

DIARY / JOURNAL EXCERPTS
DISCUSSING THE LOWER CROSSING – UTILLA
and the area that is now Echo, Oregon

E.W. CONYERS – 1852, September 4, Saturday – We started at 7 a.m. and traveled 3 miles to the crossing of the Umatilla River at the Indian Agency. Here we saw the first frame house since leaving the Missouri River. This house is 18 to 20 feet square, one story high. The sight of the house, although standing out here in the wilderness, proves to be a great stimulant to the poor emigrants worn out by their long trip across the continent, who received new encouragement, believing their long and tiresome journey was nearing its end and trudged along.

A.E. HINES – 1853, September 12, Monday – Went about 5 miles. Crossed the River, then struck over to a creek 10 miles. Road good. Camped for noon 6 miles from starting. Saw at the River a house. The Indian Agency. The first building that looked civilized since Laramie. Country rolling....

JOHN T. KERNS – 1852, September 8, - Laid by until 1 o'clock then drove 5 miles. They brought us to the Indian Agency, where we procured wood and water for a dry camp and drove out on a ten mile stretch without water. We were somewhat surprised to see a nice house at the Agency here. It is a building 20 by 40 feet of frame nicely painted. Have a fair view of Mount Hood from here (Probably was Mt. Adams). Some of the emigrants are about to suffer for want of provisions. Three men came to our camp this morning, about starved, had not a mouthful for three days, and footing it, too to get along.

AMELIA KING KNIGHT – 1853, August 4 – Traveled twenty miles and came into camp after dark on the Umatilla River. Numbers were camped around us. No feed for our poor stock. It is quite warm. Came 5 miles this morning and have just stopped at the agency to fill our cans at the well. Evening-after filling our cans with water, we came on and stopped at noon, and let the cattle pick dry grass, as it is too warm to travel in the middle of the day...

VIRGIL PRINGLE – 1853, September 25, - This day we traveled 17 miles and again crossed the Umatilla River which brought us to the Indian Agency where Mr. Wampole is stationed and where there is a large frame house which at this time is unfinished within, though the outside presents a fair appearance as it was painted as white as snow. Here also an opportunity to procure flour. Mr. Wampole asked \$18 per hundred pounds; sugar is 37 ½ cents; coffee, ditto.

A mail contract or who carries mail between the Dalles and Salt Lake City also had a trading tent and he sold flour for \$15 per hundred pounds. An Indian brought in two white looking salmon to us, for which he asked \$2 but found no purchasers. Most of the materials which which the house has been built were brought from the late Dr. Whiteman's station.

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JOHN MCMILLAN ADAMS – 1852, September 27th, - Laid by ½ day. Road turns to right down the River, crosses a ridge, before reaching second crossing. Umatilla River and Agency road crosses the bed of a river which dry, the water having sunk; just above a few paces wood plenty and grass down the river and also on the bluff. North of the river is a frame house after crossing, or the Agency-where generally are kept flour, beef, sugar, coffee, tea and such things as needed by emigrants to sell. Also traders for cattle and horses, etc, to obtain the weak, lame exhausted or well stock of the emigrants. At the above house is a good well, and watered and tood water, traveled 2 miles over heavy sand and camped left of the road. Plenty dry grass and dry wormwood.

MRS. C.E. MCMILLAN ADAMS – 1852, October 13th – traveled down 3 miles to Indian Agency, the first frame house we have seen since we left the Missouri River and they actually got a stoned up well. The agencet was gone to The Dalles, but we left our wagons there and sold three cattle to some traders, and put all the teams to Stephens wagon and proceeded. Our loads are light, but our cattle are getting powerful weak, and we think best to favor them as best possible. An Indian here has some flour for sale at 50 cents per pound. A white man has some corn, brought from Walla Walla, which he sells at the rate of six pint cupsful for \$1.00 and it sells fast.

Road very sandy, the heaviest I ever saw for so long a distance. Camped on open prairie;not water;burn greasewood, of which we have seen a good deal lately. Looks familiar, but old fashioned. We find it to our advantage to camp between watering places on account of grass. Seventy graves since leaving Fort Boise. Made 8 miles.

David or John Dinwiddle, 1853 (September) Friday 2nd Passed over a ridge of high land, then down the bottom to the crossing of the umatilla, the river has a large channel here but water all stinks, and we crossed on a bed of gravel and pebble stones, for which the stream is famous all along. On the west bank is the United States Agency, a very neat looking frame house painted white, it looked cheering, as we had not seen a frame house since we left fort Laramie. There had passed the agency up this morning of emigrants three thousand six hundred, of wagons seven hundred and eighty, and of stock, then thousand three hundred. Here we leave the umatilla and strike out on one seeming endless prarie as there is no timber of any kind to be seen in any direction, prarie rolling, soil sand, roads good, plenty of grass...-

Jesse Applegate, 1843...the camp on the Umatella was a very pleasant place...the Umatella was small stream with sandy banks and bottom.-

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John Lawrence Johnson, 1851 diary, typed copy from Mrs. Harold Marble, Corbett, Oregon August 5th 1851: Started early and drove to the crossing of the (Umatilla) river, here we met Cal Ely and his brother from the Sound. They came to meet their families on their way from Missouri...Here we met an old “galoot” by the name of Jackson who was living with a squaw. He had been to the Dalles and had bought a dress pattern for his wife and wanted the girls to make it for her. So sister Mary and Sarah sat down in the tent and made the dress. Our company that we had traveled with most of the time for three months left us here. We met a man from Oregon, who had a contract to put up a building for an Indian Agency, he wanted to hire a few men to help him raise the building as he had hewed out the frame from green cottonwood, and they had twisted and curled up so, it was quite a job to put the frame together, but finally Harve Green and Mr. Williams and I agreed to stop 2 or 3 days and help raise the building. Father said we would meet at the Deschutes River...We went to work on the house, it was two stories high, we put the bents together on the foundation. The boss had some goods to trade to the Indians, he hired 5 to help raise, we got the first bent up and braced. The Indians went back, sat down and when ready to raise the second bent refused to help – too tired. The boss had to make a new treaty, give each a new shirt, tobacco, coffee, sugar and some of everything he had in the store, so on with each bent a new treaty. As it was framed in 4 bents we got it up by sundown and was ready to resume our journey, with orders on Dr. Dart at Milwaukee for 3 days work at \$3 per day.

The following excerpts are taken from the Echo Historical Survey, by Dr. John Woodward, December 1984.

JOHN ZEIBER, September 25, 1851.-“new frame house...painted white as snow...”

A letter from **L.W. Jackson dated October 11, 1851** complained to Anson Dart that ... “Wampole is engaged in trade with the Indians, he has bought and sold several horses and has a large quantity of Indian goods bought and sold several horses and has a large quantity of Indian goods bought of A.F. Royer, which he is daily selling to Indians...”

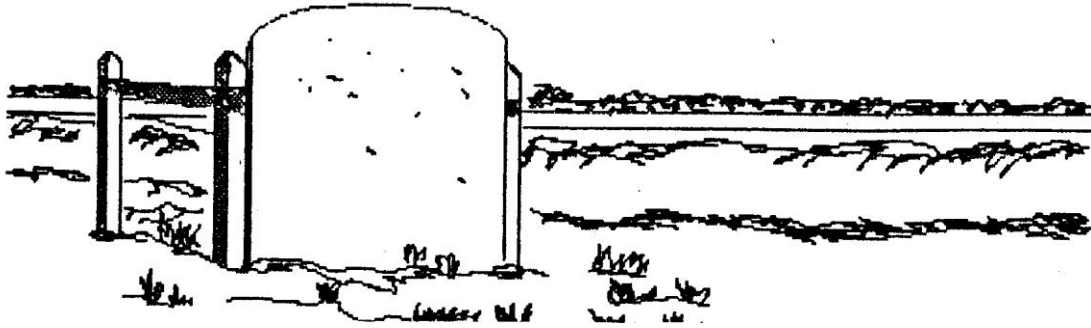
Sept. 17, 1851, Elias Wampole correspondence - - agency unfinished, one more keg of 10 penny nails needed.

Dec. 30, 1851 Wampole correspondence - - One finished room serves as kitchen, parlor, office; muslin, tobacco, tea, sugar, coffee, beef and chicken available.

Sept. 8, 1852, John T. Kerns - - nice house, 40 by 20 feet, frame, nicely painted, obtained wood and water.

Sept. 9, 1852, Abigail Scott - - new looking house, unoccupied

Sept. 2, Catherine S. Washburn - - Indian agent lives in a fraim (frame) house, has a well of good water.



Oregon Trail Grave – David Koontz, 1852

(located ¼ m. outside of Echo city limits between Railroad right of way and county road (old hwy 30).



Oregon Trail Ruts on Ramos Ranch 7 mi. SE of Echo

(The arrow indicates the point where the two trail segments descend the hill)

National Park Service Oregon Trail Markers have been placed along the trail

Sept. 7, 1853 - - Maria Parson Belshaw - - passed the Indian Agency..near the crossing of the Umatilla, frame building 30 ft. long, 12 or 16 ft. wide, porch in front, white washed on one side and bost ends, 2 doors, a well in front of porch, timber on east.

Sept. 12, 1853, Celinda Hines - - saw at the river a house. The Indian Agency, the first building that looked like civilization since Laramie.

Sept. 18, 1853, Samuel Handsaker - - frame building, 30 by 40, a story and a half, porch in front, man is stationed to record number of immigrants, wagons, stock. Traveled 17 miles 4 to the river the roads fork near the river one takes down the Columbia the other crosses the Eumatilla and keeps up from the Columbia bottom here

we found a trading post and men employed in building an indian agency the information that we could get was that the left hand road was much the best road and grass but water scarce. (**Susan Amelia Cranston, Aug 17, 1851**).

They must have been nearly done for only 3 weeks later **Charles A. Brandt** wrote: "Came to the Agency. Here is the first frame house we have seen in Oregon. Here we heard of the Promised Land. Could see the snow capped tops of the Mounts St. Helen's and Ranier. Clear day. Sunday."

From The Old Northwest to the Pacific Northwest: The 1853 Oregon Trail Diaries of Patterson Fletcher Luark and Michael Fleenen Luark

Howard Jablon and Kenneth R. Elkins, eds.

August 18

(PFL) Twenty miles to day left the river at the (Uvilla) Indian agency and passed 15 miles of sandy road to Butter creek here is Several traders good camp about 60 wagons on creek tonight

(MFL) left camp going down the creek 3 miles climbed the bluff ½ mile to the bottom again 2 miles further is the forks of the road the right hand going over to the columbia I hear this is a very bad road the left crosses the river in ½ mile where is the (Uvilla) Indian Agency it is a frame house unfinished

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here is a large haystack fenced with wagons besid(es) others standing about by a register kept here there has been 1669 oxen 1914 cows 615 horses 151 mules 283 wagons and 1963 persons ahead of us at this time leaving the agency we raised the bluff and had heavy sandy road to a small creek with a deep narrow channel called alder creek (Butter Creek) 10 miles very good water here crossing we went up a mile and camped grazing our cattle in the hills on bunch grass there is 60 wagons camped within 1 mile on the creek cool and cloudy today

August 19

(PFL) Twenty miles to day to what is called Wells springs (Well Springs) being strong Sulphur and mirey at head good grass no fuel but a little Sage

On August 27, 1851 P.V. Crawford wrote:

"This day we traveled sixteen miles. We first ascended a long hill on the northeast side of the stream [Umatilla River], to a high plain, over which we traveled for fifteen miles, then down a long hill to the valley, then one mile to the stream. Here we found good camping and a butcher located here, with a bountiful supply of good beef, which he sold very cheap, and which we hungry emigrants ate with good relish.

This day we traveled twelve miles. Four miles down the valley brought us to the Umatilla Agency. Here the road forks, the right hand one leading to the columbia, at the mouth of the Umatilla, the left hand one leading to the wells springs. Our company took the wells springs road and crossed a dry, sandy desert to Butter creek."

1864 Hattie Loughary-Aug. 17th We wished to take the Birch Creek Road, but after wandering around until 12 o'clock found ourselves at the camp of the previous night. Then resuming the Old Immigrant Road went 18 miles over a dry sandy ridge to the

Umatilla again. Then had to take our stock 2 miles on up the hill. Our men as usual after supper took their dogs, blankets, and guns and sleep on the mountain with the stock. Plenty of vegetables.

Aug. 18th Have to make another dry stretch of 15 miles to Butter Creek, which is well night dry, with grass very scarce. No wood except what we buy from the ranchers.

Aug. 19th Another 18 mile dry stretch is announced the morning. Our road is through rolling sand hills, plenty of dry grass which is very rich, but without water is comparative useless. Reach the "well spring" at 4 o'clock. This is a small oasis in the middle of a great waste. Have large number of teams and pack trains. Can buy oats, wood, mild, etc.