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ALFRED B. MEACHAM

PROMOTER OF INDIAN REFORM

by

EDWARD STERL PHINNEY

[redacted]

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of History
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
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PREFACE

To present a name before the bar of historical opinion for a decision on whether the person deserves a place in recorded history involves a risk. Only after the research and writing is completed does a basis for final judgment exist, yet a tentative decision must be made before the work is begun. A pre-judgment of Alfred B. Meacham identified him as one whose life should be reconstructed. Why? Because his name intrudes persistently into the study of Indian affairs between 1869-1882. When contemporaries discussed the administration of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, the Modoc War, the work of the Ute Indian Commission, or lecturers on Indian reform, Meacham was anathematized or defended. Rarely were moderate or neutral attitudes expressed. Historians from Hubert Howe Bancroft to more recent writers such as Loren B. Priest, Flora W. Seymour, and Keith A. Murray vary widely in their evaluation of him.

A study of existing materials raised questions about Meacham: Was he a sincere well-intentioned reformer, or was he a fool? Did he deserve the abuse heaped upon him by Oregonians and Coloradans? Was the support of eastern humanitarians warranted? Did he make effective contributions to Indian reform? It was discovered that satisfactory answers to these questions could be found only in a biographical study. The study was made, and this dissertation is the report.

Many people cooperated in bringing the study to completion. To identify all by name would be impossible, yet I want to acknowledge my indebtedness to several of them. I owe much to Dr. Wendell H. Stephenson who led me into the pleasures of research and instructed me on methodology; to Dr. Martin Schmitt, Curator, Special Collections, University of Oregon Library, who first suggested the subject and gave valuable aid and advice on locating sources; to Mr. David C. Duniway, Archivist, State of Oregon; to Dr. Max L. Heyman who made available microfilm of a manuscript containing excerpts from General Edward R. S. Canby's last letters to his wife; to the librarians of the Bancroft, California State, Oregon State, Colorado State, Iowa State, and Indiana State libraries; to the county clerks in Solano County, California, in Union, Umatilla, and Multnomah counties in Oregon, who permitted use of county archives; and to Meacham's descendants: Mr. Louis Hoppe of Washington, D.C., husband of Meacham's great granddaughter, and several of the granddaughters--Mrs. Marian R. Abbot, Mrs. Mabel Redington Reid, Mrs. Donald J. Stewart, and Miss Bernice Redington. The contribution to this work made by those named plus many others has been beyond price. Not the least among those to whom gratitude should be expressed are my wife, Marie, and sons Edward, Paul, and David whose positive aid and forbearance have been invaluable.

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CHAPTER I

FRONTIER INFLUENCES

In Indiana

Alfred Benjamin Meacham was born on April 29, 1826 in Orange County, Indiana.[1] His grandfather George Meacham, his grandmother Mary, and their six children--Isaac, Ruth, Anderson, Mark, Elizabeth, and John--migrated from Orange County, North Carolina, in 1818.[2] Many of the immigrants from one Orange County to another were Quakers who were bitterly opposed to slavery.[3] It is quite likely, as R. Carlyle Buley concludes, that attraction to the free soil of Indiana was a stronger incentive to migration than were antislavery convictions.[4]

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[1]Thomas A. Bland, Life of Alfred B. Meacham (Washington, 1883), 3; Pacific Christian Advocate (Portland), XXVIII (March 2, 1882), 5.

[2]Orange County (Indiana) Cemetery Records (Typed copy compiled by Lost River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1947), 68. All typed, microfilmed, or photostatic copies of Orange County, Indiana, records were examined at the State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana. The originals are preserved in the courthouse, Paoli, Indiana; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 3; Orange County (Indiana) Probate Court Records (May, 1816-March, 1825), September 20, 1820 (Typed copy, Genealogical Records of Orange County, Indiana, V, compiled by Lost River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1960, p. 26).

[3]History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties (Chicago, 1884), 385-86.

[4]Roscoe Carlyle Buley, The Old Northwest Pioneer Period, 1815-1840 (Indianapolis, 1950), I, 25.

Thomas A. Bland, the biographer and friend of Alfred B. Meacham, asserted both Quaker and Methodist ancestry for him.[5] George Meacham and family originally may have been Quakers, but in 1820 he and two children--Anderson and Ruth (Meacham) McVey--were listed among the charter members of the newly organized Methodist Church in Paoli, the county seat of Orange County.[6] This record tends to substantiate Bland's assertion, and thereby provides the genesis of Alfred B. Meacham's life-long interest in Methodism.

Death came early to the original Meacham home. The grandfather, grandmother, and one uncle died in 1819, 1823, and 1825, respectively.[7] The three older children--Anderson, Ruth, and Isaac--were capable of supporting themselves upon the death of their father in 1819, but the three younger children received a court-appointed guardian. Mark, age thirteen, was bound apprentice to Thomas Coffin, who agreed "to learn [sic] Mark the arts and history of the sadling [sic] business."[8] Grandfather George's death necessitated the return to the government of one quarter section of land for which he had contracted, and upon the death of the grandmother the remaining land was sold to pay off the indebtedness.[9]

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[5]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 3.

[6]History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties, 530.

[7]Orange County, Cemetery Records, 16, 68.

[8]Orange County, Probate Court Records, September 25, 1820 (Genealogical Records, V, 35).

[9]Ibid., September 25, 1820, July 21, 1823 (Genealogical Records, V, 36, 65).

Anderson Meacham and Lucinda Wasson were united in marriage before a justice of peace on August 26, 1822, when Anderson was approximately twenty-two years of age.[10] Out of this union Alfred B. Meacham was born four years later.

Bland said Anderson Meacham was a farmer, an owner and operator of a grain and lumber mill, a member of the 1820 state legislature, and, a few years later, a member of the state senate,[11] but no proof can be found to substantiate these declarations. His name is not listed among the leading families of Paoli before 1830, nor is it found on the lists of early businessmen and manufacturers, nor is it recorded on the membership rolls of either house of the Indiana legislature.[12]

Anderson Meacham was a property owner, however. Between May, 1824 and September, 1837, he purchased a dozen lots in Paoli, and in December, 1837, he bought a quarter section of land in Orange County.[13]

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[10]Orange County (Indiana) Marriage Records, 1816-1826 (Typed copy, Genealogical Records of Orange County, Indiana, I, 1-25, compiled by Myrtle Mavis Mavity, French Lick, Indiana, Lost River Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1943), 14; United States Census, 1830, Indiana, Orange Township, X (Photostatic copy of the original, in book form and indexed), 4. The census indicates four male members in the Anderson Meacham family; one between ages twenty and thirty, one between fifteen and twenty (perhaps a brother?), and two under five, assuredly Alfred and Harvey. Two female members are shown: one between ages twenty and thirty, surely Anderson's wife, and one between ages five and ten. The last must have been a sister either of Anderson or his wife.

[11]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 3.

[12]History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties, 473-75; See also Indiana House Journals and Senate Journals, 1816-1841.

[13]Orange County General Index of Deeds (Microfilm copy), B, C, E, and F (1816-1862), B: 150, C: 144, 164, E: 185, 263, 423, F: 178, 254.

The long series of purchases came to an abrupt end, probably because of the 1837 panic. Within a week after the purchase of the 160-acre farm, Meacham began to mortgage and sell the Paoli lots, and within the next four years he disposed of all his lands.[14]

Despite Bland's assertion that Anderson Meacham served in both houses of the legislature, the only public office which he attained was that of justice of peace for Orange County. Benjamin Craven, his predecessor in office, removed from Orange County before the term expired and thus created a vacancy. Meacham was commissioned to replace him on February 16, 1832.[15] His brother-in-law, John McVey, was elected county treasurer in 1817 and county clerk in 1831, an office he held until his death in July, 1836.[16] The positions filled by Meacham and McVey were sufficient to create a family interest in politics emulsted later by Alfred Meacham.

Because of Meacham's later connections with the Indian Service and Indian reform efforts, one looks expectantly for early close contacts with members of the native race. The record shows that he was born ten years after Orange County was formed,[17] and only a few years

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[14] Ibid., F: 389, 292, 501, 531, G: 106, H: 147, 311, 328, K: 279.

[15] History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties, 436; Dorothy Riker (ed.), Executive Proceedings of the State of Indiana, 1816-1836 (Indianapolis, 1947), 543.

[16] History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties, 439; Riker (ed.), Executive Proceedings, 542, 544.

[17] History of Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties, 472; Buley, Old Northwest, I, 27. Orange County, Indiana, was formed and the town of Paoli was founded in 1816.

after the Indian title to southern Indiana lands had been extinguished.[18] There is no indication that he grew up in a community with Indians, but he was close to stories of recent white-Indian relations, even as he later asserted.[19] He could not avoid the stories; they were a part of American life.[20]

Whether because of the effects of the Panic of 1837 or the lure of a new frontier, Anderson Meacham and family left Paoli for Iowa in the summer of 1841. It is quite possible that the 1841 publication of John B. Newhall's Sketches of Iowa, or the Emigrant's Guide influenced the decision.[21]

At the time the George Meacham family migrated to Indiana in 1818, the trail to Missouri was also opened, and in the next two years many emigrants passed through Indiana on the way to the trans-Mississippi territory. Many also returned through Indiana, disillusioned with what they had found and filled with nostalgia for what they had left.[22] By 1841, however, Iowa had become a land of promise to many.

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[18]Logan Esarey, A History of Indiana, I, From Its Exploration to 1850 (Indianapolis, 1919), 185.

[19]Alfred B. Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath (Boston, 1875), 2.

[20]See Richard Irving Dodge's testimony concerning the atmosphere in which he was reared, in his Our Wild Indians (Hartford, 1882), 29-31. Dodge was a contemporary of Meacham.

[21]John B. Newhall, Sketches of Iowa, or the Emigrant's Guide (New York, 1841).

[22]William Faux, "Memorable days in America; Being a Journal of a Tour to the United States," Harlow Lindley (ed.), Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers (Indianapolis, 1916), 295; Richard Lee Mason, "Narrative of Richard Lee Mason in the Pioneer West," ibid., 235.

In Iowa

The Indians first ceded Iowa lands to the white man in 1832, and by 1837 all of Johnson County and a small part of Iowa county had been surrendered. The rest of Iowa County was ceded in 1843, and in 1845 the Indians were removed to reservations west of the Missouri River.[23] As Indians moved out, white men moved in; among them was the Anderson Meacham family.

Emigrants often traveled in groups made up of friends and neighbors. The Anderson Meacham and Lewis F. Wilson families were neighbors in Indiana who migrated to Iowa together and there maintained the same relationship. Although sources vary as to the exact year of migration,[24] the preponderance of evidence points to 1841 as the year for leaving Indiana and 1842 as the year of settlement in Iowa County. At least three sons, Alfred, Harvey, and John, and one daughter, Matilda, were members of the Meacham family at the time of arrival in Iowa.[25]

The early movements of the Meacham family in Iowa are traceable only through the friend and neighbor, Wilson. Upon arrival in Iowa he stayed one year in Johnson County, had a brief residence in the future

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[23] The History of Iowa County, Iowa (Des Moines, 1881), 290.

[24] Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 3; History of Iowa County, 307; Portland Oregon Journal, November 6, 1935. The Oregon Journal account is a reporter's interview with Nellie Meacham Redington, the daughter of Alfred B. Meacham.

[25] United States Census, 1870, Oregon, Umatilla County (Microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library, Eugene).

Powshiek County, and, in 1843, abandoned a land claim and removed to a new one on Honey Creek in Johnson County. The Meachams were near neighbors of Wilson at the last location.[26]

Meacham and Wilson were among the first to break the virgin sod on Honey Creek.[27] Young Alfred plowed the prairie for father and neighbors, and, according to Bland, paid the farm mortgage with the money earned.[28]

The Meacham family participated in the new community's political and religious life. In 1845 Anderson Meacham was elected one of three county commissioners, a position held for one year only. Nineteen-year-old Alfred, in the same election, surprisingly received one vote for sheriff and six for constable.[29] There is no evidence Anderson Meacham ever ran for public office again.

The Koszta Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1845 with Anderson, Lucinda, Alfred, and Matilda Meacham, and Lewis Wilson among the charter members.[30] The Meacham attachment to the Methodist Church which began in Indiana was continued in Iowa.

In Iowa Alfred Meacham was schooled in the rights and privileges of squatters who preceded land surveys. Although filing on land claims

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[26] History of Iowa County, 307.

[27] Ibid., 663.

[28] Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4.

[29] History of Iowa County, 352, 358.

[30] Ibid., 665.

after completion of the survey was permissible after 1841, few claims in Iowa were filed before 1846. Wilson was one of the early claimants in December, 1846, but Meacham delayed two years before claiming the land he had occupied the preceding four or five years.[31] In view of the long occupancy before Meacham filed a claim, Bland's assertion that young Alfred plowed hundreds of acres of prairie land to pay the mortgage[32] seems grossly exaggerated.

Alfred Meacham's frontier life in Iowa provided experience in the creation of a farm from raw land, in participation in the political and religious organization of a society, and in the first close contact with Indians. Bland referred to the last as the beginning of Meacham's interest in the Indians,[33] but Meacham's own dramatic account considered[34] the experience a heightening rather than a beginning of interest. The adventure took place in 1845 when Meacham drove his father's ox team, one of eighteen or twenty hired by the Government, to assist in the removal of Poweshiek's band of Sac and Foxe Indians from their homes near Iowa City to a new one near Skunk River, one hundred miles to the west. Thirty years later Meacham recalled that the removal had resulted from "power" taking advantage of "weakness" and from a "clamor

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[31] Ibid., 335, 341; James C. Dunniddie, History of Iowa County, Iowa (Chicago, 1915), I, 41.

[32] Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 4-23.

for more room for the expanding energies of a growing population."[35] The incident strengthened his sympathy for the unfortunate and oppressed.

Although reared on Indiana and Iowa frontiers, nurtured in Christian humanitarian and reform thought of the Quakers and Methodists, and exposed to the sight of human suffering during the removal of the Sac and Foxe Indians, yet in 1850 it was gold fever, not reform fever, that affected Meacham. The rush to California from Iowa began in the early spring of the year. Eyewitnesses maintained that wagon trains passing through Iowa County extended farther than the eye could see. The wagon trains and their human cargoes suffered accidents, breakage of equipment, sickness, and perhaps faint-heartedness which caused wagons and people to drop out of their places. Among Iowa County men who joined the treck were the Meacham brothers, Alfred and Harvey, ages twenty-four and twenty-one. They began the overland journey before June, since the rush through Iowa County ended by that date.[36]

The wagon train joined by the Meacham brothers probably differed little from others. The Des Moines Gazette's description of the trains was equally applicable to all. Gold rush men from Iowa County crossed the ferry at Fort Des Moines, where statistics were kept. For the three peak weeks, April 17-May 1, 846 ox and horse teams and 2,256 persons made the crossing. The next two weeks brought the total to 1,049 teams and 2,713 people. During the first week in which statistics

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[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] History of Iowa County, 327; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4; Portland Oregon Journal, November 6, 1935; Pacific Christian Advocate, XXVIII (March 2, 1882), 5.

were kept, fifty of the teams were oxen averaging three yoke to a team; the others were horse teams averaging three and a half horses to a wagon.[37] The Meacham brothers and their ox teams were merged with the milling throng, unidentifiable from others.

The crossing to California presented but one incident worth retelling in Wigwam and Warpath, probably because it reflected an inhuman attitude toward Indians. While resting for a day at Independence Rock, a member of the wagon train returned to camp from a hunting excursion asserting that he had "knocked over a buck at a distance of a hundred yards." When asked to produce the deer, he presented instead a bloody scalp. The only excuse for the killing was that the Indian had frightened away an antelope. The callousness of the deed increased with the knowledge that Indians had not troubled the passing emigrants.[38] Few wagon trains in the 1850's feared Indian attacks on life, but there was a danger of theft and bullying.[39] The attacks on life came later.

In California

Did the Meacham brothers actually mine gold in California? Bland said, "The brothers reached the mines safely and were fairly

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[37] History of Iowa County, 328-29.

[38] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 29.

[39] Ted and Caryl Hinchley (eds.), "Overland from St. Louis to the California Gold Field in 1849; The Diary of Joseph Warren Berrien," Indiana Magazine of History, LVI (December, 1960), 275, 297.

successful. . . ."[40] The same writer also asserted that Alfred Meacham visited San Francisco in 1850 or 1851.[41] The best conjecture is that the brothers probably went directly to the fold fields on arrival in the Sacramento area, but followed the mining crowd to the wintering town of Benicia, Solano County, in the winter of 1850-1851. Whether they returned to the gold fields in the spring of 1851, or remained in Solano County is not known, but the brothers are first officially discovered by California's State Census of 1852 as farmers located near Suisun City, Solano County.[42] The rich lands of the county probably convinced them there was more money in the familiar occupation of farming than in gold mining.

Alfred Meacham believed sufficiently in the future prospects of his new home to return to Iowa in 1852 and marry Orpha Carolina Ferree. She was a descendant of Daniel Ferree, a silk manufacturer in France who fled that country during the persecution of the French Huguenots. His descendants arrived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1708. One branch of the family settled in South Carolina where Orpha was born,

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[40] Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4.

[41] T. A. Bland, Pioneers of Progress (Chicago, 1906), 189; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4.

[42] California State Census, 1852, X (California State Library, Sacramento, copied under the direction of the Genealogical Records Committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution of California in 1935). Even though the names, H. J. and A. B. Neacham, were misspelled, data as to ages, Indiana birth, and Iowa residence are correct. Perhaps the spelling "Neacham" instead of "Meacham" was the error of the copier rather than of Stephen Cooper, the census taker. Since the 1850 United States census record of San Francisco was burned, it is not possible to determine through this source whether Meacham went to San Francisco.

and from that state she and her parents emigrated to Iowa.[43] The Meacham-Perree nuptials took place at Brighton, Iowa, on October 28, 1852, with the Reverend Robert Dinsmore officiating.[44]

The newly wedded couple made the journey to California by way of Panama because the overland route was impassable during the winter.[45] In late 1852 or early 1853 they arrived at their new home in Solano County.

Solano County included the land area formerly occupied by the Suisun Indian tribe, the eastern wing of the Sonoma Indians.[46] The valley of the Suisun was the home of the Indian chief. In 1817 the Spaniards fought the Suisun Indians for possession of their land. Led by their chief Malica, the Indians were defeated, and, according to one story, retreated to their homes, set fire to the rush-built houses, and perished in the flames with their families. Sem Yeto, the chief of the survivors, was converted to Roman Catholicism after 1823 and was

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[43]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4; Portland Oregon Journal, November 9, 1935; Mrs. Marian R. Abbott to E. Steri Phinney, May 4, 1959 (Mrs. Abbott is a granddaughter of A. B. Meacham); Portland Oregon Journal, November 9, 1935; Nellie Meacham Redington, Autobiographical Novel (Unpublished MS, preserved by Mrs. Donald Stewart, Meacham's granddaughter, Vancouver, Washington, microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library).

[44]Claim No. 303.721, Box No. 34575, Certificate No. 201713, Orpha C., Widow of Alfred B. Meacham (General Reference Branch, Central Search Room, National Archives, Washington).

[45]Abbott to Phinney, May 4, 1959.

[46]Marguerite Hunt and Harry S. Gunn, History of Solano County and Napa County (Chicago, 1926), I, 13.

baptized with the Christian name, Francisco de Solano.[47] The chief's name was given to the county, and the tribal name was given to the town, Suisun City.

The California legislature organized Solano County in 1849, divided it into two townships in 1850, Benicia and Suisun, and by 1854 subdivided these into five additional townships.[48] The town of Benicia was named the county seat and the first capital of California. It was significant because it lay in the line of gold-rush travel. Men poured into the mining areas near Sacramento from two directions. One route went overland via the Oregon Trail and up the course of the North Platte River to South Pass. From that point the majority passed north of the Great Salt Lake, the others south of it. Crossing into California near Lake Tahoe, they moved down toward the Sacramento area and into the gold fields. The second route was by ship around the Horn or by way of Panama. From the Isthmus they sailed by boat to San Francisco, and in smaller craft across the Bay and up to Benicia, which lay in the passage between San Pablo and Suisun Bay. Benicia felt the shock of the first gold rush when nearly all of its permanent male population went to the gold fields.[49]

A warehouse and store were erected on the Suisun City site in 1851, and with the thrust inland by additional settlers in 1852, more

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[47] J. P. Munro Fraser, History of Solano County (San Francisco, 1879) 2-3; Hunt and Gunn, Solano County and Napa County, I, 13.

[48] Fraser, Solano County, 28, 30.

[49] Ibid., 153.

stores and homes were built.[50] The census of 1852 listed a one-room house built by the Meacham brothers two miles west of Suisun City. The land was timberless, forcing landowners to adopt the Spanish method of marking land boundaries by enclosing them with a ditch and a parallel mound of dirt on top of which was piled a heap of brushwood. It produced hay and grain crops that were marketed by small boats that pushed their way up the Suisun slough to the Suisun City docks. The Meacham brothers were in the vanguard of those settlers that placed 5,942 acres of Solano County land under cultivation in 1852.[51]

It was to this new and growing community that Alfred Meacham brought his wife. The county grew for two main reasons: First, the southern border was on the line of gold-rush travel; second, the county seat, Benicia, was the winter home of many miners. The increased permanent and migrant population created an expanded market for farm produce and other supplies. Some men who became disillusioned with mining established stores in strategic areas and engaged in the carrying trade to supply the new market. Others, like Meacham, went to farming.

Meacham squatted on what he considered to be public land not far from Suisun City,[52] an act that reflected the political philosophy acquired from his parents and nurtured by frontier experience in Iowa. Archibald A. Ritchie and Robert H. Waterman claimed ownership of that

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[50] Ibid., 290.

[51] Ibid., 71, 72.

[52] Fairfield Solano Republican, February 24, 1882. The Fairfield Solano County Herald became the Solano Republican in 1869.

land, however, and Meacham found himself in a legal battle that would reach the United States Supreme Court. The story of the struggle between the squatters and the landowners is the story of the Suisan Land Grant, one of six comprising most of Solano County's 545,000 acres. The Suisun Grant contained approximately 17,752 and included the whole of the Suisun Valley and the towns of Suisun City and Fairview. The county histories and the records of the court cases are informative on the background and development of the struggle.

The Indian chief, Francisco Solano, first petitioned for a grant of his hereditary land on January 16, 1837. Mexican law in 1833-1834 had granted Indians the right of citizenship and landholding and had secularized mission lands. Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, the Mexican military commandant, gave Solano a temporary grant of his lands two days after the petition. Solano, as actual possessor of the land, applied for a title on January 15, 1842, and thirteen days later the Mexican governor for the Department of California, Juan B. Alvarado, declared the Indian owner in fee simple. The Departmental Assembly for the Department of California confirmed the Suisun Land Grant in October, 1843.

About four months after Solano was given the land in fee simple by Governor Alvarado, he sold it to Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo for 1,000 hard Mexican dollars, a transaction witnessed to by the commander of the military department. Vallejo in turn sold the Suisun Land Grant to Archibald A. Ritchie for $50,000 ($10,000 in cash and $40,000 in notes) on August 29, 1850. The deed was duly recorded in the recently organized Solano County. The same day Ritchie sold a third interest to Robert H.

Waterman.

An Act of Congress in March, 1851, provided for the appointment of a Board of Commissioners to settle private land claims in California and for appeal of the Board's decisions to the United States District Court of California. An August, 1852, amendment declared that the simple act of filing a transcript of a case presented to and acted upon by the Board of Commissioners with the clerk of the district court should "ipso facto operate as an appeal."

The Board of Commissioners confirmed the Suisun Land Grant title to Ritchie on January 3, 1853, and on May 19 and September 20 a transcript and an appeal of the board's decision was filed with the clerk of the United States District Court for northern California. In November of the same year the district court confirmed the decision of the Board of Commissioners and sustained Ritchie in his title. The case was appealed to the United States Supreme Court and a decision sustaining Ritchie's title to the land was handed down in December, 1854. Attorney General Caleb Cushing based the government's argument against the validity of Ritchie's claim to title on the contention that none had passed from the Mexican government to the Indian Francisco Solano. He maintained that the whole transaction was a fraud of which the Indian, Solano, was the instrument for the benefit of Vallejo. He contended that the Suisun grant was mission land and therefore Solano could not legally acquire any interest in it and could not lawfully sell it to Vallejo. The land, therefore, automatically reverted to the public domain as soon as Solano's occupancy ceased. Cushing asserted that the sale of the land to Vallejo covered the plunder of a part of mission

lands. He concluded that Vallejo had no title to convey to Ritchie, and therefore the land belonged to the public domain of the United States.[53]

Meacham was only one of over three hundred that fought to preempt the Suisun Grant land, but he became one of their foremost orators.[54] An examination of his political affiliations reveals where his sympathies lay in matters of this kind. Originally he was a Whig who became a Free-Soiler, and then identified himself with the Know-Nothing party in Solano County without losing his Free-Soil sympathies.

Frazier, in his History of Solano County, sided with Ritchie and Waterman against the squatters. He mentioned the unsettled condition of county affairs due to the litigation over land titles, spoke of the violence and bloodshed which arose out of this litigation, and

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[53]The legal briefs consistently outline the facts and dates relating to land sales and purchases; an occasional variation in the day, but not the month does not invalidate the dates as a whole. By critical use of the facts presented in the briefs, otherwise lost details can be reconstructed. The data for the Suisun Land Grant struggle have been taken from: Archibald A. Ritchie and Robert H. Waterman, Plaintiffs v. James Dorland, James L. Miles, John Long, Alfred B. Meacham, James K. Gordon, R. D. Pringle, Sampson Smith, Daniel K. Berry, Joseph R. Chadbourn, John Doe and Richard Roe, Defendants, Solano County (California) District Court, Seventh Judicial District (Courthouse, Fairfield), File number 302; United States Supreme Court, December Term, 1854, No. 44, p. 34; Fraser, Solano County, 130-31; Solano County Judgments, Seventh District Court (1853-60), 460-63; Stewart Rapalje, ed., Reports of Cases Argued and Judged in the Supreme Court of the United States, (New York, 1885), XVII, 524-41. All Solano County documents used in this work, including the Court of Sessions and Seventh District Court records, are preserved at the courthouse in Fairfield, California.

[54]Fairfield Solano Republican, February 24, 1882; Ritchie and Waterman v. Dorland, Meacham et al., File 302.

talked of the bitterness over inaccurate boundary lines.[55] The inaccuracy is illustrated by the description of the Suisun Land Grant boundaries:

> At a point marked by a rock which is somewhat flattened on its top and sloping toward the water of a slough or creek being on the right bank of said slough or creek, near an uprooted oak tree which has fallen into said slough or creek, and which rock is on the northeast side of and near to an isolated hill, which hill lies southwesterly of and adjacent to the place known as the town of Cordelia in said county . . . and is situated about a mile southward from a large and conspicuous white mark or spot on the mountain to the northward of said. . . .[56]

The nature and violence of the riots began and carried on by squatters is demonstrated by the case of the People v. James Dorland in March, 1853. The plaintiff, U. P. Degman, swore that he had started construction of a home on his own land near Dorland's house. The work was interrupted by a company of persons who hauled away the lumber which he had purchased for its construction. Degman accused the "thieves" of threatening to cut his throat if he resisted. He admitted that Dorland was not present when all of this took place, but believed that he as leader had advised, encouraged, aided, and abetted the assembling of the riot. The "thieves" accused Degman of attempts to kill with a crowbar and hammer. The trial ended by acquitting all of intent to kill.[57] Meacham knew and associated with the men involved in this incident of violence, but was not a party to the affair.

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[55] Fraser, Solano County, 131.

[56] Ritchie and Waterman v. Dorland, Meacham et al., File 302.

[57] Solano County Court of Sessions (1853), File 37, the People v. James Dorland, James L. Miles, John Long, Benjamin Davidson, Hirma Mosey, B. F. Gibbs, et al., March 5, 1853.

There is no evidence that Meacham and his brother were ever leaders of or participants in the squatters' riots. The writer senses that Alfred Meacham was in agreement with the squatters in principle and was willing to serve as the public speaker in defense of their position, but that he was not the real leader of the group.

Meacham and many other squatters believed they were on the side of the United States Government in the contest for lands of the Suisun Grant. When the United States Supreme Court confirmed the decree of the District Court of California, granting the lands to Ritchie and Waterman, the decision did not end all litigation.[58] Ritchie and Waterman brought suit in the Seventh District Court against Meacham and eight other men by name and an unnamed three hundred others. The intent of the suit was to compel each squatter to identify the location and the number of acres of land which he occupied and to sue for past rent and profits as well as eviction from the land. The court decreed in favor of the plaintiffs and a percentage of the $50,000 rent claimed by the laintiffs was assigned to each of the defendants. Meacham's share was $500 plus $60 in court costs. He and his co-defenders appealed the decision of the Seventh District Court to the Supreme Court of California and secured a reversal of the lower court's decision that cancelled the obligation to pay back rent.[59]

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[58]Solano County Judgments, Seventh District Court (1853-1860), 460-63.

[59]Report of Cases, The Supreme Court, State of California, 1856 (San Francisco, 1870), 41; Ritchie and Waterman v. Dorland, Meacham, et al., File 302.

Meacham asserted during the litigation of the various suits that he had occupied 103 acres of land in Suisun Valley and had built "permanent and valuable improvements" to the value of $400. Codefendants laid claim to as little as forty acres and as much as 140, and reserved the right to demand up to 160.[60] Each man claimed land in harmony with the pre-emption laws of the United States. They did not succeed because one court after the other ruled against them.

Litigation over the Suisun Grant continued during practically the whole decade of the 1850's even though court decisions favorable to the owners were constant. A patent of ownership was not issued to Ritchie until January, 1957. Waterman, who had purchased in August, 1850, an undivided third part of the Suisun Grant, sold his portion to George W. P. Bissell in July, 1856, while litigation was still in process. The suit of 1855 had failed to effect a mass eviction; therefore individual suits were brought against each squatter.[61] A search of the Judgment Book (1853-1860) for the Seventh District Court, revealed no eviction trial of Alfred Meacham, although there were trials for practically all other defendants involved in the previous suits. Meacham apparently was content to abide by the decisions of the court, and moved in a different direction to earn his livelihood and secure his home. Indications of what transpired are found in the registry of land purchases, political activity, and additional civil suits.

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[60] Ritchie and Waterman v. Dorland, Meacham et al., File 302.

[61] Solano County Judgments, Seventh District Court (1853-1860), 460-63.

By 1855 Meacham apparently had become disillusioned with the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer and he turned to industrial and speculative pursuit for a living. On October 8 he purchased 480 acres of Solano County land, for which he paid $2,400--$1,200 in cash and a first mortgage on the property for the balance.[62] The purpose of the purchase was made clear five days later when he sold the land just purchased to the Suisun Lime and Quarry Company for one dollar and for one share of stock in the company.[63] The county newspaper, reflecting the hope of the new business venture, reported that a fine marble quarry in the hills north of Suisun City had been discovered. The editor went on to state:

> A company is being formed, and the quarrying will be commenced early next spring. . . . The shipping point will be at Suisun City . . . docks which has for the past four months been by far the busiest place in the county. Three stores are located there and a stream flour mill is in full blast. If any person desires to inform himself as to the wealth of our country he can do so at Suisun City.[64]

Four or five months later the newspaper again encouraged the new venture:

> The Suisun Lime and Quarry Company has manufactured an excellent article of lime, and are making preparations to do a heavy business this coming season. This is a very important enterprise and one which will do much for our country.[65]

But Meacham's hopes for profits were never realized. The sequel to the story was given in a few brief words written from Suisun City on

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[62]Solano County Deeds, I (1847-1863), 545; Solano County Mortgage, I (1849-1886), 418.

[63]Solano County Deeds, H (1847-1862), 544-46.

[64]Benicia Solano County Herald, November 10, 1855.

[65]Ibid., March 29, 1856.

December 28, 1869. The writer told of a group of eight people who took a fifty-mile hike to the head of Copay Valley. Going north from Suisun City the first item of interest passed was Marble Quarry Mountain from which could be mined "beautiful variegated marble." He understood that this marble had attracted much attention several years earlier, but had never been developed into a profitable undertaking.[66] The historian Frazier reported the result of a geological survey of the marble quarry made by Charles Rueger in 1876. The survey revealed that the quality of the stone was of doubtful competitive value on the commercial market, which explained why Meacham's business venture failed. The survey report did indicate, however, that the stone contained excellent material for the manufacture of Portland cement, but since the town of Benicia already had a cement factory with a nearby supply of raw materials, it would be difficult for the Suisun Quarry to compete with it.[67] When the writer visited Fairfield, California, in 1958, the county engineer stated that Portland cement was manufactured at Suisun Marble Quarry at a much later date.

Although the Suisun Lime and Quarry Company failed to make a profit, an examination of the tax rolls revealed that Meacham and his brother made a fair living. The assessment rolls indicated that in 1853 the Meacham brothers' personal property was assessed at $1,360 on which a tax of $15.26 was paid. Since they were squatting on the land

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[66]California Christian Advocate (San Francisco), XIX (January 6, 1870), 2.

[67]Frazer, Solano County, 93, 100.

they were not charged an ownership tax.[68] In 1855 their personal property was assessed at $1,770 and improvements at $500.[69] Two years later the brothers were assessed $1,080 plus $450 for improvements on ninety acres of land in the Suisun Valley of Suisun Township. Two lots in Suisun City were assessed at $30 and improvements at $300. The total assessed value of real and personal property was $3,210, the maximum worth of the Meacham brothers to 1857.[70]

Rapid change was a constant on the early American frontier to which Solano County was not immune. The influx of people, the improvement of communications, the opening of new businesses provided opportunities for able men to make money, but the changes called for frequent adjustments to new situations and new problems. Among the new businesses into which Alfred and Harvey Meacham entered was the carrying trade under the business name of A. B. Meacham and Brother.[71] This business was more profitable than marble mining, but it was not without its problems. In 1861, Meacham, his brother, and two others--A. R. Jackson and E. C. McComb--were sued in order to collect a disputed debt of $253.91.[72] Meacham contended that he had signed a note for the loan with the plaintiff's agent and had deposited fifty tons of hay as

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[68]Solano County Assessors Roll (1853), 96.

[69]Ibid., 1855.

[70]Ibid., 1857.

[71]Solano County Seventh District Court, William Pierce v. A. B. Meacham, Harvey Meacham, A. P. Jackson, and E. C. McComb, File 891.

[72]Seventh District Court, Pierce v. Meacham, et al.

collateral, and that the hay had been sold without his knowledge or consent and the money converted to the plaintiff's own use. Therefore, rather than he owing the plaintiff the principal and interest on the note, the plaintiff owed him $92. The plaintiff denied the accuracy of Meacham's contention, convinced the court that he was right, and Meacham was ordered to pay $325.91 (the principal plus interest) and $32 in costs.[73] This was only one of many civil suits over debts owed by Meacham; he had an astonishing record for suits lost.[74] The case just reviewed raises a question concerning the strength of the Meacham brothers' credit in Suisun City. Money lenders, however, may have been political enemies.

The legal struggles over land claims, involvement in civil suits because of debts, the task of making a living by farming, the quarrying of marble, and the operation of the carrying trade business did not stop the normal process of everyday living. Meacham was a family and church man. According to the baptismal records three children were born to him and his wife Orpha: Clara Bell on February 12, 1855; George Ferree, on October 26, 1856; and Nellie Frances, on August 6, 1858.[75] There is no official record of any other birth, but a granddaughter Mabel (Margaret) Redington Reid says the family tradition asserts the birth of a first child, a son, who died as a result of

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[73] Ibid.

[74] Meacham's propensity to go to court rather than pay claimed debts has provided legal briefs containing significant information on his life.

[75] Record Book, Methodist Church, Fairfield, California.

Meacham's accidentally pushing him off the bed. The tragedy, it is believed, haunted him the rest of his life.[76]

Because of Meacham's later work with the Indians, the question of early relationship with them has significance. What experiences with Indians could he have had in Solano County? The answer is found in the 1852 California census which tallied 2,835 people in Solano County. Of this number there were only 402 women. United States citizens twenty-one years of age and over numbered 1,289. There were twenty-six male Negroes, two female Negroes, thirty-five male mulattoes, and only thirty-one male and fifteen female Indians.[77] It is obvious that Meacham, the future promoter of Indian reform, did not have much experience with Indians while living in Solano County. During this period newspaper and travelers' accounts would be his main sources of information concerning Indian affairs.

As in Indiana and Iowa, Meacham became identified with the Methodist Church, which came early to Suisun Valley.[78] Methodist services were first held in a home in November, 1849, and the first pastor was assigned in February, 1851. A small white frame valley church was erected three miles west of the present town of Fairfield in 1855. In the same year the first board of trustees was organized, and as a member Meacham assisted in the erection of the parsonage in 1857 and the new

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[76]Mrs. W. J. Reid to E. Sterl Phinney, May 7, 1959. Mrs. Reid is A. B. Meacham's granddaughter.

[77]Fraser, Solano County, 72.

[78]Ibid., 294.

brick church in Fairfield in 1860.[79]

Although a member of the board of trustees since 1855, Meacham was not baptized until September 25, 1858; his wife and three children received baptism on the same day.[80] Of the three church classes the Meachams belonged to number three which held its meetings in the Turner School House.[81] Among members of the Methodist Church were some of the men with whom Meacham was associated in the struggle of the squatters versus the purchasers of the Suisun Land Grant: Daniel M. Berry, Captain Josiah Wing, and James Dorland. One can believe that Methodist meetings included "shop talk" as well as worship of God.

Meacham left California without taking his church membership with him, and finally his name was dropped from the rolls. The Reverend B. F. Taylor in 1884 sadly told the story of the preceding twenty-six years: Out of eighty-one members received on probation, twenty-five were dropped. "Eleven were removed, some by letter, and some, it is not stated how, and ten are marked 'Gone.' Whether into the world, to heaven, or to some other place I cannot tell."[82]

Evidences of Meacham's ability in public speaking filter through the Solano County documents. As already noted, he was the main orator

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[79]"History of Methodism in Suisun Valley and Fairfield, 1857-1957" (a mimeographed brochure prepared by the Methodist Church in Fairfield, California, copy in the writer's possession).

[80]Record Book, Methodist Church, Fairfield.

[81]Ibid.

[82]Ibid.

for the squatters, and was also a leading speaker for the Know-Nothing political party.[83] This natural trait demonstrated itself in church discussions and court cases, and such forensic competence also helped push Meacham into coveted political activity.

Politics in Solano County were strongly partisan, increasingly so with the establishment of the Solano County Herald. It began publication in Benicia on October 5, 1855, and removed to Suisun City three years later when the county seat was changed to Fairfield.[84] After the peak of the gold rush was over, the county began to settle down to normal living. In 1855 the Herald editorialized that the county had seen her best days and that now with the gold fever subsiding it would conform to natural health and growth. For two years strangers had looked on Benicia "as a wreck since the state capitol was moved to Sacramento," but even though the town had been "bled to the last drop" even as San Francisco and other cities, yet it had partly recovered. Evidence of recovery was visible in new discoveries of the county's natural resources such as the marble stone uncovered near Benicia and Suisun City, the equal of Italian marble.[85]

The decline of Benicia's importance and the expansion of the population into such interior centers as Suisun City and Vacaville demanded a more centralized location for the county seat. The editor

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[83]Fairfield Solano Republican, February 24, 1882.

[84]Fraser, Solano County, 301; Benicia Solano County Herald, October 2, 1858.

[85]Benicia Solano County Herald, April 5, 1855.

of the Herald was realistic in his appraisal of this demand. He did not blame the residents of Suisun and Vaca valleys for seeking a more centrally located county seat since settlement of land claims had stimulated their business. He believed the only way for Benicia to avoid removal of the county government was to speed up railroad construction.[86] The need for a branch express and post office in Suisun City was pointed out: "The island is the shipping point for nearly all the produce of that part of the country. The people of Suisun are unhappy because of their inability to get a post office."[87]

After over two years of agitation, a county convention was called and delegates appointed to meet at Suisun City in August, 1858, to consider relocation of the county seat. Several potential locations were considered: Fairfield, Suisun City, Vacaville, and Denverton. Fairfield had the most attractive location and land offer because Waterman had donated sixteen acres of land--four blocks of the Fairfield town plat--to the county. The delegates selected Fairfield as their choice for the county seat and the electorate overwhelmingly approved the selection on September 2, 1858.[88]

Several political parties--the American or Know-Nothing, the Republican, the Democratic, and the Whig--were contending in Solano County in 1855 and 1856. "An old citizen," writing in the Herald, pled for the election of good county officials. He insisted that the people

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[86] Ibid., March 1, 1856.

[87] Ibid. April 5, 1856.

[88] Fraser, Solano County, 34.

did not care to which of the four parties elected officials belonged--they wanted only honest officeholders.[89]

The Know-Nothing party to which Meacham belonged had little newspaper support, but it was the object of some humor and ridicule. "The last Yankee cry" said an 1854 issue: "No English! No Germans! No Irish! No taxes! No Government! No Babies! Know-Nothing! ! !"[90]

Within two years after settling in Solano County, Meacham was elected justice of peace for Suisun Township in September, 1854, and one month later, out of eleven justices of peace, he was elected by the Board of Supervisors to the office of associate justice of the Court of Sessions for Solano County.[91] He was chosen on the first ballot. He served for only one year, but was re-elected to the office of justice of the peace in 1855 and 1856.[92] Perhaps because of increasing Democratic strength, Meacham's political success subsided after 1857. In the November, 1856, election, Solano County gave Buchanan 799 votes for president, Fillmore 634, and Fremont 189, evidence of the comparative strength of the various political parties.[93]

Meacham's pay as associate justice was eight dollars for each day of service rendered. During the 1854 October and December terms of the Court of Sessions, he served twelve days, and at least seven days

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[89]Benicia Solano County Herald, October 25, 1856.

[90]Ibid., November 5, 1855.

[91] Solano County Supervisors Minutes, I (1853-60), 76.

[92]Fraser, Solano County, 122.

[93]Benicia Solano County Herald, December 6, 1856.

during the May and June terms of 1855. For one of these days he received fifteen dollars for his services, including reimbursement for twenty miles of travel.[94] The standard fee for the service of a justice of the peace was three dollars.[95] Meacham assuredly did not get rich from the political offices he held, but neither did he ignore the value of the extra income.

As justice of the peace, Meacham handled criminal as well as civil complaints. The People v. John Patterson was an example. This case began when Andrew L. Fish on February 23, 1856, appeared before Meacham and swore that Patterson had attempted to kill or maim him with a pistol or colt revolver at 2:15 a.m. the preceding day. The warrant for arrest issued by Meacham was written in his own handwriting, one of the rare instances in which his holograph has been preserved. On February 26 Meacham found Patterson guilty and bound him over to the Court of Sessions scheduled to meet on April 8, and set bail at $500.

The grand jury indicted Patterson for the crime, but, for lack of witnesses, the trial before the Court of Sessions, scheduled for April 1856, was postponed.[96] Since no further record of the case can be found it is a temptation to assume that Patterson fled the country. The case reveals that Meacham was no stranger to the violence of frontier life.

Concurrently with the positions of justice of the peace and associate justice, 1854-1855, Meacham also served as road supervisor.

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[94]Supervisors Minutes, I, 76, 98, 107, 147.

[95]Ibid., 176.

[96]Solano County Court of Sessions, People v. Patterson, File 111.

He was appointed to this office on February 11, 1854, placed in charge of Road District Number 10, a section of road leading from Suisun City toward Sacramento City, and given a $250 appropriation for road repairs from the county treasury. In May of the following year, Road District Number 11 was also placed under his authority.[97]

Meacham's political rewards during 1850-1855 suggested promise of better things to come, but instead there followed five years of political poverty. In 1861 minor success came to him again. He served as election officer in the Suisun precinct in September,[98] and was elected to the newly created office of road master in the same month.[99] The duties of the road master were carefully detailed by the Board of Supervisors: Roads were to be kept in good repair, bridges and culverts constructed where needed, sign posts erected, and the labor of citizens and their teams and equipment organized and directed.[100] For one year of service in this office, Meacham received $120.[101] He was not re-elected at the end of the one-year term.

Following the term as road master, Meacham turned to land ownership, whether for farming or business purposes is not apparent. On July 19, 1862, he bought R. D. Pringle's contract for the purchase of 320 acres of state school land, a contract that had been initiated in

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[97]Supervisors Minutes, I, 11, 121.

[98]Ibid., II, 42.

[99]Fraser, Solano County, 124.

[100]Ibid., 117.

[101]Supervisors Minutes, II, 201.

September, 1861. At that time Pringle paid the state $112 which was 20 per cent of the purchase cost plus the first year's interest on the balance.[102] He owed the state a balance of $320. Meacham contracted to pay Pringle $300 cash for his investment and take up the obligation still due the state.[103] On the same date Meacham and his wife secured from Nicholas Edwards a loan of $1,000 guaranteed with a mortgage on 320 acres of land, one half of which either was not recorded or was not discovered by the writer. As further proof that Meacham had already made the purchase, he sold 640 acres on February 16, 1863, to Nicholas Edwards, the same man from whom the $1,000 has been borrowed. Edwards held a mortgage on half of the section.[105]

Edwards paid Meacham $1,500 for the land. When one considers the amount of debt Meacham had contracted the preceding July, $1,000 of which bore an interest charge of 2½ per cent a month, the cash balance remaining after payment of debt would have been small. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Meacham receptive to the news of the gold strike in Eastern Oregon and Idaho.

The gold strike news reached the Meacham brothers through the Solano County Herald. By 1863 many had already reached the gold fields

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[102] Solano County Deeds, Q, 747-48.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Solano County Mortgages, V (1849-1886), 105.

[105] Solano County Deeds, R, 476-77.

and some wrote news and travel instructions to the Herald. One descriptive letter was published in February, 1863, in which the writer told of his trip to Walla Walla, Washington Territory, and on to the mines in the Boise Basin via the Blue Mountains, Grand Ronde Valley, and across the Snake River. He calculated the distance from Walla Walla to Placerville to be approximately three hundred miles. The road from Walla Walla was good, except over the two mountains, with plenty of grass for animals all the way. The writer believed the gold mines were not as rich as those discovered in California in 1849, but they paid well. Provisions were high, but beef was plentiful and cheap at fifteen cents a pound. In his opinion it was only the cheap beef that made it possible for many people to stay.[106]

Harvey Meacham, who had gone to "spy out the land," telegraphed his brother at Suisun City on February 4, 1863:

> I have found a good country and more business than I can manage alone; come and help me. Better leave your family until you can see for yourself. You may not like it, though I do. Money is plenty, everything new, and prices keyed up to old 'forty-nine' times.[107]

Twelve days after Harvey sent this telegram, Alfred and Orpha Meacham sold their 640 acres of land, and Alfred was soon on his way to Oregon. From Lee's Encampment on top of the Blue Mountains, fifty miles from Walla Walla, Meacham telegraphed his wife at Suisun City:

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[106]Fairfield Solano County Herald, February 7, 1863.

[107]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 32.

> 'Eureka.' Come; I am camping in four feet of snow, and cooking meals in a frying-pan, and charging a dollar; selling 'slap jacks' two bits each: oats and barley at twelve cents, and hay at ten cents per pound, and other things at same kind of prices; can't supply the demand. Go to William Booth, San Francisco, and tell him to ship you and the children with the goods, to Walla-Walla, Washington Territory, via Portland, Oregon, care Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express.108

Once again Meacham had succumbed to the lure of gold, and with the rapidity of frontier changes, the Meacham family moved from Solano County, California, to Lee's Encampment, Oregon.

108Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE OREGON PREPARATION

The Lure of Gold

Why did Meacham move to Oregon? He was thirty-seven years old; his three children ranged in age from five to eight; and he migrated to a new and raw frontier, not to a promised well-paying job. The reason is hinted in an 1877 letter to Oliver C. Applegate containing complaints that financial success had hovered over him but had always eluded his grasp.[1] The move to Oregon probably was another attempt to lay hold on elusive financial success. He sought also public leadership and political success. Having been accustomed to frontier life and opportunities, he instinctively believed his ambitions could be achieved on the new frontier.

Meacham did not achieve financial, political, or social success to the degree he desired in California. His land and stone quarry ventures failed. In the years 1854 to 1856 he achieved temporary political success, and a slight revival occurred in 1861, but his political party lost rather than gained strength in Solano County. News of the gold strike in eastern Oregon and Idaho offered him an exciting challenge. California experiences--politics at the grassroots level, participation

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[1]Meacham to Oliver C. Applegate, September 10, 1877, Applegate Papers (Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library).

in the carrying trade, construction and maintenance of roads, and development of his natural oratorical ability--prepared him well for his future career in Oregon.

Harvey, the advance agent for the Meacham family, was pleased with what he found in Oregon. Alfred, the second member to investigate business possibilities, concurred with his brother. The real pleasure was not camping in four feet of snow and cooking in a frying pan, but collecting one dollar for the meals. Oats and barley that sold at twelve cents and hay at ten cents a pound, with a demand greater than supply, gave Meacham visions of richness he had not yet attained. He quickly saw that more gold could be extracted from the miners' pockets than from the mines. No wonder his message to his wife was " 'Eureka.' "[2]

Meacham's travel instructions to his wife and family directed them via the route normally used by Californians: from Suisun City to San Francisco and thence to Portland. There the family boarded the Oregon Steam Navigation Company's river boat and steamed up the Columbia to Umatilla Landing.[3] To this point, the journey was by water. Nellie Meacham, in 1935, asserted that her mother and the children sailed from San Francisco to Portland aboard the famous steamship Brother Jonathan. No evidence has been uncovered to substantiate the assertion. That

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[2]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 32.

[3]Ibid.; Portland Oregon Journal, November 9, 1835; John Hailey, The History of Idaho (Boise, Idaho, 1910), 61. John Hailey's work serves as primary source material in the section which describes the operation of his stagecoach line on the Meacham Road.

steamship arrived in Portland on March 23, 1863; the newspaper printed the names of many of the passengers, but Mrs. Meacham and the children were not listed among them, although they could have been among the 133 other unnamed passengers.[4] It is possible that the Brother Jonathan, which was wrecked on July 30, 1865,[5] had associated itself in Nellie's mind by its fame more than by the fact of having actually journeyed on it.

The Meacham family traveled from Umatilla Landing to Cayuse Station in a six-horse stage owned and operated by William Ish and John Bailey.[6] The stage made this trip, a distance of fifty miles, three times a week. It could not go beyond Cayuse Station because the road over the mountain was not yet completed.[7] The only other methods of travel from Cayuse Station to Lee's Encampment were by foot or by horseback. Meacham would not have permitted his family to travel by foot.

What kind of accomodations did Meacham prepare for his family? He was camping in four feet of snow in early March, 1863. Did the family also camp out for a time after their arrival? If so, the experience did not impress itself on Nellie Meacham's memory, for in 1935 she remembered only a log house with a shake roof, a stick and mortar

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[4]Portland Oregon Journal, November 5, 1935; Portland Oregonian, March 24, 1863.

[5]Ernest A. Wiltse, Gold Rush Steamers of the Pacific (San Francisco, 1938), 304.

[6]Portland Oregon Journal, November 9, 1935.

[7]Bailey, Idaho, 96.

chimney, and a fireplace made from smooth stone.[8] Trees and other materials necessary for building a log house abounded.

The Oregon Perspective

Meacham arrived at Lee's Encampment seventy-five years after the Bostonians, John Kendrick and Robert Gray, discovered Oregon's Pacific shore;[9] fifty-eight years after Lewis and Clark's overland trip of exploration; fifty-three years after John Jacob Astor founded the fur-trading post at Astoria;[10] forty-five years after the London Convention placed the United States and Great Britain in equal contention for the Pacific Northwest; twenty-nine years after the arrival in Oregon of the Methodist missionary Jason Lee and his companions;[11] twenty-seven years after the arrival of the Presbyterian missionaries Marcus Whitman and Henry H. Spaulding on the Walla Walla, Washington area;[12] twenty years after the first large overland migration of agricultural families to the Willamette Valley, which included the three Applegate brothers: Jesse, Charles, and Lindsay;[13] fourteen years after the United States established the territorial government of Oregon; and four years after

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[8]Portland Oregon Journal, November 9, 1935.

[9]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast (San Francisco, 1889), I, 185.

[10]Ibid., I, 512.

[11]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Oregon (San Francisco, 1886-1888), I, 58.

[12]Ibid., I, 104, 118, 134; Clifford M. Drury, Marcus Whitman, M. D. (Caldwell, Idaho, 1937), 156.

[13]Bancroft, Oregon, I, 211, 408-409.

Oregon became a state. These are landmarks in Oregon's history that brought it along the road of development to its status when the Meachams and the gold rushers invaded the new frontier.

Oregon's economic prosperity began only fifteen years before Meacham's arrival. Before 1848 Oregonians engaged primarily in subsistence farming, but the California gold discovery of that year radically changed things. The small amount of export and import trade with Honolulu was diverted to California. Oregon farmers produced food and lumber for export that was sold to the captains of ships from that market.[14] The gold discoveries brought economic prosperity to residents of Oregon, but emigrants were still attracted to California.[15]

Missionaries and gold helped set the stage for the kind of Indian troubles Meacham would face as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Marcus Whitman and Jason Lee promoted white agricultural settlements, some believe to the exclusion of their missionary work.[16] The Cayuse Indians in 1847 rose up against Whitman, killed him and thirteen associates, and took forty-seven captives.[17] War resulted, bringing defeat to the Cayuse Indians and the claim by Oregonians that the Indians had forfeited their lands. Thus began the inexorable pressure of the white man against the Indian and his lands in the territory west of the Cascade Mountains.

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[14] Ibid., II, 22, 48.

[15] Ibid., 42, 47.

[16] Ibid., I, 166; Drury, Whitman, 346.

[17] Bancroft, Oregon, I, 669; Drury, Whitman, 390.

The 1848 discovery of gold caused heavy overland travel between Oregon and California with a consequent disturbing of the peace with the Indians of that area. Gold was discovered in southern Oregon from 1850 to 1852; it was found in the Klamath River and some of its tributaries, in the Rogue River, and in Jackson Creek near the present town of Jacksonville.[18] The white man's invasion of Indian land was resisted, resulting in the Rogue River Indian Wars of 1850 to 1855. In 1852 Ben Wright and eighteen volunteers endeavored to protect emigrants journeying to Yreka, California, as they drew near the Oregon-California border and they sought revenge for the Indian murder of emigrants and theft of supplies. Through subterfuge and treachery, Wright and his men as their last act before returning to Yreka killed forty-seven out of forty-nine Modoc Indian braves.[19] This deed became a ghost that haunted Meacham twenty years later in dealing with the Modoc Indians during his superintendency of Indian affairs and chairmanship of the Modoc Peace Commission. Each war ended with the defeat of the Indians and with bitter memories.

The Indian territory east of the Cascade Mountains was not particularly attractive to white men until the discovery of gold. Immigrants had been traveling through the region for twenty years without desiring to appropriate the lands, wanting only to reach Willamette Valley in western Oregon. But two years after Oregon was admitted to

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[18]Bancroft, Oregon, II, 180.

[19]Harry L. Wells, History of Siskiyou County, California (Oakland, California, 1881), 129-133.

the Union, gold was discovered on her northeastern border and in adjacent Washington Territory.[20] The discovery created a counter-flow of migration eastward over the Cascades into the gold country without interrupting, but rather increasing, the westward flow of immigrants from the East. Contemporaries were fully aware of the significance of the discoveries on the economy, on immigration, and on Indian relations. A newspaper reported visible evidence of the value of the 1862 gold strike on the John Day River: Miners visited The Dalles for purchase of supplies, paid for with gold dust. The writer attempted to calm fears of Indian troubles by asserting that three fourths if not nine tenths of the stories told about Indian fights and massacres on the Snake River were not true. He was not sure why "false stories" were circulated, but it is evident that he wanted nothing to stop mining, miners, and immigrants.[21]

It is difficult to trace accurately each gold discovery in eastern Oregon and Idaho. Gold was first discovered in the summer of 1860 on Canal Gulch in the Nez Perce country of Washington and Idaho. The rush to that area began in 1861.[22] The larger claims were located at Florence, Idaho, where, on June 1, 1862, thirteen hundred were worked by about forty-two hundred men.[23] In August, 1861, gold was discovered

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[20]Portland Oregonian, October 15, 1862.

[21]Ibid., October 20, 1862.

[22]William J. Trimble, The Mining Advance Into the Inland Empire (Madison, Wisconsin, 1914), 66.

[23]Ibid., 71.

on the John Day and Powder rivers in Oregon. These discoveries were not revealed until November of the same year.[24] The most important mines in eastern Oregon were at Canyon City on Canyon Creek and at Auburn, located ten miles southwest of the present Baker City, on the Powder River. Rich placer mines developed in the John Day River area. Miners poured into the regions in 1862. The town of Auburn was laid out in June, and by winter had a population of three thousand.[25] The gold discovery which set the stage for the success of Meacham Station at Lee's Encampment was made in August of the same year in the Boise Basin, Idaho.

John Hailey, a participant in the events of the period, gave a detailed outline of how the Boise Basin mines were discovered. The placer mines of Florence, Idaho, were playing out in 1862 and the miners went in search of new fields. Several parties arrived in the Boise Basin within a few days of each other. Some camped where the town of Placerville grew up and others where Idaho City arose. Moses Splawn, a leader of one of the parties, asserted that he had heard about the Boise Basin gold through a Bannock Indian whom he saw in Florence. Splawn believed the story and in company with seven men started in search of the country. He met and joined forces with George Grimes and his seven men. Grimes was killed by the Indians and the party retreated to the Snake River because of continued attacks. They went to Walla Walla, Washington Territory, where they secured fifty men and returned

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[24]Bancroft, Oregon, II, 479.

[25]Trimble, Mining Advance, 73.

to the Basin in force and opened the mines.[26] By the spring of 1863 the gold rush was on. Meacham arrived at strategically located Lee's Encampment in time to provide service for the thousands of miners funneling through the pass on their way to the new gold fields. Several roads started from the Columbia River, converged at the Umatilla Indian Reservation, climbed the mountain by way of the old immigrant trail, went through Lee's Encampment, and over into Grande Ronde Valley. Meacham called his location "a great observation post."[27]

Lee's Encampment

Meacham always referred to his location in the Blue Mountains as Lee's Encampment. The spot was named after Henry A. G. Lee, a descendant of Richard Lee of the famed Old Dominion family. Migrating to Oregon in 1843, he became a major in the volunteer army that was raised to punish the Cayuse Indians for the murder of Marcus Whitman. During the Cayuse War of 1847-1848 Lee established his military encampment in the location where Meacham later built a stage station and hotel.[28] According to Meacham the encampment was located fifty miles south of Walla Walla on the "out-boundary" of the Umatilla Indian

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[26]Hailey, Idaho, 32-43; Trimble, Mining Advance, 75.

[27]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 33.

[28]Frances Fuller Victor, The Early Indian Wars of Oregon (Salem, Oregon, 1894), 193; George H. Himes, "History of the Press of Oregon, 1839-1850," Oregon Historical Quarterly (Portland), III (1902), 344; Lewis A. McArthur, Oregon Geographical Names (Portland, Oregon, 1952), 397.

Reservation.[29]

Gold Rush Business

Meacham and his brother Harvey prepared to receive the flood of miners on their way to the Oregon and Idaho mines. The rush began in earnest in early April, 1863. Besides the miners, "merchants, packers, ranchers, sporting men, loggers, and an occasional preacher was within the throng."[30] The summer of 1863 saw 15,000 to 20,000 men enter the Boise Basin.[31] This heavy traffic of men and supplies flowed by Meacham's camp both to and from the gold fields. It was a "boom" time.

A look at the travelers in the gold rush route is revealing. The drawing power of gold was so powerful that multitudes were willing to walk to the mines with scarcely any forethought and few provisions. A friend and contemporary of Meacham said:

> The road between Umatilla, the steamboat landing, and the Boise Basin, was lined with people, some on horseback, with a few pack animals, but the majority were on foot. Many pack trains were on the road loaded with merchandise of all kinds.[32]

Great quantities of supplies were needed to provision the large number of people. All of the supplies were packed on animals from Umatilla or Walla Walla, with the exception of a small amount of flour that came

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[29] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 33.

[30] Hailey, Idaho, 61.

[31] Ibid., 62.

[32] Ibid., 33.

from Salt Lake City.[33] Some people brought saddle horses and a few brought pack animals, but the majority were without animals of any kind, nor were they prepared to purchase them. Some men without animals banded together in groups of four or five and purchased one to pack their blankets and a small supply of provisions, and walked over three hundred miles to Boise Basin. Others bought a lunch, rolled it up in their pack, and started walking to the mines a few minutes after landing from the steamer at Umatilla. They depended upon replenishing their stock of food at some packers' camp or at stations such as Meacham's.[34]

A number of miners had more money and more time. These wanted guides who knew the country and who would help them pack their supplies into the gold fields. This kind of travel was called "saddle train," that is, the owner of the train furnished each passenger with a horse and saddle. Pack horses carried a small amount of baggage for each person and sufficient food for the trip. The train master cared for the animals and the packing; the passengers did the cooking. A saddle train trip from Umatilla Landing to Boise Basin cost $50 a passenger, paid in advance. The owner paid $10 in toll for the round trip; purchased food; cared for the animals; provided the train master's wages; and frequently stood the loss of a horse or two. Operating costs were high. The round trip from Umatilla Landing to the Boise Basin took two weeks. Both horses and train master would then rest a week to

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[33] Ibid., 62.

[34] Ibid., 61.

recuperate from the trip.[35]

Hailey, who became Meacham's good friend, was engaged in the saddle train business with William Ish. They sent out their first train to the Auburn mines on April 10, 1863, and to the Boise Basin on April 18. Ish drummed up the business and Hailey led the saddle train.[36]

Success invited keen competition, and prices dropped. Merchants laid in a heavy stock of supplies for winter and spring at high prices. Because of overstocking, merchandise was cheaper in the spring of 1864 than in the fall of 1863, and many lost money. Saddle train prices descended from fifty to forty and to thirty dollars a passenger. Cut-throat competition drove many out of business. The 1863 freight rates of sixteen to twenty-five cents per pound also dropped.[37]

Fred Nodine, one of the first settlers in the Grande Ronde Valley, profited by the demand for supplies as early as 1862. He invented a crude hay baler that baled tall rye and bunch grass in bundles of convenient size, slung them between two pack horses, carried them to the snow line in the mountains where animal feed was scarce, and sold them for $100 a ton.[38]

Jacksonville, Oregon, a former goldmining center, greedily

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[35] Ibid., 61, 62.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 63.

[38] History of Union and Wallowa Counties (Portland, Oregon, 1902), 144.

sought ways to participate in the profits of the new gold fields. In 1862, when the John Day River mines were being exploited, the editor of the Oregon Sentinel tried to promote wagon freight business between Jacksonville and the mines in eastern Oregon. He reported that Frank Smith of Jacksonville Valley had just returned from the John Day mines with a train of twelve wagons, a trip of fifteen days over a good road with plenty of water and grass. The editor estimated that a wagon train of 6,000 pounds of flour would net a profit of $1,650, and urged businessmen to venture their money. His list of prices at the Auburn mines--coffee at forty cents a pound, apples at twenty-six, sugar at thirty-three and one half, mutton and beef at twenty to thirty, flour at twenty-seven, beans at twenty-five and bacon at thirty to forty cents--was held out as tantalizing bait.[39]

Some Oregonians thought the gold rush fever was a form of insanity and deplored the exit of the Willamette Valley voting population to the gold mines. The Portland Oregonian pointed out that the rich mines were on the farms and that gold-seeking was a "will of the wisp."[40]

In 1863, because of the large amount of gold dust in circulation, greenback money was unpopular, though legal. It depreciated to forty-five cents on the dollar. Gold dust was a more popular medium of exchange. Each businessman owned a blower to clean the dust and scales

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[39]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, August 9, 1862.

[40]Portland Oregonian, March 10, 1863.

to weigh it.[41] Even taxes were paid in gold dust. The county commissioners of Umatilla County recognized the problem involved in collecting taxes in that medium, and by special action in 1864 voted to reimburse the sheriff with county funds in the sum of $20.38 for the loss of gold dust taken in taxes.[42]

Into this business climate Meacham moved when he established Meacham Station at Lee's Encampment.

Meacham Station

The stage station and hotel established by Meacham was an immediate success because of its strategic location, the volume of business, and the quality of its hospitality to which both Mr. and Mrs. Meacham contributed. First there was the personality and the character of Meacham himself. He was over six feet tall and had "a magnificent red beard and hair."[43] In 1873 a political enemy stated that Meacham was "a man of warm impulses, positive character, and strong will, and has very many attached personal friends. . . ."[44] The editor of the Pacific Christian Advocate, the Reverend H. K. Hines, declared in 1882 that "Mr. Meacham was a man of generous impulses, kind hearted, zealous,

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[41] History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 146.

[42] Umatilla County (Oregon) Court Journal, A (1863-1866), 64. The Umatilla County records used in this study are preserved in the courthouse at Pendleton, Oregon. WPA transcripts of many of the earlier records are found in the Oregon Collection of the University of Oregon Library and in the State Archives, Salem, Oregon.

[43] Mrs. W. J. Reid to E. Steri Phinney, May 7, 1959.

[44] Salem Oregon Statesman, April 15, 1873.

true to his convictions. . . ."[45] These characteristics would be an asset in any business that served the public.

The quality of Mrs. Meacham's cooking was a positive factor in the success of Meacham Station. Nellie Meacham never tired of bragging on her mother's cream of tartar biscuits, dried apple pie, beef steak hash, fried chicken, cakes, and other delicacies. Its fame spread throughout the Northwest.[46]

Tired and weary travelers looked forward to the warmth of Meacham's hospitality. A traveler in 1868 testified to this fact in an article entitled "Time Flys, So Does Hailey's State." Called out of bed at 1:00 a.m., he boarded the stage and "rolled and tumbled over a rough road to Meacham's. . . . Arriving at Meacham's we partook, with a magnanimous lavishness, of the generous hospitality for which the Blue Mountain Camp is world-wide noted."[47] Hailey, whose stages ended their first day's run at Meacham Station, said that it "was a romantic place near the summit of the mountain and was kept by the late A. B. Meacham and his brother Harvey. The accomodations were always first class."[48] The Blue Mountain Times, referring to Meachams' current advertisement, stated that it revealed the Meacham family's enterprise, that they were still running the inn in the Blue Mountains, and that

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[45] Pacific Christian Advocate, XXVIII (March 2, 1882), 5.

[46] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 4, 107.

[47] La Grande Grand Ronde Sentinel, October 24, 1868.

[48] Hailey, Idaho, 97.

"from long experience the traveling public must be satisfied that they are capable of doing it."[49]

Because the public was satisfied, Meacham's business grew, and by the spring of 1865 a new hotel building was under construction. It was sixty feet long and forty feet wide, built of logs, and located on higher ground. The building contained men's rooms, women's rooms, dining and general sitting rooms. A ten-foot porch extended the full length of the building. The kitchen, storeroom, and one bedroom were located in the rear. The second story supplied several bedrooms and a general bunkroom for men. Men's and women's quarters were each equipped with huge fireplaces. These were made of rock, held together with home-made mortar. The upper part of the chimney was made of sticks and mortar.[50] (A chimney so constructed could have been the cause of the fire which destroyed the hotel in 1888.)[51] The dining room was located between the men's and women's rooms.

Originally, the men's room was a big barroom.[52] Meacham later became a temperance orator,[53] but during his first years in Oregon he did not hesitate to secure a liquor license and dispense spirited beverages to his customers. The first licenses issued by the commissioners

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[49]La Grande Blue Mountain Times, August 1, 1868.

[50]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 1.

[51]Pendleton East Oregonian, May 20, 1889.

[52]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 1.

[53]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 4-5; Pacific Christian Advocate, XXVIII (March 2, 1862), 5.

of the newly formed Umatilla County were liquor licenses. Six were granted on July 7, 1863, one of which went to the Meacham brothers at Lee's Encampment. It cost fifty dollars for six months.[54] The last liquor license granted to the Meacham brothers expired on December 1, 1866.[55] There is no record of any additional license issued to them.

Much help was needed to operate Meacham Station. Soon after Meacham established Lee's Encampment he invited his brother John and his sister Matilda to work with him and Harvey.[56] The three men operated under the firm name of Meacham and Brothers. In 1865 Fred Foster and at least eight other men worked for them.[57] This crew operated the toll road as well as the stage station.

Toll Roads, Ferries, and Bridges

The discovery of gold in eastern Oregon and Idaho preceded settlement. The old immigrant trail, twenty miles wide in places, was not a prepared road on which stagecoaches and freight wagons could travel.

Before the gold rush, all Oregon east of the Cascade Mountains was one county, Wasco, with The Dalles as county seat. From it seventeen

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[54]Umatilla County Court Journal, A, 5.

[55]Umatilla County Liquor License Record Book (1866-1894), 3, 7.

[56]Ninth United States Census, 1870, Oregon, Umatilla County (Microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library); Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 3, 91.

[57]Umatilla County Sheriff Census Enumeration (State Archives, Salem, Oregon), 1865 A; Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 101.

additional counties were created of which Umatilla (1862) was the second.[58] Meacham moved to Lee's Encampment the year after Umatilla County was formed and but one year before the forming of Union County, which joins Umatilla on the southeast. With approximately five hundred agricultural settlers in the beautiful and fertile Grande Ronde Valley, James M. Pyle, chairman of the Committee on Corporations in the Oregon Senate, introduced a bill on September 16, 1864, to create and organize Union County. Five days later section eight of the bill was amended to read:

> Whereas the rapid growth and settlement of the country embraced in said county of Union has created an emergency which still exists for the immediate organization of said county; therefore, to protect the rights of citizens and insure the administration of justice, this act shall take effect and be enforced from and after its approval by the Governor.[59]

On October 14 the amended bill was passed and signed by the governor. La Grande became the county seat.[60]

Meacham was aware of the business significance of the permanent settling of land and of the large volume of transient traffic caused by the rush into the Boise Basin in 1863. There was an immediate need for better roads, which could be built only by private enterprise since there was insufficient white population to provide adequate tax money

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[58] Inventory of the County Archives of Oregon, No. 30, Umatilla County (Portland, 1942), A-37; History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 142.

[59] "Journal of Senate," September 16, 1864, September 21, 1864, "Special Laws," 3rd regular session of September 12-October 22, 1864, Laws and Journals (Salem, Oregon, 1864-1865), 37-39.

[60] Ibid.

and labor. The opportunity for profits attracted entrepreneurs, of whom Meacham was one. He drew on his California experience as road master and turned instinctively to building and operating a toll road.

Oregon's 1862 road law permitted county courts to lease public roads in sparsely settled areas to persons or corporations for a ten-year period. The law provided for the collection of toll at designated gates and at publicly posted rates. Travelers were liable to the lessee for three times the amount of the toll if they tried to avoid payment.[61]

Among the first road corporations formed under the 1862 law was the Powder Road and Bridge Company, with headquarters at Auburn in Baker County. The incorporation articles were signed by B. H. Belknap, A. B. Roberts, G. Collin Robins, and Samuel J. Clarke. Clarke was the clerk of Baker County and later became a close friend and supporter of Meacham.[62]

The main road over which Meacham obtained control was originally incorporated on January 2, 1863, under the name of Umatilla and Powder River Road Company, at Lafayette, Oregon. The articles of incorporation contained no termination date. The company had a capital stock of $5,000, divided into shares of $100 each. The principal office was located at Marshall in Umatilla County. The road was to begin there and run by the best and most direct route via Lee's Encampment and Grande Ronde Valley to a point on the west side of the Powder River

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[61]M. P. Deady (comp.), General Law of Oregon, 1845-64 (Portland, Oregon, 1866), 619.

[62]Corporation Commission Office (Salem, Oregon), File No. 4208.

Valley near where the old immigrant road entered it.[63]

The exact date Meacham bought this road is not known, but it must have been earlier than March 16, 1865, when Stephen Coffin sold for $500 another toll road to the Meacham brothers--the La Grande and Umatilla Landing Wagon Road and Bridge Company. Included in the sale was Coffin's one-third undivided interest in the bridge across the La Grande River at the town of Oro Dell.[64] The price paid indicates that the road was not of great value, but the purchase did secure the bridge across the La Grande River. In the early spring of 1863 stagecoaches could go only as far as Cayuse Station on their journey from Umatilla Landing. This station was located at the foot of the Blue Mountains' north side just before the steep ascent. The road between Cayuse Station and La Grande via Meacham Station was not improved to receive stage and wagon freight travel until 1864.[65] Since it would have taken months to improve the road, one is led to believe that Meacham secured control of the Umatilla and Powder River Road Company some time in 1863, or not later than early 1864.

The distance from the beginning of the Meacham Road at Marshall to Meacham Station was approximately forty-eight miles; from Meacham Station to La Grande, about twenty-five; and from La Grande to the

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[63] Ibid., File No. 3332.

[64] Union County (Oregon) Deed Record, A, 51. All Union County records referred to in this study are preserved in the courthouse at La Grande, Oregon.

[65] Hailey, Idaho, 92.

Powder River, about twenty-five; a total of almost a hundred miles. The toll road operated on a large scale.

Toll road and toll bridge builders raced to see who could be first to collect tolls. Construction and repair of roads was hard work, and took capital funds. The purchase of stage wagons, horses, and harness took a large capital outlay also, but the stages were ready as soon as the roads were in proper condition to receive them.[66] Stages started operating in the early summer of 1864, freight wagons in late summer. Until this time all freight had been packed into the mining areas by animal trains. Even after freight wagons were put on the roads, pack trains were used to haul freight during the winter and spring because large amounts of snow and mud made wagon use impossible. The introduction of freight wagons, however, caused a drop in rate.[67]

There was no central planning of the toll-road system, which developed into a hodgepodge of obstacle courses from Umatilla Landing to Boise Basin. George B. Currey, Commander of E Company, First Oregon Volunteer Cavalry, reported that his troops left Fort Walla Walla on April 28, 1864, and arrived in the Grande Ronde Valley in early May. With understandable sarcasm he described the army's journey over the toll roads:

> From the Grande Ronde Valley we threaded the maze of toll roads, toll bridges, toll cut-offs, in fact every shanty by the roadside, every armful of brush thrown into a rut, placarded with more emphatic artistic letters--'Toll Road' or 'Bridge --with a bill of fare

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[66] Ibid., 96.

[67] Ibid., 92.

> that showed how highly the owner appreciated the importance of his enterprise. Whether these self-constituted 'Custom House Collectors' have materially benefited the development of the country and assisted trade or not, I leave for those more directly interested to decide. The only military inconvenience felt by my command was mostly endured by Lieutenant Pepoon, he being compelled to go with a ready supply of quartermaster's vouchers.[68]

A look at the toll rates reveals why Meacham found in toll roads a profitable business. In February, 1866, H. E. Goodwin received a six-month license from the Umatilla County Court for the toll bridge across the Umatilla River. He was authorized to charge the following toll rates: An empty wagon with one span of horses or oxen, $1.00; a loaded wagon with one span of horses or oxen, $1.50; each additional span, $.50; man and horse, $.50; pack animals, $.12½; and loose stock, $.10.[69] Ferry boat rates were slightly cheaper than toll bridge fees.[70] The rise and fall of businesses were directly affected by the toll rates. Hailey pointed out that in 1865 the freight wagons charged less per pound for freight than pack trains and that

> Tolls were still very high on the roads at bridges and ferries, and it would take nearly half the earnings of a pack animal to pay his tolls. This was so discouraging that many who had small trains quit the business. . . .[71]

In 1870 newspapers complained about the high cost of tolls. The Mountain Sentinel asserted that a trip to Walla Walla from Union County or

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[68] Report of Adjutant General of Oregon, 1865-1866 (Salem, Oregon, 1866), 32.

[69] Umatilla County Court Journals, A (1866), 202-203.

[70] Umatilla County Court Journal, B (1867), 105.

[71] Hailey, Idaho, 99.

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to Umatilla Landing cost not less than $60 a trip. A traveler to Idaho had to pay toll

> . . . at every turn of the road, at the crossing of every small brook, and at the commencement of every pass, gulley and ravine. In leaving Grande Ronde Valley, going either way, the traveler is beset by bridge keepers, ferry owners and owners of roads, as thick as flies in harvest; demanding fifty cents, one, two or three dollars as the case may be. Think of a teamster having to pay from ten to twenty dollars toll on every load he takes into Idaho, and of one who actually did pay $1500 toll for one year of freighting on the Boise-Umatilla Road.[72]

The Oregon Papers pointed out that in the 1860's the Meacham Road was a "bononza." An estimated 100 to 500 footmen, 25 to 40 horsemen, and from 80 to 150 pack animals passed through the toll gate each day. The toll rates were $.40 for pack animals, $.50 for footmen, and $1.00 for horsemen.[73] What was a "bonanza" to the toll road owner was a resented tax to freighters and travelers.

In the fall of 1864 the miners left for the cities of Oregon and California to visit their families and spend their gold. They returned to the mines in the spring of 1865. Meacham prepared for the spring rush with a new hotel, but the toll road improvement was not completely finished until later in the summer. On this job he spent $81,000. Before the summer was over, large freight teams began passing over the Meacham Road to the Boise Basin, fifteen or twenty a day.[74]

Prosperity was at its height in 1865. Steamboats were idle from December 1, 1864, to March 1, 1865, because of the frozen river.

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[72]La Grande Mountain Sentinel, 1870, quoted in the History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 150-51.

[73]D. H. Stearns, Oregon Papers (Portland, 1882), VII-X, 7.

[74]Ibid.

But on March 1, an Oregon Steamship Navigation Company boat docked at Umatilla Landing "literally jammed with passengers." They were miners returning to the Boise Basin to replenish their depleted treasuries. Few of the men paid any attention to the Umatilla stores and hotels, but started immediately to the mines. The trip overland was hard; many men experienced snow blindness. Steamers arrived at Umatilla Landing three times a week loaded with both passengers and freight for the Boise Basin; thus far it was the greatest rush into the gold fields. The road from the river boat landing was lined with people. The saddle trains and stagecoaches were crowded; business was good. It was a peak year for gold production, about $10,000,000 worth.[75]

The expansion of business called for additional capital. Meacham was able to finance his own business expansion for the most part, but in spite of a boom year, by October he was seeking new money. He sought out T. J. Carter of 102 Front Street, Portland,[76] from whom on October 9, 1865, he borrowed $5,000 secured by a mortgage on the Umatilla and Powder River Clay Road Company. It was a thirty-day loan with interest rate at one per cent per month. A default in payment empowered Carter to sell the toll road, to subtract from the sale price the amount owed, and to turn the balance over to the Meacham brothers.[77] When and how this loan was repaid is not clear. In the margin beside the loan record there is written the phrase "satisfied on foreclosure." No date is given

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[75]Hailey, Idaho, 216-17.

[76]Portland Directory (Portland, Oregon, 1865).

[77]Union County Mortgage Record, A, 70.

nor is there further explanation, but the passing of the road from the control of the Meacham brothers to other hands was yet several years in the future.

Toll Road and Stage Competition

The Meacham Road was the most used, but it had strong competition, especially from the Thomas and Ruckel Road. This road led out of the Grande Ronde Valley via the route taken by the earliest immigrants--Nathaniel Wyeth, Jason Lee, and Marcus Whitman. It was the most direct route to Walla Walla. The road lay about twelve or fifteen miles north of the Meacham route.[78] It was the highway to the gold fields generally used until the summer of 1863. The Thomas and Ruckel Road ran from Wallula, a river port, to Walla Walla and on over the Blue Mountains. The Meacham and the Thomas and Ruckel roads were improved for stage travel at about the same time. Hailey began running his stages over the Meacham Road about June 1, 1864.[79] George F. Thomas, of the Thomas and Ruckel Road, put stages on his toll road in the early spring of that year.[80] The two stage lines as well as the two toll roads competed for traffic.

The two toll roads passed through the Umatilla Indian

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[78]Hailey, Idaho, 97; Leslie M. Scott, "Pioneer Stimulus of Gold," Oregon Historical Quarterly (Portland), XVIII (September, 1917), 157-58.

[79]Hailey, Idaho, 96.

[80]Ibid., 97.

Reservation for which permission had to be secured from the Indian Service of the United States Government. Nellie Meacham asserted that her father secured a license to run his road through the Reservation and in return for this permit, "Indians were allowed free passage over the well-kept road."[81]

Meacham was a Hailey partisan in the competition between the stage lines because Hailey's stages traveled over his toll road. Hailey won the time competition with a sixty-five mile run from Umatilla Landing to Meacham Station the first day, whereas his competitor traveled only thirty-one miles, from Wallula to Walla Walla. Thomas' stage carried the mail by subcontract with Ben Holladay and monopolized on the carrying of treasure, fast freight, letters, and Portland newspapers through a contract with Wells, Fargo Company. Hailey beat the competition on all counts by delivering mail and newspapers to Boise Basin one day sooner and at cheaper rates than Thomas, and by hauling large amounts of gold at freight rather than express rates with the owner assuming the risks. By late fall of 1864 Hailey had the upper hand, and Thomas' business declined. During the winter, Thomas' large American horses ate up the profits in feed. Hailey's medium-sized half-breed horses thrived on bunch grass. Since Thomas had the mail contract, his stages had to travel during the bad winter months, making his big horses work and eat; Hailey's horses rested more and ate less.[82]

William K. Ish sold out to his partner, Hailey, in 1865, and

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[81]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 6.

[82]Hailey, Idaho, 97-99.

bought a half interest in Thomas' line which was then renamed Thomas, Ish and Company. Before the year ended the new company went out of business and sold part of its rolling stock to Hailey, and the rest to other parties.[83] Hailey's victory was due not only to his business acumen, but also to the fact that Meacham Road was the best and shortest route to the Boise Basin.

There were frequent reorganizations and consolidations of stage companies and stage runs.[84] Each one was an attempt to adjust to the changing need of a rapidly developing frontier. Each adjustment of the stagecoach business and the increase or decrease of traffic into the gold fields affected directly the business on Meacham's toll road. When prices were high, profits were easy. When competition was strong, toll rates were lowered, and so were profits. The beginning of freight-wagon hauling in 1865 forced rates down to six and eight cents a pound for slow freight.[85] The decreased income on the part of the packers and the freighters put them into conflict with the operators of toll roads, for high tolls tended to eat up profits.

Stage Stations

The distance from Umatilla Landing to Placerville in the Boise

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[83] Ibid., 123.

[84] Ibid., 124-25.

[85] Ibid., 99.

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Basin was 285 miles by way of Meacham Station.[86] The stagecoach and toll road men cooperated in their business ventures for each was dependent on the other. Stage stations were established along the route, some of which served more than one purpose. A few existed solely as a service stop for stagecoaches where extra horses were kept and fed, and where meals for passengers and limited supplies were available. Other stations provided facilities not only for stagecoach travelers, but also for those traveling by horse or by foot.

Stations from Umatilla to Boise Basin included Four-Mile House, Twelve-Mile House, Old Wells Station, Stage Gulch, Swift's Station, Pendleton, Cayuse, Meacham, La Grande, North Powder, Baker, and Durkee. From Durkee the stages went by way of the Burnt River, Snake River, and on into Idaho by way of Crystal Springs, Sulphur Springs, and Forty-Nine Ranch. Many of the stations were not permanently located. Water or grass shortages often caused a change to a better location.[87] The stations were generally located from twenty to twenty-five miles apart.[88]

Toll Roads Versus Public Roads

With the increase of agricultural settlers and the passing of boom times, pressures to eliminate toll roads in favor of public roads

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[86] Ibid., 96. The records vary in their assertions on the distance between the two points, probably because changes in routing shortened or lengthened the route.

[87] WPA-1, Umatilla, Transportation (Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library), copies from Ft. Dalles Historical Society, Scrapbook #50, News Clipping, Mrs. Benton Mays Scrapbook.

[88] Bailey, Idaho, 96.

increased. In April, 1866, forty Umatilla County residents petitioned the county court for a public road which would by-pass the Meacham Road. Road viewers began the survey on May 24, 1866. Meacham was concerned, and when the viewers camped at his station on the night of June 7, he talked them into surveying a route by which his hotel could be connected with the new road. But the proposed public road would miss the hotel by two and a half miles and hurt both his toll road and hotel business. Meacham was politically strong enough to force a survey of an alternate route, but the viewers reported unfavorably on it. At the September meeting of the county court the proposed public road was approved.[89] It was unable to compete with the Meacham Road, but the attempt demonstrates citizens' desire for deliverance from toll charges. In other instances, the public was able to force the closure of toll roads or turn them into public roads. The Pyle Canyon Road provided an example of public coercion. Senator James Pyle secured a charter for the road that bore his name in 1863 or 1864.[90] His death in 1865 gave Union County an opportunity to seek its control. The county failed in this effort, and built one of its own above and parallel to Pyle's road. This caused the Pyle operators to lose money, and they sold out to the county. The transaction was finalized in 1871, and the Pyle Canyon Road became a public

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[89]Umatilla County Court Journal, A (1866), 241; Umatilla County Roads and Field Notes, A, 2-11; Umatilla County Court Journal, B (1866), 47.

[90]History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 145.

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enterprise while the earlier county road was abandoned.[91]

Between 1862 and 1868 four roads were constructed over the Blue Mountains: The Thomas and Ruckel Road, fifteen miles to the north of Meacham Road; the Linckton Road, still farther north; another built by the Government, later abandoned; and the Meacham Road.[92] As the last was the best and shortest route, it survived all the others.

The Meacham Road did not survive as a toll road without a struggle. There were periods when it was unprofitable. In 1868 the Blue Mountain Times corrected the Walla Walla Statesman on its view of the future flow of traffic. The consolidation of the Thomas and Ruckel Road with the Meacham Road into a new corporation, the Blue Mountain Consolidated Road, caused the dispute. The Statesman asserted that all traffic would now flow over the old Thomas and Ruckel Route and the Times declared that traffic would go whichever route it pleased, and since the Meacham Road was the shorter and better route, it would choose to go that way. Recent traffic increase was offered in support of the second argument.[93] The Times expressed its approval of the union of the two roads.

> Now that both roads are under toll, much travel which went Thomas and Ruckel Road free, will come back to the Meacham Road. The new corporation is certainly not throwing out on us since they make

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[91]WPA File, Union County (Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library), Personal Interview with Arthur Busick, April 10, 1942; Union County Commissioners Court Journal, A, 403.

[92]Stearns, Oregon Papers, VII-X, 7.

[93]Union County Mortgage Record, A, 258-60; La Grande Blue Mountain Times, August 8, 1868.

La Grande their headquarters and principal place of business.[94] The newspaper discussion pointed up the problem involved in maintaining toll roads as a profitable business. One free road could destroy a toll road. By combining the two roads, charging toll on both, and allowing the public a choice as to which road it wished to travel, Meacham was able to increase travel and profits on his original road.

After the consolidation of the two roads, Meacham put an advertisement dated July 31, 1868, in the Blue Mountain Times. It declared that the Meacham brothers were closing up business and asked that all who were indebted to them pay immediately. It announced that arrangements had been made to consolidate the Meacham Road and Lee's Encampment with the Thomas and Ruckel Road and also Warm Springs, and that A. B. Meacham was to conduct business at Warm Springs and H. J. Meacham at Lee's Encampment. The public was warned that hereafter all business would be strictly on the "pay as you go" plan.[95]

The road situation in 1868 was much discussed by the two newly founded La Grande newspapers: the Republican Blue Mountain Times and the Democratic Mountain Sentinel. Both began in April, 1868, and later fought over priority of publication.[96] Meacham being a Republican placed his advertisements in the Blue Mountain Times. The Mountain Sentinel, a political, but not necessarily a business critic of Meacham, pointed out

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[94]La Grande Blue Mountain Times, August 1, 1868.

[95]Ibid., August 8, 1868.

[96]History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 148, 660-61; La Grande Blue Mountain Times, December 19, 1868.

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that even with the existence of many county roads, toll roads in 1868 were "the main highways:"

> County roads cross the valley in all directions but the main highways are toll roads. One, called the Meacham Road, comes over the Blue Mountains and follows the Grande Ronde River for some distance until it merges into the valley at Oro Dell. Thence it goes to La Grande and directly across the valley to Union and out at the south end via Pyle's Canyon or the old immigrant road of Ladd's Hill.
>
> Another called the Thomas and Ruckel Road extends over the Blue Mountains from the headwaters of the Umatilla River entering the valley on the west side near the north end and leading thence through the towns of Summerville and across the valley to the opposite side. Thence up the east side past the mouth of Forest Cove, through Union and into Powder River Valley by the same outlets as the Meacham Road.[97]

Meacham's control of the two main highways over the Blue Mountains did not give security in the toll road business. The year 1868 saw a definite decline in travel and business. Gold mines began to weaken, and although there were long lines of pack trains and mule wagons going over the toll roads, the stampede was definitely over.[98] The Union County historian asserted that "Unbounded prosperity prevailed in Grande Ronde Valley up to and including a part of the year 1868."[99] Until then, farmers of the valley had been able to market all they could produce because of the rapidly expanding population. This resulted in overexpansion and prosperity turned to depression. Because of a long summer heat the crops were injured. The placer mines of Powder River, Sparta, Canyon City, Boise, and elsewhere decreased in production. In

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[97]La Grande Mountain Sentinel, April 25, 1868, quoted in History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 149.

[98]Inventory of County Archives, Umatilla County, A-33.

[99]History of Union and Wallowa Counties, 150-51.

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the areas surrounding the mining districts, agriculture had developed to supply much of the local market, which lessened the demand for Union County products. With the depression came an increased awareness of the drain on pocketbooks by the transportation companies, toll roads, and ferry owners.[100]

Miscellaneous Events

The depression of 1868 brought an end to easy profits. The Meacham brothers had lived comfortably if not luxuriously for five years. Harvey, who had been Alfred's constant companion since the two left Iowa, did not risk marriage until he was thirty-seven years of age. Perhaps economic prosperity encouraged Harvey, for on Christmas Day, 1865, he married a sixteen-year old bride, Alice Rockfellow.[101] Seven years and five children later, Harvey died. Alfred never got over Harvey's death because he was the indirect cause of it.

The immediate cause of it was the penetration of his temple by a sharp branch of a dead tree. Alfred had cut a tall pole tree, and in its fall it knocked from a dead tree the branch which killed Harvey.[102] A twenty-five mile horseback race to La Grande for the doctor failed to save Harvey, who died before the doctor arrived.[103] The Reverend H. K.

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Union County Marriage Record, A, February 19, 1865 to October 21, 1866; Salem Oregon Statesman, January 15, 1866; Lewis A. McArthur Files (Oregon Historical Society, Portland), Meacham.

[102] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 95-97; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 5.

[103] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 98-99.

Hines, a superintendent of the Methodist Church, preached the funeral sermon on May 20 to the largest audience that had ever assembled at La Grande,[104] a testimony to the esteem in which the community held the Meachams. Harvey's brothers of the Odd Fellow Lodge expressed their sorrow in a full column newspaper article.[105] Alfred received his greatest comfort from the Indians.[106]

The specific responsibilities of the youngest brother, John, for this period are not known. A dramatic event occurred when he nearly killed one of the hotel guests who made sneering remarks about President Lincoln when the news of his death reached Lee's Encampment. Only the interference of others kept him from it.[107] It is assumed the sister, Matilda, helped with the cooking and cleaning. To her nieces and nephews she was "nice, fat, Auntie Till."[108]

Life was not always a humdrum existence. Meacham Station residents were startled on Sunday morning, August 2, 1868, with the news of the first stagecoach robbery in that area. It occurred on Bailey's line about fifteen miles from Meacham Station toward La Grande. The story as unfolded in the Blue Mountain Times and The Dalles Mountaineer has the drama of a modern western movie or television show. It involved

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[104] Pacific Christian Advocate, XXVIII (March 2, 1882), 5.

[105] La Grande Mountain Sentinel, June 8, 1872.

[106] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 99-100.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 92.

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a stagecoach driver who pretended to join the gang in order to get inside information on planned robberies; who worked with the Wells, Fargo Company authorities to lay plans for capturing the bandits; who risked having the gold in the express box exchanged for rocks on the day of the robbery; and who was able to carry through his part without a slip. Between August 26 and 29 a medical doctor of Walla Walla and his band were arrested. The event so impressed itself on the Meachams that Nellie gave it prominence in a report to the newspaper in 1935.[109] Hailey, writing years after the gold rush, said that his stages were troubled with a few "road agents" who robbed passengers and took the Wells, Fargo Company's box, but that they were generally captured and the money recovered. The "robbers soon learned it was not a profitable business to rob a stage."[110]

Property and Finance

Meacham was not a good businessman. He knew how to run a first-class hotel for his day and location, and he successfully operated a toll road during economic prosperity, but he did not know how to manage his profits in terms of savings and investments. There is no evidence that he used his money for more than support of his family, wages for laborers, and business expansion. He did not invest in land. His

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[109]Portland Oregon Journal, November 18, 1935; La Grande Blue Mountain Times, August 8, 1868; The Dalles Mountaineer, September 11, 1868.

[110]Hailey, Idaho, 124-25.

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free-soil convictions of the early days[111] appear to have influenced his attitude toward land while living in Oregon. In spite of Nellie's assertion that her father developed a 360-acre homestead at Lee's Encampment,[112] there is no record of his having filed on, purchased, or received by grant one piece of land. The Umatilla County Recorder at Pendleton believes that Meacham squatted on the land occupied at Lee's Encampment.[113] This explains why there was no will or inheritance of the property at his death.

Although there is no legal evidence of landholding at Lee's Encampment, Meacham must have made verbal claim and willingly paid taxes to support it--at first. The 1864 and 1865 tax assessment records show a $4,000 value placed on 640 acres of land. But from 1866 on no land appears on the tax roll and the years 1868 and 1870 show no assessment of any kind, not even personal property.[114]

Harvey and Matilda Meacham were the only members of the family who attempted to buy property. Harvey first speculated in gold mine stock. In August, 1864, he bought for $120 one-sixteenth part of nine "claims of 250 feet each on the Wills and Knight ledge of gold-bearing

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[111]A. B. Meacham to F. R. Brunot, January 29, 1872, Meacham Papers (Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library).

[112]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 6.

[113]Personal interview with Jack Folsom, Umatilla County Recorder (Pendleton, Oregon), June 26, 1958; Umatilla County, General Index, Deeds.

[114]Umatilla County Sheriff Tax Assessment Roll, 1864-1871 (State Archives, Salem), 25, 74, 134, 188, 246, 294, 346, 395, 396.

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quarts situated in the Excelsior mining district, Baker County, Oregon." Of the nine partners in the claim, one of them was Harvey's future father-in-law, W. H. Rockfellow.[115] There is no evidence that the mine was profitable. In December, 1870, Harvey's purchase of 314 acres of state land in Union County[116] called for a down payment of $400 and a mortgage of $266 to be paid in two annual installments. Because of Harvey's death the mortgage was never paid and the state took the land back in June of 1874.[117] Another Meacham failure to buy and hold land.

Matilda Meacham may have been more successful. She purchased 319.62 acres of state school land in July, 1871, with a $400 down payment. It was located next to Harvey's land. The deed was not recorded until 1878 and the mortgage was declared satisfied in 1881.[118] Whether satisfaction was by payment of money or return of land was not indicated.

The Meacham family not only had trouble in securing and holding land; it had equal difficulty in holding cash and business. The Judgment Docket of Umatilla County reveals a series of civil suits for monies owed from 1865 forward. In July, 1866, a judgment of $747 at one per cent per month and $8 cost was rendered against A. B. and Harvey Meacham to the judgment creditor. On the same date, the brothers were ordered to pay other creditors the sum of $1,355. The judgments were

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[115]Union County Deed Record, A, 2.

[116]Ibid., G, 196; Union County Register State Lands, A, 233.

[117]Union County Deed Record, G, 196.

[118]Ibid., C, 554; Register State Lands, A, 254.

paid in full on October 15 and July 21, 1867, respectively. Apparently the county went to court to secure a defaulted $50 license tax (probably a liquor license tax) in November of 1865. The county won and Meacham paid. Additional judgments were rendered against Meacham in February, 1873 ($27.81), April, 1875 ($324.16), and May, 1876 ($1,357.71).[119] Meacham's record for losing civil suits was as spectacular in Oregon as it was in California.

Fred Foster, a former employee, was accused by Meacham's descendents of stealing the toll road from him. The facts are that after Meacham received the appointment to the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, he mortgaged the Blue Mountain Consolidated Road Company, which included all his toll road acquisitions but excluded Lee's Encampment, for $15,000. The mortgage was signed by A. B., Harvey, and John Meacham, and assigned to B. F. Stone and A. H. Reynolds of Walla Walla on July 10, 1869. It called for a $3,000 repayment on October 1 of that year, and $3,000 plus interest each year thereafter until paid. Any default in payment authorized Stone and Reynolds to sell the property.

The Circuit Court records show this mortgage was not paid by Meacham. Stone and Reynolds took the case to court. Each year from 1878 to 1881 the case appeared on the court's docket and was continued to the next term either on the motion of the defendant's attorney or because no one appeared. Finally, on December 12, 1881, Stone and Reynolds gave F. A. Foster power of attorney to settle the case against

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[119]Umatilla County Judgment Docket, A, C.

Meacham and the Blue Mountain Consolidated Road. On December 17 the mortgage was acknowledged as satisfied and was signed by Foster for Stone and Reynolds.[120] Apparently this marked the time when Fred Foster became the owner of the road.[121]

The Good Templar and Mason

Business problems did not keep Meacham from enjoying the friendship of the wide community he knew and served. He joined two of the newly arrived fraternal orders, the Good Templars and the Masons.

One of the movements current in Meacham's time was temperance. Into this he wholeheartedly plunged in 1867. Meacham's disposition toward temperance reform had deep roots. At the age of fifteen he signed the Washington Society Temperance Pledge at the request of his mother.[122] Bland told a dramatic story of how Meacham in 1850, in the city of San Francisco, resisted the attempts of rough miners to force him to break that pledge.[123] Hellie Meacham declared that her father "never willingly tasted or sold a drop of spiritous liquor in his life."[124] Hellie had a romantic view of her father, for even though there is no evidence that he personally partook of liquor, the record

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[120]Union County Mortgage Record, 258-260; Umatilla County Circuit Court Journal, B (1875-1882), 326, 385, 481, 551, 659. Volume A was missing from the courthouse.

[121]Stearns, Oregon Papers, VII-X, 7.

[122]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 3-4.

[123]Ibid.

[124]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 2.

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indicates that he sold liquor at Meacham Station for several years.

In the years 1865-1867 a new temperance organization called the Independent Order of Good Templars came to Oregon. The Good Templars were the inheritors of earlier temperance efforts: The United States Temperance Union of 1833; the Washingtonians, who were primarily reformed drinkers not drawn from the ranks of the church; and the Sons of Temperance Lodge, which was replaced by the Good Templars after the Civil War. The Good Templars, organized in New York in 1851, had 50,000 members by 1861, and had reached Oregon by 1865.[125] The first lodges in the state were formed at Jacksonville and Ashland. Oliver Applegate was the Ashland lodge deputy,[126] a basis for later friendship with Meacham. The Good Templar movement came to Umatilla and Union counties not later than February, 1867.[127]

As noted above, Meacham's last liquor license expired on December 1, 1866. Having identified himself with the Good Templar movement, he tried to conform to its Pledge:

> No man shall make, buy, sell, use, furnish or cause to be furnished to others, as a beverage, any spiritous liquors, wine or cider; and every member shall discountenance the manufacture, sale and use

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[125] John E. Caswell, "The Prohibition Movement in Oregon," Oregon Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (September, 1938), 235-61; California Christian Advocate, I (October 10, 1851), 3.

[126] Proceedings, "Third Annual Session, Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars" (Portland, Oregon, September 3-6, 1867), 44; Ibid., Appendix, Statement A.

[127] Ibid.

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thereof,[128] in all proper way.

Meacham probably destroyed the bar in the hotel in late 1866 or early 1867. Nellie Meacham described its termination. One morning her father surprised all with the command: "Boys, roll out every one of those whiskey kegs, wine and beer included." The kegs were rolled out, the heads were broken, and the spiritous liquors were poured on the ground. Meacham himself knocked in the barrel heads. Travelers complained, but Meacham used to say, "Right is right and wrongs nobody, so stand your ground and pray. Do right because it is right to do right."[129]

Meacham was appointed a deputy of the Good Templars with the power to organize lodges, the first one on February 23, 1867, at La Grande with seventy members, and the second on the following day at Oro Dell with thirty-five members.[130] The organization of a total of four lodges[131] indicates something of Meacham's persuasive powers of speech.

The Good Templars were a strange combination of temperance movement and fraternal order. Men were attracted by flashy regalia made of silk trimmed in velvet, gold lace, gold boullion fringes, gold tasseled rosettes on the front, heart of green velvet, and the name of each

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[128] Constitution, By-Laws and Rules of Order, "For Grand and Subordinate Lodges, Independent Order of Good Templars of the State of Oregon" (Portland, 1878), 12.

[129] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 2, 88.

[130] Proceedings, 1867, Appendix, Statement A.

[131] Ibid., 1868, 7.

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officer embroidered in letters of gold.[132]

As early as 1866 the Good Templars attained political influence in Oregon. One Republican became concerned about bringing the temperance program into politics. He believed the people were not yet educated to it and hoped the Templars would work quietly in order not to arouse opposition. Democrats were drinkers, but there were a lot of free thinkers in the Union Party, too, who believed too much pressure by the Good Templars would hurt the party.[133]

The Good Templars experienced a rapid growth. By the fall of 1867 they reported 108 lodges with 4,635 members in Oregon.[134] The period of growth did not last a decade, for the lodge membership in the state declined by 1876.[135] Although the lodge did not continue as the main channel of Meacham's activities, there is no evidence that he was hypocritical in his opposition to alcoholic beverages as a contemporary, Timothy W. Davenport, later declared.[136] On the contrary, one senses that temperance was a basic issue with him. He was consistently opposed to the sale and distribution of liquor among the Indians. He had observed at close range its effect upon them.

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[132]Daniel M. Armas to Oliver Applegate, June 20, 1865, Applegate Papers.

[133]George H. Hinsdale to Addison C. Gibbs, February 19, 1866, Gibbs Papers (Oregon Historical Society, Portland), Folder 685.

[134]Proceedings, 1867, 6.

[135]Ibid., 1876.

[136]T. W. Davenport, "Reminiscence of An Indian Agent" (MS, State Archives, Salem, Oregon), 156.

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Whether or not the Good Templars failed to satisfy all his needs or to provide the social and political respectability he sought is not known. Nevertheless, he became an "apprentice" of La Grande Masonic Lodge No. 41 sometime between June, 1868, and June, 1869, and a master mason in 1870.[137] In that year or the next his membership was transferred to Pacific Lodge No. 50 at Salem. In May, 1881, he transferred his membership for the last time, to the Benjamin B. French Lodge No. 15 in Washington, D. C.[138] Except for the first two years with the Good Templars, when Meacham organized four lodges, he was merely a statistic on the Good Templars' and Masonic records. No outstanding deed or word is recorded to his credit or discredit. Yet he utilized his fraternal relationships when the occasion demanded while he was in the Indian Service.

The two-chapter survey of Meacham's life and environment, from birth until the year he entered the Indian Service, partially illuminates the character of the man who was to become a leading and integrating force in the promotion of Indian reform. The story of his appointment to and accomplishments in the Indian service is told in the next four chapters. Chronologically the period occupies only four eventful years.

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[137] Proceedings of Grand Lodge of Oregon A. F. and A. M., 1863-69 (Portland, 1870), 123, 140; Ibid., 1871, 170.

[138] Records, Grand Secretary's Office of the Grand Lodge of Washington, D. C. (Masonic Temple, 801 13th St., N. W.).

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CHAPTER III

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, PART I

Political Success

Meacham had a meteoric rise in the Oregon Republican party. In contrast with his experience in California, the county records reveal no evidence that he sought or obtained local offices. Why? There is no clear-cut answer. Normally, men rose to state office through political success at the county level. As an example, Meacham's predecessor in the Oregon Indian Superintendency, J. W. Perit Huntington, attained prominence first in Umpqua County politics.[1]

Apparently an exception to the norm, Meacham reached the state superintendency of Indian affairs without prior political office in Oregon. If we may accept his testimony without corroborating evidence, the state's delegation in Washington first presented his name in 1866 as a nominee for the office.[2] If the delegation honored him in this

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[1]Umpqua County Commissioners Journal, A (1851-52), 1-9 (Typed copy, WPA Files, Umpqua County, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library); Umatilla County Court Journals (Courthouse, Pendleton, Oregon), A, B (1863-68). A search of the latter records produced no evidence of Meacham's political activity on the county level.

[2]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 57; Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 81.

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way, there was no hope that an appointment would follow. Andrew Johnson was then president, and Meacham was a Radical Republican. Meacham asserted later that the President refused to make the appointment because he was not a Johnson man.[3] Senator George H. Williams confirmed the fact that it would have been impossible to get the President's approval of a Radical.[4]

Appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon had to await another three years--until Ulysses S. Grant was inaugurated president. Meanwhile, politics at the national and state level had been in a transitional stage. The national Republican party had been supplanted in 1864 by a new Union party, a combination of former Republicans and War Democrats. It had re-elected Lincoln, placed Johnson in the vice-presidency, and brought the Civil War to a conclusion. In the congressional elections of 1866 the Johnson forces retained the name National Union party, and the opposition called itself the Union Republican party. Realizing that Johnson was endeavoring to commit his administration to the time-honored principles of Jacksonian Democracy, opponents saw merit in a return to the pre-1864 designation Republican. By the presidential election of 1868, the transition to the old Democrat-Republican alignment was nearly complete.

Political transition in Oregon followed the national pattern. The Oregon Republican party had been organized in 1857 and held its

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[3]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 57.

[4]George H. Williams to Governor Gibbs, December 18, 1867, Gibbs Papers.

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first state convention in 1858. It had absorbed the former Whigs and Know-Nothings and had developed into the first potent opposition to intrenched power of the Democrats. In 1860 Lincoln carried Oregon by 270 votes over John C. Breckinridge and by 1,000 over Douglas. By 1862 the concern for saving the Union took precedence over partisan politics, and a coalition of Republicans and Douglas Democrats completed the organization of the Union party. Because popular sovereignty men controlled the Republican party, Douglas Democrats, after the final split in the national party in August, 1860, found political at-homeness with the Republicans more than with the old-line Democrats. The Union party label was retained through the 1864 and 1866 elections, but tensions between former Republicans and former Democrats grew, compounded by the attraction to the party of place-seekers whose primary loyalty was to self rather than principle. The Republicans dominated the Union party by 1866, but Democratic votes increased in number with each election until 1868 when they carried the state by a majority of 160 out of 22,000 votes. Although the antebellum nomenclature of Republican-Democrat was restored to the Oregon political parties by 1868 and the state legislature returned to its prewar status, not all individuals went back to their former political allegiances, and severe infighting continued in the Republican party.[5]

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[5]For Oregon political developments see Bancroft, Oregon, II, 638-675; Republican League Register, "A Record of the Republican Party in the State of Oregon" (Portland, 1896), 5-36; Joseph Gaston, The Centennial History of Oregon, 1811-1912 (Chicago, 1912), 643-55; William D. Fenton, "Political History of Oregon from 1865 to 1876," The Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society (Salem, Oregon), II (December, 1901), 321-65; Robert W. Johannsen, Frontier Politics and the Sectional

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Meacham, having aligned himself with the Radical wing of the party and acquiring further prestige among them, demonstrated his usefulness as a political campaigner in the election of 1868. He was one of three Umatilla County delegates to the Union State Convention held at Salem on March 24.[6] At this assemblage of Radicals, Meacham was strong enough to secure and weak enough to accept the thankless nomination as one of three Republican presidential electors.[7]

It was a difficult year for the Oregon Grant Republicans. The recent state election had been won by the Democrats, and Republicans had been forced to generate enthusiasm for the national ticket from a position of defeat. The Dalles Mountaineer's "Washington correspondent" urged Oregonians not to lose heart because of the recent Democratic victory, and tried to convey General Grant's personal interest in and concern for the Oregon campaign.[8]

Conflict, "The Pacific Northwest on the Eve of the Civil War" (Seattle, 19550, 120-51, 196-218; Walter Carleton Woodward, The Rise and Early History of Political Parties in Oregon (Portland, 1913), 210-64.

[6]Salem Oregon Statesman, April 23, 1866; Republican League Register, 35.

[7]Republican League Register, 17; Charles Henry Carey, History of Oregon (Chicago, 1922), I, 656. An examination of the Republican League Register indicates that between 1860 and 1892 Meacham was the only man to receive two consecutive nominations for presidential elector. The second was received in 1872. T. B. Odeneal, Meacham's successor in the Indian Affairs Superintendent's Office, was chairman of the State Central Committee. See page 38.

[8]The Dalles Mountaineer, July 10, 1868; Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, April 4, 1868.

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Meacham campaigned vigorously for the Grant-Colfax ticket. In September the people of La Grande were informed that the "Honorable A. B. Meacham and Colonel Ruckel" had been in town that week on road business and that Meacham "is getting ready to give the Copperheads a seasonal drubbing, to commence at Canyon City on 26th instant."[9] Problems arose during his barnstorming campaign. In all but two precincts, speaking hours had to be changed from one o'clock until evening.[10] Meacham suffered from a hoarse throat and a bad cold, and all through the campaign he was "decidedly unwell." The sympathetic Blue Mountain Times believed that he had been sustained by "the righteousness of his cause" and that whether sick or well he had the advantage over his opponent. The paper was confident that Meacham would be chosen elector if he kept up the hard work.[11]

An opposition newspaper, the Grande Ronde Sentinel, turned to ridicule in its ungrammatical attack on Meacham:

> Hon. A. B. Meacham has buckled on his armor and went forth to the fight. He left here on Wednesday last, to meet Judge Slayter at Auburn. A. B., besides being a good fellow, is also a good Templar, and we can hardly see how he can consistently make a canvas for the 'greatest tipler of the age.' Grant will smoke his cigar during the canvas, Meacham will take the stump. We have an idea the judge will 'get the old man waked up' by the time they get back, and advise everybody to come out and hear them. November frost will undoubtedly cook the radical goose this fall, and 'immediately after the tribulation of those days' Meacham may be found at the Warm Springs house, where the weary traveller may rest assured of receiving every attention that may be desired.[12]

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[9]La Grande Blue Mountain Times, September 19, 1868.

[10]Ibid., October 3, 1868.

[11]Ibid., October 10, 1868.

[12]La Grande Grand Ronde Sentinel, October 2, 1868.

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Just before the election, the Blue Mountain Times declared that Meacham was "doing good work for our cause."[13] He worked hard, but in spite of his and other efforts, the Democrats in Oregon won the election; Grant, Colfax, and Meacham were defeated. The Republican defeat in the state was disheartening, but the election of Grant and Colfax on the national level gave loyal party men like Meacham hope for political reward.

The Republicans in Oregon were divided in 1868. Governor Addison C. Gibbs was the leader of the Radical Republican wing to which Meacham belonged. Gibbs was the obvious selection for the United States Senate but through "treachery" in the 1867 legislature he was defeated and Henry W. Corbett was elected.[14]

Leaders of the Republicans in revolt were supported by office-seekers like John W. White and J. W. Perit Huntington.[15] Among the several candidates for the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon was Timothy W. Davenport, a Radical Republican who later became disgruntled over Meacham's success.[16] All that went on behind the scenes is not known, but there was a struggle for political patronage, and Huntington was identified with the Republican revolt. Senator

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[13]La Grande Blue Mountain Times, October 31, 1868.

[14]W. C. Johnson to Governor Gibbs, January 30, 1868, Gibbs Papers; T. W. Davenport to Governor Gibbs, February 10, 1867, ibid.

[15]Johnson to Gibbs, January 30, 1868, Gibbs Papers; Davenport to Gibbs, n.d. (probably 1868 or 1869), ibid.; F. M. T. Patton to Gibbs, March 20, 1867, ibid.; Odeneal to Gibbs, February 7, 1866, ibid.

[16]Davenport to Gibbs, n.d. (probably 1868 or 1869), ibid.

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Williams was determined that none but "real bed rock" Republicans would receive his sanction for political appointments from Washington.[17] Meacham was counted among this group, and it can be deduced that his trip to Washington in 1869 was not primarily to attend President Grant's inaugural, but to seek a political appointment. He must have had reasonable hope of success before going.

Meacham's name was formally presented to President Grant for the office of Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon on March 23, 1869. The Oregon delegation--Senators Williams and Corbett and Representative Rufus Mallory--offered Meacham as replacement for Huntington, "whose term of office has expired." "Meacham," the trio stated, "has been for a long time [six years] a resident of the state, has large knowledge of Indian affairs, and in our opinion would make an honest and capable officer."[18] The President notified the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of Meacham's appointment on March 31;[19] Meacham filed

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[17]J. H. D. Henderson to Gibbs, January 30, 1869, ibid.

[18]Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, Appointments Division, Letters Received, 1869-1872 (National Archives, Washington), RG 48, Box 85.

[19]A. H. White to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 31, 1869, Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, (National Archives, microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library), Letters Received, 1861-1869. Microfilm copies of all documents relating to the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs are available at the Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library and at the National Archives in Washington. The writer has used the microfilm at both sources and has examined large numbers of the original documents at the National Archives.

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his official bond signed by several sureties from Oregon on April 1;[20] and on April 3 he received his appointment from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.[21] The four-year appointment began March 29. Upon the advice of his friends, Meacham posted bond in Washington rather than in Oregon in order to block any countermoves on the part of the deposed Huntington.[22]

Oregon Indian Department employees, anxious to learn the character of their new superior, welcomed the early arrival of Benjamin Simpson, agent in charge of the Siletz Agency, who had been with Meacham in Washington.[23] Simpson passed the news of Meacham's appointment to William C. McKay, who in turn conveyed the information to members of the Applegate family. Time alone would answer many questions. What would be Meacham's policy? Did he know how to handle Indians? Would he sustain in office the incumbent agents? The agents concerned waited and watched and hoped.

Meacham's Knowledge of Indians

As has been noted earlier, Meacham had heard Indian stories from birth, but firsthand experiences appear to have been comparatively

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[20]Attorneys Mitchell and Dement to L. Q. C. Lamar, August 27, 1885, Office of Indian Affairs (National Archives), Letters Received, 1885, #21802.

[21]Nathaniel Greene Taylor to Meacham, April 3, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1861-69.

[22]William C. McKay to Oliver Applegate, April 13, 1869, Applegate Papers.

[23]Ibid.

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few until his residence at Lee's Encampment. Here he met and became intimately acquainted with Indians of the Umatilla Reservation. They had free passage on the toll road and apparently visited Meacham on both business and social levels. With 750 Indians on the Reservation, there were many possibilities for associations of this kind.[24]

Meacham, with a dramatic style common to him and to his day, described relations between white men and Indians during the gold rush. The account revealed antagonisms created by the lack of ability to communicate through a common language; uncovered white men's attitude of disdain toward Indians; and showed how white men deliberately defied the law by giving alcoholic beverages to the Indians in order to secure horses and labor.[25] Meacham said, "I have heard men boast that they were 'riding a bottle,' meaning the horse that bore them along had cost that sum."[26] He defended Indian agents who did their best to prevent the distribution of alcoholic beverages. Agents could arrest Indians easily, but they found it almost impossible to arrest white men for violating the law.[27] Meacham further asserted that though he did much business with Indians through the purchase of beef and other supplies, he never had occasion to complain that they stole his stock or failed

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[24]J. W. Perit Huntington, Report to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, August 19, 1864, and Annual Report, September, 1865, Oregon S.I.A., Letter Book H:10.

[25]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath. 36-40.

[26]Ibid., 41.

[27]Ibid.

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to carry out agreements to the letter.[28]

He insisted that the treaty between the Indians and the United States Government gave them the right to hunt and graze stock in common with other citizens on the public domain. Using this right, the Indians made annual journeys to the Grande Ronde and other valleys east of the Blue Mountains and there came in conflict with white men.[29] One reason for the annual Indian pilgrimage was to dig and cure camas roots, small bulbs about the size of an onion. The Indians dug them in large quantities to cure for winter use. They also picked many huckleberries. On such trips the Indians always camped on Meacham Creek. Nellie Meacham Redington remembered them as "kind and friendly and sociable."[30] The Meacham children loved to trade their mother's good biscuits for Indian beads.[31]

Without doubt Meacham did have close associations with the Umatilla Reservation Indians. Although there is no written proof, there may be some truth in his contention that he got along well with them. It is possible this happy relationship influenced the thinking of his political friends when they nominated him for the Indian Superintendency.

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[28] Ibid., 42.

[29] Ibid., 45; Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 6.

[30] Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 6.

[31] Ibid.

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Assumption of Office

Six weeks after Meacham was handed his commission in Washington, he became the ninth Superintendent of Indian Affairs with the formal transfer of office at Salem on May 15, 1869. The transfer consisted of handing over office furniture and stationery, but no funds.[32] On the same day, Meacham demonstrated political sagacity and party loyalty by notifying the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that C. S. Woodworth, chief clerk, and James Brown, messenger, were retained in office. Both had worked for years with his predecessor, J. W. Perit Huntington.[33]

Of all complaints directed by Indian superintendents and agents to their superiors the loudest, the most pressing, the most frequent, and the most threatening was "no funds." Whether the absence of sufficient funds was due to dishonesty, to poor business administration, to unanticipated demands, or to governmental tardiness, it was an ever recurring crisis. When Meacham assumed the duties of his office, his first official act was to report "no funds." Not only did former Superintendent Huntington fail to turn over the funds belonging to the Oregon Superintendency, he inconsiderately died on June 3 before putting his affairs in order.[34] The tragedy created a crisis of the first order.

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[32]Meacham to Taylor, May 15, 1869, Meacham Papers; Ethel M. Peterson "Oregon Indians and Indian Policy, 1849-1871" (M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, 1934), 80.

[33]Meacham to Taylor, May 15, 1869, Meacham Papers.

[34]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, p. 153; Meacham to W. T. Otto, June 5, 1869, Meacham Papers; Meacham to C. N. Felton, June 25, 1869, ibid.

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Indian agents' allowances were past due; the Klamath Agency was particularly concerned. This agency was run by Lindsay Applegate and his sons, a family that was aggressive in business and clever in politics. Even before Huntington's death they had sent the most articulate member of the family, Oliver C. Applegate, to Salem to look after the Klamath Agency and Applegate interests, and maintained him there at a cost of $40 per month.[35]

The Applegates had promoted the establishment of the Klamath Agency.[36] As early as 1853 at least one member of the family, probably Lindsay, sought the position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs.[37] In 1861 Lindsay Applegate received from Superintendent William H. Rector a six-month appointment as special agent to the Klamath and Modoc Indians of southern Oregon with a view to making the job permanent.[38] Rector was unsuccessful in securing an extension of the appointment, and it was not until June, 1865, that Applegate was appointed by the Secretary of the Interior as a subagent of the recently established Klamath reservation.[39] Soon the father added a son Oliver to his staff.

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[35]Oliver Applegate to Lindsay Applegate, June 10, 1869, Applegate Papers; Oliver Applegate to Ivan Applegate, July 3, 1869, ibid.

[36]Elisha L. Applegate to his family, August 24, 1861, ibid.; Elisha Applegate to Ivan Applegate, July 20, 1865, ibid.

[37]Joseph Lane to Lindsay Applegate, January 3, 1853, ibid.

[38]William H. Rector to Lindsay Applegate, August 17, 1861, ibid.

[39]Rector to Lindsay Applegate, February 17, 1862, ibid.; William P. Dole to Lindsay Applegate, June 30, 1865, ibid.; James Harlan to Lindsay Applegate, June 28, 1865, ibid.

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Hired as an interpreter, he received $500 a year "for talking jargon occasionally."[40] Later, Huntington appointed Oliver as head teacher of the Klamath Agency, Lucien B. Applegate as superintendent of farming, and Ivan D. Applegate as special commissary for the Snake Indians.[41] The apparent harmony between Huntington and the Applegates was aided by their relationship through Mrs. Huntington, a cousin.[42]

In behalf of his family, Oliver Applegate went to Salem to make friends with and influence Meacham. The two quickly became friends, went to Good Templar meetings together, and discussed the confidential business of the superintendency. Oliver reported that Meacham "appears to be an excellent man, and perfectly frank and candid"; and again, he "is a splendid man and he and I harmonize readily."[43] Through the Applegates, Meacham made a good beginning in establishing friendly relations with key people.

What the outcome would have been had he been obligated to contend only with the problems of the Oregon superintendency, Oregon Indians, Oregon agents, and Oregon people is purely speculative.

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[40]Lucien B. Applegate to "Dear Friends" [Members of the family], January 2, 1866, ibid.; Lindsay Applegate to Huntington, October 14, 1865, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1865, No. 48.

[41]Meacham to E. S. Parker, April 25, 1870, Meacham Papers; Report of Employees, Klamath Agency, September 30, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered letters received.

[42]Oliver Applegate to Mary H. Huntington, June 19, 1869, Applegate Papers.

[43]Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 8, 1869, ibid.; Oliver Applegate to Lindsay Applegate, June 10, 1869, ibid.; Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 11, 1869, ibid.

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Meacham came to the superintendency, however, at a time when the eyes of the nation were focused on Indian affairs. President Grant had adopted the peace or "Quaker" policy for his administration and Meacham had accepted appointment as a firm supporter of it. This policy was an assertion of the American conscience reacting against three hundred years of Indian abuse.[44] It was a commitment to the idea that Indians should be gathered on reservations and be fed, protected, civilized, and Christianized. Although many people had doubts about civilizing and Christianizing Indians, they agreed it was cheaper to feed than to fight them.

A further step toward a new Indian policy was taken on May 1, 1869, when the Board of Indian Commissioners, composed of nine philanthropists, was established. The commissioners' duties were to supervise all expenditures for the benefit of the Indians and "to inspect all goods purchased for them."[45] It was hoped the commissioners would help ferret out and aid in the correction of abuses in the Indian agencies. By 1871 Meacham received two of the commissioners in the Oregon superintendency.

Meacham did not oppose the Board of Indian Commissioners, but he strongly reacted against the next sudden change in policy--turning control of the Indian superintendencies and agencies over to the army.

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[44]Loring Benson Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, The Reformation of United States Indian Policy, 1865-1887, (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1942), 5.

[45]Opinion of Assistant Attorney General, W. H. Smith, January 31, 1873, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners (National Archives), Tray 118.

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The news reached Meacham during the first part of June, before he had been in office a month.[46] He believed Congress would not sustain Grant in this decision, and that a telegram to Washington, warning that the move would give Oregon to the Democrats at the next election, would save the state from army appointments.[47] Samuel A. Clarke, owner and editor of the Salem Oregon Unionist, condemned the new policy in an editorial and raised the question of how an inexperienced army officer could advance the Indians toward civilization.[48] Advocates of the peace policy were concerned that this new move would destroy their humanitarian goals. As late as January, 1871, the Board of Indian Commissioners agreed that "it is important that the military officers stationed in an agency shall be in harmony with the peace policy of the President."[49]

Meacham fought to hold his job. He and other Republicans met with Senator Williams in Portland, and the unpopularity of the new decision was spelled out. According to Oliver Applegate, Williams had to secure a reversal of the order for Oregon or fail at re-election.[50] It was reported that Senator Williams had been informed before leaving

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[46] Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, June 10, 1869, Applegate Papers.

[47] Ibid.; Oliver Applegate to Ivan Applegate, June 18, 1869, ibid.

[48] Salem Oregon Unionist, August 25, 1869.

[49] Minutes, Board of Indian Commissioners (National Archives), January 13, 1871.

[50] Oliver Applegate to Ivan Applegate, July 1, 1869, Applegate Papers.

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Washington that Oregon would be exempted from the new ruling, but that Senator Corbett had received word three days later that the state would be assigned military officers.[51] Having done all he could, Meacham returned to his home at Lee's Encampment about July 1 and awaited developments.[52] He returned to Salem on July 31, after receiving notice that he had been retained in office.[53]

The rapid succession of orders and counterorders brought confusion to the superintendency personnel. Major Henry Douglas had been assigned to take over Meacham's job, but upon his arrival in Salem from San Francisco on August 5, a waiting telegram informed him of his suspension.[54] He was angry, but Meacham was gratified because Major Douglas transferred $50,337.38 for the operation of the superintendency, the first money he had received.[55] After an examination of the tabular statement, Meacham quickly notified the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the sum received from Major Douglas did not include funds for his salary nor for a number of other items.[56] But with money to operate, Meacham was at last in control of his office. He now had to work out the difficult problems of his agents.

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[51]Oliver Applegate to Ivan Applegate, July 3, 1869, ibid.

[52]Ibid., July 1, 1869.

[53]Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 1, 1869, ibid.

[54]Major H. Douglas to Commissioner Indian Affairs, August 5, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1866-1867.

[55]Ibid.; Meacham to Parker, August 12, 1869, Meacham Papers.

[56]Meacham to Parker, August 12, 1869, Meacham Papers.

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Meacham and His Agents

The order that sustained Meacham in office also upheld agents Benjamin Simpson and Charles Lafollett of the Siletz and Grand Ronde agencies.[57] Agents John Smith of Warm Springs agency, William H. Barnhart of Umatilla agency, G. W. Collins of Alsea subagency, and Lindsay Applegate of Klamath subagency, were relieved by army officers on August 1 and 6 and October 1, 1869. Lindsay Applegate surrendered his post on the last date.[58] Charles Lafollett had entered his office on June 1, and Benjamin Simpson had served since March, 1863.[59]

The work of the agencies and relations with the agents, except one, proceeded satisfactorily with only the usual set of problems. Captain O. C. Knapp, the new subagent at Klamath, had to contend with a powerful political faction centering in the Applegates and their friends.

When Senators Williams and Corbett failed to secure the retention of Lindsay Applegate as subagent at Klamath, the whole family girded for battle. In early June, while the issue was in doubt, Lindsay Applegate ordered his son in Salem to offer Lindsay's resignation if Meacham thought him to be "an unnecessary appendage."[60]

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[57] Oliver Applegate to Elisha Applegate, July 15, 1869, Applegate Papers.

[58] Meacham to Parker, September 30, 1869, Meacham Papers.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Lindsay Applegate to Oliver Applegate, June 11, 1869, Applegate Papers.

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Applegate's major concern was the $16,000 due the Klamath Agency from Huntington's account, necessary to pay past-due salaries and goods contracts.[61] Applegate did not want to resign; the Indian Service was the main source of family income, as Lucien Applegate candidly admitted to his brother: "If the agency business plays out, we will find ourselves just about out of employment. . . ."[62] During July and August the Applegate family requested the Oregon congressmen and influential Republicans to use their influence to retain Lindsay Applegate in office.[63] A certain panic in their efforts stemmed from having paid employees with personal funds and with money advanced out of other-than-salary appropriations from agency funds. Even though Superintendent Huntington had approved the latter act, he was dead, and the Applegates feared economic disaster.[64] By the end of August, Oliver Applegate notified his brother that everything possible had been done to retain their father in office, but that there was no hope unless favorable legislation should be enacted by the next Congress.[65]

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[61] Oliver Applegate to Lindsay Applegate, August 3, 1869, ibid.

[62] Lucien Applegate to Oliver Applegate, July 12, 1869, ibid.

[63] Oliver Applegate to Elisha Applegate, July 15, 1869, ibid.; Lucien Applegate to Oliver Applegate, August 10, 1869, ibid.; Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 21, 1869, ibid.

[64] Oliver Applegate to Elisha Applegate, August 21, 1869, ibid.

[65] Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 21, 1869, ibid.

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Oliver Applegate, working with Meacham in Salem, concentrated on winning the superintendent's cooperation in securing funds to pay the Klamath accounts and on creating confidence in the Applegate family. He was successful in both respects. By mid August he was confident the three brothers could continue indefinitely in the service of the Klamath Agency--from which they could alternately and conveniently visit their cattle ranch--and he believed more money than ever before could be made from the Indian Service.[66] Although many months were to pass before old financial accounts were settled, by December Oliver Applegate was gratified to know that his father could get free of the Klamath Agency without economic ruin.[67]

At first there was harmony between the Applegates and the military agent, Captain Knapp. Soon, however, Meacham received a mounting number of complaints against Knapp from the Applegates and other residents of the area. Knapp countered with grievances against the Applegates. He charged Lindsay Applegate with having transferred the agency without funds and without the records necessary for preparing official reports.[68] He asked the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to compel the return of the records.[69] Knapp accused Oliver Applegate of absence from duty, he being the only one in the employ of the agency who knew

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[66] Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, August 21, 1869, ibid.

[67] Ibid., December 20, 1869.

[68] O. C. Knapp to Meacham, November 14, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[69] Knapp to Parker, November 14, 1869, ibid.

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how to prepare the reports and accounts.[70] By December, 1869, the Applegates were reporting to each other that Knapp drank to excess, that he would discharge all the Applegates, and that Lucien Applegate had resigned as superintendent of farming.[71]

The next month two men of Jackson County confronted Meacham with serious charges against Knapp: drunkenness, conduct unbecoming an officer, neglect of duty, incompetency, impertinency, cohabiting with squaws, and general libidinous conduct. They informed him that it was his duty to press the charges.[72] Meacham responded to the pressure one week later by asking the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to replace Knapp without preferring charges.[73] Later, the political overtones of the Knapp-Applegate feud came to the surface when Knapp was accused of subserviency to the Copperhead Democrats.[74] Apparently a "nonpolitical" army agent was giving patronage to Democrats rather than to Republicans. The loss of political patronage and antagonism to military control contributed toward the growing opposition to the program of army agents.

The struggle was won in July, 1870, when Congress passed an act suspending military agents and superintendents and providing for their

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[70]Knapp to Oliver Applegate, November 15, 1869, Applegate Papers.

[71]Lindsay Applegate to Oliver Applegate, December 23 and 27, 1869, ibid.; Lucien Applegate to Knapp, December 16, 1869, ibid.

[72]John M. McCall to Meacham, January 8, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[73]Meacham to Parker, January 14, 1870, ibid.

[74]William H. Turner to Oliver Applegate, January 24, 1870, Applegate Papers.

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replacement with church-nominated personnel.[75] The victory over the army did not restore the status quo ante, but rather initiated a radically different program in the direction of reform in Indian relations. Meacham's trials with military agents were minor compared with those he would undergo with the new dispensation.

Meacham had heard rumors some weeks before about a possible general change in the management of Indian affairs, but he did not know the direction it was to take.[76] During the days of military agents, the Kansas and Nebraska agencies were exempted from the program and instead were administered by agents nominated by the two Quaker groups--the Orthodox and Hicksite. President Grant was so pleased with the results of these appointments that he decided the policy should be generally applied to all Indian agencies. The Congressional Act of July 15, 1870, launched the new plan.[77]

The Board of Indian Commissioners heartily approved the idea as assuring the selection of men of "high moral qualifications" to manage Indian affairs.[78] Churches responded to the plea for participation in the government's program with varying degrees of cooperation. The Methodists immediately pledged full collaboration and nominated their ideal Indian worker, the Reverend James H. Wilbur, for Oregon and

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[75] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 72.

[76] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, June 27, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[77] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 72.

[78] Minutes, Board of Indian Commissioners, July 27, 1872, 38.

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Washington Territory, and Richard Smith for Michigan.[79] The Presbyterians also responded promptly, but the Baptists expressed doubts concerning the feasibility of the plan. They suspected that the program would end with Grant's term of office and were unhappy over being assigned to the Utes, among whom the Baptists had not formerly worked, and removed from the Pottawatomi, Kickapoos, Cherokees, Creeks, Ottoes, Omahas, Ojibwas, Ottawas, and Shawnees, among whom they had labored for fifty years.[80] In spite of misgivings the Baptists eventually cooperated, as did the Episcopalians, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Congregationalists, Dutch Reformed, Unitarians, American Missionary Association, Roman Catholics, Friends Quakers, Lutherans, and Christians.[81] In Oregon, Meacham received agents nominated by only two of the participating denominations, the Methodists and Roman Catholics.

Grant's new plan involved changes, that took approximately a year to complete, in every agency under Meacham's superintendency. In the subagencies, Klamath and Alsea, Meacham enjoyed a little more

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[79] J. P. Durbin to Vincent Colyer, June 25, 1870, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Incoming Letters, Letterbook 1, No. 69; Minutes, Board of Managers, Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society (Board of Missions Library, Methodist Headquarters, New York City), VI, 191.

[80] Nathan Bishop to Colyer, June 28, 1870, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Incoming Letters, 70; Colyer to Bishop, June 23, 1870, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Outgoing correspondence, I.

[81] Colyer to Bishop, June 23, 1870, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Outgoing correspondence, I, Tray 118; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 74.

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freedom in appointments; they were responsible directly to him. Lieutenant F. A. Battey, in charge of the Alsea subagency, was honorably discharged from the army in September, 1870, and by October, Meacham, on his own authority, replaced him with Samuel Case. To legalize and protect the appointment, the Superintendent classified Case as "Special Commissary for Alsea Agency" and wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to secure approval for assignment as "Sub-Agent."[82] H. R. Clum, Acting Commissioner, refused to grant the request until it was determined whether or not a church should be privileged to nominate a subagent for Alsea.[83] The future for making patronage appointments to subagencies now seemed in doubt, but Meacham used the privilege as long as it was possible.

Meacham opened himself to later charges of epotism when he named his brother John to replace Captain Knapp of the Klamath Agency. John carried the title "Commissary in Charge of Klamath Agency." All funds and property of the agency were transferred directly to Meacham who in effect became the agent operating through his brother.[84] Earlier he had appointed his brother-in-law, D. J. Ferree, to the position of

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[82]Meacham to Lieutenant F. A. Battey, October 13, 1870, Meacham Papers; Meacham to Samuel Case, October 21, 1870, ibid.

[83]H. R. Clum to Meacham, December 10, 1870, ibid.

[84]Meacham to Knapp, September 15, 1870, ibid.; Meacham to John Meacham, September 15, 1870, ibid.; Meacham to Reverend William S. Harris, March 14, 1872, Records, Department of the Interior, Appointments Division, Letters Received, 1869-1872.

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Superintendent of Farming on the Klamath reservation.[85] The practice of nepotism in the agencies was so common that only rarely was an objection raised. Meacham looked upon it as an opportunity to put into effective practice his plans for civilizing and Christianizing the Indians. His words to his brother were:

> While I have a man in charge that has a heart molded in the pattern of my own, I am determined to bring order and justice to the people of Klamath Agency. Be courteous and charitable but be just and whether we administer a month or a year we will put things in reputable shape for successors. I sometimes fear you will be too exacting. You will guard against this 'Meacham trait' but maintain firmly another 'Meacham' characteristic--be liberal and just.
>
> I will not flatter you nor find unnecessary fault but while you are agent be agent, not a tool.
>
> I much desire you to make reasonable effort to have your men observe the Sabbath and to abstain from the use of profane language. I foresee from all indications from Washington, D.C. that the new policy will require every employee to be of moral character and habits. . . . I am heartily glad that things are tending in this direction. President Grant has unalterably determined to put the Indians under religious influence. . . .[86]

Meacham went on to say that he did not fear removal at present, and he was therefore continuing with plans for reform in his superintendency. He emphasized that only good moral men would be employed, and named Oliver and Ivan Applegate as men who had always "maintained reputations as moral men."[87] Meacham used his appointments to the subagencies to further and promote reform.

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[85] Meacham to Knapp, July 30, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[86] Meacham to John Meacham, December 2, 1870, ibid.

[87] Ibid.

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In the first assignment of Oregon reservations to churches, the Methodists received Umatilla, Grand Ronde, Warm Springs, and Siletz.[88] Meacham protested assignment of Umatilla and Grand Ronde to the Methodists because only Roman Catholic churches had been established at these reservations. He told Senator Williams that John Smith, who was restored to the Warm Springs agency in October as a Methodist agent, was in reality a Presbyterian, that Alsea and Siletz had no church, although the Methodists preached at Siletz, and that Klamath had no church, but was a good field for Methodism.[89] He instructed the Senator in the ways of religion more perfectly, predicted that Methodism would not grow well on Catholic soil, and, with transparent egotism, requested that he be "ordered" to Washington to assist in establishing the "new order of things."[90]

The Roman Catholics bitterly protested the invasion of Methodists in what they considered their area. Strong letters were sent to Washington attacking the "glaring partiality" for the Methodists and asking how the government could expect a true civilization to be transmitted to the Indians "by sects, not Christian but infidel." Particular distaste was expressed for the Methodist agent at Yakima in Washington Territory, the Reverend James Wilbur, and for Methodist control of the

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[88]A. B. Williams to Senators Williams and Crobett, December 3, 1870, ibid.

[89]Ibid.; Meacham to Captain W. W. Mitchell, October 22, 1870, ibid.

[90]Meacham to Williams and Corbett, December 3, 1870, ibid.

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Grand Ronde Agency.[91] As late as 1873 the Roman Catholics were claiming thirty-nine Indian agencies of which only eight had been granted.[92] The Methodists in turn protested the Catholic pressure, and Secretary Columbus Delano made it clear to the Catholics that the government was bound to view these " 'dissenting sects' as you call them, in a more Catholic and," he hoped, "a more charitable spirit." The government could hardly denounce them as infidels.[93]

The sectarian struggle over the Grand Ronde Agency placed Meacham in a delicate position, but he was able to keep friends on both sides. Charles Lafollett resigned from the agency in August, 1871, giving as his reason "interference from members of the Methodist Church," and the Methodist replacement, Leroy S. Dyar, took office in November.[94] The Methodist Church and the Grand Ronde agent were finally in harmony. This adjustment took pressure off Meacham, but the Roman Catholics were not pleased that their nominee Lafollett had been replaced with Methodist Dyar.

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[91]Father F. W. Blanchet to Parker, July 8, 1871, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Tray 3; Father DeSmet to Board of Indian Commissioners, March 27, 1871, ibid.

[92]Charles Ewing to Secretary of the Interior, December 30, 1873, Department of Interior, Appointment Division, File 84.

[93]Columbus Delano to Right Reverend T. N. Blanchet, July 31, 1871, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Tray 2; T. M. Eddy to Delano, June 11, 1873, Department of Interior Appointments Division, File 84.

[94]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 297.

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In August, 1870, Meacham separated Yainax Station, a subdivision of the Klamath reservation, from the Klamath Agency, and had placed Ivan Applegate as Special Commissary in Charge.[95] When Meacham surrendered his rights to the Klamath agency in favor of the Methodist Church, he removed his brother from control of agency affairs, and Johnson N. High, the Methodist nominee, took charge on September 1, 1871.[96] Yainax Station remained separate from Klamath, however, and Ivan Applegate was the only agent, subagent, or commissary who was not removed from office during the upheaval that came with the introduction of the new policy of appointing church-nominated agents. Yainax was classified as a station, not a subagency, and somehow avoided a change in personnel. The Applegates, supporters of Grant's policy, profited to a degree that would be difficult to measure. They were the only agents so situated as to be able to profit by public appointments while at the same time engaging in private enterprise.

The rapid change of agents occasioned by shifts in federal government policy would have made it difficult for any superintendent of Indian affairs to carry through a sustained program of reform. But Meacham pushed the peace policy in spite of administrative complications. The degree of success is examined in the next chapter.

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[95]Meacham to Knapp, August 28, 1870, Meacham Papers; Meacham to Acting Subagent at Klamath Agency, August 22, 1870, ibid.

[96]Meacham to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 30, 1871, ibid.; Meacham to John Meacham, June 27, 1871, ibid.

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CHAPTER IV

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, PART II

The Superintendent's Philosophy of Reform

Meacham took Grant's peace policy as his own, not because it was the policy of the President, but because it accorded with his own judgment.[1] The policy, in Meacham's mind, was independent of whether the agents were army men or church-nominated men. In a December, 1869, speech, President Grant emphasized that neither the conduct of the white man nor the laws passed by Congress were blameless with regard to the bad relations between the two races. Railroad extension had rapidly confronted the Indians with white men's civilization, and regardless of what kind of relations should exist, the cultures of the whites and the Indians did not harmonize; one or the other must yield. Grant announced that he could not condone extermination, and the only alternative was to place the Indians on large reservations, protect them, and make them wards of the Government.[2] The implementation of this policy called for civilizing, Christianizing, and leading the Indians to self-support and citizenship.

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[1] Meacham to Parker, January 20, 1870, quoted in Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 254; House Executive Documents, 41 Cong., 2 Sess., II (1869-1870), No. 146.

[2] Salem Oregon Statesman, December 10, 1869.

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Grant's "new policy" was new only in the sense it had become officially a principle of Government administration for the first time. The idea was one of several that existed in the general climate of opinion in the 1860's. The underlying assumptions of the peace policy were: The Indians could be civilized; civilization would be attractive to them only if they were guided and guarded by agents whose justice and fair dealing created implicit confidence; corrupt Indian agents had been the cause of the Indian's unwillingness to accept the white man's civilization; the Indian needed an incentive to accept civilization, a guarantee of the product of his labor through permanent location on reservations. These ideas were current with Lindsay Applegate in 1865.[3] Lewis Henry Morgan concluded in 1862 that the corrupt agent and the system of licensed traders had caused the agency system to fail.[4] Richard I. Dodge in the 1880's was still excoriating the corrupt Indian agent.[5] Although Meacham refused to subscribe to the theory that all Indian agents were corrupt,[6] his reform philosophy called for the appointment of agents of high moral character who would treat the Indian with "humanity and justice." He was well aware that men nominated by the church were not always of the caliber he sought.[7] It was the quality of the man he measured, not the source of his nomination.

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[3]Lindsay Applegate to George W. Williams, September 18, 1865, Applegate Papers.

[4]Leslie A. White (ed.), Lewis Henry Morgan, The Indian Journals, 1859-62 (Ann Arbor, 1959), 136, 138-40.

[5]Dodge, Our Wild Indians, 46.

[6]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 41.

[7]Ibid., 91-93.

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The peace policy was supported by large segments of the American citizenry, but with varying interpretations as to its meaning and purpose. There were those like Meacham, the Board of Indian Commissioners (who represented serious, sincere humanitarians), and other humanitarians (who did not object to making a profit from the Indians) who believed that all United States treaties with the Indians must be kept to the letter. Others saw the peace policy only as a pragmatic means to the end of saving American lives and money. Columbus Delano, Secretary of the Interior, declared that the purpose of the reservation was to make the Indians "as comfortable on, and as uncomfortable off their reservation as possible." This meant that within the framework of the policy the military had to be a factor. To Delano, the new policy consisted primarily of a combination of the reservation and feeding systems which appealed to the Indians' "indolence and self-indulgence" and which enabled a smaller army to deal with the few recalcitrant Indians. It was cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them--grounds enough for the policy. Delano said, "The westward course of population is to be neither denied nor delayed for the sake of all the Indians that ever called this country their home. They must yield or perish. When the Indian yields, then the peace policy must go into effect."[8] Meacham subscribed to the theory that it was "cheaper to feed and clothe than to fight the Indians," but added a thought not considered by many, that this policy was "more humane and in accord

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[8]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, pp. 5, 9-10.

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with our own Christian idea of right."[9]

The practical reformer as well as the idealist could see that the white man had to share the blame for Indian uprisings. Lindsay Applegate warned Superintendent Huntington that the Klamath and Modoc Indians could not be expected to submit to occupation of their land by whites before a treaty was ratified and before at least a partial payment had been made on it. This would be a breach of faith. Newspapers, he believed, aggravated the situation by advertising the desirability of Klamath lands without admitting that they still belonged to the Indians. The clash between the War and Indian departments also created tension. The War Department was ordered to protect settlers before settlers had a right to be on the land, and Indians found off the reservation were considered "hostile" before they were ever ordered on to it.[10]

Huntington, in his 1864 annual report, told of white-settler encroachment on Umatilla reservation lands, of the crossing of it by traffic to the gold fields, and of whites who sold liquor to Indians, stole their horses, and stole from whites and blamed the Indians.[11] Examples of the white man's crimes against the Indian could be multiplied; the instances were common, but reaction to them varied. Men like Meacham said that the white man must stop his crimes against the

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[9]Meacham to Parker, April 24, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[10]Lindsay Applegate to Huntington, July 5, 1867, Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1867.

[11]Annual Report of J. W. P. Huntington, September 26, 1864, Oregon S.I.A., National Archives, Letter Book H:10.

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Indians and treat them honestly and justly. Men like Grenville M. Dodge said that "the Indian for the most part must be dispossessed. The practical question is how the inevitable can be accomplished with the least inhumanity."[12] Frances Fuller Victor believed that the Indian was doomed, and wanted to make "savagism" comfortable in its death; that only the "bigoted and brainless talked of Christianizing or of civilizing" the Indians;[13] that the quick extermination of the Indian would be a blessing to both races; and that "the fate of the savages was fixed beforehand . . . by almighty providence. . . ."[14] Providential destiny was a concept that soothed the consciences of many intelligent, capable, and moral people.

Meacham appears to have held an amalgam of the views of both the practical and idealistic reformer--a view of man that stemmed from Jeffersonian liberalism fused with Methodist revival zeal. He approached the task of civilizing the Indians with the conviction that the Indian was a person, a man who needed only to be treated like one in order to attract him to the white man's ways; there was no doubt that he could be civilized.

The first right Meacham exhorted the Indians to appropriate was freedom of speech. Senator George H. Williams accompanied Meacham on a

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[12]Glenn Chesney Quiett, They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities (New York, 1934), 19.

[13]Bancroft, History of the Northwest Coast, I, 529.

[14]Bancroft, Oregon, I, ix; II, 379.

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visit to the Grand Ronde and Siletz agencies in September, 1869.[15] For the first time, these Indians were allowed to express themselves freely on what they wanted to purchase with the government's annuity funds. The Indians were astonished at the granting of this right, but did not abuse it. They asked, not for blankets and trinkets, but for ploughs, horses, harnesses, wagons, and other farm tools.[16] "If they are men," said Meacham, "treat them as such, and not as children"; and on this premise he proposed to inaugurate new rules for dealing with the Indians.[17] One year later, Meacham reported that he had negotiated with Indians on the basis of consulting their desires and always they had asked for the equipment of civilization, not for the trinkets of savage life.[18] He wrote the Commissioner of Indian affairs in March, 1870, that he had observed that Indians were dissatisfied when council talks were forbidden, and that since human nature is the same among all people, Indians were jealous of their rights and privileges. He intended to recognize the Indians' "rights as men, not as savages," which included "free expression of opinion on all legitimate and proper subjects" under a system of dignified control. He believed no harm would come from the talks, but rather cause the Indians to feel they were men.[19]

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[15] Salem Oregon Statesman, September 22, 1869.

[16] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 116-19; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, p. 156.

[17] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, p. 156.

[18] Ibid., 1870, p. 513.

[19] Meacham to Parker, March 22, 1870, Meacham Papers.

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Meacham was misunderstood by some of his contemporaries and by some recent writers because of his commitment to the policy of free expression, and because of his own love for talking. Mrs. Flora Warren Seymour calls him a "man of words."[20] Timothy W. Davenport, a contemporary, never credited Meacham with having a definite goal or even proposing anything new for all of his words.[21] It is obvious the two men never had a meeting of minds, but Davenport must not have read any of Meacham's reports. A survey of Davenport's life suggests that jealousy may have blinded him, for he had political aspirations that were never realized to the same degree as Meacham's. Davenport served as a special agent for a few months at the Umatilla agency during 1862 and 1863, which to him was a period of anxiety and pain and from which he was anxious to be relieved.[22] At one time he was an aspirant for the superintendent's office,[23] but had had to settle for surveying tasks granted by Meacham as political patronage.[24] Although Davenport's

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[20]Flora Warren Seymour, Indian Agents of the Old Frontier (New York, 1941), 212.

[21]Davenport, "Reminiscence of an Indian Agent," 154.

[22][Rector] to Davenport, September 18, 1862, Oregon S.I.A., Letter Book H:10; Rector to Davenport, September 28, 1862, ibid.; Huntington to William P. Cole, June 29, 1863, ibid.; Davenport to Huntington, May 25, 1863, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1863, No. 89; Dole to Huntington, May 6, 1863, ibid., No. 92.

[23]See this work, Chap. III, p. 83.

[24]Meacham to William H. Odell, August 24, 1871, Meacham Papers.

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criticism of Meacham's "pow-wow" policy was not completely valid, it did reflect the attitude of a segment of the Oregon population.

To civilize the Indian called for the attainment of certain well-defined goals in addition to freedom of speech and the freedom of having a voice in the disposal of income. The goals which Meacham sought for the Indians were not original with him, but were a part of the thinking of his day. The originality lay in a determined effort on Meacham's part to administer his superintendency in such a way as to make attainment possible.

With the fervency of a Methodist preacher, he sought to lead the Indians from polygamy to monogamy and to break the custom of selling wives. Joel Palmer of the Siletz agency believed the elimination of polygamy was one of the most essential reforms toward civilizing the Indian, but since the Indian considered his wives property for which he had paid, he should be reimbursed by the government.[25] Palmer's idea of reimbursement was not accepted by Meacham, but he worked incessantly on every reservation toward getting the Indians to agree to release all wives but one and be formally married to that one. At the Warm Springs agency in December, 1871, Meacham made a powerful appeal to the Indians and succeeded in getting many to free all but one wife.[26] Meacham called the Warm Springs meeting a "civil revival," and stated that Indians who decided to become "white men" and follow white men's customs experienced emotions "like white men newly converted

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[25]Joel Palmer to Meacham, July 14, 1871, ibid.

[26]Salem Oregon Statesman, December 9, 1871.

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to Christianity."[27] Meacham was not adverse to using the authority at his disposal to move the Indians toward monogamy. When he ordered a census of the Alsea subagency, the agent was instructed to recognize "only one wife" to each man. All others were to be freed and allowed to seek another husband or live with parents. Meacham, when instructing the agent on the plan, said, "We are to think for them [Indians] and to teach them to think. . . ."[28] He went a step further and commanded that all subordinates working at the agency should be discharged if they had no heart for this reform program.[29] Meacham saw that the Indian had to be pushed as well as drawn into accepting the white man's monogamous marriage, but his attitude was excessively paternalistic.

The white man's vices had corrupted the Indian, and from the worst of these, liquor and gambling, Meacham wished to protect him. For years Americans had known that alcoholic beverages should be kept from the Indian, and for just as many years men defied laws and convictions by selling liquors to him. Meacham attacked the problem courageously, but with only a moderate degree of success. To his brother John he wrote, "Discharge any employee who brings whisky onto the reservation," and in a somewhat contradictory statement he added that for a second offense a man should be "put in irons."[30] But Meacham found it was almost beyond his control to keep liquor from the Indians.

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[27]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 175, 178-79.

[28]Meacham to Palmer, July 10, 1871, Meacham Papers.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Meacham to John Meacham, December 2, 1870, ibid.

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Indian agents complained it was impossible to secure the conviction of white men for selling the beverage to Indians.[31] They honestly tried, but many who were determined to stop the traffic were thwarted by lack of law enforcement.[32] Meacham sought the aid of the United States District Attorney of Portland against whites who trafficked in liquor to Indians, but without success.[33] He complained to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that the Clackamas County Court refused to enforce the law, and asserted that he was doing all possible to break up the traffic, but that few whites were cooperating. He was certain the Indian Department had a just complaint against county government, officers, and juries who never convicted white violators of the law against selling liquor to Indians. He said, "We admit our Indians are immoral, but we know well who it is that makes them so."[34]

Meacham attained no better results in his efforts against gambling. An ironic miscarriage of the democratic process occurred when S. D. Rheinhart, a temporary agent at Grand Ronde, had the Indians express their thinking on the subject of gambling; the gamblers won on a test vote.[35] Meacham later said, "Under the new law gambling is

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[31]William H. Barnhart to Huntington, June 10, 1868, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, Volume F.

[32]Barnhart to Huntington, June 6, 1868, ibid., Unregistered Letters Received; H. A. Conroyer to Meacham, February 5, 1872, ibid.

[33]Meacham to John Cartwright, August 31, 1871, Meacham Papers.

[34]Meacham to Parker, July 7, 1871, ibid.

[35]S. D. Rheinhart to Meacham, September 24, 1871, ibid.

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prohibited by a fine; but the Indians find ways to avoid the law, and gambling is now, and will continue to be, common among them."[36] He had discovered that the forces within and without the reservation bringing liquor and gambling to the Indian, were greater than moral persuasion or law.

The public attitude toward the Indians complicated the reform efforts. There were white men who profited from trade with the Indians and who exploited their tendency to accept the white man's vices. Many Indians could not endure confinement to the reservations during the spring and summer. There were always a number who sought former hunting and fishing haunts, and many who gravitated to the towns. Indians from the superintendency in Washington Territory would come to Oregon and Oregon Indians would go to Washington.[37] Off-reservation Indians created inter-superintendency problems and tensions.

Townspeople were particularly irked by the presence of Indians and were impatient with superintendent and agents if they were not removed to the reservation promptly. A citizen of Albany wrote to Meacham through his clerk that the Indians there "have been a nuisance long enough" and insisted that if they were not removed immediately he would take the matter to Washington. He accused the Indians of theft, drunkenness, and sodomy.[38] The next year he wrote directly to Meacham a short, stinging letter: "One Indian shot. Cause whiskey--from forty

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[36]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 281.

[37]E. Y. McKinney to Meacham, June 12, 1871, Meacham Papers; Meacham to Colonel Samuel Ross, March 22, 1870, ibid.

[38]J. W. Conner to C. S. Woodworth, January 30, 1870, ibid.

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to seventy-five Indians here looks as though reservation here--Have had enough of this and shall go to headquarters if you and your Ag'ts can't put a stop to it."[39]

From Eugene, Meacham received a petition signed by fifty-seven citizens stating that the city was "infiltrated with a band of strolling female Indian prostitutes" and since their presence was a danger to the morals of the youth they demanded removal to the reservations.[40] Agent Joel Palmer was ordered to bring in the strays. Palmer reported the results of his difficult trip. It was hard on the horses: he started with fourteen and returned with five. He gave twenty-two Indians permission to stay where they were until spring, and fifteen others promised to return at the same time. He left supplies for those unable to accompany him because of sickness. The cost of the trip prohibited further expeditions. Palmer minimized public objection to leaving the Indians where they were; in fact, many whites wanted them to stay. He stated, "The great hue and cry as indicated by the petition and corrispondence [sic] was presented by a very few for spite or personal gain by forcing expenditure of federal funds." He was convinced that "a few humane and well disposed people . . . believe the Indian condition would be bettered by removing them . . .," but that a much larger number were indifferent. The worst groups were those that connived to retain the Indian in the community and work

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[39]Conner to Meacham, July 31, 1871, ibid.

[40]James F. Brown to Meacham, March 28, 1871, ibid.

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against removal by the agent.[41] Certainly there was no unanimity of opinion among the whites with regard to the presence of Indians in their communities. This, coupled with the cost of removal, presented Meacham and his agents with a major problem.

Meacham wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that absentee Indians created disciplinary problems. He informed him that military force would be used if necessary to return them to the reservation, but rarely was force used. He reported that he had authorized civil authorities to cut off the hair of drunken Indians, and had proposed to shave the heads of Indian women prostitutes.[42] A reading of the record reveals that Meacham's efforts, as energetic as they were, neither brought all absentee Indians to the reservation, nor stopped drunkenness and prostitution.

The education of the Indians presented a challenge and complicated problems. Meacham was not an educator, having had "but a limited education when a boy,"[43] but he appreciated the need of education and gave thought and time to it. Three conclusions on Indian education guided his administrative policy. First, he had little confidence in

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[41]Palmer to Meacham, December 26, 1871, ibid.

[42]Meacham to Parker, March 22, 1870, ibid.

[43]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 6. The Methodist Church in Oregon had no confidence in the Government's educational program for Indians either. It was considered almost a complete failure, the cause of which was poor administration of Government policies and funds. The Methodists asked for the removal of Indian administration from politics to Christian hands. The work of Reverend James H. Wilbur at the Yakima Agency, Washington Territory, was exalted as the ideal. See Minutes, Oregon Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1870 (Salem, Oregon), 25-26. Preserved in Willamette University Library.

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the system of education in force when he took office. Few children attended existing schools, and those who did could not read or speak English after years of attendance, mostly because they lived with their non-English speaking parents. He believed the schools were almost a total failure.[44] Second, Meacham believed a manual labor school should replace the standard type.[45] He promoted the idea as the only workable educational program for the Indians, but there is no evidence that it was generally adopted at the time. Agent Lafollett on the Grand Ronde reservation was authorized to build such a school in May, 1871, but he resigned before it could become a reality.[46] Third, he provided a new visual-aid teaching method. It consisted of a series of picture charts which illustrated facts in nature and animal life and contrasted man's condition in the savage and civilized states. Each object had the English name printed beside it. Meacham believed this method was natural to the Indian.[47] There were eight charts in all, and it was asserted that teachers wanted them even for white children.[48] At least Meacham was impressed with the new teaching method; there is no

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[44]Meacham to Parker, March 22, April 18, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[45]Meacham to Parker, March 22, April 18, 1870, ibid.; Meacham to Charles Lafollett, May 10, 1871, ibid.

[46]Meacham to Lafollett, ibid.

[47]Salem Oregon Statesman, September 9, 1871. There are similarities in the method Meachan introduced to the modern Frank Laubach method for teaching adults to read. Whether or not the method originated with Meacham is not known.

[48]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 306.

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record to show whether Indian children were enlightened.

The allotment of land in severalty to the Indians was a goal toward which Meacham worked earnestly and consistently. He and others believed it to be the most advanced and important step toward civilizing the Indian and preparing him for full citizenship.[49] The idea of acquiring land in severalty had a long history. It was strongly recommended to the Indians by Thomas Jefferson in 1808, and provision for alloting land in severalty was included in many Indian treaties,[50] but efforts to implement them were new. Promoters of Indian reform took granting of land in severalty as a basic plank in their platform. Indians who had advanced in the white man's ways pressed for land allotment. They saw in it a safeguard against removal from the land they loved, from ancestors' graves and from living loved ones, as well as protection from arbitrary agents. They believed land allotments in severalty would create incentive to work.[51]

Preparations for land survey and eventual land allotment began

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[49] Meacham to Parker, February 8, 1871, Meacham Papers; Palmer to Meacham, July 14, 1871, ibid.; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 306.

[50] Thomas Jefferson to Captain Hendrick, an Indian chief, c. 1808, Saul K. Padover, The Complete Jefferson (New York, 1943), 502-504; Various Indians of Grand Ronde Reservation to President Grant, September 20, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received. This letter was written in the presence of Senator Williams, Meacham, and agent Lafollett. It purports to be the expression of the thoughts of fifteen Indians who made their marks as signatures. The letter was written by J. W. Crawford, Clerk of the Agency, and approved by agent Lafollett. It requested that Indian lands be granted in severalty as provided by the treaty.

[51] Indians of Grand Ronde to President Grant, September 20, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

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with an order to take a census of the Indian reservations.[52] Senator Henry W. Corbett wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in December of 1870 that he approved Meacham's recommendation for the survey of the Grand Ronde Agency for the purpose of alloting lands to heads of families and others. He supported approval on the basis of his own visit to the agency a few months earlier where he found Indians dissatisfied because of the "nonsurvey of these lands." He believed the Indians' improvement on the lands could not be retained without the guarantee of surveyed and allotted lands.[53] In March, 1871, the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent a memorandum to the Secretary of the Interior, referring to Meacham's request for the survey of Indian lands, with a recommendation that the survey be ordered. A few days later the Secretary approved the recommendation and instructed the General Land Office to proceed accordingly.[54] Meacham, encouraged by the authorization, pressed for completion as rapidly as possible. He wrote the Surveyor General of Oregon that he was anxious to have the surveys completed in time for allotment in the fall of 1871.[55] In

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[52]W. R. Dunbar to Meacham, July 22, 1871, Meacham Papers; Meacham to W. H. Boyle, June 23, 1870, ibid.; Meacham to Charles Lafollett, June 23, 1870, ibid.; Meacham to Knapp, June 23, 1870, ibid.

[53]Corbett to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, December 20, 1870, Oregon S.I.A.

[54]Office communications between Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Secretary of the Interior, March 9, 13, 1871, Commissioner of Indian Affairs (National Archives), No. 2, January, 1870, to January, 1874.

[55]Meacham to W. H. Odell, September 20, 1871, Meacham Papers.

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October he urged the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to secure early approval for the Grand Ronde surveys by the General Land Office in Washington because the Indians were anxious to start work on their homes before winter.[56]

Excellent progress toward the desired goal of allotment in severalty was attained in 1871. Everything appeared to be ready for taking the great step toward advancement in civilization. But by January, 1872, Meacham was threatened with removal from office and in view of the threat dared not order allotment of lands. Meacham asserted that "Thompson the Deputy Surveyor General of Oregon is ready and willing but it would compromise me at this juncture, hence, I must abandon the idea for the present, and perhaps forever." He wanted the agent to explain to the Grand Ronde Indians that the delay came through no fault of his own, and that he still would have it done at an early date if he should be sustained in office.[57] Thus ended a nearly successful program to allot Indians land in severalty.

Unanswered questions are raised at this point. Did Meacham sacrifice the welfare of the Indians in favor of personal political survival? If he had ordered the allotment of land to the Grand Ronde Indians could the order have been implemented? Were there strong political forces opposing allotment? Certainly the need for allotment was the same, and politicians such as Corbett did not change their attitude.

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[56]Meacham to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, October 28, 1871, ibid.

[57]Meacham to L. S. Dyar, January 9, 1872, ibid.

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As late as 1878 Senator Corbett wrote Carl Schurz that there was ample law in the treaties to issue title to the Indians for the land set apart for them, and that if this could be done for a few Indians only it would tend to reassure the others and prevent trouble.[58] Never were the Indians in Oregon so close to receiving their lands in severalty as in 1871, but another sixteen years were to pass before the Dawes Act of 1887 made it a policy for Indians of all States.

Indian Removal

The policy of concentrating Indians on reservations was popular after the Civil War.[59] Friends of the Indians believed they would be cared for, protected from enemies, and sheltered from the vices of white men. Others accepted the policy because they believed removal of Indians to reservations would open new lands for settlement and free settlers from the danger of Indian attacks. When the policy was extended to removal of Indian tribes from established reservations and concentration of them on lands north of Nebraska and south of Kansas, altruistic as well as selfish interests created opposition.[60] Meacham's attitude toward the question apparently followed the administration policy from 1869 to 1872. He approved the reservation system and also the consolidation of several reservations into one. During his term of

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[58]Corbett to Carl Schurz, June 25, 1878, Schurz Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington), 1842-1906.

[59]Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, 6.

[60]Ibid., 7.

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office he was confronted with three types of removals: 1) the removal of nomad and conquered Indians to reservations; 2) the concentration of all Oregon Indians on two reservations; 3) the removal of the Umatilla reservation Indians to a different reservation.

After General George Crook had defeated the Snake Indians in eastern Oregon in 1868, plans were made to remove them to a reservation. Superintendent Huntington was not able to accomplish the task before his removal from office, but Meacham proposed it as his first major project. He wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in August, 1869, that he believed the Snake Indians would "cheerfully" go to Klamath but not to Siletz reservation. He called for the fulfillment of all promises to them. He wanted to know if money would be available to subsist and control the Indians if they refused to go to the reservation, because if not, they would take to the warpath to prevent starvation. The thing needed, therefore, was support to "carry out all promises made to a helpless race."[61] After funds and approval were received, detailed plans were made and the newspapers were kept informed of developments. The press normally reported Indian Affairs activities as items of interest to the Oregon public. Agents and superintendents liked the world to know about the successes (but not failures) in handling the Indians. In this case, however, an investigator gets the impression that Meacham and supporters of the peace policy wanted to convince the public of the policy's success.

The bifurcated expedition was a major undertaking. One group

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[61]Meacham to Parker, August 10, 1869, Meacham Papers.

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under the leadership of Ivan Applegate left Klamath Agency for Fort Harney.[62] Six soldiers and six friendly Indians accompanied the party. The supply train consisted of four wagons loaded with forty barrels of flour and four bales of blankets.[63] Two Indians went as interpreters, and a chief of the Summer Lake Snakes and two of his head men accompanied the party as witnesses to the fact that the Government kept its promises.[64] The presence of the witnesses was a Meacham touch. Another group under the personal direction of Meacham left The Dalles about October 8. This party was composed of about thirteen persons including Meacham, his brother John, and Doctor William McKay.[65]

The expedition raised hopes that Indian removal would make southeastern Oregon safe for gold seekers,[66] and bring a necessary peace required for settlement of land which was essential to the success of "our national enterprise."[67] Fifteen hundred Indians were to be collected and conducted to the Klamath agency. One thousand were gathered about Camp Harney, 160 miles east of Camp Warner, and five hundred were located at Camp Warner.[68] Meacham was only partially

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[62]Meacham to Ivan Applegate, September 21, 1869, ibid.

[63]Meacham to Peter W. Caris, September 21, 1869, ibid.

[64]Salem Oregon Statesman, January 18, 1870.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid., October 9, 1869.

[67]Ibid., December 1, 1869.

[68]Ibid., October 9, 1869.

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successful; Ocheo's band of about two hundred and fifty Indians consented to go to the Klamath reservation.[69] Reasons offered for the small success were opposition from the military and the influence of contractors, teamsters, laborers, and "bummers" who depended on the continuance of Indian trouble for their livelihood.[70]

The record of Snake Indian removal to Klamath reservation indicates that Meacham tried to conduct it in a manner that would create confidence in the promises of the Government and of Meacham. This squared with his basic philosophy of what was wrong in Indian relations. The business of the expedition, however, was conducted within the framework of accepted political practices: 1) the use of political friends and relatives to man the expedition, and 2) the issuance of supply contracts to political party supporters. Orders such as 100 barrels of flour, 100 pairs of blankets, and 1,500 yards of flannel to Wagner McCall & Company, and 500 pairs of blankets and 4,000 yards of woolen goods to Rogue River Valley Woolen Manufacturing Company would tend to make these suppliers strong supporters of the Snake Indian removal to the reservation.[71]

In December, 1870, Meacham wrote the Oregon senators at Washington that he had a plan which if adopted would settle the Indian

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[69] Ibid., November 24, 1869; Knapp to Parker, December 30, 1869, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[70] Salem Oregon Statesman, January 19, 1870.

[71] Knapp to Parker, December 30, 1869, Oregon S.I.A. Unregistered Letters Received; Meacham to McCall, October 21, 1870, Meacham Papers; Meacham to Wagner McCall Co., September 21, 23, 1869, ibid.

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question in Oregon "for all time." Oregon Republicans like Ben Holladay, Henry Failing, and Harvey W. Scott backed the plan. Meacham asked to be invited to Washington to present the scheme in person.[72] After receiving a request from prominent Oregon Republicans, the Indian affairs office gave reluctant authorization for Meacham to proceed to Washington at the Indian Department's expense. Meacham made the trip in January, 1871, and returned April 12.[73] His proposal called for the establishment of two reservations in Oregon on which all Indians were to be concentrated. Indians east of the Cascade Mountains were to be located on a reservation isolated from the white man, and all west of the Cascade would be placed on another reservation. The Grand Ronde Indians were to be exempt from the second since they were ready to take lands in severalty. The proposal was supported with arguments that Umatilla reservation was destined to be taken over by white men except for four hundred Indians who would demand land in severalty according to treaty; that the Warm Springs agency was a "fraud" and the Indians must be relocated elsewhere; that the Oregon military road invaded the privacy of the Klamath reservation; and that the Modocs and Harney Snake Indians refused to live on Klamath.[74] When Meacham wrote Lindsay Applegate the details of his proposal, Applegate replied that the plan of consolidation was not new and that he believed it to be the best

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[72]Meacham to Senators Williams and Corbett, December 3, 1870, Meacham Papers.

[73]Meacham to Parker, April 15, 1871, ibid.

[74]Meacham to Williams and Corbett, December 3, 1870, ibid.

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course "to forever settle and quiet the 'Indian Question' of Oregon." Applegate chided Meacham for not taking him along to Washington because he was "thoroughly acquainted" with the Indians.[75]

Meacham's proposal to establish a reservation in eastern Oregon was recommended for approval by the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs on March 10, and by the Secretary of the Interior on March 14. On the latter date, President Grant ordered withdrawal of the lands.[76] But apparently there was no further attempt on the part of Meacham or others to concentrate Oregon Indians on two reservations. The subject was not discussed by Meacham after his return from Washington. How strongly he believed in the proposal is a question, for later he vigorously opposed forcing Modoc Indians onto the Klamath reservation with the Klamath Indians. Meacham might have been the spokesman for party leaders who promoted the two-reservation plan; he did not believe in it enough to fight for it.

The removal of the Indians from Umatilla reservation had been recommended for years by both friends and enemies. Agent William Barnhart declared in his final report in 1869 that the reservation was wrongly located because it was surrounded by white settlers who owned the greater part of the good land in Umatilla County. Moreover, it was crisscrossed by roads bearing passenger or United States mail

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[75] Ivan Applegate to Meacham, December 31, 1870, ibid.

[76] Acting Commissioner to Delano, March 10, 1871, Office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Recommendations, XI, January, 1870, to January, 1874. This was an inter-office communication with various notations made on the original recommendation.

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stages, and were the main highways to agricultural settlements and gold mining camps. Even a railroad would eventually pass through it. The whites, consequently, were clamoring for Indian removal. Barnhart believed that Indians would have to go sooner or later, and he therefore recommended that they be paid a fair price and have good homes built in a new location. He suggested they be sent to the Yakima and Nez Perce reservations, but, he said, "do not beguile them to some 'howling wilderness' with empty promises, as was too frequently the custom in removing Indians from their native land in former years."[77] Meacham agreed with Barnhart that agents would not be able to protect the Indians from white harassment and recommended that a commission be appointed to negotiate their removal.[78] By September, 1870, Meacham, in his annual report, urged implementation of the congressional bill of July 1, 1870, which authorized and provided $2,000 for negotiating the sale of the Umatilla Indian lands.[79]

Earlier, in March, Meacham notified Commissioner Ely Samuel Parker that he had not allowed discussion of removal in the Umatilla Indian council because he had not been authorized to do it. The Indians, he said, were debating it among themselves and many had declared "they will die on the graves of their fathers before they be removed."[80]

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[77] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1869, pp. 157-60.

[78] Ibid., 153-54.

[79] Ibid., 1870, pp. 514-15.

[80] Meacham to Parker, March 22, 1870, Meacham Papers.

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Meacham predicted that the negotiations would succeed if commissioners with the right "moral qualifications" were selected.[81] In December, before leaving for Washington to present the great two-reservation plan, Meacham went to the Umatilla reservation to determine the attitude of the Indians toward removal and sale of their lands.[82] Still pressing for action, he reminded Commissioner Parker in May, 1871, that instructions concerning negotiations for sale of Umatilla reservation had not been received.[83] Finally, the instructions were sent on May 31. They ordered that the Indians be asked to sell their land and remove to another reservation or take land in severalty of not more than 160 acres each at the Umatilla reservation; they emphasized that "special care" must be taken to protect the Indians from undue outside pressure while making their decision. It was desired that they not "agree to anything they might hereafter regret."[84]

Meacham was glad for the instructions, but was unhappy in that Umatilla Agent Narcisse Connoyer was placed in charge of the three-man commission named to do the negotiating, with himself and John S. White the other two members.[85] Since this placed a "superior officer second to a subordinate officer," Meacham refused to serve unless he should be

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Meacham to William H. Boyle, December 13, 1870, ibid.

[83] Meacham to Parker, May 13, 1871, ibid.

[84] Parker to Meacham, May 31, 1871, ibid.

[85] Ibid.

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named the principal, which he asserted, had been the earlier agreement.[86] During June and July the debate as to who should be the principal negotiator went on.

In a tactful move, Meacham demonstrated his abilities by raising questions with Commissioner Parker, the answers to which, he said, should guide the chief negotiator.[87] He knew how to ask good questions. The letter with the questions was followed the next day by a report to Parker on a necessary visit to the Umatilla agency earlier in June for the purpose of settling the Indians' minds and promoting acceptance of the new agent, Narcisse Connoyer. He announced that the Catholics were pleased with the agent but that the non-Catholics, the Dreamers (followers of Smohollah) were distrustful of him. The Catholic priests, he asserted, wanted to control everything, and the Dreamers resisted and threatened to leave. Meacham stated that he had told the Indians that they had rights; that they would not be compelled to sell their land nor would they be compelled to accept a religion they did not want; that priests were there to teach religion, not to enforce it.[88] Whether or not Meacham's demonstration of knowledge and wisdom influenced the final decision is not known, but on July 29 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that Meacham be

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[86] Meacham to Parker, June 22, 1871, ibid.

[87] Meacham to Parker, June 23, 1871, ibid.

[88] Ibid.

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named the principal in the negotiations.[89] Meacham was officially informed of the decision by telegram on August 5.[90]

The negotiations with the Indians of the Umatilla reservation took place August 7-12, 1871. Present were two representatives of the Board of Indian Commissioners, Felix Brunot and Thomas K. Cree, and the three special commissioners with Meacham as chairman. The five-day meeting was filled with words, no small portion of which were Meacham's. He loved to talk and he defended the Indian's right to talk. After all the words had been borne away by winds, a clear-cut decision remained--the Indians would not sell their reservation and submit to removal.[91] Brunot, in analyzing the history of the reservation, expressed the belief that in the light of maladministration of agents, the misapplication of funds, the failure of the government to keep promises, the years of talk by agents urging removal, it was amazing that the Indians had advanced so wonderfully. He believed that to remove them now would be wrong; rather, what was needed was the fulfilling of promises.[92]

Although Meacham's confidence in himself seems excessive at

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[89]Commissioner to Delano, July 29, 1871, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Recommendations, II

[90]Acting Commissioner H. R. Clum to Meacham, August 5, 1871, Office of Indian Affairs, Correspondence Land Division, V (National Archives), April 29, 1871, to August 16, 1871.

[91]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, pp. 97, 297.

[92]Ibid., 97.

times, and the interminable Umatilla negotiations are wearisome, yet his concern for the Indians' individual rights and his desire to protect them from exploitation are evident. In the negotiations Meacham retreated from the earlier theoretical position which called for the concentration of all Oregon Indians on two reservations. He would not force any Indian to surrender that which was his by treaty rights. The Government's offer to negotiate the purchase of the Umatilla reservation without force and its willingness to accept the Indian's refusal to sell were perhaps unique in the annals of Indian relations. Grant's peace policy had created some changes.

Dismissal from the Superintendency

Dismissal from the superintendency came suddenly and shockingly to Meacham, to his friends, to Oregon Republicans, to Oregon Methodists, and to the Indians. Apparently first news of removal came from the December 22 issue of the San Francisco News Bulletin, as quoted in the January 3, 1872, Oregon Statesman. T. B. Odeneal was named his successor.

Surprise and regret was expressed by Oregon newspapers. The Oregon Statesman described Meacham's services as excellent, able, faithful, and earnest in seeking the improvement of the Indians.[93] The Portland Oregonian, announcing the news in its January 5 issue, said that the removal of Meacham "occasions a good deal of surprise. No event could have been more unexpected." The Oregonian spoke

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[93]Salem Oregon Statesman, January 3, 1872.

approvingly of Meacham's work and laid the blame for his dismissal on Felix Brunot of the Board of Indian Commissioners who reportedly was dissatisfied with Meacham's arguing for the removal of the Indians at the Umatilla Council the preceding August. The newspaper insisted that Meacham "did not press the point unfairly or take advantage of the Indians," but that the commissioner received the impression that Meacham had joined the popular clamor to have the Indians removed. The Oregonian concluded that Meacham had been judged harshly for "something he had not thought or planned." It described him as an "enthusiast on the subject of caring for and elevating the Indians, and no better man can be found to carry out the humanizing and just policy of the administration."[94]

Because of the peculiar involvements surrounding Meacham's dismissal, the forces which brought it to pass must be examined fully. Loring Benson Priest believes the record indicates Meacham was dismissed for incompetency.[95] A fuller examination of the documents raises serious questions concerning the accuracy of that conclusion.

Meacham thought of himself as a precursor of the Government's humane policy.[96] He was aware that he was called an "enthusiast" and had "Indian on the Brain."[97] The descriptions help corroborate the

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[94]Portland Oregonian, January 5, 1872.

[95]Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, 60

[96]Meacham to Williams, January 9, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[97]Meacham to Senator Corbett, January 10, 1872, ibid.

fact that he zealously tried to administer the Government's policy. He was the first Oregon Superintendent of Indian Affairs who consistently held the welfare of the Indians basic in his philosophy of administration. In his 1871 annual report Meacham listed what he considered to be advanced steps in dealing with the Oregon Indians. First, the Indian had been recognized as a person and successfully consulted concerning the expenditure of annuity funds; second, some agencies had been partially democratized with the adoption of a policy of electing chiefs; third, trial by jury had been instituted; fourth, polygamy had been checked and the sale of women for wives prohibited; fifth, slavery had been eliminated; sixth, improvement in educational methods, results, and interest had been achieved through the adoption of "object-charts", seventh, preparation for allotment of land in severalty, which had inspired new hope in the Indian and "with proper management" would cause tribal relations to disappear, had been accomplished. He called for laws which would make possible full Indian citizenship.[98]

These forward steps were accomplished within the framework of accepted political procedures with only an occasional deviation. Patronage was used for political and friendship reasons, but always Meacham sought to give jobs to men who he felt were morally qualified to carry out the humane policy, and refused positions to incompetent men on either a church or political recommendation.[99] Once he

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[98]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, p. 306.

[99]Meacham to Brunot, January 29, 1872, Meacham Papers.

complained to a petitioner that "the trouble with me is I have so many friends in straightened circumstances that I can do nothing for you. . . ."[100] To one such friend he loaned $300 and asked agent High to give him employment at Klamath Agency if possible.[101] Even though Meacham sought political patronage for "worthy" friends, he ordered his agents to cut their lists of white employees as much as possible and to use Indians for common labor as a civilizing medium.[102]

There was political criticism of the way Meacham handled routine affairs. In 1870 he informed Ivan Applegate that he would make one more effort to get him appointed agent at Klamath, but that he did not expect success for he was already criticized for giving him Yainax, a subdivision of Klamath agency.[103] He told Applegate that he was reproached for giving John McCall so many contracts to fill and for placJohn Meacham in charge of Klamath, but that he expected "to run the affairs that I am officially responsible for according to my judgment and take the consequences."[104] But the "consequences," when they finally came, did not involve appointments and contracts; rather, they found Meacham caught in the crossfire of the Methodist-Roman Catholic battle.

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[100]Meacham to French T. Mix, August 31, 1871, ibid.

[101]Meacham to Johnson N. High, November 7, 1871, ibid.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Meacham to Ivan Applegate, November 12, 1870, ibid.

[104]Ibid.

The first reason given for dismissal was Meacham's position on Indian removal from the Umatilla reservation. Meacham challenged this charge in letters to Senators Corbett and Williams. He denied Brunot's charge that he was trying to dispossess the Indians of their lands. He was, he said, only trying to do what Williams "and every other member of Congress has been trying to do for ten years--to remove the Indians."[105] After all, he was obligated to present both sides of the removal question to the Indians, and this should not have been cause for dismissal.[106] To Corbett he stated that he believed the Umatilla Council was only a pretext.[107]

Further, Meacham was told that Wilbur of the Yakima agency had poisoned Brunot's mind against him, and this Meacham believed at first.[108] The two men had clashed over the presence of Yakima reservation Indians in Oregon for whom Wilbur refused to acknowledge responsibility. Meacham said he proved Wilbur to be in the wrong, and that a part of the quarrel was in Brunot's presence.[109] Wilbur's anger against Meacham was also stirred at the time John Smith was appointed agent of Warm Springs in the spring of 1871. Wilbur backed Stephen Coffin for the appointment, and Meacham backed Smith. Both Coffin and Wilbur were

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[105]Meacham to Williams, January 9, 1872, ibid.

[106]Meacham to Corbett, January 10, 1872, ibid.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Ibid.; Meacham to Williams, January 9, 1872, ibid.

[109]Meacham to Williams, January 9, 1872, ibid.

furious, and Coffin even asserted he was the one who caused Meacham's dismissal.[110] Although there was good reason to suspect that Wilbur influenced Brunot against Meacham, both Brunot and Thomas Cree denied Brunot had anything to do with it.[111]

Minor reasons suggested by Meacham as possible causes for his dismissal were jealousy of Senator Corbett and political purposes of "the Rings."[112] It appeared suspicious to Meacham that Corbett waited thirty-one days between the time he was first requested by the Secretary of the Interior to nominate a replacement (November 25) and the day he wrote Meacham (December 26). The delay made countermeasures impossible.[113] Cree pointed the finger of suspicion at politicians. Meacham professed to believe this and named four reasons why they wanted him out of office: 1) Meacham had declared publicly that the Indian Service should be separated from politics; 2) he had refused jobs to "whisky barroom politicians"; 3) he could not and would not gamble and drink at the politicians' "club rooms" or visit "unworthy places"; and 4) he refused to spend government funds to win elections.[114]

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[110] Meacham to John Smith, February 9, 1872, ibid.; Meacham to Jesse Applegate, February 6, 1872, ibid.

[111] Meacham to High, March 16, 1872, ibid.; Thomas K. Cree to Meacham, February 29, 1872, Board of Indian Commissioners, Outgoing Correspondence, January to September, 1872. Cree and Felix Brunot were Board of Indian Commissioners' representatives to the Umatilla Council.

[112] Meacham to H. H. Mitchell, January 27, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[113] Meacham to Jesse Applegate, February 6, 1872, ibid.

[114] Meacham to Cree, January 19, 1872, ibid.

Meacham went on to say that he had felt so secure in his office "that I would not believe they could reach me."[115] To Brunot he wrote that the politicians wanted to secure the official patronage of the Indian department for political ends; that they did not want the Indians to receive land in severalty which would make it impossible to drive them from their homes, and to block this Meacham must be removed; that Meacham was from a Democratic county that would have no votes in the next legislature; and that it was known that Meacham was an original Free-Soiler while his successor, Odeneal, and nearly all federal officers were formerly Democrats.[116] After listing the various reasons why politicians wished to unseat him, he appeared to drop "politics" as a basic cause for dismissal. He was convinced that the majority of the Oregon Republicans were favorable to him and that Odeneal was just as surprised with the appointment as he was with the dismissal. Odeneal even proposed declining the office in Meacham's favor, but because of a charge of dishonesty he could not very well resign without admitting guilt.[117] Meachan finally concluded that the only part politics had in the affair was in the selection of his successor.[118] Available evidence confirms this conclusion.

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Meacham to Brunot, January 29, 1872, ibid.

[117] Meacham to John Smith, February 9, 1872, ibid.; Meacham to Williams, February 1, 1872, ibid.

[118] Meacham to Smith, February 9, 1872; Meacham to My Dear Brother [Captain D. J. Ferree], February 2, 1872, ibid. Captain Ferree was Mrs. A. B. Meacham's brother.

The main reason offered for Meacham's dismissal concerned the Roman Catholic fight to take Grand Ronde Agency from the Methodists, and an attempted compromise to give Fort Hall, Idaho Agency, to the Catholics and Klamath to the Methodists. Fort Hall Agency was originally assigned to the Methodists, as was Grand Ronde. Johnson High was the Methodist agent appointed to Fort Hall. The question of how to satisfy the Roman Catholic demand for Fort Hall arose while Meacham was in Washington during the first quarter of 1871. He understood from Attorney General Williams and Senator Corbett that Secretary Delano was willing for the Catholics to have Fort Hall if the Methodists would agree to it.[119] The question between Secretary Delano and Meacham was not the validity of the Catholic claim to Fort Hall, but rather how the contending elements could be harmonized.[120] As a compromise, Meacham proposed that he give up his claim to Klamath agency and turn it over to the Methodists as a reward for surrendering Fort Hall to the Roman Catholics.[121] With the approval of Secretary Delano, Meacham went to New York City to persuade Dr. W. L. Harris, Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the Methodist Board of Missions, to agree to the transfer.[122]

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[119] Meacham to Brunot, March 13, 1872, ibid.

[120] Meacham to Doctor William Harris, March 14, 1872, ibid.

[121] Meacham to Brunot, March 13, 1872, ibid.

[122] Ibid.

The Methodists agreed to accept Klamath agency and yield Fort Hall to the Roman Catholics. The formal appointment of High to Klamath agency was made on April 29, 1871.[123] In June Meacham notified the appointee that upon the presentation of his commission, John Meacham had instructions to turn over Klamath agency to him.[124] Meacham telegraphed Commissioner Parker on July 6 that High had not yet reported at Klamath and asked if it would be possible to transfer him to Grand Ronde in order to fill the vacancy caused by Charles Lafollett's resignation.[125] Word was received about August 1 that Lafolletts' resignation was not accepted,[126] and High was notified to await official word from the Interior office.[127] By mid-August funds were deposited to High's account as subagent of Klamath agency.[128] The Reverend Charles C. Stratton (presiding elder of Oregon Methodists) later related that High began complaining as soon as he took over the Klamath agency because he had been transferred from a full agency to a subagency with reduced salary, and that the agency was not what it was purported to be, but had been run largely in the interest of Meacham's brother and not of the Indians.[129] Stratton said, "This Mr. High seems to be an indefatigable

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[123] H. R. Clum to Meacham, April 29, 1871, ibid.

[124] Meacham to High, June 21, 1871, ibid.

[125] Meacham to Parker, July 6, 1871, ibid.

[126] Meacham to Lafollett, August 1, 1871, ibid.

[127] Meacham to High, August 3, 1871, ibid.

[128] Meacham to High, August 19, 1871, ibid.

[129] C. C. Stratton to Reverend A. F. Waller, February 8, 1872, ibid.

worker and evidently has a good deal of influence here [New York City] --probably on account of his war record."[130] High's complaints were effective for in late November Harris formally notified Delano that the Methodists had been misled and deceived on the Fort Hall transfer and requested the reassignment of Fort Hall agency to that church and High as the Fort Hall agent.[131]

Harris accused Meacham of stating that the Roman Catholics had prior claim to Fort Hall, of asserting that Klamath was a full agency when in reality it was only a subagency, and of keeping High at Salem instead of allowing him to take over his new assignment in order that John Meacham might continue in charge.[132] Almost immediately after Harris's letter reached the Secretary of the Interior, Senator Corbett was asked to present a nomination for a replacement, which he did not do until December 19, and did not write Meacham until December 26.[133]

As the news of Meacham's dismissal became widely known and people recovered from the first shock, efforts were made to revoke the order. Oregon Methodism and other Protestant groups rose up in protest. Evidently Harris of the New York office did not consult the wishes of Oregon Methodists. They did not want Fort Hall, but they did want

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[130] Ibid.

[131] W. L. Harris to Delano, November 24, 1871, ibid.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Senator Corbett to Delano, December 19, 1871, Oregon S.I.A., Department of the Interior, Appointment Division, R.G., 48, Box 85.

Grand Ronde which had been assigned to the Catholics at the time Meacham was dismissed. Letters of protest were sent to Harris. The Reverend William Roberts of Portland asserted that the church would not be benefited half as much from any other man and pleaded for Meacham's restoration.[134] He growled at the replacement of the Methodist agent at Grand Ronde, L. S. Dyar, by the Catholic agent, P. R. Sinnott, who, he said, was a rum runner.[135] Harris received another letter signed by fifteen men--officials of the Oregon Methodist conference, president and professors of Willamette University, and pastors of other denominations. It urged the reinstatement of Meacham "for the good of the Indians" because he had done more for them than any of his predecessors.[136] Harris was told that "Mr. Meacham, though holding no denominational connection with our church is one of its warmest and most zealous supporters, giving to it all the influence and character of which one (not a member) is capable."[137] Presiding elder Stratton went to New York in February, 1872, to see what he could do. His letter

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[134]Reverend William Roberts to Harris, February 5, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Ibid.; J. Dillon, William Roberts, George W. Izer, I. D. Driver, J. W. Miller, G. Hines, J. L. Parrish, L. M. Nickerson, A. F. Waller, Josiah Bowersox; P. S. Knight, W. B. Stewart, F. W. Gatch, L. J. Powell, and Lovell L. Rogers to Harris, February 5, 1872, Oregon S.I.A., Department of the Interior, Appointment Division, R.G. 48, Box 85.

[137]Dillon et al. to Harris, February 5, 1872, Oregon S.I.A., Department of the Interior, Appointment Division, R.G. 48, Box 85.

to the Reverend A. E. Waller convinced Meacham that High's unilateral statement of dissatisfaction with the Fort Hall-Klamath transfer was the ultimate cause of his dismissal. Stratton had earlier talked with Attorney General Williams who expressed the belief that a mistake had been made in dismissing Meacham, and Stratton believed he was correct.[138] The dismissal could have been prevented if Secretary Delano had been seen at the outset, but delayed communications (one telegram took two weeks to reach Washington) had apparently made it too late to correct the error, although Stratton was willing to try. He was sure he could have blocked Meacham's removal from office if he had arrived in the East sooner.[139]

No one was willing to accept the responsibility for Meacham's dismissal. Brunot protested that he had not had "the slightest suspicion of this attack on you for your removal,"[140] that he had just read the news in the papers,[141] and that he believed Meacham had acted "justly and fairly" at the Umatilla Council.[142] Wilbur denied having any part in the dismissal, Williams disclaimed any foreknowledge of it or even any consultation on the subject, and Corbett said he was urged

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[138]Stratton to Waller, February 8, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[139]Ibid.

[140]Meacham to Harris, March 14, 1872, ibid.

[141]Ibid.

[142]High to Meacham, February 5, 1872, Oregon S.I.A., Department of the Interior, Appointment Division, R.G. 48, Box 85.

for a month to present a nomination before he yielded.[143] Meacham's dismissal was evidently a "hot potato" that no one wanted to touch.

Meacham fought hard to retain the superintendency. He demanded an investigation, but was denied a hearing.[144] The dismissal hurt him deeply because he believed his integrity and honesty were impugned and desired more than anything else to clear himself "of any stain or impeachment" on his character.[145] It was hard for him to surrender the position because it had become more than a salaried job; it was a life's work, a purpose for living; and he regretted leaving just when the work had "fairly begun."[146] He was obliged to accept the many denials of responsibility for the dismissal, but of High he frequently said, "he wrought more than he intended." He never was able to reconcile Harris' and High's denial of seeking his removal with Stratton's letter which pointed the finger of guilt at them.

Meacham was not dismissed for incompetence. Rather he was a victim of the struggle between Roman Catholics and Methodists over control of Indian agencies, a struggle he tried to mediate honestly. He defended his position on Fort Hall to the last, and to many people. The clearest statement of it was made to Harris:

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[143]Meacham to Harris, March 14, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[144]Meacham to Brunot, March 13, 1872, ibid.

[145]Ibid., January 29, 1872, ibid.

[146]Ibid.; Meacham to Cree, January 19, 1872, ibid.

> A calm, honest, conscientious look over the whole matter will not--in my opinion--discover any sordid or selfish motive that could have prompted my action from beginning to end, but on the other hand it seems impossible for reasonable men, willing to judge by the Golden rule, would fail to see that I was desirous of settling the fight then going on about Agencies; to relieve my Superior in Office--Hon. Sec. Delano--of the constant annoyance arising from so much contention: to secure the stoppage of Catholic publications against Protestant missionaries, and especially against Father Wilbur: to secure the church of my fathers [Methodist]--the only one with whom I ever had any connection, and for whose interest I have worked twenty-five years--the possession and control of "the best Agency in my Superintendency," the most hopeful field for successful missionary work in all the Indian Dept. of which I have any knowledge. That to do this I voluntarily resigned my claim (conceded to me last winter) and "that no injustice be done Mr. High," I proposed to you to withdraw my brother, to which you demurred and expressed regret, saying that if you had any other place you could give Mr. High you would not have my brother sacrificed.[147]

"A mistake was made" appears to have been the sober afterthought on the part of responsible people. The friends of the Indians in Oregon were distressed over Meacham's dismissal, and the Indians were exasperated, but on April 1, 1872, T. B. Odeneal assumed the duties of the office.

Loss of the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs could have ended Meacham's interest in the Indian Service. But within a year he was catapulted into national prominence because of the application of Grant's peace policy after strained relations between the Modoc Indians and white settlers exploded into a war. That story, and Meacham's part in it, is summarized in the next two chapters.

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[147]Meacham to Harris, March 14, 1872, ibid.

CHAPTER V

WHITE - MODOC RELATIONS

Severing official connection from the Bureau of Indian Affairs brought grief and relief to Meacham. Grief, because he was separated from "those poor despised people [who] have taken hold of my life and won my sympathies";[1] and because dismissal brought personal problems: ". . . my children in school, my business gone, money less than I started with and my wife nearly distracted with the excitement of suspense, not knowing the cause of my removal and still fearing that something terrible is behind that may be brought up."[2] Relief, because it enabled him to get away from the tensions caused through the bitterness and strife created by his ouster.

While serving the Government as Indian superintendent, he lived in a Salem residence which was located at the edge of Willamette University campus, on Winter Street between Ferry and Trade.[3] During the 1870's his children attended the university and its academy, and he served a one-year term on the board of trustees, beginning in July,

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[1] Meacham to Brunot, March 13, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[2] Meacham to Mrs. George H. Williams, March 25, 1872, ibid.

[3] The Salem Directory (Salem, Oregon, 1871), 111.

1871.[4] He delivered the commencement address for the medical department in 1872 while still in the throes of the dismissal struggle.[5]

After surrendering the superintendency to his successor, Meacham returned to his Blue Mountain home at Lee's Encampment where he suffered the tragic loss of his brother, and where he dreamed grandiose schemes for making money. The most sensational of these was a plan to build a flume fifteen miles long, from the Blue Mountains to Walla Walla, over which lumber supplies could be floated. The estimated construction cost was $1,000 a mile, and anticipated profits were large.[6] Meacham thought big; he could envision great dreams, but his success ratio in translating them into reality was low. The projected flume was never built.

The loss of the superintendency did not lessen Meacham's loyalty to the Republican party, therefore he decided to wait until after the election to vindicate his honor.[7] He campaigned loyally for Grant who carried Oregon, and cast his electoral vote for the Republican candidate. He went to Washington in the winter of 1873. While there, war with the Modoc Indians of Oregon began, and Meacham was selected to head a Peace Commission charged with the responsibility of probing into the causes

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[4] Minutes of the Oregon Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869, pp. 5-7.

[5] Samuel Case to Meacham, February 21, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[6] C. S. Woodworth to Ivan Applegate, August 3, 1872, Applegate Papers.

[7] Meacham to Mrs. Williams, March 25, 1872, Meacham Papers.

of the war and effecting a just settlement.[8]

In order to understand the origin and work of the commission, it is necessary to trace briefly the events which led to the war and to the appointment of three special commissioners to arbitrate the quarrel between whites and Indians. The first known clash between the Modocs and white men occurred in 1846 when John Charles Fremont's party experienced a Modoc attempt to steal horses from two of the men and an Indian attack that resulted in killing four whites.[9] After Lindsay and Jesse Applegate opened the southern route from Fort Hall in the same year, and emigrant trains began traveling the route via Tule and Klamath Lakes, the trains were attacked frequently by Modocs.[10] It has been asserted that the Modocs killed twenty-four white men in 1847, eighteen in 1849, and up to sixty-two in 1852.[11] Lindsay Applegate tallied the death of ninety-six by Modoc hands between 1846 and 1864.[12] Stealing of horses and cattle accompanied attacks on life. Americans, never willing to lose lives and money, planned retaliation.

The most significant counterattack against the Modocs took place in 1852 and is generally known as the Ben Wright massacre or

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[8]Clum to Meacham, February 8, 1873, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, 1869-1873.

[9]Keith A. Murray, The Modocs and Their War, (Norman, Oklahoma, 1959), 14.

[10]Ibid., 15-17.

[11]Ibid., 17-18; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 299-300.

[12]Portland Oregonian, January 17, 1873.

affair. Wright was the most famous Indian fighter of the period. Using Indian tactics, he was feared but not respected by the Indians. Yreka citizens appointed him head of a volunteer group of twenty-five men to protect the emigrant trains while passing through Modoc country, a task they accomplished effectively. Their last deed before returning to Yreka for the winter was the treacherous killing of forty-seven out of forty-nine Modoc warriors. Meacham and a recent writer, Mr. Keith A. Murray, believed there were five survivors. Meacham asserted the killing took place under a flag of truce; Mr. Murray declared it occurred when Wright walked into the Modoc camp and demanded the return of captured emigrant train animals, goods, and two girl captives. He shot the Indian who refused the demand, dropped to the ground, and his men who surrounded the camp fired over his head on the surprised Indians. Harry L. Wells, a historian of Siskiyou County, California, asserted that Wright took freshly killed beef into the Modoc camp, dropped it on the ground, and sat down beside it. A Modoc woman pointed to an Indian whose sister had been given to Wright a few days before and said, "That is your brother-in-law." Wright immediately killed the Indian and fell flat on his face while his men opened fire. Meacham, Elisha Steele, and Cyrus Townsend Brady have insisted that, preceding the massacre, Wright sent to Yreka for strychnine to poison the Modocs' food while he had them as his camp guests, but failed because the poison was worthless.[13] The story appears to this investigator to be more fancy

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[13]Murray, Modocs and Their War, 21-26; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 288-301; Wells, History of Siskiyou County, 129-33; Cyrus Townsend Brady, Northwestern Fights and Fighters (New York, 1907),

than fact.

The Modocs never forgot nor forgave the Ben Wright massacre. Two of the survivors were leaders in the plot to kill the peace commissioners in 1873.

The gold discoveries of the 1850's in northern California and southern Oregon, with their concomitant emigrations of white people, brought sharp conflicts with the Modocs. It was the arrival of permanent agricultural settlers and cattlemen in the 1860's, however, that created the setting for a seemingly irrepressible conflict.

The people of Jacksonville, Oregon, petitioned James W. Nesmith, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, for aid in 1858 to prevent trouble between the town's citizens and the Indians of the Klamath Lake area. Nesmith replied that the government had no treaty, no agent despite a recommendation that one be appointed in 1857, and no money appropriated for the task.[14] In 1863 information concerning the atrocities committed by the Klamath and Modoc Indians since 1846 was assembled to prove the necessity of establishing a military post at Klamath Lake.[15] A treaty with Klamath and Modoc Indians was finally concluded on October 14,

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229-30; Elijah S. Steele to his Brother, May 27, 1873, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners, Tray 3. Steele forwarded a copy of the letter to the Board of Indian Commissioners with a three-page cover letter explaining that it was written in response to one received from his brother who had raised questions about the charges brought against him by Oregonians. Steele entitled his answer, "Report of E. S. Steele on His Visit with the Indians."

[14] Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, April 3, 1858.

[15] Mayor C. S. Drew to Huntington, March 8, 1863, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1863.

1864. Ratification with amendments was advised in July, 1866; the amendments were approved in December, 1869; and the treaty was proclaimed by the President in February, 1870.[16] During the five plus years after the conclusion of the treaty, white encroachment on Modoc Lands, resistance to the encroachment and to enforced confinement on the Klamath reservation as provided by the treaty, put relations between the whites and the Modocs in a state of permanent tension.

The Modocs agreed by the treaty of 1864 to cede "all their right, title, and claim to all country claimed by them" to refrain from attacks on whites and from aiding or abetting hostile natives, to submit to all United States laws, and to allow the location of other tribes on the reservation. The treaty also provided for the establishment of a reservation in the Klamath Lake area with rights of way for public roads and railroads reserved.[17] It was signed by twenty-seven Indians including Schonchin, the head chief, and Kient-Poos, a subchief of the Modocs, known popularly as Captain Jack.[18]

The Klamath and Modoc Indians took up residence on the reservation. Lindsay Applegate was appointed subagent, and an era of hoped-for peaceful relations was inaugurated. The Klamath Indians, the Modoc Chief Schonchin, and some of his followers continued loyal to the treaty, but Captain Jack and his band soon left the reservation for

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[16] United States Statutes at Large (1869-1871), XVI, 707.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

their home in the Tule Lake-Lost River region.[19] What is known today as the Lava Bed National Park was a part of Modoc land.

A significant event, later skillfully used by Captain Jack, took place the same year the treaty with the United States was concluded. This was a "private" treaty between Captain Jack and Elisha S. Steele, who had come to the California gold fields in 1850 and had located in the Yreka area in 1851. Describing himself as skilled in handling Indians, he became Superintendent of Indian Affairs in California in 1863, but was "legislated out of office" the following year. Steele asserted that Modoc, Klamath, Shasta, Scotts River, Salmon River, and Sacramento River Indians submitted their disputes to him and accepted his decrees as binding.[20] The "private" treaty was requested by the Indians themselves; and Steele, perhaps flattered by the Indians' confidence, concluded realistically that any agreement was better than none, and drew up the document. Two important factors apropos to this study were: 1) a promise to try to secure a reservation for Captain Jack and his band in the Tule Lake-Lost River area, and 2) permission to continue residence in the home territory and trade with the whites.[21]

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[19]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 304; Murray, Modocs and Their War, 41; Knapp to Parker, January 6, 1870, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[20]Steele to Brother, May 27, 1873, Records, Board of Indian Commissioners.

[21]Murray, Modocs and Their War, 37; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1864, pp. 109-110, 120-23; Hubert Howe Bancroft, California Inter Pocula (San Francisco, 1888), 448-50.

After leaving the Klamath reservation in 1865, Captain Jack and his band turned again to the Yreka friends. On August 25 Steele wrote the commanding officer at Fort Klamath and referred to the private treaty he had made with the Modocs guaranteeing them residence in their own country. He pointed out that Captain Jack disliked submission to military rule, that Jack and not Schonchin was chief, and that the Modocs could support themselves on their own land, but not at Klamath Lake with its tradition of death. In fact, Steele believed the Modocs could support themselves more adequately living in their own territory than could the government supply them on a reservation. Steele asserted that the Modocs had been peaceful since he had "quieted" them and induced them to trade in Yreka. The letter had the signed approval of A. M. Rosenborough, county judge, and E. W. Potter, justice of the peace.[22] A distinct California position relative to Captain Jack's band was discernible by 1865.

Opinions, even in California, could change or differ from Steele's. John A. Fairchild wrote Lindsay Applegate in October, 1867, requesting that he go to the Modoc country and remove the Indians to the Klamath reservation. He was confident Captain Jack and his band would yield to Applegate's personal persuasion.[23] Applegate wanted to bring the Modocs in, but was sure the task should not be attempted without the aid of a strong military force. He sent several notices to the Modocs

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[22]Steele to Commanding Officer, Fort Klamath, August 28, 1865, Applegate Papers. This letter is quoted in MS. entitled "The Last Conflict Between the Races." It was apparently written by Oliver C. Applegate, Jr.

[23]John A. Fairchild to Lindsay Applegate, October 29, 1867, ibid.

to return to the reservation, but always they were ignored. In April, 1868, Applegate requested military assistance, but was informed by the Fort Klamath commander that authorization for aid had to come from General Crook. A petition to the general by the fort commander for permission "to assist in bringing the Modocs onto the Reservation; peaceably if possible, but forcibly if required," was denied.[24] Applegate alerted Meacham in May, 1869, to the rapid settling of whites in Modoc country and to their rough treatment of the Indians. He was fearful of a war that could be prevented only by bringing the off-reservation Modocs back where they belonged, a task that could not "be accomplished without military aid" which had "heretofore been withheld."[25] He told retiring Superintendent Huntington on the same day that only a large military force could succeed in the removal task.[26]

Meacham himself, after completing the expedition into eastern Oregon to collect the Snake Indians for removal to the Klamath reservation, led the successful effort to bring Captain Jack and his band back to the reservation. Citizens of the Lost River area had appealed directly to the military at Fort Klamath, who had finally received orders to assist in removal to the reservation when the commander was assured that the Indian agent was prepared to subsist them. After consultation with

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[24]Lindsay Applegate to Huntington, April 30, 1868, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[25]Lindsay Applegate to Superintendent of Indian Affairs [Meacham], May 31, 1869, ibid.

[26]Lindsay Applegate to Huntington, May 31, 1868, ibid.; Applegate to Huntington, August 31, 1868, ibid.

the military authorities, who authorized twelve soldiers to accompany the expedition, Meacham arranged for himself, agent Knapp, Dr. William C. McKay, and the commissary at Yainax, Ivan Applegate, to precede the soldiers to Captain Jack's camp. They would tell the chief of the soldiers' presence only if he refused to go with Meacham. Upon refusal, the twelve soldiers would be brought into camp, and if he still rebelled, Meacham and the others would return to the fort and secure a force large enough to compel obedience.[27] During the initial talk, Captain Jack denied that he was a party to the 1864 treaty and presented letters of good conduct from his Yreka white friends as proof of his right to remain in the home territory. For a time it was doubtful he would yield, but the early, unplanned, and noisy arrival of the soldiers finally convinced the Modocs of the futility of resistance, and they reluctantly returned with Meacham and his party to the Klamath reservation.[28]

The party of 248 Modoc Indians arrived at the reservation on December 30, 1869. The following day goods and blankets of the same good quality that had been distributed to the Snake Indians on December 11 were issued.[29] Captain Jack made friends with the Klamath Indians; old issues were ceremonially buried;[30] but Frank Riddle reported that

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[27]Knapp to Parker, January 6, 1870, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[28]Ibid.; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 320-28.

[29]Knapp to Parker, January 6, 1870, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 333-34; Salem Oregon Statesman, January 5, 20, 1870.

[30]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 300-32.

Jack did not intend to remain on the reservation.[31] The patching-up of old quarrels with the Klamaths was not permanent, and on April 26, 1870, he and his band returned to their home on Lost River.[32] Meacham placed the blame on the Klamath Indians, who constantly annoyed the Modocs, and upon agent Knapp who failed to protect them from the annoyances.[33] He did not blame them for running away, and proposed setting aside a portion of the reservation near Yainax just for the Modocs where they would be under Ivan Applegate's rather than Knapp's supervision.[34] The old chief Schonchin moved his followers to the Yainax area shortly after Jack and his band left.[35]

Immediately after leaving the Klamath reservation, Captain Jack re-established relations with Yreka whites who furnished safe-conduct-request letters and provided statements relative to his friendliness to whites.[36] Lindsay Applegate, on the other hand, warned his sons against the Modocs who had fled the reservation and instructed them to keep their guns ready for use.[37] Fairchild suggested to Jack that he and

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[31] Bancroft, California Inter Pocula, 450

[32] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1870, p. 532; Ivan Applegate to Brother [Oliver], May 5, 1870, Applegate Papers.

[33] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1870, p. 517.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Lush [Lucien Applegate] to Folks [Lindsay Applegate], May 22, 1870, Applegate Papers.

[36] A. M. Rosborough to [Whites], May 13, 1870, ibid.

[37] Lindsay Applegate to Lush [Lucien Applegate], May 5, 1870, ibid.

his head men should lay their complaints before Ivan Applegate at Yainax. These Fairchild outlined: 1) the Modocs were allotted insufficient provisions, and were located on the reservation in a place where Indians could not supply their own; 2) they were not provided with blankets and clothing; and 3) they were repeatedly moved from one location to another, thus losing the fruits of their labor at each place to the Klamath Indians. No white men in Yreka had advised Jack to leave the reservation, Fairchild asserted, but he believed those who had "a pecuniary interest in having more soldiers stationed at Fort Klamath, particularly cavalry," did so advise.[38] Hubert Howe Bancroft scoffingly said that "It was the prospect of allowing his men to be degraded by labor, instead of living off the sale of women and children, which hastened Captain Jack's departure."[39] Meacham categorically denied Jack's charge of insufficient provisions, and absolved Knapp of any blame with respect to this accusation. He did accuse Knapp of not protecting the Modocs from the jibes and taunts of the Klamaths and of causing them to move from location to location.[40]

By July, 1870, Ivan Applegate feared war. Conditions were "truly alarming." Jack's Modocs were riding in bands, armed, and threatening settlers with death. Cattle were shot and left dead on the range and Yainax Indians were laughed at and called cowards. Applegate

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[38] E. W. Potter to Ivan Applegate, May 24, 1870, ibid.

[39] Bancroft, California Inter Pocula, 452.

[40] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 344-47.

requested $500 worth of additional supplies for destitute Indians on the reservation to prevent temptation to join the war band. He believed delay on the part of the military would end in "ruinous war."[41]

The tension between Captain Jack's Modocs and the white settlers rose in intensity in 1870 and continued unabated in 1871. The whites wanted to keep the Modocs from their fishing rights at Lost River.[42] Serious quarrels arose between the Klamaths and Modocs.[43] Captain Jack paid an Indian doctor to cure his sick child. The child died, and Captain Jack, following Indian law, killed the doctor.[44] Friends of the dead man insisted on application of the white man's law. Jack, concerned over this attitude, consulted his friend Steele who gave him an open letter for whites to read. It said the white men should not meddle with the Indians when they perform according to their own laws except "to try to persuade them out of such foolish notions." Treka white men were not "mad" at the Indians for "executing thier [sic] own laws," and Steele exhorted all whites to keep out of danger by observing a hands-off policy and letting Indians settle their affairs among themselves.[45] Jack carried this letter in his pocket while on the Oregon

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[41]Ivan Applegate to Meacham, July 31, 1870, Applegate Papers.

[42]John Meacham to Meacham, March 31, 1871, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

[43]John Meacham to Ivan Applegate, April 5, 1871, Applegate Papers.

[44]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 349.

[45]Steele [Open Letter], June 28, 1871, Applegate Papers.

side of the state line. Nevertheless, an order went out for his arrest for the June 19 murder of the Indian doctor. Even the Sheriff of Siskiyou County, California, was asked to hold Jack and four other Indians until they could be turned over to the army.[46] No one succeeded in arresting Captain Jack, not even Ivan Applegate, Yainax Commissary.

In July, Jack received another document signed by one Californian and three Oregonians--Judge Rosborough, Jesse Applegate, Henry E. Miller of Tule Lake, and John S. Miller of Jacksonville who had interviewed Jack and written up his request to inform his limited world that he would not resist the military nor disturb the white residents in Modoc country.[47] One wonders if fear dictated the writing of Jack's oral statement or if it was a tactic to impress on him the binding nature of his commitment. He could not read, but understood the significance of writing.

Meacham appeared to be convinced by July that the Modocs could never be induced to return to the Klamath reservation.[48] He was ready to declare the Modocs amenable to local laws and, if the military was unwilling to take action against the murderers, to turn the case over

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[46] Ivan Applegate to Meacham, September 10, 1871, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received; Ivan Applegate to Sheriff Siskiyou County, California, July 5, 1871, Applegate Papers.

[47] A. V. Rosborough, Jesse Applegate, Henry F. Miller, John S. Miller [Open Letter], July 5, 1871, Applegate Papers.

[48] Meacham to Agent in Charge at Klamath, July 5, 1871, Meacham Papers.

to the Jackson County Grand Jury.[49] Meacham at this point pressed the first half of his conviction that the Indian should be held responsible to the white man's law and protected by that law.

About three weeks after signing the statement for Jack, Jesse Applegate wrote Meacham his evaluation of the Modoc situation. He believed Jack had the backing of his people in killing the doctor. He declared a state of terrorism existed and that the Indians were living well on the "charities of the settlers, whose fear increased their charities," but were ready to take matters in their own hands since agents and the military had disregarded petitions for protection. A Modoc called Jim had asked Applegate why the whites would not allow them to live at peace in their home. His answer was an attempt to explain the white man's procedure when one man killed another. He finally induced the Indian to promise not to fight soldiers or disturb the settlers until they heard from Meacham.

The Indian detailed to Applegate the Modoc grievances which included those mentioned in Fairchild's letter, with amplifications. Schonchin, he said, had betrayed Jack's band into signing the treaty and had reaped all its advantages, but Jack and his followers preferred living in their own home without any presents or pay. He complained that the soldiers chased the Modocs into the mountains where they had no food supply. The constant dodging of soldiers brought them to a point where ". . . life has no pleasure for us and we are ready to die." At this point Applegate did an odd thing. He repeated to the Indian Jim

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[49]Meacham to Ivan Applegate, July 25, 1871, ibid.

a suggestion he had heard Meacham make at Salem, that of giving the Modocs a small reserve around Tule Lake. This pleased Jim, but Applegate, in reporting to Meacham what he had done, wrote at length against the advisability of granting the reservation. Why did he raise the Indian's hopes for something he was not willing to grant? There is no apparent answer to this question, especially when Applegate closed the report with an expression of fear of a horrible Indian war.[50]

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[50]Jesse Applegate to Meacham, July 27, 1871, Department of War, San Francisco Presidio, Department of the Columbia (National Archives), A., L.S., D.C., 1873, No. 1830. This document, along with many others, is found in a compilation of "Modoc War Official Correspondence and Documents, 1865-1878" by Olaf T. Hagen, Regional Supervisor of Historical Sites. The compilation was completed in May, 1942, for the Lava Beds National Monument, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Region Four. The documents are typed copies bound in two volumes, but numbered as one. There are four sets. One is located at the Bancroft Library; one in Washington, the Department of the Interior Building, National Park Service, Branch of History, Division of Interpretation; one at the Lava Beds National Monument; and one at the San Francisco Office of the National Park Service. The records were transcribed from film which is on file at the office of the Regional Supervisor of the Historic Sites at Region Four Headquarters of the National Park Service, San Francisco. The documents selected are from the United States War Department and Interior Department records in the National Archives in Washington, and from the Applegate Collection.

The writer has examined Hagen's Compilation both at the Bancroft Library and at the National Park Service's office in Washington. Hundreds of the documents in the original were also read at the National Archives. All of the Applegate Papers were studied at the University of Oregon Library. Only the original sources are cited in this work because of the complication of making a dual reference to the same source. Admittedly a few of the sources were read only in Hagen's Compilation. Precedent was set by Mr. Keith A. Murray in his The Modocs and Their War. There is no evidence that he read any of the Modoc War documents at the National Archives, yet he cites the depository as the holder of them. He makes no reference at all to the Hagen Compilation. He did read, however, the Applegate Papers in the original.

Meacham's response to Applegate's letter was a request to John Meacham and Ivan Applegate to visit Captain Jack and his band and make one more effort to secure peace. No attempt to arrest Jack for murder was to be made, and Meacham promised another effort to secure a reservation for the Modocs at the mouth of Lost River. If he failed, the Modocs were to choose between Klamath and the new Harney reservations.[51] John Meacham and Ivan Applegate notified Jack of safe conduct to a meeting that took place in August, about sixty miles southeast of Yainax;[52] it consisted mostly of speeches filled with invectives. Jack detailed his grievances of several years standing, placing particular emphasis on his hatred of the Klamath Indians. He asserted that when he was on the reservation, located on former Klamath Indian land, the Klamaths would constantly say that the trees, the water, the fish were theirs, but that they would allow the Modocs to use them. Jack said Klamaths and Modocs could not live together in peace and he was determined to never try it again. When John Meacham and Ivan Applegate confronted Jack with the settlers' complaints, he hastened to convince them that he had no plans to resist the soldiers and would not try to prevent white people from settling in his country, and promised to advise the young men against molesting the settlers. John Meacham was convinced Jack made these promises only because of fear of the military, for ever

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[51] Meacham to Jessee Applegate, August 2, 1871, Meacham Papers.

[52] Meacham to Ivan Applegate, August 2, 1871, ibid.; [John Meacham] to Meacham, August 6, 1871, Applegate Papers.

since he had left the reservation he had repeatedly said he did not want to see or talk to the agent. For the present, however, John Meacham was confident there was no danger of serious trouble.[53]

Jesse Applegate's letter of July, 1871, was passed on to the military authorities by Meacham. Their reaction was to deny any danger of an Indian outbreak. Captain James Jackson said, "I have no doubt they are insolent beggars, but so far as I can ascertain no one has been hurt, robbed or seriously threatened." Jackson denied the reports that Jack carried with him letters of good conduct from Yreka citizens and stated that settlers in the district where Jack roamed were opposed to his removal. Jackson was unaware of any move for settlers to take matters into their own hands.[54]

Meacham notified Ivan Applegate in November, 1871, that Captain Jack should be told that he must keep peace with the whites, that no instructions from Washington had yet been received, and that Meacham had recommended to the Indian Department that a home be provided for the Modocs near the mouth of Lost River.[55] This was at least the third time Meacham had sent word to Jack concerning the possibility of a reservation there. He made the recommendation official in his 1871 annual

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[53]John Meacham to Meacham, August 21, 1871, San Francisco Presidio, A, L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 1811.

[54]Captain James Jackson to Assistant Adjutant General, Department of Columbia, Portland, Oregon [August, 1871], Office of the Adjutant General, Fort Klamath Letter Book (National Archives), Volume 7.

[55]Meacham to Ivan Applegate, November 11, 1871, Applegate Papers.

report.[56] The statement reflected the conviction that land-hungry persons would oppose the plan, but that a separate reservation was essential since it was impossible to consolidate Indian tribes. The consolidation theory looked good, but the stronger tribe would exterminate the weaker.[57]

Upon Meacham's instructions, Ivan Applegate had another meeting with Captain Jack in late November, but with no new results. Jack and his men stubbornly refused to move from their home to the confinement of a reservation. Applegate became alarmed over their continued defiance of orders because he feared reservation Indians would follow their example. He urged immediate removal by force.[58]

The year 1872 arrived with a stalemate in the relations between the whites and the Modocs of Captain Jack's band. Each attempt to return the Indians to the reservation had been successfully resisted without open warfare. The Indian agents feared to force their return without powerful military support. The Modocs stopped short of open warfare against the encroaching whites because of fear of the soldiers. Mutual fears were kept in balance by the army which apparently was not aware that it was exercising delicate balance of power.

The traditional antagonism between the military and the Indian Department served to fog rather than clarify the issue on how to return

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[56] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1871, pp. 305-06.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ivan Applegate to Meacham, November 30, 1871, Oregon S.I.A., Unregistered Letters Received.

Jack and his band to the reservation. Another factor worked in favor of the Modocs, trade with and support of Yreka citizens. The trade gave the Modocs economic independence and a source of arms and ammunition. The citizens' support tended to confuse the issues between the Indians and white men and pitted Californians against Oregonians. All of these factors came into sharper focus during 1872, a year which ended with a shift in the balance of power sufficient to bring an open clash of arms.

The first three months of the new year saw Meacham fighting a losing battle to retain the superintendent's position while at the same time struggling with the Modoc problem. In January he received a strong petition from sixty-five Jackson County citizens demanding immediate removal of the Modocs. He responded to this pressure by requesting General Edward R. S. Canby, Commander of the Army, Department of Columbia, since August 8, 1870,[59] to remove the Modocs to Yainax on Klamath reservation by military force. He boldly suggested fifty soldiers would be needed to accomplish the removal.[60] Two days later Meacham wrote the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the decision he had made, sent a copy of the letter to General Canby, and asked for telegraphic countermanding of the order if the decision was not approved. He reminded the Commissioner that he had not yet heard from

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[59]Max L. Heyman, "Prudent Soldier: A Biography of Major General E. R. S. Canby, 1817-1873" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1952), 362. This dissertation was produced in book form under the same title in 1959.

[60]Meacham to General Canby, January 23, 1872, Meacham Papers.

the alternative suggestion recommended last year, a separate reservation at Lost River. He informed him that war and bloodshed might result from the removal-by-force effort, but saw no other recourse.[61]

Canby's reply referred to Meacham's letter of the preceding August from which he had understood a temporary settlement, authorizing the Modocs to remain in the Lost River area, had been reached. Canby believed it would not be "expedient or politic" to send the army against them until they received government notification where they were to be permanently located.[62] The general sent copies of the exchange of communications to the General Division Headquarters at San Francisco and wrote a long evaluation of his own. Like Meacham, he was not surprised at the Modoc's unwillingness to return to the reservation, and he regretted especially the long delay in ratifying the treaty. He stated his understanding of Meacham's temporary settlement with the Indians as though he were laying the groundwork for future understanding and action.[63] It was strange that Canby denied military assistance for removal of the Modocs solely on the strength of Meacham's August letter. He who protested delay in treaty ratification appeared ready to accept it with regard to a decision on the Lost River reservation proposal. Did he consider his judgment better than Meacham's? Or did

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[61]Meacham to F. W. Walker, January 27, 1872, ibid.

[62]Petition of Sixty-five Citizens to Governor L. F. Grover of Oregon, January 29, 1872, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 281; Canby to Meacham, February 7, 1873, ibid., No. 920.

[63]Canby to A. G. Division Headquarters, San Francisco, February 6, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 4721.

he procrastinate because he wanted to wait until the new superintendent took office? No conclusive answers have been found.

Perhaps Meacham was stirred to positive action through the accusations by the citizens of Lost River, Link River, Klamath Lake, and Tule Lake country that his delays in enforcing the 1864 treaty had brought the issue to its present dangerous condition.[64] He justified his requisition of troops on the basis of reports from Jesse and Ivan Applegate, Johnson High, and the citizens' petitions. He reiterated his conviction that attempts to arrest Jack and his "bodyguard" would be potentially serious, but settlers had to be protected. The Modocs, he asserted, had broken the agreement by leaving the agreed territory and by behaving unpeaceably toward the settlers. He could see no breach of faith in using military force to effect removal; it was the only way to peace.[65]

General Canby finally ordered a detachment of fifty or sixty cavalry troops to be stationed near the settlers of the Link River and Lost River areas to protect them and maintain the peace.[66] He said that the duty of the military was to protect the settlers and avoid collision between whites and Indians that would prevent the peaceful

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[64] Ibid., Enclosure 7.

[65] Meacham to Canby, February 8, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[66] Louis V. Caziarc to Commanding Officer, District of the Lakes, Camp Warner, February 16, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 27.

settlement of the pending issues.[67] Canby may have been moved to action because Meacham had informed him that Oregon's Governor Lafayette Grover had called at the superintendent's office to discuss the Modoc trouble, and had urged prompt protective measures.[68]

By March Meacham felt squeezed between pressures from citizens and Washington. He wrote Ivan Applegate that he must understand that while the settlers were vindictive in their attitude toward the Indians, Washington was following the peace policy. And even though the settlers might be displeased with him, he would be held responsible by Washington if war should come, and would be dismissed unconditionally. Meacham urged Applegate to explain the nature of responsibility to superiors. The superintendent had gone as far as he dared to compel obedience to the military. He doubted that military action would be sustained in Washington even if the Indians committed terrible depredations.[69]

The army changed its point of view slowly, but it did change. On April 3, 1872, Major Elmer Otis and Agents High and Applegate met Captain Jack and his head men and white settlers in council in Linkville.[70] This council enabled Major Otis to see and hear at first hand the tension that existed between the Modocs and the whites. The meeting

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[67] Canby to Commanding Officer, District of the Lakes, February 17, 1872, ibid. No. 28.

[68] Meacham to Canby, February 19, 1872, Meacham Papers.

[69] Meacham to Ivan Applegate, March 16, 1872, ibid.

[70] Statement of Citizens of Modoc Country to Major Elmer Otis and J. H. High, April 3, 1872, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 604.

moved him to recommend, and General Canby to approve, the removal of the Snake Indians from Klamath reservation to the new one on the Malheur and John Day rivers in order to provide ample room for the Modocs.[71] Canby warned his superior that the Modocs had to be established on a reservation during the coming winter season or trouble would occur.[72] Between January and April, therefore, Canby moved from no action to partial action by dispatching a detachment of peace-keeping troops, and by a definite recommendation for Indian removal during the winter.

Because no further difficulties occurred after the April 3 council, Major Otis recommended that the special detachment of troops be withdrawn from the Modoc country, and General Canby issued the withdrawal order in late May.[73] In July, Washington finally handed down a negative decision on the recommendation to establish a small reservation for the Modocs on Lost River. On the basis of recommendations from Major Otis, Ivan Applegate, the Klamath agent, Jesse Applegate, and Superintendent Odeneal, the Indian Department decided the Modocs should be located at Yainax on Klamath reservation.[74]

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[71]Canby to Assistant Adjutant General (San Francisco), April 18, 1872, and Major Otis to Assistant Adjutant General (Portland), April 15, 1872, and Ivan Applegate to Odeneal, May 8, 1872, Oregon, S.I.A.

[72]Canby to Assistant Adjutant General (San Francisco), April 13, 1872, ibid.

[73]Major Otis to Assistant Adjutant General (Portland), May 11, 1872, Office of Adjutant General, Fort Klamath File Box, 1863-1872; Cazlarc to Commanding Officer, Fort Klamath, May 22, 1872, ibid.

[74]Walker to Odeneal, July 6, 1872, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 904.

General Canby had withheld positive army action until the decision on the Lost River reservation was given, but now the way was cleared for effective military aid. Superintendent Odeneal received instructions in September to remove the Modocs to Camp Yainax "peaceably if you can, forcibly if you must."[75] At last the necessary decision and authorization to make the military a decisive weight in the balance of power had been made. What use would be made of it? November brought the answer.

General Canby prepared his officers at Camp Warner and Fort Klamath for the impending attempt to remove the Modocs to Yainax, all necessary assistance was to be made available.[76] Superintendent Odeneal arrived at Fort Klamath on November 25. His communication to the army commanders, seconded by Major John Green, was that if it should be necessary to use troops, a large force would be needed.[77] Swift moving events gave little time to prepare an adequate number of troops. Odeneal sent Ivan Applegate to the Modoc camp with orders to arrange a meeting with him at Link River. Captain Jack's definite "no" caused Odeneal to wash his hands of the whole problem, and on November 27 he transferred the matter to the "Army Department," requesting that the

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[75]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 361; Odeneal to Lieutenant Colonel Frank Wheaton, November 25, 1872, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2304.

[76]John Q. Adams to Commanding Officer (Fort Klamath), November 14, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2304.

[77]Odeneal to Wheaton, November 25, 1872, ibid.; Major Green to Acting Assistant Adjutant General (District of the Lakes), November 25, 1872, Fort Klamath Letter Book, Volume 8.

Modocs be compelled to obey by military force. He expressed the pious hope that the goal could be accomplished without bloodshed.[78] Two days earlier, Major Green, the Fort Klamath commander, requested the cavalry troops of Camp Warner to join his command if military force was to be used,[79] yet on November 23, without waiting for the reinforcements, he sent out thirty-five troops to arrest Captain Jack and bring in his band of Modocs.[80]

Thirty-five soldiers failed in the assigned task. They had the element of surprise in their favor when they rode unexpectedly into Captain Jack's camp on the south side of Lost River at dawn, November 29, 1872. After forty-five minutes of tense discussion, the charged atmosphere erupted into open battle. Some said the Modocs fired first, others said Lieutenant F. A. Boutelle opened the hostilities, while Boutelle himself asserted that he and the Indian Scar-faced Charley appeared to have fired simultaneously. Afterward neither he nor Scar-faced Charley could decide which fired first.[82] The first battle

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[78]Odeneal to Wheaton, November 15, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2304.

[79]Major Green to Acting Assistant Adjutant General (District of the Lakes), November 25, 1872, Fort Klamath Letter Book, Volume 8.

[80]Major Green to Odeneal, November 28, 1872, ibid.

[81]Oliver Applegate Account of Battle on Lost River, November 29, 1872, Applegate Papers.

[82]Yreka Journal, December 11, 1872, January 1, 1873; Jacksonville Democratic Times, December 7, 1872; Brady, Northwestern Fights and Fighters, 233-34, 261, 264-67. The last pages (264-67) are Major F. A. Boutelle's account of his duel with Scar-faced Charley.

resulted in one white killed and seven wounded.[83] The soldiers captured the camp, but not the Indians. A part of Captain Jack's band under the leadership of Curley-Headed Doctor and Hooker Jim had their camp on the north side of the river. Immediately, upon hearing the firing on the opposite side, they fought a short engagement with a group of settlers led by Oliver Applegate.[84] After a brief fight, this band broke off the battle and headed down the valley to kill unsuspecting white male settlers; a total of eleven died that day.[85]

News of the battle, followed by the murder of eleven unarmed and unarmed settlers, shocked Oregonians and the nation. Immediately the game of assessing blame began. Superintendent Odeneal declared that ninety-nine out of one hundred Oregonians knew the fight could not have been avoided, but he placed the greater if not the entire responsibility[86] for the insubordination of the Indians on a few men in Yreka. Lieutenant Boutelle declared the fight to be a dreadful mistake, but that the "greater sin lies at the door of Mr. Odeneal who would not trust his precious skin to a council on Lost River; but preferred treacherously to send troops with guns in place of an agent of the

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[83]Jackson to Major Green, December 2, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 2303.

[84]Applegate Account of the Battle on Lost River, November 29, 1872, Applegate Papers.

[85]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 368-69; Jacksonville Democratic Times, December 7, 1872.

[86]Odeneal to Walker, December 23, 1872, Oregon S.I.A., 1873.

Indian Department with an olive branch."[87] Major Green sarcastically reported that, according to his understanding, Odeneal left Linkville for Jacksonville as soon as he heard of the fight.[88] John McCall wrote questioningly about Odeneal's return to Salem so soon after the opening of hostilities.[89] Lieutenant Colonel Frank Wheaton plaintively stated he had been assured that Captain Jack would not resist military authority, and that the battle was "as unexpected as it was deplorable."[90] Wheaton had grounds for thinking as he did for Captain Jack had declared many times that he would not resist the army. Another officer complained that the Indians could have been wiped out if opportunity to submit without force had not been given.[91] General Canby protested that his orders of September 10 and October 30 included the troops at Bedwell and District of the Lakes which should have been in Modoc country before attempting removal.[92] Each person related closely to the events deftly placed the blame in whole or in part on others, or on a policy. In reality, the clash of arms came as a surprise to both sides,

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[87]Brady, Northwestern Fights and Fighters, 269.

[88]Major Green to Assistant Adjuntant General (Portland), December 3, 1872, Fort Klamath Letter Book, Volume 8.

[89]McCall to Oliver Applegate , December 1, 1872, Applegate Papers.

[90]Colonel Wheaton to Assistant Adjutant General (Portland), December 5, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 2304.

[91]Green to Assistant Adjutant General, December 3, 1872, Fort Klamath Letter Book, Volume 8.

[92]Canby to Adjutant General (Division of the Pacific), December 3, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2157.

although each knew it could and probably would happen.

The murder of the settlers by Modocs created fear and bitterness. It was to avoid this killing that the settlers had so insistently sought the removal of the Indians. The preceding May, the Jacksonville Democrat Times insisted that the presence of nonreservation Indians was "seriously impeding . . . [the country's] settlement and rending the tenure of life and property at all times precarious."[93] The frontier Oregonians knew perfectly well why the danger existed; the newspaper stated it clearly. The whites, it said, "have established a cordon . . . around [the Indians], and the Indian hunting grounds are being contracted yearly, filling the tribes with rage and anguish, and affording all the incentives to hostile acts which anger and despair can give."[94] Knowing the why of the "hostile acts" did not prevent Oregonians from labelling settler-killing a crime, and demanding the arrest and trial of the murderers before civil authorities and the crushing of Captain Jack's band.[95]

While assessment of blame for the first clash of arms went on, preparations were made for a second battle. Californians and Oregonians called for state troops. The Oregon militia, led by Brigadier General John E. Ross, was called out for thirty days. Oliver Applegate was

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[93]Jacksonville Democratic Times, May 18, 1872.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Governor Grover to Canby, December 7, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2223.

commissioned Captain of scouting Company B.[96] Californians of the Yreka area opposed calling the militia because of cost; they wanted volunteers only.[97] One Californian, whose proposal was not given serious consideration, said the cheapest way to exterminate the Modocs was to place a $50 bounty on each scalp. This bounty would induce old mountaineers to go after them and twenty mountaineers would be more effective than two regiments of soldiers.[98] As a matter of fact, the newspapers of the Sacramento-San Francisco region opposed the war and took the side of the Indians. Captain Jack and his followers were presented as peaceable and industrious Indians who wished only to make an honest living off their lands. The Modoc mode of life was represented as seriously interfering "with the greed of gain of the officers in charge of the neighboring reservation." The editors asserted that the Modocs were encouraged to begin and continue war in order that the encouragers could make a profit out of it.[99]

Sympathy for the Modocs reached the highest office of the state. Governor Booth proposed to Washington that the Modocs be assigned 3,000 acres at the mouth of Lost River since they wanted only to be independent and self-supporting. He believed the approval of his proposal would be

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[96]General John E. Ross to Oliver Applegate, December 10, 1872, Applegate Papers.

[97]Yreka Journal, January 8, 1873.

[98]Ibid., December 18, 1872.

[99]Yreka Union, February 15, 1873.

cheaper and safer than a long and expensive war.[100] The editor of the Yreka Union said the majority did not favor Governor Booth's plan, and regretted to know the governor had sided with the murderers. The editor's own philosophy was clearly spoken: "We believe that any white man's life, however humble he may be, is worth all the murdering vagabond Indians now roving over the continent."[101]

Because of official and newspaper pro-Modoc feelings in California, only twenty-five volunteers presented themselves for the second battle with the Modocs, which began on January 17, 1873. The attack was launched against 54 Modoc Indian warriors by 405 white troops, including regulars, California and Oregon volunteers, and Indian scouts.[102] The Modocs inflicted a surprising and humiliating defeat on the white troops. An officer of the Oregon volunteers candidly reported: "To tell the truth, we were badly whipped, without seeing the enemy. . . .We don't know that we killed a single Indian."[103] Neither the Oregonians nor the Californians could believe that so few could defeat so many. They were certain there were at least 200 Indian

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[100] Ibid., January 4, 1873.

[101] Ibid., January 25, 1873.

[102] Lieutenant E. W. Stone to Assistant Adjutant General (Portland), December 9, 1872, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1872, No. 2262; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 400, 408: Meacham asserted that one of Captain Jack's men was wounded two days before the battle, thus making fifty-three available warriors; William H. Boyle, "Personal Observations on the Conduct of the Modoc War" (MS. Bancroft Library), 22-23; Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, January 25, 1873.

[103] Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, January 25, 1873.

warriors in the battle, and that many more were joining up.[104] The Lava Beds turned out to be a fortress of unprecedented strength, and after the battle it was concluded that it would take 1,000 men two weeks to defeat the Modocs.[105] John Fairchild, a friend of the Modocs who lived on a nearby ranch on the California side, but who led the twenty-five California volunteers into the fight, said the strength of the Modoc position surpassed anything he had seen and he hoped Governor Booth would change his mind and "let us raise some more troops."[106]

Two military defeats, the strong defensible position held by the Modocs, the need for the build-up of 1,000 soldiers, the mounting costs, and the pressures from the friends of the Indians demanding application of the peace policy to the Modoc problem, contributed to President Grant's decision to appoint a peace commission whose labors are examined in the next chapter.

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[104]Yreka Union, January 22, 1873.

[105]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, January 25, 1873.

[106]Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CHAIRMAN OF THE MODOC PEACE COMMISSION

Pressures for the investigation of the causes of the war began immediately after the first battle in November, 1872. John Beeson, labeled by Loren B. Priest one of three individual promoters of Indian reform,[1] wrote a congressman early in December and demanded that the war be stopped and an investigation of the causes be made.[2] A citizen from Sacramento, just before the second battle, sent President Grant a clipping from the Sacramento Union which called for an investigation before beginning "a war of extermination." The newspaper was convinced the Modocs had been ill-treated and exploited.[3] In late January one of the army captains in charge of troops at the Modoc front presented the Indian side of the story. He declared that the trouble originated with a few cattle-men and "land grabbers" and that the Indians had "fought like men fighting for their rights." The "so-called murderers," he asserted, had fought only for their lives and would have been "fools and cowards" to have done less. The captain believed lives and property could be saved by sending immediately an empowered negotiator who would

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[1]Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, 59.

[2]John Beeson to Honorable H. B. Coven, December 7, 1872, Oregon S.I.A.

[3]John H. James, Jr. to President, United States, January 15, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., Special File, Modocs, 1873.

"act justly and honorably" with the Modocs.[4]

Oregon and California newspapers first heard rumors concerning the appointment of a peace commission about February 1. L. M. Foulke of San Francisco had enquired of Judge A. M. Rosborough and Elisha Steele of Yreka whether one would serve as a commissioner to negotiate a peace treaty with the Modocs. The Yreka Union doubted that such a plan truly existed and credited the move to an effort on the part of San Francisco sentimentalists to gain support for the Indians.[5] The Oregon Statesman appeared to have definite information on a discussion of the Modoc War by the President's cabinet and on a decision to establish a three-man peace commission.[6] The full story, as put together over a period of weeks by newspapers and by participants in the efforts to create the commission, was as follows:

Elisha L. Applegate, who was in Washington as emigrant agent for Oregon, actually originated the peace commission idea and sold it to the Oregon men then in Washington. The Oregon delegation in Congress assisted by Applegate and other prominent Oregonians convinced the President through Attorney General Williams and the Secretary of the Interior or

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[4]Captain R. F. Bernard to Major Samuel Buck, Adjutant General, San Francisco, January 26, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 724.

[5]Yreka Union, February 1, 1873.

[6]Salem Oregon Statesman, February 1, 1873.

of the move's expediency.[7] Applegate wrote his brother that he had taken the step because he felt it the safest for the settlers. The reason he recommended Meacham for chairman of the commission was never made public; he wanted some one at the scene of conflict with authority who was friendly to the Applegates. Meacham himself denied he had had anything to do with the forming of the commission or that he sought membership on it.[8] Samuel A. Clarke, former owner and editor of the Oregon Statesman, supported Meacham's assertion.[9] Aside from Elisha Applegate's desire to have a person in the field friendly to his family, Meacham was selected because he was a "pow-wow" man. Applegate believed talking was cheaper than fighting and that the right man could talk the Indians into anything, if he was willing to talk long and often enough.[10]

Applegate's argument to the Secretary of the Interior for a peace commission included insistence that all Klamath reservation Indians and Modocs be moved to the coast reservation.[11] This was a resurrection of the idea pushed by Meacham and others two years before--the placing of all Indians west of the Cascade mountains on one reservation. It is clear the recommendation to create a peace commission was not based on "Lo, the poor Indian" sentimentality. Oregon Republicans in

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[7]Elisha Applegate to Oliver Applegate, March 7, 1873, Applegate Papers; Portland Oregonian, February 14, 1873; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 415-17; Sacramento Daily Union, April 14, 1873.

[8]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 420.

[9]Sacramento Daily Union, April 14, 1873.

[10]Yreka Journal, February 21, 1873.

[11]Elisha Applegate to Delano, January 27, 1873, quoted in Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 417.

Washington and at home believed a war would hurt emigration to Oregon, would be dangerous to settlers in the area, and would cost an excessive sum of money.[12] But even though the recommendation was not based in sentimentality, sentimentalists had earlier suggested the idea and were ready to embrace the Oregon proposal.

The Secretary of the Interior on January 31, 1873, notified the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs that Alfred B. Meacham, T. B. Odeneal and James H. Wilbur had been selected to constitute the commission. Ten dollars a day and actual expenses were stipulated for Meacham; the other two members were to receive expenses only.[13] Meacham immediately objected to the presence of Odeneal and Wilbur on the commission. It was believed he objected to Wilbur because he was his enemy, and to Odeneal because it was his orders which started the war.[14] The government yielded to Meacham's objections and appointed his nominees, Jesse Applegate and Samuel Case, the second an Indian agent at Siletz reservation.[15]

Reaction to the establishment of a peace commission followed party lines in Oregon and northern California. The Republican papers approved the plan (with reservations) and Democratic papers opposed it.

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[12]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 416; Portland Oregonian, February 12, 1873.

[13]Delano to Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 31, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., Letters Received, 1864-1873.

[14]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, March 8, 1873; Salem Oregon Statesman, February 23 and 25, 1873.

[15]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 421; Yreka Union, February 8, 1873; Yreka Journal, February 12, 1873.

The Democratic Yreka Union opposed both the commission and its personnel, while its political ally, the Oregon Statesman, found no fault with the personnel, but believed the Indian Department had made "an ass of itself in adopting a Peace Commission."[16] As events unfolded in succeeding weeks the Democrats in Oregon and northern California became more violent in their opposition to the commission, while the Republicans tried to strike a balance between loyalty to party and dislike of the peace commission. Republican antipathy to the peace commission increased as the days progressed.

With the issue of the personnel of the peace commission settled, the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent Meacham his instructions on February 5. Significantly these required him to confer with General Canby in all proceedings and to act under his advice as far as possible, "and always with his cooperation." It was evident from the beginning Meacham was not to have a free hand.

The instructions outlined the peace commission's objectives: to discover the causes for the hostilities between the army and the Modocs and to devise measures by which the war might be discontinued and peace restored. It was strongly recommended that the Indians be removed to a coast reservation in Oregon, but if this proved impossible some other location which would accomplish the same purpose could be considered. The commission was forbidden to give orders to the military, but could express the Indian Department's wish that "no more force or

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[16]Yreka Union, February 22, 1873; Salem Oregon Statesman, February 6, 8, 1873.

violence be used than . . . shall be deemed absolutely necessary and proper." The desire was to gain the Indians' confidence and "voluntary consent" to plans for their welfare.[17] Meacham was realistic enough to know that most Oregonians would scoff at the idea of securing the Modoc Indians' voluntary consent. They were convinced the Indians would respond to one thing only, force. When Meacham, therefore, with instructions in hand, started the transcontinental journey to the Modoc country and a meeting with fellow commissioners, he knew he must confront an aroused Oregon public opinion.

Oregon newspapers attacked the government's peace policy. It was called a policy which resulted in "wholesale butchery of the whites," debt increase, and stoppage of immigration.[18] The Indians, it was asserted, could not profit from contact with the whites since they absorbed only the vices and diseases of the "baser whites"; the two races should be kept apart.[19] Oregonians were disturbed over the California governor's efforts to secure a reservation for the Modocs on Lost River, and rejoiced when Washington refused.[20]

Members of the pioneer Applegate family were leaders in the debate between Oregon and California and were both reflectors and molders of Oregon opinion. Lindsay Applegate was wrathful over

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[17]Clum to Meacham, February 5, 1873, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, 1869, 1873, Volumes 89-112.

[18]Jacksonville Democratic Times, December 21, 1872.

[19]Yreka Union, January 11, 1873.

[20]Portland Oregonian, January 18, 1873.

California efforts to secure sympathy for the Modocs in Washington, and counterattacked with a letter to the Oregon Statesman which was reprinted in many papers. His son, Lucien Applegate, attempted to offset the influential opinions of the San Francisco and Sacramento papers by publishing an article against the Modocs and in defense of the Applegates in the San Diego Union. Lindsay summarized the Applegate conviction when he said that currently the only thing favorable done for the Modocs was to kill them.[21] Many people believed the Modocs sought to kill the Applegates, and it was rumored they had offered a $100 reward for their scalps.[22]

The articulate Applegate family was able to communicate its attitudes to a wide reading public because newspapers read and copied each other. Lucien Applegate's San Diego Union article was reprinted by the San Francisco Call and endorsed by the Yreka Union.[23] The Oregon Sentinel attacked the San Francisco Chronicle's attempt to "injure" the white man and create sympathy for renegade Indians, and printed the whole of Applegate's article in reply.[24] The Oregon Sentinel believed false reporting had caused the San Francisco Chronicle

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[21]Lucien Applegate to Oliver Applegate, January 26, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[22]Samuel Gault to Oliver Applegate, January 26, 1873, ibid.; Ivan Applegate to Oliver Applegate, December 13, 1872, ibid.; Lucien Applegate to Oliver Applegate, January 1, 1873, ibid.; Portland Oregonian, January 20, 1873; Yreka Journal, February 5, 1873.

[23]Yreka Union, January 22, 1873.

[24]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, February 1, 1873.

and the Sacramento Union to take a pro-Modoc stand. It called for total "annihilation of the Indian chiefs and murderers of Jack's tribe, and a banishment of the rest to a distant reservation." To do otherwise, it asserted, was "to offer a premium for murder."[25] The Sentinel's statements accurately reflected the majority Oregon position on the Modoc War. Oliver Applegate identified his and the Oregon position as follows: First, the unconditional surrender of Captain Jack and his tribe; second, the execution of the murderers; and third, the transportation of the remainder to a distant reservation.[26] The Governor of Oregon led the state in demanding these terms.[27]

As Meacham neared the rendezvous for the peace commissioners, he was presented with a fait accompli on the part of Oregonians: The Jackson County grand jury indicted the Modoc murderers who had killed the whites the preceding November.[28] Meacham was so stirred by the event he wired the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington from Yreka, California, that as the result of Governor Grover's demand for the surrender of Indians to civil authorities and the bills of indictment brought against the Modocs a conflict of authority was inevitable. The people of Oregon, he said, would accept no other peace than that

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, February 20, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[27]Salem Oregon Statesman, February 11, 1873.

[28]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, February 15, 1873.

demanded by Governor Grover.[29] And so the issue of state versus federal authority was joined before Meacham met the other members of the peace commission.

By the middle of February, all members of the peace commission were converging on Linkville, Oregon, where they were to have their first meeting.[30] Jesse Applegate, the first arrival at Linkville, wrote his brother concerning appointment to the commission and expressed concern over the "many difficult points to harmonize."[31] Only a few days previously he had written to the Washington Chronicle that white people in the Modoc country were in a state of siege. He emphasized the danger of economic disaster to the settlements if there should be a general Indian outbreak and a long war.[32] His interest in serving on the commission, therefore, stemmed from harsh economic and physical danger factors, not sentiment for "Lo, the poor Indian." Samuel Case's interest appeared to parallel Applegate's; both stood squarely on the Oregon platform.[33]

General Canby's relation to the peace commission was unique. An advisory member, he held more power than any of the others. A skilled professional soldier, he knew how to obey orders and to

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[29]Meacham to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 16, 1873, telegram, Oregon S.I.A., Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[30]Jacksonville Oregon Sentinel, February 15, 1873.

[31]Jesse Applegate to Lindsay Applegate, February 9, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[32]Yreka Journal, February 12, 1873.

[33]Salem Oregon Statesman, March 18, 1873.

subordinate personal convictions while effectively implementing official government policy. Politically astute, he knew how to protect himself from personal attack and maintain public confidence. A few days before notice of the peace commission's appointment arrived, Canby instructed Colonel Alvin C. Gillem to consider Captain Jack's Modocs as any other criminals, to press operations against them, and to turn over the murderers, if captured, to civil authorities. He believed the Indian department had extended considerate treatment of the Modocs to the limit.[34] To his superior, General William T. Sherman, he administered a verbal sedative to deaden any feeling of guilt the army might have for not providing sufficient troops at the time of the attempted removal of the Modocs by insisting that the Indian outbreak would have occurred whether few or many troops had been used. Canby emphasized that he had repeatedly refused to use force until the Indians' pretention to the Lost River reservation had been officially decided, but now he believed they should be treated as criminals.[35] Immediately following these communications, presidential orders through General Sherman to Canby and to subordinate officers in the field, commanded that troops be used only to protect citizens.[36] War was to be avoided.

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[34]Canby to Colonel A. C. Gillem, January 29, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.S., D.C., 1873, No. 108.

[35]Canby to General W. T. Sherman, January 30, 1873, ibid., No. 134.

[36]E. D. Townsend, Adjutant General, to General Sherman, January 30, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 212; Sherman to Canby, January 31, 1873, ibid., No. 211; Canby to Lieutenant E. W. Stone, telegram, January 30, 1873, ibid., No. 133.

The peace policy was now fully applied to the Modoc Indians, and Canby was ordered to leave Portland and go in person to the war front to direct the army and advise the peace commission. He much preferred to turn the Modoc fighting and negotiations into the hands of his commanding field officer, but Washington superiors demanded his presence.[37] On February 14 he notified Mrs. Canby of his arrival in Linkville where he met Colonel Gillem and two of the commissioners.[39] Meacham, the most important commissioner, arrived on February 19 and met all other members the same day.[39] The weather was intensely cold, resulting in numbed fingers that hindered desk work.[40] In spite of the cold, the commission completed its work of organization on the first day, and Case and Applegate forwarded their acceptances of appointment to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.[41] Oliver Applegate was designated secretary, a strategic position for protection of the Applegate

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[37]Canby to Wife, April 10, 1873 (as quoted in Louisa J. Speed, "Personal Recollections of General Canby; With Letters Hitherto Unpublished," MS, microfilm copy, originally from Dr. Max Heyman, one copy now in Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library). According to Dr. Heyman, the discoverer of the MS., the original letters are lost or destroyed and the quotes in the MS. are all that remain. All letters from "Canby to Wife" are from this source.

[38]Ibid., February 15, 1873.

[39]Ibid., February 18, 19, 1873.

[40]Ibid., February 21, 1873.

[41]Samuel Case to Clum, February 19, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., 1873; Jesse Applegate to Clum, February 19, 1873, ibid.

name and the family's interests.[42] On the same day, in response to Canby's request that California be represented, the Secretary of the Interior added A. M. Rosborough to the commission by telegraph.[43] The new member arrived on February 27.[44]

Meacham read the Washington instructions to the peace commission at the first meeting. Canby was concerned when he learned that causes of the conflict were to be investigated. He hurriedly wrote the Assistant Adjutant General at Washington to take note of the peace commission instructions which referred only to the April 12, 1872, directive to Superintendent Odeneal (the order for removal of Modocs to Klamath reservation and to protect them from the Klamath Indians; if this were not possible then a new reservation was to be selected), and said nothing about the later decision which ruled against the Modoc request for a reservation on Lost River. Canby wanted it understood that he had refused to use force until that decision had been made.[45]

There was much newspaper speculation over what was taking place in the peace commission during the first few days after formal organization. Papers reported their own wishful thinking when they said that

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[42]Ivan Applegate to Oliver Applegate, February 19, 1873, Applegate Papers; John McCall to Oliver Applegate, February 17, 1873, ibid.

[43]Delano to Canby, February 19, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 914.

[44]Canby to A. M. Rosborough, February 24, 1873, ibid., L.S., D.C., 1873, Vol. III, p. 6-7. Yreka Journal, February 26, 1873; Canby to Wife, February 28, 1873.

[45]Canby to Assistant Adjutant General, February 21, 1873, San Francisco Presidio A., L.S., D.C., 1873, Vol. III, pp. 4-5.

the commission was acting in unity and would demand the three surrender terms required by Oregonians.[46] This consensus soon changed to an assertion that the commission was divided: Commissioner Case favoring unconditional surrender, and Commissioners Applegate and Meacham declaring the Modocs had been badly treated.[47] The idea of a peace commission was so intensely disliked by Oregonians and many Yreka Californians that the newspapers of these areas found it impossible to be objective and impartial in evaluating the words, acts, and efforts of the commission. "The Peace Commission business is a perfect farce," said the Yreka Journal. It wanted to know why the commanding general was not assigned to work out peace terms (if that was desired) rather than pick out Oregonians who had secured the appointment of the commission to cover up the tracks of former superintendents of Indian Affairs.[48] Canby's recommendation to add a Californian to the commission apparently stemmed from criticism of this kind.

The Yreka Journal was pro-Applegate in its stand, declaring forcefully that the Applegates had had no dealings with the Modocs, which falsified the accusation that it was they who had starved the Indians and had failed to supply them with sufficient blankets while on the Klamath reservation.[49] This Yreka newspaper was Republican in its politics, antipeace commission in its attitude, and pro-Oregon in its

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[46]Salem Oregon Statesman, February 22, 1873.

[47]Ibid., February 25, 1873.

[48]Yreka Journal, February 26, 1873.

[49]Ibid.

position on the Modoc War. The combination of these factors made it and many Oregon newspapers natural allies of the Applegates. By February 26 the Applegate campaign in favor of the Oregon position and in defense of themselves was beginning to pay off. Oliver Applegate wrote a confidential letter to his father saying that influential California newspapers were gradually taking the right view and that the Applegates stood "with the whole people of Oregon on the same platform."[50] Applegate further reported that the peace commission had prepared its report on the causes of the Modoc War and "of course exempts us from blame."[51] This culmination was not unexpected since Jesse Applegate was a member of the commission, Oliver Applegate the secretary, and Meacham their friend the chairman. Oliver Applegate boasted to his father that Ivan Applegate had "more influence with him [Meacham] than any other man."[52] Applegate control of Meacham was not as complete as desired for about ten days later Lindsay Applegate, disgusted with Meacham's stand for peace, wrote that he wished "Meacham would leave for he is a fool."[53]

It is difficult to assess accurately the actual work of the peace commission and of Meacham, the commission chairman. The very existence of the commission indicated the desire on the part of President Grant and his administration to demonstrate restraint and humanity

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[50]Oliver Applegate to Father, February 26, 1873. Applegate Papers.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Lucien Applegate to Oliver Applegate, a footnote in Rachel Applegate to Brother, n.d., ibid.

in the treatment of Indians, a policy that at the same time satisfied a growing number of Eastern humanitarians. This policy, however, was neither understood by nor acceptable to fifty-four warriors of the small tribe of Modoc Indians, and was rejected by the State of Oregon and by many Northern Californians.

With various antagonistic forces at work, the peace commission was faced with an insuperable task. On the one hand, three commissioners, representing the peace policy of the national Government, were to talk the fifty-four armed Indians into laying down their weapons and submitting to removal. On the other hand, the army, representing the mailed fist of the national Government, was poised with weapons and a thousand men to strike the Modocs if the commission failed. A third force was the relentless pressure of Oregonians working for the removal of the peace commission and the unleashing of an army attack on the Indians. The Modocs, the objects of the above trinity of power and victors in battle, demanded that they be allowed to live in their home territory (Lost River and the Lava Beds) and that the soldiers be removed from their land. Meacham, chairman and leader of the experiment in moral persuasion, was keenly aware that the odds were against success. He knew the commission did not have full authority to act and that its true chairman was the representative of the mailed fist, General Canby. Yet he tried to play a chairman role and received the abuses that naturally fell to the head of a hated commission.

The efforts to secure peace were hesitant and devious. The first urgent need was to establish communication with the Modocs to inform them of the existence and purpose of the peace commission and

the meaning of a truce. To accomplish this, Bob Whittle and his Klamath Indian wife Matilda, and a Modoc woman, "One-eyed Dixie," were sent to the Lava Beds on February 19. They reported the following day that the Indians were willing to meet the California rancher John Fairchild and Bob Whittle to arrange for a meeting with the peace commission.[54] Fairchild and Whittle, with the Indian women as interpreters, met with Captain Jack and his lieutenants to name the personnel and explain the purpose of the peace commission. The Modoc chief professed a desire for peace, but, fearing the presence of soldiers at a meeting with the commission,[55] he refused to leave the Lava Beds for a talk. It was during Fairchild's meeting with Captain Jack and his men that the Modocs requested bringing their friend and adviser, Elisha Steele of Yreka, into the talks.[56]

Immediately after Fairchild and his party reported to the peace commission on February 23, Steele was sent for in order to comply with the Modoc request, but he was not added to the commission; Judge Rosborough was the only addition at this time.[57] On February 27 the commission decided what terms would be offered the Modocs: Unconditional surrender, United States protection until a distant permanent home

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[54]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, pp. 73-74; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 422-23.

[55]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 424; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74.

[56]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 424.

[57]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 424; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74.

could be found, and general amnesty for all Modocs.[58] Canby wrote his wife on February 28 that he had recommended these terms and that to his surprise the commission adopted them "without dissent or discussion."[59] Meacham's official report in September stated that he was the only one to vote against these terms.[60] The minutes of the meeting are not available, and the investigator is inclined to believe Canby since his opinion was written the day after the event, and Meacham's months later, after Canby's death. Meacham's later evaluations could have been colored by subsequent events.

The terms of surrender were sent by the commission through Steele, the confidant of the Modocs.[61] Canby was not at all convinced the Modocs would accept,[62] and Meacham, in retrospect, knew it was unwise to send peace terms through a third party.[63] Steele, accompanied by Fairchild, Frank Riddle, and his Modoc wife as interpreters, and several news correspondents went to meet Captain Jack on March 5.[64] He returned from this meeting jubilantly reporting that the Modocs had accepted the peace terms. Meacham in his final report declared that

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[58] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74; Salem Oregon Statesman, March 6, 1873.

[59] Canby to Wife, February 28, 1873.

[60] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74.

[61] Ibid.; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 427.

[62] Canby to Wife, February 28, 1873.

[63] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74.

[64] Ibid.

only Captain Jack accepted the terms; the other Indians did not.[65] Fairchild doubted that Steele had correctly understood the Modocs. Steele proposed returning to Captain Jack the next day in order to prove that the Modocs had accepted the surrender terms.[66] The return trip proved the Modocs were not ready to surrender and the Indians' confidence in Steele to be good only as long as he worked in their favor. Steele and H. Wallace Atwell, correspondent for the Sacramento Union, escaped with their lives only because Captain Jack and Scar-faced Charley gave them armed protection during the night.[67]

In the interval between Steele's first and second trip to the Lava Beds, Meacham wrote Oliver Applegate that the Modocs had accepted the peace terms, including removal to a distant country. He believed the terms should satisfy all white men, but knew some would oppose the peace because it granted amnesty to the killers of the white settlers.[68] Lindsay Applegate wrote his son that if the peace terms included amnesty they were "a disgusting farce." The Indians, he said, must be taught a lesson by use of force or other tribes would get ideas.[69] The Oregon

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[65] Ibid.; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 428.

[66] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 428; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74.

[67] Murray, Modocs and Their War, 151-52; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 74; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 428, 430.

[68] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, March 7, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[69] Lindsay Applegate to Oliver Applegate, March 9, 1873, ibid.

Statesman made an emotional attack against the peace commission and the peace terms. The proposal of "amnesty to the murderers and a better reservation . . ." was declared to be disgraceful to the United States. With hissing adjectives the editor declared it to be immoral to offer such terms to a "band of hoodlums," "renegades," "outlaws from their own tribe," "plunderers and murderers of settlers," "breakers of treaties," and "fugitives from the custody of the United States' authorities." He accused the commissioners of ignoring the fact that settlers were entitled to consideration.[70]

Meacham was right: the terms should have satisfied the humanitarians and the vindictive Oregonians, but they did not. Neither did they satisfy the Modocs. They rejected the terms and made a counteroffer to meet the commissioners and three others, wholly unarmed, face to face with all of the Modoc warriors fully armed. The counteroffer's implication was too obvious and too dangerous; it was rejected by the commission.[71]

Meacham's reports to Washington the first eight days of March reflected tension, hope, and despair. On March 3 he expected peace to come after the Modocs heard the peace terms;[72] on March 7 he declared the mission a failure.[73]

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[70]Salem Oregon Statesman, March 6, 1873.

[71]Ibid., March 7, 1873; Meacham to Clum, March 8, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[72]Meacham to Clum, March 3, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[73]Salem Oregon Statesman, March 7, 1873.

Tension within the commission over inquiry into the causes of the war and the pro-Oregon attitude of Applegate and Case led to their resignation by March 3, and Meacham half-heartedly to offer his.[74] The chairman reported the commission's embarrassment over the fact that the members themselves were involved with events calling for investigation and that it had no power to subpoena persons and papers and take testimony.[75] The Federal Government's order to ferret out the war causes sensitized the Applegates, their Oregon colleagues, and even Meacham, whose agent, Knapp (who was really appointed by the Army), was being blamed for the failure to feed, clothe, and protect Captain Jack and his band properly after they were removed to the reservation on December 30, 1869.[76] The Applegates, stung by California newspaper accusations, were anxious that the report on causes would place no blame on them. In this they were successful, as noted above. In spite of Meacham's sensitivity to the charges against Agent Knapp, his empathy with the Indians kept him from wholly identifying himself with the Oregon position, yet he was fully aware he could not singlehandedly effect a settlement that ignored so powerful a public opinion. Oliver Applegate was aware that Meacham was pressing for "settling the difficulty at all hazards";[77] but apparently believed he could be kept under control.

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[74]Meacham to Clum, March 3, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1875.

[75]Meacham to Clum, March 8, 1873, ibid.

[76]Meacham to Clum, March 3, 1873, ibid.

[77]Oliver Applegate to Lucien Applegate, February 20, 1873, Applegate Papers.

Meacham knew the Oregon climate of opinion would be a hindrance to negotiations between the peace commission and the Modocs. Both he and Canby reacted to this external force. Meacham blamed a Linkville citizen for the recent Modoc rejection of the peace offer.[78] Canby told his wife that Oregon's anti-Modoc feeling was a "great obstacle" to effecting a settlement and that only removal of the Indians to a distant reservation could possibly satisfy the Oregonians.[79] He also emphasized the negative influence of white Oregonians who sent threatening messages to the Modocs or made threatening speeches in their hearing to stir up Modoc distrust and prolong the war.[80] The newspapers, leaders of the attack on the peace negotiations, rejoiced over the failure of the peace offer and pressed for a renewal of fighting.[81] It was under these conditions that the first peace commission disintegrated and a new one was created.

Meacham was continued as chairman of the new commission, and on March 18 he was notified that the Reverend Eleazar Thomas of Petaluma, California, had been appointed to replace Jesse Applegate and Klamath Agent Leroy S. Dyar to succeed Samuel Case.[82] Canby half jokingly and

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[76]Meacham to Clum, March 8, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[79]Canby to Wife, March 2, 1873.

[80]Ibid.

[81]Salem Oregon Statesman, March 8, 16, 1873; Yreka Journal, March 12, 1873.

[82]Meacham to Clum, March 24, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873; Meacham to Clum, March 19, 1873, ibid. Two different spellings are found for the Klamath Agent's last name--Dyer and Dyar. The latter spelling is correct.

half seriously informed his wife that the peace commission was now almost in the hands of her church since Dyar and Thomas were Methodists and Meacham was "a Methodist in persuasion."[83]

What significance, if any, the religious affiliation of the commission members had is not apparent. Dyar was Indian agent through nomination by the Methodist Church, and Thomas had had long association with that body. He was reared a Methodist and entered the New York Genessee Conference in 1838. He went to California in 1855 and in 1856 became editor of the California Christian Advocate in which capacity he served for twelve years. He became assistant agent of the Methodist Publishing House on the Pacific Coast in 1864, the result of a Branch Book Concern he began while he was editor.[84] As editor and Book Concern agent he visited and preached in every part of California and Eastern Nevada.[85] He was well acquainted with the Methodist Church in Oregon for he frequently visited the annual conference there.[86] In 1872 Thomas became presiding elder of the Petaluma district which included the geographical area of the Lava Beds and Yreka.[87] He was widely known and highly esteemed in California and in all Methodism, and

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[83]Canby to Wife, March 24, 1873.

[84]California Christian Advocate, XVII (August 27, 1868), 2; C. V. Anthony, Fifty Years of Methodism (San Francisco, 1901), 149-50.

[85]California Christian Advocate, XVII (August 27, 1868), 2.

[86]Ibid., XVIII (July 29, 1869), 356; Minutes of the Oregon Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869, 7.

[87]Anthony, Fifty Years of Methodism, 149-50.

according to Meacham was recommended to membership in the peace commission by a California senator.[88] Canby, who had not previously met Thomas, was impressed with his appearance and bearing and believed he would be a valuable addition to the commission.[89] Even Oliver Applegate, judging Thomas by the Applegate norm, pronounced him "O.K." and reported to his brother that the new commission would make a "correct report" on the causes of the Modoc War.[90]

While the new peace commission was being appointed and assembled, a parallel development was taking place in Washington through the army. Canby notified General Sherman on March 22 that he had begun the policy of "gradual compression" by placing troops in a position to cover all points of egress from the Lava Beds to demonstrate the military power that could be brought to bear on the Modocs in case the peace commissioners failed.[91] At the same time Canby notified his subordinate, Colonel Gillem, that the Modocs were in a state of "quasi-hostility" against the United States, that all dealings with them were to be on a war basis, and that communication was permissible only through the military or through the peace commissioners. He ordered confinement of military operations to preventing egress of Indians from

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[88]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 436.

[89]Canby to Wife, March 24, 1873.

[90]Oliver Applegate to Brother, May 29, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[91]Canby to Sherman, March 22, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

the Lava Beds for the purpose of raids or escape to the mountains, unless they themselves initiated an attack. Any Modoc out of the Lava Beds without the protection of the flag was to be considered a prisoner of war, and any person attempting unauthorized communication with the Modocs was to be treated as an enemy.[92] The warlike measures illustrated a basic lack of confidence in the peace negotiations, and this pleased the Oregonians.

While Canby was moving his troops nearer to and around the Lava Beds, Secretary of the Interior Delano sent a significant message to the Secretary of War, William W. Belknap, stating that he had

> . . . so much confidence in the wisdom, discretion and correct purposes of General Canby, in regard to the execution, as far as possible of the President's policy, and the Department's wish to preserve peace and prevent further bloodshed with the Modocs, that I deem it my duty to authorize General Canby to remove from the present Commission appointed by this Department, any member he thinks unfit, or improper, and appoint in his place such person as in his judgment should be appointed.[93]

This message was sent on March 22, two days before Thomas arrived to take his place on the commission.[94]

The Secretary of the Interior was deeply agitated over something, because on March 24 he communicated to General Sherman his fear that General Canby might never have seen the instructions originally given to the peace commission "at the head of which Mr. Meacham's name now

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[92]Canby to Colonel Gillem, March 22, 1873, San Francisco Presidio A., L.S., D.C., 1873, Vol. III, pp. 27-29.

[93]Delano to W. W. Belknap, March 22, 1873, ibid., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 572.

[94]Lieutenant E. W. Stone to Canby, March 24, 1873, ibid., No. 959.

stands." Delano wanted Sherman to instruct Canby to read the instructions and consult the wishes of the Indians "so that peace may not be prevented by peremptorily insisting that they go to some place to which they are unwilling to remove."[95] Delano believed the Modocs should not be required to go to Angel Island as prisoners of war nor should the indicted Indians be surrendered to civil authorities if they themselves opposed this action.[96] On the same day Delano ordered Meacham to show his instructions to Canby.[97] These communications were strange, for Meacham had read the instructions to the whole commission on the first day it met, and Canby had reacted to them instantly because no mention was made in them to the request for and denial of Lost River as a special reservation for the Modocs. Why did the Interior Department now insist that the Modocs should not be compelled to go to the coast reservation as a "sine qua non," and should be assigned to Lost River if they dissented?[98] The answer may be found in pressures from Eastern humanitarians.

Secretary Delano on March 18 received a long communication from the Universal Peace Union, an organization whose goal was to "Remove causes and abolish the customs of war." Officers of this organization included Alfred H. Love, Lucretia Mott, Robert F. Wallcut, and H. T. Childs. Fearing that in this "trial hour" there would be a temptation

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[95]Delano to Sherman, March 24, 1873, ibid., No. 949.

[96]Ibid.

[97]Delano to Meacham, March 24, 1873, Oregon S.I.A.

[98]Delano to Sherman, March 24, 1873, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 949.

to depart from the "peace principles" that had guided up to the present, the Peace Union appealed for a removal of the military and for an end to the demand that the Modocs surrender as prisoners of war. It insisted that peace efforts be carried on "without dependence on carnal weapons." It called for a delegation of fearless, patient, just, and morally courageous men to meet the Modocs with authority to propose a settlement and with food and clothing to relieve suffering. The Peace Union was confident peace could be restored in this way.[99] It is possible that pressures of this kind caused Secretary Delano to look to the tried and proven Canby more than to the new peace commission to bring a peaceable end to the conflict. Sherman welcomed Delano's March 24 communication and notified Canby on the same day that its contents ". . . actually devolves on you the entire management of the Modoc question. . . ."[100]

The irony of the situation was that while all effective power was placed in Canby's hands, Meacham was not removed from the chairmanship of the peace commission. He had never had carte blanche authority to direct the negotiations; he consistently obeyed orders to secure Canby's advice and consent.[101] Canby was fully aware of his and the commission's position and was careful to maintain the organizational structure as it existed without using his power to remove and add

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[99]Alfred H. Love to Delano, March 18, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[100]Sherman to Canby, March 24, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 571.

[101]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 431.

commission members as he saw fit. He wrote his superior on March 27 that he believed the new commission would work well as organized.[102] Repeatedly Canby told his wife of the Government's wish that "utmost patience and forbearance" be used in dealing with the Modocs.[103] When his wife protested the use of so much patience, Canby gently agreed with all she said about the Indians, but reminded her that "the policy of the day is different and we must do what we can to carry it out."[104] Canby, therefore, meticulously carried through with the Government's peace policy without believing in it wholeheartedly.

Canby personified the Government's dichotomous policy of peace and war. As general, he slowly deployed his troops around the Lava Beds and gradually compressed the Modocs into the confines of their natural fortress while his men captured Modoc ponies until only a few remained.[105] The loss of the horses alarmed the Modocs and brought a protest from Meacham who asserted it to be a violation of the truce,[106] but Canby looked on the action as a proper military maneuver that would tend to make the Indians more amenable to negotiations.[107] When the

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[102]Canby to Sherman, March 27, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.B., D.C., Vol. III, p. 34.

[103]Canby to Wife, March 20, 24, 1873.

[104]Ibid., March 15, 1873.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid.; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 436; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 48.

[107]Canby to Wife, March 15, 26, 38, 1873; Canby to Sherman, March 27, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.B., D.C., Vol. III, p. 34.

Modocs came to Canby on horses stolen at the time they murdered the valley settlers and protested his capturing their ponies, he was completely unmoved.[108]

As the real chairman of the peace commission, Canby carried through the peace efforts to the bitter end. After the first face-to-face meeting of the commissioners with Captain Jack, he wrote his wife on April 2 that Indians "are always prosy, and Captain Jack the most prosy of all Indians that I have ever seen."[109] Canby believed by April 6 that the patience of even the new members of the peace commission was exhausted. He was certain the Indians were as obstinate as ever and had made but one concession: the willingness to relinquish Lost River on condition they be allowed to keep the Lava Beds for their homes. Canby looked on this as a "license to plunder" and a fortress of refuge when pursued, but resignedly assumed that the Government would want to continue with negotiations.[110] He humorously told his wife on April 8 that Thomas had come to see that the Modocs were "not one of nature's noblemen."[111]

Canby was unmoved by the Modocs' professed fear of the soldiers. He pointed out that Modocs expressed this fear when the troops were twenty miles away, at which time they wanted the army moved out of the country in order to "have a good talk," but now that the troops

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[108] Canby to Wife, March 4, April 2, 1873.

[109] Ibid., April 2, 1873.

[110] Ibid., April 6, 1873.

[111] Ibid., April 8, 1873.

surrounded them they asked that the soldiers be moved back to the original positions. To him the Modocs were the "strangest mixture of insolence and arrogance and superstition" that he had ever seen. He believed that force was the only way to treat with them, for "they have no faith in themselves and have no confidence in anyone else."[112]

Meacham on the other hand continued to express confidence in the Modocs and in Captain Jack in particular, but he was not blind to the dangers nor to the treachery of the Indians. He was committed to the simple equation that if whites would be scrupulously honest in dealing with the Modocs and would treat them as equals in manhood, a peaceable agreement could be worked out. A realist as well as an idealist, he saw also that white dealings with the Modocs did not measure up to the ideal pattern, and he notified Washington that he believed the mission to be a failure. When Secretary Delano telegraphed Meacham on March 5 to continue negotiations,[113] he sought to do what he could, which was not much.

Meacham later professed opposition to Canby's policy of "gradual compression" and complained that he was never shown an order from any source that authorized this procedure. "The Commission," he said, "was notified--not consulted."[114] Without doubt, Canby exercised a commander's authority within the framework of expressed policy and initiated the plan. His dispatches made it clear why he took this

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 432.

[114] Ibid., 438.

action and no Washington authority interpreted it to mean a violation of the truce. Meacham's antiarmy bias in Indian affairs, evident during his superintendency when the army assigned military men to most of the agencies, continued during the Modoc War and down to his death. It is apparent that he never objectively interpreted army decisions, goals, and moves. The reasons will be clarified in a later chapter.

Although Meacham was highly criticized by the Oregon press, which was as biased against the peace commission as Meacham was against the army, the fact remains that the commission had no opportunity to negotiate directly with Captain Jack from the time it was formed on February 19 until April 2 when the first full meeting was held in the Lava Beds.[115] It had sent surrender terms and other information through civilians, Modoc squaws, and lesser Modoc warriors. The April 2 meeting agreed on nothing but the erection of a council tent. On April 4 Meacham and Fairchild, with Riddle and his wife as interpreters, went to meet Captain Jack there.[116] Meacham asserted that the talk which lasted seven hours, was "the only full, free talk had with the Modocs during the existence of the peace commission."[117] It ended without agreements, not even an arrangement for the next meeting.[118] Meacham and Fairchild conceded after the meeting that Captain Jack would accept

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[115] Canby to Wife, April 2, 1873.

[116] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 494.

[117] Ibid., 452.

[118] Ibid.

the peace terms if only his lieutenants and warriors would permit.[119]

Soon after the April 4 meeting, couriers traveled frequently between the two camps with propositions for another full meeting of the commission and Modoc representatives. Tobey Riddle, the squaw interpreter, warned Meacham of the plot to kill the commissioners and General Canby.[120] Meacham was of the opinion that peace could not be made and war was inevitable.[121] Canby, weary of the long wait, told his wife on April 10 that the negotiations could have been left to the peace commission, to Colonel Gillem, or to the military alone, but General Sherman had wanted him to stay on the scene in person. He confided that he believed the army could have made peace "without firing a shot" unless the Indians were determined to have a war, but he offered no suggestion on how that goal could have been accomplished. Canby was anxious that any settlement would reveal the kindly nature of the Government and at the same time punish acts of the Modoc brand. Consequently, down to the last day of his life, Canby insisted that the Modocs must be banished from the country as an example of punishment to restrain other Indians tempted to follow the Modoc pattern.[122] This was Canby's last letter to his wife and reflected his latest thinking on the Modoc question.

The climax occurred on April 11. Thomas, who had been left

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[119] Ibid., 452-53; Salem Oregon Statesman, April 9, 1873.

[120] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 452, 462.

[121] Ibid., 460.

[122] Canby to Wife, April 10, 1873.

temporarily in charge of the commission on April 10, agreed, with Canby's approval, to go unarmed and meet with five weaponless Modocs at the council tent the next day.[123] Meacham protested the arrangement when he heard of it, believing the Modoc promise to surrender the day following the meeting was a ruse.[124] April 11, 1873, was Good Friday. The commissioners and Canby debated the warnings of treachery brought by Frank Riddle's wife Tobey. Meacham and Dyar believed the warnings, and urged that they not go. Thomas, trusting in God, and Canby, trusting in the army, insisted on keeping their word and going to the meeting.[125] Meacham and Dyar were fearful, but proud, and went out of a sense of honor and duty, a thing Dyar vowed he would never do again, and something Oliver Applegate declared he never would have done in the first place.[126] At the last moment, before leaving the meeting, Fairchild slipped a derringer in Meacham's pocket and Oliver Applegate gave one to Dyar, which act Dyar credited with saving his life.[127]

The drama of the last fateful meeting has been often told.[128]

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[123] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1873, p. 77; Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 463-64.

[124] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 463-64.

[125] Ibid., 467-77.

[126] Ibid., Dyar to Oliver Applegate, April 21, 1873, Applegate Papers; Oliver Applegate to Ivan Applegate, April 14, 1873, ibid.

[127] Oliver Applegate to Brother, April 23, 1873, ibid.

[128] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 478-542; Murray, Modocs and Their War, 180-200.

Canby and Thomas were killed and Meacham was left for dead, having been shot four times and having six inches of his scalp loosened. The scalping process was interrupted by the coming of the soldiers.[129] A shocked Government was galvanized into action and an appalled world called for revenge. After much frustration and defeat the army finally captured Captain Jack and the majority of his band by early June, 1873.[130] Captain Jack and five accomplices were tried and sentenced in early July, and he with three accomplices were executed by hanging on October 3.[131] The remaining Modocs, 153 in all, were banished to Seneca Springs, Quapaw Agency, Indian Territory, where they arrived in late November, 1873.[132] This ended what can be generalized as the biggest and most expensive little war the United States ever fought.

Meacham recovered from the wounds received in the Lava Beds sufficiently to walk, talk, and travel again, but he carried with him the scars not only of bullets and knife, but also vicious attacks by Oregon and California newspapers. The place of the newspaper in the Modoc War is a separate study in itself, but its attitude toward Meacham must be ascertained before a tentative judgment can be passed on his service as chairman of the peace commission.

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[129]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 499; A. H. Miller to Oliver Applegate, April 16, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[130]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 582; Murray, Modocs and Their War, 267-72.

[131]Murray, Modocs and Their War, 283-304; Meacham Wigwam and Warpath, 607-35, 636-62.

[132]Murray, Modocs and Their War, 307.

The Modoc War provided a number of newspaper firsts: 1) the first of the Indian wars to receive extensive coverage; 2) the first competitive race to "scoop" the news; 3) and one of the first, if not the first, use of the pool in war reporting.[133] It is possible Meacham was one of the first federal officials to so antagonize reporters that he constantly received a bad press. This attitude developed because the peace commission refused to give the press an open door to information. Meacham as chairman received the brunt of press hostility, although Jesse Applegate was just as adamant on news releases.[134] The Yreka Journal said the commission felt "more important and dignified than Congress itself, in fact Grant's Cabinet is a secondary institution . . .," and the Yreka Union called the commission "the self-constituted Meacham Peace Inquisition: which had determined to block reporters from getting "reliable information."[135]

The Yreka Union, a week before the massacre, put Meacham in a ludicrous and ridiculous light by telling an exaggerated story of his fear of a Modoc attack.[136] The Oregon Statesman continuously ridiculed the efforts of the commission and taunted the military leaders; the commission, it said, was acting like "asses."[137] The Yreka Union

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[133]Oliver Knight, Following the Indian Wars (Norman, Oklahoma, 1960), 155.

[134]Ibid., 156.

[135]Yreka Journal, February 26; Yreka Union, March 1, 1873.

[136]Yreka Union, April 5, 1873.

[137]Salem Oregon Statesman, March 20, April 6, 1873.

professed to believe that the Reverend Thomas was the only man on the commission who knew his business, and that he would soon delegate his authority to General Canby and leave, after which Meacham would "open a recruiting office for peace commissioners."[138] After the April 11 massacre, Meacham, while recovering from his wounds, was told of various press reports that blamed him for leading Canby and Thomas to their death.[139] One correspondent, Samuel A. Clarke, a friend of Meacham's and former owner of the Oregon Statesman, reported to the Sacramento Daily Union that there was much prejudice against Meacham in Oregon, but that it must pass away, for he had done only his duty.[140]

Grant's peace policy assumed that the white man, because of superior strength and civilization, could and should show leniency toward the Indian. It also assumed that the Indian could be made a useful and productive member of society.[141] Frontiersmen said this policy was all right for those who were not endangered, but let the friends of the Quaker idea be exposed to frontier dangers and they would soon change their minds.[142] Some called sympathy for the poor Indian "a bastard Christian sentiment" that needed to give way to common sense in Indian affairs.[143] A more moderate attitude was reflected

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[138]Yreka Union, April 5, 1873.

[139]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 554-55.

[140]Sacramento Daily Union, March 5, 1873.

[141]Yreka Journal, March 12, 1873.

[142]Ibid., May 28, 1873; Yreka Union, April 19, 1873.

[143]Yreka Union, April 19, 1873.

by the Portland Oregonian which commended President Grant for the "policy of just and humane treatment of the Indians," but believed it to be successful only when applied to Indians already on reservations and unsuccessful when applied to unsubjugated Indians.[144]

The peace policy had its defenders, few of whom lived in Oregon. Clarke, however, in his reports to the Sacramento Daily Union, pointed out that Secretary Delano had acted from the highest motives with the goal of creating confidence in the word of the Government.[145] Eastern humanitarians, such as members of the Radical Club, protested the Government order to attack the Modocs after the massacre and requested a "merciful delay in the summary punishment."[146] They were fearful the policy would be abandoned. The Christian Advocate of New York City deplored the massacre and the retaliation it would call forth against the Modocs and the peace policy. It commended Meacham who had devoted himself to the implementation of the peace policy for which cause he had fallen a martyr.[147]

Meacham should be viewed as an instrument of Grant's peace policy, a federal officer obeying orders. In the realm of politics, it would be unusual to assign a man to a special task of the peace commission magnitude without having a degree of assurance that he had a

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[144]Portland Oregonian, April 15, 1873.

[145]Sacramento Daily Union, April 14, 1873.

[146]Radical Club to President Grant, Secretary Delano, and Indian Commissioner Smith, April 19, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., 1873.

[147]Christian Advocate (New York), XLVII (April 17, 1873), 124.

personal commitment to the adopted policy. Meacham's term in the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs proved that he had the commitment. It also proved that he was not an extremist, but could and did use the disciplinary power of the army to attain desired goals when needed. The important thing that arises out of this study, however, is the fact that Grant's administration did not rest its case in the hands of the peace commission members, but backed up its olive-branch approach to the Modocs with military might and placed its confidence and final power in General Canby. Meacham received the greater part of the public abuse because of his office while Canby retained a hero's place in the public affection. Yet it was Canby's rather than Meacham's hand that guided the peace commission, and it was federal policy that kept it alive, not the commissioners or Canby. The difference between Meacham and Canby was that the one believed in the peace policy, the other tolerated it. Canby's basic belief in good treatment of the Indians, including the keeping of agreements, made it possible for him to carry through a policy in which he did not fully believe. Meacham in his current and final reports challenged Canby's decision to capture and retain the Modoc ponies and the policy of a show of military force through "gradual compression." He believed these measures violated the truce and the peace policy, yet Washington never questioned the propriety of them. Both Canby and Meacham felt the compulsive power of the Oregon position. Meacham appeared to sense the futileness of the negotiations more than Canby, or perhaps the difference was that Canby was more accustomed to carrying out a policy to its end and had always the assurance that when peace efforts should fail he had an army

of a thousand men at his command to force the will of the nation on the Indians.

The tragedy in the Lava Beds on April 11 became a turning point in Meacham's life. The experience opened a door through which he entered to a life of public lecturing, writing of books, editing of a magazine, and service on the Ute Indian Commission.

CHAPTER VII

THE NOVICE IN LECTURING AND WRITING

Termination of Peace Commission Affairs

The Indian Commissioner summarily dismissed the remaining members of the peace commission one week after the massacre of General Canby and the Reverend Thomas.[1] The same day the dismissal telegram was received, Alfred B. Meacham requested from his sick bed that he be continued until the commission's report could be prepared and filed. The request was granted, but it was emphasized that the terms of the other members ended with the "happening of events."[2] Meacham delayed the completion of the report, whether to retain his name on the payroll or to improve his account of events, is not clear. He first petitioned for a postponement until after the trial of the Modoc prisoners, but even though the petition was approved, as late as mid-September the Indian Commissioner inquired into the continued delay and urged Meacham to file the report immediately.[3] He delivered it in time for inclusion

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[1]Edward P. Smith to Dyar, April 18, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[2]Smith to Meacham, July 12, 1873, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Sent, 1869-73.

[3]Smith to Delano, June 19, 1873, ibid.

in the Indian Commissioner's annual report, but why he was continued on the payroll until January 6, 1874, is not known.[4] Probably political friends interceded in his behalf and the Office of Indian Affairs yielded because of his suffering from the effects of the Modoc wounds.

Meacham's recovery while at the army camp hospital was sufficiently rapid to enable removal to his brother-in-law's ranch near Linkville eleven days after the massacre, and to his home in Salem on May 2.[5] Healing progressed enough to permit attendance at the last half of the trials for the Modoc prisoners, in progress from July 1 to July 9, 1873, at Fort Klamath.[6] In Wigwam and Warpath Meacham professed to be incensed because the Modoc prisoners had been unable to secure counsel and offered to serve in that capacity himself, but he did not act because his physician warned against it.[7] When he wrote the Indian Commissioner on July 8, his concern was not counsel for the Modocs, but rather the ruling that no evidence not directly related to the assassination could be admitted to the trial. He complained that testimony

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[4]Commissioner Smith to Meacham, September 18, 1873, Office of Indian Affairs, Correspondence Medical and Educational Division, July, 1873-June, 1874; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1873, pp. 74-82.

[5]A. H. Miller to Oliver Applegate, April 23, 1873, Applegate Papers; Sacramento Daily Union, May 5, 1873.

[6]Special Field Orders to Brevet Major General Jeff C. Davis, June 30, 1873, San Francisco Presidio A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 1415; Captain H. C. Hasbrouck to First Lieutenant W. H. Boyle, July 9, 1873, Fort Klamath Letter Book, Vol. 8; Meacham to Smith, July 8, 1873, Oregon S.I.A.

[7]Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 628-31.

implicating outside parties or providing origins of war was unacceptable to the court, and that he himself had no authority to examine witnesses.[8] By inference he was saying it was impossible to fulfill the original instructions to the peace commission ordering an examination into causes of the war.

Whether Meacham's offer to serve as counsel for the Modoc prisoners was a product of later imagination or prompted by a knowledge of humanitarian efforts to prevent hurried execution of the prisoners is not apparent. Humanitarians wanted justice for all guilty parties, white and Indian, and some hoped the death penalty would be withheld. Meacham may have been aware of efforts by the Universal Peace Union, Lucretia Mott, the merchant Coates Brothers, and the American Indian Aid Association to intercede in behalf of the Modocs,[9] and wanted to identify himself with their cause. More probably it was a combination of his own penchant for reform and an awareness of the national conscience on the subject.

Meacham was not alone in wanting an investigation of the causes of the war. Congressman John K. Luttrell of California, declaring the war had begun through "wrongful acts of bad white men," also demanded an investigation.[10] Elisha Steele sought a postponement of the

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[8]Meacham to Smith, July 8, 1873, Oregon S.I.A.

[9]Universal Peace Union to President Grant, July 17, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873; Lucretia Mott to President Grant, April 23, 1873, Oregon S.I.A.; Coates Brothers to President Grant, June 11, 1873, Oregon S.I.A.; Notice from American Aid Association to newspaper, July 23, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873, Newspaper Clipping.

[10]J. K. Luttrell to Delano, June 17, 1873, Oregon S.I.A., 1873.

execution of the four condemned Modocs until the causal factors of the war had been thoroughly examined, for attacks on his character by Oregonians had unjustifiably placed a stigma on him.[11] Congressman Luttrell supported Steele's request and placed approval on the work of both Steele and Meacham while they were superintendents of Indian Affairs.[12] The requests to investigate and determine war guilt were not granted, however, and Meacham was compelled to terminate the work of the peace commission without conducting an official hearing.

The Meacham Lecture Company

Concurrently with readying the final report of the peace commission, Meacham was preparing for a new career in public speaking. He professed encouragement in this endeavor by "everyone."[13] Three trial lectures were given in the fall of 1873 to determine their adequacy and financial profitability.[14] Because his knowledge of the Indian language was either very limited or nonexistent, he appealed to Oliver Applegate to supply Indian words for a series of English phrases to be used "cleverly" in the lectures. He also requested a story on white men's atrocities against the Indians which he had heard previously from Ivan

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[11]Steele to Delano, July 3, 1873, Special File, Modocs, 1873.

[12]Luttrell to Military Commission, July 1, 1873, San Francisco Presidio, A., L.R., D.C., 1873, No. 1628.

[13]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, August 9, 1873, Applegate Papers.

[14]Ibid.

Applegate.[15] In this manner illustrative materials for the lectures were gathered. The series of three lectures included: first, authenticated incidents and episodes of wrongs suffered by the Indians, and the story of the Modoc removal to the Klamath reservation in 1869; second, a description of the Modocs and the Modoc War; and third, the past, present, and future policy of the government.[16] The germ of his future lectures is found in their substance. Although Meacham was a novice as a lecturer, he had had previous experience in political public speaking and in at least one serious, formal address which was given before the graduating class of Willamette University's Medical Department on March 4, 1872. Its content indicated that he was a man who read much, but was not a scholar, and who had a natural, but not fully developed facility of expression.[17]

The correspondence with Applegate concerning lecture materials originated in San Francisco, the city where the lectures were given during the first week of October. The evening preceding the day Captain Jack and his accomplices were to be hung at Fort Klamath, October 3, Meacham spoke on the Modoc War at Mercantile Liberty Hall. The Daily Alta California, impressed with the poor attendance, commented that the Modocs had "already filled their space in the world--ninety days have passed since their capture, and the public evidently cares very little

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Salem Oregon Statesman, March 7, 1872.

about them now. . . ."[18] In spite of poor delivery of an interesting address and complaints that the speaker could not be heard, listeners received Meacham well. Apparently his voice was yet weak from illness, or he was unaccustomed to speaking in large halls.[19]

The speech contained basic conclusions regarding causes of the Modoc War that he promulgated in later years: 1) there would have been no war if Captain Jack had been protected from the Klamath Indians while on the reservation; 2) there would have been no assassinations of white settlers if the citizens had not engaged in the battle when the army attempted to return the Modocs to the reservation by force.[20] Concerning the white man's relation to the Indian, he said, "We can afford to be magnanimous, and it is our duty to be just;" and "We spend millions for education of the heathen but on the Indians we make war and regard them as enemies."[21] He also recommended the punishment of white men who committed crimes against the Indians and the selection of Indian agents according to their competency for the position.[22]

An address on "Indian Religion" was delivered at the Powell Street Methodist Church on Sunday, October 5. It emphasized the receptiveness of Indians to Christianity and civilization and the inherent

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[18] San Francisco Alta California, October 3, 1873.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

goodness of a peace policy entrusted to consecrated Christian hands.[23]

The gist of the San Francisco lectures indicates that all of Meacham's basic principles of reform were well formed in 1873, and later years only amplified and refined the early convictions.

What Meacham did during the next year can be detailed in barest outline because of paucity of evidence. He left San Francisco soon after the lecture series to visit his father near Iowa City. While there the intensity of suffering from the Modoc wounds required the care of a doctor who diagnosed the head wounds as having very seriously injured the nervous system.[24] Consequently the year was probably spent in recuperation, some lecturing, and writing. The lecture tour took him as far as Boston, where on Thursday evening, May 28, 1874, he addressed an assembly at the Park Street Church.[25]

Experience as a lecturer, growing self-confidence, and the encouragement of friends led Meacham to organize a lecture company which combined addresses with an exhibition of Indians.[26] The Meacham Lecture Company was not the first or last of its kind. Dr. William C. McKay, a medical doctor and son of the half-breed Thomas McKay of the Hudson Bay Company and a Chinook Indian mother,

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Pension Claim No. 303,721, Box No. 34575, Alfred B. Meacham.

[25] Boston Daily News, May 23, 1874.

[26] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, October 8, 1874, Applegate Papers.

[27] Bancroft, Oregon, I, 33.

on Eastern interest in the Indians and organized a lecture and exhibition tour. The troupe included twelve warm Springs Indian Scouts, his half-brother, Donald McKay, the well-known leader of the Scouts, and the famous mountaineer and trapper, Joe Meek.[28] Although Doctor McKay purposed to give an informative lecture "at each entertainment," his primary objective was to turn the enterprise into profit.[29] The McKay Troupe started its tour in March, 1874,[30] but by October Meacham reported[31] that an economic crisis had arisen, and in June, 1875, the Jacksonville Democratic Times released the sad news of Donald McKay's confinement to a poorhouse in Boston.[32] Although Meacham credited the McKay failure to poor management, it did not inhibit plans for organizing his own lecture company.[33]

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[28]William C. McKay to Oliver Applegate, August 30, 1873, Applegate Papers; Pendleton Eastern Oregon Weekly Tribune, March 11, 1874 (WPA-1, Umatilla, Indians, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library).

[29]Pendleton Eastern Oregon Weekly Tribune, March 11, 1874 (WPA-1, Umatilla, Indians); McKay to Applegate, August 30, 1873, Applegate Papers; Francis Fuller Victor to Blivas [Oliver Applegate], March 28, April 23, 1874, Applegate Papers. The McKay troupe was still in Portland on the last date. Mrs. Victor reported her attendance at their performance the preceding evening and predicted financial success for the troupe.

[30]Pendleton Eastern Oregon Weekly Tribune, March 11, 1874 (WPA-1, Umatilla, Indians).

[31]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, October 8, 1874, Applegate Papers.

[32]Jacksonville Democratic Times, June 11, 1875.

[33]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, October 8, 1874, Applegate Papers.

Meacham's company consisted of Oliver Applegate; Frank and Tobey Riddle, interpreters for the Modoc peace commission; David Hill, a Klamath chief; Tecumseh, a Klamath Indian medicine man; George Harney, a Rogue River chief; and Harney's wife. In addition to these, three Modoc Indians who participated in the war with Captain Jack--Scar-faced Charley, Steamboat Frank, and Shacknasty Jim--were secured from the Quaw-Paw Agency, Indian Territory, by special permission of the President.[34] When Meacham persuaded Oliver Applegate to join the Lecture Company, he detailed all the advantages that would accrue to him: a good time, travel in the States and Europe, and possibly money.[35] The idea was attractive to Applegate, who had never been out of Oregon, and he accepted the offer. His knowledge of Indians, natural oratorical ability, even temperament, physical attractiveness (six feet three), and youth (twenty-seven) convinced Meacham that he fitted the requirements of the troupe exactly. Applegate was extravagantly advertised as an Indian Scout who spoke six Indian dialects.[36] James Redpath of the Boston Lyceum Company contracted for booking the troupe's appearances and managing the business.[37] He joined Meacham at St. Joseph, Missouri.

Meacham returned to his home state to meet with the Oregon members of the Lecture Company, and journeyed with them to Sacramento

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[34]Portland New North West, February 19, 1875; Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 12, 13, 14, 72, 77.

[35]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, October 8, 1874, Applegate Papers.

[36]Ibid.; Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 72, 92.

[37]Portland, New North West, February 19, 1875; Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 94.

on January 27, 1875, arriving in time to make the first group appearance on Monday, February 1.[38] In Sacramento Meacham announced his intention of going East to discuss publicly the important issues of the Indian question while the people were favorably inclined toward deliberation of the subject. The Indian contingent would aid in dramatizing the issues and give evidence that the race was civilizable.[39] The Lecture Company appearances included St. Joseph, Jeffersonville [Jefferson City], and St. Louis, Missouri; Terre Haute, Indiana; Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky; Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia, Reading, and Morristown, Pennsylvania; Camden, Elizabeth, Trenton, and Newark, New Jersey; and New York City. The last appearance took place on April 1 1875.[40]

According to Meacham's own published account, the troupe was in serious financial difficulty by April 10, and had to suspend the tour because expenses had exceeded receipts by several hundred dollars. His explanation for the company's financial failure was previous fraudulent Indian shows that had offended friends of the Indians. Meacham declared he "would not and did not" cater to mob entertainment. Endorsement by the United States Board of Peace Commissioners, Peter Cooper, John M. Ferris of the Foreign Mission Board of the Reformed Church, George Whipple and M. E. Stieby of the American Missionary Association, and

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[38] Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 92; Portland New North West, February 19, 1875.

[39] Portland New North West, February 19, 1875; Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 92.

[40] Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 94.

J. C. Hanckey, President of the Universal Peace Union,[41] convinced Meacham that the public should have received and supported his project generously because of the approval of the "true" friends of the Indians.

Meacham had prepared to send the Indians of his troupe home when Peter Cooper offered Cooper Institute Hall for appearances of the Lecture Company. A. C. Squires of Brooklyn replaced Redpath as manager. He planned a large-scale program for April 26, aided by skilled musical talent, with a view to producing enough profit to buy tickets home for members of the troupe. The expenses for the extravaganza consumed the profits and Meacham was in serious trouble.[42] He refused to extricate himself by accepting a variety theater offer of $100 a night for four weeks because he "was on a mission, and not on a speculation."[43] Finally, friends contributed money to pay hotel bills and to buy return railroad tickets for the Indians. Frank Riddle, wife, and son stayed with Meacham.[44]

The sequel to the Meacham Lecture Company fiasco is gleaned from correspondence and newspapers. Oliver Applegate and the Indians arrived at Yreka, California, on June 4, 1875, and told their story. The troupe had made successful appearances, but in many places religious people boycotted the meetings because of opposition to the Indian dances. Their failure to support the program contributed to its collapse. The

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[41] Ibid., 94-95.

[42] Ibid., 95-96.

[43] Ibid., 98-99.

[44] Ibid., 99.

troupe stayed nearly one month in Washington and visited the President and places of interest. The Modoc Indians had returned to their reservation in Indian territory, but David Hill, the Klamath chief, had disappeared.[45] Meacham had earlier credited the troubles of Dr. McKay's Indian troupe to poor management. He now assigned the same cause to his own failure, with Redpath the recipient of the blame. He was confident the Meacham Lecture Company was the best lyceum number of the season, but because of Redpath's interest in women, especially in a "red haired Mississippian," it was not properly "managed."[46]

Meacham's observations at this period can scarcely be trusted because of the illness that besieged him. The fretting over problems of the Lecture Company brought on a relapse.[47] His letters indicated sporadic mental confusion and depression. This tendency had appeared in its worst form in September, 1873, when he wrote: "I can't know why but something says to me 'write, write.' And I do not know what I am to write about perhaps I need not know. Some unseen, unrecognized, hand may direct my pen. I feel stealing over me a soft slow lazy pain . . . an occasional slight shock through my brain. . . ."[48] The letter continued with expressions of concern and responsibility for his family

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[45]Jacksonville Democratic Times, June 11, 1875.

[46]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, July 16, December 17, 1875, Applegate Papers.

[47]Meacham to Applegate, December 17, 1875, ibid.

[48]Memo, September 21, 1873, Meacham Papers.

and of a desire "to do something for these poor despised down-trodden misunderstood people [Indians]."[49] In the fall of 1875 similar, but not so severe characteristics were revealed in his letters.[50] In December he admitted that he was under medical care, but had favorable prospects of better health.[51]

Two months later Frank Riddle apprised Oliver Applegate of Meacham's continued illness and of his own despair about getting home.[52] Riddle had no words of censure for Meacham because of his inability to provide funds for the family's journey. Meacham, he said, was doing all he could, and Riddle himself had tried unsuccessfully to get a job. Meacham, however, was not the only one ill. Tobey Riddle had such severe "fits" that her husband was distracted as he endeavored to restrain her from committing suicide. The homesick Tobey was possessed with the thought that she could never reach Oregon. Riddle said, "If we don't get away from here soon Meacham and her both will go crazy then I will have a good time of it. . . ."[53] In April, 1876, Oliver Applegate sought financial aid for the Riddles through Alfred H. Love whom he had met in Philadelphia when the Indian troupe made its appearance there. He related the failure of the Meacham Lecture Company, of

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, July 16, September 18, 1875, Applegate Papers.

[51] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, December 17, 1875, ibid.

[52] Frank Riddle to Oliver Applegate, February 21, 1876, ibid.

[53] Frank Riddle to Oliver Applegate, June 6, 1876, ibid.

Meacham's illness and poverty, and the sickness of Mrs. Riddle. Applegate's quotation from Riddle's letter communicated a tale of poverty: "Mr. Meacham can't do anything for us, he has been sick all winter. To tell you the truth he has nothing to do with."[54] Love gave no money, but he provided the names of possible donors and promised to publish an appeal in the Word of Peace, which carried Meacham's name as one of forty-five members of the executive committee.[55] The Riddles finally arrived home in September with the aid of $30 from Meacham, $60 from Oliver Applegate, and additional funds from a friend in New York City.[56]

The Meacham Lecture Company completed all unfinished business with the safe arrival home of Frank and Tobey Riddle and their son. Personal suffering and near-tragedy that followed collapse of the venture in the spring of 1875 dissuaded Meacham from organizing a similar troupe. A man now came into his life who had that ability to "manage," about which Meacham had spoken so often, and who provided not only "management" but also medical care. His name was Thomas Augustus Bland.

Bland and Meacham

Bland first heard Meacham at the April, 1875, appearance of his troupe at the Cooper Institute Hall, and personal acquaintance began in Boston the following June. A few months later Meacham became a

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[54]Oliver Applegate to Love, August 19, 1876, ibid; Love to Oliver Applegate, May 4, 1876, ibid.

[55]Ibid.

[56]J. M. McCall to Oliver Applegate, September 13, 1876, ibid.

guest in Bland's New York City home.[57] Two years later, while lecturing in Indianapolis, Meacham publicly related the story and the significance of their acquaintance. The Blands, he said, had found him in ill health and to them he owed recovery and life itself. Other doctors had resigned his case, considering it to be hopeless, and Bland himself said Meacham had been close to death during the winter of 1875-1876.[58] Mrs. Bland, who also was a medical doctor, carefully prescribed medicines and personally gave the essential nursing care that brought him back to a degree of health.[59] No pay was given nor expected for the services. Four years after the Blands and Meacham were united in their unique relationship, Meacham again made public his appreciation of what they had done for him. The pages of the newly founded Council Fire graphically described the condition in which they found him: "half paralyzed, with brain congested, spirit broken, helpless, hopeless and friendless in a great city."[60] He not only paid tribute to the Blands for having nursed him back to life, but also for giving him a sense of mission.[61]

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[57] Riddle to Oliver Applegate, July 8, 1876, ibid.; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 7-8.

[58] Indianapolis Journal, September 11, 1877.

[59] Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 7-8; Indianapolis Journal, September 11, 1878.

[60] Council Fire (Washington), II (September, 1879), 137. From January to March, 1878, the periodical was published in Philadelphia, but each month from April forward it was published in Washington.

[61] Ibid.

What factors contributed to uniting these three so closely? A brief survey of Bland's life reveals them. His origins were similar to Meacham's. His parents were members of a North Carolina Quaker colony that settled in Orange County, Indiana, 1817, and later removed to the vicinity of Bloomfield where Bland was born in 1830, making him four years Meacham's junior. His formal education included eight years in a log school, and he was reported to have had such an acquisitive mind that he borrowed books to read. He married Mary Cora Davis of Virginia in 1852, after which he began the study of medicine. Medical practice was begun at Worthington, Indiana, six miles from his birthplace. Later he lectured on phrenology and physiology in midwestern states and occasionally in the East.[62] Bland became a surgeon in the Union Army in 1864, and upon receiving his discharge, he and Mrs. Bland settled in Dansville, New York, where she studied medicine for two years in Dr. Jackson's Health Institute.[63]

Medicine was not the only interest of the Blands; journalism equally occupied their time and attention. The couple returned to Indiana and established a literary journal called The Home Visitor which was sold after one "successful" year. Next the Northwestern was founded, which later became the Indiana Farmer, and this venture was followed by the establishment of the Ladies Own Magazine in 1868 with Mrs. Bland the editor-in-chief.[64] The Indiana Farmer was sold in 1872

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[62] T. A. Bland, Pioneers of Progress (Chicago, 1906), 7-15.

[63] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

and the Ladies Own Magazine, after removal to Chicago for a year, in 1875. Cora Bland's interest in medicine continued, and, after selling the Magazine,[65] she completed the Doctor of Medicine degree. Freshly armed with it when acquaintance with Meacham began, her interest in him was probably scientific as well as personal.

When Meacham and Bland met, it was a confrontation of two men who came from reform-minded backgrounds. Perhaps Bland perceived in Meacham a "voice" to proclaim reform standards, and Meacham discerned in Bland strength, leadership, friendship, and hope for health. Each was a reformer by instinct and conviction. Meacham campaigned single-mindedly for Indian reform; Bland, before and after Meacham's death, crusaded with the Greenback and Populist parties against monoply and for greenback currency.

A series of books and booklets written by Bland spell out his reforming trends. His first book, Farming As A Profession, was published in 1870.[66] Its intent was to attract young men to "farming as a profession" by telling a fictitious story of one who had made that choice and who had earned an annual net profit of 20 per cent on an $8,000 investment. The Life of Benjamin Butler accused wealthy men and corporations of oppressing the farmer, the small businessman, and the wage earner, and presented Butler as the promoter of greenbacks, the "perfect paper money." Bland was scarcely able to put Butler into a

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[65] Ibid.

[66] T. A. Bland, Farming As A Profession (Boston, 1870).

reformer's mold, but he did cast him in the role of defender of freedom, equal rights, and justice, the champion of the weak and timid, and the recognized leader of the Republican party.[67] The Spartan Band (16 pages) presented a series of biographical sketches of Congressional Representatives of the National Greenback party, including Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois.[68] How to Grow Rich was an alluring title of a thirty-two page booklet that consisted mostly of an attack on monopoly wealth.[69] The Reign of Monopoly (48 pages) struck strongly against monopolies of all kinds: land, gas, railroads, streetcars, politics, and others. "Banks are foes to justice and equality always," Bland said, and he bracketed them with railroads as the most powerful monopolies in the country.[70] Continuing his opposition to bank monopoly and a National Bank, he wrote Esau: or the Banker's Victim.[71] His last work on political reform was People's Party Shot and Shell, published in the significant election year, 1892. It hewed strictly to the Populist party platform, promoting every plank in it.[72]

Bland's interest in Indian reform did not die with Meacham.

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[67] T. A. Bland, Life of Benjamin Butler (Boston, 1879), 3, 14, 162, 180

[68] T. A. Bland, The Spartan Band (Washington, 1879).

[69] T. A. Bland, How To Grow Rich (Washington, 1881).

[70] T. A. Bland, The Reign of Monopoly (Washington, 1881), 10-16.

[71] T. A. Bland, Esau: or the Banker's Victim (Washington, 1892).

[72] T. A. Bland, People's Party Shot and Shell (Chicago, 1892).

Evidence of continuing enthusiasm was found in Daring Donald McKay or The Last Trail of the Modocs,[73] and A Brief History of the Late Military Invasion of the Home of the Sioux.[74] His reforming tendencies reached into medicine and religion. He was a self-confessed eclectic in both areas as disclosed in two works: How To Get Well and How To Keep Well[75] and In the World Celestial.[76] Bland's last book, Pioneers of Progress, summarized a life-long interest in reform by presenting his heroes. The book is a series of thirty-two biographies of nineteenth-century men and women including Lincoln, Grant, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Horace Greeley, Susan Anthony, Peter Cooper, Henry George, and Alfred B. Meacham. The introduction, written by a minister, is in reality the thirty-third biography--of Thomas A. Bland.[77]

Bland not only provided a home and medical care for Meacham; he also became the efficient manager of his lecture career. He who was capable of establishing magazines and writing books successfully knew how to secure lecture appearances and arrange tours. By the spring of 1876, Meacham had recovered health sufficiently for Bland to arrange a series of meetings in New Haven and Hartford, Connecticut; Springfield,

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[73] T. A. Bland, Daring Donald McKay or The Last Trail of the Modocs (Chicago, 1881).

[74] T. A. Bland, A Brief History of the Late Military Invasion of the Home of the Sioux (Washington, 1891.

[75] T. A. Bland, How To Get Well and How To Keep Well (Boston, 1894).

[76] T. A. Bland, In the World Celestial (Chicago, 1892).

[77] Bland, Pioneers of Progress, 7-15.

Worcester, and Boston, Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island.[78] The majority of the lectures were given in churches, and for two years, while on tour, he averaged five lectures a week. At intervals he returned to the Bland home for rest and medical treatment, but these friends also traveled with him the greater part of the time, contributing not only to health, but also to preparation of lectures, books, and pamphlets.[79]

Meacham's lectures were designed to inform the public on the Indian problem with a view to rousing the people to positive, favorable action in behalf of the Indian. He used all the techniques of oral persuasion and drama at his command, including a willingness to distort and magnify events and people in order to gain his end. There were five basic lectures given in each city. Only one of these is preserved in complete and published form, "The Tragedy of the Lava Beds," first published in a forty-eight page booklet in 1877, and later reprinted in Bland's Life of Alfred B. Meacham in 1883.[80] The lectures were advertised widely in every medium at Meacham's disposal such as the 1877 edition of the lecture on the Lava Beds and in each issue, for the first year, of the Council Fire. Lyceum, literary, and church societies were

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[78]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 8-9.

[79]Ibid., 9; Council Fire, II (September, 1879), 137.

[80]Meacham, Tragedy of the Lava Beds; Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 31 ff.

invited to request the delivery of the lectures.[81] The lecture titles announced their content: 1) Religion of the Redman; 2) Rum Among Red Men; 3) The Tragedy of the Lava Beds; 4) The Royal Chief in Chains; and 5) Duty of the Nation to a Dying Race. The advertising included the subheadings of each lecture, a procedure common to the day.

At least four of the series were delivered in Indianapolis in September, 1877, while Meacham was touring the states of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. The methods, newspaper reports, and responses provide a sampling of the lectures' effectiveness. First, only rarely did Meacham deliver the whole series at one location in a city. In Indianapolis he spoke at the Central Christian Church, Roberts Park Methodist Church, First Presbyterian Church, and the Plymouth Church.[82] Second, at least one newspaper in each city gave extensive reports of the meetings, including lecture content and public response. The Indianapolis Journal gave the most extensive coverage,[83] the Indianapolis Daily Sentinel somewhat less. The Indianapolis News briefly mentioned Meacham's presence, but gave no comprehensive report.[84] Third, reports on the number attending lectures indicated the level of interest. The churches were described as

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[81]Meacham, Tragedy of the Lava Beds, inside cover page; Council Fire, I (December, 1878), on last page of each number. Beginning with Volume II the advertisements were discontinued.

[82]Indianapolis Journal, September 3, 6, 10, 11, 1877; Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, September 3, 6, 9, 11, 1877.

[83]Indianapolis Journal, September 3, 6, 10, 11, 1877; Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, September 3, 6, 9, 11, 1877.

[84]Indianapolis News, September 3, 1877.

"comfortably full," "full," or "crowded."[85] Fourth, while no charge was ever made, the pastors in each church received offerings for Meacham and some plead for strong support to send him with his story to all parts of the land.[86] Fifth, newspapers that gave detailed reports of the lectures usually placed approval on his efforts. The Indianapolis Daily Sentinel exhorted the people to induce Meacham to give a few more lectures on the manner in which the Government was treating the Indians.[87]

Meacham's series of lectures began with the account of the Modocs' attempted murder and the resolve to dedicate his life to telling the Indians' side of the story and to giving the public a correct view of the Indian problem.[88] The lectures hammered on various themes: 1) the military was to blame for the Modoc War; 2) the demand for the extermination of the Indians was unjust and unchristian; 3) the assertion that the Indian could not be Christianized or civilized was false; 4) the Indians were never the first to shed blood; 5) the peace policy was not a failure; 6) justice and fair treatment must be substituted for the policy of extermination; 7) Indians could and must be civilized and Christianized; 8) the military could never be a humane civilizing

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[85] Indianapolis Journal, September 3, 6, 1877; Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, September 11, 1877.

[86] Indianapolis Journal, September 11, 1877; Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, September 3, 6, 11, 1877.

[87] Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, September 11, 1877.

[88] Indianapolis Journal, September 3, 1877.

power; 9) Indians must be given full citizenship rights with equal protection by the law as well as responsibility to it; and 10) the public must be influenced to action in behalf of the Indian if he was ever to receive justice.

Because of the conviction that the public must crystallize its thinking on the Indian problem, Bland and Meacham sought to reach as many people as possible through the lecture series. They kept a tabular record of lectures and from time to time announced the total. Almost six hundred had been given in twenty-two states by January 1, 1878; and by June, 1879, over seven hundred had been delivered within the preceding five years.[89] Allowing for some "inflation," an impressive number of states and people were touched. It is impossible to measure the depth of penetration into the minds of the hearers, but the statistic of probability alone would guarantee a fair percentage of positive results. Meacham himself believed his lectures had resulted in benefit to the Indians.[90]

On the 1877 tour Meacham wrote two significant letters: to his daughter Nellie and to Oliver Applegate. The letter to Nellie was primarily to impart fatherly advice and philosophy upon her graduation from college, but in one place he inferred regret because he had not had the discipline of formal education, and in another he complained

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[89] Council Fire, II (June, 1879), 85-86; ibid., II (September, 1879), 137; ibid., I (May, 1878), 72.

[90] Ibid., II (September, 1879), 137.

because it was thought he was good only for talking.[91] The reference to his lack of education, added to his obvious respect for and attachment to men of more disciplined intellects, like Oliver Applegate and Thomas Bland, perhaps explains to a degree Meacham's dependence upon the leadership of others. He never felt secure enough in himself to take leadership alone.

The letter to Oliver Applegate expressed a brightness missing in the ones written two years earlier. He reported improvement in health, the passing of the danger of paralysis, and "all in all" he believed he had "no right to complain." He stated, however, that "the Indian Service, official and unofficial, has cost me nearly all the real trouble I have ever known."[92]

Neither suffering nor a sense of failure in life restrained Meacham from attempting one more project in the effort to bring "justice" to the Indians. The new proposal was the creation of a monthly periodical called Council Fire, dedicated to influencing the nation toward reform in its relation to the Indians.[93] Physical illness, poverty, separation from family, popular opposition never moved Meacham

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[91]Meacham to darling Red Bird [Nellie Meacham], October 22, 1877, Nellie Meacham's Diary (Preserved by Mrs. Donald Stewart, Vancouver, Washington, Microfilm copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library). A typed copy of this letter is in the writer's possession, having been provided by Mr. Louis Hoppe, Washington, D. C., husband of Meacham's great-granddaughter Mary. Apparently each of Nellie Meacham's daughters has a copy of the letter.

[92]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, September 10, 1877, Applegate Papers.

[93]Ibid.

from a single-minded purpose that increasingly characterized his reform efforts.

Meacham the Writer

Meacham's writing career began in Boston, and probably was inspired by the reformers Wendell Phillips and D. L. Emerson and the lyceum promoter James Redpath. He stayed in that city from the spring of 1874, when he first lectured there, until late fall when he returned to Oregon to set in motion the ill-fated Meacham Lecture Company, another Boston-originated idea.[94] The first book published was Meacham's magnum opus, entitled Wigwam and Warpath or The Royal Chief in Chains. The edition used in this work is the second and revised. For a long time the writer doubted that a first edition existed because the Library of Congress card catalog contained an entry only for the second and revised edition and because a personal search in the Library of Congress failed to uncover the first edition. Two years later, two entries for Wigwam and Warpath in the new Catalog of the Yale Collection of Western Americana[95] suggested the possibility a first edition existed. The entries were identical with the exception that one did not carry the phrase "Second and Revised Edition." It proved to be a first edition

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[94]Council Fire, II (September, 1879), 137; Portland New North West, February 19, 1875.

[95]Yale Collection of Western Americana, 4 vols. (Boston, 1961), II, Meacham, A. B.

with two pages of errata inserted between the introduction and the list of illustrations.[96] The reconstructed story of the two editions reflects the trials of the writer and publisher.

Meacham wrote Oliver Applegate on October 8, 1874, that his book was "to go to the publishers next week."[97] A July, 1875, letter revealed Meacham's dissatisfaction with the printing and reported five weeks of hard work correcting numerous errors. He was unhappy that nearly half the printing had been completed and the rest of the plates cast, but since two or three hundred dollars worth of paper had been used, he believed the only solution was a two-page errata insert. The cause of the errors, he admitted, was his "beautiful chirography."[98] A close examination of the errata pages in the first edition discloses printing errors on approximately 100 pages, frequently several to a page. Meacham asserted the errors were not discovered earlier because his absence had made it impossible to revise the proofs before the plates were cast. He promised a full correction in the second edition.[99]

The errors consisted primarily in wrong spelling of proper names and Indian words. Occasionally the mistake so completely changed the

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[96]Archibald Hanna, Curator, Yale University Library, Western Americana Collection to E. Sterl Phinney, July 24, 1962. After Receiving proof that a first edition existed, the writer discovered two copies in Oregon: at the Portland City Library and at the Oregon Historical Society, Portland.

[97]Meacham to Oliver Applegate, October 8, 1874, Applegate Papers.

[98]Ibid., July 16, 1875.

[99]A. B. Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath (1st edition, Boston, 1875), errata page.

thought that the sentence was meaningless. A comparison of the two editions shows that the second was revised only in the sense the inaccuracies of the first were corrected and the errata pages removed. About one fourth the entries on the errata pages were not corrected.

Both editions of Wigwam and Warpath were published by John F. Dale and Company of Boston in 1875 on the press of Rockwell and Churchill in the same city. They contained a preface by D. L. Emerson, an introduction by Wendell Phillips, twenty illustrations, and seven hundred pages of text. Emerson revised the manuscript and prepared the table of contents, stressing to the reader that necessary editorial work was small indeed, no more than that normally required of so-called "learned manuscripts." Wendell Phillips' introduction first indicted the American treatment of the Indians, demanded that they be given equality before the law as in Canada, and then proceeded to "commend this book to the public."[100] The book was credited with factual accuracy while retaining the interest of a novel. Advertising flyers published by J. Jay Watson & Co., General Agents for the book in New York and New Jersey, quoted Phillips' commendation of it.[101] Apparently the book was first offered by subscription only at prices of $4.00 (regular binding) and $5.00 (morocco or full sheep binding).[102]

By 1878 the prices had been lowered to $3.00 and $4.00.

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[100] Meacham, Wigwam and Warpath, 1.

[101] Advertising flyer on Wigwam and Warpath (Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library).

[102] Ibid.

According to the Pacific Christian Advocate, Meacham's daughter Nellie sold subscriptions in Salem and Portland in the fall of 1875. Her success in Salem numbered "scores and scores" and the Advocate hoped that "hundreds of subscribers" would sign up in Portland.[103]

The exceedingly interesting question of the edition's size remains unanswered. It is certain sales never reached a level sufficient to bring Meacham an independent income, nor was a third edition printed. There are hints of sales resistance to the purchase of the large and expensive book, especially when offered at the lectures.[104] It is still available today as a collector's item.

The content of Wigwam and Warpath presents the interesting problem of separating the imaginative from the historical. There is much of historical value in it: descriptions of events in which Meacham and Indians participated and official letters quoted in their entirety. But the book also contains planned drama to which Meacham candidly confessed in simple words: "as to the drama, it lives only in my brain."[105] Meacham was disturbed because Oliver Applegate did not write an appraisal of the book nor acknowledge that he had received a copy of it.[106] Perhaps drama weighted on the side of the Indian reformer did not appeal to the man who had stood with the Oregon position

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[103] Pacific Christian Advocate (Portland), XXI, (September 9, 1875), 284.

[104] Riddle to Oliver Applegate, May 25, 1876, Applegate Papers.

[105] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, December 17, 1875, ibid.

[106] Ibid.

during the Modoc War; there is no evidence that Applegate ever communicated with Meacham on the subject of the book. Years later Timothy Davenport assumed that the majority of Oregonians and Easterners interested in Indian reform had read the book.[107] In 1884 a county historian referred to Wigwam and Warpath as that "ridiculous book,"[108] but the Pacific Christian Advocate in 1875 maintained it had received flattering reviews from the most critical of places, Boston.[109]

The next book-publishing venture took place in 1876 when Wi-ne-ma (The Woman Chief) and Her People came from the press in late May.[110] It carried 168 pages, a preface written by Meacham himself, a table of contents with titles and subtitles and twenty-two chapters, and fourteen illustrations. The pages are smaller than in Wigwam and Warpath, but because of the smaller type used each page carries only from thirty to fifty words less than those of the larger book. It was published in Hartford by the American Publishing Company.

Wi-ne-ma apparently was designed to sell on the lecture tours. Frank Riddle was probably correct in his observation that people wanted a "little book."[111] The price, $1.00 per copy, would make it more

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[107] Davenport, "Recollections of an Indian Agent," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society (Salem), VIII (September, 1907), 244.

[108] History of Southern Oregon (Published by A. G. Walling, Portland, Oregon, 1884), 207.

[109] Pacific Christian Advocate, XXI (September 9, 1875), 284.

[110] Riddle to Oliver Applegate, May 25, 1876, Applegate Papers.

[111] Ibid.

attractive to the public when compared with the more expensive Wigwam and Warpath.

The content of the book revealed a disciplined purpose. It deliberately made a heroine out of Frank Riddle's wife, Tobey, gave her a new name, Wi-ne-ma, and elevated her to a mythical chieftanship. On no page in Meacham's Wigwam and Warpath did he call Tobey Riddle, Wi-ne-ma. The inspiration doubtless came from the response of the hearers when Meacham told the story of Tobey Riddle's efforts to save his life at the massacre on April 11, 1873. Another new feature of Wi-ne-ma was the inclusion of the story of the Meacham Lecture Company. The motive for this is not crystal clear, but the most apparent reason was to instruct the reader on Meacham's efforts to bring justice to the Indians after the April 11 tragedy of the Lava Beds, to place the blame for the failure of the Lecture Company on preceding "speculative" Indian troupes, and to dramatize the shortcomings of the Christian people who did not support the program sufficiently. The compression and consequent improvement of the story of the Modoc Indians and the Modoc war should have contributed to lowered costs and salability. Although both books were meant to entertain as well as to instruct and move the reader toward favorable legislative action for the Indians, Wi-ne-ma revealed these qualities to a refined and more positive degree.

The third adventure in publication was also calculated to assist the lecture program, a forty-eight page booklet that put in permanent form Meacham's popular lecture, The Tragedy of the Lava Beds.[112] It

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[112]Meacham, Lava Beds.

was printed by the American Publishing Company in 1877. The book also contained Wendell Phillips' words of introduction for Meacham at the Park Street Church, Boston, Meacham's portrait, and advertisements for the books and lectures. No information has been uncovered on the size of the edition and there is no evidence that more than one was published.

Aside from the periodical Council Fire, which will be treated in the following chapter, Meacham's next publication effort was the contribution of a thirteen-page chapter on the "North American Indians" to Professor Ferdinand V. Hayden's collaborative work, The Great West.[113] This publication contained a popular description of the West for the benefit of prospective travelers and settlers. Meacham's chapter was his most highly polished writing with respect to style and content. It treated the origin and religion of the Indians, discussed the Indian population of the past and present and proved that the race was increasing instead of dying out, contemplated the introduction of European laws, and debated the question of Indian removal, cost of Indian wars, the Indian's love of native land and his need for a permanent home, and the problem of the uncivilized Indian.[114] In this and in every Meacham publication Indian reform was consistently promoted. It was the central theme of all his words, written and spoken. The most effective words written in behalf of Indian reform by Meacham were printed in Council Fire, an analysis of which is made in the next chapter.

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[113] A. B. Meacham, "North American Indians," Ferdinand Hayden, The Great West (Bloomington, Illinois, 1880), 431-44.

[114] Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROMOTER OF INDIAN REFORM

Influencing People

The influence of Meacham's lectures and books on the hearing and reading public was considerable, but not adequate to the urgency of the task. In response to the lectures, suggestions of friends, and the advice of the experienced Bland, Meacham decided to begin the publication of a monthly periodical called the Council Fire. The new propaganda medium reflected Meacham's and Bland's awareness of the power of the press. They envisioned it as another William Lloyd Garrison's Liberator to "agitate, agitate" until justice came to the Indian.[1] The Council Fire succeeded in agitating the troubled waters of Indian reform and served as a rallying center for men of like minds.

The Council Fire was conceived early in 1877, and by September planning was in an advanced stage. In that month Meacham asked Oliver Applegate to contribute an article to the first number, and named Wendell Phillips, Peter Cooper, Colonel Tappan, Professor Julius H. Seelye, and others as contributors.[2] He described the proposed periodical as "one more effort" on his part to help the Indians, and expressed

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[1] Council Fire, IV (March, 1881), 40.

[2] Meacham to Oliver Applegate, September 10, 1877, Applegate Papers.

his and friends' confidence in the project.[3] The first number was printed on December 20, 1877, at Philadelphia, but the issue was dated January, 1878.[4] An examination of the number reveals that not one of the contributors named by Meacham wrote an article for it. Rather it was filled with official reports on Indian matters from churches, excerpts from speeches and magazines, writings from Meacham's own pen, a Congressional bill for granting citizenship to Indians, an official directory of the Indian service, and a page of advertisements for Meacham's books and lectures.[5] The periodical was printed in double column on pages eight and one half by eleven inches in size and sixteen in number.

Because of the desire to influence Congress and the Indian Department more effectively, the editorial office of Council Fire was transferred from Philadelphia to Washington, beginning with the April, 1878, issue. The decision was not unilateral on Meacham's part, but had the approval and possibly the recommendation of the Blands who also moved to Washington, and Meacham continued to make their home his headquarters.[6] The subscribers were advised of the change in publishing headquarters with the explanation that men from every part of the country--Indians, Indian agents, superintendents, supervisors, and commissioners--visited Washington and the Council Fire could therefore

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 9.

[5]Council Fire, I (January, 1878).

[6]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 9, 10.

accomplish its goals better in that city.[7] Meacham, Bland, and Council Fire constituents consequently became an unofficial lobby for Indian reform.

The aims of the periodical were carefully delineated. It would be frankly "missionary" in character with an appeal to the "humanity" and "honor" of the white race for "justice" and "life" to the Indian.[8] Meacham was confident the white man would do what was right when he became "convinced of the right." He was just as certain the Indian would make peace when assured of just treatment. He denied having "sickly sentimentality" about the "noble red man," because he was fully aware of the Indians' bitter and revengeful nature and his warlike propensity. He knew, however, the Indian would respond to kind treatment: he was capable of friendship, of faithfulness to agreements, and of ability to reason.[9] On these premises Meacham set forth the goal of securing recognition and respect for the Indian as a man with rights equal to the white man's, including full citizenship.[10]

With respect to editorial policy, Meacham opened Council Fire's pages to free and open debate on a high plane, forbidding "rude or ungentlemanly speech." He would not allow the periodical "to become a battlefield for malignant pens," because it was designed as an "advocate of a despised race" and not religious, political or fraternal

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[7]Council Fire, I (April, 1878), 56.

[8]Ibid., I (January, 1878), 9.

[9]Ibid., 1.

[10]Ibid.

partisanship.[11] He invited Indians and Indian agents to air their views and reminded agents of their responsibility to inform Congressmen of the facts that would secure a majority of votes against transfer of the Indian Department to military control.[12] A recapitualtion of the Council Fire objectives appeared in October of the first year of publication:

> . . . to agitate the Indian question, to correct public sentiment where it is wrong, and create interest where it is wanting, by facts, arguments, and appeals; to give the Indian what he has not yet had - a fair hearing. . . .
>
> The Council Fire is the advocate of the Indian. It is telling his side of the story of this conflict of races--telling it truthfully, with malice toward none, with charity for all, but with the single purpose of promoting justice, fraternity, peace.[13]

A study of Meacham's philosophy of Indian reform in the Council Fire reveals no major change in basic assumptions from the time he first became Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon until he died. Refinements, modifications, and shifts in emphases occurred, however, and so did disillusionment with human nature. A look at his emphases provides a sense of direction his reform program took. First, he plead for the installation of the ideal Indian agent on every agency. This man would have integrity, common sense, business ability, a magnetic personality, a high sense of duty, the courage to protect the Indian from his white foe, and a conduct above politics. Any agent, Meacham believed, whether nominated by church, army, or senators would fail unless

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 4-5.

[13] Ibid., I (October, 1878), 152.

he was properly qualified.[14] Meacham asked more from agent candidates than one man could normally offer.

Second, he believed the Indian was confronted with two alternatives: the way of civilization or the way of extermination. To avoid the second he must accept the first.[15] The struggle between the two races he called "an irrepressible conflict," a frankly borrowed phrase from William H. Seward's October, 1858, speech on the issue of slavery and freedom.[16]

Third, the necessity of accepting civilization as the only alternative to extermination was a "decree of destiny."[17] Meacham recognized the change would not be easy, nor would it necessarily make the Indian happier. Personally he would have been willing to allow the Indian to live as he pleased, but destiny left no choice.[18]

Fourth, he was convinced the Indian must have land in severalty and the protection of, as well as responsibility to, the law. Long before Meacham founded Council Fire he strove for these goals while Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon. In 1879-1880 the emphasis was renewed, not only by Meacham, but by many reformers. The end in view for each Indian family was 160 acres of land with an inalienable

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[14] Ibid., I (March, 1878), 40.

[15] Ibid., I (January, 1878), 8.

[16] Ibid., II (December, 1879), 177; III (January, 1880), 1.

[17] Ibid., III (June, 1880), 81.

[18] Ibid., III (August, 1880), 115.

title and nonsegregated courts of justice.[19] This platform was fundamental to Meacham's program for the civilization and the Christianization of the Indians.

Fifth, he called for the recognition of the Indian's manhood. "Treat him as a man" were his oft-repeated words. This demanded a basic change in attitudes to be followed by specific applications. Because the phrase had more emotional than intellectual content, Meacham attempted an explanation. Manhood, he said, included a man's moral, physical, and intellectual ability, his reputation, and his character. It did not mean simply fine houses and bank accounts, or fine physical development. It did not belong to the rich exclusively. It could be "found in a cabin, or under a lodge-pole." Manhood never despised "the poor or lowly." It was "divinity developed in human form."[20] The formal definition raised more questions than it answered and could not compare with his implied definition which simply stated was: treat the Indian as a responsible white adult.

Sixth, Meacham promoted specific reforms. To cure the ills of Indian administration he recommended the establishment of a Department of Civilization headed by a member of the President's cabinet and free from partisan control and influence. The suggested qualifications for the departmental head had more of Meacham's ideal than the practical man: the person was to be a great cultured humanitarian "who dared to

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[19] Ibid., III (January, 1880), 3, 8.

[20] Ibid., I (April, 1878), 52.

do right for the sake of the right."[21] Other specifics were: 1) give Indian superintendents pay equal to a congressman's, but hold them strictly accountable for clearly defined duties and powers; 2) select Indian agents who are "liberal and charitable by nature, form and brain," and reward them with an eight-year commission, three to five thousand dollars in salary, a home equal to army officers', and tenure in office dependent on "efficiency and success"; 3) forbid agents the right of trade with Indians or receipt of gifts from them or from any with whom agency business is conducted; 4) remove agents only by court action, and withhold from courts the power to fill vacancies; and 5) remove military posts and military methods from Indian administration.[22]

These recommendations reflect the same Meacham tendencies observed earlier: the inclination to think in broad general terms with a peculiar lack of ability to carry through the detail essential to success.

Meacham may not have been able to secure legislative support for specific reform measures, but he accomplished a significant gain, the wider discussion of the Indian question.[23] This was prerequisite to any legislative action. Meacham thought he saw an ever extending influence of Council Fire at the end of two years of publication because magazine exchanges had copied "extensively" from his periodical.[24] A

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[21] Ibid., III (May, 1880), 66.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., II (May, 1879), 65.

[24] Ibid., II (May, 1879), 73.

Portland, Maine, editor, who read two issues of Council Fire, was converted from belief in extermination of the Indian to civilization for him.[25] Meacham encouraged the trend by informing his readers that he was "neither a monomaniac, nor a fanatic, nor a Fenimore Cooper theorist." He knew "from personal observation that the Indian was just like other men, no better, no worse." "The Indian," he said, "has been pleading for a recognition of his manhood; pleading for liberty; with no voice in Congress, no press of his own, no history save that carved by his tomahawk upon the skulls of his victims, no higher law than that given him by his fathers, of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; his wrongs accumulating until his wrath has driven him upon the waiting bayonets of his enemies."[27]

Meacham was not content with a hearing through the printed page only, but continued to speak and make his personal power felt through the lecture. In March, 1878, just before transferring editorial headquarters to Washington, he gave four lectures in that city. The first two were delivered in the Congregational and Calvary Baptist churches; the third and fourth were held, by invitation of senators, representatives, army officers, Board of Indian Commissioners, and Indians from six different tribes, at the Odd Fellows Hall.[28]

Bland and Meacham were convinced that the capital was the right

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[25] Ibid., II (May, 1879), 73.

[26] Ibid., I (August, 1878), 127.

[27] Ibid., III (January, 1880), 1.

[28] Ibid., I (April, 1878), 54-55.

location for exerting personal influence on key people. In Washington Bland organized social gatherings each Friday night in his home at 514 Thirteenth Street, N.W., where large numbers of people interested in the subject under discussion gathered: educated Indians, ministers, Indian service employees, doctors, and others.[29] Later a larger and somewhat more formal meeting was held monthly at Council Fire's new location, 503 Thirteenth Street, N.W., where Meacham formally addressed invited guests and friends.[30] Each address was printed in the next issue.

Personal contact by lecture was not confined to Washington. Meacham spoke to a large meeting of Methodist ministers in Philadelphia, which resulted in a formal resolution by the assembled body expressing satisfaction with the present peace policy and opposition to transfer of the Indian Department to the military.[31]

Beyond the planned, formal, and personal contacts with Washington personnel, the Council Fire office kept open house to all casual visitors: subscribers and readers of the periodical. In 1880 it began reporting some of their names. A sample listing included George W. Manypenny, the Ute agent from Uintah, Utah, the agents of the Kaw Indians, agents from the Pueblo and Cimarron agency, a teacher in Indian schools at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.[32] The growing number of

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[29] Ibid., I (January, 1879), 13.

[30] Ibid., III (April, 1880), 49.

[31] Ibid., I (May, 1878), 78.

[32] Ibid., III (April, 1880), 56-57.

visitors reported revealed an increase in interest and influence in Indian reform.

The Council Fire circulation figure aids in measuring the periodical's influence. Unfortunately, an accurate count is not available, but internal evidence is revelatory. Beginning with June, 1878, the Council Fire was placed on the desk of each senator and representative, and of each administrative officer in the Indian service.[33] In November of the same year Meacham reported printing four or five times more copies of the periodical than there were subscribers. Concerned with moving extra copies into subscribers' hands, several hundred complete sets for 1878 and 1879 were offered for sale.[34] Enemies accused Indian Councils of subsidizing Council Fire, and to counteract this charge, Meacham frequently told his readers that not one dollar had come from that source except by subscription to the magazine.[35] He reminded the Indians that the Council Fire was not a paying business and appealed directly for their support through numerous subscriptions.[36] White men said, when approached for contributions, that since Council Fire was the Indians' paper they should pay for it. Meacham reported the white man's thinking to the Indians for the purpose of convincing them that the paper was their voice and worthy of their support.[37]

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[33] Ibid., I (June, 1878), 88.

[34] Ibid., I (November, 1878), 168.

[35] Ibid., I (December, 1878), 184.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., II (January, 1879), 9.

A year and a half after the Council Fire's beginning, Meacham declared that subscriptions and donations had paid the cost of printing,[38] but no honorarium for the editor and assistant writers. The appeal to the Indians produced encouraging results, however, for a hundred Arapahoe Indians sent $100 for a hundred subscriptions in one order,[39] and renewed them in 1880. But a steady growth in the 1879 subscription list did not reach a volume sufficient to meet all bills. Although an October, 1880, summation indicated that Council Fire was going to every state and territory as well as to Canada, the November survey revealed a total accumulative deficit of $1,000, paid mostly by Meacham and Bland out of other earnings. The 1880 deficit was less than the loss of the preceding two years, reflecting the 1879 increase in subscriptions, and no deficit was anticipated for 1881 if all should renew their subscriptions. "We send gratis each month more than twice as many as are paid for," said Meacham, a self-explanatory statement on the periodical's purpose as well as financial condition.[40] One year later Meacham expressed disappointment with the level of Indian support. Only four hundred had consistently subscribed, an inadequate number from people who were most benefitted by Council Fire's publication. In addition,[41] there were two hundred paid gift subscriptions to whites. On

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[38] Ibid., II (June, 1879), 88.

[39] Ibid., II (March, 1879), 40; III (June, 1880), 91.

[40] Ibid., II (November, 1879), 168; III (October, 1880), 155.

[41] Ibid., II (February, 1879), 29; II (November, 1879), 168.

the basis of these figures Council Fire's paid subscription list reached a maximum of eight hundred to a thousand in 1881. Add to this the gratis copies sent each month to congressmen, other public men, Indian agents, and missionaries, and the maximum circulation approximated two thousand per month. This estimate corresponds with the only Council Fire entry in the American Newspaper Directory which classified the periodical in the "not over 1000" circulation bracket, assuming the figure covered paid subscriptions only.[42]

Meacham's confidence in economic guarantees from friends weakened as early as May, 1878. Promises of financial support for Council Fire had not materialized. He said, "Indian-like, we listened to those promises, and Indian-like, have expected that those who promised so much would do something to assist in the work. We are still waiting."[43] In spite of the lack of support from friends of the Indians, Meacham asserted that Bland's financial and journalistic contributions had made possible the publishing of four numbers of Council Fire with all bills paid unaided from outside sources save for one $25 contribution.[44]

In order to earn additional money, Meacham began charging a modest fee for representing individuals who had business with the Government. This work included collection of money on vouchers that had

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[42] American Newspaper Directory (New York, 1884), 48.

[43] Council Fire, I (May, 1878), 72.

[44] Ibid.

been refused for payment by agents,[45] power of attorney to collect salary due discharged agents,[46] and intercession to secure a clerk's job at an Indian agency.[47]

By July, 1880, Meacham's disillusionment with people was nearly complete. He had believed, he said, that white people needed only to be informed of the real condition and need of the Indian and justice to him would result. Instead, he had discovered that white Americans would not "bear plain, unvarnished truth," but wanted it "doctored and watered." He was "ashamed of a civilization" that would not "tolerate differences of opinion without impugning the motives of those who differ."[48] The white man was more concerned for "his party, his church, his profession, than for . . . right."[49] Legislators, press, pulpit, church, and the masses would not speak for the Indian, he said, and ". . . to point to our Government as a Christian government is a mockery."[50]

Meacham had been warned at the beginning of his editorial career that few specialists succeeded in periodical publication. In late 1881

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[45]Meacham to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, February 2, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, File 2031.

[46]Ibid. (re John H. Smith, discharged Indian agent), File 2032.

[47]C. B. Arbuckle to Meacham, December 26, 1880, January 26, 1881, ibid., File 2033.

[48]Council Fire, III (July, 1880), 97.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid.

he came to the conclusion that to survive economically a greater circulation of Council Fire was essential and that to attract more subscribers the paper must include more than the issue of Indian reform. Consequently the January, 1882, number took on a new cause and expanded name: the cause--world peace; the name--The Council Fire and Arbitrator.[51] Bland, a member of the National Arbitration League, was certainly behind the decision. Since only two issues were published before Meacham's death, no significant accomplishment can be credited to his editorship of the expanded periodical. One subscriber from West Newton, Indiana, protested the change because Council Fire had done more for the Indians in four years than all other newspapers had in one hundred. Meacham's candid answer was that economic reasons had forced the new program, supplemented by his belief in the cause of arbitration and his duty to it. The new departure, he said, accorded with the spirit of Council Fire.[52]

After January, 1882, Council Fire became a medium to agitate public opinion for abolishing war and settling all disputes by arbitration. It used the slogan of the Universal Peace Union, "abolish causes and customs of war."[53] After Meacham's death, Bland molded the publication to his will and his goals, but always retained Indian reform as a major item.

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[51] Ibid., IV (February, 1881), 24; IV (December, 1881), 184; Council Fire and Arbitrator, V (January, 1882), 1.

[52] Council Fire and Arbitrator, V (January, 1882), 92.

[53] Ibid., V (January, 1882), 9.

Perhaps disenchantment with the common man in contrast to his abstract man made Meacham more than willing to turn editorial responsibilities over to Bland while he again took formal service with the Indian Department. Before examining this phase of his life, however, it is essential to investigate his relation to and influence on other reformers.

One Among Many

The rapid settlement of the West after the discovery of California gold in 1848 began the inexorable destruction of the Indian's nomadic way of life and the diminution of his food supply. Conflict under these conditions was inevitable and the Indians fought back like white men do when confronted with similar circumstances. Because of the frequency and intensity of the battles, national attention was increasingly directed toward the Indian problem. Although no person is singly credited with awakening the American conscience on the subject, individual voices began making themselves heard by emphasizing the white man's crimes against the Indians, a story "Indian haters" did not care to hear or tolerate. In the East and Midwest a rising tide of sympathy and concern for the welfare of the Indian began to manifest itself among the humanitarians in the 1860's. In the West there were sympathizers with the Indian's point of view as far back as the 1850's, but only John Beeson dared raise his voice loudly enough to be heard, and he was banished from his new home in Rogue River Valley, Oregon, in

1856 because of it.[54] Beeson observed upon arrival in New York City that humanitarian activity in that city was not directed toward the Indians.[55] He attempted to remove the lack by publishing A Plea For Indians[56] in 1857. Whether or not Meacham read this work is not known, but points of view are sufficiently similar to warrant the assumption that he did.

Even though the last ante bellum decade was an early period for promulgating specific Indian reforms, Beeson did not hesitate to proclaim his program. Place the Indian on good land, he said, and teach him the art of farming. Select only qualified, married, and sympathetic agents. Give Indians the maximum freedom possible, discourage use of tobacco, alcohol, and drug medicine, and keep all mysticism out of Christian teaching.[57] At that early date his reform program was too advanced to influence the nation's legislators, but Beeson did not cease trying.

There is evidence of indirect if not direct contact between Beeson and Meacham. The Ladies National League for the Protection of the Indians invited Mrs. Bland and Beeson to participate in a July, 1878, conference where they shared the speaker's platform.[58] A

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[54]John Beeson, A Plea For Indians, "With Facts and Features of the Late War in Oregon" (New York, 1857), 21, 105, 105.

[55]Ibid., 103.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid., 125-28.

[58]Council Fire, I (August, 1878), 127.

correspondent reported that Beeson had continuously engaged in presenting Indians' claims since April of that year.

Another early voice for reform was lifted when Henry Benjamin Whipple of the Protestant Episcopal Church was elected Bishop of Minnesota in 1859. He visited Indian agencies and camps and established a mission among the Sioux Indians in 1860. What he saw convinced him of the Government's injustice to the Indians, and he began a correspondence on the subject that reached local agents, senators, congressmen, heads of bureaus, and the President. During the Civil War, Whipple visited Washington three times a year to plead for the Indians, but returned with little or nothing accomplished. He contrasted the American system of Indian management with the Canadian. Our northern neighbors, he said, localized the Indian tribes, guaranteed their rights of person and property, placed them under law, promoted schools and missions, and appointed agents for life. The American system, he asserted, was "based on falsehood." The nation treated with the Indian tribe as with another foreign power, yet no diplomatic relations were established nor provision made to compel obedience by either party to signed treaties. Treaties and their provisions for land sales weakened or destroyed the rude, patriarchal government of chiefs and left tribesmen outside of the law, and at the same time reduced them to poverty. Land sales forced Indians to civilize or perish. A ruinous system of trade, the traffic in liquor, and political appointments to the office of agent

combined to complete their destruction.[59]

After the Sioux massacre of white men in August, 1862, Whipple plead for reason among fellow Minnesotans, explaining that the Indians had been goaded to revolt by the fraud and deceit of white men. The Bishop experienced the wrath of frontiersmen over his defense of the Indians, but he stood his ground. Whipple said, "The world and the church have forced me to be the friend of this poor race, which has cost me more anxiety and has brought me more trials than all my other work. But I do not regret it."[60] Alienated friends and questioned motives were difficult realities in reform effort. Whipple, as well as Meacham, knew the meaning of public rejection, active opposition, and virulent hatred.

Eastern humanitarians suddenly turned to Whipple with moral and financial support at the close of the Civil War, and from then on Indian reform was added to their objectives. The Bishop in 1867 advanced four basic reforms: 1) the perfection of the reservation system; 2) the granting of land in severalty with inalienable title; 3) the creation of an adequate school system; and, 4) the establishment of a system of inspection for Indian agencies, schools, and employees.[61]

What influence did Whipple have on Meacham? The writer believes

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[59]Grace Lee Nute, "Henry Benjamin Whipple," Allen Johnson, Dumas Malone, and Harris E. Starr (eds.), Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1928-1950). XX, 68-69; Henry Benjamin Whipple, Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate (London, 1899), 99, 261, 523-25, 124-26.

[60]Whipple, Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate. 289.

[61]Ibid., 68-69.

Whipple's publications were read by Meacham, particularly the 1868 report "On the Moral and Temporal Condition of the Indian Tribes on Our Western Border." This report, presented first to the Board of Missions, was then read publicly at the Cooper Institute in New York City. It was widely publicized and influenced the organization of the 1868 Indian Peace Commission.[62]

After Meacham became a lecturer and writer, he definitely became acquainted with Whipple, for in the very first issue of Council Fire he printed by permission the Bishop's speech given in New York City in November, 1877. Meacham commended Whipple in the highest terms: "No man in the United States comes to the witness stand with better qualifications to testify understandingly. His independence in political matters, his high position in church relations, and his acknowledged character for candor, places his testimony beyond impeachment."[63] Whipple read Meacham's writings sufficiently to quote them in his autobiography,[64] thus providing partial proof of the interaction of the two men. Whipple was perhaps the most powerful, the most effective, and the most original of the promoters of Indian reform in the 1860's and 1870's, a force in the creation of the climate of opinion in which Meacham moved and worked.

Lieutenant Colonel Elwell S. Otis, although not a reformer in the Meacham and Whipple pattern, published in 1878 an incisive and

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[62] Ibid., 261.

[63] Council Fire, I (January, 1878), 2.

[64] Whipple, Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate, 251.

analytical book entitled The Indian Question.[65] A graduate of the Harvard Law School,[66] he applied his legal faculties to research and analysis of the Indian question and delivered a powerful argument against the Indian treaty system and in favor of direct congressional control.[67] In effect he agreed with reformers that the Indian should have the same relation to law as the white man. He disagreed with the conclusions that Indians were never the first to break faith with the white man and that the whites always created the conflicts through their dishonesty and aggressions.[68] He believed that "persuasion and intercession accompanied by justice and integrity" could not be totally substituted for the use of force.[69] Otis pointed out that all presidential administrations avowed a three-point policy of removal of Indians from land for white occupancy, of restraining Indians from attacks on whites, and of preparing them for citizenship. The emphasis, he said, on one policy over the other varied from period to period, and during President Grant's incumbency it was on the civilization of the Indian.[70] It is difficult to believe that Meacham did not read this book, but it probably was too rational in its approach to the problem to suit the

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[65] Elwell S. Otis, The Indian Question (New York, 1878).

[66] Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., "Elwell Stephen Otis," Johnson, Malone, and Starr (eds.), Dictionary of American Biography, XIV, 94.

[67] Otis, Indian Question, 136, 157, 180-81.

[68] Ibid., 184-85.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 80.

needs of the reformer who felt obliged to keep a high emotional content in his pronouncements.

Another Meacham contemporary whose pen brought the Indian question into sharp focus was Richard Irving Dodge. He, like Otis, was a soldier and writer who gained knowledge of the Indians through numerous campaigns against them.[71] His first work, The Plains of the Great West, was published in 1877. It was followed in 1882 by a more comprehensive work on the subject entitled Our Wild Indians.[72]

As the second book was published after Meacham's death, it could have no influence on him, but it reflected a point of view that was current while Meacham lived. General William T. Sherman, in his introduction to Our Wild Indians, disagreed with the view of Dodge and many others that the Government had been deliberately unjust and had exploited the Indians. He asserted that no systematic desire to do wrong had ever been present.[73]

It is true Dodge emphasized deliberate unjustness and exploitation on the part of the Government, but he did not view the Indian as a "noble red man." He agreed with Otis that war was the "pleasure and passion of the Indian,"[74] but he also looked upon him as highly

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[71]"Richard Irving Dodge," The National Encyclopedia of American Biography (New York, 1892-1960), XI, 512.

[72]Dodge, Our Wild Indians.

[73]Ibid., xxxvi-xxxvii.

[74]Ibid., 44.

intelligent, with capacity for education.[75] He was aware of the negative qualities of the Indian--vainness, deceitfulness, ungratefulness, treacherousness, utter selfishness, lecherousness, filthiness in ideas and speech, and inconceivable dirtiness; a conclusion to which Francis Parkman had come many years earlier.[76] But Dodge also believed in the Indians' capacity for civilization, in the necessity of granting full citizenship, in distributing land in severalty, in turning Indians over to the control of the War Department, in abolishing the Indian Bureau, in abrogating all existing treaties and terminating the treaty system, and in giving Indians equal status with white men before the law.[77] Dodge opposed the agent system as a whole and Christian church selection of agents in particular.[78] He illustrated the fact that many nonreformers had some ideas that coincided with those of reformers, and it was this agreement which eventually made it possible to enact reform legislation.

Meacham became intimately acquainted with George W. Manypenny, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs and later Chairman of the Ute Indian Commission, when Manypenny visited the Council Fire office in the spring of 1880. He had been a subscriber to the magazine from the beginning, and must have felt assured of a welcome at Meacham's office

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[75] Ibid., 50.

[76] Ibid., 56; Mason Wade (ed.), The Journals of Francis Parkman (New York, 1947), II, 451, 477.

[77] Dodge, Our Wild Indians, 89, 94, 646-47.

[78] Ibid., 93-94.

and of a favorable review of his book, Our Indian Wards. The work revealed that the two men had identical reform goals and shared a common terminology, even to the use of the phrase "irrepressible conflict" to describe the white-Indian antagonism.[79] The fact that Manypenny quoted from Dodge's Plains of the Great West[80] is additional evidence that he read writers on the Indian question.

The Indian question was debated publicly after Carl Schurz became Secretary of the Interior on March 4, 1877.[81] Harper's Weekly believed by 1880 that the discussion was more general and more intelligent than ever before and was confident it would bring good results under Schurz's "able and incorruptible" leadership.[82] Two years earlier the periodical had expressed confidence in Schurz's formal training and in his capacity to expose the "Indian Ring" because he would not be stopped either by thieving rascals or by honorable, best-intentioned men who were so easily blinded to the facts.[83]

Meacham had earlier observed the unusual breadth and depth in the discussion of the Indian question, and believed the Council Fire had played a part in it. This was possibly true, but it could not have

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[79]George W. Manypenny, Our Indian Wards (Cincinnati, 1880), 15; Council Fire, III (March, 1880, 39; V (April, 1882), 99.

[80]Manypenny, Our Indian Wards, 146.

[81]Oswald Garrison Villard, "Carl Schurz," Johnson, Malone, and Starr (eds.), Dictionary of American Biography, XVI, 469.

[82]Harper's Weekly (New York), XXIV (January 10, 1880), 18.

[83]Ibid., XXII (February 2, 1878), 86.

happened if other reformers and writers on the subject had not participated in the conversations, and particularly if there had been no reformer of Schurz's capability in the Interior Office. Meacham, therefore, was only one of many voices in Indian reform, but his was loud and clear. That his contributions to the movement were large there can be no doubt; that they can be accurately measured is impossible. Meacham must be viewed as one of many, all contributing to the same goal: reform in Indian relations. This reasoning is illustrated by the debate over the issue of transferring the Office of Indian Affairs to the military.

The "army transfer" issue was old. The Secretary of War personally directed Indian affairs from 1789 to 1832, and from that date until 1849 he supervised them through the newly created Office of Commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Department of the Interior was organized in 1849 and the Office of Indian Affairs was transferred to its jurisdiction. After that year there were recurring efforts to return the Indian office to the Department of War. The movement succeeded in 1869 to the extent that army personnel was assigned to fill Indian superintendencies and agencies, but the Office of Indian Affairs was retained in the Department of the Interior. With this maneuver Meacham lost the Superintendency of Indian Affairs in Oregon, regained it six weeks later, but had to contend with army officer agents in all but two of the agencies. In 1870 church-nominated agents replaced the army officers, the signal for new efforts to transfer Indian Affairs to the War Department. The struggle over the issue was moving toward a climax when Meacham began the publication of Council Fire in 1878. He joined forces with the

antitransfer propagandists.

When Secretary Schurz took office he invited the views of experienced persons in Indian affairs on the best methods for managing Indians. Replies recommending army control came from many people including the United States marshall of Helena, Montana Territory, James Davis of the Federal Insurance Office in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, and T. T. Cabaniss, M D., of Eureka, California.[84] Each gentleman detailed in full how he believed Indians should be controlled, and although all agreed that Indian Affairs should be under military supervision, they also concurred with granting land in severalty, placing the Indian under common law, and keeping all promises made to him.

Opponents of military supervision manifested their disapproval in many ways. Thomas K. Cree, former member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, vigorously opposed the proposition and pointed to the negative conclusion of army generals on the subject in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1868 as proof that the military itself knew better. A friend of George W. Manypenny from Columbus, Ohio, recommended the Commissioner's new, but as yet unpublished, book as proof against establishing military control of the Office of Indian Affairs. The president of the Universal Peace Union accused the army of provoking Indian hostilities in order to effect the

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[84]William F. Wheeler to Rutherford B. Hayes, June 20, 1877, Schurz Papers; James Davis to Schurz, June 25, 1877, ibid.; T. T. Cabaniss to Schurz, December 10, 1878, ibid.

transfer of Indian affairs to its control.[85] Reading Schurz's papers from late 1878 forward, the investigator senses the intensity of the struggle over the "army-transfer" issue. Schurz fought to defend the Office of Indian Affairs and reminded correspondents that the Department of War was just as subject to corruptive influences as any other department of the Government. Changing Indian affairs to military control would not solve the problems.

Meacham warned the churches in January, 1878, of their need to do more effective work in civilizing and Christianizing the Indians, or the system of church-nominated agents would be terminated through transfer of the Office of Indian Affairs to the military.[86] He declared the army to be what Americans had made it, but it was not made to be a civilizer of Indians.[87] By May, 1878, Meacham's arguments were increasingly aggressive.

> No well-informed man will assert that it [transfer to the army] is for the good of the Indian. Everybody knows better. Those who clamor for change give as a reason that by so doing we will get rid of the Indian rings. This is all bosh. The Indian rings are no worse than the army rings . . . . If West Point is the only institution which graduates honest men then our Christian civilization is a lie.[88]

Meacham insisted that the "transfer issue" was pressed by enemies for the purpose of abolishing the system of church-nominated agents. He did not

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[85] Cree to Schurz, November 7, 1878, ibid.; P. M. Wagenhals to Schurz, December 7, 1878, ibid.; Love to Schurz, October 31, 1879, ibid.

[86] Council Fire, I (January, 1878), 3-4.

[87] Ibid., I (April, 1878), 59.

[88] Ibid., I (May, 1878), 66.

defend the mistakes and evils committed under the peace policy, nor did he disregard the necessity for caution in keeping Church and State separate. With all its faults Grant's peace policy, he believed, was the best yet adopted. It had demonstrated the possibility of civilizing the Indian, something the army had never been able to do. Again he warned the churches to take their responsibility seriously. He fed the fires of Roman Catholic-Protestant antagonisms by reminding readers that Catholics favored transfer to the military because they had not been assigned to agencies that they believed were rightfully theirs. If the Indians were transferred to the War Department, he said, Protestant missions would be practically abandoned to Roman Catholics, even though this was not the intent of the bill then before Congress.[89]

Meacham continued to press the theme that the army could not civilize the Indian, that the issue was "civilize or exterminate," and that surrender of the Indian to the army was a vote for extermination.[90] In October, 1878, he appointed himself a committee of one to follow into Indian Territory two congressional committees who were seeking Indian views on the subject. He made glowing reports of Indian civilization accomplished without the aid of the army.[91]

In Meacham's absence, Bland began a series of articles advocating disbandment of the army and conversion of West Point into an industrial college. He asserted the regular army was "a relic of barbarism,

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[89] Ibid., I (July, 1878), 97-99.

[90] Ibid., I (September, 1878), 129; I (December, 1878), 182.

[91] Ibid., I (November, 1878), 161.

a menace to liberty, a foe to humanitarianism, and a bar to correct Indian policy."[92] Bland's position brought Council Fire to a radical view on the subject of transferring Indian Affairs to the War Department.

Each writer on the Indian question tried his hand at telling Americans what to do about the "transfer issue." Manypenny's book Our Indian Wards was a long and well reasoned argument against transfer. In an extensive letter to the Council Fire, he refuted the attacks of Generals Sheridan and Pope on Indian agents and called their reports untruthful where they related to Indians.[93] Meacham in his work Wi-ne-ma and Her People bitterly attacked the army for its failures in handling the Modocs on the reservation and off.[94] Richard I. Dodge advocated abolishing the Office of Indian Affairs entirely and replacing it with military officers assigned to Indians who needed Government food and clothing. The army quartermasters and commissioners, he believed, could handle this task effectively.[95] Bishop Whipple declared the transfer of Indian Affairs to the military only put a "bad system in other hands." In his opinion proper administration of the Office of Indian Affairs required independence of both the War and Interior Departments. A new principle of giving Government aid only as a reward for

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[92] Ibid., I (December, 1878), 189; II (April, 1879), 60.

[93] Ibid., II (January, 1879), 2.

[94] Meacham, Wi-ne-ma, 155-56.

[95] Dodge, Our Wild Indians, 646.

industry, rather than as alms, should be adopted.[96]

The voices for reform were increasing in number. Each year a strong one was added to the list: Manypenny in 1880 with the release of Our Indian Wards and Helen Hunt Jackson in 1881 with the publication of A Century of Dishonor.[97] While Meacham's voice was only one of many, it was influential. The Council Fire was considered a standard bearer that aided all reformers.[98] Meacham said of his periodical, "its power is felt -- we are not mistaken."[99] He directed great efforts toward rallying Indian agents, churches, and friends of the Indians against the congressional bill for transfer of Indian Affairs to the War Department, and had a part in its defeat. His years of greatest influence in the promotion of Indian reform began with the founding of Council Fire in January, 1878.

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[96]Council Fire, I (January, 1878), 2.

[97]Helen Hunt Jackson, A Century of Dishonor (Boston, 1891). The book was first published in 1881. I have used the 1891 edition.

[98]Council Fire, I (August, 1878), 127. Reverend E. R. Swackhamer wrote Meacham a letter in which he rated Council Fire as a "standard-bearer." Meacham published the letter in full.

[99]Ibid., I (July, 1878), 107.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN SERVICE AND DEATH

Service Again With The Indian Department

Meacham held no official position with the Indian service from January 6, 1874, to September 25, 1878.[1] On the latter date the Office of Indian Affairs employed him, with the title United States Special Indian Agent, to disburse annuity funds to Seminole, Creek, and Delaware Indians. This position required the filing of a penal bond for $50,000 and paid a salary of $8.00 for each day of actual service and $5.00 per diem for expenses.[2] He served again as special agent between April 29 and August 13, 1879, and carried annuity funds to the Sac and Fox in Iowa and Pawnee in Indian Territory. The bond and salary schedules were the same for both periods of employment. The first covered sixty-six days and the second, one hundred and seven. The total salary of $1,384 and expenses of $2,249 were the costs of disbursing $121,082.75 to the Indians.[3] Bland, although in error with regard to the number of weeks consumed in the completion of the assignments, insisted that

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[1] H. Price (Commissioner of Indian Affairs) to Henry Mitchell, June 1, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Letter Book 168, Accounts, 465.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

Meacham finished the tasks in record time.[4] The emphasis on the time factor was an attempt to align the "hero" Meacham on the side of maximum economy as a "qualified" Government agent. Actually, he spent almost eleven weeks more in the service than Bland calculated.[5]

After completing the two special agent assignments, Meacham was appointed to the Ute Indian Commission. Its creation was prefaced by twelve years of white encroachment on Ute territory. This Indian nation, composed of seven bands whose original territory comprised western Colorado, eastern Utah, northern New Mexico, northern Arizona, and southern Wyoming, signed a treaty with the United States in March, 1878.[6] It restricted the Indians to a territory west of the one hundred seventh meridian, north of the southern boundary of the Territory of Colorado, south of the east-west line that ran fifteen miles north of the fortieth parallel, and east of the west boundary of the Territory of Colorado.[7] It was ratified and proclaimed on November 6, 1868, but because of lateness in the year, annuities were not adequately supplied until 1869.[8]

White men had little respect for the treaty guarantee against white intrusion on Ute lands, and continually encroached on Ute territory

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[4]Bland, Alfred B. Meacham, 10.

[5]Price to Mitchell, June 1, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Letter Book 168, Accounts, 465.

[6]Manypenny, Our Indian Wards, 395.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., 397.

until in 1871 the respected Chief Ouray asked for federal troops to expel the intruders and bar further infringement of rights.[9] The Government preferred negotiation to force, and four million acres were acquired in 1872 and 1873 with the aid of two special commissions.[10]

A crisis of the first order occurred on September 29, 1879, when agent N. C. Meeker of the White River agency, eight agency employees, an army major, and a number of soldiers were killed.[11] The tragedy, although believed by many to have been provoked by an agent who lacked wisdom and by an army major who interpreted his orders inflexibly, caused violent reactions from Coloradans and threats from the military.[12] General Sherman advised the Secretary of the Interior to confiscate the entire Ute Reservation and allow qualified Indians such as Chief Ouray to take land in severalty.[13] Secretary Schurz informed Sherman that he had already discussed with Coloradans the possibility of giving the Utes land in severalty, of selling the balance to settlers and miners, and of using the money for the benefit of cooperating members of the tribe.[14] The granting of land in severalty to the Utes did not materialize, however, for the ever swelling cry in Colorado was,

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[9] Ibid., 405

[10] Ibid., 405-18.

[11] Ibid., 421.

[12] Ibid., 422, 432.

[13] Sherman to Schurz, October 22, 1879, Schurz Papers.

[14] Schurz to Sherman, October 22, 1879, ibid.

"The Utes Must Go."[15]

Congress confirmed the Colorado demand on June 15, 1880, by accepting and ratifying an agreement with representatives of the Ute bands that required their removal to the Uintah reservation in Utah, to unoccupied agricultural lands of the La Plata River in Colorado and northern New Mexico, and to agricultural lands in the Grand River district near the mouth of the Gunnison in Colorado. The White River Utes, some of whom were involved in the massacre of agent Meeker, were required to remove to Uintah.[16]

The congressional act provided for the appointment of a special commission to secure the Ute ratification of the agreement. For the first time in the history of treaty-making with Indians, the act required approval by three fourths of the adult males rather than by only a few leading chiefs.[17] Manypenny was appointed chairman and four others --Meacham, John B. Bowman, John J. Russell, and Otto Mears--members of a commission charged with the responsibility of securing Indian ratification.[18] The appointments were formally made on June 21, 1880,[19] and in the evening of the same day the Blands gave a farewell reception to

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[15]Robert Emmitt, The Last War Trail, "The Utes and the Settlement of Colorado" (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954), 285.

[16]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, pp. 193-95.

[17]Ibid., 194.

[18]Schurz to Meacham, Manypenny, John B. Bowman, John J. Russell, and Otto Mears, June 21, 1880, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division, Special Cases 112, Colorado.

[19]Ibid.

Meacham and his wife. Meacham departed for Denver to assume the new responsibility on June 23, and his wife traveled to Iowa to visit relatives and friends.[20]

Meacham journeyed to Colorado to face an angry, unreasonable citizenry bent on extermination of the Ute Indians more than on their removal. In April, 1880, Schurz, in response to an accusation that he was stealing 112,000,000 acres in exchange for 40,000, declared that after the attack on Meeker and the army major he had single-handedly stood between the Utes and total destruction and had been ridiculed for it. He said, "If I had removed my hand from them a day a war would have been inaugurated and we should have seen the last of this tribe."[21] He was convinced the only future for the Ute Indians was removal from the antagonistic whites.[22]

Not all Colorado whites were anti-Ute Indian. Meacham found "a strong minority" that felt "kindly" toward them, but the majority, he said, had no sympathy for the Indians. He identified the persons working for Indian extermination as "floaters, vagabonds--men who have nothing to lose by an Indian war."[23] Shortly after his arrival in Denver, Meacham was interviewed by a reporter from the Denver Tribune who predicted that the experienced Meacham would exert considerable

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[20] Council Fire, III (July, 1880), 105.

[21] Schurz to E. Dunbar Lockwood, April 1, 1880, Schurz Papers.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Council Fire, III (August, 1880), 114.

influence on the commission in favor of the Indians.[24]

As invariably happened when the white man negotiated a treaty or agreement, the Indians never fully understood all the "benefits" the United States had legislated for them. The new agreement provided for taking land in severalty at the new locations, and permitted it in the old territory under certain conditions. Meacham said the Indians did not understand the significance of severalty land. They were fearful of individual responsibility, and many preferred a period of working together until the white man's civilization was better understood.[25]

The big issue of the moment, however, was not land in severalty, but Ute ratification of the agreement. Meacham believed that more than three fourths of the Uncompahgre Utes had approved by late September. He was eager to complete the roll and secure the money payment for the Indians because signatures were secured on the guarantee that the pledged money payment would be forthcoming in the fall, and without the payment the peace of Colorado could not be guaranteed.[26]

Between July 29 and September 25, 1880, the Ute Indian Commission secured the necessary signatures to ratify the agreement,[27] and

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[24]Denver Tribune, July 14, 1880.

[25]Council Fire, III (August, 1880), 114.

[26]Meacham to Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division, Special Cases, 112, Colorado, 1880, No. 42.

[27]Report of Ute Indian Commission on Ratification of Agreement by Three Fourths of the Adult Male Ute Indians, September, 1880, ibid., No. 281. The same report is available in the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, p. 192.

Secretary Schurz immediately requested release of the authorized funds.[28]

Money for the Uncompahgre Utes was received on December 8, 1880, but the White River Utes did not receive theirs because the agreement stipulated it was to be withheld until they had moved to the Uintah reservation.[29] The ratification of the land sale and the partial payment of the agreed price occurred too late in the fall to effect the removal of the Southern and Uncompahgre Utes. Chairman Manypenny was fearful the whites would move in and claim land before Utes could be removed, and asked Secretary Schurz to check the movement.[30]

The year 1880 ended with the Ute problem still unsolved and with relations between the two races in a continued state of tension. The Utes were suspicious of the Federal Government's commitment to pay for the land because a similar promise three years earlier had not been fulfilled. Some whites insinuated that again the Government would fail to keep its promise. This charge was calculated to block ratification of the agreement and to provoke a war that would drive the Utes out of Colorado and cause the expenditure of millions of war dollars in the state. Meacham believed white interference was behind delays the commission experienced in securing signatures to the treaty, a fact he

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[28]Schurz to the Secretary of the Treasury September 24, 1880, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division, Special Cases, 112, 1880, No. 579.

[29]Ute Commission to Schurz, January 20, 1881, ibid., 1881, No. 1639; Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, p. 194.

[30]Manypenny to Schurz, October 2, 1880, Office of Indian Affairs, Land Division, Special Cases, 112, 1880, No. 43.

knew would be difficult to prove.[31]

Ill feelings were intensified because of unfortunate dual killings in late September, 1880. An ox train of five teams, traveling over the seventy-five mile portion of the public road that passed through the Ute reservation, was visited on September 29 by two Indians asking for food. An angry exchange of words was climaxed with the shooting and killing of the son of Chief Shavanaux, an Indian called "Johnson." The freighters declared the Indians had threatened them with a gun; the surviving Indian denied any hostile act. Meacham, agent William H. Berry of the Los Pinos agency, and a captain of the army believed the killing was wanton and unprovoked.[32]

The surviving Ute informed Chief Shavanaux of his son's death, and the Chief and his armed followers went to agent Berry to demand the arrest and execution of the murderer. Agent Berry and fifteen soldiers hastened to the freighters' camp. Chief Shavanaux and his men preferred a direct route to travel with Berry, and the Agent prevailed on two white citizens known and respected by the Indians to travel with the Chief to keep him calmed. Upon Berry's arrival with the soldiers at the freighters' camp, the two citizens already had Donald Jackson, who fired the shot that killed Johnson, under protective arrest. It was believed that the actions of Berry and the citizens saved the freighters' camp from extermination.

The Indians opposed taking the prisoner to the Los Pinos agency

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[31] Council Fire, III (October, 1880), 145, 149-50, 152.

[32] Ibid., III (November, 1880), 161-62, 169.

or the military camp. It was agreed he should be sent in the custody of three citizens to Gunnison for trial, an arrangement that narrowly averted war. Meacham, who was staying at the agency, had been invited by Berry to go with him to the freighters' camp which he did as a visitor, not as one with authority. He concurred, however, with Berry's decision relative to sending the prisoner to Gunnison, and believed all parties--the Indians, the citizens, Berry, and the army--were sincere.[33]

The satisfied Utes departed for home; Berry, Meacham, and the soldiers returned to the agency and army camp, and the citizens with the prisoner started for Gunnison accompanied by one Ute as an eye witness. Another party of Utes, believed to have had white men with them, came upon the citizens and the prisoner a few miles from camp, forcibly captured Jackson from the citizens, and took him away. Although Jackson's body was never found, the Indian grapevine report indicated he was executed by shooting soon after his capture.[34] Jackson's death satisfied the Indian sense of justice and the danger of war passed, but white men took a different view of the affair.

The newspapers led the cry for revenge. The blood of the freighter rested on the hands of the three citizens, it was declared.[35]

The Denver RockyMountain News quoted the Leadville Democrat's insistence on immediate hanging and its attack on Secretary Schurz,

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[33]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1880, xxv-xxvi; Denver Rocky Mountain News, October 19, 1880; Council Fire, III (November, 1880), 162-64.

[34]Council Fire, III (November, 1880), 162-64.

[35]Denver Rocky Mountain News, October 7, 1880.

"the unconcionable old granny," for leaving the state defenseless.[36] Although no evidence of the freighter's death was ever uncovered, the news sources pictured it by Indian torture and burning at the stake.[37] Public rage turned first against agent Berry and then Meacham as accomplices before the fact,[38] and threats of a war of extermination against the Utes were rife.[39]

Because it was election year, Colorado Democrats utilized the incident to maximum advantage. Their newspapers magnified the story until the three citizens, Republicans all, were considered wanton murderers. The Republicans in the Gunnison and San Juan districts, stung by the accusations, demanded the instant removal of Berry and Meacham in order to avoid the loss of a thousand votes in the election.[40] A Colorado citizen wrote Secretary Schurz that Coloradans as a whole were not as disturbed as the outside world had been led to believe. The difficulty was "the immigration of Missouri bushwackers" had hurt Governor Frederick W. Pitkin's re-election chances, and his followers therefore resorted to making the most out of the Ute affair to secure votes for him.[41] The same writer reported that many believed the Indians behaved

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[36] Ibid., October 8, 1880.

[37] Ibid., October 9, 1880.

[38] Ibid., October 10, 1880.

[39] Ibid., October 12, 1880.

[40] George D. Sherman to Marshall Jewell (telegram), October 13, 1880, forwarded by Jewell to Schurz, October 18, 1880, Schurz Papers.

the same as whites would have under similar conditions and were opposed to a war because of the death of a freighter. "For God's sake," he said, "Give Meacham every chance and try to stave the thing off till the election settles matters one way or the other with Pitkin."[42]

The Gunnison County justice of peace issued warrants of arrest for Berry and the three citizens. One of the three was arrested in Gunnison and became the object of three unsuccessful lynching attempts. The arresting constable found Berry and the other two citizens at the Los Pinos agency, and Berry informed him he had no authority on the reservation. Meacham and the army captain were subpoenaed to appear as witnesses and threatened with arrest on a bench warrant if they refused. From threatening letters received and person-to-person information from outside sources, it was obvious Meacham and Berry would be lynched once they walked off the reservation.[43]

As tempers rose, Meacham requested legal counsel from Washington, and it was immediately granted.[44] The Attorney General's Office ordered the Denver United States Attorney, Edward L. Johnson, to investigate the case thoroughly and report promptly.[45] Very soon the issue of State versus Federal jurisdiction arose. The United States Attorney General, hearing that agent Berry had been arrested by a justice of peace,

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[42]Ibid.

[43]Council Fire, XIII (November, 1880), 164.

[44]United States Attorney General Charles Devens to E. L. Johnson, October 13, 1880, Central Files, Department of Justice (National Archives), N.A., RG 60, Instruction Book K, 252.

[45]Devens to Johnson, October 14, 1880, ibid.

ordered efforts to transfer the case to a United States court.[46]

At this juncture of events, public wrath was focused more on Berry than Meacham. Attorney Johnson notified Washington on October 20 that if Berry were arrested he would be lynched unless provided with a military escort to the jail at Pitkin, Colorado.[47] He was informed the next day that the War Department had authorized the necessary protection.[48] Meacham also had wired for protection for Berry,[49] but within four days Meacham, the three citizens, and Berry were listed as the ones who had "conceived and carried into effect one of the most bloodcurdling and damnable outrages ever heard of, and they should hang from the highest limb in Gunnison County."[50]

Attorney Johnson on December 1 presented a full report of rapidly moving events. He had departed from Denver on October 15, 1880, accompanied by a United States Commissioner with warrants for the arrest of those charged with complicity in the murder of the freighter.[51] Johnson decided that because of public wrath it would be unwise to take the defendants to any nearby town for the court hearing. He learned on the way to the Los Pinos agency that the Indians were protecting Berry and would not permit his arrest unless his safety were

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[46] Devens to Johnson, October 1 , 1880, ibid.

[47] Johnson to Devens, October 20, 1880, ibid., 283.

[48] Ibid., 263.

[49] A. Bell to Schurz, October 22, 1880, Schurz Papers.

[50] Denver Rocky Mountain News, October 26, 1880.

[51] Johnson to Devens, December 1, 1880, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 283.

guaranteed. Because of potential danger at the Indian agency, Johnson stopped at the army camp located four miles away and there found Meacham. Berry was out trying to get the Indians moved away from the public roads, but sent word he would meet Johnson at Los Pinos agency the next day.[52]

Johnson informed Berry and Meacham of the danger from invasion of the reservation by the Colorado State Militia and of his orders to make arrests under United States warrants and insure their safety from a mob. Berry and one of the citizens were willing for the arrest if safety could be guaranteed. Attorney Johnson had witness subpoenas for Meacham, the army captain, and an agency trader, but Meacham considered himself a hostage to the Ute Indians until the purchase money was delivered, and was unwilling to leave. He said the Utes had notified him every day that he must not leave until the money was paid. Attorney Johnson decided that neither Pitkin nor Gunnison were in the mood to give the prisoners a fair trial, and for their safety he decided to take them to Denver; but Berry did not want to go without Meacham, his key witness. It was finally agreed to take Meacham's deposition before the United States Commissioner, who was still traveling with Johnson, but before this could be effected official word was received from Washington that the State of Colorado had criminal jurisdiction within the Ute reservation and that the army was forbidden to help or hinder the

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[52] Ibid.

state's effort to make arrests.[53]

The new turn of events speedily changed Meacham's mind and he was ready to depart the reservation immediately, "much more willing to face the hardships and potential dangers of the journey than to face the Gunnison posse."[54] Meacham, supported by the commanding army officer, insisted that Berry was able to convince the Utes on the necessity of the two going to Denver, after which there was no objection to their leaving. At the army camp Meacham had believed himself secure from civil subpoena and arrest, as well as from the wrath of a lynch mob, but because of the United States Attorney General's ruling, the army was compelled to ask Meacham to leave camp.[55]

The total party of eight white persons and five Indian guides, well armed and mounted, left Los Pinos agency secretly and headed for Denver via trails known only to the Indians. After seven days of arduous riding, the party reached the military camp at White River and continued the journey from there by army ambulance to Rawlins, Wyoming, 165 miles away. At the railroad station there they boarded a train for Denver. Because November 1 was election day, the party delayed arrival at Denver until Tuesday, November 2.[56]

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[53] Ibid., Bell to Schurz, October 18, 1880, Schurz Papers; Council Fire, III (November, 1880), 164.

[54] Johnson to Devens, December 1, 1880, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 283.

[55] Council Fire, III (November, 1880), 164-65, 171.

[56] Johnson to Devens, December 1, 1880, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 283.

At the hearing the state did its best to secure jurisdiction of the prisoners, but its efforts were unsuccessful. A formal decision on November 19 gave the United States Courts exclusive jurisdiction of the case. Both political parties had been struggling to take credit for the right of the state, and each had claimed the initiative for the expulsion of the Ute Indians. With the election over, Johnson believed events would follow a more normal course.[57] Meacham said the Utes would have gone to war if the state had secured jurisdiction of the case, and war would be inevitable if attempts were made to arrest the Indians who killed the freighter.[58]

Berry, Meacham, the citizen witness, and Meacham's attorney made a hurried trip to Washington shortly after their arrival in Denver. In their absence, enemies tried unsuccessfully to get a warrant for Meacham's arrest from the United States Court, but they persuaded a man to swear out a complaint before a notary public who issued a warrant. Meacham and Berry hurriedly returned to Denver, where on November 23 each posted $5,000 bail provided by Denver citizens. The hearing was deferred until April, 1881.[59]

The spring of 1881 brought a renewal of agitation against Meacham, Berry, and the Ute Indians. The United States grand jury at

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[57] Ibid.; Council Fire, III (December, 1880), 177; Johnson to Devens, September 8, 1881, Central Files Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 283.

[58] Council Fire, III (November, 1880), 166; III (December, 1880), 177.

[59] Ibid., III (December, 1880), 177; Johnson to Wayne McVeagh, United States Attorney General, September 8, 1881, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 284.

Denver in the May, 1881, term of court, formally indicted Chief Shavanaux and four other Ute Indians as principles, and Berry, Meacham, and William M. Cline "as accessories before the fact" for the September, 1880, murder of the white freighter.[60] The commanding general for the Department of Missouri knew any attempt to arrest the indicted persons would jeopardize, if not prevent, peaceful removal of the Utes to the new reservation;[61] therefore, he refused to make the arrests without orders directly from his superiors.[62] He believed the Indian view of justice should prevail. Actually, he said, the Indians had demonstrated "unusual forbearance in the matter.[63]

Meacham and Berry renewed bail in May in guarantee of their appearance at the October court. Meacham was convinced that since the law prohibited trial of accessories before the principals were tried and convicted, and since the indicted Indians could be arrested only by an order from the Secretary of Interior demanding that the tribe voluntarily surrender the guilty parties, the case was virtually dismissed. He believed that he, Berry, and Cline were held on bail only for

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[60]Johnson to McVeagh, September 8, 1881, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 284.

[61]General Pope to General Sheridan, May 10, 1881, (telegram), Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1881, File 8497; Pope to Colonel W. D. Whipple, May 10, 1881, ibid., File 8560.

[62]Pope to Colonel Whipple, May 10, 1881, ibid., File 8560.

[63]Ibid.

appearance's sake.[64] The War Department refused to share responsibility for a conflict over the arrest of five Indians, so justice to the three men innocent of the crime of murder appeared certain.

In September United States Attorney Johnson asked for instructions.[65] Six days later he was ordered to postpone the trial of Meacham and Berry since they could not attend, and was requested not to require renewal of bail.[66]

Besides time and worry, the indictment for murder cost Meacham $500 in lawyer fees for which he was never reimbursed. He was entitled to relief because he was brought into the litigation through services on the Ute Commission, yet only a special act of Congress could procure a refund.[67] He died before this was accomplished.

Meacham consistently worked to administer "justice and fairness"

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[64] Council Fire, IV (June, 1881), 82; Johnson to McVeagh, September 8, 1881, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Instruction Book K, 284.

[65] Johnson to McVeagh, September 8, 1881, Central Files, Department of Justice RG 60, Instruction Book K, 284.

[66] S. F. Phillips to S. J. Kirkwood, September 14, 1881, Central Files, Department of Justice, RG 60, Executive and Congressional Letter Book J, 1880-1881, p. 574; Phillips to Kirkwood, September 14, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1881, No. 16412.

[67] Kirkwood to John R. French, February 8, 1882, Department of the Interior, Indians, Miscellaneous Letters Sent, 1882, p. 78. In a letter to his daughter, Meacham asserted that the Colorado indictment for murder had cost him $1,000, however, the official claim to the Government sought reimbursement for only $500. The latter figure would more accurately reflect the actual cost. He declared, also, that the indictment was a political maneuver to help carry Gunnison County in the last election, that conviction of him and agent Berry was not anticipated. See Meacham to Charlie and Hellie (Meacham) Troup, October 23, 1881, Letter preserved by Mrs. Donald Stewart, Vancouver, Washington, Xerox copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library.

to the Ute Indians although the violent attitude of Colorado whites made the task difficult. Meacham's personality antagonized some, his principles, others. But the things for which he stood in white man-Indian relations were held in sufficiently high repute to influence the appointment of a successor. When a group of Colorado citizens petitioned President Chester A. Arthur to fill Meacham's place with their nominee, eligibility was determined by his intimate friendship with Meacham and his qualification "to take up and carry out the methods and principles of the late Colonel Meacham better than any other man now available."[68]

During 1881 Meacham continued his responsibilities to the Ute Commission with little interruption because of legalities in the murder case since these took more money than time. Much work accompanied the tasks of census taking and locating new homes for the Utes. It was particularly difficult to effect removal because of their extreme reluctance to go. An army officer's report on Meacham's council with the principal Indians at White River in June, 1881, commented on their compliance with the removal requirements, "more as a heart-broken people than as a band of warriors."[69] Delays and problems related to moving cattle, horses, sheep, and goats consumed much time, and the pressure

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[68]Group of Colorado Citizens to President Chester A. Arthur, March 13, 1882, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1882, No. 5127.

[69]Major Orlando H. Moore to Assistant Adjutant General, Fort Leavenworth, June 27, 1881, ibid., No. 12546.

of whites wanting to occupy the reservation prematurely created tensions.[70] Meacham worked to change an agreement on the disposition of cattle in favor of the White River Utes, and even asked for a summons to Washington to present the case. But the Office of Indian Affairs refused to permit any changes or to authorize Meacham's return to the capital.[71] Instead, he was ordered to speed up the removal before the season was "wasted and nothing done."[72]

Efforts were made to minimize the value of Meacham's work. The Rocky Mountain News editor was angry because Meacham had convinced the Indians that white Coloradans were antagonistic to them. On the contrary, he said, the Indians had no confidence in Meacham or the other commissioners, men ignorant of the Indian character. When he inferred that Meacham lacked the necessary qualifications he knew some would laugh, but he was confident that all "intelligent" persons present at the last Indian Council would endorse his statement. Meacham, he contended, had "shown by his speeches and by his utterances in that sensational product, the Council Fire," that he considered himself "in a

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[70]Notice posted by William H. Berry Prohibiting Settling of Persons on Ute Reservation, April 30, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Special Cases, 112, Colorado, 1881, No. 7855; Chris Gilson to General McKenzie, July 25, 1881, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1881, No. 12546; Council Fire, IV (November, 1881), 163.

[71]Bell to Meacham, May 17, 1881, Department of the Interior, Indian, Miscellaneous Letters Sent, XXVI, 200; Bell to Meacham, May 18, 1881, ibid., 203; Kirkwood to Meacham, May 23, 1881, ibid., 209; Bell to Meacham, May 23, 1881, ibid., 228; Bell to Meacham, June 4, 1881, ibid., 291; Bell to Meacham, June 14, 1881, ibid., 244; Kirkwood to Meacham, June 15, 1881, ibid., 245

[72]Kirkwood to Meacham, June 25, 1881, ibid., 259.

state of antagonism with the people of Colorado on the Indian question. . . ."[73] By contrast, Meacham's June editorial spoke compassionately of the Ute Indians, against whom every man's hand seemed to be turned, and of the thousands of Coloradans who were favorably inclined toward the Utes, but remained silent because they feared public opinion. These had pointed out to Meacham that the animosity of the Colorado press toward him had stemmed from his Council Fire editorials exposing the true, but better-left-unsaid facts about the Ute removal.[74] The Council Fire quoted in full an unrestrained, inaccurate, and vicious newspaper attack on Meacham made about eighteen days after the killing of the freighter. It declared he had enriched himself as the Klamath Indian agent and with the money had built the hotel in the Blue Mountains--a totally inaccurate tale. The writer called Meacham "a coward by nature, a thief by instinct, a hypocrite by choice . . . the incarnation of pure undefiled rascality."[75] So it happened in Colorado as it had occurred in Oregon--Meacham versus a majority opinion on the Indian question resulting in public abuse from the majority spokesmen.

Meacham completed the assigned task with the White River Utes, paid them at Uintah reservation the first installment on the price of their land, and sometime in October, 1881, returned to Washington.[76] He met with the Ute Commission there in November to lay plans for the

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[73]Denver Rocky Mountain News, July 7, 1881.

[74]Council Fire, IV (June, 1881), 81.

[75]Ibid., III (December, 1880), 179.

[76]Ibid., IV (October, 1881), 145.

completion of unfinished business, but death soon intervened, and Meacham never returned to Colorado.[77]

Death and Evaluation

After the return to Washington Meacham's health slowly but steadily deteriorated. He had literally lived with death since the day of the Modoc massacre, and had never been able to resume a normal life. Believing he deserved financial aid for the disability incurred while in Government service, he petitioned Congress in 1878 for a $15,000 reparation grant. The petition was supported by two medical doctors--Thomas Bland of Washington and R. W. Pryce of Iowa City--and by Benjamin Simpson, former Indian Agent of the Siletz Agency in Oregon.[78] The memorial declared that Meacham had not had one day free from pain or one night of "quiet slumber," and had lived half the time since the Modoc massacre expecting death daily. Constant medical treatment had caused great expense, and income from lectures and books was inadequate to care for him and his family.[79] Bland declared Meacham was in continuous danger of a "violent stroke of paralysis," and gave his professional

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[77]Bell to Meacham, November 5, 1881, Department of Interior, Indians, Miscellaneous Letters Sent, XXVI, 479.

[78]Memorial in Behalf of Alfred B. Meacham to Congress of the United States, February 18, 1878 (delivered to the Committee on Claims), Pension Claim, No. 303.721, Box No. 34575; Sworn Statement, R. W. Pryce, M.D., February 5, 1878, ibid.; Sworn Statement, Thomas A. Bland, M.D., February 19, 1878, ibid; Sworn Statement, Benjamin Simpson, February 7, 1878, ibid.; Simpson to Honorable Mr. Bright, Chairman, Committee on Claims, March 22, 1878, ibid.

[79]Memorial, Meacham to Congress, February 18, 1881, ibid.

opinion that Meacham could "never fully recover from the effects of said injuries or be restored to anything approaching his former health, and that further he was in danger constantly, from various causes, to a violent relapse and sudden death."[80]

The Committee on Claims recommended that reparations be granted in the sum of $3,500 instead of the "prayed for" $15,000, but no action was taken.[81] A new bill requesting $5,000 relief was introduced in April, 1880, reported out favorably by the Committee on Claims, but it too failed to pass.[82] Not content with two defeats, a third effort was made in December, 1881, but death interrupted the bill's progress through the Claims Committee.[83]

The privations and tensions of the Ute Commission's labors in Colorado probably hastened the end. Meacham died suddenly on February 16, 1882, while sitting at the editor's desk, after having spent most of the day in writing letters and talking to friends.[84] Through the preceding November, December, and January, however, slow and difficult labor caused publication delays of the Council Fire.[85]

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[80]Bland, Sworn Statement, February 19, 1878, ibid.

[81]House Reports, No. 51, 45 Cong., 3 Sess.; Congressional Record, House Proceedings, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 334; Congressional Record, Index, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., H.R. 3357.

[82]Congressional Record, House Proceedings, 46 Cong., 2 Sess. H. R. 5609; House Reports, No. 899, 46 Cong., 2 Sess.

[83]Senate Reports, No. 976, 47 Cong., 2 Sess.

[84]Council Fire, V (March, 1882), 66.

[85]Ibid., 65.

Meacham lived almost nine years after the fateful April 11, 1873, when the Modoc Indians left him for dead near the peace tent in the Lava Beds. Although it took nine eventful years to bring the end, Modoc bullets killed him as surely as though he had died with Canby and Thomas.

The last thirteen years of Meacham's life were significant to Indian reform. They were unequal in value to the cause, but each was essential to the succeeding one. There is no evidence that Meacham sought the Oregon Superintendency of Indian Affairs because of a strong desire to inaugurate reforms in Indian management. The writer believes he sought and received the appointment as political patronage, but was committed in principle to Grant's peace policy with the Indians. The later efforts by Meacham and Bland to convey the idea that the office sought him appear to be a deliberate attempt to square Meacham's career in the Indian Service with the philosophy that employees should be selected for their "eminent fitness" rather than for political reward. The phrase "eminent fitness," first used by Whipple,[86] caught the imagination of Indian reformers and they used it frequently. Although Timothy Davenport could not understand what eastern philanthropists saw in Meacham's treatment of the Indians that endeared him to them, he admitted that Meacham was one of two superintendents in Oregon who had

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[86]Whipple, Lights and Shadows of a Long Episcopate, 139.

faith in the Indians and had tried to civilize them.[87]

Meacham's record in the Oregon Superintendency proves that even though the office came as a political reward, reform principles guided his administration. The intensity of his commitment to the promotion of Indian welfare grew with the months in office. It took on the quality of a religious "call" for service to humanity, and may have compensated for a thwarted desire to enter the Methodist ministry, a desire his daughter asserted he had had in California.[88] Significantly enough, Meacham's reform efforts, as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon, did not generate violent public opposition. His work was approved by the majority leadership in Republican politics and in the churches. There was evidence of growing opposition from political forces, but even when his dismissal was effected the opposition did not identify itself publicly. Perhaps the approval of Meacham's administration by Radical Republican Leaders stemmed from the fact that Grant's peace policy in Indian affairs was a new and official policy of the party.

Meacham did not seek appointment to the chairmanship of the Modoc Peace Commission, and there is no evidence that he initially considered it an opportunity to promote Indian reform. Because of his complete identity with the administration's peace policy, it is difficult to determine just where the promotion of party policy ended and

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[87]Davenport, "Recollections of an Indian Agent," Quarterly of the Oregon Historical Society, VIII (September, 1907), 243-44. Joel Palmer was the other superintendent. When the Oregon Superintendency was terminated in 1873, a total of ten superintendents had filled the office.

[88]Redington, Autobiographical Novel, 62.

the promotion of Indian reform began. The heated debate that arose out of Grant's efforts to apply the peace policy to the Modoc Indians created a public image of Meacham as a reformer, hated by frontiersmen and admired by humanitarians. First with limited power and then stripped of it, Meacham was only the instrument of the Grant administration policy. As chairman of the Peace Commission he became the symbol to Oregonians of an obnoxious policy and the recipient of their anger against it. The Modoc experience hardened Meacham into a promoter of Indian reform more than a seeker of political patronage.

During the first two years following the Modoc War, Meacham strove for wealth as well as reform via the lyceum lecture circuit. Perhaps the failure of the Meacham Lecture Company was caused more by the change in public preference in entertainment than by the quality of Meacham's lectures and the performance of his Indian troupe. The economic decline following the depression of 1873 affected public support of lyceum numbers. The change was sufficient to convince James Redpath that he should sell his share in the Boston Lyceum Bureau in 1875, an event that took place after the failure of the Meacham Lecture Company.[89] The dream of wealth faded with the failure of the Lecture Company, but the drive to promote Indian reform remained.

Sickness and suffering, caused by the after-effects of the wounds suffered in the Modoc massacre, delayed Meacham's return to the lecture platform until the spring of 1876. After this date, under the

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[89]Milton E. Flower, James Parton, The Father of Modern Biography (Durham, North Carolina, 1951), 133.

skillful management of the professional humanitarian Bland, Meacham's obsession to reform white-Indian relations took on the characteristics of a sustained and disciplined effort. Reform appeared to be the primary goal, although wealth would have been eagerly welcomed. Only the fact that Indian reform had become the main mission in life explains Meacham's single-minded devotion to the cause in spite of chronic illness.

Two years of lecturing taught Meacham that legislators and administrators as well as voters had to be convinced, or reform in Indian affairs would never come to pass. He clearly understood the significance of the printed page in periodical form as a proven tool to reach a select audience; consequently the Council Fire was founded and subsidized in order to agitate the Indian question and influence key people. The lesson of Garrison's Liberator with a maximum subscription list of three thousand was not lost on Meacham and Bland. The Council Fire's estimated circulation of two thousand placed in the hands of legislators, Indian Affairs Office administrators, Indian agents, teachers, missionaries, and friends of the Indians had an impact comparable to the Liberator. Meacham's practicality along with his idealism brought a respectable balance to the periodical. A standard-bearer for other believers in Indian reform, Council Fire helped to stimulate debate on the Indian question and to crystallize thinking on the type of needed reform.

The publication of Council Fire was the peak of Meacham's efforts and influence. It greatly exceeded the value of his other writings: Wigwam and Warpath, Wi-ne-ma and Her People, and The Tragedy

of the Lava Beds. Although the writer has found no evidence that Meacham's writings influenced Helen Hunt Jackson to write A Century of Dishonor, he believes the earlier discussion of how writers on Indian reform read each other is sufficient to assume that Mrs. Jackson read Meacham's publications. It is not clear on what premise Priest, in Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, appraised Meacham as a propagandist second only to Jackson. As a literary stylist, Jackson surpassed Meacham, but the constant pressure of the Council Fire could have equalized in propaganda effect the greater literary skill of Jackson. She was better at dramatizing the wrongs suffered by Indians than she was at proposing workable solutions for their elimination. With all of Meacham's generalizations and idealism, his proposed solutions were more carefully formulated than Jackson's.

Meacham's promotion of Indian reform reached its height during the incumbency of Schurz in the office of Secretary of the Interior, the period when discussion of the Indian question became general. Although it was not until 1887 that reform ideas in Indian affairs became law, it was the combined efforts of persons like Meacham, Dodge, Otis, Manypenny, Schurz, Jackson, the Board of Indian Commissioners, the Universal Peace Union, and many others that laid the groundwork for later success.

What kind of man was Meacham? Eulogies after his death emphasized his positive qualities: Earnestness; profound convictions; a keen, discriminating judicial mind; "a worshipper at the shrine of

truth and justice" a tireless and fearless worker;[90] a man of warm heart, of strength, of energy, of accomplishment, of iron will.[91] Schurz said of Meacham that he was the "most faithful and generous friend the Indians ever had."[92] A Washington World editorial appraised Meacham as a great man in many respects, with talent, courage, enthusiasm, large-heartedness, generosity, and thorough honesty.[93] It credited his fame chiefly to "tongue and pen" and his greatness primarily to his ability to rise above "prejudices based on personal injury."[94] The National View of Washington declared that in the period 1873-1882 a "revolution" in public thinking on the Indian question had taken place and that Meacham was the acknowledged leader.[95] Manypenny, speaking from personal experience with Meacham on the Ute Indian Commission, asserted that his associate was a man of strong will and "undoubted courage," one who stood firmly by conviction and maintained consistency in Washington or in the Rocky Mountains.[96]

The weaknesses of Meacham were little known by the friends of

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[90] Council Fire, V (March, 1882), 67. The Reverend Bauer, pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church, Washington, applied these characteristics to Meacham in the funeral sermon.

[91] Ibid., 68. A description of Meacham presented by the Reverend Charles Adams at the funeral service.

[92] Ibid., 77.

[93] Ibid., 80. The Washington World comment was published in the Council Fire.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 81.

[96] Ibid., 100.

the Indians. While he was dedicating his life to the promotion of Indian reform, his family in Oregon suffered from lack of support. His daughter Nellie asked her diary in 1879 why father did not relieve mother of financial worries? It had been "four long years" since he had left home, and in all that time there was no "subsistence visible or thought of."[97] It is difficult to explain this apparent desertion of the family because the deed was contrary to the norms expected of Meacham. The record contains not one shred of evidence of marital infidelity, but it is full of facts indicating illness and financial struggle. A conjecture suggests that Bland's management went beyond setting up lecture appointments and assisting in the work of writing and editing; he kept Meacham in the East by persuasion and by the force of a dominant mind. Perhaps the fact that only Mrs. Bland could relieve the ever present pain was a weight that tipped the scales of family responsibility against the wife and children.[98]

Neglect of family was not characteristic of Meacham, but inability in managing money was. The long series of civil suits involving nonpayment of debts both in California and Oregon was indicative of an abnormal attitude toward money. Attempts to acquire property from which profits could be earned failed in California. In Oregon earnings from the toll road and hotel were never converted into real estate or into

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[97]Diary of Nellie F. Meacham (October 21, 1878 to May 11, 1879), March 3, 1879. Preserved by Mrs. Donald Stewart, Vancouver, Washington, Microfilm Copy, Oregon Collection, University of Oregon Library.

[98]Council Fire, V (March, 1882), 65.

another business that depended on a stationary rather than a migrating public. The mortgaging of the toll road in 1869 for $15,000 was the only visible capital gain Meacham received on the $81,000 capital invested in road improvement. There is no evidence this sum was ever used for anything more than family expenses. The fact that the loan was never repaid and that settlement of the debt took place twelve years later by a former employee rather than by Meacham is another illustration of his strange attitude toward financial obligations.

It is no surprise that Meacham was unable as Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon to bring order into the chaotic finances of the Superintendency. His sudden dismissal from office left no time to balance the various accounts. A friend said that when Meacham was removed the business affairs of the Superintendency were "in the same confused condition in which Superintendent Huntington and others had found and conducted them, and it had not been in Mr. Meacham's power, with the means placed at his disposal, to prevent an overplus in one direction from being temporarily appropriated to supply a deficiency in another."[99] Odeneal's report in 1872 indicated that Meacham must have appropriated money from the educational account to supply a need in another fund--a practice not uncommon in that day.[100]

Meacham's term of office in the Superintendency terminated on March 31, 1872. When the Government finally settled his accounts on

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[99]Portland Oregonian, April 16, 1873.

[100]Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1872, p. 360.

April 28, 1879, it officially declared that he was in default by $7,676.99.[101] No payment on this deficit was ever made by Meacham.[102]

In January, 1886, the Department of the Treasury instituted a suit against thirty-two people, including Meacham, formerly connected with the Indian Service. Since he was now dead, the suit was brought against those who signed his bond of April 1, 1869.[103] Legal action actually began in 1885, and trial was set for November of that year in Walla Walla.[104] A search of the Justice Department records in the National Archives failed to uncover any conclusion to the litigation. Apparently the case was dropped for lack of evidence. In spite of Meacham's free and easy attitude toward money, no instance of fraud or dishonesty were ever uncovered in the suits against the bondholders. Charges by enemies that he had enriched himself in the Indian Service were false. He died a poor man.

When Bland with the consent of Mrs. Meacham and family petitioned the court to be named administrator of Meacham's intestate estate, Meacham's poverty was itemized: bedroom furniture valued at

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[101] Senate Executive Documents, No. 65, Pt. 2, 49 Cong., 1 Sess.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Second Comptrollers Office to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, January 8, 1886, Office of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, 1886, No. 727.

[104] Attorneys Mitchell and Dement to L. Q. C. Lamar, August 27, 1885, ibid;, 1885, No. 21802.

$50 and a claim against the United States for $340.[105] Meacham's bill in Congress asking for $5,000 in reparations was transferred to the Committee on Pensions immediately after his death and was attached to a bill petitioning a pension for Mrs. Meacham.[106] The pension bill was finally passed, and Mrs. Meacham received $50 per month from March 2, 1883, until her decease on January 7, 1888.[107] Death enabled Meacham to provide for his wife better than he had in any year after 1874.

It cannot be truthfully said that Meacham exploited the Indian Service to his own profit. Nor can it be asserted that he was a Fenimore Cooper idealist. His human weaknesses, egotisms, and ambitions could not hide his dedication to the cause of reform in white man-Indian relations and his fundamental commitment to the concept that all men, regardless of color or culture, should be treated with dignity and respect. Although he himself never fully attained his ambition, he kept always before him the mental construct of the ideal man, the kind of man he wanted to be and a norm for setting reform goals. A clinical psychologist, after analyzing Meacham's long letter to his daughter, said of him:

> He is a highly sensitive, introspective individual who is forever conscious of his own weaknesses and attempts rather desperately to overcome them. He is a very altruistic individual, idealistic and

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[105] United States Court, District of Columbia, 1882, Case No. 854 in Probate, Estate of Alfred B. Meacham (Court House, Washington, D.C.).

[106] House Reports, No. 1346, 47 Cong., 1 Sess; Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., H.R. 1669.

[107] Claim No. 303, 721, Box No. 34575, Certificate No. 201713, Orpha C., Widow of Alfred B. Meacham.

> with a level of aspiration that defies his own capacities. Not that he wasn't capable or intelligent. Quite the contrary. But I feel he had an almost insatiable aspiration, a tremendous driving force that may very well have tortured him in that no matter what he accomplished, much of the time he felt like a failure. . . .
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> . . . . . .
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> I feel that psychologically it was always difficult for him to assume leadership. If he was a leader, he was an extremely insecure one. Psychologically, he was a "follower" and under the leadership of a man who could fit his father's shoes, he would have been able to attain his loftiest heights. But on his own he must have been afraid and lonely.[108]

Perhaps Bland was the "father" who led Meacham to his greatest height as a promoter of Indian reform.

An examination of Meacham's Indian reform goals in the light of subsequent developments throws light on the complexity of the Indian problem and the inadequacy of proposed solutions. Citizenship and severalty land were two basic reforms promoted by Meacham and his contemporaries. It was believed that private ownership of land accompanied with knowledge of farming skills would accomplish several things: 1) It would partially satisfy the Indian's love for and attachment to the land of his fathers; 2) it would provide security against removal by land-grasping white man; 3) it would enable economic survival; 4) it would bring the Indian into the mainstream of the white man's civic, legal, and economic life; and 5) it was the only alternative to extermination. With the founding of the Indian Rights Association in 1882, severalty land and citizenship were even more insistently urged. The years of reform agitation finally crystallized into the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887.

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[108]Dr. Andrew Berger to E. Sterl Phinney, August 10, 1960.

The Dawes Act made it possible for the Indian to receive up to one hundred sixty acres of land and United States citizenship. Unlike other citizens, however, the Indian could not alienate his acreage for twenty-five years. With the goal attained, public pressure for Indian reform relaxed, but the Dawes Act did not bring the hoped-for results. Release of much Indian land to a land-hungry public benefitted white men more than Indians. Many Indians were not ready to move out of a communal society into individualism. If he had lived longer, Meacham would have promoted a process of gradualism with maximum safeguards for the rights of the Indian. The Burke Act of 1906 promoted gradualism by slowing the process of transition to citizenship. Full citizenship was granted in 1924 to Indians who had not yet attained it. But land in severalty and full citizenship did not solve the Indian problem in the way reformers hoped it would.

In the 1950's the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was still talking about the future ending of federal trusteeship for Indian property. He pointed out that laws against the sale of liquor and firearms to Indians were not repealed until 1953. In the same year the antidiscrimination law for the first time admitted that Indians had the same rights as whites. The Commissioner announced as a policy a principal declared by Meacham seventy-five years earlier: that the Indian should be subject to the same laws and given the same privileges and responsibilities as white men. Moreover, the Eisenhower administration, for which the Commissioner spoke, pledged itself to consult with the Indians and give them opportunity to express their desires and

hopes.[109] Meacham propounded and practiced this philosophy from the time he became Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Oregon. He would have been as much at home with Eisenhower's Indian policy as he was with Grant's.

Mid-twentieth century efforts to assimilate the Indian into the predominant white culture have not been highly effective. The 1953 law that set up procedures for ending federal trusteeship is feared by many Indians and by many of their friends. The Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian echoes the voices of yesterday in declaring its attitude toward management of Indian affairs. It advocates gradualism in termination of federal trusteeship, protection of Indians' individual and tribal economy, recognition of Indian rights as inherent and independent of state law, strict observance of existing Indian treaties, retention of home rule by Indians until they ask to dispense with it, continuation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the creating of an Advisory Board outside of Government that would recommend policies and judge performance "from the standpoint of justice and practicability."[110] The last statement has the quality of a direct quote from Meacham.

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[109] Glen L. Emmons, "Future Prospects in Indian Affairs" (n.p., 1954), 3, 6, 8. A speech given by Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Glenn L. Emmons before annual meeting of Indian Rights Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, January 21, 1954.

[110] A Program for Indian Citizens (n.p., n.d.), 5-8, 11-15, 23, 27-28, 43. This is a report from the Commission on the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian, O. Meredith Wilson, chairman. The commission was established by The Fund for the Republic, Incorporated, beginning in March, 1957.

Looking at Meacham from today's vantage point, he appears, not as a fool, but as a sincere, conscientious promoter of Indian reform. Concepts expressed by him still live in today's philosophy of Indian administration. He may not have originated them, but he articulated them and through the periodical Council Fire brought a cohesion to the Indian reform movement that had not previously existed.

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