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by Jack Wilkins, staff writer

Nez Perce War  
Mrs Alice Russell

Robie

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. . . Her father was William Robie, who rode Barney from the fort at Mount Idaho to rescue Alice's mother, then Mrs Samuel Benedict, whose husband had just been killed by drunken Indians. Robie later married Mrs Benedict.

"My half sister, Mrs Francis Shissler, was there with my mother when Samuel Benedict was killed," Mrs Russell said recently. "The home was on Whitebird Creek where Smokey Ruttman's trailer court is."

Mrs Shissler died last year. Mrs Russell quoted her as having given this account of the raid:

"We had heard that the Indians said they would not go to the reservation without a fight. An Indian we called 'the old fisherman' had warned us to leave but he couldn't speak English and we weren't sure what he meant. . .

"One day Mox Mox met Father on the trail and came home with us. He was given food. He stood around the yard for several hours and leaned against the gate facing the house, glancing to the road on one side of the creek or the other.

"Mox Mox finally rode away, and afterwards Mother realized he had been planning the attack. He was a fighting chief in the war. Afterwards he changed his name to Yellow Bull, saying 'Mox Mox bad Indian; Yellow Bull good Indian.' "

Some Nez Perce have said he was the one who taunted the 'red blankets' into action and the only old Indian to join the raids. This would support the supposition that he was scouting the Benedict home.

That afternoon, several young Indians rode up, lingered awhile and rode on. Benedict went out to look for a calf. The account of his daughter continues:

"Father came riding back on a neighbor's plow horse. His boots were off. Mother got excited, thinking he had been bitten by a rattlesnake.

"Don't get excited," Father said. "Those Indians shot me and left me for dead."

"While we were doctoring Father a few hours later, a bunch of Indians dismounted at the gate and as they came toward the house they were told to stay out by August Bacon who had grabbed a gun and shut the door.

"The Indians answered by shooting and Mr Bacon fell to the sitting room floor, apparently dead . . . One of the Indians cut his throat and then made me wash his cartridge belt, which was blood stained, in a basin of water . . .

"In the meantime Father arose and, standing by the bedroom window looking out, told Mother to take me and the other two children away. Later I saw him in the yard going toward the creek, followed by many Indians who were shooting at him, and when I last saw him he had gained the center of the creek."

The next day the woman and children wandered from one stricken ranch to another. At the Manuel ranch, Mrs Manuel was taking food to her wounded husband whom she had hidden in a draw. She would not flee toward Mount Idaho with the Benedicts and later was killed by the marauders.

The following day the Benedicts were rescued by volunteers. On the way to Mount Idaho Mrs Benedict was thrown from her horse during a scare and she lost the rest of the party, which got through safely.

Robie

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The next day, she was captured by a band of Indian men and women. She attributed her release to the fact that she had taught some of the women household skills.

Shortly after her release, she heard a rider coming. She hid but the rider found her. The rider was William Robie, riding the horse that the then unborn Mrs Russell was one day to ride. Mrs Benedict climbed on behind the courageous rider and off they rode to a happy ending.

Previously in this same article appeared . . . But she remembers the white horse. Barney was a gentle horse and Alice rode him when she was a little girl.