

Reservation Plan (continued)

In order to secure the acquiescence of the citizens in the removal of the Indians to that point I am compelled to purchase and pay for several of the land acquisition claims that will be occupied. This the Department may deem an unwarranted assumption on my part, but I can conceive of no other means by which to avert an impending calamity involving the destruction of these bands and a blot upon our national reputation.

The prospective destruction of the bands was described in a letter which Palmer sent in December 1855 to Major-General John Wool, Commander of the Pacific Division:

The existence of a war of extermination by our citizens against all Indians in Southern Oregon which by recent acts appears to evince a determination to carry it out, in violation of all treaty stipulations, and the common usages of civilized nations, has induced me to take steps to remove friendly bands of Indians now assembled at Fort Lane and upon Umpqua Reservation, to an encampment on the headwaters of the Yam Hill River, distant about sixty miles south west of Vancouver and adjoining the Coast Reservation.

This plan has been adopted with a view of saving the lives of such of those Indians as have given just and reasonable assurances of friendship.

Grand Ronde Reservation History

Palmer's establishment of the Grand Ronde Reservation was reluctantly accepted by the Indians and was vehemently opposed by some whites. On January 8, 1856 a petition from Oregon citizens to President Franklin Pierce protested the purchase of the land claims and the colonization of

"thousands of Indians in the 'heart of the Willamette Valley.'" Sentiment against relocation of Indians at Grand Ronde was so threatening that Palmer had to organize civilian protection and request the presence of troops. On April 11, 1856 Palmer wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

The threatening attitude of the community led me to apprehend a general and combined attack upon the camp of friendly Indians, located at the Grand Ronde, and the slaughtering or driving into hostile position all who might be residing in the valley. I accordingly deemed it necessary to organize a force of armed citizens and place them on the eastern line of the reservation, cutting off all communication between settlements and the Indians. And whilst engaged in this line, to construct a fence from mountain to mountain, as a line of demarcation, across which no one could