

THE INDIAN SIDE OF THE STORY

by Wm. Compton Brown

Historians have habitually said Kamiahkin was the prime mover in this attack on Stevens' party. They even go into detail and tell what orders Kamiahkin gave and how he conducted the engagement and what he said about it. My information is all to the effect that Quil-ten-e-nock and the youthful Qualchen led the fighting, and it was to them that the young looked for inspiration and directions.

The spirited young Quil-ten-e-nock was the head chief of the "Half-Sun" people or so-called Isle de Pierres Indians. The famous Chief Moses was his younger brother. Quil-ten-e-nock was not notified of the first Walla Walla Treaty Council and his people had no representation there...When Kamiahkin and the rest signed the Yakima Treaty, it ceded away the Half Sun lands....Quil-ten-e-nock became filled with a... desire to see Governor Stevens and lay the matter directly before him and get him to right the wrong....

When Quil-ten-nock got no consideration from Stevens, he was greatly disappointed and angered. In consequence, Quil-ten-e-nock and some of his followers attacked Stevens' escort and some sharp fighting ensued....He is said to have been very reckless himself and during the fighting had two horses shot under him.

Qualchen's younger brother Lo-Kout, was in the forefront of the scrimmage all the afternoon and evening. He got caught in the sortie that Shaw and a detachment of the volunteers made from the white camp after dark and was so severely wounded as to render him helpless. A white volunteer came up and struck him with the butt of his gun in the forehead and left him for dead. This resulted in a conspicuous scar in the shape of a big depression in his forehead which was carried all the days of his life. He lived to a good old age and died here at Nespelem on the Colville reservation...

(Gov.) Stevens, in his report of this fighting, says, "We fought four hundred and fifty Indians, and had one man mortally, one dangerously, and two slightly wounded. We killed and wounded thirteen Indians." Hazard Stevens (son of Gov. Stevens) has this to say about the attack: "One half of the Nez Perces, one hundred and twenty warriors, all of the Yakimas and Palouse, two hundred warriors, the great bulk of the Cayuse, Walla Wallas, and Umatillas were in the fight.

The principal war chiefs were the son of Ow-hi and the Isle de Pere chief, Quil-to-mee." From what I have gathered I don't think over three or four Indians were killed. And as for four or five hundred Indians having joined in the attack, I am inclined to think that there is certainly very much of an exaggeration unless the on-lookers from a distance be counted.



Lo-Kout, Edward S. Curtis, 1910



Chief Kamiakin, Gustav Sohon