

MOUNT RAINIER. 1852. "Visit to Mt. Rainier," *The Columbian*, Olympia, Oregon. Volume I #2 Saturday, September 18, 1852. p. 2.

About four weeks ago, a party of young men consisting of Messrs. R. S. Bailey. S. S. Ford, Jr. and John Edgar undertook an expedition to Mount Rainier for the purpose of ascending that mountain as far as circumstances might warrant. Rainier, as all are aware is situated in the main Cascade range, distant from its base to Olympia about fifty-five miles.

On arriving at the foot of the mountain the party secured their animals and pursued their way upward by the back bone ridge to the main body of the mountain and to the height, as near as they could judge of nine or ten miles, the last half mile over snow of the depth probably of fifty feet, but perfectly crusted and solid.

The party were two days in reaching their highest altitude and they describe the mountain as extremely rugged and difficult of ascent; on the slopes and table land they found a luxuriant growth of grass far exceeding in freshness and vigor any afforded by the prairies below. On some of these table lands they found beautiful lakes from a half to a mile in circumference formed from mountain streams and the melting of the snow.

The party remained at their last camp, upward two days and nights where they fared sumptuously on the game afforded by the mountain, which they found very numerous in the shape of brown bear, mountain goat, deer, etc. with an endless variety of the feathered genus; the side of the mountain was literally covered with every description of berries of the most delicious flavor.

The party had a perfect view of the Sound and surrounding country recognizing the numerous prairies with which they were familiar to which were added in their observations, several stranger prairies, of which they had no knowledge and which, probably, have never been explored. The evenings and mornings were extremely cold with a wind strong and piercing, the noon day sun oppressively warm.

They describe their view of the surrounding country and scenery as most enchanting, and consider themselves richly rewarded for their toil in procuring it. This is the first party of whites we believe that has ever attempted to ascend Rainier.

Not being provided with instruments for taking minute observations and there being a constant fog and mist along the range of mountains, the party were unable to make any very satisfactory discoveries in relation to a practicable route across them, yet Mr. Ford informs us that he noticed several passes at intervals through the mountains, which, as far as he could see, give satisfactory evidence that a good route could be surveyed and a road cut through will all ease.

Who can calculate the benefit that would have accrued to the Puget Sound Country had its citizens taken sufficient interest in the project to have located a road across the mountains for the ingress of this year's immigration?

Instead of the main body of the present influx going into the Willamette, Umpqua, Rogue River and Shasta valleys, they would have gladly wended their way to this still more inviting territory. Hundreds of claims would already have been taken and mechanic shops established wherever the wants of the people might have required them. Commercial and all other interests would have received an impetus before undreamed of, and the country advanced in importance in a single year, what would take ten years by the present tardy movements of settlement and improvement.

Let the people of the Sound be true to their interest the coming year and turn their attention as early next spring as practicable in surveying a route and establishing a road across the cascades, and for every dollar expended on the project they will in the end receive a hundred per cent interest.

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Note: The proprietors of the Columbian, Wiley and McElroy, chose to spell the name of the mountain as Ranier.