
REPORTS

OF

EXPLORATIONS AND SURVEYS,

TO

ASCERTAIN THE MOST PRACTICABLE AND ECONOMICAL ROUTE FOR A RAILROAD

FROM THE

MISSISSIPPI RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

MADE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR, IN

1853-5,

ACCORDING TO ACTS OF CONGRESS OF MARCH 3, 1853, MAY 31, 1854, AND AUGUST 5, 1854.

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BOOK I.

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the Jocko River valley. Arrived there, they became aware of their whereabouts, and, leaving camp early this morning, pursued the trail taken by Lieutenant Donelson's party, which they met in the defile near the summit of the dividing ridge. On his route Mr. Tinkham passed the Flathead fort, which is situated on one of the tributaries of Clark's Fork, a little distance to the north of Jocko river. It is at present unoccupied.

I now determined to send Mr. Tinkham across the mountains again, to explore the Marias Pass, on which my mind has been so long fixed as a practicable and direct pass, and to return to the Bitter Root valley by some route south of those already explored; thence by the southern Nez Percés trail, to examine another route over the Bitter Root to Walla-Walla. The animals wintering at Fort Owen and at Fort Benton would suffice to afford him an exchange; and as I was satisfied that in the course of this trip his conferences with Mr. Doty and Lieutenant Mullan would all lead to a better mutual knowledge of the country, I made the necessary arrangements at once, and sent an express to Lieutenant Donelson informing him of the fact, and directing him to make the necessary pauses on his route that Mr. Tinkham might overtake him, and to furnish him with provisions and some fresh animals; and I availed myself of the opportunity to advise Mr. Doty, by letter, of the arrangements, and to suggest to him that it might be well for him to return with Mr. Tinkham to the Bitter Root valley, in order to enlarge his own knowledge of the country, and conceive properly the deportment of the mountain region, so that, returning immediately, he would have an enlarged and just view of his field of duty. This, however, I left optional with Mr. Doty, whose plans and labors, acting under my general instructions, I could not altogether foresee.

It is extraordinary how easy of passage the mountains are in this latitude. A favorite time of the return of the Flathead Indians from the buffalo hunt is between Christmas and New-year; it is only in winters of unusual severity that they are unable to cross during any month. The Indians west of the Cœur d'Aléne mountains return from the hunt usually in March, leaving the buffalo grounds early in the month, and reaching their homes at its close. I dwelt upon this in conversation with Mr. Tinkham, and wished him to let it be thoroughly understood by Mr. Doty, that the latter might not fear being caught in the mountains or obliged to winter at St. Mary's.

We have to-day seen at our camp a good deal of Victor, the Flathead chief, celebrated in the book of De Smet. He appears to be simple-minded, but rather wanting in energy, which might, however, be developed in an emergency. I secured a Flathead guide to go with Mr. Tinkham through the Marias Pass, returning with him by the Flathead Pass. He was at first reluctant to go, but afterwards consented. In the course of the evening the Flathead Indian came to me to decline going, and one or two of the men wished to back out. On tracing the cause to its source, I found they had been alarmed by some remarks of Monroe, who told them he was afraid they would fall in with parties of Blackfeet young men.

I will here remark that the Indian agent, Lansdale, in 1856, went over the route from the Jocko to the Big Blackfoot, sought for by Mr. Tinkham in 1853. It is much used by the Upper Pend d'Oreille Indians in going to hunt buffalo east of the mountains. The following description will show the character of this route:

Leaving the Mission of St. Ignatius the trail leads up the main fork of the Jocko, which runs through an open grassy bottom interspersed with pine trees. After following this stream for six miles the trail passes up the east fork, which has an open valley for about a mile, when the country becomes thick with trees, and many fallen logs obstruct the passage; the hills rise

high on either hand. In about ten miles the valley becomes narrow and the path rough and difficult, going in many places along steep rocky hill-sides. In about five miles further are a chain of lakes which extend to the headwaters of Little Water river, a tributary of the Big Blackfoot. The trail keeps along the margin of these lakes, sometimes in water, and in high water cannot be used. Upon reaching the divide the country is more level, the mountains recede towards the east, and small streams come in from both sides, but principally from the east, and soon form quite a stream. The country is wooded with pine, and much fallen timber occurs. Some low, swampy places occur on the first lake of Little Water river, and at ten miles from the divide the trail crosses a large stream, not passable at high water, which is supposed to be the principal fork of Little Water river. After crossing this stream the trail crosses a low divide, then passes along two or three little lakes with no outlet, then through open pine woods and prairies to some creeks running in a westerly course to the Blackfoot fork, before reaching which the country opens into a large prairie; crossing a large stream coming in from the east, the trail passes on direct to the Blackfoot fork.

This route has plenty of wood, water, and grass, but is only fit to be passed over in dry weather, and could only be made practicable for wagons by a great outlay of labor; in wet weather or spring time it would be impassable.

EXPLORATIONS AND INCIDENTS IN CONNEXION WITH THE BLACKFOOT COUNCIL.

My party were camped on the Teton, where Mr. Schon was busily occupied in working at the sketches of the route, and where he took regular barometrical observations through the day; and on the 11th of August, having received three days previously a letter from Colonel Cumming, who was at the Porcupine river, informing me that he should move along as rapidly as possible, I concluded to go on to Milk river to meet him, more especially as I was anxious to avail myself of the opportunity of reviewing this portion of my route again. So, accompanied by Mr. Doty, Mr. Schon, and a small party, we reached Milk river on the 13th of August, camped the first night at the springs, and the second night at the Box Elder creek, eighteen miles from Hammell's Houses on Milk river. It is probable that this portion of the country has been sufficiently described, and the results of this little trip will appear simply in the details which I shall furnish of the railroad line along this portion of the route. It would encumber this narrative to go outside of the subject which I propose to present, but I will observe that the use of our numerous expresses, indispensable to keeping in hand and bringing together the Indians, enabled us considerably to extend our knowledge of the country. Without referring particularly to dates, we obtained valuable information from Mr. Doty, from Sub-Agent Tappan, Special Agent Adams, Mr. Burr, and especially Dr. R. H. Lansdale, Indian agent, as well as from A. H. Robie, who had charge of our hunting parties, making at one time a trip to the Judith for buffalo meat, at another time nearly to the Three Buttes, and making several trips down the Missouri either to the boats to get provisions at the mouth of the Muscle Shell, or to the Citadel rock to kill bighorn.

MR. DOTY'S TRIP TO THE SASKATCHAWAN, AND RECOVERY OF THE FOUR FLATHEAD HORSES.

A most remarkable incident occurred at Fort Benton, which I will give, because it illustrates somewhat how voyaging may be done in this country. In the arrangements which I made in the Bitter Root valley with the Indians to attend the contemplated council on the Missouri, I was met by the objection that there being no escort to protect them, their old enemies, the Blackfeet, would steal all their horses. I reminded them of the message which I had brought them from the Blackfeet in 1853, and assured them of my belief that they would be received in good faith, and treated with kindness and hospitality by the Blackfeet, using this expression, "I will guarantee that when you pull in your lariat in the morning you will find a horse at the end of it." On the 29th of August, about sundown, four Pend d'Oreille boys came to my camp, which a few days before had been removed from the Teton to the Missouri, a quarter of a mile above Fort Benton, with a message from their chief, Alexander. Very much against their own judgment they placed their horses, by my direction, with those of my own band; but before midnight two Blackfeet boys, of the northern tribe, picked them out from a hundred horses and ran off with them, we could not discover where; for although I put the Little Dog to search for their trail, thirty hours' work and a hundred and odd miles hard riding did not enable him to find a single foot mark of the missing animals. To get these animals back, therefore, was necessary to inspire our western Indians with confidence, and was, indeed, indispensable to making the treaty. Accordingly, without waiting the return of the Little Dog, we sent Mr. Doty, with a single white man, north to the camp of the Blackfeet, on the Saskatchewan, to recover these animals. We thought the Blackfeet would expect us to search for them among their bands down and south of the Missouri, and that they felt perfectly secure from being followed up so far north. Mr. Doty

continued on the trail, making fifty miles a day, sleeping several times on the prairie, until he struck the Bow tributary of the Saskatchewan, two hundred and thirty odd miles from Fort Benton, entering the large Blackfeet camp two hours only after the four stolen horses. He immediately called the chiefs, demanded the horses, received three of them, and placed them in the hands of the Little Dog, who, after returning from his fruitless search for the trail, had started off, without resting, to join his old friend Doty. One of the scamps, however, got off with the fourth horse, and Mr. Doty started off immediately in pursuit, moved over seventy miles in a day to the Elk tributary of the Saskatchewan, and there received from the chiefs the fourth horse; and on the sixteenth day after these horses were stolen from my camp they were returned to the four *Pend d'Oreille* boys at Fort Benton. This was the last, as it was the first, stealing of horses by the Indians. A full account of this trip of Mr. Doty is given in the proceedings of the Blackfoot council, of which the following summary is given:

Starting from Fort Benton on the evening of August 30, he crossed the Marias river on September 1, about thirty miles from its mouth. The river was seventy yards wide, and two and a half feet deep at the ford, with a three mile current. The valley was from one-half a mile to two miles wide, well timbered with cottonwood, and having a soil of reddish or ash colored loam, which in many places appeared well adapted for agricultural purposes.

He then crossed the plain northwestwardly to the base of the most westerly of the Three Buttes, where there was a fine grove and several springs of excellent water. Thence, continuing northwardly, he reached a *coulée* tributary to Milk River valley, which had perpendicular walls of red sandstone a hundred and fifty feet high, wooded along the stream with the narrow leaved cottonwood, a tree common from the eastern base of the mountains to the Pacific coast.

Crossing Milk river, he passed to a high, level plain, of different character from that on the south side. The soil is a sandy loam; the grass, though short, forms a heavy turf, and the prickly pear had disappeared. Twenty miles due north he reached Lake Pah-ka-kee, or Unlucky Water, which has a strong odor of sulphuretted hydrogen, perceptible at a distance of a mile. The Indians and horses drank of it without any bad effects, although it had been supposed to be the cause of death to a number of horses lost here by the Indians some years before. The report of its being salt, before generally credited, was thus disproved. Its shores are gravelly, and its water clear. It lies at some distance north of latitude 49°. Forty-seven miles further north he struck the *Mo-ka-un*, or Belly river, fifteen miles above its junction with Bow river. The stream is here 150 yards wide, and is deep, with a current of four miles per hour; the water clear and cold, and the shores gravelly and sloping. It is subject to a freshet of forty feet, as shown by the pine driftwood scattered in its valley. No timber grows on its banks near the point then reached. Going up this river about twenty miles, he left it and followed a branch destitute of wood towards the northwest, and proceeded across the plain beyond for thirty miles, to a marshy lake, and twenty miles further reached Bow river. He then followed this up for thirty miles, and crossed it at a ford 300 yards wide and so deep as to run over his saddle. This being the last encampment of the Indians who hunt and trade on American soil, he started on his return September 8. There was a heavy storm of rain and hail that night and the next two days. He arrived at Fort Benton on the 15th, having travelled 583 miles, and connected the reconnoissance of Mr. Stanley and Mr. Tinkham with his own exploration along the eastern base of the mountains, and examined the country far northward of the boundary line.

Northward both wood and water became more scarce, for although the rivers are large and deep they have fewer and more distant branches, and are usually destitute of timber.

Mr. Adams and Mr. Tappan remained with the Indians nearly all the time until the council was assembled in October, the former with the Flatheads, and the latter with the Nez Percés, in the country between the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Proceeding down the Judith river to its mouth, following out a considerable portion of the Muscle Shell, and over a hundred miles of the Yellowstone, Mr. Tappan went south of the Yellowstone, some distance up the upper tributaries. The country south and east of the Judith, in the direction of the Yellowstone, they found somewhat deficient in grass and water. In September Dr. Lansdale, the Indian agent, made a careful examination of the Bitter Root valley and of the country on the Flathead river, from the Coriakan defile northward and eastward, through a country watered by the Jocko river, Prune creek, and other streams; and he describes that whole country of which you have a view, passing from the valley of the Hell-Gate to that of the Jocko river, as one of the most rich and inviting countries he ever saw; the view most extensive, the country arable, the streams well timbered, and good facilities for establishing mills and supplying them with timber.

CHANGE OF COUNCIL GROUND—EXPRESS TRIPS OF PEARSON AND HAZARD STEVENS—MOUNTAIN MEN.

The council was not, however, held at Fort Benton, but at the mouth of the Judith, which enabled us to extend our barometrical observations down the river and to examine something of the adjacent country. The country in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Judith, and the greater portion of it between that point and Fort Benton, presents good inducements to the settler. Formations, however, of the mauvaises terres occur at some points, and twenty miles below Fort Benton is the famed Citadel rock, an extraordinary resort for bighorn and smaller game. I will here remark that we had in our employ an Indian hunter, Metsik, who never failed, starting out early in the morning, to get back by night, always heavily laden with the meat of the antelope and the deer. As we had very little bread, sugar, and coffee, for a change of fare the bighorn of Citadel rock was exceedingly delightful as an article of food, and is generally preferred by the mountain men to any other game of the country except buffalo; so between buffalo, bighorn, and the smaller game, we fared very well. The parties who extended our information of the country in conveying messages to the Indians, &c., invariably lived either on the dried meat which they took with them or on the game which they killed from day to day; they had no flour, no sugar, no coffee, and yet there was not a word of complaint from one of them; but we made it the subject of a good deal of merriment when we were able to reach the boats and have a sufficiency of those articles which in civilized life are deemed indispensable to comfort. As the moving of expressmen, also, will give some idea of the practicability of a country, I will remark that on the 27th of August my expressman, Pearson, reached camp from Olympia, having made the distance from the Bitter Root valley to Olympia and back to Fort Benton, some 1,750 miles by the road he travelled, in twenty-eight days, during some of which he did not travel. He was less than three days going from Fort Owen to Fort Benton, a distance by the route he pursued of some 260 miles, which he travelled without a change of animals, having no food but the berries of the country, except a little fish which he killed on Travellers' Rest creek of Lewis and Clark, on the morning of starting from Fort Owen, which served him for a single meal. I might refer to other incidents which occurred at this council, showing how easy it is to travel in this country, but one more will probably suffice. My son, Hazard, thirteen years of age, had accompanied me from

Olympia to the waters of the Missouri. Like all youths of that age, he was always ready for the saddle and delighted in the hunt, and had spent some days with one of my hunting parties on the Judith, where he had become well acquainted with the Gros Ventres. When we determined to change the council from Fort Benton to the mouth of the Judith, I undertook, in the name of the commission, the duty of seeing the necessary messages sent to the various bands and tribes, and to bring them all to the mouth of the Judith at the proper moment. These Indians were scattered from Milk river, near Hammell's Houses, along the Marias, along the Teton, to a considerable distance south of the Missouri, the Flatheads being on the Judith, and the Upper Pend d'Oreilles on Smith's Fork of the Missouri, with two bands of the Blackfeet lying somewhat intermediate, but in the vicinity of the Girdle mountains. I succeeded in securing the services of a fit and reliable man for each one of these bands and tribes, except the Gros Ventres, camped on Milk river. There were several men who had considerable experience among Indians and in voyaging who desired to go, but I had not confidence in them, and accordingly, at 10 o'clock on Sunday morning, I started my little son as a messenger to the Gros Ventres. Accompanied by the interpreter, Legare, he made that Gros Ventres camp before dark, a distance of 75 miles, and gave his message the same evening to the chiefs, and without changing horses they were in the saddle early in the morning and reached my camp at half-past three o'clock.

Thus a youth of thirteen travelled 150 measured miles from ten o'clock of one day to half-past three o'clock in the afternoon of the next; and he came in so fresh that he could have travelled without fatigue at least thirty miles further that evening. The Gros Ventres made their marches exactly as I had desired, and reached the new council ground at the mouth of the Judith the very morning which had been appointed, being the first of all the bands and tribes. Our examination of the Yellowstone tended to verify the accuracy of Lewis and Clark's survey of it, and showed that in our previous maps we had laid the course of the stream too far to the south. I will refer in this connexion to three of the remarkable mountain men of that country, who were with me through this season's trip, and who had hunted and trapped on the forks of the Missouri and on the waters of the Yellowstone and its tributaries—the interpreter, William Craig, a Delaware Indian, also one of the Nez Percés interpreters, by the name of Jim, and a half-breed Shawnee, known as Ben Kizer, one of our Flathead interpreters. Ben Kizer and Delaware Jim both speak English, the first quite well; and they were exceedingly reliable men as interpreters, and remarkable as hunters and as guides. To show how Delaware Jim could lead a party, towards the close of our stay at Fort Benton, and before we moved to the Judith, I despatched our packmaster, Higgins, with the guide Legare, to some bands of the Nez Percés on the Yellowstone, who I was fearful might be compelled to go very far, perhaps even to the forks of the Missouri, in order to get meat. They had already suffered much from the want of food; we knew their general line of movement, and time was very essential to be saved in reaching their camp. Although the Delaware had not passed over this portion of country before—that is, the country from the Missouri to near the Yellowstone—yet so thoroughly was he possessed of the general knowledge of the Yellowstone country, and of the extreme upper portions of the Missouri and certain general ridges and mountain heights which would flank the route, that he undertook and actually did take the party on an air line to Clark's tributary of the Yellowstone, and, as I was informed by the whole party, struck their camps, hardly making a detour of a mile on the road. They also moved very rapidly, some fifty miles

a day. I will here remark, that I doubt whether such an express service as we were obliged to employ at Fort Benton to keep the Indians in hand was ever employed in this country with the same means. Many of our animals, which had done service all the way from the Dalles, travelled at express rates more than a thousand miles before we started on our return from Fort Benton. Many of our mules travelled from seven to eight hundred miles with packs, in going to the boats for provisions and to the hunting grounds for meat: and yet, after our treaty was concluded and we were ready to move home, we were able to make very good rates with these same animals, although the season was so late as November.

I had forgotten to mention in the proper place that, whilst at Fort Benton, I examined the Missouri towards the mouth of the Marias, and especially a very narrow place, called the Cracon-du-Nez, separating the Teton from the Missouri. This place is only about one hundred yards wide, and will require simply that length of cutting to bring a railroad line from one river to the other. The Teton valley was only about forty feet higher than the corresponding valley of the Missouri, and there will be no difficulty in adjusting an easy grade.

RETURN FROM THE BLACKFOOT COUNCIL.

We got through with the Blackfoot treaty, everything having succeeded to our entire satisfaction, and, indeed, beyond our most sanguine expectations. The greatest delight and good will seemed to pervade the minds of all the Indians, and we left them at the mouth of the Judith on our way to Fort Benton, and proceeded thence to the waters of the Pacific, rejoiced that our labors had had such a consummation. I do not propose to give a detailed narrative of my return trip, but simply to refer to such points as may be necessary in my purpose of presenting the character of the country. I had intended making many observations and examinations on my way back, in the way of detail, with a view of perfecting the information already gained, but the second day of my march from Teton my expressman, Pearson, reached my camp with information of the Indian war which had broken out in Washington and Oregon, and of the defeat of Major Haller. He brought me letters from official sources, stating that my only chance of safety was to go down the Missouri and return to the western coast by the way of New York. I remained in camp the following day, October 30, to make my arrangements to meet this unexpected condition of things; for my determination was fixed and unalterable that an attempt should be made to reach the settlements by the direct route, and that all dangers on the road should be sternly confronted. I sent back Mr. Doty to Fort Benton to get a large quantity of powder and ball, additional arms, and additional animals; put my force into camp awaiting his return, and at noon the next day, October 31, with Robie and Delaware Jim, we started to ride express to the Bitter Root valley. That night we camped on Sun river, having made a distance of some twenty-nine miles from about noon to sundown.

On the 1st of November we were in saddle at early dawn, pushed towards Cadotte's Pass, between the Crown Butte and Rattlers, passed by the Bird Tail rock, crossed the Dearborn, and went into camp four miles before reaching the divide, at a point which was the camp of Lieut. Grover and Mr. Robie in their winter trip of 1854. This evening a snow came on about an hour before sundown, or we should have crossed the divide that night. The weather in the morning was clear and beautiful, but, as we had no tent, we built up a large fire in order to dry ourselves, and got breakfast before leaving camp; and at half past eight o'clock we were on the road. There were some six or seven inches of snow on the ground, but the weather was extremely mild, and the snow was rapidly passing away. I went up the divide on the ravine

north of the usual trail, and was able to find a very good route for our animals. There was little or no snow on the western slope of the divide; continuing down the Blackfoot valley $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the snow was only an inch or two deep, and entirely passed away before we reached Lander's Fork. I will here observe, that Mr. Doty with the train crossed the divide some six days after us, and found not a particle of snow on the trail. We halted at Lander's Fork for a few minutes to rest our animals; then moving very rapidly through the Belly prairie and cañon, we came out on the large prairie of the Blackfoot at a little after dark, camping where I had camped with Lieutenant Donelson in 1853. The next day we were in the saddle early, and, moving over this prairie at a very rapid rate, ate breakfast at a point some eighteen miles from our morning's camp, and made our evening's camp within about ten miles of the Hell-Gate crossing to Fort Owen. The next day we reached Fort Owen, meeting at the Hell-Gate crossing some Indians, by whom I was able to communicate with Dr. Lansdale, who had preceded me to the Bitter Root valley, under instructions to confer with the Indians, to the end that if they desired to make a treaty at this time, I would meet them for that purpose. This rapid trip from the Teton to Fort Owen in the month of November shows the practicable character of the country; and I have referred to it rather in illustration of the fact that I had the opportunity of making a comparison of the approaches of Cadotte's Pass with those of Lewis and Clark; having observed and seen both carefully, the former twice. On our way to Fort Owen we had met a Nez Percés delegation on their way home, and had made arrangements to meet them at the crossing of Hell-Gate, in order to confer about difficulties ahead. After waiting a day at Fort Owen, I moved down to and established my camp at Hell-Gate, to await the arrival of Mr. Doty. I was here able to gain no additional information of the condition of the Indian tribes between the Cascade mountains and the Bitter Root, but the reports were that all were in arms except the Nez Percés, a large portion of whom were said to be disaffected, and some of them even hostile. I now purchased every good mule and horse that I could get in this valley; for it was my determination to endeavor to have my whole command in a position so that they could move rapidly and act promptly. The question was, what should be our route home. It was important, it seemed to me, to our success that we should be able to cross the mountains and throw ourselves into the nearest tribes, without their having the slightest notice of our coming. I felt a strong assurance that if I could bring this about, I could handle enough tribes and conciliate the friendship of enough Indians to be sufficiently strong to defy the rest. There would certainly be no difficulty from the snow down Clark's Fork; but it was known that the upper and lower Pend d'Oreille Indians were along the road, and no party could travel over it without its approach being communicated to the Indians; whereas Indian report had it that the Cœur d'Aléne pass was blocked up with snow at this season of the year, and I felt satisfied that they would not expect us on this route, and therefore I determined to move over it. It was the shorter route of the two; it was a route where I desired to make additional examinations; it was a route which enabled me to creep up, as it were, to the first Indian tribe, and then, moving rapidly, to jump upon them without their having time for preparation. I knew that Kamiakin and Pu-pu-mux-mux had sent a body of warriors to cut off my party; and that we had to guard against falling into an ambush, but an Indian has not patience to wait many days for such a purpose, and I thought, looking to all these things, that the line of safety was to move over the Cœur d'Aléne pass. Mr. Doty arrived at Hell-Gate on the 11th day of November, and after waiting until the fifteenth to make the necessary arrangements with Dr. Landsale, whom I left in charge of the Flathead Indians, with my friend, John Owen, and the Jesuit missionaries, I pushed down the Bitter Root valley. I need not go into the

details of the trip, except to say that my party, almost without a single exception, apparently looked upon the undertaking as a very desperate one, but still they were cheerful, obeyed every order with great alacrity, and enjoyed themselves very much in the evening's camp. We crossed the Bitter Root mountain on the twentieth day of November, the snow being three feet deep, and reached the creek at its western base a little before dark—too late to go to good grass, known to be some six miles beyond. This was the only night that we were without grass. The next morning I directed Mr. Doty very carefully to examine the upper waters of this Cœur d'Aléne creek, while I with the party moved on to grass and waited for him another day. In two hours we were in good grass, with fine water—a fine range for animals. They were now a good deal exhausted, for we had moved rapidly with the train from the Teton, and I determined to wait there another day to recruit. From the appearances of all that surrounded us, I was satisfied that there were no Indian runners on the lookout for us. On the twenty-third day of November we raised camp, made a good day's journey, and camped near our old camp in June. We were now about twenty-five miles from the Cœur d'Aléne Mission. It was impracticable for me to take the whole train in in one day without breaking down our animals; so, with Pearson and Craig, and four Nez Percés, I started at daylight, determining to reach that tribe that day, and leaving directions for the train to come in the following day. So we pushed on very gently and quietly at first, and when we came within sight of the Mission and the Indian village we moved rapidly, throwing ourselves into the midst of the Indians, and with our rifles in one hand, and our arms outstretched on the other side, we tendered to them both the sword and the olive branch. They met us all very cordially; every Indian left his lodge and gathered around us. I had told the four Nez Percés, "when you reach the Cœur d'Alénes, talk to them Blackfoot; tell them about our great council and treaty at Fort Benton; tell them that they can hunt buffalo without being disturbed by their hereditary enemies, the Blackfeet; tell them that the lion and the lamb have laid down together; get their minds off their troubles here, and turn them to other subjects in which they take an interest." It is enough for me to say that we established the most cordial relations with the Cœur d'Alénes. We found that the emissaries of the Yakimas had only left that point some four or five days, having despaired of our crossing the mountains. The train came in the next day, and I now determined to push on to the Spokane, having first despatched from the Cœur d'Aléne Mission Craig and a part of the Nez Percés home to that country to bring them into council and to make arrangements for moving below to the Dalles. Moving from the Cœur d'Aléne Mission on the twenty-seventh day of November, I made our first camp at the Wolf's Lodge, some nineteen miles from it, and the next day made a forced march, moving forty miles to the Spokane country. We met Polatkin, one of the principal chiefs of the Spokanes, on our way, and were at Antoine Plante's before dark. Here I found some of the miners from Colville. Before midnight Indian expresses were on the road to the lower Spokanes, to the Colville Indians, and thence to the Okinakane and to the lower Pend d'Oreilles, asking them to come and meet me in council at that point. I also requested Mr. Angus McDonald and the Jesuit fathers at Colville to visit my camp. We remained on the Spokane nine days, and I had there one of the most stormy councils for three days that ever occurred in my whole Indian experience; yet, having gone there with the most anxious desire to prevent their entering into the war, but with a firm determination to tell them plainly and candidly the truth, I succeeded both in convincing them of the facts and gaining their entire confidence. At this council were all the chiefs and people of the Cœur d'Alénes and of the Spokanes—the very tribes who defeated Steptoe the past season, the very tribes who have met our troops since in two pitched

battles; and I feel that I can without impropriety refer to the success of my labors among these Indians, backed up simply with a little party of 24 men. When our council was adjourned, the Indians gave the best test of their friendship and affection, by each one coming to lay before me his little wrongs and ask redress. They came in a body and offered me a force to help me through the hostilities of Walla-Walla valley and on the banks of the Columbia, which I declined, saying that I came not among the Spokanes for their aid, but to protect them as their father.

I now determined to move to the Nez Percés country, although on the Spokane the uniform feeling of the Indians was, that they were hostile and would try to get us into difficulty—a conclusion which seemed to be much supported by the fact that the Nez Percés chief, the Looking Glass, who had accompanied me to the Spokane, endeavored to betray me there. This little incident will serve to explain to what expedients one has to resort in these cases of difficulty. I had made a forced march to the Spokane. The Looking Glass came in the next day. I saw from his countenance that something was wrong with him, and I immediately got a half-breed interpreter, in whom I could trust, on the track to overhear his conversations. That interpreter kept about him, and finally overheard a long conversation between the Looking Glass and a prominent Spokane chief, in which the Looking Glass proceeded to develop his plan to entrap and deceive me in his own country, amid the Nez Percés, and in which he advised a similar course to the Spokanes. I never communicated to the Looking Glass my knowledge of his plans, but, knowing them, I knew how to meet them in council; I also knew how to meet him in his own country, and it gave me no difficulty. In order, however, to be prepared for all possible contingencies, I exchanged all but four of my horses for the best horses of the country, giving in exchange the Indian goods that we had brought up for the contemplated Spokane council, and when I moved from the Spokane I had with me the best train of the season. I reduced transportation to twelve days, and the packs to eighty pounds, for I desired to be in a condition that if the Nez Percés were really hostile, and I was not strong enough to fight, I could make a good run, and then I struck for the Nez Percés country. The second day I met an express from Craig's, telling me that the Nez Percés were all right, and that the whole tribe would back me up. We moved towards Lapwai, and were four days in reaching that point, the distance being 108 miles. The weather was very disagreeable, being snowy and rainy. In about fifty miles from the Spokane we got upon our old trail to the Red Wolf's ground, which trail we followed for about twenty miles, and then keeping to our left, passed to the mouth of the Lapwai, and thence to William Craig's place, on that stream. The banks of the Spokane, and pretty much the whole route from the Kamas prairie of the Cœur d'Alénes, is very well wooded; and the route towards Lapwai, for the whole distance, passes in the vicinity of a very well wooded country, except for about fifteen miles before reaching the Kooskooskia. My object not being to give an account of my Indian operations or of the Indian war, I will close my narrative at this point, referring you to my official reports should further information be desired in connexion with this trip. I will state that on my way into the settlements I remained in the Walla-Walla valley some ten days, where I saw much of the Oregon volunteers. Went to the Dalles, in advance of my party, with three men, and, the river being closed by ice, went down from the Dalles to near Vancouver on the trail, and reached Olympia on the 19th of January. I intend at some future day to give a very full account of these large operations in the Indian service.