

Nez Perce..gold..

The Idaho placer mines were discovered in 1860, the year of the Cariboo discovery. The section which was first opened was then a part of Washington Territory. The most important placers were located following the discoveries in the Nez Perce and Salmon river districts were the John Day and the Powder river districts in Eastern Oregon, the Boise basin and Owhyhee in southern Idaho and the Deer lodge, Bannack, Alder gulch and Last Chance gulch in Montana.

From Indian sources Captain E.D. Pierce derived information which led him to suspect rich deposits of gold on the tributaries of the Clearwater. He went into the region in the summer of 1860 with five other men. The Indian objected to his presence on the reservation and warned them to leave. Each time this happened the prospectors turned back but they changed their course as soon as the Indians were out of sight. They were able to elude the natives with the assistance of a Nez Perce girl named Jane whose services had been secured them as a guide. After a few days wandering the prospectors camped in a mountain basin which was afterwards named Canal gulch. After supper a member of the party, W.F. Bassette, in a casual investigation of the stream, made the discovery which ushered in the new era of placer mining.

..Sergeant Smith came out on snowshoes with \$800 in gold dust (in 1861) The gold was shipped to Portland and the excitement commenced. By June thousands of miners were camped on Orofino creek and the tributary streams. Two mining towns, Orofino and Pierce City were built.

Traffic became heavy on the Columbia, and two new steamers were built, at once in addition to the Colonel Wright which was then running on the river. Lewiston came into existence located by miners and the navigation company as the most convenient river port and point of departure for the daily pack trains.

By August (1861) it was estimated that 2,500 miners were at the diggings and that possibly it was 5,000 in the district, making a living in other ways.

It was the same summer that gold was discovered on the South Fork of the Clearwater and Elk City was started. In September the Salmon river discoveries were made which became known as the Florence mines.

The placers of Central Idaho produced between \$30,000,000 and \$60,000,000 in gold. They were exhausted soon after 1900. Quartz mining commenced about 1884.

--Whitwell, G.E. and Patty, E.H. The Magnesite Deposits of "ash. Geological Survey Bulletin No. 25, Olympia, 1925; Fuller, George E. The Inland Empire of the Pacific Northwest (correct title in previous mentioned Fuller excerpt) (Vol. II)

Nez Perce, Mining.

Fuller, History of the Northwest, Vol. III, 1928.

...By the year 1861 the banks of the Orofino creek were lined with the tents of thousands of miners. By the end of the summer Orofino was a metropolis of the mining region, well supplied with stores, hotels and an outstanding number of saloons and gambling halls.

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Minining. Routes
early living conditions

In the mining regions of the Inland Empire at the time of the first gold rush homes were built of frames covered with muslin. they were windowless and the doors were frames made of small poles covered with muslin. Of such buildings was Lewiston constructed in the mining excitement immediately following the Orofino and Florence gold discoveries. At night the streets were lighted by the lamps and candles within the muslin tents. It was customary for the sleeping occupants to protect themselves against stray bullets with a barricade of flour or sand sacks around the bed. Money was plentiful in the mining towns and the first real cabins were more luxurious than those of the early pioneers in Oregon. The miner's cabin was of logs roofed with shakes or drift. It was 10 by 12 feet in size.

There were stores of provisions. Cow-skin rugs were nailed to the floors. Bunks were fixed one above the other on the walls. There were books and papers, mirrors and pictures.

The isolated miner usually had bread, bacon, beans and coffee.

In the towns, a greater variety of foodstuffs could be bought and a person able to pay well could at times obtain eggs and butter.

In summer there was fresh meat. Fish were plentiful for those who could spare the time from prospecting to catch them. Scurvy was prevalent; so vegetables and potatoes were much in demand. Potatoes were often packed on the men's backs through deep snow for fifteen or twenty miles in winter. Only by the early sixties food was imported from California, the Willamette valley, Utah and other States. The improvident miner, finding his provisions low, was often made to pay tremendous winter prices for his supplies. Restaurants and hotels sprang up rapidly in all the towns.

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a metropolis of the mining region, well supplied with stores hotels and an outstanding number of saloons and gambling halls. Back trains came and went. The streets resounded to the brayings of the mules and the sounds of carpentry and blacksmithing. Violins played in the saloons as the people surged about the streets from one resort to another. Voices of auctioneers shouted on the corners. Drunken men and tawdrily dressed women completed the usual mining town scene.

Lewiston was the center for the towns of Orofino, Elk City, Florence and Warner Creek and it grew very rapidly. Within three months there were several streets more than a mile long with muslin stores, hotels, saloons and dwellings. The importance of a pioneer town was gauged by the number of pleasure resorts. There was no restriction on the vending of liquor. Familiar names for whiskey in the frontier days were Tangle-leg, Forty-fod, Lightning and Tarantula-juice. The story is told of a road house proprietor on the road from The Dalles to the Canyon City mines who was dissatisfied with the prices charged by the Portland liquor dealers and decided to manufacture his own whisky. The formula used included alcohol, plug tobacco, strychnia and prune juice. The first victim on whom the concoction was tried was a Jew peddler who carried his store of merchandise on his back. After partaking of the new drink he stole his own pack and hid it in the willows along the stream.

It was acknowledged that a camp was not really worthy of the name until it possessed a well filled graveyard. Idaho City was reputed to lead the other camps in this respect. Excessive drinking was indulged in even by the more conservative people in the communities. The invitation to a party frequently specified whether it was an eight or ten gallon dance. The members of the Philipsburg Pioneer Association in Montana reserved in their resolutions

the right to get "decently drunk" and some of those who played important parts in vigilante work later went to pieces through ~~debauch~~ dissipation. Fuller.. Vol III, 1928.

Priest Rapids
Hydroelectric

The importance of water resources of the Inland Empire ..are scarcely realized. The state of Washington ranks first of all states in potential hydroelectric power having nearly 19 per cent of the total water power resources of the country. The figures have recently been raised by the U.S. geological survey considerably above previous estimates. The immensity of Washington's water resources is explained by the fact that two-thirds of the land in the state is mountainous, accommodating more than 500 glaciers with a natural storage system of timber and lakes. The Columbia river within the borders of Washington has 6,588,000 potential horse power. About six percent or 699,367 ~~180~~ of available hydroelectric horsepower in the state has been developed. The increase in the demand for power amounts to about 50,000 horse power annually.

The ideal natural storage basin in the state is Lake Chelan. The Chelan power site was sold by the Great Northern Railway to the Washington Power company in 1925 and the first unit of a ~~128,800~~ 128,800 horsepower development was completed in 1927. The Chelan river drops ~~415 feet~~ 415 feet in the four miles from the lake to the Columbia. The dam is a little below the lake and a fourteen foot tunnel was bored through the rock 10,694 feet with a gradient of 3.14 feet per 1,000.

The topography of Washington favors the economical transportation of electric power and two 110,000 volt transmission lines cross the Cascades. Generators on the Spokane river already operate in connection with power plants on the sound.... The western rivers are at flood in the winter with the exception of the Skagit while the Skagit and the Columbia have to their maximum flow later in the

season.

The General Electric company issued a statement in 1923

that it was interested in the development of the Priest rapids power site on the Columbia where the river drops 90 feet in ten miles and there is a potential hydroelectric capacity of 700,000 horse power. A dam ninety feet high and two miles long has been planned to cost \$28,000,000. The aggregate cost of the enterprise will be \$100,000,000 which includes laying out a town-site and building several industrial plants. The Priest rapids dam would put 100,000 acres in the Columbia valley under irrigation. The organization formed to handle the enterprise is the Washington Irrigation and Development company.

...Fuller, History of Inland Empire, 1926.

.. Troupes of players journeyed from town to town. A picture of a performance at Walla Walla is preserved by a newspaper correspondent. Mrs. Leighton and a troupe presented a play, "Naval Engagements," to what was called by the writer the "highly marine population of Walla Walla." Between acts the audience adjourned to the bar and kept up a fearful racket of yells, whistles and stamping of feet.

The hurdy-gurdies or dancehalls were well patronized by the miners. As in the case of most public resorts they were often the scenes of drunkenness and violence but they were not houses of prostitution. One of the is described as follows:

At one end of a long hall, a well stocked bar and monte bank in full blast; at the other, a platform on which were three musicians. After each dance there was a drink at the bar. The house was open from 9 p.m. until daylight. Every dance was \$1, half to the woman and half to the proprietor. ~~Publicly, decorum was~~ Publicly, decorum was preserved and to the many miners who had not seen a feminine face for six months the poor women represented vaguely something of the tenderness and sacredness of their sex. (Richardson, Beyond the Mississippi.) A large proportion of the women were German and were usually engaged by the proprietors of social resorts in sets of fours--with a chaperone. At the expiration of their contracts most of them married men whose acquaintance they had made at the dance halls and they are reported to have made good wives and mothers. (McConnell, W.J. Early History of Idaho, Caldwell, 1913.

The immoral women formed another class and houses of prostitution were plentiful. These women paraded the streets in gorgeous raiment and small companies of them were often to be met on the trails dressed in men's clothing and wearing revolvers strapped to their waists

No trails were too steep for them if a rich camp lay at the end.

As Walla Walla was the largest town in eastern Washington it was the goal of the criminal class who always flock to mining regions. The undesirables of 1861-62 were in many cases fugitives from justice in other localities.

Party feeling ran high at the time. The war was a sore point with every one and murder was frequently the result of political passion. Among the more conspicuous law-breakers of the time was Cherokee Bob, a native of Georgia. In 1861-62 the fort was garrisoned with California volunteers. They were men of good families and generally of independent means, who had enlisted for patriotic reasons and little expected to be stationed at a northwest fort. Cherokee Bob hated these young "hirelings" of Abe Lincoln as he called them and never failed to offer insulting remarks when he came within hearing. The fact that they always appeared in groups armed with regulation revolvers prevented him from wreaking his vengeance on them in the street. So he devised a plan for "getting the soldiers" on the night of a theatrical performance. He arranged with a Secessionist Deputy Sheriff, who acted as peace officer at the show, to interfere during the first noisy applause. At the appointed time the sheriff leaped from his chair and yelled an insult at a group of soldiers from the fort. This brought the desired result. A young soldier asked "why do you single us out, when there are others who are more boisterous?" The sheriff seized the soldier nearest him and called upon his confederates to help him make an arrest. The soldiers resisted and Cherokee with revolver and bowie knife began his work. When Cherokee and his gang had fled, two of the soldiers lay dead on the floor and others were brutally mangled.

Cherokee fled to Lewiston on a stolen horse. He organized a band of cut-throats with his own saloon as their rendezvous. He later moved

to Florence with a woman he had won in a gambling game from a notorious murderer. He determined that his mistress should go to a ball in the town. He went with a man named Willoughby, who was instructed to report if there was any trouble. The women present made it plain that they or the outcast would have to leave and the managing committee expelled the pair. Cherokee and Willoughby armed themselves to the teeth and set out the next day to punish the committee. The committee was evidently well prepared for both outlaws were killed in the exchange of shots.

In the spring of 1861 Henry Plummer came to Lewiston and set up as a gambler. A band of criminals soon gathered around him, whom he organized under iron-clad rules administered by a committee of which he was chairman. He was not suspected of being anything more dangerous than a sharper as he dressed and behaved like a quite sort of business man. He built two road-houses of "shebangs" one on the Lewiston Walla-Walla trail and the other between Lewiston and Orofino. They were managed by his henchmen and were headquarters for various forms of lawlessness. Miners who were outfitting in Lewiston were watched by members of Plummer's gang. Accurate descriptions of their animals and saddles were taken. Bills of sale were then made out according to the descriptions giving title to the animals under an earlier date, to the keeper of one of the "shebangs." A fast courier carried the bill of sale to the man in whose name it was drawn. It was then an easy matter for the criminals to dispossess the traveler of his animals at the point of a gun while he was being shown the bill of sale. Resistance meant death and burial in a private cemetery.

The murder of a German named Hildebrandt resulted at last in measures to protect the people against outlawry. Hildebrandt ran an orderly saloon in his muslin tent house. He was well liked. He was known to possess a quantity of gold dust and the Plummer gang

took steps to get it. One night while Hildebrandt was sleeping the door was torn from its hinges and a volley of revolver shots was fired into his bed. Two friends of Hildebrandt escaped with the treasure and the disappointed murders retired through a crowd of citizens voicing threats as they went. No one dared to attempt an arrest. But the citizens met on the following day to make plans of protection. Plummer unsuspected of being the instigator of this or any other crime attended the meeting and spoke eloquently for conservative action. It was largely due to his influence that no organization was formed at the time. An honest saloon keeper named Ford denounced the citizens present at the meeting as cowards. Later Plummer and two others, went hunting for Ford and descended upon a saloon in Orifino which he owned. When Ford appeared they demolished the furnishing but he had the drop on them, drove them from the saloon and ordered them out of town. They rode to a feed yard and Ford followed and demanded why they had not left. The answer was a shot and in the fight Ford was killed.

Plummer then shifted his headquarters to Florence and with a new gang continued his robberies, his activities extending to Elk City and Deer Lodge. With the help of sporting and outlaw classes he was selected sheriff in 1863 for all the camps east of the Bitter roots. The series of atrocities which he perpetrated while in office finally resulted in a vigilance committee at whose hands he and a dozen of his partners met their death.

In October, 1863, a robbery was committed on the road from Florence to Lewiston and another a few days later when two brothers, Joseph and John Berry were robbed on the same trail. They recognized two of the robbers as Dave English and William Peebles and it was learned that the third was Nelson Scott. When the Berrys reached Lewiston the citizens took it upon themselves to run down the criminals. Plummer was no longer there to dissuade them from violence. Peebles

Peebles was captured in Walla Walla, English at Wallula and Scott on Dry Creek. The robbers were astonished at the interest shown in their capture and had fully expected to escape. Meanwhile a citizens committee had been organized in Lewiston and all suspicious characters were ordered to be brought in for trial. The result was a sudden exodus of undesirables, the town was in a fever of excitement, everybody wore a revolver and business was suspended. The trio were placed under guard for the night but the first person who arrived at the building in the morning found that the culprits had been hanged and that the guard had disappeared.

In the same year Lloyd Magruder was packing supplies from Lewiston to camps on the Clearwater and Salmon rivers. He was well known and had many friends. One of these was Hill Beachy, owner of the town's largest hotel. In August Magruder started over the trail to Virginia City on a journey of almost 300 miles. About ten days later another party set out for Virginia City, caught up with Magruder and helped him the rest of the way with his sixty mule pack train in exchange for their board. At the destination most of the second party scattered but three bad men who had purposely followed Magruder remained with him in Virginia City and assisted him in disposing of his cargo. He engaged the three criminals and three other men for the return journey and started back with about \$30,000 in gold dust. Half way to Lewiston Magruder and two of his men were murdered and the bodies were dropped over a bluff. Five of the best mules were selected and the rest were killed in a deep canyon. The camp equipment was burned. The man whose life had been spared was a trapper. He was compelled to accompany the murderers who quietly entered Lewiston, disposed of their mules and took the stage to Walla Walla.

Beachy noted the shortness of their stay and feeling sure that something was wrong complained to an officer. Magruder's mules

were identified and Beachy set out in pursuit of the criminals. He anticipated their arrival in San Francisco with a wire to the police and when Beachy arrived the murderers were behind the bars. The gold dust was traced to the mint, and the prisoners were taken back to Lewiston. They arrived there on the day when the first legislative assembly of the Territory of Idaho convened. The organic act creating the Territory had failed to provide that the previous territorial laws should remain in force and Idaho had no civil or criminal law. While the murderers of Magruder awaited trial the legislature hastily passed an act adopting the common law of England. The three men were convicted of murder in the first degree and were duly executed... Fuller, History of Northwest. 1928.