

CALIFORNIA MILITARY DEPARTMENT HISTORICAL PROGRAM  
North Highlands Annex, Joint Forces Headquarters  
3900 Roseville Road  
North Highlands, California 95660

# **Politics of the 1859 Kibbe Campaign: Northern California Indian-Settler Conflicts of the 1850s**

by Michele Stover

Extracted 20 January 2019. *California Territorial Quarterly*, No. 38 (Summer 1999) pp. 4-25,  
and 31-37

# The Politics of the 1859 Kibbe Campaign

## Northern California Indian-Settler Conflicts of the 1850s

By Michele Shover

*This is the second in a series of articles by Michele Shover which examines the brutal conflicts between Native Americans and pioneer settlers in Northern California during the 1850s and 1860s. The first article, "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter, 1852-1856" appeared in the 1998 winter issue #36.*

### The Farmers v. the Miners and Kibbe's 1859 River Expedition Against the "Butte Creeks"

In 1859 raids and counterraids east of the Sacramento Valley foothills pitted Native Americans and settlers against one another along a one hundred-fifty mile trail of retribution. Local Indian fighters, a U.S. Army unit, and State Adjutant General William Kibbe's River Expedition took the settlers' part. While modern studies have identified the Native men as Yahis, this account assigns significant responsibility to Butte Creek Maidus--also then called Mountain Maidus--who conducted raids west into the valley from the canyons of eastern Tehama and Butte counties. The campaign which valley farmers launched against them deepened the political split between the farming and mining regions of Butte County. The effects of this split would carry over into Indian and settler conflicts there in the 1860s.<sup>1</sup>

This study relies on sources in the California State Library; the State Archives; the Special Collections Department of California State University, Chico; participant memoirs; significant anthropological treatments of related material; and contemporary press accounts.

### Mill Creeks and Butte Creeks: Problems to the North

Modern scholars have abandoned the names, "Mill Creeks" and "Butte Creeks," the Sacramento Valley settlers' nomenclature for the mountain Indians with whom they exchanged raids during the 1850s and

Illustration by Charles Nahl, 1850



Hostilities between Native Americans and northern California settlers reached a fever pitch in the late 1850s.

1860s. According to anthropologist Theodora Kroeber and others, for example, "Mill Creek" was a misnomer because the Native men who raided valley ranches were solely Yahi tribesmen from the caves and camps along Mill and Deer Creek canyons of eastern Tehama County. While the present account agrees that the Yahis were principals among the raiders on Tehama and Butte counties during this period, it will demonstrate that settlers of the day had good reasons for their conviction that the Yahis raided in association with or parallel to reservation refugees and neighbors from other tribes--particularly Mountain Maidus--who, under pressure from European immigration, had secured access to Yahi territory.<sup>2</sup>

Yahis had retreated from their Sacramento Valley homeland to Mill and Deer Creek canyons about 1600 years earlier under attacks from Maidus and Wintus who had invaded the valley out of the north. In the three hundred years prior to the settlers' arrival, those

invaders had deepened their hold on the valley and had driven the Yahis from the foothills deep into the canyons' steep recesses. Their inhospitable territory had made them tough and savvy adversaries who regularly raided valley and mountain rivals alike.

*The pattern and ferocity of their hit and run attacks were aimed at keeping unwanted visitors out of the foothills.<sup>3</sup>*

These lightning raids proved a tactic which frightened and frustrated settlers on their far-flung ranches. The night raids, which simultaneously capitalized on their victims' vulnerability and facilitated rapid escapes, virtually never cost casualties to the raiders themselves. Because immigrant diseases had already decimated the Native American population, any raider death was a critical loss of a valuable male hunter and defender. Settlers managed to halt few raids in midcourse. Consequently, after attacks on valley farms, Indian casualties, if any, almost always occurred well afterward in settler pursuits for vengeance that were generally ineffective or, tragically, punished inoffensive Indians as examples to perpetrators.<sup>4</sup>

As the Yahis' immediate rivals, the canyon or "Mountain" Maidus lived in small clusters, three or more of which comprised a tribelet of thirty or more roughly related people. By the late 1850s in Butte and Tehama counties, where Valley Wintus and Valley Maidus had become the equivalent of vassals to big ranchers, Mountain Maidus, the Yahis' neighbors south of Deer Creek, survived by their wits in the midst of the American gold seekers. Mining camps, which honeycombed their territories, demolished their food sources and constrained their freedom. Most canyon Indians--hereafter called Mountain Maidus--came to terms with the miners at every turn. However, Mountain Maidus who found the American infringements most intolerable seized alternative space in the Yahis' Deer Creek Canyon. By 1859 the Yahis evidently had accepted the presence of these Mountain Maidu rivals. They had little choice. Despite their fierceness, the Yahis' population of about three hundred--"one of the lowest population densities in California...and barely able to reproduce themselves"--could never field more than forty to sixty men as fighters.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, according to researcher Jerald Johnson, they were "hardly in a position to attack any significant party of

# Invest With Confidence

## We Offer...

- Medical Insurance, All Ages, Individual or Group
- Long Term Nursing Care • Life & Annuities
- Medicare Supplements • Living Trusts

**B & Y**

Securities  
Offered Through

**Breck & Young Advisors, Inc.**  
A REGISTERED INVESTMENT ADVISOR/BROKER-DEALER  
11341 Gold Express Dr., Suite 110, Gold River, CA 95670  
(916)636-8555

**Younger  
& Associates**

INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

**530-872-8000**



1-800-464-6300  
P.O. Box 3003, Paradise 95967

Wintu and Maidu to the east or south of them."<sup>6</sup> It is unlikely that such a small number of Yahis could have committed all the thefts and arsons about which Tehama and Butte county residents complained.

Any kind of rapprochement represented a significant development. Yahi men not only had long warred to the death with Wintu and Maidu men, but they had replenished their population through the capture of women and children from those tribes. While no evidence survives to verify this, under the crisis conditions of 1859 the Yahis certainly had Maidu and Wintu connections, therefore, with whom they might have coalesced against their common enemy, the settlers. Because old Mountain and Valley Maidu rivals had long observed temporary truces in order to affect common objectives, such as trade, it is possible that Yahis and Mountain Maidus also reached accommodation under extreme conditions. For example, while the Yahis made almost no use of trade, their access through rival territory to the Sacramento River may have been the product of treaties as well as stealth. For whatever reason, evidence suggests the Yahis shared or ceded parts of Deer Creek Canyon to Mountain Maidus in 1859.<sup>7</sup>

The Mountain Maidu camps and caves lay along the West Branch of the Feather River as well as along Butte, Rock, Mud, Chico and adjacent creeks which flow onto the Sacramento Valley floor. "Old hands" among the settlers called Mountain Maidus from these areas by the name of "Butte Creeks" because they knew that, while these tribelets were sometimes rivals, at other times they combined forces against common enemies, both settler and Native American. Mountain Indians particularly resented valley settlers whom they regarded as protectors of the Valley Maidus and Wintus whose labor the ranchers had pressed into service. In addition, the settlers aroused resentment because their cattle grazed on grasslands on which Mountain Maidus counted on for food. While both the Yahis and the Mountain Maidus had disciplined themselves to survive on their territories' sparse vegetation, they had supplemented their diet by surreptitious sorties to the lands of the Wintus and the Valley Maidus.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the 1850s, the settlers, Maidus and Wintus from adjoining valley areas in Butte and Tehama counties feared mountain Indians, whether Maidu or Yahi. According to surveyor William Brewer who was in Butte County during 1860, his Valley Maidu guide halted at the entry to Butte Creek Canyon, Mountain Maidu territory. The man implored Brewer's party to turn back. Brewer recalled,

*The tame Indians that live...among the whites are much afraid of the wild ones, who treat them with terrible cruelties if they catch them.*<sup>9</sup>

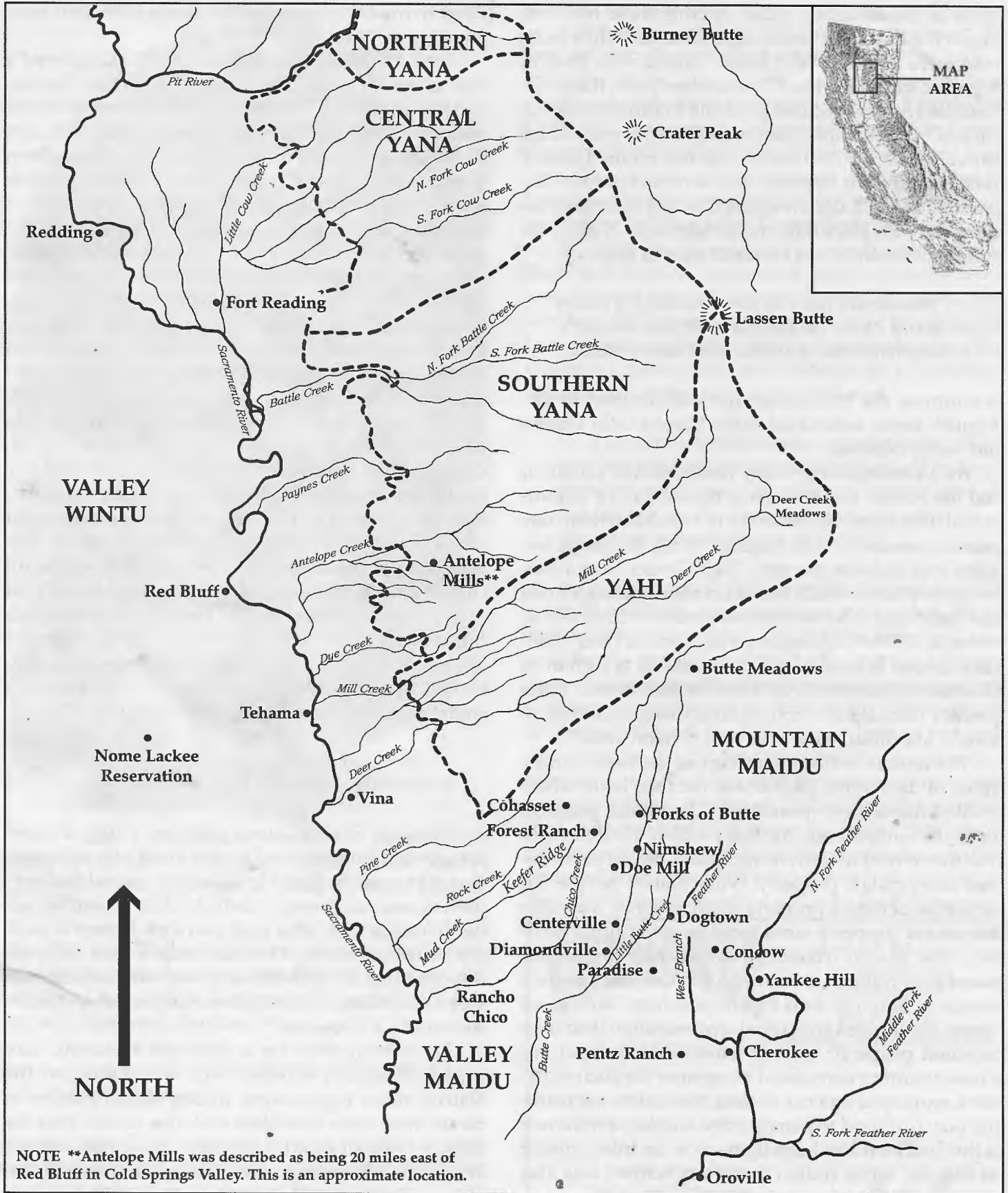
Both Yahis and Mountain Maidus were more formidable adversaries than the passive valley peoples. By tradition, for example, the Mountain Maidus killed and scalped males they had slain and set fires to enemy sites. They celebrated victories with dances around scalps they had hung on a pole. They bound prisoners to poles and tortured them with burning stakes and they cut off their captives' noses or appendages before killing them. While these practices were seldom employed in the conditions of the 1850s, they gave the mountain raiders a fearsome reputation. During the 1850s, therefore, both settlers and Maidus in the valley had reason to worry about raids out of the steep canyons that enter the valley floor from the east.<sup>10</sup>

Overly simplified accounts of Mountain Maidus and Yahis have ignored the importance of their resistance, their spirit against overwhelming odds, as well as their shrewd, effective and terrifying tactics. Similarly, overly-simplified accounts of the motives and actions of the valley-based Indian pursuers are commonplace. For example, consider a popular pamphlet still in circulation:

*In 1859, a mob of armed men, led by a local thug named Coon Garner, swept the Canyon, pillaging the last of the Maidu villages.*<sup>11</sup>

Mob. Thug. Pillage. The Indian pursuers from the valley committed demonstrably wrong acts. Revulsion at such acts, while appropriate, has discouraged a closer look at these ranchers and the first-hand knowledge they gained in the field. Their grasp of conditions is critical, however, to understand what happened in 1859. For example, while anthropologists T. T. Waterman and Theodora Kroeber identified all raiders out of the canyons as Yahis, settler data at the time pointed to the Mill Creeks and Butte Creeks as clusters of Native people from more than one tribe or tribelet.<sup>12</sup>

How could residents conclude with such confidence that more than one tribe was responsible for the raids? Although settlers found it hard to distinguish Native individuals and groups from one another, they had a reliable source of information in their Native workers, the valley Indians, whose lives had always depended on their ability to identify traditional en-



Map showing the northern California area of Indian-settler conflicts.

emies in the mountain tribes. Among these workers, whom the Red Bluff *Beacon* identified as "white Indians," were mountain and valley Indians who lived in or passed through white communities. From them, the mountain Indians secured guns and information about settlers.<sup>13</sup> For example, Native people who worked for John Bidwell, a Butte County rancher, notified him of outside predators. Not only that, some of his more disgruntled ranch Indian workers brought mountain Indians on to his place who meant him harm. California Indian historian Albert Hurtado affirms that,

*Indians who had once been employed by whites in many cases raided their former masters. Accomodation and resistance went hand-in-hand.<sup>14</sup>*

In addition, the 1859 Indian pursuers learned to distinguish some individual Butte Creeks, Mill Creeks and valley Natives.

As a consequence, valley residents had no doubt that the Native raiders were a random array of individual men from various tribes or tribelets whom they called in common, "Mill Creeks." While this usage has fallen into disfavor, the term "Mill Creeks" was a contemporary term which rested on reasonable grounds and there is no more accurate alternative. Similarly, as events in 1859 would demonstrate, south of Deer Creek Yahis raided in concert with and parallel to men from Mountain Maidu tribelets, whom settlers called "Butte Creeks" because the raiders comprised members of several Maidu tribelets from that general area.<sup>15</sup>

The settlers' refusal to recognize the basic human rights of the Native people was the core issue which divided the settlers from them. On a more practical level, the subject here, the issue which divided them was the refusal of each to recognize the other's concept of legitimate property. While Native people did recognize personal property, such as tools, they also recognized property considered as community territory. The Maidu tribelets marked their territories, reared their children to know the borders, and assigned patrols to fend off rival Indian poachers. Settlers, of course, subdivided such tribal territories into their own personal property with no compunction. Indians, whose tradition demanded vengeance for such violations, employed against settlers the traditional methods they had used to penalize one another. Prominent in this tradition had been theft--tribe on tribe, tribelet on tribelet. While Indian theft from settlers was also importantly linked to their desperate search for food, property theft against settlers proved an astute chal-

lenge to the settlers' precarious survival on their marginal farms.<sup>16</sup>

Since the 1840s these considerations had played a role in periodic conflicts between mountain Indians and valley settlers. In 1859 eastern Sacramento Valley settlers believed that their immediate conflict with area Indians had begun over property claims in southern Shasta County. There, in late January, Antelope Creek Indians, who had endured a winter of heavy snows and bitter chill as well as severely depleted food supplies, had stolen some cattle. This precipitated a private pursuit party which murdered seven to twelve Native people, most of them women and children. Because the Indians and settlers both subscribed to retributive justice and because both recognized no jointly-acceptable mediating institutions, the course of their conflict offered no opportunity for reconciliation.

That January the Red Bluff *Beacon* printed an editorial from the Yreka *Chronicle* which harshly condemned such abuses of the Native people. Perhaps, the writer ventured, the settlers exhibited such harshness because they lacked any convincing moral explanation for their land seizures. Consequently, he suggested, they seized on deaths or thefts at the hands of Indians as opportunities to recover the moral highground. For that reason, therefore, Indian raids furnished settlers with the moral clarity they had lost but hoped to recover. The crisis, he hypothesized, also turned strangers into neighbors as they discovered a common stake in defense. The editor summed up:

*We are of the opinion that the whites are more to blame than the Indians.*

After the Shasta County murders, valley settlers' antagonism hardened and turned moralistic with signs that the mountain-based Indians had "upped the ante" from occasional livestock thefts to nightly raids on settler livestock and, after that, on ranch homes in eastern Tehama County. That the settlers bore ultimate responsibility for the Indians' desperation was also the view of local area Indian fighters such as Robert Anderson and D. F. Crowder.<sup>17</sup>

The driving issue for settlers was economic. Yahi expert, Theodora Kroeber, who acknowledged the Native men's aggressions, distinguished their misdeeds from those of settlers with this caveat, that the Indians "stole or killed to live, not to accumulate herds or wealth."<sup>18</sup> However, since 1856 Indian raids had cost settlers considerable "wealth," roughly \$100,000 in buildings and fields torched as well as livestock sto-

Illustration by J. Ross Browne



**Northern California settlers committed indiscriminate vengeance upon local Native Americans in response to raids on their homes.**

len. This was not a new problem of course, for Tehama and Butte counties' small farmers. As early as 1847, rancher Daniel Sill and others had dispatched a petition for help with the plea,

*If cattle killing continues, we will be forced to abandon our farms.<sup>19</sup>*

In the late 1850s version, Indian attacks on stage coaches, for which guards proved insufficient, resulted in the termination of service. Freight wagons, with guards riding shotgun, carried on, but the personnel

suffered casualties.

The settlers at risk to raids, who were among the less well-off, depended on modest property such as their few cattle. The anxiety this provoked in them combined with fears of Indians they had carried to California. For example, a companion of Indian fighter Harmon Good later mentioned that he had heard from several sources that Good's fiancée had been killed by Indians en route across the country. Good's close friend and fellow Indian tracker Robert Anderson's obituary recalled that his crossing party had encountered conflicts with both Mormons and Native peoples. Similarly, Butte Creek goldminer Charles Ferguson, who was troubled by settler abuse of Native peoples, had lost several members of his immigrant party to a Native attack. The survivors retaliated with a "massacre" at an Indian camp. Ferguson concluded,

*I do not believe in wanton cruelty to the Indian, but when you are in a country where you know he is your enemy, and is not only waiting his chance but looking out for his opportunity, why not cut him down, as he most surely will you?<sup>20</sup>*

As the course of these events evolved in 1859, roughly in March, valley settlers who noted the increased frequency of raids also began to remark on a new factor, one which would importantly influence their analysis of the situation: the Native men appeared to select expensive targets. This factor first appeared on Tehama County foothill farms where in one case, for example, night raiders passed up numerous ranches to seize highly valuable horses only two miles from the village of Tehama. Because Native men neither rode nor had an interest in riding, they would have no interest in such horses for themselves, settlers deduced that mountain goldminers had dispatched them.<sup>21</sup> The case the settlers made for the Native men's

**CHEROKEE**  
LAND CO.

Jack McWherter  
Broker/Owner  
(530) 534-5043  
fax 533-1601  
email: cherland@jps.net

4220 CHEROKEE ROAD  
CHEROKEE, CA 95965

Located near the  
Cherokee Museum



lack of interest in horses is not altogether convincing. For one thing, Native people preferred the taste of horseflesh to that of beef. For another, the Indians were particularly hungry by the spring months when the raids took place. Nevertheless, it did not make sense for them to pass up ordinary horses for fine riding animals and, in one case, tack. While the Army would later read such information to indicate white thieves, the farmers on the scene could recognize the pattern and signs of Native men. Because settlers made no attempt to protect white thieves and because they were savvy about Indian tracks, it is likely that they were correct. While these settlers had no evidence of white thieves, they were already alive to the idea that miners were complicit with Indian raiders. As a Red Bluff newspaper had stated in 1857:

*We boldly assert that white men are connected to the Indians in such robberies... What wild Indian would come seven miles into the valley, passing hundreds of cattle, to steal a fine mare worth \$400, within a pistol shot of a house occupied by four or five persons.<sup>22</sup>*

From an early moment, therefore, the farmers realized they had two problems: angry Native men and the miners who shared canyon streambeds. Because the mining sites concentrated south of Deer Creek along Butte and nearby creeks as well as on Feather River branches, this reveals the early concern about participation not only by Mill Creeks but also by Butte Creeks.<sup>23</sup>

In the spring of 1859, when publicity on the Indian raids still focused on eastern Tehama County, not only the stepped-up pace of the thefts, but the raiders' boldness united the farm community. In order to understand how events evolved, it is important to grasp a factor unthinkable to later times: despite the settler anger and fear, no public officials mounted any response--no defense, no offense--on the settlers' behalf any more than on the Native people's behalf. In the first place, no local office had the responsibility to address Indian attacks. Sheriffs and their deputies were at most willing to arrest or otherwise discipline town Indians in scrapes and, in several such cases, under the influence of liquor from local vendors. It was each man for himself and his neighbors.

As a consequence, valley ranchers and ranch hands themselves set out in pursuit of Indian raiders. These men, the Tehama Volunteers, rode from Red Bluff into Mill Creek Canyon during early April backed by pre-

mium money which citizens had agreed to pay them for "scalps" or "some other satisfactory evidence that they had been killed."<sup>24</sup> On their return to town, these pursuers reported that, while they had spotted many Indians, the heavily swollen creek had prevented contact. When the Native raiders accelerated their sorties, the settlers attributed this to the April pursuit party's departure from Mill Creek Canyon in frustration. Both Indian fighter Robert Anderson and Butte Creek country storekeeper and miner, James Callen, agreed that any defeat or retreat of settlers emboldened Native men to press their advantage.<sup>25</sup> Proximity without hostile engagement was common then because weapons--guns or bows and arrows--lacked the accuracy or distance of modern arms. Where no natural barrier protected Indians from search parties, they employed seclusion and avoidance. Each party that went out in this period experienced what miners had regularly reported: the sense of constant surveillance from Indians who, they "knew," watched them from bluffs and canyon walls where the valley men observed signals they did not understand. The men who made up one of the April pursuit parties reported that, while they had killed random Indians in the hill country and canyons, they had made no impact on the capacity of the "Mill Creeks" to inflict more damage. In a tactic which some confused with cowardice, the Indians exercised strict discipline to avoid casualties. According to D. F. Crowder, the Native men,

*...only attacked those they met on their pathway and were unprotected. They seemed ever ready for murder of the white man or woman, when they could do so without risk to themselves.<sup>26</sup>*

At every stage of the conflict such Indian tactics suggest they considered it essential to protect their numbers.

In the present instance, the Indian imperative for vengeance found ongoing provocations. In the third week of April, for example, a settler party in pursuit of Indian horse thieves attacked an Indian camp where they massacred fourteen, most of them women and children. A retaliation was, therefore, necessary to satisfy Native tradition. Its force fell on innocents. In the early morning of May 10 along the Sacramento River only three miles southeast of Red Bluff, a young Indian boy in the service of the Edward A. Stephenson family locked the family home and, keeping the only key, set fire to the home, and took off for the countryside. Flames claimed the lives of two women and five



children, the oldest of whom was five. While Edward Stephenson survived and would later head the Nome Lackee Reservation, his ranchhand, the father of three of the children, died of injuries a few days later. While it is impossible to know, because the boy was only ten, the organization of the crime and the aftermath suggests the boy had adult accomplices. Only the next day, barking dogs alerted wary residents who drove off two raid attempts. While livestock thefts chronically troubled settlers, the deaths of women and children would regularly arouse a depth of hostility which moved campaigns against Indians to new intensity.

The pattern through the late 1850s points up this distinction. Settlers had tended to ignore remote or occasional Native thefts or murders of individuals. Responses were the random products of private initiative. For example, a week after the Stephenson fire, the murder of Peter Lassen and his companion at a mountain campsite, and the murder near Pit River of a cattle driver produced no organized response. This shows that both the settler and the Native communities considered attacks on women and children a higher level of provocation which required a concerted response from men. The mountain settlers' January and April murders of Indian women and children in southern Shasta County seemed to have launched retaliations in the valley, such as the Stephenson fire. The settlers felt they were at a disadvantage in the contest with the mountain Indians. For example, in their retaliations the Native raiders found ready access to valley settlers' assets and persons on any night of their choice. On the other hand, valley people had no idea where to find the raiders. Only a few valley men had skills to search the canyons. Until the summer of 1859, Indians there rarely entered their pursuers' eyesight let alone their gunsights. It is important to understand the extent of the valley residents' sense of disadvantage in this contest.<sup>27</sup>

Because by the time of the Stephenson fire the initial Red Bluff area subscription drive had exhausted the local funds available for such a purpose, the rural residents and their supporters petitioned Governor John B. Weller to finance volunteer parties. They had confidence in State Adjutant General William Kibbe who had conducted volunteer raids against Indians on the coast. Governor Weller, a Ohioan who had served in that state's legislature and had been its Democratic candidate for governor, was a Mexican War veteran. Having represented California in the U.S. Senate as well, he was no political novice and did not act on their petition in haste. While he pondered his

options in early June, raiders continued almost nightly raids at valley ranches.<sup>28</sup>

As the governor received the Tehama County petition of May 16th, Indian raiders had taken horses from the Hickman place where the owner decided not to pursue them in order to guard his grain fields against the arson attempts raiders had launched in valley fields along the foothills. By late May raiders had left a six mile expanse of the valley in flames between the town of Tehama and the foothills. With the settlers' key crop, wheat, nearing harvest, as well as the Harker and Bradley homes also in flames, the prospect of bankruptcies loomed. Meanwhile, northeast of Redding, Pit River Indians "shot" a hired hand of Napoleon McElroy, whose dog also took three arrows. The man survived; McElroy would himself be killed by Indians in mid-August of 1859.<sup>29</sup>

Governor Weller did not oblige the settlers in their call for a volunteer response under State auspices. However, he did secure the U.S. Army's agreement to send its Captain Franklin Flint with Company A, the 6th Infantry, which arrived in Red Bluff on the 26th of May. Residents were disappointed. They noted the soldiers' lack of urgency and felt their supplies were inappropriate as they set up their regulation camp and assessed the situation at their ease. As professional soldiers who had a decade of experience with California Native peoples, Army units had long mediated between northern California settlers and Indians. These experiences had left them skeptical, even cynical, about settler cries of abuse. In northwestern and far northern California the Army had regularly responded to settler calls of alarm only to find that the accused Indians had acted in self defense in response to abuses by the very settlers who wanted the soldiers' protection. These experiences had given officers and men reason to reserve judgment about the validity of the complaints from the Sacramento Valley.<sup>30</sup>

## Kalico Kitchen

- Daily Specials
- Food to go
- 877-1255 Paradise
- 343-3968 Chico
- Homemade Soups, Pies
- Hours 5 am - 9 pm
- Outside Seating
- Friendly, Fast Service
- Reasonable Prices
- With Great Portions

7099 Skyway

Paradise

877-1255

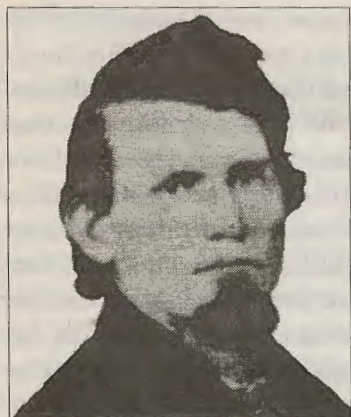
2396 Esplanade

Chico

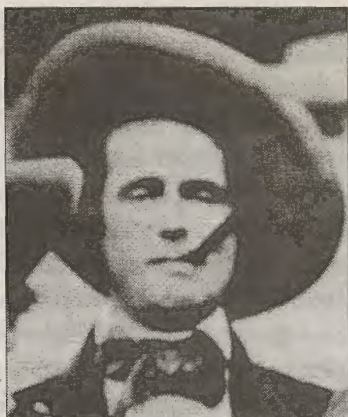
343-3968

VISA

Master  
Card



Robert Anderson



Harmon "Hi" Good

Of particular note, the soldiers did not impress two individuals who had a direct interest in the issue. Prominent among the local volunteers most familiar with the canyon Indians' turf were Robert Anderson, 21, whose later memoir Theodora Kroeber dubbed "uninhibited and intelligent," and Harmon A. Good, 25. These Deer Creek neighbors, who together had tracked Native parties into the canyons on many occasions, took the professional soldiers' measure. While they agreed the heavily provisioned unit would likely be effective in battles which fielded massed ranks in open country like the Vina plains, their experience had convinced them that such federal troops could never prevail against the local mountain Indians. In their opinion, the military unit carried the wrong equipment and relied on inappropriate tactics for the canyon pursuits. For another, they carried orders from Brevet Brigadier General Newman Clarke, federal military commander for California, which prohibited them from any military engagement with the Indians "until open war is declared by competent authority."<sup>31</sup> In other words, soldiers' orders permitted them only to negotiate with or to detain Indians; Indians whom they would find they could not see, let alone approach. The Army's dispatch of this unit, therefore, appeared a futile gesture. Anderson and Good were typical of local settlers when they concluded that only local men in the field over a long time could figure out how to find and defeat the Mill Creeks.

On May 29 the residents dispatched a second petition to Governor Weller. In this one they tried to be more direct about the peculiar nature of the challenge they faced:

*The close proximity of the mountains to the settlements enables these Indians to make nightly excursions to the valley, committing their depreda-*

*tions upon the farms, driving off the stock and in a few hours, unless...pursued, will hide in their mountain fastnesses. The peculiar ruggedness of these mountains enables them to hide from the most vigilant to escape from the most wary and oftentimes to make good battle against the bravest.<sup>32</sup>*

This view by the residents was no invention. For example, in 1851, Indian Commissioner Oliver Wozencraft had informed the Indian Agency of the Interior Department about the area's difficulty:

*The mountain Indians are very different [from the valley Indians] as they are athletic, wild, brave, independent, and measurably intractable beings; their physical and mental organization is far superior to those in the valleys.*

*These Indians cannot be subdued by waging a war on them. The rugged face of the country forbids it, and the Indian can pursue this course without halt, whenever he will, and feed upon the indigenous product of the soil, where the white...cannot tread or transport his food.<sup>33</sup>*

While the Indians had directed their raids on the countryside, town leaders felt at risk. The news that rural families had begun to flee their homes meant that immigrant settlers, so eagerly wooed by other new towns, might begin to look elsewhere for homes. Town businesses counted on their patronage. On June 15, the *Beacon* in Red Bluff described poor farmers on the point of exhaustion from all-night vigils over their fields. The threat of burned-out wheat fields and the continued theft of livestock, once again raised the specter of bankruptcies. Measures seemed imperative to assure security for farm families' persons and property. In addition, the editor noted that hard pressed agrarians had put up most of the \$3000 for the local Indian fighters as "their only hope, in order to protect their lives and property."<sup>34</sup> Having exhausted their resources, any additional expenditure might lead them "to abandon their farms and ranches."<sup>35</sup> State funds appeared their last hope. In early June the governor assured area petitioners that, should the federal Army's efforts fail to secure order, he would send help.

On June 15 as valley residents pondered the governor's unsympathetic stance, the local Indian pursuers set out again, this time with the State Militia's Captain Bill Burns, "a renowned Indian fighter," whom, according to Anderson, Kibbe had evidently dispatched for a reading on the situation.<sup>36</sup> Members

of the party included Hi Good, Robert Anderson, William Simmons, John Martin, John McCord, as well as men whom they called "Slim" and a "-- Cartin." Because orders from Governor Weller and Brevet Brigadier General Clarke limited Burns' options, the local men were uncomfortable about his presence in their party. Their reservations about the soldier's fitness for their regimen found vindication when Burns became sick and had to return to camp. In addition to Burns, forty-eight men in his unit and Captain Flint all fell ill almost immediately upon their arrival in the valley.

With settler John Breckenridge now at the Volunteers' head, after a brief skirmish with an Indian band, they could find no Mill Creeks. At the same time they were aware that Indians kept them under constant surveillance. The local volunteers' still tentative familiarity with the terrain hampered their movement through Mill and Deer Creek canyons. On this passage they charged themselves to master the Indians' land, their tactics and their signals. They also deepened their conviction that no regular military methods could adapt to such peculiar conditions and terrain.<sup>37</sup>

Two days after the Tehama Volunteers had set out from the valley, an estimated fifteen to twenty Mill Creeks in the vicinity of Antelope scalped and slit the throat of "bull puncher," William Patrick, 28, en route with a load of hay from his Cold Springs Valley quarters to Antelope mill east of Red Bluff. Before the Native men left with his team, they hid Patrick's body in brush and overturned his wagon. On the same day a dozen or more Mill Creeks pursued a Mr. Judd, who lived between Cold Springs Valley and Dr. Inskeep's Antelope mill where he had enjoyed agreeable relations with Indians. Judd ran for half a mile to safety at the mill. As Antelope settlers moved their families to the valley, Captain Flint and his men arrived. However,

*The Indians followed them all the way up and back, but at a respectful distance; in fact, the night the soldiers were encamped at the mill the Indians were prowling around the premises watching for a chance to attack.*<sup>38</sup>

While there Flint heard from Inskeep that at Lassen Butte, from which the physician had just returned, he had encountered numerous Native men of diverse tribelets. He had learned from some of them that they intended to "combine" and take on the whites "in a general battle."<sup>39</sup> He added that the roads there were

under the scrutiny of Nosers or Yanas, a point which emphasizes the breadth of Indian disaffection then.

On the Flint unit's June 20 return to Red Bluff from Antelope, temperatures of over 100 degrees had dried the valley wheat in the fields. There, Native parties again set fires, this time between Deer Creek and Mud Creek to the south in northern Butte County. The setting of fires to ground cover, a Maidu practice to clear passages and stimulate young growth, was a powerful weapon to apply against valley settlers on their far-flung farms.

Apprised of the fires and the Patrick murder, Governor Weller concluded that conditions would allow the State to act on the settlers' behalf. During the last week in June, General William Kibbe dispatched assurances to Red Bluff that he would organize a volunteer company. Because he would require another month-and-a-half to enter the conflict, however, the Tehama Volunteers continued to be the only unit in active pursuit of the Native men.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Breckenridge Party v. the Miners and the Butte Creeks**

Neither Inskeep nor the Breckenridge men invented the allegations about the troublesome tendencies of individual men among the Butte Creeks. Rancher D. F. Crowder, then a young man, whose 1918 memoir recorded his respect and sympathy for the Native people, remembered those Indian raiders on the valley and foothill ranches as men from "the same tribe as in the valley."<sup>41</sup> In other words, "Butte Creeks" were Mountain Maidus. John Breckenridge, Conrad "Coon" Garner, and Robert Anderson, members of various Indian pursuit parties over years, all acted on the conviction that the Indian raiders from Deer Creek south were primarily "Butte Creeks" of more than one Maidu mountain tribelet. While these valley men have earned disdain for the number of Native people they killed, their understanding of Indian identities and locations merits regard because it grew from their first-hand experience in the field.<sup>42</sup> Their conviction about the predatory role of some Butte Creeks merits consideration.

The pursuit of Butte Creeks as a priority began in late June when the course of six Breckenridge scouts and trackers led them to the Antelope mill after Flint's company had returned to the valley. The mill workers, still agitated over Patrick's murder and Judd's close escape, fed the hungry volunteers. It is reasonable to assume they heard Inskeep's report of Lassen

area Indians' threat to combine against whites. Because the party headed next for Lassen, Mill Creeks remained their focus.

In mid-July when that pursuit proved fruitless, however, an exchange of fire with an Indian party in Mill Creek Canyon near Black Butte shifted their attention to the trail of that party which led them south toward the Cohasset or Keefer Ridge in northern Butte County. While this shift has raised suspicions of arbitrary scalp hunting for bounty money, Anderson is specific in his references to the circumstances which led them to track to the south. A contemporary, Sim Moak, called Hi Good "one of the best Indian trackers in northern California" and "a great Indian trailer."<sup>43</sup> This direction would not have surprised the men given their suspicions about the Butte Creeks' alleged role in the valley raids.<sup>44</sup>

They descended to James Keefer's Rock Creek store where they exchanged information as they collected supplies. Having concentrated their attention from Deer Creek north, they knew considerably less about the area from Rock Creek to Butte Creek and beyond. With the field fires having reached the area of Mud Creek, Keefer's clientele had contracted the alarm which possessed their neighbors north to Deer Creek. With both law enforcement agencies and the Army contingent still unresponsive to Indian and settler conflicts, private retaliation seemed the only type of justice in prospect. Under the circumstances, the Tehama Volunteers seemed justice's only available instrument.<sup>45</sup>

While in camp on Rock Creek, the Volunteers received a warning to halt their pursuit. While neither the message's author nor its contents have survived, its content reenforced the "local wisdom" about ties between the roughly three hundred Butte Creek goldminers and the Butte Creek "Mountain" Maidus, whom the valley people blamed for raids south of Deer Creek along the Tehama and Butte county borders. Before they left Rock Creek, according to Anderson, a second note informed them about fifteen miners with close ties to the Butte Creek Indians who had been valley raiders throughout the 1850s.

*We had always felt certain that the Mill Creeks procured arms and ammunition through friendly relations with whites... This note of warning seemed to settle the matter and to indicate where the whites in question were to be found.*<sup>46</sup>

Nineteenth century Americans were familiar with

the frontier phenomenon of white men who had bonded with Native peoples. For example, Meriwether Lewis evinced no surprise when his and Clark's expedition encountered a white man who hunted with a large band of Blackfeet Indians.<sup>47</sup>

The men's sources could have been anyone in the area where such links were common knowledge. One contemporary example was northern Butte County rancher D. F. Crowder,

*It was a common remark among settlers that the Mill Creek Indians were receiving aid from either the Indians or miners, or both, on Butte Creek and I think those suspicions were well-founded.*<sup>48</sup>

Crowder had overheard a quarrel between neighboring farmer, Ed Brison, and a miner which, he said,

*...satisfied me that some of the miners on Butte Creek were furnishing the Indians with arms and ammunition.*<sup>49</sup>

From a different perspective, John Bidwell explained,

*Even the miners would sometimes pretend to be friendly to the Indians and unfriendly to me, because they were afraid of them.*<sup>50</sup>

Bidwell's experience had made him knowledgeable about the Butte Creek Indians' aggressive practices. In addition, he had long personal acquaintance with area miners. He knew the people and he knew the culture. Also in agreement was rancher-businessman, James Keefer, whose wife Rebecca was a Cherokee. The Keefers provided refuge to Indian victims of valley ranchers. Bidwell, Crowder and Keefer were not only respected individuals, they were also first-hand observers or participants in the clashes of the period. The credibility of all three on this point is powerful because each expressed considerable sympathy for the Native peoples. In order to understand why events of this time evolved as they did, therefore, it would be unwise to dismiss the allegations about some miners' complicity with some dangerous Indians. In light of the mixture of local information and lore available to the Breckenridge party, its members had reason to conclude that, while the "Mill Creeks" were the predators in northeastern Tehama County; the "Butte Creeks" were no less significant an adversary in troubled areas to the south. With this development, the fissure between miners and farmers--the moun-

tain people and the valley people--in Butte County joined the issue of Native raids at the forefront of local issues.<sup>51</sup>

Such allegations would widen a slim crack which had already opened between Butte County's mountain and valley residents. Until Breckenridge's Volunteers confronted miners on the latter's turf, however, the issue had raised little heat. Origins of the split had nothing to do with the Native people, but had begun as Butte County's economic base--and its future--began its shift from goldmining to agriculture. Because no concomitant shift in political control from mining to farming interests had occurred on the Board of Supervisors, office holders in the county seat at Oroville, remained allied with merchants who carefully tended to the lucrative miner market, the town's only economic base. While the Gold Rush had passed its peak, in 1860 the *Butte Democrat* reported that miners continued to funnel large amounts of gold into Oroville's banks and stores. When county officials had to take sides, the miners' interests prevailed. Valley residents already resented the county supervisors' support for a public hospital which served indigent miners, but was too distant to help valley taxpayers. In addition, valley men resented the supervisors' road and bridge expenditures which supported Oroville trade and ignored Chico. The latter hamlet, which was the principal valley settlement, had sprung up at John Bidwell's Rancho Chico headquarters on the Oroville-Shasta Road.<sup>52</sup> At Rancho Chico the information about danger from Mountain Maidus or Butte Creeks, which the Breckenridge party heard at Antelope and at Rock Creek, was common knowledge. Since the 1840s valley residents had periodically tangled with groups of Maidu men drawn from the Nimshew and Tigres tribelets on upper Butte Creek and other area creeks, as well as their occasional Kimshew and Concow Maidu allies from the West Branch of the Feather River. During late 1858 mountain residents as well had alleged Butte Creek complicity in the murders of two miners on the North Fork of the Feather River territory of the Maidus' Concow tribelet. The Concows, who denied responsibility, blamed Maidu Kimshews who, according to the *Record* in Oroville, have "given much trouble heretofore."<sup>53</sup> A year previous, the *Record* had referred to these men as "Chico Indians" because, as a north county people, they had become a familiar sight in Chico Canyon under circumstances linked to danger. As mentioned previously, the term "Butte Creeks" would include the Native peoples of all the canyons' Maidu tribelets south of Deer Creek and east

of the valley on Butte County's portion of the Sierra Cascades' western slopes.

The suspicion that Butte Creeks were complicit with the Mill Creeks also gained currency with reports from northern Chico Township ranchers. In early June, when southern Tehama County experienced numerous Indian raids, A. M. Sadorus, a farmer just north of Rock Creek, passed word that he had spotted men from "Ned's Tribe," a settler name for the canyon Nimshews, armed with bows, arrows and guns, as they traveled along the foothills north from Mud Creek. This was a borderline Yahi territory out of which the Mill Creeks also operated. Sadorus was well-known in the area where, among residents, his identification of Nimshews would have recalled local memories of their multiple attempts on John Bidwell and his operation as late as 1856.<sup>54</sup> In light of this recent history, valley residents' distrust of the Butte Creeks was similar to the distrust they and others just north of them felt for the Mill Creeks. Because they understood both Native bands to be a mix of tribes and tribelets, it followed that they suspected interconnections between Butte Creeks and Mill Creeks.

The miners' relationship to the Butte Creek-based Indians substantively differed from that of the ranchers and Valley Maidus. For over a decade of mining at isolated and far-flung sites, miners and Indians had lived at risk to one another. Miners had killed Indians. Indians had killed miners. In eastern Butte County each race in practice had inclined to absorb periodic murders of a miner or a Native individual (or more) in the wilderness. Retribution was sporadic, random and individual. In the early phase of their relationship each side tended to regard the other as thieves and worse. Over the course of the 1850s, however, while occasional violence continued at remote sites, most people of both races had inclined toward rapprochement. For the miners' part, this occurred as they learned they could expect reasonable security if they were personally cautious and could ignore the occasional disappearance of supplies and livestock at the hands of the hungry Native people. In the same vein, but on a more profound level, of course, Indians had no choice but to absorb the theft of their lands and other abuses, such as the miners' exploitation of Native women. In several examples of rapprochement settler communities pointedly rallied behind Indian victims of brutal acts by individual whites. Such members of the miner community were keenly interested to demonstrate to Indians the good intentions which distinguished them from their brutal counterparts.

Likewise, in 1854 Kimshews had assisted mountain residents as they pursued rival Paiutes who had killed miners.<sup>55</sup>

Having collected current information which supported their suspicions about miners' protection of Butte Creeks, therefore, the Breckenridge party proceeded into eastern Butte County in mid-July. The men first set up camp between Rock and Chico creeks on the Cohasset or Keefer Ridge. From there Hi Good and Robert Anderson, who alternated as lookout and as tracker, worked in advance of their party. Theodora Kroeber, who called the pair "large, shrewd, and fearless," acknowledged the common understanding that "Anderson and Good were natural trackers and scouts..."<sup>56</sup> Still on the course of the Indian party they had confronted on Mill Creek, and able to work only by daylight, they followed the faint signs which led them "very close to" the trail which approached Forks of Butte, a mining village of about three hundred.<sup>57</sup> Their colleagues followed them by night. The trail led them south across Chico Creek Canyon to the Butte Creek ridge trail near Forks of Butte and, from there, to the vicinity of what later came to be called Forest Ranch.

There, they discovered the men whom they had pursued had joined a large number of Indians, all of whom were asleep in what they concluded was a miners' camp because it sported an American flag. In early dawn, having collected the balance of their party and killed an Indian "scout" along the way, they attacked the camp. Robert Anderson later claimed they had killed forty Native people and a "Spaniard" who had offered no defense. His figure of forty has entered this attack in the class of most disgraceful settler actions against Native people. While nothing about the men's action can defend it, this figure is only bravado. In the first place, Anderson's own description suggests the mortality rate was limited because the Indian women, who understood English, heard Good instruct the party not to shoot them or the children. In their flight, he recalled, the women had obstructed the attack as they made shields of themselves to protect the men. This was a practice which would frustrate attackers on several occasions. In addition, Anderson's comments about the inaccuracy of their guns then and their difficulty in firing quick serial shots from muzzle loaders undercuts the death toll he claimed. At the Forest Ranch camp, the terrified survivors, who had discombobulated their attackers by taking flight directly through their ranks, vanished in the woods. He described the attack as a train of blunders which gives

no sense of a massacre. Later press reports counted the killed as ten Native men, one or two women, and two children who had moved in front of a targeted man. These also recorded that among the dead, Breckenridge had scalped a white man, "one of the Butte Creek squawmen" or "white Indians."<sup>58</sup> In early September of that year, John Breckenridge would claim the party over the entire summer campaign had killed a total of twenty-nine.<sup>59</sup>

The Breckenridge party's examination of the camp contents appeared to justify their hypothesis about the link between Mill Creeks and Butte Creeks in valley raids. The camp's furnishings included provisions such as containers, sugar, and flour--items presumably available to the Native people from sources on Butte Creek. Party members stole \$60 to \$70 in addition to a half dozen six shooters, rifles, and ammunition which the valley raiders were convinced the miners had furnished the Indian men. Because Native men continued to prefer traditional tools such as bows and arrows when they hunted, common opinion held that these weapons were for mischief. In 1859 the Butte County Grand Jury reached the same conclusion when its annual report concluded that Indian crimes traced directly to the role of the white men who supplied them with rifles. The Breckenridge men increasingly had observed the Indians' use of such weapons and, as they passed through the countryside, they saw evidence of target practices near Native camps.<sup>60</sup>

The valley men, who concluded the Forest Ranch camp survivors had fled to the protection of miners at Forks of Butte, headed there. Along the way they moved under fire and spotted surveillance from the north wall of Chico Canyon by men some "believed...weren't Indians."<sup>61</sup> It is significant that, as the Tehama Volunteers saw it, the conflict was no longer only between Indians and farmers, but clearly also one between farmers and miners. When word reached Forks of Butte, the miners, although irate, were initially perplexed. The survivors of the attack had described the raiders as "white men" who came "from the direction of the valley."<sup>62</sup> While that seemed clear enough, uncertainty attended some of the Indians' description of the attackers' "faces being blacked."<sup>63</sup> No known white men blackened their faces, but Maidu rivals did; early miners called Maidus, "tar faces."<sup>64</sup> When this confusion later reached the Breckenridge men, they took responsibility. They also took offense. An attempt to hide their identities would have inferred that they knew their acts were criminal. They had never meant to obscure their identities be-

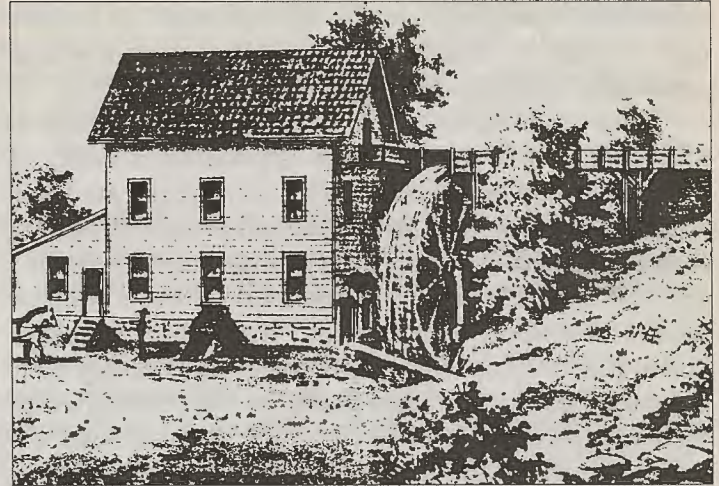
cause they considered their actions to be warranted retributions.<sup>65</sup>

In the meantime, word had filtered to Rancho Chico that Indians had killed Anderson, Good, and others "near Chico Canyon." The rumor was not true, although the report would have been credible there in 1859 because of Butte Creek clashes with John Bidwell. Almost simultaneous with this news, word had arrived both in Chico and at Breckenridge's new camp near Keefer's Mill that on July 28 arrows had struck William Lindsey, as he and Perry McIntosh hauled posts and rails along Cohasset Road from the Vermont Mill to his place. At the moment of attack, as Lindsey crumpled, McIntosh had dashed away at full run and managed to reach a nearby ranch. The timing of this event, of course, suggests the attack was retribution for the valley men's assault on the Forest Ranch camp. The incident reenforced Breckenridge and his men's belief, and the belief of those who waited on their word, that the Butte Creeks were principals in the valley problems.

From Chico Conrad W. "Coon" Garner, 43, organized the pursuit party. While his role in these and subsequent events would antagonize both miners and the Butte Creeks, Garner, an Illinois native, enjoyed good repute in Chico Township where his 1852 election ballot established him as one of that community's earliest voters. He had an interest in the 1859 dispute as one of the Mud Creek farmers at the southern edge of the Native men's raids.<sup>66</sup>

Garner enlisted about fifteen cohorts. Among the Chico Township men who rode out with him were Wash. Cox and Pleasant Guynn, the latter a Sadorus ranch hand. Guynn knew the area from having both mined on Butte Creek and labored near King's Vermont sawmill on Mud Creek. His job at the Sadorus place would have exposed him to his boss' conviction that Ned's Tribe--the Nimshevs--had joined forces with "Mill Creeks" in the southern Tehama County raids that spring. Another of Garner's recruits was a goldminer and sharpshooter, Daniel Sutherland, the son of a Hudson's Bay trapper turned Iowa homesteader. His Scottish brogue was so strong that many heard his name as Neal Southern. He and three brothers had headed for California in 1850 and 1851. Sutherland, a small property holder east of Chico, was a goldminer and wagon builder. One brother, a welder, apparently made pickaxes which John Bidwell sold to miners. Their brother Roderick raised sheep on a Rock Creek ranch which was within the range of both Mill Creeks and Mountain Maidus in north Chico Town-

Smith & Elliott's Pictorial History of Butte County



Keefer's Mill on Rock Creek.

ship. Daniel Sutherland would play minor but regular roles in Butte County's Indian conflicts through his participation in the Three Knolls battle in 1865.<sup>67</sup>

The Garner and Breckenridge parties moved across Chico Creek and set up camp at Doe Mill. This was a central area around which Indian and settler conflicts clustered. Together they set out for the mining hamlet at the forks of Butte Creek to which they believed the Indians had fled after the Forest Ranch raid. While Breckenridge had ordered his men to kill any Indians they met on the street, they were to ignore those who entered houses where they could claim the protection of miners. In this the valley men confronted a problem which would plague them in their desire to make the miners accountable. While they would readily kill and scalp white men in the company of targeted Indians in the wilderness, they could not dispatch them in town because, as whites, the miners could call on the protection of law.

Despite Forks of Butte's empty street, in the back room at George Lovelock's general store they found Native men had clustered. Behind the counter out front was store clerk, Richard Wallace, 52, a Pennsylvanian, who confronted an angry Breckenridge, "not a pleasant man to have as an enemy."<sup>68</sup> The valley man unleashed the allegations about weapons sales to Indians and their other complaints to which Wallace responded with equal vehemence. The Indian woman who was Wallace's consort and the mother of his children had been one of those injured by the valley men's attack. According to Breckenridge's account later, as the argument escalated, Wallace capped his defense with a threat to kill six white men for every Indian the farmer party had murdered. Not intimidated, Robert

Anderson recognized in the background an Indian man whom he had shot at Forest Ranch and whose wound he confirmed.<sup>69</sup>

After the Volunteers confronted Richard Wallace, they evidently found so much opposition in Forks of Butte that they concluded they had to vindicate their actions. As Anderson put it later with a touch of sarcasm, they had "to straighten out affairs with the Indians of Butte Creek."<sup>70</sup> Having tracked what Wallace would later acknowledge were "the bad ones" to the Forest Ranch camp, the Breckenridge and Garner men were confident about their analysis. They remained at their camp for several days while they set tests by which the Butte Creeks could prove their innocence of Mill Creek ties. The Native men appeared to accept the first test in which they were to mount an independent attack on the Mill Creeks. These Butte Creeks had argued that the only way to succeed would be for them to sneak up on the Mill Creeks and attack them using bows and arrows. As security, John Breckenridge held their chief as hostage pending his men's return. The chief's escape attempt, in which guards wounded him, reenforced the valley party's distrust.

Breckenridge scouts soon found the seven Native men as they lounged by a campfire up Butte Creek. Brought back to Forks of Butte, they confessed they had made no contact with the Mill Creeks. Still under pressure, however, to demonstrate they were not Mill Creek allies, the Butte Creeks next agreed to lead the Breckenridge party to the "hiding places of the renegades."<sup>71</sup> Escorts set off with these men to meet the rest of the Breckenridge party which had moved on to the Sadorus place at Rock Creek. However, as the Butte Creek men and their Volunteer escorts worked north, the hostages fled. This second Butte Creek offer, therefore, had proved spurious as well. Taken in combination with the miners' backing at Forks of Butte, the incidents appeared to support the valley party members' beliefs, first, in the Butte Creeks' bad faith and, second, in their complicity with both the Mill Creeks and the miners.

The first protest against the Tehama Volunteers' attack on the Butte Creeks reached Red Bluff and the *Beacon* over a week later. That newspaper and others in Oroville and Sacramento printed a note from Forks of Butte which condemned the valley men for having attacked "perfectly peaceful Indians" at Forest Ranch.<sup>72</sup> The writer was thought to be Richard Wallace, the Lovelock store employee with whom the Breckenridge party had quarreled. On the other hand, and significant, Wallace inadvertently provided information both

more specific and exonerative than were Garner's and Breckenridge's later letters on the legitimacy of at least some of their targets at Forest Ranch. Wallace's remarks vindicated the accuracy of their tracking which had led to the Forest Ranch camp. The clerk conceded that the Breckenridge men had probably acted in "retaliation" against "two or three" "rifle bearing" "bad ones among them" who had done "some mischief." While the valley men had only mentioned having identified Butte Creek troublemakers and having seen guns and ammunition among their things, Richard Wallace here acknowledged some of the men as having been offenders.<sup>73</sup> According to Wallace, the white man and "one of the bad ones" whom attackers had shot four or five times and Breckenridge had scalped was known as Malo Joe, possibly a Mexican.<sup>74</sup>

A final issue of interest in Wallace's letter was his characterization of the Butte Creeks' acts against valley people as "mischief," which trivialized the damages valley residents had suffered. This cavalier attitude on the part of the miners certainly exacerbated valley residents' resentments against miners.<sup>75</sup> The editor of the *Red Bluff Beacon*, who had initially evidenced confusion at news of the attackers' "blackened faces," repudiated the Forks of Butte complaint. He charged the miners with complicity in the Indian problems:

*Are not the people of Butte Creek leagued in with them [the Native raiders] as has been reported here, and do not the "squaw men" of that creek furnish them with arms and ammunition, provisions, &c. and assist them in carrying on their depredations and plundering excursions against the settlers of the valley?*

The editor also dismissed Richard Wallace as a "squaw man."<sup>76</sup>

The Indian fighters by now also knew how to use the press. The *Butte Democrat* in Oroville printed their immediate response:

*No doubt remains but the Indians have white accomplices, and that they receive their supplies of arms and ammunition from white agents.<sup>77</sup>*

In a reply to Wallace's charges a month later in the *Marysville Express*, Breckenridge with support from Coon Garner and others in their joint party emphasized that Wallace lived with a Butte Creek woman with whom he had children. Their response played to miscegenistic attitudes common in the valley. Wallace,



aware of valley people's low regard for white men in such relationships, had denied that Forks of Butte men lived with Native women. However, Breckenridge had learned about the presence of Wallace's companion at Forest Ranch when the Volunteers attacked the camp. John Breckenridge was consistent in his disgust at race mixing. His attitude stemmed from cultural prejudices; from common knowledge of abuse of Native women by miners; and probably also from resentment at the split such alliances had opened in the settler community.<sup>78</sup>

In 1859 the cohabitation of miners with Indian women was one of the practices which most offended valley residents. Breckenridge shared this position. He believed that, as the *Beacon* put it, forty to fifty of the miners, who were determined to keep Butte Creek Indian women as "concubines," aided the Indian raiders in order to foster their good will and, so, to preserve their access to the women. Examples of mining area abuses of Native women were well-known. In September 1859, for example, in Butte County's Honcut, when a man seized an Indian woman, her Indian mate killed her rather than let her be taken. After other Indians severely beat this predator, white residents defended their action.<sup>79</sup> In the same period, however, in a practice the valley people also disapproved, at Rich Bar, Frenchtown, Spanishtown, and Yankee Hill of eastern Butte County, a few miners had committed themselves to relationships with Indian women from which stable families would result. In 1859 at Rich Bar, for one example, Vermont miner Alfred Burr Clark established his home with Yohema, whom he called, "Kitty." She was a daughter of Chief Bouchard of the Concows, the largest and strongest Mountain Maidu tribelet and one in close proximity to the Feather River Kimshews, and the Nimshews of upper Butte Creek. When Indian and settler relations collapsed during the mid-1860s, the couple would name their sons George Washington Clark and John Adams Clark. The family became a prominent one. Other miners, such as Martin and John Gramps, Horatio Leggett, and William Pinkston also established families with Maidu women. These were reputable men and women in their own area. Robert Anderson, John Breckenridge, and the others were typical of whites who could not distinguish between the positive and negative types of such relationships.<sup>80</sup>

By contrast, the Sacramento Valley Maidu tribelets lived in the midst of settlers on whom they depended for their living in exchange for ranch labor from such men as John Bidwell, Robert Durham, and James

Keefe of Chico Township. There, while the races lived peacefully and in close proximity, the Indians' social separation from settlers was rigid. Intermarriage was rare. In Chico the exceptions were occasional unions between young Bidwell rancheria women and that hamlet's small population of black or hispanic males who had virtually no black or white women available to them. Breckenridge's views were not more exaggerated than general valley attitudes.

Meanwhile, valley settlers' apparent confirmation of Butte Creeks' complicity in valley problems and word of the miner's rage at the Forest Ranch attack had reached General Kibbe. He expanded the range of his proposed campaign to encompass from Pit River in the north as far south as the extent of Butte Creek with its adjoining territories.

### The Kibbe Solution

In Sacramento General William C. Kibbe, no novice to public crises, made ready for Red Bluff. He was an Illinois native who had quickly traded his interest in California gold for state politics. A Democrat in the State Assembly where he was briefly a clerk, Kibbe

**Mountain  
Mike's  
PIZZA**

CALL AHEAD AND WE  
WILL HAVE YOUR ORDER  
READY FOR YOU!

**ALL YOU CAN EAT  
PIZZA & SALAD BAR**

(WEDNESDAY NIGHTS - 6pm-9pm)

ADULTS \$4.35 plus tax

KIDS UNDER 12 \$2.05 plus tax

**DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS  
MONDAY - FRIDAY**

**HOURS:**

**SUNDAY-THURSDAY**

**11AM-11PM**

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY**

**11AM-12PM**

**PHONE 872-1991**

**6626 CLARK ROAD**

**K-MART SHOPPING CENTER**

had been State Quartermaster and Adjutant General since 1852. In early July 1859 he was particularly interested to hear from the Army's Captain Franklin A. Flint, whose unit he proposed to replace. The problem was politically delicate. Kibbe diplomatically explained by letter that the governor had proposed he,

*...evaluate the Indian situation and decide whether a volunteer force is necessary.*<sup>81</sup>

Of course, he already carried the governor's orders to launch a campaign. Kibbe inquired whether Flint would be willing to divide his command and whether it might be desirable to add posts and units. On the day before he left Red Bluff for medical care, the Army's Captain Flint responded:

*I have no reliable means of judging of the number of hostile Indians in this vicinity. The Country between Butte and Mill Creeks and as far back as Antelope Mills has been thoroughly examined by various detachments of my company and thus far neither Indians nor Agents have been met with. The settlers estimate the number at from thirty to one thousand. I consider [my unit] and the orders I have received as sufficient to check the incursions of any Indians in this vicinity.*<sup>82</sup>

Flint added that the local men who knew how to find the Indians were already with his party. The situation he described in the valley differed importantly from that on the coast where the Army negotiated the tensions between settlers who were unified against the Indians. By contrast, in Butte County both the Army's Lt. Archibald Harrison and the farmers blamed some whites as complicit with some troublesome Indian raiders. Flint did not accept the legitimacy of the valley farmers' complaints, however; nor did he mention that:

*... on June 19 the Army's Captain Flint had returned to Red Bluff from a reconaissance. To no one's surprise there, the soldiers told townspeople that the Indians followed them all the way up and back, but at a respectful distance... When the soldiers were encamped at the mill of Dr. Inskeep the Indians were prowling around the premises watching for a chance to attack.*<sup>83</sup>

Because Kibbe came down sick soon after he arrived in Red Bluff, he could not project the vigor necessary to win over the locals. They had not wanted

the Army; they had wanted state funds for their volunteers. They doubted the ability or commitment of the military, whether state or federal, to support them against the Native raiders under the conditions peculiar to the area's canyons. Kibbe's credentials were sound, however, on the question of a volunteer force against California's mountain Indians. During 1856, when he had forwarded to Washington a state legislative plea for arms and ammunition, he had observed:

*The Indians are well armed, bold, and daring warriors, pursuing a system of warfare which is little understood by our regular [U.S. Army] troops.*

At the time he had also explained that only experienced volunteers with local assistance could do the job because only they had any grasp of the complex California terrain as well as some grasp of their adversaries' culture. Kibbe added that in such situations volunteers had been more successful than regular troops at minimum expense.<sup>84</sup>

Skepticism about the state's reliability deepened on July 20, when, no sooner had he recovered, than Kibbe left Red Bluff for Nome Cult, the federal Indian reservation in Mendocino County. From there Kibbe urged the governor to back a private company. During the summer of 1859, Kibbe would divide his attention between volunteer companies in the Sacramento River Expedition and in Mendocino County's Eden and Round valleys. As Governor Weller had done at first in Red Bluff, so in Mendocino, he had first secured federal troops to address complaints about Indians. However, Mendocino settlers soon turned on the Army whose officers concluded that it was the Native peoples who were the victims of settlers' abuses. When the local leaders complained to Governor Weller about the Army's partiality to the Indians, he sent Kibbe to command volunteers under State militia control.<sup>85</sup>

In Kibbe's absence Red Bluff leaders considered how they might persuade him to take action upon his return to the valley. Circumstances relieved residents of this need when on July 22 Mill Creeks burned the Cold Springs Valley mill of Dr. E. W. Inskeep twenty miles east of Red Bluff. Two previous arson attempts there had failed thanks to alert dogs. A year previous Indians had burned Inskeep's grain and taken all his livestock. This time, one arson fire had reached eighty yards from the mill. Inskeep and his employee had begun to sleep on his grain pile every night in order to protect it. While Inskeep watched his house burn from

cover, he could see the Indians "dance" four hundred yards away. The raiders made another attempt to burn out the grain at the Ferguson place nearby.<sup>86</sup>

Lt. Harrison, Flint's replacement during his medical leave, and sixty men set up camp for the rest of that summer near the Inskeep place where their presence discouraged further trouble in that vicinity. The Army's company had been ordered to ignore the Kibbe operation. From Sacramento Flint would later issue a condemnation of the settlers, Kibbe, and the volunteers. On July 26 Kibbe rode to Inskeep's mill where he took his own measure of the situation. From there he reported to Governor Weller that the area's problems stemmed from forty-five to one hundred Native men of several "tribes" whose mission was to avenge the wrongs done their people by the settlers. By contrast to the 20th century belief that the attacks were all by Yahis, his summary fitted all first-hand contemporary local information. Kibbe pointed to the raiders' range from Little Cow Creek in the north, in Pit River Indian and Mill Creek range, to Butte Creek at the south, which was Mountain Maidu--or Butte Creek--territory. He stressed to the governor that the area is extremely rough; that much of it is impassable "for man or beast."<sup>87</sup> The Indians had destroyed large amounts of cattle and horses, he told the governor. In six years they had killed six citizens, using bows and arrows as well as guns. Kibbe offered the attack on Lindsey as the most current example of danger. He did not balance his account with a catalogue of settler and miner abuses of the Native population as having precipitated the problems. Kibbe went on to explain that, although the number of Indian raiders was small, their superior grasp of the remote terrain and their capacity to detect and evade large units would require him to disperse roughly 80 to 100 men along three flanks.<sup>88</sup>

While the Red Bluff businessmen who had secured Kibbe's services from the governor were relieved to see him slip into action, they remained disappointed by his refusal to subsidize the local volunteers' continued action on their own. Kibbe informed them that his officers in the field would exert control. Although a volunteer supporter, he was alert to the weaknesses of their work without supervision. As he stated in 1856,

*Civilians make good fighting men but sometimes are [too] over zealous and confident to be prudent.<sup>89</sup>*

State control presented terms which neither Robert

Anderson nor Harmon Good, for example, found acceptable. They rejected any inferences that regular military could be more disciplined, competent, or successful than they had become under their own auspices.

John Breckenridge's party did not volunteer. Instead, aware that Kibbe would soon enlist volunteers, his men remained on patrols through the countryside. By this time the Tehama Volunteers had become well-known figures in both Tehama and Butte counties. While participants had varied, core members were Anderson and Good, neighbors who owned small ranches in the Deer Creek foothills of the Vina plains. Anderson, a young bachelor two years in residence, had managed to put up a simple cabin, and he owned five cows. His close friend and fellow bachelor, Harmon or "Hi" Good, was a handsome Ohio native who would become obsessed with the chase of Indian raiders. Along the way, he learned their dialects, probably from the women and children whom he seized for work at his small ranch; others he delivered to Nome Lackee, the reservation west of Red Bluff; still others he provided (probably sold) to ranchers who worked them as unpaid servants. The prominent role



*"We Rent What You Need"*

**LARGE SELECTION OF SERVICES**

**We Sell Propane, Acetylene/Oxygen/Helium**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ryder Trucks &amp; Accessories</li> <li>■ Air Compressors</li> <li>■ Automotive Tools</li> <li>■ Tractors &amp; Tillers</li> <li>■ Cement Finishing Tools</li> <li>■ Airless Paint Sprayers</li> <li>■ Lawn &amp; Weed Mowers</li> <li>■ Lawn Aerators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Plumbing Tools</li> <li>■ Rollaway Beds</li> <li>■ Baby Cribs</li> <li>■ High Chairs</li> <li>■ Tables &amp; Chairs</li> <li>■ Propane Sales</li> <li>■ Oxygen/Helium</li> <li>■ Moving Boxes</li> </ul>
--	---

**Much More...Please Ask For It!**

**TELEPHONE: (530) 877-4519**

**5810 CLARK ROAD, PARADISE, CA 95969**

which Good and Anderson would play in the evolution of Indian and settler relations is an important, if incompletely understood, key to the area's history, not only in 1859 but well into the 1860s.<sup>90</sup>

On July 27 the Breckenridge men surfaced with Coon Garner's party at Cold Springs near Deer Creek at its headwaters. The Garner men had financial backing. Because the Chico area had no newspaper coverage, it is a matter for speculation whether the money came from a public subscription or from a substantial rancher. The combined parties' slow pace was characteristic of their attempts to track Native men, according to Anderson and as suggested by amounts of time between events in the field. Sim Moak, who accompanied Anderson and Good on later sorties in the same areas, remembered Indian tracking as a protracted process.

In the clash with Indians they chanced upon as they searched Deer Creek, they pursued a running, though brief, battle in which they killed five Indian men. Among these they recognized Native men from their time near Forks of Butte after the Forest Ranch raid. For the first time they had names for individual adversaries among the mountain Indians--in this case, "Billy" and "the Doctor." Weeks later Breckenridge referred to "the Doctor" as a man they had learned was a Mill Creek who had become familiar to them on Butte Creek. There, they had learned that he recruited Native men to enter into raiding parties.<sup>91</sup> Prior to the Forks of Butte sojourn after their Forest Ranch raid, the Breckenridge men had acknowledged never having seen any Mill Creeks well enough to recognize or characterize particular men among them. Anderson could now say, "Several of us knew this Billy to be a dangerous and troublesome customer."<sup>92</sup> Breckenridge, speaking later, was no less emphatic: "These faces we are able to prove by responsible men."<sup>93</sup> Billy both understood and spoke English, a characteristic never associated with Yahis but common among Butte Creeks. When Billy, under questioning, acknowledged having killed William Lindsey, Breckenridge shot him dead. It is noteworthy that the Breckenridge men by now grasped they would have to respond to miner and press challenges to their actions on their return.<sup>94</sup>

According to Anderson, these encounters led his colleagues to agree that the area below Cold Springs on Deer Creek was the Butte Creeks' and Mill Creeks' meeting place and the staging ground for their valley depredations. As Breckenridge later would explain, they were able to deduce from this Deer Creek sortie that,

*... all the depredations that have been committed in the mountains, and on the valley in the vicinity of Deer Creek, has been done by the Butte Creek Indians.<sup>95</sup>*

This decisive turn from their initial emphasis on Mill Creeks alone marks an important redefinition of the private Indian fighters' objectives in 1859.

Just as Breckenridge and his men believed they had come on hard evidence in support of their analysis of the threat, an opposition voice entered the issue. The Red Bluff newspaper printed a note from Forks of Butte which condemned the valley men for having attacked "perfectly peaceful Indians" at Deer Creek.<sup>96</sup> The Indian fighters by now also knew how to use the press, however. The *Butte Democrat* in Oroville printed their immediate response:

*No doubt remains but the Indians have white accomplices, and that they receive their supplies of arms and ammunition from white agents.<sup>97</sup>*

The *Beacon* in Red Bluff pressed General Kibbe to look for miners in receipt of valley goods seized by mountain Indian raids.

In the course of their immersion in Butte Creek country, the valley men gained confidence. As evidence for this, they began to refer to their Native adversaries as "the boys in the hills."<sup>98</sup> Throughout their sorties over years, while they took tens of lives, only some members of their party were injured, and none lost his life to Indian opponents. D. F. Crowder attributed the low death rate on the Indian side, not to the settlers' poor aim, but to the Indians' flight pattern from the first shots fired. They would "run and scatter like deer" in a zig zag pattern while shooters had to reload the muzzles of their cumbersome weapons for any followup shots.<sup>99</sup> In addition, the valley men learned that, when the Native men used guns, their accuracy would suffer if they were thrown off-base, were taken by surprise, or had to aim downhill.

However, the volunteers felt acutely at risk because, out of the mountain population around them, they could rarely identify the malefactors who remained elusive, in control of the canyons, and poised to spring surprise attacks.

They confirmed that their opponents were not all primitive back-country people, but included Indians who spoke English from direct contact with settlers. The canyon Indians, many of them reservation veterans, moved back and forth between white and Native

homes and communities. The anonymity of such individuals added to their aura of dangerousness. In places like Forks of Butte or in the valley, they acquired not only arms and ammunition but also information about settlers' vulnerabilities and opportunities for the vengeance their culture required.

Valley fires in June, a late July retaliatory arson at the home of Robert Anderson and the August attack on Lindsey and McIntosh raised alarms along the Tehama and Butte county borders. It appeared to be the start of a new Indian campaign against valley homes. In a panic and convinced "that the Indians had threatened to burn every house between Red Bluff and Butte Creek," residents headed for defensible locations where they pooled resources and shared watches for several nights. While the Red Bluff pleas for State backing for volunteers had begun as early as May, only as these people headed for refuge on the first week of August had General Kibbe actually begun to interview volunteers. Meanwhile, the Breckenridge party remained in the field.<sup>100</sup>

On July 28, as reports of the Forest Ranch raid arrived in Red Bluff and General Kibbe selected his officers there, the *Beacon* pressed him to look for miners in receipt of valley goods from Indian thefts. Upon the Garner party's return to the valley, Kibbe picked it for the Butte Creek flank of his expedition. With their Deer Creek raid concluded, the Breckenridge men closed down their operation. Kibbe quickly picked Chico Township's Coon Garner and his men for the Butte Creek flank of his River Expedition. Breckenridge, Good and Anderson and three others had set out for their Tehama County homes with captive women and children from the Deer Creek raid whom they planned to deliver to a reservation. If they sensed they had deeply angered the Butte Creeks and their allies, they were correct, as the implications of these events would spill over into the 1860s. From the perspective of the moment however, they focused on the conviction they had gained in the field: that Butte Creeks and not Mill Creeks—or at least not Mill Creeks alone—had been the principals in valley raids from Deer Creek to the south.

According to Anderson, on August 18 as he, Hi Good, and the others moved with their captives into the valley, they were north of Mud Creek when they met General William Kibbe who accompanied Captain William Burns' company as it moved en route to northeastern Butte County. The reports about Forks of Butte and settler flights to cover evidently had moved that area to the top of Kibbe's agenda; ahead of problems to the north at Antelope and on the Pit

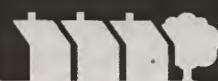
River. Anderson later remembered Kibbe's close attention as he listened to the Breckenridge party's account. He expressed admiration for their actions and took their names with assurances that they had earned regular military status with pay. This meant a good deal to those men. Not only had he vindicated their judgment but none were men of means.<sup>101</sup>

On the 22nd of August, General Kibbe, Captain William Burns and the volunteers negotiated their way along Rock Creek Canyon. The Burns party pack mules tumbled down slopes and spilled supplies on all sides. General Kibbe wrote Governor Weller that "This is the worst country to hunt Indians in the State."<sup>102</sup> While Breckenridge pointed out the corpses of Native men his party had killed, the Maidu Tigres—a Butte Creek tribelet—watched and hectored them from the canyon walls. Other Butte Creeks also stayed out of sight. As the men continued, they made an important observation, one that signaled a change in the relationship between miners and Indians. They spotted recently occupied but now deserted cabins. Goldminers, had begun to feel insecure along the canyons of eastern Butte County. The proximity of this development to the Tehama Volunteers' killings, suggests that Butte

**PRESERVING  
OUR COUNTY'S  
PAST AND  
SECURING  
IT'S FUTURE  
SINCE 1929!**



**Bidwell  
Title &  
Escrow**



7126A Skyway, Paradise 95969  
(530) 877-6262

500 Wall Street Chico 95928  
(530) 894-2612

1835 Robinson St., Oroville 95965  
(530) 533-2414

560 Kentucky St., Gridley 95948  
(530) 846-4005

*Four locations in Butte County*

Creeks had begun to blame the miners whose promises to protect them had proved unreliable. The Mountain Maidu tribelets prepared to turn on miners--or to plant fear in miners that they might do so. A soldier in Burns' party later recalled this evidence of miners' flight and he blamed the Maidu Tigres "who were supposed to have created the latest depredations in the valley."<sup>103</sup>

A letter from the Forks of Butte confirmed the Butte Creeks' fury at their situation:

*The war tocsin has been sounded, and the remnants of the Digger [Mountain Maidu or Butte Creeks] are collecting, armed and equipped, and arrayed in Nature's full-dress uniform. Their very looks and manners indicate revenge.<sup>104</sup>*

In the meantime, Kibbe left the company for Rancho Chico in order to arrange for supplies from John Bidwell's store and for a camping ground to which Burns and Garner could bring captive Indians. Captain Burns had moved on to the Feather River where Maidu chiefs or captains began to cooperate in his collection of Concows, northern Butte Creek Kimshews and some Tigres in preparation for their removal to a reservation. Burns had dispatched a twenty-seven man unit to collect other Native people along Butte, Chico, Rock and other nearby creeks. With the prospect of the state militia's approach, the Forks of Butte's letter writer-in-chief had moved from offense to defense. He assured readers that the community was not a base for "squawmen" "as commonly understood;" that the residents were ignorant of Indian raids on the valley; that the local Indians were always at work "packing our provisions, tools, lumber &c." on the Creek; and that canyon residents would have helped Breckenridge and his men make arrests had they identified miscreants. Such an effort to ease suspicions proved fruitless when the state volunteers who appeared on Butte Creek proved to be the last men the community wanted to see again, let alone under General Kibbe's orders: Coon Garner and John Breckenridge.<sup>105</sup>

As Kibbe moved toward Chico on the 24th, his local volunteers, farmers Garner, John Breckenridge and Henry Sadorus, Vermont Mill owner M. T. King, mill owners, J. C. Morrill and G. M. Stratton of Rock Creek, S. Lasley and the rest of their party had moved into position on Butte Creek where they planned to collect the Indians near Centerville. Kibbe had ordered them to capture all the Indians along their way down the

creek and to shoot only those who tried to escape.<sup>106</sup> As another member of the party explained, Kibbe had ordered the arrest of all the Butte Creeks because it was impossible to tell hostile Indians from the rest. This was the case in part because whites seldom observed crimes as they took place in the night and on the run. In addition, like at Forest Ranch, it had long been customary for members of Native raiding parties afterward "to intermix with those who have the confidence of the whites, and by so doing to avoid detection."<sup>107</sup> While no one seems to have considered the Native women as dangerous, the searchers shared an understanding, one about which Anderson later wrote, that, if women were to remain at home, their own men and others in flight from reservations would seek them there.

In the early morning of the 24th the Garner unit made a surprise raid on the Cox's Flat rancheria about one-half mile from Centerville. While they managed to seize twelve to fourteen Native people, three or four others managed to flee. They later claimed, "we called several times for them to stop."<sup>108</sup> They wounded two of those who kept going. At this point the party split. Coon Garner and the rest moved on to make a report and seek instructions, possibly from General Kibbe at Rancho Chico. While John Breckenridge, Henry Sadorus, G. M. Stratton, and Myron Ormesby guarded their prisoners pending Garner's return, a miner appeared who demanded they release one of the women to him. When Breckenridge refused to hand her over, the miner rushed off to the nearby mining community of Diamondville where a bibulous county sheriff's campaign rally was underway. There, he found a hearty response to his call for help. Forty-five men, aware of the Forest Ranch raid, rushed to Cox's Flat.

While the mob immediately outnumbered Breckenridge's small party, he was contemptuous. As he read the situation "the only motive the mob had was to secure the squaws and keep them on the creek."<sup>109</sup> According to Albert Hurtado, prominent scholar on Maidu culture, who quoted Breckenridge on Indian women's vulnerability to predatory miners, mining villages in northern California were, for Native women, "a social landscape pockmarked with sexual violence."<sup>110</sup> Breckenridge's concern was also that of Yohema, daughter of the Maidu Concow tribelet chief, Boucherd. She told her son, John Adams Clark, that her people resented the "outrages committed by lawless element among the settlers on Indian women."<sup>111</sup> Because, according to state law, no Indian had the legal right to testify against a white man, In-

dian women lived totally at risk to the kinds of conditions Breckenridge observed on the creek.

With the Diamondville men when they streamed into Cox's Flat, was candidate and Deputy Sheriff D. W. Cheesman, a Republican stalwart who was then or later a lawyer.<sup>112</sup> They quickly seized Breckenridge and the other guards; then freed the Native prisoners. Meanwhile, they turned on their valley hostages an invective which reached a crescendo with calls to lynch them. John Breckenridge's indignation remains palpable, if petulant: "no white man will use such insulting language as was used to us."<sup>113</sup> This, of course, issued from a man who had killed tens of Native people over the past few months. The deputy sheriff managed to appease the crowd with his offer to arrest the four men on murder charges. Cheesman then moved his three prisoners to Diamondville. There, however, because anger did not subside, he evidently realized that he could not protect them. He managed to persuade the miners that no jury would convict the men because they had acted under State auspices. He seems to have convinced them that, if he were to remove them to Kibbe's auspices at Rancho Chico, the General would take their part. Nothing about these Cox's Flat events reached the *Beacon's* pages which reported on August 31 that on the 24th,

*...a unit commanded by Captain Byrnes [sic] and under the immediate direction of Kibbe himself, succeeded in surrounding the same Rancheria attacked a few weeks ago by Breckenridge, and took every Indian in it prisoners.*

The miners dispatched an additional volley in a letter which they entered in the *Butte Democrat* on August 27. Their letter attacked Garner as a man with a bad reputation on their creek and defended the Native people as harmless individuals who had not been "off the creek for awhile."<sup>114</sup> They also claimed that a body of four to six unarmed men could have made arrests of miscreants in the rancheria. The miners' letter claimed the Indians were at a mining camp where the miners had advised them they would be safe. To this Breckenridge and Garner were quick to respond. To the miners' claim that the Indians attacked were never "off the creek," they asserted that the Cox's Flat camp included men whom their joint parties had confronted in the well-armed camp at Deer Creek. He "passed" on the miners' comment about a need for four to six men for arrests.

Deputy Cheesman met with General Kibbe and,

presumably, John Bidwell at Rancho Chico. Cheesman gave an account of the events at Cox's Flat and Diamondville which had led to his arrival with the valley volunteers in tow. Bidwell's position does not appear on the record. However, his experience with Butte Creek raiders and with miners who had distanced themselves from him in order to appease those Native men would not have inclined the rancher to support the miners.<sup>115</sup> When Kibbe ordered Cheesman to release the valley men, he hesitated to do so. In the midst of a campaign he could little afford to antagonize the miners who were his largest constituency. Cheesman weighed his obligation to his constituents in the face of contrary orders of the State Adjutant General in the midst of a fullscale campaign against Indians on behalf of valley farmers. At Kibbe's insistence, he relented.

After this, no other evidence suggests that the Garner unit continued to participate in the Kibbe campaign, which shifted its focus to the north. John Breckenridge's name did not appear in future settler and Indian conflicts. In a summary of his Tehama Volunteers' exploits, he reported that he and his men had killed twenty-nine and wounded twenty, most seriously. Among the dead he counted four to five women who had accidentally or purposely moved in the way of men under fire. They had sent thirteen women and children to a reservation. By contrast, Kibbe's unit would ultimately count thirty to forty Native men killed and two women plus a child killed in the line of fire.<sup>116</sup>

Now alert to the extent of the problem, Kibbe and Burns headed up Butte Creek. As they proceeded, on August 29 they surrounded the Cox's Flat rancheria where, as the Garner party had done, they rounded up the residents. From Forks of Butte they met no resistance when they removed about one hundred Native people. The only challenges arose from miners who objected to the removal of women and, in some cases, children. General Kibbe struck bargains: if the men would marry the women with families, the dependents could remain. This approach produced three mixed race weddings on record in the county for those dates.<sup>117</sup> In mid-September Captain Burns and his men proceeded to Deer Creek or Cold Springs and from there to Concow Valley where they collected one hundred Native peoples—Kimshews, Tigres and Concows—who readily surrendered. In late September, a Kibbe officer, S. D. St. Johns, discovered a Feather River hid-

*Continued on Page 32*

ing place which held a collection of Maidu peoples--Concows, Kimshews and Tigres--who had eluded Burns' capture. All these military captives were held at Bidwell's ranch pending removal. When St. Johns' men and their prisoners arrived at the Rancho Chico campsite, John Bidwell sent over a wagon of watermelons which relieved a measure of the misery. With this flank of his campaign in hand, Kibbe's attention shifted to the northern flank which he conducted out of Fort Kibbe, his Butt Creek headquarters a few miles from the Deer Creek headwaters. [Note: Butt Creek is a different site from Butte Creek.]<sup>118</sup>

### The Aftermath of Kibbe's "River Expedition"

In his clearance of Native people, General Kibbe's objective was to isolate them on reservations sufficiently distant to prevent their ever again finding their homes. To his mind, this precluded the dispatch of his prisoners to Nome Lackee, the reservation in Tehama County. In urgent letters he pressed the governor to approve alternative placements. While the governor offered to place two hundred of the prisoners on the Mendocino reservation, he insisted the two hundred remaining would have to go to Nome Lackee. Kibbe deigned this idea as "worse than useless." At that Tehama County site he knew reservation captives and area residents mutually despised one another. Kibbe explained to Governor Weller that his prisoners included men who were angry and vengeful. They would flee that reservation and return to the mountain homes at their first chance. Eventually the governor agreed to send all four hundred Native captives to the Mendocino site where conditions were poor and surrounding residents were hostile.<sup>119</sup>

In mid-December, the last group of captives began their passage to San Francisco by ship out of Red Bluff, an unfamiliar experience which momentarily diverted them from their fear and confusion. Upon arrival in the city, they camped alongside the Bay while they waited for the Mendocino-bound ship's arrival. Nine babies had been born as they traveled. Their apparel was so inadequate to San Francisco's cold that the local newspaper urged residents to bring warm clothing to the fit and handsome people at whom they flocked to stare.<sup>120</sup>

Kibbe wrestled with the responsibility for these hundreds of Native people whose survival now depended on him. His vantage point impressed on him his part in their plight. Nevertheless, the general remained confident that he had obeyed necessity. While

Hutchings' California Magazine, 1859.



"Distribution of Rations to the Indians," at the Nome Cult reservation in Mendocino which was established in 1855 and abandoned in 1864.

his campaign had not eliminated the sources of the valley residents' and the Native peoples' problems with one another, he believed his campaign had removed genuinely dangerous men from circulation.

Nevertheless, Kibbe also realized that through his assiduous efforts he had reduced hundreds of worthy and innocent human beings to helplessness and destitution. William Kibbe's personal sense of tragedy appeared in his description of the Indians he had captured as,

*...probably the best and finest race of Indians--athletic and healthy--in California and [they] possess more intelligence than any race I have yet seen.*

This description of Mountain Maidus resembled the observations of federal Indian agent Oliver Wozencraft in his 1851 report to the Interior Department.<sup>121</sup> The terrible consequences of Kibbe's parallel decision in 1859 to unleash Mendocino settlers against area Indians would lead him to reevaluate volunteers as appropriate monitors of Native peoples. In the 1860s, while he would provide state resources to Butte County when crises rose between Native raiders and settlers, he would no longer rely on volunteers.

In the Sacramento Valley only a couple years' passage would demonstrate that Kibbe's hopes had no long-range result. In his optimistic report to the gov-



ernor he had claimed,

*The tribes of Indians engaged in [the war] whose frequent acts of violence and atrocity had rendered them a terror to the region...are completely vanquished and subdued.*<sup>122</sup>

On a more tentative note, he also had hoped the expedition would be a lesson to other Indians disposed to avenge their condition. Robert Anderson disparaged Kibbe's efforts as having worked no positive result. He and Good continued their individual pursuits of Indians from their homes. Sporadic raids continued, but at a reduced level.

From the point of view of others, however, some improvement was evident and marked to Kibbe's credit. According to D. F. Crowder, local people in northern Butte County did observe a diminution of the most destructive types of Indian raids. From a different vantage point, some would attribute this to the chastening effect which the appearance of the Kibbe units had on the Butte Creek miners.

An important consequence of the Tehama Volunteer and Kibbe campaigns against the Butte Creeks centered on the responses of those Native men who had escaped Kibbe's roundup or returned from the reservation in a hostile frame of mind. No longer able to rely on a secure base in the midst of miners on Butte Creek, they repaired to "isolated haunts in the mountains."<sup>123</sup> From that point forward, the fearsome independent reputation of the Butte Creeks vanished and they became integral with the Mill Creeks. Butte Creek Canyon would remain a significant route which Mill Creeks continued to employ for their raids in the 1860s.<sup>124</sup>

The area's Native people continued to suffer a regular decline in their conditions. A severe drought over the winter of 1859-1860 led cattlemen to lose stock and, in defense, to disperse their livestock even more broadly where their grazing destroyed grasses which the Indians—Yahi, Wintu and Maidu—required for their traditional diets. When farmers began to use the acorn crop to feed their swine, the problem deepened. Because, however, many Native people had begun to adopt aspects of the settler diet, the effect was less drastic than it would otherwise have been. Those who remained in the hills or returned there continued to make valley sorties which focused on livestock and supply thefts.<sup>125</sup>

Despite Kibbe's reliance on volunteers and a general sense among settlers that he had accomplished

their major goals, the settlers' established distrust of military leadership and state officials would persist in the next phases of their disputes with the Native peoples. Robert Anderson believed that the ranks of embittered Indians increased as the result of Kibbe's collection with the result that more reservation renegades added to the number of the "boys in the hills." The reappearance of significant problems moved local peoples' confidence back to the individual local ranchers who moonlighted as Indian fighters. These men became settler heroes of their day; villains in the latter 20th century. Finally, the River Expedition of 1859 crystallized Butte County's growing division between its scrappy miners and determined farmers. The early 1860s would not only see this erupt once more in the context of the Mill Creeks' struggle with foothill settlers in eastern Butte County, but also in the early 1860s would foster attempts to split the county.

*The Indian-settler conflicts of the 1860s in eastern Butte County are the subject of the next article in this series.*

#### About the Author:

**Michele Shover is Professor of Political Science at California State University, Chico. She is the author of articles and monographs on Chico's business community, politics, women, Blacks and the anti-Chinese campaigns in the 19th century. The present article is the second in a projected six part series on settler and Indian relations in northern Butte County during the 1850s and 1860s.**

#### Acknowledgement:

**The author appreciates the significant analytical advice of local Indian historian Steve Schoonover of Chico, California. Errors of fact or interpretation, of course, are those of the author.**

#### End Notes

1. Cf. Steve Schoonover, "The Kibbe Campaign," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #20 (Winter 1994), pp. 10-49. Schoonover supplies a useful map and review of Kibbe's campaign with a focus on its northern flanks.

2. Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi in Two Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961; Cf. W.H. Hutchinson, *Tales From Old Hutch*, Chico: ANCR, 1990.

3. Jerald Jay Johnson, "Ishi's Ancestors," Paper delivered to unnamed group, 23 September 1994. Manuscript in possession of Anthropology Library, CSU, Chico, pp. 109-110.

4. In two exceptions Dr. E. W. Inskip and John Bidwell drove off only one of several attacks on each of their properties. The Inskip incident appears later here from the late June 1859 *Beacon*. For the Bidwell incident, see Shover, "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #36 (Winter 1998), pp. 50-52.

5. Johnson, p. 23; Albert Hurtado, p. 29.

6. Johnson, p. 109.

7. Johnson, p. 109; Michele Shover, "John Bidwell: Reluctant Indian Fighter," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #36 (Winter 1998), p. 50.

8. Jerald Johnson, p. 7.

9. William Brewer, *Up and Down California*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 339.

10. Roland B. Dixon, "The Northern Maidu," vol. xvii, New York, May 1905; A. L. Kroeber, "Elements of Culture in Native California," U.C. Publications in Anthropology, vol. xiii, No. 8, pp. 296-7; Johnson, pp. 104-109.

11. "Butte Creek Canyon," Chico: Colman Museum, no date.

12. Cf. Roland B. Dixon, "The Northern Maidu," xvii, New York, May 1905; A. L. Kroeber, "Elements of Culture in Native California," U.C. Publications in Anthropology, vol. xiii, No. 8, pp. 296-7.

13. Red Bluff *Beacon*, 30 September 1857. Hereafter called *Beacon*.

14. *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, pp. 7-8.

15. Shover, "John Bidwell and the Indian Treaty of 1852, passim;" "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter," pp. 50-51.

16. Dixon, p. 227; Wm. Simmons, "Indian People of California's Contested Eden," *California Before the Gold Rush*, Summer/Fall 1997, p. 58-59.

17. *Beacon*, 12 and 26 January 1859; R. A. Anderson. *Fighting the Mill Creeks*. Chico: Chico Record Press, 1909, p. 64; Petition to Governor John B. Weller. 29 and 16 May, 1859. California Indian War Files. California State Archives.

18. T. Kroeber, p. 61.

19. Petition from Daniel Sill and others. Western History Department, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. Courtesy of Curator, Peter Blodgett. A rancher in the 1850s, Daniel Sill had been William Ide's ranch manager in the 1840s. *Beacon*, 7 December 1859; San Francisco *Alta*, 16 December 1859.

20. *The Experience of a Forty-Niner During Thirty-Four Years Residence in California and Australia*. Cleveland, 1880, pp. 105-106; Moak, p. 30-31; *Plumas National Bulletin*, 4 March 1915.

21. *Beacon*, 19 January, 20 and 23 March, 3 and 6 April 1859; San Francisco *Alta*, 16 December 1859.

22. *Beacon*, 6 April 1857.

23. Anderson, p. 7.

24. *Beacon* 6 April 1859.

25. Anderson, p. 7; Letter. James Callen to John Bidwell, 20 July 1852. John Bidwell Collection, California State Library.

26. Crowder, 22 January 1859; *Beacon*, 6 and 23 April 1859.

27. *Beacon*, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20 and 25 May 1859. Cf. Rosaline Levenson on Peter Lassen.

28. Carl E. Wheat, ed. "California's Bantam Cock: The Journals of Charles DeLong, 1854-1863," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, IX (Winter, 1930), footnote 76; *Beacon*, 20 March, and 1, 3; 23 April; 1 June 1859. *Tehama County Petition to Governor Weller*. 11 and 16 May, 1859. California Indian Wars Files. California State

Archives.

29. *Petition to the Governor*, 11 and 16 May; 1 June *Beacon*, 1859. *Beacon* 27 April, 18 May and 1 June 1859. San Francisco *Bulletin*, 31 May 1859.

30. William Strobbridge, *Regulars in the Redwoods: The U.S. Army in Northern California, 1852-1861*. The Arthur C. Clark Co., 1994 Appreciation to Mr. Strowbridge for his assistance; *Beacon*, 25 May and 1 June 1859.

31. *Beacon*, 20 and 25 May, 1 and 15 June 1859. The residents had reached a panic point, as the *Beacon* reflected in its call for controls by the troops even if they have to "exterminate" the Mill Creeks. Anderson, Chapter 3.

32. Petition to Governor, May, 1859, California Indian Wars Files. California State Archives.

33. Letter. XX Wozencraft to Luke Lea, U.S. Senate Misc Documents, No. 688, 33rd Congress, Spec. Sess. Reports and Executive Data, p. 203-204.

34. *Beacon*, 14 June 1859.

35. *Ibid.* From Sacramento later that summer, Army Captain Flint would accuse townspeople of having pressed for a military campaign, not because Indians presented a threat, but because they wanted the state expenditures to pad their cashboxes. Flint also disparaged the Stephenson fire as only the product of the Indian child's act and refused to credit any of the additional events as credible. Sacramento *Union*, 25 October 1859. Petition, Tehama County Citizens to Governor Weller, May 29 1859 op cit.; Letter. Gov. Weller to Petitioners. 2 June 1859. Indian War Files, California Archives; *Beacon*, 8 June 1859.

36. *Beacon*, 15 June 1859; Anderson, Chapter Two. Burns would serve under the Militia's Kibbe when his campaign began in August 1859. Two spellings of the name evidently refer to the same man.

37. *Beacon*, 20 May; 1, 9, and 19 June, 1859.

38. *Beacon*, 22 June 1859.

39. *Beacon*, 22 June 1859.

40. *Beacon*, 22, 27, 29 June 1859; Anderson, p. 55.

41. *Enterprise*, 22 January 1918.

42. In 1993 a perceptive article by Steve Schoonover ventured the conclusion developed here that Yahis did not act alone. "The Three Knolls Massacre," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #15 (Fall, 1993), pp. 4-55. Although at one point in Crowder's 1918 memoir he refers to these Indians as "Mill Creeks" he slid into this term because the appropriate term of his day, "Butte Creeks," had largely disappeared from useage. By the early 20th century, the modern application of the term "Mill Creeks" had come to encompass all the Native men who raided valley and foothill farms. Then the term "Mill Creek," a collective term, was also dropped and accounts have attributed all valley raids to Yahis, a specific tribe. The Yahis were always too few to have accomplished so much mischief (or such valiant retribution) without allies. As stated earlier, because "Butte Creeks" was a sensible usage and critical to understand what happened through the 1850s, the present account employs it.

43. Moak, pp. 11 and 31.

44. Anderson, p. 26. Note: Anderson in Chapter 4 recalled arrival at Antelope Mill the day after Patrick's murder. Cf. *Beacon*, 29 June, 7 December 1859. This contradicts Theodora Kroeber's assertion, which no record supports, that when the Breckenridge party turned to the Mountain Maidu territory in Butte County, they were not so much tracking the Indians as the Indians were

leading them away from their people. She and others, who accepted her account, concluded, also without evidence, that Good and Anderson, tired of their failure thus far, "felt they must find some Indians to kill, even if they could not catch any Mill Creeks." T. Kroeber, pp. 66-68; T. T. Waterman, p. 43.

45. Anderson, p. 19-20; *Butte Democrat*, 9 June 1859.

46. Anderson, p. 20.

47. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Undaunted Courage-Meriwether Lewis and Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West*. (New York: Touchstone, 1996), p. 589.

48. Crowder on p. 196 of Mansfield.

49. *Enterprise*, 17 January 1918. Crowder uses the Bryson spelling.

50. John Bidwell, "Dictation," Bancroft Library, University of California, pp. 19-20.

51. *Beacon*, 6 June 1858; Larry Richardson, whose family were neighbors of the Keefers had the above understanding of her tribal roots. Cf. Kathleen Gabriel, "James Lawrence Keefer, 1850-1901: An Ethnology a Butte County Pioneer" (M.A. Thesis, California State University, Chico, 1981), p. 48; Dorothy Hill, *The Indians of Chico Rancheria* (Sacramento: State Office of Parks and Recreation, 1978) p. 27. Robert Anderson, Chapter One; *Beacon*, 29 July; *Enterprise* 12, 14, 15, 22 January 1918. In that *Enterprise* memoir Crowder erroneously notes that the split between Mountain and Valley Maidu began in 1859.

52. 3 March 1860 *Butte Democrat*; *Butte Record*, accounts appeared on these issues throughout the mid-to-late 1850s.

53. 12 January 1858. *Beacon*, copied from *Record*. 1847; *Beacon*, 12 May 1858. Petition from Daniel Silva, Courtesy of Peter Blodgett, Western History Department; The Huntington Library, San Marino; T. Kroeber, p. 60, called Tiger--here Tigre--a Maidu name for Yahis, p. 60. This was not the case as they were a Maidu tribelet located in the middle of Maidu territory between the Feather River and Butte Creek. Dixon. "Map Showing the Locations and Subdivisions of the Maidu Indians." Op cit.; In agreement with Dixon on this point was anthropologist, Francis Riddell, p. 19.

54. Shower, "John Bidwell, Reluctant Indian Fighter," *passim*.

55. Mansfield, p. 187.

56. Kroeber, p. 63.

57. Anderson, p. 22.

58. *Beacon*, 3 August 1859. The term also applied to Indians accustomed to white life. Anderson did not mention this scalping incident.

59. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-26; *Beacon*, 7 September 1859.

60. Anderson, p. 37ff; Mansfield, p. 188; *Beacon*, 3 and 17 August; 7 September 1859. The latter links a later Forks of Butte attack that summer to the Cold Springs/Deer Creek conflict just described. The 1859 Grand Jury report is missing.

61. *Ibid.*

62. Mansfield, p. 188.

63. *Butte Record*, 6 August 1859 quoted in Mansfield, p. 188.

64. Mansfield, p. 193.

65. *Beacon*, 17 August 1859.

66. Anderson, p. 22 and 25; Chico Township, Butte County, California. Voters Roll from 1852, George McKinstry Collection, California State Library; Great Register. Mill Precinct, Butte County, California, Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico.

67. Mansfield, p. 536; Anderson, p. 27; *Chico Courant*, 24 February 1866. Members of this twenty-man party also included--

Bates, Ad. Williams and others. Sutherland was the brother of the author's great-great grandmother, Catherine Sutherland Moses. He and his brother Roderick are buried in the Chico Cemetery. Research provided to author by Judith Sutherland Pahnke, originally of Monticello, Iowa and now of Aptos, California.

68. Anderson, pp. 27-29.

69. In 1863 Wallace married an Indian woman, called "Nancy." Federal Census of 1860; Butte County Marriage Records. Appreciation to Larry V. Richardson for this information.

70. Anderson, p. 28.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 34. Anderson, Chapters 6-7.

72. *Beacon*, 3 August 1859; *Butte Democrat*, 6 August 1859. T.T. Waterman accepted and repeated this characterization in T. Kroeber on p. 46; while T. Kroeber erroneously placed this raid on Mill Creek, pp. 66-68.

73. *Beacon*, 17 August 1859. Wallace's name does not appear in the report of the letter but the editor did not dispute Breckenridge's later identification of him as Wallace.

74. According to T. Kroeber, "malo" was one of the Spanish terms which the Native people also adopted, p. 41.

75. Mansfield, p. 188 in a quote of the *Butte Record*, 6 August 1859. This important article is not available in other surviving issues of the *Record* that year, including the hardcopy edition in the State Library.

76. *Beacon*, 17 August 1859.

77. *Butte Democrat*, 6 August 1859; *Beacon*, 3 August 1859.

78. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859; in 1863 Richard Wallace formally married an Indian woman, Nancy. George Lovelock history, census and marriage record. Appreciation to Larry V. Richardson.

79. *Butte Democrat*, 24 September 1859.

80. Vera Clark McKeen of Yankee Hill: *Memoir of a Maidu Matriarch, Chico: Privately Printed, 1998*. Special credit to Larry V. Richardson for information on the mixed race families. For a scathing, even repulsive, broadbrush attack on the miners' relations with Native women, see *Beacon*, 17 August 1859.

81. Letter. Gen. Kibbe to Capt. Flint, Comd. of "A" Co. 6th Infantry. California Indian Wars Files, California State Archives. Cf. William Strobridge, *Regulars in the Redwoods*, Chapter 8.

82. Letter. Lt. Francis Flint to Adj. Gen. William Kibbe quoted by Adj. Gen. William Kibbe to Gov. John B. Weller, 30 July 1859; River Expedition Expenditure Record; Letter. Kibbe to Capt. Flint, 11 July 1859 in California Indian Wars Files, California State Library.

83. *Beacon*, 22 June 1859.

84. 34th Congress, 1st Session, *Senate Miscellaneous Document* 67, Vol. 1, June 19, 1856. Cf. *Regulars in the Redwoods* *passim* for the best analysis of the Army's experience and perspective.

85. Jarboe Correspondence. Letter from Kibbe to Governor John Weller, 25 July 1859. California Indian Wars Files. California State Archives; *Beacon*, 13, 15 and 20 July 1859; See good coverage by the *Shasta Herald* on the northern fronts; Cf. *Regulars in the Redwoods* treats the Mendocino situation.

86. *Beacon*, 27 July 1859.

87. Letter. Kibbe to Weller, 30 July 1859. Indian Wars Files. California State Archives. Acknowledge Strobridge correspondence. Camp Cass Returns and Strobridge, *Regulars in the Redwoods*, p. 219.

88. *Beacon*, 27 July and 31 August 1859; Letter. Adj. Gen. William Kibbe to Gov. Weller, July 25 and 30 1859. California Indian Wars Collection, California State Archives.

89. Letter. William Kibbe to Governor J. Neely Johnson. Quoted in Herbert Florcken, "Law and Order View of the Vigilance Committee in 1856," Part 11, *California Historical Society Quarterly*, XV (1936), p. 147. Anderson, pp. 43-45. He infers no later change of mind.

90. Anderson, Chapter 4.

91. *Beacon*, 31 August and 7 September 1859.

92. Anderson, p. 40.

93. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859.

94. *Beacon*, 12 January, 3 and 6 August, 7 and 10 September 1859. While Anderson, in his 1909 memoir on p. 41 called "Billy" a Mill Creek, by the time he wrote his account he often slipped into that group term that had come to encompass all rebellious Indians. By the early 20th century the distinction between Butte Creeks and Mill Creeks, so important in 1859, was seldom used except by some local oldtimers. Anderson's account taken alone is unclear, even confusing. However, from his account read in combination with the Breckenridge account of the same event emerges the meaning which appears here.

95. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859; Anderson, p. 38.

96. *Beacon*, 3 August 1859; *Butte Democrat*, 6 August 1859. T. T. Waterman accepted and repeated this characterization in T. Kroeber on p. 46; while T. Kroeber erroneously placed this raid on Mill Creek, pp. 66-68.

97. *Butte Democrat*, 6 August 1859; *Beacon*, 3 August 1859.

98. Anderson, p. 9.

99. *Enterprise*, 22 January 1859. The valley party used muzzle loaders.

100. *Enterprise*, 17 January 1918. Because Crowder mixed up the sequence, he mistakenly linked these developments to retaliation for the earlier Forest Ranch attack. *Shasta Herald*, 20 August 1859.

101. *Butte Democrat*, 20 August; *Beacon*, 24 August 1859. Cf. Schoonover, passim; The army would later pay Coon Garner \$60 for his services in the California Volunteers' River Expedition. While Daniel Sutherland and Sandy Young did not win pay, they would win California Indian Wars veteran status with benefits. Anderson and Good secured neither pay nor benefits. Speculatively, the reason may be that these three men and others unidentified who were paid were part of the Coon Garner wing of the Kibbe force, first under Kibbe himself and then under Captain Burns. Anderson forgot that Breckenridge split off and returned to Butte Creek under General Kibbe's auspices. Anderson, p. 43. This differentiated Good and Anderson from the other Breckenridge party veterans in that they served directly under an officer. This would have become important at the end of the campaign when Kibbe was under pressure to bring down his expenses about which the governor was apoplectic. At that time, he may have sacrificed his early intentions toward Good, Anderson and others. However, Sutherland's apparent citation of Young, then an employee on the ranch of Samuel Neal, as his officer does not fit the 1859 events—or may represent an aspect about which information is lost. And, of course, the Kibbe campaign was not federal action. This mystery remains. While land patent records from the National Archives in Washington, D. C. and the Butte County Recorder's Office offer information about Sutherland and Young, they do not resolve the mystery of which of these of later actions qualified them for veterans' land benefits on the basis of their service in the California Indian Wars. Ledger River Expedition State Archives.

102. Letter. Kibbe to Weller. 30 July 1859. California Indian

Wars Files. California State Archives.

103. *Beacon*, 14 December 1859.

104. *Butte Record*, 6 August 1859.

105. *Butte Democrat*, 18 August 1859; *Beacon*, 24 August 1859.

106. Significantly, Breckenridge later said, Kibbe's orders were "to scalp" escapees. The party's actions suggest that in this case at least Breckenridge used "scalp" for "kill" in the colloquial sense of the day. This is buttressed by the *Beacon's* account which states the orders were to "shoot." However, Breckenridge and Good did take scalps in other actions on their own. No evidence points to Kibbe's adoption of scalping. Whether the word's use in other contexts may also have become an occasional substitute for the word "killing" raises similar questions.

107. *Beacon*, 14 December 1859. Anderson, p. 48; *Beacon*, 31 August 1859; *Shasta Herald*, 10 September 1859; Federal Census of 1860, Chico Township, Butte County, California.

108. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859; The newspaper names M. Armesby, who appears to have been Myron Ormesby, the Rock Creek farmer whose name appears above. Credit: Larry V. Richardson.

109. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859; Later, Breckenridge claimed, at Dogtown the miner married the same woman even though she had an Indian mate who was one of those the Garner/Breckenridge men had wounded at Cox's Flat.

110. Hurtado, *Ranchos, Ranchos, Gold Mines, and Rancheros: A Socioeconomic History of Indians and Whites in Northern California: 1821-1860*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation: U.C., Berkeley, 1981, p. 283 in Chapter Eight which treats this problem in depth.

111. Mansfield, p. 190; *San Francisco Bulletin*, 9 November 1859.

112. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859; *Butte Democrat*, 16 June 1860 on Cheesman in politics.

113. *Beacon*, 7 September 1859.

114. *Butte Democrat*, 27 August 1859.

115. Bidwell, *Dictation*, p. 19.

116. *Butte Democrat*, 12 October 1859 and 16 June 1860; *Beacon*, 31 August, 7 September, 5 and 19 October 1859; River Expedition of 1859 in Tehama, Shasta, Plumas, and Butte Counties, Claims Against Government Funds. California Indian Wars Files; California State Archives.

117. *Beacon*, 22 and 24 August 1859; Butte County Marriage Records, September 1859. Appreciation to Larry V. Richardson for his assistance on marriage records.

118. *Beacon*, 21 September, 5 October 1859; *Shasta Herald*, 8 October 1859.

119. Letter. Kibbe to Weller. 29 November 1859, California Indian Wars Files, California State Archives; Cf. *Beacon*, 9 November 1859; 31 August 1859.

120. *San Francisco Alta*, 6, 15 and 16 December 1859; *Beacon*, 14 December 1859.

121. Letter from Kibbe to Weller November 29, 1859. California Indian Wars Collection. State Archives; *San Francisco Alta*, 15 and 16 December 1859. *San Francisco Bulletin*, 14 January 1859. The events of the 1860s are the subject of the next article in this series.

122. Kibbe, p. 17.

123. Crowder, quoted in Mansfield, p. 196.

124. Robert Anderson, p. 44; Letter. Larry V. Richardson to Michele Shower. February 1999. Richardson recalls oldtimers who used the term in his youth but not in the persistent context of danger associated with the term "Mill Creeks." Sim Moak, who ar-

rived in 1863 only referred to Mill Creeks in his memoir. Passim.  
125. *Butte Democrat*, 12 November 1859; 28 January 1860; Anderson, p. 46.

## Sources

### Articles:

Roland B. Dixon, "The Northern Maidu." *Bulletin*, American Museum of Natural History, xvii, Part 3 (New York, May 1905), pp. 119-346.

Kathleen Gabriel, "James Lawrence Keefer, 1850-1901: An Ethnology of a Butte County Pioneer," M.A. Thesis, California State University, Chico, 1981.

Gerald Johnson, "Ishi's Ancestors," Paper Delivered September 23, 1994. Manuscript, California State University, Chico Anthropology Library.

William Kibbe, "Adjutant General Kibbe's Report." In *Ishi the Last Yahi, A Documentary History*, eds. Robert Heizer and Theodora Kroeber, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

A. L. Kroeber, "Elements of Culture in Native California." In *U. C. Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology*, xiii, No. 8, pp. 259-328.

Steve Schoonover, "The Kibbe Campaign," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #20 (Winter, 1994), pp. 10-49.

"The Three Knolls Massacre," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #15 (Fall, 1993), pp. 4-55.

Michele Shover, "John Bidwell and the Indian Treaty of 1852: Seduction, Betrayal, and Redemption," Under consideration.

"John Bidwell: Reluctant Indian Fighter, 1852-1856," *Dogtown Territorial Quarterly*, #36 (Winter 1998), pp. 32-56.

William Simmons, "Indian People of California's Contested Eden." In *California Before the Gold Rush* (Summer/Fall 1997)

Carl E. Wheat, ed. "California's Bantam Cock: The Journals of Charles DeLong, 1854-1863," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, IX (Winter, 1930), pp. 243-290.

### Books:

Stephen E. Ambrose. *Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis and Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West*. New York: Touchstone, 1996.

R. A. Anderson. *Fighting the Mill Creeks*. Chico: Chico Record Press, 1909.

John Bidwell. *Dictation*. Unpublished Manuscript. John Bidwell Collection. Bancroft Library. Berkeley: University of Cali-

fornia.

William Brewer. *Up and Down California*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.

Charles Ferguson. *The Experience of a Forty-Niner During Thirty-Four Years Residence in California and Australia*. Cleveland, 1880.

Theodore Heizer and Theodora Kroeber. *Ishi, the Last Yahi*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Dorothy Hill. *The Indians of Chico Rancheria*. Sacramento: Department of Parks and Recreation, 1978.

Albert Hurtado. *Indian Survival on the California Frontier*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

W. H. Hutchinson. *Tales from Old Hutch*. Chico: ANCR, 1990.

Theodora Kroeber. *Ishi in Two Worlds*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.

Sim Moak. *The Last of the Mill Creeks and Early Life in Northern California*. Chico: 1923.

William Strobridge. *Regulars in the Redwoods: The U.S. Army in Northern California, 1852-1861*. Spokane: The Arthur C. Clark Co., 1994.

### Newspapers:

*Butte Democrat*

*Butte Record*

*Chico Enterprise*

*Red Bluff Beacon*

*Sacramento Union*

*San Francisco Alta*

*San Francisco Bulletin*

*Shasta Herald*

### Government Records:

California Indian War Files. California State Archives.

Governors' Papers. California State Archives.

John Bidwell Collection. California State Library.

U.S. Senate Misc Documents, No. 688, 33rd Congress, Spec. Sess. Reports and Executive Data.

George McKinstry Collection. California State Library.

Western History Collection. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

### Correspondence:

Letters to author: Larry V. Richardson. Paradise, California.

Letter to author: William Strobridge. San Francisco, California.

## Visit the California History Website

for Links to nearly 100 California History-related Websites

[www.californiahistory.com](http://www.californiahistory.com)

Scroll down to the bottom of the home page and click on the site you want to see!

Provided Courtesy of the Dogtown Territorial Quarterly