

# SKETCH OF SHAPLESS, UMATILLA SCOUT

The following interesting sketch of the life and career of "Whirlwind," or Charley Shapless, the well known Umatilla Indian, has been written for the East Oregonian by E. S. McComas, the pioneer newspaper man and mining broker of Union. Mr. McComas has been a fast friend of Shapless for 40 years and writes from personal knowledge of the facts of history.

It was late in the fall of 1863 that I first formed the acquaintance of my old friend, Whirlwind, ex-chief of the Cayuse tribe of Indians now residing on the Umatilla reservation.

The circumstances which lead to a life-long acquaintance was somewhat romantic. I had been on an extensive search for the "Blue Bucket" diggings in a section of country which I now presume is embraced in Harney county, Ore. Our little party of 21 men had received rough treatment at the hands of probably old Winnemucca's band of Bannocks, and as my petticoat I had received a bullet wound in my left leg and also a painful arrow wound in my right hand.

Finding it necessary to seek medical aid after arriving at Auburn, the first mining camp in Baker county, I managed to reach Umatilla landing on the Columbia river where I knew I had a cousin residing. After spending a few days with him I was looking around for some means of existence when my cousin told me there was a patch of good timber land about four miles out on the Umatilla, which he advised me to take by squatter's title.

### First Meeting.

He loaned me a tent, bedding and cooking utensils and I move out to what was afterward known as the "Four Mile house," and pitched my tent. That evening old Chief Homily at the head of some 16 stalwart Indians, rode up to my camp and asked me what I was doing there. I told them I was going to make this my home. He informed me that this was his place, that he owned "all the land and all the tips, (timber), and all the grass and water," and that I must klatawa, or, in other words, "pull my freight."

We camped together in peace that night, and early in the morning he was re-joined by another band of 16 Indians making the total 32 to one. I had walked down to the Umatilla river with my gun, rifle, and was bathing my wounded leg when the Indians all came down on horseback, and among the last arrivals was Whirlwind, who could speak fairly good English.

He told me what was the matter with my leg, and I told him that I had been shot by a Snake Indian. He told me that the Snake Indians were a bad lot, and I ought to have killed a few of them. I told him we had fixed about 13 of them.

At this announcement he made a long talk to the Indians who by their grunts and nods of approval, seemed to endorse what he was saying. He then told me that I was all right, and that if I would give the Indians \$2.00 a cord for cutting the wood that I was welcome to stay and we immediately struck a bargain to this effect, and Whirlwind and myself have been good friends ever since.

### Wanted to Save His Hair.

On the evening of the 6th day of January, 1902, I was surprised to see Whirlwind dash up in front of my office in Union, Ore., on a small, faded cayuse pony. After greeting me with his "kiah-yam six," or how do you do? he asked me if I had heard the news that the Indians would have to cut off their hair on or before the first day of March.

My first impression was that somebody had been trying to scare or make sport of the old Indian. In the meantime he had picked up a very rich piece of copper gold ore off one of the shelves of my cabinet of ores. He asked me if that was good "money stone," and I told him it was very rich in gold and copper.

He said: "I know where there is a whole mountain like that, Mac." I asked him how much he would take to show me a mountain of ore like that. He said "you keep me from getting cut off hair and I show you." I said all right, I'll do it. He said make paper "wawa." I proceeded to put our agreement in writing, and after reading it to him, he said, let us go and get our pictures taken, like Lee Moorhouse make. Then we be just like twin brothers, then I do what I say; you do what you say.

We secured the services of an artist and had our pictures taken, which is virtually his signature to the compact.

After making this agreement I realized that I had an engagement to meet parties in Muscatine, Iowa, with whom I was interested in dredge mining on Snake river, and had promised to be there on the 22nd day of February, and realizing that it would be impossible to correspond with authorities in Washington and get answers back and forth, I told Whirlwind that he had better go back East with me, and then he would not be at home at "shearing time."

### Shapless Goes East.

We soon had an understanding to this effect and he came over to Union and we started east on the evening of the 19th of February. Immediately after our meeting in Muscatine, I secured rooms in Iowa City, to attend to the correspondence which I desired to carry on with Generals Howard and Miles and Senator Mitchell of Oregon.

It was during our stay in Iowa City that Whirlwind contracted a very severe cold, and one morning I found him with a very high fever and very severe cough and could not induce him to eat any breakfast. I told him I would go for a doctor. This seemed to alarm him very much, and he said: "No, no, Mack; white man doctor kill Indian pretty quick. I got some roots in my satchel, if Mrs. Bell make med-

icine the way I tell, then "Injun" be all right."

He got some roots from his satchel which I had Mrs. Bell prepare by boiling down to a thick syrup. After taking sufficient of this medicine he went to bed, saying: "Now, pretty soon 'Injun' heap sleep, heap sweat, then wake up 'bout 3 o'clock." About 3 o'clock I woke him and found him with great drops of sweat standing on his forehead. He got up and in two or three days was entirely recovered.

I at once began to ply him with questions about this wonderful medicinal root, to all which he was very reticent until one morning when I received a letter from Senator Mitchell informing me that the order issued by Secretary Jones of the Indian department had been modified so far as it applied to old Indians. This was glad tidings and brought great joy to Whirlwind, and he immediately went to his satchel and presented me with some of the medicinal root, which I immediately recognized, having seen much of it grow in some portions of Idaho.

The Indian name of Whirlwind is "Shapless," which means a whirlwind. Whirlwind was exalted to the chieftaincy of the Cayuse tribe if I remember correctly, soon after the Bannock Indian campaign of 1878, in which he took a very prominent part, under direction of Captain Evan Miles.

### Killing of Egan.

At the time that the Bannocks, under Egan swung around by way of Canyon City and Long Creek and had the fight on Butter Creek with Captain Sperry and his Pendleton volunteers and killed Charlie Jewell, the well known citizen of Pendleton, Whirlwind and his Umatilla Indians captured the Bannock chief, Egan, and Whirlwind turned the custody of Egan over to Five Crows while he and his Indians went to capture other members of Egan's party.

Soon after their departure Egan, who had been shot through the right arm, drew a knife which he had concealed in his leggings and jumped off his horse and tried to stab Five Crows, whereupon Five Crows drew his revolver and shot Egan in the forehead, killing him instantly.

It so happened that while dictating this statement to a friend, Whirlwind and his wife, whose name is "Gesselt-on-a-ridge," came to see me and this statement was read to him, which he fully corroborated as the true history of the capture and the killing of Egan.

### Fought the "Sheep Eaters."

Whirlwind subsequently took some 16 of his Umatilla Indians and went up to Idaho and served under Lieutenant Farrow, where, after the battle of Vinegar Hill, he, by a clever piece of strategy, succeeded in capturing Warcheck, the renegade chief of the band of Bannock Indians, known as the "Sheep Eaters." It is our purpose in this brief sketch to give but a brief synopsis of this old Indian's services which date back from the time of Colonel Steptoe's great fight at Steptoe Butte, where, by the slaughter of 3500 of the Indians' ponies, he brought the Colville Indians under subjection.

Whirlwind is 78 years old some time this coming January and from the time he first joined Colonel Steptoe, when a very young man, he has served under Colonel Olney, Major Wright, Captain Evan Miles, General O. O. Howard and Lieutenant E. S. Farrow, and has gained the confidence of each of these distinguished commanders, but in the Nez Perce campaign, led by Chief Joseph, who but a few days ago passed to the "Happy Hunting Ground," Whirlwind maintained a strict neutrality, saying Chief Joseph is my cousin, and I can not fight against him.

Whirlwind owns a valuable tract of land on Thorn Hollow, about 16 miles from Pendleton, which he has leased to Senator Pierce, whom he says is an upright, honorable man, and his good friend.

E. S. McCOMAS.

### GORMAN AND LAMONT.

Both Are Ardent Supporters of Parker and Davis.

New York, Oct. 29.—There are two noted democrats whose influence is active and effective in accelerating the campaign for Parker and Davis, and yet they are seldom seen by the every-day visitors to the national democratic headquarters in this city. These men are Senator Arthur P. Gorman of Maryland and ex-Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont. Each has assured Candidate Parker of his belief that the chances of democratic success in the nation at the approaching election are fair and each is working his own way to bring about such success.

Gorman and Lamont appreciate each other's political qualities, and to that extent they are friends. Lamont knows—perhaps better than any other man—how much Gorman did toward bringing about Cleveland's election to the presidency in 1884, and Senator Gorman knows just how much Cleveland and the democratic party owe to Lamont's tact and intuitive knowledge of human nature.

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