Notes

Union Gap is the name of a pass and a town in Yakima County, Washington. The pass is a water gap of the Yakima River, which flows through a prominent up-folded ridge there along its course from the Cascade Range to the Columbia River. It has always been an important corridor for travel through the central part of the state. In pre-settlement times an Indian trail, which was the shortest route between Columbia River and Puget Sound, traversed this gap. In the 1860's, the Cariboo Trail passed through it to the gold mines of British Columbia. In 1875 the first wagon road was opened through the pass; later, the first stage coach route followed the same path. In 1884 the first railroad in this area was constructed through the pass and in modern times the traffic of the two major railways and three major highways of Yakima County, including Interstate Highway 82, funnels through this ancient water gap.

The Indian name for this important landmark was "Pahoticute," which is a modern spelling of "Pah-quy-ti-koot," a phonetic spelling of a Shahaptian word combination signifying "place where two 'mountain heads' come together." The root for the place-name was "Pah-quy-ti-koot-lema," which was the name of a tribe that once lived in a village just below the gap. (The literal translation of the tribal name is "people of the place where two 'mountain heads' come together.")

After the white man came to the territory, and established a fort in the area, the water gap was called Two Buttes. On Army maps this name identified the side of a skirmish between soldiers and hostile Indians which took place in 1855, during the Yakima War. The current name, Union Gap, was given to the pass by a federal government survey party which camped nearby on a Fourth of July just after the end of the Civil War. The men of the survey party wished to commemorate the preservation of the Union, and this seemed the most appropriate gesture they could make.

The upfolded ridge through which the Yakima River flows at the pass bisects the Yakima Valley into the Upper and Lower Valleys. From Union Gap, the Rattles-nake Hills extend east of the river into Benton County, and Ahtanum Ridge extends west, to the foothills of the Cascade Range. (Before separate names were applied, the divided ridge was called, collectively, Rattlesnake Range.) Originally, the name "rattlesnake" was applied only to an intermittent creek adjacent to the hills, probably so called by early-day cattlemen for the venomous snakes found along its course. Rattlesnake Mountain and Rattlesnake Ridge are other names which have been applied to this area. A decision by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names de-creed that the use of the name Rattlesnake Hills should take precedence over other contenders, but Rattlesnake Ridge still persists locally.

The ridge which extends to the west, called Ahtanum, was also originally the name of a stream. Ahtanum Creek flows almost parallel to the north side of Ahtanum Ridge from its origin in the Cascade Range to its mouth at Yakima River near Union Gap. (This creek was the source of water for the earliest attempts at irrigation in the Upper Yakima Valley, and is still used for this purpose.) Ahtanum is one of

the oldest place-names in Yakima County. It is the modern spelling of "Ah-tan-um," a phonetic spelling of a Shahaptian combined form meaning "water by the long hill." The name of the creek was derived from "Ah-tan-um-lema," a tribe which once lived along the creek. (The literal translation of the tribal name is "people of the water by the long hill.") Although the exact year in which the name was first used by white men is uncertain, it was probably about the time that St. Joseph's Mission was established by Jesuit priests on Ahtanum Creek; that is, in 1847. In 1853, when Theodore Winthrop's *Canoe and Saddle* was published, "Ahtinam" was the spelling used. Numerous variant spellings have appeared in various early documents of the area; the present spelling was standardized as a result of another decision by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names. The name has since been extended to a settlement, valley, and voting precincts, as well as being applied to the ridge.

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Yakima, Washington

Monacan has been interpreted in many ways. The Powhatan Algonquians used it for their hereditary Souian enemies in Piedmont about 20 miles west of Richmond, Virginia, in the James river valley. In the early seventeenth century, their principal village was Monocan, on the south side of the James about opposite the present Village of *Mannikin.* Huguenot folk etymology has *Mannikin* as the Norman French version of *Monocan.*

The Powhatans boasted to the English about what brave and triumphant warriors they were. They called the Powhatan Algonquian area, as a whole, *Tsennah-commah, Geary,* "thickly populated land," since few homes were solitary, but grouped together in large, medium sized, and small towns, in what would now be called urbanized land.

Monacan as a pejorative term is indicated in the above cultural context. It is affirmed by the Powhatan name for their Iroquian hereditary enemies, *Nottowai,* "rattlesnakes."

Memonini was a dialect spoken in the Powhatan area. In that dialect, *Monacan* would be *mo · na · he · ka · ni*; "where there is a dug land," the primitive concept of farming lands, or land of farmers. Powhatan men disdained manual toil in gardens, leaving it to old women and children, *Mon-aheka · n-enini*; with the "people" ending dropped, as is often done from names, it becomes *Monacans,* "old-womanish and childish farmers."

This interpretation is culturally valid and appears to be phonetically sound. I feel certain it is the meaning the Powhatans intended: "Those weeping cowards — dirty, old-womanish — childish *Monacans.*"

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