

Anniversary of Canby Massacre Is Observed



MURDER SPOT - This cross marks the place where General Canby fell, shot during the peace talk by Captain Jack. The cross bears the inscription "General E.R.S. Canby was murdered here by Modocs April 11, 1873."

Thursday, April 11, was an important date in the historical heritage of Americans, particularly western Americans.

For it was on that date 90 years ago that the Modoc Indians, led by their chief, Captain Jack, attacked the U.S. Peace Commission in the Lava Beds, now preserved as a National Monument, and protected by the National Park Service.

Irvin Kerr, superintendent of the Lava Beds National Monument, called attention to the anniversary, announcing that the Lava Beds are open all year and extending a special invitation to the public to visit the area where most of the battles of the Modoc war were fought.

The ill-fated Peace Commission tried to negotiate a peace with Captain Jack's insurgent Modoc band of 160 men, women and children entrenched in the Lava Beds at Tule Lake, Calif. Two commissioners were shot and killed in the "Peace" tent April 11, 1873.

It was during the Battle of Lost River near the present town of Merrill, Ore., that the Modocs thwarted the U.S. army's attempt to arrest them and force their return to the Klamath reservation. That was on Nov. 29, 1872. After their escape the Modocs found

safety in the natural fortress of the Lava Beds which became known as Captain Jack's Stronghold, Kerr related the history leading up to the massacre.

The 55 men of the Modoc band scored a sensational victory over the more than 325 army and volunteer troops who attacked the stronghold on Jan. 17, 1873. The Modocs suffered no casualties. They killed 16 and wounded 49 of the attacking troops.

Following this "startling" defeat, President U.S. Grant's administration yielded to the demands of humanitarian Easterners to seek a peaceful settlement with the Modocs. The Peace Commission was appointed and sent to the Lava Beds to end the hostilities and to relocate the Modocs on a protected reservation.

Alfred B. Meacham, former Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs (1869) headed the Peace Commission. The Rev. Elmer Thomas from Petaluma, Calif., and Klamath Reservation Sub-Agent L. S. Dyer also were members of the commission.

Gen. Edward Canby, however, commanding general of the Military Department of the Columbia, was the military adviser and guiding figure in the Peace Commission. He had gained fame as the commander of the Union Forces in the New Mexico Territory and as conqueror of Mobile, Ala., and as military governor during the post-Civil War reconstruction period.

The Modocs attempted to dictate to the Peace Commission messengers from the beginning. General Canby refused Jack's demands that the Commission negotiate only in the Lava Beds and without a military escort. When it appeared that Captain Jack was not willing to compromise, Army Chief of Staff William T. Sherman telegraphed Canby to set an example with the Modocs so that "no other reservation for them will be necessary except graves among their chosen Lava Beds."

General Canby moved his reinforced troops to the Lava Beds for a show of force April 11, 1873. This movement of troops brought a quick agreement from Captain Jack to meet face to face with the Commission.

The first meeting with the Peace Commission was held on April 2. The Modoc chief demanded that the soldiers leave the Lava Beds. He demanded Lost River for a Modoc Reservation and a general amnesty for those Modocs indicted by Oregon authorities for murdering settlers along Lost River. A rain storm broke up the meeting with an agreement to erect a tent for shelter and to continue the talks.

Interpreters Listed
Frank Riddle and his Modoc wife Toby (Winema) were interpreters for the Peace Commission. Immediately after the meeting Riddle cautioned General Canby to watch for treachery. Canby ignored the warning.

The Modocs met the Commission, as planned, on April 5 at the tent. Captain Jack complained about the nearness of the army troops and claimed that he feared Commissioner Thomas as a religious leader. He stated that if the army would leave and concede Lost River to the Modocs, there would be no more trouble.

Finally he asked for the Lava Beds as a reservation. He was advised that if he would surrender to the army, the Peace Commission would try to have the Lava Beds reserved for the Modocs. The

next meeting was scheduled for April 8.

Toby Riddle (Winema) was sent to the stronghold on April 7. She reported that she was secretly warned by a Modoc friend not to go to the Peace tent again. Only Commissioner Meacham and Dyer heeded her warning.

On April 8, Jack sent word that he would meet the Commission at the tent with six unarmed Modocs. As the Peace Commission group prepared to leave the army camp for the tent, an army signalman reported six Modocs at the Peace tent and at least 20 others hiding in nearby rocks. General Canby refused to let the Commission leave camp that day. The Modocs then sent a messenger requesting a parley for Friday, April 11.

On the night of April 10, the Modocs agreed to kill General Canby and the Peace Commissioners at the next day's meeting, believing that killing the

leaders would cause the army to withdraw and leave Lava Beds to the Modocs. On the fateful Good Friday, April 11, 1873, the Modocs arrived early at the tent.

Warnings Discounted
Frank and Toby Riddle's repeated warnings of disaster were discounted by General Canby and Mr. Thomas. Commissioners Meacham and Dyer, however, armed themselves with derringers.

The commissioners found eight Modocs, two of them armed, when they arrived at the Peace tent. As soon as talk began the Modocs revealed an ominous attitude which alarmed Commissioner Dyer and Riddle, both of whom moved to the edge of the group. Sensing imminent danger, Toby Riddle casually stretched herself out on the ground into a more protected position.

Suddenly, with a signal to the other Modocs, Captain

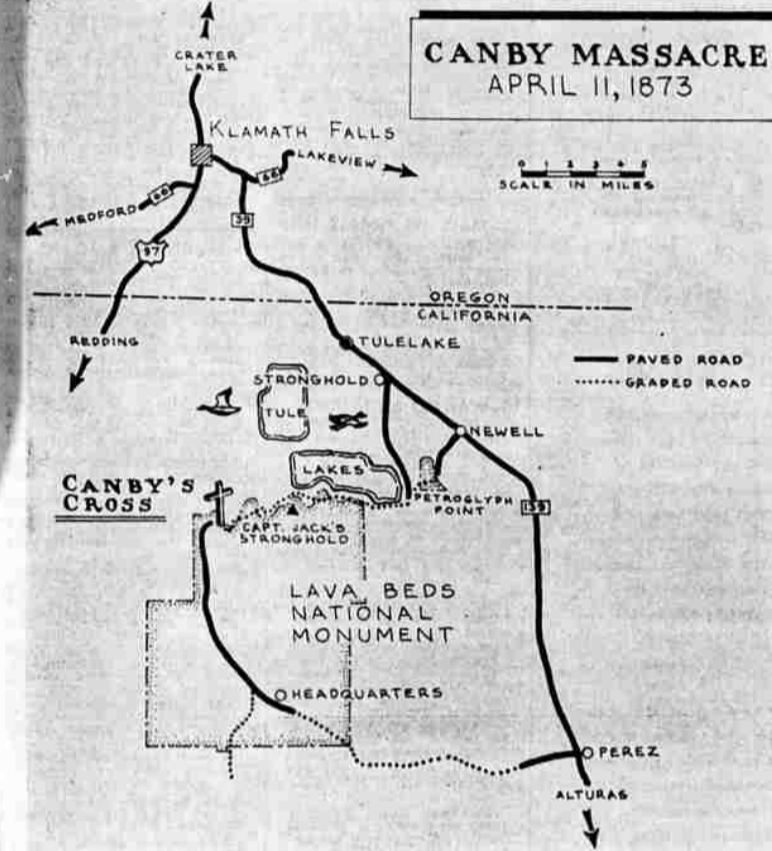
Jack drew a concealed revolver and shot the amazed General Canby. At the same moment, Boston Charley shot Commissioner Thomas. Dyer and Riddle, who had suspected treason, ran for safety in the army camp.

Hooker Jim chased Dyer until Dyer drew his concealed derringer. Frank Riddle reached the army camp close behind Dyer.

Bluff Saves Life
Schonchin John and other Modocs wounded Meacham who fell among the rocks. Boston Charley was interrupted in his move to scalp him by Toby Riddle shouting, "The soldiers are coming!" This bluff saved Meacham's life. The Modocs retreated to their Stronghold before the troops left camp.

Violating the truce with their attack upon the Peace Commission, Captain Jack and his band were doomed to relentless pursuit. Three more costly and violent battles were fought in the Lava Beds before the Modocs could be captured.

When they were captured, Captain Jack and three other Modocs were hanged.



TIME TO TOUR - This is an ideal time to visit the Lava Beds National Monument, shown in this map, according to Superintendent Irvin Kerr and others who have made the tour. Most of the battles of the Modoc War were fought in this area, Kerr



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Cancer Checkup Is Subject of Show

"Adventures in Medicine" will be seen at a new time today over KBES-TV. The medical panel program will be presented at 3 p.m. instead of the usual 1 p.m.

In keeping with national Cancer Control Month, a panel of physicians will discuss "Cancer Checkup," and what the term means to the patient and to his physician.

Dr. Brian D. Stinger, general surgeon, Dr. John R. Watson, obstetrician gynecologist, and Dr. Robert M. Turner, general practitioner and president of the Jackson County chapter of the American Cancer Society, will form the panel.

They will discuss important factors the physician takes into consideration when doing a physical examination on a patient, and will explain certain followup procedures that might be indicated as a result of the medical investigation for cancer.

According to Mrs. C. I. Burton, program moderator, the object of today's discussion is to clarify the term "Cancer Checkup," and to emphasize that early cancer detection by means of a checkup is a joint responsibility of patient and physician.

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