
HEADQUARTERS THIRD DIVISION,
Sonoma, May 25, 1850.

CAPTAIN: On the first day of April I left San Francisco, in the steamer for San Diego, accompanied by Lieut. Colonel Hooker, Assistant Adjutant General, and Lieut. Gibbs, aid de-camp, to examine the southern part of the territory, and fix on the position of posts. Two days and a half took us to San Diego. I there visited the boundary line, as established and marked by the commission. The end of the line on the Pacific ocean is about fifty feet south of latitude 32° . If this determination be correct, the position of the entrance of San Diego bay must be a little south of that assigned to it by Brevet Captain Halleck, engineer corps. The troops (two companies second infantry, under Major Heintzelman) were situated on the beach at the usual landing, near the mouth of the harbor, without fresh water or wood near, while a few men occupied the mission about five miles from the bay, where both are convenient, and where good gardens can be cultivated. General Riley had already directed Lieut. Colonel Magruder's company to occupy San Diego on its arrival, and I see no reason to change its destination. This will leave the two companies under Major Heintzelman disposable, and a post will be occupied as soon as possible at the mouth of the Gila, by these or other two companies, as General Riley may direct. The missions are generally claimed by individuals. I cannot assume to decide on the validity of such claims; but assuming that such of them as are now in possession of government troops are public property, I have directed the garrison of San Diego to be established at the mission, and remain there until the permanent bar-

racks are built at the works to be erected for the defence of the harbor, or the property is legally adjudicated to some claimant.

The escort detailed for the boundary commission having been disengaged, by their adjournment to meet on the Rio Grande, and having been relieved by Major Emory and ordered to report to department headquarters, left a company of infantry under Captain Hayden, second infantry, and a company of dragoons under Lieut. Coutts, disposable. Major E. Fitzgerald's company was also at San Diego, having been organized from detachments that came across by the Gila, and directed by General Riley to occupy El Chino. These three companies were all too small to occupy any distant or exposed point. But the cavalry was stationed at the mission of San Luis Rey, and a small infantry post determined on at the Cajon pass, twenty-six miles from El Chino, after I had visited those places. At San Luis Rey are good stables for a squadron of cavalry, good quarters (with trifling repairs,) the best of pasturage, a position central as to the Cajon pass, Warner's pass, San Pedro, San Diego, and the southern boundary, and a most valuable (as I think) property going to ruin; good gardens can be made, and there is much fruit on the spot, a consideration of great importance, for the health of the officers and men in California has suffered much from the want of fresh vegetable diet. The Cajon pass admits the ingress of Indians, even from the Colorado, into the great valley of San Bernadino, in which is the rancho of El Chino, and is the only pass in that district by which they can drive cattle or horses rapidly out. A small force of infantry at its mouth will suffice to give notice to the inhabitants when any predatory band enters, and to prevent them driving out herds of cattle. The inhabitants being warned, must undertake the care of their own property, for these Indian expeditions rarely consist of more than a dozen persons. Cavalry could do no more, for the pass is difficult for horses, and they could hardly penetrate at all in the mountains. The cavalry at San Luis Rey, particularly if brought up to its proper strength, can be kept in good order at little expense, and moved even with wagons to any point I have named. I have passed all of the roads myself with a wagon, except between the mission and El Chino and San Pedro, which are well traveled carriage roads. A large amount of supplies had been already moved to El Chino, under General Riley's order; otherwise I am not certain that I should have considered it necessary to plant a detachment at the Cajon until troops were more numerous in the division. As I passed up on my way northward, I went over the road from San Luis Obispo to San Miguel. General Riley had sent Lieut. Derby, topographical engineers, with a party to open a wagon road from San Miguel to the Mariposa river and mines, thus opening a communication from sea near or at San Luis Obispo to the southern mines. The mountain which lies between San Luis and the head of the valley of the Salinas river, in whose valley is San Miguel, is very difficult to cross with wagons loaded with anything like a full load. My opinion is that a better route for transportation of supplies to the posts to be established on the waters entering into the Tulare, is from the headwaters of the San Joaquin, taking advantage of the high water to reach the uppermost point of navigation, from which it is only twenty-five miles to Los Reges river, over a level road. On this stream the post will probably be established. Its position will be determined when Lieut. Derby's report reaches me.

I returned to Benicia on the evening of the 18th instant, having rode

840 miles from San Diego. The distance by the direct route is 487 miles. I diverged to visit Warner's pass, towards the Gila, and the top of the ridge overlooking the great desert, the Cajon pass, San Pedro, Monterey, and other minor points.

The time remaining between the delivery of the mail from the Atlantic and the departure of the next is too short to permit me to give a detailed description of the country. In general it is better for agricultural purposes than I expected to find it. There is much limestone near El Chino and Santa Barbara; many springs of mineral tar near the latter place and the Pueblo de los Angeles; and lagoons near both, in the neighborhood of the sea, that furnish every year, in the dry season, immense quantities of salt of the best quality, in large transparent crystal of the size of a hickory nut. I ate very fine oranges from the tree growing in the open air at Los Angeles, showing a very mild climate. Six thousand people from Sonora and the neighboring Mexican States have come in this year; by the route I came up, the road was covered with them, most of them poor and in extreme want. The Apaches have desolated their own country and left them nothing to abandon or bring. To comply with our treaty obligations with Mexico, will require 600 cavalry and 400 infantry on the line of the Gila and eastward to the Rio Grande, besides those now on the two extremities of that line. The cavalry must be practised dragoons, not recruits that cannot ride. This country is the best school for dragoons in the United States.

When I was in Washington, on my return from Mexico, and my regiment under orders for Oregon, I was authorized, on my application to the War Department, to direct that only Americans from the western States should be enlisted after the fatal act of discharging the men from Mexico was passed. After I left, the recruits, generally the refuse of all the depots, were swept into it; and I am informed that in one instance a body of American western men, enlisted under my order, were turned over to a dragoon detachment, and a body of recruits, many of whom could neither speak English nor ride a horse, but nearer the regiment, were turned over in their stead, thus *saving a large amount of transportation*. Many men deserted on the route; and, but for the excellent dispositions of Colonel Loring, the regiment would hardly have reached Oregon. During the absence of Colonel Loring from his headquarters on duty this winter, more than 100 men deserted in a body, and a very unsatisfactory pursuit was made, under the orders of Major Tucker, by Major Ruff. Colonel Loring on hearing of it returned in haste, organized a detachment containing all the officers of his command that could be possibly spared, pursued the deserters in the most inclement season over mountains covered with snow, and through passes thought by the old trappers to be at that season impenetrable, and returned, after a march of a thousand miles, with seventy. Many of the rest perished; but some reached the northern mines, where they are sure of aid and protection. The conduct of Colonel Loring and his officers and men, but especially his own—for his energy animated and moved the whole—is beyond my commendation, and shows that the shot which, at the garita of Belen, took off a limb, in nowise diminished his spirit or even his strength.

I hope that in enlisting men for the regiment, fitness for their peculiar service may be considered, and that the choice of men for its ranks may not be committed to officers of other corps who have their own ranks to

fill. There is no corps in the army calculated to be so eminently useful on this western frontier as one of mounted riflemen, properly constituted.

Last summer, Captain Warner, topographical engineer, was killed by a tribe of Indians on the headwaters of the Sacramento; and later in the fall a tribe, or rather a confederacy of several who had long threatened evil, murdered some citizens near Clear lake. Prompt pursuit was made by Lieutenant Davidson, commanding a company of dragoons stationed at Sonoma; but the Indians took refuge on islands in the lake, and could not be reached without boats; they became bold and defied us. I wrote, on my arrival from Oregon and learning these events, that it was my intention to chastise the authors of both outrages, and orders were issued conformably.

Lieutenant Davidson, a most intelligent and zealous officer, had submitted a plan of action for the Clear Lake Indians, founded on his experience on the first expedition, which was approved. General Riley detailed his company, and, as I directed an additional force of infantry to be added, the General placed Major Seawell in command of the whole. Many instances were made by citizens to have the expedition start early in the spring; but I gave positive directions that until the route was practicable for wagons no movement should be made, as it was intended to carry boats for use on the lake. Major Seawell made every preparation for several months' service, for the detachment was to punish also, if they could be found, the murderers of Captain Warner; but on the eve of starting, the order of the President for a court-martial in Oregon took away Major Seawell, and it was necessary to provide another commander. The lot fell most happily on Brevet Captain Nathaniel Lyon, 2d infantry, and he marched immediately, about three weeks since.

My instructions, conveyed through General Riley, were, to waste no time in parley, to ascertain with certainty the offenders, and to strike them promptly and heavily. There was no difficulty in determining the guilty, for they boasted of the deed and defied punishment, secure of a retreat on their islands in a lake surrounded by mountains impassable for any carriage. Captain Lyon pushed his advance with all his activity, and sent back all his wagons, except those prepared to carry three boats from the foot of the mountain. By putting the teams of all on one wagon, and by the assistance of all the men, the three wagons, with the boats, were gotten over, and the boats concealed on the edge of the lake without the knowledge of the Indians. A body of the latter were driven from a thick jungle by a shot from a howitzer, and all took refuge by their tulé boats on the island. Captain Lyon so disposed his command that a part, principally dragoons under Lieutenant Davidson, lined the shore nearest the island, while the boats manned by the infantry were to attack them in their retreat. The Indians, confident in their position, expected the dragoons would have again to retire without being able to reach them, and taunted them with the distance kept up between them—for some of them spoke Spanish—invited them at least to wade into the water if they came for a fight, &c. When the boats appeared around the point, they set up a howl of despair, but received them manfully with showers of arrows. Soon, however, the fire of the infantry began, as the distance lessened, to tell fearfully, and many fell before our men landed, when they were completely routed, and only those could escape who could reach the water and conceal themselves in the rushes. Another

tribe concerned with these were still further off. Captain Lyon pursued his march by night and day, and came upon them before they could expect him; they were, however, prepared in a measure, and had established themselves in a thick jungle. This was surrounded and attacked, and, after a spirited defence, the enemy were routed.

The cavalry was then sent down, by Russian river and Sonoma, to Benicia, to get their horses shod, which Captain Lyon, after moving down the lake, was to attempt to cross, by Cash or Puta creeks, to the Sacramento, to move on the headwaters of that river in search of the murderers of Captain Warner. The facts I have detailed, I learn from the officers who have returned this day: they all unite in awarding to Captain Lyon the highest praise for his untiring energy, his zeal and skill, and attribute his success to the rapidity and secrecy of his marches, and skilful dispositions on the ground. His own official report cannot reach me for some time, but I cannot let the mail go off without communicating information which must be interesting, and expressing my highest praise of Captain Lyon's conduct, and of that of the officers and men under him, many of whom fought in the water up to their arm-pits, with their cartridge boxes on their heads.

The officers here think that two hundred Indians, at least, were killed in the two affairs.

Some murders have been committed by Indians elsewhere, of which I have no authentic account, except of one at the crossing of the Colorado. When I was at San Diego, a great many complaints were made by citizens there, and persons arriving from the Gila, of a gang of lawless men who had established a ferry over the Colorado, where not only they practised the greatest extortions, but committed murders and robberies. I was urged to send out a command to drive them away. I offered, if any civil officer charged with the execution of a writ for the arrest of any of them required the assistance of the military for his aid and protection, that the whole command there, if necessary, should go, but that I could not on these reports, however credible, put such a responsibility on any officer as was desired. In the mean time, the captain of the gang complained of came to San Diego with some men and mules to purchase goods to sell at his ferry: one of the men with me, who had been in Mexico, recognised him as a man who had been tried, condemned, and whipped, for a burglary committed at Perote, on the march of the army out of the country, he being one of the marauders that infested it. While there, (in San Diego,) one of the men with him shot a soldier with a pistol, and was pursued and taken: this man, I am since told, has escaped. The party on the Colorado consisted of thirteen. I learned from travellers on the road as I came up, both from Americans and Mexicans, that the captain, representing himself as a Texan who had served, received from the local government a sum of money to raise a company to fight the Apaches: with this he gathered his band and came to the Colorado and established a ferry. There were two others already there—one kept by the Youmas Indians, and the other by an Irishman. This gang took the Indians' boats and cut holes in the bottoms, so as to render them unserviceable; and a few days afterwards they seized the Irishman and brought him up to their camp, where he was tied. The next morning the dead body of the Irishman, with his hands still tied, was found in the water, with a ball through his head. A Mexican at work (to pay for his ferriage) told one

of my informants that the man was taken out and shot by the captain's order, and the body thrown into the river; he saw the whole from where he lay, as they thought, asleep. A traveller from Tennessee, with twelve hundred dollars, was robbed and murdered some days afterwards: he either followed shortly after, or belonged to a party under Colonel Anderson, of Tennessee. All the Mexicans I overtook were loud in their praises of Colonel Anderson, for having, while on the river, protected them from the outrages of this set. The universal complaint against the gang determined me to have a post established at the crossing, to protect our emigrant citizens, as soon as I learned that Lieutenant Colonel Magruder's company was intended for San Diego, by which two companies of infantry would become disposable. A few days since, I received a series of resolutions from a public meeting in San Diego, calling upon the military authorities to send troops immediately to the Colorado, to punish a terrible murder committed on American citizens there; and annexed was an affidavit of one of the ferry party, declaring that the captain and most of the party were set upon one night suddenly by about three hundred Youmas Indians, who had been living quietly there for some time, and murdered; that the Indians did not molest any of the parties of emigrants near the ferry, who were chiefly if not all Mexicans.

The Youmas are not good Indians, and may revenge themselves indiscriminately on all they think Americans, and the movement of the two companies to the Colorado will still be necessary. The resolutions of the meeting I shall take no notice of, as their style does not please me.

If the revenge of the Indians should be satisfied by what they have done, I do not think it would be right to punish them; they had great injuries to complain of, and only did what the law would have done, if it had been administered with strictness. Their residence is in the Mexican territory.

Learning, though informally, that there is in Oregon an order from the headquarters of his regiment, transferring Lieutenant Haynes to one of the companies there, I have directed him to report to Colonel Loring.

I neglected to mention, that so irregular is the mail communication with Oregon, that the first information from Colonel Loring of the desertion of his men reached me with the report of his return from his pursuit of them: his letters of 19th January were received by me the 22d May. A fine steamboat, the Carolina, has been put on the route by the mail company, and sailed as soon as she received the mails by the last steamer from Panama.

A report from the post at Far West shows it to be so unhealthy, that I will direct its removal up into the mountains, on one of the principal routes across the Sierra Nevada.

The territory north of this is fast filling with miners in the neighborhood of the boundary with Oregon, while on the seacoast, about latitude 40^o 50', a bay called Humboldt's bay, having a channel half a mile wide, with four fathoms at low water, has been visited by many vessels, and some parties are settling there; it is surrounded with fine lands and good farming country, and has many Indians living on it. Treaties should be held with the Indians to buy the lands necessary for public use or settlements, and reservations made for military purposes. If I had the use of a steamer, I would visit and determine some points. With the Indians I suppose I have no authority to treat, while there are Indian agents

here. The bay is eighteen miles long, and from five to six wide, with good anchorage for any vessel. No river of any size enters into it.

Some parties are establishing themselves on Trinity bay, an indentation of the coast, somewhat like Monterey bay, but opening to the southwest instead of northwest.

I respectfully ask that Benicia be made a chaplain post. It would be very much to the interest of the government if it were made a port of entry. Vessels could come then directly to the depot without delaying at San Francisco to enter, losing their crews and incurring demurrage on the part of the government.

A vessel, the Charles Cooper, is now discharging at Benicia a large cargo of lumber, shipped by the Quartermaster General from Bangor, Maine, to San Francisco bay. From a calculation furnished by the captain, the difference between the expense of landing his cargo at Benicia and San Francisco is, in money, in favor of the former \$9,600, and in time two months.

Every day's experience establishes the superiority of Benicia over every other point on the coast for a great military depot.

Your obedient servant,

PERSIFOR F. SMITH,

Brevet Major General, Commanding Division.

Captain IRVIN McDOWELL,

Assistant Adjutant General, headquarters of the army.

P. S.—As this seems to be the only *division* in which there is any *fighting*, I have left out *Pacific* division.

P. F. S.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
NEW YORK, *July 17, 1850.*

Official:

W. G. FREEMAN,
Assistant Adjutant General.
