

DOCUMENTS

Our First Official Horticulturist

(Continued from Vol. XXI., page 229)

[The Wilkes Expedition inland party under Lieutenant Johnson are four days out from Nisqually on the Naches Trail across the Cascade Mountains to the eastern part of Old Oregon, now Eastern Washington and Idaho. The previous installment broke off in the middle of the entry for May 23, 1841.]

Oregon Country—Inland Expedition (Continued)

Our route [a]cross the range lay somewhat to the north of Mt. R[ainier] where the finest timber exists that I ever beheld. For several days our route lay through dense forests of Spruce the stems so straight and clean that it was seldom you could find a branch closer than 150 feet to the ground. A prostrate trunk of a Spruce which we took with a tape line measured—length 265 ft. circumfe: (10 ft. from base) 35 ft. When this tree fell the top had broke[n] of [f], where it measured 18 inches in diameter, and allowing the top piece to be 20 ft. the whole height of Said tree when standing would be 285 ft. In deep moist valleys I have seen the Thuja, or Arbor Vita at least $\frac{1}{3}$ more in circumference, but not so high by 100 ft. A Populus, or Cotton tree which we measured was upwards of 200 ft. high. Many of the Spruce stems which lay prostrate were so stout that when on horse back we could not see over them. On the decayed bark of such seedlings of the Spruce vegetated⁷² freely, forcing their roots through the bark, over the body of the trunk, till the[y] reached the ground so that when said trunk became entirely decayed, the roots of the young trees became robust [and] formed a sort of arch way,⁷³ under which we occasionally rode.

24th. Game on these mountains is exceedingly scarce, and although we had three excellent Indian hunters in our party, and could also do a little in the shooting line ourselves, yet up to this time only one Deer and three or four Grouse had been killed; tracks of Bears had been observed several times but none seen.—

25th. The banks of the Streams and Rivers which we came in contact with afforded the greatest variety of trees and Shrubs, these consisted of Populus, Rhamnus,⁷⁴ 50 ft. h.; Cornus 30 to 40 ft. h.;

⁷² *Spruce vegetated.* The hemlock is more likely to be found growing on the down logs.

⁷³ *Sort of archway.* Such are found, but the size of these is, to say the least, sensational.

⁷⁴ *Rhamnus.* Probably, because of its height, the cascara.

several species of *Salix*,⁷⁵ *Alnus*,⁷⁶ *Acer*⁷⁷ 2 species, & occasionally a solitary Yew. The Shrubs or under gro[w]th in the forest were chiefly—Hazel, *Vaccinium*, *Gaultheria*, a prickly species⁷⁸ of *Aralia* with large peltate leaves. *Euonymus*,⁷⁹ a little evergreen shrub, was also common. The herbaceous plants in such places were—Goodeyra, *Neottia*,⁸⁰ several species, *Claytonia*, *Corallorrhiza*,⁸¹ *Aquilegia*⁸²—the majority of such plants had not yet come into flower, so that we left many of such till our return. During the early part of this day we had to cross a deep and rapid River⁸³—we had for the two past days made a great ascent on the range & were still continuing to do so, and the water from the Snow Mts. rushing down confined valleys acted powerful in sweeping logs and every thing else that came in its way before it, forming bridges, over which we sometimes crossed, & swam our horses.—

26th. In the early part of this day we came to a small open patch of prairie ground⁸⁴ where there was good feed for the Horses—here the party halted & partook of some breakfast. Mr. Johnson arranged & drew up orders for a party which was to start on foot, and cross the mountains, to ascertain the possibility of getting the horses through the Snow—finding such to be practicable to send back a native to inform him of the same. Mr. Waldron was intrusted with this party, which consisted of Dr. Pickering, *myself*, Pier[r]e Charles as guide, with 10 or 12 Indians loaded with baggage belonging to our party, to ease the horses. Our foot party left Mr. J's Camp at A.M. and after proceeding ½ mile came to a rapid river⁸⁵ where we had to cut down two large trees to get over—the way through the forest was smooth and firm, the air cool and clear—we marched forward at a rapid rate, the natives keeping up like good fellows, nevertheless that many of them had upwards of 90 lbs⁸⁶ on their backs. In the afternoon we came to the base of a very long and rather *tough* looking mountain to climb, but to it we set—and long before all of the party got to the top, the Doctor and

75 *Salix*, willow.

76 *Alnus*, alder.

77 *Acer*, maple.

78 *Prickly species*. Probably devil's club, *Echinopanax horridum* (Piper), *Fatsia horrida* (Frye and Rigg).

79 *Euonymus*. Could this have been *Pachistima myrsinites*? The only species of *Euonymus* known here is deciduous.

80 *Neottia*, an old synonym for *Spiranthes* (lady's tresses).

81 *Corallorrhiza*, coral-root.

82 *Aquilegia*, columbine.

83 *rapid river*. The White.

84 *prairie ground*. A half mile below the confluence of the Greenwater.

85 *rapid river*. Greenwater.

86 90 lbs. Dr. Pickering comments: "It did not appear to have been remarked that there were slaves in the party; and I afterwards had some reasons to suspect that one man had been overloaded. *Quarterly*, XX:55. Pickering had been for many years a practicing physician.

Myself had reached the margin of the Snow. This was about Sun down, & we concluded to stop till the whole party came up—which was not till dark when Mr. W. made his appearance pretty well used up. We now pitched our Tent and there being no water near we melted snow to procure Water for Tea. As the Cooking of the Supper was going on, some one set fire to the moss covered trees, and in one minute all around was one glaring mass of flame. Now was a confusion and bustle—to get all our luggage to windward, & in the midst of the conflagration Dr. P. came near losing the tails of his Coat by a brand of fire that had accidentally fallen into his pocket. During this days route we found few plants in flower it being yet too early in the season for such an elevation, but the ground we found covered with fine Spruce twigs and ascicles,⁸⁷ which I presume had got broke[n] off by heavy falls of Snow resting on the tops of the trees.—Walked today about 18 miles.

27th. At the commencement of this days route, the two first miles the snow was thin and crisp till we came upon an open space perhaps 15 or 20 acres in extent which I estimated to be the summit⁸⁸ of the range, Here all around, the spruce trees (there being no other) were more dense in foilage [foliage] and stunted in habit. The snow in this glade was deep and so firm that we walked on its surface. On leaving this opening we began to descend, when the snow became deeper, say 8 feet. The smaller of the Trees had become bent down by it, and on passing near these bows we often broke through and it was with some difficulty that we could extricate, particularly the poor Indians, with their heavy burdens. The whole breath of Snow we walked over was about 8 miles, and so soon as we got over the body on to thawed, clear patches, a Native was dispatched back to Mr. Johnson with a note to the effect that he might come on, and that the Guide and other natives so soon as the[y] had taken us down to a good watering place should come on the following day as early as possible.

At three in the afternoon when we had got fairly clear of all snow we came upon the head of the Spipe River,⁸⁹ where we incamp'd pretty well fatigued after our heavy walking. Mr. Waldron dispatched 2 Indians down the River to an Indian settlement to procure fresh Horses, as we all anticipated that a good many of our old one[s] would not pass the Snow. I went out into the forest towards sundown and shot a brace of Grouse. I am not aware what

87 *ascicles*. Misspelling of acicles, needle-like spines or bristles.

88 *summit*. The Naches Pass.

89 *Spipe River*.. The Naches River.

our height was here, but it struck me that the vegetation was farther advanced on the east side of the Mts. than it was at what I considered the same height on the West Side. The *Pulmonarias*⁹⁰ and several small annuals were in a more advanced state.

On our descent we fell in with a good many fine Larch trees and I could dis[c]ern a goodly number of them scattered very regularly through the Spruce forests beneath us. During the trip over the range I saw one real *Pinus*—(Pine) which consisted of a few small trees in an open place on the west side of the range, the Alpine plants which we expected to meet with on the high ridges being covered with Snow.

28th. Old Pier[r]e—the Guide—and Indians started early this morning to assist Mr. Johnson with the Horses, the major part of the luggage having been brot. over by us. Dr. P. and myself went a collecting & found some pretty curious plants particularly a glaucous leaved species⁹¹ of *Pyrola*, and a little fern—perhaps *Cheilanthes*⁹²—on a rocky situation.

29th. I wandered down the river about three miles. The Character of the country is Hilly, on both Sides of the River, with a low narrow marsh or meadow along its banks which was now partly overflowed above our camp; it is mountaneous & woody the same Character extending down the Country on the mounts. running in a parallel with the Spipe valley, at least so far as we could see.

Towards mid-day several of the Indians from Mr. J's party arrived at the camp. And in the afternoon Mr. J himself came on, having left four of the Horses behind, and came near loosing himself by getting out of the path when the Indians had left him. During the day one of the Indians sent down the river to procure horses, had returned without succeeding. The services of the indians being no more required, the[y] were all discharged with the exception of a smart young fellow⁹³ named Lashemere, who expressed a desire to accompany us. These indians who had received blankets in advance at the Fort when we started willingly gave them up to us and took an order for the whole amount due them, to be cashed at the same source. All the specimens that were dry, of my collecting, were neatly stitched up in a canvass cover by Mr. J. to be taken back to the Ship, accompanied by a note of instructions from myself to Mr.

90 *Pulmonarias*. The Lungwort is now *Mertensia*.

91 glaucous leaved species. *Pyrola picta*, variable wintergreen.

92 *Cheilanthes*, the lace fern.

93 smart young fellow. Dr. Pickering is authority for the statement that Lachemere was part Walla Walla. This would account for his desire to make the trip east of the mountains.

Dyes, relating to their preservation. Out of our short stock of provisions we had fed these natives for 10 days, and as the[y] would not eat Pork the[y] rec'd. Bread, so that after giving them a stock to take them back to Nesqually, our own was reduced to a few days allowance, particularly Bread—from this cause and hoarding up followed a state of starvation.—

30th. As there was not a sufficient number of horses to carry packs and riders, one was al[1]otted to Dr. P Sergt. Stearns & myself, to be used alternately, but as the Doctor and myself were proved pedestrians & had plants to pick up, we started to walk while the party followed, keeping close to the river which had in many places overflowed its banks & filled small creeks on the flats, through which we were obliged to wade, as the banks behind was too steep and bushy to force a path. After proceeding 4 miles down from camp, the river by receiving several tributary streams from the Mts. was become unfoordable—our path lay on the north side. The flats or meadows had now entirely disappeared and small round ridges setting down towards its brink terminated in steep rocky bluffs through which the river rushed with great violence. This same character continued down the valley for at least 20 miles. Towards the evening we could dis[c]ern a particular difference in the character of the vegetation—every thing was in a more advanced stage & several interesting genera of Plants made their appearance, as *Paeonia Brownii*? *Cypripedium*⁹⁴ *Oreogonium*, *Pentstemon*, *Ipomopsis elegans*,⁹⁵ and several neat little *Compositae*.

31st. Pursued the same system of movement as yesterday, found the atmosphere becoming perceptibly warmer, although the Thermomiter this morning indicated 35, the cause of which was no doubt the cold winds from the snow on the high Mts. On the bank as we went along fell in with *Purshia tridentata*,⁹⁶ a very handsome flowering shrub.

While the Doctor & myself were ascending a steep hill, met Lashemere the Indian who reported that horses were procurable a considerable distance down the river; and that the old Chief *Tobias*⁹⁷ was coming on to meet us. At this place found a beautiful little species of *Polemonium*,⁹⁸ about three inches high. At mid-day met

94 *Cypripedium*, lady's slipper. The *Narrative* couples *Oreogonium* with *Cypripedium*, thus: *Cypripedium oregonium*. This is probably correct as no genus *Oreogonium* is known.

95 *Ipomopsis elegans*. Now *Gilia aggregata*, the scarlet *gilia*.

96 *Purshia tridentata*, or *Kunzia tridentata*, antelope brush.

97 Chief *Tobias*. He is called *Tidias* throughout the *Narrative*; but the form given by Splawn, *Te-i-as*, is probably nearest to the native word. He was father-in-law of the later famous Kamiakin. Dr. Pickering likened him to pictures of Red Jacket, famous Iroquois chief. (*Quarterly*, XX:55.) For Splawn's reference to him see *Ka-Mi-Akin, the Last Hero of the Yakimas*, p. 16.

98 *Polemonium*, Greek valerian.

two indians from the Chiefs party on horseback, who wished us to mount which offer was declined—walking on till we came on the Old Chief encamp'd with his followers under a tree on this side of the River. After the usual shaking of hands, which he seemed to understand as the *whites* token of welcome, then in order to shew him that we knew also something of Indian etiquette, I filled a pipe of Tobacco put fire to the same & presented it to him. When he had finished we took a smoke all round. Then followed a shooting match, in which the Indians was worsted by our party. Mr. Johnson made the old fellow a present of *Scotch plaid*, a canaster of Powder, some Ball & Tobacco; which he took with as much cool indifference as if the whole had been due him.⁹⁹ On being informed that we were short of provisions he gave us a few dried Salmon, a few more we afterwards bot. of him. After partaking of some dinner the whole mooved farther down the river, where we encamped for the night, the natives leaving us before dark.

June 1st. Went about three miles farther down the River, where we fell in with the Old Chief again, who appeared to cast obstacles in our way in regard to horses, but Mr. J. at last by exchanging and purchase procured four. The party then struck off from the River in a north direction,¹⁰⁰ where we had a range of Mts.¹⁰¹ to cross. We had not got up more than 600 ft. when the vegetation as[s]umed quite a different aspect: on the top of a bare ridge¹⁰² we fell in with a number of Spipen Indians, collecting Cammass and other roots. From them we bought a small quantity of Cakes made from the roots of the last mentioned plant, and another¹⁰³ umbelliferous plant with a small oblong tuberous root¹⁰⁴ with a short neck at the top—its taste resembles that of a Parsnip. The proces[s] used to prepare these roots for bread, is to bake them in an oven heated by hot stones, when the[y] are taken out and dried, afterwards pounded between two stones till the[y] arrive at the consistancy of Corn meal—it is then knead[ed] into cakes and dried in the Sun. Such bread went rather hard¹⁰⁵ with us, but it was the best we had. These roots form the principal vegetable food of

99 *due him*. Dr. Pickering records that Tidias traced in the sand a map of the country through which they were to pass. *Quarterly*, XX:56.

100 *nor direction*. The party here, considerably above the confluence of the Tieton, reach the chief Indian arterial trail from Celilo (near The Dalles) to Chelan. The part to the southward of the Naches was known to Indians as the Eel's Trail.

101 *range of Mts.* the Cleman Mountains.

102 *bare ridge*. Umtanum Ridge.

103 *another*. This seems to imply that camas is umbelliferous; but it is a *liliacae*.

104 *tuberous root*. *Lomatium cous*, the Cous, or biscuit root. The same plant is also classified as *Peucedanum cous*.

105 *rather hard*. They had been warned by Tidias that the route was a "hungry road." *Narrative*, p. 427. The *Narrative* further says: "Lieutenant Johnson had now succeeded in purchasing venison and salmon, and the party again had full allowance."

the natives all over the Oregon country, and tis not an uncommon thing to see 30 or 40 Indian women with a basket suspended from their shoulder and a pointed stick the size of a hoe handle, digging up Cammass roots in meadows, and so dilligent at work that the[y] seldom pay any attention to a passer by. The roots when well dried are stored away for winter stock.

The whole distance traveled today was about 13 miles, and I had the misfortune this day to loose my Note Book, so that what I have said of our route from Nesqually to this place is mostly from memory and partly from some of those who were in the party, but I believe it to be correct.—

2nd. The party this morning was delayed by one of our horses having strayed from the Camp, but so soon as found we proceeded on our route and arrived during the day at the Eyakema¹⁰⁶ River, where we fell in with a party of Indians encamped on its banks to the number of 30 or 40. The Chief¹⁰⁷ of the tribe soon arrived, whose bearing was morose & cold towards us. Procured a few fresh Salmon from him, and after partaking of some dinner, we inflated the Gum elastic Bolsters¹⁰⁸ in order to form a raft to carry our luggage over to the opposite bank, the river being to[o] deep to foord it. After making four runs we got the whole of our traps on the opposite side. We found the Bolsters to answer our purpose better than any canoe, being more safe, and carried a greater burden. The horses we had to swim, but got all over in good order. The character of the country between the Spipe and the Eyakema River is mountaneous very thinly wooded with about equal proportions of Spruce and Pine. A great many of the latter I observed to be forked¹⁰⁹ at top—a feature rather rare in this tribe. The soil is a poor obstinate yellow Loam producing very indifferent feed for Cattle—in the plant way it is rich. I mention a few of the finest—Lupinaster sp: with flesh colour'd flos.; Viola flos: white and purple, Parnassia,¹¹⁰ a very dwf. sp.; Dodecatheon like integrifolia, Trol-

106 *Eyakema*. The Yakima, near the site of Ellensburg.

107 *The Chief*. In the *Narrative* he is called Kamiayah, son-in-law of Chief Tidias. He is known in history as Kamiakin. "He was one of the most handsome and perfectly formed Indians they had met with." *Narrative*, p. 428. This Indian chief, barely mentioned by Brackenridge, was almost as little noticed by the naturalist, Dr. Pickering. Although Kamiakin's name was unheralded then to his distinguished visitors, it was within fifteen years to ring out as that of the leader of the three years war against the settlers, 1856-8. Apparently Mr. Splawn overlooked this early reference to his great hero. Governor Stevens at the Walla Walla Council thus describes him: "He is a peculiar man, reminding me of the panther and the grizzly bear. His countenance has an extraordinary play, one moment in frowns, the next in smiles."—*Life of General Isaac I. Stevens*. By His Son. Ch. XXIX, p. 38.

108. *Bolsters*. These are called balsas throughout the *Narrative*.

109 *forked*. This peculiarity is celebrated in Okanogan legend. "Ridge of the Forked Pines" has been suggested as a name for that part of the ridge overlooking Wenas Creek.

110 *Parnassia fimbriata*, grass of Parnassus.

lius¹¹¹ sp: *Sisyrinchium*¹¹² sp: the five last in marshy grounds. A sp: of *Balsamoriza* different from the one on Nesqually plains.—

3rd. We kept watch during the night on our luggage, the Indians looking rather suspicious, but every thing went on well. The breadth of the Eyakema may be about 100 yards, and along on both sides of it are large tracks of flat land of apparently good quality though rather of a sandy nature having evidently been overflowed by the river. In the early part of the forenoon a sandy prairie¹¹³ with a number of small shrubs on it was passed over. And immediately a group of Mts.¹¹⁴ set in by degrees upon us. We found these similar to those we had left yesterday. Towards evening the Thermom. fell to 30, which was any thing but comfortable.

4th. Broke up camp at 5 A.M. Started without breakfast. The Ice this morning on water beside our tent was the thickness of a Dollar, & by some accident the Barometer tube got broke[n] which put an end to its use for the Cruize. The early part of the forenoon was cold with showers of sleet. Our road for the first 5 miles was over swampy ground on the brow of a Mt.¹¹⁵ A few patches of Spruce trees stud[d]ed the crest and the[y] began to thicken as we descended a small stream. On the banks of the same at 12 o'clock we halted to take some breakfast; which was ready about one and served us at the same time as dinner also. In all our operations we wanted system, but with such a leader we had all we could expect, in fact fared and got farther along than I at first anticipated we could with our journey.

Edited by O. B. SPERLIN

(To be Continued)

111 *Trollius laxus*, spreading globe flower.

112 *Sisyrinchium*, blue-eyed grass.

113 *prairie*. The party head north from near the site of Ellensburg, up Wilson (Kittitas) Creek and its tributary the Naneum. The crossing was made by Colockum Pass, 5323 feet elevation.

114 *group of Mts.* The Wenatchee Range, chiefly Table Mountain and Mt. Baldy.

115 *Brow of a Mt.* Brackenridge here passes lightly over one of the hardest days of the trip, over the Wenatchee Mountains. Swamps in the summit region are characteristic of the range.