

BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A RESERVATION

sect III

Creation of the Reservation brought together fourteen tribes and bands, in some instances of different linguistic stock or dialects, compelling them to follow economic pursuits that were alien to their tradition and to adapt themselves to unfamiliar value systems.

Three years before the agency was born at Fort Simcoe, the slow process of gathering the scattered, leaderless people was commenced.

When F. Robie was local agent at The Dalles on August 30, 1856, he wrote to Governor Stevens that Captain Frederick Dent, brother-in-law of Mylsses S. Grant, was working on a wagon road from The Dalles to Fort Simcoe and that Major Robert Selden Garnett was "getting on well with his improvements," (Fort Simcoe).

The gathering place was the White Salmon. There were 900 there, 1,200 at the Cascades and The Dalles, and 1,200 in the Simcoe Valley which was called "Simkwee, a place name for a saddle in the hills north-northeast of the fort. Their daily subsistence amounted to 1,500 pounds of flour and one beef.

Because Kamiakin would not come upon the reservation, the Yakimas were adrift and their guidance too often was entrusted to inefficient agents.

The first regular agent, Dr. R.H. Lansdale came from Olympia when that

town had only a few houses and where he was the town's doctor and justice of the peace. He wrote to Superintendent Edward R. Geary, December, 1859, that "Kamiakin is much needed. I know of no one who is adapted to supply his place."

James C. Geer was living in the Simcoe Valley in August, 1857, acting in an unofficial capacity as local agent. Bonner & Co. had a license to trade near Fort Simcoe, established a trading post a mile away contrary to the wishes of Major Garnett who ordered the building torn down. The traders were later allowed to locate a quarter of a mile from the fort while soldiers were posted to see that troops did not patronize the place.

The Army was responsible for feeding and clothing those in the Simcoe Valley. Local agents at The Dalles, Cascades and White Salmon cared for the people there as best they could. The war had upset the traditional food quests which took the people to different areas, and they were overshadowed by hunger and want.

In 1852 Captain Jordan, an Army officer stationed at Fort Dalles, fenced land north of the river. At the same time E.S. Joslyn located near present Bingen, built a home, set out an orchard and cultivated land which became the White Salmon Agency.

Joslyn left during the war but returned, demanded the property and

re-established his home until 1874. His return compelled the government to look for another location and Fort Simcoe was selected.

In 1859, the same year that the territorial legislature formed "Clickitat" County (December 20), and located the county seat at Rockland across from The Dalles at present Dallesport, Lansdale was instructed to remove the White Salmon Agency to Fort Simcoe. He wrote to J.W. Nesmith, superintendent of Indian Affairs at Salem, Oregon, May 16, 1859:

"Captain Archer of the Ninth Infantry (James J. Archer of Maryland, later General Archer of the Confederacy), in command of this post, has been ordered by General Harney and as arranged by the general and yourself, turned over all public buildings at this place." (There were twenty-one, valued at \$30,000).

Archer, writing from Fort Simcoe to Headquarters, Department of Oregon on April 18, 1859, said: "I have this day turned over all public buildings to R.H. Lansdale." Archer and some of the troops marched off to
and
join the Northwest Boundary Survey, occupy Fort Colville, and others were ordered to Fort Dalles, leaving a detachment of fifteen to guard the military stores.

Lansdale removed to the agency on June 2 and from there wrote Geary: "I have also commenced farming operations, purchased crops of grain

growing in the field."

By spring the employes were feeding and taking care of stock, procuring rails for fencing and preparing an orchard and gardens.

Three hundred trees, mostly apple were set out under Lansdale's direction on the old parade ground, and men were plowing to sow grain. Lansdale said that "the wheat sown last fall has proved a total failure bec use of alkali in the soil or lack of rain."

Geary contracted with James Knox of Linn County, Oregon, on May 29, 1860 to purchase 100 head of cattle, paying \$10 a head for yearling heifers and \$17 for two year olds. Then he bought an additional fifty cows and calves and five bulls, re-introducing livestock into the Yakima Valley. Kamiakin, as early as 1836, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ obtained cattle from the Hudson's Bay Company at Vancouver by trading horses, and developed herds that were scattered or killed during the war.

When the salmon run surged up the Columbia, George H. Abbott, sub-Indian Agent at the Dalles was directed to help lay in a supply for winter use and to purchase a ton or two of salt and fifty barrels for curing and packing the fish.

A saw mill was under construction, \$9,000 having been appropriated to build it and a proposed flouring mill.

And then Lansdale , who had brought in 147 Klickitat Indians from Lewis River Valley, was suddenly suspended because of "serious charges."

In reality while there was some basis for the "serious charges," there was a confusion over authority of territorial officials and their jurisdiction. Moreover, payment for employees did not come through with known regularity and some had gone two and three years without salary.

Lansdale , on January 4, 1861, acknowledged that W.B. Gosnell was appointed sub-agent. He was transferred ~~to~~ from ~~his~~ his post on the coast to serve temporarily in the emergency.

Gosnell renewed a contract with J.R. Stark and John W. Allen to cut 100,000 feet of pine saw logs "within four miles of the saw mill, at a cost of three dollars per thousand feet."

In a report to Geary on January 26, 1861, he told how he had visited the mill and found the dam unfinished. When he inspected the beef cattle they were unfit for slaughter, weighing only 175 pounds each.

Besides the employes, 120 Indians were being fed.

There were 21 yoke of work oxen of which Lansdale claimed nine but they were "old and worn out." There were 21 head of horses and seven mules of which four were being used to haul logs.

The 355 head of sheep and 50 lambs were in good condition and Robert

Rantoul, the herder, was "an excellent man."

Gosnell wrote:

"The farms seem to have been awfully neglected. There is not a grain of fallow wheat in the ground. Hay on hand is only about 472 tons. "

He recommended that 200 hoes and six plows be purchased, because only "four plows are on hand."

The school, in operation that year for the first time, was under "the superintendency of the Rev. James H. Wilbur, assisted by Mr. Wright and lady. There are now fifteen boys and three girls in daily attendance."

On June 1, Charles R. Hutchins, special agent, writing to Geary reported: "I have this day relieved Gosnell. Goods stored at Rockland can be teamed to this post at contract of \$40 per ton. About 14 Indians are at work now for the government. The wages paid them is \$30 per month and rations."

Before the end of the month ~~the~~ lumber was ready for the flouring mill which H.W. Shipley was to erect. The sawmill on Simcoe Creek was in "constant operation."

B.F. Snelling was superintendent of farming. One of the farms contained 200 acres of "good soil and has a crop of hay and 32 1/2 acres of oats." Smaller acreages of peas, wheat and potatoes were being enclosed by a board fence.

"Another farm selected on a branch of Simcoe Creek, five miles distant,

consists of 300 acres but impregnation of alkali renders it useless.

"There are three gardens in the immediate vicinity of the agency containing about eight acres which are planted with corn, oats, barley, potatoes and other vegetables."

The next agent, Ashley H. Bancroft, was appointed by President Abraham Lincoln. Bancroft was a brother of George Bancroft, a historian, United States minister to Prussia in 1867 and father of Hubert Howe Bancroft whose histories of the Pacific Coast and Mexico have never been equalled. Yet the agent, Bancroft, proved a failure.

He too, and because of Civil War conditions, and his employees, went for extended periods without pay and were compelled to subsist themselves from the storehouse and gardens.

Leaders of the different tribes or bands were disturbed. They reported that annuities were dwindling and by the second year had become so small that they were not worth making the trip to secure. Many refused to go after their goods, believing that the Great White Father must be angry with them and meant to do them harm or he would not have sent a man such as Bancroft to look after them.

The Rev. Wilbur was held in high respect and they confided in him. Wilbur attempted to reason with Bancroft but was discharged and in a letter

two days later asked permission to remain "without expense" as teacher but his request was denied.

Bancroft also discharged the agency physician, Dr. S.H. Roberts on the grounds that "he attempted to incite the Indians ~~against~~ against their agent."

On January 13, 1862, Bancroft issued annuities to 1,458 men, women and children. (Under the Treaty at least 3,500 were entitled to food and goods).

"On first coming together there was a very general disposition not to receive the goods. Many said that they were not consulted on the Treaty for the land and would not give it up and take pay but upon convincing them that the land was sold, they received the goods. Owing to the deep snow many could not come for them. I have retained a portion for ~~distrib~~ distribution in the spring."

Bancroft complained to C.H. Hale, superintendent of Indian Affairs, Olympia, W.T., on November 1, 1862: "The numbers now far exceed that of the previous distribution. The last goods would not afford one blanket to a family."

He complained of the lack of seed to sow seventy acres of land to wheat and the superintendent of farming complained that the Indians were destitute.

"All the farming implements that have been distributed for the past five

years and a half , even at exchange rate, would not amount to as much as the salary of one employee for one year. Men employed to superintend the farming have been ashamed to look an Indian in the face and mention farming for it would bring up questions that he could not easily answer," he wrote.

The agency farmer F.C. Moore informed the superintendent that he had gone without pay for over two years, and that vouchers were worth only thirty cents on the dollar.

Bancroft submitted letters signed by the discharged Wilbur's co-workers ~~xxxxxx~~ to the effect that goods were damaged and worthless for distribution or had not been received. His estimates for the quarter ending December 31, 1862, included \$3,925 for treaty employees, a superintendent of farming and two farmers at \$800 a year; superintendent of schools, two teachers, physician, two blacksmiths, carpenter, plow and wagon maker, a miller, tinner and head chief.

A barn for storage of grain was estimated at \$2,500, fences at \$1,000 and a reaper, thresher, separator, three breaking plows and other agricultural tools at \$1,200.

Wilbur left the agency in February, 1864, and journeyed to Washington, so the story goes. There he laid his protests before President Lincoln

, explaining his "Bible and plow policy", and returned with the appointment of agent. He began duties in ~~1864~~ 1865 and held the position with only one interruption for nearly eighteen years.

Agency reports ~~immediately~~ at once took on a businesslike appearance, because irrespective of his faults Wilbur was a tireless worker and a friend of those who followed his way of life, a strictly religious way.

H.G. Thompson, farmer, reported breaking 75 acres ~~xx~~ and seeding 30 acres in one month while Walter E Carman, the miller, ground 142 bushels of grain and turned out 15,239 feet of lumber.

Alfred Hall, carpenter, in his report for April, 1865, "made and stained three coffins, \$18, six ax handles 50 cents, \$3; 5 rake heads, \$2.50; 4 bed boards, \$3; dressed out 2 gunstocks for gunsmith, \$3; made six frame picket gates and hung them, \$42; and spent the rest of the time getting out lumber for fencing."

James McGrew, blacksmith, besides shoeing horses and mules~~x~~ made 64 harrow teeth, ironed six neck yokes and three sets of doubletrees, made 100 rings, repaired wagons at a cost of \$25 and forged a branding iron.

Father Wilbur, as he was called by the Indians, directed the tribe in progress, education and agriculture under a serious although religionistic administration.

Grazing privileges were granted to a few of the stockmen like the

"king of range," Ben Snipes, bringing in several thousand dollars annually for the benefit of the tribe . Some of the payment was made in ~~six~~ fat cattle which were slaughtered to augment food stores.

Lumber was transformed into homes--not too many at first, four or six a year--and replaced tepees which had dotted the Valley.

Wagons, plows, harrows and harness were purchased and given to those who worked for them but were denied to those who wanted only annuity goods without working.

Early in 1866 a stage road and relay stations were opened through the reservation near the present route to ~~Gold~~ Goldendale over Satus Pass. In 1878 there were 3,500 head of Indian Department cattle, burned with the ID brand , and there ~~xxx~~ were 16,000 head of horses. Most of the lumber was used for fencing cultivated areas to keep out livestock which was even then creating a serious overgrazing problem.

The severe winter of 1880-1881 set back the stockmen both on and outside the reservation because 80 to 90 per cent of the stock froze or starved to death, a repetition of nineteen years earlier.

The military returned to the control of reservations over the nation in 1869-1870 and Lieutenant James H. Smith was assigned to Fort Simcoe.

He was quick to assail Wilbur.

The lieutenant asserted that those following Wilbur's faith could obtain all they asked for, but others who adhered to their old belief were denied annuities. This was even enforced in hair cutting, although long hair was inherent in the old religion ~~which~~ with which the missionaries were unfamiliar.

"Furthermore, " Lieutenant Smith wrote in an official report: "In comparing the highly favorable reports from this agency regarding the wealth of the Yakima Indians on the reserve, the conclusion forced itself that these reports were grossly exaggerated..." An ~~ddddd~~ official inquiry substantiated the contention:

"Restraint of their religious liberty was always the occasion of great discontent and a direct violation of the most cherished ideas of the American people."

The government restored civil control over the reservations and Wilbur, returning as agent in 1871, stated his policy:

"If I fail to give moral character to an Indian I can give him nothing that does ~~xxx~~ him permanent good. If I can succeed in giving him moral character, then he no longer needs the gifts of government. He becomes a man like any other and can take care of himself."

"Wilbur built up attendance at the Indian school; the children were eagerly

learning the ways of the white man.

He outlawed liquor runners on the reservation. He was a strict disciplinarian who resorted to the whipping post (for women as well as men) and the ball and chain and hard labor for punishment of tribesmen and non-Indian offenders. He was the law of the land at a time that Simcoe was the leading town in the ~~widexxalks~~ country for miles around, and in carrying out justice, he did so without discrimination other than his religious convictions.

The years that swirled around Fort Simcoe and the reservation, the people who lived there, and the country surrounding, are rich in history, not only of the region but interlocked with the west and the nation.

Several ~~agxkx~~ events show the temper and disposition of Wilbur and give a new insight into the Yakimas.

There was the time when the combattant Snake or Paiute Indians from Fort Harney and the disbanded Malheur Reservation in Oregon, who had resisted settlement days for so long and whose scattered and prowling bands continued to attack wagon trains, were finally subjugated.

And out of a clear sky and in the dead of a crackling cold January, they were herded onto the Yakima Reservation by military escort.

"Five hundred and forty-three Snake and Piute Indians arrived yesterday

without official notice of their coming, in a destitute condition, nearly naked. Something must be done immediately to feed and clothe them," Wilbur wired to E.A. Hayt, Commissioner of Indian Affairs on February 3, 1879.

Wilbur dutifully took the Yakima chief and interpreter to meet Captain W.H. Winters of the First Cavalry and the prisoners.

The Yakimas went to work with teams and hauled lumber from the steam sawmill to build a shelter, 150 feet long and 17 feet wide.

"It affords me pleasure to say the Indians of the ~~Coeur d'Alene~~ agency did not revolt but took hold with a will to help locate them and make them comfortable," he wrote.

The camp was set up on Toppenish Creek, seven miles east of Fort Simcoe and Wilbur himself, a huge man weighing over 200 pounds, directed twenty Yakima freighters to move the prisoners and the two companies of blue-clad troops.

He also established the Paiute farm, first at Lone Pine Tree, just west of present White Swan, and then the farm and school four miles southeast of White Swan. It was to obtain water for this that the old Paiute ditch was dug, one of the reservation's first irrigation projects of consequence.

Sarah Winnemucca, the determined and pathetic heroine of the Paiutes accompanied her people to the reservation and Wilbur engaged her as

interpreter and teacher but later replaced her with the Rev. George Waters, an ordained Methodist.

At the same time Chief Moses (Sispilth Kalch, Seven Shirts) and two hundred of his people from the Upper Columbia were brought in as a precaution against any outbreak resulting from the war with the Nez Perce. They were the Moses people or the Kawachkins.

There was an unexplainable friendship between Moses and the agent who at one time imprisoned Moses to keep him from being seized by the sheriff from Old Town (Union Gap). When Moses was arrested and taken to Old Town, Wilbur bailed him out for \$300 and stood by until the chief was acquitted of charges resulting from ~~the~~ minor outbreaks which occurred off the reservation and the murder of the Perkins couple.

Wilbur was disappointed that Moses and his people did not choose to remain on the Yakima Reservation, and that the Paiutes became dissatisfied and deserted in wholesale numbers to Warm Springs and Idaho when he enforced his "no work, no food" policy. He constantly sought increased appropriations for an empire of many tribes he was attempting to build.

But ~~after~~ a reservation was created by Presidential Proclamation for Moses after he had gone to Washington.

Sarah, seemingly content at first, took personal issue with Wilbur and

then went directly to Washington and complained strongly to authorities of cold and wet camps, ~~added~~ widespread deaths among her people and the lack of food and clothing.

All this time the Yakimas regarded the Paiutes as guests and brothers needful of assistance. They willingly consented to withdrawals from Yakima rations and at Christmas they slaughtered their own cattle, gathered presents of food and clothing and delivered them to the Paiute camp. Yet most of the time they were compelled to keep a close watch over their own belongings and especially the horses.

Some of Sarah's own people turned against her and there were long and bitter councils at which her brother, Lee Winnemucca defended her, and Paiute leaders like Leggins, Paddy, Oytes the medicine man and defeated warrior, and Natchez spoke.

In a few years the Paiutes broke away and scattered to their old homes and the Yakimas went back on about the work of building their own lives with Wilbur's strong guidance.

Sarah perpetuated her disgruntled feelings in letters and documents. She once wrote:

"Father Wilbur says he should be much relieved if the Piutes were not on the reservation. They have been the cause of much labor and anxiety to him. Yet he does all he can to prevent their going away.