

OREGON INDIAN WAR CLAIMS.

COMMUNICATION

FROM

SENATORS GEORGE H. WILLIAMS AND H. W. CORBETT,

ON THE

Oregon Indian war claims of 1855-'56, audited by Philo Callender, which encloses letters of the Third Auditor and B. F. Dowell on the expenses of the war.

MARCH 4, 1868.—Referred to the Committee of Claims and ordered to be printed.

WASHINGTON, March 2, 1868.

DEAR SIR: Our attention has been called to the report of Philo Callender to the legislature of Oregon, on the contingent expenses of the Oregon and Washington Indian war of 1855-'6, and the letter of B. F. Dowell, esq., urging the payment of the claims of the estate of George W. Harris and David Evans. The murder of Mr. Harris by the Indians, on the 9th of October, 1855, and the rescue of his wife and daughter by the Jacksonville volunteers, were facts well known and universally discussed at the time in Oregon. We are well acquainted with the officers who describe it in Mr. Dowell's letter, and also with the witnesses who testify as to the prices received in Oregon at the time of the war. There can be no doubt of the truth of the statement in Mr. Dowell's letter, and the report of Philo Callender.

Mr. Callender is now judge of the county court of Clatsop county. He is a man of ability and integrity. Congress ought to make an appropriation to pay the whole of the account audited by him. We enclose a copy of Mr. Callender's report, and a letter of the Third Auditor, and Mr. Dowell's letter on the subject. We resided in Oregon during the time of the war.

Respectfully yours,

GEO. H. WILLIAMS.
H. W. CORBETT.

Hon. R. MALLORY.

Report of the commissioner to audit claims growing out of the Indian war of Oregon Territory.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
Astoria, December 1, 1856.

To the honorable Legislative Assembly of Oregon Territory:

In conformity to the statutes creating a commissioner to audit certain claims growing out of the then existing Indian war of 1855 and 1856, the undersigned begs leave to submit the following report:

The whole number and amount of certificates for claims audited and allowed are as follows, viz :

George W. Jackson.....	\$117 50
Wm. Helm.....	9 60
John B. Smith.....	155 00
Austin Badger.....	223 20
Twogood & Harkness.....	1, 643 00
John McCullock.....	157 00
John D. Bowen.....	241 00
Wm. McCullock.....	100 00
Lazarus Wright.....	750 00
Hiram Smith.....	1, 287 10
Caroline Niday.....	2, 724 24
Thos. W. F. Paul.....	136 00
Daniel A. Levans.....	2, 569 00
Davis Evans.....	1, 183 50
Daniel Miller.....	180 00
H. J. Martin.....	70 00
G. W. Harris.....	786 30
W. H. Riddle.....	1, 239 00
Charles F. Ray.....	350 00
Total.....	<u>13, 845 84</u>

The undersigned begs leave to observe that, in conformity to the statute, he has visited and opened offices at the following different points in the Territory, to wit, at Salem, Portland, Corvallis, Roseburgh and Jacksonville, giving, as he believes, a convenient opportunity for those having claims to present them before the commissioner for investigation; that there have been no claims presented before him and duly investigated but what have been found entitled to consideration, and in part allowed. There have been many claims presented to me which, upon examination, were properly referred to the different departments under the military organization, or withdrawn by the applicant without full or complete investigation.

I would observe here that in the investigation of all claims, the undersigned has required full and explicit proof, under oath, not only of the property furnished, but also of its value at the time and place where it was furnished, and I have carefully reduced to writing the testimony of the claimant and principal witness, with their signatures attached, which are numbered and kept on file with the duplicate certificates or vouchers.

PHILO CALLENDER,
Commissioner of War Claims.

John Wilson, Third Auditor, to H. W. Corbett, U. S. S.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, THIRD AUDITOR'S OFFICE,
February 8, 1868.

SIR: In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, I have to state that the report of Philo Callender to the Oregon legislature, showing his action as commissioner to audit certain Oregon war claims, (to fill which office he was chosen by said legislature on the 30th of January, 1856,) has not been filed in this office. I am, therefore, unable to furnish you with a copy of the same, or with copies of such evidence or vouchers as may have accompanied his report.

Some of the certificates issued by said commissioner are on file in this office, having been presented in support of certain claims for supplies, &c., furnished during the Oregon and Washington Indian war of 1855 and 1856, which claims were disallowed, the act of March 2, 1861, containing no appropriation for the payment of claims certified by Callender, as they were not included in the report of the Third Auditor, of 7th February, 1860. Ex. Doc. No. 11, 36th Congress, 1st session.*

I understand your letter to be a request for copies of Callender's report, with evidence and vouchers, showing his action and the total amount of claims allowed by him, which I am unable to furnish. If, however, you desire copies of such vouchers and evidence only as have been filed in this office, they will be furnished upon receipt of your request for them.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN WILSON,
Third Auditor.

Hon. H. W. CORBETT, U. S. S.

To the Committee of Claims of the House of Representatives of the United States:

DEAR SIRS: I have resided in Oregon from 1850 to the present time, and from the spring of 1852 to the fall of 1856 I was the owner of a pack train, and was constantly engaged in buying, transporting and selling supplies to the miners and farmers at and in the vicinity of Jacksonville, Oregon. Hence I am familiar with the history of the Oregon and Washington Indian war of 1855 and 1856.

I am well acquainted with Davis Evans and Mary A. Harris, the administratrix of George W. Harris, who are asking pay for supplies furnished the volunteers in the war. Prior to and during the war Mr. Evans resided at the ferry on Rogue river, about twenty miles below Jacksonville. He had a small farm, a pack train, kept a hotel and the ferry. Mr. Harris resided on the main travelled road between northern Oregon and California, about ten miles north of Evans's ferry. At the time of the war there was no settlement except on the road between Rogue river and Canyonville, in Douglass county, a distance of 40 or 50 miles.

The war commenced suddenly, at the same time, in both Territories, and in a single night nearly every house along the road between Rogue river and the Cañon was burned to the ground, and many of the owners massacred, among which number was George W. Harris, whose widow now asks Congress to pay her the value of supplies furnished the volunteers. No claim was ever presented to Congress that was more just, or that was better calculated to enlist the sympathies of the people than this claim. This will appear plain from the records of Congress. Let us look at them, and make a few extracts from relevant passages.

On the 10th and 11th of October, 1855, George H. Ambrose, who, at the time, was Indian agent for this part of Oregon, reports to the superintendent of Indian affairs that: "After wounding of those men at Evans's ferry, the Indians pursued the main travelled road towards the Cañon, where I learned from a company of packers, who had just arrived, that they saw seven dead men lying in the road, in different places, between Mr. Evans's ferry and Mr. Waggoner's; several trains had been robbed, and several wagons had been plundered, and I suspect every person who passed the road has been killed. I ex-

* There is also a letter from Third Auditor to the chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. Ex. Doc. No. 51, 35th Congress, 2d session.

pect to have to record still sadder news before the week closes. A greater destruction of life will, probably, never be caused by the same number of people, or more horrid atrocities be perpetrated, than by those Shasta Indians. They are well provided with arms, both guns and revolvers, and skilful in the use of them. I do not believe more desperate or reckless men ever lived upon the earth, and I have no doubt but they have made up their minds to fight till they die. To-day a despatch arrived from Major Fitzgerald, who was in pursuit of the Indians. From his statement, it appears that all the houses between Mr. Evans's ferry and Jump-off-Jo creek were destroyed by fire. Mrs. Jones escaped, wounded, with her little girls, to Mr. Vannoy's. Mrs. Wagoner and little daughter were both burned in their house—probably massacred first. Her husband was away from home at the time. Mrs. *Harris** escaped. Her *husband* was killed, and her little girl wounded in the arm. I am unable to give you the names of those killed." (House Ex. Doc. No. 93, 1st. session 34th Congress, pp. 67, 68.)

E. S. Drew, one of the oldest settlers of Jacksonville, Oregon, and who was Colonel John E. Ross's adjutant in the war of 1855-'56, and lieutenant colonel of the Oregon volunteers during the late rebellion, reports that "the massacre near Evans's ferry (Rogue river) was a premeditated affair. In the execution of their work the Indians divided their force into several parties, and made their attack at different points in the neighborhood, almost simultaneous. The chiefs, George and Limpey, commanded in person along the road, but the leadership of the several parties designated to murder the families was delegated to such warriors as had either been in the employ of or had been suffered to loiter about the premises of their intended victims, until they had learned where and how to deal the surest and most fatal blow. Those who were foremost in the attack at Wagoner's, Jones's, Haines's, *Harris's*,† and so on, were well known to those families, had been in their service from time to time, and had often received favors and kindness from them when out of it. In the attack upon Jones's house, he was killed at the onset, and Mrs. Jones mortally wounded, though not utterly disabled for the moment. Seeing her husband dying, and the Indians cutting him in pieces, she fled toward some brush which was near by, whither she was immediately followed by an Indian who had been in the employ of her husband, and in whom she had placed the greatest confidence. Seeing none but this Indian following her, and thinking that, perhaps, he might still be her friend, she awaited his approach, and then implored his protection. His reply was, 'You damned b—h, I'll kill you!' and thereupon fired at her with his revolver. The shot took effect only in her arm, but she fell as if dead; and he, supposing his shot had been fatal, left her, and returned to his companions. Mrs. Jones escaped to Vannoy's ferry, where she died the next day. At Wagoner's no one escaped to tell the particulars of the attack there; but the Indians themselves, even now, boast of the affair, and do not hesitate to say who were engaged in it. Their story of the matter does not conflict with what I have stated. They state, also, the manner in which they accomplished their purpose. It seems that the house was first set on fire, and Mrs. Wagoner and her daughter were then compelled to remain in it until burned to death. Their nearly-consumed remains were found in the smouldering ruins of the house on the following day. The Indians were equally successful at Haines's. At *Harris's*,‡ however, they were suspected before they could get possession of the house, and, consequently, their work was less complete. Finding themselves suspicioned, they commenced the attack somewhat prematurely, and, consequently, succeeded in killing only three of the five they intended. Mr. Harris received a fatal wound at the first fire; but falling par-

* The same in the bill before the committee.

† This is the Harris described in the bill.

‡ Same man in the bill.

tially into the house, his wife and daughter (the latter severely wounded) succeeded in drawing him inside, and barring the door so successfully as to keep the Indians out. While dying, Mr. Harris instructed his wife how to load and use the rifle, and bade her defend herself to the last—an order which she most heroically obeyed. For nearly twenty-four hours she defended herself against the besiegers, and was then rescued by some volunteers from Jacksonville. Master Harris and Mr. Reed were in a field close by when the attack was made, and both fell a prey to the enemy. The other victims of this massacre were mostly travellers, some of whom belonged in the Willamette valley. Mr. Gwin was an employé of the Table Rock agency, and was killed on the reserve.”

* * * * *

“On the 12th of October, Colonel John E. Ross, of the ninth district of Oregon, by virtue of his commission, and pursuant to a resolution of the citizens of Jacksonville and that vicinity, assumed the command in his district, and commenced the organization of a regiment of mounted volunteers, for the defence of the settlement in the Rogue river country against the hordes of hostile Indians by which they were menaced on every hand. On the 14th he had nine companies, consisting of about 500 men, under his command, and on duty in the most exposed portions of his district, including the settlement of Rogue river and Illinois valley, and those of Applegate creek, Deer creek, Butte creek, Galeese creek, Grave creek, Cow creek, (in the adjoining county, Douglas,) and Sterling. *Several of these companies, however, had been organized, and on duty at some of the points mentioned, since the day of the massacre at Evans's.* The regiment, between the 14th of October and 1st of November, was increased to fifteen companies, consisting, rank and file, of about 750 men.” (House Mis. Doc. No. 59, 36th Congress, pp. 22, 23, 24, and 30.)

I know, of my own knowledge, that Mary A. Harris and George W. Harris, described in the bill before the Committee of Claims, are the same that are described in the reports of Indian Agent Ambrose and Colonel S. Drew. I knew them long before the war. They had a good little home, and considerable stock and farming utensils and provisions. The greater part of it was destroyed by the Indians at the time. The appraisers of the estate valued the property which was destroyed by the Indians at \$4,192 50. What little was left of the supplies was taken and used by the volunteers from Jacksonville, who rescued Mrs. Harris and her daughter, and many others, from the blood-thirsty savages.

The company, at this time, consisted of twenty-five or thirty men, which was increased, in a few days, to a full company. The exact number I do not now remember. They rushed to the rescue of the defenceless families along this road, on receiving the news of the massacres described in the foregoing reports. They continued to patrol the road for several days, but did not receive supplies until Colonel Ross took the command, on the 12th of October, three days after the massacre of Mr. Harris and his son, and a day or two after they received the supplies.

A. J. Smith, captain United States army during the Oregon war, Rufus Ingalls, quartermaster of the United States army, who was stationed at Portland during the war, and Hon. Lafayette Grover, reports to the Secretary of War that “the initiative steps of the organization of the volunteer forces in Oregon early in October, 1855, were quite precipitous, and, consequently, in some cases, irregular. This organization was based upon the militia law of the Territory, as it then existed, declaring the same military district for brigade purposes, of which, by authority of the act of Congress organizing the Territory, the governor was commander-in-chief. This law further provided for the appointment, by the governor, of a brigadier general, and for the election, in subordinate districts, of colonels and subordinate officers of regiments. It also embraced the usual departments of the general staff, and provided for the commission of their

chief and subordinate officers." (Senate Ex. Doc., No. 24, 1st session 35th Congress, vol. 7, page 2.)

This irregular organization created, necessarily, irregular claims. For the purpose of investigating this class of claims the legislature of Oregon, on the 30th of January, 1856, appointed Philo Callender commissioner, and to the next legislature, on the 1st of December, 1856, he made his report, allowing Davis Evans \$1,183 50, and the estate of G. W. Harris \$786 30. (Appendix to House Journal of Oregon, pages 59 and 60.)

The services of the volunteers having been shown to be absolutely necessary, and the claims of Evans and Harris having been allowed by a commissioner, duly authorized, the question naturally arises, why have not these claims been paid long ago? Two or three satisfactory reasons may be learned from the reports which have been published by both houses of Congress.

The difference of opinion which existed, at the time of the war, between General John E. Wool, commanding the department of the Pacific, and George L. Curry, governor of Oregon, and I. I. Stevens, governor of Washington Territory, is, in my opinion, the great moving cause of the non-payment of these claims.

General Wool opposed the prosecution of the war during the winter. The governors of both Territories were in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war during the winter, and they had the citizens generally throughout both Territories to back them in a vigorous prosecution of the war, without any delay for winter or bad weather.

Out of this difference of honest sentiments sprang one of the bitterest feuds that probably ever existed in any division of the army of the United States. General Wool kept the regular army in winter quarters all winter. The governors, as commanders-in-chief of the volunteers, kept the volunteers in active service all winter. In December the volunteers fought the hardest, most bloody, and most successful battle that was fought during the war. General Wool, it is believed, became jealous of their success, and in his official despatches denounced the governors and the whites generally as lawless bands, and charged the whites with commencing the war on peaceable Indians.

The governors denounced General Wool in their despatches as a base calumniator, and wholly unfit for the position he occupied. Every newspaper and nearly all the citizens in both Territories denounced General Wool in the bitterest of terms. General Wool reiterated his charges and denunciations against the whites; but his official reports about the condition of the hostilities were contradictory; so much so that the Secretary of War and President Pierce sustained the governors and removed General Wool from the department of the Pacific.

Those who have time or curiosity to see the rise and progress of Indian wars on the Pacific coast, and how contradictory and vindictive distinguished high officials sometimes condescended to be, can have their curiosities more than gratified by consulting the following documents, viz:

33d Congress, 2d session, Senate.—Ex. Doc. No. 16, correspondence between General Wool and Secretary Davis in 1854, and Palmer and Thompson's letters in the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of 1854, pages 277 to 285.

Commencement of the war:

34th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives.—Ex. Doc. No. 1, Carnes's and Palmer's letters, pages 511 to 514. No. 66. No. 93, Ambrose's, Olney's, Palmer's, Geary's, Thompson's letters, pages 59 to 124; Bennan, 1 to 11; Withers, Wool, Nesmith, Keys, Palmer, pages 1 to 39; Governor Stevens, pages 137 to 141. No. 118, Governor Curry's, pages 1 to 22; Wool, Wright, Sergeant, Kelly, pages 11 and 12; Palmer, 13 to 15; Lieutenant Phil. H. Sheridan, page 16; General Lamericks and Colonel Cornelius, pages 24 to 31. Governor Stevens and the legislature of Oregon ask for the removal of General Wool,

pages 31 to 38; 44. Governor Curry's reply to General Wool, page 45; Colonel Casey and Stevens, pages 47 to 55.

35th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives.—Ex. Doc. No. 38, letters of J. Ross Browne, pages 1 to 16; massacre of Dr. Whitney and charges against the clergy, pages 16 to 66. No. 45, report of expenses of the war by Commissioners Smith, Engle and Glover.

35th Congress, 2d session, House of Representatives.—Ex. Doc. No. 47, Captain Walker and Captain Olney's companies in 1854 No. 51, Third Auditor to the chairman of the Military Committee. No. 114, Captain T. J. Cram's report and memorial.

36th Congress, 1st session, Senate.—Mis. Doc. No. 59, reply of Adjutant C. S. Drew to Captain Cram.

36th Congress, 1st session, House of Representatives.—Ex. Doc. No. 11, Third Auditor's report of the claims growing out of the Oregon and Washington Indian war of 1855-'6.

36th Congress, 2d session, House of Representatives.—Ex. Doc. No. 29, occupation of San Juan island, page 9; value of Hudson Bay property at Vancouver, page 20; Colonel Wright and Captain (now general) F. T. Dent's report of the massacre of emigrants by Indians on Burnt river, &c., pages 86 to 90.

In my judgment, bad white men and reckless savages caused the war, and the citizens of Oregon generally, who furnished the supplies, are no more responsible for the war than the citizens who supplied our armies during the late wicked and bloody rebellion. I am firmly convinced that the truth and the whole truth is contained in a resolution of the Oregon Methodist conference, which is in these words:

Whereas our Territories have been the theatre of a disastrous Indian war during the past year; and whereas an impression has, by some means, been made abroad that the people of Oregon and Washington have acted an unworthy part in bringing it on: Therefore,

Resolved, That though there may have been occasionally individual instances of ill-treatment of the Indians by irresponsible whites, it is the conviction of this body of ministers, whose fields of labor have been in all parts of the Territories, at the beginning and during the continuance of the war, that the war has not been wantonly and wickedly provoked by our fellow-citizens, but that it has been emphatically a war of defence, and that that defence was deferred as long as Christian forbearance would warrant.—*Senate Ex. Doc., No. 59, 1st session 35th Congress, page 48.*

The unavoidable high prices for a great many of the supplies for the army, and two dollars per day which was paid by the Oregon legislature, served to make General Wool's reports plausible, and still continues to delay their settlement and payment.

By the 11th section of an act of Congress approved the 18th day of August, 1856, (11 United States Statutes, page 92,) the Secretary of War was authorized to appoint a commissioner to audit these claims.

The Secretary of War appointed Captains A. J. Smith and Rufus Ingalls, of the United States army, and Hon. L. F. Grover, who was the first member of the House from the State of Oregon.

The commissioners in due time made their report to the Secretary of War, allowing two dollars a day for each horse, and two dollars a day for each volunteer, according to the law of Oregon, and generally the prices agreed to be paid by the officers of Oregon and Washington, which amounted to the sum of five million nine hundred and thirty-one thousand four hundred and twenty-four dollars and seventy-eight cents (\$5,931,424 78.)

This sum being large, and charges of corruption being made against General Wool, some of his staff and his friends induced the House of Representatives to refer the whole matter to Robert J. Atkinson, Third Auditor of the United States treasury, who made a report allowing the volunteers the same price that the soldiers of the regular army were getting, which was only about thirteen or four-

teen dollars per month, and forty cents per day for their horses, and generally from twenty-five to fifty cents on the dollar for all kinds of army supplies.

See report of Smith, Ingalls, and Grover, House Ex. Doc. No. 45, of the first session of the thirty-fifth Congress, vol. 9, pages 4 and 9.

Third Auditor's report, House Ex. Doc. No. 11, of the first session of the thirty-sixth Congress.

Report of Jefferson Davis, chairman of the committee of the Senate, dated 29th May, 1860.

Senate Rep. Com. No. 161, first session of thirty-sixth Congress, vol. 1.

The result of all these reports may be summed up in a few words. By an act of Congress of the 2d of March, 1861, the general principles contained in the Third Auditor's report were adopted; the sum of four hundred thousand dollars was appropriated to pay the volunteers, and for supplies two million four hundred thousand dollars.

This act, among other things, declares that the Third Auditor "be, and he hereby is, authorized and directed to receive additional evidence as to the amount or value of supplies, transportation, and personal service, and to correct errors in his former report touching the same." (12th United States Statutes at Large, 198, 199.)

Under this clause some of the claimants made proof of the actual value of the supplies, &c, by good, respectable, disinterested citizens of Oregon, and tried to get the Third Auditor to amend his report and to allow them something near their actual value.

Atkinson, being in sympathy with Wool, disbelieving the best evidence that could be obtained in Oregon, or being a corrupt scoundrel, disregarded the proof and refused to allow any more than was contained in his former report. The claimants generally soon got the news of the manner in which their claims were being audited, through agents and the newspapers.

Many thought, and will forever think, that they were deceived and swindled from the beginning to the end.

About the time the first payments were made the government bonds had declined to ten or fifteen per cent. discount. Soon after this the treasury paid thirty and forty cents on the dollar of the amount of the original claims in drafts on the treasury.

These drafts were paid in legal tenders, which sold and still sell in the market at enormous discounts; hence hundreds and thousands of dollars of the original war scrip are still held by the original owners, waiting, like Micawber, for something to turn up, so that they may get an equivalent for the supplies furnished.

Mrs. Harris and Mr. Evans both thought their claims were covered by the act of the 2d of March, 1861, and Mrs. Harris remarked to me, at the time she gave me her claim for collection, that she would not take the contemptible sum generally allowed by the Third Auditor, but that she was poor, and something was better than nothing.

After my arrival at Washington some time last winter or spring, I learned for the first time that there was no appropriation to pay any of the claims audited by Philo Callender. After this I informed the claimants, Mr. Evans and Mrs. Harris, and wrote to the Secretary of the State of Oregon for the proofs, and he sent me the journals containing the report of Callender.

Doubtless the prices in the accounts of Mrs. Harris and Mr. Evans appear high to you and to all persons not well acquainted with the prices in this section of the country, but to my mind they are reasonable, just, and correct, and low enough compared with other prices in the immediate vicinity.

From the first settlement of this part of Oregon and Siskiyou county, California, until after this war, prices generally were always higher in these two counties than in any other county in either State. This will appear reasonable and plain from the affidavits of J. W. McCulley, D. Kenney, W. W. Fowler,

S. Ettinger, J. A. Brunner, W. Hesse, John Anderson, and Benjamin T. Davis, which are found in Miscellaneous Documents, No. 47, of the House, of the second session of the thirty-fifth Congress.

On pages 32, 33, 34, and 35, they truly say, "that these valleys are surrounded with rough and rugged mountains, which make them very difficult of access; that these valleys are bounded on the west by the Coast range of mountains, on the east by the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges; that the Grave Creek hills, Umpqua, and Calapooia mountains separate Rogue River valley from steamboat navigation on the Willamette river, and Mount Shasta and the Trinity mountains separate Shasta valley from steamboat navigation on the Sacramento river, and Shasta and Rogue River valleys are divided by the Siskiyou mountain, which runs near due east and west, and close to the dividing line between Oregon and California.

"The principal towns in these valleys are Jacksonville, in Oregon, and Yreka, in California. These towns are noted for their rapid increase in population, the frequent changes and fluctuations in their markets, rich gold mines, frequent Indian wars, and high prices; but it will be seen by the following prices that the government has not been asked to pay as high prices to prosecute these wars as individuals have frequently paid in time of peace for necessaries of life, while pursuing their common avocations. Yreka was settled in 1851, and Jacksonville in 1852.

"After enumerating various prices and their exact dates, from their books, for two or three years, these gentlemen say, 'the above prices have been taken from the books and accounts of these affiants, and from them it will be seen that in 1852 and 1853 flour raised in Jacksonville from sixteen cents to one dollar and seventy-five cents per pound; coffee from forty cents to one dollar; sugar from thirty cents to one dollar; salt from thirty-five cents to four dollars, and beef from twenty-five to thirty-five cents per pound.'"

These affiants are informed and verily believe that during the same time, in Yreka, a distance of sixty miles, flour sold from sixteen cents to two dollars per pound, and coffee and sugar from forty and fifty cents to a dollar and fifty cents and two dollars per pound; salt and tobacco from one dollar to fourteen dollars per pound; and that thousands of persons during the winter of 1852 and 1853 lived in Jacksonville and Yreka for upward of six weeks upon beef straight; that as late as March, 1853, thousands of pounds of flour were sold in Yreka for cash at one dollar per pound.

In 1854 the roads and pack trails were better, and the prices lower and more uniform, flour varying from fourteen cents to forty cents per pound, sugar from twenty to forty cents, coffee from thirty to seventy-five cents per pound, and salt from fifteen cents to forty cents per pound, and everything in proportion.

In the latter part of the summer and first of the fall of 1854 the quartermaster general of Oregon was wholly unable to get flour at forty cents, sugar at fifty cents, and bacon and coffee at seventy-five cents, enough in Jacksonville to supply Captain Jesse Walker's company of mounted volunteers ninety-six days, while in active service, on the credit of the Territory and the faith of the United States, but was compelled to apply to the merchants of Yreka, California, for the necessary supplies for the use of this company and the indigent immigrants who were then on their way to southern Oregon and northern California.

We know this of our own knowledge, for we were applied to and urged to furnish the necessary supplies at the above prices. As late as December, 1854, flour sold at sixteen cents per pound at Jacksonville, and as high, at the same time, as twenty and twenty-three cents at Yreka; but in the spring of 1855 it fell to twelve and thirteen cents, and this article has never been above thirteen cents since in this market; and now these affiants are selling an excellent article of flour at five cents per pound, bacon at thirty-five cents, sugar and coffee at thirty-three cents, and salt as low as twelve cents per pound. However, flour has declined more in price than any other article, owing to large and fine crops of wheat being raised in Rogue River, Shasta, and Scott's valleys, in the immediate vicinity of probably the best gold mines on the Pacific coast, while sugar, coffee, salt, and dry goods are still transported here from San Francisco, California. Since the first settlement of these towns to the present the great body of merchandise which has been sold in Jacksonville and Yreka has been transported on the backs of pack-mules, either from the head of steamboat navigation on the Sacramento river, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, or from the head of steamboat navigation on the Willamette river, a distance of two hundred miles; or across the Coast range of mountains from Crescent City, a distance of one hundred and twenty

miles. Freights upon whole stocks of goods and groceries have frequently been from fifteen to twenty and thirty cents per pound from these places to Jacksonville, and sometimes as high as fifty cents on unhandy articles to pack.

As late as November, 1854, the said Fowler was compelled to pay fifty cents per pound for packing some billiard-tables from Crescent City to Jacksonville, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles, and as late as the fall of 1855 many of the merchants of Jacksonville paid upward of sixteen cents per pound freight on whole cargoes of their goods from San Francisco to Jacksonville, and as late as April, 1856, they paid upward of thirteen cents, but during the last summer it only cost them from five to six cents. This great change so recently in the price of transportation doubtless may be attributed to the removal of the hostile Indians to the coast reservation, from the immediate vicinity of the roads and pack trails over which the Jacksonville merchandise had to pass.

Now there is less danger of Indians, the pack animals are more constantly employed, and more pack animals have come on the route from Lower California, which has caused greater competition between the packers.

From the first settlement of Shasta and Rogue River valleys to the time of the removal of the Indians to the coast reservations, in 1856, the roads and trails leading to and through these valleys have been considered more or less dangerous, and many transportation animals that would have been employed on these trails, owing to the hostility of the Indians, have been kept employed on other roads and trails, where the Indians were considered less dangerous.

These numerous fluctuations and high prices have been caused by a variety of facts and circumstances, such as the hostility of Indians, scarcity of capital, high price of interest, muddy and snowy roads, rough and rugged mountains over which the merchandise had to pass, the scarcity of transportation animals, and the high price of labor. Interest, from the first discovery of gold in Shasta valley to the present time, has been from three to five per cent. per month; hence the merchants could only buy or sell on very short credits, and the miners have made from nothing to one hundred dollars per day to the hand.

Under these circumstances, common laborers, who have no claims, will not work for less than from two to six dollars per day.

Witnesses further state that they are acquainted, from common reputation, with the general character of the Shasta, Modoc, and Pi-Ute Indians, and know something of the dangers, difficulties, trials, and hardships that many of the overland immigrants have to encounter, and the hostilities of these Indians in the summer of 1854, at the time Captain Jesse Walker's company was called into active service, and they believe the company was actually necessary for the safety of the lives and property of the immigrants; that the regular army stationed in the vicinity of the emigrant road was small, and wholly failed to keep the peace within the settlements between the whites and Indians.

These witnesses have no interest in these claims for supplies, &c., but make this affidavit at the request of the claimants, that justice may be done.

(House Mis. Doc. No. 47, 2d session of the 35th Congress, vol. 1, pages 32 to 35.)

I am well acquainted with these eight witnesses, and I know them to be men of truth and veracity. Each and all of them were traders and merchants of Jacksonville from 1852 until long after the close of the war of 1855-'56. They had many opportunities to know this country and the prices, and I would believe them as soon as I would any one in the country.

I know a great deal of these prices to be true of my own knowledge. However, I was never lucky enough to get one dollar and twenty-five cents per pound either for flour or salt; but I have bought flour in the Willamette valley at ten cents and sold some of it in Jacksonville at seventy-five cents per pound, and the balance in Yreka at one dollar twelve and a half cents per pound, and salt at one dollar per pound. I have repeatedly sold sugar, coffee, and salt, at forty and fifty cents per pound, and occasionally as high as sixty cents per pound; and I paid, in September, 1855, just before the commencement of this war, fifteen cents per pound freight for a whole train load of goods and groceries from Crescent City to Jacksonville, a distance of only one hundred and twenty miles. The cost of transportation to Evans & Harris would have been at any time as high or a little higher than to Jacksonville, because it is further from the sea-coast, and they frequently bought their supplies in Jacksonville.

The commissioners, Smith, Ingalls, and Grover, at the close of their report say: "There are doubtless, to some limited extent, irregular and unascertained claims growing out of the late volunteer service, which have not come to the notice of the commissioners, but such will be found inconsiderable." (Senate Ex. Doc. No. 23, of the first session of the 35th Congress, vol. 7, page 9.)

All the claims audited by Philo Callender, including the claims of my clients, Evans & Harris, belong to this class of cases. They have never been submitted to these commissioners, and they were not submitted to the Third Auditor until long after the appropriation for the other claims was made. The exact date of their submission to the Third Auditor may be found on the voucher.

I was well acquainted with Callender about the time he was appointed commissioner, and at the time he made his report, but since that time I have not seen him. He was a vigilant, active member of the legislature of Oregon in 1855-'56, and I have confidence in his honesty, ability, and integrity, and I think all the claims ought to be paid; but I have no personal knowledge of any of the circumstances under which the supplies were furnished, nor of the items, except the claim of the estate of George W. Harris.

Hoping that all just claims may soon be paid, and that the claim of the brave and gallant widow and orphan, who fought their deadly enemies for nearly twenty-four hours, may be among the first, I remain yours, very respectfully,

B. F. DOWELL,

*Attorney for Davis Evans and Mary A. Harris,
Administratrix of G. W. Harris's estate.*

WASHINGTON D. C., February 28, 1868.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 24, 1868.

I, B. F. Dowell, a citizen of Jacksonville, Oregon, make oath that I believe the matters and things stated in the foregoing letter to be true.

B. F. DOWELL.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this second day of March, 1868.

CHARLES P. WEBSTER,
Justice of the Peace.