

Ka-MI-Akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas (Classic Reprint)

A. J. Splawn

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Excerpt from Ka-MI-Akin: The Last Hero of the Yakimas

In writing this book of historical sketches of the early days, the author makes no claim to literary merit. Plain facts are told in plain language. My hope has been to correct some statements which I knew to be wrong and to add some new facts that might be of interest to different localities.

The writer's memory goes back to a time when the great Inland Empire of Eastern Oregon, Washington and the present Idaho was a vast country inhabited only by the Indian, coyote and jack rabbit. The highways of travel were the deeply worn trails running in every direction which had been followed by the wild tribes for generations. Mountain stream and boundless prairies were spread out before us where we roamed at will.

It is to present the Indian side of the War of 1855-8 that the writer has undertaken this work. He has spent many years in gathering stories and statements as to why they fought and how they fought, descriptions of their battles, and names of the killed and wounded. The task was difficult since superstition keeps the red man from talking to the white man on such subjects. My long residence among them, together with the fact that I have always treated them right, gained me their confidence.

I have talked, during the years, with many of their old chiefs and warriors who participated in the war, and they all tell practically the same story. Having spent over 50 years among them and knowing Indian character as I believe it is known to few men, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe their statements, at least in the main, to be true.

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