

OREGON FREE PRESS.

GEO. L. CURRY, Editor and Proprietor.

OREGON CITY, SATURDAY MAY 13, 1848.

FROM THE ARMY.—We have received several letters from the army; one from our correspondent "Juan," which will be found on our first page, contains the substance of whatever news there may be. Capt. Martin, of the Yamhill company, with several of his men, have returned, in consequence, as we understand, of some dissatisfaction occasioned by informalities in mustering the companies into service.

On the evening of the 7th inst., Col. Lee, with the reinforcements to the army, was at John Day's river.

Two of our correspondents state that the H. B. Co.'s express from Fort Hall brings news of the arrival of U. S. troops some where in the vicinity of the "Soda Springs." We have had no report of this kind from their express which has arrived at Vancouver; our correspondents nevertheless state that Indians had brought such news to Fort Hall. We give the report for what it is worth. That there are U. S. troops some where on the Oregon route between this and Platte we have no doubt.

"Tamsuckie," instead of being in the "Grand Round," was met by the express near Fort Hall.

We have not been able to learn the name of the volunteer of Capt. Maxon's company, who had been killed by a fall from his horse.

Communication with the Dalles is now being had by way of the Mount Hood road, by which route Gen. Palmer arrived on Sunday last, four days from the Dalles. There is considerable snow on the road, near the mountain, but not enough to be any serious impediment to travel.

PROBABLE WRECK OF THE VANCOUVER.—Intelligence reached this City on Thursday last that the H. B. Co.'s bark Vancouver, in entering the Columbia river on Monday last, had struck on the "Horse-shoe" where she remained in a most dangerous situation. Mr. Pisk, who lives at the Cape, conveyed the news to Fort George, from whence it was despatched, by express, to Vancouver. Mr. Douglass with ten men immediately started for the mouth of the river upon the receipt of the disastrous intelligence.

The pilot boarded the Vancouver on Sunday, after having taken the brig Eveline out. The wind being unfavorable for her entrance, she went seaward, and on Monday afternoon, in the endeavor to get in, struck on the bar. There was a slight hope entertained that she might get off on the next morning's tide—if that did not avail there was no rescue for her. This is all the information we have been able to obtain, as no communication had been had with the ship when the express left.

JUDGE LANCASTER'S ADDRESS.—We listened with much interest, on Monday evening last, to Judge Lancaster's address, delivered before the "Washingtonian Temperance Society," at the Methodist church. The greater portion of the address was occupied with a discussion of the natural and relative rights involved in the question of "prohibition," in reference to the proposed amendment to the "Organic Law." The auditory was very large, and undoubtedly dispersed highly gratified with the discourse.

We are requested to state that Samuel R. Thurston, Esq., has accepted an invitation to address the society on Monday evening next.

THE LAND LAW.

MERRIWEATHER BAY, April 27, 1848.

Mr. Editor—Permit me, through the columns of your paper, to ask some questions with regard to land claims. Can a person, under 18 or 21 years of age, hold a claim to 640 acres of land, according to a strict construction of the law? Can a record, illegal, afterwards be made legal; or has a claimant, recording during the occupancy of a claim, any future use of that record? I suppose not—it being not good at the first, cannot be afterwards made so. Is a person bound to cultivate their land within one year, or only to build and fence?

INQUISITOR.

Although that portion of the "Organic Law" denominated the "Land Law" is inexpressive and indefinite upon the point in question, yet the rights of claimants over 18 years of age have generally been respected.—A law that was in force anterior to the "Organic Law," enacted we think in '44, made provision only for persons of the age of 18 years and upwards in regard to the possession of land, and notwithstanding the silence or imperfection of the present law in this respect, the spirit of it has generally been so understood. Indeed, we may remark that so universal has been the adoption of this construction of the law, that but very few claims have been recorded by minors.

A record, illegal when made, in our judgment, can never become good and legal.

Any person recording a claim during the period of its occupancy by another person, can never be the recipient of any advantage thereby; for, although the one who occupied, in the meantime abandons, still the person who first records, after the abandonment, alone can hold the claim. We do not know that the law is expounded in this manner, but such is our understanding of it.

In reference to the last query of "Inquisitor," the law is very plain, viz: "All claimants shall, within six months from the time of recording their claims, make permanent improvements upon the same, by building or enclosing." The law also requires the claimant to become an occupant upon his claim within one year from the date of the record, or pay what is termed an "absentee tax" of five dollars, annually.

PROTECTION FOR THE SOUTHERN FRONTIER.—We are happy to state that in obedience to various petitions of the citizens of the upper Willamette Valley, the governor has ordered Capt. Felix Scott's company of Mounted Rifle Rangers into service to defend the Southern frontier settlements; and at the proper time, we are authorized to say, the company will be ordered to proceed to Ogden's river to meet and escort the next immigration into this valley.

Capt. Scott wishes 35 more men. Any citizens, desirous of entering this service and going to meet the immigrants, can enroll themselves to the number of 20 with Adj. Gen. Lovejoy, and the remaining 15 with the commander. Each man will furnish himself with horses, guns, ammunition, and rations, and may expect to be ordered out about the 10th or 15th of July.

Capt. Scott will take out about 15 or 20 of his company every two or three weeks, on tours of duty, for the purpose of guarding the frontier settlements at the head of the Valley. He informs us that it is his intention to commence this service the beginning of the ensuing week.