

THE MOJAVE EXPEDITION OF 1858 - 59

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In October of 1858, Californians were shocked by the news that Mojave Indians had attacked a wagon train traveling the recently opened Beale Road in western New Mexico. An outraged public demanded that the government chastise the Indians and ensure the safety of emigrants. In response to these demands military authorities in California dispatched a column of 600 men under Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman from Fort Yuma to reduce the Mojave threat. After a short decisive campaign, the Indians capitulated, and a military post - Fort Mohave was established on the Colorado River to protect the overland route. Although small in scale, the Mojave campaign mirrored the problems the army encountered in fighting Indians in remote desert reaches. It also marked the end of Mojave resistance to an expanding white civilization intent on possessing the land.

In the 1850s from 2,500 to 3,000 Mojave Indians (tribal name, *Aha macave* or *Amacava*, meaning the people who live along the water) inhabited small, scattered villages along the banks of the Colorado River in Arizona and California. Tall, athletic, and physically robust, they were fierce warriors who practiced war *more* for gain and individual distinction than as a matter of revenge or necessity. Believing themselves inherently and racially distinct from other peoples, they avoided social intercourse with neighboring tribes and even some kindred Yuman-speaking peoples. Surrounded by formidable desert country, they remained virtually isolated from contact with westering Americans for generations.

In 1858, however, the Mojaves suddenly found themselves on a new federal highway across the Southwest. In that year Edward F. Beale surveyed a government wagon road along the thirty-fifth parallel from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River and reported that it was the shortest and best route for the movement of settlers, troops, and mail from the Santa Fe Trail to California. As the road crossed the Colorado in the vicinity of the Mojave villages, the Indians soon faced increasing contact with emigrant parties. Conflict was inevitable.

The first sizable party to use the road was a westbound group which had organized at Council Grove, Missouri. Containing some 200 persons, the emigrant train, led by Leonard J. Rose and driving over 400 head of livestock, reached the Colorado on August 27. The families had

encountered problems one hundred miles east of the river when Indians stole a horse and a mule, but they had gotten the animals back by handing out presents to the poachers. The emigrants then divided into several parties to prevent their stock from exhausting the limited water at the springs along the route. At the Colorado, the whites found the Mojaves friendly. The Indians inquired about the size of the train, its destination, and sold melons and corn to the travelers. But the number of Indians quickly increased, and they became insolent, driving off several head of cattle, which they butchered and ate within sight of the train. Despite this ominous situation, the emigrants again distributed presents and began building a raft to cross the river.

On the evening of August 30, three hundred Mojaves attacked the Rose party, killing eight, wounding thirteen others, and making off with most of the stock. Fearing for their lives, the survivors loaded a wagon and carriage with provisions, collected nineteen cattle and eleven horses and retreated east during the night to the second train. The reunited families in turn fell back to a third party who provided them much needed supplies. When news of the incident reached the Rio Grande, Major Electus Backus, Commanding a garrison at Albuquerque, dispatched two wagons of provisions with a military escort to meet the emigrants and escort them to the New Mexico settlements.

The report of the attack on the Rose party appeared in the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* on October 16, 1858, and was widely reprinted in the California press. The *Sacramento Union* urged that immediate measures be taken to prevent further atrocities. Rumors also circulated that the Mojaves had attacked a party of the Stockton Mail Transport Company at the Colorado. The *San Francisco Herald* demanded that the government adopt comprehensive measures for "a final and complete solution of the whole difficulty" to ensure permanent security for the frontier settlements.

When Brevet Brigadier General Newman S. Clarke, commanding the Department of California, learned of the attack on the Rose party, he ordered that a post be established near Beale's Crossing on the Colorado to protect the overland mail and travel on the new road. He selected Brevet Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman, a distinguished veteran of thirty years' service on the western frontier, to perform this task. On December 4, 1858, General Clarke handed instructions to Colonel Hoffman, who recently had reached Benicia Barracks, California, with his regiment, the Sixth Infantry, from Fort Bridger. Hoffman would send one infantry company to construct a temporary depot near Martin's Ranch at

the Cajon Pass in the San Bernardino Mountains. Here supplies sufficient for four companies to operate four months in the field would be collected. With wagons moving food and forage to the ranch, Hoffman would take a dragoon detachment to the Colorado and select a site for a post near the crossing of Beale's Road. From the depot, four companies would be moved east to build and garrison the new installation.

With two experienced guides, Joseph Reddeford Walker and William Goodyear, Hoffman left Benicia Barracks on December 18, and met an escort of fifty men of the First Dragoons at Martin's Ranch on Christmas Day. Designating the new depot Camp Banning, Hoffman and the dragoon detachment departed the next day, heading northeast, and soon picked up a trail along the banks of the dry Mojave River. As he crossed the desert, Hoffman quickly realized that the barren terrain would complicate a campaign against the Mojaves and hinder the construction and supply of a fort. The sandy soil taxed the animals' strength, and water and grazing were scarce. Small cottonwoods provided a satisfactory fuel supply, but were unsuitable for construction. He found small pools at intervals along the streambed of the Mojave River, but the water soon disappeared into the sand. After passing Soda, Marl, and Rock Springs, the detachment on January 7 reached the Colorado River, two hundred and twenty-three miles from Martin's Ranch.

As they descended from the river bluff nine miles west of the river, the soldiers saw columns of smoke rising at distant intervals along the river. As no sign of Indians was seen, Hoffman ignored the signals and encamped two miles from the river at Beaver Lake, a slough which fanned a horseshoe along whose banks the Mojaves farmed. Soon a dozen or more well-armed Paiutes approached, and announced that they were camped in the vicinity. The Mojaves were farther away and would visit the soldiers the next morning. At sunset, Hoffman ordered the Indians to leave, warning them not to approach his camp at night or his sentinels would open fire.

Hollman was anxious to examine the bottomland above and below the river crossing, and at dawn on the eighth, he moved down toward the Colorado. In the distance, he saw bands of twenty to thirty Mojaves watching his progress. The Indians were painted, well-armed, and naked, except for a loincloth. As the morning was severely cold, Hoffman concluded that "something extraordinary" must have induced them to expose themselves in such weather. As they descended into the river bottom, he suddenly realized that his soldiers could be trapped between the bluffs and the river in the thick undergrowth. He halted his men

and retraced his march, then sought to explore the valley above his camp. Encountering difficult terrain again, the detachment returned to Beaver Lake and bivouacked.

Soon after the soldiers reached Beaver Lake, Mojave warriors entered the camp. Although angered by the presence of the troops, a spokesman told Hoffman that they would allow the intruders to pass through their country. He also said that the Mojave chief would visit the next morning, whereupon Hoffman warned that the chief should bring only twelve or fifteen warriors with him. At sundown the Mojaves were expelled from camp. The soldiers, however, spent a sleepless night, as Indians prowled around the perimeter of the bivouac, occasionally discharging arrows into the camp.

Hoffman ordered reveille sounded at four o'clock on the morning of January 9. He had pushed the reconnaissance as far as he had intended. To remain in the valley one more day with his small force could mean a collision with the Mojave nation. The departure of the detachment, however, was not without incident. As the men packed their gear, some three hundred Mojaves gathered a short distance away. They taunted and mimicked the soldiers, imitating the commands being given. "If I had allowed this insolence to pass unnoticed," Hoffman later reported to Clarke, "they would have hooted us out of the valley with shouts of derision." He decided to attack. Dispatching the wagon, pack mules, and a six-man escort on the return route, Hoffman ordered his dragoons to dismount, take position and open fire. With a few rounds the troopers drove the Mojave back into the brush, leaving an estimated ten to twenty dead or wounded warriors behind. The command then hastily mounted and set off in pursuit of the train. A large group of Mojaves attempted to follow them, but a few shots from the dragoons' carbines discouraged them. On the morning of January 19, the party reached Camp Banning. Hoffman's efforts to locate a site on the Colorado had been unsuccessful.

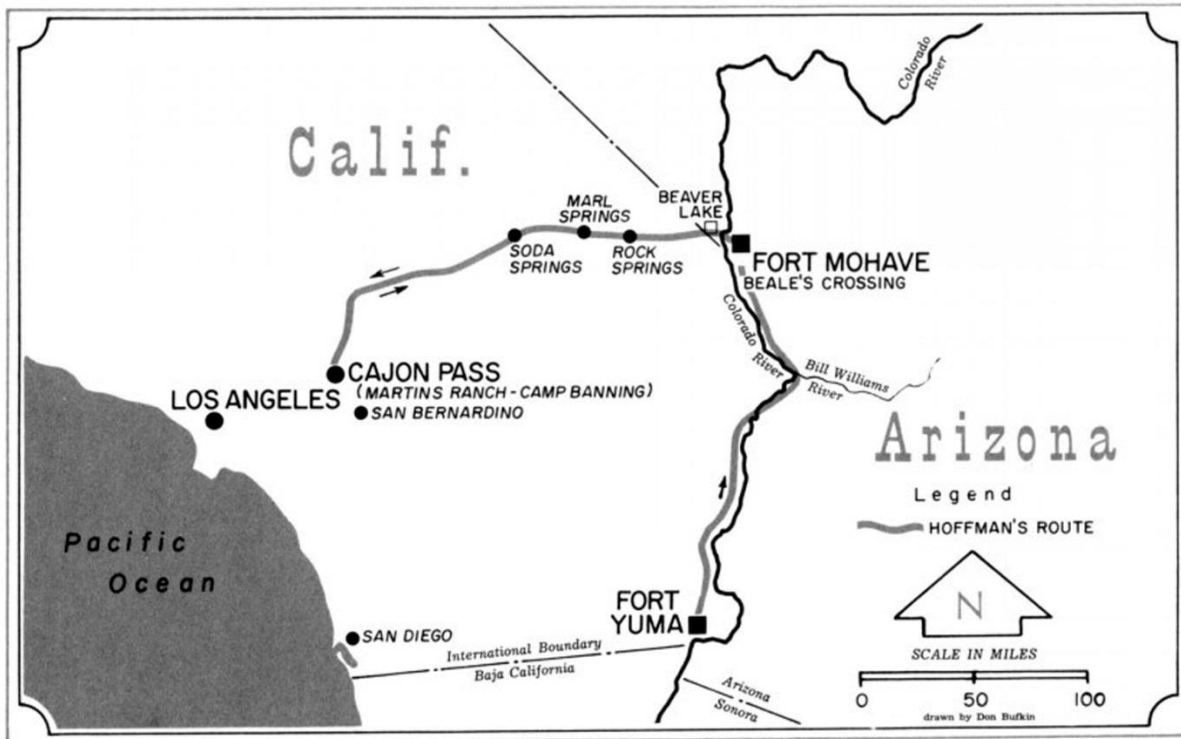
Although he had found a valley with fine grass and timber and a healthy climate near Cajon Pass, at the head of the west fork of the Mojave River, the location was two hundred miles west of the Colorado River and out of range for troop movement against the Indians. It would also be expensive to build a road to supply a post there. A fort site farther east at Beale's Crossing, Hoffman believed, was even less desirable. Not only would such a post be costly to supply via the river, but the intense



William Hoffman conducted a successful campaign against the Mojave Indians in 1858-59. He served as Union Commissary General of Prisoners during the Civil War. – Library of Congress

heat of the climate, lack of forage, and an absence of wood for construction rendered the locale virtually uninhabitable for troops. Moreover, Hoffman frankly doubted that the new wagon route would ever develop into a regular highway.

Californians had followed Hoffman's reconnaissance with interest. The San Francisco *Herald* editorialized that a comprehensive solution was needed to insure "repose and security" for the western settlements. An expedition to quell a single disturbance was too limited in scope, the problem was too "deep-seated" to be solved by "mild means," and the



tribes were too savage to learn from a single campaign against them. 'The only alternative is unconditional submission or extermination,' the *Herald* stated. Prolonged and costly campaigns had been avoided in the past when Indians were surrounded by whites and unable to find refuge, or when an overwhelming force was sent against them and they had no choice but instant submission. When the results of Hoffman's operation became known, California newspapers demanded strong follow up measures. "They have got to be whipped and with a moderate force, it can easily be done, for they live in an open country, where dragoons can get at them," the *San Joaquin Republican* advised." In late January of 1859. Hoffman submitted a detailed account of his reconnaissance to General Clarke. The desert rendered the northern route to the Colorado "wholly impassable" for wagons or for a large body of troops, he said. However, an expedition against the Mojaves could ascend the Colorado River from a base at Fort Yuma. The troops could march north along the river, carrying supplies on pack mules or camels, and draw further from a steamboat serving as a floating depot. Only through such an undertaking could the Mojaves be subdued and a post established to protect the Beale Road

General Clarke adopted Hoffman's recommendations and immediately ordered seven companies of the Sixth Infantry, a dragoon detachment, and two mountain howitzers be readied for the Mojave campaign.

Of these, the four companies at Benicia Barracks would be shipped by water to the mouth of the Colorado, where they would be transported on river steamers to Fort Yuma. He instructed Hoffman to lead his column to Beale's Crossing and there locate a post. He would demand a promise from the Mojaves that they would never again attack emigrants or interfere with the construction of posts and roads in their country. He also would seize the chiefs who had led the attack on his party and hold them as "hostages for their future conduct." If the Indians refused to cooperate, Hoffman was instructed to "tell them you will lay waste their fields and that the troops to be stationed on the River will not permit them hereafter to cultivate their lands in peace." Clarke personally supervised preparations for the operation and directed Hoffman to employ Joseph Walker again as guide.

On February 10, 1859, companies C, F, H, and I of the Sixth Infantry, accompanied by the full regimental band, marched to the San Francisco wharves and boarded the transport *Uncle Sam*. On the upper deck were sixty packers and two hundred mules who were to be landed in San Diego. From San Diego, Joseph Hooker, a California militia colonel later famous in the Civil War, would drive the mules across the desert to Fort Yuma for Hoffman's use. Colonel John K. F. Mansfield, Inspector General of the Army, also accompanied the expedition to Fort Yuma in order to test the practicality of the seaward supply route. With loading operations complete, Hoffman and his staff came aboard and the *Uncle Sam* sailed at eight o'clock the following morning.¹⁸

A few hours out of San Francisco, the heavily laden transport encountered a violent gale. By eleven o'clock at night, it was almost impossible to keep the ship's head to the wind and sea. Soldiers lightened the vessel by throwing overboard tons of barley and coal, marine tackle, and their own weapons and baggage. Only a sudden subsiding of the wind spared the two hundred mules and the other property on board. Finally out of danger, the ship turned about and on the morning of February 12 returned to San Francisco.

While carpenters repaired the damage to the *Uncle Sam*, Colonel Hoffman, somewhat shaken by his experience, "very respectfully" suggested to General Clarke that the freight on board was more than the ship could safely carry at sea. Another severe storm might make it necessary to throw cargo overboard, further delaying, if not canceling, the expedition. Hoffman felt his opinion was "confirmed by the opinions of many experienced and disinterested nautical men," and proposed that another vessel transport half of the mules to San Diego. But despite his

objections, the *Uncle Sam*, inspected and pronounced seaworthy, sailed again on February 16 with both troops and mules on board."

The second voyage passed uneventfully, and the ship anchored at San Diego two days later. The next morning two hundred "unhappy mules" were pushed overboard and swam ashore. Additional soldiers, Company C, Sixth Infantry, under Captain William S. Ketchum, came aboard, and at dawn the ship sailed for the Gulf of California. Completing its voyage around the Baja peninsula, the *Uncle Sam*, reached the head of the gulf on the twenty-sixth.

While the transport lay at anchor, a disagreement arose over landing procedures for the infantry. The captain of the *Uncle Sam* refused to risk his vessel in the shallow waters at Robinson's Landing, some thirty or forty miles away, and proposed disembarking the troops in the ship's boats. Considering the captain's plan dangerous, Hoffman dispatched an officer to Robinson's Landing, where the U.S. schooner *Monterey* was unloading cargo. He requested that the *Monterey* transport his men and supplies to the mouth of the Colorado River, where the river steamers *Colorado* and *General Jesup* could carry the troops to Fort Yuma. With the assistance of the *Monterey* the transfer was made, and the soldiers began arriving at Fort Yuma on March 14.

Hoffman now plotted the logistics of his expedition, Hooker had delivered the mule train to the fort after a trying march during which the animals, unused to carrying packs, had required "the unremitted attention of 48 men night and day." Hoffman estimated that the mules and the steamers *General Jesup* and *Colorado* together could transport sufficient provisions upriver to supply the command for fifty days. But there would be no supplies available for the new post, and the river captains could not guarantee that their boats could descend the river and return to Beale's Crossing before provisions ran out. Based upon careful calculations, Hoffman finally decided that steamers and mules possibly could carry two months provisions for the new post, in addition to the fifty days' rations for the expedition. For supplies after June, the garrison must depend on a new boat expected on the river in two or three months. To help prevent starvation at the post, a herd of beef would be driven north with the column. The cattle would have to range far and wide to find forage, and the danger existed that they would be lost or stolen.

To his dismay, Hoffman learned that the dragoons had been detached from his expedition. The loss of the mounted troops, he wrote Clarke, crippled his command so severely that he could not operate in

case the Mojaves combined with adjacent tribes. Clarke replied that Hoffman worried needlessly. The colonel doubtless would encounter difficulties, but Secretary of War John B. Floyd had ordered that a post be established "on the 35th parallel & Colorado." Hoffman had already personally, inspected the upper route via Martin's Ranch and had pronounced it impractical. Now his force was on the southern route to Beale's Crossing. No obstacles which "time and labor can remove," Clarke said, should prevent the accomplishment of the undertaking."

Hoffman protested to Clarke that he had been misunderstood. He was not trying to raise obstacles to the expedition, but rather to anticipate all eventualities. He clearly understood his orders. If the Mojaves declined to fight, and also refused to surrender the chiefs responsible for the Beaver Lake attack (plus hostages to insure future good conduct), his soldiers were "to lay waste their fields." Beyond destroying crops, the army was "not permitted to make war" upon the Indians." On March 26 Hoffman's Mojave expedition, accompanied by Indian Agent H. P. Heintzelman, marched out of Fort Yuma, heading north along the west bank of the Colorado. For the moment, the supply ship remained behind. The *General Jesup* drew only two and one-half feet of water, and the seasonal shallowness of the river prevented the steamer from passing over the sandbars upriver at that time. Because of this, each soldier carried a knapsack filled with forty days' rations, hopefully sufficient to last until the steamer could catch up with them. Despite spring weather the heat and dust seemed unbearable. The men soon began lightening their packs by discarding extra clothing. On April 5 Hoffman's dusty column of six hundred men crossed to the east bank of the Colorado and trudged on north."

Newspapers followed the Mojave expedition with interest. A correspondent at Fort Yuma assured his readers that Hoffman would wage "a war of extermination on these savages" unless they agreed to his terms. After years of atrocities, it was time the Mojaves learned the power of the government. The *San Francisco Herald* noted that Hoffman was not marching simply to hold the Indians in check, but possessed the men and means to teach "those treacherous reptiles a lesson that will insure the unmolested transit of Americans through the country upon which they reside, while the sound of the word American shall continue to tingle in their ears.

Hoffman's column reached Bill Williams Fork of the Colorado in six days. The problem of supply loomed constantly. Because the river route was almost destitute of grazing, the animals began to fail. By

April 13 Hoffman doubted that one-fourth of the mules had the strength to return to Fort Yuma. If the river rose and steamboats could bring supplies, there would be no difficulty; however, rising water also could flood the river bottom through which his trail passed, preventing soldiers from returning to Yuma by land.

General Clarke had doubts about establishing a post at Beale's Crossing. He advised Hoffman that after chastising the Indians, he should make a camp there for only two companies, and ignore all orders for building a fort, as instructions from Washington might yet defer the "permanent occupation of the point." In fact, Clarke already had written to the War Department expressing doubts concerning the practicality of constructing a post on Beale's route. In his reply, Secretary of War Floyd stated that after reviewing the evidence, he remained convinced that a post must be established. Clarke relayed this information to Hoffman, reminding him that his original orders would be carried out.

Hoffman's troops reached Beale's Crossing on April 21 and camped. He crossed the river to the west bank and again found it unsuitable for a post. The bottomland was subject to floods and the sandy soil produced no grass. A post on high ground would put the men a mile or two west of the river and make them dependent upon Beaver Lake for water. On the east bank of the river, however, the bottomland extended several miles downstream, furnishing more grass than at any place along the route from Fort Yuma, plus an unusual quantity of cottonwood. But when the river rose, it would be difficult to communicate with the west bank. Although he could find no suitable site for a ferry landing, and the location was outside the jurisdiction of the Department of California. Hoffman decided to establish the post on the east bank of the river.

Hoffman turned next to the Mojave problem. On April 11, the day after he arrived two Mojave delegations came into camp and professed a desire for peace. They said they had always held the greatest friendship for the white man, and would declare their friendship in the presence of the troops. Hoffman reminded the Indians that they had committed numerous depredations on parties crossing their land during the past two years, and said that he had come to their land to prevent future incidents. The Mojaves had initiated the hostilities, and if they desired to fight, his soldiers would retaliate until the Indians "were tired of it." Hoffman told them that they must submit unconditionally to the terms he would dictate. He would discuss these terms the next morning at a council in his camp. If the Mojaves truly desired peace they would

attend the meeting called for 10 a.m. The Indians must be punctual or "they would not be received.

Colonel Hoffman doubted the Mojaves would appear, but nevertheless made preparations for the council. Conferring with his officers that evening, he stated that if the Mojaves came in he would keep them in camp until a satisfactory settlement was reached. The Mojaves deserved a "severe chastisement" for their many offenses, and he firmly believed that a settlement with them would be more lasting if preceded by a military defeat. He was reluctant, therefore, "to encourage them to submit without a trial of their ability to resist." On the other hand, if the Mojaves agreed to his terms "it would be conclusive proof that they felt that they were wholly at my mercy, and would give every assurance that their fear of punishment which alone controls Indians, would prevent their ever again placing themselves in a similar jeopardy." Hoffman, therefore, made arrangements "to meet any emergency.

At mid-morning on April 23, over four hundred Mojaves gathered outside the camp. When an officer went out to escort them in without their weapons, many Indians feared a trap and turned back. The chiefs, however, persuaded two hundred and fifty warriors to assemble at the council site. Wary of a possible fight, some of the Mojaves carried short clubs concealed under their bells. Sergeant Eugene Bandel recorded that "our arms, rifles, and cannons were loaded; and in addition, the Indians were surrounded by soldiers of the artillery company, with loaded revolvers (six-shooters), and were not permitted to leave the camp until the conference was over." Some distance away, one hundred and fifty Indians, armed with stone-tipped arrows and clubs, intently watched the proceedings.

When all was ready, Hoffman opened the conference. He spoke through three interpreters: Captain Seth M. Barton, and Jose and Pasqual, two Yuma chiefs accompanying Agent Heintzelman. Hoffman spoke in English, Barton translated this into Spanish, and one of the Indians translated the Spanish into the Yuma language, and the second into Mojave. Hoffman sternly declared that the Mojaves had the choice of war or peace. If they wanted peace, they must submit to his demands; they had no say so in the matter. This blunt statement caused grumbling among the Mojaves and the Indian interpreters became alarmed. After some difficulty in restoring order, Hoffman listed his demands. He would tolerate no Mojave opposition to the establishment of posts and roads in their country, or attacks on passing emigrant trains. To guarantee future good conduct, he asked for one hostage from each of the six bands,



(Above) "Rio Colorado-Near Mojave Village" sketched in 1854 by the Whipple Expedition. (Below) A group of Mojave Indians – Whipple Survey," House Executive Document 91, 33 Cong., 2 Sess., Vol. III.



plus three hostages from the group that had attacked the Rose party. In addition, Hoffman wanted the chief who had menaced his camp at Beaver Lake. His request for a hostage from each tribe was misinterpreted and every chief, except one, stepped forward. When the misunderstanding was clarified, the Indians taken hostage included Cainook, or Cairook, the leader of the band that had threatened Hoffman's party.

Once the demands were made known, the Indians seemed relieved. The chiefs said that Hoffman could do as he pleased with the land, but they asked to "be permitted to live in it." With this declaration, Hoffman softened somewhat. He explained that the hostages would be taken to Fort Yuma and returned at General Clarke's pleasure. He believed the chiefs sincerely desired peace. Previously, the Indians had seen only small parties of white men; but his large expedition had surprised them and filled them with dread. Hopefully, the show of force would prevent the Mojaves from again entertaining thoughts of hostilities. In his report, Hoffman described the Mojaves demeanor as "that of a subdued people asking for mercy."

After constructing a post - originally designated Camp Colorado but several days later renamed Fort Mojave - on the east bank of the



river, Hoffman made preparations to leave. Two companies boarded the *General Jesup* for Fort Yuma, while Hoffman himself took command of four companies destined to march westward for Cajon Pass. He left Brevet Major Lewis Armistead to command a garrison of seven officers and one hundred and sixty-five men of Companies F and I and Lieutenant John Tipton's detachment of the Third Artillery. On April 26 Hoffman crossed the river and headed west and the steamer started downriver.

Living conditions at Fort Mojave were difficult. Armistead's men were poorly provisioned, lacked tents and tarpaulins, and had little clothing and bedding. The "fort" consisted of quarters, storehouses, kitchens, a guardhouse, and a hospital. The buildings were "large brush sheds," enclosed with a basketwork of young willows, and covered with a thatched roof designed to exclude the sun and allow the free circulation of air. Even with the doors kept constantly wet, temperatures inside the buildings occasionally rose to 120 degrees. The soldiers' fare included half-rations of flour, beans, and rice, supplemented with beans and meal the Mojaves brought to the post to trade for shirts and blankets.

Four days after Hoffman's departure, Beale's road party approached the crossing from the east. Observing the river from a mountain summit, and failing to detect the presence of soldiers, Beale decided to descend upon the Mojaves and give them "a turn." Early on the morning of April 30, thirty-five men in "fighting trim," carrying rifles, knives, and revolvers reached the river. After quenching their thirsts, the hunters began prowling through the thick brush along the riverbanks, firing at every Indian seen. Three hours later, a detail of soldiers appeared and informed Beale that troops were encamped a few miles below and that Colonel Hoffman had made a treaty with the Indians. Beale called in his men and they encamped at the post, before resuming their westward journey.

In the meantime, Hoffman was moving slowly across the desert to his depot at Martin's Ranch. As water was limited the companies traveled on alternate days. The grass along the route was dead, and the forty mules with each company subsisted on three or four small bags of barley carried with each train. Fortunately, cool weather prevailed during the two-week march, sparing the troops much hardship. But Hoffman's experiences on this march confirmed his opinion that only small numbers of soldiers burdened with feed for their stock could cross the desert to the Colorado River. Members of his command also voiced great displeasure over the route. Captain Richard. B. Garnett submitted a critical

report of the journey, and Sergeant Bandel hoped he would "never again see the deserts between the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada," resolving to become a civilian when his enlistment expired.

In his report Colonel Hoffman praised his officers and men for the cheerfulness with which they had endured the privations and hardships of the campaign. General Clarke expressed his satisfaction to Hoffman that "the submission of the River tribes is complete as is the *success of your expedition.*" He was pleased that a show of force had been enough to achieve the objectives of the expedition without bloodshed. When Clarke's report reached Washington, General-in-Chief Winfield Scott concurred in the praise bestowed on Hoffman and his men.

Newspaper reaction to the expedition was mixed. The *San Francisco Herald* approved of Hoffman's conduct, but wished that he had found an opportunity to chastise the Indians. However, it applauded his having conquered a peace from the Mojaves without the loss of life. Other newspapers were critical of the expedition. The *Weekly Bulletin*, which had urged Hoffman to "thrash them (the Mojaves) first, and treat afterwards," declared that "our anticipations of the practical failure of the expedition are unfortunately realized." Hoffman had concluded a peace without punishing the Indians, and the *Bulletin* predicted that the treaty would prove "utterly worthless." The *San Joaquin Republican* called Hoffman's peace a "Humbug.

The nine hostages taken by Colonel Hoffman were confined at Fort Yuma. According to Mojave tradition, while the soldiers were eating at noon one day, the captive Mojaves tried to escape; seven were successful but two were shot. Three swam to the Arizona side of the river, while the other four fled along the California shore. Eventually, the seven Mojaves were reunited and made their way back to their villages. Information about the escape reached Major Armistead at Fort Mojave by a Yuma Indian, who also reported that the Mojaves did not want to fight. Armistead requested instructions from General Clarke."

Clarke did not know what effect the escape would have on the river tribes, but he instructed Armistead to take a firm stand and demand the resurrender of the hostages. However, at Clarke's headquarters at Benicia, the assistant adjutant general, Brevet Major William W. Mackall, advised against taking Indian hostages for indefinite periods and prohibited further seizures. He also stated that the escape of the hostages could not be made the grounds for hostilities against the Indians: escape was "what was to be expected if an opportunity offered.

The Mojaves continued to cause trouble. They destroyed a garden

at Fort Mojave, attacked a mail party and drove it into the fort, and killed a herder. Lieutenant Elisha C. Marshall led a scout, but was unable to locate the Indians and an ambush failed. Armistead again asked for instructions. General Clarke responded that the post was established to protect the mail and emigrants, and Armistead should demand that the offenders be delivered to him for punishment. "If not, you must inflict such punishment on the tribes as will determine the nation to submission in the future," he added. Destroying Indian crops was another matter. Hunger drove men, women, and children to desperation and compelled them to maraud to live. Armistead should exhaust every means of bringing the Mojaves to terms before ordering crop destruction."

Armistead decided to take action. On August 2, Lieutenant Montgomery Bryant crossed the river with twenty men and destroyed an Indian farm. Two days later Armistead led twenty-five men of Company F on a scout and surprised an Indian band at a lagoon fifteen miles below the fort where the mules were herded. The next morning, Lieutenant Marshall followed with twenty-five picked men of Company I to reconnoiter in the same direction. At dawn on the fifth, Armistead surprised three Indians planting beans and killed one of them. Gunfire and the yells of the two fleeing Indians aroused other Mojaves, and in a short time a large number of Indians surrounded Armistead's command. The fight had been in progress for thirty or forty minutes when Lieutenant Marshall, who had also heard the firing, arrived and attacked the Indians in the rear, driving them from the field. Although the Mojaves regrouped and attacked the combined companies, they were soon dispersed again. Exhausted, the soldiers gathered under the shade of the mesquite and rested for two hours.

On the return march to the fort, the soldiers had traveled only a short distance when large numbers of Mojaves struck the column. Some came within ten yards of the soldiers, but their crude weapons were no match for rifled muskets. After a half hour, Armistead ordered his men to charge and the Mojaves were completely routed. Armistead returned to the fort with three men wounded. Twenty-three Mojave warriors were counted dead; it was estimated that fifty to sixty were actually killed. An old Mojave woman later recalled that "the whites were using firearms and killed nearly half of the Mojave men who were in that battle.

The Indians sent a spokesman to the fort and asked for peace. On August 31 Armistead granted the request, but insisted that the Mojaves

behave themselves and never go again to the bend of the river where the garrison kept its mule herd. The major subsequently asserted: "They wanted a good whipping, which they got. They appear to be perfectly satisfied." On September 3 Armistead turned over the command of Fort Mojave to Lieutenant Levi C. Bootes and left on the steamer *Cocopa* for Fort Yuma. Five days later, Bootes posted an order stating that "the war with the Mojave Indians" was over.

The Hoffman expedition of 1859 had played a critical role in reducing the Mojave threat to travel to California along the thirty-fifth parallel. The Mojaves never again attacked parties of travelers or resisted the authority of the federal government. In the spring of 1862 when gold was discovered in the Colorado River region, and groups of prospectors swarmed into the area, some of the Yuman tribes, particularly the Yavapais and Walapais, clashed with these intruders, but the Mojaves did not become hostile, the government effort to chastise the Mojaves and secure travel along the Beale Road had been successful to the extent that the Mojaves committed no further depredations. The fort the army established to guard the river crossing was a permanent symbol of the white man's power, Yet Hoffman's expedition to insure emigrant safety on the Beale Road was somewhat premature. Not until after the Civil War did the route become a regular overland highway, and over twenty years passed before railroad crews laid a ribbon of steel to tie the region to the outside world. By that time the Mojave campaign of 1859, an expensive, disagreeable operation, merited only passing mention in the annals of Southwestern history.