

No. 48. BURNS, HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1889. \$2.50 a Year.

**THE HISTORY OF CAMP WRIGHT.**

**As Told Us by an Old soldier of 1865,  
To Which is Added Interesting  
Data Concerning the  
Early Settlers in**

**HARNEY COUNTY.**

Several weeks since while visiting the Devine ranch at Wright's Point we were shown the remains of an old Camp Wright, the grave of a soldier before it pointed out, and the tall grease-wood grown all over the grounds told us many years had passed since the soldiers threw up the embankments and the American colors floated above the surrounding swamps.

Who commanded at Camp Wright? Who named it? How many companies garrisoned it? How long ago since soldiers were there? Why were they there? To fight Indians? What Indians? Why fight them? Who was the dead man? Was he killed or did he die from a natural cause?—were the questions that rapidly followed each other while gazing upon the evident remains of a part of the past history of Harney valley.

Point Wright towering high above the surrounding country like the sphinx that grimly guards the secrets of the Nile, stood mute and untouched by any appeals made by inquirers of 1889. Some one remembered that one of the soldiers of Camp Wright had come into the country a couple of months since.

Upon returning to Burns, we interviewed the old soldier and gleaned a reply to nearly every question, to which we have added information hitherto obtained from Mrs. Stenger, Mr. McGowan, Mrs. Whiting, Mr. Fitzgerald and several others:

General Harney in 1853 while escorting emigrants through this valley had a brush with the Indians, and the valley was named in his honor—by whom we have not yet learned.

In the spring of 1865 Gen. Wright went down before Crescent City, Cal., with the ill-fated Brother Jonathan, and in the fall of 1865, Capt. L. L. Williams of Co. "H" 1st Oregon Infantry, in command of parts of three companies stationed on the grounds since August of that year, near the present site of J. S. Devine's residence, named the camp in honor of the deceased soldier, also, the point or head-land he called, "Point Wright."

In September, 1865, there was a fight between the Indians. Harney Valley Putes, and a part of the force under Capt. Williams, between Camp Wright and Harney lake, wounding a soldier named Smith in the foot, and another named Griffin, who in after years died from the effects of the injury. That same evening the Indians set fire to the tall grass [a man named Keiger describes the grass of the valley "high enough for me to reach up and tie over my head as I ride through it on horse-back] and Capt. Williams and his men had to take refuge on a grease wood knoll—somewhere about the Buccaroo house of the Devine ranch of to-day. En passant, two olden time shot guns were found in the willows in that vicinity, a couple of years since.

At about the same time Lieut. Applegate of Co. "H", in command of a part of Capt. Williams' force, was returning from Camp Curry (where W. C. Cecil's place now is), to Camp Wright, that was evening attacked by the Indians at some fortifications thrown up on what is now the Widow McGee's ranch and called for fun after one of the company, Fort Drellenger. And again, the next morning, about eight miles south of the present town of Burns, the Indians shooting from the point of the rimrock west of the cove.

The Putes of Harney valley were under command of a chief whose name is pronounced much like Wuhweveh, the brother of old chief Paulina whom Howard Maupin an old Mexican soldier killed on Crooked river in 1867; he burned Camp Wright some time afterward, and died years ago at Steen mountain. The Malheur chief Egan was also in command of the turbulent burns. The defunct town south of Burns was named in honor of his memory.

Regarding the lone grave now in front of the remains of old Camp Wright the man's name is forgotten, but he was known among the soldiers as "Reddy" (on account of his hair), was from the state of New York, and was noted among his comrades as a great singer. One dark night in February, 1836, while in camp on the Blitzen "Reddy" was called up by his turn to guard the pack mules in charge of Pack Master Mace McCoy, and had not mounted a good five minutes when he received an arrow in the arm, and a second in the heart. Mace McCoy, said to be the finest mountaineer in the country, and the first settler in Diamond valley,

with John Mulkey bore the dead soldier three days on pack mules to with John Mulkey bore the dead soldier three days on pack mules to bury him at Camp Wright, where he has lain undisturbed the past 23 years, his loss of life and his grave unknown to friends and relations "back East."

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

The winter of 67-68 the Indians surrendered to Gen. Crook on the site of the old Malheur agency.

Mace McCoy, a cousin to Wm. M. Page late of this county, went from here to Arizona with Gen. Crook and came back in 1873. He now resides in Waitsburg, Wash.

1863 to 1873—C. M. Lockwood from Michigan, located in Jackson county, Or., a government contractor for military posts on the frontier, and said to be a fine-looking, liberal, noble-hearted man, is the first man that did more than merely pass through the country. He it was that built the present road leading from Canyon City through the town of Burns. When he died in Salt Lake City, he was a very wealthy man, whom no poor man envied, since he had always been known as the poor man's friend.

1865—John Craven, a native of Ray county, Missouri, came to Oregon in 1864, enlisted in Eugene City, in 1864-65, in the 1st Oregon Volunteer Infantry, Co. "H." Capt. L. L. Williams in command; and in August, 1865, came with his Company, to Camp Wright, at the age of seventeen years. Mr. C. is not only the only Camp Wright soldier in Harney county, but the oldest resident of the Harney county.

1867—A man named Walker carried the first mail, on horseback, from Canyon City to Camp Harney, taking lots of chances of his life.

1872—Stille Riddle, John Boone, and the Smyth family, now of Happy valley, and John Chapman, came in with stock.

1873—J. S. Miller, J. Cooksey, T. Prather and the Venators brought cattle and horses into the valley. Frank McLeod (a former subscriber to THE HERALD, in Livingstone, Montana) Jas. Sheppard, and the Currys carried in stock; and Maurice Fitzgerald, one of the U. S. soldiers stationed at Camp Harney; still a citizen of the valley.

1874—P. F. Stenger and Thos. Whiting brought stock in from Douglas county, Oregon. P. F. Stenger establishing his camp at what is known as the Sod house on the Flitzen, afterward moving to the present Peter Clemens ranch, where Riddle & Boone had camped two years before, and Whiting at Rock Point the present site of Burns.

Mail route from Canyon City via Camp Harney to Fort McDermitt, Nevada, was established and the mail carried by Doc. Anderson, an old Kentuckian, still with us.

1878—The Smyths, father and son, were killed by Indians, at the close of the trouble with the Piutes and Bannocs. The Bannoc warfare ceased. The first merchandise store and saloon put by a man named Josephson, and kept where the Burns hotel now stands.

1879—Wm. Curry bought and moved Josephson stock to where the Levens Bros. ranch is located. Daniel Wheeler was the first Justice of the Peace.

1879-80—The military Post at Camp Harney was abandoned.

Large stockmen began buying out the smaller dealers.

1881—P. M. Curry, now of Lakeview, Or. came here.

Egan Postoffice was established.

1882—Geo. McGowan, the Martins and A. O. Bedell located.

1882—McGowan & Martin opened a general merchandizing store in Egan and the next year P. F. Stenger bought out Martin's interest and moved the store to the site of the present town of Burns.

1883—Geo. McGowan named the new postoffice to be in the McGowan & Stenger store "Burns," in honor of the famous poet of his native land, Robert Burns, Scotland's favorite bard.

1885—The first newspaper, a 6-column, patent-outside, was established Horace Dillard.

1887—THE EAST OREGON HERALD, a 7-column, patent-inside, newspaper plant was established by J. L. Grace.

1888—In May THE HERALD was enlarged to an "all-at-home-print," making it the first and only newspaper ever printed complete in the Harney county. It spends the money it makes, in keeping up with and ahead of the advance of Harney county. Only \$2.50 a year.

N. Brown began the erection of the first Grist and Mercantile Mill on the valley.

1889—The creation of Harney county was obtained with following officials: Judge, T. J. Shields; Clerk, W. E. Grace; Treasurer, T. L. Roberts; Commissioners, Lytle Howard; T. B. Janes; Surveyor, V. R. Graddon; Sheriff, A. A. Cowan; Assessor, W. E. Albersson;

School Superintendent L. B. Baker.

P. F. Stenger obtained the first daily mail, and erected the first costly and elegant family residence in the county.

The United States in Land Office for Harney District was established in Burns with J. E. Huntington register, and Harrison Kelly, received.

1877—Abner Robbins now of Drewsey, used to ride on pack horses among the Indians, long before any white men lived here.

ORIGIN OF NAMES.

"Diamond" valley was named from the diamond-brand of McCoy & Ruby's stock.

"Silvies" river in honor of a Canadian trapper, killed in an early day.

"Blitzen" or Donner-und-Blitz from the exclamation of a Dutch soldier in Gen. Crook's command while standing guard over the pack-mules during a vivid thunder storm.

"Steen" Mountain after Major Steen who escorted emigrants under Fremont, in an early day.

"Catlow" valley after John Catlow, the first cattle man that brought stock into that section.

Camp Alvord on east side of the Steen mountain, was named in honor of Gen. Alvord, who left the coast in 1865.

"Camp Harney" was established in 1867, and named after the Harney country by Capt. Kelly of Co. "A," 1st U. S. Cavalry. Capt. Kelly was formerly from Fort Klamath and went from here to Arizona where the Apaches captured his daughter and he had to give 100 head of horses to get her from them—he died in Arizona.

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

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