

The following data is extracted from *History of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington, 1889*.

C.K. MERRIAM, M.D. - Mr. Merriam was born June 29, 1848, in Houlton, Aroostook county, Maine, being the eighth child in a family of ten children, the third and fourth being girls.

His father, Lewis Merriam, when a young man, went from New Salem, Massachusetts, to Maine, in 1832, and married and settled in Houlton in 1833. He is now eighty-two years old, and is coming West this summer.

The parents were poor, and lived on a farm two miles from the village. In early childhood he was taught to pick wool, quill yarn, etc., as the wool of the farm was manufactured into garments in the family mill, the motive power of which was supplied principally by his mother; and with boyish impatience he watched his father make his first pair of shoes by candle light.

If a book, slate, or pocket money for a Fourth of July celebration were needed, the wild strawberry patch frequently contributed the means. If a handsled, cart or miniature mill were desired, it was found in the workshop over the woodshed after a few days' work with the lumber and tools; while the yearly sugar camp in the maple grove furnished amusement for the boys as well as syrup for the family.

The farm was sold; and the family moved about two miles to a sawmill which the father built on the north branch of the Meduxnekeag, where they remained a short time, until the mill was sold to the oldest son in 1861. The family move again to a farm having an old up-and-down sawmill in Hayesville, Maine, about twenty-five miles south of Houlton. While there he received much valuable advice, encouragement and promise of aid from an older brother, - then and now an officer in the United States army, - which led him to resolve, in 1864, to obtain an education, though not unmindful of the difficult task before him, as the promised aid was to be given him after entering college.

The older children were away, - three to the war, others to make homes for themselves. The parents were growing old, and not only were unable to render much assistance, but required his service in the mill or on the farm with still a younger brother. One term of three months each year in Houlton Academy was all that could be given him; and the expense was chiefly met by teaching writing schools evenings, by money earned driving logs, and by the sale of furs trapped along the banks of adjacent streams in the fall.

In the summer of 1867, after the usual spring work was done, he assisted by his younger brother, cut some timber, hauled it to a stream, drove it several miles to a point near home, took it from the water and manufactured fifty thousand shingles for the purpose of paying for land desired for pasture.

Thus the years ran by, offering little opportunity for study; and the necessary preparation for college required the long tedious struggle of seven years. One day during that period, needing a pair of boots, and having no money, he went one morning to a cedar swamp about one mile from the house, cut a load of shingle rift, and returning yoked the steers, - he had been taught to drink milk and later to work, - haled the timber to a brother's mill near by, and sawed and bunched before night a thousand of extra shingles, which paid for the boots.

On the way to enter Colby University in Waterville, Maine, September, 1871, being unusually pale from too close confinement and study during the summer, his brother, who accompanied him in a carriage sixty miles to Mattawamkeag Point railroad station, urged him not to go, and expressed the opinion that he would not live to get through college; to which he replied, "I will die then in the attempt."

His first term's expenses in the university were paid in part with money earned river-driving the previous spring, his last experience with the peavy. While a student in college, he became a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, and taught schools during the long winter vacations. Just before graduating in the spring of 1875, he applied for a position as teacher of penmanship in the public schools of Lawrence, Massachusetts, and by invitation met the school board of that city May 29, 1875, and was appointed sub-master of the Liver Grammar school, and teacher of penmanship in the city schools for the next year at a salary of one thousand dollars. After getting settled in his new duties he began the study of medicine under Doctor Chamberlin of that city.

At the close of the academic year, in the summer of 1876, he returned to his native town in Maine, and continued the study of medicine under Doctor Bussy. He taught the High School in Rockport, Maine, in the winter of 1876 - 77, and resumed the study of medicine again during the summer, and entered Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York City in September, 1877. He went to Lowell, Massachusetts, after the close of the session, and studied medicine under Doctors Burnham and Benoit. He entered the medical department of the University of the City of New York in September, 1878; and in February, 1879, received his degree of M.D. from that institution.

Returning to Lowell, Massachusetts, he began the practice of medicine in partnership with a former preceptor, Doctor Benoit, March 1, 1879. The income from the practice of medicine during the year only paid his expenses; and, becoming impatient and anxious to achieve something more, and being debarred from a commission in the United States service on account of his age, he applied for a medical contract in the army. Being promised such contract by the medical director, Department of the Columbia, on his arrival in Vancouver Barracks, Washington Territory, he started west and was given a contract March 18, 1880, and assigned to duty temporarily at that post. In May he was ordered to accompany troops up the Columbia river to a new military camp at Lake Chelan, - which is destined to become the greatest pleasure resort of Washington. The lake is nearly sixty miles long and is narrow and deep. Its waters are full of immense trout; and its shores abound in large game; while the scenery near its head amid the snow-clad peaks of the Cascade Range is of surpassing beauty and grandeur. En route to this section, the troops landed at White Bluffs and marched across the great plains to a point opposite Lake Chelan, and crossed the Columbia river in Indian canoes and roughly made bateaux. While enraptured with the pure mountain air, the fertile plains and beautiful pure mountain scenery, he received the sad news of his mother's death at the old home in Maine in her sixty-seventh year, which clouded for a time all he had witnessed.

Camp Chelan was abandoned in October, 1880, and a new site for a military post selected near the mouth of Spokane river, to which point the command was moved. He was again ordered to Fort Colville, Washington Territory, in October of the same year. While there he paid the last of his indebtedness, amounting to over twenty-three hundred dollars, and January 1, 1882, possessed the capital of twenty-one dollars. During that year he began assisting, and has since aided, a nephew through college. November, 1882, Fort Colville was abandoned; and he was ordered to Fort Spokane, Washington Territory, where he is still stationed.

On the frontier the lessons learned from necessity in early life have proved useful to him. Among other things he improvised a rawhide jacket-splint, with a detachable jury-mast for supporting the head in cases of Pott's disease of the vertebral column, which met indications admirably, and possessed the desirable qualities of strength, lightness and durability. As a taxidermist he has preserved specimens of many a successful hunt or chase. As a mechanic, household furniture, snowshoes and fishing rods served to utilize an otherwise idle hour. His latest effort was a seven-ounce fly rod made of lance wood, and covered with eel skins sent from Maine. It doubtless has few equals in beauty and durability.

During his connection with the army, he has traveled over the greater portion of Eastern Washington

Territory, and has visited Puget Sound. Being so favorably impressed with the great natural resources of the territory, its fertile plains, its fine timber, its mineral wealth, and its healthful climate, he not only decided to make it his home, but induced others of the family to do so. By investing wherever he was able, he has laid the foundation for a snug little fortune.

Source: *History of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington, 1889*