

Fremont, Brevet Captain J.C. Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the year 1842 and to Oregon and North California, Washington, Gales and Seaton Printers, 1845. (With Map)

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"...there were several Indian encampments scattered along the river and a number of their inhabitants in the course of the evening came to the camp on horseback with dried and fresh fish to trade.

At the time of the first occupation of this region by parties engaged in the fur trade, a small party of men under the command of ----Reit, constituting all the garrison of a little fort, were surprised and massacred by the Indians; and to this event the stream owes its occasional name of Reid's river.

On the 8th we travelled about 26 miles, the ridge on the right having scattered pines on the upper parts; and continuing the next day our road along the river bottom, after a day's travel of 24 miles, we encamped in the evening on the right bank of the river, a mile above the mouth and early the next morning arrived at Fort Boise. This is a simple dwelling house on the right bank of the Snake river, about a mile below the mouth of Riviere Boissee; and on our arrival we were received with an agreeable hospitality by Mr. Payette an officer of the Hudson Bay Company, in charge of the fort...Mr. Payette had made but slight attempts at cultivation, his efforts being limited to raising a few vegetables in which he succeeded tolerably well; the post being principally supported by salmon...stock appeared to thrive extremely well; and we had an unusual luxury in a present of fresh butter, which was however by no means equal to that of Fort Hall. During the day we remained th^o here, there were considerable numbers of miserable half-naked Indians around the fort, who had arrived from the neighboring mountains. During the summer the only subsistence of these people

is derived from the salmon, of which they are not provident enough to lay up a sufficient store for the winter, during which many of them die from absolute starvation...

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October 11---about sunset we reached the Riviere aux Malheurs (the unfortunate or unlucky river,) a considerable stream with an average breadth of 50 feet, and at this time, 18 inches depth of water.

The bottom lands were generally one and a half miles broad, covered principally with long dry grass; and we had difficulty to find sufficient good grass for the camp...

October 12--My attention was attracted by a smoke on the right side of the river, a little below the ford, where I found on the low bank, near the water, a considerable number of hot springs, in which the temperature of the water was 193 degrees.

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October 13--..The horses had strayed off during the night...about 9 o'clock we heard the sound of an Indian song and drum approaching and shortly after, three Cayuse Indians appeared in sight bringing with them the two animals...

We were not about to leave the valley of the great southern branch of the Columbia river, to which the absence of timber and the scarcity of water give the appearance of a desert, to enter a mountainous region where the soil is good, and in which the face of the country is covered with nutritious grasses and dense forest-land embracing many varieties of trees peculiar to the country and on which the timber exhibits a luxuriance of growth unknown to the eastern part of the continent and to Europe...

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...Leaving entirely the Snake river, which is said henceforth to pursue its course through canons, amidst rocky and impracticable

mountains, where there is no possibility of traveling with animals, we ascended a long and somewhat steep hill, and crossing the dividing ridge, came down into the valley of Burnt river, which here looks like a hole among the hills. The average breadth of the stream here is 30 feet; it is well fringed with the usual small timber; and the soil in the bottoms is good, with better grass than we had lately been accustomed to see...the mountains were covered with good bunch grass (festuca;) the water of the streams was cold and pure; their bottoms were handsomely wooded with various kinds of trees; and huge and lofty and picturesque precipices were displayed where the river cut through the mountains...

October 14... a fertile soil, with excellent grass and partly well covered with pine...

P. 174...From the dividing grounds we descended to a mountain road to Powder river, on an old bed of which we encamped... from the heights we looked in vain for a well-known landmark on Powder river which had been described to me by Mr. Payette as *P'arbre seul*, (the Lone Tree) and on arriving at the river we found a fine tall pine stretched on the ground, which had been felled by some inconsiderate emigrant axe. It had been a beacon on the road for many years past.

Our Cayuses had become impatient to reach their homes and travelled on ahead today; and this afternoon we were visited by several Indians who belonged to the tribes on the Columbia. They were on horseback and were out on a hunting excursion, but had obtained no better game than a large gray hare, of which each had some six or seven hanging to his saddle. We were also visited by an Indian who had his lodge and family in the mountain to the left. He was in want of ammunition and brought with him a beaver skin to exchange, which he valued at six charges of powder and ball. I learned from him that there are very few of these animals

in this part of the country.

October 16-For several weeks the weather in the daytime has been very beautiful, clear and warm; but the nights in comparison are very cold. During the night there was ice a quarter of an inch thick in the lodge and at daylight the thermometer was 16 degrees...

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...There is snow yet visible in the neighboring mountains which yesterday extended along our route to the left in a lofty and dark-blue range, having much the appearance of the Wind river mountains. It is probable that they have received their name of the Blue Mountains from the dark-blue appearance given them by the pines. The soil appeared to be very deep and is black and extremely good, as well among the hollows of the hills on the elevated plats as on the river bottom; the vegetation being such as is usually found in good ground. The following analytical result shows the precise qualities of the soil and will justify to science the character of fertility which the eye attributes to.

Analysis of Powder river soil.

Silica	72.20	Oxide of iron	1.20
Alumina	6.25	Organic matter	4.50
Carbonate of lime	6.86	Water and loss	4.27
Carbonate of magnesia	4.62		

			100.000

...On either side the mountains here are densely covered with tall and handsome trees, and mingled with the green wood of the variety of pines is the yellow of the European larch (pinus larix) which loses its leaves in the fall. ...about 2 in the afternoon we reached a high point of the dividing ridge from which we obtained a good view of the Grand Rond--a beautiful level basin or mountain valley covered with good grass on

on a rich soil, abundantly watered and surrounded by high and well timbered mountains; and its name descriptive of its form--the great circle. It is a place--one of the few we have seen in our journey so far--where a farmer would delight to establish himself if he were content to live in the seclusion which it imposes. It is about 20 miles ~~in~~ in diameter; and may in time form a superb country.
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The old grass had been lately burnt off from the surrounding hills, and, wherever the fire had passed, there was a recent growth of strong, green, and vigorous grass; and the soil of the level prairie, which sweeps directly up to the foot of the surrounding mountains, appears to be very rich, producing flax spontaneously and luxuriantly in various places. The elevation of the encampment is 2,940 feet above the sea.

....quitting therefore, this road, which after a very rough crossing issues from the mountains by the heads of the Umatilah river, we continued our northern course across the valley, following an Indian trail which had been indicated to me by Mr. Payette, and encamped at the northern extremity of the Grand Rond, on a slough like stream of very deep water without any apparent current. There are some pines here on the low hills at the creek; and in the northwest corner of the Rond is a very heavy body of timber which descends into the plain...some indifferent observations placed the camp in longitude 117 degrees 28' 26'', latitude 45 degrees 26' 47''; and the elevation was 2,600 feet above the sea.

October 19...We passed out of the Grand Rond by a fine road along the creek, which for a short distance runs in a kind of rocky chasm. Crossing a low point, which was a little rocky, the trail conducted into the open valey of the stream--a handsome place for farms; the soil, even of the hills being rich

and black. Passing through a point of pines, which bore evidences of being much frequented by the Indians, and in which the trees were sometimes apparently 200 feet high and 3 to 7 feet in diameter, we halted for a few minutes in the afternoon at the foot of the Blue Mountains, on a branch of the Grand Rond river, at an elevation of 2,700 feet...

after travelling occasionally through open places in the forest, we were obliged to cut our way through a dense body of timber, from which we p. 181

emerged on an open mountain side where we found a number of small springs and encamped after a day's journey of 10 miles.

Our elevation here was 5,000 feet...

a laborious day, which had advanced us only six miles on our road, brought us in the afternoon to an opening in the forest in which there was a fine mountain meadow with good grass, and a large clear water stream, one of the head branches of the Umatilâh river. Some of the white spruces which I measured today were twelve feet in circumference ...

we were on the westward verge of the Blue Mountains, long spurs of which, very precipitous on either side, extended down into the valley, the waters of the mountain roaring between them. On our right was a mountain plateau, covered with a dense forest; and to the westward, immediately below us, was the great Nez Perce, (pierced nose) prairie, in which dark lines of timber indicated the course of many affluents to a considerable stream that was seen pursuing its way across the plain towards what appeared to be the Columbia river. This I knew to be the Walahwah river, and occasional spots along its banks, which resembled clearings, were supposed to be the mission or Indian settlements; but the weather was smoky and unfavorable to far views with the glass.

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..about 4 o'clock in the afternoon (Oct. 23) we reached a little bottom on the Walahwah river where we found Mr. Preuse, who yesterday had reached this place and found himself too far in advance of the camp to return. The stream here has just issued from the narrow ravines, which are walled with precipices, in which the rock has a brown and more burnt appearance than above.

..we found the soil in the Blue mountains to be of excellent quality, and it appeared also to be good here among the lower hills. Reaching a little eminence over which the trail divided and spread over its bottom in a net work of water, receiving several other tributaries from the mountains. There was a band of several hundred horses grazing on the hills about two miles ahead, and as we advanced on the road, we met other bands, which Indians were driving out to pasture also on the hills...

In six miles we crossed a principal fork, below which the scattered water of the river was gathered into one channel; and passing on the way several unfinished houses, and some cleared patches, where corn and potatoes were cultivated, we reached in about eight miles farther, the missionary establishment of Dr.

Whitman which consisted, at this time, of one adobe house, i.e., built of unburnt bricks as in Mexico

I found Dr. Whitman absent on a visit to the Dalles of the Columbia; but had the pleasure to see a fine large family of emigrants, men, pg. 183

women and children in robust health, all indemnifying themselves for previous scanty fare, in a hearty consumption of potatoes which are produced here of a remarkably good quality. We were disappointed in our expectations of obtaining corn meal or flour at this station, the mill belonging to the mission having been lately burnt down; but an abundant supply of excellent potatoes

banished regrets and furnished a grateful substitute for bread.

A small town of Nez Perce Indians gave an inhabited and even a populous appearance to the station; and after remaining about an hour, ~~here~~ we continued our route and encamped on the river about four miles below, passing on the way an emigrant encampment...

October 25--We halted about three miles above the mouth on account of grass, and the next morning arrived at the Nez Perce fort, one of the trading establishments of the Hudson Bay Company, a ~~few~~ ~~of the trading establishments~~ few hundred yards above the junction of the Walahwah, with the Columbia river. Here we had the first view of this river and found it about 1,200 yards wide and presenting the appearance of a fine navigable stream....

about nine miles above, and in sight from the heights about the post, is the junction of the two great forks which constitute the main stream--that on which we had been travelling from Fort Hall and known by the names of Lewis's fork, Shoshonee and Snake River; and the North fork, which has retained the name of Columbia, as being the main stream.

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November 3--After two hours' ride through a fertile, hilly country covered as all the land here appears to be with good green grass, we descended again into the river bottom, along which we resumed our sterile road, and in about four miles reached the ford of the Fall river (Riviere aux Chutes,) a considerable tributary to the Columbia. P, 174...

We had heard, on reaching the Nez Perce fort, a repetition of the account in regard to the unsettled character of the Columbia Indians at the present time; and to our little party they had at various times manifested a not very friendly disposition

...it entered the Columbia with a roar of falls and rapids

and is probably a favorite fishing station among the Indians, with whom both banks of the river were populous; but they scarcely paid any attention to us...p.187

We passed rapidly three or four miles down the level valley and encamped near the mission. The character of the forest growth here changed, and we found ourselves, with pleasure, again among oaks and other forest trees of the east, to which we had long been strangers; and the hospitable and kind reception with which we were welcomed among our country people at the mission aided the momentary illusion of home.

Two good-looking wooden dwelling houses, and a large school house, with stables, barn and garden, and large cleared fields between the houses and the river bank, on which were scattered the wooden huts of an Indian village, gave to the valley the cheerful and busy air of civilization and had in our eyes an appearance of abundant and enviable comfort...our land journey here found its western termination.

(trip to Vancouver described)
(return described)
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we arrived again at the Dalles.

196--Our camp was now occupied in making preparations for our homeward journey, which though homeward, contemplated a new route and a great circuit to the south and southeast and the exploration of the Great Basin between the Rocky mountains and the Sierra Nevada.
p. 197... Mr. Perkins succeeded in obtaining as a guide to the Tlamath (Klamath) lake...

today we commenced our journey...

p. 198..along the little branch of Winanens creek, where there was good grass and timber

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After Nov. 26, 27, 28, 29

..December 1--one of the guides informed me that this was a salmon water, and pointed out several ingeniously contrived places to catch fish; among the pines in the bottom I saw an immense one about twelve feet in diameter. We encamped on the height of land in a marshy place among the pines, where there was an abundance of grass. We found here a single Nez Perce family, who had a very handsome horse, in their drov, which we endeavored to obtain in exchange for a good cow; but the man "had two hearts," or rather he had one and his wife had another; she wanted the cow, but he loved the horse too much to part with it. These people attach great value to cattle, with which they are endeavoring to supply themselves... (the latitude of this place 44 degrees, 35' 23" and for longitude from the satellite 121 degrees 10' 25").

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Dec. 5...and found a good encampment on the verge of an open bottom which had been an old camping ground of the Cayuse Indians. A great number of deer horns were lying about indicating game which indicated game in the neighborhood...

December 6...we met here a village of Nez Perce Indians who appeared to be coming down from the mountains and had with them fine bands of horse. With them were a few Snake Indians of the root digging species

p. 203...December 8...today we crossed the last branch of the Fall river, issuing like all the others we had crossed, in a southwesterly direction from the mountains. Our direction was a little east of south, the trail leading constantly through pine forests. The soil was generally bare, consisting in greater part of yellowish, white pumice stone, producing varieties of

of magnificent pines, but not a blade of grass; and tonight our horses were obliged to do without food, and use snow for water. These pines are remarkable for the red color of the bolls; and among them occurs a species of which the Indians had informed me when leaving the Dalles. The unusual size of the cone, 16 or 18 inches long, had attracted their attention and they pointed it out to me among the curiosities of the country. They are more remarkable for their large diameter than their heights, which usually averages only 120 feet....

December 9...The trail leads always through splendid pine forests.
December 10--The country began to improve; and about 11 o'clock we reached a spring of cold water on the edge of a savannah, or grassy meadow, which our guides informed us was an arm of the Tlamath lake ;(Klamath lake)