

REPORT UPON PIONEER HISTORY

of

YAKIMA SPORTSMEN STATE PARK AREA, YAKIMA CROSSING AND
LONE PINE.

by J. A. Slavin.

These sources of information lead to the pioneer historical import-

ance of the new State Park. i e: Ezra Meeker in Tragedy of Chief

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Leschi.

the middle of the river which would make for shallow water crossing

Mr. Meeker who had preceded his father by one year across the plain
for Puget Sound, learned while at Fort Steilacoom that his father and
and others in the wagon train were in distress at Fort Wallula. So
in August 1854 Ezra Meeker on horse back and afoot started east thru
Naches pass. This was one year after the James Longmire train (with
David Longmire) crossed the Naches pass going west and also one
year after the Citizen's Committee from Puget Sound worked several
weeks with axe, saws, and shovels to make the road a little more
passable.

Mr. Meeker had ridden east, crossed Naches Pass and reached the Yaki-
ima Valley, then not inhabited except by missionaries among the
Indians. Here Mr. Meeker met a train of wagon Emigrants bound for
Puget Sound. The immigrants were camped on the present site of
the Yakima Sportsmen State Park.

A. J. Spahn Page 239
Kamiskia 2nd edition.

"Seipah the salmon man of the tribe, with a few other Indians, had
a temporary encampment of the east bank of the river near the Lone
Pine, a short distance above the present Naches bridge."

Topography of the Valley would lead one to suppose this was the Yakima Crossing Ezra Meeker refers to. It was in direct line from the Moxee Pass that Mortimore Thorp used seven years later to get into the Moxee Valley, and the Naches ~~pass~~ Valley and Naches Pass beyond. There are two other natural conditions that lead one to the circumstantial conclusion that the State Park site was a natural camping grounds and the river crossing.

There was then and is today a large island of some forty acres in the middle of the river which would make for shallow water crossing otherwise the whole flow of the stream would have to be breasted either above or below the island. The second deduction that ~~wpx~~ would lead immigrants to cross at this place would be the lone pine tree that Splawn and McWhorter both refer to; and a living farmer now less than sixty years old saw growing there. It could be seen for miles and would stand out from the lighter green foliage of the willows and cottonwood near by.

quoting Ezra Meeker in Tragedy of Chief ^Weshi says on Page 110----
 " We had met in the hither bank of the Yakima river, where the old trail crosses that river near where the flourishing city of N. Yakima now is."

There are other plausible reasons leading on to conclude that this location was known as the Yakima Crossing, i e.:

A. J. Spalwn Page 239
 Kamiakin 2nd edition.

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There was then and is today a large island of some forty acres in
the middle of the river which would make for shallow water crossing
otherwise the whole flow of the river would have to be directed
either above or below the island. The second condition that
we would find in the course of the river would be the loss
of pine trees at the island and the forest cover for and a living
forest now less than sixty years old and growing there. It could be
seen for miles and would stand out from the higher forest
of the valley and surrounding hills.

Looking back to the river in the days of the Indians, when the old
trail crossed the river, it was the crossing place for
Yakima now is.

There are other circumstances leading us to conclude that this
location was known to the Indians.

A. J. Sperry - Page 237
October 2nd 1910

"Within the salmon run of the river, with a few other Indians, the
temporary encampment of the east end of the river near the home
place, a spot that was above the present McKee bridge."

Washington Historical Quarterly, page 96; Vol. VIII No. 2, April 17th, Chief Saluskin's narrative, by McWhorter-----

"It was, I think, one or two years after this, our people were camping above the (now) Moxee bridge (about two miles east of North Yakima) for a long time a big TOPIS (pine) tree stood there."

"One day an old man Ya-num-kum, came to see me and said: Two King George men come! I look and see them."

1839 Pierre C Pambum + Cornelius Rogers explored the Nisqually Pass as early as 1839 going from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Nisqually by that route. (Or. Spectator, May 13, 1847) [Bancroft's Works, Vol. XXX] [Vol. II 1845-88 Hist] could this have been the two men Saluskin had seen at Yakima State Park of Oregon.

The lone pine tree that ~~beckoned~~ beckoned the pioneers and Indians to its sheltered bows has gone. The State Park has taken its place and beacons all to rest on the green swarth under the stately cotton woods besides its still waters and babbling brook, or to follow in the traces of the old Pioneer road that traverses the Park, likely some day destined to become a bridle path.

4. Covered Wagon Centennial and Ex-Team Days
Oregon Trail Memorial 1951 Page 162 Ezra Meeker
"Yakima River, at the place where the old trail crosses that river
the site of the Present North Yakima."

[illegible][illegible]

"It was a fine day, I think, at two o'clock, when we were told that the boat had been sighted." "The boat?"

CONFIDENTIAL - EYES ONLY

[illegible][illegible]

Message from Daniel: I look and see you.

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...to the

The Bureau of the old United States Army

One day I started to become a little pale.