

Letter from Chief Victor to Territorial Gov. Sidney Edgerton, April 25, 1865

The Chief of the Flatheads to the Chief of the Whites, Virginia, Montana Ty

Four horses have been stolen by some of our young men, but I cannot find them in the camp. Therefore I, Victor the chief, send you four horses of our own, . . . and I . . . send to you the Chief of the whites, a horse of mine, which I present you with for yourself.

I send back also five oxen found, not stolen by our men, from below the Marias. You will see to whom do they belong. . . .

Now I address myself to you the Great Chief of the Whites of this country. Some of the big men among the white settlers in this our land, spoke to drive us away from our country. This thing vexed a great deal me, and all the other Chiefs, and all my children. I, Victor, therefore do send you the horse above mentioned to pray you to take pity on us, and to put an end to such talkings, and to stop the whites from building themselves houses in our land guaranteed to us by Treaty. We are almost given to despondency seeing every day new houses started up, and farms taken by whites in our land. We got this spring some ploughs from [the] Government, and we are all busy, and in great earnest to make ourselves fields; but after a little while there will be no more room for us in our own country, if you do not stop the whites. . . .

I, Victor, spoke already to my children not to go to war. But you must tell your white children to give nothing to eat to these warriors or horse stealers both Snakes, or Flatheads, but to let them starve. Though our boys go not much to war, . . . other indians of other tribes go, and say to the whites that they are Flatheads, because we are good friends with the whites.

The last favor that I and my fellow Chiefs beg from you, is, that you would give order to the whites settled in our valley to sell no whisky to our boys, who go to buy it against our will. I, Victor, an old man already, . . . could not sleep all the winter, because the whites and indians, both drunk, were always fighting in the camp. My heart was broken seeing the whites compelling by force our boys and girls, young men and women, to drink; you know for what purpose. . . .

*From the Flathead camp in Bitterroot Valley,
Apr. The 25th, 1865.*

Victor

The Chief of the Flatheads

[And Signatures of 5 other Chiefs]

Source: *Sidney Edgerton Family Papers, 1859–1884. Manuscript Collection 26 [box 1 folder 8a].* Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives. Excerpted in *Not In Precious Metals Alone: A Manuscript History of Montana* (Helena, 1976): 56–57.