

Click Relander.

[1963?]

for Mrs. Gossett

Some day I may do something with the Archer Letters complete. You are welcome to parts relating to your country, but letters "reproduced" are poor reading. References, sometimes quotes help out.

I gave many of them to H. Dean Guile for his Bugles in the Valley (and the title too), since I believe as much history should be "spread" as possible.

Archer was James J. Archer, a captain with the 4th Infantry, came out to the Northwest after a break following service in the "war with Mexico." He eventually became commandant at Ft. Simcoe. Excerpts from letters while in the Valley: (citation would be ~~James J. Archer~~ Archer Letters, microfilm in possession of Click Relander) (or merely: Archer, James J. Letters.  
Camp on the Naches River

8th June, 1856

My dear mother:

"...not a tree was to be seen except the winding border of cottonwood and atanam poplar.

The next morning we were up at 6 and rode 12 to 14 miles to Col. "right" camp on the Naches. I cannot understand how those officers who remain all day long and every day in the dusty range manage to bear it.

Warr and I after lunch ride out over the hills and through valleys. The first day was eight miles up the river. We are the only ones to ride every day.

Yesterday we took a ride down the river to a point where we could see the confluence of the Naches with the Yakima.

At the point where the river breaks through its barrier into the great plain over which it hastens to join the Yakima stands a high block of columnar basalt, receding at the base so as to form a shallow cave where protected from the rain and wind we found a large number of

Indian paintings on the rocks, crudely representing as I suppose the painter's idea of their dieties.

"We returned by the plateau.

"...Col Wright has been engaged during ~~this~~ the week on building a bridge across the Nachess for the transportation of supplies of the troops. It is under the charge of Lt. Missel who deserves great credit for his task, doing it in a very scientific manner with no tools but axes and no material but green poplar saplings and rope mule halters. It seems a little strange that Missel, one of the citizen appointees should be the one most capable and always selected to perform the duties appertaining to the exclusive scientific corps. He is also the topographer. We will probably cross the Nachess day after tomorrow and will procede at once across the Wenas to the Selah fisheries on the Yakima. Then no one except Col. Wright, if even he does, has any idea where he will take us. The Indians who were on the opposite side of the river when I wrote to Henry shortly after my arrival and whose chief had several interviews with Col. Wright suddenly decamped after about a week since and no one knows where they are dispersed, separated into their separate tribes or if where they have gone or what their purpose is.

Col. Wright I think expects to conclude a peace with them without the power of conquering.

Camp on Naches, 20th June  
1856

Dear Annie (His sister)

The expressman arrived from Col. Wright. He stops here only long enough to change his horse before going on to the Dalles so that I will have time only to send you my love and tell you I am well.

Maj. Garnett arrived a few days since by way of Vancouver and Dalles with Dent and Fletcher's companies which were unable on account



of the snow on the mountains to come by the Naches pass.

Col. Wright who seemed determined to make peace with the Indians had many interviews with their chiefs in which they (at least) those who came in, Leschi, Whi and Tias, disclosed themselves for peace.

Friday was fixed upon for a general council. Col. Wright had a large bower erected for the council but they did not return. It was understood that unless they all come in at that time they would be severely dealt with.

By Wednesday Col. Wright with all his com and except my company, Bowman's and Goodruff's crossed the Naches and moved on toward ~~Onkanie~~ Snoqualmie pass. When the expressman left he was on the Yakima river.

Col. Steptoe, whom I like exceedingly, is in com and of our battalion.

(no signature)

Camp on the Naches River

4th July, 1856

... .. The two companies which joined us about the 15th June under Maj. Garnett brought up with them two wall tents and were obliged to leave them when they left with Col. Wright. I have the use of one of them during my stay at this place and Carr has the little common tent which we had before jointly occupied. These two tents I have placed side by side and over and surrounded with a bower woven of willow branches with the leaves on. The bower extends about five paces in front of the tent doors forming a cool pleasant verandah which is our dining room and parlor. The whole space enclosed by the bower is the tent floor and is covered by long grass which I have cut and spread. It is quite as pretty and cool looking as your best straw matting. I have some furniture too, writing table and settees made of forked sticks driven into the floor for the legs and little straight sapplings laid across and

nicely fastened in their places with strips of bark.

The men have built quite a pretty little village of willow wh wyths thatched with the long grass of which I have spoken. The weather has been-- when we first came up about the last of May it was very warm but for the last two weeks until yesterday we have worn overcoats and sat by our fires from sunset until bedtime. Today it is very warm, just like a fourth of July at home.

The last mail brought me two letters from Hattie dated, one 17th and the other 18th April but postmarked both 19th May. Ask her to be a little more particular about her dates.

Aug. 16, Camp on the Yakima River (apparently Kittitas Valley)  
descriptive, comparative

"...I have now been here over two weeks. It is much more pleasant than the camp on the Naches where every wind filled the air with clouds of dust. Here the view is more beautiful, extending for many miles in every direction over a level valley enclosed within high mountains. The winds, which here as at Naches blow almost constantly and with great force from the direction of the snow covered ridge of the Cascade Range come to us fresh over miles of grassy plain without a particle of dust.  
... "

Following letters regarding Wright on Yakima meeting with Indians (have Wright army correspondence on these)

Letter then regarding moving to To-Pi -Ish Creek (for location of what became Fort Simcoe)

Letters from Simcoe, Fort Dalles, Portland etc.

Fort Simcoe, W.T.

14th Sept. 1858

My dear mother:

Everything is going on pretty much as usual. I have just come in from the brook a out two-miles above the post where I have been attending to the construction of a reservoir which is to supply us with ice for the ice house and with water for irrigating the parched ground and gardens...

Fort Simcoe, W.T.

1st October 1858

My dear mother:

By the last mail I received letters from Mary, Nannie and sister H. This morning our boat left us on a two weeks rest to Portland which to us here is what Baltimore used to be to me in Hartford.

Our post now, although not one of the buildings is entirely finished, presents the appearance of a smart village. Everybody is still busy--a few days ago one of the workmen at the reservoir dam dug out a nugget of gold worth about \$20. There are traces of gold in all the streams here but it has not been found in sufficient quantities to justify the labor of collecting it...

(on expedition north)

At Twi-wi-an Creek W.T.

12th Aug. 1858

My dear mother:

I neglected to say in my letter yesterday from the Atanum that most likely I will not have another opportunity to send a letter to the "white settlements" for 40 or 50 days so without next having anything else to communicate I will write again to prevent your being uneasy on account of not hearing from me. I have no way of sending this that I know of for although we expect a mail it is expected to be



brought by a man who will remain with us when he arrives but it is possible that some friendly Indian will be going in by whom I can send this and I take the precaution to have it ready for such a chance.

Our march was short, only 10 miles. That of tomorrow will be shorter to the Naches.

By these three days of marches the men will have been gradually broken in so that ~~xx~~ the long march we commence on the 4th day will not be so hard.

We got in today at 10 a/m and have spent the day bathing, fishing and I caught a fine mess of trout, one of them 14 inches long. It is now twilight and our mail not yet come.

Affectionately J.R.J Archer

Entinnum Creek, 13th

Maj. Garnett sends an express to Sincove this evening. We are 45 miles on our way, being slow traveling but we will get along faster today.

Last night we were at Naches river where I spent two months in the summer of 56. I will write whenever I have an opportunity but don't expect to have another.

Yours J.J. Archer

(Where he spent the summer of 56 was at the location ~~Qu@@~~ near present Eschbach Park. This was called basket fort by the old timers, but the previous references to this would indicate there was no "fort there." Perhaps the rock piles to "anchor" the bridge etc. were mistaken in later years for remains of a fort. "the basket" reference may have been references by Indians to later settlers, to the willow huts etc. referred to in the letter?)

I don't think these excerpted letters will add much but they do contain some fairly local information. The Archer letters were copied several years ago from microfilm and the handwriting is pretty difficult. They start before the Mexican War and follow through to the Battle of Atlanta in the Civil War, with about a year's omission. It would take a lot more background, research etc. to put ~~xxx~~ them into shape and unless properly done would be dull reading, although he was exceptionally scholarly for the period.

Place names I think are a key to history. I hope you are going into them as thoroughly as you can, "origins" that is, and in time, would like to compare some notes.

I don't believe ~~xxx~~ the area has been well treated with and I think the Forest Service is starting to change names around, without any authority than they are on the ground floor, and heaven only knows where their ~~xxxxxx~~ "origins" are recorded for the future.

(Hope you are able to find out something about mushrooms that will result in productive gathering).

Sincerely

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