

# LIEUT. T. J. SMALL'S ACCOUNT OF INDIAN WAR OF 1855, INCLUDING BATTLE AT THE LA ROQUE FARM

Light on early day Indian fighting in this region is thrown by a letter that was written in 1859 by T. J. Small, a lieutenant, to T. A. Wood, grand commander of the Indian war veterans. It was as follows:

My Dear Sir—I never desired a biography of myself to be written, the world and mankind are not interested in my adventures, struggles, afflictions, and bereavements and tender affections. The pen of no true friend, or myself, can at this time furnish thought to illustrate my very dark pathway this far in life. It seems to me now that there never was any sound reason or necessity for my having to breathe but as I did breathe it has always seemed to me that I should have breathed the sweetest, brightest and balmy air on earth. I am now convinced that the world never wanted me for no important place was created for me in Hill, Lieutenant Thomas J. Small was born in Mt. Pleasant, Maury county, Tenn., Dec. 9, 1834, and spent his boyhood days there in attending school and in learning a trade with his father. He came of sturdy Scotch-Irish stock, he moved to Missouri with his father in 1852 and settled in Otterville, Cooper county in May. In the spring of 1853 he spread his wings, left his home and started across the plains to Oregon to build for himself a possible home nest on the Pacific slope. He was six months and 11 days crossing the plains and settled in the town of Champoeg, Marion county, 1853. Champoeg was a small old town, built on the bank of the beautiful Willamette river, at the head of steamboat navigation in the summer, 25 miles from Salem or Oregon City. Much history of Oregon springs from this place.

An Indian war broke out in eastern Oregon and Washington in 1855 and under a proclamation of Gov. George W. Curry, Connoyer, Revals and Small recruited a company at Champoeg of French, half breeds and four or five Americans, mostly all of whom were from French parishes. Carlisle A. Connoyer was elected captain, A. Revals, first lieutenant and T. J. Small, second lieutenant. The organization was known as company K. It was mustered in at Portland October 20, 1855 and immediately started for The Dalles via Fort Vancouver and the Cascades. With the beginning of this march the company commenced to make history for itself and Oregon. The greatest mistake for any man to make is to endeavor to correct errors of early historians from memory. It is well known that a great majority of men are born into the world without a good thinking apparatus on their shoulders, but if I differ from some of your early historians I hope they will not accuse me of thinking wrong.

The march to the relief of Major Haller was made through snow and extreme cold by the first regiment O. N. G. All who made that march through snow, sometimes three feet deep, and a bitter cold wind will remember it through life. The command found Major Haller and returned with him in safety to The Dalles from which point Captain Connoyer was ordered to march immediately to Fort Henrietta to reinforce Major Mark A. Chinn which he did. Captain Connoyer with company K arrived at Fort Henrietta (at Echo) November 27 and went into camp outside the fort. With it arrived Col. James K. Kelley. I know not with whom he left The Dalles but I am sure he arrived at Fort Henrietta under escort of company K. Here I met for the first time the brave, noble, warm hearted and generous Major Mark A. Chinn, who built the fort and named it. But for this work he was secretly charged with cowardice by some of his small under officers. At the battle of LaRoque's farm these same men learned who the cowards were and Major Chinn was not one of them. A braver, truer, kinder man I never met in the army. Sweet to me even now is the memory of this noble man. I know not when other companies arrived at Fort Walla Walla but ours got there with both feet a little after sunrise on Dec. 3. We found the fort red and plundered, the interior badly defaced and the Indian devil gods. We went into camp a short distance from the fort on the morning of the third. On the third, fourth, fifth and sixth we skirmished with Indians. Company K marched alone into Indian valley, into a deep ravine on the Touchet river and scouted all that

country. Returning to Melma at the mouth of the Touchet on the night of the sixth. Peu-peu-mox-mox or Yellow Serpent and those with him were killed and the body of Peu-peu-mox-mox mutilated, ears cut off, scalped and other indignities on the night of Dec. 6, in camp at mouth of Touchet river and not during the battle at LaRoque's farm. On the morning of the seventh the Indians came down from the hills across the Touchet under a flag of truce and demanded the release of their chief and the other prisoners. After exchanging flags a few times Lieut. Col. Kelley ordered Captain N. A. Connoyer and Captain O. Hummason with their companies to cross the Touchet and take position to defend camp. Company K moved across and Hummason with the Wasco followed and one other company not now remembered and soon the four days' fight was on known as the battle of La Roque's farm. We had fun chasing the red-skin beauties seven miles, but when the entire force of Indians met us at La Roque's farm the fun was over and business of vital importance was on hand. For it kept us busy to retain scalps on our heads. For four days this hard and bitterly contested battle raged, no one knowing what the result might be. Every inch of ground was fought over and the contending forces camped in sight of each other. To the music of the tom toms Indians danced the scalp dance every night. The stubborn pluck of the whites at last scattered the Indians with a loss to them of 180. After the battle of La Roque's farm the command moved to Howlish Wampool camp.

## Nine Umatilla County Men in Second Training Camp

Nine Umatilla county young men are at the present time being trained at the U. S. training camp at the Presidio, San Francisco to take their places as officers in the national army, and one of the number is a former director of the Round-Up and a former director of Happy Canyon.

He is Frederick Steiwer, prominent attorney, senator from Umatilla county in the last legislature and former district attorney. When the call came for applicants for a second officers' training school, Senator Steiwer closed up his extensive law practice, put his many business interests in shape, ferreted a most promising political career and having successfully passed the examinations had been accepted, had

broodre to his wife and little daughter and reported for training. He is in the artillery division. Mr. Steiwer served on the Round-Up during the first two years of its existence as director of non-competitive events and was one of the originators of Happy Canyon and served with J. R. Haley on the program and of that show up until last year. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon and O. A. C.

The others going to the camp from this county were James Alger Fee, Chester A. Fee, Lyman G. Rice, Harold J. Warner, John R. Wheeler, Charles Despain and Fritz Lundstrum, all of Pendleton, and E. W. Hamman of Echo.

The two Fees are brothers. The elder was city attorney of Pendleton at the time he was accepted. Upon his resignation his father, Judge James A. Fee was appointed and accepted with the understanding that the monthly salary was to be paid to the wife and child of his son. The former city attorney is a graduate of Whitman College and of Columbia University, having three degrees. His brother, Chester Fee, is a graduate of the University of Oregon and one of the most noted athletes in the country. He was captain of the Oregon team in 1915, the greatest point winner that institution ever had and won the distinction of being third best all-around athlete in the United States at San Francisco in the exposition decathlon events.

Lyman G. Rice is the son of G. M. Rice, vice-president of the First National Bank, and was himself fellow in the bank when he applied for the camp. He is a graduate of the University of Oregon and has a wife and child.

Harold J. Warner was a prominent

young attorney in the offices of Haley & Haley when he responded to the call. He left for camp ostensibly a bachelor but in reality a young bridegroom. It was not until he had been gone a week that it was learned that he had been secretly married to Miss Edna Zimmerman, telegraph editor of the East Oregonian, before departing. Mr. Warner, who is a son of Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Warner of Portland is a graduate of the University of Oregon.

Charles Despain received his education at the Oregon Agricultural College and during his senior year there was captain of one of the cadet companies. He was rated an exceptionally good student officer and of his appointment to his previous experience. He was in the dairy business here when called and sold it to report. He is also married.

Wheeler and Lundstrum are graduates of the University of Idaho and both had military training there. Both were star members of the baseball team at that institution and Lundstrum afterwards played shortstop on the Walla Walla team of the Western Tri-State League. Wheeler was in the office of the Hartman Abstract Co. when taken and Lundstrum was selling G. M. C. trucks.

E. W. Hamman was instructor in the manual training department of the

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