

MARKER FOR CAMP MONTGOMERY

Under the direction of Mrs. Percy C. Smith, the Monday Civic Club of Tacoma, have during the past several years, erected, each year, a marker on some historic site in Tacoma and vicinity. This year, 1931, on June 14, they have placed a comprehensive marker at "Old Camp Montgomery," on the line of the old Military Road from Fort Steilacoom to Fort Walla Walla. This road is also known as the "Naches Pass Branch of the Oregon Trail." The first immigrant train coming directly to Puget Sound, via the "Oregon Trail" drove over the Naches Pass in the fall of 1853. Camp Montgomery, of Indian War Days, was located on the John Montgomery Donation Land Claim, that being part of Sections 26 and 35 in Township 19, North Range 3 East.

John Montgomery was born in Scotland in the year 1817; in 1851 he was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Nisqually. An Extract from John Montgomery's agreement with the Company, signed by W. F. Tolmie, reads:- "To have a cream horse and three cows as part wages for the current year and three cows for the time he serves in 1853, provided during the course of this engagement he breaks in 18 cows, he can have six of these as the cows he will be entitled to under this agreement. Dated October 10./52".

Before Mr. Montgomery had finished his engagement with the Company he declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States; filed on a Donation Land Claim of 320 acres, erected a log cabin and a commodious log barn. When the Indian war broke in the fall of the year 1855, he tendered the use of the barn as a store house for supplies etc. for soldiers in the field. The tender was accepted by Governor Stevens and Camp Montgomery became an important place. Orders issued to W. W. Miller Esq. Quarter Master and Commissary General, read:- "Sir;- Move tomorrow to Montgomery's, with all your wagons, teamsters, employees and supplies, leaving at Yelm prairie simply supplies for 20 men for ten days. Give directions to the available teams at Steilacoom to move tomorrow morning to Montgomery's, with forage for the advance of Heness' Company.*** All the foot troops will move with you*** On reaching Montgomery's, Tuesday, (tomorrow) you will push all your teams to Steilacoom on Wednesday, with orders to deliver everything there next day*** My Aid-de-Camp, Lieut. Col. Hurd, will go to Steilacoom today, and will see to the

getting to Montgomery's of forage, lumber for block-houses, lumber, blocks, tackle &c. for the ferry on the Puyallup."

Among other orders issued by Governor Stevens, one reads:- "Better have one years supply on hand at the close of the war to be sold at a discount, than allow our people to want food for one day."

During the war Camp Montgomery was a military post of much importance. When Judge Lander attempted to hold Court after Military Law had been declared, he (Lander) was arrested, sent to Camp Montgomery, and Harvey Scott, the late editor of the Oregonian, then a soldier boy of 18 years was guard over the Judge.

The marker erected by the ladies of the Monday Civic Club, at Camp Montgomery, is a pyramid in form, built up of cobble stones and cement, about seven feet high, five feet square at the base. Near the apex is the "Oregon Trail Memorial" bronze plaque. Below this is a key-stone shaped granite tablet with a suitable inscription carved on its polished surface.

Several hundred people attended the ceremony of unveiling. The parade of State flags, before the speakers stand was very impressive; Governor Roland H. Hartley, joined the line of boys, and he received a real ovation as he displayed the State Flag of Washington.

Mrs. George W. Slyter presided, the Fort Lewis Military Band furnished the music and Herman C. Smith sounded taps at the conclusion of the program. Other participants were: Dr. Herbert S. Johnson of Boston, "Invocation"; R. A. Richards of the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce, "Welcome"; Dr. Johnson, "Old Oregon Trail;" W. P. Bonney, Secretary of the State Historical Society, "Introduction of Pioneers;" Major R. M. McMurray, "Camp Montgomery;" Miss Jean Jones, Honor Essay, "Natches Pass Branch of the Oregon Trail;" W. F. Geiger, Superintendent of Tacoma Schools, "Presentation of Awards;" Mrs. George W. Slyter, "Unveiling of the Marker;" Mrs. Percy C. Smith, Chairman of the Historical Committee of the Tacoma Monday Civic Club, "Presentation of the Marker;" C. L. Babcock, President of the State Historical Society, "Acceptance of the Marker."

W. P. BONNEY