

EXPERIENCES OF A PACKER IN WASHINGTON  
TERRITORY MINING CAMPS DURING  
THE SIXTIES

(Concluded from Vol. XIX., page 293).

Well, that morning when Patterson reached the barber shop he found Pinkham in the barber shop getting shaved; Patterson just walked over to the barber chair, drew out a big dragoon six shooter and placing it against Pinkham's ear shot him through the head. After he was shot Pinkham jumped up and ran to the front door, and fell there dead. I was right there at the time and saw him lying there in a pool of blood. Patterson "gave himself up," and his crowd being in control of things he was later acquitted by a packed or intimidated jury. Patterson was a bad man, he had killed a sea captain in Portland, and murdered a number of men in "self defense." When a bad man wanted to commit murder with impunity he picked a quarrel with his victim and killed "in self defense."

In going from Walla Walla to the Kootenay mining district we traveled over the Mullan Road to the crossing of the Touchet River, the site of the present town of Prescott; thence to the Snake River, which we crossed sometimes at Silcott's or Lyons Ferry and sometimes at Texas Ferry. We struck the Mullan Road again at Rock Creek and followed it to the crossing of the Spokane River, or Herrin's Bridge, as the place was then called. This bridge was located near the Idaho line, about a half mile above the place where Col. Wright had, in 1858, corralled and slaughtered several hundred head of horses belonging to the Indians of this region. The bone piles of "Horse Slaughter Camp" were then very noticeable in those days. From this point the Kootenay trail diverged from the Mullan road and we proceeded northeast to the present site of Rathdrum, Idaho, which in 1866 was called Conner's Ranch; thence to a ferry on Pend Oreille River, about 12 miles below the present town of Sandpoint. This ferry was called Sinna-acquateen, then the unsettled county seat of the unorganized Kootenai County of Idaho Territory. From the ferry the trail led east along the north side of the river to the site of Sandpoint..

I was in Walla Walla when the *Mary Moody* was built and launched on Pend O'Reille Lake. In going into the Kootenai mines in the spring of 1866 with the George Dacres pack train we

crossed at Sinnacateen ferry and went up the river to the Sandy point; there we boarded the *Mary Moody* and transported mules and packs to the mouth of Pack River. The boat would easily hold 60 mules and their loads. From Pack River the trail led to Stampede Lake, about 15 miles from Pack River; thence to Bonner's Ferry on the Kootenai River. The trail then led down the Kootenai River for 15 miles to a camping place and thence across to Moyie River, a distance of about 16 miles; thence up the north bank of the Moyie a distance of 40 miles, when it crossed this river at Peavine Prairie, near the home of Ogden Howell, a trapper. This was at Moyie whence the Moyie River takes its rise. It was on this trail that I met the Camel pack train. From this crossing the trail led to St. Joseph's Prairie, where the Canadian revenue officers were located; thence to the upper crossing of the Kootenai; thence five miles to Kootenai town, on Stud Horse, or Wild Horse, Creek. The name Kootenai is spelled with an i in the United States and a y in British Columbia.

Kootenay was a very rich strike and the placer mines there were worked for several years. Kootenay gold dust was very fine and was taken in at \$18. an ounce. In 1866. there were perhaps a half-dozen stores and two or three saloons in Kootenay. The rates for carrying freight to Kootenay, either from Walla Walla or Wallula ranged from 40 cents to 60 cents a pound. We had to pay duty on all the goods that were transported across the international boundary. This was paid in the town of Kootenay.

I first saw the camel pack train on the Kootenay trail. I had heard of it but had never before seen it, and as we were camping near by some of the boys said; "Let's go down and see it;" so we went down. This was on the Moyie River in 1866 or 1867; this camel train was packing into the Kootenai mines from Walla Walla or from Fort Hope. Our own pack train was a pretty big one, 125 to 130 mules, and there was great excitement on account of the report that the camels were frightening and driving the mule trains off the pack trails. There were three men in charge of these camels, one cook and two packers. The train was a small one; only about six animals. The camels kept up a constant bleating when being loaded and unloaded, and on hearing them or smelling them a mule train would at once stampede right off the trail. The camels were equipped with a pack saddle, instead of the aparejoes such as we used, and they carried 800 to 900 pounds apiece, as against 350 to 500 for our pack mule.

The camels browsed on brush, and could get along anywhere a mule or cayuse could. On August 3, 1928, Mr. Lewis received a letter from Mr. Watt saying: "The only other camel pack trains I knew of were of little importance; one having about twelve camels, the other about half that number. They were loaded, as near as I can recall, from Umatilla or Wallula to Bannock City, in the Boise Basin. They only made one trip. On this trip they stampeded a large mule train, doing so much damage that after leaving Bannock City they were taken out to Salt Lake. These were the only two camel trains on the Boise trail. The British Columbia camel train, that I met at the Moyie river on the trail to the Wild Horse mines, was I believe, packing from Fort Hope at the time."

J. Normansall was the postmaster at Kootenay Post Office. Among the Kootenay merchants were:—George Dacres, of Walla Walla; Oppenheimer & Co., Brenner & Co., Buckley and a man named Manuel.

Wallula, on the Columbia River, was the center of the freight train and stage line transportation to Colville, and the Columbia River, and Kootenay placer mines; and also to the early mining camps along the Pend Oreille, and into Western Montana, along the route of the old Mullan road. A great deal of freight was landed here for distribution through Walla Walla and Lewiston. Alvin Flanders, of Flanders & Fenton was postmaster and Wells Fargo & Co's local agent. Margaret Moon ran the leading restaurant, and Parks & Hall ran the Wallula Hotel and Hazard Stevens, son of Gov. I. I. Stevens, was agent for the Oregon Steam Navigation Company operating the boat line from Portland.

Walla Walla was quite a bustling little town, and a great stage and freighting center. Captain Ankeny and Sons had one of the leading stores. Condon was Wells Fargo & Co's agent; George Thomas & Co., operated the Walla Walla, Wallula and Umatilla stage line into Boise City. Thomas Tienney and J. F. Abbot had the principal livery stables.

During the freighting days I made one trip to Colville with a load of general merchandise for Marcus Oppenheimer, with the pack train of George Dacres of Walla Walla—Dacres was later the owner and proprietor of the Dacres Hotel of that town. There was a military wagon road from Walla Walla to the U. S. army post, Fort Colville; as a pack trail it was fairly good, but the ground was so soft that wagons were not run over the

route until late in the summer. We set out for Colville in the early spring of 1866—in March—and midway encountered a heavy snow storm that raised the waters of Deep Creek and other streams and made the ground so soft that we had difficulty in crossing with our loaded animals.

Oppenheimer's store was on the flat which became known as Marcus Flat—the site of the old British Boundary barracks. Oppenheimer had evidently taken possession of the abandoned buildings after the British Boundary Commissioners left, and he had his store in one of the large log buildings. The Hudson's Bay Company post, Fort Colville, was but a short distance south of Oppenheimer's. The trail ran close to it, and I visited the place and met the Trader, Angus McDonald, while I was there.

Pickney City, officially known as the Fort Colville Post Office, was then the only town and trading center for northeastern Washington and the Pend Oreille country, and the Kootenai and Big Bend, or Columbia River mines of British Columbia. Park Winans was postmaster at Pinckney City, and among the leading merchants were; Louis Abraham & Co., Daniel H. Ferguson & Co., and Edward T. Smith. John Shaw and Stephen M. Harris ran saloons, and John Hoffstetter operated a brewery. A Mr. White was captain of the *Forty-nine*, and W. W. Briggs, purser of the steamer.

I packed into the Warren's Mining Camp in the years 1868 and 1869 with freight from Lewiston. Warrens then had 1100 or 1200 people and there was a great deal of mining yet going on there in the camp. The trail to Warrens went through the old Florence diggings and that district was still a pretty lively mining camp in 1868 and 1869; but the population had dwindled to 600 or 700. S. S. Fenn was postmaster there. I quit packing into the mines in 1869. My last packing trip to the mines was from Umatilla to the Sumpter Camp in the Blue Mountains in Oregon. After that I was engaged for a time packing to the government forts in Eastern Oregon. When they located Camp Klamath, Camp Warner, and Camp Harney I packed out to these posts, and I was with the command that went after Captain Jack and the Modocs in 1868. I was a civilian employee, and not enlisted in the regular service, and hence am not technically an Indian war veteran, though I've had all the experiences and have felt all the thrills of a real Indian fighter.

In my day I handled lots of gold dust and I became somewhat of an expert in judging it. Gold from the different min-

ing camps nearly always had different assay values. The current trade value of this gold was always somewhat under the mint or assay value. The gold was classified and called "light," "heavy," "coarse" and "fine." The Florence gold dust was worth about \$12 to \$14 an ounce—it was "light" gold; we took it in at \$12. Oro Fino gold dust was worth about \$16 an ounce—trade value \$15.00. Kootenay gold coined at \$20. to \$22. to the ounce, and was taken in trade at \$18. Some of the Elk City gold was of nearly equal but the average was lower and we took it at \$16. Bannock gold was \$15 to \$16 an ounce. We took in Boise gold at \$15. The Warrens gold was light and taken like that of Florence at \$12.00.

I knew the men operating Tracy & Company's Express into the Oro Fino mines in 1861. This was later consolidated with Wells Fargo & Co. I also knew Mossman, of Mossman & Co's Express operating between Oro Fino and Walla Walla. Most of the miners carried their own gold dust and nuggets out of the country. The stores of the camp accumulated large amounts of gold dust as there was no banking business to speak of. Most transactions were in cash, and the usual medium of exchange was gold dust. Every store, saloon and other place of business had its own gold scales. The man taking in the gold usually weighted it, and one had to be pretty well acquainted with the localities the gold came from in order to know the correct value to place upon the gold dust. Usually, at least in the first year or two, miners were pretty honest and would correctly tell you where their gold came from. Anyone frequently handling gold dust soon acquainted himself with the peculiar color and texture of the dust dug out in the various mining sections, so that he could tell, almost at a glance, where the gold dust offered to you came from, and then its corresponding correct trade value.

Folks now-a-days haven't much conception of the richness and extent of those early placer mines. Why, the whole country from the Blue Mountains to the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, and from southern Idaho far north into British Columbia was just one big gold field. There was rarely a stream that wouldn't "pan at least a color," and practically every square mile of that vast territory was some time or other traveled over and prospected by some of those prospecting parties in the latter 50s and early 60s. I traveled a good part of it more than once with pack trains. True, most of it would just pan a color and wouldn't

pay to work but the rich diggings were numerous and bushels of gold were actually taken out of claims in camps like Florence, Boise and Helena, and gold dust and nuggets were for a time so plentiful that they were weighed and handled by the pound, and stored in tin cans and other handy receptacles.

This gold only found its way gradually into the assay offices and the mints at San Francisco and Philadelphia. A large amount of it was for years used as a circulating medium throughout the Northwest. Nearly everyone then used to carry around some gold dust in his "poke." As a general thing the returning miners packed out their own gold. In those days it was not an uncommon thing for a miner to come out from the mines carrying anywhere from \$2,000 to \$3,000 or more in gold dust and nuggets on his person and concealed in his pack. I don't think over half the gold dust then mined was shipped out through the express companies, or made a matter of record anywhere.

The rush into these placer mines brought along a lot of men from every walk of life. Many of them, especially old California, Oregon and Australian gold miners, were solely bent on searching for and mining gold. Lots of others went to the mines to carry on every day business pursuits catering to the miners' needs; others came simply to work at the high wages there paid. Along with these hordes of people,—I say hordes because there were actually thousands and thousands of them. Why in camps like the Boise Basin it was like as if there was an army camped there—little groups and bodies of men, scattered over the flats, gulches and hills, as far as you could see. At night one could see the camp fires everywhere.

Well, as I started to say, along with the hordes came the unscrupulous gambler, the bandit, road agent and murderer, and the usual camp following of dance hall girls, sporting house women, and other citizens of the underworld that preyed upon both the miner, the merchant and the legitimate laborer. At first we had no courts, or any means of law enforcement, and early in the discovery of placer gold in the Clearwater, the Salmon River, and the Boise and Upper Missouri River water sheds, this latter law-breaking element reaped a rich harvest. For a time in the absence of any organized peace force the honest men in camp hesitated to take any individual stand against them, and incur their ill will; so the criminal element carried on their operations in each camp for a short time with apparent impunity.

It was somewhat difficult in those days for law abiding men to know just whom to trust among their neighbors and acquaintances in camp. In the end the situation in nearly every camp became so bad that the better element finally had to band themselves together in a secret body to enforce law and order. These organizations were named "Vigilantes;" I never knew why they called themselves by that Spanish term. I suppose that the earlier organizations in California first got the name there. These bodies of courageous citizens soon helped to make the mountain trails and pathways safe for the honest miners, merchants and packers. A few hangings in a community were usually sufficient to check the graver crimes of murder and robbery. Life in those days was lightly valued by some, and the deeds of these road agents and of the vigilantes for a few years in the early 60s beat beyond comparison any dime novel or present day fiction of the wild and wooly west I've ever read.

I was intimately acquainted with most of the people connected with the Magruder murders. I knew Hill Beechy well and was often a guest at the Luna House. Magruder was a packer and trader with headquarters at Lewiston; he was married to a girl named Arthur, a sister of Sam Arthur, one of the early hotel men at Spokane Falls, Washington Territory. Magruder's wife lived in McMinnville, Oregon and as a young fellow I knew both her and her sisters. Magruder himself I knew and had often associated with as a fellow packer. He packed out of Lewiston. People about Hill Beechy's livery stable at Lewiston knew Lloyd Magruder's mules and equipment and this was the first clue of the murders. Dan Dwight later long in the merchantile business at Lewiston associated with his brother Henry Dwight, was one of the guards over the murderers in bringing them up from Portland. It was freezing weather when they were brought into Lewiston. Bill Page, who stood "State's evidence" and made a full written confession of the crime was released and afterwards did chores about Beechy's Hotel at Lewiston.

In October, 1863, Magruder, who had been on a packing trip to the Beaverhead mines, sold out his goods and part of his pack train, at Virginia City, Montana, and was returning to Lewiston with considerable bullion. It was said he had between \$16,000 and \$20,000 in gold dust. Enroute back, he and some companions, Charles Allen, William Phillips, and two brothers, Horace and Robert Chalmers, were brutally murdered in the Bitterroot

Mountains in the most cold blooded manner by men who had accompanied Magruder from Lewiston in the guise of packers for the sole purpose of robbing him. The murderers were "Doc" Howard, Christ Lowry, J. P. Romain and Bill Page. Their capture and trial is a part of the history of those days.

These murderers had hung around The Dalles and Lewiston for some time before their departure with the Magruder party in August, 1863, and I knew them. Daniel Howard was a well built, good appearing man who had evidently studied medicine at some time and he was generally known as "Doc." James P. Romain was an idler and gambler, and acted as cook on the fatal trip. Christopher Lowry was a man from down in Oregon, of rough and reckless disposition. He was a blacksmith by trade and had been with Capt. John Mullan on his road building expedition a few years before. William Page was a worthless, no-account fellow, easily led. He came from over in the Klickitat country, in Washington Territory, opposite The Dalles.

Hill Beechy used to say that he had dreams of the murder of his friend, even before the murderers appeared in Lewiston. There was some suspicion of them at that time and they were questioned some, but there being then no suspicion or evidence of a murder or other grave crime, they were permitted to go and soon made their way down to San Francisco. One of the murderers, Christopher Lowry, had been a schoolmate of Mrs. Magruder's down in Oregon. After his arrest she went to the jail and asked him what he and his companions had done with Magruder. He afterwards told his jailors that he didn't ever want to see her again. This man Lowry, himself, had killed Magruder with an axe.

Bill Page, who had turned "State's Evidence," was killed a couple of years later at Lewiston, Idaho, by Albert Igo. Al was a tough, worthless character himself, laying up with sporting women, and of a very bad reputation. Page at the time was reduced to the job of carrying water from the river up to the house of ill fame where Al Igo was then staying. Igo had been drunk the night before and in a quarrel had been beaten up by Bill Page. He was in an angry mood the next morning and when Page entered the house carrying a pail of water in each hand, Igo blew his head off with a shot from a shot gun. This was on December 25, 1866. Al Igo immediately fled from Lewiston but he was followed by his brother Bill Igo, who overtook him



and persuaded him to go back with him and stand trial. Everyone in Lewiston thought the killing of Bill Page was a good act, and after some pretense at an investigation, Al Igo was turned loose. Many years ago a man named Chapman wrote up the history of the Magruder murders. "Doc" Howard, Lowry and Romain were executed at Lewiston, Idaho, on March 4, 1864, after a short trial.

This Magruder murder trial was the first case we ever tried in the Courts of the new Territory of Idaho. It was tried before Judge Samuel C. Parks, Judge of the Boise County, or Second Judicial District, who held a special term of Court at Lewiston for that purpose. The defendants were found guilty on January 20, 1864, and sentenced to death. A detail of soldiers from the 4th U. S. Infantry at Ft. Lapwai formed a guard around the gallows at the hanging on March 4, 1864. Hill Beechy's expenses at running down and bringing back the murderers were something over \$6,000 and later the Idaho Territorial Legislature passed a special appropriation bill to reimburse him. Hill Beechy later sold out his hotel and livery stable in Lewiston to the Dwight Brothers and moved to the Boise Basin where he operated stage lines to Nevada and California. He died down in San Francisco about fifty years ago.

My cousin, D. M. Jesse, was once held up by road agents on this side of the Clearwater River, about 25 miles out from Oro Fino on a return trip to Lewiston. Jesse was on the alert, and when he met the holdups he shot at them and chased them into the brush. Pack trains were frequently held up on the Boise trail.

I knew Alex Carter well. He was one of the cargadores of Bledsoe and Creighton's pack trains, running into Florence in 1861, and I went into Florence with him on that first trip in 1861. He was a tall, powerful, fine appearing man, and was not afraid of anything. He always bore a fine reputation among us packers. He packed on the Boise road until late in the fall of 1863. Then he came into Umatilla, collected his wages and procuring a couple of mules, started out for Montana. A few weeks later, on January 16, 1864, way up at Hell Gate, Montana, some 15 or 20 miles from Missoula, he was seized and after a hearing at Higgings's store he was taken out to the corral and hanged by the Montana vigilantes. They claimed Alec to be a member of the notorious band of road agents headed by Henry

Plummer, who was sheriff at Bannock and Virginia City, Montana in 1863.

We, who knew Carter, couldn't believe that he was guilty. He was a man from a good family back in the east, and was a trusted employee of Bledsoe and Creighton, often having thousands of dollars of their money and property in his hands. He was always recognized among us as a law-abiding man. I remember an occasion at Florence in 1861 when Mat Bledsoe, a nephew of his employer, and a worthless gambler, got on a drunken tear in his uncle's store at Florence. In those days, stores kept an open whiskey barrel in the back of the store with a tin dipper, and customers buying a considerable bill in cash, or settling up old accounts were customarily invited back and asked to "have a drink." Mat was a mean drunk, and he got out his gun and began 'shooting up' the store. His uncle wanted him to get out, but he refused to go. Alex Carter, who had been standing over by the fireplace, finally got up and says in a clear commanding voice, "Mat, put up your gun and get out of here," and when Mat hesitated he went right up to Mat, grabbed him by the coat collar, and kicked him out of the store.

I don't think Alex Carter deserved hanging. Later I went by the place where he was hanged and tried to locate his grave, but I couldn't. All the accounts I've heard or read state that Alex Carter continued to assert his innocence, even as he was being strung up. He's written up in the *Vigilantes of Montana*.

Along with Alex the vigilantes hanged Johnnie Cooper. Cooper was from down in the Willamette Valley, Oregon, and had also borne a good reputation until he got mixed up with bad associates in Montana. His folks lived in the East. The old California and Oregon gold miners were as a whole a very steady, law-abiding lot of men who were steadily working for their "stake." Most of the trouble and lawlessness of those times was caused by the shiftless, moneyless adventurers about camp who were too lazy and shiftless to do hard work. So much gold dust was carried about that it was a great temptation to road agents.

Mule packing of freight will soon be "one of the lost arts." The settlement of the country and the building of railroads and wagon roads, put us out of business nearly fifty years ago. I haven't seen an aparejo for twenty years. Most of our packing terms were Spanish, picked up by the Forty-niners from the Mexicans in California. What is an Aparejo? Why it is Span-

ish pack saddle made of leather and stuffed with moss, dry hay or grass—anything handy; it protected the mule's back from any rubbing of the load, and equalized the weight of the pack on the animals. They were far superior to the American pack saddle.

With each aparejo there was a "caronie," a fancy Spanish embroidered pack blanket, which was laid over the "sweat" blanket; on top of this went the "bed" blanket, of best wool and costing in those days from \$15.00 to \$20.00. Each "caroni" was embroidered with a distinctive design or flower figure, and each mule had its own "caronie" and pack. In camp the packs were arranged in a hollow square or rude circle if possible—if not they were strung in a row, two packs high, with the aparejos on each side, the lash rope lying under the loads. The aparejos were well made and often ornamented and cost from \$35.00 to \$60.00 apiece.

Arriving in camp, after unloading one of the packers rode the bell mare out into the hills for pasture, the unloaded mules followed along behind. We usually had a white mare for bell mare, and the mules would rarely ever leave her vicinity. Sometimes a strange mule had to be watched for a few days until he got acquainted with and accustomed to the bell mare. On the road we'd get up early, before day light; while the other men were breaking camp and preparing breakfast, one of the packers would go out into the hills and locate the bell mare. Finding her, he would ring her bell and the mules from all around would answer by bawling out, and starting towards the bell mare. The packer would then walk around to see whether all the mules were in sight and coming in; when satisfied of this he would mount the mare and ride into camp. If he started off on a trot or run, the mules would follow at a trot or run.

On the pack trail we would roll out of our blankets at two or three o'clock in the morning, and while some were bringing in the mules the rest would break camp and the cook would get breakfast.

When the animals came in the bell mare was brought to the head of the packs, and the men began to holler at the mules "Get in there," and the mules would herd in around the packs. Then the men quickly placed the "hackamores" or headstalls on the mules, and tied them together, all facing in towards the rigging which was usually arranged in a hollow square or circle if the ground permitted.

The mules secured, the men sat down to their breakfast. This finished, they hastened to load the animals, while the cook cleaned up and packed his outfit. Each mule had the same aparejo and load during the entire trip, unless it was overloaded or disabled. In the first days of my packing we averaged only 15 mules to the man, later this was increased to 18 or 20 mules, and at last it was customary to give two men 36 to 40 mules to handle. It was some work, I'll tell you. The average time was 1½ to 2 minutes for two experienced men to pack a mule. Four men would load 40 to 60 packs in 45 to 50 minutes. The men who worked in pairs were called the "near" and the "off" packer. With a big train, the pairs would work near together, and while his partner was finishing the tie the odd man would act as a "booster" assisting the other two men with the loading of their pack, by helping to lift and place the heavy load. Experienced men would pack a hundred mules like clockwork. The "sweat" blanket was first put on the animal's back—carefully smoothed out so that there were no folds to rub and gall the animal's back during the day; then the "caronie" and the bed blankets were added; then the aparejo; then the load. If it was 400 pounds of flour each packer would first lift his 200 pounds of the pack up on to his side of the animal; then throw the "swing" rope and "swing the packs;" then the lash rope was thrown on top and lashed in the "diamond hitch" and the animal was ready for the trail. The "cinch" of the aparejos was 8 or 10 inches wide; it was cinched tight about the protesting mule by two men. The "ladigo" strap or sinch strap was 2 inches wide, and it was well greased so as to slip easily in tightening.

Packers were always armed. The cook on the bell mare usually carried a shot gun or rifle; the packers were armed with rifles and revolvers. We carried "cantinas" or leather fittings with two pockets with flaps fitting over the saddle horn for holding little conveniences. I usually carried a revolver in the right side of my "cantina." Some carried their gold dust there. It was also a handy place for a flask of whiskey.

As quick as the last load was securely packed and tied, the cook mounted the bell mare and rode off; the loaded mules of the train followed behind without command. The cook usually carried a water bucket. The packers mounted their horses and took convenient places along the train as the loaded mules went along in single file. The "Boss" packer rode behind. The start

was usually made by six o'clock in the morning. The train moved at a fairly rapid walk to the next camping place. These averaged about 15 miles apart, at convenient places where there was feed and water. The next camping spot was reached, according to the distance, sometime between ten o'clock and noon, when camp was made for the day.

If it stormed, or there was a heavy rain, the train remained in camp for the day; if it rained or stormed on the road, then the train kept steadily on until the camping place was reached. Packs were protected from the weather by "mantos;" large 9 by 12 peaces of canvas which were laid over the packs in camp, or folded over the loads on the trail in heavy rains or snow storms.

Part of the art of packing consisted in understanding how to put up the freight for packing; this was done by the packers. The loads were proportioned to the various animals in the train according to their strength; a mule would carry from 300 to 500 pounds, an occasional animal could carry considerable more. Flour was packed in burlap sacks of heavy weave holding from three or four sacks of flour aggregating a weight of 150 to 200 pounds. Liquor was carred in kegs; usually in an "8 cask" holding 28 gallons. One large barrel made an average mule load. The most difficult load I ever packed was some solid steel shafting, each piece 8 or 9 feet long and weighing about 200 pounds apiece.

In those early days when there were no roads, only just pack trails, we packers would pack anything—quartz mills, burial caskets, cans of powder, or even a piano. One time Bob Grostein's train packing a quartz mill from Lewiston into the Warrens diggings had a single piece of steel casting—a crescent shaped plate on which the stamps hammered—weighing 667 pounds. It was carried the entire 100 miles by one husky mule, over one of the most difficult trails I've ever packed over. In going to Warrens diggings we dropped down Slate Creek from Florence into the Salmon River canyon; we crossed the river by a wire cable suspension toll bridge built in 1864-5, and about 10 miles below Florence by trail. This bridge was just wide enough for a loaded pack mule to pass through. The toll was 75 cents per loaded animal and 35 cents a head when we returned. Going into and out of the canyon the trail led along the edge of precipices with perpendicular cliffs above and below. Mules oc-

asionally lost their footing and fell. I recall that one mule, loaded with women's apparel for the demimondes of the camp, fell off this trail and went crashing down through the tops of the pine trees below. In the fall the pack broke and all manner of women's apparel was scattered over the tree tops to flap and flutter in the breeze to the amusement of we packers and everyone passing along the trail. The poor mule was of course killed.

Many packers were owners of stores, or traders, buying their own cargoes and packing the merchandise into the mining camps to sell on their own account. Arriving in camp they would wait for Sunday and then, unpacking their goods would often sell their stock out in the day. If there was a remainder it was disposed of to some merchant at a price which covered the packing charges and a fair profit on the goods.

I was acquainted with most of the master packers, and I worked at one time or another for most of them. D. M. Jesse and H. H. Snow were in partnership as D. M. Jesse & Co. They had a large pack train, Jesse had charge of it, while Snow handled the merchandise business. When the packing business fell off in 1866-7 they sold out their train and Mr. Jesse went into the stock business at Walla Walla; while Mr. Snow went into business at Lafayette, Oregon. His son Wilbur is in the bank at Dayton, Washington.

Old Andrew Lafevre was a partner with "French Louie" in a train of 65-70 mules at Walla Walla operating into Helena and on the Boise road in 1864-1865. George Dacres of Walla Walla had a train of from 45-50 mules. I went with this train to Helena in the fall of 1865; Charlie White, his "boss packer," who lived at the mouth of Dry Creek, left him at Helena and I took his place. I was then twenty-two years old. I handled the train for two years. Frank and Mat Lowden at the mouth of Dry Creek, near Walla Walla, also owned a train of about 125 mules, and packed into the various camps. They were likeable and popular men, and Frank was later elected County Commissioner of Walla Walla county.

Jones and Dalton ran a pack train of 125 packs out of Lewiston. Bludsoe and Creighton also ran a train of 65 to 70 packs out of that place. D. M. Jesse and John Thompson had a train of 40 packs running out of Lewiston and Pierce City. Bob Grostein also ran a train of 100 mules out from Lewiston. Virgo Little was boss and packmaster of a train of 40 or 50 mule team

running from Umatilla into the mines. Bill Sperry and his brother also ran a train out of Walla Walla; later they sold out and went into the flour milling business at Pendleton, Oregon. Their brother-in-law, Manse Chrip, located the first farm above what is now Pendleton; part of his original holdings are in the present townsite.

Most of the large packing outfits had their headquarters at Walla Walla, but they packed out of Wallula, Umatilla, Walla Walla or Lewiston, wherever they could get the freight. One trip might be into Florence or Warren or Mormon gulch over beyond Burnt river; the next might be to Helena or Virginia City; our next trip might be into the Kootenai or Columbia River mines, some 400 miles Northeast across the international boundary line into the Province of British Columbia, or south into the Boise Basin. In my 10 years on the trail I packed into every good sized mining camp in the Northwest.

Lize Dove and his brother had a train of about 25 mules running from Lewiston into Elk City and Florence. I worked with this train in 1864 and made one trip into Florence. Lize died here in Spokane about five or six years ago, while his brother Tom died down in the Palouse country years ago. At one time they were large land holders there and had wealth, but they went busted in the hard times of 1894.

In packing days I worked with Johnnie O'Hearn's pack trains from Walla Walla; also with George Williams' train from The Dalles, Oregon, packing into the military posts. O'Hearn had the contract for Camp Hearn supplies.

The highest freight we ever received was around a dollar and a quarter a pound, received when we went into Bannock, Idaho after the fire; the lowest freight received from Umatilla into the Boise Basin was twenty cents a pound for the three hundred mile pack. Pack trains used to be of all sizes, from a small train of but five or six animals up to large trains numbering a hundred or more animals. It all depended on the amount of business. Some pack train proprietors had several hundred pack animals on hand and kept a number of pack trains in constant and regular operation on a fairly regular schedule from outfitting points into the various mining camps. An average pack train into the larger mining camps would average say about twenty-five pack mules. Trains of twenty-five pack animals were easier to handle than larger trains on account of the greater convenience in making camp and finding feed. The size of the trains was increased or re-

duced, or additional pack trains placed on the route, as the immediate traffic needs of a mining camp required.

Packing was a trade which called for both skill and strength. In loading and unloading we usually worked in pairs; one on each side of an animal. Each man had to swing his half of the heavy pack up from the ground on to the animal's back, and hold it there on one side of the pack saddle with one arm, despite the kicks and bites and protesting lunges of the mule, until he and his partner had it securely lashed there by means of a "diamond" or other hitch. To round up, saddle and load and unload twenty-five such packs a day, and to meet all the emergencies of the trail was a real man's sized job. If a mule got down, you'd have to get him up; sometimes you'd have to unload; other times the mule would succeed in unloading for you. Some mules got real mean and tricky, and would try to rub their packs off against trees; or would lie down and try to roll them loose. It took a good tie to stand such treatment, even if you rode up at once and started the animal along with the train again. If straps and ropes broke you had to splice them; you had to mend the pack saddles; sometimes you had to shoe the mules; sometimes animals got sick and you had to nurse them. Worst of all sometimes the packs broke, or sprung a leak, and you had to devise means—way out alone in the wilderness—to save your cargo.

And talk about roads and trails; principally there weren't any; leastwise a tenderfoot would have gotten lost a dozen times a day just trying to follow some of them. We penetrated into the most remote and inaccessible places; over all kinds of country and in all kinds of weather conditions. At the head of the trains, long before you met them you could hear the tinkle of the bell on the bell mare. For convenience in locating strayed animals, we sometimes use to hobble new pack horses and mules at night, unless a coral was handy to put them in. We sometimes placed a bell on animals that were giving to straying away for convenience in locating them when turned out. On all ordinary occasions the "bell mare" kept the pack animals together.

Heavy snows in the mountains usually forced us to quit our packing ventures along in November; then when we returned from our last trip we drove the pack animals down to winter at some ranch in one of the lower, warmer valleys along the Columbia River where there was plenty of good feed and water.

As I've said this packing business called for both skill and



strength; the lifting of heavy weights—sometimes a barrel of whiskey—right up from the ground to the pack saddle required a young muscular man with a stout back and good arms and shoulders. Quite a few of our packers were Mexicans, brought up from California, and employed on account of their special experience and skill in such work. In addition to taking care of the freight and animals a man had to prepare camp and cook his own meals, and act as his own valet, and wash and mend his own clothes. We often camped out in rain and snow and severe cold without even a tent. With the larger pack trains one man was usually taken along as cook for the outfit

Besides all this work we had to be on the alert to preserve our own scalps. On the trail there was always more or less danger from attacks by hostile Indians, and murderous road agents. If they didn't kill you they might run off your horses and mules, or rob you of your freight. It wasn't an easy life by any means. At first there weren't even any trails, and we often had to strike out over virgin country and find our own way, with no one to enquire of, in case we got lost. When we came to bad places we had to work our train around them; cutting a way through fallen timber; working around or across a bad rock slide, or detouring impassible cliffs. Why, often there weren't any bridges, or ferries; when we came to streams we sought for a ford; if there wasn't any, we swam our animals across, and if there there were no boats available, we then built a raft and rafted our outfit and goods across. Sometimes when a spring freshet had made a stream impassible, we had to sit down and wait until the high water passed. The whole packing business called for courage, hardihood, and endurance; that wasn't all, you had to have skill, daring, initiative, gumption, and loyalty.

In many respects the packers I worked among were, take them all in all, a rough, lawless and profane bunch of men; but they were brave, hardy and extremely loyal and trustworthy towards their employers.

The few men in a pack train were often intrusted with train equipment worth ten to fifteen thousand dollars and with the delivery of merchandise worth as much or more again. Freights were paid in cash, and goods sold for cash, and the packers sometimes returned with as much as fifteen or twenty thousand dollars worth of gold dust, belonging to their employers.

In those early days of Washington, Idaho and Montana Ter-

ritories there wasn't any money in the Territorial Treasuries to build needed roads and bridges, so the Legislature met the situation by granting individual franchises to build private toll roads and toll ferries and toll bridges. On a long pack like that from Wallula into the Kootenai country mines, or from Wallula into the Montana mines where there were many ferries or toll bridges to cross the toll charges for the trip might run up to five or ten dollars an animal for the trip. All of this was added to the expense of packing and included in the freight charged.

As the trails were improved into roads, and toll bridges and toll ferries were installed the freight pack trains of the packers and muleteers were gradually replaced by wagon freight trains driven by "bullwhackers" and "Mule skimmers." On anything like a passable road it was far cheaper to haul merchandise, than to pack it; bigger loads could be carried, better time made, and the expense of equipment and labor was greatly reduced.

Quitting the packing business, I remained in Oregon for several years before moving to Washington Territory and making my permanent home there. In 1883 at the time of the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad, I settled in the Lance Hills district, nine miles southwest of Cheney, in Spokane County, then Washington Territory, and I have lived there ever since. My brother, Alex Watt, an old gold miner of the 60's also settled in that neighborhood.

JAMES W. WATT.