

Up Shasta in '56

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The *Shasta Courier* reprints from its files of 1856:--

"September 16, the famous mountain Shasta Butte was ascended by a party of ladies, where they celebrated the admission of California into the Union. The ladies who performed this feat are Mrs. D. A. Lowry of Scott's valley, Mrs. Eddy, Mrs. Gage and Mrs. J. White of Yreka, and Mrs. McLeod of Sacramento river. They have accomplished that which it was thought up to 1854, from the representations of Fremont, to be an impossibility. In company with Capt. Pierce, Mr. White, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Sparlin, Mr. Gage, Mr. Gordon and two others they left the highest point of timber on the mountain at 6 o'clock in the morning and arrived on the summit at 4 o'clock p. m. There they remained half an hour or more, and after planting the star spangled banner on the highest pinnacle, commenced the descent and arrived at the starting point at 10 o'clock at night."

A friend of the *MIRROR* recites the incident, referred to as the first ascent of Mt. Shasta by ladies, in the following contribution.

Nearly two score years and one! Such is the time that has elapsed since the ascent of Shasta by the first party including ladies. Away back in the days before the war, when people were yet crossing the country with ox teams! Is it strange that after the monotony of the plains, anyone reaching the foot of Shasta should have been filled with enthusiasm and a desire to make the ascent if possible? All ambition seemed to reach the same height, and yet it required some bravery for the first tourists to attempt the new trails.

Over these Capt. Pierce, the pioneer pilot, had as yet taken only parties of men, but when in '56 women turned their eyes toward Shasta, and five of them wished to share in the enjoyment of this great masterpiece of nature, the good pilot, like men of today, was too gallant to refuse them. A party was formed with ten good escorts. Styles have not changed so greatly since then. The suits which the ladies had worn in crossing the plains were the original plan of the modern bloomer and were considered the only suitable dress in which Mrs. Eddy, Mrs. Lowry, Mrs. Gage, Mrs. White and Mrs. McLeod might be permitted to ride their surefooted mules in the perilous ascent of Mt. Shasta.

Like parties of today they chose their first night's camp in one of the pleasantest spots at the little creek just south of Sisson Tavern. In comparison with the next night they rested on beds of flowery ease, for at the timber line their blankets were spread upon the cold, damp sand, while at the Tavern they had a plentiful supply of oat straw from a neighboring field.

The trail was long, and the rocks were steep, but there never were braver riders or more dauntless climbers than these five pioneer women who sought to rise above their surroundings and place their names in the highest place, even with those of their masculine pilots. It is needless to say that not one of the party fell behind, but reaching the top at about the same time, they congratulated each other upon their equal success and, combining their efforts, repaired a flag staff and floated the flag left there by Capt. Pierce two years before. From out a goodly sack Mrs. Lowry, wife of a local Methodist minister, took some treasured volumes and after writing their names upon the fly leaves they hid them for a future find.

Beneath one rock they placed a Bible, under another a testament and between two others a copy of the Christian Advocate; then taking a farewell view from Shasta's majestic height, and with hearts filled with gratitude for their privileges, they began the descent.

Many trips have been made since then, Mrs. Eddy having returned to the summit with a sister and two brothers within ten years, but even with the present advantages of a well defined trail, or the prospect of a longer ride, no succeeding party has had more thorough enjoyment than these pioneer women found in the party of '56, of which Mrs. Eddy of Gazelle and Mr. Sanborn of Red Bluff are the only survivors in this state.

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