

---

CAMP IN SCOTT'S VALLEY, SHASTA COUNTY, CAL.,  
October 28, 1851.

SIR: Referring to my respects of the 3d, 4th, and 7th instant, from Durkee's ferry, on the Klamath river, sent per W. Vandyke, esq., to be mailed at Trinidad, in which I acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 9th August, &c., I have now the honor to address you from the lower end of Scott's valley, about 121 miles northeast from the junction of the Trinity and Klamath, and some ten or fifteen miles south of the Oregon State line.

This valley must be several thousand feet higher than the ocean, and affords a fine view of the perpetual snows of Shasta Butte, or Mount Shasta, the highest point on the Pacific coast. Fremont, I think, makes it 14,700 feet above the ocean.

We left the ferry, or "Camp Klamath," on the 9th; on the 11th reached the mouth of the *Coratem* or Salmon river, where I remained one and a half day, making a supplemental treaty with the four tribes who reside there, namely: the Si-wahs, Op-peos, He-co-necks, and In-necks. They number at present only some 225 or 250 souls, and are eventually to remove to the reservation on the Trinity and Klamath. On the 13th we resumed our tedious and difficult march up the river; and finally, with the loss of five mules, and part of our cooking apparatus and provisions, reached the mouth of Scott's river on the 20th, and my present camp, fourteen miles east of that point, on the evening of the 21st.

On the Klamath we passed through several old Indian rancherias or settlements, generally containing but a few families each. To these I gave some small presents; and, as well as I could, in the absence of a *Klamath interpreter*, gave them an invitation to meet the other tribes in this valley and treat with me. As it was necessary to remain in this valley some days to recruit our animals, I employed runners to go out and invite the Shasta, Upper Klamath, and Scott's River Indians to come in and make a final arrangement to settle the disputes and dis-

turbances which have been rife in this quarter for a year past. Many of the Indians being out in the mountains hunting game, preparatory to winter, we have thus far made but little progress; still, some have arrived, and several other parties or delegations are said to be on their way coming in, and may be expected to-morrow.

Finding that eight or ten days would be required to collect the Indians and accomplish the object of my visit—if indeed it can be accomplished—Major Wessells concluded it would be unsafe for him to remain longer in these mountains, and with his dragoons and pack-train left our camp, on his return to winter quarters at Benicia, on the 24th instant. To be left thus in the midst of a mountainous Indian country at this season of the year, without an escort, is by no means a desirable position; but as he had some four hundred miles to traverse, the safety of his command required, he thought, his immediate return, and I had no alternative but to acquiesce, and for the present abandon the great object of my mission, and accompany him, or risk the consequences, and remain to see what could be done. I chose the latter, relying upon the resources of my own little party of seven or eight men, and the protection of Providence, for safety and success.

As the possibility of my return to the post at Benicia by the Sacramento route was very doubtful, I concluded it was best to pay off my pack-men, and turn over to Major Wessells all the government mules and other public property I had drawn, except a few guns, pack-saddles, and two small tents, which I will pay for if I cannot return. This will make it necessary for me to purchase or hire a few additional mules or horses; but upon the whole, the arrangement will lessen my expenses and facilitate my movements, when I shall again take the road.

A cold-blooded murder of an Indian by a heartless Oregonian, within a mile of my camp, a few nights previous to our arrival, has exasperated the Indians considerably, and operates unfavorably to their prompt assemblage. I am encouraged to persevere, however, in trying at this time to effect a settlement, by the assurance of several respectable citizens of this county, that if a treaty can be made, their "vigilance committees" will promptly punish all bad white men who may interfere with or injure the Indians. I am utterly opposed to the jurisdiction of "Judge Lynch" in all ordinary cases; but until a military post is established on this exposed frontier, and society assumes a more settled, regular form, there seems to be no other course left for the protection of either person or property.

In my next despatch I will be able to give you the results of my efforts here. If a treaty can be made, I foresee great difficulties in arranging for an Indian reservation. This valley, thirty or forty miles in length, by three to six in width, with a small portion of Shasta valley, affords the *only* farming lands in the county, which is of vast extent. Shasta valley is a rich mineral district, at least the middle and lower parts of it; and in this (Scott's) valley, squatters' tents and cabins may be seen on almost every little patch or strip where the soil promises a reward to cultivation. The whole valley yields grass in abundance, and looks well at a distance, but on close examination the soil is thin, or wholly sand and gravel. Almost all the mountains and gulches in this

•

northern portion of the State are auriferous, yielding gold in the earth or in the quartz formations.

It has been my constant policy, in selecting reservations for the Indians, to exclude them from the mining districts, and settle them on agricultural lands, surrounded by mountain ranges for hunting-grounds; but here, for one or two hundred miles, the country is mostly mountainous, and yields more or less of the *shining dust*. It will be impossible, therefore, if I give them a home at all, to confine them to lands of the description first named. Still I shall keep the general principle in mind, and the white adventurers must be content with *ninety-nine hundredths of the whole!*

I have also, in view of the large expense which the support of each will involve, aimed at confining the reservations in northern California to *four*, viz: Clear lake, mouth of Eel river; Trinity and Klamath; and Shasta, or Scott's valley. It is impossible to settle the Indians of this country *contentedly* at any very great distance from their old hunting and fishing grounds, upon which it is our policy to encourage them to rely for part of their subsistence, until their farms can be opened.

If good lands were common in this part of the State, I should not hesitate to assign them the whole of this valley, with a strip of mountain land, connecting it with the Klamath river. To do this, however, in the existing state of things, would give great dissatisfaction to the white settlers, and perhaps exasperate them more against the Indians, whose utter extermination would be quite agreeable to many, especially the emigrants from Oregon.

To settle the matter upon the most judicious basis, I formally requested the citizens of the two largest towns, "Shasta Butte city" and "Scott's Bar," to hold public meetings, and appoint each four or five delegates to confer with me upon the whole subject. I have made a similar request of the settlers or squatters in the valley, and have had several conversations with these delegations on the subject. I have examined this valley in person, nearly to its head; and, in a day or two, after I can learn the general feeling among the Indians, will probably send Mr. Gibbs, who is a topographical engineer, with one or two others of my party, with a part of the gentlemen of the delegations, to examine and report upon the upper end of this and Shasta valleys. This course will, I hope, satisfy the public mind, that while I consider the ultimate improvement of the Indians and the credit of the government paramount, I am disposed to regard the interests and convenience of the squatters on the public domain as far as possible.

Enclosed I hand copies of my letter of 18th ultimo, to Messrs. Howard, Dobbin, and Dupern, and the receipt of Mr. Charles A. Robeson.

1. In relation to the reservation on Eel river.
2. Copy of a circular to miners, packers, &c., 5th instant.
3. Copy of a letter to M. S. Thompson, 5th instant.
4. Copy of a letter to Charles W. Durkee, 7th instant, in relation to the reservation, &c., near the mouth of Trinity.
5. Copy of a treaty with twenty-four tribes or bands of Trinity and Klamath Indians, at *Camp Klamath*, 6th October; and of supplemental article with four tribes at *Camp Coratem*, 12th instant.

**214**

**S: Doc. 4.**

6. Copy of notes addressed to leading citizens of Scott's Bar and Shasta, on the 24th instant.

I am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

**REDICK McKEE.**

C. E. Mix, Esq.,

*Acting Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.*

---