotr Astoria, Oregon Country/Verity Crum/volunteer/Oct.31, 1969.

"Many days of delirium, uNcle, the fever bends my body and mind. I hear many sounds at once and the rigging shrieks and moans. Doktor allowd brandy this All Hal-

lows Eve. And just in my bunk in fever's Arms in a fainting swoon I heard shod feet upon the warf, like a mighty horse, the sails howling like Death's own Cape, I looked, so Startled, Uncle, I saw a one legged sailor holding aloft a glowing head, HIS HEAD, which he hurled at my cabin wondow. I quake begging to forget the ghostly image, the thuds of his wooden Leg, so like hoof-beats. God speed me to leave this haunted shoreline, there is goulsh Mischief here, I fear. Your Nephew Pierre."

Intended as a footnote in the published "Legend of Sleepy Hollow," 1820, it was stricken through by Washington Irving's own hand: "OMIT."



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ON THE COVER

A view of the Astoria Bridge.

PHOTO BY ALYSSA EVANS



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