

Nicholas Finley

In The Pacific Northwest in 1816

By Chalk Courchane

He was the youngest son of Jacques Raphael “Jocko” Finlay and a Spokane Indian woman. His ancestry was Spokane, Chippewa and Scots. When his sister, Marguerite Finley Ashley McLeod, was married on June 18, 1855 to her second husband, Pierre Angus McLeod her mother was given as Teskwentichina. Flathead Agency Tribal records always show that Nicholas and Marguerite were full brother and sister. On this evidence I say his mother was Teskwentichina.

United States Census records indicate that his birth date was about 1816. Although it is said he was born in Canada he grew up in the Spokane House area of Washington State and among the Spokane Indians. This area was often referred to as “Jockoland.” He would have traveled from a very young age with his father, Jocko, and his older brothers throughout the Old Oregon Territory on trapping and hunting trips. His father Jocko was a member of Donald McKenzie’s Snake country brigade and would have had his family with him including Nicholas. By October of 1824 Jocko was at Jasper’s House in the Rocky Mountains of Canada trading with the Shuswap Indians the northern most of the Salish tribes. Jocko was also on Alexander Ross’ Snake country brigade. Nicholas was most likely on these brigades with Jocko and his mother. He was about 12 years old when Jocko died at Spokane House.

He was called Schwn-mui-miah or Schiom-miu- mah by the Salish and often his name is spelled Nicoli, Nicola or Niquala. The name Schwn-mui-miah, is said to have something to do with “hair” according to Flathead tribal elder Pat Pierre. And Schiom-miu- mah has something to do with bone according to Troy Felsman.

He was schooled in the trade of trapping and hunting and knew all the woods lore of the day. He was often employed as a free trapper or for one of the large fur trade companies. He would have been too young to have been on John Work’s HBC Snake brigades as a trapper, but he was an apprentice trapper on those of Francis Ermatinger and Tom McKay. It has been said that Jocko’s sons were tall, raw-boned and had blue eyes; Nicholas was probably similar in appearance. He had over 20 siblings and may not have known those that stayed in Canada.

His father and older brothers relied on their hunting skills to keep them in food, usually not planning or saving food for a rainy day. They did dry their game and fish but sometimes ran out when game was scarce. Because of this the family was sometimes left hungry as they were when David Douglas visited them in 1826 at Spokane House. They were subsisting on tree moss and roots. When they could the Finleys always ate a high protein diet of buffalo, elk, deer and moose meat supplemented by fish such as salmon and trout. Small game and with the traditional roots of the Indian tribes such as bitterroot (spetlem) and camas and medicine herbs were by them. Nicholas's niece by marriage, Mary Ermatinger Ashley was very knowledgeable in Indian medicine and was considered a medicine woman. Huckleberries, gooseberries, and serviceberries were eaten fresh or dried. Food articles such as bread, milk, sugar, potatoes and coffee did not exist for them. They were foods that they would in the years to come experience but not in these days. I suppose they learned of these foods first by their association with the Hudson's Bay Company and later from the Americans and the Catholic priests. Nicholas did farm chores for the Whitmans and probably tasted milk there. Nicholas and his family would not eat birds such as ducks, geese, crows, eagles, hawks, and hummingbirds because they were considered to be spirit birds. Nor did they hunt bears in those days, but they do in the present days. Bears were spirit animals along with wolves and coyotes.

Bruce Watson, an authority on the fur trade, places him at Fort Vancouver in 1834 working for the Hudson's Bay Company. He was 13 or 14 years old. Later that year until 1835 he as an apprentice with Tom McKay's trapping party. He was part of Francis Ermatinger's Snake country trapping party as an apprentice in 1836 and 1837 (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, HBC Archives, Ref: B.239/g/17 fo. 40) and then as a middleman apprentice in 1837 to 1841. He would have been about 25 years old in 1841. He was among the Flatheads as a trapper in 1841, 1842 and 1843. Then in the latter part of 1843 into 1844 he was back in the Columbia Department of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Old Oregon Country. It is shown on the company records that he was owed money for being on the 1843-1844 HBC outfit. He worked in 1844-1845 but did not show up for work in 1845-1846.

While he was among the Flatheads in 1842, 1843, and 1844 he lived at Porte d'Enfer (Hellgate) in what the Catholic priests called the "Finley Camp" not far from the future city of Missoula. It was here that Father Nicholas Pointe baptized his son, "Nicolas, son of Finlay, infidel" on May 6, 1844. Nicholas was no longer an "infidel" when he got baptized on March 4, 1849 at St. Paul's Mission at Kettle Falls in the future state of Washington. In fact Nicholas had himself baptized by both the Protestants and the Catholics.

He was known to have had at least two wives: Marie Iroquois and Suzette (Josephte, Suzitt or Josette all these names are interchangeable). Not much is known about Marie except that she is mentioned in a 1851 baptism as the mother of Nicholas' son, Francois. How long she was with Nicolas is not known, maybe Nicholas had two wives at the same time.

Suzette (Josephte) was born between 1818 and 1823 and was one half Cayuse and one half Palouse. She most likely lived among the Cayuse. She was baptized on March 4, 1849 at St. Paul's Mission the same day Nicholas was. She was married to Nicholas for a very long time eventually moving to Montana with him and dying on the Flathead Reservation.

Of his children it is not very clear who was the actual mother, Marie or Suzette. Suzette is usually given as the mother on the later Flathead Tribal allotment records. Eight children are known. They are Angele born about 1842 and who married Antoine Plouffe and had a son named Edward; Nicholas born in 1844; Francois born in 1850; Mary Josette born in 1856; John; Timothy born about 1858; Rosalie ; and Dominique who married a woman named Therese and they had a son named Dominique. It is not clear to me who is descendants on the Flathead Reservation are. The family surnames on the Flathead, Nicolai and Nicola may have connections to him. Although Nicola seems to have ties to the Collins family.

After service in the Hudson's Bay Company he settled in the Colville Valley to be near his brothers, Patrick (Pic-ka-nah), Augustin (Yoostah), Jacques (Miquam); James and brother-in-law, Alexander Dumont. In 1846 he pitched his tent at the Tshimakain Mission and was mentioned by the missionaries Walker and Eells in their journals.

Sometime prior to 1847 he moved south to work for Dr. Marcus Whitman at the Waiilatpu Mission near Fort Walla Walla. It was here that he fell into the company of half Delaware Indian Tom Hill, and the psychopath part Indian Joe Lewis. He may have traveled south and was hired by Whitman on the recommendations of Walker and Eells. He may have taken his Cayuse wife Susette (Josephte) here.

At that time a measles epidemic was raging throughout Pacific Northwest killing off hundreds of Native Americans. Dr. Marcus Whitman treated both the white and Indian at Waiilatpu and most the white children survived. About half the adult Cayuse and nearly all the Cayuse children died. Of the 400 or so Cayuse about 197 died during the measles epidemic, according to Clifford H. Drury. "fate worse than death: Indian captivities in the West, 1830-1885 By Gregory Michno and Susan Michno."

Both Catholic Priests and Protestant missionaries told lies about each other going to Hell to the Indians, confusing them even more with their "Ladders to Heaven".

Joe Lewis and Nicholas Finley began telling the Cayuse that Dr. Whitman was poisoning them, and they may have actually believed this themselves. Nicholas' lodge was pitched a few hundred feet from the mission house and became the headquarters for the malcontents. As someone predicted, the fall immigration had brought more disease and the Indians were quick to note that the doctor's mission family, were not being affected at the same rate as the Indian population. Of course this was due to the living conditions of the Cayuse, as they relied mainly on a sweat bath and plunge in the cold river. When they died it increased the belief that they were being poisoned.

"In the Doctor's absence "Mrs. Whitman was their physician. One day while in the midst of housecleaning, an Indian woman came rushing in and wanted her to go to her lodge, where her husband had reportedly just died. It was raining very hard and the ground was covered with water; but without hesitation she threw on her shawl and accompanied the woman to her lodge about half a mile away. Arriving at the lodge, she found the Indian not dead but having the same disease as a man that the Doctor had just cured on the Umatilla. Returning to her house, she procured the necessary medicine and selected some tea, sugar and other things for the sick man. She returned to their lodge and soon had the satisfaction of seeing him much better. He finally recovered. This was Nicholas Finley and it was at his lodge where the Indians afterward met in council to deliberate on the death of the doctor. Though Finley spoke of them with a great show of gratitude he gave them no hint of the approaching danger." <http://www.oregonpioneers.com/Whitman4.htm>
See this site for an excellent account by Stephanie Flora of the Whitman Mission Massacre and the events before, during and after massacre.

"Finley's exact role is not described by most of the survivors of that fall, except that his lodge was said to have served as a headquarters for the ringleaders and their followers. This may well have been true and it may be that Finley was at least sympathetic with the Cayuses; but the lack of evidence strongly suggests he was not a leader of the discontented and he was probably not an active participant in the events to follow. Mary Saunders, the wife of Judge L.W. Saunders, and one of the few surviving adults to write about the massacre said that Finley was sympathetic to the Cayuse. But from her account it would seem that Finley's own survival was based partly on his being an ex-employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and partly because he cooperated just enough to stay alive. His concern for Whitman was outweighed by his concern for himself."

SHALLOW GRAVE AT WAILATPU: THE SAGERS WEST; both by Erwin N. Thompson, Pages 87-88.

Joe Lewis moved into the lodge of Nicholas about this time. Trouble was brewing. The Cayuse had decided to kill the Whitman's and all other white people at the mission. A plot was hatched and some say in Nicholas' lodge. Nicholas Finley, Joe Lewis, Tom Hill, Jean Baptiste Dorion and Joseph Stanfield were still telling the Cayuse that the Americans were after their land and poisoning them.

"Whitman decided to ask Nicholas Finley what he knew about any supposed plot. Finley was sent for and when he arrived, Whitman asked him: 'I understand the Indians are to kill me and Mr. Spaulding. Do you know anything about it?' Although Finley was fully aware of what was to happen, since the conspirators had met in his lodge when they agreed on their course of action,

he brazenly professed ignorance by replying: 'I should know doctor; you have nothing to fear; there is no danger.' "This is when he (Whitman) should have left the country, but maybe he did think that things would be ok.

Stephanie Flora writes in her account: "The morning of November 29th, 1847 was shrouded in fog and pierced by a near freezing rain. A blanket of eery silence hung over the area." This was the day that many good people would die. And Nicholas Finley was caught up into it and although he did not take part in the killings he knew they were coming. He managed to do what he could to save lives and his wife, Susette, showed compassion for those white people that were near her. She too saved lives.

"On the day of the Whitman Massacre three half-breed boys escaped to Nicholas Finley's tepee, where he cared for them. On November 30, 1847 when he got the chance Nicholas slipped them into Fort Walla Walla and safety. It has been said that Nicholas and the other employee, Joseph Stanfield, went about the chore of milking the cows almost casually in the midst of the carnage that day."

"The two Manson boys, John and Stephen, were present during the first day of the massacre and were then taken to Fort Walla Walla by Nicholas Finley." Footnote on p.229 of MARCUS AND NARCISSA WHITMAN.

From pp. 234-235: "In the meantime, Mrs. Saunders, not knowing what had happened to her husband or the Whitman's, and fearing for the safety of all the white women and children, decided to make a desperate appeal for mercy to Chief Tiloukaikt through Nicholas Finley. She bravely ventured to leave the comparative safety of her room in the emigrant house in order to call on Finley in his lodge. John Manson was at the lodge when Mrs. Saunders arrived and has given us the following account of what happened. Since he was able to understand what the Indians were saying, his recollections have special significance.

"Soon Mrs. Saunders came up to the lodge where Mrs. Finley (an Indian woman), her sister and several other Indian women were standing. Besides the Cayuse Indian women, there were some Walla Walla Indian men. The women seemed friendly to Mrs. Saunders.

About four hundred feet away from the lodge was a hill that had three Indians on it looking over the plains. (They were possibly looking to see if anyone was approaching.) One of the Indians rode down to kill Mrs. Saunders, but Mrs. Finley expostulated with him and he rode off. Then Chief Tiloukaikt rode down, shaking his hatchet over his head. He threatened Mrs. Saunders with it, but again Mrs. Finley urged him to desist and he rode off. Then Edward Tiloukaikt, the oldest son of the Chief, rode down very rapidly, shaking his tomahawk over his head and that of Mrs. Saunders with fury. She had sunk down on a pile of matting in front of the lodge. But the Indian women shamed him and talked to him. Then he rode off.

Mrs. Saunders then came to see me (John Mason) and kneeled down. She begged me to interpret for her to the Chiefs, as she did not understand the language of the natives. She said: "Tell the Chiefs that if the Doctor and the men were bad, I did not know it. My heart is good and I want to live. If they will spare my life, I will make caps, coats, and pantaloons for them."

John interpreted for her as she pled with Tiloukaikt for the life of her husband and for the women and children. In all probability her husband by that time had been killed, but of this she was unaware.

"What do they say, John?"

"They are talking about it."

After some consolation, Tiloukaikt and the other chiefs agreed that none of the women and children would be killed. Mrs. Saunders then begged to let all who were in the main mission house to go to the emigrant house. Tiloukaikt gave his consent.

Mrs. Saunders then turned to John, while still on her knees, and begged: "John won't you go home with me?" John replied: "I do not dare to go, but I will ask." Tiloukaikt then told Stanfield to take Mrs. Saunders back to her quarters and to get her some meat. John's account continues: "Then Mrs. Saunders rose from her knees and went with Joe Stanfield. The Chiefs and all the natives then left the lodge. They went to Dr. Whitman's house. Very soon, several shots were fired there. Mr. Finley came and told us that three more had been killed. They were Mrs. Whitman, Mr. Rodgers, and Francis Sager."

"Joe Lewis, like Tom Hill, an eastern import, was a leader in the agitation. So was Nicholas Finlay, a former Hudson's Bay Company employee who had taken a Cayuse wife."

p.111 "At this point, Tamsucky came in to tell those upstairs that the Indians were going to burn the house, that he was friendly, and that they would be spared and should all go to Nicholas Finlay's lodge." From *The Cayuse Indians, Imperial Tribesmen of Old Oregon* by Robert H. Ruby and John A. Brown; University of Oklahoma Press 1972, p.104

One of the men named Hall escaped to Fort Walla Walla.

From page 243: "McBean was alarmed at the news that Hall had brought to him. Eager to get more information as to what had actually taken place at Waiilatpu, he sent his interpreter, a man by the name of Bushman, on Tuesday morning to make inquiry." This would be Beauchemin.

In the meantime, Nicholas Finley left the mission with the three half-breed boys that same morning for Fort Walla Walla. Mrs. Saunders, learning from Joe Stanfield that Finley was going to the fort, hastily wrote a note to McBean for Finley to carry in which she listed the names of eleven people she thought had been killed. She included the names of Osburn and Canfield, as she was unaware that both had escaped. Catherine, in her account of what happened on Tuesday,

said that when Bushman arrived at Waillatpu, he was so frightened by what he saw and heard that he came only to the door and as soon as they assured him that it was so, he left."

From page 267: "In the meantime, Finley with three half-breed boys had arrived at the fort. Finley delivered to McBean the letter that Mrs. Saunders had written which listed the names of those she believed had been killed. On the basis of this information, McBean wrote that Tuesday evening to the Board of Management' at Fort Vancouver and reported what he had heard. He also repeated a rumor that Finley had brought to the effect that the Cayuses were planning to attack Fort Walla Walla. (That would be David Malin Cortez, age 9, and the two teen-age sons of Donald Manson, John and Stephen Manson.)

On a Sunday about a week after the massacre Daniel Young came to the Mission from Young's Saw-Mill which was about 20 miles from Waillatpu. He got there just after dark and this is when he first heard of the killings. He saw in a house where he expected to find his brother, eating supper Mrs. Hays, Mrs. and some of her family and Joseph Stanfield. Stanfield left soon after, and a couple hours later Nicholas Finley arrived there. Daniel Young learned at this time that his brother had been murdered.

Dec. 6, 1847 "Monday. Fine day. In the afternoon Mr. David McLoughlin returned from the "Janet", and the boat which took Mr. Work to the Cowelitz likewise returned. In the evening Beauchemin arrived from Walla Walla with the startling intelligence that Dr. Whitman and his lady, beside 9 other Americans have been massacred by the Cayuse Indians at Waulitpu. Most of the women and children have been spared. Mr. Hinman from The Dalles came with Beauchemin.

"7th, Tuesday. Rainy weather. In consequence of the massacre at Waulitpu Mr. Ogden started for Walla Walla late this afternoon with a boat and 16 men, taking Mr. Charles along with him. Mr. McBean writes that the Fort is threatened by the Indians, but this is not supposed to be the case, and the principal object of Mr. Ogden's trip is to rescue the surviving women and children and to prevent further outrage. Mr. Hinman returned to the Dalles."

"8th. Wednesday. Raining most of the day. Almost all our working hands are laid up with the measles, and it is only the white who are able to work." Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages 61.

January 8, 1848 "Saturday. Fine weather. This morning the Rev. Messrs. Roberts and Robb returned to Oregon City. In the forenoon Mr. Ogden arrived from Walla Walla with 3 Boats, bringing all the women and children who survived the massacre at Waulitpu, as also the whole of those at Mr. Spalding's station, amounting in all to 61 souls. There were also the following passengers, Mr. Charles who went up with Mr. Ogden, Mr. Stanley an American artist, Bishop Blanchette and two other Priests. Mr. Ogden had to purchase the women and children from the Indians giving them 62 blankets, 62 shirts, 12 guns and some ammunition for them, telling them at the same time that the H.B. Co. were not to interfere in the quarrel, that it must be settled

between the Americans and themselves. Had to find quarters for all these people until Monday, when Mr. Ogden intends taking them all up to Oregon City.”

“10th. Monday. Raining a little during the day. In the afternoon Mr. Ogden started for Oregon City with all the passengers he brought down from Walla Walla, in two bateaux. He is to transfer them to the Governor, and leave him to dispose of them.”

“17th. Monday. Splendid day, warm and clear. Mr. Ogden returned in the afternoon from the Wallamette. On his way up he was saluted both at Portland and Oregon City.” Private Journal kept at Fort Vancouver Columbia River by Thomas Lowe Hudson Bay Coy., pages 63-64.

"In the following days and weeks messages, meetings, and negotiations passed amongst the Cayuse and members of other tribes in the area, and between the Cayuse and the only Euro-American authorities left in the area. These were the HBC at Fort Vancouver, with its local post located near the mouth of the river at Fort Walla Walla, plus the priest, Father Brouillet from Quebec, recently installed in the next river valley south on the Umatilla at his Catholic mission.

Meanwhile, at the Whitman Mission site, the need to resolve another critical issue surfaced. After such incidents, the Indian men often forced marriages on the surviving younger women and older girls. Catherine detailed the dilemma these young women faced. During a council held by the Indians in the Whitman house, at which the young women were present, a chief got up and spoke, citing the necessity of providing protection for the younger women. In a lengthy speech he counseled them as to the merits of being the wife of a young chief who would provide protection, as opposed to some of the other Indians. Nicolas Finley served as translator again, interpreting the speech to Joe Stanfield in French, and Stanfield in turn to the young women in English. At a later point, in the days following this session, after Ms. Sager had literally been fighting off the attentions of an unwanted suitor, it was "... proposed for me to go to Nicholas' lodge, one of the Mr. Youngs going with me." [Sager pp. 75-6]

Nathan Kimball a young boy and survivor wrote a different tone about Nicholas Finley,

“Recollections of the Whitman Massacre by Nathan Kimball (Jr.), a Survivor — Some time in the month of November, 1847 (I do not remember the exact date), everything about the Whitman Mission was going on as usual. Quite a number of Indians were gathered about the place, but as a beef was being butchered, the crowd was easily accounted for. Three or four men were dressing the beef in the barnyard. One of them was my father. All at once several shots were fired, and upon running out of the house I saw men running, my father among them, and the Indians were shooting at them. My father had on a white shirt, and I could see that his arm was broken at the elbow, for it was red with blood, and his arm was swinging back and forth. He succeeded in getting into the schoolhouse, where there were several children, and there he stayed all night, so the children told us the next day. While the work of death and destruction was going on outside, and it did not cease the first day, father, after remaining all night with the children, was suffering much with his broken arm.

On the following day, driven to desperation with his suffering and those of the sick children with him, one of whom was Joe Meek's little daughter, Helen Mar, he resolved to procure some water from a stream which ran nearby. He had not gone far before an Indian saw him, and he was shot down and killed instantly, so the children told us the next day. I never saw him alive after I saw him running with his arm swinging. The Indians had planned it so as to have two or three Indians wherever there was a white man, and when the signal was given they all commenced their hellish work at once. Within ten minutes after they commenced all were killed who were killed, with the exception of one or two. (note: Helen Mar Meek died of her illness and later her father, Sheriff Joseph Meek got revenge when he hanged five of the Cayuse. Chalk)

When I saw the massacre going on I got my father's rifle and was going up into the garret, intending to shoot out of a hole. The house was built out of brick, a foot square, one of which had been left out and a glass put in, and it was through this opening I intended to do some shooting. I well knew they would not burn the building. A woman who was there took the gun away from me, saying it would not do to shoot an Indian, for if I did they would kill us all. I said: 'They will do that anyway, and I want to kill some first.' But she was the same woman for whom I afterward went three miles at night to get the interpreter to protect against an Indian.

It was the next day when the Indians put us on the benches and debated whether they would kill us or keep us as prisoners. The night of the massacre I stayed up in a garret, hid under some running gear of a wagon, expecting every minute would be my last.

I have always thought that one thing that saved my life was being a great friend of Steven, my chum. He was a Catholic, and they were all right with the Indians. He told me a great many times to stay with him and the Indians would not hurt me. They killed Francis Sager, who was only a year or two older than I. That made me think they would soon kill me.

About a week afterward, Crockett Bewley, who was sick abed, was brutally murdered. I was in the room when they tomahawked him and jerked him out on the floor. Afterward I saw a piece of his skull, the shape of a half-dollar, lying on the floor. Meanwhile all of us were enduring such agony as seldom falls to the lot of humanity to suffer. We were compelled to work for the Indians. Our feelings were continually harrowed by the terrible sights which everywhere met our eyes, in going back and forth between the houses, carrying water from the stream, or in moving in any direction whatever, for the dead were not removed until the setting in of decay made it necessary for the Indians themselves.

The bodies or pieces of them, lay scattered all around, an arm here and a leg there. Some of the men had their breasts open and their hearts taken out. I saw two Indians each with a stick and a human heart stuck upon it, which they showed to the women, and told them they belonged to their husbands, and that they were going to eat them. I don't think they did, but I do not

know. The buildings were plundered of everything the Indians coveted. The women were forced to work making clothes for them. Bedding, sheets and window curtains were made up into garments for the devils. So passed about a week and a new horror was added. The devils incarnate began taking the young girls to themselves for wives. Only one was taken away, that was Miss Lorinda Bewley, the eldest of the girls at the mission and a teacher there. She was taken to the Umatilla to the lodge of an Indian by the name of Five Crows.

As to the cause of the massacre, it is pretty hard to tell, as there were so many indirect causes at work that could produce a revolution among the Indians, that it would be unfair to name any particular one as the direct cause. The last cause was a season of sickness among the Indians; the measles were brought among them by an immigrant train. While Doctor Whitman was attending them they were also doctoring themselves. They had sweathouses in the ground, and would put in water and hot rocks and create steam and then get in and sweat themselves and run out and jump into the ice cold water. Anyone can judge the effect it would have on any one having the measles. It did not matter that Dr. Whitman had exerted himself night and day for them. Their peculiar notions about the 'tamanawos' or 'medicine man', made it the duty of the relatives of the dead to avenge their death. Three, four and five would die in a day, and sometimes more, and their remains would be brought there in the evening to have coffins made for them. I have seen as many as seven dead Indians hanging across the fence, the same as you would hang a sack of wheat, waiting for coffins.

There was another suspicious character there by the name of Joe Lewis, a half-breed, who came there with an immigrant train from Fort Hall. He was much about the houses of the whites, and pretended to relate to the Indians conversations which he claimed to have heard between Doctor and Mrs. Whitman. He told the Indians that they were talking of poisoning them in order to get them out of the way, so that the white people would own the country.

I saw him take a boy about fifteen years old, names Sager, by the nose and shoot him in the head with a pistol, while I was a prisoner there. We had to work for the Indians. Dr. Whitman had two or three hundred bushels of onions and potatoes, and so on, in his cellar, and we youngsters had to pick, sort and stack them. Then the squaws carried them away to their village, three miles away. There was another boy there about my age. He and I were chums. One night, about 10 o'clock, one of the women came to my chum and I and told us that Tamahas, an Indian, was trying to get her to go with him to his lodge, and she was afraid he would force her to go. She wanted us to go to the Indian village, about three miles away, and get a Frenchman, an interpreter, and bring him to her. The interpreter's name was Niquilau (Nicholas Finley). He was a good man. We did not feel much fear when he was near.

After the massacre the Indians would come from their village to the mission, three, four and five at a time, and by noon there would be two or three hundred at the mission. By evening they would go again to their village. This evening they had almost all gone except this old

Indian. After a good deal of coaxing, we consented to go, and we started. It was a bright moonlight night. When we got nearly there, we heard horses coming, and we ran into a large tract of cane, hid and waited for them to pass. There was a band of about a dozen Indians. After they had passed by we again started on our way, but here they came again, and again we broke for the cane field. My chum fell down and I lost him. It was not far now to the village. After searching and waiting for him, not daring to call out for him, I went on alone and came to the village.

It seemed to me there were a thousand dogs all yelping at once. However, as luck would have it, the first person I saw was an Indian girl. She was about my own age, and could talk some English. I said to her: 'Sixtowa?'—in her language 'How do you do?' She replied in English: 'How do you do?' I asked her where Niquilau lived, and she said for me to come with her. I went with her, and she took me to his lodge. When he learned what I wanted he put on his coat and we started back. When we came to where I lost my chum we halloed for him, and after a while he came to us. He said he was completely lost. Well, we then went on, and soon arrived at the mission, and found the devil still there trying to get the woman to go with him. Niquilau made him leave at once. That same Indian, with four others, was hung at Oregon City afterwards.

About a week after this an Indian came to me and wanted me to go and live with him. He said he would give me a lot of horses and a girl for a wife. As I was only thirteen years old I concluded I was rather young to have a wife. The next day he came again and brought his girl to show her to me, and she turned out to be the same girl who had shown me where Niquilau lived.

There was another brute there by the name of Joe Stanfield. When the massacre commenced he went through the houses plundering and breaking open trunks and taking whatever he could find of value. Father had a silver watch hung on a nail on the wall. He grabbed it in such a hurry that he left the ring of the watch still on the wall. Mother brought it away with her. After we got down to Oregon City some of the women had him arrested for some of his devilment up at the mission. While in court he made an excuse to go out, but the sheriff kept a sly eye on him. He saw him digging in the ground with his fingers, and after his return to the courtroom the sheriff went out and examined the place where he had dug and found the watch and some money. It was father's watch, and mother, being in court, identified it at once and produced the ring that belonged to it.

While at the mission before the massacre he got sweet on a widow named Hays, but she despised him and would have nothing to do with him. So he rigged a scheme to compel her to marry him. He said she would have to make this promise or be killed, for he claimed he had saved her life by telling the Indians that she was his wife and that he had married her just before the massacre. She was compelled to make a solemn vow that she would marry him as soon as we

got down to Oregon City. But when we arrived at Oregon City she told him she would scald him if he ever got near enough for her to do so. He was a French-Canadian.

Two days, I think it was, after the massacre, the Indians brought the benches out of the schoolhouse, placed them along in a row, and strung us youngsters along them. In front of us stood a lot of Indians, armed and ready to shoot us. While they were holding a council to determine whether they would kill us all or keep us as prisoners, believing they were going to kill us sure, I whispered to my chum and told him I guessed they were going to kill us and we had better run. He said 'all right', and I told him when I squeezed his hand we would make a break. We had to run about one hundred yards to get into a patch of cane, but we had to jump the mill race to get there.

Well, we started. I cleared the race, which was about ten feet wide, but my friend struck on the bank with his breast, and I turned and helped him up. We reached the cane and kept running for about two hours before we stopped. When we started some of the Indians shot at us, but missed us; but my cap received a bullet hole, which bullet also grazed my head. Night coming on, we lay down in the cane brake to sleep, and almost froze. I remember we would spoon up to each other, and when we got so cold that way we could stand it no longer we would flop over. Thus passed the night. In the morning three Indians came upon us while we were lying there. We were going to run again, but they grabbed us and told us they would not hurt us, because 'we were big men and got away from the big Indians', and for us to come with them and they would give us something to eat. When we ran we ran in a circle, and when we laid down for the night we were not more than three hundred yards from where we entered the cane.

After the men were killed and Mrs. Whitman was not yet dead, but lying on a lounge in the house helpless, having been shot four times, the Indians wanted to get her out, but were afraid to go in because there were two or three men they had not killed and they did not know where they were. So they told some of the women to bring her out to another house, for they were going to burn the house she was in. Some of the women took hold of the lounge and carried her out. Thereupon the Indians shot her again. Yet she lived several hours after that. Whenever she struggled the Indians struck her in the face with their whips and continued to do so until she was dead.

After we had been prisoners for two or three weeks, all had a very narrow escape. The Indians had killed a beef, and had ordered the women to cook a big dinner. They did so, and made up some mince pies, and the Indians ate so much it made them sick. Not being used to pie, it acted as physic. They thought they were all poisoned, and we had a hard time to make them believe the contrary. We finally persuaded them to wait a few days, which they did, and all having come out all right, they spared us; but it was a narrow escape from death for the whole of us then and there. [Only Old Beady was made sick and intervention by others saved their lives]

Some time about the middle of December the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Walla Walla bought us from the Indians. They paid the ransom in blankets, tobacco and other stuff which delights the savage eye. It was agreed that the company should pay half down and the rest on our delivery at the fort. After receiving the first payment the Indians were not going to let us go, but two or three friendly chiefs helped us to get away. One morning we hitched up before daylight and made a start for the fort. I drove the team that carried our family. It was a tough trip. We hurried too much at the start, and our teams nearly gave out before we got there. It was soft sand nearly all the way. While on the journey an old Indian named Beardy would ride up on the off side of my team and lay his whip on the oxen and say to me: 'Hom tits, hom tits, muchusocol, muchusocol.' He was telling me to hurry up the oxen, hurry up the oxen.

We arrived at the fort about 5 o'clock in the evening. Just in sight about three hundred Indians after us, but we got into the fort too soon for them.

We stayed at the fort about a week and then started down the Columbia river in some boats provided by the Hudson's Bay Company. The boats came through The Dalles, we making portage while the boats shot the rapids. Somewhere near the last of December we arrived at Oregon City, sixty-two of us, to be delivered to the governor. We were bought from the Cayuse Indians by Hudson's Bay goods and influence.

The number of victims of the massacre was thirteen men and one woman. None escaped who did not have to mourn a father, a brother, a relative or some friend. We lost about everything we had and arrived in Oregon City destitute." [Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association, Thirty-first Annual Reunion, p.189-195]

Even after the massacre Nicholas is said to have slandered the Whitmans, for some reason he did not like them. Although the superior air of Narcissa would be reason enough for resentment and her discourtesy and rudeness to Indians and half-breeds would make them dislike her. She was very rude to Francis Ermatinger some years earlier when he came by to pay his respects on the birth of the Whitman's daughter.

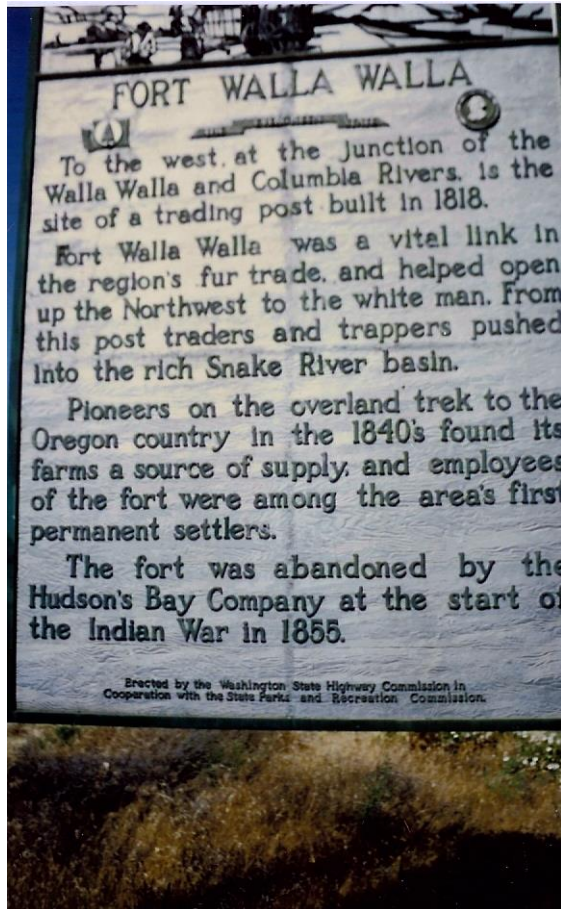
The Whitman massacre captives were ransomed and saved by the Hudson's Bay Company under the command of Chief Factor Peter Skene Ogden, who brought to bateaux filled with trade goods from Fort Walla Walla's stores. With him were sixteen French-Canadian voyageurs.

"After the hostages had been ransomed by the HBC at the end of December, for his part, Nicolas opted to clear out and headed east toward les montagnes. Insinuations of the American survivors and stories circulating in the Willamette settlements cast his ambiguous role into a guilt by association mold. He had no intention of hanging around to find out what the authorities might have in store for him, nor to take the risk of trying to clear his name." Washington Territory's Tale of a Few Frenchtowns: and resettlement of the French-Breeds onto nearby reservations, pages, 292-293. Robert Foxcurran, 2010

“He next journeyed north to his homeland, the Colville Valley. The missionaries at Tshimakain, Walker and Eells were fearful when they heard he was on his way north to see his brothers and the Spokanes.”

"McBean, in his letter of November 30, 1847, to the officials at Fort Vancouver, repeated what he had learned from the half-breed, Nicholas Finley, who was the first to carry news of the massacre to Fort Walla Walla. According to Finley, the Indians killed the Whitmans in retaliation, believing that Dr. Whitman was poisoning them in order to get their property. Furthermore, Finley claims that Andrew Rodgers had told the Indians that he had overheard Whitman and Spalding plotting to poison them. Finley claimed that Rodgers had been induced to tell what he had heard by being promised immunity by the Cayuses. Of this McBean wrote: It was reported that it was not their intention to kill Mr. Rodgers, in consequence of an avowal to the following effect, which he is said to have made and which nothing but a desire to save his life could have prompted him to do. He said, 'I was one evening lying down and I overheard the Doctor telling Mr. Spalding that it was best you all should be poisoned at once, but that the latter told him it was best to continue slowly and cautiously and between this and spring not a soul would remain, when they would take possession of your lands, cattle, and horses.' Since Rodgers had been killed in spite of the supposed immunity promised him, some explanation of this had to be made, so, according to Finley's report to McBean, it was claimed that 'One of the murders, not having been acquainted with the above understanding, shot Mr. Rodgers.'

"McBean refused to believe such an incredible story. In his report to Fort Vancouver, he wrote: 'These are only Indian reports, and no person can believe the Doctor capable of such an action without being as ignorant and brutal as the Indians themselves.' One must see; "The tainted gift: the disease method of frontier expansion" by Barbara Alice Mann - 2009 - History - 180 pages. It's treatment of the poisoning question is very interesting.



Taken by Chalk Courchane

It is time to say that because McBean considered the Indians "ignorant" and "brutal" he was already biased to anything Nicholas Finley would have said. He and later writers, such as Clifford Drury, were certainly prejudiced for the Whitmans, who may have conspired to poison the Indians, and certainly wanted their land. Why would Nicholas Finley say that Rodgers bargained with the Indians in the first place, if he was not involved with them to some degree. Certainly some motive is missing. Like Whitman, Rodgers was only human, facing certain death sometimes makes people act differently than they normally would under pleasant circumstances. Besides Nicholas Finley has a "clean record" before and after the Whitman incident, a man who was at the wrong place at the right time, and who took the side of the losers.

News of the massacre traveled to the other missionaries in Washington and in Idaho.

From *Nine Years Among the Spokanes: The Diary of Elkanah Walker - 1838-1848*; Clifford M. Drury; 1976; The Arthur H. Clark Co.; Glendale:

"Several weeks of agonizing suspense followed the arrival of Old Solomon on December 9, 1847, with the first news of the Whitman massacre. A number of questions cried out for an answer. What had happened to Spalding and his family? What was the fate of Perrin Whitman

and Alanson Hinman at the Dalles? What about the women and children held captive at Waiilatpu? But the most disturbing question of all was - what was to happen to them at Tshimakain? A frightening possibility haunted their minds - would the hostile Cayuses attack their station and seek to kill them? This was the situation at Tshimakain - they did not know what was going to happen -- events to follow in succession after the ordeal at Waiilatpu were -- the Cayuse War, the rescue of Perrin Whitman and Hinman, the captives at Waiilatpu were released mostly to Peter Skene Ogden's efforts, and the Spauldings were safely protected by the Nez Perce. But the Tshimakain people were still jittery - Walker and Eells hoped the Cayuse would stay in the south.

From Elkanah and Mary Walker; *Pioneers Among The Spokanes*; Clifford Merrill Drury-Caxton Printers, Ltd.; Caldwell, Idaho; 1940; pp. 208 & 210:

"Alexander Dumont and two Finley brothers were settled near the encampment of the Spokane chief called 'The Fool', in the vicinity of what is now Chewelah, Washington. Dumont visited Fort Colville on January 1, 1848, at the time measles was in epidemic proportions in the Spokane country and many of the Spokane Indians were dying. On January 14, 1848 he called on the Walkers and their co-missionaries, the Eells, at Tshimakain to profess his friendship to them -- the missionaries were worried about the dangers of an Indian attack -- due to the news of the Whitman affair, his reassurances to his and the Finley's friendship greatly relieved the troubled Walkers."

"It was early in February when the missionaries heard of an attempt being made by the Cayuses to induce Half-Sun, or Sakatal-kukum, to join them in their expected conflict with the American soldiers. Half-Sun was a chief of the "Kowalchins" or "Columbias" Indians who lived in the vicinity of what is now Wenatchee, Washington. Walker reported that the Cayuse offered him "60 horses and 40 cows, the property of the (Whitman) Mission", if he would assist them. Fortunately for the missionaries, Half-Sun refused to become involved. The possibility of the Cayuses moving into the Palouse country alarmed Chief Factor Lewes at Fort Colville. Again he urged the two missionary families at Tshimakain to take refuge in his fort. (Fort Colville was 60 miles to the north of Tshimakain Mission.)

"A still more serious threat to the safety of the two families at Tshimakain came early in February when Nicholas Finley arrived at the Finley- Dumont settlement for the purpose of persuading them and the Spokanes to join the Cayuses in their war against the Americans. If Walker and Eells had only known the extent of Nicholas' involvement in the Whitman massacre, they would have added reason for being alarmed.

"Walker wrote on Tuesday Feb. 8, 1848: `...Just after dinner we had another report said to have come from one of the Finleys (Nicholas) who has been sometime with the Cayuses. The report is that the Indians are collecting from all quarters & that the whites are determined to make a grand sweep of the native in the whole land & that the Americans were going to fight the (H.B.)

Company as well as the Indians & that he had come up to get his friends to go down & join the Cayuses & also that the Cayuses had said that we should not be molested.'

"Wednesday, Feb. 9, 1848: 'I had a quiet night's rest but awoke in rather low spirits this morning. I have been most anxious about the coming of Nicholas. I fear he has some evil design against us. Our Indians are much moved, more I think than we are. I have tried to compose myself but without effect. I have had much talk with the Chief but he does not afford me much consolation. The idea that (Nicholas) has come up after his brothers & the people to join the Cayuses makes it very evident that he is deeply implicated with them, or else he has to deal for his own safety--which is difficult to tell. One thing is very certain, that if his brothers & the Spokanes join him, we are placed in a very precarious situation & it will be impossible for us to remain here with any safety. I know not what course they will pursue. My prayer is that God would lead them in the right course....O Lord, we are here to do thy work. I pray Thee sustain & defend us & thy truth.

The people are much alarmed on account of the report that the half breed brought, that all the Indians from this region in the Willamette were killed, but I think that much of them do not believe it. I think that it is only a report got up to induce the Indians in the upper country to join them. What effect it will (have) none can tell.....

"Thursday, Feb. 10, 1848: 'I have suffered more from excitement to day than at any previous time this winter. I have been at the Chief's once or twice. He does not seem well pleased with the movement of things. I have been expecting the half breeds all day but they have not made their appearance, I prayed, if ever it I did, that God could bring all his (Nicholas') councils to nought & think that they will be frustrated so that the remainder of the wrath of man will be restrained.

'The report is to night that all the Spokans are going to join the Cayuses, at least that was one report but it seems that it was modified & that the chief at Spokane had sent word to our chief to remain here & take care of us.....'

"Friday, Feb. 11, 1848: 'I went with Mr. Eells after the horses & had a very pleasant ride. I have felt more calm to day.....We heard to night that the half breed (Nicholas) who came up went back alone, but what his brothers will do, we cannot tell. They do not appear to say much. I had worship with the people this evening. Some few attended.....'

"Sunday, Feb. 13, 1848: 'I received another letter from Mr. Chief Factor Lewes, stating that things at that place had taken a very serious turn & that they had been under arms ever since three o'clock that morning.....'

"Monday, Feb. 14, 1848: 'I wrote Mr. Lewes this morning giving him as fair account of things as I could and requesting him to make some arrangements with the Finleys & Dumont to come here & stop awhile with us, until we should see how things would go with us. I had a long ride

after the horses. I did not like to go far from home & so left a part of them. In the afternoon I sent an Indian to drive them in.....I went to see the Chief. He does not seem to mend much. The people are anxious to know what course we are going to pursue & seem well satisfied with the idea of our taking our families to Colville until the strain is over.....'

"Tuesday, Feb. 15, 1848: 'I had last night some very interesting thoughts to me. I had a more high & exalted view of the happiness of heaven than common & what would constitute that happiness....I have not felt well to day & have been low spirited all day. I spent considerable time at the lodges. Some Indians from above came in to day & reported that none of the Spokans was induced to follow Nicholas. If this is really the case, it is encouraging....'

From *First White Women Over the Rockies: Diary of Mary Walker*; Drury; Arthur H. Clark, Co.; Glendale; California; 1963; p. 340:

"Thurs. 6 (Apr. 1848) -- 'The Finlays have gone to bring off their brother from the Kayuses.'

"Sat. 8 (Apr. 1848) -- 'The Finleys turned back & did not go for their brother.'"

p. 337: "One of the Finleys arrived from the seat of war. There had been one engagement. More than 300 Americans, 200 half breeds, 200 or 300 Kayuses were waring. 100 Nez Perces on their way to join the Americans. I hope matters may be brought to a speedy close and the land again enjoy rest.."

"Before he left the Colville Valley he stopped by to see the fearful Walker, who wrote on May 23, 1848: 'Just at night Pishnot (Patrick Finley who was called Bish-ca-nah or Pic-ka-nah) & Nicholas Finley came in. I met & spoke with them. They rather put themselves in my way or came out of their own to speak with me.'"

and p. 288: "Tues. (Dec) 2 (1848) Traded this morning with one of the Finleys. Brought nine prs. of shoes & seven deer skins for which I paid a kettle, knife, spoon, fire steel, a few pins & needles, a shawl, an old coat of C's & an old dress of my own & a piece of Baize worth 20 loads. He seemed pleased with his trade & I am sure the skins & shoes are worth more than I gave for them & probably the things are worth more to him than he paid for them...."

"Nicholas Finley had sided with the Cayuse Tribe after the Whitman ordeal and had been with them in the skirmishes with the Americans on the Umatilla on Feb. 24 and Feb. 25, 1848. The missionaries could breathe easier once Nicholas left the country, Cushing Eells wrote, 'Thursday 30, Near night, reached the half-breed settlement. Here are four families by the name of Finley. The other man (Dumont) married their half sister. She has a brother, Nicholas who has a Kayuse woman for his wife. He, together with his family, is at the encampment of the Kayuse murderers. It is reported that Nicholas is detained against his will, or if he leaves, shall not be allowed to take away his property. The statement is very improbable.' Walker later wrote, 'Friday, April 21, 1848: One of the Finleys arrived yesterday from the Paluse camp. He

says the Kayuse murderers were separated from the Paluses & gone off in an easterly direction; that Nicholas Finley with his family is coming this way.'

Nicholas was involved in the Cayuse War that followed that February of 1848. He was supposed to have stopped the scouts and officers of the volunteer army under Col. Gilliam to parley, somewhere between Mud Springs and Umatilla. Talking it has been said just long enough for the Indians to surround the troops. He then rode a short distance to a group of Cayuse and raised his rifle and fired a signal shot. At this hundreds of Indian warriors under Five Crows and Grey Eagle charged down on the soldiers, with the Indians were hundreds of boys and women. The battle of Sand Hollow was fought and lost by the Cayuse. Gilliam's troop formed a hollow square formation and moved the Indians ahead of them as they march to a campsite that had water and stopped that night. Later they marched on to Waillatpu and made camp. Here another parley was made but this time with some Cayuse and Nez Perce headmen.

Tom McKay was in command of a volunteer company and it is ironic that Nicholas was a trapper in his Snake Country brigade some years before in 1835. Another of the Oregon troops was Narcisse Cornoyer, whose probable relative, Godefroy Cornoyor, was married to Nicholas' niece, Genevieve Finley. Being an ex-HBC man many of Nicholas Finley's acquaintances were on the other side! On the eve of the battle of Sand Hollow, Nicholas and two of his brothers, one said to have been Xavier, attempted peace overtures with the government commissioners. From The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest; Alvin M. Josephy, Jr.; University of Nebraska Press; Lincoln; 1979; p.261 His brothers did not come south according the missionaries Walker and Eells.

"The evening after the fight between the forces of Gilliam and the Cayuse Indians, just after the Whitman incident--February 1848--`Nicholas Finlay and two men who pretended to be brothers, who had been with the Cayuses, came into the American camp. Nicholas was already suspected of having played a role in arousing the Cayuses against the Whitmans, and Newell wrote that he "is a friend to the enemy in My opinion and told lies and showed much treachery." However, Gilliam gave him a letter, which he promised to deliver to McBean.' But fearing to be hanged he fled." From The Early Indian Wars of Oregon by Frances Fuller Victor; Salem, Oregon, Frank C. Baker, State Printer 1891 p.176

The Cayuse War was short and violent and the leaders of the Whitman Massacre were later hanged by Oregon authorities.

He seems to have been living in the Colville valley at the "Half-Breed" settlement later called Chewelah after the Chewelah Indians. When several of his brothers and the Plant brothers took a group of people to California during the 1849 Gold Rush he does not seemed to have gone. Which may have been just as well as the Oregonians that were that had witnessed the Whitman Massacre and were part of the Cayuse War were indiscriminately killing any Indians they came upon. They would have known Nicholas. He lived near St. Paul Catholic Mission which was located at Fort Colville, while the other Catholic Mission was at St. Francis Regis was in the Colville Valley.

In St. Paul's and St. Francis Regis' Mission Marriage Records from 1848:

He and "Clementia" Finley are witnesses to the wedding of Laurence Silimoultshé & Therese Wpial on 23 May 1852 at St. Francis Regis.

1849 St. Francois Regis, (Washington) p1:

Nicolas - 4 Martii Nicolas Finley 33 annorum nater ex Jacobo Finley ex uxor Spocanne (above uxor is written sometime that is too small to read). What this says is Nicholas Finley son of Jacques Finley and his Spokane wife, age 33 was baptized March 4, 1849..

Patrinus Alexander Guerret (vulgo, Dumon) Alexander Guerret dit Dumont

St. Francois Regis Mission; W.T.

Josette Finley (PS Nic.) sm/ 4 Mar 1849

1858 4 Mar 1849

There is a sort of census that was made by the priest at the St. Paul's Mission, Kettle Falls, Washington Territory, sometime in the 1850s which shows:

Finley, Nicolas

Josette

Angele

Francois

On January 1, 1851 his son Francois was baptized at St. Paul's Mission, Kettle Falls with Marie (Iroquois) as the mother and Francois Morigeau as godfather. Francois was born on December 6, 1850 which indicates that his parents were wintering in the Colville Valley.

Marie Iroquois again?

From St. Regis Mission, Meyers Falls, Wa., Baptismal Records 1852-1866:

In baptism number 47 on May 23, 1852 he is listed as godfather.

From St. Francis Regis Mission, Washington Record Book Burials 1853-1887

Listed alphabetically according to Christian (or first) name.

(In this group of records is inserted a book that seems to list names in some kind of census or status record thus. No date has been determined for this book:

(Possibly means)

name	tribe?	baptism	census?	marriage?	Page
Nicolas Finley	sm	1 Mar 1849	1854	1 Mar. 1849	

He lived in the Colville valley for a number of years between 1848 and 1860. Sometime during that period of time he went to Idaho and was recorded in the St. Joseph Mission's records. And by 1860 was in the Bitterroot Valley in southwestern Montana.

The hundred miles long Bitterroot Valley was the traditional homeland of the Salish (Flathead) Indians and it runs in a north-south direction. The Catholic St. Mary's Mission was located there in 1841 and in 1850 John Owens built Fort Owen. Later Owens took over the Mission and became the Indian Agent for the Flathead, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Indians. This area was close to the plains and the Flatheads made two trips a year to hunt buffalo. And it teemed with fish and game, and edible plants and roots. And it was off the Oregon Trail which protected its remote existence. The Flatheads were forced to leave their beloved home, with the last of the tribe leaving in 1891. There was a deep love for this homeland that the Flathead Reservation tribal members still hold dear today, making annual trips home.

1860 Washington Territory; Spokane County; Bitterroot Valley; US Census shows:

Dwelling #136; Family #94

Phinley, Nicolas	age 32	trapper & hunter	born in Canada
		\$600.00 value	personal property

"	Susate	age 41	born in Washington Territory
---	--------	--------	------------------------------

"	Angale	age 18	" " " "
---	--------	--------	---------

"	Francis	age 8	" " " "
---	---------	-------	---------

"	Mary	age 4	" " " "
---	------	-------	---------

In Flathead (Salish) genealogy Susate, or Suzitt would be interchangeable with Josephine, Josephite and Josette.

Possible connection to Nicholas Finley.

Rosa Finley: son Louis; bapt. & born June 1862 St. Mary's Mission, MT - Baptisms

Narcisse Finley born 24 Dec 1874; bt. 9 May 1875 Father: Francis Finley; Mother: Julia Finley

By the 1880s he was living on the Flathead Indian Reservation. As some of his brothers had settled and started farming on Flathead Lake where Polson, Montana now stands he may have too. In those days the settlement was called Foot of the Lake or Lambert's Landing. The Blackfeet drove them out in the 1860s.

From the ages given to the census taker I don't think Nicholas really knew how old he was or else there was a communication problem.

Angus McDonald: A Few Items Of The West, edited by F.W. Howay, William S. Lewis and Jacob A. Meyers, Washington Historical Quarterly, Vol. 8, 1917, page 192.

In 1850 on Camas Prairie Angus took part in a War dance with the Salish and later wrote, "Not a soul occupies this plain now, but a solitary Indian rancher called Nichola. His wife untied from my saddle a goose, I had killed, saying she wanted the feathers. On telling her to wish me well on my trip, after she ate it, she laughed and thanked me heartily." Did Angus visit Nicholas Finley and his wife here? Angus was headed for Plains, Montana.

0053

44

	English	Indian	Relationship	Age	Sex
1047	Ellen	None	Daughter	18	F
1050	John	"	Son	11	M
1051	Peter	Si-gan	Son	7	M
1052	Mary Louisa	None	Daughter	4	F
1053	Charles	"	"	22	F
1054	Nicholas Emily	Sohun-min-mah	Husband	70	M
1055	Luzette	None	Wife	62	F
1056	Amiguel	"	H. dow	42	F
1057	Pyms	Spie-augh	Son	28	M
1058	Francis	Non-Hough-wag-hay-han	"	22	M
1059	Francis	Sit-Nah-ent	Husband	38	M
1060	Charles	Sah-gui-mo	Wife	23	F
1061	Rosalie	Ah-gah-el-pah	Daughter	6	F
1062	Ester	Wah-Nah-el-pah	"	3	F
1063	Emile	Ploun	Widow	59	F
1064	Mary Emily	Poo-pah-wah	"	70	F
1065	Ellen	Pish-nah	Daughter	32	F
1066	Boyle	Spaniel	Son	26	M
1067	Louise	Poo-Spaniel	Wife	25	F
1068	Louis	Losmo	Son	4	M
1069	Emeraude	Hittah-pah-gah	Daughter	2	F
1070	Mary	Consona	Widow	54	F

December, 1886 U.S. Indian Census, Flathead Agency, Montana

N ^o	English	Indian	Relationship	Age	Sex
1061	Octave Munnipen		Son	8	M
1062	Mary Louisa		Daughter	6	F
1063	Orville		"	23	F
1064	Nicholas Finley		Husband	71	M
1065	Suzette		Wife	64	F
1066	August		Widow	48	F
1067	Thomson	Thomson	Son	29	M
1068	Francis		"	28	"
1069	Orville		Wife	24	F
1070	Francis	Pet. Kahl-witz	Husband	39	M
1071	Rosalie		Daughter	7	F
1072	Esther	Yab. Kahl-pitt	"	41	F
1073	Emily	Plorn	Widow	60	F
1074	Mary Finley		"	77	F
1075	Ellen		Daughter	38	F
1076	Esperance		Son	27	M
1077	Larry	"	Wife	26	F
1078	Louis	"	Son	5	M
1079	Emmerence	"	Daughter	8	F
1080	Esperance	" Jr.	Son	20	M
1081	Baptiste Versaille		Husband	49	M
1082	Mary	"	Wife	38	F
1083	Peter	"	Son	16	M
1084	Mary	"	Daughter	6	F
1085	Pierre Louis		Son	12	M
1086	Louis Valle		Husband	62	M
1087	Eugenie		Wife	48	F

June 30, 1887 Flathead Indian Census shows on page 40.

0418

(5-128.)

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CENSUS of the Indians of
 Agency, taken
 by United States Indian Agent,
 , 189

NO.	INDIAN NAME	ENGLISH NAME	SEX.	RELATION.	AGE.
953		Agnes	St	Daughter	11
4		Abigail	St	son	8
5		Francis	"	"	2
6		William	St	husband	28
7		Janette	St	wife	28
8		John Baptist	St	husband	40
9		Rosalie	St	wife	30
960		John	St	son	3
1		Annie	St	Daughter	1
2		Delia Reavis	St	husband	37
3		Josephine	St	wife	30
4		Alphonse	"	Daughter	11
5		Annie	"	"	9
6		Louisa	"	"	7
7		Sophy	"	"	1
8		Antoinette	St	husband	26
9		Rosalie	St	wife	22
970		Bermine	St	Daughter	22
1		Ellen	"	"	19
2		Antoine	St	son	25
3		John	"	"	16
4		Albert Elona	St	husband	35
5		Belie	St	wife	32
6		John	St	son	7
7		Rosalie	St	Daughter	3
8		Albert	St	son	2
9		George	St	son	1
980		Nicholas Hingle	St	husband	44
1		Luella	St	wife	47
2		Frederick	St	son	36
3		John	"	"	17
4		Timothy	"	"	22
5		Francis	St	husband	27
6		Belie	St	wife	28

June 30, 1889 Flathead Indian Census

0299

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Census of the _____ Agency, _____, United States Indian Agent,
by _____, 18____

Indians of _____ taken

NO.	INDIAN NAME	ENGLISH NAME	SEX.	RELATION.	AGE.
886		Lazarus	M	Husband	31
887		Elizabeth	F	Wife	41
888		Andrew	M	Step Son	29
889		Joseph	M	Husband	31
890		Louisa	F	Wife	33
891		Agnes	"	Daughter	9
892		Charles	M	Son	6
893		William	M	Husband	23
894		Annnette	F	Wife	21
895	Qua 9 Wa	Jaques Baptiste	M	Husband	19
896		Rosalie	F	Wife	28
897		John	M	Son	7 mo
898		Oscar Mirais	M	Husband	35
899		Josephine	F	Wife	28
900		Alphonse	"	Daughter	9
901		Annie	"	"	7
902		Louisa	"	"	6
903		Alexander Monfian	M	Husband	54
904		Rosalie	F	Wife	30
905		Emmie	"	Daughter	20
906		Ellen	"	"	21
907		Antoine	M	Son	24
908		John	"	"	14
909		Oscar	"	"	10
910		Albert Sloane	"	Husband	33
911		Lucile	F	Wife	30
912		John	M	Son	5
913		Rosalie	F	Daughter	21
914		Nicholas Rindley	M	Husband	72
915		Susette	F	Wife	66
916		Angella	F	Widow	45
917		Frank	M	Father	34
918		John	M	Son	1

1679 b-12 m

August 8, 1891 Flathead Indian Census

These census record show that Nicholas and Susette were still alive in 1891

Carrie Orr's List of Nicholas Finley's children:

Nicholas

?

Francois

Angelle Plouff

I have not found his death date but he probably died on the Flathead Reservation.