

ASCENT OF MOUNT RAINIER BY THE INGRAHAM GLACIER

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IN 1885 and 1886 I spent the summers in Eastern Washington, making my headquarters on the Yakima Indian Reservation. I became very chummy with the Indians, and in the fall of the latter year when they organized their annual hunting trip, I was invited to go with them. Being a boy, I readily accepted. I was the only white person in the party of some thirty odd people.

As near as I can remember, we crossed the Cascades through what was then known as Packwood Pass, going north up the Ohanapecosh Valley to the Cowlitz Divide country, a region which the Indians considered one of their best hunting grounds. Finding no game here, we were forced to hunt near the snow-line.

As the Indians were not killing the quantity of game they expected to, and for a little diversion from hunting, several of the more adventurous ones suggested that we get up a crowd and climb to the top of the Mountain. My recollection is that seven or eight made the climb, and I, being in for anything, went along.

From the contour maps I have seen since, my impression is that we continued to the end of the Indian Trail on the Cowlitz Divide, and from there made for the lower end of Whitman Crest, skirting the end of the Ohanapecosh Glacier and from there to the ice field now called Whitman Glacier, crossing it and the ridge between the Whitman and Ingraham, and dropping down upon the Ingraham Glacier. At about 8500 feet we crossed to the south

side. We had used our horses as far as the near side of the Ingraham—much farther, probably, than would be considered possible by a white man, and from this point we sent them back to our camp at timber-line.

Continuing on foot, we followed up the west slope of what is now known as Cathedral Rocks on the Ingraham Glacier, making use of the well defined goat trails. As I remember, there was a short distance of 40 to 60 feet where we were compelled to work ourselves along a ledge by gripping the side wall with our fingers, the ledge being very narrow, apparently just wide enough for the wild goat to travel over. After crossing this small strip, we found ourselves again on the glacier snow, and from there had an unobstructed, though rather steep climb over the snow to the top. We did not try to reach the highest pinnacle. The snow, as I remember, at that time was rough and granular, and the walking was comparatively easy. Most of the party wore the usual Indian moccasins and some of us had alpenstocks which we cut from the mountain ash and other shrubbery along the wooded spots. We took rations and axes, and carried one or two lariats to use in case of emergency, but never found it necessary to use them.

In descending we tried to retrace as near as possible our own footsteps. Late in the afternoon we put up for the night at the base of the rock I have always believed to be Gibraltar. We found a rather sheltered place, and the following morning descended to join the rest of our party and continue the hunting expedition. We were in the mountains approximately six weeks in all.

You will note from the foregoing that as far as I was concerned this mountain climb was just a lark with me. I was out with a crowd simply to be doing something. It has never occurred to me as being of any historical value, and it is reasonably certain that the Indians never gave it a thought.

In view of Sluskin's warning given to Hazard Stevens and P. B. Van Trump, it is interesting to know that the Indians who composed this party were all educated at the Yakima Reservation and therefore had no superstitions with regard to the spirit of the mountain.