Pocatello Never Came Back

J. D. Gilliam

Pocatello is one of the wide-awake towns in Idaho. It lies at the crossroads of the Oregon Short Line, whose legs like a giant X reach Salt Lake and Boise, Granger, and Portland. Pocatello was located in the center of the Ft. Hall Indian Reservation about 1882 when the Utah Northern went from Ogden to Anaconda. It has gradually become seggregated from Indian lands by the government having had the eastern and southern portions thrown open to settlers. The Indians on these lands were the Bannocks and the Shoshones, a mixture of [illegible] and politics make queer bed-fellows. There are almost fifty hundred of them yet living on what was formerly the north-west corner of the greater holding and aboriginal inheritance. The remainder has been lost to the ever encroaching and never satisfied white man.

Pocatello is said to be the Spanish word for "female kitten", I am sure I do not know; but it was the name of a powerful and sanguinary chief of the bloodthirsty [illegible] years ago.

There are living yet a few of the pale faces who were there in that long ago, and who became squawmen by marrying among the red faces. One of these a short time since was "Doc" Yandell. He lived in a little shack on Indian ground and raised horses (formerly Indian hair) and eked out a half ration existence. The writer went once to his barbarial "palace" and had a friendly and reminiscent chat with him.

"Tell me about Pocatello, the Indian, and what became of him Doc?" said I.

The old veteran darned with the [illegible] its wintry winds, ingrained with its dusty sands, half reclining on a pile of rags—there were no seats there—motioned me to [illegible] door. The four corners were occupied thus: in one was a [illegible] and the [illegible] for range work; in another the accumulation of rags and blankets on which he slept and was now sitting; in another was his sheet-iron box stove, and at the other the door [illegible] The old veteran then lighted his pipe and said:

"[illegible] when the freighters who operated twixt Corinne and Virginny City when Alder Gulch was a-goin' chock full o' business. The Forwardin' company had a mighty big lot o' rollin' stock and hosses to care for and keep up. The hull enjurin' kentry was Injun from night onto Corinne to Montany. The Snake River valley and the Ft. Hall tribes, and the Bannocks and Blackfeet usun make life powerful interestin' and anything but comfortable. Well, I tell ye now the management was sure mad, and [illegible] that somethin' hed to be done, an' blamed quick, too, this time. So we got busy. We begun to round up the old feller and his gang and he appeared to 'smell a rat' right off, and started up that canyon yonder, Pocatello Creek canyon. He did so almighty fast, too, now I'm a-tellin' ye, an' we jes kep' a-folleren' an' folleren', we did, a hull lot of us—an'—an'—an' Pocatello he never come back."

The old squaw man then tapped the ashes from his pipe on his boot heel and rising, went to the door and said, "I guess I better cinch up my cayuse and ride some this afternoon."

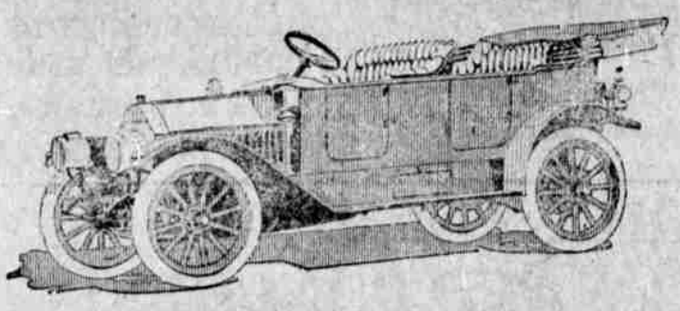
o' July picnic fer them fellers. Right hyur was a nat'rel campin' place fer the [illegible] when they git fresh an' new on the Portneuf River, and go on as they hed to do day an' night.

"They hed to keep things a-movin', ye see, so's they c'd git through soon's [illegible]

"Now, Pocatello and his bunch was [illegible] They hed the [illegible] of stock, and sometimes th company'd haf to [illegible] on north; or till their fagged animals c'd git rested 'fore they'd dare to push on. Mr. Salisbury of Salt Lake was the head o' the company and he and the rest o' the men got all-fired tired o' that sort o' doin's an' wanted it stopped instanter. I don't know if they knew what would be done in the matter but in them days hoss flesh was [illegible] and Injuns was [illegible] planned we might [illegible] he did.

"Fer several days we laid kind o' low, and waited to see somethin' real show up. Pretty soon one night a [illegible] on just when a big lot o' treasure was goin' through [illegible] I tell ye now [illegible] Well, [illegible] Pocatello Creek canyon.

Monday night the board of managers of the Twilight league met in their regular weekly session. Vice President A. A. Wenzel presided. A few more players were passed upon; provision for a mask and breast protector was made and other regular business transacted. Charles R. Harding was selected as the official gatekeeper for all league games.



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