

No. 109.

NOME CULT INDIAN FARM,  
*August 14, 1858.*

SIR: In obedience to your request I submit herewith an account of the establishment and present condition of Nome Cult Indian farm.

"Round" or "Nome Cult" valley was first discovered in 1852 or 1853 by hunters, but little was known of it until 1855, when it was visited by several parties. From information gathered from men who had seen the place I was convinced that it was a suitable place for an Indian reservation, and mentioned my opinion on several occasions to Colonel Henley, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, which induced him to send me to the place with a small party, in June, 1856.—(See copy of letter of instructions from Colonel Henley, and my report to him in June, 1856.)

When I first came into the valley there were no white people there, and no settlers came until the fall of 1856. No planting was done the first year, as the season was too far advanced. We erected a few cabins within an enclosure of pickets, for the occupancy of the whites and a few Nevada Indians that I brought with me. We began to pack farming tools, seeds, and provisions from Nome Lackee, but the winter set in sooner than we anticipated and we did not accomplish much. On several occasions I nearly lost my life in the mountains. One Indian was frozen to death, two men drowned in Eel river, and several mules lost in the snow. Some of the Nome Cult Indians twice

surrounded our quarters, threatening our lives, and killing some stock. In resisting them we were forced to kill many of them, which stopped their proceedings. During this winter and the spring of 1857 but little planting was done. The harvests, however, proved the great fertility of the soil.—(See extracts from my report to V. E. Geiger, Indian agent, September 30, 1857.)

Most that has been done here has been accomplished during the last twelve months. There are now twenty log houses for the use of the Nevadas and Yubas. We have a substantial store house, a house for the employés, and one occupied by the families of the overseer and commissary. These last are inclosed by a close picket fence ten feet in height. There are also three other houses at the Yuka station, one mile from headquarters. During the past season ten miles of fencing have been made; also, large corrals for stock. Four hundred and fifty acres have been planted with different grains and vegetables. The wheat and rye have been harvested, of which we have two thousand bushels. The corn and vegetables promise a large crop; buck-wheat, hemp, flax, and sugar-cane thrive well here, and irrigation is not needed. Sufficient will be raised this season to feed all the Indians who require it.

There are in Nome Cult about two hundred of the Yuba Indians, sixty of whom are men. These are comparatively civilized and are valuable work hands.

About three thousand Nome Cults or Yukas make this valley their headquarters. The largest number present at the station at once is two thousand, about one fourth of these are men.

The amount of stock on this reservation is as follows: Three hundred and twenty-five head of McCorkle stock, cows, yearlings, and calves; nineteen American cows, yearlings, and calves; ten yoke of work cattle, nineteen pack and work mules, and eight horses.

I am not able to give you the exact cost of this place since its foundation, as I have not copies of many of the bills of goods sent here, but, as near as I can determine, the total expenditure cannot be more than thirty-four thousand dollars up to July 1, 1858; this would include money paid for work cattle, pack mules, and riding horses, (most of which are here now,) wages of employés, rations, farming tools, and clothing for Indians. The above amount does not comprise the McCorkle stock, of which fifty have been killed to feed the Indians, nor American cows bought by Bourne, for which one thousand dollars were paid.

The amount hereafter required to carry on this place will not be great. With the addition of the ten teams and three extra hands, fifteen hundred acres can be planted the next season as easily as the four hundred and fifty this year. I cannot form an estimate of the probable expense, for I do not know how many Indians will be brought here, how much land will be set apart as a reservation, or what improvements will be required. As flax and hemp grow so well here and sheep thrive upon the mountains, I think, with proper instruction, the squaws could be taught to manufacture clothing.

To secure the complete success of this place the whole valley should be set apart for a reservation. Past experience shows that it

is not for the benefit of the whites, and much to the disadvantage of the Indians, that they are allowed to mingle together. So long as whites are near reservations the utmost vigilance is powerless to prevent the Indians from obtaining liquor and the squaws from being corrupted. It is well known that contact with the whites causes diseases that are unknown in their wild state; it is from these two causes that most of the difficulties with Indians arise.

The natural advantages of this place are obvious to the most casual observer, and my two years residence here convinces me beyond a doubt that this is a more suitable place for an Indian reserve than can be found elsewhere within the limits of the State. The climate is more equable than that of the Sacramento valley. The summer's heat is not so intense, and in winter no snow remains on the ground.

If this valley be taken as a reserve there will be nothing to induce men to settle within sixty miles east, seventy north, thirty west, and forty south. For five months in the year communication is cut off from the Sacramento valley by the deep snows on the mountains. I think that the improvements in the valley may have cost the settlers from twenty-five to thirty thousand dollars. None of the land has been surveyed. If this valley should be confirmed as an Indian reservation, in a few years it would afford a home for twenty thousand Indians and reflect honor upon the Indian department. The outlay required would be trifling when compared with the benefits to be derived from it.

For the last nine years I have spent most of my time with the California Indians; at first I was trading with them, then I was employed by Dr. Wozencraft, Indian commissioner, as interpreter; afterwards by Lieutenant Beale, superintendent of Indian affairs, and in the employ of Superintendent Henley for the last four years. I have seen them in every variety of circumstances, and had abundant opportunity of studying their habits and character. At your request I make a few suggestions.

To govern Indians it is of the first importance to gain their confidence; in order to attain this result one must be very careful never to promise them anything which he cannot perform; firmness is necessary; no order should ever be allowed to be neglected; at the same time they should be treated kindly, encouraged, and praised whenever they deserve it. They should be taught to feel that the agent is their friend, and to go to him whenever they are in trouble, with the assurance that their wrongs will be redressed. With good management corporal punishment is seldom needed; when given, it should be severe and in the presence of others, that it may operate as a warning.

If reservations were conducted as they might be, each year would show some improvement in the intellectual and moral conditions of the Indians. A suitable teacher should be provided for the children and youth, and schools established where each must learn his daily task. In these schools the first principles of morality and religion should be taught.

It would be well to give the Indians some idea of personal property, that those who labor might feel that they were deriving individual

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benefits from their exertions. Let some of the most active and intelligent have a few acres of land and a cabin for their families, and let the product of their industry be their own. At first they would need some instructions, but after a time they could teach still other Indians, till finally a system of regular labor might be firmly established; at the same time there should be large common fields, from which all would receive benefits.

To keep Indians quiet and contented they should have abundance of occupation, and this can always be done on a reserve, where improvements should be constantly made. When Indians are unoccupied they are always plotting mischief.

Each tribe of Indians should be kept separate. There is always jealousy between the different tribes, and when it is not prevented the more intelligent will impose upon the ignorant.

In my opinion, one great obstacle to the success of reservations has been the frequent change of employés. Each stranger upon a reserve is closely watched, and the Indians almost always try to evade his orders. Great care should be taken in the selection of men, as peculiar qualities are required.

An educated faithful physician is needed on each reservation.

In removing Indians to reservations it is very important that the entire tribe should be taken to their new home, otherwise there is dissatisfaction and a strong desire to return to their old home and friends.

In my opinion, the reservation system, modified and improved, is the only way of doing justice both to whites and Indians. If the latter are allowed to be near settlements they are very troublesome and would soon be exterminated. Within the last eight years three-fourths of those in mining regions have died.

All of which is respectfully submitted by your obedient servant,  
SIMMON P. STORMS,

*Overseer of Nome Cult Indian Farm.*

G. BAILEY, Esq.,  
*Special Agent Interior Department.*

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