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OREGON PIONEER HISTORY.

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

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Sketches of the Free Trappers and Mountain Men of Early Times.

One of the most remarkable escapes and terrific contests told by mountain men occurred in the history of Wilkins and Ebbert, and must have happened about 1835, in the Malad country, south of Boise river, Idaho. A company of five men and Fannie Ebbert went trapping and hunting. They purchased \$150 worth of goods for trading. They were Ebbert, Wilkins, Richard Owens, John Burris and Fannie. When out about a month they saw Indian tracks and stood guard. Ebbert had a very valuable horse that cost him \$175. He was on the last watch one night when a band of sixty or seventy Blackfeet rushed close to camp to stampede the horses. Snow lay six or seven inches deep in the bottoms at this time. Owens and Wilkins fired and killed two men. Ebbert was shot through the foot while trying to catch the loose horses. The boys called to him to let the horses go, and he did so. They were camped on a small creek. The Indians killed all but two horses. Ebbert's was shot with two arrows, six inches deep. The enemy fired from the hill and a bullet hit poor Woodman in the neck, killing him instantly. Some of the Indians had guns. The men made a breastwork of saddles and other things and put Woodman in the pile. The Indians came so close that their guns crossed ours (Ebbert said) over this rampart. They made a fort of our dead horses, and the fight lasted four or five hours before daylight came. Owens knew their language. Wilkins said he saw the gleam of a powder horn. "Burst it!" said Ebbert. Wilkins fired and a terrible yell went up. Owens said that he understood that a great chief was killed, and knew that they would soon draw off; and so they did. They found out afterwards that the Blackfeet lost ten men in this raid. They buried Woodman as well as they could, as it was shallow to water.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

The last thing they shot was Ebbert's fine horse. The trappers found another one, badly tangled up, but alive. They got it on its feet and hobbled. It ran up the hill and the Indians after him, but it was saved. They packed their valuable furs on this nag. The brave woman Fannie had done her part well. She had a dress with \$150 worth of beads on it. Mountain men vied in fixing up their wives bravely, and Fannie had the best there was. She walked twenty miles and then had a leg "four sizes too large." It was impossible for her to walk, so she said for the rest to go on and she would make her way to Fort Hall or somewhere else in a week or so. Dick Owens owned the horse and said: "Cache the things and put the blankets and the woman on the horse." This was done. Ebbert remembered a cut-off that McKay discovered, though water was scarce on it. All said go ahead! It saved eighty miles. It was a terrible hot day and no water! Burris gave out. Fannie went on a hill and there saw a band of forty or fifty Indians, which inspired Burris and he went on again. They pushed forward to a slimy lake, where antelope and mountain sheep frequented, and when they drank the water it made them vomit; it was full of dung and very filthy. They dug a well near the lake and that improved the water a little. They pushed on ten miles further to a prickly pear region, and as it was night had to stop to avoid stepping on the

prickly things. Fannie called them at moonrise. They found water at 10 o'clock the next day in a rock-hole, and soon after reached Snake river. Burris staid behind, but Fannie carried him back water to drink and he managed to get down to the river.

THEY REACH FORT HALL.

Wilkins killed an antelope, and they were in comfort again. They had to cross the river to get to Fort Hall. They saw an Indian among the rocks, and it proved to be a poor Snake siwash, who said in answer to Fannie, who talked the Snake language, that Blackfeet had the previous day killed all his family except a grown girl they carried off. Wilkins killed a fat buffalo cow near here, so they had abundance of good meat. They made a raft of drift logs and crossed the river, and in due time reached the fort, where news had already been heard of the fight through the Blackfeet. It seems there was a village of this tribe in a mountain valley near there, and a trader from the Hudson Bay Company was with them. They learned from him that this band of trappers were on the Malad, and made a raid to rob them of horses, furs and goods. This man LaDuke was perhaps innocent of intention, and did not think the Blackfeet would attack them, but they did do so, as a result of his information, and their village was in mourning many days. This is a sample of the hardships and dangers that beset the trapper's life, and shows how bravely the trappers' Nez Perces wives did their part amid such dangers.

This fight with the Blackfeet was only one of many escapes Ebbert and Wilkins had from great danger. The mountain man carried his life in his hand. Once the Blackfeet and Creeks charged in at daylight. Two men had been setting traps after dark and saw signs of them, so they placed a guard, but the Blackfeet rushed in with a terrible yell that stampeded the horses. A fight followed but no one was killed. After the fight was over the Blackfeet wanted the whites to smoke with them, but they would not. The Indians stole a great number of traps and the beaver in them. It is remarkable that the mountain men escaped with so few losses of life. The Indians were not often as well armed, and felt that the whites were the best fighters, so were at a disadvantage. When they took the war path in great numbers they would attack small parties, but usually lost the day, as the Blackfeet did in the story told above, ten to one. War with the Indians was not more dangerous, sometimes, than the rivalries and contentions between competing fur companies for the trade of the mountain regions.

ACROSS THE PLAINS IN EARLY SPRING.

In 1848 Ebbert went east at the request of Governor Abernethy as an escort for Joe Meek, who went as a messenger from Oregon to carry news of the outbreak of the Indians and the massacre of the Whitman family. The escort consisted of a number of men who wished to return to their friends in "the states." The company was composed of Joe Meek, Squire Ebbert, Leabo, Williams, Miller (who went back to Missouri), Nathan Bowman, John Owens, David Young and a character known as "Jack, the Sailor." They got started in March and accompanied the Oregon volunteer troops through the Umatilla country to where Whitman's station used to be. On the way the Oregon volunteers had two battles with the Cayuses and whipped them. At Whitman's they killed a fat cow and jerked the meat and then went over the Blue mountains. They had an escort of volunteers part of the way. They went to Grand Ronde valley through deep snows. John Owens took the measles on Snake river and had to be carried for a ways, but two days rest at Fort Hall made him well. Meek had an order on Captain Grant at Fort Hall

for provisions but he was at Salt Lake and Mrs. Grant refused to comply with the order. They only got a few things there and pushed on. At Port Neuf, a few miles beyond Fort Hall, a horse gave out, so they killed it and took the meat along. They tried to kill geese on Bear river and failed. Ebbert thought he saw buffalo tracks and wanted to follow them. Meek said no, but finally they all went. As snow wouldn't bear up animals, they left their mules and went afoot. Across Bear river they found a wagon train that proved to be Pegleg Smith and two Frenchmen and their half-breed families, with a band of American cattle. They lived in their camp and traded for cattle. They cooked the Oregon men a good meal and made all feel happy. Pegleg Smith traded Meek a fat heifer, which was killed and the meat dried, and they went on their way next day. He was to pay for it when he came back, but back he never came, so a fat heifer was Pegleg Smith's contribution to the patriotic fund.

HARDSHIPS AND DANGER.

So they made their way, amid dangers and hardships, through the early spring, sometimes hungered and always wearied. Meek had his documents tied around his body, and in crossing Big Muddy, a branch of Bear river, his mule was washed down stream, and he and his personal belongings got wet, so they had to stop and dry them, which was difficult, as there was only brush to burn. They were treated well at Bridger's, who exchanged good mules for their worn out ones, and gave them such meat as he had, and sugar and coffee. The other side of Laramie they found a single buffalo bull, wandering the frozen plains. They killed it and had meat in abundance. Very soon they found plenty of bison, and killed all they needed.

At Sweetwater they obtained more supplies, and Jack the Sailor left them there. When they reached the Platte forks it snowed and stormed severely. The mules suffered from hunger, and all of them were subject to great hardship. Some of the mules gave out at different times. On the Blue rivers they met a train of emigrants bound for Oregon. They were suffering severely for want of food, and when the emigrants gave them good food, they were happy. So were the emigrants, who were anxious to hear from Oregon, as many of them had friends there. They gathered round and asked for letters. Word had been sent around Oregon that an express was going "to the states," and many had sent letters by them. The escort had saddle bags full, so they got out their mail bag and called off the letters they found there, furnishing mail for a great many of the emigrants present. When they reached the Kaw agency they expected to be treated at least humanely, but the agent refused them any hospitality whatever, though Meek explained his mission and his purpose. They were turned away hungry. They came at last to St. Jo and went to a good hotel to get meals and lodgings, but the landlord refused them any accommodations. He had more respect for appearances than for purposes. Men of the plains were too hard looking to suit the fastidious tastes of civilized life. Fortunately Miller's father met them here, and soon found for them a hostelry where they were well cared for. They had completed a journey through the half winter months of early spring that entailed great hardship as well as danger.

The advertisement of the California Nursery Company, John Rock, manager, Niles, California, appears in this issue. Their stock is complete and reliable. They have an immense nursery, and from information received they are alluded to as perfectly reliable. Send for catalogue and mention you saw their advertisement in the FARMER.

Horticultural.

HOT-BEDS FOR WINTER.

Now is the best time to get ready a hot-bed for winter or spring work. Choose a place well drained and sheltered from the north and west winds, and sloping gently to the south or level. Build a tight board fence six feet high, running nearly east and west, or southwest or northeast, so as to have the bed face somewhere between southeast and south. Let the fence post lean back eight inches at the top so that when the mats from the bed are leaned against the fence they will not readily fall down with the gusts of wind. As an additional precaution it is well to run a small rope along the fence about four feet high, securing it between each second mat and the next one to a cleft made fast to the fence; this rope will effectually prevent the wind from blowing the mats down, a frequent source of annoyance and breakage of glass. The rope, of course, will have to be coiled every day when the mats go on the bed.

According to a formula of the American Cultivator, the ground in front of the fence should be made thoroughly fine and rich for a distance of eight or ten feet from the fence, throwing out all stones and sods, and working in a liberal dressing of fine manure. When finished the bed should slope slightly from the fence. Now place a row of 2x12 inch planks along the bed two feet from the fence; square the ends so they will butt together without a large crack, stretch a garden line two feet from the fence to guide the driving of 1x4 inch stakes, which are to be driven at the points where the planks butt together, and at a distance of about six feet between these points. Next hold the edge against the stakes and nail through the stakes into the planks with nine penny nails, being careful to keep the line of the planks parallel with the surface of the ground, which may slope a little from one end to the other if convenient or may be quite level. The plank for the other side of the bed should be 2x9 inches, and is set just six feet outside measure from the other by using a gauge and four inches below it by a level on the gauge. This will give the glass a proper slope toward the south. The height at which the planks are to be placed is a matter of some consequence. The wide plank at the north side of the bed is usually placed an inch or two above the surface on beds which are to be run with a strong heat; if for beds to be used with a mild heat the planks should be set three or four or even six inches lower, in which case narrower planks will answer as well.

After the planks are in place plough the bed between them, and after freezing a little plough again, so as to make the soil fine and mellow. Then bank up the planks on the outside with loam half way up, and cover the whole bed with litter enough to keep out frost till you want to use it, having first braced the plank apart every ten feet, so as to keep them just six feet outside measure. When you are ready to use the bed you have only to begin at one end and cart out the loam from the first six feet between the planks and put it near the other end of the bed. Then put in the hole whatever manure your crop demands. If for lettuce in severe weather then supply ten or twelve inches of strong heat, or if for radishes or lettuce later in the season, six or eight inches will be enough. Then throw the loam from the next six feet on this manure, and repeat this operation till the loam carted out in beginning is placed back at the last end of the bed. Two men with a cart can put down a bed fifty sashes long in a day in this way where the "heat" is handy and the men understand their work.

If the weather is severe after the bed

is made up it will be necessary to bank up outside the planks with coarse manure or other litter quite to the glass, but in spring this will not be needed. Sometimes a newly made bed will heat too strongly. In this case it will need airing judiciously, both by day and night, and for this purpose bits of lath placed flatwise by night under every second or third sash will answer. A good deal of judgment and experience are needed to make beds run well in winter, and it would be quite impracticable to run them at all before spring by the directions often given, and even then the labor would be more than double what is needed.

The best heating material for hot-beds is fresh horse manure from a stable where at least six horses are kept, so that it will not take too long to accumulate a load. Where the supply of this material is short it may be extended to good advantage by mixing with forest leaves about half and half, moistening the leaves well while mixing. Another good material is spent hops from the breweries, which, being very wet can be mixed with dry horse manure or with forest leaves. When it is desired to accumulate a considerable quantity of heat before putting down a bed the material should be turned over every five days to prevent excessive heating and to mix the materials well. One or two turnings are a decided advantage, but we often throw the manure fresh from the stable directly into the bed when in a hurry. A two-horse load of manure will put down from ten to twenty-five sashes, according to the time of year and amount of heat required by the crop. One heat is often enough to grow two crops upon it, especially if the second one is a crop that does not demand a high temperature, such as radishes. But where two crops of lettuce are grown in the same bed it is usual to renew the heat before planting the second crop. This is done by throwing out the old manure and mixing about half of it with fresh manure for a new heat. A good heat of twelve inches deep will run a bed in severe weather for about six weeks. Of course the weather and the quality of the materials used have much to do with this point and one can never tell beforehand exactly how a bed will run upon manure heat in severe weather, though in mild weather of spring there is less trouble in this direction.

Weather Report for October, 1886.

EOLA, Nov. 2, 1886.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

During October, 1886, there were 14 days during which rain fell, and an aggregate of 3.12 inches of water; there were 7 clear, 4 fair and 5 cloudy days, other than which rain fell.

The mean temperature for the month was 49.96 deg.

Highest daily mean temperature for the month, 62 deg. on the 3d.

Lowest daily mean temperature for the month, 50 deg. on the 30th.

Mean temperature for the month at 2 o'clock P. M., 53.03 deg.

Highest temperature for the month, 74 at 2 P. M. on the 1st.

Lowest temperature for the month, 34 deg. at 7 A. M. on the 30th.

Frosts occurred on the 10th, 19th, 20th, 22d, 23d and 30th.

The prevailing winds for the month were from the north during 15 days, south 11 days, southwest 5 days.

During October, 1885, there were 7 rainy days and 1.42 in. water; there were 14 clear, 4 fair, 6 cloudy days.

Mean temperature for the month 55.62 deg.

Highest daily mean temperature for the month, 58 deg., on the 5th.

Lowest daily mean temperature for the month 50 deg. on 30th.

T. PEARCE.

All leading patent medicines at Port Drug Co., 100 State street.