

# Bunchgrass Historian

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Contributors should send copies of their manuscripts to the editor (at the above listed address). All stories dealing with topics related to Whitman County history will be considered for publication.

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**The Authors**

**Von Pittman**, historian by training, is administrator of the Office of Continuing University Studies at WSU. He has taught journalism history and has an active interest in the history of the Palouse region.

**Dr. Roy M. Chatters** is a charter member of the Whitman County Historical Society. He was, for many years, editor of the *Bunchgrass Historian*; currently he is the director of the *Boomerang* Newspaper and Printing Museum in Palouse.

**Cleveland Rockwell** was a contributor to *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in the late nineteenth century. He travelled extensively through the West in the 1880's and reported on the conditions he found there.

**The Cover**

This issue's cover features a photograph of Pete May, Editor Emeritus, of the *Goldendale Sentinel*, taken at Palouse on July 18, 1976. Subsequently May, along with Emmett Clouse, delivered a Monotype lead and column-rule caster to the *Boomerang* Newspaper and Printing Museum as a donation from the *Sentinel*. (Colfax Gazette photo)

# The Frontier Press

by  
Von Pittman

The term “frontier press” often conjures up the image of a colorful reporter, such as Mark Twain or Bret Harte, mixing colorful yarns with the news in order to entertain. Another familiar stereotype is presented in the film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*—that of a courageous and hard drinking editor whose crusading helped “win” the West. While such characters existed, the stereotypes do not hold. The history of frontier journalism is much more complex. Most of the United States was of course, at one time, the frontier. Because of the great differences in time and place involved, as well as the many individuals, it is difficult to characterize the frontier press. While some editors were intelligent and public spirited leaders of their communities, others were mean and bigoted rascals. While many newspapers exhibited blatant—even outrageous—political partisanship, others capably defended their editorial independence. But while it is impossible to make absolute, definitive statements about the nature of frontier journalism, certain broad themes did persist.

Frontier newspapers were almost always outspoken boosters of their local communities. The historian Daniel Boorstin aptly noted that “the pioneer newspaper of the upstart city . . . had to call into being the very population it aimed to serve.” The *Pittsburg Gazette*, the first frontier newspaper, began publication in 1786. Intended primarily to attract settlers from east of the Alleghenies into Pittsburg, the *Gazette* established boosterism as a central theme in the frontier press, a theme that would greatly grow in intensity after the Civil War. A new Iowa weekly expressed in its first issue the widely held belief that the existence of a newspaper could determine whether a town would prosper or dry up: “The fact that the population of Cedar County is not now vastly larger than it is can only be attributed to the want of a public journal, to unfold its resources, and make known its advantages to the emigrant.”

Once established, booster newspapers fiercely promoted the interests of their communities. The Mineral County (Nevada) *Independent*, for example, proudly proclaimed itself “The only newspaper in the world that gives a damn about Yearington, Nevada.” And it probably was. Editors across the advancing frontier echoed exaggerated platitudes about the fertility, mineral wealth, mild climate, and enormous potential of their towns. In justifying such claims, one Wyoming editor stated, “to sorter toy with the truth in prophetic spirit for the good of the county or community in which he [the editor] lives is . . . a labor of love.”

Besides engaging in boosterism, almost all frontier newspapers maintained a high degree of political activity. In fact, politics—usually partisan—was one of the primary reasons for the founding of newspapers on the frontier. However, one study has indicated that—at least in Washington Territory—the first newspaper in a community was not initially a party organ. Because editors of fledgling newspapers needed the widest possible circulation and advertising in order to survive, they avoided deliberately alienating any segment of their potential readership. Typically, a town's second paper was established as a party organ; it usually adopted a partisan position and attacked the first. The first paper often then became the organ of the opposing party. Across the west, newspapers with the names *Democrat*, *Republican*, and *Independent* reflected their editors' interest in party politics.

Whether partisan or nominally independent, most frontier papers took strong, activist roles within their communities. For example, editors often threw their support behind efforts to bring the county seat to their town. The Dayton (Washington) *News*, for example, was instrumental in wresting the county seat from a rival town because, according to a witness at the time, "Dayton had a newspaper, while Marengo had nothing but a store, a mill in prospect and an abundance of hope." The success or failure of a newspaper in such a situation could determine whether a town lived or withered away.

Financial insecurity was another constant in frontier journalism. Publishing a newspaper in the absence of a stable, established population was quite difficult. Supplies, subscriptions, and significant news were often difficult to obtain. One historian of the western press noted that the three tasks of frontier editors were "to get paper, to get news, and to get paid." Often, editors had to resort to barter; one stated that he was willing to take any kind of produce in payment, except babies. Other problems abounded. A party organ whose sponsor was turned out of office could lose the contract to publish legal announcements. Rival journals could draw away readers. Or, as frequently happened, a town could simply fail to take root. Any of these circumstances could force an editor to close down his paper and move on.

Mobility thus represents another repetitive theme. While changing demographic patterns usually prompted editors to relocate, the development of inexpensive portable printing presses made their frequent moves possible. A single strong man could lift the so-called "army press" which had a cylinder of only a foot in diameter, and was turned by a hand crank. Such presses, easily transported across the plains and mountains, allowed for unprecedented mobility. They brought newspapers to the West's remotest communities, at least for a while. As an extreme example of this mobility, Legh and Frederick Freeman moved their *Frontier Index*, the famous "Press on Wheels," some ten times between 1865 and 1868, as they followed the construction of the Union Pacific railroad.

As yet, there is no comprehensive history of the frontier press. Most of what we know is derived from limited studies of particular times and geographic areas. And these accounts often contradict each other. Scholars differ on even such basic questions as whether western newspapers more accurately reflected the societies they served or the biases of their editors. As with other generalizations about frontier journalism, it seems probable that neither absolute would hold. Still, it is probably safe enough to say that western newspapers played a crucial role in establishing the political and social order of the West. Further, in spite of their boosterism and political biases, as well as their erratic editorial quality, those newspapers today provide us with an extremely valuable record of life on the American frontier.



—Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

*The eastern portion of the **Boomerang** Newspaper and Printing Museum. This was the original museum. The storefront immediately to the west was added subsequently.*

## **The Boomerang Newspaper and Printing Museum at Palouse, Washington**

by  
**Roy M. Chatters, Director**

*The **Boomerang** Newspaper and Printing Museum located in Palouse, Washington was founded in 1974 by Dr. Roy M. Chatters. In this excellent facility are preserved the equipment, symbols, and legends of the art of letterpress printing—printing from movable type, linotype slugs, and stereo castings. On September 18, 1976 the museum was dedicated to Mr. and Mrs. J. B. West of Palouse who had generously given the building for exclusive use as a newspaper and printing museum.*

*Within **The Boomerang** museum there are five main divisions: 1) a complete country town weekly newspaper shop; 2) miscellaneous obsolete equipment, tools, cuts, and a wall-display of historically important newspapers; 3) a large file of Whitman County pioneer newspaper back issues; 4) a significant collection of old magazines, books, telephone directories, and catalogs; 5) a large general storage area.*

*Genealogists and historians are free to use the newspapers and other materials for their research at the museum site. **The Boomerang** Newspaper and Printing Museum is now a branch of the Whitman County Historical Society and is open from June through September, Thursdays and Saturdays from one to five p.m., and by appointment.*



—Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

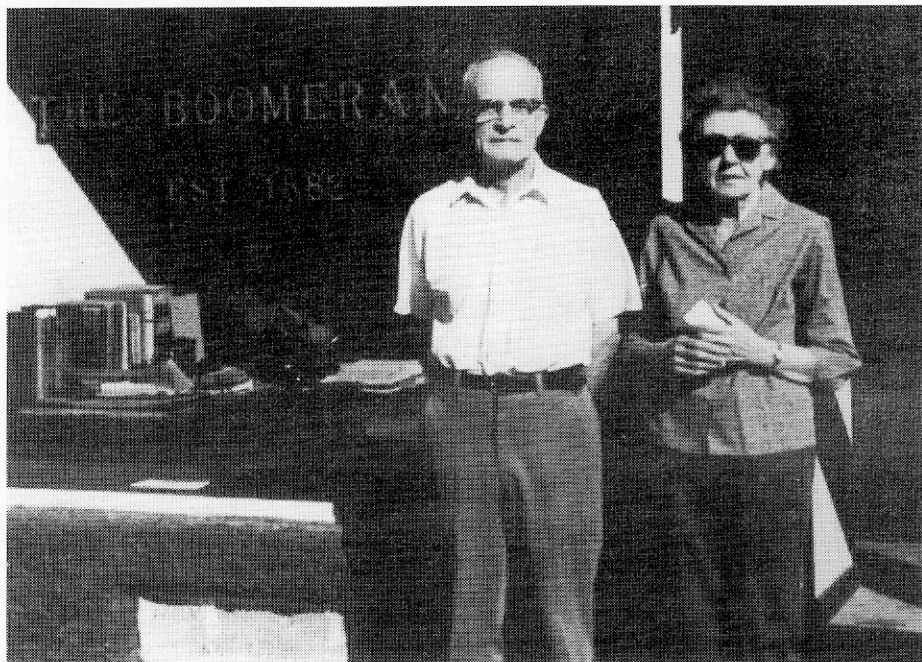
*The crowd on dedication day for the **Boomerang** Newspaper and Printing Museum, September 18, 1976, topped four hundred people.*

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During the late fall of 1973, I visited the *Palouse Republic* print shop. Having once been a printer, I was fascinated by it, leaving with the thought I would like to own the shop and equipment some time just to preserve it as a pioneer country-town weekly. The opportunity came sooner than I expected as, a few weeks later, the editor died and the business reverted to Mrs. Edna Bricker of Palouse who held title to it as widow of its previous publisher and owner, a Mr. McPherson. She soon sold the business on contract to Mr. and Mrs. Elbert Pillers, with whom I originally negotiated for purchase of the equipment, erroneously assuming them to have full ownership. I contacted a number of people hoping to get them interested in joining me in the purchase of the printing equipment and related items. Not succeeding in this, I turned for help to Mrs. Bricker, actual owner of the equipment, on March 15, 1974. I told her that I would agree to pay her \$800.00 for the equipment (\$300.00 on May 14, 1974 and \$100.00 on July 8, 1974, the balance at a later date). Between July and late September, E. Neal Klemgard agreed to pay the remaining \$400.00 on the condition he receive a specific piece of *Republic* photo-reproduction equipment for his own print shop; final payment was made to Mrs. Bricker on September 26, 1974. Mr. Klemgard subsequently donated his half-interest in the *Republic* equipment to the Whitman County Historical Society on December 24, 1974. Although interested, he took no further active part in the development of the newspaper and printing museum. On April 27, 1974, the equipment was moved from the old *Republic* building by the Palouse Lion's Club. After occupying a vacant building for two years, the same civic group donated its time in July of 1976 to move everything to the present museum site.

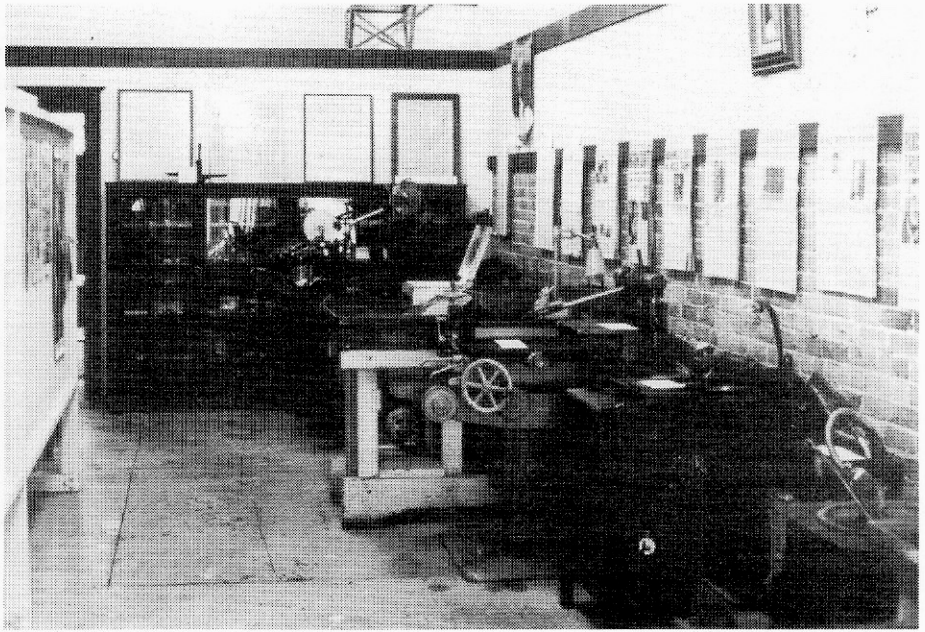
Six years have passed since I wrote the article, "Pioneer Newspapering in the Palouse"<sup>1</sup>, and of my hopes for establishing a newspaper and printing museum. At that writing such equipment and other printing memorabilia as had been acquired were in storage awaiting completion of the remodeling of the 25' by 75' building donated to the Whitman County Historical Society for a museum by J. B. and Olga West of Palouse on February 26, 1975. On April 27, 1975, my wife and I purchased the printing equipment of the defunct *Metalline Falls News and Ione Gazette* of Metalline Falls, Washington; part of this equipment we moved to Palouse and the remainder we donated to the Pend Oreille County Historical Society for their proposed museum.

Funds for materials needed in remodeling the building were obtained from the Palouse Garden Club, Palouse Improvement Association, a Washington American Bicentennial Commission grant and the Whitman County Historical Society. Money for the heating unit in the building was provided by Dorris (West) and Chauncey Goodrich of Santa Barbara, California, daughter and son-in-law of J. B. and Olga West. By the late summer of 1976 the remodeling was complete; the presses, typesetting machines, and other newly acquired gifts of printing gear had been taken out of storage and moved to the museum location at 110 East Main Street in Palouse. After Olga West cut the ribbon strung across the front doors on September 18, 1976, the museum was officially dedicated to the Wests, J. B. and Olga. As this took place during the annual Palouse Days celebration, many visitors passed through the museum; more than 400 people signed the guest book on the first day of operation. After touring the museum on the day of dedication, Bill Wilmot, Editor and Publisher of the *Colfax Gazette* remarked that the reproduced old newspaper shop was quite authentic, except that the editor's desk was "much too clean."



—Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

J. B. and Olga West in front of the Newspaper and Printing Museum in September 1976.



—Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

*This section of the museum has on display numerous pieces of early printing equipment, as well as a rotating display of historic newspapers. In the back can be seen a display case containing a variety of lead newspaper advertising cuts.*

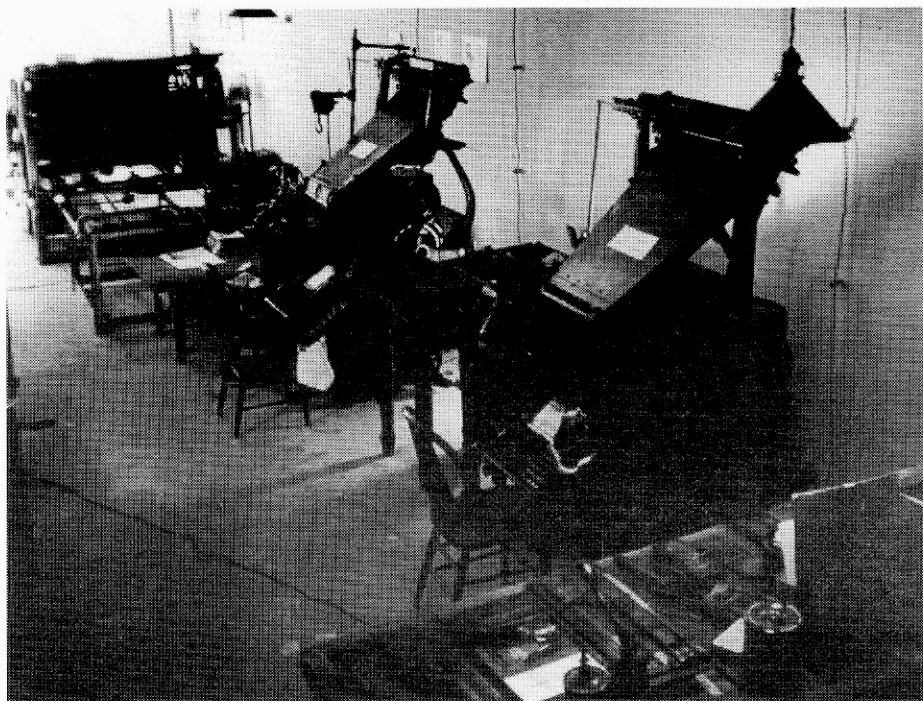
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In May of 1977, Mr. and Mrs. West deeded the building adjoining the museum on the west side to my wife and me, to be used as we saw fit, to further the development of the printing museum. It was decided to use the front portion of this building for the display of old magazines. On August 30, 1978, we deeded the building to the Whitman County Historical Society. Both buildings were deeded over with specific written statements that they were to be used exclusively for preserving the history of printing and newspaper publishing, or revert to the donors.

Since the acquisition of the original letterpress items, other materials have been received as gifts and through purchase. When the *Spokesman Review* (Spokane) switched from letterpress to offset printing, the purchasing agent, "Steve" E. Toy, donated in the name of his company many valuable pieces of equipment, catalogs, and other items which were suddenly obsolete. Other important gifts were received from the *Daily Idahoan* (Moscow, Idaho) *Wallowa Chieftain* (Enterprise, Oregon), *Goldendale Sentinel* (Goldendale, Washington), *Citizen/Journal* (Rosalia), *Colfax Gazette* (Colfax), and the successor to the *Palouse Republic*, the *Whitman-Latah Record* (Palouse).

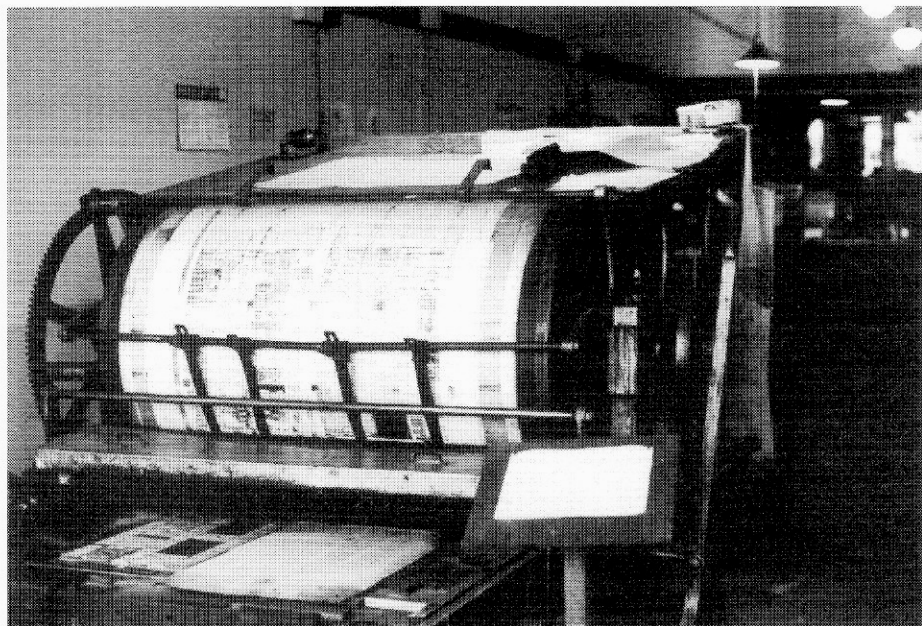
Among the more valuable acquisitions have been the thousands of newspapers and magazines from the estate of the late Paul T. Bockmier of Garfield. His heirs, Fannie and Tracy Ross of Farmington, Washington and Charles Bockmier, of Moscow, Idaho have made this collection, which spans more than seventy years, available for our use. In addition, back-issue files of many original county pioneer weeklies were given to the museum by the Washington State University Libraries. These provide valuable reference material for historians and geneologists.





—Clifford Ott Photo. Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

*An 1890 Cottrell flatbed press can be seen in the background. Next, can be seen a 1908 model Linotype. To the right of the Linotype stands a 1917 Intertype. In the foreground are the composing “stones” on which the early editors put together the type to make up their advertisements.*



—Courtesy of Roy M. Chatters

*The museum’s 1890 Cottrell flatbed press.*

We now have in our collection the *Garfield Enterprise* (back to 1888), *The Palouse Republic* (from 1914), the *Endicott Index* (from the early 1900's), *La Crosse Clipper* (from the early 1900's), *Citizen-Journal* of Rosalia (from the early 1900's). In addition, the museum contains broken lots of other early Whitman County papers, such as the *Rosalia Rustler*, *Palouse Boomerang*, *Colton Newsletter*, *Palouse Gazette* (Colfax), *Farmingington Times*, *Malden Register*, *Johnson Optic*, and *Colton Eagle*.

The many old newspapers acquired from the Bockmier estate and elsewhere have made it possible to display a large variety of front-page reports of historic events on the walls of the museum. A grant from the Washington Commission on the Humanities during the past year has made possible the purchase of plastic sheeting, pasteboard and related supplies for use in encasing the paper articles, thus, better preserving them.

We also received many magazines, familiar to the early residents of the county, from the Bockmier estate. Among these were, the *Youth's Companion*, *American Magazine*, *Delineator*, *Etude*, *Judge*, *Country Gentlemen*, *Follyology*, *Literary Digest*, and forty years of *Life Magazine*. We also received a set of the *National Geographic Magazine*, complete from 1916 to 1969, from Kay (Kenedy) Turner of rural Colfax. Many visitors say that they believe the magazine collection to be their favorite section of the entire museum.

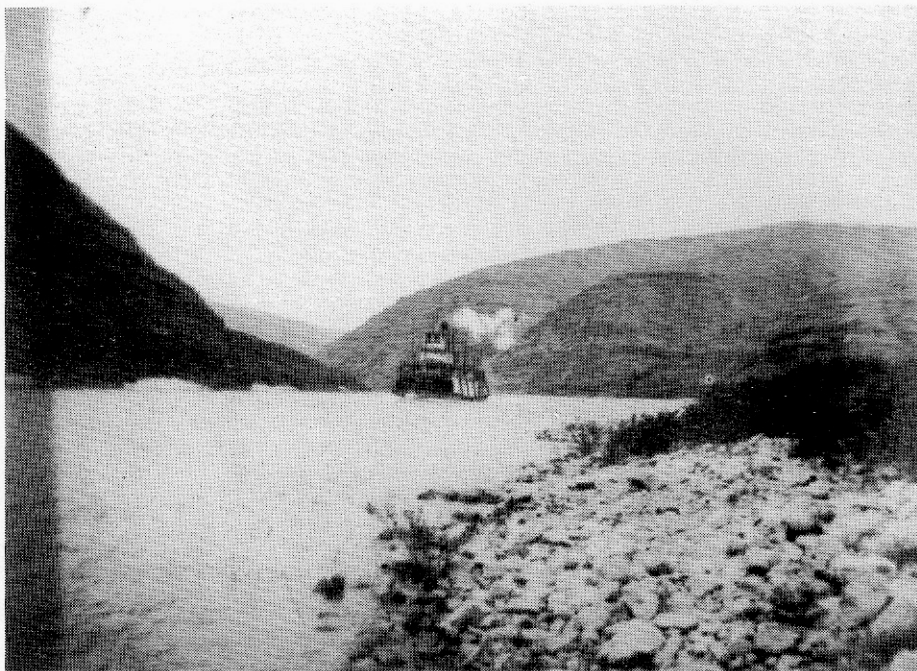
The above-mentioned collections of printed matter, along with early catalogs, calendars, post cards, and other print ephemera, have been used to create displays at the Neill Public Library (Pullman) and at the Whitman County Fair for the past several years.

Despite the impressive collections, the main section of the museum is the representative pioneer newspaper printing shop. Included here are an 1890 flat-bed press, two type-setting machines (a 1908 Linotype and a 1917 Intertype), two imposing stones, a large paper cutter, type cabinet and racks (with wood and metal type in cases), a stereo-casting device, proof press, metal saw, 1888 model job press, and related accessories. The print shop is of particular interest to those who have been associated with the printing trade, especially those who have had the letter-press experience.

In addition to the many adult groups who visit the museum, many classes from Pullman and Moscow have come out to tour the facilities as part of their studies of Northwest history. A feature was added during the past two years whereby the groups of school children were divided into two groups; one remained for a tour of the museum, while the other was given a tour around historic Palouse by J. B. West (now eighty-seven years old). At the appointed time the two groups reversed roles. This arrangement has become a favorite with teachers who have used it. The students show great respect and affection for Mr. West.

In short, I believe that *The Boomerang* Newspaper and Printing Museum has given us a means for preserving the tools, methods, products, and traditions of the art of letterpress printing which was so important in the development of Whitman County's pioneer communities. □





—Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections,  
Washington State University Libraries

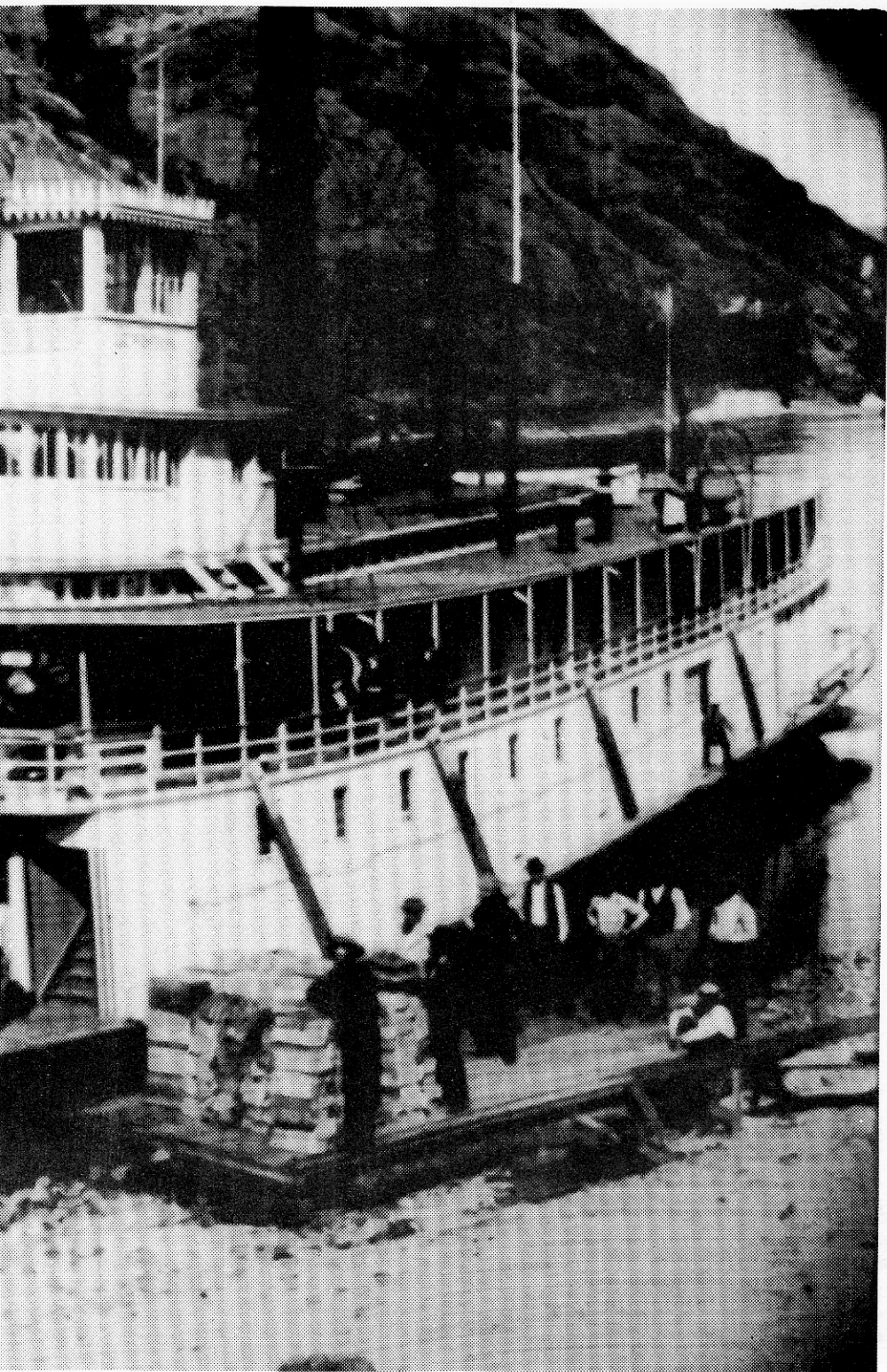
*An unidentified sternwheeler makes its way up the Snake River*

## The Columbia River

by  
Cleveland Rockwell

*In the late 1870's and early 1880's **Harper's New Monthly Magazine** printed a series of detailed travelogues containing vivid descriptions of the rapidly expanding American frontier. Weaned on a diet of Bret Harte and **The Outcastes of Polker Flat** the reading public of the East appears to have eagerly consumed these more dispassionate accounts. Tales of the Yellowstone region, railroad building in Montana, and of "bonanza" farming in the Red River Valley of the Dakota were typical of the stories that appeared on the pages of the magazine. "The Columbia River," by Cleveland Rockwell, is one of two such features that contain material dealing directly with Whitman County. Though its focus is not specifically on this region, Rockwell's story should be of interest to **Bunchgrass Historian** readers because it describes the route followed by many of the county's early pioneers. Edited by William F. Wilbert, the text as it appears here is virtually complete; only a few lengthy passages concerning "down river" geography have been deleted. We wish to thank the editor of **Harper's** for kindly giving us his permission to reprint this article.*





The early completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad from its eastern connections across the territories to its western terminus on the Pacific Ocean will establish for tourists and travellers rapid communication with the northwestern corner of the United States—Oregon and Washington Territory. The Columbia River will then become known to others than the student of geography as the largest river emptying into the Pacific Ocean from the American Continent, and second only to the Mississippi in length and volume. The great plain of the Columbia is a vast grazing and farming country. Its natural garment is bunch-grass, the most nutritious of the wild grasses, which grows in the greatest luxuriance and abundance on level ground and steepest slopes alike. This domain of forty thousand square miles belongs to the people of the United States—and the Northern Pacific Railroad. The settler can select a farm, not for the asking, but for the filing, or by purchase of the railroad on easy terms.

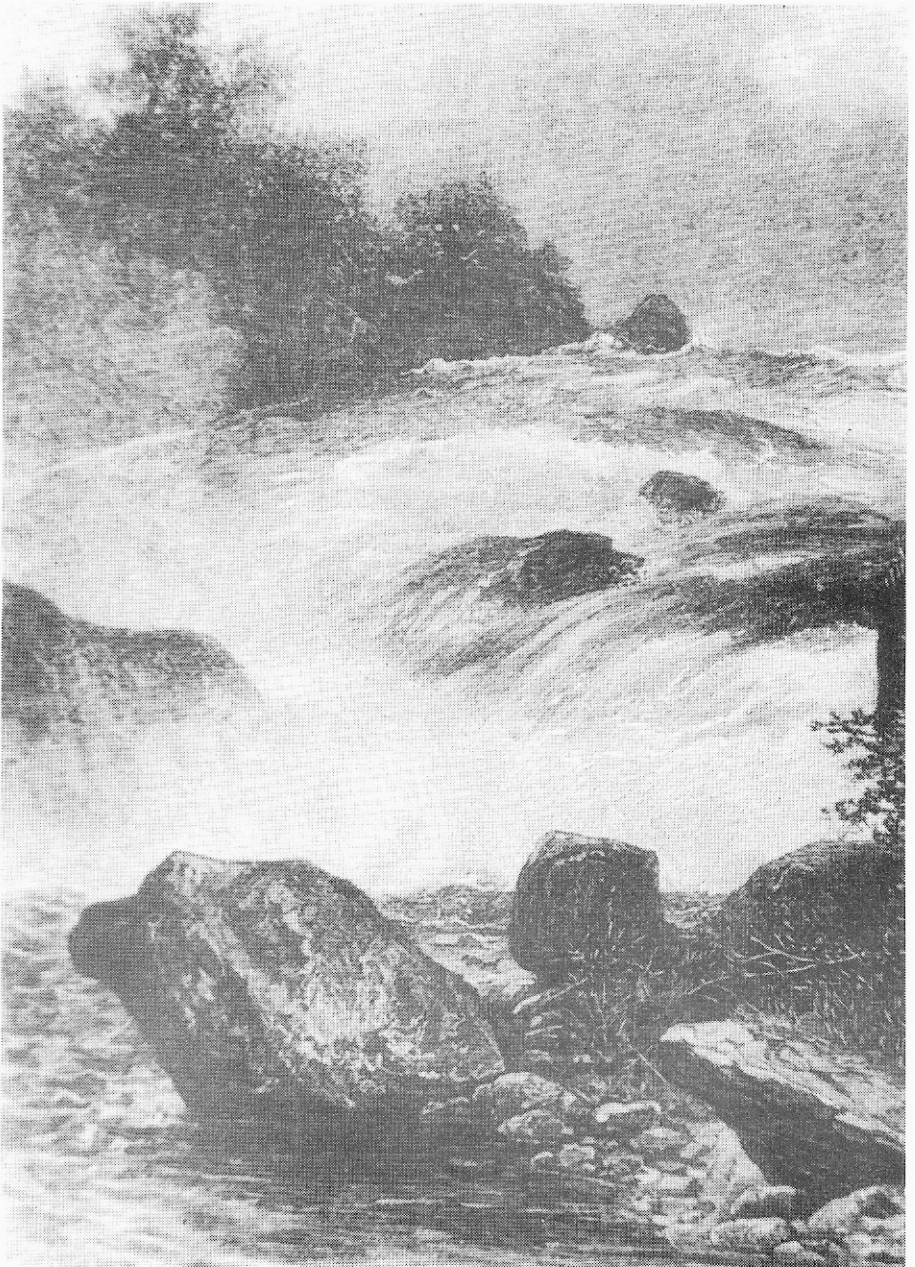
Timber, there is none except on the mountain ranges; a few willows and cottonwoods fringe the banks of the watercourses. Mountains, as far as the eye can see reach toward the coast. The Snake River has cut its channel down deep through the hard basaltic walls, and its course is impeded by many rapids. After reaching the Columbia, the Traveller can enjoy all the comforts of modern travel by rail or on well-appointed steamboats. The navigation of the Upper Columbia and Snake Rivers is difficult but not dangerous, though to one unaccustomed to swift water it seems perilous and well-nigh impossible to control a steamboat threading the narrow channel of wild, whirling waters among the black threatening rocks. Our stern-wheel boat creeps along up stream close to the banks taking advantage of every eddy, now shooting across to an eddy on the opposite shore, then boldly attacks the rapids. Presently the swiftest water is reached, the race of the rapid. Now commences what Western steamboat men call “bucking;” the wheel flies around fast enough, and there is a great kicking up of water behind, and a tremendous exhaust of steam. But the boat stands still, then draws back inch by inch, and we hold our breath in suspense. But a steady hand and nerve at the wheel hold her balanced in the flying current like a bird poised on the wing, and soon a rapid feeding of the voracious furnace furnishes the required power. The steam index goes up five, ten, fifteen pounds, and inch by inch the rapids is passed, and we relieve our feelings by a long breath.

Until a few years since stock-raising was the principal industry of the great treeless region of Eastern Oregon and Washington; but it has now been demonstrated that wheat of the best quality can be surely and successfully grown over a large area of the country, and that, too, as cheaply as anywhere in the world. The bunch-grass, unlike prairie-grass of the Western States, forms no sod or turf, does not need breaking, and the first ploughing will produce a crop.

We ask if it is profitable. Hitherto transportation charges consequent upon the many handlings at the different portages have not left much margin of profit to the producer. But the expense of these numerous transshipments is being rapidly reduced. The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company have already completed a line from the Dalles to Walla Walla, and are constructing feeders in all directions from the main artery to tap the grain-growing country. Transportation charges have already been

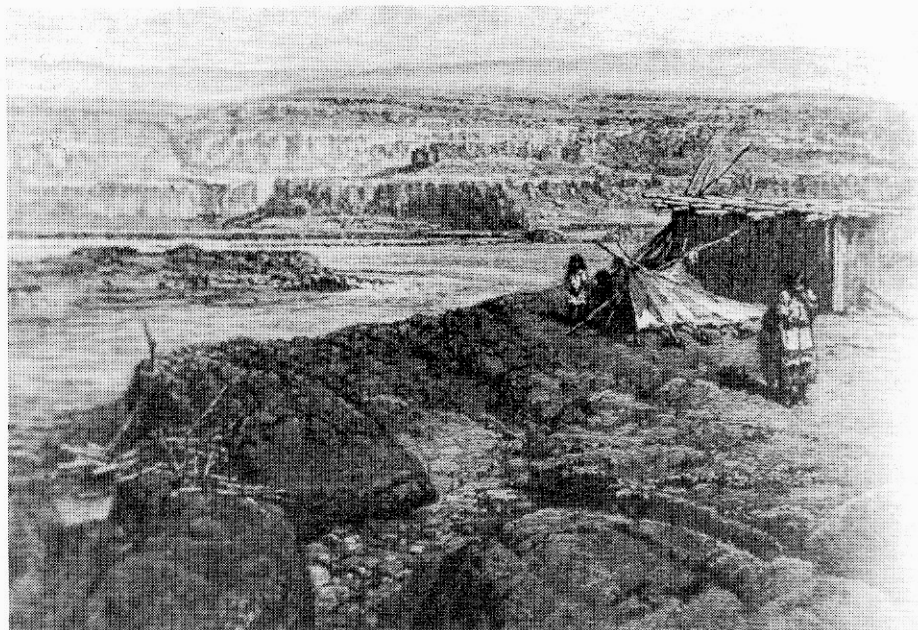
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*The paddlewheel steamer **Lewiston** (pictured on the preceding pages) is similar to the vessel on which the author, Cleveland Rockwell, traveled down the Snake and Columbia Rivers. (Photo courtesy of Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections, Washington State University Libraries.)*



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*"The Snake River has cut its channel down deep through the hard basaltic walls, and is impeded by many rapids . . . The navigation of the Upper Columbia and Snake Rivers is difficult but not dangerous, though to one unaccustomed to swift water it seems perilous and well nigh impossible to control a steamboat threading the narrow channel of wild whirling waters . . ."*



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“Long trains of Indians, driving their ponies and dragging their camps, file along the perilous trails high up the frowning cliffs.”*

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reduced where railroad connections have cheapened the handling, and the whole farming and grain-growing interest has brightened up at the encouraging aspect of the near future. One is astonished to see the immense numbers of farming and harvesting implements and machinery, in all their glory of fresh red and green paint, crowding the boats and trains on their way to the front of civilization.

And yet this country has barely been wrested from the control of the Indian, and he still makes spasmodic attempts to check the overpowering flood of whites. Let us now suppose that all the advantages are on the side of the farmer, for there are some drawbacks and disadvantages which prevent a man from being an optimist. To enumerate some of these, we will find that water is not abundant, and often of poor quality, and the absence of forest growth makes lumber expensive.

The winds blow with great force in the summer months, and carry clouds of sand and dust flying through the air. The nights on the highest lands are cool, and occasional frosts are likely to occur. Nothing, however, seems to prevent the growth of wheat, one season's crop often taxing the carrying capacity of boats and trains to the utmost.

Walla Walla has been formerly the centre of the grain-farming interest, and private enterprise constructed a narrow-gauge railroad from there to the Columbia, thirty-five miles. This road has been changed to the standard gauge. We find Walla Walla a thriving, busy town of several thousand inhabitants, its streets thronged with wagons and horses. The stage still dashes along the dusty street under the tall poplar-trees, and the

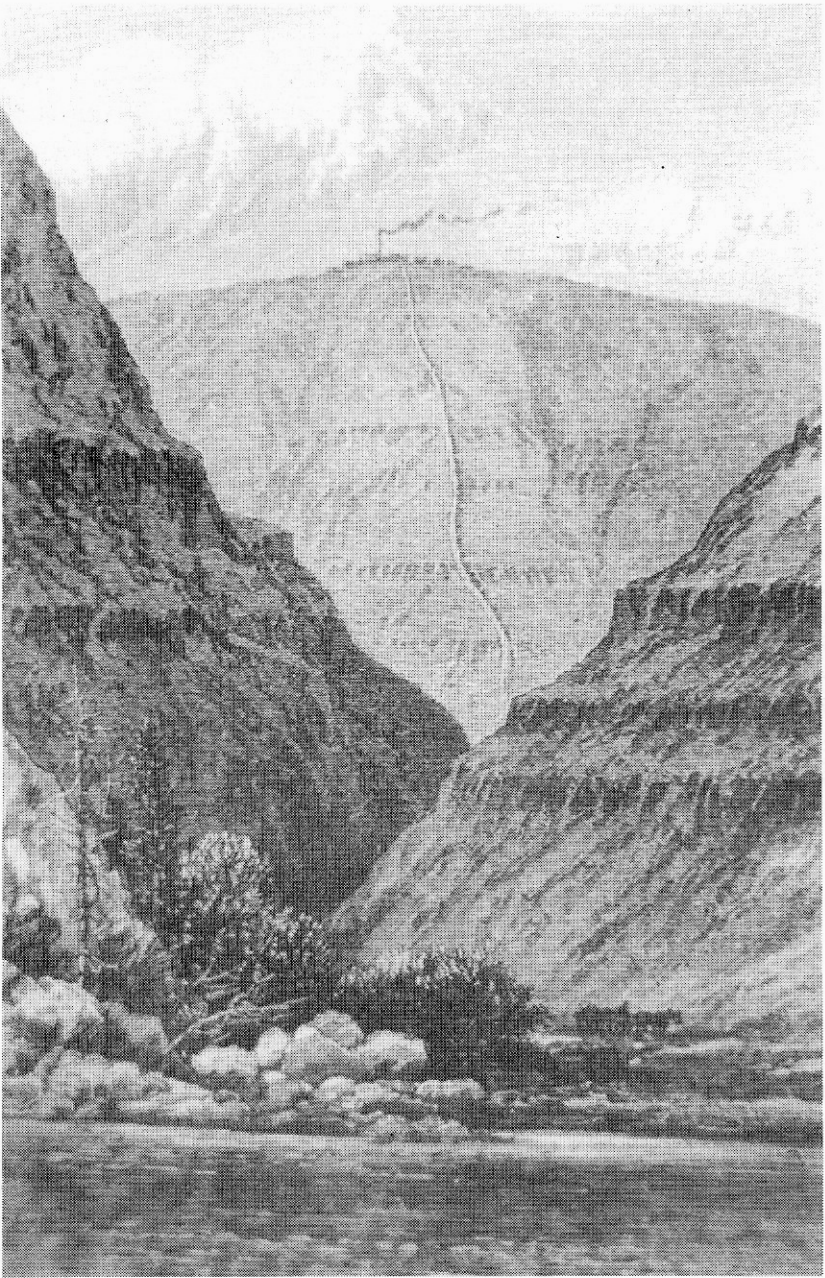


prairie schooner, or large lumbering freight wagon, unknown to Eastern residents, looms up in the distance of the country road. The fort, or military post, of the same name as the town, is on a pretty little elevated plateau a short distance from the village, and the regimental band can be heard playing every evening at sunset. The post is garrisoned by one regiment of cavalry, and is one of the handsomest frontier posts in the West. The services of the army are still needed to subdue the insurrections of the Indian tribes; the war with the Bannocks and Nez Perce tribes, the flying settlers, devastated homes, herds and flocks ruthlessly slaughtered, with pursuing troopers following fast over mountain and plain, attest to the necessity of a strong military force for the protection of the pioneer. Since the completion of the railroad from the Dalles to Walla Walla, but few steamboats ply upon the Upper Columbia and Snake rivers. The head of navigation on the Columbia is Priest's Rapids, forty-five miles above its confluence with the Snake. Lewiston, at the junction of the Clearwater and Snake, is the head of navigation on that steam, three hundred and fifty miles from the ocean. The scenery on the river is grand and peculiar, perpendicular or terraced walls of reddish-brown basalt, carved by the elements into architectural forms of great regularity and beauty, like the mullions and flying-butresses of some great Gothic temple, tower upward a thousand feet above the water's edge. The rounded summits are covered with bunch-grass and the ubiquitous sage; cattle and sheep can barely be discerned, clinging like ants to the steepest slopes. Long trains of Indians, driving their ponies and dragging their camps, file along the perilous trails high up the frowning cliffs. The general surface of the country being so high above the river level, it is not practicable to construct roads except at certain points. At one point is seen a novel expedient in shipping grain. From the summit of a hill twelve or fifteen hundred feet high, a wooden pipe has been constructed down the steep slope of the hill for a thousand feet or more, to a point below where a road can be brought. The grain is deposited in bulk at the mouth of this tube, and pours into a bin at the bottom, where it is sacked and hauled to the river.

At many points on the river we pass the ferries—flat-bottomed scows decked over, propelled across the rapid current by the water acting diagonally against the side of the boat. A twisted wire cable is suspended from shore to shore, sometimes over high tripods, and again from the solid rocky banks. Sheaves run along this cable, to which the boat is secured by blocks and tackle. They are quite expeditious and effective, but not very safe unless carefully and skillfully handled.

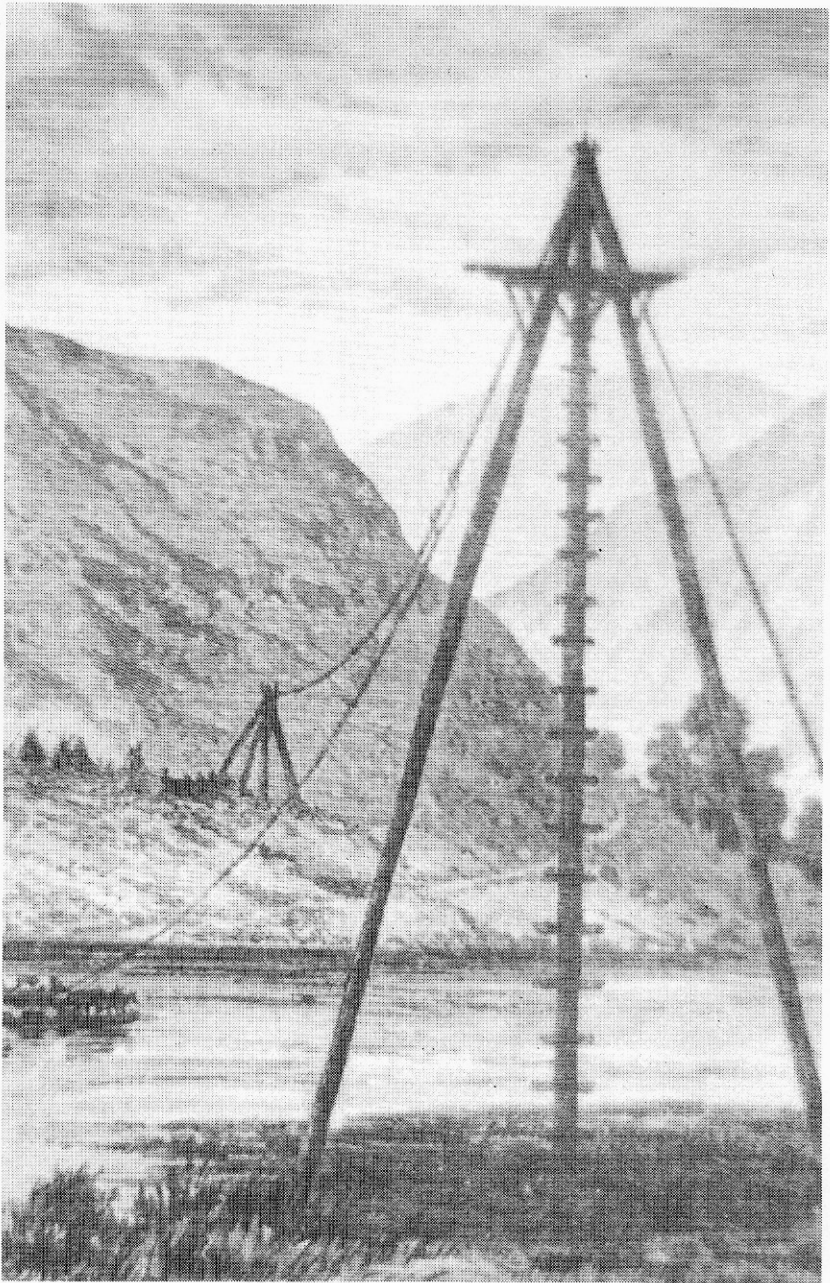
The scenery soon ceases to interest us by the constant repetition of similar forms along the hundred miles of river. It would puzzle any one but a steamboat pilot to make out from the landscape in what particular part of the river he happened to be. Our attention is called to a large open-mouthed cave in the face of the cliffs on the south bank of the river, and noticing a row of children seated against the walls, we are surprised to learn that the cave is utilized as a summer school-house—Nature's temple of learning. The land bordering the Upper Columbia is nearly worthless, sand and gravel forming the soil, while, strange as it may seem, the best soil is on the highest hills and rolling ridges . . .

If the Upper Columbia is barren of beauty to lovers of picturesque scenery, the passage of the river from the Dallas to Vancouver through the heart of the Cascade Mountains, is a panorama of magnificent pictures. The grand towering peak of Mount Hood, its icy slopes and glaciers glistening in the sun, pierces the blue vault of the southern horizon. Our gaze constantly returns to his hoary summit, and we find ourselves silently worshipping, overpowered with a sense of littleness in contemplating his enormous bulk . . .



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“At one point is seen a novel expedient in shipping grain. From the summit of a hill twelve or fifteen hundred feet high, a wooden pipe has been constructed down the steep slope of the hill for a thousand feet or more, to a point below where a road can be brought. The grain is deposited in bulk at the mouth of the tube, and pours into a bin at the bottom . . .”*



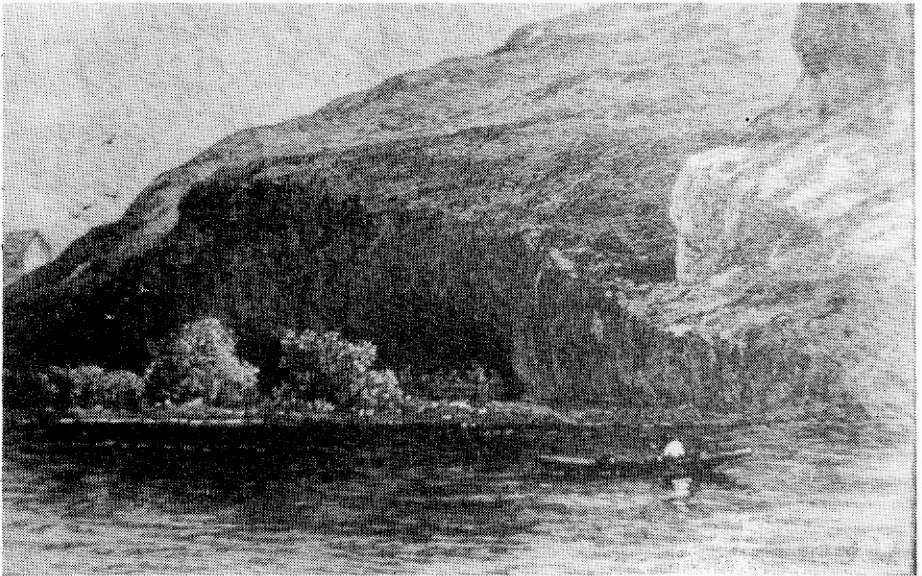
—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“At many points on the river we pass the ferries—flat-bottomed scows decked over, propelled across the rapid current by the water acting diagonally against the side of the boat. A twisted wire cable is suspended from shore to shore, sometimes over high tripods, and again from the solid rocky banks. They are quite expeditious and effective, but not very safe unless carefully and skillfully handled.”*

The Columbia, at the Cascades, narrowed to half its width, dashes down the rapids in a rush of wild waters, resembling in a manner the rapids of Niagra. The river approaches the lip of the cataract as placid as a lake, its surface dotted here and there with many a tufted rocky islet. Our steamboat approaches full speed, and swings around to her moorings with the greatest confidence, while a few hundred yards below the angry water is lashing its rocky shores and leaping high over the submerged rocks. The government is building locks on the Oregon side to enable the steamboats to pass up to the Dalles.

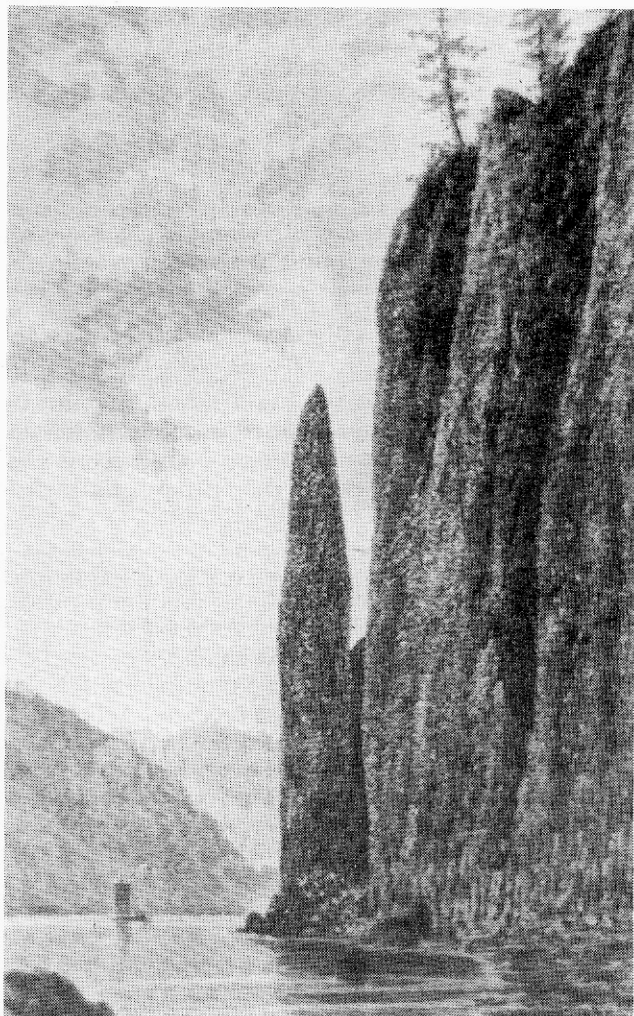
As we pass up and down the river in the early part of May, the scene is a succession of grand and lovely surprises. The cottonwoods along the shores have just donned their spring vesture of tender green; the delicate quaking stand in groups and fringes, their round leaves quivering with the lightest breath of air . . . We long for the brush of a Turner to transfer this beauty to our possession. The views through the Columbia highlands can not be effaced from the memory; the chambers of the imagination are haunted by their shapes . . .

The Lower Columbia is open to the influence of the tides from the sea to Portland and the Cascades. Ships of very large draft are towed up the river to Portland to load wheat at the wharves for the English market. To appreciate the rapid development of the grain-growing interest, we have to remember that only as far back as 1868 the first cargo of Oregon wheat was shipped by an enterprising merchant of Portland to Sydney, merely as an experiment. The following year a vessel was dispatched to Liverpool and it was not until 1870 that Oregon became known as a wheat-producing state.



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“Our attention is called to a large open-mouthed cave in the face of the cliffs on the south bank of the river, and noticing a row of children seated against the walls, we are surprised to learn that the cave was used as a summer school-house—Nature's temple of learning.”*



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“ . . . the scene is a succession of grand and lovely surprises . . . The views through the Columbia highlands cannot be effaced from the memory . . . ”*

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The yearly shipments of wheat from the Columbia are steadily increasing. In 1879 the exports of wheat were 1,932,080 centals, valued at \$3,611,240 . . .

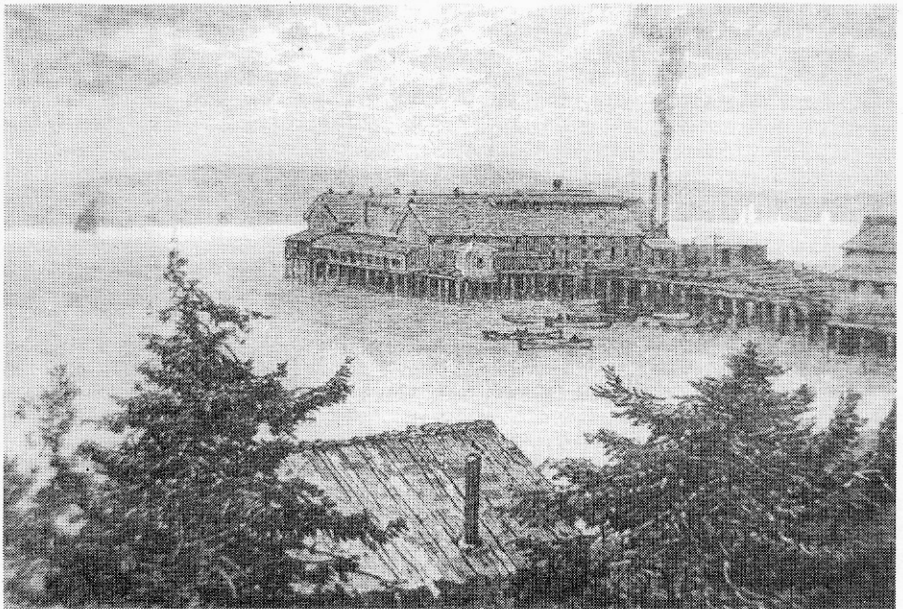
The resources of Oregon and Washington in timber and lumber are practically inexhaustable, the whole country from the ocean to the Cascade Mountains, except the Willamet [sic] and other smaller valleys, being covered by a forest of fir, spruce, cedar, and pine. It is true, fires have ravaged these virgin forests over large areas, and hoary and blackened trunks on many a mountain-side bear witness to the ghastly devastation; but where the fire has not consumed the humas or mould, the Douglas fir, like the phoenix, springs triumphant from its ashes . . .

On the first twenty-five miles of the river above its mouth we observe the large buildings of the salmon fisheries, and Astoria is the centre of that industry . . . The salmon-canning establishments are large unsightly structures, constructed over the

water on piles, and without the slightest concessions to architectural effect or taste. The labour employed is almost exclusively Chinese—a monotonous work for which they prove well fitted . . .

The ancient village of Astoria, situated on the south shore of the river or bay, fifteen miles from the ocean, looks to us like a very new wooden town, though really the first settlement on the northwest coast. As early as 1811 the Pacific Fur company occupied the present site as a trading-post, and it became a bone of contention between the English and American companies, whose fields of operations covered the same ground. A large part of the place is built on piles over the water, like the lake-dwellings of prehistoric man. It has always been a place of great expectations and tardy fulfillments; but the ancient Astorian will ever adduce the fact that as New York occupies a similar site at the mouth of a great river, *ergo* Astoria must become a great city. Vessels enter and clear at the Custom-house, and are towed over the bar by competent tug-boats. The only building constructed of other material than wood is the Custom-house—a neat structure of stone. During the fishing season in spring and summer the streets are thronged by a cosmopolitan population belonging to every nationality of Europe and the East . . .

At last our trip was over; and as we steamed swiftly down the channel on a falling tide, past the forts on either hand and close under the rock-ribbed walls of Cape Hancock, at the close of a beautiful day in June, the ship rose and fell to the vigorous pulsations of the broad Pacific, while the snow-clad dome of Mount St. Helens rose higher and higher, and filled the broad gateway of the river.



—Harper's New Monthly Magazine Illustration

*“On the first twenty-five miles of river above its mouth we observe the large buildings of the salmon fisheries, and Astoria is the centre of that industry . . . The salmon-canning establishments are large unsightly structures, constructed over water on piles, without the slightest concession to architectural effect or taste.”*

## For Further Reading . . .

### Early Journalism

A Standard, but superficial, work on the pioneer press in the West is, John Myers, *Print in a Wild Land* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967). Thomas H. Heuterman's biography of Legh R. Freeman, *Movable Type* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979) is an outstanding work on the life of a frontier editor. Robert F. KKarolevitz, *Newspapering in the Old West: A Pictorial History* (Seattle: Superior Press, 1965) is also worth looking at. A recent article by Barbara L. Cloud entitled "A Party Press? Not Just Yet! Political Publishing on the Frontier" appeared in *Journalism History* (Summer 1980). Ms. Cloud's work deals with the political nature of the press in Washington Territory. *The Bunchgrass Historian* (Fall 1975) contains several articles of interest: "Pioneer Newspapering in the Palouse," and "Tale of an Early Printer's Devil," both by Roy Chatters; "Over Sixty Years as a Printer," by R. E. Heitzman; and "From Apprentice to Editor-Publisher," by Carl P. Dilts.

### Navigation on the Columbia and Snake

Randall V. Mill's *Sternwheelers up the Columbia* (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1947) and "A History of Transportation in the Pacific Northwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* (September 1946) are good background sources. See also June Crithfield's article "The River Road to Rag Town that opened the Palouse" In *The Bunchgrass Historian* (Summer 1973) for an excellent discussion of the Snake River and Whitman County.

### PULLMAN PERSPECTIVES 1881-1981

#### A Centennial Exhibit

The Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections of the Washington State University Libraries features an extensive display commemorating Pullman's first hundred years. If you are interested in Pullman history, do not miss this one! The exhibit will be on display from November 30th, 1981 through January 31, 1982 in the lobby area of E. O. Holland Library on the WSU Campus.

## Publications of Note

### North of the Narrows: Men and Women of the Upper Priest Lake Country, Idaho

by Claude and Catherine Simpson

University Press of Idaho, 305 pp., \$11.95

*North of the Narrows* is an engaging, anecdotal history of both pioneer homesteaders in the Upper Priest Lake Country and the leisure activities of residents of eastern Washington and northern Idaho from the 1910's through the 1950's. The Simpsons are both long-time Whitman County residents. Claude was born in Colton, gret up in the Palouse Country, and served as Registrar at Washington State University from 1953 until his retirement in the late 60's. Catherine was born near Wilbur, Washington and spent many years teaching grade school. Their book is obviously a labor of love and they offer many short, readable accounts of early business, mining, and boating enterprises around the lakes, as well as entertaining short biographies of some memorable characters: Aunt Belle Angstadt, accused, then acquitted of murdering Jack Burnette in a lover's quarrel; silent filmmaker Nell Shipman who operated a major film company, Shipman Productions, for a number of years with studios in Spokane and a location lot at Lionhead Lodge on the south side of Mosquito Bay; "Dad" Moulton, a former scout for General Custer; Six Shooter Jack who always car-

ried a pair of 38s strapped to his hips, wore a black hat, black shirt, and black pants, and rode a black horse. The story of the Beaver Creek Camp Association and the Shady Rest Resort should be of particular interest to students of Washington State University history since it involves the purchase and development of 57.72 acres of land at the north end of the lake as a "WSC staff and faculty recreation area." The enterprise was initiated by WSC president Wilson Compton and involved many well-known Pullman faculty and staff: Emmett Avery, Claude Simpson, Murray Bundy, D. F. McCall, Palmer Hilty, and Herbert Wood, to name a few.

*North of the Narrows* is a handsomely produced paperback illustrated by many well-chosen photographs and a helpful map of the Priest Lake region.

—William F. Wilbert

### **Sprague, Lamont and Edwall—Stories of Our People, Land, and Times, 1881-1981**

*Southeastern Lincoln County Historical Society/Ye Galleon, 1982, \$25.00*

It is not often that a new historical society ventures beyond the strictured memorabilia-filled confines of the local historical mansion to undertake an ambitious project like the publication of a local history. Yet that is precisely what happened in Sprague. Originally their book, *Sprague, Lamont, and Edwall—Stories of Our People, Land, and Times, 1881-1981*, was to be out before Christmas, but production problems have unfortunately delayed its appearance until early 1982. Despite this minor setback Alana Harder, historical society treasurer, says that nearly one thousand advance subscriptions have already been sold. For those with an interest in the history of the Sprague area or northern Whitman County this forthcoming book should make enjoyable reading. In all, *Stories of Our People, Land, and Times* will contain histories of Sprague, Lamont, and Edwall, as well as 400 individual family histories, "generally written," as the advance publicity declares, "by descendants of the pioneers, or compiled from information found in issues of the *Sprague Advocate*." The 8½ by 11 inch volume will, according to Mrs. Harder, contain more than 300,000 words and numerous photographs. If you wish to order a copy send \$25.00 (add \$3.00 to cover the cost of mailing) to:

Alana Harder  
Historical Society Treasurer  
Sprague, Washington 99032

Further information about the Southeastern Lincoln County Historical Society can also be obtained from Mrs. Harder. The Whitman County Historical Society wishes the people of Sprague, Edwall, and Lamont much good fortune with their new organization and with its first publication.

—Fred C. Bohm