

*Ephraim Fox established a family in Oregon in 1852 that spread down the Pacific coast, which was so prolific at one time, that no one would ever have believed one hundred years later the last Fox would be detailing the end of the line.*

## **Ephraim Fox: An Oregon Pioneer Story**

By James Royal Fox, Jr.

**Order the book from the publisher [BookLocker.com](http://BookLocker.com)**

**<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12769.html?s=pdf>**

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**



*Ephraim Fox,*  
*An Oregon Pioneer Story*

AMERICAN FOX TALES



They told him  
land in Oregon was free  
if you were willing to pay the price.

It was true.

And if it was for family,  
Ephraim Fox was willing to pay.

*James Royal Fox, Jr.*

**Copyright © 2023 James Royal Fox, Jr.**

Print ISBN: 978-1-958878-27-9

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-387-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the author, addressed “Attention: Permission Coordinator”, at the address below.

James Royal Fox Jr  
21575 Highway 101 South  
Cloverdale, Oregon 97112

### **Fair Use Policy and Legal Disclaimer**

The information in this book is true to the best of my knowledge. Those who can add to this educational narrative are invited to contact the author who reserves the right to expand the facts contained herein in subsequent printings.

If you wish to use copyrighted material from this book for purposes of your own that go beyond fair use, you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

Printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Fox, Jr., James Royal

Ephraim Fox: An Oregon Pioneer Story by James Royal Fox, Jr.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023901729

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Chapter One: The Willamette Valley, Late Summer, 1852.....	3
Chapter Two: Brownsville.....	21
Chapter Three: Settlement.....	29
Chapter Four: First Winter in The Oregon Territory .....	35
Chapter Five: The Baltimore Family Arrives in Oregon.....	47
Chapter Six: Rogue Indian War, 1853-1854.....	57
Chapter Seven: Indian Hostilities of 1855.....	65
Chapter Eight: Rogue Indian War 1855-1856 .....	73
Chapter Nine: The Boys of Linn, Company C, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Regiment.....	91
Chapter Ten: The First, or Little Meadows Campaign .....	105
Chapter Eleven: Assault on The Rice Settlement.....	117
Chapter Twelve: Aftermath .....	133
Chapter Thirteen: Captain Jonathon Keeney Under Fire .....	143
Chapter Fourteen: War Reaches the Coast .....	145
Chapter Fifteen: William Fox Service at War's End .....	161
Chapter Sixteen: Settlement Continues in Oregon Territory .....	167
Chapter Seventeen: Onset of The Civil War.....	177
Chapter Eighteen: The Telegraph Killed the Pony Express Star....	181
Chapter Nineteen: Great Flood of 1862 .....	183
Chapter Twenty: The Hearing Family .....	189
Chapter Twenty-One: Early Oregon Justice .....	203
Chapter Twenty-Two: Changing Times.....	207
Chapter Twenty-Three: Honest Abe.....	217

Chapter Twenty-Four: The Wild West .....	223
Chapter Twenty-Five: Dunkard Disorder .....	227
Chapter Twenty-Six: The Final Straw & New Beginnings.....	231
Chapter Twenty-Seven: The Death of George Bunch.....	239
Chapter Twenty-Eight: New Beginnings & Dead Ends.....	247
Chapter Twenty-Nine: Grandma Liz.....	257
Chapter Thirty: The Overholser Family.....	261
Chapter Thirty-One: The Letter from Reverend Robe.....	275
Chapter Thirty-Two: The Summer of '76 .....	277
Chapter Thirty-Three: Railroads & The Wild, Wild West .....	281
Chapter Thirty-Four: The Mysterious 'Second' Bunch Family .....	289
Chapter Thirty-Five: Fossil, Oregon.....	299
Chapter Thirty-Six: Oregon Range War .....	305
Chapter Thirty-Seven: Moses General Store .....	319
Chapter Thirty-Eight: The Chinese Slaughter of 1887 .....	323
Chapter Thirty-Nine: First Murder in Columbia County - The Stoddard Incident .....	327
Chapter Forty: Electricity in Oregon City .....	341
Chapter Forty-One: The Final Defeat of The American Indian.....	349
Chapter Forty-Two: Jim & Orra Fox .....	353
Chapter Forty-Three: The Silver Lake Fire & A Halsey Affair .....	357
Chapter Forty-Four: Bloody Summer of '95 .....	363
Chapter Forty-Five: A Fall from Grace.....	367
Chapter Forty-Six: A Chance at Redemption.....	385
Chapter Forty-Seven: Redemption, of a Sort.....	389
Chapter Forty-Eight: Royal Hobart Fox .....	397
Chapter Forty-Nine: The Passing of A Pioneer.....	399

*Ephraim Fox: An Oregon Pioneer Story*

Epilogue.....	405
Acknowledgments .....	433
Bibliography .....	435

## Chapter Nine

### The Boys of Linn, Company C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment

On the morning of October 23, from Brownsville to Peoria; from the banks of the Willamette to the Calapooia River valley, men from the area with the exception of those with religious objections, gathered in great numbers at the Harrisburg post office. From remote and distant homesteads to the busy riverside of the Willamette, farmers to prominent businessmen and political figures; all gathered to defend their homes and families from a common enemy. Jonathon Keeney stood somberly as the men of Linn County, including Ephraim and John Fox, and George, James and Stokely Bunch, enthusiastically committed their names to a roster. When they were finished, A.W. Stannard was elected as First Lieutenant and Joseph Yates as Second Lieutenant. With Company C Second Regiment loosely organized, the citizen army rode in a column a mile south out of town where they camped for the night. The following morning the march south was resumed at 8am toward Eugene City, still referred to as Skinner's Mudhole by many, despite the city's name changing a couple years prior.<sup>511</sup>



*Jonathon Keeney, 1813-1878 (image 8)*

The Boys of Linn left the county of their name riding hard and armed to the teeth with every man on his best horse. They initially encountered light traffic as riders joined them from homesteads along the way. A thin veil of smoke reddened the skies that the oldest pioneers among them claimed were likely signal fires set by the Indians, as they had done many times in the past. The older pioneers would have been right in one respect, the fires were started by Indians, but they weren't signal fires, they were settlers' homes burning in southern Oregon, blowing up the valley.

The ranks of the citizen army grew steadily as they rode through each small village where groups of motley men dressed in their work clothes or finery waited along the trail with their rifles to join with them. Sometimes they met wagons in the road banging along speedily, carrying women and children to gather in relatives' and friends' homes, all in great haste. As the volunteer group grew, the thunder of their hooves could be felt on the roadside by residents and relatives who hollered their support and raised their fists in unified defiance and rage as they rode by.

Riding swiftly among the growing group of armed horsemen, united with the purpose of taking a bloody fight to the aboriginal savages coursed adrenaline through their veins. Excitement, anxiety, fear and maybe a chance for glory reflected in the eyes of each man as they moved through the scattered, modest, and secluded settlements. The gravity of their purpose was seen in the faces of the settlers they passed, who waved them on with encouragement, some enraged, others crying or with fear in their eyes. Dogs ran out to meet them, children screamed, and babies cried. Even those not enlisting that they met, riding or working, carried firearms in an open fashion that was never the typical case.<sup>511; 534</sup>

The armed party reached Eugene City at 1pm October 24, 1855. Working their way through the crowded streets toward a white banner suspended across the street that advertised 'Oregon Volunteer Enlistment', they proceeded to join long lines, working their way toward two heavy wooden tables. Smaller white banners over each table were labeled 'Linn' and 'Lane' and at the front of each line, Army regulars stood behind the tables and made entries into great wooden



backed books with spines 5” wide, signing men into the Oregon Mounted Volunteers proper. This great wood frame tome remains in good original condition, at the Oregon Archives in Salem.

Ephraim and John, as well as George, James and Stokely enlisted for a term of 105 days of service each and were assigned to Company C Second Regiment, under the command of Capt. Jonathon Keeney serving under Col. Robert L. Williams. Each man had to present himself and his equipment as well as his arms and horse for inspection, and a value was given for his equipment, firearm and mount. The value of an average horse was \$200, while the best mount was valued no more than \$350. All men received a \$50 estimated value given for their equipage. The largest difference in value were the firearms the crowd of men carried; some worth as little as \$50, others as much as \$125. The people who signed up on the roster were familiar to each other as neighbors; Crabtree, Turner, Swank, Brown, Cochran, Rice, Yates, Porter and Miller, as well as Fox and Bunch. Many men who crossed the Oregon Trail with Ephraim served as enlisted men; Payne, Moore, Robinett, Schooling and more.<sup>511; 51</sup>

Most of the men that served on this volunteer force had dealt with hostile Indians before and those that had not were anxious to. Despite their being officially organized by the Governor of the Territory, there was no training to be an Oregon Mounted Volunteer, nor any identifying article of clothing, badge or signed document. They were simply a state sponsored militia of men that had a horse, a brace of guns, and used them both effectively. There was little time to train and little respect for rank unless the men knew the man who commanded them; this common theme had been the case since the first rag-tag armed group was gathered in Jamestown and repeated in Oregon. There were plenty of men like John (who used his given name, George) Bunch, that received ranked positions in great part for their ability to control the independent, often stubborn farmers. Without benefit of military training to follow orders without question, it was necessary to give positions of rank to men who were respected in their communities. Men often received the rank of lieutenant and sergeant because they could control the untrained troops. Rank among the Oregon Mounted Volunteers was a reflection of a man’s abilities and the position that he

held in his community; not necessarily anything to do with his military experience.<sup>511; 534</sup>

George was given the rank of Second Sergeant. He had an excellent mount that was deemed worth \$350. It is unknown if he used the cherished rifle he carried across the Oregon Trail, but the rifle he presented was appraised at \$75, an average value. His brothers James and Stokely were both placed in the rank of Private, their mounts and rifles both being valued at \$200 and \$50, respectively. Ephraim's sturdy, strong mount was given a respectable value of \$300, while his little brother John's horse was appraised at \$200, the same as James and Stokely. Both Ephraim and John Fox carried fine rifles that were estimated to be worth \$100 each. The rate of pay for their term of service was \$210, and an additional \$210 for use and risk of their horse. When they had signed their names or made their mark, as was the case with James Bunch and John Fox, they marched a mile outside of town and camped on the Willamette.<sup>511; 51</sup>

Still, more men arrived in Eugene City until the turnout was such that they began turning away zealous farmers, miners, loggers, laborers, and businessmen; some of whom were enraged by the exclusion. It is almost inconceivable that a volunteer army of that size could be gathered so quickly in the sparsely populated territory, but it spoke to the urgency and seriousness of the turning point in settler and Indian relations. As the population exploded inside the towns mustering troops, settler movement up and down the Willamette slowed to only that which was necessary.<sup>511; 536</sup>

In the afternoon of October 24, 1855, a muster roll of Company C 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was called. In command was highly respected 40-year-old Jonathon Keeney with the rank of Captain. Though he had no military experience George W. (John) Bunch, 39, was assigned as Second Sgt. Among those listed in the rank of Private were James W. Bunch, 27, Stokely D. Bunch, 19, Ephraim Fox, 33 and John Fox, 18. Filled with purpose, the bold group of heavily armed men, 114 strong, rode out of Eugene City for the rugged mountains of southern Oregon. The average age of the Oregon volunteer Indian fighter was 24 years old. Less traffic was encountered the further they rode south, but

smoke from burning homesteads increased, hanging hazy, pink in the sky.<sup>511;51</sup>

As a unified-settler response was being organized, random attacks, looting, burning, murder and mutilations continued in southern Oregon. The same day the muster roll of Company C was called, on October 24, the Indians attacked some hog drovers in the Cow Creek valley, killing two men named Bailey and wounding three more.

During the day, the Indians attacked and burnt four homesteads, including one owned by the Redfield family. Mr. Redfield, a gunsmith among other professions, had managed to harness teams to wagons but as the family fled in terror, their teams were shot and killed. Because his wife was unable to walk due to an injury received previously in the accidental discharge of a firearm, Mr. Redfield picked her up on his back and was running for cover when the Indians sunk arrows into her back, further wounding her. They remained hold up until the following day. Capt. Rinearson gathered enough volunteers that by the following day guards were placed at homes, hostels, and stagecoach stations, showing a strong presence that sent the Indians back into the mountains.<sup>536</sup>

The following day, on Thursday, October 25, the hastily formed volunteer companies were organized by their officers and preparations were made for their movement. At 1pm Company C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment paraded with the other regiment from Linn County as well as two from Lane County. When they were finished, the combined parties moved ten miles south of Eugene, and camped on the coast fork of the Willamette River. When supper time came, they found that they did not have enough utensils but were assured they would receive supply in Roseburg. This was only a hint at what was to come for the lack of fundamental supplies the troops needed. Meanwhile, violence, murder and slaughter increased in both frequency and intensity. The day after Company C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment mustered in Eugene City, Rogue River Indians attacked a 12-man detachment of Company H, Third Artillery. The men had just completed a 13-day road survey that had begun on the coast in Port Orford, through the coast range mountains to the Oregon-California Road. Three miles from its conclusion at the Oregon-California Road, they were ambushed and two were killed as

the rest scattered, escaping back to Fort Lane. Intelligence at Ft. Lane gained inadvertently during the ambush of the survey crew of Company H had identified a hidden Indian encampment on a high ridge near the site of the attack. Regulars and Volunteers raced into the Grave Creek valley, including Capt. Keeney's newly organized 2nd Regiment, who traveled 25 miles that day, to confront the warring Takelma Indians; finally camping near the Calapooia Mountains. Smoldering burnt out homesteads along the road and smoke curling into the skies from a distance across the rugged mountains caused a deepening reddish haze in the broad sky. The only movement on trails or roads, was that of armed White men. Saturday October 27, the volunteers traveled twelve miles over rugged roads that crossed the Calapooia Mountains. They camped that evening in the Umpqua valley.<sup>511</sup>

Sunday, October 28 the men traveled another twelve miles and camped that evening in the Camas Swale. That evening about midnight an express messenger from Roseburg arrived with an order calling for a detachment of thirty men to quell Indians threatening settlers on Cole's prairie. The Second Regiment's First Lt. Stannard organized 30 men, and at 6am they departed on their mission while the balance of the Volunteers began an 18-mile march to Roseburg.

When the companies reached town, they were surprised by how coolly they were received by the inhabitants who offered them no quarter. One settler outside of town refused to let the Volunteers cut firewood on his claim, and his decision so enraged some of the Volunteers that they went to the settler's own woodpile and took some of it. That afternoon the detachment of 30 men returned with 10 Indian prisoners who had been taken without firing a shot. The Indians were offered to the constables in Roseburg who took them into custody. That evening about dark a request came for a contingent of guards from the Volunteers to secure the Indian prisoners as the citizens in town were threatening their lives. Capt. Keeney called for them to be brought to camp and there they remained, safely. The next night it rained, and the men had not yet been issued tents. Locals refused to let the men sleep in their barns and it made for a strained relationship by morning.<sup>511</sup>

On Tuesday October 30, the election was held for the commander of their troop. Captain William Martin was elected unanimously and given the title of Major. The companies left Roseburg at about 4pm, traveling five miles before setting up camp for the night.<sup>511</sup> Meanwhile, from Ft. Lane, Capt. Andrew Jackson Smith had organized a night march to sneak up on the Indian encampment in the Grave Creek Hills. By 11pm, their plans were finalized and from bivouacs they had set up along the Oregon-California Trail at Wolf Creek and Grave Creek, two companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of United States Dragoons, five companies of Oregon Mounted Volunteers led by John E. Ross, and two companies of Oregon Mounted Volunteers from the Governors Northern Battalion, 300 in all, walked away silently from their camp in two columns. One column descending Wolf Creek, and the other Grave Creek, they advanced on the Indian camp in the moonlight. That evening a messenger brought word to Maj. Martin that Capt. Bailey's company and the Umpqua Volunteers together with the Southern Battalion and Capt. Smith's Regulars, had engaged the Indians at the Grave Creek hills.<sup>510</sup>

Unfortunately, in the course of the night march, due to miscommunication and poor guidance by scouts in the dark, the forces strayed from their flanking positions. When dawn came, they found their forces combined together on a high, open and grassy ridge two miles across from the enemy camp, with a 1500' deep ravine dividing them. When several Volunteers stupidly lit warming fires in the pre-dawn, the Indians were alerted to the White men across from them and readied for battle.<sup>510</sup>

As the sun rose October 31, the men of Company C 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment began a 20-mile march across the floor of the canyon toward the Six Bit House and the coming theater of battle. Thirty men were detailed to remain at Roseburg for its defense.<sup>511</sup>

Meanwhile some distance beyond, atop the Grave Creek hills, the eager pioneers could see their enemy across the deep divide and began getting anxious for the fight. Some of the Volunteers left their posts and abandoned their equipment to sneak down the ridge into the valley out of anxiousness for the fight. Finally, when wisps of smoke from

Indian cooking fires were seen by the White men in the valley, they began storming 1500' up the hillside toward the Indian encampment.

From atop the ridge where their men were yet massed, their charge was seen by the other Volunteers and it didn't take long before Smith and Ross lost control of the men, who threw their gear to the ground and raced themselves down into the ravine to attack the Indian camp up the other side. Running, crawling, climbing and scratching, they reached the bottom of the deep ravine and sweating in their effort they then turned uphill toward their enemy. As they watched the citizen army pour off the grassy ridge into the ravine, running without formation or tactical consideration, Smith and Ross threw their hands in the air and ordered the Regulars to the charge.

Over the course of many hours some scaled both sides of the ravine, but by then the troops were scattered on either side of the canyon. By the time they scaled both sides of the ravine, at great effort, many of them were exhausted. As the White men gathered at the precipice of the ravine, they could see the Indians were positioned well for their defense, behind stumps and wind fallen timber in a natural saddle in the ground. Of the 200 Indians in the group, about half were women and children hidden well behind the lines, with the notable exception of Queen Mary.<sup>510</sup>

The daughter of Chief Tyee Joe, known as Queen Mary, rode on horseback along an open grassy hillside 800' behind and above her peoples' battle lines, with a panoramic view of both her people and the White men. Acting at least in part as a leader of her people, she could be seen directing movements as she watched the battle unfold before her. Her voice resounding above the crackling gunfire and insults hollered between the combatants, giving encouragement and direction to her people, emboldened the Indians and exasperated the assembling White men; many who had heard of the Indian princess and her sister, Sally Lane.

Six to eight hundred yards beyond the lines of the White men, far beyond the capabilities of their muzzle-loaders, Queen Mary's voice was heard well by the Volunteers, who found her provoking. Soon undeterred by the Indians superior position, the citizen army poured atop the ridge hell bent for blood. The Indians, anticipating the assault,

rained a deadly barrage of bow and musket fire upon the first wave, killing one and wounding several. As the sound of battle and black-powder smoke cleared, they saw the Indians had made a tactical retreat to the west side of the razor thin ridge while keeping their rear guarded from attack. For some time, the cries of the wounded White men filled the air, and with ears ringing and smoke all around, all they could see were men cut down around them.<sup>510</sup>

The man that was killed, John Gillespie, was the son of a noted pioneer family from Lane County. He was riddled with bullets as he led his friends and neighbors up the hill. His death both shocked and terrified many of the untrained Volunteers. Lt. August V. Kautz of the U.S. Army later wrote how this one dead man won the battle for the Natives; two-thirds of the men never made it past Gillespie's dead body.

Concealed behind windfall logs and stumps in a natural depression along the ridgeline, the Indians made mounting the ridge impossible. Several attempts were made during the course of the afternoon to flank the Indian position, but they failed. Queen Mary, riding in full view but safely distant, continued to hurl her voice down the hillside, enraging the White men and encouraging her people.

By late afternoon, the Americans had been pinned down for hours. One Takelma brave hidden in a hollow stump sniped the hapless soldiers with such effect that commanders Smith and Ross were forced to establish a medical base on the hill to the east of the battle.

Held down by deadly fire, their friends being wounded around them, the Volunteers slowly abandoned the ravine. Frustrated by the lack of military discipline of the Volunteers Smith organized a headlong charge straight down the ridge, directly at the saddle in the ground the Indians occupied. The few men that were left to execute the charge were not enough. Charging at the Indians' position, the White men made it to within 50 yards of the storm-strewn log barricade. Several men died in the attempt before the Americans fell back, dragging out the wounded and the dead when they could; though many were left on the battlefield and were mutilated before they could receive burial. They retreated to a gully fed by a spring and with little food and freezing temperatures they posted guards and huddled around

warming fires for heat. Many of them had abandoned their equipment in the field, and the few blankets that were left were used by the wounded.<sup>510</sup>

During the night someone accidentally fired their pistol, and the camp blew up in chaos. Stock stampeded and as men woke from their sleep with their firearms loaded and handy, they believed they were under Indian attack. When shots began to be fired in the dark, men caught up in the moment mistakenly screamed it was Indians and in the ensuing confusion several were wounded by friendly fire, and one died.

In the Indian camp that night there was much singing and dancing, celebrating their victory with scalps carved from the dead left on the field of battle hanging from spears, sticks and belts.<sup>510</sup>

That afternoon, Company C 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, under Maj. Martin and Capt. Keeney, arrived at the Six-Bit House and were told that the battle was yet raging about 15 miles away in the mountains between Grave Creek and Cow Creek. Capt. Keeney wanted to push ahead and offer assistance, but Maj. Martin would not allow him to go. By 4pm, Volunteers began to arrive from the scene of battle who claimed forty White men were killed or wounded after fighting for two days without benefit of food.<sup>511</sup>

When dawn came November 1, 1855, the troops in the Grave Creek hills woke to find they were surrounded in the gully by the Indians; though Queen Mary was notably not heard in attendance. With their enemy trapped near the spring in the gully, the Indians taunted the White men, calling the “damn Bostons” to come out and fight.

Pinned down in the gully, the enemies traded shots at one another all morning; wounding more Volunteers and Regulars. In the early afternoon the Indians ceased firing on the White men and faded away from the edge of the gully. When the White men crawled out from cover, they realized there had only been 20 Indians that had surrounded them all morning. The purpose of the Indians surrounding them was soon discovered, as the whole band had escaped westward during the morning, led in part by Queen Mary, the Indian princess.



Smith and Ross had some of the dead buried there near the spring and then quickly organized their men to begin east toward the Oregon-California Trail. Carrying wounded on litters and slung over horseback moaning in pain, the Volunteers found field hospitals were set up on Wolf Creek and Grave Creek by the U.S. Army, the Volunteers and local homesteaders, who had never seen men so defeated in body and spirit. Ten men were killed in battle and another 29 were fatally wounded, dying as they traveled back to the fort. Sixteen of the Indians were believed killed. A field hospital was established at the Six-Bit House and Maj. Martin sent forty men to carry the wounded off the hills on litters.<sup>510</sup>

Lt. George Crook said afterword that when the combatants separated, it left the Takelma Indians as “monarchs of the woods”. The tenuous relationship between the U.S. Army and the Volunteers was fractured at the battle. The Regulars had little respect for the lack of fighting ethic and military discipline of the citizen army.

Subsequent articles written in the *Oregonian* and *Spectator* played down the mistakes made by the impudent citizen army of volunteers. While Army Lt. August V. Kautz wrote scathing private letters to Gov. Lane describing the inaction and mistaken actions taken by commanders Smith and Ross, and condemned the use of untrained citizen armies, the battle was painted in the newspapers and memoirs as no worse than a draw. In fact, it was one of the largest Indian battles fought during the years of Indian wars and it was a rout.

Initially called the Battle at Grave Creek Hills, it became more commonly known as the Battle of Hungry Hill because of the soldiers surviving for two and a half days on little rations. The gully the Regulars and Volunteers had camped in became known as Bloody Springs.<sup>510</sup>

As part of the Northern Battalion, Company C 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was immediately headquartered along with four other companies at Camp Leland, seven miles north of Grave Creek. Each company consisted of 110 men, far in excess of what the proclamation called for. Under the command of Major W.J. Martin, detachments were stationed in suitable locations that they were able to generally protect the settlers throughout the broad area south of the Rogue River. The Northern

Battalion stationed detachments at Evan's Ferry, Bowden's, on Grave Creek, and other points to effectively cut the Indians off and protect the major settlements. When the Indians saw their way east was cut off and that the settlers had armed themselves in such numbers and fashion, they disappeared from Bloody Springs down the Rogue River. Taking refuge in deep gorges surrounded by steep mountains of sagebrush and deep undergrowth along the river, the Indians escaped.<sup>511</sup>

Initially Ephraim's regiment were given the task of guarding the whole region of settlements south of the Rogue River. As Company C traveled the river bottoms and rugged mountain peaks, something about the area appealed greatly to George (John) Bunch and his young brother Stokely. Perhaps the brothers were interested in the booming timber or mining industry? As it happens, at some point, a member of their regiment found faint flecks of gold in a pan along a random creek. It garnered much attention, and many bought tools and gold pans to explore the creeks and rivers they camped along or took breaks at. This habit would come back to bite the soldiers-cum-miners.<sup>511</sup>

It's likely that Ephraim was acquainted with James Norval Rice, 23, before their service together in the Volunteers, as he was a young settler from Brownsville. Despite his youth, like 2<sup>nd</sup> Sgt. George Bunch, Norval as he was called, had been given a rank of Third Corporal for the respect he had with the 'Boys of Linn'. He lived in the vicinity of Holley; a little village further up the Calapooia, east of Brownsville. A single man, he had come to Oregon two years prior to the Fox family, in 1850 with his father Charles. Charles had been born in about 1798, in Grainger County, Tennessee<sup>211; 214</sup> so was about the same age as Ephraim's deceased father, Nicholas. It is entirely possible the families were familiar with each other even before their relationship in Oregon was established.

After Norval had spent some time as a laborer, he took a bachelor size allotment of 160 acres near the town of Holley, just between his father's property and Brownsville, that he was successfully proving up.<sup>238</sup> The only physical description of him the author found, is that he was a very heavy man.<sup>201</sup> He was ten years younger than Ephraim, but after the two served in the Indian war, they remained friends until their

deaths many decades later. In fact, Norval's daughter and husband would someday be a couple of Ephraim's advocates in his old age.

Capt. Keeney's Company C spent most of the month of November 1855 in the Camas Valley and Cow Creek Valley. The area had been a hot bed for bushwhacking and random murder for the last few months. November 2, Company C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment was ordered to return to Cow Creek, to protect the settlers that were left alive. The valley was filled with smoke as they passed scene after scene of burnt-out homes and buildings. Miles of charred fields was evidence of the Indians' destruction.

During the day, they ascertained that all the stock on the creek had been stolen or killed and tragically only three buildings were yet standing. By 11pm the troop reached William Henry Smith's place along Cow Creek and forty of them remained there, while the rest continued up the canyon. The following day, planning an engagement with the Indians but running low on munitions, twenty of the armed men escorted a pack train up the canyon to retrieve supplies. On Sunday, November 4, twenty of the main group rode high atop a ridge on the west side of the canyon to scout for sign of the Indians; but none were found. By the following day, tensions eased as the Indians seemed to have vanished. The Volunteers spent the day escorting travelers between Cow Creek and the Six-Bit House, that was now being called Fort Bailey.<sup>511; 542</sup>

The various companies were then directed to guard duties in the more remote areas, protecting settlers. While there was a break in large campaign action during the winter months due to weather conditions, there were still engagements.

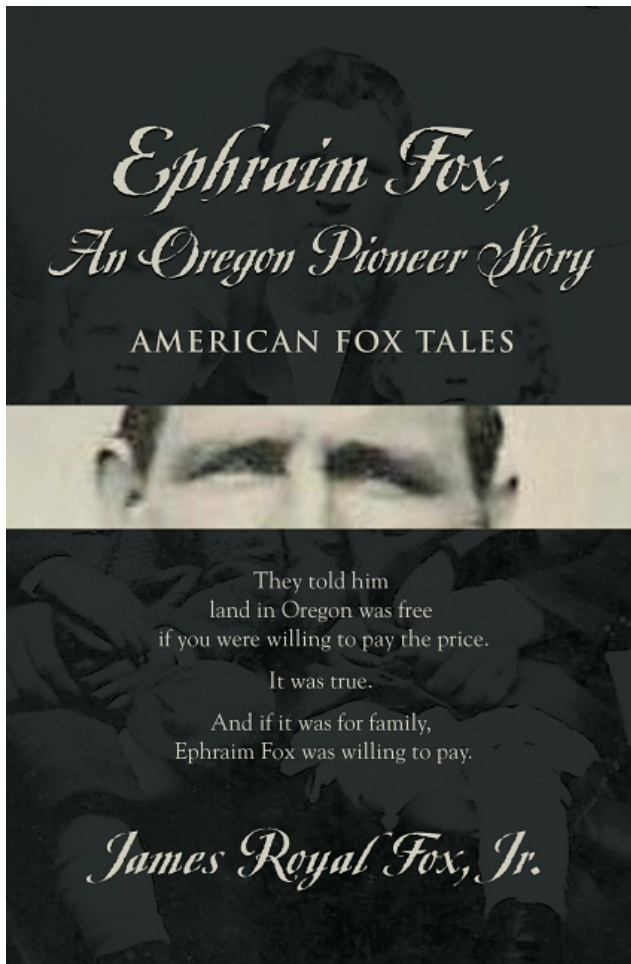
Only the most stubborn and desperate settlers remained on claims that were the most remote. Indians too, that wanted no part of fighting, gathered at Indian encampments called rancheria's, to isolate themselves from the sporadic violence. At one point, with tensions high, there was a remote rancheria in Looking Glass Valley where many Umpqua Indians as well as others gathered. These Indians kept to themselves and were happy to not be part of the violence around them. On nothing but suspicion of their evil intent, a group of locals

organized and set upon the peaceful Indians, killing several men and an old squaw: scattering the rest into the hills.

Meanwhile, camps of Volunteers were shot at from hidden positions randomly by Indians who seethed with hatred for the invading Whites.<sup>511; 542</sup>

During that fall and winter, the Indians of the Cow Creek tribe held a great pow-wow on their reservation where Old Tom plead their case for so long that it was rumored later, he had spoken for 56 hours, detailing the complete history of his tribe. When he was finished, he counseled for peace, but his son, Young Tom took the opposite view, and with the aid of two other Rogue Indians, they argued for war.<sup>526; 2</sup>

Unknown to the White settlers in the Oregon Territory, war had been officially declared.



*Ephraim Fox established a family in Oregon in 1852 that spread down the Pacific coast, which was so prolific at one time, that no one would ever have believed one hundred years later the last Fox would be detailing the end of the line.*

## **Ephraim Fox: An Oregon Pioneer Story**

By James Royal Fox, Jr.

**Order the book from the publisher [BookLocker.com](http://BookLocker.com)**

**<https://www.booklocker.com/p/books/12769.html?s=pdf>**

**or from your favorite neighborhood  
or online bookstore.**