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NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY



The Squaw Valley "Fever"
of 1863

Letters From a Nevada Doctor
To His Daughter in Connecticut
During the Years 1881-1891

Teacher's Examination

The Pyramid Lake Indian
War of 1860



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Volume I
Number 1

NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Founded in 1904 for the purpose of investigating topics pertaining to the early history of Nevada and of collecting relics for a museum, the NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY has dedicated itself to the continuing purpose of preserving the rich heritage of the peoples—past and present—who have inhabited the land of Nevada.

The Society believes that it can best serve the State by arousing in the people an historical consciousness which it hopes will be carried to succeeding generations. Thus, through its Director, the Society sponsors an educational program which carries the history of Nevada to the schools and organizations throughout the State.

The Society maintains a library and museum where historical materials of many kinds are on display to the public and are available to students and scholars.

The Society publishes the NEVADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY which publishes articles of interest to readers in the social, cultural, economic, and political history of the Great Basin area: Nevada, eastern California, eastern and southern Oregon, Idaho, and Utah.

The Society's membership is open to the public; application for membership should be made to the Secretary of the Society, State Building, Reno, Nevada.

THE PYRAMID LAKE INDIAN WAR OF 1860¹

Commentary, Notes, and Transcription

By WILLIAM C. MILLER

The story of the Pyramid Lake Indian War has been chronicled many times. The present telling is not a restatement of what has been told; rather, it is source material which Nevada historians—De Quille excluded—have ignored;² as a consequence much in the succeeding telegraphic dispatches, letters, and newspaper accounts corrects details which the historians have distorted. Too, the source material brings into scope details of activities hitherto minimized—the activities of officialdom: civilian and military, as well as the activities of the everyday citizens of California. Moreover, the material pinpoints the blame, placing it squarely on the shoulders of white men. Beyond that, the material shows mob rule at work, the rumors engendered through hearsay, and the poetic justice meted out to those who clearly displayed their belief in: *the only good Indian is a dead Indian*.

Although present-day highway maps do not show “the Great Bend of the Carson” river, they do show the Lahontan Reservoir area where the “Great Bend” is located and where the “massacre” took place. Present-day maps show the town of Wadsworth at the site of the “great bend” in the Truckee River; between that point and the town of Nixon, on Nevada highway “34,” the war took place. If, then, we should draw a triangle and let the base line be represented by a line from the town of Genoa to the Lahontan Reservoir and the two side lines represented by lines drawn from the Lahontan Reservoir to Nixon and from Nixon to Genoa, we have, in general, the total locale of the immediate territory involved in the “war.”

THE PYRAMID LAKE INDIAN WAR OF 1860

PART I

DISPATCHES AND RUMORS

Virginia City, U.T., May 8—4 P.M.

Last night a horrid massacre was perpetrated by the Indians below the Great Bend of the Carson. J. Williams arrived at Buckland's, near the Bend, and gave the information of the

murder of his two brothers and five other white men at the same hour, and the burning of the house. After witnessing the perpetration of this shocking butchery, on his way up, Mr. Williams called at two other houses, on the opposite side of the river; the doors were open, but loud calling, at a short distance, failed to induce any signs of life about the premises. He supposes all are murdered. They number twelve or thirteen men. The Indians are about 500 strong, and all armed. They pursued him to within six miles of Buckland's. The Pony Express dispatched their horses and riders, and through them we have received the dreadful intelligence. J. Barstoles and J. H. Smith brought the news.³ It is to be feared that Buckland station may be attacked to-night. Efforts are making here now to go to the relief of the border settlers and stations. Much excitement prevails.

A committee of five, consisting of Col. Whitman, L. Nightengale, George Ashe, Henry Meredith and Capt. Johns were appointed to make arrangements for forming a company of volunteers and scouts to protect settlers, and warn parties in the mountains, near the desert, of their danger.

Capt. Leonard's company, from San Francisco, of 17 men, have gone on to Buckland's to-night, to defend that station.

The Indians engaged in the murder are the Carson division of the Pah-utes, numbering 150, but were reinforced by 300 more. They are under the command of Capt. Ham, a notorious rascal.

They are now about 25 miles from here. Volunteers are enrolling and a subscription is open to defray expenses. The excitement is increasing.

9:30 P. M.

A company to reinforce Capt. Leonards' company, start at 12 o'clock to-night. A company of scouts, consisting of 13, start for the Nevada district at 10 o'clock. There will be a company of mounted men leave early in the morning. Five hundred dollars and increasing had been raised.

Virginia City, U.T., May 9—1 P.M.

There is no further report about the massacre by the Indians on the night of the 7th. Many parties have gone out in pursuit. So soon as any news comes in, it will be forwarded.

Carson City, May 9, 2 P. M.

The news of the Indian massacre at Miller's Station, at the Big Bend of the Carson river, night before last, created great excitement. A company was organized here last night, numbering thirty mounted men, under the command of Major Ormsby, who left here this morning, at 8 o'clock, for the scene of action. By an express, this morning, we learn that the Indians have fortified themselves at Ragtown,⁴ and threaten a big fight. Everything in the shape of firearms, from Allen's "pepper-boxes" to U. S. muskets, is in requisition.

A negro and a white man have been accused of selling ammunition to the Indians for some time past, knowing their intentions. The negro is now under arrest.

A company has been organized at Genoa, under the command of J. Cradlebaugh. The women and children have all left the river, and are at Silver City, which place is fortified. . . .

2 10 P. M.

The white man above alluded to has just been arrested for selling powder to the Indians. He had over one hundred pounds concealed in his cabin, about one mile out of town.

Carson City, May 10.

G. Clark has just arrived from the scene of the massacre, and corroborates the statement that four men were murdered, besides the two brothers of Williams. He informs us that he saw the remains of their bodies in the burned ruins of the house. He left the sink of the Humboldt at 7 o'clock last night, and met one company of rangers, composed of 30 men, at Miller's station; one company of 25 men, three miles this side; Judge Cradlebaugh with 12 men, and Major Ormsby with 30. Three in addition were reported yesterday. Total rifles on the ground, over 200, with provisions for four days. The Indians engaged in the massacre were the Shoshones, Smoke Creek, Honey Lake, Pahutes, with those previously reported.

William's Ranch, Miller's Station, May 10th.

A company arrived here 24 strong, last night, and found no others as yet on the ground. There were two bodies burned that were recognized as males, and another body almost gone, so that it could not be identified. W. F. Mason was appointed coroner.

But little information could be got. We buried the bodies, and are now waiting for James Williams, and some more men, and then we move most likely for Pyramid Lake. One of the dead is known to be Samuel Sullivan, who drove a wagon here. But few Indian signs exist. We have found tracks where stock had been run off, and we intend to follow them up. It is reported that one of the Williams was found alive and told his brother that he had been attacked by the Pahutes. He soon died. There are traces of blood for more than half a mile from the house, as though some one had escaped, or some Indian had been wounded. Mr. Gilbert, of Salt Lake, has been very active in the command, as have been Sergeant McIntosh and his companions, recently from Salt Lake.

signed: W. A. Spear and Capt. Ormsby.⁵

Virginia City, May 13—10:40 A. M.

C. T. Lake—belonging to the Company that left Silver City to fight the Indians who committed the late outrages—has just arrived here. The force, 100 strong, struck camp between 3 and 4 o'clock, P. M., on the bend of the Truckee, yesterday, and advanced on the trail towards Pyramid Lake. The Indians, judged to be 2,000 strong, came upon the Company and opened fire upon them from ambush. By order of Maj. Ormsby, the troops charged upon the Indians, who opened right and left, surrounding the troops, who fired occasionally. Their ammunition soon gave out. The Indians, seeing this, closed in upon them, pouring in volley after volley. Lake was ordered to guard the pass to the east, to secure an avenue of retreat. He succeeded in this, and was followed by six men.

Lake thinks a few escaped across the river, but none others came through the pass. Maj. Ormsby was shot, and Lake thinks that the greater part of the force were left dead upon the field.

Among those who went out to fight, and who are supposed to be killed, are William S. Spear and Richard Snowden, of San Francisco; Maj. Ormsby, of Carson Valley, and Henry Meredith, of Nevada. . . .

Carson City, May 13—10½ P. M.

Mr. Meredith is dead, sure. Joe Baldwin is missing, and probably dead. Many of your acquaintances are among the dead and missing. The battle was fought about sixty-five miles from here, commencing yesterday afternoon about four o'clock and

lasted two hours, when a general retreat was made by the whites, the Indians pursuing them for twenty miles, when darkness saved the fugitives. The families are all leaving the valleys. The Indians are driving off the stock and murdering the inhabitants.

signed: Geo. Hurst,
W. M. Lent,
Geo. Story.

Virginia City, May 13—10 P. M.

The citizens of Carson City are fortifying that place against the Indians. At this place, picket guards are stationed, and will go out to-night. Every stone house is being put in defense for the protection of females and children.

The names of the dead of Capt. A. McDonald's Virginia Volunteers, taken from the roll, are: Joseph Baldwin (yet in doubt,) A. Kellot, F. Gathouse, W. Hawkins, A. Haven, George Jones, Col. McVance, H. Meredith,—McIntosh, Patrick McCount, Henry Newton, John Noyce, A. J. Peck, R. Snowden, and William Arrington, mortally wounded. The remainder, thirteen in number, have arrived.

No definite information yet as to the Carson and Silver City Companies.

Capt. T. D. Johns of San Francisco, has been appointed to the supreme military command. He has, accordingly, declared martial law. Forces are now being enrolled.

Virginia, May 14—3 P. M.

As soon as we receive arms we shall send out for the dead bodies. Col. Snowden is here, and says that he has no hope for his son. This town is under martial law. We shall look for arms to-morrow night.

Virginia City, May 14—10 P. M.

There were 106 men engaged in the battle, 80 under Ormsby, and 26 under McDonald. They followed the Indian trail from Williams' Station, Carson river, to the Truckee, down that river and through the Pass to four miles off Pyramid Lake.

When attacked, the Indians broke their line. Forced back to the river, they charged again and again. Some whites fled at the first fire. There were 500 Indians well mounted, and armed with rifles. The whites retreated, and forced the Pass. Many were

killed on the retreat. Others, completely routed are scattered through the mountains. The baggage, mules, provisions and arms are mostly lost. Stragglers have been coming in ever since the fight. There were not half as many killed as we thought when first accounts were received;—82 names of those engaged in the fight are known.

No returns are received from Silver City and Genoa companies. Much excitement exists all through the territory, Carson, Genoa, Black Rock country and Honey Lake, and all ranchmen, miners, and others outside are removing to the towns. Some settlements are fearing attacks, but we do not anticipate any here. Shoshone, Smoke Creek, Pitt River, and Pah-Ute Indians are supposed to have been engaged in the fight.

Carson City, May 14—10 A. M.

The reports of yesterday are confirmed. At least 60 or 70 must have been killed. The forces which left Downieville on the Honey Lake route, it is feared, will be cut off.

Capt. Joe, of the Washoe tribe, has come in and surrendered nine guns to Capt. Proctor, which is evidence that he wishes to preserve peace. This will subject the Washoes to the most bitter hatred and warfare from the Pah-Utes and Shoshones.

Carson and Virginia City are not generally considered in danger of an attack. All the parties outside are pouring into the towns so as to concentrate the strength. No arms or ammunition have yet arrived, although this assistance is needed. The Indians are gathering a goodly force, and are determined to clean out the whites in this country. The Pitt Rivers are supposed to be with them, and the rumor that the Salt Lake bands are also with them, has been confirmed. W. Wasson and others have gone to Long Valley, to warn the inhabitants there. Couriers have been sent in all directions. Arrington, who was brought in wounded yesterday, died last night.

signed: C. E. Goodrich.

Virginia City, May 14—11 A. M.

Maj. W. W. MacKall:—A fight took place near Pyramid Lake, on Saturday, 4 P. M., between 105 whites from this place and Carson Valley, and 500 Indians, well armed and trained, 150 of whom were well mounted. The whites were defeated, with a loss of 25. The Indians are in arms and full war-paint between

the Humboldt and Pyramid Lake, and are also reported so on Walker river. There are 300 friendly Indians at the Sink of the Carson who are threatened by the Pah-Utes if they do not join the war.

We have a few revolvers and shot guns to defend this place, but it is feared that the Indians will sweep the valley, which is perfectly defenseless. We have no arms to fit out a party for its protection. There appears to be no doubt that there is a general combination among the Indians. We want arms and ammunition at once, and troops as soon as they can be sent, as the the [sic] Indians will be emboldened by success. All prospecting parties are coming in, and all work in the country, outside of this place, is stopped. Can you send two mountain howitzers with ammunition? Judge Baldwin's son is in all right.

signed: W. L. Dall,
C. P. Patterson.

Virginia, May 15—1:30 P. M.

About midnight last night there was an alarm. The Indians were reported to be within two miles of the town. The women and children were gathered at Pat. Ryle's stone hotel, which was barricaded. Many left town with their blankets and rifles, during the night, others left yesterday. Some of them will be in San Francisco soon. No Indians were seen or heard, nor do I believe any are within fifty miles. Our population has been much diminished within the last few days, but absentees will return after the arrival of troops and arms now on the road. A war is anticipated, but the Indians won't come here to fight us.

A proposition has been made emanating from Genoa, to send delegates to Carson City at once, to organize a temporary or provisional government. We have a military government now, and it is all that is necessary for the present. Better wait for Congress to organize the Territory.

Virginia, May 15—3:30 P. M.

On account of the varied and discrepant rumors relating to the catastrophe which befel [sic] the forces engaged near Pyramid Lake, we have deferred the transmission of the names of our friends engaged in the action, until something like an approximation could be made of the true number engaged, and their

fate. The annexed names are all that are at the present time known. The lists of the different companies, with one exception, are lost; and we are dependent on our couriers to collect the remnants as they come in. All who left Gold Hill have returned safe.

We have received returns from Silver City. Most who left that place have returned.

From Genoa our tidings are as yet meagre, and from Carson City they are quite incomplete. From the two latter towns none who left have returned, and hence our difficulty. As they return, after this reaches you, there will be forwarded the names of the persons engaged in the expedition [*sic*], and the localities from which they came, so far as they can be ascertained.

The company from Genoa, under Capt. Condon, was composed as follows: Thomas Condon, D. E. Kimball, Michael Lay, Robert Ridley, Big Texas, M. Pular, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Lee, and Mr. James.

The company from Carson City, under Major Ormsby, consisted of Major Ormsby, John Blackburn, F. Steinger, Mr. Barnes, James Gatewood, William Spear, Frank Gilbert, William Mason, Wm. C. Marley, Richard Watkins, John Holmes, Samuel Brown, Dr. Eckelroth, Dr. T. Sader, James J. M'Intyre, and nine discharged United States soldiers, whose names are as yet unknown.

The company from Virginia, under Capt. F. Johnson, consisted of: F. Johnson, J. Call McFreery, Hugh McLaughlin, Charles McLoud, John Fleming, (Greek);—Henderson, (Greek); Andres Scuald, (Italian); Marco Kneegiswoldt, (Austrian); John Gaventi, (Austrian); Geo., (Chileno).

The second company from Virginia, under Capt. A. McDonald, consisted of William Arrington, C. W. Allen, G. F. Brown, J. Baldwin, D. D. Cole, A. K. Elliott, C. Forman, A. L. Grumes, F. Gathousi, W. Hawkins, Archibald Haven, J. C. Hall, George Jones, R. Lawrence, Col. McVane, Henry Meredith, P. McIntosh, Patrick McCourt S. McNaughton, Henry Newton, John Noyce, A. J. Peck, Richard Snowdon, M. Spear, O. Spear.

The company from Silver City, under R. Watkins, consisted as follows: Capt. R. Watkins, Parsons, John Holmes, Keene, Albert Bloom, Charles Devans, James Shabell, James Lee, Boston Boy—(lame and unknown.)

Total of all the companies, 81. These include all the names at present obtainable of the aggregate numbers engaged. The whole number who entered the battle was 105, and there are therefore

24 persons whose names are unaccounted for, and their fate as yet is unknown.

The names of the returned wounded and dead of the different companies to this hour are as follows:

GENOA COMPANY.—Of this company we have the following: Thomas Condon, fate unknown; *Returned*—Michael Tay, Robert Ridley, Big Texas, M. Pular, Thompson Lee James

Of the Carson company: *Dead*—Maj. Ormsby, William S. Spear, Dr. T. Jader; *Returned*—John Blackburn, D. E. Kimball, F. Steinger, C. Barnes, James Gatewood, Frank Gilbert, William Mason, Samuel Brown, William C. Marley, Richard Watkins, Dr. Eckelroth, John Holmes, James McIntyre; *Fate unknown*—Nine discharged U. S. soldiers, names unknown.

Of the Company from Silver City: *Dead*—Parsons, Charles Devans, James Lee, Boston. *Wounded*—James Shabel. *Returned*—J. Holmes, Albeot bloom, (unknown.) Mr. Keene and boy, name unknown.

Of the company from Gold Hill, the number and names are unknown. They have all returned.

Of the company from Virginia, under Capt. F. Johnson: *Dead*—F. Johnson, Charles McLoud, John Fleming, S. Aubersen, Andrew Schued, M. Knezerwitch, John Gavenbo. *Wounded*—Hugh McLaughlin. *Returned*—J. Call McLierney, Geo. O. C. Steel, D. E. Kemble, H. Beet, (unknown,) M. Shasterich.

Of the company from Virginia, under Capt. A. McDonald: *Dead*—William Armington, A. K. Elliott, W. Hawkins, George Jones, Henry Meredith, Wm. Mackintosh O. McNaughton. *Wounded*—F. Galehouse. *Returned*—A. McDonald, Charles W. Allen, Joseph Baldwin, B. D. Cole, Charles Forman, A. L. Grunns, Archibald Haven, J. C. Hall, Richard Lawrence, Col. McVane, Patrick McCourt, Henry Newton, John Noyce, A. J. Peck, William Spear. (Unknown, Richard Snowden.

The following is a recapitulation of these figures:

Fate unknown and missing, 43.

Returned alive, 38.

Dead, 21.

Wounded, 3.

Total, 105.

Capt. T. D. Johns, commanding, has despatched an ambulance, with Dr. Perkins, of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to the Truckee river to attend the wounded there, with provisions and other necessary stores. He left at 11 A. M. to-day.⁶

Virginia City, May 17—9 P. M.

Messrs. Espers, Anderson, Lamar, Ques, King, Charles Palmer and Marco Cuesavick, left here Saturday, 5th, for Pyramid Lake. At Red Bluff, Truckee river, they were joined by John Gibson and Mr. Canfield, recently from Oroville. They left Red Bluff, Monday morning, for Pyramid Lake. Their bodies have been found in Willoughsby river, four miles from the place of departure, showing that they were murdered the day they left Red Bluff. This was the day on which the massacre at Williams' Station took place.

This settlement has been considerably alarmed a few nights past, by reports of Indians close at hand. There are no Indians probably within fifty miles of this place. Great fears has [*sic*] been experienced by thousands of poltroons who have run away from here.

Two hundred and fifty stand of arms and an escort of twenty men, under Col. Sanders, from Sacramento, reached Genoa last night, and started for Virginia City this morning.

Dr. T. Jader, reported killed in the battle, returned yesterday with three slight arrow wounds. He lay concealed near the battle ground two days. He saw seventeen dead bodies of whites stripped, but not mutilated. Three days ago their faces were beaten with stones. Dr. Jader had nothing to eat for four days.

At an election held here yesterday to decide for or against a Provisional Territory, the vote stood—*ayes*, 7; *noes*, 1,175. Carson also opposed it, but Gold Hill and Silver City voted in its favor.

PART II

ACTIVITIES AND DISPATCHES IN CALIFORNIA

[As reported in detail in the columns of the San Francisco *Steamer Bulletin*, May 21, 1860.]

Placerville, May 13—3 P. M.

The intelligence of the defeat and slaughter of Major Ormsby's company caused intense excitement in our city.

Mayor Swan promptly called a meeting of the citizens at one o'clock, P. M., to make provision for supplying the inhabitants of Western Utah with arms and ammunition. The Theatre was crowded. Mayor Swan acted as Chairman, and D. W. Gelwicks as Secretary. Mayor Swan called the meeting to order, and explained its object. Fervent and patriotic speeches were made by several citizens, when resolutions were adopted authorizing

the Mayor to procure arms and ammunition, and forward them instantly to Carson Valley. A messenger was sent to Captain Von Guelder, of Coloma, to obtain the arms of the "Coloma Greys." The meeting promptly and liberally responded to the subscription list, and a large sum was paid in before the meeting adjourned, to defray expenses in sending arms, etc.

Sacramento, May 13—6 P. M.

The citizens of Sacramento are requested to meet in front of the Orleans Hotel, at 6 o'clock this evening to concert measures for the relief of their fellow citizens at Carson Valley.

The feeling was further increased by the announcement that white men had been described acting with the Indians, inducing the belief that the treacherous Mormons were leagued in with the savages.

Action of the Authorities.

Naturally the first inclinations of the public mind favored the immediate chastisement of the savages committing the outrage, while immediate attention was given to the defense of the residents of Washoe against any further hostile proceedings. General Clarke of the U. S. Army was appealed to for relief and the authority of Governor Downey invoked for aid. The Governor was absent from Sacramento and the Secretary of State, Dr. Price, essayed the following action:

THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO GEN. CLARKE.

Sacramento, May 13—3 P. M.

Gen. Clarke—Can you furnish arms immediately for the citizens of Carson Valley? There has been a terrible butchery of our citizens by the Indians—Gov. Downey absent.

Johnson Price.

THE SAME TO GOV. DOWNEY.

The wires are cut between here (Sacramento) and Carson City. I have taken the responsibility to order two hundred stands of arms, with ammunition, to the seat of war.

Johnson Price.

GOV. DOWNEY'S ANSWER.

You have done rightly. I am now making arrangements with Gen. Clarke. Have any arms been sent from other sources?

J. G. Downey.

GEN. CURTIS TO GEN. HAVEN.

What are you doing relative the Carson Valley Massacre? Where is the Commander-in-Chief, Gov. Downey? Will Gen. Clarke take action in this matter?

N. Greene Curtis,
Maj. Gen. 4th Division, California Militia.

GEN. HAVEN'S ANSWER.

We are acting in concert, and promptly.

J. P. Haven.

. . . from Gen. Curtis, to Gov. Downey:

Sacramento, May 13th.

To His Excellency John G. Downey: Sir—The Sutter Rifle and City Guard of Sacramento, and the Marysville Rifles, are ready to march at any moment. They await orders.

The Nevada Rifles and Coloma Greys are also ready.

A company of citizens of Placerville are also prepared to march to the scene of action forthwith.

N. Greene Curtis,
Maj. Gen. Div. California Militia.

THE STATE AND FEDERAL AUTHORITIES MOVING.

On the receipt of the disastrous news in this city, although Gen. Clarke was present, Gov. Downey was on a visit to the State Prison. A concert of action between the State and Federal authorities was immediately determined upon. Gen. Haven, of the State militia, with commendable zeal, boarded the U. S. steamer *Shubrick*. Her commander, Capt. Boggs, was notified of the exigency of affairs, at 4 P. M. At a quarter past 5 P. M., the *Shubrick* reached San Quentin, with Gen. Haven, and the Governor at once repaired to this city [San Francisco], for an interview with General Clarke.

THE ACTION DETERMINED UPON.

Obstacles in the way of action by the Executive of the State arose from the fact that the enemy committing depredations were in a neighboring territory, without the limits of California. General Clarke, with respect to furnishing an immediate force was powerless from the meagre number at his command—two companies in the vicinity of this city and one at Benecia, with an available number for duty of perhaps 120 men being all that

could be depended upon. Under such circumstances an aggressive warfare was out of the question and measures of defense were the next resort. A conference was held between Governor Downey and General Clarke, when the latter very promptly signified his willingness to break through the trammels of "red-tapeism" of the strict line of his authority, and agreed to assume a certain responsibility upon a proper representation of the facts by the Governor.

REQUISITION FOR ARMS BY THE EXECUTIVE.

Governor Downey forthwith transmitted a requisition to General Clarke for 500 stand of arms, accoutrements and ammunition. The requisition cannot be published, but the action of the General is shown in the following order:

San Francisco, May 13th, 1860.

To Captain Callender, Commanding Benecia Arsenal.—Deliver to Governor Downey, of California, five hundred stand of arms, one hundred thousand rounds of ammunition, and the accoutrements necessary for each stand.

N. S. CLARKE,

Col. Sixth Infantry, Brevet Brigadier General.

We are apprised that the arm to be issued is the Minnie Rifle Musket, than which a more effective weapon does not exist in any service.

THE GOVERNOR SENDS THE ARMS TO WASHOE.

Adjutant-General Kibbe being absent from the State, a temporary substitute was found in General Haven, of the 2d Division, who shook off the trappings of his fancy rank, and bent himself in earnest to the real duties of a soldier, as appears by the following documents, bearing the official date of the seat of government, but indited from this city [San Francisco]:

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,

Sacramento, May 13, 1860.

To J. P. Haven, Major General California Militia—

SIR: In the absence of the Adjutant Quartermaster-General, you will discharge such duty, and proceed to receive, receipt for, and dispatch such arms and ammunition as Major-General Clarke, Commanding Pacific Division, U. S. A., will deliver to you, upon my requisition.

You will use all possible dispatch in transporting the arms, etc., to the scene of Indian outrages in Carson Valley, using all necessary economy on behalf of the State.

Consult with the regular and authorized command of such military expedition as you may find at the scene of action, and take proper receipts the property.

Having complied with these instructions, you will report to me forthwith. Respectfully,

John G. Downey.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Sacramento, May 13, 1860.

Col. C. W. Tozer, Aid-de-Camp, &c.—SIR: You will place yourself under the order of the Acting Adjutant and Quartermaster-General (Haven) and render such aid as he may require in transporting arms etc., to Carson Valley. Having done which you will report to me forthwith. Respectfully,

John G. Downey,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

GENERAL HAVEN ON THE MOVE FOR THE SCENE OF ACTION.

About 11 P. M., General Haven, provided with the above authority, left headquarters and took a special steamer for Benecia, getting under weigh at 2½ A. M., prepared to carry the efficient means of relief at his disposal with the utmost dispatch to the field of hostilities.

From the prompt action that we have detailed, the citizens of Carson Valley will soon receive the only really requisite assistance. There are fighting men enough there, or soon will be to successfully cope with the savages, and all apprehension for the safety of the main settlements should be allayed. The scourging of the Indians who committed the late slaughter, and the probing to the bottom of the alleged collusion of the treacherous Mormons, belongs to the Federal Government. Such U. S. troops belonging to the command of Gen. Clarke as can be availed of for the service, we are assured by that officer, will at once be ordered to march. At Salt Lake city [*sic*], there were stationed, at last accounts, 650 men, infantry, dragoons, and artillery, under the command of Col. St. George Cooke. Gen. Harney, of the Oregon division, has doubtless an available body under his orders, and in a very brief period the General Government at Washington can be apprised of all the facts.

MONDAY, 3 o'clock, P. M.

We telegraphed early this morning to Virginia City for a full summary of the latest news from that quarter. The answer received at 2 P. M. was: "Everybody is so excited that nothing can be done. There is no more known to-day than was telegraphed last evening."

We have other parties to get a summary of news, and hope yet to receive full particulars before going to press for our city edition. Meanwhile we have the following particulars through private dispatches:

A dispatch to Gov. Downey states that the excitement at Virginia City is overdone, and that the number killed has been exaggerated.

Mr. Holiday, received a dispatch from Mr. Marley, agent of the Pony Express. He was in the battle—had a horse and mule shot under him, and escaped by a *scratch*." [sic] He thinks some 60 men were killed. . . .

Gen. Clarke has ordered the U. S. troops at Honey Lake to proceed to Virginia City, a distance of about 100 miles.

A dispatch received here at two o'clock by C. A. Crane, from Mr. Williams of the *Territorial Enterprise*, says that Mr. Mason (a partner of Mr. Spear) and who was at first named as among the killed, was in the fight but escaped unhurt. The telegram adds, "The number of the killed was not so great as reported."

The troops (consisting of two companies of light artillery acting as infantry) that Gen. Clark [sic] sends to Carson Valley, will leave at 4 o'clock, this afternoon, on the boat for Sacramento. Probably the company of infantry at Benecia will be joined to the command *en route*, embarking this evening. . . .

The sum of \$2,000 was raised last evening at Sacramento, for aid to the volunteers in Carson Valley. . . .

The Marysville *Express* gives the following extracts from two private letters written by S. W. Langton, from Downieville, on the evening of 14th and 15th of May. The first dated letter says:

We received intelligence last night from Sierra Valley, that Joseph Blodget and a Mr. Cady are missing, and are supposed to have been killed by Indians. They went to look for stock, and not returning that night, a party went in search for them, and discovered Indian signs on their trail; and also, Blodget's dog came back, apparently much terrified. They went in the direction of Pyramid Lake, and are doubtless murdered.

Urgent dispatches requesting aid and arms were received last night and to-day from Messrs. Ayer, Hungerford and others.

It was feared here that Dr. Bryant and W. M. Stewart were in great peril on the road, but both arrived here to-day—the latter having left Virginia City before the reception of the news of the battle. Dr. Bryant states that going he met ten men, separately, who had told him that they had been with the Indians at Pyramid Lake, and that they are fifteen thousand strong—six thousand of them mounted and all well armed, and with great quantities of ammunition—Pitt River Indians, Shoshones and Pah-Utes. According to the story of the men who warned Dr. Bryant to turn back, the Indians say they are hemmed in by the whites on either side; they must either starve or fight; they are determined to war to the death.

The following is from the letter of [1]5th May:

Your dispatch relative to Sierra Valley received. Much alarm is felt there. A messenger came through last night reports some 1,200 Indians camped in Long Valley. He informed me that they learned from some friendly Indians, (of the Washoe tribe) that it was the intention of the Pah-Utes to make a descent upon the valley in a few days, and drive off all the stock.

FOR THE SEAT OF WAR.

General Clark [*sic*] has ordered one company of infantry from Humboldt, to be here in five or six days, and in readiness.

The troops at the Presidio are under orders to start at a moment's notice to the seat of war, and should Captain Steward call for more troops from Carson, they will proceed forthwith.

(*To be continued*)

NOTES

¹The telegrams, dispatches, letters, and news accounts are to be found in the columns of the *San Francisco Steamer Bulletin*, May 21, 1860. The *Bulletin* was published as a daily, weekly, and as a "Steamer" issue, the last carrying stories out of the "Daily," up to the latest possible moment prior to the sailing of the packet boat.

²Historians after De Quille relied on accounts of the war as told by survivors as late as twenty, thirty, and forty and more years after the event. There is, of course, the later historian who relies entirely on secondary sources for his material.

³This is in keeping with De Quille's *Big Bonanza*, p. 118, account.

⁴Ragtown was a trading post on the Carson River where "exhausted and thirsty emigrants recuperated after their 40-mile trip across the Carson desert between Humboldt Lake and Carson River." The trading post was slightly to the north and east of Hazen, Nevada.

⁵This dispatch confirms the number killed as stated by De Quille, *op. cit.*, p. 118, and challenges succeeding historians who, seemingly, did not think that the murder of three men constituted a "massacre."

⁶A similar list of names is to be found in Angel's, *History of Nevada*, pp. 153-154, and in accounts by succeeding historians who rely on Angel.