

The Citizens of St. Helena Aroused!

One Hundred Tramps Warned to Leave Our Town and Valley

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Reported by Mariam Hansen, Research Director of the St. Helena Historical Society

For weeks past there has been camped along the Napa River, a company of tramps estimated to number from sixty to one hundred able bodied men. These forlorn looking specimens all told the same tale that they were *waiting for work*. Their numerous demands became unbearable to householders. They became daily more insolent and their petty thefts became so offensive that the citizens arose against them. Tramps have gone to houses in this town and finding no man around, *ordered* hot coffee and something to eat. In many cases the ladies have been afraid of them and complied, while in others the "man of the house" has appeared at the right moment to protect his wife from insult. Petty thefts have been numerous, they have broken into cellars and a few dwellings and taken whatever they could lay their hands on.

On Monday, Rev. Alfred Todhunter was away from home, when a party of tramps entered his corn field and helped themselves. They built a fire and roasted their corn. After completing their meal they left without putting the fire out and a tree was soon in flames. Sparks ignited the grass and soon a destructive fire was under way. There being no man about, it could not be controlled, until the southbound freight train came along and the men stopped to get the flames under control.



The citizens did right when they organized Tuesday morning: over one hundred and headed by Deputy Sheriff McGee and Marshal Spurr, proceeded up and down both banks of the Napa River, warning these tramps to leave the town within *thirty* minutes. The tramps saw that the citizens meant business and marched on for pastures green. Tuesday evening about dusk Marshal Spurr and his deputy went up and down the Napa River but could not find a single tramp. The citizens have organized a Citizens Safety Committee to protect themselves and copies of the following terse notice have been posted all over the town and valley:

NOTICE TO TRAMPS! You are hereby notified by the Citizens Safety Committee that you must leave this vicinity at once or means will be taken to rid the country of your presence. We have endured the intolerable nuisance as long as we are going to.
BY ORDER OF THE COMMITTEE.

It is safe to predict that we will not be troubled much more by these prowling nomads. It is to be hoped, that householders will not encourage tramps by giving them food. We compliment the officers of this town on their prompt and efficient action in this matter and trust that they will continue vigilant in their war on this curse to the valley.