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Editor Spokesman Review.

Kind Sir-

Some time ago I received a request from you - "To give you some items about the Indian War in Rogue River valley of 1853!"

You may be surprised that a woman 86 years old, is still a busy business woman - carrying on the marble work that I have been engaged in for a livelihood since 1865 - helping my crippled husband during his life. Then by my own <sup>alone until now</sup> work, yesterday I spent advising work being set up in a cemetery. I am expecting to be in another cemetery attending to orders, I enjoy carving in marble more than writing Indian War history - (is more profitable also) But, I realize this people can never experience what the Oregon Pioneers did - and so few are left. That I will take a little while to tell my personal experience - I being 15 yrs. old the day we reached my father's "Donation Claim" in this valley. <sup>the same</sup> date that we started for the Plains. with ~~or~~ <sup>(Apr. 14 - 1853)</sup> teams, & about 100 head of loose cattle - for "Oregon Territory" one year & 6 mo. of that year we traveled at the gait that a little calf could walk - (and <sup>was</sup> not very hard for us 3 Hill girls to keep up with. because we walked more of the time. than we rode in the poky covered wagons. but aimed to go ahead.)

(2)

The Indian Territory shown on our school maps, reached from Mo. River to Oregon Territory. Not one house, or white settler lived in that country of Mo. journey to Salem Or. where we stayed from Oct. <sup>1852</sup> until Apr. 1853 - as my Father had passed through this valley in 1850 - with a co. of armed men - bound for Cal. gold mines. The beauty of a home here impressed him so strongly - that in 1851 - he left "Humboldt" Mines, <sup>Cal.</sup> where he averaged \$50<sup>00</sup> per. day, to recross the Plains - to bring his family from Tenn. & make a home in this beautiful valley as soon as it was safe to come among the Indians. he was surprised to hear on the Plains, that settlers were already "taking up claims" here. Then no other stopping to wait idea, was needed - but to hasten on as soon as weather, & Willamette rain, & mud, & stones like rivers, could possibly be traveled, so that trip from Salem, would fill a book - to describe, but we located with Indians our next door neighbor on one side, & 4 bat<sup>ch</sup> "Mountain House Boys" on the other - The Old "Hill Butte" belonged to "Uncle Sam" but whole section of land at its base, was staped off for father & Mother's "Donation Claim" - and our family of 2 brothers, & 3 girls. My parents planted here, & they grew, until our 70 anniversary last yr. a picture of relatives number 80 - & 40 others that could not be with us. I claim 21 - grand children 17 great grand children & 10 living children. All honorable citizens.



In the late summer a drunk Indian came to our door. My brothers were mining. father was planing smooth our puncheon floor. Taking one by one into the yard plane. Mother, sister Mary & I were in the cabin. sister Lou helping father out side. The Indian saw mother was frightened when he began to show his sharp knives in his belt. & Examined his gun. he stepped in the door when father came in for another plank, & refused to move when father wanted out. but was pushed aside with plank, 'Clatawa' was not heeded. Father knew a drunk Indian could not be trusted any more than a drunk <sup>man</sup> man. & his gun was not loaded. Mother had <sup>quite</sup> nervous chill. (which I saw brought savage nature in his eyes) But, it also brought our inherited Military nature to sister Mary. she caught up father's unloaded gun, and pointed it at the Indian, & said 'Clatawa'; with all the authority of a General. drunk Indian stood, but another step, and a repeated Clatawa; he saw danger in that 17 year old slim girls eyes. so left in haste. looking back to see if she was after him. & heard me laughing at the funny sight. Father knew our lives was in danger. for him to get his gun. gave the Indian the advantage. & to kill the Indian meant war. he intended to use an at. if he had to defend us. so he said Mary's bravery saved our lives, and sobered the drunk Indian. and quieted Mother's nerves.

shortly after that, we saw a signal fire on the foot hills of the Siskiyous flare up. Then go out several times. Mother said that meant war. if father thought so too, he did not say so. to us. but one morning soon after, a man came about sun rise, & called father (we got up at day light to milk 20 cows) he told of a man being killed by Indians the evening before & the settlers were calling a meeting at the mill Culver's to decide what must be done. & <sup>hurry</sup> on to tell the Mountain House Boys, father told Len & I to finish milking - he must go for a horse, (that meant to hunt on the range for one) he was going down the valley to attend a Citizen's meeting. he told Mother & Mary to hurry breakfast but did not tell us that the Indian had "broke out" John Gibbs came back with the man, & father went off with them, & Mother decided to wash some nice quilts, so some of us was baking pies of Oregon grape & washing. when the men returned with news that several men had been killed at Jacksonville & on Rogue River, and Gibbs would hurry home & bring a little spring wagon to take us to Albenchiens. & <sup>to</sup> where others were to go. No more washing was done, but got ready & ran to meet the wagon - & several Mountain House men, with guns, to protect us past an Indian camp we had to pass. Those Indians seemed ready for an attack. we met more men coming to take them prisoners. we soon heard shooting, & the wagon <sup>went</sup> back. Next we saw



after reaching the <sup>(5)</sup> fort. was the wagon coming  
with ~~two~~ wounded men. {Dunn. shot in shoulder,  
& Carter broken arm} an Indian prisoner, this  
little log cabin, with fireplace to cook by, &  
a "lean-to" room made of shakes. housed the two  
wounded men. 5 families, & 6. or 7 men. the Indians  
were given a place near the cabin, & guarded by  
men day & night. after 3 ds. father & sister Lon went  
with a wagon to get our stove & what we needed from  
home, they found cloths on the line, & in tubs of water,  
half baked pies the oven, & all as we had left  
things. a Co. of Yreka Cal. volunteers, under  
Capt. George Tyler. met father, our Cousin Isham  
P. Keith, was in this Co. his Mothers only child,  
being only 19. of age. he could not join the Co. without  
his Mothers consent. she only consented for him  
to stay with us. so when he saw the danger  
of the prisoners being rescued, & insuring a  
battle there. he insisted that we go on to  
Fort Wagner. (Tallent?) we went there, then he  
was urged by the Co. to go on with them, as  
the Fort was safe. (built of logs stood up right  
& port holes in 2 corners) also it was well  
guarded. he went on with his Co. but Capt. Elli.  
needed more men in his Co. & the Yreka Co. joined  
Capt. Elliott's Co. just leaving to follow a band  
of Indians up Rouge River. & found them camped  
on Evers Creek. where a fine bloody battle  
was fought & my Cousin Isham was killed as  
stepped from behind a tree to shoot an Indian who  
aimed his gun at one of the Co. Indians surrounded  
them. but they fought them off until reinforced

Came to frighten <sup>(6)</sup> the Indians to retreat, so they buried Keith there. digging a shallow grave & covering it with rocks & brush. 3 ds. after a Co. went & brought his body out. & at his mother's request was buried on his Uncle's farm - (thus the beginning of the "Hill Cemetery")

Poor John Gibbs lived to see his friends ~~happy~~ sadly fulfilled. The Indians did come at <sup>day</sup> light in less than a week. filling the air with their war cry, like hundreds of coyotes & a <sup>Indian</sup> trusted friend, (as Gibbs thought) jerked his gun from his hand - & shot him twice, in abdomen & breaking one arm into splinters, (this Indian Gibbs told my Mother - "was a good friend of his" & he would trust a hundred lives in his hands") (Indians have no white friends in time of war.)

Gibbs lived 2 ds. after being taken to Fort Wagner. he died & was buried beside Keith, a warm friend & neighbor in the Hill Cemetery. 4 men were killed in that battle, & several wounded. grain & hay burned, & stock killed. Capt. Thomas Smith living near & fearing an attack, & had warned Gibbs the night before. That he had seen Mockinson's tracks had his riding mule hitched near his door, & did not <sup>undress</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>night</sup> he heard the first shot, & was on the scene in a few minutes. he saw the need of a Dr. & while the Indians were busy burning things, left for Jacksonville, 20 miles away. To get a Dr. (all news had to be given verbally, those times) he reached Fort Wagner as soon as a fast mule could get there. My Mother made him coffee while he told



all he knew of the battle, of 4 or 5 Emigrant families getting in off the Plains the night before. 1 man shot dead lying under <sup>his</sup> wagon & several wounded, he did not know how badly, but feared Gibbs, fatally, & of such a panic of women & childrens - screaming, men hunting still for their guns. while wives & childrens clinging to them to stay by them. Poor Wounded Dunn & Carter, beging to not let the Indians in the house - & which did delay getting the door opened to let those outside get the other wounded men inside. But, <sup>wait</sup> drunk his coffee standing beside his mule, & in 10 minutes was dashing off to rush <sup>Dr.</sup> to the wounded men, next to do in the fort was to get men ready to go at once to help at the Alberdein & Dunn battle ground. all the available horses to rush men there. was very quick work - Pioneers did not wait for military orders. to act, all were brothers keepers <sup>then</sup>. to know help was needed. was all required, by 10 o'clock A. M. wounded & dead were being brought to the Fort - or on to Jacksonville, one man died on the way to the fort. an Emigrant who only reached his land of promise the night before, to be killed by Indians before glimpsing the beauty of this valley. They came down Emigrant creek - the only wagon road into the Rouge River valley at that time. Mr. & Mrs. Fordice & family came in same train. They were sleeping in their wagon - <sup>when awoken by that awful war cry</sup> as they ran to the house <sup>together</sup> a bullet whizzed between their heads - & cut <sup>together</sup> a scratch on Mr. Fordices cheek - a sad welcome <sup>to</sup> Oregon

Gibbs died next <sup>(8)</sup> day in the hack he was brought  
to Fort Wagner in. My mother repeated the same  
sacred task she had bestowed on her Nephew-  
to prepare him for burial. No undertakers  
were thought of, neighbors, hurried neighbors  
with tender care. That war lasted 6 weeks,  
all homes were deserted, white families were  
gathered in any available place, & guarded by  
day & night by a few men- while the others  
were in State Military service, furnishing  
their own outfit & supplies free. The thought  
of saving life & home alone prompting them.  
Col. John Ross was next year head of S. O.  
S. militia. & James H. Russell elected Major  
under him & given charge of enlistment in  
S. district for volunteers. But the 1853 war  
as I knew of it, was volunteer companies.  
General Joseph Lane later commanded U. S.  
soldiers in the valley. & established Fort  
Lane on Rouge River. but his orders came  
from Astoria, news going & coming by "Pony  
Express", requiring 6 or 8 days time. No telegraphs  
this side of Portland - & no stages, all mail  
from the states came around the "Horn" or by  
pack mules over the Isthmus trail - requiring  
6 mo. time in transit. Peace was restored  
somewhat, so families returned home. To  
live in constant fear, horses & cattle stolen,  
& men often killed on the roads. Then volunteers  
were called by the first who knew of Indian



who knew of Indian <sup>(9)</sup> depredations would go at once to report to next neighbor & then the 2 would go & start the news, & a Co. would go to the Mountain House - & choose a Capt. in our neighborhood Capt. Thomas Smith was chosen & Major Russell would swear them into service & all start after the Indians in a loop, some times recover the stock without any battle - but battles were frequent, & men killed - No recompense was given volunteers until recent years - at first \$8.00 per. mo. was allowed to those living, if witnesses could be found - later on, \$12.00 per. mo. is allowed, and some are paid \$20.00

So me, it seems very unjust that the Oregon Indian War Veterans are not allowed as much as Civil War Veterans & their wives - The Oregon Pioneers furnished their own supplies & expenses, without any recompense whatever, the women suffered & helped save Oregon for the white man - so justice demands equal recompense with other veterans & their widows =

You only asked for 1853. history, what I have written is only part of my own experience in that war - I have more to tell of 1855 war, which seemed even worse.

I enclose this, however, hoping you can read my writing - if you find this worth printing, please send me 20 copies, & return this - also. I have given this because I do not know of only 2 others living now who were in this valley at that time.

Ann Harrell (Hill) Russell