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73 Years In Cascade Locks

BY JACK McCRARY

I was 1 year old before I had an opportunity to go to school. The schooling that I did get came in the summer and not in winter. Father settled on a place two miles east of Cascade Locks, or the upper Cascades, when he came here in 1861, and we lived there two years. Father had been working in a sawmill, but in 1863 took a job in the woods down at Bonneville, or the lower Cascades, and moved his family down there.

The Indian war of 1866 was a fierce affair while it lasted and caused much excitement among the settlers on both sides of the river. An Indian squaw named Ellen, who made her home in the village that stood by the river's edge in Cascade Locks, went among the whites, warning them that the Indians were going on the warpath. Not all of the Indians in the village joined in the fighting, but enough were involved to make it decidedly hot for a few days. The white families on the Oregon side of the river gathered in what is now Bonneville and built a blockhouse.

It was seven years after the Indian war that father took us to the lower Cascades. Phil Sheridan, who had been a lieutenant in command of the regulars in the fight with the Indians, was back east and rising fast in the army, and there was plenty of excitement all along the river over the new gold fields over in Idaho and Montana. Father took possession of the old blockhouse and turned it into a tavern. He gave travelers who came up the Columbia on steamboats their supper, a bed and breakfast for six bits.

The steamers would come up from Portland as far as the lower Cascades and go back next day. Another steamer came down every day from The Dalles. At The Dalles travelers would transfer to the stage and go on up the river to Umatilla, Walla Walla, Lewiston and Idaho City. Other stages ran off across the country to John Day.

In 1864 a girl, Jennie Stevens,

came up from down around Vancouver and opened a school at Ruckle creek. All of us youngsters attended that school. The next summer she opened a school across the river at Cascade, just below where North Bonneville now stands. Soldiers were stationed there and they had quite a settlement. There was a store and postoffice and a track where they raced their horses.

The children living on the Oregon side of the river had to row across in a skiff, but we never seemed to mind. Miss Stevens taught there three years. All the schooling I ever obtained I got from her. I made the fourth grade and after that had to hustle for knowledge wherever I could find it.

The Indian children did not attend school, so they didn't get any education except in their native manners and customs. They were pretty well behaved and we used to play with them. The other Indians had settled down and I don't remember that there was ever any trouble among them. There was one mean buck, but even the Indians themselves didn't care for him and they didn't make any fuss when found him dangling from a limb one day. No one knew who hung him, but everybody thought it was a good thing for the country.

As I grew older we went to Cascade to dances. The Indians danced, just as the whites did, and the girls were popular because there were more white men than white women in this section. My brother could fiddle and we used to cross the river pretty regular. The old chief on the Washington side had as good a house as there was around in those times and we could dance there all night.

The Indians liked to race their ponies and so did the soldiers. The track was down near the river, below what is now North Bonneville. They would have some fast races. I rode one of those races in 1868. The horse had run one race for a bet of \$500 and lost. The soldiers asked me to ride a second race. I agreed

and they commenced to bet. The purse was \$1000 and everyone was excited. I was a pretty good rider and about the right weight and the horse I was riding won.

You hear people condemn the Indians, but I always liked them. Take this squaw Ellen, who warned the whites in 1866. She used to come to our house. I was nearly blind as a child and could barely see more than a few feet. My folks took me to the doctors, but they didn't seem to help any and my mother felt pretty bad about it. This Ellen used to ask her why she didn't doctor me herself. Finally mother told her she didn't know what to do, so Ellen said she could cure me. And she did. She rubbed and rubbed my eyes. I don't know what she did, except she used herbe and massaged the muscles of my face below the eyes. So you see I owe my eyesight to the Indians, and here I am at 82 years of age and still reading without glasses.

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