

## OUR FIRST INDIAN WAR.

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Until 1853 Oregon Territory reached from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean and from the California line to British Columbia. All of the States of Washington, Oregon and Idaho, and parts of Wyoming and Montana, were then included within these limits.

In Oregon, at the time of the coming of Jason Lee and Daniel Lee, his nephew, the first missionaries, there were probably about one hundred thousand Indians. Among these, small parties of white men were never entirely safe except among part of the Nez Perces tribe and the natives of the lower Willamette Valley and the upper Puget Sound region. Of course detached families, prospectors, travelers, etc., came and went at will all over this region, and often without harm coming to them, but the record of pillage, outrage and murder during the half century from about 1830 down to 1880 is a long and bloody one. Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor was a careful historian, taking pains at all times to be sure of the facts and to understate rather than to magnify, yet she says the number of white persons killed and wounded within the above limits between the years 1824 and 1878 was eighteen hundred and ninety-six, an average of thirty-seven annually. Of these, the unprovoked murders made more than half the total; the remainder being those wounded in attacks equally unprovoked, or killed and wounded in warfare.

The first Indian war began late in 1847, immediately following the massacre of the mission party at Waiilatpu, with Marcus Whitman at its head, and only a few of these murders occurred before that time, which at least doubled the annual number of fatalities after that time. As a matter of fact, the greater portion of the victims of Indian violence fell between the years 1850 and 1862, a period of twelve years, and during that time the annual loss was at least one hundred and fifty, a frightful drain upon a sparse population.

Most of those who suffered were men in the prime of life, who could ill be spared by the struggling young territories, though comprising all classes—travelers, prospectors, miners, ranchers, traders, freighters, and, lastly, volunteers, who left their homes and families to go to the Indian country in defense



of the outlying settlers or to avenge the unprovoked and brutal crimes against them. Many immigrant families were totally destroyed, the women and children suffering every outrage which fiendish imagination could devise. The amount of property destroyed by Indian attacks upon immigrants, settlers and government supplies, was enormous, and almost none of it was ever repaid to the people who suffered.

It has been the fashion among a class of persons, absolutely ignorant of conditions on the frontier, to prate loudly of the wrongs visited upon the poor Indian. No one, with any knowledge of the facts, will deny that the Indians were oftentimes wrongfully treated by the whites, but as General Sheridan wrote in 1870, "So far as the wild Indians are concerned, the problem to be decided is, 'Who shall be killed, the whites or the Indians?' Since 1862, at least eight hundred men, women and children have been murdered within the limits of my present command in the most fiendish manner, women ravished, and they and their little children horribly tortured, and then after suffering the pangs of a thousand deaths, killed and scalped." General Sherman also wrote strongly against the Indian apologizers and sympathizers, referring in the most vigorous language to the great number of persons butchered in the department east of the Rocky mountains.

The first Indian war in Oregon was with the Cayuses, mostly with its scene of operations in what is now Walla Walla county, this state. The great war period was a few years later, from 1855 to 1858, during which there was a general uprising of the confederated tribes of Oregon and Washington, in Eastern Oregon and Washington, in the Rogue River region of southern Oregon, and along the eastern shore of the upper Puget Sound.

Individual acts of violence and oppression on the part of white men, from time to time, induced acts of retaliation, but the criminal procrastination and indifference of the general government was responsible for most of the troubles between the settlers and the Indians. The policy of the government was to encourage a vanguard of settlers to cross the constantly receding frontier. This began almost immediately after the close of the war of the Revolution. The government never provided protection for these people, but after most of them had been impoverished by frequent attacks from the Indians, accompanied by murder and outrage, an insufficient army would be sent out to overawe and perhaps punish the savages. While I am no



apologist for the hideous wrongs perpetrated upon the natives of the New World by the Spaniards, they at least protected their own people by sending out a garrison with every colony, which took good care that there were not enough of the native population left to be a menace to the settlers. It is often said the English did better than the Americans with the Indians, and had less trouble with them. This is only a partial truth. Until in comparatively recent years the English occupying the country west of the Canadas were there only as trappers and traders. They interfered but little with the Indians, and in fact gave them a market for their furs and peltries that had before been lacking. The lands over which the natives roamed at will were not sought for nor occupied by their white neighbors. It has been the "land greed" of the Americans that has caused most of the disturbances and wars between them and the Indians.

Prior to 1843 the population of Oregon increased slowly. At the beginning of 1842, there were only one hundred and thirty-seven American settlers. Of these twenty-one were Protestant ministers, fifteen lay members of Protestant churches, thirty-four white women, thirty-two white children, and thirty-four American settlers, twenty-five of whom had native wives. There were also three Jesuit priests, French or Belgians, as I remember. During 1842, the first immigration of American settlers, numbering about one hundred and forty, came across the plains under the leadership of Dr. Elijah White; in 1843 nearly nine hundred immigrants were added to the little colony; in 1844 about seven hundred and fifty; in 1845 about three thousand; in 1846 about one thousand, and in 1847 about five thousand.

Each year poor fare, bad drinking water and long-continued exposure had caused a good deal of sickness among the immigrants, and this had been unavoidably communicated to the Indians, causing a good many deaths among them. This was particularly true of the immigration of the year 1847. It brought with it a virulent form of measles, accompanied by typhoid fever, and these diseases were as fatal among the Indians as the small-pox. The Indians hung about the immigrants most of the time, to the great annoyance of the latter, as they were inveterate beggars and pilferers, and it was not long before the disease was epidemic among the Cayuses, threatening that tribe with extinction, as the mortality was frightful. Missionary Spalding wrote: "It is distressing to go into a lodge of some ten or twenty fires, and count twenty or twenty-five, some in the midst of the measles, others



in the last stages of dysentery, in the midst of every kind of filth, of itself sufficient to cause sickness, with no means of alleviating their inconceivable sufferings, with perhaps one well person to look after the wants of two sick ones. They were dying every day; one, two, and sometimes five in a day, with the dysentery, which generally followed the measles."

There were Indians and half-breeds among the Cayuses, who had come from other tribes, notably Jo Lewis, who were not friendly to the Americans and who stirred up ill feeling among the natives by telling them that the whites would poison them and get rid of them as fast as they could so the valuable lands along the river bottoms could be turned into farms. Many matters of more or less importance had come up during the three or four years prior to 1847 that had lessened the influence of the missionaries over the Indians.

The first white women to cross the plains were Mesdames Whitman and Spalding, in 1836.

Doctor and Mrs. Whitman settled at Waiilatpu, in the Walla Walla valley, a few miles below the present city of Walla Walla. Mr. and Mrs. Spalding went up the Snake river to Lapwai, near the present city of Lewiston, Idaho. Mr. Gray assisted for a time at both places, but the next year he went back East to intercede with the Missionary Board to send out more missionaries. This errand was successful. Soon after he reached the Eastern States he married Mary A. Dix, and in 1838 Revs. A. B. Smith, Elkanah Walker and Cushing Eells, and Wm. H. Gray and their brides, and Cornelius Rogers made up this reinforcement. The trip across the continent was a wedding tour for the three newly-married couples. This was the second party of ladies to accomplish this arduous and perilous undertaking.

At this time Texas, California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona were foreign territory, and Oregon was so much foreign country that it was necessary for the missionaries to procure passports from the Secretary of War. That to Eells and party was dated February 27, 1838.

The houses were of logs or sun-dried bricks—adobes, with the earth for a floor and evergreen boughs or cedar bark for a roof. Cooking was done at an open fire—stoves were unknown. Daylight came in at the open door, or through small windows covered with cotton cloth or oiled deerskin. Tables, chairs, and all the scanty furniture, were of home manufacture from boards split from logs. There was but one saw mill, and that at Fort



Vancouver. Later they used whipsaws, and with them a small amount of lumber was laboriously cut by hand. Flour mills were much more numerous, as there was one at Vancouver and another at Colville. Myron Eells wrote that the latter proved a great convenience, for while they lived among the Spokane tribe they could make the trip there and back in five days. The plows were home-made, the singletrees were strengthened with rawhide instead of iron, from which their ropes were also made. For nine years the wheat was cut with a sickle. [Parenthetically—In the early fifties, in the Willamette valley we had advanced to the use of cradles to cut the grain, but most of our threshing was still done with flails, or by having it tramped out by cattle or horses. This was done by first spreading out the grain about a foot deep over the corral ground, which had been hardened by countless hoofs and which had been carefully cleaned by sweeping it with brooms whittled from ash or hazel saplings. When the grain was ready cattle or horses, preferably the latter, were turned into the corral and driven around the circle until the grain was separated from the straw. It is one of my pleasant recollections how proud I was when I was permitted to help drive the animals which it was necessary to urge along with whip and goad to prevent them from taking too much toll while engaged at their task.] The flour sacks were of buckskin, as were many of the garments in everyday use. Cattle were scarce, and nearly all of them belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, which would not part with any of them for love nor money. Beef was the chief article of diet, especially in the winter, but the animals from which it was made neither "chewed the cud nor parted the hoof." They were Indian ponies, and for several years each family salted one down every winter.

These conditions were not all confined to missionary life. Many of you old pioneers have either personally known them or have heard your parents relate similar experiences of their pioneer life. At the Whitman mission, in its early days, a small allowance of bread was baked and enjoyed once a week, and then boiled wheat and corn were the staple diet the rest of the week. Flint and tinder were relied upon to start the fires, matches being unknown until many years later. Mails usually came twice a year in the Hudson's Bay Company's vessels by way of Cape Horn and the Sandwich Islands. These vessels brought the merchandise used by the company in its trading with the Indians and trappers for furs and peltries, which made



part of the return cargoes, supplemented, ere long, when the herds and flocks of the company had grown to immense proportions, by hides, tallow and wool. The profits that enured to the company from this monopoly made its stock the most sought after of any in the London market. When the missionaries learned that mails had arrived at Walla Walla they would start there on horseback with a pack animal to carry blankets and supplies. It took Mr. Eells two weeks to make the round trip of four hundred miles. The letters and papers were usually twelve months old.

Enduring these privations without complaint, and surrounded at all times by dangers from the elements, wild animals and treacherous Indians, this little band, widely separated from each other, year after year, carried on their labors among the Cayuses and Nez Perces.

For a time they were greatly encouraged over the apparent success of their efforts in Christianizing and civilizing the Indians around them, but about 1841, from many causes, the natives changed from their general attitude of kindness and apparent zeal to learn to read and to understand the lessons taught them by the missionaries, and became insolent and threatening in their demeanor. The mission schools were abandoned, and thefts and acts of petty violence were frequent. From 1843 to 1847 the Cayuses and most of the Nez Perces retrograded rather than improved in education and civilization. During the latter part of this period the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, who understood thoroughly the ins and outs of Indian character, often advised and entreated Doctor Whitman to abandon his work at Waiilatpu. The latter undoubtedly realized the dangers surrounding him, as he advised the immigrants to use the utmost discretion in their intercourse with the Indians. There is abundant evidence of record that he knew he stood over a powder magazine that was liable to explode at any time, but he was of the stuff from which martyrs are made and felt that duty commanded him to remain at his post at all hazards.

Of the immigration of 1847, about fifty remained at the mission station instead of going down to the Willamette valley. These, added to the mission party, made up a total of about seventy.

On the afternoon of November 29th of that year, the Cayuses made a sudden onslaught on these people and killed Doctor and Mrs. Whitman, Mr. Rogers, John and Francis Sager, Mr. Gilli-



land, Mr. Marsh, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Hoffman. The next day Mr. Kimball and Mr. Young were killed, and several days later two young men, named Crockett Bewley and Amos Sales, who had been spared for some reason, were added to the list of slain, and two little children, one of the Sager children and Helen Mar, the daughter of Joe Meek, were allowed to die of neglect. A man named Hall made his escape to Fort Walla Walla, and instead of remaining there in safety insisted on being ferried across the river on his way to The Dalles. He was never heard of afterward, and was either killed or drowned in trying to cross some stream. This made the total number of the victims of Indian cruelty sixteen.

No account of this massacre has ever been written that was not disputed by some of the parties to the bitter sectarian controversies that followed for many years, and to this date no agreement has been reached.

I have read carefully the different statements published soon after the massacre, and during the succeeding quarter century—Spalding's, Gray's, Brouillet's, J. Ross Browne's—and an immense mass of transient accounts of the same, and at this time declare unhesitatingly that I do not believe the Hudson's Bay Company's people were in any manner directly or intentionally responsible for the Whitman massacre. He and all other missionaries, Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist and Catholic alike, at all times and at all places, were treated with kindness and with generous hospitality, which was boundless. At the company's stations, and on their travels in the Indian country, they were aided by the company's officers, and particular pains were taken to impress upon the minds of the Indians that the safety and comfort of the missionaries were desired at their hands. It is a fact that most of the officers of the company were Catholics, and that nearly all the subordinates were of the same faith, and that while all were welcomed and cared for most generously, still it was quite natural that the Catholic priests were shown greater deference and were accepted as friends while the others were guests. The Indians were quick to observe this nice distinction. The Catholic priests appeared in their black gowns and carrying with them the emblems of their service; they were received with great respect by the officers and warmly welcomed by the employes of the company. The Hudson's Bay Company was the highest corporeal power known to the Indians. Its officers enunciated the law and enforced it with iron hands



in all that came up between it and the natives. Any wrong doing that affected the company was punished surely and swiftly. For these reasons, when the Indians saw what deference was shown to the priests by those to whom they, the Indians, looked up to as "Tyees," whatever the priests said to them was naturally accepted with greatest respect. The ceremonials of the church service were attractive to them, and the instructions connected with them all made a lasting impression upon their memories.

In their teachings of the Indians, the priests did not hesitate to pronounce the religious instructions of the Protestants as the grossest of falsehoods, and the latter were equally vigorous in their declarations of the falsity of the teachings of the Catholics, and of their blasphemy. This had an evil influence upon the Indians, who could not understand the distinctions in religious creeds, and possibly I might add that many white people of the present day are equally benighted.

The Hudson's Bay people could have had no object in causing trouble between the whites and Indians at that late day. The treaty settling the northern boundary of Oregon at the 49th parallel had been signed more than a year; the region about Walla Walla was never of value for the gathering of peltries, so that if white settlers had begun to occupy the lands adjacent it was a matter of small importance to the company, whose rights had been abundantly safeguarded in the treaty mentioned above.

The rest of the party, mostly women and children, remained captives among the Indians, and the women, and even young girls, became the victims of the lust of their captors.

But for the immediate and vigorous action of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company, these would all have been killed very soon after the other tragedy. James Douglas and Peter Ogden, two of the grand men of that early period, had succeeded Dr. McLoughlin in chief control of its affairs, and then lived at Fort Vancouver. McBean, the factor in charge of Fort Walla Walla, sent off an express as soon as he learned of the massacre, and at once upon its receipt Ogden started for the scene of the tragedy. Arrived at Walla Walla, he demanded that the captives be delivered to him, and such was his wisdom, as well as courage and adroitness, coupled with the great influence of the company's officers among the Indian tribes, that he succeeded in rescuing them to the number of fifty-seven, and at the same time made no promises to the Indians of immunity from punishment



for their crimes. He gave what the Indians accepted as a most liberal ransom, consisting of fifty large blankets, fifty shirts, ten guns, ten fathoms of tobacco, ten handkerchiefs, and one hundred balls and powder.

To Ogden the captives and the people of Oregon owed a heavy debt of gratitude that was never forgotten by those whose minds were not obscured by prejudice or partisanship.

The provisional legislature of Oregon met at Oregon City on the 7th day of December, 1847, and on the 8th the following letter was received from James Douglas, chief factor at Vancouver:

“George Abernethy, Esq.

“Sir:—Having received intelligence last night by special express from Walla Walla of the destruction of the missionary settlement at Waiilatpu, by the Cayuse Indians of that place, we hasten to communicate the particulars of that dreadful event, one of the most atrocious that darkens the annals of Indian crime.

“Our lamented friend, Dr. Whitman, his amiable and accomplished lady, with nine other persons, have fallen victims to the fury of these remorseless savages, who appear to have been instigated to this appalling crime by a horrible suspicion which had taken possession of their superstitious minds, in consequence of the number of deaths from dysentery and measles, that Dr. Whitman was silently working the destruction of their tribe by administering poisonous drugs, under the semblance of salutary medicines.

“With a goodness of heart and benevolence truly his own, Dr. Whitman had been laboring incessantly since the appearance of the measles and dysentery among his Indian converts to relieve their sufferings; and such has been the reward of his generous labors.

“A copy of Mr. McBean’s letter, herewith transmitted, will give you all the particulars known to us of this indescribably painful event.

“Mr. Ogden, with a strong party, will leave this place as soon as possible for Walla Walla, to endeavor to prevent further evil; and we beg to suggest to you the propriety of taking instant measures for the protection of Rev. Mr. Spalding, who, for the sake of his family, ought to abandon the Clearwater mission without delay, and retire to a place of safety, as he cannot remain at that isolated station without imminent risk, in the present excited and irritable state of the Indian population.

“I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

“JAMES DOUGLAS.”



What a burden was thus thrust upon the officers and legislature of the Territory! There was in the treasury forty-three dollars and seventy-two cents, with an outstanding indebtedness of four thousand and seventy-nine dollars and seventy-four cents. War was inevitable, but where could funds be obtained to carry it on? Application was made to the Hudson's Bay Company, and on the personal guaranty of Governor Abernethy, Jesse Applegate and A. L. Lovejoy, supplies to the value of one thousand dollars were promptly supplied by it.

These three gentlemen were appointed loan commissioners to obtain subscriptions and loans from the merchants and few men of means in the Willamette valley, and they secured the pledge of five thousand dollars with which to equip the regiment of volunteers for an extended campaign in the upper country. Very little of this was in cash, and the rest was in provisions of all kinds, clothing, blankets, arms, ammunition, horses and their accoutrements, and all else that could be made available.

A company of riflemen was raised the same day, and officered and equipped the next, and it pushed forward to The Dalles at once. A regiment was raised during the succeeding thirty days, and Cornelius Gilliam was made its colonel. Mitchell Gilliam, one of the judges of the King County Superior Court, is his grandson.

It was in those days a matter of the greatest difficulty and hardship to get a body of men up the Columbia river to The Dalles, and it was not until the last of January that Col. Gilliam, at the head of one hundred and thirty men, was able to take the field, with the latter place for his base. The first engagement was with the Des Chuttes, John Days and Cayuses. About twenty miles from what was later known as Celilo, the Indian camp was attacked, one Indian killed and the rest dispersed. The next day the whole force went in pursuit of the enemy, which was found and attacked, regardless of its numbers, several Indians killed, a large number of horses, a few cattle, and nearly fifteen hundred dollars of stolen property recaptured. Skirmishing continued for several days, with a loss to the army of four men killed.

Peace negotiations, lack of facilities for transportation and of food, delayed the progress of the troops, and it was not until late in February, 1848, that a fight of any importance occurred. This was a little below the mouth of the Umatilla river, where the Cayuses had chosen their ground. Repeated charges were



made on them as from time to time they fell back and reformed, and toward dark they made a disorderly retreat, leaving eight dead and five wounded behind them. Five of the volunteers were wounded.

The Cayuses were surprised and disappointed over this day's fighting. The Americans had always avoided trouble with them, as they were tired and worn out with the hardships of crossing the plains, and encumbered with their stock and families. It had been the boast of the Indians that they would beat the Americans to death with clubs, and then go down to the Willamette valley and gather together the women and children and the white men's property.

As the troops continued their march toward Walla Walla the Indians hung on their flank, away up on the bluffs, but did not venture to attack.

All this time it was feared that the Yakima and Columbia river Indians would join with the Cayuses, but pains were taken to allay the apprehensions of the former, as they were assured that the surrender of the Indians who had committed the atrocities at the Whitman mission was the chief purpose of the expedition.

On the last day of February the troops reached the Walla Walla river, and on the 2nd of March camp was made near the site of the mission, and the dread story of the massacre, with all of its horrible details, first became fully known.

Colonel Gilliam, with two companies, first visited the mission ground, and the next day moved his camp to its site. The dead had been buried in shallow graves, and had been unearthed by the wolves and lay about, half devoured. Some of Mrs. Whitman's golden tresses were cut off and preserved, and the mutilated remains of herself and husband were interred together and a neat picket fence erected about the grave. The others were also reburied. The buildings had been burned and desolation reigned. Books, papers, letters, and other things of no interest or value to the Indians, lay scattered about. Some of the latter disclosed the fact that Dr. Whitman was fully aware of the dangers that encompassed him.

From the time the troops left The Dalles vexatious delays occurred from day to day, caused by conferences with other tribes of Indians not parties to the massacre. Efforts were made by the Cayuses to bring about a general uprising. Had they been successful in this it would have resulted in the annihilation



of all the Americans in the upper country, armed or unarmed. These delays and negotiations continued to the end of the campaign. "Blood is thicker than water," and even the Nez Percés, most of whom were always the friends of the whites and deplored the massacre at Waiilatpu, as well as other friendly Indians, did not hesitate to employ artifices to delay the troops and thus enable the Cayuses to move their families and stock out of danger.

After a delay of a week the army of about two hundred and seventy men again advanced, and on the banks of the Tucannon were attacked by the Palouses, allies of the Cayuses. Advancing slowly, fighting all day, the troops had to camp at night without food or fire, under gun fire all the time, so that they were glad when the first streaks of dawn enabled them to again advance. The engagement was sharp, and at times critical, but victory rested with the whites, with several wounded, one mortally. The Indians lost four killed and fourteen wounded. This sickened the Palouses of fighting, and, although the whites had won the fight, they had been without rest or food for thirty hours and were glad of a respite.

While the troops had been successful in their operations thus far, it had become apparent that the force in the field was inadequate for a campaign, and it was decided to build forts and leave enough men to garrison them, and let the rest return to the valley and harvest their crops, and during that period raise another regiment.

Colonel Gilliam and Captains Maxon and McKay, with two companies, left Waiilatpu March 20th, with a wagon train, leaving Lieut. Col. Waters in command of the forts and men. Just below Umatilla, where they made camp for the night, Colonel Gilliam was instantly killed by the accidental discharge of a gun. He had proven himself a most intrepid soldier and capable Indian fighter.

Troops came and went during the summer, but little active work was done. Missionaries Eells and Walker and families were escorted from Colville to The Dalles by a company under Major Magone, who had volunteered for that service.

As an additional incentive for men to remain at the front, Colonels Lee and Waters promised that authority would be given volunteers for that service to take land claims in the Cayuse territory. This offer was accepted, and the required number of fifty, under Captain Martin, remained. Governor Aber-



nethy approved these promises later, as a military necessity, and thus began the first actual settlements in what is now Eastern Washington.

The proclamation discharging the first regiment of volunteers, except the men who remained to garrison the forts, was dated July 5, 1848. The volunteers in the Indian country were hardy and resourceful. The mill at Waiilatpu was repaired, and as considerable grain was discovered in Indian caches, they soon had plenty of flour. They also raised several hundred bushels of grain during the summer. Meat was abundant, and they lived well. They held control of the Cayuse country, marked out claims for themselves on the best lands; also patrolled the immigrant road, which was of great service to the migration of 1848.

The Indian murderers had fled to the upper waters on Burnt river, and were reduced to poverty; the Cayuses also, as a tribe, had been greatly humbled.

The events sketched heretofore, of such vital interest to the infant Oregon colony, were long in coming to the knowledge of the outside world. Efforts had been made at once to send word overland to the States and to California, but had failed. It was also not known in Oregon that the United States had taken possession of California, and it was late in the summer of 1848 before anything was done at the national capital. August 14th Gen. Joseph Lane, who later ran for Vice-President on the ticket with John C. Breckenridge, when Lincoln was elected to the presidency, was appointed governor, and Joe Meek marshal. These two started immediately for Oregon and arrived early in March, 1849, and at once a proclamation was issued to the effect that the United States had at last asserted its authority over Oregon Territory. The treaty with Great Britain had been concluded more than three years that confirmed our title to Oregon, and but for this Indian war other years would doubtless have elapsed before the prayers of the Oregon settlers would have been answered.

In May, 1849, the United States started a regiment of riflemen overland to Oregon, in command of Col. W. W. Loring. They encountered many hardships, and often were on short allowances of food. Arrived late in the fall at The Dalles, they were almost naked. Seventy men were lost on the way by death and desertion. They spent the winter at Oregon City.

In the meantime, Governor Lane had been carrying on nego-



tiations with the Cayuse tribe for the surrender of those who participated in the massacre of Doctor Whitman and the others. The arrival of the soldiers of the regular army, which had long been threatened, and the increasing tide of immigration, opened the eyes of the Indians to the power of the Americans. Sales of ammunition to the Indians had been stopped, which to them was a great hardship, as their food supply was largely cut off in consequence, and the fugitives felt its effects even more than the others.

The Cayuses recognized the fact that something must be done. Early in 1849 Governor Lane received word that five of the tribe had surrendered themselves to be tried, and were on their way down the Columbia river under escort. He went to The Dalles to meet them. They were taken to Oregon City and there held under guard until late in May, then tried before Judge O. C. Pratt. A jury was empaneled, from which old settlers and those who had suffered at the hands of Indians were excluded. U. S. District Attorney Holbrook conducted the prosecution, while Territorial Secretary Pritchett and Paymaster Reynolds and Capt. Claiborne, Jr., of the U. S. Army, conducted the defense.

The attorneys interposed every defense that able men could devise, but a verdict was returned of guilty as charged. Attempts were also made to appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court, and in other ways to delay the execution, but without avail, as the Indians went to the scaffold soon afterward.

Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor, in discussing events of the period, said:

“That which strikes the student of Oregon history is the pathetic patience with which the people, and the provisional government, bore the long-continued neglect of the federal government. From the first influx of immigration proper, in 1842 and 1843, Congress had been entreated to make some provision for the protection of travelers to Oregon from Indian attacks, as it had previously been urged to insist upon the rights of Americans as against the British, represented by the Hudson’s Bay Company. But Congress had equally neglected both. The people, guided by a few wise minds, had hit upon the plan of inducing the British residents to join them in forming a joint organization, which both parties knew to be temporary, and only to be maintained by mutual concessions. After much petitioning, Congress had at last ordered to be raised and equipped a regiment of mounted riflemen, to establish posts and patrol the road to Oregon; but instead of being sent at once to this country it



was ordered to duty in Mexico, from there sent back to Fort Leavenworth at the close of the war with Mexico, and its decimated ranks filled up with raw recruits. Of these movements isolated Oregon was in ignorance, and, unable to account for the non-appearance of the regiment known to have been raised for her exclusive benefit, still strained her eyes toward the east, always looking for some sign, and listening for some news of the promised aid. For this Doctor Whitman was waiting when he delayed too long to leave the Cayuse country. For this the volunteers at Fort Waters waited until October, performing the duty the federal government had been pledged to perform; and for this Oregon was still waiting when Governor Abernethy was called upon to assist the United States."

Several years afterward Congress appropriated one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to pay the expenses of the Cayuse war, and later a bill was also passed that, among others, gave bounties to the volunteers of this war.

This war marked the close of the provisional government of Oregon. The men who brought it to a conclusion had all imaginable difficulties to contend with. There was no money in the treasury, and practically none in the country. Each volunteer had to furnish his own weapons, and was poorly supplied with ammunition, clothes and food. While the actual loss in killed and wounded was not great, it required men of undaunted courage to penetrate the Indian country, surrounded as they were by hordes of Indians, who, had they combined, as there was always danger, could at any time have overwhelmed the Americans.

Nearly sixty years have passed since this war began. Only here and there one remains of the original band who first taught the Indians to fear the American when he went on the warpath, but their children and children's children are many all over this Northwest. Not a few of these live on Puget Sound today, and the fighting blood that has come down to them from their pioneer ancestors is to them a proud heritage.

George Abernethy was then Oregon's provisional governor. His nephew has long been one of Seattle's business men. I have mentioned Mitchell Gilliam. John C. Holgate has a host of relatives here. Jeremiah Driggs has a daughter; M. M. McCarver has a daughter here and one in Tacoma, and descendants all over the Sound; Daniel Waldo has a nephew; Medorum Crawford has a brother and nephew. Nathan Olney has descendants on the Sound. Col. B. F. Shaw is still living in Vancouver, and



one of the best known men in the State. Clark S. Pringle and his wife, Catherine Sager, one of the rescued children, are spending a hale and hearty old age in Spokane.

Old Oregonians know all the names that follow, and they are also household words with hundreds of our own pioneers, viz.: James W. Nesmith, Jo Meek, Robert Magone, James Force, H. A. G. Lee, Thomas McKay, Joel Palmer, William Burnett, A. L. Lovejoy, Robert Newell, H. J. G. Maxon, John Minto, W. T. Matlock, L. J. Rector, Wesley Shannon and Lewis M. Savage. A. M. Poe, one of the pioneer newspaper men of Washington, is also on the list. Had I the time I might prolong the list indefinitely.

CLARENCE B. BAGLEY.