

# Castle Rock and Houseboat by Lily White

*By Lily White (1866-1944), photographer*

Lily White took this photograph of her houseboat *Raysark* at the base of "Castle Rock" on the Washington State side of the Columbia River in about 1902. The 800-foot tall monolith is the second largest in the world, after the Rock of Gibraltar. It is the remnant of the basalt vent plug of a long-eroded volcano. The region's Indians used the landmark to designate the last of the rapids on the river and the beginning of tidal influence from the Pacific Ocean, 150 miles away. The official name of the monolith is "Beacon Rock," so-named by Lewis and Clark in 1805. Alexander Ross of the 1811 John Jacob Astor expedition called the landmark "Inshoack Castle," after a castle in Europe, and early Euro-American settlers called it "Castle Rock." The monolith is part of Beacon Rock State Park, approximately 35 miles east of the city of Vancouver, Washington. Lily White was an important early amateur photographer in the Pacific Northwest whose life and work helped expand interest and appreciation in the art of photography. She was born in Oregon City in May 1866 to a prominent family. White learned portrait painting in San Francisco and Chicago in the 1880s and worked as a clerk and bookkeeper for Portland businesses into the 1890s. In March 1898, Lily White was elected a member of the Oregon Camera Club. By the summer of 1899, White was educating camera club members on photographic technologies and techniques. The Oregon Camera Club was founded in January 1895. Membership was restricted to amateurs, and one of the primary purposes of the organization was to increase interest and exposure among a wider audience to the artistic and recreational aspects of photography. Lily White's photographs earned accolades not long after she began her affiliation with the Oregon Camera Club. Her work as part of the fifth annual club exhibit in October 1899 garnered high praise. White helped expand the membership of the camera club to 175 by 1900 and also taught photography classes. In November 1902, the members of the Oregon Camera Club voted Lily White as an honorary member in recognition of her services. Two of White's photographs were part of an exhibition in the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art in San Francisco in 1901. That same year, the Camera Club of New York, led by prominent New York photographer Alfred Stieglitz, selected White—and also her friend and fellow Portland resident Sarah Hall Ladd—as nonresident members, honoring them particularly and recognizing Northwest artists in general. In 1903, Steiglitz also selected White and Ladd for his group of elite American photographers, Photo-Secession. White stopped making photographs by 1909, a year after increasing her involvement in the Christian Science movement. In 1923, she moved to Carmel, California. Ladd joined her in 1924. Lily White died in Carmel on November 14, 1944. Further Reading: Glauber, Carole, "Eyes of the Earth: Lily White, Sarah Ladd, and the Oregon Camera Club" in *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 108:1 (Spring 2007) Written by James V. Hillegas, © Oregon Historical Society, 2008.

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