

ARETAS WHITCOMB.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

Papers in the Indian depredation claim of Aretas Whitcomb.

JANUARY 20, 1890.—Referred to the Committee on Indian Depredation Claims and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 17, 1890.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a copy of a communication of 30th September, 1889, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, inclosing certain papers in the Indian depredation claim of Aretas Whitcomb, No. 62, which claim was transmitted to Congress in January, 1888 (see Ex. Doc. 77, Forty-ninth Congress, second session).

These papers were returned to the Indian Office from the House of Representatives on the 23d September, 1889, and are as follows:

Letter from claimant; affidavits of Eliza Richards and Eliza Dexter; Office letter of August 5, 1881, and Department letter of January 12, 1882.

The Commissioner states that this testimony does not, in the opinion of his office, justify any change in the conclusions heretofore reached in this case, and in compliance with his recommendation the papers are herewith returned with request that they be filed with the above claim.

Very respectfully,

JOHN W. NOBLE,
Secretary.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, September 30, 1889.

SIR: On December 2, 1886, this office made a report on depredation claim No. 62, of Aretas Whitcomb, amount \$23,000, and pursuant to Department letter of December 4, 1886, the claim, with all the papers then on file, was transmitted to Congress January, 1887 (Ex. Doc. 77, Forty-ninth Congress, second session).

On the 23d instant the following papers pertaining to this claim were returned to this office from the House of Representatives, pursuant to act of March 3, 1885 :

Letter from claimant; affidavits of Eliza Richards and Eliza Dexter; Office letter of August 5, 1881; and Department letter of January 12, 1882.

This testimony does not, in the opinion of this office, justify any change in the conclusions heretofore reached in this case, and I have the honor to recommend that these papers (which are herewith inclosed) be transmitted to Congress to be filed with above claim.

Very respectfully,

R. V. BELT,
Acting Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

SEMIAHMOO, WHITCOMB COUNTY, WASH., July 14, 1881.

COMMISSIONER OF INDIAN AFFAIRS:

SIR: I have delayed sending these testimonies, in hopes of getting others to go with them. I sent to Nebraska for witnesses, but since we left that country one of those we sent for has died, and others have moved away. It has been so long, and we are so far away, it makes slow work. If I was able to go there, I think I could hunt up plenty of witnesses, but as it is, I don't know how it will be.

Will you please to tell me what further witness we need. We thought we had all the witness that was required, or we might have secured many more before we left the place. Some three or four Indians said they would testify to the Indians burning the mill, but we thought there was no use, because we could hear nothing from it. We thought that W. A. Berley had destroyed it—he said he had—and now it has been so long, and I have failed the first time trying, that I am afraid I shall not be able to get any further witnesses. Nevertheless, if it is needed, I will try.

Now we are old and feeble, not able to earn our living; twice the Indians have stripped us of all we had (or nearly all), once in Nebraska and once in Arizona, and if you can help us please help us. I send with this two witnesses, all that I could get here that I thought would do any good. There are others here that knew something about it; they saw the mill before and after it was burned, and that is about all.

Yours, respectfully,

ARETAS WHITCOMB.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *County of Whatcom, ss:*

Personally appeared before me, a notary public in and for the county of Whatcom, W. T., the undersigned deponent, and says my name is Eliza Richards.

That I was a resident of Nebraska, Dixon County, from 1867 until 1869, continuously, and that I lived within 2 rods of steam grist and saw mill belonging to Aretas Whitcomb; that I am personally knowing to the burning of said mill, together with a large amount of other property stored in the said mill; and further that I firmly believe that the burning was done by the Sioux Indians.

Further the deponent saith not.

ELIZA RICHARDS.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of May, A. D. 1881.

[SEAL.]

A. W. STEWART,
Notary Public.

TERRITORY OF WASHINGTON, *County of Whatcom, ss:*

Personally appeared before me, a notary public in and for Whatcom County, W. T., the undersigned deponent and says that my name is Eliza Dexter, and that I was a resident of Nebraska from the year 1856 to the year 1859, and that I was a resident of said State at the time of the burning of a steam grist and saw mill belonging to Aretas Whitcomb, said mill situated on the Missouri River, in the county of Dixon, State of Nebraska; that I lived within 10 rods of said mill at the time of the burning; that about 2 o'clock a. m., when the alarm of fire was given, I went to the door

and saw a torch in the hand of some person coming from the burning mill toward the dwelling-houses, four in number, and on seeing that the inmates of the houses were aware of their presence the torch disappeared over the bank of the river; that a Frenchman who lived with the Indians at the time of the burning of the mill told me afterward that the Indians intended to burn the dwelling houses and people as well as the mill, but were prevented by the barking of the dogs at the houses. After the burning the parties who did the burning went toward where a portion of the Sioux were living. This circumstance, with the statement of a Frenchman, led me to believe that it was the Indians who did the burning of the said mill.

Further this deponent saith not.

ELIZA DEXTER.

Subscribed and sworn to this 13th day of May, A. D. 1881.

[SEAL.]

A. W. STEWART,
Notary Public.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, August 5, 1881.

SIR: Referring to the report of this office, dated April 1, 1874, submitting the claim of Aretas Whitcomb, amounting to \$24,000, on account of alleged Indian depredations, I have the honor to inclose herewith the affidavits of Eliza Richards and Eliza Dexter, and a letter from said claimant, received on the 2d instant, and respectfully recommend that the same be transmitted to Congress to be filed with the other papers in the case.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. L. STEVENS,
Acting Commissioner.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington City, January 12, 1882.

SIR: In compliance with the terms of the seventh section of the act approved May 29, 1872, entitled "An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department, and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, for the year ending June 30, 1873, and for other purposes," I have the honor to transmit herewith additional evidence in the claim of Aretas Whitcomb for compensation on account of depredations committed by Indians.

A letter dated the 5th day of August, 1881, from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, reporting the nature, character, and amount of said claim, is accompanied by the evidence presented in support thereof, and shows the action taken by that officer under the rules and regulations prescribed by this Department for the investigation of such claims; all which is respectfully submitted for the consideration of Congress, as contemplated by said seventh section of the act aforesaid.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. J. KIRKWOOD,
Secretary.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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