

## In the Beginning

(Told by Pioneers index..unpublished material)

As early as 1865 cattlemen moved their herds into the fertile lands along Yakima river in the vicinity of the present site of Sunnyside. Snipes and Allen had two corrals there and one at Parker Bottom. Snipes' Mountain was named for Ben Snipes.

Jack Morgan's first ranch buildings were of logs but as soon as lumber was available he built a fine ranch house on higher ground owing to high water every year.

O.R. Farrell was another cattleman. There was good grazing above the canal and cattle-raising was a profitable industry until the severe winter of 1888-89 when heavy snows caused such a loss owing to the scarcity of feed. With an eye to the future some of the settlers began raising hay along the river bottom. This successful venture was the beginning of development which was to attract thousands of settlers to the lower valley.

In 1889 Walter N. Granger formed the Yakima Canal and Land Company which united later with the Northern Pacific. One day in the spring Mr. Granger drove through the lower valley, his mission being the selection of the canal site. He climbed Snipes' mountain to get a better view and it was then and there that he decided that a town should be founded, the center of fields and orchards to come.

Out of this vision grew Sunnyside Canal and the town bearing that name which lies in the center of this beautiful valley. Other towns have come into being as the need has arisen. The town of Granger was named for the man of vision. Ellah bears the name of the daughter of one of the railroad officials.

Paul Schultz's ideas of a city beautiful which he had expressed in laying out Naches avenue in Yakima was carried out in Sunnyside which he platted in 1893. Trees were planted at every intersection on each lot corner and there is no doubt that many plans for beautifying



the town collapsed with the downfall of the irrigation project two or three years later.

Two hotels were built, a post office was established. Bishop Wells, pioneer missionary, held church services in the office of D.C. Gillis, postmaster and sales agent for the Townsite Company. There was a school, a drug store, a few other business buildings and homes.

When the government stepped in and took over the canal as a federal reclamation project a few years later, the town had to be revived. About this time three wise men from the East were looking for a site for a colonization idea they had in mind. They visited California but before fully deciding they came to the Yakima valley. Finding the conditions around Sunnyside suited to their enterprise they took over the mortgaged townsite. This was the Christian Cooperative movement led by H.M. Lichty, S.H. Harrison and Chris Rowland, members of the Progressive Dunkard Brethren. The townsite banned every enterprise of a questionable nature. Good substantial citizens were brought by these men, one of whom went east every year to bring back colonists.

Jack Morgan's ferry soon gave way to a bridge over the Yakima, money and labor being donated by the people with a little assistance from the county. Settlement was rapid, mainly because of the enthusiastic leadership. The first crops were alfalfa which the leaders wisely suggested should be fed at home rather than shipped out. This brought another industry, that of dairying which has been and still is the leading industry, with asparagus and fruit and grain adding considerable revenue.

The history of the nineties is neither romantic nor colorful. The glamour and romance of stage coach days had faded. No savage war-whoops, terrorized the settlers who came in over the red-plush route. Log cabins with dirt floors and roofs had long since given way to comfortable homes. Churches and schools flourished throughout the land. Barbed wire had diminished the stock range. More than 50 years of

sacrifice and labor had paved the way for their coming, yet the great western empire was still in the making, awaiting the arrival of these men and women who brought to their task courage and will power and greatest of all a marvelous foresight. "hey:

Saw the vision of the world  
And all the wonder that would be;  
Saw the heavens filled with commerce,  
Argosies with purple sails;  
Pilots of the purple twilight  
Drooping down with costly bales."



The folk lore of the Yakima Indians is rich in legends and myths pertaining to the beginning of things in the Yakima valley.

Around their camp fires Indians have discussed these tales, often for the entertainment of friendly white men. So we have the Indian version of the origin of rock formations, of mountains and lakes.

Coyote was appointed by Me-yah-wah to prepare the world for the coming of the tribes. This was before there were any real people in the Pacific Northwest and only animals dwelt here.

The religion of the Yakima Indians is founded on the activities of this little traveler of prehistoric times.

He had been told by Me-hay-wah (the spirit chief) to make the world a good place for the coming of the tribes. Finding it impossible to remove all evil, and knowing that the people to come would find both good and evil, Coyote wisely determined to leave some of the work for the tribes themselves. The manner of driving out the evil spirits constitutes much of the Indian's idea of religion. It is made up of ceremony, omens of all kinds, belief in visions of dreams. Most important of all these beliefs is the Wee-ach or prayer houses where the Indian purifies his soul and emerges with a new spirit.

Since 1847 Yakima tribes have been under the influence of the Christian religion, yet today as in centuries past and down through the generations, the majority of Indians go to the sweat house to ask the Great Spirit for guidance and strength.

If he is sick he asks that his health be restored; the gambler prays for good fortune, medicine men try for supernatural power. The lover prays that his wooing may be successful.

The Wee-ach may be found somewhere on the property of nearly every Indian on the reservation. Usually it is in a thicket of trees and always by a stream or ditch. To each and every Indian, no matter what his social state, is granted the privilege of the sweat house.



Many of these are for permanent use, yet wherever an Indian man or woman may find need of spiritual guidance, he builds his small house and enters it seeking sympathy and aid.

The material used for the Whee-ach varies, but the manner of its building never changes. Temporary houses may be made of willow wands laced together and bent to form the mound-shaped structure which may be covered by skins or blankets.

Along the Columbia River where the Indians still gather for their annual fish-drying the Whee-ach made of stones and willow branches remains long after the Indians have departed, but evidence of their supplication for a big catch.

Often the Whee-ach will hold but one person, others will accommodate several. The floor is carpeted always and the material depends upon the locality. Ferns are used and grass or reeds--fir boughs if obtainable since their medicine power is very strong. Much of the occult influence comes from the aromatic quality of the carpet.

The door which is just large enough for the supplicant to enter is covered with a mat or blanket. On one side of the door there is a shallow hole. This holds the searing hot stones which have been heated just outside.

Dense steam is produced by sprinkling these stones with cold water. Garments are removed and the skin is thoroughly cleansed. There is a belief that rose bush leaves possess supernatural powers of purification. And they are used whenever possible, especially if the supplicant may have handled a corpse or been near a dead person or to the burial ground. A whee-ach is never destroyed while its owner lives..  
Augusta M. Eastland. Field Rep. for interviews, Told by Pioneers.  
(Unpublished material. See index.) About 1936.



Indians at Priest Rapids. (considerably inaccuracies)

Augusta Eastland's report in 1936.

For many generations the Columbia river Indians have made their home at Priest Rapids. They were there in 1811 when Alexander Ross and his party of explorers came up the Columbia River and it was then that the village was named Priest Rapids for their leader who seemed to be a doctor or a priest.

Twenty years ago the last of the Smohallas perished in a blizzard near Ellensburg and La-wa-ma-nash has since been at the head of the tribe. These Indians refused to go on the reservation, claiming that their ancestors have always lived here.

They are sun-worshippers, beginning their worship at sundown Saturday and continuing until sundown on Sunday. They dance and beat the tom-tom; feasting is also a part of the ceremony.

Twenty years ago they never missed a Sunday but the younger generation seems less religious.

Formerly they dressed up two or three times every winter and invited the white people to attend the ceremonies. There were around 60 in the village then, now perhaps 13. The severe flu epidemic diminished them.

Their long house was at the present site of Riverland (probably means Richland) then they moved west to the Jaeger farm, then up to the foot of the rapids where they now spend their winters. They live just as their ancestors lived. They fish, hunt, gather berries and roots and dry them. They paddle up and down the river in old dug-out canoes. They have cayuses and in the days of yore they measured a man's wealth by the number of horses he possessed.

Their burying ground is a canyon close to Priest Rapids. Rocks are placed over the graves. The Indian loves ceremony. These Indians speak English almost as well as whites yet when their census was taken they had an interpreter for the occasion. Beautiful blankets were

spread on the floor of their long-house where the Indians gathered. The government official was escorted to the chief and his interpreter, treading a carpet of gorgeous and rich blankets.

Not realizing his offense, he stepped on their sacred hearth and was abruptly shoved onto the blankets again. The hearth runs the length of the long house, right through the center and is made of clay from the river bank.

The fires are made of cedar, the smoke escaping through a long opening in the roof. Poles from the river for the walls of the house are taken from the river. They are set up about 3 feet apart and the squaws weave tule among the poles. The roofs are made in the same way.

True to the traditions of his race, these Indians are firm believers in the sweat-house or house of prayer.



## Keeping Step With the White Race

(From Told by Pioneers, index, unpublished material.)

Cattle and wild horses by the thousand grazed on the Yakima reservation seventy-five years ago. One of the leading stockmen was Thomas Pearne, an Indian living in Medicine valley. His cattle were among the finest in the country and he had horses imported from the Blue Grass regions of Kentucky .

As early as 1855 when the Indians of the Northwest were intent on exterminating the whites, Thomas Pearne's ambition was to become a stockman. Like Ka-mi-akin, he began the irrigation of his farm by diverging the water of a creek into a deep furrow which he plowed through the valley. He was ridiculed for thinking he could irrigate his farm, but the fertile acres still farmed by his son prove that his judgment was good.

Thomas Pearne attended the Great Council of Walla Walla in 1855 and never lifted a hand toward the whites. He always said that Gov. Stevens was a great man. When the Yakima reservation was laid out, he was chosen to assist Governor Stevens in placing the boundary. He was educated at Ft Vancouver in the Hudson's Bay School and married the daughter of a white man named McKay, probably an officer, who had taken an Indian wife. The McKays were in California during the gold rush and for a long time led a nomadic life. Mrs. McKay came to the Simcoe reservation where she, her children and her grandchildren received instruction at the school established by Rev. Wilbur and his wife. Her son was butcher at the fort. Abe Lincoln, Indian interpreter at Ft Simcoe, grew up in the McKay home.

One historian says: Father Wilbur tamed the oxen and tamed the Indian boys to drive them. The whipping post at the fort was not a symbol of brutality, it was simply a necessary part of the training of the savage (Footnote says not true.) Several trades were taught and they erected a sawmill and gristmill. Early settlers often came to



grind wheat.

Logs brought from the foothills were sawed into lumber, piled and dried, then taken to the Indian farms where good buildings were put up by Indian carpenters. One of these carpenters was Charles Olney, oldest son of Philip Olney, a white man who was Indian agent at Warm Springs in the '50s. He homesteaded in the Ahtanum and died there a year later. Among his descendants are worthy and progressive members of the communities where they reside.

Charles Olney helped build the Methodist church at White Swan for the Indians and many of the farm buildings on the reservation. A monument to his skill is the barn which has stood for nearly three quarters of a century on the Pearne ranch in Medicine valley. The timbers are of heavy pine, mortised and tenoned, fastened with wooden pins. In the ~~soo~~ strongest wind these timbers never creak.

Like the white settlers, Indians built their homes on the reservation along streams or beside springs where the more progressive among them raised gardens and crops.

"White Swan Indians brought ditches from Toppenish creek. Thomas Pearne had so much influence over the Indians he was looked upon as a counselor. "They don't always take my advice," he declared, "but I always tell them just what they should do." Forty or fifty would go to him at one time to tell their troubles. When there was a controversy over the Indian fishing grounds at Celilo he went to Washington, D.C. at his own expense to confer with the great white chief, who at that time was President McKinley. He accepted an invitation to dine with the President and attend church.

Indians were permitted to sell their land if they had a deed. The town of Toppenish on the reservation was founded on land owned by Mrs. Sweazy. A land company bought it and platted a townsite which was enlarged when Mrs. Lillie platted 80 acres and sold the lots.



## Klickitat county--Historical

Near the little town of Lyle on the Columbia river in Klickitat county there is an old cemetery under the pines where a crumbling stone marks the grave of a man whose youth was spent in this valley. Deeply interested in the customs and habits of the Indians, this man whose name was Fred Balch spent most of his time exploring the country which is steeped in Indian legends and traditions.

He visited historic Memaloosia where generations of Indians lie buried beneath the shifting sands. One of the tales told him by ancient men of these tribes was that their ancestors crossed the river on a bridge of stone. One day the mighty mountain peaks grew angry with each other, hurling rocks and spitting fire until the whole earth trembled and shook. Finally the bridge fell, filling the river with rocks.

The time came when Mr. Balch wove into a beautiful story the lore he had gathered, using the bridge of the Indian tradition for the basis of his legend. He called it "The Bridge of the Gods" and in the preface we read: "It may be asked if ever there was a natural bridge over the Columbia river..the answer is emphatically yes.

..... The Willamette valley, extolled in song and story received all the early immigration. The possibilities of the country north of the Columbia were not even investigated until 1852 when Erastus S. Joslyn who had recently crossed the plains with his family from Massachusetts crossed the Columbia and located opposite the mouth of the Hood river, a mile and a half east of the present site of White Salmon.

He built a cabin, set out a small orchard and plowed and cultivated some land. He had a good sized herd of stock in 1855 when friendly Indians warned that he would be attacked. He fled with his family across the river from where they watched the Indians burn and destroy. The stock was driven off and nothing was left of the orchard and crops.



Soldiers rescued the family and they remained on the Oregon side until the close of the war, returning then to the ranch where they lived until 1874.

Across from Fort Dalles on the Rockland flats an army officer named Jordan fenced in a tract of land consisting of several hundreds of acres. A few others established farms on the north side keeping their old residences in Oregon. Two squaw men, Egbert French and J.H. Alexander settled on the Washington side.

In 1856 a military road was commenced from Ft Dalles to Ft Simcoe on the Yakima reservation. Soldiers built and garrisoned a small fort or blockhouse on Spring Creek, seven miles northeast of the present site of Goldendale. This fortification was built of logs and enclosed in a stockade eight feet high. After more than half a century of neglect this frontier fort was moved to a place of honor on courthouse square in Goldendale.

It was in the spring of 1859 that Amos Stark entered the Klickitat valley. He had crossed the plains in 1844 and settled in Polk county, Ore. Rushing to California in 1849 he succeeded in ~~washing~~ washing seven thousand dollars worth of gold dust. This he invested in merchandise disposing of it in Oregon at a profit. He seems to have been of a roving disposition for he moved to Wilbur, then to Forest Grove looking for a new location he crossed the Columbia and explored the country to the north.

In all that region the only white men were the soldiers at the blockhouse. Mr. Stark was pleased with the possibilities of this rich grazing land and decided to build a log house.

Alone in the wilderness with only an ax and rope he built his pioneer home, pulling the logs up inclined skids, one at a time, until all were in place. He then left to bring his family. When he returned a few weeks later he was surprised to find a number of settlers in the valley.



The Jenkins family had arrived with one hundred and fifty head of cattle. They settled near the blockhouse where Mr. Jenkins filed a claim in 1860 after the removal of the soldiers.

John S. Golden arrived July 9, 1859 with a large herd of cattle. His father-in-law Lewis S. Parrott came a few days later. They drove their herds onto The Swale but Mr. Golden went on down the river to the boat landing at Columbus and took a contract to deliver a thousand cord of wood to the boats.

For a twenty-dollar greenback John W. Burgen purchased the prior rights of a young man for a homestead near Swale Creek on the Columbus road. His son Newton was born here in 1861, the first white child born in Klickitat county. Thomas Burgen came with Hohn and later moved to Chamberlain Flats so called because of Tim Chamberlain's wood yard at that place. Both Burgen's brought in large herds of cattle and horses. F.M. Thorp's sale pasture was the present site of Goldendale and Alfred Hensen settled just below him. Charles Splawn, Calvin Pell, John Nelson, Robert Carter, Nelson Whitney and William Murphy came with flocks and herds.

Alfred Allen and A.H. Curtis took claims on Rockland Flats across from The Dalles. There were 15 families in the Klickitat during the winter of 1859-60, not enough they believed to necessitate county organization. A different opinion was held by the territorial government however and an act was passed December 20, 1859, setting off Klickitat as a separate county with the following boundary:

Commencing in the middle of the Columbia river, five miles below the mouth of the Klickitat river, thence north to the summit of the mountains, the divide between the waters of the Klickitat and the Yakima rivers; thence east along said divide to a point north of the mouth of Rock creek; thence south to the middle of the Columbia river, thence along the channel of said river to the place of beginning.



The county seat was temporarily located on the land claim of Alfred Allen which was across from the Dalles on Rockland Flats.

The majority of the officers appointed by the legislature failed to qualify. The settlers were more interested in the problem of making a living in this new country where there were no markets at all and about the only industry was delivering wood to the boats on the Columbia river.

At first the boats ran only to Wallula but with the discovery of gold at various points in Idaho, steamboats ascended the Snake river as far as Lewiston. Now began the great era of navigation on these rivers and a consequent demand for fuel. At Columbus and Chamberlain Flats large contracts were let by steamboat companies to the settlers of Klickitat county.

Ten dollars a cord was the first contract price, then it was cut to eight dollars. The wood had to be hauled by oxen twelve miles, taking two days for the round trip. Five cords of wood could be hauled with six yoke of oxen. A good road was opened to the boat landing at Columbus, the settlers paying for it by private subscription.

In the spring of 1860 a little grain was sown for hay and some gardening was done, but these attempts were unsuccessful. Again in 1861 some of the stockmen sowed grain. The small amount that reached maturity was highly prized the following winter when snow fell to the depth of several feet and cattle perished by the thousands. The largest cattle owners in the Okanogan county at that time were Willis Jenkins, William Murphy, Ben E. Snipes, John and Thomas Durgen, Lewis Parrott, John Golden and Joseph Kroott. There were small herds whose owners were so discouraged some of them left the valley.

Ben E. Snipes lost practically all he had in Klickitat county but he had driven 200 head to the Okanogan country where they wintered safely. Beef sold the following summer for one dollar and a half at the mines at Carbou. Snipes cleared forty thousand dollars.



More grain was grown in 1862. There were no threshing machines nor grist mills in the valley and the grain was used for hay. This was the beginning of agriculture.

The timber industry was started in 1860 when Jacob Halstead, David Kitson, Benjamin Alverson and his brother, Isaac, built a sawmill on Mill creek.

The first county election was held in 1860, the polls being at Rockland, the blockhouse and the present site of Goldendale. It was a Democratic victory as there was a scarcity of Republicans in the country. Very few of the officers qualified and the legislature was forced to pass an act Jan. 24, 1861, appointing officers to fill vacancies.

In 1859 a ferry was put in operation between The Dalles and Rockland, another in 1863 between Rock Creek wagon road and Oregon shore and a third in 1868 named Hickinbotham's ferry at Columbus, now Maryhill.

Failure of the county officers to qualify after their appointment in 1861 was a great handicap to progress in Klickitat county. No taxes were levied, there was no money to build roads or bridges or establish a school system.

The first schoolhouse in Klickitat valley was built by private donation of the settlers in 1866. This was the state of affairs when the legislature met in 1867. It was evident that a county organization must be made so the officers appointed this time were anxious to qualify and perform their duties. A building was rented from William Connell at Rockland for eight dollars a month for the courthouse. These officers were appointed to hold office until the general election of June 30, 1867. Then the following officers were elected: Amos Stark, H.M. McNary and T.J. Chambers, county commissioners. August Schuster, sheriff; A.H. Simmons, probate judge; Martin Harper, auditor, John Burgen, county superintendent of schools.



Only the superintendent of schools received a salary. He was given twenty-five dollars a year. The rest were paid fees or wages by the day for the time spent in the service of the county. Four changes were made in the boundary line of Klickitat county, the last being Nov.

29, 1881. The county election Nov. 8, 1872, changed the county seat to Goldendale. A \$3,500 courthouse was built by private subscription of time, labor and money, there being no expense to the taxpayers.

In the seventies work commenced on the Cascade Locks. The slow progress of this enterprise which was calculated to be of such great benefit to Klickitat county was one of the factors which held back agricultural development. Some wheat was exported in 1876 and grist mills were built in 1878.

In 1888 the National Congress voted an appropriation for the Cascade locks but they were not finished until 1896. Six years later another enterprise was completed. This was the building of the Columbia River and Northern Railroad.

The Portland Oregonian said (date missing) "At 10:30 this morning the last spike in the main line of the Columbia River and Northern railroad was driven. A vast crowd of sightseers was on hand early and by 10 o'clock fully half of the city was present. It was a spectacle never to be forgotten by the citizens of Goldendale. After years of patient waiting, during which time many railroad schemes have been industriously worked only to end in dismal failure. A full fledged railroad is now completed in the city and Goldendale is placed in easy communication with the outside world."

The settlement near the present site of White Salmon is the oldest in Klickitat county, but the town was not platted until 1891, although there was a store established by Jacob H. Hunsaker in 1880. The first postoffice for the settlement was two and one half miles east of the present town at Warren's Landing, now Bingen.

J.R. Warren was the first postmaster. A German named Levison was the pioneer school teacher, a school district having been organized around 1876.

Note: I sent around thirty interviews from Klickitat county all the way from Bickleton to White Salmon. I remember that they contained excellent county history, but none of them are available to me now. The outstanding ones that I recall now after considerable time has elapsed are the following:

Alameda Hill--History of Goldendale.

Jennie Whitney, first schools-boats on the river.

William Schuster--Father was first sheriff.

Clarence Short--Hard winter of 1861-62.

Elizabeth Stultz, early days.

Tennis Wymer, stage lines north from White Salmon.

Zumsdorf, Pingen county.

Mrs. McCreedy, Bickleton.

Robert Graham Bickleton.

I sent a picture of the old blockhouse and clippings about Fred Balch. ---Augusta Eastland. Field worker. 1936.



At a meeting of the Klickitat Valley Pioneers held Saturday March 2, 1936 at the Goldendale grange hall a n interesting paper prepared by two descendants of old pioneers was read. This account, along with other similar accounts being collected by the Pioneer group will form a history of pioneering days in the Klickitat valley. the story follows:

One of the earliest pioneers of the then Oregon and Washington carried the mail from The Dalles to the Blockhouse, situated between eight and nine miles from what is now termed Goldendale.

He carried this mail on horseback in a pair of rude saddlebags provided for that purpose. That was in the years of 1872 and '73. This mail carrier was Meriel S. Short by name who was living at that time on the Columbia river bank at a place ~~designated~~ designated as Eight Mile creek, about eight or ten miles from The Dalles on the north bank of the river. He was obliged to start in the early morning hours in order to make the trip through to Blockhouse in the course of one day. He remained overnight at Spring Creek with some newly made friends and acquaintances he had acquired during the days preceding this historical period.

In telling this story the relater states this incident which came from her mother: As the mail carrier, my father would be leaving Blockhouse with the mail several of the neighborhood women would gather and send by him to get many household articles which they might be in need of at that time. It would be a few spools of thread, a paper or needles or a few yards of calico or some other necessity of which the busy housewife was in need of at that time. It is further related that his memory was so accurate that he seldom forgot the separate items for which they sent.

One of the most remarkable things about this man was that in



rugged condition he seldom, if ever, wore an overcoat upon this long trip, even during the cold winter months. His powers of endurance were so remarkable that he would pay no attention to the remonstrances of his wife who became anxious over his constant exposure to the cold and rigorous climate of the winter months. He was able to endure intense fatigue and all the hardships attendant to the pioneer life of those days.

Written by Ella A. Shell for the Klickitat County Agriculturist,  
Goldendale, March 8, 1935.