

# Sheepeater Indian Campaign

(Chamberlin Basin Country)



## *Forgotten Tragedies of an Indian War*

By AARON F. PARKER



## *The Sheepeater Campaign*

By GEORGE M. SHEARER

AND

COL. W. C. BROWN



## *Moccasin Tracks of the Sheepeaters*

By JOHN CARREY



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## Introduction

A generation ago, when A. F. Parker wrote of his experiences in the Sheepstealer campaign of 1879, he noted that little was known about the Sheepstealers. Until the Bannock war of 1878 had brought a number of Bannock refugees to their remote mountain wilderness, the whites had paid little attention to the Sheepstealers. Then incidents associated with the Bannock war in the Sheepstealer country led to an army campaign against the previously inoffensive Sheepstealers. Some of the Sheepstealers were rounded up and placed on the Fort Hall reservation. But Eagle Eye's band avoided the army and continued its wild, independent existence until about the end of the century—as long as Eagle Eye was around to lead his people.

Recent archaeological and ethnological investigation has cleared up some of the main features of the hitherto obscure story of the Sheepstealers. Their culture in the Salmon river mountains goes back for a surprisingly long time—eight thousand years or more. Other Indians—especially in the broad Snake River valley to the south—came and went as gradual changes in climate forced them to move about the country. The deep canyons and high mountain basins of the central Salmon had such diversity of climate that the predecessors of the Sheepstealers managed to stay through regardless of long hot dry or cold mist cycles that drove their neighbors about the land. In language and culture, the Sheepstealers give evidence of having been well established in their land for a truly long time. Their culture on the Salmon, in fact, goes back long before the beginnings of civilization in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. Until the white men came, they had a surprising stability not far from a region of migration and change.

Until sometime in the eighteenth century, the traditional Sheepstealers occupied a broad mountainous zone from the upper Weiser and Payette eastward across Idaho to Yellowstone Park and on into Wyoming. Then the Shoshoni obtained horses from the Commanche, a Plains tribe related to the Shoshoni, but living near the source of Spanish horses in New Mexico. Horses changed the way of life for many, but not all, of the Sheepstealers. Those who used horses were able to travel about in a way they had not before; they could go on buffalo hunting trips out into the plains, and gained more mobility to reach salmon fishing areas and prairies for digging camas. When Lewis and Clark came to Idaho in 1805, they were able to get horses from one of these progressive Sheepstealer bands, the Lemhi Shoshoni. Sacajawea was one of these Sheepstealers who had gone into horse-raising, and was able to help Lewis and Clark obtain pack horses from her people.

After the gold rush brought mining and ranching into all but the more remote parts of the Sheepstealer's wilderness home, some of the more conservative bands still kept most of their old way of life, retaining their highly specialized skill at hunting mountain sheep.

(They ate a lot of other things besides mountain sheep, but were known primarily for that particular hunting ability.) Their language was an older, more conservative Shoshoni dialect, and altogether they represented a long established cultural tradition in a mountainous part of the country where change came slowly. But after the Bannock war, not even the Sheepeaters could stay clear of trouble with the whites. Friction from beyond their borders invaded even the unexplored recesses of the Salmon river wilderness, and the Sheepeater campaign of 1879 came as the final episode in Idaho's Indian wars.

Less well known than the Nez Perce war and the Bannock war, which in turn made the Sheepeater difficulty unavoidable, the Sheepeater campaign is a fascinating story quite different from the ordinary Indian war. These accounts by three participants—A. F. Parker, George M. Shearer, and W. C. Brown, recall one of the really difficult army campaigns in Idaho.

MERLE W. WELLS,  
Historian and Archivist  
Idaho State Historical Society

### **SHEEPEATERS MISREPRESENTED**

(Information for the following statement was provided to the staff of the Idaho Historical Society by: Dr. Sven Liljeblad, Idaho State College, Pocatello, Idaho. April 19, 1962.)

Their (the Sheepeaters) skin products were highly praised by other Indians and by the white fur traders. As the gold prospectors moved into their country and ruined their fishing, many of them joined their relatives among the Lemhi Indians for living and protection. He notes further that "they lived as peaceful villagers under the leadership of trusted headmen; they shared cultural inventory and social traditions with all other Idaho Shoshoni in the early days. In many respects, they were culturally superior to any other Shoshoni groups on a pre-horse level of culture. Other Indians respectfully referred to them as 'hunters of big game'."

Except for Leesburg and Loon Creek miners, and for a few scattered ranchers on their borderland, whites had not penetrated very much into the Sheepeaters' central wilderness area before the Bannock War. A number of Bannock refugees from the war were thought to have joined them when the Bannock cause collapsed as a military venture, and from that accretion they seem to have gained an entirely undeserved later reputation as a band of outcasts from other tribes.

During the Bannock War, an ambush of four whites in Long Valley was attributed perhaps to the Sheepeaters, and the next winter the Loon Creek Chinese massacre at Orogrande was blamed off on the luckless Sheepeaters also. (On the basis of a careful ethnological investigation, Dr. Liljeblad rejects this latter aspersion as false in fact, just as the notion that the Sheepeaters were a band of outlaws turned out to be a gross misrepresentation.)

In any event, the army decided to round up the Sheepeaters in the summer of 1879. After a difficult military campaign, some fifty of them—found at the very end of a long search that had to be called off for the winter—agreed to move to a reservation. Other Sheepeaters eluded the army, and a few families continued to live their mountain life unmolested in its ancient pattern for another decade or two.



# Aaron F. Parker, Author

Aaron F. Parker, writer of the following account of the Sheepeater Campaign of 1878, took an active part in the Indian hostilities. He put down his version of the Sheepeaters and the trouble in the early 1920's while the events were still impressed on his mind. Writing came naturally for Parker, since he founded the Idaho County Free Press June 18, 1886, continuing at the helm for many years.

Aaron Foster Parker was born March 16, 1856, in Wells, Somersetshire, England, and became a Merchant Mariner when of the age of 16. He continued plying the seas for four years, and on a trip to San Francisco departed his ship and headed for Idaho. He mined in the Central Idaho area until Indians Wars of 1877 drove most of the miners and ranchers into settlements for protection.

He then served his adopted country during the Nez Perce, Bannock and Sheepeater Indian Wars. After these were settled he took up a new career as a newspaperman, his first experience as editor of the Nezperce News, an early Lewiston newspaper in 1880. The mines called him back and the lure of a gold stampede in the Coeur d'Alenes took him away from the newspaper business. This was only for a short time, for he started the Coeur d'Alene Eagle in 1884. The gold boom soon faded out and he was back at the Nezperce News within a year.

Parker had become a traveler through his experience on the seas. He came to Camas Prairie in 1886, putting out the first edition of the Idaho County Free Press June 18 of that year, copies selling for \$5.00 each. As long as he was an editor and publisher he was recognized never-tiring upholding for the future of the West and especially mining. His editorials, and often his personal views incorporated in news, were vigorous and untouched by paper patronage.

Parker was a staunch Democrat; a signer of the Idaho State Constitution; the first regent of the University of Idaho; always took an active part in political and civic activities in his community. His last public service was treasurer of Idaho County, position he held when writing his version of the Sheepeater Campaign. He died January 3, 1930.

He married Mary Scott Newman February 4, 1890 in the Weiser Episcopal Church. He brought his bride to Grangeville to a new home he had built at 212 S. Hall St., where both continued to live the remainder of their lives. (The home is still occupied by a daughter, Mrs. C. D. (Beth) Cutting.)

In addition to Mrs. Cutting there were twin daughters, the late Mrs. Earl (Sylvia) Mulhall, and Mrs. R. B. (Lydia) Kading living in Boise at this writing. Also, one son, Horace Newman Parker, who followed in the footsteps of his father, and became a newspaperman, serving many years on the staff of the Idaho County Free Press, active there at the time of his untimely death in May, 1956.



**AARON F. PARKER**  
**Mariner, Miner, Publisher,**  
**Indian Scout**

### **PUBLISHER'S EXPLANATION:**

This book gives version of the Sheepeater Indian Campaign by many writers. Therefore, there may be duplications of places and events. The publishers have made no effort to "edit" the material, but reproduced the same in the words of the authors.

John Carrey came to the Idaho County Free Press office on numerous occasions asking the Sheepeater Campaign and Country be put in print for posterity, which was also urged by officials of Idaho State Historical Society. Some of the work reproduced in this book is now practically extinct, such as accounts of the campaign by Aaron F. Parker, Col. W. C. Brown, George Shearer, others and in letters.

Carrey's part of the book tells of the Sheepeater Country in following years, and in some instances up to the present time of publication (1968).

# *Forgotten Tragedies of an Indian War*

By the Late AARON F. PARKER

Indian hostilities in Central Idaho which have received no attention from historians are the "Sheepeater" campaigns of 1878 and 1879. Only recently the War Department has given these troubles official recognition as "Campaigns," and hereafter they will be so listed and Army regulations amended accordingly. This recognition has proceeded so far that the Cemeterial division of the Q. M. G. has sanctioned the erection over Private Egan's lonely grave of a 5-foot conical monument of boulders laid in cement and surmounted by a marble headstone of the World War design, which will mark not only the grave but also the site of the engagement of August 20, 1879, on Big Creek at Soldier Bar. So remote is this section, far up in the fastnesses of the Salmon River canyon in the golden heart of Central Idaho that the stone will have to be hauled about 70 miles by wagon and 40 miles by pack mules to reach its destination.

In the absence of official data the writer has related personal experiences, supplemented by verification from other active participants among the few survivors who still walk the earth.



The story of the Nez Perce War of 1877 is too familiar to need repetition here, and for the benefit of the new generations which have since entered the world it may be said that it is the story of the epic flight of Chief Joseph and his tribesmen over 2000 miles of the roughest country in North America; of a retreat conducted with such masterly skill as to win the highest praise for the Indian leader from the Army officers who tried in vain to catch him. The war finally ended in the Bear Paw mountains of Montana when the late Gen. Nelson A. Miles, and the Fifth infantry finally intercepted him and held him at bay until the pursuing Gen. Howard and his weary troopers came up, and the hostiles surrendered.



The "Sheepeaters" were a few mongrel Indians of unknown pedigree who inhabited the isolated, and at that period scantily settled, Council and Indian valleys of the upper Weiser river. Except for their natural propensity for raiding ranches and running off stock they were comparatively peaceful. Their name was derived from their subsistence on mountain sheep killed during their summer hunting trips into the rugged fastnesses of the mountain hinterland.

What is known as the Sheepeater country is to this day the wildest and most impenetrable region of indescribable ruggedness and grandeur. Lofty mountain summits alternate with abysmal canyons thousands of feet in depth along whose depths the waters of mountain torrents dash along to free themselves from their rock-bound channels. The forests abound in game; the streams teem with fish, and these resources constituted the principal subsistence of the Sheepeaters. The Big Horn or mountain sheep are still numerous despite the fact that the Indians were successful hunters of this elusive game and largely subsisted on their meat, from which they derived their name.

The Chief Joseph War of 1877 aroused general unrest among the tribal Indians of the entire Pacific Northwest, and this condition was further aggravated by the Bannock War of 1878 under the leadership of Buffalo Horn. Although the Bannock outbreak was neither so long nor so arduous as had been the Nez Perce War, it was filled with plenty of dangers and hardships. With the first defeat of Buffalo Horn in Southeastern Idaho, many of his hostiles escaped to the Weiser country and joined forces with Eagle Eye, War Jack and Chuck, tribal chiefs of the Sheepeaters, thus strengthening and encouraging them to make trouble, with the probable view in their minds of inaugurating a distant flank attack necessitating withdrawal of troops engaged in chasing Buffalo Horn and his myrmidons entirely out of Idaho.

This conjecture was justified when, on June 17, 1878, the Sheepeaters and their renegade Bannock recruits raided ranches in Indian Valley some hours before dawn, and ran off with about 60 head of horses owned by William Monday, Tom Healey and Jake Groscluse. Discovering their loss at daylight these men, accompanied by "Three-Fingered" Smith, a veteran of the Modoc War of 1872-73, they pursued the hostiles with intent to recover their stolen stock, following them over the divide between the Weiser and Payette water sheds to Long Valley where at a point on the old gold-seekers trail between Lewiston, Idaho, and the Boise Basin, they were ambushed by the hostiles at the Payette Falls, resulting in the killing of Monday, Healey and Groscluse in the order named, and badly wounding "Three-Fingers" and his mule, after putting up a brave fight for their lives.

Smith, shot twice through the right groin, and his left shoulder crippled by two more shots, and his mule practically out of commission, escaped to a grove of pine and willows, where he remained under cover until he observed the hostiles rounding up their stock, headed for the divide between the Payette and Salmon river waters. He then made the greatest effort of his life by climbing his crippled mule and headed for the Calvin R. White mail station on the Little Salmon Meadows, finally arriving at his destination after abandoning his mule and making the last lap of his journey on his hands and knees, where he was given every care possible under the primitive conditions then existing.

The writer had been placer mining on Burnt River, Oregon, 35 miles west of Weiser, that spring, and the water supply having given out early in June he returned to Weiser where, in 1877 he had joined Company E, 1st. Regiment Idaho Volunteers, Thos. C. Galloway commanding, for service during the Nez Perce War. Anticipating trouble from the Bannocks, who were raising all kinds of devilment in Southern Idaho at that time, he returned for further service in his company. The day following his arrival at Weiser, Edgar Hall, mail carrier, arrived from the upper country with the first news of the massacre. Hall was on his way to Boise City to procure and accompany a doctor to the White station to doctor the wounds of "Three-Fingers."

That afternoon a company of four men comprising John Smith (a brother-in-law of Bill Monday), Steve Durbin, Ike McKinney and the writer, all members of Company E., left Weiser for the mail station, intending to chase the hostiles, recapture the stolen stock for the benefit of the widows, and with the further hope in mind of capturing or otherwise disposing of the murderers.

Their equipment consisted of horse and saddle; a .50 caliber Springfield rifle; a very limited supply of cartridges; extra saddle blanket, one-half sack of "self-rising" flour; and a few coffee berries and a pinch of tea to chew on and prevent headaches for those who were accustomed to the use of these beverages in peace time.

In those primitive days all civilian volunteers furnished their own transportation, commissary and other equipment for light marching order at their own cost. Under such conditions most of the Indian wars of the Pacific Northwest have been fought; the volunteer companies being always in the field before troops arrived.

Thus equipped the four men reached the mail station in the forenoon of the following day, making the 90 miles over a poor excuse for a wagon road, in 22 hours. They camped at the mail station for rest and refreshment for man and beast until daylight next morning. "Thee-Fingers" was impatiently awaiting arrival of the Boise doctor; but gave to the pursuing party much valuable information concerning trails and distances, together with details of the massacre, which they subsequently verified.

Early dawn they headed for the scene of the tragedy, where they arrived at evening dusk, being unfamiliar with the country. Here they built a camp fire, mixed a batch of "self-rising," toasted on willow twigs, and after a smoke and going through the motions of spreading their blankets they silently stole away and back-trailed to another camp two miles up the trail they had followed, in the hope of deceiving the Indians if any were around in search of new victims. Here they camped for the night, each taking turns of vigilant watchful waiting until daylight, when they returned to the scene of the killings, and reconnoitered the topography of the region and inspected the bodies, which lay in positions as outlined by "Three-Fingers."



The scene of the massacre and the details connected therewith will remain forever as a clear-cut picture never to be effaced from mind and memory.

Imagine for yourself a trail lying at the base of a timber-clad mountain, with huge slabs of bare granite standing perpendicularly, from which twisted scrub pines and mountain mahogany had grown from the fissures. Beneath the trail the land sloped gently to the broad open valley through which the river sang, with no protection save a few wash boulders protruding a few inches above the soil at frequent intervals. About one-half mile above this spot stood the grove of pine and brush in which "Three-Fingers" had sought shelter after the death of his comrades.

Ambushed behind this natural and impregnable fortification, commanding the trail and the open valley above and below, the

rebukes picked them off one by one as their victims, traveling in single file, approached, with no possibility of escaping the deadly trap. From the version given them by "Three-Fingers" Monday was in the advance and the first to be shot, his horse being killed under him. He was not, however instantly killed, and upon the fall of his horse he opened fire. His comrades rallied to the scene, dismounting as they approached, except "Three-Fingers," whose experience had taught him never to dismount under Indian fire.

As Healey walked, leading his horse, he became the next target, his horse being first badly wounded and fractious, which engaged his attention so that he became confused, and another shot from the ambush laid him low a short distance from Monday, who was still firing at the unseen enemy. No Indians were visible throughout the melee. Grosclouse was the next to fall, screaming as he fell: "They have got me, Smith." Thus far only single shots had been fired from the ambush as the travelers approached, but as Smith drew nearer the hostiles fired in fusillades, and he and his mule were severely wounded. Smith then exhausted his cartridges in aimless fire, and realizing that his comrades were now dead he escaped as above narrated.

A search of the soil revealed 14 cartridge shells scattered around the bodies of the victims; their cartridge belts were on the ground, all of them empty. Examination of their rifles revealed only empty shells, showing that they had fired as long as their scanty supply of ammunition held out. The bodies had clearly been untouched, indicative that the Indians were either in a great hurry to get away or were short of ammunition. The carcasses of the horses were far apart in the valley. Realizing from these conditions that the Indians had vamoosed directly after the murders, they scouted around and soon discovered and followed the broad trail up the mountain in the soil of the hillside.

Anticipating that troops would soon be here and bury the dead they maintained the pursuit for two days and nights, selecting well protected spots for camps and keeping vigilant lookouts for possible attacks. Approaching the summit the soil of the side-hills gave way to bare granite; the tracks became less recognizable, and a summer thunder storm accompanied by hail and torrential rain wiped out the last vestige of the trail, eliminating all hope of again picking up the hoof prints. The pursuers concluded to abandon the chase and return from whence they came.

On the evening of the fifth day they again reached the battle field and found that the bodies had been buried where they fell, and as a landmark to perpetuate their memory the troop had inscribed upon one of the slabs, behind which the enemy had lain concealed, the names of the victims and the date of the event under crossed rifles. Here they camped for the night in peace, and after raking the still warm ashes of the troopers' camp fires they found bacon rinds which, after washing, chewed to satisfy their hunger. Next morning they resumed the homeward march, intending to camp that night with the troops whom, they rightly surmised would be near the outlet of the Big Payette Lake.

In the early forenoon, with the prospectors instinct, the writer left his companions to trace up some good looking float quartz noted on the outward trip, following it well up the mountain side without finding "the other end of the rainbow." He was speeding for the valley when fresh bear tracks invited another chase, resulting in the sudden death of the animal. Realizing that his hungry comrades would consider a mess of fried bear steaks better than manna from heaven he partially skinned the bear carving out the two hams, and wrapping the hide around the carcass dragged it down the mountain side with picket rope attached to the saddle and speedily rejoined his outfit, who were dismounted and chatting with two troopers wearing sergeant's chevrons, and by the insignia on their caps identified them as members of the 2nd Co., C, 2nd. Infantry, in command of Captain William F. Drum, whose company had been detailed from Camp Howard, a cantonment which had been located near Grangeville to protect the Camas Prairie settlers from possible Indian raids and further martyrdom such as they had undergone from the Chief Joseph hostiles in 1877.

The 2nd infantry had been sent out from Atlanta, Georgia, in 1877, under executive order issued by President Hayes withdrawing the troops from the southern states during the Negro and Carpet Bag governments in the reconstruction days. The two troopers whom we met were Sergeants Edward S. Beck and Nicholas Lamb. At the close of the Sheepeater troubles in 1879 they were again detailed to Camp Howard, where the writer became acquainted with both.

Sergeant Beck was postmaster at Grangeville for some years, and he and the writer organized there Company C, First Regiment, Idaho National Guard, of which Mr. Beck was elected captain and the writer quartermaster sergeant. This company later served in the Philippines during the Spanish War. Sergeant Lamb located a farm near Mount Idaho where he lived and died some years later. Sergeant Beck also died at Grangeville and was given a military funeral by Company C.

They were out on scout duty, and being assured that the Payette watershed was clear of hostiles they returned to the company camp near the outlet of Big Payette Lake as surmised. The civilians stayed behind to cook bear steaks, and did not resume the march until the afternoon, reaching the military camp two hours after midnight. Camping for the rest of the night and eating breakfast with the boys in blue, and being unable to adjust their .45 cartridges to our .50 Springfields, they headed for the White mail station. They found "Three-Fingers" still on his cot, but recovering from his wounds. The doctor had left for Boise the day before, leaving the assurance that his patient "could not be killed with an axe."

"Three-Fingers" was a prototype of the Artist Porctor's picture deliniating the pioneer, tall and stringy, and a typical mountain man accustomed to hardships. He was an early arrival in the Florence placer camp, where he discovered and developed "Smith Gulch," from which he extracted \$300 per day, but was always broke at the end of the scanty water season. He later "squatted" on a garden

spot at Elk Creek, on the South Fork of Salmon River, where the writer met him in 1883, when the events of the 1878 campaign were again gone over. He died there a few years later at a ripe old age. In due time the four men returned to Weiser, with entertainment at every house we stopped at en route.

During the month of August, 1878, Dan Crooks and Boone Helm were killed in Round Valley, at that time totally uninhabited, presumably by Sheepeaters, no other Indians being in that country at that time. Their bodies were discovered and buried by a detachment of the Second Infantry from Camp Howard, near Grangeville, where the parents of Crooks resided. The motive of these murders will never be known.

Early in the spring of 1879 the Sheepeaters inaugurated another campaign of murder and depredations. In the hostilities which ensued they eluded three bodies of troops sent against them, defeating one, and resisted capture until late in the fall, when they surrendered with the honors of war—quite a record considering the circumstances.

Along the South Fork of the Salmon River there were four small farms or garden patches on narrow bars along the canyon, each isolated from the others, all having but one outlet by way of a rugged trail to Warrens, a prosperous placer mining camp. From James P. Rains' place, just above the mouth of the South Fork, to Hugh Johnson's place, on the main Salmon, the distance was 40 miles, while between these two places were those of Sylvester S. Smith, known as "Three-Fingers," referred to frequently in these reminiscences. There were a few bars along the rivers where desultory placer mining was carried on, tho most of these were deserted. All four ranchers had families except Johnson.

In March or April of 1879 the hostiles made their first killings by the murders of Johnson and Peter Dorsey. This became known when Dorsey, living at the first ranch below, went to visit Johnson in the latter part of April and was greeted with death-dealing bullets from Indian rifles and his life blotted out. These men frequently visited Warrens for supplies and mail, and as they did not show up for some time their friends in the camp decided, in May, to investigate the cause of their absence.

The party failed to find anyone at the Johnson house, and saw that the cabin had been plundered and the horses gone. Fearing the worst they returned to Warrens, where they were reinforced by neighbors and returned to the river for a more thorough search. In a near-by field they discovered the decomposed bodies of Johnson and Dorsey, bearing gunshot wounds. Indian signs were discovered, and the circumstances warranted the conclusion that the outrages had been committed by Redskins.

A messenger was dispatched to Camp Howard requesting that a force be sent to protect the Warrens community and capture the Indians. Lieut. Henry Catley set out with a detachment of 60 mounted men of the Second Infantry early in July, accompanied by a large pack train with supplies for several weeks. Some civilians were recruited, making a total strength of 70 men.

The expedition reached Warrens by forced marches and pro-



ceeded into the Sheepeater country. They marched eastward for eleven days toward the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. No Indian signs appeared until July 28 when the civilian scouts discovered them eight miles below camp on Big Creek. This stream heads north of Thunder mountain and runs north-easterly into the Middle Fork of Salmon River. The creek runs through a box canyon, with infrequent bars along its course. Details of the happenings which followed — the discovery of the Indians, the attack on the troops, the retreat, the fight on Vinegar Hill and the return to Warrens — was made public by an official report of Lieut. Muhlenberg, a member of the expedition, dated October 28, 1879, copies of which are still privately owned. From this source it appears that Catley placed no faith in the report of his scouts that Indians had been seen, altho twice repeated to him by different persons cognizant of the facts, and ordered the troops to camp for the night over the protest of Lieut. Webster, who suggested sending out a scouting party.

Early next morning the troops broke camp and started down the Big Creek canyon in single file, civilian scouts leading the way. The objective of the Indian camp was reached early in the forenoon and found deserted, evidently in a hurry, as large supplies of food and other equipment had been abandoned.

Destroying these supplies the troops were ordered without customary precaution of an advance guard and flankers on the surrounding ridges. They were soon greeted by a volley from the opposite side of the creek; the troops quickly dismounted and sought protection from the enemy's fire. Two of their number, Privates James Doyle and A. R. Holmes of Co. C, Second Infantry, were severely wounded. A detail of five men were ordered to bring them in. Catley then ordered a retreat to their last camp to await arrival of the pack train, which soon appeared, and the night was spent without alarm.

Early next morning Catley ordered the men to move up a long ridge to the summit of the high mountain on the north. They had hardly left the base of the ridge when the pack train in the rear was attacked, but Muhlenberg and Webster brought them safely within the lines. However, the Indians also attacked the head of the column, thus placing the troops between a cross-fire. Skirmishers were ordered out to drive back the Redskins in front, but were soon repulsed. The Indians fired the brush and grass to demoralize the troops and their mounts.

For 14 hours the command was kept in this position, only five shots having been fired by the soldiers. Water was not accessible owing to Indian command of the creek. So thirsty they became that, so the legend runs, they opened a keg of vinegar found in the pack train supplies, and with its contents allayed their thirst. From this incident "Vinegar Hill" derived its name.

In the subsequent retreat the greater part of the pack train was lost, furnishing the hostiles with needed provisions, equipment and ammunition. They also secured the rifles and cartridge belts of the two wounded soldiers. In scaling the heights across the creek, Lieut. Muhlenberg was thrown from his horse and one of

his knee caps dislocated. A short forced march the next morning brought the tired command to Warrens where they rested and when again on the march met up at the Burgdorf Hot Springs with Col. R. F. Bernard in command of a company of the First Cavalry fresh from Boise barracks.

Subsequently Lieut. Catley was subjected to a court martial at Ft. Walla Walla in January, 1880, on charges of "misbehavior, etc., in the presence of the enemy in connection with his retreats in Idaho in 1879." Among the dates mentioned in the charges are July 29, 30, 31 and August 1 and 2, 1879. The verdict of the court martial was "guilty as charged," and recommended his dismissal from the service.

Many civilians familiar with military matters protested these charges were preferred because Catley had risen from the ranks, and that the court martial was a matter of prejudices and clannishness on the part of West Point graduates. The verdict of the court martial was set aside by President Hayes.

On Catley's arrival at the Burgdorf Springs he was relieved of his command by Col. Bernard and ordered back to Camp Howard. With a portion of the Catley Second Infantry, Bernard moved into the Sheepeater country, leaving a guard of twelve cavalrymen to reinforce the stockaded civilian population of Warrens. In the absence of Bernard in the mountain fastness, the Indians inaugurated the second tragedy on the South Fork of the Salmon, a tragedy which fired the communities interested in a blaze of righteous indignation.

The scene is laid at the little farm of James P. Rains who, with his family, had lived for a number of years and had accumulated a valuable property by dint of hard work, supplying the Warrens population and surrounding mining camps with the producers of his farm, raising and baling hay which he packed into the camps and sold for \$80 and \$100 per ton. Mr. Rains had never quarreled with the Indians and was held in the highest respect by everybody in those mountains. He was never apprehensive of special danger to himself or family.

He was engaged in harvesting his hay crop when Catley's command traveled through his farm enroute to Camp Howard, and informed the family that they must get away to Warrens as speedily as possible as the hostiles were in close pursuit. Mr. Rains promptly followed this advice, took his family safely to Warrens, and seeing nor hearing anything about Indians being anywhere in that region, he returned to his ranch, accompanied by Jas. Edwards and Harry Serren, the latter being better known throughout Central Idaho as "Lemhi." Ten days had elapsed since Catley's return. Bernard was well on his way into the interior. Rains, Edwards, and Serren were gathering the hay crop. On Friday, August 15, Albert Webber, who lived near Grangeville, and brother-in-law of Rains, and now sole surviving witness of the tragedy, joined the party at the ranch and volunteered his services in the hay harvest. The August sun is almost tropical in those low-lying and enclosed canyons, and a long noon siesta is customary. They hoped to complete their work by Saturday and return to Warrens on the Sabbath.

From the first they had carried rifles to their work as usual. At noon they returned to the house for lunch, resting until three o'clock. They discussed the advisability of carrying their weapons back to the hay press and decided to dispense with this precaution. They were putting the last bale through the press well towards evening; the twilight deepened, distant objects were becoming obscured, when a rifle shot from the direction of the house startled them. The others thought that Webber was shooting at a grouse. A volley of rifle fire followed, whizzing close to their ears. Edwards, who was on top of the press, yelled to his companions to drop behind the press and himself jumped from his exposed position. The Indians were at their bloody work, seeking the lives of the three unarmed men.

Between the men in the field and the house a small creek flowed down from the steep mountain slope, cutting its course through the densely timbered channel forty feet in depth to the river. To this creek the three men stealthily made their way, consulting as to the best course to pursue. The longer they stayed the more probable it was that they would be cut off from the house and their weapons, with absolute certainty of death. Notwithstanding the odds against them they rushed for the house at all hazards and cautiously climbing the bank of the creek they started along the trail with Rains in the advance. The trail led over a small exposed point. All were running rapidly when Edwards and "Lemhi" shouted to Rains: "Keep off the point!"

For some reason Rains kept to the trail, and as he reached the summit of the point a gun flashed and the brave pioneer staggered. A ball had pierced his right hip. Another shot rang out from the direction of the cabin, tearing a frightful wound in his body. Edwards and "Lemhi" saw him fall; they saw the flash of the gun from the direction of the cabin; they heard shooting in many directions, especially on the right where it was afterwards learned that Webber had been firing at the Indians.

The two men decided that Webber had been taken, and that they had better retreat to the creek canyon, which they reached unharmed. No safety there, so they walked, crawled and ran to the forks of the creek, a place they had never seen. From here they toiled over sharp rocks and thru scattering pines until they reached the summit, 2500 feet above the creek canyon. Exhausted, they crawled into a thicket and slept for a short nap.

At daybreak they found an old trail which they followed into Warrens, arriving about 7 o'clock. A little later Webber arrived, much to the surprise of Edwards and "Lemhi." His escape was as marvelous as that of his companions.

As soon as the Indians opened fire, Webber grasped the situation and prepared to defend the cabin. He had not done much shooting because he was instantly expecting the men in the field to return for their rifles. Soon after dark Rains reached the cabin and was admitted by Webber, who laid him on a couch and ministered to his wants as best as he could. Rains called for water and after drinking a little, moaned in pain and peacefully passed away.

The Indians lighted several bonfires around the house for the purpose of watching his movements. Almost in despair he noted that the fire in the rear of the cabin burned low. Now that Rains was beyond aid Webber grasped the opportunity and taking the best gun in the outfit he crawled into an irrigating ditch with willows on both banks which he followed to its source in the creek, and then began a terrible climb. He ascended the precipitous canyon and made the summit. From this point he watched the Indians burn the buildings on the ranch and the few miner's cabins along the stream. He estimated the number of hostiles taking part in the attack as seven although he thought there might be more.

At Warrens a volunteer company of eighteen well armed men, under the leadership of Norman B. Willey, later a governor of the State of Idaho, took the field to pursue the Indians. A messenger was dispatched to Col. Bernard. The company proceeded to the Rains ranch and found the usual scene of desolation following an Indian attack. In the ruins of the cabin where the Rains family had made their home and where Webber made his brave stand, they found the charred bones of Rains' body, which were taken to Warrens and properly interred.

The damage to the property and contents of the building was estimated at \$3000, which the government was asked to pay to the widow and the two children; but her claim, like all of the depredation claims filed by the victims of Idaho County during the Nez Perce War, were thrown out by the claims commission, and the widows left absolutely destitute thru the deviltry of the so-called "Wards of the Nation."

Such is the story of the Rains Massacre as personally narrated by Albert Webber on July 10, 1925. Mr. Webber was shot thru the left shoulder, leaving a wound from the evil effects of which he still suffers in his advancing age. Rains at the time of his death was a young man aged about 30 years. Edwards and "Lemhi" both resided in Grangeville for some years, finally passing on to a more peaceful land.

Col. Bernard remained in the mountains until early September, but was unsuccessful in capturing the hostiles, though the presence of the troops kept the Indians from further outrages. Early in July Second Lieut. Edward S. Farrow was detailed with a force of 40 instructions to commence a fall campaign against the Sheepeaters. This force proceeded to Big Creek over the same route taken by Catley and Bernard. Farrow was energetic and profoundly impressed the hostiles with his determination to capture them. An official letter from the adjutant general of the War Department, Washington, D. C., dated June 18, 1925, in response to inquiries made by the writer, states:

"Nothing has been found of record showing definitely the date of surrender of the last party of Sheepeater Indians to Second Lt. Edward S. Farrow, 21st Infantry, in 1879. However, the records indicates that Lieutenant Farrow and his force of Umatilla Indian scouts captured 14 Sheepeaters at Big Salmon Meadows September 21; compelled the surrender of 39 near the Middle Fork of Salmon

River October 1, and compelled the surrender of 12 October 6, 1879, near Chamberlain basin."

A report current at the time, indicated that few Indians ever surrendered to United States troops under more favorable conditions. The Sheepeaters were allowed, according to this rumor, to retain their weapons and property; were exempted from prosecution by the civil authorities of Idaho County, in whose jurisdiction their atrocities were committed. The captives were brought out of the mountains by Lieut. Farrow by way of Grangeville, and after being kept at Fort Vancouver for a time, were placed upon the Fort Hall reservation in the southeastern part of the state. About one-half of the prisoners were men. This total is supposed to represent their total strength, while others contend that not one-half of the Indians surrendered.

Speaking of their capture, the Warrens correspondent of the Lewiston "Teller," October 8, 1879, says: "Too much praise cannot be accorded Lieut. Farrow for his exertions in this affair. He has been thoroughly in earnest; has persevered when others weakened; has resolutely faced the inclemencies of the season; short supplies; poor and exhausted stock, and has achieved complete success. In these expressions of gratitude I but echo the sentiment of every one of our citizens. The large scope of country thus cleared of Indians should recommend his promotion to a colonelcy."

The close of this Sheepeater war happily proved the conclusion of Indian disturbances in Idaho County.



As publisher of the "Nez Perce News," at Lewiston, Idaho in 1885, the writer published the following editorial:

"Six years of patient industry have rebuilt the waste places caused by the war, and made the face of the country more beautiful than ever. Not even the farms of the Walla Walla Valley show better evidences of careful agriculture than can be seen on Camas Prairie at this time. Hard as were the experiences of our people during the war of 1877, the results it has brought have advanced them in the care of life and bettered their condition by giving them broader views of men and things than are usually found in communities so isolated. The scars of war have been covered with the fruits of peace, and Camas Prairie is now a garden spot, making manifest the broad differences between the elevating influences of our Caucasian civilization and the enforced degradation by the government of the Indians on the adjoining reservation."

Grangeville, Idaho, July 14, 1925

## Gen. O. O. Howard Praised Highly Efforts of Bernard, Catley, Brown Against Sheepeaters

Performed ordinary garrison duty until May 2, 1879, when, until May 12, 1879, escorting Indian prisoners to Ft. Vancouver, W. T., when ordered to join and assist in organization Co. Umatilla Indian Scouts, Umatilla Indian Agency, Ore. July 15, scouting in Umatilla Indian Reservation. July 8, 1879, left Umatilla Agency with Lieutenant Farrow's command of 20 Indian Scouts, 7 enlisted men and pack train for Salmon River Mountains, Idaho, to co-operate with infantry command under Lieutenant Catley and Captain Bernard's Co. G, 1st Cavalry in operations against Sheepeater and Bannock Indians in the then unexplored and almost inaccessible region of Middle Idaho.

After scouting through Seven Devils Mountains the scouts joined the commands of Bernard in Long Valley and Catley on Elk Creek and acted as advance guard to the Big Creek country where Catley had been defeated. Hostiles were struck and their camp captured on Big Creek August 19 and a running fight ensued. Bernard in his dispatch that date reported:

"The country is very rough, probably the roughest in the United States. The Indians have but little stock; much of the property taken from Lieutenant Catley's command was found in the Indian camp. Lieutenants Farrow and Brown deserve the greatest credit for bravery and energy displayed since under my command. Their scouts also did splendidly. The entire command was kept close to the scouts during the chase."

The infantry and cavalry commands being obliged to withdraw for lack of supplies the Scouts made another effort, again struck the hostiles, the results being as indicated in the following appendix to the annual report of the Department Commander.

### TELEGRAM

Vancouver Barracks, Washington,  
October 9, 1879.  
To Assistant Adjutant General,  
Division of the Pacific,  
Presidio, California.

My annual report indicated a failure in the main object of the expedition against the Sheepeaters and renegades located between Little Salmon and Snake Rivers.

Now it is reversed, and the expedition has handsomely been completed by Lieutenant Farrow and his scouts, having defeated the Indians in two skirmishes, capturing their camp with stores and stock. He has finally forced the entire band to surrender, and will deliver them as prisoners of war at this post.

Lieutenant Farrow, Twenty-first Infantry, and W. C. Brown, First Cavalry, with the seven enlisted men, citizen employes, and Indian scouts, deserve special mention for gallantry, energy, and perseverance, resulting in success. There is not a rougher or more difficult country for campaigning in America.

Please add this to my report.

HOWARD  
Commanding Department.

(See report, Secretary of War for 1879, Vol. 1, p. 163.)

## Territory "Inaccessible as Any in Country"

(The following is a "blue-print" reproduction from the record: dealing further with actions of Lieutenant Farrow, and others.)

The Commanding General, Department of the Columbia in 1879, in letter to the Adjutant General, U.S.A., calls special attention to excellent conduct of Lieutenant Farrow, 21st Infantry, commanding Indian scouts, and his assistant, 2d Lieutenant W. C. Brown, 1st Cavalry, and states this force has been operating during the summer together with infantry and cavalry against renegade hostile Bannocks and Plutes and a band known as "Sheepeaters." These Indians occupied a portion of territory between Snake and Little Salmon Rivers as rough, broken and inaccessible as any in the country. Troops labored from June 1st until severe weather obliged the authorizing their return. Indians were struck once by force of 50 men under Lieutenant Catley, 2d Infantry, when troops were repulsed and obliged to withdraw, and again by Indian scouts supported by cavalry under Captain Bernard, when Indians were driven from their stronghold and their camp captured by Lieutenants Farrow and Brown. After my orders to withdraw troops from field, excepting command of Lieutenant Farrow, which then consisted of Lieutenant Brown, seven soldiers and twenty Indian scouts, Lieutenant Farrow, receiving new information concerning location of hostiles, again started in pursuit and with ceaseless perseverance and resolution pursued them over miles of this exceedingly rough country and succeeded with his small command in capturing every one of the band. These Indians have given much trouble, committed many murders and depredations, seeking security in the fastness of the almost impregnable haunts. But for gallantry, skill and energy of 1st Lieutenants Farrow and Brown I should have been obliged next summer to put another and larger force into the field \* \* \* Therefore I recommend that \* \* \* the brevet of 1st Lieutenant be conferred upon 2d Lieutenant W. C. Brown, 1st Cavalry, for distinguished perseverance, energy and gallantry in action against the hostile Indians of Middle Idaho, expedition of 1879, which operations resulted in the capture of the entire band.

Heavy snows had set in before the last of the Indians had surrendered. The scouts and their prisoners then started back and by October 22, 1879, all had arrived back at Umatilla Agency, and November 14 Lieutenant Brown rejoined company at Ft. Klamath, performing ordinary garrison duty during the remainder of year. Field service in 1879, 6 months and 10 days. Distance marched, 2,365 miles. Lieutenant Brown during this campaign made the first map of Middle Idaho, the Department Engineer reporting it "a valuable addition to our knowledge of an almost unknown section."

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(NOTE: The map mentioned above is reproduced in the rear of this book. John Carrey, one of the authors, who was born and reared in the Sheepeater Country, and has traveled same horseback for 50 years, says the map is correct in a general way of the area, now commonly known as the Chamberlin Basin.)

## George M. Shearer, Veteran of Robert E. Lee's Staff, Relates of Vinegar Hill Encounter

Two different Army units commenced the Sheepeater campaign of 1879: one came from near Grangeville (Camp Howard) and spent almost two months going through Florence, Shearer's Ferry, Warren's, and Chamberlain Basin trying to reach the Sheepeater camp on Big creek; the other came from Boise to the Middlefork of the Salmon via Bear valley and Loon creek. George M. Shearer, an Idaho county pioneer who had been an officer on General Robert E. Lee's staff during the Civil War, joined the northern force of mounted infantry commanded by Lieutenant Henry Catley, and prepared the following report on the encounter with the Indians after the campaign was over. The site of this engagement still is known as Vinegar Hill, named by the soldiers during the Sheepeater campaign when they spent fourteen hours without water on a ridge above Big creek.

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On the afternoon of July 28th 1879 between the hours of one and two o'clock P.M. Mr. White, one of the Packers of Grostein's packtrain which was along with Lieut. Catleys Command came in and said to Dave Monroe, one of Lieut. Catleys scouts, that he had seen Indian signs during the morning about eight miles below our Camp on "Big Creek." The Indian Signs consisting of two Indian horses out grazing and moccasin tracks made that morning he supposed; soon as Dave Monroe heard this he started off to find Lieut. Catley, who was fishing, when he found Lieut. Catley and told him what Mr. White had said, Lieut. Catley replied to him "Keep quiet with your foolish story you have lost me two bights [bites]" or words to that effect. Lieut. Catley never returned to Camp for nearly an hour or more after Dave Monroe told him what Mr. White said. When Lieut. Catley returned to camp he called up Mr. White to his tent and asked him about what he told Dave Monroe. Mr. White told him the same story as Dave Monroe had told Lieut. Catley already. Lieut. Catley said "if he had more time he would go down that evening but it was to [sic] late to start" or words to that effect. Lieut. E. K. Webster told him "that he had plenty of time to go and that he would have two or three mules loaded with provisions so that the men would have something to eat and that the two or three mules would be able to travel as fast as he would" or words to that effect. Lieut. Catley replied "That the Indians might run" and that he would want to follow them as quickly as possible and that he would not start before tomorrow morning and ordered everything to be ready to leave the next morning; that he would give Lieut. Webster seven men to guard the Packtrain.

The foregoing facts were heard from Dave Monroe and Lieut. E. K. Webster 2d Infty on the 28th day of July 1879.

It is my opinion, that if Lieut. Catley would have started that evening with his Command he would have been able to have surprised the Indians in their camp, as I do not think they knew we were near their camp.

On the morning of the 29th of July 1879 between six and seven o'clock A.M., we broke camp and started down Big Creek towards where [where] the Indian Camp was supposed to be, leaving the Packtrain behind to follow up after us with Lieut. Webster and seven men as guard. The Command moved out of camp in the following manner: Dave Monroe in the lead, Jos. Faulkner second, Lieut. Catley 3d Dr. Pring fourth, then came I with the Command following me in single file, we arrived where we supposed the Indians were at between the hours of nine and ten



o'clock A.M. and found the Indians had left there about two hours before. We found an Indian cage in a tree near there, which was destroyed. Lieut. Catley then with his Command following as before stated without trouging [throwing] out any advance guard in front or flankers on both sides of Big Creek on the ridges, but went right into the canon where the Indians had gone just about two hours before him. When he had advanced about two Miles in this manner the Indians opened fire on his Command from the opposit side of Big Creek about one hundred yards off; after the Indians had fired instead of him giving any Commands to his men he jumped from his horse and got behind a large tree, which was near where he got off his horse; the men seing [sic] him dismount and go behind a tree did the same without any command and tried to git shelter the best they could, some behind their horses and others behind brush, which was along Big Creek and which afforded shelter.

Prvts. James Doyle II and A. R. Holms Company "C" 2' Infantry were endeavoring to git shelter behind their horses but both were badly wounded. When I sawh [sic] Lt. Catley and the men gitting behind shelter I dismounted and stood longside of him a few minutes expecting Lieut. Catley to give some orders; finding he did not give any, I went down near the bushes seing [sic] that I could not do any good where I was, on my arrival there I sawh [sic] 1st Sergt. John F. Sullivan go to Lieut. Catley and report to him for Orders; after reporting and receiving no reply, that I heard, as I was only about five yards from him (if Lt. Catley had answered I would have heard it) 1st Sergeant John F. Sullivan then came to me and reported for Orders. I told him to take charge of the Command and have the horses turned round the other way and I would go and see Lt. Catley to ascertain what he was going to do. I then went to Lt. Catley and asked him what he was going to do, saying that he would have to act promptly or we would not be able to stop there, instead of making a reply to my questions he ran from behind the tree, that he was at, down into the bushes and along them. Prvt.

Co. K 2' Infty. about three minutes after Lt. Catley left without making any reply to my question, came to me and asked what was to be done about the wounded. I answered that I would see Lt. Catley and have something done in their behalf. I ran along the bushes trying to find that Officer. I had gone about forty yards from where the wounded men were laying when I met Josh. Falkner and Dave Monroe and asked them where Lieut. Catley was to be found; they informed me: he had passed them and was going to the rear. I went on about sixty yards further and came up to the Doctor and asked him why he was not along with his wounded men; he replied: "I am not able to do anything as I can't git any person to help me," or words to that effect. About this time I was beginning to loose [sic] my temper on account of how things were going on and replied to him where in hell and damnation is Lt. Catley, is he deserting his wounded men too. Lieut. Catley replied to my question put to the Doctor: Here I am Mr. Muhlenberg. When I expressed my mind, I was ignorant of Lieut. Catleys close proximity as there were a lot of brush between us. I then went to Lt. Catley and told him something had to be done in act to git the wounded men off the field; he then called 1st Sergt. John F. Sullivan Co. "C" 2 Infty, and ordered him to detail five men to go and take care of the wounded and bring them out of range. Lieut. Catley from behind some bushes called out: "Catch my horse" and Prvt. Parkman Co. K 2' Infty. went and caught the horse and brought it to him, he then ordered me to git on my horse and move the Command out to the first Clearing and halt there. I then ordered the men to move at a trot; I gave this command three times but the men still kept their

horse and started at a gallop and overtook the three men that were sent ahead and moved on with them and took possession of the point in question; while waiting there some more men came [sic] up to my assistance. I then divided my force into two parties, took charge of one myself, and placed an Non Commsd Officer in charge of the second party with instructions that he should move on to a point ahead while I would stop here with my men and so protect him till he would reach his destination, and on his arrival to have his men lay down and hold that point and that I would move with the rest of my men to the next point ahead of him, that we would take points alternate. When we had been travelling in this manner for sometime part of my men were fired upon by the Indians. Corpl. Lamb C. K 2' Infty. fired at one of the Indians, who was about six yards from him and thinks he killed the Indian as he rolled down the right side of the ridge and the other Indians ran down off this point into a lot of rocks on the left hand side of the ridge. Corpl. Armour Co. C 2' Infty. then got on top of the point and waived his hat that all was right. Lieut. Catley having come up to me with the Command started to go across to where Corpl. Armour was at then, an Indian above the point were [where] my men were fired a shot at Dave Monroe who was right ahead of Lieut. Catley; as soon as Lieut. Catley heard this shot fired he turned his horse and shouted to my men: "Come out of there," and told me to bring my men back; as soon as Lt. Catley gave this Command my men fell back from this point onto a point about 400 yards in rear of it and lower. On this point (were [where] my men fell back) we stopped without water. Lieut. Catley seemed afraid to go ahead or back and when any person went to him and asked him what we were to do, he never made a reply but seemed as a person, that had lost his head entirely; while we were laying on the ridge [Vinegar Hill] the Indians fired the base of it on both sides. The men all felt disheartened as Lt. Catley would not do anything. For the whole fourteen hours during which we were laying on this ridge there were only five shots fired by the Indians. When Lieut. Catley ordered my men out of the point from which they had driven the Indians there was (in my opinion) only one (1) Indian on the ridge ahead of us. Between 12 and 2 O clock A.M. on the 31st of July 1879 Lieut. Catley sent for me to where I was at and told me that [he] would like me to take the Creek which was at the base of the ridge on the left hand side and as soon as I got there to move my men on to the opposite side of the Creek and take possession of the ridge on that side. I gave Orders to my men to charge down the hill as quickly as possible, take the creek and move on to the other side; when I arrived at the foot of the ridge and not being fired on by the Indians I ordered the men to find a crossing; we were hunting about five minutes and not finding any I told my men if they were not able to find one soon they would have to leave their horses and hunt a road on foot; but the men found one just about that time I gave the foregoing orders, so they did not leave their horses. I gave this order on account of the Command having caught up to me and the Packtrain having nearly got down the hill. I then moved with my men across the Creek and ordered them to mount and got up on to the ridge as soon as possible. I had got up about two hundred yards when my horse fell and drew me about 20 yards and the cap of my knee striking against a large rock and knocking it out of place, after I was laying there about three minutes Lieut. Catley came along and saith: Are you hurt very badly [I] replied that I knocked the cap of my knee out of place and that I was hardly able to move, he replied to me: He was very sorry I was hurt and then put spurs to his horse and left me laying there. Prvt.

to him and report facts. I at once dismounted and started to run down the hill, some of the men, seeing [sic] me, run down also towards the packtrain on foot and joined me. When the head of the Packtrain got to where I was, the men who came along with me commenced to fire towards where the Indians were firing from and kept up this firing until the Packtrain had nearly all passed where [where] I was at and then Lt. Webster called out to stop firing; as soon as Lt. Webster called out to stop firing I ordered the men that had followed me to cease firing and catch up to the Command. Then started myself to overtake the Command, which had been moving all the time having travelled about half an hour. I caught up to the head of the Column again when Lt. Catley came to me and said: That the Indians were trying to head us off, and that he had sent three men ahead to take a certain Point on the ridge which we were going up and that he would like me to go ahead and take charge of them, that he would send me some more men. I mounted my

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### DAVE LEWIS PACKED FOR ARMY DURING THE CAMPAIGN



“UNCLE” DAVE LEWIS was a civilian packer with Col. W. C. Brown who returned to the Sheepeater Country after the Indian War and homesteaded on Big Creek, a tributary to the Middlefork of the Salmon River. He became well known as a cougar hunter, well supplied with several dogs. He also helped the government in locating Pvt. Eagan's grave which is on Soldier Bar about three miles from his homestead. His place has now been purchased by University of Idaho as an experimental plot.

horses at a walk; as the men did not move faster than a walk Lt. Catley ordered them to halt, but they still kept moving out of the Canon with their horses at a walk. Lieut. Catley gave the command: "I order you to halt," at this Command the whole Command halted. Lieut. Catley passed the Command until he got to the Head of the Column, which was original [sic] the Rear of the Column going into the Canon; as soon as he got there he moved on with the Command; the Command had passed the clearing about twenty yards where Lt. Catley saith: he was going to halt at when Prvt. Andrew Snyder Co. "C" 2d Infy. came up and reported: that the men that Lt. Catley had sent back to bring out the wounded had been fired on and that he had come back to report; just about that time I sawh [sic] two horses belonging to men, who went after the wounded, coming along the Trail without any person on them and I supposed: the men must have been killed. I rode then as fast as possible from the rear of the Column to its head where Lieut. Catley was and told him that he had to do something at once as the five men sent to the Rear had been fired upon and that I had seen two of their horses coming along the trail without riders. He then called Sergt. Sullivan to detail (5) five more men to go back and bring out the wounded; just a little while before they were ready to go, another one of the men sent back previous came up and reported that the wounded men were coming up allright. Lieut. Catley then with the rest of his Command halted here until Prvt. Holm had caught up; we then moved on again about four hundred yards and halted here on account of the men and horses wanting something to drink. Whilst men and horses were drinking and resting Lt. Catley came to me and asked what I tought [thought] about going on six miles further that day or halting there and camp; I replied: that it would be almost impossible to go any further as only one of the wounded men had come up as yet and that he (Lt. Catley) did not know what had become of his Pack Train and told him that he would be able to protect that point by sending out three picket posts. Lieut. Catley then ordered the men to unsaddle as he intended to camp there that night. About half an hour after we were in camp Lt. E. K. Webster arrived with the packtrain; he was greatly surprised that Lieut. Catleys Command had been fired on and that we had two wounded men as he did not hear any of the firing. He then came to me and asked particulars of the days doings which I gave him in detail; he then wanted to know how many Indians there were, and I told him I juged [judged] there were about ten Indians, but that I had not seen any, as they were behind some rocks. Just about the time Lt. Webster got into camp, Prvt. Doyle II the other wounded man came in.

Lieut. Catley a short time before dark ordered all the horses to be tied to a picket line and placed nearly all his Command on guard that night; We were not molested in any manner by the Indians during that night. One [sic] the morning of the 30th of July 1879 the Command started up a high mountain [Vinegar Hill], which was alongside of our Camp to the North, in the same manner as went down the Canon leaving the wounded men in rear of the Command and the Packtrain in rear of the wounded with a guard of seven men under Command of Lt. E. K. Webster A. A. G. Mr. The Head of the Command had got up this ridge about three quarters of a mile when I happened to look back and sawh an Indian coming mounted towards the camp we had left and heard firing in the rear. As soon as I sawh the Indian and heard the firing I hastened to Lieut. Catley and informed him that the Packtrain was attacked by Indians and that I would go back and assist Lt. Webster; he gave me permission to go, see what was wrong and come back

Jackman Co. K 2' Infty. came to me soon after and saith: Lieut. I see you can not walk take my horse and ride as I am well able to walk. We kept on moving till about 6 O'clock that evening before we went into camp, having travelled, as we supposed, about forty miles. Lt. Catley gave Orders after we reached camp, that he did not want any large fires as the Indians might find out where we were camped at.

One [sic] the morning of the 1st day of August 1879 he left camp between two and three O clock A.M. and travelled until about 10 O'clock P.M. making we supposed about fifty miles that day; after we had got into camp Lieut. Catley came over to where Lt. Webster and myself were at and asked Lieut. Webster what he tought [thought] of his marches. Lt. Webster replied: "that it was good enough to git off the ridge were [where] we had layed fourteen horses [hours] but that he tought he had travelled to fast out of the country after that," or words to that effect. Lieut. Catley then said to Lt. Webster "I tought [thought], I was doing what you would have done;" or words to that effect. Lieut. Webster then said to Lieut. Catley "That he (Lt. Catley) had no right to think what he would do, as he never expressed his opinion to him about it," or words to that effect. Lieut. Catley never asked me what I tought [thought] of his retreat from that country.

The wounded men had been riding on horse back for the two days that Lieut. Catley was making this rapid march.

In regard to the Orders he gave to me or his men on the 28th of July 1879 were as folows:

First Order I heard him give was to Sergt. Sullivan to detail five men to go back and take care of the wounded and he did not give this Order until I went to him and told him: he had to do something for the wounded.

Second Order was for some person to catch his horse, which he had left on the trail, where he got behind a tree at the first fire.

Third Order was for me to mount and move the Command out to the 1st Clearing, and halt.

Fourth Order was for the Command to halt.

Fifth Order was: I order you to halt.

I suppose the reason for giving Orders No. 4 and 5 was on account of the men moving out so slowly and he being in the rear of the Column nearest to the Indians. What makes me think the above was the reason is as follows: As soon as the Command halted he went around the right of the Column to the head of it and started of [sic] with the Command again and never halted it until I went to him and told him; something had to be done for the wounded.

Sixth Order was: for Sergt. Sullivan to detail five more men to go back and help to bring out the wounded men; and he did not give this Order until told by me, that the men with the wounded were fired upon and that he was out now about nine men.

The foregoing are all the Orders I heard Lieut. Catley give during the fight on the 29th of July 1879.

Lieut. Catley, I think, acted as a coward and is totally unfit to take command of any body of troops. As to the conduct of Lt. Webster every where I sawh [sic] him, he seemed to be cool and collected. I never got to see him much, as he allways was left behind in charge of Packtrain. Lieut. Catleys men behaved very well, and seemed to be willing to obey any Order given to them, they did not seem to be excited in the least.



## *Moccasin Tracks of the Sheepeaters*



**JOHN CARREY, Author, Stockman**

I was born at the Jack Shafer place on the Southfork of the Salmon River, June 2, 1914. My parents were Tom and Jeannie Carrey. My mother came from Dingwall, Scotland, to John Day, Oregon, when she was 16 years of age. My father was the son of John (French John) Carrey.

I have two sisters, Gay Robie of New Meadows, Idaho, and Mary Megorden of Payette, Idaho.

We moved to the Frank Smith place (now Hettinger place) in 1920 and lived there until 1925. Mother taught us at home until I went to school at Warren, starting in September, 1922. Lucy A. Tibbs was the teacher. We moved to Shorts Bar near Riggins, Idaho in 1925, where we lived for 21 years.

I married Pearl Holbrook in 1939. We now make our home on Little White Bird Ridge on the Little Salmon River, operating a cattle ranch. We have one daughter, Dolina Gill, and two granddaughters, Gayle and Donna Gill.

JOHN CARREY

## “Three-Finger” Smith, a Lone Survivor

S. S. “Three-Finger” Smith had an active part in the Sheepeater Indian Campaign. He was the lone survivor of the battle that took place at Cascade Falls on the Payette River with the Sheepeater Indians. His own account of the massacre was related to Edgar Hall of Indian Valley:

“On Saturday, August 17, 1878, several horses were stolen by Indians from citizens living in Indian Valley. William Mundy was the principal loser. On Sunday Solon Hall, his son Edgar, and Grosclouse had made their first attempt to follow. When they found a well-defined trail about 10 miles out, they turned back for reinforcement.

Monday, Mundy, Smith, Tom Healy and Jake Grosclouse took up the pursuit. They had gone about 40 miles and arrived at what is known as the Falls of the Payette, about 30 miles below the Great Payette Lake. They came upon the Indians there at noon Tuesday.

“The Indians were scattered in the rocks and on the first fire, before they were observed by any of the party, shot and killed Mundy. At this moment Healy and Grosclouse dismounted, when the latter was shot in the breast. He turned to Smith and said, ‘They have got me.’

“Healy then got behind a rock and asked Smith to stay with him. Smith, however, being a man of experience in such matters, saw that they were completely out-numbered and at the mercy of the Indians, and not having dismounted, turned to make a run for it. He was fired upon and shot through the thigh. The next shot took his mule from under him, and being on foot and running for his life, he was again hit by a shot which broke his arm.

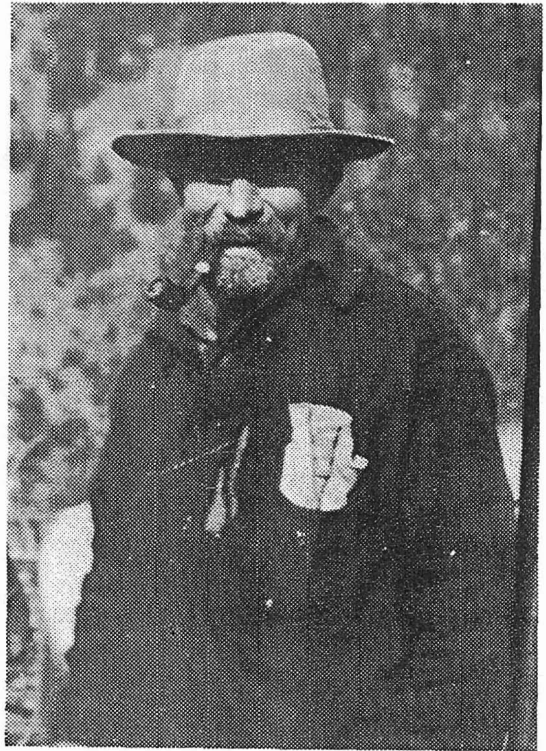
“Having somewhat the start of the Indians, Smith made his escape by running and succeeded, after traveling 30 miles, in reaching Cal White’s mail station on the Little Salmon Meadows. He arrived there two days later and found three or four men.

“Smith says that after leaving Healy,

who was completely surrounded by the Indians, he heard about a dozen shots, and after a short interval another shot was fired which makes it certain that poor Healy met his sad fate at the hands of the red friends.

“As soon as Smith arrived at White’s Station, a courier was sent to Major Drum, who with his command was camped at the head of the Weiser (River), 13 miles from White’s. Major Drum immediately marched to the station, arriving there the same day Smith got in.”

Smith was a big, massive man, but remained badly crippled after this encounter. He made a strike at Florence, then later at Slaughter Gulch at Warren. His ranch was at the mouth of Elk Creek where he spent the remainder of his life.



HENRY SMITH, son of “Three-Finger” Smith, taken at mouth of Elk Creek.

Three-Finger Smith raised four sons, Sam, Warren, Henry and Bob, the youngest.

Bob froze to death along the trail

carrying mail from Warren to a mining district called the Alton District over Elk Summit in the winter of 1890. He was buried on the ranch at Elk Creek. Smith and Sam's wife, Jaunita, are buried there, also.

Smith was very honest and exceptionally good-hearted. His son Henry was the same. Henry died in a Boise hospital, Warren passed away at the Hackett Ranch, and Sam died in an accident in Garden Valley.

During the Sheepeater Indian Campaign soldiers had a base camp on Elk Creek at a site where an old sawmill stands now, and another camp at the head of Elk Creek just under Elk Summit.

After the Smith family was gone

from the ranch, Jimmy Taylor lived there for a good many years. He proved up on the homestead March 15, 1917. He was a corker!

Between 1917 and 1918, Brad and Margaret Carrey acquired the property. They raised two daughters, now Mary Mende of McCall, and Margaret Gribble of Reno, Nevada. When Carreys left the ranch, it was bought by a power company and a power plant was put in by a dredge company in Warren. When the mines shut down, that was the end of the ranch. It now belongs to an outfitter and guide business.

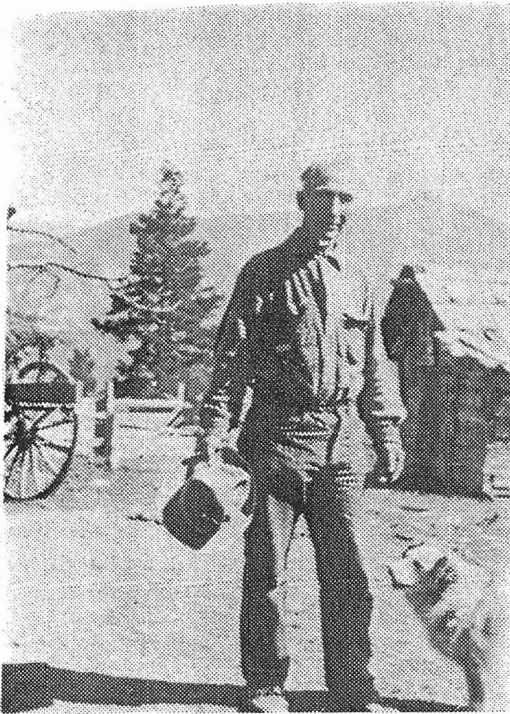
For a short time there was a post office at this location, known as Comfort.



MOVING DAY — Henry Smith and Brad Carrey, who was a resident of "Three-Finger" Ranch for a long time. Here they are shown moving furniture as done in the mountain country.

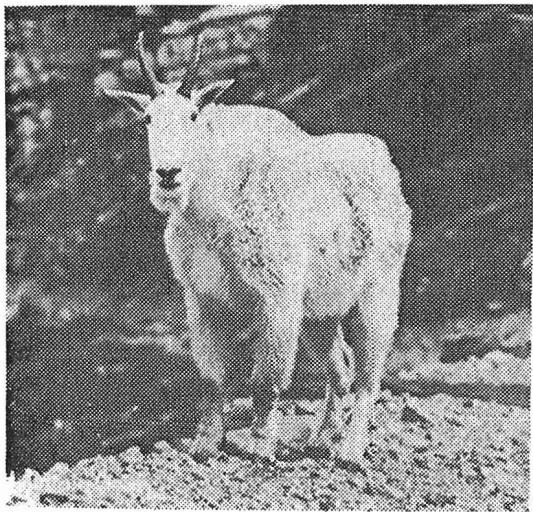


## “Shepherd” Bill Burned to Death in Cabin on Porphyry Creek When His Moonshine Still Blew Up



WM. (Shepherd Bill) BORDEN

“Shepherd” Bill’s name was William Borden and he lived at the mouth of Porphyry Creek. It was down the river from the Frank Smith place about 4½ miles. Bill raised a garden and had a cabin. He had made several stakes and drank up all the money.



MOUNTAIN GOAT, picture taken Shepherd Bill’s place.

In the early days he did a lot of back-packing. He claimed to be a descendent of the Gale Bordens of canned milk fame.

Bill was burned in his cabin when his whiskey still blew up, it was thought. Neighbors cougar hunting in the vicinity in March saw the house was burned and investigated. They buried Bill’s remains on the spot. Men helping with the burial included Lavel Thompson, Allan Williams, Pat Irvin and Frank Francis.

Bill was well educated and could talk on about any subject. The longest night I ever spent was with Shepherd Bill. I was eight years old at the time. He came by our house when we lived at the Frank Smith place, now the Hettinger ranch. Bill was going home and mother gave him a sack of ripe prunes.

Bill’s cucumbers would be ripe in a week, and I was supposed to get some for mother. When the time came, I got on old Whitey and went down to Bill’s and got there about 4 o’clock. Bill had the prunes working in a big mash barrel. Every little bit he would go over and fold the cloth back and try some of the prune mash.

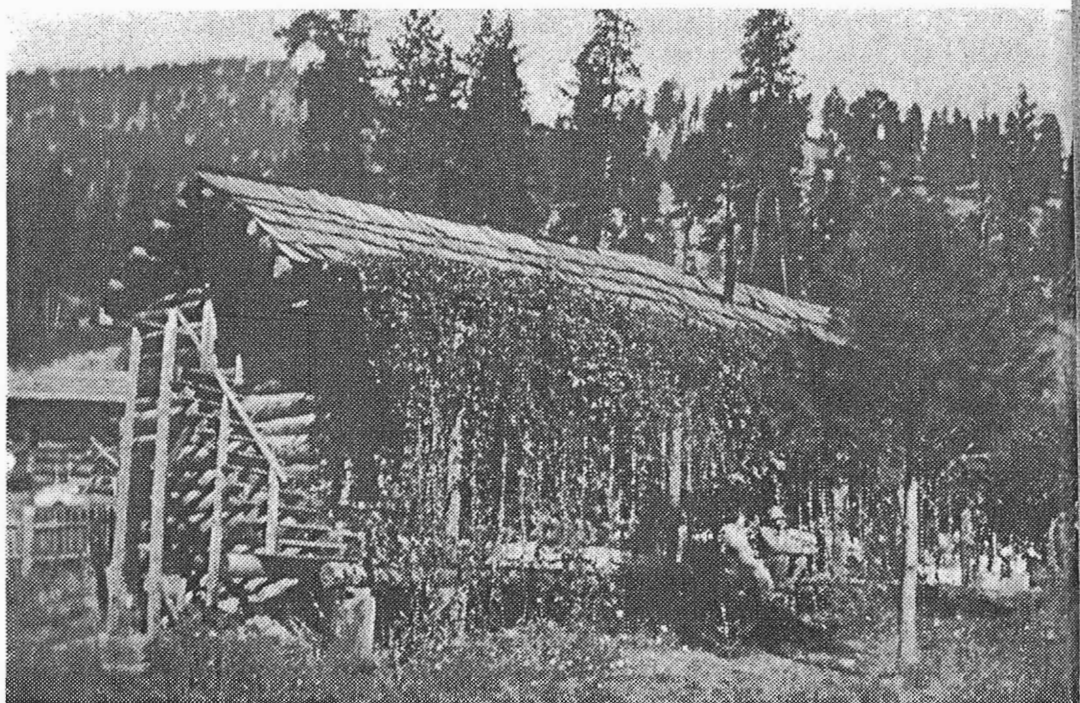
I kept listening to his stories until it got too dark to go back up the trail. Bill started a lecture on Shakespeare and going around the Horn on a sailing vessel. By morning I had enough Shakespeare to do me the rest of my life.

I never did get the cucumbers.

### FIRST TRAIL ON BIG CREEK

A good Forest Service trail was built down Big Creek to the Middlefork. The work was completed in 1933-34 by John Cook Art Francis, Bill Bean, Wilmer Shafer, Dick Cowman, Walt Hinkley, Dan LaVan, John Reeder and Tom Koski.

## Curly Brewer Home on Southfork of Salmon



IT WAS ALL HAND WORK building a home in the back country as shown by this picture of the Curly Brewer house, adorned with hop vines. Note the log building is two-story.

Curly Brewer was one of the early settlers on the Southfork in the Sheepeater days. He was active during the mining boom days. His place was just across the Southfork from the Three-Finger Smith place. He married Georgia Thomas, a sister of Taylor Smith, and to this union two sons were born John and Bud Brewer. This was a well-kept and improved ranch with a good pack bridge across the river.

Brewer was a hard working man and had done a lot of back-packing and mining in the Profile Gap country. He back-packed year-around. In the winter time he would come into Warren carrying huge packs on his back, wearing nine-foot skiis

After Curly left the ranch, his son and wife, John and Pearl Brewer, ran the place for several years. Curly died in the Profile country and is buried there.

Pat and Teresa Ervin bought this place and later sold it to the State Fish and Game Department. Today there is little evidence there had been buildings on the site.

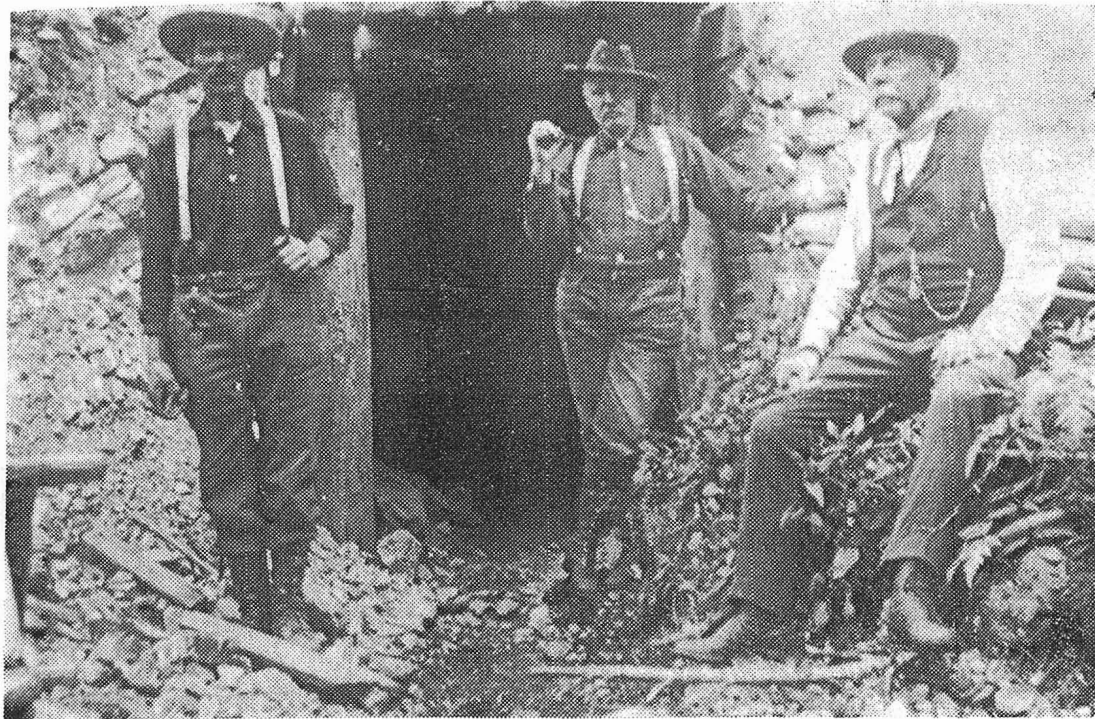
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### FOREST SERVICE MADE IMPROVEMENTS; LOST GRUB

When the Forest Service came into the Sheepeater (Chamberlain Basin) country, they started to improve the area. When they were establishing headquarters at Big Creek, Earl Potenger came with a big load of grub. He had a four-horse team and loaded. When he got up Elk Creek about to the Beaver Dams, he ran a rim of a wheel.

Dad went up with a hack and brought the wheel back to our place to shrink the tire back on. It took a couple of days, and when they took the wheel back, the wagon was empty. All the grub had been packed off. The Forest Service headed back for McCall.

Andy Casner was one of our first rangers, and the best. You couldn't beat Andy and his wife, Helen.



MINE ON PROFILE GAP, out of Yellowpine. Curly Brewer, left; George Brewer, brother, and a mining man, name not known.

## James Flynn Ranch on Southfork



JAMES and DELLA FLYNN homesteaded on the Southfork in 1914. They had one son, James, Jr. Their place joined the Curly Brewer place. The Flynns built a nice log house on the place and had a saw-mill there. In 1925 they sold the ranch to Pat and Teresa Ervin. It is now owned by the State Fish and Game Department. To see the place today you would never know there had been a ranch there.



## Jack Shafer Buried on Ranch



TOM and JEANNIE CARREY and three children, Mary, Gay and John. Picture taken in 1920, soon after the family left Shafer Ranch.

Jack Shafer acquired a place on the Southfork of the Salmon from Ben Day. At one time a man from Indian Valley by the name of Hall had used it for a stopping place. Jack's wife's name was Frankie. She was a sister of Taylor Smith. The Shafers raised two sons, George and Fred, living now in Boise, Idaho.

When the first wagon bridge was being built across the Southfork, Jack drowned while crossing on one of the stringers. He was buried on the ranch and the grave is marked 1907 or 1908.

After his death his wife turned the place over to Carl Brown and his family. From there it went to Mamie McCall. About 1911 Tom Carrey moved onto the place. Tom made final proof in October, 1916, and completed the homestead. He raised three children, John, Gay and Mary. John was born there in 1914 with Mrs. Della Flynn as midwife.

After Tom Carrey made final proof on the place, it was acquired by the Forest Service and is now the Southfork Ranger Station.

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### "WOODTICK" WILLIAMS RETURNS TO SHEEPEATER COUNTRY

A man by the name of "Woodtick" Williams came through the country who had been with the Army when they were fighting the Sheepeaters. He said he was at Papose Meadows in Chamberlain Basin (Sheepeater country) when the main body of Indian gave up. He claimed their leader was War Jack by name. Quite a few of the Indians could speak broken English, he said.

Edward Osborne of Meadows, Idaho was in Warren when they came out with the Indians. He was nine years old at the time. He told me the same story as Williams did. The band was mostly squaws and old men, indicating the young bucks had been killed.

As late as 1920 there was visible evidence of a big Indian camp on the west side of the Southfork of the Salmon River, just below the Badley Ranch.