

Reeve, I[saac] V[an] D[uzer]. Letter to Lieutenant J. D.

Wilkins, Acting Assistant Adjutant General. Fort Buchanan,
New Mexico, May 20, 1859. National Archives Records Group
98, Records of the War Department. U.S. Army Commands.
Letters Received, Department of New Mexico. Box 12, R 22-
1859.

5 pages facsimile

5 pages typescript

115

Fort Buchanan, N. M.
May 20th 1859. —

Sir

For the information of the Col. Commanding the Dept, I have the honour to make the following communication —

On Sunday afternoon the 8th Inst. I received information from Mr Wadsworth, (who had charge of the Government herd of beef cattle,) that some "difficulty" had occurred between the Americans and Mexicans in the Sonora Valley, a few miles below this post; that the Mexican hussars (then with the cattle) had been driven off, and that the herd was scattered and running at large through the hills. — Without knowing the nature of the difficulty alluded to, I immediately sent four mounted men to collect and take care of the Government herd. In the course of an hour or two, further information was brought to me, that the "difficulty" before reported, consisted in nothing less than the brutal attack, without provocation, upon some Mexicans, by a band of American Murderers, who had sworn to drive all the Mexicans out of the Territory. (Arizona.) Two of them were killed, and two badly wounded, and all others were fleeing into Sonora to save their lives. Lieutenant Cooke had left

the day before for Madelina, Sonora, to procure some specie upon government drafts, to defray the current expenses of the post; and was, on that night, about 70 miles from the post. It became necessary to recall him before the excitement, consequent upon the news of the murders, should be productive of any evil to him; and I despatched an express, under direction of a guide well acquainted with the mountain trails, who overtook Lieut Cooke that night, and before he had reached any of the Mexican towns. Immediately after despatching this express, I ordered Captain Cuell with 30 Dragoons, to proceed down the valley, & to stop all murder and bloodshed, and to use any amount of force he should find necessary to accomplish that object. The appearance of the troops in the vicinity of the scene of violence, proved to be sufficient for the object desired.

The next day, a few citizens of the valley, desiring to take measures for the protection of their labourers, and to prevent their own ruin. came to me to ask assistance; and I immediately gave them all they wanted then - which was countenance and advice, & the promise to receive and keep in confinement such of the outlaws as they would deliver to me - until they could be brought before civil authority. That night (the 9th inst) I received an express about midnight, stating that two of the murderers were captured, but that assistance was needed to bring them to the post; for which purpose I immediately despatched a Sergeant and five men. On the following day (the 10th) another one was taken. On the night of the 16th I received information that two others had taken refuge in what

is known as the "pinery" in the Santa Rita Mountains. I sent, by request of the citizens, a Sergeant and 15 men of the Dragoons to assist in finding and capturing these men; one of whom was taken and delivered to me on the 19th inst. On the day that these murders commenced, the band of outlaws met with Mr. Hart's train, which is engaged in transporting corn from Sonora, under contract for the supply of the Quartermaster's Department at this post. They ordered the man in charge not to attempt to pass that train through the valley again with "Mexican drivers", for if he did they would be killed. This train, of course, required protection; and the most effectual protection which could be given would be by removing the enemies who threatened it. You will understand, therefore, that my first motive for the action I have taken in this matter, was the protection of the government interests entrusted to my care; and the second, my moral and civil duty to assist in preventing crime and bloodshed whenever and wherever there is not the civil authority and power to do so. Some two or three of these outlaws have kept the community here in constant terror of their knives & pistols, and have committed several murders. There were seven in the band, names as follows - John H. Page. William Ake. Samuel Anderson. A. W. Scott. John Bolt. John Remington and — Brown. The first three were leaders, and considered much the worst men. Page. Anderson. Bolt & Scott are those in confinement. "Ake" the most notorious and worst of all, still at large. I was asked if I would deliver the prisoners up to the citizens to be tried here; but I

of course refused, knowing that they would have but a mock trial, without the form or authority of law. They are held until the proper opportunity arrives, when they will be sent to the Rio Grande and delivered to the civil authority.

The whole difficulty seems to have arisen in the fact, that some Mexicans from Sonora, engaged as labourers on one of the farms in the Santa Cruz valley (in this Territory) known as "Roventon," committed some act for which they were considered deserving of punishment, which punishment, ^{consisted} in whipping, and cropping the hair; and in the latter ceremony some slight mutilation or cutting of the scalp happened.

These Mexicans either committed, or assisted, or instigated the murder of one of the Americans present at the aforesaid "punishment" (tho' whether taking any part therein I do not know-) and as a matter of revenge, ^{upon them} all Mexicans were to be killed, or driven off, however innocent or ignorant of the cause.

Hoping that my course in this matter may meet with your approval -

I have the honor to be

Yours very Respectly

L. V. S. Reeve

P. S. Colwell

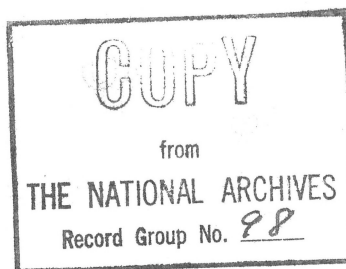
Cavalry

L. J. D. McKim
Co. Asst. Adjt. Genl

In reference to Am-
dell summit near
Fort Guadalupe in Territory
of Arizona

For the Bureau
May 20th 1859 -
L. V. S. Reeve
P. S. Colwell

Copy of this letter June 15, 1859



*Records of War Dept.
U. S. Army Commands
Letters Received, Dept.
of New Mexico. Box 12
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Bt Lt [Colonel]

Cavalry

Lt. J. D. Wilkins

[Acting] Asst. Adjt. Genl.

Fort Buchanan N.M.

May 20th 1859

I. V. D. Reeve

Bt Lt. Col. U.S.A.

In reference to murders committed near Fort Buchanan in the
Territory of Arizona

[indecipherable] Dept. Hdqrs June 15, 1859

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U.S. Army Commands

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