

NACHES PASS TRAIL SNOWDEN ACCT.

Clinton Snowden, "The Naches Pass Road," History of Washington. The rise and progress of an American state. New York: The Century Publishing Company, 1909, Volume III p. 160-164.

The coming of all those settlers, and the consequent advancement in all lines of useful activity, particularly in the lumber business, made the road question more important and interesting than ever. Particularly did the desirability of getting the road opened from Walla Walla to Steilacoom impress itself upon all.

Great hopes were entertained that Colonel Ebey would induce the legislature to memorialize Congress in its interest, and he did not disappoint them. His memorial was among the earliest prepared, and although various amendments were offered by members from the south side of the river, who were anxious to get other memorials adopted, in the interest of roads in their own neighborhoods, they were all voted down and his was approved and duly forwarded to Washington.

It asked for an appropriation of \$30,000 for the improvement. He also got a memorial adopted recommending an appropriation of \$6,000 for a military road from Steilacoom to Vancouver.

But as the season advanced the settlers were reminded that these memorials did not build the roads they were so anxious for. Early in March notice was received that Congress had appropriated \$20,000 for the Walla Walla road, but by the end of April it began to be apparent that it would not be expended in time to be of any benefit that year, and it was the immigrants of that year that everybody had hoped to have it ready for.

The "Columbian"(the first newspaper) accordingly began to call upon the settlers to "put their own shoulders to the wheel," and this they soon resolved to do. On May 18th, a public meeting was held at Olympia at which offers of labor were volunteered, and John Edgar, Whitefield Kirtley, Edward J. Allen and George Shazer were designated as a committee to explore the road, and they almost immediately began their work.

Rev. Benjamin Close, A. W. Moore, E. Sylvester, James Hurd and John Alexander undertook to raise subscriptions either in money or labor.

These and all others interested in the enterprise were greatly encouraged by the receipt of a letter early in June, from Isaac I. Stevens, the newly appointed governor of the territory, which had now been created, in which he gave notice of his appointment and that he was setting out for his new post of duty; that he was to explore the route for a Pacific railroad while on the way, but this would not delay the organization of the territorial government, as a census would have to be taken before anything else could be done, and the new United States marshal would soon arrive to begin that work.

The \$20,000 appropriation for the Cascade road had been placed in the hands, and the expenditure of it had been intrusted to a "vigorous and energetic officer 'Captain George B. McClellan, who would also soon be on the ground.

This was cheering news. Captain McClellan was notified of his appointment in April, but he did not reach Fort Vancouver until July, although the mails were carried from New York to San Francisco in eighteen days, and there was a regular weekly mail steamer between San Francisco and Portland. At Vancouver his movements were so deliberate that the settlers, wearying of the delay, and fearing that nothing would be done in time to be of benefit to the immigrants of that year, finally concluded to go on with the work themselves.

In a very short time \$6,600 was subscribed in money and labor. The money was invested in tools and provisions, and those who had agreed to contribute labor were assembled, and Edward J. Allen of the immigration of 1852 was given charge of the work by general consent.

From that time forward, as Elwood Evans well says, he was engineer, contractor and the soul of the work. The exploring committee, of which he had been a member, had followed the trail which the Klickitat and Yakima Indians had used for years in their visits to Fort Nisqually. Edgar, who was an old Hudson's Bay man, who had married a Klickitat woman, had pointed it out, and they were easily convinced that it was the most practicable route to be found.

A party composed of Whitefield Kirtley, Edwin Marsh, Nelson Sargent, Paul Ruddell, Edward Miller, J. W. Fouts, John L. Perkins, Isaac M. Brown, James Alverson, Nathaniel Stewart, William Carpenter and Mr. Clyne, was sent forward to begin work at the eastern end, while Allen himself, A. C. Burge, Thomas Dixon, Ephraim Allyn, James H. Allyn, George Githers, John Walker, John H. Mills, R. S. More, R. Foreman, Ed. Crofts, James Boise, Robert Patterson, Edward Miller, Edward Wallace, Lewis Wallace, James R. Smith, John Barrow and James Meek began work at the western end.

The time was short for an undertaking of such formidable appearance. July was already well advanced: August would be at hand before the work was well started, and settlers would begin to arrive in September or early in October.

But no time was lost or wasted. So confident were the builders that they would get the way open in time, that handbills were printed giving notice that the new road was open, and messengers were sent out to distribute them along the trails, and to urge the arriving settlers to come direct to the Sound, the true land of promise.

Some of the trains arrived at the Columbia before the ferry, which it had been proposed to construct there, had been begun, and they were detained until some sort of rafts or flatboats to convey their wagons across could be constructed. This required four or five days, and they did not reach the summit of the Cascades until about the first of October.

Here the road had not quite been completed. Allen and his associates, having been informed that no settlers were coming that year, had given up the work for the time being and returned to Olympia. Enough had been done, however, to enable the new arrivals to get through, and several trains came over the road that season, as we have already seen.

No part of the \$20,000 appropriated by Congress for this road was used to reimburse the settlers

for the money they had contributed, or the work they had done to get it opened. During the summer and fall Captain McClellan, " the vigorous and energetic " officer of whom. so much had been expected, arranged to have it inspected.

The route chosen was duly approved, and a promise was made that a report should be sent to Congress recommending an appropriation for their reimbursement. The promise was faithfully kept, but Congress did nothing. In those times the Constitution was strictly construed, and no appropriations were made for any purpose within the boundaries of any single State or territorial government or if no such government had been organized, or provided for, by the settlers themselves.

But a military road might be built by the national government, and the \$20,000 had been appropriated for such a road from Fort Walla Walla, still a Hudson's Bay station, to Fort Steilacoom. The nice distinction was made, apparently, that the settlers had not been building a military road, but an immigrant road, and therefore they must pay for it, notwithstanding the fact that the government appropriated their emigrant road, and made use of it for all the purposes a military road was designed to provide.

The \$20,000 was subsequently expended without greatly improving on the work which Allen and his fellow settlers had done at a cost of \$6,600.