

Yankee Hill Dispatch

Vol 4 No 1



April 2011

Published by the Yankee Hill Historical Society

www.yankeehillhistory.com

P.O.Box 4031, Yankee Hill, Ca 95965

The Yankee Hill Dispatch is published three times per year. In each issue we include an article about the area's history. In this issue is part 1 of an article about the Concow Indians in this area. The Concow Indians played an important role in local Indian history. You may be surprised! This issue covers their history until 1859. Next month we will issue part 2 which covers the history from 1860 to 1865. We hope you will find this series both informative and interesting.

The Indians of the Concow Valley, Yankee Hill and Cherokee

Part One

The focus of this article is the history of Indians in the Concow Valley, Yankee Hill and Cherokee area. But it is difficult to separate their history from the history of all the Indians in Butte County. This is because their history, like most Indians in the state, was dramatically influenced by intruding cultures, first by the European fur traders, later by the gold seekers and finally by the ranchers who permanently settled on large tracts of land. Each of these groups had unique effects on local Indian history. Tehama County also played a major role in the lives of Butte County Indians in the late 1850's by instigating actions to remove the Indians from both counties. The failure of the management of the California Indian reservation system caused conflicts within the white community as well further aggravated the conflicts between whites and Indians after 1852.

Is it Concow, Konkau or Konkow?

One of the challenges in writing this article has been the changing definition of who the Concow Indians were, especially after 1900, as anthropologists redefined the boundaries of the tribe based on studies of the tribe's language which was a basis for grouping individual tribes into larger cultures. As an example, the term Maidu was not used in the early histories or newspaper articles. It was defined in "The Tribes of California" published in 1877 by Stephen Powers. Powers also used the spelling Konkau when describing the Indians of the Concow Valley. But all the newspaper reports from the time, and the people of Butte and Tehama Counties always spelled it Concow, when discussing the valley and/or the Indians from this immediate area. I believe Powers changed the spelling because he defined the Konkau Indians as a larger group other than just those associated with the Concow Valley. It is worth noting that the Indians did not have a written language of their own so all spellings of Indian words associated with their culture are attributed to researchers, historians and map makers.

The 1882 History of Butte County says the Concow Valley was named by the white settlers. “The Valley took its name from a tribe of Concow Indians, numbering seven hundred, who were camped there when it was first settled”. The first written occurrence I found of the name Concow was in a May 1857 article in the Oroville newspaper the “Butte Record” about a trip through the Concow Valley. It also appears in the 1858 Butte County tax rolls when describing taxpayer’s property assessments from the valley. Those land claims were first filed in 1856, but the 1856 records are lost. The official 1862 map of Butte County is the earliest map I found that shows the Concow Valley. In 1863, the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs included a letter dated Sept 25, 1862 by California Indian Agent, G.M. Hanson referred to the Concow Indians. It is the first year I could find the mention of Concow Indians in the agency’s yearly report. The spelling as Concow continued in the commission’s reports at least through 1880.

In 1870 the county census defined the area between the West Branch of the Feather River and the North Branch of the Feather River as the Concow Township. Previously, in the 1860 census, this same area was included as part of the Oregon Township census whose population was primarily centered around Oregon City, Cherokee and Messilla Valley (this has caused some researchers, including myself, to assume that people had relocated from Oregon Township to Concow Township between 1860 and 1870 when in fact they had not. The township had been split in two). There never was a town of Concow, but the Concow Township census district lasted until just before the 1920 census.

As mentioned earlier the spelling as KonKau is attributed to Stephen Powers and his 1877 book “Tribes of California”. In 1871, Stephen Powers during a trip to the Concow Valley and later the Round Valley Indian Reservation in Mendocino County, identified the ancestral home of the Konkau Indians, We-le-u-deh, as located near Cherokee Flat. Powers attributed the word KonKau as coming from the word Ko-yoang-kauIn. Ko-yo, meaning a plain, and kau meaning the earth or a place.

In 1925, Alfred Kroeber in his book, “Handbook of American Indians of California”, partially based on Powers work, listed a number of California place names and defined Concow as meaning “Valley Place”. He also used the spelling Konkau when referring to the Indian tribe.

The spelling became KonKow in the Smithsonian Institution’s book “Handbook of Northern American Indians Vol. 8” published in 1978. The area occupied by the KonKow Indians was also at that time greatly expanded by Francis Riddell, the author of the Maidu/Konkow section, to include most of Butte, Yuba and Sutter counties as well as a small portion of Plumas and Sierra Counties, many of these Indians never saw the Concow Valley. Again, I believe the spelling was changed to differentiate the refined definition of the Indian tribe based on new linguistic studies since Powers’ earlier definition. As mentioned earlier in reviewing the local newspapers from 1857 thru 1866 the only spelling I found was Concow when talking about the Indian tribe or the valley. The Tribe was closely associated with the mountain Indians in the vicinity of the Concow Valley. Other tribes were referred to by their individual tribal names or a specific area “the Indians of, usually a river, valley or place. As an example the Indians of this area were referred to as “Indians of the West Bank”, meaning the West Branch of the Feather River, prior to 1857. Based on this practice, the references to the Concow Indians in local papers of the time I have assumed refer to the Indians in the Concow/Yankee Hill/Cherokee areas and the area between the West Branch and the North Fork of the Feather River.

Note: Research indicates that with the influx of nearly 500 miners to this area in 1856 and the establishment of Spanishtown nearby, the Indians in this area abandoned their village sites in the Concow Valley, many

moving farther north past Flea Valley, which was settled in 1857, and along the North Fork of the Feather River. It was several of these new arrivals, G.G. Marquis, A. W. Thompson and Charles Mullen who in 1856 permanently settled on former Concow Indian village sites, north of Spanishtown, who most likely named the valley, Concow Valley.

Early Sources for Butte County's History

The first newspaper in Butte County was established at Bidwell Bar in November 1853. So with the exception of a few articles in the Marysville papers, founded in 1851, the pre 1853 history of Butte County has been primarily gathered from the book the "History of Butte County", published in 1882. At that time, the pre 1853 historical information was taken in a large part from interviews held with various citizens of the county. After 1853 the information was also gathered from various newspaper articles in both Butte and Tehama Counties (Note: In 1918 another History of Butte County was published which expanded on the 1882 version). Starting in 1854 there are articles in the local papers about the Indian/white relationship. For the next 30 years the only time an Indian's side of the story is represented in the newspapers is when it is told by a White man, sympathetic to the Indian's plight. In July 1884 an interview with the Concow Chief, Tome-ya-nem also known by the English name George Burchard was in "The Overland Monthly" magazine, published in San Francisco.

Before The Gold Rush

Archeological evidence from the area suggests the larger family of Maidu Indians, of which the Concow are a part, have been in Butte County over 3,500 years. I could find no published archeological digs from the Concow/Yankee Hill area. These digs, following proper archeological protocol, are primary sources for dating when an area was first inhabited. I do not believe any actual organized digs following that protocol have ever been made in the Flea Valley, Concow, Yankee Hill, Cherokee areas. However, it is estimated that the Concow Indians have been in the Concow/Yankee Hill/Cherokee areas prior to the gold rush for many hundreds, if not thousands of years.

The estimated total population of Maidu Indians, of which the Concow are a part, has varied from 4,000 to as many as 9,000. It is important to remember that areas were populated with a number of small villages usually containing anywhere from 25 to 200 inhabitants. Each village had its own name used by the inhabitants and each village established their own Chief. There is no evidence of a hierarchy outside the village, meaning there was no individual with power over all the villages. It is reasonable to assume that a larger village would exert more influence over its neighbors than a smaller village. Evidence suggests that tribes in the foothills exerted influence over tribes in the valley.

Per individuals very familiar with this area, there are at least three known village sites in the Concow Valley, as well as at least one at Big Bend and one at Flea Valley (undoubtedly more are undiscovered). All of these sites appear to be larger sites so the total population for all would probably be anywhere from 500 to 1,000 Indians. Whether all these sites were occupied at the same time is open to debate without any archeological data. However, it is reasonable to assume that there were five different Chiefs in charge of these five sites.

It was common for a village to migrate from a lower elevation in the spring to a higher elevation for the summer. This migration would minimize the stress on the local food source and offer a milder climate in the summer months. It has been said that a large group of Concow Indians migrated yearly to Grassy Lake, 16 miles north east of Concow Valley. Grassy Lake is a very small lake located at an elevation of 5,900 feet; it would have been much cooler and greener during the summer months.

Some researchers have indicated that the Chief was primarily a social director for the village. In some cases there was a second Chief who took charge in times of conflict between villages, a war Chief. The choice for Chief was heavily influenced by the village Shaman, or doctor. If a village later decided they did not like their Chief, he could be unelected. (I think it is safe to assume that another option would be to leave the village with his loyal followers and start another village.)

Relationships between Villages

Conflicts between villages usually centered on protection of hunting grounds and the taking of women from other villages as wives by force. If two villages were hostile to one another, the retaliation was usually measured, following the principle of an eye for an eye. In some cases where the whole village was involved the conflicts were resolved in a surprisingly organized manner. Two chiefs would meet and agree to have the villages fight at a predetermined location. After an appropriate amount of time, the Chiefs would meet and agree to end the fight or meet again another time to continue. These conflicts were usually ended with a minimal amount of death.

An Indian Fight - Daily Butte Record, August 22, 1856

A fight among the red men of the forest took place on Monday last, on the open prairie six miles from Chico. The battle was fought between the tribe known as the Bidwell Indians and a tribe that belong across the river. It seems to be a periodical affair with these savages. They fought on the appointed day and at the spot named, and with as much system and regularity as their more civilized brethren. The struggle was carried on for several hours and with a savage fierceness equal to any contest that has been witnessed for a long time. There is a peculiarity in this mode of warfare, that we presume is not generally known. It is that when in the heat of a conflict – arrows flying as thick as hail — and the air is rent with the hideous war cry — the little children, by mutual consent, are sent into the ranks of the enemy to pick up the poisonous bearded arrows that have missed their mark, and return them to the quiver of the hostile parent, to be again sent whizzing into the enemy's ranks.

There were some ten or twelve seriously wounded, and two killed. One of the Bidwell tribe, a fine stout warrior was pierced in the breast by an arrow to the depth of nine inches. The point was poisonous, and the probability is that he would die from its effects.

Villages often traded with other tribes for goods, driven by availability of certain raw materials. Bidwell reported that valley tribes made their own arrows but traded with hill tribes for bows, probably because of the availability of the proper trees to make strong bows.

European Contact

The establishment of Fort Ross in 1812 by 25 Russian and 80 Alaskan fur traders would eventually drive traders inland in search of new sources for beaver and otter fur. Jedediah Smith traveled through Butte County in March 1828 with a party, possibly as many as 20 men, on his way to Oregon. In the spring of 1830 Peter Ogden led a trapping expedition from Canada which passed through Oregon and ended up in the San Joaquin Valley near present day Stockton, Ca. His diaries are lost so the exact route is not known, but trapping along major rivers and passing through the Sacramento Valley was a common practice. In December 1832, John Work headed a party including Michael Laframboise, in the Feather River area trapping for the Hudson Bay Company. They would acquire anywhere from 4 to 15 skins per day. Work reported in his diary that the Indians of the area seemed to be sick with ague (malaria). Could this have been introduced by Peter Ogden's expedition the year before? Michael Laframboise would return to the Feather River again in August of 1837 heading a party of 27 trappers, he stated the only significant number of beaver left was on the Feather River. Laframboise returned again in 1838 and 1839. John Bidwell reported



John Work - Hudson Bay Company

that before he arrived in 1841 an epidemic of Cholera killed large numbers of Indians. Bidwell felt they acquired the disease from the Hudson Bay Company trappers. It is estimated that as many as 800 Indians died from these epidemics.

The Miners

When gold was discovered in 1848 John Bidwell, who had worked for General Sutter headed north to the Feather River region. Bidwell soon discovered gold in the area of what later would be called Bidwell's Bar, now under Lake Oroville. Bidwell employed approximately 20 Indians as laborers for a year realizing over \$100,000 in gold, using scarves and other clothing as payment to the Indians. Bidwell used the money to buy his Chico ranch. Later he would use Indian labor on his ranch. Sam Neal, Bidwell's neighbor was also at Bidwell Bar and followed the same practice. He used his profits from mining to purchase his ranch south of Bidwell's.

The gold rush to Northern California was on. Soon after Bidwell's strike at Bidwell's bar a flood of miners headed north establishing the town of Ophir in Oct 1849, now known as Oroville. In 1850 Tom Stoddard, a miner, appeared in Marysville with a pocket full of gold he found farther North. Stoddard wasn't sure of the exact location as he was lost when he found the gold, lying along the shores of a lake. Stoddard believed it was in the general vicinity of what we now call Plumas County. The story of Stoddard's Gold Lake created so much excitement that 2,000 miners left Marysville headed north in the next 12 months. Rich Gulch and Rich Bar along the current route of Highway 70 were founded because of this migration north. Gold Lake was never found, but the rapid migration into Concow Indian country had begun.

Relationship between the miners and the Indians

The early miners were an unorganized group of individuals from all over the world coming from all social classes. They were also a transient group of people. Gold panning and sluicing was dependent on water. The miners migrated to the higher elevations in the winter and retreated to lower elevations near major water supplies for finding gold in the summer. Indians were viewed with caution by individual miners and at the same time a potential source of labor. Miners did not own much personal property and relied on some of the same food sources as the Indians, hunting and fishing. This mining population was made up primarily of men so there was interest in the Indian women. The need for balance, although not equal, between the cultures was recognized by many of the early white miners. The earliest documented example I found was an article in the Butte paper published by a group in Frenchtown, located a mile south of Concow Valley.

Frenchtown, Oregon Township, Feb. 14, 1854 Butte Record, Oroville, Ca

At a meeting called by the miners and friends of humanity in Frenchtown and vicinity held at the store of J. I. Stewart & Co. for the purpose of taking into consideration the content of those men or fiends in human nature, who are in the habit of committing outrages upon the Indian women of this vicinity, the meeting was called to order by L. C. Goodman, Esq. F. Y. Johnson, was chosen President, and Edward Pope appointed Secretary

It was moved that a committee of three be appointed to draft resolutions expressive of the sense of the meeting, whereupon L. C. Goodman, James McKay, and James Cannon were appointed as such committee. On motion, T. E. Cannon of Spring Valley was added to the committee.

The committee after retiring for a few moments reported the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Whereas, the peace and quietude of this neighborhood has been disturbed by the frequent outrages committed on the Indian women by lawless characters – and

Whereas, the Indians have been driven from their ranches and have come into the cabins of the miners with their feet frozen and nearly famished. And *whereas*, even children, from ten to twelve years of age, have not been spared by these *fiends* in human shape – Therefore, we, the citizens of this community in meeting assembled, do

Resolve, that complaint be made before a Justice of the Peace, against all those persons when proof can be had that warrants may be issued for their arrest. Be it further

Resolved, that if the civil law cannot reach such offense to meet out to them the punishment their crimes so justly merit – that we, after due trial of the law, will feel ourselves in duty bound, to take the law into our own hands, however severely we may deprecate such a course. Be it further

Resolved, that the District Attorney be requested to use all just and legal means in his power to convict those who may be sent before the proper court for trial. And be it further

Resolved, that we will support the officers in enforcing the law and each other in carrying out these measures.

Resolved, the proceedings of this meeting be published in the “Butte Record.”

On motion the meeting adjourned.

F. Y. Johnson, President

Edward Pope, Secretary

The Ranchers

By early 1850 ranchers and farmers were establishing themselves in the valleys. An individual with the establishment of a homestead could claim up to 160 acres of land as long as the land was not already claimed, and the only cost was a \$15 charge for a pre-emptive land claim with the county recorder. In some cases two or more individuals would partner to file a claim of 360 acres or more on adjoining property. Later one

person would sell out to the second person. The ranchers and farmers realized that there was good steady money to be made in supplying miners with goods and services. Unlike the miners who were a transient group and might leave when the gold played out, the ranchers were here to stay. They were taking up large tracts of land that were a source of food for the Indians and restricted their movement in their own homeland. The entire Indian lifestyle was radically changing, it was becoming harder and harder to hunt for your own food. There was still the need for both groups to be close to year round water to support both the Indian lifestyle and the lifestyle of the rancher/farmer.

Relationship between the Ranchers and the Indians

In 1850, Manoa Pence who had mined for gold at Rich Gulch acquired land with several partners in Messilla Valley. Here they opened a store and eating place. Pence also had some cattle. The 1882 History of Butte County relates the following story. On New Year's Eve 1851 a party of six or seven Indians came to his ranch. The Chief of the Concow Indians was with them. At first Mr. Pence objected but later agreed to let them spend the night on his property. The next day the Indians had left early in the morning when someone noticed Pence's cattle were gone. Pence and several friends pursued the Indians; Pence shot the Concow Chief in the hip before they all fled. Pence later recovered his cattle. The Indian Chief reportedly threatened to kill Pence if he got a chance. Sometime later the Chief was caught and brought to the Pence Ranch. Pence wanted to hang the chief but some others present objected. A vote was taken after which the Indian Chief was hung from a tree at the site of the future post office established in 1864 in Pentz.

The lack of food made ranches a target of raids by small groups of Indians seeking food for their village. Some ranchers would look the other way if they knew an animal was a straggler, sick and going to die anyway, but this quickly became unmanageable. Soon the ranchers started hunting down Indians suspected of stealing, killing them to set an example. Killing several Indians for killing one cow for food was commonplace.

The Treaty Attempt of 1851

The United States Government had treaties with Indian tribes throughout the country prior to the Gold Rush. In 1851 a series of 18 treaties were negotiated by the Federal Government in California with tribes throughout the state. In August 1851 a treaty was negotiated at Bidwell's Ranch, ten tribal leaders and 300 Indians were present. O.M. Wozencraft, Indian Agent and several senior members of the military along with their troops were present. The proposed treaty set aside all land between the current sites of Oroville, Chico and as far north as Nimshe for a reservation, nearly 227 square miles. In addition each Indian over 15 years old would be given clothing, blankets, material and sewing supplies. The government would furnish 1,000 lbs of steel, 25 horses, 100 milk cows, 6 bulls, 6 work mules, 12 ploughs, 75 corn hoes, 25 spades and 4 grindstones to be used by all the Indians. A school would be established and teachers furnished, 1 wheelwright, 1 blacksmith, 1 carpenter and 1 practical farmer will also be provided with salaries paid for a minimum of 5 years and as long thereafter as the President shall deem advisable. The government also reserved the right to establish a military fort on the land. In exchange all Indians had to move onto the reservation. Nine chiefs signed the treaty, expecting to see the goods promised them offered immediately. The Concow Chief, Kulmeh, refused; the Concow did not want to leave their homeland in the foothills. It should be noted that four months later the incident at Pence's Ranch mentioned earlier transpired. The treaty of 1851 was rejected by Congress in 1852. It was felt too much valuable land for farming was being given up for the reservation. Some suspect Bidwell didn't really support the treaty because he had a large population of Indians living on his property and he could not offer his Indians what the Government was offering, so he would have lost many of his workers.



Maidu Headmen with treaty commission July or Aug 1851, probably taken at Bidwell's Ranch. Oliver M. Wozencraft seated front center

The California Reservation System

In October 1852, the Federal Government instead authorized \$250,000 to establish five reservations, each to be no more than 25,000 acres. The concept was to copy the California Missions system where the Indians would be taught to farm and thereby the reservations would become self sufficient. The assumption was the reservations would become less dependent on financial support as they became more efficient at providing for themselves.

In September 1854, **Nome Lackee Indian Reservation** was founded near the present site of Corning, California. 800 Indians from the immediate area were soon moved onto the reservation.

In the spring of 1856, the **Mendocino Indian Reservation** was established near the current site of Fort Bragg. In addition three reservations were established in central and southern California.

Almost immediately the reservations started having problems. The Indian agents assigned by the Federal Government had little experience with Indians and were not from the areas they managed. Plus local white populations were quickly growing around the reservations. This was a source for agitation between the two cultures.

Simmon Storms worked on the Nome Lackee Reservation when in 1855 he heard of an isolated valley in Mendocino County. In June of 1856 Storms entered what we today call Round Valley. The valley consisted of about 25,000 acres of rich farm land, access was limited because of no established road and winter snows



Indian Agent Simmon Storms circa 1850's
Courtesy Mendocino County Historical Society

made it difficult to leave and enter the valley. Stephen Powers estimated in 1877 that at one time there was a population of about 5,000 Yuki Indians in the valley and surrounding hills. When Agent Storms first saw the valley it was not inhabited by whites. The Indians had seen whites before, probably trappers and traders. They were afraid of the whites because they had taken away Indian women in the past. Mr. Storms was impressed enough that he claimed the valley for the Federal Government and told the Indians they would be protected and provided for if they moved onto the reservation. But there were already 5 reservations in California as allowed by Federal law. A petition was filed to establish an outpost of only 5,000 acres as a farm to support the other two reservations in Northern California. **Nome Cult Farms** was established in July 1856. Almost immediately whites started settling on the remaining 20,000 acres of rich farm land.

The Relationship between White Town's People and the Indians

In Sept 1857, the citizens of Oroville asked the Indian agent at Nome Lackee for assistance with the Indians

as they were considered a general nuisance. Mr. Titus, the subagent, came to Oroville to investigate. Arriving Saturday, on Sunday Mr. Titus along with several local citizens secretly watched the Indians and determined there were a larger number of small camps in the area than anyone suspected, “the women being in quite a majority.” The next day while camped across the river, Mr. Titus was approached by a number of Indian women complaining that their boys were taken away. Now living with whites, the women begged for their boys to be returned. Their complaints fell on deaf ears and the process of removing the Indians was begun.

Note: On April 13, 1850, the California Assembly passed “An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians”. Section 20 of this act allowed for the indenture of vagrant Indians by whites. Children without parents were classified as vagrants and could be indentured by a Justice of the Peace to whites until boys reached 18 and girls reached 15. The only condition was that they had to be provided proper food, clothing and shelter. Unfortunately, this law was often abused and children were rounded up and presented to white families as having no parents. In some cases the children were sold for \$25 to \$75 each by their abductors. This law came under scrutiny in the 1860’s with Lincoln’s freeing the slaves.

The Daily Butte Record, September 17, 1857 reported that “On Tuesday the 8th, everything being in readiness 6 wagons moved up the hill. All filled with the Indians and their stuffs - the “bucks” in high glee pushing them and stopping every now and then, at a signal from Old Walkatow, to give three democratic cheers, which were always given with vigor, stimulated by a large bottle of Mini-Gin sold to them by some hu-Maine individual.” Bidwell supplied beef and flour for the trip to Nome Lackee reservation. Spending the night on Little Butte Creek the paper reported “There being wood and water in abundance, their fires were soon kindled, when baking and roasting began in good earnest: being divided into families, the supper was soon ready and devoured, when they began their usual songs and sank singing into sleep to dream of beef and red shirts.”

The roundup in 1857 was of Indians near and around Oroville. It appears the Concow Indians along with other tribes in remote parts of Butte County were not affected. In fact the Concow Indians were establishing relationships with white miners in this area. In May 1858, when two miners were reported missing after leaving Spanishtown, in the Concow Valley, heading into the hills in search of gold, the citizens of Spanishtown were advised by the Concow Indians that it was the Kimshew Indians that killed the miners; the people of Spanishtown believed the Concow Indians and told the reporter for the Red Bluff Beacon that the Kimshew Indians were a troublesome tribe. However, they also stated that it might be best to remove both tribes to Nome Lackee reservation. No action was taken.

Miners Supplying Friendly Indians with Guns?

Digger Fight - Butte Record, June 16, 1858

We learn from Mr. Patton that a fight took place opposite White Rock, on Monday between some of the Hollilupe Indians and a party of the Concows. The former were fishing in the river, and were surprised while so engaged by the latter who were all armed with rifles. One of the Hollilupes after having been wounded, jumped into the river and attempted to escape, but while in the water was shot again and sank. The attacking party – the Concows – were finally frightened away by the appearance of an armed white man on this side of the river. Two or three of the Hollilupes were severely wounded. The fighting was conducted with much bravery by both parties while it lasted. We believe no attempt has been made to arrest any of the Indians. (White Rock was located 4 miles north of Oroville on the Feather River)

The Conflict between the Miners and the Ranchers

It was becoming clearer that small raiding parties were responsible for some of the Indian troubles. It was

felt that these parties hid out in the foothills and other remote locations. It was also suspected Indians from Bidwell's Ranch as well as the reservations were at least supplying information to these tribes. Some of these raiding parties had guns and it was suspected they were supplied by sympathetic miners, especially those in remote locations. Many of the miners had Indian wives and were referred to as Squaw Men by other hostile whites. Several articles at the time referred to the Squaw Men as aiding the Indians. In one newspaper article at the time it was stated that "white Indians" were worse than "red ones" and they should be dealt with accordingly.

The Conflicts between Ranchers and Indians Become Worse

The struggling reservations never accommodated more than a few thousand Indians each as food supplies were always scarce. The attempts to make the reservations self sufficient was not successful because of poor farming skills and attempts by nearby whites to sabotage the reservations. Fences were torn down and crops destroyed. Meanwhile Indians not on the reservations were killing more cattle and horses for food. Ironically Nome Cult Farms located in Round Valley was one of the worst areas for conflict because of its remote location. Had the government made it one of the first five reservations, encompassing all 25,000 acres of the valley when it was first discovered it may have been a big success.

The conflict between ranchers, farmers and Indians grew more violent as the punishment for killing cattle and horses increased as the conflict went on. An article in the Red Bluff Beacon quoted an article from the Yreka Chronicle that raised concerns about what was happening. Part of the article is quoted below.

Treatment of Indians - Red Bluff Beacon, Jan 12, 1859

"It seems to us that the policy pursued by our people in the treatment of the various Indian tribes of the country, is, in many respects, but little superior to that of the natives towards us. It is true that they sometimes barbarously murder our citizens, but cannot they make the same charges against the whites? There are villains among us who care but little more for the life of an Indian than that of a chicken; and yet, it is too often the case that for murdering such a character a whole tribe of Indians are held responsible. We sell them spirituous and inflammable liquors; we drive them about at caprice or will, however unreasonable, and after ingrafting every conceivable vice in their untutored minds, if one of their number, returns upon us or any of our citizens, the product of our own planting, relations and friends indiscriminately take revenge.".....
"Where should lessons of morality and humanity originate, if not among our own people?"

The Role of the Military

In Tehama County ranchers asked the Federal Government to send troops to chase down Indians not on the reservation. The government had dispatched troops and established forts near reservations to protect the Indians on the reservation and keep the peace. But their orders were specific, they were protecting the reservations. The 70 % or more of the Indians still outside the reservation system were not their concern, nor were they authorized to act. This angered the local population in Tehama County. In April 1859, Tehama County citizens, primarily from Red Bluff, hired trappers and former soldiers to track down and bring the Indians onto the reservation, if they resisted they would be killed. They targeted Indians from Lassen County, northern Butte County and those in Mendocino County. In Round Valley a separate group of citizens hired seasoned Indian fighters to round up all the Indians off the reservation in Round Valley. In April 1859, it was reported in the Petaluma Journal that 300 to 400 Indians had been killed. That same month in the Red Bluff Beacon it was reported that a new way to compensate Indian fighters for hire was being used by those across the river, payment based on the number of scalps they brought in.

In July 1859, Walter Jarboe was hired by the citizens of Round Valley to recruit rangers and again hunt

down Indians. At the same time the citizens of Round Valley solicited the Governor of California for help with paying for the hunt. Jarboe was given the title of Captain, recruited 26 men and started his hunt before the Governor replied. Between July 1859 and December 1859 Jarboe killed 300 Indians and had taken 500 prisoners. The Governor eventually approved the operation and paid Jarboe \$11,143 for his services.

Meanwhile, in Red Bluff, the citizens of Tehama County, still unhappy, were also soliciting the Governor of California for troops to again round up the Indians in Lassen County, northern Butte County, Tehama County and parts of Plumas County. Concern was also expressed that Bidwell's Indians were aiding Indians stealing cattle in Tehama County. Bidwell, who had about 60 Indians living on his ranch argued to protect his Indians, claiming they were innocent of any crimes; he fell out of favor with many whites for doing so.

General Kibbe Campaign of 1859

In August 1859, the Governor of California, Gov. Weller, appointed State Adjutant General Kibbe to enlist men to track the Indians in the area and bring them to the reservations. Kibbe recruited 75 men, mostly from Tehama County, and formed them into three groups to accomplish his task.

Headquartered at Butte Valley, General Kibbe along with Lt. Bailey and a group of men proceed to Hat Creek and the Pit River areas in Lassen County. There had been a lot of conflicts in the Pit River area between Indians and whites resulting in deaths to both. Kibbe's men were joined by forces from Shasta County and local volunteers when they arrived. A second group headed by Capt Byrnes and Lt McCarthy along with their men proceed to Eagle Lake and then Honey Lake near Susanville, Ca. A third group headed by S.D. Johns and his men, working under orders from Capt. Byrnes, proceed to the North Fork of the Feather River and the Concow Valley.

At Pit River and Hat Creek General Kibbe had numerous clashes with the Indians there, killing a large number. At Eagle Lake and Honey Lake Capt Byrnes and Lt. McCarthy were also involved in several clashes resulting in Indian deaths. On the Feather River, in September, S.D. Johns, with the help of Capt. Byrnes, in 13 days succeeded in rounding up 218 adult Concow, Kimsheew and Tiger Indians, along with their children without any resistance and transported them to Tehama County where they awaited transportation to a reservation.

Johns filed a report from Concow Valley, part of which is quoted below.

From Gen. Kibbe's Command - Red Bluff Beacon, September 21, 1859

September 14, 1859 - ".....Crossing over into the Concow Valley, in one of his forced nocturnal marches, he (Capt Byrnes) succeeded in capturing the chiefs of the different tribes which inhabit this locality. The names of who are Tippee, Moolah and Yumyan, the latter being head of all the tribes, which according to his own estimate number one thousand. Tippee is represented, by all who know him, to be not only daring, but most dangerous, and, consequently, the citizens of this valley are well satisfied to dispense with his presence. Wm. Pete (Yumyan) seems to be a very intelligent Indian Chief, he speaks English fluently, and, as far as I could learn, has never manifested much hostility to the whites. Yesterday, within my hearing, he observed to Capt. Byrnes; "now Captain since you've got me, you won't have much difficulty in getting all the other Indians - they will all follow me to the reservation....."

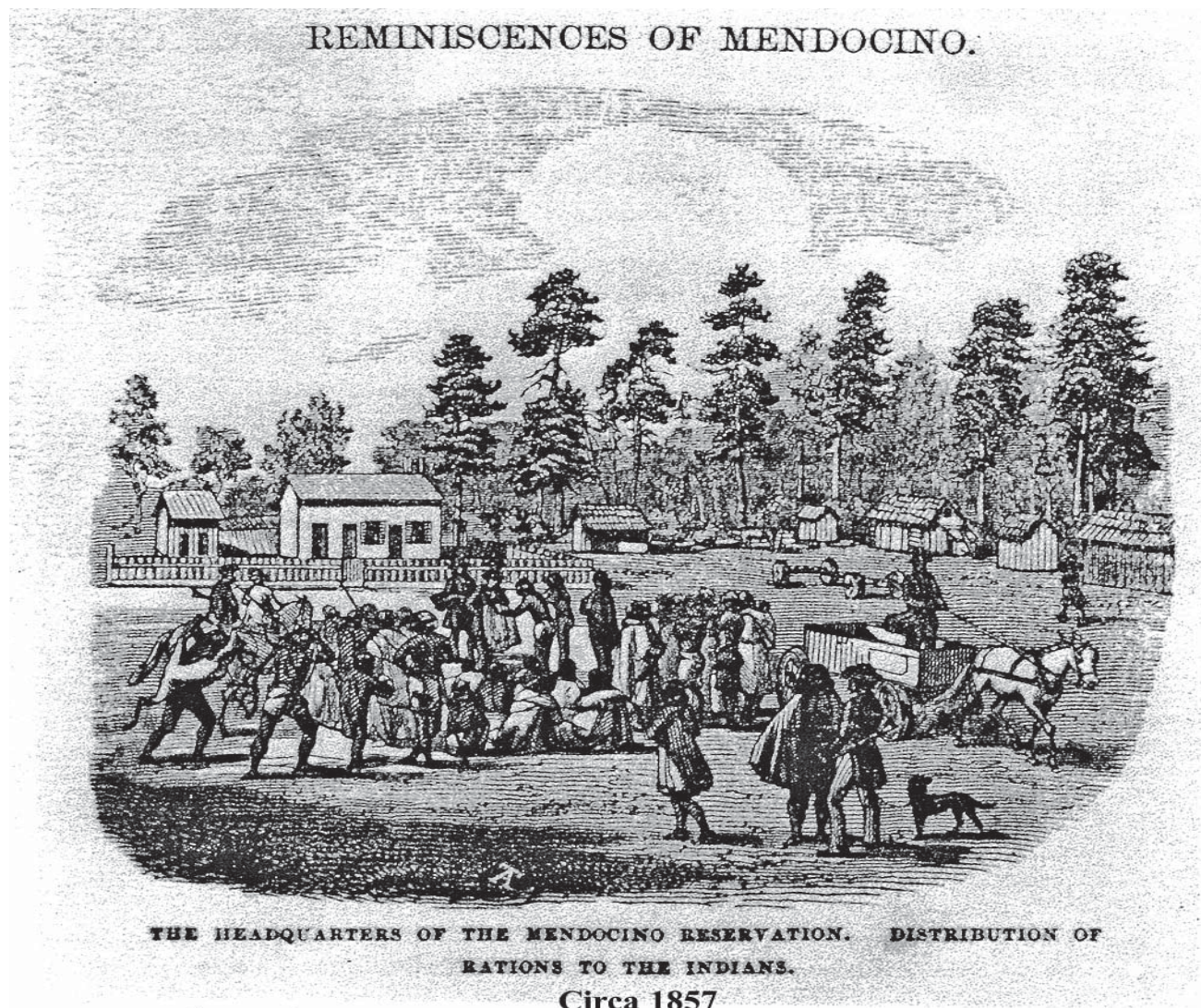
Note: I could find no evidence of additional Indians from this area being rounded up immediately after this date. In May 1859, an article had appeared in the Marysville Democrat regarding concerns expressed in Spanishtown that a man name Downs, living in Spanishtown was harrassing the Indians located in Shield's

Gulch, about 1 mile east of Dark Canyon. It appears he had taken an Indian wife who later returned to her village and married an Indian. Downs was threatening to kill all the Indians if he did not get her back, the local miners expressed concern because the Indians in this area were friendly and they wanted something done to keep the peace. In fact one of the miners hid the girl in his cabin for a brief period. This supports the claim that the Concow Indians were not considered a threat.

General Kibbe disbanded his men in December 1859 at Red Bluff, the papers later reported 1,000 Indians had been captured and 300 killed. The papers also went on to congratulate the General for capturing the Chief "Shave Head" near the Pitt River. It was felt Shave Head and his band of 50 or 60 Indians were responsible for most of the Indian problems in the area. General Kibbe submitted a bill for \$69,000 to the State of California for his services. Included in that figure was a pay of \$50 per month per man for the men he recruited.

The Captured Indians are Taken to the Reservations

The Indians captured by Jarboe and General Kibbe's campaigns were distributed amongst the reservations. Jarboe sent Indians to Nome Cult Farm. General Kibbe sent the Concow, Kimsheew, Tigers, Hat Creek and other Indians to the Mendocino Reservation. He then sent 400 Pitt River Indians, held near Red Bluff for several days, to Sacramento via boat then on to the Tejon Reservation down south (presumably because



they were considered the most troublesome). General Kibbe felt the Indians sent to the Tejon Reservation would never return to this area again.

The Mendocino and Nome Lackee Indian Reservations along with Nome Cult Farms were already having problems retaining the Indians on the reservations. The shortage of food, shortages of clothing and harassment by whites were causing the Indians to run away. Some people had already suggested closing the Mendocino and Nome Lackee reservations, sending all the Indians to Nome Cult Farms at Round Valley. But 5,000 acres in Round Valley would not support such a large Indian population.

Next Month in Part 2

The Concow Indians are moved from the Mendocino Reservation to Nome Cult Farms in Round Valley - the Concow Chief is asked by the reservation agent to help fight the Indians living outside the reservation - the Concow Chief leads 500 Indians away from the reservation and returns to Butte County - raiding parties of Indians from Mill Creek attack whites in Messilla Valley - the citizens of Messilla Valley meet at Pence's ranch demanding removal of all Indians - the Indian roundup of 1863 and the tragic forced march from Chico to return the Indians to Round Valley and Nome Cult Farms.

Editor's Note: I have tried to refer to primary sources when available. Over 100 newspaper accounts from the 1850's and 1860's in the Butte and Tehama County newspapers and the 1884 article in the Overland Monthly interviewing the Concow Indian Chief were primary sources. The 1882 History of Butte County as well as the 1918 History of Butte County are good sources for early Butte County history. I also relied on "Genocide and Vendetta, the Round Valley Wars of Northern California" published in 1981 for much of the history of the Round Valley Indian reservation, first known as Nome Cult Farm, the place where many Concow Indians ended up after their round up in 1859 and 1863. "The Indians of Chico Rancheria" by Dorothy Hill published in 1978 is a good reference book on Bidwell's mining adventure and his association with the Indians, many of whom worked for him mining and on his ranch. Steve Schoonover's article on General Kibbe's campaign in rounding up the Indians in Butte and Tehama Counties and Michele Shover's series of articles on Bidwell and the Indians are excellent, well documented sources for information. Articles by both these authors were published in the "California Territorial Quarterly", back issues are still available at Paradise Coin and Gift. The "KonKow Valley Band of Maidu" web page was also helpful in my research.

YHHS Happenings

First Saturday of every other month, *Bunko Party!!* - The first Saturday of **June, Aug, Oct and Dec** at 1:00pm we have a bunko party at the old school. Prizes and a raffle are held to raise funds for the school restoration and other projects. SEE YOU THERE!

Saturday April 30th, “*Spring Fling*” Stop by the Spring Valley School between 10:00am and 2:00pm and enjoy all the activities. Yankee Hill Historical Society will have a table, **stop by and say hello!** Fun for everyone!

Thursday May 5th, 8:00 am “*Yankee Hill Cemetery Clean Up*” The Yankee Hill Grange and the Yankee Hill Historical Society are getting together to clean up the Yankee Hill Cemetery. Join us and if you can bring a hoe and a rake, even if you can't be there at 8:00, stop by later. If we have enough volunteers it should go fast! Some of us are bringing a bag lunch just in case.

Saturday May 21st, 10:00am to noon “*Tour of the Indian Village at the Concow Camp Ground and a short drive to the Concow Cemetery*” Tony Salzarulo and friends have been building an Indian village, including a sweat house at the Concow Camp Ground for several years and he has invited us for a tour. Afterward we make a short drive to the Concow Cemetery nearby, parking is limited so we will have to double up in cars. Tony has lived in the area all his life and is a student of Concow history, the story of the village and the story of some of the residents of the cemetery will be very interesting. Bring a bag lunch and you can eat at the camp grounds afterward and enjoy the lake. We will all meet at the camp ground at 10:00am. Hope to see you there!

Officers and Contact Information

President: *Bob Huffman (530) 533-4132*

Vice President: *Patty Dummel*

Treasurer: *Debbie Ingvoldsen*

Secretary: *Don Saul*

Director: *Marji Corey*

Newsletter Editor: *Larry Mauch (530) 532-0706 editor@yankeehillhistory.com*

General Correspondence: *information@yankeehillhistory.com*

Yankee Hill Historical Society
P.O. Box 4031
Yankee Hill, Ca 95965

“Dedicated to Preserving Our Local History”
Visit Our Web Page @ www.yankeehillhistory.com