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HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY CLAIM - BATTLEFORD

DECLARATION OF WILLIAM MCKAY J.C.T. DATED SEPTEMBER 7, 1885

fo.388

In the Matter of the claim of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The North West Territories

B a t t l e f o r d

I, William McKay of Battleford, in the North West Territories, Junior Chief Trader in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company: do solemnly declare: -

1. I have been in charge of the Hudson's Bay Company at Battleford for the past six years and was in charge there in the months of March and April last.
2. The Company have been carrying on a general commercial and trading business in Battleford and in March last had a large stock of goods on hand for the purposes of this business. They had also there, at that time a large quantity of goods and articles sent specially for supplying a contract with the Indian Department. Besides these some furs were also there on hand.
3. The premises occupied by the Company consisted of four log buildings on the Flat used as warehouses and of a store and warehouse on the slope of the hill, and about a quarter of a mile distant from the warehouses. These two buildings did not belong to the Company but were rented by them.
4. On Sunday the 29 th day of March last we heard that the Indians from the neighbouring Reserves were coming to the town in an armed body and that night myself and all the other white residents in the town who had not already left, took refuge in the Mounted Police Fort or Barracks on the North side of the Battle River and over a mile distant from the Town.
5. I went back to the store the next morning and during the day about a hundred fo.389 Indians under the Chiefs Poundmaker, Sweet-Grass and Little Pine made their appearance and gathered about the office of the Indian Agent. I know most of the Indians

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began demanding other articles they saw in the store. I refused to give them what they asked and they went back to where the others were.

6. At this time Peter Ballandine and myself were the only whites in the town and from the manner of the Indians and from what we heard we saw we were not safe and we therefore returned to the Barracks. Early next morning we heard that the Indians had broken into the houses and stores in the town during the night and myself and four others started to go over to see what they had done. Three of us went as far as the river and were about to cross when a French Half Breed woman called to us that the Indians were trying to get between us and the Fort, and we had to go back. We had seen however that the Company's store was open and someone was going in and out.

7. After this, myself and all the men in the Fort were enrolled in Companies, under command of Inspector Morris, the officer in command of the Mounted Police, and were kept on duty and under military discipline til towards the end of May and none of us was allowed to leave the Fort without a pass. Colonel Otter arrived fo.390 with a body of troops about the 24 th of April and from the first coming of the Indians till then they were in possession of the Town across the Battle River, and armed bodies of them were constantly about and occasionally fired on parties from the Fort, and one of our night patrols was killed.

8. On the Wednesday after they first came, a party of fifteen of us cicilians (sic) crossed the river, under the cover of the fire of the gun of the police and went into the Town. We found that the Company's store and the adjoining warehouse had been broken into and most of what had been in them had been carried off, and what had not been carried off was lying scattered about. A number of other places had been pillaged but of our warehouses on the Flat three of them had not been disturbed.

9. We brought back with us as much goods as we could carry and as there was no bridge across the river and the ice was then breaking up at the edges we set to work at once to bridge the broken ice to enable us to get teams across. I was on guard the next day and could not leave but I sent my clerk with all the teams

across and after this it began to break up and we were unable to cross. About the 20 th of April a scow was taken down from the Barracks and put in the river, but by this time all that was left of the Company's effects consisted of some bacon and scattered and damaged fragments of goods. What the Indians did not want for themselves they seemed to have wantonly destroyed. The bacon that was then left was saved. fo.391

10. Before the 22 nd of April, several of the buildings in the Town had been set fire to at night and burnt, and on the night of the 22 nd of April two of the Company's warehouses on the Flat were burnt to the ground. Both these buildings were built of logs and were one story high with shingled roofs. Their dimensions were thirty four feet (34) by eighteen (18) feet and nineteen feet (19) by seventeen feet (17) respectively, and to the best of my knowledge and belief to replace them would cost at the least the amounts charged for them, in the Inventory hereinafter mentioned.

11. When we first went over to the Barracks I took with me all books, and accounts of the said business and they are all preserved. On the first day of December last I took a full and correct Inventory of the goods merchandise and effects belonging to the Company in Battleford. Our books shew all the goods received and all the goods sold and disposed of after that date and I have been able to make an accurate inventory and account of all the goods merchandise and effects the Company lost at Battleford.

12. The Inventory and account now shewn me marked "A" signed by me and intituled (sic) "Inventory and account of goods merchandise and effects of the Hudson's Bay Company pillaged and lost in Battleford in March and April A.D. 1885 contains a true and correct statement and account of the property and effects of the Company belonging to their business there (with the exception of some furs) that were pillaged lost or destroyed as hereinbefore set forth and the prices set opposite the several items in the said Inventory are the cost prices of the goods and merchandise therein mentioned, landed at Battleford and the fair and fo.392

and Account includes no charge for damage or injury to the goods we were able to save.

14. Besides the goods and merchandise of the Company belonging to their Battleford business there were also in the warehouses there on the said 30 th day of March a large number of farm implements and other goods and effects that had been sent by the Company from Winnipeg, to supply a contract with the Indian Department and many of these were pillaged and taken along with the rest of the Company's property. The Inventory or schedule marked "B" hereunto attached signed by me and intituled "Inventory of Articles for Indian Department Contract, pillaged and taken from the Hudson's Bay Company at Battleford in March and April A.D. 1885" contains a true list of all the said articles that were pillaged as aforesaid and all these have been wholly lost to the Company. The prices charged in this Inventory are I believe the cost prices of the several articles landed in Battleford.

15. Besides the goods and articles mentioned in the said Schedules "A" and "B" the Company also lost by pillage as aforesaid at Battleford the furs mentioned and set forth in the schedule hereunto attached marked "C" signed by me and intituled "Inventory of furs pillaged and taken from the Hudson's Bay Company at Battleford in March and April A.D. 1885" and all the furs mentioned in the said Inventory were of the qualities therein mentioned, and were pillaged and taken and have been wholly lost to the Company. These furs were purchased by me by bartering goods for them and I am unable to say what their value was at Battleford. We ship all our furs to England and they are sold there. The statement attached hereto and signed by me is a correct summary of the Company's loss at Battleford.

And I amke (sic) this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Act passed in the thirty seventh year of Her Majesty's reign intituled "An Act for the Suppression of Voluntary and Extra Judicial Oaths."

Declared before me at Battleford

in the North West Territories

this seventh day of September A.D.