

Oregon Secretary of State

Defendants Request, Whitman Massacre Trial 1851

Transcript of Original Document

The United States }
vs }
Telokite et al }

Telokite one of the defendants makes oath that a certain Indian named Quishem now in the Cayuse country he thinks will be a material witness for the defendants in this case. That the materiality of said witness was not known in time to have him in attendance at this term of the court. He expects & believes that said witness will prove that the late Dr Whitman administered medi-cines to may of the Cayuse Indians and that afterwards a large number of them died, including amongst them the wives and children of some of these defendants. He expects further to prove by said witness that a certain Joseph Lewis, who resided at Wailatpu informed these defendants a few days before the 29 November 1847 that the Cayuse Indians were dying in consequence of poison being administered to them by the late Marcus Whitman and he had heard Dr. Whitman say that he would kill off all of the Cayuse Indians by the coming of the ensuing spring-that he would then have their horses and lands. Witness will also prove it is the law of the Cayuse Indians to kill bad medicine men.

Background

The Wailatpu mission, run by Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and established in 1836, became a way station for immigrants and local Indians came to resent this. One wagon train brought an epidemic of measles and hundreds of Indians died. On Nov. 29, 1847, Cayuse Indians attacked the mission and killed 14 whites, including the Whitmans. Surviving women and children were taken captive. Hostilities ended when five Indians surrendered in 1850. This document shows that the defendants believed the Whitmans poisoned the Indians so they could take their lands and horses. The Cayuse retribution for bad medicine was to kill the medicine man. The five defendants were convicted and hanged in 1851.



The Witness stating

by

Telokite et al } Telokite one of the defendants

makes oath that a certain Indian named Quishem now in the Cayuse Country, he thinks will be a material witness for the defendants in this case. That the materiality of said witness was not known in time to have him in

attendance at this term of the Court. He expects

& believes that said witness will prove

that the late Dr Whitman administered medicines to many of the Cayuse Indians and that

afterwards a large number of them died, including ~~amongst~~ among them the wives and children of some of these defendants.

He expects further to prove by said witness that a certain Joseph Lewis, who resided at

Waiilatpu ~~was~~ informed these defendants a few days before the 29 November 1847

that the Cayuse Indians were dying in consequence of poison being administered to them by the late Marcus Whitman

and he had heard Dr Whitman say that he would kill off all of the Cayuse Indians by the coming of the ensuing Spring - that he would

They have their horses and loads
Witness will also prove that it is the
Law of the Cayuse Indians to Kill
Bad Medicine Men.