

Paul Mohr's famous portage railway at the Celilo rapids of the Columbia.

The government in 1864 gave an immense land grant to any company that would build a railway from the mouth of the Snake river down the Columbia to the sea. To be a section of the transcontinental.

Work was begun at a point one mile below the village of Columbus on the north side of the river. By reason of its rough topography that point is a strategic one in railroad building, a fact which strengthened the Northern Pacific's desire to occupy it at once.

The work of building the Oregon Railroad and Navigation company line down the southern bank of the river was still in progress. At a cost of several hundred thousand dollars the NP graded two miles of road bed west of Columbus. One rock cut alone cost the company approximately \$250,000. However no steel was ever laid. Energies were thrown into construction of the Yakima line.

After the abandonment at Columbus they lay neglected until 1883 when Paul F. Mohr conceived the scheme of building a portage railway alongside Celilo rapids. He proposed to build a line twenty two miles long, utilizing the NP's old right of way. He organized the Farmers Railway, Navigation & Steamship Portage company, commonly called the Farmers' Transportation company, composed principally of Spokane, Walla Walla and Spokane capitalists. The transportation was capitalized at one million dollars.

By operation of a statute forfeiting rights of way through abandoned or five-year government domain after their abandonment for a period of five years, the Northern Pacific's claim had lapsed and the Farmers' Transportation company soon secured possession of its old road bed by filing location maps with the secretary of the department of interior, a thing permitted by act of congress, approved March 3, 1875.

It was entitled "An act granting to railroads the right of way through the public lands of the United States."

The Mohr company succeeded in 1891 after many years of effort in floating a small loan. It had in the meanwhile sold considerable stock and made several surveys. April 16, 1891 a mortgage in the sum of one million dollars was given the State Trust Company of New York, a trustee, to cover a bond issue of the same amount.

The company was reorganized in July 5, 1899 under the name of the Columbia Railway & Navigation company.

The objects of the new corporation were set forth as being to build, operate and maintain a railroad from the mouth of the Columbia along the north bank to a point near the mouth of the Yakima river thence by the most convenient and eligible route to a point at or near the mouth of the Okanogan river; also to build branch lines, a portage railway at Celilo rapids, telegraph lines etc.

About the same time that this reorganization was effected the stockholders also formed another corporation known as the Central Navigation & Construction company in both of which concerns Mohr had a controlling interest.

November 25th of the year 1899 the company began work upon the long delayed project by letting a contract to Winters & Chapman of the Spokane for the remainder of the grading. That firm immediately placed a large force at work and by June 1, 1900 had graded nearly 10 miles of the route or to the Big Eddy, about three miles above the Dalles. This, with what had already been done at the eastern end made a completed roadbed eighteen miles in length. W.D. Hofius and co. furnished the steel. Thus the portage railway was practically finished in the summer of 1900.

In the meanwhile the company built two steamers, the Billings above the rapids and the Klickitat on the river below.

The hull of the Billings was formerly the old Northern Pacific ferryboat at Ainsworth which was fitted up in excellent condition at a cost of about \$25,000.

The Billings unfortunately struck a rock while running between Arlington and Columbus and was wrecked. Subsequently the boat's machinery was placed in the Charles R. Spencer.

The Klickitat was a little smaller than the Billings and cost twenty thousand dollars.

The Mohr portage railroad, so well conceived, so slow in growth, so promising in results, came to an untimely end in August 1900 when liens were filed upon the property to collect material and labor debts aggregating fifty thousand dollars. Sixteen parties were represented in the suits.

Two years later William Burgen, sheriff of Klickitat county sold the property into which hundreds of thousands of dollars had been placed for the paltry sum of \$36,592.88

Subsequently Winters & Chapman, compelled to take it to satisfy the judgment, transferred the road to a Spokane man who was said to represent the Northern Pacific. Hofius & Co. was allowed by the court to remove the rails. A dreary looking torn up roadbed shut in by rocks and covered by drifting sands alone marks the course of the now historic Paul Mohr portage railway.

Central Washington History, Interstate, 1904.

1892

An event of the year 1892 which evinces the faith of the leading citizens in the present prosperity and future prospects of their county was the incorporation on April 19th of the Yakima Wathcheez and Eastern Railway company.

Its capitalization was five hundred thousand dollars divided into five thousand dollars divided into five thousand shares and the objects it proposed to accomplish were to construct, maintain and operate a system of railways, telegraph and telephone lines from the following routes:

A line commencing at North Yakima and running through the Moxee valley and the Moxee pass to a point on the Columbia river in or near Priest rapids; a line commencing at North Yakima and running thence up the Waches river to the mouth of Bumping river, thence to Bumping lake, thence to certain coal fields or near Fish lake known as the Yaki a coal fields; a line commencing at North Yakima and running in a general southeasterly direction into the Konnewock valley and Sunhyside; a line commencing at North Yakima and running by the most convenient route by the Whtanum valley to the Yakima mineral springs and thence up the north fork of the Whtanum for a distance of twenty miles; a line commencing at North Yakima and running in a southerly direction to Status creek and thence by the most practicable route through Status canyon to Goldendale; all the roads to be narrow gauge.

The company of which George Donald was president and Edward Whitson vice president asked a bonus of one hundred thousand dollars and the various rights of way.

This the people of North Yakima and the county were willing to furnish but the hard times came on before all preliminary arrangements could be made and the enterprise was of necessity abandoned. Central W. History. Interstate 1904.

1832 1832
Captain Nathaniel J. Wyeth of Massachusetts projected in 1832 an enterprise of curious interest and some historical importance.

His plan was to establish salmon fisheries on the Columbia river to be operated as an adjunct to and in connection with the fur and Indian trade. He crossed overland to Oregon, dispatching a vessel with trading goods via Cape Horn but his vessel was never again heard from, so the enterprise met defeat.

The next year Captain Wyeth returned to Boston leaving however most of his party in the country.

Many of the men settled in the Willamette valley and one of them found employment as an Indian teacher for the Hudson's Bay company.

Not to be discouraged by one failure Captain Wyeth in 1834 fitted out another land expedition and dispatched to the Columbia another vessel, the May Dacre, laden with trading goods.

On reaching the confluence of the Snake and Port Neuf rivers Wyeth erected a trading post which he gave the name of Fort Hall.

Having sent out his hunting and trapping parties and made arrangements for the season's operations he proceeded to Fort Vancouver where about the same time the May Dacre arrived. He established a trading house and salmon fishery known on Wapato (Now Sauvie's) island which became known as Fort William. The fishery proved a failure and the trading and trapping industry could not stand the competition and harassing tactics of the Hudson's Bay company and the constant hostility of the Indians.

George B. Roberts, who came to Oregon in 1831 as an employee of the Hudson Bay company is quoted as having accounted for the trouble with the red men in this way. "The island was thickly inhabited by Indians until 1830 when they were nearly exterminated by congestive chills and fever. There were at the time three

villages on the island. So fatal were the effects of the disease that Dr. McLoughlin sent a party to rescue and bring away the few that were left and to burn the villages. The Indians attributed the introduction of the fever and ague to an American vessel that had visited the river a year or two previously. It is not therefore a matter of surprise to any one who understands Indian character and their views as to death resulting from such diseases that Wyeth's attempted establishment on Lapato island was subject to continued hostility.

Wyeth eventually returned to Massachusetts disheartened. Fort Hall ultimately passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay company and with its acquisition by them, practically ended American fur trade west of the Rocky Mountains. But though Wyeth's enterprise failed so signally his account of it, published by order of congress, attracted the attention of Americans to Oregon and dissipated its settlement.

History of Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas counties..Interstate, 1904.

(Klickitat history..Interstate. 1904.)

In 1856 the government commenced the construction of a military road across the Simcoe range to Fort Simcoe, on the Yakima reservation and during the summer of that year a small fortification was erected on Spring creek, seven miles northwest of Coldendale and garrisoned with a troop of U.S. cavalry.

This little fort, known as the blockhouse, was a log structure surrounded by an eight-foot stockade. The building still stands to mark the location but the stockade has long since been removed. The early settlers say that this building when first seen by them showed plainly the marks of bullets fired by the Indians in skirmishes with the soldiers. In 1860 the troops were removed.

....Some time in the spring of 1859 Moses Stark came to the valley and built a log house. There was no settler then in all that country. Save for the soldiers at the blockhouse and a few roving Indians the entire district to the north of the Columbia was unpopulated.

Mr. Stark was obliged to build his cabin alone as there was no one to whom he could apply for aid but he managed to raise the logs by sliding them up inclined skids. First he would pull one end up a distance with a rope, fasten it and work the other end up a little way.

When he finished his cabin he went to California where he met Stanton H. Jones, whose acquaintance he had previously made.

They planned to return to Klickitat country together but Mr. Jones delayed for a few weeks in California by business affairs so Stark came back alone. Jones followed a little later.

During Stark's absence in California a number of settlers arrived in the valley. Among the first of these were Willis Jenkins and family. Willis Jenkins was one of the earliest settlers in Oregon.....

they settled near the blockhouse after coming to Klickitat county in the summer of 1859 ,where the garrison was stationed and when in 1860 the soldiers were removed Jenkins filed on the claim. They brought down their

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During the summer of 1860 the first road to Columbus was opened by private subscription

Vancouver

Forts

Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, under charge of Dr. John McLoughlin was established in 1834 and consisted of an enclosure by stockade, thirty-seven rods long by eighteen wide that faced the south.

About one hundred persons were employed at the place and some three hundred Indians lived in the immediate vicinity. There were eight ~~000000~~ substantial buildings within the stockade and a large number of small ones on the outside.

There were 459 cattle, 100 horses, 200 sheep, 40 goats, and 300 hogs belonging to the company at this place; and during the season of 1835 the crops produced in that vicinity amounted to 5,000 bushels of wheat, 1,300 bushels of potatoes, 1,000 bushels of barley, 1,000 bushels of oats, 2,000 bushels of peas and garden vegetables in proportion. The garden containing five acres besides its vegetable products included apples, peaches, grapes and strawberries. A grist mill with machinery propelled by oxen was kept in constant use, while some six miles up the Columbia was a saw mill containing several saws which supplied lumber for the Hudson's Bay company. Within the fort was a bakery employing three men, also shops for blacksmiths joiners, carpenters and a tinner.

Fort Williams, erected by N.J. Wyeth at the mouth of the Willamette was nearly deserted. Mr. Townsend (J.K.) the ornithologist with the original party) being ~~one~~ about the only occupant at the time. ~~One~~ Wyeth had gone to his Fort Hall in the interior. Of Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia but two ~~log~~ log houses and a garden remained where two white men dragged out a dull existence, to maintain possession of the historic ground. Its ancient romantic grandeur had departed from its walls when dismantled to assist in the construction and defenses of its rival, Fort Vancouver.

Up the Wilamette river was the Methodist mission in the condition already noted while between it and the present site of Oregon City were the Hudson's Bay company's french settlement of Gervais and McKay containing some twenty families, whose children were being taught by young Americans. In one of these settlements a grist mill had just been completed.

East of the Cascade mountains Fort Walla Walla was situated at the mouth of the river by the name. 1800

It was built of logs and was internally arranged to answer the purposes of trade and domestic comfort, and externally for defense, having two bastions and was surrounded by a stockade. It was accidentally burned in 1841 and rebuilt of adobe within a year.

At this point the company had horses, cows, hogs, fowls and they cultivated corn, potatoes and a variety of garden vegetables.

This fort was used for a trading post where goods were stored for traffic with the Indians.

Fort Colville on the Columbia a little above Kettle Falls near the present line of Washington territory, a strongly stockaded post, was occupied by a half dozen men with Indian families and Mr. McDonald was in charge.

Fort Okanogan at the mouth of the river of that name established by David Stuart in 1811 was in the absence of Mr. Ogden in charge of a single white man. Concerning Fort Hall nothing is said; but it fell into the hands of the Hudson's Bay company in ¹⁸³⁶ 1836, It was then a stockaded fort, but was rebuilt with adobe in 1838. Mr. Parker is also silent in regard to Fort Boise which was constructed on Snake river from poles in 1834 as a rival establishment to Fort Hall, was occupied in 1835 by the Hudson's Bay company and later was more substantially constructed with adobe.

If there were other establishments in 1835 west of the Rock Mountains between the forty-second and forty-ninth

parallels , the writer has failed to obtain evidences of them..
Parker's tour. History of Klickitat, Kittitas and Yakima counties,
Interstate Pub. co. 1904.

Klickitat county..history..Interstate 1904.

The first immigrants began to arrive in the valley late in the 50s. It was a beautiful country then, covered everywhere with rich luxuriant bunch grass, a cattleman's paradise. From the hills along the Columbia to the foot of the timbered covered Simcoe range stretched one undivided pasture field.

,.....As large herds of cattle could be raised and fattened ready for slaughter at almost nominal expense, the rearing of stock was a decidedly profitable business. Another advantage in the enterprise was that the stock could be transported readily overland to the market while any other commodity required a conveyance, a thing which is difficult to furnish in a newly settled country.

Most of the settlers came from across the plains to the Willamette valley and then on the Klickitat

Willis Jenkins and family came to the Klickitat country in 1859 (the summer of) He had brought his family across the plains as early as 1844 and settled in Polk county near the present town of Dallas. In 1849 he moved to California to the newly discovered gold mines. During the first winter there he washed out about \$7,000 in gold, most of which he invested in merchandise. The following spring he returned with his goods to Oregon where he started a store. As most of his neighbors had likewise sought their fortunes in the new El Dorado, money was about the only thing that was plentiful and Mr. Jenkins disposed of his merchandise at a good profit. From Polk county he moved to Wilbur, a small settlement in southern Oregon named for Father Wilbur and there he also kept a store and wayside lodging house. He lived at Wilbur during the Rogue River war

Later the family moved to Forest Grove in Washington county and finally in the summer of 1859 they came to Klickitat. They settled near the blockhouse where the garrison was stationed and when, in 1860, the soldiers were removed Jenkin filed on the claim.

They brought with them to Klickitat one hundred and fifty head of cattle and a few horses.

The Jenkins family were not yet settled in the valley when Lewis S. Parrott and his son-in-law John J. Golden came. With the Parrots and Golden came the Tarter family, also from the Willamette.

Mr. Golden preceded the party into the valley arriving with a large herd of cattle, July 9, 1859, to the best of his recollection. He says the others joined him in August. They settled on the Swale, a few miles southwest of the side of Goldendale; John Golden afterward moved to Columbus and lived there for a time.

The party brought with them here as much as did most of the early settlers. While living at Columbus Golden took a contract to deliver one thousand cords of wood to the boats and wood hauling soon became one of the chief industries of the country.

A little later John W. Burgen and his brother Thomas came, also bringing a large herd of cattle and horses. In 1860 John Burgen settled on the Columbus road near the Swale creek, about four miles south of the site of Goldendale. Interstate, 1904.