

DURKEE'S FERRY, KLAMATH RIVER,  
November 15, 1851.

SIR: My last despatch, enclosing copies of the treaty made at this place on the 6th ultimo, with twenty-four tribes or bands of the Trinity and Klamath Indians, and several other papers, was dated at camp in Scott's valley, 28th October, and sent by Gregory's express, to be mailed at San Francisco. I designed writing you again from that camp, but was so pressed by other engagements previous to commencing our return to the coast, that I could not do so.

Our small party, comprising six men and ten mules, reached this ferry yesterday, and as we are likely to be detained several days before the river (much swollen by the recent rains) can be crossed with safety, I embrace the first opportunity to return my report.

On the 29th ultimo several additional parties of Indians reached my camp, and believing that by patiently waiting five or six days, an important treaty might be effected with the whole nation, precious as time was, I determined to remain, and at once took measures in relation to the vital question of a "reservation." The Indians thought we should give them the whole of Scott's valley, and under different circumstances I should have done so; but, for the reasons assigned in my last despatch, I considered it inexpedient. To satisfy, as far as possible, the white settlers, and obtain reliable information upon which to base my final action, and if possible forestall future complaints, I invited four gentlemen, interested in both *Shasta and Scott's valleys*, to accompany Mr. George Gibbs, and make a personal exploration thereof. This they did, and the enclosed papers marked Nos. 1 and 2 are copies

of my note and their report. During the absence of the committee I visited Shasta Butte city. It is a wonderful specimen of American enterprise and energy. A little over four months ago the mines were discovered, and the first cloth tent stretched in the valley; now the town contains 250 or 300 houses—stores, warehouses, hotels, private dwellings, &c.; a city in miniature, with 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants. The mines here and in the neighborhood have been very productive, and the commerce of the place gives constant employment to numerous pack-trains of fifty to one hundred and fifty mules each, bringing goods and provisions from the Sacramento valley on the one side, and Oregon on the other.

At Shasta Butte city I obtained some camp supplies, and saw an opportunity of consulting many intelligent gentlemen as to the best plans for colonizing and improving the Indians. A public town meeting was held, and I received a general assurance, that if a treaty with the Indians was effected, its provisions should be carefully observed. A copy of the minutes of the meeting is enclosed, marked No. 3.

Having promised the Indians that I would return after *two sleeps*, I reached camp in the evening of the 2d instant, and was gratified to find that the old and very influential Klamath chief, *Ishuck*, with his two sons, had arrived, and expressed himself in favor of a settlement of all existing difficulties.

On the 3d I had several interviews with the chiefs in council, and finally succeeded in obviating their objections and removing their difficulties in relation to a general treaty of peace, and the cession of all their country to the United States. These Indians on the northern frontier of California are a vastly superior race to their brethren in the Sacramento valley and southern part of the State, both in appearance and intelligence, and appeared to understand very well both what was asked of them and what was promised. They appeared to be tired, dissatisfied, perhaps I might say disgusted, with the white men who had forced themselves into their country; and if I could have given them a retired valley on Rogue's river for a home, they would have been well pleased: this, however, was impracticable, as the whole of that country lies north of the Oregon line. The district allotted to them comprises the lower half of Scott's valley, with a mountain boundary, clearly defined, connecting it with their fishing-grounds on the Klamath, and extending north to the Oregon line. For want of time and proper instruments, the precise position of this boundary could not be ascertained; but at the mouth of Scott's river it is supposed to approach very near to the Klamath. The only lands in the reservation at all valuable for farming or grazing purposes lie irregularly in Scott's valley, and may comprise an area in all equal to eight or nine by six or seven miles. The entire reservation forms an irregular square some thirty-two or twenty-four miles in length, by fifteen or sixteen in breadth. It is well defined by mountain ranges, or divides, on the eastern or western sides, by the Oregon line on the north, and two well known landmarks on the south.

The estimated population of the Upper Klamath, Shasta and Scott's River tribes, is 4,000 souls. Those on the Upper Trinity river, which I have not yet visited, but contemplate settling, eventually, upon the

same reservation, are variously estimated at 1,000 to 1,500. For the comfortable settlement and support of such a family, the reservation is, perhaps, too small; but the matter was surrounded with difficult and embarrassing considerations, and the plan adopted was the best the circumstances admitted, without disregarding wholly the ultimate settlement of the country by the whites. As arranged, those settlers who have made small improvements in the lower end of the valley can, with little comparative trouble, remove to equally good, perhaps better land above the reservation, and be several miles nearer to market at Shasta Butte city. Others, whose improvements are more extended, consented to the propriety of the choice I made with great reluctance, and will appeal to Congress, through your department, for redress. Others, who had made fortunes, as they supposed, by the discovery of quartz mines in the mountains, will be claimants also. A few of the settlers should, I think, be compensated for their improvements, which will be valuable to the government agents in managing the Indians; but I have given no positive assurances on the subject to any person.

On the evening of the 4th, the treaty, prepared in duplicate, was formally executed in the presence of a large and apparently interested concourse of both whites and Indians. The chiefs and headmen signed in behalf of 24, 19, and 7 villages or rancherias, respectively—in all for fifty villages, or grounds, as they term their towns or settlements, viz:

Tribe.	Villages.	Principal chiefs.	Residence.
O-de-i-lah . . . . .	24	I-shack, E-ch-ne-qua, Pi-o-ku-ke, Sor-wak-a-ha.	Upper Klamath.
I-Kar-uck, Kos-e-tah, Ida-kara-wak-a-ha.	19	Tso-hor-git-sko, Che-le-na-tah, Ida-kara-wak-a-ha, O-lab-se-wak-a-ha, A-da-war-how-ik.	Shasta river and valley.
• Wat-sa-he-wa, E'ch -	7	Arats-a-cho-ica, An-na-nik-a-hok, Sun-rise.	Scott's valley.

At this treaty I had very excellent interpreters, and I think the Indians understood fully the terms of the bargain, or *trade*, as their word for a *treaty* very significantly means.

At the close I distributed among the Indians present all, or nearly all, of my remaining goods. A large bullock was killed for their supper. Then followed a grand peace dance, which was kept up till long after midnight, and the next morning the greater part started for their respective homes, in excellent good humor with themselves and the

## S. Doc. 4.

“Shim-shin-tahs,” or white men—strictly, men who use metals, as iron, copper, &c.

As I was to return down the Klamath, the old chief Ishack remained to give me escort as far as his village, which we passed on the second day's march. Thus ended a treaty arrangement with a large body of Indians who have ever been the dread, and not unfrequently the annoyance, of our people, since the first discovery of the northern mines, and with whom it was by many predicted no amicable arrangement could be made.

The Klamath river is undoubtedly rich in its deposits of gold; and before I left Scott's valley, several parties had already started for the purpose of *prospecting* its *cañons* and *bars*, from which heretofore the Indian difficulties had shut them out. This is the best evidence of the confidence our people feel in the policy and permanence of the treaty. Upon the whole, I flatter myself that this arrangement, with those previously effected during the expedition, will restore and maintain quiet and security along this northern frontier. I regret that the advanced state of the season, and, indeed, the actual commencement of the winter rains, puts it out of my power to visit the tribes living on Redwood and the Upper Trinity rivers, as well as those at and above the mouth of the Klamath and about Point St. George.

The two latter are, and have been, friendly; the two first are considered uncertain, and rather dangerous to small parties passing through their country. They must be visited as early next year as circumstances will admit. Meanwhile I have sent them messages by tribes with whom I have treated, which I hope will restrain them from further aggression. I should have no apprehension on the subject were it not for the fact that I find on this frontier, as elsewhere, some men so utterly reckless of reputation; and even life itself, as to threaten, at every hazard, to shoot the Indian wherever he may cross their path. This keeps up the excitement; and if an *Indian* is shot, a *pale-face* must fall, as a matter of course. Now that I have been through the whole Indian country, I am convinced in the opinion that in almost every instance of difficulty the whites have been the aggressors, and some cases have come to my knowledge of wilful, brutal, and outrageous disregard of all the claims of humanity and civilized life. Until some examples are made in the punishment of such *demons* in human shape, perfect tranquillity can hardly be expected. It is only a few months since the laws of the State have been extended over these mountain counties and as yet they are but imperfectly understood by the people, or administered by the officers. In the neighborhood of all the Indian reservations yet made, I have however, found a few intelligent and right-feeling gentlemen, who have promised to exert their influence to preserve the peace of the country, and bring about a better state of things; and from their exertions I anticipate an early and decided improvement.

The great importance of an immediate withdrawal of the Upper Klamath and Shasta Indians from the mining districts, and their settlement upon their own lands in Scott's valley, was so apparent, that, in compliance with the wishes of many respectable citizens in that county, as well as in full accordance with my own judgment, I determined to detail some one of my little party to remain as a temporary

agent in charge of the business: otherwise our high-raised hopes might all end in disappointment, and the expedition, involving, as it has, four months' labor, much exposure, and a large expenditure of money, prove abortive. As Mr. Gibbs (interpreter) and Mr. McDonald (commissary) both desired to return with me to San Francisco to attend to their private interests, I had no alternative but to impose the duty upon my secretary, Mr. John McKee, who has accordingly remained on the reservation in Scott's valley.

The papers enclosed, marked Nos. 4 and 5, are copies of a card issued to the public and a letter of instructions to the temporary agent. The whole arrangement, I am aware, is without the express sanction of law, but the exigencies of the case seemed to justify, and, indeed, require, my taking the responsibility. I would rather defray the additional expense which the arrangement may involve out of my private purse, than have the treaty endangered. Through the blessing of Heaven, I trust that compact has accomplished what many intelligent persons thought an impossibility, and if prudently and successfully carried out, will save many valuable lives and perhaps immense expense to the government. Unless I am greatly mistaken, *the treaty of Scott's valley* will be remembered, by both white and red men, long after the immediate parties to the arrangement have left the stage. A copy will be transmitted to your department from San Francisco, possibly by the steamer which carries this letter; also a copy of my journal since last reported.

My party, at present, consists of only Mr. George Gibbs, Mr. McDonald, two packers, and a cook. The three last named I propose to discharge on my arrival at *Union*, head of Humboldt bay, some three days' travel from this. At that place I will also dispose of my mules and camp equipage, and be prepared to embrace the first vessel for San Francisco, where I shall hope to meet letters from your office, as well as from my family in Virginia.

We broke up our camp in Scott's valley about noon on the 6th inst., crossed the mountains and encamped on Scott's river, distance nine miles. That night the rain commenced falling, and has continued with short intermissions every day since. The high mountains around us are covered with snow, so that we are getting out of the mountains *not a day too soon*. I hope to be able to cross this river within two or three days, and in about three more end the land travel of an expedition of nearly four months' constant labor and exposure. Of this our clothing and appearance bear ample testimony.

On the 12th inst., while swimming our animals across the Klamath, they became alarmed, missed the ford, and two of our best pack-mules were carried over the falls and drowned. This was a serious loss, as they could not be replaced, making it necessary for me to leave behind my only remaining tent, with some other baggage, and still leaving one of my men on foot. We have managed to get along this far, and hope in a few days more to exchange the mountain-trail for the deck of a steamer. If time permits, while on Humboldt bay I propose visiting the Indians on Eel river, and ascertain how the arrangement made with Mr. Robeson in September for planting five or six acres of potatoes for their use progresses.

**224**

**S. Doc. 4.**

In the hope of addressing you again ere long from San Francisco, I  
am, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

**REDICK McKEE.**

C. E. Mix, Esq.,

*Acting Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.*