

No. 106.

CAMP ON CLEAR LAKE,  
120 miles *N. E.* of Yreka, August 30, 1856.

SIR: I have the honor to say that I got from Judge A. M. Rosborough a short time since a letter, directed from you to him, asking for information relating to the Indian tribes in this section of the United States. This letter he has done me the honor of handing to me, requesting that I should give the required information, which I take pleasure in doing, to the best of my knowledge and abilities.

I suppose that in the area of country beginning at the Pacific coast, on the northern coast of California, and running thence about due east three hundred miles to the summit of the Sierra Nevada mountains, to a point about where the emigrant trail from Yreka to the sinks of the Humboldt crosses said mountains, and thence along said mountains south about two hundred miles, and thence due west to the coast, and thence to the place of beginning, there are some five or six thousand Indians at least, amongst whom there are perhaps eight or ten different tribes, all of whom live on fish, flesh, and fowl, roots, and seeds of different grasses, together with a variety of nuts and berries. Their habits are predatory, and as far as petty thieving goes, they are in the habit of preying upon each other and upon the white settlers, who usually have stock, such as cattle and horses, which the Indians find so tempting to steal that they avail themselves of it, which brings on collisions, keeping the settlements in trouble, retarding their progress, and induces expeditions against the Indians exceedingly expensive either to the State or general government.

The only regular force in this whole area of country (now fast settling) is at Fort Jones, some twenty miles from Yreka, and it is totally inadequate to hold in check and overawe so many small tribes in so large an extent of country, especially where so many miners and settlers from all parts of the world are in juxtaposition with the Indians, and hence difficulties or aggressions on one side or the other are constantly occurring.

I am now at this point engaged in an expedition against the Indians, on the staff of Major General Casley. I am satisfied that peace, under the liberal auspices of the general government, is a better policy than that of war, and without this interference war must continue to be the result until the Indians are completely conquered.

An experience of more than twenty years amongst the different tribes of Indians on the southwestern frontiers of the United States and of California warrants me in respectfully suggesting it as good policy in the general government to place special agents in this country who have good sense in such matters, with *ample means* and *full powers* to act for the common weal and promote peaceful relations.

The whole, or most of them, (Indians,) can be gathered on reserves and taught the civil arts at infinitely *less expense* than to war with them. An agent with these powers for acting, and a force of seventy-five or one hundred men to aid him, ready to enforce obedience with the refractory, could soon establish these Indians on reserves, present them with gewgaws, promote industrial pursuits, and inculcate into their minds the fact that the *whites were really their friends*. Establish this belief *into* their minds and the greatest difficulty is surmounted.

There are always on the frontiers renegade, reckless, and irresponsible white men, who do more to promote quarrels with the Indians than all other causes combined, and, unfortunately, the Indians (savages, as they are,) are too apt to form their estimate of our race from these persons who commit upon them these injuries and outrages.

Let an Indian know that he is the recipient of benefits, that he is safe in his person and that of his squaw and papoose, that they have comfortable means of subsistence, and he is easily managed. As a savage foe he is quite a different being. If the people of the United States would give one-tenth part of that attention to their Indian affairs that is given to the question of African slavery it would be infinitely better for the Indians on the score of humanity, and for the whites on the score of expense; for I have scarcely yet seen an instance where peace (under proper management) could not have been better maintained with them than a state of war.

The Pacific coast Indians, the Lower Klamath, Salmon river, Upper Klamath or Lake Indians, the Scott's valley, Shasta, Modock, (or Tulare lake,) Pitt river, McCloud river, and Goose lake Indians compose the tribes in this section of country; and I respectfully urge that the general government cannot too soon act, in some such manner as it deems best, in relation to these tribes, both for their own welfare and that of the white settlers, who are prevented from settling some fine portions of country on account of the position of Indian affairs as they now exist here.

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Since the settlement of this section of the country by the whites, (which began about the year 1851,) the Indians (then much more numerous than now) have considerably decreased in numbers, as far as relates to those immediately in juxtaposition with the whites. War with each other and with the whites, whiskey, and a variety of diseases unknown to them until the advent of the whites, have been the cause of this; and it is a fact well established that the Indians, when brought in contact with the whites, are prone to contract their vices instead of their virtues.

The uprooting of the soil for farms, the grazing of stock, and the working of the streams for gold, has a tendency to stop the supply of game, roots, and fish, which the Indians have heretofore relied on for subsistence. All this has a tendency to engender thieving propensities among the Indians, who are to some extent imbued with the belief that it is *just*, and who assert, with some show of reason, that the whites have taken from them their hunting grounds.

I regret that at present I cannot give a more detailed account of the *character, number, and mode of living* of the Indians, as much of the country has as yet been but little explored, especially on upper Pitt and McCloud rivers. If you deem proper to correspond with me on the subject, I shall take pleasure in availing myself of all useful information, and in furnishing you with it at the earliest date.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

JAS. P. GOODALL.

Col. THOS. J. HENLEY,  
*Superintendent Indian Affairs, California.*

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