



Sam Hill's Peace Arch: Remembrance of Dreams Past

Blaine Clark

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Standing but a stone's throw from the continent's western shoreline, Samuel Hill, a Quaker devoted to peace and a road builder rolling in wealth, addressed 4,000 celebrants gathered at the United States-Canada border on the Fourth of July, 1915. There, they celebrated a century of international peace and the opening of the Pacific Highway, now known simply as the I-5. As the ceremony closed, one member of the crowd stood and proposed construction of an international arch of peace at the site whereon they stood. Hill agreed and acted upon the proposal. Six years later, on September 6, 1921, Samuel Hill stood before a crowd estimated at 10,000 or more, and dedicated the International Peace Arch to the cause of world peace. "War satisfies neither the victors nor the vanquished," he said, opening his dedicatory address. "Perfect peace alone satisfies." For more than 80 years the Peace Arch has stood between freeway lanes where millions of travelers, heading south into Washington state or north into British Columbia, have seen it as a symbol of peace. Curiously, little historical investigation occurred until Richard Clark, a resident of Blaine, Washington, whose home is but one block from Peace Arch State Park, completed an exhaustive manuscript after fifteen years of research. The Peace Arch, standing on beautiful international parkland, has also been enshrouded with myths and mysteries that Clark has uncovered in the course of his research. Peace Arch devotees, long forgotten, have been restored to remembrances they have long deserved. Vital facts, long lost, have been recovered and given merited recognition. The Peace Arch has been the setting of devotion and demonstrations, queens and quarrels, marriages and marching bands. But in its history, so notably marked by variation ranging from violence to indifference, peace has remained its ongoing theme

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