

It is reported that a visiting Iroquois Indian told the Indians of this country about the "black robes". The Flatheads were so impressed that they sent several small expeditions to Saint Louis, Missouri, to investigate and possibly invite the Jesuit missionaries to come into this country. The first of such expeditions was in 1831. In response to these, Father DeSmet set out in 1840. He reached western Montana the same year. After remaining with the Indians of this region for some weeks, he returned to St. Louis, but promised to come back. The following year he did return with a number of the Jesuit Fathers. They established in 1841 Saint Mary's Mission in the Bitterroot valley at what is now known as Stevensville. This was the first of such missions among the Flathead people.

Fourteen years later the chiefs of the confederated tribes of the Flathead, Kootenai, and upper Pend d' Oreille Indians entered into a treaty with the United States. This treaty is commonly known as the Hell Gate Treaty of July 16, 1855. It was later ratified by Congress and proclaimed April 18, 1859. (12 Stat. 975).

By the terms of this treaty the Indians relinquished all the territory they claimed including the Bitterroot valley. In turn there was reserved for their exclusive use and occupancy the Flathead valley. The treaty also provided that the Bitterroot valley above Lolo Fork should be carefully surveyed and examined, and if, in the judgment of the President, it was found to be better adapted to the wants of the tribe than the Flathead valley, then such portions would be set apart as a separate reservation for the said tribes.

An Executive Order issued on November 14, 1871, found, as might have been expected, that such portions of the Bitterroot valley were not better adapted than the reservation described in the treaty. All Indians were then ordered by act of Congress July 5, 1872, to leave the Bitterroot and remove to the Jocko Reservation. (Flathead Valley).

The act of June 5, 1872, provided that after a public-land-survey of the lands above Lolo Fork in the Bitterroot valley said lands should be sold to white settlers. The proceeds of such sale up to the first \$50,000 should be used for the benefit of the Indians. Certain Indians were also permitted to preempt without cost the land they occupied and cultivated not to exceed 160 acres.

Following this an agreement was attempted August 27, 1872, between James A. Garfield, Special Commissioner, and the chiefs of the Flathead tribe to carry out the act of June 5, 1872. It provided that the government should erect houses, furnish flour, enclose and plow certain tracts of land, pay \$5,000.00 to help the Indians move, make an annual payment of \$5,000.00, etc., etc., and that the Indians should thereafter occupy the Jocko Reservation as their permanent home.

This agreement was signed by some of the lesser chiefs. But the first chief, Chief Charlo, would not sign it, and he refused to leave the Bitterroot valley.

By about this time it is reported that there were a thousand white families established on well improved farms in the Bitterroot valley. The whites began to feel that their interests in the valley were greater than the Indians and they urged that the latter be removed.