

Document #12: An interview with Clifford Jake, a descendant of the Paiute Indians, among whom the story of the massacre was passed down orally. This interview was conducted in 1998, when Jake was eighty years old. (Some words have been changed for easier reading).

I used to chop wood for the old man Isaac Hunkup and his sister... He told me a story about what they saw and what they heard about the Mountain Meadow Massacre. The Paiute people didn't know anything about what was taking place there. The Paiute were calm and quiet. They didn't know anything about anything. There were two Indian brothers that came to Pine Valley hunting deer... Isaac told me was that they were camping there in the mountain. In the morning during the day [they] heard a gun popping like a firecracker. So they went up on the mountain. There was a wagon train where people were shooting and killing the people of the wagon train. That is the way Isaac used to tell about the massacre. Oh, my goodness! The two brothers waited until [the attackers] finished. They took everything, everything, even their houses. The wagons were tipped over, they had killed some cows and sheep and pigs and chickens and the women also. They killed women. [The victims] were running around and getting shot there. The two Paiutes were watching from a knoll. "Oh, my god," they said, "they are killing the people." They said, "I don't see any Indians around here," They said, "No Indians live around this area." So, anyway, the Paiute brothers got down, and the attackers had stolen a lot of things. They took those things away from the victims of the wagon train. And the brothers talked together. "Let's follow the rim a few miles away from them to see what they are going to do." So they went. All of the people that were massacring the wagon train went over towards the east. The Paiutes followed them till they got to the place to where they were going to change their clothes. From there they sneaked up on them about a half mile. They watch them and they watch them. The attackers cleaned themselves. They took their Indian outfits off-Indian clothes. And they were white people. They were white people. The Paiute brothers washed themselves up and they said, "Let's get going." They said, "Let's get going to warn other people." They traveled as fast [as] they could. I don't know if they were on foot or on a horse. But, anyway, they made it down [to the Paiute villages]...to get a hold of the Indians, house to house. They said, "I want them to be aware. We are going to [be] blamed for something that we didn't do: for shooting those people on the wagon train. We better beware." They said the Indians got really scared. After a while during that day one of the younger Indians saddled up his horse and warned the people around the distant areas all the way to Cedar City. "So beware; we are going to get blamed, going to get blamed for what those white people did. There were no Indians in that massacre..."

Original Text

I used to chop wood for the old man Isaac Hunkup and his sister... He was telling me a story, telling me what they see and what they hear also. And the Mountain Meadow massacre and Paiute didn't know anything about what was taking place over there. They were calm and quiet. They didn't know nothing about nothing. There was two brothers that come to the pine valley, hunting deer... But what he was telling me was that they were there camping out there in the mountain. In the morning during the day [they] heard a gun, like popping, popping like a firecracker. So they went up on the mountain. There was a wagon train the people where people were shooting and killing the wagon train people, is the way he used to tell it. Oh, my goodness! Two guys were still waiting when they got down, they got everything, everything. Even their houses, the wagons were tipped over, they had some cows and sheep and the pigs and chickens and the womenfolks also. They got womenfolks. They were running around and getting shot there. They were watching from a knoll. Them two guys. "Oh, my god," they said, "they are killing them people." They said that "I don't see no Indians around here," he said. No Indians live around this area. This is their hunting place, not the pine valley.

So, anyway, they got down, they got all of those things. Those things they took away from the settlers, the wagon train. And they talked together. "Let's follow the rim about a mile, a couple of miles, away from them, see what they are going to do." So they went. They took all of them people that [were] massacring the wagon train. They went over towards the east. They followed them quite a ways from they followed them till they get to the place to where they are going to change their clothes. So, anyways, they followed them clear to New Harmony. From there they sneak up on them about a half mile. They watch them and they watch them. They sit there. They clean themselves; they took off their Indian outfits off-clothes, Indian clothes. And they were white people. Them white people. They washed themselves up and they said, "Let's get going," they said. "Let's get going to warn them other people down to Sham [the Paiute encampment]." They traveled to get there as fast [as] they can. I don't know if they were on a foot or on a horse. But, anyway, they made it down there...to get a hold of them Indians, house to house. I want them to be aware. We are going to [be] blamed for something that we didn't have happen. For those people, for shooting them wagon train. Better beware. They said they got really scared. After awhile during that day one of the guys from the younger Indians they saddle up their horse and warn the people around the area. Clear to Cedar City and ... maybe Moapa too. So beware; we are going to get blamed, going to get blamed for what those white people did. There were no Indians in that massacre...