

Return to Clara Ann Smith

It is encouraging to hear that residents of Ellensburg are thinking in terms of a golden jubilee. This is something that you people here have a greater interest in, at this time, than other residents of the community. But as time goes on, and in a proper setting, a celebration of this nature can have great effects upon the community.

History is a vantage point from which we can look back and see where from where we have come and look forward, and see where we are going. A properly staged celebration will make this more evident.

It is the small little stories, that make up the history of the Kittitas Valley, which woven into all the other little stories, from the Yakima Valley and across the nation, that go into the greater warp and woof of America, making it the larger story which it is. And if we believe that these little stories are worth preserving, we believe that America is worth preserving.

Look any way we desire, from our vantage point, and we see notable things taking place. To the south, the opening for the summer season of Fort Simcoe State Park, the Mabton Museum of wagons, the continuation of the Yakima Valley Museum.

Toward the west, the Washington State Historical Society, which is even now planning construction of a million and one-half dollar new wing. Look toward the North, the museums there, and to the developments at Sun Lake Park. Then follow down the Columbia River, and to now completed Wanapum Dam where a Tour Center is being completed in time for the June 4 dedication.

Now this is not a museum, but is just what it says, a tour center, which will give some of the flavor of the region to visitors who pause there a time and then go on, perhaps never to return again. But the Wanapum Tour center, constructed through the far sighted planning of the Grant County PUD is right in on your doorstep and is an asset to the historical significance of the region. (Dedication invitation)

But there is no need to go further into these things ~~which~~ with which you are ~~already~~ somewhat already familiar .

To my way of thinking no historical talk would be of historical importance if it did not deal somewhat in Indians. We here in the Northwest are still so close to the threshold through which the pioneers have passed that most of us have a different kind of respect for our Indian neighbors than these Johnny come latelys , whose main interest is to ~~down~~ gain access to Indian land and the last possessions these original inhabitants of our land possess.

I will give you one example. After we have squandered the resources of our yet so new land to the point where we have virtually exterminated salmon, through conservation measures and through the great commercial fisheries, who do we set up as the whipping boys for this situation. The Indians. But believe me, before the white men came onto their land, they had no depletion of salmon, nor did they know the taste of intoxicating liquor.

And I wonder what would happen now if some foreign power like Russia or England or some other powerful armed force would come into the Northwest and take their stand beside the Indians at their age-old fisheries, like we have sent military forces to foreign countries? It 's a crude example but it should have its lesson.

So let's go back a little into our honored past, to the days of Indians and their first contact with the soldiers. We can start with the Yakima Indian War of 1855, and bring in some soldiers with whose names we are vaguely and indifferently familiar, and then bring these people right into the Kittitas Valley, before the pioneers came .

One of these men was Maj. Granville O. Haller. He has left several diaries he kept while in the field, and these are now useful to show us how the soldiers lived and some of their reactions they had when they were here in the land we later came to occupy.

Haller came from York, Pennsylvania and was fought in the Seminole Indian War in Florida, on the Texas border under Gen. Zachary Taylor, took part in the occupation of Mexico City and then was sent to the Pacific Coast.

He arrived in Fort Vancouver in June of 1853 and was sent to The Dalles to protect immigration trains from Indian attacks.

For military reading and engagements with Indians his diaries about his 1850 punitive campaigns against the Snake Indians and into the Boise country, made from The Dalles, are of especial interest. He had just returned from this campaign in October, 1855, when he was ordered into the Yakima country to punish the tribe for the murder of several miners and the Indian Agent A.J. Bolon.

Haller set out from The Dalles with 107 men of Companies I and K, Fourth U.S. Infantry. 65 miles nearly north of there on Toppenish Creek the Yakimas engaged him in battle. In the three-day running fight which followed five soldiers were killed and 17 wounded.

Then in May of 1856 Haller participated in another expedition into the Yakima country, this with the newly organized Ninth Infantry commanded by Col George Wright. Came north and camped on the Naches River, Indians on the other side, held councils, awaiting building of bridge, Here were such chiefs as Kamiakin, Owhi and Leschi but K did not come into camp to treat for peace.

On June 18 the soldiers moved to the Kittitas Valley. Haller celebrated the Fourth of July on "Leanaway Creek" a considerable stream with a salmon dam across it." Then the troops marched through the Swauk Valley where packers washed for gold and found signs in every pan of dirt. They went on to Wenatchee, attempted other Indian peace treaty meetings too but without success. Returned to Kittitss, where Haller remained, others went to Simcoe and started fort, others to Walla Walla. And after his stay in the Kittitas Haller was sent to build a new post at Port Townsend and played some considerable part in the San Juan Island

year after his defeat:

Controversy...the Pig War.

(Lent Sept 16) - 2 months.

To bring you something new, quote from some of his writings:

(1856)

June 19th...Reveille at 2 a.m....marched at 8 o'clock...ascended a very steep height and rose up higher for some time, then by a gentle decline through a ravine most of the way, came into the Kittitas Valley, say nine miles and marched about three miles further, total 17 miles to the junction of a nice branch of cold water with the Yakima River.

The Kittitas valley is about 15 miles wide and more than double as long, and well watered. The streams are covered with thick undergrowth and tall heavy cottonwood in many places with pines. The mountains around the valley are covered with pines, the hills appear to be more sloped than generally in this country. In the northwest there is a great separation in these hills indicating a pass. It is I believe, the Sno-sualm-my pass and the Yakima River comes through it winding a graceful course by our camp. Up the pass is seen the Cascade mountains covered with snow, but rugged peaks projecting through it and shooting far into the blue vault above it.

halted in a very unpleasant spot being opposed to the wind and ~~and~~ dust with shade and on a bluff with a steep descent to water. The mosquitos and crickets and small black ants are numerous.

The march was long and toilsome and in a measure more fatiguing than necessary as water and a good camp was close to the point where we debouched into the valley, yet continued the march and not then to retrace our steps to get to this camp.

Company "I" was detailed for guard this evening and had to guard both camps although the two battalions were 200 yards apart. Sent a picket guard to protect the quarter masters animals and provisions, too.

Friday, June 20-Had set up until after midnight and was waked up in the morning by Gov. Stevens expressman, Pierson, who called at my tent as he went into camp. Pierson brought me the Portland Weekly Times with a

notice of Gov. Wool's letter to the National Intelligencer. Two sketches by Derby illustrating the war, an order from Lt. Hodges, adjt. of regiment about descriptive rolls etc. of records to be sent Hd;Qrts of Regt. and my diary of the scout with Maj. Rains giving in it the names of the murders of Blon and Mattice, also a letter from Mrs. Haller.

I heard that an express would leave here at 3 o'clock pm so wrote a long letter to Mrs. Haller and a note to Cap. Archer about the letter in answer to Genl. Wool. Lt. Randolph carried them over just in time to be forwarded.

Dined by invitation with Lt. Dearing on a grouse dinner and enjoyed it very much. Sat awhile with Cap. Russell and Lt. Dearing.

Saturday, June 21--Rose late, visited with h qrs and talked awhile. Came home and wrote up my journal to present mo ent., 11 o'clock am amidst a host of mosquitoes and having nothing on hand to attend to can give my thoughts up to reverie.

An hour more will complete the 7th year of my marriage. This day, seven years ago, I promised before heaven and our relatives to love, honor and cherish my wife, Henrietta. How much I regret I cannot be at home today to renew the promise I made. How thankful I feel that it was my fortune to meet in my wife one so well qualified to be my partner and to make me feel profoundly happy. We have those little pledges of our affection no more and our future will, I trust be a happy to us all.

....Heard from Mr. Coffee that he had been through this country with Mr. McDonald (Coffee was one of Col. Shaw's scouts) that he crossed the Yakima here, and by a trail went over to the Columbia River striking it far above Priest's Rapids, the distance ~~being~~ across being 35 miles with water on the route, the greatest distance being 12 miles with good grass at camps.

Sunday June 22d A very cold disagreeable day. Slept most of the day away. ...Sat awhile at a fire before the staff tents in the brush after retreat.

Monday June 23rd...Got up early and was ready for the start. Marched up the Yakima River, but the trail led around the hills and at one time feared we might be too far away from water. Halted and sent out scouts soon they returned and reported the river not far ahead with plenty of wood and grass.

The column advanced and our Indians seeing an Indian approaching hid themselves, tied their horses and prepared to capture him and succeeded.

~~He~~ The captured Indian proved to be a medicine man who had been in camp repeatedly. He told us there were several lodges up the stream. Supposed to be only two miles off and Col. Wright, after halting at the place selected for our camp to give the men a little rest, directed that I should detach one of my infantry companies, 20 men of the artillery, one howitzer and men to work it with the accompanying ammunition and these to leave everything in camp until our return, except their arms etc.

...We marched off about 2 1/2 o'clock PM and after going about 9 miles we came to the Yakima River where the trail crossed it, and here the Indian watch saw us and gave the ~~alarm~~ alarm. The dragoons crossed over and followed up the watchmen, but the alarm was in time for most of the Indians to effect an escape. The dragoons caught one male, an old Indian and half a dozen or more horses, took some salmon and returned. ..We got into camp ~~at~~ before 10 o'clock at night having made today nearly 35 miles..

June 24. Visited the prisoners, marched about 3 miles to a spot where we had the day before noticed a good place and encamped...

June 25...John Cutmouth and Mr. McKay sent out with instructions to the Indians to come in, the colonel wanted to see them and they would not be hurt. Each company sent along some one to get some fresh salmon, Lt. Randolph went out with Pvt. Berry to get some, brought home 10 salmon; they were small however..

The Indians were still at their fishing and said that if so many troops had not appeared before they would come in, but with so many they felt afraid. They brought back about 8 male Indians ~~and~~ and left some women who were sick ~~and~~ who had no horses to ride on.

They say Kit-sap, a notorious warrior from Puget Sound. He is said to have shot Lt. Slaughter and to have killed several whites in cold blood...the captain left him and he promised to come in today or tomorrow. This man has a long range rifle, pistol etc. which he claims has been taken from the whites.

It has rained almost all day.

Thursday, June 26th..Rose, gave necessary orders for the march when orders came countermanding the order. Maj. Garnett kindly gave me a fishing line and hook this morning. Lt. Randolph loaned me a book, Dombey and Daughter so I am now well favored for the week's stay at this camp.

(.. and so on..until just before July) when Father Pandoza, the Christian Choos-kun and about 50 ~~and~~ Indian came in.

July 1--today, Kit-sap, the nephew of Choos-kun came into camp.

Father Pandoza came and supped again with us...

Left for the Wenatchee...marched four miles and encamped on a little brook, a branch of the Tien-ne-win-ness Creek.

Friday, July 4th..In half a mile or less we crossed the Tien-ne-winess creek, a considerable stream having a salmon dam across it which seemed to come from the north. Our route then crossed a very pretty little valley and a few hills, eastward, when we struck the travel of the above creek called the Swack Creek which we followed up in nearly a northeast direction for nearly 12 miles to where the trail leaves it, and encamped in good grass....~~Found~~ Found on this stream very strong gold indications, and when encamped the men and packers washed for gold and found scales in every pan full.

(July 7-- 6-- The valley of the Wenatcha is peculiar and interesting. the hills around are exceedingly steep, rugged and ragged in their outlines and covered with timber. They resemble the hills in Switzerland, says Lt. Russell who has visited that country.

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July 11

Our road ascended the mountain by a very gradual ascent for several miles then rapidly to the top by a steep trail but after getting up on the mountain found it level and prairie for a short distance where we gradually descended the ridge until close to the Kittitas valley where the trail is stoney and descends rapidly for a mile. Our camp is on a branch of the Yakima river called the Nan-um and at the foot of the mountains in the Kittitas valley. The Indians today kept before us and their animals were very numerous and could be seen feeding in the prairie as they encamped first.

(Back to the Dalles) By July 28...

Started at sunrise (from the Naches) and arrived in camp in the Kittitas valley at noon.

August 1 Order from Wright to Maj. Garnett 9th Infy to turn over the command here to me and repair to the Topinish

Aug. 4...Capt. Russell, commandant of the general police of the camp built a bowe for the Indians to lounge under, and to present their milk, berries, meats, etc. for sale. Built bower over a fine spring which lay below the camp..

Aug. 5--Lt. Allen today got his bridge as far advanced as to be able to cross over the river on it. We are cutting away the brush from around our line of sentinels to be able to see any body who approaches. It will make an avenue around our camp.

(August 6, 1856 -Lt. Allen's bridge was completed today and I pointed out the position for picket's bower and the position for sentinels.

This evening posted two sentinels on the bluff opposite our camp and a picket ~~and~~ guard...

Sunday, August 10--Rose early to give my tent to Father Pandosy for early Mass

Aug 15..This is a fete day with the Catholics and the Father had services this morning in camp.

August 28th..Father Pandosy left here today to visit his grain field at the Atahnem C and to arrange for it being cut and so forth...This afternoon had a hail storm. The stones were as large as cherries of the common size. It thundered and lightened and rained too, very hard.

Sept. 10..Arranged with Capt. Archer 9th infantry for his departure for Fort Simcoe..

(Depleted) Sept. 12, cleared away the old corral. Built up a new bower for the guard. Put the camp in order to suit our numbers.

Monday, Sept. 15...In the afternoon the express mail arrived bringing orders to abandon the Kittitas Valley. I Co. 4th Infantry to proceed to Puget Sound and C Co. 9th Infantry to stop at Fort Simcoe.,.

Tuesday, Sept. 16...Reveille at 4 o'clock...Had my mules packed by 7...marched off with I Co. 4th Infy and the remainder of C Co. 9th Infy. I sent off the men at 25 min. past 7 o'clock and reached the Entenems' Creek at 5 min. before 11 o'clock. Rested. Resumed the march at 11 o'clock and arrived ^{at} Winnass Cr. at 2 1/2 o'clock.

Sept. 17 -Off at 6. Reached the Naches in two hours. Found bridge and all standing in good order. Arrived at the Attenham Cr. about 1 o'clock.

Sept. 18--Reveille at 4. Marched at 6. Reached the Simcoe Creek at 2 mins passed 9 o'clock...

I allowed Maj. Garnett to pick out of my train the best mules for service at his post and in turn took his jaded animals..

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