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**JOHN BIDWELL:  
CIVIL WAR POLITICS, AND THE INDIAN CRISIS  
OF 1862**

By Michele Shover

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# John Bidwell

## Civil War Politics, and the Indian Crisis of 1862

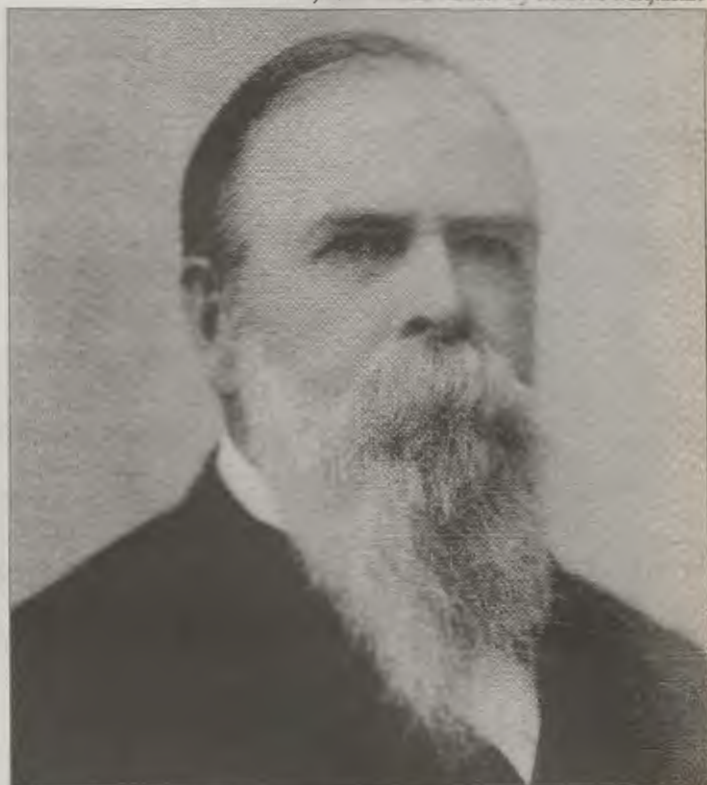
By Michele Shover

Although the Civil War had a major impact on the rest of the country, in California its direct effects were less dramatic. While 8,000 of the state's men headed East for the front, for others California became a kind of haven from the tragedy. For example, it became host to men who declined to enlist in the cause which their brothers and neighbors served on battlefields. Among the men who arrived over the war's course, some evidently believed they had fought enough or had lost too much. Once such men had settled on farms around Chico Township in the north-eastern Sacramento Valley, they could do little more about the war than quarrel about its merits.<sup>1</sup>

Fuel for debate came from several sources. Because John Bidwell and Company received news on its new telegraph machine, area residents were able to follow reports about frontline engagements. Beyond that they relied on personal correspondence and San Francisco or Sacramento newspaper articles which local papers copied. No less than Chico's new arrivals, residents in the area since the 1840s and 1850s also worried about friends and family members back home who now faced death or ruin. Because residents' interest in the war was deep, their opinions and feelings about it filtered into both personal relationships and public issues.

This essay will focus on two aspects of the Civil War's course in Chico Township and its environs. Part One will examine a dispute in 1862 which began with an Indian and settler clash. However, as a side effect of the Civil War, its aftermath pitted rebel sympathizers against John Bidwell, the lightly populated area's most prominent citizen and its leading Union supporter. Because the evidence which survived to illuminate the war tensions between Bidwell and his neighbors that year is often murky, later interpretations confused 1862 events with those in 1863. For example, spirited references to the 1862 and 1863 situation intermixed in an 1886 reminiscence by area resident John Guill, as well as in Bidwell's 1890s mem-

From *John Bidwell, Pioneer* by Marcus Benjamin



John Bidwell, 1819-1900

oir, and in other early twentieth century accounts of Chicoans who recalled the Civil War years. Because memories of Bidwell's dispute with his neighbors in 1862 lingered for decades, the incident invites reconsideration. This essay will examine the contemporary accounts and memoirs in order to clarify how the Indian-settler problems and Civil War issues happened to intersect in 1862, but followed largely parallel paths after that.

The second part of this paper will focus on tensions between rebel and Union supporters which played out in Chico Township and the surrounding area during the years 1864 and 1865. These were the closing years of "Camp Bidwell," which the California Volunteers had set up at Chico in mid-1863 under

orders of General George Wright to address Indian-settler issues. A side effect of the California Volunteers' presence well into 1865 meant that they became an occasional factor in local controversy over war-related issues.

### Part One: Chico's Indian War and the U.S. Civil War Collide: 1861 and 1862

In 1860 a dispute within northern Butte County's Democratic Party prefigured the war strains that were about to evolve. That year John Bidwell, a Union Democrat, joined the effort to preserve that party from a takeover by an opposing faction, the Chivalry Democrats. The Chivalry Democrats championed the South's demand for states' rights, a position which they principally advanced in support of slavery and its expansion. The Union Democratic faction which Bidwell supported would confront them on one issue after another, not only in Chico Township, but at the county and state levels. Bidwell was a delegate to the national Democratic convention in Charleston that year when the supporter's of moderate Stephen A. Douglas challenged the Southern Democrats' John C.

Breckenridge in a fight for control over the national party. Because Bidwell was the only California delegate who supported the Douglas faction, he stood in opposition to powerful Californians such as Senators William Gwin and Milton Latham, both of whom relied on the political support of "State's Rights Democrats" who supported the Confederacy in California. In Washington after the convention, Bidwell later recalled, "Stephen A. Douglas...sent for me. He wanted to see the man who dared to differ with Gwin and the rest of them from California."<sup>2</sup> Because Douglas and Breckenridge each ran as the Democratic Party's nominee for president in 1860, they split the party's national vote—and that in Butte County as well. The party's split resulted in Abraham Lincoln's Republican Party victory.

The war's onset in 1861 launched side effects which reached the remotest parts of Chico Township where it registered as a new cause for personal conflicts. For example, in August 1861, war partisans came to blows at Daniel Gibson's store when the owner fought with Union Democrat Miles Harper who had killed "Secesh" Turner the previous day.<sup>3</sup> In another instance of the tensions, throughout the following

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winter Chico readers of Oroville's *Butte Record* followed two trials and the last minute reprieve of a Confederate sympathizer, Jacob Girr, who had killed Union man, Fred Wagner, in self-defense. Wagner had attempted to knife Girr because he joined in an election day cheer for Jefferson Davis.

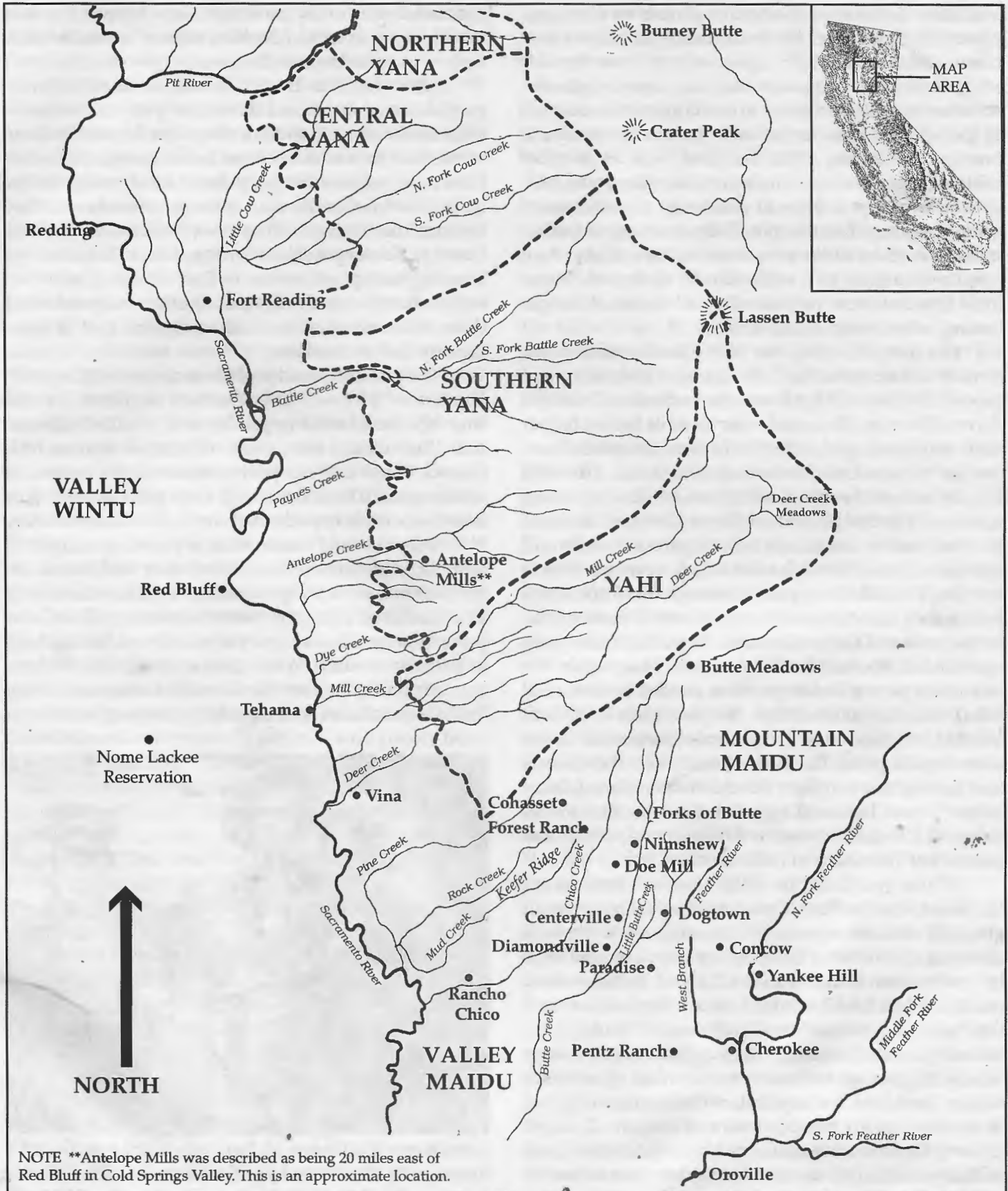
As the Girr trials and appeals played out, two other Union men boasted that they had whipped seven local Confederate supporters, whom their opponents dismissed as "Rebs," in a fistfight.<sup>4</sup> Such incidents most often reached print when men sympathetic to the South's cause were on the losing end. However, they found some success in Chico where John Bidwell became accustomed to the "Reb" rowdies who rode back and forth in front of his place "hurrahing for Jeff Davis" to celebrate Confederate victories.<sup>5</sup>

While poor or young men around Chico defended their choice of the Union or the Confederacy with street fights, the established residents of Chico Township advanced each side through traditional politics. For example, at the 1861 State Democratic Central Committee meeting in San Francisco, Butte County's Assembly member from Chico, Joseph McCorkle, a lawyer who lived just south of Little Chico Creek and who had been Bidwell's acquaintance since their gold mining days, urged the delegates to moderate their outspoken opposition to the South's cause.<sup>6</sup> As an elected politician, McCorkle was eager to keep the party's voter base—his voter base—as united as possible. A few months later, Bidwell urged the Chico Democratic Club's large majority of Chivalry Democrats to turn from its disapproval of the war against the Confederacy and to embrace all-out Union support. He soon found he and McCorkle were each in competition against three other men for the party's gubernatorial nomination. Over the course of eleven ballots, the two Butte County men competed for the bottom spot in the vote with Bidwell consistently coming in last. He suffered this humiliation because McCorkle and the other county delegates, angry at his refusal to work a compromise with the Chivalry Democrats, denied him 22 of their county's 23 votes. Bidwell later denounced their action not only as a "kind of contempt" for him personally, but he also regarded their vote as a theft of the county's Democratic Party by Chivalry Democrats on behalf of the South's cause.<sup>7</sup> When the unrepentant Chico Democratic Club members returned home, they re-nominated McCorkle for a new term in the State Assembly.<sup>8</sup>

One reason why McCorkle and his allies worried

about the loss of support from Chico's Chivalry Democrats, was that they controlled enough votes to influence an election. In 1860, while roughly 63% of Chico's white, American-born males were Northerners, 37% were natives of the South or the Border states. Substantial Chico land owners who had immigrated from the latter area included such individuals as James Morehead of Virginia as well as Thomas Wright and D.M. Reavis from Missouri. In 1862, one of their number was John Tatham, a Virginian, whose former slave, Joseph, 30, tended his Chico area farm.<sup>9</sup> John Bidwell could recall "one or two" of the Southern men who supported slavery but objected to secession. Of these men, one, whom Bidwell never identified, kept the rancher informed about threats against him by other Southerners.<sup>10</sup> While there may have been Union Democrats among local men from the South, no evidence points to them as either organized or visible. In sum, at the war's start Chico Township's demographics led Union Democrats and Chivalry Democrats to become active adversaries in the valley township of farms centered on the village of Chico adjacent to Bidwell's ranch.

In 1862 war-centered tensions collided with an eruption of Indian-settler conflicts. This began in late June northeast of Chico when a renegade Indian band, the Mill Creeks, appeared on Cohasset Road above Rock Creek. "Mill Creeks" was the name area settlers applied to bands of renegade Indian men, many of whom had fled reservations such as Nome Lackee in Tehama County, Nome Cult in Mendocino County, or a Smith River camp. Typically the Mill Creeks' changing membership drew from several tribes or tribelets, but their bands consistently operated out of camps in Mill or Deer Creek canyons of eastern Tehama County. Individual men also moved throughout the canyons and sometimes worked on valley farms. Mill and Deer Creek canyons, which are so rugged that they were virtually impenetrable by settlers, had been the territory of the small but aggressive Yahi tribe. The Mill Creeks may have included some Yahis, but mostly they comprised changing clusters of mountain Maidus from various tribelets. While it is not possible to document how this mix of men from historically rival tribes and tribelets evolved, their invasion of Deer Creek Canyon in the mid-to late 1850s evidently overwhelmed or absorbed most or all of the Yahis. The mountain Maidus who were in search of a refuge may have called on a tradition of limited cooperation among rival tribes and tribelets in order to unify for specific purposes. Even though Maidus, Yahis, Wintus,



NOTE \*\*Antelope Mills was described as being 20 miles east of Red Bluff in Cold Springs Valley. This is an approximate location.

Map showing the northern California area of Indian-settler conflicts

and other tribes were fierce antagonists by tradition, nevertheless they had also periodically employed treaties in order to negotiate agreements to cross boundaries. Valley and mountain Maidus, for example, enacted such treaties in order to exchange products such as the bows of a particular craftsman or the arrows of another. By the late 1850s bands of these cross-tribal raiders had taken on an independent identity as Mill Creeks whose practice was to avenge the offenses of settlers against their people. They also targeted other Indians such as those who worked for settlers. As a longtime member of a settler family observed, "these (Mill Creeks) were very warlike, all the small neighboring tribes being afraid of them."<sup>11</sup>

On June 25, 1862, the Mill Creeks, having just burned settler cabins and slaughtered livestock, then crossed to Keefer Ridge where they murdered a freight driver, Thomas Allen, and wounded his Indian helper who barely escaped in flight. In local Indian culture, justice required equivalent acts in kind. The Mill Creeks' attack, therefore, likely was retaliation for the deaths of five Indians whom Butte Creek miners had lynched earlier that month to avenge recent thefts and murders. From the Cohasset Road scene of Allen's murder, the Mill Creek party descended to Rock Creek where they came upon three children of Vermont natives Frank and Elvira Hickok as they filled their buckets with blackberries for their mother. Meanwhile, the wounded young Indian worker alerted several men who soon discovered that the two girls and their brother had headed in the general direction of the Indian band's path. The local men armed themselves and headed out to collect the children and bring them home. It was not until nightfall that the men found scraps of the girls' dresses and their horses, which had been shot. The children had vanished.<sup>12</sup>

When word of the Mill Creeks' actions on Cohasset Road at Rock Creek reached Chico, a small group of citizens convened a meeting early the next morning. In the belief that "the children are doubtless in possession of the Indians," these businessmen drafted a call for Governor Leland Stanford to send the "men and means" for a full search.<sup>13</sup> Outside resources seemed necessary because any pursuit party would require an extensive exploration of canyons where the Mill Creeks situated their camps beyond Butte County in remote areas of eastern Tehama County. Dr. Samuel Sproul, who had signed the Chico petition, headed by steamer for Sacramento where he delivered their appeal to Governor Stanford on the 27th. While the Chicoans' plea for military help

seemed their best choice at the moment, over the next month an issue would develop as to whether the military or local Indian trackers were the better choice.

Meanwhile, as Dr. Sproul was enroute to Sacramento, searchers found the arrow-pierced bodies of Minnie Hickok, 13, and her sister Ida, 16, which some of the men removed to Chico for an emotional burial. However, because the party had found no sign of the girls' little brother, Frank, others continued on as they tracked the Indians. When they reached Mill Creek Canyon, its steep walls and rugged conditions led the men to give up and return to Rock Creek. There they stopped at the ranch of James Keefer who persuaded them to hand over the search to experienced Tehama County Indian trackers.

The principal leader of those men was "Captain" Harmon—"Hi"—Good, who had acquired his title from the local tracking parties who regularly elected him their leader over years of sorties against Mill Creeks. Good and his party took over the search, in which some Chico Township men participated. This search concluded with their arrival in Chico on July 11th. They carried Frankie Hickok's severely mutilated and decomposed remains, which they had found under rocks near Antelope Creek in the canyons east of Red Bluff after a lengthy period of tracking. The Good party had retaliated with the murder of Indian men at the nearby camp. When they entered Chico, where the community had awaited word for two weeks, they found tensions were at a peak. A distraught and agitated crowd flowed to the cemetery to witness the six-



Northern California Indian trackers Sandy Young, Hi Good and Jay Salisbury, with Good's servant, Indian Ned. Young worked for Bidwell as his chief vaquero.

year-old boy's burial. Whatever words the mourners heard that day neither calmed nor assuaged them. They keened; they accused; they blamed.

At this point Civil War passions intruded on the Hickok case. As these passions had deepened, they had begun to cross over and to affect local issues, even as in this case—Indian issues. Pre-war settlers from both Northern and Southern states had brought their convictions about slavery and secession with them. Through the 1850s, however, they had made it a point to avoid public discussion of such issues in the interest of keeping good relations with their neighbors. With Abraham Lincoln's election, this changed. According to North Carolina native, Frank Crowder, Lincoln's election was the provocation which had plunged western Butte County into "bitter strife" and left residents "pretty much at one another's throats." Crowder added, "Everything was at a fever pitch and men were willing to believe most anything."<sup>14</sup> The Crowders, residents since 1856, were Chivalry Democrats who lived at Rock Creek north of Chico, a voter precinct in which Confederate supporters clustered during these Civil War years. At the age of 18, Crowder was one of the searchers who first found the Hickok girls' bodies. He would become a successful rancher, who at one time leased and operated 15,000 acres of the Bidwell ranch. His memoir, which treats a broad array of Chico issues over the nineteenth century, is largely consistent with the memoirs of his contemporaries' such as John Bidwell, Sim Moak and Robert Anderson.

From Frankie Hickok's gravesite, the crowd surged back across Big Chico Creek to John Bidwell's store where the men stormed upstairs and packed the public meeting room. Anger resonated against the room's stark walls and plain benches. Frank Crowder would remember this meeting as the angriest he ever attended.<sup>15</sup> Virginia native, Missouri resident and a '49er, John Guill, thirty, would remember the crowd in Chico that day as "the largest I have ever seen."<sup>16</sup> Guill's own sense of the danger from Mill Creeks had crystallized that spring when bow and arrow-wielding raiders had killed his neighbor, Michael Walsh, while that sheep raiser tended his stock in foothills east of Chico. Like Guill, other men present at the meeting also found that the Hickok murders had transformed their daily lives. On widely-scattered farms, their wives and children would not go to the outhouse alone and hardly slept. Their family dogs, already work animals, now became sentries.

Families felt at risk because normal routines regu-

larly took husbands to Chico on errands. In addition, because the new farms earned only small returns, it was common in the area for these small farmers to take out-of-town jobs, for example as teamsters, for days or weeks at a time. In the meantime, their wives' routine was to stay near home where every day of every week they tended children, prepared food, and made virtually everything their families used. For example, farm wife Mary Compton would recall that during those years she went into Chico, the nearest town, only twice in eleven years. While Mrs. Compton experienced no threat from Indians, other farm women's feelings of vulnerability, which surged with the Hickok incident, would linger for several years. As in 1859 at Rock Creek and in 1863, a year after the Hickok incident, when Mill Creeks again killed rural children, a number of farm families in 1862 temporarily moved to more secure areas.<sup>17</sup>

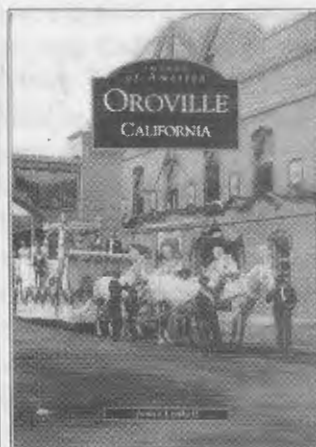
While the crowd in the meeting room over John Bidwell's store stewed about what course to take regarding the Mill Creeks, the Southerners present discovered they had enough votes to run the meeting. They were among the "large number of secessionists in the country[side]" who had nettled Rancho Chico's owner for over a year.<sup>18</sup> In this spirit of unfriendly rivalry Chico's "Reb" sympathizers elected a Maryland native, R.H. O'Farrell, their secretary. They also elected their own man, Washington Henshaw, 54, an Alabaman, to chair the meeting. Henshaw, a prominent farmer whose land was worth \$10,000 in 1860, still retained the services of a young black woman, Matilda Henshaw, 24. She had tended his family since she was a child when the Henshaws took her west with them. Washington Henshaw was a Chivalry Democrat who resented not only Bidwell's politics, but also his Rancho Chico Indians who, he claimed, sometimes took fruit from Henshaw's orchard.<sup>19</sup>

Such men turned the public forum into a venue where they could vent their anger at John Bidwell, with whom they were already at odds in Democratic Party politics. This time they accused him of farm labor practices which abetted the Mill Creeks. The accusation seems absurd. However, it is one that surfaced periodically at that time from a general knowledge that on occasion a few valley Indian men would fade out of the valley and reappear in Mill Creek parties, who made raids on valley farms or at Butte Creek mining camps. And, on occasion, valley farmers would hire mountain Indians, for example, when they needed seasonal workers. Those mountain Indians, settlers believed, would then return to their

## Images of America Oroville, California

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own territory from which a few might reappear in raiding parties where their knowledge of the farms and access to weapons was valuable. For example, the *Sacramento Union* reported that, in the Hickok case, Chico area people believed that the valley Indians are "in league with those of the mountains, or at least form a blind for the mountain Indians to get into the valley."<sup>20</sup> Afterward such men would filter back into the valley Indian populace.

This was an accusation which both Northern and Southern-born residents had leveled against valley farmers, who worked resident Indian labor forces which they housed on "rancherias." In the Chico area John Bidwell was the biggest, but not the sole rancheria operator. In 1862, however, that criticism of Bidwell appeared in company with an added accusation by angry local Confederate sympathizers.

The charge was that John Bidwell, as local leader of the Union Democrats, was a rank hypocrite on the issue of slavery. In the opinion of vocal Chicanos, many with Confederate sympathies, the rancher was himself the equivalent of an Indian slaver. Yet, they fumed, he had the temerity to be the most ardent local opponent of the South's black slavery. To Chico's former Southerners, who had lived on or around plantations or who sympathized with that culture, Rancho Chico's Indian rancheria resembled the plantations which Lincoln's war would destroy in their old home states. For example, as late as 1877, Mississippi native Dr. Oscar Stansbury, would explain to his new Southern wife that Bidwell's treatment of the rancheria Indians resembled how "the better plantation owners cared for their darkeys back home" in Maryland.<sup>21</sup>

Out of frustration at ranchers like Bidwell, James Keefer, and Robert Durham, all three of whom controlled permanent Indian workforces, local Chivalry Democrats adopted a pejorative, "black abolitionist." By contrast, their national counterparts favored the term, "Black Republicans." While both terms disparaged opponents of black slavery, in the context of Butte County politics during the Civil War, rhetoric which spoke of "black abolitionists" evidently referred to those whom the speakers alleged wanted abolition only for slaves in the South, but not for Indian "slaves" on their own ranches.<sup>22</sup>

Contributing to their conviction that rancheria Indians were the equivalent of slaves, immigrants to Chico from the South may have seen in local Indians a physical resemblance to the slaves whom they recalled in comparable roles and circumstances at their old homes. A journal entry by geologist William

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Brewer, a New Englander, whose survey party camped at Rancho Chico in 1862, suggests this possibility. Brewer described how the California Indians he saw at Chico appeared to him as "very dark, black as our darkest mulattoes and not as intelligent looking as the negro."<sup>23</sup>

Neither at the meeting in 1862 nor at any time in later years did John Bidwell ever acknowledge any similarity between his Indian workforce and slaves. Instead, inasmuch as a few in the crowd were willing to listen to him in the 1862 meeting, Bidwell's defense of the rancheria Indians ignored the slavery allegation. Instead, his response denied the allegation that a few valley Indian men might have left his ranch, joined the Mill Creeks on occasional sorties against miners or farmers, and then melted back into his valley workforce. Although Bidwell himself had experienced serious problems with a few of his Indian workers who collaborated with mountain Indians in the early to mid-1850s, he refused to acknowledge the rural peoples' concern. As Bidwell made his case, one of his antagonists whose name does not appear, advanced on Rancho Chico's owner and shook his fist in Bidwell's face: "Shut your mouth. If you open it again in defense of those outlaws I'll strike YOU!"<sup>24</sup>

Bidwell, of course, was by no means alone among Chico Township's residents in his disapproval of the South's slavery. An important group who shared his view was a segment of the local Methodists, the denomination to which most Chicanos belonged. On the national level, Methodists were in such a turmoil over the issue of slavery that, well before the war broke out, they had split into Northern and Southern congregations. The Chico Methodists, who relied on the periodic appearance of circuit preachers, managed to ignore this split until war issues pushed the parishioners to part company. For example, John Bidwell and Company's young store clerk, Lewis Stilson, stayed home from church when "a Copperhead preached."<sup>25</sup> One spur to the local Methodists' split into two congregations was Pastor George Gray's sermon to a mixed congregation in which he blamed Northern abolitionists for the war. Afterward, Union people grumbled in the schoolyard after the services. Next, they formed their own congregation and found a different schoolhouse in which to meet.<sup>26</sup>

Of the two branches in Chico, the Methodist Church South was the more active and better funded. For example, its members built a handsome church at least five years before its Northern counterpart could raise enough money for more than a shabby parson-

age in which they also held services. Before Northern Methodists could scrape up enough money to build a separate church building, black Chicanos had a lot and new building for their African Methodist Episcopal Church. They were beneficiaries of John Bidwell's new Southern wife, who had arrived with black servants, possibly her father's newly freed slaves.

John Guill, a member of the Methodist South congregation, would remember twenty years later that "during the most exciting time of our civil war...everything else was absorbed by the war news, when neighbor was suspicious of neighbor."<sup>27</sup> What was distinctive about Bidwell's fellow Union supporters in the 1862 meeting was their reluctance to support him against the local "Rebs." However, over the next few years they would not combine with his most ardent antagonists to any important degree.

With Chivalry Democrats in charge of the 1862 meeting, "radical and fiery speeches" about Bidwell's Indian slaves resulted in a resolution to remove the valley's "tame" Indians to a reservation. Men at the meeting resolved to end Chico Township's "Indian slavery, and they warned rancheria owners of the danger if they persisted in trying to defeat the wishes of their neighbors and fellow citizens."<sup>28</sup> Bidwell's memory decades later mistakenly claimed that the Chico men's attempt to drive out his Indians stemmed from the Lewis killings and kidnapping which took place a year after the Hickok killings. Those 1863 threats would come from foothill farmers and not from Chico men proper. It was in 1862 that his most important threat from his immediate Chico Township neighbors came on the Indian question.<sup>29</sup> The resolution which that 1862 meeting passed was important because it provided the principal grounds for Bidwell's later claim that Chico Township men wanted to drive out his Indian workers and their families.<sup>30</sup>

Years later, when Bidwell recalled the 1862 Chico meeting, he fumed that his attackers' accusations deserved no more credit than the ravings of "infuriated drunken men," who both envied his success and were ignorant about the burden he carried in his support of rancheria Indians.<sup>31</sup> Ironically, his "burden" argument was also a defense which U.S. Senator John C. Calhoun and other Southerners employed to defend slavery.

While Bidwell understood the political weight of Chico's Confederate champions from his clashes with them in Democratic Party politics, other measures of their influence also entered into his assessment of the threat they posed to the Indian workforce on which

his ranch depended. Not only were Southerners numerous, as the census figures in the end notes demonstrate, they were also organized. In Chico Township during the war they operated a chapter of the Knights of the Golden Circle or American Knights, a shadowy national organization which promoted the expansion of slavery into the territories. While the Knights, a secret group, were little documented in other parts of California and mostly a rumor in other parts of the country, John Bidwell recalled having kept a close watch on them in Chico:

*Whenever the Unionists were defeated, [the Knights] became very bold. I employed a man to join that society; paid his initiation fees, etc. Every night after they had a meeting he reported to me. He reported their signs and pass words. At one time they had under consideration and actually did resolve that every man of them should kill one Republican. 2 men were selected to kill me. Things went on that way until the Union began to be victorious and until the soldiers came up.<sup>32</sup>*

According to Bidwell, because support for the South's cause was prominent among California's leading politicians and because thousands of Union supporters had gone east to fight, Union sympathizers like himself considered it imperative to do all they could to contain the Southern sympathizers' influence. To that end, they founded Union League chapters such as one in Oroville, the Butte County seat. Bidwell employee Lewis Stilson was an officer of the Chico chapter in which member Sim Moak recalled, "We pledged ourselves to uphold the Union at all hazards..."<sup>33</sup>

Under these conditions, Bidwell had reason to worry about the threats opponents had leveled against him at the June 1862 meeting in response to the Hickok killings. Of even more concern must have been that, although the numerous Confederate sympathizers among his neighbors were antagonistic to him, his Northern-based neighbors, alas, showed no disposition to rise in his defense. Rancho Chico's owner, therefore, looked to his other strength—his access to powerful public officials.

Bidwell's decision to seek help elsewhere evolved in mid-July as the Tehama County farmer and Mill Creek tracker, Hi Good, who had found the Hickok boy's corpse, prepared to return to Mill Creek where Chico people encouraged his party to carry out a full-

fledged campaign against the Mill Creeks. In the aftermath of the Hickok crimes, the Good party came to be the focus of Chicoans' hopes for protection. In Butte County during 1862, like Tehama County in 1859 and after, the citizenry turned to private help because no public authority—constables or sheriffs—

took day-to-day responsibility for response to rural criminal acts by Indians against settlers or by settlers against Indians. While Chico citizens' first instinct upon the Hickok children's "disappearance" had been to call for "men"—i.e., soldiers—from Governor Stanford, Good's retrieval of Frank Hickok's body had quickly shifted Chico opinion to the position which had prevailed in Tehama County for several years: namely, the superiority of local Indian trackers over any soldiers who might be sent into the area to address the crimes of Mill Creek Indians. This recognition planted doubts in retrospect about the appropriateness of the citizen leaders' quick appeal for military help that Sproul had delivered to the Governor about two weeks previous.<sup>34</sup>

Bidwell's opportunity appeared when the Tehama men refused to accept "rusty muskets" that Governor Leland Stanford had secured from General George Wright in response to the Chico leaders' June 26th plea for arms in the Hickok crisis. Smooth bore muskets were of limited value, even those in good repair, because they were accurate only up to about eighty yards.<sup>35</sup> Bidwell agreed to ask State Adjutant General William C. Kibbe for better weapons. Because militia officers had to file surety bonds with the State to secure weapons, Bidwell, who clung to the honorary rank of "Major" from his brief naval service in the Mexican War, may have had sufficient standing to do so.

On a different level, he already had won Kibbe's confidence. Three years earlier he had helped the State Adjutant General, when Kibbe headed the River Expedition of 1859 to collect mountain Indians in Butte and Tehama counties. While there, Kibbe had had to



Harmon "Hi" Good

negotiate his way through a Chico area dispute between miners and Indian trackers in the state's collection of mountain Indians for dispatch to Nome Cult Reservation that year. In 1862, Kibbe, who still struggled to secure federal reimbursement for the 1859 campaign, had no budget to fund another one. However, Kibbe was always more willing to support local Indian fighters than were regular Army men. He immediately dispatched "a couple of boxes of U.S. rifles in good order" to Chico. In contrast to muskets, these rifles in skilled hands could hit their target at up to three hundred yards.<sup>36</sup>

General Kibbe agreed to send the rifles for Bidwell to disperse and later collect back from Good. In this transaction the rancher's opponents, who learned about his receipt of the guns, observed from their perspective that Bidwell, the biggest Union supporter and Indian employer around, had inside access to weapons from powerful public officials. This apparent connection between Bidwell and a military official did not ease the resentments local Confederate supporters felt toward the operator of their area's biggest Indian rancharia.

Good and his fellow tracker, Robert Anderson, and their men, accepted the rifles Kibbe sent Bidwell for their use. In addition, Bidwell's handsome donation of \$100 toward their expenses put him even further in their good graces. In still another gesture of support, Bidwell dispatched his "chief vaquero," Sandy Young, 26, to accompany Good and his men when they set off for eastern Tehama County, the area to which settler conflicts with Mill Creeks most recently had shifted. The Good party's gratitude toward Bidwell did not last long. In July, only a week after they had left the valley, while the men camped in remote expanses of Tehama County, a messenger brought them shocking news about the result of Bidwell's latest "access" to officials at high levels.<sup>37</sup>

Before Hi Good's party left the Sacramento Valley, Bidwell had agreed that his next contribution to their offensive campaign against the Mill Creeks would be to carry a joint petition from Butte and Tehama county residents to Governor Stanford from whom they requested "a commission to raise and equip a campaign of (30) thirty men to Mr. H.E. Good."<sup>38</sup> By the term "commission" they meant an official imprimatur for their campaign which would carry with it state funds to pay and provision the party of small farmers so they could stay in the field. General Kibbe's dispatch of arms evidently had encouraged their hopes for the success of this request. Gov-

ernor Stanford had the power to call out Good and his men to form a local Indian fighting unit as a special type of militia, such as those which confronted squatters, and then to dispatch their unit on assignment. This resembles what General Kibbe, representing the governor, had done in 1859 when he had included parties of Butte and Tehama county men in his 1859 campaign through that area. By 1862, however, Butte residents were unaware that public outrage at the crimes against Indians which the state-backed private Indian pursuit parties committed in Mendocino County during 1859 and early 1860 had made it politically impossible for the governor to back a new private campaign. A further complication which imperiled their request was the Army's official responsibility to respond to Indian raids through its command of the California Volunteers, a federal unit. The Butte and Tehama County people had no confidence in soldiers as an effective option when Mill Creeks were involved.<sup>39</sup>

While twentieth century critics have dismissed the local men who made up Indian pursuit parties as the equivalent of psychopaths and mercenaries, common opinion at the time regarded them as poor men who risked their lives to defend their families and neighbors against that day's equivalent of terrorists. Because this duty called them from their homes for indefinite lengths of time, supporters believed their work deserved compensation. Their families would need supplies in their extended absence. Their farms would need help to look after their herds, every cow or sheep of which was a major asset. "These volunteers are called from harvest fields where help is scarce, and have no resources to sustain them."<sup>40</sup>

While many history writers today record how some of the men earned compensation in exchange for scalps, that was a stipulation very rarely considered necessary after the Tehama County campaign in 1859 which early on called for such evidence of "performance." While some of these men continued to collect scalps, they did so to boast and to intimidate Indians. They did not have to take scalps to collect money because by 1862 area residents no longer required scalps as evidence that Good and his men attacked Mill Creeks. They trusted the Good party to track and kill every Mill Creek man they could find.

Another point salient to the Indian fighters' belief that they deserved wages was their exposure as favorite Mill Creek targets. The Indian men, of course, knew where each volunteer lived and regularly retaliated against the trackers for incursions on their Mill

Creek camps. From the trackers' point of view, the exposure of their homes, fields, livestock, and out-buildings to arson and theft added to the personal burden of what they considered their hazardous public service. For example, in 1863, Mill Creeks set fire to the barn of Good's tracking partner, Robert Anderson, from whom they also took a horse. In 1862, therefore, when these volunteer Indian fighters secured weapons from Kibbe, they wanted wages. They also knew that a campaign would fail unless they could count on a supply of ammunition, provisions, and pack animals sufficient for a month or more. Good and his men had left Chico for Mill Creek with John Bidwell's assurances that the Chico man would leave immediately for the governor's office where he would take care of them: "Major Bidwell engaged to present the petition and obtain a commission" for the private Indian fighters.<sup>41</sup>

On July 15, 1862, although Bidwell carried the citizen petition addressed to the governor, he did not head for Sacramento. Instead he went straight to San Francisco where he cooled his heels for a day before he could meet with General George Wright, Commanding Officer of the Army's Pacific Department. Immediately afterward, he summarized their meeting in a note to Governor Stanford with whom he met on July 17th: "The Indian difficulties were fully explained by me, and he resolved to order a company forthwith from Humboldt County to the scene of troubles."<sup>42</sup> The citizen petition was not ambiguously worded: it made no request for soldiers. Yet the full explanation Bidwell says he provided the general was one that produced troops. What else other than troops could Bidwell himself have wanted from Wright in order to protect his property—his rancheria? Bidwell's actions from 1862-1865 verify that he, like the public at large, believed that the most effective use of soldiers in their area was to protect Indians from settlers. He, as well as the general public, also believed that the most effective strategy to employ against Mill Creeks was the dispatch of local Indian fighters. However, in July 1862, Bidwell's personal priority was not the rural residents' safety. Instead, he was most concerned about the safety of his Indian rancheria operation following the Southern immigrants' threats at the June meeting in Chico. Having such a concern in the context of the Civil War and in the light of subsequent events, it is reasonable to assume that he set out his worry about those Chico Southerners' threats to General Wright, who controlled federal service volunteers and could have sent them to Chico to protect Bidwell's

rancheria against any incursion.<sup>43</sup>

Assuming that this is what Bidwell wanted, it is clear that his San Francisco meeting did not move the commanding officer of the Army's Pacific Department to act on the Chico rancher's request. Unlike Kibbe of the State Militia, General Wright had no history of collaboration with Bidwell. For whatever reason, in 1862 the rancher failed to secure Army troops from him for protection in Chico against the Southerners' threat. Not only that, Wright could not commission the Good party since that was the responsibility of the governor. On July 18th, however, Wright instructed his Assistant Adjutant-General, Richard Drum, to send out Captain David B. Akey from Humboldt County duty and Captain H.B. Mellen, both of the Second Cavalry, California Volunteers, to make an expedition through the Antelope Valley area of eastern Tehama County to which Mill Creek actions had shifted after the Hickok incident.

While these decisions must have disappointed Bidwell, he took away two "wins." First, Wright ordered his men not to confuse the valley Indian cowboys at Big Meadows, Bidwell's summer grazing ground, with the Mill Creeks, whom his Maidu Indian workers there feared.<sup>44</sup> This was important to Bidwell who had lost some of his workers at that camp to General Kibbe's sweep in 1859. Second, word of soldiers having been dispatched after Bidwell's meeting with General Wright impressed on Chico "Rebs" that their adversary had personal access to the Army's highest officer. Troops might be no threat to Mill Creeks, but they could make a lot of problems for feisty Union opponents should Bidwell be able to secure their services at Chico.

When a report that Bidwell had met with Wright, not Stanford, and secured troops, not a commission, reached Hi Good's party, the captain's response reflected his sense of betrayal. On July 22nd a writer from Good's camp at Deer Creek Flats (probably Good himself) issued an appeal for donations from Red Bluff residents who had been their earlier backers. He explained their situation this way: "for some unexplained reason Gen. Wright, unsolicited by petition, has preferred to send us the promise of regulars."<sup>45</sup> Common opinion, he went on, was that, "Regulars [soldiers] ... are generally conceded to be more efficient in guarding Indians than hunting Indians."<sup>46</sup> Without mentioning Bidwell's name, the writer also offered his estimate of the individual who had evidently double-crossed the petitioners in their express desire to support the local volunteers. He spoke of the

"treachery or criminal neglect of those in power, or those entrusted with the citizens' petition for the organizing and commissioning of a company of volunteers."<sup>47</sup> Speaking on behalf of the Butte and Tehama county residents who relied on the Good party, he described "a deep sense of injustice [which] pervades the minds of the petitioners. Different causes and persons are blamed..."<sup>48</sup>

Hi Good did not let the issue rest. On August 8th he wrote directly to Governor Stanford:

*Being without a Commission or instructions... I am at a loss to know to whom I should report; therefore trusting that if you are not the proper person you will do me and those I represent the favor humanity requests by forwarding this to the proper authorities, who will no doubt forthwith some instructions at least respecting prisoners of whom I shall continue to respect until a reasonable time for an answer. One more favor I crave is to know why our citizens' petition was unheeded, and what became of it?*<sup>49</sup>

In an attempt to win the governor's agreement to make the Tehama County unit a temporary State militia company, Good laid out his credentials. He described his expedition's course to date, gave specific estimates of the Mill Creeks' numbers based on first-hand observations and he gave the location of two of their camps. He and his men had attacked one of those at the cost of eighteen Indian lives, six wounded, and six children as prisoners. Out of deference to the Good party's unique record of finding and killing Mill Creeks, General Kibbe sent a recommendation to Governor Stanford. He suggested that Wright's officers, whom the Army general had dispatched to Tehama County where they remained, either present Good with a specific assignment and so bring his operation under the state's control, or order him "to desist from further actions."<sup>50</sup> Stanford acted on neither suggestion.

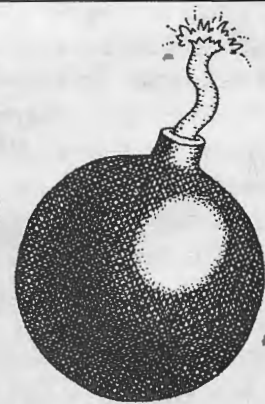
The two companies of California Volunteers made the passage Wright had ordered through portions of eastern Tehama County, but to no effect, before they moved on to other assignments. It would be another year, in 1863, before Wright would dispatch companies of troops to set up camp in Chico itself. This time he would instruct the officers to "consult frequently with Major Bidwell, both on account of his large experience with these difficulties" and as an Indian Department sub-agent.<sup>51</sup> While events in 1863

were so substantial that they require a separate account, their close proximity to those in 1862 served to muddle old timers' memories many years later on what happened in which year. One element their memories retained in common, however, was the weight they all placed on Bidwell's conflict with the local supporters of the Confederate cause.

For example, John Bidwell's memoir confused the sequence of events in 1862 and 1863 when he wrote about them thirty years later: "Finally I got sick of [local Southerners' harassment]. Gen. Wright sent two companies of troops up... and they remained with us until the end of the war."<sup>52</sup> In support of this recollection, the harassment he spoke of referred to the threat he heard at the meeting over his store in 1862; not, however, in 1863. In the latter year, when California Volunteers set up camp near his home to protect Indians, no evidence indicates any Chico-based threat to Bidwell at that time. In that year, because Southerners and Northerners alike had unified in reaction to their fear of Indian raids on rural homes, the local "Rebs" were no longer a problem to him.

While Bidwell's memory confused the two consecutive years, his confusion holds meaning nonethe-

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less. What the two years did have in common was that in both the Civil War years of 1862 and 1863, when Bidwell had tense relations with neighbors over war issues, his call for troops each time stemmed from perceived threats of white mob actions against his rancheria in the context of the Indian killings of two families' children. It is not hard to understand how, as an elderly man, the years merged in his memory.

Chico Southerners also mixed the two years in their memories. Their confusion is as understandable as was Bidwell's, but for different reasons. In 1886, for example, John Guill resembled Bidwell in his own recollection that Bidwell anticipated a "general uprising of the people" at Chico.<sup>53</sup> In this reference he remembered the 1862 conflict with Bidwell when supporters of the South had threatened Bidwell as an Indian slaver. However, when Guill remembered troops at Chico as having been sent to "keep down copperheads" or anti-war Democrats,<sup>54</sup> the troops he referred to were those of Captain Augustus Starr and Company F, 2d Cavalry of the California Volunteers. In 1863 they set up Camp Bidwell on Rancho Chico only in response to requests to handle Indian problems at the behest of both Indian Agent George Hanson and John Bidwell.<sup>55</sup> That year the threat to Bidwell's Indian laborers was not from Chicoans, of any stripe, however, but came from foothill and canyon residents. The impact of the presence of soldiers on the lives of Southerners in Chico was considerable and enduring, as Guill's comment reveals. This was the case because, whether or not Chico's Southern natives supported secession, with Army-controlled troops in their midst they must have felt they now lived under surveillance; even occupation. This would certainly confuse their memories of the 1862 confrontation with Bidwell and the arrival of troops at Chico in 1863. There is no evidence that the fact that the soldiers in Chico were California Volunteers and not troops of the Union Army, relieved such concerns in the minds of townspeople who favored the Confederate cause. It is also the case that the general population, whether from the North or the South, treated the units who arrived in Chico with wariness because residents in general, understood that the military was present in Chico, not to protect Indians, but to watch the citizenry, whatever the official wording in the orders their officers carried.

This confusion became established in Chico with a town history that the *Enterprise* newspaper published in 1918. That series set out critically important fragments of the 1862 events without analysis to resolve

important contradictions. In an otherwise invaluable resource, the editor in passing endorsed as fact a version which confused events in the two successive years when he concluded: "The troops were sent here primarily on account of anti-union sentiment."<sup>55</sup> A leading source of the *Enterprise* account was Frank Crowder who had found the Hickok girls' bodies and attended the 1862 meeting from which he recalled the Southern natives' anger at Bidwell. The failure to sort out war-related anger in 1862 and the arrival of troops to address Indian issues in 1863 at Chico also contributed to the anecdotal jumble which comprised George Mansfield's limited account of the war period at Chico in his important *History of Butte County*, also published in 1918.<sup>57</sup>

When the Mill Creeks' 1862 Hickok murders was repeated in another Mill Creek party's 1863 murders of the Lewis family's two children, the fear of Mill Creek attacks on rural homes continued to unify Chico area residents, whether Northern or Southern, behind the need to place that Indian threat ahead of their Civil War passions. A comment by John Guill, the Virginian who, as mentioned earlier, recalled the 1862 meeting in his 1886 remarks, supports this explanation for the war's subsidence as an issue from mid-1862 until the fall of 1863. He explained that, because of the fear that the current Mill Creek raids, which produced the Hickok crimes and others, the Southerners' challenge to Bidwell as an Indian slaver fell by the wayside: "everything was forgotten save the protection of our wives and little ones from the raids of the Indians."<sup>58</sup> For approximately the next year, therefore, the unity Guill described remained in place. The complex Indian and settler conflicts at Chico during that interlude will appear in the next article in this series.

## Part Two: Chico's "Little Civil War"

By early September 1863, the uproar over the previous summer's Indian removal from northern Butte County had subsided. During the interim since the summer of 1862, General Wright had ordered California Volunteers to establish "Camp Bidwell" north of the village to expedite that removal and to guard against any new clashes between the citizenry and the Indians. With a greater sense of security against Mill Creek raids now in place once more, the tenuous unity in Chico on Civil War issues that John Guill later recalled now subsided.<sup>59</sup> Once again Civil War issues surfaced and publicly pitted supporters of the North against those of the South.

Latent war tensions quickly focused on "squads of demoralized rebels from [Sterling] Price's shattered army" who had arrived over the late summer in 1863. One large cluster from Missouri settled on farms southwest of Chico around the hamlet of Dayton.<sup>60</sup> As a consequence, in local parlance any reference to "the Dayton crowd" now became interchangeable with the popular term, "Copperheads." While the term "Copperheads" properly referred elsewhere to anti-war Northern Democrats, local newspapers and other accounts indicate that Chicoans employed it to refer to any Confederate supporter or secessionist. Because this article's focus is on the war's effects on Chico, use of the term "Copperhead" in this section will employ Chicoans' common usage.

When Union men groused about the Missourians' arrival, they found no supporter in the *Butte Record*. Its publisher, George H. Crosette, a New York native who opposed the Union's war campaign, and so a proper Copperhead, defended the newly-arrived Southerners. He deemed them "tired of the war [and] wanting to settle down away from destruction."<sup>62</sup> The Union men were leery of the Dayton precinct Southerners as a new factor in local Democratic Party politics who could tip the county in the Chivalry Democrat direction at the pending state election. The narrowly divided result in September of 1863 relieved their fears when it showed "the County ticket is safe. Copperheads are miserable as they ought to be but Union men are jubilant."<sup>62</sup>

At Chico that year the Missouri men's arrival had taken place during a summer of local conflict between Indians and settlers. In the meantime, by late December soldiers from Captain Augustus Starr's Co. F, 2nd Cavalry, California Volunteers, had delivered hundreds of Butte County Indians to the Round Valley reservation in Mendocino County in order to appease settlers who had issued extermination threats.<sup>63</sup> With those Indians at Round Valley and time on their hands in camp, the unit remained alert to further disputes between Indians and settlers. Encamped near the village of Chico, they sporadically responded to complaints by Union men there about Confederate supporters' vocal support of the South's cause. On December 13, 1863, for example, the soldiers arrested three men who refused to identify themselves. Whether they were Confederate supporters is unclear. Because the soldiers carried no orders to police Confederate allies in the vicinity, they may have employed this ambiguous description of their arrestees to cover their actions. In any case, the timing of this arrest ap-

peared in tandem with the first of the soldiers' explicit challenges to Chico civilians sympathetic to the Southern cause.<sup>64</sup>

With the onset of winter in 1864, when deep mountain snows precluded the soldiers' Indian patrols, Camp Bidwell troops found time to put up a "liberty pole," perhaps to symbolize their support for the Union.<sup>65</sup> Two months later, Lewis Stilson, John Bidwell and Co.'s young sales clerk, gloated at the soldiers' next venture:

*Surely today was an unlucky one for some ardent secesh sympathizers who under the influence of liquor gave vent to their resentments in the presence of some Soldiers who were guarding horses near Sandy's Corral—the result was they were arrested and are now incarcerated in the guard house will probably remain on duty awhile...<sup>66</sup>*

A few days later a Confederate backer desecrated the American flag at a Butte County school house in the rural hamlet of Evansville where the voters would exactly divide between Union men and Rebs in the

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1864 general election. As residents continued to squabble about whether that flag should fly from the pole, Union men began to guard it. As soon as they relaxed their vigilance, however, the Rebs cut it down.<sup>67</sup>

Captain Starr's men stepped up their attempts to discipline obstreperous Copperheads. One method they favored was to arrest them, strap ninety-pound gunnysacks of sand to their backs and order them to pace until told they could stop. Area Southerners, helpless to speak up because of the prospect of themselves being disciplined, must have resented such affronts to their collective honor. By contrast, of course, the resident Northerners reveled in the soldiers' sanctions as justice-long-denied. Lewis Stilson, who had made friends with the soldiers, gleefully reported that: "The secesh are indignant to think that their friends are 'packing sand' at the camp."<sup>68</sup> With the backing of local residents and, as soldiers in a war whose Indian patrols constituted a second rate assignment, the soldiers seem to have warmed to the chance to penalize Confederate sympathizers in Chico. Evidently the men acted on a desire to do what they could for the Union despite their distance from the battlefronts.

In April 1864, Mary Silsby, a recent arrival in Chico, described tensions between Northerners and Southerners at Chico as more visible than those she recalled from her New England home where everyone backed the Union side. For one thing, she explained to her correspondent,

*There is not that unity of interest [in Chico on the war] that we find in the East. This is not to be wondered at if we take into consideration that California...is made up of people from all parts of the country...who have no interests in common & perhaps even a jealousy of each other, like the people [here] of the North & the South.<sup>69</sup>*

The strains of which she spoke made Chico township a lively little outpost of the nation's debate over the country's future makeup. The differences provided regular fuel for hot debates on war topics at the lyceums which periodically drew crowds to the meeting room above the John Bidwell and Company store. Although Bidwell was a Union man, George Wood, his managing partner in the store, had no strong allegiance to the Union campaign. Therefore, the meeting room was host to rousing speakers for the Confederate side roughly until the meeting room became the Armory, a development that will be discussed later.

On April 13, 1864, Captain Starr and his company, under orders to abandon Camp Bidwell, headed for Camp Union at Sacramento. However, Indian problems in western Butte County reappeared. In June, an armed Mill Creek party crept up on the farm home of S.J. Morgan, 27, whose husband Thomas was away, and she and her three small children barely escaped. George Wood immediately dispatched a plea for General Wright to reinstate soldiers' protection, not of rural residents, but of John Bidwell's ranch. Like Bidwell, his absent partner, Wood feared that rural citizens would again suspect valley Indians from Bidwell's rancheria of some role in a new season of attacks as they had done in 1863.<sup>70</sup>

Against the recommendation of Captain James Van Voast, 9th U.S. Infantry and a West Point graduate, who made an inquiry into conditions at Chico, General Wright agreed to revive Camp Bidwell that summer. On the 28th of July 1864, he ordered Captain James C. Doughty and Company I of the 2nd Cavalry, California Volunteers, to operate out of Chico on a sixty-day assignment. These orders directly matched Bidwell's stated needs for protection of peaceable Indians, in addition to which the general added "pro-

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tection of the settlers."<sup>71</sup> However, because the Mill Creeks had shifted their attention east to the more mountainous areas for the remainder of that year, no other significant Indian incidents arose which threatened women and children in northern Butte County. As a consequence, without Indian issues either to provoke the settlers or to unify and divert them away from war passions, Captain Doughty began to address the Civil War on the Chico "front." In late July, Lewis Stilson noted that, in contrast to Captain Starr's approach to problems with "Rebs," Doughty's soldiers "are more ready [than previous Camp Bidwell companies] to deal with all our exultant copperheads—and in consequence they [the Southerners] are very angry to see them come."<sup>72</sup>

John Bidwell would later claim influence on the soldiers' decision to move against the more feisty "rebels." As he remembered it, they had been an annoyance "until the soldiers came up. Then we arrested every fellow who hurraed for Jeff Davis and kept him under guard..."<sup>73</sup> Bidwell's use of "we" was not inadvertent. Because the subject of Bidwell's special influence on the military at Chico is important to understanding what happened there, a brief review of its course, beginning in 1863, is warranted. Although Indian-related problems were the sole subject of all the Camp Bidwell troops' orders, Captain Starr, from his first arrival at Chico in 1863, carried orders to consult with John Bidwell. For example, on August 1, 1863, General Wright's initial orders for Captain Starr were "to consult frequently with Major Bidwell... You will find the major reliable and extremely loyal."<sup>74</sup> Starr passed this instruction along to Captain Alfred Morton whose Company K of the Second Infantry arrived the second week in August of 1863.

Reliance on Bidwell's judgment appeared in the fall of 1863 at the highest military levels in California when Lt. Col. A.E. Hooker reported to Lt. Col. L.C. Drum, Assistant Adjutant-General, on his first-hand inquiry into the Indian and settler tensions at Chico. In his report, Hooker's conclusions exactly mirrored Bidwell's disdain at that time for the opinion or condition of the general populace in the outlying areas where Mill Creeks operated.<sup>75</sup> Those were the rural residents who had threatened to remove the Indians from Bidwell's rancharia in 1863.

As late as 1865 Bidwell would again demonstrate his credibility with the military at the headquarters level. That year, in response to appeals from Humboldt Road<sup>76</sup> businessmen, he made several requests for patrols along the road to defend against Mill Creeks who

murdered teamsters. General Wright immediately dispatched Doughty and his men with orders to address the problem. That Bidwell had strong influence with Wright was apparent in similar incidents that year. In each case General Wright or his successor, Major-General Irwin McDowell, responded in the affirmative to his requests for troops to guard mountain roads against Indian attacks.<sup>77</sup> At Chico, the officers were aware of General Wright's regard for Bidwell. Therefore, Bidwell's sympathy with the Camp Bidwell soldiers' anti-Confederate actions may have encouraged the officers to believe their men's actions were appropriate ones. It is clear in the comment from Bidwell's memoir that he endorsed Captain Starr or Captain Doughty in their excursions to discipline Butte County's Confederate allies. Captain Doughty's post reports noted that his men had settled into a routine in which they regularly interspersed occasional Indian patrols with their popular police actions against area "Rebs."<sup>78</sup>

During the war years of 1864 and 1865, the military presence in Chico expanded with the Chico Light Infantry's formation, again under the influence of John Bidwell. The impetus had begun in the fall of 1863 after John Bidwell received word that the Governor had appointed him to the rank of Brigadier General in the State Militia. While this honorary position carried with it no independent power to call the militias of his own brigade into action, the title added clout to his status at home and luster for the rest of his life.<sup>79</sup> The Chico Light Infantry joined the Oroville Guard, the Lassen Rangers at Susanville, the Halleck Rifles of Red Bluff, and a few other remote militia units in the north state which made up his command.

Members of Chico's militia, like those elsewhere, operated like a men's club, but one which carried the accouterments of public responsibility. The Chico Light Infantry's new members sported home-made uniforms, poured over official drill manuals, jockeyed for election to the officer ranks, and enjoyed the possession of government weapons. The California Volunteers based at Camp Bidwell and the Chico Light Infantry collaborated on a variety of informal occasions in town. In one public event, for example, Light Infantry Private, Dan Sutherland, came in second to one of Doughty's men in a competitive shooting match. On other occasions the two groups paraded together and once they also jointly hosted a ball. In order to encourage the members' interest, Bidwell turned the meeting room over his store into the town's Armory for which he secured the additional advan-

tage of rent payable in government gold.<sup>80</sup>

Bidwell's militia never had responsibility for any official action. As a Chico Light Infantry officer, Lewis Stilson, whom elections had raised from private to lieutenant soon after he joined in September 1864, did not grasp the unit's limits. For example, he once speculated that his unit might be called up to assist the California Volunteers on Indian duty. This took place March 20, 1865, after he returned from the country funeral of his friend Jo Moore's mother, who had been killed in her yard by Mill Creeks. They also burned down her farmhouse.<sup>81</sup> The ultimate benefit which accrued to members in the uniformed militia was exemption from the national draft, the rumored prospect of which inspired dread. Interest in militia membership heightened even more with the Butte County rumor that California men were about to be called up. Chicoans also heard that draftees would be "put on the front ranks to receive the enemy's fire, while those who volunteered could stand in the rear."<sup>82</sup> While these rumors had no factual foundation, they naturally increased interest in becoming a member of the local militia.

Each man had his own motive, of course. Stilson,

for example, confided to his diary that he joined because he thought the drills would provide him needed exercise. In addition to its light duty and draft exemption, membership in the Chico militia offered another attractive benefit—the opportunity to make the local Chivalry Democrats miserable. The unit's public rallies, marches, and cannonades in celebration of Union victories accomplished that objective.

The most sensational Confederate sympathizer to crop up in Butte County was Ridgely Greathouse. The government had imprisoned that Siskiyou County man in 1863 for participation in a group which bought and armed a San Francisco-docked schooner, the *J.M. Chapman*. They evidently had hazy plans to capture forts around the bay. Although the arrests of Greathouse and his cohorts occurred the moment they set sail, avid Union supporters demanded harsh penalties. According to Frank Crowder's memoir, rumors were rife about pending Confederate invasions of California. While such a prospect now appears absurd, the idea of a "rebel" action at San Francisco gripped the fertile imaginations of many northern Californians.

In February 1864, therefore, Lewis Stilson was

Courtesy John Nopel



John Bidwell's brick store on 1st and Broadway in Chico. Prior to 1863 the second floor was used as a public meeting hall. When the Chico Light Infantry was formed in 1863 John Bidwell turned the meeting room into the town's Armory.

alternately indignant and fascinated when he found himself seated near Ridgely Greathouse, fresh out of Alcatraz, in a stagecoach between Oroville and Chico. Release from prison had come with his acceptance of President Lincoln's offer of a general amnesty in exchange for declarations of loyalty. Now able to claim some personal acquaintance with the man, Stilson confidently denounced Greathouse's loyalty declaration as "a farce."<sup>83</sup> Two weeks later, on April 9th, therefore, he was happy to report that Captain Doughty's men had rearrested that "noted pirate [who] was taken thru town in irons—on a new charge." Best of all, he gloated, "it makes the secesh boil with rage."<sup>84</sup> The arrest had come after word reached Camp Bidwell that Secretary of War Edwin Stanton had ordered the soldiers to seize Greathouse for a different offense. Authorities next dispatched him to a New York prison from which he promptly escaped and moved on to embrace other far-flung adventures.

In the late spring of 1864, John Bidwell left Chico for the Union Party convention in Baltimore. His decision to change parties after his lifelong commitment to the Democratic Party represented an important development in Chico as the war continued. The convention gave Bidwell the brief but welcome companionship of national leaders for the Northern cause. Their conviction, which mirrored his own, provided him momentary relief from his difficult relations with California's—including Chico's—Chivalry Democrats.

Uncertain conditions at home prompted Bidwell's quick return to Chico. Once there, during late July he launched his candidacy to become the Union Party's nominee for Congress. This was a political move its leaders had urged him to pursue for more than a year. They had invited his candidacy out of concern that the Democrats' warring factions might unite and manage to trounce Lincoln in the 1864 campaign. Bidwell launched his campaign for the nomination at a reception he hosted in his Armory. Lewis Stilson, 21, clucked at the generous bar his boss offered the bibulous voters who became increasingly boisterous over the course of the evening.<sup>86</sup>

Political passions from this election and the news of battle outcomes from the East plunged townsmen into such frequent fistfights that D.F. Crowder recalled the village of Chico at that time as in a state of "small civil war."<sup>87</sup> In mid-August Doughty dispatched a Camp Bidwell sergeant and a private to look into complaints about a secessionist. On another assignment, this time at a passionate secessionist rally, his men ar-

rested the speakers who denounced "black abolitionists," employing that local "dig" at John Bidwell as one who would free blacks but not the Indians on his own rancheria. On a different occasion, after the California Volunteers returned from an unsuccessful sortie after Indians, one of the more "quiet and polite" soldiers beat up a vocal "Secesh" in a saloon. When Captain Doughty called him to account, the soldier explained that he was on the payroll to fight the Confederacy and that was all he did.<sup>88</sup> At about the same time, a squad of soldiers, who had word they might meet resistance, rode to Oroville where they arrested a "Copper" for removal to the Chico camp's guardhouse. However, because of discipline problems along the way, three of the soldiers returned to Camp Bidwell, like the "Reb," as prisoners of their sergeant.<sup>89</sup>

These tensions, therefore, were not confined to Chico, but appeared in pockets of greater Butte County where gunfire exchanges cost two men their lives. In one of these incidents, a man named Harper was shot and died a few miles from Chico in the hamlet of Nord at the store of Tennessee native W.H. Turner. In the second incident, an "Irish Copperhead," Phillip Farrelly, was killed after a Union Democrat meeting in Oroville where he kept a saloon. His killer escaped to Oregon from which the man later returned for trial. He was acquitted for having acted in self-defense.<sup>90</sup> The Chico events which reached print were few. At the time no substantial Chico newspaper existed that has survived and the Oroville paper printed little about that community. One reason for its neglect may have been Chicoans' recent effort to split Butte County, an effort the Oroville newspaper's publisher bitterly opposed. In addition, all or most of the items which the Oroville press printed on Chico had often reached them from the hand of Lewis Stilson, an adamant Union man. And, too, the presence of troops probably forestalled publicly visible clashes in Chico.

By comparison, no impediments stifled the enthusiasm of Union men who held rallies and cheered on the traveling orators who exhorted them in the Armory and elsewhere. They shouted their approval when the Chico Light Infantry fired its cannon to celebrate news of important Union victories, such as they did upon Sherman's seizure of Atlanta. In the Union residents' most successful Chico fundraiser, they secured \$1,000 "in coin" for the Sanitary Commission, the national organization which raised funds to support the health and safety of Union soldiers. At Oroville, Union supporters auctioned off the bag of flour that former Butte County resident Reuel Gridley

had sold to raise money for the Sanitary Fund. Rallies across the state, which sold and resold the same bag, raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Commission.<sup>91</sup>

Throughout the war Stilson fretted about the dangers which faced his brothers, Thomas and James. He gleaned news of their military units' campaigns from his mother's letters. On October 1st he received the news he dreaded: on July 31st, Thomas Hart Benton Stilson, a member of Co. A, the Seventh Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, had died in the battle of Petersburg:

*Oh how can I express my feelings upon...the sad sad news of tonight—my own Dear Brother Thomas is Dead yes was killed when his time to return to dear friends had so nearly arrived & this blow is my first great affliction...there is one great consolation that he lived & died a Christian. Oh that I were one also.*<sup>92</sup>

The next day, when Reverend Woodman included Thomas Stilson in his prayers, Lewis "could not prevent the scalding tears flowing."<sup>93</sup> His friends

made it a point to keep him company while he absorbed this loss. Stilson's Chico Light Infantry colleague, Dan Sutherland, followed news of his two brothers' units. A third had died earlier from wounds in the battle at Pea Ridge in Arkansas.

With John Bidwell's September nomination now in place on the Union ticket, he tackled the election campaign. From what local people could learn, the election news from the East looked bad. Rumors from Pennsylvania, for example, predicted a Democratic Party victory in that crucial state. Bidwell faced stiff opposition, of course, from both Union and Chivalry Democrats, the latter of whom lived in scattered pockets of Butte County. They were also an important faction among the farmers around Colusa County when he stumped in Colusa during late October. Upon his return to Chico, Bidwell, no stemwinder, made a "sound and logical" speech there. A second and more riveting speaker on the same occasion "urged all to maintain that Union which cost us so many precious lives & that...our Brothers shall not die in vain."<sup>94</sup> On the 24th Stilson seethed about that evening's "Dem-Copperhead Traitorous meeting" in which John Bidwell's opponent, Jackson Temple, fanned "secesh sentiment...in a rich treat for Traitors."<sup>95</sup> His brother's death had aroused the now-embittered young Stilson, who worked all the harder for the Union League which assigned his committee to identify each "loyal" in every precinct.

As the presidential campaign neared election day, members of the Chico Light Infantry traveled to Oroville where they marched in a parade to promote Lincoln's reelection. Militia units from Butte and Yolo counties carried "mottoes, transparencies, and banners" to the music of their bands. The Chico Light Infantry chose to march accompanied by transparencies Lewis Stilson had prepared to promote the Union cause. They topped off their contribution to the day with a cannonade in which the report of their "12 pounder" shattered windows at the Court House. He was proud of the event: "the procession was certainly ahead of anything ever known in Butte Co..." Afterward, candidate Bidwell exhorted the voters to the sound of "long continued cheers."<sup>96</sup>

Southern supporters of the Confederacy in western Butte County had no less stake in this election, of course. Reports of Union Army advances had led them to realize that they could no longer count on their Confederate armies alone. In the election, they had to depend on their old strength—politics. Their only hope to drive Lincoln from office was the Democratic



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Party's nomination of former Union Army General George B. McClellan in hopes his appeal might unite the opposing factions. At Chico, where California Volunteers sometimes arrested those speakers on behalf of the Confederacy, no campaign by Chivalry Democrats on McClellan's behalf could make much headway. Nevertheless, their faction of the Democratic Party made a respectable showing at the ballot box. While the incumbent President Lincoln carried Butte County in the November 5th election, McClellan captured 46% of the votes cast at Chico, which observed the state mandate to close the village saloons for the day. A winner who benefited from Lincoln's "coattails" was Union Party candidate John Bidwell. Stilson had added his own "maiden vote" to his new party's count that day. Once it was established that Californians had backed Lincoln, residents settled back and awaited word of results from other states.

Over the remainder of 1864 Union residents showed their support for the cause as they flocked to Chico's Sanitary Commission lecture series. There they heard graphic accounts of battlefield conditions and vivid descriptions of "sad scenes in hospitals" that deeply moved Lewis Stilson: "Oh how freely tears flowed as I thot of my Dear Brother."<sup>97</sup> On a lighter note, the Sanitary Commission's active women sponsored a ball and they regularly solicited donations door-to-door. In one instance, when a preacher refused the money his female parishioners had raised by giving a dance, they donated the whole amount to the Sanitary Commission.<sup>98</sup>

While Rebel supporters had to be discreet when they spoke out during the later stages of the war at Chico, they also managed to express their resentment in a subtle but material way. In light of Bidwell's role as the principal target of their ire, it is probable that, when Chico's Southerners had a choice, they denied their trade to John Bidwell & Company. Politics was personal in nineteenth century Chico—it was a criterion in social circles and could govern trade choices. After Stilson's 1863 arrival, his diary reported on January business conferences between John Bidwell and George Wood. His comments indicated that the store's business suffered during the war. This was the case despite population growth and the valuable military trade.

Stilson's diary also recorded his view of the daily mix at the Bidwell store. Had Southerners made up an important part of the store's trade, Stilson, a prickly man, would have recorded his personal suspicion or disapproval of them. Government rent money for the

Armory, the parade ground downtown, the California Volunteers' corral grounds, and their camp grounds as well as provisions for Indians and soldiers, permitted Bidwell's store to recoup some of the trade he and George Wood, his store partner, must have lost as a consequence of war politics. The military's camp and expenditures to support it provided income all the more important because it was payable to Bidwell in gold. Nevertheless, although sales clerk Stilson noted in one of many such entries during 1863 that "Soldiers have kept us busy all day and trade is lively," his diaries between then and 1865 are also replete with notes of slow trade.<sup>99</sup>

George Wood and Augustus Chapman, Wood's sales manager, were Union men. However, war issues gripped neither man. Like other Chicoans who arrived when he did in 1861, Chapman headed for California just as the war began. While Chapman helped organize the Chico Light Infantry, his poor attendance at drills suggests he found the cause less compelling than his fledgling business interests in which he immersed himself when his health permitted. Over his prosperous later years, Chapman's personal friends would include Southern Democrats such as ranchers D.M. Reavis and James Morehead.

Throughout the war, Wood, a Massachusetts native who had married a Georgia belle and was California correspondent for the *Mobile Advertiser*, somehow maintained an exchange of letters and documents with Alabama lawyers in his ultimately successful attempt to halt the Confederate government's intent to confiscate his Mobile store. Once Wood secured the proceeds from his property there, he broke off his partnership with Bidwell and entered a partnership with Chapman in a rival emporium.<sup>100</sup>

In the spring of 1865, Captain Augustus Starr, whom General Wright had sent from Camp Union to pick up Colusa County Confederate sympathizers, continued on to Chico where he arrived on April 8th. Word of Lee's surrender arrived two days later to deepen the Southern supporters' gloom as Starr's unit temporarily joined that of Captain Doughty at Camp Bidwell. By contrast to the Rebs' misery, the Chico militia greeted news of the surrender by firing its cannon one hundred times as the members marched with the California Volunteers in a parade along Second Street.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, the township's Southerners watched quietly from the sidelines or kept to themselves in their sorrow and disappointment.

On April 14th the village's sense of drama heightened with news that a Camp Bidwell soldier, Private

Frank Hudson, had shot Lt. D.W. Livergood through the stomach as the officer walked toward his Chico home from Camp Bidwell at nine in the evening. Hudson was angry at the lieutenant who had ordered him to march at double quick time for being drunk. The news brought Captain Doughty back from an Indian patrol in order to supervise the camp which particularly needed him because it was also without the services of a seriously ill sergeant. As Livergood's friends maintained a watch at his home where the young officer struggled to survive, the news about Lincoln's assassination arrived by the Bidwell store's telegraph. Stilson's diary captured a sense of the response:

*The most terrible calamity that ever befell a people has been made known to us to day & such a gloom & sorrow was never felt in any community. President Lincoln was assassinated yesterday evening in Washington and tonight we are mourning the loss of the greatest man the world ever knew. Sec. Seward was also wounded & little hopes are entertained for his recovery.— I can not have time to express my feelings.<sup>102</sup>*

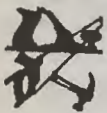
While the Union men in Chico registered the news about Lincoln with disbelief and shock, their spirits rallied with news that San Franciscans had torched the "secesh"—mostly Democratic—newspapers. As they grieved, they joined a national vigil for the recovery of Secretary Seward. Meanwhile, Stilson and his friend, Chico Light Infantry Captain Joseph Eddy, headed for Livergood's home in order to share the news and to commiserate with their friend. Their mood sobered when they discovered the patient now seemed "past hope."<sup>103</sup>

On April 19th the funeral at the lieutenant's home, where he and his wife had entertained a lively

young circle, attracted one of the larger gatherings Chico had known up to that time. The I.O.O.F., or Odd Fellows, and the military, jointly presided over services for Livergood, who had been promoted to 1st Lieutenant only the previous December. The Odd Fellows, which had recently started a chapter in Chico, attracted men like Livergood because their dues provided insurance which would assist their widows.

Private Hudson's flight was a brief one before his capture in the countryside by a local man who recognized him by his military boots. Once in custody, he remained in Chico until seven officers from Sacramento arrived for his court martial. Charles Stilson not only kept abreast of the hearings as they unfolded, he made friends with the visitors who often stopped by the store. He found their friendly bluster made him uneasy, but their teasing about his prospects with one of the town's young women moved him to make a date he otherwise would not have ventured. The trial of Hudson led to the murderer's conviction and removal to Sacramento where he was hanged that summer. While Stilson found the private's sentence not worth comment, the capture and killing of John Wilkes Booth inspired his bitter reaction: "It only causes regret that he was permitted to die so early—I would like to be one who would take his life by inches."<sup>104</sup>

When General Wright learned about celebrations of Lincoln's assassination in Colusa County, he dispatched Captain Starr on April 18th to bring in men who had fired off their guns and cheered the news. After the captain had arrested those perpetrators, he again returned to Camp Bidwell. There, in early May of 1865, Charles Stilson noted local Southerners' "blue" mood which continued as soldiers arrested two men whom they held at Camp Bidwell. These were Al Stewart, 27, an "Irish reb" and Oliver P. Gregory, who was a Virginian and property owner in Chico Township. Although he was in custody, Stewart was represented before the justice of the peace in a lawsuit against another "Reb," the details of which provided at least one day's excitement for villagers who generally took a lot of interest in such conflicts. On May 15th Starr seized "Rebs" L.P. Hall and Benjamin Baker of Forbestown, neither of whom resisted. By contrast, Captain Doughty had to arrest one "man of secession proclivities" at gunpoint. This was Butte Creek resident Lucious W. Thomas—or "Three-Fingered Jack"—whom Doughty collected in Colusa County where he also arrested over a dozen men who shared Thomas' views.<sup>105</sup>



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*Continued on page 34*

*Continued from page 24*

While in Chico, Starr's last arrest was that of B.F. Baker at Forbestown near Oroville. The Camp Bidwell prisoners remained in custody until late May when Starr removed them to Sacramento. On their way to the capital, the captain and his men also added a "prominent traitor" to their party in Yolo County.<sup>106</sup> From Sacramento, some of these men were sentenced to confinement at Alcatraz where Hall and Thomas shared not only a cell but also a mat and food that Thomas declared was better than he was used to at home.<sup>107</sup> On May 23rd, close upon Starr's departure from Chico, Captain Doughty and his company also left with no intention to return.<sup>108</sup>

On June 1, 1865, in a sober gesture of thanks for the Union's victory, Chico's businesses, like those across the country, closed for the day. Residents assembled to hear a sermon from Reverend James Monroe Woodman and to offer private prayers.<sup>109</sup> In a unifying gesture as 1865 came to a close, local people set up a "Union Commission" which raised funds to assist the recovery of whites and blacks—in other words, all residents in the "war devastated Southern states."<sup>110</sup> The end of the war and the apparent end of Mill Creek crimes that spring (although more problems would follow) promised a return to normal life.

One sign of normalcy upon the war's approaching end had appeared on May 26th when the Idaho Stage carried the first mail to Chico over the new Humboldt Road which linked Chico to Idaho's rich mines.<sup>111</sup> Boosted by the promise of ample trade by the mid-summer of 1865, residents turned their interest from war to business. Nevertheless, memories of the conflicts which marked the Indian and Civil wars in Chico would linger for decades. When in the 1880s schoolboy Frederick Clough brought his history book to the house of his Southern-born grandmother, who refused to serve yams, watermelon, or catfish—black folks' food, she said—she scanned his text and silently X'd out its photograph of Abraham Lincoln. A proposal to erect a statue in Chico to commemorate the soldiers of the South in the same period found support, but strong opposition denied a statue to both sides until the early twentieth century when passions had cooled and the Union finally prevailed.<sup>112</sup>

Chico was a remote place which was little known outside of Northern California in the early 1860s. Nevertheless, because the Gold Rush and its aftermath had attracted immigrants to the Sierra Nevada mountains regardless of their sectional sympathies, its residents,

who were often nostalgic for their old homes, carried regional passions which the onset of the Civil War readily mobilized. The brief crossover between those passions and the fears which Mill Creek Indian raids raised among all rural residents, the subject of this paper's first section, created a unique and complicated interaction among people, institutions, and ideas.

**About the Author:**

**Michele Shover, Ph.d., is Emeritus Professor of Political Science at California State University, Chico. She has focused her research on Indian and settler issues in Butte County for the past ten years. Her previous publications have treated a variety of nineteenth century issues which shaped Chico's early years.**

**Michele authored three previous articles on Indian and settler relations in Butte County in the *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*. "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter, 1852-1856" appeared in the 1998 winter issue #36, "The Politics of the 1859 Kibbe Campaign, Northern California Indian-Settler Conflicts of the 1850s" appeared in the 1999 summer issue #38, and "John Bidwell and the Rancho Chico Indian Treaty of 1852, Seduction, Betrayal, and Redemption" appeared in the summer 2000 issue #42. Research for a fifth article dealing with the complex Indian and settler conflicts near Chico in 1862-63 is currently underway.**

**End Notes**

1. The author is grateful for the substantive recommendations by historians Robert Chandler and George Stammerjohan. While their recommendations have been important, even critically so at times, the article as it appears reflects the author's choices, her sources' limitations, and her own. Editorial advice proved valuable from Ramona R. Flynn, Larry V. Richardson, and Emeritus Professor of History, G.D. Lillibridge, whose role as the author's husband caused his recall to duty, this time as a copy editor.

2. John Bidwell, *Dictation* (unpublished: Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, no date), p. 26. The content suggests Bidwell wrote it in the 1890s.

3. *Alta California*, 9 August 1861; 23 December 1861. Daniel is presumed to be the proper Gibson because, as a Missourian, he was the only Southerner in the 1860 census by the name of Gibson.

4. George Mansfield, *History of Butte County, California* (Historic Record Co.: Los Angeles, CA, 1918), p. 231.

5. Bidwell, pp. 13-14, 27.

6. Cf. Michele Shover, "The Doctor, the Lawyer, and the Political Chief," *The University Journal*, No. 19 (Winter, 1983), pp.

1-38. McCorkle is a subject of this article. Winfield J. Davis, *History of Political Conventions in California, 1849-1862* (Sacramento: California State Library, 1893), pp. 171-178.

7. *Butte Record*, 13 July 1861.

8. Bidwell, p. 26.

9. Federal Census of 1860. Chico Township, Butte Co., California. All of the nineteenth century Butte County histories skirted the question of Chicanos' alliances in the Civil War. Until the early twentieth century, native state allegiances continued to divide the senior residents who, with their families, were an important component of potential volume buyers for these commercially produced histories. The proportion of Southerners relies on listings from the United States Census, Chico Township, Butte County California, 1860. These percentages are based on N=777 for white males who were United States born. Not counted were 3 Chinese, 156 Native Americans, 2 African Americans, or 76 foreign residents. Northerners were 422; Southerners and Border State immigrants were 265. For further information, see Michele Shover, *Blacks in Chico, 1860-1865: Climbing the Slippery Slope* (Chico: Assn. for Northern California Records and Research, 1991), pp. 2-4. Information on the woman who arrived as a slave appears in papers collected by this author with additional research by Carolyn Payne in the "Blacks in Chico" archive of Meriam Library, Special Collections, California State University, Chico. Hereafter SCML

10. Bidwell, p. 27.

11. D.B. Lyon, August 1915. U.C. Berkeley, Ethnological Documents Collection. Reel 199, Frame 627, Bancroft Library. Thanks to Professor Oren Starn of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill for this information. This conclusion is consistent with the product of the author's research for three *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly* articles on the 1850s in which the focus was mountain Indian and settler-Indian conflicts which showed a changing character between 1850 and 1859.

12. *Chico Enterprise*, 11 and 12 January 1918; Sim Moak, *The Last of the Mill Creeks*, (Chico: Privately Printed) 1923, p. 11; Mansfield, p. 218; *Chico Enterprise*, 1 January 1918; Robert Anderson, *Fighting the Mill Creeks* (Chico: *The Chico Record*, 1909), Ch. 10; *Red Bluff Independent*, 1 July 1862. The *Chico Enterprise* account best fits contemporary accounts in the timing of these events as they unfolded.

13. Governor Leland Stanford to General George Wright. 27 June 1862. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 vols, Washington: 1880-1901), Series 1, Vol. 50; (1897), LXII, p. 1162-1163. Hereafter, *Official Records*. Four of the five signatories were close associates of John Bidwell—a fellow businessman, a doctor on whom he relied, the surveyor he hired to set out the town of Chico, and his partner in John Bidwell and Co.

14. D.F. Crowder in the *Chico Enterprise*, 11 and 12 January 1918.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Mansfield, p. 691. *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 16 July 1886 and *Chico Record*, 24 July 1886. The two articles reflect a confusion between Guill and Bidwell between events of 1862 and 1863. This analysis represents an attempt to sort out events and accusations between those two years; *Chico Enterprise*, 18-19 January 1918.

17. Henria Packer Compton, *Mary Murdock Compton* (Chico: Privately Printed, 1953), pp. 16-17. Special Collections, Meriam

Library, California State University, Chico; *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886; *Oroville Union*, 13 June 1863; *Butte Record*, 21 June 1863; Dorothy Hill, *The Indians of Chico Rancheria* (KaCaMa Press: Chico, 1978), p. 30.

18. Moak, p. 9.

19. *Butte Record*, 24 July 1886; Federal Census, 1860, Chico Township, Butte County. For further information on Joe Tatham, see Michele Shover and Thomas Fleming, *Black Life in the Sacramento Valley, 1850-1934* (San Francisco: Max Millard, 1998), pp. 3-4.

20. *Sacramento Union*, 2 July 1862; *Red Bluff Beacon*, 17 July 1862.

21. F.S. Clough, *The House at 5th and Salem*, Chico: Stansbury House Preservation Assn., 1978), p. 44.

22. *Butte Record*, 27 August 1864 provides one example of this usage.

23. Quoted in Robert Chandler, "The Failure of Reform: White Attitudes and Indian Response in California During the Civil War Era," *The Pacific Historian*, XXIV (Spring 1980), p. 288.

24. *Chico Enterprise*, 25 January 1918; Analysis of these events and the primary sources which speak to them appear in Michele Shover, "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #36 (Winter 1998), pp. 32-56.

25. Stilson, 8 November 1863.

26. *Chico Enterprise*, 25 January 1918.

27. *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886. This account on some points confuses events in 1862 and 1863. The present account extracts the descriptions that could only apply to the Chico meeting in 1862; *Chico Enterprise*, 11 January 1918.

28. *Butte Record*, 27 June 1863 and 13 July 1861; Rockwell Hunt, *John Bidwell: Prince of California Pioneers*. (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, 1942), p. 183; Wells and Chambers, *History of Butte County*, (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1973), p. 174; *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886.

29. *Chico Enterprise*, 19 January 1918; Bidwell, p. 14-15.

30. When Bidwell raised this accusation years later in his "Dictation," p. 14, confusion would result. This was because he unintentionally blended accounts of the Indian raid crises of 1862 and of 1863. The 1862 crisis differed from that of 1863, however, both because of the prominent role the Confederate supporters took in 1862 and because of the Chico locus of his opposition. All evidence of events in 1863 supports the conclusion that neither Southerners nor Chico township men played a focal role during the latter year.

31. Bidwell's handwritten note on his copy of the *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886; Cf. the speeches of U.S. Senator John C. Calhoun.

32. Bidwell, p. 40. Frank L. Klement. *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies and Treason in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1984.)

33. Moak, p. 4; John Bidwell, p. 27; *Oroville Union*, 9 and 23 May 1863. While mentioned in Butte County press in 1863, according to Robert J. Chandler, the Chico group did not appear in an 1864 circular.

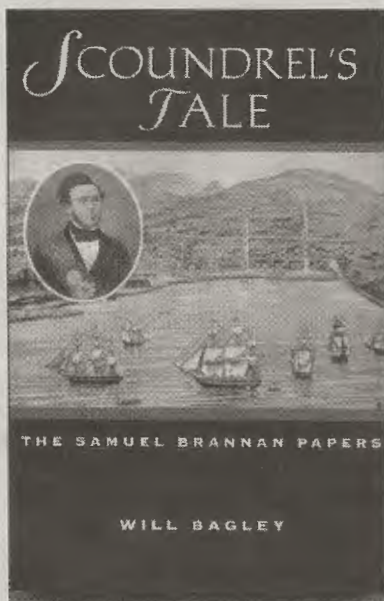
34. *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886; Cf. For the experience of Tehama County's resort to private Indian trackers, see Michele Shover, "The Politics of the 1859 Kibbe Campaign," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #38 (Summer 1999), pp. 4-39.

35. *Red Bluff Beacon*, 17 July 1862; Governor Leland Stanford to General George Wright. 27 June 1863. *Official Records*, Series 1,



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Vol. 50, Part 1, p. 28.

36. 1862 Petition to Leland Stanford. Military Records, California State Archives; Michele Shover, "The Politics of the 1859 Kibbe Campaign," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #38 (Summer 1999), pp. 4-39; Wm. Kibbe to John Bidwell, 21 January 1863, John Bidwell Collection, Special Collections, Meriam Library, CSU-Chico; Hereafter, JBC; Official Records, Series 1, vol. 50, Part 1, pp. 1162-1163; *Butte Democrat*, 23 June 1862; *Sacramento Daily Union*, 26 June 1862. List of Ordinance Issued to Organized Militia, Annual Report of The Adjutant-General of California in 1862. (Sacramento: State Printer, 1863), p. 146. This notes 32 rifles delivered to the "Citizens of Butte County" on July 2. Thanks to Dr. Robert Chandler of Wells Fargo Bank for this document. General George Wright to State Adjutant General George Wright. 28 June 1863, Military Records, California State Archives. Thanks to George Stammerjohan for information on muskets v. rifles.

37. *Butte Record*, 9 August 1862, *Sacramento Daily Union*, 2 July 1862; *Enterprise*, 19 January 1918.

38. Petition, Citizens of Butte and Tehama Counties to the Governor, July 1863. Military Records, California State Archives.

39. The author appreciates the advice of Robert Chandler regarding the responsibilities of the various authorities for response to Indian problems.

40. *Butte Record*, 8 August 1862.

41. *Ibid.*, 9 August 1863; Robert Anderson, *Fighting the Mill Creeks* (Chico: The Chico Record Press, 1909), p. 59-60.

42. John Bidwell to Governor Leland Stanford, 17 July 1862. Military Records. California State Archives.

43 *Ibid.*

44. *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 50, Part 1, p. 27-28.

45. 22 July 1862 *Red Bluff Beacon*. Good and his men, like most citizens probably, did not distinguish between California Volunteers and Army "regulars." The troops Wright sent up were California Volunteers.

46. *Butte Record*, 9 August 1863.

47. *Ibid.*, 8 August 1862.

48. *Ibid.*

49. Hiram Good to Governor Leland Stanford, 8 August 1862. Military Records, California State Archives.

50. General Wm. Kibbe to Governor Leland Stanford, 15 August 1862. Military Records, California State Archives.

51. *Ibid.*; *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 50, Part 1, pp. 550; *Red Bluff Independent*, 19 August 1862; *Chico Enterprise*, 15 and 26 January 1918. Federal Indian Agents or Commissioners referred to Bidwell as a sub-Agent in the early 1850s and as late as 1863 when Agent George Hanson called on the Chico rancher for help with new mountain Indian problems.

52. *Dictation*, p. 14; The quote mentioned examples of annoyances he found objectionable. These are compressed in the quote here to economize space.

53. *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886.

54. "Copperhead" was the term given to anti-war, anti-Lincoln Democrats by Unionists in the Midwest, particularly in the states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. They were called this because some of them wore copper pennies as identifying badges. Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio was the leading "Copperhead" throughout most of the Civil War. In California, Unionists used the same term to brand anti-war Democrats. In the State Legislature elected in 1863, five of the forty elected senators and eight of the eighty assemblymen were known as "Copperheads." (Cour-

tesy Dr. Robert Chandler.)

55. *Ibid.*
56. *Chico Enterprise*, 15 January 1918. The same words appeared in Mansfield, p. 229: "The troops were sent here on account of anti-union sentiment."
57. George Mansfield, *History of Butte County*, (Historic Record Company: Los Angeles, 1918) Chapter XIII.
58. *Chico Morning Chronicle*, 17 July 1886.
59. *Ibid.*
60. *Butte Record*, 15 October 1863.
61. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1863; 3 and 4 September 1863.
62. Stilson, 3 September 1863.
63. Camp Bidwell Post Returns, Chico, Butte County, CA. Returns from Military Posts, 1800-1916. December 1863, M 617, Roll 111, U.S. National Archives. [Hereafter Camp Bidwell Post Returns.]
64. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1863.
65. Stilson, 24 January 1864.
66. *Ibid.*, 25 March 1864. Cf. 11 April 1864.
67. *Marysville Appeal*, 29 March 1864.
68. Lewis Stilson, *Diaries*. 26 March 1864. Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico.; Bidwell, 26. He said the troops saddled rebels with bricks rather than sand.; *Chico Enterprise*, 15 January 1915.
69. Mary Silsby to Mrs. H.H. Webb, 3 April 1864. Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico.
70. Camp Bidwell Post Returns, Chico, Butte County, CA. Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916. April 19, 1864. M617, Roll 111; *Official Records, Series 1*, vol. 50, Part 1, p. 874; *Oroville Union Record*, 11 June 1864. Cf. Mansfield, p. 216.
71. *Official Records, Series I*, vol. 50, Ch. LXII, p. 875-876 and 880-881.
72. Stilson, 18 and 23 July 1864. Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico.
73. Bidwell, p. 27. This example also appeared in the memoir of F.C. Crowder, *Enterprise*, 15 January 1918.
74. *Official Records, Series 1*, vol. 50, Part 1, p. 550, 572.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 633-634.
76. Reports of gold being found in the Humboldt Mines of Nevada in 1862 led John Bidwell and several partners to seek a state franchise for a new wagon road from Chico to Susanville where it connected with the National Wagon Road to Fort Kearney through South Pass. After investing \$40,000 to improve the road, it was completed in 1864 after the mines proved to be a disappointment. The Chico and Humboldt Wagon Road was then used by teamsters carrying provisions and supplies to the Idaho mines, and by July 1865, stage service was established between Chico and Ruby City, Idaho. Clarence McIntosh, "Stage Lines from Southern Idaho to the Sacramento Valley, 1865-1867," in Butte County Historical Society *Diggin's*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring, 1965.
77. *Official Records, Series I*, vol. 50, Part I, p. 1136; 19 June 1865, p. 1171-1172; 19 June 1865, pp. 1263-1265.
78. Camp Bidwell Post Returns, August, 1864. M617, Roll 111, U.S.N.A.
79. Irvin Ayres to John Bidwell, 24 August 1863, John Bidwell, Collection, Special Collection, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico. According to military field historian, George Stammerjohan, Bidwell had previously enjoyed the courtesy rank of "major," as a U.S. Navy title which approximated to "Paymaster" and not as an equivalent to the rank of major in the U.S. Army or in a militia. In being named Brigadier General, therefore, his elevation was the equivalent of the rank of general in the California Militia. He never acted in a command capacity.
80. "Chico Light Infantry," State Militias, Military Records, California State Archives; Stilson, 1863-1864, passim.
81. Stilson.
82. Mansfield, p. 228.
83. Stilson, 20 February 1864; Mansfield, p. 228-229; Robert J. Chandler, "Success to Civil War Tragedy: The Greathouse Brothers and Slicer's Express" *Western Express*, p. 46 (March 1996), pp. 10-11; A peculiar and unlikely version of the Greathouse episode appears in Mansfield, p. 229.
84. Stilson, 9 April 1864. Chandler, "Success to Civil War Tragedy: The Greathouse Brothers & Slicer's Express," pp. 4-58.
85. J.P. Steele to Hon. Wm. Dole. 25 April 1864. John Bidwell Collection, Special Collection, Meriam Library, CSU, Chico; Bidwell, pp. 27-29.
86. *Ibid.*, 23 July 1864.
87. *Chico Enterprise*, 12 January 1918.
88. Post Return, August 1864, M617, Roll 111, U.S.N.A.; *Butte Record*, 27 August 1864. See p. 9 for a discussion of the term "black abolitionist."
89. Stilson, 22 and 25 August 1864; Camp Bidwell, Post Return, August 1864, M617, Roll 111, U.S.N.A.; *Butte Record*, 27 August 1864. Norris Bleyl, "Camp Bidwell," (Chico: ANCR, 1984), p. 10.
90. Mansfield, pp. 228-229; Stilson, 5 October 1864; *Marysville Appeal*, 7 October 1864; *Santa Rosa Democrat*, 23 October 1863.
91. *Union Record*, 8 October and 3 December 1864; Stilson, 3 September and 30 December 1864.
92. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1864.
93. *Ibid.*, 2 October 1864.
94. Stilson, p. 18 and 14 October 1864.
95. *Ibid.*, 24 October 1864.
96. Mansfield quoting *Union Record*, 5 November 1864. Cf. Stilson, 5 November 1864.
97. Stilson, 15 December 1864.
98. *Ibid.*, passim and 10 and 16 December 1864; 7 February 1865; *Butte Record*, 11 April 1863.
99. *Ibid.*, 3 October 1863 and January 1863 passim.
100. 8 October 1864, *Union Record*. Chico Light Infantry, Military Archive, California State Archive; Post Returns, Camp Bidwell, October 1864, M617, Roll 111, U.S.N.A.; *Chico Courant*, 7 July 1866. Cf. *Butte Record*, 11 August 1883.
101. Stilson, 10 April and May 16 1865.
102. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1865.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*, 17 and 19 April 1865; Moak, 15; *Official Records, Series I*, vol. 50, Part I, p. 1218; *Chico Enterprise*, 15 January 1918; Post Returns, November 1864-March 1865, M617, Roll 111, U.S.N.A.
105. *Oroville Record*, 20 and 27 May 1865; Bleyl, pp. 13-15. Another L.P. Hall edited a newspaper at Amador County at this time.
106. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1865; Bleyl, p. 13.
107. *Butte Record*, 6 May 1865; Stilson, 13 May 1865.
108. Stilson, 23 May 1865.
109. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1865.
110. *Chico Courant*, 16 December 1865.
111. Stilson, 26, 1865.
112. Clough, 54, 57.