

## JOURNALS OF THE INDIAN WAR OF 1855-56

These journals of the Indian war of 1855-56 were kept by two brothers, Robert M. Painter and William C. Painter, privates in Company D of the First Regiment of Oregon Mounted Volunteers. Robert M. Painter died in Oregon City in 1868. In 1864, His brother, William C., moved to Wallula. Three years later he moved to Walla Walla, where he was living at the time of his death in 1900.

A copy of the journal of Robert M. Painter was given to me by Mrs. J. B. Davidson of Ellensburg in August, 1923; and a copy of the Journal of William C. Painter was made by his son, the Reverend Harry M. Painter of Cheney, in November, 1923. Robert Painter of Walla Walla, son of Robert M., says that his father's journal is an exact copy of the record which was kept from day to day. Concerning the original journal of William C. Painter, Harry M. Painter says: "The diary was a few sheets of blue writing paper folded and sewed. It had no cover and was badly worn. Some pages were so rubbed as to be undecipherable. It was written with pencil. I had a hard task to decipher as much as I did with a magnifying glass." (Letter to J. Orin Oliphant, November 7, 1923.)

A comparison of the two journals will disclose several small discrepancies, especially in the matter of distances covered from day to day. It is presumed that each one estimated the distance and that no comparison of notes was ever made.

Muster rolls of the various companies of the regiment may be found in Frances Fuller Victor, *The Early Indian Wars of Oregon Compiled From the Oregon Archives and Other Original Sources*, (Salem, 1894) pp. 522 *et seq.* Officers of the regiment were as follows: James W. Nesmith, colonel; James K. Kelly, lieutenant-colonel; Ambrose N. Strong, senior major; Mark A. Chinn, junior major. Several changes were made during the campaign.

In the "muster roll of Captain Thomas R. Cornelius's company 'D' of the first regiment of Oregon mounted volunteers, commanded by Colonel James W. Nesmith, mustered in pursuance of the proclamation of the governor of Oregon territory, to serve in the war against the Yakima and other Indians, from the seven-

teenth day of October, 1855, until discharged," are found the following entries: "No. 55—Robert M. Painter, private, enlisted October 17, 1855, at Portland by Adjutant-General E. M. Barnum. No. 56—William C. Painter, private, enlisted October 17, 1855, at Portland by Adjutant-General E. M. Barnum."

At the outbreak of the war in 1855 Governor Stevens was negotiating a treaty in the country of the Blackfoot Indians. Affairs of Washington Territory had been left in the hands of Acting Governor C. H. Mason, who commissioned Major G. J. Rains, an officer of the regular army, brigadier-general in order that he might outrank the officers of volunteer organizations. Major Rains was in command of the regulars with whom Colonel Nesmith's Oregon volunteers cooperated in the Yakima campaign in November, 1855.

More than usual interest attaches to the campaigns of the Oregon volunteers in southeastern Washington in 1855-56 because of the controversy which developed between Governor Stevens of Washington Territory and General John E. Wool, commander of the Pacific department, over the "righteousness" of the war. General Wool took exception to the proclamation of Governor Curry of Oregon in pursuance of, which the volunteer regiment was raised. He characterized the undertaking as "one of the most unwise, unnecessary, and extravagant expeditions ever fitted out in the United States, and for no other reason than to plunder the treasury of the United States, and to make capital for somebody. It could not have been projected for the defense of the inhabitants of Oregon, nor for the protection of Oregonians in Washington Territory, for none resided there. What, then, could have been the object? Nothing but a crusade against the Indians, and a long war to enrich the country." (Letter of General Wool to the *National Intelligencer*, April 2, 1856, in *Cong. Globe*, 1st Ses., 34th Cong., p. 1135.) Joseph Lane, delegate from Oregon to Congress, denounced the accusation of General Wool, and, in an effort to disprove it, introduced into the records of the House of Representatives a letter written by Governor Stevens to General Wool on March 20, 1856. (*Ibid.*, p. 1145.) This letter, in part, is printed in Hazard Stevens, *Life of General Isaac I. Stevens*, Vol. II, pp. 177 *et seq.* Also, see *ibid.*, chapters XXXVI and XXXVII. Governor Stevens commended the Oregon volunteers very highly.

The Oregon volunteers were ordered to act independently of, but to cooperate with, the regulars during the campaign. Hazard

Stevens gives as the reason for this that "both they and Governor Curry were anxious to strike the Indians, and justly feared that if placed under the orders of the regular officers, they would be held back or placed in garrison." (Stevens, *Op. cit.*, p. 160.) Many documents pertaining to this war may be found in, *House and Senate Executive Documents* and in the *Congressional Globe*, 1st Ses., 34th Cong. Extracts from documents are printed in [Elwood Evans], *History of the Pacific Northwest; Oregon and Washington* (Portland, 1889), Vol. 1, chap. LVII.

The journals which follow do not throw any additional light upon the Stevens-Wool controversy, but they give abundant evidence of the hardships borne by the Oregon volunteers on the soil of Washington Territory.

J. ORIN OLIPHANT

JOURNAL OF ROBERT MOORE PAINTER<sup>1</sup>

[October, 1855]

16. Washington County [Oregon] Volunteers, Co. D, left Hillsboro Tuesday, Oct. 16, 1855.

17. Were mustered into service at Portland, crossed the river and encamped.<sup>2</sup>

18. Marched four miles and encamped.

19. Marched to Foster's, eighteen miles, and encamped at the foot of the Cascade mountains.

20. Remained in camp. Purchased thirty bus. oats, and made Foster hull out enough to feed the animals while in the Cascade mountains.

21. Marched thirty miles, and encamped on Sandy.

22. Marched to Summit Prairie, distance thirty miles.

23. Marched thirty-five miles, and encamped on Indian creek, three miles east of Barlow's gate.

24. Marched twenty-one miles, and encamped on Fifteen Mile creek.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Moore Painter, a son of Philip and Jean (Moore) Painter, was born in St. Genevieve, Missouri, November 30, 1827. He received his education in the schools of his native state. In 1850 he crossed the plains to Oregon and settled near Oregon City. At the outbreak of the Indian War of 1855-56 he enlisted in Company D, 1st Regiment, Oregon Mounted Volunteers, served throughout the war and returned to Oregon City when his company was mustered out of service. On February 28, 1859, he married Ella Zieber, a daughter of John S. and Eliza (Sloan) Zieber, early pioneers of Oregon. Five children were born to them: Robert, Octavia J., Philip, John Z., and Zulette Z. Robert Moore Painter died at his home in Forest Grove, Oregon, November 3, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> October 17, 1855, General Order No. 7, Territory of Oregon, directed C and D companies to proceed immediately to the Dalles. General Order No. 4, issued one day previously, had designated the Dalles as the base of operations for the volunteers and directed the colonel "as far as practicable [to] cooperate with the commanding officer of the United States troops which now are, or may hereafter be, in the field."—*House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 4.*

25. Marched twelve miles, and encamped on Three Mile creek, three miles east of The Dalles.

29. Marched to The Dalles, and encamped.

30. Crossed the Columbia river, and marched four miles and encamped on a small spring branch.<sup>3</sup>

[November, 1855]

1. Remained in camp.

2. Remained in camp.

3. Marched twenty miles, and encamped on the Klickitat.

4. Remained in camp.

5. Marched twenty-five miles, and encamped, two hours after night, on Canyon creek.

6. Marched twelve miles, and encamped on the above creek.

7. Marched fifteen miles, and encamped on Simcoe creek, in Simcoe valley.

8. The main command marched directly to the main Yakima river, distance fifteen miles, and encamped on the river. Capt. Cornelius and fifty men (ten from each company) started directly up the Simcoe creek, for the purpose of scouring the country. We traveled up this creek eighteen miles; from thence to the base of the mountains, in the direction of the two buttes on the Yakima river. We were attacked by one hundred Indians, about two hours before sundown, five miles west of the buttes. We fought about three hours. We had three men wounded slightly. We saw several Indians fall from their horses, although we did not get any of them. I think there were three Indians killed. We arrived at camp about two hours after night.

9. Marched eight miles and met with the Indians at the two buttes, on the main Yakima river. The Indians showed fight. The volunteers were ordered in the advance guard and to charge the Indians, which they did for about five miles through sage brush. The Indians retreated to the summit of the two buttes, and then made a stand. The officers held a consultation, and finally decided

<sup>3</sup> Neither of the Painter diaries mentions the fact that Philip H. Sheridan, at this time a lieutenant, was a member of this expedition. In his *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 1, chap. iv, Sheridan devotes several pages to an account of the Yakima war: "We started from the Dalles October 30, under conditions that were not conducive to success. The season was late for operations; and worse still, the command was not in accord with the commanding officer [Major Rains], because of general belief in his incompetency, and on account of the fictitious rank he assumed."—*Ibid.*, p. 54. There were about 350 regulars under the command of Major Rains, according to the report of Lieut. John Withers, commanding Fort Vancouver, to the Adjutant General of the army, Nov. 12, 1855. Concerning the rank of Major Rains, Lieut. Withers says: "Governor Mason visited him at Camp Yakima, opposite the Dalles, previous to his departure, and, in view of the probable events of the war, conferred upon him the rank of Brigadier General of Washington Territory volunteers."—*House Ex. Doc. No. 93*, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 13.



to camp for the night near the base of the West butte. After pitching our camp, the volunteers turned out promiscuously from all the command and a few regulars, and dislodged those Indians on the summit of the West butte, chasing them into the valley on the north side of the butte.

10. This morning a few Indians showed themselves on the West butte. Co. E was ordered to take a circuitous route, and cross the mountains west of the West butte. The other companies were ordered to charge through the canyon. They made a bold charge, but found but few Indians, whom they routed, and reported having killed three Indians. Co's. C, E and D were sent out to scour the valley. They captured fifteen head of cattle and about 40 head of horses. Saw but few Indians. The Indians have gone towards the Priest rapids. We traveled twelve miles, and encamped two miles below the Catholic mission,<sup>4</sup> on the same creek.

11. A scouting party started to meet the Puget Sound regulars and volunteers.<sup>5</sup> We traveled twenty-two miles, and encamped on the West fork of the Yakima river.

12. We proceeded on our journey eight miles, and encamped on a small creek. We here intersected the emigrant road leading to the sound. It snowed during the night, six inches in depth.

13. Col. Nesmith concluded to return to the mission. We arrived at camp two hours after night. We killed two cows and calves while out, and captured fifteen head of horses.

14. Remained in camp.

15. Remained in camp. Snow going off.

16. The command started for The Dalles, traveled ten miles and encamped in Simcoe valley, on Simcoe creek. Held a council of war; decided to return to The Dalles forthwith.

17. Marched six miles, and encamped on the above creek where Major Haller was defeated by the Indians. The volunteers drove in four head of cattle and twenty-five head of horses. I went all over the battle field.

18. Marched twelve miles, and encamped in pine grove on a small stream. Capt. Wilson,<sup>6</sup> of Co. A, met us here with supplies for the command. The express also arrived from the Governor.

<sup>4</sup> Sheridan, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1., p. 61, speaks of this mission as Father Pandoza's Mission. General Wool, in a letter to the *National Intelligencer*, April 2, 1856, calls it the Atanhum Mission.—*Cong. Globe*, 1st Session, 34th Congress, p. 1135.

<sup>5</sup> Colonel James W. Nesmith and Lieutenant Sheridan were in command of this detachment. The reinforcement expected was a column of troops of the Fourth Infantry, commanded by Captain Maurice Maloney.—Sheridan, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred V. Wilson.

The officers held a council of war, to determine whether to return by Fort Walla Walla or march directly to The Dalles. They determined to return directly to The Dalles.

19. We marched for The Dalles; crossed the Simcoe mountain, which is covered with snow three feet in depth; have some difficulty in crossing; encamp in the Klickitat valley, on a branch of same; have good grass; traveled twenty miles.

20. Remained in camp. Jos. Meek and others leave for the valley.

21. We moved three miles, and encamped on a small branch of the Klickitat.

22. Remained in camp.

23. Remained in camp.

24. Marched for The Dalles, crossed the mountains, and encamped on a branch, eight miles east of The Dalles.<sup>7</sup>

25. We crossed the Columbia river, and arrived at The Dalles. We are ordered to march to Fort Walla Walla.<sup>8</sup>

26. We remained in camp, three miles from The Dalles, on Three Mile Creek.

27. Remained in camp. Several of the boys have obtained discharges, and are leaving for home.<sup>9</sup>

28. We marched for Walla Walla, and encamped on Ten Mile creek.

29. Remained in camp, waiting for supplies.

30. Marched twelve miles, and encamped after night. A very disagreeable day.

[December, 1855]

1. Marched thirty-five miles, and encamped on John Day's river. But little wood.

2. We marched up the river three miles, and thence east up Rock creek three miles, and encamped. Good grass and plenty of wood.

3. Marched twenty-five miles, and encamped on Willow creek. Wood scarce, and grass short. Very bad water.

4. Marched twenty miles, and encamped at the Well spring.

<sup>7</sup> Failure of this expedition ascribed by Sheridan almost entirely to incompetency of Major Rains.—Sheridan, *op cit.*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>8</sup> Sent to reinforce Major Mark A. Chinn.

<sup>9</sup> About 125 were discharged by Colonel Nesmith on account of sickness and lack of supplies.—Elwood Evans in *History of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon and Washington*, (Portland, 1889), Vol. I, p. 558.

5. Marched twenty-five miles and arrived at Umatilla, at Fort Henrietta.<sup>10</sup>

6. Remained in camp until evening. Capt. Cornelius, with a part of Co's D and E, started out on a scout. We marched to Wm. McKey's claim, and encamped.

7. We marched up to the base of the Blue mountains. We captured one hundred and thirty head of cattle and fifty head of horses and encamped for the night at Wm. McKey's place.

8. We returned to the fort with the cattle and horses. We saw no Indians during our absence.

9. Received an express from Col. Kelly's command, informing us of having fought the Indians two days and were still fighting; that a number had been killed of both parties. They wanted immediate assistance. Capt. Cornelius starts to their relief this evening.<sup>11</sup> We marched for Whitman's station. We traveled forty-one miles, and encamped on Wild Horse creek, about two hours before day.

10. Marched twenty-five miles to Fort Bennett,<sup>12</sup> the scene of action. We arrived at sunset, and found the volunteers still engaged with the Indians. They had two men wounded to-day. They report having killed a number of Indians. We were kindly received. The boys wanted us to camp in the fort, for fear of the Indians firing on us after night. We thanked them for their advice, and informed them that we never camped in forts. We, consequently, camped outside.

11. We marched in pursuit of the Indians with the main

10 Fort Henrietta was erected by Major Mark A. Chinn and named in honor of the wife of Major Haller. It "was a stockade 100 feet square, built of large split timbers, with two bastions of round logs, and outside a stock corral enclosed with rails found on the ground."—Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

11 It was during this engagement that Peu-Peu-Mox-Mox, head chief of the Walla Walla, was killed while trying to escape from his guard. Neither of the Painter brothers was present at his death, so there is no mention of it in either of the journals. General Wool later declared that the killing of the Walla Walla chief was "barbarous," and a controversy raged for some time. "The second or third day of the engagement the volunteers barbarously killed Pin-Pin-Mox-Mox and his companions. They took from the chiefs' head some twenty scalps, cut off his ears and hands, and sent them as trophies to their friends in Oregon."—Letter of General Wool to *National Intelligencer*, April 2, 1856, in *Cong. Globe*, 1st Session, 34th Congress, p. 1135. Regarding the death of the chief Colonel Kelly wrote to Governor Curry of Oregon as follows: "I regretted the necessity of putting these men to death, as I was in hopes that they could be made useful in prosecuting the war against the other hostile tribes; but I am well satisfied that the guard was fully justified in taking away their lives in their efforts to escape."—Quoted in Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 445. Governor Stevens, writing to General Wool under date of March 20, 1856, said: "Pee-Pee-Mox-Mox was slain fairly. I have investigated that matter on the ground, having not only the testimony of the officers of the Oregon volunteers and the eye-witnesses of his death, but the testimony of the friendly Indians, both Cayuse and Nez Perces. He was not entrapped by a flag of truce. I, of course, reprobate the indignities subsequently committed upon his person."—*Cong. Globe*, 1st Session, 34th Congress, p. 1145. An official record contains the following account of the mutilation of the body of the Walla Walla chief: "D.r Shaw brought down, as a trophy, old Pu-Pu-mux-mux's ears, and Mr. Story brought down a portion of his scalp to Thomas Stevens, which was sent him by his son John, who cut it off."—Extract from *Weekly Times*, in *House Ex. Doc. No. 93*, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 108.

body of volunteers, Co's D and E among the rest. We saw some Indians on the hill, who fled before we got in gunshot. After traveling twelve miles we came to the Indians' ranches, which had been recently vacated; the firebrands were still burning, and hi-yu Indian ictas scattered in all directions. We followed the Indian trail, which leads to the Nez Perce country. After marching three miles, we came in sight of a large band of stock driven by some Indians. We were here met by an Indian with an express from some French families, who had a fortified camp on Touchet. The Col. ordered a halt. That gave the Indians time to get out of sight with their stock. We encamped at 8 o'clock P.M., on Coppei, having marched eighteen miles.

12. We marched eight miles to Brooks and Bumford's claim on Touchet. The Col. ordered us to return to Fort Bennett, and drive all the stock. We encamped where we did the night before.

13. We marched for the fort. We captured a large number of stock, and arrived at camp at sunset.

14. We remained in camp. The day was passed in raising caches of corn, potatoes and squashes.

15. Marched six miles up the Walla Walla river above Whitman's station, and encamped. Good wood and grass.

16. Remained in camp.

17. Remained in camp. Killed some fresh pork.

18. Remained in camp. The wounded and sick left for The Dalles.<sup>13</sup>

19. Remained in camp. Col. Kelly leaves for the valley.<sup>14</sup>  
--We held an election for colonel. Capt. Cornelius was the fortunate man.

20. Remained in camp.<sup>15</sup>

13 There were eighteen wounded.—*House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 108.*

14 Colonel Nesmith was compelled to quit his command on account of sickness in his family.—Statement of Joseph Lane on floor of House of Representatives, *Cong. Globe*, 1st Session, 34th Congress, p. 777. "About the middle of December Nesmith resigned the command of the regiment, and Thomas R. Cornelius was elected in his place. The place of Captain Bennett was filled by A. M. Fellows, and several minor changes were made. Lieutenant-Colonel Kelly returned to the Wallamet valley to take his seat in the council of the legislature about the same time, and was received with a perfect ovation by the people."—Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 448. The muster roll shows, however, that Colonel Nesmith was discharged on December 4, 1855.—*Ibid.*, p. 522.

15 The omission of Governor Stevens's arrival at this time seems peculiar. An inquiry addressed to the Reverend Harry M. Painter of Cheney, nephew of Robert M. Painter, brought the following reply: "The only explanation that I can give of the omission of Governor Stevens's visit is that he supposed all such matters, together with the election of Cornelius to succeed Nesmith, etc., would be matters of public interest and would be recorded. I have heard my father tell of the governor's visit."—Letter of Harry M. Painter to J. Orin Oliphant, October 20, 1923. In this connection Robert Painter of Walla Walla, son of Robert M. Painter, offers the following suggestion: "In regard to Mr. Oliphant's reference to a reported visit of Governor Stevens to the camp of the Oregon Volunteers in December, 1855, not being mentioned in my father's diary of the Indian War of 1855-56, it is quite probable that he was on one of the numerous scouting expeditions at the time of such visit. The diary is just as he wrote it day by day during the war. My mother said he intended to rewrite it more fully, but neglected to do so."—Letter to Harry M. Painter, October 30, 1923.



21. Remained in camp. It rained and snowed late in the evening.

22. Remained in camp. Snow fell four inches in depth. It is now clear, but cold.<sup>16</sup>

23. Remained in camp. Still very cold.

24. Remained in camp. Still cold.

25. Remained in camp. Clear and cold.

26. Co's D and E moved camp two miles east, on a tributary of the Walla Walla. Cold and snowing—some warmer.

27. Remained in camp. The weather a little warmer—still snowing.

28. Remained in camp. Cold and clear.

29. Remained in camp. Cold and clear.

30. Remained in camp. Cold and clear.

31. Remained in camp. By order of Major Chinn some of Co's D and E drove in three hundred head of horses. The Indians went to Chinn, whereupon he revoked his order and gave the horses up to the Indians without the shadow of proof that they were their individual stock, which we had reasons to believe they were not.

[January, 1856]

1. Remained in camp. Still cold and snowing.

2. Remained in camp. Still snowing.

3. Remained in camp. The weather has moderated. The wind is from the south. Snow melting.

4. Remained in camp. Snow thawing.

5. Remained in camp. The snow has thawed off in parts of the valley.

6. Moved camp twelve miles east, on Mill creek. Weather pleasant. The whole command encamp at this camp, known as Camp Mill creek. We have beef straight.

7. Remained in camp. Cold and cloudy—snowing a little.

8. Remain in camp. Still snowing.

9. Remain in camp. Still cloudy.

10. Remain in camp. Cool and cloudy. Our horses are mere skeletons. Some few have died. There is not one in the command fit for service.

<sup>16</sup> "Several of the boys who had no shoes took rawhide and sewed it up in shape something like a moccasin. This beat bare feet to wade through the snow with. But the boys seemed to be content. Our tents were small and thin; our blankets were smaller and thinner. I had two of these long, narrow, thin blankets, one blue and one green, that were not long enough to reach from my nose down to my feet, and a saddle blanket; this constituted my bed."—Quoting from "one who was there."—Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 453.

11. Remain in camp. The weather has moderated. It is still cloudy.

12. Remain in camp. The weather warm and clear.

13. Remain in camp. Weather cloudy and frosty.

14. Remain in camp. Still cool and cloudy.

15. Remain in camp. The weather warmer, though cloudy.

Beef straight. Clothes worn out.

16. Remain in camp. Warm and cloudy.

17. Remain in camp. Warm and cloudy.

18. Remain in camp. Cloudy and snowing.

19. Remain in camp. Weather cloudy. We received supplies of flour and sugar and coffee. Boys in good spirits.

20. Remain in camp. Weather cloudy.

21. At camp. Weather cool and cloudy.

22. Remain in camp. The snow is falling fast.

23. Remain in camp. Snow fell to the depth of four inches last night. Capt. Hembree,<sup>17</sup> of Co. E, and Lieut. Mires, of Co. D, returned from a scout, report having seen Indians on the north side of Snake river, in a large body. They captured two hundred and forty head of horses and some few cattle. They brought the horses in camp.

24. Remain in camp. The boys amused themselves to-day by lassoing wild horses.

25. Remained in camp. Weather cold and cloudy—snow still on the ground. The ball is still going on. The boys are lassoing and riding the captured horses. How they spike! It is fun for them, but it would not be for me.

26. Remain in camp. Cloudy and snowing.

27. Remain in camp. Cold and cloudy.

28. Remain in camp. Cold and cloudy.

29. Remain in camp. Still cold and cloudy.

30. Remain in camp. Cold and snowing.

31. Remain in camp. Cold nad snowing.

[February, 1856]

1. In camp. Cloudy.

2. In camp. Cloudy and cold.

3. In camp. Snowing fast; quite cold.

4. In camp. Cloudy.

5. In camp. Snowing fast.

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<sup>17</sup> A. J. Hembree was captain of Company E, and William H. H. Myers was second lieutenant.

6. In camp. Clear weather.
7. To-day moved camp two miles up Mill creek, and named it Camp Cornelius in honor of our colonel.
8. In camp. Weather cold and cloudy.
9. In camp. Weather moderated. Snow going off the hills.
10. In camp. The weather clear.
11. In camp. Clear weather. Provisions scarce.
12. In camp. Weather clear and warmer.
13. In camp. Weather clear.
14. In camp. Weather clear.
15. In camp. Weather clear and warm. The pack train has just arrived, bringing fresh supplies of provisions.
16. In camp. Weather cool and cloudy.
17. In camp. Weather cool and cloudy. Col. Cornelius captured four Indians as prisoners of war. They are in camp, under guard, to await their trial.
18. In camp. Court-martial in session for the purpose of trying those Indians, who gave themselves up as prisoners of war.
19. In camp. Weather cloudy and cool.
20. In camp. Weather cloudy.
21. In camp. Weather pleasant and warm.
22. In camp. Weather pleasant. The colors were hoisted in honor of Washington's birthday. We fired a salute.
23. In camp. Weather pleasant.
24. In camp. Weather pleasant. One of the Indians was found guilty of a small crime, and they sentenced him to receive thirty-three lashes on his bare back. The sentence was excuted.
25. In camp. Hubbard's train of ten wagons arrived from The Dalles, with provisions and clothing.
26. In camp. It snowed last night to the depth of six inches.
27. In camp. The weather has moderated. Snow is going off.
28. In camp. Snow going off. Weather clear and warmer.
29. In camp. Four companies arrived at headquarters to-day, A, B, C and D, of the new recruits.

[March, 1856]

1. In camp. Weather pleasant.
2. In camp.
3. In camp. Weather clear.
4. In camp. Weather clear and pleasant.

5. In camp. Capt. Hembree arrived with recruits.
6. In camp. R. Caldwell arrived with recruits for Co. D.<sup>18</sup>
7. In camp. One of those Indians was sentenced to be hanged by the neck until dead. The sentence was executed at 9 o'clock A.M., in the presence of the whole command.
8. In camp. Weather pleasant.
9. We march for Snake river. Lieut. Pillow,<sup>19</sup> of Co. A, No. 1, is ordered to Fort Walla Walla, to take charge of that post until further orders. We marched fifteen miles, and encamped on the Touchet.
10. Remained in camp to get some cattle.
11. We marched down the Touchet fifteen miles, and encamped where the trail leaves for Snake river.
12. We marched to Snake river, twenty miles. We saw thirty Indians on north bank. In two hours after we arrived there we crossed and routed the Indians, killed four and captured a number of pack animals.
13. In camp, north bank of Snake river. We went out on a scout down Snake river to the mouth, and then up the Columbia eight miles. We saw several Indians across the Columbia river. The boys killed four Indians. They returned to camp late in the night.
14. We marched up Snake river six miles, and encamped.
15. We marched up Snake river sixteen miles, and encamped on the river. Grass scarce.
16. Marched fifteen miles up Snake river, through heavy sand.
17. We here left the river and struck across to the Palouse, twelve miles, and encamped.
18. We remained in camp one mile above the first Palouse falls. Six miles above the mouth the fall is one hundred feet perpendicular.
19. In camp. Great disaffection in camp. We have had to subsist on horseflesh. Col. sent an express to Fort Walla Walla for provisions.
20. In camp. It is raining. Horse meat straight. Co's. A, D

<sup>18</sup> A recruiting battalion of five companies had been raised in accordance with a proclamation of Governor Curry on January 16, 1856. The proclamation is published in *Victor, op. cit.*, pp. 454-55.

<sup>19</sup> Charles B. Pillow, second lieutenant of Company A.



and H, of the new recruits, speak of leaving camp for the fort.<sup>20</sup> Col. Cornelius paraded the regiment and informed them that he did not intend marching farther unless the supplies came, which would certainly arrive in twenty-four hours.<sup>21</sup> Major Curl got up and stated that he would march his command back forthwith. Lieutenant-Colonel followed, and made a speech showing the men the bad consequence of deserting in that manner. He was followed by Col. Sheil, who made a brief and appropriate speech. The boys became somewhat better satisfied.

21. Horse straight to subsist on. Late this evening the provisions arrived in camp. The boys pitched into it like hungry wolves. We have rations for eight days.

22. We remained in camp.

23. We marched for the Priest rapids, on the Columbia, traveled nine miles and encamped at a spring of good water. Grass good.

24. Marched down a canyon which seems to have once been the bed of some river. We traveled eighteen miles, and encamped at a salaratus lake. Grass short, and no wood.

25. March through sand and sage during the whole day. A number of animals gave out. Several men afoot. We traveled twenty miles, and encamped at a small salaratus spring in between the high, rocky hills. No grass or wood. Have to drink water off three dead horses; very scarce at that.

26. We marched twenty-six miles. Traveled in the first part of the day a north-west course fourteen miles, turned from thence south west, crossing a high hill two miles across, and thence west through a sand plain for about ten miles, when we camped on the Columbia, about fifteen miles below Priest rapids.

27. Remained in camp. Sent a scout up to Priest rapids. Saw some Indians on the opposite side.

28. Marched twelve miles down the Columbia river, and encamped, without grass or wood.

29. Marched down the Columbia river fourteen miles, and encamped on the bank.

20 "The new recruits, says a voracious chronicler, on being fed with Cayuse beef, acquired all the bucking qualities of that animal, and refused to march before the provisions provided by the commissary-general came up, which they did about the twenty-third, when the army resumed its march."—Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 456.

21 The record of the journey across the Snake river, and in fact all of the events recorded by Robert M. Painter for March and April follow very closely the official reports contained in [Evans], *History of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington*, Vol. I, chapter LII.

30. Marched down ten miles on the Columbia, and encamped. We here met Capt. Cason,<sup>22</sup> of Co. E, new recruits, who swam some cattle across Snake river and brought them to our relief. They were very kindly received, as we had to eat horse meat since the 18th.

31. Crossed the Columbia below the mouth of the Yakima, and encamped. Grass good.

[April, 1856]

1. Moved camp three miles down the Columbia. Grass good.

2. Remained in camp. Capt. Hembree found some cattle in the mountains, twenty miles from camp. They were wild, and they could not drive them. They killed one and packed it in.

3. In camp. Six hundred pounds of flour arrived from Fort Walla Walla.

4. Marched down the Columbia river twelve miles, and encamped on the west bank opposite to Fort Walla Walla.

5. Remained in camp. The pack train arrived from below.

6. Marched thirty miles, and encamped on the Yakima river.

7. Marched eight miles up the Yakima river, and encamped. Grass good.

8. Marched up the Yakima river twenty miles, and encamped. The last part of the road was very sandy. Poor grass.

9. Marched ten miles, and encamped on Canyon creek.

10. In camp. Capt. Hembree, of Co. E, and Capt. Wilber, of Co. D, and Capt. Wilson, of Co. A, and lieutenant and six men started out on a scout about one hour by sun. While they were in sight, and ascending the hill, they were surrounded by a party of one hundred and fifty Indians and fired on. The small party returned the fire, and retreated for the camp, except Capt. Hembree, who was killed, scalped and stripped of all his clothes. The Indians immediately showed themselves, three hundred in number, on the hills on both sides of our camp. Our boys charged them and made them get, killing two Indians. At 3 P.M. the Indians showed themselves on the north side of the canyon. Major Cornoyer,<sup>24</sup> with seventy-two men, went out and ran them some three

<sup>22</sup> William A. Cason, enlisted at Oregon City on February 25, 1856.

<sup>23</sup> Hiram Wilbur, at the beginning of the campaign, was first lieutenant of Company D.

<sup>24</sup> At the beginning of the campaign Narcipe A. Connoyer was captain of Company K. It will be observed that Mr. Painter writes the name "Cornoyer," which is also given in *House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 123*. It always appears as "Connoyer" in the Victor book.

miles to the summit of a hill, where they constructed forts out of stone. The boys dismounted and ran up the hill, firing on the Indians, who gave way. The boys killed two on the summit of the hill, and run the rest some distance. It was after night when we returned to camp. Capt. Hembree's body is in camp.

11. Marched twelve miles up the canyon, and encamped. Grass good.

12. We saw some Indians on the north side, on the summit of the hills. The Col. ordered the advance guard to scale the hills. They report that the Indians ran off to the north. We marched twenty miles, and encamped on the Klickitat creek. The advance guard met two Indians in the canyon, and killed them. They captured three horses and packs.

13. Marched down Klickitat six miles, and encamped. The pack train went on to The Dalles for provisions. This is a beautiful, small valley; very rich land; pine timber. Halo muck-amuck. The pack train arrives late in the evening with provisions. The boys dive into it like hungry wolves into a dead carcass.

15. In camp. Good grass and wood.

16. Remain in camp.

17. March nineteen miles, and encamp within six miles of The Dalles.

18. In camp. Grass good. Wood scarce.

19. In camp.

20. In camp. I went down to the mouth of Klickitat on a scout. Saw no fresh signs of Indians.

21. In camp. The boys are all anxious to return home.

22. In camp. Some are fearful they will not get a discharge.

23. In camp. Provisions are plentiful.

24. In camp.

25. In camp. Gen'l M. M. McCarver<sup>25</sup> visited our camp and informed the boys that they would be disbanded. The boys are in fine spirits, and very much elated at their prospects of getting home.

26. In camp. Weather clear. Gen'l M. M. McCarver addressed the volunteers, informing us how he was grieved to think we had to subsist on horse flesh, but he was not in fault. He

<sup>25</sup> Commissary General of Oregon. See General Order No. 2, Oregon Territory.—*House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 3.* "Morton Matthew McCarver, Frontier City Builder," is the subject of a study by Professor Edmond S. Meany in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* for 1909, pp. 173-179.

purchased supplies, but he was not the one to transport them. He could not tell where the fault was, but he was determined to ferret it out, so that the guilty would be compelled to suffer.

27. In camp. Weather clear.

28. In camp. Weather clear. This morning, at 7 o'clock, the Indians charged on the horse guard, and ran the whole band of horses off—five hundred head. The volunteers pursued them on foot, but did not succeed in retaking the horses, so we are all left afoot.

29. In camp. Weather clear.

30. We marched down to the Columbia river, and encamped on the north bank of the river opposite The Dalles.

[May, 1856]

1. We got on board the *Wasco*, and start for home. We traveled five miles, and encamped for the night. The wind was so high that it was dangerous to run. Saw signal fires on both sides of the river. This is where the Indians cross back and forth to the Yakima country.

2. We started early in the morning and arrived at the Cascades about 3 o'clock. We got our baggage transported to the lower landing, and encamped at an old cabin.

3. We started early in the morning on board the *Fashion*, bound for Portland. We arrived there at 3 o'clock P.M., and camped on the east side of the Willamette.

4. Remained in camp.

5. We were mustered out of service at 11 A.M., and all started for our homes. I got aboard the ——— and arrived at Oregon City at 5 P.M.



JOURNAL OF WILLIAM CHARLES PAINTER

[October, 1855]

25th. (Thursday). Lay in camp today. Capt. went to The Dalles—returned the same day. Our grub wake-si ya-halo pleasant.

26th. Marched within three miles of the Dalles and encamped. The weather pleasant.

27th. Lay in camp today. The weather hazy and cool. Here we got some provisions and some of the boys a little whiskey too.

28th. (Sunday) Lay in camp today. The weather was dark and cool. Two men sick in camp.

29th. Lay in camp today. Weather cloudy—some rain. We received orders today to cross the river (Columbia) into the Yakima Country.

30th. Marched to the Dalles and couldn't cross today.

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26 William Charles Painter was born in St. Genevieve, Missouri, in April, 1830. His father had moved to Missouri from Pennsylvania. In 1850 the Painter family started across the plains for Oregon. Robert Moore, father of Mrs. Painter, had crossed 10 years before.

On the journey across the plains the father and two brothers of W. C. Painter died of cholera, on the Little Blue River, in what is now Kansas. The train was brought through by Robert M. Painter and W. C. Painter, aged 23 and 20 years, respectively. Owing to the death of oxen, several wagons loaded with machinery were abandoned on the plains. When the family reached Oregon they did not have enough machinery to set up their saw mill. Mrs. Painter took up a donation claim on the Tualatin river.

W. C. Painter attended for some time the Tualatin Academy, now Pacific University. When the Indian war broke out in 1855 he and his brother enlisted in company D of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers. Most of the men of this company had attended Tualatin Academy, and a company flag made by "Grandma" Brown and the girls of the academy. Each girl was allowed to put a few stitches in the flag so that it would be an all-school affair. The flag is still in the possession of the Painter family.

In 1864, W. C. Painter moved to Wallula, and in that year he married Caroline Mitchell, whose father had crossed the plains with his family in 1847. While living in Wallula, and afterward in Walla Walla, Mr. Painter served as deputy collector of internal revenue under Hazard Stevens. In 1867 he moved to Walla Walla. He served as receiver of the government land office, and for eight years he was auditor of Walla Walla county.

When the Bannock Indians went on the warpath in 1878 Mr. Painter, at the earnest solicitation of Governor Ferry, left his sick bed to serve as captain of a company of Walla Walla volunteers that had been raised to patrol the Columbia river on a steamer in order that the Bannocks might be prevented from crossing into the Yakima country. He had been elected captain because the volunteers refused to serve under a regular army officer.

Major Kress of Fort Vancouver had put a few regulars on the steamer *Spokane*. He took on the volunteer company at Wallula. The Indians were discovered as they were attempting to cross the Columbia at Long (Blalock) island. The vanguard had reached the island and fired on the steamer. The volunteers landed and, after a hot skirmish, defeated and almost exterminated the band. A few Indians escaped in canoes and rejoined the main body in Oregon. After patrolling the river for a few days, the volunteers returned home.

Soon after the volunteers returned to Walla Walla frantic appeals for help came from Pendleton and other Oregon towns. Indians were firing down from the hills into Pendleton. The Pendleton volunteers had been ambushed and shot to pieces. Captain Painter raised another company in Walla Walla at his own expense and marched to the relief of Pendleton. Governor Ferry, with the consent of the governor of Oregon, commissioned Captain Painter a lieutenant-colonel in order that he might outrank all volunteer officers and take charge of any independent companies he met. The volunteer company was thrown across the line of march of the Indians, and their advance was checked so that General Howard was enabled to overtake them. Colonel Painter received a letter of commendation from General Howard, and from Governor Ferry he received a sword for his services.

As this volunteer company was composed of Washington men who served in Oregon, neither state gave compensation. At the close of the campaign several Indian ponies were rounded up and sold, and in this manner a part of the expense of the undertaking was paid. Colonel Painter paid the rest.

W. C. Painter died in Walla Walla in 1900. Material for this sketch was furnished by the Reverend Harry M. Painter. A comprehensive biographical sketch of W. C. Painter is also contained in W. D. Lyman, *An Illustrated History of Walla Walla County*, (W. H. Lever, 1901), pp. 328-331.

Camped in town. Five of our men were discharged (one man shot in town.)

31st. (Wednesday) We crossed the river today into Washington Territory and our enemies' country (the north side of the Columbia). Encamped four miles out from the river.

[November, 1855]

1st. (Thursday) We lay in camp today. The weather rather cold and windy. All in fine spirits and anxious to meet the redskins.

2nd. (Friday) We lay in camp today. The weather pleasant. In the evening we had a regimental parade for the purpose of giving general orders, the mode of marching, guarding, etc. Three more men of our company were discharged on account of sickness.

3rd. We took up the line of march this morning for the Yakima Valley. All in good spirits. Travelled 16 miles and encamped for the night on the Klickitat. Regulars one day in advance. This is the right wing of the first regiment, comprising Companies C, D, E, F, & G. of Oregon Mounted Volunteers. Several caches of salmon and berries, belonging to the Indians, raised by the regulars.<sup>27</sup>

4th. Lay in camp today. Weather clear. Capt. Hembree arrived from the Dalles with clothing.

5th. (Monday) Took up the line of march—travelled 30 miles, through the mountains mostly—and through a horrible canyon and encamped for the night. The day was cloudy and some rain. The regulars camped near by. Expected to have a battle today but halo Indian.

6th. Marched 10 miles—camped for the night. Pleasant ?

7th. (Wednesday.) We took the line of march. Travelled down Canyon Creek, thence over the mountains 16 miles. Camped in the Simcoe Valley. Saw some Indians. Expected an attack. Drove in a band of horses. Captured one cow and calf and three or four horses. Weather fair; very dusty.<sup>28</sup>

8th. (Thursday.) Marched 14 miles, mostly through sage and sand. Camped on the Yakima river. Sent out a scout in the morning of 70 men in command of Capt. Tom Cornelius; had a fight, several Indians killed, three men wounded.

<sup>27</sup> Mention is made of these caches by Sheridan, *op. cit.*, p. 54. "Major Rains discovered several large *caches* of provisions, and one of powder and arms, near the Mission. The Catholic priest has left the Mission—whether by compulsion of the Indians, or not, is yet unknown."—Letter of Lieut. Withers to the Adjutant General, *House Ex. Doc. No. 93*, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> Sheridan gives an amusing account of a detachment of regulars and a detachment of volunteers mistaking each other for Indians on account of the dust.—Sheridan, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

9th. Marched 10 miles; expected a great battle. Saw some Indians. 300 camped at the mouth of the Canyon, had a fight. Some Indians scalped.

10th. (Saturday) Marched through the canon. Sent out a scout. Returned in the evening with 40 head of horses & 14 head of cattle and two scalps.

11th. 300 men left this morning to meet the volunteers of W. T. (Washington Territory) at the Nachees pass.<sup>29</sup> Travelled 18 miles and camped on the Yakima. Snowed all day. Wind cold and from the north.

12th. Snowing. Travelled 8 miles and camped. Captured some beef, 4 head. Snowing fast—horses.

13th. (Tuesday) Cold and snowing. Didn't see or find the volunteers. Returned to our old camp at the mission. Snow 8 or 10 inches deep. Very cold. One man sick. Lieut. Smith of Company D reached camp at night.

14th. Fair but cold. Lay in camp. Went to the mission and burned it.<sup>30</sup> Got turnips and cabbages.

15th. We took up our line of march for the Dalles. Sunshine but cold. 2 sick men, Smith and P—. Carried them on litters.

16th. (Friday) Marched to the Haller battleground. Encamped for the night. Found two cows and calves. Killed them for beef. Weather fine.

17th. We took up our line of march and travelled through the snow 12 miles and encamped in the mountains in the snow. Capt. Wilson arrived with provisions from the Dalles. The weather changeable. The regulars buried two of the men that were killed in battle.

18th. [Illegible. Ms. badly worn.]

19th. [Illegible. Ms. badly worn.]

20th. [Illegible. Ms. badly worn.]

21st. (Wednesday) Fair but cold. We had our arms inspected.

22nd. Fair but cold.

<sup>29</sup> According to an official record, quoted in [Evans], *History of the Pacific Northwest: Oregon and Washington*, Vol. 1, p. 554, there were 168 men sent on this expedition.

<sup>30</sup> While digging for potatoes in the mission garden some one discovered a half-keg of powder which had been buried. According to Sheridan this powder "had been buried in the garden by the good father to prevent the hostile Indians from getting it to use against the whites."—Sheridan, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64. The volunteers were so infuriated on discovering the powder, which they thought was evidence that the hostile Indians were being supplied from this source, that they destroyed the mission. In a letter to the Assistant Adjutant General of the army, dated at Fort Vancouver, Dec. 13, 1855, General Wool expressed his regret at the destruction of the Yakima mission by the volunteers. *House Ex. Doc. No. 93*, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 15.

[December, 1855]

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9th. Left Fort Henrietta on the 9th and travelled all night. Arrived at Fort Bennett on the evening of the 10th in the heat of battle.

11th. Left fort in pursuit of the Indians, for Touchet, on 12th, turned back on 13th of Dec., lay in camp.

16th. Moved camp to Camp Curry. Very cold.

17th. Cold and Snowing.

19th. (Wednesday) Lay in camp. The weather was dark, cold and windy. This day we held an election for Colonel. The candidates were Cornelius and Laton<sup>31</sup> (?). Cornelius was elected by 60 majority.

20th. Cold. Gov. Stevens arrived from Blackfoot Country with 50 whites and 100 Nez Perces warriors with him. He made a speech to the boys. Had a regimental parade and fired salutes.<sup>32</sup>

21st. [Illegible. Ms. worn.]

22nd. [Illegible. Ms. worn.] Coldest day that I have ever seen in Oregon. 11 degrees below zero.

23rd. [Ms. illegible.]

24th. (Monday) Lay in camp. Weather clear but very cold. 27 degrees below zero at midnight.<sup>33</sup> Killed some pork for Christmas.

25th. Christmas day cold but clear. Gov. Stevens moved 6 miles up river. All in good health. Muck-a-muck scarce. hi-yu grumbling.

26th. Companies D and E moved camp 2 miles on a branch of Mill creek. Very cold and cloudy. Snowed at night.

27th. (Thursday) Lay in camp. Very cold and cloudy. No salt. Provisions scarce. Horses poor. Some wanting to go home.

28th. Lay in camp. Cold but clear. Caught some horses. Express from Fort Henrietta.

<sup>31</sup> Davis Layton was captain of Company H. He was probably the rival of Cornelius for the colonelcy.

<sup>32</sup> Governor Stevens was accompanied by 50 white men: "Stevens Guards and Spokane Invincibles," and 69 Nez Perce volunteers.—Victor, *op. cit.*, pp. 451-52. Hazard Stevens, who was with his father on this expedition, writes as follows: "The valley was reached on the 20th. Major Chinn, commanding the volunteers, and other officers rode out to meet the governor, and, on reaching the volunteer camp, the troops, four hundred in number, paraded, and fired a volley in salute as the picturesque column marched past, the fifty sturdy, travel-stained whites in advance, followed by the hundred proud and flaunting braves, curveting their horses and uttering their war whoops. The volunteers then formed in hollow square, and the governor addressed them in a brief speech, complimenting them on their energy in pushing forward at that inclement season."—Hazard Stevens, *Life of General Isaac I. Stevens*, Vol. II, pp. 147-48. Governor Stevens, reporting to the War Department on Feb. 19, 1856, gave the number of Nez Perce warriors as 69. *Senate Ex. Doc. No. 66*, 34th Cong., 1st Ses., p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Hazard Stevens also gives temperature as 27 below zero.—*Op. cit.*, p. 150.



29th. Lay in camp. Clear but cold. Raised some caches of potatoes. Got some salt. Got some flour—half rations.

30th. (Sunday) Lay in camp. Fair but cold. The day was spent in sporting with wild horses and gambling.

31st. Lay in camp. Cold and cloudy. Snowed some. Drove in 400 horses. Had to let them go again. No flour in camp—nothing but beef.<sup>34</sup>

[January, 1856]

1st. (Tuesday) Lay in camp. Snowing. No provisions in camp but beef. Stevens started for the Dalles—Nez Perces home.

2nd. Lay in camp. Snowing. Express arrived from the Dalles with 3000 lbs. of flour.

3rd. Lay in camp. Cloudy but warmer. Some of the boys come from Henrietta.

4th. Lay in camp. Snow melting—rained some. Lieut. Myers and — started for Henrietta.

5th. Lay in camp. Snow all gone, quite warm. 5 Indians seen. Farrar came up and camped.

6th. Moved camp today. 10 miles up Mill creek. Very pleasant.

7th. Lay in camp. Snowed at night. Party went to hunt stock, —the Frenchman's camp.

8th. Lay in camp. Cloudy & rainy Co. B left for Henrietta. C. and G. to the Dalles. K to guard the French.<sup>35</sup>

9th. (Wed.) Lay in camp. Dark and raining. Boys scouting hills.

10th. Morning dark and cloudy. Boys went to hunt beef. Found none. Myers returned from the fort—halo grub. Capt. Hembree went on a scout to the Touchet.

11th. Lay in camp. Dark and foggy. Got 30 head of cattle from the Indian camp. D and E boys come from the fort.

12th. Lay in camp. The weather fine.

<sup>34</sup> "The men had all they could do to keep the fires going and avoid freezing, and many of the horses in the volunteer camp were frozen to death. Although the ground was covered with snow, the animals found grass enough projecting above it, or by pawing it off, to avoid starvation. Herds of cattle, abandoned by the Indians in their flight, grazed within sight of camp, and were driven in and slaughtered as needed, and great flocks of prairie chickens roosted in the trees about camp, so there was no lack of food."—Hazard Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>35</sup> Several Frenchmen were enlisted in Company K.