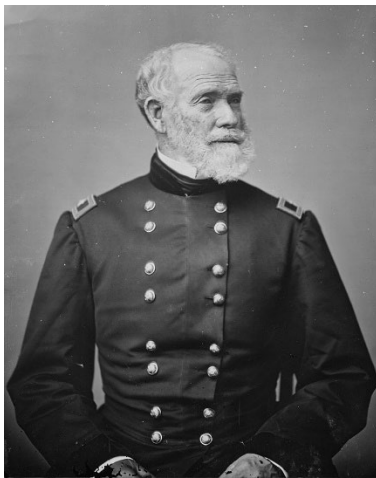


Military Fort Colville

When we left off talking about the US Military and its involvement in the Indian Wars of 1858, Colonel George Wright had defeated the collective Spokane, Yakama and Coeur d'Alene tribes at Four Lakes and then again in the Spokane Valley. His troops were using long-range rifles that were accurate at twice the distance of those provided to the Indians by the Hudson's Bay Company. HBC Fort Colville was still a safe haven for Natives but no longer a source of arms. The US Canadian line had been established for 12 years along the 49th parallel. US Troops were careful not to trespass on HBC property or homesteads owned by HBC employees.



Brigadier William S. Harney

The mission of Edward Steptoe to establish a fort to protect settlers and miners near Colville had not succeeded since his defeat near Rosalia by collective tribes. Still wanting to establish a military presence in the Colville Valley, the officer in charge of the Department of Oregon at the time was Brigadier William S. Harney. Harney ordered Brevet Major Pinkney Lugenbeel to march north and establish a fort near the settlement of Colville. He arrived June 20th 1859 after travelling north on the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail from Fort Walla Walla but having to route around the Hudson's Bay land claims starting at what is now the Orin-Rice Rd. His instructions were to build a fort to house 300 men.

Although a respected military officer who would later play a hand in preventing Missouri from joining the Confederacy. He beat an enslaved woman, Hannah, to death in 1834 at the Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis Missouri. Although clearly responsible, Harney was acquitted by a friendly judge. He was accused of mistreatment of prisoners in the Mexican American War and was known as "Woman Killer" for shooting cannons into a cave where Sioux women and children were hiding at Blue Water Creek. In later years he was appointed to the "Indian Peace Commission" where he urged the US to honor treaties. He spent time with his old friend Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy.

Seeing friends emerge on both sides of the Civil War was not uncommon, especially if they both attended West Point Military Academy which was also not uncommon. Pinkney Lugenbeel was a West Point graduate too. His graduating class included William T. Sherman. Lugenbeel brought troops to establish Military Fort Colville in 1859. Ostensibly the fort was established to house the US Northwestern Boundary Survey personnel. Other accounts say it was there to protect settlers and miners. Both HBC Fort Colville and Military

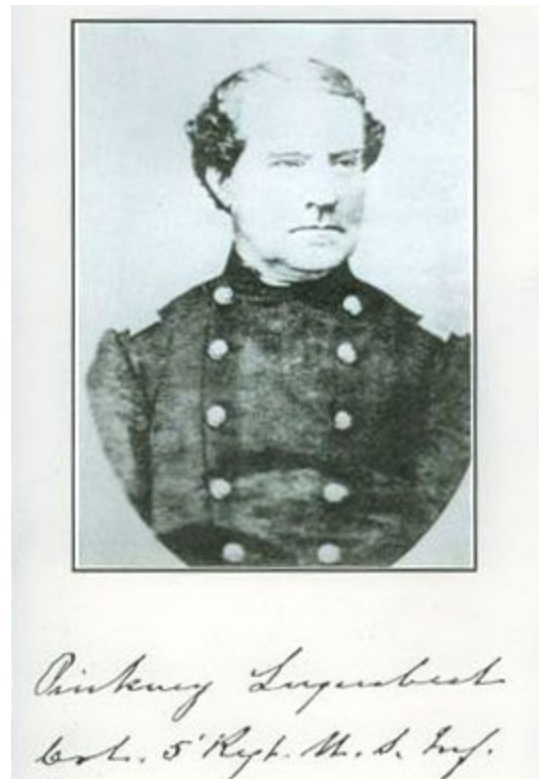
Fort Colville existed at the same time. The HBC fort was abandoned in 1871, a decade before the military fort was left behind in a move to the newly established Fort Spokane at the mouth of the Spokane River where it enters the Columbia.

At first Military Fort Colville was called “Harney’s Depot” and then “Colville Depot”. Across Mill Creek from the fort a small town arose called Pinkney City. It became the first Spokane County Washington County Seat until Spokane County and Stevens County merged. The Boundary Survey people arrived the fort on December 3rd 1859 and despite nighttime lows of -22° F survived in tents until December 19th when their buildings were ready to be inhabited.

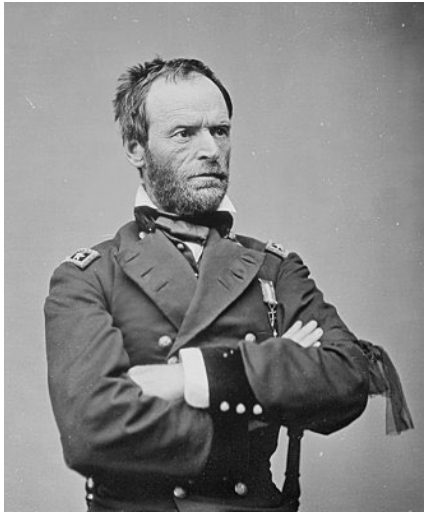
As the Civil War broke out in 1861 many men left to fight, half for the Confederacy and another half for the Union. With so many regular trained military gone, a group of volunteers from the California Infantry Regiment replaced them, with some of them recruited from Alcatraz Prison. Even locals considered these men a bad lot. One murdered a local man and their treatment of local natives was intolerable. These volunteer “Indian Fighters” sometimes called “Rangers” were particularly ruthless in what amounted to genocide. (See **An Indigenous People’s History of the United States** by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz.)

Regular troops returned in 1865 after the Civil War. Ten years later cavalry troops arrived. Horse stables were added and the post readied to fight the Nimiipuu (AKA Nez Perce) tribes as they fled through Montana. By 1880 Fort Spokane was ready and in 1882 most personnel moved there from Colville. Nine months later the Commanding General of the United States Army, William Tecumseh Sherman visited on a tour of army posts in the west and visits to border stations.

Sherman is a hard man to describe, though countless authors including himself have tried. He wrote in 1873 “We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women and children...during an assault the soldiers cannot pause to distinguish between male and female, or even discriminate as to age.” His father fancied the great chief of the Shawnees, “Tecumseh” who organized tribes to stand together against incursions and broken treaties. Hence his first name. Two of his children also



carried that name. His brother John was one of the founders of the Republican Party that was organized to abolish slavery.



William Tecumseh Sherman

Another graduate of West Point, he evolved during the Civil War from an often-maligned commander to one prized for his ability to quickly size up a situation and adjust. Having conquered Atlanta, he set his sights on Savannah and drove there with little opposition or communication with the rest of the Union. His objective was to demoralize the enemy and thereby see a definite end to the conflict. This tactic was later viewed as the beginning of “Modern Warfare” because it avoided direct confrontation and battles but left whole populations without supplies or the wherewithal to sustain an army. He had seen clearly from the beginning of the conflict that the war would be long and terrible. The phrase “War is hell” is ascribed to him. He

also supported the practice of eradicating the bison for many of the same reasons. (It can be noted that although Sherman Pass is named for him, he did not use that route but more accurately traversed what is now Boulder Pass and was at that time called “Deadman Pass.”)

One last military man of note from Fort Colville was John U. Hofstetter, an immigrant from Switzerland, Hofstetter started a distillery in Pinkney City. He went on to found the town of Colville after stealing the county records from Pinkney City. But his shenanigans and the exploits of his many businesses remain to be told another day.