

California B99  
Supt. P. B. Brown  
San Francisco, Cal.  
Apr 5. '59  
Out

Papers upon the true  
employment Agents W. L.  
Lewis that were submi-  
ted to him for examina-  
tion for the P. & G. Co.  
'59 and in relation to  
the Indian form  
Stevens and Lewis

Placed Recd 6. '59  
Copy filed with Lewis' 7c 20p  
1859 (for 2<sup>nd</sup> witness) by De Witt  
L. Hunt

Letter of J. Ross Brown,  
Special Agent, in relation to  
the  
Indian Farms on the Fresno and  
King's River,  
California

San Francisco, Cal.

November 5<sup>th</sup> 1859.

Hon. A. B. Greenwood,

Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Sir:

I have examined in detail the vouchers of M. B. Lewis, Sub. Indian Agent at the Fresno, for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarters of 1859, and beg leave to submit the following remarks.

The Fresno farm produced a fair average crop when it was first established in 1854; but since that date it has been a heavy expense to government without any corresponding benefit to the Indians. During the greater part of each year, the number of Indians on the farm, ~~deriving~~ <sup>deriving</sup> any actual aid from government has not exceeded from twenty to fifty. The occasional hands by whom it has been visited, have procured their own subsistence as they did prior to the establishment of the farm. Compared with the enormous expenditures for hire of hands, implements of agriculture, supplies and clothing, these results are not only discouraging but manifest, in my opinion, either negligence or incapacity on the part of the officers charged with the disbursement of the Indian fund. The expense on this and the King's River farm during the year ending June 30<sup>th</sup> 1859, exceeded \$36,000. A brief review of the vouchers will present the best evidence of the purposes to which the fund has been applied.

By reference to Vouchers No: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 It will be seen that the expenditures for beef alone during the 1<sup>st</sup> Q<sup>r</sup> of 1859 were, in the aggregate, \$1,215<sup>38</sup>, of which E. G. Campbell, <sup>acting overseer</sup> employe at Kings River, received \$373<sup>57</sup>, and Wm. M. Lewis son of the Sub. Agent, received \$109. During the same quarter, John H. Blair signs Voucher No 25, for 11,500 lbs Acorns at 3 cts per lb \$345 and for hauling the same \$535, being \$880; and Jeremiah Lewis signs Voucher No 21 for freighting Acorns and ferryage of teams amounting to \$322.00. The Indians gathered these Acorns on King's River, and white men sold them for the use of the Indians. The "freighting" or more properly hauling, (it being a land route of forty miles from Kings River to the Greas) was done at an expense of \$815 by private agreement, when government had a wagon, two pair of oxen, and eight mules at Kings River, and two wagons, and thirty six mules and horses at the Greas - all of which were, <sup>or should have been</sup> available. Ora M<sup>c</sup> Cray, as per Voucher No 28, is paid \$84.50 for the hire of a team. Jeremiah Lewis is allowed \$42 for ferryage, but keeps no ferry and submits no sub vouchers. Under a standing contract C. P. Comrose (Voucher 23) is allowed \$57 a quarter for all the ferrying across the San Joaquin, which is the only river between King's River and the <sup>Greas</sup> ~~San Joaquin~~. The Abstract of articles issued as forage during this quarter shows an issue of 4,000 lbs of barley and 7,195 lbs of hay; but if this was "issued to the animals belonging to said Agency" for what purpose are teams hired from private individuals?

4

Vouchers Nos 9, 22, 24, 29 show large expenditures for wheat and barley; and vouchers 2, 2, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, for flour and other provisions - sufficient, it might be supposed, to obviate the necessity of hiring outside teams and purchasing acorns, especially when it is considered that the Sub Agent in his official report dated August 18<sup>th</sup> 1858, estimates the wheat raised on the two farms at "sixty-seven thousand two hundred & seventy pounds, and the barley at thirty-seven thousand four hundred and fifty pounds; in addition to which," he adds, "there has been raised on this farm a fair variety of vegetables in abundance, and on the two farms twenty acres of corn, which gave a fair yield." Mr Lewis further informs the Department that by judicious management, aided by seemingly a good mast it is believed "the wheat and corn raised on the two farms can be made to suffice for Indian breadstuffs during the fall and winter season of the ensuing year" - that is to say, the season of 1858-9. It seems almost incredible that so great a miscalculation should be made inadvertently from year to year, when the number of Indians, instead of increasing, is well known to be rapidly decreasing. Nor can it be alleged that the cause of the extraordinary expenses of the year ending June 30<sup>th</sup> 1859, was owing to the removal of the King's River Indians to the Mesquite. When they were not fed and supported by the King's River farm, there was

5

that much deduction to be made from the expenses of that establishment. Both farms are within the Mesquite Agency, and it mattered nothing at which farm the Indians were. If they were not supported by either, but lived among the whites (as was really the case) there could have been no excuse for the enormous expenditures of the previous year, and of every year during which the farm has had an existence.

In his letter of explanation dated March 31<sup>st</sup> 1859, Mr. Lewis says "there has been kept alive, but poorly fed and clad, on, and in the immediate vicinity of the two farms within this Agency - including the subsistence and clothing of the permanent laborers - who have neither suffered for food or clothing, not less than (950) nine hundred & fifty Indians, at the expense of less than 14 cents a head per day, at a time too when there was none of the natural products of the country to be had for their subsistence, other than acorns hauled from King's River at two & a half and three cents per pound &c" It will be borne in mind that he has just shown from his official report of August 18<sup>th</sup> /58 that it was apparently a good (most year, that there was available 17,270 lbs of wheat, and 37,450 lbs of barley (the odd lbs showing the accuracy with which the weight was taken) besides vegetables in abundance and twenty acres of corn. From the same report it would appear that up to August there had been a "a concentration of from three to five

hundred Indians on this farm (The Mesas) during the last nine months working season," and that all except 200 on both farms (say 100 on each) then went on their way "rejoicing into the mountains to take their annual mangamit feast, where they will remain until Salmon season, at which time a large majority of them will anxiously repair to the San Joaquin river there to remain until called for to commence the labors of another year, and the remainder to go into the mountains for the purpose of gathering the winter acorns and such other spontaneous means of subsistence as the seasons may afford."

It will be conceded, after a careful perusal of the above that the Sub Agent is good authority that there was no increase in the number of Indians and no scarcity of provisions to justify the extraordinary expenditures of the ensuing winter of 1858-9, as shown by the vouchers. But the fact is, when the citizens of King's River brought to the Mesas, late in the winter, some two or three hundred Indians, they were informed by the Agent that he had not the means to support them, and prior to that time there were but two or three families on the farm - all the rest having "gone to the mountains."

The Vouchers for the 2<sup>d</sup> Quarter, ending June 30<sup>th</sup>/59, show a similar state of things. Mr Wm. S. Campbell (whose brother E. G. Campbell signs the vouchers for beef) is owner of the Kings river farm for which he is allowed \$500 a year, (Voucher 28). By the use of Indian labor and government supplies he has this year erected a good brick house, built a barn, fenced in his farm with a substantial fence, gathered in a considerable supply of hay (upon which he keeps the stage-horses of the Visalia & Morristas Stage) plowed up his land and put it in seed for his own use during the ensuing season, out of the wheat & barley raised for the Indians; enjoying at the same time the advantage of an assistant or overseer Wm. Day (See Vouchers 37 and 25 for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>d</sup> Qrs of /59) at \$150 per quarter, with rations, and \$75 a month, (with rations for himself and family) for his own services as overseer (See Vouchers 24 & 36 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>d</sup> Qrs /59) his private business requiring his absence a large portion of the time for which he is paid. He is also bound with a beef contract to supply the necessities of his own farm, and sells to himself as manager of the farm beef for \$275.<sup>85</sup> (See Voucher 15 signed by his brother) in addition to that shown in the previous quarter. Thomas Pousmuhela receives \$250 a quarter rent (Voucher No 26) and sells beef for \$215.<sup>37</sup> (Voucher No 16) which beef is attended by Fresno Indians. See also beef voucher of Wm. M. Lewis, No 17 for \$256.<sup>95</sup>

9

The payroll during the ~~the~~ first quarter of 1859, shows a list of seven employes including the Sub Agent, on the Fresno farm, and two at Kings River. There is 1 Sub Agent, whose duty it is to oversee the farm; but this being deemed insufficient there are three other overseers, one of whom is son of the Sub Agent. There is also a blacksmith and a Chinese Cook - all of which is not only in direct conflict with the instructions of the Department limiting the number of employes, but in my opinion wholly unwarranted by the condition of the place and the necessities of the service.

Clark Hoxie is employed as blacksmith at a salary of \$75 a month (Voucher No 33) when the accounts of the P. O. Department show that he is, <sup>and was at that time</sup> Post Master at Millerton; and the Sub Agents own reports show that the wagons and mule teams belonging to the Agency were not available to do the necessary hauling from Millerton and Kings River. Of what use was it to have mules shod and wagons mended, if they could not be used? See Vouchers 13 and 14 for 2<sup>d</sup> Q<sup>r</sup> 1859. Ah Sing, a Chinese, is cook at \$150 p<sup>r</sup> quarter for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>d</sup> Q<sup>s</sup> of 1859, (Vouchers Nos 22 & 38) as well as for previous quarters. Why employ a Chinese Cook, when according to the report of <sup>the</sup> Sub Agent ~~James~~ dated August 16<sup>th</sup> 1859 he could have had a selection from 2,555 Indians, upon whose services he could at any time rely, and in whom he has been egregiously disappointed in their ability to acquire a knowledge of

9  
civilized life." But it is needless to particularize. All of these employes were equally a burden upon the service, without any corresponding benefit, either to government or the Indians.

Vouchers for the 2<sup>d</sup> Q<sup>r</sup> of 1854 (See 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 19) of Hughs, Evans, Hunt and others, for supplies of flour, bacon, beef, pork, and even tobacco, show such a remarkable recklessness of expenditure as, <sup>scarcely</sup> to need ~~no~~ comment. The price for barley is 5 cents per lb, when it was worth but 2 cents; bacon 30 cents, when hogs on King's River (the great hog country of California) were worth about six or eight cents; beans 8 cents, worth in San Francisco 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ , and other ~~the~~ articles in the same proportion.

I have thus briefly, and somewhat irregularly glanced at a few of the principal items in the accounts before me. Doubtless the vouchers for preceding quarters are of a similar tenor, but they are not in the office of the Superintendent, and I am unable now to refer to them. By reference to reports made by me in 1858, however, it will be found that other serious abuses are enumerated, which have failed to attract the attention of the Department. In 1857, I reported the waste of public money upon this Agency, and recommended that it should be abolished.

The question now arises what is Mr. McDuffie the new Superintendent to do with the Indians

10

of the San Joaquin? At present, most of them  
are hired to white settlers on Kings River and  
at Visalia; and so long as these settlers can obtain  
their labor at a small cost, they will probably  
not suffer. But a few mischievous white men  
are liable at any time to cause difficulty, when  
further scenes of murder and outrage may occur.

I submit, if it is possible for the new Superintendent  
to carry on farming on either the Kings River or  
Fresno farms, by confiding the management to  
the present Sub Agent, whose efforts have so signally  
failed during the past four years. Nor do I believe  
any other Sub Agent can now be successful in  
that locality, so utterly and entirely has the public  
service fallen into discredit, and so ~~various~~ <sup>various</sup> are the  
conflicting interests of the settlers and Indians.

I am clearly of opinion these Indians  
should be moved over to Owens Lake Valley, which  
~~now~~ offers an open field for a fair trial of the  
reservation system; but it is now too late in the  
season to attempt the experiment. Nothing can  
be done till Spring. Meantime, the Indians  
must do as they have always done - depend chiefly  
upon natural products gathered by themselves, and  
upon the aid and charity of the better class of  
white settlers.

Very Respectfully  
Wm. G. Hunt

J. Ross Brown  
Special Agent