
SAN FRANCISCO, *December 29, 1851.*

SIR: I have the honor to report my safe return at last from my expedition in northern California. I arrived last evening, in the steamer Columbia, from Portland, Oregon—rather a circuitous route, to be sure, from Humboldt bay; but the condemnation and sale of the regular packet Chesapeake, and a series of breakages and delays of the only *other* steamer plying to that bay, rendered it necessary to proceed by way of the Columbia, in order to intercept the Oregon steamer, and prevent a possible further delay of weeks—perhaps months. At this season of the year violent storms prevail all along this northwest coast, and make passages in common sailing-vessels not only uncertain, but precarious.

My letters of 12th September, from Eel river; of October 3d, 4th, and 7th, from Durkee's ferry, on the Klamath; October 28th, from Scott's valley; and November 15th, from Durkee's ferry, on my return march, will have given you a running report of my operations on this expedition, and to these letters I would respectfully refer. The only letters I find here from your office are dated 23d August and 11th September. By the latter I find you are at your post again, and that the rumor of your death, announced in a New York paper, was, happily, wholly erroneous.

The steamer due here in the next three or four days will, I hope, bring me instructions in reference to my temporary return to Washington this winter. In the mean time, I am somewhat at a loss to know whether to send forward the original treaties in my possession. If you shall not have considered my presence as important, I will, of course, forward the papers by the mail of the 15th of January, unless I conclude to take the responsibility of delivering them, and a statement of my accounts, as disbursing agent, in person.

I am quite surprised to learn that Colonel Barbour returned home in October, and that agent Wozencraft has gone down to the southern part of the State to inquire into the recent reported difficulties in Colonel B.'s district. When I last saw Colonel Barbour here, in August, the understanding was that we should meet here in the fall, after my return from the north, and make out a joint report. His unexpected return from his district and from the State will, of course, prevent this being done, as well as my going into any regular settlement of his accounts. My accounts will show the amounts paid on his requisitions, and the settlement will, I suppose, have to be gone into at Washington. My northern expedition has been necessarily expensive, and consumed the greater part of the funds transmitted to me; still I think the money has been both economically and usefully expended. Of this, however, you

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will have to judge by the results, after I get a little time to make up my accounts. My labors have been arduous and responsible. I hope they will prove useful to the country, and satisfactory to the government.

The late flurry in the papers about a general rising of the Indians in the south, the necessity for sending off troops and munitions of war, has pretty much blown over; the whole was, as usual here in California, immensely exaggerated; still there was some cause for alarm, and I consider it unfortunate that the government agent was from any cause prevented from visiting the Indians in the southern district, and treating them with the same attention as was bestowed upon those in the Mariposa and San Joaquin. As stated in our joint letter of 1st May, 1851, that section of the State was in charge of Colonel Barbour.

I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

REDICK McKEE.

Hon. LUKE LEA,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington City.
