

UMATILLA INDIANS

ARTICLE BY PENDLETON BOY
IN PORTLAND MAGAZINE.

Roy Alexander Writes of the Umatillas and Their Manner of Celebrating—One Great Failing is Their Thirst for Whiskey.

The following interesting article by Roy Alexander, of this city, appears in the February issue of The Orderly, the official journal of Hill's Military Academy, of Portland:

Situated about eight miles from my native town in Eastern Oregon, there is an ideal site for an Indian camping ground. The reservation near this town is very large and many Indians live there. This tribe of Indians, the Umatillas, is the remnant of a once enterprising and great tribe. They are very very peaceful and for years have caused no trouble. Many of them are civilized, talk good English, and are engaged in farming and other profitable pursuits. Their one great drawback is their unquenchable thirst for whiskey. Of course, the state law prohibits the selling of liquor to Indians, but in different ways they succeed in generally getting too much. Saturday is their principal day to come to town, and then the small jail is filled with Indians. They are given their choice of a five dollar fine or a few days in jail, and the fine is seldom paid. A person found guilty of selling whiskey to Indians is sentenced to a term in the penitentiary. Some of these Indians have bugles or wagons and seem very contented while riding in them. Most of them, however, seem to prefer their natural way of riding horseback. The agency is situated four and one-half miles from the town. The agent's building and a few others are situated here, and this is a favorite place for the Indians. There are a few Indian policemen on this reservation and they pay close attention to their work. A large Indian school having four buildings is located two miles from this agency, and the Indians have fine educational advantages. The Indians begin preparations for

their celebration about two weeks ahead and are generally ready to begin on the Fourth. They seem to take as much interest in this celebration as the white people do. It does not seem to us that the Fourth of July would attract the Indian's attention in such a manner, but this seems to be their most enjoyable time. They invite all of their neighboring tribes to their celebration and always a large number of Indians are present. The tents or wigwams are pitched in the form of an oval around this tract of land. It is a very pretty sight when a person sees the wigwams placed in such a manner. This celebration generally lasts for two weeks or until the Indians are satisfied.

On the first of July the visiting Indians commence arriving on the scene. In two days the wigwams are erected and generally they begin with a grand parade on the Fourth. If the weather suits the Indians they have their parade at once, but sometimes they have their parade in the afternoon. This parade is a great event to them and looked forward to with delight. The various decorations are really a beautiful sight. The old warriors ride in front with their chief as leader. The younger men follow these warriors and last of all come the squaws and the children of the Indians. At first they ride very slowly, and then faster and faster humming war chants, shouting war yells and shooting. The squaws who are too old to ride stay at their wigwams and weep, as this reminds them of their husbands who have been killed in different battles. The horses are decorated in a very neat way. Some of them are painted or have Indian blankets on them. The Indians paint their arms, legs and faces in a peculiar manner and some ride nearly naked. It is interesting to watch the attempts of photographers. It is very easy to take their pictures when in the parade, but in few instances will they consent to have their pictures taken when standing.

The next event after this is the war dance, which is also very interesting. Very little space is left for this dance, for visitors crowd pretty closely in their desire to witness it. The dancers all wear moccasins and sleigh bells and each man endeavors to make

a better impression than the others. This lasts very late and next day they begin gambling. They wager horses, blankets, robes and nearly everything they have. This lasts only for a short time before racing is begun. They take great interest in their racing and also wager their possessions on the results.

This completes the regular program and the rest of the time is given up to various diversions. A small dance hall is built for the white people, and some enjoy themselves in this place. At the end of two weeks the visiting tribes begin to leave. Their wigwams are torn down, and the place has once more the appearance of desolation.

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COLD EVERYWHERE.

Spring Everywhere Backward in the Palouse Country.

"Farmers in the Palouse country are fretting over the continued cold and delay in getting in spring grain," said John Lyons, a big foot hill farmer, who returned yesterday from a business trip to Pullman and vicinity, says the Walla Walla Statesman.

"There is little snow, hardly as much as in this valley, but the temperature is hovering below freezing point, and spring work is being greatly delayed in consequence. Unless a thaw occurs soon the farmers of the Palouse wheat belt will have to rustle to get their wheat in this year in time."

Mr. Lyons says he is anxious for a good thaw in this valley, he having several hundred acres of grain yet to sow this spring. He is farming something like 700 acres in the foot-hill country, but has several hundred acres that he failed to get in owing to the late cold snap. Little fall wheat was sown in the foot-hill district, he says, and farmers in that section are anxious for a chinook to clear the ground of snow that spring sowing may commence.

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