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Records of United States Army Commands

Department of the Pacific
Selected Records Received

1856-1858

General Services Administration

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A Copy of Letter to Lt. MacAuly[?]

MI Vancouver Jan. 5, 1855x 1855

Copy

Head Quarters Columbia River District

Fort Vancouver W.T. Dec.29,1855

Sir:

It appears that soon after the Yakima Expedition started for the enemy's country, the packers banded together to perform the necessary guard for the protection of the public animals, and that on the evening of the 3rd of December, 1855 25 horses and 5 mules the property of the United States were captured by the Indians (reported to me as 8 or 10 ~~horses~~ horses).

It seems that there was no written agreement or other article compelling them to serve yet if also their fault these animals were taken, their value should have been stopped against them in behalf of the U. States by the Quartermaster making payments. Please inform me in writing as to these facts.

Very Respectfully

Your obt servt.

S. J. Rains

Major 4th infy. comdg.

To 1st Lt. R. MacAuly

Late A.A.Q M

To Yakima Expedition

Fort Vancouver, W.T.

December 30th, 1855

Major:

I have the honor to state, in reply to your communication of the 29th instant, that I reported to you at camp No. 3 Yakima Expedition on the morning of the 1st of November, that I had directed a number of the packers to perform guard duty over the public animals which order they refused to obey.

On the morning of the 3rd of November at Camp No. 4 as appears by the affidavit of one of the packers who was on duty as herder that morning, 25 horses and 5 mules were ran off by the Indians.

As to it having been reported to you that but eight or ten animals were ran off I can only say that I made no such report and being responsible in my accounts for the animals I have taken pains to ascertain the exact number.

There is no regulation of the quarter master s Department that I am aware of requiring written agreements to be made with employees, nor do I know it customary to do so. These men were employed as packers, but were subject to any duty they might be called upon to perform.

As to charging the value of the captured animals to the packers I have to say: that the loss of these animals cannot be attributed to any fault or neglect on their part; the lateness of the hour at which the pack train arrived in camp the night previous and it being dark rendered it wholly impossible to pocket all of the animals.

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I am sir

Very Respectfully, your obedt servt.

Signed R. Macfeely 1st Lieut 4th Infy. A.A. Q.M.

To Major G.I. Rains, 4th infantry, comdg. True Copy G.? Rains,

1st Lieut C. Hedges Adt (?) 4th infy who put these men on duty

P.S. The campaign against the Yakima Indians
terminated for the winter ~~Max~~ 23rd Nov. 1855

Territory of Oregon,

Dalles, Wasco County ss

Personally appeared before me John A. Simms clerk of the United States District court in and for the county and Territory, aforesaid Edward ~~Tranquil~~ Tranquil a citizen employed as parker and herdsman by the Quartermaster Dept on the Yakkima expedition, who made oath in due form of law that while on duty as herdsman in camp on the Koinch creek during the latter part of the night or early in the morning of the ?? day of November, 1855 a band of hostile Indians skirmished around the outposts of the guard and ran off twenty five horses and five mules, the property of the United States for which 1st Lieut Robert Macfeely 4th Infantry, the acting quartermaster of the expedition was accountable and through this deponent and others, herdsman and packers were dispatched in pursuit with all haste by the said Lieut Macfeely as also a party of eighteen or twenty U.S. dragoons with an officer in pursuit by the commanding officer of the expedition yet the Indians escaped by their trails through the woods and mountain passes and the animals could not be and were not recovered.

And further this deponent saith not.

witness Signed Edward Tranquil (his mark)

Signed J.A. Simms

Sworn and subscribed before me this 29th day of November

A.D. 1855 in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said court the day and year last above written

signed John A. Sims

True copy G. Rains

CCB

Fort Vancouver W.T.

January 6th 1856

General:

In compliance with your verbal request I have the honor to make the following statement respecting the loss of public animals on the late Yackima Expedition.

On the morning of the 3rd of November, 1855 at camp on the Ko-insch Creek (Skloom's log house) Twenty five horses and five mules were run off by the Indians as appears by the affidavit of Edward Teonquil a packer and herder on duty that morning. On the night of the 9th of November 1855 at Camp on the Yackima River, twenty horses and four mules were run off by the Indians as appears by the affidavit of Donald McKay a packer and herder on duty that night and by the affidavit of Samuel D. Smith packmaster of the Expedition, one horse stampeded and ran off and two horses and one mule were abandoned broken down and unable to travel. The said affidavits are herewith enclosed.

From the fact of my having been called upon for the above statement, it might appear that the loss of these animals was attributed to some neglect on my part, I would respectfully request--should the aforesaid statement not prove satisfactory--that a court of inquiry be instituted to examine into the circumstances attending the loss of said animals.

I have the honor to be General

Most respectfully

Your obedt servant.

R. Macfeely

1st Lieut. 4th Infy. a.a.q.m.

to Major General John E. Wool
Commanding Dept. of the Pacific
Fort Vancouver, W.T.

Fort Vancouver, W.T.

January 3th 1856

General

In compliance with your verbal directions, I have the honor report that the total number of animals lost out of 344 on the late Yackima Expedition was 58--towit 48 horses and 10 mules.

Of the above ~~mentioned~~ number, three horses and one mule were abandoned on the road being unable to travel further--the balance were run off by the Indians on two occasions.

I have the honor to be General

Most respectfully

Your Obedt Servt.

R. Macfeely [?]

1st Lieut 4th Inf.

a.a. q.m.

To Major General Jno Wool
Comd'g Dept. of the Pacific
Fort Vancouver, W.T.

Fort Vancouver, W.T.

April 27th 1856

Sir:

I have the honor to forward charges against B Major G.O. Haller 4th Infy and Capt E.O. C.Ord brd act his coadjutor, with his charges against myself and comments thereon with a request that the whole matter be investigated thoroughly.

I present them in a tangible shape for immediate investigation, undertaking the harvest part ordinarily tho' not in this case to prove a negative.

Very Respectfully

Your Most Obt Servt.

G.J. Rains

Major 4th Infantry

To 1st Lieut. R. Arnold

Aid a a.a. adt. general

U.S.A.

Present

Copy

Head Quarters Columbia River District

Fort Vancouver, W.T. January 4, 1856

Sir:

The Yakima Expedition left Camp No. 1 on the 31st Oct and marched only 4 miles that day., we left Camp No. 2 next morning and 4 miles further, arriving at Camp No. 3 at or before 12 o'clock M when we remained that day giving ample time for all our wild and stray animals to be found and brought up.

At this last place after night you came and informed me that all the packers had banded together refusing to stand guard and the animals and I authorized you to discharge them and employ soldiers it was impractical in the dark to collect the stray animals which I had directed to be picketed which was done but imperfectly and I believe fear was the cause of their ~~conduct~~ conduct and thought from your remarks that an attempt to them there, but about 8 miles from the post of Fort Dalles, could cause them to dissent, subsequently after advancing further I notified you that I would then compel them and you informed me that it was unsatisfactory as they had come to terms.

Our camping ground next day according to our guide McCoy [?] being 16 miles off and finding from the above night that our whole force would be delayed, going as per plan of campaign to the relief of troops and Captain Malony [?] who might be fighting an enemy overwhelming in numbers, I determined to march with such companies as were ready so as to reach the ground and ----our camp before night leaving the Dragoons and 2[2] companies to bring up the rear as the packers found their animals

We arrived at Camp No. 4 sometime before ~~sun~~ sunset but without our baggage, as that with the pack train and troops in

rear to my surprise did not come up until late in the night on account of the neglect of the packers as reported, not getting in time the animals strayed away. I had a chain of sentinels put around the animals which came with us and at night they were picketed but those which came, contrary to my orders, were suffered to loose and the consequence was the Indians captured as per affadvait 24 horses and 5 mules. Your clerk M Blanshaw [??] from much experience thinks our loss smaller ~~inxxxxxxx~~ than usual in such marches, that may be so yet in the present case the packers were to blame and should not have gone off "scott free"; when I called upon you for an explanation.

As you have paid these men however and it is too late now to remit, I have come to the conclusion to sign the rolls

Very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servant

G. I Rains

Major 4th Infantry.

Lst Lieut R. Macfelly 4th Infy.

Late A.A.Q.M. to the Yakima

Expedition

Present.