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TWO RAILROAD TOWNS

Tekoa and Malden

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Ross Cox was an employee of J.J. Astor's Pacific Fur Company, in which capacity he found himself in the circumstances he described in his account of wanderings through the scablands in 1811. Reprinted for the edition of 1832.

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Two Railroad Towns: Tekoa and Malden

by

Dale L. Martin, Jr.

Part I

Tekoa and Malden During the Era of Railroad Dominance, 1880s through 1910s

Tekoa and Malden were two of many railroad towns established during the rapid expansion of the American rail network in the fifty years before World War I. Tekoa was a small settlement chosen in 1888 by the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company as a junction and operating headquarters. Twenty years later the Milwaukee Road built a second rail line through Tekoa and created Malden as a division point. The railroads dominated transportation and employment in both towns until after World War I when improved road travel led to a long and gradual decline of the national rail system.

Tekoa is located at an elevation of about 2,500 feet at the confluence of Hangman and Little Hangman creeks in the rolling hills of the northeast Palouse region. To the north a ridge rises over 1,300 feet above the surrounding prairie, which was covered with wild wheat grass before cultivation began. The first whites settled in the area during the 1870s. In 1875 Frank Connell established an Indian trading post northeast of the future townsite within a mile of the western edge of the Coeur d'Alene reservation. Two years later brothers George, David, and Nathaniel Huffman each selected a homestead near the spot where Little Hangman Creek flows into Hangman Creek. By 1883 enough people lived at the confluence to create a small community called "Fork of the Creek." At the same time Daniel Truax and his brother built a sawmill on the west bank of Hangman Creek. In the mid-1880s rumors of possible railroad construction through the region gave the residents hopes of a prosperous future.¹

In 1881 the first railway north of the Snake River, the Northern Pacific, built its transcontinental mainline through Cheney, thirty miles northwest of Tekoa. The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company (OR&N) constructed the first line into the Palouse in 1883 and soon stories of rail projects were common in "Fork of the Creek." Such talk was popular all over the West in the late nineteenth century, but for the people living on the flats around the creek confluence rumors became reality.²

By 1886 the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company had completed a rail line from Portland to a connection eastward to Huntington, Oregon with a branch into eastern Washington terminating at Farmington. In the spring of 1888 crews surveyed

lines beyond Farmington toward Spokane Falls and the Coeur d'Alene mines. The Washington and Idaho Railroad, an OR&N subsidiary, started construction several months later and Chinese and white laborers laid tracks to "Fork of the Creek." Company officials chose this place for the junction of the mainline and the branch to the mining district and as the eastern operating terminus of the Pleasant Valley line (Winona to Seltice via Thornton). They also decided to make it the location of a locomotive roundhouse and repair shops. Such a concentration of railroad activity assured the town immediate growth and prosperity. By 1889 Tekoa and Starbuck were division points on the completed Spokane Falls-Walla Walla-Pendleton line with connections to the west and east at Pendleton. The Union Pacific system won financial control of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company in the summer of 1889 and the tracks through the new railroad town became part of a corporate network extending from Portland to Omaha and Kansas City.³

With the arrival of the railroad in the summer of 1888, Daniel Truax purchased land from George and David Huffman for a townsite and platted twenty acres into streets and lots. His wife, seeing the tent camp of construction workers and early settlers on the low ground around the creek confluence, chose the name "Tekoa" from a community of herdsmen mentioned in the Book of Amos of the Old Testament. The town was incorporated in the early spring of 1889. That year the railway company began construction of its facilities, erecting a two-story depot and obtaining ground for a roundhouse, machine shops, and coal bunkers. With the completion of these structures in 1890 and full employment, the Union Pacific payroll in Tekoa amounted to twelve thousand dollars per month.⁴

Although the railroad dominated the Town's economy with its large work force, the company did not directly interfere in Tekoa's commercial and political affairs. Land sales, businesses, and utilities developed free of overt Union Pacific control and grew rapidly. A fire in the late summer of 1892 destroyed much of the business district but the merchants quickly rebuilt in brick. Within five years after its founding Tekoa had a population of about 850 and was one of the major towns in Whitman County with two banks, two weekly newspapers, a waterworks, an electric light plant, and a Catholic academy, in addition to the public school.⁵

Other factors besides the railway contributed to the prosperity of Tekoa. Located among the fertile Palouse hills, it was a center for grain growing and shipping. By 1894 warehouses in town handled over two hundred thousand bushels of wheat annually. The flour mill could produce 125 barrels per day. Fruit orchards developed more slowly than grain farming, but were important by the turn of the century, especially apple trees. Tekoa was also the principal trading and banking place for the Indians of the Coeur d'Alene reservation, just across the state boundary in Idaho. Many adopted the ways of white men, including agriculture, and their prosperity benefited the town's merchants.⁶

Beyond sharing regional agricultural characteristics, Tekoa's role as one of the few industrial sites in the Palouse give it economic diversity and additional strength. The *Tekoa Globe* noted the "gladsome sight" of the Union Pacific pay car pausing in town with the comment that it meant "a general settling up of grocery bills, etc., and, as a consequence of its arrival, everybody wears a broad smile." Tekoa's dependence on the railway was further demonstrated following the Panic of 1893, which combined low agricultural prices nationwide with a disastrous wet summer in the Palouse, and led to several poor years for the region's farmers. Railroad traffic and employment declined,

The Iron Horses All Want to Get Into That Pasture



*James J. Hill of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads contemplates the incursion of the Milwaukee Road, and other lines, into his "pasture" in Eastern Washington. Cartoon from **Spokane Spokesman-Review** January 22, 1906.*

causing the monthly payroll in Tekoa to fall to only eight to ten thousand dollars. Yet because of this income Tekoa did not suffer as much as neighboring towns largely dependent on crop sales. For instance, Frauke Engelland, wife of a farmer near Tekoa, supplemented her family's earnings by selling eggs and butter in town, where railroaders with their regular pay provided a much better market than people in other nearby communities.⁷

The depression years of the mid-1890s brought financial crisis and violent labor conflict to the nation's railways. Several large western roads failed, including the Union Pacific which went bankrupt in October 1893. In a separate action, the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company was declared insolvent on 25 June 1894 and applied for receivership. The next day the American Railway Union, in sympathy with Pullman Company employees in Illinois striking for restoration of full wages, refused to work trains with Pullman cars throughout the United States, which resulted in an almost complete shutdown of some railroads, such as the Northern Pacific, and led to military intervention.⁸

The strike did not greatly affect Union Pacific operations in eastern Washington, although it did halt traffic on many of the company's other lines. Some workers in Tekoa, who had formed one of the first American Railway Union locals in the Pacific Northwest, joined the Pullman blockade, but the railroad continued to provide service (including passenger trains with Pullman cars) to and from Spokane without violence or military protection. After ten days a majority of the strikers in Tekoa had quit the American Railway Union and sought to return to their positions. The Union Pacific restored train service over all its lines after fifteen days. Ironically, fifty Tekoa members of a state militia company saw labor violence when their unit traveled over the Northern Pacific between Spokane and Tacoma.⁹

Problems of bankruptcy persisted after the strike finally ended in the middle of July. Union Pacific officials changed OR&N management, consolidated operations, and cut employment. While this affected affairs in Tekoa, the railway nevertheless continued its dominant role in the town with over one hundred men on its payroll in October 1895. Reorganized in 1897, the OR&N was temporarily independent, but returned to Union Pacific control two years later.¹⁰

The railroad was an unpredictable employer, even after recovery from the depression of the mid-1890s. Fluctuations in traffic and the transfer of administrative and maintenance activities between division points influenced the size of the work force in Tekoa. At the turn of the century Union Pacific employment in Tekoa was unusually low. Out of a population of over seven hundred only about fifty people were on the payroll, earning 50 to 195 dollars per month. Most of these were train crewmen with few station and shop workers since the company had shifted almost all these jobs elsewhere. Within several years, however, the Union Pacific restored full activity to the roundhouse and depot offices. By 1904 the railroad employed approximately 140 men in Tekoa with over 90 in train and engine service, 30 in maintenance of equipment and track, and 14 in the station. Over the next twelve years the company payroll in Tekoa usually ranged between 125 and 175 workers, of which more than half ran the locomotives and trains.¹¹

Events of 1905 and 1906 illustrated the frequent changes in railroading in Tekoa and eastern Washington. Heavy freight traffic, especially after a good harvest, caused a temporary increase in employment and short-term promotions for train personnel. In order to move unusually large amounts of freight through Tekoa during the early autumn of 1905, the Union Pacific obtained more locomotive engineers by hiring from other companies and promoting some of its own firemen. Two months later the railroad transferred the office of the assistant superintendent of operations in Washington from Tekoa to Starbuck to place the headquarters nearer the center of the division. The dispatcher who directed all Union Pacific train movements north of the Snake River worked in the Tekoa depot until that building burned in 1906, after which the company shifted them and their staffs to Spokane. Loss of the superintendent's and dispatcher's positions in Tekoa took twenty-five railway jobs from the town.¹²

The railwaymen of Tekoa ran and supported the operation of passenger, freight, and mixed trains (freight trains with one or more cars carrying passengers, express, and mail). Passenger service through Tekoa increased from only two trains per day in January 1890 to ten per day two years later. As the railroad experimented with schedules and routings, the daily frequency ranged between eight and twelve passenger trains. After the turn of the century daily runs included two trains each way between Spokane and Northeast Oregon and fast service between Spokane and Portland (fourteen hours in 1909), which carried cars to and from St. Paul traveling across Alberta and Saskatchewan on the Canadian Pacific. After 1910 local service between Tekoa and Wallace and over the Pleasant Valley branch (an operation unofficially called the "Sage Hen") consisted of gasoline-powered motor cars which hauled riders, mail, and express. The Union Pacific also ran special trains for ball games, fairs, political gatherings, and holiday events. Freight service through Tekoa consisted of regularly scheduled trains plus a varying number of "extras," trains operated only when specifically needed, such as after harvest.¹³

WASHINGTON

IDAHO



Lines of Union Pacific
Milwaukee Road
Joint U.P.-Milwaukee Use

Map of Union Pacific and Milwaukee Road lines in the Palouse country and adjacent areas. Map by Dale Martin.

Tekoa ended twenty years as a one-railroad community in 1908 when construction of another railway changed the north part of town. The new line, part of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad (often called the Milwaukee Road) never approached the economic impact of the Union Pacific, but it gave Tekoa a position on a transcontinental rail route and built a landmark, a large trestle on the northwest edge of town, that dominated its setting. Directors of the Milwaukee Road voted in late 1905 to build an extension to Puget Sound. After several decades as a major railway in the upper Middle West, they decided to end their dependence on connecting lines for Pacific coast traffic and construct their own route from central South Dakota to Seattle and Tacoma. In early 1906 work began concurrently at several places on the proposed route.¹⁴

The line in eastern Washington passed south of Spokane, through Tekoa and Rosalia. Construction across the rolling Palouse landscape involved much earthmoving and some major bridge-building. In the late spring of 1907 crews began cutting through hills and filling in low places just northeast of Tekoa. The work provided temporary jobs for some local people as the contractor supplemented his regular crews and excavation machinery with Tekoa men and boys hired to work horse teams in grading the roadbed. During this activity the Milwaukee Road also located engineering offices and a "hospital" with two physicians in the town.¹⁵

In August and September 1908 the railway built a steel trestle to carry its track over the Hangman Creek Valley on the northwest edge of Tekoa. A traveling bridge gang of about sixty men came to town to erect the piers and girders, completing the task in less than a month. One thousand feet long and 125 feet high where it crossed the creek, the prominent structure was visible from most of the town. Crews and machines laying track eastward moved across the bridge in the early afternoon of 29 October 1908. As they approached, a crowd of townspeople gathered to watch the activity. Union Pacific employees blew the whistles of locomotives at the roundhouse. Teachers and students, excused early from the public schools, marched to the north end of town accompanied by the Tekoa band, which played as the track-laying machine neared the east end of the trestle. The citizens provided refreshments for the laborers.¹⁶

The Milwaukee Road completed the line to Puget Sound in May 1909 and soon long freight trains regularly passed through Tekoa. Local passenger service continued until May 1911, when the company started operation of two daily passenger trains each way between Chicago and Seattle, the *Olympian* and *Columbian*. Only a few people in Tekoa worked for the Milwaukee Road following completion of track and structures. Two carpentry crews built a two-story combination passenger-freight depot and a water tank for locomotives at Tekoa in the late summer of 1909. Afterwards, Milwaukee employment in town consisted of a station agent, telegraph operators, and track maintenance workers.¹⁷

The Milwaukee Road brought some new businesses to Tekoa. A company crew of ten men built an agricultural warehouse and cold-storage plant opposite the depot in 1912. Stock pens constructed along the tracks attracted shippers of sheep, who sent the animals by rail to summer pasture in Idaho and Montana and to packing plants in the Middle West.¹⁸

The Milwaukee Road also created new communities for its own operating headquarters. In the northwest Palouse, the company built the division point of Malden



Tekoa, 1938

—WSU Libraries

which contrasted in several ways with Tekoa, twenty-eight miles by rail to the east. The operation of trains was the primary economic activity in both towns, but Malden grew faster with less economic diversity and more corporate domination. Rail employment in Malden exceeded that of Tekoa, although its total population was less.

The Milwaukee Road's prevailing role in the affairs of Malden began with the town's establishment. The company founded Malden in May 1908 after purchasing and platting a townsite on a forested bench in the coulee of Pine Creek, a rocky channel among the hills. At an auction in Spokane in late May the railroad opened sale of lots in five new townsites planned along its line in the north Palouse: Seabury, Pandora, Malden, Kenova, and Palisade.¹⁹

Malden, chosen to be a division headquarters, grew rapidly. Milwaukee employees, transferred from the Midwest, lived in primitive housing while setting up operations on the new line. Besides temporary construction headquarters, the railroad established at Malden a station and administrative offices, a freight depot and supply buildings, a roundhouse and machine shop, a water supply system, car repair facilities, a switchyard, and train crew change point.²⁰

A land and townsite agent for the Milwaukee Road supervised the sale and development of the company's lots during the rapid growth of Malden. The community had eighty "substantial" buildings and a population of about 450 in May 1909 when the first trains traveled over the completed transcontinental line. In only two weeks of October 1909 builders started twenty houses. The federal census of 1910 found 798 people in Malden, making the two-year old settlement the seventh largest town in Whitman County.²¹

Political, social, and commercial features of a town developed as the number of residents increased. The people established their own government, a school, churches, fraternal organizations, and a booster club called "Malden 5000 [population by] 1912." Early businesses included a newspaper, several hotels, two banks, and two grain warehouses.²²

The Milwaukee Road exerted influence in direct and indirect ways. Its real estate subsidiary, the Milwaukee Land Company, financed the town's water system. The businesses depended on the railroad payroll even more than those in Tekoa, for Malden did not serve as a focal point for a rural district. Most of the area's farmers continued to regard the older towns of Rosalia, six miles to the east, and Pine City, four miles to the southwest, as the local trade and service centers. After six years of rapid growth Malden was a town with about one thousand residents and an economy heavily dependent on the Milwaukee Road.²³

A new route opened for service in September 1914 changed traffic on the railroads through Tekoa and Malden. The Union Pacific completed a line across barren lava lands between Ayer and Spokane cutting fifty-two miles from the distance between Portland and Spokane and eliminating much curvature and gradient. As a result, the circuitous route through Tekoa became a secondary mainline. At the same time the Milwaukee Road began operating the *Olympian* and *Columbian* through Spokane, the location of new division headquarters, instead of through Malden and Tekoa.²⁴

These changes did not have a major effect on Tekoa. Union Pacific crews and facilities continued to handle much local traffic since the original mainline had more towns along it than did the new line. Spokane-Portland passenger service operated over the new route but four daily local trains still stopped in Tekoa and four more originated or terminated there. Consequently, employment declined only slightly. Most Milwaukee freight trains still used the line through Tekoa and Malden, which was shorter with lesser gradients than the Spokane route, and local passenger service through the Palouse region replaced the transcontinental trains. In Malden the payroll decreased as the Milwaukee Road transferred some train crewmen, administrative staff, and their families to Spokane. The roundhouse, shops, and car repair facilities in Malden continued operations.²⁵

The increase of traffic resulting from World War I insured continued prosperity. The beginning of the war in Europe in 1914 started a rise in railroad business across the nation, and United States entry into the conflict put an unusual burden on the railways. By the end of 1917 the railroads appeared unable to handle all the traffic and a transportation crisis seemed imminent. President Wilson announced that the federal government would take over ownership and operation of the nation's railways on 28 December.²⁶

Other aspects of wartime transportation had a more obvious impact on Tekoa than the government takeover, which largely affected national and regional planning. Many troop trains passed through Tekoa. When they paused, some townspeople greeted the soldiers and exchanged names and addresses for later correspondence. As traffic increased, so did employment. The Union Pacific payroll in Tekoa exceeded 220 people in 1917, with over 120 in train and engine service, 65 in the roundhouse and shops, 20 in the station offices, and the rest in track maintenance. Two weeks after the United States declared war, seventeen Idaho National Guardsmen arrived in Tekoa to keep constant surveillance on the Milwaukee trestle, which was considered a potential target for sabotage.²⁷

The pressure of increased traffic at the same time that railwaymen entered the military was evident in Malden in late 1917. The Milwaukee Road planned to start a third shift of switchmen to keep the freight yards in operation twenty-four hours per day, but had difficulty finding more workers. In preparation for conscription, the company took a census of its workers aged nineteen to thirty-five, listed thirty-three in the roundhouse department, and expected a larger number among the train crewmen. Anticipating the hiring of women as engine wipers, carpenters completed a building at the roundhouse for them.²⁸

The United States returned the railroads to private ownership and operation in March 1920. Writing of the transition, the *Tekoa Blade* listed rumored changes, which included a larger roundhouse, new machinery for the shops, and the hiring of more trainmen. Though not apparent until much later, new developments in transportation were starting to diminish the role of railroads across the county. An era for Tekoa and Malden was ending, one in which railroads had dominated the towns' transportation and economic existence.²⁹



Tekoa, 1938

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Notes For Part I

¹For history of Tekoa before the railroad, see "The Tekoa Story: From Bunch Grass to Grain" (compiled by the History Committee of the Community Development Study, Tekoa, 1962), pp. 3-4. Hereafter cited as "The Tekoa Story." This mimeographed volume, which includes separate accounts of resident families, is part four of a larger town recording and planning project conducted by citizens of Tekoa under auspices of the Bureau of Community Development of the University of Washington.

²For early railroad construction in eastern Washington, see D.W. Meining, *The Great Columbia Plain: A Historical Geography, 1805-1910* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), pp. 242, 254-279.

³The Oregon Railway and Navigation Company was later known as the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company (1897) and the Oregon-Washington Railroad and Navigation Company (1910) before losing its identity in the Union Pacific in 1936. From this point on the term "Union Pacific" will be used throughout the paper. For corporate background on the OR&N and the UP and their Pacific Northwest setting, see Robert G. Athearn, *Union Pacific Country* (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1971), pp. 311-329 and James L. Ehernberger and Francis G. Gschwind, *Smoke Along the Columbia* (Callaway, Nebraska: E. & G. Publications, 1968), pp. 61-64, a chronology, and pp. 11-24, historical summaries of all Union Pacific lines in Washington, northern Idaho, and northern Oregon. See also *The Railroad Gazette*, 4 May 1888, p. 296; 18 May 1888, p. 327 and "The Tekoa Story," pp. 60-61.

⁴*Spokane District Directory* (Spokane Falls: Spokane District Directory Co., 1890), vol. 1, p. 208; *An Illustrated History of Whitman County, State of Washington* (n.p.: W. H. Lever, 1901), pp. 192-193. In Tekoa its name is commonly believed to mean "city of tents." See "The Tekoa Story," p. 4. *The City of Spokane Falls and its Tributary Resources, Issued by the Northwestern Industrial Exposition* (Spokane Falls, Oct. 1890), p. 45. In 1890 monthly wages of relatively well-paid Union Pacific employees included conductors of local freight trains at \$95 and baggagemen on mainline passenger trains at \$85 (*The Railroad Gazette*, 20 June 1890, p. 441), so the \$12,000 payroll probably included over 150 men. The 1890 U.S. census showed Tekoa's population as 301.

⁵"The Tekoa Story," pp. 5-7, 16, 18, 140, discusses growth of government, commercial activities, and utilities; *Spokane Review*, 16 Sept. 1892, p. 7; *The Oregonian's Handbook of the Pacific Northwest* (Portland: The Oregonian Publishing Co., 1894), pp. 469-470 (which includes the population figure, perhaps less reliable than U.S. census figures).

⁶*The Oregonian's Handbook*, p. 470; *An Illustrated History of Whitman County*, p. 193; "With the Editor through Washington," *The Coast*, Oct. 1903, p. 132; C.S. Clarke, "Tekoa, Washington," *The Coast*, Dec. 1907, p. 409.

⁷*Tekoa Globe*, 26 March 1892, p. 3; *The Oregonian's Handbook*, p. 470; "The Tekoa Story," p. 223. The only other major industry in the Palouse was sawmilling, with large mills in Colfax, Elberton, and Palouse. By 1910 these mills were closed. See *Bunchgrass Historian* 8 (Summer 1980), a special issue on lumbering.

⁸Athearn, *Union Pacific Country*, p. 367; *Spokane Review*, 26 June 1894, p. 1. See also Almont Lindsey, *The Pullman Strike* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943).

⁹Carlos A. Schwantes, *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism, and Reform in Washington and British Columbia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979), p. 59; *Spokane Review*, 28 June 1894, p. 1; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 29 June, p. 4; 5 July, pp. 1, 4; 6 July, p. 4; 10 July, p. 1; 11 July 1894, p. 4.

¹⁰*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 20 July 1894, p. 3; *Tekoa Times*, 11 Oct. 1895, cited in *Tekoa Blade*, 23 April 1920, p. 1; Nelson Trottmann, *History of the Union Pacific: A Financial and Economic Survey* (1923; reprinted., New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1966), pp. 278-279.

¹¹*An Illustrated History of Whitman County*, p. 193; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Population, manuscript returns for Tekoa city precinct. Tekoa's population was 717 in 1900. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Directory of Whitman County, Washington* [for] 1904, 1905-6, 1980-9, and 1910-11, *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Whitman and Garfield Counties Directory* [for] 1912-13 and 1915-16, all published by R.L. Polk & Co., in Seattle (except editions of 1980-9 and 1910-11, which were published in Spokane). These directories consist of towns arranged in alphabetical order, each town with a listing of individuals (mostly heads of household and employed people). After complete initial citation for each edition, the following references will be simply *Polk*, and edition if applicable, e.g., *Polk, 1912-13*. By 1910 Tekoa's population had reached 1,694. Employment figures, based on listing of individuals in *Polk*, are minimums. Some railroaders are not listed. The 1910-11 list is obviously incomplete. In spite of inaccuracies, the figures are useful for relative changes over time and types of jobs within the payroll.

¹²*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 3 Oct. 1905, p. 14; 17 Dec. 1905, p. 12; 15 July 1911, p. 10; "The Tekoa Story," p. 425.

¹³*Tekoa Globe*, 3 Jan. 1890, p. 1; 16 Jan. 1892, p. 1; 27 May 1893, p. 1; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 8 Dec. 1908, p. 8;

13 May 1910, p. 5; 19 Oct. 1910, p. 8; 7 Jan. 1911, p. 5; 8 July 1911, p. 7; *Tekoa Sentinel*, 3 Sept. 1948, p. 3; Arthur D. Dubin, *Some Classic Trains* (Milwaukee: Kalmbach Publishing Co., 1964), p. 283; "The Tekoa Story," pp. 61-62. Freight train schedules were not published and much traffic operated as "extras," so frequency of trains is nearly impossible to determine.

¹⁴For more on the Puget Sound extension, see August Derleth, *The Milwaukee Road: Its First Hundred Years* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1948), pp. 170-187.

¹⁵*Tekoa Advertiser*, 14 June 1907, cited in "The Tekoa Story," pp. 65-66; "The Tekoa Story," pp. 194, 197, 269; *Polk*, 1908-9.

¹⁶*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 19 Sept. 1908, p. 8; 31 Oct. 1908, p. 8.

¹⁷Derleth, *The Milwaukee Road*, pp. 186-187; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 20 Aug. 1909, p. 8; 9 Oct. 1909, p. 8; *Polk* lists Milwaukee Road employment in Tekoa.

¹⁸"The Tekoa Story," pp. 67-68.

¹⁹*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 29 April 1908, p. 7; 26 Feb. 1909, p. 6. Of the five townsites, only Malden was developed.

²⁰*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 10 April 1909, p. 6; 3 Oct. 1909, p. 2; 26 Oct. 1909, p. 6. *Polk*, 1910-11 lists the range of railroad jobs in Malden. The introductory text on Malden in *Polk*, 1910-11 and 1912-13 states the railroad employment to be five hundred, but the listing of individuals includes only about 150 in 1910 and 270 in 1912. The editor of the *Malden Register* claimed in 1911 a monthly payroll of over \$50,000 (at a time when passenger brakemen earned \$94 per month and track workers less than \$45); see *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 1 Aug. 1910, p. 6; 6 June 1911, p. 9; 16 June 1912, p. 11.

²¹*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 9 March 1909, p. 6; 19 May 1909, p. 12; 26 Oct. 1909, p. 6; 16 April 1911, p. 11.

²²*Polk*, 1910-11; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 26 Feb. 1909, p. 6; 22 Aug. 1909, p. 6.

²³*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 10 April 1909, p. 6; James E. Lindsey, "An Economic History of Whitman County, Washington" (M.A. thesis, State College of Washington, 1926), p. 64.

²⁴*Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 31 May 1914, p. A6; 30 Aug. 1914, pp. 6, 11. Beginning in September 1914 the *Olympian* and *Columbian* travelled between Marengo and Plummer Junction on tracks of the Milwaukee Road and Union Pacific to serve Spokane.

²⁵*The Official Guide of the Railways*, June 1916, pp. 734, 745, 799-801; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 31 May 1914, p. A6. *Polk*, 1912-13 and 1915-16 show a decline in railroad employment between 1912 and 1915: U.P. in Tekoa from about 175 to 150, Milwaukee in Malden from about 270 to 195.

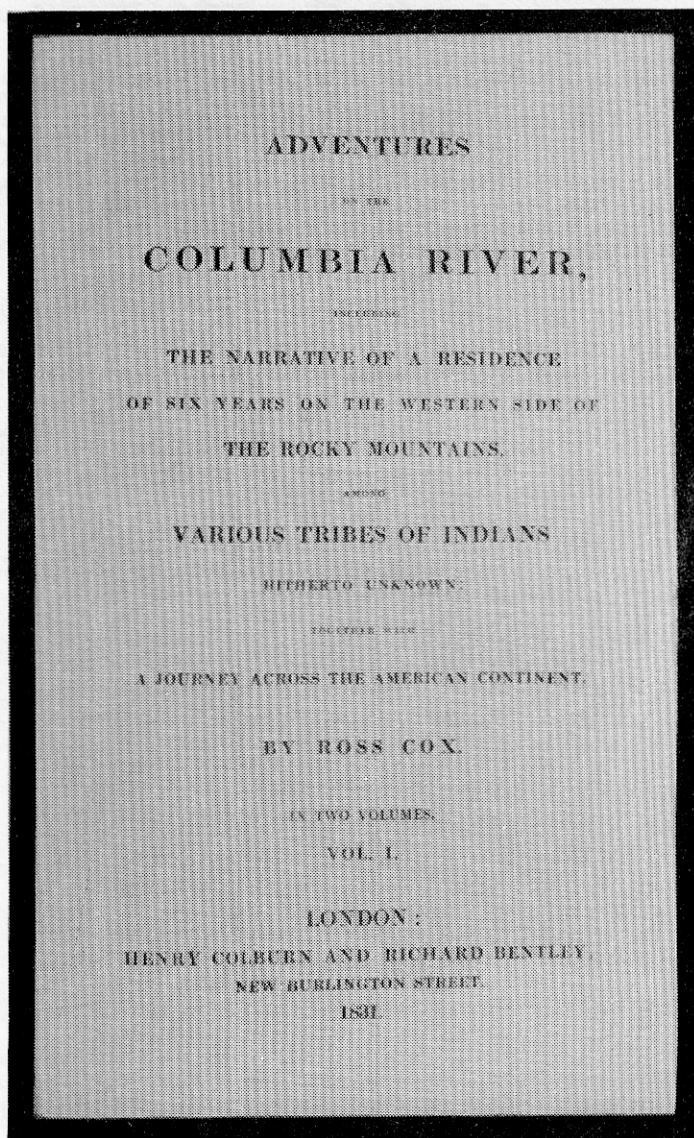
²⁶John F. Stover, *The Life and Decline of the American Railroad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 158, 162-165; *Spokane Spokesman-Review*, 27 Dec. 1917, p. 1. The weekly *Tekoa Blade* did not mention the government takeover in its December 1917 or January 1918 issues.

²⁷"The Tekoa Story," pp. 68, 361; *R.L. Polk & Co's Whitman and Garfield Counties Director, 1917-18*; *Tekoa Blade*, 27 April 1917, p. 1.

²⁸*Malden Register*, 29 Nov. 1917, p. 1.

²⁹*Tekoa Blade*, 27 Feb. 1920, p. 1.





*Title page of the 1832 edition of Ross Cox's **Adventures on the Columbia**.*

Adventures on the Columbia

Volume 1, Chapters 7 & 8

Published—1834

by
Ross Cox

One of the very earliest descriptions of areas now in Whitman county is that of Ross Cox, published in England in the 1830s. A portion of his account is re-printed here for readers of Bunchgrass Historian.

Cox's experiences date from the year 1811. At the time he was a new employee of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company, enroute from the mouth of the Columbia to Spokane House, a trading station located on the Spokane River.

Somewhere near present Hooper, Cox was separated from the party of fur traders with whom he was travelling. For the next several days he wandered about in the scablands, more-or-less along with present boundary of Whitman and Adams Counties. Eventually he was rescued by people from the Lower Spokane tribe, somewhere near to the present city of Cheney.

That part of his account reproduced here deals with his experiences in the scablands. It begins as he leaves the Snake River (which he calls the Lewis River) and ends when he reaches the Spokane River (which he refers to as the Coeur d'Alene River.)

At the time Cox was a wilderness novice, a greenhorn as we would say. He did not fare well and did not understand all that was around him. Hence his account of stumbling about the scablands is humorous because his imagination turns coyotes into wolves, prairies into deserts and so on. Through the distortion, nonetheless, the modern reader can recognize familiar places.

—Editor

On the 15th of August, at five a.m., we took our departure from Lewis River. Our party consisted of one proprietor, four clerks, twenty-one Canadians, and six Sandwich islanders, with the Indian guide. We proceeded nearly due north along the banks of the small river for some miles through an open plain, which was bounded by a range of steep rugged hills, running from the westward, over which we had to cross. In some places the path led over steep and slippery rocks, and was so narrow, that the horses which were loaded with large bales could not pass without running the risk of falling down the craggy precipices; and the men were obliged to unload them and place the bales singly on the top of the packsaddles. After we had passed as we imagined the most dangerous part of the pathway, and had commenced our descent into the plain, one of the horses missed his footing, and rolled down a declivity of two hundred feet

loaded with two cases of axes: the cases were broken, and their contents scattered about the rocks; but, with the exception of his sides, the skin of which was scraped off, the horse received no material injury. We arrived on the north side of these hills about eleven o'clock, when we stopped to breakfast on the banks of the river, which here turns to the eastward. We resumed our journey at two o'clock, and suffered severely during the day from the intense heat, and the want of water. The country was a continued plain, with sandy and rocky bottom, mixed with loose tufts of grass. About seven in the evening we reached a cool stream, on the banks of which were a profusion of wild cherries, currants, and blackberries, which afforded us an unexpected and welcome treat. We encamped here for the night; and did not hobble the horses, as we were certain the luxurious herbage of the prairie would prevent them from wandering.

At four a.m. on the 16th we set off from our encampment, still pursuing a northerly course. The country still champaign, and the grass long and coarse, but loosely imbedded in a sandy soil. About eight we came to a fine spring, at which we breakfasted, as our guide told us we should not find water beyond it for a great distance. After waiting here a few hours, we reloaded, and pursued our journey in the same direction. During the remainder of the day no "green spot bloomed on the desert" around us. The country was completely denuded of wood; and as far as the eye extended, nothing was visible but immense plains covered with parched brown grass, swarming with rattlesnakes. The horses suffered dreadfully, as well as their masters, from heat and thirst. Two fine pointers belonging to Mr. Clarke were so exhausted that we were compelled to leave them behind, and never saw them afterwards. Several of the horses being on the point of giving up, and numbers of the men scarcely able to walk, Mr. Clarke sharply questioned the guide as to his knowledge of the country, and the probable time we might expect to fall in with water: the latter saw his doubts, and calmly replied, pointing to the sun, that when it should have gained a certain distance we might expect relief. We knew half an hour would not elapse before it should attain the desired point, and every watch was out to judge of the Indian's accuracy. He was right; and about half-past five p.m. we reached a small stream, by the side of which we encamped for the night. The guide gave us to understand we should find plenty of water the following day.

Chapter VIII

On the 17th of August we left our encampment a little after four a.m. During the forenoon the sun was intensely hot. Occasional bright green patches, intermixed with wild flowers, and gently rising eminences, partially covered with clumps of small trees, gave an agreeable variety to the face of the country; which we enjoyed the more, from the scorched and steril uniformity of the plains through which we had passed on the two preceding days. We got no water, however, until twelve o'clock, when we arrived in a small valley of the most delightful verdure, through which ran a clear stream from the northward, over a pebbly bottom. The horses were immediately turned loose to regale themselves in the rich pasture; and as it was full of red and white clover, orders were given not to catch them until two o'clock, by which time we thought they would be sufficiently refreshed for the evening's journey.

After walking and riding eight hours, I need not say we made a hearty breakfast; after which I wandered some distance along the banks of the rivulet in search of cher-

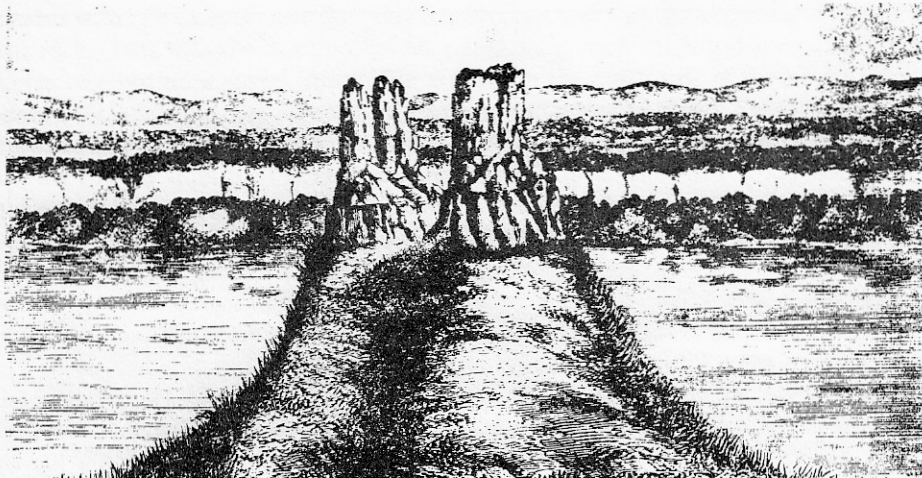


VIEW N.E. FROM TUCANNON, ACROSS SNAKE RIVER, STEPTOE BUTTE. COEUR D'ALENE. MTS., IN THE DISTANCE.

"Pyramid Peak." As Ross Cox worked his way northward he looked east into the Palouse country. The view was probably similar to this line drawing made in about 1880. The horses would not have been present in Ross Cox's time.

ries, and came to a sweet little arbour formed by sumach and cherry trees. I pulled a quantity of the fruit, and sat down in the retreat to enjoy its refreshing coolness. It was a charming spot, and on the opposite bank was a delightful wilderness of crimson haw, honeysuckles, wild roses, and currants: its resemblance to a friend's summer-house in which I had spent many happy days brought back home with all its endearing recollections; and my scattered thoughts were successively occupied with the past, the present, and the future. In this state I fell into a kind of pleasing, soothing reverie, which, joined to the morning's fatigue, gradually sealed my eyelids; and unconscious of my situation, I resigned myself to the influence of the dowsy god. But imagine my feelings when I awoke in the evening, I think it was about five o'clock, from the declining appearance of the sun! All was calm and silent as the grave. I hastened to the spot where we had breakfasted: it was vacant. I ran to the place where the men had made their fire: all, all were gone, and not a vestige of man or horse appeared in the valley. My senses almost failed me. I called out, in vain, in every direction, until I became hoarse; and I could no longer conceal from myself the dreadful truth that I was alone in a wild, uninhabited country, without horse or arms, and destitute of covering.

Having now no resource but to ascertain the direction which the party had taken, I set about examining the ground, and at the north-east point of the valley discovered the tracks of horses' feet, which I followed for some time, and which led to a chain of small hills with a rocky, gravelly bottom, on which the hoofs made no impression. Having thus lost the tracks, I ascended the highest of the hills, from which I had an extended view of many miles around; but saw no sign of the party, or the least indication of human habitations. The evening was now closing fast, and with the approach of night a heavy dew commenced falling. The whole of my clothes consisted merely of a gingham shirt, nankeen trowsers, and a pair of light leather moccasins, much worn. About an hour before breakfast, in consequence of the heat, I had taken off my coat and placed it on one of the loaded horses, intending to put it on towards the cool of the evening; and one of the men had charge of my fowling-piece. I was even without my hat; for in the agitated state of my mind on awaking I had left it behind, and had advanced too far to think of returning for it. At some distance on my left I observed a field of high strong grass, to which I proceeded, and after pulling enough to place



Basaltic Towers, ca. 1850 from Domenech, Great Deserts of North America.

under and over me, I recommended myself to the Almighty, and fell asleep. During the night confused dreams of warm houses, feather beds, poisoned arrows, prickly pears, and rattlesnakes, haunted my disturbed imagination.

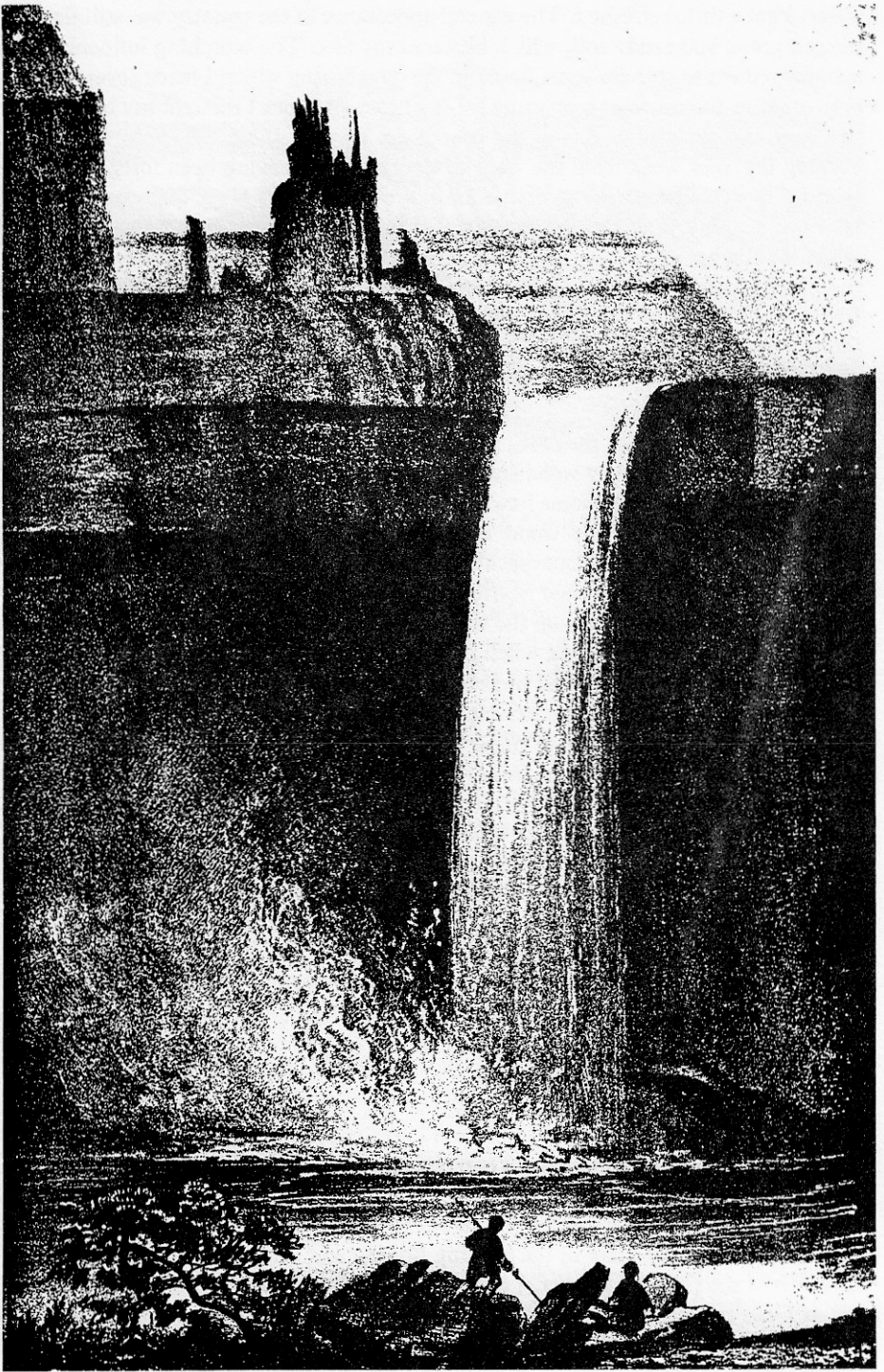
On the 18th I arose with the sun, quite wet and chilly, the heavy dew having completely saturated my flimsy covering, and proceeded in an easterly direction, nearly parallel with the chain of hills. In the course of the day I passed several small lakes full of wild fowl. The general appearance of the country was flat, the soil light and gravelly, and covered with the same loose grass already mentioned; great quantities of it had been recently burned by the Indians in hunting the deer, the stubble of which annoyed my feet very much. I had turned into a northerly course, where, late in the evening, I observed about a mile distance two horsemen galloping in an easterly direction. From their dresses I knew they belonged to our party. I instantly ran to a hillock, and called out in a voice to which hunger had imparted a supernatural shrillness; but they galloped on. I then took off my shirt, which I waved in a conspicuous manner over my head, accompanied by the most frantic cries; still they continued on. I ran towards the direction they were galloping, despair adding wings to my flight. Rocks, stubble, and brushwood were passed with the speed of a hunted antelope; but to no purpose: for on arriving at the place where I imagined a pathway would have brought me into their track, I was completely at fault. It was now nearly dark. I had eaten nothing since the noon of the preceding day; and, faint with hunger and fatigue, threw myself on the grass, when I heard a small rustling noise behind me. I turned round, and, with horror, beheld a large rattlesnake cooling himself in the evening shade. I instantly retreated, on observing which he coiled himself. Having obtained a large stone, I advanced slowly on him, and taking a proper aim, dashed it with all my force on the reptile's head, which I buried in the ground beneath the stone.

The late race had completely worn out the thin soles of my moccasins, and my feet in consequence became much swollen. As night advanced, I was obliged to look out for a place to sleep, and after some time, selected nearly as good a bed as the one I had the first night. My exertions in pulling the long course grass nearly rendered my hands useless by severely cutting all the joints of the fingers.

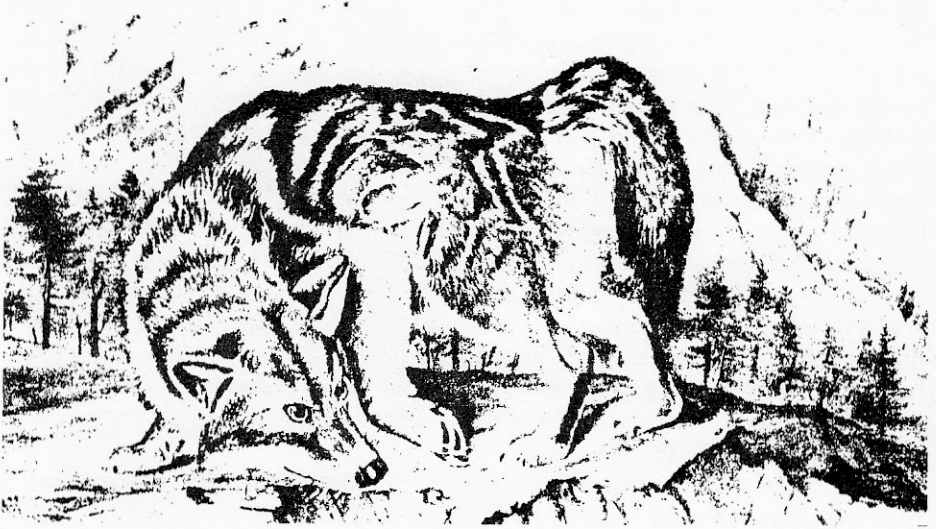
I rose before the sun on the morning of the 19th, and pursued an easterly course all the day. I at first felt very hungry, but after walking a few miles, and taking a drink of

water, I got a little refreshed. The general appearance of the country was still flat, with burned grass, and sandy soil, which blistered my feet. The scorching influence of the sun obliged me to stop for some hours in the day; during which I made several ineffectual attempts to construct a covering for my head. At times I thought my brain was on fire from the dreadful effects of the heat. I got no fruit those two days, and towards evening felt very weak from the want of nourishment, having been forty-eight hours without food; and to make my situation more annoying, I slept that evening on the banks of a pretty lake, the inhabitants of which would have done honour to a royal table. With what an evil eye and a murderous heart did I regard the stately goose and the plump waddling duck as they sported on the water, unconscious of my presence! Even with a pocket pistol I could have done execution among them. The state of my fingers prevented me from obtaining the covering of grass which I had the two preceding nights; and on this evening I had no shelter whatever to protect me from the heavy dew.

On the following day, the 20th, my course was nearly north-east, and lay through a country more diversified by wood and water. I saw plenty of wild geese, ducks, cranes, curlews and sparrows, also some hawks and cormorants, and at a distance about fifteen or twenty small deer. The wood consisted of pine, birch, cedar, wild cherries, hawthorn, sweet-willow, honeysuckle and sumach. The rattlesnakes were very numerous this day, with horned lizards, and grasshoppers: the latter kept me in a constant state of feverish alarm from the similarity of the noise made by their wings to the sound of the rattles of the snake when preparing to dart on its prey. I suffered severely during the day from hunger, and was obliged to chew grass occasionally, which allayed it a little. Late in the evening I arrived at a lake upward of two miles long, and a mile broad, the shores of which were high, and well wooded with large pine, spruce, and birch. It was fed by two rivulets, from the north, and north-east, in which I observed a quantity of small fish; but had no means of catching any, or I should have made a Sandwich-island meal. There was however an abundant supply of wild cherries, on which I made a hearty supper. I slept on the bank of the nearest stream, just where it entered the lake; but during the night the howling of wolves and growling of bears broke in terribly on my slumbers, and "balmy sleep" was almost banished from my eyelids. On rising the next morning, the 21st, I observed on the opposite bank at the mouth of the river, the entrance of a large and apparently deep cavern, from which I judged some of the preceding night's music had issued. I now determined to make short journies for two or three days in different directions, in the hope of falling on some fresh horse tracks; and, in the event of being unsuccessful to return each night to the lake, where I was at least certain of procuring cherries and water sufficient to sustain nature. In pursuance of this resolution I set out early in a southerly direction from the head of the lake, through a wild barren country, without any water, or vegetation, save loose tufts of grass like those already described. I had armed myself with a long stick, with which during the day I killed several rattlesnakes. Having discovered no fresh tracks, I returned late in the evening hungry and thirsty, and took possession of my berth of the preceding night. I collected a heap of stones from the water side; and just as I was lying down observed a wolf emerge from the opposite cavern, and thinking it safer to act on the offensive, lest he should imagine I was afraid, I threw some stones at him, one which struck him on the leg: he retired yelling into his den; and after waiting some time in fearful suspense to see if he would re-appear, I threw myself on the ground, and fell asleep; but, like the night before, it was broken by the same unsocial noise, and for upwards to two hours I sat up waiting in anxious expectation the



*Palouse Falls, from the **Pacific Railroad Report**. It was near this point that Ross Cox was separated from his companions and began to wander northeastward.*



Coyote. The wolves which Ross Cox recalled inhabiting the scablands were quite possibly not wolves at all, but rather common coyotes.

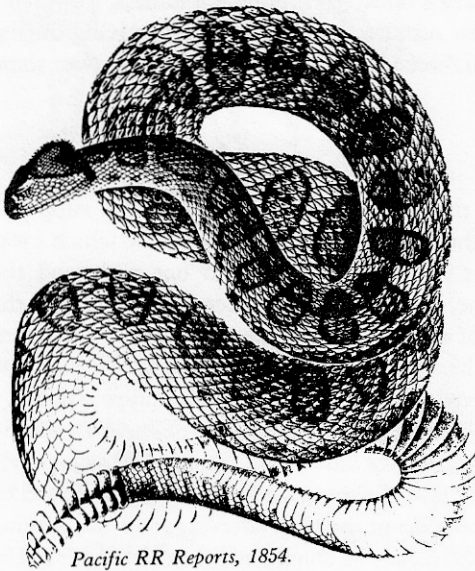
return of day-light. The vapours from the lake, joined to the heavy dew, had penetrated my frail covering of gingham; but as the sun rose, I took it off, and stretched it on a rock, where it quickly dried. My excursion to the southward having proved abortive, I now resolved to try the east, and after eating my simple breakfast, proceeded in that direction; and on crossing the two small streams, had to penetrate a country full of "dark woods and rankling wilds," through which, owing to the immense quantities of underwood, my progress was slow. My feet too were uncovered, and, from the thorns of the various prickly plants, were much lacerated; in consequence of which, on returning to my late bivouack I was obliged to shorten the legs of my trowsers to procure bandages for them. The wolf did not make his appearance; but during the night I got occasional starts, from several of his brethren of the forest.

I anticipated the rising of the sun on the morning of the 23rd, and having been unsuccessful the two preceding days, determined to shape my course due north, and if possible not return again to the lake. During the day I skirted the wood, and fell on some old tracks, which revived my hopes a little. The country to the westward was chiefly plains covered with parched grass, and occasionally enlivened by savannahs of refreshing green, full of wild flowers and aromatic herbs, among which the bee and humming bird banqueted. I slept this evening by a small brook, where I collected cherries and haws enough to make a hearty supper. I was obliged to make farther encroachments on the legs of my trowsers for fresh bandages for my feet. During the night I was serenaded by music which did not resemble "a concord of most sweet sounds;" in which the grumbling bass of the bears was at times drowned by the less pleasing sharps of the wolves. I partially covered my body this night with some pieces of pine bark which I stripped off a sapless tree.

The country through which I dragged my tired limbs on the 24th was thinly wooded. My course was north and north-east. I suffered much from want of water, having got during the day only two tepid and nauseous draughts from stagnant pools, which the long drought had nearly dried up. About sunset I arrived at a small stream, by the side of which I took up my quarters for the night. The dew fell heavily; but I was too much fatigued to go in quest of bark to cover me; and even had I been so inclined, the howling of the wolves would have deterred me from making the dangerous attempt. There must have been an extraordinary nursery of these animals close to the spot; for between the weak, shrill cries of the young, and the more loud and dreadful howling of the old, I never expected to leave the place alive. I could not sleep. My only weapons of defence were a heap of stones and a stick. Ever and anon some more daring than others approached me. I presented the stick at them as if in the act of levelling a gun, upon which they retired, vented a few yells, advanced a little farther; and after surveying me for some time with their sharp, fiery eyes, to which the partial glimpses of the moon had imparted additional ferocity, retreated into the wood. In this state of fearful agitation I passed the night; but as day-light began to break, Nature asserted her supremacy, and I fell into a deep sleep, from which, to judge by the sun, I did not awake until between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of the 25th. My second bandages having been worn out, I was now obliged to bare my knees for fresh ones; and after tying them round my feet, and taking a copious draught from the adjoining brook for breakfast, I recommenced my joyless journey. My course was nearly north-north-east. I got no water during the day, nor any of the wild cherries. Some slight traces of men's feet, and a few old horse tracks occasionally crossed my path: they proved that human beings sometimes at least visited that part of the country, and for a moment served to cheer my drooping spirits.

About dusk an immense-sized wolf rushed out of a thick copse a short distance from the pathway, planted himself directly before me, in a threatening position, and appeared determined to dispute my passage. He was not more than twenty feet from me. My situation was desperate, and as I knew that the least symptom of fear would be the signal for attack, I presented my stick, and shouted as loud as my weak voice would permit. He appeared somewhat startled, and retreated a few steps, still keeping his piercing eyes firmly fixed on me. I advanced a little, when he commenced howling in a most appalling manner; and supposing his intention was to collect a few of his comrades to assist in making an afternoon repast on my half-famished carcass, I redoubled my cries, until I had almost lost the power of utterance, at the same time calling out various names, thinking I might make it appear I was not alone. An old and a young lynx ran close past me, but did not stop. The wolf remained about fifteen minutes in the same position; but whether my wild and fearful exclamations deterred any others from joining him, I cannot say. Finding at length my determination not to flinch, and that no assistance was likely to come, he retreated into the wood, and disappeared in the surrounding gloom.

The shades of night were now descending fast, when I came to a verdant spot surrounded by small trees, and full of rushes, which induced me to hope for water; but after searching for some time, I was still doomed to bitter disappointment. A shallow lake or pond had been there, which the long drought and heat had dried up. I then pulled a quantity of the rushes and spread them at the foot of a large stone, which I intended for my pillow; but as I was about throwing myself down, a rattlesnake coiled,



Pacific RR Reports, 1854.

"I had armed myself with a long stick, with which during the day I killed several rattlesnakes."

with the head erect, and the forked tongue extended in a state of frightful oscillation, caught my eye immediately under the stone. I instantly retreated a short distance; by assuming fresh courage, soon despatched it with my stick. On examining the spot more minutely, a large cluster of them appeared under the stone, the whole of which I rooted out and destroyed. This was hardly accomplished when upward of a dozen snakes of different descriptions, chiefly dark brown, blue and green, made their appearance: they were much quicker in their movements than their rattle-tailed brethren; and I could only kill a few of them.

This was a peculiarly soul-trying moment. I had tasted no fruit since the morning before, and after a painful day's march under a burning sun, could not procure a drop of water to allay my feverish thirst. I was surrounded by a muderous brood of serpents, and ferocious beasts of prey, and without even the consolation of knowing when such misery might have a probable termination. I might truly say with the royal psalmist that "the snares of death compassed me round about."

Having collected a fresh supply of rushes, which I spread some distance from the spot where I massacred the reptiles, I threw myself on them, and permitted through divine goodness to enjoy a night of undisturbed repose.

I arose on the morning of the 26th considerably refreshed; and took a northerly course, occasionally diverging a little to the east. Several times during the day I was induced to leave the path by the appearance of rushes, which I imagined grew in the vicinity of lakes; but on reaching them my faint hopes vanished: there was no water, and I in vain essayed to extract a little moisture from them. Prickly thorns and small sharp stones added greatly to the pain of my tortured feet, and obliged me to make further encroachments on my nether garments for fresh bandages. The want of water now rendered me extremely weak and feverish; and I had nearly abandoned all hopes of relief, when, about half-past four or five o'clock, the old pathway turned from the prairie grounds into a thickly wooded country, in an easterly direction; through which

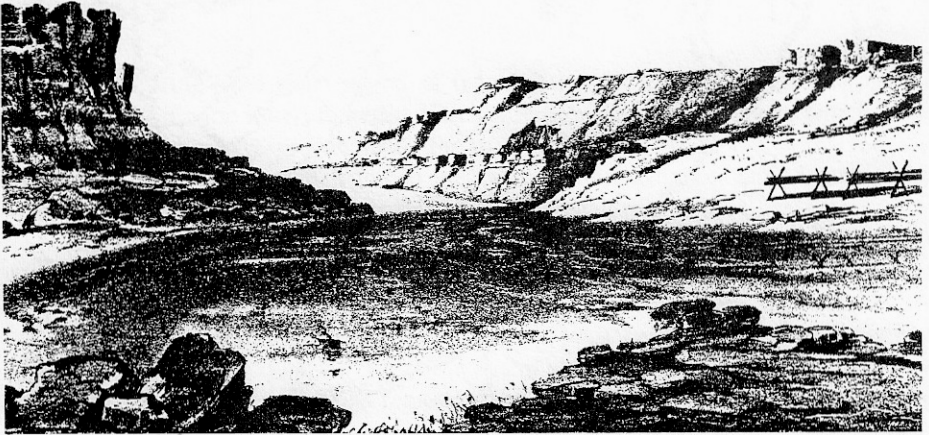
I had not advanced half a mile when I heard a noise resembling a waterfall, to which I hastened my tottering steps, and in a few minutes was delighted at arriving on the banks of a deep and narrow rivulet, which forced its way with great rapidity over some large stones that obstructed the channel.

After offering up a short prayer of thanksgiving for this providential supply, I threw myself into the water, forgetful of the extreme state of exhaustion to which I was reduced: it had nearly proved fatal, for my weak frame could not withstand the strength of the current, which forced me down a short distance, until I caught the bough of an overhanging tree, by means of which I regained the shore. Here were plenty of hips and cherries; on which, with the water, I made a most delicious repast. On looking about for a place to sleep, I observed lying on the ground the hollow trunk of a large pine, which had been destroyed by lightning. I retreated into the cavity; and having covered myself completely with large pieces of loose bark, quickly fell asleep. My repose was not of long duration; for at the end of about two hours I was awakened by the growling of a bear, which had removed part of the bark covering, and was leaning over me with his snout, hesitating as to the means he should adopt to dislodge me; the narrow limits of the trunk which confined my body preventing him from making the attack with advantage. I instantly sprung up, seized my stick, and uttered a loud cry, which startled him, and caused him to recede a few steps; when he stopped, and turned about, apparently doubtful whether he would commence an attack. He determined on an assault; but feeling I had not sufficient strength to meet such an unequal enemy, I thought it prudent to retreat, and accordingly scrambled up an adjoining tree. My flight gave fresh impulse to his courage, and he commenced ascending after me. I succeeded however in gaining a branch, which gave me a decided advantage over him; and from which I was enabled to annoy his muzzle and claws in such a manner with my stick as effectually to check his progress. After scraping the bark some time with rage and disappointment, he gave up the task, and retired to my late dormitory, of which he took possession. The fear of falling off, in case I was overcome by sleep, induced me to make several attempts to descent; but each attempt aroused my ursine sentinel; and after many ineffectual efforts, I was obliged to remain there during the rest of the night. I fixed myself in that part of the trunk from which the principal grand branches forked, and which prevented me from falling during my fitful slumbers.

On the morning of the 27th, a little after sunrise, the bear quitted the trunk, shook himself, "cast a longing, lingering look" towards me, and slowly disappeared in search of his morning repast. After waiting some time, apprehensive of his return, I descended and resumed my journey through the woods in a north-north-east direction. In a few hours all my anxiety of the preceding night was more than compensated by falling in with a well-beaten horse-path, with fresh traces on it, both of hoofs and human feet: it lay through a clear open wood, in a north-east course, in which I observed numbers of small deer. About six in the evening I arrived at a spot where a party must have slept the preceding night. Round the remains of a large fire which was still burning were scattered several half-picked bones of grouse, partridges and ducks, all of which I collected with economical industry. After devouring the flesh I broiled the bones. The whole scarcely sufficed to give me a moderate meal, but yet afforded a most seasonable



Cartography of the Northwest as of 1811. The stream called Dreyer's River in the Falouse. —Map by Lewis and Clark



*Mouth of the Palouse River, from the **Pacific Railroad Reports** of the 1850s. It was from the point that Ross Cox began his trip across the scablands.*

relief to my famished body. I enjoyed a comfortable sleep this night close to the fire, uninterrupted by any nocturnal visitor. On the morning of the 28th I set off with cheerful spirits, fully impressed with the hope of a speedy termination to my sufferings. My course was northerly, and lay through a thick wood. Late in the evening I arrived at a stagnant pool, from which I merely moistened my lips; and having covered myself with some birch bark, slept by its side. The bears and wolves occasionally serenaded me during the night, but I did not see any of them. I rose early on the morning of the 29th, and followed the fresh traces all day through the wood, nearly north-east by north. I observed several deer, some of which came quite close to me; and in the evening I threw a stone at a small animal resembling a hare, the leg of which I broke. It ran away limping, but my feet were too sore to permit me to follow it. I passed the night by the side of a small stream, where I got a sufficient supply of hips and cherries. A few distant growls awoke me at intervals, but no animal appeared. On the 30th the path took a more easterly turn, and the woods became thicker and more gloomy. I had now nearly consumed the remnant of my trowsers in bandages for my wretched feet; and, with the exception of my shirt, was almost naked. The horse-tracks every moment appeared more fresh, and fed my hopes. Late in the evening I arrived at a spot where the path branched off in different directions: one led up rather a steep hill, the other descended into a valley, and the tracks on both were equally recent. I took the higher; but after proceeding a few hundred paces through a deep wood, which appeared more dark from the thick foliage which shut out the rays of the sun, I returned, apprehensive of not procuring water for my supper, and descended the lower path. I had not advanced far when I imagined I heard the neighing of a horse. I listened with breathless attention, and became convinced it was no illusion. A few paces farther brought me in sight of several of those noble animals sporting in a handsome meadow, from which I was

separated by a rapid stream. With some difficulty I crossed over, and ascended the opposite bank. One of the horses approached me: I thought him "the prince of palfreys; his neigh was like the bidding of a monarch, and his countenance enforced homage."

On advancing a short distance into the meadow the cheering sight of a small column of gracefully curling smoke announced my vicinity of human beings, and in a moment after two Indian women perceived me: they instantly fled to a hut which appeared at the farther end of the meadow. This movement made me doubt whether I had arrived among friends or enemies; but my apprehensions were quickly dissipated by the approach of two men, who came running to me in the most friendly manner. On seeing the lacerated state of my feet, they carried me in their arms to a comfortable dwelling covered with deer-skins. To wash and dress my torn limbs, roast some roots, and boil a small salmon, seemed but the business of a moment. After returning thanks to the great and good Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and who had watched over my wandering steps, and rescued me from the many perilous dangers I encountered, I sat down to my salmon, of which it is needless to say I made a hearty supper.

The family consisted of an elderly man, and his son, with their wives and children. I collected from their signs that they were aware of my being lost, and that they, with other Indians, and white men, had been out several days scouring the woods and plains in search of me. I also understood from them that our party had arrived at thier destination, which was only a few hours' march from their habitation. They behaved to me with affectionate solicitude; and while the old woman was carefully dressing my feet, the men were endeavoring to make me comprehend their meaning. I had been fourteen days in a wilderness without holding "communion kind" with any human being; and I need not say I listened with a thousand times more real delight to the harsh and guttural voices of those poor Indians, than was ever experienced by the most enthusiastic admirer of melody from the thrilling tones of a Catalani, or the melting sweetness of a Stephens. As it was too late, after finishing my supper, to proceed farther that night, I retired to rest on a comfortable couch of buffalo and deer skins. I slept soundly; and the morning of the 31st was far advanced before I awoke. After breakfasting on the remainder of the salmon I prepared to join my white friends. A considerable stream about ninety yards broad, called *Coeur d'Alene* River, flowed close to the hut. The old man and his son accompanied me. We crossed the river in a canoe; after which they brought over three horses, and having enveloped my body in an Indian mantle of deer-skin, we mounted, and set off at a smart trot in an easterly direction. We had not proceeded more than seven miles when I felt the bad effects of having eaten so much salmon after so long a fast. I had a severe attack of indigestion, and for two hours suffered extreme agony; and, but for the great attention of the kind Indians, I think it would have proved fatal. About an hour after recommencing our journey we arrived in a clear wood, in which, with joy unutterable, I observed our Canadians at work hewing timber. I rode between the two natives. One of our men named *Francois Gardepie*, who had been on a trading excursion, joined us on horseback. My deer-skin robe and sunburnt features completely set his powers of recognition at defiance, and he addressed me as an Indian. I replied in French, by asking him how all our people were. Poor Francois appeared electrified, exclaimed "*Sainte Vierge!*" and galloped into the wood, vociferating "*O mes amis! mes amis! il est trouve!—Oui, oui, il est trouve!*"—"Qui? qui?" asked his comrades. "*Monsieur Cox! Monsieur Cox!*" replied Fran-

cois. "*Le voila! le voila!*" pointing towards me. Away went saws, hatchets, and axes, and each man rushed forward to the tents, where we had by this time arrived. It is needless to say that our astonishment and delight at my miraculous escape were mutual. The friendly Indians were liberally rewarded; the men were allowed a holiday, and every countenance bore the smile of joy and happiness.

