



HISTORIA

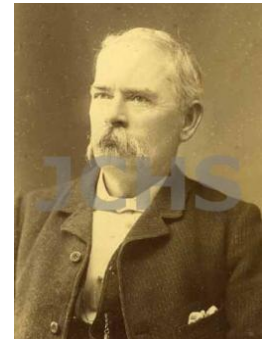
Individual, family, business and building genealogies

A Salt Water Cure

Eileen Johnston

Adapted from the handwritten manuscript of Charles Henry Jones.¹

While he paddled, Charles must have thought about what he would do with the gold. Should he make improvements to his farm on the North Skagit? Buy his own sloop so he could pick up trade and make a living on the water, of Puget Sound? Maybe even a fleet of modern ships... Splash, another bucket of dirty water was dumped over the side. Heading down river, it took only one man to manage the canoe with the help of the passengers who were expected to paddle and to bail water during the 15 mile trip on the Cowlitz River, from Pumphy's Landing to Monticello.²



A seat on this leaky old canoe in a downpour was not likely what Charles had hoped for when he started for the gold fields of Idaho. So far, this trip was not without frustrations. It was the spring of 1861 and setting out, he had taken the first transport he could get, which chanced to be on Jim Sanders' old flat-bottom fishing boat, taking a week to get from the northern waters of Puget Sound to the south sound at Olympia.

He then boarded a smart stagecoach for the 80 miles to Pumphy's Landing on the Cowlitz River.³ After a few miles, they transferred to an old mud wagon built for rough terrain, an indication of the roadway ahead, as they traveled through dense forests with old growth timber from 250 to 300 feet tall.⁴ The driver soon got them thoroughly stuck with mud up to the wagon hubs, and ordered the passengers to disembark. Charles told him: *"You have handed us into this, and must pull us through."* Sure enough, after a few harsh words and the assurance from all the passengers that they refused to get out in the middle of that huge mud hole, the man finally saw reason and pulled them free. The delay caused a late arrival at Pumphy's though, and the indignity of being damp and cold, was followed by having to spread their wet blankets on the floor to sleep. Folks sure do know how to take advantage of one another, a \$1.50 for breakfast and the privilege of sleeping on that dirty floor. The thought of those *"eggs, beans and that villainous coffee"* still got his dander up.

FOR NEZ PERCES MINES.

THE OREGON STEAM NAVIGATION Co's Steamers will run on the Columbia river as follows:

THE STEAMER JULIA.

WOLF.....Commander,
Will leave Portland every
Monday, Wednesday and Friday. at 6 A. M
Connecting with the steamer

IDAHO,

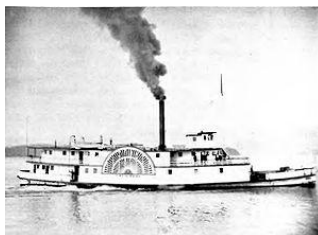
McNULTY.....Commander,
At the Cascades,
FOR DALLES CITY, Arriving same day.

NEW STEAMER TENINO,

WHITE.....Commander,
Will Leave Des Chutes for Wallula every Tuesday.
Returning, leaves Wallula every Thursday at 6 A. M.

Passage from Portland to the Dalles,.....\$8 00
Portage at Cascades extra.
Animals from Portland to Dalles,.....5 00
Passage from Des Chutes to Wallula,.....15 00
No Extra charge for meals.
J. C. AINSWORTH,
Pres't O. S. N. Co

Once in Monticello, Charles waited for a ship to Vancouver. Steamships were big business on the Columbia, and the Oregon Steam Navigation Company (O.S.N. Co) had a monopoly on the Columbia River.⁵ At Vancouver, Charles caught another steamer up river as far as the Cascades, where, owing to the rapids, all passengers disembarked.⁶



Side-wheeler Idaho

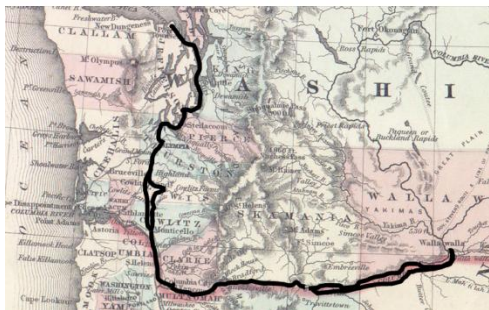
Charles threw his pack over his shoulder and walked the two mile portage trail to the other side of the rapids where once the cargo was loaded, the side-wheeler Idaho embarked for the Dalles. The Idaho was 150 feet long, 25 feet wide and 278 gross tons with a shallow bottom suitable for passengers and cargo registered up to 179 tons.⁷

The next morning at The Dalles, Charles took a stage to Celilo, paying an outrageous \$15.00, which was twice the cost of taking the 2 steamships from Portland. Another example of whatever the market will bear in a gold rush. At Celilo Falls, Indians could often be seen with their nets catching salmon. It had been a fishing and trading post for the Indians of the Columbia for thousands of years, and as Lewis and Clark had noted some fifty years earlier, the salmon had great importance to the survival of the local tribes.⁸ Charles boarded another steamer, this time the Gehl Wright which took him to Fort Wallula, where he caught a stage to Walla Walla.



Celilo Falls, Oregon 1899

Born in Maine in 1835, Charles had gone to sea at the age of 14, and then crewing on the Fearless out of Boston around the Horn, made his way to San Francisco and up to the waters of Puget Sound in 1856. Spending the majority of his life as a sailor, at the age of 26, Charles had little knowledge of the inconveniences associated with overland travel. So, when the coach arrived in Walla Walla at the Blue Mountain House, run by a Hibernian named Buckley, Charles asked about a place to wash off the alkaline dust from the road, to which old Buckley answered: *“Young Felly, better ye get a dry towel and wipe off the alkey before ye wet yer face or ye will have durnd sore eyes.”*⁹



Charles Route to and From Walla Walla

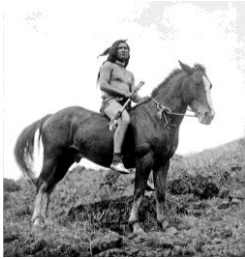
Hearing news from the gold fields, Charles was disappointed, possibly because mining required trespassing on the Nez Perce Reservation and the 1,600 claims already staked had not yet proved legal.¹⁰ This would need to be settled by the time the Territorial Legislature funded a road, into the fields.¹¹ Charles decided to stay in the lively little town of Walla Walla for a period of time. In just two years, it had grown from a few tents outside the walls of the Fort to a boomtown on the main route to the gold fields.¹²

A great demand for furniture found Charles working with a Mr. Munsell who had a small shop. Using a turning lathe powered by a water wheel on Mill Creek, Charles helped to produce rough furniture. He earned \$5.00 a day and the work was fairly easy. This soon gave him enough money to purchase a horse. After a period of time, Charles took ill and thought it might be due to the unaccustomed alkaline water or the climate. However, the doctor said it was Ague, which is similar to Malaria and is carried by mosquitoes with symptoms of chills, fever and sweating at regular intervals which can last for hours or days at a time causing fatigue and joint pain. Affecting those near wetlands, Ague was one of the leading cause of chronic illness in America from the colonial period to 1900.¹³

Having never been so far or so long from the sea, Charles became convinced that if he didn't get back to salt water soon, he should die. After he gained sufficient strength from the initial onset of the disease, Charles, abandoned all thoughts of gold and decided to head back to Puget Sound. A man named Alexander tried to convince him to stay and offered him \$7.00 per day to work for him, but Charles later said: *“All Walla Walla Valley wouldn't have induced me to stay.”* He packed his blanket, cooking utensils and grub and started out on his horse.

Charles knew it would be a rough ride, as there were no settlements between Walla Walla and The Dalles. Traveling on the old Hudson Bay Brigade Trail, he spotted a family of Indians on the Umatilla River but they did not communicate and he saw no more Indians until the John Days river. In the mornings, Charles tried to break camp before the chills came on him, and when they did, he would just hang onto his saddle pommel while the chills shook his feet right out of the stirrups. Once after stopping at a mud spring to fill his canteen, he was unable to remount his horse. Just then a gentleman riding a fine spirited animal, happened by and helped him mount. They rode together for several miles and Charles told the man of his narrow escape the night before at the John Days:

“There was nothing but Bunch Grass, Indians and Kiote [sic], and the Indians were a bad lot...After fording the river, an Indian appeared very suddenly, I didn’t see where he came from, his mount was a miserable kyuse [sic], he proposed to trade horses. [Since] My horse was a good one, I told him I didn’t want to trade. Soon he turned back but in a short time another red Devil came up flying on a poor looking Kyuse[sic] and he was all decked off with paint[,] feathers and ribbons and he proposed to trade horses, and when he found it was no go[,] he went back. And soon a third villainous looking Devil made his appearance and the result was the same as the others but what worried me was I couldn’t see from whence they came or where they went to. I thought they must just come up out of the ground. I began to feel a little uneasy. It was getting late in the day and I was a pretty sick man and quite weak. I thought that



Nez Perce Warrior

as shure[sic] as I camp anywhere near this place[,] them Red Devils will take my scalp before morning...It was a moonlight night and I kept traveling until about 10 P.M. when...I went off to the left of the trail where there was a slight rise in the ground. I unpacked and went in search of a place to pickett[sic] my horse and as luck would have it[,] I found a low place where he couldn’t be seen from the trail...I made no fire...[and] went to bed without supper. About 2 A.M. I was awakened by the tramp of horses...I lifted my head and looked through the bunch Grass and there were about 8 or 10 of the Red Devils all riding abreast and talking. If they had seen me or my horse, it would have been goodbye Charlie, and nobody would ever have known what became of me[!]”

The man answered: “You are very lucky to be alive today.” The rider told Charles he was sorry that he could not stay with him longer, but was in a great hurry. Uneasy about leaving him alone, the man assured Charles that unless Charles arrived safely in The Dalles by the next day, someone would be sent out to look for him. Happily, Charles did arrive in time for supper the following day. The wait staff at the Western Hotel were very kind and helped to make him comfortable for the night. The next morning, Charles boarded a ship for the Cascades and then another for Portland, where he stayed at the Columbia House.

From Portland, he took a boat for Monticello and then rode his horse north. He stopped just outside Olympia at old Charlie Bile’s place to deliver a letter from Bile’s son who worked in Walla Walla. While visiting, Charles no doubt told Bile of what had happened the night before in Portland. Charles had been sleeping comfortably in his bed at the Columbia House when he was awakened by an explosion: “*An Irishman blew out the gass[sic] and nearly cooked my goose[!]*” At the livery stable in Olympia, Charles chanced upon a pilot he knew by the name of Dave Wallace who did not recognize Charles even when he was standing next to him until Charles spoke hello. In surprise, Dave said: “*Great God, Charlie, that can’t be you!*” Charles explained, the illness that in his words, had made him: “*such a sad looking object.*” From Olympia, Charles caught the steamer Eliza Anderson which was headed for Port Townsend.

After his arrival and recovery, Charles said: “*...a good sniff of the salt water breeze apparently did me good, and Dr. O’Brien did the rest.*”¹⁴

[Charles’ farm on the north Skagit River was burned out by Indians while he was in Walla Walla, so he decided to stay on in Port Townsend, working at the Port Ludlow Inn until he bought a sloop and plied the waters of Puget Sound. He eventually became the first Harbormaster of Port Townsend and Chairman of the Puget Sound Pilots Commission. He had at least two other gold fever adventures, the details of which are recorded in his manuscript and also in a journal of Joseph Kuhn, both in the possession of the Jefferson County Historical Society. He evidently did not marry and had no known descendents.]

¹ “Jones, C.H.,” undated; Manuscript, 1996.164.15X.a-1; Joseph A. Kuhn Collection; Jefferson County Historical Society Research Center, Port Townsend, Washington. *Direct quotes are italicized.*

² “Monticello”, *Towns of Cowlitz County, Washington*, database; *Cowlitz Co., WA GenWeb Project* (<http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/wacowlitz/townsmz.html> : accessed 4 September 2010). Extinct town at the site of what is now Longview, Washington.

³ H.A. Gorley, *Selections from the Numerous Letters and Patriotic Speeches of my Husband*, (1876), 101; digital images, *Google Books* (<http://books.google.com> : accessed September 4 2010).

⁴ R. Wayne Clemm, “Mud Wagon Coaches and Mountain Wagons”, *Clem Wheel and Wagon Works, LLC* (<http://clemwheelandwagon.com/cart/> : accessed 4 September 2010). Gorley, *Selections from the Numerous Letters and Patriotic Speeches*, 101.

⁵ John Harrison, “Steamboats”, *Columbia River History*, database; *Northwest Power and Conservation Council* (<http://www.nwcouncil.org/default.htm> : accessed 4 September 2010).

⁶ Harrison, “Steamboats”, *Columbia River History*.

⁷ “Idaho-sidewheeler”, *Wikipedia.org* ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho_\(sidewheeler\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho_(sidewheeler))): accessed 4 September 2010).

⁸ Elizabeth Woody, “Recalling Celilo” Adapted from *Salmon Nation: People, Fish and our Common Home* (2003), digital reprint, *Salmon Nation.com* (http://www.salmonnation.com/essays/recalling_celilo.html : accessed 6 September 2010).

⁹ “Hibernian”, Merriam-Webster Incorporated, online database, *Merriam-Webster* (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hibernian> : accessed 6 September 2010). Hibernian: noun- a native or inhabitant of Ireland

¹⁰ Gerald J. Tucker, “Chapter VI: Early Pioneer Accounts,” *History of the Northern Blue Mountains*, (1940), 28; database; *US Forest Service* (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/publications/history/Umatilla16.pdf> : accessed 4 September 2010).

“ADA, ID 1870: Federal Census Transcriber’s notes”, data base; *USGenWeb Census Project* (<http://www.us-census.org/pub-ftp/id/ada/1870/notes.txt> : accessed September 4, 2010)

¹¹ “Gold Rush Historic Byway”, Miner’s Shanty and Cedar Inn (<http://www.minersshanty.com/cedarhistory.htm> : accessed 4 September 2010).

¹² “Walla Walla and the Gold Rush”, *HistoryLink.org* (http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8486 : accessed 4 September 2010).

¹³ “Ague”, US History Encyclopedia, database, *Answers Corporation* (<http://www.answers.com/topic/ague> accessed 10 September, 2010).

¹⁴ Charles’ farm on the Skagit was burned out by Indians while he was in Walla Walla, so he stayed on in the Port Townsend area and worked at the Port Ludlow Inn until he bought a sloop and worked the waters of Puget Sound. He eventually became the first Harbormaster of Port Townsend and Chairman of the Puget Sound Pilots Commission. He had at least two other gold fever adventures, the details of which are recorded in his manuscript and also in a journal of Joseph Kuhn in the possession of the Jefferson County Historical Society.