

OLD OREGON TRAIL'S TALE IS NARRATED

Wilson Price Hunt Expedition and "Great Migration" Told in Serial by Walter E. Meacham.

BY WALTER E. MEACHAM,
President of the Old Oregon Trail Association.

(Continued from Yesterday.)

His idea was to establish a line of trading posts from the Missouri to the Columbia and have China as the great mart for the furs obtained. He interested with him Alexander McKean, Duncan McDougall, Donald McKenzie, and Wilson Price Hunt. June 23, 1810, the Pacific Fur company was formed with the above named men as partners of Mr. Astor.

Two expeditions were devised and set on foot, one by sea and one by land to reach the mouth of the Columbia and establish a trading post. The ship Tonquin, under command of Captain Jonathan Thorn, was fitted out for the sea voyage and the land expedition was placed under the command of Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt proceeded to St. Louis, which was then the outpost of civilization, to fit himself out with a company to undertake the toilsome and perilous trip overland through a savage and unknown country.

He was greatly harassed in his undertaking by the Missouri Fur Company, which did not relish the thought of a rival company coming into the field.

But by persevering, Mr. Hunt finally gathered together a company of boatmen and hunters with which to make the journey.

Included in his company were such men as Donald McKenzie, Joseph Miller, Robert McLellan, John Day, Ramsay Crooks, Pierre Dorion, interpreter, John Bradbury, scientist, Mr. Nutall, scientist, and John Reed, clerk.

In October, 1810, the party left St. Louis and proceeded up the Missouri river in boats, where a winter camp was made.

Early in the spring of 1811, the start was made from Nevada, there being twenty-six in the party. On the trip up the river great flocks of pigeons were encountered which at times blackened the sky; their numbers were so great.

Frequent desertions were made in the ranks of the little company but recruits were also received as they went along so that the party was enlarged rather than diminished.

Various tribes of Indians were encountered on the journey up the river. The Omahas were very friendly and traded with the party for such things as both desired.

Benjamin Jones and Alexander Carson, two great hunters, were met and induced to turn back and go with the party, being a welcome addition to the little band.

The Poncas was the next tribe met with and friendly intercourse established with it.

The party was next reinforced by three Kentucky hunters who were on their way home but could not resist the temptation to again defy the wilderness and join in such an expedition.

These men were Edward Robinson, John Hoback and Jacob Riner. Robinson had been scalped and wore a handkerchief around his head in lieu of hair. The Sioux Indians were next encountered but no act of violence was received at their hands though the company feared meeting them on account of their warlike disposition. Great herds of buffalo, elk and deer were seen and the company did not lack for fresh meat.

Mr. Hunt and his party in the largest of the boats were trapped near a sandbar in the river by a party of Arickaras, Mandans and Minnietras and would have been exterminated had not been for the Arickaras, who were friendly to the whites.

These Indians invited the party to visit their village which was not a great distance away and the invitation was accepted.

Mr. Hunt and his party intended to leave the river soon and strike out overland.

The Arickaras had plenty of horses and Mr. Hunt hoped to be able to trace with the Indians for a sufficient number to carry the party and its baggage.

A stay of several days was made in this village which was near the present site of Pierre, South Dakota, and brisk trade was kept up with the Indians.

Guns, powder, bullets, highly colored beads and blankets, knives and tomahawks were traded for horses and finally after much trafficking eighty-two horses were secured and loaded with members of the party and its belongings.

The party now turned its back upon all communication with the outer world and set out upon its tedious and dangerous journey over the mountains and plains which separated it from the object of its trip.

The Cheyenne Indians were next encountered from which the party traded for more horses. In Wyoming, the Crow Indians were met and more horses obtained. The party was forced to watch these Indians continually to avoid treachery but finally parted with them without any trouble.

The Shoshone and Flathead Indians were the next tribe encountered and trading for more horses and for buffalo meat was prosecuted. The party reached Wind River, Wyoming,

in September, 1811, and proceeded up that stream for a number of miles, then crossing the mountains and coming upon the headwaters of the Snake River the latter part of September.

The Canadian voyageurs called it the Mad River. At this point Alexander Carson, Louis St. Michel, Pierre Delays and Pierre Delauney left the party to remain to trap and hunt.

On October 8th, the party arrived at the post erected by Mr. Henry of the Missouri Fur Company. The post was abandoned at this time and the party took possession and proceeded to build boats on which to float down the river. At this place Robinson, Hoback, Riner, and Mr. Miller, one of the partners, stayed to hunt and trap for beaver and other animals.

The party embarked on the river October 18, 1811. On October 21st, what is now American Falls was reached. It was necessary to lower the boats around the falls by means of ropes.

On October 28th, the party arrived at a point near the present site of Twin Falls. Here the party met with many hardships. One of the boats was wrecked and one of the boatmen Antoine Clapline, was drowned.

This place in the river was called Calderon Linn. The situation of the travellers was indeed gloomy as an old tin kettle, after having offered

There was no game in the country and the company began to suffer from hunger.

The party divided into several groups to try and discover the best way out of the dilemma. McLennan and three men kept on down the river, Crooks and five men started back up the river to secure horses left at Fort Henry, McKenzien and four men started across the desert and Mr. Hunt and thirty-one men besides the squaw and two children of Pierre Dorion stayed in camp. In three days Crooks and his party returned, deeming it impossible to secure the horses and get back to the party before winter. The main party then kept on down the river, subsisting on fish and an occasional beaver. The party then divided. Mr. Hunt and eighteen men going on one side of the river and Mr. Crooks and eighteen men on the other side.

Some Snake Indians were encountered from whom some salmon and a few dogs were purchased. On November 17, several Indians were met, one of which was called a horse. Mr. Hunt finally purchased the animal in exchange for this route now, what a different story travellers would have to tell for the magic

a gun, ammunition and beads in vain. Mr. Hunt here left the river and started over the desert. The party encountered great suffering and hardship on this journey and finally reached the Boise river and an Indian camp where fish and dogs were purchased for food. The Payatt and Weiser rivers were forded and the Snake river finally reached again.

November 28th a bag of meat and some fish were purchased from a party of Shoshones who informed Mr. Hunt that they had seen white men on both sides of the Snake river within the last few days.

Washington Irving, in his account of the country west of the Snake: "A dreary desert of sand and gravel extends from the Snake river almost to the Columbia. Here and there is a thin and scanty herbage, insufficient for the pasturage of horse or buffalo. Indeed, these trackless wastes between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific are even more desolate and barren than the naked, upper prairies on the Atlantic side; they present vast dreary and thirsty wilds between the habitations of man, in traversing which, the wanderer will often be in danger of perishing."

If the same party could go over this route now, what a different story they would have to tell for the magic

hand of reclamation has made a garden out of the former desert and populous towns have sprung up in the Snake river valley where members of the Hunt expedition nearly perished of hunger and hardship.

Mr. Hunt and his party continued on down the river canyon which was very steep and difficult to negotiate. Food was very scarce, the party subsisting on a black-tail deer, a beaver and some frozen berries. The horses were killed and eaten one by one until only that owned by Pierre Dorion remained.

On December 6th, 1811, Mr. Crooks and his party were seen on the other side of the river, returning after a vain attempt to get through the narrow precipitous canyon of the river and seeing nothing but mountain pil-

ed upon mountain for miles ahead. Crooks and his men were almost starved, having subsisted on a few beaver and old moccasins. Hunt and his men then turned about and started back up the river.

(To be Continued.)

HUGE WINTER BAL ROOMS

(By Associated Press)

ROME, Mar. 29.—Crown Prince Humbert attended the winter carnival and sports held this year at

what he called the "largest and most beautiful ballroom," comprising 15-square miles, 4,000 feet above the sea level on the Roccaraso plateau in the Abruzzi mountains.

With 500 university students, the prince enjoyed skiing, tobogganing and bob-sledding and when an eagle circled over his head his companions called it a good omen.

When the prince accepted the invitation to attend the carnival he said: "I will come on condition that no ministers, senators or deputies are asked, not even generals."

He was received at Roccaraso with much enthusiasm by the 3,000 inhabitants.

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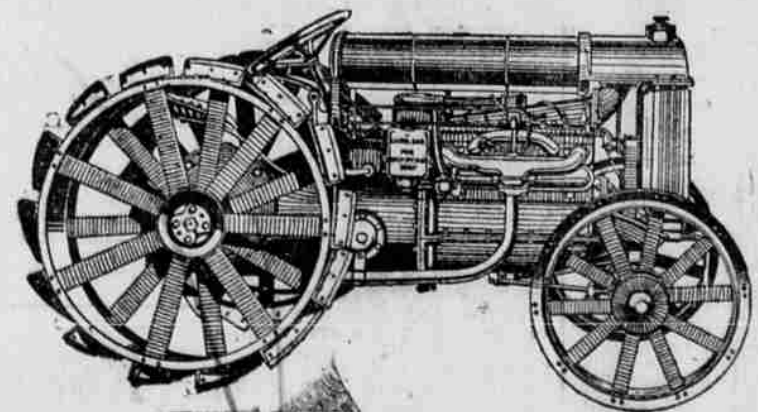
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