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Battle Rock: Anatomy of a Massacre

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by

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Abstract

On June 9, 1851, nine men under the direction of a steamboat captain and land speculator named William Tichenor landed on the southern coast of the Oregon Territory at present-day Port Orford with the intention of establishing a permanent settlement. Tichenor's plan was to establish a commercial port that would supply gold mining endeavors in the interior. The landing party's instructions were to survey the townsite while Tichenor traveled to San Francisco to gather more men and supplies. Before departing, he promised the group he would return in exactly two weeks. He also assured them that the local Quatomah Indians, who had lived in the area for generations, were friendly and peaceful.

When Tichenor returned to the site, two days later than he had promised, he discovered that a violent confrontation had taken place atop a large, rocky promontory on the beach. The landing party was nowhere to be found and a subsequent investigation led to the discovery of two discarded journals which provided insight into what had transpired. As a result, it was assumed that all the men in the landing party had either been killed or taken captive by the Quatomah, and a letter was quickly sent to the editor of a Portland newspaper giving a suspiciously contrived account of the grim discovery. It had been written by a San Francisco attorney named D.S. Roberts, who not only claimed that Tichenor had arrived back at Port Orford on time, but that the landing party had recklessly fled their fortified camp and were therefore ultimately at fault for whatever had befallen them.

One week after Tichenor had returned to the site, the missing landing party turned up alive and well at a settlement approximately 65 miles to the north. After reading

Roberts' account of their supposed demise in the newspaper, the appointed leader of the group, J.M. Kirkpatrick, became upset by the claim that he and the others may have acted foolishly by abandoning their camp prior to Tichenor's return. Leaving the rest of the group behind, Kirkpatrick quickly traveled to Portland where he presented a letter to the editor of a local newspaper refuting Tichenor's supposed punctuality and defending the actions of him and his men.

This thesis attempts to explain what really happened at "Battle Rock," and why. Through an examination of these two letters, a picture emerges of a public relations struggle that ultimately obscured what really happened between the landing party and the Quatomah. As head of the enterprise, Tichenor attempted to get in front of the blowback that a massacre of white men in his employ might generate by utilizing Roberts as an "impartial" witness whose testimony, via the letter, exculpated him of any wrongdoing. This inadvertently placed Kirkpatrick—who was assumed dead—on the defensive, compelling him to respond with a courageous narrative justifying the actions of him and his men. Although not wanting to be alienated from the potential financial rewards of the Port Orford enterprise, Kirkpatrick fit his account within the parameters established by Roberts' letter. In this way, the aftermath helped create the event. The price for this was historical truth, particularly as it related to the Quatomah. They were not only the victims of a massacre, but were then cast as villains in a highly-consequential story outside of their control.

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INTRODUCTION

"Battle Rock" was an 1851 massacre of Quatomah Indians by nine Euro-American men attempting to establish the town of Port Orford, Oregon. I first came across the story in a small volume by J.L. Smith entitled A Chronological History of the Oregon War: 1850 to 1878, and was struck by the event's romanticized, larger-than-life narrative. The Euro-American men had been deposited onto the beach by a San Francisco steamship captain and land speculator named William Tichenor, who wanted to establish a coastal supply town that would provide miners and goods to recently discovered gold fields in the interior. Inhabiting the area where Tichenor intended to build his settlement were the Quatomah, a small band of Athapaskan-speaking people who were part of a larger, regional network that historians and anthropologists often classify today as Tututni. At the time of the landing, however, the Quatomah had been branded by Euro-Americans as "Coast Rogues," due to their proximity to, and perceived relations with, the supposedly troublesome and dangerous Indigenous groups living along the lower Rogue River, roughly thirty miles to the south.

Once Tichenor had transported the men to shore, he assured them the Quatomah were friendly, and promised he would return in exactly fourteen days with additional men and supplies. Before he took his leave, however, the appointed leader of the landing party, a man named J.M. Kirkpatrick, insisted that Tichenor give them the signal cannon from his ship as protection against what he believed were the "mischievous" looking

Indians now gathering on the beach.[1] Tichenor reluctantly agreed, and the men carried the cannon up to the top of a large, basalt promontory where they then set up a fortified encampment. The following morning, according to the traditional narrative, a Quatomah war party laid siege to the rock, launching arrows and storming up a narrow passageway to its summit. The men in the landing party, despite being severely outnumbered, valiantly held off the angry throng by shooting the cannon into their midst, and then defeating the remaining warriors in brutal, hand-to-hand combat.

When Tichenor finally returned—two days later than he had promised—the landing party was nowhere to be found. Seeing evidence of a battle on top of the rocky promontory, he and the others with him searched the area and discovered two discarded journals, both of which gave insight into what had supposedly transpired. As a result of these journals, it was assumed the men had either been taken captive or killed by the Quatomah, and not long after a letter was sent to the editor of a Portland newspaper giving a suspiciously contrived account of the grim discovery. It had been written by a San Francisco attorney named D.S. Roberts, who not only claimed that Tichenor had arrived back at Port Orford on time, but that the landing party had recklessly fled their fortified camp and were therefore ultimately at fault for whatever had befallen them. The gripping story quickly went to press and was published under the headline, "Probable Massacre."[2]

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[1] J. M. Kirkpatrick, *Heroes of Battle Rock, or the Miners' Reward*, Orvil Dodge, ed., (Myrtle Point: 1904), 2.
[2] *The Weekly Times*, July 3, 1851, page 2.

At that same time, 150 miles to the southwest, the nine missing men stumbled out of the wilderness and into a settlement on the Umpqua River, exhausted but relatively unharmed. The following day, they read Roberts' account of their supposed demise in the newspaper and how they may have acted "foolishly and rashly" by abandoning their camp prior to Tichenor returning at the appointed time.[3] The leader of the group, Kirkpatrick, was particularly upset by this false claim, and quickly made his way to Portland where he presented a letter to the *Oregon Statesman* with his version of events.[4] His heroic story, contradicting Tichenor's supposed punctuality, provided a first-person account of what happened on top of the rock. Roberts' letter, despite its refuted details, was still highly consequential, and it played a fundamental role in how Kirkpatrick constructed his narrative.

Through an examination of these two letters, a picture emerges of a public relations struggle that ultimately obscured what really happened between the landing party and the Quatomah. As head of the enterprise, Tichenor attempted to get in front of the blowback that a massacre of white men in his employ might generate by utilizing Roberts as an "impartial" witness whose testimony, via the letter, exculpated him of any wrongdoing. This inadvertently placed Kirkpatrick—who was assumed dead—on the defensive, compelling him to respond with a courageous narrative justifying the actions of him and his men. Although not wanting to be alienated from the potential financial rewards of the Port Orford enterprise, Kirkpatrick fit his account within the parameters established by Roberts' letter. In this way, the aftermath helped create the event. The

[3] Ibid.
[4] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.

price for this was historical truth, particularly as it related to the Quatomah. They were not only the victims a very real massacre, but were then cast as villains in a highly-consequential story outside of their control.

In the years immediately following the massacre the two accounts presented by Roberts and Kirkpatrick coalesced and settled unchallenged into the firm foundation of accepted truth. In fact, the story seems to have soared to new, even more valorous heights as the centerpiece of a burgeoning, Euro-American oral tradition in southwestern Oregon. "Battle Rock," as it was now being called, was portrayed as a quintessential foundational tale—the heroic moment when white "civilization" established a bold and determined foothold in the region. This is evident in one of the earliest written accounts following the two original letters. In October of 1856, only four years after the massacre, Harper's Monthly Magazine published a travelogue entitled "Wild Life in Oregon," in which William V. Wells relates the story of Battle Rock as told to him by Port Orford locals.[5] In this version, the nine men in the landing party, who Wells charmingly refers to as "our little garrison," heroically faced off against "nearly a thousand braves."[6] After a harrowing, Thermopylae-like battle, the defeated Indians, despite their overwhelming numbers, "took to their heels and fled affrighted into the forest."[7] The tale of brave adventurers repelling a savage horde had taken on a symbolic importance to settlers in the

[5] William V. Wells, "Wild Life in Oregon," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol.13, (June, 1856), 590; Wells claims his informant was a member of the landing party. This seems unlikely, however, as the anonymous individual erroneously states that 18 men were deposited onto the beach.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid.

region. The rock itself was transformed into a citadel of Anglo-American supremacy, with the landing party hailed as its "defenders."[8]

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, state and regional histories of Oregon began to appear, one of which was the *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties*, published in 1898.[9] Written and compiled by a Myrtle Point newspaper editor named Orvil Dodge, the lengthy text presented various narratives from current and former residents detailing the region's history. For the story of Battle Rock, Dodge tracked down J.M. Kirkpatrick, now in his late-sixties and living in a small mining town in southern Arizona.[10] The statement Kirkpatrick provided in response to Dodge's inquiry was the first since his letter to the *Oregon Statesman* almost four decades prior, and provides a much more detailed account of the massacre as well as its aftermath. Entitled "The Hero of Battle Rock," this second narrative from Kirkpatrick is written in a sensational, almost jocular style, emphasizing the derring-do of himself and the others in the landing party. In many ways, it reads like a standard "blood and thunder" story so popular in dime novels of the day.

In fact, a few years later, Dodge published Kirkpatrick's narrative again, this time in dime novel format as a standalone, 21-page promotional booklet for a mining venture he was involved in.[11] Now with the title, *The Heroes of Battle Rock, or the Miner's Reward*, the "short story of thrilling interest" presents Kirkpatrick's *Pioneer History*

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[8] Stephen Dow Beckham, *Requiem for a People: The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersmen*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1971), 54.
[9] Orvil Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties*, (Salem: Capital Printing Co., 1898).
[10] Bob Ring, Al Ring, Tallia Pfrimmer Cahoon, *Ruby, Arizona: Mining, Mayhem, and Murder*, (Tuscon: U.S. Press & Graphics, 2005), 39-40.
[11] Bert Webber, Margie Webber, and J. M. Kirkpatrick, *Battle Rock: The Hero's Story: A True Account, Oregon Coast Indian Attack: An Oregon Documentary*, (Medford, Oregon: Webb Research Group, 1992), 7.

account in its entirety. At the end, however, Dodge subtly connects the narrative to his mining operation, implying that any potential investors will be continuing the "adventure" they had read about in the previous pages. It seems that half a century later, the aggressive commercialism that led to the massacre of the Quatomah on Battle Rock was now involved in shaping its legacy.

This second narrative given by Kirkpatrick to the exploitative Dodge became the "official" account of the massacre on Battle Rock, and has since been utilized as *the* primary source in everything from 1960s pulp magazines to present-day academic journals.[12] It has also appeared in the two monographs which focus on the so-called Rogue River War—Stephen Dow Beckham's *Requiem for a People,* and *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath,* by E.A. Schwartz.[13] In these two works, Battle Rock is given relatively brief treatment as an adventurous prelude to a larger conflict. This is also the case in other, more recent works such as Nathan Douthit's *Uncertain Encounters* and *The People Are Dancing Again,* by Charles Wilkinson.[14] The latter text, which is presented as a "History of the Siletz Tribe," of which the Quatomah are a part, devotes only a few hundred words to the event.[15] This is not meant to criticize Wilkinson's very

[12] Joe Beckham, "The Cannon of Battle Rock," *True Frontier*, Vol. 1, No. 9, (May, 1969), 20-21, 54-55; David G. Lewis, and Thomas J. Connelly, "White American Violence on Tribal Peoples on the Oregon Coast," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, No. 4, White Supremacy & Resistance, (Winter 2019), pp. 368-381.
[13] Beckham, *Requiem for a People*, 53-59; E. A. Schwartz, *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath, 1850–1980*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 33-39.
[14] Nathan Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters: Indians and Whites at Peace and War in Southern Oregon, 1820s to 1860s*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2002), 116-117; Wilkinson, Charles, *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010), 75-77.
[15] Wilkinson, The People Are Dancing Again, 75-77.

fine work, but to emphasize that the massacre has not been given the attention it perhaps deserves. This thesis seeks to change that.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "anatomy" as the "dissection or dividing of anything material or immaterial, for the purpose of examining its parts."[16] With this definition acting as a guiding doctrine, this thesis dissects and examines the earliest information surrounding the massacre of approximately two dozen Quatomah Indians on the morning of June 10, 1851, in an effort to arrive, as close as possible, at historical truth. An eruption of violence, like any other act, does not occur independently inside of a vacuum. It is part of a chain reaction. The momentary product of diverse, preceding factors—itself becoming a factor in a subsequent act. Kirkpatrick's assessment that the Quatomah seemed "mischevious" was but one of many things which led to the massacre, and it too was constructed upon a foundation of intertwined, sociocultural elements. One of these was a distinct bias towards indigenous groups in southwestern Oregon that had developed steadily over the preceding quarter century. As a result, numerous and diverse peoples, representing three different language families, were swept up into a crude conglomeration called the "Rogues." The Quatomah were one of these people, and in the first chapter I attempt to paint a picture of who they were by situating them within this broader, regional context, while also looking at their interactions with Euro-Americans in the decades prior to the arrival of the landing party.

At the beginning of the second chapter, I shift the focus away from southwestern Oregon to California in 1849-50, and the massive influx of people seeking to strike it

[16] "Anatomy," *The Oxford English Dictionary*, OED Online, Accessed February 21, 2021.

rich. William Tichenor was part of this emigration, and by following his activities in Gold Rush San Francisco we get a sense of the "speculative craze" gripping the city at that time. As the easily accessible placer gold in and around the Sacramento Valley began to disappear, individuals with an eye on commerce turned their attention to the north, and reports trickling in that gold was being discovered on rivers all the way up into the Oregon Territory. A loose community of land speculators, seeing this northerly trend, began mounting expeditions to the still relatively unknown coastline above Cape Mendocino in search of harbors and rivers where supply towns could be established. If the location was right, and there really was gold in the interior, in a matter of months a small settlement might explode into the next great city of the west.

Port Orford was a product of this speculation, and although Tichenor would later portray the founding of his settlement in the romantic light of Manifest Destiny, as an attempt to establish a simple homestead for him and his family, in truth it was a collective business venture involving several different partners from both San Francisco and Portland. In this way, the Quatomah were not what they have traditionally been made out to be—a stereotypical horde of aggressive savages fighting against the establishment of "civilization." Instead, by pulling back the heavy shroud of settler mythos, the Quatomah are revealed as the human casualties of a callous commercial enterprise. One not born out of a "natural" westward expansion along the Oregon Trail, but an encroachment from the south, in San Francisco, and in the waters just beyond Frederick Jackson Turner's Pacific "barrier."[17]

[17] Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *The Frontier in American History*, (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1920), 7.

In the second half of the chapter, I turn to an analysis of the massacre itself, focusing primarily on the two earliest sources—the letter from D.S. Roberts describing the discovery of the scene, and Kirkpatrick's letter in response. As these were composed days, not decades, after the event, both truth and fabrication are floating closer to the surface. This is not to say that valuable information cannot be gleaned from later accounts. In fact, some of the most revealing details come from these sources. However, I have tried to approach this thesis almost as if it were a criminal investigation, and in that sense the most reliable witness statements are those taken as close as possible to the event in question.

In the epilogue, I present what I believed likely happened on top of the rock leading up to the massacre. While it is impossible to know exactly what occurred, this alternative theory is at least more plausible than the traditional, attacking horde narrative. I also look at what transpired in the immediate aftermath when one of Tichenor's partners, William Green T'Vault, led an expedition into the interior—with disastrous results. Finally, I examine the legacy of Battle Rock and its decades-long association with the Port Orford Fourth of July Jubilee. How and why history is constructed, particularly in the sense of propaganda, is fascinating, and I see the *story* of Battle Rock as a foundational tale fit for the next great city in the west. In this sense, it could be called boomtown history—a narrative artifact of unmet potential. With that said, the massacre was a very real event in which two dozen human beings were slaughtered. That is the story of Battle Rock, and to this day the Port Orford community and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz are still debating its legacy.

CHAPTER ONE

In the early morning hours of June 9, 1851, the SS Sea Gull emerged from the darkness off Cape Blanco on the far southern coast of the Oregon Territory. Five days out of Portland, the small, 200-ton sidewheeler slowly pushed its way through the choppy waters around a rocky headland, and into the relative calm of a semi-sheltered, south-facing harbor. Dropping anchor a mile offshore, the captain of the vessel, a thirty-seven-year-old New Jersey native named William Tichenor, stepped out onto the ship's weather-beaten deck and peered through his spyglass at the heavily wooded coastline. Enormous stands of fir, alder, hemlock, and cedar, descended from a mountainous, fog-shrouded hinterland to the very edge of a sweeping coastal plain. A two-mile stretch of rock-strewn beach ran along the rugged, crescent-like contour of the roadstead to its northernmost point. There, a large basalt promontory sloped out a hundred yards into the surf like a high, "black wedge" dividing the landscape.[18] Scrub brush and wind-bent trees clung to its summit, some sixty feet above the sand. From around its base, several figures appeared and looked out at the Sea Gull.[19] These were the Quatomah, and they had lived on that beach for generations.

To them, the big rock was *Ma-na-xe oe,* and like everything else in the world, it had emerged eons ago from the flat, watery stillness of Beginning.[20] When there were no swells, no breakers, no wind. Only a single, solitary sweathouse adrift in an endless,

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[18] George Davidson and U.S. Coast Geodetic Survey, *Pacific Coast: Coast Pilot of California, Oregon, and Washington*, Fourth Edition, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 375.
[19] Kirkpatrick and Dodge, *The Heroes of Battle Rock*, 2.
[20] Lewis and Connolly, "White American Violence on Tribal Peoples on the Oregon Coast," 370.

unmoving fog. Inside the sweathouse was Xowalaci, the creator—breathing, pondering. Outside, his companion, the watcher—great lover of tobacco—always smoking, always watching. Then, on one endless, indiscernible day, the watcher saw something strange approaching. White land. White as snow. Squinting at its starkness, he watched it undulate outward, north and south, like waves on the ocean. Then, the fog dissipated and the watcher saw everything in the vastness before him. Wiping tears from his eyes, he stood, slowly, and walked into the sweathouse. "Xowalaci, are you ready?" he asked.[21] Looking up from the fire, the creator smiled at his old friend, took the pipe, and began to smoke.

Tichenor lowered the spyglass and motioned at his first mate to prep the whaleboat. A moment later, he was joined on deck by J.M. Kirkpatrick, a brash, twenty-three-year-old drifter, who at fifteen had fled the family farm in Ohio and made his way south to serve as a fifer in the Mexican War.[22] Afterwards, he went west, eventually winding up in the Oregon Country, where he had spent the last year working as a carpenter in and around the burgeoning town of Portland.[23] Two weeks prior, however, he was recruited to assist Tichenor in establishing a permanent settlement on a remote stretch of the southern Oregon coast. Kirkpatrick, along with eight other men, were to be deployed at the proposed site where they would then survey the area and erect a few preliminary structures. After depositing the men on the beach, Tichenor would continue

[21] Livingston Farrand and Leo J. Frachtenberg, "Shasta and Athapascan Myths from Oregon," *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 28, No. 109 (1915), 224.
[22] "Far West Experiences," *Eutaw Wig and Observer*, March 22, 1883, Page 1.
[23] Kirkpatrick and Dodge, *The Heroes of Battle Rock*, 1.

south to his base of operations in San Francisco. There he would gather more men and supplies before returning in two weeks to what he had decided to call "Port Orford."

Not long after the expedition had set out from Portland, tension arose onboard the *Sea Gull* between Tichenor and the landing party. Although he had promised the group they would be furnished with arms and ammunition, it was quickly discovered that weapons were not included in their gear. When confronted, Tichenor brushed off their concerns, assuring them the Indians in the area were "perfectly friendly."[24] The men were unconvinced, and when the *Sea Gull* arrived in Astoria on the following morning they refused to go any further unless sufficiently armed. Relenting, Tichenor went ashore and returned a little while later with "three old flint lock muskets, one old sword that was half eaten with rust and a few pounds of lead and three or four pounds of powder."[25] When the group commented on the pathetic looking arsenal, Tichenor reiterated that the Indians were friendly and weapons would not be needed. Kirkpatrick was still not convinced the group had enough "to fight Indians with," and before the *Sea Gull* departed he found a soldier willing to sell him his rifle for $20.[26] This seems to have alleviated his concerns. Three days later, however, as he and Tichenor stood on deck watching the Quatomah gathering onshore, Kirkpatrick's uneasiness returned.

As the men loaded supplies into a whaleboat, Kirkpatrick, recently appointed "captain" of the landing party, told Tichenor he believed the Quatomah on the beach "meant mischief."[27] As a result, he wanted to take the *Sea Gull's* four-pound signal

[24] Ibid., 1.
[25] Ibid., 2.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

cannon as well. Tichenor laughed at this, until he was informed the group would not go ashore without it, and left with little choice, reluctantly agreed. Later, after the men and their supplies had been transported to shore, Tichenor bade them farewell and promised to return in exactly fourteen days. As the *Sea Gull* slowly left the harbor and continued its journey south to San Francisco, Kirkpatrick and the others waved at the little steamer from the beach, and then began carrying their gear up to the top of the rocky promontory. By the following afternoon, roughly two dozen Quatomah would be dead. To understand what happened to them and why, it is important to first look at who the they were.

The Quatomah were Athapaskan-speakers, whose ancestors had migrated south between 1,000 and 1,500 years ago from modern-day British Columbia.[28] Also in that migratory group were the ancestors of the Navajo and Apache, who at some point branched off towards the American southwest.[29] Their once-shared proto-language also diverged as a result of these migrations into numerous linguistic subgroups—one of which has been designated by Euro-Americans as "Tututni." This was a few different dialects spoken by peoples along a sixty-mile stretch of Pacific coastline, from the area just below the Coquille River in the north to the Chetco River in the south, and extending inland along the lower Rogue River perhaps ten or fifteen miles.[30] In many ways, it is an arbitrary construct derived from the name of the largest village in the area, *Tututin*, and

[28] Melvin C. Aikens, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins, *Oregon Archaeology*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2011), 216-217; John A. Draper, *A Proposed Model of Late Prehistoric Settlement Systems on the Southern Northwest Coast, Coos and Curry Counties, Oregon*, PhD Dissertation, (Washington State University, 1988), 42.
[29] Martin P.R. Magne and R. G. Matson. "Moving On: Expanding Perspectives on Athapaskan Migration." *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (2010): 227.
[30] Joe E. Pierce and James M. Ryherd, "The Status of Athapaskan Research in Oregon," *International Journal of American* Linguistics 30, no. 2 (1964): 138; Victor Golla, "Tututni (Oregon Athapaskan)," *International Journal of American Linguistics*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Jul., 1976), 217;

used by anthropologists and treaty negotiators to classify what is thought to have been seven groups or bands as a single "tribe."[31] As historian Charles Wilkinson points out, this classification is still useful as these groups not only shared the same language and geographic area, but also had close socioeconomic ties via trade and intermarriage.[32]

The Quatomah were the northernmost group within this Tututni framework.[33] Their territory stretched from the Sixes River south to Humbug Mountain, and consisted of three villages, one of which was in the Port Orford area. According to a census conducted by Indian Agent Josiah L. Parrish, the Quatomah population in 1854 was 98 adults and 45 children.[34] This figure was likely 30-40 percent higher before Euro-American contact—still making them a relatively small group of people.[35] Parrish reports the principal chief, "Hah-hult-a-lan," lived in a village along the Sixes, while the sub-chief, "Tag-on-Ecia," was in the village at Port Orford. Although these two may not have held those positions three years earlier when Kirkpatrick and the others arrived on the beach, the "hierarchy" of villages was likely the same, with the Sixes location being the main one.

The Quatomah may have spotted and perhaps even interacted with a European vessel as early as the end of the sixteenth century. Although, it was not until two hundred years later, at the end of the eighteenth century, that documented encounters first appear

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[31] Joel V. Berreman, *Tribal Distribution in Oregon*, Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, No. 47, (Menasha, Wisconsin: American Anthropological Association, 1937), 31-33; Wilkinson, *The People Are Dancing Again,* 13.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Berreman, *Tribal Distribution in Oregon,* 31-33.
[34] Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties,* 105
[35] Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters,* 6.

in the historical record.[36] One of the earliest occurred in the spring of 1792 when the HMS *Discovery* was sailing north on its way to Nootka Sound in modern-day British Columbia. Following the voyage of Captain James Cook fourteen years prior, word of the potentially lucrative trade in sea otter pelts had triggered an international rush of commercial ventures to the Northwest Coast. The British Admiralty, worried their interests in the region were under threat, mounted a follow-up expedition and gave command to the late Cook's protégé, thirty-four-year-old George Vancouver.

On the afternoon of April 24, Vancouver's "Voyage of Discovery" entered a small harbor just south of Cape Blanco, which he promptly renamed "Cape Orford" in honor of a recently deceased friend, George Walpole—the 3rd Earl of Orford.[37] In his journal, he writes that shortly after they anchored a small canoe quickly paddled out to them and "with the greatest of confidence" pulled alongside his 330-ton warship.[38] Onboard the shallow, shovel-nosed vessel sat seven Quatomah men. The *Discovery's* surgeon, Archibald Menzies, was also struck by the outgoing nature of the canoe's occupants, writing that they approached "without shewing [sic] any kind of dread or apprehension," and when asked if they wanted to come aboard, "accepted very readily of the invitation."[39]

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[36] T. C. Elliott, "Captain Robert Gray's First Visit to Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (June, 1928), 168.
[37] George Vancouver and Kaye W. Lamb, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and round the World, 1791-1795: With an Introduction and Appendices*, Vol. II, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society; 2nd Series, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984), 491; The toponym fell into disuse by the early nineteenth century and the U.S. Board on Geographic Names has since reinstated "Cape Blanco."
[38] Vancouver and Lamb, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 491.
[39] Archibald Menzies, C.F. Newcombe, and John Forsyth, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage, April to October, 1792*, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, No. 5. (Victoria, British Columbia: Printed by W.H. Cullin, 1923), 8-9.

Clearly, the Quatomah had interacted with a passing ship before. In 1788, an American merchant sloop had gone by the same stretch of coast on its way north and the Quatomah had tried, unsuccessfully, to hail the vessel by waving pelts over their heads.[40] Just two weeks prior to the arrival of the *Discovery* they had pulled alongside the passing *Columbia Rediviva* to trade "a few Otter and Beaver skins."[41] What is unclear, though, is if they had ever been invited onboard a ship, and climbing up into that strange, wooden world would have required a considerable amount of courage. Huddling together on deck, Menzies writes that the attention of the Quatomah was "much engagd [sic] by other objects …"[42] What were they seeing? The cramped complexity of ropes, barrels, bottles; men closing in around them; staring, pointing, whispering—some with blond hair, some with red hair, blue eyes, green eyes, freckles, a silver tooth—men looming in the rigging above, emerging from hidden spaces below; strange, unfamiliar animals—chickens, pigs, a cat swirling about their feet; smells, sounds—the ship's bell, the bleating of a goat—all of this may have overwhelmed the senses of the seven, mostly naked men. According to Menzies, they kept "repeating the word *Slaghshee* the meaning of which we did not comprehend."[43] An Athabaskan language scholar would later identify that the Quatomah had been saying "My friends, my friends," over and over.[44]

[40] Elliott, "Captain Robert Gray's First Visit to Oregon," 168.
[41] John Boit, F. W. Howay, T. C. Elliott and F. G. Young, "John Boit's Log of the Columbia—1790-1793," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Dec., 1921), 304.
[42] Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 10.
[43] Ibid., 9.
[44] Stephen Dow Beckham, *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2006), 29.

Both Menzies and Vancouver describe the Quatomah as being generally slender and short in stature with a light olive or "copper" coloring to their skin.[45] Their hair was long and black and tied neatly in a "club," either in the back or on the forehead.[46] Some of the sailors were struck by their use of cosmetics—whale oil mixed with red ochre as face paint, and silica acting as a kind of glitter that was "laid plentifully on the eye brows, nose and chin."[47] Both their ears and septum were pierced, and in the latter they wore what was described as a "piece of bone four inches long."[48] This was actually dentalium, an attractive, tusk-like shell gathered far to the north on what is now Vancouver Island, and circulated down the coast via trade. The shells were sorted by size and strung together in groups of ten, with the length of a strand determining its value. Using a bone needle and charcoal, some Tututni men tattooed their left arm with a series of lines to measure dentalium from the tip of the hand all the way up to the shoulder if necessary. As a result of the maritime fur trade, iron and copper items had become more highly-prized by Indigenous groups on the coast, and Menzies notes that one of the Quatomah quickly swapped out the dentalium in his nose with a nail he had received in trade.[49]

As someone who had spent a good portion of his adult life interacting with indigenous peoples throughout the Pacific world, Vancouver seems to have been especially taken by the "scrupulous honesty" of the Quatomah bartering system.[50] He

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[45] Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 9.
[46] Vancouver and Lamb, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 492.
[47] Thomas Manby, *Journal of the Voyages of the H.M.S. Discovery and Chatham*, (Fairfield, Washington: Ye Galleon Press, 1992), 149.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Douglas Cole and David Darling, "History of the Early Period," *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 7, Northwest Coast, Edited by Wayne P. Suttles, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 120; Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 9
[50] Vancouver and Lamb, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 492.

writes that once a deal was struck, if a second bidder offered more than the first "they would not consent, but made signs … that the first should pay the price of the second, on which the bargain would be closed."[51] A sailor aboard the *Discovery* also took notice of this, writing in his journal that the Quatomah "exercise the strictest honesty."[52] Vancouver relates that at one point he attempted to give them a gift and they "instantly offered their garments in return, and seemed much astonished … that I chose to decline them."[53]

Not everyone was impressed by the "pleasing and courteous deportment" of the ship's visitors, however, and an intriguing aspect of this well-documented encounter is the way in which individual narratives differ.[54] For example, whereas Vancouver and Menzies both praise the clean appearance of the Quatomah, a midshipman named Joseph Manby described them as "filthy and stinking," and "the nastiest race of people under the sun."[55] He writes in his journal that their faces were so covered with paint it was "difficult to read their countenances, so much were they disfigured by these odious fashions."[56] Although Manby's animosity is the most pronounced, other sailors also refer to them as dirty, with one even suggesting that the bodies of the Quatomah were "ill-made."[57] After interacting with the crew for close to an hour, the Quatomah climbed back down into their canoe and paddled back to shore.

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Beckham, *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries*, 33.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Vancouver and Lamb, *A Voyage of Discovery*, 492.
[55] Ibid.; Menzies, *Menzies' Journal of Vancouver's Voyage*, 9; Manby, *Journal of the Voyages of the H.M.S. Discovery and Chatham*, 59, 148.
[56] Ibid., 148.
[57] Beckham, *Oregon Indians: Voices from Two Centuries*, 34.

It would be twenty-five years before the next documented encounter took place. During that period—the height of the maritime fur trade—approximately 127 different vessels visited the Northwest Coast.[58] How many of these stopped and interacted with the Quatomah is unclear. Although, when the British schooner *Columbia* stopped to trade in July of 1817, it is apparent their attitude towards Euro-American visitors had changed considerably. Peter Corney, a sailor onboard the vessel, wrote in his journal that several canoes cautiously approached around midday "displaying green boughs and white feathers."[59] At one point they stopped paddling and a man whom Corney took to be a chief, "stood up, and made a long speech, which we did not understand."[60] After he had finished the crew of the *Columbia* waved a white flag and the Quatomah "immediately pulled for the ship, singing all the way."[61] Once alongside, Corney writes they handed the emissaries a rope and made signs for them to come aboard, "which nothing could induce them to do; they seemed quite terrified …"[62] Instead, from the safety of their canoes, they traded furs for beads and knives. They also offered the sailors "berries, fish, and handsome baskets."[63] Once the trading had finished, the Quatomah "left the ship singing, and, when they got to a certain distance, made another long speech."[64]

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[58] James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841,* McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series, (Seattle: Montreal: University of Washington Press; McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 300-305.
[59] Peter Corney and W.D. Alexander, *Voyages in the Northern Pacific: Narrative of Several Trading Voyages from 1813 to 1818, between the Northwest Coast of America, the Hawaiian Islands and China, with a Description of the Russian Establishments on the Northwest Coast,* (Honolulu, Hawaii: T.G. Thrum, 1896), 77.
[60] Corney and Alexander, *Voyages in the Northern Pacific*, 77.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

While historian Stephen Dow Beckham has suggested the changed behavior of the Quatomah was the result of mistreatment by passing ships in the years following Vancouver's visit, it seems more likely their cautious, highly-ritualized approach was due to infectious diseases.[65] Smallpox, malaria, measles, influenza, dysentery, whooping cough, typhus, and typhoid fever were all introduced on the Northwest Coast from Euro-American sources in the late eighteenth century.[66] Smallpox, in particular, had a devastating effect on Indigenous groups, and was likely first brought to the coast in 1775 with the Spanish expeditions of Bruno Hezeta and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra.[67] The first outbreak killed at least one third of the total population, and then reappeared in a series of successive, epidemic waves that swept away scores of younger individuals who had not yet developed an immunity.[68]

In 1811, Chinook Indians along the lower Columbia River discovered the connection between Euro-American contact and smallpox, and this revelation quickly traveled up and down the coast to other groups.[69] While we can only speculate on how this affected the Quatomah, historian Greg Dening points out that in the context of South Pacific islanders, smallpox, despite being linked to Euro-Americans, reinforced cultural beliefs rather than upturn them.[70] They still viewed sickness and death as being caused by

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[65] Stephen Dow Beckham, *Requiem for a People: The Rogue Indians and the Frontiersmen*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 24
[66] Robert T. Boyd, "Demographic History, 1774 – 1874," *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 7, Northwest Coast, Edited by Wayne P. Suttles, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990), 137.
[67] Robert T. Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence: Introduced Infectious Diseases and Population Decline among Northwest Coast Indians, 1774-1874*, (Vancouver: Seattle: UBC Press; University of Washington Press, 1999), 36.
[68] Boyd, "Demographic History," 138.
[69] Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 45-46.
[70] Greg Dening, *Performances*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 78.

sorcery or the violation of *tapu*.[71] This also seems to have been the case on the Northwest Coast, and anthropologist Robert Boyd has argued that indigenous groups created new myths and rituals to confront these epidemic threats—just as Medieval Europeans did during the plague years.[72] Although the Quatomah may indeed have had one or more bad experiences with passing ships, the threat of disease is a more likely explanation for the "speeches" and singing, as well as their refusal to board the *Columbia*.

Regardless, the encounter reveals that while the Quatomah had adapted to a changing world they were still a peaceful and outgoing people, willing to engage passing vessels despite the dangers they may have presented. In this they had some measure of control, as the watery buffer zone between land and ship allowed them to establish terms of contact. Although the furs they had to offer were not as desirable as those acquired in the less temperate climate to the north, their location next to one of the few decent harbors along the southern coast likely gave them the opportunity to trade with vessels on a somewhat regular basis—perhaps once or twice a year. By the early 1820s, however, large scale economic factors as well as the decimation of the sea otter population led to the decline of the maritime fur trade.[73] Ships such as the *Columbia*, which in earlier years had cruised the coastline looking for opportunities wherever they arose, now spent their time in harbors far to the north.

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[71] Ibid.; "Taboo" derives from the Polynesian word *tapu* and was introduced to the English language by Captain Cook after his visit to Tonga in 1771.
[72] John Sutton Lutz, "First Contact as a Spiritual Performance," *Myth and Memory: Stories of Indigenous-European Contact*, edited by John Sutton Lutz, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007), 43; Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 278.
[73] Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods*, 60-61.

In the Oregon Country, the fur trade had shifted to a land-based industry controlled by the Hudson's Bay Company. Over the next two decades this British-owned corporation dominated the socioeconomic life of the region—internally designated the "Columbia Department."[74] While the Treaty of 1818 between the United States and Great Britain allowed for "Joint Occupancy," the American presence in the Oregon Country was insignificant until the 1840s, leaving the HBC to operate as de facto colonial administrators.[75] Their geopolitical maneuvering in response to the threat of U.S. encroachment on their commercial interests would prove highly detrimental to indigenous groups south of the Columbia, paving the way for later hostilities between Euro-American settlers and the so-called "Rogue Indians."

In 1824, Governor George Simpson, head of North American operations for the HBC, appointed Dr. John McLoughlin as superintendent of the Columbia Department, and the following year Fort Vancouver was established as its headquarters.[76] Not long after, McLoughlin, under orders from Simpson, sent a two-pronged expedition south to explore the lower end of the Oregon Country, and to search for a rumored "Great River" connecting the Pacific Ocean to the area around the Great Salt Lake.[77] Heading the southeastern branch was thirty-six-year-old Peter Skene Ogden, a stout, "turbulent" man

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[74] Richard Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), xv.
[75] Hubert Howe Bancroft and Henry Lebbeus Oak, *History of the Northwest Coast*, Works, Vol. 27, (San Francisco: History Company, 1886), 338; Melinda Marie Jetté, *At the Hearth of the Crossed Races: A French-Indian Community in Nineteenth-Century Oregon, 1812-1859*, (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 2015), 43.
[76] James R. Gibson, *The Lifeline of the Oregon Country: The Fraser-Columbia Brigade System, 1811-47*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 11-12.
[77] Peter Skene Ogden, K.G. Davies, and Dorothy Johansen, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 23, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1961), xlii, lviii.

who ten years prior had been indicted for brutally murdering an unarmed Cree in north-central Saskatchewan.[78] Ogden avoided prosecution thanks to his then-employer, the North West Company, who quickly transferred him west "across the mountains."[79]

Flanking Ogden on the southwestern, coastal side was the party of 44-year-old Alexander Roderick McLeod, a tough, somewhat rebellious man who Simpson described as a "tolerably good Indian Trader, but illiterate self-sufficient and arrogant."[80] While McLeod and Ogden were both instructed to search for this new river system they had other objectives as well. A revitalized American fur industry was seen as an increasing threat to the HBC's monopoly in the Oregon Country, and Simpson wanted to get as much out of the region as possible while still in control. He also believed that by trapping it out and a creating a so-called "fur desert" to the south of their most valuable holdings along the Columbia River they might create a buffer zone that would forestall American occupation.[81]

Ogden's party, consisting of 58 men and an unknown number of Indian wives and their children, first went east into "Snake Country," before heading south to the area around Klamath Lake.[82] From there they traveled down the Klamath River before crossing over Siskiyou Summit and descending into what is now known as the Rogue

[78] Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, xvii; John Phillip Reid, *Contested Empire: Peter Skene Ogden and the Snake River Expeditions*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 26-31.
[79] Reid, *Contested Empire*, 31.
[80] Doyce B. Nunis and Alexander Roderick McLeod, *The Hudson's Bay Company's First Fur Brigade to the Sacramento Valley: Alexander McLeod's 1829 Hunt*, (Fair Oaks, California: Published by The Sacramento Book Collectors Club, 1968), 23.
[81] Frederick Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal, 1824-1825*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1931, 46. Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, xiv-xv.
[82] Nathan Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 13.

River Valley in February of 1827.[83] This was the first known Euro-American foray into the region, and the party spent the next two months exploring, trapping, and interacting with various Indigenous groups. This was generally done via three smaller parties that went out daily from a central campsite, while a group of men, women, and children remained behind to dress furs, gather firewood, cook, and guard supplies, among other things.[84]

On their second day in the valley an envoy of twenty Shasta Indians visited Ogden's camp. His journal entry detailing this encounter reveals a man who was extremely hostile and suspicious of Indigenous peoples. Dismissing their advice on where to find beaver as an attempt to lead him and his party astray, Ogden laments these emissaries "stand not in the least awe of Tradors [sic] or Trappers."[85] In his view, this was due to "Indians in general" not fearing retribution for their actions, and he states the HBC should adopt a more aggressive strategy when dealing with them.[86] "I am of the opinion," he writes, "if on first discovering a strange Tribe a dozen of them were shot it would be the means of preserving many lives … "[87] Ogden then attempts to reconcile this brutal notion with his Christian beliefs by arguing the "right to retaliate in kind on all those who murder" could also be used preemptively.[88] "Why allow ourselves to be

[83] Jeffrey M. LaLande and Peter Skene Ogden, *First over the Siskiyous: Peter Skene Ogden's 1826-1827 Journey through the Oregon-California Borderlands*, (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1987), 55.
[84] John A. Hussey, "The Women of Fort Vancouver," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Fall, 1991), 286.
[85] Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, 70-71.
[86] Ibid., 71.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

butchered," he asks, "our property stolen by such vile wretches who are not deserving to be numbered amongst the living."[89]

Despite Ogden's intense animosity towards the visitors to his camp, the encounter seems to have ended without incident. Over the next week, however, the aggressive trapping practices of his party began to anger Indigenous groups in the upper valley, and he writes they were "displeased at seeing us daily destroy their Beaver and say they will in consequence starve."[90] After several of the expedition's horses were shot with arrows and one of his trappers harassed, a furious Ogden reiterates his belief that "an example must be made of them …"[91] Although his journal never reveals whether he and his men committed any violence it seems likely that something did in fact occur as Ogden writes that a delegation came to their camp one evening to sue for peace.[92] Afterwards, not only were there no more reports of harassment, but the peoples they came across fled from them in fear.[93] During Ogden's initial meeting with the Shasta, he implied that his power was hamstrung in some way and that this prevented him from preemptively making an example of Indians. "I wish to God," he wrote at the time, "the same power and support the East India Company enjoy were granted to us."[94] This might explain why a violent incident, if one had occurred, might go undocumented in his journal. Amongst

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid., 77.
[91] Ibid., 78.
[92] Ibid., 82.
[93] Ibid., 86.
[94] Ibid.

colleagues, however, Ogden's penchant for utilizing "considerable pe[r]suasion" in the field was well known.[95]

Ogden's actions in the Rogue River Valley set the tone for future relations with cultural groups in the region. This was especially important as it became the main north-south corridor for Euro-American travel and settlement. As historian Nathan Douthit points out, the HBC was not interested in establishing fur-trading relationships in the south.[96] They simply wanted to strip it of its commercial appeal to discourage American advances. "We have convincing proof that the country is a rich preserve of beaver," wrote Governor Simpson prior to the expeditions, "and which for political reasons we should endeavor to destroy as fast as possible."[97] This central objective determined how Ogden interacted with the Shasta, Takelma, and others, many of whom relied upon beaver for their survival.[98] Perhaps even more consequential were Ogden's heavily biased observations of the Indians he encountered, which shaped their reputation as mischievous and hostile towards whites. This in turn influenced the expectations and actions of successive expeditions through the valley.

Four days after Ogden's party left Fort Vancouver the southwestern branch of the expedition, led by Alexander Roderick McLeod, set out for the coast with "ten men and an Indian."[99] This number grew as others joined later on, and it does not include what

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[95] Peter Skene Ogden, *Snake Country Journals, 1824-25 and 1825-26*, Publications of the Hudson's Bay Record Society, 13, (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1950), 58; John Phillip Reid, "Principles of Vengeance: Fur Trappers, Indians, and Retaliation for Homicide in the Transboundary North American West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1993): 21-43; Ross Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia River*, Vol. II, (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), 245.
[96] Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 19.
[97] Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 46.
[98] Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 17-18; Schwartz, *The Rogue River Indian War and Its Aftermath*, 22-23.
[99] Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, Appendix C, 175.

was likely its largest contingent—the wives and children of the trappers. Also accompanying the party was Scottish botanist David Douglas and HBC interpreter Michel Laframboise, who would later lead expeditions through the Rogue River Valley into California. Like Ogden, McLeod had orders to acquire as many furs as possible.[100] Although, unlike his counterpart to the east, his methods seem to have been much more tolerant, and throughout the four-month expedition he made a conscious effort to establish trading relations with groups in the coastal zone.

After setting up a base camp along the lower Umpqua River, McLeod's party conducted three exploratory excursions down the coast. In January of 1827, on their third and final trip, they passed through the Port Orford area on their way south. In his journal, McLeod reports the Quatomah were alarmed, "for we observed in the course of the day, several run[n]ing with all their might from us."[101] Eventually, they were able to keep a small group from fleeing, and he writes that "after their panic was dissipated and a few presents handed them, they assented to keep us company."[102] The two parties traveled down the coast together until evening, at which point McLeod and his men gave the Quatomah a deer they had shot.[103] Although not documented, it is possible the two groups ate a meal together before parting ways.

The following day McLeod's party arrived at the Rogue River.[104] Realizing this was the "Great River" he and Ogden had been instructed to find, a disappointed McLeod

[100] Ibid., xlii, lviii.
[101] Ibid., Appendix C, 204.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.

wrote in his journal that it "falls short of the description report has given it …"[105] He and his party walked along the bank for a while until they came to a small Tututni village, throwing the inhabitants into a shocked state of confusion.[106] After presenting them with "trinkets," McLeod was able to learn they "dont trouble themselves about beaver [sic]."[107] Then, in a somewhat surprising move, he and his party decided to set up camp right next to the village, and that evening their hosts gave them whale blubber to eat. Although McLeod himself did not partake of any, he writes his men "praised it very much for its delicacy."[108]

Over the next three days McLeod's party made contact with various Tututni groups along the lower Rogue. They too had no interest in beaver and instead directed them east up the river. Perhaps realizing that Ogden was, or would soon be, exploring that area McLeod decided to head back up the coast. Before leaving, however, his party discovered that a small hatchet had been stolen from their camp. After detaining several Tututni, "three Chiefs with about sixty followers made their appearance," and informed McLeod the offender had fled.[109] As it would be several days before the stolen item could be recovered, the chiefs instead offered McLeod a hostage, and promised when he came back to the river the hatchet would be returned to him. Although the hostage, who was likely a slave, would later flee, this incident highlights the non-confrontational nature of the Tututni.[110]

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[105] Ibid., 205.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid., 207.
[110] Ibid., 209.

While McLeod's exploration of the coast appears to have been less contentious than Ogden's foray into the interior of the Rogue River Valley, it was not without its hostilities. Although coastal groups did not rely on beaver for food or trade, they did have a strong sense of territorial rights.[111] Historian Vernon Nielson points out that boundaries on the coast were not only rigorously defined and adhered to, but were also passed down from one generation to the next.[112] Villages within those respective boundaries—identified by prominent headlands, streams, or other geographical landmarks—possessed the hunting and fishing rights. It appears this was not respected by McLeod's party as he was informed at the Coquille River the "Indians grumble at our presumption in trapping without paying them tribute."[113] He would later dismiss this as hearsay, which indicates he did not alter his approach.[114]

There were also two reported incidents of violence on McLeod's expedition. Although, the first is somewhat dubious. In early November, the botanist David Douglas wrote in his journal that one of McLeod's trappers had returned to camp and informed him the Indians on the coast "are so hostile, that one of his party has been killed, and an Indian woman, wife of one of our hunters, with five children, carried off."[115] Douglas

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[111] Nathan Douthit, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians of Southern Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (Spring, 1992), 35.
[112] Vernon Nielson, "Indian Tribes of Curry County," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Mar., 1931), 24; James Arneson, "Property Concepts of 19th Century Oregon Indians," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (Winter, 1980), 398; Cora Du Bois, "The Wealth Concept as an Integrative Factor in Tolowa-Tututni Culture," *Essays in Anthropology Presented to A.L. Kroeber in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday, June 11, 1936*, Essay Index Reprint Series, (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1968), pp. 49-65.
[113] Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, Appendix C, 193.
[114] Ibid., 194.
[115] David Douglas, "Sketch of a Journey to the Northwestern Parts of the Continent of North America, During the Years 1824-'25-'26-'27," Part III, *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Mar., 1905), 94.

goes on to say that whatever became of the woman and her children, "we have never been able to learn."[116] Strangely, this event is never mentioned in McLeod's journal. One possibility is that the trapper was having a bit of campfire fun with the botanist, or that Douglas made up the incident himself to add some dramatic flavoring to his account. Another possibility is the Indian wife and her children really did disappear, but instead of being taken they fled back to her people.

The fact that there was no talk of retribution for the trapper's murdered companion is also very strange. Particularly in light of the second violent incident that occurred—this one documented in McLeod's journal. After returning from their excursion to the Rogue River he and his party learned one of the expedition's Iroquois trappers, Ignace, had been murdered by Coos Indians in retaliation for one of their own having been shot.[117] Apparently, a rifle in the bow of a canoe Ignace and others were in accidentally discharged, killing the Coos as he was pulling the boat ashore. Fearing for their safety, Ignace's companions fled the scene, which made the shooting appear intentional. As a result, Ignace, who had remained behind with the body, "fell an easy sacrifice to the irritated Natives."[118] Enraged by this news, McLeod wrote he "would not suffer the case to pass unnoticed," and before returning to Fort Vancouver he vowed to come back at a later date and settle the matter.[119]

During the following summer, British fears of American penetration into the Oregon Country were realized when twenty-nine-year-old Jedediah Strong Smith led

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, Appendix C, 214.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.

eighteen men and nearly 300 horses up the coast from California.[120] Four years prior, the ambitious New Yorker had taken a fur-trapping party over the Rocky Mountains to the Snake River country in what is now southern Idaho. There, he and his men encountered an HBC brigade under the command of Alexander Ross, who foolishly boasted about the Oregon Country's productivity to Smith.[121] When word of Ross' blunder reached Governor Simpson, he promptly demoted the "empty headed" trapper and transferred him out of the region.[122] The damage was already done, though, and over the next few years Smith led two exploratory expeditions into California before turning north and crossing the 42nd parallel in June of 1828.[123]

On the journey north, Smith and his men acquired a reputation for "injudicious conduct" towards the Indigenous peoples they encountered.[124] This information traveled swiftly up the coast via runners, so that by the time the expedition arrived in the Oregon Country many villages they came across were empty, the inhabitants having taken refuge in nearby hills.[125] While camped at the Chetco River several of Smith's horses were shot with arrows during the night, indicating groups in the area were unhappy that a sizeable, and undoubtedly very messy, caravan was trampling through their territory.[126] On July 1,

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[120] Alice B. Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith on the Oregon Coast," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Sep., 1940), 305.
[121] Theodore Stern, *Chiefs & Change in the Oregon Country: Indian Relations at Fort Nez Percés, 1818-1855,* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1996), 29.
[122] Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire,* 46; Theodore Stern, *Chiefs & Chief Traders: Indian Relations at Fort Nez Percés, 1818-1855,* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1993), 90; Gray Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee: U.S. Empire and the Transformation of an Indigenous World, 1792-1859,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 75.
[123] Maloney, "Camp Sites of Jedediah Smith on the Oregon Coast," 306.
[124] Maurice S. Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith: A Documentary Outline including the Journal of the Great American Pathfinder,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), 137.
[125] Beverly Ward, *White Moccasins,* (Myrtle Point, Oregon: Myrtle Point Printing, 1986), 31.
[126] Smith and Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith,* 103; Ward, *White Moccasins,* 31.

they passed the eventual site of Port Orford. However, no mention is made of the Quatomah. In fact, that evening Smith wrote in his journal that for many days they had "hardly got sight of an Indian…"[127] Two days later, though, Smith overtook a couple of scouts near the Coquille River attempting to flee. Realizing they would not be able to evade a man on horseback, they desperately tried to break apart their canoe to deny its use before Smith "screamed at them" and they fled north to warn others.[128] Not long after, the expedition was met by a Miluk headman and over a hundred of his warriors on the dunes near Cape Arago.[129] After what must have been a tense few moments in the wind the two parties came to an understanding and Smith and his men were escorted to a nearby village to rest, eat, and trade.

A few days later, the Americans continued up the coast, arriving at the mouth of the Umpqua River on July 11. There, they met the Kalawatsets, who only a year prior had established trading relations with the McLeod expedition. Historian Gray Whaley believes this association may have placed Smith and his men in a precarious position, as the Kalawatsets would have viewed the HBC as allies and the Americans as interlopers.[130] The HBC also made it a point to present themselves as occupants in the region—not its owners. Smith and his men, however, apparently informed the Kalawatsets the Oregon Country was the property of the United States.[131] The situation

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[127] Ibid., 104-105.
[128] Harrison Clifford Dale, ed., *The Ashley-Smith Explorations and the Discovery of a Central Route to the Pacific, 1822-1829*, (Arthur H. Clark Company, 1918), 265-266.
[129]George B. Wasson Jr., "The Memory of a People: The Coquilles of the Southwest Coast," *The First Oregonians: An illustrated Collection of Essays on Traditional Lifeways, Federal-Indian Relations, and the State's Native People Today*, Edited by Carolyn Buan and Richard Lewis, (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Council for the Humanities, 1991), 85.
[130] Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee*, 81.
[131] Ibid.

grew more tense when an ax was stolen from the group and Smith seized the alleged perpetrator and "put a cord round his neck."[132] A high-ranking Kalawatset stepped forward and deescalated the situation. Although, he too was later humiliated when he tried riding a horse for the first time and one of Smith's men "compelled him to dismount."[133] The final insult occurred on the evening of July 13 when Harrison Rogers, a clerk on the expedition, attempted to pull a Kalawatset girl into his tent. When the girl's brother stepped in to protect her, Rogers knocked the man to the ground.[134]

The following morning, while Smith and two others were scouting upriver, the Kalawatsets attacked, killing 15 members of the expedition. Only one man, Arthur Black, was able to escape into the woods. He was later found by Tillamook Indians and taken to Fort Vancouver. Smith and the two men with him were ambushed as they rushed back to camp. All three survived and were also able to make it to Fort Vancouver, arriving only a couple of days after Black. In response to the news, Chief Factor McLoughlin instructed McLeod to lead a punitive expedition against the Kalawatsets, and to recover as much of the Americans' goods as possible. While he did not want to damage relations with Indigenous groups along HBC trading routes, he believed that if he did not seek retribution it would set a dangerous precedent—even if the attack had been against commercial adversaries.[135]

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[132] Dale, et al., *The Ashley-Smith Explorations*, 270.
[133] Smith and Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 108.
[134] Ibid., 148.
[135] John McLoughlin, E. E. Rich, Kaye W. Lamb, and Hudson's Bay Company, *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, 1825-1838*, Hudson's Bay Company Series, Vol. 4, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1941), 70.

McLeod and his men traveled to the Umpqua where they interviewed the headman of a neighboring group who had spoken with the Kalawatsets. Based upon information gleaned from this conversation, which McLeod determined "carries the probability of truth," it was decided that further bloodshed would be unwarranted.[136] Although the Americans' possessions had been widely distributed throughout several villages in the area, McLeod was successfully able to recover a significant number of pelts, horses, and other items—all without resorting to violence. Despite this peaceful conclusion, the stain of the incident lingered as a cautionary tale for decades, and became a significant chapter in the developing narrative that the Indians of southwestern Oregon were "the most treacherous of savages."[137]

Over the following decade, this sweeping characterization became ingrained as traffic through southwestern Oregon steadily increased. Smith and his surviving companions had provided a wealth of first-hand information to McLoughlin regarding California, which resulted in McLeod being tasked with leading a fur brigade to the Sacramento Valley.[138] This was the first of what became known as the "Southern Party," an annual HBC expedition to California that passed through the Rogue River country. The Indigenous groups in that area had not forgotten the actions of Peter Skene Ogden and his men two years prior. As a result, they harassed McLeod's expedition on its way through by dismantling traps after they had been set. Although this was viewed as simple

[136] Smith and Sullivan, *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*, 148.
[137] Gustavus Hines, A Voyage Round the World: With a History of the Oregon Mission, (Buffalo, New York: G. H. Derby and Co., 1850), 109; Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 35; Whaley, Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee, 80.
[138] Nunis, *The Hudson's Bay Company's First Fur Brigade to the Sacramento Valley*, 14-15.

theft, it should be remembered that groups in the valley relied heavily on beaver for food and trade, and this had been jeopardized by Ogden and the HBC's attempt to create a "fur desert" in the region.[139]

In September of 1833, while leading an expedition through the Rogue River valley, HBC trapper John Work reported that several horses had been shot with arrows during the night. "There is no manner of dealing with such barbarians," he wrote in his journal, "but to punish them whenever they can be caught."[140] A few days prior, Work had matter-of-factly referred to the river running through the valley as the "River *Coquin*," the French word for rogue or rascal.[141] This is the first documented usage of that hydronym.[142] Although, as historian Lewis O. Saum points out, "rogue" and "rascal" were common epithets employed by fur traders to describe Indigenous peoples—particularly those viewed as a hindrance to their commercial endeavors.[143] The terms seem to have also been applied as a kind of cartographic shorthand to areas or features where these "troublesome" groups lived. For example, two decades prior, Sgt. Patrick Gass of the Corps of Discovery referred to present-day Baker Bay as "Rogue's harbour."[144] After trade was established with the Chinook who lived in the area the name

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[139] Simpson and Merk, *Fur Trade and Empire*, 46; Ogden, *Snake Country Journal, 1826-27*, xiv-xv.
[140] Alice Bay Maloney and John Work, "Fur Brigade to the Bonaventura: John Work's California Expedition of 1832-33 for the Hudson's Bay Company," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Jun., 1944), 139.
[141] Ibid.; Lewis A. McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, 6th Edition, Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1992, 720.
[142] Douthit, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians of Southern Oregon," 47.
[143] Lewis O. Saum, *The Fur Trader and the Indian*, (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1965), 40.
[144] Patrick Gass and James K. Hosmer, *Gass's Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, (Chicago, Illinois: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1904), 177.

fell out of use. This would not be the case with the Rogue River Valley as Euro-American trade never really developed in the region.[145]

The year following Work's expedition, an HBC party under the command of Michel Laframboise engaged in a "quarrel" with Indigenous peoples somewhere on the north side of the Rogue River, killing eleven.[146] No one in the HBC party was injured. Over the next decade Laframboise would lead annual brigades through the valley, and while details are scant it is generally believed the so-called "Captain of the California Trail" had no qualms about killing Indians.[147] When he was forced to defend the notorious actions of his employee, McLoughlin stated that Laframboise resorted to violence only in self-defense, "and in punishing the wrongs others had suffered."[148] This subjective explanation clothed Laframboise in the guise of "justice," granting him a tremendous amount of ethical leeway. Regardless, McLoughlin seems to have been pleased with the results, at one point boasting that Laframboise had made six trips to California without losing a man.[149] How many Indigenous people were killed during that span remains unknown.[150]

In 1834, not long after Laframboise's party had killed eleven along the Rogue, a group of Americans led by the well-known trapper and trader Ewing Young arrived at the

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[145] Whaley, *Oregon and the Collapse of Illahee*, 80.
[146] Nunis and McLeod, *The Hudson's Bay Company's First Fur Brigade to the Sacramento Valley*, 22; John Work and Leslie M. Scott, "John Work's Journey from Fort Vancouver to Umpqua River, and Return, in 1834," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Sep., 1923), 255.
[147] Doyce B. Nunis, "Michel Laframboise," *The Mountain Men and the Fur Trade of the Far West*, Vol. 5, Edited by Leroy R. Hafen, (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1968), 170, n. 89; Douthit, Uncertain Encounters, 37; Nunis and McLeod, *The Hudson's Bay Company's First Fur Brigade to the Sacramento Valley*, 22.
[148] Nunis, "Michel LaFramboise," 170, n. 89.
[149] McLoughlin, Rich, and Lamb, *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, 1825-1838*, 203.
[150] Douthit, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Indians of Southern Oregon," 47.

river on their way north to the Willamette Valley. A few months earlier, Young had agreed to lead an eccentric Bostonian named Hall J. Kelley on a colonizing mission to the Oregon Country, becoming the vanguard of American settlement in the region. After setting out from Monterey with seven men and roughly a hundred horses the party was joined by what Kelley later described as a group of "marauders" leading an additional fifty to sixty horses, many of which were likely stolen.[151] After attaching themselves to the expedition this villainous contingent proceeded to wreak havoc on Indigenous groups they encountered, raping and murdering several on the journey north.[152] It appears that Young himself may have been involved in at least one atrocity, leading the naïve Kelley to speculate that his heroic guide had lost, "some of the refinements of manners once possessed."[153]

When the expedition arrived in the Oregon Country several of its members, including Kelley, were suffering the effects of malaria. Anthropologist Robert Boyd makes a compelling argument that it was John Work's 1833 brigade that was responsible for carrying the disease, then known as "fever and ague," south into California where it then decimated the Sacramento Valley's Indigenous population.[154] It was in that area, on those "low and pestilential tracts," that the northbound Young expedition fell ill.[155] By the time they reached the Rogue they were in extremely bad shape, and decided to camp

[151] Kenneth L. Holmes, *Ewing Young, Master Trapper*, (Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1967), 97; Hall J. Kelley and Fred Wilbur Powell, *Hall J. Kelley on Oregon: A Collection of Five of His Published Works and a Number of Hitherto Unpublished Letters*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1932), 100.
[152] Kelley and Powell, *Hall J. Kelley on Oregon*, 351-352.
[153] Ibid., 183.
[154] Boyd, *The Coming of the Spirit of Pestilence*, 97-98.
[155] Kelley and Powell, *Hall J. Kelley on Oregon*, 141.

on a large island in the river to rest and recuperate, believing this not only offered protection, but also prevented the horses from wandering off or getting stolen. Not long after getting situated, two Indians came out to the island to visit and trade. Years later, a member of the Young expedition would "unburden his troubled conscience" by confessing to a Methodist missionary that even though the encounter had been friendly, the group had murdered the two young men to prevent them from telling others they were in a weakened state.[156] After hiding the bodies under rocks and brush, Young, Kelley, and the others quickly packed up and fled north.

Revenge for the murders was exacted upon another party of Americans passing through the region the following year. They too had come north from Monterey, and planned to join Young and the others in the Willamette Valley. After setting up camp along the Rogue, the group was attacked, resulting in four of their number being killed. A naturalist named John Kirk Townsend was at Fort Vancouver when one of the survivors stumbled through the gates, "in a most deplorable condition."[157] The man had been stabbed several times and had taken a "tomahawk" to the face, cleaving his jaw in two just below the nose.[158] A rattled Townsend would later write that it was "by far the most horrible looking wound I ever saw."[159] Traders at the fort informed him those responsible were known as "the '*rascally Indians*,' from their uniformly evil disposition, and hostility to white people."[160] By 1835, roughly two years after John Work had referred to a "River

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[156] S. A. Clarke, *Pioneer Days of Oregon History*, Vol. 1, (Portland, Oregon: J.K. Gill Company, 1905), 296-297.
[157] John Kirk Townsend, *Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains*, (Boston, Massachusetts: Perkins & Marvin, 1839), 228.
[158] Ibid., 229.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid., 228.

Coquin," a stigma was firmly established that Indigenous groups in southwestern Oregon were *collectively* more hostile and aggressive.

Over the next several years, a growing demand for livestock in the Willamette Valley prompted a series of cattle drives from California which passed through southwestern Oregon, further aggravating tensions in the region.[161] The first was led by Ewing Young and other members of the newly-formed Willamette Cattle Company. After crossing the Rogue, two of the caravan's drovers, who happened to be survivors of the 1835 attack, shot and killed an Indian who had come to their camp to trade. The man had been accompanied by a young boy, perhaps his son, who was able to escape into the woods.[162] When a member of the expedition, Philip Edwards, protested this "dastardly act," he was censured and told they were "not missionaries."[163] Before departing the scene, Edwards says his companions stripped the dead man of his clothes, "and left him lying naked."[164] His people later retaliated and managed to wound a member of the expedition before being driven back.

The following year, settlers in the Willamette Valley started petitioning the United States Congress for territorial status. In response, advocates in Washington D.C. began circulating documents extolling the virtues of the Oregon Country while simultaneously depicting the British-owned Hudson's Bay Company as tyrannical

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[161] James R. Gibson, *Farming the Frontier the Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846*, (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1985), 143-144.
[162] Philip Leget Edwards, California in 1837: Diary of Col. Philip L. Edwards, (Sacramento, California: A. J. Johnson & Company, 1890), 42.
[163] Ibid.; Edwards had traveled west with missionary Jason Lee, and served as a schoolteacher at the Methodist Mission.
[164] Ibid., 43.

overseers.[165] A prominent aspect of this nationalistic propaganda campaign was the HBC's mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in southwestern Oregon, and how the company's violent "excesses" in the field had placed American settlers traveling through the region at risk.[166] One of the documents presented to Congress was an excerpt from the journal of Captain Josiah Spaulding, who had transported missionaries to the Oregon country via ship. In his journal, Spaulding accuses the HBC's southern party of committing "every depredation upon the poor defenceless [sic] and peaceful Indians … murdering hundreds of them every year."[167] He goes on to claim the HBC made it a point to shoot every Indian they came across south of the Umpqua, "without the slightest provocation."[168] Despite these exaggerations, there is an element of truth to Spaulding's journal, and he does single out Ewing Young—a fellow American—for "cruelties, barbarities, and murders…"[169] In 1843, McLoughlin rebutted Spaulding's account, instead implying it was Americans who had committed the most heinous acts.[170]

Regardless, the stigma surrounding Indigenous groups in southwestern Oregon continued to shape the expectations and actions of Euro-American settlers throughout the 1840s. Guidebooks, such as the popular *Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, warned travelers of the "extreme hostility and treachery" of Indigenous groups in the

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[165] Hubert Howe Bancroft and Frances Fuller Victor, *History of Oregon*, Works, Vol. 29, (San Francisco: History Company, 1886), 373.
[166] John Forsyth and William A. Slacum, "Slacum's Report on Oregon, 1836-7," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Jun., 1912), 189.
[167] United States Congress, House, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, Report No. 830, 59.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] John McLoughlin, E. E. Rich, Kaye W. Lamb, and Hudson's Bay Company, *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver Letters, 1839-1844*, Hudson's Bay Company Series, Vol. 6, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1943), 142-148; Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 54.

Rogue Valley.[171] This sweeping characterization was also applied to peoples along the adjacent coastline, such as the Quatomah, who were now being referred to as "Coast Rogues."[172] While trade with groups in the interior likely made them aware of tensions in the valley, the Quatomah were still roughly 50 miles from the main Euro-American thoroughfare. By all accounts, they had very little, if any, contact with outsiders and yet, unbeknownst to them, they had also been branded as hostile and mischievous.

In 1848, news of the discovery of gold in California led Willamette Valley settlers to head south in great numbers, further inflaming tensions in the Rogue Valley. It also brought tens of thousands of people from around the world to the west coast of America, forever altering the region. Previously sleepy San Francisco exploded almost overnight into a bustling, international seaport connecting far-flung settlements, such as the burgeoning Portland, like never before. Although the Quatomah would have had no idea at the time, this was the very end of their way of life, and over the next two years the littoral world they had inhabited for centuries, still ill-defined on most maps, would be violently swept away by a torrent of commercial expansion.

[171] Overton Johnson and William H. Winter, Route Across the Rocky Mountains, (Lafayette, Indiana: John B. Semans, 1846), 48; Lanford Hastings, *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California*, (New York, New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 60.
[172] Paul Kane, Thomas Vaughan, and Francis Norbert Blanchet, *Paul Kane, the Columbia Wanderer, 1846-47,* (Portland, Oregon: Oregon Historical Society, 1971), Appendix, 22.

CHAPTER TWO

Around ten o'clock in the morning on January 24, 1848, on the outskirts of a Maidu village in present day Coloma, California, a Mexican War veteran and itinerant carpenter named James Marshall was inspecting the tailrace of a recently constructed sawmill on the American River when a small, yellow glint caught his eye. Bending low, he reached into the water and picked up the stone that set in motion one of the largest mass migrations in American history—the California Gold Rush. Over the next several years, hundreds of thousands of people were drawn to the heretofore remote Pacific coast by the glittering possibility of instant wealth. In 1849 alone some 80,000 individuals, mostly young men, left their homes and families behind and scrambled by land and sea for the new El Dorado.[173] One of these men was William Tichenor.

Born in Newark, New Jersey in 1813, Tichenor spent his youth working onboard various merchant vessels, first on the Atlantic and later on the Mississippi River. When he turned twenty, however, he decided to "quit the sea and settle down."[174] In his highly-romanticized memoirs, written just prior to his death in 1887, he depicts the seventeen years following this decision, when he lived a "life of little action," as a prolonged attempt to suppress his true calling—that of the adventurous mariner.[175] Despite his desire to carve out a new path for himself, Tichenor claims the pull of the sea was so

[173] Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1
[174] William Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, CB T435, Special Collections & University Archives, (Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon Libraries), 1.
[175] Ibid.

strong he was forced to move his family inland to get "as far as possible from its influences."[176] After a few years in Indiana, they moved west across the Wabash River and settled in Edgar County, Illinois, where he bought a farm and became involved in local politics, eventually getting elected to the state senate in 1848. By the end of that same year, though, word of the discovery of gold in California had spread across the country and Tichenor, like so many others, decided to drop everything and head west. On February 19, 1849, he resigned his senate seat and "started immediately for the Pacific coast," leaving his wife and two young children in the care of a brother.[177]

On August 3, 1849, Tichenor arrived at the foothills of the Sierra and present-day Placerville, California—then colorfully known as "Hangtown."[178] He immediately began mining in the area with some success. Although, the great rush of emigrants, "eager to get their pile," soon forced him to ditch his claim and seek out a less crowded locale.[179] With a horse and a mule he made his way east into the rugged and desolate Happy Valley, where he found nothing at first but "terrible difficulties."[180] Undaunted, he slowly moved northward while continuing to prospect until one day, on the middle fork of the American River, he and his animals tumbled down into a deep ravine. It was there, as he lay injured at the bottom of what came to be known as "Tichenor's Gulch," that a certain shimmer

[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid., 2.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.

appeared amidst the dust and the dirt.[181] One month later, William Tichenor limped into San Francisco and bought a schooner for forty-two pounds of gold.[182]

In 1848, San Francisco was a remote and sleepy village of several hundred people. One year later, at the end of 1849, it had exploded into a rollicking commercial hub of some 20,000.[183] Hundreds of ships, many of them abandoned and left to rot, lined the harbor two and three deep. On the Long Wharf, the stench of fish, tar, tobacco and raw sewage swirled through the waterfront air to a cacophony of brass band music, auction bells, and a whole host of in-your-face barkers and tooters—some advertising passage aboard a vessel, others simply creating a distraction while their partner picked a poor fool's pocket. Hawk-eyed merchants wielding cowhide whips sold their wares from open-air stalls as drunken miners with mouths agape stumbled into countless makeshift groggeries and gambling dens.[184] In the words of Mark Twain, gold rush San Francisco was a "wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society."[185]

For Tichenor, newfound wealth in this adventurous new land, free from familial obligations, finally allowed him to live out his romantic, life-at-sea fantasy, and over the next several months he immersed himself in the highly-competitive world of Gold Rush shipping. The in-demand route was transporting miners and freight to and from Sacramento. Tichenor, however, found this work to be "dull," and so he turned his

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[181] Erwin Gudde and Elisabeth Gudde, *California Gold Camps: A Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Camps, Towns, and Localities Where Gold Was Found and Mined, Wayside Stations and Trading Centers*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975), 349.
[182] William Tichenor, *Among the Oregon Indians*, MS P-A 84, Bancroft Library, (Berkeley, California: University of California, Berkeley), 2.
[183] Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 156.
[184] Lula May Garrett, "San Francisco in 1851 as Described by Eyewitnesses," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 1943), pp. 253-280
[185] Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Company, 1872), 416.

attention elsewhere.[186] The crowded barrooms and meetinghouses of San Francisco offered up a frenzied buffet of entrepreneurial opportunities—especially to the owner of a ship. In his popular 1850 work, *Eldorado,* Bayard Taylor captures the frenetic, commercial spirit of the city. "You speak to an acquaintance," he writes, "his eyes send keen glances on all sides of you; suddenly he catches sight of somebody in the crowd; he is off, and in the next five minutes has bought up half a cargo, sold a town lot at treble the sum he gave, and taken a share in some new and imposing speculation."[187] Businessmen, sweaty and hoarse, shouting in a dozen different languages, scrambled and jostled along the waterfront, desperate to get their hands on arriving goods—any goods—to sell to the miners. In some instances, frantically rowing out to approaching ships to buy their cargo sight unseen.[188]

In many ways, there were two parallel rushes occurring in California at that time—the rush for gold, and the rush to sell supplies to those in search of gold. Many thought the former a foolish endeavor, not unlike playing the lottery. The numbers generally back this up, particularly starting in the latter half of 1849, as the easy-to-get placer gold rapidly disappeared. The simple fact was that for every elated boom there were a thousand catastrophic busts. The only reasonable chance one had to strike it rich did not involve desperately toiling away in the dirt, but instead "mining the miners."[189] While some sold shovels, pickaxes, and other day-to-day items to the thousands of

[186] Bill Dennison and Oscar Wegelin, *The Letter of a '49er*, (Private Print, 1919), 5.
[187] Bayard Taylor, *Eldorado, Or Adventures in the Path of Empire*, (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1861), 114.
[188] Mark A. Eifler, *The California Gold Rush: The Stampede That Changed the World*, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 94.
[189] Eifler, *The California Gold Rush*, 82.

people, brimming with optimism, who poured into the city, others, men like Tichenor, set their sights on a much larger speculative venture—creating another San Francisco.

These men looked at the bustling metropolis around them, which had exploded practically overnight into the fourth-ranked U.S. city in foreign trade, and believed the phenomenon could be replicated at another bay further up the coast.[190] Of course, gold was still the prime factor in this speculation, and the word around town was that it had been discovered along the Trinity River, 200 miles to the north.[191] Many wondered how far north it could be found. Did it stretch all the way up into the Oregon Territory? Settlers from the Willamette Valley who had passed through southern Oregon on their way to the gold fields in California were reporting—now that they knew what to look for—that the geological conditions around rivers such as the Klamath, Rogue and Umpqua looked promising.[192] Was there another Mother Lode just waiting to be discovered? How would miners get there, and who would supply them?

These questions are central to understanding what happened to the Quatomah at Battle Rock, and why. Although the event has been romantically portrayed in the light of Manifest Destiny, as a heroic attempt by Tichenor and a few other "settlers" to establish a simple homestead on the remote "frontier" of Oregon, in reality it was a collective, commercial endeavor born on the teeming, opportunistic streets of Gold Rush San Francisco. Tichenor and his well-to-do partners were part of a larger effort by various

[190] Tom Cole, *A Short History of San Francisco*, 3rd Edition, (Berkeley, California: Heyday Books, 2014), 46.
[191] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 4; Owen Coy, "The Last Expedition of Josiah Gregg," *The Southwestern Historical* Quarterly 20, no. 1 (1916): 43.
[192] Bancroft and Victor, *History of Oregon*, 184.

entities set on establishing coastal supply towns that paralleled the apparent northerly trend of gold mining. A settlement in a previously "undiscovered" deep-water harbor, or at the mouth of a navigable river, could reap a financial windfall as the gatekeeper to a gold-rich interior. Who knows, if the location was right and the diggings fruitful, in a year or so it might even rival San Francisco as the next great city in the west. When viewed in this way, the Quatomah did not represent hostile savagery, but economic liability.

In his memoir, Tichenor claims his first exploratory expedition to establish a supply town occurred in the spring of 1850, and was inspired by an old Spanish chart he had acquired on a recent trip to Mexico. At that time, it was thought that the supposedly gold-rich Trinity River emptied directly into the Pacific somewhere along the northern California coastline. While the mouth had yet to be found, Tichenor believed his newly-acquired chart pinpointed its exact location, and he quickly placed an ad in the paper offering "a short and pleasant trip to the new Eldorado."[193] There was incredible demand in the city at that time for fresh mining opportunities. Thousands of people, from all over the world, having read fantastical newspaper stories of abundant gold nuggets effortlessly plucked from the ground, used whatever funds they could muster to get to California as quickly as possible. Upon arriving, they were greeted by a much less bounteous reality. In fact, for many the situation was quite dire as they were now thousands of miles from home, with little to no money, in an immensely overcrowded, highly-competitive environment. Tichenor capitalized on the desperation by offering access to a "new,"

[193] "For Trinity Bay," *Daily Alta California*, March 18, 1850, page 1.

untouched locale, and within moments all eighty-five tickets were sold. On March 23, Tichenor's schooner, the *Jacob M. Ryerson,* sailed through the Golden Gate and headed north.[194]

The expedition enjoyed favorable winds for the first few days. Although, that changed on the afternoon of the 26th, when they ran into a fierce gale off Cape Mendocino. Unable to land, the crew of the *Ryerson* battened down the hatches and spent a long, uneasy night riding out the storm with the rest of the passengers. When dawn finally broke, Tichenor emerged onto the deck and discovered they had been blown far to the north and were now thirty miles west of Cape Blanco. Instructing his pilot to stand along the coast south one degree, he and a few of his men provisioned a whale boat and pulled for the cape. A mile offshore, they began rowing south while "examining carefully all indentations, bays, creeks and rivers."[195] Soon, they entered the roadstead that would eventually become Port Orford. Seeing it for the first time, Tichenor claimed he wanted to go ashore but the "numerous naked savages and their hostile appearance" prevented him.[196] This remark, written nearly forty years after the fact, is likely nothing more than a dramatic embellishment. Still, it is possible that Tichenor and the whale boat crew, upon seeing the Quatomah, felt vulnerable in their smaller vessel and decided to flee.

After rejoining the *Ryerson* on the following afternoon near present-day Crescent City, Tichenor and the rest of the expedition continued south to explore the coastline. Just below Trinidad Head it was discovered the "Trinity River" on Tichenor's Spanish chart

[194] Ibid.
[195] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 4.
[196] Ibid.

was in fact the Eel River.[197] The actual Trinity was inland about 40 miles. Despite this setback, the *Ryerson's* passengers decided they wanted to stay and settle the area around Humboldt Bay, eventually founding the towns of Arcata and Eureka. Incidentally, some onboard the vessel were members of the notorious "Sonoma Gang," vigilantes who had recently slaughtered dozens of Native Americans around Clear Lake.[198] The gang had been arrested and held onboard the *USS Savannah* in San Francisco Bay, only to be released on a $10,000 bond following the first ever decision by the California Supreme Court.[199] Although ordered to appear at a later date to stand trial for murder the gang jumped bail and fled north aboard the *Ryerson*. Tichenor seems to have been well aware of this, and in his memoirs he states the gang's members were "fine specimens of Western manhood."[200] Why he himself did not stay in the area is unclear. Perhaps there were too many settlers involved. Or perhaps his earlier "discovery" of the Port Orford area had convinced him it was a better place for his supply town—despite the supposedly hostile "savages."

Over the next few months, the success of the new towns around Humboldt Bay created an excitement amongst the horde of eager speculators in San Francisco, and several joint stock companies soon formed with the intention of establishing their own settlements.[201] One of these, Winchester, Paine and Company—also known as the

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[197] Ibid., 5.
[198] Jerry Rohde, "The Sonoma Gang: Remembering the Genocidal Scum Who Built Arcata," *North Coast Journal*, September 11, 2008.
[199] Barry Evans, "Ben Kelsey: Arcata Founding Father, Trail Builder, Indian Killer," *North Coast Journal*, February 13, 2014.
[200] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 7.
[201] Caspar T. Hopkins, "The California Recollections of Caspar T. Hopkins," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Jun., 1946), 110.

Klamath Exploring Expedition—set their sights on the southern coast of the Oregon Territory.[202] Handbills fluttered through the streets of San Francisco calling on shrewd and adventurous investors to join an exciting "voyage of discovery."[203] A share in the endeavor cost $100, but for $50 extra individuals could have the "privilege of accompanying the expedition" to the mouth of the Klamath River.[204] Once there, the company planned to "take possession of the most eligible townsites," which would then be surveyed into lots and divided amongst the shareholders.[205] Those who went would not only be able to choose the most desirable lots, they could also take advantage of what was arguably the most generous land distribution bill in United States history—the Donation Land Claim Act—which granted each white, male emigrant to the Oregon Territory 320 acres of land. If married, the settler's wife also received 320 acres for a grand total of 640 acres, or one square mile. As historian Kenneth Coleman points out, the DLCA allowed settlers to seize indigenous lands without consent, even though the Constitution recognized tribal groups as the legal equivalent of sovereign nations.[206]

On July 5, 1850, thirty-five Winchester, Paine and Company shareholders, "armed to the teeth," sailed out of San Francisco Bay onboard the schooner *Samuel Roberts*.[207] Prior to leaving, some of the men had gathered "half a ton of old screws, hinges, and nails" from a burnt-down hardware store to use as ammunition in the ship's

[202] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 110.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Kenneth Coleman, "'We'll All Start Even': White Egalitarianism and the Oregon Donation Land Claim Act," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 120, no. 4 (2019): 416.
[207] Socrates Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition, 1850: Settlement of the Umpqua Valley—Its Outcome," *The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Dec., 1916), 342; Hopkins, "California Recollections," 111.

four-pound carronade.[208] They also brought a dozen muskets and "small arms to each man's taste." In many ways, while it may not fit the conventional definition, this was a filibustering expedition—at least in spirit. Prior to the Civil War the term "filibuster" carried a much different connotation than it does today. Back then it referred to an unauthorized, private military invasion of a foreign country or territory that was officially at peace with the United States. In the aftermath of the Mexican War filibustering reached "epidemic" proportions in America with numerous expeditions taking place throughout the 1850s.[209] Perhaps the most well-known example was the campaign of William Walker, the so-called "Gray-eyed man of destiny," who conquered Nicaragua in 1856.[210] Although the Klamath Expedition was not invading a foreign country, and the Donation Land Claim Act implicitly "authorized" their actions, they were still aggressively taking land from peoples they did not view as Americans, and who the Constitution recognized as a sovereign nation. In fact, one of the men later joked that it was a good thing the federal government was not yet in California "else had our piratical appearance stamped us at once with the character of filibusters."[211]

After a rough, fourteen days of sailing into a strong headwind the expedition reached what they thought was the Klamath River, but in actuality was the Rogue. Crowding onto the deck the men spotted "several Indian houses" onshore, and decided to sound the river's entrance before attempting to cross it in the *Samuel Roberts*.[212] Six

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[208] Ibid.
[209] Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny's Underworld: Filibustering in Antebellum America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 18.
[210] "The Execution of Walker," *The New York Times*, October 5, 1860, page 5.
[211] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 111.
[212] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 343.

sailors shoved off in a whaleboat and slowly pulled their way through the choppy, roiling waters of the bar. Suddenly, a heavy breaker slammed into the smaller vessel, capsizing it. The men onboard the *Roberts*, many of whom had spent very little time at sea, watched in horror as the sailors were thrown overboard and quickly "swallowed up by the waves."[213] After several tense moments of pointing and peering through the churning mist, four of the six sailors were spotted being pulled from the surf by the excited Tututni lining the shore. The "dreadfully mutilated" bodies of the other two men would be found a couple of days later, washed up onto the beach.[214]

Concerned about the safety of his sailors, the young captain of the *Samuel Roberts*, Albert Lyman, recklessly attempted to take the undermanned schooner across the bar by himself, leading one member of the expedition to later write "there were but two able seamen left on the vessel, of whom the captain, unfortunately was not one."[215] During the first attempt the foresail crashed onto the deck and the ship came dangerously close to running aground "broad-side on."[216] Eventually, on the second try, Lyman was able to maneuver the schooner safely through, leading to an "exultant shout" from all onboard.[217] This was answered by loud cheers from the riveted Tututni spectators on the beach, who, to the surprise of many onboard the *Roberts*, quickly loaded the rescued sailors into their canoes and paddled out to greet the vessel.

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[213] Ibid., 344.
[214] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," *The Pioneer*, Vol. 1, (San Francisco, California: W.H. Brooks and Company, 1854), 285.
[215] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," 284.
[216] Ibid., 285.
[217] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 344.

The subsequent interaction between the two parties was documented by several different individuals. The only account that seems to have reached a significant audience, however, was written by one of the expedition's organizers, C.T. Hopkins, and published a few years later in a California magazine. Hopkins' narrative would eventually be the primary source used by ghostwriter Frances Fuller Victor in Hubert Howe Bancroft's widely-read *History of Oregon*.[218] As Hopkins account was intended for public consumption it is highly exaggerated and biased, depicting the "Rogue Indians" they encountered as goofy, subhuman creatures "with an expression of face indicating an inveterate habit of duplicity."[219] Hopkins writes the survivors of the whaleboat "owed their safety to the rapacity of the Indians," who he claimed rescued the men simply to steal their belongings.[220] Writing decades later, Fuller Victor added her own dramatic touches to Hopkins' account, stating the sailors were stripped of their clothing and were "naked and half dead with cold and exhaustion, being freely handled by their captors."[221]

While it appears the Tututni did in fact take some of the wet clothing off of the sailors they rescued, they likely did this to help the men get warm, and two different accounts mention the clothing being returned.[222] This is not to say that the Tututni did not help themselves to certain items in the men's possession, but it was not the aggressive "robbery" that Hopkins and Fuller Victor make it out to be.[223] In fact, another member of

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[218] Bancroft and Victor, *History of Oregon*, 177.
[219] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," 350.
[220] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 112.
[221] Bancroft and Fuller Victor, *History of Oregon*, 177.
[222] C.T. Ward, "An Exploring Expedition in 1850," *The Overland Monthly*, Vol. 17, No. 101, (May, 1891), 477; Albert Lyman, *The Journal of Captain Albert Lyman*, MS, 1850-51, Transcribed from Microfilm, Douglas County Museum, 10.
[223] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," 286.

the expedition later wrote that "a few trifling things were stolen, but no account was taken of them."[224] Although Hopkins goes on to describe hundreds of Tututni "surrounding the vessel in swarms" and attempting to steal everything in sight, in reality only about twenty paddled out to the *Roberts*.[225] Once alongside, they remained in their canoes and "a brisk trade soon sprung up," with the Tututni offering the men bows, arrows, pelts, baskets of mussels, fish, berries, and other goods.[226] In exchange, members of the expedition gave the Tututni old shirts, nails, cutlery, and other bits of metal they had picked up from the burnt-down hardware store in San Francisco.[227]

On the following morning, the expedition sent out three parties in different directions to search for promising townsites. One eight-man group, led by surveyor Nathan Scholfield, headed north along the beach with the intention of hiking all the way to Cape Blanco. This would take them directly through the future site of Port Orford, roughly seven miles south of the cape. After about four miles of trudging through sand, six members of the group decided to move up to the less arduous coastal terrace above, leaving only Scholfield and a gentleman named Helbert on the beach. Although they planned to reconvene a short distance up the coast, the two groups quickly lost track of each other and Scholfield and Helbert found themselves traveling alone amidst an increasing number of curious Tututni. Scholfield's son, who was also a member of the expedition, provides a remarkable account of his father's experience, offering an

[224] Ward, "Exploring Expedition," 477.
[225] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," 350; Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 345.
[226] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 113.
[227] Ibid.; Lyman, *The Journal of Captain Albert Lyman,* 10.

important glimpse of the peoples living just to the south of the Quatomah—only months prior to the arrival of Tichenor's landing party.[228]

Scholfield, realizing that he and Helbert were now on their own, insisted that they keep moving forward as confidently as possible despite the numerous Tututni gathering around them. As they continued up the beach, more and more came out of the woods to join the procession and the two men tried to "show no fear" by smiling and shaking hands with each.[229] Nearing a Tututni village, a headman and several of his warriors seated themselves in a row in the sand, waiting for the two men to approach.[230] Clearly, they were interested in communicating and trading with these visitors to their territory. After quickly shaking hands, though, Scholfield and Helbert inexplicably continued straight past them. Upset by the slight, the Tututni in the procession tried unsuccessfully to get the men to go back and sit down, but the two kept moving forward. After a short distance, the crowd, which now numbered close to a hundred, started physically pressing in on the two men, forcing them to stop and sit down on a large log.

The men offered up some of their provisions, including ham, pilot bread, and biscuits. The Tututni were more interested in their gear, though, and within moments a hatchet went missing. After asking for it back and not getting a response, Scholfield, to the horror of Helbert, drew his revolver and demanded "that all who had any skins or dress of any kind, by means of which it could be secreted, to take them off and exhibit

[228] McArthur, *Oregon Geographic Names*, 745; Bancroft and Fuller Victor, *History of Oregon*, vol. 2, 176, note 5 and 6.
[229] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 350.
[230] Ibid.

them."[231] Remarkably, many of the Tututni, despite being "armed with bows and arrows, knives, rifles, etc." took off their skins and allowed Scholfield to search them, "although in some cases reluctantly."[232] Needless to say, Helbert was "filled with fear and consternation during this procedure."[233] Not only did his companion apparently have a death wish, but the Tututni back at the Rogue had informed him that if he went too far up the beach there was a good chance his beard would be yanked out. Even if they were simply pulling his leg it was not something he was particularly interested in confirming, and so he strongly urged they turn back.[234] Scholfield, however, was insistent they continue forward and with his revolver in hand he cleared a path through the surrounding throng.

The pilfering done by the Tututni in this situation should not be viewed as theft in a Euro-American context. Greed was not the driving factor, but rather prestige. In some ways, it seems to have been a variation on the act of counting coup, a highly-ritualized, graded system of honors amongst Plains Indians that emphasized, among other things, touching an enemy with a bow or coup-stick, taking their weapon in battle, or capturing a horse.[235] The sly and skillful acquisition of an item, such as a hatchet, was recognized by the perpetrator's peers, granting that individual status. If the Tututni had simply wanted Scholfield and Helbert's possessions they would have forcefully stripped them naked in a matter of moments. Instead, although outnumbering the men fifty to one, they relied on

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[231] Ibid., 351.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid.
[235] Tom Holm, "American Indian Warfare," *A Companion to American Indian History*, Edited by Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury, Blackwell Companions to American History 4, (Malden, Massachusetts: John Wiley & Sons Incorporated, 2004), 169; Katrine Barber, online discussion with author, May 14, 2020.

guile to obtain certain items. For example, while Scholfield was conducting his search for the hatchet he noticed a Tututni "coming up behind him with his knife to cut the strap which bound his blankets to his back."[236] This clandestine act was not necessitated by a fear of being caught, it was a performative display of skill.

Individual honor, however, was only one aspect of this cultural phenomenon. In analyzing the relationship between the Lewis and Clark Expedition and Indigenous groups along the Columbia, historian James P. Ronda argues that the constant theft of the explorers' supplies involved two patterns of behavior.[237] The first was the belief that any items taken were proper payment for services rendered. After all, the Indians had provided invaluable support to the expedition in both information and physical labor. This might explain why the Tututni at the mouth of the Rogue had taken a few items from the sailors they had rescued—they viewed it as payment for saving their lives. The second pattern of behavior, according to Ronda, moves beyond transactional reciprocity to the more complex idea of respect. By taking a knife here and a blanket there they were reminding the Corps of Discovery they needed to acknowledge the importance of the peoples whose land they were moving through. Anthropologist David H. French likens this to the application of pressure, the purpose of which was to reestablish mutually beneficial relations.[238] Although Scholfield and Helbert were interacting with different peoples, decades later, it is interesting that the hatchet was taken only *after* they had disrespectfully walked past the seated headman and his warriors. This concept of respect

[236] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 351.
[237] James P. Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), 172.
[238] David H. French, "Wasco-Wishram," *Perspectives in American Indian Culture Change*, Edited by Edward H. Spicer, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 337-430.

and the establishment of mutually beneficial relations would play a crucial role in what eventually transpired at Battle Rock.

With the crowd now following Scholfield and Helbert "at a more respectful distance," the two men continued to make their way up the beach.[239] According to a much later account given by Scholfield's son, the Tututni they began to encounter seemed more forbidding than those to the south and were "too savage for pleasant society."[240] Even though it was thought their goal, Cape Blanco, was "only about a mile further on," they decided it was too dangerous to keep going forward and turned back.[241] The claim that the Tututni in this area were more hostile seems suspect, and may have been a later embellishment based on the belief the men were getting close to the future site of Port Orford and Battle Rock.[242] In truth, they never made it that far north, as that would have meant they had traveled roughly 30 miles in half a day. Scholfield's son mentions that they had gone a little over eight miles "from the vessel" when the Tututni took the hatchet.[243] This would have placed them a few miles south of present-day Sisters Rock, which seems to have been mistaken for Cape Blanco—still 20 miles to the north. This also lines up with C.T. Hopkins' account which states that Scholfield's party was "stopped ten miles out by a gathering crowd of threatening Indians."[244]

Soon after Scholfield and Helbert made the decision to turn back they ran into the rest of their party coming up the beach. After warning the others of the dangers in the

[239] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 352.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Scholfield's account was not published until 1916.
[243] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 350.
[244] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 115.

area, Scholfield decided it would be safer if the entire group traveled back to the Rogue on the coastal terrace. To get up there, though, they would need to pass by another village where many of the supposedly hostile-looking Tututni had gathered. As the group passed by them, Scholfield's son writes the "Indians came out and arranged themselves in a row, or rather in the segment of a circle on their knees, with their bows and arrows and other weapons ready for use."[245] Again, judging by the description it seems the Tutuni simply wanted the men to stop, sit down and trade—perhaps completing the half-circle they had already formed. After saluting them "in a friendly manner," however, Scholfield and the others hurried past.

Despite fears of an ambush on their return trip, Scholfield's party made it safely back to the ship "without molestation."[246] Once there, they learned the other parties had all come back unharmed as well. Everyone onboard was particularly surprised by this, with Hopkins writing that the Tututni "never harmed a hair of our heads!"[247] Despite this, it was determined the Rogue River area was unsuitable for a supply town. That evening a "council of war" was held aboard the *Roberts*, and although some of the shareholders wanted to return to San Francisco they were outvoted by the majority who wanted to sail north up the coast to explore the Umpqua River.[248] After being forced to wait several more days for a favorable wind, on July 30, 1850, the expedition left the Rogue and pushed back out into the Pacific. As the *Roberts* sailed north into the distance, the men on deck jokingly waved handkerchiefs at the Tututni gathered along the shore. "Good

[245] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 350.
[246] Ibid., 354
[247] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 115.
[248] C.T.H., "Explorations in Oregon," 355.

by[sic], thou paradise of rogues," Hopkins exclaimed. "Not one on board the Samuel Roberts will ever desire to visit thee again!"[249]

Five days later, on August 4, the *Roberts* made it across the equally treacherous Umpqua bar and anchored in a small bay just inside the river's mouth. Several Kalawatsets in a canoe had provided assistance in piloting the schooner, and some of the men remarked that they "appeared to have a more respectable bearing" than the Tututni along the Rogue.[250] They also "did not display a propensity to steal" and were therefore allowed to come aboard the ship.[251] Capt. Lyman attributed this to the Kalawatsets having had a lengthy trading relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company, whose Fort Umpqua was located roughly fifty miles upriver.[252] It is unlikely anyone onboard the *Roberts* knew it was the Kalawatsets who, 22 years earlier, had massacred Jedediah Smith's party.

Celebrating their safe arrival on "one of the most beautiful sheets of water on the Pacific Coast," the men onboard the *Roberts* fired the ship's cannon and shot off their muskets in the "wildest exultation."[253] This got the attention of three "Oregon pioneers" who had journeyed from the interior on a surveying expedition.[254] One of the men, Levi Scott, had established a claim 26 miles upriver—Scottsburg—in the hopes that it would serve as a supply town and mail depot for southern Oregon. Scott and his partners had

[249] Ibid.
[250] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 355.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Lyman, *The Journal of Captain Albert Lyman,* 13.
[253] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 255.
[254] Ibid.

traveled down to the Umpqua's mouth to test its navigability and to discover what sort of harbor it had.[255]

After providing the members of Winfield, Paine and Company with information on the region, Scott and his companions eagerly joined forces with the well-connected San Franciscans, merging their formerly separate enterprises into the all-new Umpqua Townsite and Colonization Company. Over the next three weeks they laid out several new settlements, including Umpqua City and West Umpqua near the river's mouth, as well as Elkton and Winchester in the interior.[256] With the previously established Scottsburg, this brought the total number of settlements to five. A gleeful Hopkins estimated that all together this equaled 15,000 town lots at a cost to shareholders of only .60 cents per lot. "How could we fail to get rich on such a layout as that," he remarked.[257] With their claims in place, a majority of the investors quickly returned to San Francisco to begin a marketing campaign promoting the new settlements.

Unfortunately for Hopkins and his partners, when the much anticipated Donation Land Claim Act passed into law in September of 1850 there was a clause preventing companies or non-residents from holding lands for the purpose of speculation. This essentially ended the enterprise, and "beaten, 'bursted' and burdened with debt," the San Francisco contingent of the Umpqua Townsite and Colonization company quickly dissolved.[258] "Within five months of the sailing of the *Samuel Roberts*," Hopkins writes,

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[255] Harold Avery Minter, *Umpqua Valley, Oregon, and Its Pioneers,* (Portland, Oregon: Binfords & Mort, 1967), 55; Verne Bright, "The Lost County, Umpqua, Oregon, and It's Early Settlements," *Oregon Historical Quarterly,* Vol. 51, No. 2 (Jun., 1950), 114.
[256] Bright, "The Lost County, Umpqua, Oregon, and It's Early Settlements," 115.
[257] Hopkins, "California Recollections," 257.
[258] Ibid., 259.

"not a man of those who returned in her, was in any manner interested in the Umpqua Country."[259] Those who had remained behind continued to develop the region, though, and prior to the enactment of the DLCA, the *Kate Heath*, a brig carrying milling machinery and a number of zinc houses, as well as seventy-five immigrants, left San Francisco to settle in the new towns.[260] These individuals, many of whom had mistakenly purchased a lot, were now, for better or worse, committed to building a life there.

Despite the commercial failure of Winfield, Paine and Company, the endeavor kick-started Euro-American "settlement" of southwestern Oregon. In this way, it was an important precursor to the events at Battle Rock. In fact, according to a man named George Cole, the first mate of the resupply vessel, *Kate Heath*, was none other than William Tichenor.[261] How he came to work onboard the ship is unclear as Tichenor never mentions it in his memoirs. He does state that after helping to establish the supply towns around Humboldt Bay he had returned to San Francisco and sold the *Jacob M. Ryerson*.[262] While he does not give a reason for parting with his schooner, like many other ship captains during the Gold Rush, he may have had difficulty maintaining a crew. As the drive to establish supply towns was now in full swing, Tichenor likely took the job onboard the *Kate Heath* as a means of scouting the area and seeing the new settlements along the Umpqua for himself, particularly Scottsburg, which due to its ideal location at

[259] Ibid., 260.
[260] Minter, *Umpqua Valley, Oregon, and Its Pioneers*, 59.
[261] George E. *Cole, Early Oregon, Jottings of Personal Recollections of a Pioneer of 1850*, (Spokane, Washington: Shaw & Borden Co., 1905), 11.
[262] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 7.

the head of navigation, had quickly become an important waystation and supply depot for the interior.[263]

Tichenor's memoir implies that by the time he took the job as first mate onboard the *Kate Heath* he was already formulating his plan to establish a supply town at Port Orford. If this is the case he would have undoubtedly viewed the Scottsburg enterprise in a competitive light. A significant drawback to its long-term viability as a coastal supply town was the need for ships to cross the hazardous Umpqua bar. In fact, by the time Tichenor arrived in the area it had already claimed one vessel, the *Bostonian*, and few weeks later almost caused the sinking of the departing *Kate Heath*.[264] Understanding that the Port Orford site, having no bar to cross, held a distinct advantage over riverine Scottsburg, Tichenor traveled back to San Francisco with a strong pitch for potential backers.

Perhaps the most significant maritime entity in San Francisco at that time was the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Three years prior, in 1847, the U.S. Postmaster General, working with the Secretary of the Navy, authorized a subsidy for the establishment of mail service to the Pacific coast. Naval appropriations required that any steamers involved in the commercial enterprise be made available to the government in times of war.[265] After a period of bidding, the U.S. Mail Steamship Company was awarded the coveted first leg of service, from New York to the Isthmus of Panama. The

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[263] A.G. Walling, *History of Southern Oregon*, (Portland: A.G. Walling, 1884), 435.
[264] Isaac J. Wistar, *The Autobiography of Isaac Jones Wistar, 1827-1905*, (Philadelphia: The Wistar Institute of Anatomy and Biology, 1914), 286.
[265] John Haskell Kemble, *A Hundred Years of the Pacific Mail*, Mariners' Museum Publication, No. 19, (Newport News, Virginia: Mariners' Museum, 1950), 6.

second leg, from Panama to the Oregon Territory, was given to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, owned by William Henry Aspinwall. Although California had only recently come under U.S. control, and the population of Oregon was small at that time, Aspinwall saw the long-term potential of shipping on the Pacific.

Needless to say, the California Gold Rush accelerated Aspinwall's plans considerably and the company was forced to subcontract steamers to handle the mass of people and goods now traveling up and down the Pacific coast. One of these vessels was the steamship *Seagull,* which Tichenor took command of in March of 1851, after which he was "immediately put on the rout of the Columbia River and intermediate ports."[266] Unsurprisingly, the Umpqua bar soon became a point of contention with Pacific Mail, and they began actively seeking a new, less treacherous point of distribution for southern Oregon.[267] Although never explicitly stated, it seems fairly obvious that Tichenor was the driving force behind this development, and it would be naïve to think he was simply acting as a good company man and was not motivated by his own personal agenda—the establishment of a supply town 75 miles south of the Umpqua at Port Orford. From there, Tichenor believed he and his partners could easily clear out a road to link up with the gold mines in the interior. In this way, he would, quite literally, undercut the competition in Scottsburg.

In his memoir, Tichenor portrays his "discovery" of the Port Orford area in a romantic, individualistic light—claiming he simply wanted to establish a "permanent

[266] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 16.
[267] Bancroft and Fuller Victor, *History of Oregon*, vol. 2, 192-193.

residence" for himself and his family.[268] In truth, it was a joint venture involving the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, as well as several high-profile individuals in both Oregon and California, including T. Butler King, chief tax collector for the Port of San Francisco, and William T'Vault, Oregon's first postmaster-general, among others.[269] Although postal delivery to southern Oregon may have been the impetus behind the project, the primary incentive for Tichenor and his partners was connecting the town to the gold diggings in the interior. In late-May of 1851, after delivering the mail to Portland, Tichenor recruited Kirkpatrick and the other members of the landing party and deposited them at the Port Orford site on his way back down the coast. Although they were not given payment up front, each of the men had been promised "a share in the town" if they spent two weeks on site, laying the groundwork.[270] As the *Sea Gull* slowly pushed its way out of the harbor, Tichenor stood on deck and waved back at Kirkpatrick and the other men before they began carrying their supplies up the large, rocky promontory.[271] The Quatomah, who at first had wanted to trade with the men, now simply stood watching from several yards away.[272] As the steamer made its way down the coast towards San Francisco, the scene on the beach retreated further and further into the distance until all of the figures around the large, black rock, both Indian and white, had become dark and indiscernible.

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[268] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 2.
[269] Tichenor, *Among the Oregon Indians*, 2; Dodge, Pioneer History, 33; Bancroft, Oregon History, 29; besides King and T'Vault, the other known partners were James Gamble, Fred Smith, and M. Hubbard.
[270] Webber and Kirkpatrick, *Battle Rock*, 23.
[271] Webber and Kirkpatrick, *Battle Rock*, 25.
[272] *The Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2

A few days later, after arriving back in San Francisco, the *Sea Gull* was seized by creditors, which ultimately prevented Tichenor from returning to Port Orford on time.[273] The details of this incident are unclear. He never mentions it in his memoirs, instead claiming he "found it necessary to repair and paint the ship."[274] This clumsy explanation does not mesh logistically with his obligation to the landing party, and the fact he wrote it thirty-five years later reveals much about his sense of pride.[275] In *Among the Oregon Indians,* he briefly mentions that the *Sea Gull* "belonged to Austens & Spicer," prominent commission merchants out of New York.[276] In March of 1851, three months prior to the *Sea Gull* being seized, Austens & Spicer went under with over a million dollars in liabilities.[277] These two incidents may have been related. Although, if Tichenor was simply the victim of another party's poor business practices, he certainly would have stated this in his memoirs. Whatever the case may be, he was suddenly unable to get back to Port Orford. In response, the Pacific Mail SS Co. arranged for Tichenor's passage aboard the steamship *Columbia*, which was making its regularly scheduled run up the coast. Whether it was due to his financial difficulties, or a lack of space onboard the ship, Tichenor was only able to bring two other men with him to augment the landing party.[278]

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[273] Dorothy Sutton, Jack Sutton, and Frances Fuller Victor, *Indian Wars of the Rogue River*, (Grants Pass, Oregon: Josephine County Historical Society, 1969), 30; "Arrived," *Daily Alta California*, Volume 2, Number 186, June 14, 1851.
[274] Tichenor, Reminiscences, 16.
[275] Tichenor wrote his "Reminiscences" in 1886, one year before his death.
[276] Tichenor, Among the Oregon Indians, 4; *The Evening Post*, February 26, 1851, page 1.
[277] Oliver Lorenzo Barbour, *Reports of Cases in Law and Equity in the Supreme Court of the State of New York*, Vol. 35, (New York: Banks & Gould, 1862), 345; *New York Tribune*, March 6, 1851, page 8.
[278] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.

On June 21, the *Columbia* set out on its journey north, stopping twice at Humboldt and Trinidad before arriving at the Port Orford site.[279] A detailed account of the subsequent landing and investigation of the area by Tichenor and others onboard the ship was provided to an Oregon newspaper by a San Francisco attorney named D.S. Roberts, who identifies himself as being the "purser of the steamship Columbia."[280] Outside of a few remarks made by Tichenor in his memoirs, Roberts' account of what was discovered that day is the only one known to exist. It is an interesting document, rife with inconsistencies as well as a noticeable bias in its tone. It certainly does not read as if it were the observations of an impartial witness. Instead, it seems to have been constructed to absolve Tichenor, and perhaps more importantly the Pacific Mail SS Co., of any negligence or wrongdoing.

Roberts begins the letter by stating he is providing details of the "sad transaction," to place residents of the Oregon Territory on their guard as to the "nature and disposition of the Indians…"[281] After giving background information on the Port Orford enterprise, he says it was selected as the location for a settlement because it has a "better harbor than either Trinidad or Humboldt."[282] This not-so-subtle endorsement is followed by a description of Tichenor's "well-armed and provisioned" landing party, as well as their orders to "deal carefully with the Indians."[283] Of course, this directly contradicts Kirkpatrick's account of he and the other men raising concerns about their lack of arms

[279] "Sailed," *Daily Alta California*, Volume 2, Number 194, June 22, 1851; *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.
[280] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, July 23, 1850, page 2; *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.
[281] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.

and ammunition, as well as Tichenor's response that the Quatomah were "perfectly friendly."[284]

Roberts then explains how the Pacific Mail SS Co. had offered Tichenor and the "two others who were with him" passage aboard the *Columbia* as it made its way up the coast.[285] This statement is framed in such a way as to distance the company from the Port Orford enterprise by implying they were simply providing transportation. Roberts also stresses that the *Columbia* arrived at Port Orford on June 23, "the very day set by Capt. Tichenor for his return."[286] This emphasis on establishing punctuality is suspiciously forced in Roberts' letter. Kirkpatrick later refutes this by stating the landing party did not abandon the rocky promontory until the evening of the 24th.[287] Since Roberts claims that they "came in sight of Port Orford at 9'oclock in the morning," this would make the *Columbia's* earliest possible arrival June 25th, four days after beginning its journey north.[288] This timeframe is corroborated by the *Daily Alta California*, which indicated it had taken the *Sea Gull* four days to travel south from Port Orford to San Francisco.[289]

According to Roberts, as soon as the *Columbia* arrived at Port Orford they spotted smoke from a campfire at the base of the rocky promontory, which made them believe "the men were all safe and waiting for the arrival of the steamer."[290] After the ship dropped anchor, however, someone noticed three Indians running away from the

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[284] Kirkpatrick and Dodge, *The Heroes of Battle Rock*, 1; see pages 11-12 of this thesis.
[285] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.
[286] Ibid; June 23 was exactly fourteen days after Tichenor had left the landing party at Port Orford.
[287] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[288] "Sailed," *Daily Alta California*, Volume 2, Number 194, June 22, 1851;
[289] "Arrived," *Daily Alta California*, Volume 2, Number 186, June 14, 1851; Tichenor deposited the men at Port Orford on June 9 and arrived back in San Francisco on June 13.
[290] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2.

promontory and down the beach to the south. Three more were spotted in a canoe, "pulling with all speed in the same direction."[291] The men onboard the *Columbia* decided to fire off the ship's signal cannon to announce their arrival and to see "what effect the sound of it would produce on the Indians in the canoe."[292] Roberts writes the blast caused them to fall flat, "as if through fear," before they hurriedly paddled to shore, jumped out, and disappeared into the woods.[293]

After waiting several minutes without any sign of the landing party it was decided that a group should go ashore to investigate, and a whale boat containing "Capt. LeRoy, Capt. Tichenor, Mr. Catherwood, and six or eight others" set out for the beach.[294] Interestingly, Roberts does not include himself in the list of people going as one would normally do. It might simply be an oversight as he does say "we" quite frequently. At the same time, though, not once does he use first person singular in his letter, which is odd considering it is supposedly an account of his own observations. This suggests he may not have actually gone ashore and instead the letter was composed in collaboration with someone who did—most likely Tichenor.

After the group landed on the beach, Roberts says the first thing they noticed was a large amount of pilot bread, several books, and an assortment of carpenter tools strewn about the sand. They quickly made their way up to the top of the rocky promontory where the landing party had made a fortified camp. Here they found "nothing but destruction," Roberts writes, "which seemed to tell plainly the fate of those who had been

[291] Ibid.
[292] Ibid.
[293] Ibid.
[294] Ibid.

left."[295] Potatoes lay scattered about and he speculates that the Quatomah, not knowing what they were, had simply left them behind. He also writes the group noticed signs of a "severe struggle," but does not elaborate on what those signs were.[296] This comment is interesting because the battle between the Quatomah and the landing party, according to Kirkpatrick, took place on June 10, a full fifteen days prior to Roberts and the others arriving on the scene.

At this point, the search party found a discarded journal written by Kirkpatrick, which Roberts says "gave some clue as to what had taken place."[297] Although he claims he is quoting directly from it, strange inconsistencies appear almost immediately. For example, according to Roberts, the first line stated the landing party "arrived at our post on the 8th of June."[298] This is incorrect. The men were deposited onto the beach on June 9. Normally, this might be dismissed as a simple error. However, in light of their agreement with Tichenor, who had promised to return in exactly fourteen days, this seems highly unlikely. It is possible the date in Kirkpatrick's journal was changed, as that one day difference becomes highly significant if it led the landing party to abandon their campsite early, which is what Roberts implies by stating they arrived at Port Orford on time.

Kirkpatrick's journal—as recounted by Roberts—goes on to say that thirty-three Quatomah warriors attacked their camp the morning after their arrival, and that during the battle they had discharged the cannon. Fierce hand-to-hand combat ensued until the

[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.

Quatomah finally gave up and retreated, leaving "18 or 20 dead on the field."[299] According to Roberts, Kirkpatrick had written in his journal that three of their group had suffered significant arrow wounds during the fighting, including himself, who had one "through the neck."[300] Kirkpatrick never mentions having a neck wound in his account to the *Statesman,* or *any* wound for that matter. He simply says, "There were four of our men wounded," but does not give any specifics as to whom and in what way. As they were all well enough to travel close to seventy miles through the wilderness, though, it is unlikely their injuries were that significant.

After the search party finished reading through Kirkpatrick's journal they descended the rocky promontory back down to the beach. At the bottom they noticed an odd-looking patch of sand with several large stones upon it. "It struck us that someone was buried there," Roberts writes, and grabbing the oars from the whale boat to use as shovels the men began digging until "The dead body of an Indian was found."[301] The identity of this unfortunate individual is one of the most intriguing aspects of the narrative surrounding Battle Rock. Although Roberts describes him as an "Indian" it is unclear why he was buried in such an odd location, alone and separate from his fallen comrades. Kirkpatrick never even mentions the man in his account. Decades later, however, he would tell historian Orvil Dodge that he was a shipwrecked Russian sailor, "who had been among the Indians for many years."[302]

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[299] Ibid.
[300] Ibid.
[301] Ibid.
[302] Orvil Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties,* 38.

This leads to the question of whether or not the search party could tell that it was a white man, and if so why Roberts had reported the body belonged to an "Indian." In his account to Dodge, Kirkpatrick describes the man as having "yellow hair and a freckled face."[303] Although he had been buried in the sand for two weeks it is likely these distinct, non-Indian characteristics would have still been noticeable. According to Kirkpatrick, the man had also stood out because he was not dressed in Quatomah garb.[304] If he did not have black hair or dark skin and was not dressed in Indian attire it is unclear why the search party would think the man was one. After all, they were apparently able to discern the body was not a member of the landing party, which would have been the logical assumption considering his appearance and the nature of the burial.[305] One possibility is that Tichenor and Roberts, believing white on white violence would expose them to more scrutiny, decided it would be better to report the man was an Indian, and the fact that Kirkpatrick does not reveal this interesting detail until years later suggests he too may have felt the same way.

After they had reburied the mysterious body, Roberts writes that Tichenor and two other men climbed a nearby hill to search for more clues. Although he does not provide the names of the men, it is likely these were the "two others" who had boarded the *Columbia* with Tichenor back in San Francisco.[306] While investigating on the hill they supposedly discovered yet another journal that had been discarded, this one providing more details about what had transpired. According to Roberts, the anonymous author of

[303] Ibid.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2; see page 12.

this journal wrote that the landing party "entertained some fears of the Indians, who began to gather along the beach in considerable numbers."[307] As a result, Kirkpatrick and the others set up the signal cannon so as to "rake the passage" leading up to their camp.[308] The author says the Quatomah "appeared friendly at first," and even wanted to trade.[309] When they saw the *Sea Gull* leave, however, their attitude changed and they became "saucy."[310] After demanding that Kirkpatrick and his men vacate the area, without success, the Quatomah walked off into the woods.

According to this second journal, on the following morning the men were awoken by the sound of Indians gathering on the beach below. More came up from the area around the mouth of the Rogue River making "about 40 of them on the ground at sunup."[311] This is a different figure than the very specific "thirty-three" given by Kirkpatrick, and the number increases even more as the author of the second journal then states that twelve more "came up the coast in a large canoe," joining the others around a bonfire.[312] Interestingly, Kirkpatrick, in his subsequent account to the *Statesman* newspaper, gives the exact same numbers as the anonymous author, as opposed to his original "thirty-three."[313] This indicates he was influenced by Roberts' account of the second journal and modified his numbers so they would match.

The anonymous author then claims the Quatomah "held a kind of council of war" while two or three others danced around the fire at a "furious rate, snapping their

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[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] Ibid.
[313] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.

bowstrings at every turn they made."[314] This went on for half an hour during which time even more Quatomah arrived. Soon, they began approaching the rocky promontory and the author says "two or three of us went part of the way down the hill and motioned them to keep off, but they were bent for a fight."[315] Ignoring the warnings, the Quatomah advanced up the rock, forcing the men to retreat. As they got closer, one of the Quatomah, "who appeared to be a leader among them," grabbed the barrel of one of the men's rifles and tried to "wrest it from him; they—"[316] It is here that Roberts says the anonymous journal suddenly ended, "the remaining leaves having been without doubt scattered about by the Indians."[317] That it supposedly stopped at that exact point seems like a heavy-handed attempt at suspense building. It should also be noted that Kirkpatrick, in his decades-later account to Orvil Dodge, revealed that the one who grabbed the rifle was none other than the shipwrecked Russian sailor! This means the highly significant detail of a white man leading the Quatomah was either not mentioned in the anonymous second journal or that Roberts intentionally left it out of his account.

After relating the supposed contents of the anonymous second journal, the search party decided it was "useless to remain on shore any longer" and reboarded the whale boat to head back to the *Columbia*.[318] When they were roughly halfway to the ship, a man suddenly appeared back on the beach, "dressed in the clothing of a white man, wearing a California hat, and having a rifle on his back."[319] Thinking it was a member of

[314] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Ibid.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.

Kirkpatrick's party, they immediately turned the boat around. As soon as they did, however, the man "started for the woods."[320] Surprised, the group fired a rifle in the man's direction causing him to fall down and take cover, "just as the Indians in the canoe had done."[321] After a few moments, though, he quickly got up and ran into the woods. Roberts says the search party was now convinced that Kirkpatrick and his men must have been "wholly or partially destroyed."[322]

At the end of his letter to the newspaper, Roberts speculates on what may have happened to the landing party, and makes the curious statement that they "acted very foolishly and rashly" by abandoning their post. Obviously, this is something he could not have known, and it is clear he is building an argument that Tichenor and the Pacific Mail SS Co. are not to blame for whatever may have happened. The question we are left with is how much of Roberts' account is truth and how much of it is a fabrication? Believing the landing party was dead, the two discarded journals the search party supposedly discovered provided Roberts and Tichenor with the perfect narrative device through which they could construct essentially whatever story they wanted. The anonymous second journal seems particularly suspicious as it is conveniently free from any association to a specific individual. Even its supposed discovery by Tichenor and his two associates—away from the rest of the search party—seems to have been specifically designed to insulate it from any scrutiny. While it is unlikely that both were entirely

[320] Ibid.
[321] Ibid.
[322] Ibid.

fabricated, as Kirkpatrick does say he left a journal behind, it appears, at the very least, that certain "alterations" were made.

One example is the erroneous one-day-earlier arrival date supposedly written in Kirkpatrick's journal, which implies he believed Tichenor's return would be on the 22nd of June, as opposed to the agreed upon 23rd—something that Roberts awkwardly emphasizes at the beginning of his account. Why does that one day matter? If they believed Tichenor was late, when in fact he was not, and they abandoned their fortified camp because of it, then they would have been acting "foolishly and rashly," just as Roberts claimed they were. The fact remains, if the men were either dead, captured, or hopelessly lost in the woods, as was believed, then Roberts and Tichenor could say whatever they wanted to protect the enterprise from being liable—even if that meant making the Quatomah out to be hostile aggressors.

The situation changed on July 9 when word reached Portland the landing party, or "Gallant Nine" as they were now being called, were not the victims of an Indian massacre after all.[323] The group had stumbled out of the wilderness alive and well on July 2, and were recovering in the friendly confines of Scottsburg along the Umpqua River.[324] A few days after their safe return, Kirkpatrick read Roberts account in the newspaper and became upset at what he felt was a poor portrayal of him and his men.[325] Determined to correct the record, he parted ways with the rest of the group and traveled north to Portland, arriving there on July 14. The following day, the *Oregon Statesman* published a

[323] Oregon Spectator, July 10, 1851, page 3
[324] Ibid.
[325] Webber and Kirkpatrick, *Battle Rock*, 52.

letter by Kirkpatrick in which he begins by stating, as leader of the landing party, it was his duty to "make a plain statement of our transactions … and also give the reasons why we left."[326] A fundamental element of his letter—one that cannot be overlooked—is his desire to remain involved in the Port Orford enterprise. Kirkpatrick and the others had not been paid up front. Instead, as was stated earlier, they had been promised "a share in the town."[327] If he contradicted Roberts' narrative too aggressively he risked alienating himself and the others. This compelled him to operate *within* the confines of Roberts' account. This is evident within the first few lines as Kirkpatrick copies, almost word for word, the anonymous journal that Roberts had claimed was discovered by Tichenor.

The landing, establishing the camp on top of the rock, positioning the cannon, the fears about the Quatomah—all of the details that were in the journal are exactly the same in Kirkpatrick's account to the *Statesman*. Even the number of Quatomah, which had been a very specific "thirty-three" in his *own* journal, now matched the much higher figure given in the anonymous one.[328] And whereas the latter had ended in the dubious cliffhanger of the "Indian" grabbing the barrel of a rifle and trying to pull it away from one of the men, Kirkpatrick now seamlessly picks up the story by saying another member of the group came to the rescue and struck the man over the hands until he let go. Kirkpatrick claims the enraged Quatomah then shot a "volley of arrows" at the landing party before continuing their hostile advance up the narrow ridge.[329]

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[326] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[327] Webber and Kirkpatrick, *Battle Rock*, 23; see page 9.
[328] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[329] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.

The war party was approximately six feet from the mouth of the cannon when Kirkpatrick decided to set it off with a firebrand, instantly "killing some six or eight dead."[330] It had been packed with two handfuls of one-inch bar lead, creating what must have been a horrifically gruesome scene. In the stunned, blood-splattered aftermath, chaos and confusion ensued, and Kirkpatrick's men mercilessly took advantage of this with a "discharge from our rifles and pistols."[331] Only three warriors made it through the barrage and into the men's camp, and they were quickly knocked down and beaten with rifle butts. When the survivors finally broke and ran, many having hurled themselves off the rock into the ocean, Kirkpatrick says they left behind "thirteen dead on the ground."[332] It should be noted this figure differs from the "18 or 20" written in his journal.[333] Although, he then matches Roberts' account by saying he later learned from an Indian at the mouth of the Umpqua River that there were "20 killed and 15 wounded" in the battle.[334] As was stated earlier, Kirkpatrick says "four of our men were wounded," but he mentions nothing about an arrow wound through his own neck.[335]

Later that afternoon, "a chief came up the beach and made signs that he wanted to come into camp."[336] Once the landing party allowed him to do so he slowly carried away his dead comrades. Kirkpatrick attempted to communicate that "in fourteen days from the time that we arrived there, we would go away again."[337] Meaning on June 23, when

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[330] Ibid.
[331] Ibid.
[332] Ibid.
[333] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[334] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Ibid.

Tichenor had promised to return, he and his men would leave the area. Of course, this was a lie and Kirkpatrick was simply buying time until reinforcements arrived. He adds they were not "troubled by them [the Quatomah] any more until the morning of the 15th day."[338] This means the landing party was still at Port Orford on June 24—one day *after* Roberts claims the *Columbia* arrived on the scene. This is the point where Kirkpatrick, unwilling to be depicted in the press as someone who acted "foolishly and rashly," breaks from Roberts by claiming he and the others had *not* abandoned their post early.[339]

When judging the veracity of Kirkpatrick's account, it is important to remember that Roberts' letter had put him on the defensive. He needed to justify the actions of him and his men. As such, it was in his own best interest to depict the Quatomah in as hostile a light as possible. This is to say nothing of the effect that racial stereotypes and youthful bravado had on his account. While little is known about his life, it is clear he was someone who was very concerned about establishing a particular persona. Years later, a member of the landing party told an interviewer they had appointed him as leader of the expedition, despite the fact he was only twenty-three years old, because he had repeatedly told them he was a close friend and protégé of Kit Carson, and had extensive "knowledge and experience of Indian cunning and fighting…"[340] In an interview of his own, three decades after the Port Orford incident, Kirkpatrick romantically depicts himself as a grand old Indian-fighter who wandered the West and "made it safe for the soldiers to go there."[341] Not only does he reference his close friendship with Carson, he also places

[338] Ibid.
[339] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[340] "Bloody Baptism of Battle Rock," *The Sunday Oregonian*, January 11, 1903, page 1.
[341] "Far West Experiences," *The Eutaw Whig and Observer*, March 22, 1883, page 1

himself alongside some of the central figures of early Oregon history. Ultimately, it was this fierce attentiveness to his own image that compelled him, perhaps against his better judgement, to refute the timeframe that Roberts had established.

Kirkpatrick states the Quatomah, having been led to believe the men were leaving on June 23, angrily prepared for another attack on the morning of the 24th. He claims there were "a great many more at the second fight than at the first," and that roughly 150 warriors had amassed at the base of the rocky promontory.[342] The threat of the cannon seems to have held them at bay and Kirkpatrick says their chief "could not prevail on them to make a second rush on us."[343] Instead, they shot arrows from a distance of three hundred yards and although many of the projectiles fell into the camp none of men in the landing party "received the slightest injury."[344]

Despite the unwillingness of the Quatomah to attack again, Kirkpatrick says the men had to make a decision. "We had not more than eight or nine rounds of shot left, and we were surrounded by at least 150 Indians."[345] The only viable option, in his view, was to "take to the woods and make our way to the habitation of white men."[346] Fortune appeared to favor this plan when the majority of the Quatomah suddenly moved off down the beach and built several bonfires at the mouth of a small creek, leaving only a few warriors behind to keep watch. Kirkpatrick and the other men pretended as if they were preparing for battle and eventually "this movement had the desired effect."[347] The few

[342] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Ibid.
[345] Ibid.
[346] Ibid.
[347] Ibid.

remaining warriors all left and ran down the beach to join the others. Seeing their chance, the landing party quickly descended the rocky promontory and ran off through the woods, "for about five miles," before heading back out onto the beach.[348] They then, "traveled up the beach," which implies they were going north, until they ran into a group of thirty warriors, "all armed with bows and arrows and long knives."[349] Kirkpatrick claims he and the other eight men heroically charged at the Indians "and when they saw that we would attack them, they broke for the timber."[350] This somewhat dubious story is suspiciously reminiscent of the *Anabasis*, Xenophon's famous account of Greek hoplites escaping to safety from behind enemy lines.[351] The work was extremely popular in antebellum America, particularly during the Mexican War.[352]

After their encounter with the warriors, Kirkpatrick and his men "continued up the coast" for the next two days, alternating between the woods and the beach.[353] Eventually, they came across a fresh path, "where a great many Indians had trailed up the coast."[354] The men followed it for five miles until they reached the mouth of a small creek where it suddenly stopped and turned back again. Kirkpatrick speculates the Indians "followed us thus far the first night," and this was where they had given up and gone back home.[355] Needless to say, this statement is confusing. If the landing party had

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[348] Ibid.
[349] Ibid.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Xen. *Anab.* 1.8.14
[352] Tim Rood, *American Anabasis: Xenophon and the Idea of America from the Mexican War to Iraq,* (New York: Overlook Press, 2010), 53-72.
[353] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Ibid.

been travelling for two days how could they have just reached the point where the Indians who were chasing them on the first night had given up and turned around?

Kirkpatrick's account gets even more perplexing when he says the group continued "up the beach" for about fifteen miles before they came to "the mouth of the Rogue River."[356] How is it possible for them to have just arrived at a river that was twenty miles *south* of Port Orford? The logical explanation is that they mistook another river, such as the Coquille, for the Rogue. This is exactly what E.A. Schwartz surmises in his history of the Rogue River War.[357] Stephen Dow Beckham, in his study of the war, does not even speculate he simply changes it to the Coquille.[358] The problem with this is that in Roberts' account he quotes the anonymous journal as saying the Quatomah had come north "from towards the mouth of the Rogue River," which means the men knew exactly where it was located.[359] While this may have simply been a mistake, another intriguing possibility is the anonymous journal, or at least that section of it, was fabricated by someone who was *not* a member of the landing party.

Assuming it was simply a mistake, Kirkpatrick and the other men arrived at the Coquille River and found two large Indian villages on the opposite bank. "As soon as they saw us," he writes, "they prepared for a fight."[360] The Indians supposedly lit a bonfire on top of a bluff in preparation for battle, and with "nothing but the river between us," Kirkpatrick says he and the others fled back into the woods.[361] They traveled upriver

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[356] Ibid.
[357] E.A. Schwartz, *The Rogue River Indian War*, 34.
[358] Stephen Dow Beckham, *Requiem for a People*, 56.
[359] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[360] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[361] Ibid.

for roughly eight miles, eventually lashing together some old logs to cross to the other side, before quickly making their way up into the mountains. It seems odd that none of the supposedly battle-hungry Indians from the villages had followed the group, but Kirkpatrick never mentions them again.

Kirkpatrick continues his account by stating that it had been four days since he and the others had eaten anything other than salmonberries. Why they had not taken any food with them when they left the promontory is another puzzling aspect of his story. According to Roberts' description of their abandoned campsite, the men still had pilot bread and potatoes when they set out—and that was just what was left untouched by the Quatomah.[362] That none of the men thought to throw some food into a sack before running off into the wilderness seems unlikely. Although, it is possible they believed they were closer to a Euro-American settlement than they actually were, or perhaps they simply ate everything on their first night in the woods. Regardless, the group was in desperate need of food.

Moving tentatively back down to the beach, they were able to find some mussels, "which revived us some."[363] Not long after, they arrived at the mouth of a river, thought to be the Coos, and "got among some friendly Indians" who gave the men something to eat.[364] Kirkpatrick writes they then "struck out across the sand hills" and waded through a swamp before arriving on the following morning at the mouth of the Umpqua River—eight days after abandoning the rocky promontory.[365] When they stumbled into Umpqua

[362] *The Weekly Times*, Portland, July 3, 1851, page 2
[363] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.
[364] Schwartz, *The Rogue River Indian War*, 34
[365] *Oregon Statesman*, July 15, 1851, page 2.

City, the settlers apparently greeted the men with cheers and a "hearty shake of the hand."[366] Not long after, they traveled upriver to Scottsburg, where they rested for a few days. It was here that Kirkpatrick read Roberts' account in the newspaper and then left the group for Portland.

Toward the end of his letter to the *Statesman*, Kirkpatrick directly addresses the account given by Roberts. "I submit these facts to the decision of our fellow citizens," he writes, "to know whether we acted foolishly and rashly, as has been stated by a certain gentleman [Roberts] in a letter to the *Oregonian*, or not."[367] He then refutes the claim that Tichenor returned on time and says, quite remarkably, "As dead men make no contradictions, this gentleman had smoothed the matter over by making an incorrect statement of the time so as to lay all blame upon us."[368] He quickly follows this up by writing that he is the "last man to lay any blame on Captain Tichenor," and that he is aware of the circumstances that detained him in San Francisco.[369] It is possible that Kirkpatrick was unaware of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's involvement in the enterprise, instead believing that Tichenor was the only one needing appeasement. Perhaps his youthful sense of bravado would not allow him to see that Roberts was much more than an impartial witness, or perhaps he was simply naïve. Perhaps he knew exactly who Roberts was and what he was doing, but decided that protecting his honor was worth the risk of being ousted from Port Orford.

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[366] Ibid.
[367] Ibid.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Ibid.

Whatever the case may be, after praising Tichenor one final time, Kirkpatrick gives a lengthy and somewhat awkward sales pitch of Port Orford, painting it as a veritable Eden just waiting to be settled. Not only did he claim it had the "richest soil" and "finest timber" he had ever seen, he makes sure to add that he and his men saw traces of both coal and gold in the hills.[370] "It will in all probability become an important point," he writes.[371] This last section of the letter is clearly meant to ingratiate himself to Tichenor and promote his continued involvement in the endeavor, despite his public refutation of Roberts' timeframe. Whether he was successful or not is unclear. Although, it should be noted that Kirkpatrick's name never again appears in reports surrounding the enterprise.

For the next few decades, the Roberts and Kirkpatrick letters were the only accounts of what transpired between the landing party and the Quatomah written by people who were directly involved. This somewhat surprising documentary silence in the aftermath of the event helped to solidify its historicity. By as early as 1855, four years after the incident, the large, rocky promontory on the beach was already being referred to as "Battle Rock," and the supposedly heroic actions of its nine "defenders" had been firmly enshrined in regional lore.

[370] Ibid.
[371] Ibid.

EPILOGUE

After Tichenor and the rest of the search party had left the Port Orford site, fearing the worst, they continued on to Portland where Roberts' account was delivered to a local newspaper. Tichenor then took the *Columbia* back down the coast, arriving in San Francisco on July 1. In his memoirs, he claims that when he related the news of the supposed massacre of the landing party it caused "much feeling" in the city.[372] Capitalizing on this, he quickly printed handbills that not only decried the "tragedy," but simultaneously promoted the gold mining prospects in the region.[373] Within a few days, Tichenor's propaganda campaign had mustered what he described as sixty-seven, "desperate bad men," and under the command of one of his partners, James S. Gamble, the heavily-armed force, bent on retribution, returned to the Port Orford site—this time to stay.[374]

Over the next few weeks, the men erected "two forts on commanding points," and secured the area within an extensive palisade.[375] Then, at the end of August, 1851, an expedition of twenty-three men, led by one of Tichenor's partners, William G. T'Vault, set out to carve a path that would connect the fledgling settlement to the gold mines in the interior. Traveling south until they reached the Rogue, the group turned inland and slowly made their way upriver. After several days of what seemed to be aimless wandering, some of the men began to question T'Vault's pathfinding abilities, ultimately quitting the

[372] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 17.
[373] Patrick Masterson, *Port Orford, a History*, (Wilsonville, Oregon: Book Partners, 1994), 4.
[374] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 17.
[375] "Port Orford Correspondence," *Daily Alta California,* August 1, 1851.

expedition outright and making their way back to Port Orford. The remaining group—nine in total—continued on and eventually reached the Coquille River. There, some Upper Coquille Indians loaded the starving and exhausted men into canoes and took them downstream to a large village at the river's mouth. When the men stepped ashore they were attacked. T'Vault and three others managed to escape, but the other five men in the group were killed.

On the same day that T'Vault and the others were attacked, Anson Dart, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, arrived in Port Orford accompanied by Lt. August Kautz and twenty dragoons. Kautz had orders to establish an army post to provide protection for settlers arriving on the coast. Dart was there to establish treaties with the Quatomah and their Tututni neighbors. On September 20, 1851, Dart sat with the "chiefs and headmen" and promised them various items of clothing, tobacco, kettles, and other goods, along with $2,500 a year for ten years. In exchange, the Tututni ceded all of the land between the Rogue and Coquille rivers from the coastline up to the summit of the Cascade mountains—roughly six hundred square miles. Although both parties "set their hands" to the treaty, it was never ratified by Congress.[376]

When news of the attack on T'Vault's party reached San Francisco, the commander of the Department of the Pacific, General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, deployed 130 additional soldiers to Port Orford with orders to "punish and subdue" the Coquilles.[377] On November 22, 1851, the punitive expedition located the Coquille's camp. Ten soldiers in two canoes casually rowed upstream, serving as a distraction, while

[376] 53rd United States Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document Number 25, 4-6.
[377] 32nd United States Congress, 1st Session, House Executive Document Number 2, 149.

the rest of the force quietly flanked the Coquille's position. When the latter, spotting the men in the canoes, began firing their rifles, Col. Silas Casey ordered his men to attack—killing fifteen. Two American soldiers injured in the clash later died of their wounds.[378] This "officially" began a cycle of violence in the region that would last for the better part of a decade.

J.M. Kirkpatrick's claim that Port Orford would become an "important point" was indeed accurate, although probably not in the way he had imagined. It never became the next San Francisco, as Tichenor and his partners had hoped it would. Instead, it became a nexus point in the conquest and subjugation of Indigenous groups in southwestern Oregon. Over the next several years, the "desperate bad men" that Tichenor had recruited in San Francisco, continued to flow into the region—many operating out of Port Orford—and this contingent of Mexican War veterans, disillusioned miners, and shiftless "pikes," played a fundamental role in the outbreak of what has been called the Rogue River War.[379] In June of 1856, after five years of immense heartache and bloodshed, the steamship *Columbia* returned once again to Port Orford, this time to transport 1,500 Indigenous survivors to what would become the Siletz Reservation.[380]

During this turbulent period, the rocky promontory upon which the Port Orford landing party and the Quatomah had clashed was transformed into a kind of sacred space known as "Battle Rock"—the name it still possesses today. According to historian Orvil

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[378] Beckham, *Requiem for a People*, 67; "The Port Orford Expedition Against the Indians," *Daily Alta California*, December 14, 1851.
[379] Tichenor, *Reminiscences*, 17; Roger H. Pearl, "The Shiftless Belligerent Pike: An Early Western Emigrant Type as Described by Clarence King," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Jun., 1959), pp. 113-129.
[380] Wilkinson, The People Are Dancing Again, 159.

Dodge, in the spring of 1857, a leader of the Indigenous resistance named Enos Thomas was taken down to the beach and "hanged on historical Battle Rock, where his body was buried."[381] Hangings were conducted on the rock at least twice during the period, indicating its symbolic importance.[382] In articles and early histories, writers frequently referred to the rock as having undergone a "bloody baptism," which along with the executions, implies that it had an altar-like status to Euro-Americans in the region.[383] In the 1920's, the body of Erastus Summers, one of the members of the Port Orford landing party, was disinterred by his descendants and reburied on top of the rock along with his wife and son, presumably alongside the bodies of Enos and the other Indian who was executed.

Despite the rock's cultural importance, for decades the only narrative of its celebrated transformation were the two letters provided by Roberts and Kirkpatrick. That was it. Then, in 1871, Anson Dart, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who two decades prior had attempted to establish treaties with the Quatomah and others, sent a letter to the chairman of the Bureau of Indian Commissioners in which he provided "some curious revelations" about what had occurred between the Port Orford landing party and the Quatomah.[384] Dart claimed the so-called "battle" had actually been "an atrocious massacre of peaceable and friendly Indians."[385] He goes on to say the Quatomah had helped Kirkpatrick and the other men carry supplies to the top of the rock, and were then

[381] Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties*, 367.
[382] Douthit, *Uncertain Encounters*, 166.
[383] Kirkpatrick, and Dodge, *The Heroes of Battle Rock*, 4; "Bloody Baptism of Battle Rock," *The Sunday Oregonian*, January 11, 1903, page 1;
[384] "Early White Treachery," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1873, page 7.
[385] Ibid.

told to come back just before dark "to get their pay."[386] When the Quatomah returned, they climbed up the promontory's narrow passage and into a brutal ambush.

Dart's account, however, is filled with inconsistencies, and he conflates specific details from two separate events. For example, he says that "some sixty or more" men were in the original landing party, which is obviously incorrect. Although, that *is* roughly the same number of men that Tichenor returned with on August 14.[387] He then states that an eight-man expedition was "engaged in their work of exploration in the interior when the cannon was discharged and the Indians killed," clearly referring to the later T'Vault expedition.[388] Still, despite its errors, Dart's account is intriguing, and two years later it was published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* under the headline "Early White Treachery."[389]

One week after Dart's account appeared in the newspaper a mysterious letter was sent anonymously to the editor of the *Chronicle* by a person referring to themselves as "Pioneer."[390] The individual claimed they had been at the landing, "and assisted in carrying things from the boat."[391] Although he may have simply been a crew member aboard the *Sea Gull*, the author later refers to "our party," which implies he was one of the nine who stayed.[392] Angrily refuting the details of Dart's letter, the man scoffs at the idea that a "party of only nine men would go to such a remote and unknown place as

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[386] Ibid.
[387] See page 19.
[388] "Early White Treachery," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1873, page 7.
[389] Ibid.
[390] "Anson Dart's Romance," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 26, 1873, page 3.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Ibid.

early as 1851 and commence war with a tribe of Indians…"[393] This argument is valid, and it seems unlikely that Kirkpatrick's party would have intentionally instigated an attack on an unknown number of Indians knowing they would be alone in the wilderness without reinforcements for two weeks.

Twenty five years after these two letters appeared in the Chronicle, Kirkpatrick reappeared and wrote a second, much more detailed account of the Port Orford landing for the historian, Orvil Dodge. Entitled *The Heroes of Battle Rock*, this glossy, streamlined narrative "corrected" the inconsistencies in the two original accounts, synthesizing them into a cohesive whole.[394] This version became the "official" story of Battle Rock, and has been used by historians up to the present day. [395] One interesting aspect of the text is its negative depiction of Tichenor. The claims about the men not being provided with sufficient weaponry, and his insistence that the Quatomah were "perfectly friendly," first appear in this latter version. It seems that Kirkpatrick, now around 70 years old, was no longer concerned about appeasing anyone who had been involved in the Port Orford enterprise. Despite this added color, the story itself is the same byproduct of the original newspaper accounts. Whatever truth may have been lurking beneath the lines of the original letters is buried even deeper in this second, more romanticized version.

While we will never know exactly what happened on top of the rocky promontory, there are two lesser-known accounts that provide a glimpse. In 1886, one of

[393] Ibid.
[394] Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties*, 33-50.
[395] Schwartz, Beckham, and Douthit all use Kirkpatrick's second account in their works.

the members of the Port Orford landing party, John Egan, made an appearance at a meeting of Indian war veterans and spoke briefly about the events at Battle Rock. According to him, on the day of the "battle," a large group of Quatomah had climbed the rocky promontory wanting to get into their camp. Egan states that he and a couple of others "stopped them at a little plateau about ten feet from the [top of the] rock and parleyed with them there, where about twenty could stand."[396] He goes on to say they were determined to hold them but the "pressure from behind was too strong, so we fell further back…"[397] This implies that Egan and the others were physically touching the Quatomah in the front, which, along with the supposed parleying, is not something that would have happened if the men had truly been under attack. The traditional narrative, however, would have us believe that at this point there were arrows whizzing through the air.

Egan continues by claiming the Quatomah began "snatching at our clothes, provisions and other property."[398] Eventually, a member of the landing party came forward with an armful of shirts and "threw them among the Indians."[399] This action created a frenzy on top of the narrow walkway as the Quatomah scrambled for the items. "Like Oliver Twist," Egan states, "they wanted more … and with a rush came at us."[400] This is the moment when the cannon exploded in the morning air, its lead bar shot tearing

[396] *The Oregonian*, February 21, 1886, page 5.
[397] Ibid.
[398] Ibid.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Ibid.

through the clamoring crowd, and suddenly, with this new information, the heroic "defense" of Battle Rock becomes something much different.

The "rush" of the Quatomah, as described by Egan, is reminiscent of Nathan Scholfield's encounter one year prior as part of the Klamath Exploring Expedition.[401] When he and Mr. Helbert, traveling up the beach twenty miles south of the Port Orford area, had disrespectfully walked past the seated headman and his warriors rather than sit down with them, the crowd of Tututni who were following "pressed in on" the men and began snatching at their possessions, eventually taking a hatchet.[402] Historian James P. Ronda and anthropologist David H. French have both argued that Indigenous groups in the region committed what Euro-Americans viewed as theft as a way to enforce a certain standard of reciprocity.[403] This could be payment for passage through their lands or for a service rendered, such as helping portage a canoe.[404] In the account provided by Anson Dart, later published in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, he claims the Quatomah had helped the landing party carry the cannon to the top of the rocky promontory. This was corroborated by the mysterious "Pioneer," who reluctantly states that the Quatomah "did assist some."[405] However, he insists they had "volunteered" and there was no promise of payment, as Dart had claimed.

The other, lesser-known account is a statement delivered by a controversial figure named Elwood Alfred Towner, "Attorney for Oregon Indians." Towner was a fervent

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[401] See page 51.
[402] Scholfield, "The Klamath Exploring Expedition," 350-351.
[403] Ronda, *Lewis and Clark among the Indians*, 172; French, "Wasco-Wishram," 337-430.
[404] Ibid.
[405] "Early White Treachery," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 1873, page 7; "Anson Dart's Romance," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 26, 1873, page 3.

anti-Semite and supporter of Adolf Hitler who traveled around the Pacific Northwest in the 1930s delivering lectures as "Chief Red Cloud." Wearing a full headdress and white deerskin outfit decorated with thunderbirds and swastikas, Towner warned audiences about the Jewish threat to America. He had grown up on the Siletz Reservation and conducted a small law practice in Portland representing various Native American causes.[406] In 1932, Towner wrote a letter to the *Myrtle Point Herald* providing the "Indian point of view" regarding Battle Rock. He states that he was "raised among the Indian people whose ancestors lived on Rogue River…" and the story of what happened that day was part of their oral tradition.[407] Towner claims that when the Quatomah had learned the Sea Gull was in the harbor at Port Orford, they formed a "welcoming or reception committee," as they had done in the past when Tichenor had come to visit them.[408] When they arrived on the beach, however, the Sea Gull had already departed and the nine men left behind were unfamiliar with "Indians, their language or customs."[409] The Quatomah, according to Towner, lit a large bonfire and performed a welcoming ceremony for the men, which may have been the so-called "war dance" described in Kirkpatrick's account. Afterwards, they went up the rocky promontory to exchange gifts, "and through fear and the excitement of the occasion," were attacked by the men.[410]

This falls in line with Egan's account, and when pieced together with elements from Dart, a more plausible picture emerges of a horrific massacre brought about by fear

[406] Eckard V. Toy, Jr., "Silver Shirts in the Northwest: Politics, Prophecies, and Personalities in the 1930s," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Oct., 1989, Vol. 80, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), 144.
[407] *Myrtle Point Herald,* May 26, 1932, page 1.
[408] Ibid.
[409] Ibid.
[410] Ibid.

and misunderstanding. This was *not* an accident, though. Kirkpatrick and the other men in the landing party arrived in Port Orford looking for trouble, and they found it. While it was certainly not his intention, Egan humanizes the Quatomah. His account, bolstered by Towner's statement, liberates them from the narrative constructed by Roberts and Kirkpatrick—which has clouded the truth for over 150 years. They are no longer a stereotypical horde of aggressive, warlike Indians, but a complex and outgoing people trying to adapt to a rapidly changing world. The new details are also more compatible with earlier, documented interactions. In fact, when Towner mentions the "welcoming committee" going down to the beach to greet Kirkpatrick and the others, it is reminiscent of one of their very first encounters with outsiders—that bright spring day in 1792, when the Quatomah excitedly paddled out to Vancouver's ship, and climbed aboard saying, "my friends, my friends…"[411]

The historian Carl Becker once said there are "two histories: the actual series of events that once occurred; and the ideal series that we affirm and hold in memory."[412] Throughout the twentieth century the idealized narrative of Battle Rock was annually reaffirmed through celebratory reenactments. These began in 1911 when the grandson of William Tichenor organized a Port Orford Agate Carnival "with clambakes, pioneer reunions, prizes for the biggest fish caught and the finest agates picked up from the beaches …"[413] The grand finale of the three-day event was a reenactment of the "historic

[411] Menzies, *Journal*, 108-110.
[412] Carl Becker, "Everyman His Own Historian," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Jan., 1932), pp. 221-222.
[413] "Port Orford Promises Something Unusual," *The Times-Herald*, August 19, 1911.

conflict" of Battle Rock between "a tribe of make believe Indians and the whites."[414] The carnival was a rousing success, and the following year it was enlarged to include sporting events as a well as a minstrel show. Of course, "the most spectacular event" was again the reenactment, where the old cannon "held the fort against 100 howling redskins in war paint."[415] A local chapter, or "tribe," of the fraternal organization known as the Improved Order of Red Men was invited to dress up in "Indian" garb and charge the rock, beginning a tradition of various organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, portraying one of the sides in the battle.

This type of ritual performance, in which Euro-American men dress up as "Indians," has held a prominent place in American culture dating back to before the Boston Tea Party in 1773. Over the years, a myriad of fraternal organizations such as the Freemasons, the Knights of Columbus, the Odd Fellows, and the second iteration of the Ku Klux Klan, among many others, have conducted costumed dramas as a way of legitimizing a specific ideological past and connecting it to an equally specific ideological present. Historian Philip J. Deloria has argued that white male appropriation of "Indianness" was born out of an anxiety surrounding the creation of a new, wholly American identity. In the minds of Euro-Americans, the continent's Indigenous peoples represented oppositional figures in this process of ethnogenesis—at once celebrated for their authenticity and freedom, while at the same time derided for their perceived savagery. As Deloria writes, "There was, quite simply, no way to conceive an American

[414] Ibid.
[415] "Agate Carnival Enlarged," *The Morning Oregonian*, July 3, 1912; "Agate Carnival is Due," *The Morning Oregonian*, August 7, 1912.

identity without Indians. At the same time, there was no way to make a complete identity while they remained."[416]

The myth of the vanishing Indian, which proclaimed it was part of a natural order for less advanced societies to disappear in the face of "civilization," attempted to resolve this critical dilemma by arguing that the death and removal of Indigenous peoples was ultimately beyond anyone's control. It was simply a matter of destiny. This created a framework by which the spirit of the "Indian," with an intrinsic connection to the land, particularly the *idea* of the land, could be absorbed into the new, Euro-American identity, while the being itself—the "savage"—could be rejected. "Indianness" was appropriated by fraternal organizations, such as the Improved Order of Red Men, to not only signify patriotism, but also a justifiable connection to the country's ancient traditions.

The vanishing Indian trope also worked to transform colonialist guilt into a matter of fate, thereby absolving Euro-Americans of atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples. This belief in the inevitable march of civilization has been bolstered by histories that emphasize the hostility and savagery of Native Americans, while painting settlers as innocent "defenders" against this aggression.[417] The very act of remembering becomes a colonialist tool that perpetuates a false narrative.[418] The history surrounding Battle Rock is a perfect example of this kind of propaganda. Eventually, the annual Port Orford Agate Carnival was replaced by a Fourth of July Jubilee, where the reenactment was again used

[416] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37.
[417] Masterson, *Port Orford*, 51; The term "Defenders of Battle Rock" has been frequently used to describe the landing party.
[418] Boyd Cothran, *Remembering the Modoc War: Redemptive Violence and the Making of American Innocence*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

as the grand finale until the year 2000, when it was stopped all together. This association with American Independence promoted the idea that Battle Rock was a heroic and patriotic foundational tale. Although sentiments have changed in recent decades—the wayside sign has undergone several revisions—there is still a debate amongst Port Orford residents and the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz on how to commemorate the landmark. In this way, the encounter that began 170 years ago is ongoing.

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