



powered by

A Freely Accessible
Repository of Digitized
California Newspapers from
1846 to the Present



Daily Alta California, Volume 6, Number 17, 18 January 1855 — A BATTLE WITH THE INDIANS – THIRTY INDIANS KILLED. [ARTICLE]

**A Battle with the Indians—Thirty Indians
Killed.**

The Crescent City *Herald* gives the following account of what it calls a "Battle" at the Lagoon, four miles from Crescent City, between a party of Indians and the Klamath Rangers, in which the Indians were nearly all killed :

The die is cast, and a war of extermination commenced against the Indians. An encounter between fifteen of the Klamath Rangers and some thirty-five Indians took place on the Lagoon, four miles from here, on the morning of the 31st ult., and resulted in the death of some thirty Indians. The Indians had three guns. We were informed on Monday, the 1st instant, that on an island in Smith River, some six miles above its mouth, from sixty to seventy Indians congregated, to attack whom would be the next object of this campaign.

We are informed that the Klamath Rangers acted in concert and with the assistance of the settlers in Smith River valley, in the attack made upon the Indians. When it was ascertained that a number of them were gathered at a ranch on the Lagoon, about fifteen of the Rangers repaired thither on the morning of the 31st ult., but did not approach the ranch without being perceived by an old squaw, who hastened to apprise the Indians of the danger. They gathered hastily, and having three guns, were the first to fire, without doing any damage, however. Upon the fire of the whites, the Indians threw themselves into the water and swam to the other side of the lake, only to encounter the fire of another party who lay in wait for the fugitives. We are told that only five escaped, and that none of the women were killed. These latter showed little fear, and from the beginning of the fight put themselves in the rear of the whites, the older ones clamoring and abusing them, while the younger portion of them seemed little affected, and only begged mercy for their huts and provisions. The remainder of the Indians in Smith River valley, with some of the fugitives out of the first encounter, numbering in all about sixty or seventy, are now said to be congregated on an island in Smith River at an old rancheria, and are supposed to have at least six guns with them, viz: the three they had in the first fight, and three they took from the ranch of Mr. Reynolds, whose house they sacked on the day of the fight. The Rangers, assisted by the settlers in the valley, will now probably number some thirty or forty men, and the Indians have but a small chance of escape.

We give the facts as reported to us, fully aware that it is an *ex parte* statement, but we believe made in truth and sincerity. As to the expediency or necessity of an attempt to exterminate the Indians, various views are held by our citizens, and some deprecate very much the course taken. At any rate, hostilities have now been pushed so far that, in the interest of our neighboring settlers, it becomes a necessity to drive the Indians from the valley.

Subsequent accounts say that two companies were

Subsequent accounts say that two companies were engaged, the "Coast Rangers," and the "Klamath Rangers." The same paper speaks of the occurrences previous to the fight:

In former numbers of the *Herald* we have stated the various causes of complaint existing against the Indians, as they came to our knowledge, and repeating them here in a summary manner, we may premise the account with the remark, that the Indians in our neighborhood cannot be supposed to have been thankful for the incursions the whites have made on their hunting and fishing grounds during the past two years, any more than they have shown themselves to be in other quarters. The more sensible, however, among the Indians felt their weakness and acted submissively, while the majority of the whites were inclined to deal with them kindly and generously. Bad Indians and unscrupulous white men were here as elsewhere, the first to disturb this good feeling. Suspicion once excited, it increased rapidly by the impossibility of making ourselves mutually understood, and those in more exposed situations became seriously alarmed for their safety. Then the murder of Mr. French took place, and the murderers, two Klamath and a Chetcoe Indian, were hung. It was rumored that the Klamaths and Chetcoes were seeking revenge and for this purpose leagued with the Smith river Indians with a view to exterminate the settlers in Smith river valley when high water would cut off communications between them and Crescent City. The appearance in the valley of armed Rogue river Indians increased the alarm; the frequent gatherings amongst the tribes, the discovery of concealed paths, the removal of provisions from the customary deposits, the bold and even threatening attitude assumed by some Indians when calling at the houses of the settlers, and last, though not least, the often repeated warnings of friendly Indians, that the extermination of all the settlers in the valley was intended—all seemed but too clearly to indicate a deep seated hostility on the part of the Indians.