

NACHES PASS SHORT Accounts.

Pictures and captions

<http://search.tacomapubliclibrary.org/images/dt6n.asp?krequest=subjects+contains+Bonney,%20William%20P.>

E.T.Short, "Naches Pass and Frank Ross," The Tacoma Times.

Frank Ross, who has walked across the Cascade mountains so many times that he could almost cover any of the routes with his eyes shut, has written a letter to this column pointing out the military as well as commercial value and historical significance of the proposed Naches Pass highway. Frank began promoting trade routes-railroads, highways and waterways in and out of Tacoma, nearly half a century ago.

He doesn't want to see this country get into another war-hopes we won't, anyway-but believes the government commercial highways that could be military conveniences in case we had to do some defensive fighting. In the Naches cutoff - shown in the map published in the Times a few weeks ago - he sees a particular significance, from a military standpoint, of a direct route between Fort Lewis, at tidewater, and the interior of the state.

As he sees the picture, the Naches Highway which would cut 43 miles off the present route between Tacoma and the Yakima valley, fits in with the proposed bridge across the Narrows, providing a direct connection between Fort Lewis and the Puget Sound navy yard at Bremerton. Both would be part of an immediately advantageous commercial highway system and of particular significance from a military standpoint.

INDIAN TRAIL FIRST NACHES CROSSING

The reference to the historical significance of the Naches highway is based on the fact that one of the first Cascade crossings was made at Naches Pass. More than 100 years ago it was a traveled trail. In 1834, Yakima valley Indians trading with the Hudson's Bay post at Nisqually brought their furs on pack horses over the Naches.

Next important reference to the Naches is found in connection with the crossing of the Wilkes party in 1841. Capt. Charles Wilkes, who had been commissioned by the war department to explore the Northwest, sent a detachment of his party under Lieut. Thompson into eastern Washington. When they reached Steilacoom and inquired about the most feasible route over the Cascades they were directed to the Naches. They went over early in a day and found some snow but not enough to impede travel. They came back early in July and found the pass entirely clear of snow.

Naches also was the route by which the first immigrant wagon train crossed the Cascade mountains in 1853. The party rested a few days at Selah, Yakima county, and then took the long trail over the mountains, arriving at Parkland Oct.13. From that time the Naches highway was an established route across the Cascades.

An interesting fact in connection with the proposed development is that the first Northern Pacific location was through the Naches. The principal reason the road was not built there, according to Ross and others of the old timers, was the discovery of the immense coal deposits in the Cle Elum and Roslyn districts. Changing the route did not further Tacoma's ambition to be the railroad's tidewater terminal.

NACHES PASS AND THE WASHINGTON GOOD ROADS ASSOCIATION.

E.T. Short, "Naches Pass and the Washington Good Roads Association," The Tacoma Times.

When the first meeting of the Washington Good Roads Association was held at Spokane in November, 1899, there were just 14 members. At the meeting of the association which completed a two-day session in Yakima, Tuesday afternoon, four of the original 14 were present. They were John P. Hartman, of Seattle; Frank Terrace, of Orilla; Lee Monohan, of Renton; and F. M. Boilinger, of Methow. Two others of the old guard, R. H. Thompson, of Seattle, and John Donovan, of Bellingham, were unable to attend on account of illness.

As Mr. Terrace and Mr. Hartman recalled that first meeting, they related many interesting episodes in connection with the development of Washington's highway system as it is today. Mr. Hattman recalled that it as a good day's journey by horse and buggy from Seattle to Kent. The horse was put up for the night at a livery stable and the return trip to Seattle started early in the morning. Now the round trip is made easily in an hour.

The third meeting of the State Good Roads Association was held at Chehalis. Delegates from Tacoma who made the trip by automobile were on the road 17 hours. Today that is an easy two-hour drive.

"When we held that first meeting in Spokane," said Mr. Terrace, "We began to plan a highway system for the state. Among others, we planned the Sunset Highway, the Columbia River Highway and part of the Pacific Highway. We recommended a budget of about \$1,000,000 and everybody said we were crazy. The late Samuel Hill told the critics that they would see the day when Washington would spend ten times a million dollars in two years. Some of the people who laughed at him then have seen his words come true."

Frank Ross, of Tacoma, and Charlie Talcott, of Olympia, member of the firm of Talcott Bros., oldest jewelry house in Washington, who brought me over to Yakima, also told something about the road situation before organization of the Washington association. As we were driving up over the fine smooth Nachez Highway to Chinook Pass, they told me how they had walked over trails where now some of the finest mountain highways have been constructed.

The trip we were making in a few hours used to require about 10 days on horse back and three or four days longer with a pack train.

We went smoothly up the grade from Enumclaw at about 40 miles an hour in the Talcott family car and did not change gears until almost at the top. This car is a 1923 Studebaker. Of course,

some of the in-a-hurry lads went by us with a "whoosh, in their modern "airflow" cars, but I am betting that none of them will be running in 11 years from now.

These old pioneers like Charlie Talcott give their automobiles the same attention they did their horses. They gave them the right feed and care, and on a long journey saved them as much as possible. They do the same with their automobiles. That's why so many of the old models are still running and good for many years to come.

In case you don't know it, crossing the Cascade Mountains via Nachez Highway and Chinook Pass reveals some wonderful scenery. Mount Tacoma is seen from three different positions and on all sides are great crags and buttes, with here and there a green meadow and areas of evergreen trees. At the summit the sight is one such as the psalmist must have looked upon when he was inspired to write: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my strength."

While we stopped for lunch at Lake Tipso, just this side the summit, we found approximately half a hundred persons enjoying the outlook and the warm sunshine. Two days before the Tipso meadows had been covered with four inches of snow, the first of the season, but the sun had melted it and it was warm as midsummer. In conversation with one of the party who recently visited Europe, he told me that nowhere in the old world had he seen anything to compare with the outlook from Tipso and Chinook Pass.

That's something for the Chamber of Commerce and other Tacoma boosters to ponder.

BEARS ARE PEST

If you decide to make this wonderful trip before the snow settles down, you may see a couple of national park rangers driving along with a trailer that looks like a section of 30-inch corrugated iron culvert on a pair of wheels. That will be a bear trap, and the chances are they will be taking one of the too familiar bears from Yakima Park to turn him loose below Tipso.

Bears have been regular pests at Yakima Park this season and the trailer trap was devised to get rid of some of them. The bears are so accustomed to rummaging in garbage cans and getting into cabins that they do not hesitate to crawl into the open end of the trap to get a piece of meat placed at the other end. But as soon as Mr. Bear touches the meat he springs a trap which closes the door behind him, and there he is. The rangers hook onto the trailer and the bear gets a dizzying, terrifying ride.

When the end of the trap is opened, he jumps out with a "woof" and does he go! He is so badly scared that he forgets which way he came from, and of a number that have been moved this season none has come back. After a ride in the tank, away is the only direction in which they want to go.

I asked if there were any wolves around the mountain resorts and was told that they are very seldom seen in that part of the Cascades. George Talcott tells me that the long winter and deep snows in the fifties killed off the wolves and that there were none west of the mountains until

1876. That year wolves from eastern Washington followed a band of cattle driven over the mountains and soon became numerous.

Besides the wonderful scenery, a drive over the Nachez highway is interesting because of its relation to Puget Sound history. At a number of places along the highway there can be seen the old immigrant trail over which the first great overland wagon train to Puget Sound traveled, crossing Nachez Pass. On this side the descent was so steep that they let the wagons down with ropes made of rawhide. It's quite different getting around there today.

NACHES PASS TRAIL.

E. T. Short, "William P. Bonney and the Naches Pass Trail," The Tacoma Times.

This is written on historic ground at the conclusion of a week's celebration put on by the city of Walla Walla in commemoration of the establishment of the Marcus Whitman mission here 100 years ago.

The celebration also marked the beginning of a revival of interest in making the Oregon trail a great national highway, one branch of which came through the Yakima valley, up the Naches river to Naches pass in the Cascade mountains, and then down the water courses by the shortest route, ending near the site where Tacoma was to be established 20 years later.

Background for the close-up of a historic project was the ride over Naches pass about sun-up with Will Bonney, secretary of the Washington State Historical society, and Charles Ross of Pullman.

Bonney was born in a stockade at Steilacoom just about the time of the Indian uprising in 1855. Charlie Ross was born in the box of a covered wagon on the Oregon trail at the summit of the Blue mountains in 1851. The train of 65 wagons was delayed an entire day when Charlie made his advent into this world.

As the car sped along over smooth highways, past the site of the first settlement at Sumner, over Elhi hill along the White River trail to Buckley, then to the plateau at Enumclaw and over the Naches highway to the summit of the Cascades at 40 miles an hour. These two old timers commented on the great changes that have taken place since the first wagon trail came over the trail. About seven hours after we picked up Charlie Ross on the Puyallup highway just before dawn, we were at Walla Walla.

The first wagon train over Naches was about a month covering the same distance. On the way up to the pass the train was in the Naches river 68 times, crossing 68 times and coming out on the same side three times. So much for the transportation advantages which the present generation enjoys.

The last day's program of the Whitman centennial was in charge of the Oregon Trail Memorial association. This is the organization started when Ezra Meeker left his home in Puyallup nearly

25 years ago and with his ox team and covered wagon to retrace and mark the old trail. The last years of his life were devoted to impressing upon the nation the part played by the trail in bringing settlers to Puget Sound.

As Meeker neared the end of his days, he began to look about for someone to carry on the work he had started. One day he came into the historical building in Tacoma and said to his friend, Will Bonney:

"Will, I believe I have found the man to carry on the Oregon trail work."

He then introduced Howard D. Driggs, then in the history department of the University of Utah, Salt Lake. To make a long story short, Dr. Driggs took the job and has carried on where Ezra Meeker stopped when he was stricken on his last journey over the trail.

Dr. Driggs came to Walla Walla from the trail Headquarters in New York to tell the folks of the Northwest that the work is going on. He was accompanied by Maj. Arthur W. Proctor, treasurer of the association. Representatives from seven state trail associations included W. P. Bonney of Tacoma. The group agreed that having gone this far the activities of the association must be continued until the old trail becomes a great public highway spanning the country from Atlantic to Pacific.

Where the old Oregon trail reached the confluence of the Snake and Columbia rivers, it divided. One branch went down the Columbia river toward the Willamette. The other turned toward the northwest and reached Puget Sound over Naches Pass.

And here is something that should interest Tacoma:

Down in Oregon there are a lot of folks greatly interested in completion of the Columbia river branch of the trail to a terminus in Portland. They realize not only the sentimental value but also the great practical value of such a highway. If the old trail is opened along the river, that will, in a measure, fulfill one of the chief objectives of the memorial association and there will not be much national backing for the Naches pass route.

Besides the historic and sentimental significance of the Naches trail, the route over which the first wagons traveled to Puget Sound is the shortest and most direct route between Tacoma and the great -agricultural and trading area in Eastern Washington, including the Columbia basin.

If Tacoma is interested in annexing this great territory by way of the Naches trail, some highly effective support could be obtained through the national association. Right now it's a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. If Tacoma isn't interested, Portland is.