

Travel over Naches Pass 1853-1855 **(Thanks to Dennis Larsen)**

1853

June 5 to June 21---The scouts Allen, Kirtley, Edgar, Shazer travel from Yelm to the Wenas divide and return.

July 19-Aug 20---Whitfield Kirtley and eleven men go over the pass to build the wagon road from the east.

July 24--- Shirely Ensign goes over the pass to build a ferry at the Columbia River. His return date is unknown. The ferry is not completed until 1854.

July 26 to October 3rd---Allen, eighteen men & Quiemuth start east for the pass intending to build a road from the west side and connect up with Kirtley.

July 30---Major Larned sends an unknown rider from Fort Steilacoom over the pass to Captain McClellan with orders for him to aid the road builders. McClellan receives the orders on August 17th while at the Catholic Mission on Ahtanum Creek.

Aug 22--- Lt. Hodges leaves McClellan's camp on the Wenas and travels over Naches Pass to Fort Steilacoom with six soldiers, 17 packers and 50 horses. Says he followed up the Naches River to a point where the newly constructed 'emigrant road' left the river abruptly and began the ascent. Lt. Hodges camps at the summit and on the way down met Theodore Winthrop who was going east. Further down the trail Hodges encounters Allen and his work crew.

Aug 23-29---Captain McClellan with Mr. J. F. Minter, an engineer, and six men make a survey of the east side of Naches pass and camp on the summit on August 25. McClellan notes "the blazes of the party sent out from Olympia to cut a wagon road."

Around Aug 26---Mr. Theodore Winthrop spends the night at Allen's camp near Greenwater.

Sept 6---Lt Hodges returns from Fort Steilacoom, goes over the pass, and rejoins McClellan on September 15th.

A. W. Moore leaves Allen's work crew and goes in search of Captain McClellan in an effort to get the work crew under a government contract.

Sept 12-13 Moore finds McClellan and gets his contract signed.

Sept 15 to Oct 8???---Longmire/Biles wagon train travels over the pass.

Sept 8- 27---Mr. Aiken goes over the pass ahead of the wagon train to get help. Aiken rides to the Nisqually Ferry with Allen. The following persons accompanied Aiken back from Olympia to render assistance, viz: B. Gordon, T. Bush, J. Kindred, M. Jones

When did the Longmire-Biles wagon train arrive at Clover Creek?

Oct 8th ---Longmire train arrives at Clover Creek according to James Longmire and the historical bronze plaque at the site.

Oct 12th ---Longmire train arrives at Clover Creek according to David Longmire.

ca. Oct 12th-- Longmire train arrives at Clover Creek according to Van Ogle.

Later than Oct 8th according to the newspapers of the day.

Later than Oct 12th according to George Himes.

Nov--- William Mitchell wagon train goes over Naches Pass and is caught in a snowstorm. The citizens of Steilacoom rescue them.

1854

May 23---Lt. Arnold leaves Steilacoom to survey the road. Finds it is 79 ¼ miles from Steilacoom to Naches Summit, 137 ½ miles to Wenas and 234 miles to Walla Walla.

July 7---Allen and 30 men go out to work on road under a government contract.

Summer---James K. Hurd goes over the pass twice to meet incoming immigrants and spread word of the wagon road.

Aug 29---A person identified by the newspaper as MR. SILAS GALLIHER arrived at Olympia over the Naches immigrant road. He may have been Milas Galiher who settled in Tacoma purchasing Delin's sawmill. The newspaper said, "Mr. G. reports five wagons, in company with himself, which may be expected in the course of a few days. He reports the road over the mountains as being much improved from what it was represented to be last year, and that the party under Mr. E. J. Allen are within about 18 miles distant on the western slope of the summit."

Sept 14---The wagon train arrives in Olympia. "Five immigrant wagons with three families arrived at Olympia. Messrs. W. M. Morrow, and James Kirtley, brother of Whitfield Kirtley, Esq., of this place, from Iowa, and Mr. W. N. Ayres, from Wisconsin."

Sept 15---Ezra Meeker starts for Naches Pass from Steilacoom. The September 3 date he quotes in his books, I believe, is in error.

Sept 17---In the morning Meeker encountered a group of three women and eight children walking toward the settlements. [Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Herspburger and Mrs. Fawcet.] He shared what little food he had with them and learned that their wagon train had abandoned all but one of their wagons a few miles back as their stock was worn out. That night he camped alone in Government meadows.

These ladies are another unidentified wagon train as they do not show up in the rosters of any of the known wagon trains.

Sept 19---[*Austin*] diary reports, "Met Mr. Meeker on his way to meet his father." This was east of the summit near the Wenas River.

Just at dark Meeker came upon the Ebey wagon train. The next morning, according to his diary, Ebey diary gave Ezra some very bad news.

"September 20 This morning [four miles above the Naches River/Yakima river junction] we met Mr Ezra Meeker of the sound going out to meet his father's family who are behind us They are from Eddyville Iowa Poor fellow he had not heard of the Death of his Mother before. She died on the Platte. Much of his anticipated pleasure is dashed to the earth by this announcement We thought it better to let him hear the worst before he met his father He pushed on with a Sad heart to meet the family."

Sept 25---The Ebey party encountered Edward J. Allen's thirty-man road construction crew just east of the summit and spent the night with them. Ebey sold Allen his well-used tent.

Oct 5---The Ebey wagon train rolled up to Peter Smith's cabin just outside of Steilacoom.

Oct 15---The Jacob Meeker party arrived in Steilacoom—the last wagon train to use the pass

1855

Lt. Arnold out working on the road

Meeker Busy Life, Page 183

Two years after the opening of the road, the Hudson Bay Company sent a train of three hundred horses loaded with furs, from the interior country to Fort Nisqually, with a return of merchandise through the same pass, but never repeated the experiment.

Oct Indian Wars begin

1853 Wagon Trains

Longmire/Biles Wagon Train

James Longmire's account may be found in the January 1932 volume of the *Washington Historical Quarterly*. The most complete list of 163 members of the wagon train may be found in David Longmire's account in the January 1917 issue of the *Washington Historical Quarterly*, Pages 22-28. A shorter list is found in Meeker's books. A third list

may be found in George Himes' address to the 35th Annual Reunion of the Oregon Pioneer Association, June 19, 1907.

November Wagon Train-

The best account of this wagon train may be found in *Early History of Thurston County, Washington Together with Biographies and Reminiscences of Those Identified with Pioneer Days*, compiled and edited by Mrs. George E. Blankenship, Olympia, Washington, 1914. Wm. H. Mitchell, Pages 142-146; Bennett Wilson Johns, Pages 237-240.

Left Council Bluffs- June 3, 1853. At Fort Walla Walla the train split, part going down the Columbia, the rest going over Naches Pass. Two scouts were sent forward and came back reporting that there was too much snow in the Cascades for the wagons. The company left the wagons at the Catholic Mission and proceeded on foot, letting the women ride whatever there was to ride. Mr. Wooden and William Mitchell went ahead of the rest. They met Mr. Connell on the White River, secured fresh horses, and pushed on to Fort Steilacoom. Help was sent out from there.

November 19, 1853, Page 2, Column 1

The Columbian

“A party of immigrants reached Steilacoom City a few days since, having come through the new route. Owing to the lateness of the season, they were caught in the snow before getting out of the mountains and suffered severely. Fortunately assistance sent out from Fort Steilacoom reached them in time to prevent actual starvation.”

Known wagon train members—at least 34 and no doubt many more.

William H. Mitchell---from Wisconsin, settled in Olympia

Samuel Holmes---from Wisconsin, settled near Olympia—ran a daguerreian studio, died Nov. 5, 1873

Mary Ann Fullager Holmes

Holmes children—May Louisa, Frederick Samuel, Florence Adelaide

Mr. Wooden-settled in Nisqually, then moved to Seattle

Mr Schock, Wooden's son-in-law settled near Seattle

Mr. Wilson Bennet Johns and 8 children (One named Martha T. who later married William Mitchell) father, brothers & sisters settled on White River

Mr. Livingston & two daughters settled in Seattle (One daughter married William H Brannon and was killed with her husband & children by Indians)

Bird Wright & two brothers and families settled in Puyallup valley—Listed in both 1853 wagon trains. Likely traveled at times in both.

Mr. Morrison a minister settled in Puyallup valley

Alexander Barnes

There were 300 immigrants in the two trains combined according to the Olympia newspaper.

1854 Wagon Trains

Sept 14th Olympia Wagon Train Members

W. M. Morrow

James Kirtley, brother of Whitfield Kirtley, Esq., of Olympia, from Iowa

Mr. W. N. Ayres, from Wisconsin.

Silas Galliher [Milas Galiher]

Mystery Wagon Train

Mrs. Hall,

Mrs. Herspburger

Mrs. Fawcet.

Ebey Wagon Train Members:

Winfield Scott Ebey—Age 22

Jacob Neff Ebey---age 61, his father

Sarah Blue Ebey---age 58, his mother

Mary Neff Ebey---age 38, his sister

Elizabeth Ruth Ebey---age 25, his niece

Almira Neff (Myra) Wright---age 11, his niece

James Polk Wright---age 9, his cousin

George Wesley Beam---age 21

James J. Wood---age unknown, died of cholera at Bluff Spring

John W Lesley, his wife and three children—departed from the train with those bound for California at Independence Rock

Several more wagons joined the train on June 1, including George E. King and his wife and two children.

Lake and Perry wagon train-joined Ebey August 22

Walter G. Perry, wife and 4 children (Perry died from wounds inflicted by an Indian attack.

George Lake and Family. George Lake was Walter Perry's brother-in-law. He was killed in the Aug 19 Indian attack.

Joseph and Arnold Lake

The Wisconsin Wagon Train Members:

David Solomon Burr---age 31

Nancy North Burr---age 27

1. Lewis Burr---age 10
2. Emily or Emeline Burr---age 9
3. Marie Angelina Burr---age 7

4. Lynus or Linus Burr—age 6
5. Samuel Burr---age 4
6. Sarah Burr—born ca. May 1854 (“on the plains” according to the 1860 U. S. Census)

Thomas Jefferson Headley---age 38
Sarah Ann Burr Headley---age 32

1. Sarah Ursula Headley—age 14
2. Samuel Newton Mark Headley---age 9 months

A.J. Bradley—drivers employed by Headley
John Waiste

Henry Whitsell---age 41
Margaret Bulman Whitsell---age 32

1. M.E. Whitsell---age 16 (There is no mention of this daughter in the diaries, but she shows up in the W.T. 1860 census.)
2. Nancy Whitsell---age 15 Margaret’s stepchildren
3. William Whitsell--age 13

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4. Anthony Whitsell---age 11 Margaret’s children
 5. Alex Whitsell---age 8
 6. Elizabeth Whitsell---age 7
 7. Margaret Whitsell---age 4
 8. Calvin Whitsell---age 1

THE VERMILION WAGON TRAIN MEMBERS:

William Bird Goodell---age 25
Anna Maria Goodell---age 22
Frederick Augustus Goodell (Freddie)---age five months

Elizabeth Austin---age 27

Charles P. Judson---age 48
Louisa Judson---age 44
Lucretia Judson—daughter, age unknown

Charles Van Wormer---age 35, later settled in Lynden, WA (Robert E. Hawley, *Skqee Mus, or Pioneer Days on the Nooksack*, Bellingham, 1945 p. 185)
Mary Ann Van Wormer---age 27 and their three children

Ebenezer Hardy---age 21

Alexander S. Yantis Wagon Train

From September 3rd on the Yantis train traveled in close proximity to the Ebey wagon train.

Alexander S. and Sarah Green Yantis and seven children from Missouri.

Harvey H. and Eliza Jane Jones and three children from Grant Co., Wis.

Moses and Nancy Piper Kirkland from Louisiana.

Meeker Wagon Train Members:

Jacob Redding Meeker—age 50

Phoebe Shaw Baker Meeker---age 53

Oliver Meeker---age 26

Amanda Clement Meeker---age 15

Usual Clark Meeker---age 17

Jesse Dunlap---age 30 (per author's belief)

Hannah Jane Meeker Dunlap---age 20

John A. Packard---age 33 (Bonney, *History of Pierce County*, page 124)

Lulu M. Packard---age 30 (*Pioneer Reminiscences*, page 114)

The following people/families were with the Meeker train when it joined the Vermillion party on May 26th, but we do not know when or where they joined the Meeker train.

C.P. Anderson and family---Goodell and Austin simply call them Mr. and Mrs. Anderson. Bancroft in his *History of Washington* supplies the initials. The Andersons traveled with the Meekers from May 29th until July 1st, when they sprinted ahead.

Mr. Hammond---disappeared while searching for missing cattle on June 7th and was never found. It was believed that Indians captured him.

Mr. Wright—confusing, as there was a nine-year-old James Wright with the Ebey train. The Meeker train's Mr. Wright seems to have arrived with the Andersons and left when they departed.

An unidentified African-American family (Goodell and Austin) whose names we never learn.