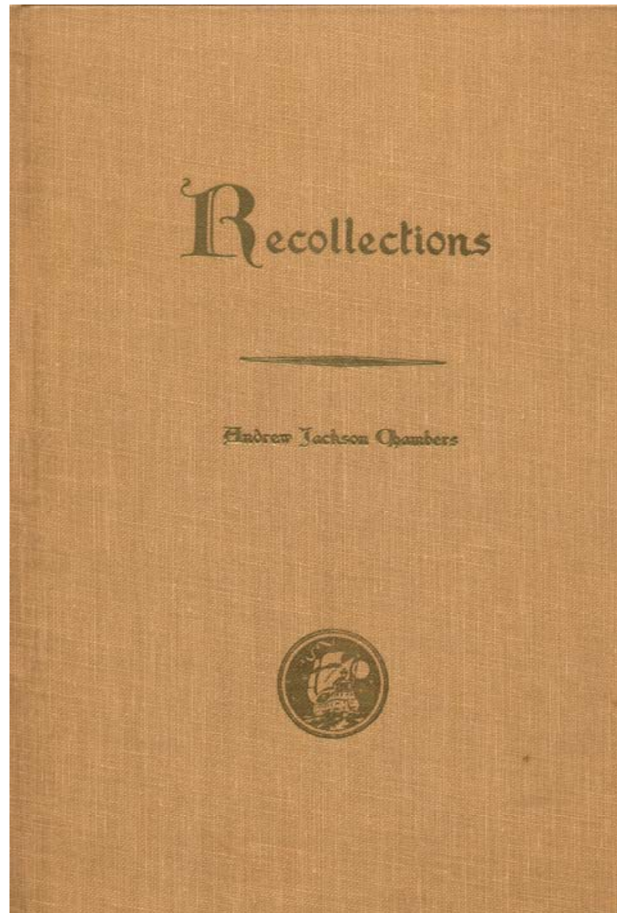

Recollections

Andrew Jackson Chambers

Crossing the Plains in 1845

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My father's reading Lewis and Clark's Journal was the cause of our crossing the plains. We started the 1st of April, 1845. Our company consisted of my father, Thomas M. Chambers, mother, Letitia Chambers, five brothers, James W., David J., Thomas J., Andrew J. (myself), John, and McClain, and two sisters, Mary Jane and Letitia. My brothers, James and David, were married and their wives, Mary and Elizabeth, accompanied them.

We started from Morgan County, Missouri, and crossed the Missouri River on a ferry at St. Joe. This place marked the last of the settlements. From this point we traveled the old emigrant road up the Platte River. Our journey led us through portions of what are now the states of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Then this was a wilderness with only

the old tracks of emigrants that had passed that way in 1834-1835. We crossed the Kaw River, about forty miles from St. Joe on a ferry, after that we forded all the streams to which we came. The first day that we saw buffalo, on the South Platte River, it was buffalo as far as the eye could see. We camped and killed fifteen that evening. It took two days to jerk all the meat we wanted. Buffalo and antelope were plentiful for twelve or fifteen hundred miles. Hunters sometimes put a handkerchief up on a stick and the antelope came to see what it was, and often we killed them by shooting from the wagons. We had to go out to the edge of the hills to hunt buffalo, except the first day we saw them, of which I have just spoken.

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Opposite Ash Hollow we crossed the Platte River, which though wide and shallow was difficult to ford on account of quick-sand. We passed near Chimney Rock, which rose like a great chimney from the level country. We could see this landmark for a number of days and passed it within five or six miles.

At Fort Laramie on the North Platte River, measles broke out in our family and we had to lay by fifteen days. We had overtaken other westward bound wagons on our journey and our party was now thirty wagons. While being detained here, about one thousand wagons passed us, and most of our company joined a party and left us at Laramie.

From Fort Laramie we traveled to Fort Hall in Idaho. We had tried traveling with large and with small companies but it was very hard to stand guard with only a few in the party. We fell in with a company of fifty wagons. Their teams had been scared by the Indians and had gotten into the habit of stampeding. They stampeded one day while we were with them. It was terrible to see fifty teams running, each team of three or four yoke of cattle—about three yoke of cattle was an average team. There was no way of holding them back except to hang on to the yokes and call to the cattle. It was an anxious time for the women and children in the wagons. One ox fell and broke his neck. This was the last day we traveled with them. After Fort Laramie we had fallen in behind these wagons with what remained of our old company. This is all that saved us from the stampede on that day.

This event recalls the first Indians we saw. Father was captain of the company. He ordered the wagons into two lines, the women

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and children to stay in the wagons, except those that could carry guns. I can recollect seeing mother marching along carrying a rifle. All the horses and cattle were driven into the enclosure made by the wagons to protect them from stampeding. We never stopped but marched along with the wagons in two lines and the horses and cattle between them.

Father stepped out to meet the chief who was coming toward us. The Indians seemed friendly but wanted tobacco. As soon as father gave one tobacco, another would step up and say, “Me, big chief too.” Father gave them all he had in his pouch. There was a large camp of the Indians, and it appeared this was a war party and that they had been out to fight other Indians. They were now on their way home.

On much of our way wood was very scarce. We always sent a party ahead of us to find wood, grass, and water. We found buffalo chips plentiful for at least a thousand miles, and often we had to use them altogether for fuel. On the Sweet Water, in Wyoming, we caught a great many nice fish.

From Fort Hall we traveled to Fort Bridgers, which was two hundred miles north of Salt Lake. It really was no fort at all. A man by the name of Bridgers was located here and carried on trade with the Indians and with the emigrants. From here we went to Salmon Falls, on the Snake River, and here we met a few Indians, but they were friendly. Until we crossed the Rockies through the Devil’s Gate, we traveled up hill and stream, but after we crossed the Snake River the waters flowed westward and we could almost see where the divide came.

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From Salmon Falls we traveled two or three days down the river before we crossed. We found a place where there was an island in the river. We crossed to the island first, and then went diagonally across the rest of the river, which was about three-fourths of a mile wide. We always took horses and rode across the rivers we had to ford and found out exactly where the wagons ought to go. The fords were always thoroughly prospected before the teams were driven into the water. We found at this crossing the deepest part was eight or ten feet wide, and deep enough to swim the cattle, the rest of it averaged about two feet. We blocked up the wagon beds as high as the standards would allow, to keep our goods dry, and hitched on ten or twelve yoke of cattle to the first wagon. The other wagons were fastened together one behind the other. There was a chain attached to the tongue of the wagon following and that in turn to the hind axletree of the forward wagon. The drivers went to the lower side of their teams to keep the direction slanting up stream. They had to hold on to the bows of the yokes to keep themselves braced up, too. By the time all the teams were in the water, the lead teams were in shallow water, and we were finally safely over without wetting any of our goods. Shortly after this our oxen began to give out. We became uneasy for fear we could not travel across the mountains, which were before us, on account of snow. To be caught on the east side of the mountains meant almost certain death. We began to break in the cows. We started across the plains with about twenty milch cows. By the time we reached The Dalles, in Oregon, we had almost all the cows broken in. They were lighter on their feet and traveled

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much better than the oxen. We didn't know at that time that we would have saved our cattle's feet by providing ourselves with shoes and nails before leaving the states.

Three or four days before we came to Fort Boise we were camped on a creek, and when supper was ready and each one had sat down to his place at the table on the ground, an Indian standing there knelt down at the place I intended for a man named Smith. As soon as Smith finished washing himself he knocked the Indian over with a stick and took the place himself. Sticks which the Indians had used for digging roots or for some other purpose were lying around plentifully. The Indians looked very sullen after this and next morning one of the horses was gone, stolen. We traveled on as though nothing had happened for two days and came to a place where we thought it advisable to rest the cattle a day, there being good grass and water there. James Chambers, Smith and myself concluded that evening to ride back to the place we had lost the horse, and it might be, we could find an Indian camp and do something terrible. Smith wanted to kill and Indian. We rode all night and when we reached the place another party of emigrants was camping there, and we found an Indian at the camp on the stolen animal. Smith had felt all the time that his act had been the cause of losing the horse, and he was very anxious to straighten things out by killing an Indian. Brother James went around the camp one way and I another. I came upon the Indian and horse and I caught the horse. Immediately Smith insisted on shooting the Indian but some of the campers interfered. They contended that we were out of the way, and that if we killed an Indian his friends would come out and take

revenge on them. They also argued that maybe this was not the Indian that stole the horse, and they urged us to make the women in camp feel easy by releasing the Indian. After consulting for some time, we agreed to let the Indian go, and to give him something for scaring him nearly to death. He was so badly frightened great drops of sweat came out of his face. The next thing we had to consider was what to give the Indian. As it was coming on the fall of the year, Mother had supplied us well with shirts. I had enough to last me two years, and I had on two at this time. They agreed that I must pull off one of my shirts and give it to the Indian. So I did, and all parties concerned, except myself, were well pleased, the Indian most of all.

From Boise we traveled to Grand Ronde, and after we passed the valley and came down off the Blue Mountains into the Umatilla Valley, we saw lots of Indians. Mary Jane, my sister, was then a comely girl about sixteen years of age. Indian chiefs offered Father fifty horses and a hundred blankets for her. They didn't care whether the girl was willing, they wanted a white klootchman. This scared Mary Jane, and she didn't want to show herself when the Indians were around.

When we were within a few day's journey of The Dalles, and after we had crossed the DesChutes River, two horses were stolen from us. We went back from Fifteen Mile creek to a village near by and called on the chief. He said he would have the Indians bring in the horses. They claimed that the horses had been stolen by some bad Indians and that a good Indian brought them back, and that he ought to have pay for it. We had become accustomed to paying, so we were prepared to give a shirt. This satisfied them.

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Our trip had not been a pleasure trip, for from the time we left St. Joe each one of us had to stand guard about once a week, and from the time we left Fort Boise each one had to stand guard half the night every other night, and after having the measles this was no fun.

On October 15th we arrived at The Dalles. On account of the lateness of the season we selected a place for winter quarters. This was on a creek about two miles from the Methodist mission.

Here, in November, we built huts for the family and large corrals of logs in which to keep the horses for safety, at night. We watched them during the day. Our cattle were at large. We looked after them to prevent their straying too far. We drove them together a few times every day. Several parties left their stock in our care during the winter.

As soon as the family was in its winter quarters, Father and I went down the Columbia River and up the Willamette River for a winter's supply of flour. This was about the 20th of November. At Oregon City we bought a skiff and one thousand pounds of flour. A young man by the name of Scoggins and myself started out to take the flour to the family.

Father stayed down the Willamette in Tualatin plains all winter, looking for places in which to locate. When we reached The Dalles, James and his wife left their stock with us, their oxen had given out, and went on, and Father remained with James and his wife until spring.

Scoggins and I started with plenty of provisions for our trip, which we calculated would be seven days. On account of stormy weather we were seventeen days. Below Cape Horn, on the

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Columbia, we had to lay by in one place two days. Cape Horn is a rocky spur of the Cascade Range, two or three hundred feet high and almost perpendicular.

This was the hardest seventeen days work I ever did. It appeared to storm almost all the time. We had the flour in sacks of one hundred pounds each, and we loaded and unloaded them sometimes eight or ten time a day. The wind

would stop blowing for a time, and by the time we got loaded and ready to start, it would begin again, and we would be obliged to unload, for the river was so rough. The wind blew either up stream or down stream. The family needed the flour badly and we were anxious to get to them with it. Some days we would not apparently abate when we could not avail ourselves of the calm. Our supply of provisions were soon about all used up except the flour. Flour and water without even salt was not very good to keep up either spirits or strength. We mixed the water and flour together in the top of the sack and made the dough into long strings which we wrapped about a stick. We set the stick by the fire and baked the dough, which tasted pretty good, after a hard day's work. We varied this with noodle soup made of water and flour. We were three days making the five miles of rapids and seven hundred yards of portage. The last day on the rapids our boat took a sheer and the one on the shore had to pull so hard against the current that the boat filled with water. In the face of this calamity I thought the family would starve. I was twenty years of age, but in my anxiety I cried. This was the first, last, and only time I cried while crossing the plains.

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We finally got the boat to a safe place and bailed it out. We were sure our flour was ruined. We took the sacks out and let the water drain off, reloaded and proceeded on our journey.

That night we built a fire and dried the sacks and found the flour was not hurt much. We were lucky to find two white men and three Indians to help us carry our boat over the portage. Four days travel up the river brought us to our winter home. We found all well and anxious for our return.

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First Flat-Bottomed Boat to Cross Over the Cascade Falls. 1846-1847

As I have said, Father remained down the Willamette the winter of 1845 with brother James and wife, looking for a place, and in the middle of January, 1846, he and James came back to The Dalles to help build a boat to move us.

There were plenty of boats then on the Willamette for emigrants who wanted to pass on down to the valley, but a very short time after we arrived at The Dalles they were all taken off.

James was a boat builder. We selected a place close to the river to build our boat where there was good timber. We chose two large trees for the purpose of

making gunnels for each side of the boat, the trees being about three feet in diameter. Then we picked out smaller trees for making the plank. We hewed out the timber the proper length and squared it. This we lined on both sides the thickness we wanted to make our planks. We chose a place on a side hill to make a saw-pit. It was so arranged that one man could stand underneath the log and one man on top of it. Then the squared logs were put in place and we ripped out enough plank for a bottom and false bottom, and for the sides of the boat. We used the old whip-saw now on exhibition in the Oregon Historical Rooms in Portland. This whip-saw told its own story in an Olympia paper in 1894 as follows:

"I started for Puget Sound from Missouri in 1845, and after passing through the trials and incidents of an overland journey of six months, reached The Dalles, Oregon, where with the assistance of four men, I sawed timber enough to construct a boat

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sixteen feet wide and fifty feet long. On February 1, 1846, the boat was loaded with myself among the passengers, and we moved down the Columbia to the Cascades. At the Cascades I took passage in a wagon around a five-mile portage. Our boat was the first boat sent over Cascade Falls. The craft was secured, and proceeded to the mouth of Sandy River. From that Point my travels varied sometimes by land and sometimes by water, up one stream and down another. Finally, in the Spring of 1848, I reached Puget Sound, after a tedious journey behind an ox team. In the three years of my travels, my master always found me of service, and during the past forty-seven years, I resided undisturbed and unthought of in my master's tool house, on Chambers Prairie. On April 26, 1894, the flames destroyed my home and I was ruined and defaced almost beyond recognition."

The story of the whip-saw being told, to resume, -- We had no nails and the boat was put together entirely with wooden pins. It resembled a scow of today. Its capacity was large enough to carry fifteen head of cattle at a time in crossing the river, and to store away all our wagons, taken apart, and all our plunder that we had brought with us across the plains, also those members of the family who were not on shore driving the cattle.

When we got the boat ready and launched, we loaded our effects, wagons, plunder and ox yokes, and proceeded down the Columbia River.

When we collected our stock, to make the start, our cattle were in good condition. The snow rarely stayed on the southern slopes of the hills and the cattle had opportunity to do well. But not so with the horses. The Indians had managed to steal most of

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them during foggy weather, when it was pretty hard work to guard them. We did not have more than three horses out of the lot whose manes and tails had not been cut off. The mutilated animals looked horrible to us. There was always some good Indian to help us hunt the stolen animals. It appeared the Indians did not want the horses except to have a big ride on them, and to get their manes and tails. They made ropes out of the hair.

Our boat had long oars, and when we started two men attended to these. Brother James usually steered the boat, and Father and David were aboard most of the time. We let the boat run with the current as great a distance each day as we could drive the cattle. Then we tied up and resumed our course next morning. We traveled on the south side down the river bottom until we came to Shell Rock, a place where the hills came right up to the river's edge. We could not drive over the rock, neither could we swim the cattle around it. Here we ferried all our effects and cattle to the north side and traveled down the north shore until we came to the Cascade Falls. At this point we unloaded our wagons, put them together, loaded our plunder into them, hitched up the teams, and started out to make our way to the lower end of the falls.

Everything had been removed from the boat, and the sides boarded up. Brother James, and two men who were willing to take the risk, went aboard. He acted as captain and they stood at the oars. We had several small boats, so we took her out in the river and gave her a good start, heading her straight for the falls. She went over, shipping only a nominal number of gallons of water. It was in February that we made this run with the first flat-bottomed boat ever to pass over these five miles of rocks and rapids.

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Having gotten safely over, they tied up and returned to help us with teams and stock. We had to blaze a trail to go through and prospect a road. We were obliged to go back about a mile from the river and pass through an Indian graveyard. In this graveyard the dead were all buried in houses, and we had to drive carefully between them. It was an ancient burying place, for the houses were all decaying. I think it would not have been used for many, many years.

After traveling about six miles we came again to the river just below the lower falls. We reloaded the boat and proceeded as before. The drivers took the cattle along by the river until they reached Cape Horn. Here we were obliged again to leave the river and travel out into the country and around this high promontory. We had to drive very slowly and it was hard work. On this trip we took a little flour, salt, and enough bread to do us the first day out. After that we tied up the calves so we could get milk enough to make noodle soup with milk, flour and salt. It was nearly three days before we reached the river again. At the mouth of the Sandy River we found the scow and the folks waiting for us. Here we unloaded again and ferried our stock across to the southern side of the Columbia at the mouth of the

Sandy. From this point we drove the cattle across the country by Oregon City to Milk Creek, close to Molalla, where father had selected a place for us.

After ferrying the stock across at the mouth of the Sandy, we unloaded the boat with our effects, and ran down the Columbia to the Willamette and up the latter river to Oregon City. Here we sold the boat for fifty dollars. We put our plunder in the wagons and moved out to place selected for our future home, and set to work to build houses in which to live.

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The Citizens of Oregon were of the opinion that Uncle Sam was slow in extending protection to his people on the Pacific slope, and that they formed a provisional government and elected Abernathy governor. The representatives passed laws, saying that a married man and his wife could take up six hundred and forty acres – a milesquare – of land; a young, or single man could, half that amount, and this could be selected any place so that it did not interfere with other claims. Wheat was made legal tender for small debts at on dollar a bushel.

Oregon City being located at the falls on the Willamette River, the Hudson's Bay Company had a flour mill and a store there. Up the Willamette, the old servants of the company had settled and taken up a great many of the choice places for fifty or sixty miles. One prairie called "French Prairie," was settled by the Canadian French, and most of these settlers had native wives.

The first Settler here, cut hazel brush and made withes with which to bind their wheat. At this time the sickle and reaphook were used. Then the cradle came into use and the people learned to make bands of the wheat, and other grain was cut.

After putting in one spring crop and garden in Molalla, we built a barn. I then went to Tualatin Plains, west of Oregon City, and stopped with brother James and family. He married a Mrs. Scoggins, who had a family of five children, three sons and two daughters. I, together with these children, went to school one term. The oldest son was one of my best friends, and it was he who helped me take the flour up the Columbia to my folks.

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Tualatin Plains, twenty miles from Oregon City, was settled principally by Hudson's Bay men. English and Scotch. This was a fine section of the country. Plenty of wheat was grown here, and newcomers could get plenty of work by taking pay in wheat at one dollar a bushel. The wheat could be taken to Oregon City, and sold to the company and taken out in trade in the store, and a receipt for the remainder would be given. This receipt could be used for anything wanted, and they, in turn, could go to the store and get goods and groceries with it. There was very little money in the country, so people were obliged to use wheat and these receipts, as a means of conducting business transactions. The emigrants to this

country had spend, mostly, all their money for outfits and a great many, even then, were poorly provided with provisions for the trip.

After school closed I stayed with my brother James and helped in the harvest. The barns were built of logs, two houses and a space of thirty feet between them, the roof including the three. The center was used for a threshing floor, and ten or twelve horses were used to tramp out the wheat. The farmers would furnish us with horses and board, and give us one bushel in ten, to thresh out and fan the wheat, and sometimes they allowed us team to take the wheat to market. While I was helping my brother that harvest, I did the threshing and my brother and young Scroggins hauled in the sheaves. We threshed eighty to ninety bushels a day.

One of the oldest settlers came to my brother and wanted help. James told him that I could go, and wanted to know how much he would pay me per day. The old settler said he would give

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me three pecks of wheat a day. James told him I might remain home and play before I should work for that price. I told my brother to make a contract with him to cut and shock his wheat, and young Scroggins and I would do the work as soon as we finished his (my brother's) crop. He made the contract at three bushels and acre and board.

We put in thirty acres for him. We put up three acres a day, and the old gentleman was highly pleased with our work. His wheat was getting very rip and shattered out, so that he proposed for us to cut and bind in the forenoon and haul in the afternoon, and he would pay us just the same per day for the hauling; that was nine bushels a day.

It was hard for him to keep help. One harvest was all that help would stay with him. Some of his help told that he recommended them to eat the peelings off baked potatoes. He said it was healthy and helped to fill up. I think he was correct about it being good for the health if he followed his own advice, for he lived to be one hundred and four years old.

The winter of 1846 we spent in looking for a new location thinking to better ourselves. We went to the mouth of the Columbia River and looked over Clatsop plains, then south to the Umpqua country, but we did not find anything to suit us.

Father said he had started out for salt water, so in the spring of 1847, we again put in the corps, and then came over to Puget Sound to look at that portion of the country. We spent two months looking around. At Newmarket, the present site of Tumwater, at the falls of the Deschutes River, we found M. T. Simmons and

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family, and five or six other families and nine or ten young men. They had settled here in June, 1845. They were putting up a sawmill. They already had a flour mill,

a very small concern. The burrs were only eighteen inches in diameter and no bolting cloth was in use. Some of the families had sieves that were used to take out the coarse bran.

At the present site of Olympia there was one man by the name of Smith. His log cabin stood on the ground where the Huggins hotel is now. We finally staked out claims on what is now know as "Chamber's Prairie." We then returned to our homes in Oregon to make preparations to move to the Puget Sound region in the fall.

Settlement on Puget Sound

Early in the fall of 1847, we hired two boats from Dr. McLoughlin, and four Kanaka boatmen. We loaded our effects, wagons, ox-yokes, and bedding on the boats at Oregon City. We went down the Columbia to the mouth of the Cowlitz, and up the Cowlitz to Cowlitz Landing – thirty miles.

It was fine boating until we came to the rapids on the Cowlitz River. There it was hard work and slow traveling. We had to use the tow line a great deal and go from one side of the river to the other to take advantage of the eddies and shallow water, so that we could use the long poles to push the boat upstream. Our boats were heavily laden and for about fifteen miles we used the poles and tow line, the water being too swift for oars.

There was a great quantity of salmon I the river. We had all we wanted and cooked it Indian fashion. This was, to dress the fish, run a stick through it and place the stick in the ground close to the fire, and, as the fish cooked, turn it so that it would bake evenly. We always left the scales on until it was cooked. After working hard all day, it was fine! – we though delicious.

We arrived at Cowlitz Landing after twenty days of travel, the only accident on the trip being the loss of a rifle, a considerable loss in those days, too.

In making this trip to Cowlitz Landing, we started the hands with the stock, horses and cattle, to cross the Columbia. All were ferried over at Fort Vancouver, then they were driven up the Cowlitz and swam the South Fork. When they reached Cowlitz Landing they swam the stock to the north side of the river and

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waited for the boats. This landing is at the lower end of Cowlitz Prairie. This prairie was settled by the Canadian French and it is a fine farming country. The Hudson's Bay Company and the Catholic Mission each had fine farms there. We rented twenty acres of land from the Catholic Mission and twenty acres from John R. Jackson and put in a crop of winter wheat.

When the crop was in we left the stock needed to haul our wagons to the prairie (Chambers), which we had selected for our future home, and started to drive the remainder of the stock through. We drove them over Mud Mountain, or Mud Hill – all the first settlers traveled this way, and we crossed the Deschutes about two miles above Tumwater. There was an Indian trail from Bush Prairie to Chambers Prairie.

Then we went back to Saunder's Bottom and completed the wagon road around Mud Mountain. This hill is east of Chehalis. There was one family living there at that time. We prospected and blazed out a road. We found trees on the bank of the creek that suited us for making a bridge. We built the bridge and cut out a wagon road through Saunders bottom, a distance of three miles. The creek's source was from Mud Mountain and the banks were steep and muddy and could not be crossed without a bridge. We then came to New Market, one of the very first settlements at Tumwater. The men of this settlement turned out and helped to cut out a wagon road to Chambers Prairie, a distance of three and a half miles. The old settlers here were glad to see newcomers and they were ready and willing to help us. What they had they were willing to share with us. They were much pleased when they learned that we had sieve wire, so that they could take the coarse

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bran in their flour. On the prairie we built a log house of two rooms; the smaller one we used for a kitchen and the larger one was curtained off into bed rooms. We then went for the family and brought them over. We stopped a few days with Mr. Simmons' family.

We crossed our wagons on boats when the tide was in, below the lower falls of the Deschutes, near where the old Biles house stands. When the tide was out we drove our work cattle across Budd's inlet, and then drove out five miles to our future home. The fifteenth day of December, 1847, we took our first dinner at our home on Chambers Prairie.

Here, our stock had plenty of grass and wintered well, and they were fat in February. We butchered a fine beef and had plenty of tallow to make candles, and we were glad to have candles. Mother brought enough candle wicking to do several years. The candles were a great improvement on the old iron lamp in which we had to burn hogs' lard. This lamp was made with a short spout for the wick to lie in, and one end of the wick came out in this spout to burn. The handle at the other end of the lamp was so arranged that it came up over the center of the lamp, so as to hold the lamp level. With a small chain this lamp could be hung up. A cotton cloth, twisted, served as a wick.

Father put up a milk house and in March commenced to make butter, and in April, to make cheese.

Brother Thomas and I took up claims adjoining, and we milked the cows morning and evening for our board. We built a log house of one room on our claim. We made it a five cornered house, the fifth corner being for the fireplace. In may we dug two

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troughs and started a tan yard, on a small scale. We used the troughs for vats, and alder and hemlock bark for tanning purposes. We dried the bark and pounded it fine. We burned oyster and clam shells and used the lime to take the hair off the skins. We made sole leather out of beef hides, and for the upper leather, we used deer and cougar hides.

By the first of November, we had our leather ready to make shoes. We brought a kit of shoe-maker's tools with us, and father and I made the shoes. I made the ladies' shoes. We brought with us a number of lasts of different sizes.

For sewing thread we put a number of strands of shoe thread together – the length we wanted – and put a hog bristle on each end for needles. It was a nice piece of work to put the bristles on so they would stay. This we could do to perfection. If they came off they could not be put on again.

We made our shoe pegs of maple and dogwood, well seasoned, sawed the length and size we wanted the pegs to be. We split off slabs the thickness to make square pegs, and shaved the slabs to make pegs sharp at one end. We used a stick with a notch against which we held the slabs and sharpened first one side and then the other. A strip of leather with a slit in it was fastened to the end of the shoe board. We took two or three of the sharpened slabs and held them with the left hand against the leather which served as a lever for the knife, and with the point of the knife held to place by running it in the slit in the leather, we split off the pegs.

The crop we put in on Cowlitz Prairie turned out well, and we hauled it over early in the fall, or enough of it to plant and keep us

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until we grew our first crop on Chambers Prairie. The winters of 1845-6, and 1846-7 were very mild and pleasant. We made the rails to fence in land and protect our crops. We raised plenty of wheat, potatoes, peas, and other vegetables. We had wheat coffee and pea coffee and we could always change from one to the other. Boiled wheat and milk made an extra dish for supper.

Father and Mother were highly pleased with the country and they thought that there was no place like it, fat beef off the range in February and plenty of oysters and clams for the digging. One beef would give us sixty pounds of tallow, and in those days tallow was an important item.

The same spring of 1848, we built the log barn which stood for over half a century and finally had to be burned on account of its being unsafe for the stock. It was built similarly to those already described, except that this barn had five apartments, two for hay and grain, one for stalls, one for wagons, and one for threshing. It was a long, narrow barn, and all under one roof. The clapboards were put on with wrought nails from England. The sheeting was of logs, put on the right distance apart to use four four-foot boards.

Thomas and I had been looking forward and calculating to return to Missouri in two years to see our girls, that we had left behind us. In 1848 Mother received a letter from our old home, telling about what had taken place since we left, and among the news was the marriage of a certain young lady, and this had the effect of making me contented to remain on Puget Sound.

This was a sensible decision, for during the winter of 1847, Indians broke out and massacred Dr. and Mrs. Whitman and many others at the Mission, near Walla Walla. The people of

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Oregon raised a company of volunteers to subdue the Cayuse tribe, the only hostiles. They succeeded in bringing the leaders to justice. We, on Puget Sound, did not know about the trouble until it was settled. The Indians here were friendly and they were glad to have the Bostons – as they called the Americans – come. About this time gold was discovered in California, and Thomas and I got the fever to go, as brother James was there.

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Indian War of 1855-1856

That which took place on Chambers Prairie, the later part of August and September, 1855 decided the settlers to build a place of refuge in case the Indians should attempt to execute their threats. Their mode of warfare was to attack the settlers at night, to plunder, and if possible, to exterminate the whites. Among many of the scares we had was one when John Chambers, who understood the Indian language well, overheard "Old Ben" (who had told him had come to live and die with him,) say "Little John knew when he sold me this knife" (at the same time smoothing the blade) "that I would kill him with it." He did not know that John was within hearing. This so frightened John, and William Elders, that they came to my house without their guns. I heard the click of the gate, and sprang for my rifle, my only thought beings "Indians!" They hurried out of sight, fearing I would shoot them, knowing my watchfulness for Indians.

I sent them back for their firearms. On their return we moulded bullets all night.

General Stevens was making treaties with the Indians that spring, and a short time after treating with the Indians west of the mountains, he and his party when east of the mountains to treat with Indians there. At this time a report was started among the Nisquallys that the "Bostons" (that was the named called the Americans; the Hudson's Bay Company and their servants, they called King George men,) were laying plans to collect all the Indians together and take them in a large ship to a country where it was always night. A great many of the Indians came to me to

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learn whether this report was true. It was hard to talk them out of the false notion and to get them to name the parties that had told them this tale. It was always "they", but no definite person or persons. The young Indian that was working for me came out and said the Klickitats were coming over to this side of the mountains and would kill all the "Bostons." He wanted Mrs. Chambers and me to go to Fort Nisqually. He said it was safe there, because this tribe would not hurt King George men.

I went to the settlers on the prairie and we called a meeting the next day. We decided to build a stockade around a large barn I had put up that summer. This barn still stands here on my place. The shed and stockade were long since torn away. The settlers came in force, and in seven or eight days we had a stockade one hundred feet square and sixteen feet high, with guard houses at the opposite corners. It was built of fir logs eighteen feet long, and from ten to twelve inches in diameter. These logs were set just as close together as they could be, straight up and down in a trench three feet deep.

Each family, as it came in, took a certain portion of the barn and shed, that extended around the barn. They partitioned off kitchens under this shed with lumber I had on the place. There were thirty-two families sheltered here at one time, and we had just hauled the crop into the barn, too. As near as Mrs. Chambers and I can recall the names of those who were in the fort with us, the list is as follows:

Mr. and Mrs. Ike Hayes, Mr. and Mrs. John Hayes, Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Eaton, Mr. and Mrs. Marcus McMillan, Mr. and Mrs. William Yeager, Mrs. and Mrs, William White, Mr. and Mrs.

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Tyrus Hines [Himes], Mr. and Mrs. Captain Tyrril [Tyrell], Mr. and Mrs. James Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Ruddell, Mr. and Mrs. James Pattison, Mr. and Mrs. Archibald McMillan, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. David J. Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Wilson, Mr. and Mrs. Spurgeon, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Guthrie, Mr. and Mrs. Abijah O'Neal, Mr. and

Mrs. Joseph Conner, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bunton, and Mrs. James McAllister and family.

The single men were as follows: Mr. Mayhard, Nathan Eaton, George McAllister, William Ruddell, William White, Rolland Wood, John Chambers, McLain Chambers, Henry Parsons, William Parsons, Joe White, Columbus White, Milton White, L. D. Barnard, Jonathan Prince, Levi Prince, Joseph Deaves, Joseph Guthrie, Sanford Guthrie, William Pattison, Nathan Pattison, Charles Pattison, John Pattison, and James Burnes.

While we were at work on the stockade, “Old Nanyumpkin” or “Stahi”, used to come out on the prairie and watch us building. I think our making this stockade was the only thing that saved us. The Indians saw that we had means for protecting ourselves.

I can’t remember just when the first scare came, but I know that thirty families gathered here at the fort within twenty hours after James McAllister was killed. He was killed close to Puyallup while returning as an express to acting-governor Mason. The soldiers had sent him with reports to the governor. Abraham Moses and Dr. James were with him, and some others I cannot recall.

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As soon as the fort was completed, a company was organized with Isaac Hayes as Captain, and A. J. Chambers as first lieutenant. I may state here, although the stockade was on my place, we stayed in it only a few nights. Mrs. Chambers preferred to stay in our house just outside the stockade, and thereby avoided the crying of children, the barking of dogs, and the scolding of women. My young sister, Letitia, kept her company. Letitia said there were forty or fifty children, and thirty dogs in the fort. I volunteered to protect the homes of the settlers, and I would not be sworn into the United States service, because most of the volunteers were sent out of the country in pursuit of hostile Indians, leaving us unprotected at home. Some were disposed to think as I did, while others, who had nothing to live on, wanted to be sworn into the United States service to get rations. Nothing was said about taking this step until after the fort was completed, so it was fully a month after the company was formed before any entered the regular service.

I desired to protect the country and was scouting with that in view. Captain Hayes ordered me to select ten men but would not press horses into service. I chose James Guthrie, Rolland Wood, Sanford and Joseph Guthrie, Abijah O’Neil, William Ruddell, Marcus McMillan, McLain Chambers, Charlie and Nathan Pattison. Others were with us at that time who wished to visit their stock. We were busy riding over the settlement until late in December. I was often in the saddle three weeks at a time. On one of our scouting trips, some of the boys were very anxious to press horses into the service. On my father’s place in Pierce County, he had a corral for horses. The boys ran some horses into this corrall

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and began selecting the animals, some of them taking two apiece. I asked them what they were doing. They answered, "Why, we might as well have these horses as for the Indians to get them." I told them we were out to protect the property of people, and I made them turn the horses out.

Because I would not press horses into service, I thereby incurred the Captain's displeasure, and during my absence on a third scouting trip, he called a meeting and elected William White to the position of first lieutenant. On my return, I called on Secretary Mason, acting governor, and told him what had occurred. He told me to continue in my position, and he would see that I was righted.

In consequence of my having incurred the displeasure of Captain Hayes, my name was never mentioned in any of the reports. I was not aware of this until about three years ago, when the questions of pensions was being discussed. I have affidavits of men who served with me.

We scouted the country until Joseph White's company came in from Puyallup and reported that the Indians were east of the river.

Two of the young Indians stayed on the prairie when their tribe went to the hostiles on the Puyallup River. Before the Indians left Chambers Prairie and vicinity, they cached their provisions. These two young Indians, wishing to show their friendliness, showed us where the caches were. We destroyed the provisions. Some of the folks were afraid these Indians were spies, and it was thought best to send them to Chehalis, the Indians there being friendly to the "Bostons".

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In traveling over the country a short time after this, we came upon an Indian family. They were friendly. We disarmed the man and sent a guard with the family to the Chehalis tribe. Mr. Sidney Ford, who was agent for the Chehalis tribe, succeeded in keeping them friendly.

About the latter part of December, the settlers became restless and began to build block houses at different places, and two or three families went together so as to make preparations to plant a crop for the next year.

One man, Jim Burnes, did not want to remain on the prairie, although he had been sworn into service. The scouts found him plowing in a field near Yelm, with a gun strapped on his shoulder. They brought him back to the stockade, and locked him up in the block or guard house. Before they took him, he dropped his gun in the field and plowed it under. Some of the scouts wanted to put a rope on him and make him walk to the stockade, but he made them furnish him with a horse. The guards had become lazy about the fort. They wanted to bring this man in and make him stand guard. They did not realized that he was doing just as much good where he was.

Nathan Pattison was set to guard him, and while Burnes was talking away to his guard one day, he was at the same time digging for his liberty, and he was out and gone before any one suspected his purpose.

Mr. Stephen Ruddell and Tyrus Hines [Himes] built a block house on Mr. Ruddell's place; Mr. David Chambers and Mr. Wood built one on David Chamber's place; A. J. Chambers, Thomas Chambers, and John M. White built two block houses on A. J.

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Chamber's place; John N. Lowe built one on his place and a family was taken in to help guard his place.

Mr. Connor and family, Mr. William White and family, Mr. O'Neil and family, Mr. A. W. Stewart and family, and Marcus McMillan and family built a block house on Nathan Eaton's place. These were all constructed to enable the settlers to put in crops, so that they would have provisions for the ensuing year.

The latter part of February, 1856, William Northcraft was waylaid and killed about two miles east of Chambers Prairie while hauling supplies to the volunteers. On the 2nd of March, 1856, William White was killed at the east end of Chambers prairie. About this time, Samuel Wilson was shot and wounded and Glasgow's barn was burned. No one can imagine the desolation of the country when it came to the killing of these white men, for everyone thought the Indians had gone east of the mountains.

These depredations seem to have been committed by three Indians who had gotten around the volunteers and to the front of them. It was just about this time, too, that Governor Stevens had asked help from the Oregon Volunteers, who had successfully quelled an uprising of the Indians in Southern Oregon. The Indians had stolen three horses and were leaving the country when the Oregon Volunteers, camped at the blockhouse on Lowe's place, with Nathan Eaton as guide came up and fired on them, and captured their horses. The Indians took to the woods. I don't think they ever reached their friends. This was the last that was ever seen of hostile Indians in this part of the country during the war. The last battle was fought in June, 1857, at or near Grand Ronde Valley, Oregon.

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Customs of Doctoring and Burial and Religious Beliefs of the Indians on Chambers Prairie in 1848

The Indians believed in a supreme ruler, who they called Caghalie Tyee, and in an evil spirit, whom they called Masa Tyee.

In the fall of 1848, Cataammouth, the great tamahnous of Chambers Prairie, had a patient, a young squaw, who had consumption. His mode of treatment was upon the Presumption that she had an evil spirit. She lay near a large fire which was kept burning in the middle of the wigwam. Beside the fire was a basket of water into which hot stones were dropped to keep the water up to a certain temperature. A slab of wood as long as the wigwam would accommodate was so placed that singers could be seated on each side, and with small sticks to pound on the slab, the making the most noise possible in perfect time to the chant which they sang.

When everything was ready, the doctor, who was the leader in the chant, explained the nature of the disease, and then led off with the singing – all pounded the slab in rhythm. After keeping this up for a while, the doctor called a halt , and if their sticks were up in the air, they did not touch the slab, so powerful was his influence over them. He then explained to them how he was progressing with the patient, then they proceeded as before.

After a time, he placed his lips over the place where the disease was located, and then determined to draw it to the surface, or into his mouth. He then went through a great many maneuvers and contortions, and chanted long and loud. After two or three hours of this work, he had a most desperate time, and then announced that he had succeeded in getting the evil spirit out of the woman.

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He had a hard time to hold the spirit, judging by the many shapes into which he got himself. He finally plunged his hands into the basket of hot water, twisting them and making all kinds of contortions, and mashing the something all to pieces. He then opened his hands and blew the evil spirit into the fire.

This proceeding was kept up three or four hours each day and night and sometimes for weeks at a time, until the patient got well or died.

These Indians thought that if you had a hard time here and had to work, you would have an easy time in the next world. An Indian told me that as I had been good to him and had given him work here, he would give me work in the next world.

These Indians had three great tamahnous men, powerful doctors, who had great power over the common Indians. The Indians believed these doctors could come back in the shape of dogs and kill any one, and that it was impossible to excape from them.

If however one of their doctors failed to cure, and lost three or four patients in succession, they called a meeting of their tribe, and selected one of their number to

shoot the tamahnous man, believing that the doctor had mesachie tamahnous (the devil in him).

Once, when there was a case of the killing one of these doctors, the selection fell upon a young Indian who was working for me. The doctor had told the tribe that a bullet would not penetrate his flesh. The young Indian said, however, it went into him just the same as it would into any other man.

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The Nisqually tribe buried their dead above the ground, sometimes in the trees. The greatest doctor of this tribe, Cataammouth, made arrangement as to his burial, with my father. He wanted stakes to be driven into the ground, leaving them two feet high. He wanted a box to be made, his body placed in it, and the coffin put on top of the stakes. When he died, my father had him buried according to agreement. The Indians brought his best horse and shot him beside the grave. They brought buckets and pans, and all his cooking utensils, punched holes in them, and hung them around the grave. The tribe intended to kill a squaw, one of his slaves, to attend him and wait upon him in the next world, but she ran away and remained in hiding for several days. Finally she came to my father and he prevailed on the tribe not to kill her. That was the last on the Prairie of killing slaves to go with the dead.

When we were moving from Oregon to Chambers Prairie in the fall of 1847, we often came across canoes, canims, the Indians called them -- with dead bodies in them. The canoes would not hold water. Sometimes they were stuck in the forks of trees along the river bank. These were always above the high water mark.

On the Columbia River, above the Cascade Falls, Memaloost Island was covered with canoes where the dead Indians were buried. No one was allowed to be buried there who did not own a canoe. It was considered an honor to be buried there among the Tyees.

One man, Vic Trevitt, an Oregonian, requested that his body should be buried there. I have seen his grave. Memaloost means dead.

Andrew Jackson Chambers

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Margaret White Chambers material goes in here

Reminiscences
Margaret White Chambers

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I left my childhood home in company with my three brothers, my sister-in-law, two nephews and a niece, on April 1st, 1851, to cross the continent with ox teams – no pleasant undertaking.

Never can I forget that morn when I bade good-bye to the dear old home, turned my back on all the familiar haunts of childhood, and bade old and dear friends and relatives a last farewell.

My only sister took the road leading to Louisville the same morning, having been married one week to Presly M. Hoskins. I can see the wagon yet that carried her goods, as it slowly turned down a hill that we used to travel so much to school and church together. Oh, how sorrowful a day that was!

We crossed the Wabash river at Terre Haute about twenty-five miles from home in Sullivan County, Indiana. We traveled across Illinois and Missouri, landing in St. Joseph on the Missouri River the 9th day of May.

There we remained for a few days resting our jaded teams. The roads were very bad, in fact almost impassible, it being the spring of the year. At times the poor oxen would almost mire down.

I can't recollect the day of the month we left St. Joseph, but it was near the middle of May. One thing I do remember was my emotions after we were all landed on the Indian Territory side of the river. I felt as if we had all civilization behind us. I don't remember anything of interest occurring for several days – not

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until we came to a stream called the *Little Blue.* It was overflowing its banks. There, we met a party of soldiers, a Major Wood and a family with them, who had been east on a trip and were here water bound. (They were from Fort Laramie).

As we had wagons, that were made to ferry our goods across streams, the Major wanted to hire my brothers to ferry them over. They took them across but refused pay. Major Wood was so pleased that he told them that anything we needed we should have if we called at the fort. My brothers thanked him and told him we were well supplied.

We had laid in a bountiful supply of provisions, for such a journey required a vast amount. None but those who have cooked for a family of eight, crossing the plains, have any idea of what it takes.

My sister-in-law was sick, my niece was much younger than I, and consequently I had the management of all the cooking and planning on my shoulders. I had my eighteenth birthday on the plains. How well I remember the day. We tried to make merry and have a jolly time.

Speaking of the cooking, there isn't much fun cooking with sage brush almost like straw – so dry. Sometimes the pan cakes (or flap jacks, as that was the more familiar name, being made from warm water and soda, and some sour dough, if one had it if not, we did without) I have turned over were black with light ashes blown from the fire on them. You might ask, "Well, why didn't you throw them away/" Because the next one would, very likely be just as bad, and we were very saving of the provisions.

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We had jolly times when we were all well. My brother's wife was sick most of the time, though; At one time we despaired of her life; but thanks to our Maker and Preserver, she was spared.

I used to think, when traveling over those rocky, rough roads, often seeing the skulls of fellowmen bleaching in the hot sun, so far from home and loved ones, that if we were spared to reach a land of civilization, I could see my dearest ones laid to rest without a tear. Oh, the thought of leaving a loved one so far away was perfectly agonizing.

We would often see parts of quilts that had been wrapped around the body of some dear one laid away, but both body and quilts had been dug out by the wild animals and the bones laid bare before the gaze of the pitiless sun.

We saw some graves that had been made secure by heavy stones being placed upon them so that the wild beasts could not roll them off.

We had one funeral on our train, a little boy, and how said it was to drive away and leave the new made grave.

We had many experiences of different kinds – 'twas a place to test human nature—the good and the bad will show for itself. I made some very dear acquaintances in traveling that proved to be good true friends.

We brought our dog. He was so attached to the whole family that we could not think of leaving him.

On the Platte River we had a very hard thunder storm, and as he was always frightened so badly at home that we would run to the house for protection; there being no house to run to, he ran

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away and was gone for three weeks, when some parties came up with us one day, and said the company back of us told them our dog was with them. We had passed this company and they had seen the dog and new him.

My brother and nephew rode back several miles and came up with the dog just as we had the evening meal ready, and what a rejoicing we had.

The poor dog perished in crossing the desert. We hauled water to do for two days, and on the second day, before we reached water, my sister-in-law being very ill, our minds were taken up by greater cares. We did not know if she would live until we could reach camp. I remember seeing the dog coming along behind our wagon, with his tongue hanging out of his mouth. Poor fellow! If he had been taken in and hauled a short distance and given a little water, he would have been all right. If we had had no sickness we would have looked out for the poor beast.

Except the sickness in our family we had an excellent trip, compared with some. We had no trouble with the Indians – only some scares.

One night the guards came in and said the Indians had frightened the stock and they had run away. Of course we were prepared to defend ourselves as best we could. The wagons were put around to form a circle, the tongue of one wagon resting on the back of the next. Then the women and children were put into

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as few wagons as possible and one man sat in front of each wagon with his gun, ready to shoot if any Indian made his appearance. We were greatly rejoiced when morning came and not a sign of an Indian was to be seen anywhere. Some of the boys said the guards had become tired and perhaps scared, so they thought they would get up a little excitement.

Sometimes we would lay by all day and rest our poor worn out teams, when the weather was so warm. Then we would start out just as night fell and travel all night.

I missed the sight of the Court House Rock by passing it in the night. We had seen it at a distance for several days, rearing up like an immense old building. Chimney Rock, too, was quite a curiosity. We could see it for days, and it looked so close at hand, that three or four days before we got near it, some of the company started to go to it, but would come back into camp tired with walking a whole afternoon carrying their guns. The shape of the rock was very much like a chimney, standing alone way out on the plains with no other rock near.

We passed some very beautiful rocks very much like the ones in Yellowstone Park. On some of the smooth ones there were hundreds of names, each on higher

than the last, the writers having climbed up to see who could write their names the highest.

The Devil's Gate is a queer freak of nature and is quite a curiosity. There is just room for a wagon road between the high rocks on either side. I don't remember their height.

We passed what was then called *Steamboat Springs.* The water was thrown up into the air several feet. It was a strange sight

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to see. Then there were the hot springs, some of the loveliest water-falls and so many, many other strange and beautiful things that I have forgotten now.

I have never seen any cactus here to equal those growing wild. Such beautiful flowers!

The most unpleasant part of the journey was through the alkali district. It was white as far as you could see. In some places a thick crust or scum was on top the earth.

There were three deaths and one birth in our train. One death did not really belong to our company, but we took charge as the train the party belonged to had left them, they said they could not be detained.

Three of our women and three of our men stopped in Grand Round Valley with the poor old sick lady and her son and little girl. We left with the slow ox teams one morning, and she passed away that evening. They laid her to rest in what was then a wild Indian country, but is now a fine settlement, a beautiful and fertile country dotted with farm houses, and has two flourishing cities – Island City at one end of the valley and La Grande at the other.

The next evening our folks came up with us at camping time. They could travel much faster than we could with our poor, jaded, worn-out cattle.

Cows, as a general thing, stood the trip much better than oxen. We brought one yoke of young cows that we had milked at the home place, and more faithful creatures I never saw. They worked every day in August, when coming through the Blue

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Mountains, one of the poor creatures gave out and laid down and refused to get up; so we had to leave her and travel on. Our hearts were sad when we took a last look at one so faithful. We learned afterward that a company back of us found her quite refreshed after a rest, and brought her on through with them, which we were very

glad to know. The two cows gave us plenty of milk until we reached alkali country, then the feed was so poor that they had no milk for us.

This part of the road was the most unpleasant part of the journey, for the alkali was so thick that it formed a perfect crust, which, for miles, looked as white as snow. Our hands and lips were so sore from it. Such a dust as would raise as we traveled along. We would be so covered when we stopped at nightfall that we could not tell our nearest neighbors, as all looked alike.

Besides losing our cow in the Blue Mountains, we had another remarkable event – the birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. Ross. (They and their son now reside in the Puyallup Valley.) The next day after the birth we laid by for half a day, then traveled on as though nothing had happened. Mrs. Ross and the baby got along nicely. She was able to take care of the baby in a short time and all went as smoothly as though nothing had occurred.

Think of all the women now who have a doctor, a trained nurse and a girl in the kitchen and then do not do as well.

The next event of importance was the ascension of the Rocky Mountains. It was a tiresome and tedious journey, and our cattle after traveling so far were very much fatigued. For days it was up, all the time and the road was often very winding. The five girls

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that were in our train would sometimes take what we called a "cut-off", and come in on the road a long distance ahead of the wagons. These five girls were Elizabeth White, now Mrs. D. R. Bigelow of Olympia; Jerusha White, now Mrs. A. W. Stewart of Puyallup; Millie Stewart, now Mrs. Dr. Spinning of Puyallup; Margaret White, now Mrs. A. J. Chambers of Olympia; and Mrs. Durgan of Olympia, whose maiden name is unknown.

One day, as we could see the road quite a distance off, we set out on one of our trips, which proved much longer than we had any idea of. We were climbing hills, tramping over rocks, through deep ravines and scattering timber all afternoon.

We caught up with a Mr. Skinner, after some hours of travel, and were glad, I can tell you, not that we were afraid at the time, but after thinking of the risk we ran of possible capture by the Indians, we became nervous and refrained from taking those short cuts unless we could see just how far we had to go.

About as "blue" a time as we had, was when our cattle were poisoned – every one lying down and groaning like sick people. Luckily for us, my brother had taken along a much greater quantity of bacon than our guide had recommended, so we had enough fat meat to let the entire company have some. The men sat up all night and cut the meat into such sized pieces as they could put them down the throats of

the animals; consequently our teams were saved and we were able to resume our journey the next afternoon.

The trials and troubles of such a journey can't be imagined by the uninitiated. I think that if the people of that day had realized

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the dangers and privations attendant upon such a trip, they would never have undertaken it.

I shall never forget the first herd of buffalo I saw. Such a number of them – perhaps a hundred. We often saw small herds traveling towards water.

The first meat was a great treat, as we had been so many months without any fresh meat. The boys in our company killed three one day, and we laid by a day and a half and dried some. We made a scaffold of sticks, and hung the strings of meat on the sticks, and then built a fire under the meat.

After this, when we wished to have a change from eating the dried meat, we would put grease in the pan and fry the meat just a short time. I can tell you we relished it after having lived for months on salted meet.

I shall never forget how good the first new potatoes tasted. We got them in Powder River Valley.

One sees the most beautiful wild flowers in crossing those wild plains – (as was then the familiar name to all the emigrants)—flowers of a very hue and shade and acres of them. One place, Ash Hollow, on Burnt River, I remember particularly. The hillsides were complete masses of flowers. Oh, ho I do regret not pressing and keeping some of the beauties; but that is a little thing to regret doing compared with the many things we look back and see as we journey through life. So much occurs to us that we wish we had done.

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I think that nothing more of interest occurred until we reached The Dalles on the Columbia River. How very glad we were when we came to that point in our trip, for we knew we were nearing the journey's end, and also nearing civilization once more, where we could have the privilege of church and schools.

I had the first evening's encampment in this place stamped on my memory never to be blotted out from it, for I carry the scars today of a burn I got in preparing the first meal. As it was sandy all about here and high winds prevailed, we were under the necessity of digging a pit to build our fire in. As I was putting something over the fire to cook, the sand gave way under my foot and I came down with my hand in the hot sand and ashes, burning it to a crisp. That fixed me so that I could act the lady for some weeks.

The next morning, September 16, we took passage in a little steamer that plied between The Dalles and Cascades. It had just been built and this was its first trip. Here my sister-in-law met an old acquaintance, a Mr. Chenowith. How rejoiced she was! He was an engineer on the boat and was so kind to us. He would have us go to table and eat. The boat did not furnish meals. Everyone brought lunch, and we had prepared plenty, but that would not do; we must eat with them.

A short time after leaving The Dalles we heard there was a sick woman aboard. Pretty soon we found her, a woman in confinement. She was a stranger to us but two of our company's women attended her. She got on nicely, and when we reached the Cascades she was taken off, as the boat made daily trips.

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Her husband was a *brave* fellow! When she was taken sick he *fainted*! The men had to get water and dash it into his face. With all, we had quite an interesting time.

We remained over night at the Cascades. There my brother who accompanied us purchased a flat-boat and we loaded into it and started for the mouth of the Sandy River, quite a distance from the Cascades.

My other two brothers with two nephews and the rest of the men, drove the cattle down the trail on the Columbia, and a hard old time they had, too.

When we reached Sandy we found quite a nice farm house and a good garden of vegetables, which I can tell you looked inviting after nearly six months on dried beans, rice, bacon, dried apples and peaches. Although we had so little change in diet, yet we had cause for great thankfulness, as we had an ample supply and some to spare, which was more than many could say. Some were very scarce of provisions, but none were in want in our train.

Here (at Sandy) we camped on the banks of the Columbia, and my brothers took the contract of building a ferry-boat for the man that lived there. His name was Parker. He had a wife and only one child, a son. These people amused us very much sometimes. We took vegetables on my brothers' work. When we would ask her for cabbage, the old lady would say, "Have one head or two"? Our reply would be "Two, as we will take one apiece!" You would have supposed they were scarce by the way she would speak, but to the contrary, acres of all kinds of vegetables, and any

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number of heads of cabbage going to waste – all bursted open – but that is the style of some people.

Mr. Parker used to come to our tent and spend the evening chatting with us about our trip, and telling many interesting incidents of his experience. He had been several years in the country.

When old lady Parker was ready to retire she would come to the door and call "Davie! Davie, come to bed or I will shut the door and lock you out," and if her husband did not answer, (as he was not likely to, if in a very interesting story) she would give a door a slam which would resound for some distance, and then all was quiet. We never knew if the old gentleman slept out on those nights or not.

Well as I had a sore hand, I was not much use when washing was to be done, and, as you may guess, we had not small amount of soiled and *more* than dirty clothes, after so long a trip, although we had washed every time we had an opportunity. It took my niece several days to complete the wash, as she had no help.

My memory fails me in regard to the length of our stay at this place, while waiting for the men and boys to come with the cattle. I think it was two weeks, perhaps more. Anyway when they did come we were very glad to see them.

The boat being finished, the cattle and goods were ferried over the Columbia, and then our *precious selves* were taken over. I shall never forget the fear I had of the Columbia. "Tis an ugly stream! Many days in traveling from The Dalles to the mouth of the Sandy River, we would be compelled to lay by on account of

rough water. The wind blew most of the time, but, as a general rule, it would calm down about sunset. Then we would travel the greater part of the night. We (the girls and women) would sleep while floating down the great river.

Our train separated when we reached The Dalles. Some went to Oregon City, some to Portland, some here some there.

We found a very nice settlement on the river bottom after crossing over. Here, my brother and his wife stopped to take care of the stock, as there was an abundance of pasturage to be had very reasonably. My other brothers and two nephews, my niece and myself went to a little town between Portland and Oregon City, Milwaukee. There we rented a house and we girls tried house-keeping and going to school for a while. We enjoyed the winter quite well, considering we were among strangers and in a strange land; but God is everywhere, and through all our long journey we were protected and cared for, and watched over by that Loving Eye that never slumbers or sleeps.

Some of the young men found employment in Portland in the sawmills, my cousins and brothers among them. Altogether there were about half a dozen of them, and often on Saturday afternoons they would get a row-boat and come to

Milwaukee and spend the evening and Sunday with us. There was an attraction for one young man, as my niece was his best girl and was finally his wife. Well we did have jolly times. There were several good singers among them and we would spend the evenings singing, and talking over our long trip.

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We soon made some very pleasant acquaintances, as all were new comers and it was a small town. We attended singing school, and some few dancing parties, *only* to look on. I have never seen nor heard a violin before nor seen any dancing. My people were all very strict Presbyterians and we were never allowed to indulge in such amusements.

In December, my brother and his wife came to us, as he wanted to find a suitable place to locate and did not like the place where they had been with the cattle. He found a place east of Milwaukee about five miles. He cleared a small area, built a small house of logs, and in March moved out on it, my niece and self accompanying them. My other brothers and nephews looked around somewhat and finally went to the mines in California.

We had no snow that winter until March, and then the snow and rain came down every day during the month. Some days the sun would shine nice and warm and melt all the snow away. Then the clouds would gather and the rain and snow would come again. I shall never forget how dreary the woods looked as I had never been used to evergreen trees in winter. Now I think it a grand sight to see them in their robes of white after a fall of snow.

We remained on this place with my brother until July and then we girls thought we would like to earn something for ourselves. We went to Portland. I found a nice place at Rev. Horace Lyman's, the first Congregational minister of that place. He came as a missionary. He had a wife and one little girl. It was there I first earned money. My niece had a very good place with a Dr.

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Warren's family. Here we had the privileges of church services and society, of which we were deprived in the country.

In September my brothers came to the Sound to see if they liked the country better, as we were not favorably impressed with Oregon. As they were pleased they returned for us, and we all came to this part of the country, Chamber's Prairie, Thurston County, in October of 1852.

We spent the winter at the eastern extremity of the prairie, on the place where the widow Collins now lives, but which was owned by Mr. Nathan Eaton at that time. My brothers did the first fencing he had done on the prairie. They put in grain on shares and looked around for claims. My two brothers and a

nephew took donation claims adjoining each other. They had not remained in California long.

The latter part of the winter of 1853, my brothers split and sawed all the lumber for our houses, as sawmills were then unknown in this part. We had puncheon floors. For fear you will not know what this is I will tell you. It is a floor laid with split logs, the flat side being uppermost. The logs were of cedar and the floor was *so* nice and white when scrubbed with sand and cold water. We girls used to be very proud of our white floors. I think it was in April, 1853 that we moved into our new home. We girls were the house-keepers for my brothers and nephews. My married brother lived a mile from us, on the place where Mr. Stralehm lives now.

That summer was a very dreary summer to us as we had never been where there were forest fires. I shall never forget our fears

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and anxiety of mind, thinking that the fire might come on us any time, as the grass on the prairie was very thick and dry. For days the sun hung like a ball of fire in the heavens. When the rain came the smoke cleared away and all was pleasant. We soon forgot our disagreeable times.

Our house-keeping for my brothers was of short duration, as my niece made up her mind to be some one else's house-keeper; so early one morning in September, the 22nd, of 1853, she was married to Mr. A. W. Stewart, a young man who crossed the "Plains" with us. After her departure I made my home with my brother and his wife until January, 1854.

On the 18th of that month I was married to Andrew J. Chambers and came to reside in this house. We have spent our lives since then here and by the laws of nature we haven't many more years to live; but I hope we shall live them here, where we have seen our greatest joys and sorrows. I must say that I never known what true happiness was until I was married, as I had never known the love of father or mother. I found great happiness in a loving affectionate husband. I only hope that all my daughters might be as happily united in marriage as their mother. We have raised a large family of girls, (that we are more than proud of) ten in number, seven living, of whom five are married and two are home to cheer our declining days, although the youngest is still in school.

The Indian War of 1855 and 1856 was a trying time on the new settlements. About as badly frightened as I have ever been in my life was during the fall of the Indian War, before the outbreak

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of the Indians. They had acted very strangely, and we had frequently heard rumors that the Indians east of the mountains were coming to take the country, and not a hint that those on this side had any hostile intentions.

A brother of my husband's lived a mile from us on the place his father had settled on in 1848. This brother and a young man who lived with him were sitting outside their cabin late in the twilight one evening, in the hearing of the Indian camp. As they understood the Indian language and heard their names mentioned, they listened and heard the old Indian say, as he passed his fingers over the edge of a large knife he had bought from John Chambers: "Little did John think he was selling me the knife to kill him with." Then they talked and planned how they could execute their bloody work, and about this time the boys made tracks for our house, so scared they left their guns.

How well I remember that night! My nerves were very much shaken by the visit the Indian boy made us in the early evening.

When he heard the gate open and shut, Mr. Chambers sprang out of bed and grasped his gun. I tell you those boys made tracks when they heard him, for they knew he had his revolvers

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and gun ready. As soon as they could speak they called to him, and I tell you we were relieved when we heard who it was. Oh, how I shook, Just like one with ague.

Then the other men sat up on guard and ran bullets all night, as that was the only kind of ammunition we had in those days. We never closed our eyes all night and were very glad to see the day-light.

Early the next morning the boys returned to their homes to see how things looked. The old Indian was as fine as could be and wanted to be very gracious. He had told John Chambers some time before that he had come to camp by him and was going to live and die by him. The old *hypocrite*! (The Indians are the most treacherous mortals on earth.) When he saw the boys he asked them where they slept. They replied, "In bed." "Not here," he said. Then they asked him how he knew. They said they were in the house to see if they hadn't some medicine for a sick child, which was another story.

Very soon we heard of men being waylaid and shot and the country was all excitement. Shortly the people began to gather into the forts to protect themselves. The fort for this part of the country was on our place and is still in use as a barn. There were blockhouses on each corner. At one time there were thirty-two families in this fort. There were any number of children and dogs, and consequently, any amount of music, especially evenings. It was rather

amusing to hear the babble of so many voices. It was almost equal to the confusion at the Tower of Babel.

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We had many startling events, of which, I remember one well. My husband was Lieutenant of the company of volunteers in the fort, so he was ordered by the Captain of the company to take a number of men and make a scout through the country and see if any Indians were prowling around.

They mounted their horses about five o'clock one afternoon and rode hastily away toward Yelm Prairie. Shortly afterwards the command was given for every man to get his gun and stand in readiness as the Indians might attack the fort at any moment, as they had undoubtedly attacked the men who had gone on expedition, for they had heard the report of several guns in the direction they had taken.

Such a commotion! My feelings could better be imagined than described; but time told us our fears were groundless.

That was a long night; not a wink of sleep for me. Morning came but no signs of the Indians. The men were out two days and never saw or heard of an Indian. How rejoiced I was when I saw my good husband again!

There was one man in the company who used to give us a scare by firing his gun when he was on guard. The orders were not a gun to be shot unless at Indians. Knowing this, imagine yourself, sitting by the fire with everything quiet, and then hear one shot after another. It was *enough* to frighten any one. The old man always said he saw Indians.

There is a great deal more that I could write but time will not permit me. The war broke out in October, 1855, and closed in June of 1856. The last battle was fought east of the mountains.

Margaret White
Chambers