

A STORY OF EARLY DAY STAGING

Dave Horn, Pioneer Pendleton Resident, Had Varied Career. (Read before Umatilla County Pioneer Society.)

In the year 1860, with a freight team loaded for Walker Bros. Dry Goods Co. of Salt Lake, David Horn, one of Umatilla county's most respected pioneers, left Atchison, Kansas, on his first trip in the great wild and sparsely settled west. Seventy-seven days were consumed in covering the entire distance of twelve hundred miles, an excellent record for that time.

During the six years following, staging took Mr. Horn into a still more rugged country—Carson City, Nevada, and Sacramento, California; the Plute war was on in Nevada, and the Overland stage experienced anything but smooth sailing while handling the mail. Five hundred sixty miles of desert was a part of the Overland route between Carson City and Salt Lake, and this particular run, as well as one from Dry Creek to Sulphur Springs, found the veteran driver handling the reins. Many men, afterwards of state and national prominence—makers of history so to speak—were then taking their chances with hundreds of others in the gold fields of Nevada and California, and frequently were passengers of Mr. Horn, among them being Mark Twain, then secretary to James Nye, governor of Nevada. The experience gained during those days by Mark Twain later constituted his interesting volume, "Houghing It."

From this section of the country Mr. Horn journeyed to Montana, where from 1866 to 1874 he drove the Overland stage on various runs, one of them being from Deer Lodge to Helena. Mines were booming in that locality also, and a common shipment of gold dust overland, seven days of the week, was from 2100 to 3200 pounds. It was taken to the San Francisco mint, there converted into coin and placed in circulation. So large were many of these shipments that the middle seat of the stage coach would be removed and a large trunk placed therein which would accommodate from one to two gold dust boxes—one box being all two men could handle. One of the coins much used in Montana during this period was a two-and-a-half piece of gold, about the size of a nickel; also there was then in circulation a three dollar gold piece, as well as a fifty dollar piece, the latter an unusually pretty coin—octagon in shape. Officers of the army and government officials were often sent west on various commissions and frequently were hauled from one post or town to another by Mr. Horn. General Garfield, shortly after the close of the civil war, was one of such passengers, going from Helena to Deer Lodge. Among others, Mr. Horn recalls to memory Schuyler

Colfax, one time vice president, and a reporter for Horace Greeley's Tribune, named Richardson, who was commissioned to look for a suitable route for the railroad both in Montana and Nevada.

The autumn of 1874 concluded Montana staging days for Mr. Horn, and on the 15th day of September that year he came to Pendleton, via Walka Walka; the town was fairly young, very prosperous and is reported as far surpassing Carson City, Virginia City, or any of the other wild west towns, as being wide open and



very rough. Pendleton was a distributing point for cattlemen—cattle raising being one of the chief industries at that time—mining prospectors going into the Baker country, as well as sheep growers. Range was free and except for buying salt, and hiring men to herd the bands of sheep and bunches of cattle, little expense was attached to either business. For many years wool brought a splendid price and Mr. Horn recalls that one of the first brick buildings ever erected in Pendleton was built with money obtained from selling wool at 45c. This was an extraordinary price, to be sure, but one section from 28c to 45c was the price paid; an average price was from 15c to 18c. Among some of the town's merchants and business men then holding forth on Main street were: Frank Gray, harness shop man; Uncle George Webb, hardware store; Marshall and Son, blacksmiths; the Hendricks Restaurant; Jerry Despain's butcher shop; Uncle Dave Wright and John Bowman conducting the livery stable, and last but not least the court house and jail, which occupied the entire blocks

where now stands the Peoples Warehouse and Alexanders Store.

To return to staging—the run from Umatilla to Cayuse was given Mr. Horn; boats from Portland unloaded freight at Umatilla to be distributed many hundreds of miles inland, and shipments of ore, wool, hides, etc., were carried by teams to Umatilla, there loaded on boats and started down the Columbia for their respective destinations. It was in the year 1877 that David Horn, experienced and efficient stage coach driver, turned over the reins to other

hands and decided to enter the hotel business, conducting the hotel at Umatilla as his first venture. It was in 1877 that Mr. Horn also married.

In 1882 Umatilla was abandoned for Pendleton, then a thriving place, the Villard Hotel being the next establishment of which Mr. Horn was proprietor, until 1897. Although active staging was given up in 1878, Mr. Horn was for many years local agent for the Overland Route, and



LEGEND OF THE CHIPMUNK

Long years ago, runs one of the old legends of the Umatilla Indians, there dwelt at the mouth of the Umatilla river an Indian woman who had but one child, a boy of the age of seven. The boy was bright and full of fun and the spirit of adventure, but he was much inclined to disobey his mother in matters which seemed to him of no special importance. The foolish boy thought he knew better



than his mother what he should and should not do.

One day the mother heard there was a sorceress in the woods back of the tepee, a witch doctor who could do anything she wished with people in her power. Therefore, she told her son to remain within the tepee until the witch had gone away.

The boy, who was called Cherr-l-lee, said, "All right mother," and then slipped out the back door, thinking he would go to the woods, see the witch and return in safety. There is where he made a mistake. He had scarcely reached the woods before he saw a dreadful figure with disheveled hair, long sharp claws and mallet aspect peering through the brush as if in search of someone.

The boy was badly frightened and



was the man to officially turn over the first mail pouch to the railroad when on completion it took over the contract for hauling mail and express. It is a fact worthy of note that a robbery or hold-up was never Dave Horn's while staging.

In staging days Meacham Station, named for Harvey Meacham, was a toll gate—conducted by Mr. Meacham himself for many years. An amusing story is related of two trishmen traveling afoot, and upon reaching Meacham discovered 25c per person was the amount required at the toll gate. One of the sons of Erin inquired if any extra charge would be made if a man had a load on his back, and upon learning the price would be the same turned to his partner and said, "Git on my back, Mike, and I'll carry you through." So amused was Mr. Meacham by the trick that he refused to charge even the twenty-five cents.

In speaking of early days in Pendleton, and business methods employed, Mr. Horn narrates that merchants were called upon to stake prospectors with enough grub to last them several weeks, without so much as an "I. O. U.," and if the miner struck it rich the money was forthcoming, otherwise it was charged off the books. At "some stage of the game," to use a common expression, everyone borrowed or loaned; a practical stranger might ask you to loan him money, and if you had it, it was customary always to extend the courtesy—whether you ever saw the borrower again or not. It was one of the chances one took out west.

From 1891 to 1898 cattle raising engaged Mr. Horn's time and from 1898 until now farming has been his chief occupation, today finding him very active and awake to the affairs of the day, with ever a good boost for not only the Umatilla county and Pendleton in the times when he first knew them, but as he finds them today.

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beyond her reach by climbing a pine tree.

Once in the treetop he felt secure and glanced down at the witch. She was standing at the foot of the tree, gnashing her teeth and vainly trying to ascend. Then the boy thought he would have some fun, so he plucked a huge pine cone and threw it at the old hag, striking her on the head. Again and again he hit her, laughing with glee at his success, but the witch still remained at the foot of the tree.

Then the lad threw a cone far out into the brush, the witch gave chase and while she was gone, he slid down the tree and within a few minutes was safe in his mother's tepee. He thought he was safe but circumstances proved otherwise. Scarcely had he arrived in the tepee than the witch reached it also, wild with anger. His mother, in alarm, hid him in a corner and covered his head with a buffalo horn spoon. The witch came in and demanded

the boy. She was told that he had not come home. Then the witch searched the tepee and, eventually finding the boy, seized him. As the boy tried to squirm out of her grasp, she caught him with all her claws by the forehead and left the marks of her talons on his face and body. Then she changed him from a boy to an animal which she called the chipmunk. And that is why that cheerful little animal frequents the pine trees and wears stripes.

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