

PANAMA, NEW GRENADA,
December 6, 1850.

SIR: My last was dated at New York 11th ultimo, just prior to my sailing in steamer Georgia, for Chagres. We reached that port in safety about 11 p. m. on the 23d. On the 25th I got my goods ashore, and immediately commenced the voyage, in canoes, to Cruces. After five days' hard work (the river being unusually high) and continual exposure, we reached Cruces, and after two days succeeded in obtaining mules with which to cross the mountains. On the night of the 4th instant I reached this city in time to take passage for San Francisco on the steamer Constitution; but the goods not having arrived, I have remained to superintend their shipment, and hope to sail on the 10th per steamer Northerner. Dr. Wozencraft and family sailed in the Constitution yesterday. Col. Barbour did not join us at Havana, as expected, having probably been delayed in his arrival at New Orleans, by low water in the Ohio. From the incessant rains since my arrival at Chagres, I expect our blankets, &c., are as thoroughly wet as my own baggage, but I hope not materially injured. I will examine and dry them as soon as I get them on board ship. Expenses on this route are enormously high, and the exposure very great. Shipments round the Horn are not only cheaper, but safer.

I have here met several old friends from California, returning to the States on business, by one of whom, J. W. Garrison, of St. Louis, I send this, to be mailed at New Orleans. He informs me that the Indians on the waters of the Sacramento are in a very dissatisfied and unsettled state. Just before he left there was an outbreak, in which blood had been shed on both sides; and the next news from that quarter will probably announce increased disturbances, if not a general war, between the whites and the Indians.

From the information I have, the Indians on the waters of Weaver creek repeatedly notified the whites to keep off their ground—i. e., abstain from digging or mining in the immediate neighborhood of their camp or settlement. This the whites disregarded; and a Dr. Dickinson, and some three or four Delaware Indians in his employ, were finally surrounded by a party of the resident Indians, and shot down. As soon as this was known, the whites raised a company of about one hundred volunteers, under command of Col. McKinney, and proceeded to the place to revenge the death of Dickinson and his men. The Indians avoided an engagement; but finally Col. McK. overtook one of their chiefs, and in a personal rencontre was killed by an arrow. The Indian was in turn killed; but his party being much more numerous than the whites, the latter gave way, and returned to the settlements for the purpose of increasing their force, and then taking ample revenge. They were mustering volunteers at Sacramento city, and at other points, when my informant left, and bloody work was anticipated. What is to be the result of this state of things I cannot even conjecture. The Indians claim the country as their native soil, or hunting and fishing ground; and the whites want to explore it for gold, and, if they find the metal there, will insist upon retaining its possession. The Indians are very likely incited to resistance by interested Mexicans, Chilian and Spanish traders and gold-hunters, who have gone among them to avoid

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the tax levied upon foreigners by the authorities of California: still, as a general thing they have evinced a peaceable disposition, and our own people have, it is thought, generally been the aggressors in every quarrel or outbreak that has occurred. Whether there is any district of country in California or Utah, or Oregon, to which these tribes can be removed out of the way of the whites; or, if there is, whether they can be induced to remove from the graves of their fathers, is of course unknown to me. Our attention will, at an early day after our arrival, be turned to this subject; and it seems to me to be a vital question, involving, if not the destruction and extermination of the Indians, at least the peace of that frontier. The commissioners regret that their instructions from the government at Washington, on these and other questions likely to arise and demand their immediate attention, are so meagre and indefinite, and throw upon them necessarily so much responsibility. In the absence of direct and positive instructions, or even counsel and advice, we must do the best we can, relying upon your approval of what we may do, based upon an honest desire to promote at once the best good of the Indians, while we maintain the honor and evince the benevolent designs of our government towards the unfortunate aborigines.

Pray write us fully and freely on receipt of this hasty despatch.

Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

R. McKEE.

HON. LUKE LEA,

Commissioner Indian Affairs, Washington City.

SAN FRANCISCO, *January 13, 1851*

DEAR SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival of Dr. Wozencraft and family on the 27th, my own arrival on the 29th ultimo, and Colonel Barbour's on the 8th instant. We have all been busily occupied in gathering information touching the general subject of our mission, and in reference to the most expedient method to be pursued. We have concluded, at least for the present, to act together, and shall to-morrow go down to San José (the capital) to consult with the governor and members of the legislature, and, if possible, ascertain *facts* in relation to the recent (reported) disturbances upon the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, as well as in other parts of the State. We have here had reports of outbreaks and disturbances, first in one quarter then another, almost daily, since our arrival, the most of which we have since discovered to be greatly exaggerated or wholly untrue. Of one thing there is no doubt—the Indians are in a very destitute, dissatisfied, and unsettled state throughout this whole region, and we think, as do many intelligent citizens of the State, that our arrival has been very opportune. Enclosed you will receive a printed copy of a circular or address we have made to the people of this State, and shall be happy if the views we express shall meet the approbation of the President. We have employed Mr. John McKee as our secretary, with an assurance that his salary shall be made equal to that of other good clerks in this country. Upon no other terms could we secure his services, or those of