

## CHAPTER 9

### THIRD DAY OF THE BATTLE OF WALLA WALLA

(As of February 28, 2011)

**December 9, 1855 (Sunday):**

**1: Colonel James Kelly Official Report:** “On the 9<sup>th</sup>, they did not make their appearance till about 10 o'clock AM in the morning and then in somewhat diminishing numbers.”

“As I had sent to Fort Henrietta for Companies D and E, and expected them on the 10<sup>th</sup>, I had thought it best to act on the defensive and hold our positions which were the same as on the 8<sup>th</sup>, until we could get an occasion to our forces sufficient to enable us to assail their rear and cut-off his retreat.”

“An attack was made during the day upon Companies A and H in the brush-wood, and upon Company B on the hill, both were repulsed with great gallantry by those Companies, and with considerable loss to the enemy. Companies F, I, and K also did great honor to themselves in repelling all approaches of their positions, although in doing so one man in Company F, and one in Company I were severely wounded.”

“Darkness as usual closed the combat, by the enemy withdrawing from the field. Owing to the inclemency of the night, the Companies on the hill were withdrawn from their several positions, Company B, abandoning its **rifle pits** which were made by the men of that company for its protection.”

**4: Captain A. V. Wilson (Company A) Account:** “At sunrise on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, the battle again commenced on the same ground as the day previous, which was a hot contest until dark. Our loss was in wounded, Ira Allen, Company F and John Smith, Company I.”

**37: Sergeant A. B. Roberts (Company A) Account:** “The third day was a continuation of the work of the day previous. The Indians stood their ground most stubbornly, holding every position they assumed in the early morning and continued their unavailing charges every hour or two upon our forces at the left (near the river and timber), while the **greasewood flats** were filled with the black heads and every tree in the timber before us had a Indian behind it watching for a shot at a White mans head, or his hat if it was tempting exposed even on the end of a stick as it often was done. We let the Indians wear themselves and their ammunition out.”

**5: Private Plympton Kelly (Company A) Account:** “The Indians made their appearance early as usual. They have tried today to scare us off by yelling and screaming. They effected but little by it. Last night an express was started for Fort Henrietta and The Dalles. Our ammunition is getting low. There has been a considerable quantity of corn packed up from below.”

**33: Sergeant William G. Haley (Company H) Account:** “The third day was a full day’s work, though perhaps not so many Indians engaged as yesterday, but the efforts were continued and desperate.”

**3: Private George Washington Miller (Company H) Account:** “On the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup>, they were at their work again, but not so early as on the proceeding morning. The volunteers, being fatigued and nearly worn out, Colonel Kelly chose to act on the defensive and hold the positions, the same as before, until Companies D and E from Fort Henrietta came to reinforce us. During the day, attacks were made on Companies A and H in the brush, and on B on the hills, which resulted in great loss to the enemy. The other companies on the hills did good service in repelling the attacks made on them during the day.”

**35: Private George Hunter (Company I) Account:** “I (George Hunter) was out near the foot hills (to the north) with some of the Wasco (Company B) boys. We would leave our pits and crawl to the top of a ridge and lie in wait. The Indians were doing the same thing on another ridge a hundred yards or so in front of us. We would exchange shots and then fall back out of sight and reload. One of the Wasco boys wore a heavy elk-skin coat, and on one occasion as he was crawling to the top of the ridge, keeping his head lower than his back, a ball struck him on the back and lanced along the coat, making a crease that looked as though a hot iron had drawn along it.”

**22: Private Robert and William Painter’s (Company D) Account:** “Received an express from Colonel Kelly’s command, informing us of having fought the Indians two days and were still fighting; that a number had been killed of both parties. They wanted immediate assistance. Captain Cornelius, (Company D and Captain Hembree, Company E), starts to their (Kelly’s) relief this evening (from Fort Henrietta) marching for Whitman’s station. We traveled forty-one (41) miles, and encamped on Wild Horse Creek, about two hours before day.”

**36: Captain A. J. Hembree (Company E) Account:** “This morning received a message from Colonel Kelly to march for him immediately at Walla Walla.”

The volunteers' loss for this day, December 9, 1855, was as follows **(11, 33)**:

**Killed:**

None

**Wounded:**

Private Ira Allen, Company F (Marion County) (Shot in the left shoulder);  
Private John Smith, Company I (Marion County) (Shot in the nose  
between the eyes, ball extracted)

## DOCUMENTS USED

1. The Oregonian, January 5, 1856, **“Official Report of Col. Kelly Of The Battle Between The Oregon Mounted Volunteers And The Indians”** from Fort Bennett, December 14, 1855, To Wm. H. Farrar, (Adjutant 1<sup>st</sup> Regt. O. V.) from Lieut. Col. James K. Kelly (December 14, 1855: Kelly to Farrar: Official Report);
3. Walla Walla Daily Union, December 7 and 8, 1905, and the Tacoma Tribune, October 28, 1892: an account by George Washington Miller, Company H (Linn County, 1<sup>st</sup> Reg. Oregon Mounted Volunteers);
4. The Weekly Oregonian, December 29, 1855 **“Particulars of the Fight at Walla Walla”** from Fort Bennett, December 14, 1855, To T. J. Dryer from Unknown (Captain A. V. Wilson, Company A, a daily account) (December 14, 1855: Wilson to Dryer);
5. **“We Were Not Just Summer Soldiers”** a daily account (in diary form) by Plympton Kelly, Oregon Mounted Volunteers, Company A; (Plympton Kelly Daily Diary);
11. The Oregonian, December 29, 1855, Letter to T. J. Dryer from B. F. Dowell;
14. The Oregonian, December 29, 1855, **“An Abstract of the Latest Intelligence Received from the Volunteers under Col. Kelly”** (FHA);
22. **“Journals of the Indian War of 1855-1856 (The Robert and William Painter (Company D) Accounts)”**: by J. Orin Oliphant, Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 15, No. 1, January 1927 (FHA);
33. The Oregon Statesman, January 1, 1856: December 15, 1855 letter W. G. H. (1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant William G. Haley, Company H, Linn County) to Bush (Editor of the Oregon Statesman), (FHA);
35. **“Reminiscences of an Old Timer”** by George Hunter, Company I (Benton County), First Regiment, Oregon Mounted Volunteers, 1887 (FHA);
36. **“Yakima Indian War Diary”** (of Captain A. J. Hembree, Oregon Mounted Volunteers, Company E, Yamhill County), Washington Historical Quarterly #16, (1925);

37. **“The Yakima War of 1855: The Campaign to Walla Walla: The Capture of the Most Noted War Chief of the Pacific Coast”** by (Sergeant) Alvin Brown (A. B.) Roberts (Oregon Mounted Volunteers, Company A, Multnomah County), Clark County History, 1967, (FHA);