

ABBIE SHARP, FORMERLY ABBIE GARDNER.

MARCH 14, 1888.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. WHITTHORNE, from the Select Committee on Indian Depredation Claims, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 4775.]

The Select Committee on Indian Depredation Claims, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 4775) for the relief of Abbie Sharp, formerly Abbie Gardner, beg leave to report:

That the questions involved in this case have been considered and examined heretofore by the Committee on Claims and the Committee on Indian Affairs of the House of Representatives, and reported favorably; that from the Committee on Indian Affairs in the Forty-seventh Congress, first session (No. 487); that from the Committee on Claims in the Forty-ninth Congress, first session (No. 858).

Now this committee, after an examination of the evidence and papers now on file in said case in the Interior Department, find the following facts correctly stated, as the committee now extract and exhibit the same from said report of the House Committee on Claims made, as stated, to the Forty-ninth Congress, first session, to wit:

Prior and up to the 8th day of March, 1857, a considerable settlement of white people existed in the vicinity of Spirit and West Okiboji Lakes, two bodies of water lying in proximity to each other in northwestern Iowa.

Among other settlers living there was Rowland Gardner, with his wife and three children, including this claimant, Abbie Gardner, who was then fourteen years old. Another daughter then, but recently married to a man named Luce, lived on an adjoining farm.

Upon the date last named, Inkpaduta, with his band of Sioux Indians, made an irruption into the settlement, and began a massacre of the inhabitants, that ended only with the extermination or capture of the entire settlement. The massacre is well known as one of the most inhuman, as well as one of the most complete in its exterminating character, in the long list of savage atrocities.

The claimant saw her mother and family killed, one after another; also her sister, Mrs. Luce. While holding the infant child of the latter and endeavoring to protect her own infant brother, the Indians dragged them from her arms, and beat out their brains with sticks of stove-wood. The cattle and stock were shot down and destroyed in sheer wantonness; the furniture and property of all kinds were destroyed. Her father and Mr. Luce, her brother-in-law, with her entire family, except a sister who was absent, were murdered with the rest. Three women, besides claimant, were the only captives taken and spared.

The Indians then began their retreat into Dakota. The claimant, although but a young girl, was compelled to carry a load of some 60 or 70 pounds, consisting of eight bars of lead, 1 pound of bullets, one tent cover made of the thickest and heaviest kind of cloth, one Indian blanket, one iron bar about 4 feet long and 1 inch thick, a stick of wood of considerable weight, and a gun; in addition to this a flat piece of wood about 4 feet long to keep the back straight. She was obliged to carry this load and keep up with her captors in their retreat, wading streams which at that time, in the

month of March, were very cold, and with the other outrages perpetrated upon her totally ruining her health. She saw her female companions who were taken with her killed or die of exposure, and after several months' captivity she was rescued by Indian scouts employed for that purpose through the exertions largely of Maj. Charles E. Flandreau, then Indian agent for the Sioux of the Upper Mississippi. Her father's land was seized by others, and being a young girl, broken down in health, with all her relatives swept away, save a young sister absent from the massacre, she had no one to interest themselves in her behalf. This land is now embraced in one of the most picturesque and popular watering-places of the northwest, and is shown to be worth about \$200 an acre. Claimant's health is now utterly broken down, so as to render it impossible, as stated by her physician and others, to earn a livelihood; this on account of the outrages to which she was subjected while in captivity. She is obliged to subsist largely upon the assistance of friends. Her integrity and excellent character are amply vouched for by distinguished citizens; among others are Gov. C. C. Carpenter, lately a member of this House, also Hon. John F. Duncombe, both of whom are personally acquainted with her and were among the volunteers who marched to the scene of the massacre to render assistance.

Claimant's only surviving sister has assigned to claimant all her right and claim for compensation for damages growing out of the massacre and loss of property. Mrs. Sharp filed with the Interior Department her claim for property destroyed in the sum of \$10,630, which was duly investigated and examined by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and was recommended for allowance by him in the sum of \$2,630. This recommendation was duly approved by the Secretary of the Interior on the 29th of January, 1885.

Hon. Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, in his report upon this case says:

"The property was completely destroyed, as will be seen by reference to the report of Maj. William Williams, who had charge of the expedition to recover the captive settlers from the Indians, in which he says: 'At every point they (the Indians) broke up and destroyed all the furniture, burned the houses, killed the cattle—very nearly a hundred head of cattle shot down; their whole course goes to show that they intended to break up and stop the entire settlement of that part of the country.' That as early as the 15th of April, after the massacre, new settlers came in and the land claims of Gardner and Luce were taken possession of by one J. S. Prescott, and that the title thereto was secured by him; the lands and improvements were entirely lost to the heirs of the said Gardner and Luce; that the interest of her sister in said claim was conveyed to claimant, which will more fully appear in the deed attached to claimant's declaration, and marked Exhibit B. Claimant further states that she has made application to Congress for relief, and attaches to said papers a letter from Hon. N. C. Deering, late member from Iowa, showing the course which her petition has passed, and marked Exhibit C. The reason her claim did not pass was that no specific itemized statement of losses sustained was made. She therefore presents herewith her claim as follows, to wit:

(1) That at the time of the massacre she was but fourteen years of age, and that by reason of cruel treatment and exposure her health was completely ruined, and a reasonable compensation should be allowed, in a sum not less than.....	\$3,000
(2) She claims that she would be entitled in justice to the value of the land at the time of her father's and her brother-in-law's death, well worth the sum of.....	5,000
(3) The personal property of Gardner and Luce, destroyed by said Indians, consisted of, as near as she can recollect, namely, 6 yoke of working cattle, valued at \$100.....	600
5 cows, valued at \$50.....	250
12 head of young cattle, valued at.....	250
3 lumber wagons, at \$80.....	240
2 breaking plows, ox-yokes, chains, etc.....	90
Mowing-scythes, hay-rakes, pitchforks, several hogs, a large amount of poultry, seed wheat, seed corn, corn for keeping stock, potatoes, two double-barreled guns, household goods, consisting of 5 beds and bedding, 2 cooking-stoves, 2 tables, necessary dishes, knives and forks, table linen, etc., 50 yards of carpet, a clock, and all personal clothing, and numerous articles which are not stated, valued at.....	1,200
Total amount claimed.....	10,630

* * * * *

The joint certificate of John Duncombe, captain of Company B, and Charles Richards, of Company A, of Iowa Volunteers, is also filed in support of said claim, who, under the same date, in substance, state that they were under the command of Maj.

William Williams's expedition for the rescue of the fugitives from the said massacre. A detail was assigned to bury the dead, and who did bury the families of the above-named Gardner and Luce, and do hereby certify that from their own knowledge, and at the time (March 8, 1857) when said massacre occurred, they believe the allegations as stated by claimant to be true in every particular.

After examination of all the evidence presented, and from the further fact that it is well known to this office that the massacre took place at the time and place stated, I am of the opinion that the depredation was committed as alleged.

This claim, if it were possible, should be paid out of annuities due these Indians. By a communication, however, from the Hon. Samuel J. Kirkwood, Secretary of the Interior, it is alleged that Inkpaduta's band were outlaws from the Sioux tribe of Indians, and that the Sioux tribe had never been held responsible for their acts. The Secretary's letter is as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, February 14, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt by reference from your committee of 8th instant of H. R. No. 306, Forty-seventh Congress, first session, entitled "A bill for the relief of Abbie Sharp," with request for information—first, as to the band of Sioux Indians who committed the outrage for which relief is granted, and, second, whether there are any monies due or to become due said band out of which relief can be afforded the claimant. In reply I respectfully invite attention to the inclosed copy of the report of the 11th instant from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, from which it appears that the Sioux Indians committing the outrage complained of were known as Inkpaduta's band, who were outlaws from their tribe, and that the Sioux tribe had never been held responsible for their acts, and appropriations from the public funds, as will appear from the legislation cited in his letter referred to, have been heretofore made for the satisfaction of depredations committed by said band. H. R. 306 is herewith respectfully returned.

Very respectfully,

S. J. KIRKWOOD,
Secretary.

Hon. D. C. HASKELL,
Chairman Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives.

In view of these facts and conceiving that the obligation of the Government exists under the law to indemnify its peaceful citizens for property so taken from them, and as the amount claimed in the bill is under that shown to exist by Hon. Hiram Price, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, this committee recommend the passage of the bill.