

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF OREGON,
Fort Vancouver, Wash. Ter., July 28, 1862.

Honorable WILLIAM PICKERING,

Governor of Washington Territory, Olympia, Wash. Ter.:

GOVERNOR: I have received your letter of the 18th instant and must thank you very sincerely for the kind expressions it contains and the congratulations you offer upon my recent promotion. I assure you that my long residence in this country leads me to take a deep interest in the welfare and prosperity of the Territory and in the defense of its frontier. I look with special concern to the incoming emigration, and the moment I arrived I turned my attention to taking steps for its protection. I inclose herewith for your information a copy of my orders issued on the 8th instant, the day after I assumed command. * I have heard this morning that Lieutenant-Colonel Maury's command of three companies of Oregon cavalry probably started to-day from Fort Walla Walla upon the emigrant road. Salmon Falls, half way between Fort Boise and Fort Hall, is the great haunt of the Snake Indians at this season for the purpose of fishing, and Colonel Maury's command will remain encamped in that vicinity as long as possible, not leaving there until it is necessary in order to return to Fort Walla Walla by the 1st of November. Mr. Crawford, of Oregon, with a guard of seventy-five men enrolled for the journey by order of the War Department, left Omaha early in June and writes Major Francis that he intends "bringing up the rear of the emigration." I have given no order to Colonel Maury about "bringing up the rear of the emigration," for that phrase with us is rather unsavory and unsatisfactory, as in the fall of 1860 a commander who supposed he brought up the rear of the emigration had the sorrow and mortification to hear of a massacre in his rear. By staying out and not returning until the 1st of November, the command will do its best before the winter sets in. Colonel Maury is ordered if opportunity occurs to arrest and punish those Snake Indians who committed the murders of 1860. The command of Major Rinearson, which has gone to the vicinity of Lewiston, will have an important and delicate duty to perform in the preservation of peace by protecting the Nez Perce Indians from outrages by the whites. Those Indians are of superior character; have always been warmly our friends, but they are now rudely dispossessed of their lands on the reservation secured to them by a sacred treaty; their women treated with outrage by the miners; liquor is sold to them by lawless whites, and great danger apprehended of collision. I learn that Senator Nesmith has pushed through the Senate a measure appropriating \$50,000 to enable the Indian Department to take steps to extinguish the Indian title. I hope and trust Colonel Wallace will get it through the House. From this statement you will see that I have taken such measures as lay in my power to preserve the peace. The multitude of whites pervading that region may possibly hold the Indians in check. Please be good enough to show this letter to Mr. Hale, the superintendent of Indian affairs, who will doubtless be interested to know what has been done.

With best wishes, I remain, with high respect, your obedient servant,

BENJ. ALVORD,

Brigadier-General, U. S. Volunteers, Commanding District.

The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.

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