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## OREGON PIONEER HISTORY.

SKETCHES OF EARLY DAYS.—MEN AND TIMES IN THE FORTIES

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### Thrilling Adventures of the First Port Orford Settlers.

The earliest mention of Port Orford in the procurable newspaper files I find in the first volume of the Statesman, July 4, 1851, where a correspondent, who signs "J. C. F.," writes from the P. M. S. Columbia, under date of June 25, the same year, that the ship had just touched Port Orford to leave two surveyors, who came prepared to lay out the new town there, but to their surprise the nine men, only lately left there by the steamer Sea Gull, were missing, and from the appearance of the Indians, who fled on the approach of whites, they were forced to believe all was not right. He says they found upon the ground an imperfect memorandum of an attack, in which some forty Indians were engaged, and eighteen paid the forfeit and three of the whites were wounded. This was only a partial statement to the happenings of the Kirkpatrick company, that we shall soon proceed to give. They found the journal of another man, who described a war dance they witnessed. They found only one dead body, that of an Indian buried in the sand. The Indians, who left as they approached, wore clothing, not in accordance with aboriginal habits, and the visitors thought the nine men had been murdered and their effects appropriated. This made it difficult to establish intercourse with the natives, but the persons who were interested in establishing a seaport and commercial point there were not so easily put off.

Two weeks later the Statesman published a communication from J. M. Kirkpatrick, who says he was captain of the nine men who were left at Port Orford by the Sea Gull, and proceeds to give a statement of their adventures there and in escaping from there. This we shall give in detail as gleaned from this communication and from a personal interview had years ago with Mr. John H. Egan, of Portland, who was one of the party of the nine adventurers whom Capt. Tichenor persuaded to go there in his interest and locate a town.

#### VOLUNTEERS GO THERE IN FORCE.

The facts concerning the settlement of Port Orford are not published consecutively in that paper, but come in installments without regularity. The issue of July 22 has a letter dated "Steamer Sea Gull, off Klamath River, July 13," from "J. C. F.," who says the project is to commence a settlement near Cape Blanco, and that Capt. Tichenor, with F. M. Smith, employed eight or nine men to commence a permanent settlement, and that the name "Port Orford" was given to the place selected. That effort having failed, by either the nine men being taken prisoners or massacred, as they believed, another expedition was organized with sixty-five men as volunteers and a number of speculators or agents, who were all well armed and provisioned. They had six pieces of ordnance, and intended to build a fort. The volunteers were young and toughened to hardships; several were experienced in Indian warfare and some were fine marksmen. Five or six proprietors made up the list, so there were seventy-five men in all. With this preliminary information, to give an idea of the situation, we will now go back to the landing of Kirkpatrick's company of nine, employed by Capt. Tichenor and F. M. Smith, and show what stirring times they had in the preliminary effort to build a city by the sea, to accommodate the mining region of Southern

Oregon. We may as we say here that so far as this turning of commerce to a port on the Southern Oregon coast was concerned, it was a failure. The mountains intervening made it impossible to construct roads that could be traversed at all seasons, and the mines of that region have had no Oregon seaport.

#### NINE MEN HAVE A MISSION.

Soon after gold discoveries opened Southern Oregon to commerce and trade, it was deemed important to locate a seaport adjacent to the mines. Capt. Tichenor was commander of a steam propeller named the Sea Gull, a vessel well calculated for the coasting trade. The Sea Gull was at Portland in June, 1851, and when it started early in that month for San Francisco Tichenor took down a small party of men who were to locate at Port Orford and establish a point for trade with the northern mines.

The Sea Gull reached there and anchored on the 9th of June, remaining long enough to see the nine adventurers landed and making peaceful terms with the natives. The Indians there were very civil and agreeable so long as the ship and her numerous passengers were in sight, but no longer. As soon as the Sea Gull got up steam and flew away the Indians commenced to do saucy things and be very impudent and offensive. Fortunately the steamer did not leave until the men were well fixed and had a good defensive camp. At Orford a point puts out to seaward and the harbor is made by the sea thus afforded. The bay or harbor is exposed to the sea on the south and west, and is sheltered by land on the east and north. In the shelter of the cape an island stands, close by the shore. The mainland has a bluff, a hundred or so feet high, that overshadows the sea beach. There are places where creeks or ravines seek the seashore and break through the bluff, otherwise the sea wall extends around the harbor.

The island may be eighty feet wide by three hundred feet long, and stands with its broadside to the shore. The rock wall around it is perpendicular on all sides except at the south, or southeastern end, where a well-worn trail ascends by a fair grade, some rocks projecting and some sharp turns affording protection. The surf pounds around the island and on the harbor beach, except where the island protects the shore line. Under the lee of this island they first camped on the beach, and afterwards on the island, when they found the trail leading to the summit. This summit proved to be a plateau 80x300 feet, almost level, and inaccessible save by the trail that came up at its southern point. The mainland had a level equal to that of the island plateau. Standing back from the strait that lay between main and isle, it seemed as if it were all mainland, as the summit levels were the same. When they left the ship they persuaded Tichenor to let them take ashore the four-pound iron gun, or carronade, on the Sea Gull's deck. The night previous to the steamer's leaving they took this gun to the island and planted it at the head of the trail, where it could sweep the only approach to their refuge. This trail came down from the mainland where the strait was shallow and fordable at any stage of water, while the approach to the island was bare when the tides were lowest. This was the situation.

#### INDIANS ASSAIL THE FORTRESS.

At first the natives showed a desire to trade and be friendly. When the Sea Gull left they became saucy and impudent and ordered the whites to be off. They found their protected camp on the island a great relief from the savages and experienced no trouble until the morning of the sixth day, when the Indians were seen crowding down the bluff at sunrise and crossing the ford as if to come on the island. Then Kirkpatrick and some others went out to meet them and tried to persuade them

to keep back. They were evidently bent on a "scrimmage," for they had crowded the shore at earliest daylight, built fires and had their war dance, which meant business on their part. It was evident, too, that they were better armed than ever before, as well as more numerous. They were constantly being recruited by new parties that came over the hills to join them. A large canoe had made its appearance with a chief and twelve warriors. So, by early morning, they began to be formidable as to number and character. They gave no heed to the orders and motions to return, but crowded across the ford and commenced to climb the trail. Kirkpatrick and the rest retired to their summit refuge, the arrows whistling near them as they went. At least forty Indians rushed after and reached the top of the trail before any stop was made. The savages then tried to pull the men's hats off, and to tear their clothing from them. One of them clinched with Jim Kerrigan and was about to take his rifle from him, when some white man pounded his hands and made him let go. Brush had been piled across the head of the trail and the ship's carronade was a masked battery close behind it. The tents of the party were near by. Three of the assailants had leaped over the brush wall and were inside the camp, when one of the men knocked them down, one after another, he being alone at that point. The blows bent the gun barrel and ruined so much artillery, but laid hors-du-combat three Indians, two of whom were found to be dead and the other near it. This was all instantaneous and some of the men called to Kirkpatrick to fire the cannon. That was done as the three Indians inside the camp were receiving the quietus already told of.

#### A CANNON SHOT THAT TOLD.

The situation was extremely critical. Nine men were holding back a furious horde of savages who had been nerving themselves up to the work in hand and had overpowering numbers to do it with. In an instant the men stood aside, and while the three on the left were being clubbed with an old musket, Kirkpatrick seized a brand from the camp fire close by and touched off the cannon. Its charge of iron slugs went like a thunderbolt through the crowd of savages that were massed at the gun's muzzle, but had no idea of its existence. Never was shot more opportune, and scarce ever was one more effective in proportion to its calibre. The head of the trail was strewn with corpses. The Indians had opened the battle with a volley of arrows, but they fired up hill and the arrows nearly all went skywards. They had long knives, like the Mexican and Central American machete, as if a stout piece of hoop iron made the blade, and pieces of wood bolted over one end made the handle. They relied chiefly on bows and arrows, and while some were at close quarters others would shoot across from the main land.

The cannon strewed the way with dead and dying and then laid low in camp. Terrible demoralization seized them, but many remained and fought hand to hand for twenty minutes. The whites followed up their cannon shot by use of their guns and pistols at close quarters. They had four men wounded, but none dangerously; all recovered soon, as there was no poison on the arrow-heads. That afternoon two rifle shots were fired at the island from different spots on shore, and the men thought the swish had some way got the guns, but did not have ammunition to make them available. When they finally got to the Umpqua, they were told there that the Indians lost twenty men killed, and had fifteen badly wounded. Egan, of Portland, told me many years ago that eighteen were found dead about the island and had to be buried. Those who survived stood before rifles and revolvers a little while, then fled to the rocks that

crowded the beach and paid their compliments in the shape of arrow-shots the remainder of the day.

#### BURYING THE INDIAN DEAD.

It was the middle of June by this time, and the weather was very warm. The island had no native spring to supply water, and the men found fighting to be thirsty business. The dead lay in the camp, and one fellow who got a dose there survived for many a day. Even he was a heart-rending subject, with his groans and blood-encrusted locks. It was almost unbearable, especially as four of their own nine were wounded. Toward the middle of the afternoon an old chief was seen on the rocky bluff making signs and holding up his hands to show that he was unarmed. They gave him permission to come to the camp and he finally did so, moaning piteously over the dead bodies that were strewn about there. Soon afterward canoes came, and the bodies of the dead were put into them and borne away. The whites assisted in removing the bodies that lay inside their camp, and helped to move the wounded man, who had revived and was moaning pitifully. Indian treachery was shown to the last, for a hostile arrow—or may be one of the rifle shots—carried away Joe Hussey's thumb while he was at this work of mercy.

For several days they saw but few Indians, and were encouraged to think they had all gone away, and themselves left in peace. This emboldened them to prospect the vicinity, and in exploring near camp, they found the aromatic white cedar and saw indications of coal. In the creek that put into the ocean near by they found speckled trout in abundance. The discovery of the white Port Orford cedar was made then, and it existed in immense forests. There were great flocks of pigeons; sea otter were seen in the water near by, while signs of elk, deer and bear were all around them. We forgot to say that for some reason or other the Indians refused to bury or take away one of the dead bodies that lay at the edge of the water. Probably it was the body of a slave, and they would not waste time on it. So the whites covered it up time and again, with rocks and rubbish, but like Banquo's ghost, it wouldn't "down," and every high tide threw it about again. This kept up so long as they remained there, and the same sight greeted Capt. Tichenor when he finally was able to reach Port Orford on the Columbia.

#### The Mechanics Fair.

This Fair has been held for a week past and has attracted many people from a distance. Coming in October, when the farmer has as much leisure as he can command at any time, many improve the beautiful weather and excursion rates for travel to see the metropolis, lay in winter supplies and have a sight at the exhibit, which is lit up with electric glare and crowded with curious human beings. To be sure much of what is there displayed comes from the stores and is arranged to please the eye and fill up the building, 200x200 feet in size. The galleries, too, are crowded with the various ecceteras that adorn our persons and beautify our homes, not forgetting the picture gallery that comes as borrowed art from many elegant homes.

Near the door is a space devoted to work made from Portland cement, and if it works as well as they say, and as appearances indicate this cement will equal in value its famous namesake that was named in generations gone by from a place in England that gave it to the world. It is Portland cement again, on the far-off shores of the new and enterprising Occident. "Westward the star of the empire takes its way," and this is the shore from which navigators point to "Furthest Inds." The various work made from this cement

shows its great value for many purposes. Such work as this strikes the attention of a practical man, who realizes the need of material for building, and for many ornamental uses. He sees that our region has natural resources that are easily developed as soon as transportation makes them available. We already have rail and water communication to a large extent and other enterprises are planned that will open all parts of the Pacific Northwest to capital and enterprise.

Among the machinery we see that the old time patrons of this journal are well represented. A great engine receives power from a boiler and keeps every thing in motion. One of the entries is the "Stutesman steam generator," that was invented in our State by our fellow citizen George Stutesman. David Cole & Co. have an interest in it, and Mr. Cole is determined to make it known with all its advantages for saving fuel and furnishing safe and economical power. It is mentioned in his advertisement and seems to deserve all that is claimed for it.

The floral garden, or parterre, is a very beautiful place where young and old can wander at ease, or occupy rustic seats and benches. Fountains and cascades; cascades and springs from many small jets, waterfalls and rock work in different forms, with moss and lichens; ivy and vines twining round a miniature log cabin that is perched on a rocky summit—all these are lit by electric glare that shines by night as brilliant as if sunshine waked the world.

The horticultural exhibit occupies that same southwest corner and is perhaps more attractive than ever. Mr. Settlementire has a large selection of green fruits; Mr. Seth Luelling has many beautiful grapes and other fruits. H. W. Prettyman has a very good exhibit, not so extensive in variety but not to be excelled in excellence. He shows a fine lot of fruit trees, of wonderful size for their age. He has Japanese persimmons. (Someone shows figs), excellent peaches from his own seedling trees, and intends to introduce here varieties of peaches that have originated in our region, therefore should be acclimated and do well here.

We do not pretend to describe the Fair and do justice to exhibitors, only to give a transient look as we pass along. This Fair belongs to Portland and its citizens have a good support for it from the country. It is worth much to young people to catch a sight of a city; see street cars and the traffic that throngs its streets; see river and ocean steamers, coasters and deep sea ships, and watch the bustle and rush of trade in the business season.

A. F. Miller has charge of the agricultural exhibit, and he can show it with satisfaction. There are many visitors from abroad in our State at this time and they all visit the Fair. There is much there that redounds to the honor of our State, showing its vast but hidden resources and their development. Baker county has a mineral exhibit under the charge of our old-time friend J. W. Virtue, who was there in 1863-4 when we lived there. He has charge of a very extensive and interesting cabinet of rich specimens. The time is near at hand when that district will yield treasure from its mines that will overshadow the finest bonanzas on the Pacific slope, not including Montana, for the same range of mineral penetrates Idaho and Montana and Eastern Oregon.

The American Fruit Drier is in operation there, for which Messrs. Staver & Walker are agents. It is handled by Mr. Winston, of Douglas county, who has much experience in drying fruits and says this excels in its perfect work and ease and economy of operating it any drier he ever saw. He turns out dried apples in two hours time.

BLUE VITRIOL.—Cheapest at Port Drug Co., 100 State street.