Settlement and Conflict:
The Refuge Period and Historic Settlement in the North Fork Eel River Basin 1854-1864

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...acculturation has always been a matter of conquest... refugees from the foundering groups may adopt the standards of the more potent society in order to survive as individuals. But these are conscripts of civilization, not volunteers. (Stanley Diamond in *Victims of Progress* by John Bodly 1981)

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Authors Note:

I wrote this paper during the winter of 1989/1990. I have placed a copy on my web site www.solararch.org to make it available to researchers and the general public. I have made some minor editing changes and have included some comments within text boxes or brackets. Given what I have learned over the last 25 years, I firmly believe that--if anything--this paper understates the brutal treatment of Indians in this portion of northwestern California; what in modern terms should be considered ethnic cleansing or genocide.

TK
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Introduction

Within a period of about ten years (1854-1864), the traditional lifeways and cultures of the Athapascan speaking Wailaki Lassik [see comments box below regarding the use to the term Lassik.] and Pitch Wailaki who inhabited the North Fork of the Eel River basin were almost totally destroyed. Nearly the entire aboriginal population of the region died of disease, was killed (more often than not murdered), sold into indentured servitude, or were removed to reservations. The environment was also greatly affected by changing land-use patterns as hunting and gathering cultures were replaced by the cattle and sheep ranches and by the deer slaying hide hunters of the historic period.

The historic era within the North Fork basin has been divided into a number of periods (Keter 1985).

1854-1864	Conflict and Historic Settlement Period
1865-1904	Ranching Period
1905-1940	Homestead Period
1941-	Modern Era

This paper covers the Conflict and Historic Settlement Period. This period can be viewed as the refuge [or protohistoric] period for Native American inhabitants of the region and the formative years of the historic era for the Euro-American population moving into the region. The object of this study in presenting an historical overview, conducting research on the past environment, and reviewing the archaeological record relevant to the period, is to pursue a holistic anthropological approach to cultural change taking place at this time and the direct and dynamic relationship between [changes to] the environment and the land-use practices of the cultures within the region. In addition, some suggestions are made concerning the possibility of identifying refuge sites within the archaeological record and where these sites might be located. Finally, from an anthropological perspective, I discuss some [personal] impressions [generalizations] on this era of intense conflict and extreme

violence.

2015 Updated manuscript: use of the term Wailaki Lassik

During my research over the last 35 or so years and in my interactions with numerous Wailaki from southern Humboldt, northern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties as well as with Wailaki consultants living in Hulls Valley and Round Valley who had links to what has been delineated by ethnographers as "Lassik Territory"(see Baumhoff 1958); Not one individual I have talked to considered themselves to be Lassik but referred to themselves as Wailaki. This included descendants of Lucy Young (who despite being called Lassik by Merriam, Essene and Kroeber insisted that she was Wailaki) and descendants of Mary Major who were two of the principal informants for ethnographers (see Essene and Merriam). For example, Kroeber in his introduction to Essene's (1942) *Culture Element Distributions: XXI Round Valley* writes: "there are indeed old people on the reservation who are listed as Wailaki in agency records and who call themselves Wailaki. Those of them who still had worth-while knowledge to dispense proved however to be Lassik."

I wrote a paper on this subject in 2009 (referenced below) and it is posted on my web site. I have chosen to use the term "Wailaki Lassik" in order to clarify that like the Pitch Wailaki (see Goddard's work on the North Fork) the Wailaki Lassik were a direct offshoot and therefore closely related through language and familial ties with the other Wailaki "triblets" (I prefer the term "communities" see Keter 1991, 1993) but also shared cultural practices as well.

The people living in this region prior to the historic era, referred to themselves collectively with some derivative of the term *ken'-es-ti* (personal communication: Fred Coyote Downey). Merriam (1923:276, field notes) claims that the Southern Athabascans used the term "nongatl" to indicate "the name of their nation--covering all the tribes between Round Valley and Iaqua."

It is clear given the common language and shared cultural beliefs of the Native Americans residing in southern Humboldt, northern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties during the ethnographic period, that at some higher level than Kroeber's small triblets, the Southern Athapascans (ethnographers have named Sinkyone, Eel River Wailaki, Pitch Wailaki, Lassik, and Nongatl) shared a common cultural and linguistic identity.

2009 All Those Things that You're Liable to Read in the Ethnographic Literature They Ain't Necessarily So. Society for California Archaeology Paper presented to the Society for Archaeology, Modesto, CA.

PDF at: www.SolarArch.org

The Historical Record

1854 to 1859 the Early Years

The first Euro-Americans to enter the North Fork of the Eel River region were brothers Pierce and Frank Asbill traveling with the Kelsey party in May of 1854. Heading north from Sonoma County, they first passed through and "discovered" Round Valley (Carranco and Beard 1981: 41). They continued north into the North Fork of the Eel River basin crossing over Long Ridge spending the night of May 16 at Soldier Basin (Asbill n.d.: 27). They traveled north along the East Fork of the North Fork towards the headwaters of the North Fork basin and crossed over the low divide which leads into beautiful Hettenshaw Valley in the Van Duzen River drainage. The Kelsey Party, commissioned by a group of Petaluma merchants who hoped to open a trail to the mines around Weaverville, continued on (Tassin 1887: 1.2). The Asbill brothers along with mountain man Jim Neafus remained in Hettenshaw Valley. They planned to spend the winter hunting deer and tanning hides which were in great demand in the booming mining districts of California.

There was a large deer population in the Yolla Bolly country (Keter 1988: 9, Maps 1 and 2]. In one day Jim Neafus killed 35 deer with a muzzleloader and skinned the hides. Throughout the winter large numbers of deer were taken. This was often accomplished by driving the deer herds up canyons into the deep snow where entire herds could be killed at one time (Asbill n.d.: 29).

In April of 1855 Pierce Asbill left Hettenshaw Valley with a number of pack horses carrying carefully packed bundles of tanned deer hides sealed in bear skins and headed east across the upper reaches of the Mad River drainage and into the South Fork of the Trinity drainage. He then climbed North Yolla Bolly Mountain and traversed its south facing slope crossing into the Sacramento drainage at the headwaters of Cottonwood Creek on a route which later became known as the Humboldt Trail (Asbill n.d.: 32-35).

Asbill was not sure exactly where he could sell the hides but did know there was a demand in the gold mining centers of the state. In the central valley he encountered a Spanish vaquero who directed him to Kingsley's trading post near the present town of Red Bluff. Here he sold the one thousand pounds of tanned hides for three dollars a pound. Pierce left his pack horses at Kingsley's and headed south and then west to Bodega Bay to visit his parents. He then returned to the trading post and bought three of the famous Kingsley rifles and provisions and returned via the Humboldt Trail to Hettenshaw Valley. Upon his return the three hide hunters again headed south through the North Fork basin (this route became the earliest historic trail through the basin see Map 2) returning to Round Valley (Asbill n.d. :35-38). During the remainder of 1855 there is no record of any Euro-Americans passing through the North Fork region.

The year 1856 marked the beginning of the often violent conflict between the Indian

people of the Yolla Bolly country (southwest Trinity, southeast Humboldt, northeast Mendocino, and western Tehama Counties) and the white settlers moving into the region (Carranco and Beard 1981: 55). By this time, homesteaders were pushing south and east from the Humboldt Bay region and north from Round Valley. The result was to push the surviving Indians into the more remote mountain areas [the Pilot Ridge, Mad River, North Fork Eel River, and headwaters region of the Yolla Bolly Mountains] where it was increasingly difficult to find an adequate food supply (Carranco and Beard 1981: 65).

It was at this time that the Wailaki Lassik (whose territory included the northern portion of the North Fork basin) were first severely affected due to historic settlement of the region; ironically by Indian refugees escaping from the Mendocino Reservation near Fort Bragg. In 1856 a number of Chilula were captured and sent south via Humboldt Bay to the Mendocino Indian Reservation at Fort Bragg. They escaped from the reservation, and passing through unknown territory, headed north towards their ancestral homeland over 100 miles away. Traveling through Wailaki Lassik territory they were attacked near the future location of Fort Seward. The Wailaki Lassik killed all but a few who escaped and made it back to their territory. A war party was organized by the Chilula to avenge the murders. A group of about 70 including some Whilkut and Hoopa headed south from Pilot Ridge and attacked a Wailaki Lassik village near Dobbyn Creek. It was nearly abandoned at the time of the attack. They killed the few mostly elderly inhabitants in the village and then headed north attacking a large camp near the present location of Blocksburg. Many Wailaki Lassik were killed including women and children. It appears that three more trips were made to Wailaki Lassik country before the conflict ended (Carranco and Beard 1981: 78, Goddard 1914: 269).

By the end of 1856 the Wailaki Lassik and Pitch Wailaki who occupied the North Fork basin were beginning to be affected by historic settlement and disruption of other Indian tribes in the region (this may have included Wintun groups from further to the east) who may have entered the area seeking refuge. This would have placed additional pressure on food resources. Regional trade networks were also probably disrupted by this time.

By 1857 Captain James Willburn and his brother Hiram David Willburn had settled in Hettenshaw Valley (Robb 1978: 11). When the Asbills returned to the valley in 1857, they found it occupied by the Willburns who were living with Indian women. Several Indians were also working for them. Like the Asbills, the Willburn's planned to sell deer hides to Kingsley's trading post (Carranco and Beard 1981: 173). William Kent (1926: 84) mentions in a memoir of the Voila Bolly region that it was common for "deer-slaying hide hunters" to have Indian women living with them who did the tanning with deer brains and smoke. A. G. Tassin (1887: 210) writing about the neighboring Yuki noted that:

> "As each settler raised his little log house in the middle of his claim, there congregated around it by degrees a certain number of the most docile and friendly among the Indians, who preferred the half civilization of the whites to the barbarism of their brethren, and who, in exchange for small favors in the shape of food and cast off clothing, took upon themselves many of the

> menial duties of servants. ...These Indians, however, were not to be altogether trusted; many of them came and went as they pleased...."

The Asbills then headed south and west about 20 miles to Island Mountain and Bell Springs. They spent three years in this area hunting and taking hides and selling them to Kingsley's trading post.

As 1857 ended it is likely that some displacement of the Wailaki Lassik and Pitch Wailaki from traditional seasonal habitation sites had occurred. Some Indian women had been taken for wives (most often against their will) by settlers moving into the North Fork region and some interaction was occurring between these two cultures usually but not always without violence.

In 1858 a few more settlers entered southwestern Trinity County. Most of these individuals settled to the west of the North Fork basin on the Eel River. By this time, however, troubles to the south were increasing between the ranchers and Yuki Indians living in Round Valley (Miller 1975: 18).

Situated about twenty-five miles south of the North Fork of the Eel River, the Round Valley Indian Reservation and its inhabitants and the ranchers and settlers who settled in the valley, played an important part in both the historical development of the North Fork region--and the fate of the Pitch Wailaki and Wailaki Lassik who inhabited the area. The Round Valley Reservation was to become the primary location to which the peoples inhabiting the North Fork region were sent during the latter part of the Conflict and Settlement Period. For this reason a brief outline of the development of the Round Valley and the reservation as it relates to the North Fork region is presented.

[Many of the Wailaki I interviewed during the 1990s referred to the Round Valley Indian Reservation as a "concentration camp" (personal communication Fred "Coyote" Downey, see also Keter 2009]

In May of 1854, only a few days after the Asbills passed through Round Valley, the George White party "discovered" Round Valley from the east, crossing over from the Sacramento drainage. White was to become one of the most powerful ranchers in California. After this visit, rumors began to abound about a beautiful round valley in the North Coast Range (Carranco and Beard 1981: 219).

In 1855, Judge Peters, of the federal court, Northern California District, suggested Round Valley be set aside as an Indian reservation. He wrote: "it contains at least 30,000 acres and is one of the most lovely valleys in the world and the Indians are numerous and hostile" (in Carranco and Beard 1981: 51). In addition, some Indian agents had seen the valley in the distance while hunting on the high ridges of the Coast Range to the west of the Nome Lackee Reservation. It was not until 1856, however, before Simon Storms, in charge of a portion of the Nome Lackee Reservation that was located in the Sacramento Valley, was directed to explore the region of the Coast Range lying to the west. Storms and his party

entered Round Valley on June 14 and explored the area for several days deciding that it was an ideal location for an Indian reservation.

Storms named it Nome Cult Valley and wrote: "I think that in the valley and in the mountains around are at least. 5,000 Indians and that the valley can be made to support 20,000 or more. It is the best place for Indians I ever saw" (in Carranco and Beard 1981: 54). Leaving three men behind, Storms departed Round Valley on June 18 planning to return on June 23 to build a house. While heading east Storms encountered several parties of explorers heading west. He told them that "the valley was reserved for the government", and thought that they would then look for land elsewhere. The settlers, however, continued on to Round Valley and like White immediately recognized the potential for farming and ranching in this beautiful valley (Carranco and Beard 1981: 56).

By the end of 1856, Round Valley was occupied by the Army and several ranchers and farmers, including George White who began raising stock and farming (Tassin 1887: 1.2). The ranchers resented the Indian Reservation because it prevented them from controlling the valley and they tried every means possible to force the Indians out of the valley (see Hammond 1959). Referring to Round Valley, J. Rosse Brown, Special Agent of the Interior Department during this period, reported "a war of extinction against the ...Eel River...Indians was being waged". He also reported that about thirty armed men had already spent several months "killing Indians" (Miller 1975: 8).

Most of the violence and killing at this time occurred to the south of the North Fork region in the Round Valley area. The Pitch Wailaki and Wailaki Lassik within the North Fork basin were, however, becoming increasingly isolated by events taking place at Round Valley. In addition, more settlers [and deer hunters] were entering the Yolla Bolly region and military operations were increasing further north in Humboldt County.

By the end of 1859, several settlers, including John Fulwider, had moved to Kettenpom (Kettenchou) Valley and nearby Hoaglin Valley along the western edge of the North Fork basin. This region was a major food resource procurement location for the Wailaki Lassik [and Pitch Wailaki]. Camus bulbs, a primary subsistence resource, grew in great numbers within these small valleys. The homesteading of these valleys [the largest areas of flat arable land within the entire North Fork Eel River watershed] would have had a major impact on the "seasonal round" [see below] of the local Athapascans as this was not only a major food resource location but was a social gathering area during the spring (Keter 1989:6,14).

1860-1864

It was only after 1860 that the external pressures from homesteading, grazing, and military operations began to severely encroach on the inhabitants of the North Fork basin. The Wailaki Lassik many of whom had settlements along the main Eel in the Fort Seward/Alderpoint area, were finding it difficult to return to their winter villages. The

Indian groups [including the Pitch Wailaki] who utilized resources within the North Fork basin would have been increasingly displaced from a significant number of subsistence resource procurement locations.

During the year 1860, the John Duncan family (not related to the Duncans of Hettenshaw Valley) settled on Long Ridge having left the mines near Weaverville. At about the same time (early 1860's) George Burgess also headed south from the Trinity mines and settled just to the west of the North Fork basin at Zenia. Zenia then called Poison Camp was named after the larkspur which is poisonous to livestock and was common in the area (Robb 1978: 13).

During this period of time there were few white women in this wild and isolated region. For this reason, many homesteaders, hide hunters, and ranchers married Indian women. One interviewee, a 96 year old Wailaki man (I# 378) said; "while the white man he hate us, he take our women. My father say all men sad because our women were forced to live with white man. We lose a lot of Indian like that. Then after a while we all went to work for the white man and women get used to being married to white man." Mrs. George Burgess lived in Zenia for three years before seeing another white woman. The only others at this time in the whole region were Mrs. Pitt White and Mrs. Fenton (I# 186).

During this time, as outlined in the section on grazing discussed below [see also Keter 1994], the number of livestock grew rapidly (especially to the south and west of the North Fork watershed). These animals competed for many of the same food resources as the native people (Keter 1989). Whenever butchered animals were encountered, it was avenged by attacking the nearest Indian village or encampment. The ranchers and their hired guns would kill any Indian they could get their hands on. No proof of guilt was ever sought, nor was there really ever any concern for the truth. During one two week period, settlers from Round Valley killed 250 Indians, mostly Yuki, whose territory adjoins the Pitch Wailaki to the south (Miller 1975: 8).

Tassin (1887:1.2) writes about one such raid which took place at this time. Local ranchers attacked a village in the North Fork region near the confluence of Horse Creek and Hull's Creek. This is several miles to the east of where Hull's Creek meets the North Fork of the Eel. After "marauding Wylackies" killed some stock, including a prized horse, ranchers organized an armed posse and along with some Con Cow Indians living on the Round Valley Reservation, headed north to seek revenge. The village was attacked and "the Wylackies were shot down in all directions." Tassin claims that 240 Indians were killed during this battle. This number seems far too high for one raid, at least given the normal size of a typical village in this area. Other estimates were that the number killed was closer to 120 (Carranco and Beard 1981: 111). The story, however, is probably typical of the type of revenge raids carried out at this time in which a village was attacked and all inhabitants male and female, including children, were killed with little or no interest in guilt or innocence of any crime and no fear of outrage from either the military or the local settlers and ranchers. The military had no jurisdiction outside the reservations and no authority to even arrest settlers who raped, kidnapped, or murdered the Indians who lived on the

reservation (Carranco and Beard 1981: 82). Indians had no legal rights or legal standing and could not swear out a complaint on anyone.

By the end of January 1861, most of the settlers in Kettenpom Valley had left due to the cold winter and only John Fulwider remained. In February, Fulwider's house was robbed by Indians and he left the valley (*Humboldt Times* February 23, 1861) leaving it deserted; at least temporarily (Fulwider it appears was eventually killed by Indians along the Mad River where his bloody hat was found).

By this time the Yolla Bolly region, including the North Fork basin, was recognized as a major refuge of Indians in the North Coast Ranges. One officer (USWD [U.S. War Department] 1897a:456) in correspondence with his commanding officer noted that the region was: "exceedingly mountainous and very difficult of access, affording shelter for a larger number of Indians than can be found in any other portion of this state."

On June 16, 1861, Lieutenant Collins and a detachment were scouting near Kettenpom Valley when they encountered Chief Lassik's band [Keter 2009]. Lieutenant Collins (USWD 1897a: 19) describing this engagement wrote:

> This rancheria was occupied by Las-sic's band, probably the most desperate and troublesome Indians in the mountains. They have frequently been engaged in murdering whites, burning houses, and killing horses and cattle....The attack was made near noon, and as the Indians were prepared for it many of them escaped through the impassable bushes.

The skirmish left four Indians dead. The Army's only casualty was a Corporal Larabee wounded in the left hand by an arrow. The next day on the trail from Kettenpom Valley to Round Valley they surprised another group (possibly Wailaki) killing six with one escaping. This group of Indians was processing about 200 pounds of pork recently killed (USWD 1897a: 19).

In the fall of 1861 (September to December) a detachment of soldiers and guides under the command of Lieutenant Wilkinson were located in Southeast Humboldt County. Their orders were to range between the headwaters of the Eel and Mad Rivers (Bledsoe 1885:193). Coy (1929: 168) writes, that during this time "the dryness of the season and the prevalence of forest fires so hindered the activities of the guard that it was the middle of November before they met the Indians in direct engagement."

Prior to the Civil War, military operations in Humboldt County were carried out by the regular Army and local volunteers. The latter usually small in number and often acting as scouts, generally served ninety days or less. After the start of the War, it was necessary for the military to send its troops elsewhere. It was during this time that the California Volunteers who were better qualified to fight the Indians were formed; as Carranco and Beard (1981: 135) noted: "This change in policy was the beginning of a new period of military operations."

The first company of Volunteers arrived at Fort Humboldt on October 24, 1861. They were to relieve regular officers and troops and immediately left for Fort Seward. By January of 1862, Colonel F. J. Lippett had arrived with two more companies of Volunteers (Carranco and Beard 1981: 135).

By 1862, the Indian Wars of the northwest (see Bledsoe 1885) were in being waged earnest, especially in the region east of Humboldt Bay. Fort Seward had been established south of Blocksburg on September 25, 1861 (the site was selected by Captain Lovell and was officially abandoned in 1863 due to its remoteness and the difficulty in bringing in supplies) (Whiting and Whiting 1960: 78). Fort Baker (north and east of the town of Bridgeville) was established March 23, 1862 (Prucha 1964: 59). That site was selected by Lieutenant Collins due to its strategic location. It was not as isolated as Fort Seward and there were a greater number of homesteaders and stock in the area (USWD 1897a: 12).

Often during this period, Indians (especially women and children) surviving attacks by the army or ranchers were apprehended by small groups of men who followed the hostilities and sold surviving children under the Indenture Act of 1850. This act and a series of laws passed by the state of California over a period of years in effect permitted the involuntary servitude (a polite term for slavery) of Indian children and adults under the age of 35 not living on an Indian reservation (Robb 1978: 7). One Humboldt County judge complained of the extra work drawing up these indenture papers and requested in a public notice in the *Humboldt Times* (February 19, 1861) that citizens go to a qualified attorney to have the paper work done. At this time a bundle of 105 of these records was on file with the County Recorder at the Eureka courthouse (Coy 1929: 167).

Records indicate that in Humboldt County 181 Indians, mostly children, were indentured between 1860 and 1863 when the indenture laws were repealed (Herbert et al n.d.:70). It is likely that for the most part, however, legalities were ignored and Indians were simply enslaved. Military records outline such activity at this time just to the west of the North Fork basin. Captain Thomas Ketcham operating from Fort Baker reported (USWD 1897a: 982):

> "I have been informed that there are quite a number of citizens who intend, as soon as the snow goes off, to make a business of killing the bucks whenever they can find them and selling the women and children into slavery. It is supposed that they will make their headquarters somewhere in the neighborhood of Fort Seward, taking their captives to Long Valley, there selling them to certain parties for $37.50 per head, who put them in a covered wagon, to take them down to the settlements, and there dispose of them at very handsome profit."

One trader in Long Valley was said to have made $15,000 in one year [at $37.50 per individual that would have totaled approximately 400 Indians] (USWD 1897a: 897). The editor of the *Humboldt Times* (February 23, 1861) wrote in an article entitled "Apprenticing

Indians": "What a pity the provisions of the law are not extended to greasers, Kanakas, and Asiatics. It would be so convenient....to carry on a farm or mine when all the hard and dirty work is permitted by apprentices." [Quoted from the original.]

Early in the summer of 1862 some Wailaki hiding out in the region immediately to the north and west of Round Valley [see Keter 2009] began to increase their raids on stock. At about the same time, a number of Wailaki also came into Round Valley to the reservation. Military records indicate that they were "not reservation Indians, but belonged to a tribe of Wylackies that had taken refuge on the reservation from a band of white kidnappers that were in pursuit of them" (USWD 1897b: 69). Because of their reputation as the best fighters among all the Indian groups in the area, and because of the losses being reported to livestock, they were under immediate suspicion by ranchers in the valley who questioned the motives of why they were there. In August, the whites attacked their Round Valley camp and killed twenty-two including women and children (USWD 1897a: 169). Tassin (1887:2.16) writes that as the Wailaki fled the valley: "it is more than probable that many more were killed in the retreat and rout.... besides many who were severely wounded and afterwards died in the Mountains." Colonel Francis Lippitt in a report (USWD 1897b:169) to his commanding officer at Fort Humboldt wrote: "Some of the murdering settlers admitted.... that they knew these Indians had not taken their cattle, but they killed them for fear they would."

During the summer, Capt. Ketchum from Fort Baker had the assistance of a number of settlers from Hettenshaw Valley in chasing and capturing members of the Wailaki Lassik band [whose territory included the northern portion of the North Fork Eel River watershed]. This included Jim Willburn, Steve Fleming, Jim Graham, and Steve Howe. Other settlers in Hettenshaw Valley by 1862 were James Howe and the Duncan family. Some understanding of why the settlers were acting as guides for the army can be found in military records which indicate that "Willburn and Fleming report the loss of many stock" (Robb 1978: 8).

The reason these local settlers were so important to the army is made clear in a letter from Col. Lippett to the Assistant Adjutant-General at Fort Humboldt (October 13, 1862). Although not specifically referring to southern Trinity County, it is relevant. Col. Lippett (USWD 1897b: 170) writes:

> The truth is, two companies of state volunteers could be raised here, consisting of old hunters and mountaineers familiar with the habits of the Indians and accustomed to hunt them, that would be of far more service than a whole regiment of the finest troops in the world....

The orders of the military in the Humboldt Military District were to capture as many Indians as possible and bring them to Fort Humboldt. From this location it was planned that they would be removed to the Smith River Indian Reservation far to the north of their traditional homelands. The conditions of the prison camp near Fort Humboldt were intolerable. One report describes the holding area as a corral eighty feet in diameter and

ten feet in height made of planks into which the Indians were herded like cattle (Carranco and Beard 1981: 138).

In the summer of 1862 as the mortality rate at Fort Humboldt began to increase some of the Indians alarmed at the conditions tried to escape. The high mortality was attributed to two causes by the Army surgeon: close confinement and lack of activity (more likely unsanitary conditions) and changes in diet. Fearing that those escaping would inform the Indians hiding in the mountains of the terrible conditions at Fort Humboldt, the prisoners were moved across Humboldt Bay to a location on the southern end of the northern peninsula. At this location a chain of sentries was placed just to the north--effectively sealing off the only escape route. This location provided up to 800 Indian prisoners with a larger living area and the Army with better control (Carranco and Beard 1981: 139). No mention is made in military records if this reduced mortality among the captives.

On July 24th, Captain Ketcham of Fort Baker reported the capture of two Indian women and one child. They were subsequently freed and sent to "induce the Indians to come in." The result was that over the next few days 112 Indians surrendered. Chief Lassik's Band of 32 Indians surrendered on July 31st. Colonel Lippett noted that Chief Lassik was the leader of: "the largest and most active" group in the region in resisting white encroachment into their territory. He estimated that it numbered 100-300 people (USWD 1897b: 50). On August 10, it was reported that twelve more warriors of Chief Lassik's band gave themselves up (USWD 1897a: 63). The prisoners were taken to Fort Humboldt and then across Humboldt Bay to the peninsula. Eventually, Chief Lassik and his band were part of a group of 834 men, women, and children sent from Eureka via the steamer Panama to Crescent City and then to the Smith River Reservation (Carranco and Beard 1981: 139). By September 24 over 400 Indians, including Chief Lassik and a number of his small band, had escaped from the reservation (Carranco and Beard 1981: 140).

By 1863, the surviving Pitch Wailaki and Wailaki Lassik who inhabited the entire Yolla Bolly region were constantly on the run. Pursued by ranchers and settlers to the south and west and by the military from the north at Fort Baker, and with livestock increasingly depleting their resource base, their position would have been desperate. It was at this point that the native population began to decline more rapidly in the North Fork region as Army operations, murder, removal to reservations, disease, hunger, and indentured servitude, decimated their numbers. Hostilities between the whites and Indians increased as the surviving Indians made a desperate effort to retain their traditional lifeways and aboriginal lands (Bledsoe 1885: 232).

In early February 1863 a delegation of legislators from Del Norte, Humboldt, and Klamath Counties visited General Wright and requested that he call upon Governor Stanford for the enlistment of volunteers because:

> their constituents were anxious to engage in such Volunteer service, because their families and their homes were in danger, because they were familiar with the habits and haunts of the Indians, and because they were confident of

> their of efficiency and distrusted the efficiency of the soldiers enlisted abroad who were not interested in the establishment of a permanent peace (Bledsoe 1885: 230).

Governor Stanford responded to this request on February 7. He called for the formation of six companies of volunteer troops from the counties of Humboldt, Mendocino, Trinity, Klamath, Siskiyou, and Del Norte. These six companies were called the Mountaineer Battalion. Records indicate that Army Colonel Lippitt was "slightly contemptuous of the mountaineers," believing that there "was much southern sympathy in the battalion" (Kirkland 1960: 56).

On March 18, while the formation of the Mountaineer Battalion was still underway, Lieutenant Winchill (under the command of Captain Flynn) with fifteen men (U.S. Army California Volunteers) and with Steve Fleming serving as scout attacked a village on the North Fork of the Eel about thirty miles from its confluence with the main Eel River (Thomson 1963: 68). A captive led them to a spot along the river where a band of Indians were collecting "grasses and clover" (USWD 1897a: 194). The Indians were spread out for some distance up and down the river, the women collecting and the men on lookout. Thomson (1963: 67) in his study of military operations in the area summarizes the military report.

> The Lieutenant deployed his men to the left and right to flank the Indians, and they were not discovered. The Indians were in this manner trapped between the river, which was very high and cold, and the troops. At the signal the troops opened fire, the hostiles deciding to remain and fight [with bows and arrows] rather than swim the river. The prisoner who had guided the troops immediately tried to escape but was shot down. The engagement was a heated one, but short, the troops forced to fight for every inch of ground as the Indians slowly retreated to the river bank.

In all ten Indian men and one woman were killed. No records were kept of how many Indians were captured by the Army during this engagement (Thomson 1963:68). The captives were taken to Kettenpom Valley where Captain Flynn and the rest of the Mountaineers were encamped (USWD 1897a: 194).

Captain Flynn then learned from an Indian scout of another Indian village to the north of the previously mentioned village. This village was attacked at daylight on March 24, eight men and one woman were killed in the attack (Thomson 1963: 68). On March 26, Captain Flynn saw smoke to the east toward the slopes which rise to the Middle Eel River divide. He attacked another village (possibly near Red Mountain Meadows) [See Keter 1994]. After the attack Flynn counted 18 dead and estimated that 25 lie dead in the brush. At the same time Lieutenant Winchill found a camp of Indians in an adjoining canyon. He surrounded the camp and attacked killing eight men and capturing all the women and children (USWD 1897a: 195).

After three weeks of attacking villages in the North Fork basin, Flynn reported that he and his men had been in four engagements and killed forty-six Indians with many more probably dead in the brush. He reported thirty-seven women and children captured. One man (Private Lynch) was killed during this time (USWD 1897a: 195-196). By April, the military was becoming less active as the Mountaineer Battalions had finally been recruited, organized, and were ready for duty. Many of these soldiers were influential citizens from the counties of the North Coast Ranges. Bledsoe (1885: 232) [A. J. Bledsoe authored the *Indian Wars of the Northwest*] writes that they were "ignorant of the details of military affairs," but they were men used to the hardships of living in the wilderness and that they possessed a familiarity with the Indian's habits and the geography of the region. In their first major action, a large Pitch Wailaki village was destroyed. Bledsoe 1885: 234) writes, "Capt. Flynn U.S.A. must have credit of leading the first actual engagement of the war." A detachment of 35 soldiers under Capt. Flynn and Lieutenant Winchill made an attack on a large rancheria, at a place called Big Bend on the North Fork of the Eel River [at its confluence with Hull's Creek] killing thirty "warriors" and taking 40 prisoners. One rifle and a large number of knives and bows and arrows were captured.

Since escaping from the Smith River Indian Reservation and making their way south to their homeland the previous fall, Chief Lassik and his group had "terrorized" the southeastern part of Humboldt County and areas within the North Fork basin. Sometime before July, a group of settlers, some from as far away as Round Valley, attacked Chief Lassik's encampment near Ft. Seward. This attack appears to have been led by Stephen Fleming, who by this time headed a group of mercenaries who were paid (presumably by local settlers) to kill any Indian that the Mountaineer Battalion missed or could not find (Genzoli and Martin 1961: 28). Chief Lassik and all of his men who were not killed during the initial attack were subsequently shot (more accurately murdered). Although historic records are not clear on this matter, it appears that at least some of the survivors were kidnapped and sold. Lucy Young, niece of Chief Lassik and a number of other children were eventually taken to Long Valley where many were sold and shipped south to the Bay Area. Lucy Young escaped shortly before being indentured to a nearby family [in the Laytonville area]. Traveling north through the Bell Springs area made her way back to Wailaki Lassik territory (Young 1941: 355).

By 1864, all Indian groups inhabiting the North Coast Ranges had been subdued except in three areas; Hoopa Valley, Mattole Valley and some portions of southwestern Trinity County including the North Fork area (Thomson 1963: 80). The military was aware of the situation and records indicate they were active in the North Fork basin at this time. The refuge groups for the most part had retreated to the headwaters of the Mad River/Middle Fork of the Eel region where it was difficult for the army to operate (USWD 1897b: 805-806).

As the Mattole and Hoopa Valley regions were finally subdued, the North Fork basin and the high Yolla Bolly Mountains to the east remained a final refuge. This was due to its remoteness and the roughness of the terrain. Military operations then increased in the North Fork basin and this region of the Yolla Bolly where the last free Indians still survived.

The military now wished to capture the surviving Indians alive (at least the women and children, more often than not many men were killed during the violent attacks on the refuge sites) and remove them to the Round Valley Indian Reservation. By this time grasslands were becoming increasingly depleted by grazing and the hide hunters had greatly reduced the size of the deer population. Many of the Indian's seasonal resource procurement locations such as Hettenshaw Valley, Kettenpom Valley, and Long Ridge were occupied by homesteaders, and they were under constant harassment by the military. The situation of the surviving bands by this time would have been impossible.

The military and the ranchers and settlers of the region were not unaware of this desperate situation and their desire was to end the presence of the few remaining Indians in the region by either extermination or removal to reservations. The military strategy was to keep scouts moving throughout the region (USWD 1897b:816). By keeping pressure on the surviving Indians and giving them no rest from relentless pursuit by the military it would, as one officer wrote, "wear down the Indians by preventing them from laying [inl supplies of food or ammunition" (Carranco and Beard 1981: 150).

During the spring, Captain Hull and Company D California Volunteers were active in the Eel River region. In his report (USWD 1897a: 259), Captain Hull wrote, "traveled all night over a rough terrain called the Rola Bola Mountains; plenty of Indian signs." The *Humboldt Times* (April 16, 1864) reported that Captain Hull and his men attacked an Indian encampment in the North Fork Basin, and that after making, "the necessary disposition of men to prevent as far as possible their escape a charge was made upon their camp." In this attack twenty six men were killed and fifteen women and children were taken prisoners. In May, the Humboldt Times (May 14, 1864) reported that a group of forty-eight Indians had surrendered to Captain Hull in the North Fork of the Eel River region. The *Times* concluded that the Indian's surrender: "would seem to indicate that the sneaking redskins of that locality are becoming satisfied that the war now being waged against them is no child's play, and that the only chance they have of salvaging their scalps is unconditional surrender." The following week the *Times* (May 21, 1864) stated that an additional one hundred and sixty Indians had surrendered to Captain Hull. In Captain Hull's report he noted that he returned to Fort Humboldt with 158 prisoners (sixty-six men, sixty-eight women, and twenty-four children) (USWD 1897a: 249).

It was during this period that Soldier Basin was named. Captain John Simpson commanding Company E of the First California Battalion of Mountaineers (mustered into service August 31, 1863, out of service June 14, 1865) operating within region was charged with gathering the remaining Indians within the North Fork basin (Robb 1978: 8). Since this was the final expedition into the North Fork region by the military, the following report (USWD 1897b:963) by Captain Simpson to his commanding officer at Fort Humboldt is quoted at length below.

> ....arrived in the Indian's country on the 12th day of August...My camp is' about twenty-five miles northeast of Round Valley [at Lake Mountain], near the Yallo Bailey Mountains, which is very rough, being one continuation of

> mountains and ravines, interspersed with dense thickets of timber and brush, which afford excellent hiding for Indians and render it almost inaccessible to white men.... On the 12th day of August I succeeded in capturing five Indians, to whom I explained the object of the expedition, assuring them that all who came in and surrendered themselves would be well treated and provided for and those who refused to come in would be killed by the troops. I then instructed them to go out and find all the Indians they could and bring them to camp... There are sixty-eight Indians in camp at present and the prospect is fair for many more. They appear well satisfied to be taken to the reservation....
>
> From what information can be gained of the numbers of Indians in this vicinity there are probably 400 or 500 inhabiting a space of country about 150 miles in circumference, principally on the headwaters of the Eel River and lying between Round Valley on the west and the Sacramento Valley on the east. The Indians appear to be in almost destitute condition as to supplies of provisions for the coming winter, only being able to barely subsist themselves through the summer and fall months; consequently when winter commences they will be entirely destitute of subsistence and will necessarily be compelled to resort to plunder for a living."

In September, Captain Simpson was camped at Lake Mountain and operating in the North Fork region when he learned of a large encampment near the confluence of the North Fork and the Main Eel River. In his report he wrote (USWD 1897a: 391):

> I found the rancheria to extend some 300 yards up and down the river, the place being surrounded by rocky banks and very difficult to approach. I immediately divided my men in squads and surrounded them to the best advantage. I then told them through Indian interpreters to surrender and they would not be killed...they were disarmed and counted, numbering eighty-eight in all. They had slaughtered a considerable number of cattle, hogs, and sheep, and had a large quantity of dried beef in camp, numerous sheepskins, and offal of slaughtered cattle were lying about camp, and one live sheep picketed in camp. After explaining to the Indians that they were to be taken to the reservation they appeared well satisfied and willing to go.

On September 24 Captain Simpson left for Round Valley. Upon his arrival he turned over 161 Indians to Austin Wiley Superintendent of Indian Affairs. This expedition returned to Camp Grant on September 30 after having spent "two months twelve days in the field." This marks the end of military operations within the North Fork Basin (USWD 1897a:391). Bledsoe (1885:209) writes: "In January 1865 Lieutenant Middleton, Company C, arrived at the Peninsula [Humboldt Bay] with a large number of prisoners, compromising the last of the hostilities in Trinity County". By their capture, it was said that Trinity County was cleared of all Indians who lived in rancherias. A few families, however, remained within their ancestral territories. They were described as docile and "too few in number to be

feared or avoided" (Bledsoe 1885:209). The winter of 1864-65 was considered the end of Indian troubles in the Northwest and the California Volunteers and Mountaineers were mustered out of service.

Environmental Changes within the North Fork Eel River Basin 1854-1864

Much of the environmental data relevant to the North Fork basin has been presented in a number of papers over the last several years (Keter 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989). [See also Keter 1995, 1997] The information presented here is a basic summary of material related to the environment which is relevant to the Conflict and Settlement Period. The baseline data presented for this era are the result of the review of historical records, interviews with local residents, and field research. For information on methodology in how vegetation associations and animal populations (principally deer) were reconstructed for the years 1854-1865 refer to the references cited above. From an environmental perspective, it appears that in terms of actual abundance and changes in the kinds of plant species and their distribution across the region, the principal changes to vegetation have occurred since 1865. It was however, during the Conflict and Settlement Period that human land-use and resource exploitation practices were so changed that the stage was set for the relatively rapid, irreversible, and significant changes to the environment that have taken place within the North Fork Eel River watershed over the last 135 years.

It appears that the first significant impacts to the environment of the region would have resulted from the hunting of deer for hides. Deer were plentiful in the Yolla Bolly region and many early historical accounts write of the large number of deer in the area. Records indicate that Jim Willburn and his Indian hunters alone killed over 20,000 deer between 1856 and 1895 (Rahm 1943: 4-7). It has been estimated (based on the vegetation of the basin) that the deer population within the region would have numbered approximately 10,000-15,000 in 1865 (Keter 1988: 10). This estimate suggests that perhaps the higher figure would be a close approximation of the population in 1854. This would include deer that spent at least a portion of the year within the North Fork basin (usually summering above 4,000' in the higher South Fork Mountain/Yolla Bolly country to the east or the Lassics/Round Mountain area to the west). By 1865, the deer population was probably closer to the lower estimate of 10,000, still significant in number.

The hunting of deer for hides was somewhat localized. For example, in 1861 Lieutenant Lynn (USWD 1897a: 10) in a report to his commanding officer wrote:

> "Between Spruce Grove [near Harris] and Willburn's place on the Eel River, and especially between [the] main Eel River and Larrabee's Creek, game particularly deer, is quite plentiful, owing mainly to the fact, I suppose, that buckskin hunters, killing deer in contravention of game laws and for their skins, have not yet, to any great extent, infested that region.

Although the hunting of deer by hide hunters would have had some impact, it appears that it was not in and of itself significant, but was rather one component of a number of negative affects to the aboriginal subsistence resources which was broad based and cumulative in nature. It appears that although the decline in the deer population would continue after 1865 a significant deer population much greater than the current population remained in the region until the late 1800s (Keter 1988: 9). [Consultants indicated that a large number of deer still wintered in "herds "on the southwest facing slopes of the North Fork basin well into the 1920s and 1930s. Smaller herds of 10 to 20 deer can still be seen in this area in the winter (personal observation).]

A second impact to the environment and subsistence resource base of the Indians would have been the introduction of wild hogs to the basin in 1860. This would have not only affected the Wailaki [within a few years thousands of wild hogs roamed the Yolla Bolly Country; see Keter 1994] but would also have affected the deer [and bear] population also dependent on acorns as a major food resource in the fall to add body fat to last through the winter. In addition, wild hogs would have accelerated the deterioration of the rangelands within the North Fork basin. For an explanation of how vegetation associations and animal populations (principally deer) were reconstructed for the years 1854-1865 refer to the references cited above.

In 1860, the Asbill brothers bought some hogs and were driving them north to Weaverville where there was a market for pork among the large population of Chinese miners. While camping in the North Fork basin on Long Ridge (see Map 2), bears came into camp one night and scattered the hogs into the countryside (Carranco and Beard 1981: 174). Feral pigs adapted readily to the abundant acorn crop and other plant resources and their numbers increased rapidly. It is also possible by this time that feral pigs may have already entered the North Fork basin from Round Valley to the south as ranchers and homesteaders had begun bringing pigs into the valley in the late 1850's. Feral pigs were abundant in the Yolla Bolly country well into the 20th century (Miller papers).

Military records indicate that Indians surviving within the basin began to exploit this new food resource (Carranco and Beard 1981: 366). On June 17, 1861, a detachment of U.S. Calvary troops under the command of Lieutenant Joseph Collins found more than 200 pounds of pork hanging in an Indian camp on the trail from Round Valley to Kettenpom Valley.

Despite the availability of an additional food resource, the feral pigs soon competed for the acorn crop and other plant resources (for example bulbous plants) and further reduced the resource base of the local Indian inhabitants. John W. Burgess testifying before the Joint Committee indicated that much of the conflict with the Yuki in Round Valley was the result of desperation for food; "The hogs eat the acorns and roots, and cattle take the clover, and therefore they kill the stock to subsist upon" (Herbert et al et al n.d.: 47).

Grazing within the North Fork Eel River Basin

Because of the importance that livestock grazing played in both changing the environment within the North Fork basin and its effect on the culture of the local Indian groups and their ability to continue the pursuit of traditional resource subsistent strategies, a summary of the historic development of grazing for the region is presented in this section (specific effects of grazing as related to the environment are documented in Keter 1989). Other researchers working in this area have already suggested that the expansion of the livestock industry into northwest California was one of the major causes of the "Indian Wars." of the early 1860s (Herbert et al n.d.: 76).

By the mid-1840's livestock were already established on Spanish land grant ranches north of the San Francisco Bay area extending well into Sonoma and Napa Counties (Burcham 1981:127). After the gold rush, statehood, and the influx of Americans, the livestock industry expanded rapidly throughout northern California. The mining districts were an enormous and rich market and there was a heavy demand for meat. Large herds were driven north to the mining districts from southern California, the southwestern states, and even Texas (Burcham 1981: 128).

When Euro-Americans first entered the area of southern Humboldt, northern Mendocino, and southwest Trinity Counties, they immediately recognized the potential for grazing. The grasslands of the North Coast Ranges met four criteria as outlined by L. T. Burcham (1981:4) which are needed to have an extensive and successful livestock industry:

1. Availability of large of essentially free range, producing suitable forage.
2. A demand for animal products, locally or in a foreign market.
3. A low requirement for labor, readily available from a cheap labor source.
4. Suitable animals available for a foundation stock.

Among other factors that facilitated the growth of the livestock industry were sufficient rainfall to produce forage, mild winter temperatures permitting year-round grazing at lower elevations, lack of competition from native wildlife, few predatory animals, and, initially, freedom from disease and insect pests (Burcham 1981: 4).

The grasslands of the North Coast Ranges were rich and extensive and the newcomers considered them, despite its Indian inhabitants, free for the taking. These lands were exceedingly productive and at first were able to support vast herds of cattle, and somewhat later, sheep [Keter 1994]. Overgrazing, however, resulted in rapid deterioration of the rangelands. Today, it takes a significantly greater acreage per Animal Unit Month (AUM) than when these lands were first grazed in the late 1850's (Burcham 1974: 114).

In the North Fork basin, as elsewhere in California, by the early 1860s, as noted earlier, the conflict between the Wailaki and the growing number of newcomers had become increasingly violent. The land-use patterns of each group were so conflicting that there was little room for coexistence. For the most part the new comers simply viewed unarmed

Indians as an impediment to be removed or eliminated so they could have the range for themselves.

Grazing (and over grazing) rapidly depleted the rich perennial bunch grasses and forbs of the region's grasslands and oak woodlands (Keter 1989: 9). As increasing numbers of livestock entered the Yolla Bolly country, it became more and more difficult for the Indian population to secure adequate food resources (Herbert et al n.d.: 46). It was, primarily, the loss of grass seed, clover, and other vegetal materials easily collected, transported, and stored that led to the severe hunger and malnutrition among the native population (Herbert et al n.d.:46). Testimony before the Special Joint Committee on the Mendocino War held in 1860 makes this point perfectly clear: "The stock....consuming the clover, grass, acorns and wild oats, which they have hitherto subsisted on.... there is hardly any food in the mountains that the Indians can get" (In Herbert et al n.d.:47).

The result of this loss of aboriginal food resources led directly to the slaughter of stock by Indian groups facing starvation and was a major cause of the intense period of conflict between the Indians and the ranchers in the North Fork region especially after 1860. As documented earlier, these conflicts often were little more than one-sided massacres of small bands of extended families of unarmed Indians hiding in the hills trying to survive by occasionally killing livestock or consuming livestock which had died of natural, predator, or other causes. Whatever the cause of death, the butchered remains of livestock were attributed to Indian depredation and more often than not a vigilante group punished the nearest group of Indians without regards to their culpability (see Hammond 1959: 40-41 and Carranco and Beard 1981).

During the Ranching Period (1865-1905) [Keter 1994], George White was to control a major portion of the North Fork basin. Through violence and intimidation, he managed to prevent homesteading throughout much of the area. George White, in later years often called the "Cattle King" or "King of Round Valley", first entered Round Valley in May of 1854. White was prospecting for gold at the time (Carranco and Beard 1981: 219). In April 1856 White returned and preempted one thousand acres on the south side of the valley. Leaving a hired hand in charge he then left for southern California. White returned in the spring of 1857 with several hundred head of cattle driving them all the way to Round Valley from the Los Angeles area, via Colusa and Tehama Counties. Another 500 head were purchased in other areas of northern California. White became the first of the ranchers to utilize the North Fork basin for summer and fall grazing (later his brother Pitt White, Ben Arthur, and Charles Fenton would also use this area although it was principally controlled by White).

Historic maps indicate that White claimed many parcels of land with springs and water sources within the North Fork basin (Lowden 1894: map). These lands were claimed under the Preemption Act of 1841 and the Homestead Act of 1862 to control the limited water supply and thus control the open range country. White's "buckaroos" (hired guns) were used to enforce his control of the region (Carranco and Beard 1981: 220) until the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Historian Rand Herbert (Herbert et al n.d.: 64) writes: "virtually unknown by whites in the mid-1850's, by 1860 Round Valley had become a mecca for stock raisers from all over northern California whose cattle grazed over a 30-mile stretch of the vast country of ridges, canyons, and hills around the valley." The winter of 1861-62 was extremely severe. The cattle and stock industry in northern California suffered heavy losses (Coy 1929:210). In February 1862, the Humboldt Times expressed fear that half the livestock in the region might perish. Although the livestock did begin to recover from the storms, it was also reported that the losses to livestock by Indians increased in Humboldt County. This was probably the result of the severe winter and the impact to the food resources of the surviving Indians. Despite some occasional setbacks the number of cattle increased rapidly in the Yolla Bolly country from about 1860 to about 1865. Table I presents data on the number of cattle and sheep in Humboldt, Trinity, and Mendocino Counties during this period.

Although the study area is located in southwestern Trinity County, livestock from southeastern Humboldt (Blocksburg and Alderpoint areas) and Northeastern Mendocino (Summit Valley and Round Valley) used the area to some extent for grazing. Most of this activity, however, took place after the Indians in the region were subdued in 1864. Several large ranches (Benjamin Arthur, Pitt White, Charles Fenton,) were located just to the west of the North Fork basin. An overview of these ranches and how they utilized the North Fork basin will be presented in the portion of this study on the Ranching Period [see Keter 1994]. The actual number of cattle prior to 1865 within the North Fork basin is not clear. The data does suggest, however, that it was probably not until sometime after 1860 before any significant impacts from grazing were felt in the area. From 1860-65 there was increasing use of the rangelands within the North Fork basin. If the pattern followed that of later times, cattle would have passed through the basin in the spring and early summer. As summer wore on the cattle were then driven further east to the South Fork Mountain/Yolla Bally high country area returning through the North Fork region in the fall. The boom times of the stock industry really only began in the mid-1860's. This was so not only because of the killing or removal of the remaining Wailaki, but because the foundation herds originally brought in were reproducing and growing in numbers.

As outlined in earlier sections of this paper, the North Fork region was one of the last regions to be settled and exploited by the white population in the North Coast Ranges. For this reason, it was not impacted by grazing as greatly during this time period as were areas further to the south in Round Valley and to the west in Humboldt County. After 1865 with the removal of the surviving bands of Indians in the North Fork basin, the region quickly became an important region for grazing of cattle and sheep.

Natural Vegetation within the North Fork Eel River Basin

Prior to the Conflict and Settlement Period, the oak woodlands and grasslands of the region provided a major portion of the food resources for the Wailaki Lassik and Pitch Wailaki inhabiting the region. After spending the winter months in villages situated along the major

rivers of the region, they usually left the lower elevation sites by late spring often traveling in small bands (usually extended families) exploiting resources in the mountains as they became seasonally available (a section of this study will cover the seasonal rounds of the native groups inhabiting the basin in detail).

Clovers, grasses (primarily perennial bunch grasses), seed bearing plants (for example *Wyethia* spp.) and bulbous plants were major food resources (refer to Keter 1989 Tables I-V). The oak woodlands and grasslands were maintained in a productive state through a seasonal burning regime (Keter 1988). The large increase in the distribution of Douglas-fir (500%) and corresponding decrease (65%) in distribution of oak woodlands within the region, primarily since 1865, is documented in another portion of this study (Keter 1988). [See Keter 1995, 1997] This major change in vegetation associations is primarily due to the absence of anthropogenic fires which the Indian initiated to maintain habitat diversity and maximize subsistence resources. Another principal change to the vegetation within the basin was the introduction of non-native plant species, primarily annual grasses, but including some weedy and noxious species (Keter 1989: 9). These changes were primarily the result of overgrazing.

The grazing portion of this study and previous research (Keter 1989: 7) documented that changes to native vegetation were only beginning to occur within the basin by about 1865. It is possible that wild oats (*Avena fatua*), an introduced species, may have preceded historic settlement of the region. It was not, however, until widespread disturbance of the grasslands by overgrazing that the number of species of perennial bunch grasses and their distribution were radically reduced. By the end of the Conflict and Historic Settlement Period, the stage was set for the large number of non-native annuals which would invade the area over the next several decades. It should also be noted, that, overall, non-native annuals are significantly lower in nutritive value and contributed to the malnutrition of many Indians, especially in the Round Valley region (Keter 1989: 11). In addition, after an initially high carrying capacity for livestock, as non-native grasses became established, the carrying capacity of the rangelands began to decline dramatically.

It appears that significant impacts to the grasslands and oak woodlands did not occur or become critical during the Settlement and Conflict Period (Keter 1989). It seems likely, however, that by 1860 the increasing numbers of cattle, the introduction of feral hogs, and deer hunting would have conspired to significantly affect the ability of the Wailaki inhabiting the North Fork region to continue their traditional subsistence practices. To make matters worse, as noted earlier, several locations within the North Fork basin--including Kettenpom and Hoaglin Valleys and Long Ridge--that were principal food resource gathering areas, were no longer available due to settlers moving into these areas.

The Archaeological Record 1854-1864

Little has been written from an archaeological perspective on what has been termed the "refuge period" (see Jackson 1976, Tamez 1978, and Edwards 1976). Thomas Jackson

(1976:148) defined this period as that time when: "the last aboriginal inhabitants of the region fled to the hinterland in an effort to escape the total destruction of life and culture." Some models have been suggested for predicting the location of refuge sites. Jackson (1976:148) hypothesized that refuge sites might be located: "in areas of the most illogical sort, perhaps located away from easily obtained water or adjacent to the most minute springs in the deepest and densest vegetation." He also predicted that some of the older habitation sites might have been reoccupied.

Sonia Tamez (1978:25: 26) listed a number of characteristics which might help to identify refuge sites.

--Sites may reflect a wide range of activities in a hinterland location when more favorable sites are available.
--Sites cannot easily be seen from the outside. [remote]
--Sites may be easily vacated if necessary.
--Sites will not reflect long term occupation.

These models, while suggestive and helpful, are rather generalized and remain largely untested. Given the limited amount of attention paid to the refuge period, it is not surprising that little actual archaeological research has been conducted on this type of site.

Military records indicate that some refuge sites encountered did conform to the models presented above. For example, Captain Hull while operating in the North Fork region (USWD 1897a:259) wrote: "discovered Indian fires situated on a high bluff of rock that seemed impossible to approach, and it was so to strangers at night-time; hence I was compelled to defer attack until daylight but those wary savages discovered us and fled."

Within the North Fork basin there has been no formal excavation of any sites. There have been a number of surveys and some limited subsurface testing which have produced some information relevant to this study. Most of the basin, however, remains unsurveyed. It is apparent from the surveys (including the survey of over 16,000 acres for the vegetation portion of this study [Keter 1995, 1997], that the distribution of prehistoric sites across the basin was the result of maximizing a diverse resource base. From the military and historical records cited earlier in this paper, it appears that some sites occupied during the refuge period have been identified on the ground. These locations (for example CA-TRI-387) are major habitation sites and have been identified in some of the ethnographic studies of the Wailaki Lassik and Pitch Wailaki (Baumhoff 1958). There are vague references in the historical record concerning other recorded sites in the basin, one such site is located adjacent to a major complex of springs [Red Mountain Meadows] and several others are located along Rock Creek. A complex of sites is also located just over the divide in the headwaters area of the Mad River drainage about 100-200 meters below the ridge. This area was also referred to by the military as a refuge location (USWD 1897b:805-806). Although no formal excavation has occurred to any of these sites, any future excavations should consider the possibility that they may have been occupied during the refuge period.

One site (05-10-54-196) has been identified as having a strong probability of being a

temporary occupation site, dating from the refuge period. This site consists of a pit sized depression approximately 5.5 meters in diameter. During the fall of 1989 an intensive surface examination of the site was undertaken (Keter 1989a). After all duff was removed from the pit and the area immediately adjacent to the pit it was carefully inspected. In addition to the shallow pit depression, five chert flakes and one obsidian flake were noted on the surface or below the duff layer. The limited cultural materials associated with the site and their limited spatial distribution is suggestive of short term occupation.

[In 1984, a core was taken from a Douglas-fir growing along the northeast corner of the pit. This tree was approximately 110 years old at that time. Moreover, the pit feature was still relatively well defined. It lacked the buildup of understory debris and litter usually found under a mature forest canopy. Nearly all of the Douglas-fir in this area were about 110 years old--it was an even-aged stand invading an oak woodland; personal observation, see Keter 1995, 1997. This in and of itself suggests the site has a shallow time depth.]

It appears that this site conforms quite well to Tamez's and Jackson's predictive models for refuge sites. The site is located in a rather isolated spot away from the main east/west trending ridge in very rough deep cut canyon country. The site is situated on the edge of an ancient alluvial terrace about 80 meters up a steep slope and 200 meters away from the nearest water source, a seasonal stream which is a marginal water supply at best.
Given the tenuous connections between the site referred to above and the refuge period, it is apparent that it will be difficult to identify with any certainty sites from this period.

[Unfortunately this small compact site along the edge of an ancient river terrace was destroyed by the Forest Service. Despite my having flagged this site to protect it, it was near a timber sale unit and during the logging operation the site was bladed and used as a landing. This took place in about 1990. Refer to the CRIR linked to the site record 54-196 for more information on this site and its location.]

Although predictive models are helpful, it appears that the material record left during this relatively short period in the North Fork basin is extremely limited. Due to the need for mobility and limited interaction with the white population at this time, the artifacts likely to be found on sites will be the same as those found in the ethnographic record. Within the basin for the years 1854-1859, it is likely that a transition was taking place in which cultures were struggling to maintain their traditions, independence, and control of their territories. Due to the remoteness of the region during these years many groups could have survived relatively unscathed by simply avoiding the areas occupied by ranches and settlers who were few in number.

By about 1860 and until 1865, however, the pressures would have increased due to settlement, increased grazing, military operations, the presence of feral pigs, and the cumulative impacts from hide hunters to the deer population. In effect, the refuge period as defined by Jackson would have only lasted for a period of five to six years. During this period, to avoid being killed or captured, the surviving bands would have needed to be even more mobile than usual. Material possessions would have been meager or non-

existent. At some known refuge locations (for example CA-TRI-387, CA-TRI 230) it is possible that some evidence may be found including evidence of military action. For example, if remains of any military operations such as lead shot or military hardware are identified it is likely that they can be attributed to this period. In addition, some Indians were known to have firearms and ammunition during this period. Historical accounts, however, greatly overestimated the number of firearms possessed by the Indians at this time.

Although excavation is needed to confirm this hypothesis, it appears that in the North Fork region sites or site components from the refuge period will be extremely difficult to identify with any certainty and will remain an enigma due to their ephemeral nature.

Historic Sites

During the period 1854-1864 historic sites within the North Fork basin were few in number. These sites were primarily related to homesteading activities, military operations, and hide hunting. Homesteads were located on what is now private land in Kettenpom and Hoaglin Valleys, on Long Ridge, and possibly late in the period at Red Mountain. Military encampments were short in duration and any materials left would likely be few in number. Some locations where the military is documented to have camped include Kettenpom Valley, Soldier Basin, and Lake Mountain. These locations are likely to also be Indian camps. It may be difficult to conclude with any certainty whether some of the historic artifacts encountered at these sites were being utilized by Indians or the military.

The Social and Political Context 1854-1864

It can be concluded from the research conducted for this study, that although short in duration, the Conflict and Historic Settlement Period was catastrophic for the native peoples of the North Fork basin and more generally to those inhabiting northwest California. Although there have been many histories of the region (see for example Bledsoe 1885, Hoopes 1971, and Coy 1929), few of these studies have come to terms with the record of violence perpetrated on the Native Americans by the predominately American settlers who entered the area at this time. More recently, however, this has begun to change and a number of researchers have documented and described more critically some of the events related to the conflict and the violence which took place (see for example Hammond 1959, Carranco and Beard 1981, and Miller 1975).

The most critical study to date is by Jack Norton, a Native American professor at Humboldt

State University. In his book, *Genocide in Northwest California* (1979) he describes many of the atrocities which occurred in northwest California during the 1850's and 1860's. Written from a Native American perspective, this book is an indictment of the Americans who first entered the region. Although I do not agree with all of the assumptions and conclusions in Norton's book, I do agree with his central point; a war of genocide, conscious in intent, and with racist underpinnings was pursued against the native peoples of Northwest California by the settlers, predominately American, who moved into the area. Racist attitudes were shared by a large portion of the white population and are often cited as the reason for the conflict with the Indians during the period of historic settlement (see for example Hammond 1959). Several other factors, however, should be considered when interpreting the events which took place at this time. Among the most important are economics and the basic incompatibility of two entirely different social systems; the tribe and the state. Tribal cultures persist in a relatively dynamic equilibrium with the environment and within tribal boundaries. The population is limited or grows slowly and must adapt to the ecological limitations of their territory. Industrial cultures are cultures of consumption and can be considered the opposite of hunting and gathering cultures who make light demands on the environment.

With the advent of the industrialized states in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the rate of resource consumption increased rapidly. Technologically developed cultures, as Anthropologist John Bodly (1981: 6) notes: "have always assumed a natural right to exploit the world's resources wherever they find them, regardless of the prior claims of the indigenous populations." As markets expanded the search for new resources was a driving force for expansion into the American west. With the discovery of gold, the influx of immigrants greatly accelerated and overwhelmed the aboriginal inhabitants throughout much of northwestern California by their sheer numbers alone. Rapid and profound changes to the environment due to changing land-use practices greatly affected the ability of the aboriginal cultures to survive using traditional resource subsistence strategies. As Heizer and Whipple (1971:567) point out, in effect: "the aborigines were forced, therefore, to adapt themselves, on their own ground, to a new environment. The final effect was precisely the same as if they had been bodily removed and set down in a strange region."

Although the eventual fate of the Native Americans in the region can be attributed to economic conflict over land, control of resources, a changing environment, and racist attitudes, the underlying fundamental cause of their treatment by whites can be attributed to ethnocentrism; the belief that one's culture is superior. Ethnocentrism provided the rationale which made acceptable to white society the dehumanization of Indian people. In northwest California this basic tenet of the superiority of the white culture over "savages" and their "primitive" beliefs and cultural practices, along with principals ingrained in nineteenth century America relating to progress and "manifest destiny" are the underlying reasons for the inhumane treatment and the rapid decline in the native population.

During this era the *Humboldt Times* (the major county newspaper), and later A. J. Bledsoe (1885), who documented the attitudes of the citizenry at this time, both clearly show this propensity to dehumanize Indians. Indians were perceived as barely human, or as

"savages." Men were referred to as "bucks" and women as "squaws" and in one article, the *Humboldt Times* (February 9, 1861) editor referred to Indians as "low life diggers." In another article (September 18, 1858) the editor of the *Times* wrote: We think....that a company of men should be raised by our citizens and sent out immediately in order, at least, to keep the Indians at bay 'til some plan for their removal or extermination be matured." As Hammond (1959:4) in his history of the Round Valley Indian Reservation writes: "Thousands of documents were examined in research for this paper, virtually all written by men whose primary work was in Indian affairs...yet in only two documents are Indians mentioned by name...they were unable to recognize Indians as real people." By denying that Indians belonged to the same cognitive category as themselves, it was much easier for settlers and elected officials to justify their extermination as inevitable (though perhaps even regrettable). This "inevitable extinction" of the Indians and their culture was in keeping with ideas such as "survival of the fittest" which was adapted by Herbert Spencer and others to put forward the theory of social Darwinism and which was becoming a dominant force in mid-nineteenth century thought. Both Europeans and Americans embraced this philosophy which justified colonialism and the exploitation and extermination of tribal peoples.

For the reasons cited above, physical violence against Indians in northwest California at this time was the norm rather than the exception. Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard in the most comprehensive study of the history of the Round Valley region *Genocide and Vendetta* (1981: 39) note that "all Indians were regarded as predatory animals...the native's life was worthless... [and] what little property the Indian possessed could be taken or destroyed at the slightest provocation...the quickest and easiest way to get rid of his troublesome presence was to kill him off..." (see Norton 1979 and Carranco and Beard 1981 for numerous descriptions of violence by settlers against the Indians of northwest California).

Although some historians have attributed the killing and kidnapping of Native Americans to a class of settlers on the edges of civilization, the fact is the political system and the commercial power structure which were controlled by prominent citizens of the region, provided the impetus and the social and political atmosphere within which the killings took place. For example, the federal government, the state legislature, and the governor were lobbied by prominent citizens of the region for help in removing Indians by force from their homelands and they received such support in various laws, funding, and military aid. As Carranco and Beard (1981: 39) point out, the American system had no place for the Indian and "if there was any conflict whatsoever with the system, the native was to be eliminated ruthlessly, either by outright killing or the later slower method of segregation in reservations."

Given the contempt the general population [although not unanimous and with some notable exceptions; in 1860 Bret Harte was driven out of Arcata after publishing an article criticizing the massacre of Wiyot men, women, and children at Gunther Island on Humboldt Bay] of northwest California held for Indians, it is not surprising that extremists bordering on the psychopathic took advantage of the situation by systematically murdering (at times sadistically) Indians. For example, Henry Larabee bragged of having killed over sixty Indian

children with a hatchet (Carranco and Beard 1981:63) and Walter Jarboe lead a paramilitary group which was responsible for the killing of hundreds of Indian men, women, and children in the Round Valley region (Carranco and Beard 1981: 84-97).

In some of the histories of northwest California, the military has been portrayed as protectors of the Indians during this era. Although there were complaints by local citizens about the zeal and effectiveness with which the military pursued the Indians during this time, the historic record indicates the Indians of the region were afforded little protection from attacks by settlers and paramilitary groups. Periodically the military did provide some protection to the Indians at the Round Valley Indian Reservation or prevented an occasional massacre, murder, or kidnapping; in reality, however, they were powerless to prosecute those who murdered Indians and did little even to protect those on the reservation [local settlers more than once ran their livestock on to the reservation to destroy the Indians crops.]. Army Records (USWD 1897a, 1897b) reveal that often the military attacked Indian camps shooting all adult males and sometimes killing Indian women "by mistake" before capturing the survivors and taking them to the reservation (this was especially true before 1864). Therefore, the military can be viewed as a resource which could be used by those in political power to remove the Indians from their ancestral homelands.

The Indians of the region were not passive and occasionally they met with limited success in slowing or halting settlement in a particular area. Usually their attacks were retribution for specific acts of murder or kidnapping. They failed, however, to organize into an effective fighting force. Some historical records dating from this era refer to Indians obtaining fire arms. The number of firearms obtained by Indians was greatly overstated (especially for the southern Athapascans) by the local settlers. This was done primarily for political reasons (i.e. to elicit more military aid from the federal and state governments). The ability of the military and settlers to reprovision when necessary rather than having to live off the land, to organize sufficient fighting forces, and most importantly the use of firearms made any effort at retaliation by the Indians nearly futile. The killing of Indians and the other actions taken by the white population during this period was disproportionate to Indian resistance. In reality, there was no logical symmetry between the attacks and violence against whites by Indians and the much more widespread and institutionalized violence by whites against Indians.

S. F. Cook has written extensively on Indian populations and their decline during the historic period in California. Although in some areas, for example the Sacramento Valley, large declines in native population were due to disease (Cook 1955), that is not the case in the Yolla Bolly region. While there was some disease, primarily syphilis, this occurred after many of the survivors of attacks on villages and camps were placed on the reservations. In 1856 no Indians living on the Round Valley Indian Reservation were "affected with the venereal." By August 1858, however, about twenty percent were infected. Over the next decade hundreds of Indians on the reservation died of the disease. One of the reasons given at that time for the rapid spread of this disease was the kidnapping from the reservation and rape of Indian women by the settlers (Carranco and Beard 1981: 61).

The kidnapping and indenturing of Indians, especially children, the taking of Indian women for wives by early settlers, and the traditionally small families and low reproductive rates of the Indians of the region, also contributed to the rapid decline in tribal population and the failure of native groups to increase their populations even after the period of intense conflict had subsided (also other possible factors include an increased incidence of infertility in women of child bearing age due to physical and emotional stress, poor diet, and venereal disease). One agent reported that the Indians being brought to the reservation "have very few children, most of them doubtless having been stolen and sold " (Carranco and Beard 1981: 61).

It can be concluded from the historical record, that the primary causes for the decline of the Wailaki population in the North Fork region was a direct result of the wholesale killing of Indians by the military and settlers and the poor conditions on reservations [as noted earlier the reservation was considered a concentration camp by the Wailaki] leading to high mortality rates due to disease, poor diet, and unhealthful conditions (including inadequate shelter, lack of adequate winter clothing, poor sanitation, and overcrowding). In addition, the kidnapping of a large number of individuals, especially women and children, prevented any possibility of stabilizing or slowing the decline in population (documentation of the ethnographic cultures of the North Fork basin including population estimates will be presented in another portion of this study). Special Agent J. Ross Browne who investigated conditions on reservations (including Round Valley) in 1856 noted: "what neglect, starvation, and disease have not done, has been achieved by the cooperation of the white settlers in the great work of extermination" (Hammond 1959: 19).

The ethnocentric view of the Indians held by settlers and their elected representatives is also apparent in the reservation system. This system was created not only to rid the land of Indians who prevented "progress" and intensive exploitation of the land, but also with the 'idea that those who were placed there were wards of the state. In effect, under this legal principle, the Indian people were classified as incompetent or retarded children. As John Bodly (1981: 12) notes this creates the relationship in which the dominant culture is a "benevolent parent-guardian to the ward who must be protected from his or her own degrading culture and gradually reformed or corrected." These ethnocentric attitudes can also be seen in the Indenture Act [legal until slavery was abolished by the 13th Amendment] where Indians were indentured "for their own good."

Indian reservations were in fact not welcomed by many of the settlers moving into the region. Hammond (1959) documents how settlers in Round Valley attempted to destroy the reservation and drive the Indians from the valley. Several treaties creating large reservations in the North Coast ranges were secured by Redick McKee in 1851, but were never ratified by the Senate due to political pressure from the citizens of California. The California legislature issued an opposition report to the treaties which stated; "These reservations...embrace within their limits...extensive tracts of the most desirable land in California...the only plea for the necessity of which is to make room for the introduction and settlement of a few tribes of ignorant barbarians."

The Pitch Wailaki and Wailaki Lassik cultures of the North Fork region were almost totally destroyed during the ten year period 1854-1865. After 1865, it would have been difficult if not impossible for the Indian survivors to pursue a hunting and gathering way of life within the North Fork basin. A few individuals and families managed to survive and live in the general area working on ranches and some resided at the Round Valley Indian Reservation. Some neighboring tribes including the Wailaki and Yuki managed to maintain viable populations and retain their cultural identity. Portions of this study dealing with the Ranching Period and the Homestead Period will document how the surviving Indian people of the region managed to survive in an extremely hostile and unsympathetic social environment. Their survival is a tribute to their determination to retain their cultural identity and traditional belief systems.

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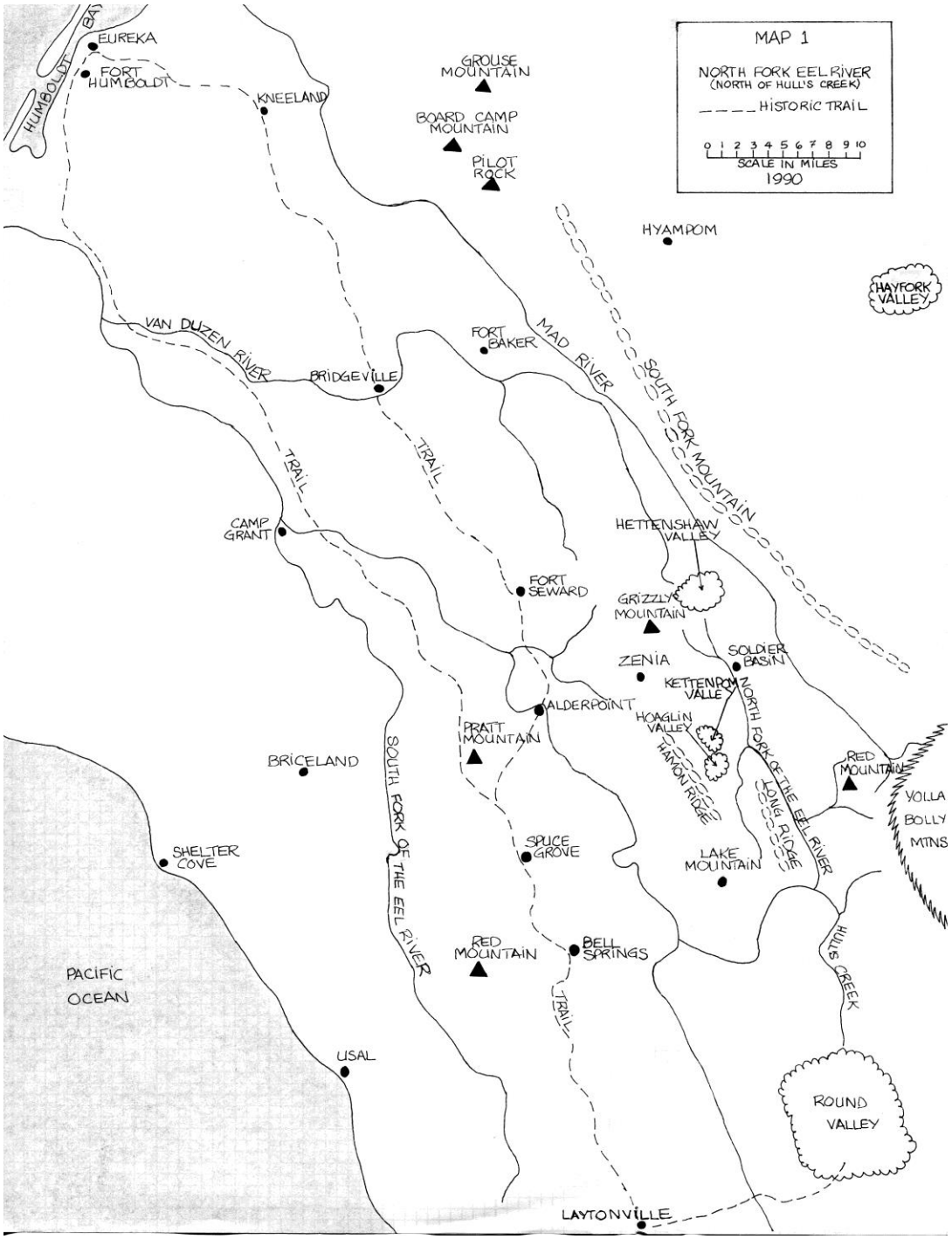

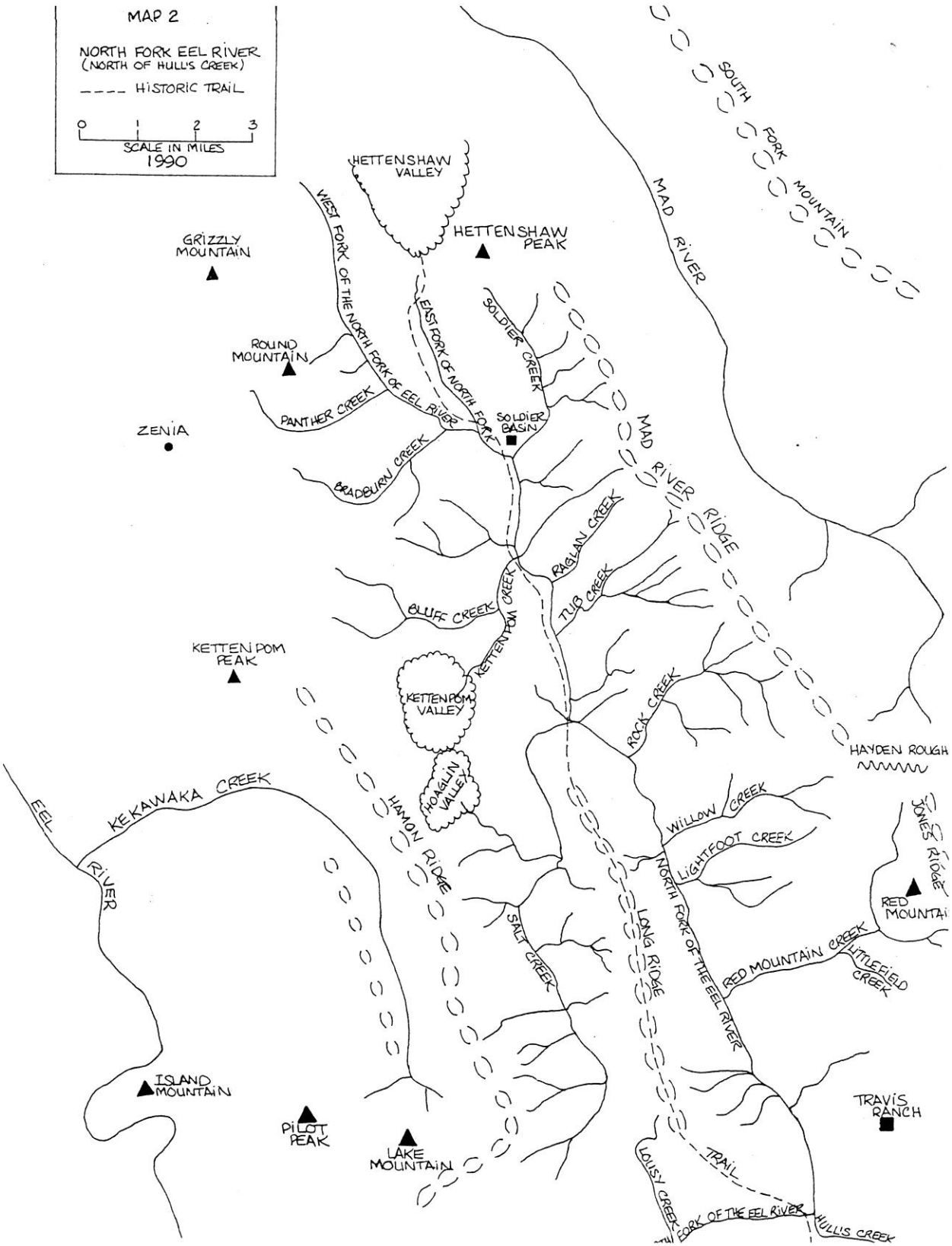
MAP 2
NORTH FORK EEL RIVER
(NORTH OF HULL'S CREEK)
HISTORIC TRAIL
0 1 2 3
SCALE IN MILES
1990
HETTENSHAW VALLEY
HETTENSHAW PEAK
GRIZZLY MOUNTAIN
ROUND MOUNTAIN
WEST FORK OF THE NORTH FORK OF EEL RIVER
EAST FORK OF NORTH FORK
SOLDIER CREEK
SOLDIER BASIN
PANTHER CREEK
BRADBURN CREEK
ZENIA
MAD RIVER
SOUTH FORK MOUNTAIN
MAD RIVER RIDGE
RAGLAN CREEK
TUB CREEK
BLUFF CREEK
KETTENPOM CREEK
KETTENPOM PEAK
KETTENPOM VALLEY
HOAGLIN VALLEY
ROCK CREEK
HAYDEN ROUGH
KEKAWAKA CREEK
EEL RIVER
HAMON RIDGE
WILLOW CREEK
LIGHTFOOT CREEK
JONES RIDGE
RED MOUNTAIN
NORTH FORK OF THE EEL RIVER
LONG RIDGE
SALT CREEK
RED MOUNTAIN CREEK
LITTLEFIELD CREEK
ISLAND MOUNTAIN
PILOT PEAK
LAKE MOUNTAIN
TRAVIS RANCH
TRAIL
LOUSY CREEK
FORK OF THE EEL RIVER
HULL'S CREEK

TABLE I

	Cattle			Sheep		
	Mendocino	Humboldt	Trinity	Mendocino	Humboldt	Trinity
1852	1,275					
1854		1,812				
1856		3,604				
1857		6,597				
1858		9,500				
1860	38,444	4,538	3,126	9,300	14	260
1861		26,678				
1865					2000	
1870	11,337	17,747	1,253	49,839	12,660	130
1880	13,253	28,318	2,958	295,869	186,038	24,150

Sources Coy 1929, Burcham 1981, Herbert n.d.

Note: Many cattle and sheep were not declared on census records or for tax purposes and the numbers for the years before 1870 are unreliable.