

Letter from Fort Gaston.  
FORT GASTON, HOOPA VALLEY,  
Sept. 4th, 1863.  
Dear Editor Times—Never has there been a week of greater excitement in Hoopa, than the past one. An Indian charged with the murder of Merrick and Madam Weaver, and the two Chinamish of New River, was arrested last Saturday by Lieut. Hempfield near the mouth of Willow creek. Two more Indians, of Hoopa, supposed to be guilty of the same crime were then sought for. Sunday last, it was ascertained that they were in Ma-til-tin Ranch, which is the largest in the valley, and about one mile distant from the fort. At the time, Major Taylor was absent on a short ride to the post office, leaving Capt. Ousley in command. Lieut. Hempfield was sent over with three wide-awake boys to bring the Indians over peaceably, if possible. They not only refused to come, but at once made ready for battle, drawing their guns on Lieut. Hempfield, and were only prevented from firing by the interferences of the squaws. Hempfield and his men carried no guns and of course had to retire. By this time Major Taylor had returned, and in company with two citizens, went over to the ranch, and in all calmness told the leading Indians that unless the supposed murderers were given up in three days he would open war upon them. He then returned, and immediately put everything in order to resist and crush any outbreak. Detachments were posted in all possible available positions, to watch the movements of the Indians; women and children of the valley were brought into the post and made as comfortable as could be under the circumstances. The sale of all spiritous liquors was forbidden; all the ammunition not in actual use was collected and put in safe keeping; the Indians of Hostler's brand and all others disposed to remain peaceable were fairly warned to remain in their respective ranches and do no more fighting for twenty days. Signals were agreed upon; that in case of an outbreak the outside soldiers would have ample warning; in fact, all possible means were employed to make the blow as heavy as possible if it must come. Monday night two canoe loads of Indians tried to escape down the river; they were hailed and ordered ashore, and upon refusing were fired into. One Indian was badly wounded, both canoes, one buck, several squaws and a gun captured. The buck was brought up to the fort, but when near the guard house he made a bolt, running in a zigzag direction, thinking by so doing he would escape; he had scarcely got under headway when twenty-five guns were brought to bear on him. He ran but a few feet being perfectly riddled with balls. Yesterday morning the three days given the Indians to produce the two demanded, were at an end. The Indians were not given up. The night before, Capt. Ousley left the post with twenty men, passing to the eastward over the rugged summit of Trinity Mountain, so as to reach the ranch on the west side

cape; he had scarcely got under headway when twenty-five guns were brought to bear on him. He ran but a few feet being perfectly riddled with balls.

Yesterday morning the three days given the Indians to produce the two demanded, were at an end. The Indians were not given up. The night before, Capt. Ourley left the post with twenty men, passing to the eastward over the rugged summit of Trinity Mountain, so as to flank the ranch on the east side. Early in the morning of yesterday, Lieut. Hempfield in command of twenty-five men made a wide circuit to the westward and invested the ranch on the upper side. On his way an Indian was met. He was ordered to stand, but his flint-log-bail would prove best. The result was that he was shot and so badly wounded that he dropped his gun, while

he crawled into the brush and escaped. In the meantime, Sergt. Hurst with another detachment took a position below the ranch, while Major Taylor with a few select artillerymen, passed unseen up the west bank of the Trinity. Lieut. Hale with a half dozen soldiers and a few citizens was left in command of the post.

Eight o'clock was the time agreed upon to begin the attack. All being ready the signal was given—every man was at his post. The cannon was well charged with shell and run into a raking position. The Indians were completely taken aback, but at first showed fight. The cannon was sighted—rifles were brought in deadly range. The Indians were told to surrender—they heeded not.

The men fell into line of battle, the order, "Man the cannon, double quick!" was given. Again, and for the last time, the Indians were ordered to surrender.

They saw the cannon frowning upon them, they saw the deadly array of rifles, and just in time to save themselves, they cried out for quarter, and the whole ranch gave up without further resistance. One hundred and fifteen prisoners were taken.

About fifty of them are young, wide-awake warriors; the rest are squaws and children. Eight or ten good guns were captured, and a large amount of ammunition. The prisoners were all brought across the river with their effects, and are now in comfortable camps under the guns of the fort. They will be retained and fairly and kindly treated until the two refugees are brought in.

To-night a detachment of twenty men, accompanied by Charley Hostler with three of his men, under Sergt. Hughes leaves on a long scout after the refugees; there can be but little doubt that the Indians will come in dead or alive.

Too much praise cannot be awarded to Maj. Taylor for the firm and decided course taken in the management of these wild scamps. Without a doubt the Indians thought that they would out-general him as they had repeatedly done Colonel Olney. They have met with a shock that astonishes them beyond description, and which has had the effect already to completely subdue the spirit of all the Indians in the valley.

The election passed off quietly and in harmony, resulting mainly in a small Union majority. Klamath county is very doubtful, and will probably disgrace its record by giving a majority for the Opporthead ticket. **NEELY.**

"Letter from Fort Gaston." Weekly  
Humboldt Times, September 12,  
1863: p. 2, col. 3.

**THE HUMBOLDT TIMES.**

— EUREKA — HUMBOLDT COUNTY — CALIFORNIA — SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1863. —

— No. 17. —

— The Rebel Bombardment of Fort — Prentice and Wicks. —

— Not Now. —

— Publishers: Piers & Co. —