



THE WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGIST

WASHINGTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, WASHINGTON STATE MUSEUM, SEATTLE 5, WN.

NEXT MEETING: Seattle Chapter - September 13, 1961 - 8:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Washington State Museum
4037 15th Avenue N. E.
Seattle 5, Washington

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With so many W-A-S Members working in the field this summer, there will be a great deal to report of their activities at the fall meetings and in the later issues of the "Archaeologist".

THE UNITED STATES EXPLORING EXPEDITION OF THE
COLUMBIA RIVER & PACIFIC NORTHWEST - - 1841

The United States Exploring Expedition (of 1836) under the command of Captain Charles Wilkes, U.S.N., conducted a series of explorations and surveys on a portion of the Columbia River and certain areas of the northern Oregon Territory during the year 1841, April through October. The expedition was authorized by Congress May 18, 1836, started August 17, 1838, and was completed June 10, 1842, encompassing much of the Pacific Rim land mass coasts, islands and waters. An 18 volume report was published by the government, only 100 copies being printed. The number of complete sets in existence today, if any, is not known. This was followed by the publication of some 17 volumes, although 20 were planned, over a span of 14 years by a group of 10 authors. Wilkes published his "Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842" in 1844 in five volumes. The purpose of this paper is to report in context that part of Captain Wilkes' narrative which may have value in considering the ethnographic or archaeological problems of the Pacific Northwest. We hope this will provide W-A-S members with basic reference material that would not otherwise be as readily available.

Although this venture is described as an exploring expedition it was initially conceived as a scientific expedition and is described as the first scientific expedition undertaken by the United States. The initial evaluation of the results of Wilkes' work by his contemporaries and expressed by the editors of the North American Review, July 1845 (N-A-R, Vol. 61, p. 100) was very uncompimentary. Bancroft was more generous: "Though exceedingly imperfect in their material and execution the published reports of this expedition formed by far the most important literary work hitherto issued by the United States government." (Bancroft 1844, p. 684)

A present day evaluation of the Wilkes Expedition has problems which cannot be resolved on the basis of the published documents.

The Secretary of the Navy gave Wilkes his orders in letter form. This 3000 word exposition reflects the political tenor which had been used to justify the expedition. The opening statement reads: "The Congress of the United States, having in view the important interests of our commerce embarked in the whale-fisheries, and other adventures in the great Southern Ocean, by an act of the 18th of May, 1836, authorized an Expedition to be fitted out for the purpose of exploring and surveying that sea, as well as to determine the existence of all doubtful islands and shoals, as to discover and accurately fix the position of those which lie in or near the track of our vessels in that quarter, and may have escaped the observation of scientific navigators." With reference to the instructions concerning the Pacific Northwest, these read: "Thence you will direct your course to the Northwest Coast of America, making such surveys and examinations, first of the territory of the United States on the seaboard, and of the Columbia River, and afterwards along the coast of California, with special reference to the Bay of St. Francisco, as you can accomplish by the month of October following your arrival." (Wilkes. Vol I, p. XXV) With respect to the scientific aspects of the expedition the orders are: "Although

the primary object of the Expedition is the promotion of the great interests of commerce and navigation, yet you will take all occasions, not incompatible with the great purpose of your undertaking, to extend the bounds of science, and promote the acquisition of knowledge." (Wilkes. Vol. I, p. XXIX) While the orders are in general terms, there were some specifics, for example only navy personnel were to do the research related to hydrography, geography, terrestrial magnetism and meteorology. The instructions by Wilkes to Lts. Ringgold, Case and Johnson, were in considerable detail suggesting that Wilkes may have had instructions that were classified. The same observation has been made concerning the explorations of Lt. Fremont. Another point which supports this speculation is that there was an apparent concentration on Hudson Bay Company facilities.

Chapters IX through XIV, pp. 289 through 496, of Volume IV, Chapter IV, pp. 113 through 148 of Volume V of the Narrative deal with the explorations of the Columbia River, Puget Sound Country and a portion of the northern parts of the Oregon Territory. The memorabilia has been extracted and is presented under very general groupings: (1) Description, tribal name, language; (2) Ornament, costume, dwellings, burials and religion; and, (3) Implements, games, hunting, fishing and gathering. It becomes obvious that this is both a report of observations and interviews. The proper names used reflects a strong Hudson Bay influence. There is a fund of miscellaneous ethnographic facts which were included to give color to the narrative.

The Atlas contains one plate entitled "Map of the Oregon Territory by the U. S. Ex. Ex., Charles Wilkes Esqr. Commander, 1841." (Wilkes, Vol. VI) Plate I is a photographic reduction of this map the detail of which can be read with a magnifying glass. A full size reproduction is available from the Society, price \$1.00 per copy. The portion of the map showing the survey of the Columbia River is of particular interest. We will discuss this portion of the map in detail in a later issue. The Navy wanted and received considerable information about the Columbia River up to the head of navigation.

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Bancroft, Hubert H. The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft. Volume XXVIII, History of the Northwest Coast, Volume II, 1800-1846.
San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, 1884.

North American Review, Volume 61, July, 1845. New York.

Wilkes, Charles. Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, In Five Volumes, and an Atlas. Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard. 1845.

SUBJECT: Description, Tribal Name, Language

TITLE: U. S. Exploring Expedition, Volume 4, Chapters 9-10-11-12-13-14

AUTHOR: Charles Wilkes, U.S.N.

PUBLISHER: Lea and Blanchard. Philadelphia. 1845

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- 297 Port Discovery--Indians were short, thick set, bow legged, muscular, and capable of enduring great fatigue, heads seemed to have been compressed, both fore and aft, and gave the appearance of a wedge. Cheek bones high, eyes fine, set wide apart, colour light copper. The oblique eye of the Chinese is not uncommon, long flowing hair, Roman nose. Their language disagreeable and guttural.
- 298 Port Discovery--Indians were of the Clalam Tribe.
- 300 Young natives almost white, men spend time gambling. Indians peaceable with whites but warred with neighbouring tribes.
- 313 Chickeeles River--Lodges of Indians of the Nisqually tribe, salmon fishery.
- 388 Wisham--proper name NICULUITA--Wisham an old chief's name. They distort heads, pointed and flat.
- 410 Hood Canal Indians--Toandos, Scocomish, Suquamish and Clalams.
- 426 Yakima Chief-(Titias)-tall, straight, thin with long black hair hanging down back, tied with worsted rag. Grave, distinguished, dignified, and graceful.
- 428 Spipen Indians, live on this river, east of Mt. Rainier.
- 428 Kamaiya, Yakima Chief (son-in-law of Titias), most handsome and perfectly formed Indians, gruff and surly.
- 444 Kettle Falls--Indian village called "Quiarlpi"-(Basket People). Use baskets for fishing.
- 450 Northern Oregon Territory:
Ft. Chillcoaten - Fraser River - Chillcoaten, small tribe.
Ft. Alexander - Fraser River - Niscotins, small tribe.
Ft. Thompson - Kamloops River - inhabited by two great nations the TAKALI (Carriers) and ATNAHA (Shouswaps); Takali language Chippewayan.

- 467 Diversity of language, on the entire trip, almost every band of Indians met with spoke a different dialect, on the coast they are at peace and do much trading with each other, but few can understand their immediate neighbours.
- 470 Principle tribe inhabiting Rocky Mountains are Blackfeet,
471 a collection of five tribes, Gros Ventres speak Crow,
472 Pilgans or Pikain, the Blood, the Surcees and the Blackfeet proper, all but the Pikain and Gros Ventres speak the same language. Blackfeet inhabit from waters of the Columbia to Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. The Snakes of Shoshones are widely scattered and may be the same race as the Camanches. Crows inhabit country between Wind River Mountains and the Platte River.
- 472 Bonachs inhabit lands between Ft. Boise and Ft. Hall, the Sampiches are south of the Youta Lake, Youtas inhabit country between Snake and Green Rivers. Monkey Indians (a corruption of name) live southwest of the Youta Lake; they are reported to live in high mountains, have good clothing and horses, manufacture blankets, shoes, and other articles and sell to their neighbors.
- 480 Sachet tribe, in possession of Whidby Island, Port Orchard - Jeachtac tribe.
- 482 Admiralty Inlet, tribes: Scocomish, Squamish, Clalams and Sachets.
- 483 Fort Langley - Fraser River, Nanitch tribe.
- 486 Classet Indians are a stout, athletic race, women much better looking than any other race observed.

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- 116 Astoria, Kilamukes, Clatsop and Chinooks gather for fishing season.
- 132 Head of Puget Sound, Toandos, small tribe; Sachals, Lake Sachals, small tribe; Chickeeles, Chickeeles River, 150 in number.

SUBJECT: Ornament, Costume, Dwellings, Burials and Religion.

TITLE: U. S. Exploring Expedition, Volume 4, Chapters 9-10-11-12-13-14

AUTHOR: Charles Wilkes, U.S.N.

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- 297 Port Discovery, the principal man of party dressed in coarse coat of red cloth, with Hudson Bay Co.'s buttons and corduroy trousers--no shirt, shoes or hat. The others wore blankets or skins and wore conical grass hats, resembling in shape those of the Chinese. They wore but few ornaments, the greatest value was a small silver tube stuck through cartilage of nose, small brass bells around the rim of their ears.
- 298 Port Discovery, lodges of rudely cut slabs covered with coarse mats, they are a filthy race.
- 299 Various tribes visited, sexes dressed alike, hair long, both equally dirty. Heads compressed with several thicknesses of bark, they manufactured a sort of blanket from dog hair which is substantially woven. Some wampum-belts and strings of dentalium shells were observed, they have a passion for carved pipes.
- 300 Women wear bone through nose.
- 302 Corpses are not interred, they are wrapped in mats and placed upon the ground in sitting position, surrounded with stakes and pieces of plank for protection from weather and beasts.
- 319 Mouth of Cowlitz, conical hill called Mt. Coffin, burial spot.
- 324 Indians will not sell first catch of salmon to whites--feel it brings bad luck. Always roast heart to insure good catch.
- 325 Coffin Rock, 7 miles above Mt. Coffin, burial place of chiefs, canoes supported between trees, gifts hung around canoes, this ground considered sacred.
- 368 Klackmus, bury in the ground, with clothes, all personal property placed upon painted head board, all articles have holes punched in to prevent use by others.
- 383 Dalles, a diversity of dress and tribes, they live 40-50 in huts 20' x 12', constructed of poles, mats, and cedar bark. Men fish, women skin, clean, and dry fish for winter use.
- 384 During the fishing season they live on the heads, hearts and offal of salmon, they string on sticks and roast.

- 389 Grand Island, burials on top of ground, body sewed up in skin or blanket, personal property of each near body, over all a few boards as a kind of shed.
- 426 Spipen River, met 2 Yakima Indians, Titias Chief of Yakima, tall and straight, costume of buckskin, profusely ornamented with beads.
- 429 Yakima's Indians live in teepees, wear buckskin clothing and moccasins, very much ornamented with beads and fringe, beautiful horses, would not part with them.
- 431 Okonagon live in teepees by summer, mounds by winter, open toward the river, the door being a round aperture 18" in diameter. They do not appear to have fire in their winter habitation.
- 448 Indian tribes of interior Oregon, the chief has no real authority over tribe, chief's rule mostly by persuasion. Punishment meted out but not necessarily carried out, no redress for wrongs committed against tribe or person of tribe. Very confused idea of Supernatural Being, ceremony called "huwash", spirit separated from body of person, medicine man has dream, tells unhappy individual who in turn employs the medicine man to recover it for him. When spirit is restored gifts of food are given to medicine man. Tohna ceremony in spring, for abundance of deer, salmon, berries and roots, this is only performed after a fast, when they call themselves "clean". Flatheads have names for months, which are connected with their habits and the climate.
- 452 Abortion, practiced by Carriers, before and after marriage. Their houses are built of logs, the roof of which is bark. Houses are 70' x 15', some live in holes in ground, they enter from aperture in the roof, also used as smoke vent.
- 453 Carrier burial rites - corpse burned, widow forced to lie on pyre until too hot to bear, she is thrown back on pyre again by friends, then forced to collect ashes and put in basket, becomes servant of relatives for 2 to 3 years, when a great feast is prepared, wife is liberated, ashes put in painted box on ten foot pole. She is free to marry again.
- 456 Spokane Indians, females separated from tribe at menses, also at childbirth. The ill are allowed few comforts, all things about bed must be buried with the person. Burial takes place within a few hours after death. Corpse is washed, wrapped in skins, legs doubled up, put in 3' grave, covered with sticks and stones. Widows do not change dress for 1 year. Men take and put away wives at pleasure, greatest requisite for wife is food preparing.
- 464 Nez Perces--overcoming "Wawish"-spirit of fatigue-the ceremony takes from 3 to 5 days. Sticks: 3 or 4 willow sticks 18" long are passed down throat, a hole is dug of a depth for a man to sit upright, head above ground, by a running brook. Second day, fast, sticks are cut of measurements taken from navel to mouth and passed to bottom of stomach until noon. Then they plunge into cold water and stay until eve, then one

half pint of porridge is eaten. Third day the same course is gone through. Fourth day, heat stones, put in water to heat, water poured on in pit, water heated until it can no longer be endured, then a plunge into cold water. The above repeated for fifth, sixth and seventh days, after which they eat and drink. This must be done annually to keep away the spirit; treatment begins at 18 years and discontinued at 40 years of age.

- 465 Lapwai--Scalps are taken in war. The war dance is always performed. Medicine men are much in repute here, they retire to mountains to fast and have interviews with the wolf before any sorcery is performed. If affronted or injured, they predict death of offender.
- 479 Port Orchard, canoe burials, bodies wrapped in matting beneath which is white blanket, under that a covering of blue cotton, boxes 3' square sitting on stages contain articles deposited by friends and relatives.
- 480 Penn Cove, many small villages, Whidby is in possession of Sachet tribe, they have well built lodges of timber and planks. This tribe has to
- 481 defend itself from nothern tribes, for protection they construct large enclosures, 400' long, constructed of pickets of heavy planks, 30' high, spaces just large enough for musket to point through. Interior of enclosure is divided into lodges, has all aspects of a fortress. The dress is a single blanket fastened with wooden pin, when they cannot afford blanket, skin garments are worn, shirts are fringed with beads and shells. Cartilage of nose perforated and pieces of polished bone or wood passed through. Wear brass rings on wrist and fingers, few are seen with tattoo, lines on arms and face, use paint on body. They hold medicine men in great esteem.
- 486 Neah Harbor, Classet Indians have many canoes, sea otter skins highly prized. George, Chief of Tatouche tribe speaks English. Many males have scars across bridge of nose, this signifies the taking of a whale. Classet tribe most numerous and most intelligent, wear small pieces of iridescent mussel shell attached to cartilage of nose size of ten cent piece and triangular in shape, seldom any clothing except blanket. Articles of trade, tobacco, powder ("Paulalee") and lead balls. They live in conical huts, made of grass, plaited so tight it is impervious to water. This tribe is treacherous and warlike. They paint bodies with oil, soot and red paint. Dress consists of native blanket made of dog hair interspersed with feathers. Practice head flattening, live on fish.

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- 117 Chinook - when time of mourning has been fulfilled, widow notifys friends that she is ready to receive advances of anyone who wants a wife.
- 118 The Chinook and Kilamuke tribes believe in future state in their hunting grounds, called "Tamath", the road is difficult, and none can go there who are not of good character, the road is called "O-LU-I-HUTTI". Strong belief in departed relatives and friends which prevent evil from approaching them. Each Indian has his own spirit which is selected by

118 him at a very early age, generally first object they see in going out of woods that has animal life, others create from imagination one that has never met mortal eyes. Ikaui is the most powerful god, they ascribe creation to him. They bury as in other parts of Oregon, personal belongings are rendered useless and put with body, either being burned or holes punched in them. Slaves are sometimes killed at a chief's funeral and buried with him. Italupus, creator of the Columbia River and all fish in it, he nourishes salmon and causes them to be abundant. The first fish of the season is taboo, heart of salmon always cut out and never fed to dogs.

SUBJECT: Implements, Games, Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering

TITLE: U. S. Exploring Expedition, Volume 4, Chapters 9-10-11-12-12-14

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- 298 Protection Island, long poles mentioned by Vancouver, Indians informed us they were for suspending nets for taking wild fowl; nets set at night, fires lighted, birds alarmed, fly against net, fall and are gathered before they could recover.
- 299 Bark cradle hung to tree or pole, kept in motion by string fastened to toe of mother. Live on shell fish, fish, cammass root and potatoes. They have muskets and bows and arrows, bows are short, small and of great strength, made of yew, arrows of iron or bone. Sheath knives, blankets obtained from Hudson Bay Co. They cultivate small quantities of tobacco and smoke the leaves of the dwarf Arbutus.
- 300 Women weave mats of bull rushes, these are used to cover the lodges. Canoes are elegant in shape, made of single trunk and sides seldom exceed three-fourths of an inch in thickness, great care is taken of them, when cracks appear they are mended by drilling holes and passing withes through so as to draw the crack together, then all is pitched with gum of pine.
- 313 Chickeeles River--Lamprey eels hanging around lodges, used for food,
314 candles, torches and oil, caught in great quantities. Cammass root gathered and stored in baskets. Curing of buckskin--immediately the
317 animal is killed hair is scraped off, stretched tight on frame, rubbed with brains of animal, steeped in warm water, dried in the smoke of fire, two women stretching while drying, wet again, wrapped tightly around tree, then taken off, smoked and drawn by women again, rubbed with hands as washing until soft.
- 343 Wilamette Falls--best salmon fishing on the river, the method of fishing

- 345 here is: two stout poles project over the foaming cauldron of falls secured at end by large rocks, platform built at other end for fisherman to stand, he uses 30' pole to which a hoop is fastened 4' in diameter the net is made to slide on hoop so as to close its mouth when fish is taken. Hoop is thrown into foam as far up as possible, carried down by water, fish swim into hoop. The fish that make the jump are caught at top with pole and hook.
- 367 Dice game--Women play with carved incisor beaver teeth, two teeth carved alike--four play in game--game is played for dentalium beads called by the Indians "ahikia", two foot long string of great value. Ten of these worth a beaver skin. Men and boys play with bow and arrows. A wheel one foot in diameter is wound with grass, rolled over ground, one rolls the hoop, one shoots the arrow at the wheel; another game is two poles are taken 6' to 8' long wound with grass, spears thrown at the poles, the team with the greatest number of spears in opponents pole wins; cotton shirts are gambled for.
- 373 Chickeeles River Indians, method of fishing--staking river across with poles and constructing fikes or fish holes through which the fish are obliged to pass. Triangles are erected to support a staging for Indians to stand on and spear fish passing through. Fish are then dried and smoked.
- 397 Ft. Wallawalla--Cauyse, Nez Perce, Wallawalla and Snake fish with erection of fish-weir of basket work, supported on poles. These Indians live in teepees (skin lodges).
- 398 Wallawalla Indian method of removing hair from hides, with round and broad chisel, fixed on handle like an adz, then the skin is sewed on the inside of bag which is suspended immediately over the fire (hole dug in ground for fire), so that little of smoke can escape. This differs from Cowlitz way of curing.
- 418 Nisqually Indians have herring rakes attached to paddles. They eat clams, dried and smoked; hooks for catching salmon made of yew, they trail for fish.
- 422 Young raspberry shoots eaten by Indians with great relish.
- 427 Yakimas eat cammass root, which is pounded and made into cakes, has sweetish taste.
- 428 Spipen--method of gathering and curing cammass which resembles parsnip, it is gathered with digging stick put in baskets suspended from neck. Cured by baking in oven of stone, taken out and dried, then pounded between two stones the mass becomes a fine cornmeal, then shaped into cakes. Principle vegetable food of Indians in Middle Oregon.
- 431 Okonagon-salmon fishing-as soon as fish are caught they are roasted, then exposed to the sun to dry on a shed. Meat is then pounded and made into
- 434 balls, which is stored for winter food. These Indians also gather great

- 434 quantities of moss, it is cleaned and placed in a hole in the ground with heated rocks, covered closely with dirt for 24 hours. It is soft when taken out, then it is washed and moulded into cakes and dried. The seed of the Oregon sunflower is used here, ground into meal which they call mielito.
- 444 Kettle Falls--salmon fishing--wicker baskets are attached to long poles and fixed to rocks. The lower part, which is of the basket form, is joined to a broad frame, spreading above against which the fish, in attempting to jump the falls, strike, and are thrown back into the basket. This basket is raised three times during 24 hours during the fishing season. Fish are divided at sunset, under the direction of chief men in the village, and to each family is allotted the number of fish it is entitled to.
- 452 Carriers hunt wild fowl, fish, hunt deer and bear, eat their meat putrid, parts of salmon they bury under ground for two or three months, a great delicacy. They use a fish-weir for collecting salmon. Very fond of oil, for drinking; bear and fish oil are mixed with pigment and used for decoration of body.
- 465 Lapwai, subsist on buffalo, fish, roots, berries. The usual Indian games are played. Supper is principle meal.
- 486 Classet Indians - Method of taking whale is with buoys, made of seal skin, blown up like bladders, when inflated make a large oblong float 4' long by 18"-24" in diameter, these are attached by rope to harpoon or spear, thrown at whale, when it enters whale, this prevents him from diving down to great depths, a number of these are attached to whale and he is unable to leave surface of water and is captured. Those whose seal skins are attached to whale divide booty. Oil is obtained and traded to Hudson Bay Company.

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- 116 Gambling is the vice of the Kilamukes, Clatsop and Chinooks. Both sexes filthy, more gambling was seen here than in any other Indian encampment. The game played was the stick game, sticks being concealed in the hand while chanting and beating with sticks continually to confuse opponent. Ten is the game, and the parties win or lose two at each guess. Another game is played with disks of bone or ivory, the size of a quarter, one of which is different. The disks are concealed in fibrous hemp, and shaken, great attention is needed to play this game and they will gamble garments and stake freedom of themselves and family as well.

Kay Nelson

MAP
OF THE
OREGON TERRITORY
BY THE
U. S. EX. EX.
CHARLES WILKES ESQ.
COMMANDER.
1841.

NOTE
The Northern part of this map contains the latest information
of the Hudson Bay Company, and the Eastern part that of
James W. W. & J. P. K. Explorations on the Eastern side of
the Rocky Mountains.

COLUMBIA RIVER
REDUCED FROM A SURVEY
MADE BY THE
U. S. EX. EX.
1841.

