

May 2023

Vol. 36, No. 2

Battle of the Cascades **By LTC (Ret) Thomas Morgan**

From the time Washington became a Territory on March 2, 1853, until it became a State on November 11, 1889, there have been many wars, battles, and incidents that have baptized the territory in blood from the wounding and death of many soldiers, Native Americans, and settlers. Despite the fact that most of the military conflicts and events here are not as famous as those in the rest of the country, statehood was not achieved for a long time. But, there were some small, and significant battles with the Indians. “Fighting Phil” Sheridan (U. S. Military Academy 1853) of Civil War Fame distinguished himself along the Columbia River while still a Lieutenant stationed at Fort Vancouver in 1856.

The Cascades of the Columbia River were wide open for attack in the Spring of 1856. Three small settlements were located in the gorge (between the modern-day towns of North Bonneville and Stevenson) where the Columbia River cuts through the Cascade Mountains, and there was a portage sometimes called the Cascade Falls or the Cascades of the Columbia. The river there was too hazardous for the steamboats to navigate with their cargoes of supplies. The rapids were important for fishing by American Indians who would catch salmon as they swam up the river to spawn. However, the rapids posed a major obstacle to the development of shipments for the Oregon Trail. Great piles of provisions gathered, waiting to be transshipped by steamboats up and down the Columbia River. Therefore, small portage boats or a wooden tramway was used to pull supplies over and around the rapids.



Yakama Chief Kamiakin

There were conflicts between the Chinook natives and the European/American settlements. The Indians of the region coveted these goods and chose a time to attack when the Cascades were almost completely unprotected. Only nine soldiers manned the one blockhouse at the middle settlement. The Middle Cascades held out in a blockhouse and the Upper Cascades held out in cabins, but the Lower Cascades fell to the Indians.

Yakama Chief Kamiakin plotted to catch both the upper river steamboats, the Mary and the Wasco, at the Cascades, kill the crew, burn the ships, and massacre the settlers. He sent some of his Yakama braves on this mission. Along the way, they persuaded some Klickitat Indians to join them.

Kamiakin was also to join them, possibly for an assault on Fort Vancouver down the Columbia that had been weakened by the absence of all but one Army Company. Colonel George Wright had taken most of the companies of the 9th Infantry Regiment into the Yakama area while the rest went north to Fort Steilacoom.

The Indian attack started early on 26 March at the Upper Cascades before the boats had steam up. The crew of the Mary started her boiler fires although three of the crew were wounded. One of the crew managed to back the steamer into the river and toot its boat whistle to warn the settlers. The other steamer, the Wasco, also got underway up river towards The Dalles.

In the attack on the Upper Cascades settlement, the Indians killed B.W. Brown, his wife and her brother. The remaining 40 settlers rushed to Bradford's store, a two-story log house. James Sinclair was killed when he looked out to see if more were coming. The Indians threw burning torches on the roof that the defenders poked off with long sticks. Burning sections of the roof were chopped out or doused with brine from a pork barrel. A Spokane Indian boy, whom Sinclair had befriended, made many perilous trips to the river for water during the 3-day siege.

The blockhouse at the Middle Cascades was also attacked. The soldiers there fought off the Indians with rifles and a howitzer while the people in the neighborhood ran for the fort. A friendly Indian warned the settlers at the Lower Cascades who clambered aboard two boats, the Belle and the Pashion, and headed down river for Fort Vancouver and Portland for help.

Only Lieutenant Philip Sheridan and 40 dragoons could be sent as relief from the depleted garrison at Fort Vancouver. This was probably the first significant battle in young "Fighting Phil's" illustrious career as the recent West Point graduate hurriedly got his small command on the steamer Belle and headed to the rescue early on 27 March. More help came on the morning of 28 March when Colonel Wright and about 250 men of the 9th Infantry returned from the Dalles area on two steamboats. With the appearance of the troops, many Indians fled.

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Although the Yakama Indians escaped, many Cascades Indians were captured. They claimed complete innocence, but Sheridan put his finger down the barrels of the Indians' rifles and determined that they had been recently fired. Sheridan arrested thirteen of the Indians and Colonel Wright tried them by a military tribunal. Nine were found guilty and hanged on the spot over a period of several days. In all, fourteen civilians and five soldiers were killed and twelve civilians wounded.

A cruel consequence of the battle was discovered by Sheridan when he later searched for the missing family of a friendly Indian chief. He found the mother, two boys, three girls, and a baby all strangled to death, presumably murdered by settlers bent on revenge.

Conflicts continued over portage rights between the Indians and the Europeans and Americans who generally refused to recognize the natives' authority over passage through the area. Fur traders passing through the area resorted to violent force against the Indians although eventually more diplomatic approaches prevailed, but the Indians ceased to be a powerful force along the river with the passage of Washington Statehood in 1889.

The Cascades were a significant barrier to river navigation. People could not go upriver through the rapids and could be brought down only at great risk. A canal and lock around the rapids were completed in 1896 at what is now Cascade Locks, Oregon. However, by 1938 the rapids were submerged under the Bonneville Reservoir as it formed behind Bonneville Dam. The Bonneville Lock at the dam, completed in 1937, replaced the old Cascade Locks around the rapids.

Decoration Day

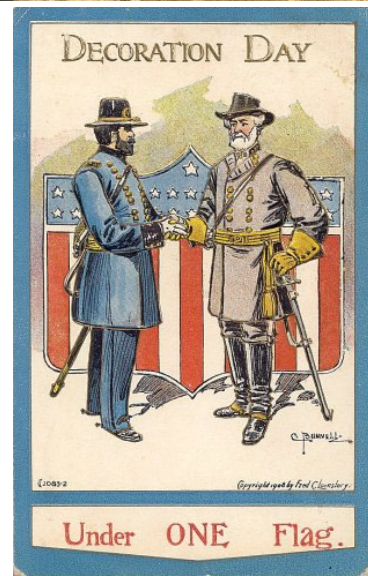
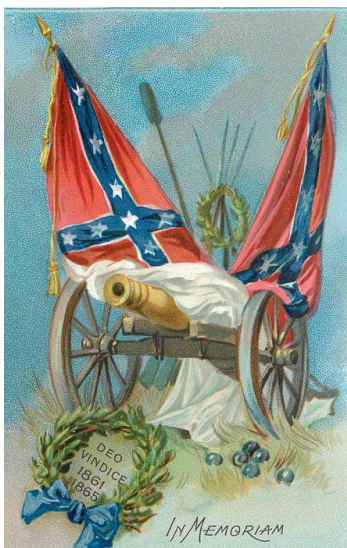
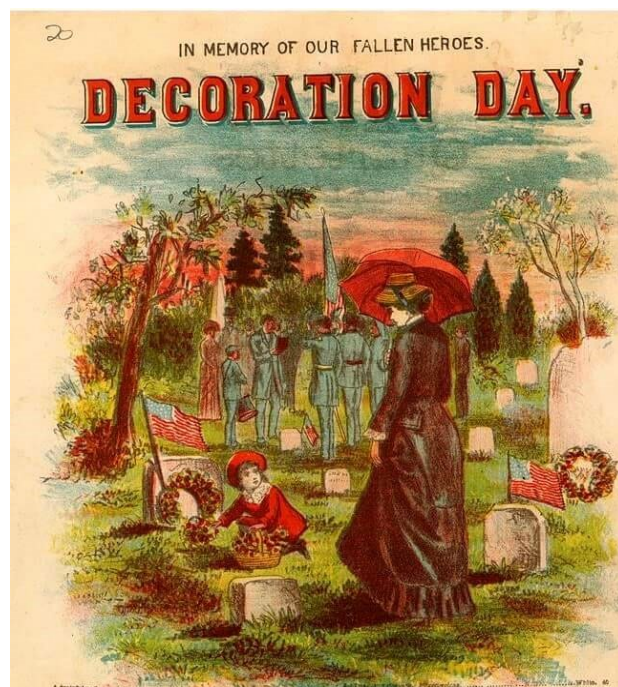


The first Decoration Day, or Memorial Day as it became known, was celebrated on April 25, 1866 in Columbus, Mississippi. A small group of women decorating the graves of Confederate soldiers in Friendship Cemetery noticed the forlorn, neglected Yankee graves; one of them suggested they honor those as well, as they were also someone's beloved father, brother or son. Moved by the widely reported story of their compassion, Ithaca, NY attorney Francis Miles Finch wrote the poem "The Blue and the Gray", believed to be the true inspiration for a national day of remembrance.



A Proclamation set forth in 1868 by General John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of Union veterans, established May 30 as Decoration Day. Several thousand people gathered to commemorate the day in Arlington National Cemetery, placing flowers and flags on more than twenty thousand graves.

The holiday was commemorated in postcards and sheet music.



Back cover illustration used for White Smith & Co. sheet music. Published first as a black and white etching in the mid-1870s, the drawing was hand-tinted later when the company published color covers. Songs of tribute available for purchase were listed underneath the commemorative artwork.



Headquarters Grand Army of the Republic,
Washington, D.C., May 5, 1868.

General Order No.11

I. The 30th day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting services and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit.

We are organized, comrades, as our regulations tell us, for the purpose among other things, “of preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors, and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion.” What can aid more to assure this result than cherishing tenderly the memory of our heroic dead, who made their breasts a barricade between our country and its foes? Their soldier lives were the reveille of freedom to a race in chains, and their deaths the tattoo of rebellious tyranny in arms. We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the consecrated wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no wanton foot tread rudely on such hallowed grounds. Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no vandalism of avarice or neglect, no ravages of time testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.

If other eyes grow dull, other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well as long as the light and warmth of life remain to us.

Let us, then, at the time appointed gather around their sacred remains and garland the passionless mounds above them with the choicest flowers of spring-time; let us raise above them the dear old flag they saved from dishonor; let us in this solemn presence renew our pledges to aid and assist those whom they have left among us a sacred charge upon a nation’s gratitude, the soldier’s and sailor’s widow and orphan.

II. It is the purpose of the Commander-in-Chief to inaugurate this observance with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year, while a survivor of the war remains to honor the memory of his departed comrades. He earnestly desires the public press to lend its friendly aid in bringing to the notice of comrades in all parts of the country in time for simultaneous compliance therewith.

III. Department commanders will use efforts to make this order effective.

By order of

JOHN A. LOGAN, Commander-in-Chief

N.P. CHIPMAN, Adjutant General

Official: WM. T. COLLINS, A.A.G.

The Blue And The Gray

by Francis Miles Finch

By the flow of the inland river,
Whence the fleets of iron have fled,
Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,
Asleep are the ranks of the dead:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day;
Under the one, the Blue,
Under the other, the Gray.

These in the robings of glory,
Those in the gloom of defeat,
All with the battle-blood gory,
In the dusk of eternity meet:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Under the laurel, the Blue,
Under the willow, the Gray.

From the silence of sorrowful hours
The desolate mourners go,
Lovingly laden with flowers
Alike for the friend and the foe:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Under the roses, the Blue,
Under the lilies, the Gray.

So, with an equal splendor,
The morning sun-rays fall,
With a touch impartially tender,
On the blossoms blooming for all:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Brothered with gold, the Blue,
Mellowed with gold, the Gray.

So, when the summer calleth,
On forest and field of grain,
With an equal murmur falleth
The cooling drip of the rain:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Wet with the rain, the Blue,
Wet with the rain, the Gray.

Sadly, but not with upbraiding,
The generous deed was done,
In the storm of the years that are fading
No braver battle was won:
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Under the blossoms, the Blue,
Under the garlands, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
Or the winding rivers be red;
The banish our anger forever
When they laurel the graves of our dead!
Under the sod and the dew,
Waiting the judgment-day,
Love and tears for the Blue,
Tears and love for the Gray.



President's Report

I retired from the Army Reserve on February 1st of this year. As part of my preparation for the retirement ceremony, I took the time to search through all of my old equipment, plaques, coins, uniforms, papers, memorabilia – the accumulated detritus of a 33 year Army career. As I looked at each item, the story behind it came rising to the forefront. I picked up an old patrol cap, complete with cat eyes sewn on the back, and remembered that they were sewn in a specific pattern for 2nd Platoon, C Company, 2/75 Ranger. I remembered the NCOs I served with there, some who went on to take a commission, others who went on to serve with SFOD-D (Delta Force, or as we liked to call them, the Hardy Boys).

I found the collection of propaganda leaflets, dropped from North Korean balloons and scattered across our camps and operations areas. The story of the US Army helicopter that strayed across the border and was shot down, killing one of the pilots, was featured on one of those leaflets. I recalled the emotion, the anger I felt at how the North Koreans mistreated our own, and how I was ready to go to war that day to go get them back.

I found the coins, each with a memory of its own: the coin presented when I earned my Expert Infantry Badge, others from my battalion and brigade commands. I remembered the Soldiers I had the honor to lead in each of these units. Some stayed for one tour and left the military; others went on to have long and fruitful careers. Others have passed on, whether through age, injury, or by their own hand.

I rediscovered the souvenirs from my tour in Iraq, the gifts from interpreters, Iraqi Police, and others I had the honor of working with. I remembered their courage. I know some were able to come to the United States and eventually became citizens. Many of the others I have no idea of their fate. Did they survive the rest of the conflict? Do they live in honor or in obscurity now? I wish I knew.

I have all the plaques, gifts, rifle magazines, cleaning kits, manuals, uniforms, and letters all more-or-less neatly stowed away in boxes. Some still hang on the wall in my home office, others are proudly displayed in my own mini-museum at work. And then I have the pictures. I have dozens, perhaps hundreds of pictures. Pictures of a much younger me in basic training, as a cadet and a lieutenant, pictures from later in my career, most showing me posed with some of the hundreds of friends and fellow Soldiers I met along the way.

I wondered as I sorted this collection, what would become of it in the years to come? Some of it my kids might keep, but honestly, there is a lot of it. I imagine much of it will eventually be thrown out by those to whom it will mean very little. At first that bothered me, but then it occurred to me that the value of all of this stuff was in the memories of the people I served with. The gift of a Leatherman was nice, but the memory of those Soldiers who pitched in to buy it for me is the true treasure. The copper plate from Korea is tarnished, but the memories of my brothers and sisters in arms are still fresh. When I tell stories to my family and others, they are always about the people I served with. I may use a piece of memorabilia as a start point, but the story always ends with a fellow Soldier.

My kids may decide to give away or toss most of this out someday, but I know if they keep some of it, what they keep will be because it reminds them of me. I can live with that.

Edward Wood



FRIENDS OF THE FORT LEWIS MILITARY MUSEUM

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

25 June 2023

Place: Patriots Landing, Olympic Dining Room

Time: 1130-1200 Social Hour

1200-1300 Brunch

1300-1400 Program



Dr. David Nicandri, former Director of the Washington State Historical Museum, author of *River of Promise: Lewis & Clark on the Columbia* and *Captain Cook Rediscovered: Voyaging to the Icy Latitudes*.

Return this reservation form to COL (Ret) Paul R. Knoop, 1600 Marshall Cir, Unit 365, DuPont, WA 98327, with your check payable to "The Friends" by Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

Cost of Brunch for members and guests: **\$18.00** each.

Last minute reservations may be made by calling Paul Knoop at (253) 279-2598.

Number of Reservations: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Name of Member: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Names of Guests: _____

Residents of Patriot's Landing do not need to make payment for the meeting, but are requested to make reservations for seating.

**The Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum
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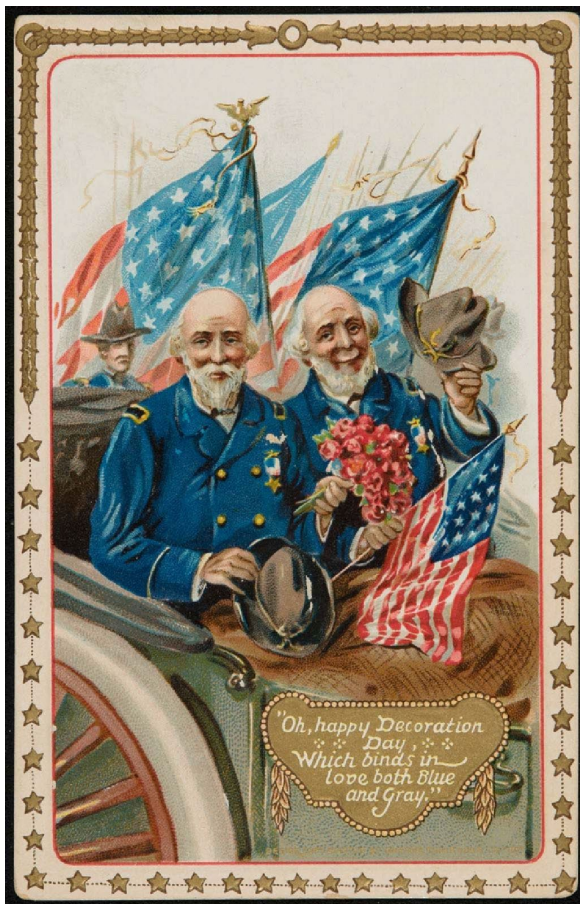
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**Living History Weekend,
 5 - 6 August, 2023 –
 1000 - 1700**

Visit the Friends web site for more
 information.
<http://fortlewismuseum.com>



**Friends of the Fort Lewis Military
 Museum
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