

NACHES PASS CAREY Account.

Roland Carey, "A trip through the pass," The Sound and the Mountain. Seattle: Alderbrook Publishing Company, 1970, p. 9-16.

By the time the first settler arrived on Commencement Bay, small communities were already located at Tumwater, Olympia, Steilacoom, Seattle, Port Townsend, and Whidbey Island.

Nicholas DeLin came from Portland, Oregon, in 1852. At Tumwater he formed a partnership with Michael T. Simmons and Smith Hays, for the purpose of building a sawmill on Commencement Bay. On May 20, 1853, DeLin filed on 318 acres at the head of the bay. James Taylor, Stephen Hodgden, Cortland Ethridge, and Samuel McCaw assisted him in construction of the mill on the south shore. The first cargo of lumber was shipped from the mill aboard the brig GEORGE EMORY, in 1853.

It was during the same summer that Theodore Winthrop, a traveler from the East, obtained his much publicized view of Commencement Bay. On August 21, 1853, Winthrop left Port Townsend in a leaky canoe, manned by six Indians. He had arranged for passage to Fort Nisqually, and his crew consisted of a Clallam chief, Chetzamokha, otherwise known as the Duke of York; the Duchess, known as Jenny Lind; and four of the Duke's subjects.

The trip was nearly aborted at the very beginning, when Winthrop confiscated a bottle of firewater, then intercepted a brimming cup that was being passed forward. When he emptied the cup over the side, the Indians were so enraged they started to turn back, then refused to paddle. As their mood became uglier Winthrop was forced to sit for some minutes with his double-barreled shotgun pointed forward and his Colt six-shooter pointed aft.

At last; hypnotized, no doubt, from staring into the Colt barrel, and the twin depths of the shotgun; they collapsed upon the bottom of the canoe, and went to sleep. The ease with which they dozed off may be attributed to an abundance of firewater, provided by the over-generous crew of a lumber schooner. The whole tribe had been on a riotous drunk for three days, and Winthrop's crew had become saturated with the rest. In fact, when the Duke was looking for his shirt, to begin the trip, Jenny Lind admitted she had traded it for grog.

Now, Winthrop could only await the next whim of his crew. As anxious as he was

to get to Fort Nisqually, this was the only means of transportation available. There was no trail, and the Indian canoe was the mode of travel. Unfortunately, the paddlers were sometimes as unpredictable as the winds. In their case, however, the tide was favorable, so Winthrop continued to move at a steady three miles an hour, while his paddlers slept.

At last, Jenny Lind sat up and announced that she was awake. She roused the Duke. The others then awakened in good humor, and began wielding their paddles cheerfully. The Duke stirred the water only lightly, but dipped the blade with sham vehemence whenever he observed Winthrop watching him. Jenny Lind, true to her name, was leader of the chorus. Often, she burst into bits of song, as joyous as shafts of sunlight in a cloudy sky. At other times she drones some roundelay, to which the crew would respond in cadence. Then the craft would quiver and leap through the water like a salmon breasting a rapids.

At sunset they landed on a gravelly beach, where there was an abundance of driftwood, and Winthrop built a fire. While he toasted salt pork, the Clallams banqueted on dried fish and a little of his hardtack. Winthrop then brewed a pot of tea, and tossed in sugar lavishly. Finally, to the sweetened beverage, he secretly added forty drops of the purloined firewater, and passed the dulcet cups to his crew. When he gave them each enough tobacco to blow a cloud of smoke, their happiness knew no bounds. They heaped fuel upon the fire, and roared with laughter, as the sparks and frantic flames leaped high in the night sky. Winthrop sat apart, contemplating the wild scene.

After the events of their trying day, the Indians soon became weary, and coiled themselves around the fire in innocent slumber. Winthrop slept rather fitfully upon the pebbles, not because he feared for his scalp, he said, but because he did not want to miss a favorable tide. It was he who awoke from time to time, to add more fuel to the fire.

A good hour before dawn, he noted by starlight that the tide was inching back up the pebbled beach. Immediately, he shook the sobered Duke, the steersman, and the young paddlers. When he touched the Duchess lightly upon the shoulder, he noted upon her upturned face, the broad, vermilion chevron of yesterday, still arched across the bridge of her nose. Cheerfully, she opened her eyes to face the new day, still wearing her make-up of the previous evening.

Only the Duke grumbled at having his slumber interrupted. The others fell-to heartily, and dragged the canoe down to low water. They then shoved off into the

void of darkness between star bright sky and reflecting water. Because the Duke did not take part in the chores of departure, Winthrop considered him a shirker. In fact, Winthrop found nothing, whatever, commendable about this intelligent sub-chief of the Clallams. This is the more remarkable, because the chief was generally well thought of by other whites in the country.

This same Chetzamokha had once traveled to San Francisco as guest on a sailing vessel. There he met an adventurous easterner named James G. Swan, and the two became good friends. Before he sailed north again, the Duke urged Swan to visit him in the Clallam country. It was probably this friendship as much as anything else that influenced Owan to come to Washington Territory, and finally to settle in Port Townsend.

Though Swan and Winthrop were both from New England, they differed remarkably from each other. One could live among the Indians, and accept their food and customs. The other would have had the Indians strive for the white man's standards.

The Duke, on the other hand, was surly with Winthrop, and scorned his efforts at conversation. Even when Winthrop sought to learn some Clallam words, the Duke was uncooperative. Winthrop attributed his surliness to a hang-over, and so it may have been.

After they left the campsite, Winthrop watched the abandoned campfire, burning brightly in the darkness. From far off, it became a reddish, glowing orb, like the eye of Cyclops watching their departure. No one thought of dousing a campfire in those days, so there were times when the sun was darkened by the smoke of forest fires.

Before dawn a waning moon appeared briefly above the trees, but it was soon overwhelmed by the flaming colors of sunrise. At midday, Winthrop was dozing in the canoe, when he suddenly became aware of a reflection on the water. He opened his eyes to a scene that Puget and Whidbey had observed 61 years before.

"We rounded a point," he wrote, "and opened Puyallup Bay, a breadth of sheltered calmness... What cloud, piled massive on the horizon, could cast an image so sharp in outline, so full of vigorous detail? No cloud, as my stare, no longer dreamy, presently discovered. it wall a giant mountain dome of snow, swelling an-d seeming to fill the aerial spheres..."

In referring to Puyallup Bay, Winthrop was naming it for the river that flows into

it. The DeLin sawmill was not visible to Winthrop; or if he saw it he did not mention it, for it would have spoiled his picture of the mountain. As he described Rainier, the lower slopes were hidden, even then, by the smoke of a large forest fire that burned far to the south.

"The smokey haze of an Oregon August hid all the length of the lesser ridges," he wrote, "and left the mighty summit based upon uplifting dimness. Only its splendid snows were visible, high in the unearthly regions of the clear blue noonday sky. The shore line drew a cincture, of pines across the broad base, where it faded unreal into the mist.... Kingly and alone stood this majesty, without any visible comrade or consort, though far to the north and the south its brethren and sisters dominate their realms, each in isolated sovereignty...."

Losing no time in contemplation of the scenery, the party soon entered the Narrows, and shortly thereafter, came to the town of Steilacoom, on the eastern shore. Here, Winthrop stopped to buy salt pork, hardtack, and a saddle; all items he would need for the continuation of his journey beyond Fort Nisqually.

Steilacoom consisted of one warehouse, at the time, but this contained every item that a pioneer population could require. From Indian lounging in the town, Winthrop learned that there were eastern tribesmen camping at Fort Nisqually, Klickitats, who had come across the Cascades to trade at the fort. This was good news, for Winthrop hoped to find a guide who could lead him across the mountains and south to the Dalles of the Columbia River.

The Clallams were not enthusiastic about encountering the Klickitats, but responded resolutely enough to encouragement from Winthrop. After beaching the canoe before the fort, they walked along a pleasant path, among native Oregon Oak trees. As soon as they reached the fort, Winthrop paid off his crew with Hudson's Bay Company blankets. The price of the trip, agreed on at Port Townsend, was one blanket per crew member.

These, Winthrop purchased for a total cost of \$18. When night came, the Clallams pretended to bed down, but stealthily departed in the darkness; so they would not be followed by the Klickitats.

The Klickitats sold Winthrop three horses, and supplied him with a guide, a suspicious youth who apparently did not welcome the assignment. Despite his petulance, however, he was a proficient guide and woodsman. The route led first through the open forest and lake country, east of Steilacoom.

They next crossed open prairie, then entered a dense forest of Douglas Fir, before they came to the Puyallup River. After crossing the Puyallup, they set out for the White River. In the days that followed, they crossed and recrossed the White many times, always heading their horses upstream, so the current would not hit them broadside and sweep them away.

Where the White is joined by the Greenwater River, they turned into the canyon of the Greenwater. At this point they met some soldiers of the United States Fourth Infantry, members of the expedition headed by Captain George B. McClellan. Captain McClellan had been selected by Major Isaac I. Stevens, to make a survey of the Cascade Range.

Major Stevens had been appointed first governor of Washington Territory in 1853, and had immediately undertaken the survey of a railroad route from the Mississippi River to Puget Sound. Leading a large force of engineers, horsemen, and adventurers, he started his westward journey from St. Louis, on May 23, 1853. While Major Stevens was marking a route through the Rocky Mountains, Captain McClellan was to find a route through the Cascades.

McClellan had preceded Stevens to the Northwest by the swiftest route then known. He had gone by ship to Panama, crossed the isthmus by mule train, then sailed on a ship bound for San Francisco. On June 27, 1853 he arrived at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River.

There he organized a party of 66 men, including three Army lieutenants, a geologist, an assistant engineer, and five assistants in observation. To transport this group he used 173 horses and mules, of which 100 were pack animals. The expedition left Fort Vancouver on June 24, and headed northeast, to begin a detailed exploration of the eastern side of the Cascade Range.

The soldiers in camp on the Greenwater, were already well worn by travel, when Winthrop met them in August. Leaving them, Winthrop continued his journey up the canyon. Toward evening, he met a road-building crew, a group of volunteer laborers, who had come out from the settlements of Puget Sound. They were attempting to open a wagon road over Naches Pass, so that covered wagons could be brought directly into the Puget Sound country, instead of roundabout, by way of the Columbia River.

After camping one night with the road builders, Winthrop and his guide began the ascent out of the canyon. Their route led up the shoulder of a ridge, 1200 feet from

the valley floor to the crest. So steep was the slope that they clung to their horses' manes, while branches whipped their faces. This was the route of the road. In one place, it gained 400 feet so abruptly that it was soon to be known as "The Cliff."

Having gained the crest, they followed the ridge until they came to a series of verdant meadows. These extended well over the pass, on the eastern side, then gave way to outcroppings of jagged rock. On the Naches River, Winthrop met Captain McClellan, himself. In vain, had the captain searched the Naches area for his rail route. Now he would have to look further north.

It was late in the afternoon when Winthrop arrived at McClellan's camp of two tents; but the captain was still in the hills, plunging into the wilderness to explore another gorge, another purple, cavernous defile, in his search for a route that Nature did not afford. McClellan was seeking not a pass that a man could cross on snowshoes in winter, but a pass over which an 1854 locomotive could pull a train of rail cars, loaded. Winthrop, himself, was certain it would not be found in the Naches area.

Winthrop, too, was forced to ride later than usual that day. he had dawdled over some of his camp fires, barbecuing salmon, or roasting group, or chatting with the road builders. It was not the way an Indian likes to travel, and his guide had become increasingly impudent.

In the territory of his own people, moreover, the guide began to show signs of treachery. It was not uncommon for a lone traveler in Indian country to be stripped of his horses, his equipment, even his clothing, and left to wander naked in the wilderness. Winthrop undoubtedly had heard of such instances, for he became suspicious when his guide engaged in a long discussion with several of the tribesmen.

When one of the natives stepped up and grabbed the bridle of Winthrop's horse, Winthrop leaned over the animal's neck and leveled his six-shooter at the man's head. When the Indian released his grip, Winthrop rode off alone.

Fortunately, for Winthrop, he found the Catholic mission at Ahtanum. There, the missionaries found him two more guides, Indian youths who proved to be better traveling companions. They got him to the Columbia River on August 31, eight days after his departure from Fort Nisqually. At The Dalles he joined two other adventurous souls who were returning to the States.