

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

North Yakima, Wash., April 25, 1893.

Major J. W. Powell,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:
While at Carson, Minn. several years ago
I became quite well acquainted with Mrs Mary
P. Wheeler and family. Recalling that acquaintance
I take the liberty of addressing you personally.
I enclose a clipping from the Spokane Morning
Review, April 20 Inst., which I would not
presume to submit to you, had I not read
of a similar inhabitant of that same lake about
six or seven months ago. From the other de-
scription the strange inhabitant of Rock Lake
would seem to be a relative of the Plesiosaurus.
If you regard the matter worthy the time, effort
and expense, I would like to be empowered and
equipped by you, or the department to investigate
the reported stranger.

If there is work that you would care to have done,
in the Northwest, during the months of June, July
and August, that would come within the scope of my
abilities, I would be pleased to put myself under
your direction to perform such service.

Through former favor, I have a number of
the Annual Ecological Reports, up to and includ-
ing the Ninth Annual Report of '88. Will you kindly
favor me with the later volumes?

Very Sincerely,

W. M. Heiney.

Lock Box 35.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Gen. Rec.

No. 720

MAY 2 1893

Nor. Yakima, Wash.
Apr. 25/93.

Heiney, W.M.

Encloses, with remark,
clipping of a
reptilian marine
monster.

Offers services
to work in his region.
Req. annual reports.

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY.

WASHINGTON,

May 4, 1893

Respectfully referred to

Prof.
O.C. Marsh, for remark.

BY ORDER OF DIRECTOR:

[G. R. 720]

P. C. Gorman
Chief Clerk.

To Prof Marsh

(over)

[1893 Apr 20]

CANE REVIEW, THURSDAY

A MONSTER WATER SNAKE

Its Home Is in Beautiful Rock Lake, in Whitman County.

SEEN TWICE IN THE LAST YEAR

Colfax Gazette.

A frightful monster of the deep inhabits Rock lake, a beautiful inland sea nine miles long and 30 miles north-west of Colfax. A hideous serpent, estimated to be fully 100 feet in length, is known to make its home in the depths of the limpid waters. More than once this terrific wonder has been seen writhing its awful length about the lake and lashing the usually calm surface of the waters into foam with its tremendous contortions. Twice within a year this ugly creature has been seen. Its known history dates back nearly half a century, the Indians of the plains giving the first account of its appearance. The last view of this hideous deep water devil was had on Friday morning last by Ernest Jones, a well-known merchant of Palouse City.

Two weeks ago Mr. Jones, accompanied by J. C. Cady, Ed Doering and J. R. Cunningham, went from Palouse to the lake on an outing after geese, ducks and fish, remaining a week. Saturday afternoon the party passed through Colfax on their way home. To a representative of the Gazette Mr. Jones related the story of the sight he had seen. It was an adventure calculated to make the flesh creep and the hair of the head stand straight.

"Talk about great snakes," said Mr. Jones, "I've seen all I want of 'em at close range. I left camp alone on Friday morning with gun and tackle for a quiet forenoon's sport, promising to return at noon, when we were to start for home. About 10 o'clock, while lazily trolling from the bank with a spoon hook, I observed a slight commotion in the waters of the lake, about a quarter of a mile from shore, and at a point two or three miles above the mouth of the lake. I thought it no more than a ruffling breeze, and soon withdrew my attention and confined it to my line. But I'll tell you, my friend, my gaze was soon brought back to that commotion, in a mighty forcible manner, too. I have hardly recovered enough yet from my terrible fright to tell the story. A

thunderous thrashing of the water made me look quickly up. Not more than 50 yards distant was the most appalling sight of a lifetime. A monster sea serpent, the like of which I never dreamed existed except in myth-history and the tales of sea-goers, had raised its terrible head fully 20 feet above the surface. With its great green eyes, nearly as big as my fist, fixed upon me, the awful creature had suddenly stopped its swift and silent approach and was beating the water into foam with the gigantic contortions of its slimy length for several rods behind. Between its wide open jaws a long reptile-like tongue, green in color, tipped with red, darted like lightning in and out. Its whitened fangs glistened in the sun and appeared to me as long as the tongs of a pitchfork. The 20 feet or more of the hideous monster which I could plainly see above the water was as large around as a big man, and was covered with scales, somewhat resembling an alligator, except of a greener hue. For fully half a minute I looked with a horrible fascination upon the great creature. Each second it became more excited and I more firmly rooted to the spot. With each contortion the serpent moved nearer me. I have no doubt that in another half minute I would have been snapped up in its terrible jaws and swallowed like a toad had I not suddenly recovered the use of my legs and lit out for high hills. As I ran the monster darted for its escaping prey, and its thrashings at the water's edge were even more terrific than before. Unlike Lot's wife, I never looked behind me for several miles."

Mr. Jones is not the only reputable person who declares to have had a plain view of this inland wonder. About a year ago Mrs. Cable, a lady who then resided near Rock lake, but who now lives at Spokane, was fishing from the banks. With her were her two children. The lady has often told that a huge serpent, which looked to her at least a hundred feet long, came quite near them and acted in much the same manner that Mr. Jones has described. Workmen on the big irrigation dam now building at the mouth of the lake tell of hearing great and mysterious noises on the water at night, which they can attribute to no animal or fowl they are familiar with.

It is a well-known fact among those about Rock lake that no Indian, however brave, will venture in his canoe upon the bosom of the lake. The reason they assign is that nearly 50 years ago the powerful tribe of the Yakimas, over whom historic old Kamiahkum reigned, were camped on the beach during the annual fishing season. A 12-year-old boy was sculling about in a canoe, when a big snake, in full view of the entire camp, snapped the youth from the boat and swallowed him at a gulp. To this day not an Indian dares embark upon the placid hiding place of the terrible serpent.