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Reminiscences of an Old Timer: A Recital of Actual Events, Incidents, Trials of a Pioneer, Hunter, Miner and Scout of the Pacific Northwest, Together with ...the Several Indian Wars

George Hunter

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Col. George Hunter was born in Ohio in 1835 died in December 1898 while in the Yukon Territory, Canada. He was a pioneer who crossed the plains to Oregon, Colonel in the Union Army, Sheriff, Legislator, Miner, Hunter, and Scout in the1877 Nez Perces war.

Colonel George Hunter, one of the band of pioneers whose advance to the slopes of the Pacific paved the way for the tide of emigration, has passed through a series of those hair-breadth escapes 'and adventures so incidental to Western life. The hunting of grizzlies and other noble game is accurately described in these pages, and the exciting accounts of the chase and its results prove that Colonel Hunter was no mean nimrod. The events which led to the massacre of the worthy missionary, Dr. Whitman, to whom the credit belongs of saving Oregon and Washington Territory to the Union, are given in Chapter VIII, and the supposed causes which led to his death are discussed. The lack of emigration and transportation retarded the development of the Walla Walla Valley, and Colonel Hunter after abandoning mining in the Shasta City district went to Shoalwater Bay, engaging in the oyster business and occasional hunting trips.
The colonel was appointed sheriff' of Pacific County about this time, and graphically describes his first arrest and how his prisoner escaped by jumping from the steamer that was conveying him to jail.

In 1861 the Civil War broke out, Hunter and his wife’s relatives ranging on the Union side, being strong “Douglass Democrats.” He bravely defended the honor of the flag in an attempt to lower it by some rebel sympathizers, and shortly afterwards resumed his old vocation of mining on the upper Columbia.

When news of the strike at Kootenia in British Columbia came, our pioneer went with a party to seek a fortune. The enforcement of the rigid mining laws on British territory are narrated, and an illustration given of the respect shown by miners to their regulations.

In 1865 Hunter left Kootenia for Walla Walla, traversing the Pen d’Oreille to the Spokane, over the Snake River, and on to Walla Walla. That town, in 1863, was a “lively” place, and our pioneer soon had his hands filled with the task of regulating the bands of road-agents and Indians who were stopping travelers and robbing stages. Vigilance committees were organized in which he took a prominent part, and the disturbers were' soon "cleaned out” of the country.

In 1877 the Nez Perces war commenced and Colonel Hunter tendered his services to General 0. 0. Howard, which were thankfully accepted. From the general he received the most considerate and kind attention, being in close attendance upon that distinguished officer throughout the campaign. The details of the outrages and practices of the Indians are given in full, and horrible indeed they are when narrated by an eye-witness of the scenes.

The war being over Colonel Hunter returned to his home to receive care and nursing at the hands of his wife, and upon recovering removed his family to Grange City. At a “pow-wow” with the Indians, where he acted as interpreter to General Howard, Colonel Hunter was elected their chief.

The remainder of the volume is taken up in describing the many events of the years that followed the discovery of gold in the Columbia basin, and a humorous description of the author’s first dabble in politics is given.
Becoming a member of the “Grange ” Colonel Hunter entered into the warehousing business and still continues in that pursuit. In I880 he was elected to serve in the Washington Territory Legislature, and his experiences and labors as a law maker proved that he served his constituents with honor.

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