

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

THE CHINESE MASSACRE AT DOUGLAS BAR, SNAKE RIVER

Number 441

1967

Lewiston Teller, April 26, 1888, page 2, column 2:

Last fall, says the Wallowa Signal, a camp of thirty-four Chinese moved on one of the bars on Snake River, just above the junction of the Imnaha with that river, to spend the winter mining for gold. When they moved there it was known they had a large boat and a good supply of provisions, and, it is estimated, about \$30,000 in gold dust. The bar on which they had encamped is very isolated, and since spring has opened a party of men passing one day noticed no one around the camp, and on an investigation found the bodies of two Chinamen who had undoubtedly been killed by shooting in the head, and the other Chinamen were nowhere to be seen. Their tents were blown down, and after being taken up revealed a large amount of provisions and mining utensils, which had been used but very little. The boat was missing, and everything looked as if it had been deserted for some time. On the bank near the river were found several small piles of cartridge shells, which seem to have been thrown out together, and with which the awful deed must have been committed.

Is this a revival of an old story, that has been heretofore published, or is it some new account about missing Chinamen. Who knows that any thirty-four Chinamen went on to any such bar and went to mining last fall. We discredit the story and shall do so until further evidence be made manifest.

Lewiston Teller, May 3, 1888, p. 2, c. 2:

Since our last issue we are placed in possession of further facts as given by Wallowa Signal of a later date, which are as follows:

Three weeks ago we published an account of a massacre of Chinamen on Snake river just above the mouth of the Imnaha, and while in the main the facts are true as we published them, we are now in possession of the entire matter as it actually occurred.

A party consisting of Bruce Evans, J. T. Canfield, Homer LaRue, Robt. McMillan, Carl Hughs, H. Maynard and Frank Vaughn, of Wallowa, entered into an agreement last spring, now nearly a year ago, to murder these Chinese for the gold dust they thought they possessed, and agreed that if any of the party divulged it

the rest should kill him; but Hughs did not like the idea of committing the deed at all and would have had no hand in the matter, but at this time was stopping with the parties who committed the deed.

As near as we can learn, about a year ago now, all the men named above except Hughs went down to the Chinese camp and opened fire on them, killing them all, ten in number, and then put the bodies of all except two into the boat which the Chinamen had, and scuttled it. They then secured all the money and gold dust they could find, amounting to between \$4,000 or \$5,000, which was given to Canfield to sell for coin, and after he got possession of it he skipped the country, and the rest of the party got nothing.

The grand jury took hold of the matter but of course it is not known what they found out, but Vaughn has made a confession in accordance with the above, and we are satisfied the matter is about straight. All the parties have left the country except Vaughn and Hughs.

Wednesday evening Hughs was arrested and taken to jail. What will be done with Vaughn we do not know, but as he has turned states evidence, we suppose he will be held as a witness against the others, but as they are all gone except Hughs there is little probability that they will ever be brought to justice.