

WALLA WALLA AND MISSOULA

There exist some very interesting relationships, almost of consanguinity, between the well known valleys of Bitter Root in Montana and Walla Walla in the State of Washington; valleys which are noted for their beauty of location, benignity of climate, fertility of soil and abundance of historic incident. Each claims priority of date of settlement in their respective states.

Politically Walla Walla is heralded as the "Mother of Counties," and it has become almost trite to call attention to the fact that once upon a time Butte in Montana was a part of Walla Walla county; surprise at that announcement now gives way to a smile. But few have called attention to a fact stated by the biographer of Governor Isaac I. Stevens, that when that official with his party in the Fall of 1853 reached the summit of the Rocky Mountains at Cadotte's Pass, Montana, he made official proclamation of the fact and welcomed the gentlemen of his company within the borders of the Territory of Washington. This proclamation was, of course, repeated after his arrival at Olympia, the capital. When the county of Walla Walla was legally defined by act of the first legislature of the Territory of Washington the officials designated to temporary control and organized the county were named by Governor Stevens himself and consisted of A. D. (Dominique) Pamburn, the resident agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Walla Walla, and George C. Bumford, a stockman residing on the Walla Walla river, and Mr. John Owens, then residing at Fort Owens, so called, formerly the St. Mary's Mission, in the Bitter Root valley. That these officials never met for formal organization was due to the sparse settlement of the vast extent of the county and the Indian troubles that followed so closely after.

Commercially speaking, the foundations for business in the commercial center of the Bitter Root valley were laid by people who emigrated from the Walla Walla valley. This is particularly so as to the large lumbering enterprise in the Hell Gate Canon, and the pioneer mercantile corporation of the city of Missoula. The founders of both these were originally residents of Walla Walla.

Individually speaking, the early families of the Bitter Root went there from Walla Walla. Among those connected with the party of Governor Stevens upon the journey already mentioned was Mr. C. P. Higgins, a man of large executive capacity, as well as frame, and well able to adapt himself to any circumstance in life or trust. Mr. Higgins was one

of the most dependable of Governor Stevens' assistants in holding the various councils with the Indians in the year 1855 and 1856, and became well acquainted with the interior region between Fort Benton and the Cascade Mountains, and after the interior was declared open for settlement in 1858 became a land owner in the Walla Walla valley, but later, with Frank Worden, who was the postmaster and a merchant at Walla Walla, removed to the Forks of the Hell Gate and Missoula rivers, where they together established a trading post for business with the Indians. This was the commencement of the Missoula Mercantile Company of the present day. Mr. Higgins took for his wife a daughter of Mr. Richard Grant, who had been in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company establishment known as Fort Hall in Southern Idaho, and their descendants include some of the leading families of Missoula.

Employed in the store of Mr. Worden at Walla Walla was a young man named Frank H. Woody, who assisted in the removal to the Bitter Root valley and settled there about the year 1860, who has since occupied many positions of trust and confidence in that valley and continues to be one of its well known and respected citizens, and prominent in the Historical Society of the State of Montana. Strange to say, Mr. Woody had reached Walla Walla by way of the Flathead country, and it is by way of introduction to his interesting article entitled "From Missoula to Walla Walla in 1857 on Horseback," which appears in this number of the Quarterly, that this brief sketch is written. In coming to Walla Walla alone and on horseback from Missoula late in the Fall of 1857 Judge Woody followed for considerable of the way the line of what afterward became the Military Road, surveyed and laid out by Captain John Mulan as a highway between Fort Benton and The Dalles. At the present day by transferring from one system to another it would be possible to travel nearly all of this route upon railway trains; another instance of the prominent fact that the old Indian trails have generally become the railway lines of the west.

In the Fall of 1911, after a lapse of fifty years, Judge Woody for the first time revisited the scene of his three years' activity at Walla Walla and renewed acquaintance with the few he remembered there. Among the historic spots of the city, he pointed out the site of the Craig house mentioned in his narrative, which stood at the extreme southeast corner of what is now the city park of Walla Walla and was the first home known to have been built and occupied within the present corporate limits of the city. This also became the first government postoffice in the valley, for Colonel Craig was appointed by Governor Stevens as agent over the Indian tribes inhabiting this region, and for that purpose removed from Lapwai for a

short time about the spring of 1856. He had been in Walla Walla during the Indian council of 1855 as one of the interpreters for Governor Stevens. Mr. Craig was a retired American Free Trapper or Mountain Man, a Virginian by birth, a companion of Joseph Meek and Robert Newell on the plains. The title of Colonel was attached to him because of his organizing a band of Nez Perce warriors to escort Governor Stevens through the Walla Walla country in the winter of 1855-6. The quarter section of land upon which the log house was erected was afterward acquired by his son-in-law, Mr. A. H. Robie, as a homestead.

Judge Woody's ride in one day from some point on Latah Creek (perhaps near Waverly) through to Snake river below the mouth of the Palouse was attended by one remarkable occurrence in that he crossed over no stream of water during the entire day; a fact then noted and ever since remembered by him with wonder. Can anyone solve this problem of topography?

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