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ALMO MASSACRE

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Six or more battles between emigrant parties and a band of local Indians were fought near later Almo not far from the City of Rocks. The first of these incidents occurred in the second week of September, 1860. An Illinois party headed west on the California trail was fired upon late in the evening of September 7, so messengers were sent for help from an army camp on the Portneuf near Fort Hall. After another fight the evening of September 8, the party moved a short distance to a better location on September 9. Indian reinforcements surrounded their wagons and drove the emigrants out of the region. Heading toward the army camp on the Portneuf, they got help and returned to recover their wagons and property. When they reached the battle site, September 12, they salvaged nothing but two oxen and a member of their party who had not been able to get away. That same day, two years later, another emigrant party returning east from California ran into trouble at about the same place on the California trail. This second group had a harder time.

Both of these incidents were reported in detail in the Deseret News, October 3, 1860 and September 24, 1862. In a letter from Brigham City, September 27, J. C. Wright explained the earlier fight:

Report reached this place last night of another Indian outrage upon a small party of emigrants from Illinois on their way to California, by Lander's Wagon Road Route.

Some two weeks ago, the company, mostly from Illinois, consisting of seven men, five women, about a half dozen children, four wagons and about 140 loose animals, besides their teams, passed the camp of the U. S. forces, stationed for the time being on the Portneuf river, in Washington Territory, near the old Fort Hall station. After traveling west about ninety miles from the army station, while in camp at night, near the City Rocks, they were fired upon by a party of Indians, supposed to be about sixty in number. The emigrant forces were so feeble that but little hopes of effectual resistance was entertained. However, returning the fire of the enemy, they kept them from making a charge upon the camp that night, and gave the women and children an opportunity to retreat down a

ravine, in the direction of the soldiers' encampment, which they did successfully.

An express was despatched immediately to the officer in command of the forces on the Portneuf, and a detachment of the troops, under command of Lieut. Sanders was sent to their relief immediately on the arrival of the messenger. On their march they met the women and children almost in a perishing condition, having traveled two days and a half without food, most of them without shoes, with no more clothing for day or night than they had on when they fled at the crack of the Indians' rifles, from their camp fires at the place of attack. After supplying their present demands as well as possible, the company proceeded, and on arriving at the place where the attack was made, they found that the stock had all been driven off and the wagons plundered of every article of value they contained. The men had fortunately escaped without any one being killed or dangerously wounded.

Report says that Lieut. Sanders' command discovered a party of Indians in ambush, and exchanged a few rounds with them, but to what effect was not known, further than no injury was done to the troops. The company of emigrants are now with the troops on Bear river, who are on their return to Camp Floyd.

I learned that two of the men were of the name of Brock, and that another's name was Thomas, from Illinois. It is also stated that a medium-sized white man, painted red, with a pair of fine dress boots on, was with the Indians at the attack. This statement was made me by a gentleman who received it from one of the party, and I presume, as far as it goes, may be relied upon as being substantially correct.

More details were available from John Hagerty who told his story to the Deseret News in time for publication, October 3, 1860:

After the communication of Hon. J. C. Wright, published in this number, was in type, Mr. John Hagerty, one of the emigrants who was in the company attacked and despoiled by the Indians, near City Rocks, to which occurrence the communication refers, called at our office and gave a full detail of the assault and robbery, from which it appears; that on arrival of the company at Col. Howe's encampment, on the Portneuf, near old Fort Hall, on or about the 1st of September, the Colonel detailed an escort of ten or twelve men, under Sergeant Barry to accompany them on their way a few days. After proceeding some sixty or seventy miles, seeing no signs of Indians, the escort returned

back on the morning of the 6th, leaving the company to pursue their journey unprotected. Without molestation they proceeded to within five miles of City Rocks, near the junction with the Salt Lake road, where they encamped on the evening of the 7th, by a small stream known as Rapid creek.

At about eleven o'clock at night an attack was made on them by a small party of Indians who, on finding the emigrants ready to give them a warm reception, drew off, after firing eight or ten guns, and came up again on the other side of their camp, where, by taking advantage of the light of the moon which had just risen, they could fire upon the company with greater accuracy, and, at the same time, be hid from the view of the emigrants and measurably secure from their fire.

After continuing the assault about one hour and a half, (during which time they fired some fifty or sixty shots and an indefinite number of arrows, many of which struck the wagons without further injury than perforating them and their contents with holes) they encamped driving off thirty head of cattle, mostly oxen that were used in the teams, which, being tired, had not strayed far from camp.

The emigrants kept up a good watch during the balance of the night, and the next morning picked up twenty-five arrows around their camp, some of which were sticking in their wagons, which had also been pierced with many balls. No Indians were seen, but a sharp look out was kept up during that day and following night, but at about the same time in the evening that the attack was made the night before, thirteen of the oxen that had been driven off returned, which convinced the party that the red skins had not gone far away, and that they were lurking about, seeking for a chance to attack them again under more favorable circumstances than at first.

On the forenoon of the 9th, the emigrants concluded to move their camp about two hundred yards to more favorable position, but before they had detached all their teams from the wagons, after moving them the Indians commenced another attack more fierce than the first, as they were in greater force, Mr. Hagerty being of the opinion that they were at least one hundred strong.

Seeing no chance of saving their lives only by flight, the whole party, with the exception of Hagerty, managed, by retreating into the bed of the creek among the willows, to elude the savages and to get away unobserved by passing over a mountain and taking the

road back towards Fort Hall, leaving Hagerty, supposing that he had been killed. He, however, after two or three arrows were shot through his clothes, and several balls had whistled near without striking him, also escaped into the willows and hid himself, but was watched so closely by the Indians that he could not get away safely, and remained in his hiding place nearly four days, without food, excepting a few berries which he found by crawling about on his hands and knees, to keep out of the sight of the savages, who were watching for him, and the rest of the party all the time, evidently supposing that they were yet hid in the bush, and that none of them had made good their escape.

Mr. Hagerty reports that the Indians were at the wagons immediately on their being abandoned by the emigrants, and without waiting to plunder them to any great extent, with much dexterity attached some of the oxen to them and drove off, taking one nearly a mile, the others a less distance, before rifling them of their contents. He is very confident that there were white men among the Indians in disguise. He positively saw one individual with short hair, who had on a pair of fine boots, and a pair of pants, but otherwise dressed and painted like an Indian, and when the attacking party were hitching the oxen to the wagons and driving them off, they spoke to the cattle in good English. He says that he was decidedly uneasy during the time he was compelled to remain in the brush, as the Indians were about him in every direction as thick as bees, and he did not know what ultimately might be his fate, neither what had become of those who had got away.

As soon as the Indians drew off on the night of the 7th, the emigrants despatched two men, John Brock and Thomas Graham, to inform Col. Howe of their situation and solicit assistance. The messengers proceeded with all possible speed and overtook the escort under Sergeant Barry, before they reached camp, but they were short of rations and could not go to the relief of the emigrants until they could receive a supply.

On hearing of the attack, Col. Howe sent out a company of twenty five men, under Lieut. Sanders, to the assistance of the party, who, proceeding without delay, arrived at the scene of disaster some time on the afternoon of the 12th, much to the joy of Hagerty, who was in a very perilous condition. The Indians on seeing the troops soon hid themselves and kept out of sight.

At March creek, on his way to the relief of the

party, Lieut. Sanders met the refugees who were in a suffering condition, being without food and not having sufficiency of clothing. Administering to their necessities as far as in his power. Under the circumstances, he left part of his command for their protection, and proceeded on with the remainder, but recovered none of the emigrant's property, excepting one yoke of oxen, the balance having been destroyed or taken away.

On the morning of the 13th, the troops returned but, after starting, a party of some five or six, wishing to take an excursion to see if they could not find some of the Indians and gain a little renown by fighting them, had leave to do so, and got into a bigger fight than they wanted with a few of the rascals who were lying in ambush, upon whom they came unexpectedly, and Hagerty reports that there were some splendid feats of horsemanship performed before they overtook or rejoined the balance of the command.

Lieut. Sanders took the entire party back to Col. Howe's camp, and from thence they came in with the troops returning to Camp Floyd and arrived here yesterday.

The names of the persons composing the emigrant company, as given by Mr. Hagerty, were William, John and---Brock, John Green and a German, name unknown, from DeWitt county, Ill.; Herbert Thomas, wife and three children, his wife's mother--Mrs. Chambers and Thomas Graham, from La Fayette county, Wis.;---Pierce, wife and two children, from Carroll county, Ill.; John Hagerty, from McGregor's Landing, Clayton county, Iowa, and John Christianson of California, with three wagons and about one hundred and fifty head of cattle and a few horses.

How many more small struggling companies of emigrants, passing over that route late in the season, will be used up before it becomes generally known that they cannot travel safely in that manner, is not known.

In this instance, it was fortunate indeed that all the persons escaped unhurt.

Some more details were added by the Salt Lake correspondent to the Sacramento Daily Union, October 20, 1860:

The emigrants to whose assistance the troops went report the loss of everything they had. The women had scarcely clothing enough to cover them when they returned to camp. Their flight through the bushes shattered considerably their crinoline and shortened uncomfortably their frail delaines and calicoes. Colonel Howe did the best he could and gave them

blankets in the absence of dresses.

Incidents near the City of Rocks in 1862, after a quiet season in 1861, may have been more numerous. Several clashes were reported prior to a more adequately documented battle, September 12. August was a busy month for the Indians. In addition to a series of skirmishes around Massacre Rock, August 9-10, four other early August engagements (if they really occurred) got into the newspapers. A Methodist party was alleged to have run into trouble about August 3, followed by some Salmon River packers, around August 6, the Yates party, August 8, and an Iowa train, August 9. The Sacramento Daily Union, October 4, assembled accounts of these fights from some Nevada papers. In Carson, The Silver Age, October 1, noticed that:

Louis Swarens and family, Richard Woods and family, Thomas Craig and family, and W. R. Bell, John Bell and Samuel Corey, camped in town on September 30th. They are from Linn and Hardin counties, Iowa, and have 4 wagons, and 10 horses and 2 mules, all in good condition, which have been driven through since the 12th of May. They came over the Lander Cut-off with a train of 29 wagons and about 45 men, through to City Rocks. At the mouth of the City Rock Canon, they were attacked about noon by from 75 to 100 Indians--partly mounted, and armed with good guns which shot accurately 350 yards. They corralled the teams, threw up ditches, and left the loose stock--some 43 head--outside. The Indians made two efforts to get these cattle, but were repulsed in the first attempt. The next time they were successful, and went about three-quarters of a mile away and had a grand dance over it.

They then surrounded the train again and kept up a brisk fire till dark, and then at intervals all night.

New morning the Indians held a council on the bluff, and while thus parleying, a part of the men in the train went out on horses, followed by some on foot, and drove the Indians over the ridge. The train then went on, having lost about 50 head of their stock and 2 persons wounded. The Indians followed through the canon and came near killing some of the men.

These gentlemen informed us that a party of 7 packers from Wallanette Valley, Oregon, were attacked in the same canon and one man named James Blue was killed. A Mr. Lee had his pony shot from under him, and he with balance of the party escaped by breaking through the Indian ranks, leaving everything behind them. They were four days without food but a little bacon. They had been to Salmon river and were on their way to the States; they came on our informants, and one of them, Charles Johnson, took stage for California and

will go to Los Angeles.

Mr. Waterhouse, one of the survivors from the Smith and Warren county train came to our informants' camp on the fourth day after they had been attacked. He reported that his train had all been killed but himself at or near the same canon. But it appears evident that part of them were saved by the Mormons after they had wandered off southward and came near the settlements on the Salt Lake and Humboldt road. There was 11 wagons in the Warren county or Smith train, and about 16 horses, which were taken, and the flour, beds, etc., were destroyed. Five persons were killed.

Additional details about the Iowa party affair appeared in the Silver Age, October 2:

the Indians took forty-six head of loose stock left out of their corral, and killed four of their working stock; among the rest a fine American Trotting mare. Little Sanford Drury was wounded in the thigh, and Richard Woods was wounded in the calf of the leg in this fight, which was all the harm that was done to the persons in the train.

In Virginia City, the Territorial Enterprise, October 1, mentioned that:

a party of emigrants numbering 40 persons was attacked new City Rocks by the same tribe of uncivilized pirates. Five young ladies were carried off, and, it is thought, women and children in all to the number of 15. All the men were killed except one, who made his escape and arrival at Humboldt about the 20th of September. This train was called the "Methodist Train," which was not all together inappropriate, since the whole party knelt down and began to pray as soon as the attack was commenced. Every train which has passed over that portion of the route in the vicinity of City Rocks since the 1st of August has had trouble with the Indians. When our informant left Humboldt several wagons had just arrived whose sides and covers transformed into magnified nutmeg-graters by Indian bullets. The Snakes corralled the train, when a fight ensued, which lasted 48 hours.

The whites cut their way out finally and escaped. We could not learn the number of killed and wounded in this battle.

The Enterprise of the same date also says:

L. F. Yates, who arrived in Virginia City a few days since from Pike's Peak, has given us the following particulars of a fight his train had on the 8th of last

August, about one and a half miles this side of the junction of the Lander's Cut off and Fort Bridger roads. Their train consisted of 15 wagons and 40 men, with a number of women and children. The train was attacked while passing along a ravine by a party of Indians being concealed in among a thick growth of poplar bushes. When the attack commenced, most of the front wagons were some 80 rods in advance. They formed in corral, and entrenched behind their wagons, refused the slightest aid to those who were struggling with the savages in the rear. The party thus left to fight their way through the ambushed Indians numbered but nine men, and there were but four guns with which to maintain the battle. Five of the nine were killed and one wounded. The names of the killed are as follows: Parmlee, James Steele, James A. Hart, Rufus C. Mitchell, from Central City, Colorado Territory, and McMahn, residence unknown. The name of the wounded man is Frank Lyman. He was shot through the lungs--recovered. The 31 men who were hidden snugly behind their wagons, with a single honorable exception, refused to render the slightest assistance to those who were fighting for their lives and the lives of their families so near them. Although they had 27 guns they refused to lend a single gun, when at one time four men went to ask assistance. The cowards all clung to their arms, and lay trembling behind their wagons. A man named Perry, or Berry, was the only one who had sufficient courage to attempt to render his struggling friends any assistance. He was shot in the face before reaching the rear wagons, and was carried back to the corral. The fight lasted nearly two hours, and some seven or eight Indians were killed, as at various times they charged out of the bushes on their ponies. Several Indian horses were killed, and at length the few left alive fought through to where their 30 heroic friends (?) were corralled, leaving the killed and two wagons in possession of the Indians. 30 bigger cowards and meaner men than these above mentioned never crossed the plains. We are certain that every man of them left the States for fear of being drafted into the army.

A month later, another Almo massacre led to additional excitement. This battle, September 12, 1862, was reported in the Deseret News, September 24:

On Saturday last a rumor was in circulation that another company of emigrants has been attacked in the vicinity of City Rocks, near the junction of Sublett's cut-off with the Salt Lake road, and that about one-half their number had been killed. The report was

confirmed in the evening by two of the party, Mr. Chas. McBride, formerly of Kentucky, and Mr. John Andrews, who came in passengers that afternoon from Brigham City, by the northern stage coach. These gentlemen state that their company consisted of fifteen men, some of them from California and some for Carson city, Gold Hill, and other places in Washoe, who met at Lasson's Meadow, which place they left on the 3d instant, some of them bound for Denver and the balance of the company for Missouri and other States where they had formerly resided. The company were all mounted, well armed, and had four pack in addition to their riding animals.

They traveled up the north side of the Humboldt, and arrived at the junction of the roads, near City Rocks, on the evening of the 11th without interruption, in the vicinity of which place they encamped that night. The next morning, having taken the Salt Lake road, they traveled but a mile or two before they heard the lowing of cattle, which led them to suppose that a company of emigrants were encamped near by, and, on descrying a smoke, produced by camp fires, a short distance from the road, some of the Indians, who appeared very friendly, among whom was their chief or leader, and seeing a very large herd of cattle, some four or five hundred head, near by, which the chief said belonged to him, and his band, they made known their wants. The chief told them that if they would go into his camp he would sell them all the beef they wanted. They did not mistrust that there was anything wrong till they had rode on a short distance further, when the chief asked one of the men if he was captain, and being told he was not, the chief requested them to go back to the road and tell their captain to come up to his camp with all his men, and they should have all the beef they wished. They accordingly returned to the company, but, instead of going into the Indian camp, mistrusting treachery, they thought it prudent to increase the distance between them and the wily red men, and proceeded on their way, but had not gone far before they were fired on from the road side, upon which they started at full speed, followed by from thirty-five to forty Indians, mounted on good horses and well armed, and by a much larger number on foot. A running fight was kept up some twenty miles, during which all their horses were wounded, but only one man was hurt, and he but slightly.

On reaching De Cassure creek, a branch of Raft river, having been compelled to abandon four of their horses, and two others giving out, which dismounted two of the party, they took up into the kanyon, and

endeavored to gain a position among the rocks, where they could defend themselves, as to proceed would be certain death to all who would be unhorsed, while the savages continued their pursuit, which they would in all probability do until the last man should be killed; but the Indians anticipated their movement, and before they reached the rocks three of their number were killed. From that time, which was about the middle of the day, they fought the Indians, who swarmed around them thickly till after dark during which time another man was killed, and four wounded, two mortally.

On obtaining possession of the animals at about 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening, most of the Indians drew off, whooping and singing hideously. Soon after the Indians retired, the seven men who were unhurt, with the two who had each an arm broken, left their position just as the moon was rising, taking with them the two who were mortally wounded, and carrying them down to the bank of the creek, where they placed them side by side, life in each being nearly extinct, and then left them and moved slowly and cautiously in the direction of the settlements in Box Elder. They were five days without food, and fortunately met a large company of emigrants some six miles beyond Bear river, bound for Humboldt, from whom they obtained relief. Samuel Riley, one of the wounded men, and two others named Jackson and Grant, returned with that company, who had some thirty wagons and about eighty armed men. The other six, C. McBride, J. Andrews, James White, Eil Wilkinson,-----Lawson, and Johnson Foster, the latter wounded in the arm, came on to Brigham City, where they arrived on Thursday, and from thence to this city, where they will remain a few days, and then proceed on their way to the east.

The Indians, in addition to their horses, blankets, etc., got a considerable quantity of ammunition and most of the arms with which the company were well supplied. How many of the Indians were killed and wounded was not known, but many of them were seen to fall.

The names of the killed, as given by Mr. McBride, were John Comer, whose relatives reside near Fulton, Callaway county, Mo; John Sharp, from Callaway county; Mr. Goodman, from near St. Louis; Joseph Snow, of Napa Valley, Cal.; William Davis, of Stockton, Cal., and Benjamin White, from Missouri or Arkansas.

This is reported to have been the fifth or sixth company of emigrants, some of them large and having a great amount of stock, which has been attacked and used up in that vicinity within the last six or eight weeks

by the same band, as supposed.

Additional information about this affair appeared in the Deseret News, November 26:

In the thirteenth number of the current volume we gave an account of an attack on a company of emigrants by a band of Indians near City Rocks, on the 11th of September, in which it was stated that, of the fifteen men composing the party, six were killed and two wounded. The statements made in relation to the tragic affair were derived from Mr. McBride and others of the party, who fortunately, effected their escape.

The incidents of the attack and the circumstances attending the escape of the survivors, as narrated by them, have by recent reports, been corroborated, and they appear to have been substantially true and correct in every particular, with the exception of the item in relation to the number killed, said to have been six, which they no doubt supposed was the case, but it has been ascertained that there were only two of the party killed during the fight, and six wounded, two of whom were able to come away with those who left the battle-ground that night--two were left, as stated, supposed to be mortally wounded, and the other two, severely wounded, had concealed themselves in the bush or among the rocks where they remained unapprised of the departure of their comrades in the dark, who had good reasons for believing that they were dead. One of the four thus wounded and left was subsequently found and killed by the Indians. The other three are reported to be yet alive, having been rescued after many days of severe suffering, by the company of emigrants under Capt. Price, who were met by McBride and those with him, at, or near, the Malade.

The statement of Capt. Price who, with his company, arrived at Virginia City, Nevada Territory, a few weeks since, sets forth that his train met McBride and the others who left the battle-field with him, at the crossing of the Malade, seven days after the fight.

Three of the party, Messrs, Jackson, Reilley and Grant, joined his train and went back, and the others came on towards Salt Lake. During the second fight after two of the wounded men, supposed to have been killed, Messrs. Goodman and Sharp came into camp, almost overcome with starvation and exhaustion. These men were badly wounded, one of them, Goodman, having been shot through one of his lungs; they had tasted no food for nine days and nights excepting rosebuds; had lain hidden in the willows on the bank of the stream every day and traveled on foot every night, half clad,

although the weather was so cold that ice froze to the thickness of half an inch and the ground was covered with a white frost. In this way they had managed to drag themselves about twenty miles from the scene of conflict. Goodman and Sharp informed Price's party that two wounded men, White and Comer, or Komer, were still in the vicinity of the battleground, and eleven horsemen were immediately despatched to bring them into camp. They reached the spot before daylight, where they found Comer stowed away in the willows. He had remained there ten days, subsisting or rather starving gradually, on rosebuds, unable to get away, and tortured by the pains of nine bullet wounds, added to which was the suffering he experienced from the bitter coldness of the weather. White remained exposed where he fell, during five days and nights, when a party of the Indians returned and killed and scalped him. Comer was placed on a sheet and carried about five miles by the horsemen. Here they stopped until the train came up. After the three dead men had been interred, the train moved on. Comer went on with the company to Virginia City, the other two, Goodman and Sharp, stopped at Unionville, Humboldt county. In referring to their sufferings and hardships, the Enterprise says:

"the three men are rapidly recovering from their wounds and the effects of the terrible hardships they have experienced; and if a restoration to health leaves their tenacity of life unimpaired, insurance companies need not be afraid to take risks on them."

The men composing the company thus attacked by the savages, and so effectually used up--those who escaped unhurt having lost everything they had with them excepting what clothes they had on, a part of their arms and some little change in their pockets, and those wounded who so marvelously escaped death having suffered more than most men could have endured and lived, are represented to have been seceders, or sympathizers with the Confederate cause, and their misfortunes and sufferings have not been much lamented by their acquaintances in California and Nevada, professing to be of the Union faith.

Military retaliation against the Indians followed the fights at Almo. Forces sent out by Colonel Patrick Edward Connor (who was leading California's Civil War Volunteers to Salt Lake) had little or no success finding the Indians who had participated in the Almo incidents. But they managed to attack a lot of other Indians along that stretch of the California trail. When Connor got to Ruby Valley (near later Elko, Nevada), he heard of the trouble near City of Rocks, and received all kinds of wild

reports of a massacre at Gravelly Ford on the California trail west of Ruby Valley. One particularly wild embellishment attributed much of the trouble to an imaginary gang of California Confederates headed east to help the South fight the Civil War. A preliminary search of the country around Gravelly Ford showed that some of the rumors were wild. A military correspondent of the San Francisco Evening Bulletin, October 4, noted that signs of Indian hostility were found even though the Gravelly Ford massacre was a fake:

The telegraph and Carson Valley papers have of late deposited in your sanctum numerous items concerning butcheries of emigrants by the Indians at the City of Rocks and Gravelly Ford, distant here, from some 75 miles. No little sensational zest has been added thereto by the supposition--set about by a Carson editor and sought to be corroborated by an ingenious set of minor suppositions--that a large number of secessionists have started across the Plains for Jefferson D's Kingdom, and being poorly furnished with funds, animals and provisions, had either instigated the Indians to capture emigrant trains, or else had disguised themselves as Indians and chosen to supply their smaller necessities in the same way that the said Jefferson D. supplies his larger necessities, viz., by stealing and murder.

On the receipt of the telegraphic information that a difficulty had occurred at the Ford, and that a party of secessionists was supposed to be in the mountains thereabouts, Col. Connor sent out Mr. Butterfield, the Indian interpreter, and Sergt. Newton of Company G. with orders to scout the country around thoroughly. They left on the 17th of September, and camped near Gravelly Ford on the night of the 20th. Except the marks of the camp fires, no traces of an emigrant party were visible, and no sign whatever of the massacre presented themselves. . . .

The scouts could neither see or learn anything from the Indians overtaken, of a party of white men; and while it is possible that a few renegades accompany the Indians, yet you may set down as a fat hoax the story of a "large and well armed party of secessionists beyond Unionville." One thing is certain, that our scouts cannot, after the most diligent search, discover even one secesh; and a better thing is yet more certain, namely, that while two of California's regiments are commanded by colonels who are strongly suspected of being sympathizers with this infernal rebellion, there is not a single drop of suspected blood in Col. Connor's veins; neither will he spare any vigilance or labor to apprehend any party of miserable

traitors that comes within reach. I only wish we had a chance on the Potomac, instead of lying in this typhoid fever basin.

Everywhere our scouts found convincing signs of hostility upon the part of the Indians; and before this reaches you a large force of cavalry will have been despatched to Gravelly Ford and the City of Rocks with orders to shoot every male Indian in the region of the late murders. Said cavalry would have been sent out some time ago, had the contractor furnished us with supplies sufficient to render such a measure possible. No prisoners will be taken.

A report of Connor's plans of September 29 appeared in San Francisco's Evening Bulletin, October 8, 1862:

Col. Connor has made arrangements for putting several grains of very hot corn in the ears of the Indians who committed the late butcheries. For two or three days he has been holding patent pow-wows with red-painted, buffalo-robed, longhaired chiefs. I can never look at their heads without being reminded of the hymn which speaks of a narrow road "with here and there a traveler." But that is not to the point; the point is that the Shoshones are divided into numberless bands or cliques. These chiefs profess to know exactly what band did or what bands did not commit the murders. The Colonel, in addition to sending out by different routes two cavalry companies with orders to scour the Gravelly Ford region thoroughly, offers the chiefs aforesaid \$50 for each live corpus produced in the camp, of the Indians who participated in the late slaughters. In the event of the chiefs claiming the reward--and they started off exceedingly filled with the idea that they would be millionaires in a week at the farthest--the Colonel proposes to hang said live corpses to a tree and leave them as a warning to other Indians who have a penchant for murdering white men and ravishing emigrant girls. Making Indian fight Indian is very wise, and upon the plains rather novel strategy, while hanging offenders is the only way to stop offenses. Hanging horse-thieves in '49 was severe, rather; but crimes were of less frequent occurrence than in '62. Hanging Indians may be severe on the Indians, but it will be the means of preserving alive thousands of emigrant men, women and children.

If there should happen to be secesh thereabouts, wouldn't it be fun! and if some or all of them should happen to be "destroyed," wouldn't the traitors in your State howl?--especially those born in the North, who are the meanest, most putrid, and smallest-souled

trucklers the Devil ever loved.

Connor's orders to Major Edward McGarry, September 29, provided for a search for Confederate guerrillas (in case there were any) as well as for Indians:

You will proceed hence to-morrow morning with Company H, of your regiment, to the confluence of the South Fork with the main Humboldt River, and there await until joined by Captain Smith's company (K), of your regiment. On the route thence you will examine every valley or place where you have reason to believe guerrillas or hostile Indians are congregated whom you will capture; but if they resist you will destroy them.

In no instance will you molest women or children. If on the route to Humboldt friendly Indians deliver to you Indians who were concerned in the late murder of emigrants, you will (being satisfied of their guilt) immediately hang them, and leave their bodies thus exposed as an example of what evil-doers may expect while I command in this district. When you are joined by Captain Smith's company you will proceed by the northern overland route via City of Rocks to a point about ten miles north of Salt Lake City, where you will leave your command and report to me in person if I am in the vicinity of the city. If not, await further orders at the point designated. On the route from South Fork of Humboldt to Bear River you will spare no pains to discover the whereabouts of a band of traitors or guerrillas reported to be encamped in the vicinity of Humboldt, and who are believed to be the instigators, if not the participants, in the late Indian murders. If you should discover such a band you will take them prisoners and convey them to headquarters near Salt Lake, but if they should resist you will destroy them without mercy. You will also destroy every male Indian whom you may encounter in the vicinity of the late massacres. This course may seem harsh and severe, but I desire that the order may be rigidly enforced, as I am satisfied that in the end it will prove the most merciful.

After he rejoined Connor at Camp Douglas near Salt Lake, Edward McGarry reported on his trip over the California trail by way of City of Rocks looking for Indians:

Agreeably to your orders, dated Fort Ruby, Nev. Ter., September 29, to proceed thence on the next day (the 30th) with Company H, Second Cavalry California Volunteers, on the northern Overland Route, via the "City of Rocks," in quest of guerrillas or hostile Indians supposed to have congregated there, I have the

honor to report that, having left Fort Ruby on the day specified, I overtook, on the second day's march, Capt. S. P. Smith, of the Second Cavalry, who preceded me with his company the day before, and who was encamped in Pine Valley. Here I remained awaiting the return of the Indians who accompanied Captain Smith, and who had been sent out by him to bring in hostile Indians. Having been informed that fires were seen near our camp, I dispatched Captain Smith with a portion of his company, at night, to learn of them. He returned next morning and reported, "No trace of Indians." On the morning of the 4th we took up the line of march, on the route designated, and arrived at Gravelly Ford on the 5th without having discovered any Indians. Here on the 7th I sent Captain Smith and Lieut. Dravin Chase with a party of men down the river, and Lieut. George D. Conrad up the south side of the Humboldt, with instructions to scour the country for hostile Indians or guerillas, and to report to me, at a place designated, on the north side of the Humboldt, where I encamped on the 9th with the balance of the command. This evening (the 9th) some of the command enticed into the camp three Indians; two of them were armed with rifles and the other with bow and arrows. I immediately ordered their arms taken from them, and placed them under a guard, intending to retain them until the arrival of my interpreter, who was with the detachment under Lieutenant Conrad. A short time after their arrest the Indians made an attempt to obtain their arms, and having succeeded, they resisted the guard and broke and ran a short distance; they were fired upon by the guard and crippled. Fearing that they would escape, and not wishing to hazard the lives of my men in recapturing them alive, I ordered the guard to fire and they were killed on the spot. Here on the 10th Captain Smith joined the command, and reported that he had received no information nor had he seen any signs of guerrillas or hostile Indians.

On the 11th I proceeded on the march, having sent out the officers of the command with instructions that if Indians were found to bring them into camp. Captain Smith, having been sent in advance, had not proceeded more than ten or twelve miles when he came upon a party of about fourteen or fifteen Indians, who were armed with rifles and bows and arrows. He surrounded them and took from them their arms. Immediately after, the Indians attempted to escape by jumping in the river. They were fired upon and nine of them killed. On the same day Lieutenant Conrad and party brought into camp three Indians and an Indian child. Captain Smith

returned in the evening with two squaws. Next day (the 12th) Captain McLean returned, bringing in one Indian and a squaw. Same day Lieutenant Clark returned with one Indian; another Indian was captured during the evening. The next day (the 13th) I told two of the Indians, through the interpreter, that if they would go and bring in Indians who were engaged in the massacre of emigrants I would release them, but that if they did not return that night I would kill all the Indians I held as prisoners in camp. The next morning (the 14th), hearing nothing from the Indians I had sent out the day previous, I put to death four of those remaining, and released the squaws and child, telling them that we were sent there to punish Indians who were engaged in the massacre of emigrants, and instructed them to tell all the Indians that if they did not desist from killing emigrants that I would return there next summer and destroy them. On the next day (the 15th) I sent Lieutenants Chase and Conrad with a detachment on the south side of the Humboldt with instructions as before. They came upon a party of Indians encamped in the mountains, armed with rifles and bows and arrows. They were surrounded and their arms taken from them. The Indians, attempting to escape, were fired upon, when eight of their number were killed. The balance of the route no traces of Indians were seen. On the 28th I arrived at the place designated by you; the next day, at about 3 o'clock p.m., arrived at this camp. The route is a good one, with an abundance of grass and water. In conclusion, it affords me great pleasure to report the efficiency of the officers and the good conduct of the men of the command, without the loss of any.

Inaccurate accounts of McGarry's expedition were published, including a dispatch, October 29, to the Sacramento Daily Union, October 30, 1862, which got the right number of Indians shot, but had some details confused:

Major McGarry, commanding companies H and K, Second Cavalry, California Volunteers, who was sent from Ruby Valley on to the Humboldt by Colonel Connor, to chastise the Indians who murdered the immigrants this Fall, arrived at fort Douglas, near this city, last night. Between Gravelly Ford and City of Rocks the Major captured twenty-six Indians. He held twenty-four of them as hostages, sending two out to bring in the Indians who committed the murders--informing the two that unless they returned within a certain number of days he would shoot the remaining twenty-four. As the two did not return in the time specified, the

twenty-four were taken out and shot. The order from Colonel Connor was to hang all Indians that it should be found necessary to execute, but as the Major could not find trees large enough, he was compelled to carry out the order as above stated. He reports that nearly all of the Humboldt Indians have gone to the buffalo range on a big hunt. His command appears to be in good health and spirits.

Exaggerated tales about the clashes between Indians and emigrants in the Massacre Rocks and City of Rocks incidents also were published, and a correspondent from The Dalles, Oregon, October 16, 1862 (quoted in the Evening Bulletin, October 30, 1862) discounted many--but not all--of the more lurid reports which had gotten into circulation that fall:

There does not seem to be a doubt among the best informed circles here, that no fear need be entertained of any trouble with the Indians on the frontier the coming winter. The bands of Snakes, high upon that river, will doubtless be troublesome until punished. The slight success that they have had the present season will encourage them to further acts of atrocity, and the only way to put a stop to their depredations is to chastise them severely. Three-fourths, if not nine-tenths, of the stories told about Indian fights and massacres on the Snake river, are untrue. A few persons have been killed by the Indians--probably the result of their own imprudence. In passing through the Indian country, companies should have a military organization--keep the Indians off--and never allow themselves to be surprised. This done, and there would be no fear from Indians. Why false stories of murders by Indians are put in circulation, we cannot understand. A California paper now before me says [following the account of an Oregon paper] that of an expedition of 60 men to Burnt river, 57 were killed by the Indians--a story made out of whole cloth, woof and chain. Other stories of the same character are equally false. There has been, however, a small fight on Boise river. That river is the home of Indians. A prospecting company which had gone there found the Indians hostile. They sent for reinforcements and sustained their position.