

United States Indian Service,

Warm Springs

Agency,

December 20 "

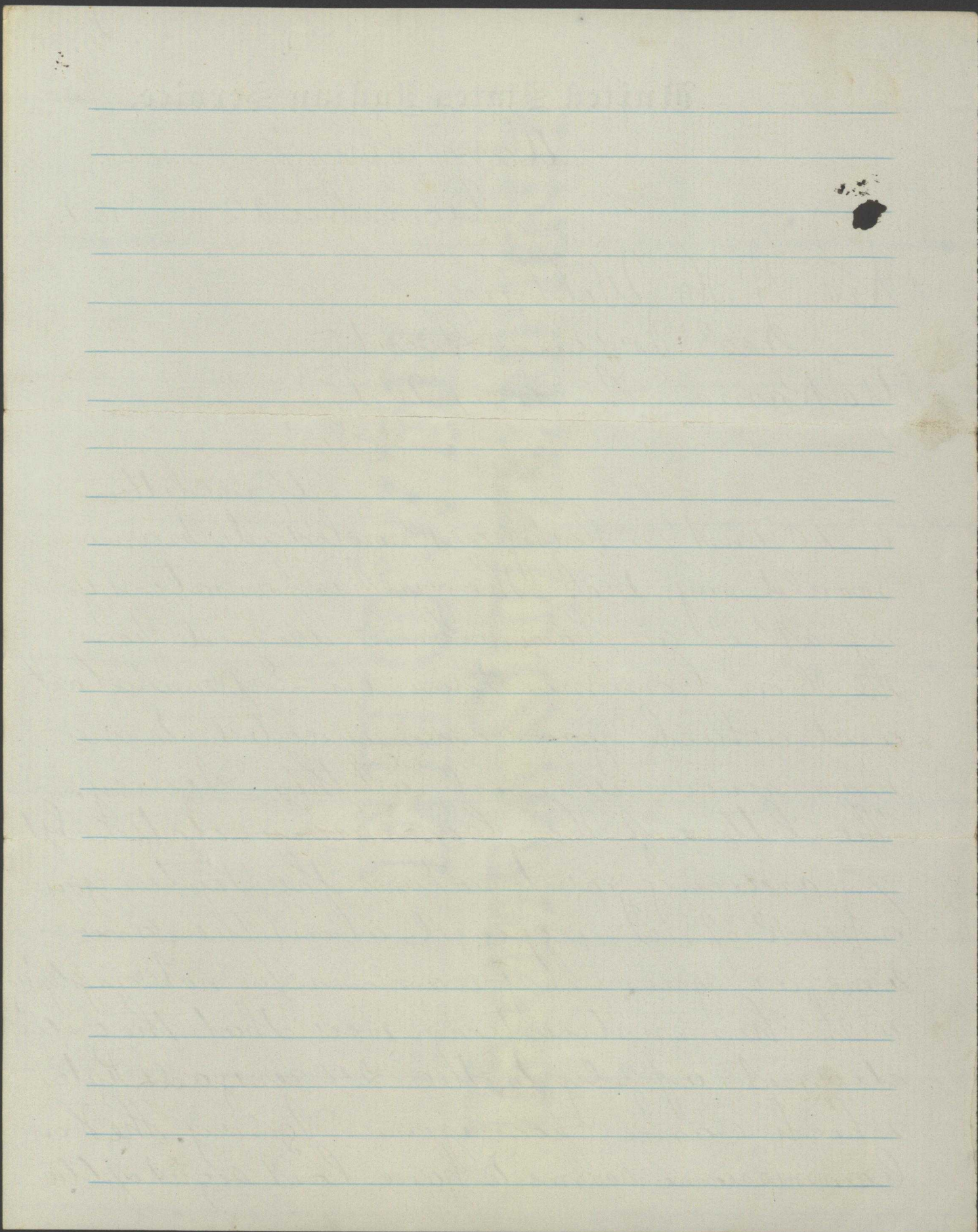
, 1881.

Rev J H Wilbur
US Indian Agent -
Yakama Agency W T

Sir

Your letter

of 10th inst is hereby acknowledged. I answer would say, that the first information you speak of as having been received from the Hon Commissioner, in September last and which you "communicated" to me, was never received at this Agency. The letter of Hon Commissioner dated Sept 7th ordering me to return the Prutes you speak of, I received about the same time as you. My reasons for not complying with his instructions, were that the order did not apply to the 24 renegade Prutes which came from your Agency. The Hon Commissioner seems to have lost sight of the



fact that there were 49 Putes here, and that the 25 belonged here. That under date of June 28, 80 I was authorized to settle them and you were instructed to bring their families to The Dalles, where our teams were to meet them. The order of Sept 7 "stated that the 25 Putes did not belong here &c. I immediately telegraphed back that there were 49 Putes here, 25 of whom had been here nearly two years, and asking that the order of Sept 7 "might be modified. Under date of Oct 10 "the answer came by telegraph "Order of September 7 "was intended only for the twenty four renegade Putes". By the time I received this telegram, the unprecedented storm of rain and snow set in which for a time stopped nearly all transportation. I waited for a time, but as it continued to be unfavorable weather, under date of Oct 31 "I informed the Department of the difficulties in the way of returning the Indians, and asked that they be allowed to remain until Spring. To this I received

a letter dated Nov 18th 1887, answering that they could remain, but they should be given to understand that as soon as return is practicable they must leave your reservation and go back to Yakima. The latter clause I expect to carry out so that I hope you will need to have no further trouble or anxiety in regard to them. You ask me to cooperate with you. I shall be glad to do so, for I never have wanted them to stay here. They were not welcome when they came, and only the lateness of the season prevented my immediately insisting upon their return. In this connection I would call your attention to the order of June 28th 1880 and your promise given over a year ago to transfer those Puute families. You have never given me any explanation, nor have I been advised that that order was revoked. But I would long ago have recommended that all the Puutes upon this reservation should be transferred to you only that they were so unwilling to go.

Why they have such a prejudice against your Agency I cannot tell, only from their own words. They have declared time and again that they would rather stay here without assistance from the Government than go over there, and be provided for. In my letters to the Hon Commissioner I have more than once said that either the families of those belonging here, should be allowed to rejoin them, or else all the Puutes should be taken to the Yakima Reservation. I am sure you are heartily welcome to all of them, and I hope, to be furnished a copy of the last instructions you speak of as having received, and ordering me to transfer all the Puutes to you. Please understand that I have never considered the 24 Puutes, as under my authority, any more than other outside Indians; and I have never assumed any control over them, but I have urged them time and again to return. As they ran off from your reservation, it is not unlikely

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Some of them may steal away from this reservation, before spring, now that they know they must return to your Agency. They have had to subside themselves by hunting, and some may run off, unbeknownst to me or my Indians, until some time afterwards. Still I hope next spring will find them "all present or accounted for" and I can have the pleasure of returning them to you.

Very Respectfully
Your Obt-Servt—
John Smith
US Indian Agent.

Dec 20-1881
Capt John Smith