

Sham Battle Sought To Highlight Need For Army Post At Fort Klamath; Failed

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS



By ELIZABETH B. LOOSELY

The Sham Battle enacted July 4, 1893, was ordered by Governor Penoyar and sponsored by Captain Compton and Cap Free, who then lived at Yanaix, with a view of establishing an Army post at Fort Klamath, Oregon.

The event was like a "home-

coming week" to those who had been stationed there as volunteers, as well as regulars. And now their children and the whole countryside flocked to the grounds and this included the Klamath Reservation Indians.

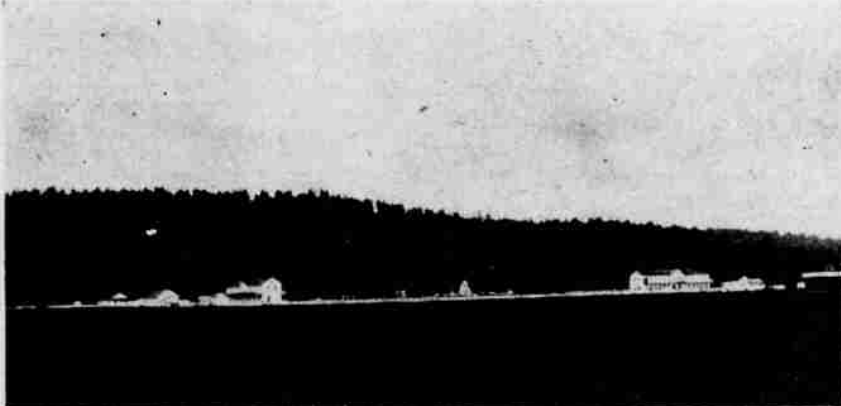
As a whole the Indians had a kinder feeling after the 21 years

that had elapsed since the Mexican War than some of the Civil War veterans who made up the regulars in 1864. Nevertheless the spontaneity and cooperation made the day a great success.

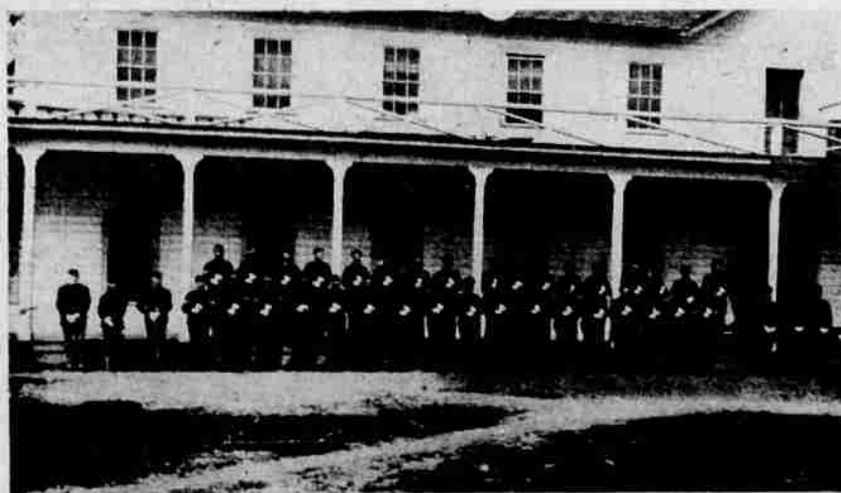
Spring wagons, dead-ax wagons, buggies and freighters, surreys and Army transports brought in



GROUND OF FT. KLAMATH on the day of the famed sham battle are shown in this old photograph. In the foreground are members of the Loosley family. Left to right, Ed Loosley, Mother Emma T., Clara, Marion, Edward Kenneth and George W. Loosley, father. Marion and George Loosley were brothers.



AN EXCELLENT VIEW of Ft. Klamath while it was in very good condition is shown in this old photograph from the collection of Elizabeth Butler Loosley, Fort Klamath. Work on the buildings at the fort were begun in the spring of 1863 and completed that same year. A road connected the post with Jacksonville. This road was built first in 1863 and later rebuilt in 1865.



ONE GROUP of the soldiers stationed at the fort at the time of the sham battle is shown in this old photograph from the collection of Mrs. Elizabeth B. Loosley. Troop C, First Oregon Cavalry, under Captain Kelly was the original force garrisoned at the fort in 1863. Company I, First Oregon Infantry, was added to the post in the spring of 1865.

the aggregation as well as saddle horses.

Company D of Ashland packed its duffel bags, loaded them in an old Army transport wagon and started over the mountain days ahead of time. Every man was dressed in his blue wool uniform and some that had been doing office work arrived with blistered noses as the visor on their caps were small; in fact the whole cap was a minute affair that sat their heads at a rakish angle.

The mules had all they could do to pull the loads so the boys walked. John McCall recalls he and C. B. Crisler marched together. At the first night's camp John saw his houn' dog had followed — there was no use attempting to send him home at this late day, so John arrived with the houn' and a blistered heel.

But the dog didn't feel out of place for every farmer had his two or three canines and the Indians had at least a dozen to the family. Most everything but the dogs moved as planned, they were under foot and at times the dog fights threatened to be the main attraction.

The July sun added just enough warmth to the high-land valley that the shade of aspens and pine and willow was sought in which to pitch camp. The close cropped white clover felt good to bare-footed children and to the tired feet of the women who had baked and prepared children's clothes for days. These same women were exchanging recipes, greeting old friends and making new acquaintances.

Someone started to say, "I declare I know very few people here, there are so many newcomers" . . . The sentence was never finished.

For Gus Melhase, his overalls damp half way to the knees, his shirt collar open, his face sweat-streaked and dust stained, hatless, his hair straggling, staggered in from the south and gasped, "Injuns! They surrounded our home, attacked our women."

"To arms," shouted Commander Thornton.

The soldiers hurried from their fishing, their love making, their horseshoe games to form an attack formation.

There was a commotion to one side—Mrs. Charles Martin had fainted. Someone called, "Where is Dr. Cox?" Others ran to escort the doctor which only added to the confusion.

A piercing screech burst like a shell, then a war whoop rang from down the valley to be echoed in weird layers of sound that sent the flesh on one's backbone creeping.

Thunder of hooves coming up country was heard. This was dimmed by the closer clatter as Fort Klamath Cavalry galloped into the foreground. The Indian battle cries came closer, were louder, were deadened as a hundred cayuse ridden by vermillion streaked warriors, armed with bows and arrows, dashed into sight.

Every soldier was waiting, sabers to their sides, rifles stacked in square formation, pistols in hand.

From a nearby grove appeared a majestic figure—the chief of the Klamaths — bedecked, bedizened but not bewildered. His features were streaked with ochre and white, his body wrapped in red and atop his head was a war-bonnet of white heron feathers interspersed with the blue of the jay, the orange of the hawk. These cascaded down his back and spread onto the pony's rump. At the line of soldiers he rode hellateelarrup, calling in Klamath, "Gopke."

Hackamores were slipped from

the ponies, as with screech after screech the Indians dismounted and, half crouched, crept through the brush and grass to within 50 feet of the line of defense, who had withheld their fire.

Then bow and arrows ready the Indians like a swarm of hornets flew towards the waiting line of blue.

Bang, wham, umph, whang, aim, fire rang the shots, the arrows, the commands.

The smoke of battle rose and hung in long white streamers, the smell of gunpowder and crushed grass filled the nostrils, the scream of children, the shouts of men, the barking of dogs and the neighing of horses were ear splitting.

Louder grew the lamentations of the squaws who were closing in to chase the cavalry who circled the melee, shriller grew the cries of the children.

The surcingle slipped forward on the spirited horse the chief rode. This infuriated the animal. He gave a running jump and landed in the midst of the soldiers who gave ground so that the crowd saw the chief upended. Saw him there, divested of his war bonnet and the red tablecloth that formed his swathing, in fact only the war paint was left and that was smudged. The tension was broken when a child shouted, "Why he ain't no chief—he is Uncle Ivan." Another shouted, "That's Aunt Ella's red tablecloth he's wearing."

And Ivan Applegate it was, who led the Indians.

The Indians pressed around him and laughed deep in their throats as they redecorated him while a soldier caught the startled horse and the assemblage laughed in all the musical range from bass to high C. Then each group took its regular stance and the sham battle was resumed eye to eye.

John McCall said, "You know even after this incident it was hard to believe it was not real. Those Injuns would come at me and wham an arrow straight for my middle. 'Course I knew they were blunt but they could hurt at that and their blood curdling yells raised my hair, there was no imitation there."

"There was one Indian treated for a powder burn and I have always had a guilty feeling that I might have inflicted that burn for I seemed to be his target."

"The marauders were driven back into the brush, to the river, across it. The battle stopped. We had vanquished the foe, who were good actors and could take it and they sure could hand it out."

Then the multitude watched as

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matter of FACT



In ancient Babylon every man became a physician by law. There were no special doctors. When a man fell ill he was taken to the public square. As people passed they were required to ask from what the man suffered. If one of these passers-by had once had the same disease or symptoms, he was obliged to advise the sick man.

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