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# Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student

## Vocabulary

**Appropriations** - Funds or money budgeted for a specific purpose.

**Harum scarum** - Reckless, rash, irresponsible, disorganized, or uncontrolled behavior.

**Howitzer** - A cannon having a comparatively short barrel, used especially for firing shells at a high angle, in this case a “mountain howitzer” used by the U.S. Army’s small, portable artillery at this time.

**Musketoön** - A short-barreled version of the musket.

**Regular(s)** - A member of the permanent military establishment of the United States.

**Volunteer(s)** - A member of a militia—or fighting group—organized at the state or local level and not a member of regular army command.

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## Source 1. August V. Kautz, a Lieutenant in the United States Army (Background)<sup>1</sup>

*August V. Kautz was a German-American whose family settled in Ohio. He joined the U.S. Army in the Mexican American War then attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to become an officer. Following the Rogue River Wars, he was stationed in Washington Territory where he married a Nisqually woman named Kitty and had two sons. He served in the Union Army in the Civil War, rising to the rank of Brevet Major General and serving in various U.S. Army commands until retiring in 1892. He returned to the Pacific Northwest, dying in Seattle in 1895. Kautz wrote a letter describing the Battle of Hungry Hill to Joseph Lane, then serving as the representative for Oregon Territory in the U.S. House of Representatives. Two years earlier, in 1853, Lane had been the main leader of the military forces who fought with Rogue Valley peoples prior to the Table Rock Treaty.*

*Because the letter is very long and detailed, it has been excerpted for easier reading. Kautz opens the letter by describing his trip with 10 men to build a trail through the Oregon Coast Range, expanding the connection between the coast at Fort Orford and the Oregon-California Trail near today’s Interstate 5. On October 25, 1855, they stumbled into the main encampment of Rogue River people engaged in the war. Two of Kautz’s men were killed in the fighting and Kautz was shot in the chest but saved when his pocket notebook stopped the bullet. Kautz and his men fled east, and in the following days regrouped at Fort Lane, located near present Medford,*

<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://truwe.sohs.org/files/jolaneletters.html>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

*joining with other U.S. Army forces under Capt. A.J. Smith and settler militia regiments (often referred to as 'exterminators') under self-appointed "Colonel" John E. Ross. This excerpt picks up with the combined forces already marching out on the attack.*

... When I returned to Grave Creek [location of Battle of Hungry Hill], I begged of the Captain to send for the doctor and for the howitzer [cannon]; he said it was too late, that we would have to do without them. I replied that late or early he would send for the doctor anyhow, and that he would wish he had the howitzer before he was done. My experience had taught me that it would be no child's play and I also felt that the Indians would make a stand, yet they prepared for the fight as though they expected the Indians to run.

There were about two hundred and fifty volunteers [members of an organized militia] under Colonel Ross and about 130 regulars [soldiers in the U.S. army] under Captain Smith ... We set out about 12 o'clock on the night of the 30th and moved along with as much precision and silence as could have been desired at first, but the nearer we got to the enemy the more careless and noisy they were ... I pointed out to Captain Smith the position of the Indians, the course he was to take and the way Col. Ross must go, and as it was already daylight I urged the necessity of going on rapidly. Colonel Ross thought he had better wait until the other party had taken position on the west, and the Captain was anxious that the only two officers he had with him, who had indiscreetly [carelessly] filled their canteens with brandy instead of water, should get sober, and they delayed an hour and a half or two hours ... It was now too late for a surprise, but I again urged the Captain to move and not delay any longer. He said he should move immediately. But before he got started a party of "harum scarum" [reckless] volunteers got the start of him and led the way down into a deep gulch some fifteen hundred feet which intervened between us and the enemy. Instead of complying with the plan of attack agreed upon and going around on the ridge the Captain followed them, leaving his train and Lieutenant Alston, who was not yet sober. Gibson made out to follow. By the time we got up with the Indians, we were very much used up and the plan of attack was effectually [successfully] knocked in the head by the fourth party joining, so instead of having surrounded the Indians we were all together. In the first meet the Indians gave up their position. One of ours was killed and several wounded, and this one dead man won the battle; two thirds of the men never got past this one dead body ... Some thirty or forty men succeeded in advancing to the brow of the knoll [hill] the Indians had abandoned and which they commanded now, where we kept up a fire quite sharp for three hours or more when we gradually hauled off and before night it had ceased [stopped].

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

The rest of the troops were behind and occasionally fired at those of our men in front who had the courage to advance towards the Indians. Everything was “helter skelter [confusion].” Captain Smith and Colonel Ross were behind taking care of the wounded. At night we hauled off down on the hillside about four hundred yards into a little gulch where the Indians had got their water from some dirty little springs ... we hovered around little brush fires, cold and hungry, the sides of the little gulch so steep that we could scarcely find room for the wounded. Things were very gloomy. I never was so depressed in my life. I felt certain that the Indians would attack us and if made in the night with a proper skill would complete our overthrow [defeat]. Everybody felt this so much so that when a tremulous [fearful] volunteer on post accidentally pressed too hard upon the trigger of his revolver and off it went, so did everybody else for the brush, stumbling over the wounded, whose shrieks could be heard above the tumult. One sleepy volunteer, when the stampede [began], started out of his sleep, snatched up a musketoon [gun] and cracked away at what he conceived to be the enemy and wounded two of his brother volunteers, one mortally, and a third slightly. Old Doctor Henry called them to order and explained the difficulty and thus settled their nerves. At daylight the Indians came down upon us. The attack however was not well sustained, and after several hours firing they hauled off in consequence of the arrival of a company of Willamette volunteers ... we did not reach Grave Creek until between two and three o'clock that night, having fasted for fifty hours, and had no sleep for three nights. Thus [illegible] fifteen days expedition for Captain Smith returned with all haste back to Fort Lane, and the volunteers were billeted out to various [illegible] in the valley.

We lost ten killed and twenty-seven wounded, several of these were killed and quite a number of the wounded were shot by our own men. The Indian loss of course not known; I do not think that they could have more than four or five killed and wounded, but if we are to believe the statements of all those in the fight there is scarcely a man that cannot give the particulars of how he killed one Indian “certain, sure.” I believe I had as good an opportunity as any in the fight and I can't say that I killed one. I don't believe that the Indians numbered over seventy warriors in all; the volunteers say however that there was three or four hundred; when I ask them where they came from, they cannot make over a hundred and fifty supposing that all the hostile Indians were there that are in the valley, and at the same time they assert that there are other bands in various other portions of the valley that could not have been in the fight ... The great secret of the failure is that the volunteers expected the regulars to do all the fighting, whilst the regulars were expecting the same thing from the volunteers. I do not think much of the conduct of the officers, nobody attempted to lead the men, and I don't think that Colonel Ross or Captain Smith attempted to fire a gun. There was a want of confidence all around. On the morning of the 1st of November, when the Indians attacked us (which attack was made by about twenty Indians according to my estimate), Captain Smith was as usual attending to the wounded and Colonel Ross did for once show

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## **Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student** *(Continued)*

that he was in command by standing down in the gulch and quoting all the gallant speeches that had been made from the Revolution [illegible] such as "Stand your ground men and don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes and know he is an Indian." Altogether it was an affair that I would never boast of and no one shall even know that I was there or had anything to do with it, unless he gets it from somebody else...It is a war they have brought on themselves; the Indians are fighting in self-defense and they fight well. I have every reason to believe that it has been gotten up expressly to procure another appropriation [federal funds]. I fear you paid them too well for their meritorious services of '53. War is a money making business. When I left they had nearly a thousand troops in the field and I venture to say they will get whipped again notwithstanding the comparatively small number of Indians, unless they fight ... I shall complete my drawings and report as soon as possible and it will no doubt reach Washington by the middle or last of January. I must close or you will never read this. I hope I shall hear from you.

Very Respectfully Yours &c

*August V. Kautz, U.S.A*

## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student (Continued)

### What Would They Say? (Example)

August V. Kautz

Questions	In your words	Textual Evidence
<p><b>Describe the author/source? (e.g., who, what, when, where, and why)</b></p>	<p><b>Example:</b> The opening text indicates that “Kautz wrote a letter describing the Battle of Hungry Hill,” which tells me that we will be reading a primary document about Kautz firsthand experience at this battle. The text tells me that Kautz was an officer who “joined the U.S. Army” and has experience fighting in multiple wars. Kautz writes this letter to Joseph Lane, who was a member of the Oregon Territory in the U.S. government, and Lane had once fought with the Native peoples of the Rouge Valley prior to the Table Rock Treaty. Kautz fought in the Rogue River War, then lived the rest of his life in Washington where he married a Nisqually woman and had two sons.</p>	<p><b>Example:</b> Introductory paragraphs 1-2: “August V. Kautz was a German-American whose family settled in Ohio. He joined the U.S. Army in the Mexican American War then attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to become an officer. Following the Rogue River War, he was stationed in Washington Territory where he married a Nisqually woman named Kitty and had two sons.”</p>
<p><b>What is the main message or story the author wants to tell?</b></p>	<p><b>Example:</b> Kautz believes settlers are the aggressors of this war and are responsible for their own casualties and loss.</p>	<p><b>Example:</b> For example, in the first paragraph Kautz writes, It is a war they have brought on themselves; the Indians are fighting in self-defense, and they fight well. . . I begged of the Captain to send for the doctor and for the howitzer [a long-ranged weapon similar to a cannon and a mortar]; he said it was too late, that we would have to do without them. . . My experience had taught me that it would be no child’s play and I also felt that the Indians would make a stand, yet they prepared for the fight as though they expected the Indians to run.”</p>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student (Continued)

<b>What are the goals of the battle and/or war according to the author?</b>	<b>Example:</b> Kautz shares that one purpose of the war was for the settlers to make money by having Congress appropriate [or make available] funds to fight Native people.	<b>Example:</b> "I have every reason to believe that it has been gotten up expressly to procure another appropriation."
<b>What is the outcome of the battle according to the author? Why did the battle end the way it did?</b>	<b>Example:</b> Kautz believes that the U.S. loss at Hungry Hill was due to a lack of strong leadership by commanding officers. In addition, the volunteer and regular soldiers did not fight together and instead both groups expected the other to lead in the battle efforts.	<b>Example:</b> "The great secret of the failure is that the volunteers expected the regulars to do all the fighting, whilst the regulars were expecting the same thing from the volunteers. I do not think much of the conduct of the officers, nobody attempted to lead the men, and I don't think that Colonel Ross or Captain Smith attempted to fire a gun."

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### Source 2. Luther C. Hawley, a member of the Oregon Mounted Volunteers (Background)<sup>2</sup>

*Luther C. Hawley was born in Ohio and raised in Illinois. He came to Oregon in 1851, settling in Lane County. He served in and helped organize multiple settler militia units that fought against Indigenous peoples during the Rogue River War in 1855-56. After the fighting, he returned east to Illinois, tried to mine in Colorado before serving in the Union Army during the American Civil War. Hawley eventually resettled in Tulare County, California, and lived there until his death in 1902.*

*The following published letter was written to Asahel Bush, editor of the Oregon Statesmen, one of just a few large newspapers in Oregon at this time, and describes Hawley's experience fighting in the Battle of Hungry Hill.*

#### **DEER CREEK, November 14, 1855.**

MR. A. BUSH—Dear Sir: Having seen an incorrect statement in the Oregon Statesman relative to the battle between the whites and Indians, on the 31st October and 1st November, I have thought that a statement by an eyewitness was due to all concerned. On Sunday, October 28th, our company (Company A, Lane Co. O.M.V.), while at this place, received the intelligence that the precise location of the Indians had been discovered, and that there would be an attack made in a day or two; we accordingly took up our line of march and proceeded to William Weaver's, near the mouth of the Canyon. Here we met some acquaintances from Cow Creek, who stated that the whereabouts of the Indians had not been discovered, and that in their opinion it was not advisable that our company should continue its forced march as was anticipated.

We accordingly proceeded on the 29th to Riddle's place, on Cow Creek, this side of the mountain, where we arrived about 1 o'clock. At 3 o'clock on the same day we received an express [telegram/message] stating that the Indians had been corralled [enclosed] in the Grave Creek Hills, and that all the available forces were required to be present, ready for an attack upon them on the morning of the 31st. We started immediately for the Canyon and passed through it in the night, a very dark and rainy one, by the way, and stopped at Camp Elliff.

On the 30th we proceeded to the Six Bit House (now Fort Bailey). Here we stopped until 3 o'clock on the morning of the 31st, when we proceeded on foot for the place where the enemy was said to be awaiting us. At daylight we arrived at a high point of the mountain, where they had murdered two regulars [U.S.

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://truwe.sohs.org/files/hungryhill.html>; Biographical Information: Dodge, F. A., & Menefee. (1913). History of Tulare and Kings Counties, California. Historic Records Company. 395-96. <https://www.loc.gov/item/16012571/>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

army soldiers] a few days ago, and where we supposed them to be at that time, but the “bird had flown,” and we could see nothing of them. Here we fell in company with a command of one hundred and five regulars, under Captain Smith, and two or three companies of volunteers [members of an organized militia] from Jackson County, which altogether, considering our company and a small company from Douglas County, consisted of a force of about two hundred and fifty men.

After a reconnoiter [search] of two or three hours by scouting parties, the Indians were at length discovered upon a high point of mountain, about four miles to the north of us. Orders were immediately given by Colonel Ross to march in that direction when we proceeded immediately. When we arrived within a distance of three-fourths of a mile, we saw their forces marshaled [assembled] upon a bald peak, awaiting our approach, and the boys were so eager for the conflict that they threw their coats and blankets by the wayside, and the fleetest on foot were foremost in the charge. The first charge (the most fatal to us) drove the Indians from their position into the brush, from where they poured a deadly fire into our ranks. The charge was made about 10 o'clock, and the fight continued without intermission [break] until near dark, when we were obliged to withdraw a short distance for the purpose of obtaining water for our wounded and dying, when the firing ceased for the night.

All went well in camp until 10 o'clock at night, when an accidental shot from a pistol caused a stampede in camp, which is more easily imagined than described. The clash of arms, the cry of Indians in camp, and the general confusion baffles description. During this time two more guns went off, severely wounding three men, one of whom has since died, but the excitement was soon quelled [calmed], and the men regained their self-possession. Things went well until about sunrise on the next morning (November 1st), when they surrounded our camp and made a general charge upon us, which was repelled in a manner which does credit to the officers and men under their commands. The firing continued until 10 o'clock, when the Indians withdrew from the field. The next move was to rig litters on which to carry our wounded men to camp, a distance of about fourteen miles, over high mountains and deep canyons, which was a great undertaking for our men after the fatigues of 48 hours without grub, and very little water, but this trip was affected, and we reached Fort Bailey about 10 o'clock at night. The boys had witnessed the “fortunes of war,” and they felt the effects of it. We lost six in killed on the ground, and thirty-one wounded—four mortally. The names of the killed I have not learned, except John Gillespie, of Lane County, and John Kennaday and Henry Pearl, of Jackson County. In our company, Gillespie was killed, and John W. Richardson, Thomas Aubrey and three others were badly wounded. The loss of the Indians is supposed to be about 20 in killed.



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## **Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student** *(Continued)*

As to the report that we were cleaned out [badly defeated], I absolutely deny it. That there was a great deal of bad management—that the men were inconsiderate in the first charge, I am ready to admit—but if there is a fault, it lies in the superior officers of the day, for I do think that the attack was not brought on under as good management as it should have been under the supervision of old Indian fighters. There were twenty chances against us where there was one for us, as the Indians chose their own ground, and we were obliged to fight them there or not at all. On the first day I did not consider that any material advantage had been gained by either side, but on the second morning I considered the victory ours.

I have given a fair and impartial statement of facts concerning the affair, as near as I am capable, for which I am willing to stand responsible, with my proper signature annexed.

*Luther C. Hawley,*

Company A, Lane Co. O.M.V.

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### What Would They Say?

*Luther C. Hawley*

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
Describe the author/source? (e.g., who, what, when, where, and why)		
What is the main message or story the author wants to tell?		
What are the goals of the battle and/or war according to the author?		

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

<p><b>What is the outcome of the battle according to the author? Why did the battle end the way it did?</b></p>		
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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### Source 3. Frances Johnson, a Takelma Woman (Background)<sup>3</sup>

*Gwísgwashan, Frances Harney Johnson, was in her early teens when she and her family went through the Rogue River Wars as part of the group of Takelma people led by her uncle, Tyee George. She and her family survived the wars and were removed to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation, though Mrs. Johnson also spent some of her younger years living in the vicinity of Fort Hoskins, the U.S. military post outside the border of the reservation. She had two marriages and has many relatives who are members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians today.*

*Because of Mrs. Johnson's knowledge of Native languages, she was consulted by three different linguists during her lifetime. The following account is a transcription of a tape recording made in 1933, when she was more than 90 years old and working with a researcher named John Peabody Harrington from the Smithsonian Institution. The original recording is difficult to understand in places, in part because of degraded audio quality and in part because English was Mrs. Johnson's third language, after Takelma and Chinuk wawa, but it is a rare account of the experiences of Native people during the Rogue River Wars.*

*Mrs. Johnson told the story of Hungry Hill twice during the interview with Harrington, as part of a much longer story of her experiences during the war. This packet includes excerpts from both times she told the story—beginning with the lead up to the battle and continuing to the aftermath of the fighting. The final excerpt is from later in the interview and contains a memory of when Mrs. Johnson and her family passed by the battle site later in the war.*

**In the months leading up to the battle Mrs. Johnson's family was on the run from soldiers and white vigilantes—two of her cousins, her uncle's sons, had already been killed. In this section, Mrs. Johnson describes her initial fear when her family encountered other tribes scrambling to prepare for the war and gathering near Hungry Hill.**

And they meet us on the mountain, "my goodness!" I say. "White folks come there," I thought. Wasn't white folks. Was Indians, you know [from further down the Rogue River]. We run. Pretty soon we find out that was Indians ... Stop, then keep going. Stop Hungry Hill now. Good place Hungry Hill, open place, on top high. Stop there and it a little while ...

<sup>3</sup>Source: Papers of John Peabody Harrington, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution. Interview with Francis Johnson, reels 1666 and 1667. Transcription by CTSI.

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

**In this section, Mrs. Johnson describes her family at the time of the outbreak of the war—including a young settler girl, “Waggoner little girl,” rescued by Mrs. Johnson’s family during the attacks on homesteads during the war and brought with them to Hungry Hill.**

...I had a little brother at that time, baby ... and we don’t know he sit down and grab, eh, hot water [scald himself all] ... Now that time that Waggoner little girl I can’t watch ‘em good, I packed that, my poor little brother, and my sister, one named Agnes, she was small yet, and one named Kitty, she was like sister little Agnes, Papa pack all the time, sometime Mama pack, fourth girl I pack baby ...

**Native people camped high in the mountains to stay safe from soldiers. In this section, Mrs. Johnson describes the days before the battle as Native leaders planned for the fight knowing that Captain Smith was helping to lead the American forces.**

*Laughter.* And they stopped, eh, I don’t know how long, say one month. Water get way down, up in the hill there in prairie, they stopped there. Oh, war dance my goodness! Rogue Rivers [Takelma] and Applegates and Shastis [Shasta] Indians. “That captain ... that’s the one you folks kill first thing” [one leader] he says, holler in the old language.

**Up in the hills it was safer but made it difficult to get water. Mrs. Johnson describes a skirmish the morning before the war at a local spring where Native people had been going to get water.**

Then a woman went to get water down the hill, way down the hill they get water, they was [staying] on top, mountain. [Record skip] and she get water. He [another person] went out. Yeah, they [American forces] catch that woman, but he didn’t catch it [get caught]. And he told [Native people], “Soldiers here now on the spring.” Man went down, they kill him.

**In this section, Mrs. Johnson talks about the actual battle. The evening before the fight, her brother-in-law, Kaméstak, arrived from his home near present-day Canyonville with instructions from Mrs. Johnson’s sister to check on their father. Native leaders had hidden some elders and young children away from their fighting forces, but Mrs. Johnson headed with her brother-in-law toward the conflict on the morning of the battle.**

... Kaméstak [arrived], and he says my [Mrs. Johnson] sister says “You go after my papa, I don’t want to, not see everybody get killed ... You go after ‘em ...”

They told me, “They come after you better come, we go in the morning!”

... Then we went down, left the road, we crossed the river, then we go up again.

Up, first thing “Pop!” that was the shot ... *Sigh.* Pretty soon / “Pah, pahpahpahpahpah” Oh! Goodness.

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

No end of it, stop. All day...All day, all day ... Canyonville company now come, went 'cross, went 'cross, and ... and we can hear "alelelel, alelelel!" When they hit 'em you know? They say "Rah! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Alelelel! Pop, pah, [whispered battle sounds]" Both sides y'know, ... Them Indian down the hillside, and soldiers come up a side then on top of hill then easy get shot, and all those *[record skip]* I see where Papa is. My goodness! Aaall day, 'til sundown, quit.

**In this section, Mrs. Johnson describes the aftermath of the battle from the perspective of Native people who had won the clash, including the way that people dispersed after the fight. American military commanders were constantly amazed by the way that Native people could navigate the steep and rocky terrain—separating and coming together seemingly without warning.**

I dunno how much, [but] big round, just as big as this place, they put 'em in, all, dead people. And that time, my uncle come 'cross. [He] didn't stay Rogue River side, you know. And some of our folks, Rogue Rivers ... stayed there between the Klamaths, between the Applegates and between the Galice Creek Indians, only my uncle come there ... And he stay with us all winter ...

**In her later telling of the story Mrs. Johnson described the end of the battle like this:**

We thought there was no person, not one livin' Indian, that many shots y'know. And we went, and they come down there, ... And we get there—old ladies all old men just dancin' round ... And we stopped there, next morning they come, they come, and they says only one get killed, and ... and one Shasta wounded, that's all. Soldiers they [Native fighters] kill just like a old salmon, they roll down the hill, and then they [Native fighters] got all the gun too.

**Later in the war, Mrs. Johnson and her family passed back by the battlefield. She noted that grizzly bears had dug up some of the corpses of the settlers killed in the fighting—an act newspapers of the day blamed on Native people.**

We go back now, we go back past Hungry Hill...my goodness, ol' Grizzly Bear take 'em out all them dead people. Pull 'em out...and bullets in the trees...maybe there yet now. Only tree they shoot, them soldiers.  
*Laughter.*

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### What Would They Say?

*Frances Johnson, a Takelma Woman*

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
Describe the author/source? (e.g., who, what, when, where, and why)		
What is the main message or story the author wants to tell?		
What are the goals of the battle and/or war according to the author?		

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

<p><b>What is the outcome of the battle according to the author? Why did the battle end the way it did?</b></p>		
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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### Newspaper Accounts (Background)

*A common saying is that journalists write “the first draft of history,” and in the case of events in 1850s Oregon that is literally true. Many people in 1855-56 who were not directly experiencing the events of the Rogue River Wars learned about them in their local newspapers. In later years, preserved copies of old newspapers are often some of the most accessible sources for people hoping to learn about the past. These records are valuable, but historians also need to question what they read.*

*In the 19th century only very large city publishers had professional journalists in the field, so many newspapers relied on reports published in other nearby newspapers or letters written to the publisher by their personal contacts, often publishing reports anonymously or under pen names. Also, newspapers at this time were often explicitly partisan from their founding—reporting on events to openly push a certain political agenda. For example, for a time in the 1860s Oregon was home to the Oregon State Democrat from Albany and the State Republican from Eugene. Here are several newspaper accounts that appeared in the days and weeks after the battle.*

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### Source 4. The Oregon Statesman (Corvallis and Salem, OR)<sup>4</sup>

#### “Letters from the South” November 3, 1855

Mr. [B. B. Jackson] also states that about 300 Indians with their families, stock and plunder have taken a position on a mountain six miles below the Grave Creek [location of Battle of Hungry Hill] house, fortified it, and are awaiting an attack. They are determined to fight and have selected this as a favorable position. Captain Smith was at the Grave Creek House, with about 150 regulars, laying his plans and awaiting reinforcements. Two companies of volunteers [members of an organized militia] from this valley arrived at headquarters just as Mr. J. was leaving. They expected to attack the Indians on Thursday. Captain Smith had sent to the fort for a howitzer [cannon], intending to first drive them from their position with shells, and then attack them with small arms.

Volunteers were coming in from both north and south, and before the attack was to be made it was thought there would be over 500 men on the ground.

<sup>4</sup>Source: <https://truwe.sohs.org/files/rriwletters.html>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### **“Still Later—The Indians Victorious—Several Whites Killed.” November 3, 1855**

General McCarver arrived here this (Saturday) morning, in 5 hours from Eugene City. He brings the following letters, which, it will be seen, contain important and highly exciting information:

*Rendezvous, Roseburg, Nov. 1, 1855.*

*Dear Gen'l.—The mail from the south has just arrived, with startling news from the seat of war. The mail carrier reports 3 or 4 killed, and 12 wounded. The Indians as yet have the advantage; among the killed is a son of Mr. Gillespie, of Eugene City. The whole command is destitute of arms and ammunition. I send you a requisition from Major Martin for the same.*

*Yours, in haste, Sam E. May*

### **Umpqua Correspondence of “The Statesman”, November 17, 1855**

... The war in the south has become a real and earnest affair. The battle in the Grave Creek Hills [Battle of Hungry Hill] has proved most disastrous to our side. It is supposed that there were not more than 100 fighting Indians engaged in the action. On our side were over 300 volunteers [members of an organized militia] and more than 100 regulars [U.S. soldiers]. The loss on the side of the Indians was very trifling; probably not more than 7 or 8 were killed. The Indians had taken a position in the mountains, about 15 miles west of the road to Jacksonville—an almost inaccessible place. After two days of the hardest kind of fighting the Indians were left in possession of the field. In about ten days it is proposed to renew the attack. The exterminators are rather down in the mouth. Major Ross was present in command of the southern battalion [troop]. God only knows when or where this war may end ...

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## **Source 5. The Butte Record (Bidwell, CA)<sup>5</sup>**

### **“The Indian War,” November 17, 1855**

We learn from the *Yreka Union*, Extra, that on the 7th inst. a pitched battle was fought at Cow Creek Canon, Rogue River Valley, between about 300 Indians and 400 regulars and volunteers [members of an organized militia] under Capt. Smith, U.S.A., of Fort Lane. The fighting continued from 1 o'clock p.m., till 10—the Indians retreating and firing back upon the whites—when it was deemed necessary that steps be taken to provide for the wounded, and a halt was ordered. The Indians then rallied and commenced [began] firing upon the men, who retired to an open space where a more effectual stand could be made.

<sup>5</sup>Source: <https://truwe.sohs.org/files/hungryhill.html>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

It was then ascertained [learned] that eighteen men were killed and twenty-five wounded. A message was then dispatched to Captain George, at Althouse, who started immediately with eighty volunteers.

The *Union* says, "The course pursued by Captain Smith, tin determination and zeal manifested, have called forth the encomiums [praise] of all and it is said the coolness manifested by him upon this particular occasion elicited the admiration of all present." The Captain is undoubtedly deserving of the encomiums heaped upon him by the Union for his zeal and coolness in preventing his company of 400 men from being cut to pieces and destroyed by the superior tactics and skill of 300 savages.

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### Source 6. The St. Louis Republican (St. Louis, MO)<sup>6</sup>

#### "Indian War in Oregon"

The last news from California, it will be recollected, brought us accounts of a serious war in Oregon, and of a battle between four hundred regulars [U.S. soldiers]and volunteers [members of an organized militia] and some three hundred Indians, in which the former, after nine hours hard fighting, were compelled [forced] to retreat. The fact of an American force being forced to retreat before a lesser number of Indians ought to have made the California people a little wary about believing such foolish gossip; but they were not, and the story has had a run all over the country. The account, as first published, was contained in an extra from the Yreka paper of 5th November and went on to state that on the 31st ult. Captain Smith, U.S.A., had this engagement with the Indians. Now the truth is, letters have been received in this city by his family from Captain Smith himself, and dated as late as the 6th of November, in which he does not even allude [make mention] to any battle with the Indians. He was at Fort Lane, and his letters were mailed at Jacksonville. If an engagement lasting nine hours, and costing the lives of so many men, had taken place, certainly he would have mentioned so novel a circumstance in his familiar letters. But he did not do it, and we look upon the account of the battle as an unadulterated hoax [joke/untrue], gotten up to force the government to send additional troops to that region.

<sup>6</sup>Source: Transcribed in <https://truwe.sohs.org/files/hungryhill.html>. This account was actually copied in Oregon Statesman, Salem, April 8, 1856, page 2

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### What Would They Say?

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
Describe the author/source? (e.g., who, what, when, where, and why)		
<i>Oregon Statesman</i> (Corvallis and Salem)		
<i>The Butte Record</i> (Bidwell, CA)		
<i>St. Louis Republican</i> (St. Louis, MO)		

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
<b>What is the main message or story the author wants to tell?</b>		
<i>Oregon Statesman</i> (Corvallis and Salem)		
<i>The Butte Record</i> (Bidwell, CA)		
<i>St. Louis Republican</i> (St. Louis, MO)		

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
<b>What are the goals of the war according to the author?</b>		
<i>Oregon Statesman</i> (Corvallis and Salem)		
<i>The Butte Record</i> (Bidwell, CA)		
<i>St. Louis Republican</i> (St. Louis, MO)		

## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

Questions	In your words	Textual evidence
<b>How does the author/source describe the participants in the battle? Who is to blame for the outcome of the battle?</b>		
<b><i>Oregon Statesman</i></b> <b>(Corvallis and Salem)</b>		
<b><i>The Butte Record</i></b> <b>(Bidwell, CA)</b>		
<b><i>St. Louis Republican</i></b> <b>(St. Louis, MO)</b>	<i>[may not be sufficient info]</i>	<i>[may not be sufficient info]</i>

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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### Optional Discussion Questions

#### Sources 1–2

1. How do the stories of Kautz and Hawley compare?

How does Kautz describe volunteers? How does Kautz describe military commanders? How does Hawley explain the behavior of the volunteer militia?

Notice Hawley's descriptions of the casualties. Why do you think that he exaggerates the number of Native people who were killed?

#### Source 3

2. No one asked for Mrs. Johnson's version of events until nearly 80 years after the events took place. How might asking for her perspective have changed how these events are viewed?
3. It's rare to have recollections like this survive from Native people who were involved in the fighting. What do you learn about the battle after reading Mrs. Johnson's memories that would have been difficult to understand from the first two accounts?



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## Battle of Hungry Hill: Source Packet | Student *(Continued)*

### Source 4–6

4. Do all the newspapers have the same point of view? What differences do you see?
5. Do you notice a difference about how the battle was reported based on where the newspapers were located (how far from the fighting that they were located)?
6. Do newspapers seem to support Hawley's or Kautz's perspective more—why do you think that may be?
7. Do newspapers consider things from the perspective of someone like Mrs. Johnson? Why or why not?