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Sunnyside

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE YAKIMA VALLEY

It has not been the effort of the writer to compile a history of the Yakima Valley. In a paper of this character, only a few of the highlights can be touched upon, and the attempt has been made to glean from the rather numerous histories and commentaries perused, a sketch, showing in reasonable continuity, the progress of modern civilization and development, in the wonderful valley which we have chosen as the land of our adoption.

The earliest white explorers found a well developed aboriginal civilization covering the Yakima Valley and in fact, the entire valley of the Columbia. The advent of the red man into this territory is veiled in the mists of antiquity and modern anthropologists have been unable to definitely account for the existence of the Indian in the Northwest. Largely on account of his pronounced Mongolian characteristics, the theory has been advanced that the ancestors of the present race of red men crossed to this continent from Asia, probably by way of Behring Strait, and descended along the coast, thence finding their way inland. Certain it is that the Kogmallucks of the Point Barrow country, are practically identical with the Asiatic Eskimos along the Siberian Coast. The above theory is perhaps as good as any other. At any rate, it seems fairly certain that the Indians inhabiting the Columbia River Basin, came thence by migration from the coast, probably by way of the Columbia river. However, the migration must have occurred many years prior to the advent of the first white men, for the Indians found by these early explorers, a nomadic, war-like type, counting its wealth in horses, and moving from the mountains to the sheltered valleys with the change of the seasons, differed materially from the peaceful fish-eating Siwash, of the

Pacific Coast.

Some twenty one years ago the writer became rather well acquainted with one Tuli, a half breed Yakima Indian, living at that time on the lower Satus. He had many conversations with ~~him~~ this Indian who was a very intelligent man of his type, and who claimed to be eighty years old, at the time. Tuli was later murdered by his son, over an altercation involving the latter's wife, which would indicate that the matter of age may have been exaggerated. Tuli told the writer that his people came to the Yakima Valley by way of the Columbia river, from the coast. He was unable to tell, from the legends of his people, how long ago the migration occurred, but gave it as his opinion that it was a matter of centuries. He stated further that the first Indians found the Yakima Valley inhabited by a race of giants, much lighter in color than the Indians, and averaging eight feet in height. That, in spite of their size, these people had, to quote him literally "the hearts of women" and were easily exterminated by his ancestors, who thus took possession of the country. I have never seen or heard, any other allusion to this ~~race~~ so-called race of giants, and it appears, in the light of the very thorough anthropological investigations ~~that~~ have been made in the valley, extremely doubtful that they ever existed. The legendary lore of the Indian, weaving a romance of glamour around their ~~conquest~~ conquest of the valley, might easily have been translated by Tuli, with his white man's education, into the story that he related. And yet, one wonders if there could be a possible connecting link, with the ancient Mound Builders of the Middle West, who were undoubtedly ~~similar~~ similar in description.

Certain it is that the first explorers found a race of Indians of a war-like nature, accomplished hunters and fishermen,

living a nomadic life in temporary villages or communities, and counting their wealth in weapons and horses.

From whence the Indian derived his horses has been made something of a mystery, ~~by~~ by the early writers. Fossil remains of an ancient horse, about the size of a rabbit, have been found in Oregon, and the attempt has been made to trace the Indian pony to this source. The evidence seems all against this theory. The late A. J. Splawn of Yakima, one of the first and most authentic commentators, ~~now~~ states that when he first came among the Yakimas, in 1860, their old men told him that they had first obtained their horses from the Shoshone Indians of Southeastern Idaho, at a time which Splawn places about the year 1750. The Shoshones obtained their horses from the Commanche Indians who inhabited Utah and Northern Arizona. These, in turn, secured them from the Apaches of Arizona and New Mexico, into whose hands they originally came from Mexico. History records that the first horses to reach the mainland of North America were landed by Cortez in 1519. Increasing numbers were imported by the Spaniards in succeeding years, and it is not difficult to account for their spread, in more than two centuries, to the Pacific Northwest.

The first white men, to look upon the Yakima Valley were without doubt, members of the memorable expedition of Merriweather Lewis and William Clark. In October of 1805, the party progressed up the Columbia, to a point above the present location of Richland. They passed the mouth of the Yakima, which Captain Clark described by its Indian name of Tapteal. No record is to be found of any explorations up the river.

The next white men to visit the Valley were trappers and fur hunters. John Jacob Astor had established Astoria, at the

mouth of the Columbia, in 1811, and from this vantage point brigades were sent into every nook and valley of the Northwest. Alexander Ross, in his book, "Fur traders of the Far West", records his adventures in the Valley of the Niyakema in 1814. He was an employee of the Astor Company, and later, when this company sold out to the Northwest Fur Co., employed by the latter. He refers to the Valley as being well known to the fur traders and by them considered unsafe.

Professor W. D. Lyman refers to the fact that neither the earliest explorers, fur traders or missionaries became so familiar with the Yakima Country, as with Walla Walla, Spokane, or the Snake river, and states that the reason is obvious. While the Yakima valley was unsurpassed by any of them in potential resources, and in the vigor and number of the native tribes, Yakima was off the main routes of travel. The Columbia and Snake rivers were the great arteries of travel, and the primary aim of all incomers, was to reach the seaboard.

It was not until 1847 that the first missionaries reached the valley. Theodore Winthrop, in his book, "Canoe and Saddle" records the establishment of a Catholic mission by fathers D'Herbomez and Pandozy, on the Ahtanum, in that year. This mission was burned by the Oregon volunteers during the Indian War of 1855. The present mission, which stands in the Ahtanum, below Tappico, was started in 1867 by Fathers St. Ouge and Boulet, and completed in 1870.

In June of 1855, Governor Stevens concluded a treaty with the principal tribes inhabiting Washington Territory, at Walla Walla. The Yakima, Walla Wallas, Umatillas, Cayuses and Spokanes, all joined the treaty. The Yakima, Colville and Umatilla reservations were set aside, and, apparently, the tribesmen were satisfied.

But it was merely the lull before the storm. In October of the same year, Kimiakim of the Yakimas, Peo Peo Mux Mux of the

Walla Wallas, and Five Crows of the Cayuses, formed a league, repudiated the treaty and the flame of savage warfare broke out throughout the entire Columbia valley. The country was immediately swept clean of white men. Governor Curry of Oregon sent a troop of volunteers, or militia, to the Yakima country, while the military authorities at the Dalles dispatched Major Haller, with 84 men, to intercept Kamiakim, chief of the Yakima, who had murdered six miners near the present site of Yakima. This force met Kamiakim on Toppenish creek, west of the present ~~mission station on the river~~ white Swan, and after a battle lasting two days, Major Haller was forced to retreat to the Dalles, with a loss of eight killed and seventeen wounded.

A few days later Colonel Raines led a force of 700 men, half of whom were volunteers, into the Yakima country. This force fought the battle of Twin Buttes, at Union Gap, resulting in the death of one Indian, but seems to have accomplished nothing beyond the destruction of the Catholic mission on the Ahtanum which was burned on the grounds that the priests in charge were rendering assistance to the Indians. In December of 1855 the Oregon volunteers decisively defeated the Walla Wallas, at a battle resulting in the death of Peo Peo Mux Mux, and in the spring of 1856, Colonel Shaw, in command of the Washington volunteers, struck the Indians an overwhelming blow in the Grande Ronde valley, that put an end to organized resistance.

Colonel George Wright, in command of the regulars, operated in the Yakima Valley in 1856, and succeeded in so overawing the Indians that peace was declared, although he was never able to engage in a decisive battle with the wily Kamiakim. Colonel Wright established Fort Simcoe as a United States military post, on August 8, 1856.

In the year 1909, the writer was engaged in making surveys for the enlargement of the Sunnyside canal, and for some time

the party was camped in the cherry orchard belonging to George Goodwin, his father-in-law George Alexander and his wife, in Parker Heights. Mr. ~~and~~ Alexander had crossed the plains in 1847 and settled in Oregon. He, as a member of the Oregon militia, took part in the Yakima Indian war. Although well above eighty years of age, his memory of the events in which he had taken part was remarkably clear and many evenings were spent by the writer in listening to his stories of those early days. Among many other instances I recall that he was, at this time, able to definitely dispute the authenticity of a relic owned by a Walla Walla man, which was making something of a ~~an~~ furor among Yakima Valley Pioneers, at the time of which I speak. This man claimed to have discovered the grave of Peo Peo ~~an~~ Mux Mux, the famous war chief of the Walla Wallas, and was exhibiting a skull which he claimed to be that of the chieftan. Considerable discussion was being had in the Yakima papers, as to the authenticity of the skull. Mr. Alexander stated to me that the skull certainly was not that of Peo Peo Mux Mux, because he, personally, had broken the skull of Peo Peo Mux Mux into several pieces, with a gun butt, upon the occasion of the chief's death.

His account of the battle of Twin Buttes, as it was called, which took place at Union Gap, was interesting. It seems the Indians occupied the Ahtanum side of the river, while the militia was on the opposite side of the hill. A few regulars accompanied the militia and these had a howitzer or mountain cannon with them. When, by means of this gun, a shell was dropped into the midst of the Indians, resulting in several casualties, the battle was over. Fort Simcoe was discontinued as a military post in May, 1859 and the following year was ~~was~~ occupied by R. H. Ronsdale, the first agent appointed by the Dept. of Indian Affairs.

The first white settler to take up land in the Yakima

valley was E. W. Thorpe. Leaving the Klickitat valley, with his family of four boys and five girls, mounted on horses, and with his household possessions carried likewise, he crossed the Simcoe mountains and settled near the river in the lower Moxee valley. A. J. Splawn states that this first settlers cabin in the Yakima Valley was 12 by 16 feet with a dirt roof and puncheon floor. Not very commodious quarters for a family of 13, but typical of the early pioneers.

Thorpe was followed a few months later by Levi Armsworth, who built a house and fenced some land in the Moxee. They shortly ~~man~~ became alarmed concerning threatened Indian uprisings and returned ~~to~~ to the Klickitat. Major John Thorpe, father of the first settler, ~~amlater~~ later in the year, drove in 150 head of cattle from Oregon, which were grazed in the Moxee.

On January 12, 1865, the territorial legislature passed an act creating the county of Yakima, bounded on the south by the summit of the Simcoe Mts., on the west by the summit of the Cascades, on the east by Walla Walla and ~~n~~ Stevens counties, and on the north by the Wenatchee river.

In 1864 the third standard parallel was established by a Mr. White, the first surveyor to reach the valley, and by 1866, much of the valley had been surveyed.

Settlers now began to reach the valley in increasing numbers. Most of these settled in the Ahtanum, Moxee and Wenas valleys, but there were a few locators in the lower valley. J. B. Nelson settled on the old Jack Morgan ranch south of Sunnyside, now owned by Mary LePlante. This was in 1864. The same year William Parker and John Allen drove in a band of cattle and settled in Parker Bottom, on the site of the present Snipes ranch. Gilbert Pell settled on the north side of the river, just below the mouth of the Satus. His original cabin stood until about five years ago, on the land now

owned by the Snipes Gun Club, and was, until that time, the oldest habitation in the valley, so far as I have been able to discover.

In October, 1865, a Mr. Moore built a cabin in the upper end of Parker Bottom. This cabin still stands on the W. P. Sawyer ranch. It is plainly discernable from the present state highway, and is now the oldest building in Yakima county. In 1865 Elisha McDaniel and his brother drove in 900 head of cattle and horses from Butter creek, Oregon, and settled on the present O. R. Ferrel ranch. In 1867, Egbert Trench settled the present Dan McDonald ranch at Donald, and opened the first general store.

These early settlers were exclusively cattlemen. The valley knew no industry but that of cattle raising. The open range, covered with the waving plumes of the native bunch grass, was limitless. It has been asserted that, until about this time there was little or no sage brush in the valley. With the advent of the early pioneers appeared the sage brush, and shortly covered the entire country. Very different must have been the view presented to these early cattlemen, than the sage covered hills to which we are accustomed. In 1910, the writer was engaged in the extension of the Sunnyside canal, below Prosser. He was boarding at the home of a Mrs. Lyons, who had reached the valley/// in the early seventies. She stated to me that when she first came to the valley, as far as the eye could reach there stretched one solid field of bunch grass, growing sometimes to a height of 2½ feet, and in the fall, resembling nothing so much as a field of ripened grain.

Opposed to this statement, however, is the testimony of certain of the early pioneers, which indicates that some sage brush, at least, was present before this time. Ezra Meeker, in his "Pioneer Reminiscences" records a letter written in 1905, by George H. Himes of Portland. Mrs. Himes passed through the Valley in 1853, some three weeks behind the Longmire wagon train, and with his party, followed

the trail blazed by that intrepid pioneer, to Puget Sound. Himes states that his party passed from the Yakima river to the Naches, through sage that grew as high as a covered wagon, and had to be cut down before they could pass. The preponderance of evidence seems to show that sage brush was present in the valley prior to the advent of the white man, but ~~showing~~ that it was not universal, as it is today.

Wild hay, requiring more ~~moisture~~ moisture than the hardy bunch grass, grew in profusion along the creek bottoms, and was cut for winter forage. The number of cattle that a man might keep was limited only by his ability to provide winter feed. The cattle were marketed on the hoof, mainly in the mining camps of British Columbia, Okanogan and the Coeur D'Alenes. Some were driven as far as the Little Black Foot Mines in Eastern Montana. As early as 1868, Isaac Carson drove 200 head of cattle to the Puget Sound Market, crossing through Naches pass over the trail blazed by the Longmire wagon train in 1853. A. J. Splawn states that by 1880 there were 150,000 head of cattle in the Yakima valley. With land to be had for the mere fencing, the industry flourished, and many of the early settlers were by way of becoming wealthy. Chief among these was Ben Snipes, known as the cattle king of the Yakima valley, and from whom Snipes Mt. takes its name.

But conditions were due to change. The winter of 1880-81 was the most severe that ~~the~~ the valley had ever experienced. A heavy snow covered the ground. Under a chinook wind, this partially melted. The temperature then fell below zero, freezing the half melted snow into impenetrable ice, that covered the ground. Sub zero weather continued for weeks over the entire northwest. Unable to move from their bed grounds, thousands of cattle perished all through the district. Mr. Splawn states that the losses in the Yakima valley exceeded 100,000 head. Many settlers lost their entire ~~herds~~ herds.

When spring came, only a pitiful remnant of the once thriving herds, were driven, staggering from starvation, to the bunch grass hills.

The stockman who had any cattle left, ranged ~~in~~ them through the summer, only to be confronted, in the fall, with a disappearance of his market. The mining booms were over, and the eastern drives were a thing of the past. Portland and the Puget Sound country afforded ~~perhaps~~ only a limited market, and Oregon cattle were being driven there. Prices were so low as to hardly return the cost of driving ~~the~~ the herd.

This condition obtained for the next few years, until the coming of the railroad in 1884, definitely connected the valley with the industrial east, and afforded an outlet for agricultural products. The day of the pioneer stockman was passing, but in his stead was to ~~xxx~~ appear the fruit grower and agriculturist, eager to avail himself ~~m~~ of the benefits of irrigation, on a virgin soil.

The first irrigation in the Yakima Valley, appears to have been practiced by Kamiakin, "the last hero of the Yakimas", about the year 1853, on his land near Tappico, now owned by William Wiley.

It seems fairly certain that the Catholic missionaries instructed him in this work. The first civilized irrigators were probably Thomas and Benton Goodwin, who took out a small ditch, about a mile below the present site of Yakima in 1866. It is recorded that these brothers ~~in~~ ~~successfully~~ irrigated a field of five acres of wheat and harvested 40 bushels per acre.

According to the records of the Reclamation service, the first ditch of any ~~consequence~~ consequence was the Nelson ditch, built in 1867, which is still in existence. This ditch was very small, carrying only seven second feet of water, from the Natches river, ~~in~~ In 1872 Charles and Joseph Shanno constructed the present Schanno ditch, and a number of smaller ditches were taken out, principally

along the Naches River and Ahtanum creek. The water was used for raising gardens and a little wheat. It was not until 1881 that the great foundation crop of the Valley, alfalfa, was raised, by means of the Schanno ditch. In 1887 the Selah Valley Ditch company built the present Selah ditch, which was the most pretentious construction undertaken up to that time. It was 12 feet wide on the bottom, 24 on top, and designed to carry a depth of 3½ feet.

To recount the many irrigation schemes, some successful and many otherwise, that were attempted in the closing years of the century, would only prove wearisome and would serve no good purpose. However, a brief history of the Sunnyside canal, the largest of all these enterprises, might prove of interest. The data given is taken from the files of the United States reclamation service, a portion of it having been originally compiled by the writer.

Walter N. Granger, in 1889, made an investigation of the sage brush waste, now covered by the Sunnyside Project, and formed the Yakima canal and Land Co. A short time later, his company united with the Northern Pacific Railroad Co., who owned approximately half the land in what is now known as the Sunnyside unit, in the formation of the Northern Pacific and Yakima Irrigation company. The company began construction work in 1890. Meanwhile the managers began an investigation of the storage lakes, at the head of the Yakima and its tributaries, with a view toward the larger utilization of the water.

As a result, they formed a new company, known as the Northern Pacific, Kittitas and Yakima Irrigation company. Practically all land titles, on odd numbered sections under the Sunnyside project, start with this company, as the Northern Pacific Railroad Co., through their land grants, held title to every other section. Title to the even numbered sections of course, start with the Government patent. Work was initiated by this company on dams at the lakes, but financial troubles arose,

and the inability of the railroad company to continue its aid, forced a cessation of the work. This situation resulted in the formation of still another company, as a financing company, known as the Yakima investment company. This new company took over the property of the preceeding company, but met with disaster through the failure and suicide of its president, Paul Schultze. The company went into receivership, but Mr. Granger retained his position of General manager, throughout this period. Forty two miles of canal had been constructed, and in 1900 the ~~the~~ property was taken ~~in~~ over by the Washington Irrigation Co., which was financed by Portland and Seattle capital. R. K. Tiffany came into the Valley as chief engineer for the company, Mr. Granger was continued as superintendent, and E. F. Blaine was its attorney. A large amount of work was done by the company in the next four years, and by 1904, about \$1,700,000 had been expended on the enterprise, including the ~~irrigation~~ outlay of the preceding companies.

The canal extended to a point opposite Prosser and was about 50 miles in length. Nearly 700 miles of laterals had ~~be~~ been constructed, covering about 64,000 acres of land. Half of this was under cultivation in 1904. The main canal, with a carrying ~~in~~ capacity of 800 cubic feet per second, was the largest in the Northwest.

In 1906, the project was taken over by the United States Reclamation service. The Washington Irrigation Co., received \$250,000 and a perpetual water right to its remaining lands. Development proceeded rapidly under Government management. The canal was enlarged in 1909 and 1910 to its present capacity, and by 1918 the area actually receiving water was in excess of 90,000 acres. Today it is considerably over 100,000 acres.

The trials and vicissitudes of the old water ~~in~~ users association, resulting finally in the passage of the State irrigation

District Law, under which the project is now operated, are of so recent occurrence as to need no mention here.

And so, we come down to the present. We have followed the development of the valley from that day when Lewis and Clark, the first white men to behold its beauties, looked first upon it, through more than a century of progress and civilization. We have seen the fur trader give way to the hardy pioneer and stockman, and he, in turn, be supplanted by the modern agriculturist and fruit ~~man~~ grower. The change, in a commercial way, is little short of marvelous. From an arid waste, affording in its fish, game and fruits, a barely a subsistence for a few wandering bands of red men, in a ~~little~~ little more than a century we see the valley annually producing agricultural products to the value of more than \$50,000,000.00 We see a ~~man~~ happy, prosperous citizenry, living in an environment particularly ~~man~~ blest, ~~man~~ and jealous of the welfare of this justly famous valley.

Is it not altogether fitting and proper that we should sometimes pause in the busy turmoil of our modern life and give some thought to the hardy men, and self sacrificing women, the ~~man~~ flower of American man and womanhood, who, by their vision, their foresight and earnest endeavor, made possible this earthly ~~man~~ paradise ~~man~~ that we now enjoy.