

Story for Syndicate (newspaper).

Vol.6, No/6.

Subject.

"Horrors of the Columbia", E.Chambreau's Account.



H. S. HOWARD,

SOLE AGENT

SPELTERINE HOOF STUFFING.

WASHINGTON RED CEDAR SHINGLES.

GENERAL AGENT

BURKE PATENT FLEXIBLE STAMPS.

156 COLLEGE STREET.

BURLINGTON, VT., \_\_\_\_\_ 189 \_\_\_\_\_

Story for Syndicate (newspaper).

Vol. 6, No. 6.

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"Horror of the Columbia", E. Chamberlain's Account.



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Horrors of the Columbia.- The French Scout's View of  
Phil Sheridan Forty Years Ago.

Our French scout, Edouard, gives me some items of history that I have not found recorded. These touch upon events prior to Phil Sheridan's maiden enterprise on the Columbia.

A dreadful massacre of white settlers occurred late in the season of 1854. It was called the "Snake River" or "Ward Massacre".

More poor white people were outraged and slain than in the well known "Whitman Massacre". The cruelty of the Indians engaged in this indiscriminate destruction was excessive.

Our troops under Major Granville O. Haller, (4th Infantry), who had already a grand record for years of successful service, started from Fort Dallas, as soon as the <sup>news of the</sup> outbreak reached there. It was a train of immigrants that had been destroyed not far from the Hudson Bay Company's frontier station, called "Old Fort Boise." Haller had with him in the expedition twenty-six regulars and thirty-four volunteers, making only sixty men altogether. Edouard was a member of the volunteer company. He says : "We arrived at the place where the horrid outrage had been committed- the early part of September, 1854. The country was scouted in all directions and the Indians looked up. Some were killed in battle and others were captured and hanged on the very spot where they had perpetrated their unspeakable outrages and murder."







Haller, after his long and tedious march of some four hundred miles altogether, had just returned to Fort Dalles, when the news of another Indian outbreak, north of the Columbia, only about seventy miles from him, came to his ears. Edouard, the scout, being in the midst of these troubles also, says :

"The Indians hereabouts were determined to rid themselves of all white men. They had been killing the white men and these as they could catch them. At last the Yakimas at Fort Sincoe murdered Agent Borland who had gone over there to try to assuage their troubles."

Edouard, the scout, who appears to have reached the Dalles before Maj. Haller, had there met Borland while he was en route to Fort Sincoe and warned him: "It is not safe for you to venture among them."xx "It was but a short time,"Edouard continues, "before I heard that he was killed."

"Haller with but a hundred and two enlisted men and four officers"marched straight over to Sincoe. Then the savages in large numbers boldly attacked his command and drove it from the timber. "The next morning", Maj. Powell, in his record writes,"his camp was completely surrounded. his animals cut off from grass and water; hourly during the day squads of mounted Indians were seen approaching and joining the war party; Father Pandoza, a Catholic priest, who was held as a prisoner, declared the number exceeded 2000 fit to bear arms; they made, however, this day little impression on the







command" ( of Haller's standing on the defensive) "and withdrew at night. Haller was thus afforded an opportunity to reach ground more favorable for marching in retreat that night; and the third day successfully kept a body of pursuing warriors at bay, while retreating to the Dalles. "

He brought in all the wounded and the body of his "Commissary Sergeant," who in the last charge of the Indians was killed.

Colonel Rain's disastrous campaign came next in order, which Sheridan, in his Memoirs so graphically describes, and of which he formed a part. Councils of war followed, particularly at Walla Walla where the greatest number of gaily dressed Indians came together since those that followed the Whitman Massacre.

I remember accounts of those as they appeared in the press of 1854 & 55. Our scout has their beauty, their fierceness, their majesty, their picturesqueness and of the participators ~~their eloquence~~ photographed on his brain. Nothing was yet really settled. Our people had to take the country- that up-country of eastern Oregon and northern Washington- as the Israelites did the promised land, i-e-e little by little, with many unexpected drawbacks.

Now comes the next scene!



command" of Hall's standing on the defensive) and withdrew at night. Haller was then afforded an opportunity to reach ground more favorable for attacking in recess that night, and on said day successfully kept a body of pursuing warriors at bay, while retreating to the Dallas."

His prompt retreat and the body of his commissary sergeant, "who in the last charge of the Indians was killed." Colonel Rain's disastrous campaign came next in order, which Sheridan, in his memoirs so graphically describes, and of which he formed a part. Donnelly of war followed, particularly at Walla Walla where the present number of early dressed Indians came together. These events were followed the Whiteman massacre.

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Now comes the next chapter



(41)

The Columbia River Indians, near and above the Dalles, the Yakimas and others, during the winter of 1855 & 56, formed combinations that appeared to threaten all white settlements east of the Cascade Mountains. The savages for a time seemed bound together to dispute with our people the possession of that part of Washington Ter. and Oregon.

In consequence of the threatened outbreaks, Col. George Wright, with his ninth infantry, occupied Fort Vancouver. The 25th of March he set out by steamer with his command, <sup>Northward</sup> reached the Dalles so that he was able to begin his march toward the up-country, the morning of the 26th.

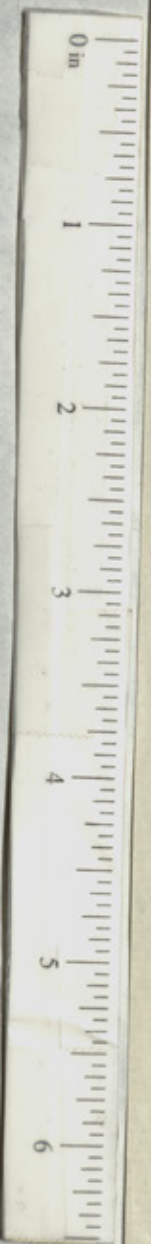
He had gone but a few miles when the Yakimas, coming from <sup>their</sup> ~~this~~ country, being aided by some Columbian Indians, began to attack the settlements far behind them, near the Cascades.

As introductory to some of his rough work and hair-breadth escapes, my old messenger and scout, Edouarde, introduces his story by quoting Gen. Sheridan's account of his own gallant and characteristic work, accomplished with his escort of forty men, whom he denominated his "dragoons."

"On the morning of March 26th the movement began, but the <sup>[Col. Wright's]</sup> column had only reached Five Mile Creek when the Yakimas, joined by many young warriors - free lances - from other tribes, made a sudden



the Columbia River Indians, east and above the falls. The  
Yakima and others, during the winter of 1882, had formed companies  
which must have been as numerous as the white settlements east of the  
Columbia. The natives for a time seemed to be together in  
disorder, and the people of the present had that part of Washington for  
and over.  
In consequence of the increased population, the  
bright, with its high intensity, soon had to be reduced. The  
of action as but not by summer with the command, seemed the  
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people, by old men and women, and some of the  
by George W. Jackson, a account of his own actions and character  
to work, accomplished when his account of forty men, whom he described  
and his  
[Vol. 11, p. 111]  
the people of which had the present paper, but the  
which had only been five miles from the Yakima, which by  
many young warriors - five horses - five cows, and a wagon

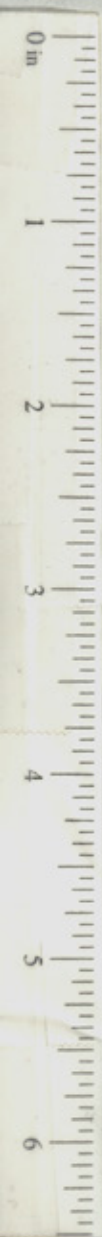




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and unexpected attack at the Cascades of the Columbia, midway between Vancouver and the Dalles, killed several citizens, women and children, and took possession of the Portage by besieging the settlers in their cabins at the Upper Cascades, and those who sought shelter at the Middle Cascades in the old military block-house, which had been built some years before as a place of refuge under just such circumstances.. These points held out, and were not captured, but the landing at the Lower Cascades fell completely into the hands of the savages. Straggling settlers from the Lower Cascades made their way down to Fort Vancouver, distant about thirty-six miles, which they reached that night, and communicated the condition of affairs. As the necessity for early relief to the settlers and the re-establishment of communication with the Dalles were apparent, all the force that could be spared was ordered out, and in consequence I <sup>[Sheridan]</sup> immediately received directions to go with my detachment of dragoons, numbering about forty effective men, to the relief of the middle block-house, which really meant to retake the Cascades. I got ready at once, and believing that a piece of artillery would be of service to me, asked for one, but as there proved to be no guns at the Post, <sup>[Fort Vancouver]</sup> I should have been obliged to proceed without one had it not been that the regular steamer from San Francisco to Portland was lying at the Vancouver dock unloading military supplies, and the commander, Captain Dall, supplied me with a steamer's small iron cannon, mounted on a wooden platform, which he used in firing salutes at different ports on the arrival and departure of the vessel. Finding at the arsenal a supply of



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light and communicated the result to the officials. As the necessity  
for early relief to the soldiers and the re-establishment of communi-  
cation with the allies were apparent, all the forces that could be  
gathered were ordered out, and in consequence I immediately received  
direct orders with my detachment of soldiers, numbering about  
twenty effective men, to the relief of the middle block-house, which  
resulted in taking the cascades. I was ready at once, and before  
the first of June of 1871 would be of service to me, either for  
one, but as these proved to be no more at the fort, I should have been  
obliged to proceed without one had it not been for the regular steam-  
or from San Francisco to Portland was lying at the Vanover dock  
relating military operations, and the commander, Captain Bell, supplied  
me with a messenger's small iron cannon, mounted on a wooden platform,  
which he used in firing salutes at different parts of the river  
and departure of the vessel. Finding at the arsenal a supply of





solid shot that would fit the gun, I had it put upon the steamboat Belle, employed to carry my command to the scene of operations, and started up the Columbia River at 2 p.m. on the morning of the 27th. We reached the Lower Cascades early in the day, where, selecting a favorable place for the purpose, I disembarked my men and gun on the north bank of the river, so that I could send back the steamboat to bring up any volunteer assistance that in the mean time might have been collected at Vancouver.

After getting well in hand everything connected with my little command, I advanced with five or six men to the edge of a growth of underbrush to make a reconnoissance. We stole along under cover of this underbrush until we reached the open ground leading over the causeway or narrow neck before mentioned, when the enemy opened fire and killed a soldier near my side by a shot which just grazing the bridge of my nose, struck him in the neck, opening an artery and breaking the spinal cord. He died instantly. The Indians at once made a rush for his body, but my men in the rear, coming quickly to the rescue, drove them back; and Captain Dall's gun being now brought into play, many solid shots were thrown into the jungle where they lay concealed, with the effect of considerably modifying their impetuosity. Further skirmishing at long range took place at intervals during the day, with little gain or loss, however, to either side, for both parties held positions which could not be assailed in flank, and only the extreme of rashness in either could prompt a front attack. My left was protected by the back water driven into the slough by the high stage of the river, and my right rested secure on the main stream



held that I would like to see I had it put upon the steamer  
Belle, and to carry my command to the scene of operations, and  
started up the Columbia River at 8 a.m. on the morning of the 23rd.  
We reached the lower reaches early in the day, where, selecting a  
favorable place for the purpose, I disembarked my men and gun on the  
north bank of the river, so that I could stand back the steamer to  
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My left was protected by the back water driven into the slough by the  
high stage of the river, and my right rested secure on the main current



7

Between us was only the narrow neck of land, to cross which would be certain death. The position of the Indians was almost the exact counterpart of ours.

In the evening I sent a report of the situation back to Vancouver by the steamboat, retaining a large Hudson's Bay bateau which I had brought up with me. Examining this I found it would carry about twenty men, and made up my mind that early next morning I would cross the command to the opposite or south side of the Columbia River, and make my way up along the mountain base until I arrived abreast the middle block-house, which was still closely besieged, and then at some favorable point recross to the north bank to its relief, endeavoring in this manner to pass around and to the rear of the Indians, whose position confronting me was too strong for a direct attack. This plan was hazardous, but I believed it would be successfully carried out if the boat could be taken with me; but should I not be able to do this I felt that the object contemplated in sending me out would miserably fail, and the small band cooped up at the block house would soon starve or fall a prey to the Indians, so I concluded to risk all the chances the plan involved.

On the morning of March 28th, the savages were still in my front, and after giving them some solid shot from Captain Dall's gun we slipped down to the river-bank, and the detachment crossed by means of the Hudson's Bay boat, making a landing on the opposite shore at a point where the south channel of the river, after flowing around Bradford's Island, joins the main stream. It was then about



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carry about twenty men, and with my mind that early next morning  
I would cross the Sound to the opposite side of the Sound  
the river, and take my way up along the mountain pass until I arrived  
at some respectable point across to the north bank of the river.  
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we slipped down to the river bank, and the detachment crossed by  
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8  
nine o'clock, and everything had thus far proceeded favorably, but an examination of the channel showed that it would be impossible to get the boat up the rapids along the mainland, and that success could only be assured by crossing the south channel just below the rapids to the island, along the shore of which there was every probability we could pull the boat through the rocks and swift water until the head of the rapids was reached, from which point to the block-house there was smooth water.

Telling the men of the embarrassment in which I found myself, and that <sup>y</sup>~~I~~ could get enough of them to man the boat and pull it up the stream by a rope to the shore, we would cross to the island and make the attempt. <sup>2</sup>~~All~~ volunteered to go; but as ten men seemed sufficient, I selected that number to accompany me. Before starting, however, I deemed it prudent to find out if possible what was engaging the attention of the Indians, who had not yet discovered that we had left their front. I therefore climbed up the side of the abrupt mountain which skirted the water's edge until I could see across the island. From this point I observed the Indians running horseraces and otherwise enjoying themselves behind the line they had held against me the day before. The squaws decked out in gay colors, and the men gaudily dressed in war bonnets, made the scene more attractive; but as everything looked propitious for the dangerous enterprise in hand I spent little time watching them. Quickly returning to the boat, I crossed to the island with my ten men, threw ashore the rope attached to the bow, and commenced the difficult task of pulling her up the rapids. We got along slowly at first, but soon striking



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we could find the boat through the rocks and swift water until the  
head of the rapids was reached, from which point to the black rocks  
there was smooth water.

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make the attempt. All volunteered to go, but as the men seemed  
sufficient, I selected four men to accompany me. Before starting,  
however, I deemed it prudent to find out if possible what was causing  
the objection of the Indians, who had not yet discovered that we had  
left camp. I therefore climbed up the side of the abrupt  
mountain which skirted the water's edge until I could see across the  
island. From this point I observed the Indians running towards  
and otherwise enjoying themselves during the day they had held  
against me the day before. The spears stuck out in gay colors, and  
the men readily dressed in war bonnets, made the scene more attractive,  
but as everything looked propitious for the dangerous enterprise in  
hand I spent little time watching them. Quietly returning to the  
boat, I crossed to the island with my gun, and the rope  
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9  
a camp of old squaws who had been left on the island for safety, and had not gone over to the mainland <sup>(north shore)</sup> to see the races, we utilized them to our advantage. With unmistakable threats and signs we made them keep quiet, but also give us much needed assistance in pulling vigorously on the tow-rope of our boat.

I was laboring under a dreadful strain of mental anxiety during all this time, for had the Indians discovered what we were about, they could easily have come over to the island in their canoes, and, by forcing us to take up our arms to repel their attack, doubtless would have obliged the abandonment of the boat; and that essential adjunct to the final success of my plan would have gone down the rapids. Indeed under such circumstances it would have been impossible for ten men to hold out against the two or three hundred Indians; but the island forming an excellent screen to our movements, we were not discovered, and when we reached the smooth water at the upper end of the rapids we quickly crossed over and joined the rest of the men, who in the meantime had worked their way along the south bank of the river parallel with us. I felt very grateful to the old squaws for the assistance they rendered. They worked well under compulsion, and manifested no disposition to strike for higher wages. Indeed, I was so much relieved when we had crossed over from the island and joined the rest of the party, that I mentally thanked the squaws one and all. I had much difficulty in keeping the men on the main shore from cheering at our success, but hurriedly taking into the bateau all of them it could carry, I sent the balance along the southern bank, where the railroad is now built, until both detachments arrived at a



9  
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and exhibited no disposition to strike for better wages. Indeed, I  
was so much relieved when we had crossed over from the island and  
joined the rest of the party, that I willingly shared the arrows one  
and all. I had much difficulty in keeping the men on the main shore  
from cheating at our success, but instantly taking into the bottom all  
of them it could carry. I sent the balance along the southern bank,  
where the railroad is now built. Until both detachments arrived at a



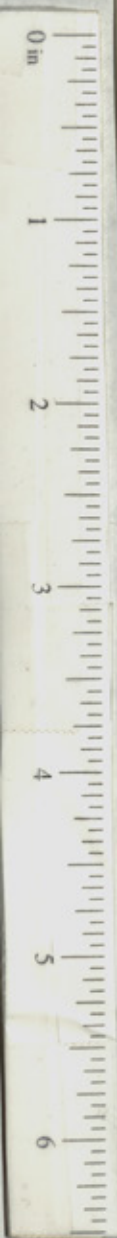
point opposite the block-house, when, crossing to the north bank, I landed below the block-house some little distance, and returned the boat for the balance of the men, who joined me in a few minutes.

When the Indians attacked the people at the Cascades on the 26th, word was sent to Col. Wright, <sup>(Up the river)</sup> who had already got out from the valley a few miles on his expedition to the Spokane country. He immediately turned his column back, and soon after I had landed and communicated with the beleaguered block-house the advance of his command arrived under Lieutenant-Colonel Edward J. Steptoe. I reported to Steptoe, and related what had occurred during the past thirty-six hours, gave him a description of the festivities that were going on at the lower Cascades, and also communicated the intelligence that the Yakimas had been joined by the Cascade Indians when the place was first attacked. I also told him it was my belief that when he pushed down the main shore the latter tribe without doubt would cross over to the island we had just left, while the former would take to the mountains. Steptoe coincided with me in this opinion, and informed me that Lieutenant Alexander Piper would join my detachment with a mountain howitzer, directed me to convey the command to the island and gobble up all who came over to it.

Lieutenant Piper and I landed on the island with the first boat-load, and after disembarking the howitzer we fired two or three shots to let the Indians know we had artillery with us, then advanced down the island with the whole of my command, which had arrived in the meantime; all of the men were deployed as skirmishers except a small detachment to operate the howitzer. Near the lower end of the



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island we met, as I had anticipated, the entire body of Cascade Indians- men, women and children - whose homes were in the vicinity of the Cascades. They were very much frightened and demoralized at the turn events had taken. for the Yakimas at the approach of Steptoe had abandoned them, as predicted, and fled to the mountains. The chief and head-men said they had had nothing to do with the capture of the Cascades, with the murder of men at the upper landing, nor with the massacre of men, women and children near the block-house, and put all the blame on the Yakimas and their allies. I did not believe this, however, and to test the truth of their statement formed them all in line with their muskets in hand. Going up to the first man on the right I accused him of having engaged in the massacre, but was met by a vigorous denial. Putting my forefinger into the muzzle of the gun. I found unmistakable signs of its having been recently discharged. My forefinger was black with the stains of burnt powder, and holding it up to the Indian, he had nothing more to say in the face of such positive evidence of his guilt. A further examination proved that all the guns were in the same condition. Their arms were at once taken possession of, and leaving a small force to look after the women and children and very old men, so that there could be no possibility of escape, I arrested thirteen of the principal miscreants crossed the river to the lower landing, and placed them in charge of a strong guard."



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telling me that, as I had anticipated, the entire body of the  
Indians - men, women and children - were in the vicinity  
of the massacre. They were very much distressed and  
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People do not imagine now how those settlers at the famous Cascades almost worshipped the little giant, Lieutenant Sheridan. My venerated messenger was among them about that time

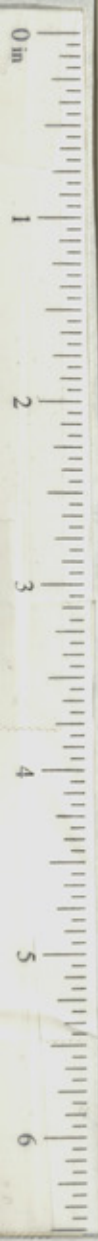
As soon as Wright's men, under Lieut-Col. Steptoe approached from above, the wary Yakimas, as we have seen abandoned the poor Columbia Indians to their fate, and it was a sad one, for nine of them, after Sheridan had found the inside of their muskets soiled with powder recently burned, were tried by military commission and hanged, the limb of a tree being used for a gallows.

After the three days of skulking, boating and fighting in the wild picturesque pass of the mountains, finding the Yakimas, the principal offenders, all gone, the officers caused a thorough scouring of the whole country to the north and northeast of them.

A little later, Edouard, then enlisted in a company, was selected and sent out as a scout from Vancouver. Here is the way he tells his tale. His memory, like that of frontiers-men generally, who have not been much worried with the words in books, is most remarkable: " A trail thro' the woods and over the jagged hills by which the Klicitats and Yakimas (for both tribes were there at the Cascades ) had retreated, was followed for ten miles, but no Indians were overtaken. The army officers, as they all know the importance of fearless and faithful scouting, sent out several. I was one of them at this time, and indeed, was kept very busy. Had the Indians been successful at the Cascades, they were to descend the Columbia, the *thirty six* miles, and attack Fort Vancouver. "



People do not think how low they are at the bottom  
 Cascades almost overlooked the little giant. Discovered by  
 Vancouver, however, it was among them about 1800.  
 As soon as Wright's men, under Stoughton, started  
 from above, the very Indians, as we have seen, answered the  
 Columbia Indians to their tales, and it was a bad one, for since  
 then, after the Indians had found the inside of their houses  
 with powder recently burned, were tried by military commission and  
 hanged. The kind of a story being used for a follow.  
 After the three days of searching, looking and finding in the  
 wild wilderness past of the mountains, finding the Indians, the  
 principal offenders, all gone. The officers caused a thorough scouring  
 of the whole country to the north and northeast of them.  
 A little later, Stoughton, then enlisted in a company, was  
 selected and sent out as a scout from Vancouver. Here he was  
 told his tale. His story, like that of the Indians, was generally  
 who have not been much worried with the words in books, in what  
 remarkable. "A trail into the woods and over the jagged hills  
 by which the Indians and Yankins (for both tribes were there at the  
 Cascades) had descended, was followed for ten miles, but no Indians  
 were overhauled. The army officers, as they all know the importance  
 of Indians and their scouting, sent out several. I was one of  
 them at this time, and indeed, was sent very busy. Had the Indians  
 been successful at the Cascades, they were to descend the Columbia,  
 the thirty six miles, and attack Fort Vancouver.





(13)

Edouard proceeds:

Being there during the excitement. I had advised the settlers to build a block house near Vancouver, for the Indians might make a raid down there, taking advantage of the absence of Wright's regiment and Sheridan's "dragoons." The block house was put up and took my wife and little children inside of it.

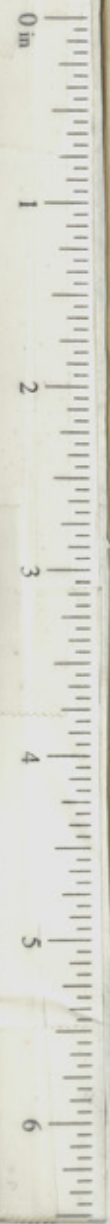
In the early days of the Hudson's Bay Company, the Indians from the Yakima and Klickitat country used to come over the Cascade Mountains to Fort Vancouver to do their trading. They called Fort Vancouver Kit-Loth-Qua. There were, then, plenty of Indian trails all going out from Fort Vancouver, leading east and north. I went on those <sup>trails</sup> whose direction seemed to be toward the Cascades. I had not been long out, when, toward evening, I came upon a trail, distinct and fresh, and feeling satisfied from the signs they left, that I was not far from the main trail, I concluded to camp there for the night. The next morning early I started hunting for more distinct evidence. I had gone but a few miles when I noticed some more fresh tracks. Hitherto I had been riding my horse. Now I dismounted and was leading the horse by the bridle and trying very minutely to examine the tracks when suddenly, from behind a big log, a rifle was fired, and I felt the shock of a wound in my arm. Instantly, two Indians, who had been lying there behind that log in ambush, sprang up and yelling as only Indians on the war path can, tried to complete their attack. But before the one who had shot me could get over the log, my return shot had struck him just beneath an eye, and he fell senseless. But the



(12)

Journal of the expedition

It being late in the afternoon I had advised the natives to build a stock house near Vancouver, for the Indians might require this down here. During the afternoon of the 21st I went to the "Hudson's Bay Company" and saw the stock house was not up and took my wife and little children to the stock house of the Indians. In the early part of the morning the Hudson's Bay Company, the Indians from the Yukon and Alaska country used to come over the mountains to buy Vancouver to do their trading. They called this Vancouver and the stock house. There were many of the Indians all going out from Vancouver, looking for stock and horses. I went to those who were offered stock as we would like to have some. I had not been long out when, toward evening, I came upon a trail which led to the stock house. I was feeling satisfied from the signs they left. That I was not far from the stock house. I concluded to camp there for the night. The next morning early I started hunting for more stock and horses. I had gone out a few miles when I noticed some more stock and horses. Now I discovered and was looking for the horses and saying very much to examine the tracks. Then suddenly, from behind a big log, a little was fired and I fell the shock of a bullet in my arm. Instantly, the Indians who had been lying down behind the log in ambush, sprang up and yelling as only Indians on the war path can, tried to complete their attack. But before the one who had shot me could get over the log, my return shot had struck him just beneath an eye, and he fell senseless. But the





14.

other had got ten steps nearer when I fired at him with my pistol, but to my terror I only slightly wounded him. He staggered a little but kept on toward me. Then followed a struggle for life between two desperate men. The shock of it I never recovered from. Imagine me in a hand to hand fight and then in a death grapple with this powerful savage. I thought, of course, that there might be other Indians near to hear the yell of these, or that the other wounded man might hit me again. I was slight of build but very active. <sup>My assailant</sup> ~~he~~ was very large and strong. I tried to spring from him, but he kept so close that at first I could not fire. His plan was to clinch me and kill me with his "Dag" (a war weapon like the arrow head, only much larger and longer). At last, by quickness and some skill in the wrestle, I succeeded in giving him what proved to be a mortal wound. The "Dag" which he still held in his hand after he fell, I took from his grasp. It was at least twelve inches ~~long~~ in length, handle and all.

At last, I was free; but somehow, though the conscience justifies the soldier-scout, he cannot help wishing he could have avoided such an experience.

I finished this scout <sup>ing</sup> and carried important information to those who sent me."

Yes, the writer well remembers in subsequent years how this energetic man seemed to be made of iron. He would ride night and day to bring news to important telegraph stations.

At this time, of which I write, he enabled the defenders of ~~Vancouver~~ ~~regiment~~ ~~every~~ ~~corps~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~wild~~ ~~Indians~~, and



one who had shot me could get over the log.



1/5  
guard the only practicable trails and avenues of approach, and by his  
clear-cut information he paved the way for those more successful  
campaigns which the people of Oregon and Washington were obliged to  
make to hold and develop the great Northwest.

*Frederick O. Howard*  
*May 2nd 1889*  
*Bellevue,*



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Wm. D. Howard  
Wm. D. Howard  
J. L. Howard

