

NACHES PASS TRAIL HUGGINS ACCT.

Edward Huggins, "Letter to C. B. Bagley, Seattle, Washington," Fort Nisqually, Wash. April 8th, 1905.

I think I have told you of the trip I made in 1860, to Similakymine (or Sun-il-kameen) via the Nachess Pass. The company had a house there, not many miles from the boundary line crossing Okinagan Lake. A Canadian half-breed lived there, and a large band of horses used principally for packing, were kept there.

The company thought of driving a large band of sheep from Nisqually to British Columbia, and I was ordered to go by the way of the Nachess, and return by the Snoqualmie, and report as to which was the best pass for the drive, and about the country generally. I have an idea that I've told you this before, but I'll risk it again. When writing long letters like this, the writer is apt to repeat, but that can't be helped.

Dr. Tolmie—I recollect—wrote many private letters, to friends at home and abroad, and he wrote upon paper, underneath which was a sheet of black (carbonized?) paper. Then with a hard, white, pointed pencil, would write his letter. The black sheet making one, if not more copies. He corresponded regularly with Sir James Hooker, the superintendent of the Government Botanical gardens at Kew, a suburb of London.

He also sent him seeds, and I have often gathered sacks-full of pine cones, from the tree called the "Red Pine" by the natives, white and brown, and by botanists, "Pinus ponderosa". There are very few to be found upon this side of the mountains but the tree is quite common upon the East side.

Well! In the month of September 20th, 1860. I started from Nisqually with a staff of one man (Perrish Lagace) and 2 Indian boys, driving 20 wild mares and young horses (to make drive easier) one American bred stallion, full grown, two young 12 American bred Stallions, one and two years old, seven fine large mules and one jackass, for mule breeding, the latter received from Victoria.

Before leaving the Nisqually plains, one of the half-bred stallions escaped us, and ran back to his mares. I couldn't succeed in recovering the brute, and was obliged to proceed without him. This is the commencement of a long report I wrote to the Board of Management, about 2300 words in length. I had a good man with me, a half-breed, Canadian and Kallispellian.

He could speak three or four Indian languages, and understood the Nez Perce talk. He was a fine hunter, good shot, and as brave as a lion, and could deal braver than some lions. One of the Indians was a good hand amongst the horses, and the other a youth, named by the whites Lourris, French for rat. He was our cook. He grew to be a large stout man, and was made Marshal, amongst the Snohomish Indians. He was knifed to death, a few years ago, when attempting to make an arrest.

We crossed the Nachess without much trouble, but the many crossings along the Nachess, gave us much trouble, and along the long, narrow passes, so frequently along the Columbia, were difficult of travel. The mules, and the jackass were especially troublesome, and would stop in the middle of a precipitous pass, and it would take many stones and x words to make them go on.

A big gray wolf met us in the middle of one of these passes, and squatted on his haunches, and showed his teeth. At last he moved up the cliff about thirty feet, when Perrish brought him down with a shot through a vital part. Returning, we found nothing but bleached bones there. His mates had evidently eat him up. We saw several Wolves as we traveled along, enough to convince me it was no country for sheep.

I am told though, that—at the present time—1905 the wolves are few having been killed nearly all off.

We met a few solitary travellers, returning from the mines, miserable looking fellows, ragged and unkept, and I thought to myself, how easy it would be to murder those poor fellows, and no doubt more then one of those men were killed for the sake of the firearms they nearly always carried.

I know positively of one case, where two well known men, brought (I think) horse outfits from the company at the post, bid us goodbye at the water gate, and that was the last of them, for nothing was afterwards heard from, or of them, until after the war, when I was informed that Qualehen met, and murdered them.

At the mouth of the Methow River, where it empties into the Columbia, we came upon a large camp of Indians, Moses's band I was told. They were hard looking fellows, and we were glad to get away from them, after trading a couple of stout riding ponies (which we much needed) for a couple of mares and colts.

Pierrish didn't let them know that he understood their language, and he learned enough to satisfy him that those fellows (who hardly understood that the war was over) were saying how easy it would be to put us out of the way, and possess themselves with our fine mules and horses, but they were well aware that the King George Tillicum were the same as the Bostons, and would punish severly the perpetrators of such a deed.

Pierrish didn't say anything to me about what he had overheard, until sometime afterwards, but he hurried the party away, and we didn't stop to camp until some distance from this camp.

We had much trouble to get our young American stallion along, the sharp angular stones so cut up his feet, as to make him almost dead lame. To remedy this, I killed a yearling horse, and out of the hide, made moccasins, and with them shod the poor brute.

I got to my journey's end all right, and delivered my animals to the man in charge, Francoois Deshiguette, a Canadian half-breed. I saw several mining parties at work upon the Similkameen River, and saw several fine nuggets of gold picked up.

One of the miners generously gave me several nice specimens. Three or four wing dams had been constructed at a great expense, in labor and money, and the men there were ready to go to work upon the parts of the river the dams made bare, next season, but alas! the winter following was a very severe one.

The river raised to such an extent as to carry away all the dams, and rendered useless their great labor of the preceeding year.

I returned by the Snoqualmie route, and found it much worse than the Nachess, and so I reported.