

# A MYSTERY SOLVED.

## How Thirty-four Chinese Were Killed.

### Murdered in the Wilds of Oregon.

#### Their Bodies Thrown Into Snake River—Nearly \$60,000 Stolen by the Assassins.

Many readers of the CHRONICLE will doubtless recollect that in the spring of 1887 dispatches were published from several points in Idaho concerning the finding of the bodies of a number of Chinese in the Snake river. Twenty bodies in all were found, and all bore gunshot wounds, showing that they had been murdered.

Beyond these facts, however, the affair has remained a mystery until the present day. The Chinese officials in this city, as soon as they heard of the finding of the bodies, communicated with the authorities in the vicinity of where the murders were believed to have been committed, and in reply were assured that the section was a wild one, inhabited by desperados and horse-thieves, and that all efforts to learn the facts in regard to the wholesale crime had been unavailing.

The locality of the crime was in the extreme northeastern part of Oregon, on the west bank of the Snake river, which there separates the State mentioned from Idaho.

A detective was then sent from this city, who spent a long time in the valley of the Snake river, searching for some clue to the murderers. He was unable to accomplish anything, however, and so, after expending a large amount of money, the search was abandoned. The officials in this city have always believed, however, that a number of men must have been concerned in the crime, and they have felt certain that in time the secret would be disclosed by some of them.

That confidence has at last been rewarded by the receipt of a confession made by a youth on his deathbed, who was present at some of the murders, and who knew the facts in regard to them all through association with the murderers.

It appears that thirty-four Chinese, all told, were murdered in cold blood—four white men being concerned in the slaughter—which was committed solely for robbery, upward of \$60,000 having been realized. But the document received by Consul Bee tells the story most graphically. It is as follows:

I, Hugh McMillan, now of Walla Walla, Wash., formerly of Immana, Wallowa county, State of Oregon, make the following statement to the end that justice may be done interested parties:

I make this statement from a statement made me by my son Robert, aged 16 years, just prior to his death, and by me then reduced to writing.

In the latter part of April, A. D. 1887, my son, Bruce Evans, J. T. ("Tide") Canfield, Max Larue, Frank Vaughn, Hiram Maynard and Carl Hughes were stopping in a cattle camp about four miles from Snake river. My son and Evans, Canfield, Larue and Vaughn started from the cabin to go to a Chinese camp on Snake river (this was in the afternoon). They went down Douglas creek two miles, then up the river by trail to the Chinese camp. Canfield and Larue went above the camp and Evans and Vaughn remained below the camp. The whole party was armed with six-shooters and Winchester repeating rifles. There were present thirteen Chinamen, twelve on the bar and one in the camp at the tents. Those above the camp fired upon the Chinamen first. The Chinamen retreated (unarmed) down the river, where they were fired upon by those below the camp. Twelve of the Chinamen were instantly killed, the other one being wounded and afterward killed. The twelve killed were thrown in the river. They proceeded to rob the Chinese camp. They got that evening five sacks of gold dust, each weighing \$1100.

The next morning about daylight Evans asked Vaughn what had become of the Chinaman who fell near the big rock (a rock which stood below the camp near where Evans and Vaughn stood the day before), to which Vaughn replied that he didn't know. Evans then said: "We had better go and see; he may not be dead." They then got up and hurried to the river, going, as before, down Douglas creek. When they arrived at the river they saw a Chinaman coming down the river in a boat. This Chinaman afterward proved to be the Chinaman that fell by the rock on the evening before and the one Evans and Vaughn were going to see about. When they had arrived at the river and had seen this Chinaman in the boat, they hid until he was opposite, when they fired upon him. The river being rough, so as to toss the boat, the Chinaman was not hit, but dropped in the bottom of the boat. The current and wind brought the boat to the shore where Evans and Vaughn were, and they knocked his brains out and threw him in the river. This was the Chinaman that fell during the row, he being shot only through the arm.

Evans and Vaughn then went to the camp where the shooting took place the night before. Just as they got to the camp a boat containing eight Chinamen came down the river and they landed, pulled the boat ashore and walked up from the river. Evans and Vaughn had come up the river in the boat in which the Chinaman was, and before reaching the camp were joined by Canfield and Larue. They fired upon the eight Chinamen when upon the shore and a short distance from the river, killing them all, and threw them in the river.

They then took the boat vacated by the Chinamen and went up the river about four miles from the above mentioned camp, to another camp containing thirteen Chinamen. These Chinamen were at work on the river bar when they were fired upon by Evans, Vaughn, Canfield and Larue and killed, their bodies being thrown in the river. The camp was then robbed, a large amount of gold being secured. The gold was retorted by the Chinamen into gold balls, the value of which was fixed by Evans and his associates as being \$50,000.

My son was only present the first day, but was acquainted with the facts, as they were talked over by the parties in his presence.

The circumstances here detailed occurred on the Oregon side of the Snake river in Wallowa county, near the northeast corner of the State.

Dated, WALLA WALLA, August 31, 1891.

HUGH McMILLAN.

Witness' signature: W. M. CLARKE.

The Chinese Consul-General in this city will at once communicate these facts to his own Government and it is probable that steps will be taken to punish the miscreants who committed these cold-blooded crimes.