

## **The 1858 White River Massacre of Wenatchi (P'Squosa) Indians**

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After the signing of the 1855 Walla Walla Treaty both Whites and Indians were frustrated because the treaty did not officially go into effect. The treaty required ratification by the Senate of the United States. Unfortunately, Washington Territorial Governor Stevens, for various justifiable reasons, had come under suspicion by Congress and it would not be until 1859 before the treaty was finally ratified. In the meantime conflicts began to take place. To the east war broke out between the United States and the Coeur d'Alene and their Indian allies. In Wenatchi country, in 1858, a party of white miners set out through Wenatchi territory to reach the gold fields on the Fraser River in British Columbia. They followed Wright's 1856 route over the Wenatchee Mountains and down Peshastin Creek, and later reportedly claimed there was gold present in a stream near Blewett Pass.<sup>1</sup> The miners then proceeded down the Peshastin until they reached the Wenatchee River where they found an encampment of Wenatchis under Chief Skamow.

The Wenatchis, under their Chief Skamow had reached an understanding with Colonel (later General) George Wright that the United States would ally with the tribe and promised them the thirty-six mile square reservation described in Article 10 of the 1855 treaty.

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<sup>1</sup>*Puget Sound Herald*, "The Naches Pass!" July 16, 1858.

Hayes, Derek. *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*. Seattle: Sasquatch Books, 1999, pp. 152-155, reproduces period maps showing the routes the miners took to the Fraser gold fields.

During the 1858 council at Skamow's village, Sinkius (Columbia) Chief Quilteneock threatened the miners and said he and his people would make war upon them if they crossed the Wenatchee River. Skamow, however, in keeping with his agreement with Wright, promised to protect the miners and to provide them with a guide as far as Fort Okanogan. Furious, Quilteneock left the council and went down river to his people.<sup>2</sup>

The miners determined to go forward anyway and journeyed down the Wenatchee to the Columbia. They crossed the Wenatchi and began moving north up the Columbia when they were attacked by a group of Sinkius under Chief Quilteneock. The miners retreated south to the Wenatchee River. There they were met by a band of Skamow's Wenatchis, who helped the miners cross back over the Wenatchee River and continue their retreat toward Fort Simcoe. During the battle, which continued for four days, two miners were reported killed and twenty Indians were reportedly killed, including both Quilteneock and his relative by marriage, the Wenatchi Tecolecun. Tecolecun had signed the 1855 treaty and was an ally of Quilteneock (they believed the United States had failed to abide by the treaty). Edward S. Curtis later

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<sup>2</sup>Splawn, A. J., *Ka-mi-akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1958) [1st printing 1917], p. 83-86.

Scheurman, Richard D. (ed) *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1982, pp. 86-87, who cited interviews with Emily Peone and the *Oregon Standard*, July 8, 1858.

*Daily Alta California*, July 9, 1858.

United States. President. "Report of the Secretary of the Interior," *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Fifth Congress*, Senate Executive Document No. 1, 35th Congress, 2d Session (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, Printer, 1858), p. 618-635.

Briley, Ann, "Hiram F. Smith, First Settler of Okanogan County," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 3 (July, 1952): 226-233, reports that Hiram Smith was one of those early settlers to the north country during this year, and that failing to find gold he set up his store on Osoyoos Lake.

There were between 75 and 90 men with 100 pack animals in the group.

asserted that Tecolecun was killed when he tried to go see the body of his relative. Eventually the miners reached the safety of Fort Simcoe.<sup>3</sup>

In 1894 Wenatchi Chief John Harmelt recalled the same events. He described the agreement and understanding that had been reached between Skamow and Colonel Wright in 1856, and the subsequent miners' expedition through Wenatchi territory in 1858.

They went by there prospecting. Shamouck [Skamow] was still on that place [Wenatchapam], and he had many Indians. These white people camped around Shamouck. There was one of Shamouck's Indians who was a bad Indian. This Indian went to Shamouck and said: "I want to kill these white people." Shamouck said: "That is not my mind." This Indian asked him for authority three times to

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<sup>3</sup>*Puget Sound Herald*, "The Nachess Pass!" July 16, 1858.

Scheuerman, Richard D. (ed) *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1982, pp. 86-87, who cited interviews with Emily Peone and the *Oregon Standard*, July 8, 1858.

*Daily Alta California*, July 9, 1858.

Curtis, Edward S. *The North American Indian*. Norwood, Massachusetts: The University Press, 1911, Vol. 7, pp. 67-68.

Ray, Verne F. "Ethnohistorical Notes on the Columbia, Chelan, Entiat, and Wenatchee Tribes," *Interior Salish and Eastern Washington Indians IV*. Garland Publishing Inc.: New York, 1974; p. 401.

Brown, Wm. Compton, *The Indian Side of the Story*. Spokane, Wash.: C. W. Hill Printing Co., 1961, p. 341.

Ruby, Robert H. and John A. Brown. *Half-Sun on the Columbia: A Biography of Chief Moses*. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1965, p. 37.

United States. President. "Report of the Secretary of the Interior," *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Fifth Congress*, Senate Executive Document No. 1, 35th Congress, 2d Session (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, Printer, 1858; serial set #974), p. 618-62, reproducing Owen to Nesmith, July 11, 1858, reporting on the Sinkius attack on miners and Quilteneck's death.

kill those whites and Shamouck said “no.” This Indian went and killed a white man, and Shamouck had told him not to kill him. It was Chief Moses’s older brother [Quilteneck]. One of the Leading white men sent word to Shamouck: “How is it that you have killed one of us?” Shamouck said: “It is not I that killed you.”

Shamouck got his men to watch over these white men. Shamouck took these men across the Wenatchee at Icicle; he let them go there. Then this leading white man said to Shamouck, “I will give you all our tools and all our grub.” Shamouck said to this white man, “I will not receive it;” of course this bad Indian might take it. The white men then went away.<sup>4</sup>

The actions that Skamow and his band took to protect the Whites from an attack were remarkable. The action cemented a good relationship between Skamow’s people and the United States, but almost certainly created (or reflected) a division between his people and the Sinkius.<sup>5</sup> Skamow’s people in the Wenatchee River drainage believed they had a peaceful alliance with the

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<sup>4</sup>United States. Senate. “Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting A copy of an agreement with the Yakima Nation of Indians, and a draft of a bill to ratify same,” March 19, 1894. Executive Document No. 67, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, esp. p. 26. Harmelt said the miners arrived three years after Wright, when it was actually two years later.

<sup>5</sup>Interview of Elaine Emerson, with Millie Steele by Richard Hart on June 15-16, 1999.

Interview of Elaine Emerson, Hazel Burke and Millie Steel by Richard Hart on March 30, 1999 at the Office of the Colville Language Program.

United States government and were entitled to a reservation where they lived, in the Wenatchee Valley.

During July and August other skirmishes took place and under pressure from Washington Territorial Governor Stevens troops were ordered into the field to punish both the Indians in the Coeur d'Alene/Spokane area, and the Middle Columbia/Wenatchi area.<sup>6</sup>

The punitive expeditions were quickly dispatched by the United States military. In August, General Wright was sent to lead the troops to the east, while General Robert Garnett who was said to be “spoiling for a fight,”<sup>7</sup> was dispatched to lead a punitive expedition of 300 soldiers towards Wenatchee country. Lt. George Crook, Capt. James J. Archer, and First Lieutenant James K. McCall, were three of Garnett's company commanders.

Archer had recently been put in charge of Fort Simcoe, and was surely aware of the special relationship of Wright and the United States with Skamow and the Wenatchis. On the way towards Wenatchi territory, Garnett's soldiers burned a village occupied largely by women and children near today's Cle Elum,<sup>8</sup> then marched over the Wenatchi Mountains via Blewett

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<sup>6</sup>Splawn, A. J., *Ka-mi-akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1958) [1st printing 1917], p. 83-86.

United States. President. “Report of the Secretary of the Interior,” *Message of the President of the United States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-Fifth Congress*, Senate Executive Document No. 1, 35th Congress, 2d Session (Washington, DC: William A. Harris, Printer, 1858; serial set #974), p. 618-635, reproducing Owen to Nesmith, July 11, 1858, reporting on the Sinkius attack on miners and Quilteneck's death.

<sup>7</sup>Scheurman, Richard D. (Ed.). *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, WA; 1982, p. 90.

<sup>8</sup>The officer in charge of this attack was himself killed by a gunshot wound, but it was in his back and probably came from one of his own soldiers.

Hackenmiller, Tom. *Wapato Heritage: The History of the Chelan and Entiat Indians*. Point Publishing (Wenatchee, 1995), p. 60.

Pass and reached the Wenatchee River, where Garnett received information that some of the “hostile” Indians were with Wenatchis on the upper reaches of the river. Garnett sent Crook, and Lieutenants McCall and Turner along with one hundred men up river “to the falls, a famous fishing place” to deal with the “renegades.” There, Crook claimed that he obtained help from chief Skamow, who Crook said helped identify and essentially turned the wanted men over to Crook's command.<sup>9</sup> By identifying the Yamakas who were evidently hiding among the Wenatchis fishing at the Wenatchapam fishery, Skamow thought he was avoiding violence against his people in Wenatchi sacred territory.<sup>10</sup>

It was later reported that Archer, in appreciation of the actions of Skamow and the Wenatchis, promised the Wenatchis that their reservation would be expanded to eight miles square, a total of sixty-four square miles described in the 1855 treaty. Both United States officials and Wenatchis also later reported that when Captain J. J. Archer, Commander of Fort Simcoe, learned that Skamow and his people had helped the miners to escape from the Quiltene-nock-led attack, Archer met with Skamow and told the Wenatchis he would see to it that

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Lindston, James. “The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon,” *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. “Major Garnett's Expedition,” Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of documents from the National Archives, p. 44.

<sup>9</sup>Crook, General George. *General George Crook: His Autobiography*. Ed. by Martin F. Schmitt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960) [first published in 1946], pp. vii, 57, 59, 61-62, 64-65, and 67-68.

Lindston, James. “The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon,” *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), pp. 35-36, reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. “Major Garnett's Expedition,” Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of document from the National Archives.

<sup>10</sup>Streamer, Francis Marion. “Life. Celestial and Terrestrial. And Walks and Talks of Francis Marion Streamer.” Vol. II. 1890. Original on file, microfilm, Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, pp. 26 and 364.

their reservation was expanded to include sixty-four square miles of their aboriginal territory around the Wenatchapam Fishery.<sup>11</sup> As Wenatchi Chief John Harmelt recalled it:

A company of soldiers came there, and Capt. Archer was their captain. The captain asked Shamouck what he had done to the whites. Shamouck told him what was done. Then Capt. Archer said, "Where is your paper from Col. Wright" And Shamouck gave the paper to Capt. Archer. Then Capt. Archer said "I am much pleased with you, because you protected the whites. Your land is 6 miles square. There will be 2 miles added to each side, and that will make it 8 miles."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>United States. Senate. "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting A copy of an agreement with the Yakima Nation of Indians, and a draft of a bill to ratify same," March 19, 1894. Executive Document No. 67, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, Proceedings of Council with Wenatchis, December 18, 1893-January 6, 1894, pp. 24-34.

Raufer, Sister Maria Ilma, O.P., *Black Robes and Indians on the Last Frontier: Introduction of Catholicism into the Colville Country* (Colville, Wash.: Statesman Examiner Publishing, 1992) [first published 1966], reproducing Chief John Wapato to Frank M. Streamer, August 20, 1890; p. 76.

Judge, Louis. "Wenatchee Indians Ask Justice," *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVI. No. 1 (January, 1925), pp. 20-28.

Scheurman, Richard D. *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, Washington; 1982, appendix, reproduces another copy of the petition dated in 1911.

Hermilt, John and Louis Judge to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 18, 1899, RG 75, National Archives.

Tonner to Secretary of the Interior, March 11, 1898, National Archives.

<sup>12</sup>United States. Senate. "Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, Transmitting A copy of an agreement with the Yakima Nation of Indians, and a draft of a bill to ratify same," March 19, 1894. Executive Document No. 67, 53rd Congress, 2nd Session, Proceedings of Council with Wenatchis, December 18, 1893-January 6, 1894, pp. 24-34

Raufer, Sister Maria Ilma, O.P., *Black Robes and Indians on the Last Frontier: Introduction of Catholicism into the Colville Country* (Colville, Wash.: Statesman Examiner Publishing, 1992) [first published 1966], reproducing Chief John Wapato to Frank M. Streamer, August 20, 1890; p. 76.

Records show that the following year Captain Archer, also rewarded Skamow and Harmelt's people by distributing goods, seeds and tools to them.<sup>13</sup>

Crook reported that he ordered the execution of only five men, although he hinted at unseemly behavior when he claimed he found the whole thing "exceedingly distasteful" and had turned the job of the executions over to someone who "rather enjoyed that kind of thing."<sup>14</sup>

Garnett later reported that ten "murderers" had been executed, and included some of the people killed near Cle Elum in his total.<sup>15</sup>

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Judge, Louis. "Wenatchee Indians Ask Justice," *The Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XVI. No. 1 (January, 1925), pp. 20-28.

Scheuerman, Richard D. *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, Washington; 1982, appendix, reproduces another copy of the petition dated in 1911.

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<sup>13</sup>Lansdale to Archer, March 18, 1859; Fort Dalles Papers, Huntington Library; San Marino, California.

<sup>14</sup>Crook, General George. *General George Crook: His Autobiography*. Ed. by Martin F. Schmitt. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960) [first published in 1946], pp. vii, 57, 59, 61-62, 64-65, and 67-68.

Lindston, James. "The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon," *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), pp. 35-36, reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. "Major Garnett's Expedition," Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of document from the National Archives.

Garnett to MacKall, September 24, 1858, M1, enclosure 6 (G23), RG 393, Pt. 1, Department of Oregon, Entry 3574, Letters Received, 1858-1861, Box 1, National Archives.

Hackenmiller, Tom. *Wapato Heritage: The History of the Chelan and Entiat Indians*. Point Publishing (Wenatchee, 1995), p. 60, who cites: Garnett to Major W. W. MacKall, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, August 30, 1858, United States Army Commands, Fort Simcoe, Washington Territory, 1858. Garnett, in his letter of September 24, refers to a letter of August 31, 1858, but neither a letter dated August 30 or 31 was located in the National Archives chronological set of letters.

Splawn, A. J., *Ka-mi-akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1958) [1st printing 1917], pp. 102-106.

<sup>15</sup>Splawn, A. J., *Ka-mi-akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1958) [1st printing 1917], pp. 104-105, reported that one of the Yakimas who thought to be executed, actually survived and was named Click-clew-washet.



However, other evidence, including strong oral traditions of the Wenatchi Tribe, suggest that at some point between August 15 and 29<sup>th</sup>, 1858, there was actually a massacre of Wenatchi men, women and children during this expedition.

There was at least one seasonal village located on the shores of Lake Wenatchee. This village was located near where the White River emptied into Lake Wenatchee.<sup>16</sup> Wenatchis were fishing at the huge fishery at Wenatchapam, where several thousand Indians gathered each year, many welcomed by the Wenatchis from other tribes. Yakamas would have been welcomed at the Icicle River fishery. Fishing would also have been going on up Tumwater Canyon and as far upstream as Lake Wenatchee. Some tribal members would undoubtedly have been berrying and hunting further upstream from the lake.

Numerous types of traditional subsistence activities took place in the region around the lake. Garnett and Crook had described troops going up river at least as far as Tumwater Falls in Wenatchi territory and summarily executing five individuals.

Other accounts and information indicate there may have been many more Wenatchi men, women and children killed by these troops at a Wenatchi village near Lake Wenatchee.

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Scheuerman, Richard D. (Ed.). *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, WA; 1982, p. 94, reported that "Clickclewwashet" survived the attempted execution by the troops, but placed the occurrence in the Wenatchee Valley instead of Cle Elum.

Splawn was probably correct since the man was a Yakama and Splawn knew some of those Indians involved in the execution.

<sup>16</sup>Ray, Verne F. "Ethnohistorical Notes on the Columbia, Chelan, Entiat, and Wenatchee Tribes," *Interior Salish and Eastern Washington Indians IK* Garland Publishing Inc.: New York, 1974; "Wenatchi Villages," p. 8. Ray cites Gibbs and reports that Gibbs said it was the village of Wenatchi Chief "Skumma' o" [Skamow].

Gibbs, George. "Sketch of the Country between the Skagit & Okinakane & Columbia Rivers," Record Group 76, Series 69, Misc. Map 2, Gibbs, 1860, National Archives (Cartographic Branch; College Park, Maryland). A copy of the map can also be found in Petitioner's Exhibits, Docket 16 1 (combined 21th 222 and 224) RG 279, Exhibit 46 1, National Archives.

In December, 1974, United States District Forest Ranger William E. Butler wrote to Wenatchi leader Moses George, saying that a white settler had reported that in 1908-1910 he found evidence of a battleground on the White River (the White River empties into the upper end of Lake Wenatchee). Butler asked Moses George to tell him anything he knew about a battle in the area.<sup>17</sup>

At about the same time, in 1974 National Forest Service Technician John W. Ware wrote to Wenatchee writer Bernice Greene reporting that graves had been discovered and that he had also been in touch with Moses George. Ware asked Greene if she could determine who had discovered the graves.<sup>18</sup>

James Lindston, in his article about a cannon allegedly lost by the army in the area, also claimed that graves had been found in the area. He admitted the story he heard was at best second-hand, but said,

The graves which the early settlers found were a short distance up the Chiwawa river, in the vicinity of Raging Creek, and the legend is given credence by the fact that two mounts there, formerly called "Goat[?]" Mountain and Huckleberry Mountain, long ago had their names changed to Crook Mountain and McCall Mountain after two lieutenants in Major Garnett's expedition.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>William E. Butler, District Ranger, NFS, to Moses George, December 13, 1974; Wenatchee Public Library.

<sup>18</sup>John W. Ware, Forest Tech. Beo. [?] to Bernice Greene, December 18, 1974; Wenatchee Public Library.

<sup>19</sup>Lindston, James. "The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon," *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), pp. 35-36, reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. "Major Garnett's Expedition," Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of documents from the National Archives, p. 35.

Lindston continued that in 1962 four National Forest Service men, along with another man made a backpack trip to the area apparently near where Raging Creek empties into the Chiwawa. Lindston asserted:

They found what gave the appearance of a common grave—a long hump about 45 feet long and five feet wide, lined with rock that appeared to have been carried in from somewhere else. They did not disturb the site to determine if it actually was a grave, but if it was a grave it was large enough for many bodies to interred there....<sup>20</sup>

Edson Dow also reported in 1963, that “A common grave area has recently been discovered.” He claimed it was in the area where Raging Creek emptied into the Chiwawa.<sup>21</sup>

In January, 1975, Moses George wrote back to answer the inquiry he had received from Bernice Greene. A copy of that letter which appears to be in Greene’s hand has survived. In it, Moses George said he appreciated the work of Greene and Butler and said the he was one of the few surviving Wenatchis with knowledge of the White River Massacre. He said he first heard the story when a child, but also had heard unvarying accounts as an adult. Moses George said that at the Wenatchi village on the White River there were sixty to seventy-five individuals in ten tepees.

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<sup>20</sup>Lindston, James. “The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon,” *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), pp. 35-36, reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. “Major Garnett’s Expedition,” Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of documents from the National Archives, p. 36. Lindston, however, gave little credence to the story of the lost cannon, saying the story had “no basis in fact.” This calls into question the additional details he supplies from second hand, unidentified sources in his article.

<sup>21</sup>Dow, Edson. *Passes to the North: History of Wenatchee Mountains*. Edson Dow: Wenatchee, Washington; 1963, p. 33. Much of Dow’s historical account is quite garbled.

The elders were busy gathering berries, nuts, fish and medicinal herbs, storing for winter use at all events this tribal faction was totally unaware of any wars, troubles, or malfeasance as committed by Yakimas as you know history records these tribes at war.

The day was horrible when the soldiers surrounded the encampment and ordered the males to line up and be shot down totally, some were hung, and to complete the decimation women and children were shot or slashed to death with sabers.

The only survivors were a few lads tending horses a short distance from camp--when the tumult of the atrocity subsided these horrified witnesses hid and fled after the soldiers left the area-- these boys were the only survivors and what they saw was handed down through generations since then until this date the only record is this letter. I will stress one point. This encampment was a Wenatchee linguistical Clan not Yakimas therefore they were not fleeing as the Yakimas were.

There were no burials by the soldiers therefore later on in time another group of Indians found the razed site and only a few of the skeletons were evident, these Indians prayed in their way and left the area untouched, due to their superstitious nature they did not return the site was shunned for many years.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Moses George to Bernice Greene, January 30, 1975 [Appears to be in Greene's hand]; Wenatchee Public Library. George also mentioned work done by one A. H. Sylvester. Sylvester was a topographer who first worked for the

In 1976 *Wenatchee World* journalist Hu Blonk wrote a story in the paper titled "He Writes of Lake Wenatchee Massacre." Blonk repeated George's description of the massacre of Indians near Lake Wenatchee, saying troops lined up male Indians and shot or hung them. He said women and children were slashed to death with bayonets and that only a few Wenatchi boys survived. Blonk repeated George's suggestion that the cause of the massacre was the murder of Yakama Agent Bolon. Blonk noted that General Garnet and Major Crook were in the area. He also added the information that Moses George did not want the location marked.<sup>23</sup>

Bernice Greene continued to research the massacre and to interview Wenatchi elders. On June 8, 1976 Joseph Atkins wrote to Greene saying he knew John Harmelt when he was growing up in Cashmere.

There was one story he didn't like to tell very often. This is the true story.

John Harmelt told us that when his father, William Harmelt, was about nine years old he belonged to a small band of Wenatchee Indians which lived near Lake Wenatchee. One summer the whole band went up the White river valley to gather berries, roots, and medicinal herbs. They put up their tule-mat covered tipis to stay a while.

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USGS and was transferred to the Forest Service in 1908. He described traveling over the area in question and discussed the source of local place names.

Sylvester, A. H. "Place-Naming in the Northwest," *American Speech*; Volume XVIII, Number 4 (December, 1943), pp. 241-252.

<sup>23</sup>Blonk, Hu "He Writes of Lake Wenatchee Massacre." *Wenatchee World*. October 23, 1975. Blonk said that Moses George's grandfather was Silico Sask, the last Chief of the Entiat.

William was looking after the horses on the nearby hill. While he was up there, he saw white soldiers on horseback come where the people were camped. As William watched, he saw the soldiers shoot all the Wenatchee Indian men. They also killed (shot) the one Yakima Indian who was with the Wenatchees.

The Yakima Indian knew about the trouble and fighting in Yakima, and he was hiding among the Wenatchee Indians without telling them why he was there. The Lake Wenatchee Indians were innocent. They knew nothing about the Indian trouble at Yakima. In fact, living that far up in the mountains they had never seen white men before.

After the white soldiers shot and killed all of Indian men, they killed all of the women and children too, even though some of the Indian women tried to fight back.

While William watched, all of William Harmelt's band of Wenatchee Indians, men, women and children, were wiped out completely.

After the white soldiers were gone William Harmelt followed down the Wenatchee River. When he came to Cashmere, the Indians living there took him in and raised him. They were Wenatchee Indians, too. When he was a grown young man they made him their chief.

After William's whole band at Lake Wenatchee was wiped out, there was never again an Indian band of Wenatchee Indians at Lake Wenatchee.

You may use this letter however you wish.

Joseph Atkins<sup>24</sup>

At about the same time as her interview with Joseph Atkins, Greene wrote to Butler and said that she believed Atkins' account confirmed that of Moses George. She also noted an important fact. She said that renowned historian John A. Brown (author of an outstanding history of the Sinkius), was now including the White River Massacre as an event in one of his history classes.<sup>25</sup>

The historian Brown, a few years later, in 1982, wrote the "Foreword" to a book about the Wenatchis by Richard D. Scheuerman, in which Brown said the book recorded "the story of a peaceful people..."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Joseph Atkins to Mrs. Greene, June 8, 1976; Wenatchee Public Library. Some of the letters saved in the Greene collection appear to actually be interviews conducted by Greene, put into letter form, and then signed by the interviewee.

Two years later Greene wrote to Butler and reported that after talking to Joseph Atkins she said she spoke with George Friedlander of Nespelem, who "said there was a Fish Lake band camped with the Lake Wenatchee band at that time. this would account for the fact that there were no Indians living in that area at the time of the first White settlements and homesteads." Mr. Atkins died on March 17, 1986.

<sup>25</sup>Greene to Butler, May, 12, 1978, Wenatchee Public Library.

See:

Ruby, Robert H. And John A. Brown. *Half-Sun on the Columbia: A Biography of Chief Moses*. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 1965.

<sup>26</sup>Scheuerman, Richard D. (Ed.). *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, WA; 1982, p. 10.

Scheuerman's book contains a graphic account of the entire incident:

According to Garnett's report, Capt. Frazier returned without further incident to the mouth of the Wenatchee on August 29. Indian accounts, however, state that during this time a group of soldiers crossed into the valley of the White River. A narrow ridge separates this river from the headwaters of Raging Creek where Frazier's company had been thwarted in its attempt to capture the fleeing Yakima. A small Wenatchi camp of about ten tepees was situated at that time in the vicinity of Grasshopper Meadows on the White River. The band was unaware of the army's presence in the area, and the people were busy with the traditional fall gathering and preparing of berries, nuts and fish. Several boys who were tending the horses on a hill nearby were shocked to see soldiers suddenly attack the peaceful village. They easily overtook the Indians and the boys watched in terror as the soldiers lined the men up for execution. After they were shot, the women and children were also brutally murdered. Although army reports are silent on the matter, a common grave in the area was recently discovered.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Scheuerman, Richard D. (Ed.). *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, WA; 1982, pp. 94-95. Scheuerman cites additional interviews made with Mr. and Mrs. Basil Abbott and Joe Atkins, as well as the work of Greene.



James Lindston reported in 1982 in an article in the Lake Chelan Historical Society's *History Notes*, that some sixty years earlier white settlers came to the Plain-Chiwawa River area they found a "battle site with its graves..." Lindston reprinted Garnett's August 30, 1858 report and said he believed the five executions described by Garnett took place the Wenatchi fishery near Tumwater Canyon. Garnett said some of his troops then chased other Indians up the Wenatchee River. Lindston claimed that the early white settlers found graves "in the vicinity of Raging Creek" near McCall and Crook Mountains (apparently named for the army officers). This would place the Wenatchi camp a little further to the northeast of Lake Wenatchi, nearer to today's Twin Lakes. Lindston continued that in 1962 four Forest Service men and one other individual made a back-pack trip to the area in question

They found what gave the appearance of a common grave—a long hump about 45 feet long and five feet wide, lined with rock that appeared to have been carried in from somewhere else. They did not disturb the site to determine if it actually was a grave, but if it was a grave it was large enough for many bodies to be interred there....<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Lindston, James. "The Legend of the Lost Army Cannon," *History Notes*, Lake Chelan Historical Society, Vol. VII, No.1, (Spring, 1982), pp. 35-36, reprinting: Garnett, Major Robert Selden. "Major Garnett's Expedition," Fort Simcoe, 1858, transcript of document from the National Archives; pp. 35-36 and 43-45.

### Location of the Massacre Site

Although the documentary evidence supporting the massacre of Wenatchi Indians by United States troops is sometimes garbled and inconsistent, the Wenatchi tribal traditions and accounts are strong and corroborated in many details by the documentary record. Although the accounts of several authors suggest a site near Raging Creek, those accounts contain obvious errors and are especially inconsistent. Many if not all of them seem to be derived from the account of Splawn, who was recalling events which happened decades before he wrote them down.

The location of the village where the White River flows into the upper end of Lake Wenatchee is confirmed and corroborated by both documentary evidence and a number of tribal traditional accounts. Two documentary sources which suggest this was the location of the massacre come from historians Richard D. Scheuerman and JoAnn Roe.

Scheuerman said the location of the village site where the massacre occurred was “Grasshopper Meadows on the White River.” Scheuerman also reported that “a common grave in the area was recently discovered.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Scheuerman, Richard D. (Ed.). *The Wenatchi Indians: Guardians of the Valley*. Ye Galleon Press: Fairfield, WA; 1982, pp. 94-95 and footnote 33 on p 99. Scheuerman cites interviews that he made in the early 1980s, including: Mr. and Mrs. Basil Abbott Interview, Cashmere, Washington, December 19, 1980, Joe Atkins Interview, Mr. Joe Atkins Interview, Nespelen, Washington, March 13, 1981 and Moses George to Bernice Greene, Katar Valley, Washington, January 30, 1975.

For other substantiation of this location, see, for instance:

William E. Butler, District Ranger, NFS, to Moses George, December 13, 1974; Wenatchee Public Library.

Although Roe's account of what happened in 1858 is somewhat inconsistent because of her reliance on Splawn, she does add the following helpful paragraph.

In the early 1900s, homesteader Lawrence Dickinson found scattered human bones in a particular area of the White River valley. No one could enlighten him as to the identities of the dead. In 1974, a USFS historian speculated that the bones' location might verify the account of the massacre. USFS archaeologists said the apparent age of the bones was consistent with the whispered accounts of the atrocity, although the damage to the fragile remains from a 1915 forest fire in the area, coupled with the sheer age of the bones, made an accurate assessment difficult, if not impossible.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Roe, JoAnn. *Stevens Pass: The Story of Railroading and Recreation in the North Cascades*. Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1995, pp. 27 and 38 (quoted at 27). Some of Dickinson's other claims may be somewhat questionable.