

The Washington Historical Quarterly

PIONEER REMINISCENCES*

I was born at Washington, D. C., on December 28, 1832. My father was Col. Benjamin L. Beall of the United States army, and my mother Elizabeth Taylor from Virginia. They were married at Washington, D. C. I came from a family of soldiers. My grandfather, Lloyd Beall, served as a major in the war of 1812, and was in command of Fort McHenry at the time that Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner. My father, and two of my uncles, brothers of my father, were graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Two of my maternal uncles were in the navy: Rear Admiral Taylor and Col. Sidney Taylor of the marines. In 1841 the family moved to Fort Wichita in Indian Territory. My father, then captain of the Second Dragoons, was stationed there with three companies, under Col. Harney.

Shortly before the Mexican war father was ordered to Fort San Antonio, and the family moved to Jefferson barracks, just below St. Louis, Missouri. My father and two brothers served in the army as officers during the Mexican war. After the war my father was ordered to New Mexico and the family moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

In 1853 I left Fort Leavenworth and came across the plains to Fort Lane in the Rogue River country, and went from there south to San Francisco, and then to Fort Tejon in Los Angeles County where my father was then stationed. I remained there from 1854 to 1857, being employed in the quartermaster's department as wagon master.

In 1857 I came up north with a company of the First Dragoons of which regiment my father was then colonel. We came through the Rogue River country via Salem and Portland to Fort Vancouver, and continued on up the Columbia to Fort Walla Walla. I remained

*This relation was made by Thomas B. Beall of Lewiston, Idaho, to William S. Lewis, Corresponding Secretary of the Spokane Historical Society. The footnotes are by Mr. Lewis.—Editor.

at Fort Walla Walla about two months and then returned to Fort Vancouver.

In the spring of 1858 I was ordered to take charge of wagons at The Dalles, Oregon, for Company H of the Second Dragoons and took the wagon train to Fort Walla Walla about the first of April, 1858, and then accompanied Col. Steptoe's expedition north, crossing Snake river as pack master of a train of eighty pack mules. In regard to the expedition not taking more ammunition with it, I would say that I do not think any more ammunition was set out of the magazine for the expedition by the quartermaster in charge. I sent two packers with four mules to the magazine and they came back with but three mule loads—this was all that had been set out for them.

On the 15th of May, 1858, we camped near the present site of Rosalia, Washington. Next day we packed up and moved eighteen miles north and west to a point about six miles due west of Spangle, near what is now known as Filio Lake.

Here a number of Indians came into our camp and held a council with Col. Steptoe, who told them that he had not come out to fight them, but was sent out to pick out a point for a fort on the 49th parallel to protect men engaged in the boundary survey. The Indians said they would refuse to let Col. Steptoe have any canoes with which to cross the Spokane river and Steptoe concluded to go back to Fort Walla Walla. Among the Indians there were Saltees of the Coeur d'Alenes, and Polatkin, war chief of the Spokanes. I don't recall seeing Spokane Garry there. I know Spokane Garry. He could read and write very good English. Big Star, the Spokane Chief, as I understand, had his people go home. Chief Moses' band was there and participated in the fight. My recollections of the Steptoe and Wright expeditions were published in the Lewiston (Idaho) Tribune in July and August, 1916.

I returned to the Spokane Country as a pack master in charge of one of the pack trains of Col. Wright's campaign in August and September, 1858, when the battles of Four Lakes and Spokane Plains were fought, and I have pointed out to members of the Spokane Historical Society the sites of these battles, and the place where the first Indian¹ was hung and the nine hundred horses killed on the Spokane river, and the site of the Indian council, and Col. Wright's camp on Hangman's creek, at what is now known as Smith's ford. The way I happened to be selected to hang that first Indian and the Indians

¹This Indian was a Palouse. Colonel George Wright's report, H. Ex. Doc. in No. 2, 35 C., 2 S., p. 394, states: "I investigated the case of the Indian prisoner suspected of having been engaged in the murder; the fact of his guilt was established beyond doubt; and he was hung at sunset." See, Kip, *Army Life on the Pacific*, p. 67.

whose execution led to Latah creek receiving the gruesome title of Hangman's Creek was this: At the camp on the Spokane, afterwards known as "Horse Slaughter camp," one of the officers enquired of us whether we knew how to tie a certain noose or knot called a hangman's noose. I knew how to tie this knot and upon answering that I could tie that kind of a knot was informed that I was detailed to act as hangman, and it thus happened that I tied the knot and placed the rope about the neck of all the Indians hung by Col. Wright's command in the Spokane country. There is nothing in the gossip reported by my good friend, Mr. John Smith, to the effect that I received twenty dollars for each Indian hung, as I never received any bonus or reward for obeying the commands of my superior officers in assisting in the execution of these Indians.

At the time of the Wright campaign in 1858, many of the Indians in the Spokane country raised grain and vegetables. In the little valley just around the rocky point east of "Horse slaughter camp" on the Spokane river we found fifteen or twenty Indian houses filled with grain. A great deal of the grain was threshed and in Indian sacks. Near Post Falls, I recall, that we also found some four or five more Indian houses filled with grain. All this was burned and destroyed by Col. Wright's Command². At that time the Spokane Indians had a big village on the Little Spokane, near its mouth, and, as I was informed, raised considerable grain in that vicinity. This village was out of our way and was not disturbed by Col. Wright.

After the Wright campaign I remained at Fort Walla Walla for a while as assistant wagon master. I then entered the employment of the Indian Department for the Nez Perce Indians and went in charge of some stock for the Lapwai Agency, but did not remain there but a short time. In April, 1859, I was engaged by Quartermaster Captain Ingalls to go to Fort Vancouver and enter the employment of the quartermaster's department and to organize a pack train to accompany two companies of the Ninth Infantry being sent north as an escort for the boundary commission from Fort Simcoe. Another train was also being organized for an expedition to go in command of Major Heller to Fort Hall, in Idaho. This train was in charge of Ben Drew. We went up the Columbia to the mouth of the Okanogan and up the Okanogan to Lake Osoyoos and waited there about six weeks for the surveying party to come through from the west and meet us and then we accompanied the surveying party on east to Fort Colville. During

²The report of Colonel George Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 396, states: "Large quantities of wheat and oats, also many caches of vegetables, kamas and dried berries, have been destroyed." Kip, *op. cit.*, p. 70, gives a more detailed account.

the fall I was sent down from Colville to Fort Walla Walla for supplies which I brought back with my train. Major Lougenbeel of the Nineteenth Infantry was in charge of the troops at Colville. The troops went into winter quarters at the post which was then being erected.

My route from Colville to Walla Walla was south through Walker's prairie to the Spokane river, where the late James Monoghan was then in charge of the newly established ferry. From the river I proceeded south to Sprague Lake, a little creek running into the lake was then called Loughenbeel Creek. Shortly afterwards a man named Smith³ took up a ranch in the vicinity. From the lake the route was down Cow Creek. We struck the Palouse and crossed it at its mouth where a ferry was then established. This was about five miles below the mouth of the Tucannon. From there the route was south, hitting the Touchet River about five miles south of the present town of Prescott and then to Fort Walla Walla. In those days there were no settlers north of the Snake river, except a few old Hudson Bay men in the Colville valley. I remember one of these, a Frenchman named Brown.⁴ I also met one of the Finlays⁵ at the new army post at Colville. He was a tall, bony man about fifty or sixty years old. A Mr. Wolf⁶ located on some land about fifteen miles south of the garrison on the road to Walla Walla.

I went to the Wild Horse mining excitement in the Kootenay country in 1864, leaving Lewiston on the 4th of July. I met Anton Plant on the Spokane about ten miles above the falls on the north side of the river near the bluff at Trent. Lieutenant Mullan had installed a ferry there, and during the Wild Horse excitement in '64 Anton Plant⁷ operated the ferry.

The first man at what is now known as Rathdrum, Idaho, was a man named Connors.⁸ He afterwards bought out Herrin & Lee at Spokane Bridge. In '64 Connors had a two-story, log road house.

³I have been unable to ascertain either Smith's Christian name, or his history.

⁴Doubtless Mr. Thomas Brown, a member of the Sinclair party, mentioned by John V. Campbell, in Washington Historical Quarterly, III, 193.

⁵Probably either Francis Finlay or Xavier Finlay, half-breed sons of Jacques Raphael Finlay, both of whom resided near the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Colville, in 1850 and 1860.

⁶Francis Wolfe, mentioned in the Washington Historical Quarterly, VII, 276. He drove the first wagons loaded with merchandise into Colville Valley in 1856.

⁷Antoine Plant's crossing was a short distance above the present town of Trent. The legislature of 1860-61 passed an act, "authorizing Antoine Plant, his heirs and assigns, to establish and keep a ferry across the Spokane river, at or near the point where the military road from Fort Walla Walla to Fort Benton crosses said river." At his brother-in-law's place, Antone Camille's, some three miles above, the Mullan road connected with the old Colville road coming down over Peone Prairie.

⁸The settlement at Rathdrum was first called Westwood after Wes. (Wesley) Wood. The name Rathdrum was not given it until the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Later Mr. Frederick Post, of Post Falls Fame, bought Connors out. At that time, I think that Connors was a bachelor. Tom Ford, an early partner of M. M. Cowley, later settled at Rathdrum.

At Sinneacatine Ferry, on the Pend O'Reille, Guy Hanes,⁹ in '64 had a road house. Governor Miles Moore of Walla Walla had a small trading post there. In those days there was a road house at the Snake river crossing,¹⁰ another on Cow Creek, a short distance from its mouth where it joins the Palouse, another at Sprague Lake then run by Tom Reynolds.

At Bonners Ferry, in 1864 Ed. Bonner had a ferry across the Kootenay which led to the name of Bonners Ferry for the subsequent settlement of that point. In the Spring of that year John Walton, Dick Eddy, and Ed Bonner left the Walla Walla Country for the gold fields on Wild Horse Creek, B. C. Arriving at the crossing of the Kootenai River, they concluded to stop and establish a ferry. Dick Eddy and Ed Bonner were half brothers, Eddy being the oldest. James Galbraith and Marion Nolan established a ferry about six miles south of the mining camp on the Wild Horse, and at Pake River Turning, three miles from its mouth, Ed Jordon from Lewiston, Idaho, established a ferry in 1864.

Returning from the Wild Horse mines in the fall of 1864, I came through by Rathdrum, the California ranch, by what is now Rockford, by the new Coeur d'Alene mission on Hangman Creek, crossing the palouse river two miles above the present town of Palouse, then down by the present town of Moscow to Lewiston, Idaho.

In the middle of November, 1864, I started out from Lewiston with supplies and tools, together with Joe Herrin and Tim Lee, who intended to put in a ferry and bridge across the Spokane at what is now known as Spokane Bridge. Both Herrin and Lee had been to the Wild Horse country that spring and had selected the site as a good location for a bridge and ferry.

The Indians came around occasionally while we were building the bridge. I think their principal village was then on the Little Spokane. There may have been a small village at Anton Plant's place. I saw Chief Garry frequently that winter and spring while we were building the bridge. He was pretty well fixed and then talked very good English. He wanted Herrin and Lee to pay him a bonus for the right to

⁹In 1862-64 these various ferries, and the Pend d'Oreille River and part of the Kootenai River, were all within the bounds of Spokane County, Washington Territory.

¹⁰The McWirck Bros. had the first ferry at the mouth of the Palouse, operating under a charter granted in the early sixties. The name of this ferry was later changed to "Lyons ferry." I have been unable to learn the names of the men who ran the road-houses at the Snake River crossing, and on Cow Creek near the Palouse. A settler named Hines ran an eating-house on lower Rock Creek.

construct a bridge there. Garry was the leading chief of the Spokane Indians, Polatkin was war chief of the Spokanes. Big Star was considered a pretty good Indian, while I think that Spokane Garry was treacherous. I met Kamiaken a couple of times. He, was tall, very dark and a good physique. The Palouse Indians appeared to be a mixture of several tribes, Umatillas, Yakimas, Nez Perces, etc., and were nearly all renegades. The Indians in the Spokane country had churches in the early days.¹¹ There was one near the Indian houses where we burned the grain, east of Horse slaughter camp in 1858. This had a cross on it. I know old Judge Yantis.¹² He came from Olympia and died, I think, at Walla Walla.

Regarding the bridge, Joe Herrin later sold out his interest to Charles Connor and later Lee and Connor sold out to M. M. Cowley. In January, 1865, I went back to Lewiston for supplies, accompanied by Bob Emery, who was working on the bridge. We came right back. On account of the deep snow, we changed our route to the Spokane river, going down Snake River to Almota, about twenty-five miles below Lewiston. We had a half-breed Spokane and Nez Perce Indian for a guide. From Almota we struck north across the country, crossing the Palouse river at Kamiaken's camp. His family consisted of about eight or ten Indians. In the vicinity of this camp there is a butte still known by the name of "Kamiaken Butte" after the old chief. Going north from there we struck for Rock Lake and a mile or two further on we came into the old Mullan road, which we followed to the vicinity of Wright's old camp on Hangman creek, where a trail branched off by way of California ranch. This was called the "Kentuck cut off" after Kentuck Ruark, who had put in a ferry on the Snake river at what is called Texas ferry—opposite Riparia. The trail passed Liberty Lake on the right—it might have been Salteese Lake; I think, though, the trail ran between the two lakes. Reaching the gravel, the trail struck across the valley to Rathdrum. Connors was not at Rathdrum when we went up to the Wild Horse in July, '64.

I think that Kentuck Ruark was in the first Coeur d'Alene excitement of '65. It was called the Wilson excitement. About five hundred men participated in the rush. After Wilson made his find in

¹¹The Catholics did not commence their missionary work among the upper Spokanes until several years after 1858; the Indian Churches mentioned were undoubtedly the result of the efforts of Spokane Garry and the Reverend Cushing Eells and Elkanah Walker among the Spokane Indians. For descriptions of early Spokane Indian churches see the journal of W. H. Gray, p. 77, and Elkanah Walker's diary, under date Sept. 22, 1838.

¹²Judge Yantis was a noted pioneer character. An early resident of the towns of Tacoma, and Colville, in Washington Territory, and of Lewiston, Idaho, he served as justice of the peace, legislator, and captain of the "Spokane Invincibles," a volunteer military organization raised among the miners in the Colville country in 1856. He was a Kentuckian by birth and died on the Sound in 1879.

the Spring of '65 he came down to Walla Walla to purchase supplies which he paid for in gold dust, exhibiting in the transaction considerable gold. He never told anybody anything about where he got it, but people got suspicious and followed him.

At that time I was with a party from Lewiston prospecting on the upper Palouse about eight or ten miles above Palouse Bridge which was put in in 1864 by a man named Bugsby about two miles above Palouse City. In 1865 it was owned by Bill Ewing. I had gone down to Ewing's to get some mail, he said there was a big excitement, that they had struck it in the Coeur d'Alenes and that many men were going by from Walla Walla bound for the new diggings.

I went back to camp and told my partners and we concluded to pull up our stakes and join the rush. When we reached the Old Mission we found a number of men camped there. Wilson, with six or eight men, was cutting a trail into where he had made his find. A guard was put out to prevent anyone going into the section until the trail was built.

Several of us went back twelve or thirteen miles from the Mission and on a small stream found another bunch of men encamped. That was as far as we ever got. Poor Wilson became so confused and excited that he could not find his mine. The wrathful miners who had followed him came very near hanging him. He was only saved by the intervention of the Catholic priest at the Mission. Wilson said to the excited miners: "I never told you I had any gold and now when I cannot find it you want to hang me." I think that his find was on Pritchard Creek, probably somewhere in the neighborhood of the later discovery and excitement of 1883.

Thirteen or fourteen of us miners now concluded to go east over the Mullan road into Montana to another stampede or mining excitement in McClellan's Gulch on the west side of the Rockies. I was posted on the location of a piece of ground for a claim, but in going in I got off on an old buffalo trail and was too late by about an hour to stake the ground. The parties who got it took out about eighteen hundred dollars a day in coarse gold.

I afterwards went to Blackfoot City, Montana. I was then nearly broke, having only two or three dollars left. I saw a sign over one of the stores "Mason & Wiley." I had thought it would be a good business proposition to put in a saloon at McClellan Gulch, provided I could secure the necessary credit. Going to the store I was confronted with a large sign, "Positively no credit." I asked one of the proprietors if he had any liquor stock and bar fixtures, stating that I had seen a good opportunity for an opening at McClellan Gulch,

and asking him to back me, as I had nothing except eight or ten head of horses. He asked me if I did not see the sign, and I told him "yes" and upon my insisting that the sign did not apply to my case he asked me where I was from. I told him "Lewiston, Idaho." This was not a very happy reference, for just then the vigilant committee was hanging people and running all the "black legs" out of the Lewiston country. After I had told him my name and stated that my father used to command the post at Fort Leavenworth, Wiley told me that he had formerly clerked for Hiram Rich, post sutler, at Leavenworth, and I finally got my stock and fixtures on credit. Later I sold the stock out and went back to Lewiston, Idaho.

In the mining excitement in the Pend O'Reille country in 1865, three boats were built on the south end of the lake near Lakeview, about fifteen or sixteen miles east of Rathdrum, Idaho.

In 1862 I was married at Lewiston, Idaho, to Jane Stewart, who died fifteen years ago. We had one child, Tom Beall, now farming near Rubens on the road between Lewiston and Grangeville, Idaho. Most of my time since the '60's has been spent in prospecting and mining. I have participated in most all the mining rushes in the Northwest, and was very active up to above five years ago, when I contracted inflammatory rheumatism. I am now living at Lewiston, Idaho.

THOMAS B. BEALL.