

DIARY OF THE YAKIMA INDIAN WAR KEPT BY W. W. DE LACY, CAPTAIN,  
ENGINEERS AND ACTING ADJUTANT, WASHINGTON TERRITORIAL VOLUNTEERS  
THE COVERING PERIOD 12 JUNE TO 29 AUGUST 1856.

Itinerary of the march of the Right Wing of the Second Regiment of the Washington Territory Volunteers, under the command of Lieut. Colonel Benjamin F. Shaw, from Montgomery's to Grand Ronde.

1856.

12 June. After several weeks of active preparation on the part of the Quartermaster and Commissary Departments, which interval had been usefully employed by the troops in actively scouting the adjoining country, the Right Wing consisting of 3 companies of the Southern and one company of the Central Battalion commenced its march for the Yakima country thus opening a campaign which, although at first attended by the wearisome tediousness of long marches made without seeing the enemy, terminated at length gloriously for the Battalion and the country.

The greatest pains had been taken that the men should be as well mounted and equipped as possible. About 23 beef cattle accompanied the Battalion, and the pack train carried supplies for 30 days.

The Battalion was composed as follows: General Staff Lieut. Colonel Benjamin Franklin Shaw, Commanding Major George C. Blankenship, Central Battalion Major Hamilton J. G. Maxon, Southern Battalion Captain Walter Washington De Lacy, Topographer and Adjutant, Right Wing. Captain C. Hughes Armstrong, Quartermaster Lieut. Benjamin F. Ruth, Adjutant, Central Battalion Henry Gallagher, Sergeant Major David F. Byles, Sergeant Major, Central Battalion

Central Battalion Captain Benjamin L. Henness, Lieuts. Charles Bishop and Francis Goodwin 37 noncommissioned officers

Southern Battalion Washington Mounted Rifles Major Maxon, Lieuts. William S. Bennington and Silas B. Curtis 67 non-commissioned officers and men. Co. D Lieut. Japtha S. Powell, Comdg., 30 non-commissioned officers and men. Captain Bluford Miller, Lieut. John A. Kemp, 26 Non-commissioned officers and men. Grand Aggregate: 175 officers and men.

The pack train consisted of 26 packers and 82 pack animals, under charge of Captain C. H. Armstrong; and the Battalion was also accompanied by Messers Coffee and Hughes, expressmen. Six of the pack animals were loaded with ammunition.

After some delay the command commenced its march and, crossing the Puyallup River, reached Fort Hays on Connell's prairie late at night. Distance 17 miles.

13 June. Left Fort Hays, crossed White River and camped on a small branch called Boise's Creek where there was prairie and good grass. From this point there is no grass for the animals until we reach Bare prairie nearly at the foot of Natchez Pass. Distance about 12 miles.

14 June. Started late as some of the cattle had strayed during the night. Crossed Boise's Creek and directed our course towards White River until we reached Emigrant road on which we continued most of the day. The road was very rough and hilly, and in passing mud mountain, in horrible condition, a new mass of mud in which the animals sank up to their knees at every step; in fact the whole command led their horse most of the way.

We were able, however, to make good progress and at night camped on White River at the first crossing. Here there was no grass, but one day's forage had been brought along and consequently the animals did not suffer. Distance 18 miles.

15 June. On examination this morning, the state of the river forbade the probability of our being able to ascend it by Emigrant Road and cross it several times, without loss of men and animals. It was therefore determined to cut a trail on the same side where we were, and endeavor to reach Bare prairie by night. Major Maxon volunteered to head a party of pioneers for this purpose.

This service was most efficiently performed. Fortunately an Indian trail was discovered which assisted the progress of the troops, but turning too much to the left was abandoned after two or three miles and the cutting resumed to the right which resulted in the reaching the Emigrant Road again some three or four miles from the mouth of the Green Water, a branch of the White River.

Some four miles more brought us to Bear Prairie, where after a day of great fatigue, the command was encamped. Some of the men and a part of the train did not get in until long after dark. Bear Prairie is very small, and grass is scant in quantity and very inferior in quality and the animals suffered from hunger. Distance about 22 miles.

16 June. Left Bear Prairie early. Soon after again encountered Green Water. This stream we crossed 17 times before commencing the ascent to the Natchess Pass. It is of course like all mountain streams, rapid and brawling, and in some place difficult to cross. Leaving it, we commenced the ascent, which the road being in excellent order was accomplished in safety; and about 2 P.M. we reached the summit of Natchess Pass, where we encamped on a prairie of tolerable dimensions, and could let our poor animals have, what they much needed, a good feed.

At this camp we found a number of snow shoes which it was supposed had been left by the Yakimas, sixty of whom had crossed over to the Sound under Qualston, the son of Owhi, and fought at the battle of Connell's Prairie last spring. Distance 12 miles.

17 June. Started early, and before long came the snow. This was in some places at least two feet deep, but the crust was hard and could easily bear our animals. This lasted for about two miles. About two miles further we gradually commenced descending. This descent was gradual. Pioneers were sent forward to clear away trees which had fallen across the road and spies two or three miles in advance to see if there were any lurking Indians about. They reported none; and about 11 o'clock, crossing the head waters of the Natchess River, we entered a beautiful prairie covered with magnificent grass. To encamp, unpack the animals, and turn them out to the feast was the work of but a few minutes. This prairie was the same one which Captain Maloney and the lamented Slaughter came when they crossed the Natchess Pass, and where they received the

intelligence which caused them to turn back. The ashes of their camp fires were still visible. Distance 12 miles.

As we were now fairly in the enemy's country, it was resolved by Colonel Shaw to prepare and publish a general order, designating the manner in which military duty should be carried on and marches regulated. The guard was regulated on the system of the U.S. Army and was mounted every morning previous to packing up, each company furnishing men in proportion to the numbers, and each orderly was instructed by the adjutant how to keep a roster, so as to prevent discontent among the men and make each one do his fair share of duty.

This guard generally consisted to 24 men. In all halts they acted as horse-guard and during the march, six were detailed every two hours, each one to lead one of the ammunition horses. Two commissioned and two non-commissioned officers were each day detailed for duty with it. The march was thus regulated. The guard as advanced guard, then two companies, the pack train and the beeves and two companies as rear guard, each company taking it in turn to be in the advance.

That there might be no mistake, the Adjutant communicated every morning to each Captain his position in the line. All firing was specially prohibited without permission from the Officer of the Day. After the days march, the Colonel or Adjutant indicated to each company its camp, generally in the shape of a "corral," so that the animals could be tied inside at night. These regulations were in force during the whole campaign.

18 June. Read General Orders No. 1 to the Battalion. Packed up and started down the Natchess. For a few miles our route passed through a succession of beautiful prairies in the different bends of the stream which we crossed a number of times. We then entered a canyon with high basaltic walls. The stream became more and more tortuous and the valley narrower. As it was not far from here that Coffee and Sharpe, the expressmen, had seen Indians in their trip over the mountains shortly before, Major Maxon, Captain DeLacy and a few men went forward to reconnoiter and pick out a camp.

Within two miles they crossed the stream 18 times. No Indians were seen and a good camp was found. The command came up after two or three hours and camped on excellent grass. Distance 20 miles.

19 June. Notwithstanding an early start, we made little progress today. Within half a mile we came to a remarkable rock or rather precipice, called "Edgar's Rock," from Mr. John Edgar, who was killed at South Prairie last winter, who always came by this route when trading with the Indians. The trail went up one side of this rock to the summit and passing some distance over, came down the other.

It was difficult for a man to get up, but by this, the whole train had to pass. It did so, fortunately, without accident, but it took almost all day, and we camped after going about 4 miles.

20 June. On leaving camp, continued along the river for about 4 miles over rough basaltic ground, then turning to the northeast ascended the divide between the Natchess and Wenass, until we reached the Emigrant road along which we continued some distance then turned east on

a trail until we struck the head of a dry stream emptying into the Wenass which we followed to its junction with that stream and there camped. Excellent grass everywhere. Distance 15 miles.

21 June. Remained in camp today, both to rest the animals and scout around the country. The scouts discovered Colonel Wright's and Lt. Colonel Steptoe's camps. No Indians. Kamiakin had left. It had been Colonel Shaw's intention to attack at once had he found him in front of Colonel Wright's camp. Colonel Wright on being asked "had nothing particular to send to Colonel Shaw." Kamiakin after feeling some time very comfortable at the expense of Colonel Wright, agreed to treat. Colonel Wright prepared a bower. Kamiakin left for parts unknown. Bower a dead loss.

22 June. Messrs. Hughes and Purcel started on express to Olympia by way of the Natchess Pass, went with a report of the movements of the Battalion. Started late and descended the valley of the Wenass. Scattered pines ceased. Country rolling with excellent grass. Valley from 1/4 to a mile broad. Distance 12 miles.

23 June. Remained in camp today and sent scouts out who discovered nothing important.

24 June. Raised camp and leaving the Wenass struck the valley of the Yakima. Passing over some rolling hills, we entered a sage desert. Crossed the Natchess River near its mouth, and entering another sage desert, finally camped at the mouth of Atanam Creek, the scene of Major Raines' battle with the Yakimas. Distance 25 miles.

25 June. Left canyon and passed along the south bank of the Yakima in a south-east direction. Camped on a slough where there was fine grass. Rain during the night. Distance 12 miles.

26 June. Major Maxon this morning ordered his men to fire off their arms against orders and avowing the act was arrested by the Colonel. He refused to submit to the arrest and attempted to take the command of the Southern Battalion from the Colonel, which with all but his own company, was unsuccessful. His company refused to obey orders or march under either of their Lieutenants. Consequently, when the order was given to march they remained behind. In the course of about an hour they followed us, but remained entirely separate. Our route lay in the beautiful level country, partly along the bank of the slough and partly along the Yakima, covered with beautiful grass and clover. Passed Pisco Creek and camped on Skloom Creek. Distance 20 miles. Maxon's company passed us some 2 miles and camped on the river.

27 June. Started at 8:00 o'clock. Course a little northeast along the river avoiding the bends. In the first part of the day's journey, we passed some excellent land. The latter part, sage desert and very rocky. Excellent pasture for animals on the side of the hills. Camped at dark. Distance 23 miles.

28 June. To avoid going around the bend of the Yakima, the Colonel resolved to leave it and go directly over the country to the Columbia. Starting early, therefore, we climbed the low hills bordering the river and took a general southeast direction. A march of 25 miles brought us to the Columbia. Country rolling no water but most magnificent grazing for thousands of animals. There were signs of large herds having been driven across, probably a month before. Camped opposite to some islands, and the mouth of a small stream.

29 June. Remained in camp today to recruit the animals.

30 June. Started and moved up the river with the intention of camping opposite Fort Walla Walla. The journey was rather a rugged one much of it over basaltic rock, until we ascended to the table land where we had an agreeable march for some miles, until we again descended to river bank in the evening opposite a large island. On arriving here the Colonel, who was in advance, discovered two Indian canoes heavily loaded, each manned by two Indians, proceeding down the river. He hailed them, to which they returned a defiant answer, whereupon he fired. The men by this time had also reached the bank and also commenced firing and with such effect as to force the Indians to abandon one canoe and run to the opposite side of the island. One man jumped out of the other canoe, but the remaining man gallantly paddled away; and, although he had upwards of 50 shots fired at him, some of which took effect in his canoe (for we could see him stop to bail her out) he succeeded in carrying her off round the island out of sight and taking off after his comrades. The abandoned canoe was a great prize for us, as we could thus communicate with the opposite shore; and accordingly two of the boys stripped, swam a 1/4 mile across the river and brought her over. It being late proceeded a short distance to the first good grass and camped. Distance 22 miles. Major Maxon who had come around the bend of the Yakima, was camped about a mile above us, opposite Fort Walla Walla.

1 July. Remained in camp.

2 July. Remained in camp. Mr. Coffee sent to Olympia.

3 July. Moved camp about 3 miles up the river on account of grass for the animals, there being no other advantage in a change, as there is very little wood anywhere along the river. Passed Maxon's camp. No sign of promised boats. An express reached us however from Capt. Goff's camp on the Umatilla, from the officer in command, Lieut. Williams, stating that the Captain had left camp 3 day's before with a command of 60 men going in the direction of Wells Springs, and had not yet returned. Also stating that the boats would be on the opposite side the next day.

4 July. In order that the day light not pass wholly without celebration, Dr. Burns (Surgeon) and a few men crossed the river to Fort Walla Walla where there was an old iron gun and fired a few rounds. An express reached us also from the Nez Perce country, bearing a letter from Colonel William Craig, Special Indian Agent, stating that everything was quiet, and that he would be down shortly with a body of Nez Perces to meet us. Mr. Pierson arrived in camp. He was on his way to the Upper country stayed over night and left. The boats arrived and were brought over. They were in charge of Lieut. Samuel Wilkes of Goff's company.

5 July. Commenced our movement across the river. The boats were employed in transporting the provisions and camp equipage across, whilst a detachment were employed in swimming the horses across. This last proved to be no easy job. They had first to be swum to a small island in the stream and thence forced off to swim to the opposite shore. Repeatedly when half way over they would turn around and swim back to the main bank. By unremitting exertion a part of the horses, all the stores and camp equipage and part of the men were got over today.

6 July. The remainder of the horses and men crossed today and the boats sent to Major Maxon to enable him to cross, which he accomplished in two or three days. Messrs. Hughes and Purcel, expressmen, arrived today from Olympia. An express also came from Capt. Goff stating that he had taken 30 prisoners in his recent expedition that he had received an urgent request from Major Layton of the Oregon service for assistance in an expedition against a body of Indians on the head of John Day's River and that he had resolved to take the greater part of his men and go with him.

7 July. Moved camp to the Walla Walla River only two miles on account of grass. Lieut. Wilkes started today for Whitman's Valley, where he expects to find Captain Robie's train which his company is escorting.

8 July. Started at 8 o'clock and after a march of 25 miles reached Whitman's Station, the scene of the atrocious massacre of Mr. Whitman and his family by the Cayuses. Some of the land passed on the route was splendid farming land. The deserted houses of the settlers were seen all along the route, and the wheat was waving in the fields, with no hands to gather it. We also passed the scene of the four days battle between the Oregon Volunteers and the Indians last winter. We camped on the scene of the massacre, on the side hill was the grave of the victims surrounded by a railing. On the other the ruined houses and mill, the orchards laden with fruit with none to gather it, a sad picture. An express came to inform Colonel Shaw that Captain Robie's train was within six miles of us. Also two Nez Perce Indians with news that Colonel Craig had arrived with about 120 Nez Perce Indians and that we would meet them tomorrow.

9 July. Colonel Craig, Special Indian Agent, paid us a visit this morning and informed us that the Nez Perces would give us a salute as we passed according to custom. We accordingly packed up, and commenced our march along Mill Creek. In 4 miles we perceived the Nez Perce camp and the Nez Perce warriors, probably to the number of 100, approaching, singing, dressed in their gayest attire, splendidly mounted and bearing aloft a large American flag which had been presented to them at the Council last year by Governor Stevens. They formed a line on the prairie with the regularity of Dragoons, the Flag in the center, still continuing their chant. The Battalion was then formed by the Adjutant in close columns of twos, and moved steadily past their line. As it passed they fired a salute. The Volunteers gave three lusty cheers for the Stars and Stripes and drawing their revolvers returned the salute, and without halting continued their march. Here we found Capt. Robie's train with Indian goods and Quartermaster stores, and the escort consisting of parts of Captains Goff and Williams companies. This train consisted of 75 pack horses and 50 wagons. Crossing Mill Creek, the command halted and camped along the stream, the wagons being formed into a "corral" for the safety of the animals at night. Our Nez Perce friends had remained behind in order to strike their camp, as they intended to come up and camp with us. In a short time they were described advancing in order, banner in front. The Battalion was immediately formed, and as they passed in two divisions, they were saluted with a volley and three cheers. This cordial reception much delighted them. Distance 6 miles.

10 July. For the first time we mounted guard to the sound of the drum this morning. Remained in camp. The Nez Perces gave us a war dance in the evening. Maxon's company came up and as usual camped apart.

11 July. Broke up our camp today and moved farther up Mill Creek, about 7 miles, where Colonel Shaw designs building a corral and making Headquarters, previous to an expedition against the hostile Indians, as he is resolved that the Volunteers shall not go out of the field, without striking the enemy if they can be found. The spot was an excellent one, where the men could have shelter and plenty of wood and water and the animals excellent grass. Our Nez Perce friends camped above us. Most of these Nez Perces are members of a company, raised by Governor Stevens, which accompanied him from the Blackfoot country to the Dalles and is now used for the protection of Colonel Craig, the Indian Agent. In the evening, Colonel Shaw met the Chiefs in Council, in which he assured them of the continued friendship of Governor Stevens and the Americans and his determination to fight the hostiles. To this, Spotted Eagle the War Chief of the Nez Perces, replied that he was sorry that the Cayuses had gone to war with the Americans, that they were his relations, and that he would never lift his gun to the Americans, that they were his friends. Similar declarations were made by the others, and the Council dissolved, both parties mutually satisfied. Brisk trade in horses blankets, the current coin many a poor fellow, to get a worthless horse, slept very cold that night.

12 July. Corral commenced this morning. Lieut. Bennington of Maxon's company came up this morning with a requisition for rations, the company being entirely out. Colonel Shaw answered that he would issue rations to no company that refused duty.

Bennington returned and shortly afterwards a sergeant came up and presented a paper stating that the company were willing to do duty. Whereupon they moved up, under command of Lieut. Bennington, were assigned their camping place by the Adjutant, and from that time forward did their duty and received their rations. Thus ended this unhappy affair. Major Maxon not making any acknowledgement of wrong, still remained under arrest.

13 July. Colonel Craig, Capt. Robie and the train with goods for the Indians, started for the Nez Perce Nation under guard of the "Nez Perce Volunteers" as the above mentioned Indians were called. The arms of this company were inspected before leaving by the Adjutant and found generally in good order. From information received from various sources it was certain that Kamiakin and the band were beyond our reach. Therefore, Colonel Shaw, whose knowledge of the country is not exceeded by anyone, from his campaigns and travels in this country, resolved to make an expedition to the Grand Ronde, a circular valley, situated on the Emigrant Road south of our present position. He was well aware that it was the usual resort of the hostile tribes, and it was morally certain that a body of them would be found there at this time. A trusty guide was found among the Nez Perces, who was engaged to take us thither by a new route, and the Captains of companies were ordered to draw ammunition and rations for several days. The sick and other who from various causes were unable to go were left in charge of the station. The day was accordingly passed in busy preparation.

14 July. Orders were given this morning to select the men, clean arms, inspect horses, etc., and have everything prepared to start at nightfall. The station was left in charge of Lieut. B. F. Ruth, Adjutant of Central Battalion. The Battalion was mustered at sundown, fully equipped and was composed as follows:

Staff Colonel Shaw, Captain DeLacy, Sgt. Major Gallagher; Central Battalion Major Blankenship, Captain Henness, Sgt. Major Boyles, Lieuts. Bishop and Goodwin, 30 officers and men; Southern Battalion Co. I, Capt. Miller, 29 rank and file Co. D, Lieut. Powell, 26 rank and file Co. N, Lieut. Williams, 27 rank and file Co. K, Lieuts. Waite and Wilkes, 25 rank and file; Washington Mounted Rifles © Major Maxon, Lieuts. Bennington and Curtis, 49 rank and file. Grand aggregate 190 and 20 packers with the train and 10 days rations.

The companies being assigned their stations according to regulations, the Battalion commenced crossing Mill Creek and its various branches, took a southern course for about 10 miles, on the old Nez Perce trail, then, under the guidance of "Captain John" our Nez Perce guide, turned to the eastward on an old trail and entered a gorge of the Blue mountains. Passing over some elevated land we came at last to the Walla Walla river at about 2 P.M. and camped. Horses were picketed, guards set out and all lay down to rest. No fires allowed. Distance about 20 miles.

15 July. Remained in camp pretty late to allow the animals to graze, and examine the country for fresh signs. None found. Packed up about 10 o'clock, passed the Walla Walla and continued ascending the Blue Mountains between the Walla Walla and Pine Creek. The ascent was considerable and the whole day's march over rough ground. Our guide stated that the trail crossed the Umatilla River near its head. On approaching that river, we descended in its valley by a series of steep descents where both men and horses kept their feet with difficulty, the mountains being fully 1500 feet above the valley. We camped upon the stream, and tied our horses up to the trees there being no grass for them. No Indian sign was seen. The trail did not appear to have been used for a year at least. Course today, first southeast, then east 20 miles.

16 July. Started early and immediately commenced ascending the mountain on the other side of the Umatilla. This was also very steep and higher than the hill we descended the day before. Then proceeded some distance along the spur, again descended and ascended several times, crossed the main ridge of the Blue Mountains and having struck the waters of the opposite side, ascended a spur whence we had a distant view of the Grand Ronde Valley. It was too distant however to see anything, tho some thought that they could, while others thought not. The general impression was however that there were no Indians. We descended the spur into a narrow valley between two spurs, striking the head of a small stream, and after proceeding several miles camped on good grass in scattering timber. Course east and southeast. Distance about 22 miles.

17 July. Started early this morning in the usual order. After proceeding about 5 miles we came in sight of the Grand Ronde River which is timbered along its banks and immediately perceived a great dust extending up and down the river about 3 miles, evidently showing a large force of Indians. Colonel Shaw had gone ahead to reconnoiter accompanied by Major Maxon and the guide and two others. He had seen the dust and sending the others forward, to examine more closely, returned to hurry up the command, which however having seen the enemy were coming up fast. As soon as he arrived, the Battalion was formed in columns as follows; Captain Miller's Company in the advance supported by Maxon's, Henness' Company, Powell's Company, and the pack train in the rear, defended by the guard of the day, and Lieuts. Waite and Williams' detachments. In this order the command moved forward quickly but regularly until within a half a mile of the enemy's village, when the warriors came forward, singing the war song, and waving a scalp on a pole. As they halted a moment and two or three came forward indicating "Capt.



John," the Nez Perce guide was desired to go to them, which he did, when several of them behind cried out "shoot him," "shoot him." Whereupon he returned to Colonel Shaw who was some distance in advance. The line by this time was formed in front of the enemy. The Colonel sent the Adjutant to Lieut. Williams, in command of the rear guard, with orders to keep close after the column in the rear with the pack train, after which he returned to his place in the front. The command was given to charge which was executed. The enemy gave way and retired towards the brush on the river bank. It became evident that their design was to draw us into a brush fight, while their pack train escaped down the river as we could plainly see. Perceiving this the command was given "forms about" and the companies charged down the river on the rear of the train. The enemy then separated, part crossing the river at the village and part joining the pack train to defend it. These we soon overtook. They attempted to fight and individually did fight to the last, but all in vain. Every instant they fell before the deadly rifle and revolver. The road was strewn in every direction with packs in many instances left on the animals and troops of horses which they were obliged to abandon were passed. Captain Miller was ordered to the left to cut off their passage that way and Major Maxon to the right to cut them off there. Capt. Miller killed five on the spot on his side but the Major was unable to cross the river there. Hennes' and Powell's companies kept up the charge in the center and continued to do good service. A body of warriors seem to be collected in front as if to make a stand, but at the approach of the troops their hearts failed them and they fled at the first fire. Packs grew thicker and thicker, and such was the impetuosity of the charge that many of their women even were unable to escape and were overtaken in the pursuit. None that were recognized were harmed, but were suffered to ride off free, which they gladly availed themselves of. In this manner we reached the crossing of the river. Here, in order to delay us, the enemy had lined the opposite side with marksmen, and when the men came up they were saluted by several shots. They hung back a little, but the colonel (who had led the charge the whole way with his hat off) calling on them to follow him, rushed into the water, followed by some of the bravest officers and men and the rest followed.

The stream here is about 50 feet broad and deep the banks steep and as soon as the Colonel entered the enemy fired a volley. But one man was wounded and he but slightly and the Colonel had a ball put through his coat. They then attempted to escape but several were overtaken and slain. We thus continued the charge for about 5 miles more until they entered a gorge of the mountains and commenced dispersing in different directions when Colonel Shaw finding that he had but few men with him (the horse of most having given out) stopped the pursuit and commenced his return to the pack train.

Half a dozen of the Indians then came back to watch, one who rode around on the opposite side of the gorge uttering yells of defiance, being shot by the Colonel, they speedily left and drawing off to a safer distance, watched our descent into the plain. One or two fired shots which came near hitting some of the party. As we returned the ground was thickly strewn with packs, and numbers of horses were taken. We found the pack train and guard encamped in the bend of a creek, not far from its junction with the Grand Ronde River, a fine position for herding the numerous stock which we had taken, in number about 300.

The pack train, as a matter of course had been unable to keep up with us in our rapid charge, and as soon as left alone, the party which had crossed the river, returned and annoyed it by firing at

long shot all the way to the river crossing, when they desisted. None of the pack train were hurt, but several of the Indians were seen to be carried off. The guard, however, drove up the bands of captured horses and brought them in to camp.

In returning it was Colonel Shaw's design to pick out the best of the captured horses, mount part of his men on them and endeavor to strike the enemy the second time. But on reaching camp, he found that Major Maxon with 16 men had crossed the river and had not been seen since. Two squaws had been captured by the pack train and brought in to obtain information. There was a vague rumor at camp that the Major had been fighting severally with a large number of the enemy, and it was feared might have been overpowered.

His absence gave color to the story and the Colonel at once got a party of 30 men and sent them out under Lieut. Waite to search for and aid him. The Lieut. returned after nightfall, unable to find the Major, but bringing in one of his men, Burke, who stated that when he accompanied the major, he and another, Irvine, remained behind on the bank of the river, that the Indians surprised them and killed Irvine, that he saved himself in the brush, crossed the stream and was making his way he knew not, wither when Lieut. Waite met him.

When in the brush he heard very heavy firing, and supposed that the Major was attacked by a large party. It was impossible to do anything further tonight and equally impossible to pursue the enemy. A very strong guard was posted at night so as to prevent any danger of stampeding the captured animals. This guard was posted across the chord of the arc of the bend, as the creek effectually prevented any such attempt on that side.

One or two sentries were placed on the other side of the creek, however, to prevent any surprise. It was impossible to tell how many of the enemy were killed, but 27 were counted on the ground, and we know of others to the number of 34 that were killed. It was probable too that Maxon's men had killed many, for they are all still good shots and determined men. In this charge we never drew rein for 12 miles. At least 200 packs were scattered over this distance, containing all their winter provisions, furniture, mats and in fact everything they possessed. In returning from the pursuit, we burnt all of these as far as camp.

18 July. Early this morning, Captain Miller was sent out with 70 men to try and find Major Maxon. He returned late in the day, having found some signs of him; but his trail becoming merged in that of the Indians, became impossible to follow. His impression was, however, that the major had retreated back to the post. Whilst out, his men saw two Indians, and two, Holmes and Lilly, the best mounted, pursued, when quite near dismounted and fired without effect.

The Indians returned the fire, killing Holmes instantly, and then rushed Lilly with their clubbed guns, who defended himself courageously with his knife and revolver. He shot one, and stabbed him twice with his knife, but did not kill him. Some of the men now approaching, the Indians got on their horses and fled, leaving Lilly with his head badly cut and left arm fractured.

19 July. Colonel Shaw resolved today to move camp up to the Emigrant Road. There take a body of men, and search for Major Maxon, until he either found him or became certain of his fate. Accordingly, the Battalion moved in the following order: Two companies in advance, then the

guard pack train and two companies, then captured horses, and two companies in the rear guard. In this order we moved back over the battle field.

A detachment was charged with the duty of burning of packs scattered on the ground which was faithfully executed. After a march of 8 miles we came to the Indian village, where 120 lodges were counted. It was burnt. We then crossed the river, picked up a band of horses which we found there, and on coming to the Emigrant road, camped. After the men had had their dinners, the Colonel took 75 men determined to make a thorough search. In camp the strictest guard was kept during the night. A party was sent out to bury Holmes.

20 July. The Colonel returned today. He had gone to the place where Maxon was last seen, and near there found the body of one of his men, Tooley, who had been killed and scalped and horribly mangled. Him they buried. Then also buried Irvine, who was literally cut to pieces, and then continuing on Maxon's trail, the Colonel became perfectly satisfied that no more of his men had been killed, and that he had returned to the post.

21 July. Commenced our return to Headquarters. Marched 25 miles on the Emigrant Road and camped late at "Camp Lee."

22 July. This morning Lieut. Hunter of Goff's Company came up to us on his way to the post for assistance. He brought us news that Major Layton and Captain Goff had had a battle on Burnt River on the 14th (July) and had had two men killed and one wounded. Those killed were Lieut. Estes (Eustis) and private Smith, and private Cherry wounded severally. All were Washington Volunteers. They were entirely out of provisions, living entirely on horse meat and were now on their way by the Emigrant Road to Walla Walla.

The Colonel immediately gave all the provisions we had except one day's rations and such horses as he wanted, and he immediately returned. It seemed by his account (confirmed by captured squaws) that the body which we had whipped on the Grand Ronde were just preparing to go to the assistance of those fighting Goff and Layton, when we came so opportunely on them. Had they joined, they would have placed these officers in a hazardous situation. Continued our march on road to Umatilla where we camped at dark. Distance about 30 miles.

Met Mr. Files (Fields), packmaster, from whom we learned that Major Maxon was safe, that he had returned to the post, and was then near us with a pack train going to our assistance. Colonel Shaw went over and learned that on crossing the Grand Ronde River, Major Maxon found himself engaged with a greatly superior force, and after fighting them sometime, and having one of his men killed, was compelled to retreat to the brush, whence he kept up the action until nightfall, when the Indians left. Many of the Indians were killed. He then endeavored to find our camp and was once near it, but hearing a woman crying, mistook our camp for that of the Indians.

Thinking therefore that Colonel Shaw had gone over to Snake River, and that he was cut off, he resolved to return to the post, obtain provisions, and meet the Battalion on the way back, as he knew that we would want them. He received orders to go on to meet Capt. Goff and relieve him. We had a very heavy hail and rainstorm tonight.

23 July. Reached Headquarters about 4 o'clock P.M. and found everything alright under the excellent management of Lieut. Ruth, whose duties during our absence had been of the most arduous description. The wagoners and others belonging to Captain Robie's train had refused to stand guard; and he consequently had only about 30 men to herd the animals during the day, stand guard at night, and defend the position if attacked.

We learned from Captain Armstrong, Quartermaster, that his vigilance was sleepless, and he deserves the greatest credit for the able manner in which he performed his duty. We found Capt. Robie had returned from the Nez Perce country. He reports part of the tribe unfriendly to those chiefly who reside in the Buffalo country. Mr. Peirson, Howlish wampoo and several Nez Perce Indians accompanied him.

24 July. Occupied today in writing an account of the battle, which was sent to Olympia by Mr. Pierson. At the same time "Capt. John" our Nez Perce guide was sent with a letter to the Nez Perce Chiefs, in which he (Colonel Shaw) told them he was tired of trying to persuade people to be peaceful who would not be that if they wanted war they should have it but if they wanted peace they should have it that it rested with them.

25 July. Captain Robie's wagon train started for supplies to the Dalles escorted by Company C, commanded by Captain Henness, whose times were out. This company had distinguished itself throughout the campaign for discipline and bravery. Major Maxon and Captain Goff's command arrived today.

26 July. Major Maxon's company being very anxious to go, and very insubordinate, as they had only 18 days to serve, were allowed to start with orders to join Capt. Henness and help escort wagons.

27 July. It being discovered that Maxon's men had taken with them many of the captured animals (which had been turned over to the QM and branded), Lieut. Waite with a part of Goff's company were sent after them and succeeded in recovering 18, there were doubtless others but they had sent them out of sight. Mr. Coffee was sent express to Olympia.

28 July. Mr. Hughes arrived in camp, express from Olympia with letters, papers, etc. A number of Capt Goff's men claim their discharges today. Part of this company were enlisted for six months, and then filled up with recruits for three months. The times of the latter is now out. They were told by Captain Goff that it was a mistake and were induced to stay longer.

29 July. Nothing important.

30 July. Nothing important.

31 July. The grass near our present position was nearly exhausted, and the Colonel had been looking for several days around the camp where he could have better grass, and build a blockhouse to protect such stores as might arrive. Having found an eligible situation on one of the lower branches of Mill Creek, we packed up today and moved part of the command thither a

distance of about 5 miles. An unfortunate accident which occurred prevented two companies from moving this day.

A gun went off accidentally severely wounding Mr. Stritzell, a private of Lieut. Powell's Co. D. He had been a miner at Colville, and had joined the company but a short time. It was impossible to move him at the time, so that his company remained, as well as Co. N of Lieut. Williams, which latter were to guard some stores, which could not be moved. Mr. Hughes started express for Olympia. "Capt. John" arrived from the Nez Perce Nation, with a letter from Colonel Craig in which he stated that the Chiefs professed friendliness.

1 Aug. The remainder of the command moved down with the wounded man. A "Corral" was built.

2 Aug. A scouting party was sent out.

3 Aug. Scouting party returned, nothing discovered.

4 Aug. A Battalion Court Martial was convened to try various men and officers on written charges.

5 Aug. Court Martial still in session. Closed this evening.

6 Aug. Mr. Stritzell died of his wounds this morning. The Battalion was paraded in the evening and he was buried with military honors after which the findings and sentences of the Court Martial were read.

7 Aug. Commenced building block house.

8 Aug. Nothing important.

9 Aug. "Joe" and some other Nez Percés arrived in camp with a letter from Colonel Craig. Nothing new.

10 to 13 Aug. Nothing important.

14 Aug. Expressman McIntosh arrived in camp, with letters from the Governor stating that he was coming up to hold a Council with the Indians. Colonel Shaw immediately sent an express to Colonel Craig announcing the fact, enclosing a letter for "Lawyer" and the head Chiefs of the Nez Perce Nation, inviting them to attend, as to the hostiles the latter to come and go in peace. Also Capt. Goff was ordered to send down his 3 month recruits to Portland to be discharged.

15 Aug. Recruits started for The Dalles.

16 Aug. Co. D of Lieut. Powell whose terms expired several days ago also went down to be discharged. This company chiefly composed of sailors had been behind none in readiness for duty and bravery.

17 to 18 Aug. Nothing important.

19 Aug. Mr. Hughes arrived with express from the Dalles.

20 to 22 Aug. Nothing important.

23 Aug. Governor Stevens arrived in camp, with a small pack train of Indian goods. "Capt. John" also arrived from the Nez Perce country with letters from Colonel Craig, who states that he thinks the majority of the Nez Percés will attend but is not certain of the hostiles.

24 Aug. Pack train in charge of Mr. Hans Tilton started for the Dalles.

25 Aug. The Battalion was paraded, the Governor, being received with the honors due his rank, made an eloquent and appropriate speech, after which the troops gave him three hearty cheers. Thirteen rounds were also fired from a small cannon.

26 Aug. An express arrived from the pack train coming up from the Dalles, under charge of Mr. John Scott, that the Indians had stolen 14 animals from them enroute. Colonel Shaw ordered Lieut. Gates of Co. N to take 25 men, meet them and escort them up, which was done.

27 Aug. Nothing important.

28 Aug. This morning a dust was seen in the direction of the road and everyone said it must be the pack train, and a smoke, apparently the prairie on fire, as it had been seen for several days. The pack train not appearing, however, Colonel Shaw thought it must be the Indians making the dust and accordingly ordered Capt. Goff to take 20 men after night and scout in that direction to see if he could catch any of them. He was accompanied by Capt. Williams. They went as far as the crossing of the Walla Walla River, and then hearing some Indian yells, retreated back for reinforcements.

Aug. 29th. Colonel Shaw was awakened about 3 o'clock in the morning by Mr. Files (Fields), asst. Packmaster, who informed him that the train had been attacked by about 60 or 70 Indians, just as they reached the hill above the Walla Walla River that they had unpacked and fought them all day, in expectation of receiving assistance. Finding that none came, they abandoned the packs and pack horses at night, and had come in.

None were wounded, and they received no molestation during their retreat. Their ammunition had given out, not having more than one or two rounds apiece. It is due to the Officer in command, Lieut. Gates to state that, known as a brave man, he was totally inexperienced in Indian warfare; had just been elected; and that his men were a set of raw, undisciplined recruits.

Colonel Shaw immediately roused the camp, detailed a party of 30 men, and heading them himself, set out to the scene of the disaster (8 miles from camp).

He met Capts. Goff and Williams returning and ordered them back. Here he found that the Indians had taken the packs and horses which had been left, and striking their trail which lead up the Walla Walla soon came in sight of the enemy. All his efforts to come up with them however were in vain. They had too much start on him. Horse after horse gave out and he was soon left with only five of the best mounted, and then was only within about four miles of the enemy.

Under these circumstances, he was compelled to return to camp. The amounts lost in the train was not much, some flour, bacon, clothes and Indian goods.

W. W. DeLacy  
Capt., Engrs., & Acting Adj., W.T.V.