

## Part II. Battles, Murders & Massacres, 1855: October 8 – December 31

### **Early October, 1855: The claimed arrival of William V. Wells (cont.)**

**William V. Wells:** *In 1851, a party of men from Portland, Oregon, selected this spot for the site of a town, depending upon its roadstead and the facility of communication with the interior for the basis of its success and growth. The discovery of the auriferous sands of Gold Bluff, which were found to extend along the entire coast, from Rogue River to Cape Arago, also augmented the progress of the place. The original party consisted of eighteen men; but finding their stock of provisions had become exhausted, and there being no means of supplying the deficiency, half returned to Portland, leaving nine of their number to await their return. At that time the character of the country between the California line and the Columbia River was unknown. Its deep rivers, bays, tribes of Indians, and topography, were a sealed book, save to a few venturesome old hunters and trappers who had wandered down the coast even to the Humboldt; but their accounts, vague and uncertain, were unknown.*

*This section of Oregon contained about two thousand Indians, divided into numerous tribes, who soon became aware that the whites had settled their country, and, with savage hostility, determined to crush the band at Port Orford. Their rapidly increasing numbers alarmed our little garrison, who retreated upon what is now known as "Battle Rock" -- a natural fort showing three precipitous sides toward the ocean, and only accessible from land by a regular causeway. The parapet of this fortification stands not less than fifty feet above the tide. Here they encamped, and barricading the only vulnerable point, they directed a brass six-pounder field-piece from a port-hole left for the purpose, and, loading their rifles, prepared for the worst. The precaution was well timed. The day following this removal, the tribes from the Umpqua, Coquille, and Rogue River, congregated, and mustered nearly a thousand braves. Armed with bows and arrows, and ignorant of the deadly qualities of the American rifle, they advanced up the passage-way with yells that made the little band within quail with apprehension. The besieged were under the command of a Tennessean, who restrained the men until their tattooed assailants had approached in a regular mass, four or five deep, to within a few yards of the field-piece, when the order to fire was given. My informant, who was one of the party, described the scene in Texan vernacular, which I regret I am unable to repeat. It would depict the scene a thousand-fold more graphically than I could write it.*

*In loading the gun, which was done with slugs, stones, and bits of iron, to the muzzle, they had exhausted their slender stock of powder to two rounds of pistol and rifle charges. As the eyes of the savages gleamed through the chinks of the brushwood barricade, the death-dealing discharge tore through their ranks. This, followed by a well-directed volley from the rifles and revolvers, of which every shot told, sent such of the Indians as were not wounded pell-mell back. What with the roar of the cannon, the cracking of the fire-arms, and the yells of the wounded, the whole mass took to their heels and fled affrighted into the forest. Numbers were dashed into the boiling surf below, or killed among the rocks in their descent. This was the first and last volley. No estimate was made of the slain. Indeed they staid not to count, but after a hurried consultation, and fearful of the return of the Indians in still greater force, and knowing their own want of ammunition, they abandoned the fort, and, taking to the forest, traveled for several weeks, entering the Willamette Valley, and so reaching Portland.*

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**Capt. Cram:** *Indian hostilities.* -- This portion of southern Oregon has been the theatre of more Indian troubles than any other part of our Pacific possessions. The whole district represented on map No. 9 was full of Indians. Those more particularly occupying the valley of Rogue river have been regarded, since the first known to the whites, as treacherous, brave, and energetic; and if at that time they did not know they were soon taught, by the whites themselves, how to use the rifle and revolver to great advantage. Notwithstanding all the evidences of danger staring them in the face, the whites underrated the skill, bravery, and local advantages possessed by the several tribes who occupied this district, as was the case in other parts of Oregon, and the first conflicts, as might have been expected, proved disastrous to the Bostons. One, probably the very first of these conflicts, I shall briefly describe; the result emboldened these Indians to defy, and inspired them with a reliance upon their own strength to effectually resist, the obtrusion of the whites into their country.

The scene of this reencounter was in the harbor of Port Orford. Between the mouth of Rogue river and Cape Orford there are scattered about in the bay many lofty rocks, towering high above the water in pyramidal form; isolated from each other by channels of deep sea water, they are the remaining solid portions, once of the land, that have been able to withstand the battering of the surf for ages. One of these is directly in the harbor, and possessed with historical interest. It is denominated Battle Rock, and stands so near in that at low tide it can be reached by wading; but it is only by one narrow face that it can be scaled, or its summit approached by the human foot. Once up, however, the top of the rock affords sufficient surface for a party of a score of men to stand on, or to ensconce themselves. It is probably 60 feet above the level of the sea. Usually upon a calm sunny day its summit is densely covered with a flock of sea birds, of all kinds, so different in color, shape, and size as to delight the ornithologist -- some sitting, some standing, some apparently sleeping, some hopping, others flapping, screaming, crowding, and fighting, seemingly, to secure, each for himself, a momentary resting place upon the rock; while high above all this din the atmosphere is darkened with myriads of the flock flying in all manner of gyrations -- now ascending, next descending, some enlarging, others contracting the orbits of their flight -- all looking down the while upon the angry strife of their fellows below, intently watching for the first vacant spot of the rock to suddenly dart down, seize, and perch upon it in turn, or contribute to the confusion. Such is but a feeble picture of the scenes with which the summits of these dark and towering pillars in Port Orford bay are daily animated. But upon the summit of Battle Rock a different strife from that of the birds was enacted.

In early times of the influx of population into California, immediately succeeding its acquisition to the United States, adventurous spirits to the number of a dozen or so chartered a schooner, and embarked at San Francisco, bent upon exploring the coast of Oregon, for purposes in general, and the purpose, in particular, of discovering a site for a town, to be laid out into lots for sale. Arrived off what is now Port Orford, then not known to the Bostons, and attracted by the favorable aspect the site presented through the medium of their telescope, the schooner's prow was turned to the entrance of the bay, and when sufficiently in (about 10 o'clock, or five bells a. m.) her anchor was let go, and she swung head to tide, then half ebb. The whole party, except the master and cabin-boy, were soon seated in the yawl, pulling ashore for a more minute examination. So engrossed were they in the discussion of speculative profits of "town lots for sale," little did they think there ever was such a thing as an ambushade, or even dream of

anything more, in the shape of an enemy, than a grizzly bear being near the handsome site that lay so invitingly before them. No sooner, however, had the party safely beached and secured their only boat above high-water mark, crossed the beach and fairly reached the high plateau, and began to admire the advantages of the site, when all of a sudden they were startled by a terrific yell in the rear, discovering the horrible reality of being completely surrounded and cut off from all access to the schooner by a hostile band of Indians, one party of whom being already in possession of their boat, and in all outnumbering the little band of adventurous speculators in "town of lots for sale" ten to one. Here were the symptoms unmistakable of an enemy more formidable than grizzly bears; and if, perchance, if there was a doubt of the intention of the Indians towards our little party it was for a moment, as they were immediately saluted, in front and flank, by a shower of flint-headed arrows. This was promptly returned, but the Indians, nothing daunted, rushed furiously on, pouring in volleys of arrows as they advanced, and the fight soon became pressing. The little band of Bostons bravely and adroitly defended themselves, retreating until forced to the very water's edge, as it happened, directly under Battle Rock. The whites were not long in seeing that their last and only hope consisted in gaining its summit. In hasty council, amid showers of arrows poured in from their pursuers, it was decided to make the attempt to scale the rock. The effort proved successful, and, although possession was disputed by the countless number of sea birds which had held it undisturbed by any but their own kind for centuries, our friends, all eleven in number, thus separated from their schooner, some already wounded in the onslaught, found themselves on top of the citadel rock, and for a moment in comparative safety. The battle ceased, however, only long enough for the parties to survey their relative positions. The Indians, led on by their oldest chief, renowned in savage cunning, repeatedly attempted to scale the citadel, eager for the conflict hand to hand; but the Bostons defended the rock most successfully; every redskin venturing to scale it was a fatal mark for the unerring rifle or revolver. Their telling, well reserved fire and the flood tide at length gave the Bostons a respite, a breathing spell, for the first time since their surprise. It was not long, however, before they perceived their wily foe, the old chief, preparing to add to the attack a regular siege; and on looking for the schooner, with amazement beheld her fast sailing out of the bay. But before charging desertion, it must be told that the master, on discovering the ambuscade and becoming satisfied, although successful in baffling attempts of the Indians who has seized the yawl to board him, that he was powerless to render immediate aid by waiting, slipped his cable, and, by aid of his boy, hoisted sail and squared away before a fresh breeze for San Francisco, 375 miles before him, for assistance, that being the only point where it could be obtained. In this laudable undertaking we leave the schooner, and return to Battle Rock.

As soon as the ebbing tide would permit the old chief returned to the assault of the citadel, but with no better success. In the meantime he had sent the swiftest runners to the remotest of the band, who, to the summons, came swarming in to swell the number of the besiegers. Every morning's dawn revealed to the unfortunate besieged a prospect more gloomy for each succeeding day. It was only during high water that it was not necessary to stand by their arms to prevent an escalade, which was as certain to be attempted as that low tide would ensue. The ravenous flock so unceremoniously dispossessed of their perch came circling and screaming around, excessively annoying them during the day, and the coming of night only afforded time for sad reflection in reference for the morrow.

*For three days and as many nights, with several of their number wounded and bleeding, the heroic little band of "town lots for sale" speculators held the citadel, without food, without water, without rest, in the broiling sun of the day and in the cold damp of the night, against fearful and increasing odds. On the eve of the last night, their ammunition being very near exhausted, a council was held; it resulted in the bold, unanimous resolve, to make, under the cover of the dark, at low tide, the desperate effort to abandon the rock by the same narrow face they had gained it, and each for himself to run the gauntlet through the enemy's ranks, to seek, as a last resort, his own safety in the dark recesses of the woods immediately in rear of the Indians. At the proper stage of water that night this desperate attempt was made, and none, save one, ever escaped to tell the story of their disasters; he was two years subsequently found a poor maniac prisoner, in possession of the Coquille band. But what of the master of the schooner? He, true to his friends, returned with a strong party, after a trip of ten days, only, however, to find Battle Rock again in possession of its feathered occupants, and his friends beyond the reach of human succor.*

### October 8-10, 1855: Lt. Kautz begins Fort Orford to Oregon Trail road survey

**William V. Wells:** *It was a bright sparkling morning, the sun pouring down a flood of radiance after the rain of the previous night, when we mounted two shaggy but strong Indian ponies, and set out for Empire City, at Coos Bay. Every leaf seemed to glitter in the light, and dew-drops sparkled in every bush. It was a morning to make one "love to live," as the lungs expanded with the respiration of the cold and bracing air. One rides through the undulating country of Oregon with an exhilaration of spirits like that following the inhalation of laughing gas. The characteristic dryness of the autumn months of California is not found among these verdant woods. Green and fragrant health-blossoms adorned the sides of the road, and at times we crossed some noisy rivulet, scolding its way toward the sea, half concealed by an overhanging drapery of verdure fed by its waters.*

*This continued for some miles, when we came out upon the sea-shore; and now, joined by a couple of horsemen bound to some point above, we scampered over a hard sand beach, until we reached the Elk River. H-- having passed this way about a year before, and anxious to display his knowledge of the route, selected the ford, and dashed in, but was soon up to his middle, and reached the opposite banks having partaken of a cold bath much against his will. The rest, more cautious, mounted the tops of their saddles, and escaped with only wet feet. This river during the winter months is impassable. The distance from a log-house standing on the bank to the Sixes River is some six miles, the road leading through a thickly-wooded country. On the route we crossed Cape Blanco, which, until the completion of the recent coast reconnaissance, was supposed to be the most westernmost point of the United States. Cape Mendocino, however, in California, is believed to be a mile or two farther seaward. Our new friends had left us, and we galloped along the verge of the beetling cliff, where we paused to "breathe our horses," and gaze off into the blue ocean beyond.*

*Here, since the creation, these foaming breakers have chafed, and the rocks skirting the base of the precipice have dashed them defiantly back. From the pitch of the Cape a dangerous reef of rocks, standing high above the water, stretches out to sea; the rocks, as we stood and held our hats on in the face of the sea-breeze, were sometimes hidden in the toppling foam. A line carried directly west from where we stand would nearly touch Jeddo [Tokyo], and meet with no impediment on the way. All is "deep blue ocean" between. Here the footsteps of Young America must pause a while. From this point we may look back upon the continent. The Cape is a prominent landmark to the mariner, and from here the land trends away to the northeast, giving to the headland the appearance of a shoulder thrust far into the sea. The bluff, crested with pine-trees, standing almost upon the very brink, and sloping thence inland, forms a plateau, or piece of table-land, finely wooded, across which the sharp sea gales whistle with unchecked fury. From the Cape to "the Sixes" is about two miles. The country slopes to the northward, forming a valley through which the river flows to the ocean. The Sixes has not yet been traced to its source, though it takes its rise not above forty miles in the interior. It can be ascended with canoes about twelve miles, and is said to wind among fertile bottoms and reaches of prairie land hitherto only traversed by Indians and wild beasts. It empties into the ocean under the lee of a huge rock, but the bar is impassable even for a canoe. From seaward no entrance can be discerned. At its mouth stands Dan's cabin.*

*"Dan" is an old Norwegian sailor, whose half century of adventures have carried him thrice around the world. He has sailed under every flag in Christendom, has fought in numerous naval engagements, and has been often wounded. Among the otter and bear hunting community in which he is now located, and who never saw salt-water or ship until their journey across the continent to the Pacific shores, he is regarded as a curious ocean monster, to be listened to respectfully, and heeded with more than ordinary awe. His fearful oaths -- almost unintelligible, from the Dutch jargon with which he mingles them -- his rough, outlandish appearance, his undisputed courage, and kind simplicity, have made him notorious, and the traveler along the coast looks forward with sharpened appetite to the roasted salmon or broiled bear-steak at "Dan's."*

*We arrived at the ford at dead low-water, and H -- determined to push across, though the quicksands are said to be dangerous at that point. However, we plunged in, and by dint of spurring and shouting, reached the opposite side. Dan's hut is about two hundred yards from the northern bank. We rode up to the door of a log-cabin situated at the mouth of a ravine, and partly embowered in its tangled foliage. From this issues a rivulet discharging into the river; and here the old Northman has decided to pass the rest of his days, within hearing of the ocean's roar -- just near enough to be reminded of his many adventures, and yet secure from its dangers.*

*Dismounting, we tied our horses to a post, while the door opened, and a long-haired, sober-faced trapper, with a face like leather and with the seriousness of a parson, gazed out upon us with Indian stoicism. He was about thirty-five years of age. Around his head was a dirty handkerchief, the ends of which hung negligently down his face. Slashed buckskin pants, hunting-shirt, and moccasins, made up his apparel, while the short black pipe, which he held firmly between his teeth, showed that our arrival had disturbed him in the enjoyment of the hunter's Elysium [heaven"]. He regarded our operations with silent indifference, and when we inquired for Dan, replied by throwing open the door, which hung on wooden hinges, and re-entered the cabin, leaving us to follow if we pleased. After fastening our animals we entered, and found the trapper already stretched before the fire, gazing immovably at the smoky rafters, and pulling gently at the digestive pipe. It was evident that an attempt to disturb our new acquaintance again would be useless, so we shouted, "Dan! Hallo there, Dan!" where-upon a savage growl from one of the hide beds in the corner announced that the lord of the manor was taking an early snooze.*

*"Can you get us something to eat, Dan?" said I, in my blandest tone.*

*"Are you Coos Bay people?" asked the voice from the bed.*

*It flashed across me that a slight fib in such a strait would be excusable, and thinking that the Norwegian might have a peculiar regard for the denizens of Coos Bay, I replied "Yes!"*

*"Well, get out o' my cabin den, you bloody sneaks! Da don't no Coos Bay man get no grub in my cabin—they're mean enough to pack their own grub!"*

*It was evident I had made a mistake, and I hastened to explain, when H --, who had known Dan, came to the rescue.*

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*"Dan! don't you know me? It's the Doctor; Dr. H --, that cured you of the rheumatics last year. Don't you remember me, old fellow?"*

*At this the heap of bed-clothes began to move, and the old Norwegian, grunting with pain, came out of his lair. He speedily knew the Doctor, and welcomed him, but without deigning me a word or look. The sight of a fat haunch of elk hanging from the ridge pole obliged me to smother my feelings.*

*Without a dozen words he got to work, and in another ten minutes was roasting several fine steaks before the fire, which crackled in a huge chimney of mud and stones. Silence seemed the order of the day in this hermit's abode, so, without saying, By your leave, I stepped over the prostrate body of the trapper, and took down from the fire-place notch a soot-begrimed pipe, half filled with the "dear weed," coolly lit it by an ember, and puffed away.*

*Dan said nothing. Thus encouraged, I addressed a few words to him with a view of opening a conversation, but without success, and a garrulous attempt upon the still motionless trapper was equally without avail. Foiled so far, and determined to draw the old fellow out, as I learned he had a fund of anecdote, I produced a flask of brandy, saved as a precious relic of San Francisco, and taking a swallow to prove it was not poisoned, passed it silently to the old sailor. He smelt at the mouth, and immediately took a strong pull at its contents, uttering a prolonged and satisfactory "A—h!" as he returned it. The fountains of his loquacity were opened at once, and turning a curious glance toward me, he observed,*

*"You didn't get dat at Port Orford, no how!"*

*"You say right," replied H --.*

*And therewith commenced our conversation of an hour's duration; but the trapper, though paying his respects to the flask, said nothing. Throughout this class of men it will be observed, that being along and in the silent forests or mountain solitudes the greater part of their lives, they acquire a taciturn habit, which seldom leaves them.*

*We found, by actual experiment, that the sand in the bottom of the rivulet near the house contained gold in fine particles. Dan hobbled out and washed a pan of earth, in which were hundreds of minute specs of the precious metal. The whole ocean beach of Oregon is thus impregnated with gold, to a greater or less extent. Among other facts, Dan stated that a law went into operation last winter in Oregon, prohibiting the sale of liquors except by the payment of a quarterly license of fifty dollars. NO sooner had the law gone into effect than the deputy sheriff started from Coos Bay, and traveling rapidly through the country before the law could become generally known, had taken every place in his route where liquor was sold, and imposed the fine for selling without a license. Dan's was among the proscribed number, and to this day he heaps anathemas on Coos Bay and its entire population, not one of whom need apply at his door for entertainment. This explained his ominous question on our entrance,*

*"Are you Coos Bay people?"*

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*We gradually grew to be good friends with both Dan and the trapper, and both took particular pains to direct us on our route. By the time our horses were rested we had learned all the necessary facts regarding the country, and paying our score, we mounted and started away to the northward, Dan's old white mare breaking away as we dashed past, and he and his companion performing a series of indescribable gyrations to arrest her evident intention of following us. We soon reached the ocean beach, where the nature of the sand admits of no faster motion than a walk. The sky to seaward began to thicken, and soon we were riding through a fog so dense that the banks of surf, a few hundred yards from us, were scarcely visible. After an hour H --'s black beard was sparkling like hoar-frost -- the glittering drops standing upon his mustaches as in a winter's morning in New England. The fog was driven inland by a keen wind that searched every seam and opening. It was like riding in the rain. Such weather may be counted on two-thirds of the year along the Oregon beach.*

**Capt. Cram:** *Cape Blanco, although possessing no harbor or "Hole in the shore," is not destitute of interest geographically, it being, I shall believe until more accurate observations prove the contrary, the most western point of terra firma belonging to the United States; certainly it is the most western habitable portion; not only is it habitable, but it is actually inhabited, squatted upon, and claimed by the "Bostons." From the fact of Captain Gray, the discoverer of the mouth of the Columbia, and his crew having sailed from Boston, this appellation was given them by the Indians, and extended to those since coming from the east to distinguish them from the Hudson Bay Company's people. Within the recollection of many now living the term "far west" was applied to no further than St. Louis, then the most westerly settlement of civilization. After that it became to mean somewhere about Independence, Mo.; thence climbing the eastern slope of the Rocky mountains and looking over its crest we saw it applied to the Mormon settlements of the Great Salt Lake basin. But here it rested only for a brief period; seemingly weary of resting place or local habitation, it departed from the city of polygamists, and with more wonderful strides than ever, crossing entire ranges of mountains, scaling with a bound the Sierra Nevada and the Cascade, traversing California and Oregon, it came to the Pacific. And here it is on the very brink of this ocean; and "far west" at this moment may be most legitimately applied to Cape Blanco. It is here that the Anglo-Saxon is arrested in his onward march by the Broad Pacific. Westward the wheels of the emigrant wagon can roll no further. Another turn on their already well-worn axles and all are precipitated down the frightful steep of Cape Blanco a thousand feet into the deep bosom of the ocean. It is here at the cry of "Westward ho!" by land must cease; and if on reaching this point the proneness for migration be not satiated, the journey further towards the setting sun must be on the ocean wave; or if migrate still our people will, thence by land must their course be in retrogression. Further than Cape Blanco I doubt if "Westward the march of empire hath its way," unless the "Bostons" can invent a bridge four thousand miles in span, and whose abutments shall be Cape Blanco and Cape Lopatka. Although there is still an onward migratory wave from the east to the west, a return wave has already begun to roll backward; and between the two -- the direct and reflex -- if we ourselves are not, another less fortunate race will be crushed -- blotted out of existence -- to make the way clear for the "Bostons."*



## October 8 (Monday).

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 243-244]: *On the seventh of October, 1855, a party of men, principally miners and men-about-town, in Jacksonville, organized and armed themselves to the number of about forty (accounts disagree as to number), and under the nominal leadership of Captain Hays and Major James A. Lupton, representative-elect to the territorial legislature proceeded to attack a small band of Indians encamped on the north side of Rogue river near the mouth of Little Butte creek a few miles above Table Rock. Lupton, it appears, was a man of no experience in bush fighting, but was rash and headstrong. His military title, says Colonel Ross, was unearned in war and was probably gratuitous. It is the prevailing opinion that he was led into the affair through a wish to court popularity, which is almost the only incentive that could have occurred to him. Certainly it could not have been plunder; and the mere love of fighting which probably drew the greater part of the force together was perhaps absent in his case. The reason why the particular band at Butte creek was selected as victims also appears a mystery, although the circumstances of their location being accessible, their numbers small, and their reputation as fighters very slight, possibly were the ruling considerations. This band of Indians appear to have behaved themselves tolerably; they were pretty fair Indians, but beggars, and on occasion thieves. They had been concerned in no considerable outrages that are distinctly specified. The attacking party arrived at the river on the evening of the seventh, and selecting a hiding place, remained therein until daylight, the appointed time for the attack. The essential particulars of the fight which followed are, when separated from a tangle of contradictory minutiae, that Lupton and his party fired a volley into the crowded encampment, following up the sudden and totally unexpected attack by a close encounter with knives, revolver's, and whatever weapon they were possessed of, and the Indians were driven away or killed without making much resistance. These facts are matters of evidence, as are also the killing of several squaws, one or more old decrepit men, and a number, probably small, of children. The unessential particulars vary greatly. For instance, Captain Smith reported to government that eighty Indians were slaughtered. Other observers, perhaps less prejudiced, placed the number at thirty. Certain accounts, notably that contributed to the Statesman by A. J. Kane, denied that there were any "bucks" present at the fight, the whole number of Indians being women, old men, and children. It is worth while to note that Mr. A. J. Kane promptly retracted this supposed injurious statement, and in a card to the Sentinel said he believed there were some bucks present. Certain "Indian fighters," also appended their names to the card.*

*The exact condition of things at the fight, or massacre, as some have characterized it, is difficult to determine. Accounts vary so widely that by some it has been termed a heroic attack, worthy of Leonidas or Alexander; others have called it an indiscriminate butchery of defenceless and peaceful natives, the earliest possessors of the soil. To temporize with such occurrences does not become those who seek the truth only, and the world would be better could such deeds meet at once the proper penalty and be known by their proper name. Whether or not Indian men were present does not concern the degree of criminality attached to it. The attack was indiscriminately against all. The Indians were at peace with the whites and therefore unprepared. To fitly characterize the whole proceeding, is to say that it was Indian-like.*

*The results of the matter, were the deaths of Lupton, who was mortally wounded by an arrow which penetrated his lungs, the wounding of a young man, Shepherd by name, the killing of at*

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*least a score of Indians, mainly old men, and the revengeful outbreak on the part of the Indians, whose account forms the most important part of this history.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 343]: *Early in October a party of roving reservation Indians were discovered encamped near the mouth of Butte creek, on Rogue river, and it was suspected that among them were some who had been annoying the settlers. Upon this suspicion a company of about thirty men, commanded by J. A. Lupton, proceeded before daybreak on the eighth of October to attack this camp, which was surprised and terribly chastised, twenty-three being killed and many wounded before it was learned that the majority of the victims were non-combatants, or old men, women, and children. The survivors took refuge at Fort Lane, where their wounds, and their wailings for their dead, excited much pity in the breasts of Captain Smith and his troopers, who went out to view the field after the slaughter, instead of preventing it. In this affair Lupton, who was major of militia, was killed, and eleven of his company wounded, a proof that the Indians were not all unarmed.*

*This occurred on the morning of the eighth of October. It has been sometimes alleged that the events following on the ninth were the immediate outcome of the attack at Butte creek, but such could not have been the case. Savages do not move with such celerity. They could not have armed and organized in a day, and must for some time have been making preparations for war before they could have ventured upon it. Armed Indians were by the treaty made suspects, and to have been armed and supplied with ammunition evidenced a long period of looking forward to an outbreak. The reservation and Fort Lane favored such an intention. The former was a safe hiding place, and the latter a refuge in case of detection or pursuit.*

### **October 9 (Tuesday).**

**C. S. Drew:** *The massacre near Evans's ferry, (Rogue river) October 9, was a premeditated affair, whatever has or may be said to the contrary notwithstanding, and instigated chiefly by the Indians of Table Rock reserve, by whom it was consummated with the aid of Indians from the Umpqua and others that were not in annuity with the United States. All the chiefs, (except "Sam,") with their respective tribes, were absent from the Table Rock reserve at this time, and had been off and on, at will, for a long time previous. "Sam" remained upon the reserve even after the war that followed this massacre had become general -- not, however, because he was averse to it; but to play the spy upon the regular troops, into whose confidence he had succeeded in ingratiating himself to the fullest extent, and to direct the movements of those tribes who were openly prosecuting the war accordingly. As I have already indicated, the military and Indian departments had ceased some time previous to have any controlling influence over these reserve Indians, or any others, and so far as either of these departments were concerned, the Indians were the absolute masters of the country -- going when and where they pleased, murdering and plundering whom they pleased, and returning to claim and receive the protection of the authorities they had set at defiance, whenever necessitated to do so by the citizens, whom they had outraged beyond further endurance. That this was emphatically the case, is proved beyond all question, I think, by the facts I have adduced respecting the murders and other depredations these reserve Indians had previously committed, for which no punishment was inflicted, and no guarantee taken that such atrocities should not be continued. At different times and places during the four and a half months immediately preceding this massacre, be it observed, these*

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*Indians had murdered in cold blood not less than nineteen unsuspecting citizens, wounded many more and destroyed a no small amount of property. Yet they were represented as perfectly harmless and peaceable by those having them, or who should have had them in charge, and no means were taken to prevent the continuance of the atrocities just cited, on whose authors, except in the case of two who participated in the massacre on Klamath river, July 28, no punishment was ever inflicted. But to the massacre under consideration.*

*For several weeks prior to the 9th of October, such of the reserve Indians and others as were afterwards found to have been designated to commence the general slaughter of the settlers in and around Rogue River valley, were in the habit of holding nightly pow-wows, in different parts of the country -- off the reserve, of course -- and generally in pretty close proximity to the settlements; so near as to be distinctly heard, and to create misgivings as to their meaning. Very frequently, too, parties of them would visit the settlers in the daytime, and very often painted and otherwise decorated in their customary war style. But when interrogated as to the meaning of these warlike demonstrations, they invariably replied that they were merely on a hunting excursion, and that their pow-wows were simply meetings for the purpose of gambling. These representations seemed not altogether out of character, and for the time served to allay the suspicions of the settlers. But it soon became evident that the number of the Indians was increasing at such a rate as would soon place the destruction of the settlements in their power, if such was their design. Their meetings, too, became more boisterous as they grew larger, and the parties visiting the whites became more insolent and overbearing, and wore a more warlike appearance. Such was the state of things on the morning of the 9th of October, and such had been the state of things for some time previous in the very neighborhood in which the massacre took place.*

*In the execution of their bloody work, the Indians divided their force into several parties, and made their attack at different points in the neighborhood almost simultaneous. The chiefs, "George" and "Limpey" commanded in person along the road; but the leadership of the several parties designated to murder the families were delegated to such warriors as had either been in the employ of, or had been suffered to loiter about the premises of their intended victims until they had learned where and how to deal the surest and most fatal blow. Those who were foremost in the attack at Wagoner's, Jones's, Haines's, Harris's, and so on were well known to those families, had been in their service from time to time, and had often received favors and kindness from them when out of it. In the attack upon Jones's house, he was killed at the onset, and Mrs. Jones mortally wounded, though not utterly disabled for the moment. Seeing her husband dying, and the Indians cutting him in pieces, she fled towards some brush which was near by, whither she was immediately followed by an Indian who had been in the employ of her husband, and in whom she had placed the greatest confidence. Seeing none but this Indian following her, and thinking that perhaps he might still be her friend, she awaited his approach, and then implored his protection. His reply was, "You damned b--h, I'll kill you," and thereupon fired at her with his revolver. The shot took effect only in her arm, but she fell as if dead; and he, supposing his shot had been fatal, left her and returned to his companions. Mrs. Jones escaped to Vanoy's ferry, where she died the next day. At Wagoner's, no one escaped to tell the particulars of the attack there; but the Indians themselves, even now, boast of the affair, and do not hesitate to say who were engaged in it. Their story of the matter does not conflict with what I have stated. They state, also, the manner in which they accomplished their purpose. It seems that*

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*the house was first set on fire, and Mrs. Wagoner and her daughter were then compelled to remain in it until burned to death. Their nearly consumed remains were found in the smouldering [sic] ruins of the house on the following day. The Indians were equally successful at Haines's. At Harris's, however, they were suspected before they could get possession of the house, and consequently their work was less complete. Finding themselves suspicioned, they commenced the attack somewhat prematurely, and consequently succeeded in killing only three of the five they intended. Mr. Harris received a fatal wound at the first fire; but falling partially into the house, his wife and daughter, the latter severely wounded, succeeded in drawing him inside and barring the door so effectually as to keep the Indians without. While dying, Mr. Harris instructed his wife how to load and use the rifle, and bade her defend herself to the last; an order that she most heroically obeyed. For nearly twenty-four hours she defended herself against the besiegers, and was then rescued by some volunteers from Jacksonville. Master Harris and Mr. Reed were in a field close by when the attack was made, and both fell a prey to the enemy. The other victims of this massacre were mostly travelers, some of whom belonged in the Willamette valley. Mr. Gwin was an employee of the Table Rock agency, and was killed on the reserve.*

*. . . Unlike their neighbors just mentioned, the citizens near Evans's took no measures to guard against the Indians, even those in close proximity to them, and therefore were easily overcome, as have shown in my statement respecting the massacre that there, (October 9) to which I need not refer in detail now. As to report, however, that this massacre was a "retaliatory act" -- the result of the affair with the Butte Creek Indians on the 8th -- I to say, that in truth it has no foundation whatever; that it with a clique of politicians, who had for their object the injury of few men whom they could not control in political matters, and for reason sought to render them odious to the community in which lived, by charging them with being the instigators of the various murders which the Indians had from time to time committed. I have referred to a couple of the representatives of this clique in my "remarks" upon the massacre here mentioned; they who counseled Mr. Wagoner and his family falsely on the morning of October 9<sup>th</sup>, and had also done the same at other points along the road they traveled the day previous. It was not until this report and these accusations had gained a wide publicity in Oregon, that they were appropriated by officers of the army and of the Indian department, and ingrafted [sic] in their reports. And it will here be observed, that the identical officers who have thus placed these misrepresentations upon record, are those who permitted the Indians to become their masters, and were solely responsible for the difficulties and enormities thereby engendered.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 245-247]: *Immediately succeeding the event last detailed, came a series of startling and lamentable occurrences, which produced an impression on the community which the lapse of over a quarter of a century has by no means effaced. The ninth of October, 1855, has justly been called the most eventful day in the history of Southern Oregon. On that day nearly twenty persons lost their lives, victims to Indian ferocity and cruelty. Their murder lends a somber interest to the otherwise dry details of Indian skirmishes, and furnishes many a romantic though saddening page to the annalist who would write the minute history of those times. A portion of the incidents of that awful day have been written for publications of wide circulation, and thus have become a part of the country's stock-in-trade of Indian tales. Certain of them have taken their place in the history of our country along with the most stirring and romantic episodes of border warfare. Many and varied are this country's legends of hair-breadth escapes and heroic defense against overpowering odds. There is nothing told in any language to surpass in*  
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*daring and devotion the memorable defense of the Harris home. Mrs. Wagner's mysterious fate still bears a melancholy interest, and while time endures the people of this region cannot forget the mournfully tragic end of all who died on that fateful day.*

*As the present memories describe it, the attack was by most people wholly unexpected, in spite of the previous months of anxiety. The recklessness of the whites who precipitated the outbreak by their conduct at the Indian village above Table Rock had left unwarned the outlying settlers, upon whose defenseless and innocent heads fell the storm of barbaric vengeance. Early on the morning of October ninth, the hands of several of the more warlike chiefs gathered at or near Table Rock, set out traveling westward, down the river, and transporting their families, their arms and other property, and bent on war. It is not at this moment possible to ascertain the names of those chiefs, nor the number of their braves; but it has been thought that Limpy, the chief of the Illinois band, with George, chief of the lower Rogue river band, were the most prominent and influential Indians concerned in the matter. Their numbers, if we follow the most reliable accounts, would indicate that from thirty-five to fifty Indians performed the murders of which we have now to discourse. Their first act was to murder William Goin or Going, a teamster, native of Missouri, and employed on the reservation, where he inhabited a small hut or house. Standing by the fire-place in conversation with Clinton Schieffelin, he was fatally shot, at two o'clock in the morning. The particular individuals who accomplished this killing were, says Mr. Schieffelin, members of John's band of Applegates, who were encamped on Ward creek, a mile above its mouth, and twelve miles distant from the camp of Sam's band.*

*Hurrying through the darkness to Jewett's ferry these hostiles, now reinforced by the band of Limpy and George, found there a pack-train loaded with munitions. Hamilton, the man in charge of it, was killed, and another individual was severely wounded, being hit in four places. They next began firing at Jewett's house, within which were several persons in bed, it not being yet daylight. Meeting with resistance they gave up the attack and moved to Evans' ferry, which they reached at daybreak. Here they shot Isaac Shelton, of Willamette valley, en route for Yreka. He lived twenty hours. The next victim was Jones, proprietor of a ranch, whom they shot dead near his house. His body was nearly devoured by hogs before it was found. The house was set on fire, and Mrs. Jones was pursued by an Indian and shot with a revolver, when she fell senseless, and the savage retired supposing her dead. She revived and was taken to Tufts' place and lived a day. O. P. Robbins, Jones' partner, was hunting cattle at some distance from the house. Getting upon a stump he looked about him and saw the house on fire. Correctly judging that Indians were abroad, he proceeded to Tufts and Evans' places and secured the help of three men, but the former place the Indians had already visited and shot Mrs. Tufts through the body, but being taken to Illinois valley she recovered. Six miles north of Evans ferry the Indians fell in with and killed two men who were transporting supplies from the Willamette valley to the mines. They took the two horses from the wagon, and went on. The house of J. B. Wagner was burned, Mrs. Wagner being obviously murdered, or, as an unsubstantiated story goes, she was compelled to remain in it until dead. This is refinement of horrors indeed. For a time her fate was unknown, but it was finally settled thus. Mary, her little daughter, was taken to the Meadows, on lower Rogue river, some weeks after, according to the Indians' own accounts, but died there. Mr. Wagner being from home escaped death. Coming to Haines' house, Mr. Haines being ill in bed, they shot him to death, killed two children and took his wife prisoner. Her fate was a sad one, and is yet wrapped in mystery. It seems likely, from the stories told by the Indians, that the*

*unhappy woman died about a week afterwards, from the effects of a fever aggravated by improper food. When the subsequent war raged, a thousand inquiries were made concerning the captive, and not a stone was left unturned to solve the mystery. The evidence that exists bearing upon the subject is unsatisfactory indeed, but may be deemed sufficiently conclusive.*

*At about nine o'clock a. m., the savages approached the house of Mr. Harris, about ten miles north of Evans', where dwelt a family of four -- Mr. and Mrs. Harris and their two children, Mary aged twelve, and David aged ten years. With them resided T. A. Reed, an unmarried man employed by or with Mr. Harris in formwork. Reed was some distance from the house, and was set upon by a party of the band of hostiles and killed, no assistance being near. His skeleton was found a year after. David, the little son of the fated family, had gone to a field at a little distance, and in all likelihood was taken into the woods by his captors and slain, as he was never after heard of. Some have thought that he was taken away and adopted into the tribe -- a theory that seems hardly probable, as his presence would have become known when the entire band of hostiles surrendered several months afterward. It seems more probable that the unfortunate youth was taken prisoner, and proving an inconvenience to his brutal captors, was by them unceremoniously murdered and his corpse thrown aside, where it remained undiscovered. Mr. Harris was surprised by the Indians, and retreating to the house, was shot in the breast as he reached the door. His wife, with the greatest courage and presence of mind, closed and barred the door, and in obedience to her wounded husband's advice, brought down the fire-arms which the house contained -- a rifle, a double shotgun, a revolver and a single-barreled pistol -- and began to fire at the Indians, hardly with the expectation of hitting them, but to deter them from assaulting or setting fire to the house. Previous to this a shot fired by the Indians had wounded her little daughter in the arm, making a painful but not dangerous flesh wound, and the terrified child climbed to the attic of the dwelling where she remained for several hours. Throughout all this time the heroic woman kept the savages at bay, and attended as well as she was able to the wants of her fearfully wounded husband, who expired in about an hour after he was shot. Fortunately, she had been taught the use of firearms; and to this she owed her preservation and that of her daughter. The Indians, who could be seen moving about in the vicinity of the house, were at pains to keep within cover and dared not approach near enough to set fire to the dwelling, although they burned the out-buildings, first taking the horses from the stable. Mrs. Harris steadily loaded her weapons, and fired them through the crevices between the logs of which the house was built. In the afternoon, though at what time it was impossible for her to tell, the Indians drew off and left the stout-hearted woman mistress of the field. She had saved her own and her daughter's life, and added a deathless page to the record of the country's history.*

*After the departure of the savages, the heroine with her daughter left the house and sought refuge in a thicket of willows near the road, and remained there all night. Next morning several Indians passed, but did not discover them, and during the day a company of volunteers, hastily collected in Jacksonville, approached, to whom the two presented themselves, the sad survivors of a once happy home.*

*When, on the ninth of October, a rider came dashing into Jacksonville and quickly told of the fray, great excitement prevailed, and men volunteered to go to the aid of whoever might need help. Almost immediately a score of men were in their saddles and pushing toward the river. Major Fitzgerald, stationed at Fort Lane, went or was sent by Captain Smith, at the head of fifty-*

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*five mounted men, and these going with the volunteers, proceeded along the track of ruin and desolation left by the savages. At Wagner's house, some five or six volunteers who were in advance, came upon a few Indians hiding in the brush near by, who, unsuspecting of the main body advancing along the road, challenged the whites to a fight. Major Fitzgerald came up and ordered a charge; and six of the "red devils" were killed, and the rest driven "on the jump" to the hills, but could not be overtaken. Giving up the pursuit, the regulars and volunteers marched along the road to the Harris house, where, as we have seen, they found the devoted mother and her child, and removed them to a place of safety in Jacksonville. They proceeded to and camped at Grave creek that night, and returned the next day.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 343-346]: *On the night of the eighth two men were killed and another wounded, who were in charge of a pack train at Jewett's ferry. Jewett's house was fired upon, but no one killed. A considerable number of Indians had gathered, apparently by concert, near this place, who about daybreak proceeded down the river to Evans' ferry, where they found Isaac Shelton of the Wallamet valley on his way to Yreka, and mortally wounded him. Still further down was the house of J. K. Jones, whom they killed; also mortally wounding his wife, and pillaging and burning his house.*

*Below this place was the house of J. Wagoner. On the way to it the Indians killed four men. Mr. Wagoner was absent from his home, having gone that morning to escort Miss Pellet, a temperance lecturer, from Buffalo, New York, to Sailor diggings. The fate of Mrs. Wagoner and her four-year old daughter, Mary, was never certainly known, the house and all in it having been burned. She was a young and beautiful woman, well educated and refined, and the uncertainty concerning her death or the manner of it was a horrible torture to her husband, who survived her. One story told by the Indians themselves, was that she fastened herself in her house, carefully dressed as if for a sacrifice, and seating herself in the center of the sitting-room with her child in her arms, awaited death, which came to her by fire. But others said, and probably with truth, that she was carried off, and her child killed because it cried so much. The mother refused to eat, and died of grief and starvation at "The Meadows." Captain Wallen has said that two scalps captured from the Indians at the battle of Cow creek in 1856 were identified as those of Mrs. Wagoner and her child, the mother's beautiful hair being unmistakable; and the Indian stories may none be the actual truth.*

*From the smoking ruins of the Wagoner home, the Indians proceeded to the place of George W. Harris, who being at a little distance from his house and suspecting from their appearance that they meant to attack him, ran quickly in and seized his gun. As they came on with hostile words and actions he shot one, and wounded another from his doorway, where he was himself shot down a few moments later, leaving his wife and little daughter to defend themselves, which they did for twenty-four hours, before help arrived.*

*Dragging her husband's body inside and barring the door, Mrs. Harris instructed her daughter how to make bullets, while she stood guard and prevented the Indians from approaching too near the house by firing through cracks in the walls at every one detected in the attempt to reach it. In this painfully solicitous manner she kept off the enemy until dark, when they withdrew. Alone with her husband's dead body, and her weary and frightened child, she spent the long night. Fearing that the Indians would return with reinforcements in the morning, towards dawn*

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*she stole forth, locking the house behind her, and concealed herself and daughter under a pile of brush at no great distance away, where she was found, blackened with powder and stained with blood, many hours later by a detachment of troops under Major Fitzgerald.*

*The other victims of the outbreak of the ninth of October were Mr. and Mrs. Haines and two children, Frank A. Reed, William Given, James W. Cartwright, Powell, Bunch, Hamilton, Fox, White, and others on the road between Evans' ferry and Grave creek; two young women, Miss Hudson and Miss Wilson, on the road between Indian creek and Crescent City, and three men on Grave creek, below the road. It was altogether the bloodiest day the valley had ever seen.*

*When the news that the settlements were attacked reached Jacksonville, a company of twenty men quickly armed and took the trail of the Indians. They were overtaken and joined by Major Fitzgerald with fifty-five troopers from Fort Lane. On arriving at Wagoner's place they found thirty Indians engaged in plundering the premises, who, when the volunteers -- the first on the ground -- appeared, greeted them with derisive yells, dancing, and insulting gestures, but when they beheld the dragoons, fled precipitately towards the mountains. A pursuit of two or three miles proved unavailing, the troop horses being jaded by a long march, and after patrolling the road for several hours, Fitzgerald returned to Fort Lane and the volunteers to their homes to make ready for the prolonged contest which was evidently before them.*

*An express, carried by T. McFadden Patton, was already well on the road to the seat of government to inform the governor, the superintendent of Indian affairs, and the military authorities at Vancouver of the condition of affairs in the south. So far, however, were the latter from being able to afford any aid, that an express was at that very time on the road to Fort Lane with a requisition for troops to be used in the north as we shall see hereafter.*

### **October 10 (Wednesday).**

**Mrs. Victor [1894: 346-347 ]:** *On the tenth of October, Lieutenant Kautz had set out from Port Orford with a party of citizens and soldiers to make an examination of a proposed route for a wagon road from that place to Jacksonville. At the great bend of Rogue river, thirty miles from the coast, he found the settlers in much alarm at a threatened attack from the Indians on Applegate creek, and returned to the fort for a larger supply of arms and ammunition, to enable him to engage the hostiles should they be met with . . .*

*It now behooved the inhabitants of southern Oregon to prepare to meet the emergency. Estimating the number of Indians who could be called warriors at no more than four hundred, four times that number of white men would be required to subdue them on account of their better knowledge of the country, their ability to appear simultaneously at several points, and of disappearing rapidly on the approach of troops, wearing out the horses and men engaged in pursuit. They were, besides, well armed and supplied with ammunition, whereas the volunteers had neither in any amount. The men mustered between the ninth and eleventh only numbered one hundred and fifty, because no more could be armed. The Indians had slyly bought up all the rifles and revolvers in the country, and were skilled in the use of them. The only thing that was attempted for several days was to protect the most exposed settlements, and keep open the roads north and south.*



*A company of which J. S. Rinearson was captain, was on the tenth, divided into squads, and sent, ten to the mouth of the Umpqua canon, five three miles south to Leving's place, five to Turner's, seven miles further south, and six to the Grave-creek house.*

#### **October 11 (Thursday).**

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 348]: *On the eleventh, thirty men made a scout down Rogue river to the mouth of Galice creek, twelve of them having no other arms than pistols. They were provisioned, blanketed, and sometimes armed by the settlers they served.*

*The United States troops in southern Oregon at this time were two full companies of dragoons at Fort Lane, under Major Fitzgerald and Captain Smith, and sixty-four infantry at Winchester, in the Umpqua valley, under Lieutenant Gibson, escort to Lieutenant Williamson on his survey of a railroad route from the Sacramento to the Wallamet, and who now retraced his steps to Fort Lane. The small garrison at Port Orford was not available, and Fitzgerald's company was ordered north before troops were put in the field here, leaving one company of dragoons and one of infantry to defend the isolated southern division of the territory.*

#### **October 12 (Friday).**

**C. S. Drew:** *On the 12th of October, Colonel John E. Ross, of the ninth regimental district of Oregon, by virtue of his commission, and pursuant to a resolution of the citizens of Jacksonville and that vicinity, assumed command in his district, and commenced the organization of a regiment of mounted volunteers for the defense of the settlements in the Rogue river country against the hordes of hostile Indians by which they were menaced on every hand. On the 14th he had nine companies, consisting of about 500 men, under his command, and on duty in the most exposed portions of his district, including the settlements of Rogue River and Illinois valleys, and those of Apple gate creek, Deer creek, Butte creek, Galeese creek. Grave creek, Cow creek, (in the adjoining county, Douglas) and Sterling. Several of these companies, however, had been organized and on duty at some of the points mentioned since the day of the massacre at Evans's. The regiment, between the 14th of October and 1st of November, was increased to fifteen companies, consisting, rank and file, of about 750 men. The almost instantaneous appearance of so large a force in the field disconcerted the plans of the Indians, and those under the chief "John" sought their mountain retreats to await a more favorable opportunity to carry out their cherished designs, but, in the meantime, continued to destroy such property, stock, &c., as they could get at without incurring too much risk. Those under "George" and "Limpy," however, who commanded at the massacre on the 9<sup>th</sup>, attacked the settlement at the mouth of Galeese creek on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>, but were repulsed by Captain Lewis, who had just been stationed there with a company of about forty men. The Indians kept up the attack during the day, and retired under the cover of night. The loss on the part of the volunteers was four killed and seven wounded. Among the latter was Captain Lewis himself. No whites were killed except such as belonged to the company. What the loss of the Indians was is not known; undoubtedly, it was considerable.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 348-350]: *On the twelfth of October, Colonel John E. Ross of the ninth regiment of Oregon militia ordered Major James H. Russell to report to him without delay. Some captains of militia were already in the field, while other companies were commanded by any men who had the qualities of a leader, and on the application of citizens, these were duly commissioned. At the request of M. C. Barkwell, a company was raised by R.L. Williams for the protection of his neighborhood. The settlers at Althouse, on Illinois river, petitioned to have Theoron Crook empowered to raise a company to range the mountains in that vicinity. The settlers and miners of Phoenix mills, Illinois valley, Deer creek, and Galice creek, also petitioned for permission to raise companies for defense, and the outlying settlements prayed for guards to be sent them.*

*The volunteer companies raised before the twentieth numbered fifteen. Of twelve of them the following information has been preserved T. S. Harris, captain of company A; James Bruce, company B; J. S. Rinearson, company C. Rinearson's lieutenants were W. P. Wing, I. N. Bentley, and R. W. Henry. R. L. Williams was captain of company D, E. B. Stone, first lieutenant, and E. K. Elliott, sergeant. W. B. Lewis was captain of company E, his lieutenants, W. A. J. Moore and -- White; his sergeant, I. D. Adams. A. S. Welton was captain of company F; Miles T. Alcorn, captain of company G, his lieutenant being J. M. Osborne. W. A. Wilkinson was captain of company H; T. Smith captain of company I. S. A. Frye, captain of company K, Abel George, captain of company L, and F. R. Hill, captain of company M. The names of Orrin Root, T. J. Gardner, M. M. Williams, M. P. Howard, and -- Hayes appear in official correspondence as captains, the names of Daniel Richardson, H. P. Conroy, and -- Morrison as lieutenants, and W. M. Evans as orderly sergeant. C. S. Drew was appointed adjutant; C. Westfeldt, quartermaster and commissary, and C. B. Brooks, surgeon. J. B. Wagoner and John Hillman were employed in the dangerous duty of express riding, Wagoner remaining in the service as long as the first volunteer organization lasted. Other names here preserved are those that have cropped up in the correspondence gathered to assist in the collection of Indian war claims by B. F. Dowell of Jacksonville, already referred to in a previous note.*

#### **October 14 (Sunday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *The "Columbia" arrived from Portland late yesterday afternoon. She brings an account of an outbreak among the Indians in Washington Territory. For the last few months we have heard floating rumors of preparations for intended hostilities by the large Indian tribes in that section of country, but as the border settlers are somewhat like the boy in the fable, always crying wolf, we have rarely been able to tell when they really were in danger. But at present there is no doubt of an Indian war having commenced. In consequence of the reports of various persons on their way to the Colville mines having been killed by the Indians, an agent was sent out by Superintendent Joe Palmer, to ascertain their correctness, and he himself was murdered by the Indians. On this news reaching Fort Dalles, Maj. Granville O. Haller, U. S. Army, who had just got in from his expedition to the Snake Indian country, where he had been to demand the murderers of the emigrants year, started out with a command of a hundred men to bring the murderers to an account for their atrocities. He had been out but three or four days, when a messenger brought the startling news of his command having been surrounded by Indians at a point about twenty-five miles from the Dalles. His position was upon a hill, with ravines and thickets around him. His troops and animals had been without water for forty-eight hours. The*

*Indians were constantly firing upon them. He was enabled to send a messenger through the ranks of the Indians in the night, who reached the Dalles Monday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, at eight P. M. Immediately on the arrival of the express at the Dalles, Lieutenant Day started with the remaining troops at that post to the succor of Maj. Haller. Maj. H. calls for large reinforcements to aid him. It is reported that the requisition has been made to the Governors of Oregon and Washington Territories for volunteers. How many is not known -- some say one thousand, others five hundred.*

*The hostile feeling among the Indian is supposed to extend to several tribes. Proposals, it is said, have been made to all the Indians east of the Cascade range to unite in a general war of extermination against the whites. But the number that has really leagued together is not known. The Yakimas and Clikitats seem to be the prime movers in the affair. In order to induce a war spirit they report all sorts of Indian wrongs, and threaten hostilities against such tribes as will not join them. It is thought the disaffection is so widely diffused among them that one flush of victory on their part against the United States troops would induce nearly all of the tribes to unite in a general war. Hence much anxiety is felt in the result of Haller's expedition against them. They are abundantly supplied with arms and ammunition; and are thought to be good warriors; differing vastly in this respect from the Coast Indians of lower Oregon. We are expecting orders by the next steamer, which will arrive in a few days, to proceed to the seat of war.*

**October 15 (Monday).**

**Gov. Curry** [Walling 1884: 253-254]: *Whereas, by petition numerously signed by citizens of Umpqua valley, calling upon me for protection, it has come to my knowledge that the Shasta and Rogue River Indians, in Southern Oregon, in violation of their solemn engagements, are now in arms against the peace of this territory; that they have, without respect to age or sex, murdered a large number of our people, burned their dwellings, and destroyed their property; and that they are now menacing the southern settlements with all the atrocities of savage warfare, I issue this my proclamation, calling for five companies of mounted volunteers, to constitute a northern battalion, and four companies of mounted volunteers to constitute a southern battalion, to remain in force until duly discharged -- The several companies to consist of one captain, one first lieutenant, one second lieutenant, four sergeants, four corporals, and sixty privates, each volunteer to furnish his own horse, arms and equipment's, each company to select its own officers, and thereafter to proceed with the utmost possible dispatch to the rendezvous hereafter appointed. It is expected that Jackson county will furnish the number of men wanted for the southern battalion, which will rendezvous at Jacksonville, elect a major to command, and report in writing to headquarters. It will then proceed to take effective measures to recover indemnity for the past, and conquer a lasting peace with the enemy for the future. The following-named counties are expected to make up the number of men wanted for the northern battalion: Lane county, two companies; Linn county, one company; Douglas county, one company; Umpqua county, one company; which will rendezvous at Roseburg, Douglas county, elect a major to command, and report in writing to headquarters. It will then proceed immediately to open and maintain communication with the settlements in the Rogue river valley, and thereafter cooperate with the southern battalion in a vigorous prosecution of the campaign.*

*Given under my hand at Portland, the fifteenth of October, A. D., 1855.  
By the Governor, George L. Curry.*

**Capt. Cram:** *We now have some of the provocations that in reality gave rise to the Rogue river war, of 1855, which was first formally and officially declared against the Indians, in the proclamation of George L. Curry, governor of Oregon Territory, October 15, 1855 -- assigning as the casus belli that he had been informed "that the Shasta and Rogue River Indians in Southern Oregon, have, without respect to age or sex, murdered a large number of four people, burned their dwellings, and destroyed their property; and that they are now menacing the southern settlements with all the atrocities of savage warfare;" and by this same proclamation he calls out companies of mounted volunteers, to constitute two battalions -- one to be denominated the "northern battalion," the other the "southern battalion."*

*. . . The governor says he was moved to call out this force "by a petition numerously signed by citizens of Umpqua valley," and ordered them to rendezvous at Jacksonville, which is the identical focus of the organization of General Joseph Lane's volunteers of 1853, who had been so liberally paid by the United States from an appropriation disbursed among them just previously to the getting up of this moving petition, which if granted would bring occupation for eight hundred men and as many horses for the ensuing winter, and they would only have to ride about and kill Indians until planting time next spring. These battalions, with the title of "southern army," were under the command of Brigadier General John K. Lamerick, and it is not surprising that with such an array and the well known hostility of many of the citizens, some of the Indians fled to their arms and others to the United States military posts for protection.*

#### **October 16 (Tuesday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *Lieutenant August V. Kautz. Fourth Infantry, who left here with ten men about eight days ago, to survey a road between this place and Fort Lane, returned last night about twelve o'clock to get arms and ammunition for his party. He reports that on reaching the big bend of Rogue River, forty-five miles from Fort Orford, he found the settlers making port-holes in their houses, preparatory to an attack from the Indians of upper Rogue River valley. He learned from them that being advised by some friendly Indians to leave the place, as the tribes above there were hostile, but not believing the reports they started up the river to ascertain the truth of the matter. On arriving in sight of a trader's establishment they saw the building in flames, and the Indians in a war dance around it and that they were further told by friendly Indians that all the tribes in upper Rogue River valley had united in war against the whites. This report, together with those received from Jacksonville last mail of the disaffection of the Indians in that region in consequence, of the hanging of several of their head men at Yreka for murder, indicates that trouble is brewing in lower Oregon also. These Indians had been arrested by the United States troops at Fort Lane, and turned over to the civil authorities of California, who, it is presumed, gave them a fair trial.*

*Of course everybody in this section is excited -- all sorts of reports are circulation about small parties being cut off, but I have lived in an Indian country too long to put confidence in more than one twentieth part of the Indian atrocities that are reported.*

**Capt. Cram:** *As soon as a military post was established at Port Orford attention was called to the advantage of having a direct communication with the Oregon trail. Several explorations were made with a view of finding a good route for a wagon road, but none were attended with favorable results for such a purpose. In the autumn of 1855 General Wool directed another effort to be made, and Lieutenant Kautz, 4<sup>th</sup> infantry, was put in charge of the party. The route which he reported most favorably upon as the least formidable in difficulties is represented on map No. 10.*

*While about closing his field labors his party was attacked by Indians -- hostilities having commenced between them and the Oregon volunteers unbeknown to the Lieutenant.*

*From my own reconnaissance in this district of Southern Oregon, and other sources of information, I think the best system of roads that can be opened in order to bring the Rogue river, the Coquille, and the Umpqua valleys into communication with a sea-port would be --*

- 1. To open a road in direct route seen on map No. 10, from Port Orford to the Oregon trail.*
- 2. To open one from Cape Blanco to the navigable part of the Coquille; also one from the head of the navigable part of this river, following the middle fork, to the Umpqua valley.*

*With such a system well executed these secluded valleys could avail themselves of Port Orford, as there is already by nature a good wagon road from this to Cape Blanco.*

### Mid-October, 1855: Ben Wright returns to Port Orford; Wells visits Randolph

**William V. Wells:** *While on the route we met Ben Wright, the sub-Indian agent, an experienced hunter and trapper, whose life has been passed in the mountains and on the Western frontier. He was a man of some thirty-two years, with black curling hair, reaching, beneath a slouched Palo Alto hat, down to his shoulders; a Missouri rifle was slung across his back, and he rode a heavy black mule with bearskin machillas. Altogether, he was a splendid specimen of a backwoodsman, of noble stature, lithe as an eel, of Herculean strength, and with all the shrewdness and cunning acquired [sic] by a lifetime passed among the North American Indians. Almost disdainful of the comforts of civilized life, and used to the scanty fare of the hunter, he seemed peculiarly fitted for the office he held. I am thus particular in the description of Ben Wright, as his name has just been published among those who were butchered by the Chetkow tribe at Rogue River in February last. He was in company, when we met him, with several others, any of whom would nearly answer to this description. Some of them have shared his fate in the massacre above referred to.*

*Our next crossing was at Flores Creek, which we now easily forded; but in winter it becomes a formidable stream, and during the heavy rains is impassable. The ford is two miles above the mouth. This crossed; we again struck the monotonous ocean beach. The route for many miles is one of the most uninteresting that can be imagined. The scenery is the same for twenty miles. A shouting conversation must be maintained to be intelligible against the high wind. Even the romantic associations attending the tumbling in of a heavy ocean surf is in part denied—the mist often entirely hiding the outer breakers, and leaving one to imagine their force by the half acre of foam, which, rushing up the slant of the beach, expends itself in tiny ripples around the horses' hoofs. [sic] Presently we observed something in the distance resembling machinery, and a nearer inspection introduced a veritable gold-beach washing apparatus in full operation, under the brow of a tall sand-bank, and superintended by three stout, contented-looking fellows, who assured us, in answer to our queries, that they were making from \$12 to \$25 per day "to the hand." Not unused to the "tricks of the trade," as practiced in the California gold regions, we were disposed to be incredulous until, by a few fair "prospects" of the gold sand, and an explanation of the modus operandi, we were finally convinced of the truth of the statement. In a word, the entire sea-beach, from Rogue River to Cape Arago, is more or less impregnated with fine gold sand, much of it an impalpable dust, and only to be extracted by the use of quicksilver. It is precisely the same thing as quartz mining -- minus the labor and expense of crushing the rock preparatory [sic] to the amalgamating process. A stream of water, conducted from a neighboring ravine, is led through wooden flumes to the "tom heads," and the workmen "stripping," or clearing away the drift, leave nothing to do but shovel tons of the black sand into the sluices, the trickling stream performing the process of separation, the fine dust escaping over these miniature riffles being arrested and amalgamated in a series of quicksilver deposits below. The greater part, however, is caught in the upper riffles. The stream was stopped a few minutes for our accommodation, and we found the bottom of the trough sparkling with innumerable specks of gold, and in half an hour the quantity had so increased that we could distinguish the fine gold sand glittering through the volume of water. It was a crystal brook, with golden pavement.*

*The sand from the beach, however, drifted rapidly over their works, urged by the diurnal gales which sweep with full force across the place, and obliging the miners to erect high brush and board fences to prevent being buried by a slow process. I had often heard and read of these diggings; but until now had never realized the fact of a "golden ocean beach." The Oregonians assert that, notwithstanding the constant working of these sands, they are found to be quite as rich the succeeding year -- a fact which we could scarcely doubt when we learned that the present is the third working over of the "Stacy claim."*

*Bidding adieu to our friends, and leaving them to their solitary fate of washing gold, we spurred onward, and another two miles brought us to the famous Coquille River, discharging from the southeast into the ocean. An abrupt descent brought us to the bank, where we found two log-houses of considerable pretensions, and owned by a Yankee and an Englishman, who have here established a ferry "for man and beast."*

*Descending the bank, we stopped at the house -- a couple of blooded dogs issuing from the yard and smelling suspiciously around our horses. The owners of the establishment made their appearance directly after, and the scow being hauled to the beach, we entered, horses and all, and were soon ferried across the river, which is about one hundred yards in width. The bar has about seven feet at low water. Availing ourselves of the directions given us by the ferrymen, we pursued our journey along a bluff bank overlooking the sea some fifty feet—occasionally getting close to the brink, where we looked down upon abandoned claims and gold-washing machines until, at nightfall, we came to the now deserted town of Randolph.*

*A few lines will suffice to narrate the rise and fall of Randolph. Captain Smith, U. S. A., while on a visit to this part of Oregon, in the winter of 1853, discovered gold mingled with the sands of the beach. The story got wind, and thousands crowded from all parts of Oregon and California to these shores of the latest El Dorado. On the bluff immediately above the most thoroughly worked claims, a town (Randolph) was commenced in the following June, and by the next winter about two hundred persons were located here, awaiting the breaking-up of the southeast gales to prosecute their labors. Their efforts, however, were not crowned with the success they had anticipated. Some abandoned the place and left for California; others went to Rogue River, and soon the place was deserted.*

*We found two or three disconsolate families collected in the public pound, or corral, making an "arbitration," as a very talkative lady informed us, of the cattle of a couple who, having been married a year, had found the hymeneal chains to hang heavily, and were about separating for life. Leaving nearly the entire population, consisting of nine men and women and a number of children, to this occupation, we drew up at the door of the least ruined house, and dismounted, to the satisfaction of a flock of flaxen-haired urchins, to whom our arrival was evidently a matter of great moment. A very pretty and interesting woman welcomed us, and was soon busily engaged in preparing our supper. Meanwhile we strolled out to see the lions of Randolph. Several vacant lots in a "streak" of deserted pine dwellings attracted my curiosity enough to inquire what had become of the houses; when our hostess responded that they had fallen a sacrifice to the fuel-gathering hands of the remaining population -- in a word, they had been used up as fire-wood. What a picture! A town springing from nothing -- growing -- culminating in its career of prosperity, and burned as fuel in its decadence!*

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*In another year not clapboard will remain to tell the whereabouts of Randolph. Our hostess -- whom we thought far too pretty to be wasting the bloom of her beauty in this bleak corner of Oregon -- soon spread before us an excellent supper, to which we did such extreme justice that even she, not unused to the voracity of her Oregon visitors, stared up from her sewing at the rapid disappearance of the edibles. The master of the house announcing that our beds were ready, we tumbled into our blankets and slept soundly until daybreak, when the adjacent frizzling of some elk-steaks operating upon the olfactories of H--, he opened his eyes, sprang out of bed, and hastened to array himself. Breakfast dispatched and the bills paid, we remounted, and leaving the silent town to its requiem of the eternal surf, we struck off from the coast, and plunged directly into the woods. The most interesting part of our ride had now commenced.*

**C. S. Drew:** *The appointment of Wright, at the instance, and during the administration of Indian Superintendent Palmer, whose sympathy for, and confidence in, the Indians was unlimited, is the most positive proof that the charge so often reiterated against him his entirely destitute of any foundation whatsoever. Instances are known where Superintendent Palmer took the word of a lying, thieving Indian in preference to that of one of his agents, whose statement could have been corroborated by the oaths of numerous respectable witnesses. It is a supposable case, then, that he would have been instrumental in getting the appointment to an agency of a man who treacherously murdered Indians by the wholesale? Certainly not.*

*"It was the design to gather all the bands along the coast of Oregon and place them upon it (the coast reservation,) there to teach them agriculture and the arts, and to forever prevent whites from acquiring the soil upon it, it is certainly not to be denied that some of the Indians, especially in the upper part of the Rogue River valley, may have objected to the treaty, and evinced some reluctance to comply, but they had two years' time in which they were allowed in which to make preparations and go, and it is believed (by whom?) that the whites show patience, and forbore to interfere, the superintendent would have had them all removed within the time specified, and Oregon would have been saved the shame reflected upon her by the commission of those most outrageous deeds that followed, such, for example, as that perpetrated by one Lupton and his party, at Looking-glass prairie, in killing from eight to ten Indians, invited there by the settlers for protection and safety. From such acts of cruelty can it be at all surprising that a retaliatory spirit was manifested on the part of the Indians?"*

*These are the grounds upon which General Wool, Captain Cram, and their associates base their charge that the war in Southern Oregon in 1855-56 originated exclusively with the people there. The utter falsity of the accusation concerning "one Lupton and his party," I have previously shown. The story about "Hank Brown and his party" was trumped up by political demagogues who wished to oust Colonel Ross from the command in his regimental district, and first appeared in the "Oregon Statesman," a paper devoted exclusively the interests of the party in which these demagogues held prominent positions. It was nothing more than a sensation article, written for a specific purpose, and without the least regard to truth.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 371-372]: *At the breaking out of war in the interior, Ben Wright, in charge of the several bands below Coos bay, hastened to make them acquainted with the order issued by Superintendent Palmer, with whom they had made treaties, that in order to prevent suspicions*  
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*concerning their intentions, and consequent collisions with white men they must remain upon their reservations and avoid every appearance of collusion with the Rogue-river bands. To those roving Indians from the interior whom he found on the coast he gave admonition, and ordered them back to their own reserve, otherwise to submit to arrest. They complied, although insolently, and the tribes in his sub-agency promised obedience and friendship. But on arriving at the mouth of the Coquille he found the settlers alarmed by appearances among these Indians. On conferring with them, however, they professed friendship, and ascribed their restlessness to the discovery of a camp of Rogue-river women and children in their vicinity, and to knowing that this circumstance might be construed against them. They also exhibited fear lest the volunteers operating in the Umpqua valley should come down upon them, to exterminate them, as they had been informed was their intention. Wright succeeded in quieting, as he believed, their apprehensions, and returned to Port Orford, appointing a local agent, David Hall, to look after them.*

*Hall was a member of a company on its way to the Coquille camp with the design of disarming or killing the Indians, who had been guilty of the death, in 1854, of two citizens, Venable and Burton, for which crime they had gone unpunished, and who now, according to their belief, were preparing for further mischief. But Wright succeeded in allaying this feeling, or at least in persuading them to trust their safety to the Indian department and the United States troops at Port Orford yet a little longer, and by making one of them local agent, left the management of affairs largely to his discretion. The settlers not being convinced of the good intentions of the Indians, soon after removed their families to Empire City, where a fortification had been erected. The miners at Randolph also concealed their portable property, and removed to Port Orford for safety; and at the mouth of Rogue river a fortified house was prepared for a refuge in time of trouble.*

## October 17, 1855: Skull Bar Massacre

### October 17 (Wednesday).

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 350-351]: *Considering the obstacles to be overcome, and the perils of the service, the organization of the ninth regiment by Colonel Ross was creditable to that officer and the men enlisted. As fast as they could be armed, men were sent to guard exposed settlements, and scouts were kept on the move, looking for the enemy, as well as detachments ordered to attend pack trains on the roads leading from Crescent City to the various mining camps, or from Jacksonville to the volunteer camps, for the Indians must now depend chiefly upon what they could capture for their supplies.*

*The first engagement between the volunteers and Indians occurred on the seventeenth of October, at Skull bar of Rogue river, a short distance below the mouth of Galice creek, where company E was encamped. In camp were gathered all the miners from the diggings in the vicinity, including some Chinese who had been driven from their claims, besides some captive Indian women and boys.*

*Skull bar lay on the south side of the river and had for a background a high ridge, covered with a dense growth of hazel and young firs. The thickets had been cut away for some distance that no lurking places for the foe might be afforded within rifle shot of the camp, and a breastwork of logs thrown up on the side most open to attack.*

*It was discovered on the day above-mentioned that the forest on the hillside was swarming with Indians, and to drive them back J. W. Pickett, with six men, charged the bushes. He was received with a galling fire, and fell, his men being forced to retreat. Lieutenant Moore then took a position, sheltered by a bank on that side of camp from which attack seemed most imminent, where he fought for four hours under a heavy fire, himself and nearly half his men being wounded, when they also were compelled to retreat. Captain Lewis was himself three times struck and severely wounded.*

*The Indians discovering that the weakest point in the volunteer position was on its left, made a bold attack in that quarter, but lost by it one of their most powerful Shasta warriors, which incident for a brief space operated as a check. Then, finding that the volunteers were not dislodged with rifle balls, they shot lighted arrows into their camp, giving them much ado to prevent a conflagration. Indeed, during the fighting the mining town of Galice Creek was consumed, with the exception of one building, occupied as the company's headquarters. When night closed in, nearly one-third of company E were hors de combat. The killed were J. W. Pickett and Samuel Saunders; the mortally wounded, Benjamin Taft and Israel D. Adams; the severely wounded, Lieutenant Moore, Allen Evans, Milton Blackledge, Joseph Umpqua, John Ericson, and Captain Lewis. In his report to his colonel, Lewis boasted that he had "fought the hardest battle ever fought this side of the Rocky mountains." More than two thousand five hundred shots had the enemy fired that day, but his men had not flinched. Two facts are brought to light by this report -- one, that the camp was ill chosen, the other, that the Indians possessed an abundance of ammunition which they must have been a year in gathering.*

**October 19.**

**Agent Dunbar** [Port Orford letter to Gen. Palmer (US Senate 1893: 40-41)]: *DEAR SIR: By the enclosed letter from Ben Wright, which I send that you may form some idea of the prompt and decided steps taken to prevent hostilities within this district, it may be necessary to give you some account of the news which has reached here and which induced Ben to leave the mouth of Rogue River, whither he has been for a time managing the Chetco band, amongst whom and some whites a difficulty had recently occurred.*

*Lieut. Kautz with ten men and a guide, started nine or ten days ago on the examination of the proposed road from here to Jacksonville. He took a due east course, and in thirty miles reached the big bend of Rogue River; on his arrival he found the settlers in great alarm, leaving for protection from a threatened attack of a large body of hostile Indians from Applegate Creek Valley. It seems, from the news brought in by the lieutenant, that some friendly Indians had come down the valley from Grave Creek and warned the settlers to leave, as a large body of hostile Indians were coming to kill all the whites in Rogue River Valley and the valleys adjacent to it. The Indians reported that some twenty white settlers and a party of ten United States troops from Fort Lane were already killed, that the Indians had descended the valley as far as the mouth of Grave Creek and were going to burn the store or trading post of Dr. Reavis, having already murdered the doctor at his ranch 4 miles-above.*

*The settlers did not believe the report, and after awhile concluded to go. One or two, in company with the Indian who brought the report (they lived only a short distance below the store), went to see. Going upon a hill carefully and not far from the store, they beheld the house in flames and some sixty or more Indians dancing the war dance around it. The Indian told them that the war party, after killing the doctor, came on to the store, where was a young man whose name was known only as Sam, and one or two others about; that the savages told Sam that they had come to kill him. He thought them in jest and made no resistance to such a cool summons. They did as they had threatened, cut him in quarters and salted him. After taking what flour and other articles they wanted, they set fire to the building, the burning of which was witnessed by the party of whites above alluded to, who at once left and on their way down accidentally met Lieut. Kautz and his party at "big bend," who at once put his men in position in a good log house with nine guns and all the ammunition and stores he had, and in company of a guide left for the fort here, arriving at 1 o'clock in the morning of the 16th and left for the camp same afternoon with arms, etc., intending to reach camp the same night, preparatory to a resistance to the further advance of the hostile party, or, if necessary, to make a demonstration upon them.*

*What will be the result I know not. The Indians will be emboldened by the success they have already gained, and the arms and provisions they have taken will or may make them quite formidable. It is said that the cause of this outbreak is the taking from the reserve and hanging, week before last, some Indians near Jacksonville, for murders committed on Humbug Creek, near Yreka, last summer. Of course, nearly all the preceding is but report as yet, only as to the burning of Dr. Reavis' store, for its truth, I have seen and conversed with one of the men who says he was one of the party who went upon the hill and saw the store in flames, etc. In consequence of this, you see the course of Ben Wright; and I know of no better course he can*

*pursue. By the way, I think he deserves great credit for the coolness and calculation manifested in his plan.*

*If anything further occurs I will let you know. Your friend, R. W. Dunbar.*

**William V. Wells:** *The forest we were entering extends along the Oregon coast from Rogue River to Washington Territory, except where broken by rivers or belts of other timber. It is composed of spruce, fir, and yellow and white pine, and forms a mass of motionless woods of giant growth and dark as a Gothic cathedral. Five minutes took us beyond the sound of the restless surf, and even the waving of the pines, as they wagged their tops in the gale, ceased as we penetrated deeper into the solemn silence of this grand old forest. The path, which had been cut through it at public expense, just wide enough to admit a horseman, was crossed in every direction with gnarled and crooked roots, forbidding our passage at a rate faster than a walk. The view, unobstructed by jungle or shrubbery, was bounded on every side by a perspective of great trunks, not twisted into knees, or protruding unsightly branches like the oak, but straight as arrows, and reaching, in some instances, an altitude of nearly three hundred feet.*

*No sound save the rustling of our stirrups against the low whortleberry bushes and blackberry vines disturbed the impressive stillness of the scene. Here and there lay the decayed form of some ancient monarch of the glade, and of such age that the twisted roots of pines not far from a century old were straddled athwart their trunks, and which had evidently sprung into life since the fall of the older tree. We thus estimated the age of several fallen cedars, which must have been growing centuries before Columbus discovered the continent. The soil over which we were passing was a rich loam, extending to an unknown depth, and the face of the country slightly undulating, not unlike the surface of the Pacific still and heaving with the long swells of past tempest. Occasionally, in the deepest of these dells, appeared a growth of oak or myrtle, among whose more extended foliage the sunlight glimmered in fine contrast to the darkening woods around; but every tree grew straight upward, as if shunning the deep shadows below, and following their instincts by stretching their arms toward the only point where sun and blue sky were visible. As we got deeper into the timber we gradually ceased conversation, and each occupied with his own thoughts was speculating, perhaps, upon the probable time when the advance of civilization should sweep away this cloud of foliage, when we came suddenly upon a large tree lately fallen across the trail, its broken limbs piled high before us, and offering an impassable barrier to our further progress.*

*An impenetrable growth of thickly-matted bushes prevented our tracing the trunk to the stump, and thus regaining the path on the opposite side, while toward the left of the path, having been cut along the edge of a steep glade filled with young myrtle and hemlocks, gave little encouragement for our passage by that route. While we were calculating the chances of forcing a way through to the right, H—, who had ever prided himself upon his woodcraft, discovered a newly-made path to the left, which he at once pronounced to be the track of two horsemen whom our hostess at Randolph informed us had gone to Coos Bay some days before. "It is evident," said he, with a peculiar logical accent common to most professional men -- "it is evident that this tree has fallen previous to the passage of these two men, and, depend on it, we shall come out right if we follow their trail."*

*H -- was generally right in his conclusions, and as this appeared a reasonable one, and none better suggested itself, we spurred the unwilling horses down the descent, slowly breaking our way through the dense bushes, and following as near as possible the direction of the road. We were soon at fault, however, as the opening disappeared after a few yards, and my companion, who was in front, had just signified his intention of retracing our steps, when his horse suddenly started, and, with a snort of terror, reared into the air, and plunging up the hill at a pace which defied the impediments of brush or briars, dashed into the road, and back in the direction to Randolph, H— shouting,*

*"Good G -- d, see that bear! Whoa! Look out! Whoa, boy! Look out for yourself W --! he's coming this way!"*

*The whole occurred so quickly, that before I could collect my thoughts my horse had sprung up the hill, and now the animals, somewhat removed from the immediate vicinity of his bearship, stood facing the jungle, and with nostrils distended and ears erect, stared wildly at the spot where Bruin had been seen.*

*Neither of us were bear-hunters or trappers, and as little acquainted with the method of attacking so formidable an animal as any good citizens alone in an Oregon forest. In the few bear stories I could recall at the moment, the main feature which presented itself to my recollection was climbing a tree, but the enormous trunks around offered very dubious facilities for such an operation.*

*"Now then," said H --, "we must pass that tree, and how to avoid a fight is the question. I'd certainly rather retrace our steps than hazard a pistol battle with the monster I just saw."*

*For my part I had not yet seen the enemy, and with my rifle ready in my hand, was wondering where he would next make his appearance. Luckily, however, Bruin was as little disposed for a battle as ourselves, and probably overrating our forces, made his way out above us, and disappeared into the woods.*

*By noon we had penetrated fourteen miles into the forest, sometimes crossing elk and bear trails, now cantering along an even tract of country, bereft of shrubbery, and overshadowed by the same huge trees, or plodding slowly through green copses of underbrush, the vines clambering up the mighty trunks, hanging in long green festoons from the branches, and forming natural arbors through which the path was barely discernible. A small log-hut, erected in an open space, and nearly in ruins, is known as the "Half-way House," and is the only sign of civilization along the route. Here we dismounted, and tying our horses by their riattas, allowed them to nibble a while at the grass, while we attacked the whortleberries, hanging in profuse clusters upon the bushes.*

*We were a month too late for blackberries, the vines of which spread in all directions, and showed traces of the visits of numerous beasts, who are decidedly epicures in their taste for fruit. Here we began to discover evidences of the great coal deposits, which are eventually to make this section of Oregon the Newcastle of the Pacific, and as effectually terminate the importation of that article around Cape Horn as has already nearly been done with flour.*

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*Remounting, we struggled along through the labyrinth of trunks, until at sundown a slight rise in the ground gave us a glimpse of daylight through the forest. A citizen of Empire City suddenly appeared, and paused aghast in his route at sight of two strangers. The grip on his trusty rifle was a little tightened as we approached, but seeing we were immigrants, and probably not connected with any of the local issues of the Coos Bay country, he shouted,*

*"Dern my skin, but when I heered the brush a-crackin', I thought I had ketched that cow at last. How are ye strangers—bound to Coos?"*

*We replied, and after a brief interchange of news, we pursued our way. He pointed out, as we parted, the graves of five children who had been crushed by the falling of a tree some twelve months before.*

*After the discovery of the coal deposits, there was "a rush" of some twenty families to the mineral region, most of whom cleared and claimed, under the law of 1847, six hundred and forty acres of land each. To avoid the danger of falling trees, it is necessary to burn and fell all suspicious ones within a few hundred yards of the dwelling. One night the father heard an ominous crackling in the direction of a giant pine which had been steadily consuming under the action of fire for a week past. The family was asleep, but like lightning the danger flashed upon the settler, and arousing his wife, they seized two of the children, and hurried the bewildered little flock into the night air. But the warning had come too late. As they issued from the hut, the tree—a monstrous pillar of wood, little lower than the cross of Trinity Church in New York—toppled from its centre and fell to the earth. The cabin was directly in a line with its descent, and was smashed to atoms. A little mound, over which clamber a few blackberry vines, marks the lonely grave.*

*As we neared the edge of the forest, the regular strokes of an ax resounding in echoes through the shadowy silence, showed we were nearing our place of destination. The horses, now quite worn down with the wearisome route, pricked up their ears at the sound, and quickening their pace, we issued from the woods upon the banks of a beautiful and spacious bay, stretching some three miles directly beyond us, and about five to the right and left. The surrounding woods were clearly depicted in its glassy surface, while the swelling tide swept nobly up the spot where we stood. It was the famous Coos Bay, of which some indistinct accounts had reached San Francisco, but which, passed over in the reconnaissance [sic?] of the United States Coast Survey, had remained unexplored and almost unknown. Indeed no maps or charts, save the one afterward made by myself from rough sketches, exist of this fine sheet of water.*

*To the right lay the little town of Empire City -- every collection of dwellings in Oregon and California is a city -- composed of some thirty houses, mostly of boards, and from the midst of which a half finished wharf projected into the bay. A hasty glance at the scene sufficed; for our animals were already gazing wistfully at the place, with visions of corn or barley, doubtless, rising in the dim perspective. So with as brisk a gait as we could assume, we entered the town—the entire population completely electrified by our arrival, and crowding around us as curious specimens of humanity, which, in truth, we were.*

*Our friend, Mr. Rogers, hastened out to meet us; and, rescuing his visitors from the crowd, hurried us into his store, where we were not long in making ourselves at home.*

*Behold us now before a crackling fire of pine-knots, alternately sipping the contents of a copious bowl of whiskey-punch -- and such whiskey, shade of Bacchus! -- and detailing to the attentive listeners the news from "Frisco," as San Francisco is here familiarly termed. The mail facilities between Coos Bay and the great commercial metropolis of the Pacific are extremely uncertain and by no means regular; so our arrival was a matter of the greatest moment.*

*Mr. Rogers's store is the commercial and political head-quarters of Coos Bay. The stout proprietor himself, a rosy-cheeked, educated Vermonter, has held some of the most important offices in the gift of the people, and his hearty manners and good-natured laugh have won for him the reputation of the most popular man at Coos. The store is the resort of the inhabitants for many miles around on Sundays; when, seated on the counter, they discuss the most important topics, and select goods form the assortment of our host. A glance around the shelves revealed the extent of his stock, which, as a racy informant remarked in answer to my look of inquiry, consisted of "green groceries"—i. e., black thread and vinegar!*

*As the fire lighted up the interior of the rough dwelling, and brought into bold relief the stalwart forms of men whose tastes and occupations had led them into this corner of the world for a livelihood, it was difficult to realize that four years ago the bare existence of such a place as Coos Bay was unknown.*

*The evening wore away with songs and stories; jolly great pipes of tobacco black as "sooty Acheron" were smoked and refilled; more logs were piled upon the fire, and rough jokes flew around the merry circle. At last, weary with the ride, and perhaps a little overcome by the hospitality of our entertainers, we were shown to a species of shed, the sign over the door of which reads thus:*

**[ Pioneer Hotel, ]**  
**[ Donuts -- WomMeets. ]**

*denoted the sole public house of Empire City. Here we addressed ourselves to sleep, and, after a round twelve hours, came out on the following day, brisk as larks and prepared to see the lions. Coos Bay is about twenty miles in length and from three to four in width. It is entered from the ocean—or, rather, the ocean discharges into it, as the inhabitants affirm—by a narrow channel, perhaps half a mile wide from land to land. The navigation is somewhat intricate, but not dangerous. There is a depth of water for vessels loaded to ten or twelve feet, and numerous cargoes of coal have been taken back to San Francisco—a distance of about four hundred miles. The mines are some twenty miles from the bar or entrance, and facilities already exist for the rapid loading of vessels. The coal, which extends over a country some thirty miles by twenty, is abundant, accessible, and of good quality. As yet only a few banks have been opened. An immense trade -- that of supplying the Pacific coast with coal – destined to spring up between this point and California.*

## October 28, 1855: Lookingglass Massacre

### October 20 (Saturday).

**Capt. Cram:** *In confirmation of which we have the official letter of the **adjutant general** of Oregon, dated October 20, 1855, in which it says "information had been received that armed parties had taken the field in Southern Oregon, with the avowed purposed of waging a war of extermination against the Indians in that section of the Territory, and had slaughtered, without respect to age or sex, a band of friendly Indians on their reservation, in despite of the authority of the Indian agent and the commanding officer of the United States troops stationed there."*

*Now, can any conscientious man believe that the intelligent, industrious officer, **Captain Smith**, who was then, and who had been, in command at Fort Lane, in the very centre of these Indians during the period of more than two years previous, would not have known, and reported to headquarters, a necessity, if there was one, of more military force than that of the United States already there to meet the exigency in the district of which he was the responsible commandant? No report was made by him or either of the commandants of Fort Jones or Fort Orford expressive of any such necessity.*

### October 22 (Monday).

**C. S. Drew:** *On the 22d of October the Indians attacked the settlements in Cow Creek valley, but, as Captain Rinearson, with about sixty men, was on duty in that quarter, they were unable to effect a very great slaughter of the settlers, but they destroyed a very large amount of property. In this affair, Captain Rinearson had one man killed and one wounded. Some of the settlers were wounded, and, if I remember correctly, several were killed.*

### October 23 (Tuesday).

**Dr. Glisan:** *The "Columbia" stopped this morning on her upward trip, having on board a large number of passengers, and seventy United States troops, under the command of Captain E. O. C. Ord en route for the seat of Indian difficulties in Washington Territory. We are not ordered, for the reason, I suppose, that trouble is apprehended in this neighborhood. I see from a Yreka newspaper (Siskiyou County, Cal.,) that the Indians in that part of California and in upper Rogue River valley, are truly in open hostilities. That the United States troops under Brevet-Major Edward H. Fitzgerald, of the Second Dragoons, have had an encounter with them -- killing some thirty, with a loss of about ten of the soldiers. The volunteers have also had a fight with them. So it seems that a second Rogue River war is upon us. We will probably be unable to hear from the outbreak in western Oregon, and Washington Territory, until the return steamer.*

*The Indians immediately around Port Orford are, so far, quiet. All the settlers within sixty miles of here have retired to the mouth of Rogue River and this place.*



**Private Robbins:** *Lynn County, O. T. The Indians of Rogue River Valley having broke the treaty of 1853, and commenced hostilities against the whites by breaking out about the 10th of this month and killing a great many citizens and miners of that valley, and destroying a great deal of property by fire, and stealing such stock and property as they could take with them, killed a large amount of stock and burned the houses and grain, spreading death and desolation over the land, the citizens of that valley have become much alarmed and sent petitions to the Willamett praying for assistance, the Governor immediately issued a proclamation calling for 3 companies of mounted volunteers from Lynn and Lane counties to go and chastise the savage murderers, which call was readily responded to, the southern counties furnishing their quota also, the northern counties having already turned out their brave and noble hearted boys to quell the savage and indiscriminating murderers of the North, who have been for years past perpetrating their bloody deeds on the emigrants while passing through their country and there has been many bloody deeds committed by them on explorers, traders, and missionaries. Nothing but a severe drubbing will ever quell them. Today by order of our enrolling officer, Colonel Helms, we met at Harrisburg, elected our officers. For Captain we elected Jonathan Keeney, first lieutenant, Stanard, second lieutenant, Joseph Yates. We then marched out of town a mile and encamped for the night.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 351-352]: *Such was the facility with which the Indians, knowing every part of the country, could move undetected from point to point, that while the regulars under Captain Judah, and volunteers under Bruce and Harris, were in hot pursuit of, without finding the enemy, they were appearing and vanishing in a manner so illusory as to bewilder the military authorities, whether local or national. At the very time that Colonel Ross announced his opinion, upon evidence, that the main strength of the Indians was centered at "The Meadows," -- a narrow stretch of bottom land below Galice creek, where mountains rise on either side of Rogue river high, craggy, timbered for the most part densely with live-oak, manzanita, chinquapin, and chaparral, with occasional bald, grassy, slopes, the meadows being covered with rank grass and shrubs, on which cattle could subsist even in winter, -- they were away on Cow creek committing depredations.*

*On the twenty-third, while a party of wagoners and drovers were at the crossing, they were ambushed and attacked; Holland Bailey of Lane county being killed, and four others wounded. The remainder of the party retreated with all the haste possible, pursued and harassed for several hours. On the same day the houses of Turner, Bray, Redfield, Fortune, and others in Cow-creek valley were burned. It was impossible to guard every settler's home, but the families were gathered at a few fortified places, while the men were on duty elsewhere, and the Indians were destroying their property. Not a settlement but was threatened, not a pack train on the road but was liable to capture, nor any traveler's life safe.*

*This condition of affairs prevented any concerted action, had it been desired, between the regular and volunteer forces, or any massing of their strength, but kept both in rapid and exhausting movement.*

### October 24 (Wednesday).

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we were on the line of march by 8 o'clock. We arrived at Eugene City at 1 o'clock P. M. and were mustered into service and our animals and equipage appraised. We then camped near the town on the Willamet River.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 257]: *On Cow creek quite a series of disturbances occurred during the winter of 1855-56. The first of these in brief was the attack on some hog-drovers from Lane county, who were traversing the road. H. Bailey was killed instantly, and Z. Bailey and three others wounded. The Indians burned on that day (October 24, 1855) the houses and barns of Turner, Bray, Fortune, Redfield and one other. Mr. Redfield placed his family in a wagon and started for a place of safety, but soon the horses were shot, and he took his wife upon his back and carried her to a fortified place. Mrs. Redfield was wounded, however, before reaching there.*

### October 25 (Thursday).

**Capt. Cram:** *It has already been said that an immediate effect of the organization of the governor's southern army was to cause some of the Indians to stand their arms, one of their first acts afterwards was to attack the little party of 10 under Lieut. Kautz, 4<sup>th</sup> infantry, when about closing the exploration for a road from Port Orford to the Oregon trail in the direction of Fort Lane, (see maps Nos. 10, 12.)*

*In this attack, which occurred on the 25<sup>th</sup>, October, 1855, at a point marked with that date on the map, the lieutenant made a successful defence without serious hurt, and the party made their way safely to Fort Lane, this officer having, in the mean time, discovered the position of the main body of Indians then under arms to be in the Grave Creek hills, about 45 miles from Fort Lane.*

**Private Robbins:** *This morning our officers are busily engaged in making necessary arrangements for our trip. At 1 o'clock we paraded with Captain Buoy's company of Lane county, and Mr. Michel of Lane Co. and Mr. I. N. Smith of Lynn Co. delivered us a very patriotic speech, each. We then traveled 10 miles and camped for the night on the coast fork of the Willamett River. A middling poor show for cooking, owing to the scarcity of cooking utensils, which we will get at Roseburg.*

### October 26 (Friday).

**Private Robbins:** *Today we traveled 25 miles and camped near the foot of the Calapooya mountains for the night.*

### October 27 (Saturday).

**Private Robbins:** *Today we crossed over the Calapooya mountains, encamped for the night in the Umpqua valley after 12 miles march over very bad roads.*

**October 28 (Sunday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *The steamer touched here on her downward trip this afternoon, and brings the news of Major Haller's defeat. After being surrounded by the Indians for twenty-four hours, he fought his way through their ranks -- but was pursued to the Dalles -- losing in the action five men, and having seventeen wounded; he also lost his howitzer. The fight lasted nearly three days. Lieutenant Day did not succeed in joining him. Success has thus added many others to the hostile tribes. It bids fair to become the greatest Indian war we have had for many years.*

*The Governors of Oregon and Washington Territories have called out a thousand volunteers, who will be ready for the field by the fifth of November. These, with three hundred regulars, will make a force of thirteen hundred men. Major G. J. Rains, Fourth Infantry, with five hundred men, expects to take the field against the enemy about the fifth of November. The Indians are said to be posted in large numbers near the battle field of Haller, but they will undoubtedly flee to the mountains if hard pushed.*

*We have received preliminary notice to get our command ready by the next steamer, to proceed to the seat of war.*

**Capt. Cram:** *Now, it is certainly not to be denied that some of the Indians, especially in the upper part of the Rogue valley, may have objected to the treaty, and evinced some reluctance to comply; but they had two years' time allowed in which they were to make preparations and go, and it is believed that had the whites shown patience and forbore to interfere the superintendent would have had them all removed within the time specified, and Oregon would have been saved the shame reflected upon her by the commission of those most outrageous deeds that followed; such, for example, as that perpetrated by one Lupton and his party, "who killed 25 friendly Indians, 18 of whom were women and children;" and that perpetrated by one Hank Brown and party, at Looking Glass prairie, "in killing from 8 to 10 friendly Indians, invited there by the settlers for protection and safety."*

*From such acts of cruelty can it be all surprising that a retaliatory spirit was manifested on the part of the Indians?*

**Private Robbins:** *Traveled 12 miles and camped for the night on the Chamas Swaile.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 257; 417-418]: *Some few of the peaceable, yet wretched and debased family of the Umpquas, resided in and around the pleasant vale of Looking-glass, and these, true to their harmless instincts, refrained from war throughout the troublous times of the conflict in the south, and sought by every humble act to express their dependence on and liking for the whites. When war broke out on Rogue river, these inoffensive people were gathered in Looking-glass valley, occupying a rancheria on the creek of that name, where they lived at peace with all the world, and ignorant and careless of everything outside of their own little sphere. Mr. Arrington was nominally their agent and protector. In an evil hour -- for them -- certain white people of that vicinity, who imagined that they were dangerous neighbors, organized themselves into a company, and fell suddenly upon the helpless little community, and scattered them to the four winds of heaven. Several men were killed; and one old squaw, in whom old age and*

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*rheumatic bones defeated nature's first law of self-preservation, died, a victim, unmeant perhaps, but still a victim, and slain by white men's bullets. The date of this transaction is at hand; and proof of all its particulars; but like other wrongs and much violence done that race, it best were buried, and only resurrected to serve the truth where truth needs telling . . .*

*Looking-glass valley, or prairie, as it is occasionally styled, obtained its name as follows: In 1847 a company of men was organized in Polk county, near the Luckiamute, to explore Southern Oregon. Colonel Ford, H. B. Flourney, Thorp, and others belonged to this band. Going as far south as Rogue river, they returned; and traversing this valley they were impressed with its beauty, and Mr. Flourney remarked that it looked like a looking-glass, upon which it received certain crops. Northwest stands Mount Arrington, 4,900 feet high, one of the most prominent peaks of the Coast Range, and so named by Evans, a geologist who visited the country in 1853. The first white settler in Looking-glass valley was Daniel Huntley, who came in the fall of 1851. During the previous year H. B. Flourney had settled in the romantic and lovely valley which bears his name, and these two were almost the only residents of a considerable tract of country. The latter possessed the distinction of being the first white settler west of the South Umpqua river. Later came Milton Huntley, Joseph Huntley, Robert Yates, J. and E. Sheffield, who settled in Looking-glass in 1852. By the fall of the next year nearly the whole valley was covered by donation claims. There are nine sections of level plow land in the valley, all of which was taken up. The country west of the South Umpqua and embracing Looking-glass, Olalla, Ten Mile and Camas suffered considerably in the Indian wars. In 1855 there was a body of Umpqua Indians living on Looking-glass creek, three miles below the present village of Looking-glass. They numbered sixty-four persons, and were supposed to be under the care of J. Arrington. On the breaking out of hostilities to the southward, the settlers of the Looking-glass began to observe symptoms of uneasiness among the Indians, and determined to strike the first blow themselves. They organized themselves, and attacked the camas-eaters, killing eight of them, and drove the remainder to the mountains. These fugitives afterwards joined the hostile tribes on Rogue river. The attack was made October 28, 1855.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 352-353]: *However, on the twenty-eighth, Fitzgerald, being in the Grave creek hills, south of Cow creek, discovered an Indian encampment, and wishing to attack it sent a dispatch to Ross, who immediately ordered Captains Harris, Welton, George, Williams, and Lewis to reinforce him. Bruce and Rinearson coming in a little later, were also ordered to Grave creek, where on the thirtieth, were concentrated two hundred and fifty volunteers, and one hundred and five regulars, although on account of the illness of Fitzgerald, only a portion of his troops were available.*

*When Ross arrived at the rendezvous late that night, he found Captain Smith of the first dragoons impatient to attack. Spies from his own and the volunteer force had found the enemy's position to be on a hill difficult of approach, and well fortified. A map had been made use by the officers, and Smith assumed command of the combined forces. Although it was already half past ten o'clock in the evening, orders were issued to march at eleven.*

## October 31, 1855: Battle of Hungry Hill

### October 29 (Monday).

**Private Robbins:** *Last night at about 12 o'clock a messenger appeared at our camp with an order from Roseburg, which is headquarters, calling for a detachment of 30 men to go and quell some Indians on Cole's prairie, who had been making hostile threats towards the citizens of that place. The 30 men were detached immediately under Lieutenant Stanard, the remainder of the company marched to Roseburg, 18 miles, against 6 o'clock A. M. We camped near the town to remain until our detail of last night comes up. The citizens of this place seem to treat the volunteers with but very little respect. One man has even forbade our cutting wood on his claim. We just went to his wood that was already chopped and helped ourselves. At 3 o'clock in the evening our detachment arrived with 10 Indian prisoners, which were taken without the firing of a gun. They were delivered up to the authority of the place. About night there was a guard called for from our company to protect the Indians from the violence of the citizens, some threatening their lives, others threatening to release them. Captain told them that if they would bring them back to his camp he would guard them.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 251-252]: *A few days subsequent to the fight at Galice creek, and while the whereabouts of the Indians was unknown, an opportune circumstance revealed their place of abode. Lieutenant (since General) A. V. Kautz, of the regular army, set out from Port Orford with a guard of ten soldiers to explore the country lying between that place and Fort Lane, thinking to find a route for a practicable trail or wagon road by which the inland station could be supplied from Port Orford instead of the longer and very difficult Crescent City route. The country proved even more rough, steep and precipitous than it had been reported to be; and the Lieutenant was many days upon his journey. Leaving the river near the mouth of Grave creek, he ascended the neighboring hills and, much to his surprise, came upon a very large band of Indians. As they proved hostile, there was no resource but to run for it, and losing one man by the savages' fire, the officer made his escape to Fort Lane, fortunate in getting away so easily.*

*Having now, by this unlucky experience of Lieutenant Kautz, been made aware of the Indians' exact whereabouts. Colonel Ross and Captain Smith, combining forces as well as the mutual jealousies of regulars and volunteers would permit, began to plan an active campaign. All the disposable troops at Fort Lane consisted of eighty-five men and four officers: Captain A. J. Smith, first dragoons; First Lieutenant H. G. Gibson, third artillery; Second Lieutenant A. V. Kautz, fourth infantry; and Second Lieutenant B. Alston, first dragoons. These set out on the twenty-seventh of October, and on arriving at the Grave creek house were joined by Colonel Ross' command, of about two hundred and ninety men, besides a portion of Major Martin's force from Deer creek.*

### October 30 (Tuesday).

**Private Robbins:** *Rained all night. We have no tents yet. The citizens will not even let us sleep in their barns. A person may very easily imagine what kind of respect the volunteers begin to have for Umpquaian. Today have to elect a superior officer to command the whole battalion. We hope that we may make a wise choice, knowing that the glory of the war depends entirely on the*

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*superior officers. It seems that Captain William Martin is the choice of all. He was unanimously elected, having no opposer at all. He runs a very strong race. We left Roseburg at 4 o'clock, traveled 5 miles and camped for the night.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 251-252]: *From this point the combined forces moved on October thirtieth, to the Indian camp, arriving at daybreak at a point where Captains Harris and Bruce were deployed to the left, while Captain Smith, with the regulars, took the ridge to the right, with the expectation of arriving in the rear of the Indians' position, whereby they might be surrounded and captured. Captains Williams and Rinearson followed in Captain Smith's tracks. The country not being perfectly known by the whites, several mistakes followed in consequence, and Harris and Bruce came directly upon the Indian encampment, and were in full view of the savages before any strategic movement could be made, and no opportunity for surprising the enemy offered itself. The time was sunrise, and Captain Smith had gained his rear position and had built fires for his men's refreshment, at the place where Lieutenant Kautz had been attacked. By these fires the Indians were warned of the party in their rear, and prepared themselves accordingly. The regulars descended into a deep gorge, climbed up the other side and directly were engaged with the Indians, who advanced to meet them. The savages "paraded in true military style," but directly fell back to a ledge of rocks or to the brushy crest of a hill. From the crest of the hill for a mile or more in the rear of the Indians, was a dense thicket; on the right and left were precipitous descents into a gorge filled with pines and undergrowth, in which the natives concealed themselves almost perfectly from the view of the whites, who possessed no resources sufficient to dislodge them. The ridge being bare on top, the men were necessarily exposed to the enemy's fire, and some casualties resulted. Movements were made to get in the Indians' rear in this new position, but such attempts were futile. Several charges were made by the regulars but ineffectually, although the men were for considerable periods within ten or twenty yards of the hostiles. The latter fought bravely and steadily, picking off the whites by a regular fire from their rifles, which were pitied against the inferior weapons of the troops, or at least of the regulars, two-thirds of whom had only the "musketoone," a short, smooth-bore weapon, discharging inaccurately a heavy round bullet, whose range was necessarily slight. About sunset the commanders concluded to retire from the field, and did so, first posting sentries to observe the savages' movements. The united commands encamped for the night at Bloody Spring, as it was named, some distance down the hill.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 353-354]: *Smith's plan was to plant howitzers on an eminence three-fourths of a mile from that occupied by the Indians, and having divided the companies into three columns, stationed so as to enclose the Indians, to open his battery upon them before he had been discovered. His design was frustrated through some one having set fire to a tree, and after a toilsome night march he was unable to surprise the enemy. On arriving on the edge of a ravine in front of the enemy's position, instead of shelling the Indians in their stronghold, a charge was ordered. The hill on which the Indians were fortified was bald on the south side, by which the troops were approaching, except for a short but tangled undergrowth with which also the ravine they had to cross was filled. On the north of the Indian position there was a heavy forest.*

*It should be here stated that an unexpected reinforcement had arrived during the night, consisting of two companies of a battalion called out by Governor Curry, their captains being Joseph Bailey and Samuel Gordon. To these two companies was assigned the duty of flanking on*

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*the north to intercept the Indians in the woods when the charging force should have driven them from their fortification.*

*The captains who led in the charge were Rinearson and Welton, their companies being augmented by portions of others, and a part of the regular force also, all rushing with eagerness to fire the first shot. As had been anticipated, the Indians took shelter in the woods, but were not met by Bailey and Gordon as designed, their men finding it impossible to penetrate the dense and tangled underwood in a body; and were not driven back upon the companies of Harris and Bruce, who were awaiting them in concealment, as had been anticipated. These two commanders therefore joined the army in front. Thus nothing happened but the unexpected.*

*The day passed in vain efforts to get at the Indians, who could not be approached without extreme peril, until three o'clock in the afternoon, when Captain Smith, with a small force of dragoons, made an assault. Several rounds were discharged with the short cavalry arms, which were wholly ineffectual against the rifles of the Indians, when the troopers fell back, having several killed and wounded. Firing continued until dark, when the whole force went into camp at a place named by them "Bloody Spring," where the wounded were being cared for, and where they all went supperless to their blankets.*

### **October 31.**

**Capt. Cram:** *All the disposable troops at the fort were put in motion. The command of regulars consisted of 85 men and 4 officers: Capt. A. J. Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> dragoons; First Lieutenant H. G. Gibson, 3<sup>d</sup> artillery; Second Lieutenants A. V. Kautz, 4<sup>th</sup> infantry, and B. Alston, 1<sup>st</sup> dragoons. At Grave creek they were joined by 250 volunteers, under Colonel Ross. From this point they moved in three detachments by different routes towards the position of the Indians. Unfortunately, from an error of the scouts in regard to the location, all three detachments came up in front instead of on different sides of the Indian camp. About daylight 31<sup>st</sup> October the regulars, accompanied by two companies of the volunteers, after climbing very steep and difficult hills, came in sight of the Indians. Fires were then imprudently built, which gave the Indians warning. At this point the baggage and provisions were left in charge of Lieutenant Alston. The command descending a mountain gorge, and climbing the opposite acclivity, came upon the Indians, charged and drove them from the crest of the hill on which they were encamped and some 50 yards into the brush over the crest.*

*From the top of the hill for a distance of 1 ½ mile it was a dense thicket; on left and on the right there was a precipitous descent into a gorge filled with large pines, and undergrowth, in which the Indians concealed themselves, and all efforts to dislodge them proved futile. Several charges were made by the regulars, but the men were picked off so effectually by the Indian rifles that but little advance was made into the thicket. The regulars stood their ground well, but the volunteers, with the exception of about fifty, were of no benefit in the action.*

*The troops continued to occupy this position until near sunset, now and then exchanging shots with the Indians. After posting pickets the troops descended to a spring to bivouac for the night, their loss during the day having been thirty killed and wounded.*

**C. S. Drew:** *Finding their plans for the destruction of the settlements anticipated at every point by the volunteers, the Indians concentrated the greater part of their force in the Grave Creek hills, securing a position almost impregnable, and affording them easy access to several of the settlements. Here they were attacked on the 31st of October, by a considerable force of regulars and volunteers -- the former under the command of Captain Smith, United States army, commanding at Fort Lane, and the latter under Colonel Ross. In addition to these, however, there were two other companies of volunteers under the command of Major Martin, which were a part of a new organization that had been ordered by the governor to supersede Ross in the command in his district. The Indians, however, had secured a position so well fortified by nature that, without field-pieces, which the troops did not have, it was impossible to dislodge them. The siege was kept up for nearly two days, when the troops withdrew, having in the meantime become destitute of rations and short of ammunition. The loss in this affair on the part of the volunteers was seven killed and twenty-two wounded. Of the regulars several were killed and a number wounded, among the latter Lieutenant Gibson. What the loss of the Indians was is not known. They claim to have lost in killed not more than ten. Probably their loss was much greater. When the troops withdrew it was with the intention to return and renew the siege as soon as the requisite artillery and about ten days' rations could be procured. This, however, was prevented by the promulgation of the governor's celebrated "General Orders No. 10," which directed Colonel Ross to leave the field, so as to leave the way clear for the new volunteer organization to which I have already alluded. Some pretext for this action on the part of the governor being considered necessary by his political advisers, it was alleged in the same document "that armed parties (meaning Ross's regiment cooperating with the regular troops) had taken the field in Southern Oregon with the avowed purpose of waging a war of extermination against the Indians in that section of the Territory, and had slaughtered, without respect to age or sex, a band of friendly Indians, on their reservation, in despite of the authority of the Indian agent and the commanding officer of the United States troops stationed there." Not one of these allegations, however, was true in any particular -- a fact that was as well known to those who devised them as to those against whom they were directed. Never, in any instance, from the time it was set apart for the exclusive occupation of the Indians, did the whites, in any capacity, invade the reservation, or interfere with the Indians thereon, nor did they ever commence or contemplate a war of extermination.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 252-253]: *On the following morning Lieutenant Gibson, of the regulars, with ten men, proceeded up the hill to the battle-field, to secure the dead body of a private of his detachment, and when returning with it was pursued by the savages, who came down and attacked the camp in force, firing numerous shots. No damage was done by this attack except the wounding of Lieutenant Gibson, and after a time the savages were driven off. No further attempt against the Indians was made, and after advising with their officers the two commanders decided to remove their troops from the vicinity. Accordingly, orders were given and the retrograde march began. The total loss was thirty-one, of whom nine were killed, and twenty-two wounded. Several of the latter died of their injuries. The volunteers killed were Privates Jacob W. Miller, James Percy and Henry Pearl, of Rinearson's company; John Winters, of Williams'; and Jonathan A. Pedigo, of Harris'. The wounded were Privates William H. Crouch, Enoch Miller and Ephriam Tager, of Rinearson's; Thomas Ryan and William Stamms, of Williams'; L. F. Allen, John Goldsby, Thomas Gill, C. B. Hinton, William M. Hand, William I. Mayfield, William Puruell and William White, of Harris'; C. C. Goodwin, of Bruce's; and John Kennedy, of*

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*Welton's. The latter died on the seventh of November, and C. B. Hinton, in endeavoring to make his way alone to the Grave Creek House, lost his road and perished from exposure. This fight, occurring on the thirty-first of October and the first of November, is known by the several names of the Battle of Bloody Springs, Battle of Hungry Hill, and Battle in the Grave Creek Hills.*

*From these details, and considering that the Indians maintained their position on the battle-field, without great loss, it is evident that the campaign was an unsuccessful one. It is generally admitted by the whites who took part in the engagement, that the affair resulted in a partial defeat, and they ascribe therefor several reasons, either of which seems sufficient. The inclemency of the weather is set forth as a reason, and is doubtless an important one. It is known from good authority that one man perished from cold and wet, and that the bodies of those slain in the fight were frozen stiff in a few hours. This would indicate very severe cold, but from independent sources we gather that the weather throughout the winter was exceptionally severe. Troops, ill provided with blankets and clothing, stationed at the very considerable altitude of the Grave creek hills, were under the worst possible circumstances for continuing the attack. Besides, a still more serious reason presented itself. There was not a sufficient supply of food to maintain a single company of men. The commissariat was in chaotic condition, and supplies were either not sent out, or failed to reach the nearly starving troops in time to be of use. This is a notorious fact in Southern Oregon, but, singularly enough, fails to appear in the earliest published accounts of the affair. The commissary and quartermaster departments were at fault, nor do they appear to have been efficiently administered at any time during the war, although their expenses (duly charged to the United States) were preposterously great. Figures are at hand to show that the expense of the latter department exceeded, for a time, eight hundred dollars per day! And this for transportation alone. A large number of Mexicans were borne on the rolls as packers, whose daily pay was six dollars, and who had the care and management of about one hundred and fifty pack animals, which were used in carrying supplies from Jacksonville or Crescent City to the seat of war. They belonged to the volunteer service, and were entirely distinct from the trains by which the regulars at Fort Lane were supplied. It was to the mismanagement of the persons in charge of the trains that the failure of the campaign was attributed, and apparently with considerable justice. The charge of insubordination made against the volunteers in consequence of their conduct at Bloody spring, will be recalled when treating of the later events of the war.*

*As was customary with the regular army officials at that date, a great deal of blame was cast upon the volunteers for their alleged failure to properly second the efforts of the government troops. This charge is retorted upon Captain Smith's soldiers by counter-charges of similar tenor; and as neither side in the controversy [sic] is supported by any but interested evidence, we cannot at this date satisfactorily discuss the question. The matter, however, is connected with the invariable tendency to antagonism of the two related, yet opposed, branches of service, which antagonism shows itself on every similar occasion, and is an annoying subject indeed. We see the spectacle of two different organizations, bent upon the same object and pursuing an identical road to the attainment of their object, but falling into bitterness by the wayside and continually reviling each other, and failing to lend their moral support and frequently their physical aid.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 354-355]: *At sunrise the next morning the Indians attacked and engaged the troops for several hours, when, being repulsed, they withdrew. The troops then marched back to*  
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*Fort Bailey on Grave creek, bearing their wounded on litters. In this battle the volunteers lost twenty-six men killed, wounded, and missing. Company A lost Jonathan A. Pedigo, mortally wounded, and Ira Mayfield, L. F. Allen, William Purnell, Williams, Hans, John Goldsby, and Thomas Gill, wounded severely. Company B., Charles Goodwin, wounded mortally. Company C, Henry Pearl, Jacob W. Miller, and James Pearcy killed; Enoch Miller, W. H. Crouch, and Ephriam Yager wounded. Company D, John Winters killed, John Stannes, and Thomas Ryan wounded. Company F John Kennedy mortally wounded The company of Captain Bailey lost John Gillespie, killed; John Walden, John C. Richardson, James Laphar, Thomas J. Aubrey, and John Pankey wounded. Gordon's company had Hawkins Shelton J. M. Fordyce, and William Wilson wounded. The regular troops lost three killed in action, one by accident, and seven wounded, among whom was Lieutenant Gibson. The Indian loss could not be known, but was much less than that of the volunteers, as from the nature of their relative positions it must be. Thus the second battle with a considerable Indian force was fought with a great sacrifice of life, and without any gain in peace or possessions." "God only knows," wrote a correspondent of the Oregon Statesman, "when or where this war may end." \* \* \* These mountains are worse than the swamps of Florida.*

#### **November 1 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Last night an express arrived here who brought the news that Captain Bailey's company and the Umpqua volunteers together with the southern battalion, and Capt. Smith with his regulars had attacked the Indians. By daylight we were on the march through the canyon. We traveled 20 miles and arrived at the Six-bit house, which is a house in the Grave Creek hills. It is now called Fort Bailey. When we arrived here we were informed that they were fighting the Indians about 15 miles from this place. They are in the mountains between Grave Creek and Cow Creek. Captain Keeney wanted to push ahead to their assistance, but Major Martin would not permit him to go. At 4 o'clock P. M. some of the volunteers arrived from the field bringing the news that the whites were all retreating with 40 killed and wounded. They had fought two days without any provision, consequently they were obliged to leave the field to the Indians. It is not known how many Indians killed, neither is it known how many were engaged in the fight. There seems to be a diversity of opinion as to the number of Indians, some say from 200 to 300, others as high as 500. I guess them that was not there has about as good an idea of the number of Indians engaged as those that were there. They had taken a position on the top of a high mountain, which was covered with timber and a thick growth of chaparral and manzanita brush. The thickness of the brush would not admit of a charge and whenever attempted by the whites they were repulsed with a heavy loss. They kept themselves close concealed until an opportunity presented itself for them to make a sure shot, then the keen crack of the rifle would warn the white man that Mr. Indian was close at hand. And so was fought the battle of Hungry Hill, as it has since been named. 40 of us went to assist in the wounded to this place, it being one of the nearest rendezvous to the battle field. They were carried in on litters by hand.*

#### **November 2 (Friday).**

**Capt. Cram:** *The next morning Lieutenant Gibson, with ten men, was sent up the hill to bring down the dead body of one of his detachment; this had barely been accomplished when the Indians came in large force around, and after exchanging numerous shots, but with little effect,*

*save the wounding of Lieutenant Gibson, for two or three hours, were driven off, and left the troops in possession of the field. At noon on the 1<sup>st</sup> November Captain Smith having found by his experience the day before that no confidence could be placed in the promised support of the volunteers, ordered a return to Fort Lane, which was reached the next day.*

*The number of Indians was estimated at 300. The number of troops actually engaged did not exceed 120, with every disadvantage of position. The Indian loss, according to their own admission afterwards, was 7 killed. The greater portion of the regulars were dragoons, and their musketoons proved utterly inadequate to cope with the rifles in the hands of the Indians.*

*No effort of Captain Smith could persuade the volunteers to go round and take the Indians in the rear, while the regulars would charge in front, and it seems only 50 out of 250 of the volunteers of the governor's southern army could be induced to take any part in the action, after coming to the point where, with resolution, they could have been instrumental in capturing the whole body of Indians in arms.*

*In the case of this southern army of Oregon we have the example of a governor of a Territory organizing a military force, with a general officer at its head, and sending it into a field within the command assigned by the President to a general officer of the United States army; the said governor in the mean while not so much as condescending to inform the President's officer of the measure, nor of the orders, it now appears, he issued to the volunteers which prescribed the relations they were to hold with the United States troops regularly stationed in the same field. It was only by accident, as it were, in the following month the United States officer commanding the department of the Pacific obtained knowledge of the governor's military measures. To say nothing of the question of the legality of those measures, one familiar with military usage cannot fail to perceive in them either a marked contempt of the authority of the President's commander of the department, or else a total want of knowledge of that courtesy which of right and by usage is due to such officer.*

*. . . The commanding officer at Fort Jones reported officially to the United States commanding general of the department, November 2, 1855, that "the recent murders by Indians of women and children in Rogue River valley, were literally retaliatory of, and immediately succeeded the massacre by Lupton and his party."*

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we are under orders to return back as far as Cow Creek, and guard the few citizens of that valley that have not been murdered by those treacherous villains. There are but 3 houses left standing in this valley, the rest have all been burnt by the Indians, the stock all killed and stolen and farms laid waste. 11 o'clock P. M. arrived at Smiths' on Cow Creek. 40 remain here and the rest proceed to the canyon.*

**November 3 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *20 of us escorted a pack train to the canyon. As soon as they return with ammunition we expect to give the Indians another round.*

**November 4 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning 20 of us went out on a scout. We went to the summit of a high peak on the west side of the canyon. Returned in the evening without making any discovery.*

**Agent Dunbar** [Port Orford letter to Gen. Palmer (US Senate 1893: 42-43)]: *DEAR SIR: By last mail I wrote you in reference to the Indian difficulties on Rogue River and the situation of matters in this district. I in that communication left Ben Wright with the Indians under his charge on Rogue River, since which he has returned, having advised with those upper bands, and put them on their guard. He found some of the hostile Indians amongst them, who were saucy enough to demand of him his business there, but who left before his small party could take them into custody. The agent learned that overtures had been made to his Indians to join the hostile bands, but either they were not disposed to do so, or his timely arrival put a stop to further negotiations of that sort. After advising with them he returned to the mouth of the river, where all was excitement; he gave the whites their orders for peace and left for home, having learned from rumor that danger was apprehended on Coquille. He hastened up there, found all quiet, though much fear existed in consequence of the alarm felt by the Indians from a report that armed whites were coming from Umpqua Valley to kill all of them, and from the circumstance of the Coquille, Indians having discovered while out hunting a large number of squaws and children guarded by four men secreted up the valley, supposed to be the women of the war party of Rogue River Valley, put there for safety.*

*The Coquilles express great friendship for the whites, and say that they don't want the war party to be allowed to come amongst them. The agent advised with them and promised to send an agent to stay by them until the alarm should be over. On his way down he met a party of armed men from Kowes (Coos) Bay, who said they were going to protect the white settlers from what they supposed a meditated attack of the Indians.*

*Ben went back with them to the Indian camp, who were greatly alarmed, but he called them back, talked with them, and convinced the whites that there was no danger. He prevailed upon the men to return, and appointed Mr. Hall as a subagent to maintain quiet until he could send Bill "Chance" up.*

*When Ben reached the coast he found everything in the wildest confusion. At Randolph they had cached their effects and were leaving for protection; all down the coast the same excitement existed, and now there is but two white men between here and Coquille -- all have come to Port Orford for safety. At Rogue River those "fire-eaters" are in a perfect fury of excitement; have built defenses, armed, and threatens to attack the Indians, or to go by force and disarm them, and all this is kept up by a set of graceless scamps at Rogue River, who have no higher desires than to murder the defenseless Indians for pastime. Up to this time no act of violence has been done. By the advice of the cool minded they have been deterred. Ben goes at once to Rogue River, and if the whites will let his business alone he can maintain quiet in his widely extended district.*

*It is lamentable to see the uneasiness and fear of these Indians; they beg of Ben not to suffer the whites to kill them; that they will do anything rather than have the whites come and kill them and drive them away from procuring food for the winter.*

*Ben will go and take with him such help as he can not get along without and try to restore quiet and at all hazards prevent the whites from misusing the Indians of his district, and try to bring them back to their homes that they may not be deprived of the chance now offering to procure their winter food. If this is not done, they will, many of them, suffer. In some instances Ben has bought potatoes, and may give them more as they actually need. There is not a doubt but he can maintain peace in his district. Some expense must be incurred to do this thing, but nothing to compare with what it would cost to put them on temporary reservations.*

*I send you a copy of the authority which Ben gave to Chance, and if anything further transpires before the steamer comes I will give you the news. Ben is on the jump day and night. I never saw, in my life, a more energetic agent of the public. His plans are all good, there can be no doubt of it, that of maintaining the peace, and that of quieting the fears of the Indian, so that he and the white man may return to their usual pursuits.*

*Your friend, R. W. Dunbar.*

*P. S. -- I send you also a copy of a request to Maj. Reynolds, who is expected by steamer, to take the remaining troops from Port Orford for the northern campaign. Ben is going to station them for a time at Big Bend. All is quiet here. I do not believe that any danger need be apprehended.*

## November 6, 1855: Fort Kitchen established

### November 5 (Monday).

**Ben Wright** [Port Orford letter to Maj. Reynolds (US Senate 1893: 43)]: *SIR: In consequence of existing excitement on the part of white citizens in this district, occasioned by the presence of warlike bands of Indians on our borders, I deem it expedient and necessary to request you to allow the present military force stationed at Port Orford to remain as a means of enabling me to carry out my plans for the preservation of peace amongst the Indians of my district, and for the security of the white citizens.*

*Respectfully, your obedient servant, Benj. Wright, Sub-Indian Agent.*

**Private Robbins:** *Nothing to do but cook and eat and escort travelling parties from this place to Fort Bailey.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 94-100]: *At the breaking out in the interior, in 1855, Ben Wright, in charge of the several bands of Indians south of Coos Bay, made known to the natives that Superintendent Palmer, with whom they had made treaties, had commanded that in order to prevent suspicion as to their intentions, that they must remain upon their reservation, and thus avoid every appearance of their acting with the Rogue River bands, and further he ordered them back to their reservations or to submit to arrest. They complied reluctantly and with some insolence. On arriving at the mouth of the Coquille he found the settlers alarmed as the appearances of the hostiles were anything but encouraging, though the Indians professed friendship. On the other hand, the Indians exhibited fear lest the volunteers operating in the Umpqua Valley should endeavor to exterminate them, and they claimed that they had been advised that that was their intention. Wright succeeded in pacifying them and returned to Port Orford, appointing David Hall to look after them. Hall was a member of a company on its way to the Coquille camp intending to disarm or kill the Indians who had murdered, as he believed, Venable and Burton in 1854, mentioned elsewhere in this work, and who, it was believed, were preparing for more savagery. Wright used his best endeavors to quiet them and they professed to be willing to trust their safety to the Indian department, relying upon the Port Orford troops to protect them for the present. The settlers were not convinced of the good intentions of the savages, hence they removed their families to Empire City where Capt. W. H. Harris and others had erected a fortification. The miners at Randolph concealed their personal effects and repaired to Port Orford for safety.*

*At the mouth of Rogue River now a fort had also been built as a precaution against an outbreak as the Indians in the interior, it will be remembered, were on the warpath.*

*On the fifth of November, 1855, Supt. Wright wrote Major Reynolds at Port Orford "I deem it expedient and necessary to request you to allow the present force, stationed at Port Orford, to remain as a means of enabling me to carry out my plans for the preservation of peace among the Indians of my district and for the security of white citizens" and the request was granted.*

*At this time the Coos county people felt apprehensive of danger, and they raised a company of nineteen men. Capt. W. H. Packwood, who asked Hall, the local Indian agent, for authority to defend the people of his district, the governor having discountenanced independent companies. Hall was then at Fort Kitchen, one mile above the present town of Myrtle Point.*

**November 6 (Tuesday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *A week ago news was brought here that Lieutenant Kautz and party, who were surveying a road between this place and Fort Lane, and a company from the mouth of Rogue River who were looking out a road between that point and Yreka, were cut off by the Indians, and that the hostile bands from above were within a day's march of the village at the mouth of Rogue River, which they intended to attack -- thence proceed to take Port Orford .*

*This rumor created a universal stampede among the whites who reside at Port Orford, and the mouth of Rogue River. Their scare alarmed the friendly Indians around here, and the few acts of precaution they were induced to take from fear, were construed by the frightened whites as indications of hostilities. What would have been the result heaven only knows had not one of the supposed lost parties -- the one from Rogue River -- arrived safely home. The excitable public thus finding a part of the rumor false, were led to believe that it might all be so. The excitement has now greatly abated. It has been the cause of a good deal of inconvenience and distress to the settlers. One poor invalid, Mr. Long, was hurried down to Port Orford so rapidly that he died a few hours after his arrival. He was one of the oldest and most respected persons of this neighborhood. Everybody turned out at his funeral yesterday afternoon. There being no proper person to read the burial ceremony, I performed this solemn duty at the request of the relatives.*

**Private Robbins:** *A large pack train arrived through the canyon loaded with provision.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 292]: *Port Orford Minute Men. -- Mustered March 26; discharged June 25, 1856. -- Captain, John Creighton; First Lieutenant, George Yount; Second Lieutenant, William Rollard; Sergeants, Nelson Stevens, Alexander Jones, Samuel Yount, Thompson Lowe; Corporals, Peter Ruffner, John Herring, George White, Thomas Jamison; Privates, E. Bray, George Barber, Edward Burrows, Preston Caldwell, E. Cutching, E. Cunningham, John T. Dickson, George Dyer, Aaron Dyer, H. M. Davidson, George Dean, Warren Fuller, Joseph Goutrain, Andrew Hubert, D W. Haywood, Joseph Hall, Thomas Johnson, Richard Johnson, T. G. Kirkpatrick, William Taylor, James Malcolm, L. Parker, James Saunders, Charles Setler, George P. Sullivan, Louis Turner, W. W. Waters, Charles Winslow, William White, John Wilson.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 372-373]: *Early in November, the Coos county people, being still apprehensive, raised a company of nineteen men, who applied to the local Indian agent, Hall, for authority to defend the people of his district -- the governor having discountenanced independent companies. On his authority, and by agreement between the agent and themselves, they carried out their design, as shown in the following compact: --*

**Fort Kitchen, Coos County, O. T., November 6, 1855.**

*Articles of agreement made and entered into between **David Hall**, local Indian agent for the Coquille district, on the part of the United States, and the undersigned persons, to wit - We the undersigned, do hereby agree to serve and obey all orders given us by David Hall, local Indian agent for the Coquille Indians, for the purpose of promoting and maintaining peace between the Indians in his charge and the settlers, or citizens of the United States in this valley; also to prevent other Indians now at war with the United States from joining and forcing the Indians in this district into a war with the United States, and to serve until such times as peace may be declared, unless relieved or discharged, and to receive for such service such pay and emoluments as the United States may think fit to give us. (Then follow nineteen names, and the affidavit of the agent.)*

*I certify, on honor, that believing the public tranquility required the measures I have adopted, I have contracted with and engaged the above-named men to assist me in promoting and maintaining the peace as above specified.*

*David Hall, Local Indian Agent, Coquille District, Coos County, O. T.*

*Witnesses: H. W. Sanford, Elijah Mouts, J. P., Coos County, Coquille Precinct, O. T.*



**November 10, 1855: “provided you take no prisoners”**

**November 7 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold rain. The most of us without tents. 30 of our men that were detailed to guard Roseburg arrived this evening all safe and sound.*

**November 8 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *We drove our horses off into the mountain about 3 miles to grass. The grasshoppers destroyed nearly all the grass out here last summer, and the Indians burnt all the grain so our feed has to be brought from the Willamet.*

**November 9 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold and raining. Some of the boys begin to shiver and wish themselves back home.*

**C. S. Drew** [Quoting **Capt. Cram**]: *“General Wool’s presence in Southern Oregon at this juncture (November 9, 1855) was exceedingly opportune. He was personally in a position to enable himself to judge of the necessary measures to be taken for the future duties that would properly devolve on the troops under his own command in this district.”*

*Unless he had some of it in his shoes, General Wool, I believe, never set foot on an inch of Southern Oregon soil. His presence which was so “exceedingly opportune,” and the “position that enabled him to judge of the necessary measures to be taken” was aboard one of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company’s fine steamers, which touched at Crescent City, California, and Port Orford, Southern Oregon, on her trips to the Columbia River. The scene of the war then raging in Southern Oregon, where troops were required, was about seventeen days march, including time occupied in preparations after landing, from either of the towns named. In what respect, then, did the deck of a steamer off the coast of Oregon afford a better “position to judge of the necessary measures to be” adopted, than the general’s own quarters at Benicia?*

**November 10 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Snow fell last night to the depth of 3 inches in the valley and much deeper in the hills.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 254-255]: *John K. Limerick, received the appointment of acting adjutant-general for the volunteers on Rogue river, and was entrusted with the duty of mustering in and organizing the forces. He arrived at the seat of war several days after the fight at Hungry Hill, and immediately proceeded with his duties. Some twelve or thirteen companies, of from twenty to eighty men each, presented themselves and requested to be mustered in. Lamerick demurred to this, however, as under his instructions the services of only four companies could be accepted. He agreed in short, to muster the remaining companies into a separate battalion, who could then*

*elect their own major. This proposition was not acceptable to many, who wished all to be in the same battalion.*

*On the tenth of November the volunteers being encamped at Vannoy's ferry, the companies of Bruce, Williams, Wilkinson and Alcorn were mustered in, and organized into a battalion known as the southern battalion, of which Captain James Bruce was elected Major, over Captain R. L. Williams his only competitor. The remaining troops were disbanded by order of Colonel Ross.*

*At the rendezvous for the northern battalion enlistments began early, and about the twentieth of October William J. Martin was elected Major. Quartermaster-General McCarver occupied an office in the court house at Roseburg, engaged in fitting out the troops. The strength of the companies, set originally at sixty-three rank and file, was increased by Major Martin to one hundred and ten. The Douglas county company called for by the governor, was easily recruited and held its election October 27, when Samuel Gordon was elected captain. The Linn county company was commanded by Captain Jonathan Keeney; the two from Lane county by Captains Buoy and Bailey; respectively. . . . **Major Martin's** written instructions to Captain Bailey at Camas prairie, given under date of November 10, conclude thus: "In chastising the enemy you will use your own discretion provided you take no prisoners." Captains Buoy and Keeney received similar instructions, the original order being now on file in the state house at Salem.*

#### **November 11 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Marched to Fort Bailey and camped.*

#### **November 12 (Monday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Making preparations for building a fort. It is expected that this will be our winter quarters.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 373-374]: *The same day on which the agreement was signed a site was selected on the Coquille river for the erection of a fortification, which was named Fort Kitchen, and which in a few days was so nearly picketed that it could be defended by half a dozen men. Captain Packwood then, with less than a third of the little force, made a scout up the south fork of the river on the twelfth of November to look after the property of several settlers who were absent from their places. They found that a house had been robbed of a large amount of flour, and thereupon Hall sent an express to Port Orford to notify sub-Indian agent Ben Wright of the absence of the Indians from the reservation, of the robbery, and other matters connected there with, and asking him to come to Coquille to settle with the Indians, and relieve the men he (Hall) had contracted with to aid him in keeping the peace, the settlers above having in the meantime returned and fortified themselves at the place of a Mr. Roland, after leaving their families at Coos bay for safety.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 97; 187-188]: *Captain Packwood had been selected as commander, and on November 12th taking less than a third of the little band he made a scout up the south Coquille. They found that a house had been robbed of a large amount of flour, and Hall sent an express to Port Orford to notify Sub-Indian Agent Ben Wright, of the absence of the Indians from their*

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*reservation, and of the robbery and other matters connected therewith, asking him to come to the Coquille to settle with the Indians and relieve the men he (Hall) had contracted with to aid him in keeping the peace; the settlers above on Johnson creek having in the meantime returned and fortified themselves at the place of William Rowland. Those who had families, however, had left them at Coos Bay . . .*

*The historical Rowland Prairie is the next place of importance reached after crossing the stream. Wm. Rowland settled here with his Indian woman before the Indian war. The dusky maiden was of the Umpqua tribe and there is quite a romance in her history in connection with her liege lord. The legend relates that Rowland was attacked by a bear in the vicinity of the North Umpqua and severely wounded. That Jane, the Indian girl, saved his life and nursed him through a critical period, after which Rowland took her to his heart. According to an obituary published elsewhere herein, her name was Mala or Mary but she was known as Jane during the last years of their wedded life. Rowland raised a large family, although he left a wife and family in the east to think of him only with disgust after learning of his downfall. It is asserted that Rowland and his squaw rendered valuable service to the whites during the Indian wars, and it is also related that he killed a Rogue River Indian at long range with his heavy rifle, which he boasted of as being a wonderful gun; but as to his great efforts to bless the white race, the historian has been unable to find wherein to credit the old man for his valor, and he is inclined to conclude that he obtained such a reputation among a few by telling stories, the half of which were no truer than his filial affection for the wife and children that he left in the eastern states.*

*A small fort or blockade was erected at Rowland's Prairie at the time of the Indian war and there are many stories yet being told of romances and casualties that happened at this place sufficient to fill many pages of this work. Press Caldwell, Harry H. Baldwin, William Rowland and some others figured as prominent pioneers of the prairie, and Bald Hill that lays back of the pretty and level stretch of land, is a short distance from the river and adjoining the bottom lands. Later on R. Y. Phillips and Chris Lehnherr arrived in this lovely valley and soon after William Warner came. Mr. Lehnherr erected a flouring mill, about 1860, and the country assumed an air of civilization. Warner superseded Rowland, who was uncomfortable no doubt when refined and industrious people began to settle around him, and he sought a more wild region with his dusky maiden.*

**November 13 (Tuesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *All hands at work, each mess building their own house to winter in.*

**November 14 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning every man seems to be stirring and making all the noise possible.*

**November 15 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Clear and pleasant.*

**November 16 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Rained all night. Quite a number of us are without tents yet, but there is no chance for dodging. Here we have to stand and take it or lay down to it as we choose.*

**November 17 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning the sky is clear and the sun is just peeping over the mountain in all his beauty. An express has just arrived at our camp bringing the news of the Indians burning houses on Jump-off Jo, and a request from Major Bruce of the Southern Battalion to Capt. Keeney for his company to meet him there to try to take the rascals in. 4 o'clock P. M. We have two bears barbecued [sic] ready for the march, and the fighting too, if we get the chance. Capt. Keeney sent an express back to the Canyon for a pack train to follow on after us with provisions.*

**November 18 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning by 8 o'clock we were on the march. We traveled 9 miles and met some men that informed us that Capt. Bob Williams had attacked the Indians 30 or 40 in number, and had completely cleaned them out, having killed 5 of them and put the rest to flight. 1 man wounded. They think that the Indians have retreated down toward the mouth of Grave Creek. We went back 3 miles to Grave Creek, thence down this stream 4 miles and encamped for the night.*

**November 19 (Monday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *For the last fortnight, the weather has been exceedingly unpleasant -- raining almost incessantly, with strong winds from the southwest. We have been looking out for the mail steamer during the whole of this time, but on account of the storm she has probably been afraid to venture in. We have thus been entirely cut off from news; at least till last night; which is a great privation during these exciting times. However, the firing of cannon in the little village near here yesterday afternoon indicated something new; and on looking out of our window we found it to be a salute to return of Lieutenant Kautz and party, who had been reported lost. This was cheering news -- for we had grown very anxious about his safety -- particularly as he had gone through all the heart of a hostile Indian country with only ten men and a guide, and had overstaid his time three weeks.*

*On his way to Fort Lane, and when within forty-five miles of that place, he accidentally came upon a hostile band of Indians, who attacked him, and killed two of his men, and wounded another and himself. He made good his retreat to Bates Station, where he arrived on the night of the twenty-fifth of October. Leaving his men there, he immediately proceeded to Fort Lane for reinforcements. Brevet-Major E. H. Fitzgerald, with sixty men of that post, was ordered to proceed against the Indians; but, on arriving at the ground, he found them so safely posted that it would have been useless to make an attack upon them with his command.*

*After reporting these circumstances to the commanding officer at Fort Lane, Captain Andrew J. Smith, the whole of the force at that post, about one hundred and twenty men; and some two*

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*hundred and twenty-five volunteers; were got in readiness, and marched against the Indians. They arrived on the ground on the thirtieth of October, and after fighting the Indians for nearly two days, and finding it impossible to dislodge them, gave up the attack. They intended making another effort on the ninth of this month. After this fight was over, Lieutenant Kautz and party, who had participated in it, returned to this post via Crescent City. He informs us that the mail steamer stood off that village for a short time on last Saturday, but, being unable to land either freight or passengers, proceeded on to Portland. He was informed that there were troops on board -- also General Wool and staff. And that orders have been issued for the troops at this place to proceed to the scene of difficulties in Washington Territory.*

*Our Indian affairs are assuming a serious aspect on the other side of the mountains as well as on the Pacific coast. General Harney, with some five companies of infantry, two of cavalry, and one of artillery, met with a party of Sioux on the Blue Water river, near Fort Laramie, and routed them completely -- having killed about ninety men, and taken several hundred squaws prisoners.*

**Private Robbins:** *This morning Capt. Keeney having determined to proceed down Grave Creek to Rogue River on foot, we sent all our horses back to Fort Leland. Captain sent back 15 men to hurry up the muck-a-muck, our rations being already nearly exhausted. We traveled 12 miles down Grave Creek and camped. This is a rough and mountainous country. The creek winds its way through rocky canyons. There is some gold in these mountains. From the appearance of the labor that has been done along this stream I judge there has been several dimes taken out here.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 374]: *Captain Packwood, while waiting for Wright's appearance, remained at Fort Roland to watch the Indians, and became convinced, although they pretended to be friendly, they were, if not in league with, at least very much excited by the visits to them of the hostile Indians from the Rogue-river camp. Pending Wright's arrival, Pack wood ordered the Indians off the reservation to be arrested, two of them, Elk and Long John, to be treated as criminals if attempting to escape, and shot. The whole band were notified of the order, and that those who peaceably obeyed would be treated as friends. John, however, managed to escape, and when the express returned from Port Orford it brought only the news that Wright was absent down the coast, and that a company of volunteers was gone up to the big bend of Rogue river, about twenty-five miles from Fort Roland, to watch the Indians. This dearth of news left the local agent without instructions, and Packwood released the prisoners he had taken, advising all the band to go on the reserve and remain quiet.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 97-98]: *Captain Packwood remained at Fort Rowland to watch the Indians, and became convinced, although they pretended to be friendly, they were probably in league with the hostile Rogue-river savages, as they became much excited when visited by members of that band. Pending Wright's arrival, Pack wood ordered the Indians off the reservation to be arrested, two of them -- Elk and Long John, to be treated as criminals if they attempted to escape, and shot. The whole band was notified of the order, and that those who peaceably obeyed would be treated as friends. John managed to escape and when the messenger returned from Port Orford, he brought the news that Wright was absent having gone down the coast and that a company of volunteers had gone up the big bend of Rogue-river, about twenty-five miles from Fort Rowland, to watch the Indians. This unexpected information changed Packwood's*

plans, and he released the prisoners he had taken, but advised all of the band to go to the reservation and remain quiet.

#### **November 20 (Tuesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning all hands complain of being sore, after climbing mountains all day yesterday and lugging their knapsacks. Half rations for breakfast; a little dough wound on a stick and baked, and a small slice of beef constituted my meal. Having concluded to remain in camp today to wait for provision, Capt. ordered 40 men out on scout; 20 to proceed down the creek to its mouth to see if there have any Indians passed down that way on foot; the other 20 to go on to a high peak that lay to our north, to see if there could be any discovery made in that quarter. While on the summit of this peak we were startled by the firing of guns up Grave Creek, also the report of 3 guns some distance to the west. We supposed that the Indians had attacked our pack train. We went back to camp with all haste. We all gathered up and marched up the creek with the expectation of having to fight. We marched 4 miles and met 8 of our men with some of our horses packed with provisions. It was Capt. Buoy's company that we heard firing up the creek. We halted and cooked and eat our dinner. Send 10 men back to make another trip for pack animals, as all attempts had yet failed; thence up a mountain 2 miles. Camped with grass, plenty of water.*

#### **November 21 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Remained in camp today, except 30 men on scout. We went to the summit of the mountain that we were camped on 3 miles where we could see all over the whole country. Many of the snow capped peaks presented themselves to our view. Indians in this country have all advantage on the army. They have spies all over the mountain that see the army wherever they go. I think that it may safely be termed the Indian's home. Deer, bear and elk abound in these mountains.*

#### **November 22 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we took up the line of march for Rogue River, down Grave Creek 4 miles, thence over a mountain 8 miles, which the boys named Mount Rubbing in honor of a young man [illegible]. 15 of us volunteer to go down Grave Creek to the mouth, thence down Rogue River to where the pack trail strikes the river, which is 6 miles of a deep canyon, and entirely impassable for anything else but a foot man and so near impassable for them that I never want to try it again. Where the trail strikes the river there is an Indian ranch or village of about 25 huts, which we burnt. From appearance we supposed the Indians had been gone about 2 days. We think that they were probably frightened away by our first day's travel down Grave Creek. Had we not gone back when we heard Capt. Buoy's guns, we would I think have given them a close chase. There had some 30 or 40 Indians come down the river, supposed to be mostly squaws and children. They were undoubtedly badly frightened. Children and all had been running with all haste. We camped here this evening. Capt. Buoy's company arrived here and camped with us. We were out of meat. They had two beeves killed, one divided with us.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 374-375]: *On the twenty-second of November sixteen men from Coos bay joined the Coquille guards at Fort Kitchen. On the same day the local agent, Hall, was relieved by William Chance, who accepted the services of the guards and the sixteen recruits on the same conditions as those agreed to by his predecessor, certifying on his honor that he believed the public tranquility required the measures adopted. The instructions issued to Packwood after the flight of Long John directed him to treat all Indians, in future, without a pass, as enemies, those belonging to chief Washington's band having commenced hostilities by burning the house of a Mr. Hoffman, robbing the house of J. J. Hill of four hundred dollars worth of provisions, robbing the house of Mr. Woodward, cutting adrift the ferryboat at the crossing of the Coquille, with other similar acts of enmity.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 98]: *Sixteen men from Coos bay joined the Coquille guards on the 22nd of November at Fort Kitchen and on the same day Mr. Hall was relieved of his charge by Wm. Chance who accepted the services of the guards and the sixteen recruits on the same conditions as those agreed to by his predecessor. The instructions issued to Pack wood after the flight of Long John, directed him to treat all Indians in future without a pass as enemies those belonging to Chief Washington's band having commenced hostilities by burning Mr. Hoffman's house, robbing the house of J. J. Hill of four hundred dollars worth of provisions, robbing the house of H. H. Woodward, burning the residence of Harry Baldwin, cutting adrift the ferryboat at the crossing of the Coquille with other similar acts of enmity.*

#### **November 23 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Today lying still. Myself and 2 other men follow an Indian's track 4 miles where he had gone last night. Major Martin arrived this evening with about 150 volunteers, 10 days provisions and Capt. Juday with 50 regulars, one canon.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 375]: *On the twenty-third Chance took a party of the guards and went to the forks of the Coquille to try to persuade Washington to go upon the reservation, but found the chief had erected a barricade on the point between the two branches of the river where he could only be approached by water at a great disadvantage. As the party came in view he stationed himself, gun in hand, behind a myrtle tree, and twice raised it to fire, but seeing several rifles pointed in his direction refrained.*

*Chance hastened to send a friendly Indian to invite Washington to a conference, which, after some parleying, he consented to. Rumors were then sent to inform the Indians up the river that they must go upon the reservation if they would not be treated as suspects; after which the agent returned to Fort Kitchen, while the guards with him continued on to Fort Roland under their captain, Packwood.*

**Orvil Dodge** [98-99]: *On the 23rd Mr. Chance took a part of the guards and went to the forks of the Coquille for the purpose of persuading Chief Washington to go upon the reservation, but found the warrior had erected a barricade on the front between the two branches of the river where he could only be approached by water unless by much difficulty. As the party came in view he stationed himself gun in hand behind a myrtle tree and twice raised it to fire but seeing several rifles pointed in his direction refrained from discharging his rifle Mr. Chance quickly*

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*sent a friendly Indian to invite Washington to a conference which he reluctantly consented to. Runners were also sent to inform the Indians by the river that they must go to the reserve if they would not be treated as suspects. The agent then returned to Fort Kitchen while the guards with him continued on to Fort Rowland under their captain, Packwood.*

**November 24 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Today Major Martin with about 400 men marched 15 miles over a mountain. Snow 12 inches deep for 3 miles. Encamped on the meadows. Excellent grass. 3 o'clock in the evening the vanguard discovered an encampment about 4 miles distant in Rogue River Canyon, which after examining with a glass were thought to be Indians, though not positive; as Capt. Williams is expected down on that side of the mountain it may be he.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 375-376]: *On the following day, having received such orders, this detachment, after allowing time for the Indians to move as directed, marched down the north and east side of the south fork, and meeting two Indians, one of whom was armed with a gun, and who either through fear or hostility made as if he would have used it, shot them, killing one and wounding the other, who escaped. Near the forks of the river another Indian was wounded, after which the company returned to Fort Kitchen.*

*Concerning these acts of the guards, Packwood explains, in a report to Governor Curry, in which he relates with great candor all that occurred, that the Indians had been warned by sub-agent Wright in October to keep upon the reservation; also by David Hall, local agent, and by his successor, William Chance, and that "it would have been madness and folly to use gentle means any further," but that force was necessarily resorted to. The order to the Indians to remain on the reservation was given in their own interest, as when the hostile Indians from the interior made incursions into their country and committed depredations, they were likely to be suspected and treated as enemies, all of which they perfectly understood, and in despite of which they continued to roam about the settlements.*



## December 2, 1855: Battle of Olalla and murder of Long John

### November 25 (Sunday).

**Private Robbins:** *2 men started at 2 o'clock last night as spies to see whether it was Capt. Williams or Indians that we had seen on yesterday evening. 12 o'clock today spies of last night not returned yet. 1 o'clock Williams arrived, came down on the same side of the river on which we did, which confirmed us that it was Indians that we had supposed to be Williams. Capt. Judah and Major Bruce went on to a mountain to take another look with the glass. Returned, report that the Indians have burnt their village. Capt. Keeney with his footmen marched down a deep ravine 2 miles to the small creek, thence down the creek 1 mile to the river. On this creek a short distance from the river, John Rogers, a young man in our company discovered something under a large rock, which after examining, was found to be a cache either put here by Indians or miners; supposed to be miners. It consisted of flour, 50 lbs., coffee 40 lbs., salt 10 lbs., 1 valise, 1 peck of chestnut acorns, several books many other articles too numerous to mention. Camped, 6 men in each, 50 yds apart for the purpose of cutting off any Indians that might attempt to pass down the river.*

### November 26 (Monday).

**Private Robbins:** *This morning the Southern battalion came down the river. The spy of yesterday morning arrived at camp, reported that the Indians were, he thought from all appearances, preparing to fight. He said that he could distinguish one amongst them that was Charco Boston. Capt. Keeney's company was ordered to cross the river with Southern battalion. While preparing rafts to cross the river we were attacked by the Indians from the opposite side of the river. Killed one man, wounded 22 more, Capt. Keeney's company. The river runs here in a deep canyon. The side on which the Indians were is covered with fir timber and brush so thick that we could not see them. The side on which we were was open with the exception of a few scattering trees. As soon as the firing commenced Capt. Keeney ordered his men, every one to choose a position behind something to shelter us from their sight. 10 minutes before he advised us, all that were not at work, to get behind something and keep a close lookout for Indians, but the boys were disposed to laugh at him. The firing commenced at about 1 o'clock, continued till 8 o'clock at night, when seeing that it was impossible to accomplish our object or even do any good in any way, we left the field, carrying our killed and wounded with us to our camp. Of the 25 it is not known whether any were killed or not, though some of the boys say they are certain they killed some.*

### November 27 (Tuesday).

**Private Robbins:** *This morning a melancholy duty remained for us to do, that was the burying of our dead man, which we did with the honor due to him who had lost his life in defense of his country. Major Martin and Major Bruce, seeing that their forces were inadequate sent for reinforcement, also for supplies and provisions.*

**November 28 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Very cold, snowing and raining all day. This morning, seeing our 10 days' provisions were going to fall short, we were put on half rations.*

**November 29 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues blustery weather. Our company is out of flour, nothing but beans without salt, and coffee to eat.*

**November 30 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *It still continues to rain and snow. The Indians still hold their position. They fire on every man that gets within 6 hundred of them.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 254-255]: *On the last of November, Major Martin moved his headquarters from Roseburg to a point forty-eight miles south of Roseburg, and seven miles north of Grave creek, calling his new location Camp Leland. Here for a few days the companies of Buoy and Keeney lay, while Bailey moved to Camas valley, and Gordon, dividing his company, posted a part in Cow creek valley and the Canyon, and the remainder on the North Umpqua, where a few stray Indians had made hostile manifestations. Some fifty men of the Umpqua company were sent to Scottsburg, near the mouth of the river, where, as before remarked, some anxiety was felt regarding an attack by the savages*

**December 1 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Quite pleasant. Today we obtained from the Southern battalion a few bushels of wheat which we cooked and eat. This evening a small pack train arrived with provisions.*

**December 2 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Snow fell last night to the depth of 6 inches. This morning Major Martin and Major Bruce seeing that we were in danger of being bound in here by snow, deeming it unwise to remain here longer, ordered their forces to march back for the settlement. By 8 o'clock we were on march carrying our wounded men on a litter, all but the ones who were able to ride horseback. We had a mountain of 16 miles to cross. Today beginning snow on the summit 18 inches deep. We camped within 2 miles of Whiskey Creek, having traveled 14 miles.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 257; 418]: *The various detachments arrived at the Grave creek camp (on November twenty-first, and the companies were separated, being sent to guard the more exposed places and endeavor to keep the savages from making forays upon the inhabited country lying to the westward of their position. The weather came on exceedingly cold and nearly put a stop to all military operations for a time. The various companies went into winter quarters, but a few events took place in December to prove to the citizens that a state of war existed. The first of these was the descent of some twenty or thirty Indians upon the Rice settlement at the mouth of Looking-glass creek, eight miles south of Roseburg. The hostiles burned the Rice house, and*  
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*captured some firearms and did other damage. A small company of men, commanded by J. P. Day, went from Deer creek to the scene and engaged and defeated the Indians, killing three, it was said. The stolen guns, horses, etc., were recaptured. Castleman, a member of the company, was slightly wounded. The affray occurred on the second of December -- The Indians were probably Cow Creeks, a band of disaffected natives, who were actuated by hostility to the whites, but did not, it appears, feel sufficiently warlike to join Limpy and George on the banks of Rogue river . . .*

*Joining the other Indians, these now ill-diagnosed and perhaps justly revengeful savages came back with a strong party the following December, and burned houses and destroyed property from South Umpqua to South Ten Mile, where they were stayed in their work of desolation. The settlers uniting and being joined by volunteers from various localities, met the aborigines and fought what is known as the Battle of Olalla. In this affray James Castleman was wounded, it being the only casualty sustained by the whites, while the Indians lost one of their principal men, Cow Creek Tom, and seven or eight more died of wounds received in the fight, according to the Indians' own account. This fight took place on the land now belonging to W. R. Wells, Esq. The result was a complete rout of the Indians and recovery of the stock that they had captured.*

### **December 3 (Monday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold and snowing. This morning we started early. Traveled to Whiskey Creek 2 miles, thence over Mount Robin to Grave Creek, 8 miles, thence up the creek 4 miles and encamped for the night.*

**Agent Drew** [Umpqua City letter to Gen. Palmer (US Senate 1893: 43-44)]: *SIR: By the mail of October 28 I informed you that I did deem it absolutely necessary to carry into immediate effect the regulations and precautions set forth in your circular of October 13, 1855.*

*Since that date affairs in this district have assumed a different aspect, and on the 14th of last month I found it necessary to act under the general orders therein contained, and accordingly collected the Umpqua band of Kal-la-wot-sets in a temporary reservation near this agency -- appointed John W. Miller local agent during my absence, and immediately started for Kowes (Coos) Bay.*

*On my arrival at Empire City in the evening of the 16th. I found the citizens from the Upper Coquille and on Kowes Bay and river had brought their families to Empire City, anticipating an immediate outbreak. Their suspicions were aroused from the fact that all the Kowes band of Indians had moved up the river, taking with them all their effects, and demanding and unceremoniously taking away all the Indians who were in the employ of the whites. Connected with this was a well-confirmed report that the Cow Creek or Rogue River Indians were in the mountains at the headwaters of the Coquille and Kowes rivers, etc.*

*I immediately started up river and found Taylor's bind and a part of Tyee Jim's band encamped at the mouth of the north fork of Kowes River, about 2 miles above the mouth of what is termed the Isthmus Slough (slew), connecting with the waters of the Coquille. The remainder of Jim's band were encamped at the head of a slough leading toward the Umpqua.*

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*In a word, these camps were so arranged that they kept up a constant communication from the Umpqua to the Upper Coquille. I thought it advisable to break up this line of communication, and proposed to them to come down the bay about 4 miles below Empire City and there camp all in one body, which proposition they told me they would not accept immediately. I gave them twenty-four hours to decide. At the expiration of that time they decided to move down. They are now on a temporary reservation and Socrates School field appointed local agent.*

*A few days after they were all encamped the Coquille Indians commenced hostilities by burning Mr. Hoffman's house, near the council grounds. I also learned by a dispatch from the Upper Coquille, received last evening, that the settlers had an engagement near Dulbey's, at the lower fork; that three Indians were shot and one taken prisoner and hung.*

*Hoping that my movements thus far will meet with your entire approval, I await further orders.*

*Respectfully yours, E. P. Drew, Sub-Indian Agent.*

**Coquelle Thompson** [Youst and Seaburg 2002: 40]: *At Coquille City they fixed it up for that boy who was killed. The **white men** said, "We made a mistake." They issued white blanket, red blanket, white blanket -- they satisfied the Coquille Tribe so they had to forget this trouble. Of course they didn't want to fight but the white people were afraid they might, so they issued blankets. **The chief** said "no more trouble."*

#### **December 4 (Tuesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Raining today. We arrived at the Grave Creek House or Fort Leland with our wounded man, having carried him 40 miles in two days and a half over mountains and through snow and rain. Encamped at Fort Leland.*

#### **December 5 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to rain. Going to remain at this place until after the election of Colonel and Lieutenant-colonel which will come off on Thursday. The candidates have been shouting here today, telling us their views and what they would do if elected. If they make their words good, woe unto the Indians.*

#### **December 6 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold and snowing. Captain Keeney's company went mostly for Capt. Williams for Colonel and Major Martin for Lieutenant-colonel.*

#### **December 7 (Friday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *Since last writing, very little of importance has occurred in this vicinity. The Indians of this district are quiet, except at the Coquille, where there are slight indications of an outbreak. But if the settlers there act prudently they need fear no trouble for the present. We heard nothing*

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*from the war in Washington Territory since the thirtieth of October. The troops were then on the march against the Indians, who had taken their position near the ground where Major Haller was defeated. A great fight was expected in a few days. We, of course, feel anxious to learn the result.*

*A mail is usually received here once a fortnight from that section of country; but an accident has occurred to the mail steamer "California," which should have been down three weeks ago. Rumor has it, that she collapsed a flue, and caught fire in the Columbia River. The extent of the damage is not known. Not returning to San Francisco in due time, the steamship company sent another vessel, the "Columbia," Captain Leroy, after her. This vessel passed here last Sunday week, and should have been down six days ago. She has probably gone in a gale. For six weeks there has scarcely been a day without a storm of wind and rain from the southwest. During the last few days it has stormed almost incessantly -- accompanied by hail, thunder and lightning. The latter we have here mainly in winter; thus differing from every other climate I have ever been in. The thermometer at present ranges between thirty-five and forty.*

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to snow. Today received the returns of the election from the South. Williams elected Colonel.*

#### **December 8 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to snow. Today we were ordered to march back into the Umpqua to where we could obtain sustenance for ourselves and animals as we could not get either one here. Snow on the hills where we had been herding our horses is about 2 ¼ feet deep. We think that we made a lucky escape in getting out of the mountains before the storm.*

#### **December 9 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we started on the march for the Umpqua leaving our wounded man in the hospital with 3 men to take care of him. Rained all day. Snow melting very fast. The creeks all very full, some of them swimming our animals. Camped at the canyon for the night.*

#### **December 10 (Monday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Today we marched through the canyon. The roads very muddy. Encamped on Canyon Creek, 1 mile from the mouth of the canyon in Umpqua Valley.*

#### **December 11 (Tuesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Remain in camp today. Provision scarce. We have no flour, we are living now on rice and meat. Capt. Buoy's Company is camped here with us. They have provisions plenty, but take care to eat it themselves.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 376]: *No news being received from Wright, and the local agent being reluctant to undertake disarming the Indians, the Coos bay men becoming alarmed for their families returned home December eleventh, leaving the guards as first organized. The weather*

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*being now very cold in the mountains, which were covered with snow so that emissaries from the Rogue-river Indians were believed to be barred out, the white people in Coos county recovered somewhat from their apprehensions, and the guards being stationed in three several detachments among the settlements, allowed themselves to hope for peace.*

*On making a visit to the beach where their provisions were stored, two of the guards from Fort Leland found Long John in the cabin cooking, and other Indians on the outside peering through the cracks. They demanded an explanation, which John endeavored to avert first by lying, and then by giving the war-whoop apparently to summon others to his aid, when he was shot. The men fearing an attack, hastened back to camp, and again quiet reigned in the Coquille region.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 99]: *On the following day this detachment met two Indians who threatened to open hostilities as the volunteers were traveling on the south side of the river and they shot one to death and wounded the other who escaped. Near the forks of the river another Indian was wounded and the company returned to Fort Kitchen. No news being received from Wright and the Coos bay men becoming alarmed for the safety of their families returned home December 11<sup>th</sup>, leaving the Coquille guards as first organized. The white people in the valley having recovered somewhat from this apprehension and the guards being stationed in three several detachments, allowed themselves to hope for peace.*

*On visiting his mining cabin on Johnson's Creek Iredel Bray found Long John in full possession of his home, busily engaged in cooking a meal while other Indians were peering through the openings between the logs from the outside. Bray knew that John was a bad Indian and bringing his rifle across his left arm while parleying with the insolent rascal he cocked the gun and turning on his heel the weapon was soon brought in range of John's head at which time the rifle was discharged, killing the Indian instantly. Bray and his one companion dragged the body from the cabin and rolled it off a steep precipice, it fell into a prospect shaft at the foot of the hill and disappeared. The other Indians took to the woods and Bray and his companion took an untraveled route and after much hardship arrived the next day on the prairie near where Eckley is now located and fortunately fell in with some white men who had camped at that place. The settlers were glad that Long John had gone to the happy hunting ground for the many depredations lately committed were supposed to have been done under his management.*

**December 18, 1855: Curry County created from Coos County.**

**December 12 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we had half rations of flour for our breakfast. We do not know when we will get any more. It seems as though the quartermasters and packmasters are trying to manage so as to starve us out. There are several pack trains here idle and have been 5 or 6 days and nothing to hinder them from going back.*

**December 13 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *A rainy and disagreeable day. This morning the pack animals that were laying here started north for supplies of provisions for ourselves and forage for our animals.*

**December 14 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to rain this morning. The mountains all around are covered with snow. General Barnum and Colonel Martin passed here today on their way to Deer Creek. This morning we were out of meat, and the quartermaster would not get any, so there being some very fine hogs running about the camp, we just killed one.*

**December 15 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to rain. Cold and disagreeable weather.*

**December 16 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we are out of meat, and having made several applications to the quartermaster for meat, and could not get it, Captain had discovered in the quartermasters house a keg of syrup which he called for, and the quartermaster swore that he should not have it. Captain swore that he would. He came to camp and took a few boys with him and just walked in, carried it out, and said, "Here boys, take it," and Mr. Quartermaster took care not to cheep.*

**December 17 (Monday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold and disagreeable this morning. Mr. Bolen sent out 4 men to hunt up what government cattle he had in his care, going to take to grass, as they had got so poor that the volunteers would not eat them. The cattle are about 4 miles distant. After they had gone a while they returned very much frightened with only a part of their cattle and said that they had heard a cap snap near them which they supposed to be an Indian. We think that they are afraid and want us to hunt the cattle for them.*

**December 18 (Tuesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Today Captain Keeney received a letter from Lieutenant Yates at Grave Creek. He says he does not expect to get here for something like a week.*

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**Lewis McArthur** [1982: 202-203]: *Curry County was created December 18, 1855, and was taken from the south part of Coos County. It was named for George Law Curry, who was born at Philadelphia July 2, 1820 . . . it was first proposed to name this county Tichenor, for Captain William Tichenor of Port Orford, a member of the legislative council from Coos County. Tichenor declined the honor saying that his constituents wanted the new county named for Governor Curry.*

**December 19 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning Lieutenant McKiney started back to Fort Leland. This evening a pack train arrived with clothing.*

**December 20 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Cold and snowing. The pack train that came here yesterday said that he would stay here but a few days till after the storm, but Captain Keeney told them that they must go on to Fort Leland, for his men that were there were out of provision and destitute of clothing and consequently in a state of suffrance.*

**December 21 (Friday).**

**Private Robbins:** *The weather very disagreeable. This morning Capt. Buoy's company left here, a part of them to go down toward Deer Creek to take some squaws that the citizens had become much alarmed about. The remainder of the company moved some 4 or 5 miles for the purpose of getting a better camp.*

**December 22 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Snowing this morning. Today 2 of the men that were detached to go with the pack train came back. One of the men was sick. They only went as far as Cow Creek in 2 days.*

**December 23 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Continues to snow, but melts pretty near as fast as it falls.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 368-369]: *During all the time since the battle of Hungry Hill, the companies which constituted the northern battalion under W. J. Martin, major, and later lieutenant-colonel, were occupied in scouting and guarding settlements, or escorting trains and travelers. The stations in this part of the field were Camas Valley, twenty miles southwest of Roseburg, at the head of the Coquille, where Captain Bailey had his winter quarters, with orders to furnish unprotected families in his vicinity with a sufficient force to render them safe, Fort Smith, at the house of William Henry Smith, on Cow Creek, where twenty-five men were stationed to escort trains between Umpqua canon and Fort Leland on Grave creek; Camp Eliff, at the south end of the canon, the station of Captain Buoy, who was instructed to protect families and keep open the road between this point and the crossing of Cow creek; Fort Bailey, five miles south of the*

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*crossing of Cow creek, where Captain Keeney was stationed to protect the road from there to Grave creek; and Camp Gordon, where Captain Gordon commanded, eight miles above the mouth of Cow creek. Captain W. W. Chapman was ordered to divide his force, about fifty men being at the mouth of the Umpqua, to keep a lookout on the reservation at that point, and also on the Coos bay settlement, while thirty men were encamped on Ten Mile prairie, near the house of L. D. Kent.*

*To his captains, Major Martin issued the order to "take no prisoners," yet about Christmas time he had quite a number of prisoners, chiefly women and children on his hands, whom he directed Captain Buoy to escort to the Grand Rond reservation in Yamhill county. Agent Metcalf, however, refused to let them go, for the reason that they were nearly related to the Indians on the Umpqua reservation, and if moved before the main body of the Indians, would make trouble, and defeat the plans of the Indian department, which had trouble enough already to reconcile the people of Polk county to the contemplated reservation of their western border for Indian uses.*

### **December 24 (Monday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *We have had no mail from Portland later than the twenty-eighth of October, and no news from San Francisco since the arrival of the "Columbia" on the twenty-fifth ultimo. As these are the only two sources through which news can reach us, we have consequently been entirely cut off from the world for nearly a month. There has been more stormy weather within the past five weeks than I have ever experienced in the same length of time -- in fact it has been storming almost incessantly -- at least until day before yesterday. The rainfall this month is already 19.6 inches -- an unusual quantity even for this country. The largest measurement in any previous month, for the last three years, is said to have been sixteen inches. Last night was also colder than it has ever been -- thermometer twenty-five degrees. There has been considerable hail, and even a little snow. The mountains near here are covered with the latter. But, notwithstanding the cool state of the atmosphere, everything around looks green. The forest trees of course do, as they belong to the pine genus; and as to grass, it is even fresher than in summer. I shouldn't be surprised, however, if the frost has nipped the blossoms of the salalle, and strawberries which were blooming a few days ago.*

*The storm has now lulled, and we may look for fine weather for a few days. To-day is beautiful. All nature seems to be reanimated. The larks and robins seem to enjoy it wonderfully; even the monsters of the mighty deep appear to be aware that the elements have ceased their warfare, for they may now be seen in large numbers sporting in the harbor. 'Tis wonderful how high a whale can spout the water.*

**Private Robbins:** *Very cold, the ground frozen hard. Today there is considerable of murmuring in camp about the way we are getting treated here. We are very poorly clad, and in fact we have no suitable equipment for a winter campaign and it seems that there is no exertion used for our relief with the exception of Captain.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 258]: *The people on Butte creek, in Jackson county, had, with the first alarm of war, sought safety in a camp of log houses on Felix O'Neal's donation claim. Several families -- in fact, nearly the whole population of the country adjoining -- made their residences*  
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*there for a time, and carried out measures of defense. Alcorn's company was recruited among the hardy settlers thereabouts, and subsequent to their return from the first meadows campaign, were posted in part at this fortified camp, and served to restore public confidence. Jake, a well-known chief of a small band of Indians, with his braves had long inhabited that portion of the country, and had refused to go on the reservation. The Indian agent, owing to the smallness of their numbers, had never thought it necessary to compel them to go there, and so they were suffered to remain, a nuisance, if not a positive danger to the whites. They were said to steal, and were not supposed to be above the crime of burning buildings. They dwelt in a rancheria, between the Butte creeks. On the night of December twenty-fourth, Captain Alcorn, with a part of his men, marched to the rancheria and camped within a mile of it, in the cold and snow. At daybreak the next morning the troops moved within rifle range, and began to fire. This they kept up until the natives were killed or dispersed, their loss being eight "bucks" killed, and the remainder wounded. One squaw was wounded in the jaw, and two men were captured. Only four guns were taken, but no ammunition, and three stolen horses were recaptured. Old Jake, the chief, was not in the fight, and was reported killed by the Shastas.*

*A similar affair occurred at the same date between a detachment of Captain Rice's company, numbering thirty-four men, and the Indians of a rancheria four miles from and on the north side of Rogue river, and just below the mouth of Big Butte creek. A night march and an attack at daybreak formed the salient features of this affair also, which was likewise completely successful. The Indians were taken by surprise, and after several hours' fighting eighteen males were killed, and twenty squaws and children captured and the rancheria burned. The Indians, finding themselves surrounded, fought bravely to the last. But one female was injured in the fight.*

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 363-364]: *But the companies were not permitted to remain in quarters. During the absence of the volunteers early in December, some roving bands of Indians were devastating the settlements on the west side of the south Umpqua, destroying fifteen houses, whose inmates had been compelled to take refuge in the forts.*

*On the twenty-fourth, Captain Alcorn discovered and attacked a camp on the north branch of Little Butte creek, killing eight warriors and capturing some horses. At about the same date Captain Rice found another band on the north bank of Rogue River, and attacked with thirty men, fighting six hours, killing all the adult males, and taking captive the women and children, who were sent to Fort Lane to be guarded.*

*"These two fights," wrote a correspondent of the Oregon Statesman, "have blotted out Jake's band." That they had done so was a cause of congratulation to the white settlers, who could nevermore hope for security of life or property while they were alive and free. But General Wool in his official report stigmatized their proceedings as murder, and drew a pathetic picture of the women and children of the slaughtered Indians making their way to Fort Lane "for protection," with their limbs frozen. That some had frozen limbs was probably true, for the winter was an unusually cold one, a circumstance as injurious to the volunteers, many of whom were ill-clad, as to the Indians. But war is a trade, whose masters cannot show mercy, even to themselves, peace being obtained only through relentless strife.*

## December 25, 1855: Fort Kitchen and the Coquille River Christmas Party

**December 25 (Tuesday).**

**Dr. Glisan:** *Christmas! This day of all others reminds us of home. Oh, how our hearts yearn for those fond ones left behind; for the many fireside reunions of our childhood; when we felt supremely happy if our kind mothers allowed us plenty of gingercake and lemonade. If our wants were as simple how much happier we might be; yet, after all, there are a few of us, I presume, who would be willing to exchange our present pleasures with the accompanying sorrows, for the happiness of childhood -- for though our sorrows are greater our sense of pleasure is also enhanced.*

*'Tis curious to look back even a few years, and see what a checkered life one leads. Two years ago I ate my Christmas dinner at Fort Arbuckle, C. N. -- last year on the steamship "Empire City," in the Atlantic ocean, off Cape Hatteras -- and to-day on the western confines of the United States Territory. What had probably conduced more than anything else to our happiness of to-day is the arrival of the steamship "Columbia," bringing us news from the States and Washington Territory. That from the former is rather of an exciting character -- as a rupture with Great Britain is seriously apprehended. The precise cause of the quarrel is not known, but from the London Times we learn that the British West India fleet has been suddenly increased with the ostensible purpose of preventing a filibustering expedition, said (by the Times) to be fitting out in the United States against Ireland. If this be the real cause the British government is acting under a great mistake, as there is no such expedition fitting out in this country. It is to be hoped that the British and American authorities will act with prudence, and not involve the two greatest countries in the world in a protracted war.*

*The troops in Washington Territory have had several skirmishes with Indians since the twenty-eighth of October, routing them in every instance, but not killing many. Several officers have been killed; among others Lieutenant Wm. A. Slaughter, of the Fourth Infantry. He had a skirmish with the Indians, whom he defeated. A few days thereafter, whilst in a hut near Fort Steilacoom, not dreaming there were any Indians near him, his small party was unexpectedly fired upon by the savages, killing him and several of his men.*

*It appears that the steamship "California" had a very hard time of it in her trip up the coast. The rumor of her having caught fire in the Columbia river is confirmed by Captain Wm. Dall, who was in command of her at the time. It seems that directly after crossing the bar at the mouth of the Columbia, she collapsed a flue, which accident caused the water from the boiler to leak into the furnace, thus suddenly generating so much steam that the door of the latter was forced open, and the fire was scattered in every direction. They succeeded in extinguishing the fire before much damage was done; but the ship, in the meantime, came within an ace of stranding. After being repaired at Astoria, and completing her trip to Vancouver, she was engaged by General Wool to take troops to Steilacoom -- whence she proceeded to San Francisco. On her downward trip she encountered on the twenty-seventh of November, a terrific gale on the mouth of the Columbia; and came very near being foundered. The gale was from the southeast, and lasted with unabated fury for seventy hours. The engine being disabled, the ship was put under sail, and*

reached San Francisco after an extremely long passage of twenty-one days. Only one person drowned -- the third mate.

**William V. Wells:** *For some weeks previous to Christmas great preparations had been made for the observance of that time-honored anniversary. Now, in Oregon, where people reside ten miles apart, and call a man a neighbor who lives half a day's journey away, it is not so easy to make up a fashionable party, for sundry reasons, as in Fifth Avenue, or any other of the "close settlements" in New York. If a hop is to take place, weeks must be given to prepare in; the "store clothes" taken out, aired and brushed, old bonnets furbished up, horses driven in from distant pasture, and saddles made ready. Then the nearest settlement must be applied to for a proper amount of whiskey and sugar, raisins and flour. But on the occasion above alluded to, great efforts were made to have matters go off with éclat. Deacon L—, residing on the ocean beach, about twenty miles to the southward of Coos Bay, and known as the most liberal, warmhearted old gentleman of Southern Oregon, had appropriated, some time in advance, the right to give the Christmas ball. It was to last two days and two nights. Oceans of whiskey, hills of venison and beef, no end of pies and "sech like." The ladies of all Coos County were to be there, and a fiddler from the distant point of Port Orford itself engaged. To this feast did all hands look forward with secret longing and hope. Two days beforehand the exodus for Deacon L—'s began to take place, and among the invited guests were the two "Frisco chaps," i.e., H— and myself. And on Christmas-eve the ball commenced. There were gay roystering blades from Port Orford, gallants from Coos Bay, select men and distinguished individuals from all over the country, and belles from every where. Such a recherche affair had not occurred since the settlement of the Territory. For two nights and days the festivities continued; and after all the dancing, riding, drinking, singing, and laughing -- and all this without sleeping, and with a determination to "never give up" -- there were buxom forms with brilliant eyes that dared us to another breakdown!*

*I snap my fingers at all civilized Miss Nancys henceforth and forever. Give me, for the essence of fun and the physical ability to carry it out, corn-fed, rosy-cheeked, bouncing Oregon lass, with eyes bright as the rivers that sparkle merrily on their way to the sea from those snowclad mountains, and hearts light as the fresh breezes of that northern climate! I may forget the Central American excitement; sooner or later I shall have forgotten the birth of an heir to the French throne; the siege of Sebastopol may fade away, but that Oregon ball will be ever fresh in my memory.*

**Private Robbins:** *This morning the quartermaster of this place brought out a bucket full of brandy and treated our company.*

**December 26 (Wednesday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Last night 9 of the men that went to escort the pack to Renoise arrived.*

**A. G. Walling** [1884: 259]: *Toward the last of December some scouts who happened to be near the forks of the Applegate discovered that a body of Indians probably twelve or so in number had taken possession of two deserted miners' cabins and had gone into winter quarters there, preparing themselves for a state of siege by excavating the floors of the houses and piling the*  
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dirt against the walls so as to form a protection against rifle bullets. The scouts withdrew unseen, and going to Sterling told the news. A body of sixty or more miners and others went immediately to watch the cabins and prevent the Indians from escaping, while word was sent to various military companies who began to repair to the spot. Captain Bushey arrived, and finding the position too strong for his small force to take, awaited the arrival of others. Captain Smith sent Lieutenants Hagen and Underwood with twenty-five regulars and the inevitable howitzer, with the design of shelling the savages out; but the fortune of war was unpropitious. The mule carrying the ammunition was so heedless as to fall into a deep creek and be killed, while the powder was ruined. More ammunition was sent for, and Lieutenant Switzer with sixteen regulars brought it on a mule. This animal was more fortunate; and the regular army drew up in front of the cabins and at a safe distance fired a shell which passed into or through a cabin and killed, as the records say, two savages. But before the howitzer's arrival the Indians had signaled themselves by a strong resistance. They had killed a man by a rifle-shot, at a distance of 500 yards -- a display of marksmanship equal to the best known among the whites. Five whites had been wounded.

**Mrs. Victor** [1894: 376]: *On the twenty-fourth of December, Wright arrived at Fort Kitchen, spending three days with the Indians, who laid the blame of all the disturbances which had happened upon the white people. They promised to remain quiet and obey orders. Wright accepted the Indian protestations of innocence, and informed the guards that their organization must be approved by the governor in order to secure any compensation for their services to his department, whereupon Captain Packwood discharged his company, and made a report in due form of his operations and expenses, which was forwarded to the executive, who was asked to recognize them as volunteers under his proclamation of November fifteenth. It was, however, only at a later period, when Packwood reorganized his company under a proclamation of the executive as the "Coquille Minute Men," that they came to be recognized as belonging to the volunteer service, their muster roll dating back to November sixth.*

**Orvil Dodge** [1898: 99-100]: *On the twenty-fourth of December Wright made his appearance at Fort Kitchen, stopping three days with the Indians, who insisted that the whites were to blame for all the disturbances which had happened. They promised to be quiet and obey orders. Wright accepted the Indians story, and informed the guards that their acts must be approved by the governor, or they would not receive remuneration for their services, to this department. Capt. Packwood then discharged his company, and made a report of his whole operations to the executive, and under the governor's proclamation they were afterwards recognized as the Coquille minute men. There were some statements made by persons not fully acquainted with all of the circumstances that brought reproach upon the service of these men, but Capt. Packwood made a lengthy statement in his report to the governor, that was so manly and convincing that it is now admitted that it was necessary to raise that company; and that it was equally necessary that they should not hesitate to prosecute their duties with vigor, and thus convince Chief Washington that they were in earnest. This same autumn a company was sent out from Empire City to punish the savages for fresh depredations. An attack was made on the lower Coquille; four were killed, and four captured and hanged. This seemed to quell the desire of these Indians to resort to savage warfare, and they remained quiet, being closely watched by the settlers.*

**December 27 (Thursday).**

**Private Robbins:** *This morning we left the canyon.*

**December 29 (Saturday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Left Roseburg.*

**December 30 (Sunday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Crossed the Calapooya mountains.*

**December 31 (Monday).**

**Private Robbins:** *Arrived at Eugene.*

**William V. Wells:** *The wolf of Southern Oregon is the fiercest animal—not even excepting the bear -- to be found in the country. These prowling fellows, when driven to extremities, will approach a herd of cattle, and a band of three or four spring upon a cow, and in a short time completely devour the victim. The white wolf, which is considered the most dangerous, is about five feet in length, and nearly as high as a yearling calf. The strength and ferocity of this beast is wonderful, and many a mortal struggle has occurred between the wounded white wolf and the hunters. On two occasions, while at Coos Bay, we heard of the depredations of wolves, and joining parties to start in chase, were disappointed by the incredible cunning which seems to guide them from all pursuit. Once a party of four left Empire City, in a small sail-boat, for Wappalo, or Isthmus Creek, in the upper part of the bay, where two large wolves had been seen for several days.*

*With plenty of provisions and ammunition, we shot away from the wharf, and, giving the sail to the wind, were soon scudding "like mad" before a staggering westerly breeze, rapidly passing the wood-crowned headlands, and awakening the echoes with an occasional rifle-report, at which some doomed pelican or eagle came tumbling from their proud elevation. Arrived "at point proposed," we found a couple of friends awaiting us, and swelling our number to six. The chase lasted all night, but was unsuccessful. We had just seated ourselves under an immense pine, and had commenced an assault upon the eatables with all the earnest vigor of hungry men, when F—, one of the best hunters in the bay, suddenly sprang up and whispered "Silence!" But we needed no such admonition, for already the ground had begun to tremble beneath us with the tread of an approaching band of elk. Quick as thought we had dispersed to a distance of two hundred yards apart, and, squatting low in the underbrush, had scarcely time to breathe free before the low growth of trees toward the mountains separated, and the form of a noble elk appeared, advancing proudly toward the stream we had just left. He stopped as he thrust his head from among the leaves, snuffed and stamped impatiently, and evidently smelled danger; but he had already passed our most distant outpost, and to return was equally hazardous. With daintily lifted feet and nose protruded he brushed past, and in another moment was followed by a herd, one two, six, ten -- it was impossible to count them. I had determined to await the signal of F -- have shot, and had my own target singled out when the sharp ring of a rifle awoke the forest*

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*echoes. The herd started and dashed past the ambush, while the woods resounded with five reports in quick succession. Like light the beautiful animals vanished, but with the thundering tread of a troop of cavalry. Two of their number lay plunging on the earth and a third, grievously wounded, was making a succession of agonizing springs to follow in the path of his companions. Another shot brought him down, and now dispatching the others, we felt that at least our wolf-hunt had not been in vain.*

*My companions had promised me a shot at an elk, but even they had not anticipated such luck. The meat was soon packed to the boat, and at midnight we were again in Empire City.*

*Marsh bird-shooting is mere slaughter, though J -- was "innocent of duck blood" to the last. We once loaded a boat with water-fowl, the result of but two hours' shooting. Starting at early dawn, we sailed rapidly toward a creek extending several miles inland from the bay, and reaching its head-waters, drifted leisurely down. The stream, some two hundred yards wide, dimly reflected in its bosom the somber shadows of the pines and firs skirting its margin. An intense silence reigned. The cry of the sedate crane, as he stood "knee-deep: in some shallow pool watching patiently for his prey, or the quick twir-r-r of a flock of blue-winged teal or mallard cutting hurriedly through the air, and settling quietly on some reedy shore below, alone disturbed the stillness. We landed on a grassy meadow, and leaving one in the boat to follow the stream, the others occupied the space between the two lines of woods. The first shot fired rolled with a thousand echoes through the forest, and in a moment arose ten thousand winged creatures from the "splashy brink" of creek and bayou, embracing every style of marsh bird and duck that can be mentioned. With every discharge these flights from place to place continued. At times they would settle down in our immediate vicinity, and apparently offer themselves voluntary sacrifices. Unable, owing to their low flight, to pass beyond the woods guarding the banks, they followed the line of the water, and never failed to pass over the ambush below. We only ceased this "pot hunting" when, weary of the slaughter, we found our boat loaded with game.*

*The hunters in this vicinity seldom use the shot-gun, and consider such shooting as the above quite unworthy the waste of powder.*