

The following account of the murder of A. J. Bolon, Indian agent at Fort Simcoe, was given by an old Indian, now a resident at White Salmon, who had it direct from the lips of Chief Gwhi's son just before his execution, who with his two companions were hung by Col. Wright at Simcoe agency for the most unprovoked and cold blooded murder.

War and rumors of war were rife, a vague uneasiness rested upon the isolated families of eastern Oregon. The government, with its usual stupidity and criminal negligence had failed to provide any adequate protection against the numerous hordes of savages that roamed the plains.

The few straggling companies of blue coats that were within reach were as a rule poorly offered and totally inacquainted with Indian tactics and were held in supreme contempt by their dusky opponents.

Numerous murders had been committed on the frontier and there was an ominous sign of an impending storm, a general uprising of the tribes of eastern Oregon and Washington that the coming spring only too surely fulfilled.

Col. Wright, in his helpless indignation, uttered threats of direst vengeance should the red man persist in his little game of scalping and the certain result was an Indian war with its usual accompaniment of rapine and murder upon us in our helplessness.

On the 15th day of September, 1855, Indian Agent Bolon left The Dalles on horseback for the agency at Simcoe. He was just returning from a hurried trip to the Willamette valley and was hurrying back on account of the restless condition of the Yakimas, some of whom had been accused of participating in some of the recent murders.

At The Dalles he was urged not to undertake the trip alone, but fearing no personal violence he started alone and unarmed. On his way through the Klickitat

valley he overtook three Yakima Indians accompanied by three squaws, all on their way to the agency and all rode toward their destination.

The trail ran somewhere near where the present wagon road does, on the western slope of the Simcoe mountains. The distance (80) miles being too great to make that day, camp was struck on one of the numerous streamlets that run down the mountainside.

Mr. Colon dismounted, unsaddled and staked his horse and returning to the fire divided his scanty store of provisions, store biscuits and butter, with his dusky companions, little dreaming of the awful fate close before him.

The conversation turned upon the recent murders and very unwisely Bolon related Wright's prouderous threats of vengeance and extermination.

Then and not till then was Bolon's death decided upon.

Two of the three quietly stepped behind him and pinioned his arms while the third seized him around the legs and threw him violently to the ground, where he was securely tied hand and foot.

When this was accomplished his captors held consultation as to the disposition to be made of the captive.

Bolon pleaded piteously for his life, but to hearts that knew no pity. One of the savages seizing him by the hair and drawing his head across his knee, cut his throat from ear to ear.

The body was then placed on his horse and carried some distance below the trail where the horse was also killed and both bodies covered with brush and left. The remains were not found until after the murderers were caught by members of their own tribe and handed over to the military for punishment. Then one of the three disclosed the location of the body which was taken to Vancouver for burial.



## Indians

Col. Lee of the 10th infantry stationed in Arizona spent several days on the reservation last week in an endeavor to persuade some of the Indians to enlist in the United States army.

Two companies in each regiment are to be skeletonized and filled up with Indians, fourteen hundred of whom will be required, and this is the work on which Col. Lee is detailed.

Six hundred Indians, including Apaches and Crows, have already been enlisted and the idea is new to the Yakima Indians, and they said they wanted time to consider the question.

One sage old Indian remarked that the ways of the government are peculiar. "Fifteen and twenty years ago the soldiers were after us with bullet and bayonet to force us to lay down our arms and take up the plow. Now they want us are after us again and this time they want us to lay down the plow and take up arms." Yakima Herald, October 15, 1891.

## Indians

Gen. O.O. Howard, well known by all of the pioneers of Yakima county, will deliver an address at Walla Walla on Feb. 22.

The general conducted the campaigns of the government in the Moses and other Indian wars in this valley during the 70s.--Yakima Herald, January 3, 1895.

Judge L.T. Erwin was in from the reservation on Tuesday settling bills among the merchants of this city. The judge states that during the last week, among the employes of the government alone, he disbursed \$10,000 or more for work done during the last quarter--Yakima Herald, January 3, 1895.



Just twenty years ago the peaceful Yakima valley was thrown into a state of uneasiness by rumors of Indian depredations and murders committed all around us.

One day in the early spring of 1878 the mail carrier brought word to the little town of Yakima that the hostile Indians were trying to cross the Columbia river over to the Yakima side. This greatly increased the anxiety for it was generally believed that if they succeeded the little handful of settlers would be wiped out.

At that time our only mail service was a weekly stage which ran between Yakima and Umatilla. There was no railway, no telegraph line, absolutely no means of communicating with the outside world except by the weekly stage whose driver, L.H. Adkins, literally took his life in his hand when he made the trip.

In July the soldiers commanded by General O.C. Howard were waging some fierce battles at Umatilla. The general anticipating the desires of the Indians to cross the Columbia and raid the Yakima country ordered patrol boats manned by well armed soldiers to be placed on the river at points where the Indians would cross with orders to fire on any hostiles seen crossing the river.

The Indians not knowing the mission of the boats soon made an attempt to cross in full view. They were promptly fired upon and several were killed; only a few were successful in landing on the Yakima side and they left at once for Priest Rapids.

At Rattlesnake springs, twenty five miles from Yakima, a general camping place for all stock men they found Lorenzo Perkins and wife, <sup>(Blanche)</sup> who had stopped there for their noon-day lunch on their way to Yakima. They had heard of the Indian troubles along the Columbia and concluded it would be safer for them among friends than at their home at White Bluffs.



outskirts of the town. Armed men paraded the streets all night and some of the braver women buckled on revolvers and walked at the side of their husbands.

The Indians had stolen a number of horses from settlers along the Wenas and other streams.

Two young men by the name of Burbank, while hunting in the Selah valley, say at a distance what appeared to be their horses. On approaching they found that the horses were being herded by Indians. The savages started in pursuit of the men, firing rapidly; the men quickly retreated returning the firing over their shoulders until they reached the settlement in safety.

The settlers by this time were so ~~terrified~~ terrified that they left their homes and fled to places of safety, leaving their fields of ripe grain uncut and turning the stock into gardens and fields to do the harvesting.

Stockades were made in different parts of the settlement for safety of families. On the Ahtanum, near the residence now owned by Cyrus Walker, a large embankment was thrown up made of sods, piled several feet high, with a deep trench on the outside. This was for the protection of all the residents of the valley.

The government soon came to the rescue by placing cavalry troops at Fort Simcoe and sending needle guns to Yakima City. This caused a feeling of relief. All breathed easier; and when news came that the Indians had surrendered to General Howard, where they were fighting along the Columbia river, there was great rejoicing.

In December of the same year, Father Wilbur, who was at that time Indian agent at Fort Simcoe, sent an invitation to Chief Moses to meet him in Yakima City for the purpose of having a friendly council. Moses accepted the invitation and was presented at the appointed time. The Centennial hall was packed with eager spectators to



When they arrived at the point designated they discovered that Moses was a traitor. He was nowhere to be seen.

9 They crossed the river and started in the direction of Crab creek and were soon startled by the approach of the chief with sixty braves in war paint. The white heroes stood firm as statues, waiting orders from their commander, Capt. Splawn called to Moses asking him what he meant by meeting them in this manner. Moses replied that his talk at Yakima was cultus, no good, and that he had no intention of fulfilling his agreement. After exchanging a few words all dispersed without bloodshed.

Captain Splawn immediately dispatched a courier to Yakima for assistance. Sixty volunteers under Capt. James Simmons immediately left for the scene with orders to arrest Moses and bring him to Yakima. They were also reinforced by Dor<sup>s</sup> Schnebly and party from Ellensburg. They were not long in capturing the chief and nine warriors. These they handcuffed and tied.

Those who saw Moses at this time do not look upon him as a brave man but think him very much of a coward. When he saw the handcuffs he wept like a baby.

He was told that he would be held a prisoner until his men produced the murderers as he had agreed and if they failed to do this his own life would pay the penalty. Moses agreed that if they should liberate three of his men they should bring in the murderers. The three were liberated and after receiving orders from their chief, disappeared. The other prisoners, including Moses, were taken to Yakima and placed in jail. Captain Splawn continued to search for the guilty parties, who were finally captured though not without resistance.

The struggle was a fierce one, other Indians coming upon them and trying to rescue the prisoners. One man, by the name of "Ozell, was shot through the arm and badly wounded; others came near losing their lives.

## Indians--Utes

The last attempt to forcibly convince the Utes of the majesty of the Colorado law cost just \$80,314.72, when all the bills were allowed exclusive of interest which has since piled up to quite a fortune.

Two whites were killed and four wounded. This happened in August, 1887 when all the White River valley was included in Garfield county.

Under their treaty the Utes could occupy the unsettled part of their old reservation, not only for hunting ground but to pasture their herds of ponies, goats and cattle. This privilege they used to the utmost and they became very undesirable neighbors, for the whites, who were just occupying the country themselves.

The A young Ute buck gambling for ponies designated as a stake a horse belonging to a white man. He lost and when the winner went to take the pony and found that it was not his a warrant was sworn out for the Ute on a charge of horse stealing. Arrest was resisted, the Utes scuttled into the hills and the sheriff's posse was swelled by every man in the country that could carry a gun.

The Utes knew every inch of the hills and the whites knew only the valley trails. No one knew where the Utes were and terror seized the whole region, every ranchman feeling that a band of hostiles might sweep down upon him at any moment.

Urgent appeals were sent to Gov. Alva Adams who is governor now, showing such a condition of affairs that the whole state militia force was sent into the field. United States troops were sent from Fort Duchesne too.

The military found the Indians at the mouth of Miller creek but while complicated military strategy was in progress, the Utes stole away. Next day scouts found them at the forks of White River where Burford post office is now. There was a lively running fight in which the only casualties of the "war" occurred as before enumerated.



Dr. W.T. Campbell, an aged Indian war veteran of 1855-6 and totally blind, died recently at Olympia. Dr. Campbell was a survivor of the battle with the Yakimas at Union Gap-- Yakima Herald, Dec. 29, 1898.

During the years mentioned (Yakima Indian war of 1855-56) an Indian war had broken out almost simultaneously on the plains of Eastern Washington and along Puget Sound.

A. J. Bolen, special Indian agent while on his way to meet Gov. I. I. Stevens who was holding council with the Indians at Spokane heard rumors of the threatened outbreak and determined to visit old Chief Kamiakin at his home in the valley of the Antanum, a few miles above the junction of that stream with the Yakima river and assure him that the whites desired peace.

He reached the mission, had his conference with Kamiakin and started on his way to the Dalles but was murdered by Qualchien, son of Owhi and nephew of Kamiakin, while pretending to escort him on his homeward journey.

From this the contagion of murder among the Indians spread rapidly and so many murders were committed that Acting Gov. Mason made a requisition on F. rts Vancouver and Steilacoom for troops to protect travelers in the Yakima country.

Maj. Raines, who was in command at The Dalles, ordered 84 men under Maj. Haller, now C. l. Haller of Seattle, into the Yakima country to cooperate with a force under C. l. Slaughter which would be sent from Steilacoom. Haller moved Oct. 3, 1855, his objective point being the Antanum valley where Kamiakin resided. On the afternoon of the third day while entering the Simcoe valley the troops were attacked by a large band of Indians who had secreted themselves in the willow thicket of a small stream. A engagement commenced which lasted all night when the Indians withdrew leaving Haller with eight killed and wounded men.

In the morning the attack was renewed. Haller moved to a bald eminence a mile away and the Indians endeavored to surround him. On this eminence without water and with little food the troops fought all day.

That night Haller found it necessary to retreat toward The Dalles and after burying his howitzer and burning such baggage and provisions as could not be



during the fall and winter of 1855 and had a few skirmishes with the Indians ; one engagement taking place near the present site of North Yakima.

The Indians , who were supplied with fast horses, preferred to run away rather than face so formidable a foe and no decisive battles were fought in that section of the country--S.L. Crawford, Post-Intelligencer-Sept. 1896.

## Indian fighters

Washington , July 20--A decision by the secretary of interior will enable about 100 old soldiers or their heirs, residents of Washington and Oregon to draw pensions.

Under the ruling of the commissioner of pensions it was necessary for those who applied for pensions on account of service in the early Indian wars to prove their muster into the service of the United States and that they had actually received pay from the United States.

Nearly 100 of those who served were never mustered into federal service and their applications were rejected. Appeal therefrom was taken to the secretary of the interior who has decided that it was the intention of congress to grant a pension to every man who served thirty days in those wars, either in territorial regiments or home guards, and that it was not necessary to prove muster into the federal service or the receipt of pay therefrom. One hundred applicants for pensions will therefore receive them--The Yakima Herald, July 22, 1903.



## Indian battles

The sale of the old Murphy farm near Medical lake for \$8,000 recalls the famous battle fought near that place just 45 years ago this month when Colonel George Wright overwhelmed the allied bands of Spokanes, Palouses, Yakimas and others and brought an end to the ~~old~~ era of Indian wars in Eastern Washington. It is also suggestive of the remarkable appreciation of real estate values which five years before the battle Captain George B. McClellan in his report to the war department had promised practically worthless.

For 10 years following the Cayuse war, which may be said to have begun with the Whitman massacre in 1847, the Indians roaming over what is now called the Inland Empire were surly and restless and finally brought on a war in which were engaged the Palouses, Coeur d'Alenes, Yakimas and Spokanes. After the battle of Steptoe butte on May 18, 1858, in which troops narrowly escaped annihilation a large expedition was planned into the Spokane country with Colonel Wright in command.

He left Walla Walla in August, 1858, crossed the Snake river and on September 1 fell upon the allied warriors and fought what has been called the battle of Four Lakes near what has since been known as the Murphy farm. After a few days rest the pursuit was taken up and on September 5 the final engagement took place on what is now called Indian prairie. On September 23 a treaty was signed with the hostiles and since that time the region of which Spokane is the center has been free from Indian troubles--Spokane Review, October, 1903.

## Indian fighters

### Pensions

John Linder, who has lived in this city for a number of years last week received a voucher from Uncle Sam for \$5,200 , which sum was the accrued amount due Mr. Linder as a volunteer in the Indian wars in the northwest in 1855-56.

The old Indian fighter, the men who made the present civilization and advancement of this section possible are now rapidly having their services recognized and while the recognition has been a long time delayed the acknowledgement is no less pleasant and acceptable especially when given in such available form--The Yakima Herald, January 7, 1904.



A special dispatch from Miles City, Mont. last Wednesday says:

Word has been received here from Hathaway that Hiram Crabtree has been found dead in his cabin in that place. He was one of the noted Crabtree brothers who recently were allowed pensions for services in the Yakima Indian war of 1853. This war was started by Hiram Crabtree's father who upon being ordered by the Indian chief to vacate his farm near North Yakima, Wash. refused. The two men were engaged in a general quarrel. Crabtree hitting the chief with an axe handle, killing him instantly--The Yakima Herald, June 8, 1904.

Prof. W.J. Trimble, chairman of the Spokane section of the Inland Empire Historical association announces that plans are making to erect a monument on the Indian battlefield near Rosalia, Wash. south of Spokane to commemorate the expedition in which Col. E.J. Steptoe and five officers and 152 United States soldiers, First Dragoons and Ninth Infantry made a stand against 1,200 Coeur d'Alene, Palouse, Yakima and Spokane Indians.

The monument will be unveiled May 17, 1908, the 50th anniversary of the battle when it is expected to have as special guests Major J.G. Trimble of Berkeley, Calif.; Thomas J. Beall of Julietta, Ida and Michael Kenney of Waiatsburg, survivors of the engagement in which eight soldiers, including Brevet Captain O.H. Taylor and Second Lieutenant William Gaston fell and nearly 100 reds were left dead and wounded on the field.

Describing the operations in his official report dated Fort Walla Walla, Wash, May 23, 1858 to Major W.W. Mackall, assistant adjutant general, U.S.A., San Francisco, Col. Steptoe said:

"Hearing that the hostile Palouses were near Al-pon-on-we, in the Nez Perce land I moved to that point and was ferried across Snake river by Timothy, a Nez Perce chief. The enemy fled toward the north and I followed leisurely on the road to Colville. On Sunday morning, May 16, when near the Te-hote-nim-ma in the Spokane country we found ourselves suddenly in the presence of 1,000 to 1,200 Indians of various tribes, Spokans, Palouses, Coeur d'Alenes, Yakimas and some others--all armed, painted and defiant. I moved slowly until just about to enter a ravine that wound along the bases of several hills which were all crowned by the excited savages.

"Perceiving that it was their purpose to attack us in this dangerous place I turned aside and encamped, the whole wild, frenzied mass moving parallel to us and by yells, taunts and menaces, apparently



trying to drive us to some initiatory act of violence. Toward night a number of chiefs rode up to talk to me and inquired what were our motives in this intrusion upon them. I answered that we were passing on to Colville and had no hostile intention toward the Spokanes who always had been our friends nor toward any other tribes who were friendly; that my chief aim in coming so far was to see the Indians and the white people at Colville and by friendly discussion with both endeavor to strengthen their good feelings for each other.

"They expressed themselves satisfied but would not consent to let me have canoes, without which it would be impossible to cross the Spokane river. I concluded, for this reason, to trace my steps and at once and the next morning, May 17, turned back toward this post.

"We had not marched three miles when the Indians who had gathered on the hills adjoining the line of march began an attack upon the rear guard and immediately fight became general. We labored under the great disadvantage of having to defend the pack train while in motion and in a rolling country peculiarly favorable to the Indian mode of warfare. We only had a small quantity of ammunition but in their excitement the soldiers could not be restrained from firing it in the wildest manner. They did, however, under the leading of their respective commanders, sustain well the reputation of the army for some hours charging the enemy repeatedly with gallantry and success.

"The fight continued here with unabated activity; the Indians occupying the neighboring heights and working themselves along to pick off our men. The wounded increased in number continually. Twice the enemy gave unmistakable evidence of a design to carry our position by assault and their number and desperate courage caused me to fear the most serious consequences to us from such an attempt on their part. It was manifest that the



loss of their officers and comrades began to tell up on the spirit of the soldiers; but they were becoming discouraged and not to be relied upon with confidence. Some of the men were recruits but recently joined; two of the company had muskets which were utterly worthless in our present condition; and what was more alarming only two or three rounds of cartridges remained in some of the men and but few to any of them.

"It was plain that the enemy would give the troops no rest during the night and they would be still further disquaified for stout resistance on the morrow, while the number of enemies would certainly be increased. I determined for these reasons to make a forced march to Snake river, 85 miles distant and secure the canoes in advance of the Indians who had already threatened to do the same in regard to us. After consulting with the officers, all of whom urged me to the step as the only means in their opinion of I concluded to abandon everything that might impede our march. At clock in good order (copy) leaving the disabled animals and such as were not in condition to travel so far, and with deep pain I have to add, the two howitzers.

"The necessity for the last measure will give you, as well as many words, the conception of the strait to which we believed ourselves reduced. Not an officer of the command doubted that we would be overwhelmed with the first rush of the enemy upon our position in the morning; to retreat further by day with our wounded men and property was out of the question; to retreat slowly by night equally so, as we could then be in condition to fight all next day. It was therefore necessary to relieve ourselves of all encumbrances and to fly. We had no horse able to carry the guns over 80 miles without resting and if the enemy would attack us en route, as from their ferocity we certainly expected they would, not a soldier could be spared from any other duty than skirmishing.



"For these reasons, which I own candidly seemed to be more cogent at the time than they do now, I resolved to bury the howitzers. "hat distresses me is that no attempt was made to bring them off; and all I can add that if this was an error of judgment it was committed after the calmest discussion of the matter in which I believe every officer agreed with me." The Yakima Herald, May 8, 1907.

## Indian Wars

A pioneer of some distinction who attended the Silver Jubilee Saturday in this city was G.W. Alexander who lives 12 miles below here at Parker Bottom. He claims the distinction of having been the only pioneer present who fought with the mounted volunteers of Oregon in the last battle against the Yakima Indians which began Nov. 12, 1865. (copy)(see 1856 below)

He says there is only one other man who fought in the battle who is living in Yakima county. That is Abner Smith who lives two miles this side of Wapato.

"The Indians of the reservation who at that time covered more much territory than ~~at present~~ it covers at present were constantly killing men who ran on an express between The Dalles and British Columbia. Major <sup>(Spelled below in notes)</sup> Polan of the United States regulars, then stationed at the Dalles, was sent here to learn why the Indians were so hostile. He called on Indian Agent Nathan Olney who sent him over to talk to the men of the tribes. When he came among the Indians he was killed and scalped.

"It appears that the Indians objected to the express crossing their lands and at every opportunity they would raid it.

"In order to put a stop to it the Mounted Volunteers of Oregon were formed and there were 600 in the company. We fought them for months, chasing them about the reservation and keeping them on the move. They were an obstinate lot and they were tricky. They never came to open battle but resorted to strategy in killing off our men, sneaking up on them in the dark or taking one unawares.

"Among those killed in that campaign was Capt. J.B. Hembree of Company E, First ~~United~~ Regular Oregon Volunteers. He was killed only a little distance from North Yakima. Many of the pioneers will remember the captain.

"In 1856 the volunteers were disbanded and the U.S. regulars were sent from The Dalles to take up the fight. Col. J.B. Nesmith was in