

Old Tacoma

Caroline Gallacci



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In 1865, Job Carr paddled a canoe to his new homestead on a small harbor that would become Old Tacoma. The area's notorious reputation--as "The Wildest Port North of San Francisco's Barbary Coast"--haunted it for decades after the tall-masted schooners, sailors, brothels, and saloons were gone. Situated on the deepwater shoreline of Commencement Bay to ship timber from the vast tracts surrounding it, "Old Tacoma" was bypassed by the Northern Pacific terminus in favor of "New Tacoma" a few miles away. Settled by waves of Scandinavian and Croatian immigrants to work the mills and purse seiners, Old Tacoma became an isolated community. Though industry, shipbuilding, and timber mills gave way to commerce and recreation, the community of Old Tacoma still retains the unique flavor of its colorful past.



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