
DID YOU SEE?

This article was printed in the Sheridan Sun in the September 27, 1979 issue. We felt this should be responded to. The answer appeared in the Sheridan Sun in the October 25, 1979 issue.

10-25-79

INDIAN EXPLOITATION

We feel we have to respond to the story printed in The Sun, Sept. 27. You wrote an article titled "Tale of Murder Recalled." Perhaps the recollection of the tale isn't clear, or is misinterpreted. Therefore, perhaps we can clarify it somewhat.

To begin with, in 1853 Oregon was not a state, and the "coast" reservation was inhabited by Indian people long before settlers began their intrusion. The "coast" reservation encompassed 69,120 acres reaching the coast mountains and adjoining the Siletz country, where other Indians resided.

The government provided Indian people with food and clothing. The clothing was Army issue and the flour provided was infested with Boll weevils. As far as prowling the hillsides, they were undoubtedly hunting as was their lifestyle before the "settlers" arrived.

General Phil Sheridan did not bring 75 Indians from California. General Phil Sheridan did not "bring" any Indians at all to Grand Ronde. They were driven from southern Oregon, on foot and by sea. My great-grandparents were among them.

Inquiries made to our elders concerning this incident produced no knowledge of any Indian being hung or their "squaws" heads being shaved.

The story does, however, provide exploitation of the Indian people as it did centuries ago. Exploitation, assimilation, detribalization, disease and loss of tribal land; who paid the lessor price? -Marv Kimsey, Tribal Chairman, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

Publish The Facts

9-27-79

Tale of murder recalled

By Rick Steber

The Missionary Kenoyer family crossed the plains by oxen in 1853 and settled on a homestead quite a ways west of Salem. The fields they cleared sloped upward to the coastal mountains and because of the nearness of the ocean, fog and rain hung gloomily for months at a time.

Above the Kenoyers homestead the Clarke family moved in and took a claim. Shortly after, General Sheridan brought 75 Indians from California and established what was known as the Grand Ronde Agency. The government provided the Indians with clothing and provisions, every three months, but the Indians could not stand to be confined to the boundaries of the small reservation in foreign land. They took turns sneaking away and prowling the hillsides.

The Indians became more and more restless until one day a small band of them crept to within breathing distance of Kenoyers' house, had a look and then moved on to the Clarks'. Mr. Clarke was away, having gone to town to have some wheat ground. And because of his lack of presence the raiding party entered the house and approached his wife and child.

Mr. Clarke returned home to find his wife and child dead. Were they killed at the hands of reservation Indians? There was no absolute proof as to the guilt of anyone in particular so the crime went unpunished for several months—until the sheriff was joking with an old Indian. The sheriff, as kind of a practical joke, played like he was going to lock the Indian in jail and the old fellow acted so suspicious that the sheriff's interests were aroused.

An investigation proved the old Indian, and others, had been involved with the killing of Mrs. Clarke and her son. As a result, three Indians were hung and their squaws had their heads shaved, that being the penalty just short of death.

Up at the Kenoyer homestead the family was giving thanks. God had protected them. They knew that the next time it might be them but they realized that was the price that had to be paid to settle Oregon.