

CHAPTER XXIV

FROM PASCO TO THE DALLES CITY

I was detained at Pasco by a severe wind and rain storm, the first rain that had fallen since leaving Castlegar, 26 days before. The storm at Hunters was a hurricane of wind only. Leaving Pasco at 11 o'clock, October 15, in a short distance I passed under the joint railway bridge and rowing down a tranquil current in three miles passed the mouth of Snake River, where I could see the steel bridge of the Northern Pacific Railroad. A mile farther brought me to the bridge of the Oregon-Washington Railway & Navigation Company across the Columbia. The going continued good and I was almost abreast of the mouth of the Walla Walla River when rain began to fall and I cast about for a place to go into camp. On the right-hand side was a neglected orchard, on a low bench, and, putting ashore, I found the place favorable and set up the tent under an old apple tree and not far from the track of the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railway.

I had noticed an empty farmhouse just across the railway track and after establishing camp, I investigated it. The house had several rooms, was wide open and unfurnished, but in one room I found the floor completely covered with fresh hay, on which, lying in one corner, was a bundle of blankets. As the ground was rather uneven and rough in the or-

chard I appropriated a good-sized armful of the hay, carried it to my tent and spread it under my bedding. While I was preparing supper, the occupant of the house made me a visit.

He introduced himself as Lee Fulkerson, a trapper of predatory animals, in the employ of the Washington State government. I learned from him that the State of Washington keeps 17 trappers constantly employed, under salary, to destroy wild animals that prey upon livestock. He claimed that in the last five years he had, personally, killed 765 coyotes, 97 bob-cats, and 2 bears. His home is at old Fort Wallula, almost directly across the River from the deserted farmhouse he was then occupying.

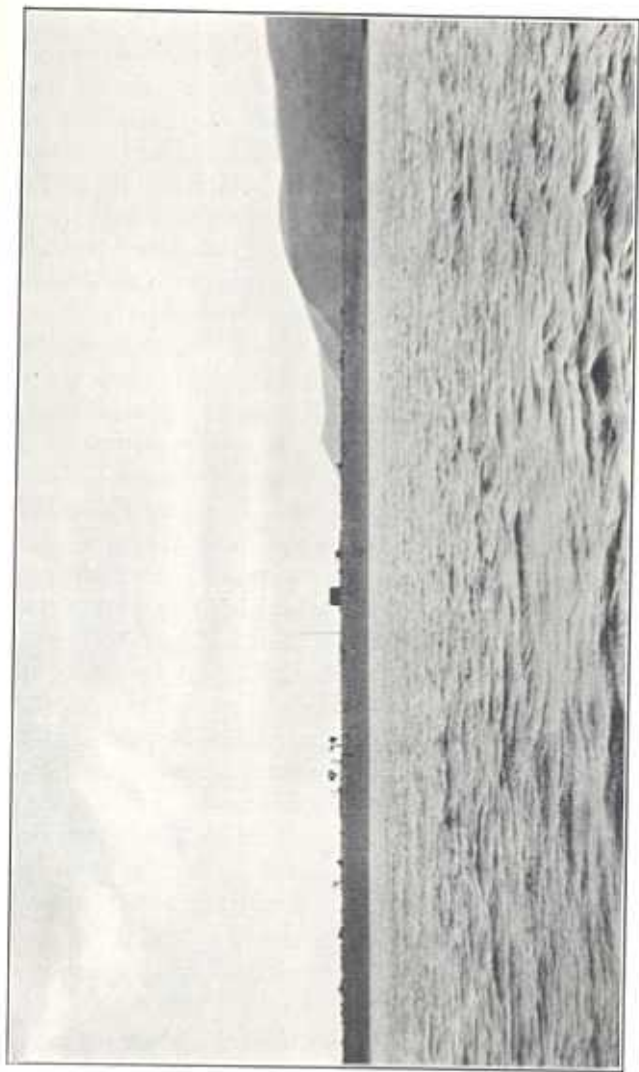
In connection with the information furnished by Mr. Fulkerson, the annual report of Mr. Glenn R. Bach, Inspector of Predatory Animals for the State of Washington, for the calendar year 1922 will no doubt be interesting. The State Government combines with the Federal Government and private agencies for the control of predatory animals, with conspicuous results for 1922. There was an average of 28 trappers, or hunters, employed for the year, working a total of 8,771 days, taking and destroying the following animals: bears 10, bob-cats 160, coyotes 2,794, cougars 6, wolf 1, miscellaneous 47; total 3,018. The expense entailed in the destruction of the above animals was \$36,775; and the saving thereby to livestock raisers is estimated to be \$156,700.

Fort Wallula was originally called Fort Nez Perce and was established on the Walla Walla

River, just above its junction with the Columbia, as a fur trading post by the Hudson Bay Company in 1820. When the Canadians abandoned their posts south of the Border the United States Government took possession, established a military encampment, and changed the name. During the pioneer times of the Northwest, Fort Wallula was a center of great activity, but now nothing remains but a solitary house and a flag-pole.

Leaving the old orchard on the morning of October 16 in a short distance I passed the Walla Walla River, fortified by an array of basalt blocks that litter the Columbia at its mouth. The Walla Walla River defines the termination of the ancient lake bed which I had been following for 100 miles; and also marks the southern end of the Great Bend around which I had come from Hawk Creek. From now on, the course of the Columbia is westward. Here the Umatilla Highlands intercept the River with their bare, basalt slopes rising up a thousand feet to the plateaus above and the challenge is met by forcing a way through for nine miles with a channel 3,000 feet wide. Immediately on entering the hills a noticeable butte is seen on the left shore. This is the Twin Sisters, crowned with two almost equal-sized turret-shaped summits. Four miles below the mouth of the Walla Walla River the State of Oregon is entered, and thereafter Washington will be on the right-hand side and Oregon on the left.

Below Pasco the Columbia River is paralleled by two railway lines. On the right is the Spokane, Portland and Seattle, known as the "North Bank



OLD FORT WALLULA

Road," which crosses the River at Vancouver to reach Portland. On the left is the Oregon, Washington Railway and Navigation Company, which goes directly into Portland. The trains on these two railways became familiar objects to me as they passed and repassed, and I received many signals from the train crews—whistle blasts from the engineers and "high signs" from the conductors and brakemen.

Below the Umatilla Highlands the valley opens out into broad plains considerably higher on the Washington than on the Oregon side. Much of the land is under cultivation, principally to grain, but the great orchards seen above are absent—those I saw were small. The section is one of minimum rainfall and semi-arid but the moisture is sufficient for grain. Irrigation is necessary for fruits and vegetables and as there are no pumping plants along the River, water must be obtained from the nearby hills or from wells. The raising of livestock is a feature of the section.

After leaving the Walla Walla River, rapids again become numerous in the Columbia, and after passing through a small one called Bull Run, towards evening I came to one I did not recognize from the descriptions that had been given me. The Umatilla Rapids should be next, and they were said to be rough and dangerous and were responsible for the loss of several lives—but these were not alarming compared even with Priest Rapids.

The rapids I had reached had somewhat rough breakers in the main channel, but along the Oregon

shore there were few rocks, little current, and ample depth of water to float the COLUMBIA. I did not land to investigate, but hugging the left hand shore closely, made good progress for about a mile until it became evident that I was in a *cul-de-sac* with a low reef ahead and another on the right barring the way to the channel. Farther downstream progress was checked and the only alternative seemed to be to line back upstream a hundred yards or more to where there was an opening which would take me outside of all obstructions. However, it was too late in the day to go through the slow process of lining, and deferring the matter until morning I pitched my tent on the low bench at the place where I was halted.

Not liking the idea of lining upstream (something there had been no necessity of resorting to so far on the trip), the first thing I did in the morning, after breaking camp, was to go down to the obstructing reef below and "size up" the possibility of crossing it in some fashion. The reef was about 15 feet wide with shallow water having a gentle current flowing over it in one place. There no longer being a reason for carrying much in the way of provisions I was now traveling with a light boatload, and believing it would be a better plan to drag my boat over the reef, if necessary, rather than line upstream, I rowed down to the crossing place I had selected. The boat grounded in the shallow water, but when I stepped overboard to drag her I was pleased to find that, relieved of my weight, she would just float across the reef without even scratching her bottom. A few minutes' time were all that were

necessary to solve the problem that looked somewhat serious the night before, and I was again in good going—but not for long, for I was in a second pocket.

This time the reef to be crossed projected about a foot out of the water, was about 12 feet wide and was cleft in twain by a narrow channel of deep water. The channel was about four feet wide, but had a sharp bend that caused the COLUMBIA to wedge in the passage. But that was nothing. Stepping out on the rocks, first on one side and then on the other, without further unloading, I alternately lifted and twisted the bow and the stern, and keeping part of the boat all the time in the water, in five minutes I was by this, the last obstruction, and was through the rapids. A little farther along I turned a bend to the left and came in sight of the town of Umatilla, Oregon, a railway junction at the mouth of Umatilla River. It was not until the town came in view that I realized that I had just come through the alleged dangerous Umatilla Rapids without having to run a single foot of rough water.

Stopping at Umatilla a short time, two miles below there Devils Bend Rapids were reached and passed, and towards evening I came to a deserted settlement about a third of the way down Blalock Island, a large island two miles wide and seven miles long. Here I found three large two-story houses, wide open and unfurnished, except that the upper house had, in one room, a bedstead with a spring mattress. It was a comfortable place, affording a good bed, and I made myself at home.

After leaving Blalock Island in the morning I ran Canoe Encampment Rapids, hugging the Oregon side, and had just reached their lower end when a man signaled from the Washington shore. Answering the signal I rowed across the River to see what was wanted. He was an employee of the North Bank Road who was "baching" and wanted to go across and down the River about a mile to Castle Rock station to get some needed groceries. In the conversation I had with him it developed that he had lived in British Columbia, and knew much about the difficulties I had had to contend with in navigating the Big Bend section of the Columbia River. Leaving my passenger at Castle Rock, nine miles of good going brought me to Heppner Junction, Oregon, a small place at the mouth of Willow Creek. Here the plain that had been a feature on the Oregon side of the River ends and becomes a plateau about 400 feet high. On the Washington side the land had been gradually increasing in elevation and had developed into broken, rounded hills many hundred feet higher than the plateaus on the Oregon side. Eleven miles below Heppner is the pretty little town of Arlington, Oregon, another railway junction, which I reached at sundown, and finding no place to set up a tent I made my bed among some willows on the beach.

Leaving Arlington on the morning of October 19, I had before me more rapids to contend with in a single day's run than on any other section of the Columbia River; and some of them were said to have dangerous features. Owyhee, Blalock, Four

o'clock and Rock Creek Rapids were navigated without delay or trouble, and then came Squally Hook, a somewhat different rapid.

About twelve months prior to my arrival at the place, Freeman had run Squally Hook, alone in a rowboat, without first taking the precaution to investigate them, and his story describes his experience and narrow escape from capsizing. The view ahead as I approached seemed to confirm his recorded impressions. On the Oregon side is the high cliff that gives the place its name. On the Washington side the shore is low and flat for a considerable distance towards the higher ground. Between the shores are low-lying, exposed reefs of basalt stretching all the way across except for narrow channels filled with tossing whitewater. The reefs seemed to form an almost perfect barrier, for I could see no channel offering even a fair chance of safety. It was a case of putting ashore and making an examination—I did not care to repeat Freeman's experience, perhaps with more disastrous results. This is Freeman's story:

"The sheer two-thousand-foot cliff on the inside of the bend that gives its name to the rapid is well called Squally Hook. What had been a gentle ten-mile-an-hour breeze on the river above began resolving itself into a succession of fitful gusts of twenty or thirty, as I approached the rock-walled bend. Even a steady head wind makes steering awkward in going into a rapid, a gusty one is a distinct nuisance. To avoid the necessity of any sharp changes of course after I was once among the whitecaps, I resolved to use every care in heading into the rapid in exactly the right place. That was why, when I became aware that two girls from a

farmhouse on the bench above the right bank were motioning me imperiously in that direction, I swerved sharply from the course I had decided upon in an endeavor to locate the channel into which I was sure they were trying to tell me to head. Just what those confounded, half-breed Loreleis were *really* driving at I never did learn; at any rate they were certainly *not* trying to pilot me into a clear channel. The fact walloped me right between the eyes the instant I discovered that I had pulled beyond the entrance of a perfectly straight channel, and that there was a barely submerged barrier of rock blocking the river all the way to the right bank.

"That, of course, left me no alternative but to pull back for all that was in me for the 'intake,' but I didn't have room to make the channel. The current, running now like a mill-race, carried me onto the reef sixty feet to the right of the smooth, green sheet of the 'fairway.'

"If it had taken half an hour, instead of half a second, to shoot out across the shoaling shelf of that froth-hidden reef there might have been time for a good bit of worrying anent the outcome. As it was, there was just the sudden thrill of seeing the bottom of the river leaping up to hit the bottom of the boat, the instant of suspense as she touched and dragged at the bank, and then the dizzy nose dive of two or three feet into deeper water. It was done so quickly that a stroke checked by the rock of the reef was finished in the up-boil below the little cascade. With an inch or two less of water she might have hung at the brink and swung beam-on to the current which, of course, would have meant instant capsizement. The way it was, she made a straight, clean jump of it, and only buried her nose for the briefest part of a second when she struck. The rest was merely a matter of three hundred yards of rough running down a rock-clear channel."

According to his description, Freeman narrowly

escaped disaster and his close call impelled him to blame the half-breed girls whom he has likened to the fabled enchantress of the Rhine, Lorelei, who with her siren songs wantonly led men on to destruction. The girls were misjudged, for they were honestly trying to divert Freeman from danger and into the safe channel that exists at Squally Hook, as my experience at the same rapids will prove.

From the lay of things at Squally Hook it was apparent to me that the Washington shore was the one on which to land and reconnoitre, and I accordingly put ashore about a thousand feet above the first reef on that side. Following down the beach, afoot, I found the solution to the safe and easy passage of the rapids. Just above the first reef, and unseen from upstream, was a deep, narrow channel, about thirty feet wide, turning abruptly to the right and then to the left, absolutely clear of rocks, and avoiding all the rough section of the main channel. This was the safety chute the alleged Lorelei were so "imperiously" beckoning the traveler into.

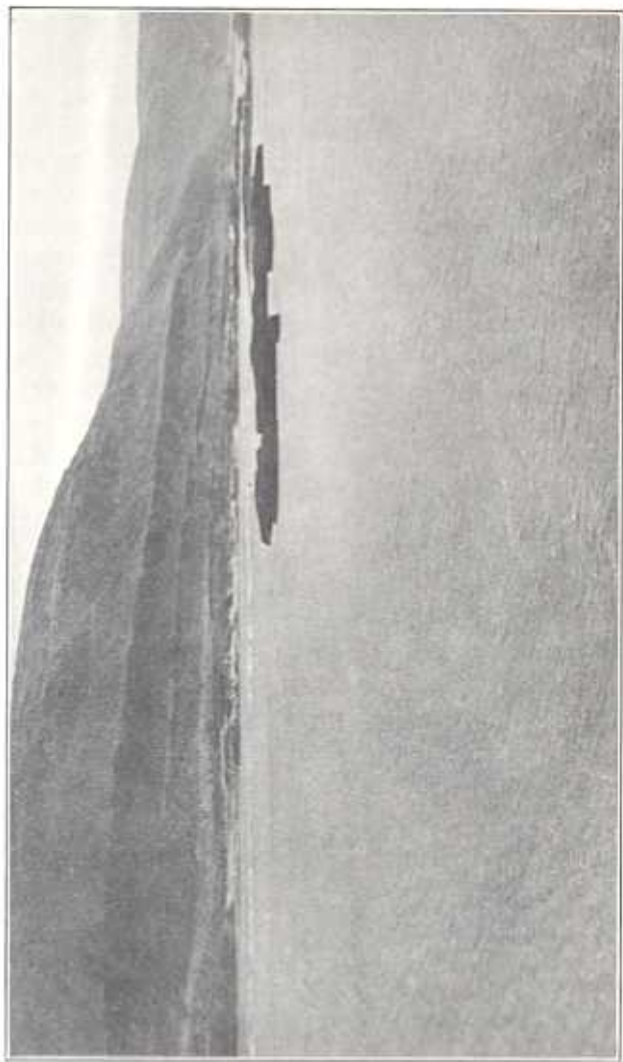
Having found the safe channel, the logical thing for me then to do was to follow it, and going back to my boat, I dropped her carefully down, close to shore, and reaching the entrance to the chute turned quickly into it and in a few minutes the swift current had carried me through with nothing more serious to contend with than the diminishing waves at the trailing end of the rapids.

Indian Rapids, three miles below Squally Hook, and said to have dangerous features, were still to be navigated. I approached them with a degree of

caution, but finding nothing to either alarm or delay me, I selected a favorable chute between the reefs and, gliding through some moderate breakers, in a few minutes the sixth, and last, rapids of the day's run were left behind.

Just before sundown John Day River, a considerable stream entering the Columbia from the Oregon side at the head of John Day Rapids, was reached. As the right-hand channel was plainly the one to be followed through the rapids, I put ashore at their head and made camp in the willows on the Washington shore.

The John Day Rapids are in three sections and with an early start in the morning I entered and ran the first. The second section was almost reached when one of the sudden storms for which the Columbia River is famous came racing upriver. It was not a squall, but a gale of wind like the one that drove me ashore at Hunters, and making headway against it was impossible. My progress had brought me against the rocky Oregon shore where there was no place to land and find shelter from the fury of the wind, and it was not until I had rowed back upstream a quarter-mile that I found protection on a sandbar behind a low, projecting cliff. The storm showing no signs of abatement, I set up the tent and placed all my things within it to shield them from the drifting sand which lost no time in covering everything with a mantle of grit. It was not a comfortable camping place that I had been forced into, but I managed to make my stay there endurable after finding a watermelon patch at a ranch on John Day River just

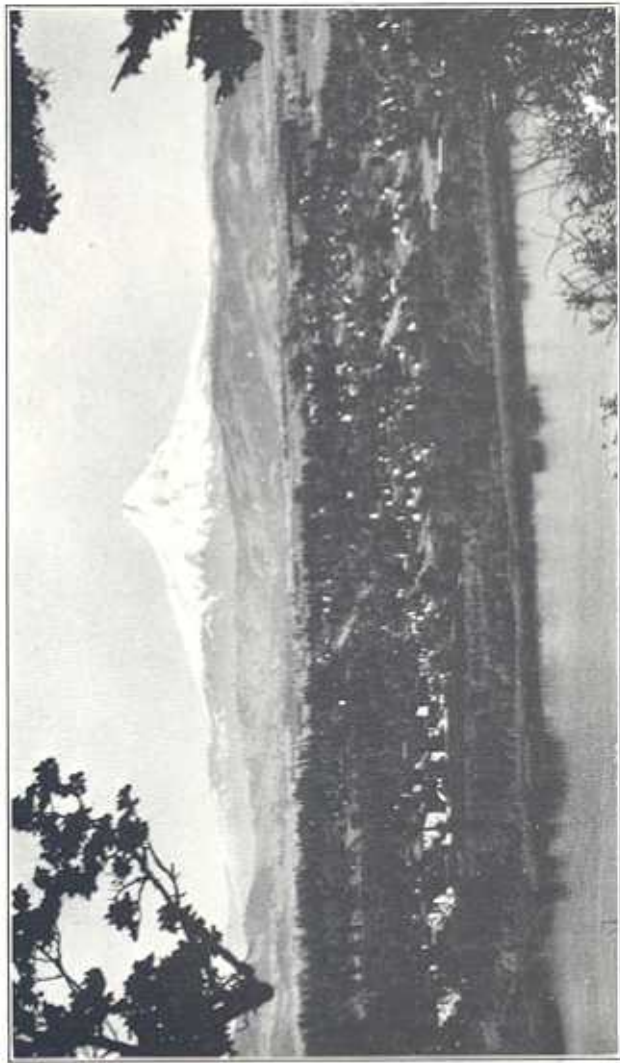


HEAD OF JOHN DAY RAPIDS

above the highway bridge. The farmer's wife and daughter were in the field when I reached it and from them I obtained a couple of fine, ripe melons cut fresh from the vine, and the last I was to get for the season.

The storm expended itself during the night and, the morning of October 21 being calm, I easily ran the second and third sections of John Day Rapids, and turning a bend to the left, a most beautiful sight burst unexpectedly into view. It was Mount Hood, an almost perfect cone covered with a fresh mantle of snow and resting in a bed of evergreen timber. The peak was directly down the middle of the River, whose silvery surface, shining in the morning sunlight, flowed apparently on to meet it, and filled the whole expanse of the valley like a picture set in a frame.

I have seen many beautiful mountains but for loveliness I think Mount Hood transcends them all—its beauty is almost ethereal. As soon as I could find a landing-place I went ashore to photograph the mountain, but by the time I had landed and got the camera ready, clouds had gathered, almost obscuring the peak, and the picture was not taken. Three times thereafter I attempted to photograph the mountain, but the atmosphere had become misty and each effort was a failure. The accompanying picture of Mount Hood does not show it at its best, which I believe is most favorably seen from the surface of the Columbia River, just below John Day Rapids.



—Photo. by Reeves

MOUNT HOOD FROM MOUTH OF HOOD RIVER

Samuel Bowles in his book, *Across the Continent*, thus describes Mount Hood:

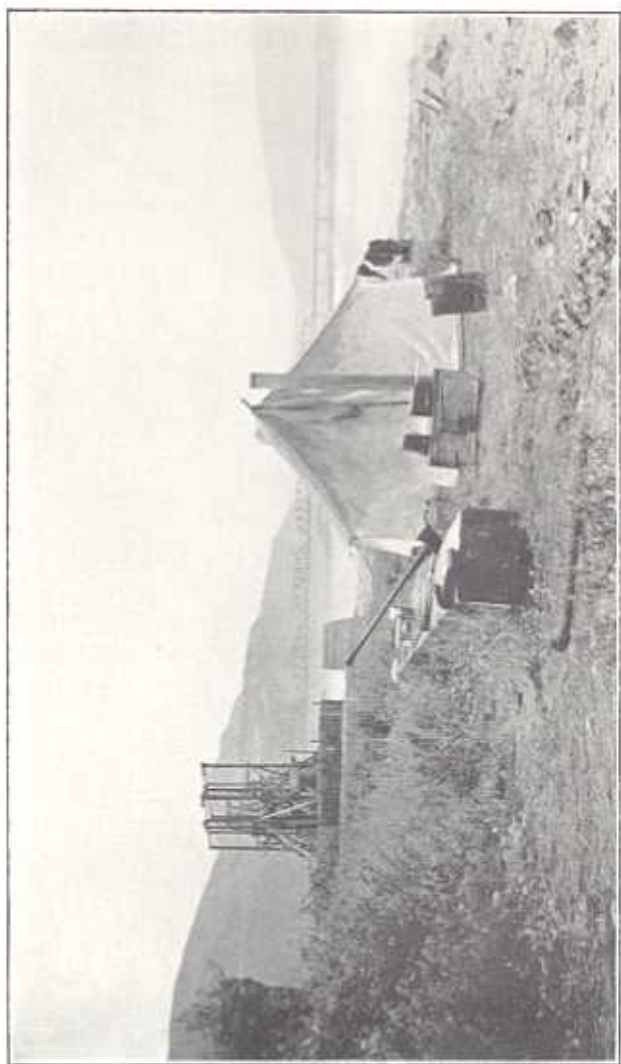
"But no mountain peak we have yet passed in our journey is seen to so fine advantage as Mount Hood from the Columbia River. It is hard to imagine a more magnificent snow mountain and adding a crowning element to the scenery of the Columbia River."

Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, pens this tribute:

"Then clouds blew in, and all the sky was cast
With tumbled and tumultuous clouds that grow
Red thunderbolts, . . . A flash! A thunderblast!
The clouds were rent, and lo! Mount Hood hung
white and vast."

Two miles below John Day Rapids I passed through a riffle called Schofield Rapids, and five miles farther came to where the Columbia is divided into two channels by an island of bare basalt two miles, or more, long. The right-hand channel is known as Hell's Gate, but in spite of its sinister name is not dangerous. The left-hand channel passes by the mouth of the celebrated Deschutes River, which rises on the eastern slope of the Cascade Range, and almost paralleling the range flows northward to the Columbia River. Two competing lines of railway occupy the Deschutes Valley.

As I wanted to see something of the Deschutes, I took the left-hand channel, which curved to the right around the island, and after weaving my way among numerous rocks, against which the now placid river formed no breakers, at the foot of the island found myself in a single channel that continued to Celilo Falls about two miles below.



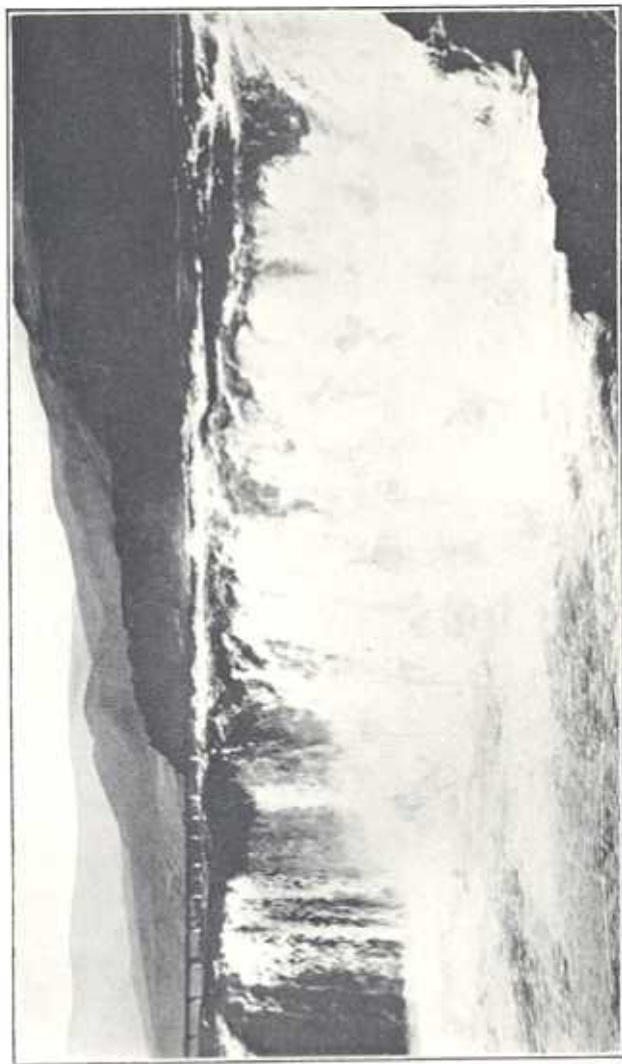
CAMP AT HEAD OF CHELCO CANAL.

Just above the Falls is the head of Celilo Canal at the Oregon shore; and rising abruptly from the water edge is a flat bench fifty or sixty feet high. Deciding to stay overnight to examine the Falls and take some photographs during the afternoon, it was not long before I had my tent set up and camp established on the bench.

A railway station, called Celilo, has been established at the head of the canal, and besides the station and warehouse and a Government building there are a few dwellings scattered along the hillside. The main settlement is the Indian village, a row of nondescript shanties located on the bench opposite to the Falls, and mainly between the railway track and the highway. Some of the better class of Indians have more pretentious shanties at the base of the hills. The one store and post-office is just below the Indian village.

The Falls are the greatest fishing grounds on the Columbia River—hence the reason for the Indian village. It was here that I first saw a fish-wheel, contrivances that would be numerous from now on downriver until the rise and fall of the tides would destroy their efficiency, as a current is necessary to operate them.

The Celilo, or Tumwater Falls are 22 feet high at low water, are horseshoe shaped, and face and are near the Oregon shore. It is below the Falls that the Grand Dalles commence and continue for about three miles. The Columbia is here filled by a great basalt reef extending from shore to shore through which the water has chiseled its way in narrow

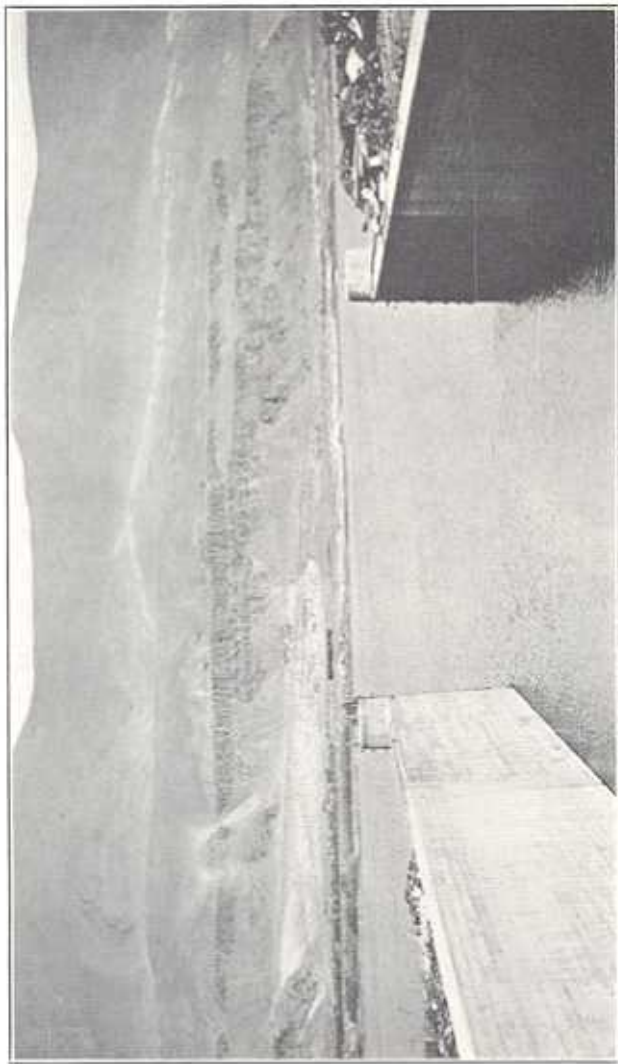


CELILLO FALLS

channels, and in one place a single channel about 175 feet wide carries the whole volume of the River's flow. The walls of the gorges thus formed are about 25 or 30 feet high, and between them the water boils, surges, and whirls with tremendous power. The River above the Falls has a general width of about a half-mile and the sudden contraction below acts as a partial dam at the time of floods and raises the water level above until the drop at the Falls is entirely obliterated. During such a condition some of the bolder steamboat captains have run their vessels over the Falls and through the Dalles with safety.

The early navigators of the Columbia were able to go quite a distance below the Falls on the Washington side of the River, and then had to make two portages, one of 1,200 yards on the right-hand shore, and one of 457 yards on the left hand shore. Hand carrying was obviated in 1861 by the construction of a wooden tramway; then came the Oregon-Washington Railway; and now the Celilo Canal affords an easy and safe mode of transportation.

The Celilo Canal was constructed by the National Government, and is operated and maintained by it. It is eight and one-half miles long; much of it blasted through solid basalt in deep, long excavations, in other places the outer walls being built-up embankments. The construction is massive and substantial throughout, and is of four types: Solid rock having an almost perpendicular slope; solid concrete; stone laid in cement; and dry, hand-placed stone—the three last types of walls being laid on varying slopes

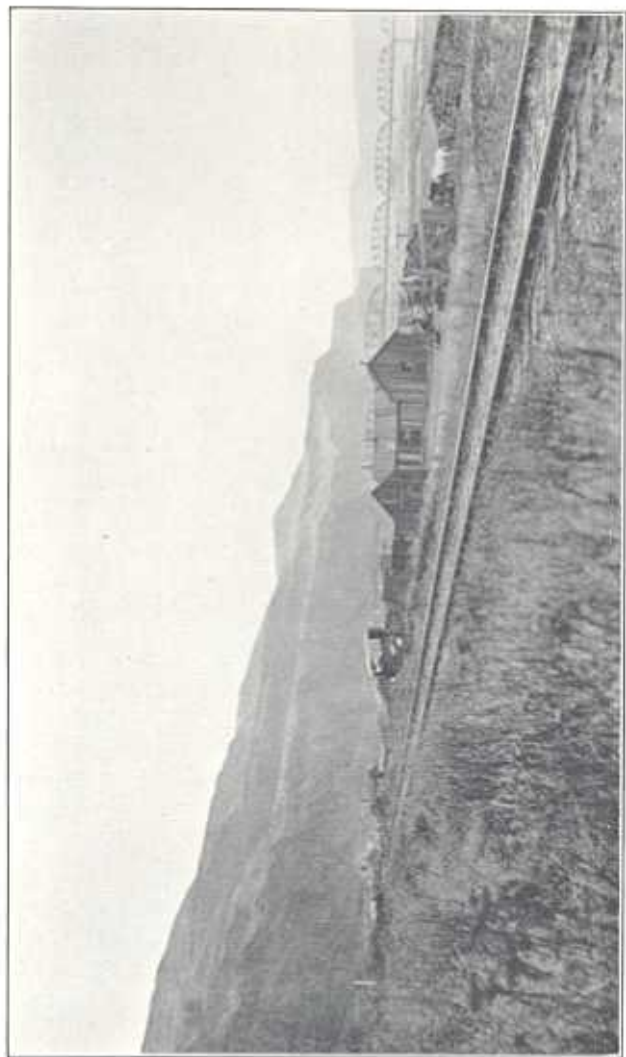


—Photo. by Saunders

UPPER ENTRANCE TO CELILO CANAL.

to fit conditions. The canal has a total drop of 81 feet, is 65 feet wide at the bottom, with a maintained depth of water of nine feet. Along its length there are occasional basins for the passage of vessels. These are wider than 65 feet and have vertical concrete walls. The head of the canal is an open, vertical-walled entrance, with a controlling gate about a quarter-mile below; a little farther down is another: about midway is the first lock; and at the lower end is the final lock. The canal was completed and opened for use in the Spring of 1905, and cost \$4,800,000, and was utilized until the United States entered into the war against Germany and Austria, but I was told that there has been no regular steamboat navigation through it since then.

On the morning of October 22, I was ready to go through the Celilo Canal. The previous evening I had called at the house of Mr. Martin Fides, the lock-tender, and obtained from him a promise to let me into the canal at 8 o'clock in the morning. I was ready on time and rowing through the open entrance found an almost imperceptible current. The first gate was closed, but Mr. Fides opened it, waved me good-bye as I passed through and then closed it behind me. Just below the Falls is the town of Fall-bridge, Washington, on the North Bank Road. A 25-span railway bridge crosses both River and canal there and connects with the railway on the Oregon side. This was the longest bridge and the last I was to see until Vancouver, Washington, was reached. I soon came to the second gate, which was wide open, and shortly after arrived in front of the first lock.



INDIAN VILLAGE AT CELLO

This was closed, and tying my boat to the round of an iron ladder I climbed the wall and hunted up the lock-tender who lived in an adjacent cottage.

I will here explain the method of passing through a canal lock, which consists of a vertical-walled chamber with gates at both ends.

The gates are in pairs, of massive steel hinged on the outside to the walls of the lock, and open from the middle upstream like a pair of folding doors. At the bottom of each gate are sluice-ways for controlling the height of the water within the chamber, and each gate has a set of levers operating the sluices from above. The gates are opened and closed by steel cables connected with a vertical drum extending to the surface of the masonry, above the gates, and which is turned by a lever, the operator walking around in a circle as is done when turning a capstan. Both sluice-ways and gates are operated by hand-power at the Celilo Canal.

For a vessel to gain admission to a lock chamber from above, the water above and within the lock must be brought to the same level, which is done with the lower gates and sluice-ways closed, and the upper gates closed and their sluice-ways open, thus permitting the water to flow into the chamber and be backed up by the lower gates until it rises to the height of the stream above. While this is being done the vessel waits until an equilibrium has been established, when the upper gates are opened and she enters the chamber, the gates just passed and their sluice-ways being closed behind her. She is now locked within the chamber with the water therein at a higher level

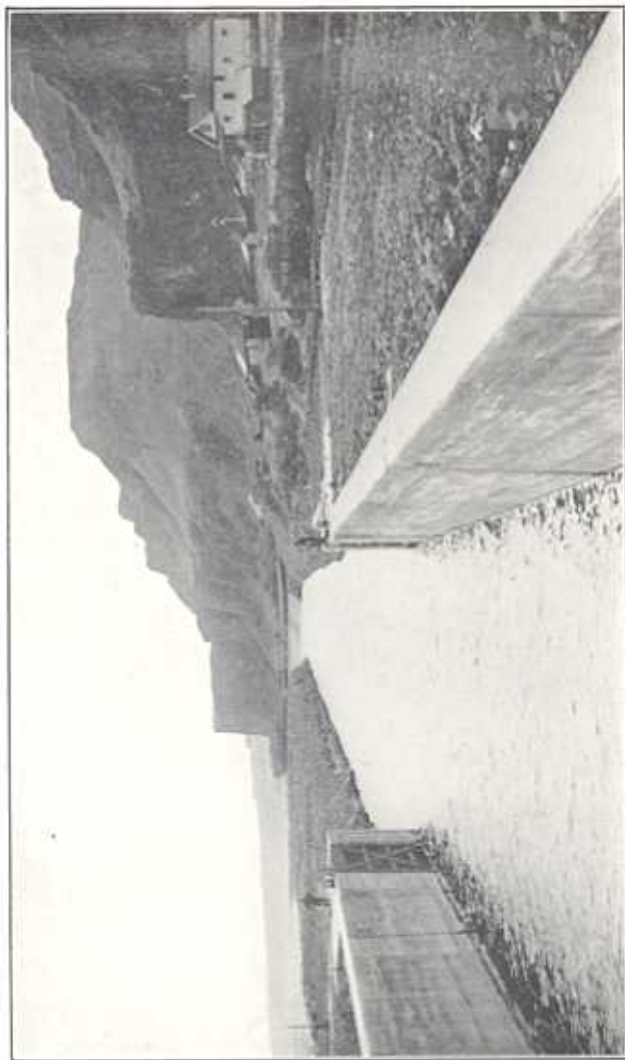


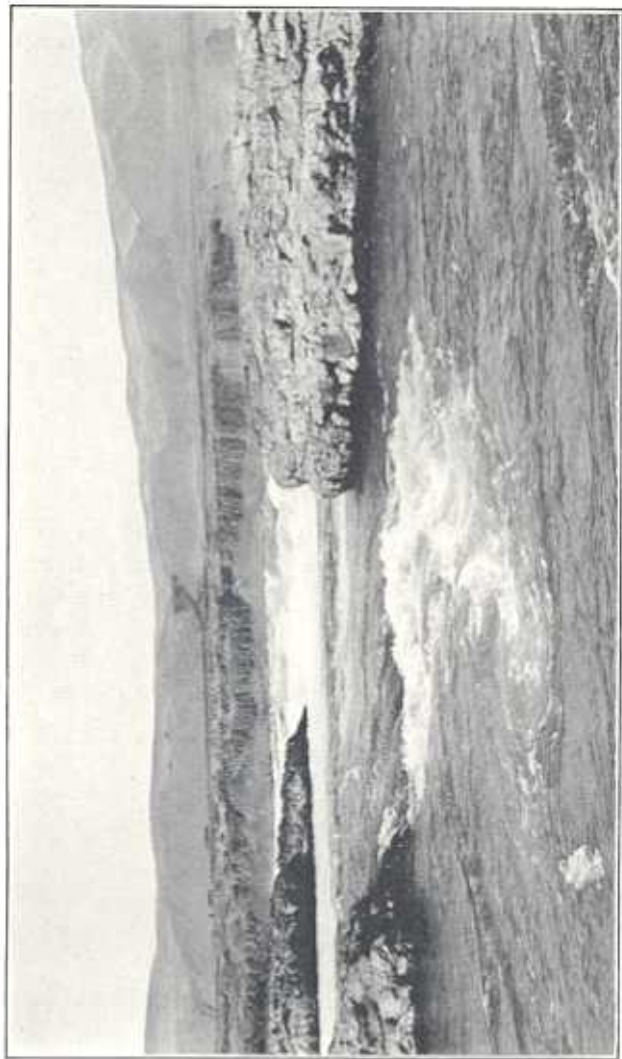
Photo by Saunders

FIRST GATE IN CELLO CANAL, STORE ON RIGHT

than that below it, and to which it must be lowered. This is done by opening the sluice-ways at the lower gates, and as the water subsides the vessel goes down with it to the lower level, the gates below are opened and an exit is made from the lock, a vertical step in the canal being overcome.

The lock-tender passed me through the lock in the manner described, and continuing on my way I was approaching the last lock, at the end of the canal when two men in a motor boat flashed past, going upstream. They had no sooner got by than they turned their boat and came back, and as they re-passed me one of them called out, "We'll be there when you get there." In a short time I reached the lock and making my boat fast climbed to the top of the masonry where the men were awaiting me. They introduced each other to me as T. W. Saunders, the civil engineer in charge of the canal, and Captain S. V. Winslow, master of the Government steamer Umatilla, which was docked in the basin just above the lock. Both men were much interested in my trip down the Columbia, and had followed my progress as it was featured in the newspapers published in the various towns on the way. They had recognized the COLUMBIA—hence their quick return to pass me through the lock.

The final lock in the Celilo Canal is at Big Eddy and is similar to the one above it. After spending a pleasant half-hour talking to the two men they opened the gates, I was dropped down to the lower level, and was again back in the River channel. With considerable current, but good going, in six miles I

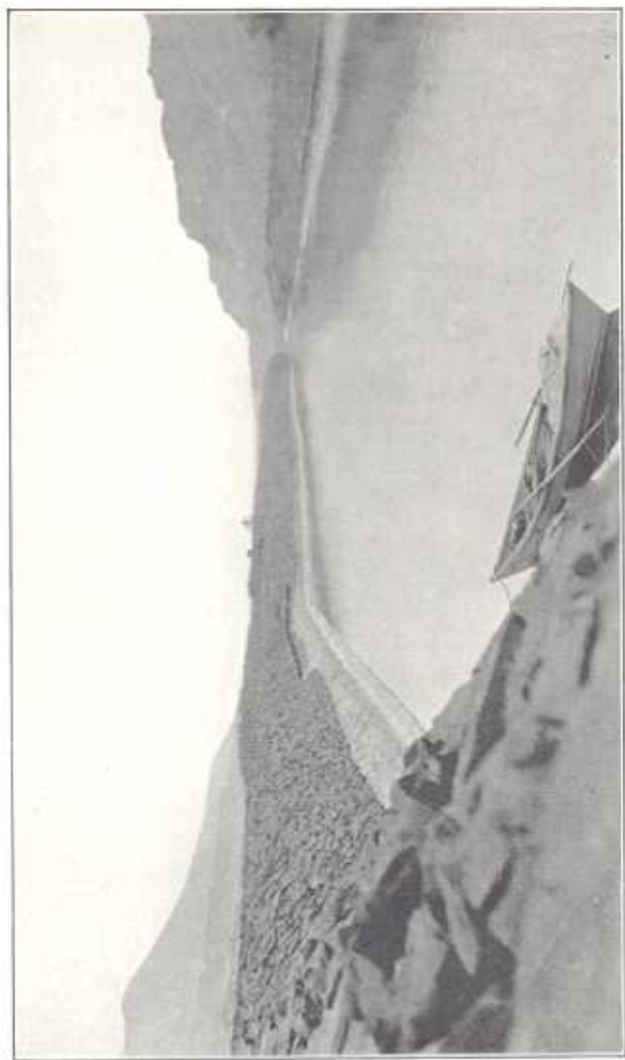


THE GRAND DALLIES

—Photo. by Prentiss

came to The Dalles City early in the afternoon, and rowing down to its lower end found a decent campground on a low bench amongst some willows. Here I planned to halt for a day.

The Dalles City is one of the oldest towns in Oregon. It was originally called Fort Dalles and established as a fur trading station. It is the present head of navigation on the Columbia River, the end of the old "Oregon Trail," and almost at the eastern base of the Cascade Range. It is located on a considerable expanse of ground rising gently south from the Columbia River, affording plenty of room for growth. The neighboring hills, on both sides of the River, have now reached a high elevation and rise a thousand feet above the valley, and while they are still bare and devoid of native growth, farming is extensively carried on, and fruit growing, fostered by irrigation, again becomes prominent. The city is well built, clean, and progressive, with a population of 6,000; and is the county seat of Waco County. The Columbia River Highway passes through it, and it has three lines of railways — being the division point of one of them. A power ferry connects it with the Washington shore. A tributary population of 50,000 people is served by the city as a business center; and in addition to other shipments it has the reputation of shipping more wool than any other station in the United States. It has its fruit packing houses, and box shoo factories, and the first fish cannery to be seen as one comes down the Columbia River. A modern, gravity water system brings the city's supply of water direct from Mount Hood.



THE COLUMBIA IN CULEBRA CANAL.