

Indian Killing

Orleans Bar, April 1852. After miners discussed the “Indian problem,” they voted to kill on sight any Indians having a gun.

Weaverville, May 1852. In revenge for the killing of five cows belonging to a white man, 153 Wintun Indians were killed.

Yontoket, 1853. After a Tolowa harvest dance, a survivor described a massacre: “The whitemen built a huge fire and threw in our sacred ceremonial dresses, the regalia, and our feathers, and the flames grew higher. Then they threw in the babies, many of them were still alive.” The following year, after a Tolowa stole a white man’s horse, most of the remaining Tolowa men, women, and children were killed.

Eel River, 1859. After local Indians stole about 600 head of cattle and killed 19 white settlers, a group of ranchers from Laytonville claimed to have killed 283 men and taken 292 prisoners to the Mendocino Reservation.

The Justifications

Drydon Laycock, a settler in Round Valley, claimed from 1856 to 1860, settlers went out “two or three times a week” and killed “on an average, fifty or sixty Indians on a trip.”

An army officer at Fort Humboldt wrote: “Cold-blooded Indian killing being considered honorable, shooting Indians and murdering even squaws and children that have been domesticated for months and years, without a moment’s warning and with as little compunction as they would rid themselves of a dog.”

In 1860, the *Humboldt Times* wrote: “The whites cannot afford horses and cattle for their sustenance, and will not. Ergo, unless Government provides for the Indians, the settlers must exterminate them.”

Source: Fergus M. Bordewich, *Killing the White Man’s Indian*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996: pp. 50-51.