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1212 N. 32nd Ave.

[Curator, Washington State Historical
Society; board member, Yakima Valley
Museum and Historical Association]

PROLOGUE

At this hour, on this day, in this grove of oak trees, 100 years after soldiers of the Ninth Infantry commenced building Fort Simcoe, we also remember that the Rev. James Harvey Wilbur also came here and was dedicated to another form of building.

This is 227 years after Methodism was born in Europe, 190 years after it originated in this nation [at New York]; 188 years after the first Methodist preachers came to that city, 110 years after the Rev. James H. Wilbur sailed westwardly and 96 years after he was appointed a teacher among the Red Men of the Yakima Valley.

Now we can see the visible results of his labors in the churches throughout the Northwest, the schools, farming communities and in the homes. His work endures. We feel, but do not see, the invisible accomplishments.

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The man who for more than 18 years in his communications signed himself "Your Obedient Servant, James H. Wilbur", Indian Agent, was first and last the obedient servant of his Creator, the self-same Creator of the Indian Tribes and Bands brought onto the reservation by the Treaty of 1855

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In his 76 years between birth near the village of Lowville, in New York State, September 11, 1811, and his death, October 8, 1887 at Walla Walla, Father Wilbur as the Indians called him evaluated the most important things in his eventful life.

First, there was his marriage to Lucretia Ann Stebbins, March 9, 1831. Then there was his trip to the west in 1846-47, and finally his appointment in 1860 as teacher among the Indians.

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"This ninth day of April is Mrs. Wilbur's birthday, 35 years old. We have been married 15 years and one month today. Of what a change 15 years will make with me should I live; then I will be 50 years old. How true it is that man's life is a hand's breadth and his days as nothing.

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Perhaps his defeat for a seat in the United States Senate and the death of his only daughter, Ann a year after she married the Rev. S.T. Michael Fackler, first Episcopal clergyman in the Oregon country, may have influenced him into entering the Yakima Country.

When Father Wilbur first came to Fort Simcoe the military had left and the Yakima Reservation had been created. But in the smoke-tinged days of fall when the flickers chattered in the oak trees which the Indians called "snnips" the women still met to gather acorns which they called "watwatche."

Dr. Richard Hyatt ~~Lansdale~~ Lansdale had received the Fort Simcoe from the Ninth Infantry on May 16, 1859. Dr. Lansdale was relieved by Wesley B. Gosnell in 1861 and he in turn was replaced by Charles Hutchins. Ashley A. Bancroft, brother of the noted historian was appointed agent on May 14, 1861 and was relieved by Father Wilbur who was appointed agent June 7, 1864 after having served as a teacher.

In his own words:

"I was appointed superintendent of teaching September 1, 1860 and in June, 1864, agent. Immediately on going to the agency in the fall of 1860 I began to prepare for opening a boarding school. There was no provision for the subsistence of the children. I pledged the department if they could feed the children for a time until the wild steers could be made oxen and the children could be tamed to drive them, and seed planted and sowed and time given to it to come to maturity, the school would raise enough for its own subsistence.

"I immediately gathered in the larger boys and commenced my instruction in yoking the cattle, hitching them to the plow and with my wild team and wild boys began making crooked furrows on the land chosen for a school farm. I needed and had a boy or two at every ox

in the team and then it was difficult to keep them in an area of 80 acres.

"The instructions in the school house began in November with 25 children . The children were taken from the camps of their parents in great destitution, not having clothes enough to cover their nakedness. Mrs. Wilbur instructed the girls to sew, spin, knit, to cut and make dresses and clothing for the boys."

His intercession for the rights of the Indians and his determination to inaugurate teaching , placed him at odds with the early agents and his discharge was ordered. Thereupon he addressed a letter , October 12, 1861, to B.F. Kendall, superintendent of Indian Affairs stating:

"I received yours of the 10th containing my discharge as superintendent of teaching. I was appointed to this field of labor by the Oregon annual conference of the Methodist Church. Is it permissible for me to remain here without expense to that department?"

Relief was not immediately forthcoming, but eventually Agent Pancroft was discharged and Father Wilbur was appointed agent. He set to work to gain the confidence of a disillusioned people. He found that the Indians had been issued annuity goods at exorbitant prices and had been paid in work vouchers differing from twenty-five to fifty-cents on the dollar.

Wilbur was a large man who at that time wore sideburns and weighed nearly 300 pounds. He was six feet two inches tall and feared ~~next~~ no one but God.

He struck at gambling and drinking with effect. He was his own law officer, arresting those who stole from the whites and requiring them to restore the goods two-fold and to spend a season as convicts, wearing a ball and chain. In that manner the area east of the agency was cleared.

In his first year as agent four of his promising students were licensed to exhort to their people "to flee the wrath to come, and lay hold of eternal life."

By 1867 he was impressing upon the Indian Department that his conviction that the Plow and the Bible and their companion influences were more helpful toward securing a permanent peace "than a thousand soldiers and their glistening sabers and their prancing steeds."

He demonstrated his convictions personally by putting three large ox teams to work plowing new land. Each plow turned one to two and one-half acres of sagebrush daily. The Indians were hired to drive the oxen and hold the plow so it would bite deep into the soil.

The plowmen went from place to place to do their work, camping at night. They developed their homes with the money earned. When Father Wilbur went out from the agency to work shoulder to shoulder with the Indians he rode a big mule called Calico.

A water-operated saw mill to turn out lumber, and a grist mill to grind out flour were at work on Mill and Simcoe creeks. The saw mill cut pine logs into boards from which to build two small churches, one at White Swan seven miles distant.

Finally when he was overwhelmed by the increasing duties of agent, preacher and teacher, he proposed that the tribe elect a leader to assist him and they selected Joe Stwire or Chief White Swan, an early convert and the brother of the Rev. George Waters. The latter studied at the Jason Lee Missionary School and was ordained in 1871. The Rev. Waters was a teacher at the boarding school and the short-lived Paiute School.

Later the Rev. Waters decided to carry his religion into ~~the~~ Idaho and built a church at the mouth of the Clearwater River, five miles from Lapwai.

He became an elder in the church at Moscow but returned to the Yakima Reservation and was elected chief in 1910, a position he held until he died in 1923.

Chief White Swan was a portly man with a large head and massive square jaws, and by his own words at preaching missions, was addicted to lum-- the Chinook jargon word for rum, in earlier life.

"My own eyes were blind and it was night in my soul. Then came the missionaries, Mr. Perkins and the others, and then Mr. Wilbur. I put away my wild ways. I am happy now."

His wife was named Susan. She was a good housekeeper and cook.

When the people wanted ~~in~~ a church built at White Swan around 1873-74 they went to Wilbur and he agreed to build it if they would help. White Swan lived near the site chosen, the present city of White Swan. Lumber was cut at the agency mill and hauled eight or nine miles. The church was finished but a terrific wind came up. It blew so strong it overturned buggies caught out on the road. The next morning the Indians went to Father Wilbur and with tears in their eyes said ~~they had~~ storm had blown over the church. It was inspected and found that the east end had slipped from the foundation three feet so they set to work and got it ready by Saturday.

On Sunday people came from all directions, some in white man's clothes and some in breechcloths and blankets. Stick Joe was the interpreter.

There was the dedication and then a speaking meeting with many taking part. They told of changes to the new way, of cutting their hair and forsaking the old ways.

Another preacher ~~was~~ in those years was the Rev. Thomas Pearne. He was named for the man who at one time was editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate and who was a pioneer Oregon minister.

Father Wilbur's first annual report as agent, written July 22, 1865, tells that the reservation farm had sixty acres planted to wheat, thirty to oats, two to peas, four to potatoes, four to corn, one to turnips, and half an acre to beets, carrots, onions and garden vegetables.

William Wright was superintendent of instruction and the Rev. W.C. Chattin and Mrs. ~~Exx~~ Wilbur were teachers. Mr. Chattin confined his labors to the school room from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour's intermission. Here the children were taught to spell, read write and given instructions in geography and arithmetic. Mrs. Wilbur instructed the girls in knitting, sewing, cutting and making their dresses and the clothes for the boys; in addition she taught the Indian women to knit, spin, saw, cut and make clothing for themselves and families.

"The Indians have, I judge, near two thousand acres fenced and 1,000 to 1,200 acres in crops," Agent Wilbur reported. "We broke them at least 150 acres of new wheat last spring.

"We preach to them every Sabbath and have from one to six hundred in our congregation. They have their prayer meetings during the week in the different neighborhoods."

The average number of students attending the school was 29. The school roll included Daniel Boone, C.H. Halex, I.I. Stevens, Oliver Lewis, Techmseh Yahotowit, Christopher Columbus, Henry Clay, William Penn, David Price, Assulia Lumley, Ben Grant, Abe Lincoln, Ambrose Eneas, Joseph Eneas, Mark, Paul, Luke, Hampton, Chamill, Kate McKay, Jenny Lind, Ursula Lumley, Bella Wilber, Ellen Grant, Marie McKay, Maria Yahotowit, Elizabeth Spencer, Zoene Eneas, ~~Max~~ and Mary Ann and they ranged from eight years old up to 21.

The policy of the Bible and the Plow was upset in 1869 when the military returned to brief control over reservations. ~~Max~~ Lt. James H. Smith was placed in charge and Father Wilbur returned to Oregon but pursued reappointment so he could continue an unfinished work.

Then he returned as agent, January 1, 1871 and wrote;

"Every interest, material and moral was waning. Employees were paid for services long before reaching the reservation and with the influence they exerted in dancing, swearing, drinking and card playing, the interests of the reservation were rapidly declining."

"The first condition of improvement in the outside manner of life of my people is the improvement of the heart. Here is the place to begin the work of reform. If I fail to give moral character to an Indian, I can give him nothing that does him permanent good. If I can succeed in giving him moral character, so that he is no more a liar, a thief, a drunkard, a profane person, a polygamist or a gambler but a man of integrity, industry, sobriety and purity, then he no longer needs the gifts of government or the charities of anybody. He becomes a man like any other man and can take care of himself."

Father Wilbur's doctrines were upheld by high officials who contended that the agent had "fully demonstrated the truth of the generally doubted problem among eastern people--the capability of Indians for permanent civilization and Christianization."

One wrote that "Father Wilbur had virtually adopted 3,000 Indians who looked upon the Wilburs as father and mother."

By then he was 60 years old and was characterized as "a kind governor, a wise legislator, just judge, stern sheriff, busy worker and good instructor in all physical, moral and religious duties; everywhere and at all times an earnest, practical working man, profitably employing every hour and civilizing and improving those around him."

In those years as always he continually defended the reservation against encroachment and when white settlers in the Yakima Valley desired to occupy the land, he wrote: "A class of irresponsible whites are anxious to have a war that the treaty might be broken and the land of the reservation opened for white settlement."

In 1872 he "remembered that the treaty with the Yakima Indians will in a few years expire when it will be expected of them that they will be capable of taking care of themselves. We are educating these young men in our shops to make harness, build houses, work in the mills and on the farms so as to make them capable of every department of business of taking care of themselves. "e have already young men who are capable of building houses, making boots, shoes, making harness, doing good work in the blacksmith shop and are good helpers about the mills."

In 1874 he wrote: "With good subsistence, with cattle, horses and the comforts of civilized life, the government needs no soldiers to keep quiet. These improvements with proper instruction and wholesome examples will keep them the white man's friend as long as the sun and moon endure."

By 1878 farming had grown to where 15,000 acres of land were fenced and 5,000 were under cultivation. Within four years Indian workers built 30 miles of post and board fences. They owned 3,500 head of cattle and about 15,000 head of horses. Many were living in good houses, painted outside, with furniture, chairs, tables, bedspreads, cookstoves, mirrors, clocks, watches, crockery, the newspaper and the Bible. There were barns, wagons, harness, plows and the improved machinery of farming. The women had sewing machines. The practice of rationing had been discontinued.

Irrigation ditches were beginning to convey water to Indian lands.

"I have no affinity," he wrote, "for the custom now practiced in many of the agencies of this nation of feeding the Indians in idleness and preparing them when their treaties run out to fight the whites and get a new treaty; and thus, from year to year and generation to generation to be a tax upon the industry of the whites."

Thick books could be written about the various aspects of the Rev. Wilbur's tenure. It would take one alone to tell the full story of the Snake or Paiute Indians on the Yakima Reservation and their leader, Sarah Winnemucca.

Five hundred and forty three of them were delivered, unceremoniously and without notice into Father Wilbur's keeping on Feb. 2, 1879. That was in the dead of winter.

They were brought from the Mahleer in Oregon by Capt. Winters after the Pannock War. The agent tackled the situation as he did the innumerable emergencies.

He engaged eight Indian men with teams to go to the steam saw mill for lumber to build a shelter, and put others to work building a 150 foot long structure to house the Paiutes during the winter. They were moved from near Toppenish to a location six miles from the agency.

Sarah Winnemucca who came in with the soldiers as an interpreter was retained as an interpreter and teacher. With the arrival of spring Rev. Wilbur directed the people toward rehabilitation by showing them how to plow and plant, build an irrigation ditch and make other preparations for their own welfare. They were disgruntled, however, and stole away to Oregon in large and small groups. Some were pursued and returned but finally were permitted to go back to their homes in Oregon and Idaho. Sarah Winnemucca embarked on a nation-wide crusading tour for "justice for the Paiutes," that ended in her death, broken and disillusioned.

Father Wilbur had many friendships. One was that with Capt. Nathan Olney of The Dalles, early-day Oregon Indian agent. Olney settled north of the reservation after the unsettled war period and when he died was buried by Father Wilbur to the east of the agency. There the Olney family has placed a monument to mark the grave.

One of the strangest friendships, however, was that existing between the agent and Chief Moses of the Kawachkins.

Father Wilbur maintained a staunch friendship with the Moses, protecting him during the period of unbusiness in 1878 when the Nez Perce under young Chief Joseph, were compelled to war, and the settlers feared that Moses would join in an alliance.

The massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Perkins at Rattlesnake Springs in the Moxee Valley by renegade Indians who were not from the Yakima Reservation cast a cloud of suspicion on Chief Moses and eventually resulted in his arrest. But Father Wilbur bailed Moses out of jail at old Yakima City and stood by him at trial there that resulted in the acquittal of Moses. Father Wilbur took Moses to Fort Simcoe and he was later permitted by General O.O. Howard to go to Washington where he acquired a reservation adjoining the Colville Reserve on the west, although the Yakima agent wanted him to settle on the Yakima Reserve.

When Father Wilbur bailed Chief Moses out of jail on \$300 bond he wrote:

"I am keeping Chief Moses. The whites swear they will kill him if he is permitted to return to his former home. The sheriff and two other men came from Yakima City with a warrant to take Moses and others of his men. I had Moses locked up. The rabble would have killed him."

When Yakima City was but a dot on the map of the new territory of Washington, the 71 year old idol of many reservation people retired.

He disliked ceremony, so on August 15, 1882, he went upstairs in the big house where the blue coated commandants had lived and where his tall desk was located. There he wrote his last annual report.

He went to Goldendale for a time and then to Walla Walla. There Mrs. Wilbur died on September 13, 1887 when she was 76 and he died shortly afterwards.

They were buried close to the old mission at Salem, Oregon, but there unbuil monument was at Fort Simcoe.

In his 17th annual and final report, written Aug. 15, 1882, Father Wilbur estimated there 3,400 Yakimas and anticipated a harvest of 42,000 bushels of wheat and 8,500 of barley. The school was attended by 120 boys and girls and some were turned away because there were no places for them.

"I am aware, " he wrote" that a common sentiment is that the Indians are a doomed race and can never exist in the presence of civilization. With this I have always taken direct issue. I have always believed in the manhood and capacity of the Indian , and contended for the possibility of lifting him to a high state of civilization.

"For more than twenty years, with an interval of only 16 months, I have resided continuously at this agency. For nearly eighteen of those years I have been agent here. I have seen the little boys who were brought to me ragged and filthy, who I have washed and clothed with my own hands, who I have taught and guided, grow into men. I have married them and baptized their children. I have anxiously watched them through all these years and rejoiced as I saw them grow up useful and respected, firmly fixed in moral and religious truth, the hope and support of their people.

"But I feel that my work is now done here, and other hands must take up the burden I have borne so long. They will not find it so heavy as I have found it.

"If the foundations that I have fixed with so much anxiety and labor shall remain--if the seed which I have sown through all these years shall continue to grow, and spread, and bear fruit, I feel that my labors have not been in vain."

H.K. Hines, former editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate who delivered a memorial sermon at the funeral of Father Wilbur at the Taylor Street Church, Portland, October 30, 1887, said:

"His place was unique; and perhaps it might be said there was place for but one Father Wilbur in our work. He was a history and a work that can never be repeated, nor even imitated on this coast. He was essentially and by nature a pioneer.

"A mark of a great mind is the renewal of effort at such succeeding failure and so it was with men of his type, although they met with difficulties and oftentimes failed to accomplish results desired, each failure quickened their ambition to a higher and better effort.

EPILOGUE

A love of the old days and ways and a high esteem of those who lived here and labored for a cause, have brought us to Fort Simcoe today.

The impassable years lie between us and the past. What was written by Father Wilbur in agency letters and reports is now history. Father Wilbur's Bible was history, too. ~~Jesus~~ Jesus of Nazareth did things that were recorded by historians like Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Have you ever stopped to think where Christianity would be today had not the history of that period been recorded?

Now on the slopes and bunchgrass covered hills surrounding Fort Simcoe we can visualize the cattle and horse herds grazing. We can close our eyes and listen, hearing the shouts of the Indian cowboys. On the ridges we can see them passing to and from the place that was dear to them and which by this preservation forever be preserved for them and their neighbors.

Under these oaks we hear the shouts of boys and girls who grew to manhood and womanhood, possessing the rudiments of an education and armed with a religion to withstand the inroads of an all-engulfing way of life that threatens to overrun their reservation unless we stand by them in the example set by their agent, James H. Wilbur.

The cowpuncher and cattleman, the goldseeker, railroad builder and landstaker and irrigationist peopled their world as they grew old, were succeeded by their children and their children's children and other agents and superintendents.

Today all that is past moves against the great backdrop of the Simcoe Valley to the east, the eternal slopes of Mt. Adams to the West, Toppenish Ridge on the south and Antanum Ridge to the north.

These places ~~are~~ still echo to the shouts and laughter that come alive through our poor efforts, on this centennial of the building of Old Fort Simcoe. Arising through our reconstruction, they give richness to our lives.

All the shouts and whispers and the whine of dry wagon axels are dust except those things that rise through the work of those who have gone before.

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The first Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at Walla Walla in October, 1859 with 30 members. A year later the Walla Walla

Circuit became the Walla Walla District and Father Wilbur was assigned for to the care ~~of~~ the Indians at Fort Simcoe Indian Agency.

Perhaps his defeat for a seat in the United States Senate and the death of his only daughter, Ann a year after she married the Rev. S.T. Michael Fackler, first Episcopal clergyman in the Oregon country, may have influenced him into entering the Yakima Country.

When Father Wilbur first came to Fort Simcoe the military had left and the Yakima Reservation had been created. But in the smoke-tinged days of fall when the flickers chattered in the oak trees which the Indians called "sonnips" the women still met to gather acorns which they called "watwatche."

Dr. Richard Hyatt ~~xxxxxx~~ Lansdale had received ~~the~~ Fort Simcoe from the Ninth Infantry on May 16, 1859. Dr. Lansdale was relieved by Wesley B. Gosnell in 1861 and he in turn was replaced by Charles Hutchins. Ashley A. Bancroft, brother of the noted historian was appointed agent on May 14, 1861 and was relieved by Father Wilbur who was appointed agent June 7, 1864 after having served as a teacher.

In his own words:

"I was appointed ~~superintendent of teaching~~ September 1, 1860 and in June, 1864, agent. Immediately on going to the agency in the fall of 1860 I began to prepare for opening a boarding school. There was no provision for the subsistence of the children. I pledged the department if they could feed the children for a time until the wild steers could be made oxen and the children could be tamed to drive them, and seed planted and sowed and time given to it to come to maturity, the school would raise enough for its own subsistence.

"I immediately gathered in the larger boys and commenced my instruction in yoking the cattle, hitching them to the plow and with my wild team and wild boys began making crooked furrows on the land chosen for a school farm. I needed and had a boy or two at every ox

in the team and then it was difficult to keep them in an area of 80 acres.

"The instructions in the school house began in November with 25 children . The children were taken from the camps of their parents in great destitution, not having clothes enough to cover their nakedness. Mrs. Wilbur instructed the girls to sew, spin, knit, to cut and make dresses and clothing for the boys."

His intercession for the rights of the Indians and his determination to inaugurate teaching , placed him at odds with the early agents and his discharge was ordered. Thereupon he addressed a letter , October 12, 1861, to B.F. Kendall, superintendent of Indian Affairs stating:

"I received yours of the 10th containing my discharge as superintendent of teaching. I was appointed to this field of labor by the Oregon annual conference of the Methodist Church. Is it permissible for me to remain here without expense to that department?"

Relief was not immediately forthcoming, but eventually Agent Bancroft was discharged and Father Wilbur was appointed agent. He set to work to gain the confidence of a disillusioned people. He found that the Indians had been issued annuity goods at exorbitant prices and had been paid in work vouchers differing from twenty-five to fifty-cents on the dollar.

Wilbur was a large man who at that time wore sideburns and weighed nearly 300 pounds. He was six feet two inches tall and feared ~~nothing~~ no one but God.

He struck at gambling and drinking with effect. He was his own law officer, arresting those who stole from the whites and requiring them to restore the goods two-fold and to spend a season as convicts, wearing a ball and chain. In that manner the area east of the agency was cleared.

In his first year as agent four of his promising students were licensed to exhort to their people "to flee the wrath to come, and lay hold of eternal life."

By 1867 he was impressing upon the Indian Department that his conviction that the Plow and the Bible and their companion influences were more helpful toward securing a permanent peace "than a thousand soldiers and their glistening sabers and their prancing steeds."

He demonstrated his convictions personally by putting three large ox teams to work plowing new land. Each plow turned one to two and one-half acres of sagebrush daily. The Indians were hired to drive the oxen and hold the plow so it would bite deep into the soil.

The plowmen went from place to place to do their work, camping at night. They developed their homes with the money earned. When Father Wilbur went out from the agency to work shoulder to shoulder with the Indians he rode a big mule called Calico.

A water-operated saw mill to turn out lumber, and a grist mill to grind out flour were at work on Mill and Simcoe creeks. The saw mill cut pine logs into boards from which to build two small churches, one at White Swan seven miles distant.

Finally when he was overwhelmed by the increasing duties of agent, preacher and teacher, he proposed that the tribe elect a leader to assist him and they selected Joe Stwire or Chief White Swan, an early convert and the brother of the Rev. George Waters. The latter studied at the Jason Lee Missionary School and was ordained in 1871. The Rev. Waters was a teacher at the boarding school and the short-lived Paiute School.

Later the Rev. Waters decided to carry his religion into ~~the~~ Idaho and built a church at the mouth of the Clearwater River, five miles from Lapwai.

He became an elder in the church at Moscow but returned to the Yakima Reservation and was elected chief in 1910, a position he held until he died in 1923.

Chief White Swan was a portly man with a large head and massive square jaws, and by his own words at preaching missions, was addicted to lum-- the Chinook jargon word for rum, in earlier life.

"My own eyes were blind and it was night in my soul. Then came the missionaries, Mr. Perkins and the others, and then Mr. Wilbur. I put away my wild ways. I am happy now."

His wife was named Susan. She was a good housekeeper and cook.

When the people wanted ~~in~~ a church built at White Swan around 1873-74 they went to Wilbur and he agreed to build it if they would help. White San lived near the site chosen, the present city of White Swan. Lumber was cut at the agency mill and hauled eight or nine miles. The church was finished but a terrific wind came up. It blew so strong it overturned buggies caught out on the road. The next morning the Indians went to Father Wilbur and with tears in their eyes said their ~~bad~~ storm had blown over the church. It was inspected and found that the east end had slipped from the foundation three feet so they set to work and got it ready by Saturday.

On Sunday people came from all directions, some in white man's clothes and some in breechcloths and blankets. Stick Joe was the interpreter.

There was the dedication and then a speaking meeting with many taking part. They told of changes to the new way, of cutting their hair and forsaking the old ways.

"Another preacher ~~was~~ in those years was the Rev. Thomas Pearne. He was named for the man who at one time was editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate and who was a pioneer Oregon minister.

Father Wilbur's first annual report as agent, written July 22, 1865, tells that the reservation farm had sixty acres planted to wheat, thirty to oats, two to peas, four to potatoes, four to corn, one to turnips, and half an acre to beets, carrots, onions and garden vegetables.

William Wright was superintendent of instruction and the Rev. W.C. Chattin and Mrs. ~~Exx~~ Wilbur were teachers. Mr. Chattin confined his labors to the school room from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with an hour's intermission. Here the children were taught to spell, read write and given instructions in geography and arithmetic. Mrs. Wilbur instructed the girls in knitting, sewing, cutting and making their dresses and the clothes for the boys; in addition she taught the Indian women to knit, spin, sew, cut and make clothing for themselves and families.

"The Indians have, I judge, near two thousand acres fenced and 1,000 to 1,200 acres in crops," Agent Wilbur reported. "We broke them at least 150 acres of new wheat last spring.

"We preach to them every Sabbath and have from one to six hundred in our congregation. They have their prayer meetings during the week in the different neighborhoods."

The average number of students attending the school was 29. The school roll included Daniel Boone, C.H. Hale~~x~~, I.I. Stevens, Oliver Lewis, Techmseh Yahotowit, Christopher Columbus, Henry Clay, William Penn, David Price, Assulia Lumley, Ben Grant, Abe Lincoln, Ambrose Eneas, Joseph Eneas, Mark, Paul, Luke, Hampton, Chemill, Kate McKay, Jenny Lind, Ursula Lumley, Bella Wilber, Ellen Grant, Marie McKay, Maria Yahotowit, Elizabeth Spencer, Zoene Eneas, ~~Max~~ and Mary Ann and they ranged from eight years old up to 21.

The policy of the Bible and the Plow was upset in 1869 when the military returned to brief control over reservations. ~~xxxx~~ Lt. James H. Smith was placed in charge and Father Wilbur returned to Oregon but pursued reappointment so he could continue an unfinished work.

Then he returned as agent, January 1, 1871 and wrote:

"Every interest, material and moral was waning. Employees were paid for services long before reaching the reservation and with the influence they exerted in dancing, swearing, drinking and card playing, the interests of the reservation were rapidly declining."

"The first condition of improvement in the outside manner of life of my people is the improvement of the heart. Here is the place to begin the work of reform. If I fail to give moral character to an Indian, I can give him nothing that does him permanent good. If I can succeed in giving him moral character, so that he is no more a liar, a thief, a drunkard, a profane person, a polygamist or a gambler but a man of integrity, industry, sobriety and purity, then he no longer needs the gifts of government or the charities of anybody. He becomes a man like any other man and can take care of himself."

Father Wilbur's doctrines were upheld by high officials who contended that the agent had "fully demonstrated the truth of the generally doubted problem among eastern people--the capability of Indians for permanent civilization and Christianization."

One wrote that "Father Wilbur had virtually adopted 3,000 Indians who looked upon the Wilburs as father and mother."

By then he was 60 years old and was characterized as "a kind governor, a wise legislator, just judge, stern sheriff, busy worker and good instructor in all physical, moral and religious duties; everywhere and at all times an earnest, practical working man, profitably employing every hour and civilizing and improving those around him."

In those years as always he continually defended the reservation against encroachment and when white settlers in the Yakima Valley desired to occupy the land, he wrote: "A class of irresponsible whites are anxious to have a war that the treaty might be broken and the land of the reservation opened for white settlement."

In 1872 he "remembered that the treaty with the Yakima Indians will in a few years expire when it will be expected of them that they will be capable of taking care of themselves. We are educating these young men in our shops to make harness, build houses, work in the mills and on the farms so as to make them capable of every department of business of taking care of themselves. "e have already young men who are capable of building houses, making boots, shoes, making harness, doing good work in the blacksmith shop and are good helpers about the mills."

In 1874 he wrote: "With good subsistence, with cattle, horses and the comforts of civilized life, the government needs no soldiers to keep quiet. These improvements with proper instruction and wholesome examples will keep them the white man's friend as long as the sun and moon endure."

By 1878 farming had grown to where 15,000 acres of land were fenced and 5,000 were under cultivation. Within four years Indian workers built 30 miles of post and board fences. They owned 3,500 head of cattle and about 10,000 head of horses. Many were living in good houses, painted outside, with furniture, chairs, tables, bedspreads, cookstoves, mirrors, clocks, watches, crockery, the newspaper and the Bible. There were barns, wagons, harness, plows and the improved machinery of farming. The women had sewing machines. The practice of rationing had been discontinued.

Irrigation ditches were beginning to convey water to Indian lands.

"I have no affinity," he wrote, "for the custom now practiced in many of the agencies of this nation of feeding the Indians in idleness and preparing them when their treaties run out to fight the whites and get a new treaty; and thus, from year to year and generation to generation to be a tax upon the industry of the whites."

Thick books could be written about the various aspects of the Rev. Wilbur's tenure. It would take one alone to tell the full story of the Snake or Paiute Indians on the Yakima Reservation and their leader, Sarah Winnemucca.

Five hundred and forty three of them were delivered, unceremoniously and without notice into Father Wilbur's keeping on Feb. 2, 1879. That was in the dead of winter.

They were brought from the Mahleer in Oregon by Capt. Winters after the Pannock War. The agent tackled the situation as he did the innumerable emergencies.

He engaged eight Indian men with teams to go to the steam saw mill for lumber to build a shelter, and put others to work building a 150 foot long structure to house the Paiutes during the winter. They were moved from near Toppenish to a location six miles from the agency.

Sarah Winnemucca who came in with the soldiers as an interpreter was retained as an interpreter and teacher. With the arrival of spring Rev. Wilbur directed the people toward rehabilitation by showing them how to plow and plant, build an irrigation ditch and make other preparations for their own welfare. They were disgruntled, however, and stole away to Oregon in large and small groups. Some were pursued and returned but finally were permitted to go back to their homes in Oregon and Idaho. Sarah Winnemucca embarked on a nation-wide crusading tour for "justice for the Paiutes," that ended in her death, broken and disillusioned.

Father Wilbur had many friendships. One was that with Capt. Nathan Olney of The Dalles, early-day Oregon Indian agent. Olney settled north of the reservation after the unsettled war period and when he died was buried by Father Wilbur to the east of the agency. There the Olney family has placed a monument to mark the grave.

One of the strongest friendships, however, was that existing between the agent and Chief Moses of the Kawachkins.

Father Wilbur maintained a staunch friendship with the Moses, protecting him during the period of uneasiness in 1878 when the Nez Perce under young Chief Joseph, were compelled to war, and the settlers feared that Moses would join in an alliance.

The massacre of Mr. and Mrs. Alonzo Perkins at Rattlesnake Springs in the Moxee Valley by renegade Indians who were not from the Yakima Reservation cast a cloud of suspicion on Chief Moses and eventually resulted in his arrest. But Father Wilbur bailed Moses out of jail at old Yakima City and stood by him at trial there that resulted in the acquittal of Moses. Father Wilbur took Moses to Fort Simcoe and he was later permitted by General O.O. Howard to go to Washington where he acquired a reservation adjoining the Colville Reserve on the west, although the Yakima agent wanted him to settle on the Yakima Reserve.

When Father Wilbur bailed Chief Moses out of jail on \$300 bond he wrote:

"I am keeping Chief Moses. The whites swear they will kill him if he is permitted to return to his former home. The sheriff and two other men came from Yakima City with a warrant to take Moses and others of his men. I had Moses locked up. The rabble would have killed him."

When Yakima City was but a dot on the map of the new territory of Washington, the 71 year old idol of many reservation people retired.

He disliked ceremony, so on August 15, 1882, he went upstairs in the big house where the blue coated commandants had lived and where his tall desk was located. There he wrote his last annual report.

He went to Goldendale for a time and then to Walla Walla. There Mrs. Wilbur died on September 13, 1887 when she was ~~22~~ 76 and he died shortly afterwards.

They were buried close to the old mission at Waleam, Oregon, but there unbuil monument was at Fort Wimcoe.

In his 17th annual and final report, written Aug. 15, 1882, Father Wilbur estimated there 3,400 Yakimas and anticipated a harvest of 42,000 bushels of wheat and 8,500 of barley. The school was attended by 120 boys and girls and some were turned away because there were no places for them.

"I am aware, " he wrote" that a common sentiment is that the Indians are a doomed race and can never exist in the presence of civilization. With this I have always taken direct issue. I have always believed in the manhood and capacity of the Indian , and contended for the possibility of lifting him to a high state of civilization.

"For more than twenty years, with an interval of only 16 months, I have resided continuously at this agency. For nearly eighteen of those years I have been agent here. I have seen the little boys who were brought to me ragged and filthy, who I have washed and clothed with my own hands, who I have taught and guided, grow into men. I have married them and baptized their children. I have anxiously watched them through all these years and rejoiced as I saw them grow up useful and respected, firmly fixed in moral and religious truth, the hope and support of their people.

"But I feel that my work is now done here, and other hands must take up the burden I have borne so long. They will not find it so heavy as I have found it.

"If the foundations that I have fixed with so much anxiety and labor shall remain--if the seed which I have sown through all these years shall continue to grow, and spread, and bear fruit, I feel that my labors have not been in vain."

H.K. Hines, former editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate who delivered a memorial sermon at the funeral of Father Wilbur at the Taylor Street Church, Portland, October 30, 1887, said:

"His place was unique; and perhaps it might be said there was place for but one Father Wilbur in our work. He was a history and a work that can never be repeated, nor even imitated on this coast. He was essentially and by nature a pioneer.

"A mark of a great mind is the renewal of effort at such succeeding failure and so it was with men of his type, although they met with difficulties and oftentimes failed to accomplish results desired, each failure quickened their ambition to a higher and better effort.

EPILOGUE

A love of the old days and ways and a high esteem of those who lived here and labored for a cause, have brought us to Fort Simcoe today.

The impassable years lie between us and the past. What was written by Father Wilbur in agency letters and reports is now history. Father Wilbur's Bible was history, too. ~~Jesus~~ Jesus of Nazareth did things that were recorded by historians like Mathew, Mark, Luke and John. Have you ever stoped to think where Christianity would be today had not the history of that period been recorded?

Now on the slopes and bunchgrass covered hills surrounding Fort Simcoe we can visualize the cattle and horse herds grazing. We can close our eyes and listen, hearing the shouts of the Indian cowboys. On the ridges we can see them passing to and from the place that was dear to them and which by this preservation forever be preserved for them and their neighbors.

Under these oaks we hear the shouts of boys and girls who grew to manhood and womanhood, possessing the rudiments of an education and armed with a religion to withstand the inroads of an all-engulfing way of life that threatens to overrun their reservation unless we stand by them in the example set by their agent, James H. Wilbur.

The cowpuncher and cattleman, the goldseeker, railroad builder and landstaker and irrigationist peopled their world as they grew old, were succeeded by their children and their children's children and other agents and superintendents.

Today all that is past moves against the great backdrop of the Simcoe Valley to the east, the eternal slopes of Mt. Adams to the West, ²Oppenish Ridge on the south and Antanum Ridge to the north.

These places ~~xxx~~ still echo to the shouts and laughter that come alive through our poor efforts on this centennial of the building of Old Fort Simcoe. Arising through our reconstruction, they give richness to our lives.

All the shouts and whispers and the whine of dry wagon axels are dust except those things that rise through the work of those who have gone before.