

Journal of the Old South Road

NOTES AND REMINISCENCES OF LAYING OUT AND ESTABLISHING THE OLD EMIGRANT ROAD INTO SOUTHERN OREGON IN THE YEAR 1846.

By Lindsay Applegate

A portion of the country we proposed to traverse was at that time marked on the map "unexplored region." All the information we could get relative to it was through the Hudson Bay company. Peter Oden, an officer of that company, who had led a party of trappers through that region, represented that portions of it were desert land, and that at one time his company was so pressed for the want of water that they went to the top of a mountain, filled sacks with snow, and were thus able to cross the desert. He also stated, that portions of the country through which we would have to travel, were infested with fierce and war-like savages, who would attack every party entering their country, steal their traps, way-lay and murder the men, and that Rogue River had taken its name from the character of the Indians inhabiting its valleys. The idea of opening a wagon road through such a country at that time, was scouted as preposterous. These statements, though based on facts, we thought might be exaggerated by the Hudson's Bay company, in their own interest, since they had a line of forts on the Snake river route, reaching from Fort Hall to Vancouver, and were prepared to profit by the immigration.

A Military Road

One thing which had much influence with us was the fact that the question as to which power, Great Britain or the United States, would eventually secure a title to the country, was not settled, and in case a war should occur and Britain prove successful, it was important to have a way by which we could leave the country without running the gauntlet of the Hudson's Bay Co.'s forts and falling a prey to Indian tribes which were under British influence.

On the morning of the 20th of June, 1846, we gathered on the La Creole, near where Dallas now stands, moved up the valley and encamped for the night on Mary's river, near where the town of Corvallis has since been built.

June 21—Moved up the valley and encamped among the foot-hills of the Calapoosia mountains.

June 22—This day we traveled along the base of the Calapoosias, our course being nearly southeast, passing near a prominent peak since called Spencer's Butte. In a little valley near the butte, on the south side, we discovered Indians digging camas. On perceiving us most of them secreted themselves in the timber. One of our party succeeded in capturing an old Indian, and representing to him by signs the course we wished to follow, the old fellow preceded us two or three miles, and put us on a dim trail which had been marked by twisting the tops of the brush along the route. It had only been used as a foot-trail and but seldom at that. It led us out into a prairie at the base of the main Calapoosia chain. Crossing the prairie we found the little trail where it entered the mountains with difficulty, and being guided by the broken brush, reached at sundown a little stream on the Umpqua side, where we encamped for the night in a beautiful little valley where the grass was good and the ground almost covered with the finest strawberries I had ever seen.

Forded the Umpqua

The next morning, June 23, we moved on through the grassy oak hills and narrow valleys to the north Umpqua river. The crossing was a rough and dangerous one, as the river bed was a mass of loose rocks, and, as we were crossing, our horses occasionally fell, giving the riders a severe ducking. On the south side we encamped for the night.

On the morning of the 24th, we left camp early and moved on about five miles to the south branch of the Umpqua, a considerable stream, probably sixty yards wide, coming from the eastward. Traveling up that stream almost to the place where the old trail crosses the Umpqua mountains, we encamped for the night opposite the historic Umpqua canyon.

The next morning, June 25th, we entered the canyon, followed up the little stream that runs through the dofile for four or five miles, crossing the creek a great many times, but the canyon becoming more obstructed with brush and fallen timber, the little trail we were following turned up the side of the ridge, where the woods were more open, and wound its way to the top of the mountain. It then bore south through a narrow back bone of the mountains, the dense thickets and the rocks on either side affording splendid opportunities for ambush.

A short time before this, a party coming from California, had been attacked on this summit ridge by the Indians and one of them had been severely wounded. Several of the horses had also been shot with arrows. Along this trail we picked up a number of broken and shattered arrows. We could see that a large party of Indians had passed over the trail traveling southward only a few days before. At dark we reached a small opening on a little stream at the foot of the mountain on the south, and encamped for the night.

On the morning of the 26th, we divided our forces, part going back to explore the canyon, while the remainder stayed to guard the camp and horses. The exploring party went back to where we left the canyon on the little trail the day before, and returning through the canyon, came into camp after night, reporting that wagons could be taken through.

Indians Encountered

We found everything all right on the morning of the 27th, although the Indians had hovered around us all night, frightening our horses a number of times. From the tracks we could see that they approached very closely to our encampment. Making an early start we moved on very cautiously. Whenever the trail passed through thickets we dismounted, and led our horses, having our guns in hand ready at any moment to use them in self-defense, for we had adopted this rule, never to be the aggressor. Traveling through a very broken country the sharp hills separated by little streams upon which there were small openings, we came out at about noon into a large creek, a branch of Rogue river, now called Grave creek, on which we rested about two hours. During the afternoon our course was over a mere open country—through scattering pine and oak timber. Towards evening, we saw a good many Indians posted along the mountain side and now and then running ahead of us. About an hour by sun we reached a prairie of several hundred acres, which extends down to very near the bank of Rogue river. As we advanced towards the river, the Indians in large numbers occupied the river bank near where the trail crossed. Having understood that this crossing was a favorite place of attack, we decided as it was growing late, to pass the night in the prairie. Selecting a place as far from the brush as possible, we made every preparation for a night attack.

Caution Saves From Attack

In selecting our camp on Rogue river we observed the greatest caution. Cutting stakes from the limbs of an old oak that stood in the open ground, we picketed our horses with double stakes as firmly as possible. The horses were picketed in the form of a hollow square, outside of which we took up our positions, knowing that in case of an attack there would be a chance of losing our horses and that that would be a complete defeat. We kept vigilant guard during the night, and, the next morning could see the Indians occupying the same position as at dark. After an early breakfast we began to make preparations for moving forward. There had been a heavy dew, and fearing the effects of the dampness upon our fire-arms, which were muzzle-loaders, of course, and some of them with flintlocks, we fired them off and re-loaded. In moving forward, we formed two divisions, with the pack horses behind. On reaching the river bank the front division fell behind the pack horses and drove them over, while the rear division faced the brush, with gun in hand, until the front division was safely over. Then they turned about, and the rear division passed over under protection of their rifles. The Indians watched the performance from their places of concealment, but there was no chance for them to make an attack without exposing themselves to our fire. The river was deep and rapid, and for a short distance some of the smaller animals had to swim. Had we rushed pell-mell into the stream, as parties sometimes do under such circumstances, our expedition would probably have come to an end there.

(To Be Continued)

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READ OUR WANT ADS

IN THE COURTS

Accident Commission Vs. Klamath Laundry

The State Industrial Accident commission yesterday filed suit against the Klamath Superior Laundry for the collection of \$185.54, alleged due the plaintiff.

Gaskins Vs. Gaskins

Marie Gaskins has filed suit for divorce from Leonard Gaskins, whom she married in January 1920.

Eastwood Vs. Eastwood

Mary Ellen Eastwood is plaintiff in a divorce case filed yesterday against Simeon Eastwood. Cruelty and failure to support the family are alleged. They were married in 1886.

Markley Vs. Markley

Alice M. Markley has filed suit for divorce from Paul C. Markley. Desertion is alleged in the complaint.

"THIRTY" SOON MAY COME FOR OPERATOR WHO TAUGHT EDISON

VISALIA, Calif., Nov. 21.—"Thirty" soon may be sent over the wires by J. C. Ward, veteran telegraph operator, who taught Thomas A. Edison the Morse code. Ward, whose sixty years of telegraphing make him probably the oldest operator in point of service in the United States, has had charge of an office here thirty-five years and he wants to retire.

Ward started telegraphing back in 1862, working for the Grand

Trunk railroad at Mount Clemens, Mich. Edison was a "newsboy" on the Grand Trunk railroad and the two boys became fast friends, when Edison used his spare moments to take up telegraphing under Ward's supervision. When Edison's train stopped long enough at Mount Clemens, he would learn a few letters or combinations from Ward, then when his train stopped at another station he would send them back over the wires to his teacher.

During the Civil war, Ward served as a telegraph operator on General Grant's staff. Later he came west for a commercial firm and worked at Sacramento in the pioneer days. Siberia called him and he

worked for a while on construction jobs there.

Thirty five years ago he came to Visalia to set up repeaters for the Visalia telegraph office. He planned to stay some six months to "get things" in running order but he has been here ever since. Once he was elected mayor of Visalia on the republican ticket when everything else went democratic five to one.

Now Ward thinks he would like to retire, so the telegraph company has asked the state railroad commission for authority to close the office. If it is granted, the veteran will be through.

Advertising pays. Try it and see.

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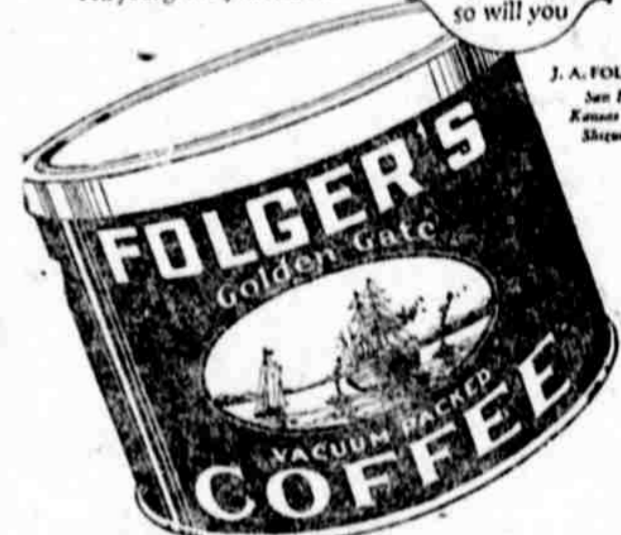
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During the month of November only we are offering The Evening Herald for one year at the reduced rate of.

\$5.00 a year, by carrier.

\$5.00 a year, by mail outside Klamath County.

\$4.00 a year, by mail in Klamath County.

The regular price of the Herald is \$6.50 per year. City subscribers who pay by the month pay 65 cents each month, or \$7.80 a year. Here is an opportunity to save from \$1.50 to \$2.80.

The special offer applies on new subscriptions and renewals alike; except in the case of the latter arrears up to November 1st must be paid.

The Herald is a better newspaper today than it was six months ago; and will continue to grow better during the next year, if proper support is accorded.

The Herald's guiding policy is the upbuilding of Klamath County, and the fostering of harmonious progress among its citizenry.

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The cost of production is mounting in the newspaper field, and this low offer, made this year in conformance with long established custom, may never be renewed.

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This is the season of gifts. If you have a friend or relative in some other part of the country, who you think would make a good citizen of Klamath, why not send him the paper for a year. It might attract him here. It has been done in numerous instances. We all know that Klamath county needs more settlers. You could not make an investment from your gift fund that would do a greater amount of good, or create more pleasure for the recipient of the gift.

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